

A sample of what we do



Calling one afternoon Miss Curtis and I found a very nice woman in a neat room in a fairly respectable house, living with her little girl about five years old.

At the opening of the war she had gone up to Carlepont at her husband's suggestion to be near him and to live with her mother and small brother. They had been caught there by the German advance and with five hundred other people had been forced to live in a grange or barn for many months sleeping on straw and eating nothing all the time every day but string beans. This was about four miles from Noyon. The Germans stole all the farm products. When they were sent to Noyon the mayor said we don't want these people there is nothing for them to eat, all right said the Germans line them up in front of the canons and we will shoot them, some were actually put before the french fire.

After they had been there some time said the mother, the Americans gave us some food. "Oh do you remember the little sugar" said the little girl to her mother, "and the little cakes". It was the Hoover commission

When the french came back part of the house in which they were staying temporarily was used by the government and soldiers were always going in and out. One day a soldier came in, - they hardly noticed, - but it was the husband and father of the child whom they had not heard of since the beginning of the war, we had walked about twenty miles that day and found them at last.

The mother and child came to Paris and stayed in the house where they lived before the war, the old mother, however went back and tried to live in her old house in the village destroyed by the Germans. The house was still standing and she and her little boy slept there but they had nothing. They lay on the straw with out blankets, they had no fire and no extra clothes. To them we sent blankets and clothes hoping that they would be able to stay and fix up their home.

Again we went to see a woman and her mother, also refugees. We found them in a room small but quite well kept in a good house. The old woman had a cataract in one eye but could see well with the other. The younger woman could not work away from the house because she had to look out for the old woman who got lost when she went out because she could not see and who often fell over. She did manage in the house for about a franc a day. She was strong looking and used to working in the fields. They had each had a house and garden before the war and had quite high standards of living. The old woman's husband had been run over by a wagon and the younger woman's had been drowned. They both spoke very nicely and seemed to be sweet old people. They had few clothes and were carefully saving the shoes they had got with the committees money. The lodging was expensive but they could not find any other. They were anxious to get back to the country if possible. They both seem to have felt keenly their suffering and seem to deserve help to keep their standards of living. They left home in August 1914 and went to Rheims then came to Paris in December. Son and brother stayed in Rheims.