

Condemned With Edith Cavell

Story of Louise Thuliez, Belgian School Teacher Who Was Saved from Death
by the King of Spain, Now Told by Herself

ON the morning of Oct. 12, 1915, an official announcement was posted in the streets of Brussels, capital of Belgium, by order of General von Bissing, German Governor General. It contained the names of ten persons upon whom sentences had been imposed for helping allied soldiers to escape from the territory occupied by the Germans. The first five named on the list had been condemned to death. One was Edith Cavell. The others were her four principal helpers: Philippe Baucq, architect, of Brussels; Louise Thuliez, school teacher, of Lille; Louis Severin, apothecary, and the Countess Jeanne de Belleville.

"The sentence against Baucq and Cavell has already been carried out," was the terse conclusion of the announcement.

It was read by the sister of Mlle. Thuliez, who had just reached Brussels in the hope of saving the Lille school teacher from death. It struck terror to her heart; perhaps she was already too late. Wild with anxiety she hurried to the Marquis de Villalobar, the Spanish Minister, who was looking after the affairs of the French in Belgium. He at once sent a telegram to King Alfonso of Spain, telling him of the dire peril in which Louise Thuliez lay, and asking him to intercede for her.

The Germans had set the time for Louise Thuliez's execution at dawn on Oct. 13. The evening before the Spanish Minister went to the Kommandantur and asked if nothing had been heard from King Alfonso.

"Nothing," was the answer.

"But I know he will wish to have Mlle. Thuliez's life spared," said the Marquis, the despairing entreaties of the school teacher's sister still ringing in his ears.

"Louise Thuliez will be shot at dawn," he was told. Seeing that further efforts were useless, he desisted. Finally, only a few hours before the time set, a telegram from Alfonso arrived. Villalobar dashed to the Kommandantur, showed it to the German authorities, and got a reprieve for the school teacher.

This and much more of absorbing interest are recounted by Louise Thuliez herself in the current issue of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, which has just reached this country. She tells of facing death at every turn while helping allied soldiers marooned in the occupied territory, of sending them secretly from one friendly house to another until they reached Miss Cavell at Brussels and were set by her on the last stage of the road to freedom.

The French school teacher was on a vacation at Saint-Waast-la-Vallée, near Lille, when the German invasion began. She began helping allied soldiers without delay. When the enemy's hosts swept past the little village on their way to the Marne they left behind six wounded Frenchmen, who were cared for by her and others. A few weeks later placards were posted throughout the invaded district warning the inhabitants to report the names and whereabouts of all allied soldiers left behind by the retreating French and British armies. Severe penalties were prescribed for all who failed to obey the edict.

"We resolved not to report our six wounded men," says Mlle. Thuliez. So they took them to the lonely house of a workman, where there was already an English soldier concealed, and left them there, arranging with a neighboring innkeeper for the food of their charges.

The Germans, full of suspicion, constantly instituted house-to-house searches; it was only with the greatest difficulty that the seven soldiers could be kept in safety. It became clear to their protectors that they must be spirited away somehow. Mlle. Thuliez learned that numerous other allied sol-

diers were concealed in the neighborhood of Maroilles and she made secret arrangements with a number of other heroic men and women, among them the Princess de Croy, for sheltering the men on their way to the Dutch frontier.

With another woman, Louise Thuliez set out one night at the head of the seven soldiers. They traveled only in the darkness, constantly fearing to be halted by German patrols. In the daytime they lay hidden in woods or in the houses of friendly people. The names of many of those who thus risked their lives are gratefully enshrined by Louise Thuliez.

The Princess de Croy put the fugitives in a huge salon at her château, and there they slept in beds for the first time in days. "It was a joy to see their faces," says their brave protectress, "some of them had been hiding in earth holes for six months."

On the day after their arrival the Princess had the men photographed in order to procure false passports for them. From her home they passed into Belgium; at Wasmes, they were sheltered by M. Cappiau, (condemned to fifteen years' hard labor at the same time that Miss Cavell was condemned to death,) and from there they passed into the hands of Edith Cavell. She it was who arranged for their escape into Holland by various means.

Louise Thuliez repeated this hazardous journey again and again, always at the head of convoys of prisoners, with the hope of escape high in their hearts. The route was changed according as the danger of discovery waxed or waned.

On one occasion fourteen Englishmen, hastily concealed in a small space behind a wall, stood for hours within a few feet of some Germans who had come upon a search for escaping soldiers. Later Louise Thuliez, with the aid of the Maillard family of Maroilles, several times smuggled escaping soldiers into a wood one by one and had them emerge as drivers of carts which had been procured for them. One man would lead a horse by the bridle, another would snap a whip over its back, and the whole group would walk up to the German patrols barring their road, who let them pass without suspecting anything amiss. Some distance beyond Mlle. Thuliez would await them and lead them on the next stage of their journey. Once a group of these "drivers" actually numbered fourteen, every one of whom escaped.

Having set practically all the allied

soldiers in her neighborhood on the road to freedom, the heroic Lille school teacher turned her attention to the Cambrai district and soon had established a string of posts between that city and Brussels, along which escaping allied soldiers flitted by night on their way to Edith Cavell's haven of refuge. All the time the efforts of the Germans to catch the indefatigable band redoubled and the work became constantly more dangerous.

On July 31, 1915, Mlle. Thuliez entered Brussels, the method of aiding escaping soldiers having been changed and it having been deemed best to have her go straight to Miss Cavell in the Belgian capital. She went first to the house of M. Baucq, the patriotic Brussels architect whose aid to Miss Cavell cost him his life. Next day the house was surrounded by German policemen, who arrested the proprietor and Louise Thuliez.

They examined her. It turned out that others of the band had been arrested and subjected to examination; it was impossible to know what each had admitted, what he or she had kept back, so that soon the Germans had a tolerably complete story of the band's activities since the beginning of the war. Throughout the examination, says Mlle. Thuliez, her captors kept repeating with infinite satisfaction the word "Endlich!"—(at last!)—showing of what vital importance the capture of Miss Cavell and her helpers was to them.

In all, thirty-five persons were arrested. After several weeks of imprisonment Louise Thuliez was taken, on Oct. 7, to court. The attorney for the prosecution was one Heinrich Pinkhof—"a miserable enough fellow," Mlle. Thuliez calls him, "highly flattered at being concerned in so important a case." She sat with Edith Cavell, Baucq, Cappiau, and the Countess de Belleville. The attorneys for the defense had had no chance to talk with their clients nor even consult the documents in the case.

On Oct. 11 Louise Thuliez heard the sentence of death pronounced against herself, Miss Cavell, Baucq, Severin, and the Countess de Belleville. Baucq tried to speak.

"No use," he was told. "There is nothing more to be done. It is too late."

Louise Thuliez then said to Edith Cavell:

"Will you not ask for mercy?"

"No," answered Miss Cavell, "it would be useless. There is nothing to be

done. I am an Englishwoman." A German officer came up, spoke a few words to her, and led her away.

"We were never to meet again," says Mlle. Thuliez.

The school teacher was confined that night alone, but, after asking her jailers why she should not have the company of those condemned like herself to die, she was allowed to go into the cell occupied by the Countess de Belleville. It was next to that of Miss Cavell. The school teacher's plea to be allowed to be with the Englishwoman that night was refused. A German chaplain told her that there were two others with Miss Cavell. "Who the two were I have never learned," says Mlle. Thuliez.

In the morning Mlle. Thuliez asked the officer of the guard about Miss Cavell. He hesitated an instant, then answered: "She is at the Kommandantur."

"That hesitation of his was a revelation," writes the Frenchwoman. "I understood that our heroic and unfortunate comrade had been shot."

Then came hours of dreadful anxiety for the school teacher. Her sister, who had just arrived in Brussels, was not allowed to see her, but managed to smuggle in a message: "Courage, confidence!" it read.

At last came the news of the King of Spain's telegram and of the reprieve. But not until Nov. 12, exactly one month after the execution of Edith Cavell, was the Kaiser's commutation of the death sentence passed upon Louise Thuliez, Louis Severin, and the Countess de Belleville read to the three prisoners.

The troubles of the school teacher of Lille were, however, far from finished. From Brussels she was taken to Cambrai and there tried for her activities in behalf of the allied soldiers who had been concealed there. Another death sentence followed, but, in view of the King of Spain's previous intercession and the Kaiser's grant of clemency, it was commuted to penal servitude for life.

She was then taken to Siegburg, where she met her old associates, the Countess de Belleville and the Princess de Croy. The jailers treated the women at Siegburg with brutality, but nothing could break the spirit of these heroines. Once they were ordered to help make hand grenades to be used against their countrymen. They protested over the heads of the prison authorities to the men higher up at Cologne, and carried their point.

Little by little news of the German reverses at the front trickled through the walls of Siegburg. Among the jailers there were whispers against the Kaiser and his chiefs. And then, at last, there was a loud cry in the prison hall, one day, and soldiers burst in, and shouted:

"Mesdames, dress yourselves. This is a republic. You are free." And they ran from group to group of the prisoners repeating:

"Dress quickly. At 6 o'clock your train will leave for Cologne."

The prisoners dressed for the journey in a daze. All the way to Cologne, all the way from there to the Belgian frontier and beyond it, they could not believe their good fortune; they felt sure, every minute, that they would be stopped and hustled back to their cells.

But nothing happened to wake them from their dream. By slow stages Louise Thuliez passed through Belgium, along the routes where she had so often heroically led her wounded and often starving charges, until at last she was back in her native Lille.

"There," she writes, "the joy of meeting my loved ones again, together with the intoxication of victory, soon consoled me for the sufferings of those four years."



Signal Corps, U. S. A.
LUXEMBURG GIRLS WATCHING OUR DOUGHBOYS ON THE MARCH.
According to an Officer at a New York Recruiting Station, About 75 Per Cent. of the Men Re-enlisting Are Applying for Overseas Service and Are Sorry They Had to Come Home for Demobilization.