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LE MANS FREED.

In the tense days following the drive across Brittany, a breathless world hears that American troops have wheeled towards Le Mans, key to the Paris Road. Can they get there? These pictures give the answer. And what a welcome the town gives its liberators. The inhabitants can't all express their feelings in English - but lips were not only made for talking.

The American advance was so swift that the enemy were given no time to stand and fight, and so Le Mans has been spared the horrors of becoming a battlefield. The undamaged buildings show that here liberation has not meant devastation as it has, all too often in the Normandy fighting. And so there is no shadow to darken the joy these French men and women feel at their sudden deliverance.

Collaborationists, who tried to gain favour with their country's oppressors when the Nazis seemed all-powerful, get what has been coming to them for four long years. Their jack-booted protectors have gone, leaving them to the mercies of their fellow-citizens.

French money takes some getting used to after dollars and dimes, but another French institution - Vin Rouge - goes down very well. The toast is - "Paris and Victory".