



I saw that we were not the only people who decided to leave the train at this place. Everyone walked over the tracks toward the building. As soon as we reached it we put our packs down. Then some of the other people came toward us. There was an elderly woman with her daughter, 3 young girls, who were sisters, and a few other persons. All I did was look around. In a few minutes my parents called me to come over to them. There was a Frenchman who helped us and the other people to get our baggage into an old-fashioned car, which was a few feet away. He could not take all of us together at once so he was going to make two trips. There was no village in sight so we knew that he'll take us to the nearest village. The scenery was really very beautiful. In another minute we saw buildings, and in another second we found ourselves in front of a pond, in the market place of a small village. We all got out of the car.

We met three families and one man. Very soon my parents became acquainted with them. We all talked and looked around, then we were told to go to a house. As we entered we saw 3 lines of long tables with white cloths, and plates, and utensils. We were told to sit down. Then they brought us food which didn't taste bad. We finished and went outside again. A woman was directing all of us to where we were going to stay. It was slowly getting darker outside. A man approached us and said he would show us where we are going to live. We walked a short while until we entered a large gate. Inside the gate we met a woman who managed this part of land. She was a very friendly lady.

First she showed us to our "home", and after that she called us inside her house, which was a few yards farther down. It was very interesting to see, since everything inside was strange to us. It was a peasant's home. The woman did not have a husband. She said he was killed, but I don't think he was killed during the war. She had a small daughter, who could not talk nor could she walk. Her name was Marie-Therese. We were very satisfied with everything. The only one who spoke a bit of French was my sister Hilda. She was our interpreter. Hilda used to take Marie-Therese for a walk every morning. The French family had a dog named "Lucky", at least that is what I called him. The woman had about 8 cows and 7 oxen. Many chickens, a few large cages full of rabbits, much land on which she grew potatoes, strawberries, and vegetables. I believe I heard somewhere that she was the wealthiest peasant in Serignac. She gave my father bottles of wine. We became good friends, but we had a hard time expressing ourselves since my sister was the only one who spoke a little French, My sister, and Marie-Therese, and the dog, and I used to take walks almost every day somewhere in a wheat field. We often saw a wagon and oxen on a road, and instead of



walking all the way back, we rode into Serginac or near it.

I will always remember this day. My sister and I took a walk to the "Mairie" or the City Hall. We had seen a crowd gathering there. As I reached there I heard a radio playing the Belgian National Anthem and then the French National Anthem. By now most of the peasant's had gathered by the Mayor's office.

I was glad to hear our National Anthem. Then the radio announced that "France has lain down its arms". In other words they had surrendered. This was bad news to us just as well as the French. I ran down the road to our home, and found my parents there, and told them about France's surrender. We had escaped to France in order to be rid of Germans, and now, the country which we were sure would "teach the Germans a lesson" has just now surrendered. As I walked up the road toward the market place I saw many of the peasants crying bitterly. Their country had just "given up". We and the other refugee families began to think about where we were going now. We found out later that the armistice which France had signed, meant that Germany would not go beyond the "demarcation line". The two zones now became known as the "Occupied Zone, and "Un-Occupied Zone". Of course we were in the Un-occupied area.