CAPTURED

by Lieutenant J. Harvey Douglas

GERMAN AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN JUNE 3RD, 1916, AT HEIGHT OF 7,500 FEET OF SECTION OF TRENCHES IN SANCTUARY WOOD, SHOWING THE RESULTS OF THE BOMBARDMENT OF JUNE 2ND. AT "A" ARE THE GERMAN FRONT LINE TRENCHES, AND AT "B" ARE THE BRITISH FRONT LINE TRENCHES. THIS PHOTOGRAPH WAS FOUND AMONG THE EFFECTS OF A CAPTURED GERMAN OFFICER

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LIEUT. DOUGLAS TRAMPING IN SWITZERLAND AND WEARING "SHORTS" USED IN HOT WEATHER AT THE FRONT.

CAPTURED

SIXTEEN MONTHS AS
A PRISONER OF WAR

By LIEUT. John HARVEY DOUGLAS

Illustrated with Photographs
by the Author

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TO

MY FATHER, MOTHER AND SISTER

WHO, ALTHOUGH BURDENED WITH ANOTHER
SORROW, DID EVERYTHING IN THEIR
POWER TO MAKE MY LIFE AS A
PRISONER OF WAR AS BRIGHT
AND CHEERFUL AS WAS
POSSIBLE UNDER THE
CIRCUMSTANCES,
THIS BOOK IS
DEDICATED.

FOREWORD

At the time of my return to Canada I had absolutely no intention of writing a book on my experiences as a Prisoner of War, and laughed when the idea was first suggested to me. My friends showed such keen interest, however, in what happened to me during the time I was mourned as dead and afterwards, when my first letter home restored me to life, that, to prevent repeatedly living over again many experiences which I would much rather forget, I have written this book.

Many Canadian families are sitting at home wondering under what circumstances one or more of their loved ones are living while Prisoners of War, and a few American families are already doing the same thing. Unfortunately it is very likely that this unhappy list will be added to as the war progresses. I trust that my attempt at the portrayal of the life of a Prisoner of War may in some way relieve the minds of the perplexed friends and relatives in that it tells them many things, which I was surprised to learn, are not already known. Of course, it must be understood that no two prisoners have exactly the same experiences — would that they could all have my good fortune!

But, many of them are living, or will live, under circumstances similar to those under which I passed sixteen long months.

It is the Prussian spirit of militarism which is responsible for most of the brutality, and, until it is stamped out, there will never be peace in any part of the globe. If I succeed in these pages in arousing the minds of many people to the realisation of the fact that, owing to this spirit of militarism, our Prisoners of War have suffered hardships to the like of which no human being should ever be subjected, and that, even to-day, their treatment is often far from humane, I will feel that my efforts have not been in vain.

I never wrote a book before in my life and in fact this one was not written, but, for the most part, dictated. I have not attempted to make it a work of art in the literary world — such a thing would be impossible for me; but I have attempted to give a plain, straightforward statement of absolute facts: I have not even used fictitious names.

I trust that nothing I have said will in any way make the life of my friends, who are still in Germany, even more hard, but rather, that any influence this book may have will speed the day when a more free and generous exchange of Prisoners of War can be arranged between belligerent nations.

J. H. D.

Toronto, Dec. 4, 1917.

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CHAPTER I

Our Last Trip In

"All present and correct, sir," reported the Company Sergeant-Major of "A" Company, 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, as the officers came on parade for what was to be the last time. We were quite proud of our company because we had just received a reinforcing draft of 40 men which brought our numbers up to about 120 — slightly over one-half the number we should have had. But in those days men were not as plentiful as they are now. We had to get along somehow.

Every man was carefully inspected to see that he had his steel helmet, two gas masks and his iron rations. The latter consisted chiefly of a tin of bully beef and some hard biscuits. These were most necessary, as we never knew when the Germans might attempt a flank movement at the base of the Ypres salient, and if this were successful those of us who were at the nose of the salient might have to subsist for two or three days on our iron rations until a way could be cut through again. That tin of bully beef

struck the men as being a piece of useless and very heavy furniture which it was advisable to "ditch" if possible.

It was just getting dusk as the inspection was completed. Every man hitched his pack up into a comfortable position on his back, gave a final tug at his belt and in a few minutes we were off on that long journey of seven miles, past Vlamertinghe and Ypres, right up the salient to the front line. Every man looked as though he were just going back to work after his summer holidays. We had had an eight-day rest and we were now going in to do a sixteen-day tour.

The 4th C. M. R. were taking over a new part of the line. They were usually in Sanctuary Wood in the trenches which ran south from the gap at Hooge, commencing at the Appendix, and ending about opposite the Bird Cage, that famous concrete snipers' post in the German lines which seemed to laugh at our artillery and continued to take its daily toll among our men.

But on the night of May 31st, 1916, we were going into trenches which ran in a southwesterly direction in front of Observatory Ridge and Armagh Wood. The right of our line was about 500 yards from Hill 60 and rested on a short gap which separated us from the Second Division. We had the good fortune for the first time in ages to be loaded on a train that sneaked up as far as —— without a light. Here we detrained and, after some marching,

reached Shrapnel Corner where we turned east towards Zillebeke. At Transport Farm, to the south of Zillebeke Lake, we were met by the guides of the 7th Battalion from whom we were taking over. From this point each company advanced separately with its own guides. The night was dark, illumined only by the flares from the front line which swept in a large semi-circle to right and left. The flares threw into relief the broken and twisted stumps of trees and the uneven sand-bag parapets of the trenches. The night was very still except for the occasional crash of a hand grenade or the crack of a rifle.

We moved along the open road until the rising ground brought us in line with some of the lead from one of Fritz's "typewriters" which was traversing that part of the scenery. We "flopped" in the ditch a couple of times and then turned to the left between Observatory Ridge and Maple Copse. Shortly after this we entered the communication trench which took us to the front line.

The ordinary trench is narrow enough for a man wearing full equipment, but when a relief is going on the trench is filled with men loaded down like pack mules, waiting to go out as soon as the relief is completed. We bumped and squeezed our way along to the accompaniment of many ejaculations never heard in Sunday School. At length we came to the section of trench we were to occupy. It was on the extreme right of the Third Division.

During the day Lt.-Col. Ussher, accompanied by his adjutant, Capt. Symons, and all the company commanders, had gone over the whole line and each knew thoroughly the peculiarities of the parts of the line with which he had most to do. A non-commissioned officer from each company, the machine gun section, etc., had also gone in ahead to take over trench stores — a supply of such articles as shovels, rubber boots, wiring gloves, ammunition, hand grenades, etc. Thus everything was in readiness for a quick relief when we arrived.

In our part of the line we were met by our company commander, Lieut. Cockshutt, and our Company Sergeant-Major who superintended the distribution of the men and arranged reliefs for each sentry post. Each man was shown his alarm post, and at these particular points every man "stood to" while the relief was going on. At length the message "Relief Completed" was passed down the line, and the men of the 7th Battalion heaved a sigh of satisfaction and left the trenches. After a final inspection by the company commander, the order "Stand Down" was given and all but the sentries on duty, the trench officer, and trench non-commissioned officer, sought out a spot in a dug-out, or a hole in the side of the support trench, in which to stretch their weary legs.

Our home, which was known as an elephant dug-out, was about eight feet square, and was roofed over with very heavy corrugated steel in the form of

an arch, each corrugation being about eight inches broad. This steel roof was very strong and served to support a large amount of earth and sandbags covered over with a detonating layer of broken rock, so that in case of a direct hit the shell would explode on the outside rather than the inside of the dug-out. The door consisted of a wooden frame sunk in the wall of sandbags which closed the entrance. At the top hung a blanket soaked in chemicals and rolled up in a convenient position to be dropped to close the door in case of a gas attack. Inside there was just room to stand up. There were two beds made of wire netting stretched over a wooden frame. In the centre was a small rough table where we did all our work and ate our meals, sitting on the edge of the beds. It was the first time we had had such a good dug-out, and we took great pride in hanging up our equipment on nails driven into the sandbags which closed up the far end of the arch. There was plenty of room, as on this last tour in the trenches there were only three officers in "A" Company, Lieut. Cockshutt, Lieut. Wells and myself. One was always on duty, so that the other two could each occupy a bed and snatch a little very necessary sleep.

CHAPTER II

The Day Before

The morning of June 1st broke bright and clear. Those of us who were off duty spent our time in a thorough inspection of the new trenches which were excellently built. They were very dry and had more head cover than the old trenches up in Sanctuary Wood. The fire step was square and solid and not crumbling away as in many of the other trenches we had taken over. The general system consisted of two lines about twenty-five yards apart — the front line contained the fire bays separated by heavy traverses to localise the effect of a direct hit; the second line contained all the dug-outs, and it was here that the men remained when not actively on duty in the front line. Three communicating trenches joined these two lines on our company frontage. The second line was a more or less straight trench without any bays or fire steps, and was really used as a communication trench to move the men from one part of the front line to another without the necessity of their passing along the front line. The brigade machine gun company had its guns mounted in excellent emplacements commanding our front, and also the gap

on our right which separated us from the Second Division and which was patrolled only at night.

While investigating these machine gun emplacements I discovered Lieut. A. W. Sime, of the 8th Brigade Machine Gun Company, who had formerly been with me in the 35th Battalion. This was the first time we had met since leaving England, and we had many things to talk about. We sat down in a sunny spot of the trench, propped our backs against the parados, filled our pipes and enjoyed a pleasant half hour. The day was very quiet. Nothing disturbed us except an occasional salvo of whiz-bangs, which are as harmless as a bottle of milk if you stand flat against the front face of the trench. They are very annoying, however, if you are trying to snatch a little sleep in your dug-out.

Talking of sleep reminds me of an incident which happened one time when we were in the old trenches at the Appendix. The officers' dug-out consisted of a fire bay roofed over with a piece of corrugated galvanised iron, sprinkled with about two inches of dirt. The parapet, which was our only protection from frontal fire, was hardly bullet proof. The roof leaked like a sieve and one of Fritz's grenades, thrown into No Man's Land, shook so much dirt down on your face that you imagined you had swallowed a potato patch.

One of our officers had just entered this palatial residence one day and stretched himself out for a short siesta on a downy couch consisting of a few

empty sand bags laid on the hard earth fire step, which was about one and a half feet wide, when Fritz decided to throw over a few "beer kegs" (Minnenwerfers). We got forty of them in about twenty minutes. The last one landed plumb in the centre of the trench just beside the officers' dug-out. It made a hole about twenty feet across, twelve feet deep, and buried three of our men alive. We eventually managed to dig them out, however, unwounded but shell-shocked. It was at this moment that the officer, who had gone blissfully to sleep, emerged from the so-called dug-out, rubbed his eyes and muttered: "Say, boys, what's going on? I thought I heard something." He was the soundest sleeper I ever knew.

About sunset one of our observation balloons broke loose and started to drift over the German lines. The occupants had descended in their parachute, and our "Archies" (anti-aircraft guns) were doing their best to destroy it before it landed in German territory. The Germans, thinking it might still be occupied, also shelled it. There must have been thousands of rounds of ammunition expended on this one balloon. The sky was white with puffs of smoke. Just as it disappeared from view we saw a German aeroplane go up and finish it off.

After supper I was sitting in the dug-out writing home by the light of a flickering candle, when I was informed that there was a corporal outside

who wanted to see me. He turned out to be Bombardier "Chuck" Gibson who was with the sixty-pound "Tock Emma" (Trench Mortar) Battery located on our frontage. We had a long talk over the games of bowls he, Ken Douglas, Howard Brown, Doug. Addison and I used to have in Toronto. All these boys were either in England or France. "Chuck" promised to bring Howard Brown, who happened also to be in the front line with the "Tock Emmas," over to see me the next day. He told me of a "strafe" they were putting on next morning about 8.30 and I promised to go over and observe for them. Unfortunately, this little party never came off. The next day I was so busy I never saw "Chuck." He was killed at his gun, which fired until it was knocked out. Howard Brown was taken prisoner.

We all seemed in a reminiscent mood that evening. Harvey Cockshutt and I spent a pleasant hour, after "Chuck" left, discussing our plans for after the war. This is the most cheering thing one can do when in the trenches, and, outside of the business of killing Huns, is the favourite talk amongst the soldiers. Poor old Harvey's dreams were never to be realised. He, too, died doing his duty like the brave fellow that he was. It was recognised throughout the 4th C. M. R. that he was one of our finest officers.

At 11 P. M. that night, when I was on duty and patrolling the trench, I noticed that a whiz-bang

had set fire to the dried sand bags on the top of one of the dug-outs. I considered that the occupants had a personal interest in this little affair so I aroused them and we got to work with shovels. Fritz thought we were celebrating Guy Fawkes' night a little early in the season and decided to break up the party with machine gun fire. However, we managed to extinguish the flames without any casualties.

At 12 o'clock I woke the officer who was to go on duty after me and lay down to sleep until 4 o'clock.

CHAPTER III

JUNE 2ND

AT 4 A. M., June 2nd, 1916, I went on duty again. Dawn was preparing to break and we all stood to in the front line. Just before dawn was the favourite time for the Boches to pull off a surprise attack, but we were always ready for them. We remained on guard till it was quite daylight and then, as trench officer, it was my duty to issue the rum. A little of this "fire water" is the finest thing in the world when you are chilled through after a long night spent in your clothes. It wards off many a cold and starts the blood circulating freely again. The only other way this could be accomplished would be by exercise. Anyone was welcome to go out in No Man's Land for an early morning run, but this alternative was not popular, it being undoubtedly a more or less unhealthy form of sport.

When the rum issue was completed, "Stand Down" was given. Everything was running smoothly. The sentries on duty gazed steadfastly through their periscopes and the runners sat or lay, always within kicking distance of the sentry, so as to be able to warn the occupants of that particular fire bay in case of an attack. The other

men busied themselves tidying up the trenches in preparation for the inspection by the Divisional Commander, General Mercer, and our Brigadier, General Williams, which was to take place that morning. A large party had been working all night repairing a gap in the parapet blown in by a Minnenwerfer and which we had to pass on the run to avoid being sniped from Hill 60. Another day party was busy filling sandbags under cover, in preparation for further work next night. I spent some time with my Platoon Sergeant completing in my roll book the details regarding the new men who had been attached to my platoon.

At 6 o'clock I went off duty, entered the dug-out, slipped off my equipment, put my steel helmet on the table and settled down for an hour or two of sleep. At 6.30 I was up again to see Col. Ussher and Capt. Jack Symons who had come to make a preparatory inspection of the trenches. As they went away I bade good-bye, for the last time, to Jack, who was my brother-in-law.

At a few minutes to 8 o'clock breakfast was announced and our "batman" came in from the little cookhouse in the dug-out across the trench, bearing a large tin plate of beautiful fried eggs and bacon and some prunes. This, with the addition of a little coffee, was the excellent meal we were just about to taste when — crash! Hell was let loose. Shells of all sizes came hurtling through

the air, raining in on us from all sides. We slipped on our steel helmets, left that lovely breakfast and rushed outside to see how serious the show might be. We had suffered heavy bombardments before but we at once saw that this was the biggest we had ever been in. Harvey Cockshutt, always thinking of the men, issued the order to take every one into the front line, where he decided the bombardment was not quite so heavy. In a few seconds every man was lining the fire trench. The shells continued to rain in on us from every direction. The Boches, as we found out later, had turned every gun around the Ypres salient on the frontage occupied by the 3rd Canadian Division. We received almost as many shells from the rear flanks, as we did from the front. These, of course, we could not always see coming, but wherever we looked towards the German lines we could see " Minnies " rolling over and over in the air on their way to greet us. These were quite easy to dodge when they came one at a time. All you had to do was to watch where they were going to light and dodge around the traverse into the next bay. You might be knocked down or even buried, but the effect of the explosion of a " Minnie " is very local although it makes an awful mess of your trench.

We had the men distributed evenly along the front line. In addition to the sentry on duty at the periscope in almost every bay, we posted fur-

ther sentries gazing up to the front and right and left watching for "Minnies." They gave no alarm unless there was going to be a direct hit in their own bay, when everyone was warned and dashed around the traverse. Unfortunately, owing to the fact that they were coming so thick, many a man dashed around the traverse to escape the explosion of one Minnenwerfer and ran directly into that of another.

By 10 o'clock the bombardment had been so effective that our front line was practically destroyed and a large portion of our men were wiped out. Harvey Cockshutt sent for me and told me to take about half of the men who were left — amounting to some twenty — to the support trench on our left. We could not move along the front line so we jumped up on the parados and made a dash for it overland. We gained the trench, without a casualty, but found that it, too, was in a sad state. We were moving along to the left when suddenly a large shell or "Minnie," I don't know which, landed right in the middle of my little party and wiped them all out with the exception of four others and myself in the front, and perhaps one or two in the rear whom I never saw again.

We five moved along a short distance till we found a short angle in the trench which had somehow or other escaped the attention of the German artillery. Here I collected a few men from "C" Company which was on our left, until eventually we

numbered about ten. Had we been spared until the attack came off, the ten of us would probably have succeeded in pumping a considerable amount of lead into the advancing Huns.

By this time we had begun to realise that this was no casual "strafe" but the preparation for an attack. A German aeroplane, flying very low, noticed this little bit of undestroyed trench. We feigned death. Any man who made a move was properly cursed, as our only hope of being unmolested was that this air-man should think we were already dead. However, he decided to take no chances, and directed the fire of what seemed to us like about forty batteries, as well as several Minnenwerfers, on to our one little bit of trench. At one moment I looked up and saw three "Minnies" coming down directly on top of us. We all kissed ourselves good-bye, and hoped for the best, but none of them made a direct hit. One of the three landed in the interior angle, and the other two on the exterior faces of the angle made by the bend in the trench, and all exploded simultaneously. Everyone who had not already been wounded, with the exception of a stretcher-bearer named Barclay and myself, got it then. We were all half buried, but we managed to crawl out.

Barclay and I put field dressings on the wounded men and I gave morphia tablets — which all the officers carried — to those who were in great pain. There were only three besides myself who could

move, and I decided to act as Mr. Cockshutt would have wished under the circumstances, and take these men to a shell-proof trench in Mount Sorrel which was commonly known as the Tunnel. We had been given orders that in case of a heavy bombardment, this was where we were to take our men. In order to get there we had to go down a short communication trench known as Canada Street, but we had not gone more than a few yards before we discovered that Canada Street existed no longer. We crawled overland, following the line of the trench by the bits of "A" frame and revetting material which were protruding from the earth. We soon came to the German barrage, which extended all the way along our frontage just in the rear of the trenches, and prevented any possibility of reinforcements reaching us. We saw that it was hopeless to get through this at the time, and decided to lie there until the barrage might lessen sufficiently to enable us to make a dash for it.

I particularly wanted to reach the Tunnel, as it was there that battalion headquarters were located, and it was necessary to report that our trenches were destroyed and that there were no men left to defend the position when the attack should come. As we lay there we were soon located by a German machine gunner who ripped off two or three belts at us. We were in full view with practically no cover; the bullets cracked all around us and the dirt flew in our faces. We had been under fire

many a time before and had often felt afraid. According to the old saying, any man who says he is not afraid under fire is either a fool or a liar. But none of us had ever experienced anything so terrific as this. We knew we were going to be killed, and we had got to the stage where it did not seem to matter whether we got it then, or a few minutes later. I believe it was this feeling that had rendered all the men so cool and collected and I was surprised to see, during that morning, that some of the new men who were under fire for the first time were just as cool as those who were old hands at the game. Of course, they had the advantage of not knowing how dangerous a shell might be, whereas the others had seen so many of their friends "Go West" that they could appreciate the danger more fully.

I don't know positively, but I believe that the machine gunner got two of the men that were with me — they were only a short distance away and I never saw them rise from the ground when the bombardment was over. As we lay there, hoping the Boche machine gunner was not a very good shot, we distracted ourselves by watching the "Crumps" (large high explosive shells) light around us. These you can often see during the last hundred feet of their flight. They are travelling so fast that they have the appearance of being very much shorter than they really are, although their diameter does not appear altered. It was

fascinating to watch them shooting in at all angles, and to see the dirt and bits of trench fly in the air as the terrific explosion came.

Suddenly, about one o'clock, we were aware of the fact that the bombardment had ceased. At first we did not know what had happened. Our own artillery had also ceased fire. It was still as the tomb of death. There was not even the crack of a rifle to break the silence. It was all so strange, after the terrific row that had been going on all morning, that we did not know whether we were alive or dead. I actually did believe for a minute that I had gone to heaven, and that that was the reason there was no noise. I probably flattered myself regarding my future destination but that was the feeling I had.

My conjectures on this subject were rudely dispelled by the most peculiar sensation I had ever experienced. The ground had started to sway from side to side like a ship on a rough sea. It was not a jerky motion but a gentle, slow movement, and the ground we were lying on rose, what seemed to me, about ten or fifteen feet. Up till this moment there had been no noise. I looked around and exclaimed: "My God, Barclay, there goes a mine."

Precisely at that instant there was the most deafening roar I had ever heard. Just under the place where we had left those badly wounded men a huge mine went up. We could clearly see the

stumps of trees, bits of trench and parts of what had once been soldiers, soaring upwards to a tremendous height. The air was filled with such a mass of earth that for a few moments it was almost as dark as night. Gradually the ground we were lying on settled down, and a deluge of stones, timber and earth fell around us. I looked up and saw a large piece of timber coming down, which seemed to have picked me out as a good soft spot on which to land. It was no use trying to dodge it. I had not time; but even if I had, one spot seemed about as good as another. With a terrific thud it struck me on my steel helmet, which undoubtedly saved my life.

I don't know how long I was unconscious, but when I opened my eyes Barclay was there beside me, untouched by some miracle. I could not move hand or foot and was fully convinced that my neck was broken. I told Barclay I was done in and that he had better get to Observatory Ridge if he could, as the Germans would probably attack in a moment, and that we would undoubtedly take up a position on the ridge with any supports that might be coming up. Barclay, however, stayed with me a few minutes and I soon found that, with his assistance, I could get up and stagger along. My steel helmet had been driven down on my head so far that it had torn my scalp in several places, and I could hardly see for the blood streaming down my face. Barclay examined my head and

found that the wounds were not serious, and we continued at a little better pace. We were walking over the ruins of the old trenches and not a living man was to be seen anywhere.

We came to a sort of lean-to dug-out which had received a direct hit, and in the wreckage I found Mr. Wells with his feet pinned down by revetting material. With him were one or two dead and very seriously wounded men. Mr. Wells himself was very much dazed. He had had his ear-drums so badly damaged that he could hardly hear me when I spoke to him. I had enough strength left to release his legs, and we decided to cross the little stretch of marshy ground which lay between us and Observatory Ridge. We were staggering along together when the sharp crack! crack! crack! of a German "typewriter" caused us to look around. For the first time we saw the long lines of advancing Huns. We knew we did not have much chance but we kept on. The bullets were kicking up the dirt all around us, and it seemed to us as if they went between our legs and under our arms without touching us. We knew if we could gain Observatory Ridge we would be alright. But this was not to be.

We went down together. Wells got it through the side and at first I did not know where I was wounded. I felt as if someone had struck me across the back of the neck with a crow bar. I rolled over and found that my left hand was flop-

ping uselessly at my side. I knew that my arm was broken. We had both been pretty weak before we were hit but this was the last straw. We just had enough strength to crawl into a shell hole on the edge of which we were lying.

Our artillery opened fire and shrapnel started to burst all around us. There was the occasional crack of a rifle from Observatory Ridge, but our hearts sank when we noticed how intermittent the fire was. We knew that no large body of supports had been able to get up alive through the German barrage fire. We hoped that every crack of a rifle meant a Hun down and we cursed our luck that we had not had time to go back to our dug-out for our revolvers. We might have accounted for one or two but if we had, this story would probably never have been written.

As we lay there in the shell hole several groups of Huns passed quite close to us. They were advancing slowly over the swampy uneven ground which had been torn up by shell fire, and were fortunately paying more attention to where they stepped than to us. Every man had his rifle slung across his back. They knew that there would be no one left to offer any resistance. They wore a look of pride and confidence which almost approached joy. We cursed them under our breath and thought of what we might have done to them if the bombardment had not wiped out our men so completely. They were wearing their full equip-

ment and, in addition, each man carried a long-handled spade slung across his back. Now and then we would see an "Unteroffizier" examining a map as he advanced, evidently figuring on a new line of trenches.

We feigned death whenever a Hun passed close to us, but we watched them through our half-closed eyes, because we wanted to follow their actions and hoped, later on, to be able to regain our own lines. We knew they had not gone far past us because, from a few yards away, smoke signals were being shot into the air. These were beautiful to watch. They were fired from a large pistol, probably similar to the Very pistol which we used for sending up flares. One solid ball of smoke rose about a hundred feet in the air and then burst into two smaller balls which flew off at a tangent. This was evidently the signal that their objective had been reached.

The stream of advancing Huns stopped and at last we were able to pay more attention to ourselves. I managed with one hand to get Wells' tunic undone and to pull his bloody shirt aside to examine his wound. He could not tell exactly where he was hit but thought it was through the stomach. I was glad to be able to tell him that this was not the case. I fixed him up as well as possible. He was very weak from shock and, by a little shifting. we managed to get him into a more

or less comfortable position in the bottom of the shell hole.

I was in a filthy state. My left sleeve and the left side of my tunic and breeches were soaked with blood. Wells helped me pull up my sleeve and I examined my wound. I found that the hole where the bullet had come out was about three inches in diameter. It had evidently struck one or both bones, flattened itself out, and, on emerging, had torn out pieces of bone, flesh and tendons and the blood was flowing freely. If I had not felt so weak and sick I would have examined with interest the interior workings of a man's fore-arm. My first thought was of the lectures in first aid given by Capt. Stanley Mills of the 35th Battalion. I knew that the correct thing to do was to put on a splint. Capt. Mills had given us great scope in the selection of splints but, unfortunately, none of the articles recommended were to be had in this one little shell hole. The only thing I could find was a tiny, mossy sprig hardly strong enough to support a canary. I took out my field dressing and, with one hand and my teeth, did the best I could to stop the flow of blood and bind the little twig to my arm. I happened to have a large silk handkerchief which I knotted into a sling, and then sought a comfortable position in which to await developments.

Wells produced from his pocket some gelatine

wafers of a soothing drug which we both took, and I brought out my flask of whisky, from which we each took a pull. We felt better, and stealthily lit a cigarette, carefully blowing the smoke down to the ground. We expected a bomb any minute, but as this did not come, we continued smoking until we had finished the few cigarettes I had. We must have slept for some time, for the first thing I remember after that was the fact that it was getting dusk. This was the moment we had been waiting for. If the Germans had not completely cut off our retreat, we hoped to crawl back home in the dark. I stealthily put my head above the edge of the shell hole and looked around. My heart sank within me. There was a brand new German trench almost completed, and fairly bristling with Huns. It was only a few yards away, but it lay between us and Blighty. Had we been stronger we might have been able to jump the trench and make a dash for it. It would have been a million to one chance, but as it was, we were so weak through the loss of blood that we could never have crossed this new German trench, had there been no one there to hinder us.

CHAPTER IV

Captured

The Hun who gathered us in was a rough looking chap with a close-shaven head. He wore his little round hat well down on his forehead. He was not a bad sort of chap, and spoke English fairly well; in fact, he had been a waiter in an English hotel for some time. He expressed great satisfaction at the thought of going back with us, as he knew that this would mean so many hours of comparative safety for him. He asked us if we had any arms. We handed over our clasp knives and told him these were the only weapons we had. He said: "You are English officers. I take your word." And so we moved on. The other prisoners had been taken back long before this, and as we were alone we escaped the official examination and search.

As we slowly picked our way across what had once been our system of defence, we were horrified to note the havoc that had been wrought by the bombardment. Nowhere did we see a piece of trench that had not been completely obliterated. There were dead everywhere. In most cases they were not lying on the top of the ground, but we

could see legs and arms protruding here and there. Dug-outs that we had thought quite safe had been crushed in like cardboard boxes. I was glad when we reached what had once been No Man's Land and had left this horrible scene behind.

About half way to the German front line we entered a new communication trench which was being dug feverishly to join up their new trench with the old system. I had never before been in a German trench and I gazed with awe at the wonderful revetting work which was to be seen everywhere. The walls of the front line were built of logs laid one on top of the other. The fire bays, fire steps, traverses, etc., were as carefully and strongly built as though they had been completed before the war began. The communication trenches were remarkably deep and just as well constructed. At short distances they were covered over by logs, forming shelters under which men could take cover in case of shell fire. Their communication wires were neatly fastened to insulators screwed into the log walls and had evidently been put there to stay. In one or two places only did we notice the effect of our own artillery fire. Even a direct hit seemed to do very little damage to these trenches, which were so strongly built.

The whole of the German system of defence at this point was constructed in a wooded section of country which sloped gently down toward Menin.

When we reached their second line of defence we saw a large signboard painted in a peculiar manner, which we learned later was to be found at every junction of a communication trench with the second line, and was a guide in case a man did not know exactly where he was in the system. We found similar signboards painted in different colours when we reached the third line. At these junction points we could see the entrances to large dug-outs evidently full of men, and at the mouth of which there was always a sentry posted, who acted as a traffic control. We were going very slowly on account of our weak condition, but we soon overtook one of our own men who seemed to be making his way along the trench alone. He had a horrible wound in his thigh, part of the flesh having been shot away, but no one was there to carry him. He was forced to make his way along as best he could, clutching at the sides of the trench. We wanted to stay with him and try and help him, but our guard would not allow this. He was evidently thinking of his own skin and wanted to get out of the range of our artillery, which was dropping shells along the communication trench. We met several parties of men going towards the front line, evidently to take over the trenches which had been newly dug.

They all seemed in mortal terror of a shell and whenever one came screaming overhead they would either "flop" in the trench or rush for cover.

We had become more or less accustomed to artillery fire. We had had plenty of it all that day, and the few shells they were dropping there did not appear to us as serious. We could not help smiling at those Huns and hoped that all the rest of them had just as bad nerves.

After what seemed an eternity we entered a dressing station, which was an enormous concrete dug-out with a long passage down the centre and about four rooms on either side. After waiting some time we were taken to a room where two German doctors in white coats were working on German wounded. One of them slit up my sleeve, dressed my wound and applied a wire splint. He gave me a white cotton sling and asked me if I would like a drink of coffee. Our conversation was in German. If I could have said it in his language, I would have asked, "Does a duck swim?" I was never so thirsty in my life. I had had nothing to eat or drink since the day before, and when he handed me a large mug of acorn coffee without sugar or milk I finished it off in about three gulps and held out the mug for more. It was the finest thing I had ever tasted.

After one more drink I was sent from this room to another, where I awaited Wells. I discovered that the doctor had taken my silk handkerchief, which had saved me an endless amount of torture in walking down the communication trench. I tried to get it back but was unable to do so.

Before long we continued our dreary march. We had not gone far when we came to a huge fence about 20 feet high, constructed of logs, upon the top of which we could see numerous machine gun emplacements. This fence was in front of a large engineers' dump and was evidently used as a screen, so that the men could work behind it by electric light without being observed from our lines. We at length emerged from the trenches and the wood. The first thing I noticed was a white cross bearing the word "Engländer." It was probably some poor devil who had fallen in the second battle of Ypres.

We were taken into a second dressing station which was even more elaborate than the first. It was built of concrete covered with ten or twelve feet of earth, on which grass was growing. The dressing station was not underground, but the floor was about six feet below the ground level. In front were steps leading down to a small paved courtyard on which stretcher cases were laid, while awaiting the attention of the doctors inside.

Here I saw a Canadian captain lying on a stretcher with his head wrapped up in bloody bandages. I could not see his face for bandages and unfortunately he was unconscious, so I could not find out who he was. At this dressing station we were given an injection against tetanus, and a tag was tied on to us indicating this fact, the nature and date of our wounds, and the treatment given.

A second and more substantial splint was put on my arm. When the doctor had finished with us we went outside and sat down to await the departure of the small engineer train which was to take us further on our journey. The Hun who had brought us down received a certificate to the effect that he had turned over his prisoners. He said good-bye to us and regretted the fact that he had to go back to the front line again, from which he seemed to have doubts about returning. We breathed a heartfelt prayer that he would not, nor any of the others with him.

CHAPTER V

Through Belgium to Germany

For half an hour or so we sat by the dressing station wondering what our fate was to be. Our minds inadvertently wandered back to the hours of strain that we had just come through, and as in a dream the horrible sights we had witnessed passed rapidly before our eyes. We could not help thinking of all the men we knew so well who had gone West, and wondering what had happened to our friends in other parts of the line. It did not seem possible that the whole Regiment, and perhaps the Division, had suffered such terrible losses as our own Company had endured.

We were rudely awakened from our reverie by being ordered to climb into a truck of the little train standing on the tracks of the engineers' railway close by. The train consisted of a small engine and four cars, which were about five feet wide and ten feet long, and closed in to the height of two feet. On either side was a wooden bench. It was only a step from the ground up, but that was more than I could manage in my weak condition. Two German officers who had been standing close by saw my predicament and gave me a hoist up. I was so grateful for this little attention that I

gave them my gas masks as souvenirs. I expected to have them taken from me so did not mind giving them to someone who had been kind to me.

Before long the train was loaded and we started off for parts unknown. Sitting across from Wells and myself was a little fair German who was in a terrible state of shell shock. On either side of him was a big burly chap holding him by the arm. At frequent intervals the little fellow would roll his eyes and writhe in a frantic attempt to escape from his guards. We could not help feeling sorry for him, but were glad to know that our artillery was giving them a little of their own back.

There were also a few slightly wounded Germans on the train and some others evidently going back on duty of some sort. They seemed highly pleased about it and lit up their pipes and cigars. One man sitting next to us was apparently interested, and seeing by the looks on our faces that we were dying for a smoke gave us each a cigar. We murmured, " Danke Schön," and lit up. They were filthy weeds, probably made of cabbage leaf chemically treated, but they tasted good to us. Three of these are issued to the German soldiers as part of their daily rations.

It was quite dark as the little train wandered slowly back past numerous gun positions, from which there came unceasingly the long red tongues of flame as the guns fired.

We often turned around to take a look at the

place on which the artillery was directing its fire. The ground sloped gradually up to the front line trenches. The whole sky-line was brilliantly lit by the flash of exploding shells, illuminating flares and red and green S. O. S. signal lights, which were continually going up all along the line. We knew by this that our artillery was pounding the new German trenches, and that Fritz had the "wind up." The display was wonderful to watch, but we knew only too well what a terrible night it meant for all those in the front line.

About midnight we arrived at what we judged to be Menin. Here we found some more of our wounded and were all piled into a motor bus. We were again seated on wooden benches and packed in like sardines. Near the door were two or three German sentries with fixed bayonets.

The engine of the bus was so weak that it could not start without assistance. Several German soldiers were ordered out to lend a hand and, with the aid of many guttural oaths, they at last got the old Ark moving. The driver dared not slow down for fear he would never get started again and we bumped along over railway tracks and ruts in the road. The continual jarring gave rise to many a muffled groan from those inside.

Fortunately the journey across the town was not long and we soon arrived at the main railway station. As we passed along the platform we came to the half-open door of the main waiting-room in

which we could see more of our men. My heart jumped with excitement. I knew that if we got in there, some of them might be able to give me some information about my brother-in-law, and also some of my other friends in the Regiment. However, we were not allowed to stop. We concluded that these men were less severely wounded, and that the German mania for system and classification would not permit of our being mixed with them. We were taken to a small wooden building filled with tables and benches, where we were told to sit down. We sighed with relief for we saw we were to be given food.

The room was lit by electric light and for the first time we were able to look around and see who were with us. Sitting next me was an officer of the 1st C. M. R., who was badly wounded in the head. On the other side was Wells and not far away, Barclay, whom I had not seen since shortly after the mine went up. Across the table was a man with his jaw badly shattered. They were a sad looking crew, covered with bloody bandages, and very pale. Nobody spoke much. They were all thinking too hard of how different it might have been. It was midnight, and, if they had been picked up by Canadian stretcher bearers, by this time they would probably have been in England.

Soon there was a clatter of tin dishes and the food appeared. We were to have our first taste of German war rations. We discovered that there

had been no reason to get excited over it. Each man was given a cup of acorn coffee without sugar or milk, of course, and a small chunk of black soggy bread. It was the first food we had had in thirty hours and we were ravenous. I sympathised with the poor chap with the shattered jaw, but that didn't appease his appetite. What wouldn't he have given for an egg-nog and a straw!

When the banquet was over we all searched our pockets for cigarettes. Those who had them broke them up into two, or even three pieces, so that everyone might have a smoke. I racked my brains and at length produced the sentence, "Dürfen wir Cigaretten kaufen?" (May we buy some cigarettes?), but I gathered from the reply to this that the United Cigar Stores of the town didn't stay open all night, so we settled down to await the next move.

Fortunately we did not have long to wait. A German Feldwebel (Sergeant-Major) appeared in the doorway and shouted, "Engländer heraus!" (Englishmen, come out). Our little party was loaded into a railway carriage dimly lit by a lantern. Down one side was a narrow passage-way, giving access to the eternal wooden bench — this time, however, with a back to lean against. Every seat was so full that we had to sit up perfectly straight. We were awfully tired and wanted to curl up somewhere and sleep, but there was no hope of that.

All night the train crawled along. About 4 A. M. it stopped for some time in a large city in Belgium, where a few men, judged in a dying condition, were put off. We could see the stretchers being carried along the platform. This was the first indication we had that there were other wounded prisoners on the train.

Cold and hungry we watched the dawn break. As we lay on sidings in different towns we saw trainloads of troops, guns and ammunition on their way to the Western Front. Had we not been so weak and tired we might have taken a great interest in all we saw; but as it was, we sat most of the time with our eyes half closed, enduring our pain as best we could.

After what seemed an interminable journey, at about 4 P. M., we were ordered out of the train. We were lined up and counted. Wells and I, being the only officers, were placed at the head of the party, which numbered about forty. Like a funeral procession we moved out of the station to a building close at hand, which turned out to be a hospital for German wounded. We were guided down the stairs to two rooms in the basement. One was devoid of any furniture and had no windows, while the other had one small window and was furnished with a single wooden bench. The floors in both rooms were of concrete, and on these we were invited to make ourselves comfortable.

The first thing I did was to ask one of the guards

if it were possible to buy any cigarettes. He said it was, so Wells and I checked up our accounts and found we had about thirty francs between us. We subscribed ten and told him to do the best he could. He got someone to relieve him and shortly returned with about six packages of the filthiest cigarettes I ever smoked. These we distributed amongst the men and everybody was happy once more.

It was here we saw the first signs of the German Red Cross. The men of this branch of the German Army wear a distinctive uniform, of a peculiar dark grey colour, with the usual red cross on the arm. Most of them are kind and as sympathetic as a Boche can be.

Two of these Red Cross men came in to see us and noticed our lack of comfort. They at once secured stretchers on which the more seriously wounded could lie. During the next four or five hours they brought several more stretchers, so that eventually most of us were lying down. It was a great relief.

I discovered one man who was shot through the hand. He had had no attention except the original field dressing applied by himself. The broken bones were protruding, and he was suffering agony. I got permission to see one of the doctors, and, by means of signs and words, asked him if this man could not have his wound dressed. He said he did not think so but would ask the Ex Chef

Arzt (head doctor). He returned with the information that the man's wound could not be dressed till he got to hospital. Evidently we had not yet arrived. How we did curse those Huns and wish we were in the hands of our own doctors.

I noticed one of the guards eyeing me curiously and at length he came up and extended a small pocket mirror. I glanced into it and then realised the reason for his interest. I will never forget the sight that met my gaze; my face was one mass of clotted blood and mud. I removed my steel helmet and felt my head. I couldn't separate my hair from the cake which covered it and I was glad that no one who loved me (if there were any) could see me at that particular minute. My mind ran back to the moment when I recovered consciousness after being hit by the timber from the mine. I remembered finding my steel helmet lying beside me and automatically jamming it as it was, full of dirt, on my bleeding head. I felt an overwhelming desire to wash my head and asked for "warmes Wasser" (warm water), but the guard thought this a privilege only for Germans, and refused. I had learned the pass-word from the doctor so told him I wanted to see the Chef Arzt. This seemed to have the required effect. I was taken to him and he reluctantly gave permission. While I was there I again enquired about having the man's hand dressed, but was told the same story as before.

About six o'clock we were each given a tin bowl

of bean soup and a chunk of black bread. The soup was quite thick and nourishing, and we soon put it in a safe place as this was the first meal we had had all day. A pail of acorn coffee was passed around and with a tin mug we dipped out what we required. The cigars and liqueurs were dispensed with for that evening. After we had finished eating we settled back on the stretchers for a much needed sleep. Up till then we had felt too tired and hungry to sleep, but at last the wonderful feeling of drowsiness was coming over us all.

We almost succeeded in forgetting our troubles for a little while, but shortly after the meal a German doctor and two assistants came around and examined the tags on each man. Very few had had an injection against tetanus and were given it then. The quantity of serum injected and the date were added to the information on the tag.

While this was going on I had a most peculiar conversation with a Red Cross Orderly. He knew a few words of English and French, and I a few words of French and German. We spoke very slowly to each other. Whenever we did not understand we would try a word in one of the other languages.

This system succeeded beautifully. I can see him now, on one knee, beside my stretcher, and can recall some of the conversation which ran something like this:

"How much years haben Sie?"
(How old are you?)
"Sieben-und-zwanzig."
(Twenty-seven.)
"You are verheiratet?"
(Are you married?)
"Ich verstehe nicht."
(I don't understand.)
"You are marié?" (married)
"Oh, nein."
(Oh, no.)
"You are versagt?"
(Are you engaged?)

It took some time to find out what this meant. He didn't know the French or English for it, but by signs he let me know he meant engaged. I said, "fiancée," and he remembered the word then and nodded, "yes." Well, this was a delicate question with me. I hoped I was, but didn't know for sure. Rather than go into a long explanation I told him I was. He seemed very much pleased, and then attacked my family one by one. I was getting a little fed up with this so switched him off the family tree on to his life history. At the conclusion of an hour we were friends, and he confided to me that we were due to leave at eleven o'clock on another train, and that he was coming with us. I saw at once that he would be a good man to stand in with, so took pains not to offend him.

The inside information I had received proved

correct and about eleven we were taken to the station and again boarded a train. This time Wells and I were put in what might have been termed the drawing-room of a tenth class Pullman. It was a small compartment about six feet square with a wooden seat on each side. We at once lay down on the seats which were made of nice soft wood. We were soon disturbed by a German sentry who came in and propped himself up in one corner and settled down to watch his dangerous (?) prisoners. That left room for only one to lie down so we decided to take two-hour shifts. My friend of the Red Cross was on the train, as he had said, and produced a real pillow for which we blessed him.

I have passed more comfortable nights before and since, but that hard bench and the pillow seemed like a feather bed to me, and when it was my turn to lie down I always felt that Wells just twisted the hands of his watch around and woke me up.

In the morning the sentry produced a greasy looking parcel from which he extracted a chunk of black bread, a bit of cheese, and a piece of sausage. With the assistance of a clasp knife and a great deal of unnecessary noise, he breakfasted. After this interesting performance he proceeded to fumigate the compartment with the smoke from one of his cigars. We enjoyed it all with the exception of the imitation of a gas attack.

We also were given breakfast consisting of a piece of the now familiar black bread and a cup of acorn coffee. This was handed into the compartment and we concluded the dining car had failed to make connections with our train.

After breakfast the sentry left us and his place was taken by the Red Cross Orderly. He was quite pleasant and told us that we were to detrain at Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle) where he would be put in hospital. He gave us a German newspaper to read, which we did our best to puzzle out, but finally gave it up.

Not long after lunch, which was the same as breakfast, with the addition of bean soup, we arrived at Aachen. A German medical officer came on board the train. He saw the Red Cross Orderly in the compartment with us and roared some unintelligible German at the top of his voice. Our little friend looked terrified and jumped off the train. Shortly after I saw him standing as stiff as a poker while the officer told him off severely, probably for being so kind to us. We never saw him again except in his official capacity.

Evidently the German officer didn't like our looks for we were told that we could not get off there, and shortly afterwards Aachen was left behind. We were horribly disappointed, but decided that we couldn't learn to love that officer and perhaps it would be better for us elsewhere.

The next news I got was that we were going to

Cöln. I was not aware that this was the German for Cologne. After a long conversation with the sentry, I learned that it was a beautiful city on the Rhine with a Dom (cathedral). I didn't know what Dom meant and the sentry didn't know any French. He kept repeating the word so often that I thought him very profane.

While I was talking to the sentry a fast train overtook and passed us like a flash. Swelling out his chest, he informed me that this train was going over 100 kilometres an hour, and that many trains in Germany did that. I knew one particular train that didn't and wished to God it would hurry, or that they would let us off to walk for a while.

We passed several groups of children who threw kisses towards the forward end of the train. We wondered why, and poked our heads out of the window to find out. We saw that the cars ahead were loaded with German wounded. When the children saw us they cocked up their chins and drew their hands across their necks, indicating the pleasant end we would have if they could get at us with a knife.

We saw Russian and French prisoners working in the fields, waved to them and received a cheery response.

About 5 P. M. we drew into Cologne, crawled across one of the huge bridges over the Rhine and into a station. The tracks were some distance

above the street, where an interested crowd soon gathered to look up at the British prisoners and probably curse England. We looked right through them and quietly cursed Germany and all the Germans.

On the platform were numerous Red Cross orderlies who took charge of us. We were led to a waiting room where we spent another half hour, and were then taken outside and loaded into two small tram-cars handled by women. We were so crowded that half of us had to stand up and hang on to the straps. The platforms were filled with vicious looking sentries with fixed bayonets, who looked as though they wished one of us would try and escape so that they could have a good excuse for using the business end of the rifle. At that particular moment we didn't want to escape; all we wanted was to sit down somewhere, anywhere.

The trams carried us back across the bridge and wound their tortuous way through the main streets of Cologne. I think the drivers had instructions to show us off to the people because I now know that we could have come a much shorter way than we did. Everything came to a standstill as we went by. The crowds stared. A few people hissed and booed but there was no violent demonstration of any sort.

We turned into a side street where the trams stopped in front of a stone building set back about twenty feet from the other buildings, and with an

iron fence across the front. At the gate stood a sentry.

The doors of the building were flung open. Men in uniform and others in long white coats came rushing out. There was much excitement and shouting of orders.

With bayonets lowered at a convenient angle the sentries conducted us past a crowd of awe-struck children and through the gate. We had arrived at last.

CHAPTER VI

Lazarett VI

Inside was a long hall that ran across the front of the building. Opposite the door was a stone stairway leading up stairs, and on either side another leading down to the courtyard and the basement. Along the hall were rooms with painted signs over the doors reading, Chef Arzt, Inspector, Polizei Bureau (Police Office), etc.

We were lined up in the hall and taken in charge by the Police Corporal, a short dark man with a nasty disposition, who was chewing the butt of a cigar. We later on learned to despise this fellow.

A group of French, English and Russian patients gathered round to look at us. This was the first excitement they had had in some time and the Englishmen were particularly interested. They saw glorious opportunities for getting some recent news from the front. Very few of them had seen the steel helmets which we were wearing. They gazed at us in wonder, and well they might, for we were a curious looking, muddy lot of almost exhausted men.

We were just as interested in the patients. They

were all wearing the hospital clothes, consisting of a long coat and loose trousers of blue and white striped material. The coat had one button at the neck and was fastened around the waist like a dressing gown with a tape made from the same material. On their feet they wore sandal slippers which were well named — one had to curl one's toes up tight to keep them from slipping off altogether. As they were all dressed this way it was hard to tell the English from the others.

The little crowd of spectators was roughly ordered to stand back and the Police Corporal commenced business. He came to Wells and myself first as we were on the end of the line. The conversation was again a mixture of French and German. I told him we were officers and asked to be put with the other British officers if there were any in the hospital. He demanded papers to prove that we really were officers. I don't know whether or not he expected that we all carried our commissions around in our pockets. I showed him the stars and braid on my sleeve but that made no impression on him; he wanted written proof. I fumbled at the neck of my shirt and produced my identification disc, on which was engraved my rank and regiment. This seemed to satisfy him and we were told to fall out and go upstairs to the officers' ward.

An English sergeant, with his arm in plaster, came up to us and asked if he could help us. We

accepted his services as guide. He led us up to the first floor and around the corridor, which was filled with iron bedsteads, to a door bearing the letters B2. He told us this was to be our new home and opened the door.

Inside, standing by the door, was a nun talking to two British officers. As soon as we entered she bowed to her friends, murmured, "Auf wiedersehen" (good-bye), and slipped quietly out of the room.

The taller one of the two greeted us with, "Cheer-o, fellows. What's the matter? You look bad. My name's Moodie (Capt. O. S. Moodie, Black Watch) and this is Gray (Lieut. K. W. Gray, R. F. C.). Where did you get yours? You're the first human beings we've seen since January. Won't you sit down?" We gladly accepted the invitation, introduced ourselves and proceeded to sketch briefly the story of June 2nd.

Gray went to the window and shouted down into the courtyard, "Watkins, Hallam." In about a minute two English Tommies rushed in. They were patients who had recovered from their wounds and were kept on as officers' servants. One of them went downstairs and came up with bed linen, while the other proceeded to punch the three sections of mattress — or "biscuits" as they are called — and get everything ready.

We were pretty tired. While we talked we kept

LAZARETT VI, COLOGNE.

FRENCH AND RUSSIAN PRISIONERS PEELING THE DAY'S SUPPLY OF POTATOES FOR LAZARETT VI.

one eye on the beds to make sure they would not vanish and with the other took in our surroundings.

The room was large — about twenty-five feet long and twenty feet wide. The walls were finished in light grey stucco. There were three large windows overlooking the courtyard. On the wall at one end was a black-board arranged like a window. The two halves slid up and down in a frame. This was explained by the fact that the hospital had been a girls' school before the war and we were occupying class-room B2. The floor was covered with a rubber composition matting. Four regulation German military hospital beds were ranged along each side of the room.

These were narrow iron beds with a steel rod at the head, which carried a metal plate painted black and on which was chalked the patient's number, his "Krankheit" (illness) and details as to his diet — but more about this later. Beside each bed stood a small locker with two shelves and a drawer. A table at the opposite end of the room from the blackboard, a chair pushed under the foot of each bed, and a cupboard by the door, completed the furniture.

As soon as we had fulfilled our duties as bearers of news we asked if it were possible to cable home to our families. We were told that it was impossible, but that we were allowed to write a post-card

every week and a letter every fortnight and, if we hurried, we could get one of each away on a mail leaving next morning (Monday, June 5th).

Moodie and Gray provided us with note-paper and pencils — ink was "verboten." We pulled our chairs up beside our beds and began our letters. I stuck a pin through the paper to hold it as I wrote and proceeded to fill the six ruled sheets we were allowed. I wrote very small, gave a detailed account of my capture, and my new address, which consisted of my rank, name, and regiment in full, followed by Kriegsgefangener, Festungslazarett VI, Abt. Kaiserin Augusta-Schule, Cöln, Deutschland. I knew that was enough to deter anyone from writing to me. My father got over this difficulty later by having numerous envelopes typewritten, and presenting them to anyone who suggested sending me a letter. That left them no loop-hole, so I got a lot of mail.

I wrote this first letter to my sister, who was in England at the time. As I read it over again now I remember the prayers with which I finished it, and how I hoped it would arrive all right so that all the things I asked for might be started on their long journey. I will quote the latter part:

"As you know I have lost everything I had in the trenches except what I had on. ——'s pictures and all of yours and Bill's are gone. Please send me more, all of you. Get Tom Farmer to send

back my kit (which was at Transport H. Q., back of the line). Then send me my gabardine tunic, slacks, my soft cap — I had on my steel helmet — that other pair of low shoes, new pair of puttees, my slippers, some socks and handkerchiefs, some shirts and collars, pipe, cards, tobacco, cigarettes, magazines and books (these latter never arrived), tea, oxo, chocolate — cooking and eating — sugar, jam, etc., tinned meats and meat pies. I'll have to depend on you for lots of little luxuries, so please keep sending this stuff regularly. It arrives O. K. Don't forget my underwear, too, and pajamas. Soon you will have to send heavy underwear. Also send me that new pair of cavalry-cord breeches and a pair of those fatigue slacks, a pair of size 8 running shoes for tennis when I get into camp (I never got there). I am enclosing the key to my kit bag. You can send it to Tom. (It never arrived.) For Heaven's sake send me word as soon as possible about Jack. I haven't been able to find out anything. If he is not all right over there he may be here some place, but I haven't seen or heard of him, nor yet have I of any of the other officers. I can write a postcard every week and a letter every two weeks, and will write every other letter to ———— and the other to the family. The postcards will probably be used for rush orders, etc. Please, oh please, all of you write often. Send this to Father and Mother and ask them to forward it to ———. It's 11.30 and I am awfully

tired, but I had to get this off tonight to go in A. M. We travelled from 11 o'clock last night till 5 this afternoon in one jump. Sorry I missed Uncle Jim in France. Love to all of you, heaps of it, and regards to all my friends and relations.

"HARVE."

While we were writing Watkins appeared with the supper. It was Sunday night and we were not given a heavy meal. There were several thin slices of black bread spread with a filthy imitation of butter and a few slices of sausage.

Wells and I eyed this hungrily, but Moodie and Gray told us to contain ourselves while they went up to the chapel to hold the service for the Englishmen, after which they promised us a good meal.

Their word was as good as their bond for, after chapel, Gray surreptitiously produced a little spirit stove from under the radiator, while Watkins was sent down to the basement for some mysterious tins. One of these was slipped into a bowl of hot water on the stove. The other was emptied into a little frying-pan and a beautiful odour filled the room. We thought we would probably wake up before long. Dishes were produced from the cupboard and other tins were opened and their contents divided on the plates. Gray was the master of ceremonies at the stove, and we eagerly watched him dump a can of peas into a dish and drop in a

huge chunk of butter from another tin. When all was in readiness we sat on the sides of our beds and ate a meal which I would gladly have paid $10 for at the Biltmore in New York.

We had lamb chops and fried country sausage with green peas cooked in butter. For dessert there was a mixture of tinned peaches and pears covered with very thick cream. All this was miraculously produced from tins which Moodie and Gray had received in parcels from home, and we at once decided to ask for some of these things before completing our letters.

After this wonderful meal we continued our writing, asking Moodie's and Gray's advice on what it was most necessary to have. They told us we could have money cabled to us through Holland, and that we could buy lots of useful things such as shaving materials, etc. In the post card which I sent to Mr. C——, the manager of our office in Manchester, I asked him to cable £10 and also to send word to my family. My father was in Canada, my sister was in England, and I knew that my mother had intended sailing for home on June 10th. I repeated many of the things I had stated in the letter, as we were told that post cards were surer and quicker.

When we had finished writing we felt that our duty was done. Watkins was sent for, and he helped us undress and put on the funny little short

hospital nightshirts. I was given one that fastened up the left side with tapes. The floor was covered with the mud that broke off as our puttees were removed.

The beds were made in a peculiar way. The "biscuits" were covered with a sheet in the ordinary manner, but the blanket was folded up and slipped into a cotton bag just the width of the bed. This prevented any possibility of tucking in the clothes so that if you rolled on your side it made the bed draughty to say the least. It did not bother me as it was months before I was able to lie in any position except on my back. We were so tickled at getting into a bed between real sheets that we didn't care what disadvantages it might possess.

I had a great deal of difficulty in finding a comfortable position for my arm, but Gray very kindly gave me a small soft pillow he had secured somehow and on this I rested it. The pillows issued were as hard as bricks but felt like eiderdown to us.

The lights were extinguished and all was still. It seemed so remarkably peaceful after all we had come through in the last three days that I could not help offering up a prayer of thanks that I was still alive.

My mind kept wandering back to the events of June 2nd, and I fell asleep thinking about all the horrible sights I had witnessed. I passed the first of many restless nights dreaming of all this, won-

dering what I could possibly have done to have got back to our lines, and what had become of Jack and all my other friends. At 3 A. M. I woke and could not get to sleep again.

CHAPTER VII

Hospital Life Begins

My first full day in Lazarett VI had begun. At 6 o'clock a Frenchman quietly entered the room carrying a huge jug of coffee and an armful of bread. There were enamelled mugs standing on our lockers, which he filled. He left us each a piece of black bread about four inches square and two inches thick. This was our ration of bread for the day. From that time forward, at regular hours, food was brought to us as follows:

8 A.M. "Schinken"— which consisted of a very thin slice of bread smeared with some sort of grease and a shaving of sausage or cheese. This was breakfast. At this time we also received our ration of butter which consisted of a very small piece of this same greasy substance used on the "Schinken." During the morning we each got a bottle of aerated water called lemonade and coloured either pink or yellow. We could have our choice.

11 A. M. A mug of what was supposed to be bouillon — a colourless and flavourless liquid whose

only virtue was that it was very hot. A cube of oxo dropped into this made a fairly decent drink.

12:30 P. M. Lunch — invariably watery boiled potatoes and cabbage, and sometimes a piece of horse-meat with all the nourishment boiled out of it for soup. It was coarse-grained and very sweet. Once a week we had awful smelling fish cooked with the heads, eyes and tails complete. There was no doubt about its being fish. The trouble was that it had been caught years before the war began. We could never eat it so we gave it to the Russians who occupied the beds in the hall outside our door. They devoured it all, poor fellows! They reminded me of the old story of the dog which was advertised for sale thus: "Will eat anything. Very fond of children." Instead of meat or fish we often got a very large pancake, tough as leather, and fried in fish fat. Butter and pure grease were never allowed in the hospital kitchens.

2 P. M. A glass of milk. If you drank it at once, holding your nose, you could make yourself believe that it had come from a cow. If you left it standing for three hours it divided itself into junket and clear water. After six hours the junket turned to a chalk-like substance.

4 P. M. Coffee.

6 P. M. Dinner — which was the same as lunch with the addition of soup.

About 8 o'clock on the morning of June 5th a sanitaire came for me and helped me along the hall to the X-Ray room where a very expert nun took two photographs of my arm. Later on in the morning a rubber-tired hospital car bearing dressings and instruments was pushed into the room by an orderly, and in a few minutes Dr. Meyer and a red-headed assistant doctor, followed by two sanitaires all dressed in long white coats, appeared. One of the latter removed the bandages from my arm. Dr. Meyer examined the wound and muttered, "schlecht" (bad); then turned to the assistant doctor and said, "Schreiben Sie!" (Write!) The doctor diagnosed my case glancing from time to time at the X-Ray photographs, while his assistant wrote down on a pad all the details which were later to be inserted in my medical history sheet.

Moodie spoke German very well and he explained to me afterwards that the doctor had said that the wound where the bullet entered was not serious, but that three centimetres of the radius had been carried away, while the large hole torn by the flattened bullet and splinters of bone was in a serious condition, and several of the tendons had been destroyed.

I was taken downstairs to the "plaster room." The doctor and his assistant slipped on overalls

GROUP OF BRITISH PRISONERS AND SOME HOSPITAL ORDERLIES IN LAZARETT VI. AT THE EXTREME LEFT IS LUDWIG, AND STANDING NEXT HIM, LOEFELSIND.

FUNERAL OF CAPTAIN BIRT.

and spread sheets all over the floor. My arm was wrapped in flannel and then bandages sprinkled with Plaster of Paris were dipped in a pail of water and wound round my arm until I was in a solid cast from my shoulder to the tips of my fingers. During this operation the assistant had instructions to hold my hand in a certain fixed position. I think he must have been in love, for his eyes wandered round the room and I had to place my hand over his to prevent him turning my wrist out of the correct position. While the plaster bandages were being wound on, a tin can was placed over the wound. When the plaster cast was completed this tin can was withdrawn, leaving a round opening for the purpose of applying dressings. I was told to go back to bed, having been given the cheerful information that I would have to carry this plaster cast around with me for two or three months. I could only lie in one position — on my back, and the continual pressure of the cast on my stomach caused me untold agony. I had no decent rest for weeks.

When I got back to the ward I found the assistant doctor working on our medical history sheets. He wanted to know everything about us except whether our mothers wore false hair. Moodie acted as interpreter or we would never have got through.

When he had gone our minds turned to more worldly things. Wells and I rubbed our chins

which had not felt a razor for days and asked, "What about it?" Moodie said, "Oh, Ludwig will fix you up with a razor and everything you need. Have you any money?"

"Oh, yes, we are rich. We have got twenty francs between us."

"That's enough. Watkins, get Ludwig."

Hallam broke in with, "You only need to get one tooth-brush, Sir. I have an extra one I have only used a few times."

We decided we would waste the price of the second tooth-brush.

Pretty soon Ludwig appeared. He was enormous. His head was cropped like that of a convict. He had been the driver of a German beer wagon before the war and he looked as though he had never arrived anywhere with more than half of the original load. He grinned all over his face when Moodie poked him in the corporation and told him that we needed safety razors, soap, lather brushes, mirrors, tooth-brushes, tooth-paste, hair-brushes and combs. He sprang smartly to attention, shaking all over like a jelly fish, sad, "Ja wohl, Herr Hauptmann," and went out of the room.

We knew that our first shave would be a tough proposition so a Frenchman, who had been a Parisian barber before the war, was sent for. He gave us each a beautiful shave as we lay in bed and we felt much better. He used to shave the officers for

twenty Pfennigs — five cents — and the men for ten Pfennigs.

Not long after, Ludwig reappeared empty handed. Our hearts sank, but he produced everything we had ordered from the depths of his trouser pockets. His tunic hung down in such a manner from his enormous waist-line that he could have concealed anything from a tooth-brush to a baby elephant. We learned later on that this was an illicit trade which Ludwig carried on. He sold things to us at cost price and we tipped him regularly. He ran a little "blind pig" in the cellar where he sold Cognac or "Schnapps," as he called it, at fifteen Pfennigs for a glass about the size of a thimble. He could not afford to lose a customer so he gladly ran messages for us.

We were supposed to buy everything through the Feldwebel who added about a hundred per cent to the price of all articles. If we wanted to buy anything of size or value we were obliged to do it through him; otherwise there would be questions raised as to where we got the money, and who did the buying. I ordered a suit case later on. It was made of paper and cost me twenty-two Marks — $5.50. Owing to a little carelessness the price mark — thirteen Marks — was not erased. I realised then what a burglar the Feldwebel was. That first day he went around the hospital and collected all the money from the new

arrivals. We hated to part with it but there was no alternative. He was the banker for the hospital and kept all the money belonging to the prisoners. Three or four times a week a Frenchman would come around with a book ruled off for us to sign. Each officer was given the large sum of three Marks and each Tommy one Mark, if he had any on deposit downstairs. We were not allowed to have more than that amount in our possession at a time. Of course we had, but didn't tell every one about it. We all had camp and escape in view, and for that purpose hoarded our money. It might prove very useful. It was all made of paper, with the exception of the five and ten Pfennig pieces which were of iron.

One day the Police Office got a tip that the English officers had money. An orderly came and told us that a German officer was going to search our room. He went out of the door for a minute. We stampeded to the cupboard, slipped some of the paper money between the leaves of books and in other hiding places — and waited. Presently in came the Police Corporal and several other hospital officials but no officer. It had been a bluff to make us declare everything. They asked if we had more than three marks apiece. We admitted that we had and opened the drawers of our lockers for inspection. They rummaged around and found we each had from five to ten Marks more than the allowance. We apologised profusely and

said that it was an oversight. They carried this money off in triumph. We really had about a thousand marks between us at this time.

Through an arrangement with the British Government, each month a lieutenant was credited with sixty marks, forty of which were kept by the Germans to pay for hospital food. This, with the addition of the money that was sent from home, assured us at all times of a credit balance with the Feldwebel.

During that first day I learned that Moodie had been taken prisoner in an attack at Loos, September, 1915. He had been shot through the left ankle, just as he reached the barbed wire in front of the German trenches, and had been unable to go back when the others were ordered to retire. Ever since that time he had had his leg in plaster. Two or three times it had been removed but the ankle joint had become so stiff that the doctors had been obliged to break it again and reset it, in hope of eventually giving him some movement in the joint. He was absolutely fed up with German hospital life.

Gray was an observer in the Royal Flying Corps. His machine had been shot down by the famous aviator Boelke, in January, 1916. His pilot was killed and he was picked up unconscious. Boelke sent him a signed photograph with a package of tobacco and cigarettes. These were all shown to me as cherished souvenirs. Gray's left

arm had been badly broken by the fall. The ends of both bones were protruding. At the field dressing station four men pulled his arm while the doctor poked the ends of the bones into position with bits of wood. When he arrived at our hospital his arm was at once put in plaster by "Gyps Meyer" — nicknamed for his fondness for putting everything in plaster. They succeeded in getting one bone to heal, but the ends of the other bone were one above the other and about an inch apart. Gray was turned over to the surgeon of the hospital who did a wonderful graft operation, putting a piece of bone from the shin at right angles to the unhealed bone and thus joining up the two ends. Immediately after the operation Gray was again put in charge of Dr. Meyer who could not wait to see if the graft had been a success or not. He took the splints off after less than three weeks and commenced violent massage which broke the arm again. This happened just after our arrival and Gray was disgusted. Dr. Meyer put his arm back in plaster.

By night time, June 5th, my temperature, which was taken regularly twice a day, was very high. I was feeling very ill and not taking much interest in life.

The next morning, when the doctor removed the dressing, he discovered that I had gas poisoning in the wound. He called in the surgeon and they held a consultation and decided to amputate my

arm. I wasn't keen on this and told them so. They said I would probably die if I didn't have the operation. I was so disgusted at being a prisoner of war that I didn't care what happened to me. They held a long conversation and finally decided to wait a day or so to see how the wound progressed. Thank goodness, they did. If I had not been in such good health when I was wounded I would probably have cashed in.

That day a man came in with a sign-board for the head of my bed. I felt like a convict when I saw my number — 3729. Under the word "Krankheit" was "Zerbrechung compl. links Unterarms, Maschinegewehrschuss" (complicated fracture of left fore-arm, shot from machine gun). I suppose this was put there to remind me that I did not have hydrophobia or any other disease. At the bottom was chalked a large II and a list of the articles included in Diet II. There were two kinds of diet and the only difference between them, as far as I could make out, was the number.

Watkins emptied all the valuables from the pockets of my uniform and carefully removed the badges. He did the same for Wells and carried our clothes off to be washed. Every prisoner on entering the hospital had his clothes taken from him and sent to the laundry. Hospital clothes were issued when he was able to get up and on leaving for camp his clothes, which were tied in a bundle and kept in racks in the basement, were

again given to him. He very seldom got his original uniform complete as the Boches had a great liking for good boots and often helped themselves. The Russians suffered particularly in this respect.

I have seen Russians in rags lined up in the courtyard, waiting to be taken away to camp. Some of them were without socks and had nothing on their feet but the hospital slippers. They were often without a tunic, to say nothing of a great-coat. I actually saw one man with his feet in bandages, lined up with the rest. Some fool doctor had discharged him from the hospital and he was waiting to hop away with the others, probably to be put to work as soon as he arrived. After a great deal of fuss he was struck off the list and left behind. This was a marvellous feat for the German system. Once a thing is down in black and white it is almost unalterable without the Kaiser's consent.

CHAPTER VIII

Sunshine and Shadow

My first three weeks in hospital passed by uneventfully. Most of the time I was very sick and didn't take much interest in what was going on around me. I lay thinking of home and wondering when I would get my first letters.

There were three nuns in the hospital who were the only women on the staff with the exception of those working in the kitchen. Two of them assisted in the operating room and the other did all the X-Ray work. One, named Schwester (Sister) Edelberta, was very nice to us. She made a point of visiting our room almost every day. Two or three times she brought flowers from the chapel, which she placed in water on the lockers beside our beds. She often spoke of her brothers. One of them was in a German Regiment of Guards and had been at the front since the beginning of the war; the other had lost part of his hand and was at home. She went regularly to the chapel three times a day and prayed for the safety of her brother at the front and for the end of the war.

On the occasion of these visits the conversation was weird and wonderful to hear. Our German was becoming undoubtedly more fluent but our

vocabulary was very limited. Schwester Edelberta was very religious and did not believe any one could tell a lie. Gray used to hold long conversations with her on all sorts of subjects, but usually religion. His German was terrible but that didn't bother him in the slightest. He went right ahead making the most glaring mistakes in grammar and inserting English words where he did not know the German. A great deal of gesticulation and pantomime helped her to understand.

One day he told her that he was a Buddhist or some such thing, and that part of their religious rites involved the burning of bones. He invited her to be present one day at this ceremony. She went away very much impressed, leaving Gray rolling on his bed with laughter. I think in a year's time he would have absolutely shattered that woman's faith.

It was a big day when I was allowed up. I put my feet on the floor and then knew nothing more until I found myself back in bed. Watkins and Hallam had been standing nearby and caught me as I fainted. Later on in the day I sat up for ten minutes, but had such a high temperature at night that I was not allowed up again for three or four days, when I was given a complete set of hospital clothes.

As soon as I was strong enough I made a tour of inspection of my new home. The hospital con-

tained about five hundred beds, mostly occupied by Russians. There were about fifty English patients and the same number of French. The wards were all full and the corridors on every landing were cluttered up with beds to accommodate the overflow.

The building was of four storeys and constructed in the shape of the letter "L." There was a small paved courtyard in the centre, enclosed on two sides by the hospital, and on the other two by high brick walls in the rear of private houses. In this courtyard, and against one of the walls, was a small stone building used as a mortuary. It nearly always contained the bodies of one or two patients awaiting burial. Almost every day we would see a stretcher covered with a white sheet carried across to the mortuary.

In one corner of the yard was a pig-pen and chicken-run. This was the private property of the inspector of the hospital, who used his Government position to great advantage. The stench arising from the pig-pen made this corner of the courtyard almost uninhabitable. We had no other place to take exercise, and, between the pigs and the Russians, we preferred to stay inside.

In the basement was a room used for the storing of clean hospital clothing and bed linen. On obtaining a written order from one of the doctors, articles of this nature could be secured from a little red-headed German named Loefelsind, who

was in charge. He also kept guard over the store of methylated spirits for hospital use. He was not averse to making a little money now and then, and we used to secure a bottle of this precious liquid for our little stove at the price of a Mark. We would send Watkins or Hallam down for a clean sheet or a pair of trousers. He would carry the empty bottle down wrapped around with the dirty clothes to be exchanged for the clean ones, which would hide the bottle on its return trip.

Near this was the parcel room, which was the most interesting for the patients.

All the parcels and letters for prisoners in hospital were censored at Wahn or some similar place on the Dutch frontier. Those for prisoners in camp were not opened until they arrived at the camp in which the man was situated. The censorship of our parcels generally took from two to four weeks, so that parcels coming from England or Canada were anywhere from one to three months on the way.

The parcel room was in charge of a German Unteroffizier (non-commissioned officer) who had on his staff five or six English and French soldiers and one Russian sergeant-major. One or two members of the staff, accompanied by a hospital orderly, would go to the station with a small hand cart and collect the parcels when their arrival was announced. Word soon went round the hospital that a certain number of parcels had come and the

excitement was intense until the list was sent round giving the names of the winners. In the meantime the serial numbers, which were stamped on every parcel when it was censored, were entered in a book opposite the name of the recipient. The parcels were then opened and the sealed tins extracted. On each tin was printed in ink the hospital number of the man to whom it belonged, and then it was placed in a small room used for the storing of food stuffs belonging to prisoners. When this work had been completed, the men were allowed to enter the parcel room one by one, and take away the packages and unsealed tins to their wards. Every man was notified of the number of sealed tins that had been placed to his credit. When he required one of the latter he went to the basement, carrying with him plates, cups or any other container he could get hold of. The tins were opened and dumped into these receptacles. This regulation was enforced to prevent prisoners receiving compasses or other articles of use when escaping, which might be enclosed very easily in the false bottom of a tin. By means of a little diplomacy and sleight-of-hand we were very often able to get an unopened tin to our room without being detected. I tucked many a tin into the broad sling which supported my plaster cast and thus got it past the watchful eyes of the Germans. In the parcel room were also the racks which held the bundles of clothes belonging to the patients. Each

bundle bore a tag with the name of the man to whom it belonged. When a party was due to leave for camp there was great excitement in the parcel room, sorting out the clothes for the men who were going. Very often it would be found that some very necessary articles were missing, and a hurried attempt would be made to substitute these from bundles belonging to men who had died or of those still in the hospital. We used to imagine the day when the war would be over and the last man was to leave. We wondered whether he would wear any more clothes than Adam.

The hospital was well guarded by Landsturm troops. At the beginning there were sentries on every floor but later on, owing to the shortage of men, the sentries were removed from the second and third storeys. One man stood guard at the front gate, and one sauntered around the court-yard with a loaded rifle hanging over his arm in a convenient position in case of any disturbance. We always watched critically the changing of the guard. They would clump along the street under the command of an Unteroffizier. In front of the hospital he would shout, "Halt! Gewehr ab!" (Order Arms.) With an uneven rattle and crash the rifles would bang down on the pavement with enough force to destroy the strongest firearm. At an unintelligible command they would straggle into the hospital and along to the guard room. The relief of the individual sentries was carried

out in a free and easy manner. Each sentry of the first relief went alone to his post and the original sentry returned alone. The old guard was formed up in the street. The Unteroffizier called them to attention; ordered, "Gewehr auf, (Slope Arms) Marsch!" and away they went.

While inspecting my new home I found some of the men taken on the 2nd of June and had a long conversation with them trying to find out the fate of my friends, and what had happened in other parts of the line besides that of which we knew so much.

We used to go around regularly and visit the English prisoners who could not get up. One man had been in bed for over a year with a bad wound in his leg. Owing to the lack of nourishing food the wound would not heal, and the leg swelled up and had to be lanced continually. He was in a terrible state. There was practically no flesh on his cheek bones. We sent him food regularly and for a week I kept him alive on a jar of calves' foot jelly I received later in one of my parcels, and which was the only food he was able to swallow. He could not even manage to drink a glass of malted milk. He was passed for repatriation direct to England, but there was some hitch in the arrangements and he was still in hospital when I left. This preyed on his mind to such an extent that it greatly retarded his progress.

The food for the men was served in a disgusting

manner. Patients who could walk were detailed to carry it from the kitchen to the wards. For this purpose they used a wooden rack with two shelves and a rod along the top. Each shelf had four large holes just big enough to hold firmly the tin bowls in which the food was served. The different portions of the meal were all thrown into this one receptacle. Very often a man would be given a bowl containing a mixture of bad fish, a few potatoes, some cabbage and a little dried fruit. The fact that all this was usually served by Russians, who were far from clean, did not make the meal any more attractive.

If a man were in a dying condition he got the same food as the others. I know that many men did die simply because of the lack of nourishing food served in a way that would tempt their appetites. We all shared up our parcels, but for a long time we had very few. Later on when they began to arrive in greater numbers we were much better off.

We used to spend a good deal of our time sitting on a bench in the front hall, looking out of the window and watching the children playing in the street. They seemed so happy and free that we envied their lot.

About the end of June we had a visit from Mr. Williams. Before the war he had conducted the services in a church in Berlin which was attended by the Kaiser and his family. He received a spe-

cial order which allowed him to visit the hospitals and camps and hold religious services for the English prisoners. Of course, we had our regular Sunday night service in the chapel of the hospital. It was conducted by Moodie, being the senior officer. The service was very simple. It consisted of the collect, psalms for the day, a few prayers from the evening and morning services, and three hymns. There was no sermon. We were provided with Church of England prayer books by a German parson who spoke a little English and used to read the burial service for our dead. I always used to wonder that no one ever discovered that right there, in the heart of Germany, we prayed that the King should "vanquish and overcome all his enemies."

When Mr. Williams arrived it was a big event. All the Englishmen who were out of bed assembled in the chapel. He was a charming man and, as he wanted to please everyone, he asked if we had any particular hymn we would like sung. Some bright spark in the back called out, "A Few More Years Shall Roll." We could not help laughing, but Mr. Williams took it all in good part and said, "No, we never sing that nor 'There is a Happy Land.'"

On July 6th a new lot of very badly wounded English arrived from the Somme battlefield. I noticed that they were asked the same questions as we had heard a little over a month before. The Germans all wanted to know when they thought the war would be over. They gave the same answer

that every Englishman gives to this question, to the effect that we were just beginning to get our men ready, and the war was sure to last at least five or six years more. When a German gets this information he can almost cry, but he keeps on asking the same question from every new prisoner, hoping that some day he will find a down-hearted one who will tell him that England is ready to give in at any minute. I am afraid, however, that they will ask the question a great number of times before they find a down-hearted Englishman.

Two of the new arrivals were officers. One young chap named Tilley had tried to stop seven bullets. Fortunately no bones were broken, but he had had two narrow escapes. One bullet had passed through the back of his neck and just missed his spine; another had seared his shoulder blades as though a red hot poker had been laid across them. This one also had passed within a fraction of an inch of his spine. His other wounds were in the legs and side.

The second officer was named Clark. He had had his thigh badly fractured by a bullet. He had been nearly a week on the way back to Germany and in that time had developed gas poisoning. He was very feverish and ill. His wound was similar to mine so I took a great interest in him.

The following day Dr. Meyer put Clark in plaster from his armpits to the foot of the broken leg. Of course, his arms and his other leg were free,

FUNERAL OF CAPTAIN BIRT.
THE FRENCH CAPTAIN, CAPTAIN MOODIE, THE GOVERNOR OF COLOGNE AND GERMAN OFFICERS AT THE MILITARY FUNERAL OF CAPTAIN BIRT, AN ENGLISH OFFICER WHO DIED IN LAZARETT VI.

but he could not move and suffered agony from the wound and the heat of the plaster.

I asked him if I could write home for him. He looked very grateful, and told me he was engaged to be married and would appreciate a letter written, half to his mother and half to his girl. He was too weak to dictate. I considered myself rather expert at writing love letters and very shortly produced a satisfactory epistle. He scrawled his signature and we sent it off. On the same day I wrote a similar letter for Tilley, whose arms had been partially paralysed by the wound in his neck.

Clark became so ill that the doctor decided the only way to save his life was to amputate his leg. He was too weak to stand the operation, so they left it till the next day and hoped for the best. In the morning he was feeling better and smoked a cigarette. He said he could sleep, so we left the room. In half an hour they brought us word that he was dead. Tilley was just a youngster and felt very nervous at seeing Clark die in the same room with him. We cheered him up with stories of men, with serious wounds who had made a rapid recovery. Our prophecy proved correct. In three weeks he was up. Nature is a wonderful thing!

As a rule, when an Englishman died we were only allowed to buy wreaths and stand reverently at the door of the mortuary, while a German minister read the burial service in English. We always brought

our hymn books with us and sang a hymn before the coffin was removed.

When Clark was buried the same kind of service was held in the courtyard, but by special permission ten men and we three officers who could walk — Gray, Wells and myself — were allowed to march behind the hearse to the grave. On this occasion we wore as much of our uniforms as we could get on over our plaster and bandages. Another short service was held in the chapel at the cemetery. From here the little procession was led by a German military band playing the Dead March. As the body was lowered into the grave we gave Clark his last salute. The band played a hymn and we were marched off by our guard. I will never forget seeing a German woman, who had probably lost all the men of her family, standing there weeping as we passed.

On the way home, we came to a school just as the pupils were getting out. They at once surrounded, and commenced to follow us. The guard had to use severe threats to drive them back and prevent them from stoning us. They hissed and booed until we were out of earshot.

Several of the other newly arrived Englishmen died, but we were never again allowed to go to the cemetery.

CHAPTER IX

Making the Best of It

The horrible monotony of the existence, the fact that no one around you cares whether you live or die, and that you have nothing to look forward to but the end of the war, make the life of a prisoner almost unbearable. One has actually to be a prisoner to realise this. It is a state of mind that cannot be imagined. I can quite easily see how men who have been in German hospitals or camps for two or three years become despondent, nervous wrecks and often go stark staring mad, or commit suicide.

Reading through my old letters home I come across a phrase now and then that recalls vividly the feeling of loneliness that possessed me at the time. After only six weeks of imprisonment I wrote: "Please write me often and tell me all the news, and ask anybody I know, who would care to write to me, to do so. It is horribly dreary here. It is cold and raining most of the time. Believe me, we will all be glad when the war is over."

Moodie had spent a year in hospital and some days would be attacked with a fit of the blues. He would lie on his bed without saying a word, paying

no attention when the meals arrived. Gray and I, seeing the effect on him and others, would attack him with pillows. Moodie would defend himself and a rough pillow fight would result. Of course, we had to be very careful not to injure the arms or legs which were in plaster. Heavy artillery in the shape of bottles of aerated lemonade would be brought up, and the shower baths that ensued would generally bring the party to an end with everybody laughing and the desired result would have been accomplished.

There was an English Tommy with a shrapnel wound in the head, whose case illustrates the utter indifference displayed by the German doctors with regard to the fate of prisoners. His cheek bone was fractured just in front of the ear and for some time he was under the care of Dr. Meyer. He suffered a great deal of pain and could not sleep at night. The doctor seemed to take little or no notice of his suffering but said there was a splinter of bone inside the skull which might work to the surface if poultices were applied. This was carried out by the men in the ward, who heated water in a steel helmet over a spirit stove supplied by the hospital. The case became so serious that I interviewed the Chef Arzt and got the patient moved downstairs to another ward under the care of a head-specialist who operated at once. It was found that the man had an abscess on the brain caused

by the splinter of bone. He died within a few days.

Incidents like this did not tend to make our lot any more pleasant, but we avoided as much as possible letting our minds dwell on our surroundings and lived in the past, and for the future.

Cards were a diversion that offered great possibilities. We Canadians introduced the " national game " of poker and also Polish Bank, and the Englishmen took a great delight in using the slang poker terms on every possible occasion. The Russians and Frenchmen had peculiar games of their own. Wherever one turned little groups could be seen, sitting cross-legged on the floor or on the side of a bed, playing some game with a pack of greasy and dog-eared cards. In our ward bridge was the most popular form of amusement, and almost the whole of every afternoon was whiled away at this game. When we had more than four players the extra ones would sit around and watch the game until it was their turn to cut in.

Reading also served to pass away the time. Moodie and Gray, who had been in the hospital for a long time, had a few books that had braved the censors. We also had some books in English, such as " The Life of a Curate," which were provided by the German pastor who buried our dead and who also, at long intervals, held a service for us in the chapel. There was a waiting list for all these books, which were passed around the hospital as

fast as they were read. If we had had a copy of Webster's Dictionary it would have been devoured from cover to cover.

As I have said, certain men who were fit were employed on permanent duties, such as working in the parcel room, issuing tinned food, etc.; Barclay, who had recovered from his wounds, being a stretcher bearer, was made a sanitaire. Others were employed on weekly fatigues, cleaning the floors and peeling potatoes. As this vegetable was our staple article of diet it took a lot of potatoes every day to feed five hundred men. At any time in the courtyard could be seen ten or fifteen men seated around barrels and tubs into which the potatoes were tossed as they were peeled. Later on, owing to the scarcity of food, the peeling was dispensed with as being wasteful.

The study of French was an occupation which attracted many of the Englishmen. There was a French captain in the hospital — the only French officer there — and I soon made arrangements to exchange lessons in English for instruction in French. We managed to have text books bought for us in the city and commenced work in earnest. He lived alone in a small room on the first floor and here, for two hours every day, we worked. Half the time was devoted to each language. We went right through the grammar taking one lesson at a time. In the beginning all our explanations were made in German, as this was the language we both

knew best. As time wore on, during the hour devoted to French, that language alone was spoken, and a similar arrangement was made for the English hour. Exercises were written as part of the preparation for each lesson, and these were corrected and assigned marks as religiously as though we had been correcting examination papers for a University degree. This serious work served to make the days seem much shorter and my knowledge of French proved of inestimable value to me later when I reached Switzerland.

On July 8th we were sitting in the hall downstairs when the mail arrived. A letter bearing my name was handed to me, and I felt as excited as though peace had been declared. It turned out to be a money order amounting to 200 Marks, which had been cabled to me from England. I knew then that my first letter or card had arrived, that my family at last knew my fate, and that I could expect letters before long. I was very much relieved. On July 13th I also received £2 sent by mail. The claim slip showed that at the current rate of exchange I should have received 49 Marks, 23 Pfennigs. This amount was scratched out and 40 Marks inserted. The difference was a pretty healthy discount for the Germans to claim. The value of the Mark kept decreasing during my stay in Germany, but on no occasion did any of us receive the full amount due for the money sent. This open robbery must have netted the German Gov-

ernment an enormous revenue, when one considers the number of prisoners who were continually receiving money.

On July 14th my first letter arrived, and from that time on my only thought on waking in the morning was, "Will there be a mail in to-day, and if so, will I get a letter?" Every prisoner of war feels the same way. The most exciting thing that can happen to him is the receipt of a letter or a parcel.

About this time the Swiss Commission paid a visit to the hospital. It consisted of three Swiss doctors who visited the English and French in most of the hospitals and camps in Germany, and selected men who were considered unfit for service for a year and who might be benefitted by treatment in Switzerland. The men had to be recommended by the doctors in charge. Those accepted were sent to Constance or some other place near the Swiss frontier, where they were seen by another Commission composed of half Swiss and half German doctors and final judgment was passed on them. The Germans had the deciding vote in case of doubt.

Gray's arm was in a bad state. It was very crooked and he had a dropped wrist. He saw the Commission without advising Dr. Meyer that he was going to do so and was at once accepted, but unfortunately just as his name was being entered on the official list Dr. Meyer appeared. He was

Camp money issued by the various prison camps and given in exchange for German coins and notes which might prove valuable in case of the escape of a prisoner. The camp money was only good in the actual camp in which it was issued.

The right-hand ring was made by a Russian prisoner in the hospital at Cologne from aluminum secured from a munition factory in which he was working. His only tools were home-made, and he did this work to earn a little money to buy extra food.
The other two rings were also made by Russian prisoners and presented to Lieut. Douglas out of gratitude for food he had given them. Left-hand ring is made from aluminum, and ring in center from horsehair and beads.

Nickel coin, value 10 Pfennigs, in use before the war. (Right.)
War issue of same value and made of iron. (Left.)
Nail in form of stickpin and presented to each person paying two marks and driving an iron nail into the wooden statue Kölscher Boer. The money thus raised was used for Red Cross work. (Center.)

furious and said that he wanted to treat Gray's arm for some time to come. This was just what Gray was trying to avoid, but he had to stand aside and see his name struck off the list.

Wells saw the Commission but was refused. Moodie and I were so far from recovered that we knew it was hopeless and did not present ourselves.

Not long after this an English aviator named Wilson was brought to the hospital from the camp at Mainz, where he had been sent with several other officers to see the Swiss Commission. He told us some interesting things. He had been in touch with officers from several different camps and we listened eagerly to his description of camp life, as we all expected before long to be leading that sort of existence. We discussed earnestly different plans he had heard for escape, and looked forward to the time when we might take an active part in striving to attain what is cherished as the ultimate goal by every prisoner of war.

While Wilson was in Mainz there was an attempted escape. Three officers planned to work together. One small building in the camp was used as a recreation room and canteen. Inside the building, and against the wall next the canteen, was a series of long wooden steps, closed in at the ends, used as a sort of small grandstand for observing the various games in progress. Beneath this was the spot selected for the commencement of a tunnel. The sound of the ripping up of the floor boards un-

derneath the grandstand was deadened by the cheering and stamping arranged by the other occupants of the room. The work progressed beautifully. There was plenty of space under the steps for storing surplus earth and the workers only emerged for roll call.

One day, just before the tunnel was completed, orders were given that all officers who had been refused by the Commission were to be sent to other camps. Wilson had not been accepted, but was to be left behind, as he had to return to hospital. Most of the officers, including the three "moles," were on the list of those to leave.

Our three friends entered their place of work, taking with them three days' provisions. Those outside replaced the boards at the ends of the steps with the nails in their original holes and departed. When the final roll was called, of course, these three were missing. No one had seen them. There was great excitement and eventually the party had to move off without them.

That night, in a frantic attempt to complete the work, a little noise was made when the recreation room was vacated and absolutely still. The keeper of the canteen became suspicious and his report resulted in the discovery of the elusive ones. We never heard how many weeks of "jug" they got for this.

CHAPTER X

Privileges, Etc.

Wilson only spent a few weeks with us, but his visit proved most profitable. We learned of the things we were entitled to and of the privileges accorded German prisoners in England. We decided to take a firm stand and demand certain rights for the Englishmen in the hospital.

We officers formed ourselves into a committee and interviewed the Inspector. We told him about the way German prisoners were treated in England, explained to him that there were many men able to walk who needed fresh air and exercise, and demanded that a system similar to that in vogue in all the camps should be introduced into the hospital. In camps men are put on their parole and sent out in parties of thirty or forty, in charge of a guard of one officer and a non-commissioned officer, to take a two-hour walk in the country. On their return their parole is given back to them and they are free to attempt to escape if they wish. We explained the simplicity of this system to the Inspector, who promised to investigate the matter and make arrangements.

The Inspector's name was Driessen. He owned a big hotel on the Rhine, which before the war had

accommodated many English and American visitors. He spoke English quite well and was, or pretended to be, very friendly towards English-speaking people. At the conclusion of our interview he suddenly came out with a string of the vilest English oaths I ever heard and then asked us to translate them. This was a rather hard proposition, but we did the best we could. When he learned what he had said he seemed horrified. We asked him where he had learned his English and particularly where he had picked up such expressions. He said that before the war he had gone to England to study the language and had lived with a professor and his family.

"Charming people," he said, "all of them very charming indeed. The only objection I had to them was that now and again the professor and his wife, and sometimes the mother-in-law, would get drunk, and then they would use those expressions which you have just translated for me. Oh, yes, they were charming people."

On July 21st our interview with the Inspector bore fruit. All the Englishmen in the hospital who could walk were to be taken out in the city for two hours. Uniforms were issued to these men, who polished their buttons and carefully put on their puttees in order to make a good impression on the people of Cologne. Just before it was time to start an officer marched in with a large guard, almost as big as the party they were to conduct.

We formed up in two ranks, were carefully counted, and marched out into the street. Moodie's leg was in plaster and he could not walk, so it had been arranged that he might have a carriage if he paid the expenses himself. In the carriage there was room for four — three officers and a German sentry. We drew lots as to who would accompany Moodie — Wilson and Gray were the lucky ones. Wells and I and the French captain, who wore his red breeches on these special occasions, were formed up in front of the men, who were arranged in sections of fours. The carriage was in the rear. The whole party was surrounded by the guard carrying loaded rifles with fixed bayonets. We moved slowly off like a convoy of dangerous criminals instead of a few harmless unarmed men, most of whom were helpless even had they been unguarded.

The commander of the party avoided the main streets as this was the first time prisoners had been paraded through Cologne in this manner, and he did not know how the people would act. His fears proved to be groundless as the adult population showed keen interest, but were not demonstrative. The children, however, made cutting remarks about England, and would gladly have done us injury had they been permitted. After nearly an hour's marching, we arrived at a large cemetery around which we were paraded for fifteen or twenty minutes. This form of amusement evidently appealed

to the German sense of humour. We, however, took a great deal of satisfaction out of the sight of the thousands of little white crosses which marked the graves of the Germans who had died in military hospitals in Cologne.

When we arrived back at the hospital I overheard the following conversation between a Tommy who had been out, and one of his less fortunate friends:

"Where did they take yeh, Bill?"

"They took us to a bleedin' cemetery."

"Yeh don't say so."

"Yes, but the blinkin' thing was chuck full of Boches."

"Good egg."

After this the Germans felt frightened at what they had done, and we were not allowed out again for a month. We had many interviews with the Inspector and made ourselves so objectionable, that in order to gain peace the walks were resumed, but at irregular intervals. During seven months we were only allowed out of the hospital four times. After the first walk the officers were given the privilege of going alone with a German officer and a guard. They refused to let us give our parole and there was nearly always a greater number of sentries than prisoners. Try as we might, we could never again get permission to have a carriage for Moodie, and we were refused the privilege of visiting the famous cathedral on the ground that there

were fortifications nearby which we should not see. We were usually taken around the Ringstrasse, the main street of Cologne, which runs in a semi-circle through the city, commencing at one point on the Rhine and finishing at another a mile or two farther down. On one occasion we went to the Stadtwald, which is a beautiful park on the outskirts of the city. It was raining and we asked the officer in charge if we might go into a small restaurant nearby and order something to eat while we waited for the rain to stop. As we approached the restaurant we saw a German officer sitting with a lady on the balcony. He sneered at us and turned his back. On his account we were not allowed inside, but were obliged to sit out in the rain at a little iron table while we drank a cup of very bad coffee without cream and sweetened with saccharine. We were just two — the French captain and myself. The officer in charge and the sentries avoided us, while we sat there, as if we had been a couple of lepers. We cursed the whole German army and hoped some day to be given the joy of commanding a camp full of German prisoners.

We were more fortunate than the men who, on each of the four walks they were allowed to take, were conducted to a different cemetery. They say that variety is the spice of life. If taking a man to a different cemetery each time he goes for a walk constitutes variety, then these men certainly led a spicy existence.

Another privilege we considered ourselves entitled to was the use of the small balcony overlooking the street. We officers had no place given us where we could be alone and take a little exercise. Though not of a grasping disposition, when we thought of the life of ease led by the German officers in England, we decided to demand everything it was possible to get, both for ourselves and the men. We were advised that an official application to the Governor of Cologne was necessary. This was made out in writing and signed by us all.

After nearly two months of waiting, permission to use the balcony was given. During this period we had a visit from Mr. Jackson, the American Ambassador's Secretary, to whom we complained about the delay to our application. The Inspector, who was present, was furious at this complaint which, however, had the desired result of hurrying up a decision. Every fine day after that we moved chairs outside and sat in the sun or walked slowly up and down to get back some of the strength we had lost through months of idleness. The people in the street would often stop to stare at the caged animals pacing up and down in the enclosure in front of their den. Sometimes there would be a new sentry at the gate, who would look up and discover us and yell, "Los!"— pronounced "Loose" and meaning "Get out!"

We would lean over the balcony and laugh at him, while he went in, frothing with rage, to report

us — only to discover that the balcony was not "verboten."

Of course, up to this time we had had the run of the courtyard, in which we religiously tried to take exercise every day, but there was such a crowd that we were continually bumping men and jarring our injured members, and finally gave it up.

The men were allowed to stay in the courtyard till 8 o'clock in summer and 7 o'clock in winter, and according to the season of the year they had to be in bed by 9 or 8 o'clock. As daylight saving was in vogue the lights were seldom turned on in the men's wards, but the officers were not obliged to retire before 10.

The English Tommy is always cheerful and sometimes sentimental. He grouses a lot, but this is superficial. It is a habit quickly acquired on entering the army and besides,— it is considered the thing to do. At heart he is a fine fellow and his best qualities are brought out under the trying conditions of life in a prison hospital.

After the evening meal the men would often gather in a circle in the courtyard round a man playing a mouth organ, and indulge in a little "close harmony." This crowd would usually be swelled by musically inclined Frenchmen and Russians. Watkins and Hallam considered themselves second only to Caruso and John McCormack and led the singing. These entertainments always started well but had a weak finish. The Police

Corporal had a strong aversion to the English and took a delight in squashing any attempt at amusement on their part. As soon as one of the "barber shop" chords would reach his ears he would order the guard to clear the courtyard at once. There would be a great shouting of "Los!" and "Heraus!" and all the patients would slink up to their wards.

The officers in the hospital were allowed the privilege of buying, every night, a flat watery beer, which was sold in bulk for forty Pfennigs a litre, and was quite harmless. When we sent the money downstairs a woman from the kitchen went to a neighbouring bar and brought back the beer in a large metal flagon. The men soon got wind of this and, in the name of the officers, would also send down orders for beer. The poor woman had often to make two or three trips to the bar and gathered the impression that the English officers had the Germans "trimmed to a standstill" as far as beer drinking was concerned.

We subscribed to the *Cölnische Zeitung* (Cologne Gazette) and every night after the evening meal would gather round the table and sip our beer, while some one translated the communiqués. We smiled when we read, almost every day, how the English had suffered a "blutige Schlag" (bloody defeat). A successful advance on the part of the Allies was never mentioned, nor were the numbers of any prisoners taken by us. The British communiqué was

always cut short, but on one occasion we got a copy of the *Volkzeitung,* in which the censor had been careless and inserted one sentence more of our communiqué than appeared in the *Cölnische Zeitung.* This sentence actually stated that we had taken several thousand prisoners. We had war maps cut from the newspapers and also other maps bought for us in the city by Ludwig. These were kept carefully hidden and we never failed to mark every village that changed hands. We could tell from the mention of new names in the German communiqués that, in spite of many a "blutige Schlag," we were advancing.

We also got news from new arrivals, although these events were few and far between. One day a small, dejected lot of Frenchmen were brought in, who told us that they had carried out a local attack and were returning with twice their own number of prisoners, whom they were driving before them across No Man's Land. The French machine gunners saw only Germans advancing and, thinking it was an attack, opened fire. The Germans in the rear did the same thing, and every man who was caught in this hail of bullets was either killed or wounded. The wounded Frenchmen were collected by the Germans and were very much disgusted with their fate.

Another reminder we had that the war was still on was the continual appearance of Zeppelins over Cologne. These monster dirigibles would some-

times fly very low over the hospital, performing various evolutions for the benefit of the people in the streets below. On such occasions we got an excellent view of the gondolas, machine gun platforms, and other details that went to make up these elements of destruction which were reported in the papers to be doing terrible damage in England. At night we would often be awakened by the whirr of propellers, and looking out of the window would see the black outlines of a Zeppelin silhouetted against the sky and bearing red and green lights on the forward gondola.

Zeppelins starting out for a raid on England usually passed over Cologne. One day, about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, the "L33," flying in a westerly direction, passed so low over the hospital that I could not refrain from making a detailed sketch of it on the blackboard. When it was finished I slid the front half of the board up to cover the sketch, of which I was rather proud. The next day we saw by the papers that the "L33" had been brought down in England. The next time the doctor and his assistants came to our ward we displayed the picture of the Zeppelin bearing its number in large letters on the side, and asked them if they knew what had happened to it. They were furious and ordered the picture erased.

Wilson was a great ladies' man and was always looking out of the window at the houses across the street searching for a girl who would answer when

he waved. One day he took me mysteriously to a little room on the top floor with a ladder leading through a trap door to the attic. This was most exciting. Quietly we walked along the boards lying on the joists until we came to a plank running across the arched ceiling of the "Grande Salle," or what had been the prayer hall of the school and was now a large ward of eighty beds. We thought of the surprise we would give the patients if we should slip and crash through the ceiling into the hall below. We eventually reached a window in the front of the hospital, which was directly opposite a window of the house across the street. One of Wilson's lady friends was standing here and answered his signal. He told me that the day before there had been two of them and he wondered where the second one was. We learned from the signs this girl was making that her sister had been arrested for communicating with prisoners of war. A few days later she signalled across to us that she was to suffer the same fate and be taken away to gaol at 5 o'clock. We were all at a window downstairs at this hour and waved her a cheery good-bye although she went away in tears. According to her signals she was to do fourteen days' cells for this terrible crime.

I did not have any more exciting escapades with Wilson as, shortly after this, he and Wells were discharged from hospital and sent to camp with some of the men who had been wounded on June 2nd and

were now recovered. I was sorry to see Wells go. He was a Canadian, and at that time I had not fully realised what fine fellows some Englishmen are. The Englishman as a rule is hard to get to know, but once the ice has been broken you find that he makes a very good friend.

A Canadian that I know was on one occasion walking with an Englishman when they came to a man stooping over picking up something from the ground. The Canadian suggested that the Englishman should quietly kick him in the seat of the pants.

"My dear fellow," replied the Englishman, "I cawn't do that. I haven't been introduced to the chap."

On August 5th I received my first parcels, which had been sent by my sister from England. It seemed just like Christmas, and I eagerly unwrapped all the little necessities of life together with what I considered a great number of absolute luxuries. My parcels were a welcome addition to our store of food, as during the two previous months the supplies sent to Moodie and Gray had been very much overtaxed.

About this time, also, another milestone in my life was passed when, with a huge pair of scissors, the plaster cast was cut away from my arm. The doctor seized me by the wrist and elbow and proceeded to manipulate my arm in what I considered to be a frantic attempt to break the bone. I ex-

plained to him, in my very best German, that the ends of bone had not yet joined together, as I could distinctly feel them moving. He did not agree with me and ordered an X-Ray photograph to be taken, followed by a series of hot arm baths to restore the suppleness of the muscles. I was in the midst of one of these baths when he rushed in carrying the photographic plate and dragged me off to the plaster room, where he repeated the operation of two months before. This time I was told that three months would elapse before my arm would be again free from the cast.

CHAPTER XI

Luxury Under Difficulties

Before the war, the business firm with which I was connected had done a great deal of buying in Germany. We had a German agent who wrote me a very nice letter asking about my arm, and wanting to know if there was anything he could do for me. I was not allowed to answer this letter but the Inspector did so for me.

I received, later on, another letter from a German who was a naturalised American citizen and represented a large firm with whom we had done business. He also asked if there were not something he could do. I was permitted to write an answer on the back of his letter and requested that he should send me, if possible, a couple of English novels and a French dictionary. In a very few days I received these articles together with a box of very good cigars and some cigarettes. This man came to Cologne to see me and spent three days there interviewing officials. He was not even allowed to look at me to satisfy himself that I was well, so that he could report to my family.

One day we were surprised at the arrival of another officer named Barnes, of the Canadian Engineers, who had been taken prisoner on June 2nd,

but since that date had spent his time in another hospital in Aachen. He had been sent to Lazarett VI to have one of his eyes removed, which had been damaged by the explosion of a bomb, and was placed downstairs in the same room as the French Captain in order to be directly under the care of the head-specialist.

Barnes managed to give us some new information regarding the events of June 2nd, and I was particularly interested in hearing that he had been in the hospital with a man named Martin who was also an officer of the 4th C. M. R. and who had been badly wounded in both legs.

Barnes' eye was removed by the head specialist, who used the operation as the subject for a lecture to some students who came regularly to the hospital for instruction. All he had to deaden the pain was a very badly applied local anaesthetic. The students sat around in a semi-circle while the doctor snipped each nerve and muscle separately, calling out their names and going into explanations as to their functions, while Barnes drew blood from his lower lip with his teeth in trying to keep from screaming out with the pain.

From this time on we nicknamed Barnes "Cyclops," a name which stuck to him until he left the hospital.

Across the hall from our ward was a bathroom containing four baths. It was in charge of two Russians, who kept the place very clean and always

had hot water on hand, which was provided by two small stoves in the room. Nearly all the beds on our floor were occupied by Russians, many of whom had filthy diseases. We objected strongly to bathing after these men, no matter how well the tubs had been scrubbed out. We were afraid of having our wounds infected, and finally made arrangements to have a bath curtained off at one end of the room for the exclusive use of the Englishmen. As soon as this had been effected an assistant doctor and all the sanitaires located on our floor admired the arrangement so much that they decided to seize this bath for their own private use. Hallam had an altercation with a sanitaire over this and just restrained himself from striking the man. He got into a great deal of trouble and, as a direct result, was later on sent to camp. We eventually succeeded in having another bath allotted us.

Soap was non-existent in the hospital. A greasy sort of substance in tins, somewhat similar to soft soap, was supplied for washing purposes. The Russians in charge of the bathroom used to do our laundry, but this soft soap stained everything a weird combination of green and yellow.

We were always looking for something to vary the monotony of our existence and one day thought of investigating the pig pen. The man in charge had no objections to our doing this and we went inside. Some one noticed an egg lying on the straw and slipped it quietly into his pocket. We thor-

FOUR CHEERFUL BRITISH PRISONERS. IN THE CENTRE—
WATKINS (WEARING SWEATER) AND BARCLAY.

oughly investigated the pigs, collecting about five eggs in doing so. The next morning, with the assistance of our little spirit stove, we had a wonderful breakfast and laid plans for the next day. For nearly a week those pigs got more attention than they had ever had in their lives, and we had better breakfasts than we had had since being taken prisoners, whereas the Inspector, who had been counting on these eggs for his own meals, grew more furious every day. We made the horrible mistake of taking all the eggs we could find and a large padlock was put on the pig pen.

Towards the latter part of August parcels began to arrive for all the Canadians who had been taken prisoner on the 2nd of June. The Canadian Red Cross parcels were particularly welcomed by those men whose families were not in a position to keep them supplied with a continual stream of food. Those of us who had friends in England were especially fortunate in receiving parcels both from this source and from our homes in Canada.

The Englishmen envied the lot of the Colonials as they said that we were looked after better than they were, both in France and in Germany. Any little unevenness in the distribution of parcels was overcome by the generosity of those who received more than their share, and men who did not get sufficient food to supplement the rations issued by the hospital, and any new prisoners who arrived destitute and hungry, were always taken care of by

their more fortunate friends. Many of us received parcels of bread sent twice a week from Switzerland but, unfortunately, owing to the fact that the censorship at Wahn was so slow, in most cases the bread arrived in a mouldy condition. Prisoners in camp received the Swiss bread in excellent shape as the parcels went direct from Switzerland to the various camps, where they were censored and at once given to the addressee. On rare occasions we received a loaf or two of bread in perfect condition, although very hard and dry, and then we celebrated accordingly. But more often I have seen a parcel of Swiss bread, which had lain in Wahn for a month, arrive with the centre all eaten out and sometimes containing a rat's nest.

It was well that our parcels had begun to arrive at more frequent intervals, as the hospital rations were cut down owing to the great shortage of food and the failure of the potato crop in Germany. Horsemeat was a luxury which we got very rarely, and fish appeared on the menu more often than ever. Another substitute for meat was a species of large sausage, containing mostly bones and gristle, and made from all the otherwise unusable parts of an animal. It seemed to us that there were about eight meatless days in every week.

Loefelsind, the little German who had charge of the hospital linen, and whose home was in Cologne, told me that, short as our rations were, we got more

and far better food than was allowed the civil population of the city. He had a wife and three children, and their weekly allowance of meat was not enough to make a decent meal for the average man, while the supply of milk and other nourishing foods was not enough to keep the children healthy. This state of things prevailed in every large city in Germany, but the farmers, in spite of strict regulations as to reporting the total output of their farms, managed to secrete a certain portion and live fairly comfortably.

Moodie had told us, a month or so before, that some one had sent him a small phonograph and records. We had been eagerly looking forward to the time when these should arrive and about the first of September the parcel came. We happened to be in the middle of a meal, but food was forgotten for the time being, and we played every record through behind closed doors and windows and with a fine needle, as we had not received permission to use the phonograph in the ward. We knew that trouble might ensue if this were not obtained, and did not dare ask permission as we were "in wrong" with the hospital authorities, and knew that it would be refused on some technical grounds, such as that of disturbing the other patients in the hospital. The phonograph and records were always kept carefully hidden under a bed when not in use. From that time on it was worked overtime and al-

ways with the greatest care. If a footstep were heard in the hall the machine was immediately shut off and pushed under the bed.

On Sept. 19th the plaster was removed from my arm for the second time, and Dr. Meyer, remembering that my statement about the arm not having been healed on the previous occasion had proved correct, asked me whether I thought the bone had knitted. I was not sure, but told him that I thought at last it had joined up but was in a very weak condition. He ordered an X-Ray photograph to be taken, then he passed on to the next ward saying that he would return when the plate had been developed. He went home that day without seeing me again or examining the photograph, and left no instructions as to what should be done with my arm over night. I went to the X-Ray room myself and saw by the photograph that the bones had grown together along a splinter, but that the junction was composed of an almost transparent substance, and I knew that if I rolled on my arm in the night it would probably be broken again. Fortunately a good Samaritan in the shape of Schwester Edelberta, who was horrified to think that nothing had been done for me, secured a splint which she applied herself. The next day the doctor was delighted when he saw the X-Ray photograph and congratulated me on my good fortune, saying that only one per cent of fractures of this nature were healed without a graft operation simi-

lar to that performed on Gray. He began to massage my arm vigorously, which at once caused an abscess by shifting the splinters of bone which were still in the scar. He applied a splint and said he would wait a month for the bone to strengthen before he operated to remove the splinters.

Moodie also got his foot out of plaster, and a shoemaker was called in from the town to make a special boot with a cork rise on account of the shortness of his leg. He at once began to talk of going to camp; and Gray laid plans to go with him as there were rumours of another Swiss Commission, and he thought that he would have more chance of being accepted in camp than in hospital, where he had failed once before. He asked Dr. Meyer's permission to leave with Moodie, but in order to obtain this he had to sign a certificate to the effect that he took all responsibility in case his arm, which was not properly healed, should be broken while at camp. Tilley was also quite well again, and arrangements were made for all three to leave together.

Before our happy home was broken up we decided to go "right in off the deep end" and hold a big dinner. We had never been extravagant with our food before, but we felt that this was an occasion which demanded it. The French captain and Barnes were invited to come and to supply any delicacies that they wished to contribute.

The French captain promised a whole chicken tinned in jelly which he had received from Paris. The instructions said that it had to be placed under a cold water tap one hour before eating. He was very precise, and after asking the exact hour at which we intended to dine, said he would be on hand with the chicken ready to eat.

Ludwig was given careful instructions a few days before the event and secured for us two bottles of Madeira and a bottle of Port, which were hidden under the mattresses till the time came to open them. The day previous we spent some time printing the menus — one copy for each guest — decorated with the flags of the Allies as far as red and blue ink would permit. We secured two tables which, when placed together, would give plenty of room for six, and calculated the number of plates necessary to avoid having to use any twice in succession. Watkins promptly stole the extra ones from the kitchen.

We dressed for parade as completely as we could, but the French captain outshone us all in his blue tunic and red breeches. My tunic had shrunk so much in the wash that I could hardly button it, and the sleeve was slit up so as to enable me to put it on over my plaster cast. The others were in a similar plight, but in spite of our peculiar appearance we felt " all dressed up and no place to go."

Moodie, being the senior, was made chairman,

and before dinner he put us each in charge of a certain course, preferably the one we had shown ourselves to be more or less expert in cooking.

At 7 o'clock we sat down and glanced at the menus in a careless manner as though we had never seen them before, and had not spent most of the last three days sneaking down to the basement and smuggling up the tins containing the food announced thereon.

The menu was as below. It was printed in French with many side remarks of a more or less witty nature. Unfortunately my copy was taken away from me on leaving Germany, but the following details I have secured from one of my letters home.

Consommé
Mock Turtle Soup
Poisson
Sardines
Entrée
Creamed Shrimps
Pièce de Résistance
Cold Chicken and Sausage
Tomatoes Peas
Fruits Confits
With Cream and Custard
Entremets
Welsh Rarebit

Dessert

Dates Raisins
Biscuits Cheese
Café au Lait

Vins

Madère Porto

To cook this wonderful banquet we had but one tiny spirit stove with two burners, one medium and one small saucepan and one toy frying pan.

While one course was being eaten the cook for the next would be dancing around the stove, burning his fingers, and rushing to the table at odd intervals to snatch a bit of the course in progress. It was the most exciting meal I ever ate. Watkins was working against time and our appetites trying to wash, in a pail of hot water, the dishes for the course about to be served. We expected the room to be raided and all our little secret luxuries discovered, but decided to throw everything to the winds and enjoy ourselves. Fortunately, no one came in to disturb us.

After dinner we drank the health of everybody in turn. Speeches were made alternately in French and English (on this occasion German was barred) and at the conclusion of the evening we all voted unanimously in favour of a similar dinner with the same guests to be held after the war if it could possibly be arranged. (Here's hoping that it will be possible.)

A few days after this Moodie, Gray and Tilley departed for camp, and left me in sole possession of the ward.

CHAPTER XII

Alone

I NEVER felt so downhearted in my life as the day I was left alone in that hospital ward. The room seemed twice as large as before. My locker and the floor around my bed were cluttered up with articles, such as empty tin boxes for sugar, or glass jars for holding butter when taken from the tin, all of which had been the precious possessions of the boys who had left, and had been donated to me as too bulky to carry. The drawers of the other lockers stood open as they had been left in the last hurried search. Discarded hospital clothes lay on the untidy beds and the floor was strewn with torn up letters and other papers. I asked Watkins to tidy the room and fled from the scene.

I spent most of that day with the French Captain and Barnes until I was summoned to the parcel room to examine two mysterious packages which had arrived for me. They turned out to be a phonograph and records which had been sent by a very kind uncle. This was a piece of luck, that, the day Moodie departed with our chief source of amusement, the gap should be filled in such an opportune way. The excitement was as great as on the

day of the arrival of the first phonograph, because here we had a brand new lot of records we had never heard which had to be tried over at once.

The phonograph was a very compact little machine, exactly the same as the one we had had at battalion headquarters in the trenches. It was constructed in two halves joined by hinges. The lower part contained the machinery, and the upper part, which stood upright when the instrument was playing, held a concave metal sound-reflector. When closed up, the phonograph could be locked and carried about by a suit-case handle arranged for the purpose.

I could not see why a phonograph should not be allowed in the hospital, so braved the lion in his den and told the Inspector that I had one which I wanted permission to use occasionally in the men's wards as well as my own. After some arguing this was obtained, and I came to the conclusion that you never know what you can do till you try.

Shortly after this I arranged for a little concert in the ward which had the greatest number of Englishmen in bed. All those from the other wards who could come were invited to do so. I saw the sanitaire on duty, who happened to be almost human and promised to say nothing if the men smoked, provided I would see that all traces were removed when the concert was over. Barnes promised to assist me, both in running the phonograph and supplying the very necessary cigarettes.

The news had spread like wildfire, and when we appeared I think every Englishman in the hospital, who was not at death's door, was seated on the beds or on the floor of that ward. They were delighted when they heard that they could smoke. This was not allowed in the building. Goodness only knows why, because it was very modern and absolutely fire-proof — and the bed patients had the first comfortable smoke they had had since entering the hospital. An English Tommy would die without a "fag" and the only chance he had to light up in Lazarett VI was at night.

The sanitaire on duty had a nasty habit of bursting into the rooms and suddenly switching on the lights, in order to catch the men at this trick. He always found them apparently fast asleep, and never knew that most of them were holding a lighted cigarette under the covers. The tell-tale holes burnt in the bed clothes were what always caused the trouble.

The concert commenced about three o'clock. I didn't want to bore the men and had counted on only playing the machine for an hour or so, but we didn't stop till six o'clock when the appearance of supper broke up the party. Never had musical artists performed for a more enthusiastic audience. Shrieks of laughter greeted every joke and everyone joined in and sang all the better known popular songs. Some of these were called for over and over again. We concluded the performance with a dou-

ble song from a musical comedy, in which God Save the King, quietly sung by the chorus, formed the background for a popular lay. We all felt as though we should be standing at attention.

Other similar concerts were afterwards held in different wards and helped to brighten our all too monotonous existence.

Our regular Sunday night services went on as usual, and by this time I had graduated to the position of pastor. I must confess that I didn't make a very good one. I am a Presbyterian and my knowledge of the English church service was limited. Before leaving, Moodie had written out for me a list of the prayers in use and the pages on which they were to be found. During the week Watkins selected the hymns and practised them over with a Canadian sergeant who was wounded in the head and who managed to do fairly well at the little organ in the chapel. Each Sunday I went to the service with every finger of my good hand marking a place in the book. I have often watched ministers in church looking up places in the prayer book during the singing of the hymns and followed their excellent example. Only once did I fall down. It was rather difficult turning the pages with one hand, and on one occasion I absolutely could not find the collect for the day. I had to lean over and ask the page from Barnes who was seated in the front row.

My meals were lonely affairs but I used to amuse

myself trying to invent new dishes. I was very occasionally given a boiled egg as a treat and instead of a ration of meat. I think the cook's watch must have been shell-shocked because sometimes the egg would be almost raw and sometimes quite hard. A single egg is not very filling so I decided to give it that property, if possible, without losing the flavour. The result of my experiments can be gathered from the following quotation from one of my letters:

"I think I have invented a new dish to get the most benefit out of an egg. We sometimes get them (boiled). Take three or four soda crackers, according to the quantity required, and pulverise them thoroughly (this was usually done with the clenched fist). Add enough (condensed) milk to make the whole a thick creamy mass, butter the size of an egg, then stir in the egg thoroughly minced if already boiled. Add a pinch of salt and cook until the whole is about the consistency of scrambled eggs. The result is wonderful. One egg makes enough for about three people. Use a raw egg if available!"

The supply of cabbage seemed to run out and we were given instead a very tough lettuce. This, when sprinkled with salt and pepper and covered with oil from a tin of sardines, was quite palatable.

On Thursday, Oct. 12th, Dr. Meyer informed me that the following Tuesday he would operate to remove the splinters from my arm. On Friday we

heard the Swiss Commission was coming soon to the hospital and I decided to present myself. I remembered the trouble that Gray had had, and confided in the doctor that I wished to go to Switzerland where I would be able to see my family. He agreed that my arm would be useless for a year, but said he would not let me see the Commission until after he had operated.

The next day there was a strong rumour — we were never given any official notice — that the Commission would visit the hospital on Tuesday. The doctor was unable to operate on Sunday or Monday; but agreed to do it that very morning if I had eaten no breakfast, as otherwise it might be very dangerous. I was taking no chances on missing the operation so said I was starving of hunger. I had in reality just finished a royal breakfast of cereals and fried sausage.

The loneliness of my position was impressed on me more than ever as I lay in bed for the three days following the operation. During this time I could not sleep and was given morphia every night. I thought a great deal of home and the approaching Christmas season, and took a great deal of satisfaction in enclosing, in the letter I wrote while in bed, a cheque to buy presents for some of the friends who had been so good to me. I was fortunate in having my cheque-book in my pocket at the time I was captured.

On Tuesday afternoon I was told that the Swiss

Commission had arrived and that I was to get up and go to the French Captain's room and wait till I was sent for. Barnes was to see the Commission, too, and we could not concentrate our minds on any one thing as we waited for the time for our fate to be decided. At length the Inspector appeared at the door and beckoned to Barnes who went out, only to reappear in a few moments wearing a smile from ear to ear. We knew that he had passed. I was sent for almost immediately.

In the centre of the Grande Salle was a group of patients and German doctors. In their midst I could distinguish the three Swiss doctors by their high blue caps with the long patent leather peaks. I was taken to one side while a sanitaire removed the bandages from my arm and displayed a deep gash stuffed with iodoform gauze. Presently a Swiss doctor approached, examined my arm, and asked several questions regarding the loss of movement in my hand. He was very nice and spoke English fluently. It turned out that he had been in Canada and had visited in several cities which I knew quite well. It was a strange feeling, talking to a friendly neutral who was in a position to aid you. Dr. Meyer brought up the other two doctors and explained my case to them, adding that I was very anxious to get to Switzerland to see my wife and family! They held a short consultation, and then gave some instructions in German to an orderly who sat at a desk writing. The Inspector

whispered in my ear "félicitations" (congratulations). I had passed the first Commission. I hardly knew whether to laugh or cry. I went back to the room closely followed by the Inspector, who grabbed the French Captain and urged him to present himself for examination. He was finally persuaded to go, and came dashing back in a moment to undress. I never saw a man remove his clothes so quickly. He was gone a long time and was very dejected when he returned. Shrugging his shoulders he said that the Swiss doctors had been very nice to him but had told him that he was too far recovered to be accepted.

When the excitement had subsided we talked over the idea of all living together, as Barnes and I had been told that we would not be sent away for re-examination in Constance for about three weeks. The matter was decided, and in the course of the next day or two I moved down, bag, but no baggage.

CHAPTER XIII

The French Captain

The room occupied by the French Captain and Barnes had been, before the war, the office of the head mistress of the school. It opened off the Grande Salle and had two windows overlooking the courtyard. Just inside the door, and on the right, was a small hand basin. Along the same wall, and in the corner next a window, stood my bed and locker. Against the opposite wall stood the other two beds at the foot of which, and between them, was a desk piled with books. The little enclosure thus made contained an arm-chair and two lockers. A table between my bed and the basin held a backgammon board, a few dishes and the phonograph. All this furniture so completely filled the room that when you walked in it was almost necessary to back out like a crab.

The French Captain was a charming man of about forty years of age. He had entered Lazarett VI when it was opened about the end of 1914. Since that time he had occupied the same room and had there recovered in solitude from his very serious wounds. He was an indefatigable worker and as soon as he was able, commenced the study

of French law in some books which he had ordered from Paris. For a year and a half he lived almost alone and kept himself from going mad by very hard reading. In sheer desperation he had taken up the study of German with a sanitaire and had even attempted English by himself. The latter he gave up until he commenced again with Moodie. His habits were well defined; every day at precisely the same hour he did the same thing, whether it was the study of a certain language or a walk on the balcony.

By the middle of 1916 he was well enough to go to camp but he managed to stay on because he took his studies very seriously, and thought that, in his little room in hospital, he would have a better opportunity for reading than in camp, where he would probably be placed in a room with six or seven other men.

His progress in English was remarkable but, in spite of that, our conversations were usually held in French. The only time he voluntarily spoke English was when we were all in bed. Just as Barnes and I were trying to get to sleep he would come out with some long sentence he had been planning for five or ten minutes.

Like all other Frenchmen he had an aversion to having the window open at night. He insisted that, being near the door — which was always closed — he felt a draught. My bed was right in front of the window in question, but we humoured him and

went to bed with the windows closed and the curtains drawn. As soon as he was asleep one of us would slip out of bed and quietly open the window.

One evening after supper we were sitting, smoking and discussing various subjects, when the conversation drifted around to home. He told us that he had lived in Lille, where his regiment, the 43rd Infantry, had been stationed. He had no family but lived alone in a small house. His two chief sources of amusement were his horse and his library. He railed bitterly at the Huns who were probably occupying his house and destroying his books. We led him on to tell us his experiences since the war broke out.

He told us that when war was declared he was on leave, and motoring with some friends in Northern France. He was at once recalled to join his regiment, and had just time to draw his money from the bank and pack his kit before departing for Belgium.

The French army was fighting a rear-guard action, and near Namur the 43rd was the last to be retired. His battalion was opposed by four regiments of German Guards and before their advance the battalion was retreating one company at a time. His company was the last to move, and as they lay in the hastily dug trench they saw a whole squadron of German cavalry, which was dismounted, and awaiting orders in what they considered a concealed position. Four salvos from the famous

"75's" annihilated them before they could mount and move off. Unfortunately the guns were all too scarce and the German hordes moved on.

When orders came for his company to retire, the Captain stayed with the last section to prevent a disorderly retreat. Most of the men of that section were killed and our friend fell shot through the jaw, the lungs and the body. The enemy passed over the trench and a German officer, seeing the Frenchman lying helpless, whipped out his revolver and shot him in the thigh.

A German medical officer who passed by a little later, told him he would be dead in the morning, that there was no use doing anything for him, and giving him a half bottle of stolen champagne, left him to die.

For three days nobody came near the place until finally a Belgian peasant, probably searching for valuables on the dead, put him in a rough two-wheeled wagon and took him back to the farm. There he lay for three weeks with no medical attention till, eventually, the Germans found him and removed him to a hospital in Belgium.

When examined by the doctors he said that the wound in his thigh was caused by a shot from a German officer's revolver as he lay wounded in a trench. This statement was scouted as a lie, for they said that no German officer would do such a thing! On his medical history sheet there was detailed account of the treatment of every wound,

but this one — which was the most serious of all, and nearly cost him the loss of his leg — was not even mentioned.

When he was well enough to be moved he was sent to Lazarett VI which had just been opened, and there he had lived for almost two years.

The first mail that left the hospital after I had passed the Swiss Commission was on October 21st. On that day I sent a post card home saying that there was every possibility of my going to Switzerland, and asking that my parcels should be stopped until further notice. This card did not reach England till Dec. 27th. It must have been held for over a month, and for no apparent reason, except that the Germans did not want the supply of food coming into the country to be decreased.

Every third day since my operation the wound had been carefully dressed. There was a great shortage of dressings in the hospital and all bandages were washed and used over and over again. My arm became infected from, I believe, a dirty bandage and I was suddenly laid up for about a week with a bad attack of erysipelas.

I grew very impatient at getting no news as to when we were to leave for Constance; I could not settle down to work and almost gave up the study of French altogether. Most of my time was spent in discussing with Barnes the possibility of being refused by the second Commission. He was sure to go as he had lost one eye, but my case was doubt-

LIEUT. DOUGLAS, THE FRENCH CAPTAIN AND LIEUT. BARNES IN THE COURTYARD OF THE HOSPITAL AT COLOGNE.

ful. He kept me in good spirits by continually telling me how bad my arm was.

At 2.30 P. M. on Nov. 14th an orderly dashed into our room and told us to be ready to leave for Constance at 3 o'clock. This was very short notice and we had a lot to do. It took at least half an hour to get out of my hospital clothes and into my uniform. Besides that, I had some packing to do and wished to make arrangements for the disposal of my parcels in case I should not come back. During that half hour pandemonium reigned supreme in our room. We were so excited and happy that we really did not care much whether we took any baggage with us or not.

We hastily donated to the French Captain and others articles of which they were in need, and which could be replaced quite easily if we got to Switzerland. I half expected to be returned to the hospital in about a week's time, so left instructions with the French Captain to hold my parcels against return. If I were accepted I said I would let him know, and he promised to see that the most needy men in the hospital, but preferably the Englishmen, should get the benefit of this extra supply of food.

We had hardly started to pack when we got orders to send our baggage downstairs to be searched. This order was closely followed by another demanding our immediate appearance in the Inspector's office. He informed us that the increase in pay,

which we had been given during the last two or three months, had not been agreed to by the British Government and that we would have to pay back the difference before we would be allowed to go to Switzerland. Barnes had no money, but fortunately I had enough to pay for both of us. We were each given a very official receipt, and I got in notes the balance which stood to my credit. These notes were later discounted in Switzerland at the rate of 28 per cent.

The Police Corporal was in charge of the search of our baggage and removed my precious steel helmet, saying that it was war material. He told us that we were to leave behind all photographs, letters or papers of any description. These were to be placed in an envelope bearing our name and regiment and after being censored would be forwarded to us if we went to Switzerland. I complied with this but kept in my pocket the receipt the Inspector had just given me, my cheque-book and little diary.

The hall was crowded with people to see us off. Schwester Edelberta, whom we had not seen for two weeks, came to say good-bye; she was crying and told us that her brother had been killed. About ten Englishmen formed the party leaving that day. There was a great deal of shaking of hands and giving of verbal messages — written messages were forbidden — for men who were already in Switzerland. Just before we left one poor fellow came up to me and said that he had been passed by the pre-

vious Commission when it had visited Wahn. The day the party left there for Constance he was sent out to work and thus missed his opportunity of being seen by the second Commission. He had since been sent to our hospital but arrived just after the Swiss doctors had made their last visit. There was nothing for him to do but wait till they came again.

I could not help comparing this happy group of men who filed out of the hospital door and climbed into an ambulance to the similar group that had arrived, weary and dejected, on June 4th.

CHAPTER XIV

Constance

The ambulance took us to Lazaret I, another hospital for prisoners in Cologne — where, after a short wait, a few more men were added to our party and we were whirled off to the railway station. We were met by Red Cross orderlies who were very kind, and assisted in carrying the baggage of those prisoners who were too weak to do so for themselves. The Unteroffizier in command of our guard had a railway warrant for a certain number of prisoners and our heads were counted as we passed through the wicket. We were obliged to wait for about half an hour in the huge hall, but chairs were brought for most of us and the rest sat on their suitcases, or on the floor.

We were eventually led into a second-class restaurant where we found a little group of English officers seated at one end of a long table. Most of these men were from the same camp and had much luggage in the shape of cages of tame canaries, home-made musical instruments and such other articles as had served to while away the time during their long punishment. After buying a few war

cakes and a cup of coffee, we sat around and talked until we were taken out on the station platform.

At 7 o'clock a train, loaded with prisoners from various camps, pulled into the station. We officers were allotted certain carriages and climbed on board to seek room in some of the compartments which were not completely filled.

By a very strange coincidence Barnes and I got into a compartment containing Moodie and Gray and also Addie Sime, whom I had not seen since our long chat in the trenches on June 1st. We had a happy reunion: everybody talked at once and it was worse than any women's sewing meeting that was ever held!

No one slept much that night for the compartment was too crowded, and besides we had too much to say. We talked well on into the night, catching occasional dim glimpses of the Rhine and some of its famous old castles. We all regretted very much that we were not making this trip in the day-time, because those who had been in Germany before told us that the scenery was wonderful. It was unanimously decided, however, that we would much prefer to study the scenery in Switzerland.

We had all brought tinned food to last us for two or three days, at the end of which time we expected to be on our way back to camp or hospital, or making our way to the promised land where tinned food was not required. At about 12 o'clock we decided to have a little feed. One of the men produced a

loaf of Swiss bread, others, tins of butter, sausages and tongue. This was washed down with a drink of condensed milk sucked through the hole in the tin — and then we felt much better.

The next day we were interested in seeing the women and old men working in the fields. Horses were nowhere to be seen, their places being almost invariably taken by oxen. On this occasion I don't remember noticing one man of military age who was not in uniform.

About noon the train was stopped for an hour on a siding. We were taken to a wooden hut close by, where we were allowed to purchase an excellent meal consisting of soup, very good meat, plenty of potatoes and cabbage. We were all surprised at the huge portions of meat, and came to the conclusion that this was done to send us from the country with the impression that Germany was far from starving.

At 11 o'clock that night we arrived at Constance and were thankful to get out on the platform and stretch our legs again. A German doctor asked those who wished to ride in an ambulance to stand on one side. Very few wanted to do this, as they preferred to walk and see something of the town. A doctor, seeing my arm in a sling and thinking I looked weak, placed me on one side with the cripples.

A short drive took us to the garrison barracks and we were shown into a long, narrow, wooden

building with a row of beds down each side. At the far end were a few officers who had arrived on an earlier train, and amongst these I was delighted to find Lieut. Hubbs of the 4th C. M. R. He greeted me with the news that I was dead, and wanted to know what I was doing there. I assured him that I was very much alive and probably born to be hung, as they had failed to kill me on the 2nd of June.

We were each assigned a bed, and proceeded to undress immediately as we were very tired after our 28-hour journey in the train. Shortly afterwards the officers who had walked arrived and filled up the unoccupied portion of the room, the overflow being accounted for by placing the senior officers in one of the main buildings which surrounded the parade ground.

We were actually within the walls of a German barracks containing troops undergoing training. In addition to the main buildings there were rows of other structures, similar to the one we were in, which formed temporary hospital wards for English and French prisoners awaiting the visit of the Swiss Commission. Our building contained fifty beds. At one end was a room in which our baggage was locked, and at the other a small dining-room was walled off by a thin partition. Beyond this was a short passage-way leading to the door, on one side of which was a room occupied by an old nurse, and used as a surgery; on the other side was

what had once been a bathroom, but the bath was now chiefly used by the orderlies for washing dishes and clothes. The place was heated by several round stoves for which there seemed to be no lack of coal, and was well lit by numerous windows on both sides. In the corner next the dining room were five beds occupied by the German orderlies. At the foot of each hung a sign-board painted with the name of the owner — Karl, Franz, Fritz, etc.

The meals were brought in from a central kitchen, and for the first day or two were very good. Unfortunately, something had delayed the arrival of the Swiss Commission, and, as the German Government did not fancy maintaining the luxury in which we were living, the supply of food was suddenly reduced. The food we had brought with us gave out, and we were reduced to living entirely on the German rations, supplemented by cheese and sardines which we were able to buy at a canteen, established in the barracks by the Swiss Red Cross. No one would tell us how long we were to be kept in Constance, and we were refused permission to write and ask to have our parcels and letters forwarded.

At 8 o'clock every morning coffee, and rolls made of fairly white flour, were placed on the tables in the dining room, and a German orderly would furiously stamp up and down the ward shouting "Schweinerei, aufstehen, Kaffee trinken!" (Pigs, get up and drink your coffee). We had nothing to

get up for, and tried to persuade our more energetic friends to bring our rolls and cups of coffee along to our beds. There was only one roll apiece. The early bird got the worm or, in this case, an extra roll, and the late-comers had no breakfast. After the first day or two this difficulty was overcome by an orderly walking up the ward every morning and throwing a roll on each bed. He was generally a good shot, and managed to hit everybody in the small of the back or on the shins so as to be sure to wake him up. It was easier to wake a man than to force him to get up, and the orderlies were always angry because we continually lay in bed. One morning Karl put his head in the door and shouted "Commission kommt heute Morgan neun Uhr" (the Commission is coming this morning at nine o'clock). Every man that could, leapt from his bed and was completely dressed in a few minutes. This trick only worked once.

The next bright idea was to start sweeping the room and raising such a horrible dust that it was impossible to lie in bed with comfort. There were many men with amputated legs who could not get up and escape this form of pleasantry, so for their sakes we usually crawled out of bed.

When we first arrived the lights were extinguished at 9 o'clock, but a delegation to the Commandant of the camp succeeded in getting us permission to stay up until 10 o'clock. Karl and his friends did not think that we should be allowed

this privilege and did their best to encourage the motto "Early to bed, early to rise."

They started the evening performance by occupying the only comfortable chairs in front of the stoves in the dining-room where we gathered to smoke and play cards or chess. No amount of abuse or complaints to the Commandant could oust them. About 8:30 or 9 they would open the windows — this was late in November and early in December — and commence to sweep the dining-room.

In spite of the unpleasantness and uncertainty of our life we did our best to be cheerful. The little phonograph worked over-time, and many pleasant parties were held around the beds of the more seriously wounded officers.

Jack Firstbrook of Toronto was one of these. He was in the R. F. C. and had been severely wounded in an air duel. One bullet which had pierced his lungs was still lodged in his body and he was in a serious condition. He, Addie Sime and I would often discuss our "home town" and talk of the people we knew and the good times we had had. It was a wonderful thing to be able to transport ourselves out of our surroundings and back to the days when it seemed that the sun was always shining.

Lieut. Hugh Macdonnell of the Princess Pats, who had played football and hockey for Queen's University, was there, too, and with him I discussed

everything from football rules to Canadian politics.

An English officer had a very tame canary which he would let free in the dining-room while we were sitting playing cards. The bird afforded us much amusement by flying from one person's head to another and pecking furiously at the ear of the passive victim, or by perching on the cards which some player was holding in his hand and thus seriously upsetting the game. At one stern word of command from its master the canary would fly back through the open door of its cage.

On one of these occasions there was a game of bridge in progress and it was noticed that there were only five eyes between the four players!

From 10 A. M. till noon, and from 3 to 5 P. M. we were allowed out on the parade ground for exercise. It was a strange sight — that mixture of crippled French and English soldiers — aimlessly going round in a large circle, stopping only now and then to watch a squad of German recruits being put through their drill by an Unteroffizier.

The German N. C. O., if he wishes to impress a certain command on the mind of a soldier, stands very close to, and directly in front of him, and shouts at the top of his voice. If, after this "gentle hint," the soldier makes a mistake, he is brutally cuffed and told to try again. As a result of such treatment the German soldiers are terrified of their N. C. O.'s, and will fight hard as long as they are directly under their command. But let the N. C.

O's. become casualties and up go the hands of the German soldiers as if by magic.

Every morning the nurse came through the ward and dressed our wounds. She was a harmless old person who meant well but knew very little about surgery. After she had once roughly poked the iodoform gauze down into my wound, I took the instruments from her and applied all my own dressings.

We heard some interesting experiences from men who had been taken prisoner at the beginning of the war. One officer had been placed in a men's camp where they refused to recognize his rank. He did not mind this so much as the brutal treatment and the terrible food. He had seen men ruthlessly shot and bayoneted to death for very trivial reasons. His life of hardship had given him very bad indigestion and for this reason he had been sent to Constance to be examined by the Commission. He had brought with him two pork pies in order to be sure of having a fit of indigestion when the Commission saw him. Unfortunately these were eaten on the occasion of two false alarms about the arrival of the Commission. He was returned to Germany.

Another young officer had lost his arm above the elbow. Every night when we were getting into bed he used to amuse us by waving good-night to those at the other end of the room and saluting the passers-by with his stump.

When we had been in Constance about two weeks we were given our first batch of letters, which we were overjoyed to receive as we felt as though we had been absolutely cut off from the world. After a great deal of discussion permission was also given us to write home.

About December 1st the Commission actually came. We were shown, one by one, into a room containing the Swiss doctors and numerous German doctors and officials. We were examined; notes were taken about our cases and we left the room without being told whether we had been accepted or refused. The next three or four days we spent comparing notes as to which doctors we had seen and what they had said, in an endeavour to find out who had passed and who had failed. The Germans would tell us nothing. One day an Unteroffizier came in with a list of six or seven names. This was read out and the officers mentioned were told to pack up and leave for camp at once. Almost every day a similar list came in and each of us trembled for fear his name might be included.

Gray, Moodie and Addie Sime were victims of these lists.

On December the 5th we were allowed to wire for our parcels and the Germans told us we would probably spend Christmas in Constance, as our Government would not agree to the terms of the exchange.

One day I was talking to a German Unteroffizier

who had a great deal to do with us on account of his knowledge of English. The conversation drifted around to who started the war. He, of course, insisted that England was to blame.

"Do you yourself, in the bottom of your heart, really think that England started the war?" I asked.

"Well, you know, we've *got* to believe it," was his reply. There is more truth than poetry in this statement.

On December 12th a lot of parcels, which had been accumulating for us in camp or hospital, arrived. They were practically useless as we left the next day for Switzerland. I, particularly, got a very large number, which the Germans tried to persuade me to leave for them. I refused, and sent to the town and bought a large basket-trunk into which I packed them all to take to Switzerland, whence I hoped to be able to send them back to my less fortunate friends. I got permission to write a postcard to the French Captain in which I told him I was leaving, and asked him to carry out the arrangements about my parcels.

The day we left, that baggage which had not been examined and sealed in camp was brought in and placed by the owner's bed. We were gathered together and asked by a German Major if we had any written messages from friends in camp, or if we had any gold in our possession. No one spoke. "I

take your word, as English officers and gentlemen, that such is the case," said the Major.

The Germans have a high respect for the word of an Englishman: I'm afraid the feeling is far from mutual.

Our persons were not searched, but the baggage was thoroughly examined, after which it was packed, labelled and carted off to the station.

My feelings about this time can be gathered from the following extract from my first letter home after leaving Germany:

"As you know by now, of course, I am in Switzerland, or at least I think I am. Every minute I expect to wake up and hear some Hun shouting, 'Aufstehen, Kaffee trinken.' I wrote you from Constance but you probably never got the letters. Permission to write was given very grudgingly. We arrived there November 15th. There were 63 of us at first. We were there for a month and the whole stay was nothing but a series of disappointments. The first was that the Commission would not be able to see us for some time and we had come prepared for a few days' stay only. All our tinned stuff was left behind in camp or hospital. We had to fall back on the horrible German rations—mostly cabbage, with cabbage on the side as a vegetable and again as an entrée. Suddenly, as a bolt from the blue, a Guillotine list was read out containing the names of eight senior officers who were

to go back to camp. It was some sort of a reprisal, I am sure.

"We saw the Commission and then no one knew whether he had passed or not. They wouldn't tell us. Guillotine lists became frequent. I managed to escape them all but was still in Constance with thirty-two other officers on Dec. 12 when two lists came in including us all. One party of thirteen was to leave at 6 A. M. on the 13th for one camp, and the rest of us in the evening for another. We weren't very hopeful, but kept cheerful. As soon as the first lot had gone we were told that the rest of us were to leave for Switzerland that night. You never heard such a cheer as went up. We were all running around in our pajamas, shaking hands and hugging each other. Even then we didn't really believe we were going till we got on the train at 6. The train wasn't to leave till 7.50 but I suppose they were afraid we might miss it. No — fear!"

CHAPTER XV

Switzerland at Last

With what a sigh of relief we settled back into the plush seats of that Swiss train! We were travelling in first class carriages just as though we had paid our fare. A very nice Swiss officer, followed by several stretcher-bearers, came through to see that we were all comfortable and asked us if there were anything we wanted. The only thing we could think of was a large brick to hurl at the Germans standing on the station platform, but we did not tell him this. We acted just as though we were dining with wealthy friends whom we hardly knew.

On the train were 414 English Tommies and 20 officers. There was a comfortable seat for every man who could sit up, and there were hospital cars for the stretcher cases. I doubt if, in the whole world, at that moment, there were a happier lot of men. But there wasn't a cheer or any other sign of joy. We were still on German territory and before we crossed the border a wheel might come off the engine or there might be an earthquake. We were taking no chances!

Just after the train pulled out of the station we entered Switzerland. We were out of the hands of

the Huns at last. We looked out of the windows and saw women and children standing in the snow outside their doors, waving handkerchiefs and shouting, "Vive l'Angleterre." A spontaneous cheer went up from every man. It was the most thrilling moment of our lives.

As we were whirled on through the night the cheering and waving continued until the train made its first stop in a Swiss town. The station platform was packed with people who crowded to the car windows and showered us with flowers, chocolate, cigarettes and cigars. This was carried out not only by the girls in their smart Red Cross uniforms, but many civilians made private donations as well.

As the train pulled out of the station the men hung out of the windows cheering and waving the Swiss flags that had been given them. It was a wonderful sensation to feel that we were really welcome in Switzerland. The personal element had recently so absolutely disappeared from our lives that this sudden show of enthusiasm brought lumps to our throats.

A British Government official had boarded the train and brought with him an armful of London papers. With the exception of the *Continental Times,* a pro-German paper published in Germany and distributed free amongst the prisoners in order to try and discourage them, we had not seen a newspaper printed in English since we had been cap-

MÜRREN, SWITZERLAND—THE UPPER VILLAGE ON THE EDGE OF THE PRECIPICE.

tured. He also produced several pads of cable forms. Imagine being able to send a cable to someone and have it arrive! It seems to me that we wrote cables to almost every person whose first name we knew. My cable home to Canada arrived in five hours, thanks to the consideration of the censors, and was the first intimation my family had that there was even a possibility of my going to Switzerland. You will remember that my letters and postcards, suggesting a move, had been held up.

At every station where the train stopped our reception was just as enthusiastic until, at 12 o'clock, when we arrived at Berne, the climax was reached. Here we were met by several English staff officers, members of the British Legation, and a crowd of charming English and American ladies who escorted us to the station restaurant to a regular banquet. All these months we had dreamed of a meal like this and at last our dreams were to be realised. The ladies were kindness itself. They cut up the meat for those of us who had "game" arms, and then sat and talked to us — but not about the war, thank goodness.

Before leaving Constance a tag indicating our final destination in Switzerland had been tied on each of us. Those who were to go to Chateau d'Oex left at 3 A. M.— Barnes was included in this party. The rest of us left at 6 A. M. for Mürren, and a large number of those kind ladies stayed in the station until we had all gone.

The Mürren party consisted of nine officers and about two hundred men. We were accompanied by some of the officers who were already stationed in Mürren, and Capt. Llopart, the Swiss medical officer in charge of the interned at that place, who had come to Berne to meet us.

As we ran along the shores of Lake Thun the Jungfrau Mountain was pointed out and we were told that it was directly opposite our new home. At Interlaken we took another train which, crossing and recrossing a mountain stream, wound its way slowly up a valley until, about 8 o'clock, it arrived at Lauterbrunnen, a little village nestling in the bottom of a valley, whose walls towered up almost perpendicularly on both sides.

Here we were given a real Swiss breakfast of coffee, rolls, butter and honey. Not far away was a small barber's shop with one barber. As soon as breakfast was over the more particular ones stampeded to get in line for a much needed shave. Major A. Kirkpatrick, of Toronto, had grown, while in Germany, a very luxuriant beard: he returned from the barber's shop minus this decoration, and looking so handsome that nobody knew him.

About 9 o'clock we were asked, not ordered, to come to the station at the foot of the funiculaire, the little mountain railway which was to take us up to a much higher altitude. The funiculaire consisted of two small cars, holding about fifty people, one of which was fastened at each end of a long

steel cable. There was a single track, over a mile long, which rose at an angle of about 45 degrees. As one car went up the other came down, the two passing in the middle at a point where the track was made double for this purpose. While the first fifty of us were boarding the car, a compartment at one end was loaded with, what we considered, an enormous amount of baggage and freight. We noted the steepness of the incline and glanced at the steel cable, which, though very strong, did not seem to us strong enough to negotiate that heavy load. Having stared death in the face so many times before and come through successfully, we did not wish to die unheroically by the snapping of that cable. The Swiss officer got on board and we decided that if he, knowing all about it, was willing to take a chance, we would too.

As the car crawled slowly up the side of the mountain the valley below was unfolded to our gaze, and we had a glorious view of the wonderful mountains from which the snow never departs. At that season of the year snow was everywhere. There had been a great fall during the night, which clung to the branches of the fir trees and glistened in the rays of the early morning sun.

At the top of the funiculaire we changed into a very modern electric car, which bore us along tracks cut out of the side of the mountain until we arrived at Mürren, a small cluster of houses and hotels perched on the very edge of a precipice. A

crowd of English Tommies, who had been released from Germany in August of that year, were at the station to meet us. Waving flags and ringing cowbells, they welcomed us, while one of the men played "Home Sweet Home" on a cornet. As we emerged from the station three rousing British cheers again brought the lumps to our throats.

We were escorted through the snow to our various hotels where most of us went promptly to bed. Personally I was almost exhausted, and will never forget the feeling of satisfaction with which I climbed into the bed with its two soft mattresses and two soft pillows; and as I pulled up the clothes, I don't even remember them reaching my chin.

CHAPTER XVI

MÜRREN

THE first few days of our stay in Mürren were spent in an interested inspection of our surroundings. The town is situated on a small plateau — over a mile above sea-level — and overlooks a precipice which drops about 3,000 feet to the valley below. On the other side of the valley tower up the triple peaks of the Eiger, Monk and Jungfrau, from which at frequent intervals huge avalanches come thundering down, to carry away large stretches of forest on the lower slopes of the mountain. Behind the town, the Amendhubel — a hill well known to all the Interned at Mürren — rises to the height of 1,000 feet; and behind this is the Schilthorn, and other peaks favoured by the less adventurous mountain climbers.

Mürren is literally a one-horse town. The horse is used to help the soldiers drag coal and baggage from the station to the hotel. There is only one level road, a few hundred yards long, and along this are found half a dozen little shops which, before the war, catered to the immediate needs of the English tourists who filled the hotels. Most of these shops had been shut for the two years between the declar-

ation of war and the arrival of the first British Interned at Mürren.

All the officers and some of the men were quartered in the Palace Hotel, the rest of the men being distributed among seven other hotels. We were all treated as guests; our daily board — six francs ($1.20) for the officers and four francs (80c.) for the men, together with a small sum for heat — was paid directly to the management by the British Government. The hotel keepers were glad to get guests even at this low rate, as they were thus able to keep their establishments running and accommodate the few civilian visitors who came to Mürren; a considerable number of officers, and some of the men, had their families permanently visiting them.

The medical services were in the charge of Capt. Llopart, who was aided by several doctors, appointed from the French part of Switzerland, who did a six weeks' tour of duty in Mürren. Each man was examined on arrival and his treatment prescribed. Those who needed operations were sent to various hospitals in the large towns of Switzerland, where their expenses were paid by the British Government; those who were to have massage and mechanical treatment received it at Mürren, in a room equipped for this purpose.

A Swiss combatant officer held the position of Commandant de Place and was responsible for the discipline of the camp. He held office every morning and administered punishment for breaches of

discipline, being advised in this by a British officer appointed as his adjutant.

The Senior British officer was directly in command of all the Interned at Mürren. He organised the camp on the old established principles of the British Army. We were fortunate in having as S. B. O., Lieut.-Col. F. H. Neish of the Gordon Highlanders. He took a keen interest in everything that went on and, with the help of very able assistants, succeeded in creating a system which cared for the moral, spiritual and physical welfare of the men.

Orderly officers were appointed weekly, to inspect the hotels, rectify any minor complaints, and insist on order and cleanliness.

In each hotel the senior N. C. O. was known as the Chief of Establishment, and did duties similar to those of a Company Sergeant Major.

A school was organised under an army schoolmaster sent out from England and, after examination, the successful men were given their Army certificates.

Numerous work shops were opened, not only to do very necessary repair work, but also as a means of instructing untrained men in trades they could follow after the war. There was a carpenter's shop, shoemaker's shop, tailor's shop, etc.

Later on a printing shop was started under the direction of Lieut. Hubbs. A press and type were bought and the men were taught type-setting and

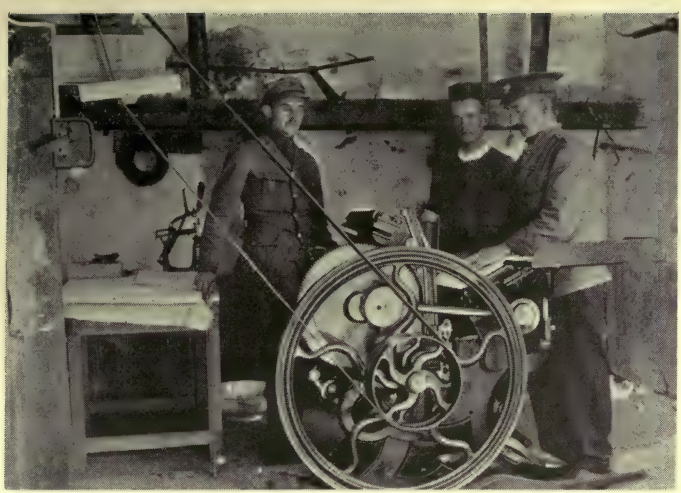
printing. A magazine called the *B. I. M.*— British Interned Mürren — was published every fortnight, and served to amuse the men, as well as to establish a permanent record of doings in Mürren.

Perhaps the most attractive form of instruction was given by the school of motor mechanism under Lieut. Wallis. A chassis was donated by a Swiss automobile firm and on it the pupils learned to be very expert motor mechanics. The school was later moved to Vevey where instruction in driving could be given. Most of the graduates of this school obtained positions as chauffeurs and mechanics during their stay in Switzerland.

The British Red Cross, with headquarters at Berne, usually supplied the necessary capital to start any new venture, but in most cases the money was soon paid back out of the profits.

Everything possible was done to entertain the men and make their lot more pleasant. A rink was built for the use of those whose condition allowed them to skate, and on it many carnivals and competitions of various sorts were held. A hockey team was organised from among the fifty Canadians, and, although all the players were crippled in some way, they succeeded in defeating almost every Swiss team they played.

There was a bob-run three kilometres (about two miles) long which, after some work, was cleared and put in working order. A funiculaire ran up the Almendhubel and carried the more energetic



MÜRREN MILITARY PRINTING OFFICE.
LIEUT. DOUGLAS AND TWO OF HIS STAFF AT WORK ON THE "B. I. M."

CARPENTER'S SHOP.
A CORNER OF THE SHOP WHERE MEN WERE TAUGHT THE USE OF SAW AND HAMMER.

and healthy members of the community to the top of the run, which wound around a little valley and finished conveniently close to the lower station of the funiculaire.

Ski-ing was another very popular form of amusement. I was very much interested by this fascinating sport and, when strong enough, bought a pair of skis and proceeded to learn. My first attempt at a real run netted me a strained knee and ankle, and two cracked ribs, but fortunately no damage to my arm. After several days in bed I began again, with much more success.

Soon after my arrival in Switzerland I received a cable from home asking me to "Cable condition of arm and general health." My poor family had endured some rude shocks. About June 5th I was reported "missing," and then later, "missing, believed killed." This time they had received no intimation that I might come to Switzerland, and thought that the change meant that I was at the point of death! I cabled back asking for my skates; that satisfied them.

Just before Christmas, the party of officers and men who had been sent back from Constance on the morning of Dec. 13th, arrived in Switzerland. We could thoroughly appreciate the joy with which those who were sent to Mürren stepped off the electric car.

Christmas day was very festive. In the afternoon there was a Christmas tree in the ball-room

of the Palace Hotel for the men quartered there, and each one received a small present donated by generous Swiss manufacturers. In the evening a special dinner was provided, followed by dancing to the music of the Mürren band. Think of it!

Every Saturday night there was a dance for the officers, and every Thursday night a dancing class for the men, at which all the officers' wives and sisters offered themselves as partners for the willing pupils.

We Canadian officers had a bigger treat in store for us on Christmas night. Lieut. J. E. McLurg and Mrs. McLurg, of Sault Ste. Marie, lived in a little chalet not far from the hotel. They invited us all to a real Christmas dinner with turkey and cranberry sauce, and pie — the kind of pie that "Mother used to make." When the meal was over Mr. McLurg passed around his best cigars and the reminiscences began. We all had a wonderful time and concluded the jolly evening by gathering around the piano and singing a lot of songs that had been popular when we left Canada.

We were all far from home and strangers in a strange land, and on that one day of the year, when everyone wants to be at home, we warmly appreciated Mrs. McLurg's efforts to make us feel that we were not forgotten.

After Christmas the days passed by uneventfully. There was a good deal of work to be done, especially when it snowed hard. The rink, the bob-run, the

roads and the railway track all had to be kept cleared. For this purpose all the men who had been passed by the doctors as fit for work were formed up every morning, and the required number selected. How these men did hate it too! For months and months in Germany they had been refusing to work in spite of severe punishment, and now they had to do it whether they liked it or not. A gentle reminder of the hardships their comrades in Germany and France were enduring put a quick stop to any unnecessary grousing.

When we had been in Mürren about a month we cast our eyes to the tops of the mountains and wondered what was beyond, and if it were possible to go and look for ourselves. We soon found out that we could not be away from Mürren overnight without a pass signed by the Commandant de Place, and only given with a good excuse. It was rather hard to find a sick relative in Switzerland so we did not do much sight-seeing.

Switzerland is divided into two parts — one French and one German — which speak the language of the country on which they border. The Germans who are interned in Switzerland are confined to the German part, and the French and English are scattered over the French half of the country. There is very little mixing of enemies, except in one or two cities which boast large hospitals, where it is necessary to send men of all nationalities for treatment. In these cities miniature

wars are avoided by confining the Germans to their quarters on certain days of the week when the Allies are allowed out, and vice versa.

Berne is the capital of Switzerland and the melting pot of the country. An English Tommy — an ex-prize fighter — was walking alone on the street of Berne when three Germans, thinking it was safe to attack a lonely Englishman, sprang on him. He knocked two of them unconscious on the side-walk, but was unable to catch the third!

I had become great friends with an English captain named Brewster. We both needed operations and decided to go to Lausanne, where we could have the services of one of the best surgeons in the world. We had heard that it was possible to obtain permission to attend a university. I was very anxious to continue my study of French, and we both wanted to study Lausanne and Lake Geneva. Eventually we were transferred to the Lausanne district for the purpose of having our operations and later attending the university of that city.

Not long before we left, Jack Firstbrook, who, on coming from Germany, had been placed in a hospital in Berne on account of his weak condition, arrived in Mürren with his father and mother. Mrs. Firstbrook soon took all the Canadians under her wing, and thanks to her and Mrs. McLurg, we had many a congenial afternoon tea-party.

Things were very pleasant in Mürren; the ski-ing and curling were good, and I would gladly have

stayed on till the snow left, but my arm was giving me trouble, and Brewster had been in this one spot since August and was becoming restless, so, on March 5th, we departed for Lausanne.

CHAPTER XVII

LAUSANNE!

SWITZERLAND is a strange country in time of war. Every belligerent nation has its official representatives in this little oasis in the desert of war. Besides that, the country is teeming with spies and deserters. In towns exclusively devoted to interned prisoners this mélange of nationalities is not so pronounced, but in Lausanne one hardly dares make a new acquaintance without first ascertaining the life history of the person in question.

Brewster and I had a lively time during the three weeks we spent waiting for accommodation in the hospital. We eventually got to know the dangerous characters by sight and carefully avoided being brought into touch with them. However, we did make the acquaintance of many charming people — chiefly American and Swiss — and were shown great hospitality.

The day after we were admitted to hospital I had a sudden attack of appendicitis and was at once operated upon. I thanked my lucky stars that I was not still in Germany, for complications set in, and a second operation was necessary. Skilful

medical attention and careful nursing pulled me through a critical stage.

Brewster had the operation on his leg and we shared a private ward. We were the first English officers that had ever been in that hospital and attracted, for that reason, a considerable amount of attention. Our room was continually filled with flowers and we had numerous visits from our acquaintances, who showered us with gifts. One motherly Swiss lady kept us supplied with home-made jelly.

We saw a good deal of several French officers who had come there to have the mistakes of the German doctors rectified. One of these had had a most trying time. His thigh-bone had been shattered, and after months in plaster the bone had finally knitted. One day he was being carried downstairs by some German orderlies who dropped him and broke his leg again. After several months more of agony the bone finally knitted, but in such a manner that the joint formed almost a right angle. His leg was very much shorter and practically useless. In the hospital in Lausanne the bone had to be broken again; a pin was put through the knee, weights were attached to it, and the poor fellow had again to endure sleepless weeks of torture in an endeavour to finally overcome the results of over a year of careless treatment.

While sitting around a cosy wood fire and entertaining our friends at afternoon tea we often

contrasted our life there with the months spent in German hospitals. It was a wonderful thing to be again amongst sympathetic people.

After six weeks I was discharged from hospital, the operation on my arm being postponed until I was stronger. About a month later Brewster joined me at the little hotel on the shore of Lake Geneva where I had taken up my abode. We registered at the University. Brewster, who had lived in Paris and spoke French fluently, took up engineering, but I enrolled in a course in the French language. Seven or eight English Tommies attended the same lectures as I, and the professor was most skilful in detecting, from their accent, the particular part of England from which they came.

During our spare time we did a great deal of sailing and I played tennis almost every day. Life in Lausanne was pleasant but we were never able to forget that we were prisoners of war and unable to go home.

I eventually had the operation on my arm but managed to avoid a further stay in hospital. I had had over eight months of hospital life and did not relish the idea of another session. Accordingly I arranged with Brewster to bring me back in a taxi to the hotel after the operation. I was three hours under the anæsthetic and was put in a ward full of Frenchmen to recover. For some unaccountable reason, when I came to I was thinking in

MÜRREN VARIETY ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY AND PIERROT TROUPE, COMPOSED ENTIRELY OF INTERNED PRISONERS.

French, and shouting, "A bas les Boches! Cochons!" (Down with the Huns! Pigs!) etc. Whenever I went back to the hospital for a dressing, these men would smile at me and say, "A bas les Boches!"

Brewster wrapped me in rugs and hurried me to the hotel, where the concièrge was sent for to help me to my room. He, poor fellow, thought I was drunk, and handled me in the patronising way usually emplcyed towards gentlemen in this state. A kind English lady who knew what had happened came to see if there were anything she could do. The concièrge waved her aside, saying, in French, "He's alright, Madame. Leave him alone, he will be quite right after a little sleep!"

While we were in Lausanne the United States declared war on Germany. A sigh of relief went up from every Ally. At last the whole English-speaking world was fighting, side by side, for Justice and Right. We Canadians felt that now we could shake our cousins to the South by the hand, and welcome them to the greatest of all undertakings, and that after the war there would not be the feeling of reproach which we had dreaded so much. We all realised the tremendous power of our new Ally, and hoped, from a selfish point of view, that her assistance might bring the war to a speedy close and so hasten our return to our homes and families.

Towards the end of July, one of the officers stay-

ing in our hotel received a telephone message from Chateau D'Oex to the effect that the British and German Governments had come to terms regarding the repatriation of certain interned prisoners of war, and that before long we might expect to be visited by a Swiss Commission, to select those eligible to go home. Naturally, this caused a great flutter of excitement. We had been expecting it for some time past as, at the railway-station of Lausanne, we had said good-bye to large numbers of our French comrades, on their way back to their native land.

About the same time as we received this good news the University closed, and the doctor with whom Brewster and I had been taking massage and mechanical treatment decided to go away for a holiday. We had no excuse left for staying longer in Lausanne and, on August 1st, we, together with several others, were recalled to Mürren to take over some of the duties which were falling rather heavily on the few remaining officers.

CHAPTER XVIII

Back to Mürren — Repatriation

As soon as we arrived in Mürren we were each assigned duties. Lieut. Hubbs had been sent away in charge of a party of men to do some civic work for the Swiss Government, and I was appointed his successor as editor of the *B. I. M.*, and business manager of the printing office. This meant a lot of hard work, but I thoroughly enjoyed having something to do, productive of tangible results. The subject of my first editorial was Mr. Woods, who had rendered such valuable service in caring for the teeth of the men. I will quote some parts of this article as illustrating the way in which this work was carried on:

"There is hardly a man in Mürren who has not paid a visit to the bright and cheery rooms of our dentist, Mr. J. A. Woods. In doing so, few of them realised what a privilege was being accorded them. . . . In spite of his formidable official titles, everyone agrees that he is one of the nicest men they ever met.

"As soon as Mr. Woods heard that British prisoners were to be interned in Switzerland he at once applied for permission to come here, and give them

the benefit of his services. He alone knows the difficulties he had to surmount before he finally arrived in Mürren, on 17th August, 1916, just a few days after the first batch of prisoners. He had to bring all his instruments with him as personal luggage, but did it so effectively that he now has two bedrooms and a bathroom in the Palace Hotel transformed into the finest dental operating rooms in Switzerland. He also enjoys the unique position of practising at a higher altitude than any other dentist in Europe.

"Mr. Woods wasted no time in commencing his work. He at once asked for lists of men, classified according to the degree of urgency, who wished dental treatment. Two hundred of the original four hundred at once sent in their names. Each case was given individual treatment, and the patients were made to feel that they were being treated by their own dentist, and not in a clinic. The same system was followed with the second and third batches of men who came in December. There never was any compulsion used; all the patients came of their own free will. A tribute to Mr. Woods' efficiency is the fact that 99 per cent of the officers and about 80 per cent of the men have presented themselves to him for treatment. Mr. Woods keeps an exact record of every patient, and below will be found some interesting statistics of his work during the past year.

Number of different patients.....over	700
Visits to room.....nearly	3,000
Operations	4,500
Prothesis (Artificial dentures, special appliances for jaw injuries, etc.)....	368

. . . . . .

"Mr. Woods has visited Wengen, Chateau d'Oex and other places, attending to 533 urgent cases amongst the French and English soldiers. As a result of these visits another Dental Surgeon, Mr. W. J. Law, has been sent to the Chateau d'Oex district.

"We all appreciate the generous way in which Mr. Woods gave up his large practice in Liverpool and, at enormous personal expense, came here to Switzerland to give us the benefit of his wide experience. All his work has been entirely gratuitous. If he had not undertaken it, no one else would. We all take off our hats to a man who is doing his bit, and doing it well."

While we were in Lausanne many improvements had been made in the camp at Mürren. Signboards had been erected calling all the little foot-paths by the names of the best known London streets, such as Piccadilly, Strand, etc. A large finger-post at the station pointed in a north-westerly direction, and was marked "Blighty."

A new Y. M. C. A. hut had been erected and was as well patronised as the Red Triangle huts on the Western front. This one had an attraction which

was lacking elsewhere, in having ladies to assist in serving the tea, which was very good in spite of the following limerick composed by one of the men:

"The tea at the Y. M. C. A.
Is weaker than ever they say;
When they try to pour out,
It just stops in the spout,
It's too feeble to come all the way."

A moving picture show had been started, and, on Thursday and Friday afternoon and evening, the ball-room of the Palace Hotel was filled with Tommies thoroughly enjoying everything from Charlie Chaplin to the latest war film.

A variety entertainment company, composed entirely of interned prisoners, gave very good performances at regular intervals, and smoking concerts were frequently arranged in the various hotels.

Through the generosity of the people in England, an arrangement had been made whereby the soldiers' wives, in groups of eighteen, were sent free of charge to spend two weeks with their husbands in Switzerland. If a man were not married his mother was allowed to come instead. In this way many couples were reunited after three years of separation.

If an interned soldier were contemplating marriage, his fiancée would be sent out with a party of wives and mothers, and the ceremony would be held in Switzerland. The Tommies took a great delight

in making these affairs successful. In winter the bride was usually dragged to the church on a large sleigh decorated with the Union Jack, and confetti was always abundant. On one occasion there were six weddings in one day at Mürren.

The most unique wedding I ever saw was that of Lieut. Hedges. He had been badly wounded at the Somme and had lost one leg. He and several other officers in the same condition had been at Constance with me. As they were all limited to the same sort of amusements they were always together in Switzerland. During the summer of 1917 Hedges decided to get married, and came to Lausanne for the happy event. His one-legged friends came with him, one of whom acted as best man, and the others as ushers. When the knot had been tied these always cheerful heroes formed an arch of crutches, under which the bride and groom passed on leaving the church. A small boy presented the bride with a bouquet, and the whole party drove off amidst the cheers of the onlookers.

There was a South African officer with one arm who had been taken prisoner on the Somme who had, what I consider, a rather ghastly experience. He had received a bullet wound in the elbow which, though not serious, caused his temperature to rise. The German doctor who was attending him said that the reason for the fever was that the hole in his arm was not big enough to allow the pus to escape. He advised a small operation to open and

clean out the wound. When the officer awoke from the anaesthetic he was lying on his back in bed, and unconsciously moved his hand across his chest where his wounded arm usually lay. The arm was not there. He feverishly felt his body until he came to a large dressing over the stump of his arm, which had been amputated. He almost fainted dead away with the shock. He shouted frantically for the nurse and demanded to see the doctor. She refused to call him. The officer started to climb out of bed, saying that he would go to the doctor if she would not fetch him. Eventually the doctor appeared and received the worst abuse he had ever had in his life — but it was too late.

I spoke to a great number of men who had had limbs amputated, and in almost every case the bone was not cut far enough back to allow the flesh to grow over the end and form a cushion for an artificial limb. A friend of mine, who had lost a leg in this way, told me that he had complained to a German surgeon about this method of amputation, and asked him why it was done. The German's reply was: "Well, you know, that's what the French and English are doing to our prisoners."

A private who had been taken prisoner at Mons told me that, in one camp he had been in, there were about three thousand prisoners, mostly Russian and French. The camp was divided by a road into two separate enclosures. In one of these en-

THE WEDDING OF LIEUT. HEDGES.

closures were about a thousand men who had to go to the main camp every day for their meals. There were two gates side by side — a small one reserved for Germans, and a larger one for the use of the prisoners. At meal times the men used to crowd around the gate, waiting for the order to pass through to draw their rations in the other enclosure. They were always hungry and impatient, and one day an English sailor and a couple of Tommies found themselves being forced through the small gate by the crowd in the rear. The sentry shouted at them to go back but they were unable to do so on account of the pressure from behind. Once more the sentry shouted "Zurück!" (Back!) and then ran his bayonet through the sailor and pulled the trigger to facilitate the withdrawal of the weapon. The bullet killed one of the English Tommies and wounded the other.

Another private who had been taken prisoner at the beginning of the war told me how the men in his camp had been tied with their backs to a post, their toes just touching the ground, and left there for hours on end, as a punishment for refusing to work.

If one of the men in a hut had committed a trivial crime, such as smoking indoors, and the Germans were unable to find out who was the culprit, every man in that hut would be stood at attention all day, in bitter weather, with only a single

bowl of soup as nourishment. The punishment would be repeated day after day, until the man confessed in order to save his comrades.

Men who had received treatment such as this thoroughly appreciated the comfort in which they were living in Switzerland, but still they longed to see Blighty once again, and could appreciate some of the sentiments expressed in the following article, quoted from an August number of the *B. I. M.:*

"Interned Prisoners of War are a species of animal usually found in a neutral country. The word 'interned' comes from the Latin '*ino,*' meaning 'fed,' and '*ternus,*' meaning 'up.' They are used in the winter for moving large quantities of snow from one place to another, and in the summer for doing the same thing with rocks and gravel.

"They are amusing creatures to watch. They live in large communities like the bees. These communities or establishments, as they are scientifically called, are presided over by what is known as a Chief of Establishment, something similar to the 'Queen Bee.' Unlike the latter, the Chief of Establishment does not lay the eggs which produce the other Prisoners of War. These are hatched out in the mud of France and elsewhere, usually in a hollow in the ground, called a shell-hole.

"The chief vice of the Interned Prisoner of War is playing football, cricket, hockey, etc. They are so depraved that at times they will indulge in these vices in the pouring rain. The only way they

can be tempted to desist is by the offer of a meal. They spend their spare time in having operations and attempting to get leave.

"There are different species of Interned Prisoners of War. There are the Scotch, English, Irish, Australian and Canadian. The latter have not red skins, as some people suppose.

"There is also another species called Officers, who spend most of their time seeing that the others are wearing their own boots, and don't take a bath before it is necessary.

"The Interned Prisoners of War are sometimes soldiers. They arrange themselves in long rows to present a formidable appearance on certain feast days. They are very religious, and believe that some day they will go to a country where they have homes, friends and relations."

We soon learned that the rumour that a certain number of Englishmen were to be repatriated had been confirmed. At a conference held at the Hague an agreement had been come to between the British and German Governments, for the exchange of interned prisoners in Switzerland on practically the same terms as had been arranged for the exchange of French and German prisoners. We were told that at this conference the Dutch were always seated at the table first, then from a door on one side came in the Germans, and from a door on the other side, the English. No intercourse, save on business, took place. At the closing meet-

ing the Chief of the Germans got up and said they could not go without thanking England warmly for the way their prisoners had been treated, and admitted that no other country had done the like. Our people bowed back acknowledgment and thanks, but could not return the compliment.

This agreement applied to the following classes of interned men, the general principle followed being that the sick and wounded whose re-establishment to health was not likely to take place within one year, and whose validity had diminished by about 50 per cent., would be repatriated:

(1) All those who had lost one limb, at least a hand or a foot.

(2) All suffering from a grave infirmity which was not likely to disappear within one year, with or without operative treatment, for instance: Complete or partial ankylosis or paralysis, diminishing by about three-quarters the use of a shoulder, elbow, wrist, leg, knee or foot.

(3) Mutilation of the face; mouth wounds, head wounds, causing epilepsy.

(4) Cases of wounds to the vertebral column, throat, abdomen, etc.

(5) Tuberculosis, where a cure in Switzerland was not likely to be useful.

(6) Diseases affecting respiration, the heart, digestion, grave neurasthenia.

(7) Blindness.

(8) Deafness of certain degree.

(9) Mental cases.
(10) Malarial cases (serious).
(11) Diabetes.
(12) Tuberculosis (cured).
(13) Loss of an eye, if other eye were also affected.

The two governments agreed not to allow men thus exchanged to fight or work on the lines of communication.

The doctors in charge at Mürren carried out a thorough examination of every man and selected a certain number as eligible to appear before the final Commission, which was composed of three Swiss doctors.

The excitement was intense when, on August 18th, the Commission commenced work in Mürren. The officers were examined first. One by one they went into an upstairs room in the Palace Hotel while their wives and sisters sat breathlessly on the stairs, awaiting their exit and the fateful news. There were not many disappointments. It was very hard for officers to get out of Germany, and they were all in a more or less serious condition. Five only, out of twenty, were compelled to resign themselves to remain in Switzerland. The rest of us dashed to the Post Office and cabled home the glad tidings.

We heard that only four hundred Germans had been passed for repatriation on account of the fact that they knew when they were well off, and refused

to present themselves to the Commission. Altogether 860 British interned prisoners had been accepted.

Before leaving for home the German officers had a banquet — probably their last for some time to come — at which they drank a large quantity of the very best wines obtainable. We were told on very good authority that, instead of being jovial, this affair was one of the gloomiest ever held in Berne.

At 4 o'clock in the afternoon of September 8th, the first load of happy and excited men descended the funiculaire, and thus completed the first stage of their voyage home. The first number of the *B. I. M.* which appeared after our departure contained the following:

EXODUS

"Now it came to pass on the 25th day of the 8th month of the 3rd year of the war against William, Emperor of Germany, there came unto Mürren certain physicians who spake, saying, Let everyone of you that is diseased, or hath lost of his value as a man of war, more than the half, return ye, all every man unto his own home.

"And all the people shouted, and said, Great is the Commission of Doctors.

"For every man said in his heart, Surely I shall be amongst the chosen.

"Now when the physicians had gone from them but a few hours, then began those who were

DEPARTURE OF REPATRIATED PRISONERS FROM MÜRREN.

REUNION, IN SWITZERLAND, OF TOMMIES WITH THEIR WIVES AND MOTHERS AFTER THREE YEARS' SEPARATION.

amongst the chosen to murmur, saying, Why go we not hence forthwith, wherefore have we been beguiled with promises?

"But those set in authority over them went amongst the people, speaking good words unto them, saying, Wherefore murmur ye? Surely in a little while will they let you go. Albeit they knew nothing.

"Now after ten days came messages, saying, Surely on the day before the Sabbath shall ye go out.

"And all the people shouted, and said, Great is the Commission of Doctors.

"Then Neish, chief of the mighty men of valour, calling together his Captains and his Lieutenants, commanded them, saying, Thus and thus shall ye do. Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, so long as the trains remain standing still in the station. For lo! is it not written in the book of King's Regulations.

"On the 8th day of the 9th month of the 3rd year of the war against William, Emperor of Germany, that reigned in Potsdam, departed the children of Neish, even 182 men with their women and their children and their dogs, a very great multitude.

"Moreover, there was much joy amongst those that departed, and they made merry, saying, Behold, Mürren shall be covered with snow, and the

land shall be white with the flakes thereof, but what is that to us. Look ye to it!

"And the people answered them and said, Go to. Get you down quickly, lest the Commission harden their hearts, and it repenteth them that they have let you go.

"And the people departed by companies, every man according to his hotel, to every hotel an Officer or two, according to the commandment of Neish, chief of the mighty men of valour.

"And it came to pass, while the train was yet in the station, that a certain fellow of the tribes of Canada, with a loud voice about the space of ten minutes, cried out, and said, Well, Well, Well, Well, Well.

"And the people of that country were astonished, saying, Surely this man hath a devil.

"Now the rest of the acts of the children of Neish, and all that they did, shall they not be written in the chronicles of *B. I. M.?*"

CHAPTER XIX

Home

Our departure from Switzerland was a repetition of our glorious arrival. We were sent home in two parties, one three days before the other, and those from Mürren were fortunate in being included in the first party. As we passed through Switzerland we collected, from different towns, several small groups which brought our numbers up to about four hundred.

At Interlaken a great crowd was at the station to see us pass through and, as I was standing on the platform, I was accosted by a little Belgian soldier who knew my name. I racked my brains and suddenly remembered that he had been a prisoner in Lazarett VI, where he had acted as orderly to the Feldwebel. I shook him warmly by the hand and asked him how things were in Cologne. In broken English, which he had learned while in Germany, he said, "I leave Lazarett VI tree weeks ago. She's awful, nothing to eat — macaroni every day. She's better here in Suisse, n'est-ce pas? You glad to go home? Au revoir, bon voyage."

At Berne we spent an hour in the station, where we were fed. The train also stopped for a short

time in Lausanne, where the station was literally packed with people. As we pulled out, the cheering from the platforms and the train mingled into a roar that made the roof vibrate. We did not leave Geneva till 3.10 A. M., but in spite of the late hour many of our friends were at the station to say good-bye, and the girls of the Swiss Red Cross passed up and down showering us with dainties of every sort.

After leaving Geneva we peered out into the blackness of the night to try and see the place where we crossed the border. Brewster was in our compartment. He had travelled over the same line before the war, and it was he who made the announcement, "Gentlemen, we are in France!"

We were prisoners no longer.

The news soon travelled the length of the train, and the men gave vent to their feelings by prolonged cheering.

The first stop we made in France was at Bellegarde. It was 4.30 A. M., but the station was crowded with people. As the train came to a stop a military guard presented arms, while a band played "God Save the King" and the "Marseillaise." We stood smartly to attention till the last note sounded, and then leapt on to the platform. We actually stood on French territory!

Tables had been erected all along the platform and from these the kind ladies of Bellegarde served champagne and biscuits. This was hospitality in-

deed. We were the first train-load of repatriated British prisoners that had ever left Switzerland, and the people felt they could not do enough for us.

Our reception at Lyons was stupendous. We filed past a cavalry guard and through a tremendous crowd that clapped enthusiastically as we passed. We were conducted to a large hall in the station where a speech of welcome in English was read by a French general, and responded to in French by a British staff officer.

Motor cars were at the door and whirled us through the streets — where we were pelted with flowers by the people — till we came to a temporary barracks. Here the officers were tendered a formal luncheon and the men, too, received an excellent meal.

In the afternoon we took the men for a walk through the town, and at 8 o'clock boarded an English hospital train. There was a bed for every man. None of us had enjoyed this luxury when we were wounded and taken prisoner and, although the train was not due to leave till 10 o'clock, we went straight to bed. We were going to make up for lost time.

The next day we stopped for a few minutes close to the place where some German prisoners were working under guard. Many of the men on our train had been taken prisoner at the beginning of the war and had received very brutal treatment. The hints and suggestions which they shouted to

the sentries would have made the Huns tremble in their shoes had they but understood.

We passed a battalion of American troops marching on the road close to the train. It was the first time we had seen soldiers of our new Ally, and we gave them a hearty cheer to which they responded enthusiastically.

The crossing of the channel was made that night on a luxurious hospital ship, and at dawn the decks were crowded with men waiting to catch the first glimpse of Blighty. Two special hospital trains rushed us to London, and we were immediately placed in hospital to await a medical board.

I was fortunate in arriving on the first train, in having my board the same afternoon, and being discharged from hospital with a recommendation for two months' leave.

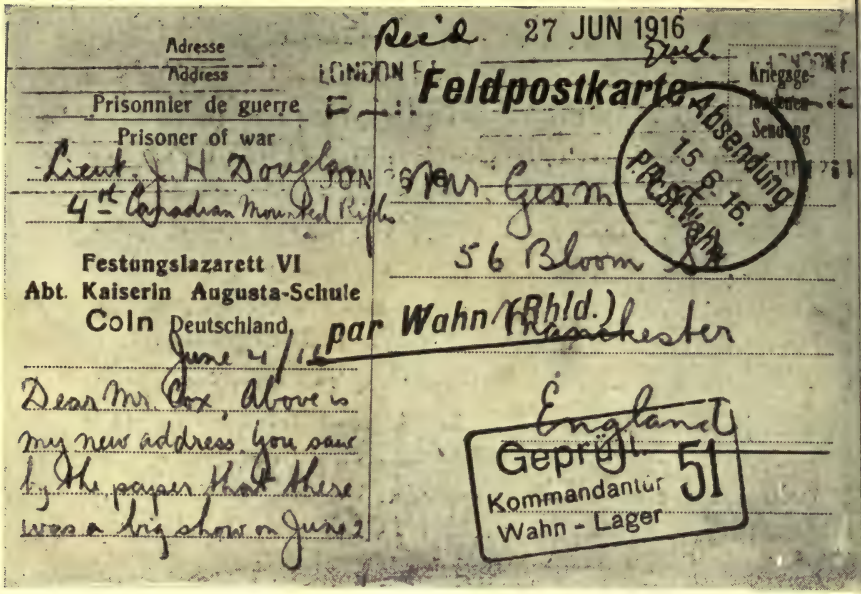
By a great piece of good fortune I spent only four days in England and was put on the first boat leaving for Canada.

I will never forget the day we sighted land, and the days that seemed like months, when we crawled up the St. Lawrence in sight of the shore, but too far away to make a break and swim for it.

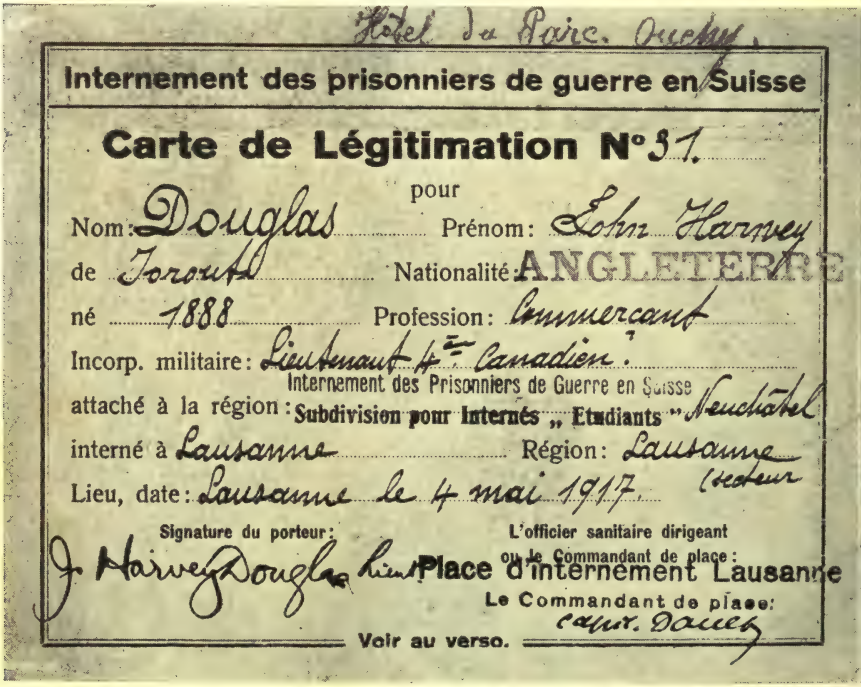
When we arrived at Quebec I rushed off the boat and took the first train for Montreal. It didn't seem possible that I was actually a free man on Canadian soil once more, whereas, less than three weeks before, I had been a prisoner of war interned in Switzerland.

At Montreal I was met by my family. Nothing could have been more perfect than that reunion which I had pictured almost from the moment I had been taken prisoner. It did not happen just the way I had imagined it would. Words fail me to describe it, but suffice it to say that it was the happiest moment of my life.

THE END



FACSIMILE OF FIRST POSTCARD SENT BY LIEUT. DOUGLAS FROM HOSPITAL AT COLOGNE



THIS CARD HAD TO BE CARRIED ON THE PERSON OF EVERY PRISONER OF WAR INTERNED IN SWITZERLAND. IT HAD TO BE SHOWN ON DEMAND AND WAS A GUARD AGAINST PRISONERS MOVING OUT OF THEIR PROPER REGION WITHOUT AUTHORITY