



The
Children's
Front

*The True Story of an
Orphanage in Wartime France*

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ISBN-13: 978-1-957651-29-3

Library of Congress Control Number: 2023902377

Designed by Rachel Valliere

INDIE BOOKS INTERNATIONAL, INC.

2511 WOODLANDS WAY

OCEANSIDE, CA 92054

www.indiebooksintl.com

Preface

Let me tell you a story about a friend of mine named Seymour Houghton.

This story is a true one about an orphanage—Refuge des Petits—in France during World War II. Here, a privileged American man struggled to establish a Refuge for desperate children. This Shelter provided needy, displaced youngsters with a worthy place in the world—while he found his own.

The Refuge would flourish. It played a leading role in what became known as the Children's Front. This Shelter influenced hundreds of youths who would have floundered if not for their blessed good fortune in finding their way to its wooden gates that never closed.

It is a tale that is both sad and full of joy. It describes the direst of circumstances, of death and destitution. It recounts the barbaric treatment that one human can inflict upon another—for no reason other than living on different sides of a national border, or for having a different skin color, or for speaking a different language, or for worshipping at a different church, or for coveting the possessions of another individual or country.

At the same time, the story contrasts these circumstances