
FIGHTING THE HUN
FROM
SADDLE AND TRENCH





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Fighting the Hun
from
Saddle and Trench

by

Sergt. Major William R. Jones
Known among his comrades as "Lucky Bill"

No. 59 of the
Royal Canadian Dragoons



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“Each honest soul your memory shall revere,
And pay a tribute of a tender tear.”

To the memory of my Comrades of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, who have fought the good fight and now rest in peace, some before and some behind the battle lines in France; and to my own little son, whom I trust and pray may live to see and enjoy the blessings that will come to the world because of their devotion to duty and life's sacrifice, this book is reverently and hopefully dedicated.

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CHAPTER I

A VOLUNTEER

“Why should I war without the walls of Troy?”

—*Shakespeare*



WHY! Why are so many men ever ready at the sound of bugle and beat of drum to drop peaceful pursuits, forsake home and family and the association of old friends, to meet the dangers and discomforts attendant in a war upon their fellow beings?

That love of country and devotion to its peace and welfare, called “Patriotism,” actuates one’s conduct, and should, at a time when its security or honor is at stake. Then men should, and do, actuated by such feeling, forsake home and loved one’s and all else to serve their country. Men will also take up arms against their fellows when the safety and honor of home and family is endangered. That, also, is but natural, but why did I, and why do others, not imbued at the time with such feelings nor confronted with such calamity, take up arms and go to war? It must simply be to satisfy a desire or a feeling for adventure and excitement.

In the year of the outbreak of the pending world conflict, neither Scotland, the land of my birth, nor America, the country of my home, were seriously endangered, at least I entertained no such feeling, and neither was there even a remote possibility of home or family being attacked or injured, and surely at that time, our present enemy had not offended me personally, by word or act, so why should I have desired to "war without the walls of Troy?"

I have but one answer, so I must confess, I fear, that the motive which took me into the conflict was none other than that inspired by love for adventure, and I am willing to admit that I was at the time one of the class of whom Macaulay said: "He loved excitement and adventure." So I forsook home and its comforts to enter what has proved, to my satisfaction, to be a noble service, a service in the interest of the life and freedom of the civilized people of the world,—a war for humanity, and nothing less.

Historians will in the future write of this war, but they can only give statistics, record dates and events. They can never portray the feelings of the men engaged, the spirit that impelled duty, the anguish and suffering of those engaged in doing their bit to make the world fit for life. They can never know of nor give proper credit to, the countless heroes who have given up and will give up their life for the cause. This part of the war's history

can only be told by the men who too have fought, and have survived to tell the story, through speech and pen, and then it cannot be and never will be fully portrayed to the mind or heart of those who hear and read.

My purpose in writing something of my part and experiences, and that of my brave comrades, in this Titanic conflict, is to add my bit to the literature, if this may be called such, of the war, and to record something of the history that is now being made, and in doing so shall relate facts truthfully, and nothing but actual facts, and so I now relate:—

“Don’t be a fool, Billy! Why, this war won’t last more than three months. Why throw up a good position for the sake of trying to kill a few Huns?” Such was the advice volunteered and the question asked by one of my friends in August, 1914, when I suggested to him my thought of enlisting for service against the Germans in the war just started.

To this well intended but, to my way of thinking, ridiculous advice and foolish caution, I replied: “Don’t talk so foolishly. Why this war will last for a year at any rate, and I, for one, am going to take a chance of getting over there and into it and seeing the fun.” My friend thereupon pronounced me a “bigger fool” than he had ever before thought me. I replied to this compliment by saying, “Oh, yes, Roy, you may not be far wrong, and in fact you may be quite right in your opinion of me, for I

guess, after all, I am all kinds of a fool, but it strikes me also that this is a fool's war, and if I am what you declare me I should be just the one to make good in it."

It took me about a week, after this conversation, to make up my mind fully on the subject, but the afternoon of September 9th found me in the office of Mr. Lockrow, my employer. I had received and had in my possession at the time, a letter from a good friend then enlisted in the regular forces of the Canadian army, and it was this letter that persuaded me to end my career for the time as a railroad employee in the freight service of the New York Central Railroad Company at Amsterdam, New York, and get into the fray.

The letter advised me that if I wanted to see action now was the time. "Come on, Bill," he wrote. "Just the thing you'll like. I'll be expecting you soon, so get a move on, for we leave Canada any day now for France."

"Well, Mr. Lockrow, I'm going." Thus I informed my employer after having decided to enlist. "Going where, Bill?" he asked. "To France to fight," I replied. "Do you mean it?" said he. I replied I was never more serious on a matter before in my life. He immediately struck me as a good sport, when he said, "Well, Bill, if you have so decided, then good bye. I hope you make good and come back all right."

"Oh, I'll come back; I have no fear about that, for they can't kill me," I answered.

Eleven-thirty that night saw me at the railroad station accompanied by my wife and Uncle Roy Loder, who came with me to see me safely started and to bid me good bye.

I felt that they did not seriously believe the parting was to be for long. I am sure they expected me to lose some of the enthusiasm once I was away and that I would be back home in two weeks or less. Little did they know or did I then realize that three years and a half would elapse before we saw one another again.

I can remember the night of my departure well, looking back now after the lapse of those long, somewhat weary and troublesome years. I wonder, if I had really known that night what was to confront me, what hardships and dangers I was to suffer and face, would I have had the nerve or the courage to go. I feel now if, while waiting for my train, the future could have been revealed to me I should have turned back before the departure of the train. I was blissfully ignorant, however, and so I kissed my wife good bye, said farewell to my uncle and told him to look well after Billy, Jr., my little son of thirteen months, and jumped aboard. The train was now leaving the station and I was being carried away with little serious thought of what the future held in store for me.

I was not on the train long before I fell asleep and when I awoke it was morning and I found myself in Montreal. There, upon inquiry, I was informed I should have to proceed to Quebec, and thence to Valcatier Camp. Everyone else seemed to be going the one way—to Valcatier—and the one thought in the mind of all was—War.

I reached Quebec about eight o'clock that night and went at once to a rooming house and engaged a room. The following morning saw me up, bright and early, and on my way to Valcatier, not even stopping for breakfast.

As the train came within sight of the camp I had my first great surprise and my first real serious thought of what was likely before me—War. The train passed on through miles and miles of tents, it seemed. The sun was shining and the great white city spread out before me populated with men only, was surely a wonderful and impressive sight.

All was activity. Everyone was busy. Wooden houses were being built, roads constructed and everything being done to provide a place to receive and quarter the soldiers. The impression this scene made caused me to remark to myself, "I guess I am in for some fun, all right, for all this bustle and preparation means the war must last for a year anyway."

The train at last reached its destination and all were ordered out. I was now at a loss as to which

way to turn or to whom to report. After a moment's thought I decided first to find my friend, Bill Tamlyn, of the Royal Canadian Dragoons. In this I had less trouble than I expected.

I was directed, upon inquiry, to the place where his regiment was located, and further inquiry sent me to the sergeant's mess, where I found him working. (Bill was never any fool, and so could be counted on to know where one could live well, and I was not surprised to find he had managed to attach himself to this department.)

I said I found him working, which was true, but at the time wholly in his own personal interest, for he was busy making away with sliced tomatoes, French fried potatoes and cold meat in the way only a healthy, hungry man could eat. I could not at first disturb him in this enjoyable as well as necessary occupation, and so stood for a moment, unobserved, watching him. Finally I said, "Hello, Bill." He looked up and immediately a smile lit up his face, and when he fully realized it was I, he gave one yell and made a jump, upsetting the table in his excitement, and there we were, hugging each other like two silly school girls.

When he could speak he said, "You sure are a sight for sore eyes." I returned the compliment, said I was glad to be there, answered all his questions, sensible and foolish, and then was reminded by my stomach that I had not yet had my breakfast, so I remarked that I was pretty hungry.

“Nough said.” I was immediately seated and soon satisfying my hunger. How I did enjoy that breakfast, and I am able to say yet, that no more enjoyable meal was ever eaten by two happier persons than was that first breakfast Bill and myself partook of that morning at Valcatier Camp.

During that meal we talked of the future and passed a pledge to stick to each other through thick and thin in whatever might lie before us. So strong was our friendship then and since that that vow has been religiously kept. Together we have been through all that I shall relate here. I shall always thank God for having had such a faithful pal through the many days we have lived since that first breakfast together at Valcatier.

CHAPTER II

ENLISTMENT

There was born at Valcatier a new family—all brothers,
Pledged to serve humanity;
To give their lives, if need be,—for others.



MY RECORD for quick enlistment, I believe, stands out as one of the finest things in all my career as a soldier. Something of my feeling in that connection is displayed in a letter written to my uncle immediately upon my entry into the service.

“Valcatier Camp, Quebec Prov.

9—12—14

“Dear Old Roy:

“I arrived safe in camp and hold the record for quick enlistment. In about five minutes I was a soldier of H. R. M. King George V., of Great Britain and Ireland.

“Well, old man, you can see by the heading of my letter that I am in for some fighting. If we get there our machine guns can fire seven hundred bullets per minute—going some, eh? Well, that’s us.

I think we leave Tuesday for the front, I hope so, anyway.

“Say, it’s great up here. Nothing but tents and men. I can hear the boys over in the Y. M. C. A. tent singing ‘Throw Out the Life Line.’ That’s what they are singing now. Over 30,000 men and 60,000 horses and not a drunk among the men. No ‘booze’ in camp. Everybody happy, except those who didn’t pass the medical examination.

“Well, I am pretty tired. When you go to bed to-night just think of me with my two blankets and waterproof sheet and sleeping on the ground.

“Tell Frank I tried to develop that Charley horse but without success. Give my regards to the boys and tell them I will try and send them all a P. C. In the meantime they might send me one.

“I am getting more money than I expected, \$9.75 per week. That is the inducement for entering the machine gun corps. You know if we can fire seven hundred bullets per minute we will be able to do some execution, and we are the first the enemy wants to put out of action.

“Well, so long, old boy. Don’t forget to keep your eye on Billy. I hope I come back if God spares me. Regards to them all. I remain,

“Yours,

“BILL.”

I have been asked if I ever felt homesick. I can honestly say, in reply, that I was ever too busy

to really feel anything of that nature, for long, at least. While in camp I never had a sleepless night. After the day's excitement of breaking horses, learning to ride, fixing saddlery, getting clothing, etc., and when the parades were over and our work finished we would gather around a fire and talk of the future, the subject of conversation always being war, war.

We of the machine gun corps felt that our branch of the service was to be the most important of all, and we felt to be called a "M. G. man," was equivalent to saying "one of God's chosen in the service." As we talked of ourselves and the part we were to play in the great war game, we would frequently picture ourselves holding, against fearful odds, some important position, and at times we would become serious and sentimental and in this mood we would picture the possible casualties among the men of our corps. More than once have I seen tears roll down the cheeks of some strong man when, with such thoughts in his mind, he spoke of his home in some far off part of Canada.

We met as strangers but were friends and true comrades from the first. The spirit born at Valcartier Camp held good on foreign soil. We were really brothers now, and this feeling of unity had much to do with the courage and faith displayed by the men in holding the Huns back from Calais and at the second battle of Ypres in April, 1915.

The men of the camp came from all classes and all walks of life. There were college men, professional men, lumbermen, and laboring men of every description. Geographically they came from the furthestmost northern, western and central parts of Canada and elsewhere. In this connection I cannot help recalling and repeating the words of Kipling—

“Oh East is East and West is West;
And never the twain shall meet,
Till earth and sky stand presently
At God’s great judgment seat.
But there is neither East nor West,
Border nor Breed nor Breath,
When two strong men stand face to face,
Though they come from the ends of the earth.”

Those days at Valcatier were happy days. We were full of life and keen for excitement and adventure, but little did we realize then how fully our desires and hopes were to be fulfilled.

We left Canada full of the joy of living and the soul bubbling over with excitement. We of that first Canadian contingent, of whom I particularly speak, who have seen all the horrors of war and yet live, have learned much, and today are wiser men with something of that boyish joy of living crushed out, and in its place there is a serious thought of life and a feeling of satisfaction that we have accomplished something worth while, and with it a feeling of thankfulness that we have been spared and are yet able and strong enough to continue to

perform the duty of helping rid the world of the great menace that threatened us from the first and which still exists.

We were anxious from the first to get over seas and were ever inquiring when we were to leave camp. Rumors were ever prevalent in this connection, mostly rumors they proved to be, to our disappointment.

“When do we leave for the front?”

“Well, I heard from pretty good authority that we leave tomorrow. Now you know George Gill, Colonel Nellis’ batman?” (batman is an officer’s body servant) “Well, he heard Sam Hughes tell the colonel that we were moving shortly,” et cetera.

Such is an illustration of the many rumors that were about, and we believed them all. We were so anxious for action those days we believed anything that we wanted to believe of that nature, and consequently every rumor of orders to move was accepted as a fact.

While we worked hard at Valcatier, yet it was not all work, for we lacked no amount of amusement as well. The Y. M. C. A. provided certain recreation rooms, provided writing material, conducted moving picture entertainments, etc. There was also about the usual camp followers with their various forms of entertainment and schemes to get what loose change the boys possessed. In this connection I will cite the case of a far-seeing and

ambitious youth possessed with more business ambition than patriotism, for instead of coming to camp as a volunteer, he brought to it a moving picture establishment, which he set up for business, charging the boys an admission fee of ten cents.

He showed a very poor class of pictures and, worst of all, short changed the boys whenever possible. I will not dwell long on the career of this fakir's enterprise, beyond saying that on a certain night some of the boys held a "council of war," at which it was unanimously decided this fellow had to go out of business and quit camp.

Plans were outlined to carry out this decision, and the rapidity with which news of the contemplated action spread from one part of the camp to the other would have surprised a good advertising manager.

The time for action was fixed and that evening a large party assembled about the show tent and began a dance. Certain men were detailed to cut, at a given signal, the guy ropes. No plan was ever more expeditiously carried out. At the signal a shout went up and down came the tent upon the head of the proprietor. Smoke at once arose and soon the tent and entire establishment was a sheet of flames with the boys dancing about in the wildest sort of a war dance imaginable.

The ending of the show enterprise in this spectacular fashion gave the boys more real entertain-

ment during the half hour it lasted than it had given during its entire existence in camp.

The good result of this lawless act on the part of the boys was far more reaching than they had figured, for what little money the manager possessed he had invested in the equipment, and when he found himself "broke," he concluded the only thing left for him to do was to join the army, which he did.

We later learned he had been detailed to be a cook, and if all reports of his conduct in that capacity be true, he had the satisfaction of getting revenge to the limit upon some of the participants in that night's affair. I congratulated myself, on that account at least, that he did not become a member of the outfit to which I belonged.

CHAPTER III

ORDERS

When in a country free, comes a call—"To Arms!"
It is to war in defense against a common foe.
'Tis a Nation's cry for help, a call which alarms
And sends all loyal men "where duty leads"—to go.



AT LAST, orders, for which we had been looking, came. Hughes and the Governor General of thirty. Inspection by General Sam "Drill order tomorrow morning—nine—
"You will parade mounted."
Canada."

Such were the orders preparatory to plans for over seas. Nine-thirty the following morning saw us formed for inspection. It was the first time that I had the pleasure of seeing the men of the regiment all together and of forming an opinion as to the kind of an outfit, as a whole, I had the honor of being connected with.

As I glanced along the line that morning it was my opinion that I had never before seen such a fine looking body of men. Every man five-foot-six, or

over, and mounted on the finest horses Canada could produce. The sight to my eyes was wonderful and inspiring, and I felt I was the proudest boy in the whole of Canada. I still hold the opinion that look where you will, you can never find a like number of finer or more soldierly looking boys than made up that first Canadian contingent to which I found myself attached.

We were formally inspected by General Hughes, who took occasion to pay us a glowing tribute, saying, among other things: "I am glad to have such a body of men for us instead of against us."

After the inspection was over we listened to a most stirring and patriotic address by General Hughes. The address so impressed me that I deem it worthy and proper to put it in print in connection with this part of my story. The subject of his address was, "Where duty leads."

"Fellow Soldiers! Six weeks ago, when the call came 'To Arms!' inspired by that love of freedom from tyranny dominant in the British race, actuated by the knowledge that under British constitutional responsible government, you enjoyed the utmost of human liberty, you loyally and promptly responded in overwhelming numbers to that call.

"Twenty-two thousand men were accepted by the Motherland. Today upwards of thirty-three thousand are en route to do duty on the historic fields of France, Belgium and Germany for the preserva-

tion of the British Empire and the rights and liberties of humanity.

“Lust of power, the subjugation of inoffensive and law-abiding neighbors, autocratic aggrandizement, have caused this war. In its cause the allies are guiltless.

“Belgium and Holland have long excited Prussian ambition for ownership. Austria has desired extension towards the Euxine and Ægean seas—insane lust of conquest bringing ruin, rapine and misery in the train.

“It has long been predicted that when the Kiel canal would be completed Germany would begin the long-dreaded war. The Kiel canal was completed early in July. War was begun before the end of that month. Germany was found absolutely ready and waiting. Great Britain, Belgium and France were unprepared. Three weeks elapsed before the regular armies of the latter countries could take the field.

“Soldiers! The world regards you as a marvel. Within six weeks you were at your homes, peaceful Canadian citizens. Since then your training camp has been secured; three and a half miles of rifle ranges—twice as long as any other in the world—were constructed; fences were removed; water of the purest quality was laid in miles of pipes; drainage was perfected; electric light was installed; crops were harvested; roads and bridges were built; ord-

nance and army service corps buildings were erected; railway sidings were laid down; woods cleared; sanitation was perfected so that illness was practically unknown, and thirty-three thousand men were assembled from points, some of them upwards of four thousand miles apart. You have been perfected in rifle shooting and today are as fine a body—officers and men—as ever faced a foe. The same spirit as accomplished that great work is what you will display on the war fields of Europe. There will be no faltering, no temporizing. The work must be done. The task before us six weeks ago seemed Herculean—but it has been successfully accomplished. So following the same indomitable spirit, you will triumph over the common enemy of humanity.

“That you will render a splendid account of yourselves for king and country is certain. You come of the right breed—English, Scotch, Irish, French, Welch, German and American—your courage and steadfastness are proverbial. In South Africa your presence was a guarantee of success. So in this most righteous struggle on the part of Britain. When side by side with soldiers from the Motherland stand the freemen from the Dominion beyond the seas; when Australians, New Zealanders, South Africans, Hindus, New Foundlanders and Canadians tread the soil of Europe, then will the Prussian autocracy realize the gigantic power of liberty.

“And amid it all you will never forget that you war not on the innocent and lovely people of Germany. Your aim is the overthrow of tyranny and aggrandizement.

“Every man among you is a free will volunteer. Not one has been invited. No more typical army of free men ever marched to meet an enemy.

“Soldiers! Behind you are loved ones, home, country, with all the traditions of liberty and loyalty; love of king and constitution. You bid adieu to those near and dear to you. You sing—

“I go then, sweet lass, to win honor and fame,
And if I should chance to come gloriously hame
I'll bring a heart to thee with love running o'er,
And then I'll leave thee and the homeland no more.

“That you will so bear yourselves, individually and collectively, wherever duty may call you, as to win the respect of the foe in the field; the admiration and regard of the good citizens of all lands in which your lot may be cast; and the love and regard of those near and dear at home, is the conviction of all Canadians.

“And when with years and honor crowned,
You sit some homeward hearth around
And hear no more the stirring sound
That spoke the trumpet's warning,
You'll sing and give one hip, hurrah!
And pledge the memory of the day
When to do and dare you all were there
And met the foe in the morning.

“Some may not return—and pray God they be few. For such, not only will their memory ever be cherished by loved ones near and dear, and by a grateful country; but throughout the ages freemen of all lands will revere and honor the heroes who sacrificed themselves in preserving unimpaired the priceless gem of Liberty. But the soldier going down in the cause of freedom never dies—immortality is his. What recks he whether his resting place may be bedecked with the golden lilies of France or amid the vine clad hills of the Rhine. The principles for which you strive are eternal.

“May success ever attend you, and when you return rest assured a crowning triumph will await you.”

Off to Quebec, hurrah! Orders were to leave the following morning at five o'clock.

Promptly at the hour of five, to the minute, saddles were packed and we commenced the ride of seventeen miles to the old city of Quebec.

As we rode out of camp bands were playing, caps were raised and waved, and such expressions were heard from men remaining behind, as—

“I'll see you over there, Bill.” “Give them hell.” “Get off his neck, who told you you could ride?” “Get off and get inside.” “Where did you get that skate?” etc.

Oh, gee! But breaking camp and this departure was exciting and filled each one of us with enthu-

siasm and unbounded happiness. Such were our spirits as we rode from camp leaving behind the comrades who jestingly and in the spirit of comradeship, as well, had bid us adieu.

We rode about ten miles and then stopped to water and feed the horses. We found everything prepared for us and was soon on our way again.

We rode through lower Quebec about one P. M. that day. I can see it now. Flags were waving people cheering, laughing and crying, and waving handkerchiefs, flags and caps. Kisses were wafted to us from windows, flowers showered upon us, and those who could do so, ran along by our sides seeking an opportunity to grasp our hands and bid us a good bye and Godspeed.

I, for one, certainly felt giddy and already quite like a hero, and so expanded my chest and sat well in my saddle looking straight to the front, trying as best I could to create the impression that all this was with me an everyday occurrence.

“Bon voyage” kept ringing in our ears as we rode through the streets.

Arriving at the docks the loading of the horses began at once, and some job it truly was, I assure you. One horse at a time was placed in a wooden cage and then hoisted with rope and tackle up and onto the deck. It was necessary to blindfold some of the horses, and others had to be shackled to manage them, and while the job lasted it was both interesting and exciting.

In connection with the handling of the horses one of the boys had rather an exciting experience for himself and one that was amusing as well to the rest of us, and it happened in this way.

A steam derrick used in hoisting the horses suddenly let out a shrill blast, frightening the horse held by the young man in question, and causing it to rear and bolt straight for the river and over the pier and into the water with Jackie all the time and still clinging to the head collar of the horse. Both horse and man disappeared beneath the water and when they reappeared Jackie still clung to the collar, but it and the horse had parted. A sergeant, fearing for the life of Jackie, ran immediately to the edge of the pier, but by this time the unfortunate gentleman was splashing around trying to gain a hold upon the pier. The sergeant appeared quite relieved at seeing Jackie well able to take care of himself, but to add to the humor and set every one else at ease, apparently, he shouted, "Pete J——, why in hell did you let the horse go for?" Jackie promptly replied, "I guess the son-of-a-gun jumped through the head collar, sergeant," at the same time holding up the collar as evidence that it was not his fault that the horse was no longer in his keeping, all of which brought forth a burst of laughter from the soldiers crowded on the pier.

From that day until he met his death in France, he was known among his comrades as "Hold Tight Jackie," and this title was literally appropriate, for

he died "holding tight" his position in line and to duty at Festubert in 1915.

By eight o'clock that evening the horses were loaded and the men who were to go on board the horse transport "detailed off."

I had decided I did not care to make the trip over on the horse ship. I was wise enough to know there would be work on that vessel beyond what my ambition would lead me to seek, and so I immediately took sick and "faded away" when it came to selecting the men to accompany the horses. It was adventure I sought rather than work. I had looked the old S. S. Lakonia (the horse transport) over and remarked to myself "You are a fine boat for horses, but the Laurentic looks pretty good to me," and I never regretted my caution and decision to take no chances on the former.

After the men who were to travel with the horses had been detailed, the balance of the regiment was formed up and went aboard the Laurentic. I was fortunate enough to obtain a second class cabin room (No. 127) and after seven days' experience at Valcatier with nothing but the ground for a mattress and a blanket to keep me warm, it surely did look good to me.

Over one thousand troops went aboard this ship and after a long day's ride all were too tired for thought of much else than bed and so to bed we went and to sleep, with the intention of making ourselves acquainted with the ship on the following morning.

CHAPTER IV

ABOARD SHIP

Like true sons heard they the call,
And left their homes to cross the sea,
In two and thirty ships,—in all.



LIFE on board the ship was at times dreary, to say the least. Reaching Gaspe Bay, we anchored and there lay for three days. Day after day other ships entered the bay and cast anchor, until there were in all thirty-two ships so anchored.

There was also with us the little warship called the "Rainbow," of the Canadian navy, which kept constantly steaming and fussing about. At last the signal was flashed from ship to ship to "Hoist anchor and sail."

At about four o'clock of the afternoon of October first the ships, one by one, left their moorings and proceeded out to sea.

The following, formed in three distinct lines—left, center and right—made up our fleet:—

On the left were the Megantic, Ruthenia, Bermudian, Alaunia, Ivernia, Scandinavian, Sicilian, Mon-

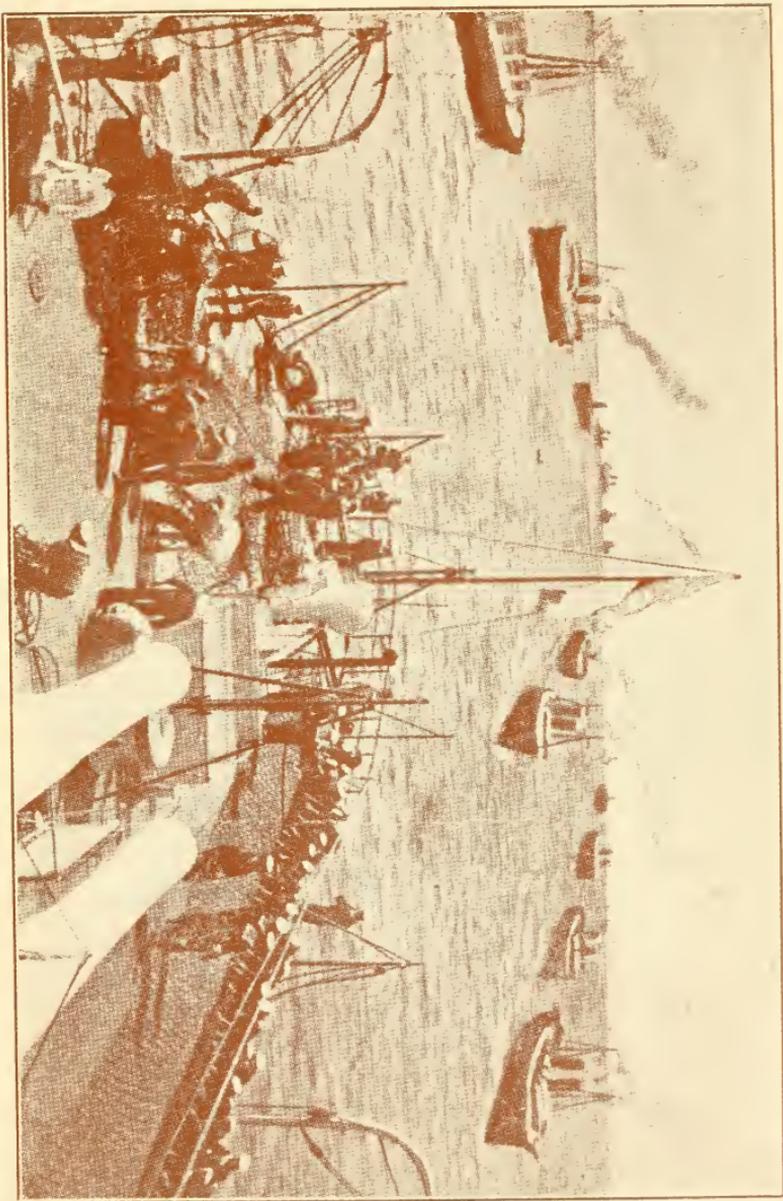
treal, Lapland, Cassandra and Florizel. In the center the Carribean, Atenia, Royal Edward, Franconia, Canada, Monmouth, Manitou, Tyrolia, Scotian and Laurentic (the ship I boarded), and on the right the Tunisian, Arcadian, Zealand, Corinthian, Virginian, Andania, Saxonia, Grampian, Lakonia, Montezuma and Royal George. Said to be the largest fleet that ever crossed the Atlantic at one time, and carried the first contingent Canadian expeditionary force.

We were convoyed by the warships H. M. S. Diana, Aaron, Eclipse, Glory, Charybdia, Talbot and Magnificent.

The sight presented by these ships, as they proceeded out to sea in this orderly position and manner, was one of the most impressive that it had ever been my privilege of witnessing, and one that I shall never forget. The picture here will give the reader a faint idea of the sight we beheld.

I stood at the bow of the good old ship Laurentic and as I watched the steaming of this fleet I remarked to one of my comrades, "Tick, old man, we are looking at the greatest fleet of transports that ever assembled under one flag."

A great fleet it truly was. With bows pointing toward the east and as the sun was setting in the west we entered the great Atlantic, leaving behind us Canada and America and home—all we held most dear, with our destination unknown, but looking





hopefully toward the future and our unknown adventure and fate, but with the greatest expectations and utmost confidence in the ultimate success of the outcome of the work before us.

I went to my cabin that night with a feeling, more or less, that I had taken my last look at the Canadian shores, and I think my feeling was fully shared in the same way by each and every man aboard those ships.

Time seemed to pass slowly and those days at sea hung heavy, but I will not dwell long on ship life beyond saying, that the voyage lasted eighteen days, yet my story would not be complete if I did not mention, at this time, the thrill which the first sight of the Motherland inspired in our breasts.

At the first sight of land a cheer went up from every throat on every ship. Men climbed into the riggings, bands began playing and everyone was happy to the limit.

We entered and proceeded through the English Channel to Plymouth, and even before anchors were weighed, England was thoroughly awake to the fact that thirty-three thousand two hundred men—British soldiers, loyal to the Motherland—had arrived from Canada and were awaiting to set foot on English soil.

It was here, while waiting to go ashore, that I got into my first serious trouble as a soldier. It happened in this way. We had run out of tobacco

and cigarettes on the way over, and decided since it was now possible to secure a supply, we would not wait until morning for our "fags." We decided to obtain some that night. I was elected by the men to go ashore, if possible, and obtain the smokes, and to assist me I selected my chum, Billy Tamlyn. We went to our cabin and prepared for the task by removing our clothes. Then I tied a five dollar note around my leg and thus equipped, we slipped overboard and swam to shore, not a great distance, fortunately, for the water was not any too warm for swimming.

Reaching the landing we climbed up the stone steps of the naval dock, dressed, as I have described, only in our "bare skins," and in this fashion and way introduced ourselves to England and the natives.

Two men happened to be on the dock at the time discussing, apparently, some important subject, and did not at first see us. We were in a hurry and decided to make their acquaintance without delay or ceremony, and so broke into their conversation by hailing them. They left off their argument and taking just one look at us gave a yell and "beat it." Amazed at this rather unexpected and un hospitable reception, I looked at Bill and he at me, and we both immediately burst into laughter.

A dock hand now came on the scene and we secured his respectful attention and explained our

situation and wants, to which he replied: "Lor' love me, I'll get yer some fags." I gave him the money and we waited for his return. In about ten minutes he was back with a box of fifty packs of "Wood-bines," and without waiting or offering to return us our change, and without further adieu he, too, took to his heels. We now decided to make our way back to the ship.

"How are we going to get these fags back to the ship without getting them wet?" asked Tamlyn. This matter of getting the goods back had not concerned us up to this point and I replied, "Gee! I never thought of that, Bill."

By some act of providence or man, rather the latter, however, a naval cutter happened to be tied to the pier near by. We decided the only thing to do was to appropriate the craft, and so unfastened it and jumped aboard and made for our ship.

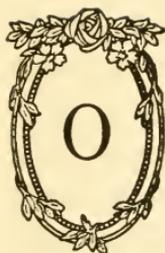
Someone was waiting for us in the shape of a corporal and two men with bayonets fixed, as we boarded the old ship, and I assure you we received more real attention and demonstration of welcome from them than we did from anyone on shore. We were taken charge of and marched, under escort, to the Guard House, with almost the entire ship company as interested and laughing spectators. We were satisfied with our plight, however, for we had succeeded in securing and bringing back the fags we had gone for, though they proved to be the most

expensive article of luxury we had ever indulged in. We had not only paid five dollars for the tobacco, but were fined a respectable sum besides, my fine being twenty-five dollars and fourteen days first field punishment, while Tamlyn had imposed a fine of five dollars and seven days punishment. We did not mind all this in the least, however. It was simply an experience and we felt we could always say, "Well, didn't we bring back the fags?" A motto we have always followed, "Never to start a thing we couldn't finish."

On the following day we disembarked and marched through Plymouth, welcomed by the people on every side. Food was given us and sweets and kisses thrown as we proceeded through the streets of this old seaport town. Finally we were returned to the government dock and a few hours later were on the train en route for Salisbury Plain.

CHAPTER V

AT SALISBURY PLAIN



OUR railway journey ended at Amesbury, from whence we marched to Pond Farm Camp, a distance of about ten miles. The long voyage had rendered our horses weak and sick and unfit to ride, and that march of ten miles on foot was the hardest, thus far, of our experience.

We reached Pond Farm Camp at about 1 o'clock P. M., where we found tents ready and soon were supplied with refreshments. The sun was shining at the time and aeroplanes flew above our heads, dropping messages of welcome and inquiries such as these—"Are we downhearted?" To which we replied, "No-o-OO" We surely were not. On the contrary we were perfectly happy and looking forward to a pleasant stay here.

The next day we could not have answered the foregoing question in quite the same sincere and enthusiastic manner, for it rained, and rained, and it kept on raining for a month or more, typical English weather. The mud and the cold and misery of

the three months passed at Salisbury Plain I shall never forget, nor do I care to dwell upon the thought.

The history of our regiment's stay at this camp I will leave to be written by someone who loves to write of misery far more than do I. It is sufficient for me to say that we suffered much sickness here and lost by death, from spinal-meningitis, a large number of men. We, the poor men of the cavalry, had not only ourselves to look after, but as well our even less fortunate horses, who were kept at this time in the open, unsheltered from the storm, and at times obliged to stand to their knees in mud. Much property was lost here through existing conditions, and I believe it safe to say that fully thousands of dollars worth of equipment in the shape of saddles and other articles were injured or wholly lost in the wet and mud.

As to personal equipment and supplies, however, we lacked for nothing, having at all times plenty of wholesome food and an abundance of clothing, in fact, of the latter we had too much, and were able to and did supply the farmers thereabouts with the excess in the shape of boots, underwear, etc.

Our discipline in those days, I am sorry to relate, was far from being good or soldierly, and little wonder, as may be judged from a single case in point—

We were on parade one morning and the officer inspecting us finding some fault with a corporal, called a sergeant, to whom he said: "Sergeant, give this man ten days C. B." (confined in barracks). The sergeant replied: "But he is a corporal, sir," "Well, give it to the next man, then. Damn it," he commanded. This was the conduct of an officer.

An illustration, as well, of the conduct of a private: Time, roll call; command, "Answer to your names." Then the roll call—Private Atkins. He responds properly, "Here, sir." All goes well until the name of Private Hubbard is called, to which he responds simply, "Here." Here what?" asks the officer. "Here I am," answered the man, amidst a roar of laughter from the other men.

Oh, yes, with it all, and in spite of our misery, those were happy days, and even then we smiled and "carried on."

I think the conditions I have described, which existed at Salisbury Plain, were due to the fact that the outbreak of the war found England wholly unprepared to enter or carry on a war, notwithstanding Germany's boast that the war was begun by her in self defense and in order to forestall an attack on the part of England. It is only reasonable to expect that neither a soldier nor an officer can be made and trained in a day.

I am sure the authorities of the imperial army finally came to the conclusion that good soldiers

could not be made out of us under the prevailing conditions, and that it would be best to get us to billets, for this they did soon after.

We were surely glad when the time came to leave the cold and mud behind us. In February, 1915, we left Pond Farm and proceeded to a place called Shrewton, where we were doomed to pass another month of inactivity and consequent disappointment, for the one thing we had been looking forward to since leaving Canada, France and war, was not yet to be seen or realized. The days of machine gun fighting, the unknown misery, the heartaches and suffering, and with it all the glory we had pictured by day and dreamed of at night, came to us later, however.

We had left behind us mud and cold and found here in its place water, which at times was knee deep. The picture here shows something of the conditions that existed at Shrewton. Such was something of the experiences and the life of a soldier in 1914-5.



01.
SHERWYON, ILL.

CHAPTER VI

FIRST CANADIAN CAVALRY BRIGADE



WE REMAINED at Shrewton for over a month. While here we watched our Canadian infantry march away to fight and die in that awful yet glorious battle—the second battle of Ypres, in April, 1915.

As our comrades left us I was not the only boy to shed tears of disappointment at the thought of having to remain in camp while others were going to action, but such is war. Some go and some must remain in reserve and support until their part in the war game shall be reached, and accordingly the personal feeling or wish of the individual cannot be considered or gratified. To await orders and obey commands is the part and duty of a soldier.

While at our new camp we received some real training and in time were moved to Maresfield, at which place we arrived a trained body of cavalrymen, and I believe as good a mounted unit as was ever trained in or ever left Great Britain. We were known as the 1st Canadian Cavalry Brigade, and

consisted of the 2nd King Edward's Horse, Lord Strathcona Horse and The Royal Canadian Dragoons. We were under the command of General Seeley—formerly Colonel Seeley, Secretary of War of Great Britain and Ireland. General Seeley was a thorough soldier and a gentleman as well, but more of him will appear later.

It was on May 2nd, 1915, that we really commenced to make history for both ourselves and Canada. Colonel Nellis, our commanding officer, on this day addressed us to the effect that our comrades of the infantry battalions who had gone to France, had lost heavily in the recent fighting around Ypres and St. Julien. "Would we reinforce them? Would we, as a body, volunteer to leave our horses and go to France as infantryman for a few weeks?" he asked. Would we? Well, the decision was made and the question answered in no uncertain language and the shouting and cheering that went up among all the men in the ranks showed their true feeling and spirit and their eagerness to get into action under any condition.

The next day saw us on our way to Folkstone, equipped as infantrymen. We did not leave camp, however, without displaying some heartbreaking feeling in saying farewell to our horses, for we had already formed for this animal that unexplainable love that a man acquires for his faithful steed. Why, I believe nearly every one of the men hugged

and kissed their nags and made all manner of funny noises in their throats when saying farewell. A good cavalryman, I know, has a love for his horse beyond what one could imagine.

We arrived at Folkstone in due season and at 11 P. M. were aboard ship ready to cross the Channel. The night was dark and the boat so small that we were packed in like sardines, but there was no complaint and little confusion or delay in getting away.

Naturally we were tired after our march, but we were little concerned with this, for we were possessed with that spirit of adventure and expectation of action which we knew now confronted us in France.

At twelve-thirty we were in Boulogne, the first stage of our journey ended, and at last in France, the country to which our thoughts had ever turned since leaving Canada. We immediately went ashore and marched into camp and slept that night on French soil. We were aroused early the following morning and informed we were to move at once.

"You have ten minutes to move. Come along, hustle up, get busy; fall in."

"Who has left his rifle here?" "Answer your name."

"Company, attention! Eyes right! Dress! Eyes front!"

"From the right tell off by sections. Flanks of sections prove. Company attention!"

The foregoing were the commands which brought us into position to move, after which we were "at rest" for a brief spell, during which was heard certain expressions from the men—for instance: "Where are we going?" And now we have our first glimpse of a French soldier, and some one near me exclaims, "Look at that cuss with a funny uniform," and to the chap the cause of this comment several of us yell, "Hello, Froggie!" To this salutation "Froggie" smiles and waves his hand. Then the command is given: "The regiment will come to attention," at which the opportunity for conversation and pleasantries is ended. A further command, "Attention! Advance in sections from the right. Quick march." And we are on our way.

During the march the men had opportunity to converse and some such remarks were heard as: "When do we halt?" "How near are the trenches." "I wish this pack was in hell." The pack referred to being the infantry pack of the British army, which weighs sixty-five pounds and consists of rifle, bayonet and trenching tools, 250 rounds of small arms ammunition, a complete change of under-clothing, shirt, drawers and socks, towel and soap, razor and shaving soap, perhaps a hair brush and comb, jack knife, field dressing iodine and identity disc. You commence the march with that outfit and finish, possibly, with small ammunition, rifle, bayonet and water bottle and such rations as you

may have remaining, the balance often becoming in some convenient way lost—for example:

“Where is your pack, Private Brown?”

“Well, it was like this, Sergeant. You know when we left Boulonge you told me to go back and see if all the packs were properly loaded. Well, I wanted to hustle, and in order to travel faster I took my pack off. Well, when I came back I could not find it.” At this Private Brown would close his right eye and the sergeant, if a good sport, would do the same and the incident would be closed.

In a short time we came to a railroad and there arose in our minds the question, What! are we going to ride? We certainly were, and soon found ourselves loaded into the funniest as well as the dirtiest little box cars I had ever seen. They were marked “8 Chevuex” and “32 Hommes” (eight horses or 32 men). In the car I occupied were placed forty-one men, and so crowded were we that one could not lie down—if he did he had to stay down.

It was here, before the train moved, that I first saw one of the noted staff officers of the imperial army. He came to the car in which I was and asked: “Who is the senior in charge of this car?” The sergeant replied, “I am.” The officer thereupon looked him all over through a specially constructed eye-glass fitted to one eye and with a cord attached, and then said to him: “Don’t you know that you should stand at attention and say ‘Sir’ when ad-

dressing an officer "Don't you know the first duty of a soldier?"

"Well, I am not a soldier," replied the sergeant. "You are not a soldier?" asked the officer. "No, I'm a Canadian," replied the sergeant, amid shouts of laughter from the men in the car.

"Where is your officer, my man?" then commanded the officer, in high dignity. "I am not your man," replied the sergeant, and continued, "I am Sergeant Cox of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, and when you are addressing a sergeant of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, you will please give him his rank."

At this sally the officer left in a hurry, with the men calling after him, "Don't go yet, Willie." "After your window?" "I wonder how he ever got away." "Oh! it's from fauncy dauncing."

It was a fortunate thing for us in that car that the train immediately pulled out or all this discourtesy might have gotten us into serious trouble.

We were in that train over eight hours and during that time we stopped once for lunch, but most of us did not care to eat, for we had already eaten the remaining portion of a day's rations, which consisted of a can of "Bully" beef per man (perhaps), and four hardtack.

It was surely rough and tough traveling on that train, but we knew every hour was bringing us

nearer the Hun, and so did not complain. On the whole we were quite happy and in good spirits.

We reached our rail journey's end at 11 o'clock that night and were not long in climbing down and out of the cars, and not in the least sorry we had finished that part of the journey and could be off the train.

We were at once informed we were to go into billets about five kilometers away. Another weary march was immediately commenced and on the way our spirits began to wane, some of the feelings of some of the boys being expressed in this way, "Oh, way did I leave my happy home?" "Imagine doing this for \$1.10 per day." "Gee, but my feet are sore." "How about foot slogging now?" And some would start singing and then all would join, to the tune of "Bring Back My Bonnie to Me," a song the words of which ran thus—"Bring back, oh, bring back my horse to me."

CHAPTER VII

“KULTUR”



IN TIME, we arrived at a place called Merris, where we halted, and we who made up the machine gun crew were billeted in a convent.

Here we beheld the first sight of the havoc wrought by the war. The convent in which we were quartered had been badly battered by shell fire, but amidst the ruins we found still working the sisters and priests, who had refused to leave the sacred shrine. The sublime beauty of their devotion to duty and the bravery and fortitude displayed in remaining and “carrying on,” under such dangerous and trying conditions, greatly impressed and inspired us and at the same time imbued us with something of their spirit of duty and sacrifice.

To say we were all greatly impressed is speaking lightly, for it did much more. It fired us with a determination to fight, and I, for one, swore to help avenge these Godly people for the awful atrocities inflicted upon them and committed by the enemy here in the name of “Kultur.”

It was not easy to get the nuns to talk to us, but the priests readily did so through our interpreter, a Roman Catholic priest, a French Canadian. They told us something of the inhuman conduct of the Huns. Described how they had taken possession of the convent and occupied it, and how one of the sisters, Sister Marie, upon her refusal to submit to the inhuman and beastly demands of a Hun, and while fighting him in the defense of her honor, had been murdered. How some of the sisters went to the aid of the British wounded soldiers and were shot for doing so. That when forced to retreat they had shelled the convent, killing three priests, one sister and fourteen school children being taught at the time in the convent school.

We later visited the graves of these fallen martyrs, and I knelt by the grave of Sister Marie and swore to avenge her death.

Our stay at Merris, on the whole, was quiet, instructive and pleasant. One night, about three days after our arrival here, orders came to move, with the information that we were going into the trenches. At this information we were in high glee and began singing and joking. We left during that night and marched twenty-one kilometers, which brought us to Locon.

All night, during that march, we could hear the rumble of the guns, and at times could see great bursts of flame. As we advanced the sounds grew

in intensity until it seemed to our untrained ears that a great battle must be raging.

The feeling of the nearness of death was now over all and with it the silly chatter and laughter stopped and there was no more singing, instead every face was white and drawn. For myself, I felt that I wanted to turn back and run, and to keep on running until I could be far away from the awful roar and din which I knew meant battle and death and suffering, but the regular tramp, tramp of the feet of my comrades toward the front kept me going onward. To occupy my thoughts and in a way keep my mind more at ease, I finally commenced to hum a tune. The man next to me at once took it up and then the next, and soon we were all singing again—"Are we downhearted? No, no. Troubles may come and troubles may go," etc. In a little time we were quite ourselves and singing and joking like old veterans.

We camped the remainder of that night in the main street of the quaint old French town of Locon.

We had not been here long when my attention was directed to a new scene. "Here comes some German prisoners, Bill," exclaimed one of my comrades. I looked up and sure enough, slouching along the road came over five hundred dirty prisoners, with clothing torn, a few slightly wounded, and many of them smoking. At their head marched a German officer wearing the iron cross on his breast.

All sorts of remarks were directed by us to the Huns, but I will not dwell on what was said, beyond relating just one incident of this nature—

“Hello, Fritz, how are they coming?” called one of our chaps, to which one of the Huns answered, in perfect English, “You go to hell, pig dog.”

This response so aroused our anger that for a moment, I believe, that Hun was nearer death than he had ever been before. Fortunately for him and all concerned, a sergeant came along then and calmed our feeling by remarking, “Never mind, we will give them ‘pig dog’ tonight.”

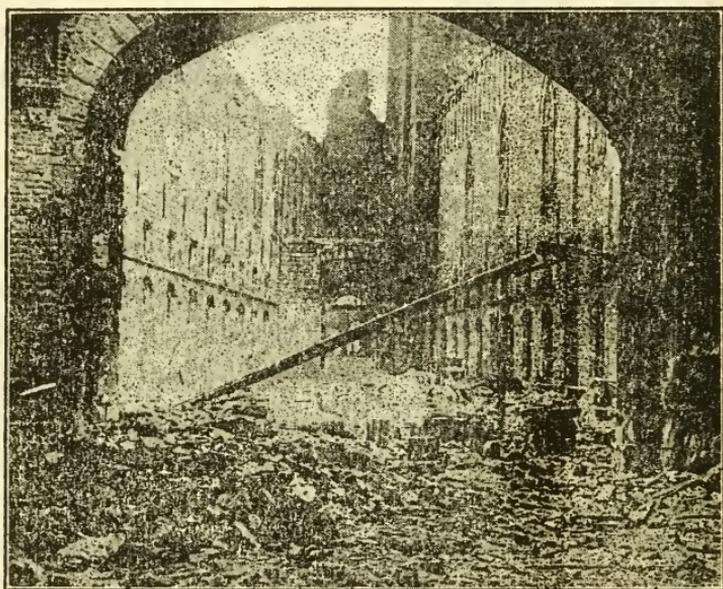
While here at Locon we had the pleasure of our first sight of H. R. H. the Prince of Wales. At the time he was a lieutenant in the Grenadier Guards, and when we saw him he, too, was smiling.

About six P. M. we commenced another march, which brought us within striking distance of the enemy. Our orders now were, “No smoking, no talking!”

We could now see the star shells and hear the rattle of the machine guns and the bursting of shells, while over our heads was heard the drone of some aeroplane, whether of friend or foe we knew not.

Suddenly the command came, “The regiment will halt.” At that each man threw himself down where he had stopped. Some soon fell asleep while others wrote short and hurried letters and addressed them.

Our main thought now was concerning the serious part we were soon to play, and through our minds went such thoughts as: "I wonder how it feels to be wounded?" "When shall I get mine?" "I wonder if I can really die game?" I do not believe a single man had that night other than some serious thought concerning himself or those he had left



behind at home, whom he felt and knew would be grieved at his death should he fall on the morrow.

Just before dawn we were ordered to occupy the village of Festubert. This we did under the cover of darkness and when dawn appeared we saw, and what we saw we shall never forget.

As daylight came it was as though a curtain had

been gradually drawn aside, exposing to view some horrible picture—a picture of utter desolation and ruin. What we beheld was the ruins of what had been but a few days ago, we judged, a pretty as well as a peaceful French village. But, my God! To see it now. Houses destroyed, furniture broken and scattered, the dead lying everywhere. Once brave soldiers lying as they had fallen in the bloodshed by them while defending the homes, lives and property of the peaceful, defenseless villagers—the women, children and little babes whom fate had seen fit to place in the way of the beasts of humanity, and who now lay with their defenders—comrades in death.

Oh! the awful impression this first real sight of war's effect made upon each one of us, an impression and a feeling of awe that will live as long as any of us continue in life. It was here, I honestly believe, that we also became something like the beasts. The finer natural traits and feelings, the years of schooling and training in the choice of gentlemanly expression and speech, seemed all to be wiped out in an instant, and in its place appeared the coarser and the uglier side of man. I heard great oaths uttered by the men, and I know men swore then who had never been profane before, and I believe they kept on swearing and hating as long as they lived, not that they enjoyed swearing and hating, but because it seemed the only possible way of expressing

themselves and the only outlet for their feelings.

I shall never forget our first day here. We saw line after line of wounded pass continually during the day and far into the night. The heat at this time, May, 1915, was intense, and the stench of decaying bodies and the blood was in our nostrils and has since remained there.

Up to this time we had suffered no casualties. At ten o'clock that night we were ordered in support, and off we went in single file to join the balance of the brigade and receive our first baptism of fire in this awful war.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BATTLE OF FESTUBERT

"'Tis the wink of an eye: 'tis the draught of a breath,
From the blossom of health to the paleness of death."

—*Wm. Knox*



T LAST we are at the front. "Holy smoke!" "Are these the trenches?" "Gee, whiz! Gee, but it's warm." "Where are the Germans?"

Such were some of the impressions and expressions of the men upon their arrival in the trenches. We had little time now to survey our surroundings or for conversation, however, for—"Bang, bang!" and the next instant shells were falling inside our trenches and a parapet was knocked down near me.

I turned to look and beheld— Oh, my God! A pal, but a second before a happy, enthusiastic young chap eager for the fray, now lying with a ghastly hole in his breast, his mouth opening and closing in a last gasp for breath.

I knelt at once by his side and tried to staunch the flow of blood, but alas. His end had come.

Private Courtney, of Toronto, my comrade, the first of our regiment to give up his life for the cause.

All that day we fought and men were being killed, wounded, maimed and torn. Oh, the ghastly sight. What feelings of horror and pity the moans of the wounded caused. Then, too, the awful stench of the dead, the thirst and the misery suffered by the living, and with it all and seeing our comrades fall, we were discouraged, for we could not seem to accomplish what we thought we should—we could not avenge.

Shell fire, shell fire constantly, bringing utter desolation and misery, and I could not help exclaiming amidst it all—"Oh, my God! And this is war." "This is what we have been training to take a part in and have been longing to see."

The command now came, "Pass the word along to fix bayonets, and move up in single file to support."

It was now 11 P. M. and the shelling seemed to have stopped. As we were about to "move up" our thoughts were of the wounded and the dead. Some of us remarked, "Are we going to leave the wounded here?" "Are we not going to bury the dead?" And then we thought of ourselves and wondered where we were going and why we could not smoke.

We move, we creep on and on, as it seems for ages. We pass what were but a short time ago active, fighting soldiers, now lying in all attitudes as they had fallen.

All that I saw and experienced now made me sick at heart and weary. I wished to be away from it all and back home where I could again follow the quiet and peaceful pursuits of civilian life, and forget, if possible, this day of horror. Then I remembered the gas at Ypres, the shattered convent at Merrie, the grave of Sister Marie, and my oath to avenge her death; the graves of the little, innocent school children slaughtered and buried there; the awful sights of the previous day at Festubert, and with such thoughts racing through my brain I forgot self and took new courage and said: "No, my duty is here." I prayed God for strength and that I be allowed "to carry on" until I had killed some of the cruel enemy,—the beastly and hated Hun.

It was here that we of our regiment won our first decorations. I will try, as best I can, to describe our position.

We were in what is known as the support trench—that is, the first line of trenches immediately behind the front line. This line the day previous had been the original front line of the Germans, and had been captured by the Tenth and the Eighth battalions of the Canadian infantry, with the assistance of the Post Office Rifles of London, England. When the Huns had been forced out their dead and wounded were left behind, as we found.

We were resting here waiting for orders to ad-

vance, when a message was passed down the line—
“A runner wanted at headquarters dugout.”

No one seemed to have volunteered for the job up to the time the message reached me, and not knowing just what a “runner” was supposed to do, but thinking, naturally, that it would give me a chance to move about, I did not pass the message on but accepted the job. I thought, too, if they needed one who could run, that “run” was about my middle name and the job of “runner” was just the job in this war game that I could fill.

I at once made my way back to the reserve line and reported to Colonel Nellis at the headquarters dugout.

I wonder if I can describe, for the benefit of the reader, what such a dugout, as I saw it in May, 1915, was like. Simply a square hole in the ground protected on the top by beams and sheet metal covered with bags filled with sand. Sand bags were also piled about the opening, or entrance, leaving just a narrow gap for passage to and fro.

When I appeared at the entrance of this dugout I wore no cap, had lost my sirge (jacket), one puttie was gone and over my shoulder I carried my rifle, but without bayonet or ammunition.

As I presented myself at the entrance described, I was hailed from within with the question, “Hello! What do you want?”

"Headquarters dugout, sir," I answered.

"This is it. Who are you?" came the reply.

I answered, "Private Jones, Machine Gun Section, sir, R. C. D. I am reporting here as a runner."

"Oh, you are the runner, are you?" continued my inquisitor.

"Yes, sir," said I.

At this the officer who had carried on the conversation with me turned to another officer and said.

"By the way, Major Elemsley, has that runner of the Post Office Rifles reported back yet from Colonel MacDonald's dugout over by K-5?"

"No, sir. Telephone advice from there informs me that he was killed about ten minutes ago by a sniper," replied the major.

This was interesting information for me, but I assure you it did not cause me to think quite so favorably of the job I had volunteered to perform. I now felt my hair rising and my feet growing cold, but nevertheless I tried to give the impression I was brave and forced a laugh to confirm, as far as possible, this deception.

I think I succeeded in impressing the officers I was brave enough to perform the required duties, otherwise, I believe I would have been sent back with orders to have another runner detailed. At least I was now asked—

"Do you know the location of the Lord Strathcona Horse, Jones?"

As a matter of fact I did not, but I dared not confess my ignorance and so replied, "Yes, sir."

My orders then were, "You will conduct Captain Bell, who has taken charge of B Squadron, R. C. D.'s there."

"Very good, sir," I replied.

Captain Bell thereupon saluted his superior officer and, turning to me, said—

"All right, Jones, let us go."

We started and Colonel Nellis followed us out, saying he would show us a short cut. Good old Nellis, I thought, I will now be saved some embarrassment in finding the dugout. As we proceeded the colonel gave us all kinds of instructions, to which we listened intently.

We soon came near a gap in the trench when the colonel cautioned, "Now be careful, for there is a sniper watching who has been firing on this hole aell night." The dead we saw lying there, seven in all, fully testified to the sniper's attention to duty and to his skill as a marksman.

The colonel continued to walk straight ahead, however, quite unconcerned, until he came to the gap in question, when he bent down almost double. Then "ping," a bullet struck just ahead of him. "Close one, eh?" he remarked. Captain Bell made no reply, but I felt I knew what his thoughts were. He went safely across the danger line. Then it was my turn.

I was not possessed of courage enough to walk across as he had done, so I went back about ten feet and took a running dive, falling full length across the gap, landing on my stomach and making, as I did so, a fearful noise. Disturbed and alarmed by my conduct and noise, Captain Bell came running back and asked, "Are you hit, Jones?" I replied, "No, sir, I just tripped over a wire and have only injured my leg a bit, I guess." He said, "Oh, that's a mere trifle, come on." Colonel Nellis here left us after wishing us Godspeed and good luck.

Captain Bell now said, "You had better lead, Jones, as you know the way." Lead I did. I took the captain through a maze of trenches and finally came to a point outside of a trench from which we heard voices. We halted here and Captain Bell said, "Are they Germans?"

"You can search me," I replied.

Luck was with us, for it was a British trench. Our presence had been noted, for now we heard someone say, "Don't shoot them. Let us find out who they are." Immediately there was directed to us the question—

"Who in Hell are you fellows?" We replied and gave the password and were then directed how to gain entrance to the trench.

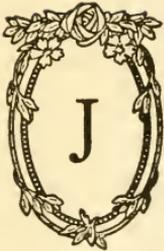
Here we were shown where Colonel MacDonald's dugout was located. Captain Bell reported and was taken to the place where B Squadron was.

People have had nightmares and many have experienced other horrible things, but in my opinion such things, or even Dante's *Inferno*, cannot be compared to the horrors of that night. We left headquarters dugout at 1 A. M. and arrived in K-5 at 3 A. M.

I was now dismissed from further duty on this detail and so finished my first job as a runner. When I again joined my section I was utterly weary and quite worn out—as the soldiers say, “Fed up.”

CHAPTER IX

TAKING THE COUNT



JUST as the dawn was beginning to break on the morning following my experience as a runner, a message was passed down

“There’s a man lying in front of Section C, wounded and calling for water. We learned that previous to this message reaching us an attempt had been made by five men to bring the wounded soldier to safety and for treatment, and that in each case the would-be rescuer had been picked off by a German sniper.

Sergeant Holloway at once volunteered to make the attempt to bring the man in. He secured some bandages, and taking a mouthful of water for the wounded man, climbed over the top and proceeded toward him.

Through a periscope we watched the sergeant crawl out and over on his errand of mercy. We saw him reach the man and when about to pick him up, saw him fall. Later we learned he had been shot through the abdomen.

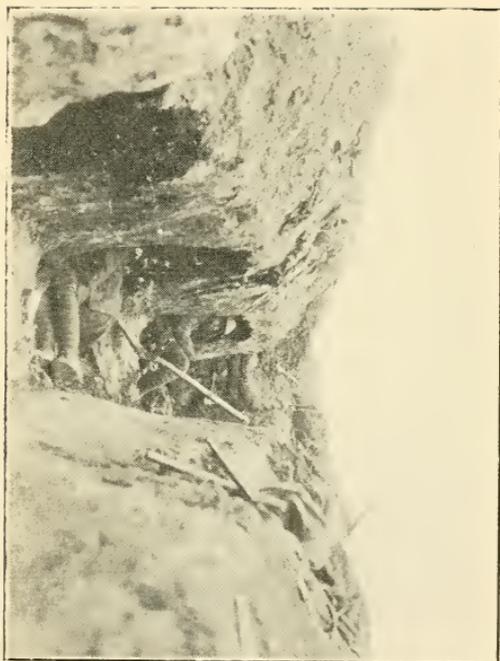
At this Corporal Pimm, a close friend of the sergeant (also since killed), went to the assistance of the sergeant, with the intention of bringing him in.

Through the periscope we watched him also safely cover the distance between the trench and the wounded man. When Pimm reached the side of the wounded man we saw him crawl over and on top of the corporal's back. Then commenced a long and dangerous crawl of the two men back to safety.

We now, for the purpose of attracting the Germans' attention toward us and to force Fritz to keep his head down to a point where he could not effectively witness the rescue, began firing at random our machine guns and rifles. Corporal Pimm in time safely reached and crawled through the gap in the wire and into our trenches with his man. As soon as he could do so he gasped out, "They have killed Holloway. Someone go and get him." Since he was dead this was considered unnecessary and to have attempted it would have been foolhardy in view of the great danger.

As soon as word was passed along that Pimm had succeeded in bringing back the wounded man, a sigh of relief was felt and a cheer rent the air.

The wounded soldier soon died, but before he did, he informed us he had been shot through the stomach while on patrol, and had lain there for four days and nights. His last words were, "Thanks, boys. Just carry on."



Corporal Pimm, I am glad to say, was mentioned in dispatches for bravery, and a month later was decorated by the king with the distinguished conduct medal, the second highest honor a soldier can earn.

It was while in this trench I saw what is known as the "soldier's ghastly comedy."

Picture, if you can, an all night of fighting, and yourself at six A. M. in a trench just vacated by the Germans. Our shell fire during the night had worked such havoc amongst the enemy that they had been able to and did, for the want of sufficient sand bags, use the bodies of their dead in place of bags and for the same purpose.

Such a picture was before us on a morning we occupied the trench in question. It was one by no means pleasant, I assure you, but the life of a soldier is to smile and carry on under all conditions, and it is well they can do so, and that there are some who can see the humorous side even to a tragedy.

Among our men was one such, in the person of Corporal Lees, who was quite a wit and was always smiling and helping others to do so. Upon entering this trench, with the German dead piled along the top, he proceeded to walk up and down noting and making some ridiculous or humorous remark concerning this or that dead German. He finally came

over to where I was lying and said, "Gee, Bill, but you look as if you are all in."

Then he turned about and exclaimed, "Holy Smoke, look who is here." There on the parapet, the subject of his jest, lay a dead young German soldier, with most of his skull gone. At this Lees grasped the forelock of the German's hair, slightly raising it and looking inside the German's skull, remarked, "I knew Gal darn well this fellow had no brains or he wouldn't be here."

Such is merely one incident of what we term the comedy of the trenches. It produces a laugh, even in the midst of the horror, and helps us to keep a light heart and carry on with a smile even under such conditions.

We remained all that day in K-5, thirsty, weary and homesick. About four P. M., I, and two other men, were detailed to proceed back to headquarters with four German prisoners.

While passing through a communicating trench on the way back we witnessed one of the funniest sights, of its kind, in all of our experience. Corporal McKay of the machine gun section, who during the previous day's bombardment had gone crazy, (commonly known as shell shock) had been sent back alone to the rear, but had lingered along the way, as we found, and when we came upon him was amusing himself in this crazy manner:—

Picture to yourself a dead German in full uniform stretched out at length on his back on the bottom of a trench, and another man repeatedly jumping upon and off his stomach. This is what we witnessed and were at first at a loss to understand the purpose of such action on the part of McKay. We asked him to explain.

With a hideous grin on his face, he said he was making the German throw up his hands, and sure enough he was. He proved this to us by repeating the act, and every time he jumped upon the Hun's stomach up would go his hands.

Just another incident of the ghastly comedies of the trenches. We took charge of McKay and conducted him back to the dressing station from whence he was "packed off" to the hospital.

While at headquarters we were informed our regiment would be relieved at eleven o'clock that night. We thereupon obtained permission from the doctor to collect water bottles and any other utensile that would hold water and go into the village of Festubert and fill them, which we did.

At one A. M., the following morning, so much of the regiment as was left and able to do so, (about half its strength) came straggling into the village. We passed the water around among the tired and thirsty men and it was joyfully accepted and appreciated I can assure you.

The men who had packs on (but they were few), threw them down and at once stretched themselves upon the ground completely exhausted, and in five minutes, more or less, all were sound asleep.

The sun was streaming through the ruined village of Festubert when we were awakened and ordered back for rest and reinforcements. After another heartbreaking and weary march, we of the R. C. D.'s halted and camped in a field ten kilometers south of Locon.

Soon after halting here we were ordered to again fall in and answer our names. The roll was called, and out of a squadron of one hundred and eighty men it was found but sixty-two responded to their names.

After the parade was dismissed such remarks were heard among the men:—

“Gee! He died game.”

“Did you see that chap pick up his own arm after it had been shot off and walk back with it to the dressing station?”

“Did you see our padre carry the wounded back, and speaking to the dying and working like a nurse all day amongst the wounded?” “Good old padre.”

“Gee! but that is some doctor we have, working all the time right in the front line trenches easing pain, administering treatment, helping by quick action and with cheering words, and all the time smiling.”

"Poor old Holloway. Gee! but he died game."
"He fought his last fight and took the count." (Holloway was the champion heavyweight boxer of our brigade, and his home was somewhere in our U. S. A.)

"Poor little Courtney never knew what struck him."

This was my first real experience of the awfulness of the war and its results. The impression it made I shall carry with me until I too take the count.

It is strange though how soon a soldier for a time throws off his own personal feelings. Soon we were all laughing and chatting again as usual and wondering where we would go next.

We thought in those early days that we were to fight almost every day, but in this we were happily disappointed. We remained in camp in this field four days, and of the funny things I saw and heard while there I believe I could write a book. Just one case as illustrative of what I have in mind and which may interest the reader at this point, and help also to dispel thoughts of the horrors just described.

"Can I borrow your candle, Bill?"

"Sure thing, kid." I give the comrade my candle. He lights it. Then takes off his shirt and proceeds to annihilate all of his bosom friends which had become attached to him while in and had returned with him from the trenches, viz—body lice, commonly known in the army as "Grey backs," or "Cooties."

There has been no time during our stay in France, except when on leave, that we have been free of vermin. But as time goes on we, in a way, become accustomed to them and to their activity on and about our anatomy, yet we are always glad to part companionship with them at the first opportunity, and really think about as much of them as we do of the Germans.

After all, they are not such bad creatures, for aside from detracting our attention at times from other troubles, they provide us with the means of a most unusual and amusing sport, known among the men as "a trench steeplechase."

It is carried on in this fashion: Take a piece of thread, hold one end and let a comrade hold the other. Then each secures his own pet louse and places it on his end of the thread. At once begins a very exciting race—the lice "are off," and naturally crawl along the thread towards each other, meeting somewhere near the center. At meeting they engage in a fight for the right of way and during the fight will rear up and one will eventually fall off. The owner of the one remaining on the thread wins the race, proving also his louse to be the superior, in fighting at least.

Also in connection with these little busy bodies one will often hear such remarks as—"I'll give you two little ones for a big one." Or, a fellow will put his hand inside his shirt and bring forth a very

little one, look at it, and with a sorrowful expression place it back with the remark, "Poor little sucker, I won't kill you until you are good and fat."

Such were some of our experiences and sport in the year 1916.

It was while in camp here we received our first mail from Canada.

CHAPTER X

THE MAIL BAG



ERE is the mail." "I wonder if there is a letter for me."

Such are the happy exclamations of the men upon the arrival of home mail.

Off we go and collect as closely as possible around the non-commissioned officer who has charge of the mail and its distribution.

The officer soon commences to call out the names of the lucky ones— "Private _____," "Corporal _____," "Sergeant _____," and so on through the batch of mail emptied out of the mail bag.

The officers, non-commissioned officers and men's mail all come in the same bag, and before going any further on this subject, let me pay a deserved compliment to the post office service of the British Empire, which as early as 1915, was good, and which improved as the years rolled on. Ask any soldier in France what he thinks of the post office service and he will look at you and say, "Why that postal service of our's is the best thing that ever happened."

Daily our mail arrives, and no matter where we are, whether it be in the front line, in support or in reserve, or elsewhere in France, the post office authorities will find us and deliver our bit of greetings from home, provided we are above ground. Just an illustration—I had letters addressed simply in this manner, "William R. Jones, R. C. D., Somewhere in France," and they were delivered to me in good time. Can you beat it? You can't, I am quite sure.

Let us return to the mail bag and see what it brings and what happiness its bounty gives the poor lonely homesick soldier. For instance—

A boy receives a letter. He first looks at the postmark and if it's a letter from home he hastily opens it and reads and re-reads and then hands it to his pal, and perhaps, usually, both laugh.

Perhaps the bag brings a photo of his baby, or of his wife, his mother, or sweetheart, or of someone else near or dear to him, it matters not which, and in either case he will then go away by himself and there gaze upon it and possibly kiss it and hug it to his breast. Then his thoughts will travel far away and over the sea to the subject of the picture, and he will dream of the time he last was with that person.

I cannot, of course, tell just exactly what that boy thinks in such case, but if just this happened to me, which at times it fortunately did—as for

instance when the mail bag brought a photo of my wife and child, I can say I acted in quite a similar manner and my thoughts went back far across the seas which separated us, and I could picture myself once more at home. Then too I wondered whether, after all, I did the right thing in leaving wife and child.

I confess I felt at the time some remorse, and with it, was torn by the thought, and I asked myself the question, "Which really comes first, love of home and family, or love of country and duty?" At times when such thoughts came up I regretted having left my country and home, but as time passed and the matter of country and duty was so constantly before my eyes and in my thoughts, I gradually thought more of country, and I thanked God for having had the conviction and the courage to say, "Duty, duty to my country, first, last and always." I have since felt and now feel that if one is true to that duty he must, after all, be serving, as well, the best interest of home and family. I am very sure my comrades, one and all, at times had similar thoughts and felt this same way.

At times the mail bag would disappoint us, and if I happened to receive no mail I at once felt lonely and had something of a feeling that I cared not particularly whether I lived or died. On such occasions I would imagine I had been forgotten by those at home, and that no one, after all, really cared. I

would also then be grgouchy, and generally sulky with my good comrades even, and under those conditions not only make myself miserable but those around me.

To you who read this, let me say, never be too busy to write to your boy "over there." Write and send something on each mail, a post card at least, or a newspaper, but a letter if possible. Make your letters cheery always. Dwell on all the nice things you can think of to tell him. Tell him how the baby is, if he is so lucky as to have one, how it is growing and how it has commenced to say "Papa," perchance. Tell him everything of interest that is going on at home which would be good for him to know about. Give him a little of the town gossip, if you wish. In other words, make your letters just as bright and cheery as possible, speaking of and dwelling only on the pleasant things of life, keeping to yourself your own troubles, for he has more than his share of such to bear himself, even under the most favorable circumstances.

Don't wish him back home, at least don't express such a wish in your letter. Say simply, "when you come back home," etc., and in that way you will make him feel more optimistic about ever returning.

A letter along something of these lines, I can assure you, is a thing of joy to your boy, so keep on, and on, writing and cheering and encouraging him in this way. A parcel or a package is an "event"

in his life. Such brings a joy which he can share with his pals, and though it is appreciated fully and far more than you can imagine, and though the package may contain good things to eat and fags to smoke, still they do not last long. But a letter, what is it? A scrap of paper and some ink, merely? No, it is something more, much more than that to the boy, more even than pen can describe. It is something that touches and in some unexplainable way causes a tender and a happy feeling to sink into the innermost cells of the heart. It is something that is kept and brought out and pored over and almost devoured at times when the boy,—your own boy,—is feeling homesick and longing for just one moment with you in person.

I have known men, including myself, to keep and carry more than fifty home letters about from day to day. Why? Because they are almost home to him. The nearest thing to home that he can possess while a soldier, so far away from home. They contain and represent all he holds most dear. They mean love, home, and encouragement to live and to "smile and carry on" until the end.

I am supposed to write a book on the war, rather than preach a sermon or attempt at moralizing, but how could I refrain from dwelling on the letter from home. And I could not pass the dear, good old mail bag, surely, without singing its praises. Now could I?

CHAPTER XI

AT LA PEROL AND GIVENCHY



WE ARE off again fully reinforced and feeling like veterans. By this time we had become accustomed to our packs and I think we were really veterans, for a month of service in France makes veterans of all.

In time we arrived at a place called La Perol, near Givenchy, on the La Basse canal. This was in June, 1915. Although only about three kilometers from the front line of trenches, we found the village still occupied by the villagers, who, much to our surprise, had remained and gave us a hearty welcome, we felt assured from their actions, though as yet we could not understand or speak much French, except by the aid of a French-English dictionary.

Our first night in the village was peaceful and quiet and were able to almost forget that there was a war on, except as the fact was brought to our mind by the continual string of transports that seemed to pass to and fro continually day and night.

We also saw the famous French seventy-five cen-

timeter guns. Howitzers, and guns of all calibre and description pass through the village. On the whole however, aside from such evidences of warfare, things were quite normal about the village and we were fairly happy and content.

We, the Fourth troop, were camping in the yard of a farmer. About four o'clock on the afternoon of the day following our arrival, we were surprised, as well as interested, in seeing the farmer bring a small pig out to the center of his yard and there kill and then roast it over a fire in the open. Nothing particularly strange or worth noting in that you will no doubt say. Perhaps not, but on a clear still day smoke will rise to a great height, you know.

About seven o'clock that night we were shelled by the Germans for about fifteen minutes, with the result that two civilians were wounded and several transport horses killed. Among ourselves, however, there were no casualties. With this shelling we began to wonder at what we had seen that afternoon and began to sit up and take notice, as the saying goes.

At about one o'clock on the following afternoon the same thing occurred. Another small pig was brought out, killed and roasted as before, the smoke ascending from the open fire. Very strange conduct we thought, and in our minds arose the question, "Are we to be shelled again?" Sure enough, at about five o'clock that afternoon we were shelled.

At the time I was standing with a number of other men listening to our padre tell some funny stories. We heard the shell coming and looking saw it explode in the center of the village street. William Reader, one of our men (known as "Caribou Bill," clutched his breast and we saw blood pouring through his fingers. We were both surprised and shocked to see that one of our men had been hit, and when the next moment Bill stretched up his arms and said, "Good bye boys," we were awake to the fact that he had been seriously injured.

We went at once to his assistance and did all we could for him. Major Todd, D. S. O., who was our doctor, examined the wound and then shook his head and said, "He is done for." Lieutenant Walker, now Colonel, also came over at this point and bending over the prostrate form of the poor man said, "Good bye Bill. You have played the game, and played it well, old boy."

Bill could only smile in answer, being unable to utter a word, though God knows he tried hard to speak.

We now looked up and beheld the Padre coming toward us with what appeared to be a bundle of rags in his arms, but which proved to be a baby of but four months old. Its mother we now saw had been killed by the same shell which had hit poor Bill. The baby also had been injured but still lived.

The Padre brought the child over and lay it on

the ground beside our Bill. What a sight it presented, and with it what an example of the mysterious and unexplainable course of life,—there a soldier, forty-five years of age, a man who had prospected, endured hardship and had lived practically a life of adventure, and had at last come to France to die such a death, while by his side lay the poor innocent, harmless babe of but a few months of life who deserved no such fate and certainly could not understand the meaning of it all.

There they lay to die together from and for the same cause. Bill died first, and just before the baby died it seemed to try to turn over on its side and to clutch old Bill by the arm as if to go with him into the unknown world.

Oh, what a pitiful sight! The Padre, who was a man of God, now knelt beside the two lifeless bodies and lifting his right hand with clenched fist toward Heaven cried out, "Oh my God! Will you allow such fiends to live?"

Then turning to the boys who had gathered about he exclaimed, "Boys! Bill was your pal and mine. This baby and its dead mother represent France. What are you here for? Fight on boys and kill. Fight these fiends as you would fight the devil."

With such sights before him, can you wonder that a soldier becomes a beast—a fiend too, possibly, and swears when he is fighting, and sometimes too when he is not so occupied?

My answer is, go to France and see the sights he must witness. Look and see and read some of the inscriptions to be found upon the wooden crosses of our fallen comrades.

Go where you will, from Belgium beginning at Ypres to the La Basse Canal, and you will find countless simple little wooden crosses which mark the place where lie the bodies of both soldiers and civilians who have already given their lives in this awful struggle to save the world from such a "Kultur."

We were satisfied by this time that something was seriously wrong near by, and began to investigate conditions about. We had strong suspicions as to where the blame for this tragedy rested, and these led us to visit the farmer who on two occasions had thought fit to kill and roast a pig, on both of which we had been shortly after shelled.

The farmer was placed under arrest and his house and premises searched, with the result that wires were found leading from his cellar out and beyond the village. The wires had been destroyed by shell fire but apparently led, originally, to and communicated with the German trenches. Now that they were worthless as a means of communication, the fire and smoke was, without doubt, a prearranged and understood signal to the Germans that troops were in the village.

If you should visit the spot and look, you will find his grave at Le Perol. It was dug by himself and is marked, "Here lies a traitor to France." That's all.

I sincerely hope when peace is once restored, that some ugly stone will be found and placed on his grave, and have chiseled thereon so deep that time can never efface the same, the above inscription as a lasting mark of dishonor to this kin of the Beast of Berlin, and as a warning to one and all that a like fate will surely befall the person who shall ever again betray his country or the cause of humanity and freedom.

The next morning we were shelled out of the village, and the villagers accompanied us leaving behind all their worldly possessions, carrying nothing with them but memories of a once peaceful village and a happy home. We were glad to leave the village I assure you. Such is war, full of surprises as well as of tragedies.

The day following we marched back into the village to support an attack planned to be made that night.

It was here that we entered the battle of Givenchy, a battle that has already been so much written about by military writers and war correspondents.

My impressions of the attack at this time are rather hazy. We advanced into the village and went into a rudely constructed line of trenches in

support to the 10th, 3rd and 8th Battalions of the Canadian Infantry.

The imperial soldiers were on our left. The French on our right. The Canadians in the center. The Canadians were ordered to take the first line trenches, but exceeded their orders and took three lines, which of course, was a mistake, for our territory was then shelling the trenches which the Canadians were attacking.

They had gone too far. Being now between two fires, the enemy's and our own, no support could reach them. We of the First Canadian Cavalry Brigade were held back. Why, I don't know. But General Seeley knew, and we all trusted him.

During this engagement the wounded kept coming back and many a ghastly sight we beheld. I saw a man of the 10th battalion with both eyes gone, being assisted to the rear by two wounded men, one a Gordon Highlander but the other I could not distinguish. The blind Canadian as he walked was singing "God Save the King" and "Heaven Bless the Maple Leaf Forever." This man was a soldier, true and brave, wounded and suffering, yet still "Carrying on" singing and smiling.

From now on our experiences were strenuous and full of activity, but I will not dwell long on them or on our many marches from place to place. It will be sufficient to say, that we saw action as infantrymen in such places as Ypres, Langemarck, Messines,

Dickibuch, Ploesteert, Givenchy and Festubert, and that for nine weary months we fought as infantrymen.

During all this time I am sure we proved to the world that a cavalryman can fight just as well on foot as on horseback. We were taught to bomb, to fight with bayonet, the proper handling of machine guns of all calibres, to dig trenches, put up wire entanglements, make dugouts, etc.

Go anywhere in France you may, where we as infantrymen have been, and you will find the handiwork of the Canadian Cavalry Brigade. In such territory you will see such names as—"Dragoon Alley," "Nellis' Walk," "K. E. H. Terrace," "Strathcona Walk," etc.

As infantrymen we also saw all the phases of trench life and experienced all the miseries and joys that go with it. But all the time our natural longing and ambition was to be mounted again—to be in the saddle with boot and spurs.

It was Christmas, 1915, that General Seeley, in a very stirring speech in keeping with the yuletide spirit, gladdened our hearts by informing us that we were going back down the line and there receive our horses.

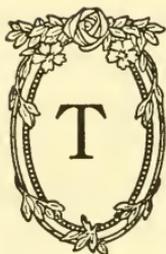
Oh my! What cheering, and what shouting and dancing greeted this announcement, but the general soon added, "We still have a little job to do here first. We are going to make a raid on the

Messines road and take over the old line of trenches at Messines before going back.

We were now at Aldershot Huts, just behind the Neuve Eglise. It was here in this engagement, while attacking a German listening post that I was slightly wounded receiving a bayonet wound in my left shoulder, in consequence of which my fighting days as an infantryman were ended.

CHAPTER XII

HOSPITAL TRAIN AND HOSPITAL



THE WOUND I received was not serious. My equipment had saved me a nasty, and possibly a mortal wound, nevertheless, it gave me much pain and I suffered considerable loss of blood before reaching the dressing station.

Dr. Todd examined the wound, dressed it, then put a tag on my shoulder with these remarks written on, "Slight bayonet wound, walking case.

A number of our chaps were also having wounds dressed. Some were laughing and joking and appeared in high glee, while others more seriously wounded lay perfectly still. The latter, of course, were stretcher cases.

We were all covered with mud and in just the condition we left the front but gloried in it. We who were but slightly wounded were overjoyed at the thought of going out. We had visions of a clean bed, good things to eat, surely a bath, and very likely some pretty girls who could speak English and would talk to and look after our wants.

A motor ambulance in time drove up, and six walking cases, which included myself, were placed aboard. We had discarded most of our kit keeping but one haversack with such trifles as a razor, towel and soap, some letters, and perhaps a few souvenirs which we held too sacred to part with.

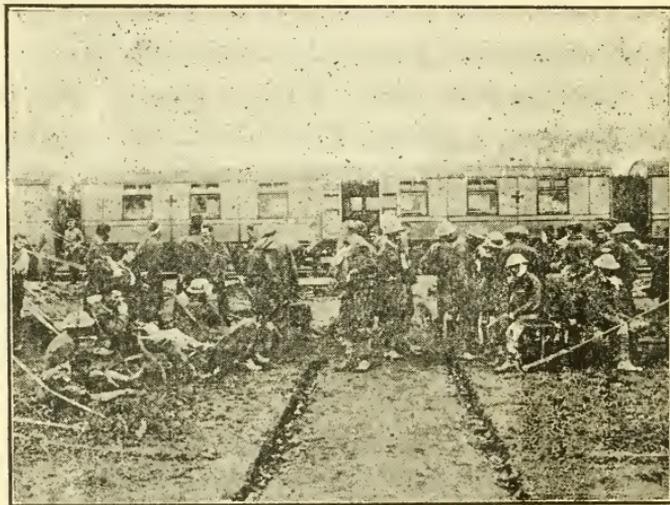
We were soon started and on our way bumping over broken roads and through the mud, gradually leaving behind us the sound of guns and the glare of star shells. On the way out we passed infantrymen going up who shouted to us, "Oh you lucky dog! How would you like to change places?" "Have you got a Blighty?" "Give my regards to the folks in Blighty." (Blighty being the soldiers' term for England.)

We rode in the ambulance for about two hours, and the bumping of the old car over the rough roads did not tend to make our wounds pain any less.

I was quite sick before the journey ended and began to feel cold and miserable generally, and to make matters worse, one of the poor chaps aboard became hysterical. He began taking of home and finished by calling the Huns all the horrible names he could think of. His conduct was far from being pleasant, particularly to the ears of one in pain and with nerves already on edge.

At last we arrived at what is known as a field hospital clearing station (7 Field A. Canadian, in

this case), situated in the town of Bailleul. We left the ambulance and entered the hospital and here enjoyed first real comforts since coming to France. First we had a real hot bath. Then our wounds were soon dressed and we were put on cots and fed hot soup, and, I believe, a little rum. Soon we were quite normal again except the poor chap who had become crazed.



The next morning we were taken from the hospital and placed aboard a hospital train bound for a base hospital to receive further treatment and care.

This train was a complete surprise to me in its make up and equipment. It was, in effect, a practical moving hospital.

Those of the wounded who could sit up were conducted to a modern parlor car, and such as were stretcher cases were placed in beds. I was also greatly surprised to see nurses aboard and at the sight of them felt ashamed of myself clothed as I was in such a dirty uniform.

I was not the only one who was surprised or made remarks concerning the train and its appointments. Some of the remarks I heard were really quite amusing, for instance— One fellow said: “Golly, Blime mate, but this is some train.” Another, a Canadian, remarked, “This is the first time I ever rode on the cushions in my life.”

We had no sooner comfortably settled down in our seats, thoroughly contented and satisfied with our lot and in the belief we were in for a comfortable ride, than a sweet voice behind me said, “Do you boys want any cigarettes?”

We instantly looked around and beheld the owner of the voice, and seeing immediately fell in love. There, standing in the doorway, was a nurse dressed in the cleanest and whitest garment I thought I had ever seen and wearing upon her breast the Red Cross. She surely was a dream, an angel, almost, she seemed to me.

We were too surprised for the moment to exercise our power of speech and only gazed. She said, “Well, cannot you boys speak?” At that I replied, “Yes Sister.”

"Well, do you care for any cigarettes?" She then repeated, at the same time holding out a packet of what are known as "Players'" cigarettes. I accepted the package but as yet could not find the power, it seemed, to properly express myself or to thank her. The others (there were five of us in the car), simply stretched out their hands and also received a package.

The nurse then left us and immediately we found our voices and recovered our power of speech and expressed our opinion of this "Angel of Mercy."

"Gee, ain't she a peach!" exclaimed a Canadian.

"Lor' love me, but ain't she a Queen?" said an Englishman.

"Aye, she is a' thot and mare," said a Scotie.

I wanted to see her again and so pushed a bell. She at once reappeared.

"I beg your pardon, sister," I said, and repeated, "We would like to smoke but have no matches." I already felt myself blushing to the roots of my hair, and I knew that inwardly she was laughing at me. The others the while just sat back and devoured her with their eyes.

I felt she knew I was lying about having no matches, but she gave us a box and said she would bring us a cup of chocolate, which she soon did. We could have just stayed on that train for the duration of the war and enjoyed every minute of the time, I assure you.

Later I managed to get into conversation with one of the doctors and was informed by him that this train had been fitted out and fully equipped and all expenses connected therewith borne by the Order of St. John's. That all the nurses and orderlies had provided their own uniforms and received no pay for their services.

Noble men and women, all, who left families and loved ones and gave up the comforts of home to devote their time, and lives as well, if need be, to care for and nurse the sick and wounded who were day and night coming in countless numbers from the fighting line.

Oh, the sublime sacrifice made by these ministers of charity and the kindness and untiring devotion to duty displayed by these women, and through it all always appearing cheerful and ever smiling and shedding into the hearts of the men under their care little rays of sunshine and comfort.

The recollection of their untiring, ceaseless, prompt and tender care day and night will be forever carried in the minds and thoughts of the thousands of men who have passed through their hands.

I wish I were possessed with the power to do them something of the justice, to give them at this time something of the credit to which they are entitled, but no living mortal can ever, with pen or by voice begin to tell the world just how much they are doing and will have done for humanity in this awful strife.

Poets may sing their praises, and writers possessed with the greatest power of expression, may write to the fullest extent of their ability, and yet have passed through their hands can really know none but the men who have been so fortunate as to or understand.

I can and do feel for them with all the feeling my heart is capable of, but I cannot express to you, dear reader, just that feeling as I would, and I can only add, God bless the Order of St. John's and all like organizations and their colleagues, and the Angels of Mercy, for the great work they are doing for humanity.

We arrived in due time at Eataples, our destination, and there saw with what system and how quickly the wounded were handled and cared for.

Cars of all descriptions were waiting for us at the platform of the railway station. In less than twenty minutes the train had delivered its cargo of broken, maimed and sick men. Stretcher after stretcher was placed in the motor ambulances in waiting and hurried off to the different hospitals.

I, with the other walking cases, was the last to be taken away. We were directed to and entered an old Ford car provided for transferring cases such as ours. A Canadian in the car with me, as soon as we were seated, said to the driver, "Home James." We were soon off and bumping and buz-

zing along, laughing and quite happy and contented with our lot.

Oh, who would not be wounded under such circumstances. I, for one, was glad. Once more we were away from the shell fire and the sight of death and destruction. The sun was shining, there was no mud, we had a pocket full of fags, and before us was the certainty of a nice clean bed, three square meals a day, the pleasure of being waited upon and to be able to talk in good English. A picture of Heaven would not have been more beautiful to us, for to our minds it surely was Heaven we were now going to in comparison to the place we had left.

My stay in the hospital was full of pleasure, romance and tragedy, to say the least. I had a nice clean bed, plenty to eat and the tenderest of care. I was really sorry when informed by the doctor one morning that I was well enough to leave the bed.

Upon leaving the bed I was given a blue uniform and soon after permitted to go out and walk about the hospital grounds, and it was not long before I was perfectly well.

While about the hospital as a convalescent, I was permitted to visit the operating rooms and witness the doctors and surgeons work upon their patients. I was also permitted to assist the nurses in certain cases, in caring for their wards, and in this I was more than amply paid in seeing them care for the

disabled and in the fact that I too was now doing something to aid my fellow beings to live rather than to die, a great satisfaction it gave me, I must assure you.

In connection with this work I saw the nurses administer not only medicine, but what seemed more



One of the "Angels of Mercy"

important even, sympathy. They seemed to pass from bed to bed as noiselessly as some spirit, simply. If a patient was in pain she would speak to and soothe him and soon he would seem to forget his suffering. It was almost as though some fairy had wafted a magic wand that dispelled pain and misery when this tender care was administered.

I should like to picture, if I have the ability, one of the hospital scenes I witnessed.

A boy is lying very near death. The doctors have "passed him up," as they say in such a case. He grows very quiet now and then begins to speak. In his mental wanderings he must have thought himself back in the dear old home and with his mother, for he says: "Good old ma, you're glad Jackie went to war, aren't you?"

"You won't cry, will you, mama?"

"Your little Jackie fought well."

"Oh, mama! I am glad to die. The pain is awful, it hurts me so."

And then he begins to scream aloud in his suffering. The scream soon dies away and he moans for a time.

A sister—God bless her, she is always there in such cases—stands at his head. She places her cool, white hand on his brow and he becomes quiet again.

A priest (a Canadian), now takes the boy's hand and shows him a cross. At once a wonderful light seems to cross his face and he begins to speak quite rational, and then he exclaims, with what strength he has, "Oh, we gave them Hell! Didn't we boys?" "Good old boys." "Good bye boys." Then his mind wanders again and he exclaims in a milder tone, "Hello, mama, Jackie is coming home." He

now closes his eyes and, with a smile on his face, sleeps.

It is all over with poor Jackie, this world of strife, trouble and suffering. The sister covers his face and I see a tear roll down her cheek. I try to suppress my feeling but feel as though I am about to choke. The priest remains with the dead, offering a prayer for the repose of the departed spirit of brave little Jackie, who has gone to his last home.

This is but one of the pitiful scenes to be witnessed in the hospitals day and night.

Whatever may have been the life of the man in the past, the soldier in the service is taught to live clean, to fight clean, to have clean thoughts as far as possible, and if he falls and need to die, to be as brave in the face of death as at any other time, and to die with clean thoughts and with a hope for a better life beyond.

That's the kind of men they breed in the army today. They take sons of kings and of tramps and alike teach them first to be men and to live true and die nobly as soldiers and gentlemen. There is no class, no creed or social distinction recognized. All are on a level and treated as men under all circumstances.

Good bye hospital. In time I was ordered to report at the C. O.'s office (commanding officer's) for examination, preparatory for discharge from the hospital.

On being examined by a board of doctors my lungs were tested and otherwise I was thoroughly gone over and in the end I was pronounced fit. The C. O. then took my hand and said, "Off you go, and the best of luck."

I saw and heard some quite amusing things while in the examination rooms of the hospital during my examination for discharge. The men are in no hurry to leave its comforts when they know it means going back to mud, discomforts, misery and danger. Consequently some such things occur, at least they did in my presence—

A man was being examined, and the doctor said to him, "You say you cannot see very well?" "No sir, I can't," he replied. "How far can you see," continued the doctor. "Not very far, sir." "Can you see three hundred yards?" "Oh, no sir." "Can you see two hundred yards away?" "No sir." "Well, then you can see one hundred yards?" "I—I think so, sir," stammered the man. "Well then," said the doctor, "you'll be all right. Where you are now going the Germans are but fifty yards away. Off you go, and the best of luck." And the doctor turns his attention to the next man.

Another case— This man is also trying to "swing the lead," as the saying is, with his eyes. The doctor holds up at some distance an article and asks him to tell what it is. "I can't see it, sir," replies the man. After picking up and trying him on a

number of small articles with the same evidence of nearsightedness as displayed by the man, the doctor suddenly holds up a large dinner pail, and asks, "What is this?" "Oh, that is an American nickel, sir." His examination is ended at this, and he too goes up the line with "best of luck," where he will perhaps have to use his eyes to good advantage.

I left the hospital the day following my examination and was soon back in the harness clad in a new uniform and with an entire new equipment.

CHAPTER XIII

I RETURN TO THE REGIMENT



LEFT for the hospital in December, 1915, just after Christmas, and was absent from the regiment about two months.

My journey back was far from being as interesting or romantic as it had been going to the hospital, and good reason, for the return was made in a box car, and you can hardly imagine one being able to find either interest or romance under such conditions. About six men from different regiments made up the party sent up the line in this way and at this time.

I was informed our brigade was now out of line and back in billets, and so looked forward to a period of quiet and peace, for which I was thankful.

Reaching the brigade I was ordered to report for duty to the officer commanding "B" squadron and then became attached to the Fourth troop, commonly known in our regiment as the "Black Troop," not because the men were black, of course, but for

the reason that in pre-war days this troop had all black horses.

Naturally it took me but a short time to get settled and used to my new surroundings and acquainted with the men. At this time we were billeted in the small village of Freeacourt, a place situated near the summer resorts of Ault and La Treeport. The country here was both peaceful and picturesque and our work interesting and somewhat exciting, though minus the hardships and horrors of war.

Prior to my return to the regiment it had received its horses and so I found a mounted unit once more and the men accordingly quite happy. The horses had been sent from England and I never saw a finer lot of cavalry horses. With them the men were already in love and they would go about asking their comrades and officers such questions as these:— "Have you seen my horse?" "He is a dark bay about sixteen hands, and has a white star on his head and a white off hind fetlock," or similar descriptions, according to the horse.

Among the horses were about forty of those we had while in England and if a boy found his old horse he was not long in applying to his commanding officer for the possession of his old friend, a request that was never refused. I was not fortunate enough to find my old horse, which I had named Kitchener, though I looked for him and was disap-

pointed, and envied the men who did receive their old mounts.

It was interesting to see the men who did obtain their own horses throw their arms about their necks and talk to them as they might have done to a long lost brother. Some such remarks were made in such cases, as:— “And what have they been doing to the old fellow since I left you in England?” “I’ll bet you missed me old man.” “Why how thin you have got.” “I would like to find the brute that put those spur marks on your belly.” “Never mind, you and I are going to see this thing through together after all, are we not, old man?”

Yes a man soon learns to love a horse or a dog, and under certain circumstances most anything with life. I have known the men to carry about with them a little kitten that they might just have something to love. But a horse to a cavalryman is a friend and a pal, and a good cavalryman will never abuse him. He may punish him, but abuse him never, and soon the horse comes to know and love his rider equally as well I believe. There is really but one horse in the army, and that is the one you own. His comfort will be looked after first at all times and under all circumstances.

In giving out the horses to the men seniority was considered, and I being one of the old, or original, men of the regiment obtained a very good choice in the horse I first received, but I will tell

you how I obtained the horse I possessed and rode until the battle of the Somme.

Jack Hind had received a horse which, to all appearances, was a mild, peaceful animal. He at once saddled and mounted it without difficulty. Then without apparent reason the horse made a jump and next we saw horse and Jack flying through the village street, Jack holding to the front arch of the saddle like grim death to keep from being thrown.

Jack was not as yet what would be called an expert rider, and as he went down the street kept shouting, "Whoa, whoa, you son-of-a-gun," to which the horse paid little or no attention, unless it was to increase its speed and effort to rid itself of the rider. Attracted by the shouting and the scene the street was soon lined with Tommies who were enjoying the excitement and all the time shouting and giving to Jack all kinds of encouraging and comforting advice, as, for instance:—

"Stick it old man." "Ride her Jack." "Whoop her up." "Hang on Jack."

A sergeant also took a hand in the fun and bawled out, "Where in hell are you going with that horse?"

Another asked Jack to send him a post card when he arrived to let him know where he was and how he enjoyed the trip.

This excitement lasted but a few minutes, and how long the horse would have continued to run or Jack to hang on I do not know, had fate not

placed in the way one of those village ponds so common in France.

Reaching the pond the horse stopped dead, stiff-legged, at which Jack shot from his back as though fired from a gun and continued to travel through space for a short distance landing finally with a great splash in the dirty, slimy pond. The horse, rid of its rider, seemed to have gotten over its desire to travel and now just bent its neck and drank from the pond as unconcerned as though it had had no other purpose in making the trip than to secure a drink.

I was attracted to the horse by the spirit it displayed, and while she was drinking I saw my opportunity to secure her. I went up to her and without any difficulty secured hold of the bridle and began making quite a fuss over her which seemed to please her and to give her confidence and trust in me.

I now called to Jack, who was just emerging from his forced bath, and asked if he was ready to mount again and continue his ride. "You can go to hell, and take that son-of-a-gun of a horse with you too," he answered.

I had by this time taken quite a fancy to the horse and felt I would like to possess her for my mount, so I struck for a horse trade while conditions appeared right. I said, "All right, I am a sport. If you do not want this horse I will let you have my horse. Will you trade?"

“Sure,” he replied, and continued. “You fix it and I’ll take that ‘old skate’ of your’s that you call a horse.”

I immediately took the “Outlaw” to the stable, tied her up, off saddled and blanketed her, and by this time we were quite friends. I then went over and saw Lieutenant Moss, our troop officer, about the exchange. He had no objections, providing the arrangement was satisfactory to each party concerned. Things were soon arranged and I took possession of my new horse and saddlery. I at once named her “Springbuck,” a name she well deserved, I felt. We soon became great friends and continued such until her death, an account of which I will give later on.

Our stay in Freeacourt was, on the whole, most enjoyable. We had nice clean barns to sleep in and plenty of good food. We mingled freely with the villagers who treated us as citizens. We visited Ault, La Treeport, and all other places of interest about. Posed for our photographs, singly, in groups and with the natives.

I will try, at this point, to give you some idea of what the life of a cavalry regiment in billets is like.

Reville at 5:30 A. M. Stables at six o’clock, when we are required to clean the stables, brush down, water and feed the horses, and then get saddles ready for the morning parade. Breakfast at seven, which, as a rule, consisted of bacon, bread and tea.

At 9:15 parade mounted, properly dressed, smart and clean, both man and horse. At this time off we would go to a nearby field and there ride and drill, and learn the use of sword while mounted and in charging. In the course of the drill we would trot, canter and gallop. This drill period usually finished about 10:30 or 11 o'clock, when we would ride back to stables with our blood tingling and feeling altogether quite happy and contented with everything in general.

Upon return from drill we would commence what is known as noon stables. From 11:30 until 1 P. M., our horses would be thoroughly groomed and then be inspected by the troop officer. After the horse had passed inspection we would clean and polish saddle, sword and rifle and put everything in shape for the next day. Next the horse would be watered and fed and by 1 P. M., the day's work would be over, except for such things as evening stables, when the horses had to be fed and watered, and perhaps an afternoon class, at times rather boring yet quite interesting providing the soldier was interested in learning and ambitious for advancement.

At 5 P. M. we had tea, which consisted of bread (if we had any left), tea and jam and cheese. Occasionally the bill of fare changed and we then had jam and no cheese, or vice versa.

It will be seen we had some time for pleasure while in billets and accordingly the time spent at

Freeacourt was pleasant. During our leisure we would stroll through the village street, visit the cafes, drink white or red wine, and perhaps champagne, if we had the price, the former we could buy at 1 franc 50c, or 25 cents for a quart bottle. The best champagne we could purchase at 5 francs, or a little less than a dollar. With our poor knowledge of French we could not pronounce "La Vin Blanch," so we would say, simply, "Vim Blink," and many other funny names in making our wants known, but, on the whole, we managed quite well to make ourselves understood and to get what we wanted. We also made love to every mademoiselle we saw and had little difficulty along this line though we could not talk much French.

Wednesday afternoons we were generally given a half holiday, which we occupied in some form of sport—such as playing base ball, foot ball and at times polo. We never lacked for sport, and could always find or make a base ball and manage very well with a pick handle for a bat, and with such improvised outfits played some really good and exciting games. Our games we termed "Inter-Troop games." The only difficulty we had in making up the outfit was in finding among the men one bold enough to umpire the game, and that was little to be wondered at, for no matter what decision the umpire rendered he was always considered wrong, and suffered the consequence.

The Canadians played their games in the same way they fought,—with enthusiasm and vim, putting their whole heart into whatever they did and enjoying, apparently, every phase of every game they played. In baseball, of course, they were the undisputed champions for the English, French and Belgian soldiers could not seem to play the game very well. In football naturally the Englishmen excelled, but just to show them that we could play their game as well, we organized a football team and played the game with so much success that we acquired a reputation of being football players also.

At football we won many a hard fought game, defeating teams of the Tenth Battery of Artillery, Seventh D. G., First D. G. or King's Body Guard, and finally when we entered the Divisional league were defeated one goal to nil, not then, however, by an English team, but by a team of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery. In this contest we played three times to get a decision. The first game was 1—1; the second game no goals scored, and finally in the third the R. C. H. A. romped home with the bacon—one goal to nil. They deserved to win, and we shared the honor with them after all, for it was two Canadian teams that played off for the final, and a Canadian team that won the cup.

While our life in France was at times very hard yet as I have tried to show there are times when a soldier experiences all of the pleasures of civilian life, at least it was so with us up to this time.

CHAPTER XIV

WE LEAVE FREEACOURT



HILE at Freeacourt we were in receipt of news daily from the front and learned the Huns were throwing their hordes against Verdun. We were able to and did follow with great interest every phase of the fighting.

Our close association with the French people at home during these long and terrible months enabled us to see and know something of their anxiety and suffering, and to deeply sympathize with them, which we truly did. My sympathy went out in particular to one Madame De Brey, an old woman who had lost her son and two grandsons within one week.

I happened to be billeted on her farm. She seemed to me to be always crying, and during this battle would sit in an old wicker rocking chair in front of an old fashioned fireplace and rock to and fro and mutter to herself, "Mon de Dieu, Mon de Dieu. Oh La Mavis Guerre, and Moi Pavre Gascons, Moi Pavre Garsons Mort Pour La France La Sale Les Allemands." (Translated would be:— "Oh my

God, Oh my God, Oh the awful war. My poor sons. My poor sons died for France. The dirty Germans.”

I tried, in my poor way, to comfort her and longed so much to be able to talk fluently to her in her own language. I wanted to comfort her and to tell her what a glorious thing it must be to be able to die for one's country, when it was fighting in such a noble cause, and how proud she should be and must be of her son and grandsons, who had proven to be such brave and loyal sons of France. At times in my effort to converse with her and to cheer her, I would succeed in bringing a smile to her lips and I then felt that she understood, in a sense, what I was trying so hard to convey to her. Poor Madame, my heart certainly went out to her, yet she was but one of thousands of women who have given up and were then giving their all for France and for the glorious cause of liberty and democracy of the whole world.

It is the women who are the real sufferers in this war. I know it for I have had the opportunity to see and note something of the suffering they have had to bear. Most of all it is the mother whose heart was first broken at the parting with her son, and who now sits at home watching, waiting and praying for his safe return. The return of a part of her own flesh and blood, as it were, and to her the dearest and best boy, and the bravest, as well, that ever lived. And next the wife who waits for

a husband's return, torn by the thought that she may have to wait in vain, and that instead it may be he who must wait for her in that unknown world. And the sister who mourns the loss of her brother, and the lass who waits patiently and faithfully at home for the return of a lover.

Oh! the anxious days they all spend during this cruel war and the thoughts they have concerning the health, comfort and life of the loved one; and then the awful thought that he may be injured, or worse, possibly killed at that very moment. And then, when the word comes, as it has and will to so many, that such loved one has fallen, what anguish and what heartache is and must be experienced. But I cannot begin to picture the suffering and would not if I could.

On the part of the soldier there is not that same suffering, for he leaves home to fight and there goes with him a certain feeling that he is going as a matter of duty and that there will be associated with it certain excitement, adventure and honor and that he may possibly win some high laurel and return home and be welcomed as a hero. While his life at the front is filled with hardship and danger, he has never anything like the same anxious heartache or fears that his mother or the others to whom he is so near and dear have and feel.

Oh, it is the women who wait and watch and listen who have my deepest sympathy. I have seen the far

off expression in the eyes of the women of France, that expression that spoke anxiety and suffering. I have seen tears roll down their cheeks when speaking of their men, and often have I had them reverently and with expressions of love show me the photograph of the one so much in their thought.

Women who wait and watch and suffer, we who are soldiers think of you and feel for you and reverently salute you.

At last orders came to move and our time for play was over.

Hurrah! in boot and saddle we are off on our first march as a cavalry unit. It was on one of those splendid spring days, with sky clear, sun shining and birds singing we rode out of Freeacourt, and like the birds we were singing too.

The villagers came out to see us off. They filled our water bottles with cider, wished us good luck, and threw kisses as we rode away. We presented a noble spectacle, I am sure, and I know to this you would agree could you have been one of the spectators in this French village on this April morning.

Picture to yourself a quaint old-fashioned French village. A cavalry brigade under command, with horses and men smart, clean and fresh and the sun shining on polished brass and stirrups. The horses pawing and neighing and the men laughing and chafing the villagers. Then suddenly the blare of a

trumpet, the giving of commands by the officers and instantly the regiment is at attention.

This was something of the appearance we presented that April morning, a sight both picturesque and inspiring.

"Vive La Canadiens," the villagers shouted to us, and not to be outdone by them, we shouted back "Vive La France."

A command is now given and every man stands to his horse's head. Another command and each man, almost as one, swings into his saddle. The trumpet again sounds and each man presses his knees home and the whole squadron walks off in unison. The order is then given, "March at ease," at which we begin to sing. The villagers again wave their hands and call after us. Soon we are out of sight of the village and when about a mile beyond take up our position in a field.

Here we halt and are soon joined by "A" and "C" Squadrons. The men of the regiment dismount and each looks to his saddle to see that the girths are properly fitted. After a time we are also joined by the Lord Strathcona Horse and the Fort Garry Horse, and now, for the first time in France, the Canadian Cavalry Brigade parades as a mounted unit.

Brigadier General Seely now rides up with his staff and inspects us and compliments us on our smart and soldierlike appearance.



An order is given and we mount. Then at a command each regiment swings into place, the R. C. D.'s leading in half sections, followed by the L. S. H. and the F. G. H. The column strings out in half sections along the road for nearly a mile and a half, and in this order we take up and continue our march.

We now commence to sing, and as we ride along the singing grows louder and louder until the whole countryside is filled with the song. We sang that day, to the tune of "Sing Me to Sleep," our old favorite song, which went something like this:—

"Far, Far from Ypres, I long to be,
Where German snipers can't snipe me,
Down in my dug-out where worms creep,
Waiting for someone to sing me to sleep,
Sing me to sleep where the star shells fall,
Let me forget the Huns and all.
Dark is the trenches, cold is my feet
Nothing but bully and hardtack to eat.

CHAPTER XV

CAVALRY AT THE SOMME



WE WERE on the move for nearly two months, passing through, on the way, such historical places as, Crecy and Asincourt, and finally the old city of Amiens.

At the latter place the citizens were out to greet us and bid us welcome. Flags were flying, hats were waved, and we felt quite as we might have felt had the day of victory arrived and we were then entering the city a victorious army.

We of the R. C. D.'s, were now the last regiment in line and thus had a good opportunity to see things. We were covered with dust from the long ride, but that only seemed to lend additional color to the scene. The day was clear and the sun shone bright on our accoutrements, and we, ourselves, sat perfectly erect in our saddles, looking neither to the right nor to the left, and I have no doubt greatly impressed the natives with our soldier-like appearance.

We continued on through the city and halted for the night two kilometers to the north. I am going to try and draw for the reader's benefit, if I can, a pen picture of a camp of cavalry when halted on the road for the night.

At the command, "Halt," the men dismount and at once loosen the girths. Then a picket line is taken from the pack and made fast to the ground by the aid of heel pegs (a heel peg being attached to each soldier's saddle for the purpose).

The line once made fast, each horse is tied thereto by means of a head rope. Each picket line is sixty feet long to which thirty-two horses can be attached.

The order is then given, "Off saddle," and in about two minutes each man's saddle is off and placed by him on the ground directly behind his horse. The horses are then rubbed down, watered and fed, after which the men look to their own personal and material comfort.

The first thought of the men now is, "Where are the cooks." On being informed, each takes his mess tin and proceeds to what is called the "cook house," which, under these circumstances, is merely a small trench fire built in the ground over which the cook boils water to make tea. When the water comes to a boil the cook takes a handful or two of dry tea, throws it into the boiling water, adds a bit of sugar and, perhaps milk, and shouts, "Tea up."

Each man securing his tea returns to his saddle and there eats some "Bully beef," and biscuit and drinks his tea. This constitutes the evening meal.

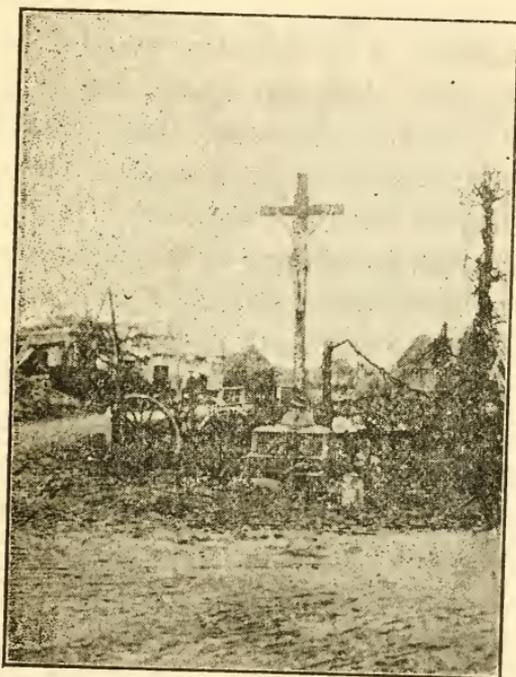
After satisfying the inner man in this way and to such extent, each man prepares his bed for the night in this manner:— First he stretches his water proof sheet on the ground directly behind his saddle, next takes his saddle blanket and rolls up into it. His bed is now made and he is properly dressed for it, and when he lies down, as he now does, he is "in bed," with the mother earth for a mattress and the sky for a roof.

It is on still clear nights in camp on the road that he can and usually does lie and think and dream of home, but usually after an all day's ride he soon falls asleep and all is forgotten. Five o'clock the next morning finds him in saddle and off again on another twenty kilometer hike.

It was not long after leaving Amiens before we came within sound of the guns, and with that we naturally began to sit up and take notice. We realized now that our days of peace and quiet were numbered and that we must soon be within reach of those guns, and we speculated as to which part of the line we were to be assigned a place.

At mid-day we halted for a time and watered and fed our horses. During this period we received information that the Canadian Brigade would take up a position southeast of Busses. By this time we

had left civilization behind, and were once more traveling through the shell-swept country in the north of France. Here hardly a tree was to be seen and no signs whatever of vegetation, the fields where once wheat and corn and other vegetation had grown were nothing but a horrible waste, and as



for roads, they were badly torn and broken, rendering travel very hard for both man and beast.

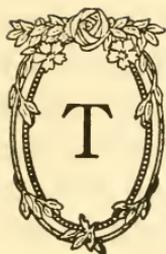
We passed through great heaps of wreckage where once villages had stood, but strange to say, a fact nevertheless, there amidst it all we usually found standing, unscathed from shell fire and war's awful havoc, the crucifix. The crucifix is to be

found in all French and Belgium villages, and we soldiers wondered, with good reason, why and how, amidst all the devastation and ruin, this religious symbol or sacred shrine escaped unharmed.

Shortly after our arrival at Busses I was promoted to the rank of full corporal, a post and a promotion I had cherished the ambition to attain since leaving Canada. I am not sure that I deserved the promotion more than any other one of my comrades, every one of whom had fought just as faithfully and suffered as fully as myself, but naturally I was delighted with the honor and respect it carried, and in the knowledge of the fact, as well, that I could now command a section of men and have full charge in dealing out death to the Germans through the operation of a Hotchkiss automatic rifle. My good comrades seemed quite as pleased as myself and heartily and sincerely congratulated me on the promotion, and accordingly I felt quite at peace with the whole world, excepting, of course, our enemy.

Such, in a way, is the life, generally, of a cavalry unit. Riding from point to point and when not really in action constantly drilling and keeping fit. It is a life of hardship from which some men sicken and die, while others apparently seem to thrive and be the better for it, and the same may be said to be quite equally true of the horses.

CHAPTER XVI
PEN PICTURE OF
A BATTLE ON THE SOMME



THE BRITISH cavalry had been pouring in from all the northern roads of France to engage in the battle I shall try to describe here.

Division after division had come up, consisting of lancers, hussars and dragoons. A magnificent display of manhood and horse flesh they presented. There was the Indian cavalry from far away India. The British cavalry from all over the empire, and last, but not least, the First Canadian cavalry brigade—the right of the line, the pride of the British army and a terror to the entire world, as we imagined, for all cavalry brigades hold that opinion.

The first phase of the battle opened in June, 1916. The object, as we were then informed, was to take the offensive, in the belief that if we did so it would compel the Germans to cease their efforts toward and their onslaughts on Verdun.

Today all the world knows with what spirit and dash the magnificent British army attacked and

drove the Huns from the strongly fortified position they had prepared and occupied since being driven back at the battle of the Marne.

At the beginning of this attack the whole heavens seemed to have opened up and to be raining shot and shell, and the awful din of the guns battering at and into the Huns' first line of defense was as sweet music to our ears.

At dawn the Germans awoke to the fact that some horrible new engine of war had been constructed and was being used for the first time against them and with awful effect. We, ourselves, were no less surprised than the enemy at the first sight of these horrible implements of war which appeared so unexpectedly upon the scene. They looked to us so ugly and so powerful, so unwieldy and so irresistible, and so horrible were their appearance that we were awed and yet, at the same time, struck with great admiration for them.

This new engine of warfare seemed in its movement to crawl along like some mammoth uncouth reptile and to be possessed with wicked little eyes with which it appeared to be seeking out prey to devour, and when its gun spoke and the machine guns rattled from within, it looked for all the world like some fiery dragoon spitting out tongues of flame.

It was the tanks!

The tanks that took the first line of German trenches. They walked through wire, straddled

trenches, climbed in and out of shell craters. They would walk up, as it were, to a pill-box, and then back away a little and then go forward and through it. They would go through a wood knocking down trees and destroying machine gun nests, and anything and everything that came in their way was crushed to a pulp.

The Huns, taken by surprise, at first stood to attack them. They would shoot their rifles, throw bombs at them, but all to no avail. The effect was the same and no more damaging than that of a boy blowing peas through a pea shooter against a plate glass.

Finally the Huns, discouraged, would throw up their hands and cry, "Kamrade Merci, Kamrade," but Mr. Tank had no mercy to show and no time or room to take prisoners. It would just continue on its way rolling over and crushing the defenseless Huns into a jelly. Oh what terror it must have struck to the hearts of the enemy for we ourselves, simply looking on, were filled with awe at the terrible havoc it could and did create.

The infantry, the tireless magnificent infantry, followed the tanks and took possession of the first line. Oh the wonderful deeds of heroism and the endurance the men displayed. Village after village fell into their hands and thousands of prisoners were captured by them.

During this battle the German dead became piled in places as high as three or four feet. With all this horrible slaughter, however, there was yet some feeling displayed between man and man. In this connection it was a common sight, and I must say a wonderful sight, to see the German soldiers being cared for by the stretcher bearers of our army, and neither was it an unusual sight, that of German prisoners helping to carry out the wounded British soldiers.

The battle line seemed to change every hour. Place after place fell to the British, and as they did, we, of the cavalry, kept coming up closer and closer, waiting the time for our dash to the last line of German defenses and then on and into the open country on the final objective—the taking of Baupaume.

When night fell, we of the cavalry found ourselves in what had been the second line of German defense the day previous. There we saw what awful havoc our shells had inflicted on the enemy. There we found the unburied dead, the equipment of the fleeing soldiers—the awful waste of life and material. Here a dead mule, there a dead horse and rider. Here an upturned gun and there wagons and limbers destroyed, and among all this wreckage here and there an aeroplane that had been brought down and also lay a heap of wreckage.

I doubt that there was ever an artist who could paint that awful yet inspiring scene witnessed by

us at this battle of the Somme. I doubt that any person could write about it and fully describe it, and while either may attempt to paint or write of it, I fear the task is beyond the power of any to do it justice, for the scenes were too rapidly changing and too awful to be painted or described.

During this engagement we, of the cavalry, never unsaddled our horses, each man and officer standing constantly to his horse with attention riveted to the scene. We actually seemed, during this time, to be carried away from ourselves, never thinking of sleep and finding hardly time to snatch a bit even to eat.

Despatch riders were constantly riding up delivering messages and then galloping away. The picture was changing constantly day and night. At night could be seen the flash of the guns along the line and for miles could be seen the fires of the cavalry. All night long could be heard the singing of thousands of voices of the men who were either to advance or were going up to the front or returning, and even amidst the roar of the guns, which seemed never to slacken, could be heard the words of the Somme, "Keep the Home Fires Burning," "Pack All Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag" and "Smile, Smile, Smile."

All night long the roads were filled with troops returning from an attack and with others going up

to the front to relieve the tired and worn out fighters—a continual stream of humanity it was, of walking, smoking, singing and joking men. Some on the way back would stop by our camp fire and tell us something of the engagement, and how and when they were hit. Some would show a souvenir—perhaps a helmet or a revolver or a pair of field glasses they had secured. Some would tell us how the boys were pushing the Germans back.

All news they gave us was good news, for they never came back with any pessimistic tales. They were great men, truly, and seemed to be happy amidst it all. Some would tell us just how they had killed their last Hun and give us the description in such a moderate and even tone of voice that it would seem they were telling of but an every day occurrence. Oh the sublime courage and the devotion to duty displayed by those men at the battle of the Somme can never be told fully to their credit.

With the coming of day the scene again changes. The cavalry is once more on the move. Shall we attack this time, we wonder? We look to our arms. We who have revolvers see that the action is in perfect working order, and all see that their swords are perfectly free in the scabbard. We pat our horses on the neck as if to cheer them and make much of them.

I look at my supply of ammunition for my machine gun and see that the gun's action is clear. I instruct

my men just what to do, how to do it and when to act. Over all this preparation for action we become sentimental. We shake hands and resolve to do our duty to the limit or die. We do not say so, of course, but that is what we all think.

We do not go far, however. We simply change our positions to screen ourselves as far as possible from the observation of the balloons of the enemy.

Here we now see the never ceasing stream of Red Cross cars coming and going. Guns are being brought forward and ammunition, rations and water going up to the fighters. Overhead aeroplanes are watching every movement of the enemy. There can be seen a great heliograph at work sending messages back to general headquarters. Here a group of German prisoners are being herded back by a small cavalry escort. Let me say here that the Hun in the trenches and the Hun a prisoner are two entirely different persons. In the trenches he is vicious and cruel. A prisoner he has, or seems always to have, an oily smile of contentment on his face and is easily managed.

Now across the open is seen a tank lumbering back for more supplies. I can see it now again as I write. It looks for all the world like some great beast of prey coming back after a gorgeous feast. As I watch it I can almost imagine I see the blood dripping from its jaws. I can imagine also that I see a horrible leer on its ugly face. I can imagine

I hear it say, "I am the destroyer of the whole universe."

But alas! My dream is shattered when Mr. Tank suddenly ceases its awful fascinating gait and comes to a halt opposite me, and at that a little iron door in its side opens and from it peers the dirty grinning face of a man who calls out, "Hello you fellows, have you any spare biscuits or fags around your kit?"

We have what is demanded and the request of the man is readily granted, each of our party donating a small portion of rations to the men in the tank. We also give them a drink from our water bottles and a smoke or two. In return all the man says is, "Thanks, we must be going," and off the tank lumbers.

I then wished, and have often wished, that that tank had never stopped, and that that fellow had not shown his face to us, for at the sight of the soldier's grinning face all of the things I had imagined concerning the tank, and all the romance I had pictured in my mind regarding it seemed to vanish.

CHAPTER XVII

WE DO NOT FIGHT AT LA SOMME



TO OUR great disappointment the order came, "The cavalry will retire." "What! Must we go back?" we ask. Yes, there was no mistake in the order. We were not going through that day.

General headquarters, it seemed, did not deem it advisable to throw the cavalry at the fleeing Huns who were now rapidly falling back on their prepared line, since and now known as the "Hindenburg line."

The ground was found to be almost impassable for cavalry because of the shell holes, trenches and barb wire. It was this condition that barred our way to a great and glorious charge.

While we were, in a sense, disappointed at the turn things had taken, yet we were after all glad, in a way, to turn our backs on such carnage and waste as we had witnessed.

Our horses had not been unsaddled for nearly three days and were pretty well worn out by now, to say nothing of ourselves. It had been extremely

difficult to get any water during this time for the men and the poor horses had been obliged to go for a long time without any at all, although the Royal Engineers had worked hard and accomplished wonders in providing a supply for both man and beast by erecting a pumping station and building a canvass trough at a point where but a few days before the German first line of trenches had been. We the cavalry were proud of the engineers and take off our hats to them.

We rode back that day with a feeling that we had failed to make good. Our comrades of the infantry who had cheered us as we passed them on our way toward the front line, now asked rude and pertinent questions as we passed them on our way back. For illustration— “Are you going home for lunch?” “Wont mama let you stay and fight?”

While we felt humiliated we did not care to show our feeling, and so replied in kind, with such scathing remarks as— “We’ll come back tomorrow and finish what you chaps can’t do.”

We had no sooner so replied than we were heartily sorry for the remark, for we felt it was really a gross insult, after having witnessed the gallantry and dash displayed by these brave men in taking of High Wood, Devil Wood, Freicourt, Beau Hamil and other points won in the famous fights in which they had engaged and for which they alone were

entitled to credit, for us to say we would finish what they couldn't do.

Good old "gravel crushers," we were after all, proud of you in those days and ready to give you credit for all you accomplished, and were glad that you proved to the world that the volunteer army of the British empire could fight so well as to defeat the much vaunted Prussian Guards of the central empire. You well earned and deserve the name "Bull Dogs."

We did not ask the reason for not being permitted to go forward. We simply went back as ordered. Oh, you who read can never understand our thoughts though or realize the great disappointment we felt, for our ambition was to press on and forward in those terrible days at the battle of the Somme.

We, the cavalry, were, in our estimation powerful and irresistible. We were ready to do or dare, to go anywhere if we might only be permitted to fight. We had seen our comrades of the infantry go forward. Had seen them gasp for breath, and in their death struggle imagined we saw them stretch forth their bloody hands to us and say, "Come boys, carry on."

Seeing all this and feeling as we did, can you wonder that we did at such times think there must be something wrong or we would not be held back. There seemed to be need for every man and every weapon and why we, the flower of the British army,

as we thought, were not allowed to go forward and kill, and kill, we could not then understand.

We, each and every Canadian, was ready in that year 1916, at the battle of the Somme, to make the supreme sacrifice necessary to win. To do all that the allied armies are doing today. To give our manhood to that great allied cause that the world might speedily be rid of the awful menace of Prussian rule. To give our lives, if need be, in the cause of democracy and liberty.

I have tried to describe as best I could how we had fought as infantrymen for over nine months in the filthy, slimy trenches of Belgium and Flanders, and now we had expected the supreme moment had arrived when, as a mounted unit, with knee to knee and at full gallop we were to charge and sabre the Huns and kill our way to victory and to everlasting peace for the civilized world.

But looking back now I can see the reason for the plans that were adopted and which kept us back, and I can now fully explain and apologize, as well, for our lack of trust in the wisdom of our superior officers in holding us back. The time for our advance, I now quite fully understand,, was not then but was to come later. Our staff knew, of course, what we did not, and had we been really true soldiers I realize now we would not for one moment have questioned their good judgment—the judgment of that grand and capable commanding

officer, General Haig, the pride of the British army and of the empire, and now of the civilized world.

But to come back to our personal feelings, our disappointment was of short duration and soon forgotten, and in a little while we were again smiling and carrying on like good soldiers.

Our horses seemed no less impatient to get into action, and kept pawing the earth and squealing and kicking during all this time. We imagined them as having something of our feelings and of wanting to break free from the rope that held them back, and to charge on without rider, if necessary, to the thing that was, as I thought, holding both them and us back—the dominating strength and power of the Prussian militarism.

We had now almost given up hope of ever meeting the Hun in the open and riding him down to the point of making him cry for mercy. But in those days we lived in the present, taking what was allotted to us with as good grace as possible. Of the future we constantly dreamed and planned, and do you know what a true cavalryman in service dreams?

It is to hear the command, "Charge," when knee to knee and sword in line he can ride at full gallop, knowing he has a good pal to carry him on—a horse just as anxious to meet the enemy as he. Oh the thrill that goes with a charge, and what shouting

by every man as he rides on. With a noise of the horses' hoofs and the jingling of scabbards, and the hurrah and the huzzas of the men, all blending into one continuous roar as of thunder, his blood then tingles and he presses his knee tighter to his horse, grasps the sword more firmly and urges his hand to greater speed; and if he happens to be leading a troop he will from time to time look back, and looking will see such expressions on the faces of the men that will almost appal him.

An officer looking back upon a troop of cavalry riding to a charge, cannot but wonder what man really is, as he sees him sitting steady as a rock with sword perfectly straight in front, eyes flashing, mouth open, and upon his face that awful look of grim determination. At such times he appears a demon rather than a man.

Behind him he hears the thunder of the hoofs of the thousands of well shod horses, and glancing at them he sees the foam on their necks, and their nostrils wide open and from their mouths he easily imagines he sees the coming of fire with every breath. There is nothing in warfare that gives quite the thrill or furnishes so much fascination to the man in action as a cavalry charge.

That is what we dreamed of—a cavalry charge, and with it the shock of meeting the enemy, the pointing and thrusting of sabres, hearing the squeal of horses in pain when hit, and seeing the last leap

for life as they fall mortally wounded, and then their agonizing squeal when they rear on their hind legs and, pawing the air for a second, drop dead in the performance of a noble duty to man.

I repeat, what a satisfaction, what a great and glorious feeling does a cavalryman have during a charge.

The year 1916, saw no great cavalry charge for the Canadian cavalry brigade, and once we were resigned to the fact we were not to immediately realize our great dream, we were ready for any other duty along whatever line we could best serve.

We did not complain now when compelled to leave our horses again, this time at Bourseville, somewhere in France, and go as a pioneer battalion, not to fight, but to work, to do real manual labor.

We worked north of D———— during the fall of 1916, digging trenches, making dugouts and assisting in building railroads. We also built wire entanglements, mended roads and buried the dead. We worked very hard all that fall, not as a cavalry unit, but as a pioneer or labor battalion and in such capacity we were employed until Christmas of that year.

Christmas was spent by us amongst the dead and devastation found north of D————, namely, M———. Christmas was a sad and dismal day for us but we tried as best we could to make it as cheerful as possible.

Officers and men met together that day for our holiday feast, and dined on bully beef, tea, bread and cheese, and during this Christmas dinner our thoughts went back to the folks at home and we could imagine them sitting down to a real Christmas dinner and enjoying such things as soups, chicken, turkey, cake and pie, and drinking good coffee and possibly wine and smoking tailor made cigarettes and cigars.

Our thoughts were finally disturbed and we were brought back to earth, as it were, when Captain Bell stood up and wished as a "Merry Christmas." We responded, in none too hearty tones, "A Merry Christmas, sir." None of us however, were really sincere in making such an expression and how could we be under the conditions which surrounded us. Just imagine, if you can, yourself, at such a time eating your Christmas dinner in the open, amidst wet and snow and filth, and being at the time wet and on the whole downhearted and quite miserable, physically and mentally.

Could you, yourself, under such circumstances feel merry and honestly exclaim "A Merry Christmas?" I answer for you, No, emphatically no.

But later when we stood up with our mess tins in hand filled with nothing but tea and Captain Bell repeated, "Boys, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, but before going any further I will ask your permission to make a toast.

Although it is only tea you have in your mess tins, I know my request will be heartily granted. Rather, I should say, my prayer will be heard and answered. Men of the R. C. D.'s, I wish you to drink a silent toast to the comrades who were with us in 1914, and '15, and who have since gone to answer the last great roll-call. May their souls rest in peace."

I say now that was a great Christmas dinner after all and one that will be remembered by each and every comrade present so long as he shall live. In tea we drank to the memory of the fallen heroes; our dead comrades. We were still alive and strong and fit for duty, so why should we be downhearted and have cause to complain. This thought cheered us and gave us courage and caused us to cease wishing for anything better than that with which we were then blessed, and through it we were taught a great lesson—to be thankful and to be merry and to "Smile and Carry On."

With tears in his eyes Captain Bell continued and concluded his remarks in this manner— "Boys," he said, "I know it is Hell to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, but damn it all, you are soldiers, and I am glad to say gentlemen as well, and so you must be happy and 'Smile and Carry On.'"

Yes, "Smile and Carry On," that was the only thing for us to do, and although many a boy was ready on that Christmas day to give away to his

own personal thoughts and feelings, he could not now with the thought of his fallen comrades forget his silent toast, and so he was able to say, "God permit me to 'carry on' that my toast, my silent toast, will be fulfilled, and that I may live to fight to the end for the cause for which my pals consecrated and gave their lives, for the great cause for which we were fighting, that of Humanity, Freedom and Democracy.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE GETHSEMANE OF MAN



CHRISTMAS, 1916, passed with the usual routine of work. Christmas, a day when “peace on earth and good will toward all men,” is presumed to prevail, yet on this day in question neither peace on earth existed and little good will toward men could be said to be felt. On the contrary two great factions were struggling and gripping each other by the throat, namely, on the one side “Right,” and on the other “Might,” each trying to smother the life of the other for all time.

Fortunately and for which we were thankful, we had the Right on our side, while on the side of our enemy was that of Might, an army borne with the spirit of Might rather than that of Justice and Right, and existing and possessing its power through might and force. On the side of Might was an army of oppressed and heavily taxed subjects forced by a cruel and merciless emperor to bear arms and fight their fellow beings for no other purpose than to satisfy the selfish ambition of such a ruler and the subordinates under him, for world power.

Oh! I, a British soldier, and an American citizen, who had been taught to believe that "people had certain rights, and that Right was stronger than Might, am sorry for the poor, deluded, and misinformed German and Austrian subjects, who have been and are being driven to their deaths at the command of such monsters in the form of human beings as the rulers of the House of the Hoenzollerners and the Hapsburgs. In a spirit of charity however, I say, God forgive them, for the suffering they have brought to this world, for in their mad insanity I can hardly believe they know what they do.

But as I write I feel the day of reckoning is near at hand. I saw and felt as early as in 1916, right after the sinking of the Lusatania, that the great American Republic, my adopted country and my home, must in time take a decided stand in this world affair, and that when it did it would not be on the side of "Might," but on the side of our Allies—the side of "Right," and I knew when she did, that Right must sooner or later triumph—and now that this great Republic, founded and enduring on the principle of Justice and Equality, has entered the conflict, I say the day of reckoning for the human brutes is near at hand.

We in 1916, were all volunteers making up a great volunteer army and doing so because we had been taught to know right from wrong and to respect

the right. To make up that vast army, we had come from all parts of the world—from far off India, from Africa, Australia, New Zealand, from Canada and from the British Isles, and I think I may safely whisper at this time, also from every state in the Union of the United States of America. We came to stand shoulder to shoulder to fight the Hun, after the little Belgian army had shown us the way.

And with the thought of Belgium, we can not but feel how well that grand little nation fought and held back the German horde at Leigh, fighting for practically every inch of soil and drawing back only as driven by superior numbers and strength, and yet, against such odds, holding until the much “despised and contemptible little army of Great Britain,” as the Germans then considered and termed it, came with the flower of its manhood to help those brave little defenders of civilization stay the progress of that horde of murderers, robbers and adulterers, which had already brought such destruction of life and property in the country of this little peace loving nation.

The story of the glorious defense and the retreat from Mons has already been written by writers far more learned and able to write than my poor self, but I, as a soldier, am able to say that the same spirit of chivalry and bravery and gallantry displayed by the Belgians, the French and the British in August, September and October, when they were

being driven backward almost against Paris, when things seemed so black and when all hope seemed to the poor fighting soldiers quite lost, still exists and remains with the Allied armies at this day, and this same spirit will continue to exist and will drive the enemy to cry for and accept a lasting peace.

At the time of which I have just spoken General Foch, then commanding the French reserve army, threw his forces at the center of the German horde, while at the same time British and Belgians on the left compelled the Huns in time to retire, foot by foot, back and ever back, until Paris and Calais were once more safe from attack.

Then the world breathed easier and settled down again to watch the grim struggle of Right against Might in that awful form of warfare which the world today knows as "trench warfare," a warfare in which men are forced to live underground like beasts and in which every method conceivable is resorted to in the effort to torture and kill.

But the world did more than simply watch. It sent forth its young manhood to help Right overpower Might that the former might exist and forever rule.

The colonies of the British empire answered the call to arms nobly. First came the men of Canada, followed by those of Africa and India. With the great spirit of democracy and the love of freedom and right, born and bred in them, they enthusiasti-

cally took up the cause and continued to carry on the work the "little contemptible army of Great Britain" had so nobly and successfully undertaken in those awful crushing and discouraging months of the fall of 1914.

And now the powerful nation, the wealth acquiring and wealth loving nation, the nation of Liberty, as well, the United States of America, has cast aside all selfish thoughts and ambition and is today giving her all, if need be, in men and money for the maintenance of right, for the interest and the life of humanity of the entire world. Not one whit less of the spirit of love for the cause is being shown by her today than has already been displayed by her noble allies, and now with this great united army of God fearing and liberty loving people allied on the side of "Right" it must, it will, in the end prevail.

In 1916, we were gradually wearing the Germans out we felt. They were then falling back to previously prepared positions, and well knew, I believe, the time could not be far away when they could not withstand the force of the allied armies and that they must soon be on their knees gasping for breath and asking for mercy in the gigantic struggle, the existence for which they alone were responsible.

It is now New Year's eve of which I write. With the dawn of the morrow comes a New Year. I was uneasy and nervous, and for some reason unusually tired, lonely and weary and heartsick.

I tried to sleep but could not. So I put on my cloak and went forth into the night. I walked through a communicating trench, passing as I did, infantry then on their way to the front line. I had no objective in my walk. I was uneasy and looking for something, yet I knew not what. I was, or seemed to be alone—alone with my thoughts and in my misery.

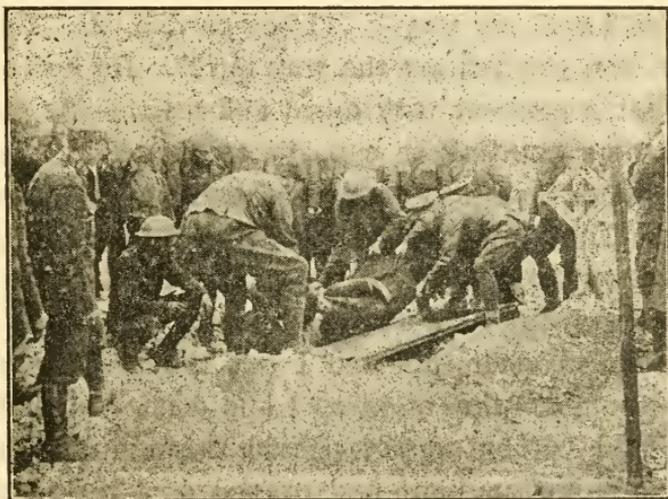


Finally, without any premeditated thought of doing so, I knelt down and offered up a prayer, the first real sincere prayer, I believe, of my life.

“How long, Oh God! How long,” I cried. Then alone out there where the great dark shadows seemed to encompass me, I thought, or I imagined, I heard the answer, “When Right prevails.”

I arose after a time and walked on and on until gray streaks of dawn began to penetrate the awful, blackness. Shadows now began to take on fearful shapes before my eyes, and in my mental fancy I imagined myself going through Hades.

As I walked I heard the droan of shells passing through the air overhead bound on their mission of death and destruction, and I could picture the awful



destruction and loss of life they were inflicting. I watched the star shells climb and cast their dull greenish hue over the land. Icicles were hanging on the barbed wire, and here and there lay the unburied dead.

I now saw coming towards me a party of untiring stretcher bearers with their burden of broken humanity being carried back to the dressing station. And a little way on in the still early dawn I came

to the side of a newly dug grave where I stopped and witnessed our soldiers being buried, wrapped simply in their blankets and placed side by side, and the mother dirt then thrown over their bodies, while a priest stood by the side of the open grave committing their souls to the care of the Great Redeemer.

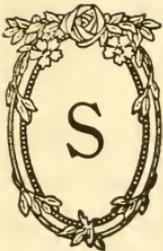
The shadows now lifted and dawn appeared. I now seemed lost. I inquire from an English staff officer I met, my way— “I beg pardon, sir,” I said, “but can you tell me the way out?” He looked at me for a moment with a sad and melancholy stare, and then pointing to a party of stretcher bearers who were bearing wounded soldiers to the rear, he said, “That is one way out.” And then pointing to the recently dug grave, he said, “And that is the other way out.” With that he left.

I looked after him and I felt that he too must have suffered this night as I had done, and that he too had without doubt passed through his Gethsemane, and perhaps had prayed as I had done— “Oh God, how long.”

I found my way back in time to my dug-out and to my comrades, a changed and a better man than New Year's morning, and with a feeling that I had been permitted to commune with my Maker on that field of havoc and destruction—in the Gethsemane of Man.

CHAPTER XIX

IN BILLETS



SOON after my return to the dugout I was hailed by one of the comrades in this manner— “Hello! old son, did you hear the news?” “What news?” I asked

“Why, we are going back to billets.”

“Yes we are,” I replied rather skeptically. “Well I tell you we are. We are going back for spring training. Back to our horses and civilization,” continued my informer.

“Is it possible?” I asked. “Sure,” he replied. “Why you know that runner over at brigade headquarters? Well he told me, and he should know. He always hears the news and puts me wise when there is a move on, and so I am sure we are going back.

We heard so many rumors of one sort or another that we believed nothing short of an official notice or order communicated in the regular order of things. The next day, sure enough, we were offi-

cially informed we were going back and that we would leave at ten o'clock that night.

Everyone was joyous over the fact we were going back to billets once more, back where we could see green trees, and for a time follow the peaceful pursuits of a soldier, and in a way forget something of the horrors and hardships of the war. Back to our games and to a plentiful supply of food, wine and champagne, which we knew we should find at Bourseville, La Somme, the place we were now going to.

At ten o'clock, to the minute, that night, we were loaded into motor trucks and soon on our way. Travelling in motor trucks was not exactly the most comfortable manner of travel. It could not be compared to travel in Pullmans, but after between three or four months of working and fighting in and around the front lines, more real pleasure was experienced riding back in an army truck than ever was or could be experienced in a trip in a Pullman on the way to a vacation earned in civilian life.

Soon we reached Amiens. It was during the night we struck the town and as we entered and passed through we were singing and shouting and, on the whole, making a fearful din.

Disturbed by the noise, the natives left their beds and opened doors and threw up windows and stood in their night apparel—some in night gowns and

some in pajamas, watching us pass through, and waiving to us as we did.

If it was a night dress we spied, up would go a whoop and a yell from the men, accompanied by some such remark as "Bon Soir Mon Chere" (Good-night, my dear), and "Oh La La, Aint she nice. Some queen, eh? Too bad we don't stop in Amiens for the night."

If it was a suit of pajamas that appeared in the window or doorway, we cried out, "Good-night-shirt!" "Hello Froggie!" "Oh you pea cracker." "After you with the pajamas." The citizens took all of our salutations in good part and seemed to heartily join with us in the humor.

We soon passed through Amiens, and thereafter tried to settle down, and some managed to get a little sleep, but most of us, because of the constant excitement and continual bumping of the trucks, managed to keep awake."

At about noon the next day we arrived at Bourseville, and as usual found the villagers out to greet and bid us welcome. From the day of our arrival in this village to the hour of our departure we practically owned the town, at least the citizens did everything in their power and means to make us comfortable and happy, and accordingly we felt the village was ours.

Bourseville is but about three kilometers from the village of Freecourt, the place where in the early spring of 1916, we began our career as a cavalry brigade, as I have already told you, and so we felt, on the whole, quite as though we had come back home.

I was fortunate in being able to secure a comfortable room from one Madam Josephine, a typical French peasant, and plainly speaking, as I found, the village gossip. She seemed to know everybody in the village and all of their affairs and everything in general that was going on. Her main and favorite topic of conversation concerned some scandal of one sort or another.

After being quartered with the madam for three days I shared my room with Corporal McKenzie, since and now an officer in the Royal Flying Corps.

Our troop, the Fourth troop, was billeted in a large empty house where they had unusually comfortable quarters and naturally were soon quite at home and very much contented. The villagers supplied the men with straw to sleep upon and did everything possible for their comfort. They also washed our clothes and cooked us many little dainties, and as for their own homes, they were always open to the soldiers.

At any time of the day and up until ten o'clock at night the soldiers and citizens mingled freely to-

gether as one large family. Their troubles were our troubles and our joys their joys.

The citizens would come out and watch with apparent interest our training of the horses. They attended our base ball and foot ball matches, and when we drilled on the village street they would turn out enmasse to watch us.

It was a common sight, and I may add, a picturesque sight, to see on Sunday afternoons and evenings the village maidens and their mothers walking arm in arm with the soldiers. They practically adopted us as their brothers and sons and treated us as such.

There was not a day while here that there was not something of interest to see or do, and very frequently informal dances were arranged for evenings at which the boys and maidens, and mothers as well, came and danced with us. It was really surprising to see how quickly the soldiers picked up the French language, and I may add everything else that was not nailed down. We had little or no difficulty now in conversing freely with all the French people and felt quite like Frenchmen when in their company.

Aside from the many little innocent amusements we took part in, I am going to chance telling of one of several somewhat lawless acts on the part of the soldiers. This one event happened to be in the way of an arrangement for a banquet.

"How about a feed to-night, Bill?" some of the men under me asked one day. "Sure, quite agreeable, I am on," I replied.

"Well," said one of the men, Leo Barge (he was our cook), has promised to cook a dinner for us, providing we bring him something worth cooking." "Now I will tell you what we will do, we will get the 'gang' together and find the eatables and have the dinner to-night."

We at once began to make plans to secure the food. Three men were detailed to forage about for wood for the fire. Two others were selected to get vegetables, and when it came to the question of meat it was unanimously decided that we should have nothing less than chickens. But who is going to get the chickens, and how and where from, is asked. "Let Jones attend to that," one man suggested, and immediately I was unanimously selected chairman of the poultry committee. I accepted the job, and as we had no time to loose directed Bigney to summon Picken and tell him to report to me at once.

Upon being joined by Picken, Bigney, he and I adjourned to meet in a little room of the village cafe. I had already thought of a scheme by which we could obtain the chickens, and when we were settled down to business, unfolded my plan for our part in the night's campaign.

“Now you know,” I said, “those twelve chickens and that great big rooster the officers have been carting around for the last four months that they might be supplied with fresh eggs? Well, I think they would make darn good eating for us.” My co-workers both replied, “I say so too.”

With the source of supply approved, I continued, as to plans— “Now I have looked the ground over and thought of a plan, and it seems to me there is nothing to it. The only difficulty, I see, will be to get the darn squaking things without their making any noise and alarming the officers or guard.”

“Oh, that’s easy,” responded Bigney, who I firmly believe was an expert in this line of work, and continued, “I have a torch that will blind any chicken that takes a squint at it. Now I will go into the coop, flash the torch, blind the chickens and pass them out to Picken, who can immediately wring their necks and then pass them to you and you can put them in the bag.” The plan looked quite feasible to me, and I said “All right, and now that we have settled things and understand our parts let’s go and get ready for the job.”

With that we left the cafe. It was already dark enough for our task and so we made our way in a round about manner to the officers’ mess. There we posted one of the men of our troop, who we picked up on the way for the purpose, as a sentry, with instructions to keep his eye skinned for the

approach of officers, and if any should be seen coming around to disturb us in our charitable work, he should whistle the tune of "Bring Back, Oh Bring Back My Bonnie to Me."

We reached the chicken coop safely and began our work of capture and carried it out undisturbed and strictly as planned. To make a long story short, when we left the officers' mess there was nothing left in the coop, where but a short time before a big rooster and twelve fine chickens roosted, but a few stray chicken feathers.

We made our way back to billets safely where we were greeted with shouts of glee upon displaying the result of our night's work. The chickens were handed over to Leo Barge, and with the assistance of Ackerstream and Bill Tamlyn, it was but the work of a few minutes before the chickens were skinned, cleaned and thrown into our dixies.

Then we all gathered around the large old fashioned fireplace, and with the delightful smell of savory cooking in our nostrils, told of our experiences in securing the provisions for the dinner, and tales of our conquests at other times and in other villages, anticipating with pleasure, in the meantime, the feast that would soon lay before us.

While waiting dinner to be cooked and served, red and white wine, and I think a little champagne as well, was passed around. We had no glasses with

which to serve it and so each would drink from the bottle as it went around from man to man.

On just such occasions as this, it is that the men in the army become really acquainted and when love and comradeship is forged among the fighting men of a regiment. On such occasions we forget any disagreeable past and live only in the present, letting the future take care of itself. We don't, as in this case, think of what unpleasant consequences may befall us on the morrow when the officers have discovered the fact that their chickens have flown. Such trifles, are trifles for the time being, and we let the future take care of them, just enjoying for the time the personal pleasure such escapades and the loot obtained thereby bring to us.

The dinner was satisfactory in every respect and as enjoyable a meal as we had ever partaken of. After it was over we just rolled back on the floor and picked our teeth with the chicken bones and passed remarks on the success of the dinner and the toughness of the "Goll darn" rooster.

The next morning our spirits were not quite so high nor our conscience nearly as clear. We went on parade that morning with our brain full of thoughts of the previous night's escapade. We felt the time of reckoning, the time to pay the fiddler, had come, and we expected every moment to hear from the officers something concerning the loss of their chickens.

Nothing was said however during this drill, and we were kept in suspense over the matter until two o'clock that afternoon, when we were lined up and the commanding officer addressed the regiment in this manner:—

“Men of the R. C. D., you are all supposed to be soldiers, and gentlemen as well.

“I am sorry to say, however, that we have among us a man, or a set of men, low enough and mean enough to steal chickens. Can you imagine such a thing among us? A thief, a chicken thief or thieves.”

I at once imagined the commanding officer was directing his gaze and remarks particularly at me. I noticed also that all the members of the Fourth troop were becoming very uneasy. Some, in their discomfort, were shuffling their feet and others were finding apparent sudden trouble with the fit of the collar of their jackets. The sergeant noticed the uneasiness, as well, and shouted, “Steady men, keep still.” I could see that Bigney was embarrassed and blushing, and Picken looked to me all the world like a convicted murderer. As for myself, well I felt just as uneasy and quite like two cents, and as much worse as you can possibly imagine.

The regiment was asked if such things were going to continue. I could imagine every man saying, under his breath, “No, not until the next time the opportunity arrives.”

We all looked, or tried to look, so very innocent, even those who were directly concerned, that the C. O. finally dismissed us with these parting remarks:—

“I hate to believe any of my men would steal chickens, and I cannot. I have no doubt the chickens have gone to appease the appetite of the men of some other regiment, who are more likely to be capable of such an unmanly act than any man of the R. C. D.’s.” To this conclusion and opinion we all agreed, and the chicken question was closed to our satisfaction, and I hope it may never be opened because of this little narrative of the doings of the boys while in billets.

The foregoing statement is not to be considered as a confession, and I desire to say now, that should the case ever be opened the facts will have to be proven, and in doing so I am quite sure the officers will find the proposition fully as tough as we found that old rooster.

The months of January and February, 1917, saw us once more well fed and in the pink of condition for action, and looking forward to the spring when we would be on our way again.

We passed much of the time while in billets in hard, solid, practical training. New men from our reserve regiment joined us from day to day until the regiment was again recruited to a war footing.

As usual we believed all work and no play makes "Tommy" a poor soldier, so we played foot ball afternoons, and evenings we would usually box. On the latter occasions officers and men would gather in a large room upstairs over the village cafe and watch the matches.

It was great sport to witness I have no doubt. Just because I was a big fellow I had the presumption to think myself something of a boxer and so was usually one of the participants and therefore had little opportunity to be a spectator.

I was the centre of attraction on many such occasions, in fact, while the boxing season lasted I could always be seen with either a black eye or a broken nose, frequently both at the same time, and often a bandaged hand. Some evidence I confess that I often got the worst of the contest. However this punishment, disfigurement and inconvenience all went with the honor that came to me of representing my regiment in the many boxing matches.

Finally I was chosen to represent the regiment at the corps boxing tournament held at Abbeville, and I went down there as the middleweight representative of the Canadian cavalry brigade. Johnny Lees was the lightweight sent down, and Sergeant Major Mellville the welterweight, both from the R. C. D.'s.

In this contest I did not last long, being knocked out in the second round. I never knew what hit me

until in the dressing room some one said, "Sit up and take this." Sergeant Major Mellville proved to be a better boxer and succeeded in getting into the finals of his class but lost out on points.

Little Johnny Lees, the boy of whom I spoke before the battle of Festubert, fought his way through, winning the championship from the entire cavalry corps, which consisted of five divisions. He was a wonderful fighter and seemed to thrive on punishment. He brought the cup back to the old regiment, and we were all surely proud of him. So, you will see, even in boxing the old Canadians were first and bound to win at that as they had already done in everything else.

Johnny, the champion boxer, was wounded at Gievenchy in 1915, receiving a bullet through his neck, and again in the battle of Cambria in November, 1917, this time severely so in the abdomen while leading his troop over a difficult piece of ground in an attempt to destroy some machine gun emplacements. When I left the regiment information came that he was not expected to live, but I hope and pray God he survived, and when I return I shall find him still growing strong and in his corner waiting for the referee to say, "Seconds out of the ring," and to then see him step out with that smiling face of his and fight his way to another victory. I hope this time the whole of northern France may be the ring, and General Haig the referee, and that when

he rings the bell and calls "Time," Johnny will go in and fight and again step out and with his comrades share another victory for which the world shall give him plaudit.

I am sure that shortly Fritz will get his knockout from the allied "Johnnys," and I know if the cavalry can but get a chance to hit in that grand finale, he will be knocked clean through the ropes—or over the Rhine, strictly speaking.

So here's to Johnny Lees, the bravest little fighter and the finest little boxer I ever knew, and a soldier loved by his comrades and adored by his troop. Good luck Sergeant Lees, a return to health and a long life, say we all.

CHAPTER XX

OFF FOR LONGAVESNES



LIFE in time gets monotonous to us in billets and we long for activity. We received news daily from the front, and we wished to be off again and fighting.

We sort of felt that our comrades in the trenches were calling to us to come on, and help fight the battle and we seemed more or less like slackers after we had enjoyed a certain period of rest, and were fit again.

Each night we would meet in the village cafe and drink "to the day." To the day when we would be on our way, and once more after the Hun.

At last the orders came, and rather unexpectedly too, that we were to move. We had not expected such orders before April, and this was March, 1917. I shall never forget the day. The orders were announced at six A. M., that the Canadian cavalry brigade would move at eight. The notice was as short as unexpected, but orders are to be carried out always, whether expected or not, and soon everything was in confusion in the hurried preparation for the march.

"Come along, get a move on. We move in an hour."

Saddles were packed, hurried farewells said to our friends in the village, who in spite of the rain, were out to bid us good bye, and Godspeed.

Madame Josephine, poor old soul, I can see her now. She came and kissed me good bye, gave me half a loaf of almost black bread and about a quarter of a pound of butter. Her parting words to me were: "Good bye my son, God have you in His keeping," and Au Revoir, Mon Garcon, Dieu t'entra sous sa Grade."

The entire regiment was soon mounted and at ten o'clock on the morning of March 16th, 1917, we were once more on the move.

We rode out of Bourseville that morning, with the feeling that we were returning to meet the Hun, and were going to break through this time surely, for the report had come in that the enemy was all along the line.

What did we care now, if it was raining and the roads were bad. Our horses were in fine fettle and we men never felt better or more fit in our lives. At night we slept along the roadside, only posting sentries to look after the horses. We were in the saddle two days and a half, and after the first day we left civilization behind, again riding over the broken and wasted ground of the Somme.

I will not describe an inch of the ground nor the scenes we witness, for it would take too long and only weary the reader. It will be sufficient to say that it was just as bad as shells and mines could make it.

Two-thirty P. M., St. Patrick's day, saw us outside of the town of Peronne. Peronne the goal of the British desire, at the battle of the Somme. We were ordered to push through the town and occupy the high slopes on the north side, and patrols were sent immediately to the outskirts of the town. We were each and every one now keyed up to the highest pitch of excitement. A shell came screaming through the air, bursting dangerously close, so close that a horse was hit, and its screams of pain made us shudder.

We, "B" squadron were not kept long in suspense. We entered Peronne, after our scouts and patrol parties came back and reported that the enemy were falling back, taking up positions on the outside of the town. Mr. Price, our troop officer, was ordered to take his troop and clear the streets. We being expert "street cleaners," were delighted with the job. We cantered through street after street, sabreing the Huns who had stopped to give us a fight. In some cases we found the street barricaded with furniture of every description, but our horses could jump four feet at any time, and now I believe, under the stress of the excitement, they could and

would have jumped over a house, if necessary, to get a Hun.

No mercy was shown the enemy. We took a few prisoners on that eventful afternoon, but those we did take were sorry looking objects. The men who had been left to fight a rear guard action had been provided with three days' rations, but inasmuch as they had been fighting but one day, we had the benefit of their two days' unsued supply, and it came in very handy for us you may be sure.

We reported the streets clear at six P. M., and soon the whole brigade went riding throug the town and on to the high ridge to the north of the village, where the Huns were concentrated on their defense of Longavesnes.

When night fell we found ourselves three kilometres north of Peronne, quite satisfied with what we considered a great and glorious afternoon of sport, excitement and victory. We rested that night without unsaddling our horses, but they were in the pink of condition, well fed, and perfectly fit for the coming day's fighting. We were glad to throw ourselves down, and get what sleep we could.

About one o'clock the next morning, I was ordered to report at regimental headquarters with four men. I immediately awakened Picken, Bigney, James and Bowes. They were far from being pleased with this early call, but when I informed them that we were going out on patrol of some kind, and there

was a possibility of excitement, and perhaps of some loot, they forgot all displeasure in their hurry to get ready, for loot was a word of magic to their ears, as you will no doubt agree since having read of their chicken foraging expedition.

We were soon mounted and trotting down the road toward headquarters. At headquarters I received orders to proceed to the outskirts of the village of Longavesnes and report the condition of the road and the general lay of the land. We were not over pleased with the order, I confess, but we were optimistic enough to imagine we might find some "loot," and that gave us some encouragement for the task.

We found "loot" all right, but not of the kind we had pictured in our minds or were seeking, for it was "eats" we were looking for naturally, being soldiers.

"Picken and Bigney, you both ride ahead, and every hundred yards or so one of you ride back and keep in touch with me."

"Bowes and James, you fall back about three hundred yards and keep a sharp lookout. If you think we are being cut off, one of you fire your rifle for us to fall back on you."

"I will ride in the center and watch for any attempt to divide the party."

"We will halt when we get to the old farm house I showed you on the map."

“Don’t trot your horses and don’t smoke. Keep your horses as much as possible on the soft road, and for the love of Mike don’t fire your rifles unless you have to.”

“Give them the steel (sword) or take them prisoners, but don’t make any unnecessary noise.”

Thus I commanded and cautioned my men.

“Right O! corporal, we get you,” they responded and were off.

We had but two hours before daylight and we knew there was no time to lose. A machine gun rattled away on our right and we prayed that we had not been spotted, and that the bullets were not meant for us.

A shell exploded at some distance ahead of me, and I feared for Bigney and Picken. I rode on for about five minutes until I saw two mounted men in the center of the road. I recognized Picken by the horse he was riding, and was much relieved to find both boys still on the job.

“What’s the idea,” I asked coming up to them. “Why don’t you push ahead?”

“Just take a look down the road yourself corporal, and you’ll see why,” they responded.

Sure enough, about three hundred yards down the road I could see a number of figures passing to and fro. We three dismounted and waited and were soon joined by Bowes and James. We now decided

to push on dismounted, leaving Bowes in charge of the horses.

Picken and Bigney crawled off down to the right of the road, and James and I took the left. We crawled about a hundred yards and stopped. A star shell was fired from the ruined farm making it necessary for us to lie perfectly still. I heard the sharp intake of breaths that James took when the star shell went up, and I joined him in a long sigh of relief when the light died down.

Bigney now volunteered to go ahead alone and find out what the Huns were doing. It was almost daylight before he returned with some very valuable information. He reported that the Huns were mining a road. They were expecting, of course, that we would advance down this road when we attacked the village of Longavesnes.

In this surmise they were perfectly correct, and it was fortunate for most of us that young Bigney obtained the information concerning their operations.

I scrawled a hurried report and gave it to James, commanding him to ride to headquarters as fast as possible. The rest of us decided to remain for a half hour or more and watch the enemy movements. We had lain there with our rifles cocked for about ten minutes after James left, when we heard voices a little to our right, and looking, saw coming towards us a party of six Germans.

“Good night,” we said, and opened fire. We dropped four and the other two instantly took to their heels toward the old farm. We decided unanimously, this was no longer any place for us, and without losing any time went back to our horses. Bowes, having heard the shots, had started toward us and met us, fortunately, about half way—good old Bowes. We mounted in a hurry.

All hell now seemed to have broken loose. Rifles and machine guns were fired as rapidly as they could, and in the gray dawn we could see numbers of men trying to outflank us on the right, but nothing doing. We stuck our spurs into our horses' sides and off we went down that road, “hell for leather” followed by a hail of lead. Bigney's horse was hit, but it did not appear to be seriously injured.

We were all beginning to shake hands with ourselves for our lucky escape, when a shell dropped just ahead of us and my horse Springbuck, shivered as if she were cold and fell like a stone. Her breast had been laid open and her off foreleg broken. The other boys stopped but I directed them to get out, while there was still a chance for safety. They waved their hands and said “good bye,” and they left me.

The Huns had given up the chase it appeared, and so the boys knew I would make my way back on foot.

“Good bye Springbuck.”

I looked down at old Springbuck whose life was fast ebbing away, and said "Good bye old girl." I patted her neck, and she looked up at me with those great big eyes of hers, and I could almost imagine her trying to tell me that she was sorry she could not carry me back to safety. Poor faithful old girl. I hated to shoot her, but she was suffering so I felt that it would be a kindness, and so I knelt down, kissed her bloody snout, and then placed my rifle against her forehead and pulled the trigger. She simply stiffened up and passed away, out there on the road from Longavesnes, and there, with a heavy heart and tears in my eyes, I left her. The one and only pal, I ever loved. My first horse, Springbuck.

"Good old Springbuck, you were wild and so was I;
You were the gamest though the first to die,
Were there ever pals like you and I
Springbuck?"

"Holy smoke look who's here! The corporal riding a gol darn mule."

"Gee! you look right at home on that jackass, corporal."

"Where did you get it? Where is Springbuck. Did you trade her off for a mule?"

These were some of the remarks with which p was greeted from all sides, as I rode into camp about six A. M.

I threw myself off the mule, and giving it a kick let it ramble on its way. I tried to answer all the questions at once, and when I told the boys that my Springbuck, the outlaw, had gone "West," I witnessed one of the greatest tributes that could be given a horse.

My comrades broke away and began to make themselves quite busy around their own horses. I could see them place their arms around their necks and talk a lot of nonsense to them. I also saw some of the boys take off their steel helmets with the remark "gal darn heavy."

"Springbuck, you were loved by my comrades as well as by your own rider.

"Springbuck, the Black troop salutes you, and accords you the honor due a faithful horse who died in the performance of duty to man."

I made my report to Major Timmis and told him of the loss of my horse, and how while walking back I had commandeered a mule which was being used in carrying ammunition somewhere. Major Timmis (or good "Old Timmy" as we called him) was a lover of horses, as well as a good and true soldier and a gentleman, and I knew he shared some of my feeling in the loss of my horse.

CHAPTER XXI

STORMING AND CAPTURING LONGAVESNES



SQUADRON will take up its position in the south side of the wood facing Longavesnes."

"Hurrah! we are going to attack."

What did we care if we had only bully beef and biscuit for breakfast? What did we care if we were soaked to the skin from the drizzling rain that was falling?

"A" squadron was going to attack on the right flank. "C" squadron on the left and that placed "B" squadron in the center.

We, the fourth troop under Sergeant Eastrope, were sent out to occupy a hill overlooking the village of Longavesnes. We pushed on and took up our position at about nine o'clock in the morning. We sent out patrols in every direction, until the whole valley was dotted with little spots of moving cavalry. Away on our left could be seen the armored cars rushing up the road, and firing a stream of lead into the fleeing Huns. Overhead the airplanes were flying at a high altitude and observing the movements of the enemy. It was here, before

we attacked Longavesnes that we had the pleasure of witnessing one of the finest aero combats of the war.

Our aircraft guns had been hammering for ten minutes at some invisible object in the air. Naturally we were looking to see what they were aiming at. Soon we saw through our field glasses one of the German's famous Gothes sailing out of the clouds towards us. At a given signal the air craft gun ceased action, and soon we saw the reason, for out of nowhere apparently, came another small speck in the shape of a British airplane who soon opened fire on the GGotha.

The fire between these two birds in the air was not lasting but while it did last it was more thrilling and exciting. We could hear the rattle of the machine guns as they fired at one another, and we could see them manoeuvre in the air for position. We saw our plane dive once and do the "corkscrew" and it appeared to us that she must dive to the ground. A groan went up and curses from our men were heaped upon the Gotha. Imagine our joy when in the next instant we saw our plane shoot once more away on level keel and begin to climb, and climb until she was far above the Hun. Then from this height with a great wild swoop she came down on her enemy firing at the same time a machine gun with great rapidity. We saw the Gotha stagger in her flight, and knew that she had been hit.

Then she burst into flame and came crashing to the ground a heap of broken and smoking machinery.

A great cheer was sent up, helmets were waved and everyone began to pay tribute to the "kid up there" who had fought so skilfully and had brought down the German plane. As all good soldiers do, we then turned our attention to and paid the silent tribute to the poor boy in the Gotha, who had fought so well and had so bravely and gloriously gone to his death.

"You take your machine gun and take up a position, so you can cover the advance of the troop when they attack the village," I was commanded.

"Very good sergeant," I replied and started off.

I took my men and cantered up behind a clump of trees, and came into action with the simple command, "Halt," "Action front."

Soon we were blazing away at nothing in particular, but for the purpose merely of keeping Fritz occupied while we made the attack. Two men galloped towards us to see if the wire was cut. One threw up his hands and fell from his saddle. We wondered who it was and immediately shoved another belt of ammunition into the breach of the gun and kept on firing.

In a very short time the whole valley seemed to be alive with mounted men and all sides of the village was attacked. We could see troop after troop gallop across the open with the sun flashing on their

sabres, men leaning well forward in their saddles, and then pass from view.

The enemy's fire gradually died down, growing weaker and weaker until it died out entirely. The village of Longavesnes had fallen to the R. C. D.'s, and the gallant Royal Canadian Horse Artillery. When our comrades reached the village we ceased fire, and immediately mounted and galloped off to see it for ourselves. Here we found the men dismounted and resting their horses, while the signals were busy sending messages back to headquarters to the effect that the village was in our hands.

Here a bunch of prisoners, who had thrown down their rifles were being searched and examined by Major Timmins the officer in charge. As we rode up we were greeted with such remarks as— "Good old Hotchkiss, you sure gave them hell," and "Look at that bunch over there, you must have caught them napping."

The dead referred to were all in a heap and none apparently ever knew what had struck them.

"Oh! well fellows," we replied, "don't blame it all on the Hotchkiss crew, because we passed quite a number who were never killed by a rifle bullet."

At that one or two of the men commenced to jab their swords into the soft ground in an attempt to clean them, trying to pass it off, as it were, that the rain had made their blades rusty.

We received orders to occupy the village until the infantry came up and took it over. We at once posted a sentry and made ourselves comfortable. The first thing we did was to send all the wounded back to the rear, both friend and foe, and then bury the dead, after which we found water for our horses and looked after our own personal cares.

We were all dead tired and at eleven o'clock that night were glad to throw ourselves anywhere, and get some sleep. My comrades and myself found quarters and slept that night in a vault, among the ancient dead of France.

In connection with the taking of Longavesnes, I desire to include a description as given me by Sergeant Sager, as follows—

“An incident which impressed me greatly was the taking of Longavesnes by the Strathcona Horse.

“My troop under Lieutenant Cunningham was detailed to watch the village of Sorel, and prevent the Germans from making any demonstration from there. Sorel was on the left of L——, and one mile from it.

“We left Templeux-la-Fosse at five P. M. and galloped along the Nurlu road, more or less under shell fire, arriving at our position we left our horses in a sunken road, and took up a position 700 yards from Sorel.

“The enemy of course must have seen us, as they began pelting us with a field gun and we had some narrow escapes but fortunately no one was hit.

“We hugged the ground pretty closely and awaited developments. At six-thirty P. M. we saw the Strathcona debouch from Nurlu behind us, in lines of troop column. As soon as they reached the open, they formed column of squadrons (that is to say each squadron in line, one behind the other). They executed this movement exactly as they would have done it on parade without the slightest confusion or haste, although by this time the enemy had their range, and was pelting them with shrapnel.

“They broke into a smooth gallop heading for

“We had a splendid view of the attack, and as I remark, it made a great impression on me. The three lines of horsemen were so perfectly aligned, that one would imagine some invisible giant was keeping them aligned with a ruler.

“As soon as a gap was made by shrapnel or machine guns (which by this time were playing on them) it was immediately closed, and the three lines galloped on, leaving a few fallen men and horses in their wake, until they finally disappeared from view in the trees surrounding the village.

“In this engagement, Major Chriteley of the Strathcona Horse received the wound from which he died a few days later, and Lieutenant Harvey won the Victoria Cross by capturing a machine gun single handed after killing the crew.

“They handed the village over to the infantry

after its defendenrs were either killed or captured, and came back at midnight."

We were forgotten, and remained shivering all night in our position, till finally Lieutenant Cunningham decided to move back on his own responsibility just before dawn.

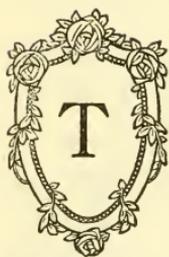
When we arrived at our camp, we unsaddled and fed our horses and dropped down in the mud to fall instantly asleep.

I woke up at eleven A. M. to find a fine layer of snow covering me, and hardly able to move, as we had been having a week of this sort of thing. I saw what I thought was someone asleep beside me with his blanket drawn over his head. On my shaking him to wake him up, I found I was shaking a dead body. It turned out to be Private Faulkner, who had been killed while on my patrol the previous day reconnoitring the village of Longavesnes, and had been brought in after the capture of that village, by Sergeant Major Melville.

I heard a funny story in connection with the capture of Longavesnes. Sergeant Jones in command of the Fourth troop Hotchkiss gun mistook a party of imperial infantry for Germans, and promptly opened fire on them, making them hop and scurry for shelter. They frenziedly tried to signal but the inexorable stream of bullets kept coming. Their language was terrific, as it was a Cockney regiment and they blasted and blinded him from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet."

CHAPTER XXII

WE COME INTO OUR OWN



THE OLD vault was some place to sleep, I don't think, yet it was dry and not too cold. Our horses were comfortable, we knew anyway. We were not disturbed until the next morning, and then only when the sound of cheering reached our ears. At its sound we all scrambled out to see what it was all about. (We slept booted and spurred in those days so we did not have any elaborate toilet to make.) We beheld a most romantic sight, for swinging down the road in columns of fours came our comrades, the infantry, that gallant old regiment, the Worcestershires. The village by this time was bathed in sunshine and the street was soon lined with men of our regiment, some shaving, some washing and some making tea. All stopped their respective operations to greet and cheer our pals of the infantry, who had come up to relieve us.

"Hello you gravel crushers," we called to them.

"Its nearly time you arrived.

“Where have you been, and how do you expect us to finish this war, if we have to wait on you all this time?”

“To this sally they would reply, with a smile, “Why you lot of ‘swank pots,’ we do more real fighting in five minutes, than you chaps do in five days.” “We are pretty slow in getting anywhere, we admit, but we are always sure.” To which we would reply, “Sure you are.” Soon all chaffing would cease, and the real business would be carried out.

The village was now in the hands of the infantry, and our commanding officer informed the commanding officer of the infantry just where to expect the next attack, where our outposts were, and the general lay of the village.

We were now going to push on ahead and capture a high ridge which the enemy were holding and which commanded the village, and to assure us that he was there a machine gun opened fire from the ridge causing us all to duck for a moment for cover.

So long Longavesnes, we are off to capture the ridge. Mr. Gwyne, our troop officer, was still with the general and we of the Fourth troop were placed under the command of Mr. Price, the officer commanding the Third troop.

Our orders were to take the ridge and hold it at any cost. The First and Second troops went away to the right as raiders and on reconnoissance. Patrols were at once sent out in every direction, and

the main body then mounted and left the village with words of encouragement from the old Worcestershire regiment.

Artillery on both sides now opened up. Our fire was directed mainly on the ridge which we were setting out to attack. The Germans were now firing on the village with light field guns, and as shell after shell dropped into the village, we thought of the old Worcestershires and congratulated ourselves on our prompt and timely departure.

“Corporal Jones, you will take two machine guns, and take up a position on the left flank of that wood over there, open fire on the enemy and keep firing until the attack is over. We, of the main body will attack the ridge as soon as our artillery barrage lifts,” commanded Major Timmins, who was in charge of the operations.

We left the main body at once with a wave of our hands and a whoop and a yell. We of the machine gun crew cantered off to take up our positions. Arriving, I commanded “Halt, dismount, action front.” The guns were swung off their packs, ammunition boxes and carts picked up by the men, the horses handed over to the horse holder and in less than two minutes we were in action.

“Chambers,” I commanded, “you and I will stay behind this small knoll. Young, you take your gun and get over to my left about forty yards, and for the love of Mike give them hell.”



"Here they come, give them automatic. Shove another strip in, Shortis, at three hundred yards. Fire."

Brrrr— the attack began. The Huns were apparently taken by surprise. Young's gun was working like a charm. The Huns did not seem to be able to locate us, and they dropped down and waited while we kept on firing. Our artillery barrage lifted and fell among them. They scrambled to their feet and ran towards us. We mowed them down as they came, but they kept on coming and were getting closer and closer. My gun jammed and I offered a prayer, while Shortis cursed the gun. Young's gun was still working like a charm, and kept the enemy from getting too close.

I now heard the thunder of hoofs, looked about and saw a flash of steel and with a great yell we watched the old Black troop and the Third troop charging through the wood and closing in again rode knee to knee and cut their way through the fleeing Huns.

"All right Shortie, the jam is fixed. Now six hundred yards, fire."

"Seven hundred yards."

"Eight hundred yards."

"Nine hundred yards."

"One thousand yards, cease fire."

The Huns were either killed or captured to a man and the troop swung around and occupied the ridge.

As soon as our line of fire was clear of our own men, we commenced firing again, but at random, just to make a noise and to keep any reinforcements of the enemy from coming up.

"Great Heavens, what do you know about this? Here comes 'Timmie' (Major Timmins), and walking at that. He must be crazy," I exclaimed.

There sure enough, coming towards us was the major, bearing an apparently charmed life, for the shells were dropping all around and he seemed to take no notice of them. His hands were in his coat pocket, and he walked along so unconcerned that we were sure he would be hit before he reached us.

When the major came up to us, he looked our position over complimented us on the cover we had taken for both ourselves and our horses and on the good work we were doing. He asked how many casualties we had had.

"One horse and two men killed," I replied.

"Carry on," he said. "I will go and see what Mr. Price is doing."

Things were beginning to get warm in the neighborhood of the ridge. The Huns, we felt, must have brought up reinforcements and were now making a counter charge to take the ridge.

Would reinforcements reach us in time was the thought in our minds. We must stay here however and keep up a brisk fire. While our pals were up against it with but their rifles and bayonets to

ward off an attack. We could only wish we were with them, and "Carry on."

"Hello! here comes young James riding towards us." He reaches us and halts. "Corporal Jones, compliments of Mr. Price. His orders are: You will send at once one machine gun to support the troop now holding the ridge on the right of your position. The other gun is to remain in action here and keep up a continuous stream of fire until support comes up."

I at once gave instructions for the carrying out of these orders.

"Young, you stay here with your crew, we will take our gun in support to the boys on the ridge. Now boy, it's up to you to protect the left flank. Don't get excited. Just let them know that you are still here and have lots of ammunition."

"All right, corporal," Young replied. "I guess I can stick it out as long as they can."

"James, we will be with you in a second," I called.

"Shortie Chambers, you signal the horses and I'll get the gun ready."

The horses came up and the Huns evidently observed us getting ready to leave, for a shell dropped near us and a horse went down with a scream. Shortie placed the ammunition on a pack horse but I had no time to fix the gun on, so I attached the strap, threw the gun over my shoulder and gave the order to mount. I ordered young Stroud to

make his way over on foot as soon as he had taken the saddle from his horse, which had been killed.

Another shell dropped ahead of us and we wondered, would we ever reach there.

"James you lead on," I commanded.

Off we went to be greeted by a rain of machine gun bullets and rode together at a dead gallop. I looked to my right and then to my left, expecting to see some of the men hit. But no, right through that hail of death, we rode with a curse on our lips wondering if we would make it and be on time.

We found the boys very hard pressed, but still holding. Thank God, we were on time. We saw them lying flat on their stomachs, and pumping lead into the oncoming Huns. They heard us coming, looked around and a cheer rent the air.

"Good boys," we answered and sang out, "Here we are, here we are again."

"Halt, action, dismount."

It was but the work of a moment. Our gun was on the ground. Shortie brought up the ammunition, and we were in action.

"Load at two hundred yards, automatic fire."

Brrrr— we got them. Another strip of ammunition—the Huns wavered. Another—they halted.

"Another, Shortie, and they are ours," I cried.

The Huns now sought cover, but our pals shouted, "Come on you gol darn Huns, come on, we have lots of ammunition yet."

The whistle now blew, "Cease fire."

"Where are the Huns now," we asked. Probably taking cover and waiting for reinforcements before continuing their attack, we concluded.

I now looked about me and what a sight I beheld. Behind us lay a number of German prisoners scared stiff. Such of my comrades as were left were still lying on the ground and looking to their supply of ammunition. Mr. Price was walking up and down, cheering the men, and I guess, as well, praying for reinforcements.

Corporal Craddock's rifle again rang out and a Hun who had broken cover, threw up his hands and toppled over.

There, behind his dead horse, Corporal Speedie lay busy cleaning his rifle.

Here and there a comrade lay stiff in death, still clutching his rifle, indicating his faithfulness to the last minute.

Ahead were the still gray forms of what once were German soldiers.

As I looked and reflected on the scene, I wondered at it all and what it meant, this reckless taking of life.

Away in the distance, we could see German reinforcements forming, but they were yet out of our range. Would our supports ever come? We were tired and weary. Oh! so weary and thirsty. We knew we could not hold out in another attack much

longer. Our ammunition was getting low, and we wanted to have it finished and have it quick.

"A squadron of cavalry coming, on the right, sir."

Mr. Price was observing them through his field glasses, but could not distinguish them. We feared that it might be the enemy and so said our prayers, filled our magazines, and gave ourselves up for lost.

They came closer and closer.

"It's our boys, 'A' squadron," soon announced Mr. Price.

Sure enough, at a canter, came "A" squadron riding low but connectedly. The Hun machine guns had spotted them too and were trying to get their range, but as yet they were firing too high. Across the open they came. Oh! what a grand sight to see that splendid body of mounted men coming toward us. Around them the dirt and dust was being thrown up by the enemy's bullets, but on they came.

A man in the front rank fell over on his horse's neck and a comrade by his side stretched out his hand and held him from falling from his horse. Will they ever make the ridge, we ask ourselves. Can they make it?

"Come on, you have got to make it. Come on," we called.

Their pace increased and over they came just in time. With a cheer, they dismounted and rushed forward to take our place. Just to show the Huns they had arrived, they at once commenced firing in

their direction with such rapidity that the Germans must have thought a whole brigade had come to our assistance.

Mr. Price immediately handed over the position to "A" squadron, and we prepared to leave, taking our prisoners with us. We had sixteen prisoners which had to be herded back of the ridge. Our number was now seventeen, including the Hotchkiss machine gun crew, so it was decided to mount and leave in parties of three, of four, and two of five, each party taking along four Huns.

The first party got away all right, but the Huns spotted the second party and began to shell us. It was funny, to say the least, to see a German prisoner hanging onto the stirrup of one of the boy's saddles and running as fast as he possibly could until the shelling forced the rider to increase his speed to such an extent that the German could not keep up and would be forced to let go his hold on his captive's stirrup.

Then he would topple over and over and as soon as he regained his feet would again run after his captor, until he too had gotten over the ridge into safety. We were soon all out of dangegr, a sad, weary, dirty crew, but proud of the fact that we had captured and held the ridge.

Mr. Price was decorated with the Military Cross, and Sergeant Easthrope with the Military Medal. What I got out of it was a loaf of black bread

which I took away from one of the German prisoners, and in addition, a barrel of fun while the fight lasted.

Our troop and the Third troop went back to the wood where we found water for ourselves and our horses, and there handed the prisoners over to General headquarters. We were now expecting and planning to rest for the night, when an orderly rode up and told Mr. Price to proceed at once to S—— where the whole brigade was going to make a mounted attack. We were stiff and sore and our horses were tired. They walked with drooping heads, and we were so tired we could scarcely sit straight on our saddles. We tried to trot our horses but there was no more trot left in them. Our pack horse eventually stopped dead, and knelt down utterly exhausted. Mr. Price gave the order for one man to stay with her, while we pushed on.

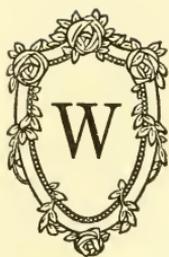
We rode for about half an hour, and soon found the whole brigade, excepting "A" squadron which was still holding the ridge. Mr. Price reported his men to the commanding officer who immediately reported to General Seeley, in command of the operation.

General Seeley rode over, and when he saw us said, "Let those men go back and take cover somewhere and sleep. They cannot sit on their horses, let along fight."

We faced about but did not have to go far, for a little wood nearby afforded us cover. We tied our horses up, only loosening their girths, threw ourselves down without any thought of eating and were soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER XXIII

A SOLDIER'S HOME IN FRANCE



WHILE we slept the "Old Brigade" charged and cut their way through two villages, reaping for themselves and Canada a crown of glory.

We were not disturbed until eleven o'clock the next morning, and I believe we would have still slept on had not an orderly found us and informed Mr. Price that he was to report at once with his party to the regiment. We had not eaten for almost twenty-four hours, nor had our horses had any feed during that period. I would have given my life that morning for an opportunity to rest. We were all so weary, so miserable and so hungry.

Yesterday we were filled with excitement and the joy of living. Yesterday our veins tingled with the lust to kill. Oh! but the awakening, what a jar to our souls and what memories of yesterday awoke and troubled us.

You, who read, can hardly imagine our mental and physical feelings, tired, miserable, our whole bodies stiff and sore. As for our horses, we could imagine something how they felt, poor dumb pals. Some a little lame, some wounded but all holding out, like brave creatures they certainly were. Can you wonder at the depth of our despondency with it all. You who have read in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" of the slough of despair can know something of how we felt on this morning.

We would have given our souls for a good square meal and to make matters worse, there was not a cigarette in the crowd and our clothes were dirty and torn, but we realized we were soldiers and so must smile and obey. Mr. Price gave the order to mount and we climbed into our saddles as best we could, a sorry, bedraggled and dejected bunch of humanity.

The honor we had won for ourselves and our regiment, faded into insignificance when we thought of our empty stomachs and those of our tired horses. However someone in the ranks, was still possessed with some life and enthusiasm and cried out, I can hear it even now.

"Who are we?" and the shout is taken up by the boys,

"We are the boys of the R. C. D. We are rough, we are tough, we come from Toronto, and that's enough."

Yes, we were tough and we were able to "Smile and Carry on" still, so we camouflaged our feelings with a smile and rode out to join our regiment somewhere in the vicinity. We soon found and rejoined our regiment including "A" squadron, who had been relieved by the infantry. "A" squadron informed us that the Huns had given up all hope of taking the ridge just then.

Soon the whole brigade was on the move back to some village in the rear, the Third cavalry division having come up by now to relieve us and continue the chase. It is needless to say, that we were not what could be called a gay party that night, under the conditions and feelings already described and more so from the sight of the many empty saddles in the ranks as we journeyed back.

As we rode on we reflected on what war really meant. The loss forever of dear comrades. We would recall the scenes of the previous days, when we were all together and noting the absence of this and that comrade, would think of what we saw him do last and try to remember some words spoken by him. We would also picture just how he met his death, perhaps he had galloped back to cut a trip wire or he may have nobly and bravely sacrificed himself to bring a comrade back.

Then we would wonder how the loved ones back home would feel when they learned he had fallen "somewhere in France." With these thoughts rac-

ing one after another through our brains, we were not ashamed to be caught wiping a tear from our eyes. I can truthfully say that there is no one thing which brings home to a cavalry soldier the fact that "war is hell," more forcibly than the empty saddle on the return from the battle, often stained with the blood of the rider.

But a soldier can not and must not dwell long on memories and so I will not here.

After a two days' ride we came to a place called Cappy, where we got straightened out, as we call it, in the form of reinforcements, etc.—that is, had our ranks filled up again. In four days' time we were on our way again, this time in good spirits singing and joking. The weather was splendid, the roads good and we had an abundance of things to eat, plenty of smokes and if I may whisper it a clean change of clothing and for the time at any rate, were free of our old bosom friends, the cooties or gray backs. So why worry?

Our marches through northern France were always interesting, to say the least, but I must not dwell too long on these details, for I too, as you no doubt do, want to see the beginning and the end of the march that is to end this story.

On or about the 5th of April, 1917, saw us in the village of Athies, just south of St. Quentin. Here was to be our hunting ground for the next

few months and so we selected a site and camped by the side of a little stream.

This village and the villages adjoining had been destroyed by the fleeing Huns, not a house or a building of any description had been left standing. Fruit trees had been deliberately cut down and even the graveyards had been dug up, vaults broken open and the coffins stripped of the metal. The whole country was a scene of waste.

We at once set to work to make a home for ourselves. We built stables and made huts and in just eight days each troop had a stable for the horses and a place for every man to sleep.

Corporals Taylor, Sharp, Mayman and myself built for ourselves a little hut on top of a knoll overlooking the river and the ruined village, not particularly on this site because of the view, but because the lumber needed was found close by in the dugouts lately occupied by the Germans. It took us but four hours to build our residence and quite some house it was thus constructed. At first it had no roof or floor, simply four sides and a doorway, and, oh yes—a window. We later secured a large tarpaulin or trench cover which we used for a roof.

The night the hut was finished we decided to furnish it and so when our day's work was over, we would go each day on a foraging expedition, returning with all kinds of junk we found in and about the village. We secured a table, a large candle-

stick, a few pots, a baby carriage, some old dirty pictures and a bed spring. With this outfit we began housekeeping and soon felt quite at home and very comfortable.

We now turned our attention to the decorations, adding to the walls some of our own photos and those of girls contributed by Corporal Sharp, thus finding ourselves with quite a picture gallery. A flag was added here and there and each day one of us would find and bring back some additional article of furniture and soon we had a place not only comfortable but really attractive and homelike as well.

We thought it only fitting that our place should have a name and finally settled on the "Home of Scandal," as appropriate. At night we invited our friends around and spent the event in singing, playing, jokes, telling funny stories, cooking fancy dishes and drinking wine, and in general having the time of our young lives.

During all that month of April the weather was fine and had it not been for the rumble of guns in the distance I believe we would have forgotten almost that there was a war.

Under the circumstances we had our sports, as usual playing football, baseball and cricket. Yes we Canadians even played cricket, though I do not recall that we ever won a game. The greatest event of the war, however, that is, musical and social, came in the shape of a regimental concert

held while here at Athies. A stage was set and a regular program made out.

The colonel offered 50f for the best piece of poetry pertaining to our last fight. One night before the concert, when in what I thought might be a poetic mood, I sat down and with thoughts on the prize, produced the following, which I called a poem and which was read during the course of the evening's program—

“Will you listen to the story

Of the gallant R. C. D.'s

Who came to France three years ago

Without their Gee,, Gee, Gee's.

Now if I try to tell of weary marches made,

Of how troopers hoofed it on bread and marmalade

But no, I am not trying to write a hard luck tale,

Nor trying to make you sore.

I'm tellingg you of all the things

In sunny France they bore,

How they stuck it in the trenches

Up to their necks in gore.

Say! What they did without their horses would fill
a book or more,

But at last the day the order came,

You will mount those R. C. D.'s again.

And ever since then we have been on the bum,

While grooming and training a long faced chum.

Now they taught us in the trenches just how to
shoot a Hun,

But it took the boys of the R. C. D.'s to make the
beggars run.

For it's now we have left the trenches and fight in
the open plain.

And it's hats off boys, and a Hip, Hip, Hurrah,
We've come into our own again.

The Canadians, you know are not much for show,
 They don't polish and burnish like some troops
 we know,
 And the officers tell us that we are a sight,
 But God! they are proud of us when it comes to
 a fight.

Now it happened one day not long ago, two troops,
 I wont mention, made a great show,
 But I'll try to tell you how it was done,
 How we charged over a ridge and captured the Hun,
 We were seventeen in number when we broke
 through,
 And that included the "Hotchkiss crew."

Now the Hotchkiss, they say, isn't much use,
 And they sure do stand some awful abuse,
 But out to the flank the Hotchkiss sped,
 And they filled those Huns so full of lead,
 That many a Uhlan from his saddle dropped dead.

Then we watched the troop go through the wood
 And kill all the Huns they possibly could.
 Say, while the fight lasted, Oh! Gee it was fun,
 And that's all of the story of the ridge we won.

And when with our prisoners we rode away
 A Hun who spoke English, I heard him say,
 "Mein Gott in Himmel!" Oh it was over soon,
 But what else could you expect from the Cana-
 dian Dragoon.

The boys of the Third and Fourth troop thought my literary production great. So did I, but the colonel evidently didn't think so much of it, for he gave the 50f to another budding young poet. However I felt amply repaid for my effort in the encore after encore I received from the "Old Black Troop," and considered myself fortunate after all in not winning the prize for the reason that the chap who did

receive the 50f was ever after called "Maggie" and encouraged by the boys to let his hair grow long, and was advised to save his 50f till after the war when no doubt he could finish his education as a poet.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE FIFTH OF APRIL, 1917



E, THE Canadian cavalry brigade, were now having a great time, in fact we were enjoying every moment of our lives. The weather was perfect and I, for one, would not have changed places with any of my honored friends back home. I had never before spent a vacation that afforded quite as much happiness and pleasure as this stay in and around Athies. Our horses too were enjoying the rest, and with plenty of food and sufficient exercise they were soon in fine fettle.

It was while here, as far as we who were Americans were particularly concerned, that real history in connection with the war was made.

From the early days of my soldier life in 1914, until the fifth day of April, 1917, no day stands out more prominently in my mind than that great day.

I say great day. Reader can you deny it? I, a soldier, say no. April 5th, 1917, will go down in history as a red letter day in this great world war.

Since 1914, those other soldiers in France who had come from the United States of America, as well as myself, were looked upon as having entered the war with little or no motive beyond that of adventure. At times we found it necessary to take off our coats and fight for the honor of the United States, when the failure to ally itself actively with the enemy of humanity was criticized, and I assure you we were always glad to do so, yet we could not help feeling that we wanted our country to take a hand in the fight for right.

In April, 1917, I was a corporal. I had served and fought since 1914, with soldiers of a strange country, and had pushed myself forward a bit, not far, it is true, but I had to prove to my comrades that I was just as good and just as faithful a soldier as any of them, and in this I succeeded I know, but they could not understand why the United States did not declare war against the common enemy on the great principle for which my country stood—Democracy. Neither could I, and so I could not satisfy their query on this subject.

I may also state that the Canadians were sorely disappointed in their cousins across the line. But on that eventful day—April 5th—what a change, what an upheaval, as it were of feelings. On receipt of news of what happened that day in Washington, they went wild—simply wild.

Let me give to you, if I may, a pen picture of the feeling that day in our regiment, and I am positive the feeling I shall describe prevailed throughout the entire Canadian forces from General Currie, the commander-in-chief of the Canadian forces, to the rawest recruit.

We had finished for the day and our horses were peacefully feeding in the stables we had constructed for them. The time was five P. M. The whole valley was bathed in sunshine, and the only thing that marred the beauty of the scene was the ruins of the village on our left. The stream along which we were camped seemed at the time to be singing some French love song.

Overhead swarms of aeroplanes were manoeuvring. A trumpet sounds. We fall in just as we are, some without caps, and our jackets off and shirts open at the neck. We double up and take our respective places. We wonder what is coming off. Something unusual we feel sure. Are we to move out in a hurry, we ask ourselves.

Soon our adjutant, Mr. Moss, accompanied by the colonel, appeared. The regiment was ordered to attention, and then the adjutant began to read the formal declaration of war made by the United States against Germany. He was about to "carry on" with the balance of the declaration, but when he said "This day the United States of America has declared war on Germany," he got no further, for

up went a whoop and a yell. Discipline was wholly forgotten. The men simply went wild. Those who had caps on took them off and threw them into the air, those who had no caps threw their arms around and cheered and cheered until they were hoarse.

Some ran to the stables and mounted their horses without a thought of saddle and rode out with a whoop and a yell. The horses seemed to take on something of the spirit also, for they stamped and pawed amidst all the excitement and din. The men also broke into the stores and drank to the health of Uncle Sam with the rum they borrowed for the occasion.

Oh! you people back home in the States can sing "The Yanks Are Coming," etc., but you did not know and can never know what cheer and encouragement you gave those Canadian cousins of yours, that day you declared war against our powerful enemy.

All we could hear now was— "Good Old Uncle Sam, now we'll lick them."

"Leave it to us now—Uncle Sam and Canada."

"Come Sammy, we are waiting. We'll go over the top together and we'll finish it together."

"Look out now Fritz. We have got you now, sure."

The excitement did not die down until almost two o'clock the following morning, but the spirit of cheer and good feeling among the men over the

entry of the United States into the war continued and remained.

It was now Canada and the United States of America who were to stand as one—to fight as one, and if need be, to fall as one. Good people back home, back up this feeling to the utmost. Do not disappoint the brave boys from Canada, and encourage your own brave sons. This caution and advice is not necessary I am sure, but I cannot help expressing it however.

France perhaps needed you at this time, and perhaps England needed you also, but the men of no country gave you a greater welcome than did the Canadians on that fifth day of April, 1917.

On the next day, I was further honored and pleased by being promoted to the rank of second sergeant in the Old Black troop.

From that April until the next August, we were in the fighting lines around St. Quentin. We fought the Huns here, we captured them and we raided their trenches. During this time we experienced every phase of the life of a soldier. To recount all of which would take more time and space than I feel warrants within the scope of one volume.

I am going however to try and give a picture of one of the raids made by the Canadian brigade under the command of that great and noble gentleman and soldier, General Seeley, in front of St. Quentin during July, 1917.

CHAPTER XXV

IMPRESSIONS OF A RAID ON THE GENMAN TRENCHES



THE NIGHT of which I shall relate was still. Not a gun was heard, but from our trenches could be seen figure after figure crawl out into the open, and there lie down, until there were perhaps one hundred men in like position.

Early that evening a torpedo party had gone forth to blow a gap in the German wire at a given signal.

At almost one o'clock in the morning, a time when man's vitality is at the lowest ebb, the Heavens seemed suddenly to be shaken by the shock of artillery fire. One long continuous roar it was, and then we were on our way to the German front line.

Our torpedo party had performed its work well, as three gaps had been made in the wire. We were detailed into three separate parties, one directed to attack the center, one the left and the other the right.

Amid the roar of bursting shells and the rattle of machine gun bullets, we made our way through the enemy wire and to the Germans—not in the mad rush as often pictured in going over the top, but at a regulation pace of four miles an hour. Everything worked with clock-like regularity. At a given signal the barrage lifted and played on the Germans' second line of defense. Soon we were in their front line without meeting much resistance. Men were bayoneted where they stood, the dugouts bombed and then destroyed, sheets of flame immediately lighting up the entire ghastly scene.

With a wild yell we then passed on to the next line, killing, with no thought of quarter. We gave and we took men.

The enemy were completely surprised. We left our trenches at twelve, midnight, attacked and also raided the Huns, destroyed trenches, captured machine guns, destroyed three trench mortars, killed a large number and brought with us on our return a commanding officer, a colonel of the Thirteenth Hanoverian regiment, and about thirty prisoners and returned across No Man's land singing, to our own trenches at two A. M.

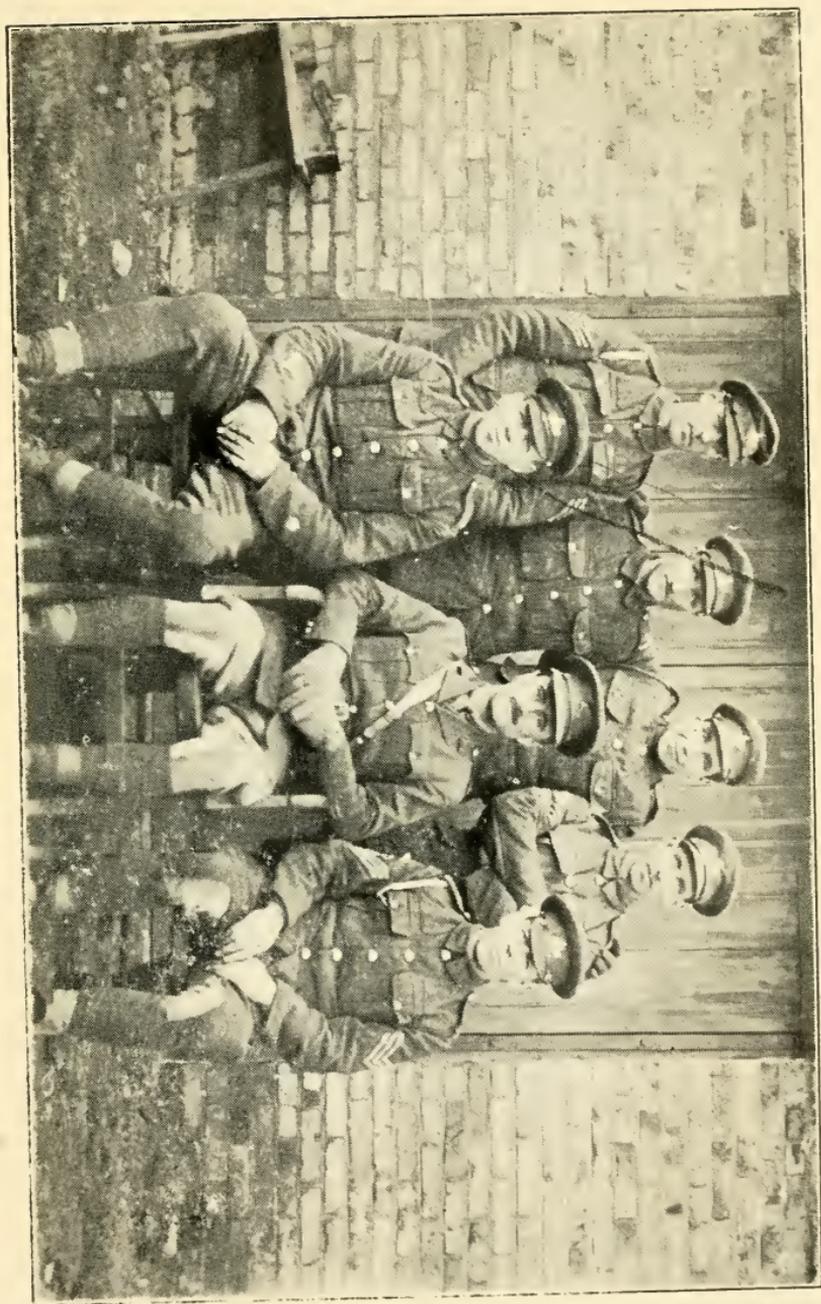
Strange to say we accomplished all this with but three casualties, one killed and two wounded, and this success was largely due to the deadly effect on the enemy of our artillery barrage, plus the spirit

and dash displayed by each man in that raid, or as the soldier calls it, a "stunt."

We had no difficulty in finding our way back to our own line. I accompanied Major Timmins, who had personally conducted the squadron in the raid. The Fort Garry Horse and Lord Strathcona Horse had been somewhat more successful than we, in that they had taken only a few prisoners a piece, and had had no casualty. They had killed and put out of action almost two companies of the Bavarians, which accounted for the few prisoners they brought back.

On the whole, the raid I have attempted to describe, of the Canadian cavalry brigade, stands to-day, officially, as one of the most daring raids of the war.

While going across No Man's land Major Timmis and I witnessed a novel and amusing sight. A great big fellow, a private in the Fort Garry Horse, was conducting two German prisoners back to our lines, when a German who had been lying in a shell hole during the action, suddenly arose and took to his heels, making straight back to his own lines. The Fort Garry chap without a moment's hesitation handed his rifle to one of the German prisoners in his custody and said, "Hold that a minute, you little son of a gun," and started after the fleeing Hun, overtaking and catching him returned with him by



the scruff of the neck to where his other two prisoners were standing. This was all done so quickly you can hardly wonder at our own amazement, and our admiration as well, for the big private. The captor then took charge of his rifle and giving his latest captive a kick (as we say in the bottom of his pants), proceeded on his way to our lines, quite as unconcerned as though it were an every day occupation with him to corral and bring back Germans. The whole thing was so amusing that we laughed a long time over the incident. We told the story when we got back, and it was repeated more than once, never losing any detail in the telling.

The raid, of course was prearranged, and accordingly well thought out. Each man knew exactly where he was going and what he had to do, for everything had been in a way rehearsed. All it required was vigor and coolness on the part of the men.

All credit for this daring raid and its success was due to Colonel Patterson of the Fort Garry Horse, who planned it and carried it out. He was afterwards decorated by the king with the Distinguished Service Order and Mr. Price of our squadron attained another bar to his Military Cross.

A number of our men throughout the brigade also received medals for personal bravery and devotion to duty in facing the enemy in this raid.

200 RAID ON THE GERMAN TRENCHES

It is but a few details of the trench raid I have related here, principally to remind the reader that the cavalry does not long remain idle. If it is not in the saddle fighting the Hun, then it is fighting him from and in the trenches.

CHAPTER XXVI

A VISIT TO PARIS



SINCE reaching France it had been my desire to visit and see something of Paris and its life. Late in the summer of 1917, I applied for leave from my regiment that I might make the trip. Nearly every British soldier was anxious to get back to Blighty at the first opportunity and accordingly my application for the purpose of visiting Paris was received with something of surprise.

“So you intend to take your leave in Paris, sergeant?”

“Yes, sir,” I replied, “I have no relatives in England, so I would like to visit Paris.”

One bright morning in September, I was advised that my request had been granted for a leave in Paris. My arrangements were soon made, and on September 28th I boarded a fussy little train at Saint Pol.

As the train left the station I had the carriage to myself and congratulated myself on the fact that I was to enjoy the trip in quiet and free from the

naturally inquisitive traveler. The train had not gone beyond perhaps two, or three stations, when my door was opened by a guard, and a little French woman with two children entered. Mentally I cursed the luck, but thought I might yet be left alone to interest myself in the paper I was reading and in the passing scenery. I misjudged the temperament of my co-traveler, however, for I was not permitted to dwell long on either paper or scenery. She had no sooner placed her baggage and settled herself and children, than she directed her attention to me, and opened her conversation with the salutation, "Good day soldier." I nodded in reply.

"Where are you going and where are you from?" she inquired.

I tried to answer her questions in French to the best of my ability. Then she wanted to know if I were an Englishman or a Canadian. I shook my head. She seemed puzzled at this and so to satisfy her curiosity and set her mind at ease, as to my nationality, I said to her, "I am an American subject, but a Canadian soldier." I had no sooner uttered the word American, than she went into raptures and exclaimed, "Oh La Bon American," and immediately jumped up and threw her arms around my neck and kissed me on both cheeks.

After this assault she turned her attention to the two children, and told them that right in their carriage was a real American, and that they must kiss

him at once. For the first time in my life I was sorry that I was an American, for I was immediately pounced upon by the children, who obeyed their mother's command to the letter, and before I could ward off the attack, was kissed by the two little mouths that had been industriously sucking candy from the time they entered the carriage. There I was, locked in a compartment of a French railway carriage, unprotected and unable to escape until the train should come to a stop and its door be thrown open by the guard, so what could I do but surrender with the best possible grace to the attack from the youngsters.

I trust I have not left the impression that I dislike children, or am adverse to being kissed by them, but I do not choose to be made a fuss over by strangers or little girls with sticky mouths and hands. More than that I feared for the condition of the nice new uniform I had managed to secure for my visit to gay Paris.

One ordeal I had was passed, fortunately, but I could not stop the madam from talking, and so I finally resolved to make the most of it and be as agreeable as possible in this connection as well. I was obliged to answer every manner of question about the United States, and while it was not necessary to secure her good opinion of the Americans, yet I volunteered the opinion that Uncle Sam would soon rid her beautiful France of the hated Hun. I

saw at once that I had talked too much, for at this information she again went into raptures, and for a moment I was sure I was about to be kissed again by herself and her offspring. So I immediately decided to employ a little strategy to ward off another possible right and left (cheek) attack, and told the madame that I had unfortunately contracted cancer of the throat, and was then on my way to Paris for an operation.

Cancer, my what wonders that word wrought upon her mind. She now began to sympathize with me, telling me how sorry she was for me, in such a solemn and injured tone that I felt she was thinking of herself and children as well, and wondering if they and herself had exposed themselves to the disease. At that thought I really felt guilty, in employing such a lie for self preservation, but it had the desired effect for it kept the madame and her small family to the opposite side of the carriage until we reached Amiens.

My conscience would not permit me to leave the train without confessing the falsehood and so I told the madam, when I felt it safe to do so, that I was going to Paris not for an operation but to have a gay time, and that when I told her the cancer story I was lying. She thereupon exclaimed "Vouse tres mechant, mon Ami" (You are a very wicked soldier to lie to me so). While her opinion of me had

fallen, yet I could see that she was greatly relieved concerning herself and children. We had now reached Amiens, where I was obliged to change cars. I stepped out of the carriage and soon lost myself in the crowd at the station.

My journey from Amiens to Paris was pleasant and uneventful. I arrived at the Gare du Nord in Paris at seven-twenty that evening. A wonderful sight the station presented to me, brilliantly lighted and filled with well dressed women and soldiers in the uniform of every allied nation. I thought to myself if the station presents such an attractive appearance what must the boulevards be.

I was in no particular hurry and so thought I would amuse myself for a time watching the people in and about the station. The first sight that met my eyes and interested me was two men, in the uniform of the French army, father and son, I judged, grasp each other by the hand and then each kissed the other on both cheeks. This custom, because of my small knowledge of French ways, struck me as quite foolish.

I soon felt somewhat alone in that gay chatting throng since every one there seemed to know some one else, and I also felt that I looked rather foolish as I stood or wandered around, gazing at the people and the surroundings. The crowd gradually dis-

persed and I then looked about to find my way out to the street.

I had no sooner stepped out of the station than a voice asked me, in broken English, where I was going. I turned and beheld my inquisitor to be a woman, elegantly dressed and carrying a small poodle in her arms. I looked at her a moment in wonderment, then, cautiously backed away from her a step and replied, "I am going home."

"You go home? For why you go home?" she asked, and then continued, "I too go home with you, is it not?" I was taken so completely by surprise at this proposition, coming so soon upon my arrival in this city noted for its gaiety, I hastily replied, "It is not," and took to my heels.

"Holy smoke," I thought to myself, I guess I am going to be sorry for ever having come to Paris alone. The next thing I did was to feel in my pocket to see if my pocketbook was still there, and I confess I was really surprised, as well as relieved, to find I still possessed it.

I concluded by this time that I had better not linger about Paris long alone. I had the address of a dear old lady whom I had met while we were in Ault in 1916, Madam Le Gentile. She became interested in me and had extended me an invitation to visit her home, and really had insisted that I should do so, if I ever came to Paris. She said she wished very much to have me meet her husband

and her daughter, Marcella. She had shown me a picture of her daughter and I was particularly anxious to make their acquaintance in consequence.

I called a taxi and gave directions to take me to 140 Rue De Bellville, where my good friend lived. I climbed in but the machine did not move. I asked the chauffeur why he did not turn on the juice and move. I was informed that he was waiting for another passenger before going. Well, I thought, this is some place, not so fast in some respects anyway.

After a wait of about five minutes a French soldier came along, somewhat under the influence of drink, and decided he would ride. It happened he was going up Rue de Bellville also, so in that respect things were satisfactory and we started. On the way my fellow passenger insisted upon singing and calling me his "Bon Comrade." He inquired whether or not I spoke French and when I shook my head in the negative he seemed sorry. He then offered me his water bottle and, just to show him I was his "Bon Comrade," I drank with him.

I was not sorry when the car stopped at my number, for I felt I was soon to be among friends. It was exactly nine P. M. when I presented myself at Madam Le Gentile's house. A son returning from the front could not have received a more tender or cordial reception than was given me. First I was introduced to the husband and kissed by him, then

I was presented to the daughter and, "Oh joy," kissed by her—on both cheeks, I still insist a foolish custom—in some cases.

Who wouldn't come to France and fight when it means such hospitality and greeting from the French people, especially from the good looking grown up, female members of the family. My advice to you boys back in the States and Canada is—if you like to be kissed—on both cheeks—don't wait to be drafted but volunteer and hurry along.

My leave in Paris was filled with interest and amusement. I had the pleasure of witnessing the reception accorded the boys of the Sixteenth regiment, U. S. A. Oh! the joy and the hope these big manly fellows of Uncle Sam's army brought to the French people, and how their spirits were aroused anew at the sight. A new bond of unity seemed formed at their entry into the war. *Vie La America*' was on the lips of every Parisian and may they always say it with no regret.

I told you in a previous chapter of the feeling and conduct of the Canadians on that fifth day of April in 1917, and now what faith and hope the sight of these American soldiers on French soil brought to poor bleeding France. In her hour of darkness she knew the services of her loved Lafayette for the cause of American liberty, had not been forgotten and she looked to the United States to come to her assistance in ridding her of the cruel

and hated Hun, and thank God she has not been disappointed.

In the company of Mlle. Le Gentile, I had the pleasure of visiting all of the places of interest in Paris. One afternoon as we started out on pleasure bent, she demanded of me that I introduce her to an American soldier and so I made up my mind that I would stop the first Sammy I met and introduce him to her. We had not gone far when I saw swinging down the boulevard, not one, but three Sammies and thinking there would be safety in numbers, I stopped them and informed them of the young lady's desire.

"Sure thing, you know," they responded. They gave me their names and I introduced them informally as though I had known them all my life, saying, "Mlle. Le Gentile permit me to introduce you to Serg. Bever, Sixteenth regiment of New York; Corporal Daly and Corporal Scott." This ceremony over we all adjourned to a near cafe and there refreshed ourselves with a cooling drink (I have forgotten the name), in quite an American fashion.

Mlle. Le Gentile was delighted to know and be in the company of my American friends, and told me repeatedly (in French of course), that she loved to hear the big Americans talk and laugh, though she could not understand a word they said.

Such is an example of the feeling and spirit of the French people toward the American soldiers in

the fall of 1917. They were proud of the fact that soldiers of the United States were walking the streets of their beautiful city.

It was a common sight to see sitting in the cafes representatives of each allied nation. There were the French officers in their red trousers and blue jackets, the big Russian officers in full war dress, little Portuguese officers in blue; here and there a Belgian officer in kahki with red trimmings and then the officers and men of the two great nations in khaki, those of the British empire and of the United States, each and all mingling and fraternizing together as one great family, each telling a story of recent battles and of the losses and victories. It was surely a most inspiring sight and a wonderful example of democratic spirit and action. It has been feared that the Huns might some day take Paris—no, never.

Mlle. and I, after a time excused ourselves and left Sergt. Bever and his comrades, but not before I had promised the sergeant that I would pay him a visit at his hotel the next day.

All the way home the little French miss was in raptures over her adventure. She kept singing the praises of the American soldiers she had met, saying, "Oh! La Bon Americans." She was, however, only voicing the sentiment of all the people of her country. The whole world knows today how well General Pershing's troops were received and how

well they deserved the praise and gratitude of France and the other allied countries.

I kept my appointment the following morning with Sergeant Bever and at the same time had the honor of meeting Captain Graves.

While there, in the Hotel St. Anne, I had my first glimpse of anything that looked like home, and it was in the shape of American cigarettes and tobacco, such as Camel, Bull Durham and Duke's Mixture. There was also an American barber, a shoe-shine parlor, a soda fountain and on my way down stairs I passed two colored soldiers amusing themselves in their favorite game, shooting crap.

On the following day my leave would expire, so on leaving my new friends I went immediately back to Rue de Bellville to get my kit in order and to thank the good madame for her hospitality and for all the kindness and interest in my behalf, which she had shown since I had been her guest.

She told me that she was only too glad to show in this way her feeling toward and appreciation for one of the defenders of her dear France. I was deeply touched by those sentiments and felt very proud to be called one of the defenders of dear France.

Today as I write my thoughts are of "dear France," our sister republic, and I thank God that I have been spared and will be able to return and "Carry on as a soldier, a defender of France." May I be permitted to live to see the hated Hun

driven out of France and Belgium, and so punished and crushed that he may never presume to again raise his serpent head to strike at such a just and liberty loving people. Such is my prayer.

When that day comes I hope I may still live long enough to again visit Madame Le Gentile and be able to tell her that I am glad her confidence in the "defenders of dear France" was not misplaced, and to express also my wish that she might live long to enjoy the blessings of a peaceful and happy France.

I left Paris the next day to join my regiment, having spent seven days, the happiest since coming to France. Monsieur, Madame and Mademoiselle came to the Gard de Nord to see me off and I felt that everyone about were looking when each kissed me again—on both cheeks. But after all what did I care, for I felt more like a son than an acquaintance, so much like a son had they treated me during my visit with them and now at parting as well.

My trip back was uneventful, beyond the fact that it took me exactly ten days to find my regiment, which had moved during my leave and when I did it was in Belgium at a place called Poperinghe, where the Canadians thrilled the world in the taking of Passendale.

CHAPTER XXVII

CANADIAN CAVALRY AT THE BATTLE OF CAMBRAI



THE DAY had arrived. The day we had been drinking and toasting to, "Z" day. The day we had been preparing for for months. Oh! what a thrill went throug the whole brigade, but I can only write here of the feelings of my own regiment. The first notice that we received was, that "Z" day would arrive on the morrow, and every man in the regiment knew exactly what that day meant. It simply meant that on that day, we, the British would make a great surprise attack on the enemy, and that all branches of the service would be used in such weight of numbers that it would not only assure success of the venture, but also gain some very important positions.

Perhaps I should explain (with your permission, Mr. Censor), what I mean by "Z" day. It was simply that each day previous to this battle was known by a letter, A, B, C, D, etc., no day following in natural sequence and sometimes the same letter being repeated.

Each night orders were issued from headquarters something like this— “Tomorrow will be ‘L’ day,” or “Tomorrow will be ‘C’ day,” and so on during the days.

While we were waiting for “Z” day to arrive we were rehearsing our attacks. Each regiment knew exactly what its duties would be and likewise each squadron had its orders just what to do when the moment came. For instance, when a certain village would be captured by the infantry or the tanks, a message was to be flashed back to the cavalry that the time for action had come. Each regiment was then to take up its respective position on the line of attack and carry out exactly what it had been rehearsing for months back.

My troop, the Black troop, was detailed as the demolition party to blow up at a given time, a certain bridge, a certain crossroads and a section of railroad. Each troop having their own instructions to carry out, everything must be done as scheduled if the attack was to be a success.

We practiced at times before “Z” day, at blowing up bridges, each man being detailed to his own part in the work. Some would carry slabs of dry cotton, others the detonators, while others had the primers and fuses. It was really amusing to see how careless the men were with all of those high explosives. One chap, for instance, was carrying a slab of guncotton inside of his shirt and four detoniers

in his pants pockets, merely wrapped in paper and packed in an ordinary cigarette box. Another would carry them in his hat, and all manner of places about his person and saddlery in fact was used to carry those dangerous articles. They were, in other words, carried any place where we could get at them quickly when the moment for action arrived.

"Troop sergeants wanted at regimental headquarters at once," announced an orderly who came into our mess with rain dripping off his oilskin. We had previously been discussing the attack that was about to take place. The boys had been chaffing me somewhat about my duties as the demolition sergeant. They volunteered all kinds of ridiculous advice, to which I had listened for almost half an hour and when the orderly came with the message, I was beginning to lose my temper.

We, who were included in the order at once proceeded to headquarters where we were greeted by Major Timmins, and received our orders. We were asked by the major if we had our maps with us, to which we replied in the affirmative. He then informed us that we would leave Tincourt, at eleven o'clock that night and move up under cover of darkness and take a position on the high slopes of Finn.

After receiving our orders and being sure we understood every detail of the plan contemplated to be carried out, we rejoined our troops and issued instructions to the men to the effect that we would

leave that night at eleven P. M. At once preparations were under way to move. Among other things each man looked to see that his rifle, ammunition and "iron rations" were in plenty and in order. Red flares were issued to each troop, and green flares to the machine gun crews. Before leaving, most of the men found time to write hurried letters to the folks at home.

Promptly at eleven P. M. we were mounted and ready to move. The night was dark and no lights were showing except as a man would occasionally flash an electric torch to see that everything was in proper order around and about his horse and equipment.

At eleven-thirty we were on our way. The night was so dark that one could not see the man in front of him, and neither could anything be heard but the metallic ring of the horses' hoofs upon the cobbled road. I rode with Lieutenant Gwyne at the head of our troop and occasionally we would speak of and discuss, in an undertone, the part we were detailed to participate in, in the great attack that was about to be launched.

When we reached Finn, Mr. Gwyne was to leave the troop and proceed mounted to the front line of attack with two mounted orderlies and there go over with the tanks, when the attack began.

When Mr. Gwyn left, the responsibility of leading the troop would rest upon my shoulders. I

realized the responsibility and naturally the thought went through my mind, how will I act when the critical moment arrives, and my courage and knowledge is put to the test. I had confidence in my men and knew them to be fighters and not afraid of anything living, and that they would follow the "old man" anywhere. I knew them and they knew me, and I prayed that I should not fail them, but should make good. I was proud of my men that night, and I was destined to think still more of them before the work in that great battle of Cambrai was finished.

As we rode that night in the rain and cold we had nothing to look forward to beyond the carnage of war and its results. With this prospect were we miserable? I reply no. We we happy? To this I reply yes, more than happy for we were enthusiastic and quite carried away with the prospect of the excitement that was to come with the work before us. We were wet and cold, but this we did not mind for we had been out of action for over two months and were perfectly healthy and strong, and trained to the minute, I assure you.

While we were expecting to see horrible and ghastly sights and to meet with casualties, we were also expecting to see and do great things in the part we were to take in the oncoming battle. Our expectations were fulfilled to the letter, and I shall now attempt to relate just exactly what I saw, and

what our troop did at the first battle of Cambrai in November, 1917, and while I shall at times draw a ghastly picture and place on paper things almost unbelievable to one who was not there, I assure you that all I shall relate will be the truth, without the use of high or flaunting words to hide any of the horrors witnessed by us at the battle of Cambrai.

At about three o'clock the following morning, the entire brigade reached a place called Finn, where we halted and the men dismounted. The attack was planned to start at four A. M., to the minute, so we did not unsaddle our horses but fed them merely and meantime partook of some refreshments and got what little rest we could. At three-thirty, we were joined by a squadron of the Scotch Grays which had been detailed for a special mission, and which was to accompany the Canadian cavalry brigade.

What a sight was presented to our view that morning—commotion, activity and excitement beyond description. Cavalry everywhere, roads filled with transports, wire cages being hurriedly erected for the use of German prisoners, engineers bringing up supplies over the light railroads, and while I said everything seemed to be in confusion, yet it might be said to have been quite orderly confusion and excitement, for everything moved with the regularity of clockwork.

At three-forty-five A. M., Mr. Gwyne left us accompanied by Privates Gordon and Bartlett, to proceed up to the front. In the plan, as detailed to us, the whole brigade movements were to depend upon Mr. Gwyne and his orderly. It was to be up to him to send messages back that the first, second and third line of trenches had been taken when accomplished. It was understood when the first line had fallen that Private Gordon would be sent back. When the second line had fallen, it would be Private Bartlett who would return, and when the third line fell Mr. Gwyne himself would return and then would come our part in the war game.

As Mr. Gwyne left us, I bid him good-bye and Godspeed.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE FIRST PHASE OF THE BATTLE



AT FOUR o'clock, to the minute, the bombardment commenced. First a single gun was heard and that was gradually followed by gun after gun until the valley seemed to be filled with the sound of guns and the explosion of shell and the echo after echo therefrom. It was as if all the elements of nature, of sky and cloud, had been turned loose—just one long continuous roar of thunder increasing in intensity it seemed every moment, and with it all one could hardly hear himself speak. The flash of the projectiles as they left the muzzles of the guns would light up the whole landscape in the gray dismal dawn of that morning.

A fleet of aeroplanes now passed overhead—great birds they appeared to be up there in the sky watching and signalling the direction and the effect of the bursting shells. Occasionally a little scout plane would be seen to leave the fleet and dash away ahead, and then circling about for a time would come straight back to where we, the cavalry, were wait-

ing and drop a message which would be instantly picked up by one of the men and rushed off to headquarters.

It was on the receipt of one of these messages that we were ordered to mount and advance. We proceeded aways and finally halted on a high piece of ground overlooking the German trenches, and from there what a sight we beheld.

Bursting overhead in the German trenches were shells of all calibres and as each shell struck we could see the earth flying as though some great explosion had caused the earth to rise up. Going across No Man's Land was seen a fleet of tanks all in orderly line. What a great display and what a sight, and yet no infantry was in sight.

The tanks plowed ahead until they came to German wire, when they all seemed to stop and it was here at this point and during such apparent halt in their movement that the "flagship," or tank, flashed back that famous signal, "Britain expects that this day every tank will do its damdest." At that the fight commenced and right through the wire, the tanks went. The barrage now lifted and the shells began dropping away on the Germans' second line of defense and with that the tanks opened fire with their machine guns killing such Germans as had survived the bombardment, and

then continued on their way to the second line of defense.

Next a great roar was heard and instantly from the front line of trenches poured our infantry and in a long extended line commenced the journey across No Man's Land at a perfectly normal gait and the regulation pace of four miles an hour.

Oh what a wonderful sight it was with the shells bursting over their heads and around and in front of the infantrymen as they continued on. Occasionally a figure would drop, but the line seemed never to grow smaller or to waver and just continued on.

The first line was followed by another line of infantry in the same extended order.

As we watched we saw coming across the open and straight toward us a horseman riding low and getting every bit of speed possible out of his horse. When but a few yards from where we were the horse seemed to stagger and then fell upon its knees but instantly regained its feet and continued on in its mad race for a short distance when its pace gradually slacked and finally when about fifty yards from us dropped dead.

The rider jumped to his feet and came toward us. It was private Gordon with the first message to the effect that the Germans' first line had been taken. Private Gordon, when he reached us, was utterly exhausted and came near fainting. We

gave him a drink and sent him to the rear where it was found he had received a badly sprained back when his horse dropped dead.

We felt that our time for action was close at hand. It had been raining for a time but had ceased now and the sun was trying hard to penetrate the overhanging clouds and smoke. We were chilled almost to the marrow but kept our blood circulating while waiting by dancing up and down.

Soon Private Bartlett came riding back with the second message which informed us that the second line had fallen into our hands, and with this information we expected every moment to attack and began to get ready for our dash across the open, but were kept waiting, however, until almost noon before we received orders to move.

All the trenches had been captured by this time and we were ordered to ride first to and capture the village of M———, and then on to our objective, the capture of the town of Cambria. With a yell we swung into the saddles and soon the entire brigade was on the move, with the Fort Garry Horse leading, and then the Lord Strathcona Horse and next the Royal Canadian Dragoons. Bridges had been thrown across the captured trenches by the Indian cavalry brigade over which to pass on and into No Man's Land.

We commenced the attack at exactly one P. M. What a sight greeted our eyes as we rode across

No Man's Land. Dead, horrible dead, bodies of the Germans who had been killed as they tried to escape. Here and there an upturned tank which had been struck and pounded to pieces by the heavy guns of the enemy. Aeroplanes that had been shot down, many of them with their nose driven in the ground and tail or propeller sticking up in the air. Here and there groups of prisoners standing waiting to be taken back, all with a look of surprise on their faces. In one group we saw I should judge there were almost one thousand soldiers.

We passed groups of American engineers already on the ground busy with the construction of a light railroad, but not too busy to cease their labor long enough to take off their hats and cheer us on our way. The soldier is never too busy while at work or play, or even in the midst of action, to cheer and encourage his comrades on the way to duty.

In time we are free of the trenches and the open country lies before us. We can see the canal with the village of M———, our first objective, nestling amongst the trees. Shortly we enter and ride toward it through a sunken road and here are met with heavy shell fire. Now and then a horse goes down, and a man screams in agony and topples from his saddle and is left behind to be attended by the stretcher bearers of the Red Cross who follow on.

We were here compelled to ride over the dead bodies of the Germans who had been killed in their

dugouts and in and around that sunken road leading to M———.

As we neared the village we came upon a stream of civilians, mostly women and children and old men, fleeing from their homes and carrying all their worldly possessions on their backs or in baby carriages or any other contrivance they were able to get hold of. What a piteous sight they presented, covered with mud and with that hunted look on their faces that you see on animals when trapped. Occasionally a shell would explode in the road and some poor woman, man or child would crumple up and his or her troubles end there. As we proceeded we found the road strewn with dead civilians and soldiers lying just where and as they had fallen, some with a smile on their face and others with a horrible expression of fear or agony in their staring eyes. Some, there may be who will say that war is a necessity and that such things are to be. Perhaps so, but how can God permit men to kill and destroy the poor innocent women and children? That is more than we can understand.

The Germans seeing they could not stay our advance began evacuating the village, but not without first destroying as much property as possible and killing every living thing possible. The Fort Garry Horse soon entered the village followed by the Lord Strathcona Horse, and in time, fortunately, to save the lives of hundreds of the civilian population who

had not been able to get out, and as well, in a measure, avenged for the death of the many we had passed on that sunken road, for no German soldier found in that village was permitted to escape alive.

We, of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, were ordered to halt before crossing the canal and there assist in the relief of the refugees. The time was now five P. M. The attack thus far had been successful, and we waited here for orders to push on to Cambria, seven kilometers away.

“B” squadron of the Fort Garry Horse crossed the bridge at five-thirty P. M., as the advance guard to the whole brigade. They had no sooner crossed than a great tank commenced to lumber across the same bridge. When in the center the bridge gave way with its weight precipitating the tank into the water. The bridge was completely destroyed cutting off, for the time, any possibility of support to that gallant squadron. Did they attempt to turn back? No. They rode on and up to the very mouths of the enemy’s guns, slaying the gunners at their posts and destroying the guns, and then on killing many Germans and throwing a whole German division into utter confusion.

Oh, what wonderful valor was displayed by that small body of cavalry—but one hundred and eighteen strong when they crossed the canal, yet without thought of fear they charged alone. When night fell and they were cut off with no chance of

support, the officer in charge halted his men and prepared for the supreme sacrifice. He issued instructions for the men to turn their horses loose and fight their way back as best they could.

The horses, finding themselves without a rider, galloped madly through the darkness into and causing havoc and confusion amongst the Germans who were now attempting to surround and capture our small body of gallant horsemen.

The charge of the Light Brigade when it charged the Russian army at B———, has been written of and sung by poets. Who will arise and sing the praises of that glorious band of heroes who at this point charged and dispersed almost a whole division of the much vaunted Prussian infantry, destroying guns and creating a disastrous moral effect on the enemy? Who can describe the bravery displayed and the wonderful things accomplished by these men in this charge and while fighting with bayonets every inch of their way on their return journey on foot?

When I tell you that but one officer and four men of the one hundred and eighteen returned, and they were wounded, you must and will agree that they were supermen, and that those who died did so while trying to make the world a cleaner, safer and better world for those who live and are yet to live.

To you who fought so bravely and fell in that glorious, yet disastrous charge, let me say here—

You made for your brigade, for your regiment, and for Canada, your country, an undying name, and we your comrades, who yet survive, salute you as martyrs for a noble cause, and pray that your brave souls may rest in peace, and that when the time comes, if it shall, when we too must make a like sacrifice, that we may go to our death as gloriously and as nobly.

No doubt in the coming years the story of the bravery of those strong faithful men will be told by writers far more able to sing of their gallantry and sacrifice than my poor self, yet they will never begin to portray to the mind of their readers the feeling that passed through the breasts of every man of the whole brigade when he heard the story of their glorious sacrifice.

CHAPTER XXIX

A NIGHT OF HORROR



H MY GOD, we are cold! Can't we move away from this hell of shell fire? Can we not be permitted to forget that death is lurking around us?

I am afraid to die, yes afraid. I am at heart a coward. I long to be away from it all.

Oh reader if you could but place yourself in the position we found ourselves that cold, bleak November night, I know you would have had the same feeling of misery and fear.

You, who have read, know that we left Tincourt at eleven-thirty the night previous. We had ridden to the battle front with our hearts full of the joy of living and a feeling that we were men and able to perform a man's part in this awful conflict. Up until we reached Finn we had been keyed to a pitch of excitement. We had been permitted to watch that great display of infernal machinery—the tanks—go forward and destroy life. We had witnessed the death of many a brave comrade, had seen our

horses paw the air in fear, had witnessed the exodus of the poor inhabitants of the village of M———, and the shells come bursting through the air taking toll of life from the poor innocent men, women and children. We had seen the dismembered bodies of friend and foe alike.

Then too we had just watched that small band of horsemen go across that bridge and fight its way to undying glory and fame and were not able to assist them, and now we must look forward to another almost endless night of horror.

Can you wonder that we were possessed with a feeling of depression and fear? Can you wonder that we were afraid to die?

Where is the romance of war when one must witness all this and then have to wait? And wait for what? We knew not. We only knew we were now being held back again. Our nerves were on edge, almost to the breaking point, and I, at least, wondered what man was made of to be able to stand up against such awful horrors as we had been compelled to witness.

Death seemed to be on every hand, and from it there seemed to be no escape. Look where we would that dark, dreary night and we would see the dim shadow of some dead thing—horse or man—and sometimes we knew it to be that of a woman, or that the little bundle of dirty rags we saw was the body of a dead child.

Our prayer was, Oh my God, let us move somewhere out of this—forward or back—anywhere to be in motion and away from this scene, or let us fight. But no, that night we could not do either and were obliged to remain where we were.

When we became resigned to our fate, the order was obeyed dutifully, notwithstanding our feeling, and so each troop of our squadron fastened the horses to the lines and settled down for the night.

To ease the horses' backs one troop at a time was permitted to take off saddles for an hour at a time, the other troops meantime standing to their horses and simply waiting orders.

We of the Old Black troop felt we must do something to overcome, in a way, the feeling of horror and misery that came upon us, so, led by Privates Higham and Roberts, we commenced to sing. Yes sing. The singing was started by these two men. They sang "The Old Folks at Home" and "There's No Place Like Home," and soon they were joined by the other members of the troop, and gradually the refrain was taken up by the men all through the squadron, and as we sang, miraculously it seemed, the shelling gradually ceased. The singing continued until about eleven P. M., dying out as gradually as it had begun.

When our turn came to unsaddle horses we did so in somewhat better spirits, and placing our sad-

dles behind the horses threw ourselves down on the muddy ground to ease our aching limbs and get what little rest was possible. One had to remain on watch, however, so Corporal Bartlett took the first half hour and I the second, each getting but thirty minutes repose.

When it came my turn for rest I lay down between Bowes and James and was about to dose off in slumber when a terrific explosion occurred just a little to our right. At once Sergeant Sayger's troop, the Second troop, was in an uproar. The trouble did not seem to concern the men of our troop and so did not particularly interest us, and we were about to close our eyes again when right amongst our troop exploded four shells.

My God! Shall I ever forget the scream of the wounded horses and men. I instantly jumped to my feet and found Corporal Bartlett already endeavoring to quiet the horses, not having left his post for a moment. He was immediately assisted by Picken and Higham. I could hear a moan here and there but in the awful darkness was unable to see who had been hit. It was my troop that had been hit and I was distracted. It was my duty to try and steady the men and so I forced myself to speak calmly yet roughly, commanding them to be steady. "Steady men, don't get excited." "That's right boys, there is no great damage done," I said, in my effort to reassure them.

My voice seemed to quiet them, but still the agonizing groans of someone persisted. I demanded, "Who is hit?" Someone answered "It's Bigney." Another said, "It's someone of the Third troop." Then Bowes, who had been lying with me gently touched my arm and said, "Sergeant, it's little James, your batman, who has been hit.

My God! James, who had been lying by my side. Could it be possible? I went to where he was lying and there I found him groaning in his awful agony. I spoke to him, gently, and he recognized me, poor kid, but he could not suppress his moans, though he seemed to try so hard to do so.

"I can't help it, sergeant. Oh it pains me so," he said. I gave him a drink of rum out of my bottle and it seemed to ease him for a moment. The stretcher bearers were busy attending the wounded elsewhere at the time and so we could do nothing further for him.

We realized he had been mortally wounded and that his young life was ebbing away. Jimmy Lainsbury went in search of a doctor and meantime Higham, God bless him, tried his best to cheer the poor lad. I too took the suffering boy by the hand and told him to be brave and that we were going to take him out, where he could get medical help.

"What's the use, sargeant," he replied, and then continued, "I am done for, I know it." Then he

said "Good bye, boys. I know the old troop will stick it out."

Lainsbury now returned with a stretcher and I gave Higham and he permission to carry James out to the nearest dressing station.

Everything by now was in an uproar. Hurried orders were given to saddle up and get out of that hell of fire.

Strange as it may seem, the men silently and nobly bent to their tasks and soon saddled their horses, encouraged meantime by that patient and noble gentleman, Major Timmis, who seemed to be everywhere encouraging and cheering his men, assisted by that other brave man, Mr. Gwyne, who had previously joined his troop.

We were soon leading such horses as were left back a short distance to better cover and safety, and there spent the balance of the night without further casualties.

CHAPTER XXX

COMING OF DAWN



GAIN we halt not far from our original position but this time screened and slightly protected by a low lying range of hills.

It was about one A. M. when we were settled again, but we could not sleep and our prayer was for dawn—dawn that would chase away the awful blackness.

were settled again, but we could not sleep and our prayer was for dawn—dawn that would chase away the awful blackness.

Men began throwing themselves down anywhere utterly exhausted, but wherever they lay it was in filthy, slimy mud with an awful stench. The cold too was intense and we had no way of warming ourselves nor of keeping warm, for we could not light fires owing to the nearness of the enemy and the fact that any light would attract its attention and cause us to be shelled again.

We therefore simply lay down and waited for dawn. How I longed to sleep and forget, but sleep was impossible.

I was wet and cold, my bones were stiff and sore, muscles cramped, and to stand or walk around was agony. My comrades were all in the same condition, and some worse even for they were suffering from slight wounds and bruises as well.

I could not see, but I knew during the shelling I had been hit on the right leg for I suffered a slight pain and could feel the congealed blood on my leg, but I could not think of leaving. I wished I might use that as a reasonable excuse to retire. I had seen a doctor struck by a piece of shell on his hand and still carry on his duties, and at the recollection of that I felt ashamed for almost giving way to the desire to go back for such a slight wound as I must have received. Nobody would have been the wiser, I thought to myself, when thinking I might give up, and then the thought came, no, perhaps nobody but myself and my conscience. I had but to look to my right and my left to see my comrades all manfully and bravely playing the game without a murmur, and seeing them I could not give up.

All night long, and far into the awakening dawn, troops were coming and going, and wounded men being carried out. Oh the untiring devotion of those stretcher bearers.

Lainsbury and Higham return about four A. M. from their trip out with poor little James. They came straight to where I was sitting, and Higham,

poor old Higham, I knew what message he had and how he felt—James was his friend, his pal, in fact—when with his head bowed he came toward me, and with a choked voice said, “The kid went west twenty minutes after we reached the dressing station.” That was all.

What emotions and sorrow the message awoke in my breast. True I had seen many die and others go that day, but no such unexplainable feeling of sadness had come over me as now at the loss of one so near and dear to me as my faithful little James. I too, in my melancholy mind, wondered how soon it would be before my time came to give up my life as I had seen so many already do.

The awful blackness was beginning to break now and the dim shadows of men and horses became gradually clearer and clearer. The dawn came, but with daylight hardly a figure stirred. All were exhausted and some had fallen asleep amidst the awful conditions. We who were awake had to awaken the sleeping and arouse most of the others from an apparent stupor.

As usual Major Timmis was about, and with a look of sadness on his face I saw him going about from troop to troop rousing a man here and a man there.

I awakened Corporal Bartlett and he and I went around and awaked and aroused the men of our

troop. Some of the poor fellows we found were actually frozen to the ground and had to be assisted to their feet, and when we did so in many cases their uniforms would be torn apart as they arose. A ragged, crippled and bedraggled lot of men we presented that cold and dreary morning.

With daylight our spirits began to rise and we thought once more of life, something of the joy of living arose within us again and so we turned our attention to our personal comforts as far as possible. A few who were so fortunate as to have any food left began to eat, and nearly all made a little tea, and all had a few mouthfuls at least, for those who had tea shared it with their less fortunate comrades, and right here I want to express my appreciation and extend my thanks to Sergeant Sayger of the Second troop for the "hate" (tea) he made and gave me that cold miserable morning. It seemed to put new life into me and to stimulate me to further endeavors.

Tea is the popular stimulant of the soldier on duty in France. I desire to include in my story at this point, a little description of tea making and drinking in France as given me by Sergeant Sayger, since his return to Canada. He said—

"During my two years and eight months' service in France I always carried a primus stove and a water bottle containing gasoline or coal oil, and if possible, tea, sugar and condensed milk, so that I

was rarely hard up for a drink of hot tea, or 'hate,' as we called it. Thus one of my most valued memories of this war is my primus stove or 'hate' pot.

"I have made tea in the most impossible places—for instance, I have made a screen and had a drink of hot tea on outpost on a rainy night, but a few yards from the enemy, and I have had it on the roadside during a half hour's halt.

"In the Cambria advance I made it in a shell hole and covered the top with a waterproof sheet during the night when fires of any description were out of the question.

"It is wonderful how everyone gets the craze for tea out there. I have known fellows who used to turn up their noses at it before the war, become regular 'tea grannies' after a few months in France, and at every available opportunity were making tea. The funny part of tea is, they don't want other people's tea, it does not taste right if they don't make it themselves, it seems.

"If you go into one of the big French huts a few minutes after a unit arrives, you will see a gloomy interior dotted with little fires with groups around making tea, and of course a pall of evil smelling smoke."

At nine o'clock that morning the First troop was sent to hold a position that was at the time of vital importance to us. Sergeant Parkerson rode out with his men and not only succeeded in holding the

position against great odds, but won for himself and his troop as well, a right to be mentioned when the history of this great war shall be written.

Sergeant Parkerson was afterwards decorated for bravery and devotion to duty on this occasion, with the M. M. Corporal Akerstream received mention in the dispatches for his gallant work with his machine gun. It was here also that Private Thompson of the machine gun squadron won the shoulder decoration D. C. M., for devotion to duty in assisting to repair bridges, though at the time severely wounded through the shoulder, yet sticking to his post until the task was completed.

In the repair of bridges at this time German prisoners were employed and they seemed really glad of the opportunity to show their captors that they were willing to do something, anything, to get away from their taskmasters, the Prussian militarism.

For nearly two days and two nights we had been almost constantly on our feet, at times fighting, at times working, and all of the time subject to and under shell and machine gun fire, not to say anything of the discomforts suffered from the rain, cold and hunger. We could not possibly endure another day of cold or a night of sleeplessness. Man must be refreshed, and horses needed rest and food. Both had reached the limit of endurance, and so at about two P. M. that day we were relieved by

one of the imperial brigades and started back to the rear for rest.

Could I clearly paint a picture or intelligently describe all of the horrors we witnessed and suffered during the few days we were at and engaged in that great battle of Cambria, I am sure the reader would close the book horror stricken and in disgust. But before I close this chapter let me cite a bit of humor that seems to crop up or exist even in the midst of war's horror, and how such humor strikes home to us under the most trying circumstances.

A tank is seen returning from an attack, but not now in the capacity of a destroyer of life, rather performing work of a good Samaritan, for within its iron walls are women and children being brought back by it to safety. And that is not all it is bringing back, for tied to the rear and following it are two meek looking cows. The sight was very unusual and naturally quite unexpected and brought forth a laugh from all and a remark as well, from some of the men to the effect— "Wal, I have heard of bringing home the bacon, but you can search me if I ever heard of bringing home the beef."

And yet this was not all, for on top of the tank was a rabbit hutch filled with rabbits, which caused one of our boys to say— "The guys in that tank have not been fighting, they have been hunting, and seem to have made a good catch." This all caused us to forget for a time some of our own misery,

and we really enjoyed the humor of this most unique sight.

At eight o'clock that night we arrived at a place called Sorel. Here we found shelter of all sorts for men and horses, built fires and dried our clothes and cooked food for the evening meal. We were informed we were going to continue on to a place called Suzanne, pleasant news it was to us for we were glad we were going back where we could rest again for a spell.

We in time came to Suzanne, where we remained for about seven days when we again moved on, finally reaching a ruined village called Meraucourt, where we expected to remain and rest for some little time, but in this we were sadly disappointed.

On the third morning after our arrival at the latter place and while out drilling on what we call drill order exercise, word came to the effect that the Germans had broken through and the Canadian brigade was ordered to leave for the front in an hour.

This was as sudden as unexpected. "What, move in an hour," we exclaimed. That was the order and so it was obeyed. We packed our saddles as best we could, leaving behind a lot of personal equipment, and within the hour of receipt of the order we, the R. C. D.'s, were in the saddle and on our way to the brigade and divisional rendezvous.

CHAPTER XXXI

WE BLUFF FRITZ



ES, THE enemy had broken through our lines capturing a large number of guns, and we the cavalry were about to be rushed up to stem the tide of oncoming Germans.

It was a critical moment. The unexpected had happened again. The enemy had found our weak spot and had thrown against it eight divisions of their best storming troops.

We saw and knew exactly what had happened and fully realized the task that lay before us, yet little did we realize the extent of the horrors we were to witness or the hardships and dangers we were to participate in.

We pushed ahead without any loss of time and at four o'clock that afternoon were thrown into the fight.

The duty of our regiment was to hold a section of railroad just north of Ephey. My troop was ordered out on reconnoitre, with instructions to find, if possible, any road through the wire which would

permit the cavalry to plow through in large numbers. It was rather a ticklish job and Mr. Gwyne called for ten men to volunteer. Immediately the troop volunteered to a man, but as ten men only were required now, I simply gave the order that the first ten men on the right mount for the task. The remainder of the troop was then turned over to Corporal Bartlett.

Mr. Gwyne, the ten men and myself at once rode away on our perilous expedition. We were handicapped, in a way, by the fact that we did not know the exact location of the enemy, but in this we were not left long in doubt, for as we showed ourselves over the skyline, we were greeted with a rain of machine gun bullets from Fritz. Two of the horses were hit and slightly wounded.

We immediately opened out in extended order, when only about one hundred yards ahead of us we saw crouching behind a clump of trees a machine gun crew of the enemy. Mr. Gwyne at once gave the signal to draw swords and charge, and charge we did with a vengeance.

Fritz, fortunately, had the wind up and could not hit us. Oh, it was a grand little fight while it lasted, but we rode them down. There were eight in the crew, all of a Saxon regiment. I singled out for my "meat" a very nice looking chap who seemed to be trying to give orders, and went for him. He saw me coming and knew I meant business. He

drew his revolver and shot at me but missed. It was his last shot in the war, for before he could fire again, my sword passed through his neck. I saw the look of awful amazement on his face as he went to the ground to die a few seconds later.

Mr. Gwyne had just put the finishing touch to the fight by shooting a fellow through the head who was about to make a lunge at him with his bayonet. Two members of the troop, Corporals Craddock and Roberts, were meantime destroying the machine gun.

On the whole it was a nice little fight and thoroughly enjoyed by the participants on our side of the engagement.

Mr. Gwyne sent a man back to headquarters with a report which read as follows— “Surprised and killed enemy machine gun crew and destroyed gun. Am pushing on. So far no casualties.” Just a message brief and to the point, telling all.

We pushed on and soon came to the wire entanglement in which we were to find a way through. Here Mr. Gwyne decided he and I would push ahead on foot. Dismounting and leaving the other men in a sunken road near by, with instructions to Corporal Craddock, who was left in command, to return to the regiment in an hour, providing we did not return in that time, and make a report to the effect that we were missing, we left the party.

It was almost dark now as we pushed our way through a small gap in the wire. Away to our right a machine gun was speaking, but otherwise not a figure was to be seen in the miles of shadowy landscape that lay before our eyes.

We were armed with revolvers and sticks as weapons of offense and defense, and naturally examined them before proceeding far. I was dismayed to find I had no ammunition, but did not dare inform Mr. Gwyne of the fact, and so trusted to luck that we might not encounter any of the enemy.

We soon came to a crossroads unprotected by wire or obstacle of any description. We had found what we were looking for—the road leading to Vandhuile, and were just flattering ourselves for having found the task so easy and so free from danger, when we saw coming along the road toward us a party of men, their identity as yet undistinguishable. We commenced to walk toward them, and as we did so, I felt my knees shaking and began praying they were not Germans.

The on coming party halted as soon as they saw us, and at that we halted also. In the dim light of the dying day neither party could distinguish the identity of the other. A member of the approaching party soon advanced toward us, apparently to find out just exactly who we were, whether friend or foe. We were equally as curious as to their

identity and so we cautiously moved up a little further also.

We had gone but a few steps when Mr. Gwyne clutched me by the arm and said in a low tense voice, "They are Germans." The lone Hun was now but about fifty yards from us, and he too seemed to have discovered by now that we were Britishers, for he stopped, turned about and commenced going back toward his party at double quick time.

Mr. Gwyne at once pulled out his whistle and blew the signal for "charge." I at the same time commenced to blow my whistle as to a body of men behind me. The bluff worked, for the Germans apparently thinking that we were there in large numbers, took to their heels and at that I started after the lone Hun. All this took place in about thirty seconds, and although Fritz had a pretty good start of me, he was handicapped in the race with his rifle, bayonet and equipment. I was traveling light and gradually gaining and closing in on him. Right behind me in the race was Mr. Gwyne, firing his revolver at the fleeing Hun. He missed him, his shot going wide of the mark, but Fritz was frightened and dropped to the ground. I was up to him in a second and made one jump, landing fairly upon his stomach knocking the wind completely out of him. All the poor German could gasp was "Kamarad." In my excitement I pulled the trigger of my revolver, but fortunately for my cap-

tive, the chambers were all empty, and fortunately for us, as well, that I was unable to kill him, for the information he gave our brigade headquarters was most valuable.

We realized we could not tarry here long and must get back quickly, so jerked Fritz to his feet and started with him back down the road at double quick time. We were obliged to encourage Fritz to greater speed endeavor by giving him an occasional kick in the seat of his pants, for we knew our bluff had been discovered and that our companion's comrades were making preparations to capture us.

Our trip back was amusing to ourselves, and if you could have had the pleasure of witnessing two great big soldiers kicking that Hun all the way down that road you too would have laughed as heartily as we did.

We found our way safely back to the regiment. Mr. Gwyne made his report to general headquarters while I hurried our prisoner over to the interpreter.

The information the prisoner gave was most important and gave us a great advantage. It was to the effect that the party we had bluffed were coming, thirty-two of them, with machine guns to defend and hold the crossroads I have mentioned.

We were highly complimented for our presence of mind and our accomplishment. Mr. Gwyne endeavored to place all the credit upon me for the capture. I hardly felt I deserved it, for while I

chased the Hun, it is true, I must confess it was not because I was not afraid, but because of the fact he was running away. If the situation had been reversed I would likely have ran to the rear quite as fast as did he, possibly, since I was armed with a perfectly safe revolver for the enemy.

I returned to where we had left our men in charge of Corporal Craddock and found them exactly where we had parted company. I recounted our experience to the men and they expressed regret that they had not been permitted to witness the capture of and the return with the lone Hun. We mounted and returned to the regiment to be greeted with the order to advance on a ruined farm as infantry and dig in.

CHAPTER XXXII

DIGGING IN



ES, WE had to dig in. Picks and shovels were delivered to the poor tired soldiers and they set to work at hard manual labor digging—digging in as it is called in this modern form of warfare when men are obliged to burrow and live like animals.

A drizzling rain was falling and it was cold on that thirtieth day of November, 1918. It was my duty to direct and oversee the work of my men, and I could see, as I walked along the fast deepening trench, a long line of dark bent figures, digging and throwing the dirt in a way never witnessed on any public work in civil life. On my left the men of the Second troop were working likewise and I could see Sergeant Sayger walking up and down his line of faithful workers as I was doing, helping his men by giving a word of encouragement now and then.

Much of this work was done under cover of darkness and occasionally a star shell would go sailing

up in the air at which every man would cease operations in just the position the light found him until it died down again. Then a shell would come screaming through the air followed by another and still another, and frequently there would be heard a cry and some man would go down. Stretcher bearers would rush at double time to the scene and carry off the wounded, and so things went on during the night, but the work never ceased.

It is times like these and under such conditions and while in the performance of such duty that men prove their true worth. Times when they work or fight in the dark, the rain and the cold, and while under shell fire, and not able to stop to smoke or refresh themselves for a moment.

Gradually the trench deepened until it afforded sufficient protection to permit the men to stand erect—that is, four feet of excavation with two feet of earth thrown on the bank, making a depth of six feet in all. To accomplish this the men have suffered and sweat blood almost, and when their task is complete they drop their tools and stand up and wait. Wait for what? For further orders, the nature of which they know not.

During the work the men become overheated and now as they grow cold, and with that and aching back and limbs and an empty stomach, they become miserable.

Oh reader, let me tell you that it is not the thought or fear of being wounded or killed, even, that brings the greatest terror or mental or physical suffering to a soldier. It is the awful waiting amidst such trying conditions, when clothes are wet, feet numb with the cold, and one is hungry and tired, oh so tired and sleepy. Then it is that his thoughts are more than ever of home. How sweet is the thought of home and the recollections of peace and happiness he enjoyed there with his own, and how he longs for just one more moment there. These are times when he becomes very homesick and heartily sick of himself in his position, and he would be willing to die right then could he but first have one long last look at home. And he feels he could die in that way with a smile upon his lips. During such periods of despondency he can almost see coming out of the inky blackness a picture of home and of the mother or other dear ones there, and yet, how far, far away "back home" appears to be, and he feels he will never see it again except in his dreams.

I speak of these thoughts and feelings from personal experience. How often have I had such fits of mental suffering, and then suddenly coming to my real self, would stretch out my arms and try to shake off the feeling and laugh at myself for my silliness in giving way to such weakness, and hope

at the same time none of my comrades had noticed my action or mood.

Mothers and wives who are waiting for the return of your boy, let me tell you he too is often stretching out his arms to you and longing to run home and throw them about you and cling to you for eternity. He may never be permitted or able to come back to you or tell you his thoughts, and so I want, in my poor way, to tell you of the sweet memories of home and mother and wife and of the tender thoughts and longings that come to your boy so very, very often, when he is suffering hardship, misery and torture far away from home, and to say it is, after all, such thoughts that makes him brave and gives him courage to continue to "Smile and Carry On" in the work for which he has pledged his life.

In time a shrill blast on a whistle rings out and the men instantly come to attention with eyes directed to the front. An order is passed down the trench to "Stand to." Each man at this looks to his rifle and sees that the bayonet is properly secured and that all is ready for the work ahead. A thrill passes through his body and he tries to imagine what he will do when he gets into close quarters with the enemy, if he should.

Suddenly all hell seemed to have broken loose. Machine guns along the whole line of our trench had opened up. A command is given—"Steady men.

Steady." "Wait for the whistle." And then, "Pass the word down, 'Cease fire.'"

What, cease fire so soon? Don't we go over the top? We inquire of ourselves. Seemingly not. We were disappointed. The Huns were already falling back and under the excitement of the moment we wanted to follow. As if to give vent to our feelings we cursed, and some men really sobbed, so great were their emotions. I really felt myself tremble and shake in my anger and disappointment, yet I knew I was at heart a coward, because in a little while I was glad we did not have to go over the top just then. I felt ashamed of my later feelings too, but as I passed from man to man I could note a look of relief in the eyes of some, and I knew how they too felt, and yet I knew and thanked God that though they were cold and hungry, tired and miserable, still they were ready and eager to go over and would have gone over the top that November night had they been permitted or ordered to do so, and would have willingly died if necessary.

An order was now passed down the line that we would move out of the trenches at three A. M. and return to our horses. At the fixed hour we dragged ourselves up and out of the newly made trenches and plodded back through the mud and filth to the spot where we had left our horses, and there threw

ourselves down in the mud to try and sleep and forget our misery.

When we awoke the infantry had not as yet come up. The cavalry had held the enemy for two days. Could it hold them for another day? Could we? That was the question. We could try, and must.

At nine o'clock on that morning of December 1st, we mounted and took up a position in a valley, later that same morning christened by some "The Valley of Death."

Here we, the Canadian cavalry brigade, halted and again waited. Shells found us and tore into our ranks killing horses and men, yet we stood our ground and waited.

Heavy guns were brought up on a gallop and placed in action on our left, many of the gunners being soon killed at their guns. Drivers were often killed as they raced away after bringing up the guns.

On our right the Eighth Hussars were charging in a vain attempt to make a passage. In front of us the Indian cavalry were going over dismounted to try and stay and hold the Huns. A troop of the Lord Strathcona Horse in time mounted and rode away never to come back. Here and there could be seen a dispatch rider galloping to some point with a message.

The whole landscape, as we viewed it, was dotted with moving troops. What a picture. What a

sight. Shell fire was on our right and behind us and amongst us, yet God must have been watching over us and protecting us that morning, for while we had a number of casualties we were able to hold our position, and the enemy seemed to be unable to advance.

Then came an order, "The Canadian cavalry will return." We mounted and moved back, not far, only across the railroad track, but why we knew not for here we were being shelled again. We halted and dismounted. Then an order was given.

"One man to three horses. The others will fall in and double up."

No, we were not returning this time, as we soon found out, but were going up to the front once more as infantry and over the top with "The Best of Luck."

CHAPTER XXXIII

AFTER THE CAMBRIA ADVANCE



SHALL here give you something of the engagement after the Cambria advance as detailed to me recently by a non-commissioned officer in "B" squadron of the Fourth troop.

"After the Cambria advance we were sent to M———, a ruined village seven miles behind the lines. We were given to understand that sixty per cent. of the brigade would go into the trenches and hold the line for the winter while the remainder would remain behind to look after the horses.

"Upon reaching the village we began improvising stables for the horses and dugouts and huts for ourselves, expecting we were to go into winter quarters.

"On November 30th, as usual, we turned out for mounted drill, when an orderly came out at gallop and informed us we should be ready to move again in an hour in full marching order. In view of the fact we had planned and were already settled down

for the winter, to get ready to move in so short a time meant quite a rush. However we managed to be ready within the hour.

“At the appointed time the brigade formed up and moved off to the divisional rendezvous where we awaited further orders. There were at this time all manner of impossible rumors going around as to what had happened, but each one formed the idea that the Germans had broken through again.

“At two P. M. we moved off by brigades and up the line, gradually bearing as we did to our right. We were anxious concerning the conditions which caused the hurried orders and tried to get news from the troops we met or passed on the way, but no one could give us any information. Just before dark we halted and dismounted somewhere close up to the front, for shells were bursting parallel to us on our right. Here we waited for about an hour or so during which time the Fourth troop of our squadron was ordered away to reconnoitre.

“The regiment soon mounted again and moved straight ahead. It was nearly dark by now and so we moved up on a trot. The first intimation we had of the nearness of the enemy to our front was, when moving up the hillcrest we heard the machine guns whizzing over our heads.

“We now received orders to dismount and hand the horses over to the horse-holders and take the picks and shovels off the pack horses. After obey-

ing these orders we pushed forward in extended order while the horses were taken back under cover somewhere.

"We passed a road and advanced a few yards to the other side and then received orders to "dig in." One of our squadrons advanced ahead of us mounted and took up a position. We commenced at once to dig a trench, and while doing so would be greeted every little while with a stream of machine bullets over our heads. According to my best judgment, the Germans were then but five hundred yards from us, where they had been checked in their advance that afternoon by the Imperial infantry.

"We knew by this time that the Germans had advanced a few kilometers and for that reason every man available in the vicinity had been rushed up to stop them.

"When we had the trenches dug to a sufficient depth for protection we were ordered to "stand to," as the enemy would likely attack during the early hours of the morning, and accordingly as the dawn began to appear we were all on the "qui vie."

"At six o'clock that morning we were ordered out of the trenches and back to the horses to be ready to fight once more as cavalry. Here we received our rations of bully and biscuits, and the oats for the horses, and after feeding the horses and eating we formed up ready for action.

"As soon as it grew light the horse artillery opened fire bringing retaliation at once from the enemy. One battery thereupon galloped up and unlimbered on our left, and now things began getting quite interesting for all, for shells began bursting to our right and left and over our heads, a stray bullet occasionally arriving and causing a horse to drop here and there, at which the owner would take what he wanted from his wallets and remove the nickel bit and stirrups from the equipment, and the others would rush to gather the feed oats for their horses.

"One German shell hit an ammunition dump to our left rear containing a store of "very shells" and rockets of different colors, and for about fifteen minutes we were afforded a magnificent display of fireworks.

"We 'stood to' under the shelling for about two hours, and every minute it seemed the Germans were coming closer and closer. We saw some cavalry go into action at full gallop on our right and through the village of E———. An Indian regiment advanced through us, dismounted, in extended order and lay down in front of us about two hundred yards away ready for action.

"We finally received orders to mount and then moved back over the next crest of hill near the artillery, where battery after battery was assembling and opening fire on the Germans. Here we

again dismounted and 'stood into' awaiting further orders, the meantime, after much trouble, being able to secure some water for the horses. We also even started fires here and managed to have a drink of hot tea. While doing so the Germans got the range and began dropping shells among us, one of which struck and blew up the camp kettles of one of the troops, causing them to lose their tea.

"The hollow here was filled with horses. There were the led horses of the Indian and other cavalry regiments which were at the time in action on foot, and the teams of the several batteries. Now and again a shell would burst in the midst of the horses, causing many of those not killed to rear and break loose and gallop all over the place. If they happened to be Lancers' horses they would gallop about with the lances and swords swinging and swaying, as both swords and lances are left fastened to the saddle on the horses when the men go into action on foot, they taking in such cases only rifles and bayonets and tools.

"At four P. M. orders were given to mount and advance to the position we had taken the previous evening. Here we did exactly the same thing as before—dismounted for action—and were told we were now to support another regiment of our brigade which was going 'over the top.'

"We advanced in extended order under machine gun fire for about half a mile, where we reached

an old trench. From here we had to run singly across the open to a sunken road where we found a few of the squadron who were ahead of us the previous night and who had remained in this position all day. One troop of our squadron previously detached had been helping the infantry here all day also.

“We went along a communication trench to what had been the advanced trench earlier in the day. The regiment which had been attacking had by this time gained their objective and was pushing the Germans back. One of the squadrons of our regiment was giving them assistance while we were in close support. Among other things, we kept sending supplies of ammunition up to the fighters, and stretcher bearers to bring back the wounded. The machine gun bullets of the enemy were continually cracking about our ears like a thousand whips, and this music would be occasionally interspersed by a shell that would come rushing on like an express train and burst a few yards or so over and beyond us. One of such shells struck the parapets of our trench, completely demolishing a few yards of it but fortunately injuring no one. We finally entered the trench with the regiment that had driven the Germans back, to find among the dead their colonel, who had lost his life in the attack. Here we also found plenty of evidence of the fierceness of the two days’ fighting, furnished by the sight of the

many bodies scattered in and in front of the trench.

“At midnight we were relieved by the Imperial cavalry, and marched back to our horses where we ‘stood to’ the balance of the night. At daybreak we went into the reserve where we had a regular orgie of food and sleep, both of which we were surely in need of, I can honestly assure you.”

CHAPTER XXXIV

HOME AGAIN

“When from afar, homeward we return,
How thrills our heart, how our love doth burn.”



I will not attempt to give a description of our life and doings during the winter months of 1918.

On March 17th my heart was gladdened by the receipt of orders to hold myself in readiness to proceed to Canada on three months' furlough. There was included in the order Sergts. Tamlyn and Cox, and you can easily imagine, I believe, our feelings upon receiving such welcome news.

For nearly three and one half years we had borne the usual brunt of a soldier's life and had faced danger. We had seen nearly all of our comrades of the Royal Canadian Dragoons fall in battle, and accordingly had never dared entertain a hope of seeing home and loved ones again. And now, after all, we were surely to see Canada and home once more, and began planning for our departure.

On the evening of March 20th, however, we were thrown in a state of despondency and all our hopes of seeing home were as suddenly shattered. We were then informed that the situation demanded our presence for a time with the regiment, and that we must take part in the expected German drive on the morrow. We felt, upon receipt of such news, that fate had, after all, decreed we must also, like our comrades, possibly give up our lives for the cause and our bodies too rest on the blood-stained soil of France.

We went into battle on the morning of the 21st, with heavy hearts and so fought all that day.

We survived the day and when evening came were again gladdened by receipt of orders from headquarters to the effect that, "Under no circumstances shall Sergeants Jones, Tamlyn and Cox be detained another hour." We were told, with the communication of such orders, that we should proceed at once to England to make preparations to sail for Canada.

On the night of the 22nd, we crossed the English Channel and the morning of the 23rd found us once more on English soil, far away from the sight of bloodshed and the sound of guns. We were royally welcomed and treated by the English people as heroes. The feeling we experienced from such reception is beyond description. You who read know something of the joy with which the heart is filled

at the safe homecoming of the soldier, but that is nothing compared with what the soldier feels upon his homecoming and amidst demonstrations of cheer and welcome.

We remained at Shorncliff until March 28th, and then proceeded to Buxton, at which place furlough papers were issued granting us three months leave and a trip to Canada and return at public expense. We left Buxton April 10th, and proceeded to Liverpool, where we boarded the S. S. Mauretania and soon were steaming westward and bound at last, beyond question of doubt, for home.

My old pal of Valcatier camp and I occupied the same cabin, and it is safe to say that no more contented or happier persons ever crossed the Atlantic. The ship was filled with other soldiers, most of them either ill or maimed and many of whom had been discharged as unfit for further service, but all were happy for their hearts were filled with the thought that they had faithfully served their country and now were to see home and loved ones again.

The trip over was without event of note. We arrived at Halifax April 15th, and from there traveled first class to Toronto, which place we reached April 18th. At the railway station we found awaiting us the mayor and an immense crowd of people, and as the train drew in the station the music of a band reached our ears. What we beheld was surely a happy and a pathetic sight. Wives, mothers and

sweethearts were there to receive their own, and there were tears and laughter, according to the emotion of the individual or the physical condition of the returning soldier. With it all there was shouting and waving and hurrahs. My sister was the only one of my kin to meet me, and when she caught sight of me, simply cried out, "Oh Will," and burst into tears. Such was something of the scenes pictured in the Canadian cities upon the return from the battle front of the Canadian soldiers.

As soon as I could break away from the crowd and the public demonstration, I hurried to my mother's home in the city, where I knew she was very anxiously awaiting me. The scene of the meeting of mother and son I will not attempt to describe, but will leave to the imagination of other mothers who may have already and must yet pass through a similar experience. I will only say, in this connection, that she had already given up one son, my brother, who too had gone into the service for the cause and had been killed at Vimy Ridge, and for whose return she could never look. I was her only son now and prior to my return she had been obliged to hear a report to the effect that I too had fallen in battle.

On the following day I hastened to my home in Amsterdam to see my wife and child. It was near evening when I reached my home town. News of my arrival had not yet reached there, and in fact

news had preceded to the effect that I had been killed. Accordingly, no one expected me and so I found none at the station to greet me, and as I made my way home I met none who recognized me.

Reaching my house I found my grandfather doing some work in the garden. I spoke to him and he at first failed to recognize me. I inquired for my son Billy and was told he was playing about the yard. I went to look for him and found him playing soldier. Upon seeing me he stopped and looked my uniform over with childish interest and then asked, "Are you a soldier?"

I said I was. He then looked me over with apparent added interest and said, "My daddy is a soldier too. A great big soldier. He is way off shooting Germans, and when I grow to be a big man, I am going to shoot Germans too."

Then he asked, "Do you know my daddy?" I said, "What is your daddy's name?" He replied, "My daddy's name is Corporal Jones. My name is Billy Jones."

I said, "My name is Billy Jones too." At that information his eyes seemed to grow bigger than ever and he looked me over again with apparent still greater interest, and being evidently satisfied with my appearance, finally asked, "Are you my daddy?"

Further conversation ended with that question, for I immediately picked him up and hugged him

to my breast and kissed him and told him I was his own soldier daddy. It is needless to describe the scene further, or to say that at that moment I was the happiest person living. Once more away from the scene of carnage and bloodshed and holding in my arms my own little son, my flesh and blood. All the misery, suffering and torture of the past three and one half years seemed to fade away as nothing more than a dream in this moment of my happiness.

My stay at home was filled with pleasure and all the excitement experienced by a soldier returned from the front and among friends and kin.

At the end of my furlough I returned to Toronto and was about to depart to the sailing port when information was received that the furlough had been extended by the Canadian government for a period of thirty days. I returned to my home and spent another happy month as a soldier in the land of peace.

The end of my extended leave of absence found me at the place of departure for England again, and I will give to you, dear reader, just a little description of life aboard ship on this second trip across sea and then my story will end.

On board S. S. O———, this beautiful August afternoon, feeling, as I write, that I must have been born under a lucky star to have been permitted to

pass through all I have recounted to you hereïn and yet live to enjoy so much of the beautiful in life.

As I sit in my deck chair we are steaming down the beautiful St. Lawrence river, and I am enjoying to the fullest extent its wonderful scenery, and with it all am wondering whether the future shall be as kind to me, and whether I shall ever be permitted to view it again, or whether I am now for the last time looking at these beautiful shores.

I have been informed the trip across will take at least sixteen days. At Halifax we are to pick up the rest of the convoy and then Eastward Ho. I cannot but recall my first trip over and note the different conditions under which I am now traveling. Then I was but a raw recruit continually ordered around by officers. Now traveling first class with a neat cabin to myself and sitting around and being treated by all with the greatest respect, and by almost the entire ship's company and crew with a certain amount of awe. In this connection I have already heard remarks concerning myself such as these, "Yes, 'E's going back. Been three and a 'alf years in France and going back." "What's 'is name?" "What outfit does 'e belong to?" "Must be foolish to go back."

Possibly I am foolish, since I was given my choice to remain on duty in Canada or to return. But I could not be contented now to remain in Canada, while my regiment and my pals are still in France

carrying on, and since I am a soldier and a soldier's work remains unfinished, while I am fit I must go back to France where a good soldier belongs.

Thus far my experience since leaving home has been uneventful beyond an amusing little incident which happened outside of the docks before sailing. When I reported for duty to one of the sergeants of Colonel Stewart's staff and gave him my name and rank, he said, "Oh yes, I have your name here, but headquarters at Toronto has forgotten to put all your number on the paper. All they have it is 59." This amused me, for I knew he had been accustomed of late to checking up regimental numbers anywhere up to seven figures. I told him I was the 59th man to enter the service in Canada and that the number was correct. Upon this information a look of surprise spread over his face and all I heard him say was, "Gee whiz." At that I simply laughed and walked on.

The boys aboard ship seem to be full of life and perfectly happy. I notice most of the officers to be smart looking and manly men and that all have seen service in France. One officer has been wounded three times and wears the military cross on his breast. Among the men I have already become acquainted with are S. S. Taylor of the Medical Corps and a Sergeant Le Roy, both returning to France. The latter is a French Canadian and seems to speak beautiful French, and I feel that I shall court his

companionship and practice my poor French upon him and endeavor to obtain in this way a better command of the French language before my journey's end.

We are now nearing Halifax and there I shall post what I have written for this chapter and in that way bid you good bye. As we leave Halifax my thoughts will turn to the future and they will be thoughts most serious, as contrasted with those which occupied my mind as we steamed out of this port on an October afternoon in 1914. Then I knew nothing, you might say, concerning what was before me, and my mind then was filled largely with excitement and thoughts of adventure. Today I realize fully what war means to a soldier and what experience, and possible fate, awaits him.

Notwithstanding my thoughts I go forward as willingly as before. No true soldier could or would do otherwise, I know, when the cause for which we fight is so noble. We have begun a fight for liberty, justice and freedom for the people of the world. The work is far from finished, and so we who have engaged in it must carry on to the end, that my son and the sons of other men may never again have to take up and bear arms for the same reason, and that other innocent and defenseless men, women and children may never again have to suffer at the hands of any people or ruler.

So my face is set toward the east where duty lies. I go forward with confidence in the future, and should I be spared to enjoy some of the blessings that will come from a peace we fight for, then will I ever give thanks to my Creator and Preserver. If, however, it should be my lot to make the supreme sacrifice for the cause of humanity, then be it so—

For I shall deem it an honor,
For such a cause to die,
And in consecrated soil, yonder,
Shall be content to lie.

FOURTH TROOP ROLL
ROYAL CANADIAN DRAGOONS
SPRING OF 1918

Regt. No.	Rank	Name
59	Sgt.	Jones, William R.
14645	Sgt.	Bartlett, C. J.
14941	Cpl.	Craddock, H. E.
649	Ac. Cpl.	Barge, L.
226550	La. Cpl.	Cunningham, H.
115231	Ac. L. Cpl.	Goodman
810	S. S	Reese, W. J.
607	L. Cpl.	Roberts, J.
550259	Private	Bartlett, J. S.
46050	Private	Bigney, J. W.
537	Private	Bowes, C.
550282	Private	Campbell, H. G.
550292	Private	Currie, J.
	Private	Cullen.
550428	Private	Neff, G. M.
550190	Private	Barrowclough, R. W.
	Private	Barrowclough, W. H.
48002	Private	Fortune, J.
49673	Private	Godin, J.

Regt. No.	Rank	Name
562	Private	Gordon, J.
300650	Private	Goodings, H. G.
15122	Private	Godfrey, H. G.
566	Private	Hallet, J. M.
15026	Private	Heirlhey, C. E.
868	Private	Higham, R.
552996	Private	Hocket, H. G.
	Private	Hollinghead.
550389	Private	Irvine, E.
3730	Private	James, J. A.
550478	Private	Jaminson, W.
579	Private	King, J.
14651	Private	Lainsbury, J.
550319	Private	Littledale, E. T.
550238	Private	Mitchell, W. J.
14658	Private	Martin, E. R.
550213	Private	Moule, R. E.
587	Private	McCordick, A.
15476	Private	Painter, T.
17	Private	Payne, J.
600	Private	Picken, E. K.
618	Private	Maxwell, A.
628	Private	Vince, A.
550179	Private	Walker, L.
226156	Private	Ross, J. T.
550214	Private	Mullen, R. P.
226766	Private	Maxwell, W. J.
550417	Private	Osborn, J.C.
225661	Private	Thompson, J. H.
		Merrick.

PUBLISHER'S ADDENDA

It may be of some interest to the reader, it is thought, to read a few letters received from Sergt. Jones since his return to duty.

The first letter is dated August 19, 1918, and was written from Shorncliff, Cavalry Depot, England. In it he says:—

“After a long voyage, full of hard work and a little excitement, I reached England. On the way over I was appointed Ship Sergeant-Major, and I can assure you I had my work cut out to organize the general routine for the men aboard.

“There were ——— soldiers aboard, including the officers, and what a lot. Some had been in the army but about three weeks, and they looked it. By the time we arrived at ———, however, every one knew I was aboard ship. I gave the men their first real touch of soldiering, viz—obeying and carrying out orders smartly.

“We had a large number of sick during the trip and a few deaths. In the latter connection I had the hard task of sewing up in canvass for burial and attending to the burial of five bodies. It was really no duty of mine, but the ship's crew were Chinamen and they would not look at the bodies, let alone touch them; and since the soldiers themselves knew nothing about the work it fell to me and my staff to perform the work.

“We made rather a neat job of the first case, and it looked so neat and well prepared for burial that I had something of a feeling of pride in my handiwork in this connection. He, the dead man, had to be buried at 5:30 in the morning. At that hour all the soldiers stood at attention at their boat station while the four men who were to act as pall bearers carried the body upon a plank to the port side of the ship.

“The body was wrapped in the Union Jack. It was a pathetic sight and I saw tears in the eyes of a number of the soldiers who happened to be in the vicinity of where the body was to be dropped overboard. I was watching anxiously to see that the body was not dropped on the deck and praying that the men would let it slip overboard at the proper time. I had been drilling the men for about an hour previously on just what to do and when and how to do it, and cautioned them as follows: ‘Now don’t forget, when the chaplain says, “I now commit your body to the deep,” you are to raise the plank very slightly and let the body slide off into the water, at the same time retaining both the plank and the flag.’”

“Everything went fine until the chaplain said, ‘I now commit your body to the deep.’ Then he waited for the body to drop into the briny deep. I, too, waited, but nothing happened. The men seemed to have forgotten their part. I then gave them the ‘high sign’ to let it go, and with that they surely did, body, plank and flag all going down together.

“I nearly exploded, and I noticed the chaplain too had an effort to remain solemn and dignified, but we managed to keep quiet and let it pass as quite the proper procedure, and I believe no one else who witnessed the scene was any the wiser. In the case of

the remaining four burials things passed off very smoothly and proper. * * *

“Col. Clegg wrote a very fine letter to my commanding officer, a copy of which I enclose to you, just to show you I am commencing my second trip by being on the job.

“Don’t bother to send me my troop roll book now for it will be of no use to me. I have been told, I am sorry to inform you, the Old Black troop is no more, Private Painter and myself only remaining for duty.

“I expect to be in France by the time this letter reaches you, at least that is my hope. * * *

“Very truly yours,

“SERGT. JONES.”

(Copy of letter referred to.)

“S. S. IXION

“13th August, 1918.

“From—O. C. Troops, S. S. Ixion.

“To—O. C. Royal Canadian Dragoons.

“On the passage from Canada to England I was without experienced N. C. Os. and called on No. 59, Sergt. W. R. Jones, R. C. D., to act as ship’s sergeant major.

“It was a difficult post to fill and I wish to let his commanding officer know in expressing my own appreciation of his services, that I consider him an efficient and very reliable N. C. O.

“I was fortunate in having him on board and hope that his abilities will be recognized in due course.

“CLEGG, Lt. Colonel,

“O. C., No. 6a, T. A. C. S.”

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“Shorncliff Cavalry Depot, England,
“Aug. 23d, 1918.

“* * * I am still going strong but chaffing at the delay. I am leaving now in a few days for France, and the sooner I leave the better I shall feel.

“I have suffered much sorrow and pain at the sight of some of my faithful troopers who have been returned here maimed and broken. Can you wonder that I want to go back and do what I can to avenge for those noble comrades of mine of the Old Black Troop, which is no more? I hope God gives me the strength to ‘carry on’ until I, at least, am satisfied that we, the Fourth troop, have paid in full.

“I regret now for having come home, even for the few short months. You wonder why? Then, in my poor way, I will try and explain. You of course now know of Picken, Roberts, Bigney, Godfrey, Hockert, etc., and of Sergt. Bartlett, who I left in charge. Well, I have met them all. Poor Picken will never walk alone. Roberts’ face has been disfigured for life. Bigney, poor Bigney, only a boy, has lost one arm and a leg. Hockert gassed and disfigured beyond any hope of recovery. Sergt. Bartlett who led the troop in that fateful charge of Moreuil Wood, had his left arm blown off but still manages to carry on.

“When I saw them, each had the same remark to make, ‘If the Old Man had only been with us.’ And so I feel like a slacker for having come away.

“Godfrey, poor young Godfrey, yet so cheerful and so resigned to his fate, the worst that can befall a young man—blind, totally blind, and yet he smiles and says it was great while it lasted. I will try and tell you how I first met him on my return.

I was walking along the Lees when I saw coming toward me a R. C. D. with a white bandage over his eyes and being led by another soldier. As he came closer I recognized him as Godfrey. I hastened to him and took him by the hand and spoke to him. He at once recognized me, and what do you think he said? It was, 'I heard you were in Shorncliffe, Sergeant, and I was hoping you would come and see me.'

"Yes he recognized my voice, and while he talked he kept laughing, and for a moment I was unable to speak and really did not know what to say to him, and so said, 'I am glad to see you looking so well, Old Man. Let us go and have some coffee.' With that I took his arm and off we went. I loaned him my eyes for the time we were together, and when I took him back to the hospital he told me he had enjoyed himself immensely. What courage! No complaints, no regrets, at least he spoke of none to me. It is boys like young Godfrey who make better men of us all and better soldiers. * * *"

On September 6th the sergeant wrote that he was back in France with his regiment and "still smiling." That his hero, Maj. Timmis, was second in command of the regiment and had won the D. S. O. That with a few, a very few exceptions, the men of the regiment and he were strangers.

In concluding the letter he said the Huns were dropping bombs, and he must be excused from writing more for he had to run and see if any damage had been done in the horse lines.

The last letter from the sergeant was written from France and is dated Oct. 26th, 1918. He had been wounded in the left leg, but was out of the hospital again and at the time of writing was the officer in command of the Fourth Troop.

He concludes this letter by saying, "I am well, dirty, hungry and lousy, but still smiling. Candle going out. Good night and good bye."

And so ends this story of some of the experiences of the brave young men, who have been the "Defenders of France" and the fighters in this world war for the cause of freedom, liberty and justice for all.

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