

Well, the old Y. D. showed that they could drill if they want to and the more one sees of these Yanks the more proud he gets, so we should never mind about this service stripe argument. Put 'em in a crowd mix 'em up, and we will pick out a Y. D. man every time. How, you say? In his air, in his attitude of "who in the world has anything on us?" His face borders on the hard boiled, for he has been through seven hells, but seems to say "Treat me white, for I've learned my lesson in the Brotherhood of Men and I'll spot your first sign of deceit or insincerity," in his speech is a tone of seriousness, in his eye is the look of a **clean man**, a man who has been tempered and mellowed by scenes of the past year, his is a heart all loyal. "A man worth while." How do you like them for apples?

We have two men from our company looking after the sanitary train canteen, two men at the amusement tent, three men, Lee Hull, John Safko and LeRoy McKinnon with the Red Cross and several others on duty with ambulances with the 102nd Field Hospital.

Men in our company in the new bugle corp for the train are Ballard, Kwansniski, Pomeroy, Denson, Keane and Lilley. Yes, and Harry Monahan is back from the hospital and there go fourteen new men being transferred to other outfits and on the other side of the road are Capt. Durham, Lewis Hough, Ferris, Kenny and Osborne waiting for transportation, for they are going to school for a few months special course in this country and those men with packs are men going on permission. Ah, that's it, I knew there was something I was going to tell you. There are four classes of passes, first three, twenty four hour, three day and fourteen day permissions. You name the city you want to go to, but not to Paris or out of the country, give the reason for going and must pay your own bills. Fourth variety is a duty status pass of seven days to some leave area, and your Uncle Sam pays all the bills. There are some nineteen different leave areas already established in France, but most of our men have been sent to St. Malo. The trip by train is the only bad parts of the trip. St. Malo on the Brittany coast with all its deep sea legends, noted for its brave sailors and adventurous fishermen, appeals to many, for there one can buy anything most that you at home can buy, even to an ice cream soda and top it off with a beer if you wish. Among those who have been or now are at St. Malo are Martin Clarks, Stan Glover, Bill Larson, Jim O'Connel, Radikin, Walter Scott, Cooper and also Ben Butler and Billy West from Headquarters.

The trip I won out of the grab bag was to the Haute Pyrennes leave area in the Pyrennes Mountains, some five hundred kilometer trip, carry your pack, and leave trains are usually made up of second and third class coaches, sleep sitting up if you can. Twenty eight hour trip, each way, down through Le Mans, Bordeaux, Pan and then into the mountains as far as the train can go, which in this case was Pierrefitte, then by electric cars up into the mountains ten kilometers over winding roads, deep ravines, gorges, into and out of tunnels, finally reaching our home for the next week in the beautiful little town of Canteret, altitude 3,000 feet, nestled away on a plateau, surrounded on three sides by wonderful snow capped mountains and only ten miles from Spain. Some twenty five hotels that will accomodate about 2,800 persons, all were closed during the war but now open to men of the A. E. F. until June when the tourist season opens. We were given fine rooms, had a good feed, and mind you these same places set tourists back nine and ten dollars a day. Then we went out to give the Y. M. C. A. the once over, for in a leave area they look after all the amusements. In this town the Y had fallen in soft into a most palatial ex-gambling rendezvous. One enters the great dancing hall, then the cosy theatre and on into the reading room, then into the amusement room, all being luxuriously furnished, costly tapestry, paneled ceilings, massive chandeliers, the finest pool and billiard tables, and set off to one side and now robbed of its mechanism was a roulet table where twas said one of our well known Americans had lost a million dollars. Then you plunk down into some of the beautiful sofas and go most out of sight, like Denman Thompson in The Old Homestead, then on coming up for air, you cross your pedal extremities and try to assume the air that you are perfectly used to all these mere trifles and you dream on and on trying to make your self believe that you have rubbed elbows with millionaires all your life and wish John D. Stonefeller would drift by about now and just to show him who you were, you wouldn't pay any more attention to him than as though he was a guy peddling shoe strings on the corner next to Lyon and Grummans Millinery Store.

Then being rather tired from the trip, you go over and go to bed and the next morning you get up at four, put on your pack, go up to the top of the highest peak in sight and as you reach out for a souvenir to take home to the Comfort Club,—pardon me just a minute folks, there's a couple of guys butting in here and want to know where I think I am getting off with

that line of stuff, "Why, old man, they won't believe that stuff. They know you didn't get up before breakfast and no buglers down there." Well, now, you two duffers, wait a minute. Who is writing this letter any how? You two are dumb enough to be non coms, don't you remember that phrase "When you are in Rome, do as the Romans do." Well we are in Spain, and you must know their national sport.

Well, as I was saying, just as I reached out, I fell down and down and down and as I came to, I was on the floor, for two guys had rolled me out of bed, said it was eleven thirty and we were to mangle tout sweet.

Next day folks we actually did go up mountain climbing over the same route the Moors had come down, and it was beautiful scenery, winding paths almost straight up, cascades, deep gorges and beaucoup snow all drifted in the passes. We passed the frontier guards, on up past a little saw mill, with its up and down saws driven by water power, that had made the owner rich, but he was a typical mountaineer, even to his shoes made of an untanned hide and laced up with raw hide. Still further up we passed a cave where there was a stream of warm water bubbling up with a strong odor of sulphur to it and smelled for all the world like water that had had eggs boiled in it, but we didn't mind that for even that was more than we had been getting, but we didn't drink much for we didn't want to get lit away up there. Still further up was a little cabin, and for the life of me I don't know how they could ever build it away up there, unless perhaps Jerry Holmes sent it by mail. Anyway it had a sign out "Cognac du vente" we all looked the cabin over expecting to find one of those eighteen year old, blue eyed, golden haired damsels, fair of face and figure, usually seen in plays depicting such life, but there was none to be found. I wonder if they have been fooling us up at the Lyric? Lands, no, we didn't drink any cognac, cause a couple of mis-steps up there might mean that some Parson would be earning a dollar and a half in about two months by marrying our widow to the village cut up. Finally we reached the Pont de Espagne, which is a bridge about three miles from Spain. Here we could go no further, as snow had made avalanches very likely. Altitude here was 5,000 feet, no flowers have dared the snow, trees mostly conifers and the song birds have not yet come over from the South. Part way up can be seen herds of sheep and goats grazing together, while the shepherd that watches is usually a small boy or a very old lady

As you are enwrapped with all the grandeur, your mind goes back to some moving pictures showing similar scenes, with high priced actors making human bridges and daring jumps from point to point or over lover's leap, but with all their nerve you can't seem to make yourself remember of seeing many of them up where the audience was mostly of the Allemande variety.

Next day we tried hiking in another direction this time to an altitude of 4,000 feet to a barn where Queen Hortense of Holland, mother of Napoleon III, had stayed for two nights on being caught in a storm while fleeing from the French Revolutionists in 1807. We made the place and as we stood there getting our breath about a dozen little French girls with a matron or two went on up past us and maybe those kids can't climb mountains, they sure made us look cheap.

Down in the town were sulphur baths of all kinds, the water coming out of the hills at a temperature of 27 to 30 degrees centigrad so during the week I had one of each and believe me or not, after the second one I thought I felt a cootie bothering me and, as a searched, two of them actually flew out so saturated with sulphur that they looked just like lightning bugs.

The best day of all was the excursion down to the city of Lourdes, some fifteen miles away, I wouldn't have missed that for anything. First you pass through the center of the city, where there seems to be nothing but souvenirs for sale, then out past the beautiful parks with their fine statuary. Then in front of you looms up that massive Basilique and the Chaplain explains the beautiful legend of how little thirteen year old Bernadette Soubirone, a sufferer of asthma, had the vision while crossing the river Gave that she would be cured and that a church should be erected there, that sojourners from all the world could come there and derive benefit. Her mother thinking that perhaps her illness had affected her mentally, forbade her to go there, but on the following Sunday she was allowed to go again and at that time the vision was repeated. So the civil and religious authorities built a church, this was in 1858. But there is no need of my explaining this for most all have heard it. Then as we entered the lower part of the church there are thousands of testimonials of thanks for benefits received, some in English, some in French, all carved and gilded in the marble walls. Also upstairs it is the same and in addition large numbers of souvenirs from persons benefited. Everything one could think of has been sent in, croix de guerres, medals of all

wars, pieces of tapestry, banners, lace, pictures, swords, anchors, etc., etc., till the walls have come to look most like a curio shop. Outside the Cathedral in the grotto or cave are persons at prayer, many of them cripples having faith that they soon be cured, the same as the former owners of crutches, trusses, splints and plaster casts that hang from the rocks over head. Up on the hill on the opposite side is Le Calvaire, where on its winding paths are groups of life sized bronze statues, depicting the fourteen epochs in the life and crucifixion of Christ. At the eleventh station, showing the Roman soldiers spiking the feet of Christ to the cross is so real, that children have placed bouquets of violets upon it and fastened beads to his hands. Another thing of interest in this city is an old fort dating back to the time of Caesar, it has had the flags of four different nations fly from its tower. Also of interest is the railway up to the mountain where there is a large illuminated cross and outside the city a few miles is a grotto that can be entered to a depth of a full kilometer and is full of wondrous stalactites and stalagmites everything from an animal's head to a pipe organ and beaucoup icicles.

Now in closing let me say,

1. We hope to come home soon
2. We are not going to talk war
3. We shall do some talking at the next primaries
4. We are going to that Comfort Club Banquet
5. We hope that that Man's Man" General Clarence R. Edwards will be there.

And if we have gotten these leggins and heavy shoes off and donned a pair of pumps, we will be so light and happy that we will have to put some rocks in our pockets to keep from flitting up on the chandalier or out the windows. Then if the old Nutmeg State gives us a few months' pay like we hear some states are doing, here's one guy that's going to invest it in a big orchard and raise nothing but "pomme de terre frutes". Come out and see me.

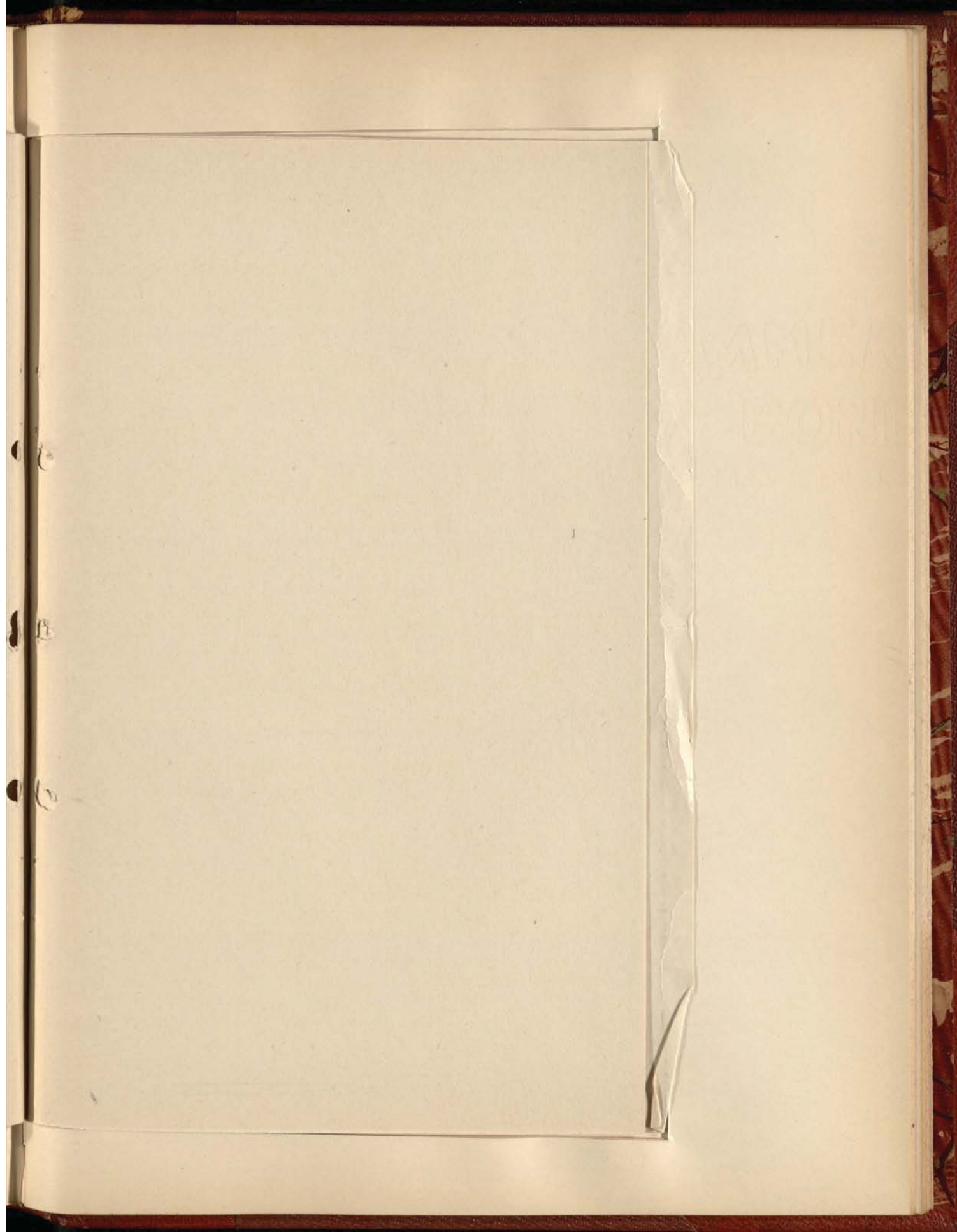
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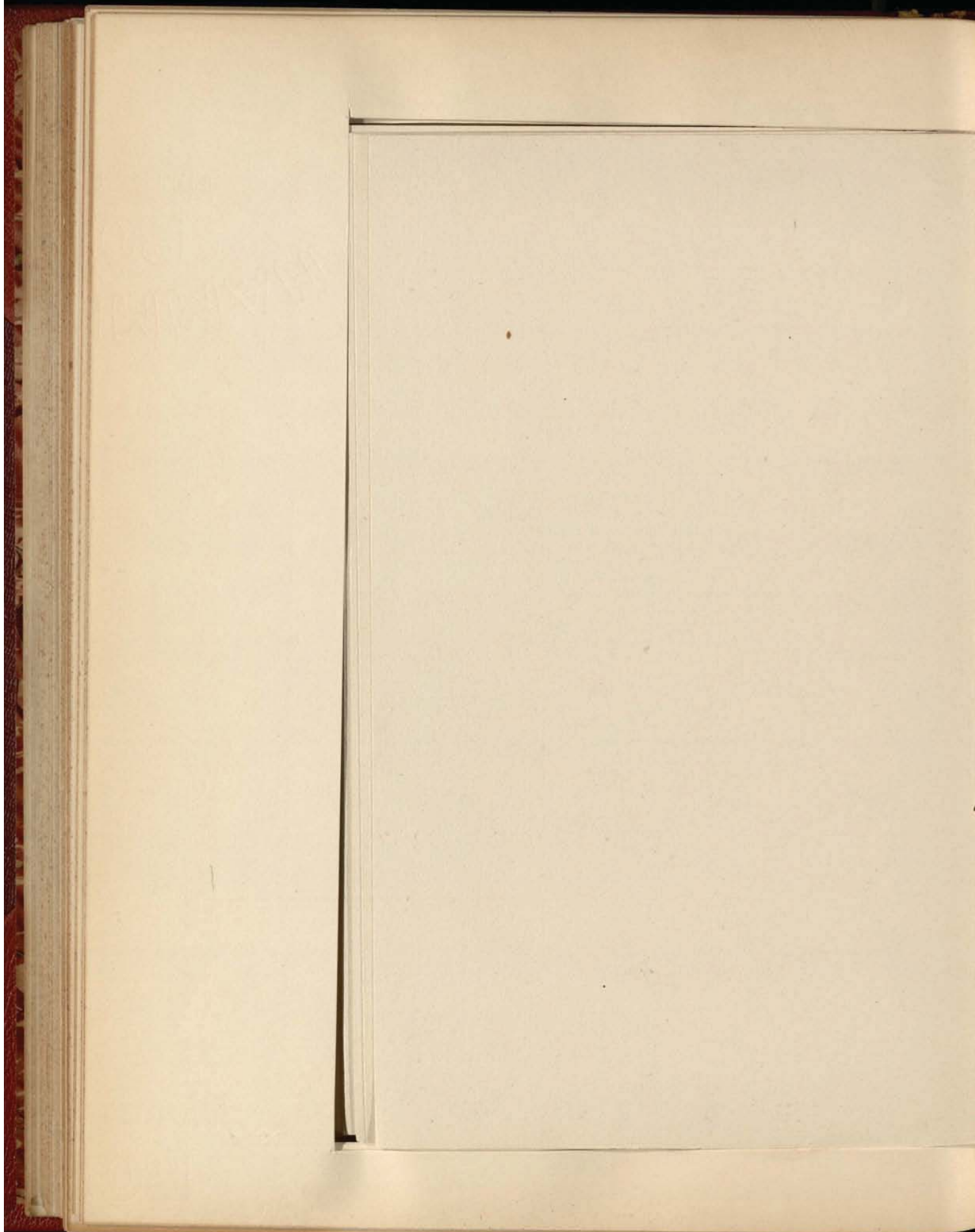
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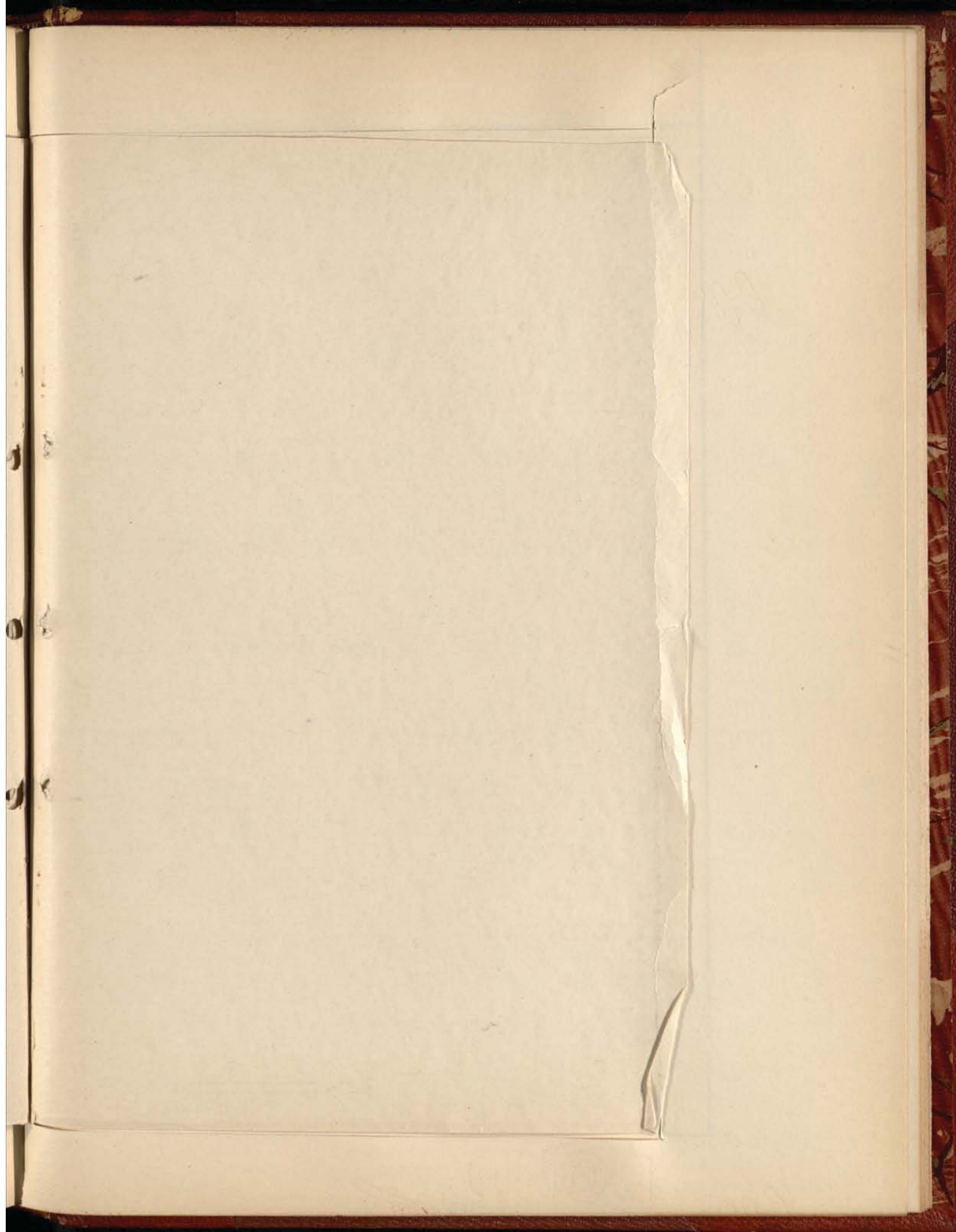
Secretary and Treasurer Foreign Chapter
Bridgeport Comfort Club.

Row de dow, have the mess sergeant add three carrots to the soup, here's Oppenheimer, Best, Etheridge, Turner and Pill back to our company.

Through the long and dreary days
At Liffol
And the days of Parlez-vous——
Chemin des Dames
Seicheprey, Xivray, Apremont
Northwest of Toul.
The Red, Red days of Hell
On the Marne
At Saint Mihiel and the Woivre
To the finish "On les aura!"
At Verdun.
Just to know someone was with us
Was "for" us all the time
Helped a lot!
Not one of us forgets it
And no one ever will.
And so——
We thank you most sincerely
Comfort Club!
Rad—A. E. F.







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