DAYS OF GLORY

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THE SKETCH BOOK OF A VETERAN CORRESPONDENT AT THE FRONT

BY

FREDERIC VILLIERS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

PHILIP GIBBS

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A SALUTE TO FREDERIC VILLIERS

By PHILIP GIBBS

"Halt! Who goes there?"
"Friend!"
"Advance, friend, to be recognized!"
"Frederic Villiers, war-correspondent."
"Pass, friend! All's well!"

The last time I saw my old friend Frederic Villiers, in February of 1919, he "advanced to be recognized" (according to the old challenge of the British sentry) as my chairman before a great audience in New York. He was "recognized" with an ovation of applause, by many people who, as boys, and lovers of adventure, had thrilled to his name when they saw it written across the corner of a sketch sent back from some distant battlefield, or at the end of a dispatch describing some exciting scene in history of which he was eye-witness, artist, and chronicler.

On that evening in New York, Frederic Villiers spoke of my work as a war-correspondent, with a fine, large-hearted generosity of soul, as an old warrior giving the accolade to a new knight. I was proud of that. I am proud now that such words should have been spoken of me by the greatest of the Old Guard, the last, almost, of those adventurers with pen and pencil who set out from Fleet Street, London (to which I dedicated a book called "The Street of Adventure"), in search of the latest war—wherever it might be in the world. In this preface I am delighted now to salute the gallant spirit of that older knight-errant, whose achievements in fields of strife have been of infinite variety in years that belong to history.

As a war-correspondent and war-artist (for it was to make sketches for *The Graphic* that I went out to the Balkan war in 1911, just as Frederic Villiers went for the same paper in 1876!) I belonged to the New School, and I confess that I was a very raw recruit when I set out for Bulgaria with but a vague idea of what war was like, and not guessing then that in a few years I should see the greatest of all wars from first to last, in its length and breadth and depth, of human agony and slaughter, with all its heroism and all its tragedy. The New School of war-correspondents travelled in motor-cars, sent back their dispatches from military telegraph offices, had a headquarters of their own with telephones in touch with army staffs, and dispatch-riders to carry back their narrative from any part of the front. They were recognized as a unit of the great machine of war, and its mechanism was at their service as far as food and transport, maps and "intelligence" reports, soldier servants, and billetting authority could help any officer to do his job. We did not have to forage around for the wherewithal to live. We did not have to buy horses or camels at enormous prices in cut-throat competition with rival correspondents—the adventure of the old game (of which I had a taste in the Balkans) had quite disappeared by the time I put on khaki as an official correspondent with the British Armies in the Field, and all the adventure we had was of a different kind. It was the unpleasant adventure of walking in the ways of death under harassing shell-fire, of studying life in front-line trenches, in dugouts, and the ruins of French towns, and the desolation of great battlefields upheaved by the ploughing of a thousand guns. We watched the drama of big battles—the preliminary bombardments, the turmoil of advance, the backwash of wounded and prisoners—without any sense of personal adventure beyond that of some personal danger, which in itself became familiar and abominable, as befell every human ant in that vast upturned ant-heap of France and Flanders.

When Frederic Villiers began his career it was a different way of life. War was always terrible, but not so mechanical as

this last war; and the war-correspondent was a more romantic figure, more dependent on his own resources, initiative, daring, imagination, and audacity. He suffered often fror hunger and thirst. He had to ride far to send his news to the paper and the world. He pitched his tent in strange places. By bribes and by threats he had to make his way among native peoples unsupported by British Armies. His comrades were also his rivals, each man a law unto himself and eager to steal a march and gain a world-wide "scoop." It was a sporting life and a hard one. There was romance in it, and the hunter's instinct. It was the life of the Wandering Men, true descendants of the troubadours and of such chroniclers as Sir John Froissart and Philip de Comines.

I remember as a boy how thrilled I was when in Trafalgar Square my father took me by the arm and said "Look! . . . There is Frederic Villiers, the war-correspondent!" Before I was born he had seen the Turkish atrocities in Serbia, and was with the Russians in Turkey, and saw the passage of the Danube, the capture of Plevna, and the battle of the Shipka pass. He was at Tel-el-Kebir in 1882; at Moscow for the coronation of the Czar in 1883; in the Eastern Soudan, where he saw the "Broken Square" at Tamai, in 1884; and in the same year went with Sir William Hewitt on his mission to Abyssinia; and up the Nile for the relief of Khartoum. In 1885 he was at the battles of Abu Klea and Gubat, and next year with the Serbians invading Bulgaria. In 1887 he was in Burma, and after many journeys about the world was with the Japanese army in 1894 and saw the taking of Port Arthur. In 1897 he was with the Greek Army in the war with Turkey, and next year again joined the Sirdar's army on its march to Omdurman. After a tour in Australia he left with the Colonial contingent for South Africa and saw the occupation of Pretoria. In 1904 he went to the Far East and was the only war artist at the siege of Port Arthur. In 1911 he joined the Italian army on the invasion of Tripoli; and, in the following year I met him, this veteran with a boyish love of adventure, this artist of history to whom the drama of life was never stale—in

the filth and squalor of the Bulgarian war. What a wonderful career!

In talking to Frederic Villiers as often I have talked to him over a cup of coffee or a bottle of French wine, one hears the inside of the world's history for half a century, anecdotes as strange as the Arabian Nights' tales, tales of terrible, fantastic things, of wild passions and crimes, and massacres, of heroism and gallantry and human love—in the strange hotch-potch which men and women make of life.

It was right, though wonderful, that Frederic Villiers should be in the last war of all, the Great European War, from which the world is now healing its wounds. The British military authorities treated him badly, as it treated others of his craft in early days, not having the imagination to realize that when England was raising volunteer armies, a body of war-correspondents and war-artists with the "Old Contemptibles" would have been worth an army-corps in rousing the spirit of the people. Like all of us at first Frederic Villiers had to go out as a "free lance," dodging staff officers, subject to arrest, and insults and many hardships. But he succeeded in getting to the British front, and afterwards to the French front; and the pictures in this book prove that he made good use of his eyes, and still kept the magic of his touch.

I find many of these sketches very valuable as historical documents, and strangely interesting as records by an eye-witness of the early phases of the war. They reveal many details of our methods of attack and defence and depict many historic places and scenes which were never captured by the camera (admitted later to the war-zone) and changed afterwards when new weapons were introduced, and when intensity of gun-fire altered the look of many landscapes. But for the observation, courage, and craftsmanship of Frederic Villiers these things would not be recorded in pictorial history.

Thus he gives a vivid picture of the way in which rifles were linked together and fired together in trench warfare to act as machine guns at a time when we were grievously weak in that

weapon. He gives another sketch of the little trench mortars called "crapauds" or "crapillots" (toads, as we should say) improvised by the French, as I saw them being touched off by the burning end of a cigarette held by a French officer in the spring of 1915. He shows the old "curtain" loopholes in the trenches, afterwards abandoned because the enemy snipers used to plug them too easily, and the bottle trails used to guide men through woods in darkness until the woods themselves disappeared under tempests of fire. I saw such a trail in the Bois de Bouvigny on Notre Dame de Loretta before we took it over from the French. His study of Ypres takes my mind back to the days of 1915 when the ruins of that dead city were still substantial, before they left but a few tatters of masonry standing above the cratered earth and rubbish-heaps during the bombardment which lasted three years more. Here are pictures of scenes which to me and to many others are reminders of days when victory was but a mirage, tempting the weakness of one's soul: that strange, first Christmas day of war when out of the slimy trenches of Flanders British soldiers and German soldiers met in No Man's Land and said, with the ironical laughter of men living in the same Hell together—"A Merry Christmas!"; and that jolly scene in the Jute factory near Armentières (at the Pont de Nieppe) where splendid boys who had been vermin-eaten in the filth of the trenches, stripped themselves and plunged into hot tubs, and splashed each other like schoolboys, and shouted joyful words at being clean again. I can vouch for the truth of that picture, for I was there, as in many other places, drawn so finely, with such true detail by my old friend.

Another picture has a value in history. It is the storming of Loos by British infantry (Londoners and Scottish in September, '15) with the "Tower Bridge" in the centre of the struggle. There are not many men alive who saw those steel towers above a mine shaft which used to stand at Loos, but I saw them several times before they fell under storms of high explosives. I saw the "going-up" of the great mine crater of La Boiselle, on the first

of July of 1916—the first day of the Battles of the Somme which lasted for six months with frightful slaughter on both sides until the German retreat to the Hindenburg line. Hundreds of times I passed the white lip of the mine crater and stared into its depths. It was like one of the craters of the moon, after that volcano of flame and earth which leapt skywards at dawn on the ending of battle. And hundreds of times also I have seen such a long vista of ambulances as that depicted very finely by Frederic Villiers, coming down the roads of France with cargoes of wounded men on days of dreadful fighting, month after month, year after year.

Here the war artist has put down in black and white, in vivid, visible truth, what I as a war-correspondent tried to do in words. It took me many thousands of words to convey the look of those things which this famous old craftsman has fixed for all time by the detail of his sketches. They are not of the "modern" school. Nevinson and Nash work by different methods. They are of the tradition which belonged to the "Old Guard" of war artists who went out to Egypt and South Africa, the Balkans and Russia, when I was a small boy or in my cradle. But they are true in their delineation of actual scenes, in their human interest, in their appeal to the imagination of those who want to know now, and in centuries to come, what this war was like.

To Frederic Villiers, veteran, that "very parfit gentil knyghte" of old renown, I raise my pen in humble admiration of long and gallant service in his great "Street of Adventure" which is the world.

PHILIP GIBBS.

August, 1919.

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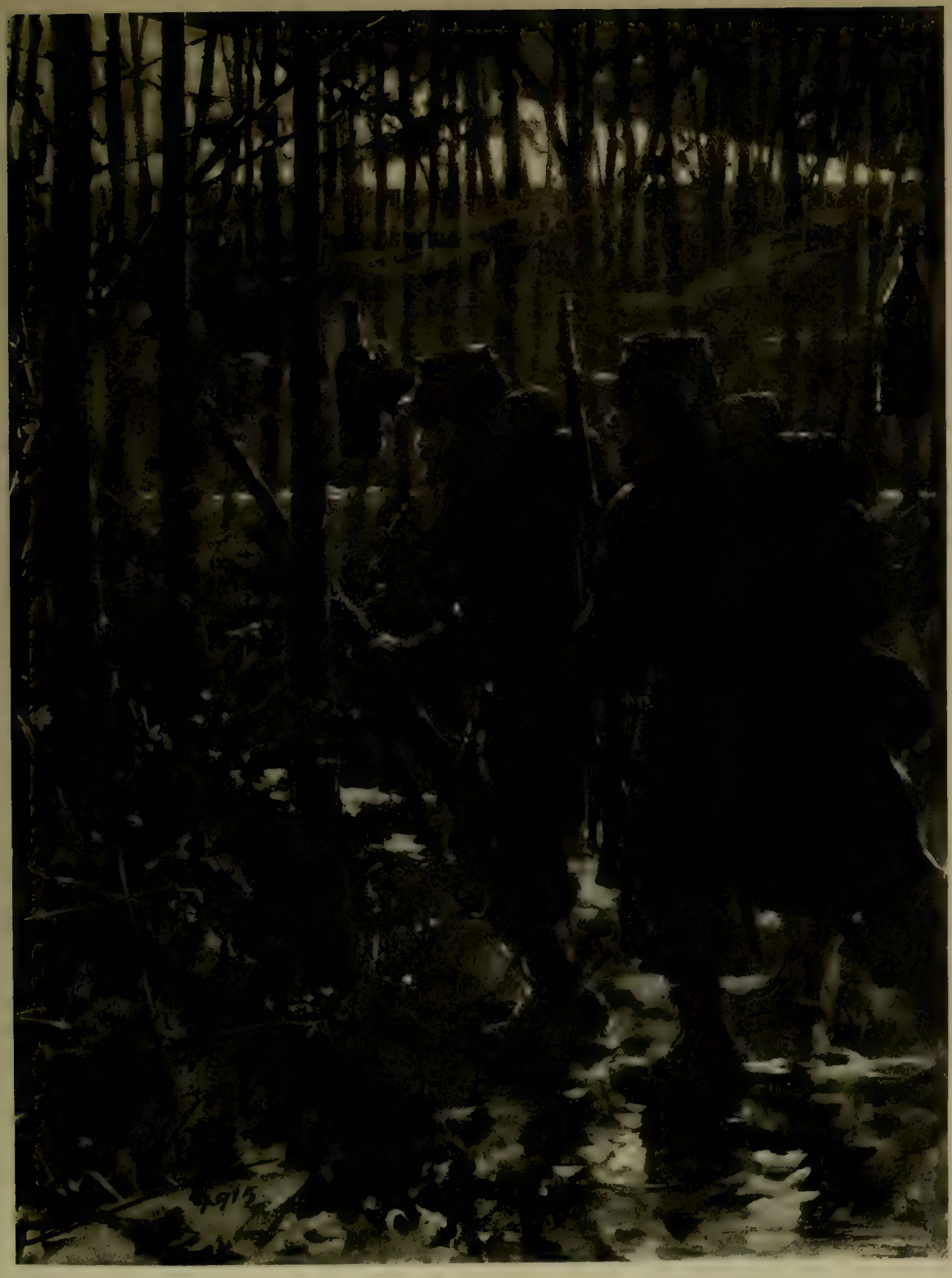
HILL 60

This is a sketch I made of the famous Hill 60, the afternoon before the position was stormed by British troops. By sheer good luck, as I was leaving the front for Headquarters at St. Omer, the Brigadier General, in command of the troops, pointed it out to me, and I was able to make a hurried sketch a short time before it was totally obliterated by our men. The German trenches can be distinctly placed by the trench shields still embedded in the mud of the walls.

HILL 60

WINE AND BEER BOTTLE GUIDES

In the wooded sectors of the Battle Front, an ingenious device was used to guide men after dark to their dug-outs. To avoid carrying even the dark lantern, served to troops in the trenches, which would sometimes give out a tell-tale glow unawares and bring at once a bullet from an enemy sharpshooter, empty wine and beer bottles were strung on a cord attached to the limbs of the trees. Thus belated soldiers, by keeping in touch with the bottles, could find their way home in safety without the fear of attracting the attention of the enemy.



WINE AND BEER BOTTLE GUIDES

CURTAINED LOOP-HOLES

During the war the front line trenches were continually changing for better or worse, according to the fortune of the moment. In the early days, when we began digging in wherever we found ourselves, generally nothing more than a glorified breast-work was made. But, eventually, more protection was given the men by building up the parapets with sand bags, loop-holing the walls, shafting them with timber and drawing curtains over the apertures when they were not in use. The men in the drawing are standing to arms and manning the loop-holes preparing to meet a raid from the enemy.

CURTAINED LOOP-HOLES

BUILDING A GERMAN TRENCH

The Germans were past masters in the art of trench building, and in the early months of the war we learned much from them. When about to dig themselves in, they would push forward steel shields with movable side wings. A slot in the center plate allowed the soldier behind it to fire at opposing sharpshooters.

Under this steel cover the Germans rapidly dug with their small belt spades and an earth defence linked up by others working and advancing in like manner soon sprang up. The great Hindenburg line commenced in this way, and eventually extended for hundreds of miles.

BUILDING A GERMAN TRENCH

IDENTIFYING THE DEAD

On some of the French positions on the Western Front I noticed a clever idea more easily to identify the hastily buried. Letters or small articles found in the pockets of the dead were stuffed into empty beer or wine bottles, corked up and stuck in the mud of the graves.

IDENTIFYING THE DEAD

THE "LOOK-OUT" MAN

The trench sentry who had to watch with vigilant eye for a possible sortie from the German trench opposite was always made as comfortable as could be. He must not miss the slightest movement of the foe. And in the early days of the war, he was the one to notify the coming of the poison gas clouds. He was always placed under a rough canopy of timber and canvas to keep off the rain, and his feet were placed in a tub full of dry straw to keep them warm. Both men and officers, passing during this period of duty, hushed their voices as they approached him and passed in dead silence so that his observation of the enemy sector should not in the slightest degree be disturbed.

THE "LOOK-OUT" MAN

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS DAY

The Christmas of 1914 on the Western Front will always be a memorable one in the history of the past war.

In many sectors of the front line trenches hostilities were stopped on Christmas Eve, especially where the opposing forces consisted of Saxons. The cry from the enemy was "We are Saxons, you are Anglo-Saxons, we are of the same kidney. Let us have a good time."

When darkness set in, mysterious colored lights flittered above the enemy's entrenchments and presently moved forward towards our lines. And soon we found that unarmed men with Japanese lanterns were up to our entanglements wishing to cease strife and to fraternize.

Cigars, cigarettes and drinks were exchanged, and mouth organs, jews-harps and sundry musical instruments were indulged in to give a touch of gaiety to the proceedings. But that night was the last of its kind. German frightfulness the succeeding year stopped any spirit of cordiality during the subsequent Christmas days of the war.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS DAY

A ROLLING SAND BAG

In the early days of the advance of the Germans, all manner of dodges were employed by the poilu to dig himself in under any kind of protection. Men would crawl forward pushing in front of them giant sand bags and, arrived at the proposed trench line, they would hastily dig themselves in under this fairly substantial cover.

A ROLLING SAND BAG

A FIRST LINE TRENCH

The advance trenches during the early days of the great conflict varied in discomfort according to the locality in which the "digging in" commenced. In the great rush of the Allies northward, after the Battle of the Aisne, to protect the Calais road, the French and British had to hurriedly dig themselves in in the water-logged plains of Flanders to stem the overwhelming onrush of the enemy. All through the first winter the Allies were compelled to live in trenches with water over their ankles, while the Germans lived in comparative comfort on a higher level. But, later on, by constant pumping and draining, our trenches were made fairly comfortable. The sketch represents a French sector in the second year of the war. A corduroy path-way runs down the side facing the enemy. On the right is a draining ditch and in that side high and dry above the water are the funk holes or dug-outs. The bank towards the Huns is pierced with loop-holes shafted with timber, and these were always curtained when not in use. But for this precaution the change of light and shade made by the passing of a soldier would have brought, at once, a bullet through the shaft from an alert enemy sharpshooter.

The dead man being saluted by the drain diggers as he is being brought through the trench on a stretcher met his death by passing one of the loop-holes that a neglectful comrade had forgotten to cover.

A FIRST LINE TRENCH

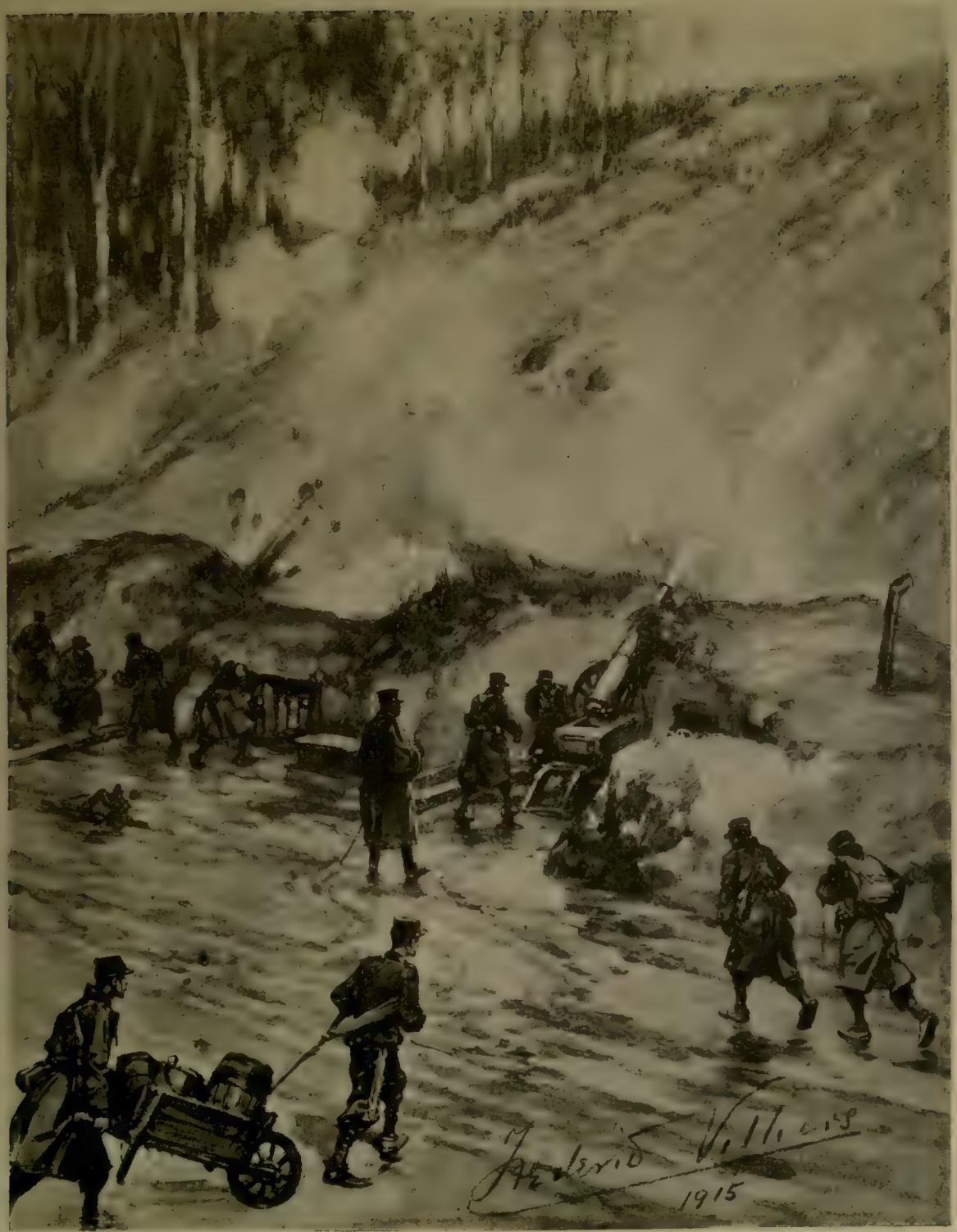
OVER THE TOP

In Flanders Fields the mud was very thick and tenacious—mud that could never be removed from garment or boot by the ordinary method of scraping and crushing. This gelatinous heavy soil so impeded troops on the march that in one instance it took twelve hours for men to march two miles. Therefore, one never knew quite what consistency of ground one had to negotiate in "No Man's Land" when once the order was to go "over the top." But, really, to the majority of Tommies and poilus this did not much matter as long as there was a prospect of sticking a few inches of cold steel into the soft body of a German, when they at last reached their goal.

OVER THE TOP

FRENCH GUNS IN THE ARGONNE

I happened to make this sketch while en route to the famous French positions at Verdun, for so long the focussing point of hostilities between the German and the French. The forest of the Argonne, eventually captured by Pershing's men, was lightly wooded and the ground in parts gently undulating. The French cleared patches of the forest to emplace their heavy artillery. The gunners at work in my picture cannot see their objective, for it is a farm garrisoned by the enemy over the hill, immediately in front of them, miles away. But their aim is being directed by telephone from officers placed at points of vantage far in their rear. In the foreground water kegs are being brought up in barrows, for there was no water on this artillery position.



FRENCH GUNS IN THE ARGONNE

AN AIR FIGHT OVER YPRES

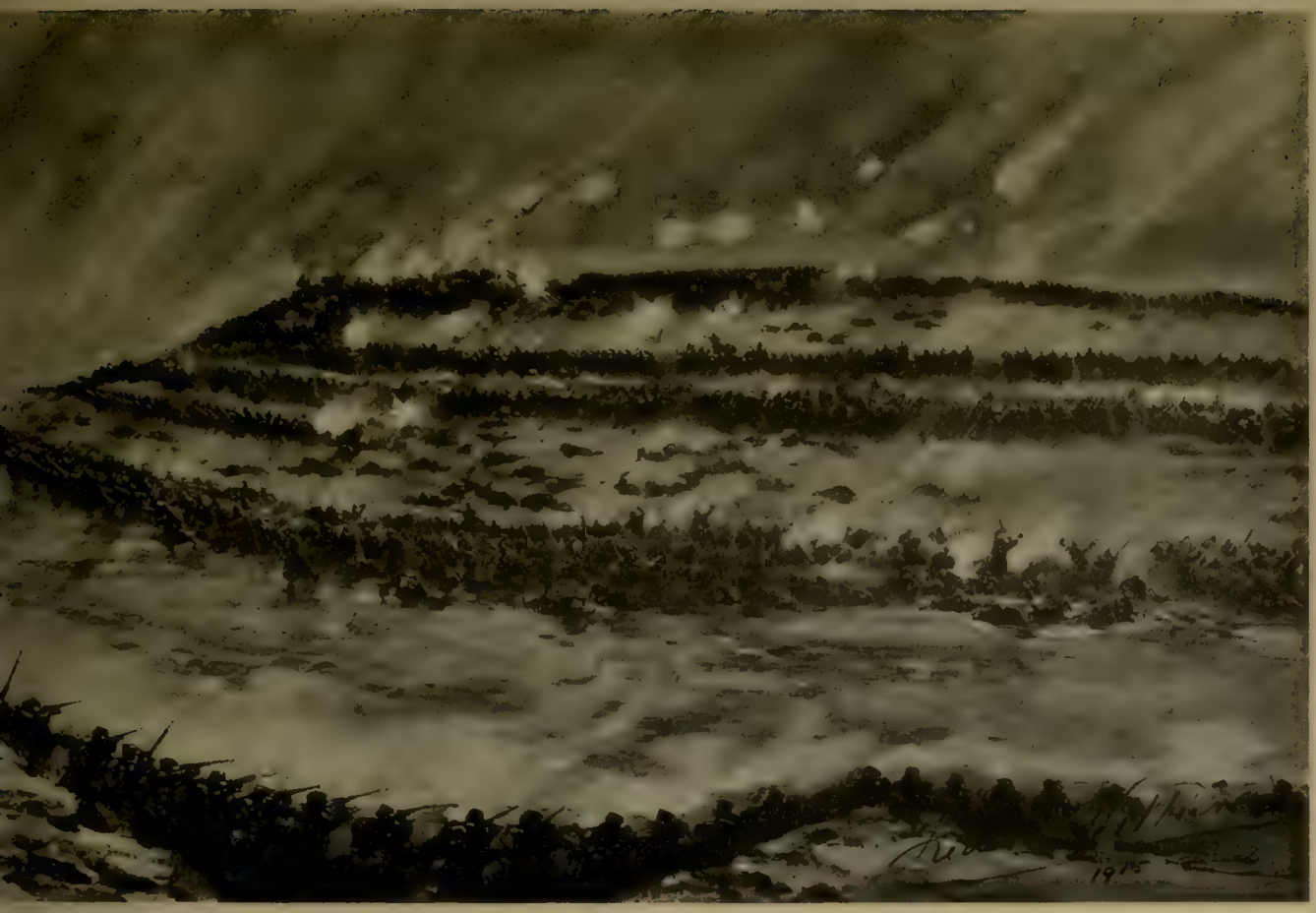
The second time I visited Ypres, the old Cloth Hall, once the glory of Flemish architecture, had been pounded by German shell fire into a heap of rubbish. As I was sketching this gruesome monument to Hunnish frightfulness, an air fight suddenly developed over the skeleton of the once prosperous capital of southern Flanders. A taube had ventured over the ruins to pick up information about the dispositions of the British troops and was hurrying back with the news when two English aircraft shot up and began to circle above and below the hostile craft. The taube put up a stubborn fight, but was slowly forced back over our lines. On passing over some of our works it tried to make a landing, but was shot at by our men from their trenches and, riddled with bullets, it dashed to the ground. As a Tommy said, "It was like wild duck shooting, governor."

AN AIR FIGHT OVER YPRES

MASS FORMATION OF A GERMAN ATTACK

On January 8th, in the second year of the war, there commenced a battle in which the famous "75's" figured conspicuously and did such wonderful work that the French troops under their cover were able to seize the much-coveted heights on the other side of the river Aisne, at Soissons, called Hill 132. Three days later the Germans, in mass formation of two army corps, swarmed over the height and drove the three brigades of the French down to the base of the hill.

The weather conditions were to the advantage of the Germans, for it rained in torrents throughout the battle. The river Aisne became so swollen that it overflowed its banks and threatened to sweep before it the pontoons over which there was any hope for reinforcements, munitions and supplies coming to the French. However, under the remarkable leadership of General Maunoury, and the rapid fire "75's," the French forces were successfully retired to the Soissons side of the river.



MASS FORMATION OF A GERMAN ATTACK

THE "75'S" AT SOISSONS

This represents one of the most brilliant feats by the famous field artillery, the "75's," during the war.

When the French infantry was driven off Hill 132, on the east side of the river Aisne, at Soissons, during the battles of the 8th and 12th of January of 1915, the floods, caused by the incessant rain, broke up several of the military bridges spanning the river. But, under General Maunoury, the French were successfully withdrawn to the west side of the Aisne. This, however, was mainly due to the Black Butchers, as the "75's" are sometimes called. One of these guns covering the retreat remained on the east bank, mowing down the oncoming Germans till they were within 600 yards of its muzzle. Then it limbered up and dashed across the half-submerged bridge of boats in safety.

THE "75's" AT SOISSONS

THE WHITE GUIDES

On the first advance to Neuve Chapelle, our troops converged towards their objective from all quarters during the night. To keep the men from floundering in the patches of swampy and rain-soaked terrain en route, white boards were stuck in the mud a few yards apart so that there was no necessity of using tell-tale lanterns to show the way. The immediate objective of the men in my picture is the timber screen in the distance. Here they rested under cover till dawn, when they dashed forward to the attack.

THE TYPICAL BATTLE FIELD

Most of the battle fields of the recent war were simply huge stretches of uninteresting terrain, mostly denuded of trees, seamed and scarred with eccentric lines of dykes, ditches or trenches. The open spaces between were pocked all over with yawning gaps made by tens of thousands of shells raining and crashing into the earth night and day. And, sometimes for weeks, no living thing was to be seen. Yet, in those burrows and dykes thousands of men, night and day, were lying *perdu* impatiently waiting the signal to spring up from the earth and dash themselves against each other with bomb and bayonet till dyke and ditch ran red with their blood.

THE TYPICAL BATTLE FIELD

THE SAPHEAD, THE TRACK OF A STORM

To get nearer to the enemy's entrenchment so as to lose as little life as possible when going "over the top," a ditch was cut trailing toward the enemy from a main line trench. This was the occasional work of engineers during the night, so as to surprise the Huns at dawn. The "Saphead," as it was called, allowed the attacking force to concentrate during the darkness, and at the first peep o' day to rush a sector of the enemy's trench at the point of the bayonet after bombers had ploughed their way through the wire entanglements of the foe. Sometimes it was an appalling sight, as shown in my sketch, when the enemy had not been surprised and had been waiting for the "Sap" and had put up a stubborn resistance. The dead at the "Saphead" shows the track of the storm, and the heavy casualties paid sometimes for an attack.

THE SAPHEAD, THE TRACK OF A STORM

A QUIET DAY AT THE FRONT

In the numerous daily communiqués from France during the war the announcements were mainly about the doings at the fighting front. Very seldom was there any mention of what was going on in the rear of the front line. Here everything was apparently quiet, but my sketch will, I think, give a better idea of what it was really like two miles or more from the actual fighting line. Shelling was going on night and day by the Huns, with the object of destroying our convoys moving from the railheads with stores and munitions.

I was travelling, a short time after I made the sketch, to the northwest frontier of India. In many parts of the country, en route, I saw highly colored reproductions of my drawing as an advertisement for the "Shell Motor Spirit Company," an idea that could only have originated in the brains of a Bengali baboo.

A QUIET DAY AT THE FRONT

AN AMERICAN AMBULANCE

Long before the United States came into the war many volunteer Ambulance Corps had been formed by American citizens in France. The services of hundreds of young men from the United States were gratuitously given, and much good work was done to alleviate the sufferings of the wounded in the early days of the campaign. Sometimes I would join the ambulances at work. Many of the volunteers were painters, sculptors, authors and students working at the ateliers in Paris, with a sprinkling of tourists who were on the grand tour when the war broke out. They all worked with splendid enthusiasm. They would dash down to outlying stations with their motors, secure the weary wounded from the trains and hurry them to the base hospitals. Most wounded lose their caps while fighting, or coming down in the trains. Therefore, directly they arrived, white woolen skull-caps were fixed over head and ears, and then, before they were taken to the base, hot tea, coffee, or cocoa were administered, and then they were gently shifted to the waiting cars and driven to the hospitals.

AN AMERICAN AMBULANCE

THE FIRST POISON GAS CLOUD

The gallant Canadians were the first to bear the brunt of the enemy's poison gas at Ypres. Many suffered a terribly painful death while hardly understanding what had really happened to them. In spite of this mysterious death-trap set by the Germans, they never swerved from their duty. It was for this plucky determination to hold their ground at any cost and in any stress of circumstances that the Canadians will always be remembered to the end of time.

When I look back to the terrible conditions under which they fought to break the yoke of the Hohenzollerns gradually enslaving all the world, I always see in front of me a stone column erected in Grahamstown, South Africa, to the memory of the men of Albany who fought and died during the Boer War. Surmounting the column is a group of men with fixed bayonets, wrought in bronze, evidently about to stem the onslaught of an overwhelming foe. At the base are a few lines by Rudyard Kipling, a fitting epitaph to those Canadians dead round Ypres:

"They came from the same stubborn stock that stood at Runnymede for freedom without fear.
Wherefore they gave the treasure of their blood to stablish freedom here."

THE FIRST POISON GAS CLOUD

WITHIN FIFTEEN YARDS OF THE HUNS

Sometimes I was very lucky in getting quite close up to the enemy. This sketch shows me sketching while only fifteen yards from the German entrenchment near Lihon, on the Western Front. Of course, this was done when I was in comparative safety looking through a periscope, my head nine or ten inches below the top sandbag parapet.

However, one had to be careful. I happened to move the reflecting instrument a little, and immediately a bullet came from an enemy's sharpshooter and smashed the top of the periscope.

WITHIN FIFTEEN YARDS OF THE HUNS

BRITISH IN ACTION

This sketch shows how the British troops advanced fighting in open order, so different from the method of the enemy, which was mostly that of dense or mass formation. But in spite of this loose and open advance, we suffered enormously in the early battles of the campaign, owing to the lack of artillery support.

The scarcity of shells made it impossible for our artillery ever to put up a sufficiently dense barrage fire under which our men could advance with a minimum of casualties.

BRITISH IN ACTION

A FAMOUS BATH HOUSE

Armentières, the town that almost marks the border line between France and Flanders, will probably be better remembered by the British soldier than any other town on the Western Front. For it has within it an institution which was much cherished by the trench-worn Tommy. Tired out, foul and lice-covered soldiers limped daily into this institution, and in a few hours came out changed men—fresh, clean, and bright as new pins.

The institution in which this transformation took place was a disused jute factory, whose bleaching vats were night and day steaming with hot water, in which platoons of soldiers squatted, washed and scrubbed themselves to their hearts' content, while their foul outer garments were sterilized in a fumigation room near by. Fresh underlinen was given to each man on leaving his tub, and in the twinkling of an eye, so to speak, he was a new man, body and soul. Nothing during the war gave me greater satisfaction than watching the effect of this cleaning process on the British soldier.

A FAMOUS BATH HOUSE

A BLOW-UP

An explosion of a mine was always a weird and soul-stirring spectacle. A most fascinating sight to those who had been tunneling their way night and day toward and under the enemy's trenches.

Directly the sector goes up, and hardly before the mutilated remains of the astonished occupants have come to the earth, engineers rush forward to occupy the cavities in the ground made by the explosion. And the position is then consolidated, occupied by troops, and possibly becomes a salient. Where the belligerent trenches were very close together, mining was the only chance of advancing.

A BLOW-UP

THE FIRST BOMBS

When bomb throwing was in its infancy, at the beginning of the late war, all kinds of oddly constructed missiles were tried on "the dog." I beg the friend of man's pardon; of course, I mean the Hun. Discarded jam or meat tins and bottles were filled with high explosives, which were either thrown by hand or shot from improvised trench mortars made out of drain pipe. First of all, in attacking a trench the sector was pounded with concentrated shell fire from our artillery. This was supposed to rattle the occupants. Then men would advance at the point of the bayonet, followed close up by the bombers, into the faces of the Huns, to further fluster them while the bayonet was at work.

I saw this kind of fighting for the first time during the Japanese-Russian war, at a place called Namakoyama. By this method the Jap successfully drove the Russians out of strong positions.

WHAT A FOG WOULD BRING TO THE BRITISH LINES

Sometimes on foggy days, in the Fall of the first year of the war, many of the enemy would take advantage of the misty atmosphere to steal across "No Man's Land." Stealthily approaching our lines, they would throw up their arms, crying "Kamarad! Kamarad!" and give themselves up to our astonished Tommies in the trenches.

WHAT A FOG WOULD BRING TO THE BRITISH LINES

PANORAMA OF NEUVE CHAPELLE

Next to Ypres, Neuve Chapelle will always be known to the British Army as the cock-pit of the early days of the great war.

The first battle fought in this bloody center was to push the Germans out of the village and adjacent wood (seen on the right of the picture), and capture the high ground beyond called the Auber Ridge, which dominated the road into the famous mining districts of Roubaix and Lille.

PANORAMA OF NEUVE CHAPELLE

FIGHTING IN THE VALLEY OF THE OISE

This landscape sketch was taken by me between the forest of Compiègne and the city of Noyon, which became a bone of contention for years. The Germans occupied all the hills on the sky-line in the far distance and are seen shelling, from these points of vantage, the city of Noyon, in the center of the middle distance.

In the foreground French infantry are moving forward from the Compiègne forest onto the highway leading to Noyon, to reinforce their fighting line.

THE HELL OF LA BOISELLE

The nearest point I ever got to the enemy was at a position about two miles from the historical little town of Albert, called by my French officer guide "L'enfer de la Boiselle," "the Hell of La Boiselle." The name was certainly appropriate, for nothing in Dante's "Inferno" could equal it for its sickly horror. Pick and shovel had carved their way through the tombs of centuries in the graveyard of the village, and their ghastly contents had been heaped up to form the "no man's land" between the belligerent trenches on which were a number of decaying corpses entangled in wire, the scarecrows of the neutral territory, which none dare remove.

A sickly odor permeated the atmosphere. I was thoroughly nauseated, for I was sketching through a periscope only seven yards from the rotting bodies, and I was about to quit the ghastly sight when, suddenly, the poilus lining the parapet of our entrenchment rushed into their dug-outs, or funk holes. "What are they doing?" said I to my guide.

"Oh!" he replied, as he dragged me to a dug-out, "they have just received notice by telephone that a battery of our '75's' is about to open fire. Now watch."

Presently I heard the dull barking of the guns far in our rear. Then came a terrific crash of bursting shells, followed by a tearing, ripping noise as the segments whipped the enemy's sector, hurling to the skies the scarecrows of the wire and the flesh and blood of a score of Germans.

"You see," calmly continued my friend, as he puffed at a cigarette, "why our men had to seek cover. If they had remained at the parapet they would have been well within the splinter zone of their own shells, for they were only three yards from the enemy. If it had been the question of, say, thirty yards, our guns are so sure and accurate, they could have pounded away for hours and our men would have had no need to leave their posts."

THE HELL OF LA BOISELLE

THE ATTACK ON THE LABYRINTH

The famous position near Neuville St. Vaast was held by the Germans for many months.

It was here the Huns cut those deep dug-outs which they furnished so elaborately with elegant mirrors, chairs, tables and bedsteads looted from the ruined châteaux in the vicinity.

Most of these subterranean dwellings were at least thirty feet below the surface, and out of all danger from shells or bombs. They were installed with electric light and well stored with liquors and wine of the best vintages. The Huns thought that they would be in these fascinating diggings till the final trump of victory sounded the doom of the Allies. But war is a tremendous game of hazard. One fine morning the French attacked their stronghold from an unexpected quarter. "Et! la voila." The happy home was broken up, and, but for quite a number of musty bones littering the blood-soaked terrain, the neighborhood knows them no more.

THE ATTACK ON THE LABYRINTH

LIQUID FIRE

Nearly all the methods of frightfulness employed by the Germans to scare the enemy during the war were not of Germanic origin. They were really not the outcome of Teutonic Kultur, after all. Some were as old as Adam. For instance, liquid fire was poured onto the heads of assailing troops attacking fortresses thousands of years ago. Poison gases were the outcome of the Chinese "stink pot" used centuries ago. Crucifixion was a common method to terrorize the civil population while advancing and ravaging an enemy's country, from the days of the Goths down to the last Burmese war. All these little "pleasantries" were practiced by the highly kultured Germans on their foe, with no ultimate success. They might just as well have added to their silly tricks the ancient Chinese method of using ugly masks and making wry faces, to frighten British, French and American soldiers.

The sketch represents Huns gaining a foothold in a French trench on the heights of the Meuse after spraying it with liquid fire. However, the poilus soon recovered from the shock, and speedily drove the enemy out. Those of the enemy who happened to remain did not suffer the humiliation of being taken prisoner.

LIQUID FIRE

THE CALM AFTER THE STORM

This sketch, taken by me shortly after the great push by the British and Indian troops into the village of Neuve Chapelle, shows the wonderful calm that immediately falls over a battle-field as soon as the stress and heat of the fray is over.

Only the pock-marked fields, stabbed and torn by monster shells, show any sign of the recent struggle and carnage. In the foreground war correspondents on the La Bassée road are seeking cover of a sand-bag fort to escape stray bullets coming from the wood on the right of the picture.

THE CALM AFTER THE STORM

SMOKE BOMB PRACTICE

The most important thing to remember in the art of warfare is to keep your movements from the knowledge of the enemy.

This was even more necessary in the recent campaign than at any time during my vast experience of war. For what with the tremendous machine gun fire, gas shells and high explosive projectiles, practically unknown to previous wars, the punishment was always terrible whenever the enemy was prepared for your coming. Smoke-bomb throwing was therefore continually practiced by our men. By the use of smoke-bombs the foe seldom knew quite what his opponents were about to do.

Were they coming forward to cut wire, or out of the cloud of dense smoke would a whirlwind of Kilties, with bloody bayonets, sweep over them? The Huns always feared the Highlanders. And, sometimes, the black cloud had nothing to hide, but was simply a game of bluff to keep them on the qui vive.

SMOKE BOMB PRACTICE

A WEIRD DISCOVERY

One morning, on my road to a French sector, I was told by a friend to visit a famous battery of mountain guns belonging to the Blue Devils, or Chasseurs d'Alpine.

I trudged through the heavy soil of a ploughed-up beet field toward a small wood, where I expected to find the battery under cover of the foliage.

Half way on my journey I was met by a startling and weird sight. Sticking in the mud were three apparently decapitated heads, covered with the blue devil bonnets. However, I was much relieved when one of them smiled at me and another shouted, "Qui va là." The heads belonged to very live sentries, who were doing duty in front of their battery, which was camouflaged in an emplacement deep down in the heavy soil covered by foliage from the adjacent wood. So well had their guns been concealed from hostile aircraft that in spite of their being in the same positions for many weeks, the Huns had never got nearer the battery than the bursting shells seen in the picture.

PANORAMA OF THE FRENCH POSITIONS AT NOORDSCHOOTE

This sketch represents the flatness of the terrain in Flanders, and was taken by me while with the Turcos of the French Army at Noordschoote. Its old church tower is plainly seen on the other side of the Yser Canal, where the Germans are entrenched. The Turcos, in the foreground, are about to advance from their trenches toward the Canal, to have a scrap with the Huns.

PANORAMA OF THE FRENCH POSITIONS AT NOORDSCHOOTE

CAMOUFLAGING THE ROADS TO SOISSONS

It was a very difficult matter for the French to manœuvre their troops in the vicinity of their famous city of Soissons without being observed and shelled by the enemy occupying the height on the other side of the river Aisne.

Railway crossings and parts of the roads leading into the old city were camouflaged with screens of foliage, and barbed-wire entanglements were erected and trenches made under similar cover.

CAMOUFLAGING THE ROADS TO SOISSONS

POISON GAS TOCSINS

Many quaint devices, such as whistles, motor sirens and gongs, were used by our men in the trenches as signals to warn their comrades of the approach of the enemy gas clouds. For instance, an empty "75" shell case would be hung up in a trench, and was rapped sharply with a stick or stone by the first man who spotted the advancing death cloud.

The sound of this signal always reminded me, but in a lesser degree, of the war tocsins used by the Chinese, in their campaign with Japan, to beat the celestial troops to quarters when they were about to make an advance on the Japs from the fortress of Port Arthur.

I picked up one of these gongs and its strikers, a sort of porcelain pestle, from a dead Chinese petty officer in a fight outside the citadel. I eventually used it as a dinner gong in my country home in the south of England. The only trouble was, however softly the maid struck it, the vibrations were so rasping and prolonged that my neighbors for at least a mile round always knew when my hunger was about to be appeased.

POISON GAS TOCSINS

THE MOVABLE TRENCH

This movable trench was designed by a French soldier. It is composed of steel plates, the front face covered with canvas painted the color of earth and tufts of real grass stuck about it, to give to it a touch of reality. It was pushed forward in the front of the first line trench with scouts behind it so that they could get nearer the enemy's barbed-wire entanglements without being observed.

The idea is a very old one and reminded me somewhat of the incident in Shakespeare's tragedy of "Macbeth", when the besieging army approaches Macbeth's stronghold camouflaged by trees and bushes cut from Birnham wood. That ruse was a great success in the case of Macbeth, but in the recent war stunts of this kind did not remain a mystery for long.

THE MOVABLE TRENCH

MOTOR AMBULANCES EN ROUTE TO THE COAST

After the first great battle of Ypres, where Great Britain had more men engaged and her losses were greater than at any other period of her military history, eighteen thousand wounded were shifted from the actual battle ground and carried in motor ambulance cars to the railheads and the coast, where they were shipped across the Channel, placed in Red Cross trains, and hurried to the military hospitals of London and the Provinces.

MOTOR AMBULANCES EN ROUTE TO THE COAST

IMPROVISED MACHINE GUNS

In the early days of the Great War the Allies had very few machine guns to those of the enemy. All kinds of dodges were employed by us to befuddle the Huns as to our paucity of that necessary weapon. A glorified policeman's rattle, that gave out almost a perfect reproduction of the rat-tat of the machine gun, was used with much success in certain quarters. In many cases rifles taken from the hands of the dead were hastily strung together in layers of six, with a rod threaded through the trigger guards, which were fired simultaneously by the pull of one man. This device, with the staccato rap of the rattle, so discouraged the enemy that in many instances an attack on our trenches broke down, the Huns thinking that we possessed machine guns where, their spies informed them, there was none.

IMPROVISED MACHINE GUNS

THE TIME FOR PRAYERS

This sketch is a sequel to No. 42, and dramatically tells its own story.

THE TIME FOR PRAYERS

A HELLISH HUNNISH DEVICE

Calling one morning on some poilu friends in a trench near Soissons, I found them very jubilant. They told me that they had just discovered how their trench had been mysteriously gassed by Germans who had for some time flooded their sector with the poisonous fumes by creeping up to their wire entanglements during the night and placing tin canisters containing bottles of gas embedded in sand. The Boches would then retire to their own lines and wait for a favorable wind, when they would take pot shots at the canisters, smash the bottles, and their contents, carried by the wind, would float over the French trench. Two of the gas bearers were caught red-handed, and I know that one of them was given no time to say his prayers.

A HELLISH HUNNISH DEVICE

DEATH OF PÉGOUD

Pégoud was in his day the most famous and beloved of French airmen. Long before the coming of the great war he had distinguished himself by being the first aviator to "loop the loop." This stunt, now common to all airmen owing to the increased speed of modern planes, was supposed to be a marvellous feat a few years ago. During Pégoud's wonderful career as an ace, he was never known to have an accident with his machine, though he always seemed to be courting disaster. In his last daring aerial fight he engaged two Fokkers near Belfort. It was his custom never to "go up" unless two of the enemy were in sight.

On this occasion he manœuvered his plane with such remarkable dexterity and so discomfited his enemies that they were about to fly away when a shot pierced his heart. His machine, uncontrolled, fluttered around and then dashed to the ground. So sudden was the collapse that one of the Fokkers swooped down within a few yards so that the pilot could make certain that his victim was dead. Peasants working in the field on which he fell discovered him lying under the débris of his machine, which had covered the corpse as with a pall.

DEATH OF PÉGOUD

IMPROVISED GAS MASKS

In the early days of the first poison gas clouds, before the gas was bottled up in shells and sent hurtling through the air by cannon fire, men had hastily to improvise nose and mouth screens to neutralize the deadly fumes as best they could. Poilus in many of the French front line trenches would saturate wisps of hay or straw with a solution of hyposulphate of soda, and then tie them over their mouths and nostrils to mitigate the stifling effect of the fumes, till a more efficacious and permanent device was employed. The improvised gas screen seen in my picture was of some use against the poison clouds, but of very little service against bursting gas shells which, later on, became the common danger, miles behind the actual fighting zone on the Western Front.

IMPROVISED GAS MASKS

CUTTING BARBED WIRE UNDER COVER OF SMOKE BOMBS

The scene depicts men of an Irish regiment throwing smoke bombs to hide the movements of a few of their comrades who are cutting gaps in the enemy's wire entanglements so that a raiding party can pass through them to the enemy's trench without being held up.

CUTTING BARBED WIRE UNDER COVER OF SMOKE BOMBS

TOAD MORTARS AT VERDUN

When I visited the French positions round about Verdun, then under the command of General Sarrail, in many of the trenches close up to the German lines all kinds of devices were made by the French to throw grenades into the trenches of the enemy. One of these inventions was a little squat mortar, called, in virtue of its shape, "The Toad." It used to throw a small bomb quite neatly over the parapet of the opposing trench, to explode almost in the faces of the occupants.

The sketch gives some idea of the bleak, bare, undulating country round the ancient Vaubanesque city of Verdun.

TOAD MORTARS AT VERDUN

THE CAPTURE OF LOOS

The brilliant capture of the famous mining town of Loos, in September of 1915, was probably the most notable feat by British troops during the second year of the Great War.

After a hand-to-hand fight, from house to house, through the labyrinth of streets, the enemy was driven back about five miles.

But, owing to our troops not being sufficiently supported by reinforcements at a critical moment, a retirement was ordered, much to the surprise and disgust of Tommy Atkins, and we had to fall back on the town.

On the left of the picture is the rather picturesque mine-head, now completely destroyed. On the right is one of the huge slag heaps which, at a distance, takes the shape of a pyramid. This illusion was so great that I thought I was once more on the banks of the Nile looking at one of those at Ghizeh.

THE CAPTURE OF LOOS

NEWSPAPERS IN THE TRENCHES

Owing to the narrowness of the *boyaux* or communication trenches on the Western Front, which led or wormed their way for miles into the main line trench, in many instances baby perambulators were used for the purpose of carrying the latest editions of the Parisian press to the poilus in the fighting sectors.

NEWSPAPERS IN THE TRENCHES

FIGHTING ON THE FACE OF THE WATERS

All the low-lying ground round the old Flemish town of Pervese was completely inundated when the Belgians opened their dykes in the first year of the War.

The Germans advancing toward the Channel ports were always trying to get out of the mire and water on to the dry land. Their objective, as shown in my sketch, was the poplar-lined road leading into the town. On this chaussée the Belgians had a searchlight rigged up on a motor trolley, which at night poured a tell-tale flood of light on any attempt of the Hun to get ashore. However, sometimes by punting rafts crowded with men across the lakes a landing was effected, but they were generally driven back into the water by Belgian troops waiting for them in the dark shadows of the night.

FIGHTING ON THE FACE OF THE WATERS

HIGHLANDERS AT NEUVE CHAPELLE

A long stretch of the La Bassée road, the famous highway on the Western Front that figured so often in the belligerents' daily communiqués during the war, ran parallel to Neuve Chapelle, and the deep water-filled ditch on the village side of the road was a great obstacle to the successful advance of our Highland and Indian regiments, when, in March, 1915, they made the final dash on their objective. For, directly our men scaled the walls of the stone trench on the other side of the chaussée, they had to run forward carrying slats to bridge the dyke. All this had to be done under a withering machine-gun fire from German trenches in front of the village. In spite of this our troops dashed forward and reached the barbed wire of the Huns. For days our concentrated artillery had pounded the wire, but none of it was broken enough for our men to pass, owing, we found, to the paucity of high explosive shells. But, in spite of the Highlanders, the Leicesters, and Indians being held up in this manner and suffering enormous losses, they gained the village at last.

HIGHLANDERS AT NEUVE CHAPELLE