



Edith Wharton: War Correspondent

Student Name _____ Date _____

Chapter 1: The Look of Paris

- What language does Edith Wharton use to describe Paris on the eve of World War I? What is her perspective in this piece?

- How can she tell that war is imminent?

- How do the French react to the news?

- How do they prepare for war?

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Chapter 2: In Argonne

- What does Wharton mean when she says that war is a “paradox”?
- Who are the éclopés?
- Where does Wharton first see a battle between the French and the Germans?
- What are the “Seventy-fives”?
- How does the Red Cross handle the overflow of troops and wounded?

- How does Wharton's visit to Verdun differ from her visit to Châlons?

- What does Wharton see between Bar-le-Duc and Vitry-le-François?

- What are some of the war-zone restrictions Wharton encounters? How do they impact her travel?



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Chapter 3: In Lorraine and the Vosges

- What are the “gnat, the cuckoo, and the cannon”?
- What does Wharton find in Gerbéviller?
- Where do people take refuge in Pont-à-Mousson?
- What happened at Ménil-sur-Belvitte?

- Give some examples of the simultaneous “beauty” and “ruin” Wharton describes as she travels.

- What do the “Ambulant Artisans” make?

- What does Wharton say about her first visit to the “bowel” of the front-line trenches?

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Chapter 4: In the North

- What is the “river of war”?
- What does Wharton see in the moonlight at Cassel?
- What is the relationship between officers and soldiers in the North?
- Wharton states that “Ypres is majestic in death, poor Nieuport gruesomely comic.” What does she mean?

- What does Wharton encounter in Dunkerque?

- How does “the unbreakable human spirit...reassert itself,” in Wharton’s view?

- Why does Wharton compare a Belgian villa to the Statue of Liberty?

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Chapter 5: In Alsace

- What language does Wharton use to describe the Cathedral of Rheims?
- What do the residents of Thann do to entertain themselves during wartime?
- Who are the "Chasseurs Alpains"?
- How do soldiers spend their time in the "trappers' huts"?
- What are the "four phases" of sound Wharton hears in the cannon fire?

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Chapter 6: The Tone of France

- What is the “tone of France” leading up to the war?

- How does this change as the war begins?

- What is the attitude of the French fourteen months into the war?

- What does Wharton say are the “proofs” of this national tone?

- What “gifts” help the French “be what they are”?
- Wharton says the French “hate militarism.” Why?
- Why do French women make good war nurses?
- What does Wharton say the French are really fighting for?