

FRENCH CHILDREN THANK AMERICANS

Miss Anne Morgan Tells of a Real Christmas Some- where in France.

GIFTS FROM SCHOOLS HERE

Toys and Wearing Apparel Made Day Happy for Little Ones Who Had Forgotten How to Play.

Miss Anne Morgan, who recently returned from France, where she has been aiding the work of the American Fund for French Wounded, has transmitted the thanks of French children and the workers for the fund in France to the thousands of school children in this country who contributed to the Christmas Fund which was raised by the organization. Miss Morgan wrote to Miss Elizabeth Perkins, a local official of the fund, as follows:

One of the special messages of thanks that Mrs. Dike asked me to deliver in America from the civilian division of the American Fund for French Wounded at Blerancourt, was to the school children who did so much to make possible our wonderful Christmas party. Unfortunately, I am to be here for such a short time that it will be impossible for me to go from school to school. May I therefore ask whether you could express through the teachers the deep appreciation and gratitude of the children of our region who had on that day the first absolutely joyous Christmas they had enjoyed for three years?

How I wish it were possible to show a picture of the 500 children as they poured out of the military camions sent to collect them from our twenty-eight villages. For days before we had been unpacking the precious things sent over from here. The supply was such that every child could have either a cap, stockings, or shawl, and several toys. The army lent us two military barrâques. In one we had a moving picture exhibition with Christmas films, and from the shouts of joy and laughter from the audience it would have been impossible to recognize those children who a few months previous had forgotten how to play.

After the moving pictures we all moved over to the other barrâque, the walls of which were literally covered with greens, holly, and mistletoe and which had a wonderful tree at the end, covered with electric lights. On one side was a large American flag and on the other the French. On long tables down each side of the room were spread the toys, garments, and candy and after a short talk by the military Chaplain the children passed down one side of the table and up the other having the joy of choosing what they wished; at each table were two or three members of our unit who gave the children their selection. It was really a wonderful thing to watch and a revelation to see their faces as they passed. It was very cold and the ground was covered with snow, so before sending them back every child had a cup of hot chocolate and a piece of cake which was served from one of the wonderful military kitchens which one of our kind American friends had sent to us.

The whole party was essentially the gift of the children in America to the children in France, and the message has gone out broadcast and will bear fruit for many months to come. This message is such an important part of our work that we are all exceedingly anxious that it should take even more permanent form, and Mrs. Dike has wondered whether it would be possible to start any general movement in this country by which the children in America could help us form small libraries in our many villages. Under the present conditions in the devastated provinces the schools that have been reopened are working against every disadvantage, as it has been impossible to secure textbooks, far less reference or story books of any kind. These books, of course, can only be bought in France, so we have already started a small fund for this purpose with some money received from some schools in Ohio, and have about 100 books. Each teacher becomes the head of a small circulating library and distributes the books in his charge, according to the needs in the community. No words can say how deeply they are appreciated.

It has been announced that the Fund would carry on its reconstruction work and its work in behalf of the French children, together with its work for the French wounded. Officials of the organization denied yesterday there was danger of serious dissension in the organization over the opposition of some branches in other cities to the use of funds in reconstruction work and work for French children, as well as for the wounded.