

THE DIGGER

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RUINS.

They sat at supper in a shadowy room,
"But you," she said you are an artist,
you
Deplore this tearing down of all our
dreams!
You know that war is shattering the
world,
But beauty falls in ashes at our feet."
He looked at her, full-blown and glori-
ous.
With flaming eyes and tossed, abund-
ant hair,
"How I abhor this hour!" he said,
"I never thought the world would come
to this.
Yet always through the years, the
flame of war,
Like a long crimson serpent, has crept
and crept,
And poisoned all the beauty that we
built.
The Parthenon was stricken by the
blast
Of cruel cannon in disastrous days;
Yet in the moonlight it is wonderful
In a strange way the mind can never
name.
And strong barbarian hordes tore down
that dream,
The Colosseum; and Romans wept
Yet it is lovelier on soft summer night
Than ever it must have been in the
young years.
And Rheims—it shall be beautiful
With a new meaning through the cen-
turies,
Hushed with its memories of this dark
hour."
Her face grew grave, "You dare to tell
me this!
You say a ruin is more wonderful
Than the pure dream the architect once
dreamed?"
"I cannot answer. But all I know;
Men rushed across the seas to catch one
glimpse
Of fallen fames and tottering columns,
Yes
They fare through desolate places that
their eyes
May rest at last on crumbling marble
... See!
Those men and women rise—and we
must rise
To pay our tribute to that noble man
Who has come back, a ruin from the
war."
She turned. There was a soldier at the
door;
And one sleeve of his uniform hung
limp,
And there were many scars upon his
cheeks.
"A ruin!" the artist whispered. "Yet
he seems
The only whole and perfect man I
know!"

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