

# **PRISONER OF WAR**

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Prisoner of War by André Warnod

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**ANDRÉ WARNOD**

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OF WAR**



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BY

ANDRÉ WARNOD

*With 60 Sketches by the Author*

TRANSLATED BY M. JOURDAIN

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

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**FROM THE BATTLEFIELD TO  
THE CAMP**





PARIS again, with its streets, where one can walk where one likes, and its restaurants, where one can eat what one pleases, its real houses, real laughter, and real bread ! There it is, after seven days and seven nights in the train. I look at my ragged and buttonless overcoat, with its strap pinned on by a safety pin, and the dirty strip of stuff which was once my red cross *brassard*, and I fancy it is all a dream.

People ask me to "tell them all about it." That isn't easy ; just at present I am afraid of losing grip of my will and memory. I think I have lost the taste for writing, just as I have lost the taste for good tobacco and good wine. These last two days I have been constantly asked what I thought of such and such a wine

TO MY  
PRISONER OF WAR

or cigar. I tell you I don't "think" anything at all. I have lost the habit of such flavours, and it is only by degrees that I shall begin to understand them again. Give me time. . . .

In the same way I must have time to think before telling my story. For the moment I can only see the past—all that happened nine months ago—through a mist of confused impressions, with here and there some quite unimportant event in clear relief against it. I can see the bustle and hurry of mobilisation, our start from the barracks, our marching through Nancy, and people crowding round us with fruit and wine and flowers; there was a dahlia or a rose stuck in every man's gun-barrel, Then the strains of the *Marseillaise* and the *Chant du Départ*. We were covered with sweat and dust, and women embraced us. Then, and for the first time, I had a feeling that we were on our way to things heroic and difficult—things we *had* to do, however difficult. And then on we went again, and here my recollections become confused—a medley of crossing

## FROM BATTLEFIELD TO CAMP 5

the frontier and tearing down the frontier posts ; the first sound of the guns ; the first fusillade ; the men who fell, who had to be left behind our lines ; the Boches in flight ; the intoxication of advancing ; and then the sudden halt at Morhange. Why did we stop there ? I have not the least idea ; a private soldier never has. I remember marches and counter-marches at night, heartrending marches on roads crowded with troops, among dragoons, gunners with their guns, carts of all sorts, and ambulances and wounded men who were being attended to. Then we fell back, and at the Grand Couronné de Nancy we were told to halt. There was a rumour that the enemy was quite near, and that he must not be allowed to advance any farther. There was a battle, and I can see Chasseurs and colonial troops dashing on before us, through the din of battle, with their bayonets, and that was the last we saw of them. We were told that the Bavarian troops in front of them were giving ground. The noise of the guns was terrible, and we dug