

**LADIES OF GRÉCOURT:
THE SMITH
COLLEGE RELIEF
UNIT IN THE SOMME**

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Ladies of Grécourt: The Smith College Relief Unit in the Somme by Ruth Gaines

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RUTH GAINES

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THE HOPE OF FRANCE

LADIES OF GRÉCOURT

*The Smith College Relief Unit
in the Somme*

BY
LEOISE
RUTH GAINES

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*"You gave us dreams unnumbered,
And life we had not known;
And now, O Alma Mater,
We give you back your own."*

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By Gaines, Ruth

LADIES OF GRÉCOURT

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CHAPTER I

"FOR A DREAM'S SAKE"

MY parents were born of poor parents; they were poor also when they married, about 1898, having nothing for all their fortune but their health and their hands." In these words Laetitia Lefèvre of the hamlet of Canisy, in the Department of the Somme, begins her "*Mémoires d'une Picarde envahie pendant la grande guerre.*" * "I was born," she continues, "one year after, and two years later I had a tiny sister. My father worked a little on farms in summer, and in winter in a sugar factory. As for my mother, she toiled at her profession of market gardening, as her father, as her grandparents, had done. When by

* Unpublished MS.

dint of privations and of labor, my parents had saved a little money, the idea came to Mama to work her garden for herself, and to sell for herself its produce to the extent of its capacity. So she commenced to peddle her vegetables with a wheelbarrow. But one day my father left his factory to work with her.

“Meantime my sister and I began to grow up; we went together to the only school of the little village of Canisy, where we were born; there we received a sufficiently good education, thanks to the help of a good teacher, and as soon as our parents judged that we were sufficiently educated, they took us from the school to aid them in the profession that we were to carry on. For my part, I should have preferred my studies, but a serious illness of my father’s prevented me from continuing. As for my sister, she loved the soil. Of a stronger physique than I, she was already a hard worker at the age of eleven.

“My parents had rented some land in bad condition; they bought an old horse, and an old wagon, to carry the vegetables; things