



A Hilltop on the Marne: An American's Letters From War-Torn France

Mildred Aldrich

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A unique civilian's eye-view of World War I, depicting, through heartfelt letters from an American woman, a fascinating before and after picture of a French community in disarray

What looked impossible is evidently coming to pass . . . I silently returned to my garden and sat down. War again! This time war was close by—not war about which one can read, as one reads it in the newspapers, as you will read it in the States, far away from it, but war right here—if the Germans can cross the frontier.

A Hilltop on the Marne is a collection of letters written by Mildred Aldrich, an American expatriate who had bought a country farmhouse near Paris in the spring of 1914. Writing to her friends back home, she describes her idyllic life in Huiry, the minutiae of her farmhouse and her daily life. Ignoring the panicked pleadings of friends that she return to the U.S. As the political situation in Europe darkens, Aldrich stands firm in her decision to stay in France and her village, come what may. As war breaks out she looks out over Marne valley at the armies moving, hears the cannonade in the distance and watches as soldiers of all nations march down the lanes in turn. Aldrich's narrative goes on to describe the subsequent events of the war until America's entry into the fray and, returning to her narrative after the war, she described the process of rebuilding local life.

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