



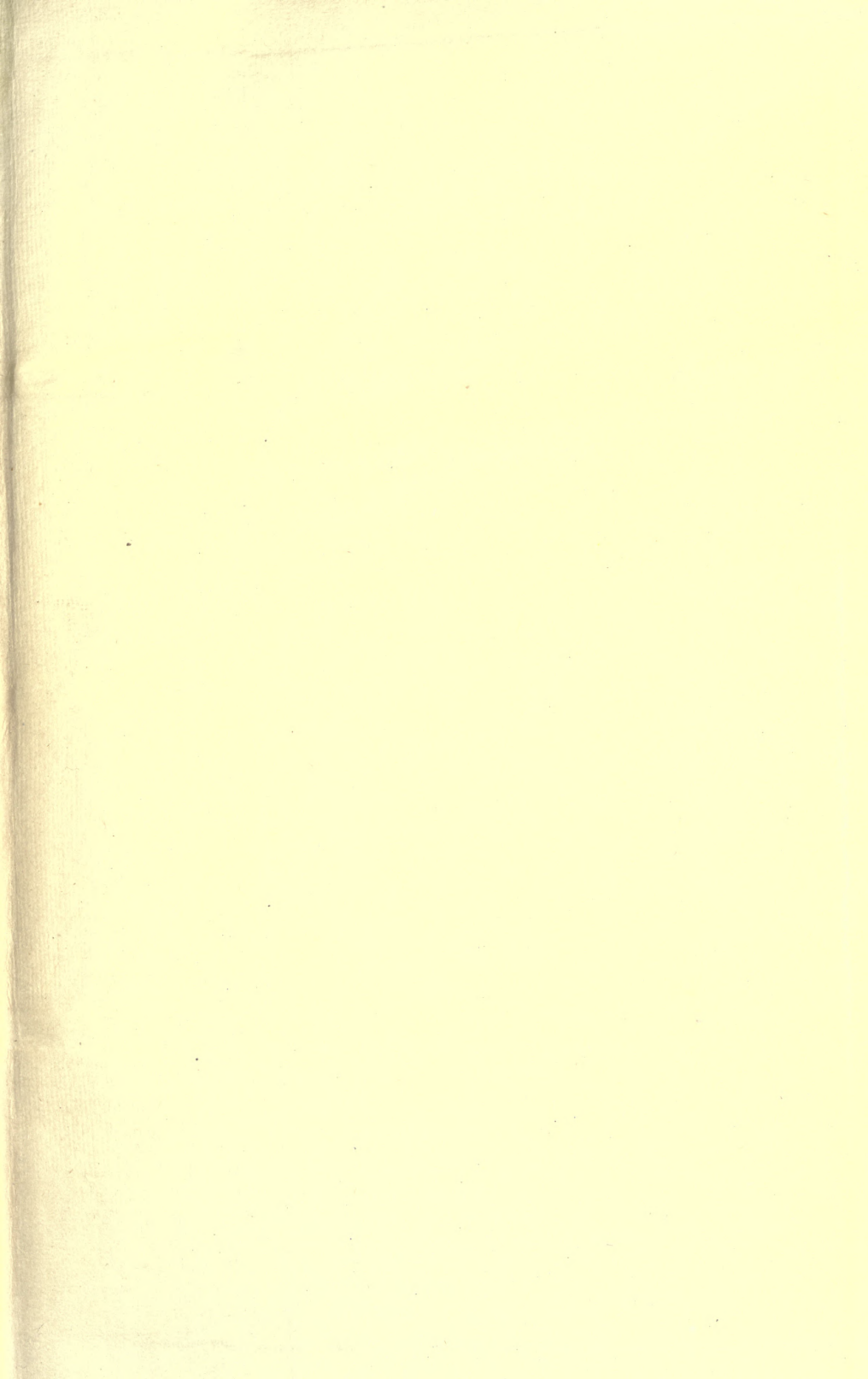




*Presented to the*  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
LIBRARY

*by the*  
ONTARIO LEGISLATIVE  
LIBRARY

1980







71312

2094

BLACKWOOD'S  
MAGAZINE.

VOL. CCV.

JANUARY—JUNE 1919.



NEW YORK:  
THE LEONARD SCOTT PUBLICATION CO.,

HARR FERRER, PROP.

249 WEST 13TH STREET.

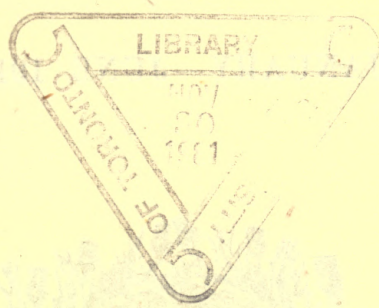
---

1919.



1831

M. A. G. A. S. I. N. E.  
J. P. G. W. O. O. D. S.



AP  
4  
B6  
V.205

THE LEONARD BLOOMFIELD FOUNDATION CO.  
722 YORK

810 WEST 18TH STREET

1881

# BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCCXXXIX.      JANUARY 1919.      VOL. CCV.

## 450 MILES TO FREEDOM.

BY CAPTAIN M. A. B. JOHNSTON and CAPTAIN K. D. YEARSLEY.

### CHAPTER I.

"IL n'y a pas trois officiers." Such was the memorable epigram by which Sherif Bey, Turkish Captain of the Prisoners of War guard at Kastamoni, and a man regardless of detail, announced to us that four officers, whose escape has already been described in 'Maga,'<sup>1</sup> had got safely away from the Camp. Those of us who knew that the attempt was being made were anxiously awaiting the news. To others it came as a great surprise. Captain Keeling does not, for obvious reasons, name any one who helped them. Now it does not matter.

Officers sang loudly and long to prevent the nearest sentry from hearing the noise of rusty nails being pulled out of a door not many feet away

from him, though hidden from view. More metaphorical dust was thrown in this wretched man's eyes and ears by the incorrigible James, who, during these critical moments, described to him, in very inadequate Turkish, but with a sense of humour equal to any occasion, the working parts of a petrol motor engine. Another helper was an orderly, Gunner Prosser, R.F.A., a remarkable man with a passion for wandering about in the dark. The thought of spending a quiet night sleeping in his prisoners' quarters was repellent to him. As far as we could make out, he never missed a night's prowl. A fez, a false beard, and a civilian overcoat were the only "props" he used. This was undoubtedly the man

<sup>1</sup> "An Escape from Turkey in Asia." By Captain E. H. Keeling. 'Blackwood's Magazine,' May 1918.



to help Keeling's party out of the town, for the by-streets were better known to Prosser in the dark than they were to other prisoners by daylight. Accordingly he led the four officers out of Kastamoni. Some one, however, must have seen and suspected them, for less than three-quarters of an hour after their start the alarm was given. Shots were fired and the camp suddenly bristled with sentries. Through this oordon Prosser had to get back to his quarters. A Turkish sergeant, into whom he ran full tilt, was knocked over backwards. Followed by revolver shots from the angry *chaouse*, Prosser darted up one side street, doubled on his tracks by another, and by his own private entrance reached his quarters in safety. Here he disposed of his beard and fez, shaved off his moustache in the dark, and got into bed. When a few moments later Captain Sherif Bey came round to feel the hearts of all the orderlies, Prosser could hardly be roused from an innocent sleep, and his steady heart-beats allayed all suspicion as to the part he had played.

The effect of the escape of these four officers on our camp was considerable. We were confined to our houses without any exercise for ten days; sentries were more than trebled, on the principle of locking the stable door. This, however, did not affect Prosser, who took his nightly walks as usual. Our Commandant, Colonel Fettah Bey, was dismissed in disgrace and replaced by a Sami Bey, whose rank corre-

sponded with that of a Brigadier-General. Now came rumours of the closing down of the camp at Kastamoni and a move to Changri—a mere village about eighty miles due south of us. Keeling's party escaped on August 8, 1917. Each day that followed Sherif Bey brought us official news of their capture in different parts of Asia Minor. One was reminded of Mark Twain's stolen white elephant. The marching powers of the four officers must have been phenomenal, and sometimes they covered hundreds of miles in a few hours. Confined to our houses, we amused ourselves taking bets with the Turkish sentries, who were convinced that the fugitives would be brought back to Kastamoni within a week. In their opinion those who had escaped were madmen. What could be more delightful than the life they were running away from—one could sit quietly in a chair all day smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee, far away from the detested war,—assuredly they were quite mad! Now it was unwise to bet, because when we lost we paid up, and when the Turks lost they did not feel in any way bound to do so. Our first commandant, Colonel Tewfik Bey, betted heavily on the war ending before Christmas 1916. He went on the doubling system. On losing his bet he deferred payment and doubled his bet for a later date, till by the time he lost his job as commandant he had mortgaged most of Turkey.

One half of the prisoners at Kastamoni moved to Changri

on September 27, 1917, the other half about ten days later. Three weeks before the departure of the first party we were told to be ready to move in a few days' time. Preparations were made, rooms dismantled, and home-made beds, tables, and chairs pulled to bits for convenience of transport—kit and crockery were packed, and all of us were living in a state of refined discomfort, when we were told that the move had been postponed, due to lack of available mules and carts. Some of us set to work to rebuild beds and chairs, others resigned themselves to fate and were content to sleep on the floor and sit on boxes. If we remember aright, there were two postponements.

At last the day of leaving Kastamoni really did arrive. We had been promised so many carts and so many mules, and had made our arrangements accordingly. At the last moment we were told that fewer carts and mules had rolled up. This meant leaving something behind, or marching the whole way—one decided for oneself. Many of us marched every step to Changri. Our departure took place at 1 P.M., and a weird procession we must have looked—carts and mules loaded high with all manner of furniture, stoves and stove-pipes sticking out in all directions.

The poor Greeks of the town were very sad to see us go. The Rev. Harold Spooner, through the Greek priests, had been able from time to time to distribute to these destitute people fair sums of money, supplied by voluntary sub-

scription among the prisoners. In addition to this, families of little children used to be fed daily by some messes, and so we were able, in a small way, to relieve the want of a few unhappy Christians. Before we left Kastamoni the Padre showed us a letter which he had received from the head Greek Priest, thanking us for having helped the poor. We had, he said, kept families together, and young girls from going on the streets, and he assured us that it would be a privilege of the Greek community to look after the small graveyard we had made for the six officers and men who had died while we were there.

By 2 P.M. we were clear of Kastamoni. The change of camp would be a great break in the monotony of our existence, and for the time being we were happy. The journey was to take four days. Of a night we halted near water at a suitable camping-ground by the roadside, and in the early morning started off again. A healthy life, and a great holiday for us. For the first two days the scenery was magnificent, as we crossed the forest-covered Hilgas range, but as we approached our destination the country became more and more barren. On the fourth day, coming over a crest, we saw the village of Changri huddling at the foot of a steep bare hill. We went through the village, and a mile beyond us stood our future home. A dirty-looking, two-storied square building it was, surrounded on three sides by level fields edged with a few willows. On its west



front the ground rose a little to the main Angora road. As we neared the barracks we came across sixty graves, which looked fairly new. This gave a bad impression of the place at the start. On entering we were too dumbfounded to speak, and here it may be added that it took a lot to dumbfound us. The square inside the buildings was full of sheep and goats, and the ground was consequently filthy. The lower-storey rooms, which were to be our mess-rooms, had been used for cattle, and the cellar pointed out to us as our kitchen was at least a foot deep in manure. Only one wing of the barracks had window panes, and these were composed of small bits of glass rudely fitted together—truly a depressing place.

Many of us elected to sleep that night in the square in preference to the filthier barrack-rooms. The sanitary arrangements were beyond words. Next morning we set to work cleaning up, but it was weeks before the place was habitable. Another great inconvenience was that for many days drinking water had to be fetched in buckets from the village over a mile away, but for this the Turks finally provided a water-cart.

It was at Changri that most of the twenty-five officers who escaped from Yozgad on August 7, 1918, made up their parties. Our party, only six at that time, consisted of Captain A. B. Haig, 24th Punjabis, Captain R. A. P. Grant, 112th Infantry, Captain V. S. Clarke, 2nd Batt. Royal West Kent Regt., Cap-

tain J. H. Harris, 1/4 Hampshire Territorials, and the two authors. Throughout the remainder of our narrative these six will be denoted by their respective nicknames: Old Man, Grunt, Nobby, Perce, Johnny, and Looney.

Roughly speaking, there were four alternative directions open to us. Northwards to the Black Sea, a distance of a hundred miles; eastwards to the Russian front, 250 to 350 miles; to the Mediterranean, 300 miles southward; or 400 miles westward. Compared to the others the distance to the Black Sea was small, but outweighing this advantage was the fact that Keeling's party had got away in that direction, and the coast would be carefully guarded if another escape took place. The position of the Russian front, so far as we knew, was anything up to 350 miles away, and the country to the east of us was very mountainous. In addition, an escape in that direction would entail getting through the Turkish fighting lines, which we thought would prove very difficult. The Salt Desert, at least 150 miles across, frightened us off thinking of the southern route. The remaining one was westward: it was the longest distance to go, it is true, but for this very reason we hoped the Turks would not suspect us of trying it. The valleys ran in the direction we should be travelling, and if we did reach the coast, it was possible that we might get in touch with one of the islands in Allied hands. Having made up our minds, we sent code messages home to find out which would be

the best island to make for in the following early summer. We also asked for reduced maps to cover our route from Changri to the island on which they decided, and requested that look-outs should be posted on it in case we signalled from the coast.

Shortly after we had made our decision the question of giving parole cropped up. To any one who gave it the Turks offered a better camp and more liberty. It was a question for each to decide for himself, and we did so. On the 22nd November 1917, therefore, seventy-seven officers went off to Geddos. It was very sad parting from many good friends, and when the last cart disappeared round the spur of the hill, one turned away wondering if one would ever see them again. There were still forty-four officers and about twenty-eight orderlies in Changri. These officers were moved into the north wing of the barracks, and there they remained for the next four and a half months. At this period we had a great financial crisis—none of us had any money, prices were very high, and it came to tightening our belts a little. Our long and badly-built barrack-rooms were very draughty, and as we had no money, there was not much likelihood of getting firewood. Some cheerful Turk kindly told us that the winter at Changri was intensely cold, and that the temperature often went below zero. Altogether the prospect for the next few months was anything but pleasant.

During our most depressed moments, however, we could always raise a smile over the thought that we were "the honoured guests of Turkey." Enver Pasha himself had told us so at Mosul, where we halted on our 400-mile march across the desert after the fall of Kut-el-Amarah. So it must have been true.

At the time we write this unscrupulous adventurer, Enver—a man of magnetic personality and untiring in his energy to further his personal schemes—has but lately fled to Caucasia. He is a young man, and having held a position of highest authority in Turkey for some years, presumably a rich one. Doubtless he will lead a happy and prosperous existence for many years to come.

There are thousands of sad hearts in England and in the Indian Empire to-day, and hundreds of thousands in Turkey itself, as a result of the utter disregard for human life entertained by this man and a few of his colleagues. Of the massacre of Armenians we will not speak, although we have seen their dead bodies, although we have met their little children dying of starvation on the roadsides, and have passed by their silent villages; but we should fail in our duty to the men of the British Empire who died in captivity in Turkey did we not appeal for a stern justice to be meted out to those responsible for their dying.

It may perhaps be said with truth that it was no studied cruelty on the part of the Turkish authorities that was



the cause of the death of so many brave men who had given themselves to the work of their country: yet with equal truth it may be said that it was the vilest form of apathy and of wanton neglect. Where the taking of a little trouble by the high officials at Constantinople would have saved the lives of thousands of British and Indian soldiers, that trouble was never taken. Weak with starvation and sick with fever and dysentery (we speak of the men of Kut), they were made to march five hundred miles in the burning heat across waterless deserts without regular or sufficient rations and without transport—in many cases without boots, which had been exchanged for a few mouthfuls of food or a drink of water.

We officers, who had not such a long march as the men, and who were given a little money and some transport, thought ourselves in a bad way—what of the men who had none? There were no medical arrangements, and those who could not march fell by the desert paths and died. The official White Book gives the number 65 as the percentage of deaths amongst British soldier prisoners taken at Kut, a figure which speaks for itself.

It is a law of the world's civilisation that if a man take the life of another, except in actual warfare, he must pay forfeit with his own life. Take away bribery and corruption and that law holds good in Turkey. Now when a soldier is taken prisoner he ceases to be an active enemy, and the country of his captors is as responsible for his welfare as for that of her own citizens. What if that country so fails to grasp the responsibility, that its prisoners are allowed to die by neglect? Should not its rulers be taught such a lesson that it will be impossible for the rulers of its future generations to forget that lesson?

It is no real use to obtain evidence of a cruel corporal at that prisoners' camp or bestial Commandant at this, and to think that by punishing them we have avenged our dead. These men are underlings. The men we must punish first are those few in high authority, who by an inattention to their obvious duty have made it possible for their menials to be guilty of worse than murder.

We pride ourselves on the fact that we are citizens of the most just country of the earth. Let us see to it that justice is not starved.

## CHAPTER II.

With the departure of the party for Geddos, the camp at Changri did what little they could to render the long bare barrack-rooms somewhat more endurable as winter quarters.

Each room was about 80 feet in length, and consisted of a central passage bordered on either side by a row of ugly timber posts supporting the roof. Between the passage



and a row of lockers which ran along the walls, were raised platforms affording about six feet of useful width. Each platform was divided in two by a single partition half-way along the room. Viewed from one end the general effect resembled that of stables, to which use indeed all the lower rooms had been put previous to our arrival. Each length of platform was allotted to a group of three or four officers, who were then at liberty to beautify their new homes as ingenuity might suggest. Planks were hard to come by, so for the most part old valises, blankets, and curtains were strung from post to post to screen the "rooms" from the passage, and thereby gain for the occupants a little privacy.

As the severity of the winter increased caulking floor-boards became a profitable occupation, for an icy draught now swept up through the gaping cracks. By the time the financial difficulties to which we have referred were at an end, it was no longer possible to obtain in the bazaar a sufficient quantity of firewood for anything except our kitchen stoves. It was not, however, until snow was lying deep upon the ground, that Sami Bey could be prevailed upon to let us cut down a few of the neighbouring willow-trees, for which it need hardly be said we had to pay heavily. Apart from the exercise thus obtained—and it was good exercise carrying the wood into the barracks—an odd visit or two to the bazaar and a few hours tobogganing

as a concession on Christmas day were the only occasions on which we saw the outside of our dwelling-place for three long months. Nor was there anything in the way of comfort within. The number of trees allotted to us was small, and the daily wood ration we allowed ourselves only sufficed to keep the stoves going in our rooms for a few hours each day. The fuel, moreover, being green, was difficult to keep alight, so that we spent many hours that winter blowing at the doors of stoves. And the stoker on duty had to give the fire his undivided attention if he wished to avoid the sarcastic comments of his chilled companions. It was a special treat reserved for Sundays to have our stoves burning for an hour in the afternoon. For over a month the temperature remained night and day below freezing-point, and the thermometer on one occasion registered 36 degrees of frost.

But enough of the miseries of that winter: in spite of such unfavourable conditions the camp was a cheerful one. We were all good friends, and united in our determination not to knuckle under to the Turk. Our senior officer, Colonel A. Moore of the 66th Punjabis, was largely instrumental in making our lot an easier one. This he did by fighting our many battles against an unreasonable and apathetic commandant, and in all our schemes for escape he gave us his sound advice and ready support.

Ours claimed to have been

the first party formed with a view to escape, but it was not long before there were several others, and it became evident that some plan would have to be devised by which a large number might hope to make their way out of the barracks fairly simultaneously. Since these had been designed for Turkish soldiers, every window was already barred. We were, moreover, a camp of suspects, who had refused to give their parole, so at night, in addition to sentries being posted at every corner, visiting patrols went round the building at frequent intervals. Three or four fellows, of course, might cut the bars of a window and slip through, but hardly five or six parties. At this moment an old American magazine came into our hands containing an article which described how thirty or forty Federal officers had escaped from a Confederate prison by means of a tunnel. This was at once recognised as the ideal solution of our problem, if only we could find a suitable outlet and the means of disposing the earth.

While the general plan was still under discussion, we were reinforced by the arrival of three officers from Geddos, who had there refused to give their parole in spite of the Turks' threat that they would be moved to Changri if they did not change their minds. Here, then, they arrived one cold December morning, looking very racy in their check overcoats supplied to them by the Dutch Legation. These coats were doubtless the last word

in Constantinople fashions, and in the shop windows had probably been marked "Très civilisé." Amongst the three was one Tweedledum, so named for a certain rotundity of figure, which even the scanty provisions said to be obtainable in Geddos had failed to reduce. From his lips we first heard of the wonderful capabilities of the Handley-Page passenger aeroplane. Such machines, he said, could carry fifteen to sixteen passengers, and three of them had recently flown from England to Mudros with only one intermediate landing in Italy. The pilot of one of them had been a prisoner with him at Geddos. A few evenings later Nobby had a great brain-wave; fetohing a 'Pears' Annual,' he turned up the maps of Europe and Asia Minor, and after a few hurried measurements unfolded to his stable companions, Perce and Looney, what was afterwards known as the "Aeroplane Scheme." These three had, with much expense and trouble, managed to collect enough planks for a real wooden partition to their "room," and it was behind this screen that this and many another devilish plot was hatched.

Briefly, Nobby's idea was for a flight of five or six Handley-Pages to be sent from Cyprus, swoop down on Changri and pick up the whole camp, both officers and men,—and Sami too. We should, of course, have to take over the barracks from our guards, but this should easily be effected by a *coup-de-main* and probably without



having to resort to bloodshed. At first the idea appeared a trifle fantastic, for after being cut off from the outside world for two whole years, it took time for us to assimilate the wonderful advance of aeronautical science which the scheme assumed: but given that Tweedledum's statement was correct, the scheme was feasible, and we soon took up the question seriously. Our representative of the R.F.C. pronounced the surrounding fields practicable landing-grounds: a committee confirmed the possibility of taking over the barracks by surprise; and the whole scheme, illustrated by a small sketch of the vicinity, was soon on its way home. We were fortunate in having by now a method of communicating secret information without much risk of detection: for the censorship of our letters, like most things in Turkey, was not very efficient. Unfortunately it used to take at least four months to receive a reply to a letter. For this reason we could not afford to wait until a definite date was communicated to us, so we ourselves named the first fifteen days of May as suitable for us, and agreed, from 6 to 8 A.M. on each of those days, to remain in a state of instant readiness to seize the barracks should an aeroplane appear. For the sake of secrecy, the details of the *coup-de-main* itself were left to be worked out by a small committee, and the report spread amongst the rest of the camp that the scheme had been dropped. The true state of affairs would not be divulged

until a few days before the first of May.

There were now at Changri 47 officers and 28 orderlies—a total force of 75 unarmed men with which to take over the barracks. Our guard, all told, numbered 70 men. At any one time during daylight there were seven Turkish sentries on duty: one outside each corner of the barracks, one inside the square which had an open staircase at each corner, one at the arched entrance in the centre of the north face, and the seventh stood guard over the commandant's office. This was a room in the upper storey over the archway and facing on to the square.

On each side of the commandant's office, therefore, were the barrack-rooms inhabited by the British officers, and to go from one side to the other it was necessary to pass the sentry standing at his post in the landing in between. From here a flight of steps gave on to the road through the main archway; on the other side of this again, and facing the stairs, was the door of the ground-floor barrack-room used by our guard. This room was similar to those in the upper storey already described, and we found out by looking through a hole made for the purpose in the floor of the room above, and by casual visits when we wanted an escort for the bazaar, that the rifles of the occupants were kept in a row of racks on either side of the central passage-way.

Each morning of the first fifteen days of May we were



to be ready from 6 to 8 A.M. to take over the barracks. The committee's plan was this. By 6 A.M. every one was to be dressed, but those who had no specific job to do were to get back into bed again in case suspicion should be caused in the mind of any one who happened to come round. The aeroplanes, if they came, would arrive from the south. Two look-out parties of three therefore were to be at their posts by 6 A.M., one in the officers' mess in the S.E. and the other in the Padre's room next to the chapel in the S.W. corner of the barracks.

The staircases at these two corners of the square were to be watched by two sentries, one in each half of the north wing. When the look-outs in the south wing had either distinctly heard or seen an aeroplane, they were to come to their staircase and start walking down it to the square. The sentries in the north wing would give the alarm, and the officer, who had the honour of doing verger to the Padre, and who used to ring a handbell before services, would run down the north-western staircase and walk diagonally across the square towards the chapel, ringing the bell for exactly thirty seconds.

The stopping of the bell was to be the signal for simultaneous action. The sentry on the landing could be easily disposed of by three officers; most of the rest were to run down certain staircases, cross the archway, dash into the barrack-room and get hold of

all the rifles; a small party at the same moment tackling the sentry on the main entrance.

On seeing the rush through the archway, the look-out parties from the south wing would overpower the sentry in the square. The arms belonging to the three sentries and one other rifle were to be immediately taken to the corners of the barracks and the outside sentries covered. The orderlies, under an officer, would meanwhile form up in the square as a reserve.

Surprise was to be our greatest ally, and we hoped that within a minute of the bell stopping the barracks would be in our hands.

Having herded our Turkish guard into a big cellar and locked them in there, we would then signal to the aeroplanes that the barracks were in our possession, by sheets laid out in the square; while small picquets, armed with Turkish rifles and ammunition, would see to it that the aeroplanes on landing would be unmolested from the village. We are still convinced that the plan would have succeeded.

Even those in the know, however, put little faith in the probability of the aeroplane scheme being carried out, realising that the machines necessary for such an enterprise were not likely to be available from the main battle-fronts. Preparations therefore continued for working out our own salvation, as though this plan for outside help had not entered our heads. With the first signs of spring, the tunnel

scheme began to take concrete form. As already mentioned in the description of the barracks, the ground to the west rose gently up to the Angora road. In this slope was a shallow cup-like depression at a distance of 40 yards from the building. If only a convenient point for starting a tunnel could be found in the nearest wall, the cup would form an ideal spot for breaking out to ground-level. A night reconnaissance was made, as the result of which there seemed a likelihood that, under the whole of the platform of the downstairs room on the western side of the barracks we should find a hollow space varying from one to three feet in depth; if the surmise were correct and a tunnel was run out from here, there would be no difficulty in getting rid of all the excavated earth into this hollow space. Unfortunately the lower room, though not in use, was kept locked.

It was discovered, however, that the walls of the barracks consisted of an outer and inner skin, each a foot thick, and built of large sun-dried bricks, the space between being filled up with a mixture of rubble, mortar, and earth, and a few larger stones. This was in the bottom storey. Above this the construction of the wall changed to two thicknesses of lath and plaster attached to either side of a timber framing, and the thickness of the wall diminished to only nine inches. The total width of the wall below was five feet; therefore the lockers in the upper room

were immediately above the rubble core of the heavier wall. It would thus be possible to get down through the lockers and sink a shaft through the rubble to a trifle below the level of the ground, and from there to break through the inner skin and come into the empty space below the ground floor.

Work was commenced in the middle of February 1918. For the next few weeks an officer was usually to be seen lolling about at either end of the first-floor rooms, and, on the approach of an interpreter or other intruder, would stroll leisurely down the passage, whistling the latest rag-time melody. Within the room all would now be silent; but when the coast was again clear there could perhaps be seen in the barrack-room a pair of weird figures, strangely garbed and white with dust. Somewhere in the line of lockers was the entrance to the shaft-head. The locker doors being only a foot square, were too small to admit a man, and so the top planks at the place where we wished to work had been prised up and fitted with hinges to form a larger entrance. To give additional room inside, the partition between two consecutive lockers was also removed. The floor of one locker and the joints supporting the platform at this point were then cut away, and we were free to commence the shaft. For this job six officers were chosen, of whom three belonged to our escape party. The six were divided into three reliefs, and each



worked for two hours at a time. The hole was of necessity only just large enough for one man to work there, so of the pair one did the digging, and his partner, when the shaft had progressed a little, sat inside the locker at the top of the hole. While actually at work the time went quickly enough; but sitting in the locker was very wearisome, as one's only duties were to pass on the alarm when the rag-time was whistled, and from time to time to draw up by a rope the small sacks filled by the digger. When all the available sacks were full work was stopped, and the two would emerge from the locker. The sacks of rubbish were then carried a few yards along the room and emptied into a space underneath some planks which we had loosened in the platform. At the end of their relief, the two would go off to change their clothes, leaving the work to be continued by the next pair. During the many hours he spent in the locker, one of the six learnt Omar Khayyám by heart. Reading a book would have been almost impossible owing to the lack of light, even if it had been permissible, in view of the risk of the reader becoming so interested as to miss the signal of the alarm. Omar, however, was a different thing. A verse could be read line by line at the streak of light entering by a chink in one of the ill-fitting locker doors, and then committed to memory—not a very engrossing task, but it helped to pass the time.

The working kit was a light

one: a shirt and "shorts," sand-shoes and a Balaclava cap. Round his mouth the digger usually tied a handkerchief, so as not to swallow his peck of dust at one time, while the cap prevented his hair and ears getting quite full of rubbish.

Let us work for one relief. You are dressed for the occasion. The tools, consisting of two chisels, are at the bottom of the hole, which is, say, twelve feet deep. A couple of candles and a box of matches is all you need take with you. It is your turn to dig. You get into the locker and climb down the rope-ladder as quickly as possible, but you must take care not to touch the outer skin of the wall as you go, or you may find yourself staring at an astonished sentry outside: there are already a few holes in the wall, through which daylight can be seen.

The candle lighted, you have a look round: but this is absurd! No one has done any work since you were down there yesterday morning. That beastly stone in the corner looks as tightly embedded in the mortar as it was then. You bend down to pick up a chisel, and you bump your head against a projecting brick. You try to sit down, but there is not enough room to sit and work at the same time. You try kneeling, but it can't be done. After twisting your limbs in a hitherto undreamt-of fashion, you begin to chip away at the mortar round your old friend. Nothing seems to happen; then suddenly your

candle falls down and goes out, and your chamber of little ease is left in Stygian darkness.

You think you hear your partner say "stop," and you look up just in time to get your eyes full of grit, for he has merely shifted his legs, which are dangling above you. After untying yourself you re-light the candle, and again get down to the stone. You pick and scrape and prise, and then, as the chisel slips, you bark your knuckles, and so you go on. All sense of time is lost, and your one thought is to get that stone out. Now it moves, and you work with redoubled energy, with the result that you break into a profuse perspiration. How you hate that stone! Finally, up it comes when you don't expect it, and the bruise at the back of your head is nothing compared to the joy of the Victor, which is equally yours.

The rock is too big, however, to go into a sack, so you shut your eyes and whisper to your partner above you. He then lets down an old canvas bath kept in the locker for this purpose. The periphery of the bath is attached to a rope by several cords, the resulting appearance as it is lowered towards you being that of an inverted parachute. The stone is difficult to lift and your feet are very much in the way, but in the end the load is ready. There is not enough room in the shaft for the stone and the bath to be pulled up past your body, so you climb the ladder and help your partner to haul. This done, work is resumed. A small sack is filled with bits

of mortar picked away from round the stone, and this too is pulled up the shaft, but the sack being small you need not leave the hole.

Now your partner tells you that it is time for the next shift. You leave the chisels in an obvious place, blow out the candle, and climb to the locker. Here your partner is tapping gently against the door. If your sentry says "All safe!" you push open the lid and emerge. The big stone is hastily carried to an empty locker, and the rubbish from the sack is poured under some planks loosened in the floor a few yards down the room. The planks are replaced, the bath and sack returned to the locker, the lid closed, and the place once more assumes its normal aspect.

You then nip along to the nearest inhabited room, where you find your relief waiting for you. One of these two is almost certain to greet you with the words, "I suppose you got that stone in the corner out straight away. I practically finished it off last night. It only wanted a heave or two." It is useless to point out that had it not been for the masterly manner in which you had worked, the stone would still be firmly embedded there. You merely bide your time, certain that within a few days you will be in a position to make a similar remark to him.

Work was now being carried on continuously throughout the day. Besides the diggers, there were twenty-four officers, who took their turn as look-



outs. It was not possible to keep the work going at night, for from time to time the sentries outside would patrol this wing of the barracks. In the day-time, when they approached the point where we were at work, our look-outs could stop the diggers, but this would have been impossible after dark. Moreover, light from a candle would then have been visible from outside through the holes in the wall.

At this stage our plans received a rude shock, for we were suddenly informed that we were to be moved to the prisoner-of-war camp at Yozgad, 80 miles south-east of us. We were to be ready, said Sami Bey, to start within a week. After our experience of the departure from Kastamonu, we came to the conclusion it might equally well be a month before the necessary transport was collected. We determined therefore to push on with the tunnel at high pressure, and if necessary to bring it out to ground-level short of the spot originally intended, and then one dark night to make a bolt for it. So the work went on.

For the first three feet of the shaft we had found merely loose rubble and stones easily excavated, for the next thirteen we had to dig out stones embedded in very hard mortar. Here we progressed only a few inches a day. Below this there was solid concrete. Every few feet we came to wooden ties holding the inner and outer skins together, but fortunately these were to one side of the

hole and we did not have to cut through them.

At the time the move was announced we were at a depth of 16 feet, just entering the concrete. Here we were below the level of the lower storey, so we broke through the inner skin into the space beneath the flooring. We now found, to our disgust, that the ground was on an average barely a foot below the joists, and the surface, being composed of dust which had been falling for 80 years between the boards of a Turkish barrack-room floor, was very unpleasant.

Our disappointment, however, was counteracted by a stroke of good luck. At each end of the barrack-room above there was an alcove, and we found beneath the nearer of the two alcoves an empty space 8 feet by 6 by 5. In this we could dispose of a good deal of the spoil from the tunnel. To get rid of the rest we should have to make a main burrow below the floor, filling up the remaining space on either side between the ground and the floor, and eventually packing the burrow itself with earth excavated from the mine. Should this again not suffice, the surplus earth would have to be pulled up by way of the shaft and distributed under the boards of the upper-room platform. All that now remained for us to do before actually starting on the tunnel itself was to sink a secondary shaft about 6 feet deep, so as to get below the level of the concrete foundations. After this we could strike horizontally towards the Angora road.

The method of moving about in the confined space was that employed by the caterpillar that loops its back, draws its hind legs under it, and then advances with its forehead, and we found it a slow means of locomotion. The burrow to the hollow under the alcove was completed, and another in the opposite direction to the further alcove was well on its way when we started to work on the second shaft. Three feet down we came to water. It was a great blow to us, and although with unlimited time at our disposal the difficulty might have been overcome, under present circumstances we had to consider ourselves defeated in that direction—especially as we heard, a few days later, that transport was already on its way from Angora.

The early move would also of course upset the aeroplane scheme, and we sincerely hoped that the authorities at home would hear that we had left Changri in time to prevent aeroplanes being sent; for although the scheme forwarded to them had provided somewhat for this contingency by arranging that the aeroplanes were not to land till they got the special signal from us, it was not pleasant to think that we might be the cause of risk to valuable pilots and machines, and all to no purpose. Apart from the move, however, it eventually turned out that the scheme could not be entertained at home, as in April and May 1918 every available machine was being urgently required for making things unpleasant for the Germans behind the main battle-front.

### CHAPTER III.

Thus, disappointed of two of our schemes, we looked around for other ways and means of escape. Nobby had another of his brain-waves. In search of dry firewood we had made several tours inside the roof of the barracks: for the ceilings and tiled slopes were carried, not by modern trusses, but by the primitive and wasteful means of trestles resting on enormous horizontal baulks, running across from wall to wall at close intervals. On these it was possible, having entered the roof space by a trap-door in the ceiling, to walk completely round the barracks, and eke out the miser-

ably green firewood we collected ourselves by chips and odd ends of comparatively dry wood, left up there presumably several decades before, while the barracks were in building. Why not, said Nobby, disappear up there one night, and leave the Turks to infer that we had escaped, encouraging them in the belief by leaving the bars of some window out and forced apart? We could then wait until the rest had left for Yozgad, and slip out from the deserted barracks at our pleasure.

There were, however, two obvious objections to this scheme. It was hardly feasible as a



means of escape for more than one or at the most two parties. The Turk might be deceived into thinking half a dozen fellows had slipped past his sentries, but hardly twenty or more. Secondly, it was quite conceivable that the escape of even a small party would lead to the move to Yozgad being cancelled altogether. It is true it would be possible for the stowaways to be fed in the roof by their companions below, but the prospect of spending three years, or the duration of the war, in that dark and musty garret, took away from the otherwise considerable attractions of the scheme.

In the end a very much modified form of the roof scheme was permitted by a committee of senior officers, and our party of six, having been adjudged by this committee to have the best chances of success on account of our pre-arranged plan when we reached the coast, was given the privilege of making the attempt. As will be seen, however, it was less an actual attempt than a waiting upon favourable circumstances which would arise should our captors make a certain mistake. In any country except Turkey the whole conception would have been absurd.

By good luck the party's preparations for escape were already far advanced, although, apart from the move, we had not proposed starting until June, on account of the rains, which continue off and on till then, and of the immature state of the crops at an earlier date. At the cost of a good deal of time, temper, needles

and thread, we had each succeeded in making ourselves a pack, for the canvas for which we sacrificed our valises. Up till almost the last night, however, we were busy repeatedly cutting straps and sewing them on again in a different place, in a wild endeavour to persuade our equipment to ride with a reasonable degree of comfort.

Food was, of course, an item of vital importance in any plan of escape, and we decided to follow the example of Keeling's party, and pin our faith mainly to a ration of biscuits. We had also for some months past been collecting from our parcels all tinned meat, condensed milk, and chocolate.

We brought our biscuit-making to a fine art. One of the ground-floor rooms had been set apart as the officers', carpenters', and bootmakers' shops—for we had long taken to making our own furniture and repairing our own boots. Here, then, was started the "Bimbashi" Biscuit Department of Escapers Limited. At one bench would be Grunt and Johnny busily engaged in the uncongenial task of taking the stalks off sultanas, and the pleasanter one of eating a few. At another stood Perce with his bared forearms buried in a mixture of flour, sugar, and sultanas, to which from time to time Nobby would add the requisite quantities of water and eggs. The Old Man presided at the scales, and, weighing out the dough into lumps sufficient for twenty biscuits, passed them on to Looney.

Armed with rolling-pin, carving-knife and straight-edge, the latter would flatten out each lump until it filled up the inside of a square frame which projected slightly above the bench to which it was fixed. When a level slab had been obtained, the ruler would be placed against marks on the frame, and the slab cut five times in one direction and four in the other. It then only remained to transfer the twenty little slabs to boards, prick them with any fancy pattern with a nail, and send them to be baked by one of our orderlies. The biscuit was about the size of a quarter-plate, and half an inch thick, weighing five to the pound, and as hard as a rock. Their best testimonials were that, without being kept in tins, they remained perfectly good for six months.

The biscuit-making concern was run regardless of expense. A pound of flour was costing at that time two shillings, sugar ten shillings, sultanas five, and eggs threepence a piece. (These, by the way, were only about half of what we soon after found ourselves paying at Yozgad. The final cost was something like half-a-crown a biscuit.)

For their escapes, Keeling and his companions had decided, if questioned, to say that they were a German survey party, and for this purpose had forged a letter purporting to come from the Commandant of the Angora Division, and ordering all whom it might concern to help them in every

way. They had written to say this letter had been of the greatest assistance to them. As we were going in a different direction, we thought that the same story would serve again. Grunt, being the best Turkish scholar of the party, accordingly drafted a suitable legend in a crisp style, such as might be expected to emanate from Enver Pasha's pen; while Johnny, aided by infinite patience and a bit of blue carbon paper, set to work and produced a faithful imitation of an office stamp found on a Turkish receipt. We hoped that the elaborated lettering of such a crest would be as little intelligible to the average Ottoman as it was to ourselves, but as a matter of interest we decided to show the original to our Greek interpreter and casually ask its meaning. And it was as well we did so, for it was the stamp of the prisoners-of-war camp, Yozgad.

After the unfortunate setback, our pair put their heads together and finally evolved a design of their own, bearing the inscription, "Office of the Ministry of War, Stamboul."

All this time, of course, we were subjecting ourselves to a course of rigorous training—football, running in the early mornings, Müller's exercises, and cold baths. We spent half the day walking round and round the exercise ground, wearing waistcoats weighing twenty pounds, which, if disclosed from under the coat, would have reminded any one but a Turkish observer of one of those advertisements of a



firm of tyre-makers, for the waistcoat was lined with a series of cloth tubes filled with sand.

Nobby, who detested sewing more than any of us, went to the trouble of making a practice rucksack carrying sixty pounds of earth. The whole of our last few weeks at Changri, one may say, were spent by the party in preparing one way or another for the escape.

On the evening of the 10th April 1918 the cart transport for our journey drove into the barrack square and there parked for the night. Orders came from the Commandant that we were to start next day, so we decided that before we went to bed our preparations should be completed.

A light ladder was made by which to climb up into the roof, drinking water was taken up in buckets and hidden there, a window-frame in the east wing was prepared so that the iron bars could be withdrawn, and we made certain by going through a list that our packs contained all that we had decided to take. The latter were then unpacked, and they and their contents placed in two boxes, each of which had a false bottom. Here were concealed our most incriminating, and at the same time our most precious, aids to escape—our maps, helio-mirrors, fezes, and compasses. The boxes were then locked, strongly bound with rope, and labelled very appropriately "Trek Stores."

For the work on hand that night the occasion was an

excellent one. Every one was busy packing, having left this unpleasant duty till the carts actually arrived. There was a lot of noise being made—to wit, a blend of singing and sawing—and when at 1 A.M. we could at last go to bed there was still much activity around us.

Next morning we showed ourselves as much as possible, and took care to find an opportunity of talking to the two camp interpreters. It was conceivable that they might take our names in the barracks, as was usual each morning; and the Commandant, being satisfied that every one was present, might omit to call roll when the move actually took place, or alternately, in the excitement of the moment, there might be no roll-call whatsoever.

On one or other of these possibilities depended the success of the modified scheme, which stipulated that until the carts were definitely on the move we were not to hide ourselves in the roof. Should the party go off without a roll-call, we were allowed to leave ourselves behind. If, on the other hand, roll was called, we had to turn up for it. This explains the necessity for the two boxes of "Trek Stores"; for, if we were left behind, these could be quickly taken up into the roof, and if roll should be called, we could hastily, and without losing our valuable escape outfit, join the carts, merely carrying two boxes of food.

After loading up our own carts with the rest of our kit in case the scheme miscarried,

we took these boxes into the mess-room at the S.E. corner of the barracks, and as the time of departure drew near, we went there ourselves and sat round a few bits of bread and an empty jam-pot. Our excellent friend H—— promised to come and warn us should there be a call over.

From the windows facing south could be seen the Angora road, and this we watched eagerly. The barracks were quite quiet. After many minutes a loaded cart appeared on the road followed by another. Our hopes began to rise; the one-in-a-thousand chance might yet come off. There were more carts moving on the road now, but to our disappointment they suddenly stopped, and a few seconds afterwards H—— dashed in. They were calling the roll. We carried the boxes outside, there to be met by several officers who had come back, so they said, to collect some firewood for the journey, but really to make our late appearance as unsuspecting as possible. No wonder we were as happy at Changri as it was possible to be, having men like these for our companions.

You may think that it was not worth our while to have taken so much trouble for so small a chance, yet you probably take a ticket in the Derby sweep. It was, we admit, a small chance, but the prize was a great one, so we were unwilling to let it slip by.

Although the direct distance from Changri to Yozgad, as the crow flies, is barely eighty

miles, the only road open to our wheeled transport was that which runs by way of Angora: our march, therefore, was about 100 miles longer. For the first sixty—that is to say, to Angora—the country was familiar to us, as we had marched along this route in the opposite direction on the way to our first camp, Kastamoni, nearly two years before. It was impossible, unfortunately, to induce our Commandant to say beforehand each day where would be the halts for the midday meal and the next night, for he did not know himself, and this was a matter to be fought out with his brother officer in charge of the transport. In other respects this march, like that from Kastamoni, was a pleasing innovation after the long monotony of our confinement. After the first few hours, the escort wearied of their primary keenness and allowed us to march pretty well at our own pace, except for occasional halts to allow the carts to come up. In fact, precautions against escaping *en route* were unexpectedly lax. On the very first day, for instance, it was not until after dark that we halted for the night, and a dozen officers might easily have slipped away from a party which went to the river, a few hundred yards distant, to fetch water: roll-call was not held until we marched off next morning. We had agreed amongst ourselves, however, that we would now wait until we reached Yozgad, and could contrive some plan by which all parties



might once more have an equal chance of escaping. It was for this reason that we let slip the above and later opportunities to make off while on trek.

Half-way to Angora we came to the village of Kalijik, where we were offered billets in the local jail, already well peopled with Turkish criminals. On our refusing this offer, we were housed for the night in an empty building on the edge of the village.

We reached Angora four days after leaving Yozgad, and were accommodated in up-to-date buildings, designed by Germans as a hospital, but since used as Turkish barracks. Luckily the particular house in which we were billeted had not as yet been used by Turks. During our two days here we were allowed very fair liberty in visiting the bazaars, the shops of which, after our six months at Changri, appeared almost magnificent in the profusion of their wares. In one of these it was that Nobby espied a pair of real Geetz field-glasses. Telling his companion to lure away the "posta" who escorted them, he entered the shop and succeeded in purchasing the glasses, and a schoolboy's satchel in which to conceal them, for about £18—a tall price; and yet if the prices of other things had been in no higher proportion to their real value, living in Turkey would have been comparatively cheap. In the end these glasses were of inestimable value to our party.

While we were in Angora some of us went to see Sherif

Bey, whose propensity for epigram was touched upon in the opening words of our story. As second-in-command he had accompanied us in our move from Kastamoni to Changri. There he had been perpetually at loggerheads with our new, as indeed he had been with our two former commandants. Having eventually relinquished his ambition of superseding Sami Bey, he had recently accepted the less remunerative post of commandant of the British rank-and-file prisoners in the Angora district. Some of the men whom we succeeded in meeting had certain complaints to make against their previous commandant. A deputation of officers therefore waited upon his successor, who received them with a show of great friendliness, and assured them that under his benevolent sway such things as the looting of parcels would be impossible. Whether he fulfilled his promises we are not yet in a position to say: the fact remains that he treated very badly the five officers who stayed behind a few extra days for dental and medical treatment, asserting that they had only stopped in Angora with a view to escape.

Moreover, there were at this very time under Sherif Bey's orders two submarine officers who had been sent from the camp at Afion-Kara-Hissar, and were to join our convoy when it went on to Yozgad. Since their arrival in Angora a week before they had been confined to the only hotel, and had not once been allowed to visit the bazaar. One of the two

was Lieut.-Commander A. D. Cochrane, who was destined to play the leading rôle in the eventual escape of our particular party. The other was Lieut. - Commander S——. These two had, with one other naval officer, attempted to escape from the camp at Kara-Hissar, but had been recaptured when within sight of the sea: they had since spent ten months in a common Turkish jail.

Lieut. - Commander S—— had also been the victim of reprisals under somewhat amusing circumstances. Whilst he was at Kara-Hissar, an order arrived one day ordering that two officers of high birth and closely connected with the British aristocracy should be selected and sent to Constantinople. Thereupon a list was prepared of officers related to Labour candidates, Dukes, Members of Parliament, &c. Thinking that this promised at least a jaunt to Constantinople, S—— had claimed descent from the bluest blood of England. After consideration of the rival claims, he and one other were selected. Their self-congratulations, however, were a little premature, as the Commandant now informed them that the Turkish Government, having heard that their officer prisoners in India were being badly treated, proposed taking reprisals until their powerful relations should think fit to remedy matters on both sides. In vain the unfortunate dupes protested that the report was obviously false, and asked that further inquiries should be made before reprisals were

carried into effect: the reply was that the order was Enver Pasha's, and could not be questioned, but that if they agreed to go quietly to Constantinople, they would at once be led into the presence of the Generalissimo, where they could put forward their complaint in person. To this they had perforce to agree, but on arrival in the capital were at once flung into prison, kept in solitary confinement, and fed on bread and water. In this state they remained for some three weeks, after which the Turkish authorities discovered, as was only natural, that there had not been an atom of truth in the report upon which they had acted. By way of redress, therefore, they allowed the innocent sufferers six days' absolute freedom in Constantinople, after which they were taken to their old camp.

From Angora onwards we were escorted by parties of the local gendarmerie; of the Changri guard who had so far accompanied us, only a few came on with us to Yozgad, and they, ill-trained, ill-fed, and ill-clad, were rather passengers who called for our pity than guards capable of preventing us from decamping.

The gendarmes were, for the most part, remarkably well mounted, and in charge of them was a benevolent old gentleman of the rank of *bash-chaouse*, or sergeant-major, who was for ever holding forth upon his friendship towards the English, and his utter inability to understand why we were not fighting side by side in this war. The



sergeant-major talked much to us, punctuating his remarks with "Jánim," "my dear." He was jovial, he was pleasing to look at, he was interesting. He had been through several Turkish wars, and he discussed the Great War with more intelligence than many of the Turkish officers we had met.

One day as two of us were marching beside the horse he was riding, the dear old man pointed out a deep ravine some few hundred yards to our right. His face lighted up with pride of achievement and pleasant recollection. "Do you see that ravine?" he said. "Well, there I helped to massacre 5000 Armenians. Allah be praised!"

The 120 mile march from Angora to Yozgad occupied eight days. As usual, we bivouacked each night in the open, on one occasion coming in for a tremendous thunderstorm. Our best day's march was one of 30 miles, and brought us down to the Kizil Irmak, better known to Greek scholars as the ancient river Halys. We camped on the western bank opposite the village of Kopru-Keui (bridge-village), so called from the picturesque old stone bridge which here spans the largest river in Asia Minor. We were all glad of a bathe, although this was only safe close to the bank, where the water was hardly deep enough to swim in. The rest of the river was

a swirling torrent of brown and muddy water, dashing between enormous rocks, which, as it were, protected the bridge from their fury, and so under only two of the nine arches and through the narrow gorge between high precipitous cliffs beyond. The bridge itself, with narrow and steeply-cambered roadway and pointed arches, each of different height and span, seemed almost a part with the rocky cleft it spanned.

The rest of our move to Yozgad was uneventful, except for the upsetting of two carts, owing to reckless driving on the part of the Turkish jehus.

On the 24th April 1918 we set out from a small village twelve miles from our destination. The way climbed gradually till we topped a high ridge. Over this we marched, swinging down the farther slope at a quicker step. The winding-road curled round spurs and valleys, and from one such spur we obtained our first sight of the town of Yozgad.

Unrepossessing it looked lying in a valley surrounded by barren hills: a few poplars here and there, the usual timber-built houses, a few mosques.

Four months later we looked at it for the last time. We could only see a few twinkling lights to the east in a curtain of starlit darkness, but we were well content as we turned away, for we had shaken the dust of prison from our feet.

(To be continued.)

## THE WAR OFFICE IN WAR TIME.—II.

BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR C. E. CALLWELL, K.C.B.

"YOU cannot," Mr Lloyd George declared when expounding his theory of Cabinet constitution for times of emergency, on the occasion of his first speech in the House after assuming the Premiership, "run a war with a Sanhedrin." I had, some twelve months earlier, undergone an illuminating experience of the unsuitability for controlling military policy of a body so composed. The whole transaction was indeed so singular that a careful note was made of dates and details at the time. Incidents such as this require to be made known, because they may serve as a warning. So here is the story.

The question whether the Dardanelles venture was, or was not, to be proceeded with, was perpetually under discussion in Government circles and at the War Office during the autumn of 1915; and from the moment when it became apparent that the large reinforcements demanded by Sir I. Hamilton could not be spared, the view of soldiers in Whitehall that evacuation was the only possible course hardened from day to day. Our rulers, however, halted between two opinions. On his taking over the command late in October, General Monro, after reviewing the situation on the spot, pronounced him-

self uncompromisingly in favour of withdrawal; Lord Kitchener thereupon left for the Ægean, and nothing happened for about three weeks. But on the 23rd of November my chief, Sir A. Murray, summoned me, after a meeting of the War Council, to say that that body wished me to repair straightway to Paris and to make General Gallieni, the War Minister, acquainted with a decision which they had just arrived at—viz., that the Gallipoli Peninsula was to be abandoned without further ado. The full Cabinet would meet on the morrow (the 24th) to endorse the decision. That afternoon Mr Asquith, who was acting as Secretary of State for War in the absence of Lord Kitchener, sent for me and repeated these instructions.

I left by the morning boat-train next day, having wired to our military attaché to arrange, if possible, an interview with General Gallieni that evening; and he met me at the Gare du Nord, bearer of an invitation to dinner from the War Minister, and of a telegram from General Murray, intimating that the Cabinet, having met as arranged, had been unable to come to a decision, but were going to have another try on the morrow. Here was a con-



tingency that was not covered by instructions, and for which one was not prepared, but I decided to tell General Gallieni exactly how matters stood. (Adroitly drawn out for my benefit by his personal staff during dinner, the great soldier told us that stirring tale of how, as Governor of Paris, he despatched its garrison in buses and taxis and any vehicles that he could lay hands upon, to buttress the army which, under Maunoury's stalwart leadership, was to fall upon Von Kluck's flank, and was to usher in the victory of the Marne.)

A fresh wire came to hand from the War Office on the following afternoon, announcing that the Cabinet had again been unable to clinch the business, but contemplated a further séance two days later, the 27th. On the afternoon of the 27th, however, a message arrived from General Murray, to say that our rulers had yet again failed to make up their minds, and that the best thing I could do under the circumstances was to return to the War Office. General Gallieni, when the position of affairs was explained to him, was most sympathetic, quoted somebody's dictum that "*la politique n'a pas d'entrailles*," and hinted that he did not always find it quite plain sailing with his own gang. Still, there it was. The Twenty-Three had thrown the War Council over (it was then composed of Messrs Asquith, Bonar Law, Lloyd George, and Bal-

four, and Lord Grey, assisted by the First Sea Lord and the C.I.G.S.), and they were leaving our army marooned on the Gallipoli Peninsula, with the winter approaching apace, in a position growing more and more precarious owing to Serbia's collapse and Bulgaria's accession to the enemy ranks having freed the great artery of communications connecting Germany with the Golden Horn. One wonders whether that edifying and eloquent memorandum to which reference was made in a former article can have had anything to do with the Cabinet's infuriating infirmity of purpose.

Enough to make Peel or Gladstone or the late Lord Salisbury turn in their graves, the War Cabinet plan, with its Minutes of Proceedings and its discussions in the presence of goodness knows who, does seem preferable to the time-honoured procedure at junctures when the situation of the State requires the Powers that Be to get a move on. Politicians, when they came to be received up into the supreme council, used to take themselves and their deliberations very seriously indeed before Mr Lloyd George's iconoclastic innovations. There was an atmosphere of mystery about Cabinet meetings at the Prime Minister's house which was exceedingly impressive, and which made it all the more extraordinary in the early days of the war, that whenever the gathering by any accident made up its

mind about anything that was in the least interesting, everybody outside knew all about it within twenty-four hours. Officers of high standing and in the confidence of the General Staff would come to the War Office to inquire about prospective operations in which they were to be concerned, and one wondered why they did not go to the Carlton or the Ritz, where they would have heard all about it under much more attractive conditions. I was summoned to stand by at 10 Downing Street one day, when the Cabinet was sitting soon after the Coalition Government was formed, and when Lord Kitchener happened to be away in France, on the chance of being wanted. After an interminable wait—during the luncheon hour, too—Mr Henderson, who was a very recent acquisition, emerged stealthily from the council-chamber after the manner of the conspirator in an Adelphi drama (although he did not quite look the part), and intimated that my services were not required. In obedience to an unwritten law, the last-joined member was always expected to do odd jobs of this sort, just as at some schools the bottom boy of the form is called upon by the form-master to perform certain menial offices *pro bono republico*.

“Lord K. tells us nothing, and Winston lies to us,” one Minister of the Crown is reported to have murmured sadly. And why not? With what object should people of

that sort be told anything, and if they are told anything why should it be the truth? War is too serious a business to justify the proclamation of prospective naval and military operations from the house-tops; reasonable precautions must be taken. One thing one did learn during those early months of the war, and that was, that the fewer the individuals are—no matter who they may be—who are made acquainted with secrets, the better. But this is not of such vital importance when the secret concerns some matter of limited interest to the ordinary person, as it is when the secret happens to relate to what is calculated to attract public attention.

Now, it was most reprehensible on the part of that expansive youth, Geoffrey, to have acquainted Gladys—strictly between themselves of course—that his company had been “dished out with a brand-new, slap-up, experimental automatic rifle, that’ll make Mr Boohe sit up when we get across.” Still, it did no harm, because Gladys doesn’t care twopence about rifles of any kind, and had forgotten all about it before she had swallowed the chocolate that was in her mouth. But when Geoffrey informed Gladys a fortnight later—again strictly between themselves—that the regiment was booked for a stunt at Cuxhaven, it did a great deal of harm. Because, although Gladys did not know where Cuxhaven was, she



looked it up in the atlas when she got home, and she thereupon realised, with a wriggle of gratification, that she was "in the know," and under the circumstances she could hardly have been expected not to tell Agatha—under pledge, needless to say, of inviolable secrecy. Nor would you have been well advised to have bet that Agatha would not—in confidence—mention the matter to Genevieve, because you would have lost your money if you had. Then, it was only to be expected that Genevieve should let the cat out of the bag that afternoon at the meeting of Lady Blabit's Committee for the Development of Discretion in Damsels, observing that in *such* company a secret was bound to be absolutely safe. However, that was how the whole story came to be known, and Geoffrey might just as well have done the thing handsomely, and have placarded what was contemplated in Trafalgar Square alongside Mr Bonar Law's frenzied incitements to buy war bonds.

But, seriously, there is rather too much of the sieve about the soldier-officer when information comes to his knowledge which it is his duty to keep to himself. He has much to learn in this respect from his sailor brother. You won't get much to windward of the naval cadet or the midshipman, if you try to extract out of him details concerning the vessel which has him on her books in time of war—what she is, where she is, or how she

occupies her time. These youngsters cannot have absorbed reticence automatically as one of the traditions of that great silent service to which, more than to any other factor, we and our Allies owe our common triumph. It must have been dinned into them at Osborne and Dartmouth, and it must be impressed upon them day after day by their superiors afloat. The subject used not to be mentioned at the Woolwich Academy in the 'seventies, nor was secretiveness inculcated amongst battery subalterns a few years subsequently. One does not somehow remember having preached the virtues of discretion in this connection to one's juniors oneself, at a later date. The General Staff must see to this.

Most officers who served at the War Office during the prolonged hostilities enjoyed occasional breaks in their monotonous existence in the form of visits to Paris or the Western Front on some duty or other, or to Italy or the United States, or even to Egypt and far-off Mesopotamia, and it was my good fortune to be sent on a couple of missions to Russia in 1916. What especially struck one out there at that time were the almost illimitable possibilities of that empire in view of the prospective campaign of 1917, and the danger of everything being wrecked by an internal upheaval. The British Government have been derided for their handling of the Balkan problem in 1915; but any blunders of which they may

have been guilty in dealing with what was an extraordinarily complex situation in that cockpit of clashing nationalities, pale into insignificance when compared to their lamentable bungling of Russian affairs during the months before the cataclysm of March 1917. They were admirably served on the Neva, at the "Stavka," and in the field—an ambassador trusted on all hands in the country, the head of our military mission a *persona gratissima* with the Emperor, our military attachés and our officers who were accredited to armies, masters, all of them, of the language, and with their fingers ever on the pulse of military sentiment on the fighting fronts. The revolution may have been inevitable, but it might have been delayed until the war came to an end, and would perhaps never have taken so hideous a form as it has had our Government turned its opportunities to account.

Russians of pre-revolutionary days were masters of the art of entertaining guests of their country; but an experience that left a more vivid impression on one's mind than did their princely hospitality, was that of a gathering of furl-clad figures on a hill-top not far from Erzerum. There, on the very site of his triumph, a colonel explained to us in detail how with a mere handful of troops he had, in the mid-winter of 1914-15, routed three Ottoman army corps, and had thereby transformed a situation which was full of

menace to Transcaucasia into one which became rich in promise. News of this dramatic feat of arms reached the War Office at the time, but without particulars. That the victor of this field, a field won by a masterpiece of soldiership, should remain a simple colonel, suggested a singular indifference on the part of authorities at the heart of the empire to what wardens of the marches accomplished in peace and war. That pow-wow in an icy blast amid the snow recalled the Grand Duke Nicholas's appeal to Lord Kitchener, that we should make some effort to take pressure off his inadequate and hard-pressed forces in Armenia, an appeal which landed us in the Dardanelles Campaign; and it further recalled the fact that the colonel's feat near Sarikamish had put an end to all need for British intervention almost before the Grand Duke made his appeal. The Russian victory, the details of which were explained to us that day by its creator, was gained on a date preceding by some weeks the Allies' naval attempt to conquer the Dardanelles single-handed.

An official visit to Dublin in connection with Convention projects for establishing a local military force provided a break in War Office routine at a considerably later stage. On arriving in that decaying city one could not help being struck by the multitudes of men of fighting age who were to be seen engaged in civilian



pursuits—civilian pursuits in the Irish metropolis largely take the form of loafing at street corners—and who maybe were subscribers to the eminently practical doctrine that “it’s better to be Paddy the Coward than to be Paddy the Corpse.” That unedifying spectacle would not have been seen had the Cabinet in London acted with judgment and with courage when they found themselves at the parting of the ways. But the truth is that English and Irish have never understood each other, and they never will. They do not even understand each other’s language. I remember a great-aunt of mine—she hailed from Galway, and had spent her days in the Emerald Isle—engaging the wife of a soldier from barracks to attend and grapple with some dressmaking operations at her house in Dublin. This sartorial artist was a typical Cockney, whose staccato enunciation of clipped sentences puzzled my aunt exceedingly. One day the sempstress failed to fulfil her appointment, but was brimming over with apologies when she turned up in the evening. “M’ cistern bust and come down through m’ parlour ceiling,” she barked. “Good gracious,” ejaculated the horrified old lady, too taken aback to proffer condolences or to be able to think of anything more appropriate to say on the spur of the moment, “I didn’t even know you’d got a sister!”

The feeling of relaxation which War Office officials experienced when they from

time to time proceeded on duty to the Western Front no doubt prompted the project of despatching parties of our legislators across the Channel week by week, to improve their minds by visiting bivouacs, billets, and trenches. Elaborate arrangements were made for carrying this scheme out. Five senators were to form a party, and, so as to ensure that only reputable persons enjoyed the privilege, Mr Speaker was expected to detail the members. One legislator in reply to the invitation was good enough to intimate that he would comply with the “request” of the military authorities that he should go: the creature evidently believed that he was conferring a favour. Another regretted his inability to fall in with the proposal owing to indisposition—and he appended a medical certificate! That anybody in the War Office could be such a fool as to believe his word had seemingly never occurred to the man. The plan, however, never caught on, although all sorts and conditions of men were for ever endeavouring to proceed to the scene of operations on some pretext or other. When such busybodies bore the hall-mark of officialdom, and had to be treated accordingly at the front, they were naturally particularly obnoxious to soldiers who had something else to do than to be bothered with looking after unwanted visitors. Towards the end, however, those in high places manifested a marked prefer-

ence for Paris and Versailles. They used to proceed to "la ville lumière" *en masse*, like a magnified theatrical troupe on tour in the provinces—except that expenses were paid by the public. It was a little difficult to get things done at this end on such occasions, but one muddled along somehow.

One is prejudiced perhaps, and may not on that account do full justice to the achievements of some of those civilian branches which were evolved within the War Office and which elbowed out military branches altogether or else absorbed them; but they enjoyed great advantages, and on that account much could fairly be expected of them. Your civilian, introduced into the place with full powers and a blank cheque, stood on a very different footing from the soldier ever hampered by a control that was not always beneficently administered. (Financial experts on the War Office staff are apt to deliver their onsets upon the Treasury to the battle-ory of *Kamerad*.) At the same time, if the civilian elected to maintain on its military lines the branch that he had taken over, he sometimes turned out to be an asset. When the new broom adopted the plan of picking out the best men on the existing staff, of giving those preferred a couple of steps in rank, of providing them with large numbers of assistants, and of housing the result in some spacious edifice or group of edifices especially devised for the purpose, he sometimes

contrived to develop what had been an efficient organisation before into a still more efficient one. In that case the spirit of the branch remained, it carried on as a military institution, but with a free hand and with extended liberty of action—and the public service benefited although the cost was considerably greater; but that was not always the procedure decided upon.

Still, whatever procedure was decided upon, every care was taken to advertise. Advertisement is an art that the Man of Business thoroughly understands, and as to which he has little to learn even from the politician with a Press syndicate at his back. Soldiers are deplorably apathetic in this respect. It will hardly be believed that during the war the military department charged with works and construction would leave the immediate supervision of the creation of some set of buildings in the hands of a single foreman of works, acting under an officer of Royal Engineers, who only paid a visit daily, as he would have several other duties of the same nature to perform. But if that set of buildings under construction came to be transferred to a civilian department or branch—the Ministry of Munitions, let us say—a large staff of supervisors of all kinds was at once introduced. Offices for them to carry on their supervisory duties in were erected. The thing was done in style; employment was given to a



number of worthy people at the public expense, and it is quite possible that the supervisory duties were carried on no less efficiently than they had previously been by the foreman of works, visited daily by the officer of Royal Engineers.

From the outbreak of war, and for nearly two years afterwards, the headquarters administration of the supply branch of our armies in all theatres except Mesopotamia and East Africa, was carried out at the War Office by one director, five military assistants, and some thirty clerks, together with one "permanent official" civilian, aided by half a dozen assistants and about thirty clerks. It administered and controlled and supervised the obtaining and distribution of all requirements in food and forage, as also of fuel, petrol, disinfectants, and special hospital comforts, not only for the armies in the field but also for the troops in the United Kingdom, representing an expenditure which by the end of the two years had increased to about half a million sterling per diem. Affiliated to this branch, as being under the same director, was the headquarters administration of the military transport service, consisting of some fifteen military assistants and fifty or sixty clerks. The military transport service included a personnel of fully 300,000 officers and men, and the branch was charged with the obtaining of tens of thousands of motor vehicles of all kinds, and of the masses

of spare parts needed to keep them in working order, together with many other forms of transport material. The whole of these two affiliated military branches of the War Office could have been accommodated comfortably on one single floor of the Hotel Metropole! Well has it been said that soldiers have no imagination.

The reference made above to the Ministry of Munitions suggests comment on the relations between that mammoth organisation and the War Office. Now, whatever may be said against the Ministry, this outstanding fact concerning it remains, overshadowing all others—it did deliver the goods. But there was one serious mistake made in and by the huge department. Not satisfied with delivering the goods, those at the top wished to lay down what the goods were to be: they devoured the committees and the experts whose business it was to design the armaments of which the army stood in need, and they endeavoured to settle for the soldiers at the front the nature of the munitions that the troops were to have. They even tried at times to allocate the output of the factories in their charge at their own will and pleasure. A well-known politician, who had for more than three years been doing his bit on active service, became a leading light in the department shortly before the conclusion of hostilities, and about the first thing he did was to promise, without reference to the War Office, an enormous fleet of brand-new

tanks to an Allied government. As there seems to be a likelihood of the Ministry of Munitions remaining in being after "reconstruction," it is important that the institution should understand its place, and that all concerned should accept manufacturing and providing, but not designing nor allocating, as being the function of their department.

Much has been said and written concerning the reputed blotting out of the General Staff within the War Office during the first year or more of the war. It is not proposed to enter into this here except in reference to two matters, the first being a statement of mine, made in evidence before the Dardanelles Commission and quoted in their published Report, to the effect that "the real reason why the General Staff practically ceased to exist was because it was not consulted"—a statement which attracted attention when the Report appeared. Quoted thus and without the context, that statement, made in reply to a query as to whether it was correct that the General Staff had practically ceased to exist, conveys a wrong impression. The Commission was concerning itself with the initiation of the Dardanelles venture and its opening phases; it was a question of the conduct of certain amphibious operations of war at an early stage, and the situation would have been more correctly described had the statement read: "The real reason why the General Staff

practically ceased to exist was that in respect to operations it was not consulted."

A General Staff, needless to say, deals with many other subjects besides actual operations—collection and distribution of information, secret service, training of officers and troops, and so on—and it performed those functions at the War Office during the early days of the war just as had been contemplated in peace time. Indeed one was consulted at times even in connection with operations as to simple matters of fact. When, for instance, after it had become plain that Sir I. Hamilton's forces were held up completely both at Helles and at Anzac, and somebody on the Dardanelles Committee wanted to embark on an undertaking at the narrow Bulair end of the Gallipoli Peninsula, we were instructed to furnish a short note as to possible landing-places. The information existed in a printed book. The right way to have approached such a project would have been for members of the General Staff to have met members of what was then the War Staff of the Admiralty, for them to have discussed the problem in all its bearings, and for them then to have prepared a joint considered report on the subject as a whole for the information of the Dardanelles Committee. Had that procedure been followed when the Dardanelles and Constantinople scheme was first mooted, had the problem been thoroughly investigated by a



joint committee of the War Staff and the General Staff without the presence of Cabinet Ministers, our naval forces would never have been committed to the creeping form of operations against the Straits in the absence of military support, the campaign (if undertaken at all) would not have commenced until an army was available and the weather had become settled, and it is likely enough that the whole project would have been incontinently dropped in deference to professional opinion.

Very few officers in the regular army are conversant with international law. Nor used they, in the days before 1914, to interest themselves in the status of aliens when the country is engaged in hostilities, nor with problems of censorship, nor with the relations between the military and the Press, nor with the organisation, the maintenance, and the duties of a secret service. Before mobilisation, these matters were looked after by a section of the General Staff under an officer of wide experience, who had made them a special study and who had devised the machinery for performing duties, which on the outbreak of war suddenly assumed a cardinal importance and called for administration at the hands of a large personnel. But on mobilisation the officer took up an important appointment with the Expeditionary Force, and disappeared, charge of his section being taken by an extremely capable and energetic substitute, who,

however, suffered under the disability of an entire lack of familiarity with the class of work that he was suddenly called upon to perform. The section was, moreover, under the general control of an official who knew nothing about these matters at all—myself.

Three or four days after the declaration of war a brace of very distinguished civil servants, one representing the Foreign Office and the other the Home Office, came across Whitehall by appointment and with long faces, and the four of us sat solemnly round a table—they, the above-mentioned officer and I. It appeared that we had been guilty of terrifying violations of international law. We had seized numbers of German reservists and German males of military age on board ships in British ports, and had consigned some of them to quarters designed for the accommodation of malefactors. This sort of thing would never do. Such steps had not been taken by belligerents in 1870, nor at the time of the American War of Secession, and I am not sure that Messrs Mason and Slidell were not trotted out. The Foreign and Home Secretaries would not unlikely be agitated when they heard of the shocking affair. Soldiers, no doubt, were by nature abrupt and unconventional in their actions, and the Foreign and Home Offices would make every allowance, realising that we had acted in good faith. Still! And they regarded us with compassionate displeasure. Will it be believed! My assistant

and I knew so little about our business that we did not then and there fall upon that precious pair and rend them. We took their protestations and themselves quite seriously. We accepted their courteous, but uncompromising, rebuke like small boys caught stealing apples whose better feelings have been appealed to. For the space of two or three hours, and until we had recovered our wits, we remained content, on the strength of doctrines enunciated by a

couple of officials fossilised by dwelling in a groove for years, to accept it as a principle that this tremendous conflict into which the Empire had plunged at a moment's notice was to be a kid-glove transaction. Immersed in the slough of peace conditions, age could not wither nor custom stale the infinite incapacity of some public servants in this non-military country of ours for conceiving any other state of things.



## A MINE-FIELD.

"WIRELESS message, sir." A crumpled and rather wet piece of paper was handed through the wheel-house door.

"Right, thank you," said Jones, the officer to whom this remark had been addressed, taking the message in his hand and glancing at it. "I'll send down if there is any answer."

He stood at the wheel-house window for a moment watching the wireless operator dodging the showers of spray which were breaking over the ship as he ran back to the wireless room, and then raising his glasses to his eyes he carefully examined the horizon ahead of him.

It was as peaceful a scene as one could well imagine anywhere in the world during the year 1916. A moderate wind was blowing, just sufficient to turn the tops of the waves into streaks of white foam, which shone and glistened in the bright sunshine. The land was plainly visible about five miles away, rising in steep cliffs of red granite straight out of the sea, and the numerous bays and headlands could be clearly distinguished. In some of the clefts in the cliffs masses of dirty snow which had defied the warmth of the summer sun could still be seen, and as far as the eye could see the land was a striking picture of peace and desolation.

A few gulls were flying about, and occasionally a school of hair seals would show them-

selves on the surface and gaze inquisitively at the ship and then dive with a noisy splash, to reappear a moment later at a safer distance. Otherwise the sea appeared as deserted as the land. In fact there was nothing whatever to be seen except the six British trawlers who were employed at the time of my narrative in the monotonous though at times dangerous pastime of mine-sweeping, and at occasional intervals a moored buoy which marked the ship channel. These buoys were necessary to enable the trawlers to maintain their correct positions while sweeping, and to ensure that the shipping which used the channel should pass over the area which they had swept.

Having satisfied himself that everything was normal and that the rest of the trawlers were in their correct positions, Jones turned to address the skipper, who was standing near him. "Keep an eye on them while I am below, Stephens, and let me know at once if anything is wanted. If the *Sandfly* gets any farther astern hoist the signal to increase speed again. I am going down to decode this message."

"Very good, sir," said Stephens, the skipper, a brawny Yorkshireman, who was standing with his head through one of the wheel-house windows, his legs well apart, and with a large bowl of black-looking tea in his hand; "but as I've often

said, you can't rightly expect a class of vessel like that *Sandfly* there to keep up with the likes of us; she ain't built same as these Hull boats."

"No, perhaps not," said Jones, "but I've never noticed her very far astern when we are on our way into harbour; she can do better than she is doing now if she likes."

"Those Scotch-built boats are all very well for the purpose for which they are constructed," continued the skipper, warming up to his favourite discussion, "and if you notice . . ."

"That's all right, skipper," interrupted Jones, who by this time was half-way down the ladder leading from the wheel-house to his small cabin immediately below, where he extracted the code from the box in which it was kept. Stephens, his skipper, was an incorrigible believer in everything, either men or ships, which came from his native town of Hull. Fortunately for his own peace of mind, he was skipper of as fine an example of a pre-war Iceland trawler as had ever been turned out from that port, and he was extravagantly proud of her.

No one knew better than Jones himself what a fine sea boat the *Sir Thomas Dancer* was, and how well built and fitted; but though she had these and many other attributes, she was not at all a fast ship; in fact, in smooth water she was one of the slowest of the group. However, nothing would ever convince Stephens that she was not a regular

ocean greyhound, and Jones had long ago given up arguing the matter.

He sat down with the signal in front of him and commenced to decode it. "I hope it's a trifle more interesting than the last dozen I've had," he said to himself; "but it's probably some more rubbish about aircraft codes or something as equally useless in this benighted part of the world, where an aeroplane or a zeppelin is even rarer than a glass of beer or a mail."

The message in this case, however, turned out to be quite interesting. It was from the cruiser stationed in the harbour on which the trawlers were based, and read as follows: "Master of s.s. *Baron* reports that he passed close to a floating mine at 6 A.M. to-day about half a mile north-east of No. 15 buoy. Report appears to be reliable." Jones replaced the code in its box and climbed up into the wheel-house again. "Well, skipper, how is the *Sandfly* getting on now?" "She is catching us up a bit, sir," said the skipper, rather reluctantly, "so I've whistled down to tell Arthur to give her all he can." Arthur was the chief engineer, also a Hull man, and the two men saw eye to eye on all matters which concerned the reputation of their ship or their native port.

"Going fast enough for us after all, is she?" said Jones with a smile. "Anyhow, here's another of these floating mines reported, so we shall have to slip our sweeps and



go down to have a look for it. Signalman, hoist the signal to wheel four points to starboard, and have the signal to slip ready."

The flags for the wheel were duly hoisted, and Jones stood watching the other five trawlers' masts for the signal to be repeated. "All repeated except the *John Brown*, sir," said the signalman down the voice-pipe. After waiting three or four minutes the signal was slowly repeated in the *John Brown*; the order to haul down the signal was then given, and the six trawlers turned in good formation to starboard and steered out away from the channel which they had been sweeping.

This necessary precaution was always carried out before slipping the sweeps, as it is quite possible for a pair of trawlers to have a mine in their sweep for some time without knowing it, and should they slip while still in the channel the mine might remain undetected in the path of shipping.

When about a mile clear of the channel the signal to slip was hoisted and duly repeated by all five without loss of time, and for the next ten minutes steam was to be seen pouring out of the funnels of the trawlers as they lay in the trough of the sea heaving in their wire hawsers with their huge steam winches.

When the last one had finished, Jones gave the order to hoist the signal to form single line abreast to starboard, ships one mile apart, course to

be steered south-east. Once again the *John Brown* was the last ship to repeat the signal.

"Haul down," said Jones, "and now hoist to *John Brown*, 'Pay more attention to signals.'" The *John Brown's* answering pendant was kept at half-mast for some time, before being hoisted close up to indicate that the signal was understood. "Must think we've made a mistake in our signal, and that it can't be meant for him," growled Stephens, who had been gazing at the trawler for some minutes through his glasses.

The signal to look out for floating mines was then hoisted, and this was slowly repeated down the fast extending line of ships, who by this time were opening out on to the five-mile front they had been ordered to take up.

A careful observer would have noticed a man climbing up on to the fore-castle head of each trawler, from which position he was able to locate any object floating in the water close under the bows.

This formation was maintained for the next few hours, but nothing was seen. The line of trawlers covered and extended about two miles each side of the ship channel, and made it quite certain that any mine floating in or near the channel would be seen.

It was now about 5 P.M., and there were only about four hours more daylight. Jones ordered the signal to be hoisted to turn together sixteen points, and as the signal was hauled down each trawler turned completely

round, and commenced to retrace her steps in the opposite direction.

"I think it must be a false alarm after all," said Jones to Stephens, who had just come on deck again to keep the first watch, "but we'll run back over the spot again before dark to make sure we haven't missed it. I have had a look at the tides, and by now the mine ought to be in the same spot as where it was seen, and what wind there has been has been up and down the channel, so that I don't see how we could have missed it if it had been there."

"No," said Stephens, "nor me neither; but I don't place much reliance in these reports from merchant ships,—more likely a porpoise or an old tin can than a mine. It's my opinion, sir," he continued, "that we shan't get any mines up here this year; depend upon it, the spies in Hull have told these Germans that we are up here sweeping, and they'll know it would be waste of time sending any up here now."

"I don't know about that," said Jones, "but certainly so far this year they have rather neglected us. Mr Rendle in the *Foam* was very indignant about it the other night in the mess, and blamed our Admiralty for it. He wanted me to write a letter to complain about it, but I said that I was afraid it would not come under the heading of a legitimate grievance, as defined by the King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions. He insisted, though, that someone was responsible for

what he called the dull time he was having, and thought that the Admiralty and the Foreign Office might share the blame equally, and said that so far in this war everything went to show that people who were far from home were neglected by the authorities."

"Well, sir," said Stephens, "it may be dull, but I prefer it to too much liveliness. I had a letter from my brother-in-law, who is working out of Lowestoft, by last mail, and he said that things there were altogether too lively for his way of thinking, though he could not say much, of course, on account of this 'ere censor."

"It will be dark in a couple of hours," said Jones, "and we shall have to give up this wild-goose chase. Hulloa, what is that?"

"The *Scurry* has got something up, sir," said the signalman, "but I can't distinguish the flag, and the *John Brown* has not repeated it."

"Edge in towards her," said Jones to the skipper, as he tried to keep his telescope focussed on the small piece of bunting floating half-way up the mast of the distant trawler. "I wish this confounded ship would keep still," he added a moment later, "I can't keep my telescope on it for a second."

"Why, sir, she's a deal quieter than the *Sandfly* there," said the skipper in an aggrieved voice; "you ought to be in one of those Aberdeen boats for a bit to know what a really lively ship is."

"Rubbish," said Jones irritably; "all these blooming



trawlers are the same, but I am pretty sure that it is the flag for a floating mine in sight."

At that moment the look-out on the fore-castle announced that he could plainly hear rifle-firing. "Hoist the signal to cease firing at once," said Jones. "I hope to goodness they won't hit it, as I particularly want to examine it to see what type it is."

By this time the *Sir Thomas Dancer* was closing the trawler which had sighted the mine, for a mine it undoubtedly was, and though they had been firing at it for some minutes it could still be seen bobbing about on the surface. As the signal to cease fire was repeated the firing gradually ceased. The *Sir Thomas Dancer* steamed slowly up and stopped about fifty yards from the mine.

"Who the devil is that firing still?" said Jones angrily, as a bullet whipped up the water about thirty yards from the ship, and quite a hundred yards from the mine.

"The *John Brown*, sir," said the signalman promptly.

"Damn the *John Brown*," said Jones; "tell her to come within hail."

Meanwhile every glass and telescope in the ship was levelled on the mine. "It looks very low in the water," said Stephens. "I expect one of them sharpshooters must have hit it after all. I think I can make out a hole between the two right-hand horns."

"Yes," said Jones, "it will sink all right in the end, but I

believe that mine is moored. Can't you see a ripple going past it?"

For the next few minutes every eye was endeavouring to detect signs of a ripple, which would show that the mine was held in its position by moorings. It was soon evident that Jones had been right: the mine heeled over gradually to the tide, which was beginning to "make," leaving a distinct wake on the surface of the water, and a few minutes later it disappeared beneath the surface.

"By Jove," exclaimed Jones, "there's no error about that—it is a moored mine of quite a new type, so you can be sure that it is not the only one that has been laid. That particular one won't cause us any more trouble now though, as it will soon sink with that hole in it, once it gets down below the surface."

He rapidly took bearings of the two channel buoys still in sight in the failing twilight, to enable the position of the mine to be placed on the chart, and then moving the ship about half a mile clear of the channel, he told the signalman to tell the *Scurry* and the *Ben Nevis*, the two subdivision leaders who were with him, to come within hail.

"Ay, ay, sir," sang out the signalman, "here's the *John Brown* close under the quarter."

Jones had forgotten about the *John Brown*, but picking up the megaphone he walked out on to the verandah and hailed her. The smiling face

of a man of about fifty years of age looked out of the wheel-house window and politely wished him good evening.

"Good evening, skipper," said Jones; "I wanted to find out why your signalman is so slow—he is always last, and delays everybody."

"Well, sir," said the skipper, with a broad Tyneside accent, "you told me to pick out the most suitable man for signalman when we commissioned, and I chose this man on account of his having been a signalman for three years before he joined up. Still, I will say that he don't behave at all as if he was used to the work, and it's my belief he knows no morse at all."

Jones raised his megaphone to the level of the upper bridge, where the signalman was standing, and hailed him. "Why are you so slow at repeating and answering signals? You are the worst signalman in the whole fleet, and there is no excuse for you at all, if you have had three years' experience before you joined up."

"I does my best, sir," replied the signalman, "but I'd like to explain that there was some little misunderstanding between me and the skipper over this signalling job. The day before we sailed, the skipper, he asked if any of us deck-hands had done any signalling before, and none of us said nothing until one of the blokes said, 'Why, this man has been a signalman for three years.' So the skipper he says, 'All right, Joshua Tancred, you take on signal duties,' and

would not give me the chance of hexplaining the mistake."

"I don't understand," said Jones; "what was the mistake?"

"Why, sir, my signalling that I used to do before the war was altogether different to anything of this sort. I was attached to one of them there steam-rollers."

"Well, you must try and improve," said Jones, doing his best not to laugh; "at present you are the worst signalman in the squadron."

"I am sure I always does my best, sir," said the man, looking rather hurt.

"All right, skipper," said Jones, "you will stay in company with me to-night. Oh, by the bye, why did you go on firing long after every one else had ceased firing, and who was it who was shooting so infernally badly—he nearly hit us?"

"It was our petty officer here," said the skipper. "He tells me he was a marksman last time he went through the range."

"When was that?" said Jones to the petty officer, a white-bearded man of anything up to sixty years of age, who was standing on the upper deck.

"In '96, sir, when I was re-qualifying after paying off the *Ramillies*; but I'm afraid my eyesight ain't what it was."

"Here's the *Scurry* alongside the other side, sir," sang out the signalman from the upper bridge.

Jones walked round the verandah to the other side and



raised his megaphone. The R.N.R. lieutenant poked his head out of the wheel-house window and saluted. "Oh, Hulton, will you take the *Sandfly* and go down the channel to the southward for fifteen miles and intercept any shipping that may be on its way north? If you manage to stop any one, sweep them through at daylight, but, anyhow, meet me here again at 5 A.M."

"All right, sir," sang out Hulton. The ring of the engine-room telegraph could be plainly heard, and he and the *Sandfly* were soon out of sight in the darkness as they made their way south.

The *Ben Nevis* was then given similar orders to go to the northward, and before long the *Sir Thomas Dancer* was lying to a stream anchor on the end of her wire within about a mile of where the mine had been sighted, with the *John Brown* keeping close to her.

Jones then set to work coding wireless signals to the senior naval officer and to the various patrols and units, reporting what he had found and suspected, giving instructions for all traffic to be held up for the present, and ordering eight more trawlers to make their way down to join him at daylight.

After eating his supper and smoking a pipe or two, Jones settled down to get what rest he could; but it was a long time before he could go to sleep. He wondered what the morrow would have in store for his ships and men, and

whether they would really find a big mine-field or not; and when at last he did drop to sleep he was constantly disturbed by dreams. He dreamt that he was being pursued down a road by a fast and heavy-looking steam-roller, which was trying to catch him, and standing on top of the roller was a man in naval uniform, who was morsing very fast and quite unintelligibly with a large red flag. At last things in his dream got very serious indeed, and, just as he seemed about to be squashed flat, the monster fell with a loud crash into the ditch close to him, and Jones woke with a start to hear the mate's voice from the wheel-house, "It's come on thick as a hedge, sir, and there's just been a big explosion away to the south'd or east'd, which sounded like a mine going off."

Jones hurried up into the wheel-house and looked out. It was literally as thick as a hedge, and any attempt to go to the rescue of the luckless ship which had struck the mine they had heard would have been sheer madness, especially as they had very little idea from where the explosion had come. He summoned the wireless operator, and told him to call up the *Scurry* and find out if they had anything to report, and was relieved to get an answer almost at once to say "No," but he remained on deck for the rest of the night listening, and cursing the fog.

By 4 A.M., however, a gentle land breeze sprang up with the

first streak of daylight, and by 4.30 the visibility had improved to about a mile. The anchor was weighed, and, with the *John Brown* following, Jones made his way slowly back to the rendezvous, and by 5 A.M. was gratified to find that all the other twelve trawlers ordered to meet him there had arrived in spite of the fog.

He hastily inquired if any one else had heard the explosion in the night, and though all four who had been with him the day before had heard it, no one seemed able to say where it had occurred.

This was not surprising when one remembers that the explosion of a mine can be distinctly felt and heard for twenty miles on a calm night.

Orders were then given to commence the day's sweeping as soon as possible. The fourteen trawlers were divided into two groups of seven; Rendle in the *Foam* was told off to take charge of the group which was to sweep north, and Jones took charge of the others himself, intending to follow the channel to the southward.

The slowest trawler in each group was left out of the sweeping as spare number, ready to sink any mines which might be brought to the surface or to fill a gap if one occurred, and the remaining six pairs passed their sweeps and proceeded.

Jones led the line of sweepers to the southward in the *Sir Thomas Dancer* with the *John Brown* as his partner, steering so as to pass close to the chan-

nel buoys. The other two pairs with him were on his quarter in echelon, so that they covered as large an area as possible without leaving any gaps.

Orders were given to all the men who could be spared to remain on the upper deck, and all hands wore their life-belts.

There were many anxious faces to be seen that early morning in the cold grey twilight, and there was no need to warn the look-outs not to go to sleep, as every one realised that at any moment a mine might explode and blow their small craft to bits under their feet.

For the first twenty minutes or so every one in the *Sir Thomas Dancer* was undoubtedly rather "on edge," experiencing the sort of feeling that a man might have if made to walk through some thick grass where he knew there were half a dozen puff-adders asleep.

But by the time half an hour had passed things became more normal, and Jones sent down to the galley for his third cup of cocoa.

He was in the act of drinking this when the ship gave a sudden lurch and shudder and a terrific explosion occurred close under the quarter. At first nothing could be seen but a huge column of water and a dense mass of black smoke, but as these cleared away every one was relieved to see the *John Brown* evidently undamaged.

The mate, who was on the upper deck, sang out to say that the explosion had parted



the sweep wire, so Jones at once signalled to the pair astern of him to take his place as leader of the line, and commenced rapid preparations for joining up the sweep again astern of the last pair.

In a few minutes a signal from the now leading pair of trawlers announced that a mine had broken surface in their sweep, and some lively though futile rifle practice was made by the men with rifles in an endeavour to sink it before it got too far astern.

The odd trawler then bustled up to perform her allotted work, and after expending about forty rounds of ammunition a lucky shot struck one of the horns, and up it went with a loud explosion.

A number of small pieces of mine fell on the decks of the trawler, and there was a scramble for these much-prized souvenirs.

Meanwhile the *Sir Thomas Dancer* and *John Brown* had managed to join up their sweep again and were following the other two pairs.

To join up it is necessary for the two trawlers to come quite close to one another to pass the hawser from one to another, and on this occasion there had been a good deal of chaff between the two crews on the advantage which the change in the position in the line had brought to the *John Brown* in the way of probable immunity from striking a mine.

The two leading trawlers in a sweep of this sort both run equal chances of striking a

mine, the odds against such a misadventure being about 30 to 1 for every mine they sweep up. In the case of the other pairs astern, however, one of each pair is sheltered by the sweep of the pair ahead.

In this case the change had resulted in the *John Brown* being the sheltered ship, whereas the *Sir Thomas Dancer* was the outside ship, and so took equal chances with the leaders.

As the ships separated again to open out their sweep-wire, Jones hailed the skipper of the *John Brown*. "Look out you overlap properly, skipper, and don't leave a gap, whatever you do." "All right, sir," said the old skipper with a grin, "I'll look out for that."

It was now about 8 A.M., and Jones was contemplating breakfast, when a shout from the look-out man announced that the second pair had swept up another mine, and Jones and several of the men in the ship amused themselves with some long-range firing at it with rifles as it passed them well away on the beam.

The spare trawler came up almost at once and commenced firing at it, and after about five minutes it slowly sank, riddled with holes.

Jones then retired down below to breakfast, and was on his way up the ladder again when another big explosion occurred close at hand. He rushed up and looked out through the open windows. For several seconds there was

nothing to be seen, and then, as the smoke cleared away, the remains of what had been the *John Brown* were seen rapidly disappearing.

For a minute or more not a word was spoken; a deathly stillness seemed to have fallen on every one, and it was obvious that every one in the ship was deeply affected. Their own friends, men with whom they had been chaffing five minutes before, had been literally blotted out of existence in the twinkling of an eye; at least, it appeared at the moment impossible for any one to be alive.

Then the men recovered themselves, and there was a rush to get the clumsy boat out. The *Sir Thomas Dancer* steered over towards the scene of the disaster, and almost at once there were shouts from the look-out that there were several men in the water, and one of them anyhow seemed to be alive.

The boat was got out in marvellously quick time, and the man was rescued from the icy-cold water and laid in the bottom of the boat, and a rapid search was made among the floating wreckage for others. Two more mangled corpses were picked up, but the remaining eleven men had all gone down with their ship.

The mine had done its work most thoroughly, and with the exception of the one man, who it turned out had been standing right in the bows of the ship, every soul was killed.

The warmth of the *Sir*

*Thomas Dancer's* cabin, a stiff tot of brandy, and a change of clothes worked marvels, and three days later the man had returned to duty apparently none the worse.

"What a ghastly thing," said Jones to Stephens who was standing near him in the wheel-house; "I would have sooner it had happened to almost any one else than that skipper, he was such a particularly nice man, and it was so funny that he should have the same name as his ship."

"Why, sir, she was his own ship which he had built for him before the war, and he used to fish in her regular, and seven of the crew were relations of his," said Stephens. "He was one of the best-known men, and one of the best fishermen out of Shields."

"I never knew that," said Jones, "and I must say I wish now that I hadn't strafed that signalman yesterday. Poor chap, he said he was doing his best, and certainly he could not have done more than he has now. Well, I suppose we must get to work again, and we shall have to sweep with the *Sparrow* now."

The six trawlers retraced their steps for several miles and then re-formed line and sweeping was continued, but except for one more explosion in the sweep of the second pair nothing more was found that day.

About 4 o'clock in the evening the look-out reported an object in sight about five miles ahead, which he thought was not unlike a submarine. It



was a perfectly calm evening, and there was a great deal of mirage about.

The most extraordinary effects are produced by this mirage or refraction on the horizon. Sometimes a ship will appear upside down, and sometimes the real and the inverted images will both be visible, one above the other. A buoy will sometimes look like a factory chimney, and sometimes like a low flat island.

No one seriously thought it was in the least likely that it was really a submarine: these elusive craft are not fond of trawlers, and are not in the habit of waiting considerably on the surface till trawlers approach them.

When the object in question was close enough to be distinguished, she turned out to be a portion of a small sailing schooner with the main lower-mast standing. She had evidently struck a mine and had been completely cut in half, the stern of the ship being practically undamaged. A boat was despatched to examine her, but there were no men on board, though it subsequently transpired that three of the men who had been asleep in the cabin had been unhurt and had escaped in a dinghy which was hanging over the stern.

"That is satisfactory," said Jones—"that accounts for the explosion we heard last night; I was afraid it might have been a big cargo vessel."

At eight o'clock that night the thirteen trawlers rendez-

voused to compare notes and arrange the next day's sweeping. Before dropping anchor the melancholy task of burying the two men who had been picked up from the *John Brown* was carried out. The bodies had been carefully prepared for burial, the trawlers all stopped close together and the white ensigns were all lowered to half mast.

The touching words of the burial service were read by Jones, and at the conclusion of the appointed prayers in the Prayer Book he turned to the prayer for those at sea and read the words which might have been specially written for men engaged in the work on which they were employed—"that we may be a security for such as pass on the seas upon their lawful occasions, . . . and that we may return in safety to enjoy the blessings of the land with the fruits of our labours."

The trawlers then anchored in a small bay for the night, and the work of plotting the mines destroyed on the chart and arranging for the next day's labours was undertaken.

It was after eleven before any of the officers were in bed, and the ships weighed again at 3.30 A.M., as it was imperative that no time should be wasted in clearing the channel. Shipping was being held up at both ends, and even in 1916 shipping was too valuable to be allowed to waste an hour more than could be helped.

One more trawler joined up at daylight, and the fourteen recommenced their work in

exactly a similar manner as they had done the previous day and continued it till dark.

It was three days later, and the captain's clerk in the senior officer's ship had just settled down to his afternoon sleep (or "oerk" as he called it). Not that he was in the habit of sleeping regularly during the afternoons, but he had been up a large part of the night coding messages, and the afternoon was hot, and the mosquitoes were unusually active on the upper deck.

He was awakened about 2.30 by the messenger from the wireless room, who handed him a coded message. It must be left entirely to the reader's imagination to guess what that clerk said, but he did say it all, and his earlier education in a gun-room had not been wasted.

Still, in spite of what he said and thought, he hurried off to interpret the signal.

It read as follows: "*Sir Thomas Dancer* to H.M.S. *Batchy*. Channel now clear for traffic to proceed. Twenty-six mines destroyed."

Five minutes later the masts of the cruiser were decked with flags instructing the fleet of merchant ships to proceed, and the motor-boat with the

boarding officer was flitting about among them, urging them to hurry up and get away.

Before dark that night over one hundred merchant vessels, loaded with every sort and kind of war material, had weighed and were proceeding down the swept channel. Every one of them arrived at their destination safely.

About midnight that same night fourteen weary trawlers felt their way into the anchorage, and almost before the anchors were on the bottom the whole of the crews were fast asleep, absolutely worn out with the strain of five days' perpetual sweeping in a mine-field.

If any of my readers should ever visit a well-known cathedral town in northern Russia, and should have occasion to visit the British Consulate, let them walk upstairs to the little English church which has existed for so long in this quaint spot.

On the left-hand side of the door as they enter they will find a memorial tablet to the brave men of the *John Brown*, "who lost their lives in the performance of their duty."

H. A. le F. H.



## THE BENCH AND BAR OF ENGLAND.

BY J. A. STRAHAN.

## VII. JUDGES AND PRISONERS.

IT was, I think, my friend Mr R. A. M'Call, K.C., who some twenty years ago told me of a conversation in the dock which some member of the Northern Circuit overheard. The prisoner was an Irish navy who was charged with inflicting grievous bodily harm on one of a numerous force of policemen who had been engaged in effecting his arrest for being drunk and disorderly. When the indictment was read to him the Irishman listened intently; but as the reading terminated in the usual declaration that his conduct was "against the peace of our sovereign lady the Queen, her Crown, and Dignity," he lost all grasp of the subject. Turning to his warder—who happened also to be an Irishman—he inquired in a loud whisper, "What does this all mane, at all, at all?" "It manes," said the learned warder, "that you are being charged with batin' a policeman. Did you do it?" "Av coorse I did," answered the navy in surprise. "What ilse am I here for?" "Well," replied the warder, "thin say, Not Guilty, my Lord."

When I heard this story I could not help thinking that if it had been the judge himself instead of the warder whom the prisoner had consulted, he would in all probability have

received the same advice. It may be due to a high sense of justice, or to an unconscious remembrance of the former inhumanity of the criminal law, or merely to the sporting instinct which every Englishman from the King to the corner-boy possesses—but it is a fact, whatever it may be due to, that an English judge and an English jury are always determined that every prisoner brought before them shall have a fair chance; and that nothing exasperates either of them more than proof or even suspicion that he has not been fairly dealt with, or that all the facts bearing on his case have not been fully disclosed. This feeling is so strong with many judges, that I have often heard them practically refuse to accept a plea of guilty when they have a notion that the prisoner has been induced by what I may call the lower authorities to tender it; and also advise other prisoners much in the same way to plead not guilty when there was no doubt of their guilt, but the judge wanted to hear the evidence of the prosecution to ascertain if he could whether there was no explanation or extenuation of it.

This is the peculiar characteristic and especial glory of English criminal justice, and

the point on which it differs most from criminal jurisprudence as I have seen it administered in law courts on the Continent. There is nothing singularly righteous in English criminal law even as it is at the present day; and in the past it was as cruel and even as brutal as any criminal law that ever existed since the world began. For centuries past, however, its administration, at any rate in the higher courts, has left little or nothing to be desired. Indeed in one way its merciful administration was perhaps at one time not altogether a public benefit, since it was only the humanity of the judges which rendered possible the long-continued inhumanity of the law. But for the judges' humanity, for many a generation every assize must have been a new "bloody assize."

Felony was at common law a crime punishable on conviction with death, followed by attainder and forfeiture of the criminal's property. Benefit of clergy was relief from the death penalty extended on their first conviction of felony to culprits who could read and write. Now there were comparatively few felonies at common law, and all or nearly all had benefit of clergy; but during that time which Disraeli called the period of Venetian Government (which was not altogether fair I have always thought to Venice), every petty legislator who objected to any conduct which he thought detrimental to his own interests introduced to Parliament a bill to make that

conduct a felony without benefit of clergy. And apparently such a bill always passed. At any rate, at the time Sir William Blackstone wrote his famous 'Commentaries on the Laws of England,' the number of statutory felonies without benefit of clergy was no less than one hundred and sixty—a number which appalled even such a worshipper of the wisdom of English Law as was that famous jurist. Such a code of criminal justice, if carried out strictly, must have led to revolution in the meanest-spirited race, and a mean spirit has never been the characteristic of the English people; but that effect was saved by the ingenuity by which the judges discovered absurd grounds for quashing indictments and sensible grounds for assisting juries to acquit, or the Crown to pardon prisoners where the crimes charged, though by law punishable with death, were in morals very small transgressions.

And the ordinary boast of old English lawyers that torture was unknown to the law of England is merely a boast, and a baseless one too. It is true, torture to secure evidence or to extract confessions was unknown to English law. The absence of torture to secure evidence is due to the absence of Roman law: it was introduced into Continental law through applying to citizens when, so far as their political status was concerned, they had become little better than slaves, the Roman law procedure which applied to slaves



only. But the absence of torture to extract confessions was due to the fact that it was not needed, since in England confession was not, while on the Continent it was, a condition precedent to a sentence of death, with the consequent attainder and forfeiture.

Judicial torture came into existence throughout Europe at the time when the court of the State may be said to have been ousting the court of Heaven in criminal matters. The ordeal, which was the ancient form of trying culprits, was an avowed appeal to God. The legal authorities, with the advance of civilisation, had begun to distrust this appeal; and in England they introduced instead an appeal to the judgment of the culprit's countrymen. At first this new form of trial was regarded as a favour, but as its superiority was proved by practice it became obligatory, and ordeal was abolished by statute. Still public opinion continued to regard it as a man's right to appeal to the justice of God, and insisted that no culprit should be judicially put to death unless he either confessed his guilt or submitted to be tried by the earthly tribunal. The Continental authorities showed their respect for this public opinion by torturing a prisoner till he confessed, the English authorities by torturing him until he consented to be tried by the King's court. This was the English pro-

cedure: The prisoner on being brought before the court was asked, "Culprit, how wilt thou be tried?" If he responded, "By God and my country," he had agreed to be tried by the King's court; and the clerk of the court piously answered, "God send thee a good deliverance." If he did not he was said to stand mute of malice, and means were adopted to compel him to end his muteness. At first these means were by pegging him out in the prison yard and giving him nothing to eat or drink but stale bread and stagnant water on alternate days till he agreed to be tried or died. This, however, when the prisoner was an obstinate person, proved a slow process, and unduly delayed the business of the assizes. So in Henry IV.'s reign pressing was added. By pressing was meant putting a wooden frame upon the pegged-out prisoner and piling heavy weights on it till he pleaded or burst. This was found to expedite matters greatly. Indeed in 1658, in the case of a Major Strangeways, the expedition was excessive: the man died in ten minutes. However, the proceedings here were somewhat irregular, since not content with piling weights on him—which was the strict legal way—the spectators jumped upon the pressing frame. I suppose they were local attorneys who were afraid that if the criminal business was not hurried up their causes might have to stand over to the next assizes.

This pegging out and pressing business was called *peine forte et dure*, and I confess it seems to me a very respectable form of legal torture. And it had to be resorted to pretty often in the case of prisoners with property and families, who knew that if tried they would be convicted, and who refused to plead in order to prevent conviction and attainder, and thus save their property for their families. In ordinary felonies the forfeiture of the convict's land was to the lord of whom it was held, the King having merely the use of it for a year and a day; but in high treason the forfeiture was to the King himself. This led to a difference in practice. When a prisoner charged with high treason stood mute of malice this was treated as a confession of guilty, and conviction and attainder followed. A very strange application was made of this principle, intended to favour the King, on the trial of Charles I. He was charged with high treason against the Parliament and people of England, and he refused to plead. Accordingly he was found guilty without trial.

*Peine forte et dure* was not abolished till 1772. Then an Act was passed to make standing mute equivalent, in the case of all felonies, to a plea of guilty. In 1827 this was altered, and the law became what it now is: when a prisoner refuses to plead the court enters for him a plea of not guilty, and the trial proceeds

just as if he himself had pleaded it.

John Evelyn has given us a very vivid description of torture on the Continent to extract confession. Dating from Paris, 11th March 1650-1, he writes: "I went to the Châtelet or Prison, where a malefactor was to have the question or torture given to him, he refusing to confess the robbery with which he was charged, which was thus: They first bound his wrist with a strong rope or small cable, and one end of it to an iron ring made fast to the wall about a foote from the floore, and then his feete with another cable, fastned about 5 foote farther than his utmost length to another ring on the floore of the roome: thus suspended and yet lying but aslant, they slid an horse of wood under the rope which bound his feete, which so exceedingly stiffened it, as severed the fellow's joynts in miserable sort, drawing him out at length in an extraordinary manner, he having onely a paire of linnen drawers on his naked body; then they questioned him of a robbery (the Lieutenant Criminal being present, and a clearke that wrote), which not confessing, they put an higher horse under the rope, to increase the torture and extension. In this agonie, confessing nothing, the Executioner with a horne (just such as they drench horses with) stuck the end of it into his mouth, and poured the quantity of two bouketts of water downe his throat and over him, which so prodigi-



ously swelled him, as would have pittied and affrighted any one to see it; for all this, he denied all that was charged to him. They then let him downe, and carried him before a warme fire to bring him to himselfe, being now to all appearance dead with paine. What became of him I know not; but the gent. whom he robbed constantly averr'd him to be the man, and the fellow's suspicious pale lookes, before he knew he should be rack'd, betrayed some guilt: The Lieutenant was also of that opinion, and told us at first sight (for he was a leane, dry, black young man) he would conquer the torture; and so it seemes they could not hang him, but did use in such cases, where the evidence is very presumptive, to send them to the gallies, which is as bad as death."

Now John Evelyn has here stated the practical defect of Continental torture. Whatever may be thought of *peine forte et dure*, at any rate it ended the matter: the prisoner either pleaded or died. As Continental torture always stopped short of death, it did not always end the matter, and indeed it sometimes put the court in an embarrassing position. I remember reading in the 'Journal de Genève,' some ten or twelve years ago, of a case which resulted in this way. It occurred in the diary (then published for the first time) which a Genevese kept when travelling in the Canton

of Berne some time about the middle of the eighteenth century. It was a murder case. One brother was charged with the actual murder: the other brother with being accessory after the fact in giving him shelter when he was fleeing from justice. Both were tortured to extract confessions. The accessory gave way under the agony, and was duly found guilty and sentenced to death: the actual murderer was of sterner stuff and resisted all efforts to extract a confession, and he could not therefore be convicted or executed. The court was accordingly in the awkward position of having to put to death the man who only tried to save his brother, and letting live the man who committed the murder. How it got out of this dilemma, or whether it got out of it at all, I do not now remember, and I am not sure the diarist told.

I have spoken of the humanity with which criminal justice is administered in the higher courts: this is sometimes not so noticeable in the lower courts. One practice, at any rate, I hope will not be extended—that of appointing judges with no other jurisdiction but to try criminal cases. Speaking from my own experience, which I confess has not been very extensive, such men tend after a time to come to regard themselves as carrying on a sort of war, with the police as their allies and the prisoners as their enemies. When I attended Clerkenwell

Sessions in my youth there were two judges there, and both of them, unconsciously no doubt, entertained this view. On one of them it had the effect of leading him always to go for a conviction; after he had secured that he was considerate and even lenient in his punishments; but if he did not secure it he warned the jury of their weakness by telling the prisoner if they had known his record they would not have acquitted, and if, in spite of this warning, the jury acquitted again, he discharged them with ignominy. The other gave each prisoner a fair run, but when the run was over and the prisoner convicted, he inflicted on him what was often an appalling penalty. Indeed, it was a sentence which he passed in a case in which I prosecuted that led me incontinently to drop criminal practice, in which I had been doing very well. The prisoner, a man over seventy years of age, had been a watchmaker, but had had to abandon his trade owing to failing sight. He had an ancient wife and a paralysed daughter to support. Reduced to abject poverty, he resorted to picking pockets. I think he had already one conviction against him (but I am not sure) when I was instructed to prosecute him. The charge was of stealing a purse from a woman in an omnibus: the purse contained just sixpence. He was convicted; and no sooner had the jury found their verdict than the police ushered into court a procession

of bus conductors, who all swore that they suspected him of picking pockets in their buses. The judge passed a sentence on him of five years' penal servitude—five years on a man over seventy for stealing sixpence! The paralysed daughter, who was in court, screamed in horror when she heard the sentence, and had to be carried out in convulsions; the police looked startled; the jury looked uncomfortable; and as for me, I felt *particeps criminis*, and slunk out of court wondering why some decent person did not kick me, and swearing inwardly that that place would never see me more: and it never did. If that prisoner had been tried by a High Court judge, I doubt if he would have received five months. Men practising at these sessions tell me that under Sir Robert Wallace, K.C., who presides there now, such a thing would be impossible; and, from my knowledge of Sir Robert, that is only what I should expect; but the principle of having a man dealing always and only with crime and criminals is, I think, thoroughly bad, and likely with some men to produce bad results.

I do not know what kind of cases are now dealt with at London Sessions, North and South; but in my young days the old practitioners there were always lamenting the days of their youth and deploring the modern degeneracy of spirit among the English people. They told me that when they



started practice there it was no uncommon thing to find at a single sessions a dozen or more high-spirited but low-lived young men of wealth and sometimes of position on trial for outrages on policemen, private enemies, or public decency. Now they said such things were unknown, and ninety-nine out of every hundred prisoners belonged to the class of habitual criminals, defence of whom was profitless in two senses, since they could pay no fee worth receiving and their faces alone were sufficient to convict them on view.

That criminal face is certainly hard to get over; when a prisoner possesses it, as most habitual criminals do, it is a difficult job to induce either judge or jury to believe in his innocence. And yet it is a type of face not infrequently borne by men of blameless lives. The late Mr Henry Labouchere once wrote of a distinguished lawyer politician that he undoubtedly possessed a very legal face; but somehow it did not remind one of the bench or the bar or the well where solicitors sit; and nevertheless you could not see it without thinking of a court of justice. And I myself, when strolling about Paternoster Row and looking at the portraits of the reverend authors of the religious books so much sold there — especially those of the Methodist persuasion — often find my mind reverting to the days when I practised at Clerkenwell Sessions. And it has even been reported that

the late Mr Justice Hawkins was requested to leave a certain suburban bowling-green, as the company—who did not know him—were respectable people and not accustomed to associate with ticket-of-leave men. This misunderstanding, however, may have been due not to the cut of his lordship's face but to the cut of his lordship's hair: my own opinion is it arose through the combination. However, I have said enough to show that the stamp of face characteristic of habitual criminals is not confined to them alone.

Still, when one meets it in persons belonging to a certain class of society, it, as one might say, carries conviction. A story is told of the late Lord Justice Mathew which shows its effect on his mind. His lordship was walking one morning up the Embankment on his way to court when one of those rogues who swindle simple people by selling to them painted sparrows saw him and thought he looked a likely customer. Sidling up to the judge, he produced from under his coat the painted sparrow. "Pardon, gov'ner," he said, "but this 'ere bird flew inter my bedroom this morning. It seems a rare 'un: can yer tell me what kind it is?" The judge took out his glasses and looked hard at the bird. Then he looked harder at the man. "No, no," he said thoughtfully, "I can't tell you what kind of bird it is, but from the company it keeps I should guess that it is a jail-bird."

## VIII. COUNSEL AND PRISONERS.

A law lecturer I once knew was a gentleman with a hot temper and a caustic tongue. If there was anything that irritated him more than another, it was being interrupted in his lecture by a question, especially when the question was silly, as such questions are apt to be. Once when he was discoursing on the subject of legal disabilities, he had naturally to refer pretty often to idiots and lunatics. A student broke into his lecture to ask what was the difference between an idiot and a lunatic. "I'll tell you," answered the lecturer grimly; "if you were born as you now are, you are an idiot, and if you became as you now are, you are a lunatic."

It would perhaps have been more accurate, and it certainly would have been more polite, if he had described an idiot as a person who never had any brains, and a lunatic as a person who had brains but had lost the use of them; after all, a man must have a head in order to go off it. Dryden has said that great wit is near allied to madness, but nobody ever suggested it was near allied to imbecility. Cunning is, however, near allied to it. Now the average habitual criminal is an imbecile or semi-imbecile, and he has much cunning, and it is just this cunning which gives the police and the lawyers their greatest difficulty in dealing with him.

The average habitual crimi-

nal's imbecility is almost incredible. The rule concerning him is one criminal one crime. He learns how to sneak umbrellas at a hall door or luggage at a railway station or parcels from a street van, or to pick pockets, to snatch watches or to play the confidence trick, and whichever of these he learns he does, and he does nothing else. So well is this known to the police that whenever a particular kind of crime is reported as prevalent in a district, they have no doubt as to the quarter in which to find the criminal, though they may not be able to find the evidence to convict him. And so persistent is the habitual criminal in committing his one crime, that you will often find him arrested for committing it again on the very day he is released after "doing time" for committing it before.

This circumstance led my brother, the late Dr S. A. K. Strahan, who was both a barrister and a physician, to inquire into the cause of habitual criminalism, and he came to the conclusion that in most cases it was impulsive: the poor creature had a longing to do a certain act, which was so strong that he could not resist it. My brother wrote a paper setting out this view, and recommending, among other things, that instead of sending wretches suffering from this disease back again and again to prison, an indeterminate sen-



tence not of a punitive character should be passed on them, and that they should be detained and treated as mentally sick men until their minds showed some sign of improvement; and if after a reasonable time no such sign appeared they should be detained permanently, not as criminals but as idiots. This paper he read before the British Association in 1891. It attracted very wide attention, and the lay press, which ignorantly misunderstood it as a recommendation of gentler treatment for persistent wrongdoers, raised a howl of indignation against it and its author. At the present moment almost everything he recommended has been made part and parcel of the law of the land; but he experienced only the persecution—he did not live to enjoy the triumph—of a social reformer.

That is the imbecile side of the habitual criminal. The cunning side is usually as noticeable. Sometimes it is shown in the way he commits his crime, sometimes in the way he hides all traces of it, sometimes in the astuteness with which he conducts his defence, and sometimes in the acting by which he deceives his judge and jury. I only once prosecuted in a murder case, and to this day I am not sure whether the prisoner did or did not deserve a hanging.

It was on the face of it a brutal wife murder. The prisoner was a degenerate of the first water, who, decently con-

nected, had sunk into poverty and lived by what he could steal and what he could wring out of the labour of his wretched wife. That miserable woman had come home one night with less money than he had expected, and he began knocking her about as usual. This time, however, he went a little too far, and she died. The happy relief came early in the evening. The murderer remained along with the corpse all the long night. In the morning he issued from his room carrying a carving-knife, and finding a neighbour had, on leaving his cottage for his work, forgotten to bolt the front door, he entered the house and attacked the wife still in bed with the carving-knife, stabbing her badly in the face. Then he fled, and happening to find another front door on the latch, he entered another cottage and attacked the woman there. Some workmen heard her screams and rescued her and arrested him.

When he came for trial the defence set up was insanity. My instructions contained statements of the prison surgeon and a distinguished alienist, who had been sent down from London by the Home Office to inquire into the state of the prisoner's mind. Both were absolutely convinced that the prisoner suffered from the mania of persecution, and that it was under the influence of this mania he had committed the three crimes. In face of such evidence from my own expert

witnesses and of the strong view of it taken by the judge, there was little chance of a conviction; and yet before the trial was over I had, and I believe many of the jury had too, grave doubts of the prisoner's insanity. From the moment he came into the dock he conducted himself, I thought, just a little bit too much like a lunatic. He professed to want to plead guilty, he interrupted his own counsel, and he hurled abuse at his own witnesses. And yet when, in opening the case, I suggested that possibly his attacks on the two women and his conduct generally since the murder might be intended to suggest insanity, I saw him start violently; and when the judge asked the jury whether it was necessary to call evidence for the defence, I saw a leer of satisfaction show itself on his face. The judge, whose eyesight was far from perfect, saw none of these things; but I think some of the jury did, and suspected that his antics in the dock were mere acting, for they would not take the judge's hint, and it was only after witnesses for the defence had given evidence of the existence of insanity in the prisoner's family, and under strong pressure from the judge, that they reluctantly acquitted. The evidence of family insanity took the police by surprise, and I was not astonished to learn later that on investigation they were far from satisfied that it was true.

I say the jury reluctantly

acquitted under strong pressure from the judge. That to any one accustomed to criminal courts elsewhere is one of the most striking characteristics of English criminal courts. Rarely has an English judge to appeal to an English jury for a conviction: not unfrequently he has to appeal to them for an acquittal: everywhere else the juries are only too ready to acquit, and not unfrequently the judge's heaviest and most disagreeable duty is to urge on them to convict when public justice and public safety alike demand it. In Ireland, north and south, this is sometimes the case—not merely in political or agrarian offences where fellow-feeling may affect the jurors' minds, but in ordinary crimes where their own wellbeing and protection are at stake. We have all heard of the case of highway robbery tried at Tralee. The evidence for the prosecution showed that highway robbery in Kerry had become a public danger, and that the prisoners were the leaders of the robber band; yet the jury acquitted them. The presiding judge showed his view of the case by requesting the High Sheriff to detain the innocent men in custody until he had got a good start on his way back to Dublin.

But Kerry, it may be said, is a county by itself even in Ireland. Did not Baron Dowse allege that once when he was the judge of assize there, when the jurymen in waiting were directed to go into the box to be sworn, they all instinctively



went into the dock instead? All the same, dislike or rather irreverence for the law, and in a lesser degree for its representatives, is common throughout the country, and by no means confined to the poorer or disloyal classes. Even the judges themselves have not the same respect for the letter of the law as English judges. Professor Dicey, K.C., once told me how much he was struck by this on one occasion when on a visit to Dublin he was invited to a seat on the Bench in a criminal court. The case being tried was one in which everybody's sympathies were naturally and rightly with the prisoner; but there was not and there could not be any doubt that, however justified morally he might be, he had deliberately committed the offence charged against him. An English judge would have directed the jury that they must convict, dropping a hint at the same time that the prisoner was not likely to suffer severely if they did; and the jury would have promptly convicted. The Irish judge, a Tory and a Protestant, told them that undoubtedly the prisoner had broken the statute made in that behalf, but, he added, they would be a queer set of Irishmen if they could not find a way of getting round an Act of Parliament. Of course the jury acquitted.

And this irreverence for the law extends, as I have said, in a lesser degree also to the law's representatives. For instance, the bearing of counsel towards English judges is far more

respectful than that of Irish counsel towards Irish judges, though the social position of the latter in the little world of Dublin is infinitely higher than that of their English brothers in the great world of London.

I myself am inclined to regard this want of reverence for the law as due not to any sympathy with crime, but mainly at least to the fact that the law in Ireland is not Irish law: it is the law of the stranger; and however just it may be—and once it was very unjust—it commands no loyalty and allegiance as an institution native to and racy of the soil. In England it is very much the reverse. The whole civilised world has produced only two great systems of law—the English and the Roman—and between them they now divide it. Englishmen did not forget this when their law was merciless; they are not likely to forget it now when it is merciful. But something must also be allowed for the national temper. The Englishman is strong and sensible, but he is slow in observing imperfections in anything he has become accustomed to. Unfortunately, however long an Irishman may be accustomed to anything, its imperfections are the first thing he sees in it, and if he is a true-born Irishman it is often the only thing he sees. Sometimes this difference of nature reminds me of the explanation an American Sunday-school teacher gave to one of her class who found some difficulty in understanding how if God was almighty

the Devil should have so free a hand in human affairs. "Oh," she explained, "God is almighty right enough, but the Devil is a deal quicker."

I have already spoken of the humanity with which the criminal law is administered in England. I should also speak of the purity. In no foreign country I know anything about is a charge of corruption against a judge regarded as too ridiculous for even the most foolish to suggest; that is the case in England, and not merely in England, but in every country which derives its system of law and legal administration from England. During the Irish land war, when hatred of the law and of its administrators was rampant, while charges of bias, cruelty, and oppression were freely made, no one so far as I observed ever breathed a suggestion of bribery: everybody felt that to do so would be to write yourself down a fool. And the same is the position, I am told, in India, Africa, and the Crown Colonies, so far at any rate as white judges are concerned. Attempts are still made in India to bribe judges, but the only effect which follows is disaster to the parties who make them.

I have stated in connection with the murder case in which I prosecuted that the judge's sight was not as good as it might have been. Defective vision is nearly as great a deficiency in a judge or counsel in witness cases as defective hearing. Most counsel when cross-examining a witness never

take their eyes away from his face unless it is to cast a significant glance now and then on the jury when they have made a point; and very often the whole course of their cross-examination is determined by their observation of the demeanour of the witness under it. A story is told of a case in which certain wills were produced which the claimant under them said he found and his opponent said he forged: the peculiarity about them was that the later the will the more favourable it was to the claimant. Counsel while cross-examining him noticed that from time to time he moved his hand nervously to his breast pocket. "What have you got in that pocket?" counsel suddenly demanded. The witness started, and then said nothing but private papers. "Let me see them," said counsel. The witness demurred, on the ground that they had nothing to do with the case. The judge ordered him to produce them. There proved to be only one paper, and it purported to be another and later will leaving the witness everything.

With judges clearness of sight is equally important: they decide what to believe and what not to believe nearly as much by what they see as by what they hear. That is the reason why the Court of Appeal, where the judges do not see the witnesses, is so reluctant to upset the decision of the court below, where the judge has seen the witnesses, on a point of fact. I have



heard of a certain Chancery judge who was so notorious for the briefness of his notes of evidence, that when a case coming before him was one in which an appeal was probable, the parties agreed to have a shorthand report of the proceedings. In an appeal from him the Court of Appeal read the shorthand report, and were puzzled to make out why he had found against the plaintiff, whose uncontradicted evidence seemed to it to establish his claim. The court sent for the judge's note, in the hope that it might enlighten them, and it did. It consisted of a vigorous drawing of an oily-faced, evil-looking person. Above the portrait was written "The Plaintiff," and below it "And a b—— liar."

I have already told of the lamentations which in my youth I used to hear from the old practitioners at Clerkenwell Sessions over the decline in the class of prisoners who came there. Since then I fear things have gone from bad to worse at the whole criminal bar, so far as such a bar now exists. There are from time to time exceptional cases, usually city frauds, or what the French call crimes of passion, where the defence is able and willing to pay heavy fees; but members of the criminal bar seldom get these: usually a fashionable common law counsel is briefed, at any rate to lead the defence. Dock briefs are more common: these are briefs consisting of a copy of the depositions taken before the committing magistrate, with a back

marked a guinea, handed by the prisoner from the dock to one of the counsel in court, no solicitor being employed. These usually go to youthful counsel, who, having nothing else to do, are very glad to take them; but sometimes counsel of good standing accept them, either for personal reasons or because the case is one of public interest.

My friend the late Gerald Geoghegan—whose early and tragic death deprived the Criminal Bar of one of its ablest advocates—told me of a singular experience of his with a dock brief. A solicitor who knew Geoghegan informed him one day that a man Geoghegan had known many years before as a fellow-student at the Temple, had got into trouble for stealing a gold watch and chain. He said he would like Geoghegan to defend him, but he was too poor to pay any reasonable fee. Geoghegan, in his generous way, said at once that he would take a brief from the dock. After he received the brief he had an interview with the prisoner, and came away convinced that the prosecution was a piece of malignant revenge by a former friend. He defended with fervour, and the jury acquitted. The next day he had a letter from his dock client saying how grateful he was for Geoghegan's kindness, and asking him to accept a small present in place of the fee he could not pay. Later the present arrived by registered post. It was the stolen watch and chain.

Of course, whatever the thief intended, Geoghegan handed the watch and chain to the police, who restored it to the rightful owner; for, whether the thief knew it or not, his acquittal, while it prevented his ever being prosecuted again for the theft, did not make the stolen property his. Many thieves do not know this, but some do. I remember being told of a case where the charge was one of stealing a pair of breeches. A young barrister, briefed from the dock, defended and, much to his delight, secured an acquittal. The prisoner showed no desire, however to leave the dock. "You are free, my man," said the young counsel loftily. "You can leave the dock." "I'd rather wait," whispered the client, "till the prosecutor leaves the court." "Why?" asked the young counsel. "Because," whispered the client, "I have them on."

As I have told in another place of the tragedy of my last prosecution, I may perhaps tell now of the comedy of my first defence, though it is against myself. It was a dock brief. The prisoner was a very pretty young woman of what is called doubtful character—though in her case there was

no doubt about her character whatever—and the charge was of having stolen a considerable sum of money from a gentleman "friend." When she came into the dock she said she had the depositions, and wanted to be defended by counsel. "Well," said the judge in his most genial manner (as I have said, the prisoner was a very pretty young woman), "there is a row of young barristers on the back benches; any of them will be glad to take your brief." I was sitting on a back bench; I was very young, and my new wig and bands made me look even younger than I was. The prisoner glanced along the benches, and then, much to my consternation, she pointed to me and said, "I'll have him." But consternation is no name for what I felt when, turning to the judge, and apparently explaining to him the reason of her choice, she added, "He's a nice-looking boy."

I was deeply vexed at the time by this remark; but the times change, and we change with them; and now if any woman, pretty or otherwise, could truthfully say the same thing of me, I should be pleased.

*(To be concluded.)*



"GREEN BALLS."

BY PAUL BEWSHER.

II.

TO FRANCE!

"The wings are stretched : the mighty engines roar ;  
And from this lovèd land I must depart."

—*Crossing the Channel.*

WHEN I arrived at the Handley-Page aerodrome I realised that, for the second time in the war, I was to have the good fortune to be attached to a pioneering branch of the Air Service, and that, instead of going to a out-and-dried task, I was to assist in operations which had been untried and were entirely experimental. I had been, as a second-class air mechanic, a balloon hand on the very first kite balloon used by the British, and had accompanied it to the Dardanelles on a tramp steamer early in 1915. Now I was to be the first observer on the huge night-bombers, which were to prove of such tremendous value to the British.

I found the squadron to be as a new-born babe, blinking at the light of day. In a couple of vast green hangars slept two gigantic machines. The skeleton of a third hangar reared its wooden lattice-work against the deep August sky, and everywhere lay heaps of material and stores.

A few officers were already there—among them the squadron commander, whom I soon learnt to know as a giant

among men from a commanding point of view. He was one of those splendid leaders that are rare, but are never to be forgotten when they are met—the type of man who, by sheer personal magnetism, could make a body of men achieve almost impossible feats.

On one occasion he wished to move an enormous hangar, complete with its canvas curtains and covers, a hundred feet long and forty feet across, about four times as big as an average cottage. The whole was extremely heavy, and weighed many tons. The C.O. called a bugler, and the call *Clear Lower Deck* was sounded. When every hand, from cook to clerk, had fallen in, he distributed the men round the hangar, gave the order, "One, two, three, *Lift!*" and marched the unwieldy structure across the ground to its new position in a few minutes. In this way he rearranged the whole aerodrome.

The C.O.—"*our C.O.*," as we called him—would never call on his officers or men to do work he would not be prepared to do himself. One day,

in the stress of action on the Western Front, an order came to the squadron to undertake an operation which meant grave danger to the airmen taking part in it. The C.O. decided, against regulations, to pilot the leading machine himself. He never told the senior command, and he knew that he would probably never return to receive censure. However, he would not send out his officers on a dangerous task without himself taking the same risk. Fortunately, the orders were cancelled, but his heroism was not forgotten.

Quickly the station expanded. More and more officers and men arrived. More and more machines landed, and were stowed in the newly-erected hangars.

I soon had my first flight in a Handley-Page, standing on a platform in the back, looking below as though I were on a high balcony. In front of me the two little heads of the pilot and observer protruded from the nose; on either side were the two great engines between the wings; behind me was the thirty foot of tapering tail, with the great double tail-plane vibrating at the end.

One evening I went on the most beautiful flight I ever made. For the only time I can remember, I saw the world look lovely from the air. We were flying in the heart of an early autumn evening, and the west was ablaze with pale gold and decked with rose-tinted clouds. On the country beneath me lay a rich mantle of blue mist. The whole air was

warm with the glowing colours of the sunset. Over the machine, over the face of the pilot, and over my hands lay a faintly luminous hue of amber-red. Below there stretched a view of field and farm, and wood and lane, enchanted by the sapphire haze. The world lay under a spell of exquisite beauty, and a tranquillity of peace which was sheer pain to see, so lovely was it. Here and there shone a light in some happy cottage, where the contented labourer sat beside the welcome fire with his wife and children. Far on the right lay the sea, dim and vast, and apprehensive of the night which was advancing with its banners of darkness from the east.

Silently we glided over the unreal world. The sunset faded slowly, and we sank into deeper and yet deeper blue. The gold crept from our faces and hands, and the solemn silence of the evening enveloped us more and more. Soon we drifted low over the trees, whose leaves quivered gently with the fragrant breeze of the twilight. The last shades of dusk turned the landscape into a sombre dream of scarce-seen hills, and the gloomy edge of a woodland. Over a field we floated gently, and ran softly over the dewy grass. . . .

The earth has usually no beauty for the airman. Mountain peaks, valleys, ravines, and curving downs are absorbed in one flat plain, strangely patterned with dull brown and yellow and green shapes, with



dark patches here and there for woods and white ribbons for roads; with black lines for railways, red blotches for villages, grey and brown stains for towns. A person who loves the beauty of nature, and has artistic sensibilities, should never fly. If he must, he should fly only at the edge of the evening, and should glide into the blue magic of the dusk.

Meanwhile, at the squadron, the days of preparation passed—days of superintending the erection of hangars, of sunny flights over the long surf-lined sands, of mushroom picking in the wind-blown grass of the rolling fields. October came, and with it the order for departure.

The great machine was prepared. Heavy tool-boxes, engine spares, tail trolleys, and a mass of material were packed into its capacious maw. The tanks were filled with petrol, oil, and water. The engines were tested again and again. The day came. A pile of luggage stood on the ground beneath the machine; farewells were said; gloves, goggles, boots, and flying caps were collected . . . and it rained.

Back into its hangar went the machine. Back into the tents went the luggage. Back into the mess went the disappointed airmen.

For three or four days this happened, but at last a gentle breeze, a clear horizon, and a blue sky greeted the morning. Once again the suit-cases and trunks were packed inside the machine. I put my little

tabby kitten into her basket and tied a handkerchief over the top, and lashed the whole on to the platform in the back of the aeroplane.

The six airmen dressed themselves in their sky-clothes and took their places—the C.O. at the wheel. A whistle was blown; farewells were shouted; the engines roared, and we mounted triumphantly into the air over the countryside of Thanet. For a time we circled over England and saw the villages shrink to red flowers on the carpet of harvest gold and brown plough and dull green meadowland, which was fringed by the yellow and white line of the curving shore. The little haycocks became mushrooms; cows looked like little dots of white and black on the green fragments of the mosaic; and more and more the sea, the wide glittering sea, dominated the landscape.

Then the machine turned S.E. towards France. Looking ahead, with the glorious wind rushing across my face, I could see the three leather-helmeted heads of the pilot, the observer, and the officer in the front cockpit, and below them the shining Channel. Looking through the slats of the platform between my feet I could still see hedgerows and plump red farms. Then we passed over the cliffs whose summits appeared to be on the same level as the sea, and below me I saw the waves.

I was leaving England behind! I had to look back over the tail to see the white line of the cliffs and the sweep of the

Isle of Thanet coast from Birchington to Ramsgate. I began to feel a lump in my throat. I was not eager to look forward to see the first glimpse of France through the sea mist. My thoughts were full of the sadness of bereavement. I knew not what lay ahead—what France and war might bring me. I knew not how long I would be from my own well-known country, or even if I would ever return. Later on, after leave in England, I found no heart-sinkings when I left Dover on a destroyer—for I had grown used to leaving England—but now my departure was potent with sorrow. I felt almost inclined to fling out my arms to the fast-fading homeland.

At last it died away behind me, and France mocked me with its twin line of cliffs and sweep of coast. I lay down on the platform and wrote letters to be posted in Paris. Between the strips of wood on which I lay I could see the grey and silver sea far below me, and here and there a tiny boat, apparently motionless, though a thin line of white foam stretched behind it.

To my horror I suddenly became conscious of the kitten sitting beside me carefully cleaning her paws, and probably supremely unconscious that she was 6000 feet in the air, half-way across the Dover Straits. Apprehensive for her safety I gave her no time to learn her position, but quickly pushed her into the basket, and, undoing my flying coat and my muffler, I took off my

tie, which I tied across the top of the basket to prevent the spirited young lady from emerging once more.

Now the machine was almost over the French coast, so I put the letter away and clambered on to my feet to look over the side. Though I was far from the ground, it was easy to tell that the country was an unfamiliar one. The houses had a different tint of red, the villages looked strange, and were arranged differently. The whole country looked peculiar and un-English. It was the opening gate of a new world and a new life.

Over sand-dunes and small pine-woods we roared. Etaples slowly passed us, with its wide estuary spanned by two bridges, and its huge hospital city. Over the mouth of the Somme, near Abbéville, we flew into the brown and yellow autumn-land of France—above old châteaux and their withering parks; above little ugly villages; above long straight roads, lined with trees blown half-bare by the equinoctial gales.

I soon forgot my freezing feet in the interest of reading. As I grew more and more absorbed in 'The History of Mr Polly,' the thundering pulse of the engines and the slight vibration of the machine slipped from my consciousness. The everlasting anaesthetic of literature had rendered me unconscious of being in the air nearly a mile from the ground.

Suddenly the machine began to sway, and to "bump" a little. I stood up and saw that we were passing through the



outskirts of a cloud-bank. Little patches of vapour appeared to rush by the machine, though they probably were scarcely moving. The air grew perceptibly cooler, and every now and then the ground would be hidden, as the white vapour streaked by, under the wheels, in a misty blur. Then suddenly the little houses of a village, a forest, and a curving road would appear far below, only to vanish again behind the next swift-moving edge of white.

We were near Paris. The pilot decided to go beneath the cloud-bank so as to keep on his course with greater accuracy. The noise of the motors stopped, the urgent forward motion of the craft became slower and gentler as we drifted down through the cloud-bank, being thrown up and down a little by the eddies caused by the different temperatures of the air levels.

Soon, in the distance, appeared a slender tower, hanging high above the mist. A great expanse of houses and streets, half-observed in haze, revealed itself to our left. Here and there sparkled a winding river, and under us were ragged suburbs with great factories and scattered groups of houses clustered round wide straight roads that pierced the heart of the city like white arrows.

*Paris!* I felt the trumpet-call of the name of a large capital, though Paris has perhaps the weakest name of all. What worthy stirring names do Vienna, Berlin, Brussels,

Amsterdam, Rome, and above all, London, bear! In the very sound of them you hear the dying song of long trains gliding majestically into domed stations; you hear the roar of traffic in crowded streets; you hear the dominant throbbing of huge subterranean newspaper presses.

These giant cities with the splendid names should be entered by train. You should thunder over populated suburban roads, and clatter under iron bridges. You should see more and more gleaming rails pouring together in ever wider streams; you should have glimpses of grey old buildings, rising sublimely above a sea of smoking chimney-pots—if you wish to feel the thrill of entering a metropolis.

To approach a great city by the air is disappointing. You can see too great an expanse of it at once. I should dread to fly high over London, lest I saw the fields to the north and to the south of it at once, and realised that this great city of ours *had* limits which were comprehensible by man. It would be a disillusion which would haunt me all my life.

Fortunately it was misty over Paris, and we only saw occasional stretches of boulevard, and white and red houses, half hidden by the haze through which glittered here and there the Seine.

On one side lay the white buildings of Versailles and its wide tree-lined avenues; on the other lay the square ugly factories of the suburbs; between was a great expanse of

field lined with countless sheds —Villacoublay!

With silenced engines we floated lower and lower towards the soil of France. Gently over the trees we glided; above the grass we swept a moment, the machine shook a little, and came to rest below the level of the tall hangars.

A crowd of British and French mechanics and airmen came streaming from all sides to the machine, as minnows dart and cling to a fragment of food which drops into a pool. We climbed out, gladly stretched our legs, and were soon in a car, driven by a French chauffeur in a black leather coat, on the way to Paris.

I mention the French driver and his coat because, in spite of what I have said about the disillusion of approaching a great city by air, yet aerial travelling does at least accentuate a change of country. Just as gradually approaching a city, or a new country on the ground, makes it seem more far-flung and mysterious, so does it introduce you step by step to its personality and language. If you go to France by boat you feel, even at Dover, that you are approaching a foreign country. You hear French spoken, and see French people during the crossing. At Calais you see the strange uniform of the Custom officers and policemen, and a notice in English and French greets you at the side of the quay with its warning against pick-pockets. So you gradually become acclimatised to

French ideas before you go ashore.

If, on the other hand, you fly to a foreign country, you are, until the moment when you land, attached by a thread to the place you have left. You dressed there, you breakfasted there, you shaved there, your sandwiches were out there, and the hot tea in your Thermos flask was heated there —the aeroplane is merely a detached, floating piece of Margate or Broadstairs, or wherever it may be. So when you land the change is abrupt. A man in a curious dress shouts up to you—

"*Ah, Monsieur! C'était bien la-haut?*"

The thread snaps: England recedes a hundred miles in an instant. You are French, and the aeroplane becomes Villacoublay!

We spent several days in Paris. Every morning our car awaited us outside the hotel. Bills were paid; bags were packed; we inserted ourselves into the car and drove to Villacoublay. The weather would be bad, and (to our secret delight) we returned. I got very used to this life after a time. I have left so many various hotels in France, day after day, in the morning, and have returned two hours afterwards, looking foolish, that the proprietors must have thought it was a British custom.

At last the machine started once more—unfortunately without the kitten. She was seen just before we left, but I think she had friends on the aerodrome who hid her at the



critical moment. We delayed our departure while a search was made. It was in vain. We left without the kitten, and (superstitious people note!) were dogged by misfortune until six months later when we acquired a black oat at Dunquerque.

The aerodrome to which we were flying was at Luxeuil, near Belfort, in the foothills of the Vosges. We left Paris and flew towards the East. Slowly the character of the country changed, and the towns and villages grew different. I had a roller map, and as I lay on my chest in the back of the machine I wound forward the map just as the living map beneath unrolled itself. On the paper would be marked a little white line, a little black blob, and a little dark-green patch. Below, in a square frame of wood, I could see a little white road, a little red village, and a little dark-green forest. Sometimes I read for a quarter of an hour and forgot my surroundings entirely, and then I would suddenly become conscious that I was in the air and would look below. There lay a curving river, and a canal beside it, across which was a grey stone bridge.

I would wind my map forwards, and would identify the river and the canal and the bridge. North of the river would be, perhaps, a forest and a railway line. I would look below me; there would be the forest and a thin black line near it, on which was a puff of white smoke coming from a railway engine. The

little village which lay near the canal would be marked on the map—*Pont St. Maure*, or something similar. It was to me a name. The red mark below had to me no more reality than the black mark on the map, yet at that very moment it must have been full of housewives cooking fish. Its shoemaker, and farrier, and priest, and mayor must have been busy. Maybe a marriage, the most wonderful incident of some simple country girl's life, was in progress, and as the wedding party walked in a procession they looked up to see the great bird with the shining wings which boomed overhead. To me it was all only a little red patch which had appeared above the pages of 'The History of Mr Polly.' Flying is a strangely aloof business, and gives the aerial traveller at times an almost divine point of view.

Three hours slowly passed. Dusk began to creep across the land. The country below changed more and more. Forests became frequent, and the scenery grew wilder and more interesting. Suddenly the noise of the engines died away. I quickly stood up and looked below. We were just over a quaint town with a curious church tower. I looked round and could see no aerodrome. Lower and lower we glided. The wind whistled and moaned in the wires. I could see no field in which to land. Over the tops of some trees we drifted. A great cluster of shrubs ap-

peared ahead of us above the level of the machine. We swept over it, dropped down again, and I saw we were a few feet above uneven ground. I shouted to the other man in the back to hold on, and got myself ready to take a shock. We touched the ground, bounced up a little, ran along, and stopped in a sloping field near a road.

I jumped out at once and ran round to the front. The pilot shouted—

"Go and 'phone to Luxeuil! Say we've had engine failure!"

On the way to the road I passed a French priest—an amazed little figure in black—who had seen this winged monster drop out of the skies to his feet. Already from the town were pouring the excited people, who had thought at first that our machine was a German one.

Before I got into the town I met a grey naval car, which was attached to the aerodrome, and had chanced to be near, and had followed us when we came down. I hurried back to the machine. It had been landed with wonderful skill by the pilot on a sloping field, into which he had side-slipped. Not a wire of it had been broken in spite of its weight and its heavy load.

The rest of the evening is a confused memory of a high tea in the little hotel—a meal of countless omelettes, grey vinegarish bread, coffee, and butter of sorts: of a long, long drive, sitting in the floor of a crowded car, rushing under the stars and the trees which

hissed at us one by one for mile after mile as we whirled down the winding roads: of arriving in the dark at an apparently limitless aerodrome, strangely full of British and Canadian officers in this remote corner of France: of going to bed in the Hotel de la Pomme d'Or in the town of Luxeuil.

The next day we returned to the machine, which was surrounded by an enormous crowd of curious peasants. My pilot wished to open a tool-box, and asked the C.O. for the keys. The C.O., dreading that he might lose them, had handed them on to me. When I looked for them, I found I had lost them! My pilot, in his irritation, stood me up in front of the open-eyed French people and searched me all over. To my shame he found the keys in one of my pockets! The C.O. said to me afterwards—

"Thank Heaven, I gave them to you, or he would have searched me!"

The machine was repaired. The engines were started. I stayed on the ground and helped to keep the field clear. (French people *will* insist on running in front of an aeroplane as it gathers speed on the ground—in order to see it better!) It rose up into the air, and turned round towards Luxeuil, to which I went in a car.

Then began strange months in the wild forest country of the Haute Saône. They were days of flying over the snow-clad country, when you could see, hanging like dream-castles



above the haze of the horizon, the whole panorama of the Alps from the Matterhorn to Mont Blanc—sublime summits, pure sun-kissed white against the thin blue of the November sky. They were days of long drowsy motor drives through the Vosges to the deserted city of Belfort, with its few collapsed houses to give witness of its nearness to the lines. Days in which I became an inhabitant of the historical town of Luxeuil-les-Bains.

This old town was very interesting. Some of its buildings went back to 1200 A.D. Its thermal establishments (so frequent in this part of France, where every town almost is—*les-Bains*) were full of relics of the former Roman baths.

In the old cathedral I saw one of the most crude and striking examples of modernity which I have ever met. As I sat in the tall and gloomy building at twilight one day, the verger asked me if I would like to see how he rang the Angelus. He led me to an old stone room, on one wall of which was a large shiny black switchboard, studded with copper switches and other electrical devices. He pulled down one switch—high in the belfry a bell chimed three times. He pushed the switch up and pulled it down again. Once more the bell chimed three times. He did this a third time, and then rang the bell continuously for a little while.

He seemed to have great pride in such an up-to-date affair, but to see the Angelus rung by electricity in an old

church was distressing. He followed up the performance by tolling a knell for the dead. He pulled another lever, and left it down for five minutes, during which a deep bell slowly rang.

"They pay five francs for that!" he said with gusto, as he looked at his watch and pushed up the lever again.

There were no British troops within a hundred miles of the place. The officers and men of the naval flying wing were the only British there, and they must have seemed strange to the French people.

We had amusing evenings, and became quite French in our ways. We dined off frogs' legs and pike fresh taken from the tank in the yard of the restaurant. We went to organ recitals in the cathedral, and paid visits to learn French and to exchange conversations. Of course, in our turn, we introduced the custom of taking tea in the afternoon. Wherever we were in France, we demanded, at four o'clock, tea, bread and butter, honey and cakes. It amazed the French people, but we generally got it. I do not think they understood it at all, because one evening after dinner I asked for a cup of tea instead of coffee, and it came accompanied by a plate of cakes, and, I believe, bread and honey. I had to explain that an Englishman *can* drink tea alone. It is amusing how an Englishman always takes his customs with him, and, instead of doing in Rome as the Romans do, rather makes

Rome do what is done in London.

Bacon and eggs for breakfast; meat and vegetables together for lunch; tea and cake and bread and butter and honey for tea in the afternoon—says the Englishman. If he does not get this, he exclaims—"My hat! What a place!" as he walks indignantly out of the hotel.

Among other things, I learnt how to fly, at Luxeuil, and found it very much like learning to ride a bicycle. It has the same fascination and the same characteristics. You have the same certainty, to begin with, that you will never be able to do it; you know the same triumph of achievement when you fly ten yards alone; and when you are flying along smoothly in complete confidence that the instructor is holding the controls and is checking you the whole time, you turn round, see he is looking over the side, become overtaken with nervousness, and dive and climb, and slip and slew, in a fever of anxiety and dread.

The advantage of being able to fly yourself is that if you feel depressed and weary of the ground, and of the people on it, you can get a book, jump into an aeroplane, and shoot up into the solitude of the sky. When you have

climbed three or four thousand feet you can bring out your book, and go round and round in great circles far away from the earth in utter seclusion, reading sublime verse, and dreaming of any unreality you desire.

The tranquillity of these days was ended suddenly by a rather welcome order to proceed to the advanced base at Ochey-les-Bains, near Nancy, from which raids were to be carried out at once.

Over miles of ravine and forest, over Plombières and Remirémont and Epinal, over winding river and rolling down, we flew till we approached the region of Nancy, where a few kite-balloons hanging above the haze showed us that we were near the lines. We landed on the wide French aerodrome, and once again met a crowd of English officers in a strange corner of France.

We began to prepare at once for a night raid on some blast-furnaces beyond Metz. My pilot and I had never flown before at night, and had never crossed the lines. With mingled trepidation and excitement we awaited the first voyage amidst the darkness and the stars beyond the frontier of Alsace into what was then Germany—with its unknown dangers and its unknown difficulties.

(To be continued.)



## OUR LAND DAYS.

BY E. S. WILKINSON.

WHEN first the appeal for women to come out and work on the land was made, my only thought was—"Well, that is not a job that will ever find me at it, because it isn't going to be any good." I was obviously just the person to volunteer, being tall and strong, and the right age! (Exactly what the "right age" is I will not divulge, but I was not too old or too young.) Also, I had lived in the country all my life, and been good friends with all the farmers in the district. Perhaps this is why I was so full of pessimism. I knew enough about the conditions and hours of farm work to know that it was not *only* contrariness that made a man say, "What's t' use of a lot o' women on t' pleece—what's

t' foreman off t' deea wiv a lot o' women when t' weather's rough?—women can't drave t' 'osses t' ploo', and wheer's off t' larn 'em? I'se seer I s'ant." And though I always made a point of arguing that they had no reason for being so damping till they had given us a trial, I felt that they were right. We *were* no use on the land if we could only do "soft jobs," and how many of us knew what we were in for, and were prepared to stiek the rough jobs? So I went on taking my weekly turns at the V.A.D. Hospital.

Boots thought differently. She always had more courage about going for a thing than I had. I will introduce her, and the way she went for it, in the next chapter.

## I.—BOOTS.

"It's no use going to work on the land without proper boots!" was one of the first axioms Boots arrived at, and so she got her name.

Now Boots was at first full of the bliss of ignorance, where I had the folly to be wise, so she struck out for the land, and hired a pony trap! The connection may seem remote at first sight, but it must be remembered that this was long before the palmy days of the "Women's Land Army" and the setting up of training

centres. The farmers' willingness to encourage and employ women was most conspicuous by its absence, and the only possibility of getting a job was by going round to the farms and demanding work with such persistence that at last, in sheer self-defence, you were taken on. Doubtless the farmer added under his breath, "She won't be here a fortnight."

Well, in the part of the country of which I am writing, the farms are very large and isolated, and tramping round

them in search of work would have been a long and tedious job, so as I say, Boots hired a pony trap and drove.

Whoever heard of a farm hand *driving* in search of work? Boots found it, nevertheless. Not all in a moment though, and only after many refusals, and questionings as to what she thought she was going to do if she came. Luckily, Boots had no idea, and answered, "Oh! anything you like to put me to," and on the basis of that willingness, at last a brave man took the risk and offered her a hoeing job on "piece-work."

On "piece-work," mind you—an amateur will not get rich hoeing by "piece," and if he undertakes to pay his keep at so much a week, he may work ten or twelve hours a day at a loss. But there was the opening, and Boots took it, and put away the pony, and began to turn old clothes into that dignified class of goods called "kit." I can't say I know a great deal about the life and work of Boots after she sallied forth with her kit on this new venture.

I was working in my V.A.D. Hospital in a rather desultory sort of way, and from time to time I had news of "back-aching jobs" and "hot harvest fields," and mixed up with them the joy of being up and

out in the very early morning. But I was a confirmed pessimist, I suppose, and merely thought "it may be a joy but it isn't any use."

Then Boots' ardour began to wane. Winter was coming on, and with it mud and wind and rain—and through it all the feeling that she wasn't essential, and in fact the thought that if she wasn't there it would really make very little difference. Then one week-end when she was home we chanced to meet, and discovered we had both got the war disease of "I'm sick of my job" very badly, and we decided to throw in our lot together and get a different one. So it came about that, full of importance and bustle, we wrote letters and had interviews, and dreamt of earning £5 a week in a Munition Factory, or £3 as a clerk. The outcome of it all was that we were put down for a new department connected with a Shell Factory, which was to open in a month, and Boots left her farm and I resigned from my hospital, and we began to go about saying good-bye to our friends. And that, to be quite accurate, was my first step towards work on the land. A strange way to start you will think, but sometimes when you follow a new road you suddenly arrive at where you least expect.

## II.—THE CALL OF THE LAND.

Yes! there's no doubt about it, the land does call!

: If you have once given your-

self time to hear and know her voice, you will never forget. Wherever you are, and what-



ever you are doing, it will always come back to your mind.

The earth will teach you to love her carefully; she will not hurry, and if you cannot be content to learn slowly, you will never learn at all. I think, really, the only way to get to the bottom of it is to work in the fields—to be out in them all day, and to come home tired in the evening. I think the land will not be very kind to you unless you are tired in the evening. But let the sun get low, so that the shadows come slanting across the fields, so low that even the furrows you have ploughed have little shadows in them; let it find you with your horses steaming and your feet tired, so that they will hardly swing down the furrow for the last few turns; and then let it be time to “loose out” and go home, with your plough traces jingling by your horses’ sides—you won’t forget. I can hear them now as I sit here in London.

It was this inexorable call of the land that turned me aside from the new-department-at-a-shell-factory and took me reluctantly to the fields. I repeat reluctantly. Let no one be deceived. I did not hear the call. I suppose I was not listening; and, anyway, the earth calls very softly. But even if she had shouted in my ear, I doubt if I should have heard. My mind was on a lathe, and pounds of wages a week.

Was it likely that grinding away at a job I had already

condemned, and earning the large sum of 16s. or 18s. a week, would appeal to me?

But between me and my little lathe were two obstacles. In the first place there was Boots, and in the second the month’s delay before our department opened.

I think it was the delay that saved us; if we had been able to start right away it would have been different. Boots would not have had time to find out she must go back. And there we should have been with a clanking, clacking machine, instead of the sound of wind and rain and birds; and instead of weary limbs and sleeps, a frowsty headache.

Not many days of that month had passed before Boots knew she must go back. At first she did not say much about it, as she also knew she had said she would take this other job with me, and felt bound to go on with it. It was no good though. You may loathe the sight of the fields sometimes; you may hate every farm implement in the world, and feel quite certain that if you don’t leave in a minute you will become a turnip; rooted to the spot, with mouldy green hair, and no ambition in life but to grow round and fat, and be exactly the same as all the other turnips in all the other rows, in all the other turnip-fields in all the world. But leave the land, and from that moment, though you may not know it, you begin to return.

At last Boots could bear it no longer, and said bravely:

"It's no good, I can't go and work in a town, and be shut up in an office or factory or anything else. I must go back on to the land, and if you don't mind, will you come with me?"

I was certainly a little bored, but the other work was hanging fire, and after all we had thrown in our lot together, so I raked up some false enthusiasm and said "All right."

It was still early days, and work was not to be had for the asking, though a land campaign was afoot, and many meetings called by pioneer enthusiasts. But farmers were still wary, and kept clear of them. They wanted the proof of the pudding without the eating, and I think they thought we looked thoroughly indigestible.

At last, on the strength of her persistent searching and her previous experience, Boots found a job, and after she had been at work a few days the farmer recklessly said he would see her friend (that meant me), and if she seemed a likely sort of person he would take her on as well. I have a very great admiration for that farmer. His friends told him clearly that we should not be there more than a week or two, and he would have all his trouble for nothing. And they also explained to him in detail the amount of damage we should have time to do in the few weeks we survived. However, he stuck to his guns, and as far as I know he did not even insure against female labour. Perhaps the premium would have been too high.

### III.—THE BEGINNING OF IT.

I was hired in the cattle-market. I walked in at 10.30 A.M. as a very ordinary mortal of the tennis party, afternoon tea, and summer hats variety, and I left it about ten minutes later as "t'Low-House thuddy," with the prospect of earning 18s. a week, and the possibility of a 2s. rise if I "framed well." The next few days were spent in collecting "kit." Boots and leggings I achieved without any financial loss from the bottom shelf of my father's boot-rack! They were about ten sizes too large for me, but by putting several pairs of cork soles inside them I succeeded in stopping them rat-

ting, and at least they were "Boots," and not brown paper coverings for the feet. Then came the question of where, in the matter of skirts, decency ended and convenience began.

A long skirt was naturally quite out of the question, but no skirt at all was a different matter, and to have appeared then in what is now the accepted uniform of the Land Army, would have distinctly meant asking for trouble. We eventually compromised with "frills." They were rather more than knee-deep, and manufactured from old tweeds, with the help of a pair of scissors. Boots and I used to



meet and have councils of war about these "frills," and full-dress rehearsals. Then we would survey each other from a distance, and cogitate on the difficult point of whether propriety would allow the removal of another inch from the bottom.

At last we arrived at what we thought would be satisfactory from all points of view, and armed with boots and leggings, "frills" and Tam o' Shanters, and an old overcoat, we reached our farm one Sunday night, to plunge into the unknown on Monday morning.

#### IV.—APPRENTICES.

"Ka-a-ate" — followed by silence — "Ka-a-ate," and a sleepy voice through the wall behind me said "Orl right!" That was the first order I heard given on the farm, and it meant that it was time that Kate, the "maiden," got up and lit the fire. I struck a match and looked at my watch. It was 5 A.M. and pitch-dark! Well! you've done it now! thought I; you're in it! And I lit the tallow candle and jumped out of bed. I didn't take long to dress, or wash either, for that matter—the water was, naturally, as cold as ice, and not encouraging to loiter with,—jersey, coat, frill, and hat were soon in their places, and with my boots in my hand I crept along the passage to my mate's room, and together we stole downstairs in our stocking feet to the kitchen. Every one always puts their boots on in the kitchen in a farm-house, and by this time Kate had got the fire well away, and it was nice and warm. Now I think the inmates of the farm must have been full of curiosity as to what these two women who proposed to work on the land

were going to wear; but people of the north country are not wasters of words, and the farmer made no comment except that we were to "get our breakusts" as soon as "they" were ready, and then he would come and "set us on." We finished lacing our boots and leggings, and started to eat breakfast, and I wondered badly what was going to happen next. It was beginning to get light by this time, and nearly 6 o'clock, and about 6 "t' master" came in and took us out! It would not be of any particular interest to explain in detail what we did that day. The jobs were various, and I know for myself I was pretty slow. We spent a good part of the day chopping up some old dead fenoing in the middle of a grass field. It was very nearly lambing-time, and it wanted clearing to prevent the lambs getting caught in it when they were turned away there. The chief event of that day, which stands clear in my memory, is thinking it must be nearly dinner-time, and looking at my watch to find that it "wanted" 10 minutes

to 8 A.M.! One gets many shocks of that description when one starts working on the land. In the first place, a twelve-hour day takes a bit of getting used to; but another reason for days seeming long is that the new-comer is not experienced enough to be sent off alone on a job for the day, but is kept round the buildings, dodging about at odd jobs, under the vigilant eye of the foreman. And every true "farm-hand" knows that "dodging about at odd jobs round the buildings makes long days."

At last that first day ended, and we came in to tea. It must not be thought from that that we had hated it, or that as far as I know we had not enjoyed it, but for myself I must confess I was surprised at its interminable length. It did not seem to me like a day at all, only vistas of hours stretching out before me till the farmer came and shouted "Dinner's ready" over the hedge—then an hour that exploded like a squib, and then more vistas stretching away till the sun went down and it was "night." So a week or two passed, and we began to feel our way. To have become expert at any single job I lay no claim, unless it be putting turnips into a cart. (There is more than meets the eye in almost every kind of farm work.) But at least we were finding our feet; we discovered that days did end, and that, however tired you were, the night generally put it right. I began to gain a sort of confidence that sooner or later I should be able to do some useful

work, and, greatest achievement of all, the men learnt to understand that we might be raw and we might be slow, but at least we were willing and not afraid of work or weather; and so they thought it worth their while to give us a helping hand, and show us little tricks of the trade for making work lighter and doing it less clumsily. With this began a debt I can never repay, to all the men I have worked with, wherever I have worked. They belong to the land, these men, and they are not quick in movements, speech, or thought. Why should they be? It is not quick wit and an eye to business that ploughs the fields in the autumn, or is responsible for their shining green with corn in the spring of the year. It is indomitable patience and hard clean work. There are no greedy bargains driven when you work with the soil as your partner. She will not cheat you, if you are willing to do your share. Read in the newspaper under the heading "Partnerships dissolved," you will not find amongst them "The Labourer and the Land." The farm men know a lot of things, of which many people never catch a glimpse; they find them out themselves, and sometimes it takes a long time. The land does not say, "I will show you"; she says, "Find out, and it will be worth while." I would say the same about the farm-labourer. He will not show you himself; but "find him out, and it will also be worth while." I know I have found a host of friends.



## V.—IN WHICH I PLOUGH.

At the end of three weeks the first strangeness of the life began to wear off. Boots and I felt that, figuratively speaking, we had "put our hands to the plough," and shortly after this the day came when we did it literally. I have been asked over and over again, "Can you plough? Isn't it awfully hard work? And how long did it take you to learn?" so perhaps it would be of interest to write a little of my first experiences. It all began because Bob, "the waggoner's lad," had toothache. It was bad toothache, and he had to go to the dentist at S——, sixteen miles away, which took the whole day. The upshot of it was that to prevent his horses standing idle the foreman told me overnight, "Yer can coom up to t' forty-acre in t' mornin', and see how yer frame wiv Bob's ploo." So "in t' mornin'" I went up to the forty-acre, and there was old Brown with two horses and a plough! The waggoner had lent me one of his horses for my first attempt, and taken the young horse himself. It was very great good-nature on his part to do this, as a waggoner on a big farm always has his own particular pair of horses, and is very loath to let any one else drive them. However, he said, "I thowt it 'ud be best for you to tak' Prince. 'E gangs weel on t' 'land,' and Boxer's a grand old 'oss in t'

'furrow.' Banker 'ere, 'e's a bit ower keen for a start."

Well, Brown, the foreman, took the plough, and I walked beside him down the furrow until he had got the plough set to his liking. Then he said, "Tak' 'old of her—you want to just keep 'er steady, and deean't press ower 'ard on t' 'andles—let her gang wiv herself."

I took hold, feeling very nervous, and she did go more or less "wiv herself" as far as the end. Then I had to turn round, and I hadn't the vaguest notion what to do. The horses knew their part of the business, and started round the headland quite confidently. Behind them, in a trailing tangle, came the plough and myself. Oh yes! it fell over all right, and it nearly knocked me down with it. I left the horses to it, and they trailed it to its place on its side. Old Brown laughed and picked it up, and said he would take it round the next end himself, and then I should see! I certainly saw, and it looked as easy as walking across a road; but a plough doesn't make friends all at once. Brown gave it me back, and I started off again down the length of the furrow; when I got to the end, I turned round to ask for advice, and far away on the other side of the field I saw Brown disappearing on his way to another job!

That was all the ploughing lesson I had officially. The rest I learnt by experience (sometimes very bitter) from

the plough itself and my horses — particularly from "little Sam," of whom I will tell you more later on.

#### VI.—FRESH FIELDS.

Boots and I had not been on this farm a full year when circumstances arose which made it advisable to leave and go to a new "spot."

We did this for various reasons that it would only be tiresome to enumerate, though to avoid misunderstandings it would perhaps be as well to say that it was nothing at all to do with the work, and the really deciding factor was that our master, the tenant of the farm, died, as the result of a riding accident, and the farm was shortly going to change hands. As far as I was concerned I left with many regrets, and though in the matter of knowledge of farm work I knew I had only touched the edge of it, I had at least tried my hand at a variety of jobs, and in many cases learnt some of the ways of dealing with them which it is best to avoid!

Boots and I were engaged to go to another farm before we actually left the old one. We snatched a fortnight's holiday, however, and rushed off to London, where we spent all the wages we had saved, very quickly, and pretended we had never been yokels in our lives. If London had been interested enough to notice us, as we passed, I don't suppose it would have been taken in. There was too much wind and weather in

our faces, and too much plough-boy's roll in our steps, for London pavements.

At this new farm we were to be *bona fide* "horse lads," with a pair of horses each to work, and another (used for odd jobs) to look after. We were supposed to know enough about ploughing, harrowing, earting, and the driving of horses, to make us responsible for the horse work of a farm of 200 acres, of which about 100 acres was arable land or "tillage." Of course, we were under the eagle eye of Dan, the foreman, but as he had fifty beasts to look after and fodder, he could not do more than "set us on" and hope for the best. It was November when we went, and for quite a number of weeks our main job was ploughing. Up till now we had only been doing this kind of work with the other men, and then only when there were horses to spare for us. That meant that we had never really discovered how much we could get through in a day, because what we did not do was always finished by some one else. Now we knew that we were directly responsible for the work being done; there was no one else to pick up the bits, and we had got to know the worst or best of ourselves.



Dan was one of the finest farm foremen that you could ever meet. There was no branch of farm work at which he was not an expert. To see him stacking, thatching, or "setting a rigg" with a plough was an education in itself. He knew good work when he saw it, and he knew a good day's work when he saw it, and what is more, he demanded both from all who worked under him. Boots and I came with a kind of hearsay reputation of having tried our hands at most of the main items of farm work, but Dan was not content with hearsay. He set himself to find out just what we could do.

"What sort o' land is't ut you've ploughed?" he said.

"Oh!" I said, "it's lightish land, a kind of chalky 'soil.'"

"Well," said Dan, "it's on limestone here, so it won't be much different. Have yer done owt on an 'illside?"

"We ploughed a 16-acre field on a steepish hillside," I replied.

Dan grunted. "Can yer tak yer own furrows up?" was the next question.

Then! we'd done that. Then—"Can yer set yer own riggs?"<sup>1</sup> he demanded, and here we had to confess we couldn't.

"Well," said Dan, "yer'll have to set 'em here—you're t' waggoner" (this to Boots), "and t' waggoner's forced to set 'is own riggs."

The next thing was to "set us on," and see how we framed.

I was not a little nervous when the first morn'ing he said, "Gear Sam and Jock for t' plough, and I'll tak' yer up as sean as I've got me brekkust."

Jock hadn't been out for a week, and he was full of beans, and danced about all the way up to the field. Dan helped me to yoke in, and then I started off, and hoped against hope that I shouldn't "have a baulk" straight away. (A baulk, for the benefit of the uninitiated, is when through hitting a stone, or through clumsy handling, your plough jumps clean out of the furrow and skims along the surface. Woe betide you if when this happens you merely try and dive in again a few yards farther on, leaving an untouched piece behind you. It is the hall-mark of the careless slipshod ploughboy, to leave "bits of baulks" all over the field. If you have a "baulk" you must turn your horses and plough round, and come in again behind it, and plough it out.)

As a matter of fact I did not begin with one; and after a few minutes Dan, murmuring something about "It allus made me nervous to have folks watching me," left me and went to his own work. He had seen enough to know that at least the land was going to get "turned over," and he knew that time and practice alone would teach me how to make a really good job.

He came up to the field again once or twice during

<sup>1</sup> Rigg = the first furrow or mark set across an unploughed field.

the day, and made very few comments; but I knew he was taking it all in. As we sat in the kitchen at tea-time I said: "Dan, how much have I ploughed?" "Why," he said, "I should think about half an acre!" Now, I had calculated myself I had ploughed about three-quarters of an acre, and I really think I was not far short of it. However, Dan, as I discovered later, always worked on the principle that "a man's reach must exceed his grasp"—or what's a

foreman for? I did not contradict his estimate aloud, but I made a mental resolve that I would try and do a little more the next day.

An acre a day is, of course, the more or less recognised day's work with a single furrow plough and two horses. Conditions of land and weather and short dark days sometimes make it impossible to do this; but in the main it is an average that can be kept up without overdoing your horses or yourself.

#### VII.—WINTER'S JOBS.

The winter set in early, and the frost was very severe. Some of the younger men said they had never known such a hard winter since they started work, and the older hands said, "There'd bin nowt like it sin' '95." Seven weeks on end we were frost-bound, and nothing could be done in the way of working the land. It is at such times as these that the "plain" jobs arise, and the one saving grace is that some of them keep you warm.

First of all came a long spell of "plugging muck," and it is work that is not the least bit better than it sounds. In plain English it means cleaning out the fold-yards and "scaling" them over the fields. Four "folds" we had, and getting on for fifty tons in each; and well-trampled fold-yard manure does not "help itself" into a cart or out of it. You've got

to get down to it with a muck-fork and "rive" it out and swing it up on to the load. There's art in this too, when you come to do it; and you can do twice the work with half the labour when you know how to set about it. I said "rive" just now; but if Dan knew I'd said it, he would say, "That's just what you don't want to do." Often when Boots and I were struggling with an unwieldy lump, he would burst out: "What do you want to go 'riving' and 'tearing' there for? *Yon's* what's fastening it. Get t' top off, and it'll come wiv itself." An optimist indeed; and then under his breath, "By lad, but it's fast!"

So the days went by and the tide in the fold-yards ebbed away, and you said cheerily to your mate: "I'm on t' bottom here," and "How many more loads will take it?" Our horses had a troublous time.



All the tillage fields were up a hill, and it took three horses to pull each load up. The frost had the ground in irons, and there was ice everywhere, and woe betide my little Sam, or any other, if he lost his frost nails from his shoes. At last I came down with my empty cart and met Boots coming up. "You'll get it this time!" she shouted, and soon a little heap on the floor of the yard was "loadened up" and the muck was out. "Let's give a dance," we said; but next morning fresh straw was on the bottom and the beasts were in the yard, and the tide had turned. So the eternal round goes on.

After the muck-loading we turned our attention to mending the farm roads, and the best of one hundred tens of stone were strewn in the ruts and muddy places about the estate, and then running through both these items was the endless undercurrent of work connected with feeding the stock.

"You can go to pull turnips while dinner-time," said Dan when we came out from breakfast in the morning. There was sometimes more in that than meets the eye. I remember days when all the ground was white, and the novice would not have known where to look for turnips at all.

Boots and I only knew because we knew where they had been sown; but we were "old hands" now. We had learnt many little tips for improving a bad situation. At a crisis like this, three

bags apiece and some Massey-Harris twine were invaluable. First we planted each foot in the middle of a bag and picked up the ends and tied them round the knees with Massey-Harris—then the third bag served as an apron. Next a couple of bits of Massey-Harris round your wrists to keep the wind out of your sleeves, and looking like nothing less than a South Pole expedition, we sallied forth. The fields were white as a sheet, and not even the tops of the turnips visible sometimes. A hoe was necessary to find them at all, and with it one of us struck into a row and kneoked the tops off by following the line of it, and the other came behind and pulled and cleaned the turnips with a knife and drag. It was a slow job at the best, and on mornings with a fog and rime on everything there is very little to be said for it except that the stock must not starve. Even here, though, there was recompense. I shall never forget one morning in early March, as the sun rose red over the snow on the hillsides, and reflected red in the curves of the river below. No sign of spring was abroad, but the trees were a wonderful madder brown. In spite of the snow, I suppose the sap was stirring in their branches, and life was tingling through them with the promise of spring. That's the amazing thing about work on the land—aching fingers with cold, and aching back with stooping, the turnips temporarily mislaid under a deep snow—and yet

the chief memory left in my mind is a red sun rising over snow, and the river winding red, and a certain contentment that the work was done.

#### VIII.—SPRING SOWING.

At last the frost broke, and we got back to our ploughs. Sowing-time was close upon us, and now it was work indeed. "Gear your horses before brekkust," said Dan—"you maun't be 'angin' about round t' stable after brekkust now—and keep 'em going. You doan't want to be waast-in' time turnin' round at furrow ends. Yon field owt to be finished this week, and then we'll get t' 'arrows in tiv it." Even now the weather would not let us have it all our own way. Snow and slush kept hanging about, and the "old hand" knows that time spent ploughing in spring with the land too wet is time worse than lost, because it will not harrow down to a good "seed-bed" without frost to temper it. It taxed Dan's patience and judgment to the utmost to decide when time was being saved by *not* getting on with the work, and when it was possible to catch even an hour or two safely.

At last "yon field" was ploughed, and the weather took a turn, the land dried up, and then it was away with the ploughs and out with the harrows. This was indeed a testing-time. I know Dan was nervous. Up till now it had been a case of going "steady away" and doing a fair average day's work.

Now the corn had to be got into the ground as soon as possible, and Boots and I had to "face the music." Poor old Dan didn't want to overdo us, but we were all the material he had, and there was nothing for it but to force the pace as much as he could. After a few days I think he began to realise that it was going to be all right.

The hard frosts of the winter made the land break up quickly, and thanks to our priceless and willing horses, we were harrowing about fourteen acres a day with a pair of harrows each.

Dan came kicking his toes into the ground to see what sort of a seed-bed it was, and grunted satisfaction. "Single it over once more," he said, "and it'll be fit for drilling to-morn."

"To-morn" Boots fetched the drill, and she and Dan fettled it up. The seed corn was dumped in sacks at convenient intervals for filling up the drill. I yoked into some light harrows to follow the drill, and away we started. A corn-drill varies in design and size, and some take a wider "breed" at a time than others. A drill with nine spouts should sow nine acres a day, with thirteen spouts, thirteen acres—that is, one acre a day for each spout. Not so Dan. The



first day (and on a hillside withal) we sowed sixteen acres, and the second day sixteen again. Thirty-two acres in two days; and dog-tired though we were, we were all a little proud of ourselves. The second day my horse, "Jock," distinguished himself by an attack of "colic." The soundest cure, without resorting to medicine, is to walk the horse about; and Boots and I loved him dearly, as we took turns marching him up and down the lane while the other had tea. When one comes in dead to the world it is not a thing one bargains for; but with a good waggoner your horses come before yourself, and we were too proud to hand old "Jock" over to some one else, and eventually he took a turn for the better, and we rolled into bed, too weary to speak perhaps, but satisfied.

The field that was ploughed late did not break up so well, and took a lot of working down. We had to use a Cambridge roller on it several times to make a job of it at all, but eventually it reached a stage when we could do no more, and that too was sown and all the spring corn in the ground. "Shut the gate on it now till harvest," we said. That is not quite *literally* true, because the young corn needs rolling, and then there is hoeing time, or "lukiing" as we called it; but it is a saying common amongst farm labourers, to signify that the essential fact of a future harvest, as far as it is dependent on them, is assured. Up and down the roads and over the hedges at this time of the year you will hear us call to each other: "Well, 'ave yer gotten all sown?" and the answer, "Ay, we can shut gate on't now!"

#### IX.—"FETTLING" TURNIP LAND.

There are not a few farmers who have said to their "hands," "I'll give you all a day off when we get 'worked up.'" It is a sage promise as far as the farmer is concerned, as the chances of finding yourselves "worked up," "and nothing doing" on a farm are more than remote. As soon as one job is finished—in fact often before it is finished—another is crying out to be done. Spring corn was in late this year, and close on its heels was the time to drill the wurzels. A 16-acre field was "for wurzels," and we all turned on to "fettle"

it. Harrows and rollers careered across the field from morning till night. Then there was salt to fetch, which the labourers sowed by hand from "hoppers" slung on their backs, or sometimes from the rullely as I drove it backwards and forwards across the field.

Then that too was ready to drill, and we all turned to. It is no easy job to lead the horse in a turnip drill, as if it is badly done and you get uneven widths between the rows you will have a very "plain job" later when you come to scruffle them.

Needless to say neither Boots nor I had enough experience to attempt it, when another man was available, so Boots led the first horse and I had the "manishment" waggon in the middle of the field where the drill had to be filled at each "turn about." A cold job on a windy day, with not quite enough to do to warm you up, and no protection from the wind except your horses. I used to cover them up with bags, and then, when I had filled my "sleps" ready for the drill coming up, stand on the leeward side of little Sam and let him be a buttress from the wind.

After the wurzels were in we had a week to ten days back with our ploughs quartering the field that was due "for turnips" at the end of June or early July. Then one dinner-time Dan came in and said: "Wurzels is showing all t' length of t' row. I want you to bring Sam up and see if we can see 'em weel enough to scruffle. He's a very good 'scruffler horse'!" So after dinner Dan and I and Sam sallied forth with a scruffler, having fished it out from where it had been packed away since the previous year, and for the next month I hardly passed a day without it.

#### X.—CHIEFLY CONCERNING SAM.

So much of a waggoner's work on a farm depends on his horses and the way he drives them. Again, those two conditions depend largely on each other. A horse may be "handy" because he has been driven well, and he is more likely to be well driven if he is handy.

To many young lads with horses every goose is a swan, and if his horse has *any* points in its favour at all, by pride of possession it is to him "such a horse as never was." On the same principle I firmly believed that in Jock and Sam I had as handy an all-round pair of farm horses as were ever yoked to plough or waggon; but I am sure that it was not mere imagination on my part which put my little Sam in a class apart, and made me feel a sort of pity for all the other

horsemen. I felt they had really missed something in missing Sam.

He was indeed a favourite all over the estate; every man knew him, be he horseman, labourer, beastman, or shepherd. I never stopped with him anywhere that he did not get a word from them. "And how's Sam this morning?" "Oh, he's all right," I would answer. "Ay, 'e's a right little horse is Sam!" they would repeat.

There was no work on a farm Sam did not know, and no work that he ever shirked. Bad, slipshod, lazy work he could not tolerate. Sometimes I drove him with a young mare "Bell," who was young both in experience and good manners, and Sam's fury when she would not do all that I wanted was a joy to behold.



We harrowed together sometimes, and Bell turned short, and between Sam and myself she found her education being taken in hand. "Who-avel Bell," I would sing out, with a flick at the line, and dunt into her neck would go Sam's head, saying as clear as speech: "Can't you *see* what's wanted, my young innocent? Don't you *know* that harrows turn upside down if you turn them short? Do you suppose we harrow a field upside down? and do you suppose your mistress is going to 'tew' herself turning the harrows right way up at every end? Keep your weight on your traces, and turn steady and learn your job from me. Though I say it as shouldn't, I *do* know!" And Sam did know, what's more, and many's the tip he gave me—ploughing, harrowing, carting, scruffling, he was a master worker all through. Little, sturdy, and black, with quick little ears listening for the least word, eyes full of intelligence, and a soft, round, velvety nose that snuffled in your hands and pockets for oake—willing to the point of impatience, and sometimes perhaps a bit "ower keen," little black Sam, it was no wonder you stole the hearts of all, and particularly the one who gained her experience as a "horse lad" with you.

After that day with the soruffler, when Dan set us on, Sam and I went scruffling nearly every day. To know the cleverness of Sam's work it is necessary to explain a little of the art of "scruffling." A soruffler, for the

benefit of those who do not know, is a horse-drawn implement for the purpose of cutting out all the rubbish between the rows of young roots. Your horse walks down the middle between the rows, and the scruffler has two knife-like blades running just under the ground and cutting the weeds. These blades are set as wide as you dare without risking cutting into the rows of roots at each side and sweeping them out wholesale.

The younger the roots are the more imperative it is to get close up with your scruffler knives, because later as they grow bigger you will damage them if you cut too close under them.

The difficulty about this in the early stages is that the rows when they are very young are bad to see, and if your horse cannot see them easily he will not keep in the row. Also you can't drive your horse much and steady your scruffler handles at the same time. Now, little Sam could see the rows of wurzels almost better than I could myself; and when I say that where many men are obliged to have a boy to lead the horse to keep him in the row at all, Sam would work all day with me alone, and not even a line to his bit, you will have some idea of what Dan meant by "a good scruffler horse." I know the farm bailiff came walking across one day, and caught Sam and me scruffling without strings, and he said he'd never met any one doing it before, and he was sure it couldn't be done with any horse but Sam!

Sometimes we did have trouble in that wurzel-field—I won't deny. (It was so hot, Sammy, wasn't it? and the flies! Oh, Sammy lad!) Day after day in the blazing sun we toiled up and down, up and down, till we knew every stone in the rows—once over, twice over, three times—and then nearly a fourth. The flies were buzzing in black masses round our heads, and Sam used to wear branches of elder flowers all over his harness wherever I could find a lodging for it; even then sometimes it was more than he could bear, and he used to start off so fast down the rows that it was all I could do to keep pace with him. We would set ourselves so many rows on end, and then a little respite in the shade of a tree. Dan expected us to do four acres a day, or thereabouts; but we couldn't always do it, especially when it had rained and the soil clogged round the knives, and we had continually to stop and clean them. My feet gave way a good deal too, as I was always walking on soft ground, and I think in many ways it was at this job that I longed most ardently for the last turn about, and the moment when I could say to Sam, "It's night, my little lad; we've finished. Are you fit for your tea?" And then I would clamber on to his back, and we would plod down the hill together to the stable. Sam always wanted a huge drink on these occasions, but he was often so hot I couldn't let him have much at first, and he used to look so reproachfully

at me, and shake his head and refuse to eat his feed properly. He was a bit of an epicure about his meals, and when, later in the year, he was allowed a wurzel with his tea every night, he never let me forget it. I would take him his corn and chop and then set about rubbing the harness over, and bedding up, intending to put his wurzel in with his last feed. Sam simply couldn't bear it. Clank! bang! and the block on Sam's halter-chain kept shooting up to the ring. I would remain stolidly at my other jobs for a time, but he would not be gainsaid.

Every time I passed he watched me. "Gosh, but you've forgotten again!" he'd say. "Wurzel, please! Thank you fer nothing for all this chopped stuff!" Then at last I'd take it in and "rag" him with it behind my back; but he knew too well, and nudged me sharply, as though he would say, "Oh! for goodness sake stop fooling. I *have* worked for it, haven't I?" He used to finish it all in a minute as soon as he got the chance, and you could hear him scrunching it up all over the stable. This chapter is growing long, and for my own pleasure I could so easily make it longer still, but perhaps he will appear again incidentally in connection with other work; and any way I know that Sam himself would be so angry at any publicity arising out of what he would consider was merely doing his job, that I had really better stop.

(To be concluded.)



## EXPERIENCES OF A WAR BABY.

BY ONE.

## CHAPTER IV.—HARBOUR.

HAVING confessed that the fleet is not always at sea, we must modify that statement a little. Some part of the fleet is always at sea, and every minute of the day and night part of the Allied fleet is patrolling the North Sea, and every other navigable sea. The Hun has but a few hours' steaming before he is in contact with some part of the fleet. Every time he leaves harbour he can be perfectly certain of having a thoroughly good run for his money, while to think of the number of times we have been "over the other side" and not seen so much as a trawler would be nauseating. The object of this chapter is to give some of our ways of passing the time between stunts.

As is right and proper in war time, our days, and sometimes our nights, are devoted to the worship of the great god Gunnery, and of his sister the goddess Torpedo. In the words of the song, we worship "day after day, week after week, month after month, and year after year." We are for ever, at drills and practices, continually getting more and more efficient, trying new schemes for the destruction of the Boche, adopting and perfecting these schemes. No machinery is ever the worse

for being frequently worked, and, Heaven knows, there is enough machinery in the *Penultimate* to keep us busy. Then there are target practices of various kinds to exercise the officers controlling the guns, and reproductions of action conditions, so that they may find ways of overcoming difficulties. Small wonder that it is a common remark from those who have been in action, that they felt as though it was only a practice shoot, until the "target" started returning the compliment.

All these practices, though they should be taken in deadly earnest, have their comic element. It was my luck to be stationed in the "T.S.," or Transmitting Station, which, in addition to its other duties, acts as an exchange for the purposes of abuse. We will suppose that A in the fore-top wishes to tell B in No. 4 turret that he is not taking an active enough interest in the affairs of the moment—in other words, that he is adrift. The process is somewhat as follows:—

We in the T.S. hear a whisper, followed at a short interval by a roar. This, to the uninitiated, would convey little. To us, with experience in such matters, it is full of meaning. Three outstanding

facts can be deduced from this simple episode—

(1) That the gunnery lieutenant is in the foretop, and not where some of us would like him to be.

(2) That he has something on his mind, and, furthermore, that he means to ease his mind of that something now, *ec dum*.

(3) That he has called to us, presumably to effect (2), latter part of.

One of our sailors accordingly elicits to attention, advances at the rush to a voice pipe, seizes it smartly in the right hand, and bellows up it, "T.S. foretop." An understanding having thus been established, he applies an ear to the pipe, and by his eager look of expectancy we know that he is receiving the happy news. We are all agog with excitement. What can it be? Is the ship sinking, or are we going to pack up? For a time one could have heard a pin drop. Then the sailor turns to the pipe, and shouts, "Aye, aye, sir." Laying down the voice-pipe with a regretful sigh, he says to the officer of the T.S., "The gunnery lieutenant wants to know what No. 4 turret is doing, sir?" We all sigh in unison to express our sympathy with ourselves for receiving such a very ordinary message after all, and with No. 4 turret for the impending trouble. "Guns" is awkward when roused.

Now the game begins. We get into communication with No. 4 turret, and tell them

that the gunnery lieutenant is inquiring after their health, and would like to know why they are not carrying out the exercise. The reply comes back clear and shrill to our telephone operator—

"We 'aven't 'ad no orders to do nothing, and the officer of the turret wants to know why you didn't pass the orders to No. 4 turret."

You will notice that No. 4 has straightway adopted the Service custom, and shifted the blame to some one else. They want to blame us, do they? We shall soon settle that.

We reply in measured tones that we passed the order to carry out an exercise on a house on top of a hill about five minutes ago, and wasn't it about time that they shook up their telephone operator and made him pass orders to the proper quarters instead of keeping them entirely to himself?

They ruminate on this for a bit, and, we hope, tell the 'phone operator a little bit about himself. At any rate, it is a far less jocular voice from No. 4 which presently inquires as to the nature of the object.

We look very patient, and reiterate, "A nouse on top of a nill." This keeps them quiet for a couple of minutes, but presently there comes another bleat from No. 4. Our 'phone man, having taken it in, shakes his head wearily, and says to the officer of the T.S.—

"No. 4 says they cannot see the object, sir. The officer of the turret would like a mere detailed description of it, and



would also like to know which way it is going."

This latter part somewhat baffles us. We think for a possible solution of the mystery, but it eludes us. We can only tell the officer of No. 4 that the house is a very prominent one, very ordinary to look at, and, since we had had no orders to the contrary, we believed it to be stationary.

"What's that object you said?" says No. 4.

"A prominent 'ouse on top of a nill," we wearily respond.

"A nouse," says No. 4; "why the—why can't you speak more plainly. I thought you said a norse."

After that we get peace. We report to the gunnery lieutenant that No. 4 turret apparently first failed to get the order, and then trained on the wrong object.

"Um," says the gunnery jack, in a way which bodes ill for No. 4 when this picnic is over.

Another exercise which frequently provides amusement, and sometimes a little excitement, is one in which the midshipmen are put on to control the guns during a practice shoot. It is a very necessary part of our education that we should gain practical knowledge of the dangers and difficulties which beset a gun-control officer and spotter. However, as can be imagined, the unexpected can, and sometimes does, happen on these occasions. There was one case in which a midshipman was controlling some guns firing at a target towed by a tug.

Something went wrong with the works, and, instead of annihilating the target, the projectiles were whistling over the tug, and throwing up great fountains as they pitched beyond her. The skipper of the tug stood it for a bit like a hero, but as things seemed to be getting no better, his feelings got the better of him.

"If you care to come down four hundred yards," he signalled, "you will sink me."

That incident brings up the subject of towing targets, which to many of us is a somewhat painful subject. I took part in one which, in particular, remains in my mind. It was a sad business.

One evening in mid-winter a messenger came into the gun-room and told me that the gunnery lieutenant wished to speak to me. This news never betided much good, so I girded up my loins and took myself along to his office, all prepared for a strafe. On arrival, I found the place already pretty full of officers and men, from which it was evident that it was not to be a *pas seul*. Having gathered us all together, the G. L. addressed us as follows:—

"The fourth battle squadron is doing a shoot to-morrow, a long-range affair, and we have been told off to mark for them. You will compose the marking party. Your duties will be as follows," &c., &c. Details followed, the address ending up, "Right; be ready to leave the ship at 4 A.M. sharp, taking breakfasts, lunches, and teas. With luck you may be back by 7 or 8 P.M.

That is all." All on five bob a day!

At 3.30 A.M. I was called, and having got outside a large cup of cocoa, I wrapped myself up in innumerable coats, sweaters, and mufflers, and boarded the tug in company with the rest of the party. At 4 A.M. we cast off and proceeded seawards.

That tug had few advantages and many disadvantages to offer. With a large target in tow our progress was very slow, hardly more than a decent running pace, whilst the distance to the practice area was considerable. There was hardly any shelter at all, and at 4 A.M. on a winter's morning in these parts the temperature is not great enough to boast about. For two hours we proceeded seawards, wind and sea rising steadily meanwhile. Our older and more experienced officers began to shake their heads, and say that the practice could not be carried out, as the sea would be too bad for the target. They grew more and more dismal, and, sure enough, a little later we got a wireless signal, which ran—

"Weather reported too bad for firing. Practice postponed. Tug and target return to harbour."

Good news for us, you will say, to avoid getting knocked about by heavy weather outside. You do not know the good old Service. We knew that we should have to repeat this performance on the morrow, and the next day, and the day after, until a suitable day arrived and the practice

came off. Still, it was no use swearing at the inevitable. To drown our sorrows we pulled out the food, which should have served us for breakfast, lunch, and tea, and at 7 A.M. partook of a hearty meal of sandwiches and bottled beer. At 10 o'clock, somewhat bedraggled, we got back to the ship.

I will not weary you with a repetition of this scene. We had two more false starts on the two succeeding days, and were getting pretty well fed up with the show. The weather is never good at this time of year, and is frequently very bad for days at a stretch. Eventually, however, we got a day which suited. There was not too much sea running to make towing an impossibility, and, as we only parted the towing wire once during the trip out, we really did fairly well. For all that there was a considerable swell running. Before we started the skipper of the tug cheered us by saying that the last time he did this game the tug did everything but upset. Certainly she rolled like a thing possessed, and considerably upset our peace of mind. I got as far as measuring the distance to the ship's side, when the fit passed, and I felt all right again.

About 11 A.M. some ships came in sight, which we recognised as forming part of the fourth battle squadron. They were just little shapes and smudges of smoke when we first saw them, and not much larger when they turned into line on nearly the same course as ourselves, for the firing. We



all closed up at our positions for observing and recording, and waited. Our look-outs had their eyes glued on the firing ships, and presently came a hail, "Leading ship fired, sir." A silence fell over the party as we stood by. Then followed a pause, which was so long that people began to look about and wonder whether the salvo had got lost in the post. Then there came a whistle ending in a crash, and four great fountains sprang into the air astern.

"200, 350, 400, 450 over," sings out the observer, and off we go recording the distance at which each salvo falls. It is hard work while it lasts, as the shots come in at a good rate. After a bit of searching over and short, the target starts to get a hot time. Corrections are applied in the firing ships, and "hit" becomes a frequent remark from the observer. Then the run ends, and those ships steam away home, their place being taken by more ships. When the bigger ships have finished, we are peppered at by destroyers at shorter range, the destroyers coming at us at high speed with foaming waters and arched, creamy, bow waves, looking rather well. Their firing is fast and furious, giving us plenty of work to keep up with the fall of shot. And so on through a long day, till at last we receive orders to tow our battered target back to harbour. We wander slowly back in the wake of our late enemies. They have got plenty of speed, and will be back in their berths in time for a bath

before dinner. We trudge astern, faint but pursuing. At long-last we get in and alongside our own ship, to find that it is 9 P.M., and that we are just in time to miss our dinners. Is it wonderful that target-towing is unpopular?

Naturally, the greatest part of our time as midshipmen is taken up with instruction. During the comparatively short time we are midshipmen we are expected to pick up a very considerable knowledge in the five technical subjects—Gunnery, Torpedo, Seamanship, Navigation, and Engineering. Each single one of these subjects is a hard problem when first tackled, and requires much theoretical as well as practical work. A hasty glance at the syllabus for examination for sub-lieutenant in any of them is apt to have disastrous effects. The syllabus is always so cleverly worded that any part can be magnified to undue proportions, and awkward questions asked, which at first glance do not appear to come within the meaning of the act. In fact, it is only the knowledge that some of our predecessors, not over-burdened with brains, were able to struggle through somehow, which prevents us from throwing up the sponge on the spot. The subject of seamanship in itself is really a life study: it has so many branches when applied to the navy. There is the part of the business which applies to any ship, and the knowledge

of which can only be properly acquired by experience. In addition to that there comes the subject of internal economy. We have to know the way in which "our village" is fed, clothed, housed, ventilated, and punished when the occasion demands. Real knowledge of these subjects qualifies one for any post from a grocer's assistant to a magistrate. Needless to say, we do not get enough knowledge of them into our heads for this. There is an excellent "book of the words" which every officer is bound to have, in which the greater part of the rules are laid down in black and white. There are rules for almost every emergency which can arise. For instance, the book will probably tell you whether a man may officially partake of potted prawns for his supper on the third day at sea without sighting land.

I hope that by this explanation the reader will understand what a walking encyclopedia of service knowledge the middy should be. In practice it has often been found that a midshipman is a very ordinary individual. To give an idea of the way in which our time, apart from firing and other exercises, is spent, I will describe a fairly typical day of humdrum routine.

We start bright and early with "Physics," or physical drill, on the quarter-deck. At 6.30 every morning we are turned out of comfortable warm hammocks, and are made to face the elements scantily clothed. In winter-

time the performance is no joke. At that grisly hour of the morning it is naturally pitch-dark, and the deck seems to contain innumerable obstacles which we never noticed in daylight. There are pipes coming up from below to which hoses can be connected for washing decks, &c.; there are hidden ring-bolts which do much damage to toes; and there are a hundred other worries. Not infrequently there has been a fall of snow since the last time the decks were swept. Then our drill is punctuated by thuds as incautious officers tread on pieces of frozen snow and assume unnatural positions on the deck. The drill is not at all exciting in other ways. The instructor's repertoire is very limited, and for over two-thirds of the time we proceed at a steady double round and round the after-turret. About half-way through the show a variety is usually introduced into the natural conditions. The sailors arrive in large numbers and turn on hoses. They then arm themselves with brooms, and brush waves of very cold water about the deck. All the hoses leak in all directions in the form of jets of water which hit us from all angles as we double. From then onwards we drill in a foot-bath of icy water and an occasional shower of the same. Thus are we hardened for a strenuous life at sea, and the hot bath afterwards is very welcome.

After breakfast and a stand easy, we clean ourselves up, and at 9 A.M. we "go to divi-



sions," or parade. Midshipmen are attached to divisions of seamen, and act as labour savers and N.C.O.'s to the officers in charge. Then for a brief time we try to imitate the army and drill. There is much barking of orders, saluting, and inspecting to be carried out. Everybody reports some one present to every one else. The imitation of the army is a poor one, as a sailor on board ship feels distinctly aggrieved when expected to march smartly and drill with precision. There is always the feeling in mind that "e didn't join the navy to be an asterisk bullock." Ashore he feels that it is up to him to impress the mere civilian with the fact that he is a handy man, and can do anything that is asked of him. Nevertheless divisions is a popular institution with the commander as a means of putting a little life into us before the real work of the day commences. We heartily dislike the process.

After performing our duties as assistant officers of divisions, we midshipmen relapse into schoolboys. We are herded into space surrounded by a canvas screen and filled with desks, which is called the "study." Here, under a naval instructor, who is an exact reproduction of the master at school, we do sums. They are just pure "maths," but, to add a nautical touch, we call them navigation. Thus we pass a happy forenoon determining the position of some unknown ship which in a weak moment felt that she simply must find the altitude of the sun. In

the afternoon we divide into sections, some of us worshipping in each of the other departments.

At 3.30 P.M. we usually finish work for the day, and at four o'clock, by way of celebration, we "go to quarters." This is a somewhat reduced form of divisions, and is just as popular. With it our official day ends. The dog-watches which follow are, by tradition, our own time—to spend as we like. In fine weather, and in civilised ports, we land for golf or other forms of amusement. In our usual port of call we remain on board, and take some kind of exercise to keep in condition. The most popular game is known as deck hockey. The game is supposed to be founded on the ordinary game of hockey, though the resemblance is not striking. The ball is a rope grummet, or a small block of wood, and the weapons of attack are walking-sticks. There are no generally accepted rules, and the resultant games are never dull. One seldom emerges from a game with much skin on one's feet. Then we have the Sandow specialists, the skipping enthusiasts, and the runners. The latter class is not large, and consists chiefly of individuals who are trying to earn five pints of beer by running a hundred times round the quarter-deck in thirty minutes.

To ensure that our spare time is not entirely wasted, there is always a midshipman of the watch during non-instructional hours. In theory he is supposed to trot round behind the officer of the watch

and gaze in awe at that officer's wonderful powers of organisation. In practice his duties are a trifle more varied. In almost any standard work on the duties of an officer of the watch you will find it stated that, suitably trained, the midshipman of the watch can take on most of the officer of the watch's duties. This idea has received the unanimous support of the officer of the watch clan, and in consequence the midshipman of the watch can frequently be found ruling the quarter-deck with great success. The officer of the watch is to be found in a place of greater comfort, though always on the alert for such a contingency as the unexpected arrival of an admiral alongside.

After dinner we are frequently given lectures on service subjects, to supplement our ordinary instruction. Otherwise we are free to do as we like again. Then there is often a sing-song and a rag-time dance, for which the younger and more cheerful inhabitants of the ward-room come in. After dancing till we are half dead, the choir forms up and proclaims to all and sundry that the first love is the best love, whether the world keeps turning or not. It doesn't matter much what we sing, so long as there is plenty of opportunity for making a noise. When proceedings are at their height, a ship's corporal puts his head in at the door and reports "Ten o'clock, sir, please." This is the signal for the end. The party breaks up, and the end of another day has been reached.

The predominant feature of our life under war conditions is boredom. Those people who have been privileged to visit the army and the navy in some capacity, and have impartially looked at the conditions under which each Service works, must have concluded that the navy has a "soft number." Here are we, miles from any enemy guns, as safe as at home, with a dry bed every night and regular meals. In many respects we are carrying on as though there was no war. Contrast this with the army. They have to exist in mud and water-logged trenches, their food supply only possible by braving the shells of the enemy. When in the trenches they are always being fired at, gassed, and otherwise harassed. They are never out of action. If they are hit they may lie for days before it is possible to attend to them. If we are hurt we have a sick bay and every convenience within 200 yards. Yet the army has one advantage. They can feel that at least they are engaged in beating the Boche. It is very hard for us to realise that we are taking part in the war at all. It is even harder to realise that if it were not for the fleet, the war would result in a German victory. All that we do realise is that we are situated in a remote place doing the same thing day after day for eleven and a half months out of twelve. We feel it sickening who have been at it for a short time. How do those feel who have been in the northern mists since August 1914?



## CHAPTER V.—THE BEACH.

Harbour life has another attraction to offer—an attraction which, on account of its rarity, is frequently much valued. This is the pastime known as “taking the beach,” or “going ashore.” Under war conditions the rarity of this delight is increased, and its uncertainty is a great feature. We midshipmen may find ourselves working all day long, with extra lectures in the dog-watches to prevent us from landing. We console ourselves with the thought that on Saturday, our make and mend, we shall be able to make up for lost time and forget that we are the navy at sea. Saturday is a lovely day, there is a cloudless blue sky and a baking sun. Directly after lunch we rush to shift, some of us into golf gear, some of us into old clothes preparative to a bathe and picnic. At one o’clock there is a ringing of bells to warn us that the boat for the shore is due to leave. Struggling with our gear we scramble up the ladders from our chest flat to the quarter-deck. At the same time a long hoist of flags leaves the flagship’s signal-bridge and climbs slowly to the mast-head. The officer of the watch claps his telescope to his eye, and after a brief look steps to the side.

“Picket-boat, make fast again,” he orders, and, turning to the prospective beach enthusiasts gathered round the gangway, he adds, by way of explanation: “No beach for

you to-day, my boys. Steaming signal: voilà.” With an airy wave of his hand towards the flagship, he thus dismisses the subject. There can be no argument about the matter. We return to our chest flat with our hearts too full for words of the printable description. Later in the evening we may glide out on one of the usual rushes to stop an invisible enemy. On the other hand, it may be merely a precautionary measure. Of the two cases, the former is more popular.

In the harbour, where we usually lie, the beach is unattractive enough to repel any but the ardent seeker after exercise. The place where we land is a lump of mud, approximately four miles long, and varying in width. The contour of the land is slightly undulating, the highest point being near the centre, and somewhere about eighty feet above the sea level. From this vantage-point a grand view can be obtained over the whole area. In parts can be seen some stunted heather, to remind the careless outsider that he is now north of the Tweed. Also there can be seen small farms dotted about, surrounded by little fields. How the worthy farmers can raise anything out of such a desolate scrap of wasteland is wonderful. They even contrive to enjoy a life of this kind. We often pass them ploughing a field about four yards by six with the plough drawn by a pony and

an ox, and they look quite cheerful.

Their wives are not at all behind the times in making a little out of the hungry snottie. Most of them give us splendid teas in their cottages, with numerous home-made scones, &c., to delight the hearts of the rationed. It is during these teas that we hear about the sort of life they lead. Except for the market-day at the local town few of them stir from their native mud. One old wife informed us that she had once been to Aberdeen for a day. But she did not like the town. There was so much coming and going, and she met so many people that she did not know, she was thankful to get back. She never wished to go away again, but was content to remain where she was. The place is complete with a kirk and graveyard.

The mud, unlike mud of the usual kind, is natural. However deep you dig nothing is forthcoming but mud. But even mud is a change after the ship.

The advent of the navy brought many changes to the place. It was obvious that its natural beauties were not sufficient, and that some more attractive items must be added. It was all very well for the energetic people to land at one end, walk to the other end and back, and return to the ship with the comfortable feeling of having done their bit. It was even well for the slackers to walk half-way to the other end, eat a large tea, and return with the even more comfortable and self-satisfied feeling of a full

stomach. The great majority wanted something more lively to pass away the time.

The officers who organise accordingly busied themselves. Signals were sent round each squadron in which these matters were stated. If you happen to read one of these you will see that H.M.S. *Fearnought* is to provide a party of 1 petty officer and 20 men who are to leave their ship at 8.30 A.M. in the D.S.B., taking with them picks, shovels, dinners, and teas. These worthies will spend their day clearing the way for a football ground, digging turf to make a golf green, or collecting stones to make a pier. These working parties are very popular with the sailors, for they are a pleasant pionic, with a little work ashore, and work ashore is a thing that no sailor complains about. To hasten the completion of the golfcourse and to keep the course in good repair, each hole was allotted to a ship, and thither the golf enthusiasts flocked to level and roll the greens, or to construct cunning bunkers.

Thus we quickly had several football grounds as well. At first the constructors were far too thorough, in that they pulled up heather and removed all unnecessary matter. The magnitude of this mistake is demonstrated at the height of the season, when it is no uncommon thing to sink a foot into the liquid mud before the basic mud is reached. Rugby is played under adverse conditions for the outsiders. It comes very hard for the tricky three-quarter who tries to dodge, though the game is very



entertaining to watch. By far the most successful ground is one where the builders felt languid, and, instead of pulling up the heather just cut it short, planted the goal-posts, and finished. The roots make no bed of roses for those who fall, and, as a result of this, few leave the ground intact, but the ground is seldom unplayable.

Thus we can get games of football and golf (no one has been brave enough to suggest a cricket pitch). The golf links is at the moment supposed to be the worst in civilised or semi-civilised lands, but years of ceaseless toil will doubtless make it a rival to St Andrews or North Berwick. This tribute to the grand fleet's work during the great war will be well worth a Cook's tour in fifty years' time.

We occasionally shift our anchorage to a place known to the initiated as the "North Shore." This spot, though hardly attractive-looking, is far superior to our usual place of residence. There is plenty of land of the ordinary kind—rocky hills, heather-covered moors, lochs and burns. Plenty of good walks can be had, and there are endless places for picnics in summer-time. There is fishing to be had for the asking, though it cannot be said that the anglers return laden. Along the coast runs a real road, and on it can sometimes be seen real Ford cars. They appear to be the original design of car, and spend their declining years in knocking about the very third-

class road at a reckless speed of ten miles an hour. For all that, the sight of such modern innovations is a cheering one.

There is even a town in this neighbourhood with a number of modern conveniences. People sometimes put on fine clothing and go there to see streets and people again, make purchases, and even go to the pictures. The city is not abounding in attractions, and few people go there twice.

To counteract the effect of all this delirious gaiety, there is the usual catch. In this case, the gunnery people feel it incumbent upon them to indulge in a form of small-gun practice which is impossible at the usual anchorage. Of course it takes place when we should be free to go ashore, and so we are not able to overdo the shore-going. For all this the North Shore is a popular resort.

On far rarer occasions we pay a visit to a really civilised part of the world, and then there is a general exodus of all whose duties permit of landing. It is hard for an ordinary person to imagine the amount of pleasure that can be derived from the sight of a tree when one has not seen anything higher than a bush for months. I never noticed trees before I went to sea, but now every tree is a joy. Then there is the hum of shore life, the smoke of towns and villages, and the smells of the same. One can almost welcome a tannery smell! In fact, arriving in civilised parts after a sojourn in the mists is almost as sentimental an affair as the return of an arctic expedition, or something of that sort.

Now at about midday on make-and-mend days the gun-room becomes quite agitated. We come in from work with a rush, and a cry goes up for the leave book. The keeper of the book is our assistant clerk, a young and green product of a large public school who lately joined, and of course is nowhere to be found.

"Where is that asterisk chick?"

"Where has that ullage stowed himself?" come from all of us.

Things are getting fairly serious, as the commander has decreed that the book must reach him properly made up and signed by every other individual of a long list of heads of departments before he attaches his signature, and that the book must reach him before noon. The penalty is a general stoppage of leave. The time is now 11.45.

A combined search unearths the clerk in the bathroom, from whence he is extracted and hustled to the mess to do his job.

Amidst a chorus of "Don't you forget me or I'll wring your neck" from senior midshipmen, and a continuous stream of remarks from the junior, a list is compiled and submitted to the senior midshipman. He adds a list of the signatures of approval to be obtained, and then roars—

"Duty snottie, take the book round, show it to Guns, Torps, N.I., Senior Engineer, Nanny, and the Bloke, and buck up for heaven's sake, you've only got ten minutes."

VOL. CCV.—NO. MCCXXXIX.

Away goes the small boy, and we wait in patience, hoping for the best. After about ten minutes he reappears, flings down his cap, and surveys the expectant company with a soothing expression.

"You're all O.K. except Tiniotot," he announces; "his leave is stopped."

"Who's the dirty hound who's jambed my leave?" comes fortissimo from that unfortunate gentleman.

"It was nurse. He said that he didn't know what the present-day midshipman was coming to. Under the old scheme, when he was a snottie, you were lucky to see the beach once in three months; whereas here was a list a page long, and a list like that was the regular thing. Anyway, he was not going to let that young fool, Tiniotot, ashore. He was a disgrace to the Service, and a young officer who was unable to bring a picket-boat alongside in his day had his leave stopped for three years, and spent them in the foretop. The old fool nearly made me late for the Bloke."

"You'd think I was the only asterisk snottie who ever went bow on into a gangway," moans Tiniotot; but seeing that his audience is unsympathetic, he drowns his sorrows in beer.

Lunch over, the rest of us make tracks for the chest flat to shift. As usual there is trouble over clothes. No one seems to have got any clothes, and every one seems to have selected you from whom to borrow. You are bombarded with demands for collars,



shirts, and ties. You yourself are endeavouring to obtain a pair of socks, a handkerchief, and a mackintosh, and cannot be bothered with the worries of other people. Thus the merry game continues until a ring on the boat-gong warns us that the boat will shortly be alongside. Each person completes his complement of clothes in some miraculous fashion, and an exodus is made on deck. We file down into the waiting picket-boat and take our places on the roof of the cabin. Following us come our seniors, who fill the cabin and stern-sheets, and when the last brass hat has got in the order is given to "carry on." Followed by the slow sad smiles of those who have been unfortunate enough to be kept on board, we push off, and after clearing the ship proceed at a funeral pace towards a far-distant pier. For a space we look patient and hope that the tide will turn, but as it shows no signs of doing so and we are hardly gaining any ground, there come fevered exhortations from the stern-sheets to "whack her up a bit." These demands are forwarded to the stoker petty officer, who is in charge of the engines, by the coxswain, eliciting a reply that "The stoker P.O. says 'e ain't got no steam pressure, sir, but 'e'll try."

Then follows a short time while he tries, and then the speed suddenly increases. Simultaneously a dense cloud of smoke and a shower of coal dust pours forth from the funnel, and from then till the end of the voyage we sit in a

profane mass whilst coal dust gets down our necks and red-hot cinders hit all the portions of our bodies which are open to attack. We can hardly complain, for we all asked for more speed, and to keep up such a high speed requires vigorous stoking. At long-last the pier is reached, and after shaking off as much coal as possible, we depart to our destinations.

Such leave is a very short affair, and in a few hours we are all gathered at the pier once more. A string of boats lying abreast stretches far out, and across these we make our way, for, as usual, our boat has contrived to come in late and get the outside billet. Amid much blowing of syrens and ringing of bells each boat gets her complement of officers and departs. We eventually complete, and after going astern full speed twice to avoid other boats who have tried to cut across our bows and end their careers, we get clear away. At first a contented silence broods over the boat. This day, for the first time for months, we have conversed with beings who could not tell the difference between a cruiser and a destroyer, and whose sole topic of conversation is not the eternal shop. The memory is still fresh.

Somebody wakes up after a bit and gives tongue.

"Anybody got an evening paper? Have we won the war, or anything?"

He is appeased with the local rag, but some one else starts an argument on the question of who is governing Russia. The peace is disturbed. Once

more we are the Navy at sea.

The rarest variety of leave, and by far the best, is that known as "long leave." The name is derived not so much from its length but from the fact that it comes all together, and that for its duration you are really living ashore, and are not just spending a little time between boats. In war time we rarely get more than ten days' leave in the year, which makes the leave when it comes a great event. It is worked up to and looked back on for about half the year, and is exactly like the going home for the holidays which in days of peace we should still be enjoying.

Some months before the event the buzz is started. Somebody hears some one say to some one else that they heard the commander talking about a refit. This rumour is further strengthened by the midshipman of the afternoon watch overhearing the engineer commander say to the senior that he proposed having the stern gland packed when we next refitted. This very non-committal remark is turned and twisted until a few days later it appears that we are going to have a long refit very shortly, as the stern gland has fallen out.

Weeks pass and idle rumours continue to float about. Each theory as to the time of the refit is accompanied by dates, and the dates are invariably vouched for by some high authority who "ought to know." The "authorities"

have probably as little idea of the definite date as we, for in time of war fate plays the greatest part in the decision of dates. Still, any innocent remark or supposition by an officer wearing a brass hat provides a buzz for circulation throughout the ship. Should the game show any signs of flagging, our humorists invent a buzz of their own, and circulate it as the statement of some eminent officer whose exalted position makes a personal inquiry impracticable.

Slowly the dates come closer and more definite news is obtained. There are many really infallible signs of the near approach of a refit. An enormous amount of paper work comes to the share of the captain's office. The captain's clerk is a member of the mess, and though terribly discreet in the news imparted to us outsiders, his mere manner tells a tale. Then one fine day the admiral expresses a wish to see the captain, and when he comes back his usually austere countenance wears a smile of content. He walks up and down the quarter-deck with the commander for some time discussing unwarlike subjects, and they smile at each other. In two minutes the news is all over the ship. We have received our orders to refit.

That this is a fact comes the proof in the afternoon in the form of a signal from the admiral. It reads: "*Penultimate*, raise steam and proceed in accordance with previous orders." That evening we weigh and proceed out of



harbour, watched by the envious eyes of the other luckless ships. As we pass our squadron we receive signals wishing us "good luck and a pleasant leave," to which we joyfully reply: "The same to you when your turn comes."

On clearing harbour we push our nose into a regular snorter. A south-easterly gale is blowing, and the temperature is dropping below freezing-point as night comes down. We wallow about with a nasty corkscrew motion, of which the *Penultimate* is very fond. It appears when you are forward that the ship is pitching, whereas if you go aft you will think that she is only rolling hard. Thus we wallow about with clouds of spray flying over the decks, and the fore-castle almost continuously awash. The casemates in which the secondary armament is situated become flooded, and the crews have their time on watch filled by baling. In one casemate the drains become choked, and the crew have to abandon the place, whereupon the water leaks into the battery, and we have a foot of water swishing about as the ship lurches. All fan inlets and exhausts have been closed to prevent the ingress of water, and the air below decks is thick and nasty. Who cares two pins? It only makes the leave seem pleasanter when it comes.

After a night of this pleasantry we enter the dockyard port in the early hours and make fast to a buoy in mid-stream. All forenoon we are hard at work, every one of us, in

lightening the ship and preparing her for docking. There can be no cessation of work now, for the docking programme has begun, and unless we are in dock by a stated time people will want to know the reason why. As we finish our preparations the tugs come out from the dockyard and surround us. We slip from the buoy and are soon proceeding at a slow and majestic speed towards the dockyard, towed by two tugs, whilst others fuss around giving a pull here and a push there to ensure that we go in straight. The control of the ship is no longer in the hands of the captain, but a King's Harbour-master armed with a large megaphone is now in command.

Taking our ease after a well-earned lunch, we see through the gun-room scuttles that we are gliding past a stone quay decorated with a number of our old friends the dockyard maties. The skilled gentlemen are at their ease for the present, waiting till we are safely in dock, when they will start straight away on our refit. The unskilled are split up into gangs and are behaving, to the casual observer, in an aimless manner. Each gang has got a wire with an end made fast to the ship. The other end they take to a convenient bollard and take a turn round it. They wait till a strain comes on the wire, when they make a very spiritless attempt to overcome it. A very short pull persuading them that resistance is useless, they take off the turns, amble along to

the next bollard and repeat the process. The whole movements of these gangs seem too desultory to have any effect, and yet by this means we are warped into dock in a surprisingly short space of time.

By this time we are all below packing as a preparation to departure. Tin cases are filled, hauled up on deck by ourselves and our servants, and piled on to a cart for transport to the station. Then we shift into fine clothing, report to the Commander for "permission to proceed on long leave," collect endless papers to give us free tickets, food coupons, &c., and away we go. The water-level in the dock is already falling, dockyard maties are streaming on board, braziers are being set up on the upper deck, and small rivet boys have started their endless games with red-hot rivets. To us these facts have little meaning. For ten days we have finished with the war.

It is in this sensation that the war no longer concerns us, that the greatest pleasure of long leave lies. Whilst we are on short leave there is always the sensation of being tethered at the end of a piece of string. We are always subject to instant recall, and all our movements must be regulated by this fact. We may not be out of reach of a telephone for more than an hour. We may not go farther than a certain short distance from our landing-place for the same reason. In every way we are tied down.

Now we are free to go where we like and do what we like as long as our money lasts.

Nobody will stop us. Of course, if there happens to be an action during this time we shall almost certainly miss it. To counteract this we shall miss all the "flaps," all the sudden rushes to sea which make life a burden. It gives great peace of mind to think that we are right out of the war, and as safe and untroubled as the "Conchies" at Dartmoor.

The ten days pass all too quickly, and before we know where we are we are once more aboard the special train on the return journey. The noise of conversation drowns that of the train. Everybody is going over his leave, day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute. All the shows in town are discussed seriatim, and votes of approval passed on them all. Choruses are sung, choruses (the human kind) are discussed. The young officer who has spent his leave in a successful campaign, and proposes shortly to join the married men, has his leg pulled with vigour. The journey is quickly passed and the dockyard reached. Having mustered our gear we proceed to the ship.

What a horrible sight meets our eyes. We left the *Penultimate* a smart clean ship, and the pride of the fleet; look at her now! The beautiful paintwork is chipped and filthy. The decks are covered in a layer of mud trodden in by the hobnailed boots of thousands of highly-paid workmen. Everywhere there is a litter of old rivets, wood shavings, dust and dirt of all kinds. The ship echoes throughout with the



clanging of hammers, the rattle and hissing of pneumatic drills. Half an hour in the ship makes your head ache, an hour is nearly enough to send you mad. We have only come in for the tail-end, as the refit is practically over, but that evening is enough for us. As many as possible depart on short leave as soon as they have stowed their gear. We who cannot get leave turn in, feeling that it will take a week of make-and-mends to clear our heads. It will certainly take a week of "Saturday Routine," a routine which includes much extra scrubbing of decks, to get the ship even passable.

In passing it may be mentioned that, with a war going on, we cannot devote nearly as much time to the cleanliness of the ship as is the case in peace time. The gunnery and torpedo people must have first turn with the hands, before cleaning ship can take place. However, a good degree of cleanliness is necessary to keep healthy, and, with old traditions, what a commander would call filthy many people would think spotless. Small wonder that it is now unsafe to venture within ten yards of the Bloke.

The next morning when we turn out we find the deck flooding and preparations are in progress for our departure. Out in the stream we see the ship which is to take our place

in dock for her refit. She came in early in the morning, and is now waiting for us to come out. To think that this afternoon her ship's company will be departing by the same special train is to feel unduly jealous. We cheer ourselves up in different ways. A party of sailors are over the side painting out the scars, and have got rather a growl. The petty officer in charge overhears them, and leaning over the side, with deep sarcasm in his voice he says—

"What the —— 'ave you got a bleat about anyway? In a year's time you'll be going back for another ten days' leaf."

At ten o'clock the ship is cleared of maties, and the retire is sounded on bugles as a sign for any of our men ashore to get on board. The gangs of the unwashed arrive with their wires. Tugs are already fussing about astern, and slowly we start to glide out. From the dock we pass into the basin, and from the basin into the river, when the tugs are cast off, and we proceed under our own steam to a buoy. When made fast there we proceed to the uncongenial task of re-embarking all the gear of which we rid ourselves before docking. The re-embarkation takes much longer, and it is evening before we are finished. That night we sail to rejoin the fleet, and the tale of work is taken up where we left it.

(To be continued.)

## THE RETURN PUSH.

BY QUEX.

V.

ON the evening of August 3, an evening with a sinister lowering sky, we settled in our newest Headquarters: wooden huts, perched on the long steep slope of a quarry just outside the crumbling ruins of a little town celebrated in the war annals of 1916 for an officers' tea-rooms, where two pretty daughters of the house acted as waitresses.

Excitement was in the air. Marshal Foch's bold strategy at Soissons had had dramatic effect. The initiative was passing again to the Allies. A faint rumour had developed into an official fact. There was to be a big attack on our immediate front. Yet few of us dared to conceive the mark in history that August 8 was to make. All we really hoped for was a series of stout resolute operations that would bring Germany's great offensive to a deadlock.

Along the road that wound past the quarry — offshoot of a main route that will for ever be associated with the War — there flowed a ceaseless stream of ammunition waggons. "This goes on for three nights. . . . My Gad, they're getting something ready for him," remarked our new adjutant to me. Gallant, red-faced, roaring old Castle had been transferred to com-

mand the Small Arms Ammunition section of the D.A.C., where his love of horses had full play, and had already gained his section many prizes at our Horse Show a week ago.

Rain descended in stinging torrents, and the Australian colonel and his adjutant, who would leave as soon as they heard that our batteries had relieved theirs, looked out disgustedly. I called for a bottle of whisky, and when the Australian adjutant toasted me with "Here's to the skin of your nose," I gathered that his gloom was lessening. The soup came in and we started dinner.

Talk ran upon the extraordinary precautions taken to effect a surprise upon the enemy. Field-guns were not to be moved up to their battle positions until the night before the attack. There was to be no digging in of guns, no earth was to be upturned. Reconnaissance likely to come under enemy observation was to be carried out with a minimum of movement. As few officers and men as was possible were to be made aware of the date and the scope of the operation. On a still night the creaking rattle of ammunition waggons on the move may be heard a very long way off. To prevent this noise of movement wheel tyres were being lapped with



rope, and the play of the wheels muffled by the use of leather washers. Straw had even to be laid on some of the roads—as straw is laid in front of houses where the seriously sick are lying.

"I think," said the Australian signalling officer, "that the funniest thing is the suggestion in orders that telephone conversations should be camouflaged. I suppose that if some indiscreet individual asks over the 'phone whether, for instance, a new telephone line has been laid to a certain map point, it is advisable to reply, 'No, he's dining out to-night.'"

"Why not try a whistling code?" put in our adjutant. "Suppose you whistled the first line of 'Where my Caravan has rested,' that could mean 'at the waggon line.'"

"And 'Tell me the old, old Story' would be 'Send in your ammunition returns at once,'" laughed Wilde, our signalling officer, who had been angered many times because his line to Divisional Artillery had been held up for that purpose.

"And 'It's a long way to Tipperary' could be taken as 'Lengthen your Range,'" said one of the Australian officers in his soft drawl; while the exuberance reached its climax when some one suggested that "Waiting for the Robert E. Lee" might be whistled to indicate that the Divisional Commander was expected at any moment.

"You've had some of the Americans with you, haven't you?" asked our colonel of the Australian colonel. "How

do you find them? We heard a humorous report that some of the Australian infantry were rather startled by their bloodthirstiness and the vigour of their language."

The Australian colonel—one of those big, ugly, good-tempered men who attract friendship—laughed and replied, "I did hear one good story. A slightly wounded Boche was being carried on a stretcher to the dressing station by an American and one of our men. The Boche spoke a bit of English, and was talkative. 'English no good,' he said. 'French no good, Americans no good.' The stretcher-bearers walked on without answering. The Boche began again. 'The English think they're going to win the war,—they're wrong. You Americans think you've come to win,—you're wrong.'

"Then the American spoke for the first and last time. 'You think you're going to be carried to hospital,—you're wrong. Put him down, Digger!' And that ended that.

"Speaking seriously, though," he went on, "the Americans who have been attached to us are good stuff—keen to learn, and the right age and stamp. When they pick up more old-soldier cunning they'll be mighty good."

"From all we hear, you fellows will teach them that," answered our colonel. "I'm told that your infantry do practically what they like with the Boche on their sector over the river. What was that story a Corps officer told me

the other day? Oh, I know! They say your infantry send out patrols each day to find out how the Boche is getting on with his new trenches. When he has dug well down and is making himself comfortable, one of the patrol party reports. 'I think it's deep enough now, sir'; and there is a raid, and the Australians make themselves at home in the trench the Boche has sweated to make."

The Australian colonel nodded with pleasure. "Yes, our lot are pretty good at the cuckoo game," he agreed.

Next morning our shaving operations were enlivened by the swift rush of three high-velocity shells that seemed to singe the roof of the hut I was in. They scattered mud, and made holes in the road below. "The nasty fellow!" ejaculated our new American doctor, hastening outside, with the active curiosity of the new arrival who has been little under shell fire, to see where the shells had burst. Our little Philadelphia medico had gone, a week before, to join the American forces. His successor was broad-built, choleric, but kind of heart, and came from Ohio. I suspected the new doctor of a sense of humour, as well as of an understanding of current smart-set satire. "They kept me at your base two months," he told me, "but I wanted to see the war. I also heard an English doctor say he would be glad of a move, as the base was full of P.U.O. and O.B.E.'s."

After breakfast the colonel

and myself passed through the battered relics of the town on our way to the batteries. The rain and the tremendous traffic of the previous night had churned the streets into slush, but the feeling that we were on the eve of great events made me look more towards things of cheer. The sign-board, "—th Division Rest House," on a tumble-down dwelling ringed round with shell-holes, seemed over-optimistic, but the intention was good. At the little railway station a couple of straw-stuffed dummies, side by side on a platform seat, as if waiting for a train, showed that a waggish spirit was abroad. One figure was made up with a black swallow-tailed coat, blue trousers, and a bowler hat set at a jaunty angle; the other with a woman's summer skirt and blouse and an open parasol. A Battery, who had discovered excellent dug-outs in the railway cutting, reported that their only trouble was the flies, which were illimitable. B and C had their own particular note of satisfaction. They were sharing a row of dug-outs equipped with German wire beds, tables, mirrors, and other home comforts. "We adopted the Solomon method of division," explained Major Bullivant. "I picked out two lots of quarters, and then gave C first choice."

"We've got to select positions still farther forward for the batteries to move to if the attack proves a success," said the colonel next day; and on this morning's outing we



walked a long way up to the infantry outposts. We struck a hard main road that led due east across a wide unwooded stretch of country. A drizzling rain had set in; a few big shells grunted and wheezed high over our heads; at intervals we passed litters of dead horses, rotting and stinking, and blown up like balloons. At a cross-road we came to a quarry where a number of sappers were working. The captain in charge smiled when the colonel asked what was the task in hand. "General — hopes it will become his headquarters three hours after zero hour, sir."

"That ammunition's well hidden," remarked the colonel as we followed a lane to the right, and noted some neat heaps of 18-pdr. shells tucked under a hedge. We found other small dumps of ammunition hidden among the corn, and stowed in roadside recesses. Studying his map, the colonel led the way across some disused trenches, past a lonely burial-place, horribly torn and bespattered by shell fire, and up a wide desolate rise. "This will do very well," said the colonel, marking his map. He looked up at the grey sky and the heavy drifting clouds, and added, "We'll be getting back."

We came back along the main road, meeting small occasional parties of infantry, and turned to the right down a road that led to the nearest village. A Boche 59 was firing. The shells fell at minute intervals four hundred

yards beyond the road on which we were walking. The colonel was describing to me some of the enjoyments of peace soldiering in India, when a violent rushing of air, and a vicious crack, and a shower of earth descended upon us; and dust hung in the air like a giant shroud. A shell had fallen on the road forty yards in front of us.

We had both ducked; the colonel looked up and asked, "Well, do we continue?"

"We might get off the road and go round in a semicircle, sir," I volunteered. "I think it would be safer moving towards the gun than away from it."

"No, I think that was a round badly 'laid,'" responded the colonel. "We'll keep on the road. Besides, we shall have time to get past before the next one comes. But I give you warning," he added with a twinkle, "the next one that comes so near I lie down flat."

"I shall do exactly as you do, sir," I responded in the same spirit.

The colonel was right as usual. The next round went well over the road again, and we walked along comfortably. At the entrance to the village lay two horses, freshly killed. The harness had not been removed. The colonel called to two R.A.M.C. men standing near. "Remove those saddles and the harness," he said, "and place them where they can be salvaged. It will mean cutting the girths when the horses commence to swell."

At 4.30 next morning the batteries were roused to answer an S.O.S. call. The rumble of guns along the whole of our Divisional front lasted for two hours. By lunch-time we learned that strong Hun forces had got into our trenches and penetrated as far as the quarry, where the colonel and myself had seen the sappers at work. Twenty sappers and their officer had been caught below ground, in what had been destined to become General ——'s Headquarters. Our counter-attack had won back only part of the lost ground.

"I'm afraid they'll spot all that ammunition. They are almost certain now to know that something's afoot," said the colonel thoughtfully.

"Something like this always does happen when we arrange anything," broke in the adjutant gloomily.

There were blank faces that day. We waited to hear whether there would be a change of plan. But after dark the ammunition waggons again poured ceaselessly along the roads that led to the front.

## VI.

On the afternoon of August 7 the colonel left us to assume command of the Divisional Artillery, the C.R.A. having fallen ill and the senior colonel being on leave. Major Veasey, a Territorial officer, who was senior to our two regular battery commanders, a sound soldier and a well-liked man, had come over from D Battery to command the brigade. A determined counter-attack, carried out by one of our Divisional infantry brigades, had won back most of the ground lost to the Boche the day before. Operation orders for the big attack on the morning of the 8th had been circulated to the batteries, and between 9 P.M. and 10 P.M. the guns were to move up to the battle positions. The old wheeler was looking ruefully at the ninety-two steps leading from the quarry up to our mess, made of wooden pegs

and sides of ammunition boxes, that it had taken him three days to complete. "My gosh! that does seem a waste of labour," commented the American doctor, with a slow smile.

"Doctor, those steps will be a godsend to the next people who come to live here," I explained. "That's one of the ways in which life is made possible out here."

We dined at eight, and it was arranged that Major Veasey, the adjutant, and the signalling officer should go on ahead, leaving me to keep in telephone touch with batteries and Divisional Artillery until communications were complete at the new Headquarters.

Down below the regimental sergeant-major was loading up the G.S. waggon and the Maltese cart. An ejaculation from Wilde, the signalling officer, caused every one to stare through the mess door. "Why,



they're putting a bed on, . . . and look at the size of it. . . . Hi! you can't take that," he called out to the party below.

The doctor rose from his seat and looked down. "Why, that's *my* bed," he said.

"But, doctor, you can't take a thing like that," interposed the adjutant.

The doctor's face flushed. This being his baptismal experience of the Front, he regarded the broad wire bed he had found in his hut as a prize; he was unaware that in this part of the world similar beds could be counted in hundreds.

"But I like that bed. I can sleep on it. I want it, and mean to have it," he went on warmly.

"Sorry, doctor," answered the adjutant firmly. "Our carts have as much as they can carry already."

The doctor seemed disposed to have the matter out; but Major Veasey, who had been regarding him fixedly, and looked amused, stopped further argument by saying, "Don't worry, doctor. There are plenty of beds at the new position."

The doctor sat down silent but troubled; and when the others went he said he would stay behind with me. I think he wanted my sympathy, but the telephone kept me so busy—messages that certain batteries had started to move, demands from the staff captain for a final return showing the shortage of gas-shell gauntlets, and for lists of area stores that we expected to

hand over, and a request from the adjutant to bring the barometer that he had overlooked—that there was little time for talk.

It was half-past ten when word having come that full communication had been established at the new position, I told the two signallers who had remained with me to disconnect the wires; and the doctor and I set off. It was a murky night, and the air was warmly moist. The familiar rumble of guns doing night-firing sounded all along the Front; enemy shells were falling in the village towards which we were walking. There was a short cut across the river and the railway and then on through corn-fields. To strike it we should have to pass through a particular skeleton house in the village we were leaving, out by the back garden, and thence along a narrow track that led across a swamp. In the dark I failed to find the house; so we plodded on, past the church, and took to a main road. After walking two kilometres we switched south along a by-road that led to the position B Battery had occupied. Not a soul had passed since we took to the main road; the Boche shells, now arriving in greater numbers, seemed, as is always the case at night, nearer than they actually were.

Sounds of horses and of orders sharply given! It was the last section of B Battery pulling out; in command young Stenson, a round-faced, newly-joined officer, alert and eager,

and not ill-pleased with the responsibility placed upon him. "Have the other sections got up all right?" I asked him. "Yes," he answered, "although they were shelled just before getting in, and Bannister was wounded—hit in the face, not seriously, I think." Bannister, poor fellow, died three days later.

The doctor and I passed on, following a shell-plastered road that wound towards a rough wooden bridge, put up a week before; thence across soggy ground and over the railway crossing. There was a slight smell of gas, and without a word to each other we placed our box-respirators in the alert position. To avoid the passage of a column of ammunition waggons crunching along one of the narrow streets we stepped inside a crumbling house. No sign of furniture, not even a stove, but in one corner—quaint relic of less eventful days—a sewing-machine, not even rusted.

A grove of poplars embowered the quarry that we were seeking; and soon our steps were guided by the neighing of horses, and by the raised voice of the R.S.M. engaged in hectoring his drivers. The doctor and I were to share a smelly dug-out, in which all the flies in the world seemed to have congregated. The doctor examined at length the Boche wire bed allotted to him, and refused to admit that it was as comfortable as the one left behind. However, he expressed satisfaction with the mahogany sideboard that some

previous occupant had loaned from a neighbouring house; our servants had bespread it with newspapers and had made a washing-table of it.

The doctor quickly settled himself to sleep, but there were tasks for me. "This is where I'm the nasty man," exclaimed Major Veasey, descending the dug-out with a signalling watch in his hand. "I'm afraid I shall have to ask you to take the time round to the batteries and to the —th Brigade, who aren't in communication yet with Divisional Artillery. Sorry to fire you out in the dark—but secrecy, you know."

Zero hour was timed for 4.40 A.M.; it was now 11.30 P.M.; so I donned steel helmet and box-respirator, and was moving off when a loud clear voice called from the road, "Is this —nd Brigade Headquarters?" It was Major Simpson of A Battery, buoyant and debonair. "Hallo!" he burst forth, noticing me. "Where are you bound for? . . . Um—yes! . . . I think I can save you part of the journey. . . . I'm here, and Lamswell is coming along. . . . We're both going to the new positions."

Captain Lamswell of C Battery suddenly appearing, accompanied by young Beale of B Battery, we made our way to the mess, where Major Veasey and the adjutant were sorting out alterations in the operation orders just brought by a D.A. despatch-rider. Beale and Major Simpson slaughtered a few dozen flies, and accepted whiskies—and-



sodas. Then I synchronised watches with representatives of the three batteries present, and young Beale said that he would check the time with D Battery, who were only two minutes' walk from B. That left me to call upon the —th Brigade, who lay on the far side of the village three parts of a mile out.

We set out, talking and jesting. There was a high expectancy in the air that affected all of us. Major Simpson broke off humming "We are the robbers of the wood" to say, "Well, if this show comes off to-morrow, leave ought to start again." "I should shay sho," put in Lamswell in his best Robey-cum-Billy Merson manner. "Doesn't interest me much," said I. "I'm such a long way down the list that it will be Christmas before I oan hope to go. The colonel told me to put in for a few days in Paris while we were out at rest last month, but I've heard nothing more about it."

When Major Simpson, Lamswell, and Beale, with cheery "Good night," made for the sunken road that led past the dressing station, and then over the crest to their new positions, I kept on my way, leaving a red-brick, barn-like factory on my left, and farther along a tiny cemetery. Now that I was in open country, and alone, I became more keenly sensitive to the damp mournfulness of the night. What if to-morrow should result in failure? It was only four months since the Hun was

swamping us with his tempestuous might! Brooding menace seemed in the air. A sudden burst of fire from four 5·9's on to the cross-roads I had just passed whipped my nerves into still greater tension.

I strode on, bending my mind to the task in hand.

At 4.40 A.M. I lifted my head to listen to the sound of the opening barrage—a ceaseless crackle and rumble up in front. I had not taken off my clothes, and quickly ascended the dug-out steps. Five hundred yards away a 60-pdr. battery belched forth noise and flame; two 8-inch hows, on the far side of the road numbed the hearing and made the earth tremble. A pleasant enough morning: the sun just climbing above the shell-shattered, leaf-bare woods in front; the moon dying palely on the other horizon; even a school of fast-wheeling birds in the middle distance. Ten minutes, a quarter of an hour, half an hour. Still no enemy shells in this support area. Could it be that the attack had really surprised the Boche?

I turned into the adjutant's dug-out and found him lying down, telephone to his ear. "Enemy reply barrage only slight," he was repeating.

"Any news?" I asked.

"The —th Brigade tanks are going well," he answered. "B battery have had a gunknocked out and four men hit. No communication with any of the other batteries."

By seven o'clock we were breakfasting, and Major Veasey

announced his intention of going forward to seek information. A grey clinging mist had enveloped the countryside. "Something like March 21st," said the Major as he and I set out. "We said it helped the Boche then. I hope we don't have to use it as an excuse for any failure to-day. Difficult for observers," he added thoughtfully.

At the dressing station in the sunken road we learned that one battery of our companion Field Artillery Brigade had suffered severely from gas. All the officers had been sent down, and a large proportion of the gunners. The sickly-sweet smell hung faintly over most of the ground in the neighbourhood of our batteries as well. B and C were now firing fifty rounds an hour. "The major's asleep in that dug-out," volunteered Beale of B, pointing to a hole in a bank that allowed at least two feet of air space above Major Bullivant's recumbent form. The major was unshaven; his fair hair was tousled. He had turned up the collar of his British Warm. Beale also looked unkempt, but he said he had had three hours' sleep before the barrage started and felt quite fresh. "Our casualties came just after we got the guns in," he told me. "They dropped two whizzbangs between No. 1 gun and No. 2."

Major Simpson was up and eating hot sizzling bacon in a trench, with a cable drum for a seat and an ammunition box as table. Two of his subal-

terns: Overbury, who won the M.C. on March 21st, and Bob Pottinger, all smiles and appetite — at any rate this morning — had also fallen to, and wanted Major Veasey and myself to drink a cup of tea. "We're taking a short rest," remarked Major Simpson cheerfully. "I'm glad I moved the battery away from the track over there. No shell has come within three hundred yards of us. . . . We have had a difficulty about the wires. Wilde said he laid wires from brigade to all the new positions before we came in last night, but my signallers haven't found their wire yet; so we laid a line to B and got through that way."

Infantry Brigade Headquarters was in a ravine four hundred yards away. A batch of prisoners had just arrived and were being questioned by an Intelligence Officer: youngish men most of them, sallow-skinned, with any arrogance they may have possessed knocked out of them by now. They were the first Huns I remember seeing with steel helmets daubed with staring colours by way of camouflage. "They say we were not expected to attack to-day," I heard the Intelligence Officer mention to the G.S.O. II. of the Division, who had just come up.

"Is that one of your batteries?" asked the Infantry Brigade signalling officer, an old friend of mine, pointing to our D Battery, a hundred yards from Brigade Headquarters. "What a noise they



made. We haven't had a wink of sleep. How many thousand rounds have they fired?"

"Oh, it'll be about 1500 by midday, I expect," I answered. "Any news?"

"It's going all right now, I believe. Bit sticky at the start — my communications have gone perfectly, so far — touch wood."

More prisoners kept coming in; limping, bandaged men passed on their way down; infantry runners in khaki shorts, and motor-cycle despatch-riders, hurried up and buzzed around the Brigade Headquarters; inside when the telephone bell wasn't ringing the brigade-major could be heard demanding reports from battalions, or issuing fresh instructions. There was so little fuss that there seemed numbers of quiet self-contained men standing about doing nothing. Occasional high-velocity shells whizzed over our heads.

Major Veasey suddenly emerged from the brigade-major's quarters, looking at his map. "Some of the Tanks and two companies of the —s lost their way at the start," he told me, "but things have been pulled straight now. The —rd Brigade have gone right ahead. A hundred and twenty prisoners up to date. Down south the Australians are on their final objective.

"Yoioks! — this is the stuff to give 'em! Now we'll go and have a look at my battery."

Captain Drysdale, who was commanding during Major

Veasey's absence from the 45 battery, said that the programme had been carried through without a hitch, although it had been difficult in the night to get the hows. on to their aiming posts without lights. "Kelly has gone forward, and has got a message through. He says he saw some of our firing, and the line was extraordinarily good."

"Good old Kelly!" said Major Veasey, puffing at his pipe. "I don't know whether we shall be ordered to move forward to-day; we shan't until the situation is thoroughly clear. But I shall go forward now with Simpson and Bullivant to spy out the land. You'd better cut back to Headquarters with what news we've got. Division will be wanting something definite."

When about 3 P.M. Major Veasey returned, footsore and wearied, he brought news that our Infantry Brigade that had reached its final objective had had to come back, owing to the stoutness of the machine-gun opposition. The attack would be renewed in the morning, and the batteries would not move forward that evening.

The adjutant was opening the latest batch of official envelopes from Divisional Artillery. With a laugh he flourished a yellow paper. "Why, here's your leave to Paris," he called out.

"Certainly, I should take it," was Major Veasey's comment. "Why, I knew one C.R.A. who never stopped an officer's leave when they were

in action. It was only when the Division was at rest that he wouldn't let them go. Said he wanted them for training then. You pop off."

And as this is a true tale, I

hereby record that I did go to Paris, and returned in full time to participate in the brave days that witnessed Britain's greatest triumphs of the war.

## VII.

Short leave to Paris ought to bequeath a main impression of swift transition from the dirt, danger, and comfortlessness of the trenches to broad pavements, shop windows, well-dressed women, smooth courtliness, and restaurant luxuries; to fresh incisive talks on politics and the Arts, to meetings with old friends and visits to well-remembered haunts of the Paris one knew before August 1914. Instead the wearing discomforts of the journey are likely to retain chief hold upon the memory. Can I ever forget how we waited seven hours for a train due at 9.25 P.M. at a station that possessed no forms to sit upon, so that some of the men lay at full length and slept on the asphalt platform? And is there not a corner of my memory for the crawling fusty leave-train that had bare planks nailed across the door spaces of some of the "officers'" compartments; a train so packed that we three officers took turns on the one spare seat in an "other ranks" carriage. And then about 8 A.M. we landed at a well-known "all-change" siding, a spot of such vivid recollections that some one had pencilled in the ablution-house, "If the Huns ever take — Camp and have

to hold it they'll give up the war in disgust."

But in the queue of officers waiting at the Y.M.C.A. hut for tea and boiled eggs was the brigade-major of a celebrated Divisional Artillery. He stood in front of me looking bored and dejected. I happened to pass him a cup of tea. As he thanked me he asked, "Aren't you fed up with this journey? Let's see the R.T.O. and inquire about a civilian train!" "If you'll take me under your wing, sir," I responded quickly. So we entered Paris by a fast train,—as did my two companions of the night before, who had followed my tip of doing what I did without letting outsiders see that there was any collusion.

The brigade-major's wife was awaiting him in Paris, and I dined with them at the Ritz and took them to lunch next day at Henry's, where the frogs' legs were delicious and the chicken a recompense for that nightmare of a train journey. Veill's was another restaurant which retained a proper touch of the Paris before the war—perfect cooking, courtly waiting, and prices not too high. I have pleasant recollections also of Fouquet's in the Champs Elysées, and of an almost divine



meal at the Tour d'Argent, on the other side of the river, where Frederic of the Ibsen whiskers used once to reign: the delicacy of the *soufflée* of turbot! the succulent tenderness of the *caneton à la presse*! the seductive flavour of the raspberries and whipped cream!

The French Government apparently realise that the famous restaurants of Paris are a national asset. There was no shortage of waiters; and, though the choice of dishes was much more limited than it used to be, the real curtailment extended only to cheese, sugar, and butter. Our bread-tickets brought us as much bread as we could reasonably expect.

One day, in the Rue de la Paix, I met a well-known English producer of plays, and he piloted me to the Café de Paris, which seemed to have lost nothing of its special atmosphere of smartness and costliness. Louis the Rotund, who in the early days of the war went off to guard bridges and gasometers, was playing his more accustomed rôle of *maitre d'hôtel*, explaining with suave gravity the unpreventable altitude of prices. And for at least the tenth time he told me how in his young-man soldiering days he came upon the spring whose waters have since become world-famous.

Another night I ascended Montmartre, and dined under the volatile guidance of Paul, who used to be a pillar of the Abbaye Thelème. Paul came once to London, in the halcyon days of the Four Hundred Club,

when nothing disturbed him more than open windows and doors. "Keep the guests dancing and the windows tight-closed, and you sell your champagne," was his business motto. However, he was pleased to see me again, and insisted on showing me his own particular way of serving Cantelupe melon. Before scooping out each mouthful you inserted the prongs of your fork into a lemon, and this lent the slightest of lemon flavouring to the luscious sweetness of the melon.

America seemed to be in full possession of the restaurant and boulevard life of Paris during those August days. Young American officers, with plenty of money to spend, were everywhere. "You see," a Parisienne explained, "before the war the Americans we had seen had been mostly rich, middle-aged, business men. But when the American officers came, Paris found that they were many, that many of them were young as well as well-off, and that many of them were well-off, young, and good-looking. It is quite *chic* to lunch or dine with an American officer."

The Americans have carried out their propaganda in their usual thorough, enthusiastic fashion. I was taken to the Élysée Palace Hotel, where I found experienced publicists and numbers of charming well-bred women busy preparing information for the newspapers, and arranging public entertainments and sight-seeing tours for American troops in

Paris, all with the idea of emphasising that Americans were now pouring into France in thousands. One night a smiling grey-haired lady stopped before a table where four of us, all British officers, were dining, and said, "You're English, aren't you? Well, have you been with any of 'our boys'? . . . Have you seen them in action? . . . They're fine, aren't they?" We were surprised, perhaps a little taken aback at first, but we showed sympathetic understanding of the American lady's enthusiasm, and responded in a manner that left her pleased as ever.

Before returning to the Front I got in a day's golf at La Boulie, and also made a train journey to a village the other side of Fontainebleau, where an old friend, invalided from the French army, had settled on a considerable estate, and thought of nothing but the fruits and vegetables and dairy produce he was striving to improve and increase. I did not visit many theatres; it struck me that the Paris stage, like that of London, was undergoing a war phase—unsophisticated, ready-to-be-pleased audiences bringing prosperity to very mediocre plays.

My journey back to the line included a stay at a depôt where officers were speedily reminded that they had left the smooth luxuriousness of Paris behind them. The mess regulations opened with "Try to treat the mess as a mess and not as a public-house,"

and contained such additional instructions as, "Do not place glasses on the floor," and "Officers will always see that they are in possession of sufficient cash to pay mess bills."

I found the brigade three and a half miles in advance of where I had left them. There had been a lot of stiff fighting, and on our front the British forces had not gone so far forward as the corps immediately south of us had done. Big things were afoot, however, and that very night batteries and Brigade Headquarters moved up another three thousand yards. A snack of bully beef and bread and cheese at 7 P.M., and the colonel and a monooled Irish major, who was working under the colonel as "learner" for command of a brigade, went off to see the batteries. The adjutant and myself, bound for the new Headquarters, followed ten minutes later.

"You know that poor old Lamswell has gone," he said, as we crossed a grassy stretch, taking a ruined aerodrome as our guiding mark. "Poor chap, he was wounded at the battery position the day after you left. Only a slight wound in the leg from a gas-shell, and every one thought he had got a comfortable 'Blighty.' But gangrene set in, and he was dead in three days. Beastly things those gas-shells! . . . Kent, too, got one through the shoulder from a sniper, and he's gone to England. The colonel was with him at the O.P., and tried to get the



sniper afterwards with a rifle."

"How is the colonel?" I asked.

"Oh, he's going very strong; active as ever. Colonel — is back from leave and doing C.R.A. now. We're under the —th Division at the moment."

We reached a narrow road, crowded with battery ammunition waggons going up to the new positions. Darkness had descended, and when you got off the road to avoid returning vehicles it was necessary to walk warily to escape tumbling into shell-holes. "The blighters have got a new way of worrying us now," went on the adjutant. "They've planted land-mines all over the place, particularly near tracks. Lead-horses are always liable to put a foot against the wire that connects with the mine, and when the thing goes off some one is nearly always hurt. D Battery had a nasty experience this afternoon. Kelly tried to take a section forward, and the Boche spotted them and shelled them to blazes. As they came back to get away from observation one of the teams disturbed a land-mine. The limber was blown up, and one driver and two horses were killed. . . . Look here, if we move off in this direction we ought to save time; the railway must be over there and the place for our Headquarters is not far from it, in a trench where the O.P. used to be."

We found ourselves on some shell-torn ground that was cut up also by short spans of trenches. One part of it

looked exactly like another, and after ten minutes or so we decided that we were wandering to no purpose. "There are some old German gun-pits close by," panted the adjutant in further explanation of the place we were seeking. All at once I saw a thin shaft of light, and blundered my way towards it. It proved to be a battery mess, made in a recess of a trench, with a stout tarpaulin drawn tight over the entrance. I hailed the occupants through the tarpaulin, and on their invitation scrambled a passage inside. A young captain and two subalterns listened to what I had to say, and gave me map co-ordinates of the spot on which we now were. When I mentioned German gun-pits the captain responded with more helpful suggestions. "It's difficult finding your way across country, because the trenches wind about so, but if you follow this trench as it curves to the right, and when you come to an old British dug-out blown right in, go due north across country; you'll come to the railway," he said.

We thanked him, plodded on, reached a point on the railway quite half a mile beyond the spot we wanted, and then out of the darkness heard the voice of Henry of C Battery. We drew near, and found him in the mood of a man ready to fight the whole world. "Dam fools," he grumbled; "there's a sergeant of B Battery who's taken a wrong turning and gone into the blue, and half a dozen of my waggons have followed him. . . . And A Battery

have a waggon tipped over on the railway line, just where we all cross, and that's holding everything else up."

As we could be of no assistance to the distressful Henry we continued our own search, and, by hailing all within call, eventually reached our trench, where we found the colonel, always in good mood when something practical wanted doing, superintending Headquarters' occupation of the place. "Major Mallaby-Kelby, the doctor, the adjutant, and myself can fix up under here," he said, pointing to a large tarpaulin fastened across the trench. "The signallers have got the mined dug-out round the corner, and you," he went on, referring to me, "had better start now fixing Wilde and yourself up. We'll make that gun-pit with the camouflaged roofing into a mess to-morrow."

With the aid of the servants I gathered six long two-inch planks, and placed them across the part of the trench that seemed best protected from enemy shells. A spare trench cover pulled full stretch on top of these planks lent additional immunity from rain. A little shovelling to level the bottom of the trench; and Wilde's servant and mine laid out our valises. A heap of German wicker ammunition-carriers, sorted out on the ground, served as a rough kind of mattress for the colonel. The doctor had fastened upon a spare stretcher. In half an hour we were all seeking sleep.

Zero hour was at 1 A.M., a most unusual time for the in-

fantry to launch an attack. But this would increase the element of surprise, and the state of the moon favoured the enterprise. When hundreds of guns started their thunder I got up to see, and found the doctor on the top of the trench also. Bursts of flame leapt up all around us, and for miles to right and left of us. The noise was deafening. When one has viewed scores of modern artillery barrages one's impressions become routine impressions, so to speak; but the night, and the hundreds and hundreds of vivid jumping flashes, made this 1 A.M. barrage seem the most tremendous, most violently terrible of my experience. The doctor, looking a bit chilled, gazed long and solemnly at the spectacle, and for once his national gift of expressing his feelings failed him.

When news of the results of the operation came to us it was of a surprising character. The infantry had moved forward under cover of the barrage, had reached their first objective, and had continued their advance two miles without encountering opposition. The Boche had stolen away before our guns loosed off their fury. I only saw three prisoners brought in, and some one tried to calculate the thousands of pounds worth of ammunition wasted on the "barrage." A message came that we were to hold ourselves in readiness to rejoin our own Divisional Artillery; our companion Field Artillery Brigade, the —rd, would march also. At 6.30 P.M. the orders arrived. We were to trek northwards,



about four thousand yards as the crow flies, and be in touch with our C.R.A. early next morning.

That night rain fell in torrents. When we had dined, and all the kit had been packed up, we sheltered in the gun-pit, awaiting our horses and the baggage-waggons. As the rain found fresh ways of coming through the leaky roof, we shifted the boxes on which we sat; all of us except the colonel, who, allowing his chin to sink upon his breast, slept peacefully for three-quarters of an hour. It was pitch-dark outside, and the trench had become a glissade of slimy mud. It was certain that the drivers would miss their way, and two of the signallers who had gone out to guide them along the greasy track from the railway crossing had come back after an hour's wait. After a time we ceased trying to stem the rivulets that poured into the gun-pit; we ceased talking also, and gave ourselves up to settled gloom, all except the colonel, who had picked upon the one dry spot and still slept.

But things mostly come right in the end. The rain stopped, a misty moon appeared; the vehicles came along, and by 10.30 P.M. the colonel was on his mare, picking a way for our little column around shell-holes, across water-logged country, until we struck a track leading direct to a village in which the brigade had been billeted during 1915. It was a strangely silent march. There was a

rumbling of guns a long way to north of us, and that was all. The Boche had undoubtedly stolen away. For a long time the only sound was the warning shout, passed from front to rear, that told of shell-holes in the roadway.

On the outskirts of the village we saw signs of the Hun evacuation: deserted huts and stables, a couple of abandoned motor-lorries. The village itself was a wreck, a dust-heap, not a wall left whole after our terrific bombardments when the place itself again fell into Boche hands. Not a soul in the streets, not a single house habitable even for troops. Of the mill that had been Brigade Headquarters three years before, one tiny fragment of a red-brick wall was left. The bridge in front of it had been scattered to the winds; and such deep shell-craters pitted the ground and received the running water, that the very river-bed had dried up. On the other side of the village batteries of our own and of our companion brigade moved slowly along. It was 2 A.M. when we encamped in a wide meadow off the road. When the horses had been tethered and fed and the men had erected their bivouacs, the colonel, Major Mallaby-Kelby, and we five remaining officers turned into one tent, pulled off boots and leggings, and slept the heavy dreamless sleep of healthily tired men.

At 7 A.M. the colonel announced that he and myself would ride up to B—— Chateau



to visit the C.R.A. We touched the southern edge of a town familiar to thousands of British soldiers. The last time I had been there was on my return from leave in January 1917, when I dined and slept at the newly-opened officers' club. Since the Boche swoop last March it had become a target for British gunners, and seemed in as bad a plight as the village we had come through the night before. We had no time to visit it that morning, and trotted on along a road lined with unburied German dead, scattered ammunition, and broken German vehicles. The road dipped into a wood, and the colonel showed me the first battery position he occupied in France, when he commanded a 4.5 how. battery. B— Chateau was so much a chateau now that Divisional Headquarters were living in tents outside. Four motor-cars stood in the courtyard; some thirty chargers were tied to the long high railings; motor despatch-riders kept coming and going. R.A. were on the far side of the chateau, and when our grooms had taken our horses we leapt a couple of trenches and made our way to the brigade-major's tent. The brigade-major was frankly pleased with the situation. "We are going right over the old ground, sir," he told the colonel, "and the Boche has not yet made a proper stand. Our Divisional Infantry are in the line again, and their latest report, timed 6 A.M., comes from M—, and says that they are approaching Z—

Wood. We shall be supporting them to-morrow morning, and the C.R.A. is anxious for positions to be reconnoitred in X 10 and X 11. The C.R.A. has gone up that way in the car this morning."

I looked into an adjoining tent and found the liaison officer from the heavies busy on the telephone. "A 5.9 battery shooting from the direction of —. Right! You can't give me a more definite map-spotting? Right-o! We'll attend to it! Give me counter-batteries, will you?"

"Heavies doing good work to-day?" I asked.

"Rather," he returned happily. "Why, we've got a couple of 8-inch hows, as far up as F—. That's more forward than most of the field-guns."

As I stepped out there came the swift screaming rush of three high-velocity shells. They exploded with an echoing crash in the wood below, near where my horse and the colonel's had been taken to water. A team came up the incline toward the chateau at the trot, and I looked rather anxiously for our grooms. They rode up within two minutes, collectedly, but with a strained look. "Did those come anywhere near you?" I inquired. "We just missed 'em, sir," replied Loneridge. "One of them dropped right among the horses at one trough."

By the colonel's orders I rode back to the waggon lines soon afterwards, bearing instructions to the battery commander to join the colonel at half-past one. The Brigade might expect to move up that evening.



The battery commanders came back by tea-time with plans for the move up that evening completed. The waggon lines were full of sleeping gunners during the afternoon; a sensible course, as it proved, for at 6.45 P.M. an orderly brought the adjutant a pencilled message from the colonel who was still with the C.R.A. It ran—

Warn batteries that they must have gun limbers and firing battery waggons within 1000 yards of their positions by 3.30 A.M., as we shall probably move at dawn. Headquarters will be ready to start after an early dinner. I am returning by car.

"Hallo! they're expecting a big advance to-morrow," said the adjutant. The note also decided a discussion in which the adjutant, the signalling officer, and the cook had joined as to whether we should dine early and pack up ready to go, or pack up and have dinner when we got to the new position.

It was a dark night again; several brigades of artillery were taking the same route as ourselves, and, apart from the congestion, our own guns had shelled this part so consistently since August 8 that the going was heavy and hazardous. We passed one team with two horses down; at another point an 18-pdr. had slipped into a shell-hole, and the air rang with staccato shouts of "Heave!" while two lines of men strained on the dragropes. We reached a damp

valley that lay west of a stretch of tree-stumps and scrubby undergrowth—remnants of what was a thick leafy wood before the hurricane bombardments of July 1916. D Battery had pulled their six hows. into the valley; the three 18-pdr. batteries were taking up positions on top of the eastern slope. Before long it became clear that the Boche 5.9 gunners had marked the place down.

"I'm going farther along to X 30 A, and shall stay with the Infantry Brigadier," the colonel told me in his quick incisive way. "Major Mallaby-Kelby and the adjutant will come with me. You will stay here with Wilde, and pass orders from us to the batteries. There are some Boche huts in that bank, and I picked one for you this afternoon."

There was indeed a row of beautifully made wooden huts, quite new, covered with waterproof felt, lined with matchboarding, and fitted with cupboards and comfort-bringing devices. The Boche naturally has no scruples about cutting down trees for material for his dwelling-places, but he also seems to possess an unlimited number of workmen, who lavish skill and care in making them pleasant to live in. Major Veasey had taken possession of a truly palatial hut for his mess. "Our infantry only got here to-day," he said, "and they captured some of the men who were adding the finishing touches." Major Simpson and Major

Bartlett had set up a joint mess, and there was an ample supply of wire beds. Major Bullivant's officers were housed three hundred yards away.

Wilde came in full of a dispute he had had with Dumble as to whether Headquarter signallers or B Battery's servants should occupy a certain dug-out with a corrugated-iron roof. "Dumble said he was there first, and claimed it on that ground," said Wilde, "but I told him the colonel had said I could have it, and that concluded the entertainment."

We had left "Swiffy," the veterinary officer, at the wagon line, but the doctor had accompanied us, and he was first to curl himself up on his stretcher. Wilde and I posted ourselves on a couple of raised wire beds.

The adjutant always said that the doctor was able to snore in five different keys. He started off that night with a series of reverberating blasts that caused Wilde to laugh hysterically and call out, "For Heaven's sake, Doc, be quiet, or you'll give the position away to the Boche." But the doctor didn't hear the appeal; nor did he wake up when three high-velocity shells landed a hundred yards away on top of the hill behind us. The huts were, of course, on the wrong side of the valley from our point of view of Boche shelling, and many more shells whizzed shrilly over our heads before the night was out.

Half an hour after we had fallen asleep an orderly woke

me with a "secret" communication that gave 4.50 A.M. as zero hour, and I circulated the news to the batteries. Some time later the telephone bell aroused me, and the adjutant said he wanted to give me the time. Some one had knocked over my stub of candle, and after vainly groping for it on the floor, I kicked Wilde, and succeeded in making him understand that if he would light a candle and check his watch, I would hang on to the telephone. Dazed with sleep, Wilde clambered to his feet, trod once or twice on the doctor, and lighted a candle.

"Are you ready?" asked the voice at the other end of the telephone. "Ready, Wilde?" said I in my turn.

"I'll give it you when it's four minutes to one . . . thirty seconds to go," went on the adjutant.

Now Wilde always says that the first thing he heard was my calling "thirty seconds to go!" and that I did not give him the "four minutes to one" part of the ceremony. I always tell him he must have been half asleep, and didn't hear me. At any rate, the dialogue continued like this—

Adjutant (over the telephone to me): "Twenty seconds to go."

Me (to Wilde): "Twenty seconds to go."

Wilde: "Twenty seconds."

Adjutant: "Ten seconds to go."

Me: "Ten seconds."

Wilde: "Ten seconds."

Adjutant: "Five seconds."

Me: "Five."



Wilde: "Five."

Adjutant: "Now! Four minutes to one."

Me: NOW! Four minutes to one."

Wilde (blankly): "But you didn't tell me what time it was going to be."

It was useless arguing, and I had to ring up the adjutant again. As a matter of fact it

was the colonel who answered, and supplied me with the "five seconds to go" information; so there was no doubt about the correctness of the time-taking on this occasion, and after I had gone out and roused an officer of each battery, and made him check his watch, I turned in again and sought sleep.

### VIII.

For three hours after zero hour our guns spat fire, firing down from four rounds a gun a minute to the slow rate of one round each minute. The enemy artillery barked back furiously for the first two hours, but got very few shells into our valley; and after a time we paid little heed to the 5.9's and 4.2's that dropped persistently on the top of the western slope. An 8-inch that had landed in the valley about midnight had wrought frightful execution, however. Another brigade lay next to us; in fact one of their batteries had occupied a position intended for our C Battery. The shell fell with a blinding crash among their horses, which they had kept up near the guns in readiness for the morning; and for half an hour the darkness was pierced by the ories and groans of wounded men, and the sound of revolvers putting horses out of their pain. Four drivers had been killed and twenty-nine horses knocked out. "A lucky escape for us," was the grim, not unsympathetic comment of C Battery.

All through the morning the messages telephoned to me indicated that the fighting up forward had been hard and relentless. Our infantry had advanced, but twice before eleven o'clock I had to dash out with S.O.S. calls; and at intervals I turned each battery on to enemy points for which special artillery treatment was demanded.

The colonel ordered Wilde and myself to join the forward Headquarters party after lunch. We found them in a small square hut, built at the foot of a range of hills that rose almost sheer 200 feet up, and curled round north-east to a familiar valley in which our batteries had spent a bitter punishing time during the third week of July 1916. The hut contained four wire beds and a five-foot shaft in one corner, where a solitary telephonist crouched uncomfortably at his task. The hut was so cramped for space that one had to shift the table—a map-board laid upon a couple of boxes—in order to move round it.

The winding road outside presented a moving war panorama that afternoon. Two Infantry Brigades and their staffs, and some of the battalion commanders, had huts under the hillside, and by four o'clock battalions returned from the battle were digging themselves sheltering holes higher up the hillside. Boche prisoners in slow marching twenties and thirties kept coming along also; some of them used as stretcher-bearers to carry their own and our wounded; others turned on to the odd jobs that the Army call fatigues. I found one long-haired, red-eyed fellow chopping wood for our cook; my appearance caused a signaller, noted for his Hyde Park Corner method of oratory, to cease abruptly a turgid denunciation of the Hun and all his works.

The talk was all of a counter-attack by which a battalion of Prussian Guards had won back the eastern corner of a wood that had been one of our objectives. One of the Infantry Brigadiers, a tall, tireless, fighting soldier, who started the war as a captain, had come round to discuss with the colonel artillery support for the fresh attack his brigade were to make at 5.45 P.M. This Brigadier was rather apt to regard 18-pounders as machine-guns; and it was sometimes instructive to note the cool good-humoured way in which the colonel guided his enthusiasm into saner channels. "You're giving me one forward section of 18-pounders there," began the

Brigadier, marking the map. "Now,"—placing a long lean forefinger on a point 150 yards behind our most advanced infantry post,—"couldn't I have another little fellow there?—that would tickle him up."

The colonel smiled through his glasses. "I don't think we should be helping you more, sir, by doing that. . . . I can shoot on that point with observed fire as well from where the batteries are as from up there; and think of the difficulty of getting ammunition up."

"Right!" responded the General, and turned immediately to the subject of the 4.5 how targets.

I went outside, and saw Judd at the head of the two guns of A Battery, that were to be the forward section in the attack, going by at the trot. As he passed he gave me an "I'm for it" grin. I knew that he was trotting his teams because the corner of the valley was still under enemy observation, and had been shelled all day. Bob Pottinger was following in rear.

Five minutes after the two guns passed, the Boche began a hellish strafe upon a battery that had perched itself under the crest of the hill. A couple of hundred 5.9's came over, and we had a view of rapid awe-inspiring bursts, and of men rushing for cover. "Good shooting that," remarked the colonel who had come to the doorway.

The Brigadier paid us an



other visit late that night. He was almost boyish in his glee. "A perfect little show," he told the colonel. "Your forward guns did very fine work indeed. And the 6-inch hows. gave the wood an awful pasting. From the reports that have come in we only took seven Boche prisoners; practically all the rest were killed."

So we took our rest that night, content in the knowledge that things were going well. There being only four beds, one of us would have to doss down on the floor. The colonel insisted on coming into our "odd man out" gamble. The bare boards fell to me; but I slept well. The canvas bag containing my spare socks fitted perfectly into the hollow of my hips—the chief recipe for securing comfort on hard ground.

*Réveille* was provided by the bursting of an 8-inch shell on the other side of the road. It removed part of the roof of our hut, and smothered the rest with a ponderous shower of earth. We shaved and washed by the roadside, and Major Mallaby-Kelby contrived a rapid and complete change of underclothing, also in the open air.

By 8.30 A.M. the colonel, Major Mallaby-Kelby, and the battery commanders, were walking briskly through the valley and on to the rolling country beyond, reconnoitring for positions to which the batteries would move in the afternoon. Wilde and myself accompanied them, and as Judd and Bob Pottinger were also

of the party, I heard more details of what A Battery's forward section had done the evening before.

"I saw you turn into the valley at the trot," I said to Judd.

"Yes, by Gad," he replied; "and when we got into the valley we made it a canter. Those dead horses will show you what the valley has been like."

We were striding through the valley now—a death-trap passage, two hundred yards across at its widest point, and less than three-quarters of a mile long. I counted twenty-seven dead horses, lying in grotesque attitudes, some of them cruelly mangled. The narrow-gauge railway had become scattered bits of scrap-iron, the ground a churned waste of shell-holes.

"And the worst of it was that the traces of the second team broke," Pottinger chimed in. "Judd had gone on ahead, and we hadn't any spare traces. So I sent that team back out of the way, followed the first gun, and brought the team back to take up the second gun. Damned good team that, E sub-section. You remember the team we were training for the 'Alarm Race' when we were out at —? That's the one. . . . And the old Boche was peppering the valley all the time."

"Did the Boche shell much during the attack?" I asked.

"Well," continued Pottinger, "he gave the guns most of the shelling —. I was shooting the battery and Judd was doing F.O.O. with the

infantry, — and where Judd was it was mostly machine-guns."

"Yes," said Judd, "I got the wind-up with those machine-guns. I couldn't find the Battalion Headquarters at first, and it was 150 yards from the wood. The first lot of machine-gun bullets went in front of me; one plopped into a bank just past my foot. It was dam funny. I spun right round. . . . But the infantry colonel, the colonel of the —s, was a brave man. We only had a tiny dug-out, and every time you got out the machine-guns started. But he didn't mind; he got out and saw for himself everything that was going on. Didn't seem to worry him at all. . . . And I shall never forget the way the heavies lammed it into the wood. They had half an hour, six batteries of 6-inch howitzers, before the 18-pounders put in a five minutes' burst of shrapnel. . . . They say the wood is choked with German dead."

It was this self-same colonel who wrote to his brigadier commending the fine work of Judd and Pottinger on that day. Before October was out each was wearing the M.C. ribbon.

Battery positions being selected, the colonel, Major Malaby-Kelby, and myself cast round for a headquarters. Some machine-gunners had taken possession of the only possible dug-outs. However, there were numerous huts, abandoned by the Hun, and I was chalking our claim on a neat building with a latched door and glass windows, and

a garden-seat outside, when the colonel, who was gazing through his binoculars at the long, dense, hillside wood that marked the eastern edge of the valley, said in his decisive way, "What's that Swiss *châlet* at the top of the gully in the centre of wood? . . . Looks a proper sort of place for headquarters! . . . Let's go and inspect it."

The view through the binoculars was not deceptive; indeed, when we plunged into the wood and made the steep climb up to the *châlet*, we passed five or six beautifully-built huts hidden among the trees. The *châlet* was equipped with a most attractive verandah; a hundred feet below stood a larger wooden building, covered with black felt and lined with match-boarding. The main room possessed tables obviously made by expert carpenters, and a roomy bench, with a sloping back, that went round two sides of the apartment. An inner bedroom contained a wood-framed bed with a steel spring-mattress and a number of plush-bottomed chairs. The Boche had extended his craftsmanship to the neat slats that covered the joinings of the wall-planks and kept out draughts. All the wood used was new and speckless, and smelt sweet and clean. The other huts were constructed with similar attention to detail. Also, one came across tables and benches in shady nooks, and arbours of the kind found in German beer-gardens.

"Jehoshaphat," gasped Major Malaby-Kelby, "this is indeed



the height of war luxury." The colonel, who was going on leave next day, not having been in England since the early part of January, smiled in his turn, and jested upon the desirability of delaying his departure until we vacated this delightful retreat. Wilde and myself nosed about joyously, chalking the name of our unit on every door within reach. From a Boche artillery map picked up in the *châlet* we concluded that the place must have been the summer quarters of a Hun artillery group commander.

And then without warning our satisfaction was changed to disappointment. Major Mallaby-Kelby had just called out that the place was so complete that even a funk-hole had been provided, when a gunner emerged.

"What are you doing here?" inquired the major in surprise.

"I'm left here until our brigade headquarters come in, sir," the gunner replied promptly.

"What brigade?"

"The —rd, sir," said the gunner, naming our companion artillery brigade.

"When did Colonel — take over?" asked the colonel.

"About an hour ago, sir. He left me to look after the place until brigade headquarters came in this afternoon."

We looked solemnly at one another. "We've been forestalled," said the colonel with mock despair. Then with brisk decision, "Well, there are plenty more huts about here. We'll hurry up and get settled before other people come along."

The colonel left us during the

afternoon. The C.R.A.'s car was to come for him at headquarters waggon line early next morning. The doctor, who was now living with Swift, the veterinary officer, and the French interpreter at the waggon line, had visited our new quarters in the wood, and hoicked off our last but one bottle of whisky. I had despatched a frantic S.O.S., coupled with 100 francs in cash, to the colonel, begging him to take the interpreter to Boulogne so as to replenish our mess supplies. Our good friends of the —rd Brigade had occupied the *châlet*, and received one sharp reminder that the Boche gunner was still a nasty animal. A high-velocity shell had hit the edge of the gully not ten yards from them, and their adjutant and their intelligence officer had described to me their acrobatic plunge into the funk-hole. Major Mallaby-Kelby was commanding our brigade in the absence of the colonel, and already our signal-wires buzzed with reports that indicated a very short sojourn in our new home in the wood.

I am making this narrative a plain matter-of-fact record of incidents and episodes in the career of our brigade—which, let it be noted, was in action from August 8, when the British advance commenced, until November 4, the day of the final decisive thrust—because such an account, however poorly told, offers a picture of real war: the war that is by no means one continuous stretch of heroism and martyrdom *in excelsis*, of guns galloping to death or glory, of

bayonets dripping with enemy blood, of "our gallant lads" meeting danger and destruction with "characteristic British humour and cheerfulness," when they are not "seeing red." On that 29th of August, when Major Mallaby-Kelby assumed command, we knew that the campaign had taken a definite turn in our favour, but none of us expected the Boche to be so harried and battered that by November he would be suing for peace. And I am stating bald unimaginative facts if I say that one of the main aspirations among officers and men was to continue the advance in such a way as to make sure of decent quarters o' nights, and to drive the Germans so hard that when winter set in we should be clear of the foul mud tracts and the rat-infested trenches that had formed the battlefields of 1915, '16, and '17. Major Mallaby-Kelby was a keen pushful officer, immensely eager to maintain the well-known efficiency of the brigade while the colonel was away; but he took me into his confidence on another matter. "Look here!" he began, jocularly and with a sweeping gesture. "I'm going to ask you to make sure that the mess never runs out of white wine. It's most important. Unless I get white wine my efficiency will be impaired." I replied with due solemnity, and said that in this important matter our interpreter should be specially commissioned to scour the countryside.

By 1 P.M. it became so certain

that the enemy had inaugurated a retreat that the major issued orders for the brigade to move forward three miles. We marched steadily down the valley through which Judd and Pottinger had passed on their forward-section adventure, skirted the wood that they had assisted the Divisional Infantry to recapture, and halted for further instructions west of a deserted colony of battered Nissen huts, gaping holes and broken bricks shovelled into piles, still entered on the maps as the village of G—. It would have been a truer description to paint on the sign-boards, "This was —," as has been done at one desolate spot between Peronne and Villers Bretonneux. Along the valley we had passed were row after row of solidly-built stables left uncleaned and smelly by the fleeing Hun; rotting horses smothered with flies; abandoned trucks marooned on the few stretches of the narrow-gauge railway left whole by our shell fire. In the wood stood numerous Boche-built huts, most of them put up since the March onslaught. The Boche, dirty cur that he is, had deliberately fouled them before departing. The undulating waste land east of the wood, hallowed by memories of fierce battles in 1916, had remained untroubled until the last few weeks; and the hundreds of shell-holes, relics of 1916, had become grass-grown. Its hummoky greenness reminded one of nothing so much as a seaside golf-course.



## MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

FRANCE AND ENGLAND IN THE WAR—BELGIUM'S NOBLE PART—  
KING AND CARDINAL—THE BURGOMASTER MAX—DEVOTION AT  
THE OUTPOSTS—WHAT THE GOLD COAST DID—THE EXACTION OF  
INDEMNITIES FROM GERMANY—THE DEMAND OF THE ELECTORS—  
THE LETTERS OF ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE—THE TRAGEDY  
OF THE PINES, PUTNEY.

AS we recede a few weeks from the impact of war, we may estimate, with an easier detachment than was possible before, the part that each of us has taken in the securing of victory. It is plain to us all that the hard fighting has been done in the East as in the West by the French and the English. We two, France and England, have broken the despotic power of Germany, and share the supreme honour of having saved the world from the domination of a tyrant. We may say so much without incurring a charge of arrogance. The casualty lists are there to speak for us with an eloquence which none can gainsay. How foolish appear to-day the malicious inventions of the Germans, who once thought it would serve their cause to pretend that the English would fight to the last Frenchman, the last Australian, or the last Canadian! We are able to-day to count the cost, and to reckon up the sacrifice. Our "hiring soldiers" have "taken their wages and are dead." Without flinching they "saved the sum of things for pay." And we may exult, with humble gratitude, in what they did and suffered for us.

Henceforth, then, France

and England will stand side by side as brothers in arms. With a common courage they have fought for a common end. They know one another as loyal and familiar friends. They will strengthen the good comradeship of war in the bonds of peace. The greater knowledge which they have gained one of the other has brought with it already a closer sympathy, a quicker understanding. And so long as our alliance endures, as we hope and believe it will endure for ever, we need not fear the attack of any enemy. Together we have borne the burden of the war. It is our privilege and our duty, as of those who have made the greatest sacrifices, to bear the burden of dictating the just peace which shall secure us the future.

As in pleasant duty bound, we acclaim also the willing aid given us by our loyal and gallant Dominions, by valorous Italy, and by Serbia the indomitable. We acknowledge gratefully the moral support that was given us by the American Republic, and we are convinced that nothing can tighten the bonds which hold the Allies together more securely than a generous understanding of what each one of us has accomplished for

the common cause. Therefore, we cannot but regret that President Wilson, in his address to Congress, should have sunk the statesman so deeply in the politician as to profess an ignorance of what the British fleet achieved in transporting the American army to France. Here is his one reference to our eager co-operation in the difficult and dangerous task of bringing two million men over to Europe: "In all this movement," said he, "only 758 men were lost by enemy attack, 630 of whom were upon a single English transport, which was sunk near the Orkney Islands." That Admiral Sims is not in agreement with his President in thus slurring over the services of England, readers of this magazine will remember. Perhaps Mr Wilson's visit to Europe has given him a better appreciation of the truth.

But in the apportioning of our praise and our gratitude, there is one country which we shall never forget, and that country is Belgium. What the Belgians did and suffered will be for ever glorious. Alone and unaided they sustained the first shock of the war, and opposed with their small intrepid army the mighty force which Germany had gathered together after more than forty years of organised industry. Nor did they enter the struggle with the valour of ignorance. They were like some dwellers in the mountains, who saw a cold blue glacier encroaching ever upon their peaceful village. They were blind neither to the

strength nor to the approval of their ruthless neighbour. They had watched the strategic railways of the Huns—railways which could serve but one purpose—coming nearer to them month by month. And they did not hesitate. No sooner did Austria send her fatal ultimatum to Serbia than the Belgians were on the alert. It is true that Germany, in accord with the other Powers, had guaranteed the neutrality of Belgium. But Germany had gained no high reputation as a keeper of good faith, and the Belgians were the victims of no illusion. On July 29 the Belgian Government decided to place the army on a war footing, a very necessary step, since, "owing to the small extent of her territory," to cite the words of M. Davignon, Minister of Foreign Affairs, "all Belgium consists, in some degree, of a frontier zone." On July 31st France and Germany were asked if they intended to respect Belgian neutrality. France gave her answer without wavering, and by a final act of perfidy Herr Bethmann-Hollweg declared that "Germany had no intention of violating Belgian neutrality, but he considered that in making a public declaration Germany would weaken her military position in regard to France, who, secured on the northern side, would concentrate all her energies on the east." Having given this reply of evasion to the Belgian Minister, Herr Bethmann-Hollweg refused to answer the plain question set to him by Sir



Edward Grey, and two days later Germany sent her shameful ultimatum to Belgium, bidding her choose between a free passage for German troops through her territory or instant war.

History does not contain a more disgraceful episode than this, and the excuse found for the treachery was fouler even than the treachery itself. France had plainly and willingly promised to respect Belgian neutrality, and the Germans, trained always in a school of lying, declared that there was no doubt as to the intention of France to march through Belgian territory against Germany. Of course no such intention existed, as the Germans well knew; but they wanted an excuse, and they had found it. And this was not all. If Belgium would only permit the German army to march through her country, the Germans were ready with half a dozen undertakings. They would bind themselves at the conclusion of the peace to guarantee the possessions of the Belgian kingdom in full. They would purchase all necessaries for their troops and pay cash for them, and would give an indemnity for whatever damage was done by the German army in its passage. And if Belgium refused the amicable offer, what then? Germany would be compelled to consider her as an enemy, and the eventual relations between the two States would be left to the decision of arms. The decision has been taken, with the result that Germany is broken in

pieces irrecoverably, let us hope, and Belgium stands upon the very pinnacle of honourable victory.

And let it be remembered that the Belgians, unappalled by the threats of a Power whose army exceeded the whole population of Belgium, eagerly picked up the gage. Thus the gallant David answered the menace of Goliath. "The Belgian Government, if they were to accept the proposals submitted to them, would sacrifice the honour of the nation and betray their duty towards Europe. Conscious of the part which Belgium has played for more than eighty years in the civilisation of the world, they refuse to believe that the independence of Belgium can only be preserved at the price of the violation of her neutrality. If this hope is disappointed the Belgian Government are firmly resolved to repel, by all means in their power, every attack upon their rights." That note was written on August 3. On August 4 Herr Bethmann-Hollweg announced his infraction of international law, and the German troops marched into Belgium.

What happened in the meanwhile at Brussels has been disclosed to us in a vivid pamphlet by M. de Bassompierre. With a lively emotion this member of the Belgian Foreign Office describes the bustlings hither and thither, the comings and goings of those two eventful days, August 2 and 3, 1914. He tells of the King's meetings with his Ministers, of diplomatic notes received and de-

spatched, and from beginning to end he gives us a clear impression of high resolve and quiet certainty. Whatever discussion there was concerned the words of the Belgian note, not of its meaning. Never for a moment did this brave people waver. Measuring the might arrayed against it, it sent back a message of calm defiance. In a moment all discord was hushed, all the strife of parties forgotten, and the King with perfect confidence could tell his lieges that there was now "only one party, that of the Fatherland." Nor has the proud boast of M. de Broqueville—"We may be conquered, but never subdued"—been unjustified by fact. Belgium is not subdued. She has passed through the fire of suffering stronger than ever she was, and if Germany become sane, she will never hear the name of Belgium without a shudder of conscious guilt.

But in 1914 Germany, always incapable of honest pride, felt her arrogance untouched, and eight days after her first irruption into Belgium she sank so low as to repeat her assurance that she was not coming "as an enemy into Belgium," and to "beg the King of the Belgians and the Belgian Government to spare Belgium the horrors of war." The truth is, she was not getting on as fast as she wished, and she thought it no disgrace to come a second time as a wicked suppliant. The Belgian note was a note of virtue and courage. "Faithful to her international obligations"—thus it ran—"Belgium

can only reiterate her reply to that ultimatum, the more so as since August 3 her neutrality has been violated, a distressing war has been waged on her territory, and the guarantors of her neutrality have responded loyally and without delay to her appeal." Germany's answer to this dignified note was German in its brutality. She replied with outrage and arson, with pillage and murder, and never, so long as our earth endures, will she wipe away the stain of blood which marks her hypocrite's hand.

Thus the Belgian soldiers stayed the oncoming tide of barbarism. In truth, they were the saviours of Europe. "A first time," says the noble Cardinal Mercier, "they saved France; a second time, in Flanders, they arrested the advance of the enemy upon Calais. France and England know it, and Belgium stands before them both, and before the whole world, as a nation of heroes." Though they were enslaved and beaten and robbed, they bore their sufferings with a marvellous patience. Defying the cruelty of the Huns, they defied also their comprehension. The Huns themselves, valiant in conquest, truckle subserviently to their conquerors, and are now busy in shifting the blame of the war from one to another. How then should they appreciate Belgium's spirit of sacrifice? Here is what Herr von Wilamovitz-Möllendorf, once professor of the Humanities, has to say about the martyred country: "See what the war



has laid bare in others! What have we learnt of the soul of Belgium? Has it not revealed itself as the soul of cowardice and assassination? . . . They have no moral forces within them, therefore they resort to the torch and the dagger." Whose word would you rather take as the word of truth—Cardinal Mercier's or Ulrich von Wilamovitz-Möllendorf's? There can be no doubt. Henceforth the professor shall not consort with honest men nor reflect upon the soul of courage and loyalty. Truly, the war has laid bare in others many things of good report, but the eyes of Wilamovitz shall not see them.

And Belgium, happy in the supreme sacrifice which unhesitating she made, has been happy also in the great men who have led her in the field of valour. Her King has given such an example of brave tranquillity as will never be forgotten. He has shared with an equal mind the sorrows and sufferings of his people. "Our King is, in the esteem of all," says Cardinal Mercier, "at the very summit of the moral scale; he is doubtless the only man who does not recognise that fact, as simple as the simplest of his soldiers, he stood in the trenches and put new courage by the serenity of his face into the hearts of those of whom he requires that they shall not doubt of their country." Thus Cardinal Mercier of his King. And what of Cardinal Mercier himself? In courage as in eloquence he stands without a rival in the war. He has faced the insolent fury of the Germans unafraid. He has heartened

his friends as he has dismayed his foes. The Germans did their best to break his unconquerable spirit, and retired in discomfiture from the unequal struggle. The Pastoral Letter which he addressed to his diocese at Christmas 1914 rivals in pomp and solemnity the great sermons of our own Donne. It is touched by an emotion which came not within the scope of Donne's experience. Having before his eyes the cruel martyrdom of Belgium, Cardinal Mercier admits not the possibility of regret. "Is there a patriot among us," he asks, "who does not know that Belgium has grown great? Nay, which of us would have the heart to cancel this last page of our national history? Which of us does not exult in the brightness of the glory of this shattered nation?" The nation might be shattered, but so long as it possessed such leaders as Cardinal Mercier it could not harbour a doubt of its ultimate recovery. Patriotism and endurance—these are the lessons which the Cardinal taught. Belgium had not brought the war upon herself. She was bound in honour to defend her own independence, and she kept her oath. The other powers were bound to respect her neutrality. Germany violated her oath; France and England kept theirs. And while France and England fought for the independence of Belgium, Belgium, under the rule of her gallant King and under Cardinal Mercier's guidance, gladly endured the stripes which were laid upon her.

It was no cold patient acquiescence which Cardinal Mercier enjoined upon his countrymen. He bade them not to rescind, but to exult in their first resolution. "As long as we are required to give proof of endurance," said he, "we shall endure." He did not ask them to renounce any of their national desires. "I hold it part of my episcopal office," he said, "to instruct you as to your duty in face of the Power that has invaded our soil, and now occupies the greater part of our country. The authority of that Power is no lawful authority. Therefore in soul and conscience you owe it no respect, nor attachment, nor obedience. The sole authority in Belgium is that of our King, of our Government, of the elected representatives of the nation. This authority alone has a right to our affection, our submission." And these words he spoke in the presence of the ruthless invader. But while he would persuade his compatriots to hold their heads high, he would permit no sacrifice of dignity. "Let us not take bravado for courage," said he, "nor tumult for bravery."

In enumerating the heroes of Belgium, let us not forget the gallant Burgomaster Max, who performed the humbler task allotted to him with an equal intrepidity. When the Germans entered Brussels, the Burgomaster did not for a moment forget his civic dignity. He rode at the head of the ill-omened procession, to prove that he was still master in his own house.

When the German General ordered three hundred beds to be got ready in the Town Hall, "See that there are beds in the Town Hall for three hundred and one," said the Burgomaster, determined not to leave his guests. Resolutely he countered lying proclamations posted upon the walls of Brussels, by speeches delivered in the public square, and at last fell out irreparably with his persecutors on a matter of money. "I have found myself obliged," wrote the German military Governor, "to suspend Burgomaster Max from his office, on account of his unserviceable behaviour. He is now in honourable custody in a fortress." To-day, enlarged from the fortress, he is back again in Brussels, a witness of his country's glory and of the truth that Belgium's noble sacrifice has not been made in vain. Nor should we fail to record the gallantry of the soldier whose defence of Liège saved France, and who too paid for his devotion by "honourable custody in a fortress." And what can we say of the thousands of brave men who met the invader with a simple courage and fell in defence of his native land, except that "their bodies are buried in peace, but their name liveth for evermore"? Patriotism and endurance have met their due reward. Germany is humbled in the dust, and Belgium has won the laurelled crown of heroism.

When the war broke out it was the amiable hope of Germany that the dominions and colonies of Great Britain



would take the first chance that offered to throw off an unwelcome yoke. It is true that the Germans, by the adroit use of spies and missionaries, had done their best to achieve what seemed to them a desirable end. We all know to-day how loyally our dominions held fast by the bonds which bind them to the mother country. The German attempt to sow the seeds of dissension failed completely, and after four years of warfare the Empire is stronger than ever it was, for the good reason that it has been united in suffering and in victory. Our dominions, great and small, have been animated by one ambition and one desire—to do what lay in each of them to help Great Britain. That which the great ones have done is plain for us all to see. The achievements of the smaller ones may escape notice, and therefore we would take a single example, and remind our readers of what has been done by the Gold Coast, a colony which with its dependencies does not exceed 1,500,000 souls, and which, as Sir Hugh Clifford explains in a message to his Legislative Council, has shown a praiseworthy zeal and activity ever since the outbreak of the war.

Those who were privileged to fight for their country in France or elsewhere have won their reward. The deeds done in obscure corners of the Empire too often remain unknown. Yet "they also serve who only stand and wait," and the men who have upheld the burden of government at

our outposts deserve all the credit that can be given to them. Great Britain does not lay down its responsibilities when it goes to war, and the double duty was laid upon our officials all the world over to thwart the far-reaching plots of Germany, and to give our dependencies the benefits of an equal rule. Of those who administer the Gold Coast, thirty per cent were released for military service. "It is hard," as Sir Hugh Clifford says, "to be compelled to carry on the dull routine of colonial duty in times like these," and there was no doubt some discontent among those whose first and last ambition it was to join the colours. But the Government could not overlook the necessities of the Public Service, and they who stayed at their post may reflect with satisfaction that they were serving their King and their Country to as good purpose, at the Gold Coast or elsewhere, as if they had fought in the trenches on the Western front.

Nor was the Gold Coast deprived of the excitement of war. As early as August 1914 the Gold Coast Regiment undertook the invasion of Togoland. The German governor surrendered the capital without a fight, and retired to Kamina, where there was a wireless station, designed to be the pivot of the whole German system of telegraphy, whence messages could be sent to Berlin on the one hand, to Windhook and Dar-es-Salam on the other. After a sharp encounter at the Chra River,

in which Lieutenant G. M. Thompson was killed, the first Englishman to give his life in the war, the wireless station was destroyed, and the Germans surrendered unconditionally. Thereafter the Gold Coast Regiment sailed from Togoland to take part in the invasion of the Kamaruns, and presently fought with great distinction in German East Africa. And it is not without a proud satisfaction that we contemplate the record of the unswerving loyalty and tireless enthusiasm of chiefs and people alike.

The Gold Coast, like other dependencies, suffered from the plots and intrigues of German merchants and German missionaries. One zealous Christian, who had been admitted into the colony to instruct the young and to preach the Gospel, was caught attempting to blow up H.M.S. *Dwarf* with an infernal machine, and pleaded, on his detection, that he was a German first and a missionary afterwards, thus affording another piece of evidence that, if ever we again admit German missionaries into a British Dependency, we shall be beset not by teachers but by spies and traitors. However, the Government of the Gold Coast knew how to deal with these miscreants and hypocrites who had abused its hospitality, and succeeded at last in ridding itself of a dangerous pest. Thus was the German danger brought vividly before the eyes of a remote colony, which not only found spies in its midst but had to lament the loss of several officials, who fell vic-

tims to German submarines. Yet never did it lose courage or lessen its energy. In the years of war its Governor is able to report a large increase of trade and industry, to report gifts of more than £60,000 to patriotic funds. Moreover, he has a useful word to say about the health of a colony which has not always been thought salubrious. "I have no hesitation," he says, "in pronouncing it the most meritorious tropical climate to be met with at sea-level in any part of the heat-belt with which I am acquainted." In brief, it is impossible to read Sir Hugh Clifford's message without hope and without the glad conviction that Great Britain has done its duty to its dependencies in spite of all the calls made upon it by the war. And what has been said of the Gold Coast may be said with equal truth of the other outposts of Empire. From the loyalty and prosperity of one we may infer the loyalty and prosperity of all, and we look forward to the years which will follow the peace with confidence that, despite the politicians, we shall administer our Empire in the future with the same justice and fortitude as in the past.

The superfluous election, which has disturbed the peace of Great Britain more bitterly than the war with Germany, has revealed many things to us. It has shown us that the fear of Bolshevism is no idle fear; that there are many demagogues in the land who shout for democracy, and who are so ignorant of its principles as to declare that if they do



not get what they want by the vote they will go in for "direct action"—whatever that may mean. It has shown also that there are still many men, and even many leaders, who love the Germans with a constant heart. They would not punish our enemies for the world. Their German friends, they think, should be carefully shielded from the consequences of their misdeeds. Meanwhile Mr Asquith keeps a firm eye upon free trade, and no doubt looks forward to many years of pleasant "dumping." "When we have got reparation," he says, "we must have a clean slate. Seventy millions of people have to go on living a life of their own, and we must not forget that a place has to be found for our old enemies as well as for our friends." Perhaps it does not matter much what Mr Asquith says, but if a place has to be found for the Germans, it is not our business to find it. Then there are the Labour leaders, who are so firmly determined not to hurt the German people that they do not object one bit to hurting the English people. So they declare that Germany must be let off without payment lest the cause of internationalism should suffer, and that England must cripple herself for years with a debt which was not of her own incurring. And that is not all. There are Cabinet Ministers not a few who have suggested difficulties whenever the word "indemnity" has been mentioned, who have been content to murmur something about "the

limit of Germany's capacity," and to suggest that if we are not compelled to shoulder our own liabilities ruin will stare us in the face.

But the election assuredly did one good thing. It demonstrated beyond the possibility of a doubt that the British people was not inclined to pay for Germany's breakages. The war came to us unsought, and an elementary sense of justice should convince us that it is not right to ask us to pay £400,000,000 a year, as interest upon our National Debt, merely because Germany aimed at the domination of the world. Nor is it a sound principle to say that we will not ask Germany for an indemnity, because we think that she cannot pay. Such an excuse as that, if generally accepted, would keep the most reckless spendthrift for ever out of the bankruptcy court. It is for us to formulate our demand; it will be for Germany to consider how best she may meet her liabilities. That she can pay is obvious, even for all the wanton damage that she has done, even for the vast expenditure that she has forced upon her foes. She will not, of course, pay in ready money. That would be impossible, and is undesired. But when she has replaced all the towns and factories and ships which she has destroyed in defiance of the laws of war, then it will be her duty to pay interest upon all the money which she has caused others to spend, and to create a sinking fund, so that at

last the capital debt shall be wiped off. If it take her a century to accomplish this good work, it will not be time lost; for it will teach her and others that not with impunity can an assault be made upon the liberty and the comfort of the world. It was not long before the great war, we believe, that certain German towns finished paying the loans which they had raised to satisfy the requisitions of Napoleon. Now that these requisitions are satisfied, they can begin again with a good heart upon the old plan to pay off the new debt.

If we are left without indemnity, it will mean that every year the Chancellor of the Exchequer will have to find some hundred of millions before he pays a penny for the Navy, the Army, and the public services. Taxation will remain perpetually at the high level which it has reached to-day, industry will be crippled, and the many tasks of reconstruction will never be efficiently carried out. Obviously, then, it is the duty of the Government, a duty made plain by the many pledges given at the election, to insist that Germany shall pay the costs of the war, and shall spread the payment over a long term of years. And not only does prudence impose this policy upon us and the Allies: we shall be guilty of gross injustice if we do not insist upon it. The wrong-doer must not be let off too lightly. Germany attacked Europe, because she believed that she alone was prepared for war, and that an easy victory would

give her control of the world's wealth. She followed the trade of the burglar, and she must be punished severely, as a warning to others. If the Allies make an easy peace, and settle down to finding their own costs, they cannot complain if twenty years hence Germany repeats her experiment in piracy, and once more involves Europe in slaughter and misery.

And this insistence upon an indemnity will have several indirect advantages. In the first place, it will prevent Germany from piling up her armaments anew. If she is asked to pay her just debts she will have no money to lavish upon Krupp's. Nor will her fresh assault upon the trade of the world be quite so easy as she hopes it may be. She has destroyed the factories of France and Belgium with the deliberate intention of rendering the competition of these countries ineffectual. It must be the policy of the Allies, by hampering the enterprise of Germany, to ensure that France and Belgium shall recover their industries before Mr Asquith begins to find a place for "our old enemies." Therefore we must turn a deaf ear to those who plead for clemency to Germany, in the name of a hypocritical idealism. We must have no word of approval for these greedy merchants, who will not be happy until they meet their German colleagues once again across their counters. We must insist that Germany shall make good what she has destroyed, and we must leave it to her to test



her own capacity, and to find the best way of paying her just debts. If only members of Parliament keep the solemn pledges which they made at the hustings, then assuredly shall justice be done. But will they?

It is pleasant to turn from the insincerities of politicians to the sincere utterances of a poet, from the hasty offers made on the hustings by men who know they have nothing to give, to 'The Letters of Algernon Charles Swinburne,'<sup>1</sup> who had no other wish than to tell his friends what he thought. It is Swinburne's peculiar merit that he writes always about his craft. Political philosopher as he believed himself to be, he was poet and critic before all things, and poetry and criticism are the stuff of his letters. The republicanism which he affected sat very lightly upon him. It was rather a literary pose than a conviction, and the "liberty" of which he writes with enthusiasm is for him nothing but a commonplace. He never lacked it, and since liberty is a thing which we esteem most highly by deprivation, we need not consider Swinburne's praise of it too gravely. Upon no man of his time was the freedom to think and act as he chose more lavishly bestowed. Until the ill-omened day on which he put himself into the tutelage of Theodore Watts he was uncontrolled and uncontrollable,

a being of air and fire, to whom much was permitted and all forgiven. However, it was in his day the fashion to amaze the well-behaved citizen, and Swinburne sometimes fretted at the shackles which bound not himself but the poor creatures whom he despised. He delighted to strike the middle classes, then, as now, eager readers of books, with a political as well as a moral fear. And thus he gave to the world 'Poems and Ballads' and 'Songs before Sunrise,' two expressions of his literary faith. But what he said seems always less intimate to him than the manner of its saying. He was greater as an executant than as a composer, and when he tells us of 'Songs before Sunrise' that "my other books are books, that one is myself," he fails in self-knowledge.

We have said that poetry and criticism are the stuff of his letters. Incidentally, being always sincere, he reveals himself, and nobody can read the two volumes, which Mr Gosse has edited with infinite tact and restraint, without appreciating highly the writer's fine manner and courtliness. Swinburne was a gentleman always, even when a passion of contempt led him to pursue a beaten foe a little further than was necessary. Though he babbled of revolution and atheism, he had the instincts of an old-fashioned Tory. He took a proper pride in his ancient lineage and in his

<sup>1</sup> The Letters of Algernon Charles Swinburne. Edited by Edmund Gosse, C.B., and Thomas James Wise. London: Heinemann.

bodily prowess. He was a fearless swimmer and an expert cragsman, and he liked his friends to esteem him for the virtues of endurance and intrepidity. His distinguished and noble ancestry was no shame to him, but a source of pleasure, and there is not a hint nor a sign of the false pride that apes humility in all his letters. And not only was he a gentleman; he was a man also. An answer to some sentimental remonstrance of Ruskin, written when he was four-and-twenty, sums up admirably his decent philosophy of life. "You speak of not being able to hope enough for me," he says. "Don't you think we had better leave hope and faith to infants, adult or ungrown? You and I and all men will probably do and endure what we are destined for as well as we can. I for one am quite content to know this, without any ulterior belief or conjecture. I don't want more praise and success than I deserve, more suffering and failure than I can avoid; but I take what comes as well and as quietly as I can; and this seems to me a man's real business and only duty." These plain words sum up the whole duty of man—and remember that they were written in the midst of pre-Raphaelite sentimentality to the arch-sentimentalist of them all.

If it pleased him to pose as a revolutionary in politics, he was no revolutionary in poetry. Where his own craft was touched he had no belief in the foolish doctrine of pro-

gress. Much as he admired 'The Ring and the Book,' he would not subscribe to the praise lavished upon Browning as a poet. "Even Browning's verse always goes to a recognisable tune (I say not to a good one), but in the name of all bagpipes, what is the tune of Emerson?" Thus he writes to Mr E. C. Stedman. His appreciation and depreciation of Walt Whitman have both been misunderstood. He has been charged, unfairly, with disloyalty to an old opinion; and the truth is that, from the first, he admired what was admirable in Whitman's verse, but in spite of his lawlessness. "I daresay you agree with me," he wrote to Lord Houghton, "that his dirge or nocturne over your friend Lincoln is a superb piece of music and colour." But when the music and colour are not there, and they soon vanished, he very properly withheld his praise or uttered his blame. "When Whitman is not speaking bad prose," he wrote presently, "he sings, and when he sings at all he sings well"; and then at last he notes that "the habit of vague and flatulent verbiage seems to have grown upon him instead of decreasing." Here there is no recantation of a cherished opinion. Swinburne witnessed the decay of such power as Whitman once possessed, and said so.

Poetry, then, was his lifelong delight. He applauds and condemns with equal enthusiasm. If he had not an appreciation of the finer shades, he pronounced his opinion with



equal courage and clearness. Before the shrine of his chief deity, Victor Hugo, he burns the incense of a pious worshipper. Nothing that Hugo did or said could be wrong in his eyes, and he was as fervent in idolatry as Vacquerie himself. But when he discourses of the past, with what loudity he speaks, how justly he pronounces sentence! Mark Pattison, being a mere scholar, had condemned the drama of 'Samson Agonistes' as "languid, nerveless, occasionally halting, never brilliant." Then Swinburne comes along with the truth about the great play, "which I have often been (unfashionably and heretically) inclined to put, on the whole, at the head of all his works." Of course the poet has the better of it, but Swinburne was scholar as well as poet, and he writes of the dramatists of Shakespeare's time, for instance, with the twofold authority. How ardently he loved them, how profoundly he studied their works, is revealed here on many a page, and those who will may discover in Swinburne's letters many a wise comment on half-forgotten tragedies. Indeed, in the matter of plays his curiosity got the better of his critical faculty, and he clamoured that even the worst of them should be printed. So for many a year, with light and flowing pen, he discussed with his friends of the books which he read and the poems which he wrote. Even when we are in disagreement with him, we would not forgo his

opinion. But we wish that he had not found Rochester stupid or malignant—assuredly he was neither; and we must protest against his description of Diderot's 'Neveu de Rameau' as a "black masterpiece," though he does qualify his condemnation with the other epithet "glorious."

And then suddenly Swinburne fell under the dominion, and what was infinitely worse, under the flattery, of Theodore Watts. Watts may have lengthened Swinburne's life; he certainly did not deepen it. Henceforth the imperious poet-critic saw through the eyes of Watts, and heard through his ears. He pretended to believe the criticaster to be the supreme arbiter of literary taste in Europe. He is delighted when Watts pronounces his last poem the best that ever he wrote, though, as Mr Gosse says somewhat sadly in a note, "it may be observed that Watts said this on every successive occasion." Henceforth he is not content, as of yore, to give his own opinion boldly; he must fortify it by the approval of Watts, who did him the further disservice in encouraging him to pursue the melancholy sport of flogging dead horses. But, even in his reputable servitude, the old friend of freedom breaks out now and again, and it is satisfactory to think that not even the atmosphere of the Pines, Putney, could extinguish wholly the flame of joy and enthusiasm which leapt up always in Swinburne's soul.

# BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCCXL.

FEBRUARY 1919.

VOL. CCV.

450 MILES TO FREEDOM.

BY CAPTAIN M. A. B. JOHNSTON and CAPTAIN K. D. YEARSLEY.

## CHAPTER IV.

WITH our arrival at Yozgad was renewed many an old friendship, dating back to the earlier days of the campaign in Mesopotamia; for, like ourselves, the majority of the eighty officers whom we found there were victims of the siege of Kut-el-Amara. A few days later about twenty officers of the original camp were transferred to Afion-Kara-Hissar, leaving us now a combined total of roughly 100 officers and 60 orderlies.

The "camp" occupied six detached houses, divided into two groups of three houses each, the one on the western, the other near the south-western limits of the town. With a single exception each house stood in its own grounds, which comprised something under an acre of garden apiece. These were in most cases planted

with fruit trees, and in all cases surrounded by high stone walls. The first comers had by April 1918 converted these previously unkempt areas into flourishing vegetable gardens. For our safe custody there were on the average two sentries over each house; these had their sentry-boxes in the garden or at the entrance to the enclosure wall. There was also a post on the four-hundred-yard length of road which connected the two groups of houses.

As had been our impression on arrival, the town of Yozgad could by no manner of means be called picturesque. It is squalidly built on the steep slopes of a narrow valley, surrounded on all sides by bare and rugged hills. The larger houses, it is true, have a few fruit trees in their gardens, and tall poplars line the river



bank; the country around, however, is destitute of trees except for a small pine wood on the high ridge south of the town. The camp was both higher and less accessible than any in Turkey; for Yozgad stands some 4500 feet above sea-level, and in the heart of the rugged mountain system of Anatolia, seven days' march from the nearest railway station.

The town itself is said to have had a population before the war of some 20,000 souls. At the time of our arrival it could hardly have contained one-fifth of that number; for, shortly before the formation of the camp in July 1916, most of the Armenians had been massacred; and they had formed a large proportion of the inhabitants. Their shops had been pillaged, and whenever there was a shortage of firewood the Turks merely proceeded to pull down another of the Armenian houses, which, as usual throughout Anatolia, were largely constructed of wood. The crash of falling timber as a building was demolished was a sound so common as to pass almost unnoticed by the prisoners. Of Turkish brutality, however, we had an even more constant reminder than the sound and sight of ruined buildings; for every day there were to be seen numbers of Armenian children dying as they lay in the narrow streets, starved, emaciated, and clad in rags. For us to provide relief on the large scale required was impossible, owing both to the difficulties

of obtaining money and the necessity of screening our philanthropy from the Commandant and other Turkish authorities. To the credit of the Turkish soldier be it said, however, that he at any rate did not prevent us from helping these poor miserable creatures; and it was thanks to connivance on the part of our sentries and escorts, that we were able towards the end of our time to give away money and bread daily in the streets.

The White Paper published in November 1918 on the subject of the treatment of British Prisoners of War in Turkey describes the Commandant of the camp at Yozgad as a "Turk of the old school—polite, honest, and silent." Silent, or, we would rather say, taciturn, Kiazim Bey undoubtedly was, for it needed many applications before an inquiry or request received an answer at all. Polite, too, for when he did vouchsafe to reply he would promise almost anything; but is it not known to those who have dealt with a Turk, albeit one of the old school, that in his estimation a promise costs nothing and involves no obligation of fulfilment? It is merely his method of temporarily soothing your feelings, and is not this of the essence of politeness? As to his honesty, if he did not loot our parcels or steal our money, he was not averse from accepting a regular commission from every shopkeeper who wished to supply his wares to the camp. Even our sentries had

to bribe him before they were allowed on leave. Ten Turkish pounds, or an equivalent in kind, passed hands before a fortnight's leave was granted. There is no doubt as to the truth of the following story. It happened that one of our guard, when desiring a holiday, turned up at the Commandant's office, but he was out. His son, however, a boy of fourteen, was there, and to him the simple soldier gave his money to be handed on to Kiazim Bey. Such an opportunity did not often occur; so the boy spent the rest of that day gorging costly sweetmeats in the bazaar. After several days the soldier made further inquiries about his leave, and the truth was out. The story ends with a good beating for the boy and no leave for the soldier. Another of our guards used to mend boots for us, but finally gave it up, declaring openly that the commission demanded by his Commandant made it no longer worth his while.

By the time of the arrival of the party from Changri, a number of so-called privileges had been granted by this polite, honest, and silent old Turk—although, it must be admitted, rather in the spirit of the unjust judge worried incessantly by the importunate widow. The most useful of these concessions was the permission to go out coursing on two days a week. The "Yozgad Hunt Club" boasted a pack of no less than three couple of "hounds." These were of a local breed, and had

the shape of small and rather moth-eaten greyhounds, mostly, however, with black, or tan and white, markings. Nevertheless, they were clean and affectionate, and, thanks to the master and whips, became wonderfully good coursers. Seldom did they fail to account for at least one hare or fox between the hours of 4 and 9 A.M. each Monday and Thursday in the spring and summer of 1918. One exception we remember was the day on which the master appeared for the first time in a pink coat of local style and dye, and then we drew blank. The field themselves were dazed, so the hounds had to be excused. Some of the happiest recollections of our captivity are of those glorious early mornings in the country, far away from the ugly town which was our prison. Here for a few brief hours it was almost possible to forget that we were prisoners of war, until reminded that this was Turkey by the monotonous drawl of one of our greatest exponents of the Ottoman tongue. Wafted on the soft morning breeze as we wended our way back to bath and breakfast, would come at intervals of half a minute some such sounds as those which follow: Er . . . er . . . poster . . . bou . . . bou . . . bourda . . . er . . . er . . . aie . . . der . . . Such fluency almost suggested that Turkish was a simple language, instead of one of the most difficult in the world, second only, it is said, to Chinese.

Although attempts were



made to play football, no suitable ground existed in or near Yozgad, and four-a-side hockey became the form of recreation which for the majority in the camp provided the best means of combining pleasure and hard exercise. Hockey was available at any time of day, as the ground was within the precincts of the camp, being in fact the lowest of a series of terraces in one of the gardens belonging to our houses. It was a bare plot, with a hard but dusty surface, and surrounded on three sides by stone walls: the area available for play was, perhaps, the length of a cricket pitch and about ten yards across, so that there was not room for more than a total of eight players.

The equipment consisted of a soft leather ball, and for each combatant a stick made from selected pieces of firewood, shaped according to fancy, subject to the finished article being passed through a  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch ring. The resultant game was always fast and often furious, its only drawback as a means of training for would-be escapers being the not inconsiderable risk of losing an eye, finger, or portions of an ankle or knee. The excitement created by such matches as the old camp, Yozgad, *versus* the new-comers from Changri, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th teams, reached at times a pitch rarely attained in the most hotly-contested house-match at an English public school.

For those debarred for any reason from this strenuous form of exercise there were walks

each evening except on hunting days and Wednesdays. On the latter days there were, during the summer months, weekly picnics in the neighbouring pine woods, to which about 50 per cent of the camp would go.

During daylight intercommunication was allowed between the two groups of houses: nominally an escort was necessary to accompany such visitors along the intervening road, but in practice this rule was a dead letter.

So hard-won, however, had been these few privileges, that the prospect of any one attempting to escape and thereby causing their suspension was looked upon by the majority of the original camp almost with horror. And this was not altogether without reason, for some of them had gone seriously into the question of escape, and had come to the conclusion that, from so hopelessly inaccessible a spot, all attempts, at least without outside assistance, were doomed to failure. Those of us who had come from Changri, however, were not likely to give up our long-cherished hopes without a struggle, but in the meantime kept our nefarious intentions to ourselves, except for half a dozen Yozgad officers whom we knew for certain to be keen to escape. The arrival of Cochrane had more than countered the additional difficulties involved by our move from Changri to Yozgad. While at Kara-Hissar, he had arranged a scheme with the powers that be in England by which a friendly boat should remain off a certain point on

the coast of the Mediterranean for a definite number of days at the end of August 1918.

Cochrane now placed this scheme at the disposal of the Changri division. There was some reluctance to give up old plans, but in the end four parties decided to take advantage of "Rendezvous X," as Cochrane's meeting-place was called—suffice to say that it was on the Adalian coast nearly due south of Kara-Hissar. Of these four parties ours was one. Our route to the mainland opposite the island of Samos would now be some 450 miles. Actually this was only 50 miles farther than to Rendezvous X, for the only feasible route to the latter was *via* Kara-Hissar, owing to the desert and mountains which would have to be crossed on a more direct route. Cochrane's scheme, however, promised an almost certain ending to the march to any one who reached the coast; whereas, even if we reached the western shore of Asia Minor, we should still have the problem of getting across to the island, and that from a coast which must inevitably be very carefully guarded.

Our six therefore decided to give up the old plan, and soon after were joined by Cochrane himself and Captain F. R. Ellis, D.C.L.I. This was a tremendous advantage to us, as Cochrane not only had the experience so hardly gained by his previous attempt, but had actually seen some of the country over which we should have to march if we succeeded in passing Kara-Hissar. It

was of course impossible for him to do guide to all four parties, as large numbers marching together would be immediately tracked; so he gave what suggestions he could, and the other three parties were to make their way to the rendezvous independently.

Our party therefore numbered eight, all of whom have now been introduced to our readers. We were the largest, and may claim to have been the most representative party, including as we did one naval officer, one gunner, one sapper, one British Infantry, two Indian Army, and two Territorial officers. The other three parties making for Rendezvous X numbered in all nine officers and Gunner Prosser. Besides these there were two parties having other schemes. The first, consisting almost entirely of Yozgad officers, intended marching for the Black Sea and crossing to Russia, the full facts of whose chaotic state were not known to us at the time. There were six officers in this party. Lastly, a party of two more officers determined to set out eastward, and hoped to make their way into Persia. There had been three or four other officers beside these who had seriously contemplated escape while at Changri, but who were now forced to change their mind through sickness or temporary disablements, such as crooked knees, &c.

The 26 starters—25 officers and 1 man—were scattered over five out of the six houses



comprising the camp. It was necessary, therefore, for those in each house—in no case all of them members of the same party—to devise their own particular means of getting out of the camp precincts, and then for a representative of each party to co-ordinate their respective schemes as far as possible. The first thing was to settle on a definite date for the attempt. As the majority were to make for Rendezvous X, to fit in with Cochrane's prearranged scheme, the date had to be late in the year. It was therefore decided that the night chosen should be the one towards the end of July most suitable as regards the moon. To enable the members of the various parties to join up at some convenient local rendezvous, and then put as great a distance as possible between themselves and Yozgad before the following dawn, the ideal was for the moon to rise an hour or so after we had all left our houses. Great credit is due to Captain T. R. Wells, 33rd Punjabis, attached R.F.C., for correctly computing the times of rising and setting of that irregular planet; for the only material available was a Nautical Almanac some four years old. From his predictions, the 30th July 1918 was eventually fixed upon as the best night. The moon would rise about 10.30 P.M., and 9.15 was fixed upon as a suitable time for all to leave their houses—if they could. This meant all would have been present at the evening roll-call, which took place dur-

ing dinner at about 7.45 P.M.; and their absence, if no alarm occurred, would not be discovered until the check taken at dawn next day.

The advent of Cochrane to our party led to a reconsideration of the whole question of the food and kit we should carry on our momentous journey. His previous experience and that of Keeling's party was that 35 lb. was about as much as one could expect to carry across country consistently with making reasonable progress. In the end, however, we found that there were so many essentials that we should have each to take about 43 lb., exclusive of the weight of packs, haversacks, &c., to carry them. The following list gives some idea of our final equipment. Each member of the party was to take the following:—

#### *Food—*

Sixty - eight biscuits, made by "Escapers Ltd.," five to the lb.  
Six soft biscuits, four to the lb.  
Sultanas, 4 lb.  
Cheese,  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb.  
Fresh meat (for the first two days only),  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb.  
Rice, 2 lb.  
Cocoa or ovaltine, 1 lb.  
Soup tablets (Oxo), 12 cubes.  
Chocolate, 1 lb.  
Tea,  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb.  
Salt, about  $\frac{1}{8}$  lb.  
Emergency ration of chocolate,  
Horlick's malted milk tablets,  
or Brand's essence, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb.

#### *Clothing—*

Spare pair of boots, or several pairs of native sandals.  
Spare shirt.  
Towel.  
Several pairs of socks.  
Felt mufti hat or service-dress cap.  
Vermin-proof belt.

Spare bootlaces.  
Handkerchiefs (mostly in the form of bags round the food).

*Miscellaneous—*

Share of medicines, mostly in tabloid form.  
One large and one small bandage.  
Matches, two or more boxes, one being in a water-tight case.  
Flint and slow-match cigarette lighter.  
Cigarettes or tobacco, according to taste.  
Soap, one piece.  
String.  
Mug and spoon.  
Wool for repairs to socks.  
Spare razor-blades.  
Compass.  
Clasp knife.  
Whistle.  
Tooth-brush.  
Comb.  
Notebook and pencil.

In addition, the following were to be distributed in more or less equal weights among the party as a whole:—

1 pair of field-glasses.  
6 skeins of  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch rope.  
2 boot-repair outfits.  
1 housewife.  
3 chargals (canvas bags for water).  
Map, original and copies, and enlargements from a small map.  
Cardboard protractors.  
"Sun compass."  
Book of star charts.  
Extra tea in the form of tablets.  
1 aluminium "degchie" or "dixie" (cooking-pot).  
1 very small adze (a carpenter's tool used in the East).  
2 pocket Gillette shaving sets.  
4 candles, } for giving red light sig-  
red cloth } nals at Rendezvous X.  
Small electric torch.  
2 pairs of scissors.  
2 iron rings, for use in the event of having to tow our kit across an unfordable river.  
1 sausage of solid meat extract.  
Opium.  
1 bottle of "Kola" compound.  
1 lb. tapioca.  
Small reel of fine steel wire.  
One  $\frac{1}{2}$ -pint bottle of brandy.  
Fishing tackle.

The actual clothes to be worn on starting were left to individual fancy. It was a question first of what one possessed; secondly, of what one anticipated would suit the temperatures we should meet, and best resist the wear and tear which our clothing would have to withstand. Some of us therefore decided on Indian khaki drill, others on home service serge, uniform; others again a mixture of the two. One of us had a rainproof coat cut down and converted to a tunic, which in practice was found to answer well. It was realised that we could not hope to pass for Turks by day, so no elaborate disguise was attempted. At night, however, a Turk's silhouette does not much differ, except for his head-gear, from that of a European—for a Turk is not a European, even though he is allowed a bit of European soil. We therefore decided to wear fezes, so that any one passing us at night would mistake us for Turks and ask no questions. For the daytime we would hold to our original Changri scheme of pretending to be a German survey party, and we would therefore carry either Homburg hats or British field service caps.

As to the best means of taking along all this kit, opinions were most diverse. The weary experiments which we had commenced whilst at Changri were continued with renewed zest at Yozgad, until by a system of trial and error each had worked his own particular idea into a more or less prac-



tical form. Our difficulties were enhanced by the necessity of concealing our experimental models from the eyes not only of brother Turk, but also of brother officers, so that all our tests were carried out in the somewhat confined space of the room cupboards. While so situated there was the risk of finding oneself shut in for half an hour if an officer net in the know came into the room to describe the events of the latest fox-hunt. Eventually the equipment of our party varied from a simple but enormous rucksack, with water-bottle slung separately, to a rather complicated arrangement by which the pack was balanced to some extent by biscuit-pouches, haversack, and water-bottle attached to the belt.

In all cases the total load carried, with water-bottles filled but chargals empty, amounted to close upon 50 lb.: of this 25½ lb. were food, 5 lb. water-bottle, and 12 lb. accessories and spare clothing; and the remainder the weight of the equipment itself—in one case as much as 8 lb.

A few notes as to the above food and equipment may be of interest. The soft biscuits were obtained at the last moment from an officer who had intended to decamp but was prevented from so doing by a game leg. They took the place of 1½ lb. of a kind of sun-dried meat known locally as "pastomar," similar to "biltong," but seasoned with garlic. This we had bought two or three weeks previous

to the date of departure, for it was not always obtainable in the bazaar. It was therefore necessary to take it while the chance offered, in spite of the unpleasantness of having to keep such evil-smelling stuff in a living-room. Its taste to any one but the garlic-loving Oriental is as disagreeable as its scent, so that it was not altogether without relief that we found at the last moment that most of the pastomar was already breeding maggots, and we replaced it with the odd six biscuits apiece.

Having read during our captivity a good deal about Arctic exploration, we had also experimented with the local pemmican, but found it would not withstand the heat. The cheeses were from home parcels, and to save weight were taken out of their tins on the last day. The same was also done with the cocoa and ovaltine, which were then carried in bags made from handkerchiefs.

Two of the party also carried an extra pound of chocolate and some Oxo tablets, on the understanding that they were to be thrown away if the loads proved too heavy, for most of us felt that the last straw was already nearly reached.

Spare clothing was left for individuals to decide for themselves, and some of us carried some thin underclothing and a "woolley" in addition to the spare shirt and socks.

The medicines comprised quinine, aspirin, cascara sagrada, Dover's powders, and iodine,

these being supplied to us by our own doctors. Also some arrowroot and ovaltine in case any one had to diet himself. We had in addition, while at Changri, managed to obtain from the local chemist about fifteen opium pills per head. Most of us further carried either boric powder or ointment for the feet. The vermin-proof belts were to be more useful as a safeguard against chill than against vermin, as in the end we nowhere slept inside a Turkish dwelling.

With one exception all the compasses were of the poorest description, being of the more or less toy variety with a mirror on the back. Changri, however, produced one of superior pattern, which we purchased without arousing suspicion, and attempted to make more efficient with the luminous paint off the face of an old watch, but without very lasting success.

It is not easy to make a bag of canvas which will hold water, but by dint of fine stitching and a special kind of beeswax, our naval leader succeeded in producing three chargals which did yeoman service.

The map on which we were to rely was a French one, forty years old, which an officer had bought for five pounds from a Greek dentist at Kastamoni. As it happened it was not bought primarily for escape purposes, but we persuaded him to sell it to us on his leaving Changri for Geddos. In this the hill features were very indistinctly shown by vague

hachuring, and even a big river such as the Kizil Irmak was in several places shown dotted, signifying not that this dried up during parts of the year, but that no one had surveyed it. An up-to-date but very small map had been received from home by means which had perhaps better remain secret, but, owing to our change of plan, showed little of our proposed route.

The "sun compass" needs some explanation. This was an invention of Captain A. B. Matthews, D.S.O., R.E., who had been a prisoner of war at Yozgad since the fall of Kut-el-Amara. Wishing to make a rough survey of the immediately surrounding country for the use of the Hunt Club, and finding that local magnetic attraction made a compass altogether unreliable, he thought him of a simple means of utilising the sun, which in the wonderful climate of Asia Minor is rarely obscured throughout the spring, summer, or autumn. The "sun compass" consists merely of a thin wooden disc of say 5 inches diameter, with the outer edge divided into 360 degrees, and with a hole at the centre through which can be inserted a piece of stiff straight wire. A table of the sun's bearing at any hour on any day completes the instrument. In actual use the disc is held horizontally, with the graduations upwards and the wire kept vertical and protruding above the disc. Then, by turning the latter till the shadow of the wire falls on the sun's bearing plus 180



degrees, you have the disc set to read off true bearings in any direction.

Captain Matthews was also responsible for the star charts. By means of two maps of the heavens obtained from a book on travel, published by the Royal Geographical Society, he devised from first principles a "bus" consisting of three concentric cardboard discs. By means of these it was possible, almost mechanically, to read off the bearings of the brighter stars in the main constellations for any hour and any night of the year. It was thus possible to obtain a series of charts showing on which star one should march for any required bearing, and at any particular time—in our case for all hours of the nights from the 1st August to the 15th September 1918. This chart book was of value as a check on a magnetic compass by night, but, of course, assumed an elementary knowledge of at least those constellations which would be of use for the particular purpose in view.

Although we expected that, if we were to get through at all, we should have to avoid replenishing our supplies at any villages, it was necessary to take money in case we were compelled to do so as a last resource. For this purpose a certain amount of gold and silver was essential, because it was quite possible that, in paying for anything in an out-of-the-way district, the paper money would be received at its true value, namely, nothing at all. A certain amount of

paper money was, however, advisable in view of the conditions we might expect if we were recaptured, as paper money was less likely to be taken away from us than gold and silver. We therefore decided to start if possible with at least £2 each in gold, £30 in paper, and two medjities (worth four shillings each) in silver. This we succeeded in collecting, thanks to being able to cash a few cheques locally: for both the gold and the silver, however, it was necessary to pay five times their face value in paper. We bought silver coins, a few at a time, from various sentries. These men thoroughly understood our desire for them when we hinted at a pretty girl in England who would look very handsome with a necklace of medjities round her neck.

While at Changri our party had succeeded in obtaining from other officers two *pukka* helio-mirrors, which had escaped destruction on the fall of Kut-el-Amara. With these we had fitted up a duplex heliograph, complete with signalling key and adjusting screws. Whereas, however, for the Samcs scheme it would have been invaluable, for Rendezvous X its use was more problematical; and in view of the way in which essentials had gradually mounted up, it was in the end rather reluctantly decided that the helio must go by the board, as it weighed about three pounds.

Another decision now made was that in our party we

should not use violence in order to make our escape, unless it should be necessary on the coast itself to avoid throwing away a really good chance. It was recognised that if bloodshed occurred, the Turks would be quite capable of killing off the whole of our party, and possibly others, if recaptured. For this reason no attempt was made to procure firearms, though this would probably have been no more difficult than obtaining the fezes, compasses, and field-glasses.

As the time grew near for the great adventure, we entered on the last stage of our training. Every opportunity was taken of going out hunting, although the number was limited to a total field of thirty. Keeness in hockey died off, as many of us were afraid of sustaining some injury which might incapacitate us on the actual day. Running and hard walking round the garden became a regular institution in some houses; and several cupboards, if suddenly opened at almost any hour of the day and at many in the night, would have disclosed a member of an escape-party loaded up in the most extraordinary manner, and performing gymnastic exercises for the strengthening of leg and shoulder muscles.

At the same time efforts were made to build up the stamina necessary for a 400-mile march by eating the most nourishing foods obtainable, irrespective of the fact that the price of any food

seemed to go up as the cube of its body-building value. To give one instance, sugar was at this time a sovereign the pound.

It was almost inevitable that, with so many preparations in progress, the secret of our intentions should leak out in the camp; and once suspicions were aroused many of our actions would go to confirm them. Thus it came about that a few days before the 30th July, the whole of the camp at Yozgad knew pretty well that attempts to escape were on foot; the shopping lists for the Changri division were alone enough to have set people talking. Everybody wanted bootlaces, straps, hobnails, rope, &c., in prodigious quantities. Unfortunately the Turks also appeared to have got wind of it. For the last week of July, sentries were visited and awakened with unheard-of frequency. Even the Commandant himself occasionally visited the different houses after dark. In the case of one house, an extra sentry was suddenly posted in the garden.

However, our preparations went quietly on; our "hosts" might have nothing really definite to go upon, and the more keen the sentries were now, the more weary they would be by the time the real day arrived. We therefore continued to make holes in walls, loosen iron bars, dig unnecessary irrigation channels in the garden, &c., &c., all as aids to egress from one house or another on the final night.



In the particular house of our original six (Cochrane and Ellis lived in another), we had come to the conclusion that our best chance was to prepare a hole through the outer wall of the kitchen belonging to our mess. This kitchen, it is necessary to explain, was built along the high enclosure wall of the garden, and was separated from the house itself by a narrow alley-way, over which one of the sentries stood guard. Next to the kitchen in the same outhouse was a little room with one small window opening on to the alley, the entrance being *via* the kitchen itself. This second room was used as a fowl-house, and it was here that we made up our minds to prepare a hole three-quarters of the way through the outer wall. How exactly those escaping from our house were to get across into the kitchen and finish off the hole on the final night was a problem of which the solution was only settled in detail at the last moment, and we will therefore leave our readers in a similar state of suspense. The essential was that all should be present at the evening roll-call, and yet the hole must be completed and everybody be across at precisely 9.15 P.M.

So uncertain were we of the means of effecting this that we had a second alternative in case the first scheme could not be carried out. This involved getting over the wall by ladders.

A day or two before the 30th July, representatives of

the various parties met once again in solemn conclave to ensure that the various plans should not clash, and a few general instructions were issued to parties with a view to obtaining as long a start as possible. Every one was to be represented in bed on the night by a dummy; boots were to be padded, likewise the ends of khud-sticks; water-bottles were not to be filled because they gurgled — there's a fortune awaiting the man who invents a stopper to prevent them doing so; every man's equipment was to be finally tried on to make certain that it would not make any noise.

Lastly, a lamp-signal was arranged between houses in case any party should be caught just prior to leaving their house, for instance while completing a hole. If that signal were given, it would no longer be necessary for the other parties to wait until 9.15 before they started; on the contrary, they were advised to start away at once before the alarm reached the sentries in the other houses.

The 30th July arrived, but with it an unexpected complication. The news had just come through that an exchange ship was being sent out from England to fetch some of the worst cases of sick and wounded from among the British prisoners in Turkey. The boat, said the rumour, was due to arrive at some port at about the end of August, and the question therefore arose at the eleventh hour whether, if we set off now, it

might not give the Turks the pretext that our Government had informed us of the visit of this vessel and that we were making off in the hopes of getting aboard her secretly. The argument was of course, on the face of it, ridiculous, but then so is the Turk, and it would be a terrible responsibility for us if by our escape we destroyed the hopes of these poor sick and wounded men. A vote was therefore taken as to whether we would postpone the date, with the result that the motion was carried by a small majority.

This was a terrible disappointment, for it meant, we thought, another month of indecision. Moreover, there would be no hope of finding a boat still awaiting us at Rendezvous X, and it would be too late in the year for much chance of our finding crops to eat or hide in. It was the moon, however, which in the end decided that the postponement could not be for so long. On working out its time of rising, it was found that if we waited till the end of August the moon would only rise late enough to let us leave our houses at 9.15, when within four days of its disappearance. In this way we should be handicapped

by having the maximum of dark, or practically dark, nights for our journey. The whole question was therefore revised in this new light, and it was decided that we must either start before the new moon came or else give up all hope of leaving in this year at all. The night 7th-8th August was then chosen. This would be a Wednesday, and the following morning a hunt-day, when the roll-call taken at dawn was confused by the movements of thirty officers dressing in haste for the day's sport.

The week's grace was spent in perfecting all our arrangements. One refinement was to collect our own and other people's hair when out by our officer barber, and paste it on to the outside of a cloth bag stuffed with rubbish or towels made up to about the size of a man's head. These were to be the heads of our dummies. Meanwhile we were more careful with our shopping orders, and were relieved to find suspicions in the camp dying down. On the morning of the 31st July one officer, who was supposed to know nothing of the escape, had been called by his orderly and told, "They ain't gone after all, sir!"

#### CHAPTER V.

At last the long-deferred day had dawned—the cause rather of relief than excitement to our party, after their planning and scheming for eleven long months and active

preparations for as many weeks. Our only prayer now was that we should at least have a run for our money, and be spared the ignominy of being led back into the camp



at Yozgad without the taste of even a few days' freedom.

The 7th August was a Wednesday, and at 11 A.M. the usual pionic party set off for the pine woods, the majority never dreaming for a moment of the intention of twenty-five officers—a quarter of all the officers in the camp—to escape that night. Their departure was the signal for feverish activity in completing preparations, which, by their nature, had to be left until the last day. Such, in the house then occupied by the present writers, called Hospital House, was the screwing together of the ladders required in case an alternative scheme for getting out of our house should prove necessary. Then there were rucksacks and haversacks to be finally made up, and the whole "Christmas Tree" to be tried on to ensure that there was no rattling. For reasons which will appear, it was necessary too for the Old Man and Looney to convey their kits across the alley into our kitchen and there leave them concealed, the one in a blanket and the other in a box. Meanwhile, Grunt and Perce had put the finishing touches to the hole commenced, as previously described, in the kitchen wall, until daylight could be seen through every joint in the outer skin of masonry, and until it was as certain as such things could be that the remaining stones would come away easily. Watches had to be synchronised to ensure that all six parties should start simultaneously; the fresh meat for

the first two days to be issued, and so on almost *ad infinitum*. It was at this stage that we discovered the maggots in the "pastomar" or "biltong," to which reference has already been made.

That evening, before the hour when intercommunication between houses was supposed to cease, there were many visits from well-wishers living in other houses who knew of our intentions, and last arrangements were made with our British orderlies to play their part. Doubtless they did it well. One can imagine the delight with which they would put some of our dummies to bed after our departure, and as we left we heard their efforts in our house to cover our exit with the noise of a sing-song. If no alarm occurred before daylight, they were to remove the dummies after these had served their purpose at the 4 A.M. "rounds." One orderly had also volunteered to build up the hole in the wall as soon as the house and kitchen doors were unlocked.

At last all was ready, and we sat down to what, we hoped, would be our last full meal for many a day. Twenty minutes to eight came and went, the time when the *onbashi*, or Turkish corporal, usually took roll-call; but it was not till eight o'clock that evening that the six of the party in our house, who, with a Major A—— and the "King of Oireland," another escaper, formed the mess on the top floor, heard his footsteps on

the stairs. We returned his good-night with rather more than usual gusto, and waited till he had disappeared, as his custom was, into the next room. Now was the moment: Old Man and Looney slipped out of the room and downstairs into the kitchen, the door of which, with the side-door of the house, was allowed to remain open every night until our orderlies had "washed up." These two were to go across in their shirt sleeves and carrying plates, so that, if he noticed them at all, the sentry posted over the alley separating the main building from the out-house would naturally mistake them for orderlies. In the excitement of the moment, however, Old Man had forgotten to bring down his coat; and Looney, now safely ensconced in the kitchen, wondered why he had not followed him across. Next minute, however, there was a tremendous crash and a tinkle of broken crockery; for the Old Man, discovering his loss, had turned back and slipped on the stairs. Nothing could have exceeded in realism this unintentional imitation of an orderly. Moreover, the accident induced a change of mind, with the result that he lost no further time in crossing to the kitchen, sending back Orderly M—— to fetch the missing article, which arrived in due course.

Now followed an anxious few minutes. Sometimes it happened that the *onbashi* would miscount an officer or man, or count one twice over, and

the check would then be repeated throughout the house. We realised that if this occurred on the present night it would be necessary for Old Man and Looney to reappear from the kitchen, and for scheme No. 2 to come into operation. Incidentally their kits, then in the outhouse, would have to be brought back in the blanket and box by our orderlies. Scheme No. 2 was to leave the house, carrying ladders, through a window on the eastern side; after which would follow a ticklish crawl between two sentries forty yards apart to the garden wall nine feet in height. The bars of the window in question had been loosened and cracked by Looney, with Old Man watching the sentries' movements, during some amateur theatricals held in the house on the previous night. To our relief, however, this plan had not to be put into execution. As was his custom, the *onbashi* locked the house and kitchen doors, and as soon as his footsteps had died away the advance-guard of our party were able to complete the opening of the wall. It was now about 8.20 P.M.; the work went on quickly but quietly; a few minutes only and the clear starlit sky was visible through the rapidly enlarging aperture. Then came another anxious moment; for as the two were relieving one another at the work, there suddenly appeared at the half-completed task the head of a mongrel dog. One growl or bark would suffice to draw the attention of the



watchmen over the vegetable gardens outside, who did not hesitate to fire off their ancient rifles on the slightest alarm; but the dog after one look in at the hole strolled on, and the good work was soon after resumed. One large stone, however, seemed likely to give trouble; indeed, it had almost been decided to let it remain, when it suddenly came away, and crashed noisily to the ground. But the sound, if heard at all, fell on deaf ears—although it must have been at about this very time that some of the party, still in the house and overlooking the wall, saw a man standing within a score of yards from the hole.

Their work completed, Old Man and Looney proceeded to screen it from any one passing casually along, by affixing a square of canvas over the outside with "blobs" of beeswax. It now only remained to arrange for the easy withdrawal of the staple of the kitchen door, so that the latter could be opened from the outside, although padlocked; then, having donned haversack, water-bottle and pack, to await the arrival of the remaining six from this house, four of our own and two of another party.

Their plan depended on the aid of Pat, an officer debarred from escaping himself by a crooked knee, but willing enough to help others to liberty. Punctually at 9.15, the hour at which the parties in the different houses were allowed to start, Pat's clear tones could be heard calling to the sentry on the alley-way, "Nebuchi, nebuchi,

jigara dushdu," which, being interpreted, means, "Sentry, sentry, I've dropped my cigarettes." And indeed he had; one hundred scattered about a cabbage-bed should keep the sentry busy for some time. But the wretched man nearly upset all calculations, for, wearied with a quarter of an hour's duty, he was already almost asleep. Pat, however, was not to be denied, and five minutes later was no doubt explaining to the delighted old fellow from the upper window how he could have a few cigarettes himself and return the remainder next morning. In the meantime the other six were able to cross unobserved to the kitchen. They had been waiting, ready loaded up with their kits in a ground-floor room used as a carpenter's shop. This had a door, normally disused and locked, but easily opened and leading on to the alley-way. We sometimes wonder whether the sentry was foolish enough to mention to his relief about the cigarettes he had been given. At the time of writing we are still ignorant how long it was before our departure was discovered.

When Old Man and Looney had rushed off to the kitchen the other six of the second-floor mess had remained at table, talking and smoking as usual. The Turkish corporal taking roll-call reappeared from the room beyond the dining-room, and was told not to forget the "yourt" for the next day. "Yourt," a kind of junket, is a staple diet of the

Turk, and most of the prisoners became very partial to it. As it was hard to come by except through the medium of a sentry, it was their custom to remind him each evening, so that he might have some faint chance of remembering about it next morning.

A few minutes later they heard the kitchen door being looked, and heaved a sigh of relief. The advance-party had had enough time to get across to the kitchen, and roll had been correctly called the first time. Major A—— in our mess, who was not escaping, had offered to watch the Upper House for the alarm-signal, and he was left sitting in the mess-room, while the others set to work on various jobs. Grunt and Perce removed all obstructions to exit from the carpenter's shop door, and Nobby and Johnny took the four ladders from their hiding-place in a wood-store and tied bits of felt round the ends to deaden the sound when they should be placed against the wall. After this the ladders were taken into the cellar, whence scheme No. 2 would have to be worked. They then went upstairs to the bedroom, where their escape paraphernalia was stored. Here they hung towels and blankets over the windows, and started to dress by the light of a candle. It was a queer sight indeed. They were, at this point, joined by an escaping officer from a downstairs mess and Pat. The latter was dresser-in-chief, and helped them on with their equipment. He was very

miserable that he was not going himself, but under the circumstances, it would have been madness for him to think of marching over broken country by night. He now employed spare moments by repeating the sentences that he had learnt up for the benefit of the cigarette-dropping incident, on which depended the best scheme of getting out of the house. The bedroom was the one in which Old Man, Grunt, and Johnny slept, and those in the room now set to work to make up the dummies in the three beds. The heads had already been fashioned, and, with a few clothes stuffed under the blankets and the heads placed in position, the beds were soon occupied with three graceful figures in attitudes of deep repose. The small piece of towel forehead that could be seen over the edge of the blanket looked perhaps a trifle pale, but, apart from that, the beds seemed quite natural. They could not resist the temptation of calling the Major away from the mess window for a moment, just to have a look at the sleeping beauties, and he returned chuckling to his post. Water-bottles were then filled about one-third full with a thick liquid paste of cocoa. Although water was not to be carried at the start, on account of the impossibility of preventing a gurgle in the water-bottle, the cocoa paste was permissible, for, being only just liquid enough to pour, it made no noise. We



had decided in the morning to leave the bedroom before 9 P.M., at which time the sentries changed. A few minutes before this hour, the six officers gave their feet a gouty appearance by tying felt padding on to their boots, and then started down to the carpenter's shop. On his way, Johnny turned into the orderlies' room to say good-bye, thanking them hurriedly for their help, without which the preparations for the escape would have been almost impossible. A few days later he found in the pocket of his jersey, which had been mended by an orderly belonging to the Norfolk regiment, a small piece of paper on which was written, "Good-bye, and good luck, sir—B.," and he still has it in his possession. Going downstairs, they met an officer prisoner, who, not having been admitted to the secret, nearly had a fit at the sight of six such extraordinary objects. Grunt looked in at another orderlies' room above the exit, and asked them to blow out their lamp and make a noise. The six then crept quietly into the carpenter's shop, and waited breathlessly by the door. Sentries were changed, and once again all became still. One lived every second of that waiting. Then came Pat's first sentence—a pause; it was repeated, then again and again. After the party had heard him shouting for many hours (perhaps thirty seconds, as time is reckoned by a watch), the sentry answered. His form was just

visible as he passed by a small iron-barred window, and now was the opportunity. An open door, three steps across the alley-way, a fumble with the kitchen door staple; another open door, a turn to the left, bend down or you'll knock your head off getting into the fowl-house, starlight showing in a black wall, through head first and almost on your face into long grass, and there you are—a free man.

Looney and Old Man, being already on the spot, had been granted the privilege of leading through the hole, the remainder following in an order arranged by lot, since ours was not the only party represented. It so happened that the two of the other party were sandwiched between the other four of ours, and this caused a temporary separation; for at the best it took an appreciable time to crawl through the wall and pick oneself up on the other side, but these two were especially slow. Grunt too had lost time when it came to his turn. Impatiently waiting to see the starry sky once more when the then broad form of Johnny should have ceased to obscure the hole, he eventually discovered that the cause of the darkness was not that Johnny had jammed, but that the canvas flap had fallen, and was covering the hole all too effectively.

Our main object at this stage was to avoid disturbing the garden chowkidars, and therefore each as he emerged lost no time in creeping along the high garden wall, and dropping

down into the friendly shelter of the river bed. For all its "hundred springs"—the meaning of the name "Yozgad"—the river for the greater part of the year consisted merely of a shallow and dirty stream, not more than ten feet broad, although its banks were as many yards apart, and from five to eight feet in height. It was along this that we all turned down-stream, Johnny now taking the lead. A few days previously he had suddenly developed a passionate interest in natural history. A polite letter, in which the word "ornithological" played a great part, was written to the Commandant, and Johnny was permitted to join two real naturalists in an expedition starting at 4 A.M. on our last Sunday morning at Yozgad. These two had been at Changri with us, so they knew we had intentions of escaping, and Johnny told them in which direction his party wished to start off, and this direction was now taken. Johnny counted his steps, noted landmarks which would be visible by starlight, and was able to draw a rough map of the country. All three dug at intervals for imaginary field-mice, until the sentry with them thought they were more insane than even the average Englishman, and said so. In the end, however, the strain of this great thought overpowered him and he fell asleep, giving Johnny the opportunity he required. He climbed a hill, took bearings, and was able to see our future route to within half a mile of

a rugged piece of country known to the local hunt club as "Hades." On the return journey the three came back along the edge of the stream, which ran past the bottom of our garden wall, and in which we have just left the six of our party. The plan formed upon this reconnaissance and now carried out was to follow the river-bed until nearly clear of the most westerly houses of the town, then to turn right-handed up a stony track, passing between two high walls till the track ended. A few more paces to the west would then take us into the open country. These few paces, however, would be along a main road directly in front of two or three houses on the outskirts of the town, but the alternative of following the river-bed farther and then turning up would necessitate passing through vegetable-gardens, which, as already mentioned, were zealously guarded. In the event, the original plan was justified by success, despite the fact that the six of us, at this time unintentionally split up into parties of four and two, passed fully in view of a man sitting on one of the verandahs overlooking the road. It was probably thanks to our fezes that we escaped detection, for other disguise we had none. It was lucky that we had taken the precaution to cover our boots with felt pads, for the ring of an Englishman's boots on a metalled road would, we know, have aroused the envy and suspicion of any Turk who



heard it, accustomed as he is to the soft footfall of the country sandal or "chariq."

Once comfortably clear of the town, the leading four could afford to wait for the other two to come up, and with their arrival we began to enjoy our first taste of freedom from Turkish toils. The only question to disturb us now was whether Cochrane and Ellis had got out safely from their house. So far, at any rate, there had been no sounds of an alarm. We therefore lost no time in setting off to the rendezvous, where we hoped to join up as a complete party of eight. This was to be at the bottom of the "Hades" ravine, at the point where it was crossed by the telegraph line to Angora. The distance from our houses, as the crow flies, was perhaps two miles, for which, taking into consideration the darkness of the night and the difficulty of the country, we had allowed two and a quarter hours. At 11.30 P.M., any one who had failed to appear was to be considered recaptured or lost, and those who had arrived were to go on. An absurdly liberal allowance of time you may say; but even the six whose movements we have followed, and who had the advantage of Johnny's guidance over a route reconnoitred by day, took till 11 P.M. to cover these two miles. We were experiencing, some of us for the first time, the difficulties of a night march. In addition, it was our first trial of carrying our loads, weigh-

ing nearly fifty pounds, anywhere outside a cupboard. No wonder then that our progress was slow, and at one time we began to think that we must have already crossed the line of telegraph which was to lead us down into "Hades" itself. But there it was at last, and we were soon slipping down—only too literally—into the ravine.

Our first act, after quenching our thirst, was to fill up our water-bottles. As 11.30 approached, with still no sign of Cochrane and Ellis, we began to wonder whether, perhaps, they might not have gone on to another ravine in "Hades," and be awaiting the rest of us there; so some commenced scouting around, while others remained to show their position by periodical flashes with a cigarette lighter. At 11.30 we decided to give them another quarter of an hour; to delay after that would be to jeopardise the remainder of the party, for it was already only four hours to dawn. Great, therefore, was our relief when, at the last moment of this time of grace, we saw two forms appear on the skyline, and presently heard the rattle of loose shale as they picked their way towards our flashes. So far so good; and we were soon exchanging mutual congratulations on joining up, and saying that even this one night's breath of freedom, after two and a half years' captivity, would be worth all the trouble of our preparations.

But we must go back for a moment and narrate the ex-

periences of the late-comers in leaving their house.

This was called the Upper House, and to the east overlooked the main street below, but was separated from it by three shallow terraces, which boasted some treasured vegetables and a few fruit trees. To the north the ground fell steeply by two high terraces to a small patch of ground enclosed by walls. It was here that we used to play the four-a-side hockey. The upper terrace on this northern face was visible to a sentry at the main gate of the Hospital House, which was on the other side of a road running along the hockey ground wall. The two remaining sides of the house abutted on tumble-down cottages, from which they were separated by a narrow alley. At the north-western and south-western corners sentries were posted. The number of officers escaping from this house was five. The bars of a window on the side facing the main street had been cut with the aid of a steel saw, and at 9.15 P.M. the five climbed down a rope-ladder to the ground. Skirting the edge of the house at intervals of two minutes they crept quietly through the garden and reached the lower of the two terraces on the north side, keeping well under the high bank. Here they passed within three yards of the sentry's box, on the top of the bank above them. Absolute silence was necessary, and this was the reason that the two had been so late in arriving at the rendezvous, for each step

had to be taken with extreme care.

The terrace a few yards beyond the sentry's box sloped down into the large market-garden to the west of the Hospital House. On the south side of this was a wall, along which they picked their way. Here, too, great caution was required. Look-out huts had to be passed within a few yards, but finally they were across the garden. A high wall had now to be climbed, but fortunately it was in bad repair and afforded good footholds. Here Cochrane and Ellis heard voices. An old woman had seen S— and R— and was wanting to know what they were doing. Our two did not wait to hear much more. Turning right, they were on the same stony track up which the first party had turned from the river-bed, and now they followed Johnny's route till they finally struck the telegraph post and arrived at "Hades."

Ellis had arrived puffing and blowing, but there was no time to be lost if we were to be at anything like a safe distance from Yozgad before dawn broke.

Five minutes before midnight, then, we started off a complete party, and were soon scrambling up the northern side of "Hades" on to the plateau above. Having left the line of telegraph poles for the sake of an easier ascent, we were unable at once to find it again. We therefore decided that, although it had been our original in-



tention to follow the telegraph wires as likely to lead over a passable line of country, we would waste no further time in a search for them, but would set off by compass and stars in a due westerly direction, and hope to pick them up again later on. The ground proved favourable: our course took us over fairly level country, a considerable portion of which was under cultivation, and for some time we were walking over stubble. Although there was no moon, our eyes rapidly accustomed themselves to the bright starlight, and hopeful progress was made, but not without occasional alarms. The first occurred within an hour of leaving "Hades." Looney was temporarily relieving Cochrane of his task of guiding the party, when the leading six suddenly found that the other two had disappeared, and inwardly cursed them for straggling. In reality, what had happened was this: the party, moving in no regular formation, had got a little separated, when suddenly the two in the rear had seen the glowing tip of a cigarette moving obliquely towards them, and immediately afterwards descried the shadowy forms of three mounted men. Quick as thought they lay down and waited till the horsemen had passed; the rest moved on in blissful ignorance of their danger, until, on turning for the others, they too saw the cigarette and realised what had happened. Those three men were almost certainly

gendarmes. Apart from this, we occasionally found ourselves coming upon little groups of huts and villages, and these necessitated wasteful detours. We had, moreover, an uncomfortable feeling that we were leaving behind us a rather obvious track through the crops where yet uncut.

About 2 A.M. we once more picked up the line of telegraph poles, and were all the more glad to follow them as we saw difficult country ahead, and they were likely to lie along a practicable route. Practicable it was, but then it is practicable to reach the bottom of most slopes if you are prepared to sit down and slide; for that is what we had to do for the latter part of the descent into the steep-sided ravine, across which our telegraph line now led us. At least, however, we had the satisfaction of a much-needed drink from the crystal-clear water of a mountain stream. Here indeed would have been an ideal hiding-place for the coming day; we could have bathed and drunk to our hearts' content, shielded both from sun and view by enormous rocks which towered above us, almost on the water's edge. But we were only seven or eight miles from Yozgad, and an hour lost now meant one to be made up later on. After a drink, therefore, we climbed up the farther slope, to find as we struggled on that we were once more coming into open country, with less and less prospect of a suitable hiding-place. To turn back was out of the ques-

tion, and the first light of dawn caught us still moving forward, and within sight of a village. The sun had not risen before men and women were on every side of us, going out to work in their fields. We came to a stream running through a grove of trees, but it was too near the village to remain there. Our freedom was to be short-lived, we thought, as we took a hurried drink and proceeded across more open country. Eventually, at 4.50, we dropped down into a tiny nullah on the open hillside. The only merit of this spot was that it was not directly visible from the village. We realised, however, that we could hardly hope still further to escape observation from the fields if we continued to lie there all day, so Looney agreed to scout around for something better. A more hopeful nullah, with banks in places five feet high, was reported half a mile beyond the next low crest. To that therefore we moved in broad daylight, glad to find that we should at least have some water, for a muddy trickle flowed down the nullah bed. Without this the heat would have been intolerable, for, until late in the day, the banks proved too shelving to provide shade from the sun. Even with water, Turkish-bath conditions are conducive neither to sleep nor appetite. Not one of us slept a wink that day. As to the day's ration, it was with difficulty that we forced ourselves to eat a quarter of a pound of salted

meat and nine ounces of home-made biscuit—not an excessive amount, even when you add to it one and a half ounces a head of chocolate, which Grunt produced from the store of extras he was voluntarily carrying.

We reckoned that we were perhaps ten miles' distance from Yozgad. After the events of the morning we entertained little hope of our whereabouts not having been reported, but we were to learn that we flattered ourselves as to the interest we aroused among the country people. The fact at least remained that we were left undisturbed in our somewhat obvious hiding-place: the only signs of life that we saw during the day were a shepherd with his flock of sheep grazing a quarter of a mile away, and a Turkish soldier who, in the early evening, came down to our nullah a little below us, and was probably himself a deserter and so a fugitive like ourselves. Towards dusk we stood up and watched a stream of men and carts returning to their villages after the day's work in the fields.

By 7.30 all was clear, and we lost no time in making our way to the line of telegraph poles which we could see disappearing over the crest of the next rise. Alongside we found a splendid track, which we were able to follow over undulating country for several miles. Nobby was in trouble with his "chariqs"; in spite of experiments carried out for weeks beforehand he



had not succeeded in getting a pair which did not gall him in one place or another. This was serious, as he was relying on these country sandals to carry him down to the coast, for strong English boots were hard to come by. On this night, after several delays as one after another of his spares was tried and rejected, he was eventually able to wear a pair lent him by Cochrane.

Twilight had now faded, and we were dependent once more on the light of the stars. The track, easily distinguishable while it kept to the telegraph poles, had begun to wind about as the country became more undulating, and in a little while could no longer be followed with any certainty. We therefore ceased to worry about the track and trusted to the telegraph to lead us towards Angora, until this too failed us, for it went too much to the north of west. We therefore proceeded on our proper course by compass.

We had started in the evening, feeling unexpectedly fresh, and it says much for our training that the first night's march had left none of us in the least bit stiff. Nevertheless the day in the hot sun and the lack of all sleep had tried us more severely than we thought, and we were now beginning to feel the effects. The idea had been to have the regulation five minutes' halt at the end of every hour's marching, but we soon found that we were taking ten minutes' rest every half hour. We were, moreover, consumed with an appal-

ling thirst; even at night the heat off the ground in this arid tract of land was stifling, while the parched and cracked surface held out little hope of there being water in the vicinity. At 11.30 we decided we must have a long halt, in the hopes of a little sleep; Johnny and Looney agreed to share the watch. We marched on again considerably refreshed soon after midnight: our main anxiety now was for water. Two hours later we saw looming ahead a low ridge of hills, and decided to go and wait there until dawn should reveal the most likely direction for a drink. A little searching round then showed us a fair-sized stream in the next valley to the south-west: in Asia Minor, however, where there is a perennial stream, there is fairly certain to be a village or two, and so it proved in this case; but water we must have; besides, on the hillside, where we had rested till daylight, there now appeared a shepherd with his flock. Hastily gathering up our kit, we dodged up dry and rocky nullahs and over the next ridge. Once more it was broad daylight before we settled down for the day in our hiding-place, in rocky ground intersected with crevices just wide enough for a man to lie in. On the way we had to descend a steep slope covered with loose shale, and this proved a sore test for important portions of our clothing, for it was impossible to keep to one's feet. When four of the party

went to the stream below us to fill up the water-bottles, they found they were within a few hundred yards of another village, so that one visit to water had to suffice for the rest of the day. They had been seen by at least one boy who was looking after a flock of sheep near the stream. We were lucky, however, to discover, close above our hiding-place, a tiny spring, from which, thanks to a couple of water-holes dug with the adze by Perce, it was possible to collect about two mugfuls of water in an hour. Cochrane now told off the party into watches by pairs; but, on watch or off, there was little or no sleep to be had. During the morning we made a fire and "brewed" a little arrowroot and cocoa, and had three ounces of chocolate apiece. All of these Grunt and Ellis had carried in addition to their ordinary share of rations, and, try as we would, we found that, owing to the heat, we could not eat more than one and a half out of the ration of three biscuits allowed for that day. Of course this saved food, but it also meant the gradual exhaustion of one's strength, and no reduction in the weight to be carried next day.

Our progress on the first two nights had not been up to expectation, for we reckoned that we were still within eighteen miles of Yozgad, whereas we had hoped to cover something over twelve miles a day. If we were un-

able to maintain our average when we were fresh and not yet pinched for food, we could hardly hope to do better after days of marching and semi-starvation. Our advance on the third night was to provide little encouragement, for we barely made good another eight miles.

Having waited until 8 P.M. before we dared to descend to the stream, we halted there in the dark for a deep drink and the refilling of our water-vessels. Half an hour later we left the valley and found ourselves in a network of hills, from which we only emerged into open country shortly before eleven o'clock, passing but one small channel of very bad water on the down-stream side of a village. Our course now lay across an arid plain, featureless except for a few village tracks and low cone-shaped hills; and we began to wonder whether dawn would not find us without water or cover, when at 2 A.M. we dropped into a patch of broken country, and decided we would rest there till daylight. As a look round then disclosed no better hiding-place, we settled down where we were for the day. We found the remains of an old spring, but it was dry. Thanks to the chargals, most of our water-bottles were still three-quarters full; but this was little enough with which to start a day in the tropical sun. Most of us rigged ourselves partial shelters with our towels and spare shirts, supported on khud-sticks. We



gained, however, little protection against the fierce rays. But all things come to an end—even this seem-

ingly interminable day; yet it was to be nothing compared to the night which followed.

#### CHAPTER VI.

There was not a drop of water in any of our bottles when, at 6.30 that evening, we emerged from our hiding-place and made our way down towards the open valley which had been running south of us and nearly parallel to our course of the preceding night; for this direction seemed to offer the best prospect of water. On the far side of the valley rose the wood-covered slopes of the Tohitchek Dagh, or Flower Mountain. Far away to the west we could see the purple ridges of the Denek Dagh, slightly to the north of which we hoped to cross the Kizil Irmak. Our hopes rose high as we saw beneath us a narrow streak of green which betokened the existence of the longed-for water; but if, in England, where there's a dog there's a man, in Turkey where there's a stream there are sheep. We soon found that all the flocks of the countryside were settling down for the night on the banks of our promised water-supply, while farther to the north-west our way was barred by the inevitable village. There was nothing for it but to lie where we were till the twilight had gone, and then to cut south-west with the idea of hitting the nullah at a point above the flocks. On

doing so we were much dismayed to find that the nullah was dry. By this time we were all fairly "cooked"; Ellis, in addition, was suffering from a strained heart—for such it now turns out to have been. For half an hour we carried his kit and helped him along between us, but he still could not keep up, and at 9.30 we decided to leave him behind, in a dry nullah we were following at the time, with Grunt, who volunteered to stay with him while the rest went on to find water—if they could. The six plodded on with frequent halts, and resorted for the first time to the bottle of "Kola" tablets, which provided a much-needed stimulant. The country was still an arid waste with here and there a dry nullah, each one like the rest; and as time went on without a sign of water, those of us with Cochrane began to wonder how we would ever find the derelict pair again. A solitary light twinkled away to our left, another far ahead. Were these from villages or were they shepherds' fires? On trudged the six on their western course towards a jagged ridge which now met their view. An hour and a half after leaving the pair they crossed a narrow embank-

ment, which they recognised as that of a light railway, then under construction, between Angora and Sivas, for we had seen another bit of this on our way from Angora to Yozgad.<sup>1</sup> At length they came to water—a stagnant lake it proved and brackish, but at least it was water. Curiously enough, they discovered they were not as thirsty as they had imagined, but a paddle was most refreshing.

After forty minutes' halt, Cochrane, Johnny, and the Old Man loaded themselves up with the chargals and all except three of the water-bottles, and leaving their packs behind set forth on their urgent quest for Grunt and Ellis. The remaining three divided up the watches between them until dawn. Nobby and Looney had a midnight bathe, finding one place even deep enough to swim in; but it was chilly work drying on a couple of silk handkerchiefs sewn together which served as towel, scarf, or sunshade indiscriminately. Sleep was impossible, for the bank swarmed with mosquitoes and sand-flies, so after a while Nobby went a-fishing with a sultana for bait, but without result. At 2 A.M. the monotony was broken by the arrival of a dog, which stood a few yards away and proceeded to bark for about ten minutes. That light we had seen ahead, and which was now close by, was probably a village fire, so the

three just lay low until, to their relief, the owner of the beast came and called it off, not worrying apparently to find out at what it was barking.

In the meantime Cochrane and the two others had to get back to the nullah where Grunt and Ellis had been left. They recrossed the railway embankment and eventually struck a nullah. As they proceeded this petered out, and the three started wandering over the country, whistling now and again, but they got no answer. At 2.45 A.M. they again struck the embankment and walked along it for an hour, but could not pick up their bearings. Accordingly they halted and waited for the light. After being heated by the strenuous marching, they soon began to shiver violently with the cold and had to take quinine.

As prearranged in the event of the others not having returned, Nobby, Perce, and Looney had at dawn moved off into hiding in the hills to the west, having first concealed the packs of the search-party under a ledge of the bank and covered them with reeds and grass. From the top of the ridge they overlooked the desolate country traversed the night before. Close below them stood an Arab encampment with its black camel-hair tents, from which both the light and dog had doubtless proceeded. A few ponies grazed near the water, now seen to be one of a series of pools lying stagnant

---

<sup>1</sup> Many of the British rank and file prisoners were employed on this, nearer Angora.



in a river bed. A man appeared leading a string of camels. The three were thinking that little prospect now remained of joining up again that day, when suddenly the watchers saw figures hurrying across the plain, and recognised with relief that they were Cochrane, the Old Man, and Johnny.

At the first sign of dawn they had marched eastwards for a quarter of an hour, and then had to give it up as a bad job, having failed to pick up their bearings. Accordingly, they turned round and walked westwards along the embankment as fast as they could. An hour and twenty minutes later they reached the point at which they had crossed on the previous night, and made for the water where the packs had been left. Here they could see Nobby's party flashing a mirror. It was now broad daylight. On their westward march they had passed a big railway working camp, and people were moving about. It was no use, therefore, for all three to risk being seen, so Johnny, after a long drink, put on his pack (in case it should prove impossible to join up as a complete party again), loaded himself up with three additional water-bottles and the big chargal, and started off once more to find Grunt and Ellis. Cochrane and the Old Man went off to join up with Nobby's party, having arranged to come down to the water the same evening to show Johnny the way. The latter, looking like a pantechnon,

passed several people in the distance and one man on a donkey at a few yards. Finally he spotted the tracks of the previous night, and eventually came upon the correct nullah. It could now be seen that there were three very similar shallow valleys running parallel to one another, and that is how the searchers must have lost their way the night before.

At 6.45 A.M. Johnny saw Grunt's head showing above the edge of the nullah. Grunt was almost done to the world and looked ghastly. Except for a little brandy (our emergency ration), he and Ellis had had nothing to drink for twenty hours. They had each tried to take an opium pill during the night, but simply could not swallow it. The very brackish water Johnny had brought provided Grunt with what he considered the best drink of his life. Ellis's thirst was unquenchable. On the previous night they had heard some one whistling in the distance, but had not dared to call out.

The three set about collecting sticks in the nullah and brewing some strong tea, which refreshed them immensely. Except for two halts for three-quarters of an hour, Johnny had been on the go for over twelve hours, loaded for the last hour and a quarter with a weight of about 67 lb., owing to the extra water he was carrying. The day was passed trying unsuccessfully to get some shade with coats placed over sticks. Johnny slept only twenty minutes that day,—it was a trying time.

The party was split up, and Heaven alone knew when we should be able to join up again. However, they had two more brews of strong tea—one at 2 P.M. and one at 5. The heat was too great for them to eat anything.

Meanwhile the Old Man and Cochrane had rejoined the three on the hill, who prepared them a welcome mugful of tea. On the way up they had noticed a small cave to which it was decided to move, in preference to their present exposed position. Eight o'clock accordingly found the five huddled up within the cave, thankful at least that they would be sheltered from the sun for the day, but miserable at the thought of what the other three must be going through.

An hour later a man appeared at the entrance, whom they at first understood to be a shepherd. He said he had seen the three arriving at dawn, and watched the five move down to the cave, but that they had nothing to fear. At the same time he rather anxiously inquired whether they had firearms. Without Grunt to interpret, the five were somewhat at a loss to follow the conversation that ensued, but, in dealing with this unwelcome visitor, they at least had the benefit of Cochrane's former experience of the art of escaping. The uninvited guest was welcomed in, and was soon afterwards squatting down and enjoying some of the party's precious 'baccy and biscuits. The ease with which he bit off pieces of the latter

testified to the excellence of his teeth. When he was once more in a position to resume the conversation, he led his hearers to believe that he had already sent a message to the nearest gendarmes and was now awaiting their arrival. Possibly he was misunderstood, for cross-examination elicited the fact that as yet no one else knew of the fugitives' whereabouts, and it became evident that he would not be above accepting a bribe—a failing for which the Turk is perhaps more famed than for any other of his peculiarities. Casting longing eyes upon the clothing which protruded from an open pack, he asked to have a look at a shirt. This seemed to be to his taste, so it was thought expedient to offer it to him as a gift. It was not disdained. That "woolley," too, looked warm and useful. He might as well have that. A skein of rope now caught his eye, so that also changed hands. Had they any gold? was his next demand. One must cry a halt somewhere to such greed, so the five regretted they had not, but later had to compromise and gave him paper money. With the addition of some more 'baccy and biscuits he appeared temporarily satisfied, and agreed to bring along some water and sour milk from the Arab encampment. Nobby requested him to conceal his gifts, which he did by the simple expedient of winding shirt, "woolley," and rope round his waist beneath his cummerbund. True to his word, he reappeared shortly afterwards with a skin of water and a copper bowl full



of sour milk, promising to bring more in the evening. He insisted, however, that his protégés should not show themselves outside the cave. To this they agreed, although the latter was too cramped to be comfortable,—nowhere was it wide or level enough to permit of any real rest of body, and peace of mind was out of the question so long as the fate of the missing three remained uncertain. It was decided not to risk a "brow," although the "shepherd" had said they might safely do so, and fuel in the shape of dried camel-thorn lay ready to hand.

As evening fell, the friend was back again, this time bringing water only. His appreciation of the biscuits and tobacco, however, remained unqualified.

Conversation was turning to lighter subjects, when it was interrupted by the entrance of another chance (?) comer, who made no bones as to the price of his silence, and proved a much more difficult customer to square. He eventually accepted five liras in gold—the party had discovered that they had some after all—together with some more paper notes. He also said he was badly in need of a watch, so Cochrane handed over his, omitting to mention, by the way, that it could only be coaxed to go for a few hours at a time! Even so, it was not until 7.15 that our cave-dwellers were able to get rid of this persistent stranger. The next step was to effect a reunion with the missing three. By

the light of the young moon they accordingly moved off clear of the cave, the track past which constituted a danger; and No. 1 scallywag was then informed that the five were not the only members of the party, and that the other three must be collected before they themselves could go on. In case the others should have been recaptured, it was thought advisable not to send still another member of the party back to the pond, for fear the spot where they had been should now be watched. No. 1 was therefore impressed for the task, and provided with a note to show the absentees, if they arrived, and instructed to come back if they had not returned within three hours. At the best the Turk has a poor idea of time. Two hours later he was back without the missing three, but once more accompanied by No. 2. No explanation was either asked for or given as to the latter's reappearance: it was quite evident that the two had been in league from the beginning.

They now put forward a proposition: the Turkish authorities, they said, were very much concerned about the escape of the twenty-five officers from Yozgad. All the roads and paths round about were being watched, and that very morning about sixty soldiers had been seen passing by the locality, presumably looking for them. They suggested the party should lie hidden in the cave for another three days, while things quietened down a

bit, after which they would themselves come along with us and clear out of the country. Their story seemed likely enough: they had at least named the correct number of officers who had escaped. Moreover, it was impossible to think of going on without a final search for the others. The five therefore fell in with the proposal provisionally and returned to the cave. Looney then went down to the pool in the company of the two "guides," to look around for the missing three. These had started down their nullah at 6 P.M., and taken things very slowly with long halts for Ellis. In any case, it would have been dangerous to cross the line again during daylight. They therefore stopped in some shrubs a quarter of a mile short of the embankment, and waited until 7.30 P.M. before marching straight for the pool, which they then reached in half an hour. Cochrane was nowhere to be seen. All three now stripped, and had their first wash for five days. Where they were the pool was very shallow, and they discovered that the only way to wash the soap off was to lie first on the back and then on the face. Cleaning the teeth they found refreshed them greatly. Despite all the water and tea he had had during the day, Grunt drank twelve pint mugfuls of the brackish water straight off the reel. This may sound incredible, but the fact remains. After their bathe they dressed and felt very clean. To sit

and wait for Cochrane was the next thing to do. The night was cool, and it was no use all keeping awake, so Johnny took the first watch, while the others tried to sleep; but the sand-flies and mosquitoes saw to it well that they did not get the chance.

At 11 P.M. approaching steps could be heard,—Grunt and Ellis crept down the bank into hiding, and Johnny waited on the top. As the shapes became visible, he was horrified to find that he did not recognise them, and thought he was in for it, till Looney spoke. The latter gave a hurried explanation of the presence of the two murderous-looking strangers with him.

The four officers and the two brigands reached the cave about 11.30 P.M. Here was quite the stage-setting for villainy of the deepest dye. Two slopes meeting in a V stood out very clearly against the bright starlit night. In the V a small crater was filled with the most ruffianly-looking fellows in fezes, which English and Turks wore alike. The peaceful shepherds, as we sometimes called them, talked a lot and again agreed to come with us. They tried on our packs and strappings. Cut-throat No. 1 appeared to be keen on joining us; No. 2 we thoroughly distrusted. At one side of the crater was the entrance to the cave, at the end of which burned a candle, throwing flickering shadows into the crater outside, and lighting up first one unshaven and haggard face and then



another. The peaceful shepherds took their departure exactly at midnight—another touch of true melodrama—each the richer by about thirty paper liras and some gold ones. The first shepherd promised to bring some more milk and water in the morning.

It was too cramped in the cave, so we slept in the ravine outside—a long sleep of nearly four hours. This was as much as we had had in the previous five days. Grunt had slept least. The day Johnny took him the water Grunt took some opium and slept for half an hour in the afternoon, and this, with five minutes now and again at halts on the march and his longer sleeps during the day, made a total of under four and three-quarter hours out of one hundred and seventeen. Without sleep, days spent in the hot sun and nights in carrying fifty pounds over difficult country without any moon at all are apt to take it out of one, and this we found was the case. We were becoming visibly thinner.

Next morning the second peaceful shepherd told us that yet a third peaceful shepherd had discovered our whereabouts, and though he did not put in an appearance, his friend, kindly acting on his behalf, took another thirty liras from us. This decided us to go off that very night, as our money affairs would not stand the constant drain. To be once more a complete party, however, was a great relief. Although cramped for room—for we crowded ourselves

into the smallest possible space at the dark end of the cave—we were out of the burning sun. Our spirits went up and we were all cheery, quite a change from other days. By 11.30 A.M. we had already made three quite good jokes. We were able to eat more, most of us managing several biscuits and two ounces of cheese. This also could be accounted for by the shade. The cheese was excellent, and was called by the endearing cheesy diminutive of "Chedlet." It was eaten in the approved style, with a penknife and by cutting pieces off towards the thumb. At about noon we all momentarily held our breath, for we thought we heard footsteps. No one appeared, however, and after a while we discovered the noise came from a tortoise, which was scratching the ground at the entrance to the cave.

During this day a decision was arrived at which affected the whole trend of events. As the two brigands were going with us, we determined to change our course and make almost due south, thereby reducing the length of our march to the coast by about a hundred miles. By taking this route we should, of course, have no boat to meet us, but we relied on our guides to get a dhow. We thereupon proceeded to cut down the food supply and kit which had been necessary for the longer journey, and rely on our delightful friends to purchase food for us from any convenient villages we might pass. Travelling

lighter, we should be able to move more quickly. We knew that the Salt Desert had to be crossed on our newly-chosen route, but we were prepared to take the risk of having a few thirsty marches. The last sentence written in Johnny's diary that afternoon was, "Grunt, I am glad to say, is sleeping."

At 8.15 P.M. a miniature avalanche of stones rattled over our cave, and thus heralded the peaceful shepherds entered. They were late, but the slight delay did not matter, as in any case we could not have gone down to the water near the tent encampment until it was quite dark. They told us they were going to take us to a spring of sweet water, and not to the brackish pool, so we followed them. About one hundred yards short of the water we were made to halt. Shepherd No. 1 then took us in pairs to get a drink and fill our water-bottles: one pair had nearly got to the spring when the shepherd suddenly froze and then squatted down—actions which his companions hastened to imitate. Some one had arrived from the camp to draw water. Nothing happened, however, and when the footsteps died away they went on to the spring, rejoining the party shortly afterwards.

We now retraced our steps

up the ravine, and here once more our friends stopped us. Before going any farther, they wanted to know what they were going to receive for their trouble. We told them that when we got to the sea we would take them with us to Cyprus, and there give them each £200. The arrangement, however, was not at all to their liking. What they wanted was ready cash, and they now demanded from each officer fifteen liras down. To comply with this demand was of course impossible, as it would have run us out of nearly all our money, with most of our journey still to go, especially at the present rate of meeting peaceful shepherds. We therefore told them that all the money they were to expect was a lump sum down when we were free men. At this the ruffians refused to come with us. Warning them that if we were caught by gendarmes we should know who had given us away, we promised to make known to the officers of the law how good our friends had been to us. After an hour's irksome haggling we decided to go on without them, so we set off, and had not climbed one hundred yards up the hill when the kind shepherds changed their minds and offered to accompany us without thought of profit.

(To be continued.)



## THE STORY OF OUR SUBMARINES.

BY KLAXON.

## I.

THERE has naturally been a great deal of ink spilled during the War on the subject of the U-boat. The British Submarines have worked unseen and unheard-of. Occasionally a few official lines have appeared in the newspapers about them, but the very nature of the work they have been doing has precluded any divulging of their activity. With the permission of the Admiralty I am about to speak now of some of the work they have done, and to give their own reports describing some of the many occasions on which they have been in contact with the enemy.

On August 4, 1914, we had in our Submarine Service the following boats: 9 E class, 8 D class, 37 C class, 10 B class.

Of these, the B and C classes were 320 tons submerged displacement, and were not suitable for the patrol round the mouth of the Bight. The D and E boats were designed for that purpose, being of 600 and 800 tons submerged displacement respectively. The B and C classes were used in the War for local patrols, defence of the coast and ports, and as the War progressed and they became obsolete, for instruction of new entries of personnel.

Before I get on to the War itself I want to give a short description of the entry and

training of our personnel both before and after the War began.

In peace time an officer who wished to join the Submarine Service had first to receive a recommendation from his own Captain. He then had to produce either a first-class certificate for his Torpedo examination for Lieutenant, or, if he had not that qualification, a certificate from the Torpedo-Lieutenant of his ship to the effect that he showed special zeal in that branch of his duties. If his name was accepted it was placed at the bottom of the candidates' list, and in due time, after an interval which varied from year to year, he was appointed to Fort Blockhouse, the Submarine Depot at Gosport. There the batch of new officers were medically examined, and (the standard being high) the unfit were weeded out and returned to their ships.

For the next three months he went through a course of practical submarine instruction, his training period terminating in examinations which provided another obstacle, the meshes of which prevented certain candidates from proceeding further.

The officers of the class were then sent as "third hands" to different boats to await vacancies as First Lieutenants. After

two to four years as First Lieutenant (the time varied with the number of new boats built), an officer obtained command of an A boat (of 204 tons), from which he rose by seniority to larger and more powerful commands.

The men entered in much the same way, being recommended, of first-class character and of excellent physical standard. They went through a less comprehensive training course, but had the same weeding-out to undergo, so that as far as possible the "duds" were got rid of before they had cost the country much in useless teaching.

In war-time it has not been possible to spare the time for the full instructional courses, but the courses continued, although much shortened. The shortage of personnel in the Navy generally cut down the field from which volunteers were drawn, but in spite of this the Submarine Service was able to keep up its volunteer entry, and to continue to retain its standard by drafting back those who were by nature or capabilities unfit for such work. The submarine sailor is a picked man, and is the admiration of his officers. There is a Democracy of Things Real in the boats which is a very fine kind of Democracy. Both men and officers in a submarine know that each man's life is held in the hand of any one of them, who by carelessness or ignorance may make their ship into a common coffin; all ranks live close together, and when the occasion arises go to their

deaths in the same way. The Fear of Death is a great leveller, and in submarines an officer or a man's competency for his job is the only real standard by which he is judged.

In the German Navy, before the War, the Submarine Service had not received the attention it might have done. There, the submarine officer did not hold the status in the eyes of his Navy that was held by his destroyer or battleship brother. Since the accident to U-3 at exercise practice, also, certain rules for exercise had been introduced, which precluded practice attacks on target-ships going at high speed, and had circumscribed the areas (by defining "safe" depths of water) in which exercises might be carried out. In our Navy it had always been recognised that risks must be incurred in peace, so as to ensure greater safety in war. As far back as 1912 our submarines were practising attacks on destroyers zig-zagging at high speed, and were diving in any waters, and generally reproducing war conditions as far as possible. While even in 1904 the early boats on manœuvres were allowed to dive under surface ships, and destroyers were allowed to use wire-sweeps against them.

For years before the War a Submarine Defence Committee of officers was working to find the best antidote to the submarine menace, and experiments were carried out by the Committee with our own boats. The result of this was that, on



the War coming, both the submarine officers and those of our Navy whose task it was to deal with the U-boat had considerable experience to begin on.

The British Submarine Flotilla, as shown in the preceding list, comprised in 1914 far more small boats than sea-going ones. This was altered later as the strategy of the War crystallised, but when the War began it had never been expected that the enemy Fleet would remain so inactive. The Navy's view had naturally been that the German had not built such a fine Fleet if he wasn't going to use it, and so the majority of our boats, instead of "being designed for "Over There" work, were designed for "half-way over." And very good boats the C boats were, too. If the expected War of Movement had taken place, with a North Sea dotted with racing cruisers, and ships of both sides looking for a fight, every boat in our service would have been in the thick of the trouble. As it was, the course of events very soon showed that the ring round the Heligoland Bight—the blockading patrol—was to be the chief station of our submarines in Home waters.

Both belligerents began to design and build at once. The German went straight ahead on the one type, which, with variations, has served him throughout the War—viz., the commerce-destroying medium-sized patrol boat. To this type he later added the mine-laying submarine, and towards

the end of the War he evolved the large commerce-destroying cruiser boat.

Now, both before and during the War, we held a lead over our enemy in the matter of submarine design. That statement is confirmed by the data given by the U-boats arriving at Harwich as I write. Some time ago the British Navy prepared an antidote to a design of submarine which it was thought the enemy must, by logical reasoning, soon produce as being the obvious thing for him to think of. Our antidote has not yet had a chance to be used, as it was only recently that the German designers got to that stage in their reasoning.

But what did we build? Well, we did not want commerce destroyers at least; such work as the cutting of the Turkish communications in the Sea of Marmora and the sinking of transports in the Baltic could be done by our ordinary E boats. But we did want mine-layers, and we built those. What else? Well, I must branch off into a dissertation on submarines generally.

A submarine may be any kind of surface vessel, with the advantage added to her of being able to dive. She need not necessarily be a diving boat with a few torpedo tubes and a couple of guns. She may be anything. A surface ship can only be one thing; you cannot have a cruiser-monitor or a destroyer-battleship. But a submarine may be two things at once;

and a submarine can, as a result, act unsupported. Take the case of a scouting submarine. What is the alternative? If we had no scouting submarines we would have had to keep a ring of destroyers out to watch the Bight. Those destroyers might, being out near the enemy's coast, be attacked by enemy cruisers, so that it would be essential to keep our cruisers out in support. Then if the enemy brought out—and so on—up to the final result of our battle fleet being continuously at sea, which would have been not only unnecessary wear and tear on the big ships, but a good opportunity for the U-boats if they had cared to take a chance. Take the case of the submarine mine-layer. She has the great advantage, to begin with, of not only getting to her position unseen, but of being able to lay her unpleasant cargo down unsuspected and unobserved. Then, again, she does not need a supporting force to follow her in case she meets with trouble. She does not look on a big enemy ship as a trouble, should one interfere with her; she would rather describe the big ship as a "gift." She is open to the usual anti-submarine methods, and can be dealt with by destroyers, seaplanes, and so on; but if she succumbs to their attacks—well, that is another submarine gone, but it might have been a big surface ship.

By the nature of the German strategy our lines of design were indicated. The

chief type we needed were scouts—in other words, patrol boats. We built these in considerable numbers, for the several types of patrol boats we diverged into were capable of doing any of several things. They could do the Heligoland Bight patrol, attacking the enemy if met with, and reporting to the C.-in.-C. what they saw on their patrols; they could go out into the Atlantic to hunt U-boats on the traffic lanes, or they could go to the Mediterranean to work in the Adriatic. They were the general-utility craft of the Submarine Navy.

The mine-layers were of the patrol boat type, getting larger as the war went on, but always with the torpedo-tubes (reduced in number) built into them to allow them to become normal submarines when a chance arose.

In the early part of the War there were some additions to the Submarine Flotillas in the shape of V-W and F boats of 500 submerged tonnage. These were experiments by the Admiralty in building boats of foreign design, drawings being used of the Laurenti and Fiat firms. After these boats had been tried and their best points copied into our own designs, the standard British ideas were reverted to for war construction. The building of these boats served its purpose in giving us an insight into the lines upon which other nations were working, but foreign designs were not continued owing to the better performances of our own boats.



The G and J class were patrol boats—the G's being of 975 tons submerged displacement, and so larger and with more beam than the E boats; the J's were 19-knot boats of 1820 tons submerged, and marked a great advance in the big-submarine type. The year 1915 gave us the addition of a number of E class, while the G's began to join up with the Flotillas in November of that year. The first J boat commissioned in the spring of 1916.

The 4th August 1916 saw the commissioning of a boat which was a revolution in submarine design. This was the first K boat. This class was designed for the expected Fleet action: their qualities were to be—that they should have several knots in hand over the speed of the Battle Fleet, that they should be seaworthy and able to cruise with the Fleet, and that they should have the necessary submarine qualities to enable them to deal with the High Sea Fleet when it should be met. These qualities they have; but it is regretted that the enemy gave them no chance of trying their luck in action. They were used on patrol to keep them from getting stale during the long wait for their "Day," and their experiences on patrol, and when at sea on the periodic occasions when the Fleet went hurrying out in reply to reported enemy activity, have given invaluable data for future construction of large and fast submarines. These boats are of 1880 tons (surface) and 2550

tons (submerged) displacement. They have a speed of slightly over 24 knots on the surface, can carry a good gun-battery if required, and their hulls being low and well streamlined, and their torpedo armament powerful, they can act both as destroyers by night or as submarines by day.

These boats have a battery capacity sufficient for a day's Fleet battle, but no more. They may be described as having great *strategic* speed and capacity, but small tactical radius: that is, they can get to the place where they are wanted quickly, but are circumscribed in their capabilities of remaining submerged in that spot for long, or of moving fast submerged for more than one attack without rising to recharge their batteries. In submarine design as well as in that of surface ships, you can't have everything; each type is a compromise.

At the other end of the scale we built the R boat. These were also "specialists," but of opposite qualities. Of 500 tons (submerged), they have a surface speed of about 8 knots, but a submerged speed of  $14\frac{1}{2}$ —a speed which will probably be slightly increased by alterations. These boats only joined up in the summer of 1918, and the enemy surrendered before they had really shown what they could do. A boat of this type (they are perfectly stream-lined, and, inside, they are all battery and torpedo-tubes) can jog out to her assigned area at her leisure—it is no use sending her to cut off

or meet a definitely reported enemy, as she wouldn't get there in time—and once in that area she can use her diving batteries for days without having to recharge them, should she be kept down by enemy hunters, and her high submerged speed and radius make her very dangerous to any

target (U-boat or otherwise) which passes within periscope range of her.

There remains the submarine monitor, which will be described in due course. I will interpolate here an account of a typical trial of a new boat, using an E boat of the early 1916 vintage as an illustration.

## II.

The boat I would use as an illustration was in 1915 very new indeed. She was just a standard E boat, with war-taught improvements and additions, and with a war-taught complement of officers and a half-taught complement of men. For a month the men had been given a queer but useful course of instruction by being taken by their First Lieutenant at "Diving Stations" in a disused shed in the building firm's premises. On the walls and floor names and rough sketches of most of the important valves and wheels of the boat herself had been chalked, and though the men laughed and swore at the make-believe, they had learnt a good deal of their drill and the probable sequence of diving orders, without the work of the builders of the E boat being interfered with. Except in the dinner hour, or during the infrequent holidays, no drill could be carried out aboard owing to the crowds of men working there. Overtime had been continuously worked, and nothing could be allowed to interfere with the firm's sacred "date"—the day on which the

Admiralty had been promised delivery.

The day dawned clear and fine, with no wind and every promise of calm spring weather. At six o'clock the submarine's whistle blew shrilly, and a few tardy passengers approaching from the direction of the yard gates broke into a run. As they climbed the iron rungs up to the low grey-painted bridge, the gangway by which they had boarded was lifted clear into the air and swung away to the basin-side by a hissing, clattering, 10-ton crane, and at an order from the boat's Captain the securing wires and hemp hawsers splashed into the oily still water. The telegraph clanged decisively, and to an answering whirr and boil under her stern the boat moved slowly ahead towards the open basin entrance. She increased speed as she neared the narrow passage, and the swirling eddies of a flooding tide outside came in view. As her stem came out into the river she took a sharp sheer up-stream, then came sharply round towards the open sea as the twenty degrees of helm that she was carrying



took effect on her. Little puffs of white and brown smoke began to show round her stern as the engines were clutched in and started, and in five minutes she was heading down-river at a fair twelve knots, with the low sun glancing from her round hull and lighting the queer mixture of Futurist painting that covered her.

She carried a matter of eleven people on her bridge—a bridge designed to accommodate, perhaps, four or five. Her fighting complement was thirty-one all told, but at this moment she held over fifty. Needless to say, it was the passengers who seemed to take up most room. They comprised overseers, foremen, chargemen, a manager or two, about a dozen caulkers and engineers, and a pilot. In addition she carried an overseer of overseers—a Commander from the submarine Commodore's staff. He was present as schoolmaster, judge, and as friend to the Captain of the boat, and his job was one the Captain of the boat was not in the least envious of. The Captain knew that his crew were only partially trained, that he himself was new to E boats, and that the boat might not be all he hoped to find her in the way of reliability and hull-strength, but he felt that at any rate he knew more or less what the personnel, including himself, were like, while the Inspecting Commander must be, or ought to be, the most nervous man in submarines, with his job of travelling from trial to trial, unbroken by a chance of a trip

in a fully-tested boat with a fully-trained crew.

As they swung round the last river-buoy and saw the outer lightship draw clear of the land, a destroyer overtook them, and passed on ahead to lead them to sea. The boat was going thirty miles out to get deep water for her hull-test, and it was not safe for a British boat to be that distance, or even a third of that distance, from the mouth of a British harbour unescorted, unless she was there on her war business. This was not because of the enemy—far from it; it was to save her from the enthusiastic but misguided attentions of the multitudes of "Fritz-hunters" who drew no distinction between submarines of their own or the enemy's flag. As she neared the light-vessel, the submarine increased speed and some of the "yarning-party" on the bridge departed below down the conning-tower. The programme included a full-speed surface-trial which was to start from the lightship and finish at the diving-ground, and for the next two hours the engineers and engine-overseers were to be the only busy passengers. From the engine-room bulkhead to the bows, the crew and officers moved to and fro—testing, instructing, and, it should be added, grumbling continuously, for the multitude of passengers were a considerable handicap in the way of an efficient and (the great ideal) an unexciting and placid diving-trial.

The inside of the boat was

incredibly dirty from a naval point of view. She had not been built at one of these yards where no workman can live without a quid of tobacco in his cheek (in fact by the trials standard of some yards she was clean), but it was obvious that she would take a good month's scrubbing and polishing before she was, in her officers' estimation, even sanitary.

At ten o'clock an order came from on deck, and a couple of sailors ascended the conning-tower carrying a few rounds of 12-pounder ammunition. The trials she was to do were to be complete and to everybody's satisfaction, and the building firm, being a firm which would sooner see their work over- than under-tested, had suggested a few rounds from the bow-gun before the dive, with the idea that if the gun-mounting was going to cause leaks through to the hull as a result of recoil, it should be given the chance to do it now instead of later when the boat was in enemy waters. A biscuit-tin was dropped, the boat circled round, and at a range of a hundred yards the gunlayer proceeded to miss the box completely. However, the shooting did not matter—the gun had recoiled a few times and that was all that was required. The fact of the gunlayer finding later that he had shipped the sights of the H.A. gun on to his bow-gun before practice, was a merely trifling incident among the errors that one might expect to occur on trials.

At eleven o'clock the de-

stroyer, which had been jogging along a few cables ahead, circled round and slowed up. The Submarine Captain rang "Slow" on his telegraph, smiled encouragingly at the civilians who still remained on the bridge, and made a pointing gesture with his thumb at the open conning-tower lid. The civilians, with a nervous straightening of bowler hats and several lingering looks at the sunlit sea and sky, clambered slowly below, and the Captain remained watching the whirling arms of the semaphore on the destroyer's bridge. He dictated a reply to his signalman, then rang down "Stop," and, leaving the lid open, descended to see what order his First Lieutenant was producing out of the crowded chaos below.

From the foot of the conning-tower ladder he could see nothing but a mass of humanity, mostly civilian, through which his uniformed crew moved apologetically and bent double. He moved forward into the crowd and assisted his officers in their efforts to station the passengers in positions where they would be as much out of the way as possible, and would at the same time be comfortable enough to lose their desire to move about. At the end of five minutes comparative peace reigned, and the crew were standing at their stations looking at their officers for orders across a new deck of caps and tilted bowler hats.

The Captain took a sweep-



ing glance fore and aft, then ascended the conning-tower. He ordered the signalman below, looked across at the destroyer through his glasses, and then descended, closing and locking the lid above his head. As he re-entered the boat, he caught the eye of the First Lieutenant. "Flood one, two, five, six, seven, and eight," he ordered. "Slow ahead both—keep her level." The vent-valves indicated their opening with a snort and a roar of air, and the rush and gurgle of flooding tanks cut off the chatter of the passengers, as the clang of a closing breech-block brings silence to a gun's crew. A few seconds later the Captain spoke again. "Flood three and four—take her down." Each order was repeated by the First Lieutenant—an officer whose eyes seemed to note the doings of every man in the boat at once. As the Captain moved to the diving-gauge by the periscope to watch for the first slow movement of the long black needle, the First Lieutenant's hand shot out and gripped the neck of a seaman by the starboard pump, and he spoke in a voice of concentrated, hissing rage. "That's the main line, you fool! Close it, quick, and don't you dare touch it till I tell you!"

The gauge-needle quivered and began to rise. At eight feet the Captain stepped back, and, taking the periscope training-handles, began to look into the rubber-padded eye-piece.

Check at twenty feet," he

said. "Take the angle off now, coxswain." "Twenty feet, sir, horizontal." The coxswain sat on a low heavy music-stool facing another white-faced diving-gauge, his big brass hydroplane wheel moving a turn or two each way under his hand. "Pump on Z internal—don't start till I tell you." The Captain was watching the hydroplane helm indicators beside him, which showed, by the amount of "rise" helm they were carrying, that the boat had a touch of negative buoyancy.

"All ready the pump, sir!"

"Start the pump—keep her up, coxswain."

"Coming up, sir—horizontal, sir."

"Stop the pump—close main line—close Z internal."

On an even keel the E boat ploughed along—her periscope top four feet above the surface, and the periscope-wake bubbling and foaming on the perfectly smooth sea. The watcher in the following destroyer saw the wake die down till it was a barely visible ripple, as—her trim correct—the Captain eased the boat's speed down to less than two knots. Then the shining periscope began to disappear, slowly reducing in height as the planes took the boat down for her deep hull test.

Inside her hull there was silence except for an occasional whisper from one seated civilian to his neighbour. The gauge-needles crept slowly round, and as the depth increased the little spot of daylight thrown by the periscope eye-piece on to the pump-starter abreast of it

changed from yellow to green of ever-darkening shades till the last link with the sun above them died away.

At ninety feet the Captain spoke again, and the hydroplane-wheels spun as her downward way was checked. "Keep her at that," he said. "Mr Ramage, will you send your men round now? We'll mark leaks before we go further."

The foreman addressed rose from his seat and called to his half-dozen caulkers sitting at hand. The boat dived easily on while the men passed fore and aft painting red dabs on rivets and seams overhead where trickles of water spoke of red-lead or packing which was not yet "set" or in condition to face the pressures of active service. Their tour over, the party settled back to their stations, and at a nod and gesture from the Captain the hydroplane men tilted the bow slightly down again for further descent. At a hundred and twenty feet the order came for the motors to stop, and with failing headway the boat sank gently down. One or two men (naval as well as civilian) reached out a hand to grasp for support as they stood, for the moment before touching bottom is always one of slight uncertainty; for, however reliable the chart, it is yet possible to bounce roughly on these occasions on such unexpected obstacles as isolated rocks or even wrecks. But there was no need for bracing against the unexpected to-day. The boat touched and slid on to a standstill so gently and imperceptibly that her Captain watched the

gauge for at least thirty seconds after she had landed, with the suspicion that she might be only "statically trimmed" and that she had a fathom or two farther yet to fall. Then he spoke—"Flood A—hydroplanes amidships."

There came a bubbling roar from the vent of A, well forward, and then the clang of a heavy "water-hammer" in the pipe as the tank filled. The boat lay now as he intended her to do, bedded with negative buoyancy and with her bows well down, so that her screws and rudder were clear of the oozy mud in which she lay. "Carry on—allhands—and look for leaks."

The caulkers did not linger over the task. They did not (and small blame to them, for they were not case-hardened to the situation) relish the idea of staying longer than was necessary at a hundred and thirty-six feet by gauge and with a pressure of sixty pounds to the square inch trying to force the round steel hull inwards on itself. In a quarter of an hour they reported "All leaks located and marked."

But their ordeal was not yet over. The gloomy-eyed First Lieutenant (a pessimist, as all First Lieutenants should be) had found a new leak right aft, and the Captain was called into consultation over it. For ten minutes more the two officers conversed and searched, then came leisurely forward again. "That's all right, I think," said the Captain cheerfully. "Anybody want to look round any more? I can stay down here while they



do—there's no hurry, you know."

There was an enthusiastic chorus from a group of overseers and officials—"Not at all, not at all, we're quite satisfied—quite . . ." The Commander, who throughout the dive had sat unmoving by the periscope, notebook in hand and his eyes half closed, allowed himself a faint smile and a lazy yawn.

"Blow on A—fifty pounds—Blow one and two externals."

The air hissed and whined along the pipes, and the eardrums of those aboard tingled to the rising pressure from overloaded relief valves. For five minutes the hissing and roaring continued, then at a shouted order the noise stopped. The First Lieutenant looked back from the motionless gauge to the Captain. "Shall we put more on A, sir? Fifty pounds won't have moved any out at this depth . . ."

"No—don't put any more on, I've got One and Two pretty near out and the fifty will blow A as she rises. Then I'm going to fill One and Two again and catch the trim before we break surface. She's stuck in the mud, that's all, and we'll have to pull her out. Stand by the motors, aft there!"

The passengers were fidgeting slightly, and the Commander, noting the fidgeting, looked up and spoke, laughing, to the youthful Captain—*apropos* of absolutely nothing at all. The Captain laughed back (for publication and as a guarantee of good faith) and turned

to the motor-room voice-pipe: "Slow ahead Port—half ahead Starboard"—a pause, filled by a dry humming from right aft where the big motors purred. "Stop both—slow ahead Starboard—half astern Port"—another droning pause, and then—"Stop Starboard—half astern Starboard." The boat quivered, then with a lurch she pulled free and her bows rose sharply. "Stop both—half ahead both—flood One and Two—Blow A—*Dammit*—hard-a-dive, coxswain."

The angle increased fast, faster than the forward tanks could fill, and the boat rushed upwards with chests, men, and other loose impediments sliding and slipping aft. At eighty feet she began to level slightly, but the angle could not be taken off her in time,—the destroyer men had a vision of a grey conning-tower foaming ahead for a few seconds, surmounted by fifteen feet of silver periscope, before, to the drive of her powerful screws, the boat dipped again till only the tops of the hooded lenses showed as she settled at her diving depth.

"*Rotten*," observed the Captain gloomily to the First Lieutenant. "I mustn't break surface like that when we get to the Bight, or we all go West one-time,—I think that'll do for the dive, though. She'll be tight as a drum when the firm's had another day or two at her. We'll do the helm and speed trials now and then go in. Hands by the blows! *Surface!*"

## III.

The Submarine Flotillas began to move to their war bases on the 29th July. By the 4th August they were ready to begin their work. The VIII Flotilla ("D" and "E" boats) were at Harwich, a port which throughout the war has remained the chief Heligoland Bight Patrol base. The "C" boats were spread all up the East Coast, with a Channel guard at Dover and a large number of them at Leith.

The Heligoland Patrol started on the 5th. The boats of the VIII Flotilla not patrolling in the Bight guarded, till the 13th August, a line drawn across the northern entrance of the Channel (between the Belgian and English shoals) till the Expeditionary Force was safely over. During the passage of this force, it was fully expected that the enemy would show naval activity and make an attempt to hinder or prevent the passage of troops. Precautionary measures were therefore taken. That the enemy made no attempt to interfere or to dispute the command of the Channel was a surprise to our War Staff, who based their calculations on what an enterprising Naval Power would do in similar circumstances. A possible reason for the enemy's sluggishness at this time is that he does not appear to have at all expected to be at war with England.

"From Commodore (S),  
To Chief of War Staff, Admiralty.  
7th August 1914 (Midnight).

"Propose to postpone over-sea operations from Yarmouth,

and to concentrate all submarines in area arranged until after transit of Expeditionary Force. How many days will passage occupy?"

On the 14th the patrol in the Bight continued.

The following despatch is a typical report of an E boat's trip into the Bight during these early days of war:—

H.M. SUBMARINE "E 6,"  
15th August 1914.

SIR,—I have the honour to submit a report of the proceedings of Submarine "E 6" on August 6th and 7th, when working in the Heligoland Bight.

August 6th—

- 1 A.M. Slipped by *Amethyst*, 30' N.N.E. from Terschelling Light vessel, proceeded N. 69 E., 12 knots, making for allotted area, and avoiding T.B.D. patrol.
- 3 A.M. Dived to check trim; day breaking on rising; sighted two steam trawlers 4 to 5 miles to southward; dived away from them; 3 miles.
- 4.25 A.M. Proceeded E. x S., 12 knots.
- 6.30 A.M. Altered course S.E.
- 7.25 A.M. Sighted German cruiser, *Stettin* class, hull down, E.N.E., beam on, steering N. (approx.) Dived E. by N. 1 mile to avoid being seen; cruiser too far off to attack.
- 8.5 A.M. Rose. Sighted trail of smoke and yellow funnel, E.N.E. Dived to attack, course N. 30 W., full speed.
- 8.55 A.M. Abandoned chase, enemy steaming very fast west (approx.) Dived to avoid steam trawler, which had passed over boat during attack.
- 9.45 A.M. Rose. Proceeded to westward charging batteries.
- 11.30 A.M. Stopped. Charged on surface.
- 1.15 P.M. Proceeded S. 72 E., 12 knots.



- 2.45 P.M. Dived to avoid steam trawler, remaining on course S. 72 E.
- 3.40 P.M. Rose.
- 3.50 P.M. Sighted German large T.B.D., or flotilla cruiser, 10 miles to northward, steaming very fast E. Too far off to attack.
- 4.15 P.M. Proceeded S. 51 E., 12 knots.
- 5.45 P.M. Position W.  $\frac{3}{4}$  N. 23' from Heligoland. Nothing in sight except numerous trawlers, chiefly sailing. Turned to N. 60 W., 9 knots. Sea rough.
- 8.10 P.M. Increased to 10  $\frac{1}{2}$  knots. Many trawlers in sight at nightfall.
- 9.30 P.M. Stopped. Dived 50 feet on "grouper down" till—

*August 7th—*

- 2 A.M. Rose. Very dark; dived 50 feet.
- 3.15 A.M. Rose.
- 3.30 A.M. Proceeded under one engine, 8 knots, working round a large fleet of sailing trawlers making to southward; making for route of warships seen yesterday.
- 6 A.M. Altered course 12 knots.
- 7.45 A.M. Altered course S.E.
- 8.15 A.M. Sighted German submarine on surface, S.E. 4 to 5 miles distant, beam to beam. Dived to attack. At first thought she was stopped and had then dived, not sighting her through periscope till 8.45.
- 8.45 A.M. Sighted her steaming west, 4 or 5 miles off. Followed, diving.
- 9.30 A.M. Rose. Submarine not in sight. Followed, diving, for  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour, in hopes of finding her stopped.
- 10.30 A.M. Proceeded S. 56 E., 12 knots.
- 12 noon. Stopped to let steam trawler pass across horizon, ahead.

*Note.*—Since about 7 A.M. I had given up the idea of trying to keep out of sight of trawlers, merely avoiding going within a mile of them.

- 12.10 P.M. Proceeded.
- 12.54 P.M. Altered course south, observed position being further north than intended. The steam trawler sighted at noon seemed suspicious of E 6, altering course so as to keep me in sight without getting close.

3.30 P.M. Turned and steered for trawler, signalling her to show colours (German), and to stop. Trawler fitted with W/T. Crossed her bows and shaped course N. 87 W., 14 knots. Position then N. 43 W. 37' from Heligoland. Trawler proceeded, apparently shaping course for Emden. Steered to avoid our T.B.D. patrol.

*August 8th—*

6.30 A.M. Made Swarte Bank Light-vessel. Proceeded to Lowestoft to report.

*Note.*—The Heligoland Bight contained a very large number of trawlers, chiefly sailing, including a few which were apparently Dutch; they became more numerous closer in to Heligoland. I did not notice W/T in any except the one I spoke.

I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

(Sd.) G. P. TALBOT,  
Lieutenant-Commander.

The Commodore (S),  
H.M.S. *Maidstone*.

That is the sort of way the submarine officers describe their experiences. The method is curt and unsatisfying somehow. I will try and give an idea of a submarine captain describing a trip during, say, the winter of 1915-1916, to an army brother:—

Yes, we got in yesterday. No—we had no luck. It's getting dull inside there now; it's not so much fun if there are no big ships about and only small craft chasing you. Well, you see, we left about 4 P.M. on Monday and had a poor sort of trip across—blowing from the north-east, so that we were head to sea, and even at eight knots we took nearly every wave over the

bridge. They're a fine sight though, the E boats, when they're butting into it like that; they get out of step so, and you can feel just about when they are going to take a good one; you see more and more of her bow going dry as she goes wrong, and then she puts a great length of herself over a hollow, and that's the time to duck your head and hold tight to a rail, because she comes down wallop just in time for the next one to roll right over you. It was fairly clear, but devilish cold, and there were snow-squalls about one to the half-hour. We gave Terschelling (the corner, you know, round Holland into the Bight) a seventeen-mile berth, as the tide sets in pretty strong there, and turned in for our billet. My orders were to work between Heligoland and the north of the Elbe. There are two ways of getting in, you see—close along the shore in seven-ten fathom water, and over and under the minefields farther out. We took the deep channel, as we don't do the other at night if we can help it—over and under? Oh! you see, there's a minefield set for submarines in one place—fairly deep laid, and farther on another set for surface ships, so we go over one and dive under the other—anyhow, they're both only reported fields, and their position isn't accurately known, and also one doesn't quite know one's position if one doesn't get sights or see Terschelling Light, so it's a matter of luck, really. Well, we didn't get any excitements going in, except that my

R.N.R. officer pressed the button with his shoulder when he was coming up to relieve me, and he and I only got down just in time to shut the lid. You see, we run with mighty little buoyancy on patrol when we are on the surface, and if you press the button you go down in a few seconds at twelve knots or so. The button? why, that's what dives the boat; if you press that (it's just under the conning tower lid) it rings the Klaxon horns fore and aft the boat, and then it's up to you to come down quick because the crew know it means business, and they don't waste any time. They open all vents and put her nose down, and in a few seconds there's just a "plop" on the surface and you're looking at a gauge-needle going round down below. But if you come on watch with too many lammies and clothes on, you may give the alarm by mistake like my feller did.

Well, we got better weather after we rounded Terschelling, and after Borkum Riff it was nearly calm. We got to the billet and dived at 4 A.M.—thirty-six hours out from Harwich. The soundings were right when we touched bottom—about 95 feet—so that checked our latitude a bit. Then we all went to bed. It was pretty cold and jolly wet too, as she leaks a bit overhead besides the usual sweating. What's sweating? Why, when the hull's cold it sweats, you know—water runs down the inside—condensation really, I suppose. Well, then we all turned in, as I say, and I put



a lot of blankets over me to dry my wet clothes. . . . I was too tired to change, and as a result I was all aches in the morning (that is, at daylight about three hours later). I reckoned it would be getting grey about seven, so we rose then, and after a few minutes at fifty feet, just to listen for propellers, we broke surface. It was all clear and still fairly dark, so we charged batteries for twenty minutes and ventilated.

Then we went under and started diving patrol. I took first periscope watch, as I wanted to fix position by steering north-west for Heligoland. At eight o'clock the patrol trawlers came by. You see, they have eighteen trawlers out between Schillig Road and the Island. They work in pairs, each pair doing a sort of sword-dance, and making Saint Andrew's Crosses along the line. They come out in the morning, and we just sheer out of their way to let them by. Then at sunset they all begin edging towards home (that's Wilhelmshaven), until the senior one hoists a signal, and they speed up and hustle into bed. No, we don't worry them—we haven't enough torpedoes to chuck them away on trawlers; and anyhow, you may miss a chance at something big if you get seen on your patrol. Those small craft don't see you unless you worry them. One dives around all day with several of them in sight, but so long as one doesn't show the periscope much, and doesn't get too close, they don't see. If we once started strafing them, they'd

keep a better look-out, but nobody keeps a good look-out unless he's scared—so we don't scare them.

Well, that's about all we saw that trip. A destroyer passed—out of range—on the third day, going about twenty-five knots, and we had some trouble on the fourth. No, not dangerous, just aggravating. You see, we got seen by some idiot, and they sent out the usual four torpedo-boats in line abreast against us. They're just small high-bowed old boats, and aren't worth a torpedo. They came fussing along and saw my periscope at fairly long range, as it was flat calm. I went down to ninety feet, and they let off squibs over us—just little depth charges that didn't even break a light globe. Still, they kept me under till dark, and when we came up then I knew I was going to have trouble and worry getting my charge in, as they'd have all sorts of packets barging round my patrol at night looking for me; so we thought it over, and decided the best place to sit and charge would be on the shoals off the Schillig Road boom defences, because they'd never look for us there. Well, they didn't; we sat there and had an absolutely undisturbed charge for the first time that trip. We saw a lot of small craft go by, all heading out to sea to put in a hate against us; and the joke was that we were only in six fathoms there, and couldn't have got the whole boat wet if we *had* been strafed into diving there. And what's better, I was told to-day that some of their destroyers looking

for us that night had a scrap among themselves,—he's such a jumpy feller the Hun: they seemed to have damaged one packet pretty thoroughly, according to the Intelligence people.

Why do we have to sit up at night? But we don't. We only have to stay up long enough to charge the batteries for next day, and then we pack up and go to the bottom till morning. That's why winter's the best time to patrol—for comfort, anyway. In December you can only see decently through a periscope for about nine hours—then you come up and charge and get to the bottom for dinner. In July it's more like work: you dive twenty-one hours, come up and charge, and dive again about 2.30 A.M. There's no time for a rest on the bottom, but if you're inside the Bight it's quite exciting getting your charge in. You get put down in the middle of the performance by black shapes coming right on top of you. They're usually trawlers on patrol; but sometimes you see a big bow wave, and that means a destroyer, and you crash-dive in a few seconds. You see, a boat charging like that is like a crab with its shell off; you never feel safe in a boat until you are submerged. On a clear night you can deal with destroyers or any other craft, but these pitch-black nights, or nights when it is foggy or snowing, are the deuce. I never feel happy on those nights till we get to the bottom. It gives me cold feet

all the time when I'm on the surface inside there. This trip we got put down at least once during each charge, except the night I went into their front garden to hide. One night, however, I thought we'd never get charged up; we kept getting put under, so that it was a case of twenty minutes' charge and ten minutes' dip for half the night. What's "putting down" like? Well, you see, when you decide it's dark enough to come up, and you've seen the trawlers go home, you pass the word to "Stand by for surface" and to get the engines ready. All the hands wake up and get busy (they read and sleep most of the day), and then when they report "Ready" you blow about five to ten tons out of the tank, and you come up. There's a routine for the business, you see, and they don't want telling much. I open the lid as soon as it's clear of the surface, and a hand follows me up on to the roof.

I have a look round, and if it's all clear I sing out below to start the charge. They get on with it then, and the engines start bumping the batteries up full bore, and at the same time we move slow ahead. I only keep just the conning-tower out, and no more buoyancy, so we have men on the hydroplane wheels to keep her from doing a dive accidentally, and as we're moving ahead a little "up helm" keeps her fairly dry. The hand on deck does "look-out" astern and I look-out ahead; meanwhile the people below carry on smoking



(that's the chance they've been waiting for all day). If the look-out sees anything at all he gives a yell and points at it, and then jumps down inside the conning-tower. If I don't like it when I turn round and see it, I press the button and follow him down. If I see something first I hit the look-out, and he jumps down and I follow. They're all on the top line below, so as soon as I press the button and the horns sound (they make a din all over the boat) they open the vents and put her bow down with the planes, and then by the time I've closed the lid over my head the gauge is showing fifteen feet, and she's going down at a big slant. If I'm slack on the lid I get wet. If I'm too slack and the First Lieutenant thinks I'm not going to get the top lid shut before she's under, he slams the lower doors and either leaves me isolated in the tower or else swimming around on the surface till he comes up later to look for me. (No—I've never got left like that yet, but some people have been pretty near it. It's not safe for the First Lieutenant to hang on too long for you—he might fill the boat.) It's quite simple. With a well-trained crew anything's safe, and you can cut it as fine as you like. When you've heard the propellers from overhead<sup>1</sup> you just keep along at sixty feet for ten minutes or so, and then you come up and get on with the work again. Oh! I'm bored

with all this talking. You ought to be able to run a trip inside by yourself by now. But there's one thing always makes me mad, that's the Heligoland leave-boat. She leaves the island on Friday afternoons and she comes back on Monday morning. She's a big flat-bottomed coal barge—too shallow draught to torpedo—and crammed with men. You can't use a gun, because she's towed by a small tug with a big gun forward and a little one aft; and besides, we're not allowed to give away the fact that we're there by having a joke with small craft. But it's devilish aggravating, all the same, to see the bloated Hun going off for the week-end while we dive up and down for a week waiting for something to turn up. We get our leave all right though. We get three days to the half crew each trip, so that each of us gets leave every other trip. The business is too exciting for me to take leave seriously. I just go to all the revues and amusements I can if I go up to town, and if it's winter-time like now, I get in three days' shooting here. The local people are jolly nice to us, and even if they haven't got a regular shoot going, one can get out to the marshes and shoot duck. After the leave we come back and do a couple of days' exercise-diving and torpedo practice, and then we go out again for another trip. It's awfully interesting,

<sup>1</sup> The date the speaker deals with is before the general use of the hydrophones in submarines.—KLAXON.

because we work in the Huns' front-yard in a way, and it seems so cheeky somehow. Makes us want a drink? Well, I guess not. If you've got cold feet you don't want a drink, because you daren't have it. That's why we den't carry any in the boats. You see, the Owner here looks on us as so many race-horses he's got in training, and if one of us shows symptoms of breathing a bit short, he gets classed as a roarer, and leaves the job altogether to repent in a big ship; there's lots more waiting to take our place, and the Owner's got no what you'd call "motherliness," if he thinks you're not all out for business. Hearing propellers? Oh yes, you can hear them quite clearly from any quiet part of the boat; the fore torpedo compartment is a good place for listening, and so is the space abaft the main motors. You can hear what speed he's going, and when you're used to them you can make out what kind of craft he is—trawler or destroyer. The best time, though, is when you've finished a day's patrol and charging and all, and gone on down to the bottom. I allow the whole crew one cigarette apiece, and they have a concert. They gather round the periscope and sing for an hour before turning in, and the orchestra plays—(that's a concertina and a couple of mandolines),—we've got quite a lot of talent in the boats. Smoking like that overnight doesn't matter. If you keep the circulating fans running the

smoke all goes away while you're asleep. I don't know where it goes to, 'cos it can't get out; but it goes somewhere. I allow the officers a couple of cigarettes apiece during the day-time, and I smoke whenever I feel scared,—that gives me about nine cigarettes a day. Of course you can't smoke at the end of a long summer's day; after about fourteen hours' diving you can't get a cigarette to burn, and a match goes out as soon as it's struck. But you can smoke a bit in the forenoon without spoiling the air in the boat—and besides, on occasions like when somebody is chasing you and dropping those little depth bombs they use, and you've gone to ninety feet or so to keep clear of them, it's a sort of guarantee of good faith if the skipper walks away from the periscope and lights a fag. It looks contemptuous somehow, and the sailors approve. You see, they never know the facts of what's going on. Only the skipper knows the situation, and so they watch you all the time. They spend a trip sitting or lying by their stations, and obeying orders and trusting to their boss not to kill them unnecessarily if he can help it. I tell you, the submarine sailor, once he's past his probation time and been tested on patrol, is a hand worth writing home about! Now, if you'll stop listening a minute and struggle out of that chair, I'll take you round the boat. She's pretty filthy still, but we'll get her clean again by to-morrow.



## THE BENCH AND BAR OF ENGLAND.

BY J. A. STRAHAN.

## IX. YOUNG LIFE IN THE MIDDLE TEMPLE.

“The Inner for the rich man,  
The Middle for the poor;  
Lincoln’s for the gentleman,  
And Gray’s Inn for the boor.”

THIS is one form of an old rhyme which most barristers have heard in various forms, some not suitable for publication, as the newspapers say. It must have been composed when Gray’s Inn was at the worst of its fortunes, for it was not true of it in its early days, and it is not true of it now. Gray’s was once the greatest Inn of Court, and it will for ever be the Inn associated with the mightiest name in English Law—that of Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, Chancellor of England and Treasurer of Gray’s Inn.

Still, no doubt when the rhyme was first written there was, as there is still, much truth in it, so far at any rate as the three other Inns of Court are concerned. Lincoln’s Inn was and is the Inn for gentlemen. It is still the home of the Chancery counsel, who, as everybody knows, maintain a higher standard of culture than do those of the Common Law Bar. There is no doubt but the more intellectual and cleanly work of equity attracts highly educated and refined men more than the rough-and-tumble of common law practice; and so it

is not to be wondered at that Lincoln’s Inn should be full of gentlemen and scholars. Nor is it to be wondered at that it guards its precincts with a certain reserve and reticence not shown by the other Inns, though, unlike the Inner and the Middle Temple, it does not, nor, so far as I know, ever did, reserve its chambers for its own members. But if it opens its chambers to outsiders it does not open its gates. By a queer coincidence the Temple, Lincoln’s Inn, and Gray’s Inn have each about the same number of entrances—some seven or eight. While the other Inns keep all theirs open to everybody who likes to enter till ten at night, Lincoln’s Inn closes its to strangers—all at seven and some at five. Even members occasionally are in doubts as to how they can get in, and when they are in are in doubts as to how they can get out. This practice, I suppose, arose from the aversion of the gentlemen to too free intercourse with “the *οἱ πολλοί*,” as Gilbert says.

And the old rhyme’s reference to the two Temples still holds good. Among common law men the Inner is to this day the Inn of the rich men. That is perhaps why it is such a dull place as compared with its cosmopolitan neighbour, the

Middle. King's Bench Walk and the Gardens are delightful; but the Hall is commonplace. Paper Buildings are an anomaly as are Temple Gardens in the Middle. But all round the Middle is the beautiful and piquant sister beside the plain and dull one. Most of its buildings are quaint and of another world, and its ancient hall has a charm no other hall I have ever seen equals. It is Elizabethan, and in 'it Elizabeth herself watched the performance by Shakespeare's company of Shakespeare's plays. Nor is that the only glorious literary recollection attached to the Inn and its buildings. Among its residents were Evelyn, Selden, Blackstone, Goldsmith, Johnson, and Thackeray; and among its members were Raleigh, Clarendon, Fielding, Congreve, Rowe, Cowper, Burke, Tom Moore, Sheridan, De Quincey, Dickens, and Blackmore. Gray's Inn can boast of Sidney and Bacon; Lincoln's Inn of More and Macaulay; the Inner Temple of Beaumont, Wycherley, and Lamb; but what other place of the same size in the whole world can show a list of the illustrious in literature approaching this?

The Temple, whether Inner or Middle, differed in my young days from the other two Inns in one respect. Lincoln's and Gray's had even then ceased to be the residence of their younger members. Gray's Inn's chambers, high and low, had been given up to solicitors and newspaper men; now they seem to be occupied

largely by women writers. Lincoln's Inn's chambers were used almost entirely as business places for practising barristers and for solicitors who lived elsewhere. But the higher floors of the houses in the Temple were then filled as dwelling-places by the younger barristers and the older students of the two Inns. Things have changed since that time. The two Inns' younger members have now, like so many of our brave soldiers, "gone West," but in a different and less noble way. The "rough comfort and freedom," which, as Thackeray has said, "men always remember with pleasure," are not enough for the present-day youth: he wants comfort without the roughness, and he does not care for freedom; so he has gone to bachelor flats or furnished apartments in St James's or South Kensington, or Bayswater or the suburbs, according as his taste and allowance suggest. Let us hope that one good effect of the Great War will be to make him more of a man in the future.

When I first joined the Middle Temple young men were still as Thackeray knew them. Those of our junior members who had homes in or about London naturally lived there, though even among them there were exceptions; those who came from the provinces or from Scotland or Ireland looked to the Temple as their new home, just as lads going to Oxford and Cambridge look to their colleges as theirs. Resident



chambers were then allotted only to members of the Inn, and were allotted by seniority; consequently, as the demand was great, he was regarded as a fortunate man who secured a set while still a student. I myself did not go into residence until I was called, and then I came in as the sub-tenant of a friend who had secured a set of four rooms, two of which he did not need.

That was nearly forty years ago, and yet I remember the first night I slept in the Temple as distinctly as if it were yesterday. I had been lodging for a short time before at Denmark Hill. That place was very much as it was in Ruskin's day—a quiet village composed chiefly of large Victorian villas, with great gardens and a few terraces of quaint Georgian houses. Open lands lay between it and Dulwich and Norwood. My lodging was as still by night and day as a house in the Chilterns or the Cotswolds. The evening I took possession of my rooms in the Temple I had been to the theatre, and I came to Temple Gate just as the theatres and music halls were pouring out their population. As I walked up to Temple Gate, Temple Bar, though it was near midnight, was "roaring" more fiercely than it roars at midday. Thousands of people were hurrying home along its foot-paths; its roadway was crowded with buses and racing cabs and hansoms. I thought to myself what a contrast my new lodging would be to my

old one. I knocked at Temple Gate. When I went in and the door was closed behind me, I was astounded. The stillness of Denmark Hill was as nothing to the stillness of the Temple by night. The whole tumult and turmoil of the street without departed as if by magic; and as I walked down Middle Temple Lane, the silence about me was so deep that I was startled by the sound of my own footsteps.

And what a contrast my Temple rooms were to those I had left at Denmark Hill! There, though the house I inhabited was of respectable antiquity, I had at least most of the fittings and conveniences of modern life: here I had none. My chambers, which were among the most ancient in the Temple, and which I had never before seen after dark, were up three pairs of gloomy, winding, and rickety stairs; the rooms were divided from each other by thin partitions of wood so warped by weather that the wind circulated freely through it, and so decayed by age that it filled the whole air with a dull, dead smell; the ceilings were low, cracked, and yellow, and hung down in the centre like inverted umbrellas; and there was no supply of water or light—light being provided by lamps or candles (I chose, like most Templars of that time, candles, since, though they might not give as much illumination as lamps, they gave less smell), and water being provided by the laundress, who fetched your allowance of what

Thackeray calls "that cosmetic" from Pump Court each morning, and who was very discontented if you required your allowance to be more than of the regulation quantity. And yet I am one of those who, to repeat Thackeray, always remember the rough comfort and freedom of the Temple with pleasure. Still, when I got a chance, I removed to more commodious chambers.

The laundresses of the Temple are a class by themselves. They succeed to their positions by inheritance or family arrangement: the lady who "did" for me most of my years in the Temple received hers from her mother, who was my first laundress, as a marriage portion. They are very kindly and considerate to the young gentlemen for whom they labour, provided they do not demand too much tidiness. Nothing will persuade them to keep themselves fairly clean; it has been said that they are called laundresses because they never wash. The extent of the services they render is strictly fixed by ancient custom, to which they as strictly adhere. To residents they come twice a day—once in the morning to "do" your sitting-room, and once in the afternoon to "do" your bedroom. They are also supposed to prepare your breakfast. Mine prepared my breakfast for a month or two after I went into residence; but she made such a botch of it that by the end of that time—when I had found sufficient courage to speak to her—I

forbade her messing with it any more. After that I cooked my morning meal myself—in the winter on my sitting-room fire, in the summer on a spirit-lamp; and with a little practice I did it, I think, very well.

There were at that time many senior students and junior barristers living in the Temple, and we all knew one another more or less; but we congregated in sets. Each set consisted of men who, as a rule, had known one another long before they ever saw the Temple—men who had been old schoolfellows or college chums. It is impossible to describe how close the friendship between them was or how intimate were their lives. We differed very much in our circumstances and in our success in the struggle of life; but no man was ever allowed by the other men of his set to go under, however badly fortune had behaved to him. If he was short of cash he applied, as a matter of course, to one of his friends who was not; and the friend, as a matter of course, supplied his deficiency. Seldom indeed was this mutual generosity imposed upon. I myself heard of only one case. A gentleman who had got greatly behind in his rent was turned out of his chambers. He at once went to a prosperous and dandified member of his set and explained his position. This was just at the commencement of the long vacation. "Billy, my boy," said the dandy friend, "you have come to the right shop.



I'm starting off to spend the long abroad; you jump into these rooms till I come back: that will give you time to look about you. And, Billy, you'll be wanting a whisky now and then. Well, there's the key of my cupboard; it contains six dozen John Jameson; but keep the door locked, for the laundress likes it." Billy jumped in as suggested, and his dandy friend went abroad. When Michaelmas was drawing near and work was once more beginning to come in, the dandy returned. He found Billy still in possession. After a friendly chat the dandy said, "I'm done up with the long journey home: I think I'll have a whisky." Billy handed him the key of the cupboard. He opened it, but all the Jameson was gone. "Well, Billy," said the dandy, a little ruefully, "you have had plenty to drink while I was away." "I have," answered Billy shortly. A little put out, the dandy thought for a moment and then said, "Well, I suppose my mother will expect to see me. I think I'll dress and dine with her to-night." He went to the wardrobe. On opening it, to his amazement all his clothes were gone. "Hillo!" he exclaimed, "what the deuce has happened to the dozen suits and overcoats I left here?" Billy replied calmly, "Well, you see, you left me plenty to drink, but you left me nothing to eat, and so," taking a fistful of pawn tickets out of his pocket, "I had to dine on your clothes."

Men of the same set usually

find it convenient, if not absolutely necessary to spend their days separately. Most of us had some other employment besides the practice of the law, which itself occupied little of our time. Literature, or rather occasional journalism, was the most common; but reporting law-cases, writing law-books, conducting civil service and university examinations and many other things, were also to many of us modes of industry and sources of income. Not that most of us actually required such income: we usually had allowances sufficient to provide for our needs; but they were very far from being sufficient to provide for our pleasures; and we were at the age when pleasures are sweet, and we were willing to work for them. When the day's labours were over, however, we forgathered for the evening, which was sometimes prolonged into the night till "the winds were sighing low and the stars"—or even occasionally the sun—"were shining bright." When commons were on we dined in Hall, one of the set arriving early to secure a mess for us by turning the forks according to custom, for at that time the Hall was often crowded: now young barristers have ceased to dine as well as to live in the Temple. When commons were not on we dined together, usually at one of the old taverns which then flourished in Fleet Street—the Cock, Dick's, or the Cheshire Cheese. Only the last of these survives; and it has become

the resort of American ladies, who show their devotion to literature and their ignorance of history by going there under the delusion that the great Dr Johnson once frequented it. We seldom went farther west for dinner than the old Gaiety Restaurant, which has also disappeared. After dinner we adjourned to chambers for a game of cards; or we went to the Temple Forum in Fleet Street, or the Society of Ancient Cogers in Salisbury Square, to indulge in free speech for ourselves, and sometimes to pay for free drinks for others; or we witnessed, from the pit, a Gaiety burlesque, or a Surrey pantomime, or a tragedy at the Wells, or, best of all, a Gilbert and Sullivan opera at the Opéra-Comique, or later at the Savoy. Not unfrequently we crossed the silent and deserted City and penetrated into the boisterous and crowded East End. Whitechapel Road, Petticoat Lane, Leman Street and its theatre, Ratcliffe Highway and its dancing dens, were familiar to us. Some of these, and particularly the last, were far from safe resorts for young gentlemen at that time, and more than once we were warned by the police of the risks we were running; but so far as I know none of us ever came to the slightest harm. My own recollection is that we were nearly always treated not merely with courtesy, but with deference—like “young princes come to visit their father’s subjects,” as Thackeray says. At any rate, London was even

then the safest of the great cities of the world, for which I think we have to thank the people at least as much as the police. I have been more often in imminent danger during the few months I have spent in Paris, Brussels, and Amsterdam than during the forty years I have lived in the capital of Europe: I understand that New York is now the capital of the universe.

The most dismal times we Templars experienced in those old days were the festive seasons. Most of us at Christmas and Easter could find shelter at the houses of relatives or friends; but some of us could not, and some of us who could had work which tied us to town. And town, when everybody else was rejoicing, was to us a place of misery. The Temple was nearly uninhabited; and from being delightful it became desolate. I remember a friend of mine, left alone in it at Eastertide, becoming so desperate that to bring up a semblance of Easter at home he got a dozen eggs and boiled them hard, and ate the whole lot at one meal. He lived, I understand, the rest of the vacation on physio.

My work—and I did a great deal of it—was of a kind which left me free to go when and where I liked during the holidays, and many a pleasant visit I paid to country houses when things were dreary in town. Sometimes friends went with me, and sometimes these friends were not ever-judicious. I remember going with one to spend Christmas at a bungalow



at Birchington in Kent. The day after we arrived an icy wind was blowing in from the sea. My friend, who hated cold, did not wish to go out; but our host was eager to take us around to display to our admiring gaze the beauties and amenities of the shore. As we crawled along the chalk cliffs, shivering in the biting blast, he stopped, and turning to us, said proudly, that there was nothing between where we stood and the North Pole except the sea. My friend answered that he believed there was not even that. Our host took this too complete agreement with him not at all in the spirit in which it was offered, and we were never again invited to his bungalow, which I regretted, because I understood that Birchington is a tolerable enough place in the summer.

There were, however, two festivals which brought us nothing but delight, provided we could contrive to get away from our work to enjoy them, which was not always easy, since they both came round when the courts were sitting. One was the Derby, the other the University Boat Race. It was regarded among us as a sort of high treason to sport not to partake in their delights; and when any of us happened to have a case—which was not very often—fixed to be heard on one of the days, the tricks and devices we resorted to in order to get it postponed to a more convenient season were marvellous in their ingeniousness and duplicity. We had

good countenance, however, for these tricks and devices in some of Her Majesty's judges of sporting tastes, who resorted to similar practices themselves. A story used to be told of Mr Justice Hawkins, which is characteristic if it is not true, but I believe it is true. He had a heavy case on his list for Derby Day. The leading counsel for the plaintiff was a certain distinguished K.C., notable for the austerity of his life and the contempt with which he regarded all the follies and frivolities of man. Hawkins sent for this K.C., the afternoon before Derby Day, and asked him as a personal favour to apply to have the case allowed to stand over till the day after the Derby. The K.C. was anxious to oblige his lordship, but could not imagine any ground on which to base his application. "Oh, simply say personal convenience," said his lordship. "You may be sure I'll raise no difficulties." So just before the court was to rise the puritanical K.C. duly applied as requested. Hawkins, with his usual perversity, demanded sternly what the personal convenience was on account of which he was asked to waste the public time. The K.C. was irritated, and was proceeding to explain that he did not care much whether the case stood over or not, when his lordship hastily granted his application. But Hawkins was irritated too, and when the court rose he took his revenge. Leaning over the bench he said in a bantering whisper, which all in court could hear,

"Ah, you wicked old humbug, I know where you want to go to-morrow!"

We Templars were then such clubbable fellows that most of us had at least two clubs—a stately one in Pall Mall or St James's Street, which we joined as a duty and frequented very little, and a homely one in the neighbourhood of Fleet Street or the Strand, which we joined for our pleasure and frequented very much. My homely club was the Savage, then housed in the Savoy. It was composed of journalists, most of whom were also barristers, actors, artists, and entertainers. Journalists then had not become mere gramophones through which you hear their proprietor's voice, but were independent writers and thinkers, and excellent company; and the members of the club really were what they still call themselves, "brother Savages." Every night entertainment could be found among them; but Saturday night was the night. Then there was a house dinner followed by a sing-song, as there is still. It was my habit to bring my Temple

friends to these festivities; and it is a little pathetic now to remember the heartiness with which we youngsters applauded the singer, laughed with the humourist, and admired the skill of the conjurer and ventriloquist. Ah, it is a good thing to be young. Pity it is that "youth is stuff will not endure."

"Oh, the mad days that I have spent!" says Justice Shallow, "and to see how many of mine old acquaintances are dead!" Life in the Middle Temple in my youth was not quite so mad as life in Clement's Inn was in the youth of Justice Shallow, according to his own account. So far as I know, none of us ever, like Falstaff, broke a man's head at the Court gate, or, like Shallow himself, fought a fruiterer behind Gray's Inn. But perhaps Shallow's story is a little over-coloured. Falstaff's comment on it casts some doubt on its accuracy; he says that every third word of it is a lie. However that may be, in one respect his story ends like mine: "And to see how many of mine old acquaintances are dead!"

*(To be concluded.)*



## THE RETURN PUSH.

BY QUEX.

## IX.

B BATTERY had been ordered to move about half a mile beyond G—, and come into action off the road that led towards the extensive, low-lying village of C—, through which the enemy front line now ran. Major Mallaby-Kelby had gone forward and the three remaining batteries awaited his return.

I clambered my horse over the shell-holes and rubbish heaps of G—, a preliminary to a short reconnaissance of the roads and tracks in the neighbourhood. Old Silvertail, having become a confirmed wind-sucker, had been deported to the Mobile Veterinary Section; Tommy, the shapely bay I was now riding, had been transferred to me by our ex-adjutant, Castle, who had trained him to be well-mannered and adaptable. "A handy little horse," was Castle's stock description, until his increasing weight made Tommy too small for him. I had ridden about six hundred yards past the sunken road in which B Battery's ammunition waggons were waiting, when half a dozen 5·9's crashed round and about them. I turned back and saw more shells descend among the empty Nissen huts in G—. Two drivers of B Battery were being carried away on stretchers and the waggons were coming

towards me at a trot. They halted four hundred yards from the spot where they had been shelled, and young Beale said they counted themselves lucky not to have had more casualties.

The Boche by now had got his guns in position and began a two hours' bombardment of G— and its cross-roads. It was not until 7 P.M. that Major Mallaby-Kelby returned. He was tired, but anxious to go forward. "We are the advanced brigade for to-morrow's show," he said. "The battery positions are only 1600 yards from the Boche, but I think they will be comparatively safe. . . . I want you all to come along and we'll arrange a headquarters. I've got my eye on a sunken Nissen hut. There's a section commander of another brigade in it, but it ought to be big enough to hold us as well."

So the major, the adjutant, Wilde, and myself walked at a smart pace along the road to C—. The Boche shells were mostly going over our heads, but whizz-bangs now and again hit the ground to left and right of us; a smashed limber had not been cleared from the road, and fifty yards short of the railway crossing four decomposing horses emitted a sickening stench. "We'll have our headquarters waggon line along

there first thing to-morrow," announced the major, stretching a long arm towards a side-road with a four-foot bank.

At the forsaken railway halt we turned off the roadway and followed the line, obeying to the letter the major's warning to bend low and creep along under cover of the low embankment. "Now we'll slip through here," said the major, after a six-hundred-yards' crawl. We hurried through what had been an important German depot. There was one tremendous dump of eight-gallon, basket-covered wine bottles—empty naturally; a street of stables and dwelling-huts; a small mountain of mouldy hay; and several vast barns that had been used for storing clothing and material. Each building was protected from our bombers by rubble revetments, fashioned with the usual German carefulness. "They shell here pretty consistently," added the major encouragingly, and we made for more open land that sloped up towards a well-timbered wood on the wide-stretched ridge, a thousand yards away. The sparse-covered slopes were dotted with living huts, all built since the Boche recovered the ground in his March push. "B Battery have moved to within two hundred yards of the wood now—you can see the guns," resumed the major. "The other battery positions are on the southern side of the road. The place I have in my eye for headquarters is close to B Battery."

The German artillery had quite evidently understood the

likelihood of British batteries occupying the slope, and were acting accordingly. Our party had reached a smashed hut three hundred yards from B Battery, when the whine of an approaching shell caused us to drop to ground; it fell fifty yards away and the air became dense with flying pieces of shell and earth showers. As we raised ourselves again we saw Beale walking at an even pace towards us. "Not a nice spot, sir," he began, saluting the major. "We picked that place for a mess"—pointing to the broken hut—"and five minutes later a shell crashed into it. There's a dead horse round the corner. . . ."

"Have you been shelled much at the battery?" demanded the major.

"We had two sergeants killed a quarter of an hour ago, sir. . . . Captain Dumble is arranging to shift the guns a bit north of the present position,—do you approve of that, sir?"

"Yes, certainly," responded Major Mallaby-Kelby hastily. "If the direction of the shelling indicates that it would mean more safety for the battery I'm all for shifting." Beale saluted and went away.

There was not so much spare room in the Nissen hut as the major had thought. He asked me to "organise things" and to "scrounge round" for a trench-cover to separate the subaltern and his gunners from our party; but while I was dodging shells, making the search, he found a small Boche combination hut and dug-cut.



The opening pointed the wrong way, of course; but there was one tiny chamber twenty feet below ground with a wooden bed in it, and upstairs a table, a cupboard, and a large heap of shavings. It was now eight o'clock, and the major remembered that he had not even had tea.

"Now what are we going to do about a meal?" he broke out. "We can't have many servants up here, there's no room . . . and it will be difficult to get the mess-cart up. Now, who has any suggestions? On these matters I like to hear suggestions."

My own idea was that Meddings the cook, the major's servant, and one other servant should bring up some bully-beef, cheese, and bread, and bacon and tea for the morning. All that we wanted could be carried in a couple of sandbags. We could do without valises and blankets that night. Zero hour for the battle was 5.15 A.M. The mess-cart could come along afterwards. The proposition was favourably received, the major's only revision referring to his white wine.

Headquarter waggons had remained the other side of G—, and I volunteered to walk back and bring the servants up. The major thought that Wilde ought to accompany me; it was not too pleasant a pilgrimage with the Boche maintaining his shelling.

But as we climbed the stairs of the dug-out the major made a further decision. "I think

you might as well bring the mess-cart," he called out. I paused. "Not very easy to bring it round here in the dark, sir," I said, and Wilde raised his eyebrows deprecatingly.

"Yes, I think you had better bring it," continued the major. "There are two officers, and besides, the drivers have to learn the way to come here. . . . Don't forget my bottle of white wine, old fellow," was his parting reminder as Wilde and I set off.

The nature of the shelling caused us to direct our steps through the Boche depot towards the railway again. "Pity we didn't have something to eat before we came up here," growled Wilde. "What road are we going to bring the cart along when we come back? There's no proper track when we get off the main road."

I looked back towards the hut in which we had left the major and the adjutant. There was little to distinguish it from several other huts. "There's the Red Cross station and that big wooden building at the corner; I think we shall recognise them again," I said. "Do you see that signalling pole on the roadside. That's a pole crossing, and I know there's a track leading off the road there," added Wilde shrewdly. "That's the way we'd better bring the cart."

It was nearly dark when we reached the G— cross-roads. Small parties of infantrymen were coming along, and ammunition and ration waggons. As we turned up the road leading south-west a square-

shouldered man with a stiff big-peaked cap saluted with the crisp correctness of the regular soldier. I recognised the sergeant-major of B Battery.

"Were you much shelled when you took your waggon lines up there this evening?" I asked him.

"Yes, sir. It got too hot, and Major Bullivant sent us down again half an hour ago. All the batteries have shifted their waggon lines back behind G—, sir."

"All the more exciting for us," muttered Wilde. By the aid of my electric torch we picked our way along a rough track that took us to our waggons. The drivers and spare signallers were waiting orders to settle down for the night. When I told the cook that we only wanted bare necessities in the mess-cart, he answered, "That'll mean emptying the cart first. We've got everything aboard now." Such things as the stove, the spare crockery and cutlery, several tins of biscuits, and the officers' kit were quickly dumped upon the ground, and I told off one of the servants to act as guard over it until the morning. "What about this, sir?" inquired the cook, opening a large cardboard box. "The interpreter sent it up this evening." I noted twenty eggs and a cake. "Yes, put that in," I replied quickly.

Wilde detailed a signaller to accompany the driver of the cart, and, with Meddings and two of the servants walking behind, the journey commenced. A ten-minutes' hold-up occurred

when Captain Denny of A Battery, a string of waggons behind him, shouted my name through the darkness. He wanted the loan of my torch for a brief study of the shell-holes, as he intended establishing the battery waggon lines in the vicinity.

The Boche had started his night-firing in earnest by the time the mess-cart and party passed the cross-roads at G—. A pungent smell of gas led to much coughing and sneezing. The air cleared as the road ascended, but shells continued to fly about us, and no one looked particularly happy. There were nervy, irritating moments when waggons in front halted unaccountably; and, just before the railway crossing, Wilde had to go forward and coax a pair of R.E. mules, who refused to pass the four dead horses lying in the road. The railway crossing passed, we began to look for the black-and-white signalling pole.

"Here it is," called Wilde with relief, as a 5.9 sped over us towards the railway line. "Come along, Miller," he shouted to the mess-cart driver, fifty yards behind us. The cart creaked and wobbled in the bumpy ditch-crossing that led past the pole. "There's the big building," said I, going on ahead, "and here's the Red Cross place. We're getting on fine. We'll tell M'Klown and Tommy Tucker that we'll apply for a job with the 980 company" (the A.S.C. company that supplied the brigade with forage and rations).



"We want to go half-right from here," I continued, lighting up my torch for four or five seconds. The track led, however, to the left, and we slowed our pace. Another two hundred yards and we came to a junction; one track curved away to the right, the other went back towards the road.

A high-velocity shell screamed over and burst with a weird startling flash of flame a hundred yards away. We followed the right-hand path, and found that it bent to the left again. "This is getting puzzling," I said to Wilde in a low voice. "I think we've come right so far," he replied, "but I shall be glad when we're there."

We went on for another five minutes, the cart following. Then suddenly the situation became really worrying. We were facing a deep impassable trench. "Damn!" said Wilde angrily. "I was afraid this would happen."

"I don't think we can be more than a couple of hundred yards from where we want to get," I answered. "It ought to be in that direction. Let's give 'em a hail."

"They'll be down below—they won't hear us," said Wilde gloomily.

We stood up on the trench and called first the name of the brigade and then the name of the adjutant. Not a sound in reply. We shouted again, the servants joining in. Another shell, bursting near enough to spray the mess-cart with small fragments! At last

we heard a cry, and shouted harder than ever. A figure came out of the gloom, and I recognised Stenson, B Battery's round-faced second lieutenant. "Ah! now we're all right," I called out cheerfully. "You see how we're tied up. Our Headquarters is close to your battery. Which is the way to it?"

Stensen's face fell. "That's what I was hoping you would tell me," he replied blankly. "I've lost myself."

There was a groan from Wilde.

"I left the battery about half an hour ago because some one was shouting outside in the dark," went on Stenson. "I found a major sitting in a shell-hole; he had lost his way trying to get back to the railway. I managed to put him right—now I can't find the battery."

Another voice came from the far side of the trench, and we peered at the newcomer. It was one of the brigade orderlies, who also had lost his way trying to find an infantry battalion headquarters. I examined him on his sense of direction, but all I got from him was that if he could reach the road and see the fifth telegraph pole from the wood, he would know that Brigade Headquarters lay on a line due north.

More shells dropped near, and I began to think of Minnie, our patient mess-cart mare. We must get her and the cart out of the way as soon as possible. Close by stood a commodious Nissen hut, sunk half-

way below ground. After consulting with Wilde, I told the servants to unload the cart and carry the stuff inside the hut. The cart having gone, we went inside; and, lighting a candle, discovered the usual empty bottles and scattered German illustrated periodicals that indicate a not too hurried Boche evacuation. After a ten minutes' wait, during which the Boche shelling increased in intensity, Stenson, the orderly, and myself went forth with my torch, bent upon trying all the tracks within reach until we found the right one. And though we twice followed ways that disappointed us, and turned and searched with a bitter sense of bafflement, our final path led in the direction to which I had first pointed. We found ourselves close to the shell-stricken hut where I had met Beale of B Battery earlier in the evening. "I know where we are now," I shouted hilariously.

"Who's that?" called some one sharply. I turned my torch on to the owner of the voice. It was Kelly of D Battery, yet another lost soul. "I'm hanged if I know where I am," he explained angrily. "I can't find the battery. I was going to lie down inside here until it got light, . . . but I have no matches, and I put my hand on a clammy dead Boche."

"Get away with you!" I laughed. "That's a dead horse. I saw it this afternoon."

Sure of my ground now, I

walked comfortably towards the dug-out where Major Mallaby-Kelby and the adjutant were waiting. It was 11.15 P.M. now. Tired and hungry and without candles, they had fallen asleep.

"By Gad! you're back," ejaculated the major when I touched him. . . . "Have you brought my white wine?"

"It is ooming, sir, before very long," I responded soothingly.

I stood outside, flashed my torch, and yelled for Wilde. An answering shout was succeeded by Wilde himself. "Why, we were quite close all the time," he said in surprise.

"Now you go back with the orderly and bring Meddings over with something to eat," I went on, "every one's famished." Soon Meddings arrived, striding across shell-holes and treacherous ground with a heavy mess-box balanced on his head.

"Only bully beef to-night, sir," said Meddings to the expectant major as he dumped the box on the floor of the hut.

"My dear fellow, I can eat anything, a crust or a dog-biscuit, I'm so hungry."

Meddings raised the lid and we all crowded round. "By Gad! this is too much," snapped the major.

The box contained nothing but cups and plates and saucers.

When Meddings returned with a second box the major and the adjutant seized some biscuits and munched happily and voraciously. "You devils," said the major grinning re-



proachfully at Wilde and myself, "I bet you had whiskies and sodas at the waggon line. Why were you so long?"

We didn't go into full explanations then, and I must confess that when the major, in his haste, knocked the bottle of white wine off the table and smashed it, Wilde and myself could scarcely forbear a chuckle. That ought, of course, to be the climax of the story; but it wasn't. I had put two bottles of the major's white wine into the mess-cart, so the concluding note was one of content. Also I might add, Stenson called upon us to say that B Battery's mess-cart had failed to arrive, and four foodless officers asked us to have pity upon them. So B Battery received a loaf and a big slab of the truly excellent piece of bully, a special kind that Meddings had obtained in some mysterious fashion from a field ambulance that was making a hurried move. "You two fellows have earned your supper," said the now peaceful major to Wilde and myself. "I didn't think you were going to have so trying a journey." We ate bully sandwiches solidly until 1 A.M. Then the major and the adjutant descended to their little room below ground. I glanced through 'The Times,' and then Wilde and myself found a restful bed upon the shavings. The cook and the servants had gone back to the Nissen hut.

The major's last words as he fell asleep were, "I've to be at the —th Infantry Brigade Headquarters at 4.45 in the morning. I think I'll take the

adjutant with me. . . . No," — sleepily, — "you'd better come, Wilde."

At 4 A.M., when the major's servant woke us, the major called up the stairs to me, "I think, after all, you'd better come with me." As I had not removed my boots, it didn't take me long to be up and ready.

Before we were fifty yards from the hut the major and I shared in one of the narrowest escapes that have befallen me in France. We heard the shell coming just in time to crouch. According to Meddings, who stood in the doorway of the hut, the shell fell ten yards from us. Smothered with earth, we moved forward rapidly immediately we regained our feet.

"We shall be right for the rest of the day after that," panted the major. "The —th Brigade are in the bank along the road from — wood to C—," he said a little later, reading aloud from a message form. As we left the dewy grass land and got on to the road that led through the wood, other shells whistled by, but none of them near enough to set our nerves tingling again. Indeed the state of mind of both of us seemed sanguine and rose-coloured. "Fine bit of country this," said the major in his quick jerky way, "and that purple haze is quite beautiful. It ought to be lighter than this. It's not even half morning light yet. . . . My old uncle in County Clare would be sure to call it

dusk. He often used to say when we were arranging a day's fishing, 'Let me see, it will still be dusk at 5 A.M.'"

The major drew an envelope from his pocket, and fixed his eye-glass. "Awkward thing sometimes having a double-barrelled name," he continued. "I remember a bright young subaltern in a reserve brigade in England, whose name was Maddock-Smith, or something like that. He complained that the brigade clerk had not noticed the hyphen, and that he was down to do double duty as orderly officer—once as Maddock, and once as Smith."

We were now through the wood, and walking down the hill direct to C—. Everything seemed profoundly quiet; not a soul in the road save ourselves. "Seems strange," observed the major, frowning. "Infantry Brigade Headquarters ought to be about here. They can't be much farther off. The starting line is only a few hundred yards away."

"You'd certainly expect to see plenty of messengers and runners near a brigade headquarters," I put in. "Hullo! here's some one on a bicycle."

It was a New Zealand officer. "Can you tell me where the —th Brigade Headquarters are?" he asked. "We are looking for them ourselves," replied the major. "I've to be there by 4.45, and it's past that now."

We went down to where a track crossed the road at right angles. Still no one in sight. "Don't understand it," remarked the New Zealand

officer, "I'm going back for more information."

The major and I remained about five minutes longer watching the haze that enveloped the village below commence to lift. Then suddenly we heard the sharp metallic crack of quick-firing guns behind, and dozens of 18-pdr. shells whistled above us. The barrage had started.

Almost immediately red Very lights went up within a stone's-throw as it seemed to me. And now Boche lights leapt up on our left where the haze prevented us seeing the M— ridge, the highest ground in the neighbourhood, and still in enemy hands. Presently the devilish rattle of machine-guns rapped out, spreading round the half-circle along which the alarm lights were still soaring heavenwards.

"We can't do anything by staying here," decided the major. "My place is with the Infantry Brigade, and I must find them."

"We can report, at any rate, that the Boche lights went up within a few seconds of the start of our barrage, and that the enemy artillery replied within four minutes," I remarked, looking at my wrist-watch, as shells from the direction of the Boche lines poured through the air.

"Yes, we can say that," responded the major, "and —, keep down!" he called out violently.

A number of bullets had swished swiftly past us. We kept close to the bank and walked, bending down, until



we came again to the sunken portion of the road.

"We can also report that this road was subjected to machine-gun fire," concluded the major pointedly.

We ducked again with startled celerity just before reaching the wood. This time it was a short-range shell from one of our own guns—there was no mistaking the wheezy, tinny sound of its passage through the air. It fell in front of us on the edge of the road, and delivered its shrapnel as vengefully as if it had fallen in the Boche lines. As we came beyond the wood we met young Stenson with a small party of gunners. His face shone with expectancy. He was on the way to man the forward gun that B Battery had placed overnight under cover of a bank not far from the road the major and I had just walked along.

"Well, old fellow," remarked the major, removing his steel helmet when we got back to headquarters, "a cup of tea, and you'd better go straight down to those trenches the other side of C—and inquire what has become of the infantry brigades. And you can

deliver our reconnoitring report."

It was a long walk, and I resolved to pick up my horse for the return journey. The infantry brigadier was taking an early cup of tea when I found his headquarters. His brigade-major told me that there had been a change of plan, and the brigade did not come forward, as previously arranged. "We couldn't find you to let you know," he explained. "Show me the position of your headquarters on the map. . . . Oh, we have our advanced headquarters not three hundred yards from you, and you will find the 2nd — Headquarters near there too. . . . I'm sorry we didn't let you know last night. But none of our despatch-riders could find you."

I rode back the best part of the way, and found the major, the adjutant, and Wilde fortifying themselves with eggs and bacon.

"We'll look round for a better protected headquarters than this after breakfast," said the major briskly.

"When I've had a shave, sir," I answered appealingly. "I can't maintain my efficiency without a shave, you know."

#### X.

August 30: Before noon we learned that the battle had gone not altogether our way. Our own Divisional Infantry had fought well and scattered the Boche in the low-lying village of C—, but

the Division on our left had failed to force the enemy from the M— Heights. Consequently our infantry had been ordered to fall back to the higher ground west of C—, while it remained impossible

for the Field Artillery to push forward so long as the Boche observers possessed the M—— ridge.

Our batteries, with an S.O.S. range of 1700 yards, were close enough, as it was, to startle strict adherents of siege-war principles. Indeed B Battery's forward section, handled first by Dumble and then by Stenson, had boldly harassed the enemy machine-gunners from under 500 yards' range. Dumble had already been recommended for the Military Cross, and Major Bullivant described Stenson's exploits while visiting Brigade Headquarters during the afternoon.

"Yesterday," he told Major Mallaby-Kelby, "he took a sniping gun on to the — crest, and kept it in action for four hours, firing 150 rounds. At one time he was within three hundred yards of the enemy. He wiped out at least two infantry teams and wag-gons—although the Boche tried hard to knock his gun out with 5·9's and whizz-bangs. This morning he fired 500 rounds over open sights, and the colonel of the —s tells me he helped our infantry a lot. I understand that more than once, when his gunners got tired, he 'layed' the gun himself—not part of an officer's work, perhaps—but he's a very sound youngster, and I should like to get him something."

"I shall be pleased indeed to put him in," responded Major Mallaby-Kelby. "A word from the infantry would, of course, help."

Our new headquarters, nearer

to the Boche depot, consisted simply of a deep stairless shaft with a 40 degrees slope. The props supporting the roof were fusty with mildew and fungus, but the entrance faced away from the German guns. As the colonel of the 2nd —s was keen to be in liaison with us, he and his adjutant and a couple of signallers shared the shaft. The servants gathered clean straw from the German dump and strewed it down the shaft. Major Mallaby-Kelby and the colonel, a slim soft-voiced young man about twenty-four years of age, with a proved reputation for bravery and organising powers, had their blankets laid side by side at the top of the shaft; the two adjutants, plus tele-phones, came next; then a couple of signallers with tele-phone switch-boards; and, lowest of all, the doctor and myself. Wilde and his signallers, the cook and the servants, had installed themselves in a roomy hut stuck in a big bank thirty yards away. There was a sort of well at the top of the shaft, with steps cut in the earth, leading down from the ground-level. We fastened a tarpaulin across the top of the well and made it our mess. It was not unwise to pick such a well-shielded nook; the Boche gunners flung shells about more in this neighbourhood than along the slope where the batteries were situated.

We slept three nights in the shaft. Each morning on awaking I discovered that I had slipped a couple of yards



downhill. I made full acquaintance, too, with the completeness of the doctor's snoring capabilities. The adjutant always said he could snore in five different keys. Down in that shaft he must have introduced a new orgy of nasal sounds. It commenced with a gentle snuffling that rather resembled the rustling of the waters against the bows of a racing yacht, and then in smooth even stages crescendoed into one grand triumphant blare.

September 1 proved a memorable day in the history of the Division. Conferences of generals, and dashing to and fro of despatch-riders, produced ambitious plans for an advance that would more than make up for the set-back of August 30. A brigade of our own Divisional infantry was again to descend upon the village of C—, while another brigade, working on the flank, would effect a turning movement northwards towards F—, a hamlet twelve hundred yards north-east of C—. Meanwhile the Division on our left intended to make a desperate effort to free the M— Heights.

My task was to be brigade liaison officer with the —th Infantry Brigade, who had come up overnight to a quarry a quarter of a mile beyond D Battery's position. It was a crisp invigorating day, with a nip in the air that foretold the approach of autumn, and it would have been a pleasant walk along the valley had not one constantly to get to lee-

ward of the dead horses that littered the way. And I shall always recall a small log-cabin that stood isolated in the centre of the valley—the sort of place that could mean lone settlers or hermit hunters to imaginative boyhood. I felt drawn to the hut. The door hung ajar and I looked in. A young German infantry soldier, dead, his face palely putty-like, his arms hanging loose, sat on a bench before a plain wooden table. There was no disorder in the hut. Many a time have I seen sleeping men in more grotesque attitudes. But the open jacket and the blood-stained shirt told probably of a miserable being who had crept inside to die.

A red triangular flag hanging limply from a lance stuck in the chalk-bank near a roughly-contrived tarpaulin and pit-prop shelter revealed the infantry brigadier's headquarters. The brigade signalling officer hailed me from a dug-out that flew the blue and white of the signalling company. Outside the brigade-major's hut I found Captain Drysdale, of D Battery, and two other gunner officers. "We are kicking our heels, waiting for news like newspaper correspondents during a Cabinet crisis," said Drysdale with a bored smile. "I can't see why they want so many liaison officers. . . . I went without my dinner to get here from the waggon line last night, and haven't had breakfast yet; and these people haven't told us a scrap of news yet."

"You're doing liaison for Division, aren't you?" I said, "and I'm for brigade. They can't need us both."

"Except that the General told me he might require me to go forward with him to look for targets," replied Drysdale.

"Well, if you like, you slip along to the battery for breakfast. I'll hold the fort until you come back."

There was, indeed, until well on in the morning, surprisingly little information to be telephoned to the Artillery. What news the infantry brigade-major did receive, however, was all to the good. The brigade that went into C— had enjoyed immediate success, and the mopping-up battalion had done its work with the old-soldier thoroughness that so many of the young lads who only learnt war during the summer advance seemed to acquire so rapidly. One of the companies engaged in the turning movement had paid the penalty of over-eagerness, and losing touch with a sister company had been badly enfiladed by German machine-gunners; but another company had rushed up to fill their place and the movement was progressing towards its appointed end.

A dozen Boche prisoners were brought in, dirty, hollow-eyed, and furtive. "This one speaks English, sir," said the dapper little private of the East —s, who had charge of the party, addressing an intelligence officer.

I spoke afterwards to this prisoner, a dark pale-faced infantry man with staring

eyes. His English was fair, although he told me he had only visited England once, for a fortnight—in London and Manchester. He had been a telephone manufacturer's employee.

"You were in C— when you were captured?" I asked.

"Yes."

"How long had you been in the line?"

"Four days; we went down to C— yesterday morning."

"Did your rations get up last night?" I proceeded, thinking of our all-night burst of fire on enemy cross-roads and approaches.

"We took ours with us, but none came for the others there. They had had nothing for two days."

The marching away of the prisoners prevented further questions. Soon the Divisional Commander with his attendant staff came up, and a conference in the brigadier's headquarters was commenced. After half an hour the G.O.C. came out. His demeanour betokened satisfaction. The manner in which he turned to speak parting words to the brigadier indicated further activities. A captain of the West —s, who had been in reserve, turned from watching him, and said to me, "I expect we shall be performing this afternoon." Soon the phrase, "exploiting initial success," ran from tongue to tongue.

This was the message that at noon I telephoned to our adjutant:

7th —s and East —s



will push forward fighting patrols to exploit success in an easterly and north-easterly direction into — Wood, and along the road to S—. Patrols will not penetrate into squares X 120 and Z 130, as —th Division will continue its advance in Y 140, a and c, under a barrage very shortly.

Artillery have been given tasks of harassing fire east of — Wood, and will not fire west of line eastern edge of this wood to A 210, b 05.

Patrols must be pushed out without delay, as it is the intention of the Divisional Commander to exploit initial success with another brigade to-day.

"That's the stuff to give 'em," chortled the brigade signaller officer, who had been whipping round similar messages to various units.

More prisoners kept coming in; the brigade-major's telephone rang furiously; a heavily-moustached infantry signaller, with a bar to his Military Medal, just back from the eastern side of C—, was telling his pals how an officer and himself had stalked a Hun sniper. "He was in a hole behind some trees," he said, "and we were walkin' along, when he hit old Alf in the foot—"

"Is old Alf all right?" asked another signaller quickly.

"Yes"—nodding and grinning—"he's got a nice Blighty—he's all right. . . . As I was sayin', he hit old Alf in the foot, and Mr Biles says to me, 'We'll get that blighter.' So we dropped, and Mr Biles

crawled away to the right and I went to the left. He popped off again after about five minutes, and I saw where the shot came from. He had two other goes, and the second time I saw his head. The next time he popped up I loosed off. . . . We went to have a look afterwards. I'd got him right under the ear."

At three o'clock the brigade-major complained to us that some 18-pdrs. were shooting short. "They mustn't fire in that square," he said excitedly, "we're still mopping up there."

I telephoned to our adjutant, who said he would speak to our batteries. "We are not firing there at all," he informed me five minutes afterwards, and I reported to the brigade-major.

Ten minutes later the brigade-major rushed angrily out of his hut. "Look here!" he said, "that artillery fire has started again. They've killed a subaltern and a sergeant of the East—s. You must do something!"

I rang up the adjutant again. "It isn't our people," he replied tersely. "It might be the —th Division on our left," I suggested. "Can you get on to them?"

"I'll get Division to speak to them," he replied.

By five o'clock the number of prisoners roped in by the Division was not far short of a thousand; the Division on the left had gained the M— ridge, and this, combined with the turning movement from the south, had brought about something like debacle among

the enemy forces opposed to us. "That's topping," said the brigade-major when receiving one particular telephone report, and he looked up with a laugh. "The —s have captured a Boche ambulance waggon, and they have sent it down for receipt on delivery, with horses and driver complete."

Not long afterwards I met Major Veasey, hot and radiant after one of the big adventures of the day. He had gone forward with Kelly, and discovered that the infantry were held up by fierce machine-gun fire. "I was afraid all the time that the major's white breeches would give the show away," Kelly told me, "but we crawled on our bellies to about a hundred yards from the machine guns—there were two of 'em—and got the exact spot. We went back and told the battery where to fire, and then went forward for another look."

"By Jove, we did pepper 'em. And, hang me, if the major didn't say we must go and make absolutely sure that we had outed 'em. There were nineteen Boches in the trench, and they surrendered to the major. . . . Look at this pile of revolvers we took from them—fourteen altogether. The major's promised to give this little beauty to the doctor."

And still the day's tale of triumph was not concluded. At seven o'clock the infantry brigade that had been held in reserve made a combined dash with troops of the Division on the left, and drove the tired, dispirited Huns out of a couple of ruined villages another 2000 yards on.

Our batteries fired harassing crashes all through the night, and were warned to be ready to move first thing in the morning.

## XI.

Sept. 2: The side-spectacle that struck me most when I walked by myself through C— was that of a solitary Royal Engineer playing a grand piano in the open street, with not a soul to listen to him. The house from which the instrument had been dragged was smashed beyond repair; save for some scrapes on the varnish the piano had suffered no harm, and its tone was agreeable to the ear. The pianist possessed technique and played with feeling and earnestness, and it seemed weirdly

strange to hear Schumann's "Slumber Song" in such surroundings. But the war has produced more impressive incongruities than that.

The brigade settled itself in the neighbourhood of F—. The —st Infantry Brigade was already established there in a trench; and the first job of work that fell to me was to answer the F.O.O. of another artillery brigade who had rung up Infantry Brigade Headquarters. "Huns are moving along the road in X429b and c," said a voice. "Can you turn



one of my batteries on to them?" Our batteries were not yet in position, but I saw, a couple of hundred yards away, two batteries whose trails were lowered; so I hurried across and gave them the target and the map spotting, and before long 18-pdr. shells were on their way to ginger up the aforementioned unlucky Huns. An aeroplane fight within decent observing distance aroused much more interest. No decisive result was obtained, but the enemy airman was finally driven away in full retreat towards his own lines. "Jerry isn't as cheeky as he used to be in Flanders last year, is he?" said Wilde to me. "It must be true that he's running short of 'planes."

The problem of the last few days had been the water supply for the horses. Although the sappers were hard at work in C—, there was as yet no water within five miles of the batteries. The Boche by smashing all the power-pumps had seen to that; and the waggon lines were too far in rear for moving warfare. "We shall be all right when we get to the canal," had been everybody's consolatory pronouncement. "The horses won't be so hard worked then."

We were still in the area of newly-erected Boche huts, and Headquarters lay that night without considerable hardship. Manning, our mess waiter, a fishmonger by trade, had discovered a large quantity of dried fish left by the departing enemy, and the men enjoyed quite a feast; the sudden ap-

pearance in new boots of ninety per cent of them could be similarly explained. The modern soldier is not squeamish in these matters. I overheard one man, who had accepted a pair of leggings from a prisoner, reply to a comrade's mild sneer, "Why not? . . . I'd take anything from these devils. There was a big brute this morning: I had a good mind to take his false teeth—they had so much gold in 'em." Which rather suggested that he was "telling the tale" to his unsympathetic listener.

Late that night orders informed us that on the morrow we should come under another Divisional Artillery. Our own infantry were being pulled out of the line to bring themselves up to strength. The enemy were still withdrawing, and fresh British troops had to push ahead so as to allow him no respite. B Battery had already advanced their guns another 2000 yards, and through the night fired hotly on the road and approaches east of the canal. Next morning Major Mallaby-Kelby was instructed to reconnoitre positions within easy crossing distance of the canal, but not to move the batteries until further orders came in. Bicycle orderlies chased down to the waggon lines to tell the grooms to bring up our horses. My groom, I remember, had trouble on the road, and did not arrive soon enough for the impatient major; so I borrowed the adjutant's second horse as well as his groom. A quarter of a mile on the way I realised

that I had forgotten my box-respirator; the only solution of the difficulty was to take the groom's, and send him back to remain in possession of mine until I returned; and all that morning and afternoon I was haunted by the fear that I might perhaps be compelled to put on the borrowed article.

The reconnoitring party consisted of Major Mallaby-Kelby, Major Veasey, Major Bullivant, young Beale of B Battery, and Kelly and Wood of D Battery, who loaded themselves with a No. 4 Director, the tripod instrument with which lines of fire are laid out.

When we approached the highest point along the main road leading east, Major Mallaby-Kelby sent back word that the road was under observation; we must come along in couples, two hundred yards between each couple. The Boche was sending over some of the high-bursting shells which he uses so much for ranging purposes, but we were not greatly troubled. We dipped into a slippery shell-scarred track that wound through a hummocky copse, swung southwards along a sunken road, and then made due east again, drawing nearer a dense forest of stubby firs that stretched far as eye could see. This was the wood into which our infantry had pushed fighting patrols on Sept. 1. Every few yards we met grim reminders of the bloody fighting that had made the spot a memorable battle-ground. My horse shied at two huddled grey forms lying by the road-

side — bayoneted Huns. I caught a glimpse of one dead German, half covered by bushes; his face had been blown away. Abandoned heaps of Boche ammunition; fresh gaping shell-holes; one ghastly litter of mutilated horses and men and a waggon rolled into the ditch, revealed the hellish execution of our artillery. The major called a halt and said we would leave our horses there.

We struck north-east, away from the forest, and, reaching the cross-roads on top of the crest, gazed across the great wide valley that from the canal sloped up to the blue haze of heights still held by the enemy. Through the glasses one saw the yellows and greens of bracken and moss and grass in the middle distances. "We're getting into country now that hasn't seen much shelling," remarked the major with satisfaction. But the glasses also showed slopes seared and seamed with twisting trenches and tawny waggon tracks.

Our path lay along a road bordered by evenly-planted, broken and lifeless poplars. The major called out for us to advance in single file, at intervals of twenty-five yards. When high-velocity shells struck the ground a hundred yards short of the road, and a hundred yards beyond it, we all of us dropped unquestioningly into the narrow freshly-dug trench that ran at the foot of the poplars. About five hundred yards on, to the left of the road, we passed a shell-blasted grove that hung above



a melancholy rubbish-heap of broken bricks and shattered timber.

"Senate Farm!" called Major Mallaby-Kelby, with an informative gesture.

Senate Farm was a datum point that batteries had mercifully pasted two days before.

"Senate Farm!" repeated Major Bullivant, who walked behind Mallaby-Kelby.

"Senate Farm!" echoed Major Veasey, with outstretched arm; and I, in my turn, passed the word to Beale.

Young Beale was in exuberant spirits. He not only turned his head and shouted "Senate Farm!" with a parade-ground volume of voice; he followed with the clarion demand of "Why don't you acknowledge orders?" to Kelly, who was so surprised that he nearly dropped the Director before responding with a grin, and thrusting out his arm in the way laid down in the gun-drill book for sergeants to acknowledge gunnery orders passed along the line of guns.

We came to another large wood that stretched down towards the canal, and, once more in a party, moved along the southern edge of it. An infantry captain, belonging to the Division we were now working under, stepped from beneath the trees and saluted. "We're reconnoitring for battery positions," said Major Mallaby-Kelby, answering the salute. "Can you tell me how the front line runs now?"

"We're sending two patrols through the wood to the canal now," replied the captain.

"The Boche hadn't entirely cleared out three-quarters of an hour ago."

"We may as well go on," said Major Mallaby-Kelby, after three or four minutes further conversation. "The Boche

must be over the canal by now . . . and we have to select battery positions as soon as possible. We don't want to bring the guns up in the dark." There was a general feeling for revolvers, and we entered the wood and followed a bridle-path. I could imagine that wood in the pleasant careless days of peace, a proper wood for picnics and nutting expeditions. Ripening blackberries even now loaded the bramble bushes, but the foul noxiousness of gas-shells had made them uneatable. The heavy sickly smell of phosgene pervaded the close air; no birds fluttered and piped among the upper branches. The heavy steel helmet caused rills of sweat to run down the cheeks.

We forged ahead past a spacious glade where six tracks met. "There's a hut we could use for a mess," said Major Veasey. "Mark it up, Kelly; and look at that barrel, it would be big enough for you to sleep in." Snapped-off branches, and holes torn in the leaf-strewn ground, showed that the guns had not neglected this part of the wood; and in several places we noted narrow ruts a yard or so in length, caused by small-calibre projectiles. "Ricochet shots from whizz-bangs fired at very close range," commented Major Bullivant.

After certain hesitations as

to the right track to follow, we reached the north-western edge of the wood. Major Mallaby-Kelby refused to allow us to leave cover, and we knelt hidden among the prickly bushes. "For heaven's sake, don't show those white breeches, Veasey," laughed Major Bullivant.

A village nestled at the foot of the slope. Not a sign of life in it now, although the Boche was certainly in possession the day before. "There are some Boches in that trench near the top of the slope," said Major Veasey suddenly. "Can you see them? Eight degrees, two o'clock, from the farm chimney near the quarry." I looked hard and counted three steel helmets. "We could have some good shooting if we had the guns up," added the major regretfully. A Boche 5-9 was firing consistently and accurately into the valley beneath us. I say accurately, because the shells fell round and about one particular spot. "Don't see what he's aiming at," said Major Bullivant shortly. "He's doing no damage. . . . He can't be observing his fire."

There was a discussion as to whether an 18-pdr. battery placed near a long bank on the slope would be able to clear the wood at 3000 yards' range, and Major Mallaby-Kelby and Major Bullivant slipped out to inspect a possible position at the corner where the edge of the wood curved north-east. Then Major Mallaby-Kelby decided that it was time to return; and on the way back Major Veasey

said he would be content to bring his 4-5 how. battery into the glade where the six tracks met. "Might as well make us Trench Mortars," growled Kelly to me. "We shan't be more than a thousand yards from the Boche."

Just before we came out of the wood Major Mallaby-Kelby called to me to chalk the sign of Brigade H.Q. on an elaborate hut that stood forty yards off the track—a four-roomed hut, new and clean. It was not pleasant, however, to find two dead Boche horses lying in the doorway.

An enemy bombardment started as we left the wood. Major Veasey and his party went off immediately towards where the horses were waiting. The other two majors, still seeking battery positions, bore away to the south, and I followed them. A 4-2 battery suddenly switched its fire on to the strip of ground we were crossing, and we ran hurriedly for shelter to a trench that lay handy. Shells whistled over our heads, and we panted and mopped our brows while taking a breather.

"No wonder he's shelling here," exclaimed Major Mallaby-Kelby. "The —rd" [our companion brigade] "have a battery here. . . . Look at those dead horses . . . three, five, seven—why, there are twelve of 'em."

"Yes, sir," I put in, "that happened yesterday when they were bringing up ammunition."

We moved up the trench, but we seemed to draw fire as if we had magnetic properties. "We'll move back



again," remarked Major Mallaby-Kelby with energy, and he started off, Major Bullivant following.

We had gone about fifty yards when Major Bullivant turned swiftly, gave me a push, and muttered "Gas!"

We ran back to where we had been before, and looked round for Major Mallaby-Kelby. "Damn it," he said abruptly when he came up, sneezing, "I forgot to bolt. I stood still getting my box-respirator on."

When the shelling died down we walked farther along the trench, which turned westwards. Excellent positions for the three 18-pdr. batteries were found not far from the trench; and returning again towards the wood for our horses, we chanced upon a deep dug-out that Major Mallaby-Kelby sent me down to explore. "Don't touch any wires or pegs," he said warningly; "the Hun may have left some booby-traps." The dug-out was thirty feet deep, and had only one entrance. But I found recesses with good wire beds, and a place for the telephonists. "We'll make that Headquarters," decided the major, and I chalked out our claim accordingly.

When we got back to the batteries we found that orders for the move had come in; the teams were up; and after a very welcome cup of tea the journey to the new positions was started. Wilde, the signalling officer, and myself led the way with the Headquarters' vehicles, and followed a beautifully hidden track that ran through the wood and came

out a hundred yards from our selected dug-out. Three red glares lit up the sky behind the heights held by the Boche. "By Jove," said Wilde, "he must be going back; he's burning things."

My day's work was not yet ended. Our own infantry had been brought up again, and it was imperative that we should be in early communication with the —rd Brigade, the brigade commanded by the forceful young brigadier who had discussed artillery arrangements with the colonel for the operation in which Judd and Pottinger had done so well with their forward section. There was a shortage of telephone wire, and at 8.15 P.M. Wilde's line had not been laid. Major Mallaby-Kelby decided that the only alternative was for me to go and report to the brigadier, whose Headquarters were not far from the road leading to Senate Farm. It was very dark, and the fact that the whole way was under Boche observation made it impossible for me to use my torch. Shells were falling about the cross-roads—and I have undertaken more agreeable walks. I went down into the infantry brigade signal-hut first to find whether we had at last got a line through. We hadn't. When I asked for the general's mess, the signalling sergeant conducted me along a passage that in places was not three feet high. Climbing up a steep uneven stairway, I found myself at the top looking into the mess with only my head and shoulders exposed to view. The

general was examining a map. His brigade-major, a V.C. captain with gentle eyes and a kindly, charming manner; his staff captain, a brisk hard-bitten soldier, with a reputation for never letting the brigade go hungry; the signal officer, the intelligence officer, and other junior members of the Staff, were seated round the same table. "What about the —nd Brigade?" I heard the general say, mentioning our brigade.

"We haven't heard from them yet," observed the brigade-major.

"I'm from the —nd Brigade," I said loudly.

There were startled ejaculations and a general looking round to the spot where the voice came from.

"Hallo, Jack in the box!" exclaimed the brigadier, staring at my head and shoulders, "where did you come from?"

I explained, and the general, laughing, said, "Well, you deserve a drink for that. . . . Come out of your box and we'll give you some targets. . . . I didn't know any one could get in that way."

Before I went away the tactical situation was explained to me. I was given the points the infantry would like us to fire upon during the night. Also I got my drink.

The last thing Major Malaby-Kelby said before going off to sleep was, "Extraordinary long time since we met any oivilians. Haven't seen any since July."

## XII.

Sept. 4: "A full mail-bag and a bottle of white wine are the best spirit revivers for war-worn fighting-men," said Major Mallaby-Kelby contentedly, gathering up his own big batch of letters from the one and sipping a glass of the other.

During two days Brigade Headquarters and the four batteries had received piles of belated letters and parcels, and there was joy in the land. I remember noting the large number of little, local, weekly papers—always a feature of the men's mail; and it struck me that here the countryman was vouchsafed a joy unknown to the Londoner. Both could read of world-doings

and national affairs in the big London dailies; but the man from the shires, from the little country towns, from the far-off villages of the British Isles, could hug to himself the weekly that was like another letter from home—with its intimate, sometimes trivial, details of persons and places so familiar in the happy uneventful days before the war.

As for the white wine, that did not greatly interest the other members of Brigade Headquarters mess. But the diary contained the bald entry, "At 9.30 P.M. the whisky ran out," in the space headed Aug. 28; and none had come to us since. People at home are inclined to believe that the



whisky scarcity, and the shortage of cakes and biscuits, and chocolate and tobacco, scarcely affected officers' messes in France. It is true that recognised brands of whisky appeared on the Expeditionary Force Canteens' price-list at from 76 to 80 francs a dozen, but there were days and days when none was to be bought, and no lime juice and no bottled lemon squash either. Many a fight in the September-October push was waged by non-teetotal officers, who had nothing with which to disguise the hideous taste of chlorinate of lime in the drinking water. Ah well!

There was also the serious matter of Major Mallaby-Kelby's pipe. It became a burning topic on Sept. 4. "I must have dropped it yesterday when we tumbled into that gas," he told me dolefully. "I mustn't lose that pipe. It was an original Dunhill, and is worth three or four pounds. . . . I'll offer a reward for it. . . . Will you come with me to look for it?" And he fixed his monocle and gazed at me compellingly.

"Does the offer of a reward refer to me, sir?" I inquired with all the brightness at my command. For answer the major commenced putting on his steel helmet and box-respirator.

It was fitting that I should go. I had accompanied the major on all his excursions, and my appearance over the horizon had become a sure warning to the batteries that the major was not far off. "Gunner Major and Gunner Minor" some one had christened us.

The major conducted the search with great verve. We encountered a gunner chopping wood, and he told him the story of the pipe. "I'll give twenty-five francs to any one who brings it to me," he concluded. The gunner saluted and continued to chop wood.

"Rather a big reward!" I remarked as we walked on.

"Do you think twenty-five too much? Shall I make it fifteen?"

"You've committed yourself now," I answered solemnly.

Our arrival at the trench in which we had sheltered the day before coincided with the whizz-phutt of a 4.2 dud. "I shall be sorry if I get you killed looking for my pipe," said the major cheerfully. We waited for the next shell, which exploded well behind us, and then hastened to the spot where our quest was really to commence. Four gunners belonging to the —rd Brigade stood idly in the trench. The major stopped and looked down upon them. He addressed himself directly to a wall-faced, emotionless kind of man whose head and shoulders showed above the trench top.

"I was down here yesterday," began the major, "and lost my pipe. It was a very valuable pipe, a pipe I prize very much. I think it must be somewhere in this trench. . . ."

The wall-faced man remained stolidly silent.

"I want to get it back again," went on the major; "and if any of you fellows find it and bring it to me—I'm Major Mallaby-Kelby, commanding the —nd Brigade

—I'll give a reward of twenty-five francs."

"Is this it, sir?" said the wall-faced man in matter-of-fact tones, whipping out of his pocket a thin-stemmed pipe with a shapely, beautifully-polished bowl.

"By Jove, that's it!" exclaimed the major, taken aback by the swift unexpectedness of the recovery. "Yes, by Jove, that's it," he continued, his face lighting up. He took the pipe and rubbed the bowl affectionately with the palm of his hand.

"Twenty-five francs reward!" I murmured softly.

"Yes, that's right," he said briskly, and began turning out his pockets. Three maps, a pocket-handkerchief, some ration biscuits, and a note-case with nothing in it. "You must lend me twenty-five francs," he declared masterfully.

The wall-faced gunner accepted the money without any sign of repressed emotion, and saluted smartly. The smiles of the other men broadened into grins as the major and myself set our faces homewards.

There were more serious matters to consider when we got back. D Battery had had two men killed by shell-fire in the wood; the other batteries had had to send away a dozen men between them, overcome by gas; the infantry brigadier wished to discuss fresh plans for hastening the enemy's departure from the neighbourhood of the canal.

In the afternoon I accompanied the major on a round

of the batteries. Nests of Boche machine-gunners were still checking the advance of our infantry—they had fought heroically these fellows; but slowly, methodically, implacably the work of rooting them out was going on. Our further advance was only a matter of hours now. "We're ordered not to risk too many casualties on this front," the infantry brigadier had told the major. "The enemy will have to fall back when certain movements north and south of us are completed. . . . But we mustn't let him rest." Beale of B Battery had returned from the most crowded glorious experience of his young life. He had taken a gun forward to support two companies of the infantry who were striving to establish posts on the eastern side of the canal. Their progress was stayed by machine-guns and snipers, and the casualties were beginning to make the company commanders doubt if the operation was worth while. Beale reconnoitred with two platoon commanders and located the machine-guns, returned and brought his gun up, and from an open position fired over four hundred rounds; and afterwards went forward in front of the advanced posts to make sure that the machine-guns had been definitely put out of action. This brilliant effort enabled the infantry to move forward afterwards without a casualty. Dusty, flushed with the thrill of what he had been through, Beale knew that he had done fine



work, and was frankly pleased by the kind things said about him.

The following day produced fresh excitements. Major Simpson had gone down to A Battery's waggon line to secure something like a night's rest—although I might say that after the spring of 1917 the Boche night-bombers saw to it that our waggon lines were no longer the havens of peace they used to be. Disaster followed. The Boche drenched the battery position with gas. Captain Denny, who had come up from the waggon line to relieve the major, was caught while working out the night-firing programme. Overbury, young Bushman, and another officer were also gassed; and eight men besides. C Battery were victims as well, and Henry and a number of the gunners had been removed to the Casualty Clearing Station.

And before lunch-time a briefly-worded order was received directing Major Mallaby-Kelby to report immediately to a Field Artillery Brigade of another Division. Orders are apt to arrive in this sudden peremptory fashion. Within an hour and a half the major had bidden good-bye to us, and ridden off, a mess-cart following with his kit. And Major Veasey came to reign in his stead.

Major Mallaby-Kelby left one souvenir, a bottle of the now famous white wine which

had got mislaid—at least the cook explained it that way. The omission provided Brigade Headquarters with the wherewithal to drink the major's health.

At nine o'clock that night I stood with Major Veasey outside our headquarters dug-out. A mizzling rain descended. Five substantial fires were burning beyond the heights where the Boche lay. "What's the odds on the war ending by Christmas?" mused the major. ". . . I give it until next autumn," he added.

A battery of 60-pounders had come up close by. Their horses, blowing hard, had halted in front of our dug-out half an hour before, and the drivers were waiting orders to pull the guns the final three hundred yards into position. Two specks of lights showed that a couple of them were smoking cigarettes. "Look at those drivers," I said. "They've been here all this time and haven't dismounted yet."

The major stepped forward and spoke to one of the men. "Get off, lad, and give the old horse a rest. He needs it."

"Some of these fellows will never learn horse management though the war lasts ten years," he said resignedly as we went downstairs.

I remember our third and last night in that dug-out, because the air below had got so vitiated that candles would only burn with the feeblest of glimmers.

*(To be continued.)*

## OUR LAND DAYS.

BY E. S. WILKINSON.

## XI.—EARLY SUMMER AND HAYTIME.

IT is more difficult to work on the land in summer than in winter, I find. For one thing, heat is more trying to me than cold; and in winter, when you are out in the fields in all weathers, you are not likely to be tempted to sit on the muddy ground by your plough and enjoy the scenery. You've just got to work to keep warm.

In summer it is different, and sometimes it is only by setting yourself a definite amount to get through that you can keep up a decent standard at all. Wild horses may not be able to turn me aside from the path of duty—though I don't know, as I've never been tried—but wild roses have stolen a little from my honest day's work before now. There was one special bush in the field where I scruffled with Sam, and there were very few days in June that we were not forced to stop sometimes in the middle of the field, while I went over to the hedge to have a look at it. If Dan had found me leaving Sam alone and asked me the reason why, he would perhaps have been a little staggered to hear it was wild roses!

Next door to my wurzel-field the hay was growing, and the sun beat as fiercely down on

the young green grass as ever it did on Sam and me. Before June was out it was turning brown and withering, and the end of it was we could afford to wait for rain no longer.

It's only "going back" as it is, the bailiff decided; you'd better get it cut at once, and hope that the rain will come and give us a good second crop. The prospect of a second hay-crop is not too cheering to the farm-labourer, who knows that it will come upon him practically simultaneously with the corn harvest, and land him into a spell of such interminable hours of work as only those who have experienced it can realise. As a matter of fact, this year it never arose. Not only did the rain fail to produce a second crop, but it came so late that even the corn harvest was light, and from the point of view of the country's need we would have cheerfully borne more work with it than we had.

Well, to save such grass as there was, we were opening out the fields to cut before the end of June, and Boots and I got our first experience with the reaper. A month or so previously another pair of horses had been sent down to our stable from one of the other farms on the estate. Jack, the lad who had helped with the



stock through the winter, was to drive them, as, now that the beasts were out at grass, he had no work with them. So now we were three "horse-lads," and shared the work between us.

Perhaps in some respects hay-harvest marks the hardest work of the year. Of course, always in harvest time the normal working hours of 6 to 6 are abandoned, and it is a fore-gone conclusion that for the purpose of getting the crops safely in, every one should be ready and willing to work overtime. You are naturally paid extra wages, but you are not in a position to say: "I'd rather work my ordinary time for my ordinary wage."

If the overtime is necessary up to even a sixteen-hour day, the labourer is expected to give it. I am not in the least implying that he grudges it; I think he hardly ever does; he takes too much honest pride in his work, and he values the opportunity of extra earnings. But I think the average man or woman hardly realises at what tremendous pressure of physical toil the harvests of the land are reaped and garnered.

Not a moment is wasted in haytime. Say Boots and I were cutting with our horses for the day, we would take spells of from three to four hours each through the day. One would gear her horses before breakfast and be out and away, and the other have orders to be at the field with hers at, say, 10.30 A.M. It is hard work for the horses,

because they have got to keep going in harvest, so that is why we work in shifts. If I was on the second shift I would get my horses to eat as many feeds as they would before I "pulled out," and then away to the field punctual to the minute if possible. Boots would loose-out at once and help me yoke-in, then I would clamber on to the seat, and with perhaps a word from Boots about "yon far corner's gettin' a bit awkward, and perhaps you'd better take a short turn at it," away we would go, and swathe after swathe of grass fall to the knives as they rattled backwards and forwards with the sound so familiar to country dwellers in the months of June and July. After the cutting, the sun didn't waste much time getting the crop fit for horse-raking, and then we all turned to raking, sweeping, cocking, and raking again for the bits that are left. It was a light crop though. "There's nobbut three good loads in yon field," said Dan. "You'll mebbe mak' ten on't though." It is a matter of considerable skill to "loaden" a waggon. Whatever you are putting into it there is a right way and a wrong one, but whatever it is the principle is the same: "Keep your ends higher than the middle, and most of all keep your corners out and up." Lose your corner at the bottom and it's gone for good, never to be recovered, and when you bring the misshapen little load up to the stack side, if you have the luck to get it there, you will be

greeted by jeering though friendly fellow-workers, who'll tell you: "I could have brought that in a wheelbarrow!"

It did not take much "getting," as we expected, and the hay harvest this year was summed up in one little stack, beautifully made by Dan it is true, but disappointing from the point of view of the owner of a fine herd of shorthorns. If it had not been for the fact that the previous year's crop had been so good that there was still a considerable amount in hand, it would really have been something of a calamity.

After hay harvest came a spell of four or five weeks, during which, although there was always plenty to do, the actual pressure of work was less insistent than we ever found it again; and Boots and I took advantage of the respite to seize a week's holiday each before we plunged into the all-important "harvest month." It was our first holiday for nine months, and I spent it bathing and picnicing with a light heart and a clear conscience, until it was time to step "once more into the breach" and "carry on."

## XII.—THE CRUX OF THE YEAR.

Though haytime is perhaps the heaviest work of the year, it is chiefly so because it is rather more unwieldy to "handle" and fork than a neatly-tied sheaf from the self-binder. The climax comes with "harvest month." It might be best to explain this a little. The "Harvest Month" is a definite period set apart from the rest of the year's work.

For four weeks on end we exist only for the harvest fields. Time sinks into abeyance, and our day, if need be, is from light to dark. We are paid a sum down for the whole month, on a scale of nearly twice our weekly wages, and over and above that, a priceless institution of food and drink, brought out to the fields twice a day, is added to our rations, known as "lowance" in the north. There is something about this little im-

promptu picnic, coming, as it so often does, when you are "dry" and tired, that makes it one of the very pleasantest memories of all my work on the land.

If the weather is only reasonably kind, there is a joy of work in harvest quite peculiar to itself. We know we are going to work ourselves to a standstill every day, but it's team work, and with plenty of "foree" on it's a grand job.

You have ploughed and harrowed, rolled and hoed, watched the young corn spring and sprout, watched it begin to "go back" for want of rain, and "come again" almost in a single night, when the welcome rain appeared,—watched a fierce thunderstorm beat on it just before harvest and lay it flat so that it will have to be out all one way with the reaper or with a scythe, and now it is



time to get the self-binder out, and set out on the one last battle with the weather, which will, when successfully won, see your year's work landed safely to the stack-side. Oh! it's a rare fine job is harvest; but, by lad! it mak's you sweat! Many's the day that the last hour before "night" seemed to Boots and me more than we could compass, and yet now I would give a great deal to be back with this year's harvest again, back with the hot sun, the thirst, and the barley horns—tired again, so that the second your horses were turned out you crawled into bed. "Don't you get awfully tired at your work?" I am asked. "Tired? Yes, but to be honestly tired out is one of the best experiences in the world."

While Dan oiled and fettled the reaper, Jack and I went to help old Dawson the labourer open out the wheat-field. He went on ahead with a scythe, cutting a path for the reaper round the hedge-side, and we followed, binding the loose corn with a band of straw, and tying it with the famous north-country twist known as "wold-wap." (I'd learnt it before, but Dawson taught me over again, and was not content till every turn of my hands was like his own.)

At last, away near the gate on the other side of the field, I heard a familiar sound that made me straighten my back and listen. Dawson stood up too, and we said to each other, "They've setten off," and we knew that before long we should

see Boots and Dan sweeping round the field on the first turn. I saw them coming down upon us, three horses abreast, Boots riding one of her own pair, and my little Sam on the outside and Dan sitting on the binder-seat yelling instructions of how to drive them. It's rather an exciting moment when first you get into the saddle of your inside horse to drive them in the binder. Jack and Boots and I took turns with ourselves and our horses. A lot of our cornfields were on steep hillsides. My first day with the horses was in one of these, and at one end we had to swing down the hill with the horses almost at a trot from the weight of the machine, and round an awkward corner at the bottom. Turn a little short and the machine was into the corn further than the knives, or turn a second too late and it swung far out and missed a piece, making it more difficult for next time. What with shouts from Dan and the fact that it was not always easy to stick on your horse as he rolled down the hillside, many's the time I did not hit it quite right. The bailiff used to tell us laughingly that it was sixpence for every bit missed, and we all teased each other over the number of sixpences we left behind. I used to get old Dawson to come with his scythe and mow them out, so that they did not show.

Sometimes Dan let me sit on the reaper and pull the levers, and adjust the height of the knives, and watch that the binder twine did not break,

and re-thread the needle if it did, and Boots and I used to be left alone cutting for hours together, she riding the horses and I on my little bumpy seat.

We were five in our team—Boots and me, and Jack and Dawson, and Dan. Whenever we were not wanted with the reaper we were “stooking” with Dawson—swinging down the rows very hot and very dry, ragging each other for setting a stook out of line, and watching out of the corner of our eyes for little Jim with the ’lowance basket. He was Dan’s nephew, aged ten, and very popular with us all, and we watched eagerly for his little smiling hot face and his cans of tea. Then when Dan thought fit he walked off and sat under a stook and got the mugs out, and we all followed speedily; then came a happy ten minutes’ respite and refreshment, when we all cheerily accused each other of incompetent work. To Boots from us all, “There’s sixpences all over t’ field.” To me or Dawson, “I never seed nowt like yon row o’ stooks, they gang all ways at yance.” To Jack: “He *thinks* he knows ‘wold-wap’! Why, all t’ sheaves down yon hedge-side comes loose as sean as you touches ’em;” and bravely to Dan: “You’re tying all t’ sheaves round t’ heads, we can’t mak’ nowt of ’em to stook.”

We all took it in good part as it was meant, and agreed that it would be nothing to the trouble when it came to loading, when we should be

lucky if one sheaf reached the stack-side.

Rain came at intervals, but in the main we got on pretty well. One day after a heavy wind Dan said, “We’ll just go and straiten up stooks in t’ wheat-field while dew gets off.” So we went and picked up all that had fallen, and as we finished and walked from the field Dan looked at me fiercely and said, as though I’d committed a murder, “Yon field’s bin verra weel stooked, considerin’ wind there’s been there’s verra few blown ower,” and I felt life was really worth living. Only twice did we actually win praise from Dan, and this was the first occasion; usually silence meant approval.

There was a great under-current of anxiety as to how we should frame with a waggon in harvest. The men, though friendly, were frankly sceptical, because our hillsides made it doubly difficult both to loaden and drive.

I think that if the bailiff had not taken a firm stand that it was only fair to give us our chance, we should have found our horses lent to two of the labourers from the Home Farm and ourselves forking. However, we were very keen indeed to try our hands, and they at first grudgingly, but later with every generosity, let it be so; and as soon as they saw that we were not going to be ignominious failures, entailing extra work all round, we were given all the help that was possible from every one. With a good friendly “forker” it’s a grand job load-



ening a waggon. It is quite a scientific performance; every sheaf has its place, and there is a tremendous satisfaction in putting a good load on.

You begin by putting "courses" round and round the waggon and filling in the middle a little, but always keeping it lower than the sides. Then when you think you have got enough "courses" on you start to "ship" or put the sheaves on straight from end to end, again keeping both ends well up and corners out, and binding them on each other by laying the heads of each row on the bands of the last. It is impossible to explain, and only practice can really teach one how to do it quickly and well.

Dawson and I got really to enjoy working together. He always knew what stage of my load I was at, and handed the sheaves up the right way round. Sometimes he would say—"You're losing a corner a bit there," and with a touch of his fork pull out a sheaf a bit and say "That's better!" and on we would go.

Sometimes I would ask his advice as to whether I wasn't a bit "ower far out," and he would walk round and have a look and say "Maybe you are a bit, take it in a bit—you maun't 'ave a pig now, when you gettin' te loaden weel." (A "pig" is the popular phrase for spilling a load on the way home, and woe betide the waggoner who has one. Even if it is not his fault his fame will spread, and he'll hear of it from friends for miles round.)

Then as the load seemed "gettin' well up" I would calculate how much more to put on, and say to Dawson "I'm going to 'top up' now. I think I can take three more stooks." "All right," he would answer, and then when they were on he'd walk all round and judge the load—"Ay, she's pretty plumb, but I think I should rope at this side—she may sag yon way as you go down t' hill going home." So I came sliding down the rope, and we roped "her" up, and then with little Sam in front set off for the stackyard, I walking by the side, with no need to drive, except just through the gates—elsewhere a word to Sam was enough. Down at the stack-side Dan waited, and watched us come down the hill—criticising a load with a jest, or approving it with a silent grin.

Then I clambered on top again, and we started to team, —good for the "teamer" when the stack was low, but heavy work when it got high, and it all had to be lifted at arm's length, and the loose straw and barley horns poured down upon one's neck and face.

Gradually the fields emptied, and the big Dutch barn filled. Dan began to ask, "How many more loads?" and then find himself baffled by the extraordinary differences in our calculation, and say helplessly, "What does Dawson say?" Jack and I were with waggons on the last day, and Boots with Dan on the stack. It got to a possible three or four loads, then three or two, then

Jack took a good load down, and as I passed him going up he said, "Can you get it all?" I said, "Well, don't come up again unless I wave to you. I think I may land it." There is such an infectious cheeriness about getting in the last few loads. Dawson and I worked with a will; we watched the load creep up and the stooks melt away.

I started to "ship." "Shall you get 'em?" he asked—the loadener can judge best how the load is going; Dawson was doubtful, but I thought I should, they were good sheaves and lay well, and the load was square.

At last there were only about six stooks left. "Top up," said Dawson, "you'll take 'em easy now." So I topped up my last load, as he swung the sheaves up to me and we roped "her" up together, and then he asked me, even if the war ended, to loaden with him again next harvest. It is indeed a thing I regret that it is not possible to do it, for Dawson too has left the farm now.

We came down the hill together, and as soon as the others saw us *both* walking with the load they knew there was no need for Jack to come up again, and no more sheaves to fetch from our fields until

next harvest. We got all in with five days of our harvest month to spare, and the stubble waited again for the plough. I helped to plough it later, and put in the autumn wheat before I left in November. Fifty acres of this year's wheat harvest are, as I write, standing waiting for the reaper, and until they are harvested I have that much claim to be amongst the land workers still.

It was through the harvest month, and especially after the corn was in, that I realised I should not in actual fact be what Boots and I termed a "landlady" very much longer.

From fields which for four years now have grown no corn, some one came to plough with Sam and me, and if two have followed the plough together for even a day or two, when one has to go away again it is not possible to go on contentedly ploughing alone. So the following November I arranged to say good-bye to the fields and my little Sam.

And now I am in London, wishing for every reason, but particularly for one reason, that the war may end before so very long. Then perhaps I may find myself on a farm again some day, but I hope not alone with my plough.

### XIII.—ALL IN A DAY'S WORK.

I have tried to give some impression of the year's round. It is naturally impossible to touch on more than the biggest items of work, and even with

them it is only the barest outlines that I have attempted. There is such a wealth of detail in the work, such change of conditions, due to weather and



circumstances, that to try and set the whole picture in a frame is quite beyond me, so as far as the year's round is concerned I leave it.

There are, however, jobs which arise in no special sequence, but off and on throughout the year. Jobs not dependent on weather or seasons, but essentially part of farm life, not in the fields, but bringing us into touch with the outside world. Of these are threshing days, days at the blacksmith's shop, and day's fetching and carrying from the station of the little town about two miles away, and they are best in a chapter by themselves.

"We're off to thresh a Wednesday!" Dan suddenly states at tea. "What?" we ask. "Barley," says Dan. We do not make conversation on the land much—just state facts.

Tuesday night sees the engine rolling up into the yard in time to get "set to t' stack" fit for morning. We are out in good time, and feed our horses and bed them well up for a happy day off; and also out in good time to get hold of a handy fork before any one else nabs it. Look after yourself on a farm and you'll get on all the better all round, and a "handy" fork will save you a lot of weariness, and make it easier to keep your end up until night. Every one has their job on a threshing day; most of them fall to you according to the position you naturally hold on the farm.

A day-labourer carries straw, or if one of the senior men, perhaps forks from the stack;

a waggoner carries corn, and a young lad has to face the worst and dustiest job of all, that of carrying the chaff away. I know that job to my cost, and I haven't a good word left for it. Boots and I, though waggoners, were of course not able to carry corn, which in the case of wheat is eighteen stone to a sack. (I think, incidentally, this is almost the only job on a farm that is physically absolutely beyond women, though they may have to go slow at others.) We usually worked one on the straw stack and one on the corn stack.

Threshing is perhaps the greatest "team" work there is. Everybody's speed is dependent on some one else's, and if there is overbalance of "force" in one department the rest are overdone. Put too many on to the corn stack in proportion to the rest and they cannot keep pace—the straw comes through too fast, and the lad struggling with the chaff finds himself completely "bunded" up with a heap of dust and barley horns.

Little grimy-faced lads, struggling away with their loads on their backs, only to come back to find the heap higher than ever, and pouring through with relentless fury—no wonder sometimes they begin to "rake it by" or stand helplessly watching it come, till the foreman catches them, and "tells them off," or seeing it is hopeless sends some one to the rescue. My normal work of forking from the stack has its ups and downs,

literally so in fact, according to the height of the stack. It's as good a job as any when you are fresh and the stack is high above the machine, but as it grows towards night and you sink down and down, it's not so easy to put the sheaves up; and with half a gale of wind blowing back from the machine—well, I know now what a man means when he says, "By lad, but it didn't half blow threshing yon barley yesterday. I was fair blind by night."

It is a fine kind of sympathy you get from your fellow-labourers on the land. Braicing indeed, but wholeheartedly honest and sincere.

At the end of a long weary day in the wind and dust, after the "boom-whoom" of the engine has ceased, and you begin to try and wash the dust from your eyes and face, a man who has perhaps been stacking straw in the barn out of sight all day will come up with a laugh and ask, "What's it been like on t' stack to-day?" I think my answer would be, "It's all right now it's night," and he would not waste his pity on me. As likely as not he'd tell me cheerily he'd been having a pleasant job in the barn, but I should know what he meant—just the fellowship of work,—next time might find him on the stack in the wind and me in the barn, and it would be my turn to ask "What cheer?"

One of the pleasant little jaunts that come one's way as horseman on a farm is a

morning at the blacksmith's shop.

Sometimes on a dark winter's morning I have stumbled into the stable with my lantern, and as I shut the door heard what, I won't deny, was a welcome little click from Sam's or Jock's stall, which told me in an instant some one had a shoe loose. I hung up my lantern and investigated, and found perhaps Sam with a loose and worn fore-shoe. I begin to wonder what I am likely to be doing that day, and if it is so urgent a job that Sam will have to "carry on" for a day or so as he is. Then Dan comes along to milk, and I just mention as he passes that "Sam *seems* to have a loose shoe," to which Dan usually muttered an unintelligible reply, after which Boots and Jack and I adjourn to breakfast, and between mouthfuls of bacon, pastry, and tea speculate as to my chances of being sent to the town with Sam. As we come out from breakfast Dan meets us and says to Boots and Jack, "You can go to plough," and adds to me, "Tak' Sam to t' blacksmith's shop and get him shod all round." Good for us, Sam! We've got our morning's spree, and it's on with your bridle and off we go, riding into the town together. Perhaps another horse is in before us, but we wait our turn, not at all impatient, and discuss farming prospects with all who come into the forge, and Sam comes in for his share of praise again, as "a right



horse to shoe." Then back again to the farm, where, as one fresh from the outer world, I am subjected to a vigorous cross-examination on all I have seen and done.

Again, perhaps in the middle of a long spell of ploughing, we would sit down to tea, and Dan would suddenly say, "There's ten ton o' coals at the station for us! You'll have to go for it with t' rulleys and two carts in t' mornin'." Then we begin to get a move on. It simply is not done at our farm, to drive into the town without shining harness and brasses—hames like silver, and boots and leggings clean. That means that after tea we go out into the stable again and start cleaning and polishing, and fastening brass face-pieces on to our "blindlers," and martingales, covered with brasses and bells, on to the collars. I wonder how many people realise that the brasses they see shining on the heads and chests of the horses in a farm waggon or town dray are not the property of the owner of the horses, but of the man who drives them? and to a great extent you can judge a "waggoner's" pride in his horses by the number and condition of his brasses. Boots and I used to like to go into the town as resplendent as possible, and we gradually collected a magnificent set of

brasses for our horses. In fact, Boots had a martingale which was the admiration of the town, and many a time have I been asked for a face-piece like my little Sam's. He used to look splendid with his black coat shining—a martingale with four brasses down his chest, a regimental coat-of-arms on his forehead, on top of his head a little horse "rampant" swinging in a brass ring—his tail tied up with ribbons, brown and orange and green, and a knotted halter swinging jauntily to his knee. Jock had another set of brasses for himself, and Boots again for her horses.

On all these special occasions, such as fetching coal or coke from the station, or delivering corn after threshing, it would be a very unusual circumstance which saw us without them. Though I must admit that once, on a very wet muddy day, Sam eluded me at the stable door and skipped off into a plough field, and rolled, and rolled, and rolled. I need not describe the result, and Sam would be furious if he knew I'd told, because he was rather ashamed afterwards. Generally the railway-men used to come and say, "Your horses do look well!" but that day they didn't, and I think Sam felt he was a little to blame about it.

(To be concluded.)

## CINEMA OF WAR.

EVERY platform of the railway station at Amiens was crowded with a noisy throng of soldiers and civilians. British and Colonial soldiers, waiting for the leave-train, composed about a third of the great concourse, and the rest consisted of repatriated French people on their way north in batches to reinhabit, now that victory had been won, the less devastated districts. The civilians looked tired and pinched, but they were happy. Were they not proceeding to their homes? Had they not been assured that those homes (fortunate in comparison with the homes of so many others) still stood? Yes, they were going back to their own beloved patch of France, and that was enough for them. A French officer to whom I had once expressed astonishment at the way in which the peasantry clung to their villages under constant shell fire, had answered very simply, "*Ils aiment beaucoup la terre.*"

Amiens itself has not suffered much visible damage from bombardment, and the Cathedral is practically unharmed. But the quarter down by the railway station has been a good deal knocked about, and the station roof has not one pane of glass remaining. Shell scars and heaps of débris are everywhere. You think as you look around you what a narrow escape the great city and traffic-centre had, what a

touch-and-go affair it all was before the break-through, which took place in the fog last March, was finally held up.

The last time I had been in that station—passing through from Paris *en route* from Salonika to Boulogne—was on the 21st of that portentous month. In Paris that morning the first "Big Bertha" shell had fallen (to the confusion mainly of the experts); and I remember how an officer got into our fog-groping train at a station outside Amiens, and told us that the heaviest Hun bombardment of the war had started before daybreak all along the line.

Here now was I, in early December, back in that same Amiens station, and the world was at peace—our peace. Since that March day, what a lot of things had happened! In the mighty thrust and resistance which had followed, the battle-front had been pinned almost within storming distance of the city, and the line from Amiens to Paris had had to be closed. When, in the middle of last July, I passed from Arras, where all were standing waiting for a fresh enemy blow, to Champagne, where a mighty blow had just been mightily met, I had to travel to Paris *via* Abbeville and Beauvais.

Then I had seen the transition of the French from the defensive to the offensive (al-



most, one might say, from grave to gay). I had seen the help given to them by some of our best Divisions. I had seen the Rheims and Soissons sectors begin to press forward upon the surprised and bewildered Boche—French, British, Italians, with the light of victory in their eyes. The wonderful good fortune was then mine of being transferred once more to the Arras front (but still keeping clear of the Amiens railway station) just as the British offensive, which was to win the war, was about to open.

It is all very splendid, and not a little tremulous, to look back upon now; but what periods there were in that long four years' struggle before we had triumphed, when it really had seemed as if the Beast might after all have his way! Or, perhaps, if one never quite felt that, the thought may have come that personally one could never expect to see our triumph.

But now the Armistice was a fact, had been so for a month, and I was waiting upon the Amiens platform to go on leave to Paris.

I had just motored down through the devastated area, back once more across the Hindenburg Line and the Drocourt-Queant Switch, through which we had so irresistibly broken. Every stage in that journey, done so swiftly and so easily now, had been gained at no one will ever know what cost, or by what dauntless heroism. One picked up all ones unvoiced thoughts while passing back over that dismal

graveyard—the prayers, the fears, the resolutions, the bereavements. The road over which we now went so smoothly had been repaired, but the “country” on either side was still bereft of all semblance of life, churned into a thing abominable. All that had been added to it since the fighting were many thousands of little wooden crosses, and the dead had been tenderly bestowed beneath their care. Names, too, had been painted on boards all along the road, on the sites of little villages which, though they have disappeared in fact, are mighty now in memory—Warlencourt, Courcellette, Martinpuich, Thiepval, Pozières, Contalmaison. On the grim “Slag Heap” three crosses stand against the sky, as on the Mount of Olives of a nightmare.

The train for Paris was very late, and a couple of local trains, although they had proceeded on their way crammed with *repatriés* whom they had picked up at the station, had not produced any visible diminution in the numbers which thronged the platforms. Then, while we continued to wait, an empty goods train came backing in rather aimlessly and halted opposite to where I stood. The waggon immediately in front of me was a covered truck, full of German prisoners. There were iron bars across the openings, and from behind these a score of brutish faces stared out at the free people upon the platform. There were no taunting or jeers from these, no threats

or abuse such as would have been lavishly forthcoming had the positions been reversed. Indeed there was scarcely any notice at all taken of the caged specimens, who on their part merely continued to regard the crowd with a dull and unabashed complacency. The British and Colonial soldiers had no remarks to offer. One big New Zealander, seated on a barrow, continued amid the hubbub to study a pocket edition of 'The Merchant of Venice.' That was the end of the "hacking through," the ruthlessness, and the victory that was to come to Germany before the leaves had fallen from the trees for the second winter!

When the Paris-bound train had at last arrived and I had secured a seat in a carriage full of French officers and civilians (how strange to be travelling with French civilians again!), I leant back and let my thoughts wander over some of the events of the last four years. While the war lasted this was a thing one did not indulge in overmuch. Thinking and writing—and indeed speaking—about those happenings, while still the war pursued its course, had been almost impossible.

But even now that it is all over, the immense relief and the joy that all along one counted upon feeling, have not come in the measure or the manner of one's expectation. Relief and joy, and humble thankfulness to God, of course, are there; but in a different way and in a different degree.

As one who has been through it all put it to me when the Armistice had been announced, "The sense of the immense mourning of the world comes to one amid these solitudes, and is overwhelming. I never thought that when Peace came I should feel like this."

As the dear French country sped by, changing gradually from the scorred and wire-littered, once grandiose, country of the Somme basin, to the calm of the district which had sheltered inviolate behind the Allied armies, and as daylight faded from the scene, with what chastened joy one's thoughts sped back! A string of empty waggons and a returning battery were coming down a slope, with the last light catching them ere they were engulfed in the valley. A derelict motor-lorry lay in a rusted heap on the side of the road. Then the lights were turned up in our carriage, and the countryside passed from the view. Opposite me a French colonel with a long row of medals nodded off to sleep, propped between a *curé* and a British subaltern. I thought for one fleeting instant of the same journey in the old pre-war days, when Abbeville and Amiens were to the English tourist little more than halting-places on the swift journey to Paris. "*Amiens; dix minutes d'arret!*" the old cry came stealing to me out of the past.

Many, I am sure, in that carriage were busy with their thoughts. What fascinating volumes would they make could we but write them down!



Mine took me (though in haphazard fashion) back to that first week in October 1914, when we of the Seventh Division landed on the Belgian coast at Zeebrugge. They took me to Ostend, and Ghent, and Bruges of those breathless days, to Thielt and Roulers, and through the epic of First Ypres. I saw again the slaughter of that fighting, and recalled the humiliation of the discovery that War was so much more overwhelming than we had ever been led to expect. Men dying like flies, but out-classed only in numbers. All the care and thoroughness and splendid training brought to nought by the elementary lack of numbers. Well, not perhaps to nought, for though dying they won; but dimly and incoherently they knew that for some reason they had never had a chance.

Then what recollections came trooping through the mind—all the incidents of First Ypres, the first French regiments I ever saw in action, and a German barrage across the Menin road near Veldhoek, which was near to being the end of it all for me. A spell in a London hospital and at home, and then the getting back to all that beastliness—to Second Ypres, with its added horrors of gas, and to another narrowly-averted break-through.

Afterwards, a risky relief by night in Sanctuary Wood, and a march at dawn past the ruins of Ypres, at which I, who had seen the Cloth Hall in its beauty, could not look; a long halt, on a wonderful May day,

in the drowsy fields of Loere, where we got our mail from home.

Trench warfare at Armentières, with kindly recollections of the farm people on whom, when we came out to rest, we were billeted; memories, too, of that lovely country and its fine-sounding names, and of a gem of an ancient church at Erquinghem-sur-la-Lys. In what condition is it all now?

More trench warfare on the since-devastated Somme, then (in the autumn of 1915) unspoilt this side of Dompierre and Frise. They were hideous trenches that here we took over from the French, mined and tunnelled; and if you struck a match on entering your subterranean dug-out, the rats passed slowly up the walls behind the brushwood revetments, unable to go quicker because of their being so many.

And then, suddenly, a change of scene and warfare complete and absolute, involving a two and a half years' absence from France. Thoughts pass through the mind of Marseilles—familiar point of embarkation and disembarkation during the days of one's Indian soldiering—and of a couple of blue-and-gold November days between there and Carcassone, in a camp amid the pines, looking down upon the Gulf of Lions. Cheery friends gathered at Basso's and were duly disappointed with *bouillabaisse*, but compensated by the discovery of a Barsac which they christened "Liquid Sunshine." Expeditions were made to the Chateau d'If and to Notre

Dame de la Garde; and then it was all aboard for the sea voyage to—where? Ah, that was it! The excitement of guessing, the time-honoured regimental game (but how serious now) of speculating about a new station. A *débâcle* was shaping in Serbia, and rumour had it that we were for there.

Then the well-kept secret, not divulged until our great ship (since lost) had left Malta behind it and the compass gave away the truth. We knew it must be either Egypt (for the Dardanelles) or Salonika, and when on a certain midday the ship's bows swung round to the north we had no need to be told that it was Salonika.

Trivial incidents of that voyage come back to one: the sighting one morning of a periscope, the "straight flush" held at poker on a stormy night, when the ship kept quivering from stem to stern and one felt that only a mine could rob one of the proceeds of that hand! Followed a tedious wait in Salonika harbour, an impenetrable fog which lasted for a week, and a daily crop of pessimistic rumours from the front, where the Serbians had been driven, after most gallant fighting, from the field, and our Tenth Division, the heroes of Suvla Bay, and the French were in full retreat.

Then at last our landing. Blizzards while under canvas at Lembet, when nothing but the rum-ration kept us alive. Christmas Day 1915, and "C"

Company mess made happy by the arrival from England, the day before, of a consignment of port and whisky which had been ordered while in France, and long since given up as lost. The blizzard passed, the news from the front improved, and the great bay of Salonika flashed out in the sunshine, with Olympus across the way, and the city with its dazzling minarets and colour, its rosy dawns and mist-tinged evenings, its charm and merchandise and traffic.

For a few strenuous weeks all our energies were monopolised in building roads out in the Galiko marshes and the hills overlooking them, and near the weird Bulgar village of Gradobor; and then for the writer came the joy of promotion to staff employment, and for the brigade a move forward up-country. This was to a sort of half-cock, compromise position in a big valley north of Salonika, which soon became part of a powerful line stretching from Stavros to the Vardar, half encircling the city, and guarding it against the possibility of a "Mackensen push." Days of expectation and uncertainty, while we settled in the "Bird-cage" (as it was afterwards called) and waited upon events.

Then came our first Mædonian spring, gorgeous in flower-colouring. The storks arrived from the land of their annual migration, and sounded their rattles from the top of every tree. It was a land of great beauty, but saddened by



the traces of man's continual warfare.<sup>1</sup>

After that the summer, hot and feverish, and from our fortified lines in the Langaza plain we marched, one sultry starlit night, up to the plateau of Hortiak. A prolonged attack of fever resulted in the puissant intervention of the Chief, and a voyage for the writer all the way by sea to Plymouth. That long voyage flashes but an instant on the screen of memory; but poor, gallant, slow old C——, she too lies now beneath the waters of the Ægean; and the related tale of how she met her end months afterwards sticks in the mind as prominently as any incident of the war.

The C—— carried (on her last voyage) the chargers of an English yeomanry regiment. Some distance away from M——, a submarine out her out of her convoy and torpedoed her. Another ship of the convoy of three towed her for many hours to within sight of safety, and there she foundered. On board the towing ship was the personnel of the regiment to which the horses belonged, and from it there went up a shout of horror and expostulation as the C—— disappeared; and then the shout died away in a long moaning cry. Men and horses had shared the vicissitudes and dangers of the war since its commencement.

The fierce struggle of the Somme was raging during

these weeks. Our thoughts were always with our comrades on those stricken fields, but we ourselves, dedicated to a role of waiting and watching, could only possess our souls in patience. We were pulling more than our weight, we hoped, in the mosquito-infested plains of Macedonia.

After a restoring leave came the return to Salonika, again by sea, to find the back of the hot weather broken and the bustle and movement caused by the Bulgar irruption into the Struma Valley in full swing. While yet the Salonika skies were hot and metallic, but with the thunder-clouds beginning to gather on the ridges, we straggled off up the mountain tracks, across the lonely Tasoluk Kar, and down into the wide-spreading Struma Valley, in which Seres is set like a white jewel.

That first glimpse which is obtained as one tops the Tasoluk ridge is unforgettable. The hills around you are dark with scrub of juniper and ilex, and forests of oak, plane, and beech. Right across your vision the valley runs, a shifting scene of lights and shades through which the silvery Struma wanders until losing itself amid the reeds of Lake Tahinos. Villages are dotted about the plain, encircled by patches of cultivation; and opposite you are the mountains that back Demirhissar, Seres, and Drama, soaring tier upon tier to the Belasica and to the

<sup>1</sup> In "A Flowery Interlude," 'Maga,' September 1916, the writer attempted some description of the country.

dazzling snows of the Rhodope.

What questions each one asked himself as that small British force moved over the crest of the ridge and looked upon the steep-cut Rupel Pass! But one does not dwell upon them in this peaceful Amiens-to-Paris train. All doubts have been set at rest and all questions answered.

Certain incidents of the waiting months which followed stand out clear on the flickering film of memory. The first raid across the river is one, a difficult adventure marked for ever by the loss of a personal friend, struck down close to where one crouched in the firing line. I remember how automatically the news was passed from man to man, while each one continued to load and fire. And the blunt language in which it was couched had jarred, because I thought it was only a clumsy joke such as men at the most inopportune times will indulge in. "*The Captain has been hit in the guts; The Captain has been hit in the guts.*" He was my companion of many a march and fight.

Flickers the film to the forcing of the Struma crossings, where a great British victory was secured. And then a year and a half of waiting, of holding on, of uncomplaining effacement. Attacks were made to keep the enemy from moving his troops—against Tumbitza, Virhanli, Pheasant Wood—names quite unheard of at home, but costing many British lives. The welcome coming in

of Greek troops, and their instruction by our officers and N.C.O.'s, and the establishment of a superiority over the Bulgar which he never afterwards dared to question, were followed by a sitting down to a long and tedious warfare of position.

No record, even the most concentrated, of life on the Salonika front as our soldiers saw it, would be complete without a mention of the wild flowers, which from early spring until well on into the summer transformed the valley into a parti-coloured carpet. The inhabitants had been evacuated just when they had gathered their crops, and when the spring came the fallow soil was seized upon by colonies of wild flowers, each species capturing the ground previously fertilised by the particular crop which suited it. Thus the effect was produced of splashes and squares of different colours, shaped as had been the fields, and the whole valley, looked down upon from a height, was a vivid pattern of red, yellow, white, and blue. Khaki provided no "protective colouring" here. The authorities should have dressed us in the uniform of Michael Angelo's papal guard.

Two winters were made memorable for the writer by the shooting with which the sterner work was plentifully interspersed, and the intervening summer, of much fever, saw another trip to England and an adventurous voyage. One of the winters was marked by a couple of reconnais-



sance expeditions into the mountainous country lying between the Struma Valley and Salonika, undertaken in view of a certain contingency which never, fortunately, arose. These treks took one into sparsely-inhabited regions, where the wind blew bitter across snow-clad forests, but where the winter sun, once you could avoid the wind, was powerful. Turkish, Bulgarian, and Greek villages succeeded one another at long intervals, primitive and lonely, and very beautiful. As early as Christmas there were crocuses springing up on the sunny side of the hills, and hellebore abounded in the shelter of crackling oak-woods. The views were far-reaching and of an elemental grandeur. A hill-top comes to mind whence one could see seven lakes, two rivers, and two seas.<sup>1</sup>

The Salonika shooting of a winter! The reverie of an entire train-journey between Amiens and Paris might easily be given to that. It was recompense, indeed, for being far away and half forgotten. And in the retrospect of a young soldier's life—if it has been an active one—comparison with regard to shooting is not difficult. His thoughts can flit to the South African veldt, to Egypt, India, and to home. But none of them can approach the Struma Valley—from Kale Zir wood, on Lake Tahinos, up to Osman Kamila, in the middle of the Seres plain. Duck (of many species), geese

(of two), woodcock, pheasant, partridge, snipe, quail, pigeon—all abound. The first of these two winters belonged *par excellence* to the duck, and of the duck shooting the fighting bulks largest in the memory. Twenty minutes every evening—the last twenty minutes of any visibility. Night after night one would stand there, gun in hand, gazing into the darkling sky, thinking that at least that night was to be blank, because it was so late and nothing had come one's way. Darkness coming on, cold and still, and not a sound across the sky.

And then, suddenly, it would begin. Like squadrons sweeping overhead, rank upon rank would come the duck. A quick subdued quacking, the noise of rushing wings—the first flight, perhaps, away before one had time to fire. But after that a steady toll as the high-flying, high-velocity shapes went hurtling by. Automatic swinging on to the automatically chosen bird—a splash or a thump, according as to whether it fell in water or on land. And the far-off crack of other guns, telling where other fowlers had taken up their stand in the lonely marshland.

When almost too dark to see the sky, along would come the little whistling-teal, phalanx upon phalanx, with their weird wild call, as they too hurried from the lake to their night feeding-grounds. With light

<sup>1</sup> "On Reconnaissance," 'Maga,' August 1917, was written after one of these expeditions.

heart and heavy bag one would step out through the darkness for home, filled with that infinite content which, perhaps, only sportsmen know.

During the summer of 1917 we withdrew from the valley to the foothills to avoid the mosquito, and instead we ran into the sand-fly. This plague abounded in the deserted Turkish villages into which we moved, and bout after bout of fever was the result. Looked back upon, however, those long hot weeks were by no means intolerable. Good friends, work, a few books, and an occasional foray against the Bulgar in the plain, kept things going well enough, until, in the end, fever got the upper hand in the writer's case, and he was ordered to the Ægean coast at Stavros to recuperate.

A change of scene, indeed, from the hot bare plains and hills to that green-and-gold coast and the free sea! Swims in the Orphano Gulf, long rides to the mountain villages—beautiful as their names—with glimpses caught along the track of Athos, distant and snow-capped above the haze.

Truly the Greeks possess the faculty for giving pleasing names to places! One instance, in particular, dwells in the memory—Asprovalta has in it all the sense of shining walls and sun and sparkling waters.

Another change came after a further spell in the valley. Once more it was farewell to Salonika—much of its beauty laid in ashes—and this time a

journey overland, as far as might be by railway, down the coast by Volo and into Greece, beneath the shadow of Olympus. Dawn was breaking over the Ægean as we pursued our way, and fishing-caïques, with their prismatic sails set to a gentle breeze, were stealing inshore from the Gulf—the Vale of Tempe,—Larissa and its wide plain,—rain-squalls blotting Thermopylæ from view—classic names at every wayside halt. At one stopping-place before we left the coast there stood on the margin of the tranquil sea an old fisherman, just landed from his boat. He held two big fish suspended from a string, a black one and a white one. Then, at another of the numerous halts, a black-robed priest descended from the train—the only passenger to alight—and girding his cassock about his loins, went striding off towards a mountain village. The sun was just gilding it, over against its rising. Another stop, and the engine-driver and fireman went into an ilex-grove to cut wood for fuel. Trifling incidents such as these beguiled the journey, and they have a way of sticking in the memory.

Vividly among the beautiful scenes with which the four years are studded there comes to mind the moonlight drive across the shoulder of Parnassus from Bralo, where we left the train, down through olive-groves to the Gulf of Corinth. The hoary mountains towered above the road,



their summits floating in a luminous mist. Tiny shrines were dotted along our course, and in the patch of light in front of the open doorways of inns stood oxen laden with the produce of the vineyards.

Then on a hot day, with just sufficient breeze to stir the waters, we are passing from the dreamy Gulf, with Patras low astern and Mount Orthris away to the south, and swinging into view of Missolonghi. A party of Greek aviators on board, going to France to attend a course, sing their fine national hymn as we pass the scene of Byron's death, and five hours after starting we are sailing among the Ionian Islands. Nothing could surpass these scenes in loveliness. On our right is one of the many islets assigned by tradition to Calypso, and on our left is Ithaca.

Rome next, for one fleeting day. Old scenes and associations recalled, but curiously aloof now and detached. The sight of a stolid British private of the Military Police directing an inquirer to the Porta Pia was one which only such a war could have made possible. The evening stroll, however, on the Pincio, with the sun going down in glory behind the Dome, was poignantly as of yore.

No need to dwell upon the few blessed days of leave at home. Towards the end of November the scene is once more laid in Marseilles. Byng's dash for Cambrai is setting all the world agog. We hear of it just as our ship sails. Jeru-

salem, too, is on the verge of falling.

All on board our ship expected that at Malta we should hear that both Cambrai and Jerusalem were ours. But it was not to be. Little did I imagine, when setting out once more on that uncertain middle sea, that Cambrai would not fall for nearly a year, and that I myself would be one of the first to enter it!

The Grand Harbour of Valletta, which always fills one with a sense of admiration and elation, possessed an added charm in all the circumstances of the war. The massive medieval fortifications, the darting colours, the mighty battleships, the bustle and the glamour—all these were of absorbing interest. Ashore, alas! old memories and associations peopled the familiar scenes with ghosts.

In a rising storm, at sunset the next day, we steamed out from Valetta, amid cheers from the assembled crews of warships, the dipping of silken ensigns, and the ringing of bells from a hundred churches. The scene is vivid on the film of memory. As we left the harbour and plunged into the dark waters the sun dropped crimson behind the island. Every tower and palace leapt up against the sky and seemed aglow. Away inland the walls of some Arab city showed clear and white. A peal of thunder from the black clouds overhead heralded a drenching shower, and the night fell.

Alexandria as the next scene, with its busy streets and its

wealth of flowering creepers. The quiet drive of an evening along the Mahmoudiyeh Canal was as it always used to be: flocks of goats still browsed upon the canal banks, and tapering spars clustered about its bridges. In Cairo the absence of the pre-war tourist element entirely changed the look of things European; but the street scenes were as full of colour and animation as of old, and the glories of the mosques and Citadel are of course unchanging. In the mystical tomb of Kaid Bey there seems to be enshrined the soul of some great purple flower.

Very prominently in the retrospect stands the recollection of a flight from Heliopolis over the Pyramids—a first one. We rose from the smooth sand of the desert straight into the sun, and the first thing that caught the eye was the gigantic outline of the Pyramids. As we passed high over Cairo it was like flying over a huge irregular honeycomb. I saw the Nile stretching from horizon to horizon; and then we were looking down upon three little pyramidal models such as one sees in a drawing-school. The pilot shouted something which I could not hear, and pointed downward. I nodded, and my senses swam. One had an impulse, in spite of the belt, to hold on to one's seat. I looked out and saw the Pyramids right above my head and falling down upon me out of a khaki sky. I had just thought of how the guide-book said that there was enough stone in

them to make a wall four feet high and one foot thick round the whole of France, when we righted ourselves, almost level with their tops, and glided unerringly between them. Then up again into the empyrean, across Cairo once more, a few more "stunts" at a great height, and finally a long glide down to Heliopolis. In some ways the best part of that flight was the gentle bump when our wheels took the sand!

Two other glimpses of that mid-war visit to Egypt stand out upon the screen, and then it is once again the sea, northward through the Cyclades, and a very close approach to disaster.

The first is a race-meeting at Gezireh, bringing back longings for the pre-war happy life of a young officer in India. Something of the atmosphere, here, of Civil Service Cup Day at Lucknow, or of the Lahore Christmas week; and when a jockey came out of the dressing-room wearing colours like our own, how the war years rolled away, and one was once more the proud owner of a "smasher," in the dear old racing days! And then came the recollection that that life had gone, probably never to return, that most of the good sportsmen of those cheery days were dead, and that of all those erstwhile triumphs—won only a few years ago—nothing now remained but one's own memory of them and some silver cups upon the sideboard at home.

The second glimpse is of a snipe-shoot in the Delta in company with a yeomanry officer



just down on leave after capturing Jerusalem. Long before daylight we drove in an old victoria from Shepheard's through the quiet bazaars, across the Nile and out into the swamps. The dawn grew in crimson and gold behind the silhouetted Pyramids, and singly and in wisps, all through a glorious day, the snipe got up in front of us.

And then the last stage of that long voyage back to Salonika. It was cold and rainy as we left Port Said, and after a run of a day and a half we were sheltering amid the Cyclades—not only from the weather. The rain swished down from a leaden sky, while round the rocky coast which enclosed our anchorage the wind swept over bare hills and the strongholds of departed robbers. When, just before nightfall, we darted from our haven into an icy sea, and had got about a mile from that iron shore, we struck hard into a floating mine, which failed, however, to explode.

Nearly three months more on the Struma, harrying the Bulgar, hunting fox and jackal, and again the extraordinary shooting. This was the winter of the geese, which came early and in enormous numbers. Very often, going out between the outposts on foggy mornings just as it grew light, one would begin shooting as soon as one had reached the feeding-grounds, and return before eleven with a dozen geese tied on a pack pony. The fact that a sharp look-out had to

be kept for enemy patrols lent an additional spice to the game. One could sometimes hear the Bulgar bugles sounding the parade calls in Seres and along the foothills.

The film goes quickly now. A sudden opportunity presented itself at the beginning of March to attend an important course at home. On the French front everything pointed to the near approach of the *grand finale*, and one would fain be in at the death. It had always appeared certain that we of the Salonika Force, kept in the background during two and a half years, were destined in the end for big things, whether on our own front or in France. But no individual could do wrong in marching to the sound of the guns in France when the chance arrived. Ten weeks intensive training in England, and then France for final victory: such was the inspiring programme.

Again the journey to the Gulf of Corinth, with sufficient delay this time at the port of embarkation to allow of two visits to Delphi. A clear spring day for this, with the bees already busy amid the banks of thyme, and the irrigated strips beneath the olive-trees a mass of opening anemones. At the other side of the Gulf the lingering snows of the Peloponnesus, and around us as we climbed to the holiest spot of ancient Hellas were mountain villages, secluded and serene.

You come upon Delphi suddenly round a bend in the

mountain road. It is a huge littered amphitheatre of broken capitals and columns, flights of steps that lead you nowhere, partial and neglected restoration that make the decay more noticeable. Many beautiful things have been collected in the museum, but the most striking of all belongs to nature—the fissure in the "Shining Rocks" where dwelt the Oracle, and whose top is now the dizzy abode of glossy hoaræ-voiced ravens. Apricot- and pear-trees were in full flower amid the ruins. We quaffed a wine called "Nectar Pythien" at an inn in the pretty village of Kastri, and returned to our camp through fields of asphodel and hyacinth.

Another flicker of the film of memory and we are amid the hallowed precincts of a Cambridge college, the buildings and the setting unaltered, but the life and associations transformed out of all knowledge. One dared not allow oneself to be influenced more than a little by those surroundings. The heaviest bombardment of the war, which the officer had spoken of at Amiens a few mornings before, had been the precursor of the biggest of all attacks. Our place was with the men out there whose backs were to the wall.

Then came a pause. To all it was evident that another shattering blow was being prepared, and that it could

only be a matter of days before it was delivered. In this pause we got our orders for France.

And so it all comes back at long-last to the satisfied imbecile faces staring awhile ago from behind the bars of the horse-truck. The last months—for them the film is blurred—have been full of the alternation of hope and despondency, of happiness and grief. Cruelties and sights to sicken, monstrous perversion of man's power, loneliness and loss of friends. But there has been joy too, and pride, and thrilling crescendo of victory.

Lights and more lights pass the window of the train. The sleeping French colonel wakes, and everybody begins to struggle into wraps and greatcoats. We are there. Paris, so barely saved by its ramparts of French and British dead from being the abode of desolation, now stands secure and splendid—the very City of Victory.

Seen next morning, the Place de la Concorde and the Avenue des Champs Elysées, right up to the Arc de Triomphe, bristle with German guns of every shape and calibre. Bugles sound in the shadow of the gold-flecked dome of the Invalides. The crowd surges along the street to acclaim a regiment marching with its band.

The work is done.



## EXPERIENCES OF A WAR BABY.

BY ONE.

## CHAPTER VI.—P.B. 2.

To attempt a description of the midshipman's chief occupation—instruction—would be both technical and dull. There is one form of instruction which is somewhat out of the ordinary school work, and which I personally enjoyed more than any other: the running of a picket boat.

A picket boat is what is generally known to the public as a "steam pinnace." She is fifty feet in length, just over 6 feet in beam, and can steam 10 or 11 knots. She is divided into a forepeak, where the crew have their abode, a boiler-room, an engine-room, and a cabin and stern-sheets. Forward, over the forepeak, is a mounting for a small gun for use against submarines, for cutting-out expeditions, raids on heavily fortified enemy bases, or other V.C. performances. In practice the gun comes in very useful as a means of starting the races at our annual regatta. As a secondary armament the boat can mount a maxim-gun on the cabin, but the gun looks far better when highly polished and placed in the fore superstructure on board.

As soon as possible after we join our first ship we are sent away in boats. At first we are sent in picket boats to under- study our seniors, who show us

how to run the boat and what to avoid. We then try our hands at running them, with some one to tell us when we are going wrong. Thus we first gain experience in boats which, in case of a misjudgment, can go astern. Later, we go away in sailing-boats which cannot.

The first trip alone in charge of a picket boat is rather a memorable occasion. You have to steer the boat yourself, for the very good reason that without knowledge of the capabilities of a boat it would be useless to try to command her, and the only practical way to learn is by steering her yourself. You may have an old, experienced, and excellent coxswain, in which case the act of bringing a boat neatly alongside will appear a more simple matter than winking, and you will not appreciate the difficulties of the situation. On the other hand, if he is young and inexperienced, it will seem that nothing can go right. He may cannon heavily into the ship's side or the gangway, calling down execrations on *your* head and damaging the boat, which entails stoppage of leave for you. He may miss the gangway altogether, and you will cruise about, going first ahead and then astern, but getting no nearer to your object. All

the time you will be under the pitying gaze of these on the quarter-deck and your passengers in the stern-sheets. In either case it is *you* who get the blame, for you are in charge of the boat. It is therefore essential that you should know enough to tell the coxswain what to do with his wheel, and, if necessary, to push him gently but firmly away and do everything yourself.

The acquirement of this knack is usually a painful process for those whose sensibilities to hard words are great. You can hardly start with a large placard to say that you are inexperienced, and that indulgence is craved on that account. In consequence, you have to endure a great deal of coarse comment from exasperated commanders whose gangways and paint-work suffer in the course of your experiments. In time you learn that in going astern your stern kicks to port. If no allowance is made for this, your arrival alongside a starboard gangway will be heralded by a sickening crash as your stern swings in; whilst at a port gangway, for like reasons, you will find your bow jammed between the ladder and the ship's side, whilst your stern is in mid-stream. You find that five times out of six you will come too close before turning to a gangway, and that full speed astern is necessary to avoid the total wreck of the boat or gangway. You learn—but technicalities are already coming in. To put it shortly, you learn a great deal.

Another great point about which you learn is the human side. Much can be learnt about the tactful and courteous treatment of Officers of the Watch. They are often as worried as you, and they have more power. Their lightest word must be taken as law. They have an annoying habit of arriving when such a crisis as I have already outlined is imminent, and shouting sweet pieces of advice to you. They think that they are doing good, and it is well to humour them. If the danger is averted they will take the credit; if you crash, they will have the first words with you before you are introduced to the commander. After you have received your orders for a trip, they will shout additional ones at you as you leave. The correct procedure is to say, "Aye, aye, sir," every time they visibly pause for breath, whether you have heard the orders or not, and if not, to trust to the coxswain hearing what you miss. To ask for a repetition is as good as to ruin all your hopes.

Then there is the commander to mollify. To be in the commander's good books is about a dozen steps in the right direction. Your boat must therefore become the smartest-looking boat in the squadron. To become this, a first essential is that the bright work must be as bright as possible, and this demands unlimited metal polish. You are the "moneyed man" of the boat's complement. Secondly, the crew must be keen. With these two essentials made good, should the captain like



the look of your boat he will take pride in her, for other ships will say that his ship is a smart one. He will express his favour to the commander, who will take the credit. The commander, if he is just, will in turn be pleased with the midshipman of that boat.

To serve our own ends, and further to smarten the boat, we introduced a new feature in the form of an engine-room telegraph. The only means of communication with the engine-room which was fitted was a bell, on which by means of a code the engine-room could be told to go ahead or astern and to stop. We could also tell them to go slower, but the degree was impossible to gauge. Thus the stoker petty officer was fairly free to work his engines as the fancy moved him. He took a fiendish delight in going full speed when a touch was all that was required, and then *vice versa* when a collision was imminent and every ounce of available steam was required to avoid it. To obtain a better co-operation the telegraph was made. The entire machine was constructed in the ship with the exception of a cog-wheel, used as a pattern, and a bicycle chain. The result was a remarkably efficient machine which made the boat the envy of all others.

The chief disadvantage of picket boat work is the irregularity of the hours. You may be required to go away in your boat at any minute of the day or night. You may be sent away on trips of several hours'

duration without any warning. You may be sitting down to your lunch after a good forenoon's work, when a messenger comes into the mess and announces that "Second picket boat is called away, sir, please." Out you go to find that your trip lasts till 5 or 6 P.M., and that you will miss both lunch and tea. Late trips lasting till 1 or 2 A.M. may come within the day's work, and early trips to land postmen and stewards, and bring off the mails, are always to be run. It is when your boat has to combine the late trips with the early that you begin to feel a good deal "fed up."

Then there is always the weather to trouble you. In our usual anchorage the weather is a very definite factor, especially in winter time. It is seldom quite calm, and directly it starts to get at all rough, picket boats become disgustingly wet. With the weight of the boiler forward, they push their noses into every little cat's paw which they encounter, flinging up clouds of spray which descend on the devoted hand at the wheel. You spend your whole time ducking behind the weather-screen to avoid a volley, and bobbing up again to see where you are going. At the same time, waves have a habit of coming bodily on board, for the deck is only about two feet above the water level, and swirling round the screen and through your legs like a tidal wave. No sea-boots or oilskins will stand such treatment for long. Frequently you are at it all day,

and it then becomes a sloppy business.

If it becomes really rough, the management of the boat is a tricky business, especially if it is at night. If, when coming alongside, you allow the boat to touch the ship's side or gangway, the probability is that she will be stove in. The bowmen cannot stand up, or they will go over the side, but must do their work on their knees. You are therefore handicapped through an inability to get a proper hold on to anything with a boat-hook. No one is ever sea-sick in a picket boat, for there is far too much else to do.

A thorn in the side of all picket boat enthusiasts is the duty known as "Duty Steam Boat," or D.S.B. Each ship of the squadron takes her turn as duty ship, and provides a boat for this purpose. The duty of the D.S.B. is to act as a fleet postman. She collects letters from the ships of her squadron, takes them to an exchange, where she meets the D.S.B.'s from other squadrons. She is provided with a set of letters for her squadron, which she then distributes. Each of these trips takes from two to three hours, and there are three of them in the day. In addition, the D.S.B. is used for any odd job for the flagship. Thus, having finished your third "postman" trip, you have had your dinner, and, hoping that all is over for the day, you turn in. At 11 P.M. the flagship makes a signal, "Send D.S.B. to flagship at once." You are pulled out of a nice

warm hammock and despatched to the flagship. You are then given a letter of importance to deliver to some ship miles away, obtain an answer, and return. The whole of the trip there is against a strong tide and a choppy sea. Before the job is completed, and gracious permission to return to your ship is received, the time is about 1.30 A.M.

Of the forms of excitement which may be enjoyed whilst running a picket boat, the most thoroughly amusing and interesting one is "picket boat manœuvres." This game is theoretically intended to teach younger officers about signals and their practical application, without endangering the safety of large ships. In practice it becomes a competition to see how near you can go to another boat without a bump.

The "admiral" in command of a flotilla of boats is usually a commander, whilst the "captains" of boats are lieutenants. Midshipmen act as signalmen, and a midshipman steers the boat. The steering is a tricky business, as the station-keeping must be as accurate as in a big ship. The distance apart of two boats when in close order, the usual formation, is one boat's length (50 feet), and, with each boat travelling at roughly twelve miles per hour, little room is left for thought in a crisis. The movements of boats are directed by signals, and for this purpose each boat has a mast and yard and a set of signal flags. The traditional smartness of the signal branch is maintained in the boats, as



the admiral proper is criticising the whole manœuvres from his barge.

Thus we are steaming along in one formation when a signal goes up at the "flagship's" yard-arm. Instantly half a dozen telescopes are levelled at the flagship, whilst the signalmen stand by. "S.W.A.K. flags," sings out one of the watchmen. "S.W.A.K. flags," repeats every one else in the boat, "Come on the buntin' tossers, you're all adrift."

"Here you are, Tack of A," in a rapid undertone from one of the signalmen, "where's the head of K?"

"Here's the head of K. Bend on. Right, hoist away," and up goes our hoist, some eight seconds from the time that the first hoist appeared.

Every eye is now directed at the "flagship" for the executive; presently it comes, and away we wheel to take up our position in the new formation.

After a number of these evolutions we fight an im-

aginary battle, deploying into line of battle, &c. The enemy is sunk over and over again without a casualty on our side. Finally the barge makes a signal to the "admiral," commending him upon his skill in the handling of the flotilla. This is a sign that the manœuvres are finished. A signal floats up to the "flagship's" masthead which orders us to return to our base. This signal is followed by one which means "Proceed at your utmost speed," and from then onwards there is a hot race home, as each boat, with volumes of smoke pouring from her funnels, and a creamy wake nearly coming over the stern, tries every dodge to cut out her opponents. Needless to say the *Penultimate's* second picket boat is a handsome winner.

Altogether, picket boating, though strenuous, is never a boring instruction, and is frequently found to be by far the best.

#### CHAPTER VII.—THE CRIMSON COMICS.

Shortly after we joined the fleet we went to some rather good theatrical shows given by other ships. So much did we enjoy these shows that we were fired with a desire to give one of our own, and do our bit towards the whiling away of weary months. The captain, in addition to his many other accomplishments, was an amateur actor of note, and was very keen that his ship should give a show. He

accordingly called a meeting of all the officers in his fore-cabin to discuss the matter.

One evening the meeting assembled, and after pipes and cigarettes had been set going in full blast, the proposals were put. Firstly, the question came, were we to give a show? The "ayes" were unanimous. Secondly, what kind of show did we propose to give? This question opened the flood-gates of eloquence.

The first person proposed a revue, but this suggestion was vetoed as too ordinary. All other ships had revues; we must be original. The next person suggested a written play or musical comedy as something out of the ordinary, arguing that, as we had little or no discovered talent, it was better to take some known success and massacre that than to do the same with some new and probably futile production. Argument on this point became fairly brisk. Objectors admitted that the point of old plays *versus* local rubbish was sound, but added that any old play would require a large outlay in scenery and dresses, with consequent expense and difficulties of stowage. They stated their points forcibly, and the vote went against plays. A plea for a historical or Shakespeare play, to elevate the minds of the senior officers and to instruct the juniors, was soon disposed of. No one's mind required elevation in a place like this, and the junior officers received enough instruction during the day.

Then there came a pause. So far we had been very successful in blocking each suggestion as it was brought forward, but we were no further towards our objective than we were five minutes after we started. We had been in session for over an hour.

Then up spake a small voice from the back of the meeting. "Could we not give a show after the style of the 'Follies'?" asked the owner. "Oh no, quite

impossible," was the first verdict; "we have got no talent, and that kind of show is all talent."

Nevertheless the promoter stuck to his guns. Modifications could be brought in in the form of interludes and sketches to relieve the strain on performers from the strain on a limited stock of talent. He waxed more and more enthusiastic, and as we were also getting proportionately tired, he began to get his way. He declared that he was prepared to write some topical items himself. After an impassioned oration, a vote was taken, and he won through by a margin of several votes. We therefore decided to have a shot at this kind, and having elected a committee of Public Safety to select the performers, sit on the author, and take the blame for everything, we turned in.

The provision of players turned out eventually to be a fairly simple business. There were several people who had acted in shows given by their former ships. There was also the ward-room basso profundo, who on guest-nights came out with notes of such liquid purity that one could almost feel the whiskies and sodas which had passed down his throat whilst he "tuned up." For the girls, the gun-room was the natural source of supply. Every midshipman with a pretence at looks or legs was taken before the committee for a cat's concert, and if he could sing in tune, was put into the chorus. The leading lady came from the ward-room. In pri-



vate life he was some forty years old, and bald; but as Elfreda in "Come into the Office," not a soul would have thought it. He captured the hearts of many when—but we are getting ahead of station.

From a mass of literature and works of musical genius a show was eventually derived and topicalised to suit an audience of naval officers. Sketches were written and fitted in at judicious intervals, so that the prima donna might have a drink between two top-note efforts. Then we started rehearsals.

It was soon discovered that some one was needed to do the dirty work. The people who were wanted to rehearse were never on the spot, and much time was lost in looking for them. When found, they always required some body to prompt them, hold their hands, feel their pulses, or take their temperatures, or they became mute and hopeless. Accordingly the positions of scene-shifter and call-boy were instituted.

Very few people fully realise the importance of the scene-shifting department. The audience should never get a sight of them if everything goes well. All they should see is a number of wretched performers performing, and consequently all the praise goes to Dolly Dimple, Reckless Reggie, or some other lime-light wonder. This is a great mistake. The success or failure of a ship show depends entirely on the work of the

people behind the scenes. A few of their duties at rehearsals, as well as during the performances, have already been given. In addition to prompting, the trouble of getting the people on to the stage at the proper time is very great. They may be seen waiting in the wings a few minutes before their time, but ten seconds before their cue they are invariably adrift. Then there is a hue-and-cry throughout the ship, in which every member of the stage staff takes a part. The fairy—for it usually is one of the females—is discovered in her cabin or down a ventilator, is rushed up to the theatre and on to the stage just as her cue has been repeated and a pause in the proceedings has occurred. She always has some excuse to offer. Either her stocking has slipped or her nose has become shiny, and repairs have been needed. She could not think of using the dressing-room; it is far too crowded.

The acting party are also very prone to stage fright, especially on the first night. The greatest number of cases is found among the men, and when a man is missing the first place to look is in the ward-room or gun-room. He will usually be found bracing himself with Dutch courage.

If the show is found to fall rather flat, it is the scene-shifters who are expected to liven it up. They must either lead the applause, applaud at the wrong place, or let down some of the scenery on top

of the occupants of the stage. This latter trick has been found to instil life into many a bored audience. Another good trick is to allow the ship's mascot to rush on to the stage in an obviously unrehearsed manner. If the mascot is a goat or a penguin, so much the better.

Of course, all these duties are in addition to our legitimate function. Even in a show of our kind, there were a number of props, and a considerable quantity of furniture-moving in the placing of some of the scenes. When these evolutions had to be executed on a rickety stage, and through very narrow wings, considerable time and labour were involved. This was a point which the performers entirely failed to grasp. In the middle of an intricate manoeuvre with a sofa, fair young things kept rushing up to us to ask if we had a powder-puff in our pockets, or if we knew where they had left their hair-pins. Throughout these trials we have to keep a smiling face, and a tactful, gentle, and generally helpful demeanour. There can be no doubt that the scene-shifters of a naval show rank among the unbelauded heroes of the war. From which it can no doubt be gathered that in our show I was a scene-shifter.

I have described our job in action; at rehearsals the tables were completely turned. The scene-shifters have then practically nothing to do. We had to place a few chairs and tables to represent couches

and sofas, chase the errant performers out of their hiding-places, and then our work was over. We could then sit down and watch the performers make fools of themselves, as they invariably did. It certainly is rather funny to watch our first lieutenant, a "two and a half striper" of whom we stand in dread, in full uniform, clasping a midshipman, likewise in uniform, to his chest and chanting "Matilda Jane, my heart's desire," to a blank wall barely two feet from the end of his nose. It is apt to be doubly funny when one remembers that half an hour previously that snottie was ordered half a dozen with the stick by that lieutenant-commander for the flooding of his cabin by the wash of a picket boat coming alongside too fast, under the snottie's command.

Rehearsals went on and on. People seemed as if they would never know their parts, never know their cues, never know anything. Almost every one was fed up with the show, and a number of people were for giving it up altogether. "The show," they moaned, "will never be fit for anything but an excuse for a drink." The producers, however, stuck to their guns, and improvement was made. A couple of dress rehearsals put a great deal of life into some people. There is all the difference in the world between singing made up, to singing in uniform, and even the substitution of a sofa for two chairs, placed side by side, makes a difference.



Having worked every one to death, the invitations were issued, and at last the first night came. During the afternoon the "theatre ship" (a fleet auxiliary with one hold fitted up as a theatre) made fast alongside, and for many hours the patient stage-hands toiled at rigging curtains, preparing the stage, and transporting properties. It is interesting to note that at the same time the sailors were embarking stores from another hold of the ship.

At eight o'clock, after a snatched quarter of an hour for supper, we are ready, and the guests begin to arrive. Each one as he arrives pulls out a pipe or cigarette, and gets to work. In a quarter of an hour there is a thick haze of tobacco smoke throughout the theatre, in which life is unbearable without some personal means of retaliation in the shape of some treasured relic in the pipe line. There are no smoking restrictions on these occasions. The band gets going to keep the waiting throng amused until the captain arrives, accompanied by several admirals and other captains. Their entry is the signal for a burst of cheering, and the overture is switched off. Then comes an expectant pause.

Behind the scenes the last touches are being given to the stage. The call-boy's wail is to be heard everywhere.

"Opening chorus; opening chorus; come along the opening chorus, or we'll all be adrift." There is a hurrying to and fro as people come up from the dressing-rooms to take their places. On the stage the manager is dancing about, pushing one person here and another there, scattering last words of advice as he does so. The participants in the opening chorus are trying to look less nervous than they feel, and failing. Finally everybody is settled, and the order is given, "Stand by main curtain." At the bandmaster's desk a red light changes to green; he taps his stand, the band play a few bars of the "Till Ready," and up goes the curtain.

There is no call to say much about the results of these months of rehearsal. The songsters sang their worst upon a variety of topics. There were solos, quartettes, and choruses. There was also a sketch. This last item was introduced to please those who thought that they could act, and were jealous of the singers. To give the reader an idea of what that audience endured, the "bill of the play" is reproduced. It was an attempt at the combination of a little topical rubbish with the modern love-story-cum-spy play, and the whole scene was laid in the dim future in order that the discrepancy in facts might be overlooked.

## THE SAUCY KIPPERS: A FANTASY.

By QWESTIAN MARX, Midshipman (Actg. Lieut.-Comdr.)

(Graded for purposes of pay as Ship's Cat I.)

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

REGINALD PENN, Assistant Paymaster . . . .	<i>Hero.</i>
CARL HUMOURFAICE, Lieutenant . . . .	<i>Villain.</i>
ETHEL BRIGHTEYES, Wren . . . .	<i>Heroine.</i>
KITTY KURLEW, W.R.N.S. )	<i>Fairies.</i>
MABEL MEMBRANE, ,, )	
GLADYS GRITTLIE, ,, )	
MARYANNE SMITH, Barmaid, R.N. )	
SENTRY and NOISE OFF }	<i>"Also ran."</i>

*Scene.* Wrens' Mess, H.M.S. *Penultimate.**Date.* The war after next. Time, 10.40 A.M. (Stand Easy.)*Stage Setting.* Front: Sofa, two arm-chairs, stove, and stove-pipe.

Middle: Long mess dining-table, a bell-push.

Rear: Left, a door; right, a pantry-trap hatch.

The show is safely over, including the shouting. The guests have left the theatre, and, after stowing away our gear in readiness for the next performance, we follow them to the gun-room. The scene then is a sight to be remembered.

Into the mess, about a hundred officers have crowded to "wait for their boats." Every one is talking at once, for almost every person present knew everybody else. At one end of the mess the wine steward is making an endeavour to cope with the demand for drink. As can be imagined, the atmosphere of the theatre, consisting of about three parts of tobacco smoke to one of air, produces a wonderful thirst. Hence the heaving mass round the bar. One is lucky if one gets a drink at all. In some messes, one never gets one: in others, every one seems to be provided by some means or other. It calls for considerable powers

of organisation, and, in the second case, one can usually find that the sub of the mess is a promising young fellow. A man who can supply drink to a crowd like this is sure to make his way.

Dotted here and there among the crowds of uniforms, can be seen some of the performers, still clad in their costumes, and with grease paints streaming off their faces. The girls come in for their full share of admiration. Each of them is the centre of a circle of midshipmen whom she is charming with her wonderfully feminine manner. In her hand she holds a long glass of beer.

Passing one group, we overhear the female charmer holding forth to her flock—

"Well, young Stutter," she says, "to prove to you conclusively that my thirst is greater than yours, I'll lay you two to one in half-crowns that I finish this drink before you finish yours."



Pushing her way through the throng comes Gladys Grittie. She is somewhat curiously dressed, for though all right about the head and face, she is wearing somebody else's dressing-gown and a pair of sea-boots over her stage costume. Finally she reaches her objective, a member of her term at Dartmouth.

"Hullo, old thing," says Gladys, "how's yourself?"

"Who the dickens are you, my dear?" responds the other, much puzzled.

"Well, I must be well made up," replies Gladys. "I'm Tinietot."

"Heavens! is that who you are? Fancy my losing my heart to a worm like you. Still, you looked topping on the stage. Pity to spoil my little romance."

"I haven't spoilt your romance," rejoins Gladys. "You may kiss me, Charles."

"Not in these trousers, old son," is the vulgar response.

"You needn't be rude about it anyway. Well, have a drink instead. Here you are. —

Cheeroh. What ship are you in?"

"I'm in the *Fearnought*."

"What, with old Bony England? My hat, do you remember —?"

The flood of reminiscences is cut short by a roar from the doorway of "*Fearnought's* boat alongside port gangway, sir, please." Then it is "So long. Give my love to Bony, and you two must come over and dine one night. I'll send you a signal about it." The *Fearnought's* worm their ways out and depart. Slowly the mess empties, as boat after boat claims her officers.

The officer of the watch is having a rousing time. Instead of the usual quiet middle watch, he is working like a nigger. Armed with a large megaphone, he is regulating the boat traffic, seeing senior officers over the side, and acting as an inquiry office for lambs who have lost their boats. In the end, every person is sorted out and despatched to his ship. Peace once more reigns supreme.

(To be concluded.)

## "GREEN BALLS."

BY PAUL BEWSHER.

## III.

## THE FIRST RAID.

"Around me broods the dim, mysterious Night,  
Star-lit and still.  
No whisper comes across the Plain."

—*The Night Raid.*

NIGHT! Before I knew I was to fly through the darkness over the country of the enemy; night had been for me a time of soft withdrawal from the world—a time of quiet. It still held its old childhood mystery of a vague oblivion between day and day, an unusual space of time peopled by slumberous dreams in the gloom of a warm, familiar bed.

Night was a time in which busy and scattered humanity collected once more to the family hearth, and careless of the wet darkness outside, careless of the wind which howled over the roof and moaned down the chimney, sat in the sequestered comfort by the glow of the fire in a lamp-lit room. Night did not mean a mere temporary obscuring of the daytime world. One did not feel that out there in the gloom beyond the dead windows lay the countryside of day, hidden, though unchanged. One felt that for a time the real world had ended, and that as one drifted to sleep, the real house faded and melted away to ghostly regions beyond the comprehension of man.

In the days before my first raid, I use to wander away from the lighted windows of the little camp, down the long road to Toul, beneath the glittering stars, looking up into the blue immensity of the sky, thinking how I was going to move high up there—above the dim country, across the distant lines to some remote riverside factory, beyond the great fortress of Metz.

From that moment the whole meaning of night changed, and changed for ever. Night became for me a time of restless activity; the darkness became a vast theatre for mystery and drama. The midnight obscurity became a thick mantle whose friendly folds hid from the sight of its enemies the throbbing aeroplane in its long, long flights over a shadow-peopled world.

The night became my day. *Dusk is our dawn, and midnight is our noon*, is the song of the night-bombers. To them daylight is a time of preparation, a time of rest, but never a time in which they can fly upon their destructive expeditions.

The pale evening star gleams



above the gold and crimson glories of the sunset. The eastern sky becomes deeply blue. Out of the hangars come the giant machines. The night-flying airman begins to rouse himself, and with the first rustle of the twilight breeze amidst the black lace-work of the bare branches comes the awakening action of the brain, and into his head troop a thousand thoughts, a thousand problems, a thousand impulses.

Over a map I bent, day after day, looking at Metz, looking at Thionville, following the curved black mark of the lines, and pondering the round spots which represented anti-aircraft batteries—going on my first raid a thousand times in anticipation. At times fear held me—the fear of the unknown. What would happen? What would happen? We might get "there," but would we return? Would a German air patrol await us—would a fierce impassable barrage bring about our downfall? Surely, surely, we argued (my pilot and I), they would be waiting for us on our way back.

We knew nothing of night-bombing, nothing of flying across the lines. Before us lay a curtain through which we had to pass. We did not know what lay on the other side, or if we would return through the closed draperies.

At times the thrill of romance, of high star-touching adventure, stirred my imagination. I thought how I was to move undaunted and triumphant over the moon-lit river, over the forests of the Vosges,

with my twelve bombs ready to drop at my slightest order. I realised how I was to bring destruction to far-off blast-furnaces where the sweating Germans poured out the white blue-flamed metal to make shells and long naval guns—how I was perhaps to ride homeward down the vast avenues of the skies to the waiting aerodrome with the exhilaration of a conqueror!

Then came the third mental phase of those days of waiting for the raid—the phase of pity. I shall kill to-night! thought I. I shall kill to-night. Even now the worker eats his contented dinner with his wife and children before going on the night-shift—the night-shift which will never see day. Even now is a young man greeting his beloved whom he will never live to wed. Is it true that those plump yellow bombs with their red and green rings are destined to rip flesh and blood—to tear up people whom I have never seen, and whom I will never know that I have slain?

So through my imagination went pouring the strange processions of thought. Brighter and brighter grew the moon; clearer and clearer grew the night. Far away to the north, near Pont-à-Mousson, I could see, as I stood on the road to Toul, the luminous white star-shells which hung quivering in the air, and dropped slowly as they faded away. There in the dark road beneath the tall bare trees I would stand, a little figure, in a great solitude under the ten thousand watching stars, gazing out to the

lines, wondering and wondering what lay beyond.

The days passed slowly. The possibilities of each night were doomed by the French report, "*Brume dans les vallées!*" Mist was considered a great danger to navigation, so night after night the raid was postponed.

French *Bréguets de Bombardement*, huge unwieldy machines, carrying two men and twenty or so little vicious bombs, were also operating from the aerodrome, and the French authorities had arranged a detailed and very useful system of ground lights to assist navigation.

At several places were groups of lights, each group separated by a certain number of miles, to give the airman an opportunity to learn his speed across the ground. There were rocket positions. There were groups of flares pointing north. Here and there were emergency landing-grounds. The whole dim country was going to be twinkling with little messages, with lights and flares and friendly rockets. More and more in these days of waiting I became obsessed with the idea of the long journey I was to make through the blue vagueness of the night above the moonlit country.

Then one night the moon rose clear and clean above a mistless world. The more brilliant stars burnt steadily in the velvet of the night. A silence brooded over the rolling downs and the deep-shadowed valleys. On the aerodrome was deliberate activity and suppressed excitement. The

Handley-Page, on which the C.O. intended to carry out the first raid, spread its long splendid wings under the eager hands of the mechanics, who for long days had been preparing everything—had been testing every wire and bolt, and had kept the machine on the pinnacle of efficiency. Now they swarmed round it like keen and careful ants, pinning up the wings, filling the engine tanks with hot water pumped up from a wheeled boiler, known as the "hot potato waggon," exercising machine-guns, and testing the controls.

The two engines were started up, and roared with a surging vibrant clamour for ten minutes. Then the full power was put on, and for a few minutes the noise became ear-splitting, and the waves of sound rolled across the aerodrome and came echoing back from the hangars. The wheels strained restlessly against the triangular wooden "chocks." The tail and the wings shook and quivered with repressed emotion. The exhaust-pipes of the motors grew red hot, long blue flames streamed out of them, and thousands of red sparks went whirling along through the shivering tail-planes into the darkness behind. It was an awe-inspiring sight. I asked the silent preoccupied warrant-officer engineer, a rugged naval man who knew the soul of the mighty Rolls-Royce engines, if it was all right. I could not believe that those red-hot pipes and blue flames were not a sign of an engine gone amok and hopelessly overheated. The thunder and the awful ex-



pression of power frightened me. The engineer, however, assured me that it was all correct, and explained that the engines were just the same in the daytime, though the heat and the sparks could not be seen in the light.

Near the towering bulk of the machine with its two deafening motors stood the pilot, the C.O., who was a frail-looking figure, with his youthful fair-haired face almost hidden in the wide black, fur-lined collar of his thick padded over-all suit. He stood there with his flying-cap and his goggles in his hand, waiting to climb into the machine when the mechanics had finished the test of the engines.

I went over to wish him luck, feeling awestruck at his coolness. On the grass of the aerodrome shone the great flares. Above hung the heartless stars, and the blank-faced moon swung rather mockingly, it seemed to me, above the dim patterns of the wooded landscape. The little fair-haired figure stood by the hot-breathed steed which he was going to ride, and it seemed that he was too small, too frail—that any human being was too frail—to take that monster of steel and wood and canvas into the unknown dangers which lay beyond the cold glare of the star-shells on the horizon.

Then the C.O. climbed into the machine, and his head and shoulders appeared just above the blunt nose which stuck out six feet above the ground. He shouted down an order or two. The little triangular door on the floor of the machine was

shut. The blocks of wood were taken away from beneath the wheels. The engines roared out, and the machine moved slowly across the grass. It turned slightly, its noise leapt up suddenly again, and with a beating throb the huge craft began to move across the aerodrome with its blue flames and showers of red sparks shooting out behind it. Faster and faster it went—every eye watching it, every mouth firm and voiceless. At last it roared up into the air, and then a curious thing happened which showed the strain and the nervousness under which we were all working that night.

In a few moments the noise of the engines died out, and beyond the slope of green over which the machine had climbed appeared a dull red glow.

"Oh! he's crashed!" almost sobbed somebody in those awful vibrant tones, full of fear and excitement, almost passionate with terror, which are so often heard when there is a swift sudden accident.

Babel broke out. "Quick! *Pyrènes!* Quick! Start up the car! It's burning! Quick, quick! How awful! Drive like blazes, driver!"

Round the aerodrome the loaded car jolted and bumped, going as fast as the driver could make it, glittering with the fire-extinguishers held by the agonised white-faced passengers.

Behind some hangars we rushed, and suddenly we heard the glorious sound of a *bavoom, bavoom*, overhead, as the Handley-Page swept triumphantly above us.

"Safe! Oh, good, good, good!" thought every one. Over the crest of the little swell in the ground we saw some dull red landing flares burning in a flickering line. The sudden cessation of the engine's clamour owing to a change of wind, and the sudden burning up of the flares, had brought at once to overwrought nerves the worst fears. As we rode back, pretending we were very ashamed of ourselves, we decided not to tell the C.O. what had happened when he landed. We were very fond of him. . . .

For ten minutes or so the machine roared round and round the aerodrome. We could see its shape black against the starshine for a little while, and then we could distinguish it no longer, for to our great delight it was hidden by the darkness in spite of the moonlight. Then it turned towards the lines, was heard booming faintly for a moment, and finally its noise died right away. The aerodrome lay silent under the magic of the watching stars and the silver frozen moon.

Restless minutes passed. From mess to cabins, from cabins to the aerodrome with its dazzling acetylene flares, we moved uneasily. Had he crossed the lines now? we wondered. Had he got to Metz? What was he doing? Had he dropped his bombs yet?

An hour and a half had gone. He was due back. Still the deep immensity of the night gave no signal. The moon had climbed a little, and its tarnished face was smaller and brighter. There was no

sound on the air save the sighing of the wind, the low murmur of a dynamo, and the occasional clear quiet chime of a clock in the village church tower.

Then somebody said, "Listen! Hush!"

Faint but surely sounded the throb of the motors. Every moment it grew more distinct. The crowds on the aerodrome increased. The relief of a strain ended moved pleasantly through them.

Then in the air appeared a glittering ball of light which dropped in a curve and faded away. Another ball of light shot up from the ground in answer. The noise of the engines in the air stopped as the machine glided in wide circles towards the ground. Suddenly it appeared a few hundred feet in the air, brilliantly lit up by two blindingly white lights which burned fiercely below both wing-tips, and from which dropped little gouts of luminous liquid. The powerful illumination lighted up every face, every dress, every shed and pile of stones in clear detail with its quivering glare.

Now every eye was watching the machine as it drew nearer and nearer to the ground. This was the first time that a Handley-Page had been landed at night, and landing is the most difficult and uncertain problem of flying.

Lower and lower it floated, then flattened out, and drifted on just above the grass. With scarcely a bump it touched the ground, ran forwards a little, and swept round towards us.



"Good! Priceless! Thank Heaven that's done!" muttered a dozen watchers. The waiting crowd streamed across to the machine from whose wing-tip flares, now dull and red, still dropped hot drops of liquid.

Some stooped at once under the machine to examine the brown paper which had been temporarily pasted across the bottom of the bomb-racks, as the bomb-doors had not yet been fitted. Scarcely a piece of paper remained—the bomb-racks were empty—the bombs had been dropped!

Then was a scene of excitement. The night travellers were welcomed and congratulated, and a thousand queries were rained on them. "How did the engines go? Any searchlights? Any shell-fire? Where did you drop the bombs? Did you find the way easily?" and so on in an endless stream. It had been a flight which had broken new ground—the first flight of five thousand night flights by Handley-Pages. It was the climax of an experiment. The machine had gone up into the night, and had returned with its cargo discharged.

A night or two later our turn came. The machine stood on the aerodrome: the wings were stretched and pinned up; the tanks were filled with hot water. I went to my little cabin with its rose-shaded lamp, and with a heavy heart began to prepare for the raid. I dressed myself in thick woollen socks; knee-high flying-boots lined with white fleece; a sweater or two, a muffler, and

the big overall suit of grey-green mackintosh lined with thick black beaver fur with a wide fur collar. On my head went my flying-cap. I strapped it under my chin and got my goggles and gloves ready. I felt very out of place, so clumsy and grotesque, like a deep-sea diver, in the little room with its bookshelf and neat white bed and soft lamplight.

I had the terrible sinking sensation which I had felt before when about to be caned, and when in the waiting-room of a dentist.

I looked at three or four photographs of well-loved friends and of grey London streets, knelt down for a moment by the bed, and went out after a last long look at the room and the unavailing invitation of the white sheets. I knew it might be the last time, and I felt quite a coward.

Towards the aerodrome I walked behind the towering line of moonlit hangars, beyond which I could hear the murmur of the engines "warming-up." Between two tall sheds I stumbled, and came on to the wide grassy expanse where stood my machine surrounded by busy mechanics.

The engines opened out with a terrifying burst of noise. I collected my map-case and my torch, and walked round to the front of the machine. I faced the two shining discs of the whirling propellers and gingerly advanced between them to the little rope-ladder which hung from the small door in the bottom of the machine. Up this ladder I climbed, and found myself in the little room

behind the pilot's seat. I knelt down and shone my torch on the bomb-handle, the bomb-sight, and on the twelve fat yellow bombs that hung up inside the machine behind me. Then I walked forward till I came to the cockpit, where sat the pilot on a padded armour-plated seat, testing the engines. I let down my hinged seat beside him, and sat with my feet off the ground. I put away my pencil and note-book and chocolate, and examined the different taps and the Very light pistol, and began to adjust the petrol pressure of the engines, which was indicated by little dials in front of me.

I was about seven feet off the ground now, sitting up in the nose of the machine, feeling very small and helpless, with the two great propellers screaming on either side a foot behind me, at 1700 revolutions a minute, and I felt very much like a lamb going to the slaughter.

Minutes slowly passed. I was itching with impatience. I longed to start so that I might have something to do to occupy my attention.

The pilot blew a whistle. The pieces of wood in front of the wheels were pulled away by the mechanics. The pilot's hand went to the throttle, and we moved slowly across the aerodrome. The front engine roared out, he turned round and faced the wind, with the lights of the flares behind us.

On went the engines with a mighty throbbing beat. At once we began to roll across the ground. Faster and faster we rushed. Below streaked

the flare-lit grass as we swept onward at a fearful speed. The hangars were just in front of us. I sat, feet off the ground, with my left hand on the padded edge of the cockpit, nervous and apprehensive.

Then slowly, surely, the machine left the ground and began to move upwards, and soon cleared the top of the hangars. Below lay the moonlit sweep of the dim forests, the curving hills and the deep-shadowed ravines, looking pale and unreal in the ghostly radiance.

In front of us the phosphorescent finger of the height-indicator slowly crept to 1000 feet. The speed-indicator wavered between 50 and 55 miles an hour, and the dials which recorded the petrol pressure on the engines obeyed faithfully my alterations to the little taps at the side.

Above us was the wide expanse of the starlit sky and the cold moon. We soon found that flying at night was like moving through a dimmer daytime sky. Though the airman is hidden from the ground, yet below he can see a detailed panorama, a little more limited in range than that of noontide, but not much less distinct. This is, of course, on a clear night of ample moon. On dark and misty nights the change is very much greater. As we flew on we realised that the task was not going to be so difficult as we had imagined.

For a time I felt too nervous to look over the side, as I always have felt, flying by day or night, until the preliminary dread of a wing falling off



which has ever haunted me, has grown less poignant. Then I began to look over the side, and the love of experience and excitement battled and pressed down the feelings of dread.

Far away on the moon-ward horizon a luminous silver mist veiled the distant view. Below the scenery of thin white roads, soft patchwork forests, little tightly-clustered villages, and the quaint mosaic of fields, unrolled away from me as we mounted higher on the long wings whose edges now and then gleamed in the moonlight. Here and there were the little glowing specks of candles or lamps burning in distant houses, and some of the twinkling illuminations of the French signals. Far away in the mist a star-shell gleamed watery white and slowly faded away. Beneath were the four white flares of the aerodrome and the little space of lit-up ground with an occasional gleam of light near the long line of hangars which I could see faintly below me.

Higher and higher we climbed. Every now and then I stood up and shone my torch on the two engines to read their dials, and to see if they were giving full power. Towards the north we moved, towards the gleaming Moselle and the distant star-shells of the lines. Then the French observer grew restless, and looked over the side, and down at the compass in his cockpit, and at the timing signal-lights beneath. At last, when we were eight or nine miles from the lines, he gave his verdict—the almost

inevitable word *Brouillard*. He thought it was too misty. He stood up and leaned back to the pilot, and shouted his words of explanation—

"*Trop de brouillard!* No good! It will be very bad by Metz!"

We turned back disappointed, and drew nearer to the lighted rectangle of the aerodrome far below. The pilot pulled back his throttle. A sudden and almost painful silence followed the roar of the engine. In an agreeable tranquillity after the incessant clamour we had known so long, we glided downwards towards the queer world of the deep shadows. Slowly, slowly over the dazzling acetylene flares we floated. The most critical moment had come: the pilot was going to make his first night landing. I sat silent and unmoving, my left hand again subconsciously holding the edge of the machine in readiness. The ground grew imperceptibly nearer. We were below the level of the sheds. I felt a little vibration quiver through the machine, and then another. We had touched ground.

We slowed down and drew up near our hangar. I dropped out of the machine, beneath which the disappointed mechanics were gazing at the unbroken surface of the brown paper pasted below the bomb-racks, and walked over to my cabin through a little pine wood. The rose-shaded lamp still shone softly. As I took off my heavy flying kit I recalled with a feeling of foolishness my fears and dreads when

I had left it, and felt how wasted my sentiment had been.

Almost the next night we started again. Once more I dressed in the heavy flying clothes, and collected my maps and impedimenta. Again I bade a sad farewell, and again sat beside the pilot, feeling weak and frail. Again we rose up in thunder across the lighted aerodrome towards the stars.

The world lay before us hard and clear. No white scarves of mist were flung over the dark woodlands. The horizon lay almost unveiled, and above was the deep immensity of the night. Here and there across the country we saw the scattered lights of cottages and the twinkling of the French guiding stations. To the north were the brilliant star-shells, and far, far away in the mist glowed dully the little red flame of some blast-furnace beyond the lines.

As we drew nearer and nearer to Pont-à-Mousson, I felt how the meaning of the lines had changed. Formerly they had come to be a barrier almost impassable even by thought. I had felt that this was *our* side, that was *theirs*! Long had the trenches lain in the same place in this area. Now it seemed wonderful to be able to see signs of occupation beyond the German war-zone. Our intended crossing seemed a sort of sacrilege, the execution of an act seemingly impossible. I felt as though I had put out my hand to the moon, and had touched a solid surface. It

was hard to believe that our machine could in a flash change from the area of one great sweep of nationality and ideas and character to the other, and could pass unhindered, untouched across that frontier of death to every living thing upon the ground.

So as I grew nearer and nearer to Pont-à-Mousson and saw a few scattered lights beyond the star-shells, I began to wonder who sat beside the light—what German soldier or officer read a despatch or wrote a letter, in what sort of hut or dug-out. Then the pilot's hands would move with the wheel, and we would swing round in a circle. Again before us lay the French signal-lights, and far away the faint glow of our aerodrome.

Then we swung round again towards the north. The Frenchman's arm went up, and dropped, pointing straight ahead across the star-shells which rose here and there slowly, white blossoms of light which burst out into a white dazzling flare, and gradually drooped and faded away.

I sat with my legs dangling, and my hands crossed in my lap, feeling I had got to take what was coming unprotesting. Defenceless and frail I seemed as I sat beside my pilot, with nothing for my hands to do—with no control over the machine or over my destiny. My heart sank lower and lower . . . and then we were right above the lines. In the pool of vague darkness below I saw the star-shells rising up and lighting a little circle of ground, and dying away, to be



followed by small and spitting flashes of rifle fire from either side of the lines, where I knew some wretched soldier lay in No Man's Land, flat in the mud, in fear of his life.

A few minutes passed, and I began to realise that I was over German territory. The height-indicator recorded 7500 feet. The engines clamoured evenly, and the speed-indicator registered fifty miles an hour, showing that we were still climbing steadily. The pilot sat immobile on my right—his heavy boots firmly on the rudder, his fur-gloved hands on the black wooden steering-wheel, which scarcely moved as we flew steadily on. The electric bulb in the cockpit shone on his determined chin and firm mouth, but his fur-edged goggles hid those eyes which looked, now forwards to the horizon and to the dark shape of the Frenchman with his curious helmet in front, now downwards to the compass and the watch and the instruments of the dash-board. Keen eyes and ready were they, I knew well, watching everything, noting everything.

I wondered what lay in his brain, and what were his real feelings as he steered the enormous machine dead ahead into the hostile territory. My own fears had begun to leave me a little. I looked round with interest to see what was going to happen, and began to hum my invariable anthem of the night-skies, which I have chanted during every raid—the Cobbler's song from "Chu Chin Chew":—

"I sit and cobbler at slippers and shoon  
From the rise of sun to the set of  
moon. . ."

Then on my left, a mile or so away, I saw four or five sharp red flashes whose spots of light died away slowly, like lightning. I felt excited. They were anti-aircraft shells. They were meant for us. We had been heard, then, and our presence was realised. I glanced at the pilot, but he had seen nothing. His face was fixed steadily forwards, so I decided not to tell him. Now I began to look all over the sky, above, below, and on either side, looking for shell fire, and trying to pierce the gloom to see enemy machines. I was on the alert, for I realised that we were heard though unseen, as we crept like thieves above the land of a people who wished us ill.

Then ahead of me I became aware of a beautiful sight, which I have never since seen near the lines—a city in full blaze. There lay a sea of twinkling, glittering lights with three triangles of arc-lamps round it. It was Metz and its three railway junctions. I stood up and looked down on the amazing scene. There lay to our view vivid evidence of German activity. I could see here and there through the jumble of lights the straight line of a brilliant boulevard. It seemed strange to think that down there moved and laughed German soldiers and civilians in the streets and cafés, all unconscious of the fur-clad airmen moving high up among the stars in their throbbing machine.

The explanation of the fearless blaze was simple. The Germans in those days had an agreement with the French that Metz should not be bombed, and therefore they realised that it would be safer if its lights were kept on, so that it might not be mistaken for any other place. Gradually, however, we passed by this city lined in glittering gems, leaving it a few miles on our right. Ahead of us the intermittent red glare of scattered blast-furnaces burst occasionally on the dim carpet of the country, blazing out for a moment and then fading slightly—to blaze out again before they died away, as the unavoidable *coulées*, or discharges of molten metal, were being made.

Still there was no apparent opposition. No searchlights moved in the skies; no shells punctured the darkness. The French observer, who was responsible for the navigation, looked carefully below and then at his map. We were evidently drawing near to the blast-furnaces of Hagen-dingen. Then he turned round and began to shout instructions. The pilot could not quite understand what he said, so I assisted him. It was strange to be arguing in English and French, the three of us, a mile and a half in the air, fifteen miles beyond the German lines. We became so interested in our explanations and translations that we forgot our surroundings altogether.

"Let me talk to him. Qu'est ce que vous désirez

dire, monsieur? Où est Hagen-dingen?"

The Frenchman pointed an energetic finger downwards.

"Là! Là!"

"He says it's just ahead, Jimmy! Shall I get into the back?"

"Just a minute. Monsieur—o'est temps maintenant to drop the— What's drop, Bewsh?"

"Laisser tomber! I'll tell him. Est ce . . . all right! You tell him, then! Look at the port pressure. I'll give it a pump!"

So went the conversation high above the earth at night in a hostile sky.

Then I lifted up my seat and crawled to the little room behind, which vibrated fiercely with the mighty revolutions of the two engines. I stood on a floor of little strips of wood, in an enclosure whose walls and roofs were of tightly stretched canvas which chattered and flapped a little with the rush of wind from the two propellers whirling scarcely a foot outside. Behind was fitted a round grey petrol-tank, underneath which hung the twelve yellow bombs.

I lay on my chest under the pilot's seat, and pushed to the right a little wooden door, which slid away from a rectangular hole in the floor through which came a swift updraught of wind. Over this space was set a bomb-sight with its sliding range-bars painted with phosphorescent paint. On my right, fixed to the side of the machine, was a wooden handle operating on a metal drum from which ran



a cluster of release-wires to the bombs farther back. It was the bomb-dropping lever, by means of which I could drop all my bombs at once, or one by one, as I wished.

The edge of the door framed now a rectangular section of dark country, on which here and there glowed the intermittent flame of a blast-furnace. I could not quite identify my objective, so I climbed forwards to the cockpit and asked the French observer for further directions. He explained to me, and then suddenly I saw, some way below the machine, a quick flash, and another, and another—each sending a momentary glare of light on the machine. I crawled hurriedly back, and lay down again to get ready to drop my bombs.

Below me now I could see incessant shell-bursts, vicious and brilliant red spurts of flame. I put my head out of the hole for a moment into the biting wind, and looked down, and saw that the whole night was beflowered with these sudden sparks of fire, which appeared silently like bubbles breaking to the surface of a pond. The Germans were firing a fierce barrage from a great number of guns. They thought, fortunately for us, that we were French Bréguets, which flew much lower than we did, so their shells burst several thousand feet beneath us.

I was very excited as I lay face downwards in my heavy flying-clothes on the floor, with my right hand on the bomb-handle in that little

quivering room whose canvas walls were every now and then lit up by the flash of a nearer shell. Through the quick sparks of fire I tried to watch the blast-furnace below. Just in front of me the pilot's thick flying-boots were planted on the rudder, and occasionally I would pull one or the other to guide him. The engines thundered. The floor vibrated. Below the faint glow of the bomb-sights the sweep of country seemed even darker in contrast with the swift flickering of the barrage, and here and there I could see the long beam of a searchlight moving to and fro.

Then I pressed over my lever, and heard a clatter behind. I pressed it over again and looked back. Many of the bombs had disappeared—a few remained scattered in different parts of the bomb-rack. I looked down again, and pressed over my lever twice more,—my heart thumping with tremendous excitement as I felt the terrific throbbing of power of the machine and saw the frantic furious bursting of the shells, and realised in what a thrilling midnight drama of action and force I was acting. I looked back and saw by the light of my torch that one bomb was still in the machine. I walked back to the bomb-rack, and saw the arms of the back gunlayer stretching forwards, trying to reach it. I put my foot on the top of it and stood up. It slipped suddenly through the bottom and disappeared.

In a moment I was beside the pilot.

"All gone, Jimmy! Let's be getting back, shall we?"

I leant forwards and hit the French observer on the back. When he turned I asked him what luck we had had. He was encouraging, and said that the bombs had gone right across the lights of the factory. Below us now still burst the barrage of shells, while one or two stray ones burst near the machine. From the direction of Briey a strong searchlight swept across the sky and hesitated near us, and began to wave its cruel arm in restless search in front of the nose of the machine. As it drew nearer and nearer my hand tugged the pilot's sleeve a little, with a hint to turn. He looked down at me and smiled, and carried on. I knew that he felt no fear, and was less nervous than I was. Little did I guess when I watched, like a frightened rabbit pursued by a slow hypnotising snake, that one searchlight moving in the pool of the night skies above Briey, how I should, later on, steer the machine through a forest of moving beams over Bruges or Ghent. That solitary searchlight was bad enough, and was full of the evil cunning which makes searchlights a greater dread to the night airman than shell fire. To be searched for by searchlights is ever more demoralising. It is as though you stood in the corner of a dark room and an evil being with long arms came nearer and nearer, sweeping those arms across the velvety dark-

ness, and you knew that there would come a time when they would touch you, and then . . .

Past Metz we flew onwards, and the city could no longer be seen. It lay in darkness, for our bombs had been dropped. Its lights had served to keep it safe. Now, lest it should be used as a guide, the city had died like a vision of the brain, and where had lain that filigree of sparkling diamonds was the unlit gloom.

The shell fire died away and stopped. The white beam of Briey moved vainly across the sky, darting in one swift swoop across a quarter of the heavens, and then hanging hungrily in some suspected corner, before it moved onwards again.

I felt supremely confident and at home. I felt I could "dance all night." I felt that for hours I could go soaring onwards over the country of the enemy with this triumphant sense of power. Fear had left me. I was not conscious of being in the air. I sat solidly and at ease on my little padded seat beside the pilot, whose arm I had affectionately taken. I peeled the scarlet paper and the silvery wrappings from the bars of chocolate, and pushed a fragment into his unresisting mouth. We were three or four miles from the lines, but from the danger point of view we were as good as across them. I stuck a photograph behind one of the dials in the cockpit, and it kept on falling on to the floor so that I had to replace it.

I fished out three or four masoots from my pocket, and



stood them up inside the machine. I began to sing loudly. It was a mild reaction after the strain, which I had not been conscious of, but which had nevertheless been there.

It was a wonderful feeling to know that the job which I had dreaded was done, and that I had come through it safely. I wondered what the Germans thought of that huge load of explosives which had fallen all at once, for a Handley-Page could drop then about three times more bombs than any other machine in use on the Western Front. The Gotha, with its even smaller load, had not then come into action. The Germans must have realised that it was the beginning of a very unpleasant time for them.

At last the white star-shells rose and fell beneath us, and we left them behind. Towards Nancy I could see a silver strip of river and a few twinkling lights. Near it lay the glare of a night landing-ground. Ahead of us rose coloured rockets from one of the guide positions. On and on we flew, and then we saw the lights of our own aerodrome far ahead. The pilot throttled the engines, and we began to glide down through the darkness to the row of flares. When we were over the rectangle of illuminated grass we circled down in wide sweeps, and landed gently in a long glide.

We stopped by the hangars, and the crowd poured round us again. This time with what delight the eager mechanics

saw round the edges of the bomb-racks only small shreds of brown paper, which showed that the machine they had tended so well had done its work, and had taken destruction for them beyond the lines!

With what glow of pleasure I climbed down from the machine, and arm-in-arm with the engineer officer walked awkwardly though joyfully to our cabin! The photographs of my friends seemed to smile on me with genial thanks, and the bed seemed more than ever inviting. We talked, and talked, and talked. The raid was described a thousand times over as we drank hot coffee and munched biscuits. Looking backwards, it seems strange that we should have been so excited after a short raid like that; but it had been a new thing achieved—an adventure successfully carried through.

When at last I got back to the cabin alone I began to think of the effect of my bombs. I pictured the ambulances hurrying down the distant roads to the hospitals. I thought of the women even then learning the news of their husband's or son's death. My head was throbbing and aching with excitement. A mad procession of unending thought went pouring through it at a headlong pace. I lifted the blind and looked out of the window to the wet chill dawn. The sickly stars flickered like pale gas-lamps. The dirty moon staggered towards the East, while the West wore a dingy dressing-gown of crimson and tawdry green. The

scenes of the night were thronging through my imagination. I could picture it all—the white faces of the dials before us; the pulsing of the engines; the pressing of the bomb-handle; the clat-clatter of the falling bombs; the waving searchlights; the impetuous flashing of the shells; the ride home across the dim country; the landing, and the release from fear.

I felt restless and unwell. Again I looked at the humid greasy dawn. Thoughts of the silly death and destruction and agony beyond Metz came to me. I got into the white sheets, but they could not cool my throbbing forehead. My frantically working brain would not let me sleep. I tossed and turned, and dozed off for a moment, only to find myself once more in the air—only to see once more the cold electric light shining on my pilot's furl-gloved hands and set mouth, only to hear the deafening thunder of the motors—and to wake up again.

So passed a sleepless night. Morning brought to my tired eyes and tight-drawn skin, to my strained nerves and slack body, no joy or happiness in life. . . .

Thus was achieved the first raid. I felt anxious for more. I forgot the fear, and remembered the excitement, as human nature always does. I wanted to go to Friedrichshafen or Karlsruhe. Night meant a time of travel. The stars called to me to be up amid their steely glitter, thundering onwards to some far distant place.

Then came the usual sudden

order. Again we had to change our aerodrome. We were told to return to Luxeuil, whence we were to fly to Dunkerque.

Farewells were said in cold grey Nancy, strange city of the Vosges with its genial populations, its jolly cafés.

Through a hailstorm we flew to the long-loved aerodrome at Luxeuil. Old friends were met again, but even in our brief absence it had changed and many familiar buildings and faces had gone.

I managed to borrow a Curtiss machine and flew alone, very badly, in order to take my ticket.

The next morning, in spite of the threatening weather, we flew to Paris. At a height of a thousand feet or less, just under the troubled grey masses of cloud, we flew on. I followed the country below with anxious eyes, relying on landmarks to show me the way. I identified each road and railway and village. I checked by the map each little patch of forest, each little lake.

Once I was carried away by the chorus of a song which made me dream a little as I sang it. I looked down. There lay the straight road quite in order as I left it, but alongside appeared a forest which was not marked on the map. I became worried. I knew that once I had lost the way I would be badly adrift.

Just in time I discovered that I had passed a fork in the road as I sang to myself, and we had not turned as we should have done. Thereafter I kept my eyes on the alert,



till finally we reached the outskirts of Paris.

When we were low over the roofs near Villacoublay I happened to look at the height-indicator. To my surprise it registered zero. I gave the pilot a violent nudge and pointed it out to him. Then I realised that the aerodrome at Luxeuil, on which the indicator had been adjusted, was several hundred feet above sea-level, and that, now we were over lower country, our height might be registered as nothing, when in reality we were a few hundred feet above the roofs.

If there had been a mist we might have been in a difficulty, as our height-indicator would have been useless. We would not have had the good fortune of an airman who on one occasion got overtaken by a thick mist in England and wished to land. He knew the country was flat, so he glided down into the mist very gently, and when the height-indicator was just above zero he climbed out of the machine and sat on the edge. He saw the finger of the dial actually touch the zero mark, and jumped. . . . So accurate was the instrument that he was not hurt. He was flung down a bank, and was badly shaken up, but was no worse for it. The amazing part of it was that the aeroplane, a very stable machine, landed itself correctly and was found in a field a little farther ahead without a wire broken.

We landed at Villacoublay, and rushed into Paris by car

to spend a gay glittering evening in the capital. We were up early next day, and motored out to Villacoublay, and were soon on our way to Dunkerque.

A little past Boulogne the low-drifting clouds were left behind, and we flew into glorious April weather. On the left, to my great joy, was the sea and the surf-lined sweep of the coast. Below was the patchwork of fields and meadows, whose colours were so soft in the sunlight that the country looked like a carpet of suede leather dyed with many a rich shade of cream and brown and purple and dull green, in oblong patternings. Across this lovely mosaic ran straight roads which linked up the compact little towns. Here and there lay a canal like a bar of steel, blue and slender.

The machine moved forward with an absolute steadiness. The pilot took his hands off the wheel, glad to rest himself after the terrific bumping we had been enduring under the clouds since we left Paris. The engines droned contentedly. The burly engineer P.O. in front looked downwards with delight at the sunny plain which moved towards us with such a stately and even progress. Flying became really comfortable for once, and very monotonous.

Calais passed. Gravelines, with its starfish fortifications, moved by on our left-hand side. Dunkerque lay ahead. I began to look for the aerodrome. I had not been told exactly

where it was. I knew it was between Dunkerque and Bergues, near the canal. Nearer and nearer to Dunkerque and its line of docks and its ramparts we drew. Still I could not find the aerodrome. The pilot grew impatient. Then I saw in the air ahead of us the familiar form of a twin-engined machine. It was another Handley-Page. It swept downwards in wide curves. I looked below it and saw, by a wide field, a few brown hangars in front of which stood other machines.

The noises of the engines ended. We drifted down and landed. We were met by an officer with a megaphone, who gave us very curt instructions as to where the machine was to stop. We expected to be greeted as heroic travellers, so this abrupt welcome rather surprised us. When we disembarked, however, we found that several Handley-Pages were coming back from a daylight patrol off the coast to Zeebrugge and back. I caught the edge of my pilot's eye and knew he was wondering as I was—what nasty new business was this?

We went into the mess, very tired after our long journey by air from one end of the lines to the other, and while we were sitting at the table a heavily-booted and furred observer came in with very bright eyes, and said to the C.O. of the station—

"Rather good luck, sir! We saw a couple of destroyers ten miles north of Zeebrugge. Dropped our bombs on them. Direct hit on one! Seemed to be sinking when I left!"

The C.O. was delighted, and as the observer left the room I felt what a fine spirit of adventure there was in flying when a man could land out of the skies so flushed with achievement. He had sunk a destroyer in the enemy's waters. What a splendid conquest for one man! I felt near the sea again. I felt proud of my naval uniform. I felt glad I was in the Naval Air Service. A breath of the sea swept through the room which drove away all the sad memories of rather bitter days far, far away near the Vosges.

That night I walked alone under a haggard moon down a treeless road that wound beside a canal. The wind sighed across the flat ploughed fields. Towards Ypres I saw the incessant flash and flicker of artillery fire. For a moment I stood looking to the north-east, towards the lines.

Then would it have been fitting to have seen, as a fantastic prelude to my fantastic nights, what I often saw later from Dunkerque—a glittering string of emerald green balls rise slowly up in the profundity of the night, to droop over and hang awhile in the blue velvet of the night skies before they died away.

(To be continued.)



## MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

THE GENERAL ELECTION—THE ROUT OF THE BOLSHEVIKS—THE END OF MR ASQUITH AND HIS FRIENDS—MR LLOYD GEORGE'S CABINET—SIR F. E. SMITH AND MR CHURCHILL—MR HERBERT FISHER'S TEUTONISED EDUCATION—CLASS-HATRED IN POLITICS—THE LABOUR PARTY'S PLACE IN THE SUN—A MATTER OF ARITHMETIC—THE TRADE DISPUTES ACT—SIR J. HILLS-JOHNES.

THE General Election has removed a vast deal of rubbish from the House of Commons. Peacemongers and Bolsheviks were swept away wherever they presented themselves, and are not likely to show their brazen faces again. Messrs Henderson, Snowden, and Ramsay Macdonald are no more, and they will be lamented by none save their German friends. Still better, those intellectual sentimentalists, Messrs Ponsonby and C. P. Trevelyan, have been driven from their constituencies by the argument of numbers—the one argument which they profess to revere. They have made their appeal to democracy, and democracy has given them a clear, and we hope a final, answer. It is proved beyond cavil that the country understood and understands the justice and the necessity of the war, that it paid little heed to the agitators who, with the encouragement of alien gold, did their best to poison its mind. In this obduracy the country showed itself wiser and stancher than some members of the Government, whose constant policy it was to keep the peace by throwing whatever they asked to impudent agitators.

Nor should we underrate the malice against their country which animates our Bolsheviks. Had they triumphed at the polls, which was happily impossible, they would, if they could, have involved Great Britain in ruin. They have but one ideal—anarchy, but two heroes—Lenin and Trotsky, and they hate the land which gave them birth with so virulent a hatred, that in their eyes the Germans can do no wrong. It is a strange attitude, this attitude of anti-patriotism, and it is assumed only by the envious, but it is in vain that we blind our eyes to it: when we see a man standing upon his head in the middle of the street, we cannot pretend that he is upon his feet. Our one comfort is that, though his position calls instant attention to him, those who would rival him in the gymnastic feat are few in number.

But though handsomely beaten at the polls, the handful of irreconcilables still pretends to believe that it alone represents the true feeling of the country. The agitators, who have been rejected by thousands of their fellows, refuse to accept the verdict of dismissal. Fresh from prating about the sacredness of de-

mocracy, they reveal themselves as no true democrats by publicly flouting the result of the ballot. They already complain that they have been excluded from Parliament by a species of fraud, forgetting that it was universal suffrage which excluded them; and they threaten that as the voters have failed them, they will abolish all parliaments and obtain what they want, though they know not what that is, by a general strike. "Opposition in Parliament has been crushed," says the ineffable Mr R. Macdonald; "the I.L.P. takes it up outside Parliament! They can close the doors of Parliament, but that only means that they open the gates of the country." Did ever a champion of democracy talk more pestilent nonsense? A vote has been granted to every man in the country and to most women. And they who boast that they represent the people laugh in the people's face as soon as the votes are counted.

The Bolsheviks, then, have taken their beating badly. They will not bow to the decision even of their own kind, and thus they prove themselves at once irrational and unsportsmanlike. The old-fashioned middle-class Radicals are in worse case even than the Bolsheviks. They have disappeared from the House of Commons altogether, and few there are who will mourn their disappearance. Thus at last is the baleful effect of the Reform Bill of 1832 undone. When that Bill was passed the Whigs boasted that it would make them "tenants for life," and

though the boast was not wholly justified, though there have been intervals of Tory government, yet the hopes of the Whigs and of the Radicals, their lineal descendants, have become realities. Even when they were not in power themselves, they could sometimes impose their wishes upon the other party. Thus it was not Cobden but Sir Robert Peel who repealed the Corn Laws, put the countryside under the heel of the town, and satisfied the first ambition of the Radicals. From this fatal measure came the policies of *laissez-faire*, a full breeches-pocket, the Big Loaf, peace at any price, and all those other schemes, once dear to the middle class, which went near to compassing our ruin. And now at a single election all the old fustian is abolished and done with. The defeat of Mr Asquith and all his lieutenants marks the awakening of England from a dismal dream. The Bill of 1832 made the middle class omnipotent, and the middle class had its way. And its way was bad, because of all classes it has shown itself the most bitterly selfish, the least capable of understanding. It despised the class below it, it was jealous of the class above. The working class has kept itself hardy by manual toil; the leisured class has strengthened its muscles and its brains by field-sports. The middle class, on the other hand, has been content with the counting-house. The bagman's millennium has seemed its golden age; to buy in the



cheapest market and to sell in the dearest, was for it the whole duty of man. If child labour helped the cotton-spinners in the fierce struggle for wealth, then children must be condemned to work ten or twelve hours a day in the factories. And it should be remembered that all the Bills which alleviated the lot of the workers were passed by Tory Governments.

The ideal, or its lack, of the nineteenth century was the ideal, until yesterday, of Mr Asquith and his friends. They had learned nothing from the war. They went to the country confidently with all the old cries. Their torn banners still bore the foolish device Free Trade, and they seem to have believed that nothing more was asked of them except devotion to the time-worn creed of Manchester. And they are one and all out of Parliament. We shall hear no more of their class-selfishness, of their egoism, of their lust after large profits and quick returns, of their ready sacrifice of national interests to provincial greed. At last the door of good British oak, which they took pride in banging, bolting, and barring, will be opened to our kinsmen oversea; and the Empire, which they, being true little Englanders, sincerely despised, will grow in strength and unity. In brief, the election has dissipated a dark cloud which overcast us for nearly a century, and the sun of patriotism will perhaps shine upon us once more.

The result of the General Election is said to be a personal

triumph for Mr Lloyd George, and the triumph is not wholly undeserved. Whatever his failings may be, and they are not few, he was resolute to beat the Germans, and he has helped to inspire the country with the will to win. But by a manœuvre, which no wise man will applaud, he put his own ticket on such candidates as he supported, and he is plainly entitled to exact their allegiance as part of a well-understood bargain. Wherefore in the making of his Cabinet he should have had a free hand. If only imagination and courage had been his, he might have ensured a strong and honest Government. And he has failed, where success was easily within his grasp. A vast and docile majority in the House would have supported him had he chosen new men for old places. But being a mere politician, he has thrown away his opportunity with a careless cynicism. His new Cabinet is made up of the old materials, and the most that he has ventured to achieve is to shift a plank here and there into a fresh place. This method does not make for stability, and we shall not be surprised if the strongest majority known to history does not melt away like snow in sunshine.

For some of the appointments we have nothing but praise. We rejoice to see that Lord Milner is to preside over the Colonial Office, and that Mr Austen Chamberlain is once more Chancellor of the Exchequer. The country has

confidence in Mr Arthur Balfour, and welcomes him back to the Foreign Office. Some other Ministers are practised administrators, and in less troubled times might be trusted not to make mistakes. But when we have said so much, we must acknowledge that Mr Lloyd George has, for the rest, betrayed the trust reposed in him. To put Sir F. E. Smith on the Woolsack is to lower the dignity of English life. Neither his career in politics nor his legal attainments justify his elevation. Thus an injury is done not only to the country but to a high office, which has been held by many great and learned men. The politicians are not held in good repute just now, and they will not recover the respect, which once they won and deserved, if they find levity a better guide of conduct than the profit of the State.

A Prime Minister who has made Sir F. E. Smith Lord Chancellor could not omit Mr Winston Churchill from his favour, and the most unpopular demagogue in England is now our Minister for War. A worse appointment could not have been devised, for it proves that in Mr Lloyd George's opinion those who have failed disastrously in politics should be marked out for promotion. Mr Winston Churchill has enjoyed a parti-coloured career. He has held many offices, and it cannot be said truthfully that he has adorned any one of them. But evidently he is indestructible. The most of men would never

have recovered from the adventure of Lamlash Bay. Mr Churchill was the hero of that adventure, and he is Minister for War. The "gambles" in which he has indulged during our struggle with Germany have been costlier for others than for him. For Mr Churchill it was merely a matter of heads I win, tails you lose. So, immune from punishment and relieved of all responsibility, the men entrusted with the conduct of public affairs do what they will, and keep a closer eye upon their own prosperity than upon the welfare of the country. As for the Army, it will be asked to make the best of a bad job, and Mr Lloyd George will be lucky if his dangerous appointment to the War Office does not shatter what might have been the strongest Government of all time. Perhaps he thinks that, since the Armistice is signed, the Army matters less than Mr Churchill's displeasure.

With an equal cynicism Mr Lloyd George has reinstated Sir Alfred Moritz Mond at the Board of Works. As we have pointed out already in these pages, nothing could be more grossly indelicate than this choice. Sir Alfred Moritz Mond is German in blood and race. The fact that he was born upon English soil alone makes him an Englishman, and as he presides over the Board of Works, it will be his duty to approve and control the monuments set up by the country in honour of our dead heroes. Nearly a million



Britons have fallen in the war which this country has helped to wage against Germany. And a man who is German in name and race, a man who is bound to Zeigenhain in Hesse-Cassel by a long line of ancestry, and whose "lineage" is all unsullied by one speck of British blood, is permitted to decide what shape and form the national memorials dedicated to those who gave their life for Britain shall assume. Can you believe that the Germans themselves would ever permit a like outrage? Not even Herr Houston Chamberlain, the staunchest champion of Deutschthum in the world, would be allowed to perform the delicate duty of setting up a shrine in honour of Germans fallen upon the battlefield. Mr Lloyd George is obviously unconscious of the incongruity, and Sir Alfred Moritz Mond has so little sense of the fitness of things that he does not decline a post from filling which with dignity he is debarred by his antecedents. Humour is a quality which has escaped him as plainly as propriety. Not long ago, in speaking of Stonehenge, he referred with some unction to our ancestors. Were, then, the Monds, the Weinbergs, and the Löwenthals among those who worshipped the sun on Salisbury Plain? Did Ziegenhain and Cologne also send their representatives across the sea to do proper obeisance at the summer solstice? For our part we would far rather see our dead heroes honoured only in the hearts of those who mourn

them than admire the loftiest pillar, golden and far-seen, set up to their memory with the sanction and concurrence of Sir Alfred Moritz Mond. If Mr Lloyd George refuses to respect the susceptibilities of all true-born Britons, he will create for himself an unpopularity which he cannot withstand. The laws of England decree that a man is a motor-car if he is born in a garage. And in accord with this law, which needs amendment, Sir Alfred Moritz Mond is an Englishman; he is not the kind of Englishman who should help to record the sacrifices of our soldiers.

There is one other Minister, still in his old place, who is universally acclaimed. If one may believe the panegyrists, Mr Herbert Fisher is the wisest man who ever was asked to preside over the Office of Education. We have been told that he has but one fault—all men speak well of him. He has another fault, far more grievous for the country—he wishes to Teutonise our whole system of education. We have heard a vast deal since the war began about the infamous training given in the schools and colleges of Germany to those who were only too ready to pick up the lessons of militarism. The evil of state-fed professors has been explained to us at great length; we have been deluged with quotations from Treitschke and the rest; and Mr Fisher refuses to take warning by the past. He would, if he could, vastly increase the control

which the State has already usurped over the education of the country. He would imitate the vices which have brought ruin upon Germany. For true it is that he who pays the piper will call the tune. Should the State meddle with our schools and universities, then our schoolmasters and professors will be contented echoes of the politicians, or they will lose their posts. Now, learning, if it is worth anything at all, should be pursued freely and for its own sake. It can survive neither State subsidies nor State interference. The day on which our higher schools and universities become mere branches of the Civil Service, will witness their destruction. They have served us well in the past; they have never served us better than in the war now coming to an end; and it would be a poor reward for our victory if the schools and colleges of England were placed under the jack-boot of the Ministry of Education.

Should the Department of Education assume new duties, which it is manifestly unfit to discharge, it may placate the envy of the Bolsheviks. It will surely destroy that which has been of the greatest profit to the country—the variety of English talent and English character. To bear the impress of school or college has not hitherto seemed a disgrace, and the result of our cherished independence is that we have been able to find men fit for any emergency. But the true democrat loves

uniformity. He is angry with all those whose thrift and industry have given them a training to which he cannot aspire. Therefore, with the true spirit of the dog in the manger, he demands a general levelling down. Why should Eton and Harrow escape inspection, if the Board School at the corner is asked to conform to a certain standard? This he asks with a kind of perverted logic, and if the democrat has his way we shall be plunged into a system of uniform state-control which has ruined the education of Germany, and from which France herself is at this moment trying to emerge. We have, however, one hope. With the universal applause of a thoughtless country, Mr Fisher has passed a Bill which we believe he will find wholly unworkable; and in the stress of insuperable difficulties he may be forced to restrain his hand from meddling with the higher schools and universities of England, which have long been a wonder to the wise, and which have trained not mere scholars but men.

By a happy chance the extreme representatives of labour were beaten at the polls. But they are not discouraged, and they are yet unwilling to abate one jot of the tyranny which they would exercise over their fellows. Though there is a far greater difference between the two wings of the Labour Party than exists between Radicals and Unionists, the bosses of the party presume to speak for all. They have



introduced a spirit of class into politics which will presently lead to disaster. At the moment, when an attempt has been made by the Coalition to soften the asperities of political strife, the officials of the Labour Party announce themselves irreconcilable. Though they represent nobody but themselves, though the British democracy has prudently rejected the most of them, they declare that no Labour member shall take part in the government of the country until the whole Government bows the knee in allegiance to labour. Once upon a time the Trade Unions were an *imperium in imperio*. Now Labour (with a capital) demands that it should itself be the sole *imperium*. Thus a sharp division is made not of thought but of class. Messrs Clynes and Hodge, for instance, being patriotic citizens, are far nearer in sympathy to the existing Government than they are to Messrs Henderson, Webb, and Macdonald. Yet these men, with glib tongues and wrong heads, seem to be strong enough to prevent Messrs Clynes and Hodge from doing their duty as good citizens. They are called to the counsels of the State, and the tyrannical masters of a mischievous machine command them to stand aside.

This claim of a certain class to govern alone is a new thing in our politics. And it is an impudent claim, because, whether labour likes it or not, the nation is made up of

many classes, and the needs of each one of them are entitled to respect and consideration. When it is our imperative duty to choose the best men to govern the country, Mr Henderson and his friends, the rejected of the voters, come along and say that men of only one class may guide the helm of State. The principle, of which our history furnishes no precedent, can have no other basis than envy. When Whigs and Tories held sway in England, the Whig party was more sternly exclusive and aristocratic, though its members professed revolutionary sentiments. And neither party shut out from its counsels those who did not belong to one particular class. The Labour Party is bitterly exclusive. Belong to our class, profess our creed, and give a helping hand to none who does not share our origins and our prejudices. That is what it says in effect, in open defiance of its obligation to the country.

A strange disease obsesses the Labour Party. It resembles nothing so much as the Prussian Junkers. A place in the sun is not enough for it. It must have all the sun, and drive those who are not of it beyond the reach of the sun's genial warmth. At the same time it suggests that it should do nothing for the exclusive advantages which it claims. It is unwilling to pay taxes; it does not want its friends and members to work overmuch. The work-

ing classes desire that their children should be educated, but they refuse to pay for their children's education or their children's maintenance while they are at school or at college. And they see in this dependence no taint of degradation. They divest themselves of responsibility without a protest. If they have their way, they will be the kept serfs of the State. They will be fed, housed, and taught at the public expense, and they will enjoy as much freedom as a set of convicts in jail. And all because they claimed the sole privileges of Junkerdom!

The spokesmen of the working classes are so strangely lacking in understanding that they do not see the moral ruin in which they would involve their dupes. A state of dependence upon taxes paid by others is good for nobody. Nothing is worth having that is not won by exertion. A man who will not be at the pains to bring up his children is not fit to be a father. To offer all that they want for nothing to those who will take it, is to sap the strength of human character and human endurance. And they are no true democrats who ask that they should be relieved of all taxation, and then that the amenities of life should be had for the asking. They are suppliants, not citizens; they have sold the pride of manhood for a mess of pottage; and in a generation they will be so comfortably accustomed to have things done for them, that they will be incapable

of activity, and will see with sorrow, when it is too late, those qualities of strength and self-reliance which have brought them happiness in the past, atrophied by disuse.

The State provides for all an open road to a career. It should provide no more. There is a broad avenue leading from the elementary school to the university, which all who will may follow. The difficulty is to find boys of sufficient energy and brains to take the easy path which will carry them to scholarship. And they are not to blame who refuse the proffered education. Book-learning is not good of itself nor for all, and the sad quest of uniformity is useless, if it be not dangerous. What, then, do the disaffected among the working classes really want? They do not know. Perhaps they wish to be born again, and born different. At present they are like children crying for the moon, and they know not that if the moon were given them for a plaything the light would be put out in the sky.

What is it that has persuaded the Labour Party to assume its truculent attitude? What is it that has convinced it that the working classes alone should engross all the privileges and all the power of the State? A mere matter of arithmetic. The working classes are more numerous than the others, and therefore they can extort from the greedy politician whatever they like to ask. They may bask in the sun of flattery, until they



believe that they alone are wise and good and powerful. The false position in which they have been placed is bad enough for the country; it is far worse for the working classes, which pretend resolutely to believe that the half is greater than the whole, that justice is due to one section only of society—the section of labour. If the leaders of the working classes do not make it their business to expose this fallacy, then labour as a force will fall into irredeemable discredit, and the bitter wrongs committed by democracy will be expiated by a counter-revolution.

But there is another reason why the Labour party arrogates to itself the right to do as it chooses. The infamous Trade Disputes Act, passed in 1906 by a supine Government, and accepted with the most shameful cowardice by Lord Lansdowne—perhaps the worst of the many disservices he has done to the House of Lords—put the Trade Unions wholly outside the law. It legalised peaceful picketing; it exempted Trade Unions from the Common Law relating to conspiracy; and it forbade the Courts to entertain any action brought against any Trade Union “in respect of any tortious act alleged to have been committed by or on behalf of the Trade Union.” “All the provisions of the Act,” says Professor Hearnshaw in his ‘Democracy at the Crossways,’ “show the excess of licence which they allow to wrong-doing; but the third goes beyond all the limits

which, before the actual passing of this iniquitous statute, would have been deemed credible. Lord Halsbury was not using the language of exaggeration when he described this flagrant specimen of class legislation as ‘the most outrageous Bill ever attempted to be put on the Statute-Book.’” Its effect was immediate and disastrous. “First,” again we quote from Professor Hearnshaw’s admirable summary, “the number of disputes immensely increased: in 1905 there had been 358; in 1906 there were 486; in 1907 there were 601; by 1913 the number had risen to 1497; while in 1914, before the outbreak of the war (January-July) there had been 836, and the country was on the eve of a gigantic and general industrial conflict that threatened to assume the dimensions of a civil war. Secondly, the gravity and violence of the disputes were deplorably enhanced; peaceful picketing displayed itself as sanguinary terrorism; contracts, agreements, settlements, all became ‘scraps of paper,’ to which irresponsible strikers, with truly Germanic ruthlessness, paid no heed at all; immense and flagrant wrongs were done for which the Courts were precluded from giving any redress.”

That is a fair statement of the case, and it shows what evil a dishonest Government, hungry only for votes, may achieve. That the Trade Disputes Act inflicted a flagrant injustice upon the community is obvious. It did an equal

wrong to the Trade Unions. For it put them beyond the law. Henceforth they were licensed wrong-doers, the declared enemies of the State, clubs properly organised for the commission of crimes, of which they were willing to show the stain and to boast of it. How, then, shall a section which has deliberately and with Radical connivance set itself in open hostility to its fellow-countrymen aspire to governance? If it ever did gratify its ambition, if it ever did successfully assert the principle that class-interest is a better qualification for the rulers of a great Empire than wisdom, training, and a sense of tradition, then assuredly it would produce not peace but civil war. Wherefore, the Labour Party shall not, if it have any pretence to justice or patriotism, dare to rule England, unless it first purge itself of the disgrace inflicted upon the whole country, and especially on the Trade Unions, by the Trade Disputes Act. Before men learn to govern they must learn to obey, and by that infamous Act the working classes claim for themselves the right of flagrant disobedience to the laws of England.

The death of Sir James Hills-Johnes, V.C., G.C.B., brings to an end a rarely distinguished and honourable career. The oldest surviving winner of the Victoria Cross, Sir James was a link in the chain which bound us to the past. The friend and colleague of Tombs and Lord Roberts,

he fought by their side and shared their toils as well as their rewards. In those far-off days fighting was less an affair of science than it seems to-day—more a feat of bodily prowess. When Jemmy Hills, as Lord Roberts calls him with an affectionate familiarity, won his V.C., he is said to have used his fists upon his adversaries when his sword failed him. The story has been written by many pens, and by none better than the pen of Lord Roberts, whose account we have pleasure in quoting. "Stillman and Hills," wrote Lord Roberts, "were breakfasting together when a sowar from the native officer's party rode up and reported that a body of the enemy's cavalry were in sight. Hills told the man to gallop to headquarters with the report, and to warn Tombs as he passed his tent. Hills and Stillman then mounted their men, neither of them having the remotest idea that the news of the enemy's advance had been purposely delayed until there was not time to turn out the troops. They imagined that the sowar was acting in good faith and had given them sufficient notice. . . . The moment Hills saw the enemy he shouted, 'Action front!' and, in the hope of giving his men time to load and fire a round of grape, he gallantly charged the head of the column single-handed, cut down the leading man, struck the second, and was then ridden down himself. It had been raining heavily, so Hills wore his cloak, which probably



saved his life, for it was cut through in many places, as were his jacket and even his shirt. As soon as the body of the enemy had passed on, Hills, extricating himself from his horse, got up and searched for his sword, which he had lost in the *mêlée*. He had just found it when he was attacked by three men, two of whom were mounted; he fired at and wounded the first man; then caught the lance of the second, and ran him through the body with his sword. The first assailant coming on again, Hills cut him down, upon which he was attacked by the third man on foot, who succeeded in wrenching his sword from him. Hills fell in the struggle, and must have been killed, if Tombs, who had been duly warned by the sowar, and had hurried out to the piquet, had not come to the rescue and saved the plucky subaltern's life."

It is a gallant tale, gallantly told, and it marks the beginning of a life devoted to the service of the Empire. As soldier and administrator, Sir James Hills-Johnes performed whatever duty was laid upon him with energy and courage. At Lord Roberts' side he fought in many a hard-won battle. He was with his friend throughout the Indian Mutiny, as well as at Kabul in 1881, and in the Boer War he was

his zealous colleague. To record Sir James Hills-Johnes' many feats of arms is superfluous. They are set forth in many a proud despatch, and have become a part of our military history. Moreover, he was eminent in peace as in war. At Dolaucothy in Carmarthenshire he proved that feudalism was not dead, that a place is still left in the world for a *grand seigneur*, if he be gifted with sympathy and wisdom. In the true sense, Sir James Hills-Johnes was the father of his people. Nothing that his neighbours did, wanted, or hoped for, was alien from him. He watched over his own part of Wales with a care and an interest which never grew dull. He was a firm friend of the University of Wales, and he deemed no public office too irksome for his acceptance. His character and selflessness were always incentives to well-doing for those about him, and all that he accomplished in Carmarthenshire is the best proof that the grievances of the working classes yield easily to kindly treatment and a good understanding. Upon the coffin, which held all that was mortal of him, was engraved a motto in Welsh, which, being interpreted, means "White is his world"; and of no man of our time could it be said more fittingly.

# BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCCXLI.

MARCH 1919.

VOL. CCV.

## FURTHER ADVENTURES OF THE ARMOURED CARS.

### PERSIA AND BAKU.

#### I.

THINGS had been quiet with us in ancient Eobatana—quiet even to distraction, for communication was bad, and news filtered through slowly.

We had heard vague rumours of the activities of one Kutohik Khan, bandit and patriot, leader of the Junglis,<sup>1</sup> who, whilst voicing noisily and vaguely his belief in "Persia for the Persians," yet made constant raids on the Resht-Menjil road, robbing all and sundry under the guise of patriotism. His methods, appealing to many in these times of Bolshevism, had gained him a certain following; and, incited by the loathsome Hun, this small force had become a great nuisance to us.

Convoys passing to and from Enzeli—the well-known port

on the Caspian Sea—were frequently attacked, and with impunity.

It was therefore good news to us, chafing at our enforced idleness, when one day towards the end of July we received orders to strafe the Khan.

On a fine morning we left Hamadan just as the sun was peeping over the snow-clad hills encircling the town, bathing the whole countryside in rose-tinted hues.

The jingle-jangle of camel-bells and the droning chant of their drivers proclaimed the fact that others were astir even at this early hour, and soon the house-tops were alive with people in many stages of *déshabillé* and sleepiness. Bundles of rags unveiled the joys of another day

<sup>1</sup> From Menjil to Resht stretches a belt of dense jungle, and the inhabitants of this belt have been dubbed by Britishers "Junglis."



the unsightly forms of their owners.

After winding between mud walls, which seemed to accentuate the dust and the stench apparently so necessary to Hamadan, we struck the Kasvin road, and, passing through the first toll-gate, felt we really had started the journey.

This road was built by a Russian engineering company, and had been well maintained during the war. Even at that stage, despite the heavy demands made upon it, it could still be classed as "metalled road 1st class." The perfectly absurd sum we paid the company for the use of the road need not be divulged, especially in these days of millions.

After about a dozen miles or so we were brought to an abrupt stop by a Persian soldier, and in due course a stooky Colonial sergeant came up and took particulars of our convoy before allowing us to proceed. This was the first of many posts, all of which were manned by Persian levies under British officers and N.C.O.'s.

The country through which we passed was far more civilised than anything we had yet seen. Though in places it was hilly, yet no difficult passes were encountered, and a slight downward gradient assisted one enormously—for Kasvin is about 2000 feet lower than Hamadan. Numerous caravanserais and posting-houses were dotted along the road, and the farming was far

more scientific than hitherto. Apparently the Russian influence had had some good effect on the effete Persian.

Our journey was much as other journeys. The dust prevented one getting a good idea of the flora and fauna; and our cars had their troubles, as cars always will have; but Vauxhall and Peerless—yes, and even Henry Ford—emerged triumphant. Gazelle darted here and there; birds of wonderful plumage, with names to match, flitted past us, uttering strange calls; the corn wagged its golden ears as we passed.

The remains of dozens of derelict motor-cars of all makes and sizes recalled to us Russia's efforts and her defection, and many "ifs" jumped to our minds. Oh, the tragedy of it all! Broken cars, broken homes, broken men—and broken pledges. However, we shrugged our shoulders and dismissed these questions as hypothetical.

Towards dusk we reached Abi Gahn, noted for its sulphur springs, and here we decided to spend the night. A few minutes later found us fairly comfortably ensconced in the serai of a Russian posting-house. Those of us who had been in Russia at once began showing our knowledge of that elusive language, and talked Russian to the master and mistress of the house, wheedling out of them such little delicacies as we considered necessary to our bodily comfort. The only fly in the ointment was the non-appearance of the

colonel's (I.M.S.) kit, due apparently to the breakdown of the car it was travelling on. This was unfortunate, especially as, in the Medical Service, medical comforts are occasionally carried!! Still, the colonel was a sport, and between us we soon made him comfortable; and with the moon to light us to bed and the crickets to sing us to sleep, we ignored the persistence of hordes of mosquitoes and slept.

Next morning we were up with the lark—or its Persian equivalent—and after a good breakfast made an early start. The country looked even more civilised than that of the previous day. The valley through which we passed was cultivated to the full, and the crops were good; the habitations were less primitive, and poverty and squalor appeared to be left behind.

We passed certain units of the — Brigade halted by the roadside, with their black-and-red diamonds showing up on the drab of their topees. As we flung them cheery greetings we little thought that before a month had passed we should be scrapping side by side with them in other lands.

Verst after verst was covered with almost monotonous regularity, until eventually the vineyards and orchards of the environs of Kasvin were reached, and later we passed through the Resht gateway—a triumph of ceramics—into the town itself.

Our glance at Kasvin was destined to be only a very cursory one, for we left early

the following morning; but it was quite a relief to find a boulevard of sorts, to see unveiled faces smiling their welcome at us, and to find gardens and cafés once again. Here the Russian and the ubiquitous Armenian gave a touch of Westernism to the Oriental town.

Next day, whilst Kasvin slept, we again passed through the archway of the Resht gate, and were soon well on the way to Menjil, our stopping-place that night. Our road ran through hill country, certain stretches being decidedly pretty, but the sun had scorched and seared all vegetation. On the whole it was rather reminiscent of Northern Armenia, though not nearly so well watered. At this juncture the flinty nature of the road gave us considerable tyre trouble, and our rate of progress decreased. As a result of this we had great difficulty in reaching Menjil by daylight.

The British Tommy describes Menjil in three words. First and foremost, as we saw it, there was a collection of small houses in all degrees of dilapidation, and at the extreme end a hotel of sorts with a name which was most out of place. Around this, each day and the whole day, raged a violent gale, accompanied by clouds of blinding dust, and, at odd times, showers of rain. To stand upright was a physical impossibility. Among the collection of houses, and particularly in the hotel, large numbers of energetic and persistent fleas had congregated, and if the



poor misguided traveller fancied he had stopped there for a night's rest he had a rude, continuous, and effective awakening. Personally I preferred to grapple with the wind and dust, and, though sleep was denied me, I was not surfeited with company. Near by the village a river of rich red mud flung itself resentfully towards the sea, passing under a very fine bridge at the extreme northern end. In charge of Menjil was an officer of the 14th H. He had been there five weeks and was still sane, so he must have had an exceedingly well-balanced mind.

The next stage of the journey was the dangerous part, for we were soon to enter the famous jungle wherein Kutchik Khan and his band of stalwarts successfully hid themselves and fell upon the unwary. Our convoy presented a unique spectacle, the cars simply bristling with machine-guns, and Master Kutchik appeared to be in for a warm time if he tried any monkey tricks. For the first fifteen miles the road ran along the hillside, with a sheer drop on the right-hand side of several hundred feet to the swirling, muddy torrent below. The hills were moderately well wooded, and were dotted with hamlets whose occupants cultivated every available acre with a thrift worthy of mention.

Everywhere derelict cars paid their tribute to the mad stampede of the Russian army from law and order to Bolshevism. Here and there enterprising Jews were attempt-

ing salvage, but the Russian soldier, if a simple-minded soul, at least has a shrewd idea as to the value of magnetos or sets of tyres, and consequently practically everything movable had already gone.

At length we reached the toll-gate and Russian post on the fringe of the jungle itself. Here we closed up and got ready for any eventuality, and slowly forged ahead.

The country was magnificent and very hilly, the dense jungle screening the road at its sides like a wall. Flowers of all kinds and hues thrust their brilliance through the dense foliage, and the air was heavy with their scent, accentuated by the damp heat. Giant creepers stretched their tendrils across the road, their scarlet blossom forming a triumphal arch. Passion-flowers, purple clematis, dog-roses, and honeysuckle vied with the semi-ripe pomegranates and oranges in mocking us as we went by; whilst from the jungle came the calls of many wild things, and down below the roar of the swirling waters as they pushed over crags and through the undergrowth. And then we reached a clearing with a small hut in the centre, from which staggered a youthful but fever-stricken British officer who should have been in hospital. In a somewhat shaky hand he held a message just received telling him that Kutchik was making merry on the road outside Resht—our destination that night.

Well, we could not stop there, so decided to go right

for him, and hoped he would give us a show. Cautiously we proceeded, peering behind every leaf, oraning our necks first this way and then that, until gradually the jungle began to thin out, and it dawned on us that this time, at any rate, Kutohik had not worked to schedule.

Fed up to the back teeth, we crept into Resht just at dusk, and there we learned from "The Babe" that, a few days previously, Resht had been the scene of bitter fighting, as a result of which the Junglis had fled discomfited, pursued by the bombs of two energetic and relentless airmen, and haunted by memories of diminutive Gurkhas with blood-stained kukris, and armoured cars which played havoc with everything.

The town was entirely in our hands and was heavily patrolled, martial law reigning supreme. On reporting to the Staff we found our orders had

been changed, and that we were to go to Baku, which the Turk was endeavouring to take in frantic haste. This promised more excitement, and full of enthusiasm we soon disentangled ourselves from the fever-stricken swamps of Resht, and after a short run through the rice-fields we reached Enzeli, just in time to rush our cars aboard a steamer bound for the Oil City of Russia. A detachment of the N.S. arrived just in time to board the same steamer.

The Caspian was unkind to us on the trip, and raised her angry billows in noisy protest; but, scorning her lack of courtesy, we in due course arrived at Baku after a twenty-hours' trip, to the accompaniment of many syrens. A noisy and cumbersome sea-plane, built probably in 1912, made ungraceful circles over our heads.

Once again we were in Russia.

## II.

Once moored alongside, we commenced to unload our cars and stores, and dusk was almost on us before we had finished. Then followed a march up to our billets in the town, and to the surprise of many the streets were lined with the populace, assembled to give us a hearty welcome. For some time the air was rent by their cheers, accompanied by the "clack, clack!" of service "nines" on the ill-paved streets.

Personally I must confess I remained unmoved by this demonstration, as I had not forgotten how I entered Russia in 1916, only to be almost booted out in 1917, and counting myself lucky to get out at all.

Besides, if Baku were to be saved, we needed help, not "lip worship," and hundreds who were cheering us should have been in the line themselves, doing their bit.

However, it was good to be



in civilisation again, and our billets at the Hôtel Metropole were splendid. As we marched through the cheering throng, it was not without a certain grim humour that we espied the field-guns of Colonel Petrov's Bolsheviki pointed seawards in anticipation of our arrival. But the Bolsheviki was always a cowardly hound, and his bark was far worse than his bite when he was really up against it.

The position on our arrival was as follows: The Turks that very morning had succeeded in breaking through and entering into the outskirts of the town, to the general consternation; but the Armenians and Russians, armed with all kinds of weapons, appearing from everywhere, not only drove them to where they came from, but actually pushed them two miles beyond.

After this the Bolsheviki Government was thoroughly discredited and received its *congé*; the Caspian Fleet took charge of affairs under the name of the Centro-Caspian Government. They possessed the biggest guns, and were therefore most capable of enforcing their commands! Their first act had been to extend the invitation we had been waiting months for, and which the Bolsheviki refused us. Had it come months earlier we should have been in every way more ready for it.

For some days we remained in the town, by day doing nothing in particular, by night standing to. Anxious days they were, too. Things were

very unsettled, and the Bolsheviki element did all they could to make things bad for us, so much did they resent the arrival of the British *bourgeoisie*. The culminating point, however, was reached when two Britishers were arrested by a crowd of Bolsheviki for some alleged injustice to their followers.

The whole of that evening a fight seemed imminent, and the entire populace seemed to go about in a state of armed frenzy. Eventually, however, wiser counsels prevailed, and, as a result of our firm attitude, the Bolsheviki allowed themselves to be disarmed, and were told politely, but forcibly, that if they did not clear out to Astrakhan at once we should give them a bad time. They went with much gnashing of teeth from their chief, Petrov—a clever, plausible old scoundrel.

Thus, in addition to removing a grave menace in our midst, we secured a large quantity of arms and ammunition, of which we were badly in need for the equipment of the Armenians. Several batteries of field-guns also were handed over.

The following day, the town being in a state of absolute tranquillity, the British troops were posted at various parts of the line, with the object of strengthening the Armenian troops already there. In the accomplishment of our aims we were quite unsuccessful, for, on the arrival of British troops in the line, the Armenians, devoid of any sense of duty or

discipline, and always craven-hearted, said: "Good. The English have come to drive back the Turk. We can go home." And they adopted this attitude, with the result that a front of more than ten miles was manned almost entirely by roughly 800 British. The Armenians were well supplied with machine-guns and ammunition, though the former were apparently private property for the most part. So-called soldiers would leave the line without permission and go into town on the spree, actually taking their machine-guns with them; and, if remonstrated with by their officers (*sic*), would merely shrug their shoulders and retort that they could do as they liked with their own property. Women flitted about the line everywhere. Soldiers, sailors, and civilians lazed about in the sun, occasionally firing their rifles in the blue in much the same way as one scares birds. Everywhere was lack of discipline and organisation combined with ignorance and stupidity. The Chief of the local Staff was known to the British as the "Village Idiot," and lived up to his name, being a perpetual thorn in the flesh of S—— of Skinner's Horse—a real live man.

The position held by the local troops was a crescent-shape ridge, half encircling the town, the southern portion resting on the sea-shore, and the northern point sloping down to a dried-up salt lake of large dimensions. This ridge was roughly five miles from the town. From the salt lake to the coast north of the promontory on which Baku was situated no specific line existed, but odd isolated posts were to be found. Thus, our left flank rested on the sea-coast, and our right flank was entirely in the air. The position taken up by the local troops from first to last was a useless one, and would never have been selected for one moment by a soldier. But there it was, and we had to do what we could with it. It afforded no field of fire, and was entirely dominated by the Turks on the opposite ridge. Between the two positions stretched a valley about 1700 yards in width, through which ran the main railway line from Tiflis to Rostov. A small station stood in No Man's Land, and from this ran a good *pavé* road across the valley, zigzagging up the slopes of the ridge held by the Armenians, and passing through Wolf's Gap, thence to Baku. The country round about had little vegetation, and abounded in salt lakes, some of which had dried up, showing as a huge white patch, whilst others still existed. The Turkish position was dotted with villages and hamlets, and though no sign of life existed it was evident the Turk had plenty of men and machine-guns, and was merely biding his time. Our left, though in a bad position, should have been secure normally, but our right was painfully weak; and after a few days it was evident that the Turks, aided by the local



Tartars, were gradually but surely swinging round, hoping to envelop our right flank. A wild effort by the local troops to frustrate this and win the support of the Tartars failed dismally, and troops had to be sent up to strengthen this flank, several good positions having been lost in the meantime.

The Tartars and Armenians simply hated each other. The former had no enmity whatever against us and were not fond of the Turk, but the atrocious excesses of the Armenians the previous March—they were in the majority—drove them into the arms of the Turk, who made full use of them.

For some days all was quiet. The Turk lay low, and though we pounded his positions soundly he made no reply. However, we could not fail to notice that stores, &c., were being continually sent to their left flank, and the dried salt lake became a regular maze of roads. These stores were finding their way to Mastagi.

Now Mastagi was the garden city of Baku, and from this source was drawn the vegetables, fruit, and farm produce so sorely needed. The main water-supply of Baku also came from this neighbourhood.

It was therefore decided by the Staff that Mastagi must be taken. Accordingly two battalions of Armenians, numbering in all about 500 men, seventy Cossacks, two armoured cars, and a mobile section of four machine-guns

with Ford transport (of the D— brigade), were sent up to clear the village, assisted by one battery of '77's.

The attack was intended to be a surprise, but when, on August 11th, it commenced, we found the Turks ready for us. In spite of the valuable work done by the armoured cars, assisted by the cavalry, the infantry made no headway against the accurate fire poured in on them from cleverly concealed machine-guns. The armoured cars could bear testimony to the accuracy of the fire. Two gunners were hit by bullets entering the gun port, one being killed and the other wounded. In spite of a nasty wound in the nose, John M— was entirely undaunted, and went in again and again with the "blood lust" showing on his face. It was soon apparent that we were merely running our heads against a brick wall in attempting to take Mastagi by a frontal attack. The place was admirably suited for defence, being well wooded, and possessing many stone-walled gardens and outhouses on the outskirts. These were turned into machine-gun nests by the enemy gunners, and were very hard to locate. The intervening ground, too, was broken, and contained undercover for snipers with enterprise.

Numerous mosques with their minarets afforded excellent observation for the enemy. However, the "Village Idiot" had his own ideas of



tactics, and another effort was made. At one point our line was advanced 600 yards without gaining us any material advantage. In fact, both Leake and Hedge professed being more comfortable in their former position, whilst Cameron got cramp through having to keep his head down to avoid the persistent attention of snipers. So things went on, neither side attempting anything much; and though our guns relentlessly pounded the Turkish positions, the enemy remained "doggo." Plans and ideas were discussed only to pass into oblivion, and how Col. S—— managed to exhibit a smiling countenance to every officer, after a heart-breaking conference with the "Village Idiot," was a marvel to us all. What should we have done without him?

Meanwhile things in Baku were bad. Water was scarce owing to the Turks having cut our main supply, and food was becoming short. There actually was a shortage; but, apart from this, a lot of profiteering went on, and the result of all this redounded on us. Black bread of an indescribable quality—often full of pieces of wood, stones, &c.—cost 10 roubles a pound, and then one had to "queue" in order to get it. This, valuing the rouble at 5d., instead of its normal price of 2s. 8d., meant 4s. 2d. Mutton was 6 roubles a pound; whilst beef, potatoes, eggs, jam, butter, fruit, and cheese were unobtainable. Rice was to be had, but of a poor quality and high price. Ca-

viare alone seemed plentiful, but was a great disappointment to the uninitiated, who thought it a new kind of jam! To surmount these difficulties a food controller was appointed, and in face of considerable opposition he did much to get food to the town at a time when it was sorely needed.

Lack of co-operation, coupled with frequent misunderstandings, made our job a hard one; but the arrival of fresh troops at various periods cheered us up immensely, for we all thought that, should the Turk choose to attack in force, we were in a very tight corner. The local troops were bad, and we knew it; and such knowledge did not tend to make things easier for us. Reinforcements came in very small batches, owing to the fact that they had to be conveyed over bad roads all the way from Baghdad. Some detachments actually marched right through. Still, we did our job as well as we could, and waited for the next move.

It soon came. On the 26th of August, at 10 A.M., after a preliminary bombardment which considerably surprised us, such was its fury, the enemy attacked the centre of the line, his objective being the village and railway junction of Balajari—a most important strategical point.

Around Balajari were the oil-fields of Griazni Vulkan, Binagadi, and Balakhani. At the station itself were large quantities of rolling stock, tank waggons, &c.



Our defensive position at this point consisted of four detached infantry posts with machine-gun support, the two posts on the right resting on the crest of Griazni Vulkan (Dirty Volcano). No friendly wire protected us, and no communication trenches existed from no fault of ours. The force at this point numbered about 120 all told. On its left flank was a gap of half a mile, after which came an Armenian battalion (which ran, incidentally, after the first shot). On our right flank was another Armenian battalion, under a British officer. This battalion remained at their post, finding the logic of Keeleigh's No. 11's irresistible, until that worthy stopped one in the leg and was unable to continue the argument.

The commencement of the attack was the usual thing. Guns, which up to now had remained hidden, rained shrapnel and high explosive on our positions with admirable accuracy, and later the enemy bore down on us in open order. They were no irregulars that we saw, but the "pukka" Turk—well trained, well disciplined, and well equipped. As they came across the open, we at once got on to them with machine-gun and rifle fire, and for a while arrested their progress, in spite of the absence of artillery support. The gunners had apparently bolted also.

It was soon evident that the numerical superiority of the enemy would prevent us

from hanging on indefinitely, but we would take our toll before retiring, we thought. Our fire tore gaps in the enemy ranks, but always they came on, until at last they were on top of us, the machine-guns going to the last. A short sharp tussle, of which I remember little, ensued, and we (what remained of us) retired, having held on for over three hours. The position taken up was roughly 400 yards in rear of the old one, and we were soon shelled out of it. We retired still further, taking up a position immediately in front of Balajari itself.

However, these details are tedious. Suffice to say that the Turk, after suffering heavy losses, failed to take Balajari, and a well-executed counter-attack by a company of the N.S. robbed him of almost all his gains. Our losses had been heavy, both infantry and machine-gun section suffering severely.

"Ted," of Galician retreat fame, got a nasty wound in the shoulder; but, using his revolver with great effect, he fought his way out and got away to tell the tale.

The position of our wounded was a pitiable one. No stretchers were available, and the nearest dressing station was fully two miles away. Those that could get away did so, and those that failed were undoubtedly bayoneted by the numerous hangers-on for which the Turkish army is noted. Once arrived in the town they were conveyed to

a hastily erected hospital and admirably treated by Maitland Scott, who throughout worked like a Trojan, and stuck it almost single-handed until the final evacuation.

Desultory fighting continued in this locality for several days, but on the whole our positions were maintained. About this time the Turks began to shell the town, and, though the damage caused was insignificant, great consternation prevailed among the civil population. Many left their homes and worldly possessions and went to Enzeli, Derbent, or other Caspian ports.

Unfortunately, the lessons the Turk had taught us were passed over unheeded, and the "Village Idiot" took no steps whatever either to strengthen existing positions or to make alternative ones, relying on the handful of British troops to drive back two divisions of Turks. Meanwhile the boulevard was crowded with Armenians and their ladies, relieved of the cares and worries (not to mention the discomforts) of protecting their own lives and property.

Thus things remained until the middle of September, and the handful of British in the line, without relief or any hope of it, with indifferent rations, dwindled appreciably owing to the ravages of dysentery, malaria, and influenza.

A flutter of excitement was caused one morning by the arrival of a Turkish officer in our lines. He was an Arab, and on this account had been

insulted to such an extent that, unable to bear it any longer, he chose to give himself up—and his friends away. From him we got full information as to the Turks' plans, numbers, and artillery dispositions, and naturally this was of great assistance to us.

The regular Turkish forces opposing us consisted of 7000 of the best troops of the Ottoman Empire. In addition, Kurdish, Tartar, and Georgian irregulars were giving their assistance to the enemy. Orders had been issued that "Baku was necessary to the Ottoman Empire, and therefore was to be taken at all costs," and though the troops were badly fed, promise of loot, and their natural hatred of the Armenians fanned to white heat, kept up their spirits.

The enemy had grossly overestimated our strength, and had he but known what a handful of stalwarts in khaki stood between him and his goal, he could have taken Baku fully six weeks earlier.

On 14th September (the date fixed by our officer prisoner), what eventually proved to be the final attack, culminating in the fall of Baku, took place. At daybreak artillery demonstrations began all along the line. It was very soon evident that the Turks had the preponderance in artillery, and, moreover, were well supplied with ammunition. The dark night was gently changing to dawn as they left their position on the ridge opposite Wolf's Gap, and, ignoring



the pitiful opposition of the local troops, they actually marched in column of route, with artillery, &c., across the intervening valley and up the chaussée road through Wolf's Gap, thus reaching the Armenian main position (left flank) unopposed. Here they deployed in splendid order, and were soon in possession of the entire ridge extending from Balajari to the sea. They were actually behind a company of the N. S. holding the coast. Taking their own time, and with the confidence of trained and tried troops, they next proceeded to shell the local troops who had re-formed on a ridge about 800 yards away, and were making a stand in the very last defensive position before Baku. From this ridge an excellent field of fire was obtained, whilst broken ground, a large cemetery, and several chalk-pits considerably enhanced its value.

But so far the Turk was top dog. Meanwhile, to prevent reinforcements coming up, demonstrations and side-shows were started all along the line. The battle raged the entire day with alternating success. Those sectors held by the British on the whole remained in our hands; but though the Armenians, scared by the knowledge that they had at last got their backs to the wall, put up a better fight, the mischief was done. The main line had been given up without a struggle, and a second formed line, protected by barbed wire, did not exist. The open fight-

ing considerably favoured the well-disciplined troops of the enemy. In vain British reinforcements were sent to where the fighting was thickest. They fought like heroes and inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. The company cut off by the coast hacked their way through, and under able leadership joined in the fray around the cemetery. Australian, Canadian, and South African officers urged their Armenian battalions on—always in the thick of it themselves. Armoured cars of the D— Brigade darted hither and thither, and inflicted severe casualties on the advancing enemy. Many deeds of valour were performed by the wearers of the black, red, and green diamonds, but eventually sheer weight of numbers told, and by six o'clock in the evening, after hard fighting, the enemy was on the outskirts of the town.

Our position was not by any means an enviable one, but during the evening something occurred—a something which I regret I cannot disclose—which revealed the base ingratitude of the Armenians, and which indicated to us our course of action. It was decided, as we could no longer hold Baku, that we must quit. Orders were at once issued for the evacuation, and all troops recalled from the line. Ships were commandeered, and troops, wounded, and stores were embarked in spite of threats from our pseudo-allies as to what our fate would be if we attempted to leave the place. The amazing brother

of a distinguished general, left to his own devices, practically stripped the local arsenal and got away with the spoils, he and his accomplice holding six-shooters at the heads of the captain and chief engineer respectively. Thus the enemy was cheated of a very valuable capture.

It was about eleven o'clock when the "Village Idiot" issued his ultimatum to us, and pointed out how the gunboats would blow us off the map if we attempted to move; but with a curt "Carry on, then," or its Russian equivalent, Colonel S—— gave the order to get away, and, with shells and bullets screaming over the

stricken town, we left for Enzeli.

We had no cause to reproach ourselves. We had done our bit, and perhaps a bit more. Playing a lone hand, let down by all who should have helped us, fighting alongside troops who, we knew, were utterly unreliable, hemmed in by intrigue more dangerous than enemy attacks, we kept at bay for a period of six weeks almost ten times our numbers.

Baku was merely a side-show, and no doubt is already forgotten, but even side-shows must needs have their rows of wooden crosses, their wards of maimed men, a tragic consequence of war.



## THE WAR OFFICE IN WAR TIME.—III.

BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR C. E. CALLWELL, K.C.B.

No branch of the Public Service in any way connected with the War Office has been more mercilessly abused during the war than the censorship. In particular has the Press Censorship been taken to task, nor can it reasonably be asserted that none of the criticisms hurled at this organisation have been justified. Mistakes have not unnaturally been made from time to time. It is human to err, and individual censors have been guilty of errors of judgment on occasion. Specimens of information withheld could easily be brought to light, which might have been given to the world with perfect propriety. There was at least one instance early in the conflict of an official communiqué issued by the French military authorities in Paris being bowdlerised before publication on this side of the Channel.

Few of the detractors of the Press Censorship, on the other hand, have given evidence of possessing more than a shadowy conception of the difficult and delicate nature of the duties which that institution was called upon to carry out. There is little reason to suppose that the critics have the slightest idea of the value of the services which it has performed. Nor is there anything to show that it is generally realised that the blunders committed, such as they were, were by no means

confined to the malapert blue-pencilling of items of information that might have appeared without disclosing anything whatever to the enemy. As a matter of fact, cases occurred of intelligence slipping through the meshes which ought not on any account to have been made public property.

When, for example, one particular London newspaper twice over during the very critical opening weeks of the struggle divulged movements of troops in France, the peccant passage was, on each occasion, found on investigation to have been acquiesced in by a censor—lapses on the part of over-worked and weary men poring over sheaves of proof-slips late at night. We lost sight at the War Office of the Belgian division which the Germans drove out of Namur, but discovered what had become of the lost legion from the reproduction of a photograph that depicted the division embarking at Dieppe for Ostend, which appeared in one of our half-penny picture papers; the censorship was not in fault, as the issue had not been submitted for scrutiny, but a copy probably found its way to Berlin. At a somewhat later date, a journal, in reporting His Majesty's farewell visit to the troops, contrived to acquaint all whom it might concern that the 28th Division, made up of

regular battalions brought from overseas, was about to cross the Channel.

It will readily be understood that incidents of this kind—those quoted are merely samples—worried the officials charged with supervision, and tended to make them almost over-fastidious. Soldiers of experience, as the censors were, remembered Nelson's complaint that his plans were disclosed by a Gibraltar print, Wellington's remonstrances during the Peninsular War, and the information conveyed to the Germans by a Paris newspaper of MacMahon's movement on Sedan. They were, moreover, aware that indignant representations with reference to the untoward communicativeness of certain of our prominent journals were being made by the French and Belgians. So the Press Bureau, which, it must be remembered, was a civil department independent of the War Office, took to sending doubtful passages across for our decision—a procedure which necessarily created delay and caused inconvenience to editors. Publication, it may be mentioned, was approved in quite four cases out of five when such references were made. One, indeed, rather wondered at times where the difficulty came in.

But a verdict was called for in one case which imposed an uncomfortable responsibility. This was when a telegram from the Military Correspondent of 'The Times' from the front, revealing the shell shortage from which our troops were suffering, was submitted from

Printing House Square to the Press Bureau in the middle of May 1915, and was transmitted thence to us for adjudication. Publication of the telegram could at the worst merely serve as a confirmation of knowledge which the enemy must already possess, and national interests did seem to demand that the people of this country should be made aware how matters stood. Choice of three alternatives offered itself,—to refuse leave, to refer to higher authority, to pass for publication—and the third alternative was adopted. One or two minor details with regard to particular types of ordnance were, however, excised.

For the General Staff at the War Office to have formulated apposite, hard-and-fast regulations for the guidance of the Press Bureau, covering all questions likely to arise, would, it may be observed, have been virtually impracticable, or at all events would not have really solved the problem. Everything must necessarily depend upon the interpretation placed on such ordinances by the individuals who were to be guided by them. Thus a rigorous enactment governing any particular type of subject, if strictly interpreted by harassed censors, would prevent any tidings as to that subject leaking out at all; while an indulgent enactment, if loosely interpreted by the staff of the Bureau, might well lead to most undesirable disclosures being made in the columns of the Press. Censors planted



down in London could not, furthermore, be kept fully acquainted with the position of affairs at the front—a factor which greatly aggravated the perplexities of their task. We of the General Staff in Whitehall were in this respect very differently situated from G.H.Q. Over on the other side, where the situation of our own troops and of the French and the Belgians was known from hour to hour, newspaper representatives could always have been instructed by the bear-leaders in charge of them as to exactly what they might, and what they might not, touch upon in reference to any development that happened to be in progress.

Another phase of the censorship, the Cable Censorship, housed in the city and differing from the Press Censorship in that it was entirely under War Office control, deserves a word of mention. Its potentialities had not been fully foreseen when it was established automatically on mobilisation, and of what it accomplished the general public know practically nothing at all. The conception of such an institution had at the outset merely been that of setting up a barrier to prevent naval and military information calculated to be of service to, or transmitted in the interests of, the enemy, passing over the wires whether in cipher or in clear. But an enterprising, prescient, and masterful staff perceived ere long that their powers could with advantage to the State be developed and

turned to account in other directions, and notably in the direction of stifling the commercial activities of the Central Powers in the Western Hemisphere. Within a very few months the Cable Censorship had transformed itself out of an effective shield for defence into a potent weapon of attack. The measure of its services to the country will probably never be known, as some of its procedure cannot perhaps advantageously be disclosed. Its labours have been unadvertised and its praises unsung. But those who were behind the scenes are well aware of what it accomplished along unseen side-tracks in bringing about the downfall of the Hun. The Cable Censorship may indeed be said to take rank with the Supply Directorate, and with the exiguous Movements Directorate during the first year and a half of hostilities, in the very highest grade of successful War Office branches during the war. Only to the Topographical Section of the General Staff need it yield pride of place.

The Topographical Section has been little heard of, although the staff at the Front knew how much they owed to it; a word may therefore not be out of place concerning its distinguished record. Its merits were brought home to me at a very early stage of the conflict, and it was most gratifying to find a branch, for which one suddenly found oneself after a fashion responsible, to be capable of so promptly meeting

emergencies that had not been anticipated. The Expeditionary Force had taken with it generous supplies of maps portraying the regions adjacent to the Franco-Belgian frontier, where it proposed to operate; but a somewhat hasty retreat to a point right away back, south-east of Paris, had formed no part of its programme. One afternoon, a day or two after the first clash of arms near Mons, a wire arrived demanding the instant despatch of maps of the country as far to the rear as the Seine and the Marne. Now, as all units had to be supplied on a liberal scale, this meant hundreds of copies of each of a considerable number of different large-scale sheets, besides hundreds of copies of two or three, more general, small-scale sheets; nevertheless, the consignment was on its way before midnight. A day or two later G.H.Q. wired for maps as far back as Orleans, a day or two later, again, for maps as far as the mouth of the Loire, and yet a day or two later, for maps down to Bordeaux—this last request representing thousands of sheets; but on each occasion the demand was met within a few hours and without the slightest hitch. It was a remarkable achievement—an achievement attributable in part to military foresight dating back to the days when Messrs Asquith, Lloyd George, Churchill and Co. either deliberately, or else as a result of sheer ignorance and pitiful ineptitude, were deceiving their countrymen as to the gravity

of the German menace, an achievement attributable also in part to military administrative efficiency of a high order in a time of crisis. The Topographical Section, it should be added, was able to afford highly-appreciated assistance to our French and Belgian allies in the matter of supplying them with maps of their own countries.

But it was not always a case of maps being despatched from the War Office. Sometimes they were being delivered to that institution. One night, after 11 P.M. and when there was hardly anybody left in the place, I found myself on the telephone being worried from Waterloo. It appeared that some packages—"seems to be maps and is marked 'very urgent'"—had fetched up at that terminus; would I send for them, and be sharp about it. A boy scout would have known exactly what to do; but the scouts always went off duty at 6 P.M., ceasing to serve their country until next morning, unless required to wake up people at night (who had never done them any harm) with melodious "all clear" buglings. There were no scouts. The Topographical Section had gone to bed. There was nobody to consult except War Office messengers, and War Office messengers are not especially distinguished by originality of thought, so I intimated by the telephone that I would send a taxi. A particularly offensive snort vibrated in the receiver. "Ain't there no officer in the plice—and a war



on? Taxi! Wy, it'll take a lorry—no, two on 'em, fat-'ead! Just you send 'em along now at once and none o'yer sauce!" One did not keep lorries handy, no insistent demand for maps had come in from G.H.Q., and the victim of a telephone outrage as a last resort always holds a trump card in his hand. He can go away. It was obviously an occasion for playing that card, so the L.S.W.R. wretch did not win the trick after all.

During the first two or three weeks after fighting started, waifs and strays who had been run over by the Boches, but who had picked themselves up somehow and had fetched up at the coast, used to turn up at the War Office and find their way to my department. For some reason or other they always presented themselves after dinner—like the coffee. The first arrival was a young cavalry officer, knocked off his horse in the preliminary encounters by what had evidently been the detonation of a well-pitched-up high-explosive, and who was still suffering from a touch of what we now know as shell-shock. He proved to be the very embodiment of effective military training, because, although he was to the last degree vague as to how he had got back across the Channel, and only seemed to know that he had had a bath at the Cavalry Club, he was able to give most useful and detailed information as to what he had noted after recovering consciousness while making his way athwart the German trains and troops in

reserve that were pouring along behind Von Kluck's troops in front line. One observed the same thing in the case of another cavalry officer who arrived some days later, after a prolonged succession of tramps by night from the Sambre to Ostend. "You'll sleep well to-night," I remarked when thanking him for the valuable information that he had been able to impart—and of a sudden he looked ten years older. "I couldn't sleep a wink last night at Ostend," he muttered in a bewildered sort of way, "and I don't feel as if I'd ever sleep again." We did not wear uniform in the War Office for the first month or so, and one night about this time, on meeting a disreputable and suspicious-looking character on the stairs, garbed in the vesture affected by the foreign mechanic, I was debating whether to demand of the interloper what he was doing within the sacred precincts, when he abruptly accosted me with: "I say, d'you happen to know where in this infernal rabbit-warren a blighter called the Something of Military Operations hangs out?" His address indicated him to be a refugee officer looking for my department.

These prodigals had such interesting experiences to recount that in a weak moment I gave instructions for them to be brought direct to me, and about 10 P.M. one night, when there happened to be a lot of unfinished stuff to be disposed of before repairing homewards, a tarnished-looking

but otherwise smart and well-set-up private soldier was let loose on me. A colloquy somewhat as follows ensued:—

“What regiment?”

“The Rile Irish, sorr.”

“Ah! Well, and how have you got along back here?”

“Sorr, it’s the truth I’m tellin’ ye, sorra ilse. Sure wasn’t I marchin’ and fightin’ and hidin’ and craalin’ for wakes and wakes” (the Royal Irish could only have detrained at Le Cateau about ten days earlier) “before I gits to that place as they calls Boulong—a gran’ place, sorr, wid quays and thruck like it was the North Waal—an’ a fellah takes me to the Commandant, sorr, where I seen a major-man wid red tabs an’ an eye like Polly-famous. ‘Sorr,’ sez I to him, sez I; sez I, ‘it’s gittin’ back to the rigimint I’d be afther,’ sez I. ‘Ye’ll not,’ sez he, ‘divil a stir,’ sez he; ‘ye’ll go to Lunnon,’ sez he. ‘Will I,’ sez I. ‘Ye will,’ sez he; ‘take him down to the boat at wanst, sergeant,’ sez he, and the sergeant right turns me and marches me out. ‘Sergeant dear,’ sez I, ‘sure why can’t I be gittin’ back to the rigimint,’ sez I. ‘Agh, t’hell out o’ that,’ sez he; ‘sure didn’t ye hear what the major bin and said,’ sez he, an’ he gin me over to a carpral—one on thim ugly Jooks, sorr—an’ down we goes by the quays to the boat—a gran’ boat, sorr, wid ladies an’ childer an’ Frinch an’ Bilgians, an’ all sorts, as minded me on the ould *Innisfallen*. D’y’ iver know the ould *Innisfallen*, sorr, as sails from Carrk to some place

as I misremember the name on, sorr?”

“Crossed over on her once from Cork to Milford.”

“Ye did, yer honour—sorr, I mane. Glory be to God—to think o’ that! Well, sorr, I’d a sup of tay at one on thim shtahls, sorr, an’ the Jock gives me me papers an’ puts me aboard, sorr. It’s mostly onaisy in me inside I am, sorr, on the say, but it was beautiful calm an’—”

“Yes, yes; but look here—Where was it you left your regiment?”

“Is it me, sorr? Me lave me rigiment, sorr? Me wid three years’ sarvis an’ sorra intry in my shate at all, only two, wan time I was dthronk wid a cowlid in me nose, sorr. Me lave me rigimint? It was the rigimint lift me, sorr. As I tell ye just now, we’d bin marchin’ an’ fightin’ for wakes and wakes, an’ it was tired I was, sorr, bate I was, an’ we was havin’ a halt, sorr; an’ I sez to Mick Shehan from Mallow, as is in my platoon, ‘Mick,’ sez I. ‘Tim,’ sez he, wid his mouth full of scoff. ‘Mick,’ sez I, ‘it’s gwan to have a shlape, I am,’ sez I, ‘an’ ye’ll wake me, Mick darlint, when the fall-in goes.’ ‘Begob an’ why wouldn’t I, Tim,’ sez he, ‘so I ain’t shlapin’ mysilf,’ sez he. ‘Ye’ll no forgit, Mick,’ sez I. ‘Agh, shut yer mouth, why would I be the wan to forgit,’ sez he. But whin I wuk up, the divil a rigimint was there at all, at all, only me, sorr; an’ there was a lot of quare-lookin’ chaps as I sined by the look on thim was Jarmins. I was



concoaled by a ditch,<sup>1</sup> an' settin' down by a bit o' whin, I was, sorr, or they seen me for sure. 'Phwat 'll I do at all,' sez I to mysilf, sez I, an'——"

"Just stop a minute; where was all this?"

"Where was it? Why, in Fraance, sorr, where ilse would it be? Well, sorr, as I was just startin' to tell ye, there was a lot of quare-lookin' chaps as I sinned by the look of thim was Jarmins, an'——"

"Yes, but good Lord, man, what was the name of the place in France where all this happened?"

"Place is it, sorr? Sure it wasn't any place at all, but one of thim kind of places as the name on has shlipped me mimry, a bog, sorr—leastways it wasn't a bog as ye'd rightly call a bog in Oireland, sorr—no turf nor there wasn't no wather. I mind now, sorr, it was what the chaps at the 'Shott calls a 'hathe,' sorr. There was trees ontigious, an' whins; sure wasn't I tellin' ye just now as I was settin' down by a bit of whin, sorr——"

But it had been borne in on me that this had become a young man's job, so I succeeded, not without some difficulty, in consigning the gallant Royal Irishman—still pouring forth priceless intelligence material—into the hands of a messenger to be taken to the officer on duty. Manuals of instruction that deal with the subject of eliciting military information in

time of war impress upon you that the Oriental always wants to tell you what he thinks you want him to tell you. But the Irishman tells you what he wants to tell you himself, and it isn't the least use trying to stop him.

Some of the criticisms directed at the military authorities for maintaining a needless and irritating secretiveness were possibly to some extent warranted. But complaints on this head were in reality often the result of misapprehension. Those lamentations, for instance, that units which had performed distinguished service were not named in communiqués, overlooked the fact that the mention of some particular regiment in a telegraphic account of a combat despatched from the headquarters of a great army may do grave injustice to other regiments engaged. Because a brigadier singles out one of his battalions for mention, it does not follow that a battalion may not have done equally well even in the brigade alongside; the other brigadier may not have thought it necessary to send a special report. Divisional commanders may not pass on reports as to individual units received from brigadiers, nor corps commanders' reports sent on by divisions; and yet the title of some lucky unit may percolate right through from a brigadier to G.H.Q. If the Chief telegraphs the achievements of that unit home, the publication of his communiqué

<sup>1</sup> *Anglicè*, bank.

in the newspapers will in all likelihood be unfair to several units with equally stirring exploits to their credit. The true story of a modern battle cannot be told at a moment's notice. Numberless reports have to be investigated and weighed and compared before the real facts are known even approximately.

In a cablegram describing the fight of Tel-el-Kebir, despatched within an hour or two of that sharp, short, and singularly decisive engagement coming to an end, Sir G. Wolseley wired: "Great emulation evinced by regiments to be first in the enemy's works. All went at them straight. The Royal Irish Regiment particularly distinguished itself by its dash and the manner in which it closed with the enemy." No other unit was mentioned in this hurried communication. Now, the brunt of the action had in reality fallen upon the Highland Brigade, belonging to the 2nd Division under Sir Edward Hamley. That brigade had carried much more formidable hostile entrenchments than those which the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Division, to which the Royal Irish belonged, had been called upon to assail. Moreover, the Highlanders had, as a matter of fact, delivered their onset a quarter of an hour earlier than the others, owing to the accident of having reached their objective just at the first glint of dawn, and when the 2nd Brigade was still half a mile from its section of the

Egyptian lines. The Royal Irish, furthermore, had only 21 killed and wounded, whereas the Highland Brigade lost 225—its casualties varying between 36 and 71 per battalion. Some ill-feeling was created by that cablegram, dictated by the Commander-in-Chief when the facts were not fully known to him, and the incident may have been a contributory cause to the estrangement between himself and the commander of the 2nd Division—an estrangement which found indirect expression in a vivid description of the action, from Sir Edward Hamley's pen, that appeared a few months later.

Mention of an individual regiment was likely to be much more informative to the enemy during the early months of the war, it must be remembered, than came to be the case later. The exact order of battle of the Expeditionary Force had been appearing in the Monthly Army List, as also the distribution of our line battalions overseas; so that the naming of any infantry unit was, from the intelligence point of view, equivalent to naming the brigade and the division to which it belonged. The constitution of the pre-war Territorial Divisions was, moreover, also shown in the Monthly Army List. Orders of battle soon ceased to appear in that periodical publication, but the Germans, of course, possessed older copies; even so, the Boches made great efforts to obtain



copies after it was decided to make the monthly issues confidential. The perplexities of the enemy intelligence experts must have increased as the New Army began to take the field, and when our line regiments came to comprise from one dozen to three dozen battalions, and to be represented in a number of different divisions. References to "West Country troops," or to "Lancashire infantry," told antagonists little—and they did not tell people in this country much beyond indicating that warriors from Old England, a portion of the Empire which was providing more than half of its fighting forces, were bearing a hand no less than Scotsmen and Anzacs and Canadians.

But there was a type of official secretiveness which was criticised freely in the opening months of the struggle with better reason. This took the form of concealing, or at any rate of minimizing, reverses—an entirely new attitude for soldiers of this country to take up. We should never have massed those swarms of volunteers in South Africa in 1900, drawn from the United Kingdom and from the Dominions and from the Colonies, had Stormberg and Magersfontein and Colenso been artistically camouflaged; the facts were blurted out, and the Empire rose to the occasion. The truth is that optimism was a perfect curse during the war; it kept men from flocking to the colours, and it checked the ardour of the workers upon whom so

much depended. Take, for example, Mr Lloyd George's speech last April in Edinburgh, close to the great ship-building centre of the Clyde. He must needs go cackling about an encouraging Admiralty report in reference to anti-submarine operations, instead of rubbing it into his audience that British sinkings had almost exactly doubled British construction during the previous month, as official figures had just announced. A special Sunday edition of a morning paper, with a somewhat hysterical account of what a journalist far away from the fighting front had seen of the retreat from Mons, aroused a storm of opprobrium about the 1st of September 1914; but a good many of us in the War Office regarded the incident in the light of a blessing in disguise, as something was badly wanted to wake the nation up to the gravity of the situation, and there was not then—nor has there been at any other time—the slightest fear of the people of this country losing heart. It is not their way. The incorporation in the Defence of the Realm Act of ordinances directed against the propagation of alarmist reports calculated to cause despondency was no doubt necessary; but one welcomed the appearance of well-informed jeremiads at times.

References to the Press Censorship above, suggest the subject of the relations between the War Office and the world of journalism during the war, which were not always too

cordial. Now, the wisdom of the attitude taken up by the War Office and by G.H.Q. in France in the matter is a question of opinion; but my view was, and still is, that as regards one point the newspapers were treated injudiciously at the start. One was indeed in the uncomfortable position of administering a policy that one disliked. The General Staff had, for some years prior to 1914, intended that a reasonable number of correspondents should proceed to the front under official ægis on the outbreak of a European war, and a regular organisation for the purpose actually took shape automatically within the War Office on mobilisation, in concert with the Press. A small staff, under charge of an officer designated for the appointment two or three years earlier, with clerks and cars, came into being *pari passu* with the Headquarters Staff of the Expeditionary Force on the historic 3rd of August. The officer, a man of attractive personality and forceful character, master of his profession and an ideal holder of the post, had been in control of the Press representatives at army manoeuvres in 1912 and 1913, and was therefore familiar with the gentlemen who had been chosen to take the field. (He, unfortunately, was killed while serving on the staff in France in the winter of 1915-1916.) The General Staff had, moreover, impressed upon correspondents at manoeuvres that they ought to regard the operations in the light of instruction for themselves in

duties they would be performing in actual hostilities.

But all this went by the board when war came. Leave for correspondents to go to the front, whether under official auspices or any other way, was refused, and the staff and the clerks and the cars abode idle in London. The Press world accepted this development philosophically for the opening two or three weeks, realising that that was no time for visitors in the war zone; but then the Fourth Estate became restive. Enterprising reporters proceeded to the theatre of war without permission, while experienced journalists, deluded by past promises, remained behind hoping for the best—the old hounds were kept in the kennel while the young entry ran riot with no hunt servants to rate them. Some unauthorised representatives of the Press were, it is true, arrested by the French, and had the French dealt with them in vertebrate fashion—decapitated them or sent them to the Devil's Island—we should have known where we were. But as the culprits were simply released with a caution the situation became ridiculous. No newspaper man boggles over marching to a dungeon with gyves upon his wrists and tarrying there for some hours without sustenance—it is part of the game. Instead of the supervision of messages from the front falling upon officers of G.H.Q., who were in a position to wrestle with the task to good purpose, this devolved upon the Press Bureau in London, which could not



perform the office nearly as well, and was moreover smothered under folios of journalistic matter emanating from quarters other than the theatre of war. Furthermore, editors and managers and proprietors of our more prominent newspapers considered that we had broken our engagements—as indeed we had—and at the very fall of the flag the Press of the country was fitted out with a legitimate grievance. Besides, the War Office was flouted.

That is the worst of a state of belligerency—the War Office does get flouted at such times. Even the Military Secretary, who, as keeper of the Secretary of State's conscience, when he has one, takes himself as seriously as anybody, found himself treated as of small account on one occasion. An officer, seoured by tumultuary process during early strivings to expand the land forces and found to be a disappointment, had been invited to convert his sword into a ploughshare; the reply is understood to have read somewhat as follows:—

“Sir,—I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of —, directing me to resign my commission. I will see you damned first.—Yours, —.”

New Army officers are so unconventional.

But if the Press had grievances against the military authorities, these also had grounds for complaint against the Press. Before the war one

accepted as gospel the pontifical utterances of newspapers concerning matters of which one knew nothing—the law, say, or economics, or art. But never again! Journalists have given themselves away too badly on occasion over warlike operations, army organisation, and so forth, for one to let oneself be bluffed in future. After a U-boat outrage on a hospital ship, a London morning paper in its first leader of the 15th of March last actually urged that half a dozen Boche officers should be “sent to sea in every hospital ship *and in every transport*”—the italics are mine. When an Army Order in April last laid down that promotion to general would in future be by selection, not seniority, newspapers of quite good standing tumbled head over heels into a pitfall of their own creation. They started an attack upon the War Office for not having recognised the principle of advancement by merit in the higher ranks of the service sooner, having failed to note that the Army Order concerned promotion to the rank of full general, and exposing their ignorance of the fact that promotions to the rank of brigadier-general, major-general, and lieutenant-general had been effected by selection for several years past. Nobody expects editors to know details of this kind; but it is their duty to investigate before starting a crusade. Then there has been the recent stirring up of discontent over demobilisation—the handiwork of the very journals that clamoured the loudest

about pacifism, defeatism, and all the rest of it. Probably they had no intention of making mischief. But the fool is often more dangerous than the knave.

The Press, it may be observed, is probably responsible to some extent for the community's hugging of the delusion that interest and influence are all-powerful in Whitehall, a phenomenon for which my experience in those purlieus during the war perhaps provides some explanation. To be invited to take a hand in obtaining appointments for people about whom one knew nothing and cared less, in services with which one had no connection, was a daily event. The procedure then followed was automatic and appropriate. A reply would be dictated intimating that one would do what one could—a mere form of words, needless to say, as one had no intention of doing anything. And yet there would often be a disconcerting sequel. Profuse outpourings of gratitude in letter form would come to hand two or three weeks later: Jimmy had got his job, entirely owing to one's efforts in his behalf, and the memory of it would be carried to the grave. One had not the faintest recollection of what all the bother was about; but it was easy to dictate another letter expressing gratification at the recognition of Jimmy's merits. To hint that the appointment had presumably been made by the responsible official on the strength of an application received from Jimmy in proper

form, that there had been no wheels within wheels, and that back-stairs influence had never got beyond the first landing, would have been disobliging.

And now there is still one matter which seems to call for mention before bringing these random jottings to an end—the troubles of the General Staff with the amateur strategist in high places, than whom there is no more fearful wild-fowl living. The activities of this pest may not have been so patent to the public since the Antwerp and Dardanelles fiascos as they were before, but they have none the less been almost perpetually at work and, had they not been kept in check, might well have lost us the war. The following incident will serve to illustrate the sort of thing that the General Staff were up against.

Early in October 1917, the War Cabinet hit upon a great notion. On the close of the Flanders operations a portion of Sir D. Haig's forces were to be switched to Alexandretta to succour Generals Allenby and Marshall in their respective campaigns, and were to be switched back again so as to be on hand for the opening of active work on the Western Front at the beginning of March 1918—a three months' excursion. This scheme seems to have been evolved quite *au grand sérieux* and not as a joke. At all events, a conference (which I was called in to attend as knowing more about the Dardanelles business from the War Office end than anybody else) assembled in the



Chief of the Imperial General Staff's room one Sunday morning—the First Sea Lord and the Deputy First Sea Lord with subordinates, together with prominent members of the General Staff—and we gravely debated the idiotic project. The War Cabinet had heard of Alexandretta before, for its possibilities were always cropping up in Downing Street, and they must have known that landing facilities were defective, and that, as ships lying there would be at the mercy of submarines, troops going to those parts would have to be put ashore in Ayas Bay, to the north of the Gulf—where there were no facilities at all.

Nobody but a lunatic would, after Gallipoli experiences, undertake serious land operations in the Alexandretta region with less than six divisions. To ship six divisions absorbs a million tons. There were United States troops unable to cross the Atlantic for want of tonnage, and, allowing for disembarkation difficulties on the Syrian coast, two soldiers or animals or vehicles could be transported from America to French or English ports for every one soldier or animal or vehicle that could be shifted from Marseilles or Toulon to the War Cabinet's fresh theatre of operations, given the same amount of shipping. Our Italian allies were in sore straits over coal for munitions and transportation purposes, simply because sufficient tonnage could not be placed at their disposal. Our own food supplies were causing

anxiety, and the maintenance of the forces at Salonika afforded constant proof of the insecurity of the Mediterranean as a sea route. But fatuous diversion of shipping represented quite a minor objection to this opera-bouffe proposal. For, allowing for railing troops from the Western Front to the Côte Azure and embarking them, and for the inevitable delays in landing a force of all arms on a beach with improvised piers, the troops at the head of the hunt would have to be re-embarking in Ayas Bay by the time that those at the tail of the hunt came to be emptied out on the shores of the Gulf of Iskanderun; otherwise the wanderers would miss the venue on the Western Front.

Had this been suggested by a brand-new Ministry—a Labour Cabinet, say, reviewing the military situation at its very first meeting—nobody could reasonably have complained. People quite new to the game naturally enough overlook practical questions connected with moving troops by land and sea, and do not realise that those questions govern the whole business. Any third-form boy, given a map of Turkey-in-Asia and told of campaigns in Palestine, and Mesopotamia, and Armenia, and of the bulk of enemy resources being found about Constantinople and in Anatolia, who did not instantly perceive how nice it would be to dump an army down at Alexandretta, would, it is earnestly to be hoped, be sent up to have his dormant intelli-

gence awakened by outward applications according to plan. Quite knowledgeable and well-educated people call this sort of thing "strategy," and so in a sense it is—it is strategy in the same sense as the multiplication table is mathematics. If you don't know that two added to two makes four, and divided by two makes one, the integral calculus and functional equations are not for you; if it has never occurred to you that by throwing your army, or part of it, across the route that your opponent gets his food and his ammunition and his reinforcements by you will cause him inconvenience, then your name is not likely to be handed down to posterity with those of the Great Captains. But the War Cabinet of October 1917 contained personages of light and leading who had been immersed up to the neck in the conduct of hostilities ever since early in 1915.

Scarcely had this exhibition of "uncanny intuition in questions of military strategy" been disposed of, when the Caporetto affair called for some British divisions from the Western Front to hurry to the Piave—and they took six weeks over the move. For months, the hankering after a transfer of force from France to the Isonzo (*en route* to Vienna) with which certain members of the War Cabinet were afflicted, had hung over the General Staff like a pall. That the enemy could move troops to the proposed new jumping-off place faster than we could, caused the Moltkes of 10 Downing Street no qualms.

That divisions detailed for the job would be lost for several weeks was, as like as not, simply disbelieved, for the exuberances of these people are due sometimes to bumptious perversity rather than to mere ineptitude. That the scheme meant hunting for trouble in a mountainous region, where effective combinations of war by masses of men must prove impracticable, was treated as of no account. Do its advocates realise now, one wonders, that the dramatically sudden collapse, after only three or four days' combat, which befell the Austro-Hungarian hosts last October would not have occurred but for their having come down from the hills into the Friuli Plain a year before, and having exchanged a good position for a bad one?

The truth is that the "Easternism" with which the War Cabinet was infected, and the more prosaic "Westernism" which had the military authorities in thrall, stood respectively for imagination and for knowledge, although imagination is perhaps hardly quite the correct expression to use. Easterners could never be got to realise that, in spite of gigantic armaments, of vast concourses of fighting men, and of reputedly impregnable Hindenburg and Wotan Lines, the Western Front was Germany's weak point—and here their imagination perhaps took a somewhat diluted form. On the Western Front the Boche was forced to fight the French and ourselves fair and square, and enjoying none of those



advantages in respect to interior lines, to communications, and so forth, which came to his aid the moment we started knocking our heads against the Julian Alps or getting ourselves entangled in the miasmatic plains or the roadless uplands of the Near East.

Fundamentally opposed as are the two schools of thought, both no doubt accept Napoleon as first amongst exponents of the art of war; but even him they regard from totally different points of view. The inspiration, the unerring instinct, the almost extravagant phantasies and the weird fatalism of the illustrious Corsican, rivet the attention of Easterners dazzled with the sun of Austerlitz. Westerners, better informed, attribute Napoleon's triumphs rather to that unexampled mastery of detail, that infinite capacity for taking pains, and that exhaustive acquaintance with all branches of the soldier's profession, which so distinguished the conqueror from all rivals; they picture him, prostrate on a map on the floor gripping a pair of compasses, scrawling hieroglyphics on scraps of paper, weighing chances, measuring distances, computing the date by which redistribution of his forces would become practicable, and laboriously taking stock of all available and potential resources, rather than dreaming dreams and building castles in the air. Few makers of history have been so richly endowed with imagination as Napoleon, but few men thus gifted have

been so well able to keep their imagination under control. When it came to business he dropped that sort of thing. And yet, twice, when planning combinations of war, imagination took charge of him. The first time it carried him to Acre, the second to Moscow.

The projected Alexandretta and Italian stunts above mentioned were not, it must be understood, isolated cases. The War Cabinet was constantly busy and agog, bent on some wild-cat scheme or other, of which the absurdity had to be demonstrated by the General Staff. Civilians and soldiers no doubt are apt to regard questions from different standpoints, and it is not suggested that civilians must always necessarily be in the wrong. A company of garrison artillery in which I was serving a good many years ago accepted a challenge one time from a local football team, and the services of the company sergeant-major were enlisted to perform in the capacity of referee. When the contest was at its very height, a stentorian appeal for "off-side" against one of the company subalterns, who happened to be playing, echoed forth from the enemy players and was taken up by the sympathetic civilian spectators ranged round the ground. But the sergeant-major was equal to the occasion. In that raucous voice of his, at sound of which recruits were wont to quail and even gunners adorned with two good-conduct badges would manifest a passing interest in parade ob-

servances, the decision was announced. "An officer," he thundered, "can't be off-side." So taken aback were the opposing team and the gallery by the dictum of this Daniel come to Judgment, that they for the moment accepted his decision like lambs. But there were murmurings heard subsequently, and in the following Saturday's issue of the local newspaper its football expert was extremely rude.

Side-shows? Mischievous, even disastrous, as have been the performances of amateur strategists in high places in the matter of side-shows, the attitude taken up by some military experts with regard to this subject has not been faultless. Uncompromisingly to condemn all side-shows as such is absurd. Certain side-shows have been obligatory. Egypt had to be safeguarded against Ottoman efforts, and the channels that lay open to German penetration leading towards Hindustan, *vid* Persia, had to be closed. So long, moreover, as a side-show only absorbs—or mainly absorbs—units which cannot profitably be employed in the vital theatre of war, the resultant diversion of force may be virtually unobjectionable. Operations in Mesopotamia and East Africa have throughout been prosecuted very largely with Indian and South African troops, and with mounted corps that have not been needed on the Western Front. Sir E. Allenby's masterly autumn campaign of 1918 was carried through almost entirely with soldiers

who would have been of no very great assistance to Sir D. Haig. Our armies in Mesopotamia, East Africa, Egypt, and Palestine furthermore have been fed from the East, not from the West; so that the ever-present shipping difficulty has been far less acute in their case than in that of hests embattled nearer home.

Palaver about side-shows may, nevertheless, be imprudent, and it might even assume properties of the boomerang. There was that unpleasant overwhelming of the 5th Army near St Quentin of last March, for instance. Incontinent jubilation over side-shows might provoke retorts concerning the hasty withdrawal of British divisions and units from Palestine after that grave set-back on the Western Front, instead of the displacement of force being effected before the event as had been recommended by the military authorities. Inquisitiveness concerning this particular matter might indeed carry investigations a step further. The hustling of troops engaged on side-shows westwards after the March *contretemps* might lead to awkward controversies over man-power. Some prying member of the legislature might even move for the production of a certain Memorandum on the Position and Prospects of Recruiting, which the Army Council submitted to the War Cabinet in the summer of 1917. (A copy of the document, which came into my possession at the time, lies before me.) Why



were steps to swell the ranks only taken, helter-skelter, after our troops had been thrust back upon Amiens, instead of their having been taken some months earlier in obedience to professional appeals? When enlarging in a speech at Leeds upon his War Cabinet's efforts to restore the situation, Mr Lloyd George did not mention that the situation had actually been saved by the grit and heroism of troops who had been left in the lurch. The War Cabinet only closed the stable-door after the steed had been within an ace of being stolen. General Gough's and General Byng's armies saved the steed, in spite of the War Cabinet having left the stable-door open; and one cause of that door having been left open was persistence in side-shows. So the less said about side-shows the better. That form of offensive invites counter-attack.

The aphorism that the man who never makes a mistake seldom makes anything worth making, is applicable also to institutions. Of all our British institutions, none has in the past been the target for more sustained criticism and for less measured abuse than the War Office; and yet, even if it made innumerable mistakes in the course of the national fight for existence which has now come to an end, that institution made something worth the making. It fashioned those armies which, under proved

leadership, played so prominent and glorious a part in bringing the enemy to his knees. It transformed Great Britain into a first-class military Power, not by gradual process during periods of peace as Prussia constructed that tremendous military machine of hers between Waterloo and Sadowa, but with the enemy in the very gate and during the progress of a contest of which the like had not before been seen. Responsibility for the nation's land forces having been unprepared for a struggle on so colossal a scale cannot be laid at the doors of the military authorities in Whitehall. Intent on votes and the puerilities of faction, the politicians who were at the head of affairs in the pre-war period had grievously betrayed their trust, had ignored portents which it was within their province to take note of and to act upon, and had thrown dust in the eyes of a confiding and, in respect to international defence problems, an unsophisticated people.

Called upon of a sudden to retrieve the position, Lord Kitchener was compelled to lay in haste, if surely, those solid foundations upon which a vast improvised military system adapted to meet the critical situation was within two years built up. The War Office had to pull the country out of the hole—and did so. Of such a record no Department of State in this or any other land need feel ashamed.

## THE BENCH AND BAR OF ENGLAND.

BY J. A. STRAHAN.

## X. THE LIFE OF A LAWYER.

IN his earliest novel Disraeli makes his hero, who is himself, speak very disparagingly of the life of a barrister. The best prospects it holds out to a man, he says, if I remember rightly, is port and bad jokes till fifty, and then a peerage. Such a career may certainly not be very attractive to a genius with the aspirations of a Disraeli, but to men of lesser brains or lesser ambitions it is not without its charm—a charm which has fascinated generation after generation of the flower of the universities, and led hundreds to adopt a profession which in its turn too often leads to a life, such as another of Disraeli's heroes described, in which youth proves a blunder, manhood a struggle, old age a regret.

Perhaps I have overstated the charm of the Bar as a career. What attracts the ablest men to the Bar is not so much the career at the Bar as what that career may lead to. It is said that the Bar leads to anything, and that is true if we include the work-house. But most of the ablest men who come to it regard success at it as merely the first step on the ladder of ambition, and, as we know, some of them climb from it to the topmost rung. But many men as able as these never get beyond the

first step, and then they are as unhappy as those who have entirely failed. Many years ago I had a severe disappointment. One of my friends then was a man almost of genius, who had attained to the highest position but one in the legal world. He was dying, and from his deathbed he sent me a letter of sympathy. Life at the Bar, he said, even when apparently successful, was full of disappointments. "When I was your age," he added, "I never thought I was to die a mere lawyer."

Whatever the attraction that brings men to the Bar may be, it remains to-day as strong as ever it was. Before the war drove every young fellow worth his salt into the army, the number of candidates who presented themselves each year at the final examination for call came close on a thousand. Of this vast number about one-half came from India and the Crown Colonies. Most of those coming from India intended to practise at any rate till they got an appointment. Most of those coming from the Crown Colonies already held appointments, and were getting called merely for the purpose of more effectively discharging the duties of them, a grounding in practical law being found useful both as to their work and



as to their promotion. Many of the English students from India belonged to the same class.

And, strange as it may appear, at least half of the home students reading for the Bar have no intention of following the law as a profession. Thackeray, in 'Pendennis,' gives a description of the men who dined in Middle Temple Hall in his time. "Among the student class," he says, "there were gentlemen of all ages, from sixty to seventeen; stout grey-headed attornies who were proceeding to take the superior dignity,—dandies and men about town who wished for some reason to be barristers of seven years' standing—swarthy black-eyed natives of the Colonies, who came to be called here before practising in their own islands—and many gentlemen of the Irish nation, who make a sojourn in Middle Temple Lane before they return to the green land of their birth." That description still applies, subject to one or two alterations. Gentlemen of the Irish nation now form a very small proportion of the students, and those there are have no intention of returning to the green land of their birth: the reason of this is that the rule which, in Thackeray's time, required men reading for the Irish Bar to keep four terms in England, has long been repealed. Again, the dandies and men about town who wish for some reason to be barristers of seven years' standing are no longer conspicuous among the students,

if they are to be seen at all: the compulsory examinations have pretty well put a stop to their ambitions. But the places of both of these classes have been more than taken by civil servants, army officers, and medical men, who, like the officials from the Crown Colonies, find a practical grounding in law, and the evidence of that which is supplied by call to the Bar, very helpful both for practice and for promotion in their respective professions.

In England, till lately, law was the Cinderella of learning. The Universities neglected the teaching of it, and seemed to regard degrees in it as things to be given to deserving but uneducated persons. Thus, when a soap-boiler endowed a chair of something in stinks, the grateful University rewarded him with its LL.D. The authorities who did this would have been amazed if any one had proposed conferring a D.Lit. or D.Sc. on the benefactor, and, as for a D.D., they would have regarded the very suggestion to confer it as rank sacrilege; and yet the D.D. would seem the most appropriate, as these worthy people are usually regular churchgoers, and so the one learned subject they know something about is Divinity. This practice no doubt is due to the fact that the ancient Universities are situated far from the capital, which is the seat and centre of the living law; and even now the men who teach law at them are separated almost altogether

from its practice. The Inns of Court, when they were a school of law, were a school of practical law. That position they are trying now to regain; and that they are not trying in vain is shown by the fact that so many men in different professions, where a knowledge of practical law is useful, come to them to get it.

These, however, are not the gentlemen with whom we are at present concerned. We are dealing with those students who study with the object, as Thackeray says, of "mastering that enormous legend of the law, which they propose to gain their livelihood by expounding." If that legend of the law was enormous in Thackeray's time, it is still more enormous to-day. Every year the multitude of reports becomes more multitudinous; every year Parliament produces, as his royal patron told Gibbon he did, "another d—d big book"; and the unfortunate student who proposes to gain his livelihood by expounding the law must acquire some sort of a knowledge of all these. When Roman law had got into the same state, Justinian immortalised himself by making an orderly collection of excerpts from the legal treatises (which corresponded to our reports), and an orderly collection of constitutions (which corresponded to our statutes), and then enacting that all the rest of the treatises and constitutions should be burnt. The sooner something of the same kind is done in England the better.

But the important thing is the burning. Without it all attempts to codify branches of law by consolidating statutes are worse than useless. No sooner does a case arise on a new statute than somebody or other is sure to raise the question whether the new statute was intended to alter the old law or not; and so the only effect of the codifying is that the lawyer must master not merely the law as stated in the statute, but the law as stated in the reports. Besides, it usually occurs that the statute is so badly drafted that it is the terror of students. It seems incredible, but still it is the commonest of occurrences, to find text-writers, in commenting on a new Act, stating that it is impossible to know its effect until it has been interpreted by the court. Sometimes the interpretation is beyond even the court's powers. It was, I think, Chief Baron O'Grady who had to confess to a jury that he could not understand a new Act dealing with sheep-stealing. He had read it over and over again, he said dejectedly, and the only thing in it that was clear to him was that when a sheep was stolen somebody or something was to be hanged; but for the life of him he could not make out whether it was the man who stole the sheep or the man that owned the sheep or the sheep itself.

Assuming that the student has acquired sufficient knowledge of this enormous legend of the law to pass his examination, and so become



entitled to try to gain his livelihood by expounding it, he has various courses open to him. He may join the Old Bailey mess and North or South London Sessions (as they are now called), and look out for criminal work; or he may try his fortune at the Common Law Bar, joining a circuit and "opening" as many sessions on it as he can work; or he may settle down to conveyancing and equity work. All three have their attractions and their drawbacks. The criminal way is usually the quickest and always the cheapest road to practice, and now a commencement in it often leads to good civil work. A man going that way has not necessarily to read in chambers, nor has he the expenses of circuit life. Commencing at the common law is more pleasant, but also slower and more expensive. There the beginner must learn in chambers to master the practical use of what he has learned from his books, and is likely to have to bear heavy expenses going circuit before he gains any fees worth mentioning there. Chancery is to the beginner the hardest way of the law, but probably in the end the most certain. He has, even more necessarily than the common law man, to read in chambers; and the work he first gets is now the most wearisome and the worst paid of all legal work—conveyancing; but if he persists long enough he is pretty sure to get court work too, which is well paid, and of all legal

work the most clean and intellectual. Which course, then, a young man just called should choose depends partly on his purse and partly on his taste.

The common law, as might be expected, is the course which attracts most men who can afford it. A youngster with a few hundreds a year to spend can pass his first half-dozen years at the common law bar very pleasantly, calling each morning at his business chambers, where he usually finds there is nothing to do, lounging over to the High Court, where he can occupy his time watching other men do cases, taking notes of the cases for them, or occasionally "devilling" a case for a friend who is too busy to attend to it himself, and sometimes doing a little work on his own account at a county court. This is his life in town. In the country it is as pleasant. He goes four times a year to the county and borough sessions, which he has opened, where he is sure to get from time to time a "soup"—that is, a brief for an official prosecution—such briefs being distributed in rotation among the members of the session's mess; and he goes three times a year on circuit, where, though he may get no work, he gets much play and a little experience, and where, if he is a sociable fellow, he is certain to make friendships which will last his life.

Over thirty years ago I joined the Midland Circuit. The Midland mess was then

still a real mess—that is, the same men constituted the body of it throughout the circuit, save perhaps in Aylesbury and Birmingham, the beginning and the end. I still look back with pleasure on those days spent in court listening to and discussing with other briefless ones the cases our busier friends conducted; the nights spent at mess over jolly dinners, with their *Durniny* and their still better *Pape Clement*; the morning walks along the banks of the Trent; the evening walks about the close of Lincoln's cathedral; and the grand nights with their jokes and laughter and song, good-humour, good fellowship, and good wine. Of all the junketings of those times, the ones I liked least were those at which the judges were present. I never felt quite comfortable in their lordships' company: not that they were unpleasant—quite the contrary—but somehow or other when I watched their demeanour towards the Bar I could not help thinking of Raphael, who, Milton tells us, is an "affable archangel." I have been a guest at Bar dinners in Ireland, both when the judges were entertained and when they were entertainers, and I never there had that thought. Their lordships appeared quite human, and even suggested to me the English judges of old, who, as I have stated, when on the bench never forgot they were judges, and never remembered it when they were not.

The favourite song sung on

festive occasions on the Midland was John Peel, and I never hear it till this day but it "stirs my heart like a trumpet." The last time it reached my ears was one night on the Lido of Venice in the year before the war. I had been spending the day in the city, and returned very late to the Hotel des Bains. As I was leaving the next morning for Bologna, on going to my bedroom I went out on my balcony to have a farewell look at the Adriatic. Above me a great Italian moon filled the still warm air with light, below me the sea shimmered like a lake of quicksilver, and away on my left the white summits of the Julian Alps stood up like spear-heads against the purple sky. As I looked about me a pleasant English voice began from a neighbouring balcony to sing that old hunting song, and immediately I forgot the moonlight and the Adriatic and the Alps, and was once more back at my first grand night dinner on the Midland: we were at Nottingham, that song was being sung, and the whole mess was joining in the chorus. How I remembered it all! And how I remembered that, after dinner and song were over, I went with two other youngsters to have a stroll in the historic market-place: it was such a night as this—with a glorious moon flooding the great square with light—and as we rambled along the dark arcades we talked of our hopes and prospects on the circuit. The two men who that night



walked with me are long dead, and their hopes and prospects lie in their graves with them; and as for me, well, I have not seen Nottingham for twenty years, and never again shall I in its market-place go aroving and adreaming "by the light o' the moon."

O singer of Persephone!  
In the dim meadows desolate  
Dost thou remember Sicily?

But it must not be assumed that all is milk and honey in the land of the law, even on circuit: there are sure to be one or two objectionable persons in the mess. In my time there were several, and the worst of them was a certain young gentleman who might have been inoffensive but for the fact that his father was made a judge; and from the date of that event onward he could not talk for five minutes without referring to it. His father was one of the feeblest beings who ever contrived to climb on the Bench; but I should be sorry to hold him guilty of all the imbecile views on law, literature, and politics with which his son charged him. At last the son's constant citation of his father's authority for his own foolishness got on my nerves, and I told him his father should never have been made a judge, which was true, but was neither polite nor politic, and led to a coolness between the son and me. It would have been much better if I could have dealt with him as Lord Morris dealt with the son of a Baron of the Exchequer Court,

who suffered from the same weakness. One night this young gentleman referred to "my father, the Baron," so often that Lord Morris was driven to desperation. "Dicky dear, Dicky dear," he said at last with deep pathos, "I wish to heavens your mother had been barren too."

Young common law barristers may think that I am, like that Emperor of the East of old, whom Lord Kenyon used to call Julian the Apostle, so absorbed in a state of things which is past that I have forgotten the state of things which is present. This is not the case: I merely like best to write about what I know best; and I know very much better how things on circuit were thirty years ago than how they are in this same year of grace. But I should say that younger men belonging now to circuits assure me that the old *camaraderie* of circuiters is long gone. Few counsel, they tell me, now go to more than one or two towns on their circuit; and few, when they do go, stay more than one or two days. This they blame on the county courts and the railways. The county courts, by creating constant work of a kind for juniors living in the country, have created that institution detested by the ancients, the local Bar. The members of a local Bar look to the county courts chiefly for their livelihood; the assizes are merely occasional events which give them an opportunity of doing a little High Court work, and they seldom

attend them elsewhere than in the town in which they reside: as for work in London, it only comes in the shape of appeals from the assizes or county courts, and is like angels' visits, very welcome but very rare. Moreover, county court practice, which, as I have said, is the local Bar's mainstay, is outside the circuit system: any barrister may hold a brief at any county court; so it happens that members of a local Bar on one circuit constantly meet at county courts barristers of another circuit, and so the homogeneity of circuits is destroyed. Added to this, the county courts have now absorbed so much of the work which was once done at the assizes, and the local Bar has absorbed so much of the assize work which is still done there, that it is hardly worth the while of the London men who once formed the band of brothers who went the whole circuit to go beyond the particular district in which their connections lie; so most of them content themselves with running by train from town to each of those districts, waiting till the briefs are delivered (which is but one day), and if they receive none, returning immediately by train to town. Thus it happens that the London men are largely a different set in each assize town, and that seldom any reasonable number of them dine at mess for more than one or two nights, while the local men, having their homes in the assize town, seldom dine at mess at all. And so we

get to this state of things, that after the first night or two of the assizes in a great town like Birmingham, you may find only half a dozen men at mess, scarcely one of whom knows intimately any one of the others. I speak now of what I have heard, not of what I have seen.

The pleasures and sorrows of circuit life, whatever they may be, are not for the man who goes to the Chancery side. He remains all his career in town. After a year or more of reading in chambers he settles in Lincoln's Inn, and enters himself in the Law List as an equity draftsman and conveyancer. The first work that comes to him is conveyancing, which, I have already said, is the worst paid and most wearisome of legal work. Lord Bowen, after a year at it, entertained such a horror of it that he would go out of his way in order not to pass the chambers where he had laboured so painfully. It was not thus always. Formerly there were many conveyancers who refused to enter court, and a very agreeable life they led once they became accustomed to their work. But then solicitors sent them what is called common form conveyancing—that is, conveyancing which your clerk can do for you out of any book of common forms. Now none of that comes counsel's way. When conveyancing comes now it is because it is so difficult that the solicitor himself will not run the risk of doing it, and thereby undoing himself; for



the solicitor is liable in damages for his mistakes, which counsel is not. And while the conveyancing which comes to counsel is now always difficult, the fees paid for it are smaller than they were when most of it was easy. But still young counsel must take conveyancing if they want court work, and when they get court work they are well rewarded for their drudgery over the conveyancing: it is well paid, clean, and intellectual. Probably no man in any profession earns his livelihood in a pleasanter way for a man of mind and of refinement than a Chancery junior in large practice. The matters he has to deal with usually are points of law with little dispute as to the facts, and little ill-feeling between the parties. The Chancery leader's work is not the same: now it is much liker the work of a Common Law leader than formerly, as they are generally retained only in witness actions.

The chief drawback of the Chancery Bar is the paucity of appointments open to its members. It has, indeed, at least its fair share of the High Court Judgeships, but it has few of those minor appointments which are the only ones open to the bulk of the profession. The consequence is that nine out of ten Chancery men have all their lives to look to practice for their livelihood, and though a man, if he can persist long enough, is pretty certain to secure enough practice to provide a livelihood, as a rule that livelihood is laboriously

earned, and is not over generous. The Common Law and Criminalmen, on the other hand, can look to scores of such minor appointments as recorders, stipendiary magistrates, county court judges, and what not.

Talking of counsels' fees, those earned by even the most successful men, either at the Chancery or Common Law Bars, are not nearly so enormous in the bulk as people think or say. One hears of a fashionable leader receiving briefs marked a thousand or two thousand guineas. This sounds by itself tremendous; but such briefs are not knocking at any man's door every day, and when they come they mean many a day's work. One can easily see by the estates left by judges and counsel that great fortunes are seldom made by them; very often what a distinguished counsel leaves behind him is less than that left by his own butcher or baker. Of all the barristers of my time, few were more successful, and none were keener after fees, than the late Sir Henry Hawkins. His chase after guineas brought on him the historic rebuke of Serjeant Ballantine, who reminded him that he could not take them with him when he died, and if he could they would melt. (By the way, his lordship was so fond of heat that he made his court to the counsel practising in it a perfect inferno in the summer—for other reasons it was not very different all the year round—and he hated draughts so much that it is said on respectable authority

that when he was being put into the furnace to be cremated, he was heard to murmur, "Shut that door: there's a draught.") He was regarded as having acquired an immense fortune, and yet when he died he left only about two hundred thousand pounds, which would be thought nothing of if he had been a successful coal merchant. It is true that at one time practice in Indian appeals to the Privy Council—where, as the saying was, you would not wink at a solicitor for less than ten guineas—and before Parliamentary Committees—long known as the Golden Gallery—brought large incomes to leaders; but unless rumour lies worse than usual, little money is made there now.

Disraeli, in his remark on life at the Bar with which this paper opens, talks of a peerage at fifty. No doubt a good many very successful lawyers do win a peerage about that age, but nowadays it is usually merely a life peerage, or if it is a hereditary one, that is because the winner has no heirs. This is because of what I have just mentioned—the fact that few lawyers by the exercise of their profession acquire large wealth, or even wealth enough to support a peerage in their family without leaving the younger children penniless. Nearly every

lawyer of my time who, having sons living, accepted a hereditary peerage, had wealth coming from other sources than the law.

In concluding these rambling notes, I am reminded of the art critic—he must surely have been a lawyer—who, when reviewing a picture of a man and his dog, wrote that the man wanted execution, and justice had not been done to the dog; and I cannot help thinking some readers may pass a similar judgment on these slight sketches of the Bench and Bar of England. If they do, all I can say is that I have tried my best within the narrow limits I assigned myself to paint them as they are; and if the painter has failed to execute the judges or do justice to the counsel, it is his misfortune and not his fault, as Lord Morris said about a short-sighted man who had kissed—in mistake for his wife, he said—a very ugly woman. His lordship added that if the woman had been very pretty he should have been inclined to hold that it was the man's fault and not his misfortune. The same might be said of me if I had set down any tint in malice; but that I have not done, though I have, I suppose, as many pet aversions as most people, and for as much or as little reason.



## 450 MILES TO FREEDOM.

BY CAPTAIN M. A. B. JOHNSTON and CAPTAIN K. D. YEARSLEY.

## CHAPTER VII.

No. 2 was now allowed to lead the way, of which he said he knew every foot; but we had only just started when the course he took veered almost to due North. Cochrane, who was next to him, caught hold of his arm and told him we were not imbeciles, and the man then led us along a fair line of country bearing between S.S.W. and S. He informed us that we would come to water on that night's march after four hours, and that we would then halt. It was decided to leave affairs in his hands: if his plans were successful, well and good; if not, we would go our own way.

Not more than two hours later we came to a small stream where the peaceful shepherds wanted to halt for the night, but we insisted on proceeding. Finally we settled down to go to sleep on the side of a small valley at about 2.30 A.M. on August 13th. Nothing untoward happened till about 7 A.M., when suddenly there was a shout and shepherd No. 1 could be seen dashing down the hillside above us. He had been keeping watch, he said, but as events turned out it is more than likely that he had been signalling while we were asleep. As daylight appeared the eight of us had moved for better concealment to the bottom of

what was seen to be a horse-shoe valley, and when the shout was heard we were lying there in a small nullah which was narrow and steep-sided.

On standing up, the first things we saw were two ragged-looking gendarmes, one of whom was dressed in a long tattered black coat, and had a black handkerchief tied pirate-wise round his head. Compared to the black-coated gentleman, the other was almost gaudily dressed in a very dirty old grey uniform and "Enveri" cap. What was more important than their dress, however, was the fact that we found ourselves looking at the muzzles of a rifle and revolver carried ready for trigger-pressing by Beau Brummel and his seedy-looking friend. These two gentlemen now came to the kneeling position for greater effect.

The shepherds were greatly agitated: but whether their excitement was due to fear or the anticipation of more loot we cannot say. They told us to close up towards the rifle muzzle, which was remarkably steady and enflated the length of the nullah; so we all bunched up. It is very hard to remember what one thinks about on these occasions: perhaps the reason is that one does not think of much. One wants

something to happen and the suspense to end, the "Come on! get done with it quickly" sort of feeling.

Our two old friends now tried to show that they were not really fond of us. They made threatening gestures, and when Grunt moved to pick up his hat shepherd No. 1 hit him a terrific blow on the side of the head with a thick and heavy stick. Grunt was stunned, and had a bad gash on the right ear, but he soon came round or there would have been a free fight.

Fortunately the stick had been very dry and had snapped at the force of the blow, otherwise without a doubt Grunt's skull would have been broken. We put iodine on the wound and bound it up with lint and bandages, and in a few minutes he was discussing matters with the new folk.

Beau Brummel said he was a sergeant of gendarmes; his companion had failed to reach the exalted rank of N.C.O. They now produced rope, and, to add insult to injury, they produced it out of our own packs. Two of us were bound together at the elbows, back to back; the rest round the wrists with their hands behind them.

The sergeant then started talking—we need not say lying. He was going to take us back to his regiment. He wanted to know where we were going, and we broadly mentioned the Mediterranean. He thought we were men who had escaped from some camp on the railway, and it took long to convince

him that we were officers from Yozgad. How had we managed to escape? We pointed out to him that a Turkish sentry is so overworked that his only time for sleep is on sentry duty. At this he had enough sense of humour to smile. He was curious as to the route taken by the others who had escaped the same night as ourselves: had we told him he would no doubt have called on them too, so we merely said we had not seen any of them since we left Yozgad.

Finally the whole point of the story was reached, and we started talking business. We had felt for some time that the conversation was veering in that direction, but these delicate situations have to be very carefully handled; so we left it to him to open the subject. He led up to his proposition by asking whether we would prefer to be recaptured or to go to our "memlikat" (home): we need hardly say what was our reply. He then wished to know what money we possessed, and with moderate truth we told him. As already mentioned, we had started each with at least thirty Turkish pounds in paper in addition to some gold; this, then, with the exception of the sums No. 1 and No. 2 had already received from us, and a little we had fortunately concealed in odd places in our clothing, he now took from our pockets.

He seemed quite pleased with his takings, as indeed he should have been with such a windfall, and was graciously pleased to signify that he



would now let us go. As we were supposed to be penniless, we pointed out that we had yet many miles to the coast and would need to buy provisions on the way: unless, therefore, he left us with some money we should still have to give ourselves up. Upon this he magnanimously gave us back a bunch of small notes, to the value of about seven Turkish pounds.

For the same reason he prevented our quondam guides from helping themselves to the essentials contained in our packs; for by this time they had opened them and were enviously fingering our spare boots and clothing. Instead of being allowed to make off with further loot, therefore, they had now to undo our bonds; after this they went away under the escort of the black-coated gentleman. He being a representative of Turkish law, could make his own selection of a souvenir of this happy occasion, and his choice fell on Johnny's fez. This was to prove a great loss, and on future occasions when fezes were the order of the day, Johnny had to wear a khaki handkerchief tied round his head, like the wounded hero.

Beau Brummel himself remained behind for a friendly chat. He advised us to make as quickly as possible for the Chickek Dagh to our south, lest the peaceful shepherds should again get on to our tracks and hand us over to further brigands. By this time he was quite frank. If we did this, he said, he would

undertake to look after them for the next four hours. (No doubt he also took care of any money they still had on them.)

As we prepared to take his advice he remarked that we were soldiers and he had been one too, and that we were therefore friends. He then went off, waving his hand and saying, instead of the usual Turkish valediction, "Adieu." That brigand had more of the sportsman in him than any Turk we had previously met.

The moment the brigands were out of sight we moved away over the head of the valley in the opposite direction, and keeping a little west of south, marched for an hour, taking it in turns to carry Grunt's pack. We saw a fairly good hiding-place in a small ravine. It was a question of halting and taking the risk of being caught again by the brigands, or moving on and being almost certainly seen by fresh people; so we decided to stop. The time was half-past ten.

Let us quote from a diary written that day. "It is now 1.30 P.M., and no one has asked for money for four hours, so things look brighter. The clouds are getting up, which is a godsend, as our last night's water-bottle will probably have to do us for many hours more. The position is this: we are bound to go by the southern route, as we have thrown away a lot of food. We have no guide, thank goodness. We have already had to bribe four people, and there is not

much bribing power left. We are likely to be very thirsty in the near future. In fact, in appreciating the situation it cannot in any sense be called a hopeful one. Nevertheless, we are still free men!"

During the day we made a chargal to replace one which leaked. For this purpose we had brought along the sleeves of a waterproof coat, the remainder of which had been left in the cave when we reduced loads. Boots, too, in some cases, already needed repairs.

Towards evening Grunt's ear was again bathed and dressed. As dusk came on Cochrane and Nobby went off to look for water near a small grove of trees a quarter of a mile away. Here they found a patch of cultivation, and there was probably water in the vicinity; but so many people were about that the two had to come back without having found any. We had therefore to trust to finding water while on the march. We started at 8.30 P.M., when the moon was up, keeping in the shadow of the hills which ran along the edge of the valley containing the cultivated patch. After going a mile we saw some damp green grass, and a short way farther on we came to a four-foot square pool of an average depth of an inch. The water gave out a most horrible stench, and must have been the last summer resort of the cattle and buffaloes of the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, we were very glad to drink it

and fill our water-bottles, though a second mugful nearly made us sick, and we each had to eat a few sultanas to take away the taste. That drink is not a pleasant memory.

Over the rise at the end of the valley we came to good going, and finally reached a road running in the right direction. Our luck, however, did not take us very far, as a short distance ahead was a village where we could hear men talking and dogs barking. To avoid the village we made a long detour to the east and soon found ourselves in the middle of numerous steep and rocky ravines. Unable to get back to the road owing to the nature of the country, we were forced to bear to the left or east, and spent the whole night going up and down the features of the mountain that had been pointed out to us that morning by Beau Brummel.

As already mentioned, this range is called Chiohek Dagh, or Flower Mountain, the oak-scrub with which it is covered being in Turkey a near enough approach to flowers to give it that name. On this night we made our first acquaintance with sheep-dogs. Shortly after midnight we heard one barking not far ahead of us, and the tinkle of bells, so we again sheered off a little. The dog, however, was not going to miss a really good opportunity of barking, and it came nearer and nearer in the darkness, making an almost deafening noise. The sheep-dogs are the only ones in Turkey that are well treated; some of them are



magnificent animals and ugly customers to meet, especially at night. The brute finally stopped ten yards short of us, and as we moved hastily on he sped us on our way with a series of roars.

Half an hour later, to counteract our general depression due to the events of the last few days and to the heart-breaking country we were traversing, Cochrane found a spring of good water. He had suddenly turned off to the right, saying he smelt it, and sure enough before we had gone fifty yards we came on a spring. Here we had a huge drink and got rid of the putrid water in our water-bottles.

On this march we found that if we drank enormous quantities of water—in fact, if we forced ourselves to drink more than we wanted—we could carry on like a camel for a long time without a drink when the need arose. It may here be said, though a digression, that the fact about camels going for many days without water only holds good if they are trained to it. A friend of ours—a colonel in a Gurkha regiment—had told us that in the attempt to reach Gordon at Khartoum the camels with the relieving force were marched for a few days along the Nile and were watered twice daily. They naturally became used to drinking only a little at a time, and when they were suddenly taken across the desert it needed but two or three days without water to kill most of them.

We moved on from the spring in very much better spirits. At 2.30 A.M. we rested for an hour till daylight, for we were now at the summit of the range, and might only involve ourselves in unnecessary difficulties if we went on without being able to see the country. Sleep, however, was impossible. It was exasperating, indeed, to find that by night it was too cold to sleep, and too hot by day. It seemed there was some truth in the saying—

“As a rule a man’s a fool;  
When it’s hot he wants it cool,  
When it’s cool he wants it hot,—  
Always wanting what is not.”

At daylight we marched on for another two and a half hours. The whole mountain range was covered with the oak-scrub, which practically hid us as we walked along the bed of a valley. At 6 A.M. we turned up a small ravine off the main valley we were in, and hid in pairs in the scrub. As we climbed to our hiding-places we disturbed a pair of huge eagle-owls. With these birds we were acquainted [at Yozgad. “Patters,” one of the naturalists with whom Johnny went out that Sunday morning, had kept a tame one. Whilst out hunting he had found a nest in a precipice, and, with the aid of a rope and two assistants, had managed to reach it. The nest contained two baby owls, one of which he brought back to the camp with him. It was at that time only a week old, and merely the size of a fowl, but

in a few weeks it became a fine upstanding bird, guaranteed to implant terror within the most resolute breast. At the age of three weeks it would swallow with consummate skill any dead sparrow that might be thrown to it: nothing remained to tell the tale except a few straggling feathers attached to his majesty's beak and a satisfied leer in his eyes. Mice, of course, were as easy for him to gulp down as sugar-coated pills would be to a sword-swallower. One day the youngster and a full-grown gander were placed face to face a few feet apart. Panic-stricken, they eyed each other for a few breathless seconds, then both turned tail and fled.

But to return to our story. While in hiding in the scrub we did not dare to move, though it was agony lying at a steep angle, one's hip on a pointed rock. We hardly spoke a word all day, which was very creditable; but none of us had any desire to be caught again by brigands. By reason of the cover it afforded the Flower Mountain was obviously very suitable for what the Turk calls a "Haidood." From this word, which means "outlaw," we coined an expressive adjective, and were wont to talk of a "haidood-ish" bit of country. Towards sunset we felt justified in having been so cautious, for we saw five armed men driving half a dozen cows over the crest of an opposite ridge, and the haste with which they were moving made it seem

very probable that they were cattle-lifting.

We left our hiding-place about 7 P.M. and retraced our steps down the valley to a pool where we had seen a little water in the morning. On reaching it we found that nothing remained except some moist earth trampled by cattle, a herd of which must have been there during our absence. An hour after sunset we were back again at the foot of the slope where we had hidden all day, and now commenced a long march. It took us two and a half hours to get clear of the Chickek Dagh. It was very up and down, but fairly smooth going. After this the country opened up a little, but once again it became very difficult, with all the valleys running transversely to the southerly course we were steering. These valleys and two villages, to avoid which we had to make detours, cut down our speed in a useful direction to about one mile an hour. During the night we halted in order to get some sleep, but once more the cold was too great. Even during the five minutes' halts at the end of each hour we were chilled to the bone, and it was an effort to get moving again. On these short halts it was a waste of precious resting-time to remove our packs, though we had done this at the start. We now used to lie on our backs without taking anything off, and with our legs up a slight slope, so that the blood could run away from our feet. At 4 A.M. we resumed our



march, meaning to go on for the first hour of daylight, then to find a hiding-place and stop there. Unfortunately an hour's marching found us stranded in unpleasantly open cornland and surrounded by villages and harvesters working in the fields.

There was no hope of concealment, so we had to carry on. Coming over a rise, we found ourselves forced to march boldly through a village which, by the headgear of the women, we took to be Turcoman, though this part of Asia Minor is rather out of the Turcoman's beat. Along the road we passed scores of people, mostly women, riding on donkeys. Having once started, however, the only thing to do was to follow a track leading as much as possible in the desired direction, and to pretend to have some business there. Grunt, with his head bandaged, looked like a wounded soldier, and the rest of us might have looked soldiers of a sort.

On the far side of the village we marched across a broad valley, in which were more women working at the crops and some men tending cattle. After plodding on for four more hours, the last three in broad daylight, we at length reached a range of bare hills, at the foot of which we saw a dozen splendid wild geese, but these potential diners flew leisurely away at our approach. Painfully climbing half-way up a rocky and winding ravine, we threw down our packs. We had

started marching over thirteen hours before, and, except for one and a half hour's rest, had been on the move all the time, and we were very weary. Our daily ration had been about twelve ounces of food—not very much, when one was carrying a heavy load and marching many miles a day over mountainous country.

We made some cocoa; and when that was finished we boiled our mixture of rice, Oxo cubes, and sultanas, which for lack of water was very uncooked. On arriving at the ravine we had found a small tortoise; but while every one was busy making the cocoa, Master Tortoise disappeared, and though we hunted for him, with a view to adding him to the rice, we never saw him again.

This day we worked out a new distribution list for the extra biscuits, rice, and sultanas, which we had made into two packages in the cave for our two guides to carry for themselves. When our two friends had threatened not to come with us, these had been taken away from them and hurriedly distributed amongst the party; even when they afterwards did accompany us we had providentially kept these supplies in our own packs. Counting everything, we found that we had nine days' supply of food, on the basis of about twelve ounces a day each, and as there were still some 200 miles to go before reaching the coast, we realised that we should have

our work out out to get through. So far we had obtained no food from the country, though when we started we had hoped to do so. By now we were beginning to feel really hungry. For the first few days of the march the heat had taken away our appetites, but we were getting acclimatized, and the exhaustion of our reserve of strength made us feel the full effects of a reduced diet. At intervals we regretted having left nearly half our food behind in the cave. At the time we did so, however, it was the wisest course, and had we not reduced our loads it is certain we should not have been able to make the same progress.

A mile north of the range of hills in which we were hiding we had passed a line of telegraph poles, and what we had supposed to be a main road running east and west. This was in a very bad state of repair, but was evidently the road which our forty-year-old map informed us was only six

miles from the Kizil Irmak. More than once we discovered that the map was a mine of misinformation. It is only fair to say, however, that the river in this part was shown in a dotted line, an admission that it had not been surveyed.

During the day one or two marmots came out of their holes to inspect us, standing up like picket pins the while, but without a trap they are very hard to catch. Looking up between the sides of the ravine, which were at least 300 feet high, we saw several vultures hovering over our heads. A few butterflies flitted about near us; and these were the only signs of life. Nevertheless it was not pleasant waiting there, as we had to do for nearly ten hours till darkness should come. We knew we had been seen by many people in the village and in the fields, and any gendarmes who might have been given news of our whereabouts would have ample time to catch us up.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

Shortly before sunset on August 15th we started to climb the ravine. This was a mile and a half long, and by the time we reached the top night had fallen. On our way up we had seen a stone that looked very like a bird; as one of us stooped to pick it up, the stone, to our great surprise, turned itself into a night-jar and fluttered away. The hills we now crossed were

very rough and steep. At the bottom of the first valley to which we came we found a stream, by which we halted in the bright moonlight for a few minutes' rest and a drink. It was fortunate we were amongst some rushes, for suddenly three or four men rode by on donkeys not ten yards from us without seeing us. Later, on coming to a big nullah, we followed it, hoping that it



would lead us eventually to the Kizil Irmak, but by 3 A.M. we had tired of its winding course and took a more direct line to the south.

The wind was bitterly cold, and the only comfortable few minutes' halt we had that night was under the lee of a hayrick. At 5 A.M. we caught a glimpse of a big river six miles away; remembering, however, our enforced march of the previous morning, we decided to halt where we were without venturing farther. A shallow ditch, about two feet deep, was our hiding-place for the day. Here we found some straw, which proved a blessing. With it we obtained for our heads some sort of protection from the sun, but, despite the shelter, the heat entailed upon us a sleepless day. A bunch of straw, too, served as a cushion for our thinly-covered hip-bones. Later on in the day we used straws for drinking out of our water-bottles. It was a good scheme, for, by judiciously choosing a very thin stem, one had the satisfaction of drinking for minutes at a time without having expended more than a few drops of water.

The cold wind of the night had died down at dawn, but towards sunset a light breeze again sprang up, and this refreshed us greatly. We had been so sure of reaching the Kizil Irmak on the previous night that we had made no provision for water. By now, therefore, it was much needed, and we felt that when we did reach the river we would make a good effort to drink it dry.

Some of us ate grasshoppers that day. The small nourishment they afforded did not make it worth our while to expend any energy in chasing them, but if one came to hand and allowed itself to be captured it was eaten. Opinion differed as to their succulence. Nobby stated they were like shrimps; Johnny noted in his diary that they were dry and rather bitter. To the general relief, Grunt's ear was beginning to heal; we had by now used nearly all our supply of iodine and bandages on it, and had it become poisoned Grunt would have had a very bad time.

It was not till nearly 10 P.M. that we reached the Kizil Irmak, and then only with great difficulty. The country was well populated, and many shepherds' huts and sheep-dogs barred our path. At one point we actually passed by the front door of a small house, outside which two men and their families were lying. The men sprang up in alarm at seeing eight extraordinary figures walk by, but we did not wait on the order of our going. Before reaching the river we came to a small stream where we drank our fill: then making several detours and walking as noiselessly as possible, we finally reached the bank of the Kizil Irmak. It was difficult in the moonlight to judge how broad it was: probably 300 yards across. But at that time of year half the bed was merely sandbanks, with a few trickles running through them. Taking off our boots and socks

we tied them round our necks; trousers were pulled up over our knees and we started off, hoping that we should find the main stream fordable. At the point where we stood the river was on a curve, and it was clear that the deep water would be on the opposite side. Walking along in single file we crossed in a direction slanting up-stream, and to our delight reached the other bank with the water only just above our waists. This bank was covered with reeds and difficult to climb.

The river water had been much warmer than the small streams we had passed, but now as we sat wet to the waist in the wind we soon became very cold; for it was a lengthy process wringing out our clothes and dressing on the steep bank where we remained so as not to be seen in the bright moonlight. Here we also washed our faces and brushed our teeth. When we started from Yozgad we had thought of the Kizil Irmak as the first definite mark in our journey, and though we had not crossed it as soon or in the same place as we had intended, yet we were across it, and one stage was successfully accomplished after nine days' march. As soon as all were dressed and ready, we again set off and, passing a gigantic and solitary rock near the bank, here running almost due N. and S., we went up a steady incline over prairie land. At 2 A.M. we halted and slept for two hours under the

shelter of some small rocks. At daylight we crossed a valley which had been converging on the left with our course, and drank at a little pool on the farther side. This would have been a pleasant resting-place for the day: we could have lain and slept under the shade of the trees which ran the length of the valley, and we even saw a few black-berry bushes to tempt us; but there were signs of human activity in vegetable gardens around, so we went forward. Again it was a case of out of the frying-pan into the fire, as we soon came into open country that was cultivated and signally lacking in cover. Two men on a track were about to cross stared very intently at us, but moved on. An old man on a donkey was ruder still; for not only did he stare at us, but he waited till we came up to him, and then without an introduction asked us where we were going and whence we had come. These questions were answered by Coghane pointing vaguely to the south, and then to the north; and so we left him. At 6 A.M. we were momentarily out of sight of mankind in a shallow depression in the ground. It was overlooked by a hill to the north, but a glance over the next ridge showed us that we were half encircled by villages: we therefore stayed where we were. All day we must have been seen again and again by herd-boys and women on the hill, what time the sun beat down upon us from a cloudless



sky. Cooking a meal or tea was out of the question, and our 11 oz. of food that day consisted of two biscuits, 1 oz. of chocolate, and 4 oz. of sultanas. The last named are not only of excellent food value, but last a long while when eaten one at a time.

When we marched on at 7 P.M., thirst once again controlled our movements, and we spent over an hour in an anxious search for water. After visiting one clump of trees after another, we were at length rewarded by the discovery of a trickle feeding a small pool. The water moreover was sweet, and we felt that the refreshment of that drink was well worth the hour's search. Having filled chargals and water-bottles, we set off once more over easy rolling country, and within three hours were again drinking our fill at an unlooked-for spring. The moon set shortly after midnight, and coming soon afterwards to a deep reed-filled ditch, we thought it would best repay us to rest there till dawn should reveal what sort of country lay ahead. The icy wind which on the march had been a blessing, now threatened to be our bane. The nullah itself was sheltered, but it was marshy; so we lay down in a shallow but dry water-channel beyond, and obtained what sleep we could. It was, however, with little regret that at dawn next day we restored our frozen circulations by a brisk walk, the improving light having revealed the existence of a

village close at hand. Making off into some low hills to the S.W., we proceeded to pick our way up a small valley, until at 5.30 we reached the head of a dry water-course. Here we settled down for the day. It was not an ideal hiding-place, but by this time we had ceased to expect one. We soon discovered a village track led by our lair a few yards above our heads. Along this would pass from time to time a country bullock-cart. The creak of the primitive axle revolving wood against wood within its rude socket was a noisy reminder, which we little needed, of the backward state of Turkey's civilisation. In view of the persistence of such anachronisms even in India, perhaps we should say it was a symbol of the stupid conservatism of the East. In addition to the unfortunate proximity of the road, our valley had the disadvantage of being itself the frequented path of cattle, a small herd of which came leisurely by not long after our arrival and showed more surprise at the strangers than did the two boys who followed them. We had seen water a little farther down the valley—mere puddles, it is true, but sufficient to justify our using a chargalful for cooking. It was not long, therefore, before a welcome half-mug of cocoa was being measured out, to be followed later by the standard mixture of rice, Oxo, and a few raisins. During the day most of us got more than the usual quota of sleep, for the cool wind still held.

At 5 P.M. our conversation, carried on now almost unconsciously in the low tones of the fugitive, suddenly broke forth into a more natural loudness; for two men had seen us from the road and were bearing down upon us. We had fortunately decided beforehand on a story containing a touch of local colour. Salutations over, the usual questions were asked as to where we had come from and what was our next objective. A Turk does not usually stop to inquire who you are; but this time we volunteered the information that we were German surveyors who had been engaged on fixing a site for a new bridge across the Kizil Irmak, and that we were now making our way to the railway at Eregli. The pair appeared satisfied, but put the question why we did not shelter from the heat in one of the villages round about. To this came the ready reply that one day we had done so, but had not been politely treated, so now we only entered when in need of food. We took the opportunity of finding out from our two callers the names of the various villages visible from the road above; unfortunately, none were marked on our forty-year-old map, so that this means of settling our position failed. However, we at least had the satisfaction of learning that there was a spring only a couple of hundred yards farther up the hill; in fact, when standing up we could see its stone trough.

Despite their apparent friend-

liness and the absence of any sign of suspicion, we were relieved to see our visitors depart; and having filled ourselves and our water-vessels at the spring, lost no time in moving on. We soon found that we were on the top of a small plateau, which to the east rose gently towards a low range of hills; while to the S. and S.W. the country fell away in a steep scarp. Below this stretched the desert plain, in the midst of which could be seen in the failing light the shimmer of the great salt lake. Even when we expected to have the guidance of the peaceful shepherds, this desert had not been a pleasant prospect; still less did we relish the thought now, after the troubles we had experienced in comparatively well-watered country. It was, however, a matter either of going on or giving up, so we went on. We had now been free men for eleven days.

The moon at this time served us for rather more than half of each night, so that even after sunset we could see the solitary peak of Hasan Dagh rising majestically over the plateau's edge to a height of several thousand feet above the plain. As we descended the scarp to our right we lost sight of this landmark; but our course was decided for us, since we soon found ourselves compelled to follow a gradually narrowing valley, and for three and a half hours were confined to a steep-sided gorge. A little before this a man mounted on a donkey, and accompanied by



a boy, had seen us, and to our disagreeable surprise turned and followed. We had shaken them off, when in the shadow of the gorge we saw a group of several men. It is hard to say whether they were more likely to have been brigands or fugitives like ourselves: one thing seemed certain, they had no business there. At any rate, they let us pass undisturbed, but the impression was forced upon us that this ravine we had entered was a death-trap, and when it veered more and more to the west we decided to make an attempt to get out of it. A clamber up the rocky southern slope, however, only revealed ridge after ridge and valley after valley between us and the plain, so we had perforce to go back into the ravine. Our relief was therefore great when at 1 A.M. the valley opened out, and we debouched on to the desert past a village.

Before we left Yozgad, Nobby had continually impressed upon the party the need of living as much as possible on the country. To aid us in this he had consulted with another naturalist, and prepared an elaborate list of somewhat uncommon but possible foods. Amongst them appeared tortoises, snails, frogs, snakes—these last were especially nutritious, stated this unique document—rodents, and grasshoppers. There were also notes regarding mushrooms, and how to distinguish them from poisonous toadstools. Tortoise we ate at Yozgad, not, we must hasten to add, because we were reduced to

it by lack of better nourishment, but with a view to testing its edibility. It proved messy and uninteresting, but at least non-poisonous. We had, however, hardly come across any tortoises during our march, although we had seen many on the journey from Changri to Yozgad four months previously. In fact, the only item of the list we had sampled so far had been the grasshoppers. We had, of course, also placed considerable dependence on being able to eke out our meagre ration by plucking corn as we went along at night, intending either to boil or to parch it the next day. We had discovered that the Turkish soldiers did the latter very quickly and effectively by making a small fire of twigs, placing whole ears of corn on them, then adding more twigs on top. When the fire had died down they took out the corn and separated the grain by the simple process of rubbing it between the hands. Unfortunately for us, although we had passed a good deal of ready-out crops, there never seemed to be enough grain inside to be worth the trouble of collecting.

On this particular night, however, Nobby was able for once to satisfy his predatory instincts by looting a couple of water-melons, for there was a bed of these outside the village we were now passing. These were cut up and divided out among the party without further ado, and eaten as we continued on our way. As a matter of fact, the melons were far from ripe; but even the

rind seemed too good to throw aside, for by this time we were ready to eat anything: but it did not tend to quench thirst, we found, so the rind was sacrificed.

The going was easier, and with one long halt of an hour and a half we plodded on steadily until 5 A.M. It was then, of course, daylight; and as a mile to our west there was a large town, boasting a rather fine-looking white tower, we resolved to lie up in a dry but grassy irrigation channel. A light haze covered the country, but in the direction opposite to the town we could just recognise Akserai built at the foot of the Hasan Dagh peak. Before us stretched the desert plain, bare except for an occasional nomad encampment; there seemed little sign of movement, even around the town near by. At 10 A.M., therefore, this 19th of August, we came to the conclusion that we might as well go on by day. We had practically no water, and if we were to be in the sun it was better to be on the march as well. The next water shown on our map was a river called the Beyaz Sou, or "White Stream," and thither we set forth, once more transformed into Germans by the simple expedient of replacing the fezes we had been wearing by Homburg hats or service dress caps, one or other of which each of the party carried for this very purpose.

In less than an hour we were glad to find ourselves nearing a stream, on the banks of which were a few reed huts and a vegetable patch with some

more of those excellent water-melons. This time, however, there were not the same facilities for their removal, and, as we rather anticipated, their wild owners would not part with them, money or no. We therefore proceeded to the stream, which was perhaps a foot deep and twelve feet across. The paddle was refreshing to the feet; the water for drinking purposes less encouraging, for above us were cattle watering and the bottom was muddy. It belied its name of "White Stream," we thought, as we filled up our water-bottles. While doing this and wiping the mud off our feet, a villainous-looking out-throat came out from a tent close by and drew near for a talk. We told the usual German story, and he asked for no details, but mentioned there was better water in a village farther on; we could see its grove of trees to our left front. Needless to say, however, on resuming our march we did not visit it, but kept due south over the scorched prairie land, varied here and there with a bit of plough. The heat was already terrific. At 1 P.M. we halted for an hour within a broken-down enclosure of large sundried blocks of mud. Two of these made an excellent fireplace for the dixie, while dry camel thorn and scrub provided fuel in abundance. We therefore cooked some rice and cocoa, which, although amounting to only half a mugful apiece, took some time to demolish, for in that temperature the food was long in cooling.

Here a dissertation upon



mugs. If an aluminium mug saves an ounce of weight, it makes a ton of trouble: and Looney's was thoroughly unpopular on account of its unpleasant habit of burning the fingers of any one who handled it. Moreover, it shared the failing of instability with Perce's empty ovaltine tin, which did duty for mug after his own had fallen out of his haversack on the very first night. Its small base was a source of anxiety both to its owner and the disher-out of brews. If you ever think of having all your food for a month or so out of a mug, let it be a squat enamelled one.

While we were eating our simple fare, a man passed ahead of us, but took no apparent notice of our little group.

We marched on at about 2 P.M., having as our next objective Mousa Kouyoussou, *i.e.*, the Well of Moses: aptly named we thought, for the parched plain before us would need a Moses' wand to make it bring forth water. No tree oasis round this well was to help us in our quest; the map itself wrote the name vaguely across the desert without committing itself to any definite spot. All we could say from the map was that the well should be almost due west of Hasan Dagh. In that case we ought to find it within eighteen miles of the Beyaz Sou, and that as we imagined was now five or six miles behind us. An hour later we unexpectedly came upon a couple of small irrigation canals, at the first of which we halted a few minutes to bathe our scorched

feet. The heat and glare of the desert were indeed overpowering; mirage seemed to raise the southern end of the Touz Cheul—the Salt Lake—above the level of the plain, and mocked us with the vision of an arm of water stretching out eastwards at right angles to our course, until we began to wonder where we could best cross it. As we proceeded, however, it became clear that this was in reality but the broad white bed of a dried-up river. A horrible suspicion now grew in our minds that here was the real Beyaz Sou, and that the muddy stream and two canals we had crossed were merely its diverted waters. Our surmise was soon confirmed, for, as we drew near, we were able to see far away to the S.E. a hump-backed bridge of some antiquity, now standing high and dry. This meant that those eighteen miles to the Well of Moses were still before us. On the far bank of the old river-bed could be seen a few huts, apparently deserted, while a little farther on, and to the west, stood an old khan or inn which eventually turned out to be in ruins. It was possible, however, that a well might be found there, so we decided to go rather out of our way on the off-chance. We amused ourselves by estimating how long it would take to reach it. The most pessimistic view was twenty minutes, but from the time of the guess we were on the march for a full hour before we finally reached that khan: so much for distance-judging in the desert. It was now 5.30

P.M., and we were soon peering down into the depths of two wells, obviously long disused, but which might still perhaps contain a little water. As it happened one of them did, and Cochrane lowered a mug. All he succeeded in drawing up were a few putrid dregs, in which floated some decomposed cockroaches—to Nobby's disgust especially; for it was his mug. Prospects were not very bright: Moses' Well, if it existed at all, was still something over twelve miles distant, and if we marched on at night it would be the easiest thing in the world to miss it in the darkness.

At length the sun set, and as the air became cooler our spirits revived a little, and we made up our minds that we would carry on for only part of the night, so as to be short of the well when daylight appeared. 7 o'clock accordingly saw us once more on the march; the going remained good, although the country was becoming rather more undulating. There were still the little fields of dusty plough in the midst of otherwise hopeless desolation. After a couple of hours we took our long halt on the edge of one of those ploughed patches. Nobby, wiser than the remainder of the party, dug himself a shallow trench in the loose soil, and so slept for five happy hours undisturbed by the cold which woke the rest; for we seemed to live in extremes of temperature.

Dawn on the 20th August found us very anxious. Having marched for another two hours or more, we felt that the well

must be somewhere near. As the light grew stronger, we crossed a couple of steep rocky nullahs, and looking back, saw that we had passed not far from a village in a group of trees. A minute later two stunted trees ahead caught our eye, and we thought there might be water here, but were disappointed. By six o'clock we were seriously thinking of going back to the village behind us, when another came into view on our left. This time, however, there were no trees, and the huts seemed entirely deserted; but next moment our steps quickened as we recognised the stone circle of a well at the nearer end. As in other countries in the East, so in Turkey, water is often drawn up by bullocks: they are harnessed to a rope which, passing over a rude pulley supported directly over the mouth of the well, is attached to a large waterskin. The track beaten out by the patient beasts as they go to and from the well gives a measure of its depth. In the present instance, we could see by the length of the track that our well was a deep one; but it was comforting to find that the hoof-marks appeared fairly recent. So deep, indeed, was this well that no sound could be heard of the splash of a pebble which we dropped, but as the eyes became more accustomed to the dark depths, it was possible to recognise the sparkle of running water. Packs were off in a moment, and while Johnny and Grunt went on to see what they could find in the village, Coch-



rane joined up the heterogeneous collection of string and cord produced by the rest. There was still insufficient length, however, until we had added on a couple of strands unravelled from a skein of rope. Nobby's mug was then lowered, and we began filling our water-bottles and chargals. No drinks were to be allowed until this had been done—a wise precaution, for after a few mugfuls the string snapped, and poor old Nobby's mug was gone. Before long, however, a new line was made, this time all of strands from the rope, and a water-bottle was lowered, suitably weighted to make it enter the water mouth upwards. As soon as the supply was ensured, Ellis and Looney started a fire in a high stone enclosure near the village huts; for here it was possible to obtain a little shade from the already burning sun. Moreover, there was inside the enclosure a limitless supply of oanes, placed there by some unwitting friend, and these, after weeks in the sun, were dry and burned admirably. Things were certainly beginning to look up, and we re-

freshed ourselves with a series of brews—cocca, rice and Oxo, and tea—calculating with satisfaction that we had covered something over forty-four miles in the preceding thirty-five hours. Our contentment was temporarily disturbed, however, by the arrival of two men on donkeys—who with three or four boys now came into the village. Since they passed by the open side of our enclosure, we thought it best to call out the usual greeting, as though we were pleased to see them. To this they responded, and a few minutes later, having dismounted in the village, the two men came up, borrowed a brand from our fire, lit their cigarettes, and chatted pleasantly enough. The conversation turned, as often, on the subject of firearms, so we slapped our thighs in a knowing way, and left them to infer that we had revolvers. They seemed to take our presence as a matter of course, and asked no awkward questions as to what we were doing in such an out-of-the-way place. After a short rest they took their departure, and we thought no more about them.

#### CHAPTER IX.

An hour later, having refilled every water-carrying vessel, we too got under way. Scarcely had we gone three hundred yards from the well, however, when a rifle bullet whizzed over our heads and plunked into the higher ground some distance beyond. We

stopped and turned, to find that we were followed by a party of five ruffians, two of whom we could see had rifles. Grunt shouted out to ask what they wanted, upon which they waved to us, as much as to imply that it was all a mistake and we could go on.

It is difficult to know what leads one to do certain things on such occasions: whether we were not inclined to allow so risky a mistake to pass unnoticed, or whether it was that we did not like to leave such doubtful characters in our rear; something at any rate induced us to find out more about them, so we began to walk back towards the well. To our surprise they too then began retreating, so six of us halted while Cochrane and Grunt approached them alone. Still, however, our friends seemed far from keen to make our nearer acquaintance—or rather we should say, renew it, for it was now possible to recognise amongst them the two who had ridden in on donkeys an hour before. This helped to explain their caution, for perhaps seeing our bold front, they thought it better to keep out of range of those revolvers of ours; at any rate they kept moving off as fast as Cochrane and Grunt advanced towards them. Even the armed men would not remain within shouting range, so that pourparlers were somewhat at a standstill. Some of the others were by this time getting in amongst the village houses where it was hard to see what they were up to. They might work round under cover, and so suddenly come in on the flank of our two envoys if they went back much farther towards the well. Cochrane therefore called a halt, and waited for the six behind to move up to some higher ground from which it would be easier to

watch the opposing party. Some of these, however, even disappeared over the low ridge beyond the village, reappearing later reinforced by three more men. Meanwhile a period of stalemate ensued: our two envoys were not to be enticed into the village, still less would the enemy come any nearer. It must have been a full quarter of an hour that we stood there looking at one another.

At length, in reply to Grunt's repeated inquiries as to what they wanted, the nearest man started taking off his clothes, and made signs for us to do the same. This, at least, was plain acting if not plain speaking. Events now began to move much more rapidly. There was not much difficulty in deciding what to do, and in any case, on these occasions one acts almost intuitively. If we thought consciously at all, it was that though we were hardly in a position to dispute these men's demands, seeing that our revolvers were only imaginary, we could at any rate give them a run for their money—or, more accurately, for our clothes. To give them these without a struggle was tantamount to relinquishing once and for all what little hope remained of getting out of Turkey; it would further involve the very unpleasant, if not positively dangerous, experience of spending several days and nights in the friendless desert, with next to no clothes or food. Cochrane and Grunt, at any rate, did not hesitate for a moment, although for the last few minutes one of the armed



men had been covering them at a range of little over a hundred yards, and was sure to fire when they turned. And so it happened; but a sustained aim does not make for good shooting, and the shot went wide. The remaining six waited for the two to re-join them, and then all of us, extending into skirmishing order, began a hasty retreat. The chances were not very equal: even if both sides had been unarmed, we were severely handicapped by our packs and water-bottles—a load of something over 25 lb. still. The two full chargals Johnny and Looney had to empty as they ran. Moreover, although by this time we were in hard enough training, we could scarcely expect to possess sufficient stamina for a protracted retirement; and if the ordinary villagers of this lawless countryside were in the habit of turning brigand on every favourable opportunity, we might have others joining in the chase when the first tired of it; a second village had already come into view. However, there was little time to be thinking of all these possibilities; we had the more immediate danger of being hit by one of our pursuers' bullets, for as soon as they had seen us take to flight they reopened fire. One of the rifles was obviously a Mauser, the other gave the impression of being rather an antiquated old blunderbuss; but it is not pleasant to stop even one of those comparatively slow-moving lumps of lead. Strangely enough, how-

ever, none of us felt afraid for his own safety: the chief fear of each was that some one else of the party might be hit, which would mean that all our plans of escape would have to go by the board, for we should naturally all have stayed with the wounded man. Providentially, the wild villagers' shooting was not very good, although one shot struck the ground between Nobby and Perce. At this stage we seriously considered the advisability of dropping one of our packs, in the hope that the Turks might delay their pursuit to look at their loot; but the suggestion was not entertained for more than a moment. So we carried on, doubling for a hundred yards in every three, for with these loads it was impossible to keep running continuously.

The shots were now beginning to follow one another at longer intervals, and looking back we found to our joy that we were actually outdistancing our pursuers. This seemed almost too good to be true, and we began to look round anxiously in case they might perhaps have something else in store. One armed man sent round on a pony or donkey would be enough to cut us off; we therefore kept a sharp look-out to right and left. No one, however, appeared, and after a precipitate flight of over two miles, and the creation, if there had been some one to time us, of a world's record for speed under novel conditions, we found that our pursuers had abandoned the chase. Probably

those imaginary revolvers of ours had still kept them in check, for we noticed that they followed us over each little rise with considerable circumspection, as though fearing we might be lying up for them.

We had come through with the loss of the water in the chargals and of Ellis's water-bottle. The latter had jumped out of its sling at the hottest stage of the pursuit, and had to be left where it fell. May its new owner find it always as empty as it seemed to be with us!

It was now about 12.20 P.M. and the heat at its worst. It was no time, however, to rest or even to slacken our pace more than we could help: and we did in fact carry on at well over four miles an hour until 2.30 P.M. Then seeing no further signs that we were followed we allowed ourselves a short halt. By this time, of course, our throats were parched with thirst, while our clothes were saturated with perspiration; but worst discomfort of all was the pain of our feet. The violent running and marching, the fiery heat of the sun above, and the radiation from the glowing earth beneath had combined to reduce them to bits of red-hot flesh, and we longed for water to cool them. But everywhere stretched the desert, dusty and bare, bordered by naked barren hills. To avoid approaching those immediately S. of us, we had latterly altered our course rather to the S.E.; for we were developing an unholy and not unnatural dread of

brigands, and imagined that every hill was infested with them.

Not till 4.30 that evening did we dare to take more than a few minutes' rest. As we lay on the ground we scrutinised with deepest interest the Taurus Mountains, which, as the heat-haze lifted, stood out clearly ahead—the last great barrier to be overcome before we reached the sea. From a distance of about sixty miles it looked a level range, broken by no outstanding peak, pierced by no low-lying pass. Anywhere in the portion where we were likely to cross, however, the map indicated a height of not more than 5000 feet; so we turned our attention to nearer objects. In the next shallow valley we could see several flocks of sheep, or so we thought, and these we watched eagerly through our glasses, for their presence denoted water. We fancied we could see water a little beyond them, but when we reached the spot after dark we found that mirage had once again deceived us. It was not until we had marched another sixteen weary miles that our needs were to be met.

That night, the beginning of our third week of liberty, the strain of recent events and our anxiety for water were reflected in our tempers, and Cochrane had the thankless task of trying to keep the balance between those who demanded water on or off the nearest route, and those who howled for smooth-going for the sake of their agonised feet. A twentieth-century Solomon, he



kept the balance well; for the sore-feet brigade he had two hours over an ideal marching surface; then, in deference to the all-for-water party, two hours over stone-strewn ground at the foot of some low hills which held out the best prospect of finding the precious fluid. The search, however, was all in vain; for although we passed close above a village where there must have been water, we did not dare to seek the source of its supply. This night opium pills and "Kola" tablets were in great demand, but even those could not keep some of us going, and soon after midnight we took an hour's rest. A little before we had passed by an enormous flock of sheep: so disheartened were some of us that we very nearly decided to go up and ask the shepherd to show us the nearest water. This, however, Cochrane wisely decided not to risk. Instead, while the remainder lay down and rested, he left his pack and went off with Old Man to search for it. But their self-sacrifice was without result. After an hour's absence they rejoined the party, and we marched on, determined to make a last desperate effort to reach the Ak Gueul (White Lake) near Eregli. This was still fifteen miles or more away, and would, we knew, be salt; but it was the next water marked on our map. Just before we halted we had crossed a track, and along this we started off at something over four miles an hour. This pace, of course, could not have lasted, and

providentially, an hour later, we were deterred from our purpose by the sound of more sheep bells. There must therefore be water somewhere in the neighbourhood. Though it was a pity to waste the moon, which was at its full and would only set an hour before dawn, we decided, after all, to wait the two hours which remained before daylight. We could then find out where the flocks were watered, and be fairly certain to find good concealment amongst the ridges of the Daradja Dag, which was visible to the S.W. At this time we had, on the average, less than a pint of water a head.

Dawn on the 21st August found us huddled behind a couple of small rocks, seeking in vain for shelter from the cutting wind which was blowing harder every minute from the north. So chilled were we that another opium pill all round was voted a wise precaution. "Seeing red" is not an uncommon occurrence, but, owing to the opium, some of us that morning saw a green sunrise. In the valleys on either side were numerous flocks and herds; but no stream gladdened our straining eyes, nor could we recognise a well. There was no village in sight, so at six o'clock we determined to take the risk of passing the shepherds, whom we could see below, and to push on at all costs towards Eregli. We had moved down the S.W. slope of the hill for this purpose, and had gone a few hundred yards across the valley, when

we hit upon another Moses' Well, this time no less than 200 feet deep. With joy did we draw water out of that well of salvation, for such in the light of later events it proved to be. We were at the time within a few hundred yards of a large flock of sheep; but a rainstorm was brewing, and the shepherds were far too occupied with getting their sheep together to worry about our presence. We were thus able to fill up all water-vessels undisturbed, after which we went back to some broken-down stone enclosures which we had previously passed. One of these, about ten feet square, we reached at 8 A.M., having collected little twigs and dried weeds as we went. We now had concealment from view and a little shelter from the wind, but not from the rain, which soon began to fall and continued in heavy squalls until late in the afternoon. Every now and then the officer of the watch peeped over the wall to see that no one was approaching. That day, however, we saw nothing but the flocks and some men with camels, who came over the hills where we had been at dawn but did not come our way. At intervals we regaled ourselves with tea and brews of rice and cocoa, or rice and Oxo. Of rice we had almost a superfluity compared with other food, owing to the number of days on which we had been unable to cook. But the hot food and drink did not suffice to keep us warm, so that every shower left us

shivering like aspen leaves. Even opium proved no longer effectual, though probably to it and to liberal doses of quinine is attributable the fact that none of us suffered from chill or fever after our exposure on that day.

Late that afternoon the sun appeared for a time, enabling most of us to snatch a little sleep. This was what we needed more than anything else. Much refreshed, we left our rude shelter at 6 P.M., and hurriedly refilling our water-bottles at the well, continued across the valley. Within an hour we were lying at the top of the low ridge on its southern side. From here we overlooked the bare plain stretching to the marshes near Eregli, and thought we saw the reflection of water in the Ak Gueul. When six hours later, and after covering seventeen or eighteen miles, we reached the lake, it was to find that it was dry and that it had been only the white salt-enorusted basin that we had seen. There was nothing to do but carry on. Besides the need of water, to keep us moving an icy wind blew without respite upon our backs, making even the short hourly halts a misery. Secondly, we had on the previous day checked our food supply, and calculated we had only enough for another four days at the most. Meanwhile, there still remained the Taurus range to be crossed.

We therefore pushed ahead and were soon fighting our way through thick reeds. The struggle continued for two hours, and so exhausted us



that towards the end we had to halt for a few minutes and eat the biscuit which was part of the coming day's ration. When we renewed the battle, it was with the expectation of finding ourselves at any moment crossing the main line of railway between Karaman and Ereğli. This, of course, had not been built when our map was made, but we judged it must be on our side of the foothills of the Taurus, to the nearest point of which we were now making in the hope of being hidden there by dawn. If the railway were guarded, as it had been at all bridges and culverts when we passed along it on our way to captivity more than two years before, our approach, we thought, would be well advertised by the crackling of the reeds. In many places these were as stiff as canes and as much as eight feet in height. Our only hope was that the sentries would be octogenarians, and bestupezied into inaction by the apparent charging of a whole herd of wild elephants.

At 4 A.M. we emerged from the reeds to find that the railway was not on our side of the nearest ridge. Dawn found us safely hidden in a deep and rocky ravine, preparing to spend our first day in the Taurus. The merciless north wind still sought us out—so much so indeed that even in the sun it was impossible to keep warm until close on midday. We had about half a bottleful apiece of water, and under these chilly conditions it would have been ample for the day. Unfortunately it was again es-

sential to cook rice, as we could afford no more biscuits; so all the water had to be expended on boiling. To be precise, our day's ration consisted of one pint mugful of rice and Oxo each: liquid refreshment there was none.

Some of us felt half drunk for want of sleep, or perhaps as a reaction after the opium, when at dusk that evening we moved up to the top of the ravine; but our limbs were slightly rested. We were glad also to find that at sunset the icy wind had dropped for a while, and that the country ahead of us was a plateau with only slight undulations and a splendid marching surface. We now took a S.S.E. direction, for we had decided to make our way across the Taurus by the most direct route to the sea. At 8 P.M. we were settling down to our second five minutes' halt, when Looney caught the glint of steel rails to our left front, and a look through the glasses established the fact that we had reached the railway. No sentries or patrols appeared to be in sight, so we completed the usual hourly rest and then out boldly across the line and gained some slightly more hilly country to the S.E. From here we saw a hut some way down the line, which may have been built for the use of sentries; but whether this was so or not had ceased to be of vital interest, for we were now safely across.

After only another hour's march all of us were beginning to feel much more fatigued than we had expected on setting out that evening, the

effects probably of lack of sleep and water. However it was, we now had another consultation as to the route we should attempt to follow to the coast. This time we came to the conclusion that it would be taking a very grave risk to go by the shortest way—for the following reason. In that direction the map showed difficult country and very little in the way of villages or likely places for water, so that, with the short rations now remaining, an accident, such as descending a ravine and finding no immediate way out again, or even a sprained ankle, might be disastrous to the whole party. We decided, therefore, if nothing else interfered, to go at first a little west of south, and later make our way across the Taurus where the mountains were lower, following the valley of the Sakara river down to the sea.

At 9.30 P.M. we agreed to halt and give ourselves a long sleep till midnight. Before the end of it most of us were sorry we had settled upon such a lengthy one, so chilled were we by the cold. While we were resting, a train rumbled by in the valley below, showing that we were still not far from the railway. On resuming our journey therefore, we kept among the low hills. An hour's fast marching brought us into sight of a village, round which we worked our way, and on the further outskirts were overjoyed to find a well. The water was about sixty feet down, and so cold that for all our thirst we could hardly drink a mugful

each. We remained at the well for nearly three-quarters of an hour filling all our water-bottles and chargals. Now and again a dog barked, but no inhabitants put in an appearance, so that we had leisure to inspect a bed of Indian corn near by. Unfortunately we could only find a single cob. It was very young and tender, and most refreshing, as far as it went when divided between eight.

With our thirst quenched by the ice-cold water, we were able to maintain an average pace of three miles an hour until 4.30 next morning. The indefatigable Cochrane was even then for going on. Most of the party, however, were utterly exhausted; for though since leaving the well the surface had been passably good, the country had been on a slight incline, and intersected by a series of irrigation channels and natural nullahs, which all added to our fatigue. In one of the latter, then, we removed our kits, and collected little bits of dried thorn and scrub in readiness to make a fire as soon as it should be light enough to do so without risk of detection. We had marched sixteen or seventeen miles, though not all in the most useful direction. There was gladness, therefore, when the two cooks on duty announced that the first dixie-ful was ready: a mixture of rice and cocoa once more graced the menu. Cochrane, who had gone ahead to reconnoitre, had still not returned, and the rest began to be anxious



lest he should have been seen, or have come to grief in some way. After a while three volunteers went out to look for him, and eventually saw his head peering cautiously over a rock. He had been out off from the nullah by the chance arrival of a shepherd, and had been biding his time till the latter should think fit to move to pastures new.

The sun was already hot, and its heat, although considerably relieved by the cool breeze, once more precluded the possibility of any real sleep. Nor could we forget our hunger. On this occasion we were rather extravagant with our water. We had two brews of rice and Oxo and one of tea; then we boiled our last two handfuls of rice with a little cocoa, and so had a rice mould to take along with us in the dixie and eat that evening. Unfortunately the cook, who shall be nameless, upset it, so that a fair proportion of grit became an unwelcome ingredient of the dish. Our lavishness in water knew no bounds when we proceeded to boil up half a mugful, in which we were all to shave. This was the first time we did so since leaving Yozgad sixteen days before, so that the two little safety-razor sets were given an arduous task that day: few of us succeeded in removing all the growth without the use of two of our spare blades. It was a long and painful per-

formance, but most refreshing in its result, and, as it proved, a very timely return to comparative respectability.

During the morning we went once again into the problem of food. At dawn we had most of us been in favour of going into the next suitable village, and there boldly replenishing our supplies as Germans; but as we recovered a little from our over-fatigue, we agreed with Cochrane that we might still reach the coast in three days. On tabulating our total supplies, we found we should in this case be able to allow ourselves the following daily rations. For the rest of the day already begun, the rice, cocoa, and grit mould. For the second day, remnants of tapioca, beef-tea, and ovaltine, amounting in all to about  $4\frac{3}{4}$  oz. per head; and chocolate, cocoa, and arrowroot, totalling perhaps  $1\frac{3}{4}$  oz. per head. For the third day, there would remain for each member of the party one biscuit, 5 oz. of raisins, 1 oz. of chocolate; and, between the party as a whole, four tins of Horlick's malted milk tablets.

For emergencies after the third day nothing would be left, so that, if on reaching the sea we did not at once find a dhow or other boat, and that with provisions, we should still be lost. But man proposes, God disposes; and it is as well for man that it is so.

(To be continued.)

## THE STORY OF OUR SUBMARINES.—II.

BY KLAXON.

## ANTI-SUBMARINE WORK.

## I.

BEFORE speaking of anti-submarine work, a very short description of the German submarine and its variations in type is advisable.

A U-boat is not unlike our ordinary patrol-type submarine. She varies in size and capabilities, but is generally a 16-knot (surface speed) boat, with two guns—a 4.1-inch and a 22-pdr., two bow and two stern torpedo-tubes, and about 800 tons surface displacement.

A U-B boat is a small patrol boat of about 500 tons surface displacement; one 4.1-inch or 22-pdr. gun, one stern and four bow torpedo-tubes, 13 knots surface speed. There is also a "Flanders" type U-B class, of 250 tons and  $8\frac{1}{2}$  knots speed. The latter class worked from Ostend and Zeebrugge.

A U-C boat is about 400 tons; one 22-pdr. gun, 12 knots speed, one stern and two bow torpedo-tubes. The Flanders type U-C's are of 180 tons and  $7\frac{1}{2}$  knots speed. All U-C's are primarily fitted for mine-laying.

The U cruisers are from 2000 to 3000 tons displacement, carry two 5.9-inch guns, have a speed of 16 knots, and in some cases are fitted as

mine-layers, in addition to their torpedo equipment.

The number of slight divergencies from the main types is considerable. Boats were built in standardised groups, and, during the second half of the war, in great quantities. On November 11th, 1918, the position was, roughly, as follows: 200 submarines in German hands, commissioned or completing—135 (roughly) on the building slips. About 200 had been destroyed up to that date.

In 1918 the average number of German submarines at sea—in the Adriatic, Irish Sea, Channel, and North Sea—was (in the spring) 20, in October, 24. The number available for service—excluding Mediterranean boats, school boats, and boats out of date—was about 72; so that, roughly, one-third were kept at sea, and the remainder resting or repairing.

The medium-size German submarines are quite good-looking boats, but the German mind showed itself clearly in the U cruisers. It has been an axiom at sea since the days of the Vikings, that a thing that looks ugly isn't good seamanship. British submarines are better stream-lined than



German boats, and have generally a more "varminty" and clean-run look. The sight of a U cruiser in dry dock recalls to one's mind a pair of pictures once published in 'La Vie Parisienne'—a Paris weekly which has done as much to win the war as any other periodical. The first picture showed a "seventy-five" gun, and standing beside it a girl built on clearly

thoroughbred lines, balancing a cartridge on her hand. The second was of a squat 11-inch howitzer, accompanied by 'La Vie's' interpretation of a homely German Frau clutching the great shell to her portly figure. The two pictures illustrate rather well the ideas of our own K-boat designers as compared with the mental state of the authors of the German submarine cruisers.

## II.

It used to be a catchword of naval correspondents that "submarine cannot fight submarine." Well, it is true, and it isn't. What can be done is that one submarine submerged can torpedo another submarine on the surface: in which case submarine No. 2 is not really a submarine at the moment. Two submarines may meet and have a gun-action, with possible damage to one or both of them, and much entertainment to their crews; but in such a case neither boat would be acting as a submarine.

Throughout the war our boats have been on the lookout for, and ready to engage, any enemy submarines met with. We have had boats, in varying numbers, since the middle of 1915 engaged definitely in submarine-hunting—that is, those boats that could be spared from the all-important task of watching the Bight and its approaches. The anti-submarine boats we sent out simply proceeded to areas where, by inference or

by "information received," U-boats might be expected to be working. The ordinary patrol boats on passage to and from their stations, or while watching at their stations for the coming of big ships, often met with U-boats, and naturally took the chances the gods gave them with gun, torpedo, stem, or whatever means seemed best at the moment.

Of course, the torpedo was the usual weapon used. A hit on a big ship, once the destroyer screen has been avoided, is comparatively easy; a hit on a U-boat is mighty difficult. The attacker is looking at his target with his eye (the top prism of the periscope) only a few inches above water-level. His view of the enemy, therefore, is confined to a square-looking conning-tower, with heavy "jumping wires" (sweep deflectors) running down from it to a low grey line of hull. It is therefore difficult to exactly estimate the enemy's speed or course, and the short time at the

attacker's disposal for deciding on his deflection and turning to bring his tubes to bear does not allow of an accurate calculation based on bearings of the passing target. In fact, it is usually a case of "make up your mind and shoot quick." In addition to the handicap of the target being small, there is the knowledge that one must be far more careful to show only a little of the periscope during the attack, as submarines are far more on the *qui vive* for periscopes than big ships are. For one thing, they know what a periscope looks like; and for another, they have more knowledge of what a torpedo can do against craft of small buoyancy.

The moral effect of the use of submarine against submarine was probably greater than the direct effect. It discouraged U-boats from coming to the surface to use their guns against merchant ships, and restricted them to their torpedo armament, which was of course limited. A U-boat on the surface had the same sensations as a man would have who fell overboard crossing the Indian Ocean, where the sharks are always keeping station astern of a ship: a feeling of impatience, and anxiety to get back to where he came from. As an instance, I will mention the case of U-81, who, while engaged in the congenial work of pumping shells into an English merchant ship, received two torpedoes amidships from "E 54," who had been following operations through her

periscope since U-81 first rose to the surface. "E 54" picked up seven survivors, one of whom was the Captain. The latter officer was somewhat damaged by the explosions, and was in danger of drowning until "E 54's" First Lieutenant dived for him and brought him aboard. Another survivor was the Warrant Officer, who, on being taken below, sent a message by "E 54's" coxswain to Commander Raikes, to the effect that it was advisable to keep a good look-out and to submerge again soon, *as there was another U-boat diving near at hand*. Commander Raikes would no doubt have acted on the second part of this excellent advice had it not been necessary for him to assist the damaged steamer into harbour. If one once begins to quote cases, it is difficult to keep from irrelevance, but I must note here that at the moment of the sinking of U-81, the crew of the steamer very wisely had abandoned ship, and the change from a U-boat in full view to a ditto E boat took place so suddenly that there was a natural misunderstanding when "E 54" stood over to tow the boats back to their ship. The steamer's crew were living too fast in twenty minutes for the situation to be quite clear, and in view of their knowledge of the way in which certain U-boats had dealt with survivors, the fact that "E 54" had to actually chase the lifeboats is comprehensible.

The following is from re-



ports of captured U-boats men:—

“Several prisoners give clear evidence of the fear inspired by the possible presence of Allied submarines submerged when they themselves were on the surface. Besides the probable results of this method of attack, the apprehension of it constitutes a seriously demoralising influence.”

From an officer:—

“We knew that for every boat we had working in an area, you had two looking for us.”

The latter statement shows an error in the officer's calculations. The odds were very much the other way; but his error shows that moral effect goes for a good deal in war.

In actions between submarines, guns have also been used, as have rifles, pistols, and—at short range in the dark—verbal abuse; but no definite sinkings on either side can be traced to these causes. In our boats it was the rule to attack submerged, if possible—in the U-boats it was rare to find an inclination to pursue a gun-action to its logical end. A submarine, when badly hit, can refuse action at any time by diving. This, of course, forces the opponent left on the surface to dive also, as it would be unhealthy then to remain on the surface in that locality. Our submarines were always more lightly gunned than the U-boats. Few of them carried more than one small gun—and that one usually an anti-aircraft weapon. This was for two reasons. Firstly, our boats are meant for warship-destroying as opposed to commerce-destroying.

The attacking of warships implies speed under water (one should have, roughly, at least half the speed of the class of ship one is after). Big guns are bad for steam-line, and therefore militate against high submerged speed. Secondly, we were supplying guns to Allies, our own Army, and to all our merchant ships and “mystery ships,” and the submarines had to take their turn at the supply with the rest.

The British officer always had an inclination to use the ram if he got a chance. A submarine can ram almost anything, and still, as the U.S. Navy puts it, “Get away with it.” Our boats have a ten-inch razor-edged cast-steel stem fitted to them for net-cutting and other purposes. They can also, by their system of compartments, stand damage forward to the extent of a crushed bow, as far back as the bow hydroplanes, with no great risk to themselves. Add to these things the delightful idea of being able to thoroughly damage your ship and to be praised instead of court-martialed for the action, and it is obvious that a number of attempts along this line have been made. There is no record of one having been successful to the extent of sinking an enemy, but in some cases U-boats were damaged in this way. A curious case of accidental ramming was that in which “E 50” (Lieutenant-Commander Michell), when diving near the N. Hinder Light-vessel, sighted a periscope close

aboard on the bow. A moment later the two boats collided heavily at 25 feet by gauge. "E 50's" Captain, deciding that the other boat was underneath him, put his hydroplanes "hard-to-dive," and flooded tanks with the idea of carrying the enemy to the bottom (at that point 180 feet away) and crushing him. The U-boat, however, broke away, and after showing her stern and conning-tower a moment on the surface, sank again. It was later discovered that the enemy got home damaged. "E 50" came out of the affair with the loss of her port-bow hydroplane and a few dents. On such an occasion, there is no time to inspect your own boat for damage before making up your mind if you should or should not instantly rise to the surface. It is a natural action to bring your own boat up as soon as possible, in case the chance of ever getting her up at all goes by. The Captain of "E 50" acted on the rule that a dead U-boat is a primary consideration, whatever one's natural inclinations may be; his crew, though not consulted, were in full agreement with him.

Again, I must quote an irrelevant incident. There were two of our submarines in the Heligoland Bight patrol, diving in adjacent areas. They both returned to harbour slightly damaged—one under the impression that, while diving at 55 feet, he had been run over by a surface vessel; the other reporting that, while diving at 25 feet, he had bumped over a submarine. On meeting in

harbour they found the times of the mysterious collisions tallied to the minute.

In April 1915, the idea of using a fishing trawler as a decoy originated in the *Vulcan's* flotilla (C-class submarines)—based on Leith. The U-boats had been sinking our fishing-boats at their leisure, and it was clear that if a few U-boats were mysteriously lost on this duty, it would be a discouraging thought for the remainder. It must be remembered that a "missing" boat has a certain moral effect—a boat openly sunk by gun-fire, &c., serves only as an example for others to be more careful. If a certain duty or a certain area becomes unhealthy for U-boats without any explanation, it tends to make the enemy chary of sending boats out on similar work until the matter is cleared up. Hence the secretiveness of the Admiralty during the war on the losses of enemy submarines. Prisoners taken from U-boats were prevented from explaining to anybody how their boats were sunk. It may have been from humanity, or it may have been from the consideration that U-boat prisoners were usually communicative in a useful way, but orders were strict that as many prisoners as possible were to be saved from the water when U-boats were sunk.

The *Vulcan's* idea was of masterly simplicity. The U-boats found a fishing fleet easy prey; therefore a fishing fleet with a "catch" on it would get results. One trawler of each fleet was to tow, instead of a trawl, a C-class sub-



marine. The submarine would keep well submerged at the end of the hawser, and need not necessarily keep a periscope look-out, in view of the fact that the critical moment for her to slip tow (a tow can be slipped while submerged) would be notified to her by telephone from the trawler's bridge. Submarine "C 24" was the first to show that the theory worked out in practice.

It will be seen, however, that she did the work under a considerable handicap, and had the most aggravating experience a submarine can have—that of doing an attack with "something wrong with the works."

Lieutenant Taylor, in command, reported:—

"At 9.30 A.M., June 23rd, I heard a report which I took to be an explosive signal from trawler *Taranaki* to show my periscope, I being at 30 feet. I telephoned her for confirmation and got the answer, 'Submarine 1500 yards on port bow'; and then again, as trawler altered course, 'Submarine 1000 yards astern.'

"I gave the order to slip, but the slipping gear jammed in 'C 24.' I then told *Taranaki* to slip her end, which she did. I went ahead, helm hard a-starboard, to attack submarine astern. The boat immediately sank to 38 feet with 5° inclination, bow down. The trim then took some time to adjust, as I had at that time 100 fathoms of 3¼-inch wire hawser, 100 fathom 8-inch coir hawser, and 100 fathom telephone cable hanging from the bows. Eventually sighted enemy's conning-tower 1000 yards off. Closed to 500 yards, manoeuvred for beam shot, and fired 9.55 A.M. Torpedo hit enemy amidships. I then came to the surface and picked up 'U 40's' Captain. My propeller then refused to move, and it was found that there were 20 turns of telephone cable round the shaft . . ."

Lieut.-Commander Edwards (in trawler *Taranaki*) was, of course, ignorant of the fact that "C 24" was somewhat hampered by these cables hanging at the bow:—

" . . . 9.30 A.M., June 23rd.—Enemy submarine rose and fired a shot across my bows from 2000 yards range—shell burst 20 yards ahead—informed 'C 24' by telephone. 9.45: Slipped *Taranaki's* end of tow, as 'C 24's' slip had jammed. Got boat out to simulate abandoning ship and panic. Saw 'C 24's' periscope pass, attacking. 9.55: Observed torpedo run and explode under conning-tower of enemy. An officer and a petty officer the only survivors . . ."

Lieut.-Commander Dobson, in command of "C 27," has an abrupt and almost *blasé* report to make of his sinking of "U 23":—

"7.55 A.M., July 20th: Lieut. Cantlie in trawler *Princess Louise* telephoned to me that a hostile submarine was in sight 2000 yards on the port bow—telling me not to slip for a little while. Telephone then broke down [*It would—of course*].

"At 8 A.M. I heard the sound of shots falling on the water and decided to slip, which I did. Turned to starboard to get clear of trawler and came to 18 feet for a look. Closed enemy to 500 yards, and fired port tube at 8.12. As I fired I observed enemy start her engines, and torpedo missed astern. I shifted my deflection and fired the starboard tube. Torpedo hit the submarine just abaft the conning-tower. I blew main ballast tanks and picked up seven survivors (Captain, two officers, and four men). The weather being too bad to get in tow again, I returned to harbour."

Lieutenant Cantlie, in the trawler, reports:—

"7.55 A.M., July 20: Sighted hostile submarine three points on port bow, distant 2500 yards—informed 'C 27,' and told her not to slip yet. Hostile submarine steering across my

bows. 7.56: Enemy opened fire, apparently trying to hit trawler. Telephone to 'C 27' broke down. 8.3 A.M.: Tow slipped. Enemy fired about 7 shots altogether. Employed trawler's crew in hoisting out boat, rushing about the deck, and appearing to be in a panic. 8.10 A.M.: Observed 'C 27's' periscope on starboard quarter attacking enemy. 8.12 A.M.: Observed 'C 27' fire a torpedo, which missed astern. Cleared away starboard gun for action. Enemy opened fire again on trawler, and commenced turning to port. I opened fire with my starboard gun, hoisting white ensign at the main. At the same moment second torpedo hit just abaft enemy's conning-tower. Column of water and smoke rose about 80 feet high. As it cleared away 30 feet of bow of submarine at a large angle could be seen. . . ."

The success of this scheme of U-boat hunting depended, of course, entirely on the secrecy maintained as to its existence; it was therefore unfortunate that the prisoners from U-23 were allowed to mix with interned German civilians who were about to be repatriated—a mistake which was excusable in the midst of the general confusion caused in the authorities' minds by the change from peace to war. At that date the disposal of prisoners

was out of the Admiralty's hands, and on this mistake being discovered, steps were taken that prisoners having secrets to tell should be prevented from telling them to Germany. The trawler scheme of hunting, however, had to be given up for some time.

In 1916 U-boats again became active against the fishing fleets on the Dogger, and C boats were again sent out to work with the trawlers. On August 28, "C 29" (Lieut. Schofield), while being towed submerged, struck a mine off the Humber and was lost with all hands. The method was continued for a few more trips, but the U-boats being by then too careful, it was abandoned before the end of the year.

There were eighteen German boats in all sunk by torpedoes from our submarines, while others were hit but were able to get home. I will try to imagine a typical case of submarine *v.* submarine, in order to give an idea of what lies behind the bare despatches of the victors.

### III.

The E boat was working a "beat" ten miles to the north of the North Dogger Bank Lightship—a dull beat, too, as in 1918 the U-boat captains had long ago given up the idea of passing near lightships in surface trim. The patrol was not there for enemy submarine strafing, however. The E boat was a unit of the watching semicircle that dived eternally,

from the Haaks Light off the Dutch coast to Horn's Reef off Jutland, watching for a cloud of smoke to the east that would tell of the coming of the High Sea Fleet. The boat had been on the billet two days, and had five more to wait before she started her run home to Harwich. She had spent the short spring night jogging about on the surface at six knots, charg-



ing her batteries, and at 4 A.M. she slowed up and slipped under. It was her thirtieth patrol trip, and she expected it to be as dull as most of the others had been; there was a kind of yawning, done-it-all-before air in the way the crew took her under that morning, that showed, besides good training, a familiarity with intricate mechanism that had developed into something approaching contempt. The boat settled to her day's dive at twenty feet, her periscope moving slowly along at a speed of about two knots, leaving a very faint rippling line on the smooth North Sea surface. The Captain swung the periscope round, wiped the eyepiece with a nominally clean chamois-leather pad, and then leaned back against the diving gauge, finishing the fag-end of a cigarette. It was still twilight in the world above him, and the bad light, combined with the fact that periscopes are very apt to "fog" for some minutes after diving, when the engines are still hot enough to make the air in the boat steamy, would prevent him seeing anything clearly for twenty minutes. It was a rule of his to keep the early morning periscope watch himself, as he believed that if anything exciting was going to happen it would always occur at dawn. Certainly, as far as U-boats go, his ideas were right, as a boat on passage is humanly liable to hold on to her surface speed, and trim as long as there is a hint of darkness left to protect her, and in submarine war it is the one

that gets under earliest that lives longest.

The Captain took another look through the periscope, and saw the familiar level floor of the sea blending with the pink and grey of the dawn just as he had seen it on so many previous mornings. He looked forward along his beat and saw the sleeping forms of sailors all the way along the battery deck cloths till his eye was attracted by a pair of sea-boots that projected through the gap in the wardroom curtain. Those were his First Lieutenant's boots, and his First Lieutenant, he knew well, was snoring loudly beyond them. He threw his cigarette end impatiently down the periscope well and began slowly moving the heavy periscope round, shuffling around with it as he swept the clearing horizon. It seemed a silly thing to be keeping the morning watch, of all watches, when he had two young and lazy officers to work for him. Their eyes were younger than his, and his were more valuable to the country anyway. It seemed absurd that only he and four "diving hands" should be awake, while all the rest snored. Why should he, an experienced and skilled officer, be at work at half-past four on a dull morning? Why, when he was a junior Lieutenant . . . he straightened up from the eyepiece. . . .

"Call the First Lieutenant!"

An hour later the situation in the E boat was the same, except for the fact that a gloomy officer in a soiled

sweater and a pair of still more soiled grey flannel trousers plodded round the periscope pedestal, while a pair of stockinged feet showing through the curtain showed whither the Captain's train of thought had led him. The crew still dozed fore and aft the boat. At regular intervals the hydroplane motors buzzed noisily as a turn of the wheels corrected her depth; from right aft came the monotonous ticking of a main motor that slowly turned the port propeller and urged the boat lazily along. In the wardroom the Captain, supremely oblivious to a monotonous drip of leaking water from a seam directly over his outthrown left hand, was back in the days before the war, when the Berkeley Hounds had had three forty-five minute bursts in a day, and he had ridden all three on the same horse. In his dreams he seemed to hear the drumming of many horses' hoofs on the sloping pastures, and the clash and tinkle of stirrups touching as the crowded field fought for room at the first fence. Then he woke and lay propped on one elbow, with a leg thrown over the side of his bunk, while his heart missed two complete beats. He had not heard the order of "action stations" that came from the periscope position, but he knew well the only possible order that could send men rushing past him to man the bow tubes. He pulled his sea-boots on as he sat up, then jumped down and covered the distance aft to the periscope

in half a dozen swift strides. The First Lieutenant, his face alight with suppressed emotions, stepped clear and spoke: "Fritz—bow-on, I think—big one"—then dashed forward to superintend the men at the bow tubes. All along the boat a clatter and ring of metal on metal told of preparation for firing. Amidships a hiss and splutter of air showed that the beam tubes were flooding, till a spurt of water coincided with a sharp cry of "Tubes full, sir!" The Captain spoke into the voice-pipe at his side, and the ticking sound from the main motors rose to a steady hum. He lowered the periscope till the eyepiece was level with the deck, and stood drumming his fingers against the hoisting wires. The matter of seeing the tubes cleared away and of keeping the boat's trim right lay now with his officers. His head was to be concerned only with the attack and the shot. He alone would be to blame for a miss now, and he had too well-trained a staff for him to need to worry over any diving details during an attack. His brain was working outside the boat in the early sunshine, where a big and confident U-boat was bound out for her station in the Irish Sea. The enemy was heading straight at him, and he himself was crossing her bow from port to starboard, heading north. To get his bow tubes to bear meant a quick rush to the north to get to a fair range, and then a turn to port till his head was



south and the enemy ran across his sights. He was, in view of the glassy state of the sea, keeping his periscope out of sight as long as possible, and intended to keep the instrument lowered till, on his estimate of the U-boat's course and speed (gauged in his first rapid glance) and his submarine sixth sense, he had turned inwards from a point on his target's starboard bow. In sixty-five seconds from the first sighting of the enemy, peace and quiet reigned again in the E boat. Except for the occasional slight hiss and gurgle as a tube-vent was tested, there was no sign to tell that the whole boat was on a tiptoe of expectant emotion. Three minutes from his first order to increase speed he starboarded his helm and—still with his periscope lowered—began his turn through west to south. His hands fidgeted now on the taut hoisting wires before him, and every nerve in his body oried for a glance at the enemy just to check his mental estimate. His first glance when his turn was half through would show him whether he had judged rightly, or whether he had made a miscalculation which would be heavy on his soul till the end of his days. But his nerves were well in hand and his will strong; the repeater of the gyroscopic compass had ticked slowly round under his gaze until it showed 275°—a trifle north of west. Then the periscope rose with a sigh and a creak of straining wires. He stooped and pressed his eye to the instru-

ment as it rose, waiting for the very earliest glimpse of the upper world. All along the boat the men leaned from their stations to watch, for they knew exactly what depended on the quick decision based on that first glimpse he had taken. To his eye the green flickering circle lightened, paled, and then changed to a clear pale-blue sky and a sparkling stretch of sea. He had hoisted the periscope trained to south-west by south, and his heart gave a jump in gratitude to the training that had given him brains to judge rightly. The U-boat—very near and big—with a little foaming line falling away from her bows, was sailing slowly across the periscope, and he winced as he saw on her bridge the little group of figures that seemed to be looking straight at his face. Instantly he lowered the periscope and forced himself—for he felt that he ought to whisper, in fear of his enemy hearing—to shout the order to “stand by bow tubes.” A few seconds later he spoke again as the periscope rose—“Midships—steady on one eight-five—stop starboard.”

As the surface view showed again he carefully jerked the great instrument a fraction round as he set it at his “deflection”—the angle of lead ahead of the enemy, based on a guess at her speed, that corresponds to the “swing in front” of a rabbit-shooter. Then he lowered his hands from the training-handles lest he should be tempted to move the instrument again, and with

the order to fire trembling on his lips, waited as the grey stem of the U-boat slid evenly into the view, and the conning-tower and the vertical spider-hair line that formed his actual sight drew together.

At the bow tubes three men and an officer crouched, the pulses of certainly one of them working at abnormal pressure. The actual firing of the tubes would come suddenly, electrically controlled by the Captain sixty feet away. *Thud!* the port bow torpedo left with a faint roar and rattle—*Thud!* the heavy ball of the starboard firing-gear came down decisively, and another "18-inch short range—high speed setting" went away on its last run. Two men by the tubes

jerked up the vents to let the water rush back into the space that the torpedoes had left vacant, and each of the crouching group held his breath in agonising expectation. It was really only ten seconds (but it must have felt like a hundred) before the great question was answered: and the answer was savagely and brutally clear. A great clanging report shook the E boat, and the hull quivered as if she had lightly touched something forward. A torpedo man leaned across and closed the two spouting tube-vents, then looked aft and, grinning with relief, sang a pæan of victory along the glittering tunnel of the E boat—"Wow!" he said. "Good-bye-ee-ee!"

#### IV.

The sinking of U-C 65 by "C 15" (Lieutenant E. H. Dolphin) provides an odd case. There is a story behind the official despatch:—

"2.43 P.M.: Sighted enemy submarine on the surface five points on the port bow. Dived and flooded both tubes.

"3.12: Sighted submarine in periscope steering estimated course of N. 70 E, bearing 40° on starboard bow.

"3.15: Fired double shot at 400 yards—one torpedo hit—the other appeared to pass under.

"Submarine sank immediately—noise of explosion slight.

"3.17: Surface—picked up five survivors of U-C 65."

The position was about 25' south of Beachy Head. "C 15" was on patrol in rather misty weather, and at the time of

sighting the enemy both boats were on the surface, U-C 65 steering home up Channel, "C 15" steering N. by E. across her bows. Both boats saw each other at the same time, and the German watched the English boat go under to attack. The obvious reply was to either dive also or to alter course and pass round the "danger-radius" of the torpedoes on the surface. The German Captain had two mental handicaps—over-confidence and (having just finished a long trip) over-anxiety to get home on leave. He decided not to alter course or delay his passage, but explained to his First Lieutenant that it was quite easy to dodge a torpedo if a good



look-out was kept and the helm moved quickly. The First Lieutenant appears to have had philosophic doubts as to the wisdom of the proceeding, his doubting being justified when, on seeing the fring-splash as "C 15" fired, the Captain neatly dodged one torpedo and received the other fairly amidships. Lieutenant Dolphin had fired two—"spread" slightly for deflection; not having "declared to win" with either, the question of which one hit did not trouble him. U-C 65 probably won a moral victory, but—"C 15" sank her.

The C boats working round the N. Hinder Light-vessel were liable to make sudden "contacts" with the enemy, usually in thick weather or at night. Both sides would be trying to make the lightship to fix their positions, and on occasions two belligerent submarines would make the lightship together.

On March 1st, 1917, "C 19" (Lieutenant A. C. Bennett) was steering east from the Hinder Light, when she sighted (by moonlight) a small submarine right ahead steering straight at her. "C 19" decided that this looked like another British G boat, several of which were in the vicinity. Each boat turned to north and flashed a challenge. The German then made I.M.I. (the Morse signal to "repeat" common knowledge to all nations). The boats were then beam to beam at 100 yards' range, and the German hailed in his own language. "C 19" had no

gun, and was trying to swing round to bring the bow tubes to bear, having no doubt as to what to do in the matter. The enemy continued to make I.M.I., and turned away to get out of the line of fire. This made it a stern-chase with "C 19" close up and gaining; the German then fired a star-shell, and "C 19" replied with rifles and automatic pistols. That was too much for the Hun; he kicked his tail up and dived, with the bullets smacking on his conning-tower as he went, and "C 19's" star-board torpedo—fired as he dived—racing over the top of him. The U-boat's periscope showed once on the bow, and "C 19" turned to ram and passed over it, without, unfortunately, hitting anything solid. "C 19," on the 5th March, met another Flanders Flotilla boat, this time with a heavy sea running, which prevented torpedoes being fired with any hope of accuracy. The C boat charged at once, using rifles and pistols as she came in. The enemy dived, and "C 19" passed over her, the bump being slightly felt below. It is possible that the German's periscope was damaged, but he saved his skin by getting under in time.

On the 14th May 1917, in thick weather, "C 6" (Lieutenant Brookes) was feeling for the Hinder Light-vessel. She found it at 7.30 A.M. close aboard, and at the same time a German submarine found it, and, appearing 300 yards away, dived at once. "C 6" went under also and pursued by the use of hydrophones. In

about half an hour the enemy's motors were heard to slow up and stop, and "C 6," thinking he had gone to the bottom to avoid the chase, came to the surface to get the mast down, as it had been left standing in the hurry of getting under. The visibility was only 200 yards, and there was nothing in sight. "C 6" dived again, and, as she did so, heard the rattle and hum of propellers as a torpedo missed her over the top. The German had evidently come up for a look instead of taking bottom. The exasperated "C 6" pursued by hydrophone for another quarter of an hour, but the sound of the enemy's motors was then lost.

The list of "Contacts" with enemy submarines shows that in seven cases the enemy was sunk less than five miles from a headland or navigational mark. When proceeding between mine-fields, or when bound for dangerous waters, it is natural for submarines to get a good departure or landfall if possible, but all such strategic points are unhealthy to approach. The following two cases illustrate this. In each of them the U-boat Captain closed a light in order to get a good navigational departure, and in each case his precaution had fatal results:—

On the 5th April 1917, "C 7" (Lieutenant A. W. Forbes) was waiting at the Schouwen Bank gas-buoy, watching the channel that led to Zeebrugge. She lay on the surface with half-buoyancy, and was undoubt-

edly, as can be guessed from the despatch, on the "top-line" in the matter of being ready for action. Lieutenant Forbes' First Lieutenant was on the sick-list most of the trip, so that he himself was pretty well worn out on his return to harbour by continual watch-keeping and anxiety.

"3.32 A.M.: Sighted submarine on port quarter steering about north, distant 400 yards. Turned and at once fired port torpedo at a range of about 250 yards. Torpedo hit forward with loud explosion, sending up a large column of water. Submarine turned to port and sank in a few seconds. The night was very dark and misty, and no survivors or debris could be seen."

In "E 52's" (Lieutenant P. Phillips) case, U-C 63 was caught as she passed a well-known light-buoy north of the Dover Net Barrage. "E 52" (with her conning-tower only showing) attacked so as to keep the enemy against the moon-light. The only survivor was a Petty Officer, who gave the following account:—

"The night being very cold, the Navigating Warrant Officer, who was on watch, sent the A.B. below to get some coffee. In the meantime the engineer of the boat came on the bridge and stood talking to the officer of the watch, who, in consequence, failed to keep a proper look-out. The Petty Officer himself, chancing to look to port, suddenly saw a submarine on the surface. . . . U-C 63 had just started to turn when she was struck by a torpedo amidships."

And that survivor's statement would be a good thing to frame and put on every ship's bridge in war-time!



The critical time when a bad look-out was being kept could not have been more than a few seconds, but it was long enough to cause death to all but one of the submarine's crew.

The U-boats during the war torpedoed four of our boats, viz.: "E 20" in the Sea of Marmora in November 1915, "E 22" in April 1916 off Yarmouth, "C 34" off the Shetlands in July of 1917, and "D 6" in the Channel in June of 1918. Of these, "C 34" was hit when almost under—the German U-52 firing at the top of his conning-tower as it went down. "E 22" was attacked while beating up and down waiting for orders to proceed to any threatened area on the day of the Yarmouth raid. She saw U-B 18's periscope and tried to ram it, actually bending down the enemy's bow "net-cutter" (the big steel saw that stands up in the bows of U-boats). The German, however, passed under her and got his torpedo in as she turned back.

As far as is known, none of our boats were sunk by enemy submarines apart from the four named. On several occasions U-boats fired torpedoes and used guns against our boats, but the low hulls

of English submarines provide very small targets. I suppose the majority of shells fired at English submarines came from English guns. Certainly the boats were far more nervous about approaching our own harbours than they were of working in enemy waters. The shooting was usually wild and could be treated as amusing, but on occasions fatal results precluded any joking. The surface anti-submarine vessels drew no fine distinctions, and the submarines at times used to deplore their own side's excessive zeal. There is a short extract from a certain boat's signal-log which begins, "Can you give me my position?" and which continues, punctuated by nine rounds of gun-fire, by way of injured protests, to "What did you do in the Great War, Daddy?" as, her identity established and the patrol ship's attentions deflected, the submarine continued her way up harbour.

Out on the patrol areas, however, a British boat diving had to stand her chance. No surface ship could be expected to differentiate between our own and enemy periscopes, and the potency of British depth charges was highly spoken of by those of our boats that had experience of them.

## OUR LAND DAYS.

BY E. S. WILKINSON.

## XIV.—“LOOKING BACK.”

WITH your hand on the plough, neither tradition nor practical experience allows you to look back; but after you have loosed out your horses for the last time, and left your plough on the headland for another to follow, then after a little time you will find yourself perforce looking back and remembering. For myself, when I am asked the plain question, “And did you really like your work on the land?” I find I cannot give a plain answer.

I would do it all again if the clock were suddenly put back to the day I started, and do it again still with the knowledge of what it means clear in my mind; but I cannot balance up the good days and bad, and the “plain” jobs and the “right” jobs, and boil it all down to a simple “Yes, I liked it,” or “No, I didn’t.” Instead of that I will try here to put down a few impressions of days that remain in my mind, as clearly now as when I worked them through from the sun rising; and if you can read an answer in them, it might not be far wrong.

There’s a day when I went to plough in a great 40-acre field that sloped up an open hillside on the wolds.

The furrow was a long one,

and it took a quarter of an hour to go once up and down. We had six other teams ploughing, and a fine mist lying about us. Half the field was always hidden in mist, and the other teams kept vanishing into it up the hill beyond me, or appearing suddenly as they came ploughing back on the downward furrow. Away in the mist you could hear a ploughboy whistling a tune, breaking off sometimes with a low “Who - arve, Boxer!” or “Come on, my lads!” and then slipping back to his tune, with the accompaniment of the jingle of the plough-traces, and the sound of the coulter cutting through the seed-land as the furrow turned over clean from the plough. And all the day round our heads the sea-gulls wheeled and cried,—all the length of the furrow, before me and behind, they settled in a long white line, rising in waves in front of my horses’ feet, only to settle again in the furrow I left behind me. At the time I was busy keeping my furrow straight and trying to improve the running of my plough, as I was not an old hand then, to get her “set right” all at once; but now, looking back, I can see the gulls in the mist again between my horses’ heads and



hear the thud-thud of the team's feet on the soft earth.

Then there is a day in the blazing sun when I "quartered" across the side of a hill, with the land as hard as a rock, and a pair of horses that were not good plough horses at the best of times,—to an inexperienced plough-"boy" fiends incarnate. If I lost my temper for a second, through sheer heat and weariness, and flicked them with the line, for the next hour or so they tore backwards and forwards like maniacs. I had practically to run to keep pace, with the plough grinding and bumping along in the hard stony ground. It was, I think, the worst day I had. Away through a gap in the hills I could see in the distance another little range of hills near my own home. As the sun rose higher and hotter, the racing across the field became intolerable. I ached in every limb, and at last I was at the end of my tether. It was touch and go. I nearly left plough and horses, and headed back to the gap in the hills and home. Perhaps it was so far that I thought I should never get there; anyway, I lay down in the hedge bottom instead, and remained there at least half an hour. What the farmer would have said if he found me, I neither knew nor cared; but he did not find me, and at last I recovered enough to carry on till night and crawl back. I think he does not know how nearly he lost his

"third lad" that day, but it was indeed as near as that. Afterwards that day stood me in good stead, because it became a sort of standard for carrying on; and I find a little entry in my diary—"Low-water mark day. May 23rd."

I remember again a day when the foreman said, "You can go and break up yon heap." "Yon heap" had lain in the yard all winter, and looked harmless enough, but it was a "whited sepulchre." True, he told me it was to be manure for the turnip drill, and it wanted breaking up to mix bone manure into it; but there was innocent grass growing on top of it, and nothing in its appearance to warn me. I would, in the light of future events, have been thankful for a notice telling me to "Keep off *that* grass!" I attacked it with a shovel. There were about thirteen tons of it. After a bit a man came to join me. When he got into the yard, he laughed and said, "It seems to buzz a bit; I think I shall be wanting my pipe." "Yes," I said, "you will." Words fail me, and I cannot deal adequately with my subject: suffice it to say that the hens we found in it had been dead a long time!

By contrast there is a day when I went, with Sam and Jock and a roller, to roll spring corn. They were a handy pair those two. One could drive them "straight as a line," and as the day wore on we made green patterns on the young oats—lovely straight lines of

dark green and light. At the end of the field was a plantation full of beech-trees, and during that day I watched them burst into green. It is perfectly true that I saw the leaves growing on the trees. Where in the morning we had seen but a green shade on the brown, at night I said to Sam, "Aren't the beeches 'ripping'!" I think Sam only said, "Is there going to be a wurzel for tea?" but then he always made a point of pretending he was merely practical.

Back to my mind too comes a day in the depths of winter when Boots, and I, and Jack had to go up to the Home Farm to help to thresh. We had some bran to fetch, so we took "Cobbie" (one of Boots' horses) in a cart. Soon after we started it began to snow, and by about 9 A.M. a heavy storm was upon us, with a gale of wind. Threshing was out of the question, and by 11 o'clock it was clear that it was not going to stop in time for us to do any good that day.

Finally we decided to try and get back to our own farm for dinner. We had about a mile to go down a bleak open road, dead against wind and snow. We yoked up Cobbie, put on our overcoats, and started off, more or less cheered away by the other men, who knew it would be rough on t' top road. Rough indeed it was. We simply couldn't face it, or even speak. We stood in the cart with our backs to the wind and left it all to old Cobbie. We went plunging through the drifts till he

reached the gate where the field-road to our farm turned off. There the drifts were so high that the road was impassable, and we had to head him out into the field. Finally we more or less tobogganed down the steep hill to the stackyard and reeled into the stable. Dan greeted us with "By lad, you'll a'ad a rough ride!" At which we assured him that he could not believe what it was like up at the top. Stamping ourselves warm we gave Cobbie a good dinner, and stumbled across the yard to our own. The road was covered with drifts for a week, and I shall not easily forget the breathless fury of the driving snow that day.

There are countless other days and incidents which, when repeated, would perhaps not seem so fresh and vivid as they do to me. Why, there is even the important fact that we had bacon-cake for tea on Tuesdays, and sometimes Fridays as well, which is almost worth a chapter to itself. But I will not write it.

I will end with the little brown plovers that hatch out in the corn, and the young leverets that lie so close that one can almost hoe them. Poor plovers, their nesting-time is a bit of a struggle when they choose the tillage fields. Sam and I scruffled a field five times over with six nests in it, and five times we took the eggs out of each nest and put them back when we had passed. They are bad to see, though, when you have your work to watch as well, and the first I knew of one little nest was four squashed



eggs behind my roller. I hope the two poor birds tried a nest elsewhere later, and were not ruthlessly crushed again. They are fine birds, and full of pluck and cleverness when they want to protect their nests. I love the way they call, and the sound of their wings as they

come tumbling round one's head. Skylarks, too, are part of work on the land—they sing best of all, I think, when one is working just beneath them. If it was all a question of skylarks when asked, "Did I like my work?" I could at once say "Yes!"

#### XV.—LABOURERS ALL.

Now I have come to the moment when I want to try and give a little account of the men I have worked with, and I find myself sitting pen in hand and unable to begin. I do not know that I can do justice to the friendliness of their spirit or the generosity of their help, and yet if I say too much they would accuse me of "nobbut talk"! I would like to answer the question so often asked: "How did you get on with the other men on the farm?" and I can only answer it by facts.

There were no "other" men, we were all labourers together. Once they knew that we were out to work, we were accepted as fellows, and helped at every turn; never laughed at for our mistakes and ignorance except in the friendliest way, and, best of all, not left in ignorance when a little of their knowledge was going to help to lighten our work. On a farm it is not really possible to do more than your own work. A day's work on the land is a day's work that demands, in nine cases out of ten, the greater part of your physical

energy, and you cannot afford to rush your own job in order to help others with theirs. That is why Boots and I will always count amongst our best friends the men who did do this for us—men who, after hoeing all day, have towards evening hoed a little of our rows as well as their own, so that we could keep pace with the "gang." They were very likely only a little less tired than ourselves, and yet always on the look-out for some friendly turn to help us. I can't think that we have struck men different from other farm hands. Boots and I have worked with a great many different men at our various jobs, and it has always been the same. There is such a fine courtesy about their help too—never an implication of, "You see you couldn't do it till I showed you how!" It always was made to seem just chance that you were being helped. I have ploughed sometimes with seven or eight other ploughs going in the field, and to the casual passer-by I was getting on quite happily, but a man ploughing behind me has noticed some little thing about

the fall of my furrow, or the way my coulter cuts, that he thought he could improve for me. We plough on for a bit before he says anything, and then perhaps we are both cleaning our ploughs at the end together, and he'll say casually, "You plough o' yours seems to be running into t' land a bit—she used to be a good plough, mebbe she's gotten bent a bit ploughing a hedge bottom out." (Nothing to do with me, you see, just the plough to blame.) Then, "Tak' my horses a turn or two about, and I'll see if I can do owt with her," and in a short time I should get her back with, "I think she'll gang better now," and he'd explain he had altered something quite unique, when it was possibly some little thing I ought to have known.

Men who come of families who have worked for generations on the land naturally know every little detail of their work from real practical experience. They know the jobs that look heavy and are not really so bad, and the jobs that look easy and are not. It would be hard to blame them if sometimes they had let Boots and me take the job which we thought looked light, and find it out to our cost; but they did not do it. The longer we worked on the land the more we realised the little ways they had tried to make our work easier. I have carted "muck" for some days on end, with the whole "force" of the estate on the job. That sometimes

meant eight or nine carts going, and perhaps four or five "standing fillers" in the fold-yard. All day long these men filled our carts as we came, in regular sequence, back empty from the field. They would get a little breathing-space sometimes, waiting for a cart to come in, and might use it to loosen some "muck" that was fast and binding the rest down. And then if I came in with my cart and old Jock, after I had backed him into place, a man would say quietly: "You come and fill here; it's nice and loose," and he would go off to another place where it took a bit more "riving" out. I wonder if he knows I knew he'd loosened it five minutes before. I wonder, too, if another man knows what Boots and I thought of him when, after a long day's loading hay, he had forked his last load before night up on to a high stack, and then proceeded to turn Boots off her waggon and fork that up too. I could add many another little item to the debt I owe them. It was the manner of it that was so fine. I've been to another farm to fetch corn, and a man says, "I'll just show you where it is," meaning he'll just loaden it up for me. Then there were friends at the railway station who, when we went for coal, found time to come and shovel a bit for us. And then through it all we had plenty of simple fun—ragging each other about our work, our horses, the forwardness of our crops com-



pared with others, the bits missed by the drill in seed-time, which you cannot wipe out till harvest, and particularly our turn-out of brasses when we had to go into the town, which made the waggons on the other farms on the estate say they would not be seen on the road with us, because it made their harness look dingy!

It is not true that the farm-labourer is lacking in wit and intelligence, or that he is silent because he has nothing to say. His horizon may be limited by his work; he is so sadly lacking in time or opportunity to be interested in anything else. But is it a narrow horizon, bounded by the open sky? Is it an unintelligent job to till the earth? I believe he does not talk, because he knows that only those who have worked with him can understand, and with them there is no need to talk because of that understanding. His greatest fault may be that he recognises no other work but physical toil—but who should look down on him for that?

He takes the finest pride in his work, and he has a very deep confidence in himself. He has not yet been caught fast in the clutches of machinery, time-saving, and money-making. His clock is

still, to all intents and purposes, the sun, and with his feet in the furrow and his hands on the plough, he is a freer man than the one who is earning enough to call half the day his own by grinding at a machine or in an office for the rest. The farm labourer does want more time to himself, and, above all, he wants a half day a week, and he means to get it. His work, I believe, is worth more than he is paid for it, though the war has done more for him than any amount of propaganda could have done in the same time. On the other hand, I sometimes wonder what is going to happen when farm work too is gripped by machinery on every side. What will become of the old traditions of work?

Are we gaining more than we lose, in these days of efficiency and the greatest amount of work for the least amount of time and cost? In gaining time are we gaining leisure? Is it not, within reason, better to work and be tired, and then sleep and rest? I am coming to believe that, with some adjustment of hours and conditions of labour, it is in places where hurry and bustle are of little avail that we shall in the end learn patience again and find content.

#### XVI.—CONCLUSION.

It is not possible for me to judge whether this account of my own experiences will be encouraging or the reverse. I

have tried to make it a true record of what land work means, or at least what I personally found it. There

are hard and tedious jobs in plenty to be found, but there is much besides that, to me, has made them well worth while. Perhaps, to a certain extent, it is the fact of having learnt what a day's work means. At least one learns *how* to work. I think one of the chief difficulties about women's work on the land is that we will make such "heavy weather" of it.

We belong to two classes. The first class there is no need to write much about, and I hope there are not many of them. I mean those who come to work on the land because they think it is a novel thing to do, and because they like the uniform, and want to attract attention. They resent criticism, and fall back on the ridiculous and pathetic plea that: "After all I am only a woman, and what can you expect? I've tried to do my best and they won't have me, so I'll give it up." I have no sympathy for this class of land worker. I knew so well the prejudices against the whole cause of women's labour that they have created in the minds of the farmers and farm-labourers! They have no right to tackle the job without the least intention of sticking to it, and they have no right to say they did not know it would be so hard! However, perhaps there are not many of these "fair weather" workers left now. I think there are not.

Then there is the second class, to which I should be glad to think that Boots and I belong. We are very ordinary

people, who find that the only way to make life possible in these days is to put all our time and energy into work that we hope may be of some value. It is little enough that women as a whole can do when we are at war, except "carry on" in their own homes, and keep confident and cheery when the outlook is not very bright. But there are a fair proportion of us who have found it possible to plunge into fields of labour which are new and strange to women, and I think many people are surprised at the results. In fact I think we have surprised ourselves. You will gather from the first few chapters that I did not personally expect women's land work to succeed. Then the question arises, has it succeeded? And is it a branch of labour that may remain open to women at the end of the war? For myself I doubt it. Some of the dairy work and poultry farming taken up by women in the last two or three years may continue to be done by them, but the rough "all-weathers" work out in the fields, with horses and hoes and muck forks, has only arisen because of the war, and to my mind is only justified by the war. The real reason at the bottom of it is that it is unpractical to have a type of labour on the land which is not able to deal with every kind of work as it arises, and there certainly are quite a number of kinds of work on the land which are essentially not women's work. I don't say women cannot make some-



thing of them in an emergency —in fact I am sure they can; but there is a risk of strain attached to them. Also so many jobs on the land are team jobs, and that means that where one member of the team falls short of her share the work is heavier for the others. This is not calculated to make women's work popular in normal times, as the hours and work of the farm-labourer are long and arduous enough as it is. But then these are not "normal times," and it is up to us all to do all we can. If I am right, and there is a slight risk of over-

strain attached to our work, may we not take that risk these days? There is no need to ask. It has already been taken. Up and down the country women are doing work they have not done before, and I believe everywhere they are justified by results.

On the land the corn has not refused to grow for us, or the stock to feed. My last word to any one new to the work is Dan's to me: "There's no need to kill yourself, just keep going 'steady away,' and you'll get more done by half." The keynote, indeed, of all good work: "Steady away."

## AN ADMIRALTY FARM.

*With apologies to those Officers at the Admiralty who, during the spring of 1916, spared no efforts to provide the ships of the White Sea Squadron with fresh meat.*

## I.

It was nearly midnight by the clock, but it was still broad daylight, and if there had been no clouds and no hills to the Northward, the sun would have still been visible skimming along the top of the horizon. The "white nights," as the Russians call them, are not conducive to sleep, although in the mornings the inclination is more marked. Anyhow, there was no apparent intention of going to bed displayed by the small group of officers who were sitting in a circle round a fire in the wardroom of one of H.M. ships: they were discussing what appeared to them at the time a most important question.

They were all dressed in naval uniform, representatives of various ranks from a commander to a clerk, but if the same group had been assembled in July 1914, very few would have been in uniform. One had returned post-haste from a farm in British Columbia, one had been a land-agent in England, one had come from the gold-mines in South Africa, several had been officers in various lines of Steamship Companies, and the Law and the Joint-Stock Banks had supplied one or two of the others with a means of livelihood.

The conversation had rather drifted away from the point under discussion, tending to become frivolous, and the Commander was beginning to look rather harassed and worried.

"It's all very well for you fellows to joke about it," he said, "but I wish to Heaven you would pull yourselves together and help me to make out some answer to this telegram. I got it yesterday morning, and it's high time I sent an answer. Several of you are supposed to be agricultural experts, and I don't believe you know the first thing about it, or, if you do, you conceal it wonderfully well."

"I've rather forgotten what the telegram said," remarked the Canadian. "Read it out again, Clerk, and we'll try and help to make up some sort of a reply; but I wish to repeat once more that I know nothing about either sheep or cattle——"

"I thought you owned a farm in B.C." said one of the younger members of the R.N.R. in rather a surprised voice.

"Perhaps I do, but that doesn't say that I farm it. Maybe I was keeping it to sell to some young idiot from England who knew less about farming than I did," and the



Canadian looked rather pointedly at the last speaker.

"I'll read out the telegram," said the Clerk. He took up the paper lying by his side and read as follows:—

*"From the Admiralty, dated two days ago. . . . My Number so-and-so.*

"Report by telegram whether there is suitable accommodation for pasturing live stock at Forsaken-skie for the use of H.M. ships during the summer months. State whether sheep or cattle, or both, should be sent, and in what numbers, and whether hay can be purchased locally."

"Surely we ought to be able to make up an answer to that," said the land-agent, "and I call it a very reasonable and sensible telegram to get from their lordships: shows how we're progressing as a nation when the Admiralty know that cattle eat hay without first referring to the Board of Agriculture."

"The Admiralty are pretty hot stuff in these days," remarked the Chief. "I suppose you heard about their three-word telegram to the poor old *Nonsuch* last winter when they had opened about their last case of provisions, and telegraphed to say they had run out of fresh water altogether, and hadn't enough coal left to distil?"

"No, what was that, Chief?" said several voices.

The answer was, "Snow will melt."

"I wish to goodness you

wouldn't start these interruptions, Chief," said the Commander irritably; "we shall never get on. Now let's take the telegram bit by bit and write down an answer to each part, and then we can form it up into an intelligible reply. First of all, is there suitable pasturage or not?"

"You ought to be able to say that without any hesitation," he said, glaring at the land-agent, "after dragging me all round the country this afternoon on that visit of inspection."

"My dear old chap," said the land-agent rather scornfully, "the less said about that walk to-day the better. Apart from the fact that there was at least six inches of snow still left on the ground, I couldn't induce you to move out of the first Lap house you came to, though what the attraction was I couldn't see."

"I was trying to buy furs," said the Commander, "and it was obviously useless to walk about looking for pasturage in all that snow. Anyhow we saw a lot of reindeer, and they must eat something, so write down, Clerk. Your Number so-and-so, mine so-and-so. There is ample pasturage for live stock in the summer: stop!"

"I wouldn't say ample," said the Canadian cautiously.

"I wouldn't say pasturage," said the land-agent. "Reindeer eat moss."

"I wouldn't say live stock," said the Chief; "that means sheep and cattle."

"I wouldn't say there is ample in the summer," said the

Clerk. "I should say there will be."

I should say, "I hope there will be," remarked one of the more pessimistic of the R.N.R. lieutenants. "We don't know for certain that the snow will ever go, and it's June now."

"What the devil is the good of my suggesting anything if you are all going to pull it to pieces in this way?" said the Commander irritably. "Let's have a little more constructive, not destructive criticism—especially from you, Clerk," he added rather fiercely.

"I am sorry, sir," said the Clerk, "but shall I rewrite the sentence to fall in line with the suggestions these other officers have made?"

"Yes, go on," said the Commander.

After several minutes' delay the Clerk read out, "There will probably be food for animals in the autumn."

"Cross that out," said the Commander angrily. "I am not asked for an expression of opinion, but for a statement of fact. Write down, 'I am informed there is ample pasturage for stock in the summer.'"

"Who informed you?" demanded the land-agent rather anxiously. "Don't say I did and try and blame me when they all die of hunger."

"I told you, didn't I, that I was asking that Lap about it this afternoon when I was up in the village—or anyhow, if I didn't tell you, I was."

"I thought you were buying furs," remarked the Canadian.

The Commander treated this with contempt, and picking

up the copy of the telegram, "Now as to sheep or cattle, or both—which do the experts advise?" he asked sarcastically.

"I prefer beef to mutton," said the Chief, "so I votes for cattle."

"We aren't discussing beef *versus* mutton, Chief," said the land-agent. "It is improbable they will ever be eaten unless they are killed before they land. You can't eat things which die a natural death," he added fatuously.

"Hunger isn't a natural death," said the Commander drily. "But as I probably have to look forward to landing the brutes, I want to ask for the animals that will give me the least trouble."

"How are you going to land them?" asked one of the trawler officers. "Make them swim?"

"I suppose so," said the Commander. "Now which swim best, cattle or sheep?"

"Sheep can't swim," said the Clerk hastily, anxious to show his knowledge in matters agricultural. "They out their throats when they try, so that quite settles it. We must have cattle, which I am very glad of, as I hate mutton."

"Am I likely to be disembarkation officer, sir?" inquired one of the R.N.R. officers rather anxiously.

"Certainly you are," said the Commander. "Why, what has that got to do with it?"

"Only that I strongly advise sheep, sir," said the disembarkation officer. "They are much easier to handle, and



they aren't nearly so strong, and they have no horns."

"Can sheep swim, or can't they? Can any of you experts tell me that? It must be a very easy thing to earn your living anyhow in these days if one can get hold of expert's jobs with such very little knowledge," said the Commander wearily.

"Yes, they can swim all right," said the land-agent, "and I expect you'll be asking to be taken on one day as my pupil after they retire you—which they are bound to do soon if you take as long as this answering a telegram."

"All right, we appear to be making some progress at last," said the Commander. "Now then, Clerk, cross out quadrupeds and put sheep, and read the telegram again."

"I didn't put quadrupeds, I put stock, sir," said the Clerk. "The Admiralty said live stock."

"Don't contradict, but read it out as I tell you, my good boy."

"The telegram now reads, 'I am informed there is ample pasturage for sheep in the summer,' said the Clerk, with a note of forbearance in his voice.

"Now then add, 'Only sheep should be sent, number to commence with'—what do you think, Pay?" asked the Commander.

"I don't know how much they'll weigh, sir," said the Paymaster thoughtfully. "I am only accustomed to dealing with them as mutton, not as sheep."

"How much do your sheep average?" asked the Chief, addressing the Canadian.

"I thought I had made it plain enough that I haven't got any sheep, and that I know nothing about them," said the Canadian irritably. "You'd better look it up in 'Chambers'."

"Get the Encyclopædia, Clerk," said the Commander, "and look up 'Sheep.'"

There was a lengthy pause while the right volume was got down from the shelf.

"It doesn't say anything about their weight," said the Clerk, but apparently there are several sorts of breeds. I wonder whether we ought to specify the breed. It says they are a docile animal."

"I should estimate a sheep to weigh about 50 lbs.," said the land-agent. "They'll probably weigh nearly that when first landed, and as to breed I should specify those most suitable for a rocky island, where the only food is moss and mosquitoes. I am getting rather tired of this, and am off to bed very soon," he added. "I've got to be off to sea early in the morning."

"For God's sake, hang on now and get this thing finished," said the Commander. "We are really making a little headway now; come on, Paymaster, how many sheep will keep us all going for, say, a month?"

After some moments of anxious calculation, the Paymaster announced 400.

"Rot," said the Commander. "I said a month, not a year."

"Well, sir, 700 men will eat

that number in a month, if you allow them fresh meat every day."

"Every day—certainly not," said the Commander. "Once a week is ample."

"Once a week is not enough," said the Doctor emphatically. "If we don't get it more often than that we shall have an outbreak of scurvy; I've been very anxious about it for the last three months."

"Will you take on disembarkation officer, Doc.?" asked the R.N.R. lieutenant anxiously. "Because if I'm to do it I hope you won't ask for more than a hundred, sir," he said, addressing the Commander.

"Heavens, no," said the Commander, "100 is ample to start off with. Now then, Clerk, write that down, and read it out again."

The Clerk read out: "I am informed there is ample pasturage for sheep in the summer; only sheep should be sent, number to commence with 100."

"Add, 'No hay purchasable locally; enough should be sent to feed the brutes.' Lord, I am sick to death of these cursed sheep already."

"What do you want hay for if there is ample pasturage?" said the Canadian.

"To fatten the brutes," said the Commander irritably.

"You don't fatten animals on hay," said the land-agent in a tactful voice, "but I should ask for it in case there is no pasturage."

The Commander's brow was

furrowed with thought for several minutes. "I think that does the trick now, doesn't it?" he said to the Clerk. "Cross out, 'I am informed,' and get the telegram coded and sent off."

"There's one thing I should like to say," said the Canadian, rising from his chair and walking to the door, "and that is, that if you turn out a hundred sheep and don't have some dogs to round them up, you'll never see them again; they'll spread all over Russia. Good-night."

"We've got eight dogs in the ship already," said the Commander, "and I wonder what the First Lord will say if I telegraph for sheep-dogs. He'll think I am pulling his leg."

"I really advise you to ask for some dogs," said the Chief, "or anyhow, one. The Admiralty will quite understand that every flock of sheep must have a dog."

"All right," said the Commander rather bitterly. "Add to the end of the telegram, 'Request one sheep-dog may be sent.'"

"Now read it out, Clerk, and then let's go to bed."

The Clerk read out, "There is ample pasturage for sheep in the summer; only sheep should be sent, good climbers; number to commence with 100. Request one dog sheep may be sent."

"What the devil are you driving at, Clerk," said the Commander furiously. "Who said anything about climbing? and I said sheep-dog, not dog



sheep. They'll probably send us out a ram if we put it like that."

"No, that's the proper way of expressing it," said the Chief decidedly. "I've kept stores for twenty years, and I assure you if you ask for a sheep-dog you'll get a ram for a certainty; whereas if you ask for a dog sheep you'll get a dog."

"God forbid we should get a ram," said the embarkation officer. "They're as fierce as the devil."

"Well, you'll probably have to take them all on charge in your store accounts, Chief, when they do arrive," said the Commander wearily, "and then transfer them to the Paymaster's account when they become mutton; so I suppose we'd better leave it as you say. I'm going to bed, and you can bring me the telegram first thing in the morning, Clerk. Find some more official word than climbers to designate the breed. I hate the thought of mutton already; good-night, everybody," and the meeting broke up.

At lunch next day the Chief asked the Commander if the telegram had gone off.

"Yes, it's gone," said the Commander; "but I cut out the dog altogether, and the Clerk put in something about breed suitable for mountainous country."

"Why did you cut out about the dog?" said the Chief.

"When I woke up I found myself repeating the lines out of the laws of the Navy: 'He does well who tears up in the morning the letter he wrote

overnight,' and I wasn't certain if these two blooming experts, the land-agent and the Canadian, were not pulling my leg over that dog. I suppose they've gone out in their trawlers now, leaving me to bear the burden and heat of the day in here. Well, thank God, my telegram can't bear fruit for at least three weeks."

In about three weeks, however, the Admiralty intimated that the first consignment of 100 sheep might be expected in a few days, mentioning that a Scotch mountain breed had been selected, and informing the S.N.O. that on no account were any to be killed until they had been shorn.

It happened that the two experts were in harbour when the telegram arrived, and a council of war was again called to consider this new complication.

"Things are getting ridiculous," said the Commander, "and I'm beginning to think the Admiralty are pulling my leg. I'm sorry I didn't ask for that dog now. How the devil am I going to arrange to shear 100 sheep?"

"I've put that notice up on the mess deck, sir," said the First Lieutenant, "but there has been no result, and the Master-at-Arms says he doesn't think there is a single man in the ship who has ever shorn a sheep, and even if there was, we haven't any shears."

"Can't you shear sheep?" said the Commander to the land-agent; "and if you can't do it yourself, what do you suggest?"

"I think the Chief ought to be able to manage it," said the land-agent drily. "He's got a workshop full of all sorts of noisy beastly machinery, and surely he could devise something or other to cut wool off a sheep."

"It's no use talking rubbish of that sort," said the Chief. "Do you imagine I'm going to put one of my skilled artificers to work to cut wool off a struggling savage brute's back? Your trawlers keep me going night and day with all their repairs, without beginning a wild enterprise of that sort."

"What about the ship's butcher?" said the Canadian. "Surely he can shear sheep?"

"No, he can't," said the First Lieutenant emphatically. "He says he can kill them and skin them, but that is all."

"I'm not going to start an undignified altercation with the Admiralty on this matter," said the Commander, "and so I think the best thing to do is to take no notice of this last brain-wave of their lordships. We will just kill the sheep and skin them, and then use black-list men to clip wool off the skins with scissors."

"When are they due to arrive?" asked the land-agent.

"Any time in the next couple of days," said the Commander. "I suppose you'll be here to help to land them?"

"I'm afraid we're awfully busy just now," said the land-agent, glancing at the Canadian rather anxiously. "We shall have to be down sweeping off that bit of the coast where the mines were laid last year. If

it wasn't for that we should love to help."

"I am taking my division out to-night," said the Canadian.

"You told me you would be in till to-morrow morning," said the Chief rather angrily, "and I've started on the *Fram's* boiler. She can't be ready till then."

"She'll have to follow," said the Canadian. "We think we ought not to waste a minute longer than necessary in beginning this sweeping."

"I've a good mind to take the ship out, and go down to see if I can do anything to help the salvage of the *Carelyn*," said the Commander, "and leave the yacht to carry on S.N.O.—just for a few days only," he added cheerfully.

"If the ship has to go to sea now," said the Chief, "it means the trawler's repairs go to the devil. I can't think why you suddenly want to go and see the *Carelyn*, as we can't do anything more to her now the Russians have undertaken the salvage work."

"I think I can guess why he wants to go," said the land-agent, "but your duty as S.N.O. here, Commander, is to stick to the sheep, I mean ship!"

"I shall be in again at the end of the week, and look forward to lamb and mint sauce. So long, you fellows. I hope you'll enjoy it."

"These retired officers have no sense of duty," said the Commander. "Well, if you go and bump a mine during the next few days, I shall feel it is a judgment on you."



## II.

About five days later the trawlers returned and secured alongside their mother cruiser just before dinner. Conversation during dinner was general, and no allusion was made to the sheep; but the land-agent could not help remarking to the Paymaster that he was looking particularly fit and well.

"So would you be looking fit and well if you'd stayed here and not shirked," said the Commander dryly. "The younger officers of the ship are going in for training for sports just at present, and we are hoping you and the Canadian will be entering for one or two of the races."

"The two-mile is the one I'm hoping to win," said the Clerk. "I did it in record time this afternoon."

"That's about the length of the island you were turning into a farm, isn't it?" asked the Canadian; "and, by the bye, how are the sheep getting on? I see we are still on bully beef," he added, looking at the menu.

"I am given to understand that the sheep are very happy indeed," said the Commander. "They are eight dozen of the most agile brutes that ever lived, enjoying themselves to the top of their bent, and likely to continue to do so as far as I can see."

"I thought there were 100 coming," said the land-agent.

"Yes, there were," said the Paymaster, "but four died on

the way out, and as far as I can make out they died every other day with suspicious regularity. The trip took eight days, and I said to the Captain that I was glad he wasn't delayed a few more days or some more might have died."

"The old ruffian only grinned, and said he thought it would have been highly probable, that they were very fine sheep, and the rate of mortality might even have risen."

"The yacht arrives in three days' time with the Commdore," said the Commander, "and we have got to have some sheep killed by then. It is really getting beyond a joke—the whole of the ship's officers and the accountant staff have been ashore all day, and they haven't managed to catch a single one."

"They are a wonderful lot of brutes," said the embarkation officer. "They swim like otters, and climb and jump like monkeys, and can do the two miles from one end of the island to the other in about ten minutes. There is any amount of grass there now, and if it wasn't for mosquitoes it would be very pleasant ashore."

"This is five days since the sheep arrived, and we haven't even tasted one yet," said the Commander. "However, I am going to put a stop to it to-morrow all right."

"What are you going to do, Commander?" said the

land-agent anxiously. "Poison them or trap them, or what?"

"No," said the Commander, "I'm going to land small-arm companies, skirmish across the island, and corner them into an enclosure; and if we can't do that I am going to shoot them."

Next morning about sixty men fully equipped, and with a liberal amount of small-arm ammunition, landed on the island. They took their dinners, and were absent until late in the afternoon. Occasional bursts of rifle-firing were heard from the ship, but nothing much could be seen. After the landing party returned it transpired that they had achieved a moderate success, though at great sacrifice of energy and wind. The sheep had completely outwitted them, and they were eventually driven to killing them with rifles. One had been bayoneted in a valiant attempt to break through the line of hot and angry skirmishers.

However, the sheep were killed and eaten, and though by the time they arrived on board they seldom weighed more than 30 lbs., still they were a very excellent change and were much appreciated. The first skin was experimented with in the hopes of getting the wool off, but it was found to be such a laborious and difficult task that it was abandoned, and the skins were sent home with the wool attached. No comment was made by the home authorities.

Towards the end of the season a small Russian ship stranded on the coast in the vicinity, and the Canadian with other trawlers went to her assistance. He found the ship deserted and on fire, and clustered in the stern were three terrified sheep. He rescued the poor brutes, and two of the three were promptly despatched for the use of the two ships' companies of the trawlers.

The third sheep was carefully adorned with a large red rosette on her tail, and next day the Canadian could have been seen seated in a trawler's boat, with a sheep sitting by his side, making for the island on which the farm was situated.

The sheep was landed, and joined what was left of the general flock.

Shortly afterwards a general signal was made to all ships from the S.N.O., informing them that the sheep with the red tag on its tail was the personal property of the Canadian, and was on no account to be killed. It lived for several weeks, and eventually fell a victim to a combined attack by the whole of the Canadian's trawler crew, armed with every sort of weapon from a .303 rifle to a .380 revolver.

On board the cruiser it had been considered bad taste even to mention the word sheep for a long time, and the whole subject of the farm was taboo. It was felt by most of the people concerned that they had been made victims, owing to the stupidity of their messmates.



On the few occasions when the subject was discussed, the Chief was always saying that if we had had cattle it would have been all right. The land-agent harped on the sheep-dog with irritating frequency. The Commander made bitter remarks on the inadequacy of his expert advisers, and on the Clerk's wording as to the climbing capabilities of the sheep.

The Canadian had been sarcastically amused at the way the whole thing had been mismanaged, and made nasty comparison with the way things were done in the Colonies. The Paymaster, who by this time was gaunt and careworn, could not eat mutton at all on the rare occasions it appeared in the wardroom, and his feelings towards all who had been in any way mixed up in the farm were too bitter to permit of expression.

On the occasion of the death of the red-tailed sheep, which occurred late in the autumn, the last of the Admiralty sheep had also fallen a victim to a well-armed landing force; and, though riddled with bullets, the Paymaster had been relieved to find that a small portion was still fit for human consumption. The general relief which was felt by all interested parties in the wardroom was so great that, after a glass or two of port, the subject was once more reopened.

The Commander gravely congratulated the Canadian on his success as a stalker, and

inquired whether his ancestors had been Border folk or not.

"I didn't steal it," said the Canadian. "I saved the poor brute from a terrible death in a burning ship, and we got it second shot. I turned the skin over to the butcher, Pay.," he added, turning to the Paymaster; "it may help to fill up some of the nasty hiatuses there must be in your farm accounts."

"Thanks," said the Paymaster, "it will certainly help me a little; but really I'm in despair as to how to account for these brutes. They weigh about 20 lbs. by the time they are killed or murdered, and half of it is not fit to eat."

"The only possible thing for you to do, Pay.," said the land-agent, "is to expend them, skins and all. I kept stores years ago when I was a navigator, and there were lots of ways of putting your accounts right. The Admiralty are very good about it as a rule—why, one fellow expended a gun eaten by rats, and nothing was said."

"Well, how do you suggest I should expend sheep?" said the Paymaster. "It sounds all right, but I've got to deal with a different department to the one you used to."

"I should put them down eaten by wolves," said the land-agent.

"Good idea," said the Chief. "Russia is full of wolves, you know, even in these days."

So wolves were decided upon.

## THE RETURN PUSH.

BY QUEX.

## XIII.

Sept. 6: The expected orders for the brigade's farther advance arrived at 2 P.M., and by eight o'clock Wilde and myself had selected a new Headquarters in a trench south of the wood. A tarpaulin and pit-prop mess had been devised; I had finished the brigade's official War Diary for August; dinner was on the way; and we awaited the return of Major Veasey from a conference with the infantry brigadier.

The major came out of the darkness saying, "We'll have dinner at once and then move immediately. There's a show to-morrow, and we must be over the canal before daybreak. . . . Heard the splendid news? . . . We've got right across the Drocourt-Quéant line. . . . That's one reason why we are pushing here to-morrow."

We had a four-miles march before us, and Manning and Meddings, our mess waiter and cook, farther down the trench, could be heard grumbling at the prospect of another packing-up, and a search in the dark for fresh quarters. "We always lose knives and forks and crockery when we move like this," Manning was saying in his heavy-dragon voice.

"You and Wilde had better look for a Headquarters somewhere near the cross-roads at N—," the major told me.

"The adjutant and myself will find where the batteries are and join you later."

There was a twenty minutes' delay because in the dark the G.S. waggon had missed us and vanished round the corner of the wood. As we moved off I felt a wet muzzle against my hand, and, stooping, perceived a dog that looked like a cross between an Airedale and a Belgian sheep-dog. "Hullo, little fellow!" I said, patting him. He wagged his tail and followed me.

The German shelling had died down, and we hoped for an uneventful journey. But night treks across ground that has been fought over usually test one's coolness and common sense. The Boche had blown up the bridges over the canal, and descending the slope we had to leave the road and follow a track that led to an Engineers' bridge, so well hidden among trees that the enemy artillery had not discovered it. But it was a long time before our little column completed the crossing. A battery were ahead, and between them and us came a disjointed line of infantry waggons—horses floundering in the mud, men with torches searching for shell-holes and debris that had to be avoided. Only one vehicle was allowed on the



bridge at a time, and a quarter to eleven came before the six mules scrambled the G.S. waggon over. The real difficulty, however, was to decide upon the track to take the other side of the canal. Maps were useless; these were tracks unknown to the topographers. Not one of them followed the general direction in which I believed N—— to be. I resolved to take the track that went south-east, and hoped to come upon one that would turn due east. Heavy shells, one every four minutes, rumbled high overhead and crashed violently somewhere south of us. "They are shooting into M——," said Wilde. We trudged along hopefully.

The dog was still with us, running in small circles round me. "That must be the sheep-dog part of him," I said to Wilde. "He's a bit thin, but he seems a wiry little chap."

The looked-for track due east came when I began to think that we were drawing too near to where the big shells were falling. After half a mile we reached a metalled road; the track we had passed along went over and beyond it. The point to be decided now was whether to go straight on or to turn left along the road. Not a soul, not a single vehicle in sight; it was hard to believe that three Divisions were to make a big attack on the morrow. I halted the waggons on the road, and turned to Wilde. "Let's send Sergeant Starling (the signalling sergeant) to find where the track leads to. We'll walk up the

road and find some one who can show it us on the map. There are bound to be dug-outs in this bank."

We walked for half a mile, meeting no one. The dog and an orderly accompanied us. In the distance my ear caught a familiar sound—the clip-clop of horses trotting. It came nearer and nearer. Then we saw a horseman wearing the artillery badge, leading a light draught horse.

"What battery do you belong to?" I asked, stopping him.

"B, sir."

"Where are you going now?"

"A shell came, sir, and hit our waggon. My traces were broke, and I'm going back to the waggon line, sir."

"Where is B Battery?"

"Up this road, sir, and I think you take a turning on the left, but I can't quite remember, sir; we had a bit of a mix-up."

"Bring up the waggons," I told the orderly. "We're on the right road. If Sergeant Starling isn't back, leave some one behind to bring him along."

Before long a jingling and a creaking told us that our carts were close at hand. We walked on, and, reaching a cross-roads, waited to shout for those behind to keep straight on. Half a minute afterwards I heard my name called. A single light shone out from a dug-out in the bank.

It was Garstin of C Battery who had hailed me. "Major Veasey is here with Major

Bartlett," he said, coming towards us. The two majors were sitting in a dug-out no bigger than a trench-slit. "What do you think of my quarters?" smiled Major Bartlett. "Sorry I can't ask you to have a drink. Our mess-cart hasn't arrived yet."

"We've found B and C, so far," interposed Major Veasey, puffing at his pipe, and I must find the —th Infantry Brigade before I finish to-night. . . . This road takes you direct to N—, you know."

Wilde and I and the headquarters waggons resumed our march. We had reached a sunken portion of the road, when above us began the deep steady drone of Boche aeroplanes. We halted the waggons.

A wait, during which Lizzie, the big mare, whinnied, and we looked up and strained our ears to follow the path of the 'planes. Then, farther away than the whirring in the skies had led us to expect, came the ear-stabbing crack of the bombs. One!—two!—three!—four!—five!—six! in as quick succession as rifle-shots. "Damn 'em," said Wilde apprehensively. "I hope they don't get any of our horses."

We were quite near N— now, and, leaving the waggons in the shelter of the sunken road, Wilde and I again forged ahead. An Army Field Brigade was forming its waggon lines in a field off the roadside amid sharp angry cries of "Keep those lights out!" Soon we approached another sunken road leading into the

village. Through the hedge that rose above the bank I saw a dark oblong hut. "Let's look at this place," I said.

In the darkness we made out a number of huts. A ring of sandbags showed where a tent had been pitched. Pushing away the blanket that covered the opening to a huge mined dug-out, we looked upon a row of sleeping engineers. "There are plenty of empty huts here," a corporal, half-awake, told us. It was past midnight. "This will do us for to-night," I said to Wilde.

A humming overhead reminded us that Boche 'planes still hovered near. As we came out of the dug-out a string of red lights floated downwards. A machine-gun spluttered, and a bullet pinged close to us. "What's he up to?" said Wilde, his eyes gleaming. We drew back. A bomb fell three hundred yards away; then another, and another. The ground shook; we thought of our waggons and horses in the road. The dog had dashed outside.

When the 'planes had passed, I sent the orderly to bring up the waggons. The horses went back to the other side of the canal; the men soon found cover for the night. Wilde and I made for the hut that we had noticed first of all. It was not very spacious—nor very clean; but it contained four wire beds to accommodate the major, the adjutant, Wilde, and myself. "Why, it's a guard-room," I called, shining my torch on a painted board affixed to the door.



So, for once in our lives, we slept in a guard-room. The little dog had curled himself up in a corner.

Sept. 7: Zero hour for the launching of the attack was 8 A.M., much later than usual. The village of L— was the first objective, and afterwards the infantry were to push on and oust the Boche from G— and S—. It was to be an attack on the grand scale, for the enemy had brought up one fresh Division and two others of known fighting capacity. He was likely to hold very stoutly to the high ground at E—. Our B Battery was under orders to follow close on the heels of the infantry, to assist in wiping out machine-gun nests.

The camp in which we had settled overnight possessed at least three empty Nissen huts in good condition. The place had been captured from the British during the March retreat, and retaken not more than three days ago. Our guard-room sleeping quarters were not roomy enough for four simultaneous morning toilets; so I had my tin bowl and shaving articles taken over to one of the Nissen huts, and I stripped and managed a "bowl-bath" before breakfast. The dog, who had quite taken possession of me, stretched himself on the floor and kept an eye upon me.

The wily Boche had improved our Nissen huts. Trapdoors in the wooden floors and "funk-holes" down below showed how he feared our

night-bombers. Jagged holes in the semicircular iron roofing proved the wisdom of his precautions.

By half-past eight a German 5-9 was planking shells over the camp, near enough for flying fragments to rattle against the roofs and walls of the huts. Fifty rounds were fired in twenty minutes. The Boche gunners varied neither range nor direction; and no one was hurt. The shelling brought to light, however, a peculiarity of the dog. He chased away in the direction of each exploding shell, and tried also to pursue the pieces of metal that whizzed through the air. Nothing would hold him. When he returned, panting, it was to search for water; but after a short rest the shells would lure him out again in vain excited quest.

Round his neck was a leather collar with a brass plate. The plate bore the name of a Brigadier-General, commanding an Infantry Brigade of a Division that had gone north. "No wonder he follows you," grinned Wilde. "He thinks you are a General. . . . It must be your voice, or the way you walk."

"More likely that I use the same polish for my leggings as the general," I retorted.

Major Veasey called me and we started forth to see how the battle was progressing. The village of L— had fallen very quickly, and Major Bullivant had already reported by mounted orderly that his battery had moved through the

village and come into action near the sugar factory.

"Oh, the leetle dawg!" said Major Veasey in wheedling tones, fondling the dog who frisked about him. Then he got his pipe going, and we strode through the desolated village and made across rolling prairie land, broken by earthworks and shell-holes. A couple of heavy hows. were dropping shells on the grassy ridge that rose on our left—wasted shots, because no batteries were anywhere near. We stuck to the valley and passing a dressing station where a batch of walking oases were receiving attention, drew near to the conglomeration of tin huts, broken walls, and tumbled red roofs that stood for L—. We stopped to talk to two wounded infantry officers on their way to a casualty clearing station. The advance had gone well, they said, except at S—, which was not yet cleared. They were young and fresh-coloured, imperturbable in manner, clear in their way of expressing themselves. One of them, jacketless, had his left forearm bandaged. Through a tear in his shirt sleeve I noticed the ugly purple scar of an old wound above the elbow. Odd parties of infantry and engineers stood about the streets. Plenty of wounded were coming through. I ran in to examine a house that looked like a possible Headquarters of the future, and looked casually at a well that the Boche had blown in. The dog was still at my heels.

"Now we want to find the sugar factory to see how Bullivant is getting on," said the Major, refilling his pipe. We pulled out maps and saw the factory plainly marked; and then followed a hard good-conditioned road that led over a hill.

We were getting now to a region where shells fell more freely. A mile to the north-east machine-gun duels were in progress. When we saw the wrecked factory with its queer-looking machinery—something like giant canisters—we pressed forward. No sign whatever of B Battery! I looked inside some tin huts: one had been used as a German mess, another as an officers' bath-house; flies swarming upon old jam and meat tins; filth and empty bottles and stumps of candles, a discarded German uniform, torn Boche prints, and scattered picture periodicals. "There's no one here," mused Major Veasey. "I suppose the battery has moved forward again."

Past a tangled heap of broken machinery, that included a huge fly-wheel, bent and cracked, stood a big water-tank, raised aloft on massive iron standards. "We might be able to see something from up there," said the major. There was a certain amount of swarming to be done, and the major, giving up the contest, aided me to clamber up. Out of breath I stood up in the dusty waterless tank, and got out my binoculars. Towards where the crackle of



machine-guns had been heard, I saw a bush-clad bank. Tucked up against it were horses and guns. Big Boche shells kept falling near, and the landscape was wreathed in smoke.

Before we got to the battery we met Major Bullivant, whose gestures alone were eloquent enough to describe most war scenes. A rippling sweep of his left arm indicated where two machine-gun nests on the bosky western slopes of S— held up our infantry; a swan-like curl of the right wrist, raised to the level of the shoulder, told where B Battery had been situated, less than a thousand yards from the enemy. "A company of the — were faltering because of the deadliness of the machine-guns," he said. ". . . I got hold of a platoon commander and he took me far enough forward to detect their whereabouts. . . . We fired 200 rounds when I got back to the battery. My gunners popped them off in fine style, although the Boche retaliated. . . . The infantry have gone on now. . . . I found two broken machine-guns and six dead Germans at the spots we fired at. . . . It's been quite a good morning's work."

He smiled an adieu and went off to join a company commander he had managed to meet. When we reached the bank B Battery were about to move to a sunken road farther forward. Smallman, from South Africa, nicknamed "Buller," was in charge, and he pointed joyously to an abandoned Boche Red Cross

waggon that the battery had "commandeered." Four mules had been harnessed to it; the battery waggon line was its destination.

"Gee-ho! they went off in a hurry from here," remarked Major Veasey, looking at a light engine and three trucks loaded with ammunition and corrugated iron that the enemy had failed to get away on the narrow-gauge line running past S—. "What we ought to do is to have a railway ride back. The line goes to N—. That would be a new experience—and I'm tired enough."

"Yes, that would be better than the four-in-hand in the G.S. waggon that you took to the sports meeting," I added.

A Hun 5-9 was firing persistently on a spot 400 yards between where we stood and S—. For once in a way the dog neglected shells, and searched for bully beef leavings among the tins thrown aside by the battery drivers. We were not absolutely safe. The Boche shells were fitted with instantaneous fuses, and after each burst bits of jagged iron flew off at right angles to points as far distant as 700 yards. As we turned to go a piece whistled over our heads and hit one of the Red Cross waggon lead-mules. The poor beast dropped and brought down his frightened, kicking, companion mule also. The drivers had released them by the time Major Veasey and I came up. The wounded mule found his feet, and was led a few yards away. A horrible tear, 8 inches long, showed a

smashed jawbone and cheekbone; he moved his head from side to side in his pain. "I shall have to shoot him," said the major, loading his revolver. The mule stared dully as the major approached, but drew back sharply when he saw the revolver. The driver could not hold him properly, and the first bullet-hole was not the half-inch to an inch below the forelock that means instantaneous death. The poor animal fell, but got up again and staggered away. The major had to follow and shoot again.

We struck off in a more northerly direction on our way back to N—, searching for the forward section of A Battery that had been told off to work in conjunction with a certain infantry battalion. We met Wheeler, who was commanding the section, and he told the major that he had not taken his two guns farther forward, because the battalion commander had gone off in a hurry without giving him instructions, without even telling him the line the infantry had reached.

"How long have you been here?" asked the major pointedly.

"Three hours, sir."

"Well, my dear fellow, you certainly should have taken your guns farther forward by now, battalion commander or no battalion commander. You've got a mounted orderly, and you could have sent him back to Brigade Headquarters, informing them of your new position. Then you could have got into touch with the in-

fantry and asked them for targets. It's useless staying here."

The arrival on horseback of the Major-General commanding the Division attacking in this portion of the front, turned the conversation. Not long appointed to his present command, the general during the March retreat had been the Senior Infantry Brigadier in our own Division. He was a particularly able and resourceful soldier; his first demand was for information regarding the work done by our forward guns. The major told him that Wheeler's section remained where it was because of the neglect of the battalion commander.

The general listened quietly, and cast a keen eye upon Wheeler. "You can take your guns up in safety to —, and you'll find plenty to shoot at there. Tell any one who wants to know that your instructions come direct from the Divisional commander. . . . And don't rely too much on battalion commanders. Very few battalion commanders know anything about artillery. It's a pity, but it's a fact." He responded with dignity to our salutes, and rode off, followed by his attendant staff officers and the grooms.

The major got more and more tired of the walking. It was half-past two now, and we were both pretty hungry. The dog seemed as frisky and energetic as when he chased the shells at breakfast-time. We passed a big dress-



ing station; a wheeled stretcher stood outside. "As we didn't take a train-ride, should I push you back in that, major?" I inquired with due seriousness. Major Veasey smiled, and we started on the last mile and a half.

There were prospects, we learned when we got back to N—— and read the reports received by the adjutant, of another move forward for the batteries.

"This looks like bringing the waggon lines over the canal," said the adjutant, showing the major the following wire from the staff captain:—

"Good spring at V 201 b 2.7. Water-cart filling-point being arranged. Approaches good for water-carts. Troughs now in order at V 202 c 8.5."

Another message of the same tenor, having to do with gun repairs, ran—

"No. 347 light shop moves to M—— to-morrow. Will undertake quick repairs. Longer jobs will be sent back to Nos. 124 B—— and 192 F——"

A third telegram supplied a reminder that the spiteful Boche still had time to leave devilish traps for the unwary—

"Advanced guard —th Division found small demolition charges in Nissen hut at W 123 b 8.9, and mined dug-out W 129 d 3.2."

"Yes," remarked Major Veasey, "we are certain to move again to-night. The wise man will take a lie down

until tea-time." And he hied him to the wire bed in the guard-room.

At 8.15 that night Wilde and I, the Headquarters party, and the dog, having waited an hour and a half for the orderly that Major Veasey had promised to send back to guide us to a new headquarters, settled in some old German gas-pits, scooped out of a lofty chalk bank. Our march had brought us through L—— and beyond the shell-mauled cemetery where the Boche in his quest of safety had transformed the very vaults into dug-outs.

The horses were sent back to the waggon line and the drivers told to bring them up again at 6 A.M.; and I was arranging the relief of the orderly stationed on the roadside to look out for the major when the major's special war-whoop broke cheerily through the darkness. "The opening of the gun-pit faces the wrong way, and we have no protection from shells—but the tarpaulin will keep any rain out," was the best word I could find for our new quarters.

It was a moderately calm night. We four officers lay down side by side with just our valises to soften the ruggedness of the ground. Fitful flashes in front showed our own guns firing; high-velocity shells, bursting just behind us, made us ponder on the possibility of casualties before the night was out. But we were dog-tired, and slept well; and by 7 A.M. the dog

no longer snuggled against my feet, and we were preparing for further departure.

"We come under the —th Divisional Artillery at 7.30, and have to settle in L—— and await orders," explained Major Veasey. "They don't want our brigade to push on. . . . They say that the infantry could have walked into E—— without trouble, but they were too fagged. The latest report is that the Boche is back there again."

Our chief aim when we walked back towards L—— was to secure decent quarters before troops coming up should flood the village. Our first discovery was a Nissen hut in a dank field on the eastern outskirts. It wanted a good deal of tidying up, but 'twould serve. We were ravenous for breakfast, and the cook got his wood-fire going very quickly. There were tables and chairs to be found, and the dog and I crossed the road, russeted with the bricks from broken houses that had been used to repair it, on a journey of exploration. Built close to a high hedge was an extra large Nissen hut, painted with the Red Cross sign. Inside were twenty wire beds in tiers; dozens of rolls of German lint and quantities of cotton-wool littered the floor. Outside, five yards from the door, lay the body of a British officer. A brown blanket covered all but his puttees and a pair of neat, well-made brown boots.

Through an opening in the hedge we came upon more

Nissen huts. One of them was divided by a partition, and would do for a mess and for officers' sleeping quarters. Another large building could accommodate the men, and I found also a cook-house and an office. I used chalk freely in "staking-out" our claim, and hurried back to the major in a fever of fear lest some one else should come before we could install ourselves.

There were three incidents by which I shall remember our one night's stay in L——. First, the men's cook discovered a German officer's silver-edged iron cross. One of the servants, a noted searcher after unconsidered trifles, had found a Boche officer's overcoat in one of the huts. He went through the pockets and threw the coat away. The cook, coming after him, picked up the coat, and, "Blow me," said he, "if this didn't fall out."

Also, while Major Veasey, Major Simpson, and Major Bullivant were standing talking, a British soldier, pushing a bicycle, passed along the road. Following him, sometimes breaking into a run to keep up, came a plump, soft-faced German boy in infantry uniform, the youngest German I have seen in France. "Why, he's only a kid," said Major Veasey. "He can't be more than sixteen."

"Was ist ihr regiment?" called Major Bullivant. I took it that the major was asking the youngster to what regiment he belonged.

The British private and his



prisoner stopped. The boy Boohe smiled sheepishly, yet rather pleasantly, and said something which I didn't understand, and don't believe Major Bullivant did either.

There was a half-minute pause. Then the practical British private moved on, calling simply, "Come on, Tich!" The phrase, "He followed like a lamb," became appropriate.

And I remember one further

episode, not so agreeable. Major Veasey and myself had been to call on the Divisional Artillery, under whose orders we were now working. When we returned the dead British officer still lay outside the Red Cross hut. But the neat brown boots had been removed.

"By God, that's a ghoulish bit of work," said the major, angry disgust in his face. "The man who did that is a our."

#### XIV.

Sept. 16: The first autumn tints were spreading over field and tree, and the tempestuous rains of the last few days had chilled the air; but the weather had righted itself now, and would prove no bar to the next advance, which it was whispered would take place on the 18th. The American offensive at St Mihiel on the 12th had undoubtedly keyed-up our men, and any one supposed to know anything at all was being button-holed for forecasts of the extent of the Allies' giant thrust up to the time of the winter rains.

There had been a four days' withdrawal of our brigade to more peaceful areas behind the line, and, praise the Saints! we had again come under our own Divisional artillery.

The colonel had returned, and, as usual, the first day or so after coming off leave, appeared preoccupied and reserved. Still there was no one like our colonel; and, in the serene atmosphere of his

wise unquestioned leadership, petty bickerings, minor personal troubles, and the half-jesting, half-bitter railings against higher authority, had faded away. He brought the news that the medical board in England would not permit the C.R.A. to return to France; and the appointment of C.R.A. had gone to the colonel of our companion Field Artillery Brigade, now the senior Field Artillery officer in the Division—a popular honour, because, though we thought there could be no colonel so good as ours,—we should not have been such a good brigade had we admitted any other belief,—we all knew Col. — to be a talented and experienced gunner, and a brave man, with great charm of manner. Besides, it kept the appointment in the family, so to speak. We wanted no outsider from another Division. "You must all congratulate General — when you meet him," said our colonel gently.

The four days behind the line

had been interesting in their way, despite the rain-storms. We had had hot baths and slept in pyjamas once more. Some of the younger officers and a few of the N.C.O.'s had made a long lorry trip to Abbeville to replace worn-out clothes. Major Bullivant and the adjutant had borrowed a car to search for almost forgotten mess luxuries; and coming back had given a lift to a *curé*, who in the dark put his foot in the egg-box, smashing twenty of the eggs. There had been the booby-trap in the blown-up dug-out. A chair that almost asked to be taken stood half-embedded in earth near the doorway. I was about to haul it away to the mess when I perceived a wire beneath it, and drew back. Afterwards some sappers attached more wire, and, from a safe distance, listened to a small explosion that would have meant extreme danger to any one standing near. Also there had been the dead horse that lay unpleasantly near our mess. Major Veasey, "Swiffy," the doctor, our rollicking interpreter M. Phineas, and myself all took turns at digging a hole for its burial; and there was plenty of laughter, because old Phineas refused to go near the horse without swathing his face in a scarf, and when wielding the pick raised it full-stretch above his head before bringing it, with slow dignity, to earth—for all the world like a church-bell-ringer. Two nights in succession German night-bombers had defied our anti-aircraft guns and brought cruel death

to horses camped alongside the canal. On the second night we had witnessed a glorious revenge. Our searchlights had concentrated upon a Gotha, and they refused to let it escape their glare. Then suddenly from up above came the putt-putt-putt of machine-guns. Red and blue lights floated down; the swift streakings of inflammatory bullets clove the cobalt sky; with ecstasy and excitement we realised that one of our own airmen was in close combat with the invader. When the enemy's plane crashed to earth, a blazing holocaust, cheers burst from hundreds of tent-dwellers who had come out to view the spectacle.

And now on the 16th of September we had pitched tents a mile south of L——, which we had left on the 9th, on the confines of a wood that stretched down to a road and fringed it for three parts of a mile to the village of T——. Wilde and the adjutant had departed in high spirits, and their best clothes, to catch the leave train, and I was doing adjutant. Hubbard, a new officer from D Battery, who before getting his commission had been a signalling sergeant, filled Wilde's shoes. I had ridden into T—— to conduct a polite argument with the officer of a Division newly arrived from Palestine on the matter of watering arrangements. His point was that his Division had reached the area first and got the pumps into working order, and his instructions were to reserve the troughs for the horses of his own Division. I argued that if our



horses did not water in T—— they would have to do a seven-mile journey three times a day to the next nearest *abreuvoir*. "And you can't claim the exclusive use of a watering-point unless Corps grants special permission," I concluded.

"But Corps haven't instructed you to water here," he persisted.

"Neither have they told us *not* to come here," I countered.

We parted, agreeing to refer the whole matter to Corps. Corps, I might add, ruled that we should be allowed to water 200 horses per hour at certain hours, and that the other Division should police the performance.

I had returned in time to administer the distribution of fifty-nine remounts come from the base to replace battery horses, killed by bombs and shell-fire, or evacuated by "Swifty," the veterinary officer to the Mobile Veterinary Section, as a result of the hard-going and watering difficulties since the advance started on August 8th.

I was talking to the staff captain about the ammunition dumps he had arranged for the coming battle, when the brigade clerk handed me a buff slip just arrived from the Casualty Clearing Station. It stated simply that 2nd Lieut. Garstin had died as the result of gun-shot wounds. Poor boy! a handsome well-mannered youngster who had come out to France practically from school.

I finished talking to the staff captain and walked to the colonel's tent. I told him of Garstin's death.

"Wounded last night taking up ammunition, wasn't he?" said the colonel gravely.

"Yes, sir. He had finished the job and was coming back towards L——. Two of the men were wounded as well."

The colonel pulled out the note-book in which he kept his list of the officers in the brigade.

"That leaves C Battery very short of officers. You'd better transfer—let me see—M'Whirter from 'B.' . . . And ask the staff captain if we can have an officer from the D.A.C."

A little later I sent out the following wire to B and C Batteries:—

"2nd Lieut. J. M'Whirter will be attached to C Battery on receipt of this message. 2nd Lieut. F. E. R. Collinge of No. 1 Section D.A.C. will join B Battery to-day."

The night bristled with excitements. No. 1 Section of the D.A.C., with two hundred horses, were camped a hundred yards from us, and at 9 P.M. I was in their mess, talking book of the day, horses, and stage gossip. A lull in the conversation was broken by the low unmistakable drone of an enemy aeroplane. It sounded right overhead. "What's happened to our anti-aircraft people?" said Major Brown, starting up from the table. "How's he got through as far as this without any one shooting at him?"

We waited in silence. I wondered what had become of the dog who had followed me,

but had remained outside the trench-cover mess.

The first bomb crashed near enough to put out the candles and rattle the glasses on the table. "That fell over there," said the padre, pointing to behind the wood. "No, it was on this side, not far from my horses," put in Major Brown quickly.

Three more bombs shook the ground beneath us. Then we heard more distant explosions.

Outside we saw torch flashings in the D.A.C. horse lines, and heard hurrying to and fro. "Swiffy" also had hurried down to give his aid.

So serious was the loss of horses through bombing during the summer of 1918 that after each fatal raid an official report must be forwarded and a formal inquiry held to decide whether full precautions for the safety of the horses had been taken. At 9.30 P.M. I received this note from Major Brown:—

The following casualties occurred to animals of this Section by hostile bombs at 7 P.M. on 16th inst.—

Map location D 230, c. 97 :  
killed, 7; wounded, 11.

Half an hour later a message from C Battery, who were a mile and a half away along the valley, informed me that their casualties in horses and mules numbered 19.

At two in the morning I was aroused by a furious beating of wind and rain upon the tent. Hubbard, already in receipt of wet on his side of the tent, was up fastening the entrance-flap,

which had torn loose. Sharp flashes of lightning and heavy thunder accompanied the squall when it reached its height. "I hope the pegs hold," shouted Hubbard, and we waited while the tent-sides strained and the pole wavered. The dog growled, and a scuffling behind us was followed by the appearance, at the back of the tent, of the colonel's head and shoulders. In his pyjamas, drenched, and shivering with cold, he struggled inside. "My tent's down," he called sharply. "Houston's got my kit into his bivouac. . . . You two fellows hop outside and hammer in the pegs. . . . Let's save this tent if we can. . . . And some one lend me a towel for a rub down!"

Wrapped in rain-coats, Hubbard and myself faced the skirling rain. When we slipped inside again the colonel had dried himself. I lent him a blanket and my British warm, and he settled himself contentedly on the ground, refusing to occupy either camp-bed.

"The annoying part," he said, with the boyish ring in his voice that made his laugh so attractive, "is that my tent was much better put up than yours."

The wind still blew when we got up in the morning. A valiant tale came from "Swiffy," the doctor, and M. Phineas. They occupied a tent 'twixt a bank and a hedge, nearer to the D.A.C. M. Phineas had held up the pole with folds of wet canvas alternately choking him or whirling round him, while



"Swiffy" yelled for him to kneel upon the tent bottom to keep it fast, and expected him to fetch a servant at the same time. The doctor, enfolded by the wanton canvas in another state compartment of the blown-about tent, was out off from communication with the other two, and fought the battle on his own.

The struggle to keep the tents from collapsing was crowned at 6 A.M. by the urgent and peremptory order from Division: "All tents in the Divisional forward area are to be struck before dawn."

It was an order that breathed an understanding fear of the inquisitive eyes of enemy aerial observers. But if the G.S.O.I. who issued the order really knew—

Under cover of the darkness the brigade moved up 6000 yards to secret positions for the morrow's battle. We were behind our own infantry once again, and it was to be a big advance. We had come over forty miles since August 8 in a series of three- to eight-mile leaps; for the third time the battalions had been brought up to something like strength, and they were full of fight. In the mud and slime of the Somme and Flanders in 1916 and 1917, when each advance was on a narrow front and ceased after a one-day effort, I always marvelled at the patient fatalistic heroism of the infantry. A man went "over the top" understanding that, however brilliant the attack, the exultant glory of continuous chase

of a fleeing broken enemy would not be his; and that, should he escape wounds or death, it would not be long before he went "over the top" again, and yet again. But this open fighting had changed all that. It showed results for his grit and endurance to the humblest "infanter." And remember, it was the civilian soldier—unversed in war, save actual war—who accepted and pushed home the glorious opportunities of achievement that these wondrous days offered.

The colonel and I mounted our horses at eight o'clock, saw C and D Batteries begin their march, and called upon the new C.R.A. in his hut-head-quarters at L—. He was genuinely pleased at being congratulated upon his appointment, and, I remember, produced for me a Havana, come straight from London. Both the general and the brigade-major had good things to say of the dog, who was now definitely known as "Ernest"—chiefly because I had said "Hullo" to call him so many times that inevitably one recalled Mr Frank Tinney and his mode of addressing his stage assistant.

From L— the colonel and myself rode eastwards two miles and a half. The road was crowded with waggons and horses, returning in orderly fashion from delivering ammunition. In the distance guns boomed. When we got to the *pavé* the colonel said we would walk across country the rest of the way. Our

horses had only been gone a couple of minutes when the colonel suddenly halted and exclaimed, "I've let Laneridge go back with my steel helmet."

"Should we wait a few minutes on the road, sir?" I responded quickly; "Laneridge is likely to come back and try to catch you. . . . Of course he doesn't know where our headquarters will be."

For answer the colonel stood in the centre and shouted with studied clearness—"Laneridge! . . . Laneridge!"

We tried a joint call, and repeated it; but there was no sound of returning hoofs.

One curious result followed. An infantry soldier, who had passed us, came back and, in a north-country accent, asked, "Beg pardon, sir, but did you call me?—my name's Laneridge, sir."

"No," said the colonel, "I was calling my groom."

The man passed on. "That's a really striking coincidence," remarked the colonel. "Laneridge is not a common name."

After waiting five minutes we continued our walk, and crossing a valley dotted with abandoned gun-pits and shallow dug-outs, came to a shrub-covered bank from which a battery was pulling out its guns.

"Our headquarters will be here," said the colonel succinctly. "Hubbard has been sorting things out. There are dug-outs along the bank, and I expect we shall find something in the trench down there."

Hubbard had indeed found

a place for the mess in the trench, while he pointed to a cubby-hole in the bank that would do for the colonel, and to another shelter, a yard high from roof to floor, in which he and I could lie down. The telephone lines to the batteries and to Div. Art. were laid. He was ready for the battle.

Zero hour was at 5.20 A.M. The battery commanders had received the operation orders during the afternoon. I reported our arrival to the brigade-major; and not worrying much about some hostile 'planes that seemed to be dropping bombs in the neighbourhood of the front line, we turned in.

At 1.30 A.M. the telephone near my head buzzed. I heard the colonel say, "Are you troubled by gas?"

"Haven't noticed any, sir."

"You had better have your box respirator ready. It seems to be coming in a cloud down the valley."

I dozed off again, but half an hour later the uneasy movements of "Ernest" roused me. I sneezed several times, and felt a burning in the throat. This was undoubtedly gas. Hubbard I found to be a heavy sleeper, but by punching hard enough I made him open his eyes, and we put on our box respirators. It was half an hour before the gas sergeant reported that the air had cleared. We slept once more. Half an hour before zero time the gas rattle sounded again, and indeed we were wearing our respirators, when at 5.20 the usual sudden crackle and



rumble all along the front announced the opening of the barrage. Judged by the quickness with which he put down a retaliatory barrage, the enemy was prepared for our attack. Nothing could now hold "Ernest." He dashed tirelessly north, south, east, west, towards whichever point of the compass he heard a gun firing or a shell exploding. "I'm sure that dog's mad," commented the colonel when we breakfasted at 7 A.M. "I watched him from my dug-out for three-quarters of an hour after the barrage started. He passed the opening eighty times, then I got tired of counting. He seems to take a marvellous interest in shells. . . . It's a pity the staff captain can't use him for ammunition returns."

When we were conducting a settled defence of the line, or registering our guns for a battle, no one visited the "O.P.'s," or the front line, more than the colonel. Many and many a morning, with a couple of sandwiches and a slab of chocolate in his pocket, he tramped to the O.P. and stayed there until dark, criticising the shooting of the batteries and finding fresh targets for their fire. But during a set battle he did all his work on the telephone, in touch with Divisional artillery one way, and with the batteries, the F.O.O.'s, and the infantry, the other. There is never much news during the first hour, or even until the full artillery programme has been completed. By that time the brigade expects definite

reports as to whether the infantry have reached their objectives, and upon what new points they require artillery assistance for consolidating positions or for repelling counter-attacks.

But on this occasion the first message reached brigade at 5.50 A.M. C Battery reported that immediately the barrage opened the Boche retaliated upon them with 5.9's. They had had six killed and ten wounded. The killed included the sergeant who so splendidly commanded C's forward sniping-gun on that bewildering nerve-testing March 21st.

I spoke to the other batteries. D Battery, and B, who had horses handy to move forward when the first objective was taken, had been little troubled, but A had had their mess smashed in, and three of the servants wounded. I rang up "Buller," who was doing liaison with the —th Infantry Brigade, and he said it was understood that two companies of the — had lost their way, but generally the attack proceeded well.

The uncertainty lasted until 11 A.M., when the colonel completed a telephone conversation with the brigade-major. The two Divisions on our left had not gained their first objective because of exceedingly stout opposition on the part of a German corps, who had gained a fine fighting reputation during the past two weeks. The —th south of our Division had done very well, capturing and advancing beyond the village of T—. Our Divisional infantry had cleared R— after

tough fighting, but their further progress was checked because of the hold-up on the left. Reserve battalions of the two Divisions chiefly affected by this resistance were to attack as soon as possible.

"The Australians have done extraordinarily well down south," the colonel told me. "They simply marched through with their tanks, capturing guns and prisoners wholesale, and are on their most distant objective."

Then he rang up Major Simpson. "Don't take your battery forward until you get definite orders from the brigade," he said. "The enemy still hold the high ground north of us."

Major Bullivant, always keen on making an early reconnaissance during a set battle, rang up at noon to say that he had been as far as a high wood, a mile and a half in front of his battery. "I got a very long view from there," he went on, "and saw no sign at all of any Boche. . . ."

The colonel, putting on his pince-nez, studied his map and asked the major for the exact position. "Yes," he observed, "that's on the 140 contour, and you must have seen as far as — copse."

His next remark revealed how his mind was working. "Did you notice any tracks from the wood towards the batteries? . . . Two tracks! . . . but my map shows a line of barbed wire running across . . . Good! . . . there is a useable track as far as 19 c, and by striking east before you

come to the cross tracks it is possible to find an opening in the wire. . . . Good, Bullivant. . . . I expect I shall move the batteries that way. . . . No, no orders to move yet!"

At 1.15 P.M., after further talks with the brigade-major, the colonel told me to send out this message to the four batteries:—

"Brigade will advance as soon as possible to position in F 20, or if that locality is full up, in F 21 c. Prepare to advance, and report to Brigade commander at F 20 c 4, 2."

The colonel's horses had been ordered up from the waggon line. "Hubbard and I will go on," he told me, "and Hubbard can commence laying out lines to the batteries' new positions. You will remain here to keep in touch with Division. I shall be back before we move, and batteries are not to go forward until orders are issued from here."

He returned at 4 P.M. and told me to send out orders for an immediate advance to the positions chosen. I was returning from the signallers' dug-out when a young major belonging to the —s passed, followed by a sergeant. The major looked pale and worn, but walked quickly. There are moments when personal acquaintance with members of other branches of the Service possesses a very direct value. I did not know Major — very well, but a habit contracted through frequent visits to the Infantry made me call out "Any news?"



"Our brigade's doing a clearing-up attack at five o'clock," he answered without stopping.

"We don't know anything about that," I said, catching him up. "How long is it since orders were issued?"

"I've only just left the General," he replied, still walking ahead.

"Can you spare two minutes to explain the scheme to the colonel," I pressed. "Our batteries are just about to move up."

"I hardly have time to get to the battalion," he answered with a frown of dissent.

"Two minutes!" I pleaded—and succeeded. We hurried to the mess. There was a quick clear exchange of words between the major and the colonel. The major sped away as the colonel thanked him. "Telephone at once to the batteries to prevent them moving!" said the colonel, turning to me.

Before five minutes had passed, the colonel after a telephone talk with the brigadier-general, had arranged a short barrage programme for the batteries.

"There's usefulness in being a gossip, you see," he smiled, a quarter of an hour later.

The orders for the batteries to advance still held good, and immediately the barrage ceased they pulled out. By 6 P.M. the colonel had ridden forward again. My instructions were to remain until the divisional signalling officer had laid a line to the new Brigade headquarters. At eight

o'clock, followed by "Ernest" and the brigade signallers who had stayed with me, I rode through St E—— and dipped into a *sul-de-sac* valley crowded with the field batteries of another Division. Our way took us toward and across gorse-clad, wild-looking uplands eastward. Night approached. Just as we halted at a spot where two puddly, churned-up sunken roads crossed, guns behind and on either side of us belched forth flame and rasping sound. Eighteen-pounder shells screamed swiftly over us; the whole countryside spurted flashes. One of the horses started and plunged with nervousness. "It's an S.O.S. call, sir," said a driver who had put his horse under a bank, raising his voice against the din. "Ernest," his little body quivering with excitement, was already racing backwards and forwards. I told my groom to take my horse into the sunken road, and started to look for the colonel and the headquarters' party. A sticky walk up the track to the left took me within a couple of hundred yards of the village of R——, where most of the Boche shells were falling. No signs of headquarters up there. After a lot of shouting to persuade the dog to keep near me, I turned back and went through the mud again, past the cross-roads junction, and along a still slimier water-logged cart-track. I found every one in headquarters digging shelters in the side of the road. The

servants had rigged up a corrugated-iron habitation for the colonel. The brigade clerks, the signallers, and the cooks had dug hard, and made use of trench-covers, with the swift resource that long experience of trench-life had developed into a sort of second nature. Hubbard had arranged an "elephant," raised on two rows of ancient sandbags, for himself and me to snuggle under.

"I've sent out S.O.S. lines to the batteries," said the colonel, who was sitting on a box in a long disused gun-pit.

"We'll turn this place into a mess to-morrow."

The firing died down. I sent some one to tell the groom to take the horses back to the waggon line which was being established at the headquarters' position we had just left. The cook prepared us a simple meal. By 10 P.M. the brigade-major had telephoned instructions for the night-firing with which the batteries were to busy themselves. Our night was disturbed by the swish-plop of gas-shells, but none came near enough seriously to disquiet us.

(To be continued.)



## "GREEN BALLS."

BY PAUL BEWSHER.

## IV.

## UP THE COAST.

"Towards the silver glittering sea we go  
And cross the foam-streaked coast, and leave behind  
The fields. . . ."

—*Crossing the Channel.*

IN the train on the way to Dover my pilot told me, with a dismal expression overshadowing his face, a piece of bad news.

"Do you know," he said, "while we were on leave a Handley got shot down off Zeebrugge! — was the pilot, and I think he was drowned. One gunlayer was saved, badly wounded. A French seaplane which picked up the other got shot down too! We were well off at Luxeuil!"

With this discouraging information, casting a gloom over the immediate outlook, we crossed the Dover Straits by destroyer, and arrived at the aerodrome to find it busy with these daylight patrols.

My pilot had no machine in action, so, though he was not wanted, I was allocated to a machine on the first patrol that took place. There was a certain amount of concern at the aerodrome in connection with the missing pilot, who was very popular, and I was glad to hear that we were to be accompanied by a patrol of triplanes.

This was good news, and one of the pilots, who had been on a daylight Handley-Page patrol, had described it in his inimitable way as follows:—

"We were tooling along merrily, about ten miles off the coast, when a Hun seaplane came up from Ostend—a nasty little green blighter. A 'tripe' just turned round—just turned round, mind you, and the Hun seaplane looked at him, and went down quick. When we were off Zeebrugge, Sinjy, my observer, saw some little specks off the Mole. Of course he wanted to have a look at them—he is a full-out beggar—said they were Hun torpedo-boats. We turned on and flew right towards the coast. Sinjy was full out and got ready to drop the bombs. Then he decided they were just trawlers. It was just in time, then—*woof*—about a hundred shells burst all at once just behind our tail. Every battery on the coast must have opened fire at once. They were just waiting for us to come right in and then let go. I shoved the nose down to 80 knots and shifted like smoke out to sea!"

That was very encouraging, especially the part about the triplanes, so really I felt very anxious to go, although I was frightened. I have often felt this mingled eagerness and apprehension, and I have come to the conclusion that although

I do not want to do the job, I want to have *done* it, to have had so much more experience behind me. Perhaps this is the impulse behind so many deeds done against personal inclinations. You think far enough ahead to realise how pleasant your feelings will be when you have passed through some danger or some excitement.

One afternoon, after many delays, we started on a coastal patrol. The machine had a crew of five: the pilot, a tremendous fair-haired fellow, resolute and impulsive, a real Viking, who towered above me, and three gunlayers, one in the front and two behind. We carried a small load of bombs, and were under orders to bomb any vessel which was attacked by the leading machine, and were also told that no vessel this side of the Nieuport piers, the seaward end of the lines, was to be touched.

The flight was a small one, of three machines only, and the leading machine was distinguished by white streamers attached to the outside struts of the starboard and port wings.

It was a sunny day when we left the ground, and rose up in great circles over the huddled red roofs of Dunkerque, and the pink - and - white seaside suburb of Malo-les-Bains.

The leading machines started to fly down the coast towards the lines before we had gained any height at all. Our engines were running badly, and we were well below the other machines, so the pilot asked me what I thought.

"Leave it to you!" I said—

one half of me whispering, "Go back!" the other half whispering "Push on!"

"Well, I'll see!" he said, as he pulled back the control wheel almost as far as he dared without "stalling" the machine. The engines complained; the finger of the speed indicator wobbled undecidedly about 48 miles an hour, and the height indicator slowly moved to 4000 feet.

So we passed over La Panne, as the two leaders flew bravely along the coast soaring upwards like swallows, while we followed gamely but ignobly behind. When we could distinctly see the Nieuport piers and the Belgian floods stretching down towards Dixmude, the leader turned out to sea. Then to our joy he evidently realised our plight, for instead of flying on at an angle away from the coast, he swept round in a big circle to give us a chance to rise up to his level. Then he turned once more out to sea, the second machine followed him, and we, still many hundred feet below them, straggled behind.

Above us now flew, gleaming white against the blue afternoon sky, several triplanes, whose flashing wings brought us their message of protection. The outlook did not seem so bad after all. The pilot, in a red silk pirate cap with its tassel blown out by the wind, looked down at me smiling. I wore a blue silk cap and was wearing an ordinary overcoat and a muffler, and my thin walking shoes looked very silly hanging a few inches off the floor in that great machine.



The sunlight came streaming into the cockpit, the sea glittered with a friendly spaciousness beneath us, and this voyage in the wind seemed a pleasant spring adventure far from the dangers of war.

We steadily drew away from the coast, whose misty outline lay some way below us to our right. When we were abreast of the Nieuport piers, and were about to cross into enemy waters, we could scarcely see more than the edge of the shore and a mile or so of country inland.

When we had flown on for a few minutes more, I heard a sudden loud crash. At once I looked to the engine to see if its indicators gave hint of trouble. They were quite normal. Then I looked back and saw, through the square framework of the tail, a cloud of smoke.

I turned quickly to the pilot and shouted, "We're being shelled!"

He looked back, and turned to me dubiously.

"What the blazes is it? It can't be the Westende guns—we're too far from the coast!"

Then I saw below me three or four shell-bursts leaping out near the water, not far from two destroyers which were lying below us, small and slim lines of black on the sparkle of the sea.

"I can't make it out!" he said. "It's very rum. Let's push on!"

Some way ahead of us rose and fell the dark outlines of the two other Handley-Pages, and we could notice that curious optical delusion of the

air, the apparently slow revolution of their propellers, blade after blade appearing to go round in a jerky fashion, though in reality they were whirling invisibly at a speed of 1600 revolutions a minute, or even more. The only explanation of this spectacle, which can often be seen by an airman, is that the vibrations of his machine affect his eyes like the rapid shutters of a cinema camera, and he has continual momentary glances of the propeller in a fixed position.

Soon we were abreast of Ostend, and we could see the inland lake of its Bassin de Chasse lying beyond the edge of the coast. We passed Ostend, and far ahead of me to my right I could see the curve of the Zeebrugge Mole, very small and dim in the distant haze.

I scanned the sea with my eyes, looking in vain for submarines or destroyers or seaplanes. No mark of any kind broke the shining surface of the water. Now and then a triplane or a "D.H.4," flying on some coastwise expedition, slid up to us and dived down past us, or flew a hundred feet above our heads, showing its distinguishing letters and its red, white, and blue cockade. The pilot sat beside me, his huge body almost half out of the machine, his aquiline nose and pronounced chin driving firmly through the rush of the wind, which flapped and fluttered our silk caps; the sunlight shone with the pale gold of spring across our shoulders and arms, and though I was ten miles out to sea in a land

machine off an enemy shore, I felt curiously safe, curiously unafraid. The sea seemed to be a safeguard. Little did I know that I was passing over the scene of my midnight tragedy a year later, when I was to regard the sea in a different aspect—when I was to learn by a bitter lesson its pitiless power.

The machines in front of us swung round to return. We swung round too to give ourselves a chance of gaining height before we were passed. This was not needed, for to our amusement we saw that whereas, as was only natural, the other machines had flown up the coast with their nose well in air, climbing steadily, now they were returning homewards with their noses well down, getting out of the danger zone (and it *was* a danger zone for a slow cumbersome Handley-Page) as quickly as possible.

They passed nearly a thousand feet beneath us, and this time we followed them easily. When we were almost abreast of the Nieuport piers once more I suddenly saw a little puff of hard black smoke appear in the air in front of us. Its clean-cut outlines grew less distinct and more hazy as it spread and grew thinner. Another puff appeared near it and a little above it, and in turn began to enlarge and dissipate.

"Why! They're shelling us!" exclaimed my pilot.

I looked below. There lay the two destroyers steaming slowly in circles.

"I believe it's those confounded destroyers!" I said. "They must be British too, off

here. Can't they see our marks, blame fools?"

Two or three more shells appeared between us and our two companions, who were now going round and round in circles evidently very mystified. It looked so amusing that we could not help laughing, now that the fire was not meant for us. Then the shells came over to us again. It was a curious sight. You would look out into the blue sky and the mist-bound coast, and suddenly, in absolute silence (for the roar of our engines deafened us), would appear, out of nothing, a perfectly hard outline, looking as solid as a piece of coal, or a crumpled top-hat. There it would appear in a second of time and would hang in the sky—an apparent mockery of gravity. Its outline would flux and change, it would writhe and roll round into an ever larger expanse of vapour, its edge would grow soft and more ragged, and in a few minutes it would be a little cloud of haze, and nothing more.

Suddenly the pilot exclaimed, "It is them, the swine, I saw them fire!" and impetuously threw round the wheel and pushed forward the rudder. The machine swung round at a tremendous pace, and a most curious incident occurred. Ahead of us were the two machines, some way below us, with their noses pointing downwards. Now to our amazement we saw them mount up, up, up, into the sky, with their tails down as though they were climbing furiously, and then the coast shot round and rose up into the sky as well.



In the midst of this mad inversion of the universe the pilot turned to me and calmly said—

"What the blazes has happened, Paul, it looks all wrong? What shall I do?"

"Shove her nose down, old man!" I said. "It looks mighty rum to me—but we'll get out somehow!"

The universe swept round us again, the coast fell down, the Handley-Pages dropped below us with their noses towards the sea. The pilot looked at me, I looked at him.

"What on earth was that?" he said.

"Must have been jolly nearly upside down!" I suggested, feeling a bit dazed.

The memory of that brief and mystified conversation, as we sat side by side in a machine which had assumed some incomprehensible position, has remained in my memory as one of the strangest moments I have known.

The shells still burst near us and the pilot got annoyed.

"Let's drop our stuff on them! Get in the back! They can't be British. They must be able to see our marks. We're only seven thousand."

"Well! What about the leader? We daren't do it unless he does—we'll get in a thundering row. Anyway they are just off our coast!"

The leading machines still flew round undecidedly. The destroyers below still fired their occasional shells. One burst rather near us.

"I'll bomb them and chance it—the swine!" said the pilot. "You get in the back!"

"All right, you take the responsibility!" I said, and climbed into the back of the machine and lay on the floor under his seat. I pulled open the sliding-door and a burst of wind came blowing up on my face. Below me lay a little square of sea, on which I could see no destroyer, but I could tell by the way it was racing under us that we were doing a steep turn.

Still the two little black shapes of the destroyers did not come into the frame of the picture. I put my head out below the machine and looked for them. I could not see them. If I had I was determined to drop my bombs on them whatever they were.

I hurriedly got back beside the pilot and asked him what he was doing.

"I decided not to touch them, old man! I want to bomb them—whatever they may be. Anyway the leader's gone off—we better follow."

Some way ahead of us were the two other machines flying homewards. We toiled on behind them, receiving a few parting shell-bursts as a farewell. Out to sea we flew till we were off Dunkerque, and then we turned in towards the coast. We passed over the crowded docks, and over the brown roofs of the town, gliding down with our engines throttled back, when suddenly I looked to the left and saw that one of the propellers had stopped dead. My heart jumped into my throat, and I took the pilot by the arm.

He looked round and told me to get into the back in order

to try to start up the engine. I hurried into the little canvas-walled room and gripped the metal starting-handle, and tried to turn it again and again in vain. The sweat poured off my forehead, my arm ached, but I could do nothing. It would not move.

I got back to the pilot, and told him.

"All right!" he said. "I'll land her somehow!"

We were getting near the aerodrome, on which, to my great relief, a machine was "taxying" towards the hangars. It was a relief to see that the aerodrome was clear, because, with no motive-power to take us off the ground again, or to swing us round in a hurry, we should be helpless if we were to land when some other machine was in the way, and we had to land at once. So, as we faced the wind, and I saw the pilot very wisely stop the other engine, I felt rather anxious, and hoped it was going to be all right. If we "undershot," we might land on a shed or a hedge; if we "overshot," we might run into a ditch—there would be no means of preventing the calamity. The pilot must have perfect judgment, and must touch the ground at the right moment.

So I sat beside him, very tense and on the alert, longing to give my advice, but knowing it was best to keep silent, even if I thought he was wrong, lest I should confuse his judgment.

Knowing he was probably feeling the strain of responsibility, since four other lives

than his own depended on his skill, I just gripped his arm and said—

"Priceless . . . priceless . . . we're going to do a topping landing. . . ."

To the right we swung, and then to the left, as we did an "S" turn, to lessen our gliding distance.

"Ripping, old man! We'll just—do—it—nicely. . . . Hardly a bump! . . . Well! that was some landing!"

The feat had been achieved, and we had landed with both propellers stopped.

Soon we were in the mess eating our "4½-minute" or hard-boiled eggs, drinking tea, and talking excitedly about the flight, our faces flushed with the wind, our hair dishevelled.

Then the glow of pleasure is felt, when the flight is finished, the danger is over, and you can rest, feeling that the rest is well deserved.

An evening report from a reconnaissance squadron informed us that the destroyers had been seen steaming into Ostend harbour. Our feelings can be imagined. Lost chances like that bite deep, and when I met the pilot many many months later on his return from a German prison camp, after the Armistice (for he had landed with engine failure behind the German lines), he said to me—

"Oh, how I wished we *had* bombed those two destroyers! What a chance! What a chance!"

This incident illustrates well the curious point of view of an air-bomber. If those destroyers had been British, and the pilot



had ordered me to bomb them, I could have done so with equanimity. If at any time I had been sent at night to attack a British town I would have released my bombs with no feeling of horror; indeed I would not have had any feelings at all. At first sight that statement sounds brutal and incredible. Let me say that I could not stand on a beetle without a feeling of repugnance. It has made me feel sick to shoot an animal in pain. The idea of killing is repulsive to me.

The explanation is that the airman dropping bombs does not drop them on human beings. He presses a lever when the metal bar of his bomb-sight crosses a certain portion of the "map" below him. It is merely a scientific operation. You never feel that there are human beings, soft creatures of flesh and blood, below you. You are not conscious of the fear and misery, of the pain and death, you may be causing. You are entirely aloof.

I have knelt in the nose of the machine over my objective, and have pressed the bomb-handle at the critical moment without ever having seen the bombs in the machine. After a certain time I have seen in the darkness below flash after flash leap up from the dim ground. In my mind those *flashes* have been caused by the movement of my handle. I have not thought of yellow bombs dropping out of the

machine, whirling through the air with an awe-inspiring scream, and exploding with a cruel force as they strike the earth. It is as though I had pressed an electric switch, and had seen a lamp glow in response in some far distant signal station.

If I had been taken to a scene of devastation, and had been shown a line of mutilated bodies, and had heard some one say "You did this!" I should have been overcome with remorse and sickness, and would have gone away in tears of shame and loathing. Yet in the air, when the handle has been thrust home for the last time, and the bombs are actually scattering their splinters of death, I would get back to my seat and laugh and say—

"That's done, Jimmy! Let's push home!"

Once at Dunkerque I saw a street closed by a barrier, round which was a crowd of quiet people. There in the middle of it was a house which had been demolished by a German bomb during the night, and in the cellar lay thirty or forty dead or dying people. Men worked frantically at the crumbled wreckage. An ambulance drove through the barrier. Next to the driver sat an old man with the tears streaming down his cheeks. His wife lay dead in the back.

I turned away with a feeling of horror, and said to my friend—

"I never want to bomb again!"

(To be continued.)

## ON PATROL.—IX.

A.D. 400.

A LONG low ship from the Orkneys' sailed,  
 With a full gale driving her along,  
 Three score sailormen singing as they baled  
 To the tune of a Viking song—

*We have a luck-charm  
 Carved on the tiller,  
 Cut in the fore-room  
 See we Thor's Hammer ;  
 Gods will protect us  
 Under a shield-burgh,  
 Carved in the mast we—  
 The Runes of Yggdrasil!*

But the Earl called down from the kicking tiller-head,  
 "Six hands lay along to me!  
 Tumble out the hawsers there, Skallagrim the Red!  
 For a battle with a Berserk sea ;  
 Sing a song of work, of a well-stayed mast,  
 Of clinch and rivet and pine,  
 Of a bull's-hide sail we can carry to the last  
 Of a well-built ship like mine.  
 Never mind the Runes on the bending tree  
 Or the charms on the tiller that I hold,  
 Trust to your hands and the Makers of the Sea,  
 To the gods of the Viking bold!

*Thor of the Hammer—  
 King of the Warriors,  
 We are not thralls here  
 —Men of the sea ;  
 We are not idle,  
 Fight we as seamen,  
 Worthy your aid then  
 —Men of the Sea!"*

KLAXON.



## EXPERIENCES OF A WAR BABY.

BY ONE.

## CHAPTER VIII.—BATTLE.

As the whole world now knows, noon on Wednesday, 31st May 1916, found the Grand Fleet in the eastern half of the North Sea, steering an easterly course. The day was fine and warm, a great change for the better after a stormy winter. The sea was absolutely calm, and the haze rendered the visibility low, though occasionally there were clear intervals when the visibility rose to about twelve miles. To all appearances we were having a very quiet and peaceful voyage.

In the gun-room of the *Penultimate* there was not a murmur of war. The general opinion of those officers who worried about the reasons for our operations was, that we were engaged in one of the periodical "sweeps" of the North Sea. We had indulged in a number of these "stunts," all precisely similar, without seeing any ships other than a few Dutch fishing smacks. Occasionally we would steam through wreckage, floating timber, &c., evidence of Von Tirpitz's campaign against the shipping of the world. On one such occasion we steamed for half an hour through a mass of logs of wood, all precisely similar in shape and size, and probably intended for railway sleepers or pit

props. They must have marked the grave of some hapless neutral. Not once had we seen the wrecker himself. Thus, after lunch, all who were not proceeding on watch, composed themselves in chairs, and on settees, for slumber.

I was one of the afternoon watch-keepers, and at 12.30 P.M. made my way up to a hut above the fore-bridge, where I kept my watch at sea. As the weather was warm and the watch was not long, I took no extra clothes with me, a fact which I much regretted later.

My duty was to look out for submarines, and report any suspicious objects in the water to the officer of the watch. In the hut, as well as myself, were eight men, of whom I was in charge. The early part of the watch was uneventful. The sea was so calm that the slightest ripple could be seen. I was beginning to feel the soothing effects of lunch, when I was galvanised into life by a report from the look-out man at my side—

"Suspicious objic' in the water two points on the port bow, sir."

I searched the face of the waters on the bearing he had given, and sighted the "objic'." There was an undoubted swirl

in the water, though no cause for the swirl was visible. Even so, it was undoubtedly my duty to report the fact to the officer of the watch, so that he might deal with the matter as he thought best. Especially was this the case, as another ship had reported the presence of submarines a few hours earlier.

"Suspicious object in the water two points on the port bow, sir," I reported down my voice-pipe.

"Very good," replied the O.O.W., and through my look-out slit I could see him searching for the supposed enemy with his glasses.

I resumed my search, and in a few seconds sighted the cause of the disturbance. The water was very calm and clear, so that, at the height my hut was above sea-level, I could see some feet below the surface. About fifty yards ahead of the ship I saw a large fish swim lazily across our bow and disappear. Luckily, the officer of the watch did not see him, and continued to look for the submarine, with visions of D.S.O.'s and promotion looming large in his mind. His disappointment was a heartrending sight.

At 2 P.M. there came a commotion on the bridge. A signal was shown to the officer of the watch, which apparently gave him much satisfaction, and shortly afterwards the captain and navigator arrived. The bridge was not far below me, and I watched the scene through my look-out slit. They were all engaged in an

argument, and appeared very pleased. By applying my ear to the voice-pipe through which I reported, I could catch snatches of their conversation, though the look-out was not as bright as it should be. At first I could hear nothing but one officer repeating, "Der Tag, der Tag," in a most cheerful tone, which made me wonder for his sanity. Then I heard more conversation, in which the words "*Galatea*" and "enemy cruisers" appeared. Finally, some one read the signal aloud, from which it appeared that the light cruiser *Galatea* had reported that she was in touch with a squadron of cruisers, probably hostile.

This, indeed, was news. In all probability we should find that the birds had flown before we got our chance, but at any rate this sweep would not be entirely blank. I told my look-outs what I had heard, which keyed them up to a greater pitch of watchfulness.

We turned to the southward at once, and began to work up our speed. Ahead of us we could see the battle cruisers, about ten miles distant, flying along at high speed. Signals reporting the presence of the enemy came in with greater frequency, and from what I could gather from my voice-pipe, there was a hope that we might be in at the death, and even fire a shot or two.

At four o'clock the ship's company went to action stations, as a preparation for any circumstances. The offi-



cer of the watch then kindly informed me that some enemy vessels had been sighted, adding that we were to keep a sharp look-out for submarines and *not* to scan the horizon for the enemy. I am afraid that our success in overcoming that weakness was indifferent. We simply could not keep our eyes off the horizon, except to look at the signal-flags hoisted from time to time by the flagship as our speed was increased knot by knot. At 4.45 the signal was hoisted ordering us to prepare for immediate action.

About ten minutes later I observed a number of red flashes burst from one of our light cruisers on the horizon, and a cloud of brown cordite smoke rose from her. This burst was followed by more from other ships near her. It was with difficulty that I realised that they were firing at a genuine enemy ship with an intent to kill, and not at an inoffensive target for practice. I remember that I said to myself at the time, "Now you have seen your first shot fired in anger." Nevertheless it was unrealistic. It is this sense of unrealism which is the most surprising sensation in a modern action. Many of the practices are very realistic, and, after all, the noise made by a gun when firing for practice or in action is exactly the same.

The order then came for submarine look-outs to fall out and go to their action stations. I went to the conning-tower, where, as navi-

gator's assistant or "tanky," I was stationed. My duty was to keep a record of all courses and changes of speed during the action, in order that our position could be found when all was over. I had also to put down such events as we observed, so that if we survived we could send in a report of the action. Shortly afterwards the captain and navigator came down from the bridge, as the enemy big ships were in sight. At one and a half minutes past five we opened fire with our 15-inch guns at the enemy battle cruisers at a range of a little over eleven miles.

Within a terribly short space of time we received our first taste of real war. A look-out on the starboard side of the conning-tower reported, "A large explosion in the battle-cruiser fleet."

"Note that down," said the Navigating Commander to me. I did so, feeling decidedly less heroic than some minutes before. The question which obtruded itself before my mind was, "Is that remark to be made about the *Penultimate* before the day is over?" Looking out of the slit in the side of the conning-tower, I saw a heavy black cloud hovering over the rear of the battle cruisers. There was also a gap, which had previously been filled by H.M.S. *Indefatigable*. With her had perished four midshipmen who, six months before, had been cadets in the same term as I.

We were having a very comfortable time. We were firing

steadily at a long range, and were receiving no return fire. The enemy battle cruisers, who when first sighted were steering an opposite course to us, had now turned, and were running away at full speed. Whilst running, their fire seemed to be directed entirely at the battle cruisers. They were firing with great skill and with a certain amount of luck. It is the practice of the Germans to bunch all the shots of a salvo or broadside into a small space. Thus, if they score a hit, probably three or four projectiles will land on board the target. The disadvantage of this scheme is that, if they miss, they will probably miss clean, whereas with a somewhat larger "spread" of a salvo of shell falling near possibly one or two would hit. During this opening stage their battle cruisers scored several hits, for H.M.S. *Queen Mary* sank shortly afterwards, with the loss of all but a dozen lives.

Shortly after this, some of the enemy turned their attention to us, and, after ranging salvos, began dropping shells all round, and scoring occasional hits, though of no very serious nature. The *Penultimate* was hit on the armour without causing serious damage, and in the ship ahead we could see gaping holes in two of her boats.

It was at this time that the main High Sea Battle Fleet appeared on the scene and opened a heavy fire on the battle cruisers. They accordingly turned back and passed about a mile away from us,

going full speed in the opposite direction. They looked a magnificent sight. We turned to follow them, and in turning came under a very heavy fire. It was estimated that we were then fighting at odds of four or five to one, as the battle cruisers were rapidly drawing out of range. The sea became a continuous succession of water-spouts, both ahead, astern, and on the sides of us. The hits were marvellously few. Throughout this ordeal we continued steadily firing. Spotting the fall of our shot was a difficult matter, due to the glare of the sun, which was exactly in our eyes. The air, also, was misty, which tended to make against clarity. However, our fire was not without serious effect. Without the actual satisfaction of seeing a ship sink, we gave them a very serious hammering, without suffering much inconvenience ourselves. From the *Penultimate's* conning-tower we saw three salvos fall dead on our fore-and-aft line produced, ten yards ahead of the ship. It gave us a feeling impossible to describe, but supposed to exist in the pit of the stomach, for with each salvo we could almost feel the little "left" correction which the German gun-control officer should be giving, and which would adjust the direction of the next salvo to drop in the conning-tower. Luckily for us that correction was given too late, for when the next salvo came it roared overhead and dropped into the water a hundred yards beyond us.

We were now racing away



to the northward, with every available ounce of steam driving the engines at their greatest speed. The highest trial speeds were well surpassed, as they always are on these occasions, and a very high speed was maintained for a long time. Thus we slowly drew away from the main enemy fleet, and even from their battle cruisers, who had turned to chase their late pursuers. Then the mist came down.

As one and all know, the mists were the cause of our failure to annihilate the enemy. It may seem that, at this point, the mist provided us with a providential means of escape. This was not the case. We were drawing away from the Germans to a range where our big guns have a tremendous advantage. The German guns are designed for North Sea use only, and for just such a day as that. They are only able to fire at comparatively short ranges, and are wonderfully accurate at these ranges. Our guns are designed for much greater ranges, for our ships may be called upon to fight in any part of the world. Thus the greater range within limits meant added advantage to us. The mist ruined everything.

Firing temporarily ceased, and every one took a breath. We junior people, who did not know the position of the main part of the Grand Fleet, took a look round. At the same time, conforming with the battle cruisers, we altered course towards the enemy, and waited for a sight of him to reopen

fire. We heard the battle cruisers begin a heavy firing ahead, and then, in a rift in the mist, we sighted the Hun once again. The light was far better, and we picked up his range quickly. He did not appear as comfortable, and his replies were not very dangerous. Once again, down came the mist.

Ahead the firing still continued, and, a few minutes later, increased in volume. This must have been the time when the *Invincible* and her sisters came into the fight, and the *Invincible* met her end in a similar manner to the *Queen Mary*. It was terribly sudden. One moment she was a fine ship steaming some thirty miles an hour, the next moment there was not a sign of her.

Suddenly the mist cleared, and we saw the Germans at a comparatively close range. It was something in the nature of a sudden shock, and, to such of us as had never seen a Hun, it was a most interesting experience to see one close to us. They could not have been more than five miles distant, when I caught sight of one squadron, four of the *König* class. My view of the situation was much limited, as we were packed like sardines into the conning-tower, so that movement was almost impossible, and also I had my job to attend to.

We wasted no time in gazing, but reopened fire with vigour. The enemy replied in full earnest, and we were subjected to the worst ordeal of the day. The sea literally boiled with

the water-spouts caused by falling shell. The entire German fleet appeared to concentrate on our squadron, and every ounce of Teutonic hate was directed at our extermination. Their success was not great. They scored a few hits of minor importance to some of us. They never hit the *Penultimate* at all, though they persistently dropped them as close as fifty yards each side. In one case the ricochets, in the other case the first flights of the shell, shrieked overhead in an alarming manner; but noise does no damage. Eventually one of our number was forced to leave the line, due to a jam in her steering gear, and when out of control passed close to the German ships. To their everlasting dishonour may it be said that they failed to sink her, and she was easily able to reach port under her own steam. By all rights, she should have been sunk within a few minutes. Presumably that is the reason why the German Admiralty persistently claimed her destruction.

At the height of this shell-storm came our deliverance. On the port bow we suddenly sighted the Grand Fleet, distant about five miles, preceded by armoured cruisers. In the log this fact is merely noted by the entry—

“7.7. Sighted Grand Fleet on port bow.”

There can be no representation of the feeling of relief which that sight afforded. We had so far fought against ever-increasing odds, and were at the moment in the thick of

the worst bombardment, whilst none of us junior people knew when the battle fleet might be expected. Looking back on the action, and helped by the official report, the chief feeling is one of admiration for this wonderful strategy by which the enemy was unsuspectingly drawn into a trap, from which, with reasonable visibility and luck, he could never have escaped. The daring and skill with which this operation was carried out by our leaders is the brightest spot in the action. It is a terrible misfortune that, having so carefully prepared the ground, we were unable to extract any more tangible results than his immediate retreat to his base, with losses, and his subsequent inactivity. However, at that time our minds were filled with but one thought—“Thank God.”

Whilst the fleet began to deploy the cruisers swept on, and came between us and the enemy. In so doing, they came under a murderous fire, at first receiving the shots which were aimed at us, but were falling short—and later, when the Huns became panic-stricken or overjoyed at an easy fight, the whole of the fire. This action was possibly the most gallant of the engagement. The smoke made by these cruisers hid not only our squadron, which stood in the way of being sunk within a short space of time, but the deployment of the whole fleet. However, this magnificent action cost us two ships. H.M.S. *Defence* caught fire,



forward and aft, almost simultaneously, and after a very short while blew up. We saw the whole terrible scene as she sank about half a mile from us. There were first the two flames with clouds of smoke, then one tremendous flame, and then absolutely nothing. As well as this, the *Warrior* was disabled, and drifted past us out of the fight. Her subsequent career is well known. When the cruisers withdrew to the flank, the battle fleet was deployed in line of battle, and very ready to do its work.

I think that this moment must have been one of the greatest anti-climaxes of history. The Germans, up till that minute, must have felt jubilant. I do not honestly think that they expected the arrival of the battle fleet for several hours. Put yourself in the place of the Germans, and, assuming that, what was the prospect? The odds were in their favour by a matter of four to one; the result could not be in doubt. It must only be a matter of time until the British were sunk. Half an hour should see them crippled, in an hour they would have ceased to exist. Then all that remained was to avoid contact with the main British fleet and return to base, having struck a blow which would shake Britain's prestige more than ever before. The appearance of the cruisers caused a sudden flutter. Could this mean reinforcements? No; such ships would not be sent into action ahead of the fleet.

This must be a vain attempt to save one or two of the heavy ships at the expense of a cruiser. Never mind, this action would merely serve to increase the bag! They must have rubbed their hands.

Then the smoke cleared away, and revealed the British fleet—miles of it. The spectacle of seven or more miles of ships, at fairly close range, and all fresh to the fight, must have stricken terror into the heart of many a superman. Within the space of a few minutes the tables had been absolutely turned. Now it was to become a fight for life on the part of the late pursuers.

As soon as the smoke cleared our fleet opened fire. At such short range very little time was lost in "finding the target." Hits were scored almost from the start. The effect on the Hun was most marked. He seemed completely unable to cope with the situation. From accurate and steady fire he changed to wild and irregular shooting within a few minutes. With the strain relaxed, we watched with interest the splashes of shells falling a mile or more from their intended target. So ineffectual was their fire that they only scored one small hit on the battle fleet. Within ten minutes three ships near the head of their line of battle were burning brightly. In other ships hits could also be seen in the form of fires.

Our squadron was temporarily out of the fight, for, in taking up our position in the line, we were forced to alter

course out of range. Thus, when we once more took up the tale, it was against a much-battered foe, and the fire which we gave merely added to his confusion.

Thus the Hun realised that, after all, *Der Tag* had not yet come. In fact, at this juncture, the Kiel Canal was distinctly preferable to the mastery of the seas. Whether they won or not, the laurel wreaths were prepared, and the Kaiser's speech was written. It seemed a pity if nobody reaped the benefit. At any rate it was obvious that anything was preferable to the present state of affairs. Accordingly the main fleet was turned away, and the destroyers were sent to cover the turn by a torpedo attack.

Of that torpedo attack little need be said. We saw eight large destroyers approaching us. The order was passed to our secondary armament, and they opened fire. As far as we could see, not a torpedo was fired; at least not one torpedo passed near us. Three of those eight destroyers were crippled by us and finished off by our light cruisers and destroyers. The remainder were last seen steaming away at full speed.

However, we were unable to follow the enemy with any prospect of success. Dark was coming down, and the mist was too thick for any more effective action. Thus the Commander-in-Chief manoeuvred us so that we were placed between the Hun and his base, and so that the next morning

we might resume the argument. Then dark came down.

As soon as the actual fighting was finished, the captain and navigator left the conning-tower for the bridge, where a clearer view could be obtained. The staff, of course, followed. We then began to relax after a strenuous day, and felt extremely cold. We had had no food since lunch, and I had no warm clothing with me. However, there was no possibility of leaving the bridge, so there was nothing to be done but wait. Our only food that night was a few sandwiches, produced from heaven knows where.

The night was almost more exciting than the day. With the continuance of the mist it was very dark. As a result, it was impossible to tell when we might run into the enemy fleet. We might pass within half a mile of each other without knowing it. Also, the enemy might try a destroyer attack, if they could locate us. Destroyer attacks on a dark night are the most fiendish things possible. In addition, the destroyers have the advantage over big ships, as, whilst invisible themselves, they can see the black shapes of the big ships looming up in the dark.

Our small craft were the easy winners of the night operations. They clung to the enemy fleet throughout the early part of the night, harassing them with attacks whenever possible. As well as this, chance meetings were very frequent. An odd de-



stroyer, or possibly two or three, would suddenly find themselves in the middle of a German squadron. In every case there was no second thought about the matter. They went straight in, enduring any fire, in order to fire their torpedoes. To be a Hun must have been a nerve-racking thing.

These affairs were half-hourly throughout the first half of the night, and, when viewed from our standpoint, were a weird and wonderful sight. All of a sudden the darkness would be interrupted by a glare of light, as a searchlight was switched on. The light might be five or ten miles away, but its glare lighted the whole area dimly. Then would come the rattle and booming of guns fired at a great speed, with red flashes stabbing the darkness. For about five minutes this would continue. Frequently there would be an explosion as some ship met her doom. The sky would become lighted with the flickering of fires started aboard some of the engaged ships. Suddenly, as though by a pre-arranged signal, the firing would cease, the searchlights go out, and peace and darkness reign once more. The worst of these affairs which we noted occurred shortly after midnight, when the termination came in a large explosion which lighted up the sky brightly for miles. Some big ship must have left this world at that time.

By midnight we were becoming very tired. I found another midshipman who had

managed an hour's sleep at his station, who relieved me of my duties on the bridge. I was told that I might go to the conning-tower for a short while, and after borrowing some warm clothes I went there to look for a corner to sleep in. There was not an inch of the deck available; the crew off watch were occupying the whole space. All that I could find was a voice-pipe which made a horizontal bend, and on this I sat down. Within ten seconds I was asleep.

This period "off" was no lengthy one, for after half an hour I was sent for to return to the bridge, as my relief was required again. However, after an hour, I had another spell off for an hour; and later, when once more relieved, I squeezed into a corner and slept soundly for one and a half hours, propped up against the steel wall of the conning-tower. Thus I was very lucky. The captain and navigator never left the bridge for one second during the whole of the night.

At dawn we were all much on the *qui vive*. It was thought quite probable that we should find ourselves in the middle of the enemy fleet. As it was, we merely found ourselves in a thick haze, with a maximum visibility of less than one mile. Under these conditions it was impossible to keep touch with him. It was a terrible disappointment to us all. A meeting then would have meant a decisive victory. In clear weather he would probably have been in sight.

We continued to stand to the southward until the mined area was reached, when we turned back and swept to the northward in the hopes of catching some if not all of them. However, our luck was out.

About 7 A.M., when danger of an immediate action was lessened, our thoughts returned to the aching void which took the place of our stomachs. Heroic cooks left their stations and lighted the galley fire. In sections, the ship's company went to breakfast.

I was not in the first batch, and was much interested to hear reports as to how we had fared aft. The first account was from a lieutenant. "Oh," he said, "the chief damage is in the gun-room. A proj. has completely wrecked the place, and it is three inches deep in beer." The whole story was somewhat exaggerated. The mess was an absolute wreck through the effects of our own gun-fire, and not one piece of crockery remained. We messed in the wardroom for some days.

About 8 A.M. I had my first meal for twenty hours. Every one present was busily talking and relating his experiences. This in the intervals of ravenous feeding. From the others I gathered that the enemy had not harmed us. Our sole casualty was a gentleman who

dropped a shell on his toe whilst attempting to load. Of course there were numerous close shaves. There was the midshipman in the fore-top who lost his cap, and subsequently found it, with a piece of iron inside, on the upper deck. I am afraid that suspicion with regard to the "shrapnel bullet" rests on a kindly old chief stoker who was in charge of a fire party.

At about noon, after much fruitless sweeping, we heard that the enemy had slipped past us in the mist and had regained his harbour. Much sickened, we were forced to return. The next day we got in and started to replenish. For the remainder of that day and for the whole of the following night we were replenishing with ammunition and fuel. By the morning after we were ready for sea once more.

The whole fight was one long series of disappointments, and possibly the greatest disappointment of all was the reception on our return, as a result of gloomy communiqués. That matter has long since been set right, and now every person knows that the Jutland action was, though indecisive, as judged by tangible results, an expression of the sea power of the Allies, and their ability to drive back intruders.



## MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

THE CONFERENCE OF PARIS—THE TRAGI-COMEDY OF PRINKIPO—MR WILSON'S INDISCRETION—THE NEW CRUSADERS—THE MANDATORY PRINCIPLE—THE EXAMPLES OF EGYPT AND SAMOA—DE COMMINES ON THE MEETING OF PRINCES—THE ASPERSIONS CAST UPON THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA—WHAT THE CONGRESS ACTUALLY ACHIEVED—THE GREAT PART PLAYED BY ENGLAND—CASTLEREAGH, HERO AND STATESMAN.

THE Conference of Peace, now being held in Paris, is said by the friends of the people to be "democratic." Though in its ultimate purpose it seems not to differ from other Conferences, it assuredly engrosses in its method of procedure all the vices of democracy. It is garrulous, sentimental, and irresolute. It prefers words to deeds, and its representatives (or some of them) keep their eyes, where those eyes love best to linger, upon the ballot-box. "Le Congrès ne marche pas," said the Prince de Ligne at Vienna a hundred years ago, "il danse." The present Conference chatters rather than dances, although the thousand and one typists who throng Paris have been given a ball-dress apiece by a paternal (or maternal) Government. And this chattering is something worse than a waste of time. It almost makes us despair of a reasonable settlement. Europe longs for peace, and she is given dissertations. The men chosen to restore a battered world cannot put off the baneful habit of rhetoric. They deliver showy orations, and appear to think that the same kind of eloquence

as serves the demagogue will serve also the diplomatist.

Let us take as a flagrant example of political levity the tragi-comedy of Prinkipo. The very name savours of *opera bouffe*, and should have been a warning, even to the foolish. Who was responsible for it we do not know; we do know that it reflects very little credit upon any one concerned. The disgrace (or the glory) of devising it, we are told, must be shared. The plan, it is said, was inspired by Mr Lloyd George, drafted by Mr Wilson, and adopted by the Conference. This threefold division of labour reminds us of the famous Canadian report which, said rumour, was thought by Wakefield, written by Charles Buller, and signed by Lord Durham. The Canadian report led on to a stable government; the adventure of Prinkipo would have ended in ridicule, if it had not aroused a vast deal of ill-feeling.

The suggestion that the Bolsheviks should meet representatives of the other Russian Governments, as well as of the Allies, upon an island in the Sea of Marmora, might have

been made in a madhouse. The scoundrels Lenin and Trotsky, and the gang of blood-thirsty Jews which follows them, are the declared enemies of the human race. No decent man should speak to them. To confer with them politely and on equal terms would be a defilement. Especially was it an open insult to gentlemen like MM. Sazonoff and Savinkoff, to be invited to sit in the same room with miscreants who had slaughtered their friends and robbed their houses. Yet Mr Wilson and Mr Lloyd George did not take the trouble to ask the representatives of Omsk, Ekaterinodar, and Ukraine, who were in Paris, what they thought of their plan. They made up their minds like tyrants, and awaited the result in self-satisfied confidence. As a necessary and proper consequence, they received a rebuff which will not enhance the authority of the Conference. MM. Sazonoff and Savinkoff curtly refused to go; the Bolshevik assassins were left in the attitude of spoiled beauties who had been wooed by the Conference, and wooed in vain; and there for the present is an end of it. What were the motives which led Mr Wilson and Mr George to embark in a cock-boat upon the Sea of Marmora? It is difficult to discover. Whatever Mr Wilson says or does is ascribed to a lofty idealism; but we love not the idealist, who makes difficulties for his Allies, in order to strengthen the enemy whom he was reluctant

to fight. Mr George, on the other hand, never ceases to play the political game, and perhaps he thought he might conciliate the ineffable Mr Lansbury, the effete Mr Henderson, and his friend Mr Ramsay Macdonald, by thus encouraging the Russian Bolsheviks. But he has weakened whatever influence he might have exercised upon the Conference by his reckless levity; he has annoyed the French; and he has been properly snubbed even by the murderers themselves, Lenin and Trotsky. The ill-omened episode has done more than this: it has given the world a foretaste of the anger and ill-will which the precious League of Nations, if ever it come into being, will certainly arouse in all those of its members who value their sovereignty and independence.

Of the second indiscretion, Mr Wilson must plead guilty alone. The speech which he delivered upon his hobby, the League of Nations, was received in complete silence. It might have sounded well enough in a provincial debating society. Chatauqua would have rejoiced in it. It was wholly out of place at a Conference of Peace. It shone with the glittering commonplaces so dear to Mr Wilson's countrymen, but it was light without heat, and when the poor little candle was put out nothing at all was left of it. The most that he said had no relevance to the matter in hand. With tears in his voice he explained



that the strain of the war had been borne by old men, women, and children, who bade us make peace secure for them. That is what we all want to do, not merely for women and children, but for the sake of the soldiers who have fought and died for our cause. He declared that if we do not make the League vital, we shall disappoint the expectations of the peoples. Neither his elections nor our own give him the smallest jot of support. Again, he tells us that "if he returns to the United States without having made every effort in his power to realise this programme, he should return to meet the merited scorn of his fellow-citizens." That may be true, but it is an argument which does not touch France nor England. We have no interest whatever in Mr Wilson's desire to win the next election for his party. France and England are the neighbours of Germany; they have borne the brunt of the fighting; they have endured the heaviest sacrifices; and they are not yet responsible for their deeds and their policies to the citizens of the United States.

And then Mr Wilson makes a claim for himself and his countrymen, which cannot for one moment be supported. "We stand in a peculiar case," says he. "As I go about the streets here I see everywhere the American uniform. These men came into the war after we had uttered our purposes. They came as crusaders, not merely to win a war, but to

win a cause." Now, if these words mean anything, they mean that, while the Americans are crusaders, the French and English are not. Such a statement cannot be passed without a challenge. We also—the French and the English—were crusaders from the first days of August 1914. We gave of our best without stint and without repining. We lost far more men in the first few months of the war than the Americans have lost altogether. We fought to win the war, because we did not know, and do not know, any other way of winning a cause except by winning a war. Moreover, if the Americans are "crusaders," they kept their hope of a crusade a profound secret for three profitable years; and they understood well enough, when they did join the Allies in 1917, that the victory of Germany would imperil their prosperity, even their existence. However, Mr Wilson, clad always in the robes of the sentimentalist, believes that his motives are purer than the motives of other men. He believes also that the fountains of the enthusiasm for the League "spring from all the ancient wrongs and sympathies of mankind, and the very pulse of the world seems to beat to the surface in this enterprise." Of these wrongs we have in Europe borne a far heavier share than has fallen to America's lot, and we are convinced that a hard peace is more likely to give us the security and in-

demnity which we demand, than a thousand pages of coloured rhetoric. Indeed, as we read Mr Wilson's speech, we remembered George Ade's fable of the pompous "spell-binder" who, "with his right hand inside of his Prince Albert coat," prated of "the Everglades of Florida," and was bidden by a discerning spouse "to let go of the flying rings and get back to the green earth."

And that is what the members of the Peace Conference will not do. They will not get back to the green earth. Peace must be made, and it matters not to them. So strong upon them is the habit of popular assemblies, that they cannot help making speeches and boasting about their ideals. They profess a vast contempt for the great men who a hundred years ago settled the peace of Europe. They despise the arts of diplomacy, thinking that politics will serve them a better turn; and they prove daily to the world that without the arts of diplomacy they are powerless to affect anything, even agreement among themselves.

If they are guided by any principle, that principle seems to be, that France and England, who have fought the fight, shall not profit by their victory; that Germany, who has outdone all the barbarity recorded in history, shall be hurt as little as possible in her pride or in her pocket. Nothing, for instance, can be more bitterly insulting to the just confidence of France and

England in their right to govern than the "mandatory principle," which is to be applied to the colonies wrested from Germany. For some centuries we have borne "the white man's burden" without disgrace. We have done our best to make subject races happy, and we have succeeded. We have ruled our colonies, not in the hope of gain, but with the unchanging resolve to govern well. And now we are told that we must hold the German colonies under the League of Nations. This principle is good neither for governors nor governed. All sound sovereignty is in the nature of a superstition. The King of England has been a symbol of justice and peace to many thousands who never saw him. The benefits which he represents have been cherished the more warmly, because they were known to emanate from him. Do the politicians, who in their bungling way are attempting to reconstruct the world, remember the universal and passionate grief evoked all over the British Empire by the death of Victoria, the Great White Queen? Who in Africa or in the South Seas will understand the ministrations of the League, if it ever exists, or shed a tear if a Zeppelin remove with a single bomb all its sad un-inspired bureaucrats?

A flag and a chief of state, then, are necessary for the proper governance of colonies. If the League ever have a flag, it will be a thing to laugh at;



if it ever have a chief, it will be the man with the glib tongue and a deft habit of intrigue. To these things no native race, wise in its childhood, will ever pay respect. And if "the mandatory principle" take away from the governed the happy illusion which ensures peace, it makes the task of the governor impossible. We have seen the system of dual control at work before this. There was a time when Egypt had a divided government, and was so closely hampered thereby that for her growth was impossible. And then the sole duty of government came to England, and Egypt increased marvellously in prosperity, nor has the passage of years put any check upon that increase. In Samoa also we have seen the mandate at work, to the complete extinction of justice and happiness. Here are our warnings, and we refuse to take them. In order that England and France may be thought not to profit by the war, many thousands of honest helpless natives shall be condemned to live without the personal government, which alone they can understand, which alone can bring them happiness. You might just as well convert them into limited liability companies, and govern them by a board of polyglot directors.

The one chance of the mandatory principle is that which it shares with the League of Nations: that it will become a dead letter. But if that be

the hope of our representatives, then our representatives are playing the part of plotters, not of men. Surely it is not easy to understand the passion cherished by demagogues for committees, offices, pens, agenda-papers, and frock-coats. Perhaps these are so many implements for shelving responsibility. But what will our Dominions oversea think of the sorry expedient which we are adopting to save the Conference the trouble of making up its mind? The Dominions did not wait for the opportune moment in which to come into the war. They were at our side as soon as war was declared, and they have fought gallantly on many a field. Are we to assume, then, that they are fit to fight, and not fit to undertake the duties of government, which before the war were discharged by the Germans? Are we to put them under the tutelage of a League, in which Liberia may have the casting vote? If they are high-spirited, as we know they are, they will not accept the thankless trust, and will leave it to the League to take on the work, for which it will most certainly be proved unfit.

The greatest mistake which the Conference made was to invite the attendance of President Wilson. That wise man, Philippe de Commines, thought that "two princes who desire to continue in friendship ought never to come together, but to employ virtuous and wise men between them, who will

increase their unity." It was only in youth that he would allow his princes to share their pleasures—and, alas, in 1917 the Kaiser and Mr Wilson were too old to enjoy a harmless game of golf together. Commines was, of course, in the right of it, and if Woodrow I. had not crossed the ocean, it would have been better both for America and for Europe. In Paris Mr Wilson stands not on the same foot as the others. He is the chief of a state; they are but delegates. Whether he wishes it or not, he carries more weight than should belong to him. The informal talk that goes on, without doubt, between this representative and that, cannot be equal where he is one of the interlocutors. King George is not in Paris. President Poincaré very properly holds his tongue, leaving it to his Ministers to watch over the interests of France. Why, then, should Mr Wilson not be content to leave such work as the United States are called upon to do in the Conference to Messrs Lansing and House? He has, by his interference, set the whole business out of gear. He would be more than mortal if he deserved all the praise that has been heaped upon him in the last few weeks. He would be more than mortal also if he had not succumbed to it. But we want to get on with the peace, even though we do obeisance to no chief of state. And we cannot but be pleased that Mr Wilson has returned

to America, a President killed by kindness. We can only hope that the urgent call of his countrymen will keep him for ever on the other side of the Atlantic.

As we have said, the Pharisees, who are now voluble in Paris, hold up their hands in thankfulness that they are not as those who met at Vienna a hundred years ago. The Radicals, from whose faces the smile of superiority is not removed even while they sleep, hold their sides in merriment when they think of Vienna. One of the gentlemen who write for the Cocoa Press, announced not long since that he found Castlereagh "laughable." He would, poor fellow! Moreover Mr Wilson gave these gentry a lead, which they followed with zest. He confided in the ear of an ingenuous "interviewer" that the Congress of Vienna was misled by "political bosses," and that the Conference of Paris should not suffer the like fate. Castlereagh and Wellington political bosses! Was there ever such a confusion of thought? Wellington was a man in authority, and knew it. Castlereagh never in his life was seduced by politics from what he thought was the road of justice. And Mr Wilson and Mr Lloyd George—what, indeed, are they but political bosses, well-versed in all the tricks of the ballot-box, better skilled than any of their predecessors in the dangerous intrigues of the hustings.



Even if they possessed one tenth part of Castlereagh's knowledge and resolution, they could not profit by it. For they pretend a blind faith in the guidance of "the plain man," and are very sensitive to the temperature of the voter as he blows hot or cold upon them.

The deriders of the Congress of Vienna, according to the custom of Radicals, are bemused with phrases. Here, for instance, is Professor C. K. Webster, whose pamphlet on the Congress of Vienna bears the *imprimatur* of the Foreign Office, solemnly declaring that the statesmen who made peace a hundred years ago did nothing "to win the gratitude of posterity," except in "one or two minor points." If this were so, then was posterity very hard to please. And we prefer to Professor Webster's Whiggishness the reasoned judgment of the late Lord Salisbury, than whom none had a better right to speak of foreign affairs. "For forty years the peace of Europe flourished undisturbed," thus he wrote in 1862, "by one single conflict between any of the five great Powers who adjusted their differences at Vienna. . . . As far as international relations are concerned, there has been no rupture in Europe important enough to have been dignified by historians with the name of war. Europe has not enjoyed so long a repose from the curse of war since the fall of the Roman Empire.

Such an achievement is an ample justification of the acts of the Congress of Vienna and of the Minister [Castlereagh] who bore so large a part in shaping its decrees." Indeed it is; but Professor Webster looks upon the past with the eyes of the present; the new catch-words echo in his ear as he writes, and, like many another, he thinks it better to be sentimental than to be just. But why, we wonder, does the Foreign Office, which knows, or should know, the truth, give its sanction to these heresies?

Professor Webster is kind enough to confess that the Congress was not without a principle. To be sure it was not, and the principle was that of peace and security. And then he complains that the Congress discouraged the idea of self-government. In this discouragement the Congress was perfectly right. The statesmen of 1814 had seen enough of what is called Bolshevism to-day, in the deplorable revolution which had devastated France, to keep it in the ancient ways. It was not turned aside from its duty by the odious cant of democracy, which has now upset all our decent standards of right and wrong. Its members saw clearly enough that resolute government was necessary to restore the happiness and prosperity of Europe, nor would they endanger a hardly-won peace for the vain pleasure of repeating proverb. But when Alexander I., who played

the same part in 1814 as is essayed now by Mr Wilson, attempted to establish the Holy Alliance, the forerunner of the League of Nations, our own Castlereagh, whose foresight detected the danger of this sentimental tyranny, refused to give it more than an ironical approval. "The benign principles of the Alliance," said Castlereagh, "may be considered as constituting the European system in the matter of political conscience. It would, however, be derogatory to this solemn act of the governments to mix its discussion with the ordinary diplomatic obligations which bind State to State, and which are to be looked for alone in the treaties which have been concluded in the accustomed form." Thus, as a wise historian has said, "the soul of the Holy Alliance might be supposed to hover over the councils of Europe; but in these councils the treaties, and the treaties alone, were to be the determining factors." And to-day our only hope of a permanent peace is that the soul of the League of Nations should be suffered to "hover" and no more. If we wish not to be plunged back into war, we must ensure the concert of the Allies, who have beaten Germany to the ground, and leave the adulation and the management of the League to the fanatical pedants who take delight in debating societies.

And Professor Webster becomes a humourist when he gravely declares that "the

failure of the Congress of Vienna to give any adequate expression to the nobler ideals of universal peace may perhaps be condoned." We should think the failure might be condoned! Universal peace was then, and still remains, an idle dream. What the Congress achieved was to give to Europe an actual definite peace, which lasted longer than any peace known to our modern history. Is it not nonsense, then, to talk of "condonation," and to pretend to blame the statesmen of a hundred years ago for not sitting at the feet of Messrs Henderson and Ramsay MacDonald? What we ask to-day is precisely the same thing which our grandfathers asked in 1814, and we shall account ourselves fortunate if our representatives in Paris serve us half as well as we were served by Castlereagh and Wellington, heroes who knew what they wanted and how to get it, and who were all the wiser because they would not permit words and phrases to take precedence of deeds and guarantees.

And then we are confronted by the foolish persons who shudder at "the balance of power." They know not what it means, and find it a convenient bogey wherewith to frighten the ignorant elector. When M. Clemenceau, who is an honest realist, said that he would be content with the balance of power as a means to preserve the peace of Europe, he was assailed as bitterly as he might have



been had he uttered an impropriety. Yet our best chance of a lasting peace is to preserve the balance of power with a loyal fidelity. The great war which has devastated Europe came not from the balance of power, but from its neglect. Drunk with fiery spirit of politics, England and France permitted their power to be overbalanced by the might of Germany, and the result might have been the universal extinction of justice and liberty. What, then, is the meaning of the balance of power? It is this, in the words of an international lawyer: "That any European State may be restrained from pursuing plans of acquisition, or from making preparations looking towards future acquisitions, which are judged to be hazardous to the independence and national existence of its neighbours." Such is the system which has made Europe habitable for many centuries, and which is a far stronger guarantee of peace than the fantastic thing to which Mr Wilson, without knowing what he meant by it, has given a name, and into which our representatives are vainly trying to put the breath of life.

When we turn from the aspersions cast by the Whigs upon the Congress of Vienna to the achievements of the statesmen gathered together there, we cannot but be amazed at the contrast. The task set to the representatives of the Powers was not light. Europe had been at war for

a quarter of a century. All the old landmarks were effaced; all the old standards of life were abolished. The Congress, therefore, was asked to secure the world against a recurrence of the war, and to distribute among those competent to rule them the territories which had been conquered by France and her military dictator. The achievement of these ends was not rendered less difficult by the conflicting claims of the Allies, and by certain promises which had been given in moments of stress by reckless, unknowing Ministers. In other words, the Congress was asked not only to provide security for the future, but to fulfil the pledges of the past.

Moreover, the Congress of Vienna was disturbed by the presence of a Chief of State, whose high moral altitude obscured a definite and a selfish purpose. Alexander I. was the "idealist" of the moment. He spoke of Holy Alliances and universal peace, and he kept his eye resolutely fixed upon Poland. He aspired to make the world perpetually safe for autocracy; he was determined that the world, if he had his way, should be dominated by Russia. He carried more weight than he should, because, though a Chief of State, he conferred with the representatives of other States, and thus wielded an influence greater than his wisdom or his cause deserved. The result was that, before the statesmen assembled at Vienna could arrive at a definite agreement, they were obliged per-

force to conciliate Alexander I., who, not content with expressing his own idealism, gave expression also to the idealisms of Mme. de Krüdener, Adam Czartoriski, and La Harpe.

But above all he was resolved, if he could, to force the Powers to receive as a gospel his "diplomatic apocalypse." He proclaimed aloud, with the voice of a prophet, that henceforth he and his brother monarchs of Austria and Prussia would govern their conduct by the principles of the Christian religion, and he invited the other rulers of Europe to follow the august and imperial example. Meanwhile he forgot not Poland, and after the manner of idealists he hoped that his practical egoism would be hidden in a cloud of noble sentiments. To the vague aspirations of Alexander, Castlereagh gave always a wise, ironic answer. He refused to commit himself or his country, and he succeeded admirably in lessening the effect of Alexander's fantasies. But he was hampered seriously in the discharge of the one duty, which he kept always before his eyes—the duty of making peace,—and he has been abused ever since by the Whigs, because he did not turn aside from the main business of the Congress and chatter nonsense about constitutional reform and the perfectibility of the human race. Professor Webster, in the pamphlet already cited, shows himself a victim of the prevailing

superstition. "None," says he, "except Alexander—and he only fitfully and irresolutely—made any attempt to do more than the obvious." The obvious was to make peace, not to talk false philosophy, and the Congress of Vienna succeeded as it did mainly because Castlereagh and the best of his colleagues were content to do the obvious.

The Congress, then, which did nothing "to win the gratitude of posterity," as the historian tells us, except regulate the international rivers, gave Europe a lasting peace. This, of course, counts for nothing in the eyes of the sentimentalist. But after all it was the main purpose which it set out to achieve, and the Congress should have won the credit it deserved from all those who do not ask daily for a new heaven and a new earth, baptised in the blood of tyrants. The Congress restored to Europe a territorial system which, as the Master of Peterhouse has said, "had some doubtful points and some unmistakable defects, and for which permanency could not be hoped any more than any other set of human devices. But the system itself was neither accidental in its main principles, nor transitory in its main conditions. It re-established a real balance of power in Europe, if this expression be understood to mean that every security was provided against the violent disturbance of the peace of Europe by any *one* Power, or by any actually existing or pro-



bable combination of Powers." In other words, the Congress did precisely what it meant to do, and by the best and speediest method that statesmanship could devise. And if the Conference now being held in Paris succeeds half as well as the Congress of Vienna, it will earn the thanks of the whole world.

Where it failed was in admitting to its resolutions the merest taint of idealism. From Alexander's dream of a Holy Alliance came the fatal policy of intervention, which disturbed the tranquillity of Europe for many a day. If you would make the world safe for this system or that, if you would impose your will upon a reluctant neighbour, you must be prepared to exercise pressure. The pressure may be economic or it may be armed, but whatever form it assume it leads inevitably to hatred and ill-will. No free nation is happy when a gang of schoolmasters is set over it, as Europe found to its cost. All the failures in the settlement made at Vienna arose from foreign intervention in domestic quarrels. "There is no practice," said the late Lord Salisbury, "which the experience of nations more uniformly condemns, and none which governments more consistently pursue. Domestic discord is bad enough, but the passions which provoke it burn themselves out at last, and the contending parties are eventually schooled by each other into the moderation which

alone makes the coexistence of freedom and order possible. But if foreign intervention on either side be once threatened, much more if it be carried out, a venom is infused into the conflict which no reaction weakens, and no revenge exhausts." That is perfectly true, and they who conferred at Vienna lived to see the perils which idealism brings upon a trusting world. Such was the worst inheritance of the Congress, and it was an inheritance which Lord Castlereagh always condemned. It is not necessary to have evil intentions to produce evil. When Russia, Austria, and Prussia, pursuing the aims of the Holy Alliance, met at Troppau, and established the principle that revolutionary attacks on monarchical government were a peril to the peace of Europe, when, further, they bade an Austrian army to replace the Bourbon King of Naples on the throne, they meant very well indeed. But they interfered in what was not their business, and left behind them a bitter memory of despotic insolence.

The nineteenth century then proved what harm might be done by political protectorates and inapposite interventions. Had it not been for these, the alliances formed at Vienna would not have been broken until the coming of Bismarck, and perhaps not then. And we of to-day, unwarned by the past, are treading the same road of danger. We are doing our best or our worst

to substitute for firm treaties, made by loyal and faithful friends, a League of Nations, which is but the Holy Alliance reversed. Lord Castlereagh was strong enough to thwart the will of Alexander I. Our representatives in Paris quail before that other autocrat, Mr Wilson, who is inspired by Alexander's dangerous idealism. And if history teaches us anything, it teaches us this plain lesson, that if you take away the sovereignty of individual states, if you destroy the responsibility of free governments, you will banish happiness and prosperity from the earth. The League of Nations will be capable of far more mischief than was the Holy Alliance, whose evil doings should be enough to make the most recklessly sentimental of our politicians pause ere he helps to forge this instrument of strife.

As we have said, it is to Castlereagh's eternal credit that he opposed the policy of interfering in other people's domestic affairs whenever he could. He was true always to the doctrine which he formulated himself: "Every state has an indisputable right to interfere with another, so as to defend itself; but such interference is just only when there is real manifest danger resulting from the circumstances of a particular case; such danger cannot, *a priori*, be the object of an alliance of cabinets." And the expression of this doctrine shows us not only what Castlereagh thought,

—it shows us what he was. He was in politics a stern realist. He knew that revolution could not be stayed by the tenets of a sham philosophy, that glib catch-words would not stop the bullets of a resolute enemy. Whatever office he held, he did therein his country the greatest services. His indefatigable energy united Ireland with England, a piece of policy which was necessary to the safety of Ireland as of England. What he achieved in India, when he was at the Board of Control, was acclaimed by the Marquess of Wellesley himself. But England owes him her vastest debt of gratitude because he brought peace to her and to Europe, and saved her from the domination of the most dangerous tyrant, save one, that the modern world has seen.

For his pains he has been insulted and derided by all the Whigs who had command of pen and ink, and who have ever been busy in judging statesmen by false standards. "I met Murder on the way," wrote Shelley, "he had a mask like Castlereagh." Byron, far more scurrilous than Shelley, lost no opportunity of pouring contempt upon the saviour of Europe. When the poet heard of Waterloo, he said: "I am damned sorry for it. I didn't know but I might live to see Lord Castlereagh's head on a pole. But I suppose I shan't now." The men of letters, save Sir Walter Scott and one or two others, joined in the hue and cry. They



derided the speeches of Castlereagh, and charged him with the heinous crime of mixing his metaphors. They did not see that it should be accounted to him for virtue that he owed nothing to the specious gifts of oratory, and that if he mixed his metaphors his statesmanship was never confused. The truth is, he was neither wit nor scholar; he possessed no showy qualities; he was as little capable of flattering his audiences by making such speeches as they wanted to hear, as of voting for measures of which he disapproved, merely for the sake of weak complaisance or of panic fever. Consistent always, he spoke what was in his mind, plainly and clearly, and he never forgot that speech, even at its most eloquent, was subservient to action. Thus he seemed a monster incomprehensible to the witlings of his own time; thus he seems to the witlings of ours, who have come to an inheritance of strength and power through his exertions, a fair target for the shies of impertinence.

We owe to Castlereagh, who took up the work of Pitt, a full century of peace and happiness. In the Peninsula and in France he faced Napoleon and beat him. It was he who sent Sir Arthur Wellesley to Spain, and thus aided in the great work of driving the French over the Pyrenees. It was he who made the last Coalition, which ensured the downfall of the Corsican, and kept it harmoniously in being

until the victory of Waterloo was won. It was he whose ascendancy at the Congress of Vienna made possible a permanent peace, and gave freedom to an enslaved Europe. When Thiers said that Castlereagh was "England herself in the camp of the Coalition," he went not an inch beyond the truth. As "England herself" he held in his hands the destiny of Europe. And he shared with Metternich as his greatest compliment the contempt of Talleyrand, who found Metternich "tortuous and second-rate," and who charged Castlereagh with "straining the Englishman's prerogative of ignorance." By these depreciations Talleyrand thought to exalt himself, and to display an aptitude for what to-day we call "propaganda."

But men are proved by their own deeds, not by what others say about them. And Castlereagh's fame is secure, even though he kept not ready upon his tongue the platitudes which the Radicals admire. When he came into office England was at war, and he left her at peace. That service alone is sufficient for immortality. His character, most often misunderstood, was simple in its greatness. He was a man of genius, even though his genius lay wholly in the realm of practical affairs, — a man of genius, who was never swayed by passion or imagination. He knew perfectly well the end at which he aimed, and he pursued it with an untired intensity. But, with the sedulous moderation which

always marked him, he did not shoot beyond his aim. This stern restraint has been well described by Lord Salisbury. "Nothing of that enthusiastic temper," he wrote, "which leads men to overhunt a beaten enemy, to drive a good cause to excess, to swear allegiance to a formula, or to pursue an impracticable ideal, ever threw its shadow upon Lord Castlereagh's serene, impassive intelligence." And it is for this impassive intelligence that our voluble demagogues have been pleased to condemn whatever Castlereagh did, while they have accepted gladly enough the freedom which he gave them.

He has been denounced as the foe of liberty and the friend of absolutism. And in truth he was neither. Shall we call him the foe of liberty, who freed an enslaved Europe from a tyrant? Shall we represent him as the friend of absolute government, who opposed, successfully for his own country, the despotism of the Holy Alliance? He had no sympathy with the chimera called Reform. He did not believe that all the ills to which flesh is heir could be cured by a lavish distribution of votes. Moreover, he was obstinately convinced that laws were made to be obeyed, and he would not weaken the strong hand of government for the noisy applause of pampered rebels. By way of punishment for daring to save his country, he was bitterly assailed, as we have said, by poets and philo-

sophers. But, asked M. de Capefigue, "was England to be allowed to perish to please the poets?" There could be no doubt about the answer to this pertinent question. The poets and philosophers railed in vain, and Castlereagh had his way, which was the way of peace at home and abroad.

And what a contrast meets us to-day! Mr Lloyd George, who essays a task far heavier than Castlereagh's, deals chiefly in words. With Mr Wilson's aid he has set the rhetorical pace in Paris, and we are given speeches when we clamour for deeds. Castlereagh's mind was set upon what he knew to be right and practicable. In him knowledge and purpose were closely joined. Mr Lloyd George is a stranger wandering in a strange land, whose language and customs are beyond his understanding. Europe is to him a rolled-up map, and yet he is asked to help in the delimitation of new frontiers. What, then, can he do but fall back upon the eloquence which has won him the high position which he holds, and which is a grave danger to everybody else? When he returned to Westminster he found himself at home again, and spoke to his supporters like a man of valour. But the future of Europe is not to be decided in democratic assemblies; it is not an affair of nicely-balanced parties or cunning intrigue. And knowing full well that Mr Lloyd George's gifts, such



as they are, are not those required for the delicate operations of an international conference, we can feel no confidence in a happy issue out of our troubles. When we demand assurances that Germany never again shall menace the peace of Europe, that the Germans shall not be allowed to engage in any commerce until the factories which they destroyed in Belgium and in France are amply restored, that full indemnities should be paid to the

nations dragged into the war against their will, we are told to be content with academic debates upon the fantasy called a League of Nations and the vain illusion of the mandatory system. Words! Words! Words! And we would give them all, including Mr Wilson's professional eloquence and Mr Lloyd George's "Celtic glamour," for one half hour of the great Lord Castlereagh's reasoned patriotism and high resolution.

# BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCCXLII.

APRIL 1919.

VOL. CCV.

## OBSTRUCTION'S GENTLE ART.

BY DOUGLAS WALSH.

POST-MORTEMS are always an unsatisfactory business and of little assistance to the corpse; so, although it may be true that, if the Salonica Expedition had landed only one month earlier, Serbia might have been saved, it is no use considering that question now. Nor is it proposed to discuss the necessity or otherwise of this unpopular side-show, or even so much as to refer to

the Berlin-Baghdad railway. The expedition having been decided upon, it is intended simply to narrate the manner of its beginnings. As Greece is now a trusted Ally and Constantinople is no longer on the throne, it seems a pity that a franker and fuller version of a story unique in military history and so rich in entertainment should not be given to the world.

### I.

Britain in War is notoriously a Bad Starter. Hypnotised by a phrase, she has come to pride herself upon her ability to muddle through. To make a mess, and then after much labour and sacrifice to clear it up, is supposed to be some peculiar British virtue denied to the rest of the world.

At 11 A.M. on September 30,  
VOL. CCV.—NO. MCCXLII.

1915, five lost sheep in khaki and two naval officers stood on the quay at Salonica, and wondered what the deuce was going to happen next. H.M.S. *Scourge* had just dumped them there to start the Salonica campaign.

They had no proper instructions as to their appointments. Their general orders were to



prepare for the eventual arrival of five Divisions of British troops, part to be withdrawn from the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force and the remainder sent direct from home. More definite orders, they had been informed, would be awaiting them with the British Consul. And that was all they knew about it.

Nobody in authority took any notice of them. The heavens did not fall, the trams continued to run along the front, the quaintly-coloured caiques from the Islands went on unloading at the quay, and Greek and German officers unconcernedly finished their drinks at Floca's little tables. The sun shone on the big white buildings and the blue sea. Hard though it may be to realise it now that it has been dirtied by overmuch traffic and devastated by fire, the front, with the tall white minarets in the background, was then an admirable setting for a gay and fascinating scene. Colour and movement were everywhere. Dapper Greek officers in brand-new uniforms; women in many-hued native garments or last year's Parisian fashions just a little soiled; bearded Jews, any one of whom might have sat as a model for the conventional Shylock; "Macedon-skis" in dirty-white smocks, baggy breeches, and scarlet sashes stolidly leading ox-carts and donkeys, oddly reminiscent of cheap illustrated editions of the Bible—none of these bestowed more than a passing glance at that little group of

strangers, or dreamed what an influx of men and gold they heralded.

Brigadier-General Hamilton, Lieut.-Colonel Striedinger, A.D.S.T., Lieut.-Colonel Malcolm, D.S.O., G.S.O.; Major Sowerby, Egyptian Railways, and Major Salmon, Interpreter, represented the Army, with Captain Mitchell, R.N., and Lieutenant Paackenham, R.N.R., for the Navy.

In two ramshackle gharries the Mission proceeded to the Consulate, leaving their batmen and their baggage on the quay.

The Consul was on leave; the Vice-Consul had only heard of their coming an hour before, and had no orders for them.

There they were, stranded—in uniform—in a neutral country under strong German influence—liable to be interned—out of touch with their own Government—and with a tremendous amount of work to do and no right to do it. The humblest Greek sous-lieutenant with pro-German leanings could have bagged the lot and created a nice political pother that might probably have turned out a blessing in disguise. It was thus, as the Parliamentarians would put it, that Britain unsheathed the sword, and it was fortunate that these five forerunners were able to appreciate something of the humours of their irritating situation. As usual, their country had done the wrong thing with the right men.

They knew their job. A gigantic labour lay before



them. Casually, between a sleep and a sleep, they had dropped in for the astoundingly complicated business of mothering a modern army. They were there to organise camps and Base Headquarters; to report on and arrange railway and dock facilities; to contract for supplies of all descriptions and provide transport; and to be in a position to receive British troops, handle them, house them, and feed them—at probably ten minutes' notice or none at all.

Undaunted, though unaccredited, they got quietly to work without a moment's delay, their first act being to bluff the Greek sentry in a hopelessly illegal manner and examine the facilities of the port. They then turned their attention to the railways—and promptly found themselves arrested by a Greek policeman for trespassing. It looked as if the fat were already in the fire, but fortune favoured them. They were taken before a railway official who luckily happened to be a Belgian, and consequently a strong Ally. He released them.

The rest of an eventful day was spent in making discoveries, one of the earliest being how very wide in matters commercial a Macedonian can open his mouth when he has the chance—a discovery we all had many opportunities later of confirming.

Three other discoveries during the day are eloquent of what the resources of Salonica amounted to at this period. There were no telephones;

there were only four motor-cars in the place; and no maps could be purchased in any of the shops. This last was a very serious matter. It is easier to make bricks without straw than to start a war without maps—and, of course, they had no maps of their own! Their very British intention had been to obtain some from the Greek General Staff; but the lack of credentials made it out of the question to attempt to get into touch with them. However, this was a Mission not easily discouraged or defeated. A map was obtained—one precious, ancient map. Doubtless our American Allies will be interested to hear that the spade-work of the Salonica campaign was started by the aid of a map borrowed from the local depot of the Standard Oil Company.

Time was the essence of their contract. There was a great deal of work to be done and not a minute to lose, because nobody knew how soon the troops might begin to arrive. As a matter of fact, time was even more precious than they suspected in their ignorance of the military and political situation. Troops were being hastily gathered together and were to come flooding upon them earlier than they dreamed.

Besides being sent to a neutral country in uniform and without maps or credentials, these officers were also sent without money. Though war is easily the most expensive business in the world, none of them had a farthing of public



money to begin it with. As a measure of precaution, with no idea of possible requirements and naturally expecting that a proper paymaster would be duly appointed, a letter was sent by the *Scourge*, which returned that night, asking for fifty pounds, and also for six motor-cars. Fortunately the paymaster—"Medforce"—was a man of discernment and initiative. He promptly wired back £10,000. Not many men can have had the experience of asking for fifty pounds and getting ten thousand. One can picture the recipient at first astonished and amused—and then annoyed. For obviously the meaning was that to his other multifarious duties was now to be added a financial responsibility which he ought not to have been called upon to assume.

That same evening Brigadier-General Hamilton prepared a wire asking for 120 lorries, 2 field butcheries and bakeries, and many other things. But even this could not go off, as the only means of communication, a French cruiser, had already left to try to pick up Lemnos from out at sea. She had always to do this, her wireless having only a very limited range. Naturally it added much to the difficulties of this hole-in-a-corner Mission that this was all the facilities they had for communicating with the outside world. A visit to this cruiser on her return established the fact that the French, who had sent a similar Mission, had left theirs in the same position as ours as

to lack of official status. But where they had undoubtedly gone one better was in sending their representatives in civilian garb.

Even such a trifling matter as obtaining office accommodation proved difficult. A house was searched for, but (enterprising British house agents please note!) there were no house agents, and houses were never advertised to let. The Greek mobilisation was proceeding with a lack of enthusiasm only too apparent, with, indeed, about as much enthusiasm as system. But this mobilisation provided the pro-Germans and obstructionists with a very handy and convenient trump-card. Again and again, when on the point of coming to terms for a Base Headquarters, the deal was crabbed by the arrival of an official with the information that that particular building was part of the mobilisation scheme. This, however, is anticipating a little.

Next morning an offer was made to let the Mission a small hotel of eighteen rooms for £380 per month—only about five guineas per room per week! More reasonable accommodation, however, was found after a day or two. Every one was up to his eyes in work, selecting, among other things, camp sites for troops and Supply Depots, and attempting to purchase forage and wood. The A.S.C., indeed, requested a local agent to make it known that they were "prepared to do a deal in almost anything"—so amazingly comprehensive



nowadays are the needs of an army.

H.M.S. *Doris* arrived with no news and no orders, and the newspapers began to get busy. Muddling up Brigadier-General Hamilton with General Sir Ian Hamilton, it was gravely announced that "It is confirmed that General Sir Ian Hamilton, Commander-in-Chief of the Anglo-French Army in the Orient, arrived at Salonica the day before yesterday. He was accompanied by all his staff, composed of superior English and French officers."

Finally, as a sort of last straw to their load of difficulties—not a tenth part of which it is possible to indicate—the British Ambassador at Athens wired to the Mission that their unexpected arrival was having a bad effect politically, and they had better leave as early as possible. A council of war was immediately held. The situation was becoming so intolerable that the advisability of withdrawing had to be debated. But British pertinacity won the day. It was decided, though not quite unanimously, that they had been sent there by the War Office, and could not take

orders to depart from any one else. The Ambassador was requested to repeat his message home, and as a result, at 11 P.M. that evening, the Mission found itself recognised at last. The Greek Government made a formal protest, and folded its arms—and the Royalists, no doubt, winked at each other complacently. They knew the game they meant to play.

But surely never before has any country sent out a Military Mission to start a War, and that Mission been ordered home by its country's Ambassador?

One can only surmise that Lord Kitchener had acted on his own, and that the Foreign Office, having no information, could not instruct its representative. The only other possible explanation is, that the Ambassador was putting up a bluff, because the political situation was so delicate and dangerous that he had to pretend either not to know or to disapprove of what was going on. If that is the case, he was transgressing an elementary law common both to Diplomacy and to Bridge—finessing against his partner. Supposing the Mission had taken his advice? What then?

## II.

They were recognised, and it was possible now to go openly to work. But it was not long before they discovered that this by no means meant that things were going to go smoothly. A visit in the morn-

ing to a comrade of the French Mission, at some offices he had hired near the quay, opened their eyes as to the sort of thing they were in for. It seemed that at 5 P.M. on the previous day, after he had



landed a few men, and was making them comfortable for the night, a Greek armed party arrived and turned them out bag and baggage. The Greeks occupied the offices themselves, and the French spent the night at their Consulate. It was quite clear that the King's party did not intend to take things lying down. But the Allies could only grin and bear it. Their orders were to be conciliatory at all costs, and even included a command to salute every Greek officer, whatever his rank.

The British turn came next. Brigadier-General Hamilton decided that our troops should be camped to the south-east of the town, and all arrangements were planned in accordance with that decision. Suddenly the Greeks announced that they needed that particular site for themselves—and the Mission had to select another one north-west.

There was a gentleman named Colonel Messalas, the Greek Base Commandant at Salonica, whom the Mission will remember long after the malarial microbes have departed from their blood. He was quite nice to look at, and his manners were politeness itself. Outwardly he was one of the most charming of men, but inwardly he was a very genius in the arts of deceit, espionage, and obstruction. Later he was deported, but for a long time he had things all his own way. Pin-prick after pin-prick he jabbed in with a delightful smile—and sent a

full report to Germany every week.

One of his best efforts was concerned with a big farm at a place called Topsisin. On October 6 this was hired for the purposes of being turned into a Base Hospital, and a couple of hundred tons of hay on the premises were bought at the same time. A deposit of 1250 francs was paid on the rent; and on the 8th the Greeks calmly requisitioned the farm for themselves. Inwardly fuming, but openly smiling, the harassed authorities consented to the earnest-money standing as part payment for the hay, which was to be sent in by rail. On the 12th, 3500 francs were advanced to the owner for a fortnight's rail charges for delivery, and on the 14th we were politely informed that the Greek Government had now forbidden the removal of the hay as well. The military attaché was appealed to, but nothing could be done, except to place the question of the return of the money advanced in the hands of the solicitor to the British Consulate.

There was also the comic-opera incident of the triple-sentried barn. The contents of a large barn were purchased outright at a good stiff Macedonian price. Then one day the contractor came along "with the wind up." The Greek Government, he declared, had threatened to imprison him unless the keys were produced in half an hour! The representative of Britain's Might, who had pos-



session of the keys, accompanied by an armed guard, hurried to the scene, and found that the door had already been broken down and a Greek sentry posted. A British sentry was also posted, and then a French officer arrived, accompanied by a guard, which he, too, proceeded solemnly to post. It appeared that the hay had been sold first to the British, and then to the French—for cash, and finally commandeered by the Greeks. Unfortunately for the gaiety of nations, no triangular duel *à la* "Midshipman Easy" took place. The Greeks got the hay.

Possibly the presence of these unwelcome Allied officers added a little extra bitterness to the Royalists' appetisers at Floca's, the principal café in the Place de la Liberté; but with one train a day running direct to Constantinople, and Colonel Mes-salas in authority at the port, the situation must have afforded them considerable secret entertainment.

No means of annoyance was neglected, big or little. The French were forced to camp on a particularly unhealthy spot. The Greek army was encamped between us and the enemy, and strong control-posts were established in every direction, beyond which they refused to allow our patrols to pass. They insisted on our making a weekly return of the stores landed for our troops "for customs' purposes," and even had the impudence to demand detail

figures — which, needless to say, they did not get! In many petty ways they tried to sow dissension between us and the French, but there they always failed ingloriously. One instance, which resulted in an act of friendly bribery and corruption, may perhaps be recorded here. It turned out in the end that our Monastir Road Supply Depot, after all the jiggery-pokery about sites, was situated on ground finally allotted to the French. But no blood was shed. As another suitable site could not be obtained, we bought our Ally off with the loan of five motor-lorries, and for that illegal consideration were allowed to remain where we were.

Another trick, when in spite of their watchfulness a purchase had been completed, was to requisition the article in question for the Greek army direct from us. We had to submit, for undoubtedly they were within their international rights; but thanks to the give-and-take between the Allies, even this measure could be circumvented. On one occasion they requisitioned all the hay acquired with great difficulty by the French, and all the wood that we had contrived to get hold of by various roundabout means. Possibly even Tino himself and Queen Sophie heard of the matter, and smiled and rubbed their hands at the thought of the French with no fodder and the British with no wood. Perhaps they even went so far as to drink to our speedy



voyage homewards in despair. But owing to the way we were working hand in hand nothing very serious happened. The British A.D.S.T. had an interview with the French Chief Intendant, and five hundred tons of British hay were swapped for their equivalent in French wood.

There was obstruction everywhere. The personnel of the railways was practically all pro-German, and at all times everything possible, from sending unsuitable trucks to a deliberate derailment, and consequent blockage of the line, was done to hinder our movements and defeat our requirements. We were never allowed to use the Greek telegraph wires, but were always politely informed that they were needed for Government purposes; we were not allowed to place telephone lines on any Greek posts or houses; and when at last we erected a line of our own, this was deliberately tapped.

Things went even further than obstruction, for there was more than a suspicion that at one time the comitadji

were being organised to murder the British and French staff in Salonica. Who was at the back of this is not known for certain, but rumour has it that on a certain night all the British and French officers discovered in the town were to have their throats slit in the best comitadji style, and for days various ferocious-looking ruffians were observed slinking into the town from the surrounding villages. The situation was met by quietly moving all the troops to the outskirts, and training every gun that would bear from our ships in the harbour on to the town on the night on which the murders were to take place. At the least sign of a riot, a pre-arranged signal would have been given to the fleet and Salonica blown to blazes. The Greek Club, the Odeon, Floca's, the Gaiety, and the White Tower, all places crowded with officers and civilians in the evening, had a carefully-sighted gun trained upon them.

There was no riot—and no more comitadji plots against the staff.

### III.

It is the doubtful privilege of the A.S.C. to be first in the Field and last out. In this case that meant that all sorts of extraneous duties were thrust upon it. Besides its proper functions—heavy enough at the commencement of a campaign, and specially difficult in that atmosphere of

obstruction—the A.S.C. had also to undertake the hiring of accommodation for other branches, advances of money to officers, payment of troops, purchases of Ordnance and Royal Engineers' material, and the payment of all Supply and Transport bills. There was nobody else to do



these things, so the already overwhelmed A.S.C. found itself saddled with a heavy financial responsibility and much extra labour in keeping the necessary accounts. Everything had to be paid for on the spot, and in most cases advances had to be made before delivery. As in many instances—thanks to the interference of the ever-active Colonel Messalas—delivery did not take place, in spite of the “earnest money” already received, complications were always arising, and the solicitor to the Consulate found a good deal of extra work thrust upon him.

There was trouble everywhere. Even the landing of stores was ridiculously difficult. The *Huntsfal*, an ex-German boat, was the first Supply ship in. She had on board besides her cargo, consisting chiefly of bully-beef and biscuits, a few British troops and the 273rd Depot Unit of Supply. These men practically formed the advance party of the Expedition, and, clerks and all, were promptly turned into stevedores, as no civilian labour (another pin-prick) was available. One of the holds was loaded with potatoes, which had become heated on the voyage, and most of this part of the cargo had to be dumped into the harbour.

These amateur stevedores had first to unload the ship on to barges, and then accompany the barges to the only pier, where, as no cranes were available, the boxes had

to be thrown off one by one!

The goods, having been stacked on this narrow wooden jetty, were then placed on railway trucks and pushed to the road by hand—a distance of about 250 yards—as we were not allowed to hire any engines! For this the freightage was 35s. per truck—and it had to be paid. What can the man in the corner do but consent to be squeezed—and be very punctilious about his salutes! The cream of the jest, from the Greek point of view, was that we provided our own labour. We pushed the trucks ourselves, and paid 35s. for the privilege! Fleecing the Allies quickly became a popular pastime in those days. The Government gave folks a lead by raising all passenger and goods fares on the railways  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent for our special benefit!

It is difficult to know whether to call the situation farce or tragedy, so pitifully unequal was that one and only jetty to the task of landing the stores of a modern army. Each truck had to be turned by hand twice on each trip on a turntable. Goods were dumped at the end of the jetty, and carted off by such transport as could be obtained. No motor or wheeled transport had arrived, and the only vehicles obtainable—mostly long narrow ox-carts of an incredible crudity and creakiness, hired at 25s. per day—were quite incapable of coping with the work. The result was that the dump was



never cleared. It grew and grew—till at last the jetty sank under its weight!

Further difficulties were caused by the Greek mobilisation methods. They had no proper census of vehicles, and the plan adopted was to commandeer anything seen in the streets, with driver and load thrown in. British supplies were "scrounged" with the rest, and in the end an armed guard had always to be sent as escort. But naturally vehicle owners were

very shy of coming out, even under British protection.

What working in such conditions was like, it is not hard to imagine. The amazing thing is that anything got done at all. Remembering the frailty of human nature, the tact and patience which avoided any open breach at a time when everybody was being cruelly overworked, and must have known how all their difficulties were being artificially increased, are worthy of the highest praise and admiration.

#### IV.

The landings at Salonica compare very unfavourably with those at the Dardanelles, where every detail was elaborately and successfully worked out. In spite of the fact that the troops were under fire, everything went with a smoothness and a precision that demonstrated for all time how splendidly the Navy and Army can work together when given a chance.

But the landings at Salonica, which on the face of things would appear to be a much simpler task, were a very different story. At the Dardanelles the organisation was right, and organisation in such matters is everything. At Salonica there was no organisation. The organisation did not fail; it simply never existed. No time was allowed for its creation. That curse of good soldiering, *la haute politique*, had its inconsiderate finger in the military pie.

It must have been so. No War Office, not even ours, after such a brilliant achievement as the Dardanelles landings, and with the extra knowledge and experience gained on the Peninsula, could have thrown troops about in that higgledy-piggledy fashion unless subjected to some overweening outside pressure. Apparently it was necessary for political reasons that some one should be able to stand up in the House and announce, amid decorous cheers, that at a certain moment there were a hundred thousand of our men in Greece. This meant that a hundred thousand men had to be hurled into Salonica anyhow without a moment's delay—or the right hon. gentleman would not have been speaking the truth. And that, and not bad staff-work, explains, if it does not justify, the breathless haste with which the campaign was started, and



the lack of order in which the troops were despatched. It would have been better to have lied. But statesmen are not soldiers, though they may be amateur strategists. They could not be expected to bother about how this hastily gathered army was to be fed and accommodated, or to consider the feelings of the Army Service Corps.

It was a pity, of course, but these things will happen. Granted that Parliament was restless, and granted that the need for troops was frantically urgent and much precious time had been wasted, all the same in the end a little less haste would have meant much more speed. Lack of method is a bad way of making up for lost time.

This is what happened. On the 3rd October, only three days after the Mission had landed, a wire was received that the *Albion*, with a thousand British troops, would shortly arrive. These troops were the advance party of the 10th Division, and they came on the 5th.

The actual landing of French and British troops was practically simultaneous, and among the news of the day the following amusing paragraph appeared in the local press:—

"The Austrian and German Consuls went in the afternoon to a little headland outside the town and explored the horizon with their glasses."

It is to be regretted that there was no enterprising journalist there to report their

conversation. Later they went even further. Taking advantage of the peculiar political situation and the protection of the Royalists, they ended by standing openly on the quay with note-books in their hands, frankly counting the troops as they came ashore. Nobody can blame them, of course; but what is one to say for an Allied Government that expected a successful war to be waged in such circumstances? By far the blackest chapter in the history of the Salonica expedition is the supineness of our political attitude to Greece. It was, actually, not until our Supply Depots had been bombed at the end of the year that the Allies plucked up courage enough to deport the enemy's official representatives.

However, somehow or other the *Albion's* complement was got ashore, and the rest of the Division and its stores followed in driblets on its heels, sandwiched among supply and ammunition ships. By the 28th October, in spite of all this confusion, and in spite of the deliberate congestion of the quays (a neat pin-prick that!), the arrival and disembarkation of the 10th Division was complete, except for an ammunition column lost in the *Marquette*, sunk by torpedo off Volo.

It may be observed here that to tear the 10th Division straight from the trenches at Gallipoli and plank them down in Salonica, just as they were, was undoubtedly a big political blunder. With nations as with individuals, it is the little



things that count. They were excellent material, but they showed the marks of the hard service they had seen. Many were still wearing summer helmets and shorts; many were without puttees, and quite a number had broken bayonets or none at all. Their best friends cannot describe them as anything else but disreputable-looking, and this was the Division launched into an unfriendly country at such a critical moment. Better have waited a fortnight for something spick and span and fresh from home! Undoubtedly the Greeks expected to see a trim and shining example of the Glorious British Army, of which they had heard so much. A nice new Division, which by the way is roughly eight miles long on the march, sent through the streets of Salonica, would have created a sense of respect among the Royalists, all in new uniforms themselves, and probably have led to the avoidance of much of that obstruction which so annoyingly hampered all our efforts. As it was, many of the officers of the Division themselves felt at the time that the impression made upon the Greeks by this rag-bag army was that Britain was already beaten.

To return to the landings, it was the A.S.C. who suffered most for the sins of the politicians. The flurried way in which the expedition was flung at their heads created an excess of confusion and difficulty and extra work at a time when everybody from the highest to the humblest was already work-

ing at the utmost pressure. It may have been politically necessary, but disgraceful is the only possible description of the way the force arrived and landed. The fighting troops and their baggage came first; then Supplies; and last, Transport! As a consequence, very heavy expenditure was incurred which might easily have been avoided; and the A.S.C., already short of Transport, found its resources strained almost to breaking-point. And when the transport did at last arrive it was found that there was in some cases no harness for the horses!

The 22nd Division, despatched in great haste from France, arrived on the afternoon of November 5, and their first line transport vehicles were disembarked without animals or personnel. Mules had to be borrowed to take the vehicles to their camp at Galiko, seven miles out, at a time when every animal was working double tides.

A Motor Ambulance convoy blew in with fifty vehicles—for which at that time there was not the slightest use. Permission was applied for—since motor transport was worth its weight in gold just then—to paint out the Red Cross and use the vehicles as bread vans. But this was refused, although the 22nd Division had to be withdrawn from Galiko to Lembet on the 19th November owing to shortage of transport. The irony of the situation was doubled by the fact that when they sent this Motor Ambulance convoy off, the Naval



authorities, for some reason, held up two ships full of motor transport at Mudros. This was one of the very few occasions when the Army thirsted for the Navy's blood!

On the 22nd November, information was received that "units of the 27th Division had sailed." This was the first intimation that this Division was coming out at all, and serves to illustrate the uncertainty that always existed as regards the arrival of troops. The French, who were in the same boat with us, landed three times as many men in much better order. But they were not rushed and muddled by their own people as we were. However, by slavery and self-sacrifice each difficulty was met, each complication unravelled, . . . and it doesn't really matter if there was a good deal of bad language directed back across the seas. Parliament and the War Office were too far away to hear it.

Even when the horse transport arrived, it brought another trouble with it. It was useful enough round about Salonica, and did much excellent work on extremely bad and muddy roads. But as there were no roads in the campaigning district, but only mountain tracks impossible for any wheeled vehicle, obviously the crying need of the future was going to be Pack Transport. The War Office was communicated with. But the War Office said "No"—only to be forced to say "Yes" later, after further irritating delays. Somehow the British War Office will

never learn to trust the man on the spot.

In one instance, when a brigade of the 22nd Division was ordered to proceed up country, having no train, a Train Company had to be improvised from what was left of the Reserve Parks, thus further depleting an already insufficient local transport.

All these things, of course, go to show with what unseemly haste the expedition was flung across the seas. Obviously all the authorities thought of or cared about was getting the troops ashore. So hurriedly were the transports sent off that hardly a ship's Manifest was correct, and it was impossible in the circumstances to check everything on disembarkation. The result was that for a long time Headquarters never knew exactly what troops and what transport had arrived. Life was a frantic rush of "fitting in," "fixing up," and "making do," and it is little short of miraculous that, in spite of all the confusion and difficulty caused by this haphazard method of despatch, things went as smoothly as they did. Needless to say, there were many changes of personnel among all grades. Such conditions are a searching test of capacity, and do not permit of any mercy being shown to the slightest hint of incompetence or unresourcefulness. Many men, excellent soldiers and organisers on ordinary lines, had to be scrapped because they were hardly up to the difficulties of such an amazing situation.



## v.

The history of the Motor Transport at this period is not without interest. The first Motor Transport did not arrive until October 21, and consisted of seven lorries of 244 M.T. Company, four of which needed repair before they could be moved from the quay, and with only two motor drivers for the lot. The reception accorded them by folks ashore, tearing their hair for transport of any description, is better omitted than described. A few days later the rest of the company landed with a hundred and ten lorries all told—and no spare parts. These vehicles were all converted London General Omnibuses, which had already seen service in France and in Egypt, and were supposed to be practically worn-out when they arrived, though as a matter of fact, many of them, like Charley's Aunt, are still running.

No mercy was shown to this Company, or to 245 Company, the next to arrive. As the vehicles came off the ship, then and there the cabs and petrol-tanks, which had been removed for stowage purposes, were bolted on, and every lorry immediately set to work. And they continued working, with a double shift, twenty-four hours a day for five strenuous months!

At that time there were three Supply Depots, each run by a temporary second lieutenant, which speaks for itself as regards the shortage of personnel.

Transport, too, was so short that the Divisional Supply Trains were obliged to come down to the Base and draw their own forage. Outside the Depot every day there was a string of G.S. waggons over a mile long!

The weather was our enemy all the time. It was bitterly cold and desperately wet and depressing. Three weeks' almost continuous downpour had made the dump at the railway jetty and each of the Supply Depots a foot deep in mud. Work in such circumstances was doubly arduous and disheartening. A 3-ton lorry is not the most tractable of vehicles in a foot of sticky mud.

Hard though the Transport worked, it was hopelessly insufficient. If a ship were discharged on the quay for twenty-four hours, it took forty-eight hours to clear it. And some genius among the Royalists invented a new pin-prick. Always round the Supply Depot there was a string of some fifty Greek Army mules, to whom motor transport was a new experience. Even those who remember the early days of motor-cars and the horse at home can barely imagine the rest! These were mules—pack-mules, untrammelled by carts; Macedonian mules, resentful of the presence of these strange monsters on the narrow highway. At a time when every hour was precious, the



antics of these brutes caused us the greatest inconvenience and delay. And we had to swallow our knowledge that it was neither an accident nor a coincidence that led to a daily encounter!

While on the subject of mules, it may be mentioned that a Mule Depot was formed immediately next door to our Base Supply Depot. Nobody ever settled the question as to which was the more appalling—the smell or the flies. Neither was very good for the rations.

The Depot was soon in sore need of extension. It overgrew itself so much that thousands of cases had to be stored in the road. Application was made, therefore, for the mules to be removed.

Colonel Messalas was very nice about it. A dozen animals were shifted next morning. Then nothing further happened for a fortnight, when the application was renewed.

Colonel Messalas was even nicer this time, and his subordinates positively beamed. Quite thirty animals were ostentatiously transferred next morning.

Altogether it took three months to get rid of them, and then six weeks of hard unpleasant work were required to clear away the manure.

Another transport trouble was the brigandage of some of the Greek soldiery. There was only one man on each lorry, of course, as the second driver was working on the other shift. When the lorry

slowed down on a hill, a Greek soldier would 'spring on board and pitch off a case or two, while a comrade covered the driver with his rifle. This became so serious that the French armed their men with carbines. But the British M.T. had no rifles. They had been given up in Egypt for use in the Dardanelles. Many of the men, however, bought revolvers on their own account, which were taken away when things had quieted down, and handed into the C.Q.M.'s stores for return *après la guerre!*

There were difficulties everywhere. For one thing, there was a lack of tarpaulins, and many supplies were damaged by rain. For another, there was a grave shortage of tyres. There was no tyre-press in the country, and when renewal was absolutely necessary, the wheels had to be sent to Egypt to have the new tyres pressed on.

And all the while the weather was vile beyond words. When the Field Bakery was at last got to work, much of its first big bake was spoiled by the backs of the ovens being washed away. The Aldershot pattern supplied was useless for such weather. Perkins' Travelling Ovens were promptly demanded, but meanwhile the Field Bakery men were not exactly the happiest or most popular of mortals.

No praise can be too high for the men who toiled so strenuously and so cheerfully amid such discomfort, or lay



shivering in their damp tents at night. Beyond all question, it was largely due to the grit of the drivers of 244 and 245 M.T. Companies, who slithered day and night over those muddy nightmares of roads, that the heavily-handicapped Salonica army ever got off from the starting-post for that hopeless race to Serbia at all.

## VI.

Amid a welter of mud and obstruction, hampered by insufficient personnel and vehicles, the A.S.C. had to cater for an army of ever-increasing numbers. Munitions had also to be handled, and likewise a thousand and one other things that are part of a modern army in the Field. There were only the worst of roads, the poorest of facilities, and all the time their work was hindered by the furtive hostility of Colonel Messalas and his merry men at a time when every minute was of value. Yet in spite of all this, the army never actually went wanting, though the possibility of running dangerously short of supplies weighed on the A.S.C. like a nightmare during the whole of this period.

At the end of November supplies of tea, jam, and sugar ran very low owing to the arrivals of new troops without rations. In one instance a transport came in with troops supposed to be carrying twenty days' landing rations. Actually the men had to be issued with four days' rations while still on board!

Frequently there was only two days' stock of essentials in hand, and on more than one occasion there was nothing available for the morrow. In

the middle of October instructions were received from the Military Attaché that no more local purchases of food-stuffs were to be made, and that the Greek Government would not ratify any bargains, the delivery of which had not been completed. This meant that the feeding of the force must be wholly dependent on supply ships, and by the middle of December the feeding strength was 90,000 men and 25,000 horses.

All the time there was a petrol shortage. Loans were obtained from the French on several occasions, and the whole of the available stock in Salonica was purchased from the Standard Oil Company. The circumstances of this transaction are rather amusing. Mr Smith, the Standard Company's chief representative, was always our friend. When it was reported to him that the Obstructionists objected to him selling his stock to us, that they meant to commandeer it for themselves, and had placed sentries at the doors of his depot to prevent any more being delivered to us, like a good American he merely said "sthat so?" Then he spat reflectively at the mantelpiece.

(Of course he doesn't spit, really, and there wasn't any mantelpiece—but it's the sort of story that demands to be told like that!)

Our Main Supply Depot was immediately behind his warehouse. So, knowing the greatness of our need, he arranged for his men quietly to push the whole of his stock over the wall on to our premises. All day long the work went on—while the Greek pro-German emissaries solemnly stood guard in front to make sure that the British were not getting any petrol!

On the 26th December, however, the supply was entirely exhausted. But luckily the next day the *Cazo Bonito* arrived with 50,000 gallons.

It ought to be clear by now that the promises of the opening words of this article have been rigidly adhered to. Nothing has been said about the Berlin-Baghdad railway—and there hasn't been a word

about the fighting. Of course in the days under review there wasn't any. There was only an army getting ready in the mud and the cold, and when an army is getting ready, naturally the A.S.C. from the nature of its duties comes more to the front than usual. That is why this account has become of necessity mainly an A.S.C. chronicle.

The A.S.C. stands in no need of advertisement. Rightly the glory of war is for the man who fights. The A.S.C.'s proudest testimonial is the fact that all the Army pulls its leg. Whom Tommy loves he "chips"! The record of the A.S.C. in this war has been a very fine one; it was not made the R.A.S.C. for nothing. And so far as the Salonica campaign is concerned, it "made good" in spite of home-confusion and local obstruction and difficulty, with an efficiency, adaptability, and foresight of which it may well feel a little proud.



## DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAINS.

To those who have spent long months among the snows of the Alps, the words "going down" have a magic all their own. During the winter the exhilaration of the clear air, the brilliance of the sunshine, and the stillness of the mountain solitudes hold one as by a spell. But now March was here; and the sensation of quickened vitality which spring inspires in every living creature was tingling in my veins, and brought with it an unconquerable restlessness. Looking down into the valley 4000 feet below, one knew that nature was there breaking into all its vernal beauty. White violets would be peeping from cranies in the vineyard walls, and the almond-trees, blushing fresh and fair, would be gladdening the otherwise barren fields.

The charm of our life, perched as we were upon a ledge overhanging the world, suddenly failed in attractiveness, and in its place sprang up a desire for life and movement—for the sights and sounds of a town, for the cry of the newsvendors, the crack of whips, or the clang of the tram-bells in the streets.

The pleasure-seekers and the sport enthusiasts had left us long before, and the hotel visitors had shrunk to a little band consisting for the most part of invalids and those who bore them company. To us who still remained the ques-

tion of how much longer the frost would hold was of paramount interest, and we asked each other almost daily, "Have you made any plans about going down?"

Around us as yet there was small sign of spring; the scene looked as wintry as at Christmas. Snow enveloped the landscape, glittering brilliantly in the sunshine, or lying grey-white in the shade. Pines and larches alone emerged, and stood in irregular clusters of greenish blackness, their gloom heightened by contrast with their surroundings. These gnarled and twisted trees, firmly rooted among the rocks, appeared so ancient and so weather-beaten that one wondered whether youth could ever have been theirs. The characteristic features in these high altitudes are curiously uniform—a study in three colours: the vivid whiteness of the slopes, the sombre tint of the firs, and, above and embracing all, the glorious blue of the heavens.

Let no one think of snow as lifeless or monotonous. With the exception of the sea, nothing in nature reflects the moods of the elements so vividly. It lies silver in the moonlight, gleams like fairy crystals under the stars, takes on a warm look from the glow of the sun, flushes in the crimson of sunset, or remains dead and shadowless beneath a threatening sky. Its tex-



ture, too, varies with the atmospheric conditions; its changes are endless, its wonders unsurpassed; and to those who live amidst it, it becomes in the end almost as companionable as fields and pastures.

Nor are these solitary regions as devoid of animal life as is commonly supposed. The wild creatures hide themselves cunningly enough from the intruding mortal, but, for those who have eyes to see, indications of their presence abound; and no more fascinating pastime can be imagined than tracing the marks they leave upon the betraying snow.

It is easy to describe the stealthy tracks of a fox, or to speak of the lace-like tracery left by a rat; but who can adequately depict the marvels of the frost itself, whose chill breath creates the wondrous scene? Who can picture the gleam of the icicles? No pen can portray the fantasy of the hoar-frost; nor can the artist's brush reproduce the exquisite workmanship of the snow-flowers. The delicacy of these fairy forms, whose filigree construction will dissolve at a breath, is finer than that of the frailest blossom. And yet . . . and yet . . . now that spring is here, I would give all these elusive silver petals for one primrose from the lowlands, or exchange the mysterious hush of the upper air for the song of a thrush at sundown.

But the season to which we were looking forward so eagerly was not hailed with

equal joy by all. Our hotel proprietor had been more or less indifferent to the weather while sure of his visitors. Now, however, he developed a persuasive eloquence on the subject of the thaw—that dreaded moment that would empty his house. The frost, he confidently informed us daily, would hold for two or three weeks yet, probably a month; such cases were known. There were clear indications—though these were never cited—that the break would prove exceptionally late this year. This, he averred, was a dangerous month, and melancholy instances of those who had “gone down” too early were recalled. We should remember “*ce pauvre Monsieur Bompard*,” who, beguiled by the March sunshine of the previous year, had descended to the plain at a perilously early date. “*C’était bien vite fini pour lui! Mais que voulez-vous?*” he would conclude, with a pitying shrug at the unreasonableness of hotel visitors.

It was therefore in an almost apologetic tone that I informed the solemn-faced lady presiding in the *Bureau* that I should be leaving in five days' time.

“*C'est dommage*,” was the only reply my pronouncement elicited. But within half an hour the news that No. 17 had given notice had spread to the entire staff of the hotel. The chambermaid yearned over me with a sudden affection; the head waiter could scarcely refrain from more than brotherly attentions; while the hall-



porter, all aglow with interest in my movements, handed me my correspondence with a deferential awe remarkably foreign to his usual behaviour. Though annoyed at first by these transparent assiduities, I soon smiled at the recollection of a similar state of mind in school-days, when a generous uncle, uninteresting enough during his visits, sprang, on the eve of his departure, to unwonted importance in my eyes. The traits in human nature do not vary greatly, it would seem, with class or nationality.

The momentous day dawned at last. My luggage, lashed to a baggage-sleigh, had been despatched at an early hour, to ensure its getting over the snow while the night frost held. As I entered the familiar *salle-à-manger* for a last breakfast, I realised with surprise how attached I had become to my surroundings. Those already seated at table seemed interested in my journey, and all prophesied a delightful day. A little gathering of visitors and servants assembled to bid me *bon voyage*. After much handshaking and many good wishes, I started off—with inevitably lightened pockets.

The walk before me was of no ordinary nature. To descend 4000 feet in a few hours is a notable experience at this time of year, when, leaving snow still piled up to the first-floor windows, one finds spring reigning in the valley. In the lowlands it had been a winter of con-

tinual snowstorms and intervening thaws; but with us these falls had merely meant one more layer on the already heavily-burdened earth. This ever-increasing load gradually pinned to the ground the lower branches of the pines, where they had remained firmly embedded for many weeks. But now as, under the sun's warmth, the load began to lessen, one of these would leap into the air, released without the slightest warning, and scatter its imprisoning burden abroad. A branch thus freed will shake itself, almost like an animal exulting in its new-found liberty, before resuming its normal position. More than once I came in for one of these unexpected snow douches in the forest, through which the road passed on the first part of the descent.

After a time the walking became difficult. The partial thaw had honeycombed the snow to a treacherous extent: at one spot the surface held, at the next I floundered through it ankle-deep. To walk on the bank piled up by the snow-ploughs brought equal risks; here, too, one got a firm foothold for a few steps, and then sank in deeper than ever. There was nothing for it but to plod on as best I could.

After a while a felled pine-tree by the wayside tempted me to rest. The day was one of extreme beauty. The unclouded sky was, to the north, of the deepest blue, against which the slopes glittered white



and pure. But to the south the colour was of softer and more tender hue; while the sun, riding in his glory, seemed, by the very intensity of his own light, to blanch that portion of the heavens in which he shone in splendour. On the farther side of the valley rose immense buttresses of rock, the foothills of the Alpine giants which towered above them—

“ . . . the strong foundations of the earth  
Where torrents have their birth.”

It was only now, when I was about to lose sight of these magnificent peaks, my companions for so long, that I realised how much they had come to mean to me, and I experienced a sense of personal loss on gazing at them for the last time.

Just below my halting-place I came to the spot where sleigh-runners must needs give way to wheel traffic, and the road on either side was lined with ramshackle conveyances dilapidated almost past belief. Anything more forlorn than this collection of battered vehicles stranded by the wayside can hardly be imagined. The method adopted is simple. Starting from the valley, a man drives his carriage as far as wheels will take it; then he transfers his passengers, his baggage, and his horses to the waiting sleigh, left unceremoniously to take care of itself since the last descent, and continues his journey on runners. The point at which this change is accomplished

must necessarily vary with the state of the roads: in autumn and spring it is high up on the mountain-side, but in mid-winter lies almost in the valley.

The going now became steadily worse. I had read in some book of Arctic travel of the delight which explorers experience on first treading on *terra firma* after months upon the ice, and of their satisfaction in crunching the pebbles underfoot. I had imagined some such pleasure would be mine once I was past the snow. But the quagmire of slush seemed never-ending, though at each bend of the zigzagging road the surface turned a little less white and a little more brown—a little less snow and a little more mud—until at last the former looked merely like whipped cream dissolving on a cup of chocolate.

As I made my way through this sea of mud, I became aware that some one was following me. Looking round, I discovered a little peasant girl at my heels, scrutinising me with the interest of one who seldom sees a stranger. Each time I turned, her eyes were fixed upon me with a grave curiosity. But although this quaint little maiden stared in such an unabashed manner, she apparently felt no desire for companionship, and answered my “*bon jour*” with brevity. The solemnity of the mountain child was well marked in her bearing. Solitude and constant work robs these little mortals of the gaiety and irresponsibility of



childhood, turns them into miniature men and women, wise beyond their years. My sturdy little friend was dressed in the usual manner. A clean, though patched, blue-and-white overall; a worsted cross-over, primly fastened behind; hand-knitted stockings and wooden-soled boots composed her outfit. Her head was covered by a red handkerchief tied under the chin, and her straight flaxen hair, braided into two plaits, bobbed up and down on either side of her *hotte*—the Swiss basket carried on the shoulders. With characteristic contrariness, seeing her thus reserved, I felt a desire to converse, and after walking together for some distance, I asked her name.

"Elise," was the brief reply; and in answer to a further question, she vouchsafed to add that she was ten years of age. I noticed that her basket was covered with a spotless linen cloth, and asked her what it contained. To this I got no answer, but she volunteered the information that she was going to see her uncle in the valley to "*lui faire une certaine commission*."

"Surely you are not going all the way down?" I exclaimed in surprise.

"*Pourquoi pas?*" came the stolid rejoinder. Then silence fell again. Looking at the stunted little figure as she marched so sedately to "make her commission," I wondered what English parents would send off their ten-year-old on a like journey with no thought of any possibility of mishap.

Presently I tried again. "Have you any sisters?"

"No, no sisters."

"Nor brothers?"

After a moment's pause she admitted with seeming reluctance—

"*Il y a bien le petit frère.*"

"And *le petit frère*, how old is he?"

"Two days."

"Two days!" I gasped. What is it in the nearness of birth and death, the beginning and the end, that always startles? If one is told that behind those shuttered windows a dead body lies awaiting burial, even the most careless is surprised into awe. And so, though in a less degree, with birth.

"Two days," I mused aloud.

"Two and a half if you wish it," she condescended, "since he was born at midnight, and it is now midday."

Not knowing what to reply, but wishing to show my interest, I murmured something, awkwardly enough expressed I doubt not, about hoping her mother was well.

"One is never *tellement bien* at these times," she replied severely; and added, "But my father returned to work in the forest this morning."

"Was he ill too, then?"

"Ill!" with immense scorn. "*Malade? hey non!* he drank a little, that's all;" and, perhaps noting my expression, she continued with the worldly wisdom of ten years old, "it is usual—at such times."

We had come to a bend in the road, and she turned and



pointed far up the mountain slope.

"That is our chalet," she exclaimed, speaking for the first time with an approach to enthusiasm, "the one with the *grand sapin* beside the fountain."

The scene within the chalet flashed across my imagination. In a large low room, constructed entirely of wood, the new-made mother would be lying, half smothered beneath the *duvet*, within the curtained bed. Through the small double windows the reflected light from the snow outside would reveal her honest expressionless face, a strange pallor showing through the tanned skin. In her arms, swathed like a little mummy, its crumpled face surrounded by a crochet cap, she would hold her babe—that scrap of humanity which had now come to share the joys and the sorrows of that lonely mountain home. The mystery of life does not trouble these peasants: birth is accepted by them as an inevitable event. And though one may see a mother contemplating her child long and earnestly, she seldom betrays any feeling in watching the fresh spark of life so lately kindled from her own.

Looking down with an added interest on the small daughter of the house, I said, "So that is where you live?"

"*C'est sûr*," was the prosaic rejoinder; she had little emotion to spare for the plain facts of life.

The road was at last becoming drier and firmer. Soon

after turning the corner at which Elise had halted, we came upon a large village, the half-way house of my walk. Compared with the usual picturesque appearance of these little communities, it had a singularly bare aspect. Gaunt stone buildings, whose purpose I did not discover, with gaps in their walls in lieu of windows, and projecting stones to serve as steps, gave the street an unpleasing look. The chalets were of the plainest architecture, unadorned by decorated rafters or carved balconies: only strict necessities were provided for among these pinched-looking dwellings.

I stopped for a drink of the clear icy water of the village fountain; this, too, was merely a roughly-tooled trough, and boasted no sign of the craftsman's art. The *curé*, a kindly-looking old man, was pacing up and down the little square, and Elise, going up to him, took his hand and gravely kissed it. He addressed a few words to her, which she acknowledged with a quaint bob-courtesy, and passed on down the street. He had been reciting his office when we appeared, and still held his open breviary; and although his lips moved as he resumed his walk to and fro, his mind was not entirely absorbed by his devotions. I was carrying my hat in my hand, and he called to me in a concerned voice, "*Ah! Ah! méfiez-vous du soleil de Mars!*" Beware of the March sunshine! Had he said, "Beware of the Ides of March," I should hardly have been less astonished, until



I recollected the superstition, strong in Central Europe, that this is the most treacherous month for sunstroke throughout the year. I thanked him for his reminder; and seeing him willing to converse, mentioned the poverty-stricken look of the place. Speaking with a sort of affectionate regret in his voice he answered—

“*Que voulez-vous? c'est un mauvais pays.*” A barren countryside, indeed! My eyes following his glance, noted the cruel shale slopes, the precipitous rock-strewn hills, and the scanty pastures scattered among them. This was a village to which the foreigner brought no wealth, and the livelihood of the peasants must be wrested from the unpromising locality.

“Yes, yes,” he continued in the same tone, “they are poor enough, *ces braves gens.*”

While we stood talking, sounds of uproarious mirth had come from the café opposite. When a mountaineer condescends to merriment, his laughter is both loud and coarse. Remembering what Elise had told me of her father, I remarked, “Perhaps they do not get any richer over their wine?”

“*Ah! que voulez-vous?*” was the tolerant reply; “it is a hard life they lead. A hard life,” he concluded with a sigh.

I was about to bid him good-day, when he asked me whether I had seen the church. I had not; and more out of deference to his implied desire than out of curiosity on my part, I mounted the steps.

The vitiated atmosphere and smell of stale incense spoke of windows unopened since the previous summer. On the whitewashed walls hung the “Stages of the Cross,” from the crude realism of which one was thankful to turn away. The furnishings of the altar consisted of the inevitable artificial flowers and gutted candles. I had heard these churches spoken of as the real home of the people, yet I wondered how their affections could long withstand the blighting effect of so stuffy and tawdry an interior. A picture of the Virgin attracted my attention. Depicted with a stereotyped expression of anguish on her face, she was holding her garment apart; and in the centre of her bosom (placed there, one imagines, more for the sake of symmetry than from a sense of anatomical correctness) lay a large red heart, pierced through with seven spears of abnormal dimensions. Could such a representation as this, in which I could only discern the ridiculous, really mean anything to a devout worshipper? The question was answered for me even as it rose to my mind. An old woman, whom I had noticed praying in a different part of the church when I entered, now came and knelt before it. She seemed unconscious of my presence, or at any rate indifferent to it. Her movements were stiff, and her shoulders bowed from constant labour. She clasped her knotted hands in supplica-



tion. Glancing at her face, I saw that it was wrinkled, and that from her closed eyes tears, the slow hard tears of old age, trickled down her withered cheeks. There was something awe-inspiring about this pathetic old figure. She had evidently come to pour out her troubles to one whose own heart had been pierced with affliction, and who, as she believed in simple faith, would never turn away from distress. And in the picture of "The Seven Sorrows of Mary," which a few minutes earlier had called forth my derision, this poor peasant dimly saw her own trials and griefs reflected.

Humbled in spirit, and musing on what I had seen, I resumed my way. A moment later I heard a voice at my elbow, and, looking down, was surprised to find that Elise was once more accompanying me.

"You are not a Catholic, then?" she exclaimed. It was slightly disconcerting to be thus taken to task, and I demanded—

"How do you know that?"

"You did not make the sign of the Cross as you passed the *Calvaire*," she replied reproachfully, nodding her head sideways to indicate the Crucifix in the churchyard. I had no idea my movements were being so closely scrutinised.

"It is not the custom in our country," I hazarded.

"*Quel drôle de pays!*" she commented with some warmth.

Our rôles had suddenly be-

come reversed. It was I who was now being interrogated, while she sat in judgment; and knowing that among the better-class peasantry "these foreigners" are often considered as merely frivolous and pleasure-loving, I felt a natural desire to acquit myself with credit.

"You are then, perhaps, a Protestant?" she queried apprehensively.

I made an attempt at explanation, but felt I was making a sorry business of it.

"And the blessed Virgin," she suddenly demanded, "where does she find herself in your religion?"

Where indeed? By way of skirting this difficulty I began to question her on the subject of her own prayers.

"Some people," she informed me, "choose the hour of Vespers to pray in. For myself, no! The good God is too occupied at that moment; I prefer another; it is more reasonable."

But the sight of our destination, visible for the first time, and lying some 1200 feet below, turned her thoughts into another channel.

"Do you live in *la ville*?" she inquired, pointing to the valley township spread out at our feet. To her it was merely "the town," the only one she knew; and on my replying in the negative, she exclaimed, "That is a pity; the town is very beautiful."

Almost in a tone of apology, as if conscious of its inferiority, I told her that I lived in London.



"I have heard of it," she remarked, with the air of one who requires no further enlightenment on the subject. "It is even larger than *la ville*."

Looking down on the miniature streets and market-place, I assented, with what I thought was due restraint, that perhaps it was.

"And that amuses you?"

Like one rebuked, I hastened to compose my features into an expression of gravity suited to the occasion.

"And what are you going to do in *la ville*?" I asked.

"I go to see my uncle; he is rich; he works in the aluminium factory, and he earns—but enormously! he gains 50c." [less than 5d.] "an hour! 50c. is a great deal of money."

Remembering how hardly money comes to the hand of a peasant, I agreed that it was. Apparently I was passing my test more satisfactorily than I had dared to hope, for she now somewhat relaxed her judicial attitude, and became almost communicative.

"I go to see my uncle," she continued sedately. "I go to announce to him the birth of *le petit frère*."

The solemnity of this minute deputy, entrusted with such a mission, tickled my fancy, but, knowing her eyes were upon me, I dared not smile. She added that this uncle had two daughters older than herself.

"And are you fond of your cousins?"

"They have ideas in their heads."

"Ideas?"

"Yes. *Par exemple*, they wear hats."

"To keep the ideas warm perhaps," I murmured in an unguarded moment.

"*Comment*?" with severity.

"I mean, . . . don't you ever wear a hat yourself, Elise?"

"To go to Mass, and for occasions, certainly; at other times, never."

Anxious to ascertain whether these young ladies were guilty of other heinous propensities, I questioned her further on the subject: it seemed that their taste for millinery was far from being their only crime.

"They saved up their *petits sous* for two years, and what do you think it was for?" she asked, scorn in her voice—"To buy white dresses for their *première Communion*! Is it to be believed?"

"But would not you like a pretty dress yourself?"

"And how should a white dress advantage me?"

Being quite unable to answer this question, I asked whether she, too, saved up her *petits sous*.

"*C'est sûr*, but in any case not for a dress. Last year I had saved as much as 1 fr. 15. I kept it in the coffee-pot, the old one with the broken spout. My father said it was not a safe enough place, and he would put it in another. One day, when I wanted to look at it (one likes to hold it in one's hand sometimes, to feel more sure of having it), he could not find it—he had hidden it so securely; that was at the time of the cattle fair."



"And does your father drink at the fair?"

"Yes, a little; it is the custom. Afterwards he found the money, but it was changed from nickels into a franc; it was strange."

"Very. And where do you keep it now?"

Regarding me almost suspiciously, she replied, "In a certain place." I wondered whether the possibility of my climbing the slopes to look into the broken coffee-pot had crossed her mind.

"Now I have even more. My father gave me 10c. for saving a cow. He is a good father."

"Saving a cow?"

"It had strayed on to the avalanche track. And last winter some foreigners who had lost their way gave me 25c. for guiding them. One likes to have money."

"And what are you saving up for?"

"To buy a counterpane."

"A what?"

"A counterpane. One would like to have a counterpane on one's bed."

Perhaps my surprise would have been greater had I not at that moment espied a patch of gentians growing in a field near by. They were the first flowers I had seen, and the pleasure of gathering them and gazing into their depths was exquisite. The colour of a *gentiana nivalis* is to blue what the scarlet of a geranium is to red—vivid, glowing, intense. The hue of its petals, heightened by the pure white of its eye, is of an almost unbelievable brightness.

Elise had followed me into the meadow. "So you like flowers, then?" she asked, not quite sure how to place this weakness.

There were other treasures in the field besides these alpine blossoms: under the protection of a bank a cowslip reared its dainty head.

"I'm not going any farther," I cried, "it is early yet, and there is plenty of time; I shall stay here for a bit."

"Then I leave you," announced my matter-of-fact companion.

"Wait a minute before you go," I said, looking through my small change. "Look here, would you like to buy some chocolate with that in *la ville*?"

She took the coin and turned it over in her little palm, already hardened by labour.

"Chocolate is good," she remarked doubtfully.

Evidently the counterpane had to be taken into consideration.

"Well, if you will spend that on sweets, I will give you another to put with your *petits sous*."

"Then I thank you," she cried; and her face, lighted with pleasure, looked more childish than I had seen it yet.

"Would you like to give me a kiss before you go?"

"Comment?"

Half-abashed, I repeated my request.

"If you desire it," she answered, and before I realised her intention she had taken my hand, as I had seen her



take the priest's, and pressed it to her lips.

"Good-bye, Elise."

"*Alors, adieu.*"

As she turned to go, she commenced a little song, a litany, if I mistake not. On gaining the road she skipped a few steps in lightness of heart; it was almost uncanny to see this sedate child-woman frisking as she went. After a moment she stopped, slipped her basket from her shoulders, and having carefully laid aside its contents produced a red handkerchief from its depths. Into a corner of this she tied the coin destined to be added to her little store. The other seemed to puzzle her; she placed it in a deep under-pocket such as market-women wear, but apparently that was not altogether satisfactory. Presently she came running back.

"It would be more *pratique* if you changed this into nickels for me," she announced with perfect gravity, holding out the small silver coin. "Like that, I shall not be cheated in *la ville*; one never knows what may happen."

I did as she requested; and having carefully counted her change, she resumed her litany and departed. As she disappeared from sight, I felt I had lost a friend.

This seemed a suitable spot on which to eat my lunch, and I pulled my sandwiches from my knapsack. The warmth of the sun as I lay upon the grass after my simple repast was delicious, but the air was soft and strangely unsatisfying to the lungs, and produced a feel-

ing of lassitude unknown for months. I gazed at the tremendous precipices on the opposite side of the valley, and marvelled at their grandeur. Never had the peaks seemed so majestic as at this moment when I was on the point of leaving. Some enthusiast has compared his love of the mountains with a sailor's passion for the sea. It is a beautiful idea. But as the sailor, though he has spent half of his voyage dreaming of home, can never be happy for long ashore or content till he breathes the salt air again, so I knew, even in this moment of departing, that I never could be satisfied until I trod the heights once more. Such is the perversity of human nature.

But it was time to be going, and having filled my knapsack with gentians, I took to the road again. A diligence, swinging past with cracking whip and jingling bells, reminded me that I was on the high-road to life and movement. The dust raised by the cumbersome vehicle came almost as a surprise after the long seclusion in frost-bound regions, and I watched the fine white powder settle by the wayside as, at the beginning of winter, one watches the first snowflakes come to earth.

Soon the road began to run through vineyards. These had been built up with infinite toil on slopes which, in England, would have been considered impossible to cultivate. Each little enclosure was upheld by a retaining wall; and now the first process of the laborious



vine cultivation was being carried out: one could hear the snick of the *secateurs* as the workers pruned with deft and certain hand. Mindful of the superstition that had astonished me earlier in the day, they wore broad-brimmed hats to protect the nape of the neck. And in truth the sun beat down upon these barren, southern slopes with surprising fierceness for the time of year.

On the outskirts of the town stood an almond-tree in full bloom, just as I had pictured it, but weariness deprived me of the expected thrill. Footsore and thirsty, I entered a *confiserie* and called for tea. The sight of a shop, the people who came and went upon their business, the traffic in the street—all seemed strange and unreal in my eyes, like things read in a book; it was difficult to believe that I was really once more moving in the ordinary life of a town.

I made my way to the station, and while waiting for the train, looked up at the spot which had been my home for so long. The sky was still intensely blue, and the pines showed up like splashes of ink on the dazzling white background. I thought of my hotel companions still among the con-

ditions of winter, while I was luxuriating in the warmth of spring. There, too, lying like a brown fir-cone on the snow, lay Elise's chalet, the one homestead of the many clustered here and there on the mountain-side, of which I now knew something. I pictured the sturdy little maiden's return. She would recount her adventures to her parents, not pouring them out in an eager torrent as our children would do, but with decent deliberation—as opportunity offered. My every word would be repeated and weighed in the balance, and a verdict would be passed.

"*Eh bien, voilà,*" the father would say in the tone of one who makes a concession, "There are good and bad in every nation."

That I should be given the benefit of the doubt was the most for which I could hope.

The train arrived, and for a moment all was bustle and confusion. Having secured a seat, I lowered the window for a last look, as we steamed out of the station. Good-bye, wonderful life-giving mountains; good-bye, quaint little Elise; and I started on my journey back to a city that is even larger and more important than *la ville*.



## 450 MILES TO FREEDOM.

BY CAPTAIN M. A. B. JOHNSTON and CAPTAIN K. D. YEARSLEY.

## CHAPTER X.

As the country before us appeared to be quite deserted, we began to move off a little before 3 P.M. The going was much the same as in the early morning, but what had then been small nullahs became broader and deeper ravines, running across our path at intervals of seven to eight hundred yards. The north sides of the ravines were especially steep. An hour and a half after our start we saw ahead of us some men and a string of camels, possibly engaged in contraband affairs with Cyprus. Accordingly we halted under cover of some rocks until we could march again unseen. The rate of marching was slow, hardly two miles an hour, for we were all very exhausted, trudging along in the hot sun, and Grunt was almost fainting. After two hours he had to give up. The terrific blow on his head by the brigand must have been the start of his collapse, and now, after many days of sticking to it, he could go no farther. His head felt very dizzy and each foot weighed a ton. We knew there must be water in a valley a few hundred yards ahead, as we had seen some trees and a bit of a village. We therefore halted for food in a small nullah, meaning to

get to the stream after dark. The dixie containing the mixture of cocoa, rice, and grit was produced, and we had our meal. The grit was a blessing in a way, as one had to eat slowly. Two ounces of rice, tinged with cocoa, does not go far with a ravenous craving for food. As dusk came on we walked slowly for a few hundred yards to the edge of the river valley, the sides of which were precipitous and impossible to manoeuvre by moonlight. Cochrane and Nobby walked along the edge of the ravine to see if there was an easier descent, but found none. While they were away Grunt told us that he wished to be left behind, as he was afraid of keeping us back. He said that if we left a little food with him he could lie up for a couple of days, till we were clear of the locality, and he would then go to the nearest village, buy food, and make for the coast later,—if he felt strong enough and was not captured.

When Cochrane returned we held a council of war and decided to halt for the whole night. Accordingly we returned to the rice-and-grit nullah, and worked down it towards the main valley until we found a good resting-place. Nobby found a spring of ex-



cellent water a short way farther on, and there our water-bottles were refilled. By way of medical comfort Grunt was given the small quantity of Ovaltine that remained and a piece of biscuit. The Ovaltine had been carried loose in a bag since we started, and was in consequence as hard as a brick. Johnny tried to cut bits off the brick, but the knife edge merely turned on its owner's thumb, so in the end Grunt had to gnaw it. On these very cold nights we had a system of what we called snuggling, usually in pairs; in larger numbers if the ground permitted, but only once did the level of our sleeping-place permit of more than two. That was on the following night. This night Grunt's snuggling partner lit a pipe, the best pipe of his life, and listened to poor old Grunt gnawing Ovaltine. It was hard to bear. Fortunately the pipe and the Ovaltine lasted for the same time. Grunt was very depressed. He reminded his partner how at Yozgad one day he, being of massive build and great strength, had prophesied that he would stand the trek worse than any of us. Ellis, as usual, was very restless. He is a noisy sleeper. When he doesn't grunt he snores, and he is not still for a minute. We never heard him whistle in his sleep, but doubtless he does. When lying in hiding by day we had to wake him if any one came at all close to us.

Before we went to sleep it was decided that the following

morning three of us should go to the nearest village on the river in the guise of Germans, and buy enough food for the party to finish the journey to the coast, some fifty-five miles away.

At daylight, about 4.30 A.M., we went farther down the nullah to the spring. Here we cooked a two-ounce porridge ration, and then began our preparations for entering the village. The three to go were Grunt, Nobby, and Johnny. Grunt had the best Turkish of our party, so he also had the undying disgrace of playing the rôle of Hun officer. Nobby and Johnny were the Boche rank and file. It was essential to the success of the scheme that we should make a good impression on the villagers. Smartness was our watchword. The theatrical party therefore were allowed to commandeer clothes. Grunt had Nobby's "Gor Blimy" (better known, perhaps, as cap, service dress, mark two, star); Ellis's uniform coat, his own trousers, the Old Man's wrist-watch, and Perce's boots—not a bad effort. Johnny had his own kit with the exception of his trousers, an important part of which had remained lazily behind on a rocky slope the second night of the escape, while Johnny energetically slid on. Nobby had Ellis's "Gor Blimy" and boots, the Old Man's coat, and Looney's trousers. The three actors then shaved, washed, put "Vermijelly" grease on their boots to give the latter a false air of respectability, and at



8.30 A.M. were ready for their performance. They thought they were playing a drama at the time, but looking back it was true comedy. The three set off down the steep goat-track towards the village. It was a tense moment, and we all thought that the evening would most probably find us once more under the orders of some uncivilised Turkish *chaouse*; for we had decided that if the three were captured in the village the other five would give themselves up. Poor old Cochrane looked very anxious, and it was not to be wondered at. On the seventeenth day of his former attempt to escape, some two years previously, he and the two other naval officers of his party of three were compelled by starvation to buy food from a shepherd's hut. This man informed on them, with the result that they were taken by gendarmes. Recaptured, they were kept for six months in a filthy prison in Constantinople, untried by any court-martial. When the latter was held, Cochrane and his friends were given a three weeks' sentence, but actually were imprisoned for yet another four months. This is an excellent instance of Turkish justice, and the kind we were to expect should any one make a false move in the village.

Grunt, the officer, walked on ahead. Nobby and Johnny, each with an empty pack and haversack on their back, marched behind. Their first glimpse of the village with its two grey-domed mosques and

a few hundred houses rather frightened them, for it was a much bigger one than they had expected, and the larger the village the more likely they were to be discovered as impostors. It was, however, too late to turn back. There were men and women working in the fields who had seen them, though they caused no real interest except to small boys, who are inquisitive the world over; so they marched on, Nobby and Johnny keeping perfect step with Grunt at a respectful two paces in the rear. When they entered the village they asked the way to the headman's house.

Their story was to be a plausible one. Their German surveying party was composed of one officer and seven men. They had left the railway at Eregli, and, taking to cart transport, were making for Mersina. The carts had unfortunately broken down, and being pressed for time they had marched on. They now wanted a few days' supplies for the party. A hard story to disprove without taking a lot of trouble, and Turks usually avoid taking much. Also, they had that forged document in Turkish, with the office stamp of Enver Pasha's Ministry of War on it to prove their *bond fides*; but this was only to be shown as a last resource.

After being wrongly directed three times by people who, if questioned further, would probably have said they were strangers to the place, the party entered a shop, and



Grunt requested the owner to allow his small boy to show them the way. They were taken to a two-storied timber-built house, against the door of which lolled a Turkish private soldier. The conventional greetings passed, and the man asked in Turkish if they were Germans. The reply was in the affirmative. To their immense surprise this "simple soldat" in an out-of-the-way village started talking a very fluent German. It was the limit. The rank and file now came to the fore, and one suggested that the man had misunderstood them. They were not Germans: they were Magyars (Hungarians), and did not understand a word of German. The last part of the statement was untrue by two words, for the three of them compared notes that evening and counted the German words they knew—"Verboten, Schweinefleisch, and Bier" were the sum total. Stepping past the soldier, Grunt led the way into a small hall furnished with some harness and a few carpet saddle-bags. On the left was an open door, which they entered. Here was a long narrow room with a low ceiling. On three sides of it carpets were spread, with a few cushions on the floor. Reclining against the cushions on one side were two grey-bearded Turks, and a young Greek in a straw hat, blue suit, and brown boots. As they came in, the Greek said in English: "Come on, come along,"—the limit was surpassed! Eventually they

found that the Greek knew only a few words of English, but it was very unpleasant at the time. Grunt gave the Turkish salutation and sat down. Nobby and Johnny stayed strictly at attention. Grunt motioned with his hand, and received a smart salute and heel-click from his two subordinates, who then dared to seat themselves. The old Turk, who received Grunt's salutation, was obviously the headman. His jacket was gaudy, his pantaloons were very voluminous, and many daggers graced his highly-coloured belt.

To our party's disgust the German scholar now appeared and sat down beside Johnny. People began to flock in, and the questioning started—thousands of questions. The three answered as best they could and gave their story. The soldier now explained that he had served many years in Austria and knew a great deal about it. The actors did not. Where had they come from in Austria? Oh, Pruth! This opened the flood-gates once more. Did they know such and such a place? At some names they nodded and looked intelligent: at others they shook their heads. Fortunately the headman here broke in. Had they rifles and revolvers? Revolvers, yes! but the rifles had been left in the carts. Would they show him the revolvers? Grunt refused, saying there was an army order against it. And so it went on. Then another unpleasant incident took place. Grunt was wearing Ellis's service dress



jacket. Before we left Yozgad its brass buttons had been covered with cloth, so as not to flash in the sun or in the moonlight. One of the large front buttons, however, had become uncovered during the days that followed escape, and though we remarked upon the fact when Grunt put on the coat in the morning, it was not covered again. Now it caught the scholar's eye. He crawled along to Grunt and started fingering it. He knew something about buttons, he said, and that particular one was an English button. The scholar was no fool! Johnny was very contemptuous—didn't the man know that it was a specially good Magyar button, and one of the latest pattern? The scholar certainly made for excitement.

Now was committed a grave error that might have had disastrous results. A small bag containing  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. of tea had been brought along to the village, in order to propitiate the headman should need arise and at this juncture Grunt thought fit to offer it to him, extolling its excellence as he did so. No sooner had the bag changed hands than to their horror the three saw that the word TEA was marked plainly on it in indelible pencil. Had the Greek seen it, he would almost certainly have been able to read a simple word like this, and the game would have been up. But once more the party's luck stood by them, and the incident closed with the headman putting the bag in his pocket.

It was dangerous for our party to talk anything but Turkish, even amongst themselves. Hindustani might have been safe, but they did not think of it. Early in the morning we had decided what food should be demanded. The list was as follows:—

Five okes of meat (an oke equals  $2\frac{3}{4}$  lbs.)  
 Eight okes of raisins.  
 Twenty " bread.  
 Ten " wheat.  
 Eight " cheese.  
 Half oke of butter.  
 One " honey.  
 Half " tobacco.  
 150 eggs.

Of course we did not expect to be able to obtain all these, but they were now asked for. As each item was named, the price was discussed by all the occupants of the room except the wretched buyers. Usually the price first mentioned was fairly moderate, but in a short time they had run it up amongst themselves as if they were bidding at an auction. They then turned to the buyers and said "such a thing costs so much," and the buyers were hungry enough to swallow any price. It is a trait of Turkish commerce that no article ever has a fixed value. Finally 23 $\frac{1}{2}$  Turkish pounds were paid in advance for the stores.

It was here that the party obtained a little war news. Of this we had had none since leaving Yozgad, and at that time the Turkish papers would have had us believe that the Germans were even then knocking at the gates of Paris. In the headman's house the war



was now discussed, and the fighting powers of the various nations criticised. As for the British, they were a very rich and powerful people, and yet just look how they had been driven into the sea at Gallipoli, and how the Turks had forced them to surrender at Kut-el-Amara. The French, of course, were not good fighters, and the Americans quite untrained to arms. The actors had perforce to agree to all these statements, but their joy was great, though well hidden under a disgusted mien, when they heard that the Germans were retiring.

After this conversation came a welcome diversion. A round table like a dumb-waiter, about 9 inches in height, was brought in. With it came a large supply of chupatties, a flat plate of honey, one of cream, a bowl of sour milk, and a dish piled high with greasy wheat pilau; and following the food came the headman's son—a lad of nine. The headman beckoned our three to approach, and, sitting on their hunkers round the table, the breakfast party of seven began the meal. The method of eating was simple, but one required either genius or years of practice to be any good at it. Break off a piece of chupattie, quickly shape it into a shovel, scoop up as much honey or cream as possible, eat the shovel and its contents, and start again. Johnny was a novice at the game. Though ravenous for food he was an amateur, and his miserable little shovels were merely damp with honey or cream when he ate them. Mark

Twain is unfortunately dead. He alone could have described how the nine-year-old boy ate: his shovels were immense, and he always took a full scoop. He was swallowing continuously, and while his right hand was feeding his mouth, his left had already shaped a new shovel. He was an expert—a record-breaker. Grunt and Nobby fared little better than Johnny, for the three had to conceal the fact that they were starving. The meal lasted not more than six minutes. Johnny reckoned he had absorbed one chupattie with a negligible quantity of honey, cream, and pilau. The boy must have eaten eight, and the greater part of everything else, and thoroughly earned the undying admiration of three Englishmen. The meal over, Nobby and Johnny put on their packs and haversacks. For a change the German scholar said they were really good Austrian packs and haversacks: perhaps the button incident had affected him.

A guide was now produced, and the Magyar rank and file went a-shopping. The packs could not possibly carry the amount of food which it had been decided to buy, so quantities were cut down, and finally the two returned to the headman's house, each carrying a load of about 57 lbs. During their absence Grunt had to answer innumerable questions about his firearms.

After a short delay the three took their departure, Nobby and Johnny again clicking heels and doing a pantomime



chorus salute. The distance to the remainder of the party was one and a half miles, and the path climbed steeply the whole way. The Hun officer of course marched coolly ahead, while Nobby and Johnny plodded behind, anything but cool. After going a few hundred yards they glanced behind them. As was to be expected, they were being followed. First came the beastly German-speaking man, then the Greek, and after them the headman himself on a donkey. Johnny advised Grunt to go on ahead and warn the others that we were now Magyars, and that we each had a revolver. Nobby and Johnny walked as fast as they could, but the sun was very hot and the loads very heavy for them, in their weak condition. The men who were following eventually caught up with them and together they came to where the remainder of the party were camped. This gave the headman a bit of a shock, as he thought we had lied about everything, and so did not expect to see five other Magyars. As soon as the party could get their equipment on we formed up in two ranks. Grunt made some guttural sounds, at which we "left turned" and started to march off into the blue, leaving three very puzzled men behind us. After an hour's going we halted and, seeing no one following us, had a meal of two chupatties and six raw eggs each. For the two odd ones of the fifty that had been bought we had "fingers out."

"Fingers out" was a procedure whereby all such debatable matters were decided during our escape. On the last sound of the words "Fingers up!" each member of the party held up any number of fingers he chose, subject to the maximum being four and the minimum one. Having decided beforehand at which person the counting would start, and which way round it was to go, the total number of fingers shown was added up and on whatever member of the party this number ended when counting round, that was the man. This was the sort of thing that happened: "Starting with Perce, going round right-handed, Fingers up!" Suppose the total was 19. That would mean, in our party of eight, that the man two after Perce would win the count. "Fingers out" was used only to settle who was to have the pleasant things, such as these odd eggs, or the scrapings of the cooking-pot; duties such as going on ahead to scout or going back to a spring to fetch water were undertaken by volunteers.

We were still on the wrong side of the ravine in which was the village, and inasmuch as it was dangerous to stay in a locality where we had aroused such suspicion, the ravine must be crossed. A mile farther on we discovered a possible line of descent to a ledge half-way down. The ravine was about four hundred feet deep and its sides almost precipitous. As we climbed



slowly down, Perce, who was coming last, started three enormous boulders, which crashed below. As Johnny leapt aside one missed him by only a few inches. Half the descent was successfully accomplished, but the ground beneath fell sheer away; so we went a few hundred yards in an up-stream direction on our own level. Coming round a rocky spur a wonderful sight met our gaze. Beyond us the cliff curved round in a shallow crescent. It was of soft yellow sandstone, and contained two large uninhabited cave-villages, about two hundred yards apart. With the passing of centuries the cliff had worn away, revealing a honeycomb of square caves. The larger village must have had ten or twelve stories of rooms connected up by some form of staircases inside, but we did not see them. The smaller one had two stories laid bare, but it was not as well-finished as the other. The entrances to the village were Roman arches, under which ran a short passage, leading to the door itself, which was rectangular in shape. In some cases the one archway contained two doors. The finest arch was carved on both sides, with crude paintings on it. From the foot of the villages a very steep pathway ran down to the river-bed below. This we followed, and a quarter of an hour later arrived at the bottom. Here was the most delightful sight we had seen since our start from Yozgad: green and shady trees lining

the grassy bank of a murmuring mountain stream. The water was ice-cold and clear as crystal—a merit when we thought of the stagnant cattle-wallows from which we had had to drink. It was too tempting to leave at once. We found what we thought was a secluded spot, and here we first of all arranged our packs so that each of us had an equal weight to carry after the morning's purchases. Then we bathed. The joy of that bathe after seventeen days was indescribable, and worth many a hardship. A bridle-path ran along the edge of the stream, and unfortunately any one who happened to pass would be able to see us. As luck would have it, an old man rode by on a donkey while we were engaged in giving our socks a much-needed wash. When he had gone we looked at each other and heaved a sigh of relief, for he had not even glanced in our direction; but when he rode past us again twice in the next twenty minutes and still failed to look at us, we thought it was time to move. Hastily filling our water-bottles and chargals we started to climb the other side of the ravine. The chargal, an extra weight of ten pounds and hard to carry, changed hands twice before we got to the top, from where the view of the cave-villages was very fine.

For the next three hours we picked our way over dreadful going, amongst grey limestone rocks, cracked and pock-marked everywhere. Progress was very slow, as one had to watch one's



feet the whole time for fear of breaking an ankle. It was here that we started a leveret, and made a vain attempt to kill a long snake which swished past Johnny's feet. We saw four snakes during our escape — one of which made Nobby leap violently into the air as he nearly trod on it. When there was a chance of resting, we were almost too tired to think at all, so the thought of snakes did not worry us.

At about 5 P.M. Cochrane betted Johnny half a sovereign that the sea would be visible from the next rise, provided there was no further mountain range within five miles. The bet was lost by nearly a week, for it was not till the twenty-third day out that seascapes became part of our scenery.

At 6 P.M. we halted in a rocky cup-shaped depression with some dried wood lying about. Here we set to work with the meat bought at the village. It was, or had been, a beautiful goat-kid, and from it we made a stew such as no multi-millionaire can buy. Certainly no "Cordon bleu" has ever achieved such an appetising dish. The recipe will now be divulged: Take a joint of goat-kid, put it on a rock and saw pieces off it with a blunt clasp-knife. Place the bits in a dixie over a wood fire, add a little water, and wait impatiently till the meat is half cooked. Put your share into an enamel mug, and with the hunger of seventeen days' starvation as relish, and the thumb and forefinger of the

right hand as a fork, eat, and thank your God.

Our dinner this evening was one to be remembered: a mugful of meat, two chupatties, a table-spoonful of cheese, and a few spoonfuls of cooked wheat for each of us; and for the first time for many a day we lay down feeling well fed. That night we found a level bit of ground where five could sleep together. Of the rest, two slept practically in a bushy fir-tree, and Cochrane curled round the fire. All went well until some one of the five—Ellis for a sovereign—wanted to turn, and the chance of sleeping was at an end. Fortunately, it was nearly time to move off, so we did not lose much rest. Just before daylight we started and did about two miles in two hours, the going being of the ankle-breaking variety. We were not many miles from a main road, so it was senseless to risk travelling much after dawn. Looney, too, with his iron-clad ammunition boots, was going very lame, with large blisters on his heels. We therefore hid for the day in another rocky cup similar to that of the previous evening. Shortly after dawn, Nobby, a keen shikari, slaughtered a hoopoo, which had the misfortune to have a fit in front of him. This made a welcome addition to our larder, and when, at our meal before starting that evening, we had "fingers out" for it, Nobby very appropriately won it. In this bivouac we had the misfortune to lose



our second and last pair of soissors—they were a great loss, and we sadly needed them later on. The cracks in the rocks, where we spent the day, were several feet deep, and the

soissors are no doubt lying at the bottom of one of these.

There was some doubt who was guilty of the crime of losing them, but we bet another sovereign it was —.

#### CHAPTER XI.

During this 25th August we had fixed our position so far as our obsolete map would permit. We had, we thought, just crossed the watershed of the Taurus, and if the day had only been clearer might perhaps have obtained our first view of the sea from our point of vantage that morning. This fact of being on the watershed, together with a compass-bearing on to a peak recognisable to the south, settled our position fairly definitely as a little to the west of the range marked Gueuk Tepe on the map. This was in agreement with a check by dead reckoning based on Looney's diary from the time we had passed the Ak Gueul, and meant that we had still forty-five miles between us and the sea, even as the crow flies; or, by the way we should take for the sake of better going, something well over fifty miles.

Soon after setting out on the following night's march, the accuracy of our estimate was confirmed, for the map had showed a main road not far ahead from our supposed position, and this as a matter of fact we crossed within half an hour's trek. Just beyond the road and a little to the east of our course rose a cone-

shaped hill, crowned by what at first looked like an old castle, but which, on a nearer view, resolved itself into a natural outcrop of white rock. It was then 7 o'clock. An hour later we were grateful for the find of a small stream of perfectly clear water. This was the first we had discovered since crossing the beautiful valley where we had enjoyed our much-needed bathe thirty odd hours before. There is no doubt, however, that by this time we had become comparatively inured to a shortage of water. It was only a fortnight ago that one of the party had collapsed after a lesser privation. Now we did not even trouble to fill completely the larger of the two serviceable chargals, although it is true there were other reasons which encouraged us in this serenity. For one thing, now that we were on the southern slopes of the Taurus, we hoped that our water troubles were over. In point of fact, we were to find ourselves sadly disappointed. Then again, we were loth to put such a drag upon our speed as a full chargal certainly was, change hands though it might every half hour. So far that night we had maintained a



pace of four miles an hour. The meat eaten during the previous two days had undoubtedly met a very real need, and with the cheese and chupatties, and the longer periods for rest, had given us a sense of renewed vigour. Time, however, still passed with the same deadly slowness. On the first night that we had started taking the chargals turn and turn about at regular intervals, more than one of the party had imagined that he had been doing a spell of a full hour, and was horrified to hear that in reality it had been only half that length.

On this night the moon rose at about 8.30; there was therefore a short period of darkness between sunset and moonlight, and as we should have a three-quarter moon for the whole of the rest of the night, we could afford to rest for twenty minutes when the twilight had faded. This was the more desirable, as we were still in difficult country. The surface itself was not as bad as might have been expected, for, after all, we were in the Taurus; but our course was constantly being crossed by steep nullahs. The climb up their farther sides was very fatiguing.

To avoid some of these, we proceeded, wherever possible, to follow the crest-line, and as soon as the moon was up the field-glasses once more proved their value by enabling Cochran to pick out the best route. As time went on, however, the country became more and more broken, until we found it necessary, if endless detours were to

be avoided, to take the nullahs as they came. After a few more climbs, we almost gave up trying to keep on our proposed course, which was a little E. of S., and nearly decided instead to follow down a valley to the S.W., which promised better going. In the end, however, we contented ourselves with making a mile and a half an hour in our original direction, and were rewarded by finding in one of the nullahs a little spring of water.

At 11 P.M., having found a fairly sheltered nook (for the wind at night was always cold at this altitude), we took the opportunity of snatching a little sleep. It has to be confessed that some of us also made a premature attack on the next day's ration of cheese and chupatties. To help level up our loads, these had been shared out already, and after our experience of the joys of a full meal—we allude again to the goat—we found having food in our packs a sore temptation. Without the safeguard of common ownership, it ceased to be inviolable. Yet perhaps after all it was best to eat at night, when we were doing all the hard work, and when, in addition, it was cold.

Shortly after midnight we moved on, and were soon cheered by the discovery of a narrow track leading in the right direction, and cleverly avoiding all the difficulties of the broken ground on either side. This we were able to follow at a hard  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles an hour until a little before day-break. Then seeing lights



ahead, we left the main track, thinking it must be leading us on to a village. Immediately around us there was no cover from view, and as the first tinge of dawn lit up the countryside, we saw that our only hiding-place would be in the wooded hills on the farther side of the valley in which lay the supposed houses. Proceeding at our best speed, we began a race with the sun, punctuated only by halts of a few seconds now and then as Cochrane searched anxiously round through the field-glasses; for we could hear herds moving about, and other lights had come into view. The descent proved steeper and longer than we had anticipated, and it was not till after five o'clock, and just before sunrise, that we reached the foot of the valley. Here we found we had to cross a stream ten to twelve feet wide, and, on account of the marshy ground, at a point not 500 yards away from the lights. These came, as we now saw, from a small group of timber huts, and in our haste to reach cover we plunged straight through the stream, to find that only a few yards farther up we might have crossed by stepping-stones in a place where the stream was only a foot deep. However, this was no time for vain regrets, and we were soon clambering up the farther slope, which was covered with scattered pines. Under cover of these we gave ourselves a couple of minutes' breathing space, for the hill was steep, and then

went on over the top of the first ridge, a thousand feet above the stream, and into a little dip beyond. Here we found a trickle of water, and settled down amongst some small trees and thorny scrub. The first thing to do was to take off our soaked boots and let them dry; after this we prepared ourselves a brew of cocoa, well earned by what we reckoned was a 27-mile march in the previous twelve hours. Most of our feet were terribly sore, and Looney spent an hour sewing on bandages before he struggled back into his boots that day.

With the present satisfactory rate of progress we could afford to be rather more liberal with our food; and so the camp fire never died down, for we took it in turns to make pilaus all that day. These were made from crushed wheat, and differed from the porridge we had been accustomed to make from it while at Yozgad, in that before boiling it was mixed with a little melted dripping, a supply of which we had obtained from the village. The resulting pilau was a vast improvement on the plain porridge, besides being rather quicker to cook—a consideration in view of the smallness of our cooking-pot. Altogether we must have had five pilaus at this bivouac, but as each when distributed filled only a third of a pint mug, we cannot be accused of greed. To avoid all waste we had brought along even the bones of the goat; from these we now made a



weak soup, after which the bones themselves were divided out for a last picking, some of us even eating their softer portions. We were now out of sight of the huts in the valley which we had so hastily crossed, but could see the top of the hill on the farther side; here was a fairly large walled village, with houses built of stone and roofed with the usual flat mud roofs. Although we could see this with our glasses, we were too far to be observed ourselves, and moreover little sign of life appeared there. That afternoon, however, we had a few anxious moments, when two men came over the next ridge to the south of us: they passed within a hundred yards of where we lay, but appeared not to have seen us.

In the evening, having moved a short distance up the same ridge, we were having a five minutes' halt when two more men, this time on donkeys, came over the crest and almost rode on top of us. They asked, "Who are you? Where are you going?" and "Why hiding?" We did not answer, so they said, "Are you foreigners that you don't understand Turkish?" Then they went on and so did we. Fortunately, even should they report any suspicions they had, we were in country that was much intersected and in which it would have been difficult for any one to trace us. So difficult, in fact, was the bit of ground which met our view on reaching the top of the range we were on, that it was some min-

utes before we could make up our minds which would be the best line to follow.

Eventually we decided to make for a ridge which seemed negotiable, and on proceeding came very shortly afterwards to a spring and a goat-track. After drinking all the water we could, we followed the latter. It was as well we did so, for the track took us round the head of a precipitous ravine which might have taken a whole day to cross if we had attempted to pass over direct. On the far side, too, the track still kept the general direction we wanted, namely, some 20 degrees east of south, and so we clung to it steadily until 8.30 P.M. We had been marching for three hours, and now following our procedure of the previous night, slept till 9.45, by which time the moon had risen. Before halting, we had seen one or two shepherds' fires ahead, so took the precaution to move fifty yards or so off the track in case there should be any traffic. By this time we had given up keeping a watch on the night halts, though we still did so by day. The reason for this was that sleep was only obtainable during the nights, and we could not afford to let even one member of the party go without it. On this particular occasion it was comparatively warm, considering that we were on an open hillside in the Taurus, and we were much rested by the sleep we obtained.

When we resumed our way we still kept to our friendly



path, although it was becoming more and more stony. A little before midnight we found ourselves in a dilemma, for, after leading us to the edge of a deep valley which ran at right angles to our course, the track now branched right and left. The problem was which path to follow. If we had stopped to think we might have realised that, in mountainous country, even the most friendly road cannot always take you by a direct route, and that the longest way round is often the shortest way home. However, on this occasion we made an error of judgment and went straight ahead. The slope, at first comparatively grassy and gradual, became rapidly more rocky and precipitous, until at about 1.30 A.M., after descending close upon 1500 feet, we found ourselves on the edge of a yawning gorge, at the bottom of which foamed a raging mountain torrent. We were not as glad to see this water as usual, for we had crossed a rivulet on our way down: at this we had already quenched our thirst, although at the time dogs had been barking at us from some shepherds' huts on the valley slope. The difficulty now was to find a practicable path up the farther bank. The torrent itself was passable easily enough, for natural stepping-stones abounded in its rock-strewn bed; and in fact we did cross and re-cross it several times in a painful endeavour to make our way a little farther to the west.

Everywhere, however, beyond a rough and narrow ledge of rock by the side of the stream, the far bank rose up sheer above us. In the moonlight the scene was wonderful, and we could not help thinking how perfect a place this would have been for a day's halt. But we could not afford to lose precious time, and for the present our whole aim was to leave it as soon as possible. At one spot, having seen a light burning not far from the water's edge, we proceeded very cautiously. It proved to proceed from the stump of a tree which some one had probably set on fire to warm himself and had left burning: happily no one was there now. After a two hours' struggle we had to own that we were defeated, and were compelled to climb back out of the gorge and still on the wrong side. Moving along its edge at a higher level, for another two hours we searched in vain for a more likely crossing-place, and were almost in despair when we suddenly heard the voices of men and women below us. Looking down, we saw in the moonlight a party of Turks or Armenians in the act of crossing a fine old bridge which spanned the gorge between two absolutely vertical banks in a single semicircular arch of stone. Even now it was some little time before we could pick up the path leading down to it, but when we did so we were agreeably surprised to find that the bridge was not guarded. In the last five hours



we had progressed but one mile in the right direction.

When at last we crossed the gorge it was barely an hour to dawn, and so we had not followed the mountain road leading up the farther side for long before we had to be on the lookout for a hiding-place. There was little cover higher up the hill; we therefore turned right-handed and dropped down once more towards the gorge, hoping that after all it would do us the good turn of providing us with water and shade for the day. On the way down, however, we saw a cave hollowed out in the rocky hillside, and as the bank below was very steep, we decided we would not give ourselves a single foot of unnecessary climbing when we started off again next evening. We therefore entered the cave; but Cochran and Perce, after ridding themselves of their packs, valiantly climbed down again to the water and came back with the two chargals full. So much had all the fruitless clambering taken out of us that we were more tired on this day than after double the distance on the night previous, and, except for taking turns to cook, every one lay like a log in the cave. The latter faced west, and was roofed by two elliptical semi-domes side by side beneath a larger arch in the rock, but being shallow in width compared to the height of the roof, allowed the sun to stream in upon us in the latter part of the afternoon.

On leaving the cave at about 7 P.M., as rugged country still

lay ahead, we thought it best to work our way obliquely up the hill and regain the track which had led us up from the bridge over the ravine. To this we clung for the greater part of the night which followed, although it involved passing through several villages. We found ourselves in the first almost before we realised that a village existed there at all: it seemed, however, a city of the dead, for not a dog barked at our approach, and the narrow crooked streets appeared deserted, until suddenly the white-clad figure of a woman flitted across our path. Fortunately she did not pause to find out who were these strange nocturnal visitors.

Not long afterwards we saw lights ahead, and as we drew nearer found that our road branched to right and left, the latter branch leading towards the lights which seemed to proceed from a village. After the previous night's experience we had no intention of attempting any cross-country going if we could possibly avoid it. Here, indeed, to go on direct would have necessitated crossing first a valley of unknown depth, and then an enormous ridge which reared up its black bulk against the clear starry sky. It was fairly obvious that the two roads went round either end of this ridge; after that it was a toss-up which was the more likely to lead us towards the sea. In view of the village and of the noisy clatter on the stony track of the booted members of the party,



Cochrane elected to take the right-hand branch, and this we followed for over a mile. It was leading us due west, and seemed likely to continue to do so for several miles more before the ridge was rounded. The coast opposite our position ran, we knew, rather from N.E. to S.W., and so every mile we marched west added another to our distance from the coast. At the next halt we reconsidered the question of roads, and decided we must go back and risk the village. But it was essential to make less noise, and so, as we once more approached the cross-roads, those who were not wearing "chariqs" padded their boots with old socks, bits of shirt, and pieces of felt. It gives some idea of the absolute weariness of body which now was ours, when it is stated that it was only after much forcible persuasion from Nobby that those who would have the trouble of tying on the padding could be induced to take this precaution. But in the end wise counsels prevailed, and we succeeded in passing through the village—and it was a large one—without causing any apparent alarm. Looney, however, lost one of his mufti hats with which he had padded one of his boots.

The track now increased in width to as much as ten feet, being roughly levelled out of the solid rock, and running along a ledge above a precipitous ravine. Below us we heard the roar of a mountain stream, and as at one point a

rough path had been cut down to water-level, Cochrane descended it and fetched up a chargal full of water. It was to prove a serious mistake that we did not fill all our receptacles here. On resuming our way, we were taken by our road over another striking bridge which crossed the ravine a little higher up. This time the arch was a pointed one. Once more we found the defile unguarded. We were probably in magnificent mountain scenery, but could see little of it, as the moon had not yet risen. Even though after crossing the bridge we waited in the warmth of a little cave till after the time of moonrise, the moon itself did not become visible until two hours later, so steep were the slopes on every side of us. We could see, however, that we were going round the eastern shoulder of the ridge which had blocked our direct route, and this ridge rose sheer from the very edge of the ravine. Without a road to follow, therefore, we should have fared badly indeed. Even with it, the climb from the bridge had been severe, but on proceeding we soon came to the top of the rise, and found ourselves walking on a carpet of pine-needles through a beautiful open forest. This was a wonderful contrast to the arid wastes or rugged ridges across which had been so many of our long and weary marches. Even here, however, the country was soon to resume its more normal aspect. We found our-



selves descending into an open valley with no signs of trees or vegetation. Our road, too, dwindled to the width and unevenness of an ordinary village track, and this it turned out to be, for it led past a few isolated huts, and finally at 1 A.M. took us into a village. A little before we had been enjoying one of the hourly halts, when in the moonlight we had seen a man approaching on a donkey; so we took to our feet and marched again in order to pass him the more quickly, which we did without a single word being exchanged.

In the village we could hear the sound of men talking and laughing together. This was rather disconcerting, as for one thing we had been hoping to find where they obtained their water. Far from finding either well or spring or stream, however, we even had some difficulty in finding the path out of the village. We were about to go across country, and had gone so far as to climb over a hedge into some vineyards, when we recognised the path to the west of us. It worked along the side of a hill ap-

parently towards a saddle in the steep ridge which closed the valley ahead. While we were in the vineyard we felt around for grapes, but the vines were barren; in fact the whole valley seemed waterless. We now regained the track and had nearly reached the top of the ridge when our path suddenly took into its head to start descending the valley again. Though we were loth to leave any track so long as it made some pretence of going anywhere in our direction, this was too much for our patience, and Cochrane led us due east, so as to cross the bleak ridge which bordered the valley on that side and see what the next valley could do for us. But even here our difficulties were not to end: the further hillside was rocky in the extreme and covered with scrub and stunted trees, amongst which we clambered for some two hours without finding any valley to promise easy progress in the direction of the sea. To "Kola" tablets we once more resorted. Finally, an hour before dawn, we lay down as we were, disheartened, without water, and without a road.

(To be continued.)



## THE COLLAPSE.

## I. THE RAISING OF THE CURTAIN.

IN pre-war days Berlin's famous avenue, known as Unter den Linden, always impressed me as being symbolical of modern Germany. There the flaunting parvenu hotels of William II.'s *Industriestaat* stood cheek by jowl with the unpretentious Ministerial buildings of the Waterloo era; there great shops, tricked out with a lavish display of bronze and marble and plate-glass, were flanked by the meanest of Old Berlin drinking kens. There was always plenty of traffic in the street and on the pavements; yet, just as the shabby-looking little horse-cabs contrasted strangely with the splendid *limousines* of Berlin's merchant princes, so the shoddy dress and boorish manners of the crowd seemed to accord ill with the heavy magnificence of hotels, cafés, and shops. In fact, with its violent contrasts, its vulgarity, its haste, and its general incoherence of tendency, Unter den Linden used to be a fairly accurate symbol of that clay-footed colossus, modern Germany.

One day in the early spring of 1913 I walked down Unter den Linden with a well-known French statesman. The German Government had just introduced its measures for increasing the army, proposing to raise the money for this purpose by means of a levy on

capital. As we strolled along my companion and I discussed these proposals and other aspects of German finance. With a characteristic gesture which took in the whole façade of the busy street, the shrewd old Frenchman said—

“Si la guerre éclate, jeune homme, vous verrez, tout ça s'écroulera!”

That was a true prophecy, though its fulfilment may have been delayed. The whole façade of modern Germany, as represented by the great hotels and *kolossal* night cafés of Unter den Linden, has fallen with a crash. The fabric of the Empire has been shaken to its very foundations, if not wholly destroyed. The collapse of Germany is a stupendous thing. It is its suddenness, its swiftness, its completeness which are so staggering, which make it an occurrence unique in the history of the world. The epoch-making events which have accompanied it, the defeat of the German armies, the occupation of Rhineland and Alsace-Lorraine by the Allies, and the surrender of the German Fleet, have deflected public attention from the study—no less absorbing, scarcely less thrilling—of the origins and symptoms of this mighty fall.

For fifty months Germany was a closed book to the world



without. For fifty months we were relegated to the realm of deduction and hypothesis by the iron curtain which shut out from our view the slow process of decay going forward in the German body politic. The Allies' Intelligence services contrived to keep the Supreme Command accurately posted on the progressive decline of what the Germans call "the spirit of 1914." But so long as the frontier remained closed our knowledge was not absolute, and I believe that the Germans are right in claiming that when the crash came the Allies had no idea how close the Germans were to collapse. But now the barriers are down. The Supreme War Lord is a fugitive and an outcast, his son and heir the same: his beaten generals have vanished from the light of day. The *tricolore* floats from Strasbourg Minster and the British Foot Guards mount the watch on the Rhine. For those who, like the writer, have been with the Army of Occupation in Germany, the land of blood and iron is a closed book no more.

Its pages are gradually unfolding, and he who runs may read. The tremulously polite householder in the houses where British soldiers are quartered, the fawning shop-keeper, the tram conductor, the lady clerk in the billeting office, the papers at the newsstand, the books in the bookshop — all are individually pages of this tragic tale of the decline and fall of a great nation. It is a tragedy, as the

story of every failure, of every crime, must be. And the spectacle of the ruthless retribution that has overtaken the arrogant, purse-proud, ambitious nation one used to know, is tragedy in the sense of the plays of Sophocles or Euripides. It seems to me in Germany of to-day that if you stop and listen you may hear the inexorable march of leaden-footed Destiny.

The story of Germany's collapse is the story of the military defeat of the German Armies. Of that it is too soon to write. But it is now possible to trace to its source in some measure the progressive crumbling of the German front in the field and at home, which led to Germany's military overthrow. And it is because I rejoined the British Army in France shortly after the opening of the great battle (August 1918), in which the symptoms of the deterioration of German *moral* made themselves incontrovertibly manifest, and continued with the Division for a month or so after it had taken its place with the British Army of Occupation in Germany, that I feel justified in attempting this task. The interrogation of prisoners during the fighting, conversations with all types of Germans during our march from the Ardennes to Cologne and during my stay on the Rhine, and articles in the German newspapers and magazines, furnished the material for this story of the collapse of Germany.



## II. THE GERMANS ON THEIR DEFEAT.

It is a popular belief in the Allied countries that the Germans do not realise their military defeat. This is, I think, true in the case of the stay-at-home civilian of the uninformed class: it is certainly not true of the German soldier. It must be remembered that the German civilian lived in a fool's paradise for fifty months. The hoodwinking of the German public by the military authorities, of which I shall have more to say elsewhere, was successful in a measure which seems incredible. For example, the German appeal for an armistice, which to every one of us soldiers on the Western Front appeared ultimately inevitable, came upon the German public with the force of a stunning shock.

In the same way, the stay-at-home Hun has not the least conception of the detestation in which the very name of Germany is held all through the civilised world. The waiters in the Cologne restaurants and cafés talk glibly about former service in England, and look forward eagerly to a speedy return. When a waiter at the Dom Hotel, wearing the ribbon of the Iron Cross in the button-hole of his dress-suit, voiced to me sentiments of this description, he fairly took my breath away. German naïveté takes some getting used to.

Advertisers in the Cologne newspapers ("published," as the notice printed above the

title runs, "with the assent of the British military authorities") ask for lessons in commercial English. On all sides one is beset with questions as to when the inquirer may resume business relations with "my good friend" Mr X of Manchester, or "our old clients" Messrs Y of Liverpool. The Berlin 'Vossische Zeitung,' of January 16, printed two advertisements asking for the representation of German firms in Rumania "in view of the approaching peace trade." One of these advertisements was anonymous, the other was inserted by an "efficient business man settled in Bukharest, temporarily resident in Berlin." Whether the advertisers are Rumanian or not, the advertisements themselves are sufficient indication of the amazing obtuseness of the German mind.

The German civilian is equally ignorant of the fact that he lost the war because the German army was defeated. In Cologne, which is mildly Social Democrat in the working-class quarters and for the rest overwhelmingly "black" or Catholic, the collapse of the German front is attributed to the "revolutionaries" of Berlin. Berlin, let me say in parenthesis, which, as the centre of Frederician Prussia, was always unpopular outside the narrow limits of the monarchy, is now anathema to the rest of the Empire. "Our Front was never broken": "our soldiers in the



West were stabbed in the back": "the Front in the field was betrayed by the Front at home" . . . these are characteristic opinions expressed to me by farmers in the *Regierungsbezirk* or "Government" of Aix-la-Chapelle, through which we passed on our march to the Rhine, and the *bons bourgeois* of Cologne. Whereas the actual facts of the case, as must be patent to every objective-minded onlooker, are that directly Germany's military power was broken, the whole fabric resting upon it came tumbling down like a house of cards.

But the soldiers know the truth. They may, in their turn, claim that they were betrayed by the folks at home; they may point to the defection of their Allies, the Bulgarians "who wanted always to go home," the "corrupt" Turks, the "rotten Austrians"; they may urge the immensity of the odds against them. But they do not deny defeat.

"Ach! der Foch!" they sigh, and pay a frank tribute to the strategical genius which turned the German success of March into the ultimate triumph of the Allies. "The men wouldn't fight!" . . . not his (the speaker's), no, but those blackguardly Bavarians or Saxons or Prussians on the right or left or wherever it might be. From every soldier you may hear abundant confirmation of what we had already divined from the course of the operations—namely, the steady deterioration of the *moral* of the German Army.

As far as my personal obser-

vation goes, it was the final piercing of the Hindenburg Line on September 27 which set the seal of defeat on all German hopes of victory in this war. On that day our Division (the Guards) forced the passage of the Canal du Nord, the last bulwark of the Hindenburg system of defence, and carried the Flesquières Ridge beyond—that ridge which, if you remember, proved fatal to British hopes at the Battle of Cambrai in 1917. It was a very stiff fight, and the enemy resisted desperately, even after the Guards were over the yawning ditch of the Canal and making for the ragged fringe of trees marking the Ridge.

That day the writer assisted at the interrogation of the prisoners of war, who were brought down as they were captured to the cage situated in a ruined orchard in the village of Demicourt. It was a curious experience, for there at the cage one had, as it were, a hand on the pulse of the German Army. The first batch of prisoners were of the normal type—wounded men captured fighting or scared creatures frightened out of their sleep in a dug-out by the apparition of a helmeted Tommy with beckoning finger. The *moral* of these men was not markedly bad. They were glad to be captured; they were sick of the war; a shrug of the shoulders, and that was all.

But as the day wore on the prisoners began to appear in droves. One Brigade of Guards captured unwounded almost an entire battalion of the Reserve



Infantry Regiment No. 228. The prisoners admitted frankly that they had not attempted to resist, that they were "fed up" with fighting, that Germany had lost the war, and that they would have deserted long since if they had had the chance. They abused their officers, and had nothing but a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders for the Kaiser. They outvied one another in their eagerness to vouchsafe military information and generally to fawn upon their captors. But these were the troops in reserve. The defenders of the Canal du Nord and of the Flesquières Ridge were for the most part already cold in death, with clutching fingers, as I saw them lying about the open after the battle or groaning and shuddering on the stretchers laid out along the sunken road outside Demicourt, where the advanced dressing station was situated.

But that day we were to have one last glimpse of the old Prussian Army. About 6 P.M. a Prussian colonel was brought down. From head to foot he was the Prussian officer as one used to know him. His flat service cap and his grey overcoat were new and glossy, a monocle was firmly screwed into his eye, and his hands were encased in clean white wash-leather gloves. With him was his adjutant, an immaculately dressed youth.

The attack upon Flesquières had been considerably delayed by a nest of machine-guns firing from Graincourt. This pompous personage in the im-

maculate uniform, who formally introduced himself to me as "Captain Baron von B—, 1st Uhlans of the Guard," revealed himself as the heart and soul of this defence. He was commanding that battalion of the 228th Regiment which had so ingloriously surrendered, and at his battalion headquarters had organised a stout resistance, which had held up our advance until late in the afternoon.

He was haughty and vain-glorious, and talked a good deal about his feat of arms, which indeed, to tell the truth, was gallantly done. He made a great show of refusing all information of any kind, except to say that he was a cavalry officer attached to the infantry; but the humiliation of a personal search, to which I was glad to subject him, somewhat reduced his *moral*. In the outcome he relaxed considerably, and we had quite a long talk.

In the affected, snarling drawl of the old type of Prussian officer, he told me of the impossibility of getting the men to "pariren," to obey orders. He had been ordered to resist to the last, and had held out with a scratch force recruited from his battalion headquarters until they had been completely surrounded. As for the rest of the battalion . . . he cast a contemptuous glance into the crowded cage at his elbow and made a little gesture, as much as to say, "What can you expect of infantry?"

I have in mind another interview with a prisoner which



gave a further indication of the crumbling of the German front. It happened during the fighting for St Python, a village situated on the slope running up to the high ridge beyond the river Selle and adjoining the town of Solesmes.

The Guards had forced a passage of the river and gained possession of the lower part of the village while the Germans were yet in the other part. The place was full of French civilians, some dying of Spanish influenza, some already dead, many cowering in cellars, living on raw vegetables stored there, unable to stir out for the machine-gun fire which swept the streets, their refuges continually bombarded with gas shells. Hundreds of these wretched people were removed under shell-fire to a place of safety, but many obstinately refused to depart, preferring to run the risk of dying in their homes to incurring the danger of the street.

In one of these cellars of St Python, visited by our men in their work of mercy, two German soldiers were found living with a French family. In due course the prisoners were sent down to Divisional Headquarters for interrogation.

Of the one I need not speak. He was a wretched little rat of a man, a transport driver or something of the sort. It is of the other I wish to tell. He was a fine broad-shouldered East Prussian, with an honest open face. He wore the greenish-grey uniform of the Garde-Jäger.

Now the Garde-Jäger are one of the crack German rifle

regiments. They are picked men recruited from the forester class, many of them foresters, or sons of foresters, in the Royal Prussian Domains. The regiment used to be stationed at Potsdam, and ever enjoyed the especial favours of William II.

The prisoners' story was that, coming back from leave, they had failed to find their respective units, and after wandering about the place had taken refuge for the night in the cellar in St Python, where they were eventually discovered and captured. They had stayed in the cellar for six days. According to their statement the civilians in the cellar had supplied them with food during this time.

The whole story sounded rather improbable, so we sent the transport man outside and interrogated the rifleman more closely, alone. Asked why he had not come out of his cellar and joined the German troops, he replied that he could not, as the British were in the village. Why then, we persisted, had not the civilians come out? Because, was his embarrassed reply, there were German troops in the street outside.

Then we put it straight to the man that he was a deserter, and, after some denial, and shamefacedly, he admitted it.

"Why did you desert?" we asked him, "and leave your comrades in the lurch?"

"I've been fighting for four years," was the man's sullen reply, "and I'm sick of the war. I'm not going to fight any more!"



This was a Prussian Guardsman, and a regular soldier to boot!

Many prisoners and German ex-soldiers with whom I talked in Germany roundly declared that it was the tanks which gave us the superiority over the Germans in the field. The men simply wouldn't face them. At the house of the Mayor of a village across the Rhine, near the extremity of the bridgehead zone, I met a German-American who, holiday-making in Germany in the summer of 1914, was overtaken by the war and called up to his regiment. He was an arch-Hun of the shaven head and bulging brows type, bitter and hostile. About the origin of the war he was not interesting, ascribing the outbreak to French plans of aggression against "peaceful Germany." He was highly critical of the policy of the German Government towards the United States, declaring that Germany has made nothing but mistakes. "We always make mistakes," he added bitterly.

In his opinion it was the tanks that took the heart out of the German Army in the West. He declared that their moral effect was tremendous, especially as the men knew that they had no adequate measures of defence against them. Despite all statements to the contrary, the German High Command was in consternation at their appearance, because they knew that Germany had not the material to construct tanks of her own.

Before leaving this aspect of

the German collapse, let me lift the curtain for an instant and show you what a competent German writer narrates regarding the events leading up to Germany's final defeat in the West. In the December number of the 'Deutsche Rundschau' Richard Fester writes:—

"The first spring offensive (of 1918) showed the heroes of three years' defensive battles to be at the height of their warlike efficiency. The losses, however, necessitated the despatch of drafts and reserves. A continuous offensive, as Foch was able to risk later on, was no longer possible. Already the pauses in our attacks gave rise to anxiety. When the third July offensive collapsed, because the right flank of the wedge pushed forward across the Marne failed to withstand the anticipated French counter-stroke, and when, after August 8th, the general retreat set in, the premonition of a catastrophe flashed across all German minds. But still the old fighters of the Western front held their own. Some infantry regiments were reduced to eighty men. The artillery and machine-gun companies vied with one another in their courage to the death. It was only, thanks to them, that the Western front, falling slowly back, was never broken through and rolled up. . . ."

Regarding the German request for an armistice, the writer says:—

"That Ludendorff submitted the request and put it through with the Kaiser, Hindenburg, Count Hertling, Hintze, and Count Roedern appears certain. Until he has spoken, we are relegated to surmises regarding his motives. At the beginning of October the military situation was black. The powerful assault on Cambrai not only obliged our hard-pressed right wing to fall back to the Lys and the Scheldt, but also threatened our actual line of communications. A week later the peril was averted by the lasting resistance at Cambrai.



On October 2nd maybe the squeezing-out and capitulation of a part of the Western front had to be reckoned with. The tension would only be slackened and a catastrophe averted by an armistice if the enemy accepted it immediately. In such cases, however, the cessation of hostilities is usually the prelude to capitulation. The French army at Sedan only escaped annihilation by the cessation of hostilities before it laid down its arms. Was the situation at Cambrai so bad as to justify the desperate resolve to expose the Empire itself to the risk of catastrophe in order to save a portion of the army? *Or did Ludendorff only then become conscious of the fact that he was no longer master of the army, and that a general collapse might be expected in the event of the breaking of our front at Cambrai?*" (The italics are mine.)

At what moment Ludendorff discovered that the German Army had got out of control I am unable to say. By the time the Allies had broken the Hindenburg Line at the end of September 1918, however, the erosion of the German front in the field and at

home was complete. The spirit of 1914 was dead and buried with the myriad corpses of those German victories which had brought Germany no nearer the end of the war. In order to paralyse the resistance of the Russians the German Government deliberately encouraged fraternisation between the German and Russian armies after the cessation of hostilities, and thereby infected German troops with the poison of Bolshevism, which in due course these same troops carried with them to the Western front. The Bolshevik bacillus found a fertile culture awaiting it in the angry resentment both at home and in the field at the glaring injustice of the food distribution, and in the suspicion dawning to certainty in the minds of the German people that for four years their Government had kept them forcibly penned up in a fool's paradise.

### III. FOOD "GRAFTING" AT HOME AND IN THE FIELD.

When we crossed the Belgian frontier into Germany in the middle of December 1918, there were few outward signs of the shortage of food. In the rural districts geese, ducks, poultry, and rabbits were to be seen at many of the farms, and in the little country towns decent meals at not too extortionate prices (but about 50 per cent higher than in peace time) were to be had. The peasants looked healthy enough and the children were plump and rosy.

But a farmer I met at Hel-

lenthal uttered a note of warning.

"In the country," he said, "we manage all right, or anyway not too badly. The one gives the other of his superfluity, and thus, by a system of barter, we receive sufficient of the necessities of life. But wait till you get to the *Grossstadt* . . . to Cologne, for instance. It is in the cities that one finds the poor, and during the war, *mein Gott!* it is the poor who have gone hungry."

In that one phrase, "It is the poor who have gone



hungry," the farmer of Hellenenthal summed up the story of Germany's fall. Throughout Germany's fifty lean months, power or the full purse was the only passport to plenty. The high officers at home and officials of State, the war profiteers, the food dealers, the farmers, the rich *embusqués* ate their bellies full. They had to pay their shot, but they did not need to go hungry. But the men whom the Government took for the army, the hundreds of thousands of volunteers into the bargain, who exchanged their civilian jobs for the miserable pittance of the soldier, had to see their families go hungry while the stay-at-homes waxed fat.

Members of the British Army of Occupation have made light of the alleged famine in Germany, because they are able to purchase a good meal at hotels and restaurants in the towns all through the occupied zone. But during the strictest period of rationing in England there were restaurants and clubs where you could get your out off the joint "and come again," as the saying is, and no "damn nonsense" about meat-cards.

The hotel "ramp" in Germany, as any intelligent German will tell you, was one of the scandals of the war. The hotels in the large cities are alleged to have made all kinds of contracts, for the most part clandestine, with the food traffickers to keep their establishments supplied with food. The large capital at the command of most of these hotels enabled them easily to outbid

other less wealthy bidders. The Bürgermeister of a village outside Cologne assured me that during the war gangs of thieves haunted the countryside stealing cattle, slaughtering them on the spot and cutting them up, to sell the carcasses to the large hotels in the cities. On two occasions, he said, he lost oxen in this way, finding only the horns, hoofs, and parts of the offal lying in the fields the next morning. The Government was frequently and urgently appealed to to put a stop to this food trafficking by the hotels. Nothing was ever done. In many cases the German Government's anxiety to keep up appearances (and hotels are a most important part of the national window-dressing) even outweighed its haunting dread of public disturbances . . . what the Germans call *die Furcht vor der Strasse*.

"Hardly has the war started," writes Dr Josef Hofmiller in the current number of the 'Süddeutsche Monatshefte,' a quarterly review published at Leipzig and Munich, "than the uncontrolled arrogance of the military supply offices drove prices senselessly and immeasurably upward. Money was thrown in handfuls out of the window, there was suddenly no question of cost, the streets were paved with gold. The 'crooks' did not wait to be asked twice. There was a wild burst of money-making. There were perfect orgies of profiteering and usury. One 'war company' after the other sprang up, rented a big Berlin hotel, sat down in leather arm-chairs smoking Havana cigars, sent prices soaring up and ruined the market. And public opinion was gagged. All Germany expected, all Germany would have rejoiced, if at last a few dozen



gallows had been erected in a public place and a few dozen prominent profiteers strung up. Nothing happened. Dividends were poured out until the board-room tables groaned, while the lower and middle classes sank into beggary. Over night a race of war profiteers had sprung up, spending, swilling, thrusting themselves forward everywhere barefacedly and cynically in the theatres, the cafés, the restaurants, the watering-places, but above all, in the Government offices. . . . Every day one heard it said, 'If a man doesn't make money now, he's a — fool.'<sup>1</sup> Nine-tenths of the German people were — fools; but the rest sucked themselves as full as leeches. Every time men came home on leave they saw that the conditions of life at home were far, far worse; but that many people were far, far better off. Their luxuriousness cried aloud to Heaven, their dinners were costlier and more extravagant, their women's fashions smacked more than ever of the *cocotte*, their clothes (of pre-war cloth) were more expensive, their jewels more ostentatious. . . . Out there we conquer to death, here at home we are organised to death. What has become of the immeasurably abundant fruit crop of the last few years? A poor woman cannot buy more than a pound of fruit except at luxurious prices. But she must buy the filthy war jam and the filthy imitation honey in order that her children shall not starve and that a few more crooks may become millionaires."

"Is it not a fact," hotly demands another writer in an article written in October 1918, but then suppressed by the Censor—

"that since the introduction of meatless weeks innumerable families of small officials in the large towns have suffered the bitterest want, while in the country and the small towns enormous quantities of meat have been consumed two or three times daily? . . . Is it not a fact that in innumer-

able small towns people still eat what they like without ration cards? Is it not a fact that a roaring trade in ration cards goes on between country and town? Is it not a fact that bread and meat cards may be bought by the pound—the pound of paper, I mean—in regions where the cards have not been officially issued at all, or at any rate only for corrupt purposes? Is it not true that this corruption has eaten its way upwards to the food control centres and the municipal offices? Is not all this true? Does any man dare dispute these facts? Nobody dares!"

That a vast clandestine trade in food was carried on between rich people in the towns and the farmers I know to be true from my personal experience. A certain mess in Cologne was situated in the villa of a rich parvenu, who was alleged to have made a fortune out of profiteering in eggs during the war. The house in question was stacked with food of all kinds, and even a rococo cabinet in the drawing-room contained a *cache* of Stollwerck's chocolate, which, although manufactured in Cologne, is actually unobtainable in the shops. The lady of the house had a wonderful organisation for obtaining food from farms for miles round Cologne. No doubt, with a view to protecting her own hoard of potatoes from possible inroads by the mess in question, she placed her organisation at the disposal of the Mess President. She even went so far as to give precise details as to where individual farmers might be

<sup>1</sup> This appears to me to be the nearest colloquial rendering of the highly unparliamentary phrase employed in the original: "dummes Luder."—V. W.



likely to conceal their best potatoes.

Dr Hofmiller, the writer already quoted, passes from the abuses in the food situation at home to a vigorous indictment of the scandals at the Front.

"No word of execration is too strong," he avers, "for those who have on their conscience the destruction of the spirit of August (*i.e.*, of August 1914) in the Army."

He gives warning of a great awakening to be brought about by a flood of "war books," — "not the sentimental manœuvre novelettes of the penny-a-liners who have watched the war through field-glasses," but books in which "we shall hear something about the training of the men, the 'barrack-square tone' in the field, the non-promotion of the older soldiers, the one-year volunteer system which puts half-boys in command of grown men, the feeding of the officers and their men, military bureaucracy, the distribution of Iron Crosses *en masse* to *embusqués*, the beggarly pitances of some, the gigantic salaries of others, the sending home of food supplies, the pilfering of comforts and field post parcels, the field punishments, the 'tragedy' of the lines of communication, the battles for French and Rumanian harlots, the non-utilisation of available weapons, the waste of money, the destruction of food, the waste of man-power."

The same review publishes, from a soldier who had been in the field since August 14,

1914, a letter dated Charleroi, October 18, foretelling that, thanks to militarism, "despondency, lack of discipline, and sabotage" will soon make their appearance in the German Army.

"You laugh!" the writer continues, "but I will prove it to you. Think of the days of the declaration of war! What enthusiasm! Think of our victories! What was our reward? Doubly strict discipline, and private soldiers reckoned less than cattle. Any man preferred to be in the worst part of the line rather than in rest, because everybody knew that rest means drill, drill to the uttermost extreme. Take the officers. Not all, but two-thirds of them, started restaurants for themselves which were nothing more than guzzling establishments. By requisitioning cattle they secured for themselves the best food, whilst the soldier waited at table. The hotel-keeper started to keep pigs and poultry, and while the 'Herren,' as the officers were called, banqueted, the soldiers received such rations as were left over for them. White bread and rolls are only for the 'Herren.' Fifteen bakeries have already been erected for this purpose on the Lines of Communication. The poor at home are starving, while here the 'Herren' live like fighting-cocks. As for the Lines of Communication, things are far worse. I could furnish you with evidence to show that every officer, every supply inspector, in fact, every one who has anything to do with food, deserves to be shot immediately. The roguery passes all limits. From general to corporal, I, and thousands of us, can give you the proofs."

Did this letter stand alone, it might be dismissed as the "grousing" of a discontented private soldier. But it does not stand alone. I have heard the same story many times from prisoners of war, have listened to fierce outbursts of denunciation by the men of their officers "who sent the



soldier's rations home to their own families," or actually even to food traffickers and by officers of "die Etappen-Herren"—the officers employed on the Lines of Communication.

A German Army doctor, who is described as having served for forty months at the Front, including twenty-eight months in the West, in the course of a study of the causes of the German collapse, devotes considerable space to a detailed account of the food scandals in the field. His article, which is entitled "The Crumbling of the Front," is contributed to that South German quarterly, the 'Süddeutsche Monatshefte,' from which I have already quoted.

He describes the German system, by which the so-called *Divisions-Intendantur*, or supply centre for the troops, is located at Divisional Headquarters. The *Divisions-Intendant* has charge of the distribution of the rations, but also looks after the canteens and generally administers the extra supplies which units may purchase either to improve their fare or to add to their personal comfort. In other words, the *Divisions-Intendant* appears to combine in himself the functions of the Senior Supply Officer and the officer in charge of the Soldiers' Club and Canteen in a British Division.

The writer accepts it as more or less inevitable that, in the distribution of meat, the Divisional staff should get the best "cuts," also that any surplus meat left over after distribution should make its way to the same destination.

As with meat, so with butter, lard, eggs, and flour. The only exception (the writer says) is ration bread (*Kommiss-Brod*).

"I am acquainted with Divisional staffs," he continues, "where ration bread is only known by hearsay, or only appreciated if served as black bread (*Pumpernickel*) after dinner: in other words, Divisional staffs where rolls and white bread of the whitest flour are served five times a day—that same white bread which the troops can only obtain by direct order of the medical officer to the *Intendantur*, and then only in insufficient quantities."

The good fare found at the tables of Divisional staffs in the German Army is attributed to "little dodges," such as the award of the Iron Cross (First Class) to the *Intendant* "for good services in maintaining the fighting capacity of the troops by tireless devotion to the work of supply." The award, the writer argues, can only be based on one of two possibilities: either the troops were splendidly fed, in which case the Divisional staff were even better supplied; or the troops were *not* splendidly fed, in which case the staff certainly were. There is no third possibility, for if both troops and staff were moderately fed, or if the troops had been splendidly, the staff moderately, fed, the award would not have been made.

The writer cites the case of a Divisional *Intendant* receiving the Iron Cross (First Class) when the Division had come back to rest after severe



fighting, in which the wretched ration arrangements and the obvious incompetence of the *Intendant* had caused great bitterness among the troops. The decoration was conferred in the face of complaints about the ration arrangements reaching the Division daily from battalion commanders and doctors. The writer regards it as symptomatic of the apathy of the army towards a universal scandal that the glaring injustice of this particular award evoked no protest.

The writer proceeds to give further instances of what he calls "demonstrably illegal, criminal acts designed to further luxurious living." During an attack delivered by the Corps with which his regiment was serving, large stocks of good claret in bottles were captured by the battalion to which he was attached. The battalion, believing they had a perfect right to the wine, carried it back with them to their rest billets after the battle. Shortly afterwards the Corps ordered the wine—or what was left of it—to be handed in, on the grounds that, as all battalions had not been lucky enough to make such a good haul, the wine was to be equally divided amongst all units in the Corps.

The good claret was handed in, and the wine ultimately served out to the original captors as their share of the spoil proved to be an indifferent vintage and only a little of that.

"Two years and a quarter later," the doctor goes on to say, "I noticed in the mess of a field ambulance which had belonged to the Corps at the time of the incident I have narrated, a bottle of this very claret. It was provided by the O.C. of the ambulance, who at the period referred to had been in charge of the supply services (*Wirtschaftsbetriebe*) of the Corps. In reply to my inquiry, the officer in question said he had bought the wine at the Corps Headquarters' mess as part of the supply captured by my battalion. Comment is needless."

Whilst attached to a casualty clearing station, the writer lived in a house where a number of N.C.O.'s attached to a Divisional Headquarters established in the place were billeted. The contrast between their fare and his, he says, was as a nobleman's to a workman's. While at the hospital mess only artificial milk and imitation coffee were served, the Divisional staff were getting real coffee and cream daily. This was at a time when the doctors were fighting desperately to get the necessary milk for patients seriously ill with kidney disease.

At the time of the spring offensive of 1918 a certain unit came out to rest after three weeks' hard fighting. The food was very bad, and both officers and men gladly consumed the flesh of dead horses.<sup>1</sup> The writer gives the menu of a dinner served during this

<sup>1</sup> During our advance from the Canal du Nord to Maubeuge we had an infallible method for telling whether the horses lying dead on the roads were British or German. The German horses—i.e., the horses killed whilst the position was still in German hands—had almost invariably the flesh of the rump



time at the mess of the inspector of a "Corps slaughter column," to which two of his brother officers were invited. The fare provided consisted of: beefsteak, sauce tartare; ox tongue aux légumes; buffet froid; cheese straws. Bottled beer was served with the meal, and everybody got as much to eat and drink as he wished; in fact, one of the two guests, "an extraordinarily large eater, was unable to eat anything even at dinner on the following evening." Hospitality reached its zenith at the conclusion of this Gargantuan repast with the present to every officer of three "large pieces of bacon fat" and several blood sausages.

The "heavy eater" had to pay the penalty for his incautious boastings about this orgie of food. He was promptly sent by his C.O. to the giver of the feast with a polite request of a present of meat for the mess. He brought back in triumph 25 lbs. of fresh meat and stated he could have had more if he had wanted it.

"Where," asks the writer of the article shrewdly, "did the cheese straws at the feast come from? From the Corps bakery column in exchange for meat. Whence the beer? From the supply office against similar compensation. But where did the enormous supply of meat come from?"

That the writer declares is the surplus resulting from the General Army system of allot-

ting to each Corps slaughter column a number of head of live oxen in accordance with the daily ration strength. Naturally, distribution on these lines cannot be exact. There must always be something over, and once the oxen have been slaughtered, the meat cannot be kept. That the best portions of the meat are invariably to be found among this surplus can hardly, the writer says, be ascribed to chance.

What must strike the Anglo-Saxon observer about all these comments on the German food distribution at home and in the field is their intense bitterness. To some people it may appear far-fetched to attribute the crumbling of the German Front to as relatively an unimportant thing, according to British or American ideas, as the distribution of food. But in Germany throughout the war the food question has been the all-important issue dominating everything, even questions of strategy. One must have been hungry to appreciate the tremendous importance of food, and under stress of war conditions few of us have actually known physical want.

To the German civilian, under the growing pinch of the Allied blockade, the food question became the main issue of existence. The rich fought for their comfort, the poor for their children. Class hatred was

---

sliced away. The peasants told us that it was a common thing to see German soldiers precipitate themselves on the bodies of horses while the flesh was yet warm, almost before the smoke of the shell that killed them had blown away. Near Quiévy I saw a transport horse thus mutilated, with the driver dead on its back, his feet still in the stirrups.—V. W.



fanned, new animosities sprang up (the feud between town and country is a chapter by itself), old friendships were severed, the very foundations of society were shaken, in the scramble after the next meal.

Handled wisely, democratically, the situation was difficult enough to cope with, but inter-

woven as it was with the whole meshwork of the German bureaucratic system and complicated by the Government's "dread of the street," the food shortage in Germany finally ranked second only to the Allies' force of arms as the decisive factor in the German defeat.

#### IV. THE HOODWINKING OF THE GERMAN PEOPLE.

Just as the German Government at home made no move until it was too late to adjust the form of Government to modern democratic ideas, so the German military authorities continued to maintain in the midst of the levelling influences of the world war (nowhere more in evidence than on the Western Front) the cast-iron framework of the military system. The censorship, covering all fields of thought, ruled out discussion of any kind. The safety-valve of the press was sealed up. The people on the one side knew nothing of the real state of affairs. The Government, on the other, was utterly out of touch with the current drift of public opinion.

Of the hoodwinking of the army in the field as of the public at home by the Government, the army doctor, from whose article I have already reproduced some passages, has something to say:—

"However despairing the battle reports sent in," he says, "they almost always evaporated *en route*, or at the most died away by the time they

had reached Divisional Headquarters. The Divisional staff was always far too prone to attribute them to personal embarrassment or even cowardice. It is not to be wondered at that, often enough, the troops are convinced that considerations of a highly personal nature are responsible for hardening the incurable egoism of their leaders. That the Supreme Command—aye, even the Imperial Government itself—so often loses all sense of proportion and sacrifices so many lives in useless operations, is due to the tendency to suppress or to colour reports in quarters most qualified to keep General Headquarters accurately and impartially informed. . . . Again and again public opinion has been led astray by its creator the Press, rendered irresponsible by censorship; again and again the fighting troops have been led astray by orders and secret orders, by speeches and every imaginable form of propaganda, in a degree which has aroused the deepest astonishment of every intelligent human being. Verdun and the Somme, the U-boat war and the 'Kaiser Battle,'<sup>1</sup> are eloquent witnesses for the truth of my allegation. The confusion of the power of judgment with pessimism, *défaïisme*, and want of patriotism (*Vaterlandslosigkeit*<sup>2</sup>), and of lack of judgment with optimism, conviction, and patriotism, which have been wildly indulged in at home and in the field, has made itself bitterly felt."

<sup>1</sup> The name given by official Germany to the German offensive of March 1918.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the Kaiser's reference to the Social Democrats as "*vaterlandslose Gesellen*"—fellows without a fatherland.



Thus both at home and in the field the soil was thoroughly well prepared for the seeds of revolution and anarchy. The German Independent Socialists on the one side, the Allied propaganda on the other, worked for the disintegration of the German front in the West with different means. If not the actual theory of Bolshevism, then at least ideas borrowed from the Bolshevists—or, more properly, from the spectacle of the Bolshevised Russian army—were imported to the Western front by the troops transferred thither from the East.

But the German Socialist minority had long been working on discontented spirits at home and in the field. As far back as 1915 a pamphlet protesting against a second winter campaign was widely circulated. It declared the statement that the enemy did not want peace to be “an audacious lie.” Another pamphlet, entitled ‘Pictures without Words,’ showed Rosa Luxembour and Clara Zetkin, the well-known German Extremists, in jail; and Scheidemann, David, Ebert, and Schopflin, the Majority Socialists, as guests at the Kaiser’s Headquarters.

Richard Fester, who quotes from these pamphlets in the ‘Deutsche Rundschau,’ declares that the Russian Revolution gave the agitation of the Independent Socialists a new direction. He regards the Russo-German fraternisation in the spring of 1917 as an unintelligible mistake of the German Supreme Command.

“The first *rapprochement*, started by the officers and taken up by the men, was intended to paralyse the war zeal of the Russian Revolutionary Government by increasing the ‘war weariness’ of the Russian Army. But at the next fraternisation in December 1917, after Russia’s second defeat, Bolshevik peace propaganda had already to be guarded against. With amazed eyes our soldiers saw an army which had become leaderless overnight. The treatment of the officers, stripped of their badges of rank and mishandled by their men, gave an idea of the power of the masses. A workmen’s strike was a familiar thing. A strike of soldiers was something new, expressing for the first time the idea that the man employed on the modern war machine is also only a workman. Even though the discipline of the German Army showed no outward signs of slackening, an internal transformation took place. . . . The reinforcements sent to the Western front brought a new spirit back with them to Germany and the West.”

I should mention here that in their peace propaganda among the troops the Independent Socialists appear to have made extensive use of a story, seemingly based on a statement published by a certain Professor von Schultze-Gavernitz, to the effect that in 1916 Great Britain made an offer of peace to Germany which was rejected. This report was widely believed among German soldiers at the Front. A workman, writing from the field on October 30, 1918, to a friend in Germany, says:—

“. . . It is high time we had peace and were free. America wants nothing from us: she is willing to conclude peace with the people, and only the Kaiser, Hindenburg, and Ludendorff stand in the way. . . . Why was peace not concluded in 1916? England offered Germany



peace, but the Kaiser and his Government would not have it, and the people were told nothing about it. Everything remains as it was. The Junkers and the militarists will not give up hope. They want to drive the whole nation to destruction and starvation. What will happen in the spring? We have nothing worth living for. The enemy is overcoming us, for the odds against us are too great for any further resistance to be made. By the spring we shall certainly be forced to make an unconditional surrender."

The Independent Socialists made great play in their pamphlets with the fable that the revolution in Germany would be inevitably followed by revolutions in the countries of the Entente. A pamphlet issued in the summer of 1917, ostensibly by German prisoners of war interned in Switzerland, addressed to their "comrades at the Front and brethren in uniform," prophesied: "On the day on which the Berlin Tsar falls we shall be as much loved in Paris and London, New York and Rome, as the Russian workmen and soldiers are loved in Germany to-day." That the enemy will tear Germany to pieces is declared to be an idle story. "We need not fear a Polish or an Alsatian plebiscite if the Junker régime falls and these fellow-citizens of ours are free and contented."

"Faced with the German Republic," runs another brochure, an appeal sent out in January 1918 to all workmen to support the general strike, "the Western States, now menaced by our absolutism and imperialism, will be forced by the workmen of these countries to lay down their arms immediately. The revolution of the proletariat in Germany signifies the revolution of the working classes throughout the world."

Richard Fester, who gives extracts from these pamphlets in the 'Deutsche Rundschau,' rightly says that these fly-leaves, chronologically arranged, tell the whole story of the German revolution.

The leadership of the strike movement of January 1918, which was speedily suppressed, was, he observes, wholly in the hands of the Independent Socialists. A strike manifesto, issued at this time, said:—

"Above all things, see that the news of the general strike reaches the trenches at the Front, and finds a mighty echo, that men on leave everywhere make common cause with the strikers, visit the strikers' meetings, and take part in the street demonstrations."

"Comrades, awake!" begins a pamphlet intended for circulation at the Front and along the Lines of Communication—"the officers have good and abundant food, elegant quarters, clothing, and footwear, and in addition, high pay, with allowances and privileges of every kind. We private soldiers and N.C.O.'s are miserably paid, shamefully fed and clothed, and live for the most part in wretched quarters. Equal pay, equal food, and the war would long since have been a memory."

This incitement to class war between officers and men (which, by the way, is a leaf lifted almost bodily from the book of Bolshevism) met with no immediate response at the Front, as the good *moral* of the German Army in the offensive of March seemed to show. But this and similar pamphlets undoubtedly left behind a decided impression, enormously deepened by the skilful propaganda of the Allies, as was revealed by the disorderly scenes, the killing of officers, and the destruction of military



effects which marked the German retreat in the following autumn.

The unerring genius directing the Allied, especially the British, propaganda, is frankly admitted by the Germans.

"The only Prince the mass of the people trust," writes Professor Cossmann in a powerful article, entitled 'Collapse,' in the 'Süddeutsche Monatshefte,' "is Prince Lichnowsky, the only nobleman they believe Lord Northcliffe. . . . Like the politicians,

the industrialists, the schools, and the whole of the German world of learning have utterly failed in the work of 'explaining the war' (Aufklärung) to our people. While the war was still on, a leading German publishing house demanded that the editor of a series of editions for schools of French authors should cut out all 'anti-German' passages. Thus even in the children a false picture of the feeling existing against us in France was sedulously implanted. . . . We waited for the man of note who was to take charge of the work of propaganda amongst our people. We found him in Lord Northcliffe."

#### V. THE APATHY OF DESPAIR.

The zones occupied by the Allies in Germany are shut off from the Empire outside. Therefore I am prepared to believe that impressions gathered on the Rhine may not be representative of the situation elsewhere in Germany. But the Berlin papers still come to Cologne, and I have searched them in vain for indications of such a revolutionary spirit, say, as vibrates through the gazettes and broadsides of the French Revolution. Rather the longing for the restoration of order, the yearning for reconstruction, are revealed in the tone of the Berlin press.

As for the occupied territory, I find it impossible to imagine anything less like a land in the throes of revolution than this fair province of the Rhine. Far from there being any outward signs of Bolshevism, Bolshevism is the universal bogey. The inhabitants in town and country have got over their terrors of "reprisals" by the Allied troops, and appear to be actually en-

joying the peace and quiet which the presence of the Allied forces procures them.

As far as I am qualified to judge from a long acquaintance with Germany and the German people, the German revolution is not a living force. If revolt had been in the blood of this, the most docile, the most characterless of peoples, it would have risen up ere this against kings and tyrants. The Emperor's throne was toppled over, and the thrones of his brother monarchs in Federal Germany followed suit, because this was the only means by which the mass of the German population hoped that they might end the war. Matters had reached such an unbearable pitch that the offer of a crust of bread, coupled with specious promises about the imminence of revolution in the Allied countries, sufficed to sway the mob to any violent act calculated to procure them alleviation.

The seeds of revolt were planted by the sheer inepti-



ture of the German Government. The tidal wave which made such a clean sweep of the German princes carried up to their thrones the agitators who had used the blunders of the Emperor and his advisers to compass their own ends. But the prevailing spirit in Germany is not revolution. It is weariness. It takes the form of dull apathy in some, black despair in others.

The character of the German people has not changed. The Lord High Panjandrum has gone; but his mandarins, the *Beamtentum*, remain. Save for occasional acts of violence, principally due to the unimaginable folly of the revolutionary zealots in opening the jails in the first rush of Germany's new-born liberty, life proceeds on the old lines. Taxes are paid regularly, policemen continue to bully the crowd, long queues of people, ox-like in their uncomplaining patience, form up in all docility, whether it is to buy a stamp at the post-office or book a seat for the opera.

The German was wont to fawn and grovel before the military. In the occupied territory he does so still, with the difference that the soldier now wears khaki instead of field-grey. When in a rural district an officer reported to the *Bürgermeister* that a man had ignored the British order that German civilian males should take their hats off to British officers, that worthy promptly told the complainant that he ought to have knooked

the offender's hat off (*den Hut herunterboxen*) (sic)!

That attitude, so wholly representative of the relations between officialdom and people in monarchical Germany, does not encourage the belief that any great change has taken place in the national mind.

Take this advertisement, culled from a recent number of the '*Vossische Zeitung*,' published in "revolutionary" Berlin:—

"For Princes, Counts, the highest officials, large landed proprietors, high officers (including those disabled in the war), also for other gentlemen belonging to the most exclusive circles of society, of every age and religion.

"Distinguished Spouses Can Be Obtained through Frau Martin, 216, Kurfürstendamm."

That advertisement, with its truly Prussian mixture of vulgarity and snobbishness, smacks far too much of the old Germany for me to believe that the German revolution is a real thing.

No, the German people is waiting for a lead, no matter in what direction, so long as it restores to them that peace and prosperity they so recklessly squandered. People may try to make our flesh creep with stories of the secret organisation of the German Army, but while no measure of precaution should be neglected by the Allies, I firmly believe there is not an ounce of fight left in the German people.

The note of many of the press comments is one of undisguised despair.



"We are wholly in the hands of our foes," writes Professor Cossmann, in his article 'Collapse.' "If they do not furnish us with raw materials, hundreds of thousands of textile workers will be thrown out of employment as soon as the military stocks are used up. Hundreds of thousands in the iron industry will be out of work if the Lorraine ore is taken away from us, and the import of Swedish ore stopped. Hundreds of thousands in the chemical industry will lose their employment, because in Japan, America, and England chemical industries have arisen and captured a part of the world trade. Provided that it is permitted and we are not called upon to perform menial services as slaves in the war zones, we therefore anticipate emigration *en masse* in a volume, and under conditions unfavourable for Germanism (*Deutschtum*) such as we have never experienced."

The Professor sums up the views of "many Germans" by saying that they regard the German people as not only incapable of existence, but also unworthy of existence.

"They declare that a race which behaved as non-combatant Germany behind the Front behaved deserves to go under. Everything for which our people was renowned, stability, loyalty, it lacks. Its enthusiasm is only a flash in the pan. They point to the French in the territory occupied by the Germans, on whose lips never a word of repining was heard; to the Italians, who, after the greatest defeat in their history in the previous year, did not dream for an instant of peace or the renunciation of their war aims; to the Belgians, the Serbians, the Montenegrins, who, even after the whole of their territory had been conquered, were not willing to make a separate peace. Never before has a nation cast its weapons from it, never before had a nation thrown over its leaders and begged for mercy as the Germans did."

The writer admits that the

above sentiments probably correctly sum up the impression produced abroad by the German collapse.

"During the war," he continues, "the hate which surrounded us at the outbreak gave place to admiration for our military achievements, mingled with contempt for our political actions, but at the Revolution these sentiments were replaced by a feeling of undisguised disgust. In the eyes of the English, any one who at such a moment levels accusations against his fellow-countrymen is no gentleman. Such things as the fawning on prisoners or the threat that Bolshevism will spread to England produces only the silence of unmixed contempt."

In conclusion, let me quote the Foreword to Professor Cossmann's article:—

"Our first greeting after the collapse is to those who fought for us, who on sea and land and in the air stood firm against the superiority of the whole world, and to those who languish in enemy captivity.

"It was all in vain.

"But the lowest form of gratitude is that measured by success. Let us measure ours by their superhuman and unparalleled sufferings and achievements.

"Let the first duty of us who live to-day and of our children be to do all we can for those who took part in the war and those they have left behind them.

"Because all is lost, everything must be built up afresh, German honour as well. Let honour's first duty be to give thanks to German heroes!"

VALENTINE WILLIAMS.

"GREEN BALLS."

BY PAUL BEWSHER.

V.

COASTWISE LIGHTS.

"The cunning searchlights haunt the midnight skies,  
Where chains of emerald balls of fire rise,  
To mingle with the spark of bursting shells—  
High in the darkness where the bomber dwells !

We know the meaning of the sudden glare  
Of dazzling light which blossoms in the air :  
For us the green and scarlet rockets blaze  
And whisper urgent secrets through the haze."

—*The Night Raid.*

FROM the aerodrome at Dunkerque five Short night-bombing machines were operating. These were large single-engined machines with a very long stretch of wings, and, apart from the Handley-Pages, were the biggest machines in use on the Western Front, and carried the heaviest weight of bombs.

While the Handley-Pages were getting ready, these Short machines, with their ten wonderfully skilled pilots and gunlayers, slipped off unostentatiously into the dark to Bruges and Zeebrugge, night after night, and would come back to the dark aerodrome and land quietly, about two and a half hours afterwards, with their bomb racks empty.

We would crowd round curiously, eager to learn what was to face us when we started raiding on the bigger machines.

The airmen said little as they removed their helmets

and coats, or drank coffee in preparation for another raid the same night.

"Bruges is getting a bit hot. Good many flaming onions to-night. Seem to be more searchlights!" was the kind of comment made.

These airmen continued their raids, a little disdainful of the fuss and excitement about the Handley-Pages. They realised that they were doing the job, and that four bombs dropped are better than fourteen about to be dropped.

When the larger machines were ready to go, it was decided that they should operate from another aerodrome near the coast in order that our own aerodrome might be left clear for the Shorts.

I was not allowed to go on the first raid, as my pilot's machine was not in action, so I drove down to the aerodrome at dusk to act as an assistant ground officer. The machines were ready in a



corner, and were to proceed to Ostend.

Night fell. The engines roared. One after the other the machines swept up and blotted out the stars in their passage. The noise of the engines died away, and the uneasy night was left undisturbed.

I climbed over the sand-dunes on to the beach, and stood looking north-east towards the lines. Far away I could see many a sign of the restless activity of the war-time night. Flash succeeded flash on the horizon, some dull and red, some brilliant and white. Here and there I could see the faint, almost invisible, arm of a searchlight waving evilly across the sky. Then I would see very slowly, very deliberately, a row of "green balls," like a string of luminous jade beads, rise up from the ground and climb up, up, up, into the darkness, begin to bend over like a tall overburdened flower, and vanish one by one. Another string would follow them, apparently on an irregular curve. Though fully twenty-five miles away, they had all the hard glitter of jewels, and were very luminous and beautiful.

As I stood watching this strange alluring sight, there were two deafening unexpected reports behind me—the most vicious urgent noises I have ever heard. I flung myself flat on the sand, face downwards, arms thrown out. Report after report followed, each one drawing nearer to me. I began to dig, in my desire to be as

little higher than the ground as possible. I wished that I were a razor-shell. I felt convinced that the next bomb would be on my back. At last the succession of awful crashes stopped. I lay still, my mouth dry with fear, waiting for the fall of a "hang-up"—the most unreliable bomb of all.

However, no more explosions shook the ground, and the noise of the French anti-aircraft batteries broke the silence of the night instead. I stood up and ran back to the aerodrome, stumbling across the sand-dunes and the tufts of dry grass. In the gloom on my right I could see the black columns of smoke which tower above the ground, recording the position of the explosions.

When I reached a deep ditch, I waited a little. I did not want to cross the flat expanse of the aerodrome without feeling sure that the danger was all over. I had the same lingering desire to remain near safety that you feel when playing "musical chairs" and you are near a vacant seat.

I saw a French marine, with the fear of death in his face, coming towards me. He had probably been in the ditch. (Lucky fellow!)

"What was it? Did you hear?" he said. "Not nice, was it?"

He was evidently delighted to see somebody. He wanted the moral support of a companion—another terrified human being. I felt the



same, and was glad to see him. He looked so terrified that it made me feel I must not appear to be in the same condition.

So I replied airily—

"Oh! Not at all nice? But not very near. Not dangerous, you know!" [My heart had hardly then left my throat.] "I'm going back to the hangars!"

He walked with me. Maybe he felt that I would be some sort of cover if any more bombs were dropped. I felt the same.

Thereafter the whole night was full of hidden mysteries. In the direction of Calais, tracer shells, like curving hot coals, moved through the sky continuously. The air was full of the hum of engines. There was a talk of Zeppelins. Everything was uncertain.

Then one by one the machines returned and landed with dazzling flares blazing away beneath their wing tips.

Before dawn we drove back to our own aerodrome, and went to bed.

Our machine was ready for the next raid, and we were detailed to go to Ghent.

In order to save repetition I will describe the first raid, and include in it other incidents which happened during subsequent night trips.

I wish to draw the contrast between the first few flights, when we made mistakes, and had to find out everything by doing it—and the later trips, when we had evolved a better scheme of attack, and, knowing what to expect, countered

each move of opposition before it came, almost as in a game of chess. So in this chapter I will give a composite description of earlier raids, and in my next chapter give a detailed account of a cold determined attack on a highly-fortified objective of whose defences we had gained experience.

The machines are lined up on the seaward aerodrome. I have my celluloid map-case with its coastwise map on one side, and on the other the more detailed map of the district round the aerodrome which we are to bomb.

I climb into my seat and sit beside the pilot. The door is slammed behind us. The pilot blows a whistle, and the chocks are pulled away from the wheels. With our engines running gently on either side we await the order to leave. Then, half a mile in front of us, we see the wide slow flash of a bomb. Another follows it a short time after, and then another. Each is nearer to us, and I can hear the crash of the explosions.

"Bombs!" I say to the pilot. "I don't like this! Bit rotten being bombed before we leave the ground!"

As the last bomb flashes in front of us we receive the order to start away. On go the engines with a roar, and we move across the grass. The nose drops down slightly as the tail leaves the ground and we begin to assume flying position. It is very unpleasant rushing across the dim aerodrome like this, not knowing when a bomb is going to burst on you or



near you, and conscious of the fact that somewhere in the darkness above is a German aeroplane, perhaps waiting for you.

Suddenly there is a jerk at my head, and my invaluable fur-lined mask-goggles have vanished, being snatched away by the rush of air. This means that I shall have no goggles to wear during the whole raid.

The nose shoots up into the air, and with a vibrant beat from the engines we mount into the star-bestrewn sky, and turn out over the sand-dunes towards the sea. We move away from the aerodrome at once, and the occasional red flashings of bursting bombs show us that we are wise.

Dunkerque passes on our starboard side. Its defences are very suspicious, and we are taken for a German machine. Shells begin to burst near us, though we are scarcely a thousand feet off the ground.

I lead my Very's light pistol with a cartridge, and fire over the side "the colour of the night." I continue to do so until the shell-fire stops. The town lies in darkness, but I am faintly conscious of its hidden wakefulness as it lies angry and apprehensive. Below can be seen a few faint specks of light from the ships anchored, for safety's sake, off the shore.

We fly onwards along the coast, climbing steadily. We keep the pale line of the beach near enough to our starboard side to be able to follow it easily. The engines

run evenly. The dials are steady. In front of us the air-speed indicator hardly wavers. It is a time, not of trouble and anxiety, but of mere waiting. The strain has not yet begun. With the near approach of the German territory the whole mental outlook of the airman changes, and every nerve automatically becomes on the alert. Now, however, there is the same sense of mild interest felt in an ordinary daytime flight over friendly territory. The country lying to our right is creditably dark. Not one gleam of light shines in the stretch of vague shadows, save where at a large coastwise munition plant a red flame leaps up for a moment and dies away.

In the far distance can be seen an occasional misty flash from the volcanic region of Ypres. A little nearer a tremulous star-shell glows white through the haze, and slowly droops and dies.

La Panne is passed, and we begin to turn out at an angle away from the coast. We are nearly six thousand feet from the ground, and are still climbing. We sweep round in three or four wide circles to gain a little more height, and then fly straight ahead.

At the end of the lines by the piers of Nieuport we are six miles or so from the coast. At Ostend I can see a vague cluster of searchlights moving restlessly and rather undecidedly across the sky, dredging the sky with their slim white arms in an evil and terrifying



manner. I ask the pilot to turn out at a sharper angle, in order that he may pass Ostend quite ten miles out to sea. There is a visible menace in searchlights, and we avoid them like poison unless it is essential to go near. It requires a very strong nerve to fly right ahead to a thicket of moving beams of light. We used to allow six or seven miles margin, and would willingly add several miles to our journey on the wrong side of the lines in order to make a detour.

As we are passing Nieuport I see two small points of light suddenly appear. They rise up and swell into two bright flares—one scarlet and one emerald. These flares die away, and at once several more searchlights become active near Middelkerke. It is the German "hostile aircraft" signal. Off Middelkerke itself we see two more flares, and when Ostend, with its forest of moving beams, lies far to our right, yet another sinister group of red and green lights rises up as we are "handed" along the coast from point to point.

Below us now is the expanse of sea. Above us are a few scattered stars, which have challenged the radiance of the moon. To the right lies the dimly seen line of the coast, fringed, as far as we can see, with a line of searchlights waving outwards over the sea. At Ostend an aerial lighthouse flashes at a regular interval, giving signals of

guidance to the German aircraft abroad in the darkness. Slightly behind us are the occasional star-shells, and a hurried flash gives evidence of military activity on the land.

We are almost 8000 feet up, and with the fringe of searchlights as a barrier I am not easy in my mind.

"Pull her up to nine thousand, if you can, Jimmy; it's hardly high enough yet! Try and pull her back a bit! We'll have to cross the coast in about ten minutes."

I am feeling that my scheme of going to the objective by land was by far the best one. The coastal section of Belgium had two fronts—the trench-line from Nieuport to Ypres, and the coast-line from Zeebrugge to Nieuport. There was a strong searchlight barrier by the sea; there was none behind the German front lines. Therefore, if you were to proceed to a land objective by the sea route you had to face two organisations of defence—first at the coast, and then at the objective. If you went by the overland route you had only the searchlights at your objective to tackle. The fewer obstacles there were to meet, the better I was pleased; and I felt that it was bad management if in an attack on an objective I was troubled by the defences of any other point.

Thereafter I used the overland route, even when attacking places on the coast, until my final accident. It was as much a question of morale as anything. If you crossed the



German lines about Nieuport there was no opposition. Your lights were extinguished. You moved into an unopposing darkness. You never felt that the people below knew that you were there. Ghisteltes on the left shot up a couple of towering lights, which moved vainly towards you. Thorout gave birth to one pale beam, which you might ignore. If, on the other hand, you moved down the coast, you saw that cruel waiting fence of white weeds stretching up into the dark pool of the night—a visible and threatening sign of hostile activity.

So, as we pass Ostend, I look along the coast-line with a feeling of fear. We are going to cross the shore between Zeebrugge and Ostend, at Blankenberghe, which is the most weakly defended spot.

Suddenly my pilot strikes my arm.

"Look! There's one of their patrol machines with a search-light! There—*there*—to the left!"

I turn and see, moving very swiftly, half a mile in front of us, a brilliant light. The pilot shouts again.

"It's turning towards us! Get in the front, quick!"

I crawl through the small wooden door into the nose of the machine, and unstrapping the Lewis gun get it ready for action. The light sweeps round to the right, but it is going downwards, and the German airman has evidently not seen us. I wait a minute or two and examine the sky all round us, but can see nothing. With

a feeling of relief I kneel on the floor and wriggle back into my seat behind.

"By *Jove*! Did you see that, Bewsh?" says the pilot. "The devil! We'll have to look out."

Ahead of us now we can see the tall powerful searchlights of Zeebrugge moving in slow sweeps over the sky. Under our right wing lies Ostend. We are off Blankenberghe, and the time has come to cross the coast. We are eight thousand five hundred feet above the sea, and are not likely to gain much more height, and, at any rate, we are anxious to get the work done and to return home.

To the right we turn and move steadily towards the waiting coast. In front of us lies the waving line of searchlights. Inland, to the left, can be seen in the distance the turmoil of Bruges. The beams of light sweep across the stars; shells burst in the sky; and now and then there float upwards strings of fantastic green balls, sparkling like gems as they bubble towards the upper levels, where they float gaily for a moment parallel to the ground before they fade away.

Below, near the coast by Blankenberghe, an aerial lighthouse flashes and flashes—*Four shorts — one long* — darkness: *four shorts — one long* — darkness. Now we are getting near to the restless weeds of light which begin to move outwards in search of us. The pilot throttles the engines slightly, for we are getting within the range of these



clutching tentacles. I feel very nervous and frightened.

On either side of us now move the slow gliding beams—broad and pale shafts of light stretching high, high up above us in the darkness, blotting out the stars, and stretching far, far beneath us to a tiny spot of light on the black edge of the coast.

With these arms of light coming up to us from the ground we begin at once to have a sense of height, which normally you never have when in the air. The searchlights, running from the earth to our level and past us, join us to the ground and give us a measure of distance and an opportunity of contrast. With these tall, enormously tall, thin pillars of light near us moving to and fro in a hypnotising swing, we feel very, very high off the ground, and realise how remote from the earth we sit on our little seats in the fragile structure of linen and steel and wood.

Beneath us now lies the vast and bottomless pool of the night sky. From the blue depths there comes pouring up, like the exhalations of some sinister sea creature in the primeval ooze, bubbles of green fire. Suddenly in the darkness appears a round bead of emerald light, another one appears beneath it, and then another, and a whole necklace pours upwards as though a string of gems had been pulled out of a fold in a black velvet cloth. In simple curves they soar past us into the upper sky, where perhaps they die out on their upward rush, or

turn over and begin to drop downwards before they fade into mere red sparks falling swiftly.

Now are we towering high over the black edge of the coast in the pinnacles of the slim searchlights which challenge us in front, and move to the right and left of us. We are conscious of our hostility to those below, and rejoice to creep unseen, unnoticed, across this sentinel barrier. Around us the occasional ropes of brilliant emeralds wander upwards in regularity and silence, and for a rare moment we are conscious of being in the air at night. To our left Zeebrugge flings into the sky a dozen beams of powerful light, fortunately too remote to challenge us. To our right Ostend echoes the threat. We are just between the two danger zones, unasailable, but by a short distance only, by both of them.

I am learning the mistake of crossing the enemy's sea frontier instead of his land frontier. I am worried and harassed at the very beginning of my travel across his territory, instead of becoming settled down and used to being in an enemy sky before the visible danger of searchlights appear to challenge my passage.

We pass slowly, silently, through the suspicious beams of light. To the right and left we twist and turn as one of the swords cuts the sky near us. I draw my arms to my side to make myself smaller so that I may wriggle through



the sharp edges of danger without being touched. Apart from the risk it is exciting, though very nerve-trying. When at last we are through the barrier, and regain the undefended inland region, there is a great feeling of relief.

Our engines are opened out, and we fly level again. Beneath us are the pale roads, and the dark lines of canals, and the chiaroscuro of villages and forests. Five or six miles to our left we look down into the cauldron of Bruges. It is a wonderful and awe-inspiring sight, and as it does not threaten us to-night we look at it with keen interest. The most noteworthy feature is a vicious-looking row of four searchlights, near together and spaced at even intervals, like a line of foot-lights at a theatre. These four beams of light move across the sky in strange and unpleasant formations. Now the two end ones stand upright while the two central ones sweep forward. Now the whole four move to and fro in a determined and formidable sweep. Now the two middle ones cross each other in a gigantic X of light, and the two outer ones sweep to and fro with the beat of a mighty metronome. We called these four lights the "Lucas Cranwell" lights, as they were like a landing light set of this name which we were experimenting with on our machines. Later on in the year, to our great relief, they were removed. The moral effect of a group of lights like that is very great. You were frightened before you ap-

proached the objective. They were a clever set of lights, too, because on one occasion they were *switched* right on to our machine and held it, without any preliminary groping in the sky.

In addition to the "Lucas Cranwell" lights are five or six other powerful searchlights standing in a circle round the town, moving to and fro in a languid and sensuous way. Ferocious little spurts of light on the ground in a dozen places indicate the position of anti-aircraft guns, and here and there in the sky appear the quick and vivid flashes of the bursting shells. To complete the picture of activity the lovely necklaces of flaming jade rise up in great curves—sometimes only five or six in a string—sometimes twenty or thirty at once.

Now comes the time when I have to begin to seek my objective. Up to the present the coast-line, and the centres of activity at Ostend, Zeebrugge, and Bruges have rendered the use of a map unnecessary. I have scarcely had need to look over the side. Now, however, I have to begin to do some work.

I know by the waving searchlights that I am about six miles south of Bruges. I look over the side and see a main road running S.S.E. I identify it on the map and see that a railway should shortly appear. Soon I distinguish, with difficulty, the thin line of a railway track, which is a difficult thing to see by night or day—the best guide being any kind of



water—canals, rivers, or lakes—then a good white road, or a forest, and lastly a railway line.

We cross the railway, and I identify a branch line running away from it. We turn N.E., and at the end of seven or eight minutes I see the bold black line of a canal whose peculiar curves it is very easy to identify. The volcano of Bruges flames up into the night to our left, while beyond it we can see the aerial lighthouses of Ostend and Blankenberghe flashing regularly on the hazy horizon. Flushing sparkles cheerfully ahead of us, and along the Scheldt glitter the Dutch villages.

We turn round to the right and fly on. We are now moving on a straight course, and I identify in turn each bend in the canal, each thin road, each queer-shaped forest. The aerodrome draws near. I see in the distance the little wood near which it lies. Then I can see the pale shape of the landing-ground, which looks slightly different to the surrounding fields owing to its made-up surface. We sweep round in order to be able to face the wind and to approach it in a good line. We turn again and begin to fly straight ahead.

"I'm getting in the back now, Jimmy," I shout. "Fly straight on. If I give two greens or two reds swing her round quickly. Turn very slowly for one green or one red!"

I crawl into the back, throw myself on the floor, kick my

legs out behind me, and slide to the right the door beneath the pilot's seat. A biting wind beats on to my face, making my eyes water and blowing dust all over me. I remove a safety-strap from the bomb handle to my right and look below. There lies a square of pallid moonlit country. The aerodrome is not in view yet. I push my head out, turn it sideways, and look forward.

A mile or two ahead I see the little forest. I try to calculate whether we are steering straight for it or not. It seems to me that we are flying too much to the left. I pull myself inside the machine again, take off a glove, shine a torch on a little row of buttons on the frame of the door, and press the button on the right. A green light glows in the cockpit, and, looking at the bomb-sight, I see that the machine is swinging towards the right.

I poke my head through the bottom of the machine again and see the position of the aerodrome a good deal nearer. Now, however, we are too much to the right. Inside I pull my head and press the left-hand button. A red light glows in front of the pilot. I look down again. The small wood is in view, but even as I look the bomb-sight travels across it from the right well over to the left as the pilot swings the machine round in obedience to my signals.

Anxiously I press the button to the right again. Five or six times I press it quickly. Across the aerodrome the sight



swings toward the right. Just before it crosses the middle of it I press the middle button. A white light glows before the pilot—the "straight ahead" signal. I have not given it soon enough, however: the machine is not checked on its rightward swing in time. It stops the turn with the sight well to the right of the aerodrome. I look at the luminous range-bars of the sight. We are almost over the objective. If I do not alter the direction I shall not be over the aerodrome when the time has come to drop the bombs. I flash the red light a second. The machine flies on. I press my finger on it and hold it there. Round to the left it swings. I look carefully down the range-bars of the sight. They are almost in line.

I press the central again and again, trying to judge the moment when I can check the pilot, so that the swing of the machine will stop as we come over the aerodrome. I misjudge it. The bomb-sights are in line with the aerodrome, but we are swinging rapidly to the left. I press the bomb lever once quickly to release two bombs. If I released any more they would straggle in a line right off the objective. My hands are almost frozen, my eyes are running. I feel discouraged and unhappy. Down below I see two red flashes appear near the hangars, leaving two round moonlit clouds of smoke on the ground.

I climb up beside the pilot,

but before I have time to speak he asks eagerly—

"Dropped them all, old boy? How did you do it?"

"Couldn't do it, Jimmy. I'm awfully sorry. It's this beastly signal light system. It isn't direct enough; I wish I could guide you better. It isn't your fault, but I can't stop you in time. I'll try again in a second if you swing her round."

In a great circle we sweep round to our old starting-point, and I get ready to make another attempt.

"I'll try very hard this time, old man. Let's get into the wind as near as we can, and you steer by some light, and I'll try to give as few changes in direction as I can. The worst is, I can't see the beastly aerodrome till we are almost on top of it, and then I can't get a decent 'run.' We must get that front cockpit position!"

I stand up and look over the front, and try to fix the exact position of the aerodrome and its surroundings in relation to the machine.

I hurry into the back and look through the trap-door again. I can hardly see, owing to my running eyes; but I wipe them dry, and look intently ahead in a horribly uncomfortable position, my head and shoulders hanging out of the bottom of the machine. Right ahead of us is the pale shape of the aerodrome. The pilot is flying magnificently. We are moving steadily forwards. As we draw nearer, I wriggle back



into the machine and look down the bomb-sight. The thin direction-bar lies right across the aerodrome. I joyously press the middle button, so that the white light laughs out: "Good! Good! Good!" into the pilot's face. We begin to drift slightly to the right. I do not touch the key-board, but stand up and push my body forwards beside the pilot and shout furiously—

"Turn her very very slightly to the left, Jimmy! We're doing fine! We'll get her this time! I'll press central when we're on it."

In a flash I am underneath the seat and looking at the bomb-sight. It swings slowly, slowly to the left. Just before it arrives over the aerodrome I press the white light button deliberately. The movement stops, and the bomb-sight begins to creep steadily forwards over the hangars and surface of the aerodrome. With my anxieties past I have a wonderful feeling of relaxation and happy excitement. Just before the two luminous range-bars actually touch the edge of the line of hangars, I grasp the bomb-handle and begin to press it forward slowly. I hear the sharp clatter of opening and closing of the bomb-doors behind me, and I see two plump bombs go tumbling downwards below the machine. Again, and a third and a fourth time, I press forward the bomb-handle, and can feel the little drags on it as I release bomb after bomb. I

look behind, and see that they are all gone. I shine my torch through the racks to make sure, and I see the gun-layer busy with his torch also. I look below through the door, and see four or five bomb-flashes leap out across the aerodrome, while behind them lies apparently the smoke of others near the hangars. I slam the door to with a feeling of thankfulness, and get back to my seat.

"All gone, Jimmy! No 'hang-ups.' You did jolly well; they went right across the aerodrome. Let's push north-west back to the coast. I'm absolutely frozen."

I have a hurried look at my pressure-dials, to see that they are all right; and when I have adjusted them, I uncork my Thermos flask, have a comforting drink of hot tea, and eat some chocolate. I beat my gloved hands together and try to restore the circulation, and stamp my feet on the floor. Feeling tired and cold, I sit on my seat with my head on my breast, feeling languid and limp after the subconscious strain.

Towards the distant coast-line, with its steady flickers of lights at Ostend and Blankenberghe, we move, forgetting already the place on which we have just dropped our bombs. The turmoil of Bruges has subsided — only two wary searchlights stand sentinel at either side of the town, alert and scarcely moving. Those two are enough to give us warning, however, and we sweep to the left to leave the



simmering inferno well to our starboard.

Below lies the pallid moonlit country,—field and forest, chateau and canal,—clearly etched in a soft black pattern of shadows and dim light. Far, far to the south Ypres flashes and flares on the horizon, with its night-long artillery fire.

Now that our job is done, we are not so fearful of being over enemy country, partly because we are used to it by now, and partly because we are leaving the interior farther and farther behind us, minute by minute, as the coast-line draws nearer.

Unexpectedly I notice below the machine a curious white patch on the face of the country. Then I see others behind it, and realise that the coast-line is becoming swiftly blotted out under a layer of clouds.

"Jimmy! Look — clouds! We'll have to go carefully," I remark, and have a look at the compass. "Let's turn a bit more south-east, and we are bound to see Ostend."

We turn swiftly, and in a few minutes are above a white carpet of cloud, through which, to my joy, I can see very hazily the flashing light of Blankenberghe to my right. Over towards Zeebrugge rise a few parting strings of green balls as the last British machine turns out to sea.

For ten minutes we fly on by compass, which I check by the coldly glittering North Star, that shines faithfully for us high in the deep blue of the sky.

Then I see, running to and fro, and round and round, on the carpet of the clouds, little circles of light. Now and then one comes to a rift on the bank, and for a moment a beam of light shoots up into the sky, only to vanish again. The Ostend searchlights are vainly looking for us; our engines have been heard.

Now we are approaching a new formation of clouds, lovely towering masses of cumulus, pearl-white in the light of the moon. Over an unreal world of battlement and turret, of mountain summit and gloomy valley, we move in a splendid loneliness beneath the scattered stars. This billowy world of soft and silvery mountain ranges is made the more strange by the restless discs of radiance which run and swoop and circle and dance in a mad maze of movement across the curving pinnacles and ravines. Now and again a searchlight, striking into the heart of some towering summit of cloud, illuminates it with a glorious radiance, so that it seems for a moment to be woven of the fabric of light.

Suddenly the scene becomes even more fantastic, for in one place on the clouds appears a spot of vivid green. The spot of light spreads and spreads until it is a circle of emerald light, a mile or more in diameter, and from the extreme centre appears a ball of brilliantly green fire which pops out of it quickly, to be followed by another and another, until the whole chain of beads have freed themselves



from the entanglements of the vapour and rush gaily upwards high over our heads, to end their brief career in a lovely splendour above the milk-white billows of the cloudy sea.

Another point of cloud glows green, there is another swiftly expanding circle of colour, and another string of these quaint gems float upwards in a swaying curve. The sight is one of such exquisite loveliness that it is difficult to describe it. It is all so beautiful—the star-scattered vault of night, gold flowers in a robe of deepest blue: the soft white wonder of the rolling clouds, mile upon mile, as far as you can see, moonlit and magic, a playground for the gambolling figures of light which, like a host of Tinker Bells, rush deliriously from side to side, climb up hills and slide down valleys, and jump excitedly from peak to peak: the expanding flowers of emerald light from whose heart rise the bizarre bubbles of scintillating brilliance, to live through a few glorious seconds of ecstatic motion before they die in the immensity of the night.

It is a scene of a strange and ever-altering beauty, and one that very few eyes have seen. It is a world beyond the borders of the unreal. Forgotten is the material country of fields and forests far below—as forgotten as it is unseen. To a paradise of vague moon-kissed cloud we have drifted, and float, dreaming, between the stars of Heaven and the Purgatory beneath.

Then for a moment a great rift in the barrier appears beneath us. Across the dark space with its edges of ragged white lie two hard beams of light. Then we see, far below, a chain of green balls rush up from the darkness, and as they appear they light up a great circle of the earth, and slowly there appears nearly the whole of Ostend lit up by a ghostly greenish light. I see the shining sea, the line of the shore broken by the groins, and the huddled roofs of the houses. For a moment the scene is clear and distinct, then with the upward course of the balls of light it dies away, and the two searchlights throw blinding bands across a pool of obscurity.

What we have seen, however, is a sufficient guide. We know we are above the coast. The machine swings to the left, and above the rippling spots of light we roar on westwards. Soon we leave this fantastic dancing floor behind us, and, seeing through the misty curtains a watery glow of white light blossom out into a watery gleam and fade away, we know that we are somewhere near the lines.

Onwards we fly, watching the compass, watching the North Star, watching the pale veils of vapour beneath us. The cloud barrier grows thinner, and more and more rifts appear in it. About ten minutes after we have passed the lines, we see ahead of us a pale searchlight flash in the masses of cloud, now shooting up through a gap, now losing



itself in the lighted edges of a floating wisp. It flashes three times, and stops. Again it appears, three times stabbing the sky, challenging us with the "letter of the night" in Morse code.

I load my Very's light pistol and fire it over the side. A green light drifts down and dies. The searchlight goes out; we fly on.

"That light is somewhere near Furnes, Jimmy. Let's put our navigation lights on now; I'll try and pick up some landmark below,—the coast if I can . . . it's awfully thick to-night!"

Beneath in the murk I can see now and again a twinkling light, and then, to my delight, I pick up the shore. We fly on above it for a quarter of an hour. Then the pilot begins to get anxious.

"Can you see Dunkerque yet, old man? We ought to be there!" he asks.

I look below, and see sand-dunes and the unbroken coast running a little way on either side into the mist, which has now taken the place of the cloud.

"Can't quite make out, Jimmy. We had better fly on a bit. We must be past La Panne!"

For four or five minutes we fly on. Once I lose sight of the coast, and ask the pilot to turn to the right, not telling him the reason. To my relief I pick it up again before he suspects that I am lost.

"Anything in sight yet, Bewsh?" he asks. "We must

be up near Dunkerque by now. We can't have passed it!"

Still the unbroken coast below.

"I'd better fire a light," I suggest.

"All right," he says. "Carry on—stop a minute, though! We *are* over the lines, aren't we?"

"We *must* be . . . I think. We passed Nieuport miles back. I can't make out where we are. I'll give a white!"

I load my Very's light pistol and fire it over the side. A ball of white fire drifts below towards the mocking emptiness of the mist. I stand up and look all around. Through the haze comes no welcome gleam.

"No answer, Jimmy! What *shall* we do? If we go on, we'll get miles down towards Calais! If we go back, we get over the lines. Go up and down here, and I'll try to find Dunkerque—it *must* be somewhere near!"

I fire another white light, and then another. No answer comes from the ground. No searchlights move across the sky. All we can see is a vague circle, bisected by the coast-line—one half being sea, the other half sand-dunes.

Then, in my excitement, I accidentally fire a Very's light inside the machine. The ball of blazing fire rushes frantically round our feet and up and down the floor. I hurriedly stamp it out amidst the curses of the pilot, who



says later that in my eagerness I picked it up and threw it over the side.

Now I press a brass key inside the machine which operates our big headlight. R-O-C-K-E-T-S, I flash piteously; and again, *Rockets*. Another Very's light I fire, and then cliok and clatter the key, "Please fire rockets"; and again, "Rockets — we are lost!"

"What shall we do?" asks the pilot in a hopeless voice. "Shall we land on the beach? I am getting fed up!"

"Just a second — I'll ask Wade."

I climb into the back and flash my torch through the bomb-racks. I see the face of the gunlayer in the ray of light. Pushing my head and shoulders into the maze of framework, I shout out at the top of my voice. The gunlayer shakes his head. I go forward and ask the pilot to throttle down a little.

The noise of the engine dies away. I hurry back and shout out again.

"Can you make out where we are, Wade? I'm quite lost. Have we got to Dunkerque?"

"Don't know, sir. I don't think so! I can't make out at all!"

I climb back into my seat, and say—

"Put the engines on again! It's no good! He doesn't know either! I don't know *what* to do!"

The key taps once more the vain appeal. Again and again I fire a white light. The floor

round my feet is strewn with the empty cartridge cases of brown cardboard. I feel depressed and tired and irritable. What a silly end to a raid, it seems, to lose yourself right over your own aerodrome! It is undignified. I am ashamed to have had to ask the gunlayer where we are. I feel a pretty poor observer.

Then I see in the mist a little ahead of me a white light rise up and die away.

"Look, Jimmy! A white light! Good! They've seen us at last!"

But the pilot is not so trustful, and says—

"You're quite sure it isn't the *lines*?"

"Oh no! I'm sure! Throttle down a bit and glide that way!"

As we draw nearer I suddenly see the two piers of Dunkerque and the docks materialise in the mist, and on the other side the dull glow of landing flares from an aerodrome.

"No! It's *not* Ostend! It's all right, old man! There's St Pol! I'll fire another white!"

I fire for the last time, and scarcely has my ball of light died out before the answering signal soars up from the ground.

The engines are throttled, and we drift downwards on our whistling planes over the long basins of the Dunkerque docks. When we are about a hundred feet off the ground I press a small brass stud in front of me. A white glare of light bursts out under our right wing tip and throws a



quivering radiance on the dyke round the aerodrome, on the hangars, and on the landing field itself, at the end of which are two or three red lights. We sweep gently on the surface of the ground, and before we have stopped rolling forwards, a little figure runs towards us flashing a light, and we hear its voice call—

"Turn to the left soon. The ground is full of bomb-holes . . . where those red lights are!"

Guided by the figure on the ground we "taxi" up to the hangars and stop our engines. In a second I am on the ground.

"Didn't you see our Very lights?" I asked almost rudely. "Didn't you see us flashing signals? I signalled Rockets—rockets—rockets—till my hand ached! We got lost. We were going to land on the beach. Why didn't you help us?"

"We *wondered* what you were doing. We saw you firing lights on the other side of Dunkerque! But, I say, things have been humming here since you left!"

I can find no admiring audience for the experiences of the raid. Every one is eager to describe the German attack.

"By Jove! you were lucky to be away to-night!" says one. "They've been bombing us ever since you left. They must have dropped a couple of hundred during the night. No damage was done. The C.O. nearly got hit. He lay flat and

one burst on either side of him. All the time you were bombing them they were bombing us!"

No one wants to hear our adventures. It is human nature all over again. They want to tell us what happened to them.

"Off Ostend we saw one of their patrols. It had a whacking big——"

"But you should have heard them whistling. Bob and I were talking outside the mess, when suddenly we heard——"

"We got over the clouds coming back. You ought to have seen the——"

"You've *missed* something, . . . and I reckon you're lucky! The noise was terrible!"

And so on, and so on goes the one-sided conversation of the two self-centred groups.

So ended a raid which is to my mind very unsatisfactory. I realise that we have to learn by experience, and I feel that to-night I have been taught a great deal. I am determined to have the bomb-sight and bomb-handle fitted in the front cockpit, so that with a splendid field of vision I can steer the pilot by the direct wave of my hand, by means of which I will be able to show emphasis or the reverse. The personal touch is essential. I will also be able to watch the enemy's defences and to counter them as much as possible.

In my next chapter I hope to show how this worked out in practice, and what it was like to attack a volcano such as Bruges.

(To be continued.)



## THE RETURN PUSH.

BY QUEX.

XV.

SEPT. 19: That morning Bob Pottinger reported at Brigade Headquarters smiling all over his face. An extra leave warrant had come in, and it was his turn to go. For weeks past every one had known of his eagerness to get home, in order to conduct certain matrimonial projects to the "Yes or No" stage. Leave to England was going nicely now. Dumble, young Beale, Judd, and Hetherington were away, and the men were going at the rate of five per day. Officers had to be five months in France since their last leave—mostly it ran to seven; the men's qualification was twelve months. Happy is the army that is attacking! Only when the enemy has full possession of the initiative is leave entirely cut off.

Of the 5 P.M. attack carried out the night before by the —th Brigade, all that we knew was that unexpectedly large numbers of the enemy had been met. The fighting had been fierce, and the Boche still held some of the ground the Brigade had set out to take. Right through the night our guns had been busy firing protective bursts.

The mystery of the Boche's unlooked-for strength was explained by a Divisional wire that reached us about 8 A.M.

It stated that a prisoner captured by the —th Brigade said that at 7 A.M. on the 18th, following urgent orders resulting from the British offensive at 5.20, a whole Boche Division came by bus from M—, fourteen miles back. Their mission was to make a counter-attack that would win back the original line. They deployed at B—, near the canal, and completed their march in readiness for an attack at 6 P.M. But the 5 P.M. thrust by our —th Brigade completely surprised them, and in fact broke up their offensive. The prisoner also reported that many casualties had been caused by our artillery fire.

The brigade-major, telephoning at 9 A.M., told us further details about the main offensive of the day before. The hold-up on our left had continued until late in the evening, in spite of renewed attacks on a big scale. "The German Alpine Corps have some of the stiffest fighters we have run against for a long time," he went on. "On the outskirts of E— one post was held by three officers and forty-five men until 7.45 P.M. When they surrendered there were only seventeen not wounded."

The sunken road we were



occupying led towards the red-brick, modern-looking village of T—. A German encampment, quite a large one, containing several roomy huts newly built and well fitted up, stood outside the eastern edge of the village. The colonel had just pointed out that any amount of material for the improvement of our Headquarters was to be had for the fetching, and I had despatched the wheeler and a party of servants and signallers to the German encampment, when the telephone bell rang.

It was the brigade-major again. "We're doing another attack," he said cheerfully, "to finish the work started last evening. . . . I want you to open on line F 10 c 2.0 to F 16 b 0.8. . . . Dwell there till 11.20. . . . Then creep 1100 yards in a north-easterly direction—100 yards each four minutes—to F 11 a 4.0 to F 11 d 2.5. . . . Dwell twenty minutes. . . . Then creep 100 yards each four minutes to F 11 b 1.3 to F 11 d 8.7. . . . 4.5 hows, on S— Farm. . . . Open at Rapid Rate on start-line for first four minutes. . . . Then go to Normal Rate for the creep, and Slow on final protective barrage. . . . Is that clear? . . . Right! . . . Good-bye."

I had repeated the map co-ordinates as the brigade-major gave them, and had written them down; and the colonel, coming in to the mess, followed the telephone conversation on his map. I handed him my note-book, and for five minutes he worked in his rapid

silent way, with his ivory pecket-rule and scale for measuring map co-ordinates. Then he told the telephonist on duty to get him each battery in turn; and the brigade was soon a stage nearer in its preparations for supporting the Infantry Brigade selected to make the attack.

Ten minutes later the brigade-major again rang up to say that the how. battery was required to fire smoke-shells on certain points.

Before the fight began the colonel made a tour of the batteries. The party sent to the German camp returned with forms and tables, and plenty of corrugated iron and boards; and it was while I was detailing a party of them to dig a sleeping-place for the colonel farther into the bank that a group of officers, headed by a red-tabbed staff captain, came along. Even if I had not recognised him from his portraits—or because two winters before the war, he and I stayed in the same hotel at Nice—there was no doubt as to his identity. Name and title appeared written in indelible pencil on his box-respirator. He told me he was looking for a headquarters for his brigade, and he had heard that the sunken road was a likely spot. "I don't know how long we shall be here," I replied, "but we intend to carry out as many improvements as possible. It will be a decent place to take over when we leave." And I indicated the digging party. "Ernest," as usual, was extremely affable, and received



any amount of petting and patting from the visiting officers. Just as they departed the assistant brigade clerk came to me with a batch of men's leave warrants. I went into the mess, and was occupied signing the warrants and other documents for ten minutes or so. When I came out there was no sign of "Ernest." Ten minutes later the attack started and the air was fluttered with the swish and scream of shells.

An hour passed. The colonel returned. We lunched. Afterwards the colonel removed his jacket, did a bit of sawing, and directed the wheeler and his party in the task of boarding-in our gun-pit mess, so as to leave it no longer exposed to wind and rain on two sides. Hubbard, who was proud of his strength, climbed on top and pulled and shifted the three six-inch girders to more suitable positions. I took a turn with pick and shovel in the improvement of the colonel's dug-out. The dog had not come back. One of the orderlies thought he had seen him running along with the officers who had called before lunch.

About half-past three the brigade-major called for our 18-pounders to drive off another Boche wave with a half-hour's shower of shrapnel; he also wanted our how. battery to devote itself to S—Farm and H—Post, which forward observers reported to be little strongholds of enemy trench-mortars and machine-guns. Still no sign of "Ernest." The mess cart arrived at five o'clock, and as a

last resource I scribbled a note to the doctor, who was as fond of the dog as any of us, describing the titled staff captain, and urging him to scour the countryside until he struck a trail that would lead to "Ernest's" recovery.

At 7.30 P.M. an S.O.S. call, telephoned by Drysdale, who was doing liaison with the —th Infantry Brigade, showed how desperately the Boche was contesting the occupation of the strong points on this portion of the front, although a Corps Intelligence Summary, delivered about the same time, told us that 60 officers and 2315 other ranks, wounded and unwounded, had passed through the Corps prisoners of war cages since 6 A.M. the day before, and that the strength of the average Hun infantry company had been reduced to 60 rifles.

As the colonel, Hubbard, and myself sat down to dinner the following message was handed to me:—

Wire has been laid out to O.P. at F 16 c 4.2 by B and C Batteries. The contours on the small paper 1/20,000 map are not correct in this neighbourhood. New zero line was registered on T—Farm.

"Yes, I've already warned the batteries that the special maps are not reliable," commented the colonel.

The end of the day found our infantry in possession of most of the strong points they had striven to seize, but at a heavy cost. And all through the



night our batteries poured forth fierce deadly fire to harass and nullify Hun efforts to loosen our grip.

It was the same sort of warfare next day. The fighting was carried out yard by yard. There was a certain post, D—Post, very valuable to the Boche because it dominated the immediate neighbourhood. It was our batteries' business to make it hellishly uncomfortable for him. At 10 A.M. the colonel, after a talk with Division, ordered the brigade to bring harassing fire to bear during the next twenty-four hours upon D—Post and the valley running north-east from it. The three 18-pdr. batteries were to work in two-hour shifts, firing 50 rounds an hour; the 4.5 how. battery was to fire 15 rounds per hour continuously. Next day the infantry were to storm the post, and thus secure a jumping-off spot for another forward leap.

With a more or less settled programme laid down—for twenty-four hours at any rate—the colonel, Hubbard, and I devoted some thought to the building of our Headquarters. "It looks as if we were in for a spell of trench-warfare without the protection we were accustomed to in trench-warfare days," observed the colonel. "There are no mined dug-outs to hide in." The cook, a Scottish miner, had contrived a kind of two-storied habitation in his little stretch of the bank, and he and Manning and my servant felt themselves moderately safe. The colonel's home

—heavy "elephant" roof and wooden walls stuffed well into the bank—being complete, the wheeler, the servants, Hubbard, and myself put backs and forearms into the task of fashioning a similar shelter for Hubbard and me. I, of course, could not stray far from the telephone. The staff captain wanted to talk about new ammunition dumps and gun-repairing workshops. Major Bullivant inquired whether he couldn't be selected for the next gunnery course at Shoeburyness. Major Veasey thought it time another captain relieved Drysdale as liaison officer with the Infantry Brigade. And all the time there were routine papers and returns to be looked through and signed.

"There's something that will do for the September War Diary," said the colonel, putting in front of me a letter sent to him by the brigadier-general commanding one of our Infantry Brigades. It ran:—

I am anxious that you and your officers and men should know how grateful I and my battalion commanders are to you for the excellent barrage you gave us yesterday morning (Sept. 18) under such very difficult circumstances. They all realise that with the moving of batteries, getting up the ammunition, and the frequent barrages you are called upon to provide, besides the harassing and the normal shooting, a very great strain is placed on your brigade. And the success we had yesterday was largely made pos-



sible by the splendid work of your people.

About eleven o'clock the doctor, who had ridden from the waggon line, came in gaily singing "Hail! hail! the gang's all here," to a tune from the "Pirates of Penzance." "I've located 'Ernest,'" he shouted triumphantly when he saw me.

"Splendid," I answered, smiling in return. "Have you got him at the waggon line?"

"No; I saw him as I was coming up here. He was trotting along with a captain who was going towards that village with the factory, over there."

"Was he a staff captain, with a Military Cross and another ribbon?" I asked. . . . "Didn't you tell him it was our dog?"

"That's so. I told him that, and 'Ernest' came and jumped around when he saw me; but the captain said it couldn't be our dog, because a brigadier-general's name was on the collar, and he wasn't going to let him go; his colonel wanted him. Besides," added the doctor plaintively, "'Ernest' wouldn't follow me."

"His colonel!" I repeated, puzzled. "Didn't he say 'his general'?" A staff captain is on a Brigadier-General's staff. . . . His colonel? . . . Are you sure he was a staff captain? Was he wearing red?"

"I didn't see any red," replied the doctor. "He was walking behind a waggon that had a pile of wood and iron on it. It looked as if they were moving."

My face fell. "Did you notice

his regiment? Was he a gunner or an infantryman, or what?" I asked quickly.

"Well, I can't say that I did. I don't know all your regiments."

The colonel joined us. "Lane-ridge has brought my mare up," he remarked pleasantly. "You'd like a little exercise, perhaps. When the doctor has finished his sick parade you take my mare, and see if the dog can be found."

The doctor and I rode across country, and scoured the village he had pointed to, but there was no trace of "Ernest." We spoke to a couple of military policemen, told them all about our loss, saw that they inscribed particulars in their note-books, and then continued our inquiries among some heavy gunners, who had pulled into a garden near the sugar factory. I even narrated the story to an Irish A.P.M., who was standing in the street conversing with a motoring staff officer. "I've been in this village fully an hour and haven't seen a dog such as you describe," said the A.P.M. "And I'm sure I should have noticed him. . . . I'm fond of dogs, and I notice them all. . . . I'll help you any way I can. . . . Give me full particulars, and I'll pass them round to my police."

He listened while I tried to obtain further clues from the doctor as to the branch of the service to which the captain, seen that morning with "Ernest," belonged. The doctor, his cap tilted backwards, a long dark cigar protruding



at an angle of 45 degrees from the corner of his mouth, did his best, but it was no good. "I'm sorry—I don't know your regiments well enough," he said at last.

It was at this point that the doctor's groom—in the building trade before the war—entered into the conversation. He had heard everything that had been said since the quest began, but this was the first remark he had made.

"The officer the medical officer spoke to this morning, sir, was in the — Pioneers," he said to me.

"Why didn't you tell us that before?" asked the doctor impatiently.

"Sorry, sir, you didn't ask me," was the toneless reply.

The doctor looked unutterable things, and the lighted end of his cigar described three or four irregular circles. "Gosh!" he pronounced briskly. "We gotta put more pep into looking for this dog, or the war 'll end before we find him."

A high-velocity shell bursting on the near side of the factory helped to decide us. The A.P.M. said that a party of the Pioneers had marched down the street half an hour ago. The doctor and I bade him good-bye, went through the village, and were directed to a lane alongside a railway embankment. In one among a row of wooden huts, where the Headquarters of the reserve infantry brigade were quartered, we found the colonel of the Pioneers finishing lunch. He

and our colonel were old friends, and immediately I explained the object of my visit he became sympathetic. "Yes," he laughed, "we have your dog—at least our A Company have him. I believe they found him wandering on the other side of the valley. . . . Stop and have some lunch, and I'll send for him."

"No, thank you, sir. . . . I shall have to be getting back."

A subaltern went off to fetch the dog. The doctor left to pick up the horses and to return to the waggon line. The colonel invited me to have a drink. But there was disappointment when the subaltern returned. "I'm afraid the dog has gone again, sir—about half an hour ago."

"Really!" said the colonel.

"Yes, sir; he was in A Company's mess when two Gunner officers passed, and he went after them."

"He knows your badge, at any rate," remarked the colonel to me with twinkling eyes. "I'm sorry you've had your journey for nothing. But we'll keep a look-out and send him back if he returns to us."

"I'm going to have another search round the village before I go back, sir," I responded determinedly. "We're getting warmer."

Turning from the lane into the road that led into the village, I noticed a groom who had been waiting with his two horses since the first time I passed the spot. At first he thought he hadn't seen a dog that looked like a cross between



an Airedale and a Belgian sheep-dog. Then he fancied he had. Yes, he believed it had passed that way with an R.A.M.C. major. "But those men near that ambulance car will tell you, sir. They were playing with the dog I saw, about half an hour ago."

Yes, I was really on the trail now. "That's right, sir," remarked the R.A.M.C. sergeant when he had helped two walking wounded into the ambulance car. "I remember the dog, and saw the name on the collar. . . . He followed our major about twenty minutes ago. He's gone across that valley to Brigade Headquarters. . . . I don't think he'll be long."

"What's it like up there?" asked one of the ambulance men of a slight, fagged-looking lance-corporal of the Fusiliers, who had been hit in the shoulder.

"Hot!" replied the Fusilier. "One dropped near Battalion Headquarters and killed our sergeant. . . . I think there are five more of our lot coming along."

There were two more places to be filled before the ambulance car moved off. Another Fusilier, wounded in the knee, hobbled up, assisted by two men of the same regiment, one of them with his head bandaged.

"Hullo, Jim!" called the lance-corporal from the ambulance. "I wondered if you'd come along too. Did you see Tom?"

"No," responded the man hit in the ankle.

The ambulance moved off. An empty one took its place. It was a quarter to two, but I was resolved to wait now until the R.A.M.C. major returned. Three shells came over and dropped near the railway. More walking wounded filled places in the ambulance.

The major, with "Ernest" at his heels, came back at a quarter-past two. "Ernest" certainly knew me again. He leapt up and licked my hand, and looked up while the major listened to my story. "Well, I should have kept him—or tried to do so," he said. "He's a taking little fellow, and I've always had a dog until a few weeks ago. . . . But"—with a pleasant smile—"I think you've earned your right to him. . . . I've never seen a dog so excited by shells. . . . Well, good-bye!"

He walked away, and "Ernest" started after him. I stood still in the centre of the road. The dog turned his head as if to see whether I meant to follow. Then he came back, and quietly lay down at my feet.

We had a joyous walk home. There were shells to scamper after, wire to scramble through, old trenches to explore. The return of "Ernest" brought a deep content to our mess.

Sept. 21: The attack which started at 5.40 A.M. was carried out by two of our Divisional Infantry Brigades; a brigade of another Division attacked simultaneously. The object was to close with the main enemy positions in the Hinden-



burg Line. Tanks were put in to break down the opposition—sure to be met by the brigades on the left and right; and every officer in the Division knew that if the final objectives could be held the Boche would be compelled to withdraw large forces to the far side of the canal. The attack was planned with extraordinary attention to detail. Battalions were ordered not to attempt to push on beyond the final objective; trench mortars were to be moved up to cover the consolidation of the final positions; the reconnaissance work had been specially thorough. Our batteries had horses and limbers in readiness for a quick rushing up of the guns.

The earlier part of the operation went well enough, but by 8 A.M. we knew that our two Infantry Brigades were having to go all out. The Boche machine-gunners were firing with exemplary coolness and precision. At 8.30 the brigade-major telephoned that every gun we possessed must fire bursts on certain hostile battery positions. The colonel and I didn't leave the mess that morning; the telephone was rarely out of use. At half-past ten Major Bartlett, who had gone forward to an infantry post to see what was happening, got a message back to say that, harassed by heavy machine-gun and rifle fire our infantry were coming back. Aeroplane calls for artillery fire on hostile batteries were twice responded to by our batteries. Drysdale, doing liaison with the —rd Infantry Brigade, re-

ported that two battalions had had severe losses. A buff slip from the Casualty Clearing Station informed us that the lead driver of our brigade telephone cart had died in hospital overnight: he had been hit just after leaving the Headquarters position the previous evening, and was the second Headquarters driver to be killed since Sept. 1. The only relief during a morning of excitement and some gloom was the arrival of three big cigars, sent by the doctor for the colonel, Hubbard, and myself. As the colonel didn't smoke cigars, the only solution was for Hubbard and myself to toss for the remaining one. Hubbard won.

At one o'clock it became clear that our infantry could not hope to do more than consolidate upon their first objective. There was no prospect of the batteries moving forward, and at 1.30 the colonel told me to send out this message to all batteries—

Gun limbers and firing battery waggons need not be kept within 2000 yards of gun positions any longer to-day.

Major Veasey called on us at tea-time, and the talk ran on the possibilities of the next few days' fighting. "The Boche seems bent on holding out here as long as he can," said the major. "I think he's fighting a rearguard action on a very big scale," said the colonel thoughtfully. "Our air reports indicate much movement in his



back areas. . . . And most of his artillery fire is from long range now."

"Let's hope it continues in that way," went on the major, filling his pipe. "If only he'd stop his beastly gas shells it wouldn't be so bad. It's not clean war. I'd vote willingly for an armistice on gas shells."

"Are you improving your accommodation at the battery?" asked the colonel. "We're likely to be here a few days, and we must make as much protection as we can."

"We've got quite a decent dug-out in the bank to sleep in," answered Major Veasey, getting up to go, "but our mess is rather in the open—under a tarpaulin. However, it's quite a pleasant mess. Bullivant and Simpson came to dine last night, and we played bridge till eleven."

I had sent out the S.O.S. lines to batteries, and we had sat down to dinner a little earlier than usual, owing to the desirability of showing as little light as possible, when the telephone bell rang. I put the receiver to my ear.

A strong decided voice spoke. "Is that the adjutant, sir? . . . I'm Sergeant— of D Battery, sir. . . . Major Veasey has been badly wounded."

"Major Veasey wounded," I repeated, and the colonel and Hubbard put down knives and forks and listened.

"Yes, sir . . . a gas shell came into the mess. Mr Kelly and Mr Wood have been wounded as well. . . . We've got them away to the

hospital, sir. . . . Mr Kelly got it in the face, sir. . . . I'm afraid he's blinded."

"How was Major Veasey wounded?"

"In the arm and foot, sir. . . . Mr Wood was not so bad."

"There's no other officer at D Battery, sir," I said to the colonel, who was already turning up the list of officers in his note-book.

"Tell him that the senior sergeant will take command until an officer arrives," replied the colonel promptly, "and then get on to Drysdale at the infantry. I'll speak to him. . . . I don't like the idea of Veasey being wounded by a gas shell," he added quickly. Depression descended upon all three of us.

The colonel told Captain Drysdale to inform the Infantry Brigadier what had happened, and to obtain his immediate permission to go to the battery, about half a mile away. "You've got a subaltern at the waggon line. . . . Get him up," advised the colonel, "the sergeant-major can carry on there. . . . Tell the General that another officer will arrive as soon as possible to do liaison."

The colonel looked again at his note-book. "We're frightfully down in officers," he said at last. "I'll ask Colonel— of the—rd if he can spare some one to take on to-night."

"I hope Veasey and Kelly are not badly wounded," he said later, lighting a cigarette. "And I'm glad it didn't come last night, when there were



three battery commanders at the bridge party. That would have been catastrophe."

That night the Boche rained gas shells all round our quarters in the sunken road. Hubbard and myself and "Ernest" were not allowed much sleep in our right little, tight little hut. One shell dropped within twenty yards of us; thrice fairly heavy shell splinters played an unnerving tattoo upon our thick iron roof; once we were forced to wear our

box-respirators for half an hour.

At 11.30 P.M. the colonel telephoned from his hut to ours to tell me that new orders had come in from the brigade-major. "We are putting down a barrage from midnight till 12.15 A.M.," he said. "You needn't worry. I've sent out orders to the batteries. . . . Our infantry are making an assault at 12.15 on D—— Post. It ought to startle the Hun. He won't expect anything at that hour."

## XVI.

Sept. 22: It was as the colonel expected. The Boche took our hurricane bombardment from midnight to 12.15 A.M. to be an unusually intense burst of night-firing; and when our guns "lifted" some six hundred yards, our infantry swept forward, and in a few minutes captured two posts over which many lives had been unavailingly expended during the two preceding days. Sixty prisoners also were added to their bag.

But the enemy was only surprised — not done with. This was ground that had been a leaping-off place for his mighty rush in March 1918. Close behind lay country that had not been trod by Allied troops since the 1914 invasion. He counter-attacked fiercely, and at 5.10 A.M. a signaller roused me with the message.

"Our attack succeeded in capturing D—— and D—— Posts, but failed on the rest of the front. S.O.S. line will

be brought back to the line it was on after 12 midnight. Bursts of harassing fire will be put down on the S.O.S. lines and on approaches in rear from now onwards. About three bursts per hour. Heavy artillery is asked to conform."

I telephoned to the batteries to alter their S.O.S. lines, and told the colonel what had been done. Then I sought sleep again.

After breakfast the brigade-major telephoned that the Division immediately north of us was about to attempt the capture of a strong point that had become a wasps' nest of machine gunners. "We have to hold D—— Post and D—— Post at all costs," he added. All through the morning messages from Division artillery and from the liaison officer told the same tale: fierce sallies and desperate counter-attacks between small parties of the opposing infantry, who



in places held trench slits and rough earthworks within a mashie shot of each other. About noon the Germans loosed off a terrible burst of fire on a 500-yards front. "Every Boche gun for miles round seemed to be pulverising that awful bit," "Buller," who had gone forward to observe, told me afterwards. "My two telephonists hid behind a brick wall that received two direct hits, and I lay for a quarter of an hour in a shell-hole without daring to move. Then half a dozen of their aeroplanes came over in close formation and tried to find our infantry with their machine-guns. . . . I got the wind up properly." Our batteries answered three S.O.S. calls between 10 A.M. and 1 o'clock; and, simultaneously with a news message from Division stating that British cavalry had reached Nazareth and crossed the Jordan, that 18,000 prisoners and 160 guns had been captured, and that Liman von Sanders had escaped by the skin of his teeth, came a report from young Beale that Germans could be seen massing for a big effort.

I passed this information to the brigade-major, and our guns, and the heavies behind them, fired harder than ever. Then for an hour until 3 o'clock we got a respite. A couple of pioneers, lent to us by the colonel who had shown himself so sympathetic in the matter of the lost dog, worked stolidly with plane and saw and foot-rule improving our gun-pit mess by more ex-

pert carpentering than we could hope to possess. The colonel tore the wrapper of the latest copy of an automobile journal, posted to him weekly, and devoted himself to an article on spring-loaded starters. I read a typewritten document from the staff captain that related to the collection, "as opportunity offers," of two field guns captured from the enemy two days before.

But at 3.35 the situation became electric again. The clear high-pitched voice of young Beale sounded over the line that by a miracle had not yet been smashed by shell-fire. "Germans in large numbers are coming over the ridge south of T— Farm," he said.

I got through to the brigade-major, and he instructed me to order our guns to search back 1000 yards from that portion of our front.

"Don't tell the batteries to 'search back,'" broke in the colonel, who had heard me telephoning. "It's a confusing expression. Tell them to 'search east,' or 'north-east' in this case."

By a quarter to four the telephone wires were buzzing feverishly. More S.O.S. rockets had gone up. The enemy had launched a very heavy counter-attack. Our overworked gunners left their tea, and tons of metal screamed through the air. Within an hour Drysdale sent us most inspiring news.

"The infantry are awfully pleased with our S.O.S. barrage," he said briskly. "As a matter of fact, that burst you



ordered at 3.40 was more useful still, . . . caught the Germans as they came out to attack. . . . They were stopped about 150 yards from our line. . . . They had to go back through our barrage. . . . It was a great sight. . . . The dead can be seen in heaps. . . . Over twenty Boche ran through our barrage and gave themselves up."

Drysdale had more good news for us twenty minutes later. Two companies of a battalion not attacked—they were to the right of the place to which the enemy advanced—saw what was happening, dashed forward along a winding communication-trench and seized a position that hitherto they had found impregnable. They got a hundred prisoners out of the affair.

Two more S.O.S. calls went up before dinner-time, but a day of tremendously heavy fighting ended with our men in glorious possession of some of the hardest-won ground in the history of the Division.

"If we can hold on where we are until really fresh troops relieve us we shall be over the Hindenburg Line in three days," said the colonel happily, as he selected targets for the night-firing programme.

He had written "From receipt of this message S.O.S. lines will be as follows—" when he stopped. "Can't we shorten this preliminary verbiage?" he asked quizzically. "Castle made this opening phrase a sort of tradition when he was adjutant."

"What about 'Henceforth S.O.S. lines will be'?" I replied,

tilting my wooden stool backwards.

"That will do!" said the colonel.

And "henceforth" it became after that.

For two more days we carried on this most tiring of all kinds of fighting: for the infantry, hourly scraps with a watchful plucky foe; for the gunners, perpetual readiness to fire protective bursts should the enemy suddenly seek to shake our grip on this most fateful stretch of front, in addition to day and night programmes of "crashes" that allowed the gun detachments no rest, and at the same time demanded unceasing care in "laying" and loading and firing the guns. And with the opposing infantry so close to each other, and the front line changing backwards and forwards from hour to hour, absolute accuracy was never more necessary. The brigade had had no proper rest since the early days of August. The men had been given no opportunity for baths or change of clothing. Our casualties had not been heavy, but they were draining us steadily, and reinforcements stepped into this strenuous hectic fighting with no chance of the training and testing under actual war conditions that make a period of quiet warfare so valuable. And yet it was this portion of "the fifty days," this exhausting, remorseless, unyielding struggling that really led to the Boche's final downfall. It forced him to abandon the Hindenburg Line—the beginning of the very end.



I was going to write that it was astonishing how uncomplainingly, how placidly, each one of us went on with his ordinary routine duties during this time. But, after all, it wasn't astonishing. The moments were too occupied for weariness of soul; our minds rieted with the thought "He's getting done! Let's get on with it! Let's finish him." And if at times one reflected on the barrenness, the wastefulness of war, there still remained the satisfying of the instinct to do one's work well. The pioneers had done their very best, and made quite a house of our mess, even finding glass to put in the windows. I don't know that the old wheeler understood me when I emphasised this thoroughness of the pioneers by adding, "You see, we British always build for posterity," but before we went away he began to take a pride in keeping those windows clean.

On Sept. 25 we heard without much pleasure that we had come under another Divisional Artillery and were to retire to our waggon lines by nightfall. "I'd rather stay here a few days longer and then go out for a proper rest," said the colonel, taking appreciative stock of the habitations that had arisen since our occupation. "I'm afraid this order means a shift to another part of the line." And it was so. Our brigade was to side-step north, and the colonel and the battery commanders went off after lunch to reconnoitre positions. An Australian Field Artillery Brigade came to "take-over"

from us, and I yarned with their colonel and adjutant and intelligence officer while waiting for our colonel to return. I told them that it was ages since I had seen a 'Sydney Bulletin.'

"I used to get mine regularly," said their adjutant, "but it hasn't come for ten weeks now. I expect some skrimshanker at the post-office or at the base is pinching it. . . . I'm going to tell my people to wrap it up in the 'War Cry' before posting it. I know one chap who's had that done for over a year. No one thinks of pinching it then."

One of the Australian batteries was late getting in, and it was half-past seven before the colonel and I, waiting for the relief to be complete, got away. The Boche guns had been quiet all the afternoon. But—how often it happens when one has been delayed!—shells fell about the track we intended to take when we mounted our horses, and we had to side-track to be out of danger. When we arrived at Headquarters waggon lines it was too late to dine in daylight; and as Hun bombers were on the warpath our dinner was a blind-man's-buff affair.

The colonel had been told that we should be required to fight a battle at our new positions on the 27th, and already the batteries had commenced to take up ammunition. But when—the Hun aeroplanes having passed by and candle being permissible in our tents—the brigade clerk produced an order requiring us to have



two guns per battery in action that very night, I considered joylessly the prospect of a long move in the dark.

"They expect us to move up to-night, sir," I told the colonel, handing him the order brought by a motor-cyclist despatch-bearer about eight o'clock.

"Oh!" said the colonel, and the "Oh!" was a *chef-d'œuvre* of irony.

Then he wrote a masterly little note, perfect in its correctness, and yet instinct with the power and knowledge of a commander who had a mind of his own. He wrote as follows, and told me to hand the message to the returning despatch-rider:—

Ref. your B.M. 85 dated 25th Sept., I regret that I shall not be able to move one section per battery into action to-night.

I was late in returning from my reconnaissance owing to delay in fixing position for my Brigade Headquarters; did not get the order until eight o'clock, and by that time batteries had started moving ammunition up to the positions. All available guides had gone up with the ammunition waggons.

My batteries will be prepared to fire a barrage by dawn on 27th Sept.

In confirmation of my telephone conversation with B.M. to-day positions selected are as follows:—

The message closed with the

map co-ordinates of the positions chosen for our four batteries, and with a request for the map location of the Divisional Artillery Headquarters, to which the note was sent.

Next day, the 26th, was a day of busy preparation. We learned that, for the first time, we should be in active co-operation with an American Division. The infantry of the British Division we were working under had been told off to protect the left flank of the American Division. The object of the attack was the capture of the last dominating strong-posts that guarded a section of the Hindenburg Line, immediately north of the section for which our own Divisional infantry had battled since Sept. 19. The enemy was to be surprised. Our guns, when placed in position, had to remain silent until they began the barrage on the 27th. That morning, therefore, topographical experts busied themselves ascertaining exact map locations of the batteries' positions so as to ensure accurate shooting by the map. The point was emphasised by the colonel, who wrote to all batteries:—

Battery Commanders are reminded that as barrages on morning of 27th will be fired without previous registration of guns,

THE LINE LAID OUT MUST NOT BE ENTIRELY DEPENDENT ON COMPASS BEARING. Check it by measuring angles to points which can be

identified on the map. All calculations to be made by two officers working separately, who will then check each other.

2. Every precaution must be taken not to attract the attention of the enemy to batteries moving forward into action. Nothing to be taken up in daylight, except in the event of *very* bad visibility.

The colonel rode over to see the C.R.A. of the Division to whom our brigade had been loaned. After lunch he held a battery commanders' conference in his tent, and explained the morrow's barrage scheme. "Ernest," the dog, spent a delighted, frolicsome hour, chasing a Rugby football that some Australians near our waggon lines brought out for practice. Hubbard went on to the new positions to lay out his telephone lines. I occupied myself completing returns for the staff captain.

By five o'clock I had joined the colonel and Hubbard at the new positions. Our only possible mess was a roofless gun-pit not far from a road. The colonel and Hubbard were covering it with scrap-heap sheets of rusty iron, and a tarpaulin that was not sufficiently expansive. Further

down the road was a dug-out into which two could squeeze. The colonel said Hubbard and I had better occupy it. He preferred to sleep in the gun-pit, and already had gathered up a few armfuls of grasses and heather to lie upon. Manning and the cook had discovered a hole of their own, and the two clerks and the orderlies had cramped themselves into a tiny bivouac.

The final fastening-down of the gun-pit roof was enlivened by heavy enemy shelling of a battery four hundred yards north-east of us. Several splinters whistled past, and one flying piece of iron, four inches long and an inch wide, missed my head by about a foot and buried itself in the earthen floor of the mess. "That's the narrowest escape you've had for some time," smiled the colonel.

Ten minutes later the brigade clerk brought me the evening's batch of Divisional messages and routine orders. This was the first one I glanced at:—

Wire by return name of war-tired captain or subaltern, if any, available for temporary duty for administration and training of R.A. malaria convalescents. Very urgent.

#### XVII.

Sept. 27: Our meetings with the Americans had so far been pretty casual. We had seen parties of them in June and

July, training in the Contay area, north of the Albert-Amiens road; and one day during that period I accom-



panied our colonel and the colonel of our companion brigade on a motor trip to the coast, and we passed some thousands of them hard at work getting fit, and training with almost fervid enthusiasm. It used to be a joke of mine that on one occasion my horse shied because an Australian private saluted me. No one could make a friendly jest of like kind against the American soldiers. When first they arrived in France no troops were more punctilious in practising the outward and visible evidences of discipline. Fit, with the perfect fitness of the man from 23 to 28, not a weed amongst them; intelligent-looking, splendidly eager to learn, they were much akin in physique and general qualities to our own immortal "First Hundred Thousand." I came across colonels and majors of the New York and Illinois Divisions getting experience in the line with our brigadiers and colonels. I have seen U.S. Army N.C.O.'s out in the fields receiving instruction from picked N.C.O.'s of our army in the art of shouting orders. Their officers and men undertook this training with a certain shy solemnity that I myself thought very attractive. I am doing no lip-service to a "wish is father to the thought" sentiment when I say that a manly modesty in respect to military achievements characterised all the fighting American soldiers that I met.

They were not long in tumbling into the humours of life at the front. I remember an epi-

sode told with much enjoyment by a major of the regular U.S. army, who spent a liaison fortnight with our Division.

There is a word that appears at least once a day on orders sent out from the "Q" or administrative branch of the British Army. It is the word "Return": "Return of Personnel," "Casualty Returns," "Ammunition Returns," &c., all to do with the compilation of reports. The American Division to which the major belonged had been included among the units of a British Corps. When, in course of time, the Division was transferred elsewhere corps Q branch wired, "Return wanted of all tents and trench shelters in your possession." Next day the American Division received a second message: "Re my 0546/8023, hasten return of tents and trench shelters."

The day following the corps people were startled by the steady arrival of scores of tents and trench shelters. The wires hummed furiously, and the corps staff captain shouted his hardest explaining over a long-distance telephone that "Hasten return" did not mean "Send back as quickly as possible."

"And we thought we had got a proper move on sending back those tents," concluded the American major who told me the story.

And now we were in action with these virile ardent fellows. Two of their Divisions took part in the great battle which at 5.30 A.M. opened on a 35-mile front—ten days of bloody, vic-

torious fighting by which three armies shattered the last and strongest of the enemy's fully-prepared positions, and struck a vital blow at his main communications.

The first news on Sept. 27th was of the best. On our part of the front the Americans had swept forward, seized the two ruined farms that were their earliest objectives, and surged to the top of a knoll that had formed a superb point of vantage for the Boche observers. By 7.30 A.M. the brigade was told to warn F.O.O.'s that our bombers would throw red flares outside the trenches along which they were advancing to indicate their position.

But again there was to be no walk-over. The Boche counter-attack was delivered on the Americans' left flank. We were ordered to fire a two-hours' bombardment upon certain points toward which the enemy was pouring his troops; and the colonel told me to instruct our two F.O.O.'s to keep a particular look-out for hostile movement.

By 11 A.M. Division issued instructions for all gun dumps to be made up that night to 500 rounds per gun. "Stiff fighting ahead," commented the colonel.

At three o'clock Dumble, who was commanding B Battery, Major Bullivant having gone on leave, reported that the Americans were withdrawing from the knoll to trenches four hundred yards in rear, where they were reorganising their position.

That settled the fighting for

the day, although there was speedy indication of the Boche's continued liveliness: a plane came over, and by a daring manœuvre set fire to three of our "sausage" balloons, the observers having to tumble out with their parachutes. All this time I had remained glued to the telephone for the receipt of news and the passing of orders. There was opportunity now to give thought to the fortifying of our Headquarters. Hubbard, who prided himself on his biceps, had engaged in a brisk discussion with the officers of a near-by Artillery Brigade Headquarters regarding the dug-out that he and myself and "Ernest" had occupied the night before. Originally it had been arranged that we should share quarters with them, dug-outs in a neighbouring bank having been allotted for their overflow of signallers. But at the last moment an Infantry Brigade Headquarters had "commandeered" part of their accommodation, and they gave up the dug-out that Hubbard and I had slept in, with the intimation that they would want it on the morrow. As Hubbard had discovered that they were in possession of four good dug-outs on the opposite side of the road, he said we ought to be allowed to retain our solitary one. But no! they stuck to their rights, and during the morning's battle a stream of protesting officers came to interview Hubbard. Their orderly officer was suave but anxious; their signalling



officer admitted the previous arrangement to share quarters; Hubbard remained firm, and said that if the Infantry Brigade had upset their arrangements, they themselves had upset ours. I was too busy to enter at length into the argument, but I agreed to send a waggon and horses to fetch material if they chose to build a new place. When their adjutant came over and began to use sarcasm, I referred the matter to our colonel, who decided "Their Division has sent us here. The dug-out is in our area. There is no other accommodation. We shall keep it."

"Will you come over and see our colonel, sir?" asked the adjutant persuasively.

"Certainly not," replied the colonel with some asperity.

The next arrivals were a gas officer and a tall ebullient Irish doctor, who said that the dug-out had been prepared for them. Hubbard conveyed our colonel's decision, and ten minutes later his servant brought news that the doctor's servant had been into the dug-out and replaced our kit by the doctor's.

Hubbard, smiling happily, slipped out of our gun-pit mess, and the next item of news from this bit of front informed me that our valises had been replaced and the doctor's kit put outside. Hubbard told me he had informed the doctor and the gas officer that, our colonel having made his decision, he was prepared to repeat the performance every time they

invaded the dug-out. "And I was ready to throw them after their kit if necessary," he added, expanding his chest.

The upshot of it all was that our horses fetched fresh material, and we helped to find the doctor and the gas officer a home.

The battle continued next day, our infantry nibbling their way into the Boche defences and allowing him no rest. The artillery work was not so strenuous as on the previous day, and Hubbard and I decided to dig a dug-out for the colonel. It was bonny exercise for me. "I think every adjutant ought to have a pit to dig in—adjutants get too little exercise," I told the colonel. After which Hubbard, crouching with his pick, offered practical tuition in the science of underpinning. We sweated hard and enjoyed our lunch. Judd and young Beale reported back from leave, and Beale caused a sensation by confessing that he had got married. A Corps wire informed every unit that Lance-Corporal Kleinberg-Hermann, "5 ft. 8, fair hair, eyes blue, scar above nose, one false tooth in front, dressed German uniform," and Meyer Hans, "6 ft., fair hair, brown eyes, thin face, wears glasses, speaks English and French fluently, dressed German uniform," had escaped from a prisoners of war camp. The mail brought a letter from which the colonel learnt that a long-time friend, a lieutenant-colonel in the Garrison Artillery, had been killed. He had lunched with us one day

in June, a bright-eyed grizzled veteran, with a whimsical humour. India had made him look older than his years. "They found his body in No Man's Land," said the colonel softly. "They couldn't get to it for two days."

At half-past nine that night we learned that our own Divisional Infantry were coming up in front of us again. There was to be another big attack, and to complete the work begun by the Americans, at zero hour we should pass under the command of our Divisional Artillery. At four in the morning the telephone near my pillow woke me up, and Major Bartlett reported that the Boche had started a barrage. "I don't think he suspects anything," said the major; "it's only ordinary counter-preparation." In any case it didn't affect our attack, which started with splendid zest. The Boche plunked a few gas shells near us; but by 9.15 the brigade-major told me that the Americans and our own infantry had advanced a thousand yards and were on their first objective. "I smell victory to-day," said the colonel, looking at his map. By half-past ten Major Bartlett's battery had moved forward two thousand yards, and the major had joined a battalion commander so as to keep pace with the onward rush of the infantry.

Good news tumbled in. At 10.50 the Intelligence Officer of our companion Artillery brigade rang up to tell me that their liaison officer had

seen our troops entering the southern end of a well-known village that lay along the canal.

"Ring up A and B at once," interjected the colonel, "and tell them to stop their bursts of fire, otherwise they will be firing on our own people. Tell our liaison officer with the —th Infantry Brigade that we are no longer firing on the village. . . . And increase the how. battery's range by 1000 yards."

Five minutes later the brigade-major let us know that the Corps on our left had cleared a vastly important ridge, but their most northerly Division was held up by machine-gun fire. When the situation was eased they would advance upon the canal. Our D Battery was now firing at maximum range, and at 11.20 the colonel ordered them to move up alongside C.

The exhilarating swiftness of the success infected every one. Drysdale rang up to know whether we hadn't any fresh targets for D Battery. "I'm sure we've cleared out every Boche in the quarry you gave us," he said. The staff captain told us he was bringing forward his ammunition dumps. The old wheeler was observed to smile. Even the telephone seemed to be working better than for months past. In restraint of over-eagerness complaints of short shooting filtered in from the infantry, but I established the fact that our batteries were not the sinners.

By tea-time all the batteries



had advanced, and the colonel, "Ernest," and myself, were walking at the head of the Headquarters waggons and mess carts through a village that a fortnight before had been a hotbed of Germany's hardest fighting infantry.

The longer the time spent in the fighting area, the stronger that secret spasm of apprehension when a shift forward to new positions had to be made. The ordinary honest-souled member of His Majesty's forces will admit that to be a true saying. The average healthy-minded recruit coming to the Western Front since July 1916 marvelled for his first six months on the thousands of hostile shells that he saw hitting nothing in particular, and maiming and killing nobody. If he survived a couple of years he lost all curiosity about shells that did no harm; he had learned that in the forward areas there was never real safety, the fatal shell might come at the most unexpected moment, in the most unlooked-for spot—it might be one solitary missile of death, it might accompany a hideous drove that beat down the earth all around and drenched a whole area with sickening, scorching fumes; he might not show it, but he had learned to fear.

But on this move-up we were agog with the day's fine news. We were in the mood to calculate on the extent of the enemy's retirement: for the moment his long-range guns had ceased to fire. We talked seriously of the war ending by Christmas. We laughed when I opened the

first Divisional message delivered at our new Headquarters: "Divisional Cinema will open at Lieramont to-morrow. Performances twice daily, 3 P.M. and 6 P.M." "That looks as if our infantry are moving out," I said.

We had taken over a bank and some shallow aged dug-outs, occupied the night before by our C Battery; and as there was a chill in the air that foretold rain, and banks of sombre clouds were lining up in the western sky, we unloaded our carts and set to work getting our belongings under cover while it was still light. "There's no pit for you to dig in," the colonel told me quizzingly, "but you can occupy yourself filling these ammunition boxes with earth; they'll make walls for the mess." Hubbard had been looking for something heavy to carry; he brought an enormous beam from the broad-gauge railway that lay a hundred yards west of us. The colonel immediately claimed it for the mess roof. "We'll fix it centre-wise on the ammunition boxes to support the tarpaulin," he decided. "Old Fritz has done his dirtiest along the railway," said Hubbard cheerfully. "He's taken a bit out of every rail; and he's blown a mine a quarter of a mile down there that's giving the sappers something to think about. They told me they want to have trains running in two days."

Meanwhile the signallers had been cleaning out the deep shaft they were to work in; the cooks and the clerks had

selected their own rabbit-hutches; and I had picked a semi-detached dug-out in which were wire beds for the colonel, Hubbard, and myself. True, a shell had made a hole in one corner of the iron roof, and the place was of such antiquity that rats could be heard squeaking in the vicinity of my bed-head, but I hoped that a map-board fixed behind my pillow would protect me from unpleasantness.

The colonel was suspicious of the S.O.S. line issued to us by Division that night. The ordinary rules of gunnery provide that the angle of sight to be put on the guns can be calculated from the difference between the height of the ground on which the battery stands and the height at the target. More often than not ridges intervene between the gun and the target, and the height and position of these ridges sometimes cause complications in the reckoning of the angle of sight, particularly if a high ridge is situated close to the object to be shot at. Without going into full explanation, I hope I may be understood when I say that the correct angle of sight, calculated from the map difference in height between battery and target, occasionally fails to ensure that the curve described by the shell in its flight will finish sufficiently high in the air for the shell to clear the final crest. When that happens shells fall on the wrong side of the ridge, and our own infantry are endangered. It is a point to which brigade-majors and brigade

commanders naturally give close attention.

The colonel looked at his map, shook his head, said, "I don't like that ridge," and got out his ruler and made calculations. Then he talked over the telephone to the brigade-major. "Yes, I know that theoretically, by every ordinary test, we should be safe in shooting there, and I know what you want to shoot at. . . . But there's a risk, and I should prefer to be on the safe side. . . . Will you speak to the General about it?"

The colonel gained his point, and at 10.20 P.M. issued a further order to the batteries:—

Previous S.O.S. line is cancelled, as it is found that the hillside is so steep that our troops in T—— Support Trench may be hit.

Complaints of short shooting have been frequent all day. Henceforth S.O.S. will be as follows. . . .

"I'll write out those recommendations for honours and awards before turning in," he said, a quarter of an hour later, searching through the box in which confidential papers were kept. "Now, what was it I wanted to know?—oh, I remember. Ring up Drysdale, and ask him whether the corporal he put in is named Marchman or Marshman. His writing is not very clear. . . . If he's gone to bed, say I'm sorry to disturb him, but these things want to be got in as soon as possible."

It was a quiet night as far



as shell-fire was concerned, but a furious rain-storm permitted us very little sleep, and played havoc with the mess. Our documents remained safe, though most of them were saturated with water. In the morning it was cold enough to make one rub one's hands and stamp the feet. There was plenty of exercise awaiting us in the enlarging and rebuilding of the mess. We made it a very secure affair this time. "What about a fire, sir?" inquired Hubbard.

"Good idea," said the colonel. He and Hubbard used pick and shovel to fashion a vertical, triangular niche in the side of the bank. The staff-sergeant fitter returned with a ten-foot stove-pipe that he had found in the neighbouring village; and before ten o'clock our first mess fire since the end of April was crackling merrily, and burning up spare ammunition boxes.

The colonel went off to tour the batteries, saying, "I'll leave you to fight the battle." The brigade-major's first telephone talk at 10.35 A.M. left no doubt that we were pushing home all the advantages gained the day before. "I want one good burst on — Trench," he said. "After that cease firing this side of the canal until I tell you to go on." The news an hour later was that our Divisional Infantry patrols were working methodically through the village on the canal bank, which the Americans had entered the day before. Next "Buller," who was with the Infantry Brigade,

called up, and said that the mopping-up in the village had been most successful: our fellows were thrusting for the canal bridge, and had yet to encounter any large enemy forces. At twenty to one the brigade-major told me that our people were moving steadily to the other side of the canal—"We're properly over the Hindenburg Line this time," he wound up.

The Brigadier-General C.R.A. came to see us during the afternoon, and we learned for the first time that on the previous day the Americans had fought their way right through the village, but, on account of their impetuosity, had lost touch with their supports. "They fought magnificently, but didn't mop-up as they went along," explained the General. "The Boche tried the trick he used to play on us. He hid until the first wave had gone by, and then came up with his machine-guns and fired into their backs. . . . It's a great pity. . . . I'm afraid that six hundred of them who crossed the canal have been wiped out."

"I hear that our infantry go out for a proper rest as soon as this is over," he added. "They brought them up again to complete the smashing of the Hindenburg Line, because they didn't want to draw upon the three absolutely fresh Divisions they were keeping to chase the Hun immediately he yielded the Hindenburg Line. Our infantry must have fought themselves to a standstill these last three weeks."

"Any news about us?" inquired the colonel.

"No, I'm afraid the gunners will have to carry on as usual. . . . The horses seem to be surviving the ordeal very well."

At 4.25 P.M.—I particularly remember noting the time—we were told by Division that Bulgaria's surrender was unconditional. "That will be cheering news for the batteries," observed the colonel. "I'd send that out." The brigade-major also informed us that British cavalry were reported to be at Roulers, north-east of Ypres—but that wasn't official. "Anyhow," said the colonel, his face glowing, "it shows the right spirit. Yes, I think the war will be over by Christmas after all."

"It would be great to be home by Christmas, sir," put in Hubbard.

"Yes," responded the colonel in the same vein, "but it wouldn't be so bad even out here. . . . I don't think any of us would really mind staying another six months if we had no 5·9's to worry us." And he settled down to writing his daily letter home.

October came in with every one joyously expectant. The enemy still struggled to hold the most valuable high ground on the far side of the canal, but there was little doubt that he purposed a monster withdrawal—and our batteries did their best to quicken his decision. The brigade-major departed for a Senior Staff Course in England, and Major "Pat" of our sister brigade, a highly efficient and extremely

popular officer, who, with no previous knowledge of soldiering, had won deserved distinction, filled his place. Major "Pat" was a disciple of cheering news for the batteries. "This has just come in by the wireless," he telephoned to me on October 2nd. "Turkey surrendered—British ship sailing through the Dardanelles—Lille being evacuated—British bluejackets landed at Ostend."

"Is that official?" I asked wonderingly.

He laughed. "No, I didn't say that. . . . It's a wireless report."

"Not waggon line?" I went on.

He laughed again. "No, I'll let you know when it becomes official."

Formal intimation was to hand that Dumble, Judd, Bob Pottinger, Young Beale, Stenson, and Tindler had been awarded the Military Cross, and Major Veasey the D.S.O. Drysdale was happy because, after many times of asking, he had got back from Headquarters, Patrick, the black charger that he had ridden early in 1916.

The tide of success rolled on. A swift little attack on the morning of October 3rd took the infantry we were supporting, now that our own battalions had withdrawn for a fortnight's rest, on to valuable high ground east of the canal. "They met with such little opposition that our barrage became merely an escort," was the way in which Beadle, who was doing F.O.O., described



the advance. Surrendering Germans poured back in such numbers that dozens of them walked unattended to the prisoners of war cages. "I saw one lot come down," a D.A.C. officer told me. "All that the sentry had to do was to point to the cage with a 'This-way-in' gesture, and in they marched."

One wee cloud blurred the high-spirited light-heartedness of those days. We lost "Ernest," who had marched forward with us and been our pet since Sept. 6th. The colonel and Hubbard took him up the line; the little fellow didn't seem anxious to leave me that morning, but I thought that a run would do him good, and he had followed the colonel a couple of days before. "I'm sorry, but we've lost 'Ernest,'" was the colonel's bluntly-told news when he returned. "He disappeared when I was calling on B Battery. . . . They said he went over the hill with an infantry officer, who had made much of him. . . . It's curious, because he stuck to us when I went to see the infantry at Brigade Headquarters, although every one in their very long dug-out fussed over him."

There was poor chance of the dog finding his way back to us in that country of many tracks, amid the coming to and fro of thousands of all kinds of troops. We never saw or heard of him again. The loss of him dispirited all of us a bit, and I suppose I felt it more than most: he had been a splendid little companion for nearly a month.

The adjutant and Wilde returned from leave on Oct. 3rd, full of the bright times to be spent in London. "People in England think the war's all over. They don't realise that pursuing the Boche means fighting him as well," burst forth the adjutant. "By Gad," he went on, "we had a narrow escape the day we went on leave. I never saw anything like it in my life. You remember the factory at Moislains, near the place where we were out for three or four days at the beginning of last month. Well, Wilde and I caught a leave bus that went that way on the road to Amiens. The bus had to pull up about five hundred yards short of the factory, because there was a lot of infantry in front of us. . . . And just at that moment a Boche mine blew up. . . . Made an awful mess. . . . About eleven men killed. . . . We had taken the place three weeks before, and the mine had remained undiscovered all that time. . . . We must all of us have passed over that spot many times. You remember they made a Red Cross Station of the factory. . . . A most extraordinary thing!"

The Boche fire had died away almost entirely; it was manifest that the brigade would have to move forward. I could go on leave now that the adjutant was back—Beadle and myself were the only two officers in the brigade who had gone through the March retreat and not yet been on leave to England;

but I was keen on another trip forward with the colonel, and on the morning of the 4th Wilde and I joined him on a prospecting ride, looking for new positions for the batteries.

It was a journey that quickened all one's powers of observation. We went forward a full five miles, over yellow churned wastes that four days before had been crowded battlefields; past shell-pocked stretches that had been made so by our own guns. At first we trotted along a straight road that a short time before had been seamed with Boche trenches and barbed wire. The colonel's mare was fresh and ready to shy at heaps of stones and puddles. "She's got plenty of spirit still," said the colonel, "but she's not the mare she was before the hit in the neck at Commenohon. However, I know her limitations, and she's all right providing I spare her going uphill."

Just outside the half-mile long village of R—— he pointed to a clump of broken bricks and shattered beams. "That's the farm that D Battery insisted was G—— Farm, when we were at C—— Post on September 19," he explained. "The day I was with him at the 'O.P.,' Wood couldn't understand why he was unable to see his shells fall. He telephoned to the battery to check the range they were firing at, and then decided that the map was wrong. When I told him to examine his map more closely

he spotted the 140 contour between this place and G—— Farm. It made G—— Farm invisible from the 'O.P.' Of course G—— Farm is 2000 yards beyond this place."

We reached a battered cross-roads 1200 yards due south of D—— Post, that cockpit of the bitter hand-to-hand fighting of Sept. 19th and 20th. A couple of captured Boche 42's—the dreaded high-velocity gun—stood tucked behind a low grassless bank, their curved, muddy, camouflaged shields blending with the brown desolation of the landscape. Two American soldiers saluted the colonel gravely—lean, tanned, straight-eyed young fellows. For the first time I noticed that the Americans were wearing puttees like our men, instead of the canvas gaiters which they sported when first in France. Their tin hats and box-respirators have always been the same make as ours.

The colonel stopped to look at his map. "We'll turn north-east here and cross the canal at B——," he said. We rode round newly-dug shell-slits, and through gaps in the tangled, rusted barbed wire; at one spot we passed eighteen American dead, laid out in two neat rows, ready for removal to the cemetery that the U.S. Army established in the neighbourhood; we went within twenty yards of a disabled tank that a land mine had rendered *hors de combat*; we came across another tank lumbered half-way across a road. "Tanks always seem to



take it into their heads to collapse on a main road and interrupt traffic," muttered the colonel sardonically.

There were twelve hundred yards of a straight sunken road for us to ride through before we reached B—. That road was a veritable gallery of German dead. They lay in twos and threes, in queer horrible postures, along its whole unkempt length, some of them with blackened decomposing faces and hands, most of them newly killed, for this was a road that connected the outer defences of the Hindenburg Line with the network of wire and trenches that formed the Hindenburg Line itself. "Best sight I've seen since the war," said Wilde with satisfaction. And if the colonel and myself made no remark we showed no disagreement. Pity for dead Boche finds no place in the average decent-minded man's composition. Half a dozen of our armoured cars, wheels off, half-burned, or their steering apparatus smashed, lay on the entrenched and wired outskirts of B—, part of the Hindenburg Line proper. In the village itself we found Red Cross cars filling up with wounded; Boche prisoners were being used as stretcher-bearers; groups of waiting infantry stood in the main street; runners fitted to and fro.

"We'll leave our horses here," said the colonel; and the grooms guided them to the shelter of a high solid wall. The colonel, Wilde, and I ascended the main street, mak-

ing eastward. A couple of 5·9's dropped close to the northern edge of the village as we came out of it. We met a party of prisoners headed by two officers, one short, fat, nervous, dark, bespectacled; the other bearded, lanky, nonchalant, and of good carriage. He carried a gold-nobbed Malacca cane. Neither officer looked at us as we passed. The tall one reminded me of an officer among the first party of Boche prisoners I saw in France, in August 1916. His arrogant disdainful air had roused in me a gust of anger that made me glad I was in the war.

We went through a garden transformed into a dust-bin, and dipped down a hummocky slope that rose again to a chalky ridge. Shells were screaming overhead in quick succession now, and we walked fast, making for a white boulder that looked as if it would offer shielded observation and protection. We found ourselves near the top of one of the giant air-shafts that connected with the canal tunnel. Tufts of smoke spouted up at regular intervals on the steep slope behind the village below us. "We're in time to see a barrage," remarked the colonel, pulling out his binoculars. "Our people are trying to secure the heights. I didn't know that G— was quite clear of Boche. There was fighting there yesterday."

"There are some Boche in a trench near that farm on the left," he added a minute

later, after sweeping the hills opposite with his glasses. "Can you see them?"

I made out what did appear to be three grey tin-helmeted figures, but I could see nothing of our infantry. The shelling went on, but time pressed, and the colonel, packing up his glasses, led us eastwards again, down to a light railway junction, and through a quaint little ravine lined with willow-trees. Many German dead lay here. One young soldier, who had died with his head thrown back resting against a green bank, his blue eyes open to the sky, wore a strangely perfect expression of peace and rest. Up another ascending sunken road. The Boche guns seemed to have switched, and half a dozen shells skimmed the top of the road, causing us to wait. We looked again at the fight being waged on the slopes behind the village. Our barrage had lifted, but we saw no sign of advancing infantry.

The colonel turned to me suddenly and said, "I'm going to select positions about a thousand yards south of where we are at this moment—along the valley. Wilde will come with me. You go back and pick up the horses, and meet us at Q— Farm. I expect we shall be there almost as soon as you."

I followed the direct road to return to B—. A few shells dropped on either side of the road, which was ob-

viously a hunting-ground for the Boche gunners. At least a dozen British dead lay at intervals huddled against the sides of the road. One of them looked to be an artillery officer, judged by his field-boots and spurs. But the top part of him was covered by a rainproof coat, and I saw no cap.

Q— Farm was a farm only in name. There was no wall more than three feet high left standing; the whole place was shapeless, stark, blasted into nothingness. In the very centre of the mournful chaos lay three disembowelled horses and an overturned Boche ammunition waggon. The shells were still on the shelves. They were Yellow Cross, the deadliest of the Boche mustard-gas shells.

I went on leave next morning, and got a motor-car lift from Peronne as far as Amiens. Before reaching Villers-Bretonneux, of glorious fearful memories, we passed through Warfusee-Abancourt, a shell of its former self, a brick heap, a monument of devastation. An aged man and a slim white-faced girl were standing by the farm cart that had brought them there, the first civilians I had seen since August. The place was deserted save for them. In sad bereavement they looked at the cruel desolation around them.

"My God," said my companion, interpreting my inmost thought, "what a home-coming!"

*(To be concluded.)*



## GEORGE MEREDITH AND OTHERS.

It is not easy to understand the meaning and purpose of Mr S. M. Ellis's book about George Meredith.<sup>1</sup> Mr Ellis seems to have no other qualification for the work which he undertakes but consanguinity. He is George Meredith's second cousin, and if that relationship should be a proper cause of biography, then another terror is added to death. Moreover, George Meredith demands in critic or biographer something more than the accident of common blood. He is not the easiest writer in the world to understand, and it is clear from his performances that Mr Ellis is all untrained in the art of letters. One advantage he possesses: he knows to a hair the pedigree of his victim. But that is a doubtful advantage, and when the "exclusive information" is used as Mr Ellis uses it, it serves only to create prejudice, to cast a shadow upon the novelist's talent.

The great secret which Mr Ellis has to impart to the world is that Meredith's father was a tailor at Portsmouth, and that the Great Mal, who being dead yet overtops the living personages of *Evan Harrington*, was Meredith's grandfather. The secret was already shared by thousands before ever Mr Ellis put pen to paper. Readers of

Marryat's novels might have been aware, if they chose, of the portentous truth, and being aware of it might have let it rest. Mr Ellis cannot let it rest. He turns it over and mumbles it with a kind of ghoulish interest. He leaves no irrelevant detail undiscussed. He presents us with a picture of the shop, and describes, with the air of one who has spared no research, the bow-windowed parlour in which the handsome daughters of Melchizedek Meredith were wont to sit, and tells us precisely how far the tailoring workshop extended towards the back.

And Mr Ellis, having set forth a vast deal of tittle-tattle, which in no way concerns the public, proceeds to lecture Meredith upon the sin of holding his tongue. "Whatever the causes that prompted Meredith's reticence on the subject of his origin," says the biographer, "he was singularly ill-advised in preserving that silence to the end." What nonsense! It was no part of Meredith's business to indulge the public curiosity. Why should he have obtruded the story of his birth and youth upon those who had never professed a great interest in him or his works, until he was taken up, as copy, by the journalists? The poet and novelist might

<sup>1</sup> George Meredith. His Life and Friends in Relation to his Work. By S. M. Ellis. London: Grant Richards, Ltd.

weave into the warp of his work as much or as little autobiography as he chose. He could not be asked to satisfy the craving for inapposite gossip of every Paul Pry who was at the pains to call upon him.

The truth is that Mr Ellis's book is a direct encouragement to the snobbishness which is always rampant in a democratic country. The democracy dislikes greatness of any kind, even while it marvels at it, and is never so happy as when it can belittle those who stand above it. In this act of belittling it shows neither justice nor consistency. If a man is of noble lineage, the democrat is down upon him at once, asserting that he must be judged only by what he is. On the other hand, he who makes his own name and fame is asked insolently whence he came, lest he reach too lofty a point of arrogance. He must not be allowed all the credit for what he has achieved, and if snobbishness can in any way besmirch him it will not lose the chance.

Suppose for a moment that Meredith had been the son of a duke. Had he breathed the horrid secret to the newspapers, he would have lain for ever under the democrat's ban. Under the ban he still lies, because he does not appear to have given out from his house-top the simple truth, equally inapposite, that he was a tailor's son. The natural result of Mr Ellis's book has been that more than one pious Radical, falling into the trap,

has denounced Meredith for a snob, without perceiving that the charge recoils upon his own head. But, indeed, it is all a barren quest. Nothing that Mr Ellis tells us in his book adds to our real knowledge of Meredith. A poet is his own sufficient biographer, and we may find in Meredith's writings all the knowledge of the man himself which he chose to give us. Whatever he was, he was no snob. The child of romance, he had a perfect right to seek the place of his origin, if he would, among the hills of Wales. And Mr Ellis, by laying a foolish stress upon that which does not matter, proves himself an accomplice in the general conspiracy to misunderstand the novelist's works.

Moreover, Mr Ellis is at great trouble to explain the dignity of his own descent. Though his grandmother was a daughter of the great Melchizedek, he is linked to the shop only by the female line, and he tells us with pride that wherever England's need was sorest there was an Ellis ready to fight her battle for her. A noted crusader in the service of Richard I., a gallant soldier who served under Earl Warrenne against the Scots at Dunbar, a distinguished Cavalier who defended Rose Castle against the Parliament, a captain who fought at Oudenarde, and a commander who was at Quebec when Wolfe fell — these are some of his ancestors. It is plain, therefore, that he can look



upon his unfortunate cousinship without remorse. But why, oh why, in the name of all that is irrelevant, does he drag his own august pedigree into a life of George Meredith? He reminds me of a zealous cab-driver at Stratford-on-Avon, who having driven me to the house in which Shakespeare was born, presently pointed out to me with all the pride of a rival his own respectable birthplace.

Mr Ellis is not merely irrelevant. He treats his distinguished cousin sometimes with a kind of patronage, sometimes with an injustice, for which there is no excuse. He seems to think that a novelist is always on oath, that if he introduces a character from real life into fiction, he must not deviate a hair's-breadth from the literal facts. For instance, he assumes that Major Strike, in 'Evan Harrington,' was suggested by his grandfather, and is a definite and purposed libel upon that gentleman. "It may be pertinently asked," he says, "in what way Sir S. B. Ellis offended George Meredith that he should be the victim of such a bitter attack." Such a question may not be asked, even impertinently. A novelist chooses his personages as he will, and as his work demands, and therefore there is no attack at all. It was necessary to the story of Evan Harrington that Evan's sister Caroline should be ill-matched by a martinet of a husband. Whether she was or was not thus matched in life is

wholly beside the point. And Mr Ellis, in imputing to Meredith a superfluous piece of spite, does little justice either to his victim's character or to his own intelligence.

These indiscretions are bad enough. It is bad enough also that Mr Ellis should drag painfully to the light Meredith's work done ungratefully and perforce for this journal or that. We have no right to judge an artist by articles which he has forgotten and suppressed. But Mr Ellis is far worse than indiscreet when he tries, after his clumsy fashion, to discuss the relations of Meredith with his first wife and with his son Arthur. Matters of such delicacy as this cannot but elude his understanding, and we have not the slightest warrant that the facts are as he states them. Who is he that he should explain Meredith's refusal to see his wife by a "horror of illness and the circumstances of death"? Who is he that he should grant to Meredith or withhold from him any excuse "in mitigation of censure"? Nor does his treatment of Meredith and his son Arthur show any finer tact. He blunders monstrously where good-feeling demands that he should walk warily, and attempts to atone for his necessary ignorance by a dogmatic statement of thoughts and sentiments, about which only two men, both of them dead, have any right to speak. Surely the supposed injury of Major Strike is magnificently avenged!

Mr E. B. Osborn's book, 'The New Elizabethans' (London: John Lane), is at once tragic and glorious. It commemorates a generation, wise, strong, and brave, which has sacrificed itself to the cause of England. Now that the war is over, we can count something of our cost with that sad tranquillity which peace has brought us. We know at last what we are asked to pay for victory. The generation is gone which would have shaped by its achievements and its counsel the world we live in. It is gone, with all its hopes and its courage and its understanding. It is not gone in vain, and, happily for us who are left, its high deeds are accomplished, and some at least of its songs are not unsung.

We knew but dimly what a treasure was ours before we lost it. Perhaps, had not the war interrupted our lightheartedness, we should never have known its real worth. With a noble, unconscious serenity these men left their books and their crafts and their sports, and in the glad spirit of youth went forth to save for their country the priceless gifts of happiness and security which they alone cannot enjoy. If we are saved by their sacrifice, the poorest return we can make is to keep their names enshrined always in our hearts, and to remember rather the glory and valour of their deeds than the tragedy of our loss.

Mr Osborn calls them the

New Elizabethans, and truly they have many points in common with their ancestors of the sixteenth century. Like them, they were skilled in arts as in arms. Like them, they looked for the promise of their curiosity in all that life held of knowledge and adventure. Like them, they did not hold back an hour when their country asked their help. But nevertheless they were essentially modern Englishmen, who owed what they were and what they thought to the training which school and university had given them. They were, many of them, deeper in scholarship than the Elizabethans, and perhaps less inclined to ruffle it bombastically. In style, also, they were more modest than their forerunners. They wrote English with a finer economy of words, if with less force, and betrayed in their works a delicate self-conscious artistry of which many of the true Elizabethans were incapable. Walter Raleigh, great poet as he was, fashioned his verses as though his hand were more apt for sword than pen. Those whom Mr Osborn calls the New Elizabethans went forth from their homes to fight the Germans with the happy nonchalance of poets. If we would find a name for them, I think it would befit them more closely to be called the New Athenians. As I read Mr Osborn's vivid sketches, as there was set before me the cheerful resolution of this heroic generation, the famous oration of Pericles came



to my mind, and I could not but draw the parallel once more between England and Athens on the one hand, between Germany and Sparta on the other. The strange resemblance which Prussia bears to Sparta need not be elaborated here. There is scarce a word in the funeral speech of Pericles which may not be truthfully applied to those who laid down their lives for England. "We have opened unto us by our courage"—thus spoke Pericles—"all seas and lands, and set up eternal monuments on all sides, both of the evil we have done to our enemies and the good we have done to our friends. Such is the city for which these men (thinking it no reason to lose it), valiantly fighting, have died."

Such as Athens was, England is to-day, and her sons went to battle with the same simplicity which Pericles celebrates. "They fled from shame," said he, "but with their bodies they stood out the battle; and so in a moment, whilst fortune inlineth neither way, left their lives not in fear but in opinion of victory." No less shall be said of our own brave men, and our esteem of them shall be as high as that exacted by Pericles of his countrymen who survived. "When the power of the city shall seem great to you," he said, "consider then that it was purchased by valiant men, and by men who knew their duty." And there is solace still in the noble words spoken by Pericles to those

who mourned their sons: "Wherefore I will not so much bewail as comfort you the parents that are present of these men. For you know that whilst they lived they were obnoxious to manifold calamities, whereas, whilst you are in grief, they only are happy that die honourably, as these have done, to whom it hath been granted, not only to live in prosperity but to die in it."

Pericles thought that for famous men all the earth is a sepulchre, that their virtues should be testified not only by inscriptions in stone, but by the unwritten record of the mind. The record of the mind, if unwritten, is immortal, but we ask to-day the inscription in stone or on paper also. For they who saved their country shall remain for ever of a glorious example to others. The torch which they lit shall never be extinguished. It shall be kept alight and handed on to countless generations, a clear symbol that England, which has never lacked saviours, will not perish so long as her sons listen to her call, as they listened in 1914. Why did they obey the call? Because they were they, and England was England—that, I think, is answer enough. But some of them have analysed their motives, and Mr Robert Nichols, author of 'Arduous and Endurances,' has set forth the reasons why the undergraduates of Oxford heard the appeal to arms. Here they are: "A feeling that England's honour was not only imperilled, but would no longer



exist if we made our Belgian pact a mere 'scrap of paper'; sympathy with France; that genuine, but concealed desire, which exists in almost every youthful breast, to suffer for others; love of England; a vague and intense idealism . . . to be granted a high, immediate, realisable purpose; the pure spirit of adventure; curiosity; fear of the world's censure," and much else besides. No doubt all these motives helped to drive the young soldiers to the war; and yet, when we consider them, they are but variants of patriotism and adventure. Englishmen went out to fight the Germans, because they could not draw back, because without the slightest touch of arrogance they knew that they were wanted, and that was enough for them. And as the impulse was always the same, so they all accepted their duty in the same spirit of cheerful endurance. The gifts which go to the making of a soldier were already theirs. They seem to have been born with a sense of leadership. Never before was a system of education so splendidly justified as that which is given in our public schools and universities, and which is daily abused by the camp-followers of the Press. Between the training which Germany gave her sons before the war and that which England gave hers there is all the difference which separates efficiency from tolerance. "I think that tolerance is the larger virtue of the two," wrote Charles

Sorley in a passage quoted by Mr Osborn, "and efficiency must be her servant. So I am quite glad to fight against this rebellious servant. In fact, I look at it this way. Suppose my platoon were the world. Then my platoon sergeant would represent efficiency, and I would represent tolerance. And I always take the sternest measures to keep my platoon sergeant in check! I fully appreciate the wisdom of the War Office when they put inefficient officers to rule sergeants. *Adsit omen.*"

That is perfectly true. Our "new Elizabethans" may have been inefficient technically when they first joined up, but they already possessed the qualities which cannot be achieved by art. They had learned how to obey, and could therefore exact obedience. They had mastered the discipline which enabled them to take whatever fell to their lot without flinching and in good temper. The custom of their public school, the freedom of their university, had taught them the two lessons—how to follow and how to lead—so that they came to the Army neither unready nor untrained. And many of them, trained to the same end, were trained also by the same road. In almost every page, as you read the slight records of their lives, you are reminded how much the writers of Greece and Rome meant to them. Of Julian and Billy Grenfell it is said that they "read Greek and Latin for the delight of it, and what they read became part of their very



being." If you would know what the classics meant to Charles Sorley, read his fragment upon Helen, quoted by Mr Osborn, and see how clearly he understood the simple truth, so often forgotten, that Homer's world was a world not of archæologists but of men. And this lore, this understanding, though despised by the prophets of second-rate efficiency, are by no means a bad equipment for a soldier.

"Being made perfect in a little while, he fulfilled long years." There is scarce one of those celebrated by Mr Osborn to whom these words would not apply, and the records of them are necessarily brief. They were making preparations for life rather than achieving life. They followed many callings, they displayed many talents. Harold Chapin the playwright, Wilding the tennis-player, Charles Sorley the poet, Dixon Scott a cloistered critic, Charles Lister, the Grenfells, Colwyn Philipps and his brother, Hugh and John Charlton, whose artistry is proved by their beautiful drawings, — they all had a right to look forward to happy lives, to the leading of their contemporaries whither they would by the exercise of their own proper gifts. What they would have done with their lives it is useless to hazard a guess. And yet of some of them the purpose and destiny were already revealed. Charles Sorley, for instance, could not have helped being a poet. Literature was in his blood and mind. He wrote with equal

delicacy prose and verse. He was fast making his own style, his own method of criticism. He was discovering the truth of men and things as he went along. How wise was his comment upon the Germans in time of peace! "They have no idea beyond 'the State,'" he wrote, "and have put me off Socialism for the rest of my life. They are not the kind of people (as the Irish R.M. puts it) 'you would borrow half-a-crown from to get drunk with.'" And the war, no doubt, taught him even more of the German character than he had learned in peace. Truly he was gaining a wealth of experience for the future. Yet is he happier than some others. He fell at twenty years of age, and left behind him a sheaf of true poems unmarred by immaturity.

Charles Sorley was a poet, and in his craft above them all. Julian Grenfell and his brother Billy were scholars, and how much more besides! Mr Maurice Baring says of them: "Like Castor and Pollux they are together now, shining in some other place." While they shone on earth, they were thrice fortunate, in talent, friendship, and character. Of all those recorded by Mr Osborn, Julian Grenfell had, I think, the greatest mastery of life. To him all things seemed possible, and the joyousness wherewith he confronted whatever lay in his way, made sweet the bitterest experience. More closely than any of them he approached the Elizabethan ideal. He



was a fighter, with his fists or in the trenches, by habit and temperament. He was a natural poet, and there is in all that he wrote the force which may only be detected in the poetry of men of action. His verses were struck out of him, so to say, by an emotional blow. The poem, "In to Battle," could have been written only by a fighting man, and is secure of immortality. There is an exultation in every line of it, which it were hard to match:—

"The fighting man shall from the sun  
Take warmth, and life from the  
glowing earth;  
Speed with the light-foot winds to run,  
And with the trees to newer birth;  
And find, when fighting shall be done,  
Great rest, and fulness after  
dearth."

To Julian Grenfell death alone could bring cessation of fighting. Yet there was, of course, another side to his character. Hear what his brother Billy, with a fine recognition of his qualities, wrote about him: "You knew all the mysticism and idealism, and that strange streak of melancholy, which underlay Julian's war-whooping, sun-bathing, fearless exterior. I love to think he has attained that perfection and fulness of life for which he sought so untiringly. I seem to see him cheering me on in moments of stress here, with even more vivid power. There is no one whose victory over the grave can be more complete."

These are but a few of the brave men who found a nobler way in which to fulfil themselves than the pleasant paths

of art and letters and sport. And they are but a few upon the edge of the long, long list. The names of others will come to every one's mind—names which will never be forgotten, and which cannot be too often celebrated. Of the right breed was Raymond Asquith, upon whom the kindly fairies had lavished all the gifts. He was a scholar, a wit, and a true artist in life. He was born into the world a natural aristocrat. There was about him an air of gay distinction which could elude nobody. And to him all things came easy—scholarship, a vivid understanding of modern literature, even the duller intricacies of the law. He could work hard without fussing, without being seen to work, and he was always ready to talk and to laugh. Nor were there many who could talk better or enter more willingly into the joys of companionship. What his future might have been is hard to say. Few of his friends could picture him immersed in the "intrigue and commonplace" of politics. Yet it is certain that in July 1914 he would have laughed the laugh of scorn at any one who had suggested that he should find a career in the Army. He was not a natural soldier, and even after he had served in France he smiled ironically at the incongruity, as he thought it, that he, a "middle-class, middle-aged" man, should be an officer in the Guards. He was as little "middle-aged" as he was



"middle-class"; and he proved, as his friends knew he would prove, a gallant and capable leader of men. With the rest of his kind, he refused to accept the kindly shelter of a staff appointment. He preferred to share the burden of the battle with his regiment, and fell fighting, like the brave soldier that he was.

Another who deserves a place among the New Elizabethans is Arthur Studd, who never heard a shot fired and knew not the hard discipline of the trenches. A painter of no small talent, he would have pursued his craft in peace and tranquillity of soul unto the end had not the war come upon us in 1914. Too old to trail a pike or shoulder a rifle, he chose for himself the heaviest task he could find at home. His brushes and his paints were instantly forgotten, and he set about gathering recruits in the unlikeliest places. It is characteristic of him that he chose for his work those counties which cared least and knew least about the war. And when the task of recruiting was over and done, he devoted his life to fighting disaffection and pacifism where he could find them. All unpractised in the art of speaking, he went resolutely into South Wales, combating the influence of the peace-mongers wherever he could find it, making speeches at the street corner, and giving his life to the cause which he believed to be just. The strain and the toil wore him

out; he came back to London, and died a soldier's death in as true a sense as if he had fallen upon the field of battle.

So long as England boasts such sons as these, she need fear neither enmity abroad nor treachery at home. And the more we read of those who fought our battle, the greater and juster cause have we for pride. Here, for instance, is General Sir F. Maurice's 'Forty Days in 1914' (London: Constable), which gives us the clearest account we have had hitherto of our contemptible little army, an account which we cannot read without a thrill. But it is not General Maurice's purpose to thrill his readers. He wishes them to understand how the Germans failed to reach Paris; how the French and the English managed to repel the attack, so long prepared for and so confidently launched. He shows us how the Germans lost the battle by too close a fidelity to the teaching of the great general staff. The one device of the Germans was envelopment. This was the doctrine which had been taught assiduously to their soldiers ever since the war of 1870. And it is happy for us that in their pedantry they had no doubt of the sovereign efficacy of their plan. "In that teaching," says General Maurice, "the German general staff of the present day has been brought up; but, fortunately for the world, the successors of the elder Moltke were not in 1914 of his calibre, and

though their plan was flexible and adaptable to the changes and chances of war, the idea of envelopment had become with them such a fetish that it was for a time at least regarded consciously or subconsciously as an end in itself rather than as a means to the one end of operations of war—the decisive defeat of the enemy." And so the stern, well-satisfied bigotry of Germany showed us the way to save the world.

With equal lucidity General Maurice describes the French plan, the German march through Belgium, the retreat from Mons, until he arrives at "the miracle of the Marne," of which miracle he gives the clearest explanation that yet has been seen. It is no part of his purpose to exaggerate

the achievement of the British Army, but he does such justice as has been done nowhere else to the part played by the British Army in this glorious episode. He is convinced "that history will decide that it was the crossing of the Marne in the early hours of the 9th September by the British Army which turned the scale against von Kluck and saved Manoury at a time of crisis." And he gives good reason for his conviction. Many histories will be written of the war, and the final history will be read by none that is alive to-day. But in the meantime here is a story of forty days, which for vividness and vigour cannot be beaten, and which may confidently be commended to all our readers.

CHARLES WHIBLEY.



## THE STORY OF OUR SUBMARINES.—III.

BY KLAXON.

THE work of the submarines on the anti-submarine patrols, minelaying trips, &c., was useful, and at times exciting; but it must be remembered that the main duty of the flotillas lay in watching for the enemy's fleet, and that this duty continued throughout the war. Boats were stationed watching both the entrance to the Baltic and the several exits from the Bight right up to the date of the signing of the Armistice. For the first two years of the war the duty of these boats was to attack the enemy if seen, and to signal afterwards that the enemy had been met. The signalling question then was a secondary consideration. The boats were considered less as scouts than as torpedo-boats, especially in view of the fact that in the early part of the war their wireless range was limited. When "E 23" (Lieut.-Commander Turner) torpedoed the *Westfalen* in August 1916, he rose to the surface as the enemy drew out of sight and signalled the enemy's position to the Commander-in-Chief. It is true that no decisive result came of the signal, as the enemy turned home when barely clear of the Bight, and the Grand Fleet's attempt to out him off, as usually happened, failed again; but that signal was the first clear

"enemy report" given by a unit of the Bight Patrol. It was then that new long-range wireless sets were installed in all boats, amid the curses of the submarine officers, who at that date were distinctly narrow-minded on the question of how their boats could be most usefully employed. They looked upon it as a personal insult that their limited accommodation should be cut down by the extra instruments supplied, and also that (this was where the shoe pinched) their splendid independence on patrol should be lost to them now that their lordships could call them up direct from the wireless at Whitehall. But they soon discovered that the idea was right, and that their loss of independence weighed nothing against the new strategic use which had been found for the submarine as a fleet scout. Orders were issued that the boats were on no account to fire at the enemy if he was seen coming out, until a wireless signal had been made to Commander-in-Chief. This, of course, implied that the boat could not attack the outward-bound High Sea Fleet at all, as the signal would have to be made from surface trim, and by the time it was acknowledged the chance of a torpedo attack would have gone by. If the enemy was seen homeward



bound, the submarines were at liberty to fire at them; but outward-bound squadrons were safe from under-water attack. A submarine officer was heard to explain the reason for these orders by the light of his own logic: "The Commander-in-Chief won't let us fire at them coming out, because he wants 'em for himself, and thinks if we butt in it discourages them and they lose their enthusiasm; I suppose he's right, but it looks a bit selfish. . . ."

During the last two years of the war, the enemy gradually discovered that such orders as these must have been given. The Naval Armistice Commission to Germany has heard some interesting sidelights on the war from the officers of the German Commission. A good deal of the information volunteered has to be left unconfirmed owing to the lack of opportunities for checking it, but in cases where it can be corroborated by our own information, it can be seen that the Germans see no object now in concealment or perversion of facts. The following is from a German Commander, a dignified solemn-featured figure standing rigidly on the bridge of an Allied destroyer, his face turned to the bank of the Kiel Canal that slid past him—a man who felt clearly the disgrace and humiliation that had come upon his country:—

"We wondered why, when we made an excursion, we were not fired at. We knew you

had submarines all round the Bight, and our ships even saw periscopes, but no torpedoes came. We thought after a while that it was an order,—that we were being watched and reported, but left unmolested till the Grand Fleet should come. I remember when we came out one night and we heard the wireless speak by Hiorn's Reef. The operator heard it, but we could not block the signals. If we had blocked we would have been yet found—our position would have been known by the Directional Wireless in England. We heard him sending by full power, and by the nature of his signal (it was so short and quick) we knew the purport of it. Then we went on, but all the time we knew it. We knew that we might meet the Fleet. It is impossible to leave the Bight without being reported. Then on the return by Hiorn's Reef the torpedo came and the *Moltke* was hit. She was badly damaged, but we towed her in. I do not know if it was the same submarine that saw us go out. I do not think so. You do not know? No? It was perhaps the same, but you had many boats patrolling. The Zeppelins claimed many to be sunk with bombs. It was not so? No? The flying men are all full of imagination. It is the vibration of the engines that affects the eyes. . . .

". . . Yes, I was at the Skageraksolaght (the Jutland Battle). We were not hit. Some ships were badly hit. One ship [probably the *Seydlitz*



—Author] had an artillery officer on board. It was his holiday, and he spent it on board her with his friend. He said after that he would prefer a year on the Western Front to twenty minutes' naval bombardment. The doctors were all killed and the ship was on fire. The shells came into both casualty stations. Did many English ships receive hits from torpedoes? The *Marlborough* only? That is strange, for we fired many. Yes, the Emperor said it was a victory, but if it had been a victory we would have known it without his having to tell us so. The sailors were not persuaded so. . . ."

(I seem to be quoting irrelevant matter here, but German mentality at any rate bears on the submarine subject, even if indirectly.)

"... The *Tiger* is not sunk? No? We thought not—we heard later that it was a dummy *Tiger* that was torpedoed. We were sure before that it was the real ship that sank, and the officer that fired was decorated. It is all right, because since then he has earned the decoration for other things, so that he does not mind. A lot of things we did not understand for long. Our submarines have seen your K-boats at sea. They saw them through the periscope, and could read the numbers, but they said they must be fast submarine-hunters, like the Americans were written to be building. Then one day a U-boat saw through his periscope a K-boat steaming, and then in one minute the K was submerged,

so we knew it was really a submarine. What was the submarine that torpedoed the U 51 in the mouth of the Jahde river? That was a fine attack. The U-boat was not yet out of the river on its voyage. Did the English boat get home? Yes. I am glad—she had many depth-charges to face. Your mine-laying submarines were dangerous. They had a trick of following our mine-sweeping boats up the channel. They did not lay mines until the channel was swept and reported free. It was well organised . . . and also the submarine that struck the mine and yet got back. The captain of her is to be congratulated; we heard of it and we thought she was very lucky—I think it was at Amrum bank she struck the mine. I think it was an English mine; one of our mines would have put her in pieces. I do not know why the Heligoland trawlers did not see her as she was passing home to England. . . ."

I must just hark back to the question of the U-boat here, as the Inspection Commissions in Germany that are seeing to the handing over or destruction of the U-boats bring back their reports here, and their reports are full of interest, though perhaps they contain little that is news to the Admiralty. There are now 135 German submarines in England, and there are more to come yet. The building-yards of Germany show that a huge effort was to have been made along the lines of submarine war in the spring and summer of



1919. Every available yard was working at full power at the date of the cessation of hostilities, and the work was almost entirely on submarine construction. The only other work being done was on new and more powerful destroyers and on standard merchant ships—the latter for after-the-war reconstruction. Yards that had never before done warship work of any kind were fully employed on building small submarines. The big yards were given all the new submarine-cruiser work to do. The submarine cruisers were a comparative failure on trials, as were also the big submarine mine-layers of the U-118 class; this must have been a sad disappointment to the enemy, as one can judge by the number of big boats preparing that he had set his heart on a campaign of thorough frightfulness on the American coast in the spring. Work on the new big surface ships had stopped in the spring of 1918, partly owing to the shortage of nickel and chiefly owing to their whole stake having been put on submarines and not on the Fleet. The German mentality never seems to have grasped the fundamental rule of sea-fighting—that commerce-destruction will never win a war, and that only the defeat or mastery of the main enemy fleet can bring command of the sea.

Such yards as the two at Hamburg (Vulcan and Blohm & Voss) are typical of the method of construction. On November 11 these two yards had seventy-two submarines

under construction. At the same time at Blohm & Voss's yard the battle-cruiser *Mackensen* lay abandoned in the water just as she had been launched in the spring of 1918, and the battleship *Ersatz Worth* lay half-finished on the building-slip. The submarines were on the slips in rows—each row representing a group of perhaps seven boats of the same class. Lying alongside each row were parts and fittings waiting to be built in: for instance, seven bows (complete with sterns and torpedo-tube pads), seven sterns (complete with hydroplane-guards, &c.), seven bow top-strakes, seven stern top-strakes, &c.—in fact, one was reminded strongly of what one had heard of American motor-car factories. The whole idea was of quick and standardised production, and the two points that occurred at once to the observer were—"There would have been a deluge of a rush of new stuff into commission in the spring," and then, "How on earth were they going to provide skilled crews for such a lot of boats all at once?"

The latter question is still difficult to answer, even if one takes into account a system of "compulsory volunteering," and also the fact that standardised boats can be worked by standardised and partly-trained men. What it would have come to was indicated by the trend of U-boat war results in 1918. It would have implied a good deal of real work being performed by a few experienced and trained crews, and a lot of blank trips and half-hearted



performances by a mass of other crews, the mortality among the latter rising to a terrible percentage. It will always be the same; a good personnel will do well in any boat—a bad personnel will do badly, however good the boat is.

In the remarks quoted from a German officer, I have referred to three incidents in connection with the activities of our own submarines. I will give them in their order, as they appeared to the officers concerned. It was "E 42" (Lieutenant C. Allen) that met the German battle-cruisers on the 25th April 1918, and, the enemy being homeward bound, fired a torpedo into the *Moltke* as she passed Hiorn's Reef:—

"A.M. 0630. While on surface, sighted hostile seaplane—high up, but close.

"Dived to 60 feet (4 bombs). Surfaced for observations. Saw smoke bearing N.E. Dived.

"Sighted a battle-cruiser escorted by three torpedo-boats. Altered course, and proceeded utmost speed to attack. Fired starboard bow tube (quarter shot). Range 2000-2500 yards. Heard sound of explosion a long way off—possible hit."

(The "possible hit," as a matter of fact, caused the *Moltke* to be towed in a very precarious condition all the way home.)

"About 5 depth-charges and 20 lance-bombs were dropped at me after the shot. Courses as requisite for getting clear."

The next incident, of the attack in the Weser river, has a story behind it.

Lieut. Varley ("H 5") reports as follows:—

"11th July 1916: Fixed by Ter-schelling Light. Proceeded towards

Ems." (At this moment "H 5," being bored with the patrol billet assigned to her, and thirsting for trouble, left her patrol to see what was going on in Germany—Author.)

"12th July, 2 A.M.: Dived off Borkum. 10.25 P.M.: dived to avoid destroyer. 10.50: surface, proceeding east, sighted enemy patrol vessel, but steamed round her without being seen.

"13th July, 1 A.M.: Sighted Wangeroog and Rote Land Lights. 9.58 P.M.: sighted destroyer about 2 miles N.W. from Aussen Jahde Lightship.

"14th July, 12.34 A.M.: Dived—several destroyers of G 101 class in sight. Attacked same. 10 A.M.: sighted hostile submarine—attacked same. Torpedoed submarine with one torpedo amidship. Surface to look for survivors. Was put down immediately by destroyer, who opened fire. 10.41: altered course N., and went to bottom in 18 fathoms. Heard loud explosion. Destroyers sweeping for us all day.

"During my attack there was just enough sea to make depth-keeping difficult. I fired two torpedoes, allowing 10 knots speed. One torpedo hit just before conning-tower.

"Previous to this, on the 12th, the periscope had become very stiff to turn, and would not lower as far as the jumping-wire. During dark hours I endeavoured to rectify same, but while doing so was forced to dive, and so lost all the tools and parts of the centre bush, which left the periscope in the same condition throughout the trip. While attacking, it took two men besides myself to turn the periscope. For this reason I did not think it advisable to attack the destroyers after having sunk the submarine. After torpedoing submarine, I proceeded four miles north, and lay on the bottom in 18 fathoms. Many vessels were heard in close proximity. Several explosions, one very heavy one. On one occasion a sweep-wire scraped the whole length of the boat along the port side, and a vessel was heard to pass directly overhead.

"I very much regret to report my slight transgression from orders. . . ."



The Navy, however, takes no cognisance of zeal, if misplaced. There is a story of a sailor of the Napoleonic wars who took a fort from the French single-handed. The resultant row with his Commanding Officer, who had been waiting some hours with all his men drawn up in order to carry out that identical duty in due military form, caused him to remark that "He'd never take another fort for them as long as he lived." The captain of the *Maidstone*, as is the way of the Service, shielded his subordinate from the wrath of My Lords, who were naturally aghast at an officer having left his assigned patrol area; but having taken the responsibility for the fault of his bull-terrier, he proceeded to lay into him thoroughly himself, while commenting publicly as follows:—

"Lieutenant Varley is a very able and gallant submarine officer, and although there is no possible excuse for his having disregarded his orders and proceeded to the Weser, it is submitted that his skilful and successful attack on the German submarine, in spite of a defective periscope, and his subsequent conduct, especially during the critical time when he was being swept for by destroyers with explosive sweeps, may be taken into consideration."

It was, however, a year before Lieutenant Varley was decorated for this action, My Lords deciding that after that interval the example he had created would be forgotten.

I have mentioned the question of our own boats' experiences of depth-charges. A few

instances of both English and German anti-submarine strafing may be of interest. At the beginning of the war the German depth-charge was a thing of contempt, and its English counterpart was nearly as useless. Submarines were sunk in those days by what might be called "accidental" methods. The boat either made a mistake and was then rammed or destroyed by gunfire, or else it met a mine or ran into nets. Depth-charges were not big enough to be dangerous, and it was not realised that even a big depth-charge must explode very close to the boat's hull before actual damage is caused. Moral effect is, of course, a different thing: there is a case of a U-boat surrendering as a result of one rivet having been knocked out of her hull by a comparatively distant explosion. That, of course, is a matter of personnel; and the depth-charges we used often had a remarkable effect, although no structural damage whatever had been caused by them. When our big depth-charges were first supplied, patrol boats and destroyers carried but few of them and were expected to be sparing in their use—in fact, they were not supposed to use them unless a fair chance was seen of an almost direct hit. Later, in 1917, the supply exceeded the demand—at least the demand on the previous scale—and anti-submarine vessels were supplied with just as many as they could comfortably stow on their decks;



while orders were issued that any patch of water in which there was the faintest possibility or suspicion of a U-boat being present was to be sprinkled with depth-charges until there was no possibility of anything intact remaining in range. It is a feature of life in submarines that one always gives the hunters credit for seeing more than they do see: one watches a Zeppelin through the periscope—a Zeppelin cruising at perhaps five miles' range away—and one feels a sort of shrinking and an inclination to slip down to ninety feet or so for a spell in the certainty that one's periscope must have been seen. Of course it hasn't, and it probably won't be. One meets a dark shape at night, and one does a "crash dive" at once, heaving a sigh of relief as one sees the gauge show sixty feet. One forgets that a submarine, besides being a much smaller mark to see at night, keeps in all probability a far better look-out than any other class of vessel. In the same way, the explosion of a depth-charge usually sounds closer than it is, and the submarine officer is inclined to jump to the conclusion that it is directly aimed at him or at some indication of his wake. As a matter of fact it is more probably aimed at an oil-patch or a piece of drift-wood some half-mile off, and the ship dropping it has no real knowledge of the submarine's proximity at all.

One German U-boat officer stated that in his last five trips

he had heard an average of 150 charges per trip exploded in his vicinity. It is probable that only a small percentage of these were dropped on clear knowledge of his presence. Being an officer of good morale this profusion had not worried him, but with a less experienced captain some direct results would probably have been gained.

In the notes taken from the conversation of the German officers, the case of the English boat that met a mine at Amrum Bank is mentioned. The case provides a good illustration of what a direct hit, even by a full-sized mine, will *not* do, when the morale of officers and men is of the ideal standard, which every submarine service tries to obtain. (I keep referring to "English boats"; in this case I mean by that that the captain was Canadian, and most of the rest of the crew Scotch or Colonial.) The report is written by the captain of the *Maidstone*.

"Submarine 'H 8 (Lieut.-Commander B. L. Johnson, R.N.R.), when diving at 60 ft. off Ameland Gat on March 22, 1916—heard a slight scraping noise forward, which was followed by a violent explosion. The submarine immediately sank by the bows and struck the bottom at 85 ft. with an inclination of 25° or 30°. . . . The captain reports that although it appeared obvious to all that the boat was lost, the officers and entire crew proceeded to their stations without any signs of excitement, and all orders were carried out promptly and correctly. I would submit that such conduct, in the face of apparent certain death, is an example of which the whole Service may be proud.

"Motors were put to full speed



astern, and Nos. 2 and 3 ballast-tanks were blown—No. 1 being found open to the sea. The submarine then came to the surface. Fuel was then blown, and after some temporary repairs had been made course was shaped for Terschelling, and then Harwich.

"The damage to 'H 8' is serious, the mine having exploded against the starboard forward hydroplane. Both forward hydroplanes and the bow-cap are gone; the upper part of the hull in that vicinity as well as both starboard torpedo-tubes are wrecked. All bulkheads appear to be strained, but luckily the one near the rear of the torpedo-tubes, although leaking, did not give way. . . ."

This boat came out of the Bight and back to Harwich at slow speed on the surface and with a large part of her forward buoyancy destroyed. The luck that watches over the competent took her back unmolested by the enemy. There is a case where the run back of a damaged boat was performed over a yet greater distance through enemy waters.

On the 21st June 1915 submarine "S 1" (Lieut.-Commander Kellett) was ten miles north of Heligoland. She dived during the day on several occasions, owing to sighting one Zeppelin, one seaplane, nineteen trawlers (sweeping in lines), and she also attacked, fired at, and missed a destroyer. Her port engine then broke down completely. On the 22nd, by Hiorn's Reef Light vessel, she sighted a Zeppelin and a Parseval. She worked on engine defects all day while diving.

On the 23rd the starboard engine broke down completely, and she continued to work on defects. A Zeppelin was in

sight nearly all day. On the 24th she captured the German trawler *Ost*. She put a prize crew of five hands with Lieutenant Kennedy on board, passed a tow-rope over, and started back to Yarmouth. On the 25th the trawler's engine broke down. "S 1's" crew refitted the HP piston, cross-heads and crankhead bearings, and at four knots speed the strange procession proceeded on out of the Bight. On the 26th they stopped to refit the trawler's L.P. cylinder (they must have been by this time thoroughly sick and tired of engines and all to do with them), and proceeded. On the 27th June they made a triumphant arrival.

There seems to be a special providence that watches over people who won't admit defeat. I don't know about faith moving mountains, but (I'm sorry to have to use the word, but my vocabulary is limited) it was "guts" that brought "H 8" and "S 1" home safely.

Getting back to the question of depth-charges—one may pass over the little explosive sweep-charges used by the Germans early in the war. They were more like squibs than anything else. The Zeppelin bombs were noisy, but burst on the surface only, and so were innocuous to a boat below 30 or 40 feet depth. Later on, in 1917, the Germans began to use depth-charges in their destroyers and patrol boats; but these weapons were not only too light for useful results to be



expected from them, but were also dropped too vaguely and inaccurately for our boats to have much respect for them.

I will quote some recent cases which refer to the best depth-charges the enemy produced during the war:—

“Midnight, Oct. 2nd, 1918; ‘L 15’ (Lieut.-Commander Ward): Vessel, apparently T.B.D., appeared suddenly on port beam, distant 100 yards. Dived to 60 feet. Vessel passed overhead (turbine engine). Heard two loud explosions in quick succession.”

“7.45 A.M., March 24th, 1918; ‘E 44’ (Lieut. Venning): Five battle-ships (apparently of *Kaiser* class) and a destroyer (the latter zigzagging). Turned to attack on surface. The destroyer turned towards me and fired a white Very’s light. His range was about 2000 and the big ships 4000 yards. All ships then altered course. 7.50 A.M.: dived at full speed. Hit bottom hard at 64 feet, and proceeded along bottom at full speed. 7.53: one depth-charge exploded astern. 7.55: another depth-charge exploded astern. I stopped engines. 8.5 A.M.: went ahead 6 knots. 8.10: destroyer passed overhead, and the sweep-wire was heard scraping over the ‘jumping wire.’ 9.30 A.M.: eased to four knots. Sounds of propellers died away. Under-water explosions were heard at intervals till 11 A.M.”

If this chance had been given, in such shoal water, to a British destroyer screen, the submarine would certainly not have been so calm about it.

There are some first-hand reports on our own depth-charges:—

Submarine “D 7,” February 10th, 1918 (Lieut. Tweedy), suddenly sighted H.M.S. *Pelican* through her periscope. She increased to full speed and went down deeper, altering course from north to west.

“3.48 P.M.: First explosion occurred, loud and violent, but no damage or inconvenience. Very shortly afterwards a second explosion. This was considerably more violent, shattering several lights and flooding the after-periscope. Heavy shock throughout the boat, but no serious damage. Order was given to ‘blow externals.’ While rising, a third explosion occurred of about the same intensity as the first. On breaking surface made recognition signals. . . .”

The comment of authority on the incident blandly points out that by more accurate judging of speeds, distances, &c., the estimated distance of 150 yards between “D 7” and the second depth-charge could have been much reduced and better results obtained. There is, of course, no hint that the destroyer was to blame in the matter of recognition. In all these cases it is the destroyer’s duty to take it for granted that any periscope is hostile, and the comments on these reports usually show some sympathy with the surface ship’s natural disappointment at finding she has attacked one of her own side.

On 29th Feb. 1918, submarine “L 2” (Lieut.-Commander Acworth) had a similar experience, which had very little that was amusing about it. Her opponents were the United States’ destroyers *Paulding*, *Davis*, and *Trippe*.

“ . . . I lowered periscope and dived to 90 feet. Gun-shots being heard, I proceeded at full speed to 200 feet, at which depth the first heavy depth-charge exploded, and at the same time the after-hydroplanes jammed hard-up. We now took a tremendous inclination by the stern, the tail touching bottom at 300 feet.

“Four more very heavy explosions



shook the boat. Bright flashes were seen in the boat, and she was at an angle of 45°, bow up. We were unable to correct this trim with the forward hydroplanes, so I gave the order to blow Nos. 5 and 6. This order was promptly obeyed, and the boat slowly commenced to rise, but at a tremendous angle. On breaking surface three destroyers opened a hot fire on us at a range of 1000 yards—one shot striking the pressure-hull just abaft the conning-tower. Recognition signals were made, and White Ensign waved, when firing ceased."

The American destroyers had sighted the top of the conning-tower of "L 2" as she "broke surface," diving in the rough swell. The submarine authorities comment on the incident as follows: "In view of the small amount of conning-tower exposed and the distance at which it was sighted, it is submitted that these vessels made a most remarkably efficient attack."

It is curious that both British and German submarine officers have the same opinion of aircraft as anti-submarine weapons. Our boats looked on Zeppelins as scouts only—as bombers they could be practically neglected. The German seaplanes became dangerous towards the end of the war from the fact that they carried machine-guns: their bombs were trifling affairs. But any aircraft might locate a boat on patrol, and then the boat might just as well not be there, because no target worth a torpedo would be foolish enough to come within range of her, once the warning had been given. Similarly, the Germans stated that what they disliked most

in the Irish Sea area were the airships and seaplanes that were always passing over them. They did not fear the bombs these craft carried, but they did dislike having their own position continually reported to the surface patrols, who, as a result, gave them little rest. There is no doubt that the morale of submarine personnel is much affected by continual nerve-strain. For a man to be able to keep up a long patrol and retain his full faculties he must have some part of the day or night free from worry, even if it is only a couple of hours during which he may feel safe from aggression. In the Heligoland Bight it was a tremendous relief to be able, at the end of a harassing day, to sink to the bottom and retire from the war for a few hours. The sense of relief and relaxation was extraordinarily grateful. It must be remembered that, even if nothing is in sight through the periscope, the officers and crew have still at the back of their minds the recollection of the number of boats which have been lost, presumably by mines, in the Bight, and of whose fate no explanation has ever been forthcoming. If a submarine can be given no rest, day or night, from the ever-present fear of death, she is soon in a state when over-tired nerves will infallibly commit some mistake which will make her an easier victim. In this connection aircraft may be described as an infernal nuisance. You never can be certain if they have seen you or not, and the



tendency is to take it for granted that they have done so. If you are then in enemy waters you must be on the *qui vive* for being hunted by the usual methods; if not in actual enemy local waters, you feel that your chance of a target has gone for the day, and that even if a target does come by, she will be well protected and on the look-out for periscopes. On the whole, however, the German aircraft did not do much, and they certainly did not make the British submarines nervous. The game, in fact, rather worked the other way, as far as the Zeppelins were concerned. It was easy to work out (the German being of a methodical and regular nature), from the continued reports by our boats of the times and rendezvous of Zeppelin patrols, just where a Zeppelin might be expected to be found, and the resultant action by our own aircraft brought two of these huge sea-scouts down in flames. It should be mentioned that our boats are supplied with "sky-searcher" periscopes, which can either sweep the horizon or swivel so as to watch the motions of anything from the horizontal plane up to the zenith. A seaplane is a different proposition. Submarine "C 25" was attacked by five German seaplanes off Harwich on 6th July 1918. Several thousand rounds of machine-gun ammunition were fired at her and a number of bombs dropped. The bombs, even when they hit direct, did very little damage, being of probably not more than 10 lb.

weight. The incendiary bullets from the machine-guns, however, killed the captain (Lieutenant Bell) and five men, who from a position on the bridge were trying to drive off the enemy with a Lewis gun. As the incident occurred close to the English coast, the success of the enemy on this occasion may be put down to the fact that the submarine, under the impression that the aircraft must be friendly, made no attempt to dive until the bursting of a couple of bombs on her hull rendered her incapable of submerging.

Seaplanes have the advantage of attack in that they are able, on sighting a submarine on the surface, to come down volplane from the clouds, the first intimation of their presence being given by the roar of their engines as they level off close overhead. Submarine "E 4" was nearly caught in this way once near Hiorn's Reef. She had just come to the surface for a look round and to get latitude observations. Lieut.-Commander Tenison, her captain, was sitting comfortably on the bridge-rail while the tanks were being blown below in order to give the boat convenient buoyancy. The seaplane had dived down on him in the path of the sun, and the *rip r.r.rip-room* of the switched-on engines 200 yards away brought Tenison to his feet with a jump. He realised instantly that there was no time to get under before the enemy could let go his bombs—the change from blowing to flooding tanks would take far more than the usual 30 seconds



which suffices to submerge a boat under normal conditions. He reached down, pressed the button of the "diving-hooter," and then stood up and enthusiastically waved his cap to the seaplane pilot. The pilot shot past at a few yards' range, giving a half-hearted wave in return, as a man responds to a perfect stranger who salutes him in the street. As the machine passed, Tenison jumped down below and pulled the lid to: the short delay had been enough for the blows to be shut off and the vents to be thrown open, and the boat was starting under. Through the periscope, before the hull was down, he saw the machine turn ahead of him, coming round on a wing-tip, and evidently now fully awake to the situation. The boat drove under, and at eighteen feet three bombs burst on the surface in quick succession over the forepart of the hull. Being the usual small bombs no damage was done, but had they struck the hull while it was still above water the chances for "E 4" would have been poor. It is quite possible that the German pilot has not to this day seen anything amusing in the incident.

Although Zeppelins did not, as far as is known, cause our submarines any damage by bombing or other aggressive action, they were a great nuisance, in that they often caused delay to the boats on passage to their areas. One had to dive in order to avoid being reported; and it was aggravating to be kept under by a great silver brute which

appeared to have nothing better to do than to cruise aimlessly round in a five-mile circle overhead. It was therefore a great relief when a chance occurred for a boat to get her own back and square accounts a little. On the 9th May 1916, at 9.30 A.M., "E 31" (Lieut. - Commander Fielman) observed a Zeppelin in difficulties, apparently sinking towards the water. The airship was "L 7," which had been under fire, and had received damage from our light-cruiser forces. She settled down till the gondolas touched, and started to "taxi" towards home. "E 31" rose ahead of her and opened fire with a bow gun. On the third hit the Zeppelin burst into flames, and disappeared in thirty seconds or so. Seven survivors were picked up, and "E 31" dived again and proceeded on towards Harwich. At midnight a German four-funnelled cruiser was seen coming right at them, and barely 200 yards away on the starboard bow. Lieutenant Love, R.N.R., officer of the watch, acted swiftly. He put the helm hard a-starboard and rang the diving alarm. The cruiser was pretty smart in her actions also. She ported her helm to ram; but "E 31," being inside her turning circle, was missed by fifty yards. As she passed, she switched on searchlights and opened "independent fire" (i.e., "fire as fast as you can and as often as possible at whatever you can see of the target"). One 5.9 shell hit the submarine's forward upper structure two



feet above the hull, but did not explode. As the gauge reached sixty feet, "E 31" heard the cruiser pass overhead. It is understood that the seven Zeppelin prisoners observed, as the boat levelled off at the bottom to wait for quieter times overhead, that it was a rotten war anyway, and that they would be glad when it was over.

One thing which the submarine service in war-time seems to engender, is extraordinary impudence towards the enemy. This state of mind is based partly on contempt and partly on complete confidence in one's crew and boat. At the beginning of the war it was a marked feature in the work of our boats; but later on, when the watching patrol was established, things had to be taken more seriously, because it was inadvisable for the presence of boats in the patrol areas to be known of by the enemy. There are several instances which will illustrate the mental attitude of our officers towards their foes before the patrol-ring was formally established round the Bight. I would instance "E 5" (Lieutenant-Commander Benning), who, on the 16th August 1915, seeing a German destroyer about four miles off, near the mouth of the Elbe, came to the surface and opened the conning-tower hatch "to attract her." The attraction was apparently sufficient, as the destroyer charged at full speed. "E 5" dived, turned outwards, and then, swinging in again, fired a torpedo as the enemy rushed

past. The destroyer, the sea being very smooth, saw the firing-splash, and, by putting her helm hard a-port, dodged the torpedo. She then ceased to be "attracted," and departed hurriedly.

The island of Heligoland has been a wonderful source of inspiration to the newspapers throughout the war. It has been described as being the strategic pivot of the North Sea, and as the heavily-fortified base of the High Sea Fleet. The importance of the place may be better gauged if it is explained that it has just about the fighting value that an old battleship would have if moored out head and stern on the shoal, but with the disadvantage of the guns being unable to obtain "all-round" training. The harbour has only enough depth of water for trawlers and torpedo-boats; the High Sea Fleet couldn't get in if it wished to. If we had had possession of it instead of the enemy, we would have lost heavily in trying to keep it. Our position there would have been rather as if the Germans had tried to hold the Shipwash Light vessel off Harwich; it would have been too exciting for words. At any rate Heligoland is not a submarine base, and as long as there are far better bases on the mainland, it is not likely to be used for that purpose. I have heard it stated that U-boats use the island as an "advanced port" which allowed them to shorten their journeys out on patrol. Such use of the island would shorten a voyage by some thirty miles,



but when the voyage implies a mileage of perhaps 6000, a matter of thirty is hardly worth noticing. From our submarines point of view the place was useful to take bearings of and to fix position on, and except for navigational purposes they took little interest in it,—so little, in fact, that "E 2" (Lieut.-Commander Stocks), when she ran aground there, barely referred to the incident in her log. Submarines are delightful things to navigate in. A surface ship has a certain fixed draught, and she has to keep that figure always before her mind's eye. A submarine never approaches the coast or navigates in thick weather, unless trimmed down until she is drawing several feet more than usual. When in this condition a meeting with the shore does not matter much. If she slides up on the land, she blows her tanks and slides off again, so that grounding in a submarine comes to be looked on as a very ordinary and matter-of-fact sort of business. "E 2" was cruising in a fog in the Bight, and was trimmed down in case of accidents, when she came well on to the beach under the western cliffs of Heligoland,—she was so close to the gun-emplacement that the guns could not be depressed enough to bear on her, which was certainly fortunate. The Germans were very agitated. They ran about, hailing and bellowing at her and working themselves up to a great state of mind. "E 2," however, blew her tanks out and backed off;

as she did so a torpedo-boat arrived and opened fire on her. "E 2," finding salvos falling close aboard of her, decided that there was hardly time to turn round and depart submerged in the usual way, so she continued to go astern, and, reversing the hydroplanes, dived off backwards—none of the shots hitting her; and, in fact, the accurate estimation of deflection by the torpedo-boat, in view of "E 2's" squid-like action, must have been difficult.

A matter that caused a good deal of amusement to our submarine service throughout the war, and which probably made the Germans laugh also, was the great "petrol myth." It is a story which is at least as good as the Russian troops that travelled through England. Every part of the coast was reported to be the scene of mysterious rendezvous between U-boats and German spies, and at these meetings petrol cans changed hands—the U-boats taking the full tins, and the spy, presumably, insisting on getting the empty tins back, or else the sum of two shillings each in lieu. Heaven knows who invented the story, but it sounds like a "leg-pull," which had got out of hand and spread like a disease. For one thing, submarines don't use petrol—they use Diesel engines and heavy oil. For another thing, a submarine, depending on her size, carries from 30 to 300 tons of fuel in her tanks. If a wicked German spy was kind enough to take a couple of tins of petrol aboard a U-boat,



he would, presuming that the captain owned a motor bicycle, be gladly welcomed; but his gift would hardly add to the radius of action of the boat. A submarine can keep the sea longer than a surface ship can, and has a much longer radius of action—the heavy-oil engine is economical and efficient, and such things as special fuel-carrying tenders or submerged fuel-tanks are unnecessary luxuries. It is true that U-boats used on occasions the little creeks and bays of Scotland and the Orkneys to shelter in, and in fact one boat landed some men on one of the smaller Orkney islands and stole half a dozen sheep; but such exploits are more matters of amusement than business. Our boats in the Bight used to shoot duck occasionally (and the Frisian Islands are a paradise for wild-fowl shooters in January—the birds are to be seen in thousands at a time), and if there had been anything else worth stealing on the very uninviting and ugly German coast, I'm certain that nothing but the innate honesty of our submarine officers would have prevented them from getting it.

As for the German spy scares, the Germans had a similar experience at the beginning of the war. Quite a number of perfectly good Huns were shot by enthusiastic amateur sentries, and the patriotic citizen felt it a duty to let off what firearms he had at any car which drove fast after dark, or which showed strong lights. The rumours of communication between

U-boats and spies on the coasts of Great Britain continued throughout the war, while all the time the real German spies continued to send their reports by letters, and the N.I.D. continued to open the letters and substitute their own versions of the news. The fact is, very little information got away to Germany except through the newspapers. This country has the disadvantage, from an enemy spy's point of view, of being an island; Germany has a neutral country on each side of her: as a result, when the Armistice came, the Germans could give us little news about their Navy,—everything of interest about it was already known at our Admiralty. There were some other widely believed "facts" about submarines which are dying a very slow death. They mostly came from the brains of the Press naval correspondents. One was that a submarine could not keep the sea more than a day or two. Of course, long before the war, even our little C-class boats were spending ten days at sea on manoeuvres. The first long trip of the war was "E11's" thirty-one days in the Sea of Marmara. Again, it was solemnly proved when the *Hogue*, *Cressy*, and *Aboukir* were sunk, that more than one U-boat must have been present, "as a submarine cannot reload under water." I am mentioning these things, as it has been a matter of surprise to the submarine services of all navies that the boats have been looked on as new arrivals, and as weapons which were completely new



and untried in 1914. The fact is, the submarine "arrived" long before the war, and has been used in annual manœuvres in our Navy since 1904. The first successful submarine attack, it should be noted, was by the Confederate submersible which sank the *Housatonic* in the American Civil War—some fifty-seven years ago.

There is no doubt that the German submarine service had everything in its favour. They had targets in plenty, in view of the fact that our fleet kept the sea practically continuously at the beginning of the war, and for about 25 per cent of the time during the later stages. The coasts of these islands are ideal for submarines to work round; the shore is mostly steep-to, and the high landmarks make navigation easy. The German coast is low and difficult to see; it is guarded by outlying shoals and islands, and the visibility off-shore is usually poor; the numerous rivers emptying into the Bight make diving conditions bad at times owing to the alternate strata formed of fresh and salt water. Altogether, the two sets of conditions used to make our submarine service often wish that the two belligerent navies might change fleets, bases, and strategic problems, and so give our boats a chance to show how a weaker navy should carry out a war of attrition. Such a war could undoubtedly have been fought very much more efficiently by the enemy if he had concentrated on warship - targets

only. There is a clause in a German instructional book for submarine officers which directs the young idea to "never attack a man-of-war if there is chance of usefully attacking commerce" (or words to that effect). That sort of order is an admission of defeat, as although the axiom, that "the object of strategy is the defeat of the main forces of the enemy," was, I believe, laid down by Napoleon, it is as old as the time of the first battle between tribes of Palæolithic men. A defeat of the Grand Fleet by direct naval action would have given Germany domination of the world; but the works of the late Admiral Mahan do not seem to have been understood in Berlin.

The great German commeree-destroying submarine navy is now no more. Its fate will be a reminder to strategists of the future that a *guerre de course* never won a war yet, and that there is no easy road to victory. It may be easier "to attack merchant ships than men-of-war," but if the result is the surrender of one's own Navy, the policy seems hardly profitable.

However, our own submarine strategy was, in spite of the enemy's example, kept on correct lines; our leaders saw the possibilities and the future of this type of craft far more clearly than did Admiral Tirpitz. Our boats were built and used for military purposes only, and their work was all part of the main strategical policy of the Navy.



## MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

DOLES FOR THE UNEMPLOYED—£1000 A YEAR AND ONE ROOM!  
 —OUR NEW PHILISTINES—MATTHEW ARNOLD ON "DEMOCRACY"  
 —A MIDDLE-CLASS UNION.

At the beginning of the war extravagance was the penalty paid of necessity to years of inaction. A state which refuses to prepare for a catastrophe, which its leaders know to be imminent, cannot hope at the outset to obtain more than a florin's worth for the expenditure of a pound. But if the eyes of England are not opened now, she will totter in blindness unto the end of time. The first duty of her Government is to practise economy boldly and unflinchingly. And what does the Government do? It exhausts such ingenuity as it possesses in wasting millions as though they were dross. Nor can we withhold our admiration from the cleverness wherewith it has discovered oceans, seas, rivers, and puddles, into which it can fling the nation's gold. He had a spark of talent who determined that high explosives should still be made and then incontinently blown to the four winds of heaven. See what this exquisite plan accomplished! It gave employment to thousands of men and women, who would rather have taken wages for doing nothing! It got rid swiftly and painlessly of many hundreds of thousands of pounds, and it imparted a genial pink glow to the sky. Only one error can we detect in the method of its carrying

out. Four o'clock, the hour chosen for the sacrifice, was far too early. The pink illumination would have been far more brilliant and more widely visible a few hours later.

The member of the Government who suggested this conflagration was plainly a man of talent. He pales to insignificance before the hero who contrived the payment of the unemployed. Here, in truth, was a stroke of real genius. Two things only were important for us, that we should save money and increase production, and by one movement of the pen we were given an inexhaustible outlet for wasted gold, and a ready means of bringing to a sudden and a happy end the industry of the land. No man, or woman either, is such a fool as to work when he, or she, is amply paid for doing nothing.

So the recklessness of our spendthrifts is happily expressed in the slang of the moment. There are "silver queues," it is said, outside all the labour exchanges, formed by men and women who have no desire to find work, and who find that a soft bed is the best place for labouring humanity. Men are wanted in every centre of industry. There is work for women to be found in hospitals, laundries, and in servantless households. What does our richly endowed



people reckon of necessity? It has more than enough for ease and comfort, and it says to itself with perfect reason, "he is a fool to soil his hands with labour if he can live like a gentleman for nothing."

What is given without thought is spent without benefit. The men and women of England are becoming as careless in the management of money as the Government itself. They rejoice to think that their rulers are driving them fast down the inclined plane of Bolshevism. All students who deign to attend courses at the University of Moscow are henceforth to be paid for their trouble, and why should the boys and girls of England go unrewarded if they are willing to subject their poor brains to the stress of instruction? And yet, if we consider the question with the cold eye of reason, we shall see that all the money wasted is wasted in vain. None but the politician, who delights to bribe with public money, profits by it. Crime is said to proceed from poverty and unemployment. There is no poverty now since unemployment became lucrative, and there has never been a time in which theft, idleness, and disturbance in the street were more grossly popular. "I have had an extraordinary number of young girls before me," said a London magistrate the other day, "who formerly worked on munitions, and who are now charged with using insulting language in the streets." These young ladies find that out-of-work pay gives them just the support

they need to ply their profession of accosting strangers at the street corner. The men vie with the women in wealth and lawlessness. A labourer, run-in not long since for being "drunk and disorderly," had in his possession "seven one pound notes, fifteen ten shilling notes, £1, 13s. 6d. in silver, 1s. 8½d. in bronze, two foreign coins, two pocket-knives, a pipe-lighter, a purse, a spring weighing-machine, a pouch of tobacco, two boxes of matches, seven keys, eleven herrings, and one pound of sausages." It sounds like the Arabian Nights, doesn't it? And yet this man, with the solid wealth of Goloonda packed about, prefers no doubt to live in idleness, refuses to pay income-tax or to educate his children, and drags the tears of pity down Mr Smillie's honest, weather-beaten cheek!

Our hearts are wrung daily, and perhaps inappositely, by the bitter cry of the workers for comfortable houses. If we clear our minds of cant and forget the mock-heroics of the labour leader, who has a natural love of melodrama, we shall come to the conclusion that if the workers demanded (or wanted) better houses, better houses would be theirs. The despised middle class, which is far worse off than many of the workers, refuse to inhabit hovels. It has a clean, keen sense of life, and it is ready to forgo much if only it may live with cleanliness and dignity. The working class, eaten up by pity and by the flattery of politicians, whose sole prin-



principle is numbers, clamours for palaces and will not pay for them. Here is a recent case: A woman who opposed an ejection order in February, admitted that her rent was no higher than 6s. a week, and that it had not been paid since November. And her husband earned £7 a week! Thousands of officers in the Army and Navy, thousands of bank clerks, thousands of Government servants, earn far less than that. Yet they would refuse to be satisfied with a lodging which cost them no more than 6s. a week, and they would know the pang of disgrace if their rent was six months in arrear. And what shall we say of another case which came a few weeks ago before a London court? A young wife sought a separation from her husband; they had no children; they admitted that they made between them £1000 a year; and so little good did their income bring them that they were content to occupy one room at a cost of a few shillings a week! Plainly, then, the large sums which our spendthrifts lavish upon the people avail nothing to raise the standard of comfort and of life. The recipients of the ill-bestowed bounty refuse to learn the proper lessons of conduct, and the worst of it is that the wealth heedlessly given to them is stolen by the judicial robbery of taxation from those who, were they not stripped to keep the loafers in affluence, would know well how to profit by every penny of their earnings which the State permitted them to keep.

The vast outlay does not purchase thrift or honesty. High wages are no check upon idleness or upon theft. Here, for instance, is a workman caught stealing a few tools of trifling value, the property of the Government. That habit rather than necessity prompted the crime is proved by the fact that the thief was paid £360 a year, and should have been sufficiently well provided with the world's goods to live honestly. Nor does the sense of responsibility seem to increase with the increase of wages. The father of a mentally deficient girl was recently invited to contribute something towards the cost of keeping her in an asylum. He objected fiercely to what seemed to him an interference with personal liberty. At first he declared that he could contribute nothing, and presently offered 1s. 6d. a week under protest. Yet this benevolent father was forced to admit upon oath that he received in wages and gratuities £276 a year, and that his wife, also mentally deficient, was supported by the country and cost him not a penny piece!

Not long since a woman complained that her husband lay in bed all day and refused to work. The magistrate whose advice she sought bade inquiries to be made. The man, sure enough, was found lying idly in bed, perfectly well and able to work if he chose. The argument which he advanced in his own defence is unanswerable. He was drawing, said he, a war pension of £2 a week; his indolence was



worth to him 29s. a week, un-employment pay; and so long as he was handsomely endowed for doing nothing, he did not see why he should trouble to work. Nor do we. We do see that the Government, which, by its wanton and deliberate extravagance, is demoralising every man, every woman, every child who will accept its doles, will presently be asked to pay a very heavy bill of ignominy and shame.

The spirit of independence, which once was the pride of Englishmen, is being utterly extinguished. The working class, arithmetically powerful, is flattered and cosseted, until it believes itself to be sacredly endowed. Worse still, in the very moment that it demands all the wealth and power of the State, it refuses to carry the common burdens of life. Its children are fed and taught at the public expense. It refuses, successfully, to pay income-tax, and the Trade Disputes Act has placed it beyond the reach of the law. To one thing only will it condescend—to the art of governance, of which it knows nothing.

And let it be remembered that labour, as represented by its fiercest leaders, is frankly egoistic. It cares not for the comfort or wellbeing of any other class. It boasts that it can destroy the prosperity of the whole land. It recognises the existence of no other class than its own, and pretends to believe that all who do not work with their hands are mere idle

parasites. The truth, amply demonstrated by the war, that all great deeds depend upon leadership, makes no impression upon its cast-iron mind. The flatterers of the people, never disinterested, have proclaimed aloud, in defiance of the plain facts, that the war was won by the working classes, and these classes refuse to understand that, had the task of beating the Germans been left to them, our shores would have been invaded and devastated before the end of 1914.

What is the motive, then, which drives the Government to distribute vast doles, and to submit to every new demand of the working class? The motive is fear, and fear is allayed by the usual method of paying hush-money. It is by this a commonplace that popular government is firmly established upon intrigue and blackmail. Thus the country is asked to suffer for the terror or infirmity of its governors. They throw the miserable and peaceful part of the community to the wolves. This is not the first time that a single party in the State has been debauched by interested politicians. During the great part of the Victorian era the lower middle class was supreme in this country. A greater share of power than should have belonged to it was put into its hands by the Reform Act of 1832, and the praise of such "tribunes" as John Bright and Richard Cobden persuaded it to believe that it engrossed all the virtues and all the graces. It was



omnipotent and omniscient, even its vices erred on the side of virtue. When its leaders sanded the sugar and watered the milk before they held family prayers, the fraud was smiled upon indulgently because it was all in the way of business. Indeed, it confused its religion with its politics so ingeniously, that none could say where the religion ended and the politics began. There was scarce a chapel in the country that was not also a candidate's committee-room. The monstrous injustice, which gave undeserved privileges to one party, met with an inevitable result. The middle class, once set upon a pinnacle, was depressed to the depths of shame. Its members were jeered at as Philistines, and its name became a synonym of moral and intellectual mediocrity. And all because it listened too complacently to the voice of the flatterer! To-day Labour (with a large L) is following the same primrose path, and if it be as careful it will find itself enveloped also in the flames of the everlasting bonfire.

Its leaders are doing it the same disservice as was done to the middle class by John Bright and others. Its false prophets are befogging its mind with promises, which will never be realised. Its members are told that they and they only are the elect. When the great "democracy" first began to feel its strength, Matthew Arnold, the wisest political philosopher of his time, saw

plainly how it would all end. He shows us how Mr Bright, who had "a foot in both worlds, the world of middle-class Liberalism and the world of democracy," and whose belief in machinery was unshaken, complained of people who appeared to have no proper estimate of the value of the franchise. "He leads his disciples to believe," says Matthew Arnold, "what the Englishman is always too ready to believe, that the having the vote, like the having a large family, or a large business, or large muscles, has in itself some edifying and perfecting effect upon human nature." The world has not changed since Mr Bright misled the people: rather the eloquence which drove large audiences to their undoing is to-day tenfold intensified. Our demagogues still proclaim, but in a far louder voice, that the franchise is the panacea of all human woes. Or else Mr Bright calls out to the democracy, says Matthew Arnold: "See what you have done! I look over this country and see the cities you have built, the railroads you have made, the manufactures you have produced, the cargoes which freight the ships of the greatest mercantile navy the world has ever seen! I see that you have converted by your labours what was once a wilderness, these islands, into a fruitful garden; I know that you have created this wealth, and are a nation whose name is a word of power throughout all the world."

Not even Mr Lloyd George at Limehouse went beyond these



burning words in praise of the democracy. And what is Matthew Arnold's just comment? "Why," says he, "this is just the very style of laudation with which Mr Roebuck or Mr Lowe debauch the minds of the middle classes and make such Philistines of them. It is the same fashion of teaching a man to value himself not on what he is, not on his progress in sweetness and light, but on the number of the railroads he has constructed or the bigness of the tabernacle he has built." And Matthew Arnold, understanding clearly the folly of the demagogues, who deceived the people by their flatteries, saw with equal clarity what would be the end of the false speaking. "But," said he, "teaching the democracy to put its trust in achievements of this kind is merely training them to be Philistines to take the place of the Philistines whom they are superseding; and they too, like the middle class, will be encouraged to sit down at the banquet of the future without having on a wedding garment, and nothing excellent can come from them."

The truth of Matthew Arnold's words is at last firmly established. The working classes, the Philistines of today, have superseded the middle class, but they sit down to the banquet of the present without having on a wedding garment, and, unless they change completely, truly nothing excellent can be expected from them. It is not wholly their fault. They have listened

to the charmer, and have put faith in his sugared speech. They have been told, from a thousand platforms, that they alone are the State, and they are coming, in their ill-omened arrogance, to believe themselves gifted above all other men. It is a pity, because, unless they look upon life with the eyes of truth, they will ruin the country, which, to their thinking, does not matter at all; they will ruin themselves also, and than that they can conceive no heavier disaster. The worst is that, though they refuse to govern, to feed, and to educate their own families, they aspire to the sole governance of the Empire with no better excuse than numerousness. Now a great Empire cannot be governed by sectarians of any kind, and until the working classes learn first that they are but one party in a complex state, and that no good can come out of mere Philistinism, they will assuredly destroy themselves, and may, unless their untrained ambition be checked, destroy the Empire also. The British Empire is made up of all sorts and conditions of men, and of these sorts and conditions not one is indispensable, but all. When Mr Roebuck and Mr Lowe said the middle-class Liberals had made England great by their energy, self-reliance, and capital; or when Mr Bright told the democracy what its members had done with their hands and sinews, they were all three speaking only a small bit of the truth. England has been made great by co-operation,



and the rarest qualities of all are not blind energy or strong sinews, but brains and the spirit of leadership. If the working classes want an open proof of this obvious statement, let them take over any enterprise they choose and show the world how long they can postpone the inevitable bankruptcy.

These things must be said because the working classes, encouraged by demagogues, appear to believe themselves fit without effort to scale the highest pinnacle of glory. Yet they have many lessons of restraint, modesty, and self-reliance to learn before they can be trusted even to help in controlling the life of our Empire. They must discover for themselves that the ruling of a great country and large wages are not one and the same thing. And in making this discovery no Government will find it profitable to help them. They must also find out the supreme value of discipline, and understand that years of training are necessary for the proper conduct of affairs. They must not listen to those who tell them that nothing is wanted for the exercise of the governing art but a loud voice and a handful of prejudices. Indeed, the best hope of the working classes lies in failure. They must be purged in the fire of experience, and prove to themselves in the school of hardship that flattery is a poor substitute for truth.

Nor does the inquiry which has been held into the state of the coal industry give us

much encouragement for the future. What was wanted was an array of facts upon which a wise conclusion might be based, and we got from Mr Smillie, for instance, little else save the stale expression of class animosity. For him property seems theft, and all the discomforts of the miners the deliberate contrivance of the mine-owners. He did not condescend to ask plain questions. He preferred to declaim and to shout irrelevancies. Nor does he see that in demanding that the miners should have all things done for them, as though they were children—that, for instance, they should be *compelled* to take baths at the pithead—he is asserting their complete unfitness for responsibility and the management of life. And yet, as we know well, he would claim for them the sole right to govern the country. The stuff of which Mr Smillie and his like are compounded is partly rhetoric, partly ill-temper. If they had their way untrammelled, they would lead us to anarchy, to what in these days is known as Bolshevism, which means injustice for everybody and a class war.

The truth is that the working classes want to win, whatever happens. They demand that they should be subsidised, and also that they should rule those who pay the subsidies. They are as brutally cynical in exacting whatever they want from the State, as were the middle-class Liberals, such as Messrs Bright and Cobden, in declaring that they would be ruined if the hours



spent by children of twelve in the factories were shortened. Sixty years ago middle-class Liberalism was resolved to exploit the "democracy," as it was called, for its own special benefit. To-day "democracy" has made up its mind to exploit all the upper and middle classes to save itself the trouble of educating its own children or of submitting to the payment of income-tax. And the "democracy," Philistine also, sees as little as did its predecessor in Philistinism, that no community can prosper in which all parties do not work harmoniously together.

Economically, the class war has already begun, and Labour, unscrupulously egoist, has struck the first blow. Its demand for free education, unemployment benefit, constant doles, and immunity from direct taxation, means that it seeks to purchase an easy life with somebody else's money. If Labour has its way, the upper and middle classes, which assume all the burdens of civic responsibility, which educate their own children, see that they are decently housed, though many of them are worse paid than the working classes, and pay such taxes as are demanded of them by the State, will sink beneath the unmerited burden. The working classes' lack of pride and independence will weigh with special heaviness upon the lower-middle class, which, for all the selfish Philistinism it showed in the past, was always self-supporting and did not stoop to beg.

"Bear ye one another's bur-

dens" is a noble maxim. It is flouted by Labour, which says to the classes above it: "Bear our burdens as well as your own." And if we yielded to Labour's despotic clamour, then there would be an end, as we have said, of the middle classes. They would be gradually extinguished by harsh processes of taxation. Those who, in the pride of their heart, have accepted help from nobody, would no longer be able to conduct their own lives with comfort and dignity, as they have done hitherto. Compelled to educate the children of others, they would perforce leave their own sons and daughters, in whose more fertile minds the seeds of learning fall most fruitfully, without any schooling whatever. But, happily, we shall not sink under this new tyranny. If there is to be class war, it shall not be fought on one side only. The middle classes, including not only the narrow-minded liberalism of the mid-Victorian age, which believed that the salvation of the world lay in the "dissidence of dissent," but manufacturers also, and men of all the intelligent professions, will know how to defend themselves against plunder and oppression. They will use all the weapons, such as boycott and obstruction, which our debased system of politics places in their hands. And they will win, as justly they deserve to win, because they have better brains and a finer understanding of the arts of life than their foes.

What is wanted, then, is a



middle-class union which shall guard the interests and defend the property of its members—a union which shall dissociate itself from the sectarian middle class, the puppet of Manchester, whose ideal never rose higher than a full breeches pocket. That middle class and its grasping egoism died a welcome death when Mr Asquith and his friends were beaten at the polls. The middle class, which we would see united, is, as we have said, far wider in its interests and less selfish in its policy than the mob which supported John Bright of old and Messrs Asquith and Runciman but yesterday. And its first duty will be the defence of its own rights. It has no desire to take anything from the profit or happiness of others. At the same time, it will refuse to be robbed for the exclusive advantage of the tyrants who pretend to believe that the working man should engross all the privileges and evade most of the duties of life.

The middle-class union will be asked to watch with a scrupulous vigilance the fair exaction of the income-tax. It is not to be tolerated that this burdensome tax should fall but partially upon the shoulders of the manual workers. If citizenship be worth having it is worth paying for, and Labour, when it is liable to taxation, must not be permitted to evade its liability. The small investor is not asked to pay the State its due. That due is taken at the source, and it is the small

investor's business to recover what he can, when he is charged at too high a rate. And there is no reason why the contribution of Labour should not be levied in the same manner. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, to increase his party's popularity in the constituencies, excuses Labour from doing its duty, will deserve no pity at the hands of the middle-class union. If one party refuses to pay what is asked of it, then all others should do their utmost to impede the collection of an unjust and partial tax. What we have a right to demand is a fair field for all, and no favour for the man who works with his hands. Thus should we see that justice is done, and a stern check put upon wanton extravagance. For one thing is clear, that the money which is being wasted to-day is largely spent in keeping the working classes in good temper. If a share of the taxation is borne by Labour, then Labour will scan with a more careful eye the public expenditure. It will be less amiable to wild schemes of education, if it be asked to pay even a fraction of the cost. And if only the middle-class union does its work with discretion and restraint, we may yet see a contented country, wherein all men bear their part faithfully, according to their ability, wherein harmonious co-operation will supersede the bitter warfare of class, beloved of self-seeking demagogues.

# BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCCXLIII.

MAY 1919.

VOL. CCV.

A COMPANY OF TANKS.

BY MAJOR W. H. L. WATSON, D.C.M.,

Author of 'Adventures of a Despatch Rider.'

CHAPTER I.—ON THE XITH CORPS FRONT.

(October to December 1916.)

THE village of Locon lies five miles out from Bethune, on the Estaires road. Now it is broken by the war: in October 1916 it was as comfortable and quiet a village as any four miles behind the line. If you had entered it at dusk, when the flashes of the guns begin to show, and passed by the square and the church and that trap for despatch-riders where the *chemin-de-fer vicinal* crosses to the left of the road from the right, you would have come to a scrap of orchard on your left where the British cavalymen are buried who fell in 1914. Perhaps you would not have noticed the graves, because they were overgrown and the wood of the crosses was coloured green with lichen. Beyond the or-

chard was a farm with a garden in front, full of common flowers, and a flagged path to the door.

Inside there is a cheerful little low room. A photograph of the Prince of Wales, a sacred picture, and an out-of-date calendar, presented by the 'Petit Parisien,' decorate the walls. Maman, a dear gnarled old woman—old from the fields—stands with folded arms by the glittering stove which projects into the centre of the room. She never would sit down except to eat and sew, but would always stand by her stove. Papa sits comfortably, with legs straight out, smoking a pipe of *caporal* and reading the 'Telegramme.' Julienne, pretty like a sparrow, with quick brown eyes, jerky



movements, and fuzzy hair, the flapper from the big grocer's at La Gorgue, for once is quiet and mends Hammond's socks. In a moment she will flirt like a kitten or quarrel with Louie, a spoilt and altogether unpleasant boy, who at last is going to school. The stalwart girl of seventeen, Adrienne, is sewing laundry marks on Louie's linen. It is warm and cosy.

The coffee is ready. The little bowls are set out on the table. The moment has come. From behind a curtain Hammond produces, with the solemnity of ritual, a battered water-bottle. He looks at Papa, who gravely nods, and a few drops from the water-bottle are poured into each steaming bowl of coffee. The fragrance is ineffable, for it was genuine old Jamaica. . . .

We talk of the son, a cuirassier, and when he will come on leave; of the Iron Corps who are down on the Somme; of how the men of the Nord cannot be matched by those of the Midi, who, it is rumoured, nearly lost the day at Verdun; of Mme. X. at Gonnehem, who pretends to be truly a *Parisienne*, but is only a carpenter's daughter out of Richebourg St Vaast; of the oddities and benevolence of M. le Maire. Adrienne will discuss the merits of the Divisions who have been billeted in the village. Like all intelligent people in every French village or town, she knows their names and numbers from the time the Lahore Division came in 1914. We wonder what are these heavy

armoured motor-cars of a new type that have been a little successful on the Somme. And we have our family jokes. "Peronne est prise," we inform Maman, and make an April fool of her—while, if the line is disturbed and there is an outbreak of machine-fire or the guns are noisy, we mutter, "Les Boches attaquent!" and look for refuge under the table.

In April of last year, when the Boche attacked in very truth, Maman may have remembered our joke. Then they piled their mattresses, their saucepans, their linen, and some furniture on the big waggon, and set out for Hinges—Bethune was shelled and full of gas. I wonder if they took with them the photograph of the Prince of Wales? There was bitter fighting in Locon, and we must afterwards have shelled it, because it came to be in the German lines. . . .

Hammond knew the Front from the marshes of Fleurbaix to the craters of Givenchy better than any man in France. He had been in one sector or another since the first November of the war. So, when one of the companies of the XI Corps Cyclist Battalion, which I commanded, was ordered to reinforce a battalion of the 5th Division in the line at Givenchy and another of my companies to repair the old British line by Festubert, and to work on the "islands," I determined to move from my dismal headquarters in a damp farm near

Gonnehem, and billet myself at Locon. It was the more convenient, as Hammond, who commanded the Motor Machine Gun Battery of the Corps, was carrying out indirect fire from positions near Givenchy.

We lived in comfort, thanks to Maman and Starman, Hammond's servant. I would come in at night, saying I was *fatigué de vivre*. Old Maman, understanding that I was too tired to live, would drag out with great trouble grandfather's arm-chair, place a pillow in it, and set it by the stove. And Julienne, a little subdued at my imminent decease, would forget to flirt.

We would start, after an early breakfast, in Hammond's motor-cycle and side-car, and drive through the straggling cottages of Hamel, where the Cuirassiers, in October 1914, protected the left flank of the advancing 5th Division, through Gorre, with its enormous ramshackle chateau, and along the low and sordid banks of the La Bassée Canal. We would leave the motor-cycle just short of the houses near Pont Fixe, that battered but indomitable bridge, draped defiantly with screens of tattered sackcloth.

I would strike along the Festubert road, with the low ridge of Givenchy on my left, until I came to the cross-roads at Windy Corner.

A few yards away were the ruins of a house which Briga-

dier-General Count Gleichen,<sup>1</sup> then commanding the 15th Infantry Brigade, had made his headquarters when first we came to Givenchy, and were certain to take La Bassée. That was in October 1914, and the line ran from the houses near Pont Fixe through the farm-buildings of Canteleux to the cottages of Violaines, whence you looked across open fields to the sugar factory, which so greatly troubled us, and the clustered red walls of La Bassée. The Cheshires held Violaines. They were driven out by a sudden attack in November. The line broke badly, and Divisional Headquarters at Beuvry Brewery packed up, but a Cyclist officer with a few men helped to rally the Cheshires until a battalion from the 3rd Division on the left arrived to fill the gap. We did not again hold Violaines and Canteleux until the Germans retired of their own free-will.

Now once again, exactly two years later, the 5th Division was in the line.

I took to the trench at Windy Corner, and tramped along to call on the cheery young colonel of the battalion to which my men were attached. There is a little story about his headquarters. A smell developed, and they dug hard, thinking it came from a corpse. The sergeant-major discovered the cause. A fond relative had sent the mess-waiter a medicated belt to catch the little

<sup>1</sup> Now Major-General Lord Edward Gleichen, K.C.V.O., C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.



aliens in the course of their traditional daily migration. . . .

We would go round the line, which then was quiet, exploring the intricacies of Red Dragon Crater. Afterwards I would walk through the complicated defences of Givenchy to join Hammond at "Dirty Diok's," by the shrine, for the ride back. . . .

The 5th Division was afraid of an attack on Givenchy at this time. It was a key position. If Givenchy went, the line south of the canal must crumble and the left flank of the Loos salient would be in the air. But the attack did not come until April 1918, and the story of how Givenchy held then, when the line to the north was flowing westwards, is history.

On the left of Givenchy the line ran in front of Festubert through stagnant fields, where the water in the summer is just below the surface. It is dreary country, full of ghosts and the memories of fighting at night. It is all a sodden cemetery.

There my men were rebuilding the breastworks of the old British line, for in these marshes it was impossible to dig trenches, and working on the "islands," tiny strong points unapproachable by day.

Breastworks continued to the north. Our lines were overlooked from the Aubers Ridge. In winter they were flooded and men were drowned. Behind were dead level meadows, often covered with water, and dismal ruined villages. The country was filthy, monotonous, and stunted. In the summer

it stank. In the winter it was mud. Luckily, for many months the line was quiet.

In November of this year the Corps, to vary the picture, took over the Cuinchy sector on the right of Givenchy and immediately south of the La Bassée Canal. It was a unique and damnable sector, in which a company of my men were set to dig tunnels from the reserve to the support and front trenches.

It was unique by reason of the brick-stacks, and damnable by reason of the *Minenwerfer* and the railway triangle. Our line ran in and out of a dozen or so brick-stacks, enormous maroon cubes of solid brick that withstood both shell and mine. Some we held and some the enemy held. Inside them tiny staircases were made, and camouflaged snipers, impossible to detect, made life miserable. Occasionally we tried to take each other's brick-stacks, but these attempts were unsuccessful, and we settled down, each as uncomfortable as he well could be. And in this sector the enemy employed *minenwerfer* with the utmost enterprise. Our trenches were literally blown to pieces. In the daytime we ran about like disturbed ants, ever listening for the little thud of the minnie's discharge and then looking upwards for the black speck by day or the glow of it by night. For "minnies" can be avoided by the alert and skilful. Finally, a triangle of railway embankments, fortified until they had become an impregnable field-work, held for the German the southern bank of the canal.



To the occasional tall visitor the main communication trench added irritation and certain injury to fear. Some ingenious fellow had laid an overhead rail some six feet above the trench boards. On this rail material was slung and conveyed forwards. It was an excellent substitute for a light railway, but it compelled a tall man to walk along the trench with his head on one side. This strained attitude did not conduce to stability on slippery trench boards. Again, the height of the rail above the floor of the trench varied. A moment's absent-mindedness and the damage was done.

My officers and men worked well. We were lucky, and our casualties were few, but it was a trying time.

The one redeeming feature of the XI Corps front was the excellent town of Bethune.

Of all the towns immediately behind the line, none could rival Bethune in the providing of such comforts, relaxations, and amenities as the heart of the soldier desired. The billets were notoriously comfortable. The restaurants were varied and good. The *pâtisserie* was famous before the war. The oyster-bar approached that of Lillers. I know of but one *coiffeur* better than "Eugene's." The shops provided for every reasonable want. The theatre was palatial. The canteen was surpassed only by Meaulte, of ill-fated memory. The inhabitants were civil, friendly, and, in comparison with their neighbours, not extortionate.

On the morning in October 1914, when the 5th Division—the first British troops Bethune had seen—passed through the town to take up the line Vermelles-Violaines, I breakfasted at the "Lion d'Or," round the corner from the square. I was received with grateful hospitality by madame. An extremely pretty girl of fourteen, with dark admiring eyes, waited on me. She was charmingly hindered by Annette, a child of three or four, who with due gravity managed to push some bread on to my table and thus break a plate. When I returned in the summer of 1916, I expected that I would at least be recognised. I found the tavern crowded. Agnes, who had just recovered from an illness, served the mob of officers with unsmiling disdain. She was not even flurried by the entreaties of multitudinous padres who were doubtless celebrating some feast-day. And Annette, decorated with appalling ribbons, was actually carrying plates.

The alternative was the Hôtel de France—a solemn and pretentious hostelry, at which the staff and French officials congregated. When the enemy began to shell Bethune, the Hôtel de France was closed.

The "Lion d'Or" carried on until the house opposite was hit, and afterwards reopened spasmodically; but in 1916 and 1917 it was wiser to try the "Paon d'Or" in the outskirts of the town, near the canal. At that stuffy res-



restaurant it was possible to lunch peacefully while shells dropped at intervals in the square and centre of the town.

"Eugene: Coiffeur," was an institution. Eugene must have been dead or "serving," for madame presided. She was a thin and friendly lady, with tiny feet, and a belief that all her customers required verbal entertainment. It was touching to see madame seat herself briskly beside a morose colonel who knew no respectable word of French, and endeavour, by the loud reiteration of simple phrases, to assure him that he was welcome and the weather appalling.

I would linger over Bethune, because no town has been a greater friend to the soldier for a brief period out of the line. Now it is shattered, and the inhabitants are fled.

My headquarters at this time were in a farm near Gonnehem, six miles or so from Bethune. The farm of its kind was good, and in summer the casual visitor might even have called it smart, after Wiggins, my adjutant, had cleared away the midden-heap, drained the courtyard, and had whitewashed everything that would take the colour—all in the face of violent and reiterated protests from madame. The centre of the courtyard, encircled by a whitewashed rope, was particularly effective.

In winter no polite epithet could describe the place. The hamlet consisted of a few farms, each surrounded by innumer-

able little ditches, hidden by rank undergrowth and sheltered by large trees. At the best of times the ditches were full of soaking flax, which gave out a most pungent odour. After rain the ditches overflowed and flooded the roads and paths. The hedges and bushes sagged with water. The trees dripped monotonously. Some of us caught influenza colds: some endured forgotten rheumatism and lumbago.

We had but one pastime. Certain of our transport horses were not in use. These we were continually exchanging for riding horses more up to our weight with a friendly "Remounts" who lived in solitude near by. In due course Wiggins became the proud owner of a dashing little black pony and I of a staff officer's discarded charger. In spite of the dreariness of our surroundings, we felt almost alive at the end of an afternoon's splash over water-logged fields. Nobody could damp Wiggins' cheerfulness when he returned with a yet more fiery steed from his weekly deal, and the teaching of the elements of horsemanship to officers, who had never ridden, produced an occasional laugh. We may ourselves have given pleasure in turn to our friends, the yeomanry, who were billeted in Gonnehem itself.

To us in our damp and melancholy retreat came rumours of tanks. It was said they were manned by "bantams." The supply officer related that on the first occasion tanks went

into action the ear-drums of the crews were split. Effective remedies had been provided. We learned from an officer, who had met the quartermaster of a battalion that had been on the Somme, the approximate shape and appearance of tanks. We pictured them and wondered what a cyclist battalion could do against them. Apparently the tanks had not been a great success on the Somme, but we imagined potentialities. They were coloured with the romance that had long ago departed from the war. An application was made for volunteers. We read it through with care.

I returned from leave. It was pouring with rain and there was nothing to do. The whole of my battalion was scattered in small parties over the Corps area. Most of my officers and men were under somebody else's command. I sent in an application for transfer to the heavy branch of the Machine-Gun Corps, the title of the Tank Corps in those days. I was passed as suitable by the Chief Engineer of the Corps, and waited.

It was on the 28th December 1916 that I was ordered by wire to proceed immediately to the headquarters of the tanks. Christmas festivities had cheered a depressed battalion, but there was at the time no likelihood of the mildest excitement. Hammond had disappeared suddenly — it was rumoured to England and tanks. I was left with a bare handful of men to command. It was still raining, and we

were flooded. I was not sorry to go. . . .

We set out on a bright morning, in a smart gig that Wiggins had bought, with his latest acquisition in the shafts, bedecked with some second-hand harness we had found in Bethune, and clattered through Lillers to the Hôtel de la Gare.

Lillers is a pleasant town, famous principally for the lady in the swimming-bath and its oyster-bar. Every morning, in the large open-air swimming-bath of the town, a lady of considerable beauty is said to disport herself. The swimming-bath is consequently crowded, but I have not met anybody who has seen the lady. The oyster-bar provided a slight feminine interest as well as particularly fine *marennes vertes*. Lillers was an army headquarters. Like all towns so fated it bristled with neat notices, clean soldiers with wonderful salutes, and many motor-cars. It possessed an underworld of staff officers who hurried ceaselessly from office to office and found but little time to swim in the morning or consume oysters in the afternoon.

The Hôtel de la Gare was distinguished from lesser hotels by an infant prodigy and champagne cocktails. The infant prodigy was a dumpy child of uncertain age, who, with or without encouragement, would climb on to the piano-stool and pick out simple tunes with one finger. The champagne cocktails infected a doctor of my acquaintance with an unreasoning



desire to change horses and gallop back to billets.

At last the train came in. My servant, my baggage, and myself were thrown on board, and alighted at the next station in accordance with the instructions of the R.T.O. . . .

A few months later the Cyclist Battalion went to Italy, under Major Percy

Davies. It returned to France in time for the German offensive of April 1918, and gained everlasting honour by holding back the enemy, when the Portuguese withdrew, until our infantry arrived. For its skilful and dogged defence this battalieu was mentioned by name in the despatches of the Commander-in-Chief.

## CHAPTER II.—FRED KARNO'S ARMY.

(January to April 1917.)

We arrived at St Pol, where officers going on leave grow impatient with the official method of travel, desert the slow uncomfortable train, and haunt the Rest House in the hope of obtaining a seat in a motor-car to Boulogne. I had expected that the R.T.O. would call me into his office, and in hushed tones direct me to the secret lair of the tanks. Everything possible, it was rumoured, had been done to preserve the tanks from prying eyes. I was undeceived at once. An official strode up and down the platform, shouting that all men for the tanks were to alight immediately. I found on inquiry that the train for the tank area would not depart for several hours, so, leaving my servant and my kit at the station, I walked into the town full of hope.

I lunched moderately at the hotel, but, though there was much talk of tanks there, I found no one with a car. I adjourned in due course to the military hairdresser, and at

dusk was speeding out of St Pol in a luxurious Vauxhall. I was deposited at Wavrans with the Supply Officer, a melancholy and overworked young man, who advised me to use the telephone. Tank Headquarters informed me that I was posted provisionally to D Battalion, and D Battalion promised to send a box-body. I collected my servant and baggage from the station at Wavrans, accepted the Supply Officer's hospitality, and questioned him about my new Corps.

Tanks, he told me, were organised as a branch of the Machine-Gun Corps for purposes of camouflage, pay, and records. Six companies had been formed, of which four had come to France and two had remained in England. The four overseas companies had carried out the recent operations on the Somme (September - October 1916). The authorities had been so much impressed that it was decided to enlarge each of

these companies into a battalion, by the embodiment of certain Motor Machine-Gun Batteries and of volunteers expected from other corps in response to the appeal that had been sent round all formations. Thus A, B, C, and D Battalions were forming in France, E, F, and sundry other battalions, in England. Each battalion, he believed, consisted of three companies. Each company possessed twelve or more tanks, and the Company Commander owned a car.

Primed with this information and some hot tea, I welcomed the arrival of the box-body. We drove at break-neck speed through the darkness and the rain to Blangysur-Ternoise. I entered a cheerful, brightly-lit mess. Seeing a venerable and imposing officer standing by the fire, I saluted him. He assured me that he was only the Equipment Officer. We sat down to a well-served dinner, I discovered an old 'Varsity friend in the doctor, and retired content to a comfortable bed after winning slightly at bridge.

In the morning I was sent in a car to Bermicourt, where I was interviewed by Colonel Elles.<sup>1</sup> As the result of the interview I was posted to D Battalion, and on the following evening took over the command of No. 11 Company from Haskett-Smith. . . .

The usual difficulties and delays had occurred in the assembling of the battalions.

Rations were short. There was no equipment. The billets were bad. Necessaries such as camp kettles could not be obtained. That was now old if recent history. The battalions had first seen the light in October. By the beginning of January officers and men were equipped, fed, and under cover.

The men were of three classes. First came the "Old Tankers," those who had been trained with the original companies. They had been drawn for the most part from the A.S.C.: M.T. Some had been once or twice in action; some had not. They were excellent tank mechanists. Then came the motor machine gunners—smart fellows, without much experience of active operations. The vast majority of officers and men were volunteers from the infantry—disciplined fighting men.

On parade the company looked a motley crew, as indeed it was. Men from different battalions knew different drill. Some from the less combatant corps knew no drill at all. They resembled a "leave draft," and nobody can realise how undisciplined disciplined men can appear, who has not seen a draft of men from various units marching from the boat to a rest camp. The men are individuals. They trail along like a football crowd. They have no pride in their appearance, because they cannot feel they are on parade. They are only a crowd, not a company

<sup>1</sup> Now Major-General H. J. Elles, C.B., D.S.O.



or a regiment. Corporate pride and feeling are absent. The company was composed of drafts. Before it could fight it must be made a company. The men described themselves with admirable humour in this song, to the tune "The Church's one foundation"—

"We are Fred Karno's army, the Ragtime A.S.C.,  
 We do not work, we cannot fight,  
 what ruddy use are we?  
 And when we get to Berlin, the  
 Kaiser he will say—  
 'Hoch, hoch, mein Gott!  
 What a ruddy rotten lot  
 Are the Ragtime A.S.C.!'"

The company lived in a rambling hospice, built round a large courtyard. The original inhabitants consisted of nuns and thirty or forty aged and infirm men, who, from their habits and appearance, we judged to be consumptives.

The nuns were friendly but fussy. They allowed the officers to use a large kitchen, but resented the intrusion of any but officers' mess cooks, and in putting forward claims for alleged damages and thefts the good nuns did not lag behind their less pious sisters in the village. We were grateful to them for their courtesy and kindness; yet it cannot be said that any senior officer in the company ever went out of his way to meet the Mother Superior. She possessed a tacit memory.

The consumptives had a large room to themselves. It stank abominably. Where they slept at night was a mystery. They died in the room next to my bed-chamber.

The door of my room was inscribed "Notre Dame des Douleurs," and the room justified its title. All operations planned in it were cancelled. The day after I had first slept in it I fell ill. Colonel Elles, with Lieut.-Colonel Burnett, came to see me in my bed. I had not shaved, and my temperature made me slightly familiar. I could never keep the room warm of nights. Once, when I was suffering from a bad cold, I put out my hand sleepily for my handkerchief, and, without thinking, tried to blow my nose. It was a freezing night, and I still have the scar.

The majority of the men had wire beds, made by stretching wire-mesh over a wooden frame; but the rooms were draughty. We made a sort of dining-hall in a vast barn, but it was cold and dark.

In these chilly rooms and enormous barns the official supply of fuel did not go far. The coal trains from the Mines des Marles often rested for a period in Blangy sidings. I am afraid that this source was tapped unofficially, but the French naturally complained, strict orders were issued, and our fires again were low. It was necessary to act, and to act with decision. I obtained a lorry from the battalion, handed it over to a promising subaltern, and gave him stern instructions to return with much coal. Late in the afternoon he returned, on foot. The lorry had broken down six miles away. Three tons of coal made too heavy a

load in frosty weather. The lorry was towed in, and once again we were warm.

I did not ask for details, but a story reached my ears that a subaltern with a lorry had arrived that same morning at a certain Army coal dump. He asked urgently for two tons of coal. The Tanks were carrying out important experiments: coal they must have or the experiments could not be continued. Permission was given at once—he would return with the written order, which the Tanks had stupidly forgotten to give him. A little gift at the dump produced the third ton. To a Heavy Gunner the story needs no comment.

The mess was a dining-hall, medieval in size, with an immense open fireplace that consumed much coal and gave out little heat. We placed a stove in the middle of the hall. The piping was led to the upper part of the fireplace, but in spite of Jumbo's ingenuity it was never secure, and would collapse without warning. The fire smoked badly.

As the hall would seat at least fifty, we specialised in weekly guest-nights, and the reputation of the company for hospitality was unequalled. In those days canteens met all reasonable needs: the allotment system had not been devised; a worried mess-president, commissioned with threats to obtain whisky, was not offered fifty bars of soap in lieu. We bought a piano that afterwards became famous. We had an officer, nicknamed

Grantoffski, who could play any known tune from memory.

Our mess was so large that we were asked to entertain temporarily several officers from other units of the Tank Corps in process of formation. Several of these guests came from the central workshops of the Tank Corps at Erin, and later returned our hospitality by doing us small services.

One engineer, who remained with the Tank Corps for a few weeks only, told us a remarkable story. We were talking of revolvers and quick shooting and fighting in America. Suddenly to our amazement he became fierce.

"Do you see my hand? You wouldn't think it, but it's nearly useless—all through a Prussian officer. It was in Louisiana, and he went for me although I was unarmed. I caught his knife with my bare hand—it cut to the bone—I jerked back his wrist and threw him. My pal had a Winchester. He pushed it into the brute's face, smashed it all up, and was just going to pull the trigger when I knocked it away. But the sinews of my hand were cut and there was no doctor there. . . . I've been after that Prussian ever since. I'm going to get him—oh yes, don't you fear. I'm going to get him. How do I know he is still alive? I heard the other day. He is on the other side. I've pursued him for five years, and now I'm going to get him!"

He was a Scots engineer, a sturdy red-faced fellow with



twinkling eyes and a cockney curl to his hair.

The mess was a pleasant place, and training proceeded smoothly, because no company commander ever had better officers. My second-in-command was Haigh, a young and experienced regular from the infantry. He left me after the second battle of Bullecourt, to instruct the Americans. My section commanders were Swears, an "old Tanker," who was instructing at Bermicourt, Wyatt, and "Happy Fanny," whose adventures with a corporal last Christmas I dare not relate. Morris, Pultock, Davies, Clarkson, Macilwaine, Birkett, Grant, King, Richards, Telfer, Skinner, Sherwood, Head, Pritchard, Bernstein, Money, Talbot, Coghlan—too few remained with the company. Of the twenty I have mentioned, three had been killed, six wounded, three transferred, and two invalided before the year was out.

Training began in the middle of December and continued until the middle of March. Prospective tank-drivers tramped up early every morning to the Tank Park or "Tankodrome"—a couple of large fields in which workshops had been erected, some trenches dug, and a few shell-craters blown. The Tankodrome was naturally a sea of mud. Perhaps the mud was of a curious kind—perhaps the mixture of petrol and oil with the mud was poisonous. Most officers and men working in the Tankodrome suffered periodically from painful and ugly

sores, which often spread over the body from the face. We were never free from them while we were at Blangy.

The men were taught the elements of tank driving and tank maintenance by devoted instructors, who laboured day after day in the mud, the rain, and the snow. Officers' courses were held at Bermicourt. Far too few tanks were available for instruction, and very little driving was possible.

"Happy Fanny" toiled in a cold and draughty outhouse with a couple of 6-pdrs. and a shivering class. Davies, our enthusiastic Welsh footballer, supervised instruction in the Lewis gun among the draughts of a lofty barn in the Hospice.

The foundation of all training was drill. As a very temporary soldier I had regarded drill as unnecessary ritual, as an opportunity for colonels and adjutants to use their voices and prance about on horses. "Spit and polish" seemed to me as antiquated in a modern war as pipe-clay and red coats. I was wrong. Let me give the old drill-sergeant his due. There is nothing in the world like smart drill under a competent instructor to make a company out of a mob. Train a man to respond instantly to a brisk command, and he will become a clean, alert, self-respecting soldier.

We used every means to quicken the process. We obtained a bugle. Our bugler was not good. He became



careless towards the middle of his calls, and sometimes he erred towards the finish. He did not begin them always on quite the right note. We started with twenty odd calls a day. Everything the officers and the men did was done by bugle-call. It was very military and quite effective. All movements became brisk. But the bugler became worse and worse. Out of self-preservation we reduced the number of his calls. Finally he was stopped altogether by the colonel, whose headquarters were at the time close to our camp.

Our football team helped to bring the company together. It happened to excel any other team in the neighbourhood. We piled up enormous scores against all the companies we played. Each successive victory made the men prouder of the company, and more deeply contemptuous of the other companies who produced such feeble and ineffective elevens. Even the money that flowed into the pockets of our more ardent supporters after each match strengthened the belief in the superiority of No. 11 Company. The spectators were more than enthusiastic. Our C.S.M. would run up and down the touch-line, using the most amazing and lurid language.

Towards the middle of February our training became more ingenious and advanced. As painfully few real tanks were available for instruction, it was obviously impossible to

use them for tactical schemes. Our friendly Allies would have inundated the Claims Officer if tanks had carelessly manœuvred over their precious fields. In consequence the authorities provided dummy tanks.

Imagine a large box of canvas stretched on a wooden frame, without top or bottom, about six feet high, eight feet long, and five feet wide. Little slits were made in the canvas to represent the loopholes of a tank. Six men carried and moved each dummy, lifting it by the cross-pieces of the framework. For our sins we were issued with eight of these abortions.

We started with a crew of officers to encourage the men, and the first dummy tank waddled out of the gate. It was immediately surrounded by a mob of cheering children, who thought it was an imitation dragon or something out of a circus. It was led away from the road to avoid hurting the feelings of the crew and to safeguard the ears and morals of the young. After colliding with the corner of a house, it endeavoured to walk down the side of the railway cutting. Nobody was hurt, but a fresh crew was necessary. It regained the road when a small man in the middle, who had been able to see nothing, stumbled and fell. The dummy tank was sent back to the carpenter for repairs.

We persevered with those dummy tanks. The men hated



them. They were heavy, awkward, and produced much childish laughter. In another company a crew walked over a steep place and a man broke his leg. They became less and less mobile. The signallers used to practise from them, and they were used by the visual training experts. One company commander mounted them on waggons drawn by mules. The crews were tucked in with their Lewis guns, and each contraption, a cross between a fire-engine and a triumphal car in a Lord Mayor's Show, would gallop past targets which the gunners would recklessly endeavour to hit.

Finally, these dummies reposed derelict in our courtyard until one by one they disappeared, as the canvas and the wood were required for ignobler purposes.

We were allowed occasionally to play with real tanks. A sham attack was carried out before hill-tops of generals and staff officers, who were much edified by the sight of tanks moving. The total effect was marred by an enthusiastic tank commander, who, in endeavouring to show off the paces of his tank, became badly ditched, and the tank was for a moment on fire. The spectators appeared interested.

On another day we carried out experiments with smoke-bombs. Two gallant tanks moved slowly up a hill against trenches. When the tanks drew near, the defenders of the trenches rushed out, armed

with several kinds of smoke-producing missiles. These they hurled at the tanks, and, growing bolder, inserted them into every loophole and crevice of the tanks. At length the half-suffocated crews tumbled out and maintained with considerable strength of language that all those who had approached the tanks had been killed, adding that if they had only known what kind of smoke was going to be used they would have loaded their guns to avoid partial asphyxiation.

In addition to these open-air sports, the senior officers of the battalion carried out indoor schemes under the colonel. We planned numerous attacks on the map. I remember that my company was detailed once to attack Serre. A few months later I passed through this "village," but I could only assure myself of its position by the fact that there was some brick-dust in the material of the road.

By the beginning of March the company had begun to find itself. Drill, training, and sport had each done their work. Officers and men were proud of their company, and were convinced that no better company had ever existed. The mob of men had been welded into a fighting instrument. My sergeant-major and I were watching another company march up the street. He turned to me with an expression of slightly amused contempt.

"They can't march like us, sir!"

## CHAPTER III.—BEFORE THE BATTLE.

(March and April 1917.)

In the first months of 1917 we were confident the last year of the war had come. The Battle of the Somme had shown that the strongest German lines were not impregnable. We had learned much: the enemy had received a tremendous hammering; and the success of General Gough's operations in the Ancre valley promised well for the future. The French, it was rumoured, were undertaking a grand attack in the early spring. We were first to support them by an offensive near Arras, and then we would attack ourselves on a large scale somewhere in the north. We hoped, too, that the Russians and Italians would come to our help. We were told that the discipline of the German Army was loosening, that our blockade was proving increasingly effective, and we were encouraged by stories of many novel inventions. We possessed unbounded confidence in our Tanks.

Late in February the colonel held a battalion conference. He explained the situation to his company commanders and the plan of forthcoming operations.

As the result of our successes in the Ancre valley, the German position between the Ancre and Arras formed a pronounced salient. It was determined to attack simultaneously at Arras and from

the Ancre valley, with the object of breaking through at both points and cutting off the German inside the salient.

Colonel Elles had offered two battalions of tanks. He was taking a risk. Officers and crews were only half-trained. Right through the period of training real tanks had been painfully scarce. Improved tanks were expected from England, but none had arrived, and he decided to employ again the old Mark I. tank which had been used in the operations on the Somme in the previous year. The two battalions selected were "C" and "D."

When we examined the orders for the attack in detail, I found that my company was destined to go through with the troops allotted to the second objective and take Mercatel and Neuville Vitasse. It should have been a simple enough operation, as two conspicuous main roads penetrated the German lines parallel with the direction of my proposed attack.

On March 9th I drove to Arras in my car with Haigh, my second-in-command, and Jumbo, my reconnaissance officer. We went by St Pol and the great Arras road. The Arras road is a friend of mine. First it was almost empty except for the lorry park near Savy, and, short of Arras, it was screened because



the Germans still held the Vimy Ridge. Then before the Arras battle it became more and more crowded—numberless lorries, convoys of huge guns and howitzers, smiling men in buses and tired men marching, staff-cars and motor ambulances, rarely, a waggon with slow horses, an old Frenchman in charge, quite bewildered by the traffic. When the battle had begun, whole Divisions, stretching for ten miles or more, came marching along it, and the ambulances streamed back to the big hospital at St Pol. I have seen it after the Armistice had been signed, deserted and unimportant, with just a solitary soldier here and there standing at the door of a cottage. It is an exposed and windy road. The surface of it was never good, but I have always felt that the Arras road was proud to help us. It seemed ever to be saying: "Deliver Arras from shell and bomb; then leave me, and I shall be content to dream again." . . .

We drove into Arras a little nervously, but it was not being shelled, and, hungry after a freezing ride, we lunched at the Hôtel de Commerce.

This gallant hotel was less than 2500 yards from the German trenches. Across the street was a field battery in action. The glass of the restaurant had been broken, the upper storeys had been badly damaged, the ceiling of the dining-room showed marks of shrapnel. Arras was being shelled and bombed every night, and often by day; German

aeroplanes flew low over the town and fired down the streets. The hotel had still carried on ever since the British had been in Arras and before. The proprietress, a little pinched and drawn, with the inevitable scrap of fur flung over her shoulders, presided at the desk. Women dressed in the usual black waited on us. The lunch was cheap, excellently cooked, and well served—within easy range of the enemy field-guns. After the battle the hotel was put out of bounds, for serving drinks in forbidden hours. It reopened later, and continued to flourish until the German attack of April 1918, when the enemy shelling became too insistent. The hotel has not been badly hit, and, if it be rebuilt, I beseech all those who visit the battlefields of Arras to lunch at the Hôtel de Commerce—in gratitude. It is in the main street just by the station.

We motored out of Arras along a road that was lined with newly-made gunpits, and, arriving at a dilapidated village, introduced ourselves to the Divisional staff. We discussed operations, and found that much was expected of the tanks. After a cheery tea we drove home in the bitter cold.

On the 13th March we again visited the Division. I picked up Fitzherbert Brookholes, the G.S.O. III. of the Division, called on a brigadier, with whom I expected to work, and then drove to the neighbourhood of the disreputable village of Agny. We peeped at the

very little there was to be seen of the enemy front line through observation posts in cottages and returned to Arras, where we lunched excellently with Lieut.-Colonel J. W. H. T. Douglas, D.S.O. I left Jumbo with him, to make a detailed reconnaissance of the Front.

...  
The Arras battle would have been fought according to plan, we should have won a famous victory, and hundreds of thousands of Germans might well have been entrapped in the Arras salient, if the enemy in his wisdom had not retired. Unfortunately, at the beginning of March he commenced his withdrawal from the unpleasant heights to the north of the Ancre valley, and, once the movement was under way, it was predicted that the whole of the Arras salient would be evacuated. This actually occurred in the following weeks; the very sector I was detailed to attack was occupied by our troops without fighting. Whether the German had wind of the great attack that we had planned, I do not know. He certainly made it impossible for us to carry it out.

As soon as the extent of the German withdrawal became clear, my company was placed in reserve. I was instructed to make arrangements to support any attack at any point on the Arras front.

The Arras sector was still suitable for offensive operations. The Germans had fallen back on the Hindenburg Line, and this complicated system of defences rejoined the old Ger-

man line opposite Arras. Obviously the most practical way of attacking the Hindenburg Line was to turn it—to fight down it, and not against it. Our preparations for an attack in the Arras sector and on the Vimy Ridge to the north of it were far advanced. It was decided in consequence to carry out with modifications the attack on the German trench system opposite Arras and on the Vimy Ridge. Operations from the Ancre valley, the southern re-entrant of the old Arras salient, were out of the question. The Fifth Army was fully occupied in keeping touch with the enemy.

On the 27th March my company was suddenly transferred from the Third Army to the Fifth Army. I was informed that my company would be attached to the Vth Corps for any operations that might occur. Jumbo was recalled from Arras, fuming at his wasted work, and an advance party was immediately sent to my proposed detraining station at Achiet-le-Grand.

On the 29th March I left Blangy. My car was a little unsightly. The body was loaded with Haigh's kit and my kit and a collapsible table. On top, like a mahout, sat Spencer, my servant. It was sleeting, and there was a cold wind. We drove through St Pol and along the Arras road, out south through Habarcq to Beaumetz, and plunged over appalling roads towards Bucquoy. The roads became worse and worse. Spencer was just able to cling on,



groaning at every bump. Soon we arrived at our old rear defences, from which we had gone forward only ten days before. It was joyous to read the notices, so newly obsolete—"This road is subject to shell-fire"—and when we passed over our old support and front trenches, and drove across No Man's Land, and saw the green crosses of the Germans, the litter of their trenches, their sign-boards and their derelict equipment, then we were triumphant indeed. Since March 1917 we have advanced many a mile, but never with more joy. Remember that from October 1914 to March 1917 we had never really advanced. At Neuve Chapelle we took a village and four fields, Leos was a fiasco, and the Somme was too horrible for a smile.

On the farther side of the old German trenches was desolation. We came to a village and found the houses lying like slaughtered animals. Mostly they had been pulled down, like card houses, but some had been blown in. It was so pitiful that I wanted to stop and comfort them. The trees along the roads had been cut down. The little fruit-trees had been felled, or lay half-fallen with gashes in their sides. The ploughs rusted in the fields. The rain was falling monotonously. It was getting dark, and there was nobody to be seen except a few forlorn soldiers.

We crept with caution round the vast funnel-shaped craters that had been blown at each

cross-road, and, running through Logeast Wood, which had mocked us for so many weeks on the Somme, we came to Achiet-le-Grand.

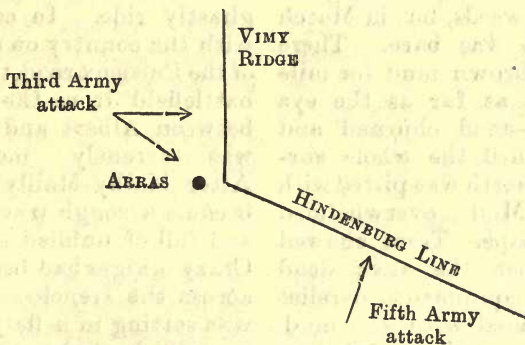
Ridger, the town commandant, had secured the only standing house, and he was afraid that it had been left intact for some devilish purpose. Haigh and Grant of my advance party were established in a dug-out. So little was it possible in those days to realise the meaning of an advance, that we discovered we had only two mugs, two plates, and one knife between us.

In the morning we got to work. A supply of water was arranged for the men; there was only one well in the village that had not been polluted. We inspected the ramp where the tanks would detrain, selected a tankodrome near the station, wired in a potential dump, found good cellars for the men, and began the construction of a mess in the remains of a small brick stable. Haigh and I motored past the derelict factory of Bihucourt and through the outskirts of Bapaume to the ruins of Behagnies, on the Bapaume-Arras road. After choosing sites for an advanced camp and tankodrome, we walked back to Achiet-la-Grand across country, in order to reconnoitre the route for tanks from the station to Behagnies. After lunch, Haigh, Jumbo, and I motored to Envillers, which is beyond Behagnies, and, leaving the car there, tramped to Mory. Jumbo had discovered in the morning an old quarry, hidden by trees, that he re-

commended as a half-way house for the tanks, if we were ordered to move forward; but the enemy was a little lively, and we determined to investigate further on a less noisy occasion.

That night we dined in our new mess. We had stretched one tarpaulin over what had been the roof, and another tarpaulin took the place of an absent wall. The main beam was cracked, and we feared rain, but a huge blazing fire comforted us—until one or two slates fell off with a clatter. We rushed out, fearing the whole building was about to collapse. It was cold and drizzling. We stood it for five minutes, and then, as nothing further happened, we returned to our fire. . . .

In some general instructions I had received from the colonel, it was suggested that my company would be used by the Vth Corps for an attack on Bullecourt and the Hindenburg Line to the east and west of the village. It will be remembered that the attack at Arras was designed to roll up the Hindenburg Line, starting from the point at which the Hindenburg Line joined the old German trench system. General Gough's Fifth Army, consisting of General Fanshawe's Vth Corps and General Birdwood's Corps of Australians, lay southeast of Arras and on the right of the Third Army. The Fifth Army faced the Hindenburg Line, and, if it attacked, it would be compelled to attack frontally.



The disadvantages of a frontal attack on an immensely strong series of entrenchments were balanced by the fact that a successful penetration would bring the Fifth Army on the left rear of a German Army, which would be fully occupied at the time in repelling the onset of our Third Army.

The key to that sector of the

Hindenburg Line which lay opposite the Fifth Army front was the village of Bullecourt.

In the last week of March the Germans had not taken refuge in their main line of defence, and were still holding out in the villages of Croisilles, Ecoeust, and Noreuil.

We were attacking them vigorously, but with no success



and heavy casualties. On the morning of the 31st March Jumbo and I drove again to Envillers and walked to Mory, pushing forward down the slope towards Ecoust. There was a quaint feeling of insecurity, quite unjustified, in strolling about "on top." We had an excellent view of our shells bursting on the wire in front of Ecoust, but we saw nothing of the country we wanted to reconnoitre — the approaches to Bullecourt. Ecoust was finally captured at the sixth or seventh attempt by the 9th Division on April 1st.

In the afternoon I paid my first visit to the Vth Corps, then at Acheux, twenty miles back. I motored by Bapaume and Albert over the Somme battlefield. The nakedness of it is now hidden by coarse grass and rough weeds, but in March of 1917 it was bare. There was dark-brown mud for mile after mile as far as the eye could see—mud churned and tortured until the whole surface of the earth was pitted with craters. Mud overwhelmed the landscape. Trees showed only against the sky; dead men, old equipment, derelict tanks blended with the mud, so that it needed an effort to distinguish them. At Le Sars bits of walls and smashed beams lay embedded in the mud. At Pozières the mud held a few mud-coloured bricks. I was glad when I came to Albert.

We took the Doullens road and found the Corps well housed in the chateau at Acheux. I announced the

imminent arrival of my tanks, but the news did not kindle the enthusiasm I had expected. The Vth Corps had already used tanks and knew their little ways. After tea I consulted with the lesser lights of the staff. Satisfactory arrangements were made for supplies, rations, and accommodation, and I demanded and obtained the use of a troop of Glasgow Yeomanry.

I decided to return by Puisieux-le-Mont. It was apparent that the Albert-Bapaume road would soon become uncomfortably crowded. I wanted to reconnoitre the only alternative route, and at the same time to inspect the village of Serre, which, on paper, I had so often and so violently attacked.

Never have I endured a more ghastly ride. In comparison with the country on either side of the Puisieux road, the Somme battlefield from the highway between Albert and Bapaume was serenely monotonous. After Maily-Maily the road became a rough track, narrow and full of unfilled shell-holes. Crazy bridges had been thrown across the trenches. The sun was setting in a fiery sky, and a reddish light tinged the pitiful tumbled earth, and glittered for a moment on the desolate water of the shell-holes. The crumbling trenches were manned with restless dead. In the doubtful light I thought a dead German moved. He lay on his back, half-sunken in the slimy mud, with knees drawn up, and blackened hand gripping a rusty rifle. Merci-

fully I could not see his face, but I thought his arms twitched.

It grew darker, and so narrow was the track that I might have been driving over the black mud of the battlefield. A derelict limber half-blocked the road, and, swerving to avoid it, we barely missed the carcass of a horse, dead a few days. Our progress was slow. Soon we lit the lamps. The track was full of horrible shadows, and big dark things seemed to come down the road to meet us—shattered transport or old heaps of shells. On either side of the car was the desert of mud and water-logged holes and corpses, face downward under the water, and broken guns and mortars, and little graves, and mile-long strands of rusty wire. Everywhere maimed ghosts were rustling, and the plump rats were pattering along the trenches.

It is unwise to go through a battlefield at night. If they make it a forest, no man will be brave enough to cross it in the dark.

We came to lights in the ruins of a village, and I stopped for a pipe and a word with my driver. . . .

My tanks arrived at Achietle-Grand just after dawn on April 1st. We had taken them over from the central workshops at Erin, and had drawn there a vast variety of equipment. The tanks had been driven on to the train by an Engineer officer. The railway journey had been delayed as usual, and the usual expert—this time a

doctor—had walked along the train, when shunted at Doullens, and had pointed out to his companion the “new monster tanks.”

In the morning we hauled off the sponson-trolleys—their use will be explained later—but we thought it wiser to wait until dusk before we derailed the tanks.

Tanks travel on flat trucks, such as are employed to carry rails. They are driven on and off the train under their own power, but this performance requires care, skill, and experience. A Mk. I. or a Mk. IV. tank is not too easy to steer, while the space between the track and the edge of the truck is alarmingly small. With two exceptions, my officers had neither experience nor skill.

It was an anxious time—not only for the company commander. The office of the R.T.O., at the edge of the ramp, was narrowly missed on two occasions. Very slowly and with infinite care the tanks were persuaded to leave the train and move down the road to the tankodrome we had selected. Then it began first to sleet and then to snow, while an icy wind rose, until a blizzard was lashing our faces.

In the old Mark I. tank it was necessary to detach the sponsons, or armoured “bow-windows,” on either side before the tank could be moved by rail. This was no easy matter. The tank was driven into two shallow trenches. A stout four-wheeled trolley was run alongside, and a sort of crane was fitted, to which slings were



secured. The sponson was girt about with these slings, the bolts which secured the sponson to the body of the tank were taken out, and the sponson was lowered on to the trolley.

My men, of whom the majority were inexperienced, carried out the reverse process on a dark night in a blizzard. Their fingers were so blue with cold that they could scarcely handle their tools. The climax was reached when we discovered that we should be compelled to drill new holes in several of the sponsons, because in certain cases the holes in the sponsons did not correspond with the holes in the tanks.

If the men never had a harder night's work, they certainly never worked better. Half the tanks fitted their sponsons and reached Behagnies by dawn. The remainder, less one lame duck, were hidden in Achiet-le-Grand until darkness once more allowed them to move.

Every precaution was taken to conceal the tanks from the enemy. My troop of Glasgow Yeomanry, under the direction of Talbot, who had been a sergeant-major in the Dragoons, rode twice over the tracks the tanks had made in order to obliterate them by hoof-marks. At Behagnies the tanks were drawn up against convenient hedges and enveloped in tarpaulins and camouflage nets. In spite of our efforts they appeared terribly obvious as we sur-

veyed them anxiously from one point after another. Our subtle devices were soon tested. An enterprising German airman flew down out of the clouds and darted upon two luckless observation balloons to right and left of us. He set them both on fire with tracer bullets, came low over our camp, fired down the streets of Bapaume, and disappeared into the east. The sporting instinct of my men responded to the audacity of the exploit, and they cheered him; but for the next twenty-four hours I was wondering if the camouflage of my tanks had been successful, or if the attention of the airman had been concentrated solely on the balloons. Presumably we were not spotted, for while at Behagnies we were neither shelled nor bombed.

The preparations for my first essay in tank-fighting were beginning to bear fruit. Eleven tanks lay within two short marches of any point from which they were likely to attack, and my crews were busy overhauling them. One crippled tank was hidden at Achiet-le-Grand, but the mechanical defect which had developed in her must have escaped the notice of central workshops. Cooper<sup>1</sup> was engaged night and day in taking up supplies and making forward dumps. The Corps had provided us with a convoy of limbered waggons drawn by mules—the forward roads were not passable for

<sup>1</sup> Major R. Cooper, M.C., Royal Fusiliers, had replaced Captain R. Haigh, M.C.

lorries — and the wretched animals had little rest. We were ordered to be ready by the 6th, and the order meant a fight against time. Tanks consume an incredible quantity of petrol, oil, grease, and water, and it was necessary to form dumps of these supplies and of ammunition at Mory Copse, our half-way house, and at Noreuil and Ecooust. Night and day the convoy trekked backwards and forwards under Cooper or Talbot. Mules cast their shoes, the drivers were dog-tired, the dumps at Noreuil and Ecooust were shelled, both roads to Mory were blocked by the explosion of delayed mines,—in spite of all difficulties the dumps were made, and on the morning of the battle the convoy stood by loaded, ready to follow the tanks in the expected break through.

Haigh had ridden forward to Ecooust with a handful of Glasgow yeomen in order to keep an eye on the dump and reconnoitre the country between Ecooust and the Hindenburg Line. He started in the afternoon, joining an ammunition column on the way. They approached the village at dusk. The enemy was shelling the road and suspected battery positions short of the first houses. The column made a dash for it at full gallop, but a couple of shells found the column, killing a team and the drivers.

Haigh and his men wandered into a smithy and lit a small fire, for it was bitterly cold. The shelling continued, but

the smithy was not hit. They passed a wretched night, and at dawn discovered a cellar, where they made themselves comfortable after they had removed the bodies of two Germans.

The reconnaissances were carried out with Haigh's usual thoroughness. Tank routes and observation-posts were selected — "lying-up" places for the tanks were chosen. Everything was ready if the tanks should be ordered to attack Bullecourt from the direction of Ecooust.

On April 4th I was introduced to the Higher Command. The Vth Corps had moved forward from Acheux to the ruined chateau at Bihucourt. There I lunched with the general, and drove with him in the afternoon to an army conference at Fifth Army Headquarters in Albert. The block of traffic on the road made us an hour late, and it was interesting to see how an Army commander dealt with such pronounced, if excusable, unpunctuality in a Corps commander.

The conference consisted of an awe-inspiring collection of generals seated round a table in a stuffy room decorated with maps. The details of the attack had apparently been settled before we arrived, but I understood from the Army commander's vigorous summary of the situation that the Third Army would not attack until the 7th. The greatest results were expected, and the Fifth Army would join in the fray immediately the



attack of the Third Army was well launched. As far as I was concerned, my tanks were to be distributed along the fronts of the Australian and Vth Corps. The conference broke up, and the colonel and I were asked to tea at the chateau. It was a most nervous proceeding, to drink tea in the company of a bevy of generals; but the major-general on my right was hospitality itself, and the colonel improved the occasion by obtaining the promise of some more nuts from the major-general, who was engineer-in-chief of the Army. Eventually we escaped, and the colonel<sup>1</sup> drove me back to Behagnies, where battalion headquarters lay close by my camp.

On the night of the 5th, as soon as it was dusk, my tanks moved forward. One by one they slid smoothly past me in the darkness, each like a patient animal, led by his officer, who flashed directions with an electric lamp. The stench of petrol in the air, a gentle crackling as they found their way through the wire, the sweet purr of the engine changing to a roar when they climbed easily on to the road — and then, as they followed the white tape into the night, the noise of their engines died away, and I could hear only the sinister flap-flap of the tracks, and see only points of light on the hillside.

Tanks in the daytime climbing in and out of trenches like

performing elephants may appeal to the humour of a journalist. Stand with me at night and listen. There is a little mist, and the dawn will soon break. Listen carefully, and you will hear a queer rhythmical noise and the distant song of an engine. The measured flap of the tracks grows louder, and, if you did not know, you would think an aeroplane was droning overhead. Then in the half-light comes a tired officer, reading a map, and behind him another, signalling at intervals to a grey mass gliding smoothly like a snake. And so they pass, one by one, with the rattle of tracks and the roar of their exhaust, each mass crammed with weary men, hot and filthy and choking with the fumes. Nothing is more inexorable than the slow glide of a tank and the rhythm of her tracks. Remember that nothing on earth has ever caused more deadly fear at the terrible hour of dawn than these grey sliding masses crammed with weary men. . . .

My tanks were safely camouflaged in the old quarry at Mory Copse before dawn on April 6th. I joined them in the morning, riding up from the camp at Behagnies on a troop-horse I had commanded from my troop of Glasgow Yeomanry. The quarry was not an ideal hiding-place, as it lay open to direct though distant observation from the German lines; but the tanks were skilfully concealed by the

---

<sup>1</sup> Now Brigadier-General S. Hardress Lloyd, D.S.O.

adroit use of trees, undergrowth, and nets, the hill surmounted by the copse provided an excellent background, and we were compelled to make a virtue of necessity as the open downs in the neighbourhood of Mory gave not the slightest cover. The village itself was out of the question: the enemy were shelling it with hearty goodwill.

We lay there comfortably enough, though unnecessary movement by day and the use of lights at night were forbidden. No enemy aeroplane came over, but a few shells, dropping just beyond the copse on a suspected battery-position, disturbed our sleep. The tanks were quietly tuned, the guns were cleaned, and officers were detailed to reconnoitre the tank routes to Ecoust and Noreuil.

The offensive was postponed from day to day, and we were growing a little impatient, when at dawn on April 9th the Third Army attacked.

It had been arranged at the last Army Conference that the Fifth Army would move when the offensive of the Third Army was well launched. My tanks were to be distributed in pairs along the whole front of the army, and to each pair a definite objective was allotted. I had always been averse to this scattering of my command. The Hindenburg Line, which faced us, was notoriously strong. Bullecourt, the key to the whole position, looked on the map almost impregnable. The artillery of the Fifth Army was to the best of my knowledge far from overwhelming,

and gunners had told me that good forward positions for the guns were difficult to find. I realised, of course, that an officer in my subordinate position knew little, but I was convinced that a surprise concentration might prove a success where a formal attack, lightly supported by a few tanks scattered over a wide front, might reasonably fail. I planned for my own content an attack in which my tanks, concentrated on a narrow front of a thousand yards and supported as strongly as possible by all the infantry and guns available, should steal up to the Hindenburg Line without a barrage. As they entered the German trenches down would come the barrage, and under cover of the barrage and the tanks the infantry would sweep through, while every gun not used in making the barrage should pound away at the German batteries.

I was so fascinated by my conception that on the morning of the 9th I rode down to Behagnies and gave it to the colonel for what it was worth. He approved of it thoroughly. After a hasty lunch we motored down to the headquarters of the Fifth Army.

We found General Gough receiving in triumph the reports of our successes on the Third Army front opposite Arras.

"We want to break the Hindenburg Line with tanks, General," said the colonel, and very briefly explained my scheme.

General Gough received it with approval, and decided to attack at dawn on the follow-



ing morning. He asked me when my tanks would require to start. The idea of an attack within twenty-four hours was a little startling—there were so many preparations to be made; but I replied my tanks should move at once, and I suggested air protection. General Gough immediately rang up the R.F.C., but their General was out, and, after some discussion, it was decided that my tanks would have sufficient time to reach the necessary position if they moved off after dusk. We drove at breakneck speed to the chateau near, which was occupied by the Australian Corps, and were left by General Gough to work out the details with the Brigadier-General of the General Staff.

The colonel allowed me to explain the scheme myself. All my suggestions were accepted; but the concentration of men and guns that I had imagined in my dreams was made impossible by the fact that General Gough had ordered the attack for the morrow.

I took the colonel's car and tore back to Behagnies. I wrote out my orders while Jumbo, helped by two reconnaissance officers who were attached to us for instruction, rapidly marked and coloured maps for the tank commanders. My orders reached Swears, who was in charge at Mory Copse, by 6.30 P.M., and by 8 P.M. the tanks were clear of the quarry.

After dark I walked down the Bapaume road and pre-

sented myself at the headquarters of the Australian Division, with which my tanks were operating. It was a pitch-black night. The rain was turning to sleet.

Divisional Headquarters were in "Armstrong" or small canvas huts, draughty and cold. I discussed the coming battle with the staff of the Division and Osborne, the G.S.O. II. of the Corps. We turned in for a snatch of sleep, and I woke with a start—dreaming that my tanks had fallen over a cliff into the sea. At midnight I went to the door of the hut and looked out. A gale was blowing, and sleet was mingled with snow. After midnight I waited anxiously for news of my tanks. It was a long trek for one night, and, as we had drawn them so recently, I could not guarantee, from experience, their mechanical condition. There was no margin of time for any except running repairs.

At one o'clock still no news had come. The tanks had orders to telephone to me immediately they came to Noreuil, and from Noreuil to the starting-point was at least a ninety-minutes' run.

By two o'clock everybody was asking me for information. Brigade Headquarters at Noreuil had neither seen tanks nor heard them, but they sent out orderlies to look for them in case they had lost their way. At Noreuil it was snowing hard.

My position was not pleasant. The attack was set for dawn. The infantry had

already gone forward to the railway embankment, from which they would "jump off." In daylight they could neither remain at the embankment nor retire over exposed ground without heavy shelling. It was half-past two. I was penned in a hut with a couple of staff officers, who, naturally enough, were irritated and gloomy. I could do nothing.

The attack was postponed for an hour. Still no news of the tanks. The faintest glimmerings of dawn appeared when the telephone-bell rang. The Australian handed me the receiver with a smile of relief.

"It's one of your men," he said.

I heard Wyatt's tired voice.

"We are two miles short of Noreuil in the valley. We have been wandering on the downs in a heavy snowstorm. We never quite lost our way, but it was almost impossible to keep the tanks together. I will send in a report. The men are dead-tired."

"How long will it take to get to the starting-point?" I asked.

"An hour and a half," he replied wearily.

"Stand by for orders."

It was 1½ hours before zero. The men were dead-tired. The tanks had been running all night. But the Australians were out on the railway embankment and dawn was breaking.

I went to see the General,

and explained the situation briefly.

"What will happen to your tanks if I put back zero another hour and we attack in daylight?" he asked.

"My tanks will be useless," I replied. "They will be hit before they reach the German trenches—particularly against a background of snow."

He looked at his watch and glanced through the window at the growing light.

"It can't be helped. We must postpone the show. I think there is just time to get the boys back. Send B. to me."

I called up Wyatt and told him that the men were to be given a little sleep. The officers, after a short rest, were to reconnoitre forward. I heard orders given for the Australians to come back from the railway embankment—later I learned that this was done with practically no casualties—then I stumbled down the road to tell the colonel.

I found him shaving.

"The tanks lost their way in a snowstorm and arrived late at Noreuil. The attack was postponed."

He looked grave for a moment, but continued his shaving.

"Go and have some breakfast," he said cheerily, "You must be hungry. We'll talk it over later."

So I went and had some breakfast. . . .

(To be continued.)



## FROM THE OUTPOSTS.

## AN OFFENSIVE IN RASKAM.

BY L. V. S. B.

THE vicissitudes of war had taken — and myself from a more north-westerly region to Tashkurghan in Sarikol. A party of seven N.C.O.'s and men had been waiting here for us for about a fortnight, and when we arrived at about midday the senior N.C.O., a Punjabi named Ahmad Shah, informed me that he had reliable news that a party of a hundred armed men, including Germans and Turks, had crossed Sarikol from the Russian side, and had been seen at Shindi and Baldir in the gorge of the Tashkurghan river. We paraded in the evening, with four days' rations, accompanied by Captain V—— of the 3rd Turkestan Rifle Regiment, six sabres 6th Orenburg Cossacks, and two Sarikoli interpreters. A pack-horse carried some spare rations and blankets.

Moving after dark to avoid comment, we worked our way down the open valley to Duldul Hekar Mazar, and crossed the ford there.

The track now entered a precipitous gorge, and the horses were led in the darkness up and down the rough cliffs. In many places the men had to hold on to the animals' tails to help them down the steep places. It was not till three in the

morning that we reached a wretched hut, which is all there is of Shindi.

There was no clue here, and the gorge lower down is impassable for man or beast unless the river be frozen, so, having eaten, and slept five or six hours, we moved on to Baldir and thence up the Wacha river. This valley, though only visited by one European traveller in thirty years, is pleasant and fertile. There are a few scattered fields of barley, trees, and houses. Torbush attains to the dignity of a hamlet, and a goat track runs from here over the hills to Tashkurghan.

A few miles up is a flat round stone, called a Kurtash, in the centre of the path. It is said that no bad horse can be brought to pass this.

Wacha is quite a large, though scattered, village, in an open valley.

A path goes to Sherbus, lower down on the Tashkurghan river, but it is said to be so fearful that at one place even the Pamir Tajiks have to be blindfolded and led across by the local men.

No news was to be had at Wacha, though a party of traders, coming from the north over the Yamantars Pass, was questioned and

small patrols were pushed out towards Mariong Robat and one or two other places.

At nightfall we all rendezvoused at Wacha, spent the night there, and next morning crossed an *aghri art* or "thieves' pass." The track is passable for laden pack animals, and leads down to Taghlik Gumbak in Taghdumbash. We returned to Tashkurghan for our kits, leaving the Cossacks watching the Mariong pamiir, and next day reached Dafdar.

At this village the Beg, with much show of secrecy, came up after dark with fresh information.

Fifteen mounted armed men had come over the Pisling Pass some days before, and gone through his village in the dark. Their tracks had been seen in the snow of Ili Su. Allowing the baggage to go on to Kanjut, I sent for an officer and six rifles of the Gilgit Scouts from our post up in the valley, just over the Indian border.

My party concentrated at Ili Su to the extent of six rifles of a regular regiment, one jemadar and six rifles of the Hunza Company of the "Scouts," and a Kanjuti merchant as interpreter.

Our kit consisted of the men's marching order and two blankets and a "poshtin" each. We also had 120 pounds of flour and some tea and sugar.

An early start on the 9th November took us up a rough trackless valley to the Ili Su Pass.

A fierce gusty wind brought down a good deal of snow, and since the final pull up is very steep and covered with sheets of ice, we were glad to see the top. I fancy the ponies were still more pleased.

The north side carried still more snow, which showed us the trail in much detail, though it was eight days old. Soon enough we came to a few patches of grass and brushwood. The valley gets rougher and narrower lower down, the hillsides are steep, rough, and bare. Our night's bivouac found us at Mal Jeran, or Itak Uzdi, under some boulders. It snowed during the night, and two villagers of Dafdar contrived to desert with five animals. The next day a very early start soon brought us into thick jungle: there was only the vestige of a track, and, fortunately, this had not been used for years, so the trail stood out clearly. The scrub was thick enough to make it a hard struggle to get through: one of the ponies lost an eye, torn out by a branch. At Issik Bulak (hot spring) is a hut and a patch of plough, sometimes used in the summer by one or two Tajiks from Sarikol. Here we found some tame yaks, which made up for our lost ponies; and just above was half a broken cup, made in Japan: this told us a lot, since it was clearly dropped by the pursued. The fracture was new, and the cup was too good to belong to a mere wandering shepherd.

Two hours more fighting



through close-knit jungle in the darkness saw us in a glade called Baital Jilga (Mare valley), where we bivouacked, close to roaring fires. The descent, though not very steep, had been vilely rough, with loose shale and sharp boulders scattered everywhere. Next morning, from high up on a steep loose slide, we soon came in sight of the immense clear slope of the north side of the mighty Raskam valley. The Ili Su stream, which we had been following, meets the big river in a flat valley floor of stones and sand nearly a mile wide. The fording of the river at this point was only just practicable; the yaks and smaller ponies were frankly swimming, and carried a good way down, whilst we ferried the rifles and accoutrements across on the larger beasts.

I felt relieved when everything was safe and on the right bank, though it had taken nearly two hours to cross. The spoor had vanished, and it took several casts to find it again in the sand beyond the stony river-bank.

Following it still, a long but easy ascent took us slanting up the huge smooth hillside for more than 4000 feet to the Kum Dawan, or Tupa Dawan, an easy pass, without snow.

A splendid view unfolded itself: to the south the mighty snow-peaks of Muztagh, Oprang, and Hunza; to the east lay the desolate Karakoram; to the north ridge upon ridge unrecognisable from the map; whilst to the west we looked

down into the untrodden gorge of the mysterious Raskam.

The swift stream flows between almost sheer and clean-cut cliffs. They tower straight up to some seven thousand feet from the water.

Even the foot of the slopes is quite impassable—there are a few flat patches of boulders on the inside of some of the curves; but it is only once in many years that the river is frozen so that any human can reach the upper valley from the villages of the embouchure.

Whilst the men and beasts were getting their wind I took a few bearings with our one and only "compass, prismatic, Mark VI." The way down from here was a steep slide of nearly  $45^{\circ}$ ; at the bottom is a little glade where our prey had spent the night, and we munched our frugal midday meal of flap-jacks cooked on flat stones heated on yak-dung (argol) fires. This was the Quetokor Ravine, its hill-sides coming steeply down into a sharp V filled with close thickets through which we carried on our toilsome way. Some two hours on we came, to our great surprise, to a couple of huts where was a loquacious Kirghiz woman, Fatima by name, with a little old silent husband. She told us that our pursued were only five days ahead, and even gave us a very little flour: as we did not know where we were going, or how far the nearest cultivation was, or how many days' rations the enemy were in possession of, this small contribution was most welcome.

Moreover, looking into the huts we found a young and chubby Kirghiz aged about sixteen. He could not explain his presence there, and proclaimed his entire ignorance of all this country, but was eventually induced to accompany us as a guide. His reticence explained itself later. Father was guiding the enemy. Lower down, where the trail led us, the valley opened out a little, and the hills seemed so low that I imagined it was but a few days' journey to the plains of Turkestan. We learnt better later. Suddenly, on the shady hillside, the trail ended. Casts forward were fruitless, the slopes were impassable to right and left, and the jungle in the valley bottom was very thick. The havildar of the militia suggested that our objective must be lying in the two or three miles of jungle, so this was combed out with the bayonet. We found nothing, till suddenly the regular Dafadar came upon the narrow mouth of a side ravine, so filled with scrub and trees that it seemed from a little way off to be unbroken hillside. Up this was the trail. I had taken all precautions against an ambushade, nor were these relaxed here. It would have paid the enemy very well to have laid out a few of my men in some narrow boulder-strewn gerge. The ravine became a small steep valley, and well up was a triokle of a spring where we were forced to stop for the sake of the animals, which were now much exhausted. We had lost ground this day owing to

the river crossing, the search through the jungle, the doubling back of the trail, and the lack of water higher up the valley. However, we made a very early start, the young Kirghiz still protesting his ignorance of the country.

A long gradual ascent into snow, growing deeper and deeper, led us up a long, desolate, untrodden valley to the pass called Furzanak. This is about 17,500 feet. I took some more bearings from its summit. The descent was very steep into a desolate valley leading apparently to nowhere, though, at about midday, we came to a small patch of grass about the size of a tennis-court. We snatched a meal where the enemy had spent the night, and left us some clues, among which was a dead quail and his little straw cage. This told the nationality of at least some of the party. An abominable ascent, finished in the dusk, of a good 4000 steep and slippery feet, led to the summit of another high snow-bound pass grimly named Yettim Qoz, or the "pass of the last sheep." The new moon lit our way down to a bleak open upland swept by a bitter wind. No water and no fuel and no grass, so supperless to bed in holes scraped in the snow. The next day the wretched beasts were so weak that they were led, or rather driven, the whole way. My own pony was so thin that his girth had to be put across his breast; he died later.



The Kandek Pass, from which we could look down into Yettim Qozi, is over 17,000 feet, but easy on the south side. Through deep snow on the north, we came down a breakneck descent to a valley in which was a spring and some grass.

We ate here. The food question was now critical: we had one and a half days' on hand, and no idea where the next lot was coming from, nor any notion when or where we could strike cultivation or even a village. Half rations were prescribed from that day. A fortunate shot the day before had secured us a young burhel—something of a windfall: he was rent to pieces, scorched over a fire, and devoured inside ten minutes. The next pass, called Pilipert, crossed still in daylight, was one of the most difficult I have ever been over, and the snow cornice on the summit did not help the ponies. Two died on the descent: this meant a bigger load of blankets and so forth for the survivors. Luckily there was not much flour to be carried. We camped on a summer grazing of the Kirghiz.

Even the round trace where their tent had been and their old fireplace seemed like civilisation to us.

The Paik Pass was the next morning's work, and the worst of the lot.

The cornice on the top and ice-sheets on the slopes were so desperately severe on the ponies that, unriden as

they were, two died on the way down into Kulan Urgi. The men began to show the effects of the cold and short rations, and suffered patiently from old wounds picked up in France, Africa, and Persia. Not a word of complaint did I ever hear; the growing freshness of the trail was a constant source of joy to all ranks, who continually voiced their keenness to press on.

We hoped that the Paik was going to be our last bad pass; seven of them in five days was as much as we wanted.

The valley we had dropped into was quite well clothed in grass, and where it joined the Kulan Urgi stream there were even trees and tall reedy vegetation. The Jemadar and I rode on here, since the men's wretched ponies could scarcely stagger, and I wanted to see what sort of country lay ahead of us.

The prospect was distinctly more hopeful; the map seemed less nebulous, and I knew that the valley, if unsurveyed, had been traversed before by a European.

Sure enough a few miles down was a patch of barley and a little hut built in under a cliff. The havildar had caught us up, and we hitched up our horses and went in.

A buxom and apple-cheeked, if ooy, Kirghiz wench greeted us, and a little blandishment secured a large bowl of rich yak's milk, followed by some boiled wheat. Though the damsel was distinctly grubby,

she took the young officer's fancy, once he had something inside him, and he remarked to me, after he had somewhat brusquely ordered his N.C.O. to get outside, "Abhi mera dil Khush hogya" (Now my heart is happy). However, he did not see any means of getting rid of me, so after a pleasant chat with the lady, who told us that our prey was now only three days ahead, I led him gently but firmly away. Two miles down was a hamlet of about five houses, and by nightfall we had billeted ourselves, fed, bought some barley, and requisitioned some ponies for the morrow. There was a little friction about handing over the ponies—not, however, for long. Next day was bright and cheery, stomachs were full, every one had a horse by the time we had gone a few miles down this Kulan Urgi valley, where several animals were loose on the hillsides, and the enemy were not far ahead. I had made up my mind here that they were going straight to Yarkand over the Sandal Pass, a well-trodden route. It was not to be so, though for some ten miles on the trail bent sharply to the eastward, up a wide valley shown blank on the map. We followed this, through easy level country, with trees, and higher up a few scattered huts. There was also a mill whence we secured a bag of flour, and later on the men enjoyed the rare treat of helping themselves to other people's horses, leaving their

more exhausted beasts in exchange.

Indeed at one place where the valley was an open level plain, the "Hun hunt" developed into a cowboy roundup. At five in the afternoon we reached a village high up in the valley, where there lived the "Yuzbashi" of the tribe of Kirghiz who grazed in those parts. He gave us information and some milk, and we stopped a couple of hours in his house. Two or three more ponies were forthcoming, and we pushed on at seven, hoping to be at grips in the next two or three days. A couple of hours up a desolate valley led to an equally desolate pass. The climb was long and stiff, through ankle-deep loose dust, in great ruts, where hoofs had worn the track three and four feet down. At midnight I reached the top, and enjoyed a scene of the most weird beauty. To the south and east were ice-bound peaks and virgin snow-fields and glaciers, as far as the eye could reach, the smallest details showing up clearly in the bright beams of the moon; ahead of us to the north were deep and gloomy gorges, equally unknown, in black shadow. A precipitous path took us down to a spring, forming the headwaters of the unmapped Shaksu. At three in the morning we came upon a hamlet called Bulun, also not on the map: we had marched nearly fifteen hours, with halts of only three. Bulun held quite a big population,



who were so excited at having seen two batches of strangers in forty-eight hours that they talked all at once at the tops of their voices. We had gained a day, but the villagers' yaks and goats had spoiled the trail. Since the party we were after had avoided the Sandal Pass, I concluded that they were bound for Karghalik. We pushed on along the beaten track towards Ak Masjid, and had marched for several hours towards a high and steep pass, when it became clear that the villagers of Bulun had lied to us. We had two with us, who confessed that they were not taking us on the path the enemy had followed. They were rapidly induced to regret their duplicity; but it was too late to go back, so I decided to go ahead by what seemed a slightly longer route, which would meet that followed by our friends ahead. During all that day and night we made a nightmare march. Four great passes, led up to by gloomy gorges, did we have to toil over. The first two I never found the names of, but the third and fourth were the Sakrigu and Akkas: these two were traversed in the dark. We found a hamlet in the valley after the first pass, and another in the Pokhpu, just before ascending to the Sakrigu. The whole population was under five.

The gloomy gorges north of the Sakrigu seemed interminable in their ghostly meanderings.

There was no track, and the animals floundered and struggled amongst huge boulders. The cliff sides towered everywhere sheer up for thousands of feet, and at one turn a titanic excrescence of rock showed up like a perfectly-formed ace of spades. This we took for a good omen, and when we debouched from the eerie canyon at midnight to the desolate valley of the Kalisthan river, whose name signifies the place where a robber was hanged, the men were still cheerful, though we found no grass, fuel, or shelter at midnight. The fourth pass of that day's journey was reported by the liar who accompanied us to be near at hand, and easy. Hence I decided to push on. It was a weary and thirsty party who reached the top and thumped the untruthful Kirghiz. A wretched and deserted hamlet was reached by four in the morning. We broke in the door of a hut and found some firewood, but no water anywhere. After a few hours' sleep we woke up to find three or four aborigines, who told us that they were British subjects. They also said that there was no water for miles. I gave one of the men a few rupees and told him to go towards Bulun, work down the Tiznaf valley, and send information about the pursued, either personally or by deputy, to me, at a big village called Arpat Bulung, which was shown on the map in the debouchure of the river into the plain.

This duty he very willingly undertook and efficiently carried out. Just as we were riding off down the valley a very old pink-faced Kirghiz, evidently a man of some consequence, and from his green turban a Haji, came round the corner, much surprised to meet an armed party. Before he could ask who we were, I asked him who he was and made him produce his papers, which indicated that he was a "Karaulohi," or head frontier guard, sent out by a mandarin to inspect certain outposts, and with instructions to meet an expected guest. This aroused my suspicions that the mandarin might be in touch with certain Germans, since the "guest" could not have been myself. So I told the Haji that I was the guest that he was to help, and that he was to come along with me and make himself useful. If he had any scruples in the matter, he did not mention them in the face of my thirteen bayonets, and the compelling suasion of Sowar Kalbi Mahomed, a youthful ex-bandit from Khorasan, who did most of our parleying in Turki. His speciality was the wheedling of unaccommodating Kirghiz maidens, and many were the stores of rich yak milk that found their way down our throats from the ladies' hiding-places.

The hamlet we had left was called Jibrail, and a few hours on was the small village of Ak Masjid, where the main

winter caravan route from the Karakoram joins in.

There was no trace of the sought-for trail here, nor any water, but a woman gave us each a small and very welcome drink out of a big gourd. We had had nothing for sixteen hours.

Kök Yar, a big village with trees and real houses, was reached in the afternoon, after a long march through a desolate valley in a blinding, tearing dust-storm. A pool of green slimy water saved the horses.

Kök Yar was barren of news, so we slept a few hours, supping on welcome melons and mealie-cobs, and went on at midnight. I intended to strike obliquely from the east, the line that I felt the enemy must have followed, down the Tiznaf valley into the plain of Turkestan. This necessitated a compass-march in the dark over a low ridge of sandy hills that separate the Kök Yar valley from that of the Tiznaf, the latter being the lower waters of the combined Shaksu Pokhpu and Kalisthan streams. Arpat Bulung was reached in broad daylight, and we found Persian-speaking British subjects predominating there. They told us that no strange party had been down the valley, and suggested that they had crossed the range separating the valley of Tiznaf and Asgansal, which would lead them into Yarkand. This was hard to believe, since it meant that they had made a circumbendibus round the



single easy pass that would have taken them straight down the valley into the old city. It might also imply that they had got wind of our pursuit, and this belief was strengthened by the behaviour of the Bulun villagers. The prospect of catching them did not seem very hopeful, but the men felt certain that we should meet in the open, and prepared for the fight they expected. The fresh mealies and melons had done us all a lot of good, and, spending a few hours to rest in Arpat Bulung, we made an immense march that lasted all the afternoon, all night, and well into the next day. At first this led down the river, forded many times, then across a howling desert, now barren and stony, now overlaid with heavy sand-drifts. As towards morning we approached Khan Langar, a big village on the banks of the Yarkand river, the plain became dotted with hamlets, which had sprung up where the map shows all blank, from the little irrigation canals started by an energetic Chinese Amban.

At Khan Langar we billeted ourselves in the Yuzbashi's big house, but the village was empty of all but women and goitrous *crétins*, who appeared to be unable to talk sense. The intelligent males had all gone into Karchalik to pay their annual taxes. That evening saw us again on the road, through frequent villages, among trees, and the many channels of the Yarkand river. When darkness fell, it became

clear that our goitrous guide did not know the road, in spite of having his head clumped. The Haji did not pretend to, so we came to a house and knocked on the locked *porte-cochère* of the big courtyard, around which are found the rooms of the inmates. The outside is a blank windowless wall. Much hammering at length aroused a voice, which roughly told us to go away. The old Kirghiz, who was now on the best of terms with us, ordered the door to be opened [in the name of the Chinese Republic]. The man inside said that we might kill him, but he would not open the door. This made me very suspicious, and enraged the Haji, so we agreed to break the door down. A few minutes' work with rifle butts effected an entrance, and we had the creepy feeling of stepping into an empty stable-yard, where we had expected to find a hostile assembly. No one could be found, but at last one of the men climbed a ladder to the flat roof and found a whole family in advanced stages of leprosy. We did not investigate further. A few miles on there lived a Wakhi, a British subject, who willingly got out of bed and showed us the path to Painap. This is on the main cart-road joining Kashgar, through Yarkand and Karghalik to Lanchowfu, and so to China itself. An empty sarai gave us a few hours' sleep, and early in the morning we galloped into a walled garden a mile outside the gates of Old Yarkand.

I stopped here and sent on my Kanjuti interpreter, in civilian clothes, to fetch out the Aksakal (the British trade agent), without attracting attention. He arrived an hour later; I inquired the whereabouts of a party, supposedly mainly Bajauris, who had arrived in the city, as I guessed, a day or so before, from Badakshan. He opined that the Badakshi Sarai might hold them; so under his guidance the whole patrol hastened in the growing daylight through the quaint tortuous lanes of the ancient abode of iniquity, to the gate of a large sarai.

The inrush of a dozen enthusiastic Pathans, Punjabis, Hazaras, and Kanjutis with fixed bayonets bewildered the fifty or so more or less ruffian Bajauris and Afghans in the sarai, and they put their hands up and surrendered themselves without more ado. It only remained to sort out the fifteen we wanted, search them, and relieve them of their German arms and ammunition. So happily ended a fortnight's venture through an almost untouched region of some of the wildest country that it has ever been my misfortune to cross.



## 450 MILES TO FREEDOM.

BY CAPTAIN M. A. B. JOHNSTON and CAPTAIN K. D. YEARSLEY.

## CHAPTER XII.

WHEN daylight came, we found ourselves in a network of extraordinary valleys. Large trees grew on the rock-strewn slopes, while along the bottoms were little strips of bright red soil, sprinkled with stones, and yet suggestive of great fertility; and indeed in some parts it was clear that the ground had in a previous year been ploughed. Yet as far as human habitation was concerned the valley seemed entirely deserted; only here and there as we marched on we passed a few timbers of some ruined shelter, indicating its former occupation by shepherd inhabitants. The whole scene gave the impression that here had once been flourishing well-watered vales, which had then been blasted by some strange upheaval of nature, by which the whole water-supply had suddenly been cut off and the former inhabitants compelled to quit.

To open our eyes on such a scene did not tend to revive our spirits. We had not a drop of water in our water-bottles, and although we soon found a valley leading in the right direction, we followed it without much hope of being able to quench our thirst. After an hour or so, however, at a place where the valley widened a little, we picked up

in the soft red soil a number of goat-tracks, and noticed that several others joined them, all seeming to converge towards the same spot. These suggested water, but soon after they suddenly ceased. About fifty yards up the hill, however, there was a stone enclosure, and just as Cochrane was leading on, Nobby thought it was advisable to make sure there was nothing there. This was most fortunate, for inside he found a well. Next moment we were all within the enclosure, and on lifting out the heavy timber bung which closed the hole in the stone-built cover, found water not twenty feet down. It tasted slightly stale, and no doubt the well had not been used for some time; but this did not affect our enjoyment of a couple of brews of "boulgar" (porridge made from crushed wheat), which were now prepared, and flavoured with a spoonful of our precious cocoa. Still more refreshing to those who could summon up the necessary energy, was a wash and a shave. Even a wash-hand basin was provided in the shape of a little stone trough which was built into the enclosure wall, and was doubtless intended for use in watering the flocks of sheep and goats.

After nearly two hours' grateful rest and refreshment, we resumed our course, and soon after entered a broad ravine. Here grew enormous oak-trees, seeming to flourish amid the barest rock and boulders, although the bed of this quaint valley appeared to have had no water in it for ages. At one point, where we halted under the shelter of a rocky outcrop, some of the party filled a haversack with the tips of stinging-nettles. Gloves were not an item of our equipment, and our fingers were badly stung, but a little spinach would provide a pleasant variation in our next cooked meal.

We went on till 11 A.M. without seeing a single sign of life. Then we came to a strong timber barrier across the narrow foot of the valley, and saw beyond it a man engaged in winnowing. We quickly drew back out of view, and decided we should have to make a detour. The country was not so desolate or uninhabited as we thought. First, however, we would fortify ourselves with a little food. For this purpose we climbed a short way up the western side of the valley and settled down in the shelter of a big tree. While Cochrane and Perce cooked some "boulgar," the rest lay down and were soon fast asleep. It was a hard struggle indeed to rouse oneself from such delightful oblivion of all our cares, but our Mr Greatheart was not to be denied, and after our food we left the Enchanted Ground.

To avoid the risk of being seen by people in the valley, it was now necessary to climb up the steep rocky ridge ahead instead of circling round its foot as would otherwise have been possible. The surface was atrocious,—jagged points of rock out into our feet through the soles of our much-worn footgear. If one wished to avoid a sprained ankle, every step had to be taken with care, for the rock was cut up into innumerable crannies and honeycombed with holes. It took eight hundred feet of stiff climbing to reach the top of the first ridge. Beyond it we were not pleased to find a whole series of equally steep though smaller ridges and valleys, and all at right angles to our proper course. After a long struggle we had to give up the idea of going straight ahead, and instead began to follow down one of the valleys. This led us back into country very similar to that in which we had found ourselves early that morning, and we once more picked our way over the small boulders and down the line of red earth.

There were no further signs of life until nearly four o'clock. Our sudden appearance then startled three or four small children who were tending some goats on the hillside. A moment later we came into view of a single black tent, set up at the junction of two branches into which the valley now divided. Concealment now was impossible; besides, we were in our usual trouble for



water. The only inhabitant seemed to be an old woman, who came out of the tent to find out why the children had run back. To avoid frightening her, the party halted some distance off, while Cochrane and Grunt went forward alone to find out what sort of reception might be expected.

For some minutes the Circassian (for we thought she must be one) stood talking to the two envoys at the door of her tent. Then we were signalled to approach, and she invited the whole party inside her abode. Here she offered the equivalent in the East of a chair—namely, a seat on the mats which covered the earthen floor. The amiable old dame now produced a large circular tray, which she set in our midst, and on which she placed some wafer-like ohupatties and a couple of bowls of the inevitable “yourt.” Never did simple meal taste so sweet, but the amount provided served only to whet the appetite of the eight hungry travellers. We therefore gently suggested that we should like a little more, and told her we would pay for everything we had. At the same time we produced some of our mugs as likely to provide a method of eating the “yourt” more in keeping with our hunger. Lest the full number should alarm her, we tendered only four, and these she filled readily enough, and several times over, from an almost unlimited supply which she kept in a row of large copper vessels standing along

one side of the tent. We noticed also several large sacks, which we thought must contain flour or wheat, and thought it would be advisable to lay in further supplies if we could. Not a thing, however, would our hostess sell: neither flour, wheat, cheese, goat, nor fowls. We asked her to make us some more ohupatties, but without avail. No money would tempt her—she was evidently not a Turk,—even the offer of a little tea could not work the oracle. Her hospitality—and it was true hospitality that she had shown to us—was limited to what we might eat on the premises. From what we could gather from her rather peculiar Turkish, the old lady seemed afraid to sell us anything without her husband’s consent. It was impossible not to admire her steadfastness, and as we left we presented her with three silver medjidies (worth altogether about twelve shillings). On this she relaxed to the extent of allowing us to take three eggs that she had.

We tried to find out how far we were from the sea; but she seemed hardly to know of its existence, so cut off had she been all her life in her mountain fastness. She directed us, however, to some other tents farther down one of the valleys, and said we might be able to buy some food there; so thither we now wended our way. There was a well outside the tent, but it was dry at the time and was being deepened. A few drops of water which she had given

us within had come from some distant stream, she said. "Yourt," however, is a wonderful thirst-quencher, so lack of water did not cause any worry for the time being.

We agreed, as we went on, that if we found the tents which we were now seeking, only half the party should go to buy; partly because we thought in that way we should be less likely to frighten the occupants from selling us food, and partly to avoid letting people see the exact strength of our party, in case any one should take it into his head to report our presence. Accordingly, when three-quarters of an hour later we arrived at two more tents, Cochrane and Nobby approached one, and Grunt and Looney the other. The first pair were not received with very open arms, and had to be satisfied with only a little "yourt" eaten on the spot, and a few coarse chupatties which they were able to take away with them. They came on to the second tent to find that the other pair had fallen upon their feet. They had arrived at a very propitious moment. Just inside the doorway they had found a smiling old dame busily engaged in making the chupatties for the family's evening meal. With some of these she regaled her guests, and Grunt at once asked her if she would bake some more for companions of his who had gone on to prepare the camp for the night. With a good deal of coaxing, and influenced perhaps a little by the sight of silver coins, she

finally made another dozen. Meanwhile another woman entered and ladled out some beautiful fresh milk which was boiling in a large cauldron in the tent. The four were able to enjoy two mugfuls of this between them, but could only induce the woman to give them one more mugful to take away for the others. After much haggling, however, and on receipt of two medjities, she was persuaded to let them have six pounds of fresh cheese made from goats' milk.

As prearranged, the rest of the party had gone a few hundred yards farther down the ravine in which stood the tents, and finding that no further purchases were to be made the four now rejoined them.

The camping-ground had been chosen some forty yards up the southern side of the ravine. The steep slope was covered with pine and oak trees, and at their feet we slept. It mattered little to us that our beds were uneven. We had before this slept soundly at all angles and on pointed rocks; and here we had a mattress of leaves and pine-needles on which to lay our weary bodies. The occasional bark of a dog or the soft hoot of an owl were the only sounds that broke the stillness of the night. Through the trees could be seen patches of the starlit heaven. We owed much to those wonderful stars. Big and bright in these latitudes, they had led us on our way for many a night, and when there was no moon to befriend us they had lighted



our path so that we could still march slowly on.

It was after a sound and refreshing sleep, that shortly before 4 A.M. next day, while it was yet dark, we shouldered our packs and moved eastwards down the stony bed of the confined valley. This gave on to a broader one at right angles to it—crossing which we halted in a small wood for an hour to prepare our simple breakfast. Here Cochrane climbed an oak-tree hoping to obtain a glimpse of the sea, but it was not yet in sight.

Hardly had we started off again when we suddenly saw a boy coming towards us through the wood. He was carrying a few *ohupatties* and a bag of "yourt." We stopped the lad, and although at first he was unwilling to part with the food, which he intended to sell to some tent-dwellers, yet finally we persuaded him to humour us in exchange for two silver *medjidies*. While eating this unexpected addition to our breakfast, we questioned the boy as to our whereabouts. Though very uncertain about it, he thought the sea was three hours' journey away; the nearest big town was *Selefké* (the ancient *Selencioia*), but where it was he did not know; we should see a well near two tents in the next village.

Thus informed we left him, and on emerging from the wood saw the two tents about a mile distant, and close to what must be the main road to *Selefké*; away to our left stood some very fine ruins. Through

field-glasses they looked like some ancient Greek temple.

We decided to go to the tents for water, and in order to vary our story to suit our surroundings, for this occasion we would be German archaeologists. Arriving at the encampment, we were received by an old Turk and his grown-up son, and taken into the bigger tent. Here we sat down on a carpet, and leant against what felt like sacks of grain. Having given our reason for being in the locality, we explained that we were willing to pay a good price for antiques.

"I have none," replied the old fellow. "Of what value are such things to me? But you Germans are for ever searching after relics from ruins. Four years ago a party just like yours came here for the very same purpose, asking for ancient coins and pottery." So we had hit upon a most suitable story.

A little girl now appeared on the scene, and to keep up the conversation we asked the old man her age.

"She's seven years old," he answered, "and my youngest grandchild. I have six sons, of whom five are at the war. One of them is a *chaose* (sergeant) on the Palestine front; another an *onbashi* (corporal) near Bagdad. I had another son in Irak too, but he was taken prisoner by the English."

"Have you good news of him?" asked one of us.

"Yes, I had a letter from him a year ago, saying he was in good health and well treated."

What the other two in the army were doing we do not remember, though doubtless we were told. The sixth son, perchance a conscientious objector, was in the tent with us. He joined in the conversation now and again, and finally produced a musical instrument like a deformed mandolin.

"Can any of you play?" he asked.

"I don't think any of us can," replied our Turkish scholar. "But we should like to hear you play us something," he added politely. "First, however, could we have some water to drink? We are all very thirsty." This saved us the ordeal of listening to Oriental music, for the little child was sent round to each of us in turn with a shallow metal cup of water, and by the time we had had a drink the musician had put his instrument away. Encouraged by these beginnings of hospitality, we asked if they had any bread for sale. At this the old man shouted some questions to the other tent, at the door of which a woman soon appeared. She talked so fast that we could not understand what she said, but the expression on her face and all her gestures gave us clearly to understand that she had never heard such impudence. In the end, however, the old Turk gave us half a *chupattie* each. Meanwhile two of the party had gone off to the well to fill all our water-bottles, the rest remaining in the tent trying to persuade the man to give us

more bread. Since no more was forthcoming, as soon as the two returned with water we moved on again. Food-hunting was now becoming a vice, of which, in our hungry condition, we found it difficult to cure ourselves. Though we had still some of the food bought at the big village on August 24, we eased our consciences with the thought that we might have to spend some days on the coast before we found a boat. Moreover, in these isolated tents, dotted about in so unfrequented a district, we might with safety try to obtain additional supplies, for there was not much likelihood of meeting gendarmes, and there was no town very near where the tent-dwellers could give information about us. The next few hours, therefore, were spent in searching for these isolated dwellings. But our luck had changed, for at four tents we were received with a very bad grace. One old woman, in particular, who, without any make-up, could have played with great success the part of one of the witches in "*Macbeth*," showed great animosity towards us, and ended her tirade by saying that nothing would induce her to give food to Christians.

Thus rebuffed, we marched on. A mile to our left front were the ruins we had seen earlier in the day. Their fluted columns were immense, and the capitals richly carved; but a closer inspection would mean going out of our way, and a few minutes later they were lost to view.



Only two of us went to the fifth tent that we saw. The remainder walked on a few hundred yards, and waited hidden in a small valley, easily recognisable, because it led up to a conspicuous tree. Half an hour later the two rejoined the main body, having bought  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of uncrushed wheat and the dixie half full of porridge made with plenty of sour milk. This was divided amongst the six, as the purchasers had had a few spoonfuls in the tent itself. Continuing, we came across some dry wells and also a few fruit trees. The fruit was unripe, unpleasant to taste, and unknown to any of us; but we ate it. The trees may have been plum-trees, which after many decades had reverted to the wild state. At 1 P.M. we found a well containing a little water, and not far from another tent. Once more only two went to buy supplies, while the others stayed at the well. Here, after much talk, the old woman in the tent let our agents have a dozen chupatties and some good cheese. The latter she took out of a goat-skin bag from under a millstone, where it was being pressed. Though rather strong, it was very good indeed, and tasted like gorgonzola. Near the tent was a bed of water-melons and a patch of Indian corn; but the good lady refused to sell any of these. Judging by the heap of melon-skins lying in a corner of the tent, she and her better-half were very partial to this fruit; hence, no doubt, her disin-

clination to part with any. We now decided that we were becoming demoralised by this "yourt-hunting," and that we would not visit any more tents; so when, half an hour after resuming our march, we passed close to one, we walked by it without taking any notice of the occupants.

All this time the going was very bad. Countless small nullahs crossed our path. The ground was rocky and thickly covered with thorny bushes the height of a man, so that it was necessary to take a compass-bearing every few minutes. For a long time we had been steering a very zigzag course, when at 2.15 P.M. we arrived at the head of one of these many nullahs and saw beneath us a deep ravine running in a south-east direction. Through the undergrowth at the bottom it was possible to recognise the dry stony bed of a river, and this we decided to follow. A little north of where we were the ravine made a right-angled turn, and at this bend we were able to find a track to the bottom. Elsewhere the sides were sheer precipices, impossible to descend. On our way down we passed a massive sarcophagus hewn out of the solid rock. The lid had been moved to one side, and the chamber was empty—a result, perhaps, of the visit of the German archæologists of whom the old Turk had spoken that morning. An eerie place for a tomb it looked, perched on the side of a steep cliff. It was a

relic of a former civilisation. That part of Asia Minor was once fertile and well populated, but some underground disturbance of nature had diverted or dried up the water without which the land could no longer live. Now it is a dead country. The terraced gardens near the coast still retain their step formation, but that is all. Only the wild locust-tree can find enough moisture to produce its fruit, and bird and animal life have almost ceased to exist.

On reaching the bottom of the ravine in safety, we allowed ourselves nearly an hour's rest before we followed the slope of the stream. This in the main continued to take us in a south-easterly direction, though at times it ran due east. Along the bottom ran a rough and stony track, crossing frequently from one side of the river-bed to the other as the valley twisted and turned. At many points, too, it had been overgrown by the thick brushwood which had sprung up in the scanty soil at the foot of the ravine, and often we had to push our way through.

By this time, in fact, marching was altogether a most painful performance. Our foot-gear was at an end. Uppers had all but broken away from the soles, which were nearly worn through, so that walking over stones was a refined torture. After two hours' going in the ravine we saw a side valley running into the left bank. Here was a camel with two foals, which

were picking up a scanty living in the main river-bed. We also heard the bells of goats and the voice of a small boy shouting to them somewhere on the top of the ravine. Assuming there was a tent village not far off, we made as little noise as possible. Nothing however appeared. Towards six o'clock we came to a very sharp bend, where the track we had been following climbed up the side of the ravine in a southerly direction. At the time we debated whether to follow the track or the river-bed, and finally decided on the latter course. As we proceeded, the bed became rougher and rougher and the track less and less defined, and just before dark we halted. We had walked for many hours that day, but could only credit ourselves with five miles in the right direction.

Moonlight, for which we had decided to wait, did not reach us in our canyon till after 2 A.M. next morning, though the moon itself had risen some time before. In the meantime we had cooked a little porridge and obtained a few hours' sleep. Now we retraced our steps till we came to where the track had left the ravine, and up this we climbed into the open. At the top we found ourselves in an old graveyard near a few deserted and ruined huts. Halting for five or six minutes, we ate a few mouthfuls of food and lightened our water-bottles. We then followed the track till 5 A.M., when we came to another



deserted village. Near this was a well; so we replenished our stock, and halted in some thick scrub a few hundred yards further on. Here Grunt, to his consternation, discovered that he had lost a small cloth bag containing one and a half chupatties and two sovereigns. The loss of the coins was nothing, but the bread was all-important. Grunt therefore decided to go back to the deserted village near the graveyard, where he had last eaten from the bag, and Nobby went with him. A couple of hours later the searchers returned with the coveted bag, and said they had seen the sea; the rest could raise no enthusiasm, and were very sceptical.

At a quarter to eight we set forth from our hiding-place, and five minutes later the party as a whole had its first view of the sea. The morning sun was on it, making sky and sea one undivided sheen. It was difficult to realise that at last we were near the coast. From the point where we were to the shore could be barely six miles. Within forty miles of the coast we had been at a height of something approaching 5000 feet, but each ridge we had passed had in front of it another to hide the sea from us. Thus it was that not until we had marched for twenty-three nights and twenty-two days did we first look on it. As we scanned the water through the field-glasses, it looked as dead as the adjacent country. Not a sail was in sight any-

where, not a single ripple disturbed the shining sheet of glass in front of us. With heads uncovered, and with thankful hearts, we stood gazing, but without being in any way excited. Thus it was that no shout like the "Thalassa! Thalassa!" of Xenophon's Ten Thousand broke from the lips of our little band that still August morning; although here was the end of our land journey at last in sight after a march of some 330 miles. Had we seen a single boat it would have been different. There was nothing.

Our great desire now was to get down to the coast itself. We thought that there must surely be a village somewhere down on the shore, where we should be able either to get hold of a boat at night or to bribe a crew with a promise of much money if they would land us at Cyprus. Before us, the intervening country was covered with bare rocks, stunted trees and scrub, and fell away to the sea in a series of small ridges and terraces. Still following the track, our party, weary and hot, came to a halt at 11 A.M. on the 30th August, two miles from the shore, in the shade of a ruined stone tower. There were similar square towers dotted along the coast; perhaps their ancient use, like that of our own Martello towers, had been to ward off a foreign invasion should need arise; or, in less exciting times, to show lights towards the sea to guide at night the ships in those waters. We stopped at the

tower, because we thought it was unsafe to go farther and risk being seen by any coast-guard that might happen to be stationed there. It was well we did so. From here Cochrane went on alone, and while he was away we saw our first boat. Coming round a headland of the coast, a few miles east of us, a motor-boat passed across our front and disappeared into a narrow bay a mile and a half to our west. She towed a cutter full of men. Cochrane also had seen them, and came back to the tower to tell us the news; unfortunately, he had not found the hoped-for village.

A few yards from the tower was a shallow stone-built well, whose water, though very dirty, being merely a puddle at the bottom, for us was drinkable. The day was very oppressive, with a damp heat, so we refreshed ourselves with a dixie full of tea. After which, Cochrane, taking Ellis with him, again went forward, this time to try to find the exact anchorage of the motor-boat. On their return they said there were tents on the shore. There were horses in one of them, and in the neighbourhood several Turkish soldiers were moving about. Studying our map, we decided we were within three miles of Perscheinbé, a point for which we had headed for some days past. The coast-line before us ran N.E. and S.W. We were on a narrow plateau one and a half mile from the sea, and the high ground continued till within a few hundred yards of

the water,—in some places even to the edge of the coast itself, which was indented with small bays and creeks.

On the headland to the east, and gleaming white in the sunshine, stood a magnificent stone-built town, walled and turreted, but showing no signs of being inhabited. Nearer to us, on the foreshore, was a small lagoon, spanned at one corner by an old bridge: on the water's edge green reeds and half a dozen palm-trees could be seen, and here three or four camels were feeding. Opposite to the lagoon and some eight hundred yards off the shore was a small island fortress, its turreted and loop-holed walls rising sheer from the sea. It boasted fine bastioned towers, and when the sun was willing to act as master showman this dazzling gem was framed in a fit setting of sapphire. This, though we did not know its name at the time, was Korghos Island. Here may be mentioned a very peculiar coincidence, although we only learnt of it after our return to England. This was, that Keeling, after his escape from Kastamoni, had spared himself no trouble in attempting to arrange schemes of escape for his former companions, and only a few weeks after our departure a number of his code messages reached the camp at Yozgad, amongst them one detailing our best route to this very island of Korghos. Here were to be waiting either agents with a supply of food or a boat, between three different pairs of



dates: one of those periods coincided with part of this very time that we were on the coast. When we eventually reached Cyprus, we learnt also that two agents had been landed on Korghos Island, but that they had been seen and captured.

To continue the description of the coast at which we had arrived: immediately below us the ground fell away to a low-lying stretch of foreshore, which extended for nearly a mile between the end of our plateau and the sea. Half a mile west of us lay a deep ravine, which looked as if it would run into the creek entered by the motor-boat.

Along the sea and lined by the telegraph poles the main coast-road wound its way. In the early evening Nobby, Looney, and Johnny went off to reconnoitre, but it was impossible to approach the coast by daylight because of the men moving about, and they had to return to the tower with little additional information. There were five tents for men and a larger one for horses, and though no guns were visible it was very probable that here was a section of a battery for dealing with any boat that might attempt to spy out the nakedness of the land. Two years before that time, Lord Rosebery's yacht, the *Zaida*, had been mined a few miles along the coast at a place called Ayasoh Bay, which she had entered for the purpose of landing spies. Four of her officers had come to the prisoners' camp at Kastamoni,

and we heard from the three of them who survived that there had been some field-guns on the shore where they were captured.

Our resting-place near the tower was an unsatisfactory one. We were close to water, it is true, but we were also close to a track leading down to the coast; and though we were soon to change our minds, we thought at the time that no flies in the world could be as persistent and insatiable as those which all day attacked us. For these reasons, and the additional one of wishing to be nearer the creek which we thought the motor-boat had entered, we decided to move to the ravine half a mile west of our tower. We would visit the well early in the morning and late at night for replenishing our water supply. Accordingly at dusk we once more packed up. Our way led us through thick undergrowth along neglected terraces, and at about 6.30 P.M. we were on the edge of the steep-sided valley. By a stroke of luck we almost immediately found a way down to the bottom. Although we were to become all too well acquainted with that ravine, we only found one other possible line of ascent and descent on the tower side, and one path up the western edge. The river-bed, of course, was dry, and filled with huge boulders and thickly overgrown with bushes. Pushing our way through these, we had only gone a quarter of a mile down the ravine when we decided to halt for the night.

## CHAPTER XIII.

There was still, however, no time to be lost in discovering and obtaining the motor or another boat, seeing that we had arrived on the coast with barely three days' supply of food. This same night, therefore, Cochrane and Nobby carried out a reconnaissance, continuing to follow our ravine down towards the sea in the hope that they would come out opposite the bay into which the tug and her tow had disappeared that afternoon. The remainder settled down to sleep as best they could, without a dinner and on hard and stony beds, taking it in turns at half-hour intervals to keep watch. This was necessary to prevent the two scouts passing them unawares should they return in the dark.

The whole party had reached the coast on their last legs. In the case of Grunt especially, nothing short of the certainty of being able to walk on board a boat could have moved him that night. He had still not recovered from the effects of the blow on the head. As for Cochrane and Nobby, it must have been pure strength of will which enabled them to carry on, after the trying day in the damp heat. Cochrane, indeed, had undertaken what proved beyond his powers; upon him more than any had fallen the brunt of the work of guiding the little column night after night and day after day. It was not sur-

prising, therefore, that on this occasion he had not proceeded a mile before his legs simply gave way beneath him, and he had to allow Nobby to proceed alone. Soon afterwards the ravine took an almost northerly direction. When it eventually petered out it was at some distance to the north of the probable position of the motor-boat. Nobby now found himself crossing the coast road; this we had assumed would be guarded. On the way out he saw no one; but on his return journey next morning he proved our assumption correct by almost stepping on the face of a man who lay sleeping on the road. He was presumably on duty. The propensity of the Turkish sentry for going to sleep at his post once more stood us in good stead. During the night it had been too dark to see much, and Nobby had had to return without having discovered a boat. After hunting round, he had settled down on the edge of a small creek running into the sea, where he remained till the first streak of dawn enabled him to pick his way back to the mouth of the ravine. His main difficulty that night had been to keep himself awake. All the time he was in deadly terror of falling asleep and awaking to find himself stranded on the coast in broad daylight. He therefore tried to occupy himself with fishing. He had taken with



him the line and hooks which were an item of the party's equipment on leaving Yozgad; but no bites came to keep up his flagging interest. Before long he had a midnight bathe, to the great envy of the rest of the party when they heard of it next morning; but the water, he said, had been almost too warm to be really refreshing; the rocks, too, were unpleasantly sharp to stand on. He next picked at an exposed nerve in one of his teeth, and the acute pain thereby inflicted served to keep him awake for the rest of the night. At long length the sky began to lighten, and Nobby, after his narrow escape, recrossing the road, once more entered the ravine and picked up Cochrane. The two then rejoined their anxious comrades.

It was now 5 A.M. Dawn was slow to reach our hemmed-in hiding-place; but when it was light enough to see we discovered that the sides of the ravine were covered with trees bearing what Ellis fortunately recognised as "carobs" or locust beans. We were soon doing what we could to stifle the gnawing pains of hunger by eating quantities of this wild fruit. Some people believe that this is what is meant by the "locusts" eaten by John the Baptist. To our taste they seemed wonderfully sweet and had something of the flavour of chocolate, so that throughout our stay on the coast they formed an unfailing dessert after, and often before, our meals. When we eventually

reached Cyprus we found that there the tree is cultivated, and that thousands of tons of carobs are exported yearly for use in cattle foods. However humble their use, in our case at any rate they were not to be despised, and as a matter of fact the cultivated beans are used to some extent in the manufacture of certain chocolates.

The night reconnaissance having failed to solve the question of the motor-boat's anchorage, at 7 A.M. on this last day of August, Johnny and Looney set out on a search for the elusive bay by daylight. Climbing up the southern side of the ravine, they had to keep out of sight of the men who were known to be below them, so they at first remained at some distance from the coast, to which they moved parallel for over a mile. They then turned towards the sea until they reached a terrace below which the ground fell away rather steeply to the shore. From this point of observation it was possible to see the greater part of the series of capes and bays into which the coast was divided. Still no sign of the tug gladdened their eyes. A closer approach by day would involve considerable risk. A couple of motor-lorries and a mounted patrol had already been observed moving along the road. The two, therefore, sat down awhile on some boulders behind a large bush, and while Johnny peered between the branches through the field-glasses, Looney drew a rough pano-



rama so as to be able if necessary to indicate to the rest of the party any particular bay.

It was now 10 A.M.: the two were about to seek some point of vantage from which it would be possible to see more of some of the bays, when suddenly they heard the hum of a motor, and next moment the tug shot into view from the hidden portion of one of the bays to the N.E. Once more she towed a cutter full of men and stores, and through the glasses it was possible to recognise the Turkish flag flying at her stern. The two remained where they were, watching her until she disappeared round a bend far up the coast towards Mersina.

Possibly she made daily trips, carrying working parties and material to some scene of activity, so the two decided to try to overlook the head of the bay in which she had appeared, in order to discover something definite about the anchorage. To reduce the risk of detection, they first withdrew out of sight of the road and worked their way more to the north before cutting down again towards the shore. On the way out from the ravine they had passed near some ruins, and these they now took in their course to see if there might be a well there with water in it. It was unfortunate that there was not, for in this dead city there was one enormous and very deep amphitheatre, into which it was possible to descend by a path out in the rocky side.

Here shade from the sun would have been obtainable at all hours of the day, and altogether it would have been a better hiding-place than the ravine, if only it had contained a water supply. But though they found the remains of one well, it was absolutely dry.

The two now made their way cautiously towards the place whence the boats had been seen to emerge. The slope of the ground, however, became more and more pronounced as they approached the coast, so that they were able to see little more of the bay than had been visible from their earlier observation point; although by this time they were within sight of the tents seen on the previous day. These stood a little way out on a small cape. Dodging from cover to cover amongst the patches of scrub, sometimes on hands and knees, they finally found themselves close to the coast road itself. Leaving Looney screened from view, Johnny now went on alone. He was not twenty yards from the road when a Turkish soldier passed along it. A moment later four or five others were seen skirting the seaward edge of a rocky headland to the south, and engaged apparently in looking for mussels. It was now obvious that opposite the head of the bay which they sought, the coast rose so sheer that to obtain a view of the whole would entail going forward across the road to the edge of the cliff beyond. With so many people moving about,



this by daylight was out of the question, and after seven hours' reconnoissance in the hot sun, the two had to be satisfied with bringing back the information that they knew which bay the boats had entered the day before, but that they were there no longer.

Meanwhile another party of two—to wit, the Old Man and Perce—had gone forth from the ravine in a last search for food. Without a further supply of this we should be compelled to give ourselves up unless we at once discovered a boat. Of inhabited villages there appeared to be none, even should we have dared to attempt another entry after the experiences of “the three Huns.” The Circassian encampments, too, had ceased.

It is a fairly well-known fact that in the East if villagers are driven away from their homes for any cause, such as a punitive expedition, they usually take steps to bury any valuables which they are unable to carry away, the most common of which is grain. We had bethought ourselves of the deserted village some miles back, near to which we had halted just before our first glimpse of the sea. It occurred to us that the occupants might have been compelled by the Turkish authorities to quit on the outbreak of war, as being within too short a distance of the coast. In this case, then, there might be food there, buried or otherwise concealed. In this, providentially, we were to find ourselves not mistaken,

although the search party set off with little hopes of success.

It required a five-mile climb up the series of ridges to reach the village, and the track was very rough to the feet. On the previous day even the descent had been trying enough in the oppressive heat which seemed to prevail on the coast; so the ascent was doubly so. Moreover, the village itself did not come into view until one was within a mile of it, and as there were remains of other tracks branching off at frequent intervals, it was not easy for the Old Man and Perce to keep to the right one. Great was their relief therefore when, after a good deal of wandering, they found themselves safely within the farm enclosure; for really the “village” comprised only one house with its out-buildings, all within a square walled enclosure.

There seemed to be no one about, so they set to work to force the rough country locks with which all the doors were fastened. They had brought the little adze with them, and for this work it was invaluable, although its steel edge was not thereby improved. They first invaded one of the upstairs living-rooms. On entering they found the floor bare, but cupboards and lockers in the wall stuffed full of a wonderful variety of things—rolls of cloth (obviously made on the spot, for there were remains of the looms), coarse cotton-wool, a few handkerchiefs, cobbler's materials and tools, an old coffee-grinder in pieces, some hoop-iron, an



enamelled mug, a dozen wooden spoons, and a miscellaneous collection of odds and ends such as seem to collect in all houses, English and Turkish alike. The only items of present value were the handkerchiefs, a little prepared leather, the mug, and some of the spoons. These they removed, and by dint of looking into many small cloth bags found something of greater value, namely, a couple of pounds of dry powdery cheese, and as much salt as we were likely to want if we stayed on the coast for a month. These alone, however, were not going to keep eight hungry mortals alive, so the joy of the two searchers was proportionately great when, on breaking into an outhouse and stumbling over a litter of wooden staves, they discovered in the next room something over 300 pounds of wheat lying in a heap on the floor. The grain was uncrushed and dirty, but that disadvantage could be overcome with a little trouble. Further search revealed nothing more in the way of food, though they noted that in other rooms there were several cooking pots which might be worth taking down on a future visit. For the present the two loaded up their packs with some grain, and hurriedly bundling back the things which they had turned out from the cupboards, set their faces once more towards the sea.

At 5.45 that evening two weary figures staggered into view, being met by Cochrane, Nobby, and Johnny, who had gone up to the well near the

tower to draw water. They had reason to be happy, for this find of food postponed indefinitely our capitulation to hunger.

All five remained at the well till after dark, in order to grind enough grain for an evening meal, using a heavy stone to beat a little of it at a time inside a hollowed-out slab, intended for use in watering sheep. Nobby and Johnny, who stayed a few minutes after the other three, were accosted on their way back to the ravine by a couple of men riding away from the coast on donkeys. They asked our two whether they belonged to the camp below, and seemed quite satisfied when they said they did. This confirmed suspicions which some of us had had the previous day, that certain of the tents we had seen contained Germans; for the two men could certainly not have taken any of us for Turks.

Crushing grain by pounding it with a primitive stone pestle and mortar is at best a fatiguing process, nor are the results favourable to easy digestion. Not only did some of the grains escape being crushed, but chips of stone from the sides of the mortar became mixed with the food, which was none too clean in itself. Cochrane said he would make the most worn-out old coffee-grinder do better work with the expenditure of half the energy, so we decided to have another expedition to the village next day to fetch the one which had been noticed



there. We could hardly hope to make a series of visits without eventual discovery; it was best, therefore, to fetch down at the same time as much more of the wheat as we were likely to want.

At 7 A.M. on the 1st September, four of the party accordingly started off carrying empty packs. These were Nobby, Johnny, and Ellis, and the Old Man, who went for the second time to show the others the way. On arrival they found distinct signs that the two men who had been met the previous evening had gone to the farmhouse and to the well just below it. Whether they had noticed anything wrong, there was nothing to show. In any case, the four lost no time in loading up and returning to a safer spot, reaching the ravine at about 3.30 P.M.

The other half of the party had gone in turns to the well, to fetch water and do some more crude grinding for the day's food. It took an hour and a half to do a single trip for water alone. Each time nearly an hour was spent in drawing up water mugful by mugful till all available receptacles were full. So we were thankful when later on that day Cochrane, scouting around, discovered another well. This was not only a little nearer to our lair, but also had one place deep enough to permit the use of a canvas bucket. This meant a great saving of time. The water, too, held in solution rather less mud and none of the bits of mouldy wood

which formed a fair proportion of the hauls from the well by the tower. Near the new well there were more ruins, in this case only a few low walls, and, standing apart, a semicircular arch of some twelve feet in diameter,—just the bare ring of stones remained and nothing else.

From now onwards, for the rest of our stay on the coast, we settled down to a new kind of existence—in fact we may be said to have *existed*, and nothing more. Life became a dreary grind, both literally and metaphorically. For the next few days, at any rate, we thought of nothing else but how to prepare and eat as much food as we could. This was not greed: it was the only thing to do. None of us wanted to lie a day longer than absolutely necessary in that awful ravine, but we were at present simply too weak to help ourselves. To carry out a search for another boat was beyond the powers of any one of us.

Cochrane rigged up the coffee-grinder on the same afternoon as it had arrived—lashing the little brass cylinder to the branch of a tree at a convenient height for a man to turn the handle. A rusty saw, cutting, like all Oriental saws, on the pull-stroke, had been discovered in the village and brought down by the last party, and this proved useful now and on subsequent occasions.

Whilst one of the party worked at the mill, and another supervised the cooking



of the next dixieful of porridge, the rest were busy picking over the grain in the hope of removing at any rate some small proportion of the empty husks and the bits of earth with which it was mixed. Even so, of course, it was impossible to clean the dirt off the grains themselves. Nothing, we thought, could be more wearisome than this never-ending task. Our misery was aggravated by the swarms of flies which incessantly harassed us as we worked. What right they had to be alive at all on such a deserted coast was never discovered. He whose turn it was to cook found in the smoke from the fire a temporary respite from their attentions; but they took care to make up for lost time afterwards. When the water was nearly boiled away, bits of porridge were wont to leap out of the pot and light on the cook's hands. The ensuing blister did not last long, for within twenty-four hours the flies had eaten it all away. We had no bandages left, and pieces of paper which we used to wet and stick on the blisters fell off as soon as they were dry. It was not many days before Old Man's and Johnny's hands became covered with septic sores. Unfortunately, too, most of us were out of 'baccy, as a means of keeping these pests away. Some took to smoking cigarettes made from the dried leaves which littered the stony bed of our unhappy home. Even the non-smoker of the party had to give way to the per-

nicious habit once, out of pure self-defence.

Nor at night was it easy to obtain peace. The flies had no sooner gone to their well-earned rest than the mosquitoes took up the call with their high-pitched trumpet notes. But of course it was not the noise which mattered, but their bites; and in the end most of us used to sleep with a handkerchief or piece of cloth over our faces, and a pair of socks over our hands.

Ravine life was most relaxing—partly owing to the stuffiness of the air in so deep and narrow a cleft, overgrown as it was with trees and scrub; but no doubt still more to reaction, after more than three weeks of strenuous marching. So long as we had had the encouragement of being able to push on each day, and feel that we were getting nearer home, we had no time to think of bodily exhaustion: the excitement, mild though it was, kept us going. Now, unable to do anything towards making good our escape, it required a big effort to drag oneself to one's feet for the purpose of fetching a mugful of porridge. It required a still bigger one to go up in pairs to fetch water from the well, although it was essential for every one to do this at least once a day, merely to keep the pot a-boiling. This, too, was the only way of obtaining a deep drink; except for half a mug of tea made from several-times stewed leaves, all the water brought down to the



nullah each day was utilised for cooking the wheat. Fortunately, to take us to the well there was the further inducement of a wash for both bodies and clothes. The latter by this time were in a very dirty and also worn-out condition, but thanks doubtless to our having spent no appreciable time inside villages actually occupied by Turks, they were not verminous.

On account of the washing, visits to the well were apt at times to develop into lengthy affairs—anything up to five or six hours, which, of course, did not help to get through the daily tasks necessary to keep ourselves fed. Not only did this involve having reliefs at the mill for eight out of every twenty-four hours, but much work was necessary to keep up the supply of cleaned wheat to feed the machine. Necessity, however, is the mother of invention, and from the 5th September, acting on a suggestion made by Looney, we used to take the next day's wheat up to the well and wash it there in a couple of changes of water. There was a convenient stone trough on the spot. The chaff floated to the surface, while the earth, whether in loose particles or clinging to the grains themselves, was dissolved. After washing, the wheat was spread out in the sun on squares of cloth brought down from the village, and when dry was fetched back to the ravine by the next water-party.

Like most schemes, this one had its weak points. It was

very extravagant in water, and in a few days our well began to show distinct signs of being drained to emptiness; in fact, only a puddle could have existed to begin with, though a larger one than that in the well near the tower.

The second disadvantage was that the grain, while left out to dry, might be discovered and give away our presence; but, in any case, one pair or another of the party was so often up at the well that the risk was not greatly increased; besides, there was not much to induce a Turk from the camp below to visit the ruins.

In the end we were seen, the first occasion being on the 6th September. That evening, Cochrane, the Old Man, and Looney were at the well, when an old fellow with a dyed beard—a Turk, as far as they could say—suddenly appeared, and eyed their water-bottles very thirstily. He accepted with readiness the drink they offered to him, but appeared to be nothing of a conversationalist. He was in fact almost suspiciously indifferent who the three might be. There was a mystery about that man which we never entirely solved. From then onwards, almost to the end of our stay on the coast, not a day passed without his seeing one or other of the party. To explain our presence at the well, the water-parties pretended they were German observation-posts sent up to watch the sea, over which, as a matter of fact, one could obtain a very fine view from that place. We usually carried



up the field-glasses to have a look round, and these perhaps helped out our story. Moreover, to live up to our Hun disguise, we once told the man that really the place was "yessäk." This is the Turkish equivalent to "verboten," and, to judge from our experiences in the camps, is about as frequently used. On another occasion it was sunset when some of us saw him. After his usual drink he washed his hands and face and said his prayers Mohammedan-wise. After his prayers he said he had seen two boats go past coming from the east and disappearing to the west. Little remarks like this made us think at one time that he might possibly be a British agent, landed to get information or possibly for the express purpose of helping escaped officers like ourselves, for there had been plenty of time for the news of our escape from Yozgad to reach the Intelligence Department in Cyprus. One day, therefore, Grunt and Nobby deliberately went up to try to get into conversation with the mysterious individual. In the end they came to the conclusion that he must be some kind of outlaw. He told them that a friend and he had come from a place far inland to sell something or other to a coastal village, and he himself was now awaiting the other's return. They were going to take back with them a load of carobs, of which indeed he had been making collections under various trees. The beans seemed to be his only food, and

he was obviously half-starving. This, combined with the fact that he relied on us to draw up water for him when there must be good water near the Turkish tents below, showed that he was in hiding for some cause or other. This was as well for us, as, if he had thought at all, he could not for a moment have been deceived by our story. Even if we were on watch, we should hardly trouble to bring up not only our own, but a lot of other men's water-bottles to fill with muddy water at a disused well. Whatever the explanation, the great thing was that he did not interfere with us. Two evenings before our final departure from the ravine, he told us that the donkeys would be coming back next morning, and that was the last any of us saw of him.

A few extracts from diaries may serve to convey some idea of our feelings during these earlier days in the ravine:—

"2nd Sept.—Struggled up to well at 8 A.M. Had wash in mugful of water: temporarily refreshing, but exhausted for rest of day, and feeling weaker than ever before in spite of five brews of boulgar" (each brew was at this time about the half of a pint mug all round) "and one small ohuppattie each, made by Nobby. Flour for last made with much hard grinding after mill had been readjusted. Readjustment alone took two hours to do. . . . Flies awful all day. . . ."

"3rd Sept.—Locust beans quite good toasted over ashes, and make sweet syrup if first



out up and then boiled, but this entails a lot of work. Every one cleaning and grinding wheat all day. As now set, grinder produces mixture of course flour and boulgar. Tried unsuccessfully to simmer this into a paste and then back into thick chupatties." (All our efforts at this stage were directed towards producing something digestible with the minimum of work.) "Day passed very slowly, with occasional trips for water."

"4th Sept.—Most of us rather doubtful whether we shall be able to get back our strength on a boulgar diet, and flour takes more grinding than we have strength for at present—rather a vicious circle."

Another diary for the same date says—"Feeling weaker now than I did when we first arrived; no energy for anything."

Next day the tide seems to have been on the turn.

"5th Sept.—Most of us slightly stronger, but held back

by chronic lethargy. Continuous brewing all day. To save interruptions at the grinder we now feed in two parties of four, taking alternate brews: this means we get nearly a big mugful at a whack, at intervals of about three hours. . . . Most of us fill in gaps eating burnt beans. Charcoal said to be good for digestion! . . . One thing is, our feet are rested here, and blisters healed. We are also undoubtedly putting on flesh again, and if we can get rid of this hopeless slackness shall be all right. . . . Grunt, working from 1 P.M. onwards, made 1 large and 4 small chupatties each, so we are coming on." It was something to feel full again sometimes.

"6th Sept.—My energy as well as my strength returning a bit now. . . . Mill hard at it all day. . . . 4½ mugfuls boulgar (1 pint each) and 6 chupatties (4½ inches diameter and fairly thick) the day's ration."

(To be continued.)

## THE RETURN PUSH.

BY QUEX.

## XVIII.

WHEN, on October 21, I returned to France, the war had made a very big stride towards its end. Cambrai had been regained, and Le Cateau—"Lee Kateo," the men insisted on calling it—taken. Ostend was ours, Lille was ours; over Palestine we had cast our mantle. Our own Division, still hard at it, had gone forward twenty-four miles during my fortnight's leave in England. Stories of their doings trickled towards me when I broke the journey at Amiens on my way back to the lines. I met an infantry captain bound for England.

"It's been all open fighting this last fortnight—cavalry, and forced marches, and all that—and I don't want to hear any more talk of the new Armies not being able to carry out a war of movement," he said chirpily. "The men have been magnificent. The old Boche is done now—but we're making no mistakes; we're after him all the while.

"Dam funny, you know, some of the things that are happening up there. The Boche has left a lot of coal dumps behind, and every one's after it. There's a 2000-ton pile at C—, and it was disappearing so rapidly that they put a guard on it. I was walking with my colonel the

other day, and we came across an Australian shovelling coal from this dump into a G.S. waggon. A sentry, with fixed bayonet, was marching up an' down.

"The colonel stopped when we came to the sentry, and asked him what he was supposed to be doing.

"'Guarding the coal dump, sir.'

"'But what is this Australian doing? Has he any authority to draw coal? Did he show you a chit?'

"'No, sir,' replied the sentry; 'I thought, as he had a Government waggon, it would be all right.'

"'Upon my Sam!' said the colonel, astonished. Then he tackled the Australian.

"'What authority have you for taking away this coal?' he asked.

"The Australian stood up and said, 'I don't want any authority—I bally well fought for it,' and went on with his shovelling.

"Frankly, the colonel didn't know what to say; but he has a sense of humour. 'Extraordinary fellows!' he said to me as he walked off.

"Then we came across an American who was 'sorounging' or something in an empty house. He jumped to attention when he saw the colonel,



and saluted very smartly. But what do you think? He saluted with a bowler hat on; found it in the house, I expect. . . . I tell you it was an eye-opening day for the colonel."

I lorry-hopped to the village that I had been told was Divisional Headquarters; but they had moved the day before, seven miles farther forward. There were nearly 200 civilians here. I saw a few faded ancient men in worn corduroys and blue-peaked caps; a bent old crone, in a blue apron, hobbled with a water-bucket past a corner shop—a grocer's—shuttered, sluttish from want of paint; three tiny children, standing in doorways, wore a strangely old expression. There was a pathetically furtive air about all these people. For four years they had been under the Boche. Of actual, death-bringing, frightening war they had seen not more than five days. The battle had swept over and beyond them, carrying with it the feared and hated German, and the main fighting force of the pursuing British as well. But it was too soon yet for them to forget, or to throw off a sort of lurking dread that even now the Boche might return.

I got a lift in another lorry along a road crumbling under the unusual amount of traffic that weighed upon it. Our advance had been so swift that the war scars on the countryside had not entirely blighted its normal characteristics. Here were shell-holes, but no long succession of abandoned gun-

positions, few horse-tracks, fewer trenches, and no barbed wire. The villages we went through had escaped obliterating shell-fire. I learned that our attacks had been planned thus-wise. Near a bleak cross-roads I saw Collinge of B Battery, and got off the lorry to talk to him.

"Brigade Headquarters are at B—, about six miles from here," he said. "I'm going that way. The batteries are all in B—."

"What sort of a time have you had?" I inquired.

"Oh, most exciting! Shan't forget the day we crossed the Le Cateau river. We were the advance Brigade. The Engineers were supposed to put bridges across for us; the material came up all right, but the pioneers, who were to do the work, missed the way. The sapper officer who had brought the material wanted to wait till the proper people arrived, but the Boche was shelling and machine-gunning like mad, and the colonel said the bridge-building must be got on with at once. The colonel was great that day. Old Johns of D Battery kept buzzing along with suggestions, but the colonel put his foot down, and said, 'It's the sapper officer's work; let him do it.' And the bridges were really well put up. All the guns got across safely, although C Battery had a team knocked out."

I walked by Collinge's side through a village of sloping roofs, single-storied red-brick houses, and mud-clogged streets. It was the village



which our two brigades of artillery occupied when the Armistice was signed, where the King came to see us, and M. le Maire, in his excitement, gave His Majesty that, typically French, shall I say? clasp of intimacy and friendliness, a left-handed handshake.

"Curious thing happened on that rise," remarked Collinge when we were in open country again. "The colonel and the adjutant were with an infantry General and his Staff officers, reconnoitring. The General had a little bitch something like a whippet. She downed a hare, and, though it brought them into view of the Boche, the General, the colonel, and the others chased after them like mad—I believe the colonel won the race—but the adjutant will tell you all about it."

Away on the left a lone tree acted as a landmark for a sunken road. "Brigade tried to make a headquarters there," went on Collinge, "but a signaller got knocked out, and the Boche began using the tree as a datum point; so the colonel ordered a shift." Twenty rough wooden crosses rose mournful and remote in a wide, moist mangel-field. "The cavalry got it badly there," said Collinge. "A 4.2 gun turned on them from close range, and did frightful execution." We were near to a cross-road, marked balefully by a two-storied house, cut in half so that the interior was opened to view like a doll's house, and by other shell-mauled buildings. "The bat-

teries came into action under that bank," he continued, pointing his cane towards a valley riddled with shell-holes. "That's where Dumble did so well. Came along with the cavalry an hour and a half before any Horse Artillery battery, and brought his guns up in line, like F.A.T. . . . See that cemetery on the top of the hill? . . . the Boche made it in August 1914; lot of the old Army buried there, and it's been jolly well looked after. The colonel walked round and looked at every grave one day; he said he'd never seen a better cared-for cemetery. . . . We had an 'O.P.' there for the R— River fight. The Boche shelled it like blazes some days. . . . And we saw great sights up that *pavé* road there, over the dip. They held a big conference there; all sorts of Generals turned up. . . . Staff cars that looked like offices, with the maps and operation orders pinned up inside; and when our battery went by, the road was so packed with traffic that infantry were marching along in fours on either side of the road."

We reached the outskirts of C—, descending a steep *pavé* road. "They shelled this place like stink yesterday," Collinge told me. "Headquarters were in one of those little houses on the left for one night, and their waggon line is there now, so you'll be able to get a horse. . . . I heard that Major Bartlett had both his chargers killed yesterday when C Battery came through. . . . Isn't that one of them,



that black horse lying under the trees?"

I looked and saw many horses lying dead on both sides of the road, and thought little of it. That was war. Then all my senses were strung up to attention: a small bay horse lay stretched out on the pathway, his head near the kerb. There was a shapeliness of the legs and a fineness of the mud-checked coat that seemed familiar. I stepped over to look. Yes, it was my own horse "Tommy," that old Castle, our ex-adjutant, had given me—old Castle's "handy little horse." A gaping hole in the head told all that needed to be told. I found "Swifty" and the doctor in the workman's cottage that had become Brigade waggon-line headquarters. Yes, "Tommy" had been killed the day before. My groom, Morgan, was riding him. The Boche were sending over shrapnel, high in the air, and one bullet had found its billet. Poor little horse! Spirited, but easy to handle, always in condition, always well-mannered. Ah, well! we had had many good days together. Poor little horse!

I want always to remember B—, the village of gardens and hedgerows and autumn tints where we saw the war out, and lay under shell-fire for the last time; whence we fought our final battle on November 4th, when young Hearn of A Battery was killed by machine-gun bullets at 70 yards' range, and Major

Bullivant, with a smashed arm and a crippled thigh, huddled under a wall until Dumble found him—the concluding fight that brought me a strange war trophy in a golfing-iron found in a hamlet that the Boche had sprawled upon for four full years. . . . And the name punched on the iron was that of an Oxford Street firm.

Collinge and I rode into B— in the wan light of an October afternoon. At a cross-roads that the Boche had blown up—"They didn't do it well enough; the guns got round by that side track, and we were only held up ten minutes," said Collinge—Brigade Headquarters' sign-board had been planted in a hedge. My way lay up a slushy tree-bordered lane; Collinge bade me good-bye, and rode on down the winding street.

There were the usual welcoming smiles. Manning gave me a "Had a good leave, sir?" in his deep-sea voice, and Wilde came out to show where my horse could be stabled. "It's a top-hole farm, and after the next move we'll bring Headquarters waggon line up here. . . . The colonel says you can have his second charger now that you've lost 'Tommy.' He's taking on Major Veasey's mare, the one with the cold back that bucks a bit. She's a nice creature if she's given plenty of work."

"How is the colonel?" I asked.

"Oh, he's in great form; says the war may end any

minute. Major Simpson and Major Drysdale are both away on leave, and the colonel's been up a good deal seeing the batteries register. . . . We got a shock when we came into this place yesterday. A 4.2 hit the men's cook-house, that small building near the gate. . . . But they haven't been troublesome since."

The end wall of the long-fronted, narrow farmhouse loomed up gauntly beside the pillared entrance to the rectangular courtyard. A weather-vane in the form of a tin trotting horse flaunted itself on the topmost point. This end wall rose to such height because, though the farmhouse was one-storied, its steep-sloping roof enclosed an attic big enough to give sixty men sleeping room. Just below the weather-vane was a hole poked out by the Boche for observation purposes. Our adjutant used to climb up to it twice daily as a sort of constitutional. Some one had left in this perch a bound volume of a Romanist weekly, with highly dramatic, fearfully coloured illustrations. As the house contained some twenty of these volumes, I presumed that they betrayed the religious leanings of the farm's absent owner. A row of decently ventilated stables faced the farmhouse, while at the end of the courtyard, opposite to the entrance gates, stood an enormous high-doored barn. The entrance-hall of the house gave, on the left, to two connecting stone-flagged rooms, one of which Manning

used as a kitchen—Meddings, our regular cook, was on leave. The other room, with its couple of spacious civilian beds, we used as a mess, and the colonel and the adjutant slept there. The only wall decorations were two "samplers" executed by a small daughter of the house, a school certificate in a plain frame, and a couple of gaudy-tinselled religious pictures. A pair of pot dogs on the mantelpiece were as stupidly ugly as some of our own mid-Victorian cottage treasures. And there were the usual glass-covered orange blossoms mounted on red plush and gilt leaves—the wedding custom traditional to the country districts of Northern France. The inner door of this room opened directly into the stable where our horses were stalled. An infantry colonel and his staff occupied the one large and the two small rooms to the right of the entrance-hall; but after dinner they left us to go forward, and my servant put down a mattress on the stone floor of one of the smaller rooms for me to sleep upon. Wilde took possession of the other little chamber. The large room, which contained a colossal oak wardrobe, became our mess after breakfast next day. The signallers had fixed their telephone exchange in the vaulted cellar beneath the house, and the servants and grooms crowded there as well when the Boche's night-shelling grew threatening.

After a long deprivation we



had come into a country where cabbages and carrots, turnips and beetroot, were to be had for the picking; and there were so many plates and glasses to be borrowed from the farmhouse cupboards that I feared greatly that Manning would feel bound to rise to the unexampled occasion by exercising his well-known gift for smashing crockery. We dined pleasantly and well that night; and when the night-firing programme had been sent out to the batteries—the Boche was in force in the big thick forest that lay three thousand yards east of our farm—we settled down to a good hour's talk. Wilde told me of the German sniper they had found shot just before the advance to this village; the adjutant narrated the magnificent gallantry of an officer who had relinquished his job of Reconnaissance officer to the C.R.A. in order to join a battery, and had now gone home with his third wound since Zillebeke. "You remember how he came back in time for the August advance, and got hit immediately and wouldn't let them send him back to England—you know we loaned him to the —rd Brigade because they were short of officers. Well, he rolled up again about ten days ago, and got hit again in the C— attack. Major 'Pat' told me he was wonderful. . . . Lay in a shell-hole with his leg smashed—they poured blood out of his boots—and commanded his battery from there, blowing his whistle and all that, until they made

him let himself be taken away." The colonel, who listened and at the same time wrote letters, said that the thing that pleased him most during the last few days was the patriotic instinct of some cows. When the Hun evacuated C— he took away with him all the able-bodied Frenchmen and all the cows. But his retreat became so rapid and so confused, that numbers of the men escaped. So did the cows: for three days they were dribbling back to their homesteads and pasturages.

All through the night the enemy shelled B—. He planted only two near us, but a splinter made a hole in the roof of the big barn and caught a mule on the shoulder.

The doctor came up from the waggon line next morning and accompanied me on a tour of the batteries. "If you follow the yellow wire you'll come to B Battery," said Wilde. "They are in the corner of a meadow. A Battery are not far away, across the stream." It was a golden autumn day, and our feet rustled through the fallen yellow leaves that carpeted a narrow lane bowered by high, luxuriant, winding hedges. "Why, this place must be a paradise in peace times," said the doctor, entranced by the sweet tranquillity of the spot. "It's like a lover's walk you see in pictures." We strode over fallen trees and followed the telephone wire across a strip of rich green. B Battery's guns were tucked beneath some stubby full-leaved trees that would hide them



from the keenest-eyed aerial observer. "No sick, doctor," called Bob Pottinger from underneath the trench-cover roof of his three-foot hole in the ground. "We're improving the position and have no time to be ill." The doctor and I crossed a sticky water-logged field, and passed over the plank-bridge that spanned the slow vagrant stream. A battery had their mess in one of the low creeper-clad cottages lining the road. Their guns were thrust into the hedge that skirted the neat garden at the back.

Major Bullivant gave me welcome, and read extracts from Sir Douglas Haig's report on the Fifth Army Retreat—his 'Times' had just reached him. He asked the doctor whether it was too early for a whisky-and-soda, and showed us a Boche barometer, his latest war trophy. "We've lost quite a lot of men since you've been away," he told me. "Do you realise the Brigade has been only four days out of the line since August 1st? You've heard about young Beale being wounded, of course? I was on leave, and so was Beadle; and Tincler was sick, so there was only Dumble and Beale running the battery. Beale got hit when shifting the waggon line, . . . and it was rather fine of him. He knew old Dumble was up to his eyes that day, and told the sergeant-major not to tell Dumble what had happened to him until the battle was over. Did you hear, too, about Manison, one of the new officers? Poor

chap! Killed by a bomb dropped in daylight by one of our own aeroplanes as he was going to the O.P.

"The Boche hasn't done much night-bombing lately. I don't think he's got the planes. He gave us one terrible night, though, soon after we crossed the canal, . . . knocked out two of my guns and killed any number of horses. There were ammunition dumps going up all over the place that night: . . . he stopped us from doing our night firing.

"Have you heard the story of the old woman at S——?" he went on. "When the bombardment was going on the civilians went down into the cellars. The Germans hooked it, and the people came up from the cellars. But Boche snipers were still in the village, and our advance parties warned the inhabitants to keep below. . . . When, however, our troops came along in a body, one old woman rushed forward from under the church wall, in the square, you know. . . . She was excited, I expect. . . . A swine of a Boche in a house on the far side of the square shot her. . . . Our infantry surrounded that house."

"Well, I must quit," ejaculated the doctor suddenly. We went out and made for the village road again. A screaming swish, and a report that hurt the ears and shattered the windows in the front of the cottage. A Boche high-velocity shell had crashed a few yards away on the other side of the stream, and thrown



up spouts of black slimy mud. The doctor and I scurried back to the shelter of the cottage wall. Another shell and another. A lieutenant-colonel of infantry, on horseback, swung violently round the corner and joined us. Three more shells fell. Then silence. "These sudden bursts of fire are very disconcerting, aren't they?" remarked the colonel as he mounted and rode away.

"Say, now!" said the doctor to me. "I think we'll call back and have that whisky-and-soda Major Bullivant offered us before we resume our journey."

"We'll take a trip up to the 'O.P.' this morning," said the colonel to me at breakfast on October 28th. The wind was sufficiently drying to make walking pleasant, and to tingle the cheeks. The sun was a tonic; the turned-up earth smelt good. Our Headquarter horses had been put out to graze in the orchard—a Boche 4-2 had landed in it the night before—and they were frolicking mightily, Wilde's charger "Blackie" being especially industrious shooing off one of the mules from the colonel's mare. There was a swirling and a skelter of brown and yellow leaves at the gap in the lane where we struck across a vegetable garden. A square patch torn from a bed-sheet flew taut from the top of a clump of long hop-poles—the sign, before the village was freed, to warn our artillery observers that civilians lived in the cottage close by. Similar, now out-of-date, white flags swung to the breeze from

many roof-tops in the village. "The extraordinary feature," the colonel mentioned, "was the number of Tricolours that the French had been able to hide from the Germans; they put them out when we came through." He nodded a pleasant good-day to a good-looking young staff officer who stood on the steps of the house in the *pavé*-laid street where one of our infantry brigades had made their headquarters. The staff officer wore a pair of those full-below-the-knee "plus 4 at golf" breeches that the Gardee affects. "For myself, I wouldn't wear that kind of breeches unless I were actually on duty with the Guards," said the colonel rather sardonically—"they are so intensely ugly." A tinny piano tinkled at a corner house near the roofless church and the Grande Place. In two-foot letters on the walls in the square were painted, "Hommes" on some houses, "Femmes" on others: reminders of the Boche method of segregating the sexes before he evacuated the inhabitants he wanted to evacuate. Only five civilians remained in the village now, three old men and two feeble decrepit women, numbed and heart-sick with the war, but obstinate in clinging to their homesteads. Already some of our men were patching leaky, shrapnel-flicked roofs with biscuit-tins and strong strips of water-proof sheeting.

We passed through A Battery's garden at nine o'clock. "We won't disturb them," said the colonel. "Bullivant is a



morning sleeper, and is certain not to be up after the night-firing." Round the corner, however, stood a new officer who looked smart and fresh, with brightly polished buttons and Sam Browne belt. He saluted in the nervously precise fashion of the newly-joined officer. The colonel answered the salute, but did not speak; and he and I worked our way—following the track of a Tank—through and between hedges and among fruit-trees that had not yet finished their season's output. We passed the huddled-up body of a shot British soldier lying behind a fallen tree-trunk. We were making for the quarry in which C and D Batteries were neighbours. On a ditch-bordered road we met ten refugees, sent back that morning from a hamlet a mile and a half away, not yet considered safe from the Boche. The men, seeing us, removed their hats and lowered them as far as the knee—the way in which the Boche had commanded them to proffer respect. One aged woman in a short blue skirt wore sabots, and British puttees in place of stockings.

There had been a mishap at D Battery in the early hours of the morning. Their five useable 4.5 howitzers had been placed in a perfect how. position against the bank of the quarry. In the excitement of night-firing a reinforcement gunner had failed to "engage the plungers," the muzzle had not been elevated, and the shell, instead of descending five

thousand yards away, had hit the bank twelve yards in front. The explosion killed two of the four men working that particular how. and wounded a third, and knocked out the N.C.O. in charge of another how. forty yards distant. The colonel examined the howitzer, looked gravely severe, and said that an officers' inquiry would be held next day. He asked Major Bartlett of C Battery, who was housed in a toy-sized cottage in the centre of the quarry, how his 18-pdrs. were shooting; and mentioned that the infantry were apprehensive of short-shooting along a road close to our present front line, since it lay at an awkward angle for our guns. Major Bartlett, self-possessed, competent, answered in the way the colonel liked officers to answer—no "I thinks": his replies either plain "Yes" or "No." Major Bartlett gave chapter and verse of his battery-shooting during the two previous days, and said that every round had been observed fire.

Walking briskly—the colonel was the fittest man of forty-five I have known—we mounted a slope of turnip-fields and fresh-ploughed land. There was a plantation five hundred yards to right of us, and another one five hundred yards to left of us; into the bigger one on the left two 5.9's dropped as we came level with it. Splashes of newly thrown-up earth behind tree-clumps, against banks and alongside hedges, showed the short breast-high trenches, some six yards long, in which the infantry



had fought a few days before. Fifteen hundred yards away the clustering trees of the great forest where the enemy lay broke darkly against the horizon. "You see that row of tall straight trees in front of the forest, to the right of the gabled house where the white flag is flying," said the colonel, pulling out his glasses — "that's the present front line." Three ponderous booms from that direction denoted trench mortars at work.

We descended the other side of the slope, keeping alongside a hedge that ran towards a red-roofed farm. In two separate places about three yards of the hedge had been cut away. "Boche soldiering!" remarked the colonel informatively. "Enabled him to look along both sides of the hedge and guard against surprise when our infantry were coming up.

"We may as well call at Battalion Headquarters," he added when we reached the farm. In a wide cellar, where breakfast had not yet been cleared away, we came upon a lieutenant-colonel, twenty-four years of age, receiving reports from his company commanders. Suave in manner, clear-eyed, not hasty in making judgments, he had learnt most things to be known about real war at Thiepval, Schwaben Redoubt, and other bloody places where the Division had made history; wounded again in the August advance, he had refused to be kept from these final phases. The colonel and he understood each other.

There was the point whether liaison duties between infantry and artillery could be more usefully conducted in the swift-changing individual fighting of recent days from infantry brigade or from infantry battalion; there were conflicting statements by junior officers upon short-shooting, and they required sifting; a few words had to be said about the battalion's own stretch of front and its own methods of harassing the enemy. A few crisp questions and replies, all bearing upon realities, a smile or two, a consultation of maps, and another portion of the colonel's task for that day was completed.

We walked across more ploughed land towards a sunken road, where infantry could be seen congregated in that sort of *dolce far niente* which, on the part of infantry in support, is really rather deceptive.

A "ping-ping!" whisked past, and stung us to alertness.

"Hullo — machine-guns!" ejaculated the colonel, and we quickened our steps toward the sunken road.

A major and a subaltern of the machine-gunners clambered down the opposite bank.

"I believe I've spotted that fellow, sir," burst forth the major with some excitement. "I think he's in a house over there . . . might be a target for you . . . bullets have been coming from that way every now and again for two days. . . . I'll show you, if you like, sir."

The major and the colonel



crept out on top of the bank, and made for a shell-hole forty yards in front. I followed them. The major pointed across the rolling grass lands to a two-storied grey house with a slate roof, fourteen hundred yards away. "I believe he's in there," he said with decision.

The colonel looked through his glasses.

The major spoke again. "Do you see the square piece removed from the church spire, sir? . . . That looks like an 'O.P.,' doesn't it?"

The colonel opened his map and pointed to a tiny square patch. "I make that to be the house," he said. "Do you agree?"

"Yes, sir," replied the major. "We thought at first it was the house you see marked four hundred yards more southeast; but I believe that is really the one."

"I've got an 'O.P.' farther forward. I'm going up there now. We'll have a shot at the house," responded the colonel simply.

The major went back to the sunken road. The colonel and I walked straight ahead, each of us in all probability wondering whether the Boche machine-gunner was still on duty, and whether he would regard us as worthy targets. That, at any rate, was my own thought. We strode out over the heavy-going across a strip of ploughed land, and heard the whizz of machine-gun bullets once more—not far from the spot we had just left. We did not speak until we descended to a dip in

the ground, and reached a brook that had to be jumped. We were absolutely by ourselves.

Up the slope, on the far side of the brook. More ploughed land. We were both breathing hard now.

Before we came to the crest of the slope the colonel stopped. "We're in view from the Boche front line from the top," he said sharply. "The 'O.P.' is a hole in the ground. . . . You had better follow me about twenty yards behind. . . . And keep low. . . . Make for the fifth telegraph-pole from the left that you will see from the top."

He moved off. I waited and then followed, my mind concentrated at first on the fifth telegraph-pole the colonel had spoken about. There was no shelling at this moment. A bird twittered in a hedge close by; the smell of grass and of clean earth rose strong and sweet. No signs or sound of war; only sunshine and trees and—

The colonel's voice came sharp as whipcord. "Keep down!—keep down!" I bent almost double and walked fast at the same time. My mind turned to September 1916, when I walked along Pozières Ridge, just before the Courcellette fight, and was shouted at for not crouching down by my battery commander. But there were shells abroad that day. . . . I almost laughed to myself.

I tumbled after the colonel into the square hole that constituted the 'O.P.'—it had been a Boche trench-mortar emplacement. The sweat dripped



down my face as I removed my tin hat; my hair was wet and tangled.

Johns, a subaltern of D Battery, was in the pit with a couple of telephonists. He was giving firing instructions to the battery.

"What are you firing at, Johns?" inquired the colonel, standing on a step cut in the side of the pit, and leaning his elbows on the parapet.

"Two hundred yards behind that road, sir—trench mortars suspected there, sir." He called, "All guns parallel!" down the telephone.

"Don't you keep your guns parallel when you aren't firing?" asked the colonel quickly. "Isn't that a battery order?"

Johns flushed and replied, "No, sir. . . . We left them as they were after night-firing."

"But don't you know that it is an Army order—that guns should be left parallel?"

"Y-e-es, sir."

"Why don't you obey it, then?"

"I thought battery commanders were allowed their choice. I——"

The colonel cut poor Johns short. "It's an Army order, and has to be obeyed. Army orders are not made for nothing. The reason that order was made was because so many battery commanders were making their own choice in the matter. Consequently there was trouble and delay in 'handing-over.' So the Army made a standard ruling."

Then, as was always the case, the colonel softened in

manner, and told Johns to do his shooting just as if he were not looking on.

The new subaltern of A Battery suddenly lowered himself into the pit. The colonel brightened. "You see the grey house over there! . . . Can you see it? . . . Good! An enemy machine-gun is believed to be there. . . . I want you to fire on that house. . . . There's the point on the map."

"Sorry, sir, my wire to the battery is not through yet—I've just been out on it."

The colonel looked at his watch. "It's half-past eleven now. Your line ought to be through by this time."

"Yes, sir; it's been through once, but it went half an hour ago. I expect my signallers back any minute."

"Very well! you can be working out your switch angle and your angle of sight while you wait."

Johns had now got his battery to work, and the sight of his shells bursting among the hedges and shrubs fired his Celtic enthusiasm and dissipated the nervousness he had felt in the colonel's presence. "Look at that! isn't that a fine burst?" he called, clutching my arm,— "and see that one. Isn't it a topper?"

An exclamation from the colonel, who had stood sphinx-like, his glasses directed upon the grey house, made every one turn. "I've spotted him," he called, his voice vibrating. "He's at the top-floor window nearest to us. . . . There he goes again. . . .



I heard the 'ping' and saw dust come out of the window. . . . Now then, is that line through yet?"

The line wasn't through, and the excitement of the hunt being upon us, every one felt like cursing all telephone lines—they always did break down when they were most wanted. The five minutes before this line was reported to be through seemed an hour, and when the telephonist had laboriously to repeat the orders, each one of us itched to seize the telephone and shout ribald abuse at the man at the other end.

The first shell went into the trees behind the house. So did the round, three hundred yards shorter in range, by which it had been hoped to complete a plus and minus bracketing of the target. After a bold shortening of the range, the subaltern, directing the shooting of A Battery's guns, was about to order a wide deflection to the left, but the colonel stopped him. "Your line is all right," he said. "It looks as if you were too much to the right from the 'O.P.', but that's the deceptiveness of flank observation. The range is short, that's all. Give it another hundred yards and see what happens."

A direct hit resulted in twenty rounds, and there was jubilation in the 'O.P.' M'Whirter of C Battery turned up, also Captain Hopton of B, and preparations for a window-to-window searching and harrying of

the Boche machine-gunners were eagerly planned. It was 2 P.M. now, and the colonel had forgotten all about lunch. "I think we can get back now," he said brightly. "Register on that house," he added, turning to the officers in the pit, "and you can give that machine-gunner a hot time whenever he dares to become troublesome."

We walked back to the sunken road in the highest of spirits, and after the major of the Machine-Gun Corps, who had watched the shooting, had thanked the colonel and expressed the view that the Boche machine-gunner might in future be reckoned among the down-and-outs, the colonel talked of other things besides gunnery.

I told him that though on my last leave to England I had noted a new seriousness running through the minds of people, I had not altogether found the humble unselfishness, the chastened spirit that many thinkers had prophesied as inevitable and necessary before the coming of victory.

"But what about the men who have been out here? Won't they be the people of England after the war—the real representative people?" returned the colonel, his eyes lighting up as he talked. "Theirs has been the chastening experience, at any rate. The man who comes through this must be the better man for it."

The conversation lost its



seriousness when we discussed whether Army habits would weave themselves into the ordinary workaday world as a result of the war.

"Some of them would be good for us," said the colonel happily. "Here's one"—picking up a rifle and carrying it at the slope—"I'm going to carry this to the first salvage dump, and help to keep down taxation."

"It might be an interesting experiment to run Society on Active Service lines," I put in. "Fancy being made an Acting-Baronet and then a Temporary-Baronet before getting substantive rank. And the thought of an Acting-Duke paralyses one."

We laughed and walked on. Along the road leading back into the village we met a bombardier, who saluted the colonel with the direct glance and the half-smile that betokens previous acquaintance. The colonel stopped. "What's your name, Bombardier?" he demanded. The bombardier told him. "Weren't you in my battery?"

"Yes, sir," said the man, smiling, "when we first came

to France. . . . I'd like to be back in the old Division, sir."

"I'll see what can be done," said the colonel, taking his name and number.

"I believe I remember him, because he often came before me as a prisoner," he told me, with a humorous look, as we continued our walk. "Very stout fellow, though."

It was a quarter-past three now, and the experiences of the day had sharpened the appetite. The colonel wasn't finished yet, however. He turned into the Infantry Brigade Headquarters, and spent a quarter of an hour with the brigadier-general and his brigade-major discussing the artillery work that would be required for the next big advance. We discovered a lane we hadn't walked through before, and went that way to our farmhouse. It was four o'clock when we got back, and two batteries had prisoners waiting to go before the colonel. So luncheon was entirely wiped off the day's programme, and at a quarter to five we sat down to tea and large quantities of buttered toast.

#### XIX.

We knew now that November 4th was the date fixed for the next battle. The C.R.A. had offered the Brigade two days at the waggon lines, as a rest before zero day. The colonel didn't want to leave our farm, but two nights at the waggon lines would mean respite from night-firing for the gunners;

so he had asked the battery commanders to choose between moving out for the two days and remaining in the line. They had decided to stay.

It turned to rain on October 29th. Banks of watery, leaden-hued clouds rolled lumberingly from the south-west; beneath a slow depressing drizzle the



orchard became a melancholy vista of dripping branches and sodden muddied grass. The colonel busied himself with a captured German director and angle-of-sight instrument, juggling with the working parts to fit them for use with our guns,—he had the knack of handling intricate mechanical appliances. The adjutant curled himself up among leave-rosters and ammunition and horse returns; I began writing the Brigade Diary for October, and kept looking over the sandbag that replaced the broken panes in my window for first signs of finer weather.

The colonel and the adjutant played Wilde and myself at bridge that night—the first game in our mess since April. Then the colonel and I stayed up until midnight, talking and writing letters: he showed me a diminutive writing-pad that his small son had sent by that day's post. "That's a reminder that I owe him a letter," he smiled. "I must write him one. . . . He's just old enough now to understand that I was coming back to the war, the last time I said good-bye." The colonel said this with tender seriousness.

A moaning wind sprang up during the night, and, sleepless, I tossed and turned upon my straw mattress until past two o'clock. One 4.2 fell near enough to rattle the remaining window-panes. The wail through the air and the soft "plop" of the gas shells seemed attuned to the dirge-like soughing of the wind.

The morning broke calm and bright. There was the stuffiness of yesterday's day indoors to be shaken off. I meant to go out early. It was our unwritten rule to leave the colonel to himself at breakfast, and I drove pencil and ruler rapidly, collating the intelligence reports from the batteries. I looked into the mess again for my cap and cane before setting forth. The colonel was drinking tea and reading a magazine propped up against the sugar-basin. "I'm going round the batteries, sir," I said. "Is there anything you want me to tell them—or are you coming round yourself later?"

"No; not this morning. I shall call on the infantry about eleven—to talk about this next battle."

"Right, sir!"

He nodded, and I went out into the fresh cool air of a bracing autumn day.

I did my tour of the batteries, heard Beadle's jest about the new groom who breathed a surprised "Me an' all?" when told that he was expected to accompany his officer on a ride up to the battery; and, leaving A Battery's cottage at noon, crossed the brook by the little brick bridge that turned the road towards our Headquarters farm, six hundred yards away.

"The colonel rang up a few minutes ago to say that our notice-board at the bottom of the lane had been blown down. He wanted it put right, because the General is coming to see him this after-



noon, and might miss the turning. . . . I've told Sergeant Starling.

"Colonel B— came in about eleven o'clock," went on the adjutant. "He's going on leave and wanted to say good-bye to the colonel."

"Where is the colonel now?" I asked, picking up some Divisional reports that had just arrived.

"He's with the Heavies—he's been to the Infantry. I told him Colonel B— had called, and he said he'd go round and see him—their mess is in the village, isn't it?"

At twelve minutes past one the adjutant, Wilde, and myself sat down to lunch. "The colonel said he wouldn't be late—but we needn't wait," said the adjutant.

"No; we don't want to wait," agreed Wilde, who had been munching chocolate.

At a quarter-past one: "Crump!" "Crump!" "Crump!"—the swift crashing arrival of three high-velocity shells.

"I'll bet that's not far from A Battery," called Wilde, jumping up; and then settled down again to his cold beef and pickles.

"First he's sent over today," said the adjutant. "He's been awfully quiet these last two days."

Manning had brought in the bread-and-butter and apple pudding that Meddings had made to celebrate his return from leave, when the door opened abruptly. Gillespie, the D.A. gas officer, stood there. It was the habit to complain with mock-seriousness that Gillespie timed his

visits with our meal-times. I had begun calling, "Here he is again!" when something drawn, something staring in his lean Scotch face, stopped me. I thought he was ill.

The adjutant and Wilde were gazing curiously at him. My eyes left his face. I noticed that his arms were pushed out level with his chest; he grasped an envelope between the thumb and forefinger of each hand. His lower jaw had fallen; his lips moved, and no sound came from them.

The three of us at the table rose to our feet. All our faculties were lashed to attention.

Gillespie made a sort of gulp. "I've got terrible news," he said at last.

I believe that one thought, and only one thought, circled through the minds of the adjutant, Wilde, and myself: The colonel!—we knew! we knew!

"The colonel——" went on Gillespie. His face twitched.

Wilde was first to speak. "Wounded?" he forced himself to ask, his eyes staring.

"Killed!—killed!" said Gillespie, his voice rising to a hoarse wail.

Then silence. Gillespie reached for a chair and sank into it.

I heard him, more master of himself, say labouringly, "Down at the bridge near A Battery. . . . He and another colonel . . . both killed . . . they were standing talking. . . . I was in A Battery mess. . . . A direct hit, I should think."

The adjutant spoke in



crushed awestruck tones. "It must have been Colonel B——."

I did not speak. I could not. I thought of the colonel as I had known him, better than any of the others: his gentleness, his honourableness, his desire to see good in everything, his quiet collected bravery, the clear alertness of his mind, the thoroughness with which he followed his calling of soldier; a man without a mean thought in his head; a true soldier who had received not half the honours his gifts deserved, yet grumbled not. Ah! no one passed over in the sharing out of honours and promotions could complain if he paused to think of the colonel.

I stared through the window at the bright sunlight. Dimly I became aware that Gillespie had laid the envelope upon the table, and heard him say he had found it lying in the roadway. I noticed the handwriting: the last letter the colonel had received from his wife. It must have been blown clean out of his jacket pocket; yet there it was, uninjured.

The adjutant's voice, low, solemn, but resolved—he had his work to do: "It is absolutely certain it was the colonel? There is no shadow of doubt? I shall have to report to 'Don Aok'!"

"No shadow of doubt," replied Gillespie hopelessly, moving his head from side to side.

Wilde came to me and asked if I would go with him to bring in the body. I shook my head. Life out here breeds a higher understanding of the mystic

division between soul and body; one learns to contemplate the disfigured dead with a calmness that is not callousness. But this was different. How real a part he had played in my life these last two years! I wanted always to be able to recall him as I had known him alive—the slow wise smile, the crisp pleasant voice! I thought of that last note to his little son; I thought of the quiet affection in his voice when he spoke of keeping in touch with those who had shared the difficulties and the hardships of the life we had undergone. I recalled how he and I had carried a stretcher and searched for a dying officer at Zillebeke—the day I was wounded,—and how, when I was in hospital, he had written saying he was glad we had done our bit that day; I thought of his happy faith in a Christmas ending of the war. The hideous cruelty of it to be cut off at the very last, when all that he had given his best in skill and energy to achieve was in sight!

The shuffling tramp outside of men carrying a blanket-covered stretcher. They laid it tenderly on the flagstones beneath the sun-warmed wall of the house.

Wilde, his face grave, sad, desolate, walked through the mess to his room. I heard him rinsing his hands. A chill struck at my vitals.

It is finished. The colonel is dead. There is nothing more to write.



S I M O N.

BY J. STORER CLOUSTON.

## I. THE SOLITARY PASSENGER.

THE train had come a long journey and the afternoon was wearing on. The passenger in the last third-class compartment but one, looking out of the window sombrely and intently, saw nothing now but desolate brown hills and a winding lonely river, very northern-looking under the autumnal sky.

He was alone in the carriage, and if any one had happened to study his movements during the interminable journey, they would have concluded that for some reason he seemed to have a singularly strong inclination for solitude. In fact, this was at least the third compartment he had occupied, for whenever a fellow-traveller entered, he unostentatiously descended, and in a moment had slipped, also unostentatiously, into an empty carriage. Finally, he had selected one at the extreme end of the train, a judicious choice which had ensured privacy for the last couple of hours.

When the train at length paused in the midst of the moorlands, and for some obscure reason this spot was selected for the examination of tickets, another feature of this traveller's character became apparent. He had no ticket, he confessed, but named the last station as his place of de-

parture and the next as his destination. Being an entirely respectable-looking person, his statement was accepted, and he slipped the change for half a crown into his pocket—just as he had done a number of times previously in the course of his journey. Evidently the passenger was of an economical as well as of a secretive disposition.

As the light began to fade and the grey sky to change into a deeper grey, and the lighted train to glitter through the darkening moors, and he could see by his watch that their distant goal was now within an hour's journey, the man showed for the first time signs of a livelier interest. He peered out keenly into the dusk as though recognising old landmarks, and now and then he shifted in his seat restlessly and a little nervously.

He was a man of middle age or upwards, of middle height, and thick-set. Round his neck he wore a muffler, so drawn up as partially to conceal the lower part of his face, and a black felt hat was drawn down over his eyes. Between them could be seen only the gleam of his eyes, the tip of his nose, and the stiff hairs of a grizzled moustache.

Out of his overcoat pocket he now pulled a pipe, and for



a moment looked at it doubtfully, and then, as if the temptation were irresistible, he took out a tobacco-pouch too. It was almost flat, and he jealously picked up a shred that fell on the floor, and checked himself at last when the bowl was half filled. And then for a while he smoked very slowly, savouring each whiff.

When they stopped at the last station or two, the reserved and exclusive disposition of this traveller became still more apparent. Not only was he so muffled up as to make recognition by an unwelcome acquaintance exceedingly difficult, but so long as they paused at the stations he sat with his face resting on his hand, and when they moved on again an air of some relief was apparent.

But a still more remarkable instance of this sensitive passion for privacy appeared when the train stopped at the ticket platform just outside its final destination. Even as they were slowing down, he fell on his knees and then stretched himself at full length on the floor, and when the door was flung open for an instant, the compartment was to all appearance empty. Only when they were well under way again did this retiring traveller emerge from beneath the seat.

And when he did emerge, his conduct continued to be of a piece with this curious performance. He glanced out of the window for an instant at the lights of the platform ahead, and the groups under

them, and the arch of the station roof against the night sky, and then swiftly stepped across the carriage and gently opened the door on the wrong side. By the time the train was fairly at rest, the door had been as quietly closed again, and the man was picking his way over the sleepers in the darkness, past the guard's van and away from the station and publicity. Certainly he had succeeded in achieving a singularly economical and private journey.

For a few minutes he continued to walk back along the line, and then, after a wary look all round him, he sprang up the low bank at the side, threw his leg over a wire fence, and with infinite care began to make his way across a stubble field. As he approached the wall on the farther side of the field his precautions increased. He listened intently, crouched down once or twice, and when at last he reached the wall, he peered over it very carefully before he mounted and dropped on the other side.

"Well," he murmured, "I'm here, by God, at last!"

He was standing now in a road on the outskirts of the town. On the one hand it led into a dim expanse of darkened country, on the other, the lights of the town twinkled. Across the road, a few villas stood back amidst trees, with gates opening on to a footpath, the outlying houses of the town; and the first lamp-post stood a little way down this path. The



man crossed the road and turned townwards, walking slowly and apparently at his ease. What seemed to interest him now was not his own need for privacy, but the houses and gates he was passing. At one open gate in particular he half paused, and then seemed to spy something ahead that altered his plans. Under a lamp-post a figure appeared to be lingering, and at the sight of this the man drew his hat still more closely over his face and moved on.

As he drew near the lamp the forms of two youths became manifest, apparently loitering there idly. The man kept his eyes on the ground, passed them at a brisk walk, and went on his way into the town.

"Damn them!" he muttered.

This incident seemed to have deranged his plans a little, for his movements during the next half hour were so purposeless as to suggest that he was merely putting in time. Down one street and up another he walked, increasing his pace when he had to pass any fellow-walkers, and then again falling slow at certain corners and looking round him curiously, as though those dark lanes and half-lit streets were reminiscent.

Even seen in the light of the infrequent lamps and the rays from thinly blinded windows, it was evidently but a small country town of a hard, grey stone, northern type. The ends of certain lanes seemed to open into the empty country itself, and one could hear

the regular cadence of waves hard by upon a shore.

"It doesn't seem to have changed much," said the man to himself.

He worked his way round, like one quite familiar with the route he followed, till at length he drew near the same quiet country road whence he had started. This time he stopped for a few minutes in the thickest shadow and scanned each dim circle of radiance ahead. Nobody seemed now to be within the rays of the lamps or to be moving in the darkness between. He went on warily till he had come nearly to the same open gate where he had paused before, and then there fell upon his ears the sound of steps behind him, and he stopped again and looked sharply over his shoulder.

Somebody was following, but at a little distance off, and, after hesitating for an instant, he seemed to make up his mind to risk it, and turned swiftly and stealthily through the gates. A short drive of some pretensions ran between trees and then curved round towards the house; but there was no lodge or any sign of a possible watcher, and the man advanced for a few yards swiftly and confidently enough. And then he stopped abruptly. Under the shade of the trees the drive ahead was pitch dark, but footsteps and voices were certainly coming from the house. In an instant he had vanished into the belt of plantation along one side of the drive.



The footsteps and voices ceased, and then the steps began again, timidly at first and then hurriedly. The belt of shrubs and trees was just thick enough to hide a man perfectly on a moonless cloudy night like this. Yet on either side the watcher could see enough of what was beyond to note that he stood between the dark drive on one hand and a lighter space of open garden on the other, and he could even catch a glimpse of the house against the sky. Light shone brightly from the fanlight over the front door, and less dis-

tinctly from one window upstairs and through the slats of a blind in a downstairs room. For a moment he looked in that direction and then intently watched the drive.

The footsteps by this time were almost on the run. The vague forms of two women passed swiftly, and he could see their faces dimly turned towards him as they hurried by. They passed through the gates and were gone, and then a minute later men's voices in the road cried out a greeting. And after that the silence fell profound.

## II. THE PROCURATOR-FISCAL.

The procurator-fiscal breakfasted at 8.30 punctually, and at 8.30 as usual he entered his severely upholstered dining-room and shut the door behind him. The windows looked into a spacious garden with a belt of trees leading up to the house from the gate, and this morning Mr Rattar, who was a machine for habit, departed in one trifling particular from his invariable routine. Instead of sitting straight down to the business of breakfasting, he stood for a minute or two at the window gazing into the garden, and then he came to the table very thoughtfully.

No man in that northern county was better known or more widely respected than Mr Simon Rattar. In person he was a thick-set man of middle height and elderly middle age, with cold steady eyes and grizzled hair. His

clean-shaved face was chiefly remarkable for the hardness of his tight-shut mouth, and the obstinacy of the chin beneath it. Professionally, he was lawyer to several of the larger landowners and factor on their estates, and lawyer and adviser also to many other people in various stations in life. Officially, he was procurator-fiscal for the county, the setter in motion of all criminal processes, and generalissimo, so to speak, of the police; and one way and another, he had the reputation of being a very comfortably well-off gentleman indeed.

As for his abilities, they were undeniably considerable, of the hard, cautious, never-caught-asleep order; and his taciturn manner and way of drinking in everything said to him, while he looked at you out of his steady eyes, and



then merely nodded and gave a significant little grunt at the end, added immensely to his reputation for profound wisdom. People were able to quote few definite opinions uttered by "Silent Simon," but any that could be quoted were shrewdness itself.

He was a bachelor, and indeed it was difficult for the most fanciful to imagine Silent Simon married. Even in his youth he had not been attracted by the other sex, and his own qualities certainly did not attract them. Not that there was a word to be said seriously against him. Hard and shrewd though he was, his respectability was extreme, and his observance of the conventions scrupulous to a fault. He was an elder of the kirk, a non-smoker, an abstemious drinker (to be an out-and-out teetotaler would have been a little too remarkable in those regions for a man of Mr Rattar's conventional tastes), and indeed in all respects he trod that sober path that leads to a semi-public funeral and a vast block of granite in the parish kirk-yard.

He had acquired his substantial villa and large garden by a very shrewd bargain a number of years ago, and he lived there with just the decency that his condition in life enjoined, but with not a suspicion of display beyond it. He kept a staff of two competent and respectable girls, just enough to run a house of that size, but only just; and when he wanted to drive

abroad he hired a conveyance, exactly suitable to the occasion, from the most respectable hotel. His life, in short, was ordered to the very best advantage possible.

Enthusiastic devotion to such an extremely exemplary gentleman was a little difficult, but in his present housemaid, Mary MacLean, he had a girl with a strong Highland strain of fidelity to a master, and an instinctive devotion to his interests, even if his person was hardly the chieftain her heart demanded. She was a soft-voiced, anxious-looking young woman, almost pretty, despite her nervous high-strung air, and of a quiet and modest demeanour.

Soon after her master had begun breakfast, Mary entered the dining-room with an apologetic air, but a conscientious eye.

"Begging your pardon, sir," she began, "but I thought I ought to tell you that when cook and me was going out to the concert last night we thought we saw *something* in the drive."

Mr Rattar looked up at her sharply and fixed his cold eyes on her steadily for a moment, never saying a word. It was exactly his ordinary habit, and she had thought she was used to it by now, yet this morning she felt oddly disconcerted. Then it struck her that perhaps it was the red out on his chin that gave her this curious feeling. Silent Simon's hand was as steady as a rock, and she never remembered his hav-



ing out himself shaving before, certainly not as badly as this.

"Saw 'something'?" he repeated gruffly; "what do you mean?"

"It looked like a man, sir, and it seemed to move into the trees almost as quick as we saw it."

"Tuts!" muttered Simon.

"But there was two friends of ours meeting us in the road," she hurried on, "and they thought they saw a man going in at the gate."

Her master seemed a little more impressed.

"Indeed?" said he.

"So I thought it was my duty to tell you, sir."

"Quite right," said he.

"For I felt sure it couldn't just be a gentleman coming to see you, sir, or he wouldn't have gone into the trees."

"Of course not," he agreed briefly. "Nobody came to see me."

Mary looked at him doubtfully and hesitated for a moment.

"Didn't you even hear anything, sir?" she asked in a lowered voice.

Her master's quick glance made her jump.

"Why?" he demanded.

"Because, sir, I found footsteps in the gravel this morning—where it's soft with the rain, sir, just under the library window."

Mr Rattar looked first hard at her and then at his plate. For several seconds he answered nothing, and then he said—

"I did hear some one."

There was something both

in his voice and in his eye as he said this that was not quite like the usual Simon Rattar. Mary began to feel a sympathetic thrill.

"Did you look out of the window, sir?" she asked in a hushed voice.

Her master nodded and pursed his lips.

"But you didn't see him, sir?"

"No," said he.

"Who could it have been, sir?"

"I have been wondering," he said, and then he threw a sudden glance at her that made her hurry for the door. It was not that it was an angry look, but that it was what she called so "queer-like."

Just as she went out she noted another queer-like circumstance. Mr Rattar had stretched out his hand towards the toast-rack while he spoke. The toast stuck between the bars, and she caught a glimpse of an angry twitch that upset the rack with a clatter. Never before had she seen the master do a thing of that kind.

A little later the library bell called her. Mr Rattar had finished breakfast and was seated beside the fire with a bundle of legal papers on a small table beside him, just as he always sat, absorbed in work, before he started for his office. The master's library impressed Mary vastly. The furniture was so substantial, new-looking, and conspicuous for the shininess of the wood and the brightness of the red



morocco seats to the chairs. And it was such a tidy room: no litter of papers or books, nothing ever out of place—no sign even of pipe, tobacco-jar, cigarette, or cigar. The only concession to the vices were the ornate ash-tray and the massive globular glass match-box on the square table in the middle of the room, and they were manifestly placed there for the benefit of visitors merely. Even they, Mary thought, were admirable as ornaments, and she was concerned to note that there was no nice red-headed bundle of matches in the glass match-box this morning. What had become of them she could not imagine, but she resolved to repair this blemish as soon as the master had left the house.

"I don't want you to go gossiping about this fellow who came into the garden last night," he began.

"Oh no, sir!" said she.

Simon shot her a glance that seemed compounded of doubt and warning.

"As procurator-fiscal, it is my business to inquire into such affairs. I'll see to it."

"Oh yes, sir, I know," said she. "It seemed so impudent-like of the man coming into the fiscal's garden of all places!"

Simon grunted. It was his characteristic reply when no words were absolutely necessary.

"That's all," said he, "don't gossip! Remember, if we

want to catch the man, the quieter we keep the better."

Mary went out, impressed with the warning, but still more deeply impressed with something else. Gossip with cook of course was not to be counted as gossip in the prohibited sense, and when she returned to the kitchen she unburdened her Highland heart.

"The master's no himsel'!" she said; "I tell you, Janet, never have I seen Mr Rattar look the way he looked at breakfast, nor yet the way he looked in the library!"

Cook was a practical person and apt to be a trifle unsympathetic.

"He couldna be bothered with your blethering, most likely!" said she.

"Oh, it wasna that!" said Mary very seriously. "Just think yoursel' how would you like to be watched through the window at the dead of night as you were sitting in your chair? The master's feared of yon man, Janet!"

Even Janet was a little impressed by her solemnity.

"It must have taken something to make Silent Simon feared!" said she.

Mary's voice fell.

"It's my opinion, the master knows more than he let on to me. The thought that came into my mind when he was talking to me was just—'The man feels he's being *watched*!'"

"Oh, get along wi' you and your Hieland fancies!" said cook, but she said it a little uncomfortably.



## III. THE HEIR.

At 9.45 precisely Mr Rattar arrived at his office, just as he had arrived every morning since his clerks could remember. He nodded curtly as usual to his head clerk, Mr Ison, and went into his room. His letters were always laid out on his desk, and from twenty minutes to half an hour was generally spent by him in running through them. Then he would ring for Mr Ison and begin to deal with the business of the day. But on this morning the bell went within twelve minutes, as Mr Ison (a most precise person) noted on the clock.

"Bring the letter-book," said Mr Rattar; "and the business ledger."

"Letter-book and business ledger?" repeated Mr Ison, looking a little surprised.

Mr Rattar nodded.

The head clerk turned away, and then paused and glanced at the bundle of papers Mr Rattar had brought back with him. He had expected these to be dealt with first thing.

"About this Thomson business——" he began.

"It can wait."

The lawyer's manner was peremptory, and the clerk fetched the letter-book and ledger. These contained, between them, a record of all the recent business of the firm, apart from public business and the affairs of one large estate. What could be the reason for such a comprehensive examination, Mr Ison could not divine;

but Mr Rattar never gave reasons unless he chose, and the clerk who would venture to ask him was not to be found on the staff of Silent Simon.

In a minute or two the head clerk returned with the books. This time he was wearing his spectacles, and his first glance through them at Mr Rattar gave him an odd sensation. The lawyer's mouth was as hard set and his eyes were as steady as ever. Yet something about his expression seemed a little unusual. Some unexpected business had turned up to disturb him, Mr Ison felt sure; and, indeed, this seemed certain from his request for the letter-book and ledger. He now noticed also the cut on his chin, a sure sign that something had interrupted the orderly tenor of Simon Rattar's life, if ever there was one. Mr Ison tried to guess whose business could have taken such a turn as to make Silent Simon cut himself with his razor; but though he had many virtues, imagination was not among them, and he had to confess that it was fairly beyond James Ison.

And yet, curiously enough, his one remark to a fellow-clerk was not unlike the comment of the imaginative Mary MacLean—

"The boss has a kin' of unusual look to-day. There was something kin' of suspicious in that eye of his—rather as though he thought some one was watching him."



Mr Rattar had been busy with the books for some twenty minutes when his head clerk returned.

"Mr Malcolm Cromarty to see you, sir," he said.

Silent Simon looked at him hard, and it was evident to his clerk that his mind had been extraordinarily absorbed, for he simply repeated in a curious way—

"Mr Malcolm Cromarty?"

"Yes, sir," said Mr Ison; and then, as even this seemed scarcely to be comprehended, he added, "Sir Reginald's cousin."

"Ah, of course!" said Mr Rattar. "Well, show him in."

The young man who entered was evidently conscious of being a superior person. From the waviness of his hair and the studied negligence of his tie (heliotrope, with a design in old gold), it seemed probable that he had literary or artistic claims to be superior to the herd. And from the deference with which Mr Ison had pronounced his name and his own slightly condescending manner, it appeared that he felt himself in other respects superior to Mr Rattar. He was of medium height, slender, and dark-haired. His features were remarkably regular, and though his face was somewhat small, there could be no doubt that he was extremely good-looking, especially to a woman's eye, who would be more apt than a fellow-man to condone something a little supercilious in his smile.

The attire of Mr Malcolm

Cromarty was that of the man of fashion dressed for the country, with the single exception of the tie, which intimated to the discerning that here was no young man of fashion merely, but likewise a young man of ideas. That he had written or at least was going to write, or else that he painted or was about to paint, was quite manifest. The indications, however, were not sufficiently pronounced to permit one to suspect him of fiddling, or even of being about to fiddle.

This young gentleman's manner as he shook hands with the lawyer and then took a chair was on the surface cheerful and politely condescending. Yet after his first greeting, and when he was seated under Simon's inscrutable eye, there stole into his own a hint of quite another emotion. If ever an eye revealed apprehension it was Malcolm Cromarty's at that instant.

"Well, Mr Rattar, here I am again, you see," said he with a little laugh, but it was not quite a spontaneous laugh.

"I see, Mr Cromarty," said Simon laconically.

"You have been expecting to hear from me before, I suppose," the young man went on, "but the fact is, I've had an idea for a story and I've been devilish busy sketching it out."

Simon grunted and gave a little nod. One would say that he was studying his visitor with exceptional attention.

"Ideas come to one at the most inconvenient times," the young author explained with a



smile, and yet with a certain hurried utterance not usually associated with smiles; "one just has to shoot the bird when he happens to come over your head, don't you know? You can't send in beaters after that kind of fowl, Mr Rattar. And when he does come out, there you are! You have to make hay while the sun shines."

Again the lawyer nodded, and again he made no remark. The apprehension in his visitor's eye increased, his smile died away, and suddenly he exclaimed—

"For God's sake, Mr Rattar, say something! I meant honestly to pay you back—I felt sure I could sell that last thing of mine before now, but not a word yet from the editor I sent it to!"

Still there came only a guarded grunt from Simon, and the young man went on with increasing agitation—

"You won't give me away to Sir Reginald, will you? He's been damned crusty with me lately about money matters as it is. If you make me desperate—!" He broke off and gazed dramatically into space for a moment, and then less dramatically at his lawyer.

Silent Simon was proverbially cautious, but it seemed to his visitor that his demeanour this morning exceeded all reasonable limits. For nearly a minute he answered absolutely nothing, and then he said very slowly and deliberately—

"I think it would be better, Mr Cromarty, if you gave me a brief explicit statement of how you got into this mess."

"Dash it, you know too well—" began Cromarty.

"It would make you realise your own position more clearly," interrupted the lawyer. "You want me to assist you, I take it?"

"Rather; if you will."

"Well then, please do as I ask you. You had better start at the beginning of your relations with Sir Reginald."

Malcolm Cromarty's face expressed surprise, but the lawyer's was distinctly less severe, and he began readily enough.

"Well, of course, as you know, my cousin Charles Cromarty died about eighteen months ago, and I became the heir to the baronetcy." He broke off and asked, "Do you mean you want me to go over all that?"

Simon nodded, and he went on—

"Sir Reginald was devilish good at first—in his own patronising way, let me stay at Keldale as often and as long as I liked, made me an allowance, and so on; but there was always this fuss about my taking up something a little more conventional than literature. Ha, ha!" The young man laughed in a superior way and then looked apprehensively at the other. "But I suppose you agree with Sir Reginald?"

Simon pursed his lips and made a non-committal sound.

"Well, anyhow, he wanted me to be called to the Bar or something of that kind; and then there was a fuss about money—his ideas of an allowance are rather old-fashioned,



as you know. And then you were good enough to help me with that loan, and—well, that's all, isn't it?"

Mr Rattar had been listening with extreme attention. He now nodded, and a smile for a moment seemed to light his chilly eyes.

"I see that you quite realise your position, Mr Cromarty," he said.

"Realise it!" cried the young man. "My God! I'm in a worse hole——" he broke off abruptly.

"Worse than you have admitted to me?" said Simon quickly, and again with a smile in his eye.

Malcolm Cromarty hesitated. "Sir Reginald is so damned narrow! If he wants to drive me to the devil—well, let him! But I say, Mr Rattar, what are you going to do?"

For some moments Simon said nothing. At length he answered—

"I shall not press for repayment at present."

His visitor rose with a sigh of relief, and as he said good-bye his condescending manner returned as readily as it had gone.

"Good morning, and many thanks," said he, and then hesitated for an instant. "You couldn't let me have a very small cheque, just to be going on with, could you?"

"Not this morning, Mr Cromarty."

Mr Cromarty's look of despair returned.

"Well," he cried darkly as he strode to the door, "people who treat a man in my position like this are responsible for—er——!" The banging of the door left their precise responsibility in doubt.

Simon Rattar gazed after him with an odd expression. It seemed to contain a considerable infusion of complacency. And then he rang for his clerk.

"Get me the Cromarty estate letter-book," he commanded.

The book was brought, and this time he had about ten minutes to himself before the clerk entered again.

"Mr Cromarty of Stanesland to see you, sir," he announced.

This announcement seemed to set the lawyer thinking hard. Then in his abrupt way he said—

"Show him in."

#### IV. THE MAN FROM THE WEST.

Mr Rattar's second visitor was of a different type. Mr Cromarty of Stanesland stood about six feet two, and had nothing artistic in his appearance, being a lean strapping man in the neighbourhood of forty, with a keen, thin, weather-beaten face chiefly remarkable for its

straight sharp nose, compressed lips, reddish eyebrows puckered into a slight habitual frown, and the fact that the keen look of the whole was expressed by only one of his eyes, the other being a good imitation but unmistakably glass. The whole effect of the face,



however, was singularly pleasing to the discerning critic. An out-of-door, reckless, humorous, honest personality was stamped on every line of it and every movement of the man. When he spoke his voice had a marked twinge of the twang of the Wild West that sounded a little oddly on the lips of a country gentleman in these northern parts. He wore an open flannel collar, a shooting coat, well-cut riding breeches, and immaculate leather leggings, finished off by a most substantial pair of shooting boots. Unlike Mr Malcolm Cromarty, he evidently looked upon his visit as expected.

"Good morning, Mr Rattar," said he, throwing his long form into the clients' chair as he spoke. "Well, I guess you've got some good advice for me this morning."

Simon Rattar was proverbially cautious, but to-day his caution struck his visitor as quite remarkable.

"Um," he grunted. "Advice, Mr Cromarty? Umph!"

"Don't trouble beating about the bush," said the tall man. "I've been figuring things out myself, and, so far as I can see, it comes to this,—that loan from Sir Reginald put me straight in the meantime, but I've got to cut down expense all round to keep straight, and I've got to pay him back. Of course you know his way when it's one of the clan he's dealing with. 'My dear Ned, no hurry whatever. If you send my heir a cheque some day after I'm gone it will have the added

charm of surprise!' Well, that's damned decent, but hardly business. I want to get the whole thing off my chest. Got the statement made up?"

Simon shook his head.

"Very sorry, Mr Cromarty. Haven't had time yet."

"Hell!" said Mr Cromarty, though in a cheerful voice; and then added with an engaging smile, "Pardon me, Mr Rattar, I'm trying to get educated out of strong language, but, Lord, at my time of life it's not so damned—I mean, dashed easy!"

Even Simon Rattar's features relaxed for an instant into a smile.

"And who is educating you?" he inquired.

Mr Cromarty looked a little surprised.

"Who but the usual lady? Gad, I've told you before of my sister's well-meant efforts. It's a stiff job making a retired cow-puncher into a high-grade laird. However, I can smoke without spitting now, which is a step on the road towards being a Lord Chesterfield."

He smiled humorously, stretched out his long legs, and added—

"It's a nuisance your not having that statement ready. When I've got to do business I like pushing it through quick. That's an American habit I don't mean to get rid of, Mr Rattar."

Mr Rattar nodded his approval.

"Certainly not," said he.

"I've put down my car,"



his visitor continued. "Drive a buggy now—beg its pardon, a trap—and a devilish nice little mare I've got in her, too. In fact, there are plenty of consolations for whatever you have to do in this world. I'm only sorry for my sister's sake that I have to draw in my horns a bit. Women like a bit of a splash—at least judging from the comparatively little I know of 'em."

"Miss Cromarty doesn't complain, I hope?"

"Oh, I think she's beginning to see the necessity for reform. You see, when both my civilised elder brothers died——" he broke off, and then added, "But you know the whole story."

"I would—er—like to refresh my memory," said Simon; and there seemed to be a note of interest and almost of eagerness in his voice that appeared to surprise his visitor afresh.

"First time I ever heard of your memory needing refreshing!" laughed his visitor. "Well, you know how I came back from the wild and woolly west and tried to make a comfortable home for Lillian. We were neither of us likely to marry at our time of life, and there were just the two of us left, and we'd both of us knocked about quite long enough on our own, and so why not settle down together in the old place and be comfortable? At least that's how it struck me. Of course, as you know, we hadn't met for so long that we were practically strangers, and she knew

the ways of civilisation better than me, and I gave her a pretty free hand in setting up the establishment. I don't blame her, mind you, for setting the pace a bit too fast to last. My own blamed fault entirely. However, we aren't in a very deep hole, thank the Lord! In fact, if I hadn't got to pay Sir Reginald back the £1200 it would be all right, so far as I can figure out. But I want your exact statement, Mr Rattar, and as quick as you can let me have it."

Simon nodded and grunted.

"You'll get it." And then he added, "I think I can assure you there is nothing to be concerned about."

Ned Cromarty smiled, and a reckless light danced for a moment in his one efficient eye.

"I guess I almost wish there were something to be concerned about! Sir Reginald is always telling me I'm the head of the oldest branch of the whole Cromarty family, and it's my duty to live in the house of my ancestors and be an ornament to the county, and all the rest of it. But I tell you it's a damned quiet life for a man who's had his eye put out with a broken whisky bottle and hanged the man who did it with his own hands!"

"Hanged him!" exclaimed the lawyer sharply.

"Oh, it wasn't merely for the eye. That gave the performance a kind of relish it would otherwise have lacked, being a cold-blooded ceremony and a little awkward with the



apparatus we had. We hanged him for murder, as a matter of fact. Now, between ourselves, Mr Rattar, we don't want to crab our own county, but you must confess that real good serious crime is devilish scarce here, eh?"

Cromarty's eye was gleaming humorously, and Simon Rattar might have been thought the kind of tough customer who would have been amused by the joke. He seemed, however, to be affected unpleasantly, and even a little startled.

"I—I trust we don't," he said.

"Well," his visitor agreed, "as it means that something or somebody has got to be sacrificed to start the sport of man-hunting, I suppose there's something to be said for the quiet life. But, personally, I'd sooner be after men than grouse, from the point of view of getting thorough satisfaction while it lasts. My sister says it means I haven't settled down properly yet—calls me the bold bad bachelor!"

Through this speech Simon seemed to be looking at his visitor with an attention that bordered on fascination, and it was apparently with a slight effort that he asked at the end—

"Well, why don't you marry?"

"Marry?" exclaimed Ned Cromarty. "And where will you find the lady that's to succumb to my fascinations? I'm within a month of forty, Mr Rattar; I've the mind,

habits, and appearance of a backwoodsman, and I've one working eye left. A female collector of antique curiosities, or something in the nature of a retired wardress, might take on the job, but I can't think of any one else!"

He laughed as he spoke, and yet something remarkably like a sigh followed the laugh, and for a moment after he had ceased speaking his eye looked abstractedly into space.

Before either spoke again the door opened, and the clerk, seeing Mr Rattar was still engaged, murmured a "Beg pardon," and was about to retire again.

"What is it?" asked the lawyer.

"Miss Farmond is waiting to see you, sir."

"I'll let you know when I'm free," said Simon.

Had his eye been on his visitor as his clerk spoke, he might have noticed a curious commentary on Mr Cromarty's professed lack of interest in womankind. His single eye lit up for an instant, and he moved sharply in his chair, and then as suddenly repressed all sign of interest.

A minute or two later the visitor jumped up.

"Well," said he, "I guess you're pretty busy, and I've been talking too long as it is. Let me have that statement as quick as you like. Good morning!"

He strode to the door, shut it behind him, and then, when he was on the landing, his movements became suddenly



more leisurely. Instead of striding downstairs he stood looking curiously in turn at each closed door. It was an old-fashioned house, and rather a rabbit-warren of an office, and it would seem as though for some reason he wished to leave no door unwatched. In a moment he heard the lawyer's bell ring, and very slowly he moved down a step or two, while a clerk answered the call and withdrew. And then he took a cigar from his case, bit off the end, and felt for matches—all this being very deliberately done, and his eye following the clerk. Thus, when a girl emerged from the room along a passage, she met, apparently quite accidentally, Mr Cromarty of Stanesland.

At the first glance it was quite evident that the meeting gave more pleasure to the gentleman than to the lady. Indeed, the girl seemed too disconcerted to hide the fact.

"Good morning, Miss Farmond," said he, with what seemed intended for an air of surprise,—as though he had no idea she had been within a mile of him. "You coming to see Simon on business too?" And then, taking the cue from her constrained manner, he added hurriedly, and with a note of dejection he could not quite hide, "Well, good-bye."

The girl's expression suddenly changed, and with that change the laird of Stanesland's curious movements became very explicable, for her face was singularly charming

when she smiled. It was a rather pale but fresh and clear-skinned face, wide at the forehead and narrowing to a firm little chin, with long-lashed expressive eyes, and a serious expression in repose. Her smile was candid, a little coy, and irresistibly engaging, and her voice was very pleasant, rather low, and most engaging too. She was of middle height and dressed in mourning. Her age seemed rather under than over twenty.

"Oh," she said, with a touch of hesitation at first, "I didn't mean——" She broke off, glanced at the clerk, who being a discreet young man was now in the background, and then with lowered voice confessed, "The fact is, Mr Cromarty, I'm not really supposed to be here at all. That's to say, nobody knows I am."

Mr Cromarty looked infinitely relieved.

"And you don't want anybody to know?" he said in his outspoken way. "Right you are. I can lie low and say nothing, or lie hard and say what you like; whichever you choose."

"Lying low will do," she smiled. "But please don't think I'm doing anything very wrong."

"I'll think what you tell me," he said gallantly. "I was thinking Silent Simon was in luck's way—but perhaps you're going to wig him?"

She laughed and shook her head.

"Can you imagine me daring to wig Mr Simon Rattar?"



"I guess he needs waking up now and then like other people. He's been slacking over my business. In fact, I can't quite make him out this morning. He's not quite his usual self for some reason. Don't be afraid to wig him if he needs it!"

The clerk in the background coughed and Miss Cicely Farmond moved towards the door of the lawyer's room, but Ned Cromarty seemed reluctant to end the meeting so quickly.

"How did you come?" he asked.

"Walked," she smiled.

"Walked! And how are you going back?"

"Walk again."

"I say," he suggested eagerly, "I've got my trap in. Let me drive you!"

She hesitated a moment.

"It's awfully good of you to think of it."

"That's settled then. I'll be on the look-out when you leave old Simon's den."

He raised his cap and went downstairs this time without any hesitation. He had forgotten to light his cigar, and it was probably as a substitute for smoking that he found himself whistling.

#### V. THE THIRD VISITOR.

Miss Cicely Farmond's air as she entered Simon Rattar's room seemed compounded of a little shyness, considerable trepidation, and yet more determination. In her low voice and with a fleeting smile she wished him good morning, like an acquaintance with whom she was quite familiar, and then with a serious little frown, and fixing her engaging eyes very straight upon him, she made the surprising demand—

"Mr Rattar, I want you to tell me honestly who I am."

For an instant Simon's cold eyes opened very wide, and then he was gazing at her after his usual silent and steadfast manner.

"Who you are?" he repeated after a few seconds' pause.

"Yes. Indeed, Mr Rattar, I *insist* on knowing!"

Simon smiled slightly.

"And what makes you think I can assist you to—er—recover your identity, Miss Farmond?"

"To discover it, not recover it," she corrected. "Don't you really know that I am honestly quite ignorant?"

Mr Rattar shook his head cautiously.

"It is not for me to hazard an opinion," he answered.

"Oh, please, Mr Rattar," she exclaimed, "don't be so dreadfully cautious! Surely you can't have thought that I knew all the time!"

Again he was silent for a moment, and then inquired—

"Why do you come to me now?"

"Because I *must* know! Because—well, because it is



so unsatisfactory not knowing for various reasons."

"And why are you so positive that I can tell you?"

"Because all my affairs and arrangements went through your hands, and of course you know!"

Again he seemed to reflect for a moment.

"May I ask, Miss Farmond," he inquired, "why, in that case, you think I shouldn't have told you before, and why—also in that case—I should tell you now?"

This inquiry seemed to disconcert Miss Farmond a little.

"Oh, of course I presume Sir Reginald and you had some reasons," she admitted.

"And don't you think then we have them still?"

"I can't honestly see why you should make such a mystery of it—especially as I can guess the truth perfectly easily!"

"If you can guess it—" he began.

"Oh, please don't answer me like that! Why won't you tell me?"

He seemed to consider the point for a moment, and then he said—

"I am not at all sure that I am at liberty to tell you, Miss Farmond, without further consultation."

"Has Sir Reginald really any good reasons for not telling me?"

"Have you asked him that question?"

"No," she confessed. "He and Lady Cromarty have been so frightfully kind, and yet so—so reserved on that subject,

that I have never liked to ask them direct. But they know that I have guessed, and they haven't done anything to prevent me finding out more for myself, which means that they really are quite willing to let me find out if I can."

He shook his head.

"I am afraid I shall require more authority than that."

She pursed her lips and looked at the floor in silence, and then she rose.

"Well, if you absolutely refuse to tell me *anything*, Mr Rattar, I suppose——"

A dejected little shrug completed her sentence, and as she turned towards the door her eloquent eyes looked at him for a moment beneath their long lashes with an expression in them that might have moved a statue. Although Simon Rattar had the reputation of being impervious to woman's wiles, he may have been moved by this unspoken appeal. He certainly seemed struck by something, for, even as her back was turning towards him, he said suddenly and in a distinctly different voice—

"You say you can guess yourself?"

She nodded, and added with a pathetic coaxing note in her low voice—

"But I want to *know*!"

"Supposing," he suggested, "you were to tell me precisely how much you do know already, and then I could judge whether the rest might or might not be divulged."

Her face brightened, and she returned to her chair with a

promptitude that suggested she was not unaccustomed to win a lost battle with these weapons.

"Well," she said, "it was only six months ago—when mother died—that I first had the least suspicion there was any mystery about me—anything to hide. I knew she hadn't always been happy, and that her trouble had something to do with my father, simply because she hardly ever mentioned him. But she lived at Eastbourne, just like plenty of other widows, and we had a few friends, though never very many, and I was very happy at school, and so I never troubled much about things."

"And knew nothing up till six months ago?" asked Simon, who was following her story very attentively.

"Nothing at all. Then, about a month after mother's death, I got a note from you asking me to go up to London and meet Sir Reginald Cromarty. I had never even heard of him before! Well, I went, and he was simply as kind as—well, as he always is to everybody, and said he was a kind of connection of my family, and asked me to pay them a long visit to Keldale."

"How long ago, precisely, was that?"

She looked a little surprised.

"Oh, you know exactly. Almost just four months ago, wasn't it?"

He nodded, but said nothing, and she went on—

"From the very first it had seemed very strange that I had

never heard a word about the Cromarty's from mother, and as soon as I got to Keldale and met Lady Cromarty, I felt sure there was something wrong. I mean that I wasn't an ordinary distant relation. For one thing, they never spoke of our relationship, and exactly what sort of cousins we were; and considering how keen Sir Reginald is on his pedigree and all his relations and everybody, that alone made me certain I wasn't the ordinary kind. That was obvious, wasn't it?"

"It seems so," the lawyer admitted cautiously.

"Of course it was! Well, one day I happened to be looking over an old photograph album, and suddenly I saw my father's photograph! Mother had a miniature of him—I have it still, and I was certain it was the same man. I pulled myself together, and asked Sir Reginald in a very ordinary voice who that was, and I could see that both he and Lady Cromarty jumped a little. He had to tell me it was his brother Alfred, and I discovered he had long been dead; but I didn't try to get any more information from them. I applied to Bisset."

She gave a little laugh, and looked at him with a touch of defiance. His inscrutable countenance appeared to annoy her.

"Well?" he remarked.

"Perhaps you think I oughtn't to have gone to a butler about such a thing, but Bisset is practically one



of the family, and I didn't give him the least idea of what I was after. I simply drew him on the subject of the Cromarty family history, and among other things—that didn't so much interest me—I found that Mr Alfred Cromarty was never married, and seemed to have had rather a gay reputation."

She looked at him with an expression that would have immediately converted any susceptible man into a fellow-conspirator, and asked in her most enticing voice—

"Need you ask what I guessed? What is the use in not telling me simply whether I have guessed right!"

Silent Simon's face remained a mask.

"What precisely did you guess?"

"That my mother wasn't married," she said, her voice falling very low, "and I am really Sir Reginald's niece, though he never can acknowledge it—and I don't want him to! But I do want to be sure. Dear Mr Rattar, won't you tell me?"

Dear Mr Rattar never relaxed a muscle.

"Your guess seems very probable," he admitted.

"But tell me definitely."

"Why?" he inquired coldly.

"Oh, have you no *curiosity* yourself—especially about who your parents were; supposing you didn't know?"

"Then it's only out of curiosity that you inquired?"

"Only!" she repeated, with a world of woman's scorn. "But what sort of motives did you expect? I have walked in the whole way this morning, just to end the suspense of wondering! Of course I'll never tell a soul you told me."

She threw on him a moving smile.

"You needn't actually tell me outright. Just use some legal word—'Alibi' if I am right, and 'forgery' if I'm wrong!"

Silent Simon's sudden glance chilled her smile.

She evidently felt she had been taking the law in vain.

"I only meant——" she began anxiously.

"I must consult Sir Reginald," he interrupted brusquely.

She made no further effort. That glance seemed to have subdued her spirit.

"I am sorry I have bothered you," she said as she went.

As the door closed behind her, Mr Rattar took out his handkerchief and wiped his brow and his neck. And then he fell to work again upon the recent records of the firm. Yet, absorbed though he seemed, whenever a door opened or shut sharply or a step sounded distinctly outside his room, he would look up quickly and listen, and that expression would come into his eye which both Mary MacLean and Mr Ison had described as the look of one who was watched.

(To be continued.)



## THE STORY OF OUR SUBMARINES.—IV.

BY KLAXON.

## I.

FACING each other across the southern part of the North Sea were the opposing submarine bases of Harwich and Flanders. The boats from these bases occasionally met and fought, but in the main their duties lay well apart. Harwich boats worked off the Bight, while the Flanders ports were bases for U-boats to start from on their way down Channel to the traffic routes. The losses of the Flanders boats were heavy—so were the losses of the VIIIth Flotilla at Harwich, especially in 1916. In that year the VIIIth Flotilla submarine officers passed a self-denying ordinance to reduce their consumption of alcohol. (Now what I am leading up to is a comparison of British and German mentality, because I think the question of personnel to be infinitely more important than that of material.) The fact is, that heavy losses do affect those who are left to carry on the work. A boat comes back to harbour with her officers and crew tired and glad to be home again; they are perhaps met with, "Did you see anything of Seventy-six? He's been overdue three days. He was next to you—off Ameland. You didn't hear anything go up? Oh, well, you'll probably have that

billet next week and you may find out. . . ."

Well, it *does* affect people, and there is undoubtedly a great feeling of relief at getting back to harbour safely. In the Navy, where wines and spirits are free of duty, alcohol is cheap and obtainable, and alcohol is a relief from worry and an opiate for tired nerves. But the war has never seen a case of disciplinary action being necessary to control our submarine officers. It is a difficult question to approach in print, as the temperance argument seems to call out such strongly-expressed opinions from the advocates pro and con; but while I have no idea of holding up submarine officers as paragons of abstinence (for I hardly know any who are teetotallers), there is no doubt that they fully realised that only moderation could keep them efficient for war.

Over in Flanders it was the rule for U-boats to base at Bruges, and to use only Ostend and Zeebrugge as they passed through on their way to and from the sea. At Bruges the U-boat officers had a mess at the house of M. Catulle—a large, well-furnished, and comfortable building near the docks.



There the officers had made the cellars (three inter-connected vaults) into an underground Rest for Tired Workers. All around the walls are painted frescoes illustrating the minds of the patrons. The frescoes are over two feet in depth, and are well executed in the type of German humour one meets in the Berlin comic papers. There are mines, projectiles, &c., with the conventional faces and hats of John Bull, France, and other Allies; dancing with the mines are torpedoes, some of which carry on them the faces of dead U-boat officers. Beneath the frescoes are mottoes—such as, "Drink, for to-morrow you may die"—"Life is short, and you'll be a long time dead." Between the pictures are smaller paintings of monkeys drinking champagne.

After dinner, according to witnesses, the officers would retire to these cellars and drink. There is little ventilation, and the atmosphere must have been fairly thick with smoke and fumes. Drinking sometimes continued till 8 A.M.—a horrible hour at which to be drunk. It is reported by Belgians that the officers got through four thousand bottles of wine in three weeks. Taking the high estimate of an average of twenty officers always present, this means ten bottles per head a day—which is absurd. It is probable, however, that the competitors broke or gave away a good many bottles. But there is

no doubt they went at it pretty fast; one officer was drunk and incapable for five days on end, and (as apparently there was considered to be a limit of four days for states of coma) on the fifth day was ordered to sea by the Captain of the Flotilla "to cool his head." The whole impression one gets from the local stories is one of fear, morbid excitement, and drink. The pictures conjured up are unpleasant: the early morning scene in the cellars when a few hiccoughing stalwarts still sat over their wine—the guttural attempt at song—the pale glow of electric lamps through swirling smoke—the reek of alcohol—the litter of bottles—and the frightened face of the Belgian chambermaid peering round the angle of the cellar stairs. "*Karl and Schmidt have not returned—God punish the English! Open more bottles, fool, and let us forget that our turn is coming!*"

How the flotillas were able to do efficient work at all is a puzzle; but the Flanders Flotillas did the Allies a lot of harm. Had it not been the custom of the officers to throw off restraint in harbour, we might have suffered a good deal more—how much more only a student of psychology can guess. But there is no doubt of this—and a comparison of the Harwich and Flanders Flotillas shows it—the British take to games to soothe their nerves and the Germans to drink.

It is possibly something to



do with this trait that brought the major part of the U-boat successes into the hands of a few special officers. The greater part of the captains did little; a few "aces" compiled huge lists of sunken tonnage to their credit (or otherwise). Judged by British Admiralty standards of efficiency, those few are the only ones who in our Service would have been retained at all.

However, it is time I went on with the doings of our own boats. Human beings are so much more important in war than are machines, that it is a temptation to describe them for preference. I would like to be able to talk about the submarine seamen also, but there is no ground for comparison between our own men and the German machine-made U-boat hand. One thinks of the German men as just things that opened or closed valves when barked at, and who never took any interest in what was going on outside their particular stations, or in what the boat was doing. Our sailors are—well, to put it "socially," they seem to belong more to the middle than the lower class. They are certainly not machine-made or dull, and they are not reluctant to act according to their own judgment in the absence of an officer's orders.

During the war our submarines sank 54 enemy warships and 274 other vessels. These figures do not, of course, include the many warships which were damaged but

which were got back into harbour, although they include the U-boats which our submarines destroyed. German ships are very well subdivided in compartments and take a lot of killing. Certainly on a modern war-vessel one torpedo-hit is very little use; it takes about four to make certain of sinking her. The *Moltke* (battle-cruiser) was hit with one torpedo forward in the Baltic by Commander Laurence, and again off Hiorn's Reef by Lieutenant Allen (right aft this time); on each occasion she got home safely. Our own light cruiser *Falmouth* had to receive four torpedoes in succession before she sank. The *Prinz Adalbert* was torpedoed by Commander Horton in the Baltic off Cape Kola and returned safely to Kiel (she could not take a hint, however, and after a long interval for repair she went east again and met Commander Goodheart of "E 8," who sank her). Commander Laurence in "J 1" hit the *Kronprinz* and *Grosser Kurfurst* (battleships) in the North Sea, but both were got home safely. Our later submarines were fitted with larger torpedoes and tubes, but the boats fitted with eighteen-inch torpedoes made up the larger part of our flotillas, and it was realised by both our own and the enemy submarines that it took several hits with the smaller-size weapon to finish off a large ship. Perhaps the clearest case on record is that of the *Marlborough*, the ship being hit by a torpedo at the Jut-



land battle and remaining in the line at the Fleet speed and continuing her firing as if she had never been touched. Older ships, as both sides found to their cost, were much more vulnerable. Probably the Turkish ships were the easiest of all to put down, as it is doubtful if their fatalistic officers troubled to keep the water-tight doors closed.

It must be remembered that there is all the difference in the world between a practice and a war attack. The war attack is usually unexpected, and is done under conditions of light and weather which

make things chancy, to say the least of it. In a practice attack an officer can afterwards usually plot on the chart for you every movement his boat and the enemy made, and give reasons for all orders he gave. After a war attack he would probably only be able to remember clearly such things as the periscope hoisting gear giving trouble and the hydroplane men appearing to be unaccountably deaf. I have mixed up several boats' attacks in the following description, and it would not be far wrong as an account of more.

## II.

The mist closed in in swirling clouds that came along the calm water in lines a few hundred yards apart. One moment through the periscope the captain of the L-boat could see across the yellow-green water a band of fog crossing his bows—the next, he could see nothing but the ripples that spread and vanished astern a few feet from the top prism of the instrument. It had been a poor visibility day since dawn, and now it looked like being thick weather till dark. He called to the first lieutenant and gave an order. The hydroplane wheels whirred and the boat tilted up and climbed to the accompaniment of sighs and roars, as a couple of external tanks were partly blown. The captain looked down as he climbed the con-

ning-tower ladder: "Slow ahead, port motor—put a charge on starboard—stop blowing." He threw back the lid and met the clammy touch of wet fog on his face. The boat was moving slowly east through a calm sea with only her conning-tower and guns above water, while a white line of foam running forward traced where her deck superstructure ran a few inches below the surface. If she had been on patrol anywhere but to the west of the VYL Lightship the captain would have taken her to seventy feet and kept a hydrophone watch, but that billet is one that marks the end of a German-swept channel, and he wanted to watch from above for the first sign of the fog clearing. He sat on the conning-tower lip, his sea-booted legs resting on



the third ladder-rung, and his head twisting this way and that as he stared at the white wall of mist that was so close to him. He had sat there barely a minute, and the booming roar of the big charging engine had just begun sounding up the conning-tower when he slid forward and stood on the ladder with his head and shoulders only exposed; he leaned out to starboard trying to catch again the faint note of a siren that he had felt rather than heard through the note of his own engine. Then something showed dark through the fog, a grey blur with a line of foam below, and the L-boat's lid clanged down, and through her hull rang the startling, insistent blare of the electric alarm. The engine stopped, the port motor woke to full speed, and the control-room was alive with sound and rapid movement. She inclined down by the bow as the captain's boots appeared down the ladder, and as he jumped to the deck his hasty glance at the gauge showed her to be already at twelve feet. But twelve feet by gauge means a conning-tower top still exposed, and as the tanks filled and the internal noises died down a sound could be heard to starboard—a noise of high-speed engines that swelled till it seemed that every second would bring the crash and roar of water each man could imagine so clearly. The gauge-needle checked at fifteen, then swung rapidly up to thirty; the faces watching it relaxed slightly—for the noise swelling through

the boat told of destroyers, and destroyers are shallow-draught vessels. The boat still raced on down, with the gauge jerking round through 60-70-80. . . .

“Hold her up, now—back to seventy, coxswain”; the angle changed swiftly to “bow-up” as the spinning wheels reversed and the boat checked at eighty-five; a pump began to stamp and hammer as it drove out the water from a midship tank, and as the trim settled, the big main motors were steadily eased back to “dead slow.” The first lieutenant looked up from the gauge and spoke over his shoulder to the captain. “I made it twelve seconds to twenty feet, sir; what was it that passed?”

“You’re a cheery optimist with your twelve seconds. Your watch is stopped, Number One. It’s destroyers, and they didn’t give us much room either.”

“Then, d’you mean a fleet?”

“I mean I’m coming up to look in a quarter of an hour. I believe if it wasn’t foggy I’d see them on the horizon now; that was a screening force that put us down. Here comes another.”

Again the sound of a turbine-driven vessel came from the starboard hand. It swelled to its maximum and then suddenly died to a murmur, passing away to port. Twice more the warning came, and then fell a silence of just five minutes by the captain’s wrist-watch. “Bring her up—twenty-four feet—and *don’t* break surface



now." He turned round to the periscope as the boat climbed and tested the raising gear, making the big shining tube move a few feet up and down. As the gauge moved to the 30 mark, the periscope rose with a rush, and he bowed his head to the eye-piece in readiness for an early glimpse of the surface world. At twenty-five feet a grunt of satisfaction and a quick swing round of the periscope spoke of his relief at being able to see at all; the fog was clearing and he was diving across one of the long lanes made in the mist by the rising wind. He turned the boat through eight points to keep her in the lane, turning up-wind to meet the clearer visibility that was coming. As he steadied on the new course he stiffened in his crouching attitude, staring to port: "*Action Stations—evolution, now get a move on.*"

The clatter and excitement of flooding tubes and opening doors lasted hardly sixty seconds, but it was punctuated by several sentences from the periscope position such as: "*Are you going to get those tubes ready?*" and less plaintively, "*How much something longer now?*" The captain's thoughts were out in the mist above him where his range of view was bounded on two sides by faintly seen grey masses that rushed past him at close range. The reports of, "*Ready, bow tubes*"; "*beam tubes ready, sir,*" came through the voice-pipes as the first lieutenant hurried from forward, panting from his exer-

tions. "*All ready, sir,*" he said, and paused for breath. "*What is it, sir; can you see? . . .*" The captain interrupted: "*Yes,*" he said, "*blink-in' mist and battle-cruisers. Port beam, stand by; port beam, fire! Starboard twenty-five; stop port, full speed starboard; look out forrard, Number One, I'm going to let go the lot.*"

The first lieutenant vanished through the control-room door as the familiar sound of a destroyer passing at short range began again to fill the boat. At the periscope the captain swore silently and continuously at the mist, the enemy, and the L-boat. He was between the destroyer screen and the big ships; the whole High Sea Fleet seemed to be coming by, and he had the very vaguest idea of their formation or even of their course. His first torpedo had missed, and it was more than likely the track of it would be seen. The L-boat spun round under the drive of the screw and the helm she carried, and as two destroyers of the screen converged on her periscope in high fountains of spray, she fired her bow salvo of torpedoes at the nearest of the big dim ships that crossed her bows. The range was short and the salvo ragged, for one torpedo "*hung in the tube*" a few seconds before leaving, its engines roaring and driving the water from the tube over the men abaft it in a drenching shower. That torpedo hit the ship astern of and beyond the target—the first bow torpedo to leave exploding right



aft on the target herself. The converging destroyers swerved outwards slightly to avoid mutual collision, and the two "Wasserbomben" they dropped as they turned were let go more in anger than with accurate aim. Thirty feet down the L-boat, her forward tanks flooding and her nose down at an angle of 15°, was driving her gauge round in an urgent hurry to gain depth. Seventy—eighty—ninety-five. "Hold her up now. Blow number two external. Slow both—*dammit*, hold her up, man. Stop both—hold on, everybody!"

The gauge-needle went round with a rush; there was a heavy shock, and the boat's bow sprang upwards (the captain, holding with one arm to the periscope and bracing his feet, had a momentary vision in his memory of a photograph of a Tank climbing a parapet—a trivial recollection of a Bond Street shop window); she rolled to starboard as the gauge-needle jumped back from a hundred and twenty to the hundred mark, then bounced again as her tail touched, rolled to port, and slid along the bottom to rest on an even keel. *Whang-bang-whang*. The explosions of depth-charges passed overhead and made the lights flicker; then a succession of fainter reports continuing to

the southward told of a chase misled in the mist. A voice spoke from a tube at the captain's side, "Did they hit, sir?"

The captain was feeling vaguely in his pockets. A reaction from the tense concentration of the last few minutes was approaching, and the habits of an habitual smoker were calling to him. "Yes, I think so," he said, "but there were so many explosions I can't swear to it. We'll know when we get in."

He took a cigarette from his case and lit it. The match burned blue and went out quickly; the cigarette gave him a mouthful of acrid smoke, and also failed. The short time the conning-tower had been open before the destroyers came had not cleared the air, and the work and excitement of the crew in the attack had consumed as much oxygen as if the boat had been diving for a summer's day. There is only one kind of cigarette which will burn in bad air; a stoker kneeling by the main line flooding-valve fumbled in his cap, and then held out a packet of five of them to the captain. The officer took one with a grunt of thanks, lit it, and spoke again. "Watch remain at diving-stations—fall out the rest—torpedo hands reload."

### III.

I am just branching off to the Adriatic a moment to describe a patrol trip by "E 21"

(Lieutenant Carlyon Britton). In this account of British submarine doings I have been



avoiding such incidents as have been already much better treated of by writers such as Rudyard Kipling and Sir Henry Newbolt. There are, however, a good many incidents for which they had not space in their accounts, and mention of such incidents here will lay stress on the fact that submarine work was continuous throughout the war, and was not a matter of spasmodic effort.

On the 30th June 1918 "E 21," being a unit of our flotilla working with the Italian Navy, torpedoed and sank an Austrian ammunition transport inshore close to Piana, one of the islands that fringe the Dalmatian coast. She then fired at an escorting torpedo-boat (who dodged and saved herself), and she was then bombed by an aeroplane without receiving damage. On the 1st July she changed her batteries in Mid-Adriatic and moved east towards Lissa Island. On arrival there she dived up to St Giorgio harbour (I wonder what Tegetthof would have thought of this sort of thing in 1864?), only turning back a mile from the entrance when it was plain that there were no ships inside. She moved on along the coast and looked into Civita Vecchia, but saw nothing worth attack there. Between Brazza Island and Lesina Island runs the Greco de Lesina Channel—a gap rather after the pattern of the Dardanelles. E 21 dived to 130 feet to pass under the minefield which guards the "narrows," and went through

by compass and dead reckoning. After four hours she rose and, being then well through the straits, proceeded towards Makarska on the surface. At dawn she dived again and did a sweep round the bay, finding no shipping in the harbours. Returning that evening, she safely negotiated the minefield at 130 feet depth and proceeded west and north to look at Zerovia Island, near the locality where she had sunk the transport. She found nothing to fire at there, and the weather getting misty and bad for periscope work, she shaped course back to Brindisi on the 4th. She had been sent out to catch Austrian transports, and having sunk one which was well out on its way, and having been bombed for doing so, she had gone right back along the traffic route to see if "running to heel" would provide another chance, while at the same time her absence would give time for the excitement off Piana to die down. On her return she found it had died down to the extent of nothing being in sight; but her strategy had nevertheless been sound and well conceived.

Aeroplane bombs around the Heligoland Bight became common in 1918. A typical "Aircraft" report comes from "E 56" (Lieutenant Satow) in May of that year. Her station was by the South Dogger Bank Light:—

"23rd May.—South Dogger, bearing north 3 miles at 1 A.M. 4.30 A.M.: a Zeppelin in sight N.E.—a long way off. 10 A.M.: sighted seaplane in periscope two miles on port beam



coming towards me—dived 60 ft.—altered course to west. 10.15: one bomb—dived to 90 ft.—up to periscope depth and continued patrol. 6.20 P.M.: three bombs—dived to 80 feet. 6.37: three bombs—altered course to N.E., depth 70 feet. 6.50: one bomb. 7.37 P.M.: at 80 feet six or seven bombs dropped, three of them close to boat.

“26th May.—Sighted seaplane—dived 70 feet at 4.45 A.M. 9 A.M.: sighted seaplane—dived 80 feet. 9.38: five bombs dropped. 12.15: one bomb dropped. Heard propellers which passed on. 4 P.M.: two bombs dropped. 4.20: one bomb dropped. Heard propellers and sweep. 4.40 P.M.: two bombs—propellers and sweep. 6.20 P.M.: one bomb a long way off—propellers heard—boat rolled in the wash of destroyers.

“28th May.—4.45 A.M.: Sighted seaplanes bearing east. 3.20 P.M.: sighted Zeppelin bearing north.

“All bombs mentioned in this report were small ones.”

The attentions paid to “E56” on the 26th call to mind the story of the E-boat which did a “crash” dive to avoid similar machines. The captain arrived at the foot of the conning-tower with a rush, his binoculars preceding him with a heavy thud and his oilskin coming after him; as he touched the deck three bombs exploded on the surface just over his boat, the shock making him sit down suddenly. To the first lieutenant’s unspoken question of “What, is it after us?” he answered with an absurd giggle, and “They’ve evidently seen me!” Students of Captain Bairnsfather’s drawings will catch the allusion.

#### IV.

I will conclude the accounts of typical submarine v. submarine engagements by the case of “E 34” (Lieutenant Tulleyne) and a U-boat off Harwich on the 10th May 1918.

“E 34” was returning to harbour after a trip. She was actually in the swept channel leading into Harwich, and could pretty well take it for granted that any vessel met with so near home would be friendly. As boats get near their base it is usual to begin the cleaning-up work which is so necessary after a trip, and to get ready generally for harbour routine again. “E 34” saw a submarine ahead steering north, and, treating her as hostile until her identity could be established, dived at once

to attack. Fifteen minutes later Lieutenant Tulleyne, in no doubt at all about what his target’s nationality was, fired both bow tubes and sank her. He then rose, and proceeded to pick up the only survivor, who happened to be the captain, and who was in pretty bad condition from shock and immersion.

Captain (S.), H.M.S. *Maidstone*, comments on the affair as follows:—

“I am pleased to be able to record that, with the two submarines meeting end on—the one in enemy waters and the other just returning to base after a somewhat difficult mine-laying operation—it was the submarine which might have been expected to have been least on the *qui vive* which scored the success. This reflects great credit on Lieutenant Tulleyne and his ship’s company, as it shows they were in all respects ready.”



It is probable that this incident caused a number of our other officers secretly to wonder whether, in "E 34's" place, they would have been equally successful and prompt.

The captain of the U-boat was a charming prisoner. He was taken aboard the *Maidstone* and put in a cabin under medical care. His clothes were dried and other clothes given him. When he had recovered he went off to a prisoners' camp, from whence he wrote peremptory letters to the *Maidstone* officers accusing them of having stolen his waistcoat, and presenting a bill for its value if not instantly returned. The *Maidstone* view of the matter was that they hadn't got his beastly waistcoat, didn't believe he'd ever had one, and wouldn't touch it with a barge-pole if he had. Considering they could not have treated him with more consideration if he had been one of themselves, and that incidentally they had saved his life—well, the Hun is a queer person and we'll never be able to understand him.

The story of the sinking of "E 14" (Lieut.-Commander White) in the Dardanelles has already appeared in print, so I shall not tell it again. But the thought of German submarine officers leads to comparisons, and perhaps a submarine sailor had better give his views about it here:—

"Copy of letter received by H.M.S. *Adamant* from Petty Officer R. A. Perkins (late of S/M "E14"), Prisoner of War, No. 5456, Fabrique de Cement, Eski Hissar, Guebze, Asia Minor."

"DEAR SIR,—No doubt the officers

and men of the *Adamant* and submarines would like to know what became of the captain and two officers. I am very sorry to say that Mr White was almost blown to pieces by a large shell which wounded three other men, and I believe it killed Mr Drew, as I was with both of them. I saw the captain's body, but nothing of Mr Drew, so I think he must have been killed and fell into the sea. Mr Blasset was last seen in the engine-room, so went down with the boat. It was a credit to us all to think that we had such a brave captain, and, sir, if only I could mention a few things about him; but owing to his coolness he saved the boat half a dozen times. It is a great pity that no officer was saved to tell the tale. I also mention A.B. Mitchell and Signalmán Trimbell for gallantry in diving overboard and saving the life of Prichard, Ord. Tel., who was badly wounded, and would have lost his life had it not been for both of these men keeping him afloat until assistance arrived. I am glad to say that all men that were wounded were sent to hospital ten minutes after being captured, and were treated very well. The remaining five men, except Stoker Reed, have had a bad attack of fever since being captured. We are all sorry that so few men were saved, and, as I have said, our gallant captain. This is all I have to report."

Being the senior survivor, Petty Officer Perkins reports as such. If his officers had lived I think it probable we would have heard something to the credit of Petty Officer Perkins.

The escape of Lieut.-Commander Cochrane from Asia Minor is being described in 'Maga.' The account of how he became a prisoner seems to indicate that he was not likely to remain a submissive captive:—

"6.30 A.M. : Passed Kilid Bahr at 200 yards—the periscope being fired on by the forts without result.



"7.30: Sighted the buoys of the submarine net off Nagara Point. Dived to 100 feet and increased to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  knots.

"The bows cut through the net as the starboard propeller fouled and stopped the starboard motor. Went hard-a-port and port motor to full speed. Boat fell off to port and lay parallel to and much entangled in the net. I tried to turn the boat's head to south and pass through the net.

"8.30 A.M.: A mine exploded a few hundred feet from the boat, no damage being done.

"After about two hours manœuvring the boat was turned to the southward, and repeated attempts to get clear were made at depths of from 60 to 130 feet by going full speed ahead and astern. Boat was now held by the net fore and aft.

"10.30 A.M.: A mine was exploded close to the boat. The explosion was violent, but no damage was done to the hull. After this explosion the boat was much freer than before, *and in the hopes that further attempts to blow up the boat might result in completely freeing her,*<sup>1</sup> I decided to remain submerged at a good depth till after dark, when it might be possible to come to the surface and clear the obstruction. Burned all confidential papers.

"By 2 P.M. battery power was much reduced and further attempts to get clear were given up for a time.

"6.40 P.M.: A mine was exploded a few feet from the hull; the explosion was very violent—electric lights and other small fittings being broken. The motors were at once started in the hope that the net had been destroyed; but this was not the case. The presence of enemy craft on the surface having made it impossible to come to the surface after dark and so clear the obstruction, I decided to come up and remove the crew from the boat before blowing her up. The boat was brought to the surface with-

out difficulty, and when the conning-tower was above water Lieutenant Leaife went on deck to surrender the crew. Fire was immediately opened on him from light guns on shore and three motor-boats which were lying round 'E 7.' As soon as the excitement had died down and the enemy officers had regained control of their men, two motor-boats came alongside and the officers and men were taken off without difficulty. This operation was carried out under the orders of German submarine officers. The boat was sunk as soon as she was clear of men, and a time-fuse having been fired, subsequently blew up.

"Throughout the day the discipline and behaviour of the crew was excellent. This was particularly noticeable at the time of the third explosion. At this time the crew had been fallen out from their stations, and many of them were asleep. On being called to their stations every man went quietly to his place, although the violence of the explosion was such as to convince every one that the boat was badly damaged.

"... Petty Officer Sims, L.T.O., was in charge of the after-switchboard, and continued throughout the day to work the starboard motor, although much hampered by smoke and pieces of molten copper, due to the damage received by the motor and starting resistances while freeing the propeller."

Lieut.-Commander Cochrane attempted to escape, but after covering 200 miles was, with Lieut.-Commander Stoker of "AE 2," captured ten miles from the coast. They received a year's imprisonment, and on August 18, 1918, Lieut.-Commander Cochrane started his successful trip, accompanied by seven military officers, back to England.

<sup>1</sup> The italics are mine—Author.

(To be continued.)



## HOW BRITISH PRISONERS LEFT TURKEY.

BY LIEUTENANT-COLONEL E. H. KEELING, M.C.

THE armistice with Turkey, signed on October 30, 1918, stipulated for the immediate collection in Constantinople of all prisoners of allied nationality. Whoever it was that inserted this proviso on behalf of the Entente Powers must have been singularly ignorant either of the location of the prisoners or of the state of communications in Turkey in the fifth year of the war. For the officers and men interned on the European side of the Bosphorus, or in camps within Asia Minor proper, Constantinople was probably a suitable embarkation point. But the bulk of the rank and file were working far away in the Cilician Taurus and Amanus mountains, or on the still incomplete section of the Baghdad railway west of Mosul; and although through communication by rail from these camps existed, repairs to the locomotives were so long overdue, and so little fuel was available, that the transportation of everybody to Constantinople would have taken months. If the task had been attempted, our men would have suffered severely on the way from Turkish official neglect and incompetence, of which they had already such bitter experience.

Fortunately the opposing generals on the Mesopotamian and Syrian battle-fronts did

not think it necessary to adhere strictly to the treaty made at Mudros. The present writer was at Baghdad when news arrived that the armistice had been signed, and as he had himself been a prisoner in Turkey, he was selected to visit the camps in Upper Mesopotamia, in order to arrange for the evacuation of our men by whatever route seemed best. Our small party left Baghdad for Mosul—a journey of 250 miles up the right bank of the Tigris—on the evening of November 1.

The British railhead was at Tikrit, and when our train reached it on the following morning, we had a farther two days' journey by motor along the rough desert track which was called a road. After leaving Kaleyh Shergat, where are the excavations of Assur, the first capital of the Assyrian Empire, we crossed the battlefield on which General Marshall had won a great victory a few days before. Corpses of men and animals, abandoned carts, pontoons, harness, ammunition, and half-burned papers strewed our course for many miles; but the enemy's hasty retirement had thrown him all the quicker into the arms of the cavalry and armoured cars which out off his retreat. Three months later the writer met in Turkey (near Diarbekr) the driver of one of the transport carts



which had fled. His was one of the few to escape, and he had led such a hard life since that he now bitterly regretted he had not stayed behind to be captured: a rather striking tribute to our reputation for humane treatment of prisoners. Certainly the 13,000 Turkish prisoners whom we met on our journey seemed well fed and well cared for—a contrast to the plight in which a similar number of our own men had passed along the same road in the opposite direction after the fall of Kut.

The situation in Mesopotamia at the moment when the armistice was signed was peculiar. The crushing defeat inflicted on the enemy bore some resemblance, though on a smaller scale, to General Allenby's great sweep in Syria. But whereas Aleppo was captured before the cessation of hostilities, the conclusion of the armistice found General Marshall, or rather General Fanshawe's Column, still "in the air" a few miles south of Mosul. Prisoners continued to come in even after the "Hostilities will cease" telegram had been received from G.H.Q., and some offers of surrender had to be refused, to the chagrin of the Turkish soldiers who made them. When, however, our cavalry reached Mosul, the Turkish Commander-in-Chief, Ali Ihsan Pasha, refused to evacuate the place, and the remnants of his army continued to occupy it, while our own troops bivouacked on the river bank below the town. The transport carts of

the two forces mingled with one another outside the grain stores, and the enemy's band, which had been heard practising "The God Save" soon after our arrival, came to play outside the French Consulate, which General Fanshawe had occupied. This rather Gilbertian situation continued for about a week, when General Marshall arrived from Baghdad, and insisted that Ali Ihsan should evacuate the town.

The place was much changed since the writer saw it, as a prisoner, in 1916. Nearly all Turkish towns are filthy; Mosul at the end of four years' war was all filth. After rain the streets must have been a quagmire, but in dry weather the town was still more unpleasant, and so completely did the dust envelope it that when viewed from Nineveh on the opposite bank of the Tigris its minarets, dimly perceptible, looked like the mill chimneys of a Lancashire town. The inhabitants had suffered severely from famine during the war, and a reliable witness reported that they had even been driven to eat one another's children. Most of the shops were closed, and so were two restaurants, one French and one Italian, in which the officers captured in Kut had been allowed to have their meals while staying in the town. The writer visited the barracks in which he and others had been interned, and found, still legible, their somewhat morbid inscriptions upon the walls.

Ali Ihsan reported that about 300 British and 1200



Indian prisoners, with three doctors of the Indian Medical Service, had been collected at Nisibin, 120 miles north-west of Mosul, and that the only other allied prisoners in Mesopotamia were a small number of sick men in hospitals between those two places. A few British soldiers who had been working as servants to German officers in Mosul were said to have gone north with their masters, who were making for the Black Sea across the mountains. It was afterwards discovered that on the fall of Damascus the Turks had intended to remove all their prisoners from Mesopotamia, and several hundred men were actually taken to the Amanus mountains, north of Alexandretta; but the removal of the others could not be begun before Allenby's occupation of Muslimié junction (north of Aleppo) cut communication by rail.

General Marshall addressed a stern reply to Ali Ihsan, reminding him of the disgraceful neglect of British prisoners during the war; warning him that the treatment to be accorded to every Turkish commander in our hands depended on the efforts made to hand over our men; and announcing that an officer would proceed to Nisibin to superintend their evacuation.

Before leaving Mosul on this mission the writer called on the Pasha to obtain a *vécika* for his journey through Turkish territory. Ali Ihsan was full of excuses for the enormous mortality among our men. He disclaimed all personal responsibility, and no doubt with

reason, for he was not in charge of them during 1916-17. But he rashly went on to say that nearly all the deaths among the Kut men were due to scurvy contracted during the siege—a statement which even the Turkish death certificates prove to be false—and wound up rather inconsequently by remarking that humanity forbids the ill-treatment of prisoners. Turkish officers who begin to talk (as they often do) of humanity sometimes get out of their depth, for their knowledge of the subject is usually derived from newspapers; but this particular pasha was specially qualified to speak, for he had organised the massacre of Armenians at Van.

Our departure from Mosul was delayed for lack of petrol, which had to come all the way from Tikrit by road. Meanwhile a visit was made to the cemetery opened in 1916 for British prisoners—a bare piece of ground south of the town without wall or fence. Only two graves—those of British officers—were marked by stones. The others—about 130 in all—were jumbled together with no marks or numbers to distinguish them, but one stone stood at their head with a general inscription—

HERE LIE  
BRITISH & INDIAN  
PRISONERS OF WAR,  
WHO DIED IN MOSUL  
1916.

For this token of respect and for the stones over the officers' graves credit is due to the German commandant. A list obtained from the Turkish



medical authorities showed that of 300 prisoners admitted to the hospital in 1916, 120 had died in it.

We left Mosul on November 8 in two Ford cars—one of them carrying a reserve of petrol. Few other types of car could have made headway, for the unmetalled track had been ploughed into deep furrows by the heavy steel-tyred German motor-lorries, some of which were seen derelict by the roadside. We overtook large parties of Turkish soldiers *en route* from Mosul with many hundreds of baggage-carts and mules and a few guns and machine-guns; but the country itself, though exceedingly fertile even without irrigation, seemed to be inhabited only by a few nomads, and as we could not find a village, we were obliged to bivouac for a rainy night.

At Tel Uqnah, next day, we came to a German depot and hospital on the line of the Baghdad railway. The attempt to continue the standard gauge from the railhead at Nisibin to Mosul had been abandoned early in 1918, and work had been started on a light 2 feet 6 inch track; but only a small part of the earthwork had been completed, and operations had been suspended on the fall of Damascus a few weeks before, when the German engineers, fearing that their retreat *vid* Aleppo would be cut off, had hurriedly fled. Several other depots were passed on the way to Nisibin, all very German, but destitute of Germans.

At Demir Kapu Khan we found in the hospital a Sikh

dafadar of the 7th Laneers, who had been captured in Kut. Naturally he was glad to see us, but he had some difficulty in speaking Hindustani, being much more fluent in the Turkish he had acquired during his two and a half years of captivity. From him we learned that ten days previously 200 British, 800 Indian, and 200 Russian prisoners at Nisibin had received sudden orders to march to Jeziré (on the Tigris above Mosul) for road-making, doubtless to facilitate a Turkish retreat from Mesopotamia. No transport of any kind was provided for their blankets or kit, and they had suffered severely from cold on the way. When they reached Demir Kapu news of the armistice arrived, and everybody was sent back to Nisibin except this man. The other prisoners in hospitals along the line had already gone to Nisibin.

Promising to send a car back for the dafadar, we pushed on and the same evening reached Nisibin, once the capital of a Roman province, but now a mere village. We shall never forget the welcome we received. Our arrival being expected, nearly all the 300 British and 1300 Indians in camp were on the road to greet us, and for hours they filled the air with cheers and singing. While nearly all the Indians were from Kut (for the Turks had captured very few Indian troops anywhere else), almost two-thirds of the British prisoners had been taken in other fields—in the Dardanelles, at Katia, at Gaza,



in the attempt to relieve Kut, and at Hamadan in Persia. One man in the Cameron Highlanders had been brought all the way from Macedonia. The "Father" of the army prisoners was a private of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers captured at Sedd-ul-Bahr over 3½ years before, but there were several submarine men who had been taken even earlier. Most of the British prisoners had worked at camps in Asia Minor or in the Taurus and Amanus railway tunnels before being sent to the Nisibin area.

The men looked better than one had dared to hope. It was the survival of the fittest, at any rate so far as the garrison of Kut was concerned. Official figures have established that, excluding men who were exchanged, barely one-third of the British rank and file in that garrison survived captivity, and the return for the Indians is scarcely less appalling. Turkish official excuses, and many Turkish officers with whom the writer has spoken, ascribe the mortality to the privations of the siege. But the British I.M.S. doctor at Nisibin, who was himself taken at Kut, emphatically denied that more than a small proportion of the deaths were attributable, either directly or indirectly, to this cause. To obtain evidence which would help to decide this question, the writer recorded the statements of many of the prisoners. They are terrible reading, and nearly every one bears the stamp of truth; but there is

no room to quote them fully in this article, and only a brief summary of the experiences of these men and of their dead comrades can be attempted.

The orders received from Constantinople on the fall of Kut required that the garrison should march nearly 500 miles up the Tigris to Mosul and across the upper Mesopotamian plain to the railhead at Ras-el-Ain. No officer, British or Indian, was allowed to accompany them. A few camels or donkeys followed each column to carry the sick, but only men who could pay the drivers handsomely ever got a seat on them. No transport of any kind was provided, and water was often unattainable for many hours together. On the long night marches, those who fell out or lagged behind were flogged or ridden down by the Arab escort, however ill they might be (and some had begun the trek with unhealed wounds). Many who were so exhausted by enteritis, dysentery, or sheer fatigue, that even fiendish brutality could not urge them forward, were stripped of their clothing and left, naked and starving, to die and feed the jackals. Several men were killed outright by the escort, and there was one fully authenticated case of a dying man being buried alive. It is hardly necessary to add that the names of the hundreds who perished on this journey were never recorded by the Turks.

The night's march was often prolonged far into the day, and when it was finished our



men were suffered to lie down till evening, without shelter of any kind from the burning hot-weather sun. The guards neglected no opportunity of pilfering their small possessions, and men whom they did not rob outright were driven by hunger to barter their clothing — even their boots and water-bottles—for food. When rations were issued by the commandant, they consisted usually of a scanty allowance of mildewed bread or biscuit; but on several days there was no issue at all. Men who had money tried to buy food from the Bedouins, but the guard formed a ring and would allow no purchases except at extortionate prices from themselves.

Granted that the men's reduced condition when they were captured was to some extent the cause of their sufferings on the march, it is obvious that the measure of their weakness was the measure of the Turkish High Command's wickedness in insisting upon such a journey. Nor can the responsibility for the order be devolved upon any mere subordinate, for Enver Pasha himself came to Mesopotamia immediately after the fall of Kut, and actually met many of our men on the road.

The mortality in the working camps was at first even higher than it had been on the march, and men captured on other fronts suffered, of course, equally with the garrison of Kut. Nearly all the Hindus were kept in Upper Mesopotamia for the extension of the railway from Ras-el-Ain to

Mosul, but most of the British and Mahomedan prisoners went first to work in the tunnels through the Amanus and Taurus mountains or to make roads at Afion Kara Hissar in Asia Minor. Whatever their location, the treatment of our men during 1916 and the winter of 1916-17 was grossly inhuman. Herded at night in verminous barracks or miserable tents, or under the open sky with inadequate clothing and miserably insufficient food, they were driven like slaves by day, toiling, whatever the heat, week after week, without even the one day's rest which Islam as well as Christianity ordains. Men whose labour did not satisfy their taskmasters were punished by the bastinado or flogged with whips. The sick received no drugs—there were none to give; treatment consisted in withholding the day's ration. Money or clothing was extorted by the guards as the price of freedom from persecution, and at some camps a bribe had even to be paid for permission to visit the latrines.

To very many, stricken by dysentery, enteritis, sourvy, pneumonia, malaria, cholera, beri-beri, or typhus, death came as a happy release, and there were some, not so ill, who went out to meet it before it came. One doctor of the Indian Medical Service who was kept in the Ras-el-Ain-Mosul area throughout his captivity, informed the writer that in one camp containing 1200 of our men, 500 died in the months of February, March,



and April 1917, and 250 more were sent up to Asia Minor as cripples.

Hospitals either did not exist or were mere tents. Most of the Turkish doctors were worse than useless, and for many months no attempt was made to distribute the British doctors among the camps. Thus ten of them were kept four months at Ras-el-Ain itself, with little or nothing to do, although they begged to be allowed to go to places where our men had no medical aid and were dying by the hundred. Even when this callous stupidity ceased, no attention was paid to our doctors' protests against the neglect and ill-treatment to which so many deaths were due. Several of them were punished by solitary confinement for their efforts on the men's behalf, and one who wrote to the American Consul at Aleppo asking for food to keep them alive was immediately removed to another camp. Worst of all, our doctors were terribly handicapped by lack of drugs and instruments, until the arrival, after many months, of the supplies sent by Mrs Bromley Davenport's Fund, which saved many lives.

Perhaps it may be suggested that prisoners' stories exaggerate the facts or distort isolated cases into common practices. But their accounts are fully confirmed not only by the British doctors who were present in the camps, but by American missionaries, officials of the railway, and other independent witnesses, to say nothing of the damning evidence furnished by the mortality returns.

Conditions improved very considerably after the winter of 1916-17: the enormous death-rate probably alarmed even the Turkish War Office. Most of the men were handed over to the company constructing the Bagdad railway, and though some of the German officials of this corporation were not to be outdone in brutality by any Turk, yet there were many exceptions, and food, clothing, quarters, and medical and sanitary arrangements were improved at all camps which came under German management. Many of our men were placed in responsible positions on the railway, and reaped the reward of the confidence which their honesty and capacity inspired.

Throughout the war large quantities of food and clothing, and considerable sums of money, were sent to the camps from England or distributed by neutral agencies in Constantinople and Aleppo. Only a small proportion of these supplies ever reached our men. Delays to parcels during their transit through Austria, and the chronic congestion of Turkish transportation services, were partly responsible, but there is reason to believe that a still more potent cause of the non-arrival of remittances and goods was the corruption of the Turkish officials through whose hands they passed. The contents of many parcels sent by relatives or by the Red Cross were sold to local shopkeepers or even to the prisoners themselves. One commandant, who forged prisoners' receipts for money



and parcels on a large scale, was eventually brought to trial and sentenced to degradation and three years' imprisonment, but many other guilty persons escaped scot-free.

The only officers among the prisoners at Nisibin were three doctors of the Indian Medical Service, all from Kut, and we spent the night with one of them who had taken possession of the German Engineer's house on a hill three miles from the camp. He had received no war news except from German sources, and had seen no English book or paper since he was captured, and he had never even heard the word "Camouflage"; possibly no matter for commiseration.

The prisoners were not yet out of the wood, and their removal from Nisibin without delay was urgently necessary. Most of them were living in tattered tents which would give little protection against the winter rains, and the men who had been sent a few days earlier on the futile journey to Demir Kapu had sold all their spare clothes and most of their blankets, for lack of transport. Repatriation *via* Mosul was impossible, because the British transport available was barely sufficient to feed the troops at that place, and no Turkish carts could be obtained. The other route was by rail to Aleppo, but the departure of the Germans had utterly disorganised the railway, and the fact that no communication had been received from the British authorities at Aleppo seemed to confirm a rumour

that most of the line west of the Euphrates had been destroyed. After discussion with the railway officials, most of whom, being Greeks, were keen to do their best for our men, it was decided that a train containing a first party of 1000 Indians should endeavour to reach Jerablus, on the Euphrates, where the men could be accommodated in barracks. One of the motor-cars, to be carried on the train, would then take the writer on to Aleppo to arrange for the line to be repaired or for road transport to fetch the men from Jerablus, while the train returned to Nisibin for the rest of the men.

The telegraph from Nisibin to Aleppo had, of course, been cut, but the Turkish line to Mosul was intact, and communication was established with the British operators at that place by signallers who were found among the prisoners. In this way a message was got through to Baghdad, and thence by wireless to Palestine, to warn General Allenby that the men at Nisibin were being sent to Aleppo.

Next morning, while preparations for the move were being made, Ali Ihsan Pasha arrived by motor-car from Mosul, escorted by two British armoured cars. They had been sent at his own request, but whether he thought that they lent dignity to his retirement or feared an attack from the Arabs can only be conjectured. The road was certainly not safe for any Turkish officer travelling without a guard of



some sort, and a few days earlier Bedouins had killed a German who was motoring along it. . . . The armoured cars being able to carry three passengers, returned to Mosul next day with three men who wished to go to India or Australia, and would probably get there quicker through Mesopotamia than by way of Syria.

A single Algerian prisoner was the only representative of England's allies at Nisibin, but the writer's instructions were to remove Russians also, several hundreds of whom were in the vicinity. They had all been captured in days when Russia was our firm ally, and now, with chaos in their fatherland and no legation in Constantinople who took any interest in them, they were far more to be pitied than our own men. Most were in rags, and many were in hospital under the care of our doctors.

But their condition did not arouse any sympathy in the breast of Ali Ihsan Pasha, that apostle of humanity. A few who were Armenians, though of Russian nationality, he allowed us to take, no doubt because of the clause in the Armistice providing for the release of all Armenians. As to the others, he refused to let even the sick go, although it was certain that some of them would not long survive the removal of our doctors. We were obliged to acquiesce in this decision for the moment, but a week or two later arrangements were made for all Russian prisoners to be brought into Aleppo.

Another thorny question was the disposal of the small number of Indians who had deserted from our lines—chiefly from Kut under stress of hunger—and had been treated as ordinary prisoners by the Turks. The Pasha refused—no doubt rightly—to give them up against their will, unless their pardon was guaranteed. The writer was, of course, unable to give any promise on this point, and most of these misguided men were left with the enemy, to regret their treachery and probably to hatch plots for getting back to India undetected. But six men—all Hindu deserters from Kut—being resolved not to remain a minute longer in the Ottoman Empire, took their courage in both hands and elected for repatriation with the rest of the prisoners. Needless to say, they could not “have it both ways,” and they were placed under arrest when they reached Aleppo.

On the morning of November 11 the train started on its journey of 200 miles to Jerablus, carrying 1000 Indians, who cheered vociferously as they set forth for freedom. The train was a heterogeneous affair, Turkish open trucks being interspersed with wag-gons and carriages stolen from Belgium. All the fittings in the passenger coaches had been gutted, and so short was the enemy of textiles that one occasionally saw Turkish soldiers dressed in cloth torn from the upholstery of a first or second class compartment.

The slowest train that ever



dawdled through Kent was an express compared with the train on the Baghdad Railway in the fifth year of the war. Most of the engines had been destroyed by the Germans just before the British occupation of Aleppo, and the one that pulled our train—the only one east of Jerablus that still could be called a locomotive—was in the last stages of decay. The fuel was wood, and when the furnace door was opened for stoking the inrush of cold air reduced pressure so much that steam had to be shut off. Our method of progress was therefore a succession of short bursts, during which, on the level, we sometimes attained a speed of as much as ten miles an hour, alternating with long halts to raise steam. Only when opportunity arose to stoke going downhill did we manage to keep moving for more than five miles on end. During the halts, which often took place between stations, the guard (who in Turkey, by the bye, always travels on the engine) and a few other members of the numerous staff of the train would wander off into the nearest village, and might or might not have returned when the train was ready to go on. Long halts were invariably made at stations, whether they were necessary or not. If one protested, one was obviously credited with a tinge of insanity. Life being so long, what could half an hour or so matter? At last, after we had

taken twenty-four hours to cover 120 miles, our patience was exhausted, and we assumed charge of the train ourselves. For the rest of the journey no stops were allowed at stations, except to take water, and halts between stations to raise pressure were out down to a minimum. One result of this "speeding-up" was that we surprised and killed two camels who had strayed into a cutting. Heavy rain fell, but although many of the men were in open trucks, nothing could damp their spirits: they were like schoolboys going home for the holidays. We who were not returning prisoners found the journey more depressing, for we passed within sight of thousands of our men's graves—unwalled, unmarked by stones, but none the less conspicuous.

We reached Jerablus on the evening of the second day, rejoiced to find that the great bridge over the Euphrates was still intact. The Germans had sent men to blow it up when the capture of Aleppo became imminent, but the Turks, having an eye to the evacuation of their Mesopotamian army under the protection of an armistice, had driven the party away.

Jerablus is within ten minutes' walk of Carchemish, the Hittite capital, and the station should surely have been given that historic name. Here also was Falkenhayn's jumping-off point for his "Yilderim"<sup>1</sup> army, which was to have descended the Euphrates on

<sup>1</sup> *Yilderim* = lightning.



rafts, for the recapture of Baghdad in 1917—a project upset by Allenby's advance in Palestine. There was no difficulty in finding accommodation for our men, and they were left in charge of one of the I.M.S. doctors, who had come with them from Nisibin.

Jerablus was only eighty miles by rail from Aleppo, but we were informed that before evacuating Syria the Germans had destroyed the track at many points. The line was, however, intact for thirty-five miles—as far as Choban Beg—and thither the writer proceeded the same night. The station had been completely gutted a few days before by Arab marauders, who had even wrenched away the signal-levers. This was not the first place on the line that we had seen in ruins. Some of the stations were built in the manner of block-houses, with the buildings arranged round a quadrangle and loop-holed; but the Arabs and Kurds had been unkind enough to select unfortified stations for attack. . . . The road from Choban Beg to Aleppo was unknown to us, and we decided to spend the night among the debris of the station. To protect the car, a guard of Turkish soldiers was obtained from a regiment quartered in a neighbouring village.

Next morning, November 15, we took the car off its truck, and made for Aleppo along a reasonably good road. When half the distance had been covered, we had the pleasure of being welcomed by some armoured cars which

the general in Aleppo had sent out to look for us. This was the first meeting between representatives of the Mesopotamia and Palestine Expeditionary Forces, and it was specially memorable to us, because we now learned that an Armistice with Germany had been signed two days before. The news had not reached Jerablus, because all telegraph lines west of the Euphrates had been cut.

On arrival at Aleppo, which had been occupied by a cavalry division of the Palestine Force a few days earlier, we found that little road transport was available, and the removal of the men left at Jerablus had to be postponed until the railway could be repaired. But of course no time was lost in sending them a supply of drugs and medical comforts by motor.

Meanwhile the train returned from Jerablus to Nisibin. By the time it got back there, demobilised soldiers from the Turkish Army at Mosul had begun to pour in, and as they were anxious to use the train to take them to their homes, Ali Ihsan gave orders that the second party of prisoners must wait. This was a distinct breach of the armistice, which stipulated for the immediate repatriation of our men, and after much argument with the British doctor who had been left in charge at Nisibin, the Pasha was obliged to give in. The train brought away all the remaining British and Indian prisoners, and it was decided that they should go straight



through to Aleppo if the line could be repaired in time. On reaching Jerablus, they picked up a small party of British prisoners who had come down the Euphrates by raft from Birejik, where they had been cutting wood for the railway, and a few Russians from the same place, who had probably escaped Ali Ihsan's notice.

The railway between Choban Beg and Aleppo had been damaged by the Germans at seven different points, and skilled labour was so scarce that it was not easy to do the repairs in a hurry. By hard work, however, they were finished four hours before the train reached Choban Beg, and it ran through to Aleppo in safety on November 17, the other party being brought in from Jerablus two days later.

At Aleppo the men were quartered in a large Turkish barrack, where they were not as comfortable as everybody wished to make them. But released prisoners are easily satisfied, especially as no time was lost in moving them. They were sent by rail and motor-lorry to Tripoli, and thence by steamer to Egypt, where they re-embarked for England or India. The sick, as soon as they became well enough to travel, went by ambulance direct from Aleppo to Alexandretta, where they were embarked in a hospital ship. A few, saturated with malaria, died in Jerablus and Aleppo—a tragic fate for men who had waited so long for freedom.

One man—a Territorial gunner—was missing. In ignor-

ance that the end of the war was at hand, he had escaped from a working camp east of Nisibin a few days before the armistice was signed, and had joined some Syrians who were making for the mountains of Kurdistan. Happily, another Syrian was found in Aleppo who knew in which direction the party had gone, and undertook to find them. He was sent to Nisibin, and returned three weeks later with the missing man. That adventurer had been robbed by Kurds of all that he possessed, so that he was badly in need of the assistance sent to him.

Before leaving Aleppo we visited a hill on the edge of the city where all prisoners who had died in its hospitals lay buried. Their graves were mingled with those of thousands of Armenians and bore no distinguishing mark. An Armenian priest stated that he had buried 50 British and 200 Indian prisoners, but his list of their names was undecipherable.

While all our men from the camps in Mesopotamia were thus well on their way home, about 4000 others, British, Indian, French, Italian, and Serb, still remained in the Amanus and Taurus mountains. Much time had been spent in discussing the route by which they were to be repatriated. The first arrangement was that they should embark at Smyrna, but the Turks rightly pointed out that Smyrna was as inaccessible as Constantinople. Then Mersina was suggested, but after 1600



of the men had been assembled at that port the Navy ruled it out on account of the danger from mines. Finally Alexandretta was decided on. Before the war the harbour was linked to the Baghdad railway by a branch line which ran first along the shores of the Mediterranean and then struck north to the junction at Toprak Kale, on the western edge of the Amanus range. This line had, however, been damaged so badly by bombardment from the sea soon after war broke out that it could not be used, and the Turks took up the rails between Alexandretta and Erzurum and used them elsewhere, leaving the branch intact only from Erzurum to Toprak Kale. It was therefore arranged that the prisoners, including those already at Mersina, should be brought to Erzurum by train, and then marched to Alexandretta, a distance of thirty miles.

Another officer who had himself been a prisoner in Turkey had already been sent from Egypt to superintend the clearing of the Amanus and Taurus camps, and the writer went by car through Alexandretta to Adana to give any help which his recent experience might suggest. On our arrival at Adana, after a journey of two days, a tour was made of the hospitals. There were at least half a dozen, and the few prisoners of war still in the town were scattered among them—a single Englishman in one, four Indians in another, and several Serbs and Russians in the rest. An American doctor

who had carried on mission work in Adana throughout the war gave us a gruesome account of the surgery in these hospitals. He had rescued from one of them a British prisoner who had lost one leg in a railway accident, and whose other leg the Turkish surgeon, quite unnecessarily, wished to amputate. We found the man in the private house of an Italian, who had taken compassion on him. This is a typical instance of Turkish official apathy. Imagine a prisoner of war in our hands permitted to leave a military hospital and take refuge in the house of an enemy alien!

The hotel of sorts in which we spent the night was crowded next day by civilians interned in Adana, who were anxious to find out when they would be allowed to leave the country. Almost every allied nationality was represented, and the British subjects included many Indian pilgrims captured on their way to or from Mecca, and also a number of Cypriotes, who would probably have been deemed Turkish citizens and left at liberty, but for the British annexation of their island. Arrangements were made for all these civilians to embark with the prisoners of war. Came also innumerable Turkish subjects who wished to return to the Syrian towns from which they had been exiled, and who were convinced that the sole object of the British officer's visit to Adana was to serve them.

One interesting person en-



countered at Adana was the colonel commanding the defences of the Karamanian coast, who had been warned of the escape of some British officers (described in 'Maga'<sup>1</sup>), and was responsible for preventing their embarkation. He gave an elaborate but not very convincing account of the completeness of his own arrangements and the imbecility of his subordinates, who had let the party slip through their hands and reach Cyprus.

We visited the cemetery for British and Indian prisoners who died in Adana, and discovered that after a number of them had been buried, the Vali (Governor-General of the Province), wishing to make a direct road from his house to the railway station, had driven it right over the graves of our men. The road, like so many new enterprises in Turkey, was never finished and is not used; but it is hoped that the British Government will take some notice of the insult, and that this place, with all the other neglected graveyards of prisoners who perished in Turkish hands, will be enclosed, and a monument erected for the instruction of the inhabitants.

Meanwhile 1100 Indian and 500 Serb prisoners who had been collected at Mersina were brought back to Adana, and we took them on to Erzine for the march to Alexandretta, where they eventually embarked for Egypt and home.

Another change of programme now took place, for news was received that a channel had, after all, been cleared through the mines at Mersina, and it was decided that the prisoners still in the Amanus and Taurus should embark there to save the journey on foot from Erzine. The first to reach Toprak Kale were a party of 130 Indians from a camp called Meidan Ekbas. The train which had brought them had actually passed through another camp called Airan, which contained a further 350 men, but had not brought these along because the authorities had omitted to instruct the commandant to release them. There was nothing for it but to go back in the train for them. On the way we passed Bagtché, where lie buried in the usual nameless graves some hundreds of British prisoners who died in the summer of 1916.

At Airan, near the summit of the series of tunnels through the Amanus, a disgraceful state of affairs was revealed. The prisoners had received no rations for four days, and would have starved had they not been able to buy food in the villages. Nihat Pasha, who commanded the Turkish Second Army in Cilicia, promised an investigation, but nothing came of it. The fact was that the arrangements for feeding our men had utterly broken down on the departure of the Ger-

<sup>1</sup> "450 Miles to Freedom," by Captain M. A. B. Johnston and Captain K. D. Yearsley.



man officials of the railway company for whom they were working.

With a train-load of 600 men we went on through Adana to Tarsus, which St Paul would hardly claim to be no mean city if he lived to-day. To this place came in 1916 a large number of sick British prisoners from Kut, for whom there was no room in the hospitals at Adana. They were well looked after by the American Mission, but many were past hope of recovery, and 250 died in Tarsus. Thinking that some of our men might possibly have been forgotten, we searched the hospitals, but only two Russians were discovered.

Going on by the old French railway to Mersina, we found that the *Commodore* of the Palestine coast had just arrived in the destroyer *Welland* to satisfy himself that a safe course had been cleared through the mine-field. A message was received from Nihat Pasha volunteering the assistance of the Turkish sailors who had laid the mines, but as a channel had already been swept the offer was declined with thanks. The operation of sweeping for mines is not free from danger, and there was no particular reason why we should not leave the Turks to complete their removal, or, in other words, to do their own dirty work.

The embarkation of our men at Mersina presented some difficulties. The jetties could only be used by lighters, most

of the local craft had been destroyed or taken away to prevent unpatriotic Turkish subjects from crossing to Cyprus, and the deck of the principal jetty had been removed in case the Allies attempted a landing. The problem was, however, simplified by the arrival of a big motor lighter which had been constructed for putting troops on to the Gallipoli peninsula. This vessel, after landing her great gangway or "brow," made fast to one of the jetties, but as luck would have it, a storm which blew up during the night compelled her to cast off. She was unable to make headway against the wind and piled herself up on the beach, but fortunately she had been built for going aground and was towed off by a trawler without suffering much damage.

Within about a fortnight the embarkation of all the Allied prisoners still left in Asia Minor was completed. The condition of the men brought from the Amanus and Taurus camps, as of those found at Nisibin, was fairly good; but their stories, as well as the evidence of the graveyards, confirmed what has already been said about their treatment in 1916-17. For all that our men suffered, whatever retribution is possible must be demanded and sternly enforced under the terms of peace, and the statements made by the survivors have, of course, been forwarded to the quarter where they can be used to this end.

## THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPS OF CHELTENHAM.

*(The old custom described in this poem was maintained till recently in several parts of England.)*

WHEN hawthorn buds are creaming white,  
And the red fool's cap all stuck with may,  
Then lasses walk with eyes alight,  
And it's chimney-sweepers' dancing day.

For the chimney-sweeps of Cheltenham town,  
Sooty of face as a swallow of wing,  
Come whistling, fiddling, dancing down,  
With white teeth flashing as they sing.

And Jack-in-the-Green, by a clown in blue,  
Walks like a two-legged bush of may,  
With the little wee lads that wriggled up the flue  
Ere Cheltenham town cried "dancing day."

For brooms were short, and the chimneys tall,  
And the gipsies netted these blackbirds cheap;  
So Cheltenham bought 'em, spry and small,  
And shoved them up in the dark to sweep.

For Cheltenham town was cruel of old;  
But she has been gathering garlands gay,  
And the little wee lads are in green and gold,  
For it's chimney-sweepers' dancing day.

And red as a rose, and blue as the sky,  
With teeth as white as their faces are black,  
The master-sweeps go dancing by,  
With a gridiron painted on every back.

And when they are ranged in the market-place,  
The clown's wife comes with an iron spoon,  
And cozens a penny for her sweet face,  
To keep their golden throats in tune.

Then, hushing the riot of that mad throng,  
And sweet as a voice from a long dead may,  
A wandering pedlar lilts 'em a song  
Of Cheltenham's first wild dancing day.



And the sooty faces they try to recall . . .

As they gather around in their spell-struck rings . . .

But nobody knows that singer at all,

Or the curious old-time air he sings:

*Why are you dancing, O chimney-sweeps of Cheltenham,*

*And where have you bought you these may-coats so fine;*

*For some are red as roses and some are gold as daffodils,*

*But has any one among you seen a little lad of mine?—*

Lady, we are dancing as we danced in old England,

Because it is thy sweet month . . . our strange hearts recall . . .

As for our may-coats, it was thy white hands, Lady,

Drew us out of darkness then, and kinged us each and all.

It was a beautiful face we saw, wandering through Cheltenham.

It was a beautiful voice we heard, very long ago,

Weeping for a little lad stolen by the gipsies,

Filled our sooty hearts and hands wi' blossom white as snow.

Many a little lad had we, chirruping in the chimney-tops,

Twirling out a black broom, a blot against the blue,

Ah, but when she called to him, and when he saw and ran to her,

All our winter ended, and we freed the others, too.

Then she gave us may-coats of saffron, green, and crimson.

Then with a long garland she led our hearts away,

Whispering, "*Remember, though the boughs forget the hawthorn,*

*Yet will I return to you that was your Lady May.*"

—But why are you dancing now, O chimney-sweeps of Cheltenham,

And why are you singing of a may that is fled?—

O, there's music to be born, though we pluck the old fiddle-strings,

And a world's may awaking where the fields lay dead.

And we dance, dance dreaming, of a Lady most beautiful,

That shall walk the green valleys of this dark earth one day,

And call to us gently, "*O chimney-sweeps of Cheltenham,*

*I am looking for my children. Awake, and come away.*"

ALFRED NOYES.

"GREEN BALLS."

BY PAUL BEWSHER.

VI.

BRUGES.

"Sleep on, pale Bruges, beneath the waning moon,  
For I must desecrate your silence soon,  
And with my bombs' fierce roar and fiercer fire  
Grim terror in your tired heart inspire;  
For I must wake your children in their beds  
And send the sparrows fluttering on the leads!"

—*The Bombing of Bruges.*

OVERHEAD sounds the beating of many engines, and here and there across the stars I can see moving lights. The first two or three machines are already up. The carry-on signal has been given. A machine which has just left the aerodrome passes a few hundred feet overhead with a roar and a rush. Its dark shape blots out the stars, and I can see the long blue flames pouring back from the exhaust pipes of the engines.

I walk along the dim path and a shadowy figure meets me.

"Is that you, Dowsing?" I ask, recognising my servant.

"Yes, sir!"

"I'm just off on a raid. Fill my hot-water bottle about quarter-past nine, and put it right at the bottom of the bed. If you think the fire too hot move my pyjamas back a little."

"Good luck, sir!"

I pass on to the aerodrome. To the right is the mess, near which is the control platform where the raid officer stands

all night despatching machines and "receiving" them as they return. A crowd of officers and men, wrapped in heavy overcoats, stand in groups watching the departure of the machines. In the middle of the aerodrome shine the lights of the landing T of electric-light bulbs laid across the grass. To the left are the vast hulks of the hangars, in front of which are lined up the machines yet to go.

Passing by two machines whose engines are running, I come to my own. Under its nose stand half a dozen mechanics. One hands me a piece of paper.

"Wind report, sir!"

Flashing my torch on it I see it is a report of the speed and direction of the wind at different heights up to 10,000 feet, information which has been obtained by a small meteorological balloon whose drift has been watched through an instrument on the ground.

Among the mechanics stands another figure as heavily muffled as myself.



"Are you my rear gun-layer?" I ask him.

"Yes, sir! Mr Jones told me to . . ."

The engine just above our heads is started up with a sudden deafening thunder. I take the gunlayer by the sleeve towards the tail to hear his message.

"Oh! Yes! You have never been on a raid. I'll tell you what to do. I warn you Bruges is pretty hot, but, touch wood" (the tail plane is near), "if we are lucky we will come through. Mr Jones is a very good pilot, and I don't like taking any risks. Don't you get worried. It will be all right. You know all about the Lewis guns, don't you? Good! Well, if a German searchlight holds us, open fire on it at once. Only if it *holds* us, mind, not if it merely tries to find us, or the tracer bullets will give us away. If a German scout attacks us, open fire on him at once with your machine-gun. When I have dropped my bombs—you will be able to see me in the front cockpit—shine your torch on the back to see whether any have hung up. If one has stuck in the back racks near you, get him through somehow,—stand on him if necessary. If you want to say anything to me flash your torch over the top of the fuselage—you know Morse code, don't you?—and I will answer you back in Morse code. You'd better get in the back now. Don't worry! If you feel frightened, remember

I am just as frightened as you—if not more!"

He walks up towards the nose of the machine, stoops under the tail to the rear of the main planes, and climbs up into his little platform in the back. I walk round the wings to the front of the machine and, facing the two propellers, walk slowly and carefully between their two whirring discs until I come to the little step-ladder under the triangular door on the floor. I walk up it, and with a certain amount of difficulty work my unwieldy body and my various impedimenta through it, assisted by the two engineers who have been starting up the engines from inside.

I suddenly remember the wind report, so I climb into the front cockpit, and, shining my torch on the bomb-sight fixed in front of the extreme nose, adjust it in accordance with the report, for I know from which height I intend to drop my bombs—that height being the greatest possible, as we are going to Bruges.

As I am turning the little milled adjusting wheels, the machine on our right moves off with a sudden roar of power. I hurry back and sit beside the pilot.

"Are you all right now, Paul?" he asks. "We are next off!"

A wave of noise sweeps over to us from the middle of the aerodrome, as the next ahead, gathering speed, rushes



across the aerodrome. We both watch it with slowly turning heads.

Gradually the machine rises, and with a change of note roars up into the sky above the farm buildings to the left.

A series of flashes from a signalling-lamp on the control platform. It is the *next-machine-away* signal. The pilot at once opens up the engines. We move slowly across the grass, bumping and swaying as we pass over the uneven ground. When we come to the end of the landing T, the starboard engine is put on, and we swing round to the left till the line of electric lights stretches ahead of us. The noise of the engine dies away. The pilot takes his goggles out of a wooden box, which he hands to me, and snaps them over his eyes. He straps himself in his seat with a safety-belt, and pulls on a pair of fur-covered gloves.

"You quite ready, old man?" he asks.

"Yes!"

"We'll start off now! I think it will be all right; don't you?"

"Yes!"

Soon we are off the ground. Below the wings streak the little lights of the cross-bar of the landing T. I can see the illuminated blades of grass round the bulbs. We climb up and up, and clear with ease the roofs of the farm buildings. Over the tall trees lining each side of a wide canal

we pass, and beneath us lie the coruscating scarlet and white lights of a railway junction. I can see the fiery red smoke of a locomotive moving down one line of tracks.

"What a target!" says the pilot. "Have a look at the engines!"

I switch on my torch and shine it on to the two engines, to see whether the sinister white scarves of steam and water are sweeping back from the top of the radiators. Fortunately, to-night the engines are working splendidly. If either engine were to be boiling, after one or two efforts to prevent it, the pilot would land the machine at once. If not, disaster would probably follow, as it did during my last terrible raid.

For a while, as ever, I am a little nervous of looking below. I prefer to hunch myself inside the big collar of my overall suit, and to make continual adjustments of the petrol pressure, which is recorded on two little dials whose pointers move slowly forwards or backwards in accordance with my opening of the release or the pressure tap.

A thin pencil of light flashes upwards from the coast-line east of Dunkerque. Four times it flashes—long, long, short, long. It goes out, and one is conscious of the town wrinkling its forehead, listening intently, uneasy, wondering. Again the searchlight stabs the sky four times and goes out.

"Challenging some one at



Dunkerque!" I remark to the pilot.

"Expect it is a Hun. We had better keep well clear of it!"

A third time the searchlight throws upwards its anxious inquiry, and this time, still receiving no answer, it is not extinguished but moves across the sky hesitatingly, nervously.

Flashes leap up from the ground at several places round the town. In a few seconds the red sharp spurts of the bursting shells appear suddenly in half a dozen places across the sky.

"Barrage!" mutters the pilot. "We'd better get clear away or we'll get bothered. Here we are! They're shelling us! Fire! Fire! We're only two thousand up!"

I hurriedly push a green cartridge into the Very's light pistol and pull the trigger. The explosion barks out, and a green globe of light drifts below us. The shells, which had been bursting unpleasantly near us, now, to our great relief, cease.

"Surely they can see our navigation lights! It's no good! We will have to get height somewhere else!" grumbles the pilot, turning the machine away.

We fly over to a "blind spot" and, climbing in great circles, see our height indicator record in turn, three, four, and then five thousand feet.

"Let's push off now!" says the pilot. "We're high enough!"

"Make it five thousand five

hundred, old man! The wind is with us the whole way! We want to be at six before we cross the lines if we are to get up to nine by Bruges."

The patient pilot makes one more wide turn and then faces east, and flies ahead on a direct course.

On the left the line of the sand-dunes edges the misty sweep of the sea. In the north a strange sign is in the skies. Great streaks of white vapour, resembling moon-lit clouds, stream from the horizon towards the zenith, spreading like the ribs of a fan. This beautiful vision of vast scarves of light, motionless and sublime, hangs over the sea with a splendid nobility, and, as we discover later, it is the sublime Aurora Borealis.

Following up the stretch of sand-dunes I see near the lines the twinkling lights in the hutments near Coxyde, and at the Nieuport Piers the occasional flash of a gun and the red burst of a shell. Here and there along the floods rise and fall the tremulous star-shells. To the right Ypres flickers and flashes, stabbing the horizon with incessant daggers of flame.

When we are about seven miles from the trenches I crawl into the back and press hard forward the fusing lever, which draws the safety-pins from the bombs hanging in rows behind us. I tie up the lever with string to make sure that it will not slip, and resume my seat beside the pilot.

We approach Furnes, and, as we expect, we see a pale

white beam of light leap upwards in front of us, and vanish, and leap up again and again—as it flashes the challenging letter of the night.

"All right! I'll give them a green!" I say to the pilot as I load the Very's light pistol and fire it over the side. A green light drops, and dies. Again the thin beam of light flashes its anxious challenge towards us.

"Curse! I'm not going to fire another! Surely they can see us!" I say irritably, having been rather worried by these searchlights before.

"Go on, Bewsh! You'd better fire another—they'll start shelling us!" comments the pilot.

Meanwhile the searchlight, having received no satisfactory answer to its inquiry, apparently, remains in the sky, where it is joined by its two watery brothers who move querulously to and fro within half a mile of us.

"Go on! Fire a light!" says the pilot.

"Oh! I'm fed up with these fools. It will only give warning to the Germans. They won't find us! It's a waste of lights!"

"Fire a light—and don't talk!" orders the pilot.

I do so with an ill grace, muttering under my breath.

The searchlights do not go out, and, assisted by our green light, sweep on to the machine.

The pilot begins to get really angry.

"Hell to them! What is the matter? Look at them—right on the machine. Fire a

green, and keep on firing them! They are giving away our course and position. I'll get some devil shot for this when I land . . . give them another . . . that's right! What is the matter with them?"

So he storms on, ablaze with a natural anger. The searchlights lose us.

We are now about three miles from the lines, so the pilot presses a switch on the dashboard, which extinguishes the wing and tail navigation lamps.

Below us the reflection of a drooping star-shell on the waters of the floods rises towards its falling counterpart, and as they meet I can almost imagine that I hear the hiss of the burning globe of light. Another star-shell rises below us throwing a brilliant radiance over a circle of flood and water-filled shell-holes and a twisted line of trench. In turn it sinks quivering to death. Two sharp red flashes leap up in the dim country beyond the German lines, and in a few seconds I see, on the ground beneath, the swift flash of the bursting shell, and another near beside it. In one place is a faint red glew where perhaps some wretched soldier tries to keep warm by a fire in some inconceivable shelter in the mud. Glad am I to be an airman, well-clad, well-fed, and warm in my sheltered aeroplane, with the thought of the welcoming fire and white sheets and hot-water bottle which will greet me when I return, to buoy me onwards through the



momentary discomforts of a few hours in the air! As I see the water-filled shell-holes shining in the moonlight like strings of pearls, and picture the cold and the mud and the desolation, I realise that it is the infantryman, the man on the ground, who suffers most and has the worst time. I snuggle up in my warm furs at the very thought of the misery which is not mine.

We hang right above the lines now. Over the wings I see the faint quivering glare of light, cast upwards by some star-shell far below over the lonely floods. In front of us two sharp flashes again appear on the German side of the lines, to be later answered by the flame of two bursting shells on the ground behind us.

We turn to the right, and for a little while fly along over the lines looking for a landmark to help us onwards. Though we know the way well enough, and could travel to Bruges by instinct, we know by experience that it is best to travel along some fairly well-defined route in order to keep a close check on our position in case at any time we get lost, or fall into any trouble.

Soon we see the circular mass of poor Dixmude—shell-shattered and mutilated—lying at the landward end of the black waters. Stretching eastwards from it, into the heart of the German territory, is the thin line of a railway. We sweep to the left and fly eastwards again, leaving the lines steadily behind us.

A few minutes pass, and then we see to our left the two mighty beams of the Ghisteltes lights stab upwards into the night, and move slowly and with an uncanny deliberation across the sky. There is something strangely alive about these searchlights. They appear to have a volition of their own. They seem to be seeking the hidden terror of the gloom with their own intellect. Look at them! They lean over towards one corner of the sky—keen swords of blue white steel, piercing upwards fifteen thousand feet of darkness. They have heard something: they are suspicious. In that one corner they move, sweeping, sweeping, through a small area. They wait motionless, then again they hear the faint hum of the hidden traveller; again they stalk wearily with tense eager arms, strained with the expectation of touching the evil presence for which so anxiously they grope. Suddenly one swings over a vast segment of the sky with a hurried gesture. Does some new menace approach—or is it deceived? It sweeps uncertainly for a few moments, and then darts back to join its companion who has not been faithless to his steady conviction. Look at them, slowly rising more and more upright as the unseen machine draws more and more above their heads! You can imagine them following the object of their hate, growing ever angrier as they fail to discover it. Then—look! look! half-way up the beam there is a spot

of light! They have found the elusive night-bird! The other beam leaps over to it with a vicious grip and holds it too. See the two beams crossed like a gigantic pair of scissors, and in the hinge a white speck whose quickening movement is followed, followed, followed by the inexorable tentacles.

Flash, flash . . . flash. Shell upon shell bursts, sullen and angry, above, below, on either side of the blinded bird, lit up so clearly and helplessly. Spurt, spurt, spurt of flame on the ground! A few seconds pass like the ticking of a clock—flash, flash, flash—the answering shells burst into brilliance near the crossing of the two beams.

"Oh! Look, Jimmy! They've got somebody over Ghistelles! By Jove! They have got him too. He is not going to escape. They are giving him hell. Look! I say . . . that was a close enough one . . . and another! He is having a rough time! Wonder who it is! . . . Bombs! Look—one, two, three, four! He is dropping them on the aerodrome—probably had engine failure, and wants to get back!"

Faster and faster moves the little bright spot in the searchlight as the anxious pilot pushes the wheel farther and farther forward. Still the searchlights follow it, and now lean at a wide angle over towards the lines. Then the beams of light begin to move irregularly. They have lost their prey. Still they grope

towards the west, but now they sweep up and down, and to right and left, vainly trying to recapture the intended victim, which has freed itself. They can still hear him, for they lie over towards our direction, moving but slightly in their restless probing into the obscurity of the night, which, with friendly darkness, hides their home-bound enemy from their useless eyes.

With gladness I witness the fortunate escape, and once more turn to my own work. In front of us now stands a challenging sentinel—the solitary beam of Thorout.

It is but a pallid and slender blade, moving uncertainly across the dark depths of the sky, and scarcely to 10,000 feet does its menace seem to reach. It is an almost negligible threat—yet I feel uneasy. The fear of the searchlight, of being clutched by a hand of light, overcomes me.

"That's Thorout, Jimmy! Shall we push on? Let's throttle and turn!" I suggest, looking sideways at my pilot's face.

"Oh! Not yet! We will go right ahead!" he answers.

Steadily forwards we fly, and it is easy to see how, with the ever more distinct roar of our engines, the searchlight becomes more excited and more eager to find us. Nearer and nearer, with a slow beat from side to side like a pendulum, it draws towards us. I almost want to pull back my head to avoid having my nose taken off. Then the searchlight



flashes on the machine for a moment, becomes tremendously excited, and leaps back again towards us.

The pilot swiftly pulls back the throttle and throws over his wheel. The thunder of the engines ceases; we turn to the left and leave him wondering.

Now the time for activity approaches. Near Ostend flashes the incessant lighthouse. To the right near Blankenberghe flashes its companion. Soon I know we will reach the wide canal running from Ostend to Bruges, which will lead me so directly to the docks that, once I have distinguished it, I will be free from any further anxiety about finding my way, and I will be able to devote my whole attention to the problems of attacking Bruges.

Six or seven minutes pass and then I see, far below me, running across the moonlit mosaic of the fields, the straight black line of a canal. Slowly we pass over it, and then I ask the pilot to turn the machine to the right. The machine sweeps round, and I stand up and, looking out over the nose so that I may see the canal, give the order to stop when we are flying parallel to it.

"Jimmy! I am going to get into the nose now. We are about seven miles away. I am going to drop the bombs down wind. I shall drop all at once. See here—these are my signals! Right hand out—turn to right. Left hand out—to left. Hand straight up—dead ahead. One hand on my head—half-throttle

the engines. Both hands on my head—throttle the engines altogether. When I have dropped I will wave my arms. I think it will be all right. I will try my best. I will adjust the pressure first!"

I look to my pressure gauge, and adjust the necessary taps. Then I collect my map-case and my torch, shout out "Cheero! Good luck! It will be all right!" and kneel on the floor of the machine. I unlatch the little door in front of me and crawl through it, and shut it behind me. Now I am kneeling in the cockpit, whose sides come a little above my waist. Around me is the ring of the Lewis gun mounting. I grasp this, and, lifting a lever, turn the machine-gun round till it is behind me and out of my way. I look over the nose of the machine, and shine my torch for a moment on to the bomb sight which I adjust for our height. On my right-hand side, fixed on the floor, is the little bomb-handle, now held safely by a leather strap. From this short vertical bar of wood runs a Bowden wire back under the pilot's seat to the bombs, which are some fifteen feet behind me.

A wonderful spectacle is now before my eyes. I can see the whole Belgian coast in one long sweep to Holland. On the left, and a little behind me, Ostend haunts the night with its pale restless beams of light, while near it to the east flashes the aerial lighthouse of de Haan. Along the edge of the shore is a fringe of moving

beams, as far as Zeebrugge, where another thick cluster wheel and hover in the sky. There a rich chain of emeralds floats upwards to some suspected menace, and a few shells burst in a scattered group above the distant Mole. On the left, beyond these signs of an uneasy enemy, lies the dim and unemotional sea. Ahead of us, like a sea of twinkling gems, glitters Flushing. Along its quays shines a white line of electric arc-lamps. The dull silver band of the moon-kissed Scheldt winds through the dim territories of Holland, and on either side the Dutch villages flicker with little lights. Ahead of us, unlit and waiting, lies the dark circle of Bruges with the water gleaming in its docks on the left, and a little light on the factory to the right of it. While far far away to the east over remote Ghent ghostly searchlights dance in a goblin measure.

Two problems face me as I kneel there in my little cockpit in the forefront of the machine. In the first place, I know well that there are nine hundred or a thousand Germans waiting round that black town for me. By the fourteen searchlights; by the forty or more anti-aircraft guns; by the machine-guns; by the "green-ball" batteries; by the sound-detectors, the signal positions, the controls—they are waiting—nine hundred or more trained eager men, determined to stop me taking these fourteen bombs to their docks, so crowded with destroyers and submarines, with soldiers and

stores and ammunition, and all that they are most anxious to keep intact. I am equally determined to drive home my blow if I can.

That is my first problem. My second problem is a more subtle one. If we are heard, we are doomed. So clever are the searchlight operators that if one murmur comes down to them from the dark skies, their powerful beams of light will leap over to us and hold us in a grip of radiance which will dazzle us. Our only weapon is silence. The only way we can become silent is by throttling down our engines. If, however, we throttle down our engines, we begin to lose height. Therefore if we throttle down too soon, we will be so low when we arrive over the docks that we will be seen by those on the ground. The searchlights will be turned on to us, and, blinded and shelled, we will become impotent, and perhaps will be destroyed. If, on the other hand, we throttle down too late, the men on the ground will hear us before we are silent. Again the searchlights will swing over to us and will blind us. So it is necessary for me to give the order to throttle at the last possible moment I can, and I must be very careful, for a second too soon or too late may ruin all my plans. Therefore I kneel down and lean over the front, looking below intently, trying to read every sign and signal, trying to work it all out, watching my height and my speed and my dis-



tance—trying to think what the Germans are thinking almost before they think it themselves.

No light, no sign of activity, breaks the darkness below. We are as yet unexpected. I glance behind for a moment, and in a spirit of bravado throw a kiss to the pilot as he switches on the lamp which shows him the white faces of the instruments in the engine casing. For a moment the light gleams, and then is extinguished. On the pilot's face, steady and determined, the cockpit lamp shines faintly, and as I turn forwards I feel that I have behind me, to follow my advice, a strong man with whom I am safe—unto the last moment of safety.

Three miles ahead of me now lies the dim circle of the town. I look at the pallid phosphorescent figures of the height indicator. The wan line of the pointer lies over the luminous 8. I look down below, and steadily we move forwards. Now we are getting very near, and cold and wind-battered, I kneel upright with a feeling of triumph because I have drawn so close unobserved. Soon we will be able to throttle, and will glide in with no difficulty. Everything is going splendidly. I have worked it very well. I am tremendously pleased with myself. I was frightened of Bruges. Bruges! Why—I laugh to myself—it will be easy. There is nothing to be afraid of. So with a boastful sense of ease I lean against the side humming the cobbler's

song from "Chu Chin Chow," my invariable night anthem.

Then suddenly like a mighty spear a powerful searchlight leaps up to my left, and its wide blue-white beam, with its sense of thrust, as though the light was pouring upwards, lies a few hundred yards in front of us. My heart jumps inside me. My hands grow clammy. My mouth tightens with dread. A wave of hot fire followed by an icy chill sweeps over me. Another great spear is flung upwards on the right, and the two towering shafts of dazzling light cross in front of us like a gigantic pair of scissors of gleaming steel.

At once I put one hand on my head to give the signal to throttle the engines down a little. I dare not stop them entirely as yet. We are not sufficiently near. I hear the clamour lessen and change, and immediately the two searchlights, so strong, so vividly menacing, identify our position more accurately, owing to the momentary alteration of the note of the murmur amidst the stars, and they sweep even nearer to us. I watch and wonder and hope. The white arms become undecided and move far far away from us, wheel round in a great circle, and swiftly one becomes a dull red beam across the stars, and below a dull red eye which slowly fades away. What relief—what a sense of danger past is mine then! The other ray of light in answer fades to obscurity, and once more, to my joy, we

are moving in darkness, unsuspected and unsought-for.

Bruges lies below, scarce a mile and a half away. I dare not risk detection a second longer. Slowly, deliberately, I place both hands on my head and turn round, and in the moonlight I see the pilot's gloved hand go forward to the aluminium throttle which he slowly pulls right back. The noise of the engines dies swiftly, completely. The nose drops as we begin our long silent downward glide. No longer does the roar of the engines beat upon my ears, but I can hear that most wonderful of all sounds to a night-bomber—the whistle of the wind through the wires and on the planes, which tells me that we are no longer heard by those below. I begin to peer downwards, checking my aim. The direction bar swings slowly off the docks to the right. I throw out my left arm, still gazing downwards. The movement of the bar stops, and gradually it moves to the left across the rectangles of the harbours. It swings past them as the pilot turns the machine. I now throw out my right hand, and in response the machine swings back. Flinging my arm upright before the moving bar has become central I stop in time the too rapid turn of the machine, and slowly, slowly we move straight forwards over the dark and unlit basins where shines not one little hostile light or flicker. I hurriedly gaze through the luminous range bars, fixed at right angles to the direction

bar. The time has not yet come. Holding my hand upwards, I keep the machine dead ahead in a straight line. I am becoming more and more excited. The strain has become intense. I have forgotten everything—forgotten that I am two miles in the air, forgotten that my bare hands are freezing, forgotten that I am in a hostile place. My whole being is concentrated on keeping that little bar of metal laid across the two black patches below. I am not conscious of being above human beings—it is not a real countryside which lies beneath. It is an unlit map made up of lines and curves and patterns and round spots. I am entirely impersonal: I have become a surveyor at his instrument waving his hand to make corrections.

The two pale-glowing bars come in line with the edge of the nearest dark rectangle. I throw my arm upright for the last time, and then, putting my right hand behind me, I catch hold of the bomb-handle with a firm grip and push it over at a moderate speed. One, two, three, four little tugs I feel on it as the four hooks are pulled away from the four bombs fifteen feet behind me. I pull it back and push it forward the second time, scarcely looking over the front as I do it. I lean forwards over the nose, and see that the direction bar has drifted slightly. Throwing out my left hand, I see the bomb-sight move to the left, and then push forwards,



again and the last time the bomb-handle. At once I move it to and fro, six or seven times quickly, in case I have not pushed it forwards far enough at any time, and failed to release any bombs. As soon as I have finished I turn round, crawl through the little door, twisting sideways to avoid jerking the great rudder on which rests the brown leather of the pilot's boot, stand up, and turn again and sit down, shouting breathlessly—

"All gone, Jimmy! Turn quickly! South-west—down-wind. Got a priceless line. There'll be hell to pay now! Keep throttled—whatever happens."

I stand up and look down at the dim pattern of the docks. This is the most exciting moment of the raid. I know the fourteen bombs are going down—the Germans do not know it, and I know they do not know it. For the moment the men in the air are triumphant. There we move in silence and unseen above the very heart of the enemy's stronghold. The fourteen bombs are whirling at a terrifying speed towards the docks, and the valuable material which they contain. No one below expects the sudden disaster which inexorably draws nearer and nearer. What use are the waiting watchmen a thousand strong? What use are your plans, O ye cunning enemy,—what use your well-oiled guns, the clear-polished lenses of your great searchlights—the long

belts loaded with your green-tipped pom-pom shells? We have come, we have struck home! Down, down below with intent eyes I gaze, waiting to see the bursting of the missiles. Hours seem to pass. I wonder if the bombs have failed to explode; I wonder if they have dropped. In a fever of expectancy I peer to the gloomy bottom of the great pool of night. Then a great flash leaps out of the earth and slowly fades, leaving by the dim strip of water a pale moonlight cloud of smoke. Another and yet another leap up in the basin itself. Then another and yet two more burst on ahead in a line. "Ah! good! good!" I mutter to myself. Seven bombs clearly I see explode, and then I can scarce see the ground at all, for with the bursting of these first bombs the whole fourteen searchlights are flung into the sky like a handful of white ribbons of light, and begin at once to move to and fro in a slow determined motion. Above us, below us, to right of us and to left of us, behind us and in front of us, move these brilliant bands of up-pouring light. So bright are they that some, though they are seventy or eighty feet away, throw a white radiance over the machine. The dim country is slashed and cut across by these almost dazzling beams which wheel and hesitate and cross each other in gigantic patterns. Against the stars over our heads move their long pale arms, which

slowly fade as height destroys the power of their thrust.

A few seconds after the appearance of this company of searchlights there rise from three or four points in the neighbourhood of the docks long chains of vivid green balls, which cast an unearthly gleam upon the water of the basins, and light up with their fantastic glow a circle of vaguely-seen country. Right in front of us they pass, passing upwards in an orderly hurry and giving a greenish tinge to my hands, the pilot's face, and to the planes on either side. They bend over slowly in the upper sky, and one by one fade away to red sparks dropping swiftly. Through the thin trails of vertical smoke left by their passage we pass, and I am reminded of the magic beanstalk of the fairy tale, rising up into unimagined heights and joining the world of reality to a world of dreams.

Then breaks into action the third weapon of this opposition—of this turbulent maelstrom to which I gave birth when I pressed over the wooden lever in the cockpit. Four little red flashes break the darkness below, and then two more a mile away, then four others to the west, and yet four more . . . as anti-aircraft battery after anti-aircraft battery comes into action against the machine. Four or five seconds pass, then, a few hundred feet away, appears a swiftly-vanishing flame. Another appears to the left, and dotted at random here and there they leap out and vanish

in quick succession, shell-burst after shell-burst. Round puffs of white moonlit smoke whirl by us as we go gliding onwards in silence, and untouched, through this turmoil of flame and radiance.

On all sides move the long blue-white swords of dazzling light—thirty feet wide they lie right before us, barring our way. To our right and our left they follow us, trying, trying to touch us. Behind our tail they dog us relentlessly, yet seemingly in vain. Below they lie across the vast depths of the sky, blinding our eyes and hiding the country from our sight. Above they move, pale beams, across the ten thousand watching stars. Here and there among their white anger move the jealous ropes of glowing jade, which pass upwards in swaying curves and mingle their green brilliancy with the searchlights' glare, which is clearly reflected on our great wings. Shell after shell, red, vicious, and sharp, bursts and bursts above us and around us—protesting with its storm of temper at the vain groping of the searchlight—the useless beauty of the green balls. Lastly, the swift-moving streaks of the fiery tracer bullets from the machine-guns cut across the sky in a dozen directions.

Wherever we may look we see this boiling volcano of shell and bullet, searchlight and green ball. White, green, and red play the colours over our hands and faces. The chorus of the bursting explosive



clamours around us, and above its sound we hear the splendid noise of the fourteen bombs, the sound of whose detonation has at length risen to us from the earth far below. When we hear that welcome sound we realise that our duty has been done, and we have driven the blow home. We are exhilarated by the thought, exhilarated by this ferment of opposition. Its very power only seems to show us that the enemy must value what he is defending so fiercely. I almost want to sing with delirious joy. What matter the blazing rays of light—what matter the crashing shells and the chains of emerald balls? We are inviolable, and we will continue our enchanted immunity from danger.

Then I become suddenly conscious of a glare upon the machine. I look down to the left, and at once I see a great dazzling eye of light, so brilliant and strong that it shimmers and wheels and boils as I gaze into it. We have been caught by a searchlight, and held. In a swift moment I see the long arms in the sky about us move with a common impulse towards the machine, until wherever I look I see eyes, eyes, eyes in a vast circle around us.

"Oh! Jimmy! They've got us! *They've got us!*" I cry out. "Shove on the engines, and push her down to ninety! Keep straight on—quick! *quick!* Push her down to ninety!"

No need is there now to be silent. We are by chance dis-

covered, and are in the pitiless grip of fourteen powerful arms of radiance. Wherever I look there is light, light. I cannot see the ground below; I cannot see the stars above. We swim in a sea of brilliance. I am as blinded as when at times I have met upon a dark country road at night some car with huge head-lights, whose white glare has dazzled me and pinned me to the side of the road in fear. Each of these searchlights upturned against me now are many times more brilliant than the acetylene lamps of a car, and there are fourteen of them.

I am tense and quick-breathed. I feel stripped, naked, and ashamed. I am most tremendously conscious of my visibility to those below, and know that one and all they hate me. I put my hand across my eyes. I crouch lower inside the machine. *Crash, crash . . . crash!* Ah! Now the shells, no longer scattered in an idle barrage, begin to explode near the machine, which, like a white bird, at the apex of a gigantic pyramid of light, so slowly crawls through the sky.

"Jimmy! They're shelling us! Shove the nose down—shove the nose down! Make it a hundred!"

Red flash the shells through the white haze of light in which we move. Green pour the bubbles of light in upward progress by the machine. Over the wings and over my pilot's grim-fixed face play the three colours, scarlet, emerald, and brightest white, in an unend-

ing, ever-changing ripple of colour. Now sounds the staccato and unexpectedly loud thunder of the machine-gun behind us as the gunlayer begins to direct downwards to one of the searchlights a stream of fiery tracer bullets. What use are they, I wonder? If one searchlight is destroyed there are yet thirteen to hold us in their grasp.

My heart is jumping wildly inside me. I make my hands adjust the brass taps at my side so that the fingers of the white-faced dials keep to the needful figure, but I know any second there may be a rending crash, and we may spin swiftly down and down. . . . Still we are held. Still the dazzle of light lies round us—still the blue-white eyes of fire stare at us with their hypnotising whirl and boil of brilliancy which makes them look so huge although so distant. Still the whole machine is clear-out to the smallest wire in their all-exposing luminance.

I grip the pilot's arm in my fear and shout to him—

"Oh, Jimmy! Keep her going! Keep her going! Make it a hundred! We'll soon be free!"

"But we're only four thousand! We can't go any lower!" he answers.

"Push on! Speed is what matters! Keep her to a hundred, and we'll get through if we can!"

Now do I feel my mascots in my pockets and think for a swift sad moment of those I love best. Will it never end, I wonder? For hours the

shells seem to have flashed and crashed round us. For hours the searchlights seem to have revealed us white in the black night. Then I become somehow conscious that the light on the machine is a little less. Looking behind me I see one or two beams moving erratically across the sky. They are *beams*, and not eyes! At last, then, we are getting beyond the range of the defences! One by one the searchlights slide away from the machine and swing up and down, pale shafts now, above or to the side of it. The shell-fire dies away. A string of green balls pours upwards half a mile away to our left. Two searchlights alone hold us, then they lose us, and to our almost indescribable relief we are moving in the darkness, whose friendliness never before have I so loved, whose protection never before have I so vividly realised.

My forehead is wet with perspiration. My hands shake, my knees feel weak. The ending of the strain has left me feeble, and the reaction for a time is almost painful. The physical feeling of sinking inside me remains for a little while, but soon I begin to feel normal.

"Oh, Jimmy! Jimmy! Aren't you glad that is all over? It put the wind up me! I don't think we got hit, though. Look at Bruges—she is mad!"

Over the weary city still glide and hover the thin beams of light, vainly regretting their lost prey. A few useless shells leap into red brilliance here



and there among the stars, while the last lovely chain of green balls rises upward through the night. To the dim north, by the docks, glows the dull glare of a fire, where some bomb has gone home.

To the west we fly onwards in the moonshine over the pale pattern of the fields. Far ahead glimmer the white flames of the star-shells in the mist along the floods.

The sense of duty well done, of dangers faced and conquered, gives an exhilaration which has made the whole night of terror worth the while. The moments of dread through which we have lived have been so vivid, so intense, that they have left us cool-headed and tranquil, and now we know that we are on the way home, and that we go to rest and forgetfulness.

Minutes pass, and below us gleams the fading loveliness of a star-shell. To the left flickers Ypres. On the right at Nieuport one shell bursts out along the coast, beyond which lies the vast expanse of the quiet sea.

Minutes pass, and below us shines the little T of lights at Coudekerque. Down drifts our light—up drifts the welcome answer. Softly we sink

towards the world which slowly, slowly grows real from out a map. . . . Gladly I drop through the little door when we have at last drawn up beside the mighty hangars. Gladly I stretch my cramped legs and walk for a while unfamiliarly upon the grass. Gladly at last I switch off the light in my bedroom, and curl up in the sheets with my feet upon the hot-water bottle. On the ceiling gleams the fire-light. Voices sound more rarely in the cabins. Suddenly I remember something, and call out—

"Who was it getting hell over Ghistelles?"

"Bob!" comes an answer from some near-by cabin.

"I say, Bob! Did you have a bad time?"

"Twenty-five holes in the machine! Jack shoved the bombs right across the aerodrome, though—he's not a bad observer!"

"Shut up, Bob!"

"Good-night, Jack! Good-night, Bob! Good-night, Bill! Good-night, Shoey!"

"Good-night, Paul!"

"Good-night, Jimmy—it wasn't so bad, was it?"

"No! Good-night, Paul!"

Soon I drift to sleep and the well-loved world of dreams.

(To be continued.)

## MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

BOLSHEVISM—THE COMMON PATH OF REVOLUTION—BRITAIN'S  
SHAME—THE LEAGUE OF FUTILITY.

THE White Paper recently presented to Parliament, and dealing candidly and truthfully with Bolshevism, should be sent broadcast over the country. It should be read especially by those whom White Papers do not touch, and who are most easily tempted to the crime of anarchy. For it shows not by argument but by an array of unimpeachable facts the tyranny, the brutality, the death, which always follow in the train of that species of moral drunkenness which is known as revolution. It is no new story. It contains scarce an outrage which cannot be matched in the political orgies of the past. But it depicts a terror which is daily approaching nearer to our doors, and the more clearly the danger of Bolshevism is understood, the better will it be for the comfort of our homes and the salvation of our race.

In cruelty, then, what is known as Bolshevism in Russia has followed the common path of revolution. A vague and foolish aspiration towards "freedom" leads always to a far worse tyranny than that which it seeks to replace. A false idealism, in whose name the worst excesses are excused, is confused with the lust of

blood. The moral maxims of the rebel go to the heads of his dupes, like raw spirit, and do more harm to the world than wars and rumours of wars. Lenin and Trotsky have been guilty of grosser crimes than may be imputed to all the Tsars. In the blaze of their wanton assault upon the decencies of life the worst exploits of Ivan the Terrible pale to insignificance. In all the ingenuity of violent deaths they surpass the hoarded experience of history. The authentic stories told in the White Book fill the reader with shame that he belongs to the same species as these monsters of hot lust and cold purpose. They have but two punishments for all who dare to disagree with them—imprisonment, into which many go and few come out; or death, accompanied with the horrors of torture. The poor prisoners are packed twenty in a small room, all chance of cleanliness is taken from them, and they are left unfed. So loud became at last the voice of scandal, that a Soviet of Petrograd sent a commission to report on the "Crest" prison, and here is a Bolshevik comment upon its report: "Comrades! What they saw and what they heard from the imprisoned it is im-



possible to describe. Not only were rumours confirmed, but conditions were found actually much worse than had been stated. I was pained and ashamed. I myself was imprisoned under Tsardom in the same prison. Then all was clean, and prisoners had clean linen twice a month. Now not only are prisoners left without clean linen, but many are even without blankets, and, as in the past, for trifling offences they are placed in solitary confinement in cold dark cells. But the most terrible sights we saw were in the sick-bays. Comrades, there we saw living dead, who hardly had strength enough to whisper their complaints that they were dying of hunger. In one ward, amongst the sick, a corpse had lain for several hours, whose neighbour managed to murmur, 'of hunger he died, and soon of hunger we shall all die.' Comrades, among them are many who are quite young, who wish to live and see the sunshine."

Lenin and Trotsky wish none to live who does not obey their behests, and to them darkness is preferable to light. Those who have once acquired a taste for cruelty can be cured only by death. And let it be remembered in this hour of inaction, that among the victims of starvation and jail-fever are Englishmen, in vengeance for whom we have struck not a single blow. The executions, ordered by these champions of the "people," are ten times worse than im-

prisonment. They are not content to kill those who disagree with them: they must pass to their doom through the gate of torture. Here is the testimony of a British subject: "The number of people who have been coldly done to death in Moscow is enormous. Many thousands have been shot, but lately those condemned to death were hung instead, and that in the most brutal manner. They were taken out in batches in the early hours of the morning to a place on the outskirts of the town, stripped to their shirts, and then hung one by one by being drawn up at the end of a rope until their feet were a few inches from the ground, and then left to die. The work was done by Mongolian soldiers. Shooting was too noisy and not sure enough. Men have crawled away after a volley, and others have been buried while still alive. I was told in Stockholm by one of the representatives of the Esthonian Government that 150 Russian officers who were taken prisoners at Pskoff by the Red Guards were given over to Mongolian soldiers, who sawed them to pieces." Truly to read the history of the Russian Revolution is to sup full of horrors.

The madness of cruelty has seized the whole of Russia. One province seems like another. "In Ural towns," we are told, "officers taken prisoners by Bolsheviki had their shoulder-straps nailed into their shoulders, girls have been raped, some of the civilians

have been found with their eyes pierced out, others without noses, whilst twenty-five priests were shot at Perm, Bishop Andronick having been buried alive there." Neither youth nor age is spared. Near Ekaterinburg sixty-six children of Kamishlof were taken as hostages and shot by machine-guns. In truth the hankering of "liberty" after blood is insatiable. The record of crime is monotonous in its horror. At Dorpat the assassins seem to have specialised in the clergy, and glutted their fury upon the blood of bishops, whom they hacked to pieces in their rage. But it is useless to pile infamy upon infamy, and we will conclude with a sketch of the Terror as seen in January last at Moscow. "Executions still continue," writes a Moscow man, "though the ordinary people do not hear about them. Often during the executions a regimental band plays lively tunes. The following account of an execution was given by a member of one of the bands. On one occasion he was playing in the band, and as usual all the people to be executed were brought to the edge of the grave. Their hands and feet were tied together so that they would fall forward into the grave. They were then shot through the neck by Lettish soldiers. When the last man had been shot the grave was closed up, and on this particular occasion the bandsman saw the grave moving. Not being able to stand the sight

of it, he fainted, whereupon the Bolsheviks seized him, saying that he was in sympathy with the prisoners. They were on the point of killing him, but the other members of the band explained that he was really ill, and he was let off." And there are still hypocrites who pretend to deplore the severity of the Tsar.

Nothing is more brutal in the record of brutality than the treatment of the Tsar and his family. The Bolsheviks had not the sense of justice to bring them to trial, had they deemed them guilty of any offence. They had not the courage to kill them outright. The members of the Imperial house were dragged from Moscow to Tobolsk, from Tobolsk to Ekaterinburg, where the worst indignities were heaped upon them, and where at last they found the poor solace of a violent death. Jews condemned them at their own caprice. Jews carried out the lawless sentence, and the bloodthirstiest of them all were Lenin's friends, Vainen and Safarof, Hebrews both. "The guard was commanded outside the house," thus runs the narrative, "by a criminal called Medogedof, who had been convicted of murder and arson in 1906, and of outraging a girl of five in 1911. The prisoners were awakened at two A.M., and were told they must prepare for a journey. They were called down to the lower room an hour later, and Yurowski, a Jew, read out the sentence of the Soviet. When he had



finished reading, he said, 'and so your life has come to an end.' The Emperor then said, 'I am ready.' An eye-witness said that the Empress and the two eldest daughters made the sign of the cross. The massacre was carried out with revolvers. The doctor, Botkine, the maid, the valet, and the cook were murdered in this room, as well as the seven members of the Imperial family. They spared only the life of the cook's nephew, a boy of fourteen. The murderers threw the bodies down the shaft of a coal mine, and the same morning orders were sent to murder the party at Alapaevsk, which was done." To this plain narrative no word need be added.

Why is it that the Bolsheviks have destroyed Russia by murder, plunder, and famine? It is all part of a carefully devised plot. The system of death and pillage is "organised and worked by Jews who have no nationality, and whose one object is to destroy for their own ends the existing order of things." Of this truth there is overwhelming evidence, and it is a curious comment upon the Zionism now fashionable, that the Jews, for the first time in a position of power, use that position for the mere purpose of destroying Christians and bringing all our modern inherited civilisation to an end. Were the return of all Jews to Palestine made obligatory, the policy of Zionism would be intelligible; and it is clear that, when Bolshevism is once

stamped out, the Christians of Europe will be compelled in their own defence to segregate the Jews in close colonies of their own. If they choose to employ the tactics of Trotsky and Zinoviev there, they will harm nobody outside their own race. Meanwhile the Bolsheviks in Russia have established a rule of force and oppression, such as no autocracy dared to impose. With the promise of free speech ever upon their tongue, they have suppressed all newspapers save their own, they have put down public meetings, and they have persecuted with peculiar venom their Socialist opponents. Or as Mr Lockhart sums up the situation, "the avowed ambition of Lenin is to create civil war throughout Europe. Every speech of Lenin's is a denunciation of constitutional methods, and a glorification of the doctrine of physical force. With that object in view he is destroying systematically, both by executions and by deliberate starvation, every form of opposition to Bolshevism." The plan is simple enough, and so far it has succeeded marvellously. The vast majority of Russians is filled with hatred of Lenin and his Jewish accomplices. Of the peasants, we are told, ninety per cent are in favour of a monarchy. But what can men do who lack food, and lacking food, lack strength and vigour? They cannot fight upon empty bellies. They cannot work with hands and heads weakened by the direst priva-

tion. And Lenin secures for his own bandits all the corn and all the gold in the land. That the end of oppression will come is certain. By what way it will come we know not yet. But if history teach not in vain, it is certain that Lenin and Trotsky and the rest of the assassins will die the death which they have brought upon thousands of innocent men and women.

Meanwhile, like all blood-thirsty revolutionaries, the Bolsheviki have reduced their infamy to a doctrine and made plain their tenets for all to understand. They mean, if they can, to destroy the idea of patriotism everywhere and to preach the dangerous gospel of internationalism, to obstruct the creation of military power, outside their own Red Guards, by preaching ideas of peace, and thus to foster the abolition of military discipline, to impoverish the peasants and to bring about national calamities such as epidemics—the outbreak of cholera last summer was traced to this source—and the wholesale burning down of villages and settlements. So much we have on the authority of the Rev. B. S. Lombard, who is well qualified to speak by a term of imprisonment in the Fortress of Peter and Paul. Nor is this the end of their policy. They prove their adherence to the doctrine of equality by allowing nobody to vote who is not either a workman or a soldier, and by attempting to destroy utterly all those who by their intelligence,

and energy might confer lustre upon the State.

It might have been said, if no British citizens had been slaughtered by the Bolsheviki, that the affairs of Russia were no business of ours, that we should be content to look in silence upon the crimes committed by Lenin and his comrades. But the revolutionaries of Russia are as keen to proselytise as were the revolutionaries of France. They are determined, if they can, to spread their infamous doctrines across the whole of Europe. It is not enough for them to kill and plunder and starve themselves. They will, if they be left unchecked, persuade others of like evil minds to kill and plunder and starve. And the danger is all the greater, because the lust of blood, the chief goad of Bolshevism, is only too easily caught. We might see it stalk, like a horrible epidemic, up and down the world. Upon this truth the men of the French Terror relied. In this truth also Lenin and Trotsky have a perfect faith. Worse still, they have money upon which their faith may be supported. For the first time anarchy has a full pocket. The Bolsheviki's supply of paper, if not of gold, is unlimited. "This paper money," it is said, "enables them to pay their way in Russia, and to build up credits abroad, which are to be used to produce chaos in every civilised country." Moreover, since the Bolsheviki are for the most part Orientals, they are



a greater danger to us in the East than in the West. As they have declared war upon all civilisation, nothing would please them better than to create a rebellion in India. How far they have promoted the disturbance which is now being suppressed in Egypt, we do not know. But it is plain that England is most openly exposed to the risks of Bolshevism, and we cannot but ask what England is doing today to check the onrush of anarchy.

It was once our proud boast that no Englishman should be murdered upon foreign soil and go unavenged. More than one of our fellow-subjects has been murdered in Russia, and nothing has been done save the making of an ineffectual protest. The old plea, *civis Romanus sum*, is advanced no more. Yet if we are not to lose our prestige in the world—a prestige which no League of Nations will sustain without the help of our own firmness and courage—we must bring the murderers of our fellow-citizens to justice. So long ago as last September the following despatch was received by Mr Balfour: "On 31st August the Government troops forced their way into the British Embassy, their entry to which was resisted by the British Naval Attaché, Captain Cromie, who, after having killed three soldiers, was himself shot. The archives were sacked, and everything was destroyed. Captain Cromie's corpse was treated in

a horrible manner. The Cross of St George was taken from the body, and subsequently worn by one of the murderers. An English clergyman was refused permission to repeat prayers over the body. The French military mission was forced. A man named Mazon and a soldier and several Frenchmen were arrested. Bolsheviks in the press openly incite to murder British and French. It is urgently necessary that prompt and energetic steps should be taken." No one has ever written an essay concerning the influence of the telegraph upon English style. If such an essay be written, this despatch of Sir Ralph Paget's may be cited as an example. Not a word is wasted in it, and it tells us a story of which all Englishmen must needs be ashamed. No steps "prompt and energetic," no steps slow and supine, have been taken. Captain Cromie was left to punish the aggressors. Right nobly he punished them; and he died in the fray. As for our politicians, they folded their hands in fatuity and mumbled with a smug satisfaction, *Non possumus*.

The country, no doubt, is tired. The suggestion that we should march into Russia and put an end to Bolshevism would have been unpopular in the country. So much may be conceded. But most righteous acts are unpopular in the country, and it is the business of leadership to face unpopularity with a glad and

resolute heart. For the old policy of waiting and seeing there is not a word to be said. British citizens have been foully murdered, and no vengeance has been taken. There is the central fact of our dishonour. The country which once was ready to go to war for Don Pacifico condones by its inaction the killing of Captain Cromie, a zealous gentleman who had served England well. It is not thus that a great name is established among the peoples of Europe. And even if our honour may be tarnished with impunity, prudence should have urged an instant intervention. Bolshevism spreads, as we have said, like an epidemic. *Vires acquirit eundo*. Day by day its menace comes nearer to us. It has swept over Hungary; it has stirred Bavaria into lawlessness; and Prussia, which begot it, as it begot most of the evils which distress our unhappy world, is ready to turn it to practical use. The longer it is allowed to flourish unchecked, the greater the armies that will be necessary to suppress it. Suppressed it must be, or civilisation will perish. It is a difficult thing to fight against what Burke called an "armed opinion," and Bolshevism is an "armed opinion." Afd our sentimental politicians have been ready not to fight against it but to treat with it. Had they turned back to the teachings of history, they would have been shamed into

taking up arms. We do not speak of such flippant personages as the conductors of 'The Daily Herald,' who in the first place deny that many murders have been committed in Russia, and then applaud the moderate (and lying) estimate of the Soviet Government as "the price of freedom." Freedom indeed! We would that we could pack Mr Lansbury, Mr Shaw, and Mr Ramsay Macdonald off to Russia, that these frivolous and well-advertised demagogues might discover what Russian freedom means. They would find out all that they want to know in the Fortress of Peter and Paul. We speak of the representatives of the great powers who conferred together in Paris, of Mr Lloyd George and Mr Wilson. These men, not having learned the rudiments of statesmanship, thought it would be popular to confer with the blood-stained assassins. They proposed a pleasant meeting at Prinkipo, where Russian gentlemen were to sit round a table with the murderers who had done their Tsar to death. The table would have been covered, we imagine, with blood-red baize, blood-red to match the colour of their master, Lenin's thoughts. And when their attempt to arrange this happy excursion failed, they sent a parcel of bleating journalists to Petrograd, who should bring the murderers and the politicians together. By hook or by crook they meant to come to terms with orime, and they used the same



words which Burke put into the mouths of the Allies, eager to make peace with the murderers of Louis XVI. "Citizen Regicides"—thus they are supposed to address the sanguinary tyrant Carnot and his colleagues—"whenever you find yourselves in the humour, you may have a peace with us. That is a point you may always command. We are constantly in attendance, and nothing you can do shall hinder us from the renewal of our supplications. You may turn us out at the door; but we will jump in at the window." And Lenin smiles, as he sees his cold doctrine of extermination march triumphantly east and west.

To oppose this "armed opinion" is more emphatically our duty to-day than it was in the time of the French Revolution. We are without the defence of strong and wise Governments. We live in a world wherein universal suffrage is esteemed a benefit, not a curse. We have subscribed piously to the vile doctrine that it is noble to shout with the biggest crowd. And what if the biggest crowd be Bolshevik, and cry aloud for the shedding of better blood than its own? The doctrine of universal murder will be speedily learned, and we shall witness massacres in every capital. Each month that passes adds to the difficulty which confronts us. Once fifty thousand men would have done the salutary work of scavenging, which presently

may demand half a million. And remember, the work will have to be done sooner or later, or the tradition of a gracious life will be utterly destroyed. That it will fall to France and England to do what is necessary there can be no doubt. America, which has too busily interfered in the making of Europe's peace, loudly disclaims responsibility for Europe's troubles, and the duty of ourselves and of our faithful allies is plain to see: we must combat with arms the pernicious opinion, and free Russia and Europe from the worst tyranny of all—the tyranny of untrammelled "liberty."

The overlooking of this duty has the less excuse, because from the past we may learn the danger of the present. Revolution, as we have said, follows always the same course. That which devastated France in the eighteenth century differs only in detail from that which has reduced Russia from the position of a loyal ally to that of a pestilent enemy. The domination of the Jew makes the present upheaval more dangerous than any which preceded it, though there was a Hebrew element also in the Terror, for Jews always fish in troubled waters. And the French revolutionaries did their own foul work themselves. They did not enrol mercenary Letts and Chinamen. For the rest there is not much to choose between them. Perhaps Russia has not thrown up any villains

so great as Carrier, who devised the drownings at Nantes, or the unspeakable Joseph Lebon, who turned Arras into a shambles. In the competition of infamy we need not award the prize. But if you desire an account of the happenings in Russia—an account which will match the White Book in accuracy—turn to Burke's 'Letters on a Regicide Peace,' or Arthur Young's 'The Example of France: A Warning to Britain,' and you will find it. You are asked to do nothing but change the names, and then you will see, rhetorically expressed, the same opinions as prevail in Russia to-day, you will mark the same crimes and the same blatant excuses for them. Take, for instance, this admirable summary of Arthur Young: "Her government an anarchy, that values neither life nor property. Her agriculture fast sinking, her farmers the slaves of all, and her people starving. Her manufactures annihilated: her commerce destroyed. . . . Her gold and silver disappeared, and her paper so depreciated, by its enormous amount of 3000 millions, besides incredible forgeries, that it advances, with rapid strides, to the entire stagnation of every species of industry and circulation. . . . Her cities scenes of revolt, massacre, and famine; and her provinces plundered by gangs of banditti." Is it France, of which he speaks, or Russia? In all respects the parallel is complete, and we

may measure what Russia will do by what we know that France did.

The self-same ambition of dominating the world and forcing a universal acceptance of their views inspires the Bolsheviks and inspired the French revolutionaries. They were and are proselytisers all. We know what it is that Lenin has set out to do. Now hear Camille Desmoulins: "To create the French republic; to disorganise Europe, perhaps to purge it of its tyrants, by the eruption of the volcanic principles of equality, . . . such was the sublime vocation of the Convention." There is no difference between them either of purpose or expression. They use the same phrases and befog their minds with the same false philosophy. The French revolution was profoundly influenced by the shot rubbish of Rousseau's obscene mind. The Russian revolution was perplexed by the futile doctrines of Bakumin. And as French and Russians thought the same thoughts and sought the same ends, they employed the same system. They had an equally blind faith in committees. Whatever was done was approved by a committee of some sort. There have been, either then or now, committees of defence, committees of watchfulness, revolutionary committees, committees of workmen and soldiers, and no good came of any of them. Camille Desmoulins, greatly daring, proposed a committee of mercy,



and lost his head for his effrontery. And for some strange unfathomed reason committees are but blood-thirsty contrivances. When one or two revolutionaries are gathered together, they are intent upon the death of this man or that. They are worse in the mass even than they are one by one. The mildest of them, if any be mild, does not like to be left behind in the race for outrage. He casts his vote for slaughter, in fear also lest he himself should be asked to dance upon the end of a rope. In brief, in times of disturbance committees have a vast deal to answer for. And nowhere have they been so various and so frequently called together as in Russia. The word *soviet* will never lose its sinister meaning. Even schools cannot escape the plague, and a teacher from Moscow has given us an account which reduces the system to an absurdity. "Each class has its committee," says he, "and as a rule the most popular boy is chosen to represent the others at the masters' meetings. The objects of the committees are—(1) To control the masters; (2) to arrange about the distribution of food, all the boys and girls being given a midday meal. This is, as a matter of fact, the only reason why they go to school." After this, we are not surprised to hear that "boys and girls are herded together, that there is no semblance of morality," and that "the classes are simply

like a bear-garden." As little are we surprised to be told that at Koloman a boy aged 18, appointed commissioner and in charge of all the teachers, closed the school for a whole week because one of the masters gave a boy a bad mark. Here, in truth, is democracy carried to its logical conclusion. The boys, being more numerous than the masters, obviously have the right of control. That is in accordance with the pure gospel. Yet we cannot but ask, Who shall control the boys? *Quis custodes custodiet?*

History teaches us, moreover, that a revolution can end only in a despotism. France never would have regained peace and her honour had not Napoleon come along to clear up the poor relics of the Jacobinism which he hated and despised. And if sanity is ever restored to Russia, she, too, must discover a despot. All government is in the nature of a superstition, and the superstition is deeper and in a higher degree necessary when the country governed is, like Russia, vast and simple. Millions of peasants, helpless and illiterate, can be happy only in obedience and in an act of worship. Whatever the faults of the Tsar may have been—and they were venial compared with the crimes of Lenin and Trotsky—he was a true father of his people. In paying him homage the Russians had their best chance of real freedom; and though a Romanoff may not

sit again upon the throne of Russia, none but an autocrat can undo the baleful work of the Bolsheviks. It is impossible for the Russian peasants to regard with superstitious awe a pack of bloodthirsty Jews who are intent upon filling their own pockets. A nation cannot live for ever upon starvation and the vain hopes fostered by a false idealism. And if an end be not put now to Bolshevism and all its works, a despot will surely arise to save the last remnants of the people. But at what a cost to us! A despot thrives best upon military adventure. The success of Napoleon cost Europe more than twenty years of bloodshed, and if Russia be permitted to follow the beaten road of revolution, this generation will not see peace. To a Russia united under a single soldier, all things might be possible. We might be called upon to save Western civilisation from the incursion of unnumbered and well-drilled hordes. It might be our duty to defend India against the resuscitated Slav. Only one policy, then, is consistent with our honour or our safety, and that is to destroy Bolshevism before it has gathered greater strength. The difficulty of this enterprise to a tired country is great, but it must be faced. If we do not face it, we shall be branded with the shame of Captain Cromie's unavenged death, and we shall be compelled to substitute for a single campaign

many years of fierce and desperate warfare.

A peace commensurate with our sacrifices, or worthy of the men who fell for their country, would be too much to look for from our politicians. But at least the worst piece of hypocrisy which threatened our security—the League of Nations—seems doomed to be of no effect. It is reduced to the position of a plaything for Mr Wilson. For, though it is still as dangerous as its supporters dare to make it, though it aims at stripping honest self-respecting States of their sovereignty, it contains from the start the seeds of dissolution and death. The new draft of the precious covenant contains one clause which will make it for ever ridiculous. "The Covenant," thus runs the clause, "does not affect the validity of international engagements such as treaties of arbitration or regional understandings like the Monroe Doctrine, for securing the maintenance of peace." In this clause shines the salvation of Europe.

That the Americans should safeguard what they deem their own just policy is very right and proper. But consider what is the meaning of this fortunate clause. It nullifies by its large reserve the very existence of the League and Covenant. If America marks out a province of discussion which may not be entered upon by the other powers, the lop-sided agreement becomes perforce a dead letter. Either we must



have the whole League or nothing at all. For Mr Wilson let there be the Monroe doctrine. For France and Italy and Belgium and Great Britain let there be a firm alliance which shall safeguard their interests all the world over. On December 2, 1823, President Monroe announced in his message to Congress that "any interference on the part of the great powers of Europe for the purpose of oppressing or controlling the destiny of the Spanish American States which had declared their independence would be dangerous to the power and safety of the United States, and would be considered as a manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards them." That was reasonable enough and readily endorsed by Canning, who was glad to call the new world into being to redress the balance of the old. And America still clings to the Monroe doctrine. But the Monroe doctrine subverts completely the League of Nations. For it comes to this, that the Argentine or Chili or Peru may interfere with the affairs of Europe, but that Europe may not interfere with the affairs of Peru or Chili or the Argentine, which is absurd. The essence of the League of Nations is intervention all round, and, says the United States, you may not intervene in South America. For our part, we welcome the clause about the Monroe doctrine because, as we have said, it puts an end once and for al-

ways to an effective league, and proves that the Frenchman was right who described it as a mere *blague*.

So far, so good. We have never believed in the possibility of a League, and now its inefficacy is demonstrated. But what becomes of Mr Wilson's "idealism"? It appears that it is nothing worse nor better than the plottings of common politicians. The President, like many another, wants to have it both ways. He wishes to control the sovereignty of the European Powers, and to guard the sovereignty of his own land unimpared. He has been fighting all the while for his own hand, and it seems that in a sense he has won. He has got the League of Nations of which he was the only begetter, and he has kept intact the Monroe doctrine. Perhaps it escapes him for the moment that the half is greater than the whole, for the mere fact of his clinging to the substance will whittle his favourite toy down to the shadow of a shade. For our own part we are happy and contented. We feel that once more we are our own masters, free to enter into alliances behind the League's back, and to ensure our supremacy by strengthening our navy. If there be one doctrine in America, there shall be another doctrine in Europe, and as the League will manifestly be of little use in checking the ambitions of Germany, France and England, knit in a close alliance,

will know very well how to protect their own borders. In brief, the hands of the clock have gone round the circle. The old world has been recalled into being to redress the balance of the new.

On paper all the honours will appear, when peace is signed, to be with Mr Wilson. We cannot blame him. He came late into the war, when the hard work had been done by France and England. He came early into the peace, and did his best to dictate to the conquerors. We do blame our own representative, who permitted another to get the better of his own country. Nevertheless, we remember that the Monroe doctrine survives, and do not grumble. For all is well. Geneva will become

another Hague. The Council of the League need not meet more than once a year, and it is not likely that the newspapers will think it worth while to report the profound speeches that are made in the new Palace of Peace. Better still, women will be eligible for clerkships as well as men, so that the windows of the sacred edifice will not be broken by suffragettes. Thus we shall all go on our way, rejoicing that the League of Nations will not be the cause of as many unnecessary wars as we feared; we shall still look to our moat; and we shall strengthen our alliances as resolutely as we did in the old unregenerate days, before we ever heard of Mr Wilson's idealism.





# BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCCXLIV.

JUNE 1919.

VOL. CCV.

## "GARRISON" WORK IN ARCTIC RUSSIA.

BY ROBUR.

THE adventures (and mis-adventures) of a "B" battalion, "fit for a winter on the Murman Coast," would not appear to deserve much notice, and if that battalion had remained to garrison the port to which it was conveyed, the memories of its tour in Northern Russia might have been left to a merciful oblivion. But its work was scarcely that of a garrison. We arrived at a port in the Kola river in accordance with our expectations, but the transport was ordered to proceed forthwith to another destination, and bore us eastwards to the White Sea, where we were gladly taken by the powers that be and transformed into a "striking force," a rôle which we sustained, not entirely without success, for many weary months.

Russia is a *mañana* country, only more so, for if a Russian

says *zavtra* he may do the job some time or other, but if he says *posle-zavtra* (the day after to-morrow) it must be taken to mean "never." This we found on the August day when attempts were made to induce the captains of the various tugs to start pulling our barges up-stream to the scene of our future adventures, and from that date we were forced to accumulate the store of patience which enables one to deal with natives without disaster.

The voyage itself was peaceful and dull, but every day we landed on Russian soil, exchanged cigarettes for cakes of sour rye or tree partridges, and kicked a football about, to the amusement of the women and children toiling in the hay-fields. Occasionally the men would rouse themselves from their lethargy and stroll down to the shore to coax tobacco or cigarettes from



the good-natured Tommies (for although we were supposed to be Jocks, we most of us hailed from the wrong side of the Tweed). We were five days reaching the advanced base, and on the third morning we passed a river gunboat, with its flag at half-mast, carrying casualties down the river. We learnt afterwards that an unlucky shot from a Bolshevik 3-inch gun had killed a midshipman and some A.B.'s on the Allies' flagship. (On its way a splinter from the shell had removed the surgeon's left eye, therefore he went aft to the scene of the main explosion and minded those who were in need, going below only when ordered to do so by the captain.) Some one signalled "Hurry up, you're wanted," so we put another log or two on the furnace to increase our knotage and disembarked at the advanced base, to find that the first change in the kaleidoscopic campaign had already taken place.

What we expected was an order to proceed another hundred miles or so to the headquarters of the column and the scene of operations; but H.Q. and the scene had come to meet us. The names and numbers of the various squadrons, batteries, and companies which composed the force we had set out to join may not be revealed, but they must have amounted (if the R.M.L.I. contingent be included in the land column) to one-tenth or one-twelfth of the organised portion of the enemy's forces. This column had chased

the Bolsheviks to a bend in the river and had captured several pom-poms and other dangerous instruments of war, in raids on both banks wherever opposition was met. But North Russia is a vast country, and there are dense forests on either bank of its rivers and scores of villages. The opposition had melted away, but the advance had been so swift that the column had left some hundreds of the enemy in its rear, and when it landed for a breathing space the disintegrated atoms again formed masses round the abandoned guns, which the silence of fear had concealed from the advancing column. Expecting our arrival and a further flow of reinforcements, the column commander had decided *reculer pour mieux sauter*, and had run the gauntlet without receiving so much as a scratch on his paddle-boxes, between the cross-fire of guns of almost every calibre.

As soon as we had stretched our legs and exercised all ranks in the use of the Russian rifle and M.G.'s, we began to take a hand in the campaign. "B" Company was sent to garrison an outlying village commanding the ferry over a tributary stream; "C" Company made a demonstration among the villages on the banks of the tributary for a distance of about 350 *versts* (200 miles or so is nothing in Russia); and "A" Company was sent to the right bank, to billet itself in the village opposite the advanced base.

The word "village" requires

to be defined, or the newcomer will fall into the trap which so often marred our best-laid schemes. Let it be supposed that an officer is sent away to report at Popoffskaia. He will be shown the place on a map, and may be taken to high ground whence he may view the village through his glasses. He then proceeds on his way, having learnt that Popoffskaia is 12 *versts* from his starting-point. After about 8 *versts* he will pass through a cluster of peasants' houses, then into the open again, and after an interval through another cluster. He will ask his way, and his informant will point ahead. This will be repeated at intervals, until at length the informant will point behind instead of ahead of the inquirer, who will again consult his map. Every one of his informants will have heard of Popoffskaia and will have a general idea of its location, which will have been indicated. The officer will retrace his steps, and on arriving at the first cluster of houses will ask the name of the village, and will be told "Romanoffski." He will proceed farther on his back track, and will be told "Timofeefski." He will again ask for Popoffskaia, and will be shown the way by one informant forwards and another backwards. The fact is that Popoffskaia is a geographical term for about six hamlets, each of which has a geographical name, a real name, and a sort of pet name, and these hamlets are collectively shown on the map as Popoffskaia.

Nor is this the only trap for the unwary, as the people who correspond to the "Trustees for the Navigation of the Clyde" have another set of names, which they inscribe on the *preestan* (landing-stage) at riverside halting-places, and such names, although writ large on maps, may stand for nothing but the *preestan* itself—or worse still, may be called after a village near which it was formerly anchored, but the river having shifted its course, the landing-stage (with its name) may have been towed a long way from its original position, possibly to the opposite bank of the mile-wide river! But the maps will still mark its new site by the old name, in letters the same size as before, and will add the conventional sign for a church if the eponymous village contained such an edifice. We found it safer to discard all printed maps, and we charted our course as we went, placing the geographical name round the clusters of locally named villages.

For the first week of September our fortunes were divided by the river. "B" Company soon got to work, and in conjunction with the Senior Service made good its footing on both banks of the tributary, and when joined by Transatlantic and other allies carried out a campaign in a large triangle between the main river and the tributary. One of their marches of 24 *versts* cost them ten hours of weary toil, the force moving in single file across a trackless



swamp on trees felled *ad hoc* and laid end to end in the *tundra*. If a man slipped off the log he disappeared to his waist, and was only saved by a comrade climbing a neighbouring tree and bending a bough down to his reach—a trick we ever afterwards remembered and employed with success. This march was made over an "impassable" obstacle by design, and brought the force where it was least expected, in rear of the enemy's position. Unfortunately, however, dissensions among the Bolsheviks had led them to retire before the move was completed, and "B" Company struck the rearguard only, captured the commander's motor-car and two 18-pdrs., and accounted for the laggards; but the triangle was cleared of the enemy, the land guns were withdrawn from their secret emplacements in the forest, and impediments to the progress of the Allies' flotilla were thus removed. "B" Company's commander received another bar to his M.C., and a zealous platoon commander was awarded the purple and white ribbon.

An untoward incident marred the conclusion of the engagement. The company arrived at a village on the main stream and sat down to await the arrival of the ration boat. In the early morning the beat of paddles and smoke from the funnel of an approaching steamer caused the despatch of a ration party, who were proceeding to the landing-stage when a horde of Bolsheviks

surrounded them and made them prisoners. The boat was an armed steamer from the hostile flotilla, and had strayed down the river in ignorance of the withdrawal of the land forces. As soon as the sentry saw what had happened he fired at the captors and was wounded by the return fire; but the alarm was taken up, and armed parties with machine-guns started off in rowing boats, ahead and astern of the steamer, to cut her out. Panic and confusion among the crew led them to a dastardly act, for they murdered the ration party in cold blood before getting aboard to man their 3-in. guns. An interesting struggle might have taken place between sailors on a ship with 18-pdr. field-guns and soldiers in boats with Vickers-Maxims at point-blank range; but before issue was joined the rowing boats suddenly made for the land, while the steamer ran her nose into the nearest island and the crew jumped ashore. The *dea ex machina* was H.M.S. —, with silent oil-engines and a noisy 7-in. gun. Her first shot fell in the water and scattered the combatants, while the second struck the paddle-box of the stranded steamer, which sunk with her back broken into the river mud. "B" Company rounded up the crew on the island, and the miscreant who ordered the ration party to be massacred did not escape from justice.

Meanwhile "A" Company had been active on the opposite bank. Slowly feeling its



way in a new country and under novel conditions of warfare, it advanced from village to village, the Bolshevik rear-guards falling back as it came, until at length serious opposition was met. "C" Company was sent over to assist, the flotilla acting as chaperon and lending the countenance of its long-range ordnance, but after the hostile batteries had been located and saluted by the secondary armament of H.M.S. —, the enemy eluded us once again and were reported to be strongly entrenched about 20 *versts* away. The fruits of the victory were one 18-pdr. and a genuine distaste for the type of road, often knee-deep in mud, through which we had dragged our weary way.

Roads in this part of northern Russia are of two kinds only. Those marked "first-class" contain stretches, often a hundred yards or so long, which are good and passable even in the height of summer, and "second-class" roads have fewer and shorter intervals between the quagmires. No other kinds exist in the summer months, but when the snow falls (October to May) good roads can be made in any direction. For this reason the summer roads are generally neglected and used as little as possible, traffic being carried on by water while the river is open. Unfortunately for the right bank column, it was destined to move where a "second-class" road existed in parts and none at all in others; while the column on the left bank often had its advance held up by the state

of the boldly marked "first-class" road which led them to their goal. In addition to these obstacles there are, in summer, the even less passable "streets" of the villages *en route*. These are, at their best, rather deeper in mire than a really unpopular section of trench in the low-lying part of the Somme front, and at their worst they form a powerful drag on the wheels of an advance.

"A" Company was commanded during the early days of the campaign by a "mud major" (afterwards a column commander), who was most anxious to entrap the elusive foe, and after the baffling retreats of the first week or so he decided to cut inland and to reappear on the river bank, while "C" Company and the others advanced with pomp and ceremony to an attack which must of necessity bring about a result. His march was to be guided by a wood-cutter, and the 35 *versts* were to be covered in eighteen hours, by which time the attack of the rest of the column was to be launched, and his encircling force would strike where it was least expected. He started at 10 A.M., and soon discovered that the "path" was a winter and not a summer route. Trees had to be felled and laid across the swamp, and there were few who were not at least waist-deep in slime. Yet he managed to get all his men, with their Lewis guns and magazines, over the weary way, wet to the bone, their faces, necks, and wrists inflamed from the incessant stings of the venomous



black fly of the *tundra* region. About 2 *versts* from his goal the "path" improved, and his scouts were met by three peasant women, who fled incontinently at the sight of his khaki-clad troops, an untoward incident which was immediately reported. Surprise was clearly impossible under these conditions, for the women were legging it with incredible speed, the exhausted troops could not overtake them, and men of British race do not shoot women. The Major therefore called a halt in the forest, and guided by his compass he struck out anew, across the trackless *tundra*, to circumvent the village in rear of his former objective. His tired troops were carried on merely by the strength of his will, and despite 12 *versts* of *tundra* and the flies and the fatigue, he reached his final goal. *O fallacem hominum spem!* The three women had so perturbed the Bolshevik army that it was in headlong flight, and soon after his arrival the Major learnt that the next stand was to be made over 20 miles from his new position. But 45 *versts* over the trackless *tundra*, from 10 A.M. one day to 4 A.M. the next, without the loss of a cartridge, was a fine feat for any troops; and although no casualties were inflicted on the enemy, it was seen later by the troops which followed how many lives had been saved by the movement of this encircling company.

This flank march had brought "A" Company ahead of the column on the opposite bank,

and "B" Company were sent over to join "A" and "C," while Transatlantic troops took over the campaign on the other side, the two forces being ordered to move *pari passu* under the protective tutelage of the flotilla. But this was not to be. During the retreat from "A" Company, the Bolsheviks had removed their land guns to rafts and barges, and had thus spirited them away; but between their flotilla and our own they had laid row after row of river mines, and these put the Allies' fleet out of action, limiting its influence to the extreme range of its heaviest guns. On our bank the enemy were well beyond this range, and on the other they began to obstruct our Transatlantic and other allies from a distance which placed a margin of safety between them and the fleet, reinforcing their land troops with men and guns from our bank. The advance thus became dog-legged, with our column well forward, trying to get our land guns alongside or behind their flotilla, and the Transatlantic column pushing their land forces back 10 or 15 *versts* at a time on the opposite bank, inflicting casualties when stoutly opposed, but never succeeding in getting round before they bolted.

The month passed away with this sort of action every day, and as we marched through the abandoned positions we recognised our debt to "A" Company for having induced the enemy to evacu-

ate such strongholds. One, in particular, 10 *versts* on the enemy's side of the spot where the company had finally debouched, was not only strong by nature of the ground and its approaches, but had been strengthened by most cunningly-devised trenches, quite of the Hun pattern, and at right angles to the real trench line,—an artificial belt of fir-trees, bodily transplanted from the forest, masked the defensive plan. When we heard in the following month that the Major had received the D.S.O. for this and other excellent work during the advance, those of us who had viewed the positions we had not been compelled to assault knew how well it had been won.

"B" Company took over the advanced-guard work from "A," and had a most tantalising experience during the next few days. They pushed on, always on the *qui vive* (for the Bolshevik is cunning as well as cruel), and entered a dense forest belt, to arrive at a small settlement on the banks of a steep-sided ravine, through which a tributary stream wound its way to the river. They "captured" the village at nightfall, and learnt from the *Starosta* (headman) that the Bolsheviks had fled through the forest two days earlier, and were no longer in the neighbourhood. The company cast out sentries and prayed for the dawn, to find themselves cut off from the main river by an uncharted bayou, into which (instead of into the main stream) the little

river poured its tribute. This bayou, and the wide sandspit which half encircled it, added another 2000 yards to the distance separating us from our Transatlantic friends, who were plodding through the mire on the opposite bank of the river, and "B" Company, with rifles, hand grenades, and Lewis guns were well in rear of the enemy's ships and infantry, but out of range of both, and our guns had been outstripped by seventy-two hours. Runner after runner was sent back to urge the guns forward, but a runner on a native pony cannot do more than 3 *versts* an hour on a forest track in September, and although he may perhaps go faster he cannot go farther on foot, and the guns were more than 60 *versts* away. At length the guns arrived, aided by two rainless nights, which left our track a wee bit harder than we had found it; but in the forty-eight hours between our arrival and the advent of the guns the battle on the left bank had been decided, "Old Glory" fluttered amongst the fir-trees, and the hostile fleet had departed, leaving little or nothing behind. But for that "second-class" road we might have won the war there and then. Think of it, ye gunners! Twenty-five unarmoured ships, some of them encumbered with rafts carrying 6-inch guns, within 4000 yards of your 18-pdrs. The first rounds would indeed have been bolts from the blue, and they would have locked the door through which the Bolsheviks escaped.



Our two columns got into step after this experience, but we were forced to leave the Senior Service behind, as mine-sweeping had proved to be far more difficult than had been expected, and when at length the river was free again there was no sign of the hostile fleet, and the land forces had melted away before the fire of our victorious troops. "Old Glory" flew from a flag-pole in the village from which headquarters had withdrawn after the earlier dash up-stream, but the "aged pioneer placing a knife-rest in position" (as a Sassenach irreverently described our cap badge of St Andrew holding his cross) got "farthest south," for "A" Company who had resumed advanced-guard work sent a patrol to examine the fortifications of a riverside stronghold covering the Bolshevik naval arsenal and refitting station. The officer in charge actually entered the Bolshevik lines, and in the dusk their guard "stood to" to do him honour. There were no supports at hand at the moment, and useless encounters with the enemy are avoided by well-trained troops; therefore the officer withdrew under cover of the Lewis gun carried by his small patrol, but no violence was offered, and his party retired with a very good idea of the best line of attack, and with other information of considerable value to the column commander.

The month of September had wrought a great change in the positions of the opposing forces,

but although we were clearly top dog and had imposed our will upon the enemy, we were still many weary miles from our objective, and his main army was still in the field, while the water was falling several inches every day and no one could predict how long the river would remain unfrozen. It was thus without surprise that we learnt from headquarters of considerable changes in the plan of campaign, and under the new scheme the Bolshevik was to be left unharried by land and river, our advanced troops were to be withdrawn, and our column was to establish itself astride the river in defensive positions from which it could emerge for a renewal of the campaign in the spring. "B" and "C" Companies were withdrawn to a 7-verst village on a riverside plain, in rear of which a boldly marked ridge was to become their "Torres Vedras," while "A" Company was sent across to the opposite bank, to establish its lines in the outskirts of a collection of hamlets, with a field of fire of some 1800 yards before the forest swept round again to the river-bank. A Transatlantic company remained to cover the working parties on this left bank, and the flotilla lay with its guns pointing up-stream, to intimidate the foe should he regain coherence and summon up courage to attack us.

But there were no signs of war in the land. Their troops were reported to be dispirited and scattered into groups,



each with a separate plan of campaign, while their flotilla, recognising its inferiority to our own, had returned to its permanent base, to lie up for the winter.

A few days' rest was a welcome change to our three companies. Since the beginning of the month they had been afoot, and, owing to the roads and to "battle order" in which they were equipped, not an officer or man had been able to change his wet socks or boots, or to dry those he was wearing. This constant wet and the coldness it engendered, together with the unchanging diet of bully and biscuit, had brought us all down with diarrhoea, which was so general that it could not be accepted as a reason for "going sick," or we should all have been in hospital. There is an ethnological note in the library edition of 'The Thousand Nights and a Night,' to the effect that only the costive are courageous; but although our bodies were infirm we were fairly stout-hearted still, and in the next few months we were able "to thank whatever gods may be for our unconquerable soul." Access to kit-bags and valises, and regular turns in the bath-houses, soon paved the way for a recovery, and in a few days we scarcely knew ourselves or one another. In fairly good fettle we laid out our defences, and when everything was in a fair way towards the chrysalis stage, H.Q. withdrew to the advanced base, *en route* for

another of its fronts, leaving the plans to emerge as block-houses and wire fences on the sites where the paper schemes had placed them. Two days later the Transatlantic company was withdrawn from its covering position, 14 *versts* ahead of "A" Company, and left our front for other fields of glory.

The Senior Service had been bored stiff for at least a fortnight. There was nothing to shoot at except wild duck, and the falling river and the prospect of ice were threatening their keels. It must have been a relief to their minds when they received orders, on October 3, to proceed forthwith to the naval base until the reopening of the river should afford them further opportunities of showing the flag. We bade them a reluctant farewell, and settled down, feeling a wee bit lonely, to prepare the position for defence and the houses for a winter habitation.

On the morning of October 4 we were a little later than usual for breakfast, the troops being given an extra hour in bed as a reward for the hardships they had endured; but something seemed to be amiss, in spite of the friendly beams of the sun and the keen October air. On all sides the peasants seemed to have a different demeanour, and their confidence in us and in our cause seemed to have waned. Rumours of all kinds also reached our ears, and there



were gatherings in the streets, and later in the day an unusual activity among the householders and a great packing and removal of goods. About lunch-time, the Senior Service being then some twenty-four hours away, a loud booming heralded the bombardment of the forward village, which had been evacuated by our Transatlantic Allies.

Amongst our defensive and offensive arms at that time was a squadron of aeroplanes, well manned, but equipped only with what the Bolsheviks had left undamaged; and although nominally a bombing squadron, there was not a bomb rack among them all, the projectiles being nursed in the lap and dropped by hand by the solitary aviator. The squadron received orders to investigate this matter of the booming and to mitigate the nuisance forthwith, but before the air report was received the nuisance had manifested itself and had developed into a scientific bombardment of both sides of our position from a range which precluded a reply to their inoivilities. A temporary respite was obtained while the squadron was in the air, but the bombs could not be accurately aimed, and no losses were inflicted on the ships. The report was far from reassuring. Twenty-eight river craft were counted, including a new type of ship altogether—a sort of Danube monitor, with a vicious-looking gun of a calibre estimated at 11 inches (it was actually 9.2), while all the

ships appeared to have discarded their previous armament of Austrian field-guns in improvised emplacements for naval guns on naval mountings. In addition, there was great activity on land in the neighbourhood of the village at the bend of the river, 14 *versts* from "A" Company's lines and about 9 from the most forward of the villages occupied by "B" and "C" Companies on the other bank, and large bodies of troops were being landed there and heavy guns were being hauled ashore.

On the left bank the exiguous garrison provided by one battle-scarred company could not indulge in operations very far afield, but the lines were advanced and all approaches carefully watched, until our patrols were driven in and the enemy established himself in a forest village 6 *versts* from the outposts.

On the right bank the two companies, with allied detachments in small numbers, were better able to make demonstrations, and they spread nets in which hostile patrols became most successfully enmeshed. Most of our information was derived from these captives by "B" and "C" Companies, and although it was full of interest it was sadly devoid of comfort to our column. For it transpired that, directly the last of our ships had steamed away, a peasant had rowed a load of hay across the river, from the right bank to a point above the village from which "Old Glory" had so recently de-

parted. Now, the land telegraph ran on the left bank, and it had been out about 2 *versts* out of the village, where the road re-entered the forest. To this spot the peasant, who was none other than the Bolshevik chief staff-officer, directed his steps. As a result of his conversation with his commander the Bolshevik fleet reappeared from its base, where it had been refitting and by no means lying up for the winter, while the reorganised army, which had spread abroad the most unfavourable reports concerning its numbers and intentions, followed up in well-appointed troopships. We had fallen into a nicely-baited trap, and were face to face with more powerful guns and better troops than any of us had previously encountered in this campaign.

Certain essential steps were taken as soon as the nature of the operations was revealed. We mobilised our fleet, which consisted of "Tug, screw, one," and hauled our precious ration barge down-stream, where it lay out of range of the largest gun, and then in the dusk prepared to tow our raft gun, with its ammunition float, to a less conspicuous place. Misadventures crowded upon us from that evening. Our "fleet," fed with logs like all such river craft, sparked most viciously and drew a salvo from the enemy's guns, whereupon the native crew pointed the tug's nose into the bank and leaped ashore, leaving the fires undrawn and full steam pressure in the boiler. But

no shots had hit the tug, and although the ammunition float was holed and sinking and the raft gun had been put out of action by a shell, its gallant crew cast the raft adrift and poled it away in the dusk, returning later to salvage the ammunition from the sunken float.

With scarcely any intermission by night or day a liberal supply of shells was distributed by the enemy, and while "A" Company had perforce to be content to take such steps as were possible to avoid casualties, "B" and "C" Companies were able to invent means to inflict them. The rules of the game as played on the right bank were very flexible, and the Bolsheviks never quite grasped them. The companies would permit their forward platoon to retire, in apparent confusion, from a shell-scarred hamlet during a prolonged bombardment, and the "Bolo" would be permitted to enter the "deserted" village, when suddenly an attack would be made from the rear by the former garrison, and vicious spurts of M.G. fire from the "deserted" village would complete the enemy's discomfiture. This game was played with variations to suit particular occasions, and if the shells had made our heads "bloody," they were still "unbowed"; but the playing-fields on which it was practised became daily more restricted. "Frame houses," as they are called on the other side of the Atlantic, were not designed to withstand H.E.



shells from nine- and six-inch guns, and once the flames from an explosion have really caught hold of a log-built house there is little to do except confine the fire, if one can, to the scene of the explosion. One hamlet after another was destroyed by fire, until the companies were driven back to the remaining villages on the cliff, confining their offensive action to battle-patrol work and judicious counter-attacks when opportunity offered.

On the left bank the brushes with the enemy had been less exciting, but casualties had been inflicted during the seven days from the 4th to 10th, and during the early hours of the 11th the welcome news of approaching reinforcements enabled "A" Company to contemplate a share in a nicely-planned battle, during which they were to simulate an attack upon the investing force, while the reinforcements marched up in rear of the Bolsheviks and enabled "A" Company to join in a real assault. The simulated attack was opened at dawn, and rifles and machine-guns occupied the enemy throughout their lines. They assumed, as we desired, that we were paving the way for a sortie, and they threw in supports at points which appeared to be threatened. The signal of participation by our own reinforcements was eagerly awaited, and messengers dashed through the investing lines to get into touch with the new arrivals, but a stroke of bad luck had again befallen us. The vast

fires on the opposite bank had been seen during the night by the crew of the tug which was hauling our supporting troops up the river, and the officer in command was told that the village to which he was directed was in flames, and must already have been abandoned. From the angle at which it was then seen, the fire certainly appeared to be on the left bank, and the reinforcements were landed there, and then to march, as good soldiers should, to the sound of the cannon, about 20 *versts* away along a "first-class" road in the worst possible condition. By the time the rattle of musketry was within ear-shot, an officer who had been sent to meet the reinforcements was able to lead our Transatlantic Allies (for such they proved to be) along the route which passed to the rear of the investing foe, and into the Bolsheviks they burst, while "A" Company participated at length in the struggle which entirely routed the enemy, and left in our hands two pom-poms (which had irritated us exceedingly) and several machine-guns and other trophies, with very little cost to ourselves and with heavy losses to the Bolsheviks. But the combined attack had taken place at dusk instead of dawn, and the pursuit through the forest was held up by the darkness as much as by the fatigue of our Allies, who had marched and fought, un-fed, for more than twelve hours.

"If my aunt had been born a boy she would have been my



uncle;" that we understood, but if the tug's crew had not misled our Allies, they would have landed on the pre-arranged spot, and would have attacked quite as much from the blue, and the pursuit could have been followed up to the village, 6 *versts* away, while surprise was still a terror to the foe. As matters turned out, the espionage system, at its height against us at that time, revealed to the enemy during the night the small number of our reinforcements, and when the battle was resumed at dawn the next day, it was (forgive the meiosis) not very favourable to our arms. Hostile reinforcements of men and guns were poured into and around the forest village, our objective at the time, and our troops were compelled to fight their way back to the shelter of block-houses and wire in "A" Company's position, the enemy recovering their lost ground and resuming the close investment.

On the right bank a similar mischance had befallen an overbold platoon which had pursued a local counter-attack to greater length than prudence would dictate, and had been extricated, not without losses, by other platoons of the same company. The final result of the engagements was not in our favour, and the enemy's tail had gone up so far that he had discovered the weakness of our right-bank position, where it rested on a 12-mile forest, into which there ran an encircling road from Bolshevik territory. Nor did this complete

our debit balance, for a secret reinforcement in the shape of a naval gun, which had arrived on the night of the 11th and had been in action for forty-eight hours, had failed to yield the results we anticipated, while the aeroplanes were still without victims, and the hostile fleet was bringing into use thirty-eight guns of various calibres, salvoes from which were reaching their targets with increasing accuracy.

We had a sort of stocktaking on the night of the 13th, and the result kept the land wires very busy for some hours until a decision was arrived at, and after dark on the 14th the wounded from the right bank were conveyed through the 12-mile forest, while those from the left bank were taken through the investing lines (one shot sufficing to protect them) to the hospital ship, which then proceeded downstream to pick up the right-bank convoy. As soon as the wounded were away we made our own preparations and destructions, some particularly evil booby-traps being provided to delay the enemy, while our forces on both banks made their way to another position about 14 miles downstream. And as we went through the night, and for twelve hours afterwards, we heard their guns pounding our empty billets. The second phase of this campaign had not ended very brilliantly for us, but in France our troops were working miracles, and we had just heard that the Hun was asking for an armistice. If we



were losing money on the swings we were making a nice little fortune on the roundabouts.

The events of the next few weeks placed the tips of our tails where they should be, and caused the Bolos to put theirs between their legs. By withdrawing from the forward position we had increased their prestige with the inhabitants, but we had evaded the toils in which they believed us to be entrapped, and between them and the Advanced Base an organised body of troops was still interposed, while reinforcements had reached us, the numbers and nature of which had yet to be discovered by the enemy. We had also brought our big naval gun away, and the Bolo was ignorant of the fate of our raft gun. This had become land-looked in a back-water owing to the fall of the river, and had been induced to commit *felo de se*,—to subside, dismembered and unseen, on the bed of the stream. Their fleet had always avoided risks, and, although it was now stronger than ever, it still preferred to lie out of range before it opened fire, and through this lack of initiative our forces settled comfortably into their new positions.

The enemy first asserted himself on 19th October by sending patrols into touch with our own, and two days later the shelling of our positions was resumed by the fleet. On 23rd the Bolo infantry presented "A" Company with three machine-guns, a number

of ready-filled belts, and some serviceable rifles, by failing completely in a "surprise" attack from a flank, where one of our platoons accounted (it is believed) for the whole attacking force, and secured immunity from such attacks for many grateful days.

On the right bank "B" and "C" Companies had undergone a trying ordeal of shelling, but, as in the case of "A" Company, there was room in the new positions to reduce casualties to a minimum. Facing our troops on the right bank was the particular set of trenches which the 45-*verst* flank-march in September had caused the Bolo to evacuate, and into this position he had now settled his front line. On 27th October two platoons from each company received orders to turn him out of these trenches, but something went wrong, mainly owing to the state of the tracks (which were half-frozen and half-thawed), and turned the "combined" frontal and flank attack into a series of partial encounters, which must be described by a tactful chronicler as having "fallen short of complete success." The four platoons withdrew to their own trenches, but before many days were up they had redressed their adverse balance of losses in local counter-attacks on the lines laid down for their earlier encounters. The Bolo found the position on each bank a difficult nut to crack, and by the end of October a thick ledge of ice adhered to each bank of

the river, and gave their ships notice to quit.

For the first week of November the war was confined to the land, but before the second week was up the river was again open, an unexpected thaw having cleared away the ice, and some of their ships reappeared to take part in a combined attack on the left-bank position. The operation was to consist of a frontal attack upon the position under cover of a naval bombardment, and while this was occupying our attention a decisive attack was to be made on the right rear by an encircling force, which had moved with three days' rations along a winter track in the forest. The principal buildings in rear of the position were the field hospital and the billets occupied by the drivers of a section of guns, part of a Maple Leaf battery which was up to that time the only reinforcement which had reached us. Owing to the length of time the infantry had been in the front line, and to the fact that the guns were not required to move with any frequency, this section had elected to provide its own escort.

The frontal attack was developed about 6 A.M. on 11th November, and in spite of the shelling of the fleet it gave little anxiety to the defenders, and was dealt with in a perfectly adequate manner by the Transatlantic Company, whose commander (newly decorated with the D.S.O.) had been given charge of the troops on the left bank. The real attack

was launched against the rear of our position about one hour later. It was absolutely decisive. The enemy burst out of the forest and quickly overpowered two sentry groups, and with loud cheers they entered the field hospital. The battery drivers abandoned their billets and fell in to defend their beloved guns, and from the gun-pits themselves they stopped the rush of about 400 men of an "International" battalion, principally of Hun origin, while two platoons of "A" Company advanced (as fast as their Shackleton boots permitted) to a position on the bank of a steep ravine which separated them from the guns, but dominated the enemy's firing line. Meanwhile the guns were busy in their own defence, and by firing "muzzle-bursts" they not only stopped the enemy's advance, but enlisted the sympathy of their section on the other bank, who appreciated the meaning of that kind of firing, and, knowing the position of the other section, took the muzzle-bursts as a target and greatly inconvenienced the enemy. Before darkness fell, both holding and decisive attack had died away; but the enemy's firing line, supports, and machine-guns were still in position near the 18-pdrs., and as they had ceased to fire upon our troops they were invited to surrender before being rushed.

Among the defenders of this position on the left bank were countrymen of those "embattled farmers of Bunker Hill, the echo of whose shots



had reverberated throughout the world," whose marksmanship had taken so deadly a toll of Howe's army. Alongside was a section of artillery manned by countrymen of those sharpshooters whose marksmanship at Chateauguay had prevented the Stars and Stripes from entering the land of the maple leaf. And these forces were strengthened by men of a race which had earned at Coruña the verdict of Napier that "the British fire is the most deadly ever known." Whatever feuds had once divided these races had long ago been buried, and their friendship was cemented afresh on this bloody field. Yet the silence of the enemy near these guns when called upon to surrender has provoked a dispute between the battery drivers armed with rifles, the gunners on the left bank with their "muzzle-bursts," the gunners on the right bank with their covering fire, and the two platoons of "A" Company, who had come up in support, as to the principal cause of that silence. But somebody, somehow or other, had put it beyond the power of the enemy to deliver a reply. Not a man was alive in their lines, and the only survivors of the "decisive" attack were a few wounded prisoners, who had fallen near the field hospital, into which the orderlies had immediately carried them, and a handful of others lying near the hospital, still alive and unwounded, but dead drunk. The normal Bolo is as bad as the Hun, and this "International"

battalion consisted mainly of very bad Huns. It is difficult, therefore, to praise the staff of that hospital too highly. In the first place, they attended immediately to the wounded (who happened to be Bolsheviks), and in the second, they went about their work throughout the day as if nothing unusual had taken place in the vicinity, although the hospital had ceased to be within our lines. It is pleasant to be able to record that nothing untoward happened, except the theft of certain medical comforts, and the credit for this must be assigned partly to a woman in hostile uniform, one of the Bolshevik Women's Legion, who prevented excesses of any worse nature than the theft of stores. This woman, the "buckshee" wife of a deceased Bolo leader (who had left a real widow behind the lines), received much honour from us while a prisoner of war, and had indeed given rein to her natural impulses.

During the night of the 11th a heavy fall of snow was followed by a sudden drop in the temperature, and ice again appeared on the river banks. The frost drove away the fleet for the winter, and so proved beneficial to our forces; but the snow left the corpses of the fallen enemy in a natural grave and deprived the disputants in the "shrapnel versus bullet" controversy of the only means of proving or losing their case. The mornning of the 12th was spent in bringing in the spoil, and a patrol sent into the forest col-



lected much useful material from still uncovered dumps, as well as the sledges on which the material had been transported. But the horses and their drivers had succumbed to the exposure, and lay dead in the snow on the forest track.

The second half of November was a period of rest punctuated by fierce raids into our advanced posts, particularly into those on the right bank, and we suffered some casualties in this way, all of which were repaid with such high interest that the Bolsheviks must have mistrusted the value of their security. During this period the river was in process of becoming passable. Perhaps all rivers in similar basins and in corresponding latitudes freeze in the same way. First a ledge of ice adheres to each bank of the main river and of its affluents, then the weight of the fallen snow detaches parts of these ledges in the tributaries, and in a minor degree in the main stream, and the current is smothered with drift ice while the ledges extend, as the temperature drops, farther and farther towards the centre of the river. The time comes when the fragments floating in the centre adhere to one another in a solid mass, and after much creaking and squeezing join forces with the ledges from the banks, while the waters of the river flow unimpeded beneath the icy coverlet. In our case there was an interval of nearly four weeks between the suspension of navigation and the opening of traffic across the ice, and

during the interval our forces, like those of the enemy, were out in two. But this was more serious for us than for the enemy, as the Advanced Base was cut off from the forces on the right bank by the main river, and from those on the left by the wide mouth of the tributary, and only the lamps of the signal service united us.

The first passenger was an adventurous peasant who crossed on November 28, and after that date the increasing cold stabilised the covering, and sleigh routes were quickly opened where most needed. The greatest cold we experienced in the month was on the 27th, when there were 59 degrees of frost (Fahrenheit).

The reopening of communication between the Advanced Base and the two wings of the River Column was of inestimable service to our battalion, for during the last few days of free navigation our fourth company had arrived from another front, and other reinforcements being also available, two of our three battle-scarred companies were at length withdrawn into rest billets behind the line. Our own "D" Company relieved "B," and reinforcements from an English city battalion relieved "C," who returned for rest and refitting to that very village opposite the Advanced Base from which they had set out to join "A" Company in the first week of September, while "B" Company rested under similar conditions at a half-way house on the L. of C.



December was a fairly placid month from the point of view of operations, and in very sooth it was too cold to fight in the open. One of our patrols actually encountered a hostile force of approximately equal strength in No-man's-land, each arriving on the opposite brink of a steep ravine which prevented the use of the bayonet. Both patrols endeavoured to fire their rifles with their gloves on their hands, but found it impossible of achievement, and metal chilled by 60 degrees of frost cannot be touched with the naked hand without disaster. They parted after an exchange of nothing more deadly than grimaces.

The forces on both sides of the river carried on active reconnaissance, and strengthened their positions with a cunning based on experience in other theatres of war, and a period of stagnation set in. Our own battalion enjoyed a Christmas dinner embellished by purchases from a special grant, and did not omit to send a seasonable message of respect and good wishes to the Colonel-in-Chief, to which Her Royal Highness returned a most gracious and warm-hearted reply.

Hogmanay was celebrated with becoming reticence and a rum ration, and in the first week of the New Year the relief of "A" Company completed the cycle. For more than eighteen weeks the company had been engaged in active pursuit of the enemy or in the front defensive line, and it emerged victorious on

its return to Battalion Headquarters opposite the Advanced Base. A curious link between their first stay and their return was discovered a day or two after their arrival. After much adjustment a rate of payment for the occupation of billets had been promulgated and the first settlement was made in December. Some surprise was caused when the *Starosta* presented the bill, for he charged us for the occupation of certain billets in the most forward hamlet from 15th August. Nor would he strike out this claim, for he maintained that as the payments were admitted to be retrospective, he was entitled to the money from the date of the commencement of his services as Town Major. It was clearly a mistake, as we had not occupied the village until September 3rd, and the amount was struck out. It subsequently transpired that the *Starosta* had in fact provided billets from August 15th to September 3rd, and then for the first time "A" Company realised that on the last-named date they had slept peacefully in their beds, while the forward village, 3 *versts* beyond their sentry groups, harboured at least twice their number of Bolsheviks. The *Starosta*, with an impartiality that proved his fitness for civic office, had provided accommodation for friend and foe alike, and had informed neither of the other's presence. No doubt he hoped for the best, and luck was with him, the Bolsheviks leaving in a



hurry on hearing of our approach.

After refitting and reorganising the company settled down to training in various accomplishments in which circumstances demanded that they should be proficient, including progress in snow-shoes, which presented little difficulty, and the speedier and more exhilarating use of skis, the short-legged among them finding the accepted method of turning a most rupturesome proceeding. Mingled with their other duties was that of providing an escort to officers of the military control service in their domiciliary visits and arrests.

Before the month of January had run its course, a dramatic change in the tactical situation on another front drew "A" Company back to the firing line. It may be remembered that headquarters had withdrawn from the main river in the last week of September, and from that time it had established itself in the midst of another column which was operating some miles up the tributary stream, where a town of some local importance offered the requisite accommodation. This town had been for some time the loadstone of Bolshevik aspirations, and they had contrived to drag heavy siege-guns over the winter roads. These weighty arguments, and reinforcements in such numbers as threatened

the isolation of the town, led eventually to its abandonment, and to the establishing of an interior line of defence within closer reach of the Advanced Base. While this line was in process of building, two platoons of "A" Company were called in to assist, and one of them had an exciting time for four days, with 6-inch shells for breakfast, lunch, tea, and dinner; but the experiences of the past had hardened them, and they suffered little from these blandishments. During their absence the remaining platoons had flitted to repel a threatened raid on the L. of C., travelling 85 *versts* in twenty-six hours, with all ranks alternately riding in sleighs and marching on foot, to prevent frost-bite and to provide precautions against surprise. Although the situation on the tributary permitted the speedy return of the first platoons, the company was not again united for several days.

Candlemas Day (15th February, old style) marks the turning-point of the North Russian winter. After that date the sun gains strength, the lengthening of the days is more pronounced, and the temperature suffers fewer variations, remaining in the neighbourhood of 25 or 30 degrees below zero (Fahrenheit).

We await the spring, when it comes, with confidence, and expect to be able to give a good account of ourselves.



## 450 MILES TO FREEDOM.

BY CAPTAIN M. A. B. JOHNSTON and CAPTAIN K. D. YEARSLEY.

## CHAPTER XIV.

OUR experiments at chupattie-making had led us in the end to grind the wheat in two stages—first into coarse meal, and then, with a finer setting of the mill, into flour. This meant less strain both for us and for the machine: upon the safety of the latter practically depended our survival, and frequent were the exhortations to the miller on duty not to be too violent with the wretched little handle. Standing there in the sun—for though there were trees in the ravine, they were not high enough to shelter a man standing up—one was greatly tempted to hurry through the task of twenty hoppers full of grain, and so risk breaking the grinder. A quotation which Looney had learnt from a book read at Yozgad proved very apposite on these occasions. It was from a label pasted on to a French toy, and ran as follows: "Quoi qu'elle soit solidement montée, il ne faut pas brutaliser la machine!"

When enough flour was ready, some one would knead it into a lump of dough, which would then be divided up by the cook and flattened into little discs. These were baked several at a time on the metal cover of our dixie. When enough chupatties were ready, the cook would pick them up

one by one, while some one else, not in sight of them, called out the names of the party at random. This was to get over the difficulty caused by the chupatties not being quite all of the same size. Similarly, after each brew of porridge had been distributed into the mugs by spoonfuls, we determined who was to have the scrapings of the pot by the method of "fingers-out." It was necessary to scrape the dixie each time to prevent the muddy paste which stuck to the bottom becoming burnt during the next brew; and the way to get this done thoroughly was to let some one have it to eat.

On the 4th September, Nobby discovered a shorter way up to the well, by first going a little down instead of up the ravine we were in. From that date onwards, except for one night when it was necessary to be on the spot in case of eventualities, Looney and Perce, and on one occasion Johnny, went up at dusk to sleep near the well. Although the mosquitoes were almost as troublesome there, they found that the air was quite invigorating—a great contrast to that in the ravine, where no refreshing breeze ever found its way.

By this time hardly one of us had any footgear left worthy

of the name, so we soaked an old *mashak* (skin water-bag) and a piece of raw hide, both of which had been brought down from the village on the second visit, with a view to using them for patch repairs. Both, however, proved too rotten to be of use, for they would not hold the stitches.

We had been a week in the ravine before any of us felt capable of farther exploration. To save time in getting to work again, on the last two evenings Cochrane and Nobby had had a little extra ration of porridge. Now at length, on the 6th September, they felt that it was within their powers to make another reconnaissance. Nothing more had been seen of the motor-boat, but the bay in which had been its anchorage on our first night on the coast seemed to offer the best prospect of finding a boat of some sort. Accordingly at 5 P.M. the pair set off once again down the ravine, hoping to arrive near the end of it before dark. And so began another anxious time for all, as we wondered what the final night of our first month of freedom would bring forth. It had not been easy to keep a correct tally of the date during the march to the coast. More than once there had been no opportunity of writing a diary for three days at a time; whilst on the coast one day was so much like another that to lose count of a day would have been easy. One of us, however, had kept a complete diary, and so we knew that we had now been at large for a month.

To celebrate this we had decided, if all went well that night, to have something very good to eat on the morrow. Every one voted for a plum-duff. Johnny had cooked a date-duff one evening during the siege of Kut, when his Indian *khansama* (cook) found the shell-fire too trying for his nerves. To Johnny then was given the post of *chef*. During the day each of the party did an extra fatigue on the coffee-grinder, with the result that by dusk we were able to set aside about two pounds of flour for the pudding. Its other ingredients were a couple of small handfuls of raisins and a pinch of salt. When Cochrane and Nobby departed operations commenced. The ingredients were mixed; the dough was kneaded on a flat rock and the resulting mass divided into two—for our little *dixie* was incapable of holding all at once. Each pudding was then rolled into a ball, tied up in a handkerchief, and boiled for two and a half hours. Thus it was close upon midnight before our dainties were ready for the morrow. The stillness of the nights in the ravine had often been broken by the melancholy chorus of a pack of jackals, usually far away but sometimes close at hand. We decided to take no risks of losing our duffs, and so slung them in the branches of a tree.

Meanwhile Cochrane and Nobby proceeded on their reconnaissance. We had made plans before they started in case of certain eventualities. One was that if the two were



recaptured they should lead the Turks to the rest of the party: it was realised that otherwise they might be very hard put to it to prove that they were escaped prisoners of war and not spies. A more cheerful eventualty was the possibility that the motor-boat might have returned unobserved. In that case, if a favourable opportunity of capturing it occurred, Cochrane and Nobby were to seize the vessel, make their way to Cyprus, and send back help for the rest four nights later. The rendezvous from which they would be fetched was to be on the headland opposite the little island on which stood the ruined castle. We eventually learnt that at the proposed rendezvous was stationed a battery of guns! It was well for us, therefore, that this plan had never to be executed.

Our two scouts had many exciting moments in their reconnaissance that night. They went to within a few hundred yards of the mouth of the ravine, and then, turning to the right, made their way up to higher ground by a side ravine. They climbed hurriedly, for the light was rapidly failing. From the top it was still impossible to overlook the bay which they wanted. They were moving along parallel to the sea when suddenly they heard voices. They could pick out four figures a little more than a hundred yards away, silhouetted against the sea on their left. These were Turks;

they seemed to be looking out to sea, and after a minute or two squatted down on what appeared to be the flat roof of a house. At this juncture Cochrane swallowed a mosquito. Nobby says that to see him trying not to choke or cough would have been laughable at any less anxious time.

After this episode the two moved off with extra carefulness. It was now quite dark. They had not gone much farther when they again heard voices. This time they were quite close and coming towards them. Our pair took cover and waited: happily, at the last moment the owners of the voices turned off. In view of the number of people who seemed to be about it was no good increasing the risk of detection by having two persons on the move; so, soon after, Cochrane left Nobby in a good place of concealment, and went on scouting around by himself.

Half an hour later he came back. He had been able to overlook the cove, and there were two boats there. It was too dark, however, to see of what sort they were, and as there was a shed with a sentry on duty close to the boats, the only thing to do was to wait for daylight. The two now slept and took watch in turn. At the first sign of dawn they moved down to a rock, commanding a good view of the creek. One of the boats appeared to be a ship's cutter, some twenty-eight feet long, the other perhaps twenty feet in length. Having seen all they could hope for, they lost



no time in moving off, as it was now quite obvious that the house on which they had seen the four men on the previous evening was a look-out post; and it was now becoming dangerously light.

Instead of returning directly to the ravine, however, they made their way some distance down the coast to the S.W. They were able to see Selefké, and to recognise through the glasses a dhow in the river there, but it was some way inland. It was 11 A.M. before the reconnoitring party again reached the ravine. The news they brought gave us something definite to work for, and we decided that if we could finish our preparations in time we would make an attempt to seize one of the boats two nights later. That would be on the night of the 8th-9th September. There was much, however, to be done before then. Masts and spars, paddles and sails, and four days' supply of food for the sea journey had to be made ready. For the paddle heads, Cochrane and Nobby had brought back some flat thin pieces of board which they had found near a broken-down hut, and also a bit of ancient baked pottery which would serve as a whetstone for our very blunt knives and the adze.

On the strength of the good news, and to fortify ourselves for the work, we decided to wait no longer for our feast. The duffs were unslung from the tree, and each divided with as much accuracy as possible into eight pieces, so

that we might have a slice apiece from either pudding in case they varied in quantity or quality. Both were superb, and the finest duffs ever made. We commented on their amazing sweetness and excellent consistency. In reality a raisin was only to be found here and there, and the puddings were not cooked right through. When we had finished, Old Man asserted that he could then and there and with ease demolish six whole duffs by himself. This started an argument.

"What!" cried one; "eat forty-eight pieces like the two you have just had! Impossible!"

"Granted; twenty pieces would go down easily enough," said another, "and the next ten with a fair appetite. But after that it wouldn't be so easy. You might manage another ten, but the last eight would certainly defeat you."

Old Man, however, stuck to his assertion and refused to come down by so much as a single slice. As it was impossible without the duffs under discussion to prove him right or merely greedy, the subject was allowed to drop.

By this date Perce was the only one of the party who still had some tobacco, English 'baccy too, for he smoked very little. To celebrate the discovery of the boats, he now broke into his reserve. A single cigarette was rolled and handed round from one to another of us. It only needed a couple of inhaled puffs to make each of us feel as if we were



going off under an anæsthetic. After the two or three puffs one thought it would be nice to sit down, and in a few seconds one felt it would be pleasanter still to lie down full length. That is what we did. The effect only lasted a minute or two, but it showed in what a weak condition we were.

On the evening trip to the nearer well it was found quite impossible to draw up any more water from it. It had been gradually drying up, and now the two on water fatigue could not scoop up even a spoonful of water when they let down a mug, so they had to go on to the well near the tower. This, too, was going dry, but still contained a little pool of very muddy water.

Shortly after four o'clock that afternoon Looney and Perce had started off on the third visit which was paid to the deserted village. They were armed with a long list of requisites: more cloth for sails; a big dixie for cooking large quantities of the reserve porridge at a time; some more grain; nails and any wood likely to be of use; cotton-wool for padding our feet when we went down to the shore; and many other things. They returned next morning at 9 A.M. with all the important articles, together with some hoop-iron and a few small poles. The latter were the very thing for the paddle-shafts. They also brought down some raw coffee beans which they had found in a little leather bag; these we roasted and ground next day, and enjoyed the two finest

drinks of coffee we ever remember having had in our lives.

Meanwhile we had started cooking our food for the sea voyage. This was to consist of small chupatties and porridge, but the latter would not be cooked until the latest possible date for fear of its going bad. Forty reserve chupatties had been set aside before we retired to rest on the night after the feast-day. From that day onwards till we left the ravine the coffee-grinder was worked unceasingly from 5 A.M. till 7 or 8 P.M. There was no question of a six hours' day for us; for while we ground flour and porridge for the reserve, we had still to provide our own meals for the day. We realised then, if never before, the truth of the saying, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."

Little of the 8th September had passed before we realised that it was hopeless to think of being ready by the following night. We therefore postponed the attempt, and settled down to our preparations in more deadly earnest. Cochrane decided on the size and shape of the sails, which were to be three in number. The rolls of cloth obtained from the village were about fourteen inches in width, and the biggest of the three sails was made with seven strips of the cloth. It was a good thing that we had still two big reels nearly untouched of the thread with which we had started from Yozgad.

When the strips had been sewn together, the edges of



the sail were hemmed. Later, pieces of canvas from Ellis's pack, which was cut up for the purpose, were added at the corners for the sake of additional strength. No one had a moment to spare. Those who were not sail-making were doing something else,—either at the mill, at work on the paddles, cutting branches off trees for the spars, fetching water, or cooking.

September 9th was similarly spent, but again on this day it soon became obvious that we should not be ready by night-fall. By the time we retired to our sleeping-places, however, our preparations were well advanced. Two of the sails were finished, the spars were cut, some of the paddles were completed, and the larger part of the chupatties and porridge cooked. The porridge was put into one of our packs. It was not a very clean receptacle, but being fairly waterproof would, we hoped, help to keep the porridge moist; for our chief fear with regard to the coming sea voyage was shortage of water.

On the 10th we worked continuously from daylight till 3.30 P.M., by which time our preparations were complete. Before moving off we hid away all non-essentials, so as to reduce our loads. With the big cooking-pot half-full of water, and the spars, sails, and paddles, these were going to be both heavy and cumbersome. We also buried our fezes and our copies of the map, lest, if we were recaptured,

they should encourage the Turks to think that we were spies. For the same reason, any allusions to what we had seen on the coast, and to our visits to the deserted village, were carefully erased from diaries. These precautions completed, we carried our unwieldy loads down the ravine to a point opposite the shorter path to the wells. Here we left our impedimenta, and, taking only water-bottles, ohargals, and the big cooking-pot, which had a cover and swing-handle, climbed up to the well near the tower and filled up. The water supply was almost exhausted, and it took an hour and a half to fill our receptacles and have a drink. It was impossible to practice the camel's plan, and drink more than we really needed at the time. It required a tremendous effort to force oneself to drink a mugful of these muddy dregs.

While the rest were filling the water-bottles, &c., Old Man and Nobby went off to a suitable point for a final look at part of our proposed route to the shore. Then all returned to the kits in the ravine. We had decided that we would move down to the beach in stocking feet, so as to make as little noise as possible. For most of us this was not only a precaution but a necessity, since our party of eight now only possessed three pairs of wearable boots between us. We therefore padded our feet as best we could, and proceeded once more towards the sea.

The going was so difficult



that we had several times to help one another over the enormous boulders which filled the bottom of the ravine, and down precipitous places where there had once been small waterfalls.

At 7 P.M. we were not far from the mouth of the ravine. Here then the party halted, while Nobby, who had been there on two previous occasions, scouted on ahead. When he returned, reporting that all seemed clear, we crept on out of the ravine. It was now night. Walking very carefully, testing each footstep for fear of treading on a twig or loose stone and so making a noise, we came to a wall. This we crossed at a low place where it had been partially broken down, and a hundred yards beyond found ourselves approaching a line of telegraph poles and then the coast road. Up and down this we peered in the light of the young moon, and seeing no one went across. The ground here was level, but covered with big bushes and a few stunted firs, between which we made our way to the shore. It was grand to hear the lapping of the waves and smell the seaweed after nearly four years.

The creek, in which were the two rowing-boats, lay a mile to the west of us. We had intended to strike the shore where we were, for by walking to the creek along the edge of the sea the risk of stumbling against any tents or huts in the dark would be reduced; but it took us longer to reach our objective than we

had expected. It was almost midnight when, a quarter of a mile from the creek, and near a place where a boat could be brought conveniently alongside, the party halted. Leaving the others here, Cochrane and Johnny were to try to get one of the two boats marked down four nights previously, and Nobby was to accompany them in case they needed help.

The shore line, which they now followed, rose rapidly to a steep cliff forty feet or more above the level of the sea. When within a hundred yards of the boat which they wanted, they found a way down to a narrow ledge two feet above the water. The moon had long set, but they could see the boat as a dark shadow against the water reflecting the starlight. Here, then, Cochrane and Johnny proceeded to strip. They continued, however, to wear a couple of pairs of socks in case the bottom should be covered with sharp spikes, as had been the rocky edge of the shore for the most part. They tied two pieces of thin rope round their waists with a clasp-knife attached to each. Thus equipped, they let themselves down off the ledge, and slipped quietly into the sea. Fortunately the water was warm; but it was phosphorescent too, so they had to swim very slowly to avoid making any unnecessary ripple.

As they neared the boat, which now loomed big above them, some one in the shadow of the cliff a few yards away



coughed. Next moment they heard the butt of a rifle hitting a rock as the sentry (for such he must have been) shifted his position. Hardly daring to breathe, they swam to the side of the boat farther from him and held on to it. Here the water was about six feet deep. After waiting a few minutes to let any suspicions on the part of the sentry subside, they moved along to the bow of the boat.

They had hoped to find it anchored by a rope, but to their great disappointment it was moored with a heavy iron chain. Speaking in very low whispers, they decided that one should go under the water and lift the anchor, while the other, with his piece of rope, tied one of the flukes to a link high up in the chain. When the anchor was thus raised clear of the bottom, they would swim quietly away, towing the boat. Accordingly, Cochrane dived and lifted the anchor, while Johnny tied his rope round a fluke and made it fast to a link as far up the chain as possible. They then let go.

With what seemed to them a terrific noise, the chain rattled over the gunwale till the anchor was once more on the bottom. Were they discovered? Another cough! They did not dare to move. Could the plash of the water lapping against the sides of the creek have muffled the sound of the rattling chain? If only the chain had been fixed! But perhaps a short length only had been loose.

Another attempt was made. This time it was Johnny who lifted the anchor, while Cochrane tied his rope to it. Unfortunately he had the rope still round his waist, and when the anchor dropped he was carried down with it. How lucky that he had his clasp-knife! For though he was free in a few seconds, he came to the surface spluttering out the water he had swallowed. It was a near thing that he was not drowned. Where, meantime, was the anchor? Little did they realise that it was lying once more on the bottom and laughing at their efforts to carry off the quarry that night.

Some point of the chain, of course, must be attached to the boat, but it was risky to continue getting rid of the spare length by the present method. Besides, there was no more rope with which to tie up the anchor to the chain. As for getting into the boat and weighing anchor from there, it would be sheer madness. The sentry would be certain to see them, naked and wet as they were.

By this time they were both shivering violently with cold, though, as has been said, the water was quite warm. As a last attempt they tried to take the boat out to the end of the chain by swimming away with it farther from the sentry. Again the chain rattled over the gunwale, and there was nothing for it but to admit defeat.

Slowly they swam back to



the ledge where Nobby was awaiting them. He said they had been away for an hour and twenty minutes, so it was not surprising that they had felt cold. With numbed fingers they put on their clothes, and climbed gloomily up the cliff. By this time the walking over sharp rocks had cut their socks and padding to pieces, so that they were marching almost barefoot, a very painful operation.

On their rejoining the party, the sad tale of failure was told. As the time was 3 A.M., the only thing to do was to get into the best cover we could find near the coast and sleep till dawn. About a hundred yards inland we lay down in some small bushes beneath stunted pine-trees. There we slept.

Our thirty-fifth morning found us in a state of great depression. There seemed now no chance left of getting out of the country. As we lay in our hiding-places we reviewed the situation in an almost apathetic mood. We were on the eastern side of a W-shaped bay, a mile wide, and opening southwards. Its eastern arm was the creek, in which was the boat we had failed to capture. There was a similar western arm, the two creeks being separated by a narrow spit of land. From quite early in the morning motor-lorries could be seen and heard winding their way along the tortuous road. In several places this closely followed the coast line, and at one or two was carried on causeways across the sea itself. We lay on a

headland on the seaward side of the Turkish encampment, and were overlooked by the look-out post on the cliff-side.

At noon a council of war was held. As we were lying dotted about some distance from one another, for the time being we all crept into an old shelter made of branches, not many yards from us. There matters were discussed. Although several schemes were put forward, going back to the ravine in which we had spent so many wearisome days was not one of them. To return there would have made us into raving lunatics. The final decision was to make another attempt that night to seize the boat; this time we would have four of us in the water. If that failed, about the most attractive proposal was to go boldly on to the coast road and by bluff obtain a lift on a motor-lorry, demanding as Germans to be taken in a westerly direction to the nearest big town, Seleké: we might get a boat of some sort there. The chief lure of this scheme was that, should the lorry-driver believe our story, we should cover a few miles without walking on our flat feet. This was a fascinating thought indeed, for despite nearly a fortnight on the coast we had no wish to set out on the tramp again.

Two or three of us, however, thought we might sum up the energy to march eastwards along the road in the hope of finding a boat in the bay of Ayasch. But even if we did this there was still the



difficulty about food and drink. Unless we replenished our supply we should have to undertake a sea voyage of at least a hundred miles with only two days' rations and perhaps a water-bottle full of water apiece. The consensus of opinion was thus come to that if we failed again that night we might as well give ourselves up the next day. We then went back into our old and safer hiding-places.

At about two o'clock in the afternoon we heard the sound of a far-off motor. This was no lorry. It came from a different direction. In a few seconds we were all listening intently.

"It's only another lorry after all!"

"No, it can't be. It's on the sea side of us!"

As the minutes passed, the noise became more and more distinct. Then our hearts leapt within us, as there came into the bay, towing a lighter and a dinghy, the motor-tug which we had last seen the day after we had reached the coast. Skirting the shore not three hundred yards from where we lay, the boats disappeared into the eastern creek.

Apathy and depression were gone in a second. Excitement and—this we like to remember—a deep sense of thankfulness for this answer to our prayers took their place.

The motor-boat was flying at her bows a Turkish and at her stern a German flag, but most of her crew of seven or eight looked to us like Greeks. In the lighter were over twenty Turks.

Another council of war took place, but of a very different type from the last. All were hopeful, and we made our plans in high spirits. Throughout our discussion, however, ran the assumption that some of the crew would be on board the motor-boat, and we should have to bribe them to take us across to Cyprus. It never entered our heads for a moment that any other scheme would be possible. In fact, when about an hour before sunset the dinghy with a few of the crew and some water-breakers on board was rowed across to a point opposite us on the western side of the bay (where there must have been a spring of fresh water), we determined to hail them on their return journey.

At one point they came within three hundred yards of us. In answer to our shouting and whistling, they stopped rowing and looked in our direction. They must have seen us, but they refused to take any further notice. Whom did they take us for? And why did they not report our presence when they went ashore? No one came to search for us; and as the mountain had not come to Mahomet, Mahomet would have to go to the mountain. Some one would have to swim out to the boat that night. As the dusk of our 36th night fell, a ration of chupatties and a couple of handfuls of raisins were issued. A move was then made to the nearest point on the shore at which there was a suitable place for a boat to come along-



side. There we waited till the moon set at about 8.30. In the meantime we drank what water remained in the big dixie. This left us with only our water-bottles full. At this time our best Turkish scholar was feeling very sick. The last scrapings from the pack containing the porridge had fallen to him, and as all of it had turned sour during the previous night, Grunt's extra ration was proving a net unmixed blessing. This was a serious matter, as we relied on him to negotiate with the motor-boat's crew. However, at 9 P.M. he and Cochrane, the Old Man and Nobby, set forth on the last great venture. The others moved all the kit close down to the edge of the rock where a boat could come in.

An anxious wait ensued. The four had set out at 9 o'clock, but it was not till 11.30 that Looney, with his last reserve—half a biscuit—gone, saw a boat coming silently towards him. In a trice the other three were awakened. Was it friend or foe? She had four men on board: they were our four. The moment the boat touched at the rock the kit was thrown in. Cochrane had done magnificent work. He had swum round the creek, found out that there was no one in the motor-boat, cut away the dinghy belonging to the lighter, swum back with it, and fetched the other three.

Eight hopeful fugitives were soon gently paddling the dinghy towards the creek,

keeping, so far as might be, in the shadow of the cliffs; for though the moon was down, the stars seemed to make the open bay unpleasantly light. As noiselessly as possible the dinghy came alongside the motor-boat and made fast. The creek here was about sixty yards wide. The tug, moored by a heavy chain and anchor, was in the middle of it. Some fifteen yards away was the lighter; on this were several men, one of whom was coughing the whole time we were "cutting out" the motor-boat. This took us a full hour.

On trying the weight of the chain and anchor, Cochrane decided to loose the motor-boat from her anchorage by dropping the chain overboard. He did not think it would be possible to weigh the anchor. Odd lengths of cord were collected and joined up in readiness for lowering the end of the chain silently when the time came. But success was not to be attained so easily. Bearding the motor-boat, Nobby and Perce had, foot by foot, got rid of almost all the chain which lay in the bows, when another score of fathoms were discovered below deck. It would be quicker, after all, to weigh anchor, and by superhuman efforts this was at length achieved without attracting the attention of the enemy, our coats and shirts being used as padding over the gunwale.

As soon as the anchor was weighed, we connected the motor-boat with the dinghy



by a tow-rope found on the former; all got back into the dinghy, and in this we paddled quietly away. With our homemade paddles and heavy tow we were unable to make much headway. With six paddles in the water, we could credit ourselves with a speed of not so much as a single knot.

Once clear of the bay, Cochrane again went aboard the motor-boat and this time had a look at the engine. We had remaining at this time about an inch of candle, but this served a very useful purpose. By its glimmer Cochrane was able to discover and light a hurricane-lamp. He told us the joyous news that there was a fair quantity of paraffin in the tank. Unfortunately no petrol was to be found, and it seemed unlikely that we should be able to start the engine from cold on paraffin alone. So weak indeed were we, that it was all we could do to turn over the engine at all. While frantic efforts were being made by Cochrane and Nobby to start her, those in the dinghy continued paddling. After three hours all were very tired of it and very grateful for a slight off-shore breeze which gave us the chance of setting a sail. Cochrane rigged up our mainsail on the motor-boat; all then clambered aboard the latter. Our speed was now quite good and many times that of our most furious paddling. Suddenly looking back we saw the dinghy adrift and disappearing in the darkness behind us. Grunt, who had been holding the rope at

the dinghy end, had omitted to make fast on coming on board the motor-boat. The dinghy still contained all our kit; so to recover this, including as it did what food and water remained to us, Cochrane and Johnny jumped overboard and swam back to it. The sail on the motor-boat had been furled, and in a few minutes the dinghy was again in tow.

After this slight misadventure the engine-room was once more invaded, and Looney and Cochrane experimented with the magneto. There was a loose wire and vacant terminal which they were uncertain whether to connect or not. Eventually, with Nobby turning over the engine, they obtained a shock with the two disconnected. Two were now put on to the starting-handle. But the cramped space produced several bruised heads and nothing else as pair after pair struggled on.

At length at 4.30 A.M., little more than an hour before dawn, the engine started up with a roar, in went the clutch, and off went the motor-boat at a good seven knots. At the time when the engine began firing, Nobby, who was feeling very much the worse for his exertions in weighing anchor followed by his efforts to start the motor, was lying on deck in the stern. Startled by the sudden series of explosions, he thought for a moment that a machine-gun had opened fire at short range, till he discovered that he was lying on the exhaust-pipe, the end of which was led up on deck!



## CHAPTER XV.

We reckoned that by this time we were some three miles from the creek, so we could hope that the roar of the engine would be inaudible to those on shore; sunrise on the 12th September was a little before 6 A.M., so that dawn should have found us still within view from the land. A kindly mist, however, came down and hid us till we were well out to sea. As soon as it was light enough we tried to declutch in order to transfer our kit from the dinghy to the tug. But the clutch was in bad order and would not come out. The alternative was to haul up the dinghy level with the tug, with the motor still running, and then to transfer all our goods and chattels on to the deck. It was a difficult task, but it was done. We then turned the dinghy adrift. This meant the gain of an additional two knots.

It now seemed as if our troubles really were nearing their end. The engine was running splendidly, the main tank was full to the brim; there was enough and to spare of lubricating oil, and in a barrel lashed to the deck in the stern was found some more paraffin. A beaker contained sufficient water to give us each a mugful. It was brackish, but nectar compared to the well-water which we had been drinking for the last fortnight. We also allowed ourselves some chupatties and a handful of raisins.

Our principal fear now was of being chased by one of the seaplanes which we thought to be stationed at Mersina, not many miles away. We had seen one on two occasions during our stay in the ravine. Time went on, however, and nothing appeared. Instead of looking behind us for a seaplane we began to look ahead, hoping to come across one of our own patrol boats. It says much for the deserted condition of those waters that during our fortnight on the coast and our voyage of about 120 miles to Cyprus we saw not a single boat save those five that we had seen in the creek.

Discussing the matter of the discovery of the loss of the motor-boat and the subsequent action of the crew, we came to the cheerful conclusion that probably the loss would not be divulged to the authorities for a considerable period. The rightful crew would know what to expect as a punishment for their carelessness, and would either perjure themselves by swearing that the boats had sunk at their moorings, or thinking discretion even better than perjury, disappear into the deserted hinterland through which we had marched. Should these two guesses be wrong, there was yet another course which we thought possible, though not so probable, for the crew to take. Thinking that the motor-boat and dinghy had drifted away, they would

not mention their disappearance till a thorough search had been made of all bays and creeks within a few miles of the locality.

The cherry of this delightful cocktail of fancy was very palatable; whatever else happened, the occupants of the lighter, agitated to the extreme and dinghyless, would have to swim ashore, and this thought amused us greatly.<sup>1</sup>

Now for a few words about the motor-boat. She was named the *Hertha*, and boasted both a Turkish and a German flag. In addition to her name she had the Turkish symbol for "2" painted large on either side of her bows. Broad in the beam for her 38 feet of length, she was decked in, and down below harboured a 50-h.p. motor. In the bows of the engine-room we found a couple of Mauser rifles dated 1915, with a few rounds of small-arm ammunition; some of the latter had the nickel nose filed off to make them "mushroom" on impact. We also discovered a Very's pistol, with a box of cartridges; trays of spanners and spare parts for the motor, and two lifebelts taken from English ships whose

names we have forgotten. On deck, immediately abaft the engine-room hatchway, was the steering-wheel, while farther astern was the barrel containing the extra paraffin, a can of lubricating oil, and various empty canisters.

Till noon the sea was sufficiently rough to be breaking continually over the bows, and three of the party were feeling the effect of the roll. To the rest, to be thus rocked in the cradle of the deep, borne ever nearer to freedom, was a sensation never to be forgotten. The motor was going splendidly, and we all took turns at the wheel, steering by the "sun-compass," and, with the exception of Cochrane, very badly.

By 1.30 P.M. we could recognise the dim outline of the high mountain-range of Cyprus: on the strength of this we each ate another two chupatties and a handful of raisins, finishing our meal with a quarter of a mugful of water.

But we were a trifle premature in our lavishness. Our troubles were not at an end, for half an hour later the engine began to fail, and, while Cochrane was below looking for the cause of the trouble, she petered out. The fault

<sup>1</sup> The following is an extract from a letter received from Lieut.-Colonel Keeling since we wrote the above: "At Adana I met the Turkish Miralai (= Brigadier-General)—Beheddin Bey—who was in command on the coast. He was fully expecting the party [*i.e.*, our party], and put all the blame on the men in the boat [*i.e.*, the lighter] to which the motor-boat was tied. These men were all Turks, the Germans being on shore. The loss of the motor-boat was discovered before dawn, and at dawn a hydroplane was sent out to look for her; but she only spotted a small boat a few miles out, presumably the boat with which they had towed the motor-boat to a safe distance before starting the engine. Beheddin Bey drew me a plan showing exactly how everything had happened."



was subsequently traced to the over-heating of one of the main shaft bearings, the oil feed-pipe to which had been previously broken, and had vibrated from its place. Having satisfied himself that no serious damage was done, Cochrane decided to wait half an hour for the bearing to cool. During this time Old Man and Looney had a mid-sea bathe to refresh themselves, while Perce and Johnny tried to boil some water for tea. The fire was made on an iron sheet, on which some bights of chain were shaped into a cooking place for the big dixie. The roll of the boat, however, though very much less than in the morning, proved too great to allow the dixie to remain steady on the chain, so the idea of tea had to be abandoned. We now had leisure to observe the sea, and we decided that its colour was the most wonderful we had ever seen—a clear purple-blue.

When the bearing had cooled, we tried to start the engine again. One pair followed another on the starting-handle, but all to no purpose. All four sparking-plugs were examined: the feed-pipe, separator, and carburetter were taken down. Except for a little water in the separator, all seemed correct. We refilled the tank with paraffin from the barrel on deck, but our renewed attempts still met with no success. Our efforts to turn the crank became more and more feeble, until, by 4.30 P.M., we lay down on deck utterly exhausted.

Just before sunset we decided we would make a final attempt to start up. Should that be unsuccessful, we would set the sails; but to our great relief she fired at the second attempt. Our joy was somewhat tempered by her refusing to run for more than a few minutes at a time. It was found that this was caused by the feed-pipe from the tank repeatedly choking, owing, no doubt, to grit in the oil obtained from the barrel, which, as we had noticed when pouring it in, was very dirty.

After dark, Cochrane did all the steering; while down in the engine-room were Looney as mechanic, and Old Man and Johnny as starters. Meantime, Perce sat on deck with his feet through the hatchway against the clutch-lever below him. By jamming this hard down and tapping the clutch with a hammer, it was possible to persuade the cones to separate when required. For over four hours we spent our time starting and stopping. Our two best runs lasted for thirty and thirty-five minutes. Usually a run lasted for five or less. We took it in turns to tap the feed-pipe with a piece of wood, in the hope of keeping it from clogging; but it was of little use. Each time the engines stopped, Looney took down the separator and feed-pipe and blew through them, getting a mouthful of paraffin for his pains. When all was ready again, the two starters, though almost dead-beat, managed somehow to turn the crank.

By 10 P.M. we were becoming desperate. It was only Cochrane's cheering news that we were within two hours' run of the coast that kept the engine-room staff going. A run of five minutes meant a mile nearer home, so we carried on.

An hour later, Cochrane told us all to sit on the starboard side, for it was on this side that the feed-pipe left the tank. This was sheer genius on his part. From that very moment the wilful engine behaved herself, and ran obediently till we meant her to stop. As we neared the coast, at a distance, perhaps, of three miles from it, Nobby fired off a Very's light, in case there were any patrol boats in the neighbourhood; but no answering light appeared. Next day, in Cyprus, we asked the police if they had seen the light. They had not seen it, they said, but had heard it. This proves how wonderfully sound travels over water, for we would not for one second doubt a policeman's story. But, as is hardly necessary to point out, a Very's signal, like little children, should be seen and not heard.

Having had only our memories of the bearing and distance to Cyprus from Rendezvous X to guide us, we had worked out in the ravine that the bearing on which we had to steer would be S. 50° W. On sighting the island in the afternoon, we had found that this was too much to the west, so Cochrane had altered the course to make for the western end of the high

range of mountains visible about due south of us. When a couple of miles from the shore we turned eastwards, and moved parallel to the coast, on the look-out for a good anchorage, if possible, near a village. Finally, about a hundred yards from the shore, we dropped anchor in a wide bay.

On leaving Yozgad each of our party had possessed a watch, but by this time only two were in working order, and those were Old Man's and Johnny's. As the chain rattled over the side, the latter looked at the time, to find that the hand once more pointed to the witching hour of midnight. This timepiece served its purpose well, for it was not till an hour later, when it had ceased to be so essential, that it shared the fate of most of its comrades and was broken. It was interesting to find later, on comparing the Old Man's watch with Cyprus time, that there was only two minutes' difference between them. We had checked our time occasionally by noticing when one of the "pointers" of the Great Bear was vertically beneath the Pole Star; the solar time when this occurred on any night had been worked out before we left Yozgad. Fairly accurate time-keeping was of importance, for on this depended the successful use of both the "sun-compass" and the star-charts.

And so we had reached Cyprus, but we were all in too dazed a condition to realise for the moment what



it meant; in fact, it took many days to do so. On arrival in the bay, Cochrane, with his keen sense of smell, had declared that there were cows not far off, and at about 3 o'clock we heard a cock crow. We said we would eat our hats, or words to that effect, if we did not have that bird for breakfast. There was not a single light on shore, and we had no idea whereabouts in Cyprus we had dropped anchor. As the stars disappeared in the coming light of dawn, we saw the coast more clearly. Then by degrees what we thought were ruins on the coast, rocks a couple of hundred yards east of us took form; later these proved to be the still occupied Greek monastery of Acropedi. Then a house or two near by stood distinct; then trees; and finally our eyes beheld not a mile away a large village, boasting churches, mosques, and fine buildings set in trees, and beyond a mountain-range rising sheer from the very houses.

With the first light came a man to the beach opposite us. We shouted to him in English, French, and Turkish, but he appeared not to understand. Soon he was joined by two or three others. Then they started arriving in tens and twenties, men, women, and children. Mounted gendarmes galloped down. We shouted ourselves hoarse, but to no purpose. We tried several times to start up the motor, but we could not turn the handle. Finally Cochrane

jumped overboard in a shirt borrowed for the occasion, as it was longer and less tern than his own. He must have felt still rather undressed for the ordeal, as when he reached the water he shouted for his hat, which we threw to him. Clothed thus he swam towards the shore. In two feet of water his courage gave way, and his modesty made him sit down. So situated he harangued the crowd.

Finally there appeared a gendarme who understood English. He said there was an English police officer in the village which was named Lapethos; so, borrowing a pencil and a piece of paper, Cochrane wrote a note to the Englishman reporting our arrival. He explained to the gendarme that we wanted to bring the boat ashore, but that we could not start the engine. When this was understood several men at once stripped and swam out to the rest of us. Cochrane came back smoking a cigarette, which he passed round when he got on board. The Cypriotes too brought cigarettes perched behind their ear like a clerk's pencil, and these we smoked with great appreciation. The scheme was for us to weigh the anchor, give the men towing-ropes, and they would then pull the boat in-shore. The men, though small, were well built. As they had started swimming almost before they could walk, it was no hardship for them to tow our heavy vessel. Laughing and shouting, they pulled us along until they thought a rest would be



pleasant, then they came on board again. They shouted now and then in sheer lightness of heart; they were very cheery fellows. We were not towed straight inshore, but to a small natural jetty a hundred and fifty yards west of us along the beach.

Here we stepped on British soil, eight thin and weary ragamuffins. We know our hearts gave thanks to God, though our minds could not grasp that we were really free.

Our story is nearly at an end, though we have yet to bring our eight travellers to England. Should our already distressed readers hope against hope that the two authors will be torpedoed long before arriving there, we will put an end to any such fond anticipations by telling them truthfully that we were not. In order, however, to soothe in a small way their injured feelings, let us divulge the fact that we, with all but two of the party, spent several days ill in hospital before we reached home. One nearly died from malignant malaria, doubtless caused by the bites of the mosquitoes on the Turkish coast.

Having given the reader this sop we will continue. Surrounded by a large but kindly crowd, we sat down on the rocks above the natural jetty on which we had landed, and waited for an answer to Cochrane's note. In the meanwhile a gift arrived from the monastery—a basket containing bread, cheese, olives, and pomegranates. No lark's

tongues, nor the sunny halves of peaches, have ever been so welcome, and we had a wonderful meal, finishing with clean sweet water and cigarettes. About half an hour later an officer, in what looked to us then extraordinarily smart uniform, came down to see why this crowd had collected, and on hearing our story conducted us to the village. The road led through orchards whose trees were heavy with pomegranates and figs; past vineyards and banana palms, tobacco plants and cotton. Everywhere we could see the signs of a fertile prosperous land, and it struck us forcibly how different it all was from the barren tracts through which we had toiled down to the coast of Asia Minor. No more vivid testimony could be borne to the contrast between British and Turkish sovereignty.

The officer with us did not belong to the police, but was on survey work in the island. We were taken, however, to the barracks of the Cyprus Mounted Police, and here, seated on chairs on the verandah, we were given coffee with sugar in it. Everything seemed wonderful. We could smoke as much as we wanted, and the barracks were scrupulously clean and tidy. One by one we went into the garden near a whitewashed well, and were shaved by one of the C.M.P. After a good wash, we brushed our hair for the first time for over five weeks. All that time we had had to be satisfied with a comb. As



soon as Lieutenant S—— of the Police arrived, we were taken upstairs to have breakfast, and right royally did we feast. The meal ended, we were given the 'Lapethos Echo,' which contained Haig's and Foch's communiqués of the 9th September. These too were wonderful, and we were greatly amazed by the change which had come over the main battle front since we saw the last paper at Yozgad before we left; then the Germans were, so we were to believe, knocking at the gates of Paris.

After breakfast a hot bath and clean clothes were provided for each of us, our rags being collected in a corner with a view to their cremation. A Greek doctor anointed us with disinfectant, and banded anything we had in the way of sores or cuts.

At about 3 P.M. two carriages arrived and our triumphal progress continued. We first paid a final visit to the motor-boat, collecting our few trophies in the way of rifles and flags. This done, we were driven to Kyrenia, a coast town eight or nine miles to the east of us—the police officer and Greek doctor stopping the carriages at every roadside inn to regale us with Turkish delight and iced water. At Kyrenia we were expected by the British residents, who accommodated us for the night and treated us with the truest British hospitality. Our sensations in finding ourselves once more between sheets in a spring-bed are more easily imagined than described. Late

next morning, after a bathe in the sea and when many snapshots of the party had been taken, we were driven off in a motor-lorry, by Captain G—— of the A.S.C., to Famagusta, the port of Cyprus on the eastern coast. It was an eighty-mile drive, and what with stopping at Nikosia for lunch and at Larnaka for tea, we did not reach Famagusta and the mess of the Royal Scots, who had kindly offered us a home, till 9 P.M.

All the recollections of our four days' stay in Cyprus are of the pleasantest description, as were those also of our voyage to Egypt in two French trawlers. As much cannot be said of the fortnight we spent in Port Said, where we passed the first night sleeping on the sand in a transit camp and most of the rest in hospital—nor of our ten days in a troop train crossing Italy and France. During this time we learnt—what perhaps we needed to be taught—that we were after all the least important people in the world. But to tell of these adventures in detail would be to fill another book. Suffice it to say that we were sustained by a few comic episodes: on one occasion, in Italy, we spent five minutes talking Italian, based on slender memories of school-day Latin, to men in another troop train, before we discovered that they were Frenchmen. On another, in France, we remember opening a conversation in French with our engine-driver, who proved to be an American.

At length, on the 16th Oct-

ober 1918, five of our party reached England together,—preceded by Cochrane, who had managed to arrange for a seat in a “Rapide” across Europe, and followed by the Old Man and Nobby, who had had to remain in hospital in Egypt for another fortnight.

Soon after arrival in England, each of us had the very great honour of being individually received by His Majesty the King. His kindly welcome and sympathetic interest in what we had gone through will ever remain a most happy recollection.

Finally, we arranged a dinner for all our party, the date fixed being 11th November. This, as it turned out, was Armistice Night, and with that night of happy memories, and a glimpse of the eight companions once again united, we will draw the tale of our adventures to a close.

There is one note, however, which we feel we must add before laying down our pens. Many of our readers will have already realised that there was something more than mere luck about our escape. St Paul, alluding to his adventures in almost the very same region as that traversed by us, describes experiences very like our own. Like him, we were “in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, . . . in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea; . . . in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fast-

ings often, in cold and nakedness.”

To be at large for thirty-six days before escaping from the country, to have been so frequently seen, sometimes certainly to have aroused suspicion, and yet to have evaded recapture, might perhaps be attributed to Turkish lack of organisation. Our escape from armed villagers; our discovery of wells in the desert, of grain in an abandoned farmhouse, and of the water (which just lasted out our stay) in the ruined wells on the coast; and finally, the timely reappearance of the motor-tug with all essential supplies for the sea voyage,—any one even of these facts, taken alone, might possibly be called “luck,” or a happy coincidence; taken in conjunction with one another, however, they compel the admission that the escape of our party was due to a higher Power.

It would seem as if it were to emphasise this that on at least three occasions, when everything seemed to be going wrong, in reality all was working out for our good. Our meeting with and betrayal by the two “shepherds” ought, humanly speaking, to have proved fatal to the success of our venture: we had thrown away valuable food, and were committed to crossing a desert which previously, without a guide, we had looked upon as an impassable obstacle. And yet we know now that it would have been entirely beyond us to have reached the coast by the



route which we had mapped out to Rendezvous X, and that it was only the deflection from our proposed route caused by this rencontre which brought the land journey within our powers of endurance. It was the same when we were forced, against our will, to replenish supplies at a village; the breakdown of one of the party which compelled us to do so undoubtedly saved us from making an impossible attempt to reach the coast with the food which remained at the time. Still more remarkable was our failure to take the rowing-boat on the night of 10th/11th September, which resulted in the motor-tug falling into our hands and being the final means of our escape on the night following.

We feel then that it was a Divine intervention which brought us through. It was in addition an answer to prayer. Throughout the preparations

for escape every important step was made a matter of prayer; and when the final scheme was settled, friends in England were asked, by means of a code message, to intercede for its success. That message, we now know, was received and very fully acted upon. We had also friends in Turkey who were interceding for us; and on the trek it was more than once felt that some one at home or in Turkey was remembering us at the time. To us, then, the hand of Providence was manifest in our escape. We see in it an answer to prayer. Our way, of course, might have been made smoother, but perhaps in that case we should not have learnt the same lessons of dependence upon God. As it was, it was made manifest to us that, even in these materialistic days, to those who can have faith, "the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save."

## OPPORTUNITY.

BY DOUGLAS WALSH.

OSMAN'S father was a *hammal*, and he really could carry a piano on his back. That has nothing to do with the story, but I simply can't leave it out. The sight of Osman père staggering with a piano through the streets of Salonica is one of my most vivid memories of the Balkans. He was incredibly bent and filthy—five feet two if straightened out, which he never was, and three feet nine with the piano on his back. His clothes were rags, many-coloured and astonishingly thick. The temperature varied between twenty degrees of frost and ninety odd in the shade, but the costume was always the same. It was only the British who undressed into "shorts" for the heat. Summer and winter, Osman père wore a red cummerbund several yards long, thick baggy underclothes, and thick patched trousers on top, a shapeless upper garment of a carpet-like material, and a fez.

So much for Osman's father.

I know very little about his mother. Women don't matter in the Balkans. It is safe, however, to assert that whatever else she might be, she was no "moon of delight." Also that she worked much harder than either the *hammal* or his son. Osman père would see to that.

The family residence was situated in the Turkish quarter.

There was no bath h. and c., or any other convenience whatsoever. Drawing-room, dining-room, morning-room, and bedrooms were all thrown into one . . . nine feet by seven. It was, in short, what plain-spoken folks would have called a shed, or a British house agent have advertised as "a self-contained maisonette, convenient of access to the City." You stepped out of the front door—not too boldly, or you might step into the mansion across the way—held your nose as you turned right, and fifty paces brought you to the top of Venizelos Street, the hub of the universe.

There was very little furniture in Osman's home. The floor was earth, and the three beds were "made" direct upon it. One was occupied by Osman, one by his sister, and one by his father and mother. Each had a pile of rags for a mattress, and each was covered with a greasy, ragged eider-down—for purposes of concealment rather than additional warmth. Under the quilt on number one was a French horse-cloth; number two boasted a long Italian cavalry cloak; and number three, the marital couch, sported a British Army blanket.

There were no chairs or seats of any description. In the *hammal's* domicile, one lived as one slept . . . on the floor. Everything was on the floor,



even the family's spare garments: for as there were neither pegs nor nails in the walls, there was no other place for them. The only actual article of furniture was a table, ten inches high, sometimes used for meals.

A poor home . . . but rich in love and insect life.

Stove or range there was none. Bread was begged in war-time from Johnny (*anglicè*, Tommy)—beautiful white cake-like stuff—a great treat, however stale. French bread was even better, but most difficult to obtain. Frenchmen do not give readily to enemies. Johnny is different. Even old women can get things out of Johnny. . . .

When absolutely unavoidable, bread was also bought in dark flat round loaves in the shops—dingy open-fronted places with public ovens for those who could afford such things. All the *hammal's* cooking, however, was done outside, among the smells, in a copper pan over a wood fire. Roasts were unknown. *When* there was meat, it was stew. Strings of bright red paprika, for flavouring purposes, hung to dry on the outside walls, gave the establishment a sort of meretricious decoration. In the driest corner inside there was also a heap of ripening maize-cobs, some day to become bread when money was short.

The roof leaked, and nobody thought of trying to mend it, or minded that the rain made the house a welter of slimy mud. Allah was Good, and

the sun was hot. The floor soon dried. The one window was broken and stuffed with rags. Allah was Great, but glass was dear.

The landlord, a Spanish Jew, had forgotten or never learned the Turkish word for "repairs." But he always remembered "rent."

Furtively one spat upon his infidel shadow on the pavement in front of his draper's shop in the Rue Ignatia—but one paid, all the same, in cash or kind.

The "kind" consisted in Osman, a boot-black, daily cleaning the landlord's shoes, and the *hammal* doing all his portage. The difference was made up in drachmae.

Life was always dear, and food was always scarce, but both were dearer and scarcer now that all these foreign soldiers and unbelievers had got themselves between the Faithful and the Sun. They brought much money—and of course one got what one could; but a *hammal* and a boot-black had few chances of fleeing them. . . . Everything had gone up. Allah was great and Mahomed was his prophet, but prices were painfully high and the feasts of the Faithful were unworthy of His goodness.

The mother and sister worked in the fields, walking four miles each way to Kalamaria morning and evening in the season. The sister, Fatima—

But this is Osman's story, so enough of his family.

He was eighteen in 1917—a handsome, dark-eyed, lazy

youth, who thought much of women and little of work. His profession, that of a boot-black, was chosen because in that easy occupation one could loll in the sun, look at the women, and earn a few leptae when necessity drove. Most lads drifted on to something else before eighteen, but Osman found it difficult to discover another opening suitable to his temperament.

He was not without education. He could read with difficulty, if compelled; and write, with his tongue out, if writing were absolutely unavoidable—or profitable. His arithmetic, however, was faulty. In the matter of giving change he invariably made an error in his own favour. Sometimes he was kicked for it; sometimes it came off—especially with the British. He was not alone in this foible. Malaria, murder, and wrong change appear to be indigenous to the Balkan soil.

He spoke Turkish, modern Greek, and "Macedonski" fluently (especially the bad bits), though Turkish was the only tongue he had learned during his brief period at school. He also, as a result of the war which, so far as he was concerned, began in October 1915, when the Allies landed at Salonica, spoke Franco-British when opportunity offered. . . .

This language is even simpler than Esperanto, and for the wealth of meanings concentrated in single words it knocks spots off Chinese. Its vocabulary is ten words

all told, and numbers are by fingers. "Feenish" is its foundation and principal word. What "finish" can be made to mean, space forbids me to try to tell. Suffice it to record that you say "Feenish" to a Frenchman and "Feenish Johnny" to a Britisher, whether he is a brigadier or a corporal. Further detailed investigations must be left to the philologists. I really must get on with the story.

Osman's opportunity arose on the day of the Great Fire—which started in the afternoon of Saturday, August 18, 1917. A gentleman in a residence very similar to Osman's father's was frying aubergine in oil. The pan overturned—and the fat was in the fire.

It so happened that one of the miseries of the climate—the Vardar wind—was very much in evidence at the time. This wind is a persistent powerful blast that "carries on" at intervals all the year round for three or four days at a stretch. It is damnable in the cold weather and disgusting in the hot. Sleep is difficult on account of the racket, and tents and tempers are torn to shreds. Anything more ideal for fanning a fire on a hot August afternoon it would be hard to imagine.

The gentleman whose ordinary clumsiness was to render a hundred thousand people homeless took to his heels, and even so the fire almost caught him. The whole of the Ghetto and most of the Turkish quarter were involved with unbelievable rapidity. These nests of



hovels crowded together in narrow snaky streets, mainly constructed of wood, half-rotten and baked tinder-dry by the sun, were easy prey. They welcomed their devourer. They flashed into fire in strings and passed it on with a roar and a hiss. Whole streets burst into flame at a time.

Salonica had previously been burned down on fourteen other occasions — and the fifteenth found her armed only with a few hand-pumping engines, one dated "Sun Fire Office, 1710." The fire smiled — and burnt them!

Osman, seated at his ease on the pavement of the Place de la Liberté, heard about the fire and went on rolling a cigarette, just as the British and French officers and nurses in the famous café opposite went on suctioning lemon squashes and eating ices. It was very hot—Allah was great—and it would be hotter at a fire.

But gradually the fire forced itself on Osman's attention. Refugees began to flock down to the sea-front close by. A procession of sewing-machines, wardrobes, mattresses, and bedsteads streamed steadily past him. He rejoiced that his father must be having a very busy afternoon. Allah was good, and the fire was good—for *hammals*. Dispassionately he watched one, half-hidden by a huge wardrobe with a mirror-door, collide with another carrying a huge brass German bedstead. Both the *hammals* rolled over, and

when they arose the mirror in the door was no more. Osman made a mental note of one of the expressions used. It was something that had never occurred to him, and he liked its piquant pointedness.

He used it almost at once—to an English Sister who blundered into him and his boot-box in her endeavour to avoid the distracted overlaiden refugees.

She smiled and begged his pardon.

Then she noticed that he was young and lithe and had beautiful dark eyes and long thin hands.

"Go and help!" she said, pointing in the direction of the fire. "Poor things! Go and help!"

He called her a Daughter of Shame, and went into details, laughing with pleasure at the thought of what she would look like if she understood. This was his one joke, which he never wearied of playing on these foolish foreigners.

The Sister passed on, saying to the officer who was with her—

"Oh, why don't the British take charge! *Look* at that poor woman over there with the baby!"

The woman had a child in one arm, and a sewing-machine, the treasure of treasures, dangling from the other. On her head she was balancing a bundle, and tied on her back was a small toilet looking-glass. Both she and the baby were crying noisily, and had evidently become separated

from the rest of her family and her household gods.

Almost crying with pity, the Sister snatched away the sewing-machine and signed to the officer to take the bundle. The woman roared more loudly than ever—and the Sister choked and laughed.

“Poor thing! She thinks we are robbing her!” she said, and took the woman’s arm to show that they did not mean to leave her.

They moved on together, and Osman grinned at the sight of the officer weighed down by the bundle the woman had carried on her head as makeweight.

“Those British!” he muttered contemptuously, his sense of decency outraged by the sight of a man carrying more than a woman.

No wonder they always took their change short if an officer could do such a silly thing as that!

But the incident woke Osman up. His Turkish lethargy fled as a thought flashed into his mind. Loot . . . there must be lots of loot if the fire wasn’t going to stop!

Leaving his box and his brushes in a shop doorway, he went up Venizelos Street, the centre of Salonica’s commercial life—then a narrow highway with crowded shops on either side where one could purchase almost anything one could think of at four times its value. . . . A street of salesmen who stood upon the pavement and said, “Souveneer, Johnny?” to M.T. majors and such like august beings,

But this afternoon they were not importuning the passers-by. They were packing up. For some hours they had comforted themselves with the thought that the fire would never cross the famous Rue Ignatia of the Romans. It would be confined to the Ghetto where it had started. The other chap’s house would be burned, but not theirs. But now they began to fear that their turn was coming.

Osman began to feel almost excited. Many curious things were happening all round him. Refugees carrying mattresses—another precious treasure that must be saved at all costs—would find them suddenly burst into flame on their backs. A spark flying in the Vardar wind had set them alight. Down went the mattress, dry and ready for burning like all else, and at once became the centre of another conflagration. Time and again he saw this happen, the wind catching up the smouldering flock and straw and cleverly dropping it upon some nicely sun-roasted roof that leapt into flame at once.

Struck by a sudden thought, he retraced his steps into the Rue Ignatia again and hurried to the shop of his father’s landlord. The buildings at the back were already in flames, and with a light of great satisfaction in those fine dark eyes of his, he dashed in.

There was nobody there. The landlord had fled terror-stricken.

Hastily Osman looked round for something worth having.



The place had been left with all its stock, and just as he had decided on a piece of bright red silk that would make him a lovely sash, and a bundle of lace for his sister, something hurt him.

"'Ere! None of that! Idey! Goo on! Idey out of this!" said the voice of a British military policeman, punctuating his observations with his cane.

"Feenish, Johnny! Feenish, Johnny!" whined Osman.

He was annoyed. These British! If a man couldn't rob his own landlord, who could he rob? And why wasn't the fool looting himself instead of preventing others? Pah! These unbelievers were mad. . . . All this stuff would be burnt in a minute, and here this pig was saying "idey," which he fondly believed meant sling your hook, and hitting him with his cane instead of making himself rich!

"Feenish, Johnny! Feenish, Johnny!" he wailed again, and fled.

Evidently it was too late for looting. Those grabbing British again! They had taken charge . . . annexed the fire!

He wandered into the Ghetto, or what was left of it. The Jews in their ancient costumes were all in the streets—weeping and wailing and gnashing their teeth. Dreadfully the women wrung their hands and cried their lamentations aloud; the children sobbed and ran hither and thither; the men raved and wept, now shaking their fists at the fire, now pleading humbly with the

driver of an ox-cart to take their goods next. That was the great cry, the cry that rose even above the roar of the flames and the wind—"Mine next! Mine next!"

This terrified noisy crowd, afraid to stay and yet unable to tear themselves away from their treasures, made the eyes of Osman gleam. But not with pity. Their tears and their imprecations left him cold. His hatred of their race was something deep within his blood, something beyond reason or explanation. For the first time in his life he was seeing a Jew too frightened even to bargain—and he liked the sight.

Rival families were clustered round the drivers of those long, narrow, springless ox-carts, with wooden spikes for sides, which are the chief means of transport in the Balkans. With many gesticulations, amid a copious flow of tears, they were imploring, screeching, and outbidding each other. And the drivers were making the most of their opportunity,—trust a Greek for that. For less than a hundred and fifty drachmae—six pounds—they would not stir, and often they got ten.

Osman, listening and watching, without ever thinking of lending a helping hand, thrilled with excitement. Fortunes were being made before his eyes. Thousands were also being ruined, but that did not interest him.

If only his father had an ox-cart, instead of being a mere *hammal* . . . what a splendid

day this would have been for their house!

The thought brought his family back to mind. What had happened to them, he wondered? He shrugged his shoulders. Their home must be cinders by now. Well, Allah be praised, they had no furniture to lose, and if his sister had not saved his horse-blanket there would be trouble when next they met! This was a day when it was more comforting to be poor than to have great possessions.

An extra noisy altercation attracted his attention. An ox-cart had returned from a trip followed by a furious Jewess. It seemed that some two hundred yards away, in turning a corner, the cart had toppled over and the goods had been shot upon the pavement. The driver had refused to reload. He contended that he had fulfilled his bargain. The things had been moved. It was no concern of his that in half an hour they would be loked up by the flames and might just as well have stayed in the house. So far as he was concerned the transaction was finished, and he was now ready to move some more! The Jewess spluttered with indignation. She shook her fists, she screamed, and her whole body was bathed in perspiration. Pointedly she accused the Greek of having overturned the cart on purpose. Her husband, arriving belatedly because of the difficulty of tearing himself away from the pile of his treasures in the roadway, joined in with threats and

objurgations, which tailed off into cringing and whining and the offer of more money. But the driver ignored them blandly as he struck another bargain; and his new customer angrily kicked them away.

Osman nodded appreciatively. Dog was eating dog—and he liked it. By Allah! this was a day!

From other noisy disputes going on around him he gathered that several more of these ox-cart drivers had tumbled to the game, and were playing the same heartless trick on their distracted victims.

He was so interested that he had forgotten to attend to the fire. In spite of the heat and the roar and the smoke, so terrible was their anxiety about their possessions that people kept forgetting to watch the fire—till with a sudden spurt it came upon them. Then there followed a wild stampede for safety and a final panic-stricken abandonment of all they had in the world.

There was a shower of sparks, so near and so startling that a pair of phlegmatic oxen incontinently bolted—and their driver, taken by surprise, was knocked down and run over before Osman's eyes. The disputing groups broke and fled. The other ox-carts were hurriedly driven off, as on each side of the street the houses burst into flame.

Neither Osman nor anybody else made the slightest effort to assist the man who had been knocked down. Either he would burn where he lay,



or else he would revive and stagger into safety for himself. That was as Allah willed. Osman ran after the oxen.

Thought with him was a subconscious process—a matter of instinct rather than of words or reasoning. He knew as he ran that his opportunity was upon him—and said something very crushing about the graves of the fathers of a man who blundered into him with a plush-covered chair and a spring-mattress.

Nobody took any notice of him. All were too absorbed in their own affairs. He caught and stopped the frightened oxen, turned them, and led them back to the fire-region again. But not in case their injured master might have recovered and be looking for them!

The sound of a motor-horn made him hop out of the way with a disgusted, angry snarl. Those British! See what they were doing now! They had brought their motor-lorries to help the enemy by moving his furniture—for nothing!

Pityingly he glanced Above. Almost he doubted the greatness and the goodness of Allah for the first time in his life. Did ever any one hear the like? Spoiling such an excellent market—moving the furniture of those who were technically their foes, free of charge!

He spat scornfully at the wheels of a 30-cwt. Daimler laden with bedding and women and children.

Was there no limit to the wickedness of these Unbelievers?

Shuddering, he watched a

British soldier give an old woman a piece of chocolate to stop her crying! By the Beard of the Prophet, these people were truly mad!

“Idey! Idey boss!” said the stern voice of a British officer in his ear—meaning “get that damned thing out of the way, can’t you?” (Truly it is a wonderful language!)

Osman passed on to another street. There were plenty to choose from, and the climax of his contempt had been reached. Allah! What next? Look! Behold!! See!!! A dozen British officers . . . officers! . . . loading half a dozen lorries with furniture! With their own hands—rushing in and out of the houses . . . working—officers!—like *hammals*!—with idle women standing by!

For nothing! Officers . . . working . . . shifting other people’s furniture—for nothing!

He felt that he understood now how it was that his compatriots had hurled them from Gallipoli and slain half a million of them before they pushed the rest into the sea. No wonder the Germans were in Paris, and London was bombed to ashes!

But to business—to business!

He turned into a street inhabited by better-class Jews, with the top half already in the grip of the fire.

A greasy old man in a fur coat seized him by the arm: half a dozen women clung to the spikes at the side of the ox-cart he was taking care of; Shylock, *in propria persona*,

danced in front of him; and three wailing, buxom young Jewesses shrieked at him from the pavement.

He stood still.

The fire roared, the wind whistled, and everybody screeched at him and his ox-cart at once.

"Peace!" said Osman, the master of them all.

Only the fire and the wind disobeyed.

"One hundred drachmae!" said Osman, beginning modestly.

"I'll give one-fifty!" panted a fat Jewess, holding out the notes.

"Two hundred!" shrieked Shylock and the three girls together.

"Two-fifty!" shouted the man who still had him by the arm.

"It is a bargain!" said Osman—and the money was in his hand in greasy notes almost as soon as the words were out of his mouth.

"Three hundred!" wailed Shylock.

But he was too late. The other man with a frantic "Here!" had dragged Osman into his house, and the two of them, assisted by the wife and two daughters, began to load the vehicle in panic haste.

To move furniture is not the easiest of tasks at any time. But on a sweltering August evening, with a holocaust threatening to engulf one at any moment, and with a hot blast blowing smoke-clouds in gusts in one's face and sparks flying all around, it is wonder-

ful what miracles of speed can be achieved.

True, a good deal of damage resulted from lack of method. To place a sewing-machine on the top of a pile of china is not good for the china. The legs of a table should not be allowed to come into contact with a mirrored overmantel, and pictures are better over than under a heavy brass bedstead.

Still . . . the great thing was to get the goods on, and on they were got, higgledy-piggledy, to a steady accompaniment of female wailing and manly vituperation, splintering wood and smashing glass.

The worse the cart was packed, the better Osman was pleased; the higher the load, the more easily that long narrow vehicle would overturn. He offered not the slightest objection when on top of the whole unsteady jumble a large heavy wardrobe was finally dumped.

The crude springless cart moved off over the uneven cobbles, accompanied by the terror-stricken family. Perilously lurched the badly-packed, top-heavy load, and Osman, with two hundred and fifty drachmae safe in the pocket of his baggy breeches, praised Allah in his heart.

A hundred and fifty yards or so they travelled, and then turned a corner too sharply. One wheel mounted the pavement: the load rocked, the Jewesses screamed, the Jew made a frantic effort to steady the wardrobe, and then the whole cart turned over, bury-



ing the Jew beneath his own furniture.

The women wrung their hands. But Osman shouted to them angrily, and, half stupefied with terror and anxiety, they assisted him to lift the cart into an upright position again.

Then, while they were getting the Jew out from under the wardrobe and a heap of miscellaneous articles piled on top of him—Osman made off.

He had earned his two hundred and fifty drachmae—ten pounds in half an hour!

There was no difficulty in obtaining a fresh load. Three hundred drachmae—fifteen pounds—changed hands, and a mixed assortment of the wares of a curio-dealer and his household gods were recklessly flung on to the ox-cart.

"Quick! quick!" panted the perspiring dealer.

"We shall be burned! We shall be burned!" shouted his wife monotonously.

The pair dashed in and out, the husband seeking to save his stock, the wife concerned solely for her furniture.

This time Osman stood at the head of his oxen.

The husband dumped an armful of antique brass-ware on to the heap; the wife added a collection of dirty cooking utensils. Valuable Persian carpets fought for a place with the bedding. Antique pottery mixed itself up with toilet sets—and a heavy tin trunk smashed the lot.

All the while the man and the woman quarrelled violently about what should be saved.

In a passion the wife snatched off a bundle of ancient embroidery and threw it in the gutter, putting a heap of cheap framed Austrian lithographs in its place.

"These Jews! How badly they manage their women!" thought Osman, shocked.

"Enough! I go!" he said majestically, and the cart moved off.

Four minutes later it was overturned.

"Alas! You packed them so badly!" said Osman in response to their reproaches.

The man danced before him and threatened to pull his nose. The woman offered him another twenty-five drachmae.

He shook his head.

"Fifty!" said the man.

Osman shrugged his shoulders and was about to move on to his next victim when . . . those British again!

Pah! Why could not these dogs live and let live?

"Hullo! Upset the whole caboodle?" said a cheery voice. "Put your back into it, mother, and we'll soon have them on again!"

Impotently Osman had to stand by while, assisted by a couple of interfering Johnnies, the things were repacked.

"Shoved 'em on in too much of a 'urry, you did!" said the other one, wiping his heated brow. "They won't come off this time!"

Quite unaware of the fact that all their ancestors for fifty generations in arrear and seventy-five generations ahead had been fluently accursed, they passed on cheerily to lend



a helping hand somewhere else.

"Fine fellows, these British!" said the Jew dealer.

Osman grunted.

The goods were deposited on the Monastir road, another little pile among several hundred others, each guarded by a grief-stricken family. Women were rushing about calling frantically for missing children. In the place of the roar of the fire there rose a chorus of means and sobs and wails that made even Osman feel uncomfortable.

He hurried back for another load.

He got three hundred drachmae again from a young, highly-scented, golden-haired lady dressed in pale blue silk and carrying a big fur cloak on her arm. For safety's sake she was wearing all her jewelry, and as she was filthily dirty, like every one else near the fire, the effect was distinctly bizarre.

A brocade-and-gilt settee, a set of gilt chairs, an ormolu console, a bundle of silk curtains, four fine rugs, an amazing bed, a washstand and a wardrobe, three "art" flower-pots and a big dress basket, were got upon the ox-cart with Osman's assistance, rendered on account of the scent. And then she wanted a grand piano added to the lot.

Osman explained—and the lady swore.

"But it is impossible!" he protested.

The lady swore some more.

"I cannot lift it! It would

break the cart! Be reasonable, madame!" he pleaded.

"You must come back for it then!" she compromised.

"Yes, yes," he promised—and off they went.

At the first corner there was trouble—but not the trouble Osman expected. As the cart rose, the lady seized the spikes at the sides in her grimy bejewelled hands, and by sheer weight of body and quickness of mind prevented it from overturning.

"Limb of the Devil! Do that again and I will tear out thine eyes!" said the lady, suggestively working her long tapering fingers.

Osman sighed resignedly. Kismet! It was written. This lead also must be taken the full journey!

However, he spilt the three following. Then, when even his baggy breeches were becoming small for all the notes he was stuffing into them, he carried six more loads without attempting any trickery.

Those British again! Night had long since fallen, though for once no Muezzin had summoned the Faithful to evening prayer. The tall white minarets stood in a sea of flame. Their metal tops were all melted, though, astonishing to relate, their masonry was unharmed. Father Time, afraid of getting his beard singed, had fled with the refugees. Even darkness could not come near that ghastly scene. For miles around earth and sky were brilliant with an eerie, glowing light. . . . And those



British were everywhere now—soldiers and sailors too, and the French as well. The military authorities had formally taken the business over. Rather late in the day a systematic effort was being made to cope with the fire. To Osman's disgust there were troops all over the place, and it was not safe to go in for any more hanky-panky with so many sharp-eyed heavy-booted soldiers about.

The course of the fire, its freaks and its ravages, and how it finally stayed itself rather than was stayed, were matters of no interest to Osman, and therefore have no place in this story. He was concerned only with his Opportunity. His mind was not overcast by the noisy sorrows of its hundred thousand victims. Even their frantic, foolish efforts to save *something* of their possessions, preferably the most bulky or the most useless, moved him to wrath rather than tears. He was annoyed because they created so much confusion and crowding in the streets, and by getting in his way reduced the yield of his harvest.

[I can't help it. There he is. . . . And perhaps, when one comes to think of it, he isn't so very much worse than some of those butchers and bakers who were poor men in 1914, and now run Rolls-Royces, and thank God that nobody can call *them* Profit-eers!]

At three in the morning, when the oxen were so weary

that it was difficult to get them to move, and when he—a Turk—had been working steadily for seven hours on end, he took toll of his earnings.

Two thousand three hundred drachmae—ninety-two pounds!

He—Osman, the son of the *hammal*—had ninety-two pounds in his pocket!

Honestly come by! . . . Not looted—earned by the sweat of the oxen he had taken care of.

*Somebody* had had to look after them. They would have been burned to death, or have rushed into the sea, if it hadn't been for him!

As an honest man, he had no intention of keeping them. Their owner might not be dead, and might recognise them. . . . It is difficult to alter a brand. Food would be very scarce after this fire, and oxen had big appetites. . . . Having saved them from destruction, the only honest thing to do was to hand them over to the authorities, and let them keep them till their driver or his family claimed them.

Those Greeks, . . . those gendarmes—always so quick with a kick and a cuff for a poor Turkish lad—they would ask many questions. . . . By Allah! they might even search him. . . . Well, well, perhaps the most sensible thing to do would be simply to walk away. . . . Of course, somebody else might steal them; but what did that matter, so long



as he was an honest man himself?

Mark the influence of the Root of all Evil! Osman, the son of the *hammal*, possessed now of ninety-two pounds, had at once begun to think subjectively.

With a parting kick at the nearest of the two tired oxen, he walked away, leaving them supperless to whatever Fate might have in store for them.

Allah was Great—all-knowing, all-mighty, and all-bountiful!

## II.

Hungry and tired, but more tired than hungry, so that the tiredness needed attention first, Osman wandered eastwards along the front, seeking a spot on which to lie down and rest. But every garden and shed, every open space, and every courtyard and alley, was crowded that night with human misery and odds and ends of furniture and drapery.

Systematically he searched among the sleepers-out for a corner into which he could squeeze. The night was hot and oppressive. Motor-cars and lorries were hurrying to and fro. Away back in the commercial centre the fire was still raging, though, thanks more to a change of wind than to good management, it was now under control. The air was heavy with heat and noise. But, worn out with sorrow and overstrain, the refugees slept, huddled in the queerest attitudes—men, women, and children, strangers and families, Mohammedans, Jews, and Christians all jumbled together.

Osman sighed with self-pity as he regarded them. He had ninety-two pounds in his breeches and nowhere

to lay his head. There wasn't an inch for him anywhere. Hundreds of others were in the same plight, but that was nothing to do with him.

Disconsolately he wandered along, following the crowd, mainly women and children overloaded with babies and sewing-machines. There seemed to be purpose in their dragging gait, and his spirits rose as they reached a British camp at Kalamaria. The camp was lit up. It buzzed with talk and movement. Ahead of him he could see more women and children pouring in.

"'Ere—Idey!" said a sentry. "Not you, sonny!"

Osman almost wept. He took in the situation at once. All those tents and these long low wooden buildings had been given up by those fool-British to the women and children. Look at them streaming by in their hundreds—look at them having their parcels taken from them—being given blankets and hot tea and bread and jam. . . . While he—a man! footsore and starving, was to be driven away like a dog! With ninety-two pounds in his pocket, too!

It was the saddest thing



that had ever happened to him!

"Munji, munji, Johnny!" he wailed, at the same time placing his head upon his hand to show that he wanted a bed as well as something to eat—he, a poor refugee, rendered homeless by this terrible fire.

"Finish! Finish!" said Thomas Atkins sternly. "Idey! Look at them pore wimmen and kids! Idey—Idey boss—you're blocking the way!"

Osman turned his back on the ununderstandable race. Doubtless Allah in his wisdom knew why such a people cumbered the earth, but it was beyond him. So he wandered wearily to the open ground behind, and cast himself down and slept.

He woke to glorious sunshine, with blue sea in the distance. Salonica was still smoking. His state was filthy. But the idea of washing off some of the fire-grime in the sea gleaming in front of him never entered his head. He set off at once in search of food.

A few inquiries soon informed him of the lie of the land. The British and the French had already joined forces with the municipality to feed and house the refugees. So, with ninety-two pounds in his pocket, he joined the long queue waiting at one of the appointed places for a free dole of bread. Each religion was attending to its own flock.

Why not? Why buy what one could get for nothing by a few lies and a little patience?

Ravenously and not very

prettily he devoured his portion in a mixed company engaged on the same task. In the midst of this absorbing occupation he heard a sharp cлик, and looked up.

A French officer had "snapped" the scene.

Osman glared at the camera and took another bite, at the same time pungently criticising the free coffee with which he had been supplied. It was only the Faithful who put enough sugar in coffee!

A bearded Turk beside him informed him solemnly that the fire had been deliberately started by the French and the British with the connivance of the Venizelists. The Allies were afraid of the Germans. Having beaten them in the West, the Kaiser was coming to help the Bulgarians to take Salonica; and so, to make it not worth William's while, and to avoid being kicked out of Salonica as the Turks had kicked them out of Gallipoli, they had burned the place down to save their faces. It was all as clear as day. That was why they were feeding them, of course, because they had done it on purpose.

Osman agreed, and told of the folly that gave even *old* women food and a bed last night and sent him empty away. This the bearded Turk regarded as direct confirmation of the correctness of his theory.

Growing weary of politics, and having finished his meal, Osman wandered down to the front. Casually he glanced at the smouldering ruins and the



amazing muddle of twisted iron that marked the sites of the Hotel Splendide, the Hotel Continental, and Flooa's, the chief of Saloica's cafés. Then he stared with sudden interest.

Almost in the heart of the fire one building had escaped the flames—a big new emporium, out of bounds to all Allied troops because it was an enemy concern. There it stood—a marble-faced, modern fire-proof building, imposingly solid and splendid—without even its iron shutters damaged . . . while all around it lay ruin and desolation.

"Allah is great!" murmured Osman. "His purpose is plain. . . . The Germans will win this war!"

The thing was an omen—unquestionable and convincing. . . .

Sneeringly he glanced at a group of French and British officers snapshotting the miracle.

"Those Dogs—and their Devil-boxes!" he muttered, hurrying out of range of the cameras.

A moment he paused near the big red Dennis fire-engine of the British, which was still throwing its powerful stream on the smoking debris. Then he sought a quiet place, noticing as he hurried on that an English Sister was "snapping" the firemen at their work.

He realised as he sank down in the shade that ever since he had awakened something had been troubling him. There was something on his mind,

something claiming his attention.

Not his father. The *hammal*, doubtless, had carried many burdens yesterday, and would find many more to carry to-day. Big fires were good for *hammals*.

Not the man whose oxen he had taken care of, or the oxen themselves. Allah was attending to them.

Not his mother and sister. If they had not had the sense to get one of the free tents and some of the free food, they were unworthy of his relationship.

Not his home—swallowed up with the rest. Not even his one possession, the French horse-blanket. Allah be praised! if his mother and sister had been foolish enough to let that be burnt, the French had plenty more.

No—none of these things. . . . His trouble was that ninety-two pounds!

It was a tremendous sum of money.

Two thousand three hundred drachmae.

Even at War prices he could buy a wife or two, a suit of real clothes, a silver cigarette-holder, a bellyful of sweetmeats, a walking-stick with a picture at the top and a tassel on the handle, a pair of patent-leather boots (if any had been left from the fire). . . . Oh! what was there that he had ever hankered for that he could not buy for himself to-day?

And yet . . . apart from the question of what remained to be bought after the fire—what



was there that he really desired to buy?

Restlessly he rolled a cigarette in those long fingers of his, and across those "beautiful dark eyes" the Sister had admired there flitted a shadow of bewilderment.

What did it mean? What was wrong?

He wanted none of these things.

With ninety-two pounds in his pockets, with all he had ever dreamed of within his reach, he desired . . . nothing!

It was too big a sum to be spent like that. It was a sum so big that he was positively afraid to break into it.

A *hammal* passed, bent almost double under the weight of a bale of salvaged merchandise, . . . his father.

Osman lay low, and gave no sign of recognition. He had no father . . . with ninety-two pounds in his pocket.

The morning passed, and by the afternoon he had bought only a slice of melon—paid for with coppers earned before the fire. The transaction had involved much abuse. The vendor had demanded twenty leptae—because of the fire. Yesterday a slice of melon had been ten leptae—a penny. Osman had expressed himself so eloquently on the subject of such shameless profiteering that he had got his slice for fifteen leptae—three half-pence . . . with ninety-two pounds hidden in his baggy breeches.

During the afternoon he

dropped off to sleep, and dreamed that he was a rich man with a motor-car. In the dream his sister Fatima stopped him and asked for alms, but he drove over her; and a military policeman (British) said "Idey!" and smote him with a cane where his money was not. And then he woke up, unmoved by his sister's fate, but relieved to find no military policeman there. That part of the dream had been so real.

He stretched himself and rose. He knew now what was the matter with him. He didn't want a silver cigarette-holder, or a bellyful of sweetmeats, or anything petty like that. He wanted to be rich and respected; wanted a motor-car—a real Ford, such as he had possessed in his dream. He wanted to be great—powerful, so that *hammals* like his father would orange at his feet . . . if it wasn't all too much trouble.

That two thousand three hundred drachmae had awakened within him—the boot-black, the *hammal's* son—the curse that the Cardinal charged Cromwell to fling away—Ambition.

He wanted to *sow* those drachmae, not spend them—sow them and reap a quick big harvest.

Click!

More officers were snapshotting the ruins.

Osman rolled another cigarette, and signed to a brigadier-general, seeing the sights, that he desired a light from the brigadier's cigarette, in ac-



cordance with the custom of the country.

Amazed and amused, the Great One complied.

"Merci, Johnny!" said Osman politely, and resumed his meditations.

Opportunity had come to him yesterday, and now, vaguely glimmering in the distance, he had an irritated feeling that it was beckoning to him again.

It was connected in some way with cameras. All day he had seemed to hear nothing but the click of cameras. The Allies were mad on cameras. French and British, officers and nurses, and even ordinary soldiers—they all had cameras, and they were all taking fire photographs. Never before had he heard so many shutters click.

An Australian Nursing Sister imperiously signed to him to get out of the way. She didn't want him in the "snap" she meant to send to Sydney (where the harbour is) of the havoc wrought by the Salonica fire. . . .

He was so interested in the thought that he was chasing in his brain, the vision he was trying to grasp, that he moved without making any remarks about her morals in Turkish.

Yes. . . . These Unbelievers were all photographing to-day—taking the ruins—the refugees—anything and everything connected with the fire. More would be doing the same to-morrow. It seemed that the men couldn't fight and the women couldn't nurse without cameras. . . . Allah be praised! It was clear that He—All-

wise and All-bountiful—had made such soldiers simply to be mopped up by the Faithful. . . . Warriors who carried cameras—no wonder they had run screaming from the Peninsula!

It was permitted in their army here, but not in France. Osman had learned that in Venizelos Street, listening to a conversation between two dealers. Practically all the shops that sold photographic materials were in Venizelos Street—and Venizelos Street was now ashes and bent iron-work.

He was getting hotter and hotter in every sense. With a graceful gesture he flung the perspiration from his forehead.

Two more cameras clicked excitedly.

They would soon use up all their films. Then they would want more. Officers and sisters and ordinary soldiers—they would all want films. . . . And the shops were burnt down. . . . They would pay anything—anything!—for these Unbelievers could never wait—they had no patience. . . . Allah had made them so in order that the Faithful might profit.

He had it! Ah! he had it at last. Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful, had granted him Light!

See! Truly the Finger of Allah or his Prophet was pointing! Behold—there—coming towards him, one of the dealers from Venizelos Street, a man whose boots he had cleaned time and again.



Respectfully Osman greeted the downcast merchant, and, immersed in his sorrows, the dealer talked — to a shoe-shiner.

Yes — he was ruined. All had gone.

Start again? Of course he wasn't thinking of starting again — not for months yet. His shop would have to be rebuilt first. And that depended on many things — whether the Allies would permit material to be sent, and when the Insurance Companies — all Allied concerns — would pay up. There were rumours — horrible rumours. . . . The fire was said to be of enemy origin, an Act of War, . . . and if so . . . The Greek shuddered, quite unable to finish such a dreadful sentence.

Where would he get his new stock from? Osman inquired, looking away.

Alexandria, of course — or Malta. There were wholesale depots at each of those places. From both perhaps.

Send the money? Of course he would send the money when he had it to send. . . . There was no credit in this accursed War. Because of the submarines one had to send cheques in duplicate.

What was a cheque?

Oh . . . a cheque, of course.

But what was the use of talking? There would be no business for months and months. Salonica — everybody was ruined. . . . It all depended on the Insurance Companies. He was a Venizelist. They were all Venizelists since the fire. These Insurance

Companies were Allied concerns.

With a gesture of despair the dejected dealer passed on.

Osman flicked some more perspiration from his forehead.

He had learned something, but the mysteries among which his mind was moving appalled him. Allah grant him understanding! What was this thing — this cheque?

All else was easy. He knew the name of these foreign merchants who made the cameras and the films — who did not? He knew now their address. . . . Alexandria and Malta. But he had no cheques to send them — only notes. . . .

From whom could he buy a cheque? To whom dare he go and explain his difficulty and find out what a cheque was?

Nobody. . . . He would only be robbed.

Dismay seized him. He was baffled. That real Ford, that high position, those great riches would never be his . . . because he had no cheques, and knew not what they were!

"Allah have pity!" he groaned.

But the leaven of ambition was fermenting in his baggy breeches. He could feel that thick bundle of notes, mostly twenty-fives, each time he moved.

Desperation seized him. Decision gripped him — a Turk! Something outside of himself made up his mind, cut through the barbed-wire entanglement of his ignorance.

"Money is money. . . . I



will send the notes!" he muttered firmly. "When they see my money they will not be able to refuse to send the goods!"

The sight of the cash is always the bargainer's trump card in the Balkans. You talk for an hour: then you dangle your final offer before the vendor's eyes.

It was settled! By the medium of the post the money should be dangled before the Company's eyes!

Bitterly, for the first time, Osman cursed the U-boats. Then, strangely pale, and for once without even a glance for the women, covered or uncovered, he walked slowly through the heat towards the outskirts of the town. Pausing at a dingy shop well away from the region of the fire, he purchased pen, ink, notepaper and envelopes, and then walked on again into the hills.

Supposing the men who opened his letters stole the money? And swore that the letters had never reached them?

Supposing the post office stole it?

Or the ship's captain?

These thoughts made him perspire again.

With a groan he was about to tear the notes out of the envelopes and stuff them back in his pockets, when—click! went a camera!

Two nurses, rambling in the hills during their weekly afternoon off, after having inspected the fire, had snapshotted the "young Turkish shepherd," who looked so sweet and

picturesque, watching his distant flock with such big sad eyes.

How were they to know that the mixed flock of sheep and goats grazing half a mile away belonged to a Spanish Jew, and were in charge of a Macedonian youth fast asleep under the shade of a tree?

"Kismet! It is written!" said Osman.

That click settled it once and for all. Evidently Allah willed that the letters should go. Who could doubt it?

They went—unregistered because he knew not of such things. And what is more—they both arrived.

Apparently the sight of the money was, as he had calculated, too much for the Company. Three weeks later the goods came to hand from Alexandria, and those from Malta followed within another week.

During that three weeks Osman had lived at his ease, augmenting the free rations of a penniless refugee from the three hundred drachmae he still had in hand. He cleaned no shoes. His box had been burned in the fire. Instead, he sought the company of photographic dealers, and by sympathy and humility picked up considerable information about their trade. His father he had continued to avoid, and he knew not whether his mother and sister were alive or dead.

Mentally he had lived during this period in a state of suspended animation rather than anxiety. Where a Briton would have alternated daily



between expectation of success and disaster, Osman, being a Turk, shrugged his shoulders and said "Kismet."

The arrival of the first packing-case galvanised him into activity. There was a little difficulty about delivery, but twenty-five drachmae to a port official smoothed that away.

He engaged a *hammal* to carry it to a shed he had rented with three other "merchants" as a home and warehouse combined.

As a result of the fire Salonica had become a city of street hawkers. Pending the erection of new buildings, such goods as had been saved from the flames were now exposed on the pavements or hung upon the railings. Shop-keeping had become very simple, and much more profitable than ever before for those lucky enough to have anything to sell.

The goods offered for sale were mostly tin-ware, drapery, particularly gaudy handkerchiefs and table centres of the "souvenir" variety, and haberdashery. Boot-laces were one-twenty—a shilling—a pair! The photographic dealers were still out of business. The few films saved here and there had long ago been snapped up. All, in short, was ripe for Osman's enterprise.

The packing-case was his stall. He covered it with a bright yellow printed tablecloth of astounding pattern and vividity, and arranged on it a selection of the cheap cameras, and samples of the

various sizes of films that had been sent to him.

He loved his new profession from the first. It was even less arduous than boot-shining! One just lolled there and looked at the women, . . . and took money, . . . and learned English.

"Have you any vest-pocket films?" asked a Nursing Sister.

"Ves' pock'? Yes!" answered the linguist.

"How much? Combeeong?"

Both hands were raised with all the fingers spread out, including the thumbs.

"Ten drachmae! But that is very dear!"

"Ten!" said Osman, learning the word.

"Troh share! Toe much!" said the Sister bilingually.

"Ten drachmae!" replied the Camera King.

And the Sister paid. There was nothing else to be done, for the passion for snapshots in a city of so many types and interests was strong upon her.

"Numbare ther-ee? Yes, Johnny!" This to a British officer.

Both hands went up, and then the right hand followed alone.

"Fifteen!" cried the officer indignantly. "Bosh!"

"Fifteen, Johnny!" said Osman, learning another word. "Finish, Johnny?"

"No! I'll try somewhere else!"

He stalked off—and came back in half an hour and paid fifteen drachmae for an article that should have been two and a half. There *was* nowhere

else. A camera without films in so tempting a place was an unthinkable proposition. If the films had not been there, one could have gone without. But to see them there . . . waiting in the sunshine . . . it was only a very strong-minded or a very poor man who could walk away from Osman's stall.

His friends the dealers came and cursed him. But what did that matter? By the time the first consignment had been exhausted, the second had arrived. He did not order a third. Allah was great and had granted him Understanding!

Films would come pouring in. Seeing his success, all the others would hurry to minister to this weakness of the Allies. The bottom would be knocked out of the market.

The main principles of successful commerce, you perceive, are not so very abstruse. Even a Turkish boot-black can deduce them for himself, one Fate has started him on the right road. The great thing is that there must be no manual labour attached. Work that did itself was the kind of work that Osman could do very well.

One day when his stock was almost exhausted his sister Fatima appeared before the stall, stared, and recognised him.

"You were not killed then," she said stolidly.

"Nor you?" he answered.

She shook her head — a leggy child, almost a woman, very dirty, but not without

good looks that would soon be veiled from the sight of men.

"Our father made much money in the fire," she announced. "We have two beds now. He forgot the face of the man who gave them to him to carry."

"They will be taken away!" said Osman scornfully. "All that was stolen must be given back. It is written on the papers on the walls!"

Fatima fidgeted with her feet on the pavement.

"My box was burned," said her brother.

"Ah! So was your blanket and my cloak."

"I am very poor. . . . See what I have to do for a bare living!" he whined. "Stay here all day and take money for my master!"

"Who is your master?" she inquired.

"A Jew . . . a hard man," he lied.

"It is as Allah wills," said Fatima.

"He is All-wise and All-bountiful!" replied her brother. "But stand back while I speak with this Unbeliever!"

By the time he had served his customer Fatima had disappeared.

"To-morrow my father will come!" thought Osman. "He will make me go back. . . . He will beat me and empty my pockets, . . . if I am still here!"

But he did not intend to be there. There was only one camera left and a few odd films. These he would sell cheap that very day before the Muezzin



called the Faithful to evening prayer. . . .

And after that . . . what Allah willed!

Packed about his person in hundred drachmae notes was a sum of four hundred and fifty pounds—eleven thousand two hundred and fifty drachmae! This was what he had made of his ninety-two pounds—four hundred and fifty!

He was rich. . . . The world lay at his feet. . . . With four hundred and fifty pounds one could make contracts with the Armies! One could be a Contractor—the easiest and most profitable occupation of all!

He had learned much since the day of the fire. It was easy for the Faithful to make money. One offered to supply vegetables—potatoes, tomatoes, cabbages—or cheese or wood—or wine (to the French). Always they were buying, buying, buying . . . at prices that made one's mouth water. . . .

One signed a paper—one deposited a hundred pounds to show one was a man of substance. Then one paid another

two thousand five hundred drachmae to the man who was really to supply the goods to complete the bargain. After that the money came of itself. . . . These Unbelievers paid as regularly as the Call to Prayer, and the difference between their cheque (Yes, he knew what a cheque was now, Allah be praised!)—the difference between their cheque and the money one paid to the man who did all the work and supplied the goods was the contractor's profit.

A splendid occupation—better than blacking shoes, better even than keeping a stall. . . .

He rolled a cigarette and placed it in a long carved silver holder.

"Finish, Johnny!" he said haughtily to a British officer who wanted some vest-pocket films.

Allah was great and all was well. His feet were now firmly planted on the ladder of wealth that led to a real Ford and two wives. He did not want more than two—to begin with. . . .

## COURTS-MARTIAL IN FRANCE.

FROM time to time during the war an outcry has been raised against the injustice which, it is asserted, has been inflicted by military tribunals at the front upon persons who have been brought within their jurisdiction. Sometimes the complaint has been directed against the system itself, sometimes against the methods adopted in carrying it out. And now that a committee of inquiry has been set up by the War Office to deal with the question, and the existing Army—composed almost entirely of “civilian helpers”—is to a large extent disbanded, the whole system under which justice is administered in the Army will be subjected to further and rigorous scrutiny.

Now, in these days of universal suffrage, in which thinking has become unpopular and rudeness nationalised, criticism is seldom found to be either ingenuous or instructed; and, as in the turmoil of reconstruction many an institution will be marked for felling which needs only lopping and pruning, a description of how the court-martial system in France has worked in practice may not be without value and interest.

I shall never forget my feelings when I first arrived at Army Headquarters to take up duty as a court-martial officer. I had had no leave for nearly eleven months, and our battery had been continuously in action; the never-

ceasing gun fire was beginning to affect my hearing, and it had become imperative that I should rest my ears for a time. I had been threatened with a rest hospital by the sea, but I was lucky enough to escape with the lesser banishment which was involved in attachment to H.Q. for a few months, until I had recovered sufficiently to return to regimental duty in the line.

And so, with my gear and servant, I was whirled off to the Army. What an amazing change it was! Instead of living in the mud of the Ypres salient under a sheet of corrugated iron or a tarpaulin, with a prospect of being blown to smithereens at any moment, I found that my quarters were a comfortable wooden hut in the beautiful grounds of a luxurious chateau. No mud or discomfort was allowed within the sacred precincts which these “who sit behind and think for you” were pleased for the moment to occupy. Double rows of duck-boards, usually quite unobtainable in the front areas, enabled the H.Q. staff to pass in comfort from their offices or billets to and from the mess, with its electric lights and warm fire, where the only thing one could be said to lack was the sweet companionship of the fairer sex. And, to make assurance doubly sure, I found a body of stalwarts, the “Area Em-



ployment Company"—jocularly termed the "Area Enjoyment Company"—whose sole business in life it was, with hammer and pick and shovel, to keep the Olympians safe, and free from the discomforts and realities of war.

For two or three nights I found the silence too oppressive for sleep, and I lay awake listening to the drip of the dank leaves of the trees overhead, and wondering at my good fortune in finding this genial habitation far from the madding Boche.

Nevertheless, even at Army H.Q. some work must occasionally be done, and for a week or two I was sent out to attend courts-martial as a "learner" in company with an expert court-martial officer. All that I need say about my time as a "learner" is that these courts-martial were invariably held well behind the line; that I lunched with a different unit each day; and that, as I was only detailed to listen to what went on, I found it both a pleasant and an interesting experience.

Some time before I reached Army H.Q., the services of C.M.O.'s had become so much in request that it had been decided that a C.M.O. should be allotted to each Army Corps, and, while remaining an Army officer, should live at Corps H.Q. and attend courts-martial held in its area. And so it was not long before I was attached as C.M.O. to a Corps in the line; and I am glad to say that, as all the three Corps to which I was at different times attached during

the next few months were invariably "in the line," I was able to carry on my work under the most interesting, and sometimes even thrilling surroundings.

But what is a C.M.O., and why is he appointed? Well, a C.M.O. is an officer with legal training,—almost invariably a practising barrister,—who is appointed as Judge Advocate to keep a G.C.M. straight on points of law and procedure, and in Field General Courts-Martial combines with the duties of Judge Advocate the responsibility of a sitting and voting member of the tribunal.

Few people, I think, appreciate the importance or the difficulties of his position. He is not, as a general rule, *de jure* president of the Court, and yet, in practice, his view dominates the tribunal, and it is his decision which determines both the finding and any sentence that may be awarded. It is easy to imagine under these circumstances how necessary it is for him to exercise discretion, and the heavy weight of responsibility which he bears in the serious cases which come up for trial. To add to his difficulties, the C.M.O., in his official capacity, is usually not a *persona grata* with the Corps Staff, and their dislike of the "legal expert" is not diminished by the fact that the appointment of trained lawyers as C.M.O.'s was, I understand, necessitated to prevent mistakes being made by military tribunals in their efforts to administer justice.



And yet the position of a C.M.O. to a Corps is, I think, one of the most delightful jobs in the Army. As an Army officer attached to a Corps, he receives respect and consideration as belonging to a higher formation, and as a specialist there is no one to supervise his work; with the happy result that, so long as he attends his courts, the C.M.O. is his own master in a sense seldom realisable in the service.

Now, the C.M.O. has to be present at as many courts-martial held in the Corps area as he finds practicable. Some C.M.O.'s used to select definite places where they sat on specified days, but the system I adopted was, I think, a more practical one; certainly it gave me much more interesting experiences. I used to allot to each Division, the Corps troops, and the Artillery, one day a week in which I was ready to attend courts-martial held at any place chosen by the convening authority; with the result that I covered in my "circuit" the whole ambit of the Corps area; became acquainted with the work and personnel of every sort of military unit, and enjoyed the hospitality, on one day of a division, on another of a battery, or a supply column, or an infantry brigade, often of battalions in support or reserve, and sometimes of battalions in the actual fighting line.

In the morning I used to drive or ride as near as I could to the place selected for the court-martial, and on arrival

at the camp, or nissen hut, or dug-out, I found sometimes as many as a hundred people awaiting me—accused, escort, witnesses, and the other members of the Court. I am speaking, of course, of F.G.C.M. A general court-martial is a much more formal affair, about which I will say something in a moment. A table with a blanket over it, and some up-turned sugar boxes, usually did service for the court equipment; and, as I entered, I invariably received what is perhaps the best thing that can come one's way—a genuine welcome. The President—as a rule a lieutenant-colonel or major, sometimes a captain—would say, "Ah! here you are! The C.M.O. aren't you? I am glad to see you. What do you do?" "I do everything there is to do, except, I hope, get at cross purposes with you, sir." "By Jove, that is splendid! Here, take this old chair—you will find it more comfortable for writing." For, strange to say, the soldier has a very wholesome fear of courts-martial, and, especially in the case of a regular officer, is profoundly relieved when the weight of responsibility for the course of the trial is taken off his shoulders.

And here I should like to say something of the source of this trepidation, which militates so greatly against the capacity of a soldier to administer justice. It arises, so far as I have been able to learn, in this way. After a young officer has received



a commission in the regular Army he is detailed to attend a number of courts-martial for instruction, and is expected to learn the procedure of a court of justice, and to make himself familiar with the principles of military law. He is afterwards himself appointed a member of a court-martial.

In nine cases out of ten he is found to be quite unfitted to discharge the duty for which he has been detailed. His opinion as to whether the accused is guilty or not has by military law to be taken first, and, although the members of the tribunal sit both as judges and jury, I have found that in the great majority of cases the President wishes the members to answer the question of "guilty or not guilty," and later of the sentence, without any previous discussion whatever as to what the right answer should be. What chance has a young officer, or the President for that matter (himself a soldier without legal training), of giving an opinion deserving of any weight? I remember once laying down that the accused might be sentenced to field punishment up to ninety days, or to imprisonment for not more than two years. "What do you say?" said the President to the junior member. "Oh! two years imprisonment with hard labour." I felt I was bound to point out that the offence was a trivial one. "Oh! I see," said the subaltern; "then I say seven days F.P. No. 1."

Again, on the question of

guilt, many soldier members do not come into court with a completely independent mind. At the very outset one finds that the court is convened by a senior officer, usually a general, who by the form of the convening order states that "whereas it appears to me . . . that the persons named in the annexed schedule . . . have committed the offences in the said schedule mentioned." Now it is perfectly true that, by military law, no one is allowed to influence the opinion of the members of a court-martial, and that no comment is to be made on an acquittal. But there are more ways than one of killing a sheep, and the fact that the convening officer has already formally expressed his view that the accused is guilty, coupled with the fact that every finding of guilty and sentence has to be confirmed, probably by the convening officer himself, who is often the C.O. of the formation to which the members of the court-martial belong, cannot be without influence on the tribunal. Again and again after an acquittal I have heard a member say, "we shall get into hot water for this." How often have officers, whose findings or sentences have not been approved by senior officers (not themselves present, and who did not hear or see the witnesses), been detailed to sit for a time on every available court-martial for instruction? I wonder! Have not lists of suitable sentences for offences been compiled and issued by higher formations for "the

guidance" of members of courts-martial? Is it prudent to disregard such intimations? It is not unreasonable that, placed as they are, soldiers should find it difficult to acquire the independence of judgment so essential to the administration of justice, and should be desperately anxious that all should "go well."

And is it, after all, such an easy task to balance the weight of evidence, or to draw the right inference from facts? Is it true that, while a physician must undergo years of training before he can pretend to diagnose disease, any one is capable of forming an unbiassed judgment upon evidence without experience, and by the light of nature? Must not a person be trained to be fair in judicial matters? "We agree," regular officers have said to me, "that C.M.O.'s are useful, because there are not enough regular officers to sit on courts-martial." Well, I have found, and I have already indicated a reason for it, that of all soldiers the regular officer is the least endowed with the judicial sense. And so it happens that the C.M.O. is assured of a warm welcome, and, if he is tactful, of a pliant tribunal also.

I wish I could portray the scene as the drama unfolds. The dim light of a few sputtering candles throwing into relief the forms of the accused and his escort; the tired and drawn faces of the witnesses under their tin helmets; and the accused himself, apparently taking only a languid interest

in the evidence as it accumulates against him. Looking back now, with the dangers and chances of the battlefield already receding into the mist of things that are past, one of the strangest features of the forward area was the atmosphere of listlessness with respect to everything except one's physical needs, which pervaded the soldier's life and coloured every scene. There life and death were viewed in a truer prospective. After all, did it matter so very much? George was killed yesterday; poor old Harry was hit by a splinter just before we started for the court; and by a hundred well-known signs we are made aware of the "show" which will soon be coming off. And so, a stranger to war as it was waged in France and Flanders, coming upon such a scene, would scarcely believe that in these matter-of-fact proceedings issues of life and death were being tried.

One thing I never omitted to do. I determined that the accused should always fully understand what he was "up against"; and, by putting the poor fellow so far as possible at his ease, I was enabled more than once to save his life. I remember on one occasion a private in the Labour Corps being tried for desertion—a capital offence. It was a simple case, and apparently a bad one. He had been working with his company in the forward area; they had been badly shelled, and had scattered for a short time. On resuming work the accused



was found to have disappeared. Search was made, but he could not be found; and four days later he was arrested forty miles behind the line. He did not wish to have the witnesses cross-examined, or to dispute the facts, but stood stolidly before us, and would ask no questions. However, I was not satisfied, and when the prosecution was closed, I urged him to tell us why it was he had gone away. For a time he remained silent; but at length, after I had repeatedly invited him to tell us anything which would enable us to help him, his whole manner suddenly changed; he became alert, drew himself up, and speaking very fast, said: "Well, sir, I was just about 'fed up' with the R.E. Nothing I did would satisfy the corporal, and so I thought I had better 'op it, etc., etc.'" He was obviously speaking the truth, and I afterwards discovered that he had asked to be allowed to go back to duty with his battalion in the line! One shudders to think what might have happened if he had been tried by a tribunal lacking experience of legal proceedings!

The value of having on a tribunal a member trained to test evidence is well illustrated in cases where an old soldier—say a C.Q.M.S.—is charged with drunkenness. In nine cases out of ten, if he intends to put up a defence, he will call a long string of witnesses to prove that he was not drunk. Suppose the R.S.M. and a C.S.M. are called for the prosecution, and accused

produces for the defence seven junior N.C.O.'s and privates, what is the Court to do? Well, I have found that the Court usually leans to one of two courses. Either it says, "Oh! we must support the R.S.M. or there is an end of discipline," or it says, "Well, you see there are two witnesses on one side and seven on the other, we must find him not guilty." In other words, "they count heads." As a matter of fact, in most cases the R.S.M. may safely be believed; but what I almost invariably found was that the evidence for the defence, after cross-examination, did not really amount to very much; because the witnesses would not state that the accused was not drunk at the time suggested by the prosecution, but would only say that some little time before or after he appeared to be normal. The art of cross-examination, however, like the art of fighting a rear-guard action, is not a matter of intuition, and can be acquired only after a long period of training and experience. And, in such cases as these, it is by skilful sifting of the evidence alone that it is possible to find out where the truth lies.

The procedure at a F.G.C.M. is very simple, and is similar to that of a trial at Assizes or Quarter Sessions. The prosecutor is usually the adjutant of the battalion to which the accused belongs. He, as a rule, takes very little part in the proceedings, except to marshal the witnesses, and

after conviction, to speak, if possible, in favour of the accused. But the value of his presence cannot be over-rated, for the adjutant knows the accused's history, and can often assist the Court in finding some witness to prove that the accused had previously done some gallant act. The importance of such evidence will be appreciated when I say that, after a conviction on a capital charge (and I must have tried over 300 such charges), no Court of which I was a member ever sentenced the accused to death if he had done a single gallant act, or had been proved to be a brave man under fire. It may be interesting here to recall the curious rule of military law, that, after conviction, the only evidence of character which may be received (other than evidence of the accused's good character), is his conduct sheet. This, however, at the front, was often quite worthless, for regimental records were not seldom destroyed, and the conduct sheet was only a temporary one; and, in any case, a man does not necessarily possess a good character merely by having escaped conviction. This is an anomaly which should be done away with, and the Court in future should be allowed to know, after conviction, the true character of the accused. I remember an amusing incident *apropos* of this. I once asked a soldier who had been convicted of a serious offence, if he wished

to call any one to give him a good character. "No, thank you, sir; the last time I was at a court-martial I came before you, and I am quite ready to leave myself in your hands." He was then marched out, and on looking at his conduct sheet I found that he was quite right,—but that on that occasion he had been sentenced to death!

As regards the defence, every person to be tried by court-martial is entitled to choose any officer he wishes to defend him; and it is a glowing testimony to the good terms upon which regimental officers live with their men, that in nearly every case the accused selects his company or platoon commander. In cases in which the death penalty is likely to be imposed, the accused, if possible, is to be defended by an officer who had legal training before the war. The value of being defended by one's own company commander, however, lies not so much in his power of advocacy, as in his desire to do all he can to save the honour of the battalion or battery; and, many a time, the obvious and genuine desire of the accused's friend to keep the prisoner in the battalion has saved him in his hour of peril. Every latitude is given to the accused and his friend; every step is taken to procure the attendance of any witness or document which the accused thinks may in any way help him; and the anxiety that everything possible should be done to help the accused in



his defence is, I think, the most striking and admirable feature of a court-martial.

Sometimes, but all too rarely, the accused was defended by a trained professional advocate, —the most successful defender whom I came across being Captain Healy, the nephew of Tim Healy, K.C. But, whether it is an advantage to be defended by counsel at a court-martial is, however, an open question. The military members of the Court, not being very sure of their ground, are apt to regard him and his ways with undue suspicion, just as I have known juries shy of accepting the advances of counsel "too clever by half," and swallowing whole the simple suggestions of "just a plain man like ourselves," such as the present Lord Justice Duke when he was at the Bar. *Summa ars est celare artem.* On the other hand, I have known instances of the Court being entirely carried away by the wiles of counsel. I remember on one occasion, —and if the counsel concerned reads this article he will remember it too, —an officer being tried for being drunk in the mess. The C.O., the adjutant, I think, and other witnesses, were called for the prosecution; while for the defence several officers gave evidence to rebut the charge. Most, if not all of these officers, however, were themselves alleged to have been drinking in the mess with the accused. The issue hung in the balance. "I now propose to call the padre," said counsel. A R.C. padre was

then duly sworn, and stated that he had "stood and been stood" drinks, and that, when he left, *so far as he remembered*, the accused was perfectly sober! Subsequently, I had occasion to point out, —as the padre's evidence was much relied on, —that the padre appeared to be in no better position than the other officers; they were all drinking together. "Oh! as to that," said counsel, "if the padre had stated that he had been for so long the spiritual adviser to this battalion, and yet had refused to touch a drop of whisky, the Court would not have believed another word that he said. . . ." The accused was acquitted!

I should like here to say a few words about general courts-martial. A G.C.M. is a cumbrous and archaic proceeding, born of distrust out of red tape. It differs from other forms of trial mainly in this, that those who invented it, thinking that soldiers would probably go wrong (if left to their own devices) when attempting to administer justice, compiled a printed form of proceedings complete with questions, and with spaces for the answers down to the smallest detail. This form had, at all costs, to be followed. It was supposed to be "fool-proof"; not even a military tribunal could go wrong, provided it followed the form. Failure to comply with the details of the form, however, was a matter for adverse comment, and might result in invalidating the proceedings altogether. To illustrate the length to which

"red tape" can go, a famous Division, which I knew well, after three years of war, was blessed with a new A.A. and Q.M.G., who had, I believe, spent the earlier part of the war on the staff in England, and had now come to France for the first time. I was invited one day to go over to dine with the Division, and after dinner was shown a form of G.C.M. on an officer, which I had filled up as Judge Advocate a day or two before. It was covered with comments in pencil by the new A.A. and Q.M.G., and the D.A.A.G. asked me what I thought he ought to do. Now, I can be as severe a stickler for technicalities as any one, I believe, when the occasion demands it, and as all my G.C.M. forms had previously gone through without criticism, I looked through the comments with care. At a certain stage in the proceedings the form provides this question: "Do you intend to call any other witness in your defence?" Answer, "No." The form then adds this subsidiary question, "Is he a witness as to character only?" Now, as the accused had answered that he did not wish to call *any* witnesses, in my simplicity I considered that it became immaterial to ask what these witnesses were going to prove—if, in fact, they were not going to give any evidence at all. Comment by the A.A. and Q.M.G.: "This question ought to have been asked and answered. The omission to do so is most

irregular and serious." I told the D.A.A.G. that I thought the best thing to do was to rub out all the comments, and take the form in to the general. Whatever he did,—as he is now safely back in England,—the D.A.A.G. appears to have avoided getting into any very serious trouble.

G.C.M.'s comprised less than 5 per cent, I should think, of the total number of courts-martial in France, and should be relegated as soon as possible to the limbo of forgotten things.

Courts - martial may be held anywhere, but the most important thing in the forward area is to "get on with it," as delay usually means that some witnesses will become casualties. The most dramatic trial in which I took part was during the fighting round Kemmel in April or May 1918. An officer was charged with cowardice and desertion during the desperate fighting which was going on, and I was specially asked by the Army if I would defend him. The trial took place amid the noise of battle raging a few miles away, and it was held within three days of the date of the alleged offence, as the brigade to which the accused belonged was in support, and might be sent back into the line at any moment. I wish I could depict the scene: the members of the Court sitting in a battered little farmhouse parlour, and the brother officers of the accused recounting the story of the fight, and the action of the accused on



the eventful day. The members of the Court were themselves fully acquainted with what had happened during the operations, for they had been through it all; and the tense strain which pervaded the scene, the coolness of the accused, and the worn faces of the witnesses who had only just emerged from,—and, as indeed happened, were expecting at any moment to be plunged again into,—the inferno, formed a picture full of dramatic interest. In the end the accused was acquitted on the charge of cowardice, and so escaped the ignominy of the most awful crime of which a soldier, or any one who calls himself a man, could be guilty.

But this scene really was typical of many others. I remember once at Hill Top (an unhealthy spot familiar to all denizens of the salient) a heavy shell bursting near us, upsetting the table, and covering everything with mud,—an incident which would not normally conduce to the dignity of a Court, but which in the circumstances added, if possible, to the impressiveness of the proceedings. On another occasion, near Kempton Park, an air raid took place while the Court was sitting. During the usual hubbub of archies, machine-guns, and rifles, we carried on; but, when “the birds had laid their eggs,” the President suggested that the Court should adjourn for a while. I protested on the ground that I wanted this to be an exception to the rule, *Inter arma silent leges*. No-

body, of course, had the slightest idea what I was talking about, but we did not stop, and finished all the cases sent to us for trial.

In conclusion, after having had personal experiences of the trial of some 1200 cases by court-martial in France and Flanders, I should like to point out two main reforms which are urgently needed in court-martial procedure. Just as offences by clergymen are tried before a Court consisting partly of clergymen presided over by the Chancellor of the Diocese, who is a trained lawyer, so I think that the members of every court-martial should consist of officers, with a trained lawyer as President. In no other way can the evidence be duly sifted or justice administered by courts-martial. The appointment of a Judge-Advocate or a C.M.O. is merely a half-way house; it is not far enough along the road. Either the legal expert dominates the Court, in which case he ought to be President, or he adopts the attitude of a mere legal adviser, in which case it is by no means a certainty that justice will be done.

Again, although, on the whole, considering the circumstances under which courts-martial were often held, and provided a strong C.M.O. was present, I think that courts-martial were carried through in France not only with every desire to be fair, but with very satisfactory results, mistakes must sometimes occur, and in the present state of military law there is no means whereby

an appeal can be lodged against a conviction by court-martial. It is true that every conviction and sentence has to be confirmed by some senior officer, and, in the case of a death sentence, by the Commander-in-Chief himself, after receiving reports from the accused's C.O., and his Brigade, Divisional, Corps, and Army Commander. But, in my opinion, the system of confirmation is very undesirable, if indeed it is not actually vicious. For the reasons which I have already given, it tends to destroy the independence of the tribunal, as well as leaving the final decision in the matter in the hands of officers who have no special, if any, legal experience; who have not seen or heard the witnesses, and who are seriously handicapped by their military training and instinct in their efforts to mete out impartial and disinterested justice. Is it fair or consistent that a Court of Criminal Appeal should have been set up in respect of convictions in criminal Courts, and not in the case of convictions by courts-martial?

I suggest that every person convicted by court-martial, (subject to the exigencies of moving warfare), should be entitled to apply for leave to appeal to a Court of Appeal presided over by a permanent legal judge appointed for the purpose, and conversant with military affairs, and that the present system of confirmation by military officers should be abolished.

It is worthy of note that the Committee which has been set up by the War Office to inquire into military law and the procedure of courts-martial, does not possess a single member who has had any real personal experience during the war as a member of F.G.C.M. Let us hope, however, that the Committee will make an effort to find out what the real position is, and will not shrink from such drastic reforms as may be necessary to enable the members of courts-martial in the future, without fear and with independence of judgment, to administer the sacred duty entrusted to them.

ARTHUR PAGE.



## S I M O N.

BY J. STORER CLOUSTON.

## VI. AT NIGHT.

WHEN Simon Rattar came to his present villa, he brought from his old house in the middle of the town (which had been his father's before him) a vast accumulation of old books and old papers. Being a man who never threw away an opportunity or anything else, and also a person of the utmost tidiness, he compromised by keeping this litter in the spare rooms at the top of the house. In fact Simon was rather pleased at discovering this use for his superfluous apartments, for he hated wasting anything.

On this same morning, just before he started for his office, he had again called his housemaid and given her particular injunctions that these rooms were not to be disturbed during the day. He added that this was essential because he expected a gentleman that evening who would be going through some of the old papers with him.

Perhaps it was the vague feeling of disquiet which possessed Mary MacLean this morning that made his injunction seem a little curious. She had been with the master three years, and never presumed or dreamt of presuming to touch his papers. He might have known that, thought she, without having to tell her not

to. Indeed, she felt a little aggrieved at the command, and in the course of the morning she made a discovery that seemed to her a further reflection on her discretion.

When she came to dust the passage in which these rooms opened, her eye was at once caught by a sheet of white paper pinned to each of the three doors. On each of these sheets was written in her master's hand the words, "This room not to be entered. Papers to be undisturbed." The result was a warning to those who take superfluous precautions. Under ordinary circumstances Mary would never have thought of touching the handles of those doors. Now, she looked at them for a few moments and then tried the handle nearest to her. The door was locked. She tried the second and the third, and they stood locked too. And the three keys had all been removed.

"To think of the master locking the doors!" said she to herself, after failing at each in turn. "As if I'd have tried to open them!"

That top storey was of the semi-attic kind, with roofs that sloped and a skylight in one of them, and the slates close overhead. It was a grey windy morning, and as she

stood there, alone in that large house save for the cook far away in the kitchen, with a loose slate rattling in the gusts and a glimpse of clouds driving over the skylight, she began all at once to feel uncomfortable. These locked doors were uncanny—something was not as it should be; there was a sinister moan in the wind; the slate did not rattle quite like an ordinary slate. Tales of her childhood, tales from the superstitious Western Islands, rushed into her mind. And then, all at once, she heard another sound. She heard it but for one instant, and then with a pale face she fled downstairs and stood for a space in the hall, trembling and wondering.

She wondered first whether the sound had really come from behind the locked doors, and whether it actually was some one stealthily moving. She wondered next whether she could bring herself to confide in cook and stand Janet's cheerful scorn. She ended by saying not a word, and waiting to see what happened when the master came home.

He returned as usual in time for a cup of tea. It was pretty dark by then, and Mary was upstairs lighting the gas (but she did not venture up to the top floor). She heard Mr Rattar come into the hall, and then, quite distinctly this time, she heard overhead a dull sound, a kind of gentle thud. The next moment she heard her master running upstairs, and when he was safely past she ran even more

swiftly down and burst into the kitchen.

"There's something in yon top rooms!" she panted.

"There's something in your top storey!" snapped cook; and poor Mary said no more.

When she brought his tea in to Mr Rattar, she seemed to read in his first glance at her the same expression that had disturbed her in the morning, and yet the next moment he was speaking in his ordinary grumpy, laconic way.

"Have you noticed rats in the house?" he asked.

"Rats, sir!" she exclaimed. "Oh no, sir; I don't think there are any rats."

". . . I saw one just now," he said. "If we see it again we must get some rat poison."

So it had only been a rat! Mary felt vastly relieved, and yet not altogether easy. One could not venture to doubt the master, but it was a queer-like sound for a rat to make.

Mr Rattar had brought back a great many papers to-day and sat engrossed in them till dinner. After dinner he fell to work again, and then about nine o'clock he rang for her and said—

"The gentleman I expect this evening will probably be late in coming. Don't sit up. I'll hear him and let him in myself. We shall be working late, and I shall be going upstairs about those papers. If you hear anybody moving about it will only be this gentleman and myself."

This was rather a long speech for silent Simon, and Mary thought it considerate of him



to explain any nocturnal sounds beforehand: unusually considerate, in fact, for he seldom went out of his way to explain things. And yet those few minutes in his presence made her uncomfortable afresh. She could not keep her eyes away from that red cut on his chin. It made him seem odd-like, she thought. And then as she passed through the hall she heard faintly from the upper regions that slate rattling again. At least it was either the slate or—she recalled a story of her childhood, and hurried on to the kitchen.

She and the cook shared the same bedroom. It was fairly large, with two beds in it, and along with the kitchen and other back premises it was shut off from the front part of the house by a door at the end of the hall. Cook was asleep within ten minutes. Mary could hear her heavy breathing above the incessant droning and whistling of the wind, and she envied her with all her Highland heart. In her own glen people would have understood how she felt, but here she dared not confess lest she were laughed at. It was such a vague and nameless feeling, a sixth sense warning her that all was not well, that *something* was in the air. The longer she lay awake, the more certain she grew that evil was afoot, and yet what could be its shape? Everything in that quiet and respectable household was going on exactly as usual, everything that any one else would have considered material. The

little things she had noticed would be considered absurd trifles by the sensible. She knew that as well as they.

She thought she had been in bed about an hour, though the time passed so slowly that it might have been less, when she heard, faintly and gently but quite distinctly, the door from the hall into the back premises being opened. It seemed to be held open for nearly a minute, as though some one were standing there listening. She moved a little and the bed creaked; and then, as gently as it had been opened, the door was closed again.

Had the intruder come through or gone away? And could it only be the master doing this curious thing, or was it some one—or something—else? Dreadful minutes passed, but there was not a sound of any one moving in the back passage or the kitchen, and then in the distance she could hear the grating noise of the front door being opened and the rush of wind that accompanied it. It was closed sharply in a moment, and she could catch the sound of steps in the hall and the master's voice making some remark. Another voice replied, gruff and muffled and indistinct, and then again the master spoke. Evidently the late caller had arrived, and a moment later she heard the library door shut, and it was plain that he and Mr Rattar were closeted there.

They seemed to remain in the library about quarter of an hour before the door opened

again, and in a moment the stairs were creaking faintly. Evidently one or both were going up for the old papers.

All this was exactly what she had been led to expect, and ought to have reassured her, yet, for no reason at all, the conviction remained as intense and disturbing as ever, that something unspeakable was happening in this respectable house. The minutes dragged by till quite half an hour must have passed, and then she heard the steps descending. They came down very slowly this time, and very heavily. The obvious explanation was that they were bringing down one of those boxes filled with dusty papers which she had often seen in the closed rooms; yet, though Mary knew perfectly that this was the commonsense of the matter, a feeling of horror increased till she could scarcely refrain from crying out. If cook had not such a quick temper and such a healthy contempt for this kind of fancy, she would have rushed across to her bed; but as it was, she simply lay and trembled.

The steps sounded still heavy but more muffled on the hall carpet, though whether they were the steps of one man or two she could not feel

sure. And then she heard the front door open again and then close; so that it seemed plain that the visitor had taken the box with him and gone away. And with this departure came a sense of relief, as devoid of rational foundation as the sense of horror before. She felt at last that if she could only hear the master going upstairs to bed, she might go to sleep.

But though she listened hard as she lay there in the oppressive dark, she heard not another sound so long as she kept awake, and that was for some time, she thought. She did get off at last, and had been asleep she knew not how long when she awoke drowsily, with a confused impression that the front door had been shut again. How late it was she could but guess—about three or four in the morning her instinct told her. But then came sleep again, and in the morning the last part of her recollections was a little uncertain.

At breakfast the master was as silently formidable as ever, and he never said a word about his visitor. When Mary went to the top floor later the papers were off the doors and the keys replaced.

## VII. THE DRIVE HOME.

Under the grey autumnal sky Miss Cicely Farmond drove out of the town, wrapped in Ned Cromarty's overcoat. He

assured her he never felt cold, and as she glanced a little shyly up at the strapping figure by her side, she said



to herself that he certainly was the toughest-looking man of her acquaintance, and she felt a little less contrition for the loan. She was an independent young lady, and from no one else would she have accepted such a favour; but the laird of Stanesland had such an offhand, authoritative way with him that, somewhat to her own surprise, she had protested—and submitted.

The trap was a high dog-cart, and the mare a flier.

“What a splendid horse!” she exclaimed, as they spun up the first hill.

“Isn’t she?” said Ned. “And she can go all the way like this too.”

Cicely was therefore a little surprised when, at the next hill, this flier was brought to a walk.

“I thought we were going all the way like that!” she laughed.

Ned glanced down at her.

“Are you in a hurry?” he inquired.

“Not particularly,” she admitted.

“No more am I,” said he, and this time he smiled down at her in a very friendly way.

So far they had talked casually on any indifferent subject that came to hand, but now his manner grew a little more intimate.

“Are you going to stay on with the Cromartys long?” he asked.

“I am wondering myself,” she confessed.

“I hope you will,” he said bluntly.

“It is very kind of you to

say so,” she said, smiling at him a little shyly.

“I mean it. The fact is, Miss Farmond, you are a bit of a treat.”

The quaintness of the phrase was irresistible, and she laughed outright.

“Am I?”

“It’s a fact,” said he; “you see, I live an odd lonely kind of life here, and for most of my career I’ve lived an odd lonely kind of life too, so far as girls were concerned. It may sound rum to you to hear a backwood hunks of my time of life confessing to finding a girl of your age a bit of a treat; but it’s a fact.”

“Yes,” she said, “I should have thought I must seem rather young and foolish.”

“Lord, I don’t mean that!” he exclaimed. “I mean that I must seem a pretty uninteresting bit of elderly shoe-leather.”

“Uninteresting? Oh no!” she cried in protest, and then checked herself and her colour rose a little.

He smiled humerously.

“I can’t see you out of this glass eye unless I turn round, so whether you’re pulling my leg or not I don’t know; but I was just saying to old Simon that the only kind of lady likely to take an interest in me was a female collector of antique curiosities, and you don’t seem that sort, Miss Farmond.”

She said nothing for a moment, and then asked—

“Were you discussing ladies then with Mr Rattar?”

He also paused for a moment before replying—

“Incidentally in the course

of a gossip, as the old chap hadn't got my business ready for me. By the way, did you get much change out of him?"

She shook her head a little mournfully.

"Nothing at all. He just asked questions instead of answering them."

"So he did with me! Confound the man. I fancy he has made too much money and is beginning to take it easy. That's one advantage of not being too rich, Miss Farmond, it keeps you from waxing fat."

"I'm not likely to wax fat then!" she laughed, and yet it was not quite a cheerful laugh.

He turned quickly and looked at her sympathetically.

"That your trouble?" he inquired in his outspoken way.

Cicely was not by way of giving her confidences easily, but this straightforward, friendly attack penetrated her reserve.

"It makes one so dependent," she said, her voice even lower than usual.

"That must be the devil," he admitted.

"It is!" said she.

He whipped up the mare and ruminated in silence. Then he remarked—

"I'm just wondering."

Cicely began to smile.

"Wondering what?"

"What the devil there can be that isn't utterly uninteresting about me—assuming you weren't pulling my leg."

"Oh," she said, "no man can be uninteresting who has seen as much and done as much as you have."

"The Lord keep you of

that opinion!" he said, half humorously, but only half, it seemed. "It's true I've knocked about and been knocked about, but I'd have thought you'd have judged more by results."

She laughed a little low laugh.

"Do you think yourself the results are very bad?"

"Judging by the mirror, beastly! Judging by other standards—well, one can't see oneself in one's full naked horror, thank Heaven for it too! But I'm not well read, and I'm not—but what's the good in telling you? You're clever enough to see for yourself."

For a man who had no intention of paying compliments, Ned Cromarty had a singular gift for administering the pleasantest—because it was so evidently the most genuine—form of flattery. In fact, had he but known it, he was a universal favourite with women, whenever he happened to meet them; only he had not the least suspicion of the fact—which made him all the more favoured.

"I don't know very many men," said Cicely, with her serious expression and a conscientious air, "and so perhaps I am not a good judge, but certainly you seem to me quite unlike all the others."

"I told you," he laughed, "that the female would have to be a bit of a collector."

"Oh," she cried, quite serious still, "I don't mean that in the least. I don't like freaks a bit myself. I only mean—well, people do differ



in character and experience, don't they?"

"I guess you're pretty wise," said he simply. "And I'm sized up right enough. However, the trouble at present is this blamed mare goes too fast!"

On their left, the chimneys and roof of a large mansion showed through the surrounding trees. In this wind-swept seaboard country, its acres of plantation were a conspicuous landmark, and marked it as the seat of some outstanding local magnate. These trees were carried down to the road in a narrow belt enclosing an avenue that ended in a lodge and gates. At the same time that the lodge came into view round a bend in the road, a man on a bicycle appeared ahead of them, going in the same direction, and bent over his handle-bars against the wind.

"Hullo, that's surely Malcolm Cromarty!" said Ned.

"So it is!" she exclaimed, and there was a note of surprise in her voice. "I wonder where he has been."

The cyclist dismounted at the lodge gates a few moments before the trap pulled up there too, and the young man turned and greeted them. Or rather he greeted Miss Farmond, for his smile was clearly aimed at her alone.

"Hullo! Where have you been?" he cried.

"Where have you?" she retorted as she jumped out and let him help her off with the driving coat.

They made a remarkably good-looking young couple

standing together there on the road, and their manner to one another was evidently that of two people who knew each other well. Sitting on his high driving-seat, Ned Cromarty turned his head well round so as to bring his sound eye to bear, and looked at them in silence. When she handed him his coat and thanked him afresh, he merely laughed; told her, in his outspoken way, that all the fun had been his, and whipped up his mare.

"That's more the sort of fellow!" he said to himself gloomily, and for a little the thought seemed to keep him depressed. And then, as he let the recollections of their drive have their own way undisturbed, he began to smile again, and kept smiling most of the way home.

The road drew ever nearer to the sea, trees and hedges grew ever rarer and more stunted, and then he was driving through a patch of planting hardly higher than a shrubbery up to an ancient building on the very brink of the cliffs. The sea crashed white below and stretched grey and cold to the horizon, the wind whistled round the battlements and sighed through the stunted trees, and Ned (who had been too absorbed to remember his coat) slapped his arms and stamped his feet as he descended before a nail-studded front door with a battered coat-of-arms above it.

"Lord, what a place!" he said to himself, half critically, half affectionately.

The old castle of Stanesland

was but a small house as castles, or even mansions, go, almost devoid of architectural ornament, and evidently built in a sterner age simply for security, and but little embellished by the taste of more degenerate times. As a specimen of a small early fifteenth-century castle it was excellent; as a home it was inconvenience incarnate. How so many draughts found their way through such thick walls was a perennial mystery, and how to convey dishes from the kitchen to the dining-room without their getting cold an almost insoluble problem.

The laird and his sister sat down to lunch, and in about ten minutes Miss Cromarty remarked—

“So you drove Cicely Farmond home?”

Her brother nodded. He had mentioned the fact as soon as he came in, and rather wondered why she referred to it again.

Miss Cromarty smiled her own peculiar, shrewd, worldly little smile, and said—

“You are very silent, Ned.”

Lilian Cromarty was a few years older than her brother, though one would hardly have guessed it. Her trim figure, bright eyes, vivacity of expression when she chose to be vivacious, and quick movements, might have belonged to a woman twenty years younger. She had never been pretty, but she was always perfectly dressed, and her smile could be anything she chose to make it. Until her youngest brother came into

the property, the place had been let, and she had lived with her friends and relations. She had had a good time, she always frankly confessed, but as frankly admitted that it was a relief to settle down at last.

“I was thinking,” said her brother.

“About Cicely?” she asked in her frankly audacious way.

He opened his eyes for a moment, and then laughed.

“You needn’t guess again, Lilian,” he admitted.

“Funny little thing,” she observed.

“Funny?” he repeated, and his tone brought an almost imperceptible change of expression into his sister’s eye.

“Oh,” she said, as though throwing the subject aside, “she is nice and quite pretty, but very young, and not very sophisticated, is she? However, I should think she would be a great success as a man’s girl. That low voice and those eyes of hers are very effective. Pass me the salt, Ned.”

Ned looked at her in silence, and then over her shoulder out through the square window set in the vast thickness of the wall, to the grey horizon line.

“I guess you’ve recommended me to marry once or twice, Lilian,” he observed.

“Don’t ‘guess,’ please!” she laughed, “or I’ll stick my bowie-knife or gun or something into you! Yes, I’ve always advised you to marry—if you found the right kind of wife.”

She took some credit to herself for this disinterested



advice, since, if he took it, the consequences would be decidedly disconcerting to herself; but she had never pointed out any specific lady yet, or made any conspicuous effort to find one for him.

"Well——" he began, and then broke off.

"You're not thinking of Cicely, are you?" she asked, still in the same bright light way, but with a quick searching look at him.

"It seems a bit absurd. I don't imagine for an instant she'd look at me."

"Wouldn't look——!" she began derisively, and then pulled herself up very sharply, and altered her tactics on the instant. "She might think you a little too old for her," she said in a tone of entire agreement with him.

"And also that I've got one too few eyes, and in fact, several other criticisms."

His sister shrugged her shoulders.

"A girl of that age might think those things," she admitted, "but it seems to me that the criticism ought to be on the other side. Who is she?"

Ned looked at her, and she broke into a laugh.

"Well," she said. "I suppose we both have a pretty good idea. She's somebody's something—Alfred Cromarty's, I believe; though, of course, her mother may have fibbed, for she doesn't look much like the Cromartys. Anyhow, that pretty well puts her out of the question."

"Why?"

"If you were a mere nobody

it mightn't make so much difference, but your wife must have some sort of a family behind her. One needn't be a snob to think that one mother and a guess at the father is hardly enough!"

"After all, that's up to me. I wouldn't be wanting to marry her great-mothers, even if she had any."

She shrugged her shoulders again.

"My dear Ned, I'm no prude, but there's always some devilment in the blood in these cases."

"Rot!" said he.

"Well, rot if you like, but I know more than one instance."

He said nothing for a moment, and as he sat in silence a look of keen anxiety came into her eye. She hid it instantly and compressed her lips, and then abruptly her brother said—

"I wonder whether she's at all taken up with Malcolm Cromarty?"

She ceased to meet his eye, and her own became expressionless.

"They have spent some months in the same house. At their age the consequences seem pretty inevitable."

She had contrived to suggest a little more than she said, and he started in his chair.

"What do you know?" he demanded.

"Oh, of course there would be a dreadful row if anything was actually known abroad. Sir Reginald has probably other ideas for his heir."

"Then there is something between them?"

She nodded; and though she still did not meet his eye, he accepted the nod with a grim look that passed in a moment into a melancholy laugh.

"Well," he said, rising, "it was a pretty absurd idea anyhow. I'll go and have a look at myself in the glass and try to see the funny side of it!"

His sister sat very still after he had left the room.

#### VIII. SIR REGINALD.

Cicely Farmond and Malcolm Cromarty walked up the avenue together, he pushing his bicycle, she walking by his side with a more than usually serious expression.

"Then you won't tell me where you've been?" said he.

"You won't tell me where you've been!"

He was silent for a moment, and then said confidentially—

"We might as well say we've been somewhere together. I mean, if any one asks."

"Thank you, I don't need to fib," said she.

"I don't mean I need to. Only——" he seemed to find it difficult to explain.

"I shall merely say I have been for a walk, and you need only say you have been for a ride—if you don't want to say where you have really been."

"And if you don't want to mention that you were driving with Ned Cromarty," he retorted.

"He only very kindly offered me a lift!"

She looked quickly at him as she spoke, and as quickly away again. The glint in her eye seemed to displease him.

"You needn't always be so

sharp with me, Cicely," he complained.

"You shouldn't say stupid things."

Both were silent for a space, and then in a low mournful voice he said—

"I wish I knew how to win your sympathy, Cicely. You don't absolutely hate me, do you?"

"Of course I don't hate you. But the way to get a girl's sympathy is not always to keep asking for it."

He looked displeased again.

"I don't believe you know what I mean!"

"I don't believe you do either."

He grew tender.

"Your sympathy, Cicely, would make all the difference to my life!"

"Now, Malcolm——" she began in a warning voice.

"Oh, I'm not asking you to love me again," he assured her quickly. "It is only sympathy I demand!"

"But you mix them up so easily. It isn't safe to give you anything."

"I won't again!" he assured her.

"Well," she said, though not very sympathetically, "what do you want to be sympathised with about now?"



"When you offer me sympathy in that tone, I can't give you my confidence!" he said unhappily.

"Really, Malcolm, how can I possibly tell what your confidence is going to be beforehand? Perhaps it won't deserve sympathy."

"If you knew the state of my affairs!" he said darkly.

"A few days ago you told me they were very promising," she said with a little smile.

"So they would be—so they are—if—if only you would care for me, Cicely!"

"You tell me they are promising when you want me to marry you, and desperate when you want me to sympathise with you," she said a little cruelly. "Which am I to believe?"

"Hush! Here's Sir Reginald," he said.

The gentleman who came through a door in the walled garden beside the house was a fresh-coloured, white-haired man of sixty; slender and not above middle height, but very erect, and with the carriage of a person a little conscious of being of some importance. Sir Reginald Cromarty was, in fact, extremely conscious of his position in life, and the rather superior and condescending air he was wont to assume in general society made it a little difficult for a stranger to believe that he could actually be the most popular person in the county, especially as it was not hard to discover that his temper could easily become peppery upon provocation. If, however, the stranger chanced to

provide the worthy baronet with even the smallest opening for exhibiting his extraordinary kindness of heart—were it only by getting wet in a shower or mislaying a walking-stick—he would quickly comprehend. And the baronet's sympathy never waited to be summoned: it seemed to hover constantly over all men and women he met, spying for its chance.

He himself was totally unconscious of this attribute, and imagined the respect in which he was held to be due to his lineage, rank, and superior breeding and understanding. Indeed, few people in this world can have out a more dissimilar figure as seen from his own and from other men's eyes, though as both parties were equally pleased with Sir Reginald Cromarty, it mattered little.

At the sight of Cicely his smile revealed the warmth of his feelings in that direction.

"Ah, my dear girl," said he, "we've been looking for you. Where have you been?"

"I've been having a walk."

She smiled at him as she answered, and on his side it was easy to see that the good gentleman was enraptured, and that Miss Farmond was not likely to be severely cross-examined as to her movements. Towards Malcolm, on the other hand, though his greeting was kindly enough, his eye was critical. The young author's tie seemed to be regarded with particular displeasure.

"My God, Margaret, imagine being found dead in such a thing!" he had exclaimed

to his wife, after his first sight of it; and time had done nothing to diminish his distaste for this indication of a foreign way of life.

Lady Cromarty came out of the garden a moment later: a dark thin-faced lady with a gracious manner when she spoke, but with lips that were usually kept very tight shut and an eye that could easily be hard.

"Nearly time for lunch," she said. "You two had better hurry up!"

The young people hurried on to the house, and the baronet and his lady walked slowly behind.

"So they have been away all morning together, Reginald," she remarked.

"Oh, I don't think so," said he. "He had his bicycle and she has been walking."

"You are really too unsuspecting, Reggie!"

"A woman, my dear, is perhaps a little too much the reverse where a young couple is concerned. I have told you before, and I repeat it now emphatically, that neither Cicely nor Malcolm is in a position to contemplate matrimony for an instant."

"He is your heir—and Cicely is quite aware of it."

"I assure you, Margaret," he said with great conviction, "that Cicely is not a girl with mercenary motives. She is quite charming——"

"Oh, I know your opinion of her, Reggie," Lady Cromarty broke in, a trifle impatiently, "and I am fond of her too, as you know. Still, I don't believe a girl who can use her

eyes so effectively is quite as simple as you think."

Sir Reginald laughed indulgently.

"Really, my love, even the best of women are sometimes a trifle uncharitable! But in any case Malcolm has quite enough sense of his future position to realise that his wife must be somebody without the blemish on her birth, which is no fault of dear Cicely's, but—er—makes her ineligible for this particular position."

"I wish I could think that Malcolm is the kind of young man who would consult anything but his own wishes. I have told you often enough, Reggie, that I don't think it is wise to keep these two young people living here in the same house for months on end."

"But what can one do?" asked the benevolent baronet. "Neither of them has any home of their own. Hang it, I'm the head of their family, and I'm bound to show them a little hospitality."

"But Malcolm has rooms in town. He needn't spend months on end at Keldale."

The baronet was silent for a moment. Then he said—

"To tell the truth, I'm afraid Malcolm is not turning out quite so well as I had hoped. He certainly ought to be away doing something. At the same time, hang it! you wouldn't have me turn my own kinsman and heir out of my house, Margaret?"

Lady Cromarty sighed, and then her thin lips tightened.

"You are hopeless, Reggie. I sometimes feel as though I



were here merely as matron of a home for lost Cromartys! Well, I hope your confidence won't be abused. I confess I don't feel very comfortable about it myself."

"Well, well," said Sir Reginald. "My own eyes are open too, I assure you. I shall watch them very carefully at lunch, in the light of what you have been saying."

The baronet was an old Etonian, and as his life had been somewhat uneventful since, he was in the habit of drawing very largely on his recollections of that nursery of learning. Lunch had hardly begun before a question from

Cicely set him going, and for the rest of the meal he regaled her with these reminiscences.

After luncheon he said to his wife—

"Upon my word, I noticed nothing whatever amiss. Cicely is a very sensible as well as a deuced pretty girl."

"I happened to look at Malcolm occasionally," said she.

Sir Reginald thought that she seemed to imply more than she said, but then women were like that, he had noticed, and if one took all their implications into account, life would be a troublesome affair.

#### IX. A PHILOSOPHER.

During luncheon an exceedingly efficient person had been moving briskly behind the chairs. His face was so expressionless, his mouth so tightly closed, and his air of concentration on the business in hand so intense, that he seemed the perfect type of the silent butler. But as soon as lunch was over, and while Cicely still stood in the hall listening with a dubious eye to Malcolm's suggestion of a game of billiards, Mr James Bisset revealed the other side of his personality. He came up to the young couple with just sufficient deference, but no more, and in an accent which experts would have recognised as the hall-mark of the western part of North Britain, said—

"Excuse me, miss, but I've mended your bicycle, and I'll

show it you if ye like, and just explain the principle of the thing."

There was at least as much command as invitation in his tones. The billiard invitation was refused, and with a hidden smile Cicely followed him to the bicycle house.

Expert knowledge was James Bisset's foible. Of some subjects, such as butting, carpentry, and mending bicycles, it was practical; of others, such as shooting, gardening, and motoring, it was more theoretical. To Sir Reginald and my lady he was quite indispensable, for he could repair almost anything, knew his own more particular business from A to Z, and was ready at any moment to shoulder any responsibility. Sir Reginald's keeper, gardener, and chauffeur were apt, how-

ever, to be a trifle less enthusiastic, Mr Bisset's passion for expounding the principles of their professions sometimes exceeding his tact.

In person, he was an active stoutly-built man (though far too energetic to be fat), with blunt rounded features, eyes a little protruding, and sandy hair and a reddish complexion, which made his age an unguessable secret. He might have been in the thirties, or he might have been in the fifties.

"With regard to these ladies' bicycles, miss—" he began with a lecturer's air.

But by this time Cicely was also an expert in side-tracking her friend's theoretical essays.

"Oh, how clever of you!" she exclaimed rapturously. "It looks as good as ever!"

The interruption was too gratifying to offend.

"Better in some ways," he said complacently. "The principle of these things is——"

"I did miss it this morning," she hurried on. "In fact, I had to have quite a long walk. Luckily Mr Cromarty of Stanesland gave me a lift coming home."

"Oh, indeed, miss? Stanesland gave ye a lift, did he? An interesting gentleman yon."

This time she made no effort to divert Mr Bisset's train of thought.

"You think Mr Cromarty interesting, then?" said she.

"They say he's hanged a man with his ain hands," said Bisset impressively.

"What?" she cried.

"For good and sufficient

reason, we'll hope, miss. But whatever the way of it, it makes a gentleman more interesting in a kin' of way than the usual run. And then looking at the thing on general principles, the theory of hanging is——"

"Oh, but surely," she interrupted, "that isn't the only reason why Mr Cromarty—I mean, why you think he is interesting?"

"There's that glass eye, too. That's very interesting, miss."

She still seemed unsatisfied.

"His glass eye! Oh—you mean it has a story?"

"Vera possibly. He says himself it was done wi' a whisky bottle, but possibly that's making the best of it. But what interests me, miss, about yon eye is this——"

He paused dramatically, and she inquired in an encouraging voice—

"Yes, Bisset?"

"It's the principle of introducing a foreign substance so near the man's brain. What's the glass? What's it consist of?"

"I—I don't know," confessed Cicely weakly.

"Silica! And what's silica? Practically the same as sand! Well, now, if ye put a handful of sand into a man's brain—or anyhow next door to it—it's bound to have some effect, bound to have some effect!"

Bisset's voice fell to a very serious note, and as he was famous for the range of his reading and was generally said to know practically by heart 'The People's Self-Educator in Science and Art,' Cicely asked a little apprehensively—



"But what effect can it possibly have?"

"It might take him different ways," said the philosopher cautiously though sombrely. "But it's a good thing, anyway, Miss Farmond, that the laird of Stanesland is no likely to get married."

"Isn't he?" she asked again, with that encouraging note.

Bisset replied with another question, asked in an ominous voice.

"Have ye seen yon castle o' his, miss?"

Cicely nodded.

"I called there once with Lady Cromarty."

"A most interesting place, miss, illustrating the principle of thae castles very instructively."

Mr Bisset had evidently been studying architecture as well as science, and no doubt would have given Miss Farmond some valuable information on the subject. But she seemed to lack enthusiasm for it to-day.

"But will the castle prevent him marrying?" she inquired with a smile.

"The lady in it will," said the philosopher with a sudden descent into worldly shrewdness.

"Miss Cromarty! Why?"

"She's mair comfortable there than setting off on her travels again. That's a fao', miss."

"But—but supposing he——" Cicely began and then paused.

"Oh, the laird's no' the

marrying sort, anyhow. He says to me himself one day when I'd taken the liberty of suggesting that a lady would suit the castle fine—we was shooting, and I was carrying his cartridges, which I do for amusement, miss, whiles—'Bisset,' says he, 'the lady will have to be a damned keen shot to think me worth a cartridge. I'm too tough for the table,' says he, 'and not ornamental enough to stuff. They've let me off so far, and why the he—' begging your pardon, miss, but Stanesland uses strong expressions sometimes. 'Why the something,' says he, 'should they want to put me in the bag now? I'm happier free—and so's the lady.' But he's a grand shot and a vera friendly gentleman, vera friendly indeed. It's a pity though he's that ugly."

"Ugly!" she exclaimed. "Oh, I don't think him ugly at all. He's very striking-looking. I think he is rather handsome."

Bisset looked at her with a benevolently reproving eye.

"Weel, miss, it's all a matter of taste, but to my mind Stanesland is a fine gentleman, but the vera opposite extreme from a Venus." He broke off and glanced towards the house. "Oh, help us! There's one of thae helpless women crying on me. How this house would get on wanting me—!"

He left Miss Farmond to paint the gloomy picture for herself.

(To be continued.)

## EASTERN NIGHTS—AND FLIGHTS.

(BEING AN INTERRUPTED SEQUEL TO 'AN AIRMAN'S OUTINGS.')

A RECORD OF CAPTURE IN PALESTINE, ADVENTURE IN  
TURKEY, AND ESCAPE THROUGH RUSSIA.

BY "CONTACT" (CAPTAIN ALAN BOTT, M.C.)

## CHAPTER I.—THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS.

MOST of us who were at close grips with the Great War will remember the habit of speculation about life on the far side of the front. Somewhere beyond the frontier of trenches, we realised, were our opposite numbers—infantrymen, gunners, aviators, staff officers, mess orderlies, generals, captains, lance-corporals—each according to character, rank, and duties, and to the position he occupied by reason of ability, courage, initiative, old age, self-advertisement, or wire-pulling. We saw them through a glass, darkly—a glass that, being partly concave, partly convex, and almost impenetrable throughout, showed us our opposite numbers as distorted reflections of ourselves.

We knew well that if we went through, round, or over this glass we should find ourselves in an unnatural world, where we should be negative instead of positive, passive instead of active, useless scrap-iron instead of working parts of a well-constructed machine. Yet we never considered the possibility of being obliged, in that unreal world, to live such a life of impotence. Our

companions, now, might have the bad luck to be dragged there; but our sense of normality would not let us reckon with such an unusual happening in our own case.

And then, perhaps, one fine day or night found us isolated in an attack, or shot down in an air fight; and we would be in the topsy-turvy country of captivity. Some of us, who passed into this country from the curious East, tumbled head-over-heels upon adventures fantastic as those of any fictional explorer of the wonderland Through the Looking-Glass of fancy.

We were a small band of six scout pilots, one monkey-mascot, and a team of Baby Nieuports, hangared in a large meadow that was the nearest aerodrome to the then front in Palestine. Slightly to the south was the one-time German colony of Sorona, with houses empty but for ugly furniture and ornaments, left behind when the routed Turco-Germans scurried up the coast-line after Allenby's great victory at Gaza. A few miles north was the trench-line, a



few miles east were row upon row of sand-dunes, a sea of that intense blue which is the secret of the Syrian coast, and the ancient port of Jaffa, misnamed "The Beautiful."

The particular job of our detached flight of Nieuports was always to be ready, between dawn and sunrise, to leap into the air at a moment's notice and climb towards whatever enemy aircraft were signalled as approaching from the north. Usually we flew in pairs, for the work was of the tip-and-run variety, and needed, above all things, speed in leaving the ground and speed in climbing; and a larger party would have been slower, because of the exigencies of formation flying.

"A A A four H.A. flying S. towards Mulebbis 10,000 feet A A A" would be telephoned by an anti-aircraft battery. The bell (made out of a Le Rhone cylinder) would clang, the "standing by" pilots would fasten caps and goggles as they raced to their buses, the mechanics would swing the propellers into position as the pilots climbed into the cockpits, the engines would swell from a murmur to a roar, and, three minutes after the sentinel-operator had scribbled the warning, two Nieuports would be away across the sun-browned grass and up into the cool air. A climbing turn, at about 100 feet, and they would streak upward, at an angle of 45 degrees, to the air country above Mulebbis. And the next

two pilots on the waiting list would come within easy reach of their flying kit.

Even with the fast-climbing Nieuport it was difficult indeed to reach a height of 10,000 to 12,000 feet in time to get to grips with machines which were at that height while we were reading month-old newspapers on solid earth. But practice, and co-operation with the Archie gunners by means of directional shots, enabled us to find the black-crossed trespassers often enough to give them a wholesome fear of venturing any distance beyond the lines. Indeed I never found a group of German machines, however many they might be, attacking a pair of Nieuports, or S.E. 5's, or Bristol Fighters.

Up till the last few weeks of 1917 the Flying Corps in Palestine had, frankly, a difficult time. This was by no manner of means the fault of the pilots, nor of the R.F.C. Staff on the spot. It was an inevitable result of the policy of gentlemen in England who were giving the Eastern fronts certain types of machine which seemed specially designed to give their crews a minimum chance of defending themselves—types which had to be dumped somewhere, because other gentlemen in England had ordered them in hundreds and thousands long after they should have been obsolete as regards active service. Thus, apart from a few Beardmore Martinsydes—excellent as light bombers, but never



much good as fighting craft, even when they were first used on the French front in 1916—the only British aircraft in Palestine prior to the last few weeks of 1917 were the much too “inherently stable” B.E. brands, officially designed, officially promoted, officially ordered by the thousand, while better privately-designed types were ordered by the score, and officially foisted on oversea squadrons so that they became the unofficial bugbear of active service pilots. And the German fighting pilots in Palestine, particularly one Oberleutnant Felmy, with their Albatross single-seaters, enjoyed themselves immensely—for a while.

With the arrival of a few Nieuports on the British side they enjoyed themselves rather less, and when some Bristol Fighters, and later still some S.E. 5's flew into the arena, the Air Boohe, Palestine species, had a perfectly beastly time. The R.F.C. Brigadier-General used his reinforcements to the best advantage, and after one or two special exploits (like that of Captain Peter Drummond, D.S.O., M.C., who, on a Bristol Fighter, destroyed three German machines over their own aerodrome within ten minutes of attacking them) we seldom found any black-crossed craft over our part of the lines.

At the period of which I write—March to May 1918—it was not too much to say that enemy machines, even when in superior force, never fought our Bristol Fighters, S.E. 5's, or Nieuports unless there was no

chance of keeping at a safe distance. Once three of us were able to chase five German scouts and one two-seater for twenty miles over enemy country until they reached their hangars at Jenin, out-dived us because of their heavier weight, and landed without the least pretence of showing fight, while we relieved our feelings by looping the loop over their aerodrome.

Those were pleasant days, in pleasant surroundings. Our tents were pitched in an orange grove, which provided shade from the midday sun, privacy from the midnight pilfering of Bedouins, and loveliness at all times. The fruit had just ripened, and by stretching an arm outside the tent-flap, one could pick full-blooded, giant Jaffa oranges. Passing troops bought at the rate of five a penny the best Jaffas, stolen from our enclosure by young imps of Arabs.

In the heat of afternoon the four of us who were not standing by for the next call would mooch through the orange-trees for a siesta; and in the cool of the evening we would drive to the sands for a moonlight bathe in the shimmering Mediterranean. For the rest, one could always visit Jaffa, where were some friendly nurses, and a Syrian barber who could cut hair quite decently. Apart from these attractions, however, and the mud hovel that may or may not have been the house of Simon the Tanner, Jaffa was just like any other town in the Palestine zone of occupation,



with its haphazard medley of Arabs, Jews, and Syrians, all bent on getting-rich-quick by exploiting that highly exploitable person the British soldier.

On the evening before my capture I bathed in the company of a German cadet; a circumstance which I thought unusually novel, not foreseeing that my next bathe would also be in the company of a German, albeit under very different conditions.

One Offizierstellvertreter Willi Hampel had been shot down and captured, and was in the prisoners' compound at Ludd. It was decided that before forwarding Hampel to Egypt, the best way to milk him of information would be for another aviator to entertain him, while discussing aeronautics on a basis of common interest; and I was detailed for the duty. This rather went against the grain; but Willi knew neither French nor English, and I was the only pilot in the Brigade who could talk German, so that there was no alternative. From his cage I motored Willi to lunch in our mess, showed him our machines and our monkey, and even took him to tea with an agreeable compatriot, in the person of a beautiful German Jewess who was the landlord of some houses at Ramleh.

The information he let slip was not very illuminating—a few truthful statements about machines, pilots, and aerodromes, and a great many obvious lies. But his opinions on our airmen and machines were interesting. Our pilots

were splendid, but too reckless, he thought. As for the machines, the Bristol Fighter was the work of the devil, and to be avoided at all costs; the B.E. 8 might safely be attacked unless it were well protected, the British single-seaters were good, but the German Flying Corps regarded the B.E. types as "sehr komisch." Later, when I was myself a prisoner, I found these statements echoed by other German pilots.

As Willi was well-behaved and occasionally informative, and as he had been a flying contemporary of mine on the Western front in 1916 and 1917, I took him for a sea-bathe before he went back to his cage, while taking the precaution to swim closely behind him.

Next day the heat was intense, so that I was glad indeed when the arrival of a A.E.G. from the north gave me the chance to climb to the cool levels of 8,000 to 10,000 feet, flying hatless and in shirt-sleeves. The trespassing two-seater spotted us, and retired before we could reach its height. But the next turn of my flying partner and me, in the late afternoon, brought us the good fortune of sending a Hun bus to earth—from sheer fright, not out of control, unfortunately—in open country. I was well content on landing, for the atmosphere was cooler, less oppressive, and almost pleasant, and my day's work should have been done.

But a pony, a monkey, and mischance conspired to send me

beyond the lines for the third time that day, and the last time for many months. Instead of leaving the aerodrome at once, I remained to play with Bohita, the marmoset-mascot. Ten minutes later the bell clanged a warning. One of the waiting pilots raced to his machine, and was away; but the other, mounted on an energetic little pony, was chasing a polo ball. The pony, being pulled up suddenly, reared, and the rider was thrown. Seeing that he must be hurt, or at any rate shaken, I climbed to his bus and sent word that I would replace him, so that no time should be wasted. It was then about one hour before sunset.

The first Nieuport had a good start, but its pilot was new to the game, and failed to see the white puffs from directional shots fired by the nearest A.A. battery. The last I saw of his bus was as it climbed due east, with the apparent intention of sniffing at a harmless B. E. 8 to see if it were a Hun, and without noticing when I continually switch-backed my machine fore and aft, as a signal that a real Hun was near. I therefore left what should have been my companion bus to its own amusement, and climbed towards the British Archie bursts.

At about 9000 feet I reached their level, and picked up the intruder—a grey-planed two-seater of the latest Rumpler type. When I was still some 800 yards distant its pilot swerved round, and, holding down his machine's nose for

extra speed, raced back northward, rather than be forced to fight. I streaked after it, beyond the trenches.

Now the Rumpler was faster than my Nieuport, but was slower on the climb. My only chance of catching up, therefore, was first to gain height and then to lose it again in a slanting dive, with engine on, in the direction of the Boche, and to repeat these tactics. Although each dive brought me a little closer, this method was a slow business. I remember passing Kilkilieh and seeing Nablus (the Biblical Shechem), and still being outside machine-gun range of the black-crossed bus ahead.

It was at a spot west of Nablus, and about twenty miles from the lines, that I got my chance. By then we had nosed down to 6000 feet. Being able to manoeuvre twice as quickly as the big two-seater, the little Nieuport was soon in a "blind spot" position, and I attacked from a sideways direction, opening fire at 80 yards. The Rumpler dived almost vertically out of the way, and I overshot.

I was turning again, when from above came a succession of raps—*tatatatatat, tatatat, tatatatatat*,—the unmistakable tap-tapping of aerial machine-gun fire. I looked up and saw three scouts dropping towards me from a cloud-bank.

Swerving right round on an Immelman turn I managed to get underneath the nearest scout as it flattened out. I had just pulled down my top-plane Lewis gun, and was pre-



paring to fire a long burst upward into the belly of the scout, when—*poop!*—my petrol tank opened with a dull thud. The observer in the Rumpler had opened fire at a distance of more than 300 yards (far outside what is the normally effective range for aerial fighting), and by an extraordinary touch of ill-luck for me, some of his bullets had ripped through my tank,—the only circumstance which, at that moment, could have put my Nieuport out of action. The petrol gushed over my trousers and swilled round the floor of the cockpit.

I turned south and had been to make a last-hope effort to reach the trenches before all the fuel had disappeared, when I received a second shock. On looking over the side, I was horrified at seeing that underneath the tank the fuselage was black and smouldering. Next instant some wicked-looking sparks merged into a little flame that licked across the centre of the fuselage. A thrill of fear that was so intense as to be almost physical went through me as I switched off, banked the bus over to the left as far as the joystick would allow, and holding up its nose with opposite rudder, went down in a vertical side-slip—the only possible chance of getting to earth before the machine really caught fire. The traditional “whole of my past life” certainly did not flash before me; but I was conscious of an intense bitterness against fate for allowing this to happen one week before

I was to have returned to Cairo, the Neutral, where they dined and cocktailed, and where the local staff officers filled the dances arranged for the poor dear lonely young officers on leave from the front. And I shouted blasphemies into the unhearing air.

I have no hesitation in saying that I was exquisitely afraid as the Nieuport slid downwards at a great speed, for of all deaths that of roasting in an aeroplane while waiting for it to break up has always seemed to me the least attractive. But the gods were kind, for by the time I reached a height of 500 feet the violent rush of air—which incidentally boxed my ear pretty painfully—had overwhelmed the flame and swept it out of existence. The fuselage still smouldered, however, and after righting the bus (now completely emptied of petrol) I lost no time in looking out for a landing-place.

This was a hopeless task. Below was rocky mountain-side, contoured unevenly, with no level nor open spaces, and scarcely any vegetation. There was just one patch of grass, about fifteen yards long; and although this was much too small for a landing-ground, I chose it in preference to bouldered slopes or stony gorges.

After pancaking down to the fringe of the brown grass the Nieuport ran uphill for the length of the patch and was heading for a tree trunk, when I ruddered strongly to avoid a collision, swerved aside—and banged into the face



of a great rock. Of what came next all I remember is a jarring shock, an uncontrolled dive forward against which instinct protested in vain, an awful sick feeling that lasted a couple of seconds, and the beginnings of what would have been a colossal headache if unconsciousness had not brought relief.

Consciousness returned dimly and gradually. First of all I saw the rock on which my head was lolling; but I had no sense of unity, nor could I feel

any bodily sensations except an oppressive want of breath. I twisted my neck and looked up at the sky, and somehow realised that the sun must have set. Then I noticed, quite impersonally, that a band of ragged Arabs were climbing towards me. Most of them carried rifles, and all had pistols or daggers protruding from their sashes and ammunition belts. The foremost had unsheathed a long knife, which he fingered appraisingly as he advanced at a quick walk.

#### CHAPTER II.—PAIN, PURGATORY, AND A PLAN.

As my senses became clearer the feeling of oppression in my chest grew more and more acute, and I had to struggle desperately for breath. Yet I did not realise that I was directly concerned in the Arabs' intentions and actions, but looked at the motley group from the detached point of view of a cinematograph spectator. They were an unkempt group, with ragged robes and dirty head-dresses and straggling beards and unfriendly eyes,—the sort of nomads who, during the lawless days of war would—and did—cheerfully kill travellers for the sake of a pair of boots, a dress, or a rifle. They had between them a strange variety of arms—guns of every size and shape, belts of close-packed ammunition, revolvers and long bone-handled pistols, and curved knives.

And the foremost Arab

continued to advance, while fingering the drawn blade of his knife. He was only a few yards distant when another and older man stopped him with a shout. The man with the shining blade answered heatedly, and a general argument followed, in which most of his companions took part. At that time my knowledge of Arabic was of the slightest, and in any case I was not in a condition to grasp the meaning of their words. Yet instinct and deductions from their pantomime made me certain that they were debating some rather debatable points, namely—whether somebody should be killed and stripped, or merely stripped, or whether it would be more worth while to hand him over alive to the Turks, in return for *baksheesh*.

And again I did not regard myself as interested in the de-



liberations, nor was I the least bit afraid, being still under the spell of cinematographic detachment. When the Arabs' argument was settled beyond question by the sudden appearance on a near-by slope of a detachment of Turkish soldiers, I regarded the scene much as if it had portrayed a film sheriff, with comic sheepskin-booted posse, riding to rescue the kidnapped maiden from the brigands.

The dozen Arabs stood sullenly aside as four mounted officers arrived, followed by a body of running soldiers.

"Anglais?" said a young officer as he dismounted.

And the mental effort of asking myself if I were English brought back most of my senses and understanding, and I discovered that I was intensely uncomfortable. The struggle for breath was almost insupportable, a searing pain permeated my right thigh, and my head felt as if it were disintegrating. I tried to move, but an implacable weight held firmly everything but my head, one arm, and one leg.

"Anglais?" repeated the young officer. I tried to speak but failed, and could only nod, miserably.

The soldiers got to work behind me, and first the weight on my chest and then that on my thigh lifted. Two officers helped me to rise, and one of them felt my face.

"Not so bad, I am a doctor. I will bandage it," he said in French.

I searched to find what was not so bad, and discovered that all this while I had been seeing through the right eye only, for the left was screwed up tightly, with a swollen forehead overhanging it. The doctor let go my arm to fetch some dressing from his horse, and I promptly collapsed, because one thigh would not perform its work. I fell among pieces of the most completely wrecked aeroplane I have ever seen. After hitting the rock the machine had evidently crashed to starboard, so that I was thrown sideways over the top plane. The starboard wings were matchwood, the struts on the port side had snapped, and the fuselage was twisted into a wide curve, a corner of the rock having cut through one longeron and bent another. None of the main parts—planes, fuselage, centre-section, rudder, or elevator—was whole, and all were intermingled with bits of wire, splinters of wood, and tattered fabric. As for the engine, it had fallen clean out, and was partly buried in earth. It was the engine that had been weighing so painfully on my right thigh, while the forward end of the fuselage had pinned down my chest. I thought of burning these remains by throwing a lighted match among them suddenly, but did not do so—firstly because I had no match, and secondly, because there was nothing worth the burning. The soldiers had already taken the instruments from the dashboard, and one of them, I

noticed, had broken off the joystick to take as a souvenir.

The doctor bound up my face and helped me to mount a mule, and we left the Arabs to their scowls of disappointment at being cheated out of loot. All this while I had been exceptionally well treated by the officers and men in Turkish uniform. Not one had spoken roughly, nothing was taken from me, and even my pockets were not searched. Could it be that the Turks treated their prisoners well instead of badly? Even on the British side of the lines we heard stories of how Turkish soldiers had killed British wounded, how Turkish officers had threatened newly-taken prisoners with death if they did not give up all they possessed, and how everybody's money and most people's boots were stolen immediately they were captured; although we did not hear anything like the damnable truth of the Turks' atrocities. The mystery soon explained itself.

"Est-ce que les Anglais viendront bientôt?" said the young officer who had first spoken.

"Qui sait?"

"Moi, je l'espère bien, parce que je suis Arménien. Nous sommes tous des Arméniens ou des Arabes."

I had been lucky enough to fall among, not Turks, but Arabs and Armenians, whose officers were, one and all, pro-British. They were a labour unit, explained the young Armenian, and their work was to make roads and

tracks across the hill-country. Like all the conscript Armenians, Greeks, and Jews, and most of the Arabs, they had not been sent to the actual front, because most of them would have deserted to the British at the first opportunity. The doctor who had dressed my face was a Jew. The commandant, whom I would meet at the camp, was an Arab, and had an intense love for the British. But he would not dare pretend to show me too much friendliness, because some of the men acted as spies for the Turks.

The camp sprawled in a hollow between two hills, without any semblance of order. The men were squatting at their evening meal, in little parties, each man dipping his fingers into the large bowl that was in the centre of his group. The Arab commandant, a fat man with a good-humoured face, was in front of his tent, awaiting our arrival. He looked at me with grave curiosity on learning that I was English, and, through an interpreter, greeted me ceremoniously. He was sorry indeed, he said, for my misfortune, and he hoped my hurts were not serious. He had little enough hospitality to offer, but it would be a privilege to make me as comfortable as possible. Would I honour the officers by joining them at dinner?

Over a meal of soup, bread, rice, and raisins, I was questioned guardedly about my views on the duration of the war, the conditions of life



in that part of Palestine occupied by the British, and, above all, if the British would advance soon. Every one seemed to take it for granted that the British could advance when and where they liked. I explained that the Arabs, Syrians, and Jews were very contented and on good terms with our troops; that bread, sugar, fish, and meat were cheap and plentiful; that local inhabitants were well paid for everything they sold to the British armies; that the population was overjoyed at being freed from the Turks.

Several eyes gleamed, and most of the company looked thoughtful; but no comments were passed. Those present looked at each other with side-glances, as if distrustful and afraid to speak.

But afterwards, when we went outside the tent to drink our coffee by moonlight, the commandant took me aside and unburdened himself, while pretending to watch the Jew doctor re-bandage my face. Was it true, he asked (the Jew acting as interpreter), that the British intended to give Arabia and part of Syria to the Arabs?

"Most certainly," I replied; and added, for the benefit of the doctor, that the Jews would probably have Palestine.

Was it true that the British were friendly to the Arabs and gave their Arab prisoners all sorts of privileges not given to the Turkish prisoners?

"Most certainly."

The good-humoured face of the Arab grew hard as he

began talking of the Turks' misdeeds. They had massacred many of the Syrian and Arab notables. They had starved to death half the Lebanon population. They had commandeered all the crops. They had thrown many hundreds into prison and left them there without trial. The whole of the population hated the Turks, and were only waiting for a British victory to rise up and kill the grasping officials. When the British advanced they would receive such a welcome as conquerors had never before received in Syria.

With that he began to tell me how, after he had been taken for service from his native town of Homs, the Turks had sent his family to Aleppo, and told him that if he deserted their lives would be forfeit. By merely talking to me he would be suspect. Would I be kind enough to give him my word of honour not to try to escape while in his charge? If, however, I were sent to Damascus and thought of escaping from there, I might obtain help from an Arab whose address he would give me. As I could not walk five yards, and still felt deadly sick, I promised readily enough.

The young Armenian helped me across to his tent and put me to bed. He then wrapped himself in a blanket and lay on the floor facing the entrance; for, he said, if I were left to sleep alone the men would creep in to steal my clothes and boots.

At about two o'clock in the morning, after a few hours of fitful sleep, I was woken up and asked to dress. A German staff officer, said the Armenian, had ridden over to see that I was sent away, fearing that the Arabs and Armenians might help me to escape. Outside, in the moonlight, I found a young eyeglassed lieutenant—correct, aloof, and immaculate. In atrocious French he asked if I were badly shaken, and if I thought I could ride for three hours. I did not think I could ride for three hours. He was sorry, but I really must ride for three hours. Why, then, had he troubled to ask my opinion if I could ride for three hours? He made no reply, but I heard him giving instructions to the Sanitätsunteroffizier who had come with him to have me put on a mule and, with drawn revolver, to ride behind, while a guide led the way to Army Group Headquarters.

A shambling, decrepit mule was commandeered from the Arab, and with many a groan I was helped on to its back. The Sanitätsunteroffizier mounted his pony, drew his revolver, and cocked it with an ostentatious click. An Arab guide took hold of my mule's reins. I said good-bye to the Arab and Armenian officers, and we moved off down a straggling track. The commandant had no chance to give me the address of his friend in Damascus.

About fifty yards ahead I saw what looked like a Bedouin galloping across a stretch of

grass and disappear behind a mound? And then, from the camp behind us, came a startled and furious shout: "Mein Pferd! Teufel! Wo ist mein Pferd?" The Sanitätsunteroffizier motioned our guide to turn round, and we retraced our path. The young staff officer—no longer correct, aloof, and immaculate, and with eyeglass dangling unheeded in front of his tunic—was in a towering rage. He had told "one of these brutes," said he to the Sanitätsunteroffizier, to hold his horse, and he now found both the horse and the brute had disappeared. I remembered the Bedouin whom I had seen riding across the patch of grass, and was infinitely amused. It appeared that the man who held the horse had already deserted twice and been recaptured; for his third attempt, who could blame him for taking as companion a German officer's horse, since Allah had sent such a wonderful gift? And the young German raged and cursed and shouted verbal contempt for all these Asiatic "cattle," among whom it was his misfortune to live. Finally, after promising the commandant all sorts of penalties, he said he would take the best horse from the Arab officers' stable.

The Sanitätsunteroffizier and I again walked our mules along the narrow track. It was a ride that will live always vividly in my memory. The guide dragged my mule up impossible slopes, pulled it over slippery rocks which ended in an almost vertical drop of several feet, and



beat it unmercifully on the several occasions when it fell forward on to its knees. Each small jolt sent an exquisite pain through my contused thigh, and my head felt as if it were being beaten by hammers. Everything seemed unreal. The piles of heaped-up stones, so common in this country of nomad Arabs, looked like monstrous gargoyles in the half-light of the moon.

After about an hour I became light-headed again, forgot I was a prisoner, forgot I was on mule-back, and almost forgot that I existed. I lost consciousness of everything but the light of the moon, which appeared as some great white hanging sheet, from the other side of which sounded, far away and unnatural, the voice of the Unteroffizier, like the trickling of hidden water. Finally I fainted, and must have fallen from the mule, for when I recovered consciousness my head and arms were sore, and the German was arranging my bandages. Refreshed by a short drink of water, I was once more pushed on to the mule's back, and continued the purgatorial journey over the rocky hillside. It was four hours after we had started when the Unteroffizier announced that a village in a small valley some quarter of a mile ahead was Arsun, the site of the Group Headquarters.

I was taken direct to the officers' mess, where I found the eye-glassed young officer relating to two early risers—a colonel and a major—how the dirty pig-dog of an Arab

had stolen his best horse. The senior officer present, a staff colonel, received me kindly enough; but a major, to whom I took an instant dislike, looked at my torn clothes and swollen face and laughed. The colonel gave me wine, and offered his sympathy. He fought, he said, side by side with the British in the Boxer War, and he had the greatest regard for the English infantryman. Finding that I had flown in the battle of the Somme, he launched into reminiscences of that epic struggle, and told me how desperately hard put were the Germans not to let their retreat degenerate into a rout. Now, however (this was the period of the whirlwind German advance towards Amiens), things were better. He believed that Hindenburg, having bled the French white, would bring about a German peace by the coming autumn. I remarked that the French were by no means bled white, and, moreover, that there were plenty of Englishmen and Americans in the world. Here the major interposed with a sneer—

“Americans! All through the war the Allies have clutched at straws and men of straw. First it was the Russians, then the blockade, then the British, and now that all these three have failed it is the Americans! I know the Americans well. They are all talk, bluff, and self-interest. They will make not the least difference to German invincibility.”



And he began a long boastful account of how he had got back to Germany at the beginning of the war by outwitting the Americans and the English. In August 1914, he said, he was on special duty in Japan. He had slipped across to America, and for a time worked in the United States with Boy-ed and von Papen. Afterwards, with Dutch papers, he had shipped to Holland. When the boat was held up by a British cruiser, he had convinced the stupid examining officer that he was a Dutchman. He proceeded to draw offensive comparisons between the Germans and the English. The German nation was magnificently organised, whereas the British leaders could scarcely be more stupid. But it was not only a question of organisation. From every point of view the German was superior to the Englishman. He was braver, more intelligent, more obedient, and had a higher sense of honour. When it was a question of equal conditions the German invariably beat the Englishman. He turned to the colonel, and speaking in German, he pointed out as a proof of his contentions that I myself had been shot down by a German. Also speaking in German (for the first time since my capture), which appeared to surprise the major, I mentioned that I had been fighting with not one but four German machines, that I had chased a German two-seater twenty miles over its own territory, that the

German aviators on the Palestine front invariably ran from the British unless in greatly superior force, that the proportion of machines shot down in Palestine was about five Germans to one British, and, moreover, that when a German officer had the misfortune to be captured he was treated as a gentleman, and was not made a target for uncivil taunts.

The major rang the bell, and ordered me to be taken to a tent by the cook-house.

Once more I lay down, and this time was allowed to sleep until awakened by the myriads of flies that swarmed round the cook-house while lunch was being prepared. I hung about the tent, miserably and dejectedly, for two hours. Then a lieutenant arrived, and announced that the major would be graciously pleased to accept an apology for my lack of respect. If, I replied, the major would express his regrets for having spoken offensively of the English, I would be delighted to exchange apologies with him. The lieutenant and I treated each other to punctilious salutes, and he withdrew; and that was the last I heard of the ill-mannered major.

To give the devil his due, he provided the single example of German rudeness that I met with while in captivity. It is obvious, from the stories of prisoners repatriated from Germany, that the Boche at home was often a brute and a vulgarian in his treatment of captives. But in the East his contempt for the Turks and Arabs seemed to make him



regret seeing a fellow-European in their hands. At any rate, German officers and men often arranged that British prisoners whom they met on the Turkish railways should be provided with a higher degree of comfort; and during the damnable 800-mile march of the Kut-el-Amara garrison across the desert and mountains, on starvation rations, when thousands died from the cruelty and neglect of the Turks, German and Austrian motor-lorries picked up and saved hundreds of worn-out, half-clothed Tommies who had been left to die by the roadside.

In the afternoon, after receiving some bread and coffee, I was sent away on pony-back, with a German cavalryman as escort. This trooper was friendly and garrulous. He pronounced himself a Social Democrat and an Internationalist. He was a good German, he claimed, and had fought for Germany since 1914; but he had neither hatred nor contempt for Germany's enemies. It was the Ministers, the politicians, the professors, the journalists, and the general staffs who had manufactured hatred. The German civilians and non-combatant troops were blinded by racial feeling, but, according to my Social Democrat guard, not so the fighting man. He liked and respected many of his officers, especially the colonel whom I had met; but after the war the proletariat would see that they, and the class they represented, discarded their arrogance and ascendancy. And,

either ignorant or unmindful of Germany's crimes, this half-baked idealist looked forward with confidence to a wonderful peace that would send him back to his trade of printing, and would bring about an immediate heart-to-heart reconciliation of Germany and the rest of the world.

With such debating-society talk my mind was distracted from the dull ache in my thigh and the spasmodic pains that came with every jolt from the pony. The heat was intense on my uncovered head, and the flies collected in their hundreds each time we halted to allow a party of ragged Arabs, mounted on camels or donkeys, to pass round some bend of the track ahead of us.

The country was fairly level, however, and it was not long before we reached my next stage—a German field hospital, corresponding approximately to the British casualty clearing station. There my face and thigh were dressed, and for the first time since capture I could indulge in the glorious luxury of a wash. The doctor in charge complained that the hospital had been machine-gunned by a British aeroplane, but he seemed surprised when I told him that the red cross painted on the *side* of the building could not be seen by an aviator. He agreed to mark a large red cross on the ground.

My destination, it appeared, was the Austrian hospital at Tul-keran, whither I was forwarded by motor-ambulance, with several wounded Turks. It proved to be a dirty in-

sanitary building, such as we should scarcely have used as a billet; but at all events it provided a much-needed place of rest.

Most ex-prisoners of war will agree that the time when one is first left alone for any length of time, after capture, is a first-class substitute for purgatory. All at once the realisation that one is cut off and under most galling restraint becomes vivid and intense. The thought of irrevocable separation from one's fighting companions, and of what they must now be doing, leaves one utterly miserable and dejected. So it was with me. Fifteen miles to the south our Nieuports would be waiting for the next tip-and-run call to flight. It would, perhaps, be the turn of Daddy and the Babe, who would hang around the hangars, while the rest trooped across to tea in the orange grove. Soon all of them would be driving along the wired-over, sandy road to the coast.

And here was I, herded with

unclean Turks in a crowded unclean room, while the hot sun streamed through the window and made one glad to get protection from it by hiding under an unclean blanket.

Only fifteen miles to the south. And the coast was fifteen miles to the east. The coast? Why, my friend Seeward, after he was forced to land in the sea, had effected a marvellous escape by hiding among the sand-dunes during the daytime, and during the night alternately swimming, walking, and rolling through the shallow water on the fringe of the sands, until he had passed the Turkish trench-line. Only fifteen miles; and from aerial observation I knew that the country between Tul-keran and the sea was more or less flat.

I resolved that when my leg allowed me to walk, I would somehow escape from the hospital early one night, try to reach the shore before dawn, hide during the day following, and then run or swim to the lines.

(To be continued.)



## A COMPANY OF TANKS.

BY MAJOR W. H. L. WATSON, D.C.M.,

Author of 'Adventures of a Despatch Rider.'

## CHAPTER IV.—THE FIRST BATTLE OF BULLECOURT.

(April 11, 1917.)

LATER in the morning we heard from Jumbo, who had returned from Noreuil, the full history of the weary trek in the blizzard.

The tanks had left Mory Copse at 8 P.M. under the guidance of Wyatt. In the original plan of operations it had been arranged that Wyatt's section should attack from Noreuil and the remaining sections from Ecoust. So Wyatt was the only section commander who had reconnoitred the Noreuil route.

No tape had been laid. We had not wished to decorate the downs with broad white tape before the afternoon of the day on which the tanks would move forward. On the other hand, we had not calculated on such a brief interval between the receipt of orders and the start of the tanks. An attempt to lay tape in front of the tanks was soon abandoned: the drivers could not see it, and Wyatt was guiding them as well as he could.

Soon after they had set out the blizzard came sweeping over the downs, blocking out landmarks and obscuring lamps. The drivers could not always see the officers who were leading their tanks on foot. Each tank commander,

blinded and breathless, found it barely possible to follow the tank in front. The pace was reduced to a mere crawl in order to keep the convoy together.

Though Wyatt never lost his way, he wisely proceeded with the utmost caution, checking his route again and again. Our line at the time consisted of scattered posts—there were no trenches—and on such a night it would have been easy enough to lead the whole company of tanks straight into the German wire.

The tanks came down into the valley that runs from Vaulx-Vraucourt to Noreuil two miles above Noreuil. The crews were dead-tired, but they would have gone forward willingly if they could have arrived in time. Dawn was breaking. The Australians were withdrawn at the last moment from the Railway Embankment, where they had been lying out all night in readiness, and the attack was postponed.

The blizzard confounded many that night. The colonel told me later he had heard that a whole cavalry brigade had spent most of the night wandering over the downs, hopelessly lost. I cannot vouch for the story myself.

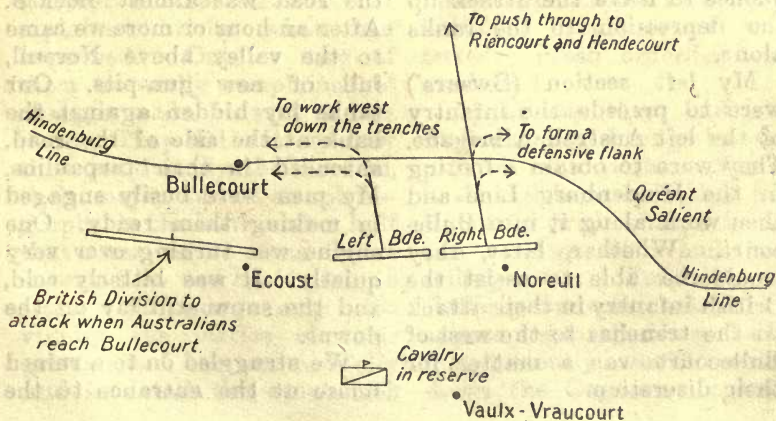
In the afternoon (April 10)

I was called to a conference at the headquarters of the Australian Division which was housed in a camp of Armstrong huts, ten minutes' walk down the Bapaume road. General Birdwood was there, Major-General Holmes, who commanded the Division with which we were to operate, Brigadier-General Rosenthal, commanding the artillery of the Corps, sundry staff officers, the colonel, and myself.

The conference first discussed the situation on the front of the Third Army. The initial advance had been completely successful, but the German forces were far from defeat, and were continuing to offer a most determined and skilful resistance. We certainly had not broken through yet. The battle, however, was still in its earliest stages; the situation had not crystallised; there was still hope that the enormous pressure of our offensive might cause the enemy line to crumble and disappear. It had been decided, in consequence, to proceed with the postponed attack on Bulle-

court, but to overhaul the arrangements which had been improvised to meet an emergency. The original idea of a stealthy and silent attack, led by tanks and supported by a bombardment rather than a barrage, was abandoned after some discussion, and the conference agreed to return to more classical methods.

Two infantry brigades would attack and pierce the Hindenburg Line on the front immediately to the east of Bullecourt. The attack was to be led by tanks under cover of a barrage and a heavy bombardment. Emphasis was laid on the necessity for strong counter-battery work. The right attacking brigade would form a defensive flank in the direction of Quéant, and at the same time endeavour to press through to Riencourt and Hendeourt. The left brigade would work its way down the German trenches into Bullecourt itself. Immediately the village was reached, the British Division on the left would extend the front of the attack westwards.





My tanks were detailed to co-operate very closely with the infantry. The right section (Wyatt's) were given three duties: first, to parade up and down the German wire immediately to the right of the front of the attack; second, to remain with the infantry in the Hindenburg Line until the trenches had been successfully "blocked" and the defensive flank secured; third, to accompany the infantry in their advance on Riencourt and Hendecourt.

The centre section (Field's) were required to advance between the two brigades and plunge into the Hindenburg Line. This movement was made necessary by the decision to attack not on a continuous front but up two slight spurs or shoulders. The Hindenburg Line itself lay just beyond the crest of a slope, and these almost imperceptible shoulders ran out from the main slope at right angles to the line. It was thought that the depression between them would be swept by machine-gun fire, and it was decided in consequence to leave the attack up the depression to the tanks alone.

My left section (Swears') were to precede the infantry of the left Australian brigade. They were to obtain a footing in the Hindenburg Line and then work along it into Bullecourt. Whether, later, they would be able to assist the British infantry in their attack on the trenches to the west of Bullecourt was a matter for their discretion.

The atmosphere of the conference was cheerless. It is a little melancholy to revive and rebuild the plan of an attack which has been postponed very literally at the last moment. The conference was an anti-climax. For days and nights we had been completing our preparations. The supreme moment came, and after hours of acute tension passed without result. Then again, tired and without spirit, we drew up fresh plans. War is never romantic because emergencies, which might be adventures, come only when the soldier is stale and tired.

We hurried back to the camp at Behagnies and composed fresh orders, while Jumbo re-marked his maps and re-shuffled his aeroplane photographs. At dusk Jumbo and I started out in the car for Noreuil, but at Vaulx-Vraucourt we decided to leave the car on account of the pot-holes in the road. The roads were heavy with mud and slush and we were far from fresh. We passed Australians coming up and much transport—in places the road was almost blocked. After an hour or more we came to the valley above Noreuil, full of new gun-pits. Our tanks lay hidden against the bank at the side of the road, shrouded in their tarpaulins. My men were busily engaged in making them ready. One engine was turning over very quietly. It was bitterly cold, and the snow still lay on the downs.

We struggled on to a ruined house at the entrance to the

village. One room or shed—it may have been a shrine—constructed strongly of bricks, still stood in the middle of the wreckage. This my officers had made their headquarters. I gave instructions for all the officers to be collected, and in the meantime walked through the street to one of the two brigade headquarters in the village.

This brigade was fortunate in its choice, for it lay safe and snug in the bowels of the earth. An old brewery or factory possessed whole storeys of cellars, and the brigade office was three storeys down.

Haigh and Swears were discussing operations with the brigadier. They were all under the illusion that the postponed attack would take place as originally planned, and bitter was the disappointment when I told them that the orders had been changed. I gave the general and his brigade-major a rough outline of the new scheme, and took Swears and Haigh back with me to the ruins.

All my officers were assembled in the darkness. I explained briefly what had happened. One or two of them naturally complained of changes made at such a late hour. They did not see how they could study their orders, their maps, and their photographs in the hour and a half that remained to them before it was time for the tanks to start. Realising only too vividly the justice of their grievance, I set out carefully and in detail the exact task

of each tank. When I had finished, we discussed one or two points, and then my officers went to their tanks, and I returned to brigade headquarters, so that I might be in touch with the colonel and the Division should anything untoward happen before zero.

The night passed with slow feet, while my tanks were crawling forward over the snow. The brigade-major rewrote his orders. Officers and orderlies came in and out of the cellar. We had some tea, and the general lay down for some sleep. There was a rumour that one of the tanks had become ditched in climbing out of the road. I went out to investigate, and learned that Morris's tank had been slightly delayed. It was, unfortunately, a clear cold night.

When I returned to the cellar the brigade staff were making ready for the battle. Pads of army signal forms were placed conveniently to hand. The war diary was lying open with a pencil beside it and the carbons adjusted. The wires forward to battalion headquarters were tested. Fresh orderlies were awakened.

Apparently there had been little shelling during the early part of the night. Noreuil itself had been sprinkled continuously with shrapnel, and one or two 5.9's had been sailing over. Forward, the Railway Embankment and the approaches to it had been shelled intermittently, and towards dawn the Germans began a



mild bombardment, but nothing was reported to show that the enemy had heard our tanks or realised our intentions.

I received messages from Haigh that all my tanks were in position, or just coming into position, beyond the Railway Embankment. Zero hour was immediately before sunrise, and as the minutes filed by I wondered idly whether, deep down in the earth, we should hear the barrage. I was desperately anxious that the tanks should prove an overwhelming success. It was impossible not to imagine what might happen to the infantry if the tanks were knocked out early in the battle. Yet I could not help feeling that this day we should make our name.

We looked at our watches—two minutes to go. We stared at the minute-hands. Suddenly there was a whistling and rustling in the distance, and a succession of little thumps, like a dog that hits the floor when it scratches itself. The barrage had opened. Constraint vanished, and we lit pipes and cigarettes. You would have thought that the battle was over. We had not blown out our matches when there was a reverberating crash overhead. Two could play at this game of noises.

Few reports arrive during the first forty minutes of a battle. Everybody is too busy fighting. Usually the earliest news comes from wounded men, and naturally their experiences are limited. Brigade Headquarters are, as a rule, at

least an hour behind the battle. You cannot often stand on a hill and watch the ebb and flow of the fight in the old magnificent way.

At last the reports began to dribble in and the staff settled down to their work. There were a good few casualties before the German wire was reached. The enemy barrage came down, hot and strong, a few minutes after zero. . . . Fighting hard in the Hindenburg trenches, but few tanks to be seen. . . . The enemy are still holding on to certain portions of the line. . . . The fighting is very severe. . . . Heavy counter-attacks from the sunken road at L. 6 b. 5.2. The news is a medley of scraps.

Soon the brigadier is called upon to act. One company want a protective barrage put down in front of them, but from another message it seems probable that there are Australians out in front. The brigadier must decide.

One battalion asks to be reinforced from the reserve battalion. Is it time for the reserve to be thrown into the battle? The brigadier must decide.

They have run short of bombs. An urgent message for fresh supplies comes through, and the staff captain hurries out to make additional arrangements.

There is little news of the tanks. One reports states that no tanks have been seen, another that a tank helped to clear up a machine-gun post, a third that a tank is burning.



At last R., one of my tank commanders, bursts in. He is grimy, red-eyed, and nervous.

"Practically all the tanks have been knocked out, sir!" he reported in a hard excited voice.

Before answering I glanced rapidly round the cellar. These Australians had been told to rely on tanks. Without tanks many casualties were certain and victory was improbable. Their hopes were shattered as well as mine, if this report were true. Not an Australian turned a hair. Each man went on with his job.

I asked R. a few questions. The brigade-major was listening sympathetically. I made a written note, sent off a wire to the colonel, and climbed into the open air.

It was a bright and sunny morning, with a clear sky and a cool invigorating breeze. A bunch of Australians were joking over their breakfasts. The streets of the village were empty with the exception of a "runner," who was hurrying down the road. The guns were hard at it. From the valley behind the village came the quick cracks of the 18-pdrs., the little thuds of the light howitzers, the ear-splitting crashes of the 60-pdrs., and, very occasionally, the shuddering thumps of the heavies. The air rustled and whined with shells. Then, as we hesitated, came the loud murmur, the roar, the overwhelming rush of a 5.9, like the tearing of a giant newspaper, and the building shook

and rattled as a huge cloud of black smoke came suddenly into being one hundred yards away, and bricks and bits of metal came pattering down or swishing past.

The enemy was kind. He was only throwing an occasional shell into the village, and we walked down the street comparatively calm.

When we came to the brick shelter at the farther end of the village we realised that our rendezvous had been most damnably ill-chosen. Fifty yards to the west the Germans, before their retirement, had blown a large crater where the road from Econst joins the road from Vaulx-Vraucourt, and now they were shelling it persistently. A stretcher party had just been caught. They lay in a confused heap half-way down the side of the crater. And a few yards away a field-howitzer battery in action was being shelled with care and accuracy.

We sat for a time in this noisy and unpleasant spot. One by one officers came in to report. Then we walked up the sunken road towards the dressing station. When I had the outline of the story I made my way back to the brigade headquarters in the cellar, and sent off a long wire. My return to the brick shelter was, for reasons that at the time seemed almost too obvious, both hasty and undignified. Further reports came in, and when we decided to move outside the village and collect the men by the bank where the tanks had sheltered a few hours



before, the story was tolerably complete.

All the tanks, except Morris's, had arrived without incident at the Railway Embankment. Morris ditched at the bank and was a little late. Haigh and Jumbo had gone on ahead of the tanks. They crawled out beyond the Embankment into No Man's Land and marked out the starting-line. It was not too pleasant a job. The enemy machine-guns were active right through the night, and the neighbourhood of the Embankment was shelled intermittently. Towards dawn this intermittent shelling became almost a bombardment, and it was feared that the tanks had been heard.

Skinner's tank failed on the Embankment. The remainder crossed it successfully and lined up for the attack just before zero. By this time the shelling had become severe. The crews waited inside their tanks, wondering dully if they would be hit before they started. Already they were dead-tired, for they had had little sleep since their long painful trek of the night before.

Suddenly our bombardment began—it was more of a bombardment than a barrage—and the tanks crawled away into the darkness, followed closely by little bunches of Australians.

On the extreme right Morris and Puttock of Wyatt's section were met by tremendous machine-gun fire at the wire of the Hindenburg Line. They swung to the right, as they had been ordered, and glided

along in front of the wire, sweeping the parapet with their fire. They received as good as they gave. Serious clutch trouble developed in Puttock's tank. It was impossible to stop since now the German guns were following them. A brave runner carried the news to Wyatt at the Embankment. The tanks continued their course, though Puttock's tank was barely moving, and by luck and good driving they returned to the railway, having kept the enemy most fully occupied in a quarter where he might have been uncommonly troublesome.

Morris passed a line to Skinner and towed him over the Embankment. They both started for Bullecourt. Puttock pushed on back towards Noreuil. His clutch was slipping badly, and the shells were falling ominously near. He withdrew his crew from the tank into a trench, and a little later the tank was hit and hit again.

Of the remaining two tanks in this section we could hear nothing. Davies and Clarkson had disappeared. Perhaps they had gone through to Hendecourt. Yet the infantry of the right brigade, according to the reports we had received, were fighting most desperately to retain a precarious hold on the trenches they had entered.

In the centre Field's section of three tanks were stopped by the determined and accurate fire of forward field-guns before they entered the German trenches. The tanks were silhouetted against the snow,

and the enemy gunners did not miss.

The first tank was hit in the track before it was well under way. The tank was evacuated, and in the dawning light it was hit again before the track could be repaired.

Money's tank reached the German wire. His men must have missed their gears. For less than a minute the tank was motionless, then she burst into flames. A shell had exploded the petrol tanks, which in the old Mark I. were placed forward on either side of the officer's and driver's seats. A sergeant and two men escaped. Money, best of good fellows, must have been killed instantaneously by the shell.

Bernstein's tank was within reach of the German trenches when a shell hit the cab, decapitated the driver, and exploded in the body of the tank. The corporal was wounded in the arm, and Bernstein was stunned and temporarily blinded. The tank was filled with fumes. As the crew were crawling out, a second shell hit the tank on the roof. The men under the wounded corporal began stolidly to save the tank's equipment, while Bernstein, scarcely knowing where he was, staggered back to the Embankment. He was packed off to a dressing station, and an orderly was sent to recall the crew and found them still working under deadly fire.

Swears' section of four tanks on the left were slightly more fortunate.

Birkett went forward at top

speed, and, escaping the shells, entered the German trenches, where his guns did great execution. The tank worked down the trenches towards Bullecourt, followed by the Australians. She was hit twice, and all the crew were wounded, but Birkett went on fighting grimly until his ammunition was exhausted and he himself was badly wounded in the leg. Then at last he turned back, followed industriously by the German gunners. Near the Embankment he stopped the tank to take his bearings. As he was climbing out, a shell burst against the side of the tank and wounded him again in the leg. The tank was evacuated. The crew salved what they could, and, helping each other, for they were all wounded, they made their way back painfully to the Embankment. Birkett was brought back on a stretcher, and wounded a third time as he lay in the sunken road outside the dressing station. His tank was hit again and again. Finally it took fire, and was burnt out.

Skinner, after his tank had been towed over the Railway Embankment by Morris, made straight for Bullecourt, thinking that as the battle had now been in progress for more than two hours the Australians must have fought their way down the trenches. Immediately he entered the village machine-guns played upon his tank, and several of his crew were slightly wounded by the little flakes of metal that fly about inside a Mk. I. tank



when it is subjected to really concentrated machine-gun fire. No Australians could be seen. Suddenly he came right to the edge of an enormous crater, and as suddenly stopped. He tried to reverse, but he could not change gear. The tank was absolutely motionless. He held out for some time, and then the Germans brought up a gun and began to shell the tank. Against field-guns in houses he was defenceless so long as his tank could not move. His ammunition was nearly exhausted. There were no signs of the Australians or of British troops. He decided quite properly to withdraw. With great skill he evacuated his crew, taking his guns with him and the little ammunition that remained. Slowly and carefully they worked their way back, and reached the Railway Embankment without further casualty.

The fourth tank of this section was hit on the roof just as it was coming into action. The engine stopped in sympathy, and the tank commander withdrew his crew from the tank.

Swears, the section commander, left the Railway Embankment, and with the utmost gallantry went forward into Bullecourt to look for Skinner. He never came back.

Such were the cheerful reports that I received in my little brick shelter by the cross-roads. Of my eleven tanks nine had received direct hits, and two were missing. The infantry were in no better

plight. From all accounts the Australians were holding with the greatest difficulty the trenches they had entered. Between the two brigades the Germans were clinging fiercely to their old line. Counter-attack after counter-attack came smashing against the Australians from Bullecourt and its sunken roads, from Lagnicourt and along the trenches from the Quéant salient. The Australians were indeed hard put to it.

While we were sorrowfully debating what would happen, we heard the noise of a tank's engines. We ran out, and saw to our wonder a tank coming down the sunken road. It was the fourth tank of Swears' section, which had been evacuated after a shell had blown a large hole in its roof.

When the crew had left the tank and were well on their way to Noreuil, the tank corporal remembered that he had left his "Primus" stove behind. It was a valuable stove, and he did not wish to lose it. So he started back with a comrade, and later they were joined by a third man. Their officer had left to look for me and ask for orders. They reached the tank—the German gunners were doing their very best to hit it again—and desperately eager not to abandon it outright, they tried to start the engine. To their immense surprise it fired, and, despite the German gunners, the three of them brought the tank and the "Primus" stove safe into Noreuil. The corporal's name was Hay-



ward. He was one of Hammond's men.

We had left the brick shelter and were collecting the men on the road outside Noreuil, when the colonel rode up and gave us news of Davies and Clarkson. Our aeroplanes had seen two tanks crawling over the open country beyond the Hindenburg trenches to Rencourt, followed by four or five hundred cheering Australians. Through Rencourt they swept, and on to the large village of Hendecourt five miles beyond the trenches. They entered the village, still followed by the Australians. . . .

What happened to them afterwards cannot be known until the battlefield is searched and all the prisoners who return have been questioned. The tanks and the Australians never came back. The tanks may have been knocked out by field-guns. They may have run short of petrol. They may have become "ditched." Knowing Davies and Clarkson, I am certain they fought to the last—and the tanks which later were paraded through Berlin were not my tanks. . . .

We rallied fifty-two officers and men out of the one hundred and three who had left Mory or Behagnies for the battle. Two men were detailed to guard our dump outside Noreuil, the rescued tank started for Mory, and the remaining officers and men marched wearily to Vaulx-Vraucourt, where lorries and a car were awaiting them.

I walked up to the Railway Embankment, but seeing no

signs of any of my men or of Davies' or Clarkson's tanks, returned to Noreuil and paid a farewell visit to the two brigadiers, of whom one told me with natural emphasis that tanks were "no damned use." Then with Skinner and Jumbo I tramped up the valley towards Vraucourt through the midst of numerous field-guns. We had passed the guns when the enemy began to shell the crowded valley with heavy stuff, directed by an aeroplane that kept steady and unwinking watch on our doings.

Just outside Vaulx-Vraucourt we rested on a sunny slope and looked across the valley at our one surviving tank trekking back to Mory. Suddenly a "5.9" burst near it. The enemy were searching for guns. Then to our dismay a second shell burst at the tail of the tank. The tank stopped, and in a moment the crew were scattering for safety. A third shell burst within a few yards of the tank. The shooting seemed too accurate to be unintentional, and we cursed the aeroplane that was circling overhead.

There was nothing we could do. The disabled tank was two miles away. We knew that when the shelling stopped the crew would return and inspect the damage. So, sick at heart, we tramped on to Vaulx-Vraucourt, passing a reserve brigade coming up hastily, and a dressing station to which a ghastly stream of stretchers was flowing.

We met the car a mile beyond the village, and drove



back sadly to Behagnies. When we came to the camp, it was ten o'clock in the morning. . . .

The enemy held the Australians stoutly. We never reached Bullecourt, and soon it became only too clear that it would be difficult enough to retain the trenches we had entered. The position was nearly desperate. The right brigade had won some trenches, and the left brigade had won some trenches. Between the two brigades the enemy had never been dislodged. And he continued to counter-attack with skill and fury down the trenches on the flanks—from the sunken roads by Bullecourt and up the communication trenches from the north. In the intervals his artillery pounded away with solid determination. Bombs and ammunition were running very short, and to get further supplies forward was terribly expensive work, for all the approaches to the trenches which the Australians had won were enfiladed by machine-gun fire. Battalions of the reserve brigade were thrown in too late, for we had bitten off more than we could chew; the Germans realised this hard fact, and redoubled their efforts. The Australians sullenly retired. The attack had failed.

A few days later the Germans replied by a surprise attack on the Australian line from Noreuil to Lagnicourt. At first they succeeded and broke through to the guns; but the Australians soon rallied,

and by a succession of fierce little counter-attacks drove the enemy with great skill back on to the deep wire in front of the Hindenburg Line. There was no escape. Behind the Germans were belts of wire quite impenetrable, and in front of them were the Australians. It was a cool revengeful massacre. The Germans, screaming for mercy, were deliberately and scientifically killed.

Two of my men, who had been left to guard our dump of supplies at Noreuil, took part in this battle of Lagnicourt. Close by the dump was a battery of field howitzers. The Germans had broken through to Noreuil, and the howitzers were firing over the sights; but first one howitzer and then another became silent as the gunners fell. My two men had been using rifles. When they saw what was happening they dashed forward to the howitzers, and turning their knowledge of the tank 6-pdr. gun to account, they helped to serve the howitzers until some infantry came up and drove back the enemy. Then my men went back to their dump, which had escaped, and remained there on guard until they were relieved on the following day.

The first battle of Bullecourt was a minor disaster. Our attack was a failure, in which the three brigades of infantry engaged lost very heavily indeed; and the officers and men lost, seasoned Australian troops who had fought at

Gallipoli, could never be replaced. The company of tanks had been, apparently, nothing but a broken reed. For many months after the Australians distrusted tanks, and it was not until the battle of Amiens, sixteen months later, that the Division engaged at Bullecourt were fully converted. It was a disaster that the Australians attributed to the tanks. The tanks had failed them—the tanks “had let them down.”

The Australians, in the bitterness of their losses, looked for scapegoats and found them in my tanks, but my tanks were not to blame. I have heard a lecturer say that to attack the Hindenburg Line on a front of fifteen hundred yards without support on either flank was rash. And it must not be forgotten that the attack ought to have been, and in actual fact was, expected. The artillery support was very far from overwhelming, and the barrage, coming down at zero, gave away the attack before my tanks could cross the wide No Man's Land and reach the German trenches.

What chances of success the attack possessed were destroyed by the snow on the ground, the decision to leave the centre of the attack to the tanks alone, the late arrival of the reserve brigade, and the shortage of bombs and ammunition in the firing line. These unhappy circumstances fitted into each other. If the snow had not made clear targets of the tanks, the tanks by them-

selves might have driven the enemy out of their trenches in the centre of the attack. If the first stages of the attack had been completely successful, the reserve brigade might not have been required. If the Australians had broken through the trench system on the left and in the centre, as they broke through on the left of the right brigade, bombs would not have been necessary.

It is difficult to estimate the value of tanks in a battle. The Australians naturally contended that without tanks they might have entered the Hindenburg Line. I am fully prepared to admit that the Australians are capable of performing any feat, for as storm troops they are surpassed by none. It is, however, undeniable that my tanks disturbed and disconcerted the enemy. We know from a report captured later that the enemy fire was concentrated on the tanks, and the German Higher Command instanced this battle as an operation in which the tanks compelled the enemy to neglect the advancing infantry. The action of the tanks was not entirely negative. On the right flank of the right brigade, a weak and dangerous spot, the tanks enabled the Australians to form successfully a defensive flank.

The most interesting result of the employment of tanks was the break-through to Rieniourt and Hendecourt by Davies' and Clarkson's tanks, and the Australians who



followed them. With their flanks in the air, and in the face of the sturdiest opposition, half a section of tanks and about half a battalion of infantry broke through the strongest field-works in France and captured two villages, the second of which was nearly five miles behind the German line. This break-through was the direct forefather of the break-through at Cambrai. My men, tired and half-trained, had done their best. When General Elles was told the story of the battle, he said, "This is the best thing that tanks have done yet."

The company received two messages of congratulation. The first was from General Gough—

"The Army Commander is very pleased with the gallantry and skill displayed by your company

in the attack to-day, and the fact that the objectives were subsequently lost does not detract from the success of the tanks."

The second was from General Elles—

"The General Officer Commanding Heavy Branch M.G.C. wishes to convey to all ranks of the company under your command his heartiest thanks and appreciation of the manner in which they carried out their tasks during the recent operations, and furthermore for the gallantry shown by all tank commanders and tank crews in action."

The company gained two Military Crosses, one D.C.M., and three Military Medals in the first Battle of Bullecourt.

(To be continued.)

## THE ABERRATION OF A SCHOLAR.

THERE has never been a more strangely fantastic fashion in literary criticism than that which would strip from Shakespeare the glory of his works. Certain ingenious persons, dissatisfied with the poet's brow, are intent to find another which seems to them more apt for the bays. It does not matter much whose brow it is, so long as it is not Shakespeare's. Some there are who would seek the author of "Hamlet" in the Inns of Court. Others, equally naïve, ransack the peerage for a suitable candidate. There was a time when Roger the 5th Earl of Rutland was a hot favourite, and the fact that he was but fifteen when "Love's Labour's Lost" was written, did not diminish the odds laid upon him. To-day, William, the 6th Earl of Derby, leads by several lengths, and all the fanatics, led by M. Abel Lefranc,<sup>1</sup> are crying with one accord, "On, Stanley, on!" And we are only upon the threshold of research. There are still many unexplored corners in Burke's 'Peerage,' and the wreath of honour may be transferred to another head any day.

By a quick transition scepticism passes to contempt. Those who begin by doubting Shakespeare's claim to his own works commonly end by de-

spising him for a pestilent fellow. In their eyes and on their tongues he is no longer the "sweet swan of Avon"; he is "the man of Stratford." And they who will not for a whim give up the well-established faith of centuries are denounced as "Stratfordians." Stratfordians! A name of honour, truly, since it is shared with Ben Jonson and Gabriel Harvey, with Milton and Sir John Suckling, with Davies of Hereford and countless other poets and wise men. And when M. Abel Lefranc pretends with satisfaction that "there is not unanimity in the camp of the Stratfordians," thus hinting at a still living conspiracy, he carries the jargon of fanaticism as far as it will go.

The blunder of these misguided critics proceeds from the vast assumption that they can tell from his works how and where a poet should be born, how educated, in what circles he should live, what friends he should buckle to his heart. They do not think much of Stratford-on-Avon as a cradle of poetry. They speak of it with a kind of animosity, and I should not be surprised if one day they joined their forces and razed it to the ground. They approve as little of Shakespeare's father as of Shakespeare's character.

<sup>1</sup> Sous le Masque de "William Shakespeare," William Stanley, vi<sup>e</sup> Comte de Derby. Paris: Payot et Cie.



And they presume to assert that such a man, as they without warrant picture Shakespeare to have been, was incapable of writing his own plays. Of course, it is easy enough to prove a man a fool if you strip him of all his wisdom and all his poesy. That is not the worst of these critics. Far worse is it to claim, as they claim, the right to interpret the workings of genius, to say that thus and thus only shall the divine spark be lit. Once upon a time two professors were walking along the road when a bird flew up over their heads. "What bird is that?" asked the one. "A magpie," said the other. "It's not my idea of a magpie," objected the one. "It's God's idea of a magpie," retorted the other. And M. Abel Lefranc does not like God's idea of Shakespeare. He thinks his own idea, the mere hazard of a guess, preferable to God's.

To try to measure genius by the ell or weigh it by the pound must always be a waste of time; for it is the habit of genius to surprise by its waywardness and its partiality. It is no respecter of persons, loving the peer no better than the peasant. It lodges happily in the unlikeliest breast, and if it make but rare and furtive sojourns among men, it does not choose its abode in accord with the established laws of the pedants. To look, then, for a solemn reasonableness in the advent of genius, to redistribute the works of well-known authors among those whom lawyers and professors deem capable of producing them, is

to make an idle sport of literary history. That Shakespeare should have been born at Stratford-on-Avon of humble parentage is in no sense what Paley called "contrary to experience." Few of Shakespeare's colleagues were of known or distinguished lineage. Marlowe, the son of a cobbler; Ben Jonson, the stepson of a bricklayer, were his equals in birth, as they were his honourable rivals in the art of drama. And the attempt to thrust him into the English aristocracy, in defiance of the clearly ascertained facts, would have needed no protest had the attempt not been made by a professor like M. Abel Lefranc, whose sad book can be described only as the aberration of a scholar.

M. Lefranc complains that he knows very little about Shakespeare, and of the little which he has discovered he disapproves. He speaks of the "man of Stratford" always in terms of an angry scorn. He dislikes everything about him. The portrait of Droeshout inspires him to disgust. "This face of wood, this veritable actor's mask," thus he calls it. If the portrait be defective, surely it is the draughtsman's fault, not the siter's; and some there are who have found much to admire in "the actor's mask." Ben Jonson praised the figure, "wherein the graver had a strife with Nature to outdo the life," and Stephane Mallarmé, once confronted with the poet's image, exclaimed: "Quelle sécurité!" But even if the famous por-

trait were as ugly as the face of an Easter Island god, and yet true to life, it would not impair Shakespeare's claim to be the author of his own works. It is as unsound a principle to judge the authenticity of a poet by his features as to insist that aristocracy of mind and aristocracy of descent are necessarily inseparable.

But in M. Abel Lefranc's view nothing that "the man of Stratford" did was right. He pours contempt upon his spelling and his handwriting, forgetting that the Italian hand had not reached Stratford in Shakespeare's day, and that orthography was not sedulously cultivated in the age of Elizabeth. There were as many ways of spelling Raleigh's name as Shakespeare's. Moreover, M. Lefranc makes merry over the poet's thrift and love of gain. He finds it reprehensible that wealth came to him, as though a proper regard for comfort and security were a slur upon the good name of genius. Yet he errs shamefully who would apply the method of Procrustes to literary history, who would out and clip poets to suit his own pattern, or dismiss them summarily from the fount of Helicon. In truth, all such arguments are wholly irrelevant. We can say no more than that some poets have saved money, some have squandered it. Milton's immaculate character casts no darker shadow upon the splendour of his verse than does the happy carelessness of Burns. In our time it pleased Tennyson to amass a fortune and

to found a family. Shall we, therefore, say that he proved himself no poet, because he patiently considered how best the works, which delighted others, might bring profit to himself? The truth is that this confusion of the man with his work is labour lost. None can explain the strange workings of nature, and when M. Abel Lefranc demands "a necessary concordance between life and letters," he demands what his profound studies must have shown him to be impossible. He thinks that the time has come for "a solution, clear, evident, and in conformity with the general laws which preside over the search for truth and the knowledge of human psychology." And he leaves out of the account the gamble of life—the supreme master of all. For one thing is certain: no knowledge of human psychology will ever explain how Keats came out of a livery stable, or—greater marvel still—why Shelley, that spirit of air and fire, was the son of a Whiggish country squire.

M. Abel Lefranc seems to think that he who drives fat oxen should himself be fat. The author of Shakespeare's plays wrote of the Court, and therefore it is as plain as the nose upon the Earl of Derby's face that he was a courtier. If you will not concede that point, then "Love's Labour's Lost" will be for ever unintelligible. It is a pleasant theory, wholly unsupported by facts. If we accepted it for gospel, then should we be compelled to



raise the most of the Elizabethan dramatists to the throne or the peerage. He who hides beneath the mask of Marlowe must needs be an Eastern potentate. Webster and Tourneur, Massinger and Middleton are dummies all, in whose shadow are concealed the gracious figures of Dukes and Barons and belted Earls. And even if this view of life and letters were not ridiculous, it would be applied most dangerously to Shakespeare. For Shakespeare is universal in sympathy. He visits with impartiality the palace and the cabin. He knows the tavern and the hedgerow; criminals, and bawds and clowns keep no secrets from him. He envisages dukes and princes with the understanding of an intimate. Was he, then, not a man, but a syndicate? Did one brain invent Falstaff and another Prince Hal? Is "Measure for Measure" the production of some great co-operative stores, of which one department supplied the Duke and Escalus and Isabella, while another furnished forth Abhorson and Barnardine and Mistress Overdone? But, indeed, they who would find "a perfect concordance between life and letters" forget also the poet's power of divination. The great poet knows all things intuitively; he knows also the terms which shall express them. Especially is Shakespeare's knowledge wide and comprehensive, like the ocean or the enviroining air. And as he understood far more than any other man,

so he had far more words at his command to set forth what he understood. In brief, he was a poet of genius, whom one may wonder at with pious gratitude; and none of his perfections shall persuade us to accept the argument of M. Abel Lefranc: the author of Shakespeare's plays was a miracle, therefore he was the sixth Earl of Derby! This, truly, is inventing a greater miracle to explain the less.

As I have said, M. Abel Lefranc bitterly disapproves of whatever he has been able to find out about Shakespeare. He complains yet more bitterly that very little has been found out. He asserts that none of the references to Shakespeare, save one only—a burlesque—throws any light upon his character, sentiments, or ideas. He declares dogmatically that in an age of friendship he did not possess a friend, forgetting, in the first place, that Ben Jonson "lov'd the man," and in the second, that our scanty knowledge of Shakespeare does not enable us to prove a negative. "A silence so complete," says M. Abel Lefranc, "is impressive." Why is it impressive? Rather would it be impressive were it more often broken. That which M. Abel Lefranc holds for a proof that Shakespeare was somebody else might be alleged to show that no man of the age wrote what was ascribed to him. A mist of secrecy envelopes them all. We know nothing of Webster, nothing of Cyril Tourneur, nothing of Heywood, nothing of Middleton, nothing of Mar-



lowe, except that he had a quarrel with "a bawdy serving-man," and died, "slain by Francis Archer, the 1st of June 1593." Will M. Abel Lefranc find new authors for the plays of them all?

Thus the Professor looks upon as a strange episode in Shakespeare's career that which was common to him and to all his friends. His was not a self-conscious advertising age. The poets who wrote and acted when Elizabeth sat upon the throne were not busied in building their own tombstones. They set as little value upon their autographs as did their fellow-citizens. The collection of literary relics had not then been confirmed into a habit. Gossip about Shakespeare and about his "method of work" would have been received with scorn. The single contemporary anecdote which has come down to us from one Manningham, tells us little enough, and does not justify M. Abel Lefranc in picking it up and using it as a stick to beat Shakespeare withal. "There is all that we know of the character of Shakespeare," says he, "of a trick worthy of Falstaff or Panurge, played upon a comrade and old companion! . . . After that, re-read 'Hamlet.'" What a jumble is here! Was Manningham, then, on oath when he told his story? And must we accept as the plain truth the mere froth of anecdote? Of course an anecdote reflects the narrator rather than the victim. I care as little as I know whether Manningham

were accurate or not; and assuredly the story which he has told will not impair or enhance the pleasure which I shall take in re-reading "Hamlet" or "Measure for Measure."

Shakespeare, indeed, was fortunate, like all his contemporaries, in eluding the gossips, and that which M. Abel Lefranc thinks a drawback, Matthew Arnold, himself a true poet, recognises for the happiness it is—

"And thou, whose head did stars and  
sunbeams know,  
Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-hon-  
oured, self-secure,  
Did'st walk on earth unguessed at.  
Better so."

After all, it is only if you accede to M. Abel Lefranc's method of criticism, and strip Shakespeare of his works, that we can be said to know nothing about him. He has said more things than any other of the sons of men, and he has said them with a finer sense of beauty. For three hundred years he has been a monarch enthroned; he has dispensed with an equal hand his benefits and his decrees; and if he bequeathed us no record of his friendships, no gossip of his tastes, that is not a sound reason for robbing him of his crown of glory.

And is it true to say that we know nothing of Shakespeare? That we should be glad to wrest from time more of the secrets which lie hid is very certain. It is also certain that, scanty as our knowledge of Shakespeare is, it is greater than our knowledge of the most among his



contemporaries. Leaving aside the business transactions which distress M. Abel Lefranc, and looking only to the testimony of his literary colleagues, we shall find that Shakespeare's name was familiar and esteemed. The pretended mystery, pierced at once, is no mystery at all. The writers who were alive in Shakespeare's time knew him and what he did. Francis Meres had no doubts to resolve, nor did he see in the face of Shakespeare the impudent mask of a peer of the realm. "The English nation is mightily enriched and gorgeously invested in rare ornaments and resplendent habiliments," he wrote, "by Sir Philip Sidney, Spenser, Daniel, Drayton, Warner, Shakespeare, Marlow, and Chapman." Thus we are asked to believe that all the others are what they pretend to be, that Shakespeare alone claims a splendour that is not his own. Nor is Francis Meres content to leave Shakespeare in a list. He takes him out of it, and distinguishes him honourably from the rest. "The sweete wittie soule of Ovid," says he, "lives in melliflous and honey-tongued Shakespeare, witness his 'Venus and Adonis,' his 'Lucrece,' his sugared Sonnets among his private friends." Yet, says M. Abel Lefranc, he was friendless! Even higher soars Meres' praise of Shakespeare's plays. "As Plautus and Seneca," he writes, "are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines, so Shakespeare among the English is most

excellent in both kinds for the stage." The poet's supremacy is thus admitted in 1598, without one inapposite hint of the "mean origin, peor relations, strange marriage, and utilitarian tendencies" which perplex his critics.

Even when M. Abel Lefranc admits a passage where Shakespeare's name is cited into his book, he turns it against the miserable "man of Stratford." We all remember what Greene, dying in wretchedness, wrote of his colleague. "Yes, trust them not," said he; "for there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tyger's heart wrapt in a player's hide supposes that he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes factotum* is, in his own conceit the only Shakescene in a countrie." This is nothing but an expression of Greene's ill-temper and jealousy; and see how M. Abel Lefranc interprets it: "To take the evidence," says he, "such as it is offered us, it is averred that one of the good writers of the time, addressing three of his confrères of not the least value, formally accuses Shakespeare of being merely a cynical upstart, an actor with a tiger's heart, a shameless plagiarist, an unscrupulous factotum, in the pay of whoever wishes to employ him, in being a kind of lackey. Has irony ever been carried farther in human affairs?" I cannot read in Greene's outburst one half that M. Abel Lefranc puts there. But even if I could, I should not be per-

suaded to believe, on Greene's unsupported testimony, that Shakespeare was not the author of his own plays. Nor do I see any avowal in the attack that Greene, "a satellite of the Stanley family," had already divined his master's secret. However, that is a specimen of the process which serves M. Abel Lefranc for argument, and it is not strange that, having extracted more from Greene's attack than lurks therein, he makes very light of Chettle's apology. Now Chettle, who printed the 'Groatsworth of Wit,' was as sorry, after Greene's death, "as if the original fault had been his fault." He himself had seen Shakespeare's "demeanour no less civil than he excellent in the quality he professes." Nor was this all: "besides," he adds, "divers of worship have reported his uprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that aprooves his Art." What now becomes of the irony, which cannot be carried further in human affairs?

But it is Ben Jonson who is the fiercest lion in the path of those who would strip Shakespeare of his bays. They can neither evade him nor slay him in his tracks. Jonson wrote of Shakespeare with candour and without equivocation. He saw in the author of "King Lear" no mystery, but a plain honest poet whom he could admire and criticise. "Shakespeare," he told Drummond, "wanted art." That, indeed, was the constant

ground of his complaint. A scholar and a university wit himself, he looked askance, now and then, at the rival who had reached a loftier height than he, and by a shorter route. What he said to Drummond he did but amplify in his "Timber." "I remember," says he, "the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writing (whatsoever he penn'd) he never blotted out line. My answer hath beene, would he had blotted a thousand. I had not told posterity this, but for their ignorance, who choose that circumstance to commend their friend by, wherein he most faulted. And to justifying mine owne candor (for I lov'd the man, and doe honour his memory for this side Idolatry) as much as any." Thereafter follows as fine a piece of criticism as Shakespeare has ever evoked. Is it, then, all sent to the wrong address? Was Ben Jonson, when he wrote that "his wit was in his owne power; would the rule of it had beene so teo," thinking of the Earl of Derby, or of the Earl of Rutland, or of Francis Bacon, or of any other candidate whom fanaticism is minded to suggest? It is wholly incredible. Ben Jonson was neither duped nor suborned. He had lived and worked with Shakespeare, and he knew his man, and he described him with what measure of justice was in him. It is characteristic of the critics, who laugh hilariously at the



"Stratfordian doctrine," that, while they involve Ben Jonson in the common charge of Stratfordianism, they do not dare to tackle honestly and straightforwardly the unsolicited testimony which he presents against them.

It was the publication of the First Folio which gave Ben Jonson his happiest chance of eulogy. The verses which he penned "to the memory of my beloved, the Author, Mr William Shakespeare: and what he hath left us," stint nothing in the praise of their subject. In talk across the table, Jonson may have loved his jest better than his friend. When it came to honouring the memory of the dead poet, he gave an easy rein to his eloquence—

"I therefore will begin. Soule of the Age!

The applause! delight! the wonder of the Stage!

My Shakespeare, rise."

And presently, that there may be no doubt as to whom he meant, he openly declares himself what the new critics would call a Stratfordian—

"Sweet Swan of Avon! what a sight it were

To see thee in our waters yet appeare,

And make these flights upon the bankes of Thames,

That did so take Eliza, and our James!"

Truly it would be a mystification if Shakespeare, being nothing better than a poor illiterate barnstormer, should have completely deceived so astute a critic and so good a friend as Ben Jonson.

M. Abel Lefranc, finding it

incredible, in accordance with a heresy picked up in America, to believe the simple truth that the greatest poet of our land was born of humble parentage at Stratford-on-Avon, hands over all the poet's works to William, sixth Earl of Derby. For this lavish transference of another man's goods and another man's glory there is, of course, no warrant. M. Abel Lefranc tenders us no evidence. He does not attempt to confute the unimpeachable testimony of many title-pages, vouched for by tradition, and supported by the unanimous authority of contemporaries. How, indeed, should he? He is content to tell us, on Gabriel Fenner's authority, that in 1599 the Earl of Derby was "busied in penning comedies for the common players." So were a hundred others at that busymoment, who were not the authors of "Hamlet" and "Othello." It is idle to argue about a mere phantasy, and I do not propose to say another word in opposition to M. Abel Lefranc's candidate. But I should like to inquire, in what the French professor calls "the search for truth and the knowledge of human psychology," what motive there could have been for this vast imposture, and how it could possibly have been carried out. It is not every man of genius who would be content to forgo the honour and glory of his art. Peers are more common than poets, and there seems no reason why the Earl of Derby should have refused a crown far greater than that which had been worn by the



Earl of Surrey or Sir Philip Sidney. M. Abel Lefranc's simplicity, always "a wonder for wise men," makes no difficulty. "When William Stanley," he writes, "published the 'first born of his invention,' 'Venus and Adonis,' his father was still alive. It is clear that such a publication would have displeased the Earl of Derby." Why should it have displeased him? And if it had, why should William Stanley, a grown man, have acquiesced in his father's lack of reason? M. Abel Lefranc piles assumption upon assumption. Having assumed that the publication of "Venus and Adonis" was displeasing to the Earl of Derby, he continues bravely: "That is why, not having put his name on the title-page, he signed his dedication to the Earl of Southampton with a pseudonym; he took the name of one of the actors in his brother's company." To be sure, nothing could be easier. We know now what William Stanley's father thought of "Venus and Adonis." Why did his displeasure extend, I wonder, to "Romeo and Juliet" or "Love's Labour's Lost"?

Again, I should like to know in the interest of "human psychology," how the vast conspiracy was kept up, how the self-denying gentleman, whoever he was, that composed the plays of Shakespeare, and blushed at his own fame, managed to guard his secret. What two or three know is known to the world, and it is plain that half a dozen must have pierced the mystery of

William Stanley. Greene had already divined it, we are told, as early as 1592, and Edmund Spenser must even then have been admitted into the innermost shrine, since, in "Colin Clout's Come Home Again," he makes a clear reference to the great and hidden poet—

"And there, though last not least,  
Aetion,  
A gentler shepherd may no where be  
found."

Thus he writes of one who is of course the Earl of Derby! Who so churlish as to doubt the obvious truth that "Aetion" refers to the familiar crest of the Stanleys—an eagle preying upon a child in its cradle? Spenser, then, knew who his great contemporary was, but he did not reveal the truth to his nearest friend, Gabriel Harvey. For that benighted man remained a "Stratfordian" to the end of his days. "The younger sort," he wrote, "take much delight in Shakespeare's 'Venus and Adonis'; but his 'Lucrece' and his tragedy of 'Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke,' have it in them to please the wiser sort." This was surely an unfriendly act on Spenser's part—to leave his dear companion immersed in that heavy bog of the Stratfordian heresy, from which Ben Jonson could never extricate himself. And by what ingenious means was Ben Jonson kept in the dark, when Greene and Spenser and Fletcher were all walking about in broad daylight? He was a man who lived in the world, who haunted great houses as well as taverns, who loved talk and his fellows as



much as he loved books. He also loved Shakespeare, and had every chance of discovering the fraud, if fraud it were, in which his friend is now said to be implicated. But from him too the secret was hidden, as it seems to have been hidden from all the sons of men, until it was revealed in a flash to M. Abel Lefranc. Here, then, is a skein too closely confused for me to disentangle, which the new criticism runs through its supple fingers without let or hindrance.

To put new names upon old titles seems to be a pleasant parlour game, if we may judge by the number and the energy of the players. And truly its scope is infinite. By the method of M. Abel Lefranc we can solve all the literary problems which perplex us. For instance, there are certain difficulties in the life and work of Lord Tennyson which have always seemed to me insuperable. How was it that he, the son of a country clergyman in Lincolnshire, should have been familiar with Courts, and basked in the sun of royal smiles? Is not the dedication of the "Idylls of the King" an unpierced mystery? "These to His Memory—since he held them dear." That surely is not a becoming address from one who was, when he is said to have penned it, a mere commoner.

Nor is this all. The works of Tennyson have from the very first been suspected of femininity. Their supposed author, after the publication of the first book, was known

as "Miss Alfred." An acute critic of "In Memoriam" divined the sex of the writer when he surmised, with an ingenuity equal to the stoutest anti-Stratfordian's, that the poem was composed by "the widow of a military man." Again, does not "The Princess" wholly baffle our judgment until we acknowledge that it is the work not of a man but of a woman? Who, then, is the real author of the works now foolishly ascribed by Aldworthians to Alfred Tennyson? It is plainly none other than the Duchess of Sutherland, who, being Mistress of the Robes to Queen Victoria, was intimately acquainted with the customs and manners of the Court, and who naturally preferred to hide her great gifts of poetry under another's name. The importance of this discovery, which, by the way, did not come from America, cannot be overrated. It gives a new meaning and a new purpose to the poems, hitherto unworthily claimed by a mere amanuensis. Moreover, it points out to us the true path which literary criticism ought to follow. There are too many upstart crows about us, beautified with the feathers of others, and it is the duty of the critic to pluck them bare. Here, then, is a work, or a sport, in which all may engage; and the work will not be done, while a single name now inscribed upon a title-page holds its place unquestioned.

CHARLES WHIBLEY.

## THE STORY OF OUR SUBMARINES.—V.

BY KLAXON.

## I.

IN 1916 we began to look to Germany to produce something very unpleasant in the way of submarines. We were certain she would follow the obvious course indicated by the lessons all belligerents were learning, and produce the big U-cruiser. Very fortunately for us, she produced nothing of the sort until well into 1918, when one small U-cruiser did us a great deal of damage. The point was this—We were worrying and chasing U-boats with trawlers, motor-boats, destroyers, and numbers of other comparatively small and weakly-armed craft. If a U-cruiser, armed with, say, four 6-inch guns, and armoured along her top-strakes, had risen to fight her tormentors—well, it is clear that our small patrol-vessel service would have become suddenly very expensive. Each convoy would have required cruiser protection, and we had not enough cruisers to provide this. In 1917, by our constructor's reckonings, there was no reason why a German submarine could not have been produced which could proceed safely to the East Indies (round the Cape), and repeat (on a bigger scale) the exploits of the *Emden*. Well, the Germans didn't do it; they produced U-cruisers with

two 5.9 guns apiece in 1918, but the type was unsatisfactory and unstable. It is still a puzzle to us that the idea came to them so slowly. We had K-class boats with the fleet in 1916 of 2600 tons, and had shown that a big submarine was a working proposition. (The K-boat, of course, is not a cruiser-submarine; she is a fast and lightly-gunned type for use in battle only, and she does not leave the fleet except when detached for watching patrols.) We produced the M-class in 1917, and—for obvious reasons—we kept the type as secret as possible until the Armistice. The M-boat is rather smaller than the K, and is of only seventeen knots speed, but she has far better under-water capabilities than her big companion. She carries, besides her torpedo armament, a 12-inch gun of the normal battleship type. This gun can be carried loaded submerged by the use of a watertight tampion and breech. The boat can rise in the wake of an enemy, fire as she "breaks surface," and submerge again—all in a matter of seconds.

The type was extremely successful, and one can only be thankful that such boats were not on the enemy's side. They would have been the very devil



to deal with on the trade routes, and would have caused us to reconsider very hurriedly our whole system of anti-submarine defence. Of course, four 6-inch would be better than one 12-inch from a German point of view, especially as a destroyer would be likely to attack unscathed under the fire of one big gun, but our type was intended for use against such things as enemy cruisers, and not for sinking merchant ships. By the end of the war the enemy had arrived at the stage of submarine design where one says, "We've got a type that works—let us stick to it, and just add improvements." We passed that stage before the war and are now in the confident (with reservations!) state of feeling that we can turn out anything required to combine the properties of under-water and surface craft. If submarines continue as weapons of war, they will improve very considerably, and the range of possibility of future types is so great that any prophecy now would be rash. It must be remembered, however, that the depth of water in which a boat is intended to operate limits her size. It is not only that the distance from her keel to periscope is (in the case of a big boat) some 50 feet, but also that the great length of a big boat's hull means that even a slight fore-and-aft inclination as she dives will add enormously to her draught; a very long boat in twenty fathoms of water (the North Sea average) would have to be careful not

to get off an even keel, as it might happen that in the presence of the enemy her bow or stern would touch bottom, with the result of causing the whole boat to bounce up to the surface. A submarine submerged is in a state of equilibrium, in that she has little or no tendency to rise or sink if her motors are stopped and the boat left to herself. I am afraid in this history that I continue to speak of submarines as if everybody knew a good deal about them. I use technical expressions and words as if I was dealing with things like motor-cars. I will try and explain more clearly what I mean by "bouncing to the surface," and will do so in the idea that there are probably readers who know as much about diving boats as I do of bimetallism.

A submarine is a surface ship which can be submerged and driven ahead at a steady depth-line. She is built strongly in order to resist the water-pressure when she is deep down. She is propelled on the surface by (usually) heavy-oil Diesel engines. When submerged she cannot use these, as they consume air, so she has an electric battery and motors for use under water. The battery is charged when on the surface at her convenience or by favour of the enemy. The Diesel engines are used for this purpose, and they recharge the batteries through the motors, using the latter as dynamos.

In old pictures of projected submarines of the seventeenth



century one sees that the principle of "trimming down" for submersion was known, and that our present-day system of tanks was intended to be substituted by pig-skins which fitted into cylindrical hollows in the hull. These skins were emptied by screwing out a ram from inside (on the idea of old-fashioned printing presses) which squashed the skins. Nowadays a boat is all tanks along her lower half, the upper half being living space and battery room, &c. These tanks are flooded through valves in order to destroy the boat's buoyancy. The water is ejected from them either by pumps or by the use of compressed air, the latter taking the place of the old seventeenth-century screw-press idea. When the tanks have flooded until the boat's buoyancy is all gone—*i.e.*, until you could press her down or lift her up with one hand—she is "trimmed," and by going ahead and working the bow and stern hydroplanes you can keep whatever depth-line is required. When submerged, a look-out is kept through a periscope—a tube about thirty feet long which has lenses all the way up, is water-tight, and has an eyepiece like an ordinary telescope at its lower end.

To dive, a boat opens her vents, puts "dive" helm on, and goes under with her motors running. The flooding valves are kept open to save time; in surface trim a boat is "hanging on the vents"—*i.e.*, if you open the vents (upper valves of the tanks) the water enters and

she goes down; until the vents are open the water cannot enter beyond a certain point; when they do open the air in the tanks can get away and the tanks fill up with a rush.

During a trip the "trim" of the boat alters continually. She is using fuel, ammunition, food, and water, and calculation is necessary to allow for this. Certain tanks are used for this compensating, so that on all occasions when a rapid dive is necessary, there is nothing to do but flood the big external tanks, and yet know that the boat will be in hand when under. If mistakes are made, they will show at once. If too much has been put into the "internals" to compensate, the boat will run on down to the bottom in spite of "up helm" and full speed. If too little, you have to flood internals according to an estimate of what is needed as she ploughs along half-submerged; the latter case is one to be avoided, as you may be killed by the enemy while flooding. The usual war practice is to compensate on the "heavy" side—*i.e.*, let her go with a rush and blow tanks so as to catch her and hold her at sixty feet; then you can bring her up to patrol depth at your leisure.

It can be seen, then, that the description of a boat as "bouncing" is not incorrect. When going to the bottom for the night it is a common occurrence, if too rough a "landing" is made, to proceed like a tennis-ball along the



sand for a couple of hundred yards. It is a curious thing that both in the Cattegat and the Sea of Marmora, boats have been able to lie for the night with motors stopped at depths of from thirty to seventy feet. In the Marmora the junction depth of the salt and fresh water is about seventy. A boat trimmed with about two hundred pounds of negative buoyancy out there will, if she stops her motors, sink slowly through the upper layer of fresh (or brackish) water, till she meets the denser salt below; on

reaching this she will be in a state of "positive" buoyancy, and after a little bouncing up and down to find her "zero" stratum, she will settle at a steady depth. The same sort of thing—a blessing in the Marmora—is a nuisance in the Bight. A boat crossing the mouths of the German rivers may be at one moment diving comfortably with zero helm on the hydroplanes—the next, she meets a layer of fresh water from the Jahde ebb and is bumping on the bottom with "hard-up" helm and the pumps working on the tanks.

## II.

The exploits of "E 11" in the Dardanelles have been published during the war; this boat, however, did not begin her war career in the Sea of Marmora—she had already shown her usual attitude of contemptuous familiarity towards the enemy when on patrol in the Heligoland Bight. On one occasion in 1914 she certainly met a "ghost"—*i.e.*, something which never gave any satisfactory explanation of what it was. "E 11" was diving in sight of Heligoland, and having sighted a line of four destroyers coming over her horizon, she turned in to attack them. Suddenly her bow was jerked up to a startling angle, and tanks had to be hastily flooded to prevent a "break surface." The boat then seemed to go crazy—taking angles by the bow or stern apparently in defiance

of all laws of hydrostatics. The captain made up her mind for her by running her down to the bottom in 65 feet and holding her there. In a few minutes the sound of screws came from overhead, and the same sound continued for several minutes. "E 11" was then dived up off the bottom, but was found to be still in the same strange condition, taking up this time an angle of 20 degrees up by the bow. She was once more taken down and held to the bottom, while again screws passed by and curious noises came from overhead. The noises went on for an hour, during which time the officers and crew—with the business-like decision of the British nation—had tea. When the noises had stopped "E 11" was again lifted, when she showed a perfect trim and instant obedience to her hydro-

planes, proceeding along at her normal patrol depth as if she had never given any trouble at all. Nothing was in sight through the periscope except Heligoland, and the explanation of "E 11's" hysteria is still her own secret.

The same boat, as was reported at the time, shared a Christmas dinner with some representatives of the R.N.A.S. on the day of the 1914 Cuxhaven air raid. The Germans have not given us their version of what happened, but from the following it will be seen that it is a pity that they did not publish an uncensored story.

At 11 A.M. "E 11" was diving on her billet to the westward of Norderney, when she saw through the periscope a seaplane coming out to seaward and flying low. She came to the surface, and, having been placed on that billet "according to plan," was not surprised to find that the machine was British. The seaplane took the water safely, and "E 11" took her in tow with the idea of saving the machine. The pilot (carrying his confidential bomb-sight with him) was taken on board first. Hardly had the tow started when two more seaplanes were seen approaching from the direction of the shore, one of them flying very groggily and looking like an imitation of a tumbler pigeon. "E 11" stopped and the machines closed her; so did a large Schutte-Lanz type airship, which was presumably in pursuit of them. Of the two seaplanes the un-

damaged one came down comfortably close to the submarine, and then all spectators stood up to watch the alighting of the other, which was seen to have had its tail shot off and to be under the nominal control of its ailerons only. Everybody held their breath as the pilot brought the machine down, and there was a general groan of sympathy as the crash came. She pitched nose first into the sea, and it looked as though the pilot could hardly have survived; then a wet figure was seen to climb slowly out of the wreck and perch cross-legged on the tip of the broken tail. By this time the enemy airship had arrived, and "E 11" realised that speed in picking up the seaplane pilots was becoming more advisable every minute. An additional complication chose this moment to turn up in the shape of a U-boat, which appeared on the surface about two miles away and then dived—presumably to attack with torpedoes. "E 11" at this stage of the war was unfortunately not fitted with a gun. She slipped tow from Number One seaplane and fired several revolver bullets through the floats to ensure its sinking. She then closed Number Two and took the pilot and observer off her just as the airship arrived overhead at a height of two hundred feet. The faces of the Germans in the gondolas could be clearly seen, and the men in the middle car were displaying considerable activity—probably wrestling with a faulty bomb-dropping gear.



Before the bombing business was in working order, however, the light breeze had carried the airship down to leeward—much to the relief of “E 11,” who saw the enemy restart her engines in order to make a sweep round and get into position again. “E 11,” having punctured the floats of Number Two seaplane with bullets, manoeuvred alongside Number Three, and picked up a very wet pilot and mechanic. By this time there was every probability of the U-boat having approached inside easy torpedo range—in fact “E 11” was wondering why the expected torpedoes were so slow in arriving. For this reason, and also because the airship was now nearly back overhead again, any further delay was rash, and so the pilot and mechanic were unceremoniously hustled below, and “E 11” demonstrated to them what a “crash-dive” was like from inside. The depth gauges had just reached nineteen feet when two heavy explosions occurred on the surface,—the enemy’s bomb-dropping gear was working nicely again, but too late. “E 11” went under feeling a little hurt at having had to leave a job unfinished; she had meant to sink Number Three seaplane before leaving, and was unhappy at the idea of it being still of use to the enemy. On rising sufficiently to use her periscope, however, she was delighted to observe the Schutte-Lanz venting its hate in machine-gun fire on the abandoned machine—an ex-

penditure of ammunition which continued until the sorely-tried raider sank. “E 11” was for a moment inclined to come up to pass a polite signal of thanks to the enemy, but, after consultation, it was decided that humour was wasted on Germans, and so the boat was taken on to the bottom for a rest while the Xmas dinner was disposed of. The five passengers shared the dinner, and presumably enjoyed the day, but it blew half a gale and more all the way home to Harwich, and the motion of an “E” boat takes a lot of getting used to.

Everybody has read of the doings of this submarine in the Sea of Marmora, and I will try to avoid writing about despatches already published; but I think the actions between submarines and soldiers have been perhaps only lightly touched on, in view of the fact that such actions are so unique in their nature and circumstances.

In August 1915 “E 14” and “E 11” met at a rendezvous in the Marmora with the intention of acting on “information received.” “E 11” says:—

“August 7th, 5 A.M.: Dived by Dohan Aslan Buoy, keeping watch on road.

“11.30 A.M.: Observed troops on road leading towards Gallipoli. Rose to surface and opened fire, several shots dropping well amongst them, causing them to scatter. Observed column approaching along same road. Range of the road now being known from our position, dropped several shells among them. Column took cover in open order.

“1.10 P.M.: Large column observed



on road nearer Gallipoli, marching at high speed. Opened fire, but failed to stop progress of column, although a large number of dead and wounded appeared to be left alongside the road. This column was under fire for about half an hour, when we were forced to dive by shore guns.

"3.20 P.M.: Rose to surface and opened fire at a considerable body of troops, apparently resting. They immediately dispersed, and subsequently opened a well-directed fire with a field-gun. Dived."

"E 14" (her captain, Commander Boyle, was senior to Commander Nasmith of "E 11") says:—

"August 7th . . . at 1.30 P.M.: I saw more dust coming down the road. Rose to the surface, and opened fire on troops marching towards Gallipoli. "E 11" was firing at the time I came up. I had stationed her to the north-east of Dohan Aslan Bank, and she first shelled the troops on a part of the road showing there, and then came down to my billet, where we both shelled them for the best part of an hour. I got off forty rounds, and about six of them burst in the middle of the troops. I had to put full range on the sights and aim at the top of the hill, so my shooting was not very accurate. "E 11" having a 12-pdr., did much more damage, and scattered the troops several times. Soon after 2 P.M. they started firing on us from the shore and out-ranging us."

"E. 11" on August 18th:—

"7 A.M.: Rose to surface near Dohan Aslan Buoy to bombard troops, but they scattered before fire was opened.

"8.30 A.M.: Rose to surface and opened fire on large convoy on road, several shells falling among them before they managed to scatter.

"9 A.M.: Observed fire springing up where our shots had fallen. This rapidly increased in size, until in the afternoon and evening it had assumed very large proportions."

A U-boat was captured by cavalry in 1918, but that case was perhaps exceptional. In the Napoleonic wars it was customary for English frigates to fire at French troops marching along the coast-roads of Spain, so that the E-boats in the Marmora were only repeating history, but they certainly showed that the new weapon was a most disconcerting one for troops to have to reply to.

I do not intend to fill pages with unexplained despatches but the following extracts explain themselves, and, in any case, are too good to be omitted from any Submarine history.

"E 11" (Commander Nasmith):—

"May 23rd, 5.50 A.M.: Observed Turkish torpedo-gunboat at anchor off Constantinople. Attacked and sank her with port-bow torpedo, striking her amidships on the starboard side. While sinking she opened fire with a 6-pdr. gun, the first round hitting the foremost periscope. Proceeded to position north of Kalolimno Island. Rose to surface, and prepared damaged periscope for new top.

"10.30 A.M.: Hands to bathe.

"May 24th, 10.30 A.M.: Observed small steamer proceeding to the westward. Examined vessel through periscope, and rose to surface on her port quarter. Signalled her to stop. No notice was taken. Brought her to a standstill by several rounds from a rifle directed at her bridge. Ordered crew to abandon the ship. This they carried out with reckless haste, capsizing all but one boat. Fortunately with this boat they were able to right the other two and pick up those swimming in the water. An American gentleman then appeared on the upper deck, who informed us that his name was Silas Q. Swing, of the 'Chicago Sun,' and that he was



pleased to make our acquaintance. He then informed us that the steamer was proceeding to Chanak with Turkish marines, and that he was not sure if there were any stores on board.

"Ran up alongside and put Lieutenant D'Oyly-Hughes on board with demolition party. He discovered a 6-inch gun lashed across the top of the fore-hatch—the forehold containing one large 6-inch gun mounting and several small 12-pdr. pedestals, the guns for which were probably at the bottom of the hold.

"The after-hold was full of 6-inch projectiles, and on top of this were resting about fifty large white-metal cartridge-cases marked Krupp. The demolition charge was then placed against the ship's side in the after-hold, well tamped with 6-inch shells and cartridges. All hands returned to the boat and the charge was fired. The vessel exploded with a loud report, and a large column of smoke and flame shot up."

At 11.15 A.M. "E 11" dived into Rodosto harbour after a heavily-laden store-ship. At 12.35 she torpedoed her as she lay alongside the pier. In the afternoon she missed a paddle-steamer which managed to save herself by beaching.

On the 25th "E 11" dived into Constantinople and torpedoed a steamer alongside the Arsenal. On the 28th she sank a large supply ship. On the 31st she torpedoed a large vessel lying in Panderma Roads. On June 2nd she got another, which was probably—from the violence of the explosion—laden with ammunition. On June 7th, on her way out of the Sea of Marmora, "E 11" sank a large troopship and so finished her cruise. I am quoting these statistics to point out what damage may be done by a

single submarine on an army's line of communication.

The moral effect (in such ways as delaying and scaring traffic) is, of course, as great as the material, and probably far greater.

The Marmora submarines hardly deign to mention such small fry as dhows and other sailing ships, but the list runs to a great length when put together. Here are a few days' sinkings by "E 14" (Commander Boyle). On June 20th she sank three dhows, on the 22nd one, on the 23rd a two-masted sailing ship, on the 24th two dhows, and on the 27th a brigantine.

Nowadays a submarine on that sort of duty would have to expect all kinds of retaliation and unpleasantness, but at that stage of the war the anti-submarine work was feeble, and the enemy must have cursed at his own impotence to defend his sea routes.

"E 12" (Commander Bruce) was the boat that had the battle at ten yards' range with an armed tug in the Sea of Marmora. She came victorious out of the action, having sunk her opponent. She had a habit of using her one gun in a violent manner which caused much distress to the enemy. On the 16th September 1916, on a trip up the Dardanelles, she torpedoed a munition steamer in Burgas Bay. On the 18th, being then inside the Marmora, she

"Dived into Rodosto, but found nothing. Chased torpedo-boat of the 'Antalia' class off Kalolimno

Island. We both opened fire at about 8000 yards, the torpedo-boat turning towards us. The fourth shot hit her aft, and she then turned and proceeded at high speed towards Constantinople, seeming to be on fire aft."

The Turkish anti-submarine craft must have been in the position of the darkey who hooked the alligator—"Is dis nigger fishing, or is dis fish a-niggerin'?"

"E 12" continues unmoved—

"Proceeded into Mudania, bombarded Magazine outside town, hit it eight times, silenced the batteries which opened fire on us and damaged the railway. Sank two sail and proceeded towards Gulf of Ismid."

Nothing was seen in Ismid owing to fog, and so she tried the vicinity of Marmora Island, where on the 21st she sank a steamer of 3000 tons and six dhows. Things were dull till the 28th, when she sank three sail off Ismid. On the 29th she met with anti-submarine work again.

"Sank one sail off Rodosto. Destroyer came out, but returned again on sighting us, . . . we were opened fire on from Sar Kioi. Opened fire on them and silenced their guns. Sank four sail three miles farther to the westward. Aeroplane dropped two bombs, the nearest falling 30 yards from our stern."

On the 5th October she sank a small steamer and seventeen sail in Rodosto Bay. An aeroplane dropped a bomb at her with no success. On the 9th she chased a torpedo-boat on the surface, but was unable to get within range. On the 12th she sank another steamer, and on the 17th submarine

"H 1" having come up the Dardanelles also, the two boats chased a gunboat and, getting each side of her, gave her an unhappy time. They hit her several times and she appeared to have lost control, as she nearly went ashore on Kalolimno Point. Eventually she found shelter in Panderma. "E 12" dived in after her, but owing to fog could not see her. Both boats waited patiently all night in hopes of her coming out, but were disappointed. On the 19th "E 12" fired on Constantinople powder factory and had hit it three times before 5.9-in. guns opened fire on her from the shore and made her dive.

On the 25th "E 12" returned down the Narrows. Her experience with the net should be read, remembering that she was an old boat and not meant to stand deep-water pressures.

She passed through the net at 80 feet depth and carried a portion of it with her. This portion must have had some of the heavy weights attached that had been holding the net down, for as the boat came through she took a big angle down by the bow and sank.

The forward hydroplanes caught in the net jammed at "10° of dive." "E 12's" external tanks were blown out and full speed put on the motors. The boat continued down, however, and as the pressure increased, the conning-tower glass scuttles burst in and the conning-tower filled up, the hull leaked forward, and the fore compartment had



to be closed off. By putting three men on the wheel the bow hydroplanes were moved a little, and after ten minutes at 245 feet the boat started to rise. They managed to check her at 12 feet, but found her almost uncontrollable. Six patrol boats opened fire as the conning-tower showed above water, and then the panting hydroplane men forced her down again. The boat continued to dive badly (she was still towing the net and sinkers), and twice she ran down to 120 feet. Both diving gauges had failed and the gyroscopic compass had followed suit. The conning-tower (magnetic) compass was flooded out and useless. Then at 80 feet she struck chain moorings off Kelid Bahr and scraped past. This broke away the length of net she had been towing, and released of the weight she rose at once, and before the tanks could be filled again broke surface. The shore batteries and patrol vessels opened fire at once, hitting the conning-tower full with a small shell and sending small shells and splinters through the bridge. As the boat went down (the conning-tower being flooded already the shell hole was nothing to worry about) a torpedo fired from Kelid Bahr passed over her, and another 50 yards astern of her. "E 12" continued her dive towards home, her trim and control being then normal. She observed two large explosions a couple of miles astern of her and saw the track of another torpedo, but was not further

molested, and joined the Dardanelles Fleet a few hours later.

Submarine "H 1" (Lieutenant Pirie) has been mentioned as having worked in company with "E 12." An "H" boat is, of course, much smaller and less seaworthy than an "E," being of 400 tons and 150 feet length. Before meeting "E 12" at the rendezvous, this boat had sunk a steamer. Later she sank three more steamers and a dhow. As "E 12" was leaving the Marmora first, she politely took "H 1's" mails out with her.

"E 7" (Commander Cochran) made herself unpopular with the enemy in July of 1915. She passed up the Dardanelles (being missed "overhead" by a torpedo fired from Kelid Bahr) on the 30th June, and on 2nd July sank a steamer and two dhows in Rodosto Bay. On the 3rd she sank a brigantine, and on the 6th a 200-ton Zebec and another brigantine. On the 7th she got a tug and a ferry-steamer and had an action on the surface with a two- or three-gun gunboat which retired, leaving a dhow to its fate. In the evening she chased a ferry-steamer ashore. In the morning she sighted the same ferry-steamer under way and sank her. On the 9th she got a Zebec, and on the 10th she dived into Mudania and torpedoed a steamer alongside the pier. On the 11th she sank two dhows, and on the 15th she dived into Constantinople and fired a torpedo at the Arsenal (which is close to the water) in the hope of



detonating something. The explosion was very heavy when the torpedo hit. She then dived out and came to the surface off Zeitunlik Powder Mills, into which she fired twelve rounds. On the 16th she sank a dhow, and at 9.30 A.M. on the 17th she opened fire on a railway cutting a mile west of Kaya Burnu and blocked the line. She then waited till she saw a heavy troop train going west, and chased at full speed to pick up the fruits of her labours. The train entered the cutting, and, as was expected, backed out again into Yarandje Station. "E 7" settled down to work, and after twenty rounds had been fired, three ammunition cars blew up. Later in the day she shelled another train and hit several cars, without, however, doing so much damage. She concluded an interesting day by sinking another dhow. On the 18th she sank a brigantine, and was fired at by rifles from Mudania. She replied by hitting a steamer with one shell, and the buildings from which rifles were being fired with ten. Three shells fired into a small shed on the beach produced heavy and satisfactory explosions. On the 19th she sank four sail, and on the 21st one; on the 22nd she fired again on a train rounding Kaya Burnu and on a stone railway bridge. On the 24th she came back through the Narrows, presumably to the immense relief of the Turks. On her next trip, as has already been related, "E 7" was sunk and the crew captured. The

coxswain was imprisoned some 60 miles from the coast of Asia Minor. He made a small canvas boat, *carried it with him* to the beach across that 60 miles of hills and put to sea. He was blown back by a gale, however, and recaptured on the day that his captain escaped from a camp 300 miles inland.

In these interminable lists of sinkings of unarmed vessels it may appear to the reader as if the work had been done roughly and without consideration for the lives of non-combatants. The following report from the commanding officer of the flotilla should be noted:—

"The destruction of the enemy's means of transport in the Sea of Marmora has been pursued throughout with the utmost regard for humanity. Ships carrying refugees have invariably been spared, and the crews of sailing vessels either given time to escape or rescued at considerable inconvenience to the submarine. On many occasions the crews of vessels destroyed have shown their surprise and gratitude at the consideration shown to them."

The first boat to enter the Narrows was "B 11" (Lieutenant Holbrook). She successfully torpedoed and sank the Turkish battleship *Messudiyeh*. The outstanding fact of this feat was that the boat was built in the summer of 1906, making her well over eight years old when she went into the Dardanelles. Eight years is a great age for a submarine in a Service which advances every month in its knowledge of construction, and "B 11" was in 1914 almost ready for a final paying off. She showed, however, that the



old boats were by no means useless if handled as they should be.

The first trip right into the Marmora was by "A-E 2" (Lieut. - Commander Stoker). She was an Australian boat of the same type as the other E's. She was unfortunately sunk by a destroyer in the Marmora after getting in.<sup>1</sup>

In the Baltic also, at the beginning of the War, targets were far more plentiful than in the North Sea. Commander Horton in "E 9" sank a destroyer on January 29, 1915. On June 4 he sank a transport which was protected by a destroyer screen. On July 2 he torpedoed and badly damaged the *Prinz Adalbert*. On July 29 "E 1" (Commander Laurence) sank a transport. On August 19 he torpedoed and damaged the *Moltke*, incidentally causing the enemy to withdraw from the attack on the Gulf of Riga—an attack which at the moment showed every probability of succeeding. Later in the war the Germans renewed their attack successfully—secure in the knowledge that the internal conditions caused by the Revolution had prevented the British submarines from operating. At that time we had in the Baltic four "E" Class ("E 18," Lieut.-Commander Hala-han, having been lost at sea in May 1916 with all hands, from a cause unknown) and four "C" Class. The latter boats had, instead of entering

the Baltic by the Sound, come in August 1916 *via* the White Sea and up the Dvina river in wooden barges towed by tugs; they came practically empty, and their batteries, &c., were replaced in them on arrival at Petrograd. The Revolution caused such chaos that the flotilla was practically tied to harbour after the Soviet Government's installation. "C 27" (Lieutenant Sealy), however, was able to torpedo a transport during the attack on Oesel, and was also reported to have damaged one of the screening vessels. There is no doubt that the knowledge that these submarines had been rendered powerless enormously helped the Germans in the Baltic. Perhaps the best tribute to their efficiency is the insertion by the enemy in the Peace Treaty with Russia of a clause insisting on the British boats' destruction. On April 5, 1918, the boats were blown up and the crews came home overland.

Curious stories were brought back by the returning officers and men of Revolutionary conditions. The English were not molested, but were still apparently respected by the Russian sailors. One unfortunate seaman of the Revolutionary Navy had insulted one of our officers, who complained to the Council about it. The wretched man was arrested, and would have been executed if the officer had not personally begged for his life. This being granted, the man was brought

---

<sup>1</sup> As I have not the despatch by me, I am postponing the account of her passage till later.

across to the E boat to apologise. His mates assisted him to do this by rubbing his face on the iron deck before the Lieutenant-Commander's feet. He was then sent indefinitely to Siberia. The same men who took such steps to uphold politeness to England and her officers at that date, had already brutally hacked numbers of their own officers to pieces, and had drenched their Admiral in paraffin and set a light to him.

When the debacle came, and the German transports were approaching, an effort was made to get both British and Russian submarines to sea. The following incident is hardly credible, but I believe it is true: one Russian boat on leaving harbour did a dive for practice—a very wise thing to do. Her after-hatch was open, and should have been closed on the order to dive. It was not closed, for the simple reason that the man whose duty it was to close it was having his "Stand easy" at the time, and therefore considered the order to shut down to be unconstitutional. He was near the hatch himself, and he sat there and watched the Baltic come in as the boat went under; if ever anybody died for his principles that man did. However, the captain and first lieutenant of the boat escaped as she sank, and were court-martialled for losing their ship. By a nightmare of Revolutionary logic they were sent to Siberia, the court finding that the order to shut down was illegal and harsh, in that

certain of the crew were taking their rest, and could not be expected to obey any order.

The E boats at that time had a number of Russian officers on board who had come to them for protection. It was customary for the Russian crews to vote for their captains, and as the life of a captain (controlled by a Council of the crew) was a short and precarious one, it was not uncommon for a new leader of a poll to desert by swimming to the British flotilla. When the flotilla was eventually destroyed by its own officers, Captain Cromie remained to make a last effort to bring the fighting forces back to the Allies' side. As is known to all the world, he closed with his death on the Embassy stairs a chapter of history that our Navy will never have cause to be ashamed of.

Revolutionary crews in Russian submarines gave illustrations of what happens if democracy is carried to its limits. An English submarine officer did a short trip in a boat belonging to the Russian Navy, and his comment about it was that "if it had not been so serious it would have been comic." The crew's committee had dismissed the engineer and mechanics for reasons of their own, with the result that furious altercations used to go on as to the best way to start up the engines. The results were not always successful; but the cook, who seemed to be the only man aboard who knew how it was done, used to eventually inter-



vene and make the much-enduring metal get to work again. This, of course, was at sea and near to the enemy.

Some difficulties were experienced in keeping the British submarine sailors away from the Russians when the boats were in harbour. Captain Cromie reported on one occasion: "I regret to report that striking cases are becoming more frequent, chiefly due to insolence on the part of the Russians and a growing contempt for them on the part of our men." Our sailors had no objection to anybody's political opinions, but they did object to a spirit of murder in substitution for a fighting spirit. The whole of Russia at that time was in a turmoil. Bolshevism was beginning, and the Germans were sweeping up the Russian ships and defences as if they were empty. The Russian Naval Commander-in-Chief went in person to assist in the defence of the Gulf of Riga. When he and his staff arrived at Hapsal they had to walk seven versts to Rogikoul, as the railway was on strike for vodka!

The Baltic submarine flotilla vanished with the collapse of Russia, but it had made a great name for itself. Even during the nightmare of revolutionary lunacy that preceded the end, it was looked on by all the Russians as the one straightforward and efficient force that remained. The lowest as well as the highest respected it as the symbol of honesty and courage. During

its career it had caused the greatest annoyance to the enemy, on occasions holding up and stopping practically all traffic from Germany to Sweden in enemy ships. The following extracts show the way some of the work was done:—

"'E 9' (Commander Horton), October 18th, 1916, 5.50 P.M.: Chased steamer and ordered her to stop by International Code and by firing maxim ahead of her. She proved to be the German ship *Soderham* of Hamburg. Boarding party went aboard and told crew to abandon ship, then opened up sea-cocks and exploded demolition charges.

"At 7.15 P.M. stopped a ship with flashing lamp and maxim. She was the *Pernambuco* of the Hamburg South American Line—from Lulea to Stettin with iron ore (3500 tons). Sent crew off in boats and sank her. Her chief officer stated her to be of 7000 tons. 6.55 A.M.: Chased, boarded, and sank the *Johannes Russ* of Hamburg—same routine as previously. 10.47 A.M.: Hove to the German ship *Dal Alfvén*, and ordered her to abandon ship. A destroyer was with her, and approached me at speed. It was impossible to discover her nationality end-on, so dived and watched her. She proved to be the Swedish destroyer *Wale*. She took *Dal Alfvén's* crew on board from their boats. Rose and closed *Wale*. Following conversation ensued:—

"*Wale*. 'You are in Swedish neutral waters.'

"'E 9.' 'I make myself six miles from land.'

"*Wale*. 'I make you five.'

"'E 9.' 'Neutral limit is three miles—please stand clear while I sink this ship.'

"11.24 A.M.: Fired stern tube at *Dal Alfvén*. *Wale* was 100 yards on our beam. Torpedo ran well and vessel sank in two minutes."

"'E 19' (Commander Cromie) was at sea also at this time:—

"October 3rd, 5.30 P.M.: Stopped



German merchantman. She would not obey the signal until I hit her with a shell amidships—then she abandoned ship. Put five shot-holes in her water-line and left her on a lee shore. Weather getting worse.

“October 10th: Sea rough with rain squalls. Stopped German ship *Lulea*. Made crew abandon ship and then sank her.

“October 11th: Sank *Walter Leonhardt* of Hamburg. Crew taken aboard Swedish steamer. Then sank *Gutrune*, carrying iron ore to Hamburg. At 4.55 P.M., stopped and sank *Director Rippenhagen*, carrying magnetic ore to Nordenhem. Put the crew aboard Swedish steamer *Martha*. 6.30 P.M.: Sank the *Nicomedia*, carrying iron ore to Hamburg. Crew pulled ashore.

“Stopped the *Nike*. This ship requiring further investigation, I put a prize crew on board and sent her to Revel. Her captain informed me that twenty German ships laden with iron ore are stopped at Lulea, waiting for escort.”

On November 2nd “E 19” was on the traffic route again and sank the *Ruomi* of Hamburg. (The work being done by these boats was the same as the Germans were doing to us, but if the Germans had carried out their work with the same decency and care for the lives of the non-combatants they would be receiving far more consideration and respect from us now.) The enemy had now started to protect their traffic lane, and they sent out a cruiser to drive the E boats away.

“E 19” continues (November 7th, 1.45 P.M.):—

“Fired starboard beam tube 1100 yards’ range, hitting her forward on starboard side. The cruiser (*Ancona* class) swung round and stopped. At 1.55 P.M. fired stern tube at 1200 yards. Torpedo hit just abaft mainmast, and after-magazine blew up.

Three minutes later there was no sign of her.”

The German ships torpedoed in the Baltic seem to have had touchy magazines. Commander Goodhart (E 8) met the *Prinz Adalbert* on October 23rd, 1915. She was zig-zagging slightly and going 15 knots, with two destroyers zigzagging ahead as a screen. The torpedo was fired at the fore-bridge as she passed, and—

“Observed very vivid flash of explosion along water-line at point of aim. This was immediately followed by a very heavy concussion, and the entire ship was completely hidden by a huge column of thick grey smoke—fore magazine having evidently been exploded by torpedo. As many portions of the ship were observed to be falling in the water all round, I proceeded to 50 feet depth.”

The range of this shot was about 1300 yards. This comparatively long distance was fortunate, as the resultant explosion would have probably caused a terrific shock to E 8 had she happened to fire from closer.

The E boats in the Baltic came from Harwich *via* the Sound. It sounds simple, but it was a remarkably difficult and dangerous trip. For six miles in the narrow it is too shallow for a submarine to submerge. The boats had to trim down and go along with their conning-towers showing and their keels bumping along the rocky bottom. The traffic—both neutral and enemy—was so thick that it was not so much a question of avoiding being seen, as of actually avoiding collision. A maze of



moving and fixed lights, search-lights, star-shells, and attempts to ram made up a nightmare of navigational difficulties to add to the normal anxiety

of passing through thick traffic in a narrow channel. It was really a marvel that any boats got through safely at all.

### III.

Throughout this history I am giving selections from despatches of typical "contacts" with the enemy, or of those which describe exciting incidents on patrol; but I don't want to give the idea that submarine patrol work was one whirl of gaiety, and that a boat had only to go to sea in order to find a target. The facts are very different. A boat might do a matter of twenty trips without meeting any kind of chance at an enemy, and I suppose that each boat averaged two to three thousand miles of diving between chances. The following description of routine in a patrol boat must stand for four years of blank days in the North Sea, Atlantic, or Mediterranean:—

The boat dives at dawn, and, the trim correct and the captain satisfied, the order is given to "fall out all but diving-hands." One officer remains at the periscope, while the remainder and the majority of the crew move off to their sleeping billets and lie down. When not on watch it is customary for everybody to sleep, read, and eat all the time; this is to conserve the stock of air in the boat. Oxygen is not carried, but "purifiers"

are. The air in the hull of the boat is, however, ample for a long day's dive, and except when kept down by accident or the machinations of the enemy there is no necessity to renew it. It is kept on the move, however, by ordinary circulating fans, which produce a general draught and disturbance of the halos of bad air around each man's head, and this keeping of the air moving makes a great difference—in fact, with no fans running a match fails to burn after nine hours' diving; with all fans circulating a match can be lit after a dive of from fourteen to eighteen hours. Why this is, I don't know. If any work is done while diving (such as re-loading of tubes or repairing of damage) the air is used more rapidly—in fact, extraordinarily quickly. When no work is being done, but only the usual day's dive has been carried out, there is a slight increase in rate of respiration among the hands on watch, with a slighter rise in rate of pulse. But as soon as one attempts to do anything, such as lifting weights or making a speech to the crew on the subject of their crimes, one finds it necessary to breathe heavily and quickly; and in fact, in the case of the speech, only a few

minutes' harangue would be possible towards the end of a day. Officers do not keep watch at the periscope for more than a couple of hours at a time—it is bad for the eyes and bad for the temper; the deadly monotony of shuffling slowly round while stooping to stare at a perfectly blank and usually misty horizon is the worst part of a patrol. The periscope work makes one sleepy also. Submarine officers sleep a lot; the work is dull and sleep passes the time. One gets tired of reading, although one certainly reads an extraordinary amount. A succession of blank uneventful trips is good for education, however; somebody once said that the book to be cast away on a desert island with was Gibbons' 'Roman Empire.' I have known heavier books than that to be worked through on patrol—even to weighty tomes on Constitutional History. The sailors also read, sleep, and eat continuously. A few hands keep watch on the hydroplane wheels, the pumps, and the motors; the rest take it easy. They study such periodicals as one finds on the counters of small tobacconists' shops, and in addition they borrow and read intelligently the more abstruse literature from their officers' library.

There is not much cooking done while diving. Cooking is done in electric ovens and boilers, but it is usual to do what work is necessary with these when the boats are charging batteries on the

surface. Cooking when submerged uses oxygen, makes smells, and expends battery power, and is discouraged. Cold meals are the rule, and submarine people cannot complain of being underfed, as there is a special supply for them of bottled fruits and other extras to obviate the dangers of illness to men living without exercise or fresh air in such confined quarters. On the whole, the crews keep healthy and fit, but there has been a good deal of illness and also eye-strain among the officers during the war.

I have said that while one officer is on watch at the periscope the others sleep or read. It is remarkable, however, how awake they are to certain sounds or happenings. An officer may take some minutes to rouse when called for his spell on watch, but if instead of the gentle shaking of the messenger he felt a change of inclination of the beat, or a new vibratory note from the motors, or if he felt by the cessation of rolling that the boat was sinking, he would be awake in a flash. The human brain seems to keep one technical department always on watch, and it misses nothing. A boat patrolling in a slight swell keeps up a gentle roll at periscope depth, and all the time one hears the rattle and click of the shafting as the fore and aft hydroplanes are worked to keep her at her depth-line. If, for instance, she meets a stratum of fresh water, she will begin to sink; the hydroplanes will be worked



up to "hard-a-rise" and left there, with the boat inclined up and trying to climb. The officer at the periscope will order a tank to be partially emptied and will increase speed on the motors to help her climb up again. As she goes down the rolling will cease, and the silence of the hydroplane shafts, the hum of the motors, and the angle of the boat will tell every sleeper at once exactly what is happening; some of them could probably tell the actual depth the boat had got down to without looking at the gauge. In the same way when on passage on the surface a change of note in the roar of the Diesel engines will wake all hands—it might mean something important. When on the surface, there is one sound which wakes everybody without any exception—and that is the electric alarm horn. It makes a dry blaring noise which is unmistakable, and in view of the fact that it may be the preliminary to the loss of the boat, it interests all hands very intimately. There is always the feeling, especially if it is dark, that the officer on watch may have rung it too late, and that before the boat can be forced under a destroyer stem may come crashing through the pressure hull. A submarine hates being on the surface—at least, a patrol submarine does. She has to come up to recharge her batteries or to "make a passage." It must be reiterated that a submarine is fairly fast and of long radius on the surface, and of slow

speed and low capacity submerged. It will be understood that a boat is in an anxious position if she has been diving long and her battery is low when she is near enemy patrols. She has *got* to come up and charge again, and while charging a low battery she is rather helpless. Every weapon has its weak point, and a knowledge of where the weakness lies means a chance to the opponent.

Neither side had any submarines present at the Battle of Jutland, for the simple reason that neither side had at that time any boats fast enough to cruise with the Fleet and so arrive in time at a tactical rendezvous. One boat did arrive at the scene of battle next day—a homeward-bound U-boat who knew nothing of what had happened; she passed through an area of water which was covered with corpses, wreckage, and debris, and which was occasionally marked by the ends of sunken ships standing up above the surface. She cruised about, wondering, for a time, and then hurried on into harbour.

If, however, there had been another fleet action during the war, the fast submarine would have been represented in it. The Germans never built anything like our K class boats, and so the test of the type would have been carried out by us only. Tests in practice had given such good results that the reluctance of the enemy to repeat the Jutland experiment was very disap-



pointing to the K-boat officers, who had two years of waiting for their one chance—a chance which never arrived. A submarine of 2600 tons cannot throw up her tail and slip under in a few seconds as an E-boat can do—she must be taken under with due respect for her great length and size, and she cannot therefore be used on the usual Bight patrols. She is built and designed for battle only, and the type, apart from a few “incidents” with enemy submarines while employed on scouting patrols, had to share the fate of the Grand Fleet battleships which never got a fair chance at the enemy. The building of these boats, however, showed us that the big submarine was a working possibility. We designed and built them to a certain specification, and they showed they could improve on that specification in practice, and they gave most valuable data for future design.

There is, at any rate, one point on which prophecy as to the future of submarines (if they are allowed by International Law to continue to develop) is safe: at present a boat has to travel submerged by electric power, because that is the only form of propulsion we know which does not consume air. When an engine arrives which can propel a boat under water by abstracting the necessary oxygen from the surrounding sea, we will have made the submersible a commercial proposition. A properly stream-lined body moves faster under than on

the surface of water, and with a submersible internal combustion engine there would be in all probability a doubling of the speed of ships. That such a type of engine will come there is little doubt, and when it is remembered that water is a far cheaper protection from shells than is armour-plate, a field for prophecy is opened which is much too big and tempting to venture into here.

Whatever happens, the German policy of torpedoing merchant ships without warning must be made not only illegal, but unsafe for a nation adopting it; the use of this weapon by the enemy has made the word submarine one of reproach; the submarine personnel of every allied navy feels that an honourable weapon has, on its first appearance in a great sea war, had its name degraded by a section of its users. If these notes of mine serve no other purpose, they will at any rate do something towards differentiating between the submarine and the U-boat. If the name of the weapon is to become a term of reproach, it is better to particularise and to spare the honour of the Allied Navies.

I am going to relate an incident which occurred during the war. It was not in the presence of the enemy, and so there is little direct connection between it and a War History. But it is illustrative of the ideas of the Submarine Service in that it evoked little comment among the Flotillas, the



standard shown by the personnel being considered to be normal, and in accordance with accepted practice.

Submarine "C 12" was under way in the Humber; her main driving motors failed, and before the fault could be remedied or anchors let go, she was carried by the strong ebb-tide against the bows of destroyers which were lying at the Eastern Jetty at Immingham, and badly holed. Most of the crew and the first lieutenant (Lieutenant Sullivan) were below at the time, while the captain (Lieutenant Manley) was on deck. Seeing that the boat was sinking fast, Lieutenant Manley ordered all hands on deck. They hurried up, the first lieutenant remaining below. The water was pouring in over the electric batteries, causing heavy chlorine fumes to be given off. The boat was on the verge of sinking when, the last man being up, Lieutenant Manley went below, closing the conning-tower lid after him. The boat then went to the bottom, with both officers inside her. Finding, however, that nothing could be done owing to the extent of the damage, the chlorine gas, and the weight of water entering, these officers entered the conning-tower, closing the lower door after them. They then flooded the conning-tower and, lifting the upper door, swam to the surface, reporting that nothing could now be done without salvage plant to lift the boat.

War produces a lot of incidents of a noteworthy kind,

but work in submarines produces similar incidents under peace conditions also, because the Service is always at war with its constant enemy—the sea. The boats have small buoyancy, and a leak is a dangerous thing; they are very vulnerable to the ram, and even in peace manoeuvres before the war we lost 6 boats from collisions either on the surface or diving. During the war we lost 61 boats, of which—

7 were blown up without losses in personnel—these being the boats of the Baltic Flotilla.

20 were lost from a cause unknown. In other words, they went on patrol, and nothing more was heard of them. The enemy have no knowledge of their fate, and there were no survivors from them. Their loss was probably due to their striking mines.

5 were sunk by enemy submarines (one of them—"E 20"—in the Sea of Marmora).

3 were sunk while entering the Dardanelles, and 1 by gun-fire in the Marmora.

4 were sunk by mines off our own coasts.

3 were wrecked on neutral coasts, 1 in the Baltic, and 1 on our own coast.

2 were sunk by air bombs.

7 were sunk by collision.

3 were sunk in error by gun or ram by our own side.

1 sank in harbour, 1 sank on trials, 1 was sunk by gun-fire after sinking a German destroyer off the Bight, and "C3" blew herself up on St George's Day against the Mole at Zeebrugge.

The losses were heavy, but were not incurred uselessly. The boats were the outposts of the Fleet, and, however great the losses, they could never have equalled those the bigger ships would have had to endure had they been given the same patrols to perform.

Looking at the above list, one can see that the majority of the losses were due to mines. Losses by direct contact with the enemy were infrequent. This, of course, is because only a Fleet holding command of the sea can institute regular anti-submarine methods and patrols. Our boats were working in and around the Bight, and were taking the risks of mine-fields all the time. The five wrecks show that navigational difficulties are increased in war-time. This was found also by surface vessels.

The Dardanelles took their toll; it was easy to do damage to traffic in the Marmora from a well-trained submarine, but getting in and out of the Narrows was no simple matter. Of the two sunk by air bombs, one was alongside in harbour, and the other was destroyed by an Allied aircraft which mistook her for a U-boat; the submarine could have easily dived and avoided attack, but was under the impression her unfortunate opponent was only closing in order to make signals. The three others sunk in error by our own side show that a submarine's risks are great even on her own coast, and that methods of identification can never be perfected. The enemy suffered more than we did from errors. They had several clashes between their own destroyers: on June 1 (the morning after Jutland) the *Stettin* was fired on by the whole of their 2nd Battle Squadron; while one U-boat in 1914 successfully stalked and torpedoed another (U-5), thinking it was one of our own.



## MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

THE SECOND TREATY OF VERSAILLES—HERR RANTZAU'S EXCUSES—  
—A NEW MAP OF EUROPE—THE SAAR BASIN—THE GERMAN ARMY  
OF THE FUTURE—SHALL THE KAISER BE TRIED?—REPARATION  
AND INDEMNITY—TON FOR TON—THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS—  
HERR SCHEIDEMANN AND THE PEACE—WHAT VISCOUNT HALDANE  
OF CLOAN THINKS ABOUT IT,

IF the Germans were gifted with imagination, they would be deeply sensible of the irony which brings them a second time to Versailles. Where Bismarck dictated terms to prostrate France and welded the German Empire into one whole, then deemed unconquerable, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau and his colleagues have received the terms framed by the inexorable Allies. Less than fifty years have witnessed the rise and fall of Imperial Germany, and truly history cannot show a swifter Nemesis. To-day Germany stands alone. Her ancient friends—Austria, Turkey, Bulgaria—are crushed beneath the same load which overwhelms her. But she lacks imagination, and can understand neither the justice nor the reality of the blow.

The meeting of the Allies with the German delegates is a meeting which will never be blotted out from the records. For more than four years a veil has separated Germany from Western Europe. Neither we nor the French have had talk or commerce with our foes, and our first confrontation at Versailles does not suggest a speedy renewal of intimate relations. The speech made by

M. Clemenceau was brief and dignified. "It is neither the time nor the place," said he, "for superfluous words." And the speech left no loophole of escape. "This second Treaty of Versailles," added the French Minister, "has cost us too much not to take on our side all the necessary precautions and guarantees that this peace shall be a lasting one." The reply of Herr Rantzau proved at once that defeat has not chastened the insolence of Germany. He spoke as one who had the right to formulate, or at least to discuss, the terms of peace. He acclaimed "the sublime thought" of the League of Nations. He strayed into the bypaths of political philosophy, declaring in the hour of his country's crisis that "the peace which cannot be defended in the name of right before the world always calls forth new resistance against it." It is late in the day for a German to defend anything "in the name of right." For fifty years the fellow-countrymen of Herr Rantzau have preached the gospel of might, naked and unashamed, and it would have better become him if he had not used words which all the

Allies know are meaningless upon his lips. We did not invite the Germans to Versailles that they should argue with us about right and wrong, an enterprise for which they are singularly unfit. We asked them to Versailles that they might hear and accept the sentence which the world has passed upon dangerous criminals.

But there is one admission which he did make. "We are under no illusion," said he, "as to the extent of our defeat and the degree of our want of power. We know that the power of the German arms is broken. We know the power of the hatred which we encounter here, and we have heard the passionate demand that the victors shall make us pay as the vanquished and shall punish those who are worthy of being punished." So far, so good. Unhappily for his own dignity, Herr Rantzeu did not end there. He went on to repudiate for his country the sole guilt of the war. He repeated the old excuse, invented by the journalists of Germany, that the German people believed that it was fighting a war of defence, and he failed to see that the responsibility for this falsehood, if it were believed, rests wholly upon his own Government. Still worse was his excuse by counter-reproach for the crimes committed by the German army. "The hundreds of thousands of non-combatants," said he, "who have perished

since November 11 by reason of the blockade were killed with cold deliberation, after our adversaries had conquered and victory had been assured them." This is sheer nonsense. The blockade is a lawful and recognised form of warfare, and if the Germans fear it they should have thought twice before they plunged Europe into wanton bloodshed. But it is characteristic of the Germans that they demand for themselves privileges which they refuse to others, and if only Herr Rantzeu would re-read Busch's "Secret Pages" of Bismarck's life, he would understand that his country has been treated with a leniency unknown to the victors of 1871, and he would have refrained from making his loud appeal to prejudice.

From the setting of the peace we come to the peace itself, and it may be said at once that, if its terms are loyally carried out, it should prove a just and a lasting peace. It has its faults. As you read its provisions, you hear the voice of compromise speaking aloud. And compromise is always a timid adviser. You can put your finger upon clauses which were dictated not by wisdom, but in fatal compliance with Mr Wilson or another. But that part which will mar the peace, if it become not a dead letter, as we hope and believe that it will, is the League of Nations—an easy method of shifting responsibility and of depriving



the master of authority in his own house. Upon this vague and shadowy debating-society, as we shall see presently, are dumped many incompatible duties, and it will be wonderful, indeed, if its reckless constitution do not involve Europe in many years of war.

Of the new map of Europe which the Allies have drawn there is not much to be said in dispraise. It is true that there are still *lacunæ* in the scheme. Nothing, for instance, is said in the draft of Jugo-Slavia, that strange invention of the journalists, or of Albania. It is also far too amicable to our enemies. But buffer-states are created in Poland and Czecho-Slovakia, and something like a stable balance of power is established. Germany loses 30,000 square miles of territory, and little short of 7,000,000 of population; and when we consider what would have happened had victory alighted upon the shoulder of Germany, we cannot say that the peace has erred on the side of violence. The cession of Alsace-Lorraine to its rightful owners is expected and clear-out. It presents no difficulties, and will be made to the great content of all save the Germans. The future of the Saar, on the other hand, is uncertain and nebulous. The terms on which the mines of the Saar Basin are given to France are designed to produce the greatest amount of friction with the least benefit to either side. The mines are handed over to

France with perfect justice—that is true. At the same time, it is made clear that France is not to be trusted in the administration of her new territory. "In compensation for the destruction of coal-mines in Northern France"—thus runs the clause—"and as payment on account of reparation, Germany cedes to France full ownership of the coal-mines of the Saar Basin, with their subsidiaries, accessories, and facilities." As the Germans, with "cold deliberation" have destroyed the mines of Northern France, in the hope that they might start again in the commercial race with an easy lead, it is right and proper that they should atone for their wanton destruction. But what the Peace Conference gives with one hand, it takes away with the other. It shows plainly that, while it cannot refrain from an obvious act of justice, it is resolved to hedge France about with irksome restrictions. So it places the whole district under a sort of parish council. "In order to secure the rights and welfare of the population," so it is said, "and guarantee to France entire freedom in working the mines, the territory will be governed by a Commission appointed by the League of Nations and consisting of five members, one French, one a native inhabitant of the Saar, and three representing three different countries other than France and Germany. The

League will appoint a member of the Commission as Chairman, to act as executive of the Commission." We can imagine no plan more nicely calculated to ensure confusion and bad government than this one, which bears the signature, we are sure, of Mr Wilson. Fortunately it comes to an end in fifteen years, when "a plebiscite will be held by communes to ascertain the desires of the population as to continuance of the existing régime under the League of Nations, union with France, or union with Germany." Whatever may be the desires of the populace in 1934, one thing is certain: they will not confirm the mixed tutelage of a grandmotherly League.

The same weakness is displayed in dealing with Dantzic. That is to be a Free City, as free as any city can be, "under the guarantee of the League of Nations." A High Commissioner is to be appointed by the League, who shall reside at Dantzic and draw up a constitution in agreement with the representatives of the city. As Poland shall include Dantzic within her Customs frontiers, and have the use of all the city's waterways, docks, and other facilities, it would have been far simpler to hand the city over to the Poles without any let or hindrance. But the League of Nations, like the busybody that it is, will have a finger in every pie, and will guarantee to the world as much unstable and discon-

tented government as political ingenuity may devise.

The military clauses are severe, as they should be, and if only the will of the Allies can be imposed upon Germany, we need have no fear of another murderous and unprovoked attack. "All compulsory service"—such is the decision—"is to be abolished in German territory, and recruiting regulations on a voluntary basis are to be incorporated in the German military laws, providing for the enlistment of non-commissioned officers and men for a period of not less than twelve consecutive years, and stipulating that officers shall serve for twenty-five years, and shall not be retired until the age of forty-five." The reason of these regulations is plain. Once before in history a limit was imposed upon the German Army, and the limit, fixed by Napoleon himself, was easily evaded by what was called the "Klumper" system. Recruits were passed rapidly through the army into a reserve, and their places taken by untrained men, so that in a few years the Germans, in spite of Napoleon's prohibition, were able to put in the field the army which won the Battle of Leipzig. We have taken our precautions, it is true, and fixed the number of German effectives at a hundred thousand, whose duty it will be to keep order at home and to guard the frontiers. But the difficulty is not in making the plan, but in forcing the Ger-



mans loyally to adhere to it. We know the value which they put upon "scraps of paper," and unless we keep spies all over the country, and a force ready to insist upon the carrying out of our decrees, we shall fail where Napoleon failed, and discover too late a German Army, trained and equipped, upon the frontiers of France. It is easy to attach too much importance to such provisions as those which limit the armed force of an enemy. It will be wiser if we leave the Germans no money in their banks, which they might spend upon armaments.

There is one section in the treaty which we bitterly deplore, and that is the section which deals with responsibilities for the crimes of the war. That military tribunals should be set up by the Allies to try persons accused of acts of violation of the laws and customs of war is perfectly just and right. If we did not punish such violations, then International Law would be a farce. But when the section opens with the ominous words: "The Allies publicly arraign the ex-Emperor William II. for a supreme offence against International Morality and Sanctity of Treaties," it announces publicly an infraction of the law. There is no court in existence which is competent to try the head of a State, and to invent a court which shall be framed for the mere purpose of judging one particular criminal is to outrage the first principles

of justice. The Kaiser believes, rightly or wrongly, that he is answerable to God alone for his actions, as Charles I. believed; and if he follows that monarch in refusing to plead, the tribunal, "guided by the highest principles of international policy," will find itself baffled. And we say this, not from any feeling of leniency to the Kaiser, whose crimes and pretensions all honest men will condemn. We should have no objection if the Allies demanded his extradition from Holland and punished him, as they chose, without a trial. If they thought well, they might put him to death or send him, as Napoleon was sent, to St Helena. There is but one course which cannot legally be followed. We cannot call a court into being *ad hoc*, and pretend that we are obeying the voice of justice. It is possible that that maid-of-all-work, the League of Nations, should devise some method in the future for bringing kings and presidents to trial for dereliction of duty or for offences against morality. But should we to-day set up a court where no court is or has been, we shall succeed only in making a martyr of William II., who will be far more heavily punished if he be left to his own bitter regrets and to the long torture of his own accusing thoughts.

The section in which reparation and restitution are considered is impaired by the admission that "the grand total of damages assessed against Germany may exceed



her ability to pay." Germany's ability or inability to pay does not concern the Allies, whose only business it is to present the bill and to see that it is paid within a stated time. The debt need not be wholly liquidated for a century, nor need the capital sum owing to us be handed over all at once. But by paying interest upon the whole debt and by creating a sinking fund, Germany can and should eventually free us all from a heavy burden, which we did not ourselves put upon our backs. We believe that at the present moment we owe a vast amount of money to the United States. Our creditor does not make an elaborate calculation of our assets and liabilities. He assumes, rightly enough, that we shall pay our undisputed debt, and there is an end of it. Why should not the Allies make the same assumption when they present their bill to Germany? Germany is a rich country. She has no external debt. Her country has not been ravaged as Belgium and Northern France have been ravaged. Her factories have not been despoiled of machinery and rendered useless. In one way only can she gain her self-respect, and that is by paying handsomely for all her breakages, and those who advise the Allies to deal tenderly with her do an ill service both to her and to them.

At present she is asked only to make compensation for damages caused to civilians. For the worst of all she can

never compensate. She cannot bring to life again the aged, the women and children, whom she has brutally murdered by land and by sea. She cannot restore to happiness the poor wretched girls whom she deported from Lille and other places and turned to her vile uses. These things are beyond her power, as they are beyond our forgiveness. But in order that all may not go unpaid, Germany will be asked to give us £1,000,000,000 within two years as a first instalment, and a Commission will periodically examine her capacity to pay such further sums as are demanded. As to the indemnities which were loudly promised at the General Election, we hear little of them to-day, nor can we extract a pinch of truth from the Government. And, when once peace is signed, we fear that the Commission will fall into so profound an apathy that it will make no attempt to lighten the burden of debt with which Germany has weighed down all the Entente.

However, the German Government is asked to recognise the right of the Allies to replacement, ton for ton and class for class, of all merchant ships and fishing boats lost or damaged owing to the war. And for the recognition of this principle we are all grateful. A vast number of German ships are to be ceded to the Allies, and, as "an additional part of reparation," the German Government agrees to build ships for the



Allies to the amount not exceeding 200,000 tons annually during the next five years. That is as it should be, and let us hope that this "reparation" will be a wholesome warning to the pirates, who thought it an honourable act of war, and deserving the iron cross, to sink merchants at sight and to drown their crews. But we miss a reference to such gallant neutrals as Norway, which refused to bend the knee to the German bully, and with admirable courage kept the seas in spite of the menace of German submarines. After Great Britain, it is Norway which suffered most cruelly at the hands of the pirate Huns, and we shall not have done our duty in the making of peace if we do not support Norway's indisputable claim to an ample reparation. Nor is this the only complaint we have to make as to the division of the German merchantships. There is a rumour, we hope unfounded, that the American Government intends to seize all the great liners of German origin interned in American harbours. Now, America has suffered least of all countries from the brutalities of the submarine commanders. As her losses have been the smallest, so her gains should not be the greatest. And if she persist in her rumoured policy, what are we to think about her idealism? Shall we not be justified in supposing that the ideal which she kept steadily before her was the ideal of a mercantile marine?

The blot upon the Treaty of Peace is, as we have said, the League of Nations. It is based upon a wrong principle to perform a duty for which it is obviously incompetent. Its basis is distrust of all the world. If we may believe its supporters, no civilised nation can be expected to act honestly or humanely, if left to itself. France may extract the coal from the Saar Basin. She may not be permitted to administer justice therein. Germany is stripped, rightly and justly, of her colonies, but lest the powers into whose hands they fall should break the laws of decency, they must receive "mandates" from the League before they are entrusted with the task of government. And reports must be written by the mandatories and solemnly considered by the League, which, we suppose, will approve or condemn, as it chooses. Thus another kind of dual control is invented, which cannot but lead to friction and ill-temper. What high-spirited nation will permit the interference of a committee, largely composed of States which may legally resent the interference of their fellows? One of two things is inevitable. Either the mandatory system will speedily become a dead letter, or the League of Nations will promote such bitter feuds as can be allayed only by the sword.

And the League of Nations will be especially irksome to Europe, because, as we pointed out last month, America claims the right to control us, and

denies us the right even to make a suggestion to any country on the American continent. We do not grumble at the decision of America, because, as we have already said, it reduces the League to an absurdity. We can only regret that the League, fruitful in discord as it is, should have been placed proudly and exultantly in the forefront of the Treaty. It is, in truth, a glorified vestry, a beard of guardians raised to a high power, a piece of international Bumbledom, which has the strength to provoke wars, and, being deprived of arms and a general staff, not the strength to bring them to a close. The committee of all the nations will begin and end, according to the wont of committees, in talk. "Upon any war, or threat of war, the Council will meet to consider what common action shall be taken." Had the League an army at its back, its solemn meeting might be of some significance. "Members agree to carry out an arbitral award." And if a member refuses to carry out the award, which will surely happen if one member believes himself stronger than another, "the Council will propose the necessary measures." All are sure that it will, and the recalcitrant member will laugh in its face. What, then, will the Council do? Of course, it will do nothing, because it can do nothing. Behind its love of talk and its intentions, good or bad, there is no sanction. And ineptitude falls into ridi-

cule when it is said pertentously that "Members resorting to war in disregard of the Covenant will immediately be debarred from all intercourse with other Members." We do not suppose that the offending Members will care very much for that. Even in the unregenerate days, before there ever was a League of Nations, Germany on the outbreak of war was debarred from intercourse with a good many of her neighbours.

That the League of Nations will be of any benefit to the world we do not believe. At the very outset it acknowledges its impotence by permitting England and America to knit a very proper alliance with France, that the Germans may not make another unprovoked assault upon their Eastern neighbour. On the other hand, it may be very active for evil. Its peculiar duty seems to be to intervene in the affairs of others, and intervention leads commonly to war. We received due warning of the danger a hundred years ago, when the excellent work achieved by the Congress of Vienna—a Congress of experts, trained in diplomacy, who did not boast about their ignorance of geography—was spoilt by the Holy Alliance. The peace which was given to Europe by the Congress was broken by a series of little wars, for every one of which the Holy Alliance was to blame. And let it be remembered that Castlereagh, at any rate, would have nothing to do with the fantastic



schemes of Alexander, and that England was therefore able to mitigate the dangers in which the Alliance involved the peace of Europe. However, Mr Wilson could not do without his plaything, and the best that we can hope for the palace, which will shortly be opened at Geneva, is that it will be but a rival to the now disused palace at the Hague, and that its staff will perform the duties of an archivist with care and circumspection.

The treaty of peace has not been well received in Germany. The Huns, always sublimely unconscious of their own character and of the hatred which it has inspired all over Europe, have assumed a port of injured innocence. They have forgotten in a moment the brutal terms which they imposed upon Russia at Brest-Litovsk, and the still more brutal terms which they would have imposed upon the Entente had they been victorious. So long as the war lasted they were never tired of sketching the exactions of treasure and territory which they would make, as soon as victory smiled upon them. The war, undertaken avowedly for the sake of profit, for the place in the sun, of which we once heard so much, was to fill their pockets for all time, as well as give them dominion over all the world. The only matter in dispute was how far they should carry their depredations. India was to be theirs, and Egypt. The land of Australia was already

portioned among the wealthy Germans who had poured their money into the Imperial war-chest. England would have been their wash-pot, France their footstool. Herr Erzberger, now a Minister in the reformed and regenerate Germany, was once obliging enough to explain his war aims. "Germany must obtain control," said he, "not only of Belgium but of the whole French coast from Dunkirk to Boulogne, with the possession of the Channel Islands; the mines of French Lorraine must pass under German control. The indemnities must provide for the full reimbursement of war costs; payment for all damage caused by the war; the redemption of all German State debts; the creation of a large fund for the German victims of the war."

Such was Herr Erzberger's modest demand, and there was not a Minister nor a General in Germany who did not propose to indulge a private fancy of his own. The earth should be theirs and the fulness thereof. All the nations of Europe should be enslaved perpetually, that the Huns might bask in the sun, when their place within its rays was assured. And now Germany lies at our feet powerless. With the complete absence of humour, which has always hampered her understanding, she whines aloud that she, the only moral guide of Europe, is savagely entreated. Forgetful of her crimes, she stands in



the attitude of an injured innocent, as though the Lusitania had never been sunk, as though Edith Cavell had not been done to death. If you read the speech of Herr Scheidemann, delivered before the National Assembly on the terms of peace, you might suppose that Germany, having drawn her sword in defence of universal liberty, had been most unrighteously attacked and beaten. No word of sorrow or penitence mars the fine fury of his outburst. No confession of wrong-doing interrupts the even flow of his hypocrisy. From an artistic point of view, he failed, we think, because he brought off his best effect too soon. "The world," he said, "has once again lost an illusion." Can not you see the tear glistening in his honest, pitiful eye? "The nations have in this period, which is so poor in ideals, again lost a belief." The Germans preserve no ideals, save the ideal of sinking hospital ships. "What name, on the thousand bloody battlefields, in thousands of trenches, in orphaned families, among the despairing and abandoned, during the bloody years, has been mentioned with more devotion and belief than the name of Wilson?" Mr Wilson is not, we think, highly endowed with humour, but even he must have smiled when he read those impassioned words.

Herr Scheidemann has a short memory, or he could not have uttered his wild complaint. Belonging to a nation

whose settled policy was the enslavement of the world, he asks instant freedom and palliation for Germany. He sketches what he calls the true portrait of Germany's future: "sixty millions behind barbed wire and prison bars, sixty millions at hard labour, for whom the enemy will make their own land a prison camp." It is not the principle to which he objects, for he acquiesced in the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and, had his country won the war, he would have shouted himself hoarse in applauding the terms which Germany would have imposed upon the world. What he objects to is that Germany should suffer in any way for her evil doing. She would have scourged us all with scorpions, and he would have said no word in protest. We are applying to her back the lightest of whips, and he mourns aloud.

Perhaps he thought that with a little of the cunning which comes natural to the German, he might deceive the Allies once more; perhaps he thought that, according to the old formula, the Junkers would win by their tears what they had lost by their arms. But he is unable to see that Germany must and shall be judged by the same laws which she would have imposed upon others. "Without ships—for our mercantile fleet passes into the Entente's hands—without cables, without colonies, without foreign settlements, without reciprocity and legal pro-



tection, aye, even without the right of co-operating in fixing prices for goods or pharmaceutical articles, which we have to deliver as hitherto. I ask you what honest man, I will not say what German, can accept such conditions? And, at the same time, we are to bestir ourselves to work, to perform forced labour for the whole world." We do not know what distinction Herr Scheidemann draws between "an honest man" and "a German." To us the distinction is clear enough. It is clear, also, that there are many things which the Germans will have to do without in the future. And Herr Scheidemann may console himself with the knowledge that his countrymen will not be deprived of a tithe of the profits and privileges from which we should have been debarred had he been able to speak with the voice of a conqueror.

We need not take the public speeches of German Ministers too seriously. It is their policy to make sensational protests, and to that policy they will adhere until the time comes for them to sign the peace. They are already sceptical themselves as to the wisdom of that policy. Herr Rantzau appears to regret the violence and bad manners of which he was guilty at Versailles. He has confided to a French journalist his belief that the Entente considers moral guarantees as insufficient, and wishes to hold the means in its hands of supervising the

treaty and its carrying out without the use of great forces. But he is full of hope for the future. Having ceased to browbeat his adversaries, he expresses a lofty faith in a regenerated Germany. "We shall kill this spirit of distrust by deeds," he boasts. "We must recognise that we have not yet had an opportunity of proving our good intentions in international negotiations. We cannot at present ask our enemies to show complete confidence in us with regard to the transformations which have been effected in Germany, but we can, and must, demand that the Entente shall give us an opportunity during the period of negotiations of giving convincing proof, by actions, of the new spirit of the new Germany." Herr Scheidemann speaks with one voice, Herr Rantzau with another, and since neither of them is sincere we need not waste our time in idle comparison. It is enough to admit that Herr Rantzau spoke nothing less than the truth when he said that the Entente would never be satisfied with moral guarantees alone.

Meanwhile Lord Haldane has come gallantly to Herr Scheidemann's help. There is something almost admirable in Lord Haldane's loyalty to his "spiritual home." Truly he has paid the debt of his nurture over and over again. We do not know whether he still regards the Kaiser as the embodiment of the *Zeitgeist*. But nothing persuades him

to modify his opinion or to mitigate his championship. Here he is always at hand with counsel and encouragement. He is as much displeased with the peace as is Herr Scheidemann, and for the same reasons. "Only a treaty," says Herr Scheidemann, "which can be kept, only a treaty which leaves us alive, which leaves us life as our sole capital for labour and making amends—only such a treaty can again build up the world." And Lord Haldane is in complete agreement with him. "The moral is," writes our eminent statesman in the 'Glasgow Herald,' "that these terms may have to be regarded as binding to-day, but yet not as final for any prolonged period." Thus Lord Haldane is a Teuton also in his contempt for "scraps of paper." The treaty will presently be accepted and signed by the Germans, and Lord Haldane is already preaching the pernicious doctrine that signatures carry no responsibility, that a treaty which "may" have to be regarded as binding to-day—mark the modest "may"—can be torn up to-morrow. While he encourages the Germans to regard the righteous terms imposed upon her as merely transitory, he expects "fresh constructive statesmanship and largeness of outlook," which will be required "before the last word has been said about the relation of Germany to the rest of the world." The Germans will be of good

heart when they hear, upon the word of a British statesman, that the treaty is but a stop-gap. We wonder what our Allies will think of Lord Haldane's disloyalty to their cause.

What, then, does Lord Haldane object to in the treaty? He finds the terms so severe that they may include the seeds of future war, and so defeat their own object. Does he? And does it not come into his mind that were the terms less severe the future war would be upon us within a year or two? What enrages the Germans most fiercely is not the severity of the terms, but the mere fact that they were beaten; and Lord Haldane should know his spiritual brothers well enough to be sure that had they been let off more easily, they would have been ready all the sooner to spring again. There remains also a sense of justice, which seems to be obscured in Lord Haldane's mind. He knows, or ought to know, what Germany would have taken from the Allies after a victory, and he objects to the separation of East Prussia from Germany; he objects also to "the loss of an enormous proportion of the resources of Germany in iron and coal," forgetting no doubt that the Germans have wantonly destroyed the coal-fields of France. He even suggests the favourite argument of the Germans, that the harsh terms may lead to revolution. "I do not believe that Germany will turn to



Bolshevism," he says with a dangerous caution. "Still the possibility is there, and is made by the burdens imposed something more than a possibility." What more could the most wildly fanatical of Germans desire to be said? Then he turns to what we can only call the argument of fear. "If seventy millions of Germans," says he, "of the racial quality of our enemies are to be left to develop their powers of peaceful penetration, neither armies nor tariffs will prevent them from succeeding hereafter, and they are not likely in that case to remain acquiescent in what they now accept." They are

not likely to remain acquiescent in any case, and because they may succeed hereafter, that is no reason why we should ensure their success to-day. For Lord Haldane the moral is that, because the Germans cannot be hampered by tariffs or armies, they should not be hampered at all. The moral for us is that, if the Germans are not hampered, the terms of the treaty are far too lenient, and that Lord Haldane himself will never be happy until he has made his spiritual home his actual home, and is permitted to preach his pernicious gospel as the President of the New German Republic.

## INDEX TO VOL. CCV.

- ABERRATION OF A SCHOLAR, THE**, 845.  
**ADMIRALTY FARM, AN**, 371.  
**ARCTIC RUSSIA, "GARRISON" WORK IN**, 729.  
**ARMOURIED CARS, FURTHER ADVENTURES OF THE: Persia and Baku**, 285.  
 Belgium, heroes of, 131 *et seq.*  
**BENCH AND BAR OF ENGLAND, THE: VII., Judges and Prisoners**, 46—**VIII., Counsel and Prisoners**, 53—**IX., Young Life in the Middle Temple**, 192—**X., The Life of a Lawyer**, 315.  
**BEWSHER, PAUL: "GREEN BALLS," 60**, 257, 400, 499, 699.  
**B., L. V. S.: AN OFFENSIVE IN RASKAM**, 604.  
**Bolshevism**, 715—Bolshevik atrocities, 717—the policy of the revolutionaries, 719—Britain's shame, 720—our sentimental politicians, 721—parallel of French revolutionaries and Bolsheviks, 723.  
**CALLWELL, Major-General Sir C. E., K.C.B.: THE WAR OFFICE IN WAR TIME**, 23, 298.  
**CHELTENHAM, THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPS OF**, 697.  
**CINEMA OF WAR**, 233.  
**CLOUSTON, J. STORER: SIMON**, 652, 802.  
**COLLAPSE, THE: I., The Raising of the Curtain**, 479—**II., The Germans on their Defeat**, 481—**III., Food "Grafting" at Home and in the Field**, 486—**IV., The Hoodwinking of the German People**, 493—**V., The Apathy of Despair**, 496.  
**Conference of Paris, the**, 418—the tragedy of Prinkipo, *ib.*—Mr Wilson's indiscretion, 419—the new crusaders, 420—the "mandatory principle," 421—the examples of Egypt and Samoa, 422—aspersions cast upon the Congress of Vienna, 423—what the Congress actually achieved, 425—a real balance of power in Europe, 427—Lord Castlereagh, hero and statesman, 429—Castlereagh and Lloyd George, a contrast, 431.  
**"CONTACT" (Captain ALAN BOTT, M.C.): EASTERN NIGHTS—AND FLIGHTS (being an interrupted sequel to 'An Airman's Outings')**: A Record of Capture in Palestine, Adventure in Turkey, and Escape through Russia, 817.  
**COURTS-MARTIAL IN FRANCE**, 791.  
**DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAINS**, 450.  
**EASTERN NIGHTS—AND FLIGHTS (being an interrupted sequel to 'An Airman's Outings')**: A Record of Capture in Palestine, Adventure in Turkey, and Escape through Russia. **I., Through the Looking-glass**, 817—**II., Pain, Purgatory, and a Plan**, 823. Election, the superfluous, what it revealed to us, 135.  
 'Elizabethans, The new,' notice of, 545 *et seq.*  
**ENGLAND, THE BENCH AND BAR OF**, 46, 192, 315.  
**EXPERIENCES OF A WAR BABY: IV., Harbour**, 86—**V., The Beach**, 94—**VI., P. B. 2, 246—VII., The Crimson Comics**, 250—**VIII., Battle**, 408.  
**FARM, AN ADMIRALTY**, 371.  
 'Forty Days in 1914,' notice of, 550 *et seq.*  
**FRANCE, COURTS-MARTIAL IN**, 791.  
**FREEDOM, 450 MILES TO, 1.** At Kastamonu, *ib.*—moved to Changri, 3—winter at Changri, 6—aeroplane and tunnel schemes, 8 *et seq.*—move to Yozgad announced, 14 *et seq.*—trek to Yozgad *via* Angora, 19 *et seq.*—the "camp" at Yozgad, 141—six escape parties and their schemes, 145 *et seq.*—completing preparations, 154 *et seq.*—first night's march, 161—appalling heat and difficulties about water, 163 *et seq.*—first encounter with brigands, 169—under brigand leadership, 173—Turkish gendarmes, 324 *et seq.*—"Flower Mountain," 327—too cold to rest, 328—fording the Kizil Irmak, 333—German surveyor bluff, 337—hunt for Moses' well, 339—more brigands, 341—the use of opium, 344



- the Taurus foothills at last, 346—  
buying food disguised as Huns, 463  
*et seq.*—cave-villages, 469—a meat  
meal, 470—a heart-breaking march,  
472—one mile in five hours, 475—  
through villages by moonlight, 477—  
searching for water, 614—an unex-  
pected breakfast, 616—first view of  
the sea, 622—arrive at the coast, 624  
—a miraculous find of food, 629—an  
awful existence, 631—a mysterious  
man, 632—a night reconnaissance,  
750—preparations for sea voyage, 752  
—attempt to steal a boat, 755—off in  
a motor-boat, 759—engine troubles,  
762—Cyprus, 764.
- FURTHER ADVENTURES OF THE AR-  
MOURED CARS: Persia and Baku,  
285.
- Futility, the League of, 725—Mr Wil-  
son's idealism, 727.
- "GARRISON" WORK IN ARCTIC RUSSIA,  
729.
- General Election, the, 274—the rout  
of the Bolsheviks, 275—end of  
Mr Asquith and his friends, 275—  
Mr Lloyd George's Cabinet, 276  
*et seq.*
- Germany, exaction of indemnities from,  
137.
- Government, extravagance of the, 568  
—wealth and lawlessness, 569—  
£1000 a year and one room! 570—  
doles for the unemployed, 571—  
Matthew Arnold on "Democracy,"  
572—our new Philistines, 573—  
Labour's despotism clamour, 574—a  
middle-class union, 576.
- Great Britain, devotion to, of Dominions  
and Colonies during the war, 134—  
what the Gold Coast did, 135.
- "GREEN BALLS": II., To France! 60  
—III., The First Raid, 257—IV., Up  
the Coast, 400—V., Coastwise Lights,  
499—VI., Bruges, 699.
- Haldane, Lord, his loyalty to his  
"spiritual home," 886 *et seq.*
- H., H. A. le F. :—  
AN ADMIRALTY FARM, 371.  
A MINE-FIELD, 34.
- Hills-Johnes, Sir James, V.C., G.C.B.,  
death of, 283.
- HOW BRITISH PRISONERS LEFT TUR-  
KEY, 682.
- JOHNSTON, Captain M. A. B., and  
Captain K. D. YEARSLEY: 450 MILES  
TO FREEDOM, 1, 141, 324, 462, 614,  
748.
- KEELING, Lieut.-Col. E. H., M.C.: HOW  
BRITISH PRISONERS LEFT TURKEY,  
682.
- KLAXON :—  
ON PATROL, 407.  
THE STORY OF OUR SUBMARINES,  
174, 349, 552, 671, 855.
- LAND DAYS, OUR, 70. I., Boots, *ib.*—  
II., The Call of the Land, 71—  
III., The Beginning of it, 73—IV.,  
Apprentices, 74—V., In which I  
plough, 76—VI., Fresh Fields, 77—  
VII., Winter's jobs, 79—VIII., Spring  
Sowing, 81—IX., "Fettling" turnip  
land, 82—X., Chiefly concerning  
Sam, 83—XI., Early Summer and  
Haytime, 223—XII., The Crux of  
the Year, 225—XIII., All in a Day's  
Work, 229—XIV., "Looking back,"  
363—XV., Labourers all, 366—XVI.,  
Conclusion, 368.
- Lefranc's 'Sous le Masque de "William  
Shakespeare," William Stanley, vic  
Comte de Derby,' notice of, 845 *et  
seq.*
- MEREDITH, GEORGE, AND OTHERS, 542.  
'Meredith, George: His Life and  
Friends in relation to his Work,'  
notice of, 542 *et seq.*
- MINE-FIELD, A, 34.
- MOUNTAINS, DOWN FROM THE, 450.
- MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD: *January*,  
128—*February*, 274—*March*, 418—  
*April*, 568—*May*, 715—*June*, 876.
- Nations, the League of, 883.
- NOYES, ALFRED: THE CHIMNEY-  
SWEEPS OF CHELTENHAM, 697.
- OBSTRUCTION'S GENTLE ART, 433. (An  
A.S.C. chronicle of the start of the  
Salonica campaign.)
- ON PATROL.—IX., A.D. 400, 407.
- OPPORTUNITY, 769.
- OUTPOSTS, FROM THE—  
*An Offensive in Raskam*, 604.
- PAGE, ARTHUR: COURTS-MARTIAL IN  
FRANCE, 791.
- Peace, Herr Scheidemann and the, 885.
- Politics, class-hatred in, 280—the  
Labour Party's place in the sun, 281  
—the Trades Disputes Act, 282.
- QUEX: THE RETURN PUSH, 103, 200,  
381, 515, 635.
- RASKAM, AN OFFENSIVE IN, 604.
- RETURN PUSH, THE: V., 103—VI.,  
107—VII., 113—VIII., 122—IX., 200  
—X., 208—XI., 213—XII., 219—  
XIII., 381—XIV., 390—XV., 515  
—XVI., 524—XVII., 529—XVIII.,  
635—XIX., 648.
- ROBUR: "GARRISON" WORK IN ARCTIC  
RUSSIA, 729.

- SCHOLAR, THE ABERRATION OF A, 845.
- SIMON : I., The Solitary Passenger, 652  
—II., The Procurator-Fiscal, 655—  
—III., The Heir, 659—IV., The Man  
from the West, 662—V., The Third  
Visitor, 667—VI., At Night, 802—  
—VII., The Drive Home, 805—VIII.,  
Sir Reginald, 811—IX., A Philoso-  
pher, 814.
- STRAHAN, J. A. : THE BENCH AND  
BAR OF ENGLAND, 46, 192, 315.
- SUBMARINES, THE STORY OF OUR : Per-  
sonnel, instruction, and types of  
boats, 174 *et seq.*—trial of a new boat,  
179 *et seq.*—typical report of an E-  
boat's trip into the Bight, 185 *et seq.*  
—the German submarine and its va-  
riations in type, 349—submarine-  
hunting, 350 *et seq.*—submarine *v.*  
submarine, 355 *et seq.*—"contacts,"  
359 *et seq.*—submarine strategy, 552  
*et seq.*—comparison of British and  
German mentality, 671 *et seq.*—de-  
scription of an attack, 674 *et seq.*—  
a patrol trip, 677 *et seq.*—submarine  
*v.* submarine engagement, 679 *et seq.*  
—exploits of "E 11," 858—the Mar-  
mora submarines, 862—in the Baltic,  
866 *et seq.*—routine in a patrol boat,  
870 *et seq.*—losses during the war,  
874.
- 'Swinburne, The Letters of Algernon  
Charles,' notice of, 138 *et seq.*
- TANKS, A COMPANY OF : I., On the  
XIth Corps Front (October to Decem-  
ber 1916), 577—II., Fred Karno's  
Army (January to April 1917), 584—  
—III., Before the Battle (March and  
April 1917), 591—IV., The First  
Battle of Bullecourt (April 11, 1917),  
832.
- TURKEY, HOW BRITISH PRISONERS LEFT,  
682.
- Versailles, the second Treaty of, 876—  
Herr Rantzau's excuses, *ib.*—a new  
map of Europe, 878—the Saar Basin,  
*ib.*—the German Army of the future,  
869—shall the Kaiser be tried? 880—  
reparation and indemnity, 881 *et seq.*
- WALSHE, DOUGLAS :—  
OBSTRUCTION'S GENTLE ART, 433.  
OPPORTUNITY, 769.
- WAR BABY, EXPERIENCES OF A, 86,  
246, 408.
- WAR, CINEMA OF, 233.
- War, France and England in the, 128  
—Belgium's noble part in the, 129.
- WAR OFFICE IN WAR TIME, THE, 23.  
II., Cabinet's unsuitability for con-  
trolling military policy, *ib. et seq.*—  
need of the inculcation of secretive-  
ness among soldier-officers, 26—  
breaks in monotonous existence at the  
War Office, 27—civilian *versus* mili-  
tary branches, 29—the General Staff,  
31—international law, 32. III., The  
censorship, Press and Cable, 298 *et seq.*  
—the Topographical Section of the  
General Staff, 300 *et seq.*—official se-  
cretiveness, 304 *et seq.*—the War Office  
and the world of journalism, 307 *et seq.*  
—troubles of the General Staff with  
the amateur strategist, 309 *et seq.*
- WATSON, Major W. H. L., D.C.M. : A  
COMPANY OF TANKS, 577, 832.
- WHIBLEY, CHARLES :—  
GEORGE MEREDITH AND OTHERS, 542.  
THE ABERRATION OF A SCHOLAR, 845.
- WILKINSON, E. S. : OUR LAND DAYS,  
70, 223, 363.
- WILLIAMS, VALENTINE : THE COLLAPSE,  
479.
- YEARSLEY, Captain K. D., and Captain  
M. A. B. JOHNSTON : 450 MILES TO  
FREEDOM, 1, 141, 324, 462, 614, 748.



...the second part of the ...  
...the ...  
...the ...

Waters, John ...  
...the ...

Waters, John ...  
...the ...

Waters, John ...  
...the ...

Waters, John ...  
...the ...

Waters, John ...  
...the ...

Waters, John ...  
...the ...

Waters, John ...  
...the ...

Waters, John ...  
...the ...

Waters, John ...  
...the ...

Waters, John ...  
...the ...

Waters, John ...  
...the ...

Waters, John ...  
...the ...

...the ...

...the ...

...the ...

...the ...

...the ...

...the ...

...the ...

...the ...

...the ...

...the ...

...the ...

...the ...

...the ...

...the ...

...the ...

...the ...

...the ...

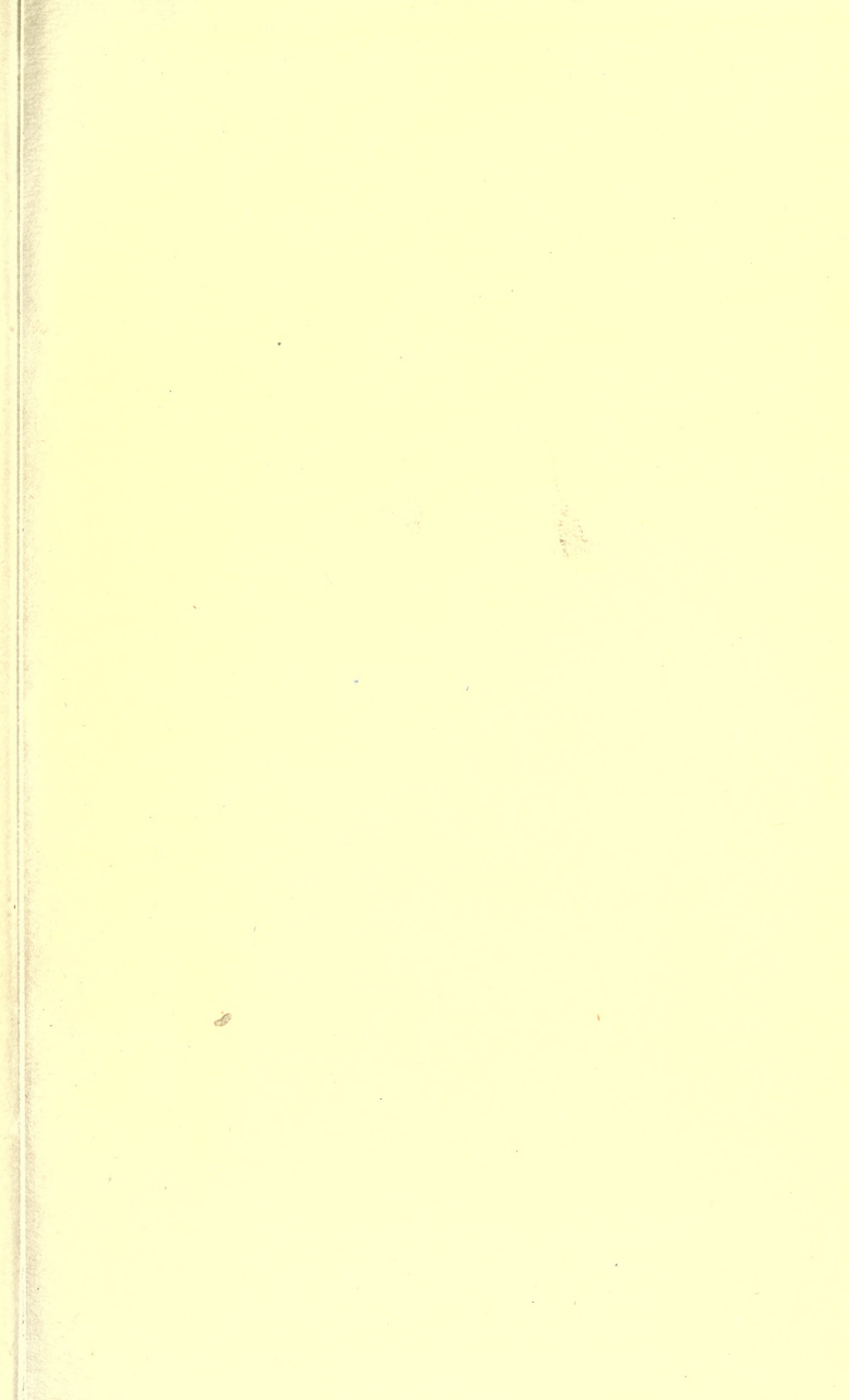
...the ...

...the ...

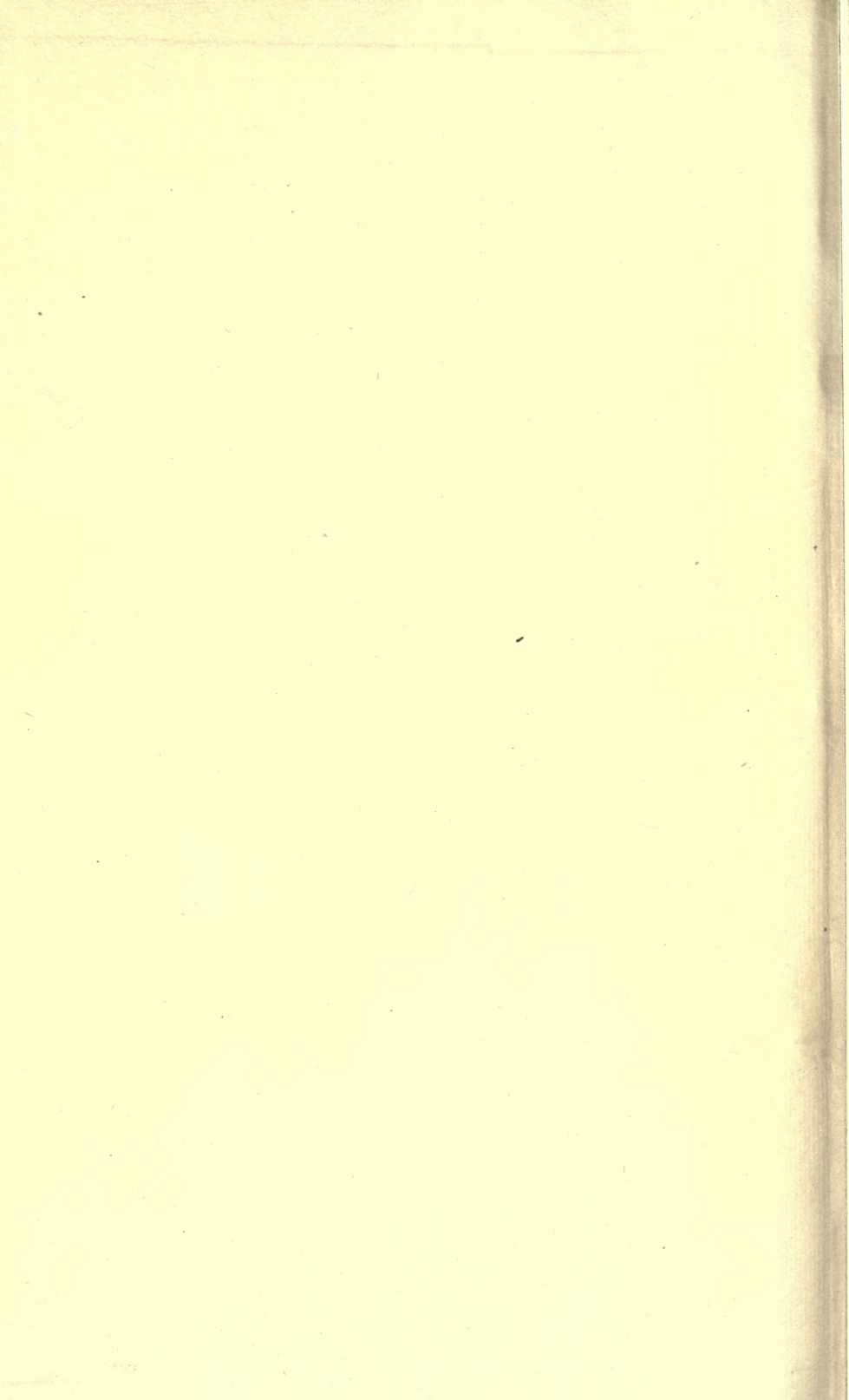
...the ...

...the ...

...the ...







AP  
4  
B6  
v.205

Blackwood's magazine

**PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE  
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET**

---

**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY**

---



