



We still could not find our mother. My father began to think that maybe our mother had gotten on one of the trains and left the station, but my sister and I did not believe that. One time we were sitting in a train already ready to leave, but we were crying very hard, and refused to leave without our mother. I was thinking if I would see my mother again. I was hoping that I would see her someplace in this large station.

We left the train in which we were ready to leave in. It began to move already, and we were hoping that our mother would not be on it. Anyway my father didn't think that our mother would leave the station. We were standing on one of the platforms, looking all around us. The "glass" station on top was shattered. Some places were bombed. All we hoped to find was our mother. We were holding our father's hand. All of a sudden I looked in one direction, and there I saw my mother among many people. I told my father where I saw my mother. She did not see us yet. I called her very loud, and she turned around. I was never happier to see my mother in my life. My mother told us that she could not follow us because there was an old woman in front of her, and she could not push her away. Anyway we were so happy to be together again.

By now I knew the name of the city. It was "Tournay" or "Doornik" in Flemish. During the bombardment I saw some bodies lying on the ground, but I don't know if they were dead, or if they were taking shelter from the bombs. We were so glad that we did not leave on that train before everything was quiet again. Now we decided to board a train again. Our father found out which train to take. Soon we boarded one of the few trains in the slightly bombed station.

Our mother was kissing us, being happy to be together. We were in a 3rd Class Train. As the train started out of the station, many people including many Belgian soldiers began to sing happy songs. It was good to be alive again.

Since we left our first train, we did not have our baggage. We were glad that we were all alive. Somehow we managed to get our large valise and some of the other articles back. It happened this way. As our train pulled out of the railyards of Tournai, we saw another train two tracks away from us. The other train was at a stop, but we were moving a little. In a few minutes we were a few hundred yards ahead of this other train. Then our train stopped. I was sitting right next to the window. In a short while our train had begun to move, not ahead but backward. I was wondering what was going on.





Now we reached the same spot as before, right next to the other train. I think the reason why we went backwards was that the track was probably bombed, so we had to return in order to go in a different direction. At that time I was still looking outside. I didn't make very much out of it, but I told my mother that " in the other train, just across from us was "that old woman" with whom we had shared our compartment when we arrived at Tournai. My parents looked toward them, and suddenly reminded themselves that our belongings must still be on top of the racks. Right away my father opened our compartment door, and ran across the 2 tracks into the other train. We were very excited, hoping that the train would not move. Anyway, in a minute my father was back with the large valise, and we had the door already open. It was really a coincidence. We didn't expect that to happen. We were trying to talk to those people inside the other train. Then our train started again. Now everything was perfect. I kept on thinking about Tournai and how lucky we had been.

There are many little details into which I cannot go. While on the train my father told us that we would probably be in France by early morning, so I told him to tell me for sure, the minute when we would cross the frontier. It was getting darker and it was time for my sister and I to go to "sleep". Our parents took a few blankets and spread them on the floor of the train. This way we were able to sleep, of course with our clothes on.

The next morning I woke up full of pep, and looked out of the window. It was very warm and bright out. I asked my father if we were in France, and he said that we were. As I looked at the fields ahead of me, I said to myself, "so this is France?"

We always had enough to eat, but not always did we have too much water. Often, my father and I got off the train when it had stopped to get some water in a bottle. Time went by rapidly. Many times when we stopped at a station there were "Red Cross" people giving the whole train food, and milk for the small children.

Once we saw "barrage balloons" in the sky. Someone said that German soldiers were tied onto them. Everyone was frightened when we heard of this. The balloons were not far away from us either. Later we found out that the balloons were British. This made us feel much better.

We were traveling through the midst of France. The train often stopped in the middle of fields. This allowed the people to get off the train and sit in the nearby field. It was already the end of May.

Days passed by very rapidly