

**A LITTLE GRAY  
HOUSE IN FRANCE**

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A little gray house in France by Helen Davenport Gibbons

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**HELEN DAVENPORT GIBBONS**

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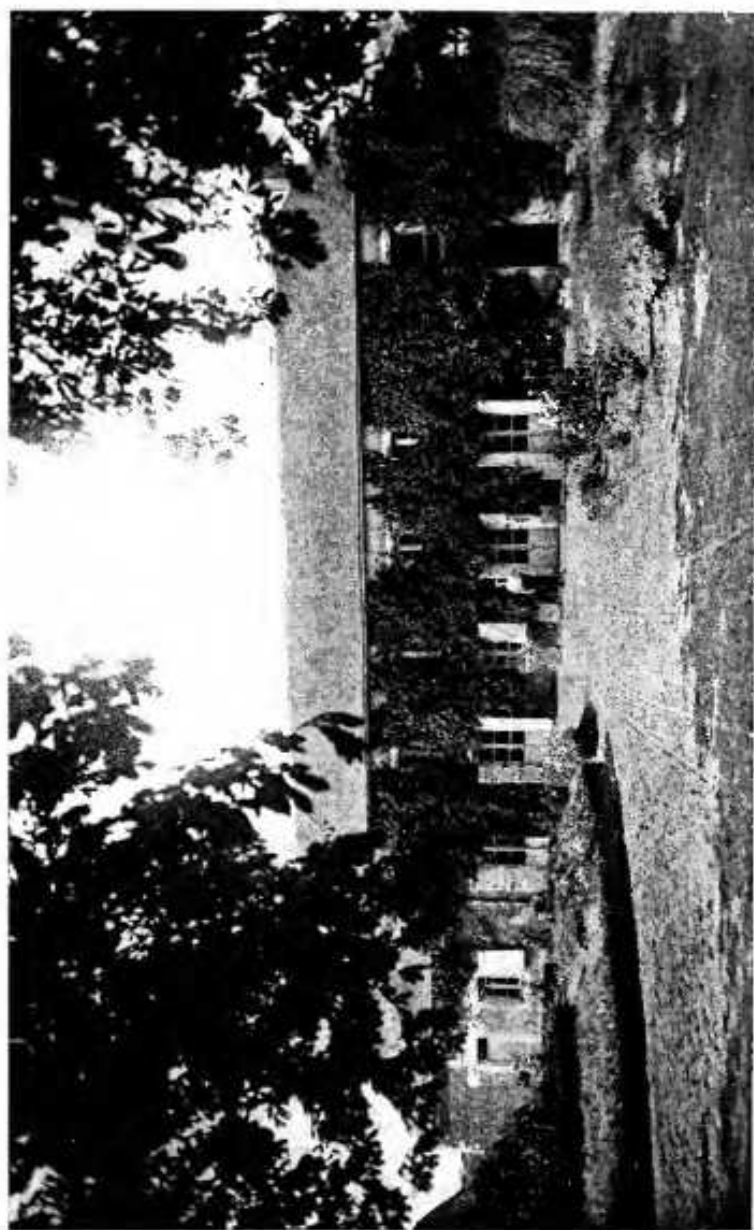
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# A LITTLE GRAY HOME IN FRANCE

• HELEN •  
DAVENPORT  
GIBBONS

**A  
LITTLE GRAY HOME  
IN FRANCE**



A  
LITTLE GRAY HOME  
IN FRANCE

BY  
HELEN DAVENPORT GIBBONS  
Author of "THE RED RUGS OF TARSUS"



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CP.

TO  
RODMAN WANAMAKER

## FOREWORD

A comfortable Turk, sitting on a dusty cushion making a rug, has eternity before him. He can stop when he likes to pull on the mouth-piece of his nargileh and dream. He dreams about the pattern he is weaving.

We are weaving to-day. The force that moves our shuttle is war. Ours is no simple frame like that of the Turkish weaver. And the pattern? So complicated that a plain body like me cannot make it out. My work is to tie up the loose strands I can see and prevent dropped stitches.

The boys know they are caught in the working of a vast machine. Some take things as they come and sing, "I don't care what becomes of me." Some think about what they see and wish they could understand. And some know that yesterday has slipped back of us as a tug drops away from a mighty battle-cruiser. They realize that the human mind

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## FOREWORD

can forget, and burn with longing to capture impressions as they fly through the days. But their work draws out from them all the energy there is. The pages of the note-book remain white.

In the study of my Little Gray Home in France is an old Brittany wardrobe. As boys toast their toes at the fire-place beside it when they stop for a breathing space, they tell me what they think and what they see. On a shelf are paper and pencil, and when I go there to get out chocolate or a new pair of woolen socks I scratch down hastily what my boys have said. When the bowls of coffee have been drunk, when the cigarettes have been smoked, when their names have been written in the guest-book and the boys have hurried out into the night to put their two hands on the steering wheel of the trucks, I light another candle, and write out the notes in more detail. Before the initial slow chug-chug tells me they have cranked and are getting under way, I have tied another loose strand.

This record belongs to the boys now and hereafter, now because they have given me the