

She was a very loyal British subject ; but she was saying exactly the sort of things the Germans want us all to say and all to believe. And it's not true. I believe that French men and women to-day are carrying their dreadful burdens with a sublime courage.

The French people are not effete ; at least I saw no signs of their being so. They look surprisingly active and virile for a people who have been under the whip of the invader for three and a half years—who have been denied their freedom to an extent completely beyond our imagination. I did see signs of great hardship. Yes, their clothes are shabby, their faces are thin and drawn, but they hold their heads high. I watched them on railway-stations and in the streets, and but for the fact that they rarely smile, and more rarely speak to each other, especially in trains and trams, they carry themselves much as we do here. Shabbily dressed they certainly are. It is next to impossible to get leather, and stockings are even harder to come by. I noticed many women wearing canvas shoes and no stockings at all, even though it was winter-time. Their skirts are darned too, but, typical of the Frenchwoman, they still manage to look neat. And, more typical still, they all seem to be wearing lovely hats. To me those hats were symbols of defiance against adversity, and again and again I was distracted and enchanted by them. I can even describe them in a sort of a way—mostly tall, like pointed busbies, with a soft ball like a powder-puff dangling on one side. I was told that as a hat does not require much material, the Germans had not discouraged the trade.

How are the French people standing up to the Germans ? Let me tell you one story I heard. When the Allied Armies landed in North Africa the Germans suffered a momentary panic in France. They asked the French railway management if they could completely evacuate all the German troops from France in twenty-four hours. " No," they said, " we can't do that, but we shall be *delighted* to do it in forty-eight hours."

## Fighting the Enemy all the Time

They are fighting the enemy all the time. When the men are called up for labour service in Germany most of them refuse to go. Instead they take to the mountains, to the maquis. In one district of High Savoy, out of 4,500 men who were called up only eleven appeared at the police-station—the rest are in the maquis. There they fight and they hunt and they are hunted. Often they have nowhere to live and they have to sleep out in the open, and they depend for their food mostly on what their friends can take them. When I was there the Germans were waiting for the snow to fall so that they could track them down. Now the snow *has* come, and I read in the paper the other day : " The men of the maquis have been cut off and surrounded by Joseph Darnand's police forces in the high mountains, and their annihilation is now merely a question of time." Merely a question of time, and when they are caught they are shot. But still they go on, ambushing the Germans day and night, until now they have them reduced to a state of terror.

I met men of the resistance movement, too—fine, tough-looking fellows they were who fight and destroy and go on destroying ; only they haven't enough weapons to fight with. But with what they have they blow up trains and they throw bombs into German billets and cinemas. Of course, they are caught and shot ; or if they are not caught some one else is taken and shot in their place. Not that that stops them. Even while I was there, trains I was on were twice held up by derailments. And one night an express was blown up and forty people were killed, half of them French. It was a pity, they said, this losing of French lives ; but it was inevitable, and what mattered was that twenty Germans had been killed.

And the attitude of the French people towards Vichy ? That's a question I'm always being asked. I talked to all kinds of people, and on this their views were unanimous. They loathe the Government ; they depise Laval, and they will kill the collaborators. For Marshal Petain what they feel is contempt.