

# HEROIC SUZANNE SILVERCRUYS, BELGIAN GIRL

## Her Graphic Description of the Hun Invasion, His Brutality and Insolence

"My prayer for the young womanhood of America is that they may be spared the brutality, the insults, the anguish and suffering that have been heaped upon the helpless womanhood of my own brave Belgium by the cruel and despotic Hun during these three years of horror.

"That the fair young women of the United States may escape the advances of the smirking German officer, when they occupied my city of Brussels, were angered because our girls did not fall in love with them and then proceeded to force their attentions upon them.

"That the girls and women of America may not suffer the terrible fate that befell many of our young Belgian women, who were lined up in the city hall courtyards of their villages when the Germans arrived and then were dragged into captivity, when these officers walked along the lines, stroking their mustaches and pointing to any pretty girl whom they desired, with the remark, 'I take this one.'

"That the women of America may not see their young men slain by the thousands as the German soldiers here sent my mother and her sisters into the fields to perform the hardest of menial labor, their own sisters shot down in defense of honor.

"All these things have happened in my own unhappy Belgium—I have seen it all with my own eyes—and it is my prayer that you here in the United States may be spared all these things."

BY CHARLES W. DUKE.

THIS is the prayer of a daughter of Belgium, an exile from the barren ruins of her once fairy and happy homeland, who when she fled into Holland on her way to England and the United States, was told by her Teutonic tormentors "that she would never see her father and mother again; that she could never return to Belgium again, and that Belgium for all time would be German."

Listen, please, for a few moments to Suzanne Silvercruys, the 13-year-old daughter of a judge of the Supreme Court of Belgium, refined, educated, well born, speaking not in the cold, hated word of the paid propagandist, but in the sheer innocence of youth, telling the story of her own outraged Belgium that was ground to earth under the despotic heel of the Hun and today dares not call its soul its own—not until the allies have forced the invader back beyond the Rhine again.

Suzanne brings a message, not alone to the womanhood of America, but to all who read. She tells the story of a Belgium, and in the telling paints a startling picture of just what may happen to any other nation that lies dormant before the menace of the Hun German military machine. Like some modern Joan of Arc, Miss Silvercruys has survived the tortures of her crucified country in order that she may point the way now for all those hosts of humanity and civilization who are surging on toward the frightful glare of the battlefield—and on beyond it to the glow of world freedom.

Listen to Suzanne. She typifies all Belgium. What happened to her happened to all Belgium. What she has to say is more than the expression of an individual; it is the voice of all Belgium speaking through one of her fairest daughters.

Miss Silvercruys is now a guest in the home of her sister, the wife of Professor A. J. Carnoy, formerly a member of the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania. It was at this Philadelphia home that she told her story.

"War! You do not know the meaning of war here in America yet," she begins. "Your beautiful young women sing and dance and are happy and gay. Your young men are marching away into the camps, it is true; but they know not yet of war in all its horror. You are busy preparing, in every town and city—and it is all very wonderful the way your great country is going into this war—but you have yet to find out the true meaning of war."

"My prayer is that you may never know as Belgium knows; that you may never suffer as Belgium has suffered; that you will arise and end this terrible carnage before the Hun shall have arrived at your gates."

"I was but 16 years old that Summer when the storm broke over us. We were at our country home at Masseyok, not far from Louvain. In two weeks more I would have been on my way to Germany to boarding school. My brother was with the army—all our Belgian boys had to serve the Hun. He was in the front in September. There had been reports of trouble; many of the peasants came to my father and told him there were reports from over the border that Germany was preparing for war and would strike through Belgium. But we felt secure. Had not the neutrality of Belgium been guaranteed?"

"Then several days later came such news that there seemed no doubt the Germans were arming and would soon be upon us. My father hastened to Brussels and returned in a few hours. The government was still hopeful that the Hun would not be attacked and he tried to reassure the frightened people."

"And then, it all came like a bolt from the sky. At 4 o'clock in the morning we were awakened by a rouser on horseback, advising all the people that the Germans were coming and detailing each soldier to the mobilization point of his regiment. I remember first of all the drumming, the sound in the air and, looking up, we saw the airplanes of the German scout advance agent of the Hun."

"Can I remember the night that followed? You have pictured some of it here in America; mothers, sisters and loved ones hanging on the necks of their soldier boys, unwilling to give them up; my own mother hysterically rolling in the earth crying for her own boy. I can hear yet the voice of my father that awful first night of the war as he knelt at the window praying for my brother; just praying that God would bring him back so that he could look upon his face again. It is to him—whether his limbs were blown off or not, just so he could talk to him and see him face."

"You picture it—the retreat of Belgium before the advancing Germans? They came by thousands; yes, by millions later on. Before the Germans, alone the country young, straggled the peasant Belgian families, leaving their children and their belongings. All the time we could hear the dull rattle of the guns. The roads were lined with our own brave troops—many of them never to return."

"Suppose here in the United States the German had appeared suddenly at New York with a mighty army and navy. You had fled before them to France, and then to Philadelphia. On the way you had seen the German army fall back until you arrived in Washington. And then after many days the German took the city and occupied it. That was what happened to us in Belgium."

"Then we found what war was like. My brother's regiment was in the thick of the fighting at Liege. He was in 20 battles until he fell fighting bravely for Belgium. Recovering from his wounds he was taken ill with fever; but we got him home and, yes, he is alive today and in this country, where he still serves Belgium."

"In these days our boys found that war was like. My brother was moving to a night attack with his regiment at Liege against a party of German troops who had occupied a vantage point at the top of a hill. As they tramped along in the moonlight suddenly the German artillery let loose. Next to my brother marched one of his closest companions; he fell dying; my brother,

brother tried to evade them, but had to turn back finally and tell them that their son had been 'wounded.'

"So Belgium suffered in the horror of those days. I saw the flames of Louvain as we retreated later toward Brussels. I saw all the horror of that stricken city. Walking near the ruins of burned homes where the Germans were digging I saw them removing bodies of women and children. The German officers saw me and commanded me to move on. 'Remember, you have seen nothing,' they would say."

"In Brussels I wanted to do my bit, so I asked my father whether I could not be nurse in one of our hospitals. I was but 16 years old and he laughed at my earnestness. However, I persisted and won my way. He took me to the hospital and introduced me to the head of the place who laughed again, when father said that I was determined to be a nurse."

"There is nothing you can do here," said the superintendent of the hospital, "except to peel potatoes and wash dishes."

"All right," I said, "then I will peel potatoes and wash dishes; it is my bit and I am very happy to do it." And I did it until later, when I took up the more active work of nursing the wounded soldiers. Oh, our soldiers were brave men; fighting until they were overwhelmed."

"I remember one brave fellow whom we encountered in our flight from

terribly in the presence of death, bent over his friend, shaking his body and calling to him to speak. An officer stepped forward and shook my brother rudely and said roughly: "Go ahead now; you will see lots of that from now on." Eight days later my brother encountered the mother and father of that boy in a distant village of Belgium. They pressed forward through



Peeling potatoes and washing dishes was all there was for a 16-year-old girl to do in the military hospital in Belgium—but Miss Silvercruys did it gladly "because it was my bit."

the crowd to ask about their boy. My over his friend, shaking his body and calling to him to speak. An officer stepped forward and shook my brother rudely and said roughly: "Go ahead now; you will see lots of that from now on." Eight days later my brother encountered the mother and father of that boy in a distant village of Belgium. They pressed forward through

### SUITS, CONFORMING TO SPRING IDEALS OF WOOL CONSERVATION, SMART AND STYLISH

Tailors Resort to Ingenious Devices to Give Individuality to Spring Garments and at the Same Time Comply Strictly With Orders to Save More Precious Materials—Modest Colors Predominate.

FASHIONS for this Spring are inspired by stern necessity, not by the whimsy of the past. Years ago the other classic style periods, taken up by couturiers and manufacturers for modern exploitation. Materials must be conserved; that is the first and all-important requirement, and designers of Spring tailored wear have set their wits to work to evolve charming and attractive effects with the least amount of fabric possible. This ideal eliminated positively the following of any special style period of the past.

The new modes had to be made to order, so as to speak with conservation of fabric as a working basis, and simplicity the slogan. And very well the designers have succeeded. The new suits are as smart as heart could wish, and so cleverly have they been planned and cut, that one never thinks of conservation of fabric when looking at them; they nearly follow the new lines and express the slender silhouette and the ideal of simplicity and dignity that fashion now considers correct.

Jackets Short and Jaunty.

There are stuns and e-ton-variations; and there are saucy little box coats hanging in straight lines to the hips; and there are trimly elegant models with longer coats in pelium effect, though one observes that the long-tailed pelium seldom goes all around the coat—usually the length is at the sides and back, the front of the coat reaching

skirt is beautifully cut and despite its scant width is graceful and not suggestive of skimpy material. It falls just over the shoulder as all tailored skirts do this season—there is no evidence of longer skirts in street costumes. The straight little box coat is distinctly jaunty, opening at either side of the waistcoat or pale tan cloth which has a wide, shawl collar that turns back over the blue serge coat. This tan cloth waistcoat buttons at the center front with five fancy buttons, the V opening of the waistcoat coming very low and revealing an inner waistcoat, or chemise, of white striped material. These waistcoats make the short, open jackets very smart, and one may have several waistcoats to give variety to a single suit; one waistcoat for instance, of pale tan cloth, another of white pique, still another of satin embroidered in colored silks.

Of this type is a delightful little model of dark blue trice serge, a favored material for Spring suits. The



An exile from her outraged Belgium, her father and mother still "over there," Miss Silvercruys works here in America from 9 A. M. to 5 P. M. every day writing letters to soldiers, sewing, packing clothes, knitting—anything to help Belgium.



Upon entering Belgian villages the Germans would line up the young women in the city hall courtyard, smirking, smiling officers, stick their fingers in the girls' cheeks and offer all manner of insults. An officer would single out a pretty girl and tell her she must go with him and do his bidding. If she refused it meant certain death, or a fate worse than death.

and smiled as he told us bravely of what he was to do.

"Atrocities! It is all too horrible to recall, but I do know many many cases; and for everyone who doubts that the Germans were merciless and cruelly brutal in their treatment of the Belgians I can tell of my own experience—and I can produce my brother, who also was witness of many barbarous things."

"Such a thing as to find upon the person of a wounded German the finger rings of many Belgian women was not uncommon occurrence."

"Near my sister's home in Louvain was a family whose home was invaded by the Germans. Several of the officers were at dinner with the family, when suddenly there came a great clamor outside the house followed by shots and a battering upon the front door of the Belgian home. In front several wildly infuriated members of a German patrol."

"Some one in this house fired upon our patrol," thundered the leader of the German patrol.

"The Belgian stoutly insisted that

patrol and he must pay the penalty," continued the incensed German.

"That meant the house still maintained his innocence, and vainly begged his guests for some word in defense. But it was not forthcoming, whereupon the patrol officer ordered the man of the house to make ready immediately to accompany the patrol party. The Belgian pleaded for five minutes in which to go upstairs to see his baby before leaving. With a growl the German officer permitted him to go upstairs."

"In the meantime the rest of the party moved through the house helping themselves to whatever they wanted. After five minutes or more the Belgian's wife, uneasy over the prolonged absence of her husband, started to go upstairs. She was met on the staircase by a bayoneted German soldier coming downstairs."

"Have you seen anything of my husband?" the woman asked in her anguish.

"For a moment the German leered at her, and then burst into a frenzied laugh. He was an insane brute."

"Huh," he laughed, with a curse, "so that was your husband that I ran through with my bayonet. Hah, hah, hah, hah, and what good did it do? Your father had been killed as he bent over his child bidding it farewell."

"That was what happened in Belgium. There are many, many cases just like that—stories too horrible to relate. Thousands of homeless people; thousands of hungry people; thousands of suffering people. Some of your people are suffering here in America now because of the fuel famine. Multiply that many times for Belgium, where, for three years, there has been no food, except that provided by relief work or the meager allowance of the Germans."

"It has been the middle classes of Belgium who have suffered most. When the souphouses were opened and the American relief poured in the poor people waited immediately in those places and awaited themselves of the food. The rich could buy for themselves, but the middle class suffered because in so very many cases they were too proud to go forth in quest of food."

"The world will never know the outrages inflicted upon the women of Belgium by the Germans. They are stories too horrible to relate. The girls in Belgium have been made to do just what the Germans commanded of them. No work was too hard or too lowly. At the command of the German officers these girls of refinement from the best homes of Belgium were made to scrub floors, shine boots and do the general bidding of their captors."

"Many times when the Germans entered a village or town they would compel the girls to line up in the city hall square or courtyard. Smirking and smiling in their vanity, these Hun officers would walk along in front of the girls, clip them under the chin, stick their fingers in the girls' cheeks and offer all manner of insults. An officer would single out a pretty girl and tell her she must go with him and do his bidding. If she refused it meant certain death, or a fate worse than death."

"Let me recall a case in particular that happened in the city of Aerschot, above Louvain. When the Germans

for his words was shot down in cold blood before his daughter's eyes. The girl's captor started to lead her away, when her brother appeared upon the scene and threw himself upon the German officer. The latter calmly drew his revolver and shot the brother.

"Such is the story of Belgium. I could tell many, many stories of this kind concerning the outraged womanhood of Belgium; but they are rewriting stories."

"It was impossible to tell who was German and who was not. Particularly in the early days of the German occupation the German spies were all around us. One could not tell but that the person next to him was a secret agent of the German spy system."

"In Brussels, before the German army arrived, was a priest who came to our hospital. It was noticed that he did not make the sign of the Cross at mealtime. Confronted with the charge that he was a spy, the priest admitted the truth of the accusation. At another time two 'Sisters of Charity' aroused suspicion by the fullness of their garments. One of our party got very close to them and suddenly brushed against her with violence. In return came the squawk of a bird and the flutter of wings. The 'sisters' were spies who carried in the folds of their garments carrier pigeons to be released and carry back to German lines information concerning our army."

"So was Belgium harassed by spies and harried until the invading millions tramped over our nation and beat our smaller army by sheer weight of numbers. It is a long story of pain and suffering, a dark picture—one of the darkest ever painted in the history of the world."

"But the spirit of Belgium is unquenchable; after the war, with the help of the allies, she will arise triumphant, superb. Here is an incident that I witnessed in Brussels that well illustrates the true spirit of Belgium:

"In a streetcar traveled a war widow—a Belgian woman—and her son. He was a child of 6 years of pretty golden hair and fair-faced. After a bit there came into the car a German army officer, a Bavarian. Probably he was thinking of his own home, his own wife and boy; at any rate, the Belgian child attracted his attention. Watching the boy for a few minutes in admiration, the officer moved toward the child and patted him on the head. Bending over he asked the boy's name.

"Instantly the little lad straightened up, his eyes flashed and he turned a glance of withering scorn upon the Bavarian."

"Do not speak to me," said the child sullenly, sternly. "You—killed—my—daddy—and—I—hate—you." The officer drew back, of course, and at the next corner left the car.

"Beneath her mien of sorrow the true soul of Belgium still lingers. German will never bend the knee to Germany; she will never acquiesce.

"War means sacrifice. There is a part for every young woman to do—and it is more than knitting or emergency aid, or anything of that kind. We've all got to give up everything above Louvain. When the Germans

captured the place they compelled all the young women of the town to fall in line. Included among the girls was the daughter of the Lord Mayor of the town. A German officer singled her out and commanded that she fall out of her place in line. He told her to go with him.

"The father of the girl objected, and

otherwise somber tailleur—and most of the street costumes now are in dark or neutral colors, so that the brave women who have suppressed personal predilections in refraining from mourning garb because of its disheartening effect during wartime may not feel unpleasantly conspicuous when "dressing like everybody else."

Among the new fabrics put out by the inimitable Rodier this Spring in Paris are several stuffs showing mohair as a basis. Wonderful materials are these, soft and supple for draperies and with a handsome sheen and rich texture. Mohair flit is a new lace used as yet exclusively by Callot Soeurs. It is a most beautiful trimming lace, combining mohair and wool threads, and is used on gowns and tailored wraps.

Modern Trojan "Horse" Used.

Popular Mechanism.

History's ancient example of camouflage, the Trojan horse, has a modern variation of peculiar interest. During the fighting near Cronone on the western front, some time ago, a horse broke his traces and dashed across No Man's Land toward the German defenses. When near the edge of a first-line trench he fell. The French immediately set camouflaging artists at work fashioning a papier-mache replica of the dead animal. Under cover of darkness the carcass was replaced with the dummy. For three days observers stationed in the latter were able to watch the enemy's movements at close range and telephone their information to headquarters.

The Cricket on the Hearth.

Dickens.

A little figure very pleasant to me, she and the rest have vanished into air and I am left alone. A cricket sings upon the hearth; a broken child's toy lies upon the ground; and nothing else remains.

### "Bagasol" Is Newest Thing in Parasol Line.

When Closed, Device Is Used as Reticule of Attractive Style.

AN interesting new development in the parasol line is the "bagasol," a most amazing contraption which leads a veritable double life—like so many of the ingenious new devices that are two things in one. Closed, the "bagasol" is a very attractive reticule of striped and flowered silk which hangs from the arm, its top gathered into two celluloid bracelet rings. Most of the space inside is occupied by the rib, handle and folded-up cover of the parasol which discovers itself when a deft manipulation of the reticule turns it into a sunshade. Open, the sunshade stretches across its cover like an applied decoration, the celluloid rings hanging at either side of the parasol like swinging ornaments.

Infinite variety is shown in waistcoats for men with Spring tailored suits. Some are of immaculate white pique, some are of bisque or chamois-colored linen, others are of cloth still with wool embroidered motifs and dainty affairs, and beige wool and mohair and wool mixtures are reaching