

**SHADOW-SHAPES; THE
JOURNAL OF A
WOUNDED WOMAN,
OCTOBER 1918-MAY 1919**

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Shadow-shapes; the journal of a wounded woman, October 1918-May 1919 by Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant

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ELIZABETH SHEPLEY SERGEANT

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SHADOW-SHAPES

The Journal of a Wounded Woman

October 1918 – May 1919

BY

ELIZABETH SHEPLEY SERGEANT



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"I was wounded in the house of my friends"

NOTE

A FEW pages of *Shadow-Shapes* — images and memories of war-time Paris — were first published as correspondence in *The New Republic* during the years 1917-18. But the author owes the whole background of her French war experience to the paper and its Editors, and for their unfailing generosity here makes grateful acknowledgment.

PREFACE

THIS book belongs to the nurses, the doctors, the friends who gathered about my hospital bed in France. Their beautiful kindness was as healing as their care, and I shall never be able to thank them for the part they gave me in the chimerical days which I saw reflected with such vividness in their faces.

The best of what they shared and what they were I have not even tried to set down. But where their faces and their voices seemed symbolic of certain human types and mysteries pondered by all Americans in France in the period between war and peace, I have ventured to quote them and picture them. My wish has been not to change what I saw and heard by a line or a feature, lest the least alteration should do violence to a vast, embracing, unseizable truth that was essentially our common possession. The heightened glow cast by danger and death on the faces of the young, and its fading into the rather flat daylight of survival; the psychological dislocation of the Armistice; the weariness of reconstruction; the shift in Franco-American relations that followed Presi-

PREFACE

dent Wilson's intervention in European affairs; the place of American women in the adventures of the A.E.F. — all this and much more I groped through my illness to understand, as my visitors came and went, and noted on paper and in memory. The journal which has resulted does not pretend to offer more than a marginal commentary. For nobody knows better than an accidentally wounded writer that the real story can only be told by a soldier — perhaps by one of those limping privates whose shadows were always creeping across the Neuilly windows to remind me that in the damp tents where they were continuing the Argonne and the Marne, not in my comfortable gray room, was the substance of America in France.

E. S. S.

August 1920