

**THE AFTERMATH OF
BATTLE, WITH THE RED
CROSS IN FRANCE**

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The aftermath of battle, with the Red Cross in France by Edward D. Toland

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EDWARD D. TOLAND

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THE AFTERMATH OF BATTLE



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The Aftermath of Battle. Joseph Offert and his wife and sister, who had come from Brittany to see him before he died. A hopeless case. Gunshot wound, touching spinal column and complete paralysis below the waist. See page 156.

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The
Aftermath of Battle



France

WITH THE RED CROSS IN FRANCE

BY
EDWARD D. TOLAND

WITH A PREFACE BY
OWEN WISTER

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1916

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PREFACE

MOST of these pages following are, like the photographs which go with them, torn fresh and hot, so to speak, from the diary of a young American, just as he jotted them down day by day in the war-hospitals of France.

In those hospitals, from September, 1914, into February, 1915, with other young volunteers, many of them Americans also, he served the wounded Germans and Allies. He carried them upstairs and down, or in from the rain, he assisted at operations, he held basins, he gave chloroform, he built the kitchen fire, he pumped the water, he was chauffeur, forager, commissariat, he helped in what ways he could, as he was ordered,

and also as his own intelligence prompted in the not infrequent absence of orders. He saw the wounded die, he saw them get well, and he tells about them, their suffering, their courage, their patience. He records one day, among other incidents, that "when we got to the Hospital we cut the clothes off most of the men and I tied them up for storage. While I was doing this for one of the Scots (of the Black Watch) who had a bullet through his chest . . . he said, 'Will ye let me have a look at those kilts?' I gave him the kilts and continued tying up his clothes. When I looked up he was folding them with his one arm, as carefully as a woman tucking her baby to sleep; 'see that they're not mussed, will ye?' he said. . . ."

In the doings caught alive and set down here, a glimpse of war as it is, is given us:

aeroplanes sail by, shells explode and tear the earth, loaded trains arrive smelling of dead flesh; while, round the wounded and the walls which shelter them, life goes on with its birthdays and Christmas dinners, its diplomats, magnates, spectators passing on and off the scene along with doctors, surgeons, and trained nurses.

From this short authentic document a long string of morals and conclusions is to be drawn, and these, saving two remarks only, shall be left to the reflecting reader.

First. After the brief introduction of the diary, wherein the writer narrates his voyage in the steerage to Liverpool, one is plunged instantly into the French chaos. As page succeeds page, written without art, yet with the effect of high art, with the effect (for example) of De Foe's account of the Plague, the reader ceases to