

~~Then the boy ran away. I ran a few steps after him and called out:
"You wait—we'll meet again!"~~

SEPTEMBER 14, 1914

THE LITTLE cemetery is the burial place for our enemies. A few Russian prisoners who have died in transit and several spies who have been shot rest there. The Belgian husband and wife are also buried there. Frau Annchen and Grandma have asked me to show them the cemetery. As they were not on duty at the station today, we went there together. Gretel Wegner came with us too.

As we stood in front of the barbed wire fence, Grandma suddenly looked around her in a pained way and cried: "Now that beats everything! It's our own land!" We were really amazed. The strip of sandy ground that immediately adjoined the cemetery was the last piece of land that we owned. As the ground was infertile we had never been able to sell it. Our former coachman Schultz had once tried to sow potatoes there, but it was never worthwhile. Frau Annchen thought Grandma ought to be pleased. She would now certainly be able to sell the land to the town, for there would be many more enemies dying and needing graves. Then the council will soon buy additional land in order to enlarge the cemetery. Besides, the fine sand is good for burials.

Gretel and I broke off pine twigs and threw them onto the nearest mounds. We secretly decided to look after the Russian cemetery. It was to belong entirely to us. Gretel would even bring a little rake, for we had found a hole in the barbed wire through which someone must already have crawled. The wire was twisted and bent down outward; you could just manage to squeeze through. We would tie the rake up in the top of a pine so it couldn't be stolen. Then we would rake between the graves every week and lay little bunches of wildflowers on the mounds . . .

SEPTEMBER 15, 1914

WHEN WE had had supper, there was a ring at the door, and Frau Schön (the councillor's wife) was standing there in tears.

"God in Heaven, what has happened?" said Grandma. "Dear Frau Schön, come in and sit down on the sofa and calm yourself!" But Frau Schön couldn't speak at all and just cried louder, until we gathered that her youngest son, who was serving as first lieutenant, had been killed at Tannenberg. Just before that he had been awarded the Iron Cross, Class II. Councillor Schön had just gone to the family of his eldest son, so Frau Schön was all alone when she received the sad news. She had just hurried to Grandma in her misery because she knew of no other earthly comfort. Grandma and Frau Schön cried together for some time. Frau Schön kept calling out, "If only I knew just how he was killed! Whether he had to suffer much . . . and whether he remained whole, without losing any limbs." It was so sad that she worried herself as to whether her boy remained whole in all his limbs, when after all he was dead.

SEPTEMBER 16, 1914

LAST NIGHT I heard Grandma crying. She was crying so much that it greatly distressed me. The young First Lieutenant Schön is the first of our friends to be killed. I buried my head in my pillow so that Grandma would not hear me crying.

This morning there was a letter from Mommy. "Now my dear pupil Dahlke has been killed at Maubeuge," she wrote. "The best pupil in my singing class, a heroic tenor, who could have become a second Caruso! You can't imagine my grief, I go around as if I had a stone in my chest and another in my throat." That is the second friend! Mommy then goes on—"Thank you, dear Piete, for the first pages of your diary! How busy you have been! It is already almost a book! But you ought to see the war in a more heroic light—not so much of the 'down' side. It clouds the view of the greatness of an event. Don't let yourself be overwhelmed with sloppy sentimentality. Our enemies want to rob us of our country and our honor. Our men are defending both. And Siegfried Dahlke died the death of a hero! Never forget that!"

I certainly will not forget it. Indeed I cry, not because our soldiers

are dying the deaths of heroes, for there is something great about the death of a hero. I cry simply because they have died—just died. No more morning, no more evening—dead. When a mother's son is killed, she will cry her eyes out, not because he had died a hero, but because he has gone away and is buried. No more will he sit at the table, no longer can she cut a slice of bread for him or darn his socks. So she cannot say "Thank you" that he has died like a hero. (Please, please, Mommy, don't be angry!)

OCTOBER 2, 1914

A COLD, horrible day. The leaves on the trees are already yellow and red and in some places are falling. They will not last much longer, and then everything will be bare and empty. To follow this weather there will be a mild and dirty winter. We shall therefore be twice as busy knitting. When I have finished the second pair of mittens, I want to knit knee-warmers. The soldiers at the station have said that the rain-water in some of the trenches is half a meter deep. Wet through to the skin, the soldiers paddle in water as they fire. The damp penetrates right into the dugouts. There is much bladder and kidney trouble among the soldiers.

NOVEMBER 2, 1914

THERE IS NO chance of peace by Christmas. Otherwise they wouldn't be hustling us so much at school about Christmas. Every day they say: "Every pfennig for the soldiers." Grandma says we are making her bankrupt with the school collections. We now have a big Iron Cross made of wood hung on the wall at school in which we have to knock 1,000 iron nails. When all the nails have been knocked in, it will really be an "iron" cross. Every girl can hammer in as many nails as she likes. The black nails cost 5 pfennigs each, the silver ones 10 pfennigs. I have so far knocked in two black nails and one silver. It makes a bit of fun. The proceeds are devoted to war purposes.

The snow has gone again. It is raining. In the west all operations

are ruled out by floods. In other battle areas, too, the trenches are under water. Perhaps they will be unable to shoot at Verdun because of the dampness.

A soldier has written the following poem:

*Our hair grows like a mane
And we are strangers to soap
Our teeth uncleaned remain;
A change of shirts? No hope!*

*Our clothes are sopping wet,
Our stomachs often empty.
No wine or beer we get
Gone are the days of plenty.*

*We've really got mud in the eye,
Our shoes and our socks are afloat,
We've nothing left that is dry
Except for our humor and throats.*

*And yet this heroism
Does earn its special coin;
We display our patriotism
Through rheumatics in the groin.*

The soldier has certainly not exaggerated, although there is one thing I can't imagine—that their stomachs are often empty. For the best meat, best preserves, and all the best foodstuffs go to the army supplies. But in the turmoil of battle it must often be the case that the field kitchens cannot come forward. Then the soldiers' stomachs must rumble. Ours too will soon be rumbling, for many provisions in the home country have become still dearer and there is no longer as much meat. Everyone talks of scarcity . . .