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DR. WILLIAM EWING, M.C., C.F.

# FROM GALLIPOLI TO BAGHDAD

BY

WILLIAM EWING, M.C., D.D.

CHAPLAIN TO THE FORCES

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

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TO  
THE FRIENDS IN GRANGE UNITED FREE CHURCH  
EDINBURGH  
WHOSE GENEROUS KINDNESS  
MADE POSSIBLE THE EXPERIENCE IT RECORDS  
AND TO  
THE MEMORY OF THE OFFICERS, N.C.O.'S, AND MEN  
OF THE 4TH BATTALION THE ROYAL SCOTS (Q.E.R.)  
WHO FELL ON THE PENINSULA OF GALLIPOLI  
THIS VOLUME  
IS DEDICATED IN AFFECTION AND PRIDE



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## FOREWORD

THE desire to keep in touch with my Congregation during a prolonged absence with the Army, by means of a weekly letter, led to the writing of pretty full notes of what was happening from day to day. Some of the letters were printed in the *Scotsman*, the *British Weekly*, and other journals; and many suggested that they might be made available in a more permanent and accessible form. I did not think, however, a mere reprint of the letters desirable. The invitation of Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton to contribute a volume to their war library gave me the opportunity to make fuller use of the materials in my possession.

This book is not concerned with questions of high policy or strategy, although opinions are expressed when clearly justified. The story of the campaigns is the framework in which is set the picture of our gallant men, and the actual conditions of their soldier-life, as I knew them during more than two years of close intimacy on the shell-swept Peninsula of Gallipoli, in the Egyptian desert, and along the banks of the Tigris, in that forlorn land of mighty memories.

The loyalty of my Congregation during the years of

separation demands special acknowledgment. To their patriotism and self-denial I owe the greatest privilege of my life: their faithful "remembrance" was a perpetual source of strength.

Among those whose friendship, counsel, and helpfulness made difficulties seem small, and privation itself almost luxury, I cannot forbear to mention Lieut.-General Sir F. J. Davies, K.C.B., Major-General Sir G. F. Macmunn, K.C.B., Colonel (now Brig.-General) Nepean, C.M.G., Captain (now Lieut.-Colonel) T. Nisbet, D.S.O., Captain (now Major) Venning, the Principal Chaplains in Egypt and Mesopotamia, and my two good friends and tent-fellows, Father E. Legros, S.J., and the Rev. L. N. Green.

W. E.

EDINBURGH, *October 1917.*



## CHAPTER I

### EDINBURGH TO GALLIPOLI

It was my fortune to be mobilised at the outbreak of the war in August 1914 with the Territorial battalion to which I was attached in peace time, the 4th Royal Scots (Q.E.R.). Officers, N.C.O.'s, and men volunteered for service overseas, and entered with zest and enthusiasm on a period of training which, to their eager minds, soon appeared far too long. Every rumour of a possible move was keenly canvassed, until hope deferred threatened to make the heart sick, and some declared their intention to "vamoose and join the Regulars"! The like spirit animated surrounding units; but there was no relaxation of discipline; and no monotony of daily routine could quench their fiery zeal. Edinburgh, with its singular beauty, gathered round its storied Castle, with its ancient buildings that enshrine great memories, with its romantic history and stirring traditions, fed and fanned the patriotic ardour of the gallant lads who learned the art of war under the shadow of Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Craigs.

Later, I was entrusted with the spiritual oversight of the men in and around Edinburgh belonging to the Forth Defences. The various units were distributed over a wide area, stretching from the island of Inchkeith in the Firth to the barracks at Redford. The generous co-operation of many Territorial chaplains

made work a pleasure. Six months of this experience was a valuable preparation for service abroad, and many friendships were formed with men whose presence in far other fields in days to come brought strength and good cheer.

When a man has spent some years of his life in Eastern climes the sun lingers in his blood, creating a yearning for fair skies and bright landscapes. There was therefore no resisting of the call to Gallipoli when it came, backed as it was by mysterious rumours of a great enterprise to be attempted there. April was waning as we passed through the brave greenery of old England on our way to the port of embarkation. It was no doubt to cheat the submarines that the port was changed at the last moment, and the hour of sailing altered. While the ship lay at the dock taking in her varied cargo—stores, equipment, wheeled vehicles, horses, arms, ammunition, etc.—I walked with my friend, Professor Kay of St. Andrews, round the face of the hill overlooking the harbour of Plymouth. We conversed with an old woman who was resting on a seat by the wayside. She told us that she was the daughter of a Navy man, that she was the wife, mother, and grandmother of Navy men. “'And,” she said, “if I'd been a gentleman 'stead o' a lydie, I'd 'a been a Navy man myself.” Many sorrows and losses had come her way, but she was full of thankfulness for her pension. “Never thought I'd 'a got a pension—aye, old age pension—an' wot a difference it do make! I allus 'olds that if you trusts in God an' asks Him to 'elp you, 'E'll do it.” It was not a bad sermon to preach to the padres facing the unknown; and the words of this fragile, brave old patriot rang in our ears as we passed out into the fog that hung heavy over the Channel.

We had reason to bless the kindly fog for blanketing the eyes of the submarines which lay in wait for us. On reaching the open sea we found that a turtle dove had accompanied the ship, making itself at home among the spars and cordage. The presence of the gentle bird of peace was very pleasant ; but after some days it disappeared, having doubtless discovered the nature of our grim errand.

There were many nurses on board, and twice thirteen medical men. There were drafts for various regiments in the numbers of which thirteen figured prominently ; and there were thirteen padres. It was enough to send a superstitious man into fits ! Perhaps, however, we should count fourteen padres. Among the medicos was the rector of a London church, who possessed the double qualification. The call for medical officers was to him more urgent than that for chaplains. He accepted a commission in the R.A.M.C., gave up his congregation, and there he was. The ship was a marvel of steadiness. She was one of those known in the West as " ladies' ships," holding on her way at no great speed, declining to notice anything but the heaviest storms. Life followed the usual lines ; but with wealth of young and vigorous spirits on board there was no danger of monotony. The boys played cards and " House " ; athletic tournaments there were, with all sorts of strange and fearsome contests—" cock fighting," " Are you there ? " spar-boxing over a great tank filled with water, and such like. The ladies' " potato race " vied in popularity with the " wheelbarrow race." But what really roused enthusiasm was the Boxing Tournament. The encounters of Heavy Weight, Middle Weight, and Light Weight were no mimic battles. But the boys took their punishment cheerfully. To sulk or grow

angry would be fatal. Surely there is no more drastic test of temper, or more strenuous exercise in self-control. The shattering summons to boat or fire drill broke in without apology upon our gaiety, forbidding perfect oblivion of the perils through which we moved. When night fell lights were reduced to a minimum, and all port-holes closed. The great ship passed like a shadowy phantom across the waste of waters. But there was much cheerfulness within. The company was rich in talent, musical, vocal, and histrionic ; nor was the man of mystery, the conjurer, far to seek. While youth found enjoyment to its taste, the seniors gathered in a remote corner of the saloon and discussed high themes with grave relish. A few of the more seriously-minded busied themselves with the rudiments of Arabic and Turkish, with a view to possible usefulness in the campaigning before us.

A great ship is a tiny object amid the expanse of ocean. In the vast solitude little things may arrest attention and even cause a flutter of excitement. A couple of whales tumbling in the deep, sending up white jets of spray ; a shoal of porpoises racing the steamer and throwing themselves about in what seemed a perfect paroxysm of delight ; a passing tramp steamer ; the wreck of the *Delhi* which went on the rocks with the Duke and Duchess of Fife ; the coast of Africa with its white towns showing in the distance like splashes of foam on the hillsides, lent interest in turn to the khaki-clad crowd on deck. The heat was already considerable when we dropped anchor in the bay of Gibraltar over against that mighty fortress. No one was allowed to land. Fleets of little boats brought traders and their wares to the ship's side. Bargains by buckets lowered and raised with stout cords proceeded briskly most of the day.

Next morning we left "Gib" and sailed into the sun towards Malta. These great rocks bristling with guns along the blue highway to our Indian Empire suggested the vast power wielded by the British people beyond the boundaries of our own little island. One is proud to reflect that it is ever employed to promote and to guard the freedom and welfare of men. The neighbouring shores recall stirring and fateful memories of ancient Rome and Carthage and their grim struggle for supremacy. Nor, as we came abreast of his native land and saw its blue hills on the horizon, did we forget St. Augustine, God's great gift to His Church and the world in later years from Carthage. A mightier memory still rose to mind as we approached the island of Malta—"Melita" of Acts xxviii. 1—and passed the scene of St. Paul's shipwreck.

How beautifully blue was the water in the rock-bound harbour of Valetta, reflecting in its calm depths the white buildings that crowned the surrounding cliffs. Battleships, hospital ships, transports, merchant vessels of all nations, and multitudes of smaller craft filled the ample spaces. Traders' boats were swiftly on the scene. The main item of news received here was of the enemy's latest achievement in sinking the *Lusitania*—news that obviously hardened the resolution of men to see the pirates properly requited. Here many of our medical men disembarked. A great hospital base was being formed on the island, and the wounded men from the Dardanelles were already arriving. I well remember the strained anxiety we all felt lest, as one man put it, "the whole show should be over before we ever reached Gallipoli"! Permitted to go ashore, my companion was the Rev. Father Legros, S.J., with whom I was destined to enjoy much intimate fellowship in the coming months. The

islanders are mainly Roman Catholics. I profited not a little from the reverence paid on all hands to my companion.

Submarines were reported in the vicinity, so when we started for Alexandria a couple of Torpedo-boat Destroyers escorted us for several hours. The weather became somewhat tempestuous. The sun was bright, but the wind was high, and our progress was slow. In the afternoon of the fourth day we sighted the lighthouse piercing the mist ahead, then the low coast with white houses here and there, the breakwater, and finally the harbour, presided over by the palace at *Ras et-Tin*. A spacious haven it is, affording shelter to a vast multitude of ships. It has undergone great development since I first saw it in 1888. This is typical of the progress made everywhere in Egypt under British control. We were moored close to a ship which bore on her side in gigantic characters the name of good omen, *Elpidophoros*, "Bearer of Hope." An American battleship glided in, silhouetting strikingly against the silver-grey, gold, and crimson that made a memorably beautiful sunset.

Many of our company, appointed to work in Egypt, left us here. Those of us who were to go farther spent the night on board, transhipped in the morning to a splendid ocean liner bound for the Dardanelles, and in the early afternoon found ourselves once more in the open sea. Unfortunately our course lay too far west to permit a glimpse of the heights of Judah and Samaria, and of the promontories of Carmel and the Ladder of Tyre. But it was easy to recall their forms as they lay just over the line where sky and waters meet. How often it is not the visible horizon but the one beyond that warms the heart and stirs the blood.

The *Franconia*—which, alas, has since gone to the

bottom—was a great contrast in all respects to the *Lake Manitoba*. The voyage northwards was swift and comfortable. Sailing through summer seas, among the beautiful green islands of the Ægean, in the sweet light of the Eastern morning, the blue billows rolling far and wide, crested with glistening white, the thought of our terrible mission seemed strangely out of harmony with these idyllic surroundings. All the horrors of war might well have been ten thousand miles away. Yet war is not unfamiliar here. These same waters have witnessed many a grim struggle from the dawn of history until now; but never one that involved greater issues for the world than that which claims our devotion to-day, and never one in which the cause of righteousness was more clearly manifest. There is no incongruity after all. We are fighting that these waves may remain the highway of the free.

Soon the deep growl of distant ordnance touched our hearts with a sense of awe. As we drew near the scene of battle the seriousness of the enterprise evidently grew upon the minds of all; but everyone seemed to look forward with a fine spirit of quiet resolution. We had many on board who had already experienced battle and wounds, and were returning to face them again. There was no swagger about these fellows, but a certain grave hopefulness which inspired confidence. Along with an officer who had been wounded and was now going back to the Dardanelles, I invited the men on board to a meeting in their own dining-room, on Saturday evening. Hanom, my officer friend, offered them a bargain. He would give them twenty minutes on the fighting in which he had taken part, if they would then listen to me for twenty minutes preaching the gospel! The arrangement was accepted and loyally carried out. A crowd gathered in the confined

space between-decks dimly lit by rather smelly lanterns. Before the first hymn was sung you could see beads of perspiration on many a brow. Hanom gave a thrilling account of the operations that led to his wounding and temporary retirement from the field. Especially interesting was his description of the arts and dodges of the snipers. One whose face and hands were painted green, and his person thatched with green twigs, had no fewer than 200 rounds of ammunition and seven days' rations in his "retreat" behind the British lines. Thence he picked off whom he would until he was caught and met an appropriate fate. This exciting fare might have indisposed the lads to tolerate a sermon. It seemed to have the opposite effect. Perhaps it helped them to realise more clearly what lay before them; and they turned with unabated interest to hear how men may be made "more than conquerors." At the close the atmosphere was awful, and breathing had become almost desperate; but the boys were in no hurry to go. The stifling air had no terrors for men who had momentous questions to ask, advice and guidance to seek.

The dawn of 16th May broke over a scene of quiet beauty. The sea was almost calm; and as the light haze lifted, in succession, the islands of Lemnos, Tenedos, and Imbros, with the peak of Samothrace beyond, hove into sight; then the Asian shore, the hills behind old Troy, and the mouth of the Hellespont. The cliffs that rise abruptly from the water's edge round the Peninsula gleamed white in the sun; and the multitudinous shipping that lay off Sidd ul-Bahr and Cape Helles came gradually into view. It was a sweet Sabbath morning. The deep resounding voices of the great naval artillery might almost have passed for the bass notes of a gigantic organ. Then for the



first time I saw big guns fired in anger ; the old *Swiftsure* bombarding the Turkish positions from the partial shelter of Cape Tekke. Red flame and yellow smoke belched from the side of the battleship with deafening roar ; then far away on the scarred shoulder of Achi Baba we saw the shells burst, sending up clouds of dust and smoke like vast, dark ostrich plumes. The Turkish guns also were "speaking back," their shells exploding over the beach and the advanced base camp which lay in the valley opening on "W" Beach, and on the slopes running up from the edge of the cliffs. This was our introduction to the place and the conditions in which we were to spend the next eight months.

## CHAPTER II

### THE HELLESPONT: A RETROSPECT

THE Hellespont, or Dardanelles, the strip of silver cutting asunder the continents of Europe and Asia, runs from the Sea of Marmora to the Ægean. Great memories of the ancient world brood upon its waters. Around it transpired many of the most momentous events in human history. On its southern shore were drawn up the hollow ships that brought the Achæans over the sounding sea. The adjoining plains echoed with the din of heroic strife before the walls of Troy; while with keen interest the gods looked down upon the battle from the dark heights of Ida. From Abydos to the tower of Lesbos Leander swam nightly, inspired by love of Hero, and guided by her lamp: a feat which Lord Byron equalled, urged by his romantic and adventurous spirit. One of the earliest steps that led Athens to empire was taken when (559 B.C.) Miltiades became tyrant of the Thracian Chersonese—the Peninsula of Gallipoli; and under him the islands of Imbros and Lemnos first bowed to Athenian supremacy. From a lofty throne of marble erected on the beach Xerxes proudly watched the hosts of Asia pouring into Europe across his bridge of boats; his dream of conquest undisturbed by visions of Thermopylæ, Salamis, and Plataea (481 B.C.). In these Straits, at Ægospotami, *Goat's Rivers*, over against Lampsacus, the power of Athens was broken by

the victory of Lysander (405 B.C.). Near the crossing-place of Xerxes the army of Alexander the Great was transported by his fleet from Europe to Asia (334 B.C.). Alexander himself marched round by Cape Helles to Elæus—possibly near to Sidd ul-Bahr—and offered sacrifice on the tomb of Protesilaus, who first of the mythical Greeks leapt on to the Asian shore in the Trojan War, and was the first to fall. From Troas, behind Tenedos, in full view of Cape Helles, past Imbros and Samothrace to Neapolis, St. Paul sailed on his first momentous visit to Europe, in response to the appeal of the "man of Macedonia" (Acts xvi. 9). "Before Constantine gave a just preference to Byzantium (330 A.D.) he had conceived the design of erecting the seat of empire on this celebrated spot whence the Romans derive their fabulous origin. The extensive plain which lies below ancient Troy, towards the Rhoetian promontory and the tomb of Ajax, was first chosen for his new capital; and though the undertaking was relinquished, the stately remains of unfinished walls and towers attracted the notice of all who sailed through the straits of the Hellespont" (Gibbon, xvii.). The Dardanelles and the Bosphorus became the easily guarded gateways of the new metropolis. Gainas the Goth and his intrepid barbarians attempted the passage of the Hellespont in rafts. The Roman galleys attacked them in mid-stream, and soon the waters were covered with the fragments of the Gothic shipwreck (400 A.D.). The Greek emperors of Byzantium strangely neglected the defence of the Hellespont, and, in the fourth Crusade, well described as a "great buccaneering expedition," the Venetian fleet passed through without opposition, and proceeded to the capture of Constantinople (1204 A.D.). The Ottoman Turks, having

taken Brusa, at the foot of the Asian Olympus (clearly seen from Cape Helles), and made themselves masters of Asia, turned their attention to Europe. The policy of neglect still prevailed at Constantinople. Suleyman, son of Orkhan, one night crossed over on a raft and surprised the town of Gallipoli, "the key of the Hellespont." He was followed next day by his troops, and the Peninsula became the first Turkish outpost in Europe (1354 A.D.).

The Turks perceived the importance of guarding the entrance to the Dardanelles, and soon erected the "Castle of Europe" and the "Castle of Asia," on the sites now occupied respectively by Sidd ul-Bahr and Kum Kale. "Inner castles" were constructed at the Narrows, and sailing craft of various orders were organised for defence of the Straits. In 1654 the Venetian fleet defeated that of the Turks to the S.E. of Cape Helles, and captured Tenedos; but its attempt to enter the Dardanelles was frustrated by the land defences. Gibbon tells of an enormous cannon which in his day still guarded the Dardanelles. "If its use be inconvenient, it has been found on a late trial that the effect was far from contemptible. A stone bullet of eleven hundred pounds' weight was once discharged with 330 pounds of powder; at a distance of 600 yards it shivered into three rocky fragments, traversed the strait, and, leaving the waters in a foam, again rose and bounded against the opposite hill" (chap. lxviii.). In 1807 it was felt that British diplomacy in Constantinople should be supported by a British squadron there. Little improvement had been made in the artillery in the Turkish forts, which were all on low ground at the edge of the water. Admiral Sir J. T. Duckworth, with a squadron of line-of-battle ships and frigates, passed through the Straits, encountering little

serious resistance. More opposition was met on his return voyage, and his ships sustained some damage from the stone balls thrown by the mediæval guns on the shore. In February 1878, to secure Constantinople against the Russians, a British fleet passed through the Dardanelles unopposed. Thereafter the whole system of defence, guns and armament, were renewed under the scientific supervision of German experts. When war broke out between Turkey and Italy, Italian torpedo-boats tried to steal through the Straits by night. Search-lights showed them up, and under a hail of missiles from the protecting guns they beat a hasty retreat. The passage of the Dardanelles has never yet been forced by a hostile fleet in face of serious resistance.

The mouth of the Dardanelles at Sidd ul-Bahr is two miles wide. The southern shore sweeps round to the N.E. in an irregular curve, the passage widening to about five miles. Towards the Narrows, between Kilid Bahr and Chanak Kale, it contracts to less than a mile, and widens as it turns to the north past Maidos. It contracts again to about a mile as it turns once more to the N.E., and thence maintains an average width of about three miles ; contracting to about a mile and a half above Gallipoli and opening to about four miles at Bulair. The channel is from twenty-five to fifty fathoms deep. The current from the Sea of Marmora to the Ægean averages something over three miles an hour. The tides are quite noticeable, but never make a difference of more than two or three feet.

The Dardanelles afford the easiest means of communication between the Black Sea, Constantinople, and the Mediterranean. Mastery of these narrow waters involves control of the main line of traffic between the rich provinces round the Euxine and the

great markets of the world. Their possession is of the highest consequence for the safety of Constantinople. This accounts for the great part this region has played through many centuries. A new and glorious chapter has been added to its history.

On the European side, between the Straits and the Gulf of Saros, lies the Peninsula which takes its name from the seaport of Gallipoli, a town of some 30,000 inhabitants, about thirty-eight miles from Sidd ul-Bahr, where are the headquarters of the naval defences. It is a tongue of land running roughly from N.E. to S.W. It is about fifty-four miles in length, varying in breadth from three miles where it is spanned by the Bulair lines, to over twelve miles from Cape Suvla to the Straits, narrowing to less than two miles at the S.W. end. It is a tract of rugged hill country. The chief heights in the district of the recent fighting are Sari Bair, S.E. of Cape Suvla, 970 ft. high; the plateau of Kilid Bahr, dominating the Narrows, rising to a height of 700 ft.; and Achi Baba, 590 ft. high, which commands all the S.W. end of the Peninsula. The hills are covered with thick scrub: they are rocky, steep, in parts precipitous. Their sides and flanks are torn by ravines and watercourses. In the open land towards Cape Helles we found traces of a fair amount of cultivation; but the soil is poor. In the early year wild flowers are abundant and brilliant. The gentle slopes are covered with heather and thyme. Here the olive, fig, and vine seemed to thrive, while pines grew on some of the lower hills. In the wider portion of the Peninsula the peasants cultivate the Corinthian vine, and grow scanty crops of pulse and cereals. The roads are little better than bridle-paths, winding across the open, along the ravines, and through the narrow irregular valleys; passable

in dry weather, but in rain going swiftly to streaks of sticky mud. All round the Peninsula steep cliffs drop upon the edge of the water. At infrequent intervals gullies break down from the uplands, making openings in this wall, and at their mouths strips of sandy beach are found. In the summer months the bottom of these gorges is dry ; but cloud-bursts in the hills at times fill them with raging torrents. In the months of rain each carries its own volume to the sea.

The land on the Asiatic side is also broken and hilly. It lies lower, and is dominated by the Gallipoli heights. The shore is steep, in parts overhanging the water. From the mouth of the Straits the marshy plain of Troy falls away to the S.E., and the view is bounded by the mountain range of Ida,—Turkish *Kag Dagh*,—which attains a height of 3000 ft.

When Turkey entered the war in 1914 she may well have believed that no military force could hope to secure a footing on the Peninsula, and that any naval attempt to open the passage of the Dardanelles was doomed to failure. The beaches were so overlooked and commanded by neighbouring cliffs and easily fortified positions that a handful of resolute men with modern weapons and appliances might be expected successfully to oppose the landing of an army. The entrance to the Straits was defended by the forts at Cape Helles and Sidd ul-Bahr on the north, and by those at Kum Kale and Orkanieh on the south, supported by batteries at intervals along the shores. Should these be silenced by the long-range fire of naval guns, ships entering the channel would find that serious business really began as they approached the Narrows. There were heavily armed forts at Kilid Bahr on the European side, and at Chanak Kale on the Asian ; the slopes around and above them were

literally bristling with guns, while batteries lined the shores all round the crook in the passage. Ships would thus be subject to a storm of fire from all directions, while cramped and hampered in their movements by the narrowness of the waterway. The fighting would be at comparatively short range, and the ships, in dealing with the guns on the cliffs, would be under the disadvantage foreseen by Admiral Hornby in 1887. The guns on the cliffs "would be most difficult for men-of-war to silence. We should have to fire at them with considerable elevation. Shots which were a trifle low would lodge harmlessly in the sandstone cliff; those a trifle high would fly into the country without the slightest effect on the gunners except amusement." But the ships had other and not less serious dangers to face from submarine mines, from floating mines brought down by the current, and from torpedoes launched from torpedo tubes cunningly ensconced by the water's edge. Minesweeping was a highly perilous operation, powerful search-lights making the vessels engaged in it an easy mark for all kinds of artillery by night as well as by day. In any case, they could afford little protection against the floating mines, which might be constantly renewed on the breast of the stream. Torpedoes, also, fired from land were more to be feared than those fired from ships, by reason of their greater strength and accuracy of aim.

To force a passage through the Straits under these conditions was obviously a formidable task, and the attempt might easily lead to overwhelming disaster. It was felt, however, that the objects to be achieved justified the risk; and the enterprise was taken in hand. These objects may be stated briefly. The first was to relieve the pressure on our Russian allies



in the east, and on our Egyptian and Mesopotamian fronts by drawing off a large Turkish force for the defence of the Dardanelles. The second, to open an ice-free route to Russia for arms and ammunition, of which she stood sorely in need ; at the same time facilitating export of the grain that filled her granaries, to meet the growing necessities of the allied countries. In the third place, the presence of an allied fleet in the Sea of Marmora might, indeed probably would, lead to a revolution in Constantinople, the fall of the pro-German leaders, and the return of the pro-Ally party to power. Or it might lead to the surrender of Constantinople. In either case the effect upon wavering neutrals in the Balkans would be immediate and decisive. With Turkey weakened and shorn of prestige, or actually separated from the enemy, and with the Balkan Powers ranged on our side, or confirmed in a self-protecting neutrality, the problem before the Allies would be greatly simplified.

The enterprise was planned as a purely naval operation. A fleet of war-vessels representing the navies of Britain and France assembled at Lemnos. At a later date they were joined by the Russian cruiser *Askold*, which, with her row of five funnels, was, by our sailor boys, whimsically dubbed the " Woodbine." The spacious harbour of Mudros afforded ample accommodation and shelter. Its island-studded entrance is easy of defence. Here, about fifty miles from the mouth of the Dardanelles, an advanced base was formed, with enormous stores of supplies and munitions brought from overseas, the island itself being poverty-struck. It was a drawback that no provision could be made for the repair of ships seriously damaged nearer than Alexandria or Malta. A blockade of the Straits was established, and on 19th February

1915 the first shots at the forts were fired. A terrible impression was made by the 15-inch shells of the *Queen Elizabeth*, the most formidable battleship ever seen in these waters. It is interesting to note that an *Agamemnon* again played a leading part in the titanic strife: the thunder of the guns echoing among the ruins of ancient Troy. The forts evidently suffered considerably, and the reply of the Turks was feeble and ineffective. After some days of unfavourable weather the bombardment was resumed on 25th February, and the forts at Cape Helles and Sidd ul-Bahr were silenced. Mine-sweepers cleared the waters, enabling certain ships to proceed some distance up the channel; and by the evening of the 26th the entrance to the Straits was cleared. Boisterous winds interrupted operations, but at intervals attacks were made upon different forts by portions of the fleet. On 6th March the *Queen Elizabeth*, *Agamemnon*, and *Ocean*, lying in the Gulf of Saros, off Gaba Tepe, bombarded the forts at Chanak at a range of about twelve miles, firing right over the Peninsula and the Straits. On the 18th of March, the Sweepers having done all that was humanly possible, under conditions of exceptional danger, to clear the channel of mines, the strength of the combined fleet was concentrated on an effort to force the passage. The ships moved well up towards the Narrows and brought a terrific fire to bear upon the shore defences. The big guns at Kilid Bahr and Chanak do not seem to have done much damage to the ships; but they were harassed by the fire of field-guns, and especially of howitzers, skilfully placed on the higher ground. To this, for reasons already stated, no effective reply was possible. Large floating mines sent down by the Turks formed the greatest peril, and to them were due the heaviest

losses suffered. The ships failed to silence the forts ; the guns on the heights were uninjured ; in spite of the intrepid efforts of the Sweepers, deadly mines still strewed the waters. When the vessels dropped down with the current at evening, and sought the open sea, three of their number were left at the bottom of the channel—one French, the *Bouvet*, which took her crew down with her ; and two British, the *Irresistible* and the *Ocean*.

Hope of success in this enterprise rested upon a mistaken idea of what naval guns could accomplish as against land fortifications and batteries. Reliance was placed particularly upon the tremendous missiles hurled by our modern ships of war, directed by aeroplane, from a distance so great that shells from the land batteries could not reach them. The destruction wrought by the naval bombardment on earthworks was far short of what had been expected ; and the difficulties of dealing effectively with concealed guns, and batteries that could quickly move their position when their range was found, were too great to be overcome by the most careful aeroplane work. It had been made clear that ships alone could never force the passage. If, however, an army, landed on the Peninsula, held the heights dominating the Asian shore, the Straits might be swept free of mines and the waterway opened to the Sea of Marmora. Accordingly it was resolved that in the further prosecution of the enterprise a land force should co-operate with the navy. What had already occurred did not make the task easier. The enemy were now well advertised of our purpose.

## CHAPTER III

### THE LANDINGS

THERE were only a few spots on the Peninsula where a landing was possible. These were the narrow strips of sandy beach at the openings in the wall of cliffs. Our leaders had only such knowledge of them as could be gained by a survey from the sea ; while every undulation of the ground, every twist in the ravines, every nook and cranny in the rocks were known to the enemy. Every device known to modern military science was employed by the enemy to make these places impregnable. The beaches became jungles of barbed-wire entanglement which, in some cases, extended under the water ; the barbs and the wire being longer and stronger than had been seen elsewhere. Machine guns were hidden in recesses of the cliffs whence they commanded every inch of the sea front and the nearer waters, with accurately measured ranges. Deep and carefully constructed trenches scored the slopes and higher ground ; while from forts and batteries a withering fire could be swiftly concentrated upon any spot desired. Sea mines imperilled approaching vessels, and land mines added to the dangers ashore. The enemy had all the advantages of position and superior numbers. They were in high spirits, having already beaten off a formidable naval attack.

Our forces, naval and military, assembled in the

great harbour of Mudros, in the island of Lemnos, which now became the advanced base for army as well as fleet. Operations were delayed till the end of April. The weather, always an uncertain element, was of supreme importance. Had the landing been interrupted by a storm such as often rages round these coasts, the men already landed must needs have been abandoned, and the whole enterprise would have come instantly to grief. There was good hope of fine weather late in April.

Again, the troops on board the transports had to be redistributed, and arranged for the special task before them. The force landed at each of the beaches must be completely equipped and self-sufficient, with its own system of transport and supply; rations, water,—of which the supply on the Peninsula was tenuous and untrustworthy,—arms, ammunition, trenching tools, etc.; with its own medical staff and appliances; all so arranged that they could be pushed ashore quickly and without confusion in the dusk before the dawn. For this the transports had to go to Alexandria. When it was accomplished, they joined the rest of the shipping in Mudros Bay. There the soldiers and sailors engaged in various exercises, and practised disembarking upon barges, so that each man might be master of his part when the critical hour arrived.

The points selected for the landing were "S" Beach, two miles within the Straits, at Morto Bay; "V" Beach, the little bay between Cape Helles and Sidd ul-Bahr; "W" Beach, at the opening of the valley between Cape Tekke and Cape Helles; "X" Beach, nearly a mile N.E. of Cape Tekke, where the crags break back slightly, affording access to the plateau; "Y" Beach, on the shore of the Gulf of

Saros, three miles from Cape Tekke; and Gaba Tepe, choosing the northern of two possible landing-places. The French were to land at Kum Kale, to divert the attention of certain Asian guns from "S" and "Y" Beaches. A demonstration in force was to be made in the direction of the Bulair lines. This and the landings at "S" and "Y" Beaches was designed to perplex the enemy, and prevent him from concentrating an overwhelming force to oppose the main landings at Gaba Tepe and the beaches on either side of Cape Helles.

If the forces landed at the south end of the Peninsula could take Achi Baba and join hands with the force from Gaba Tepe, the Kilid Bahr plateau would be at their mercy. Guns could be brought up to destroy the European forts and dominate the enemy's positions in Asia, thus opening the Narrows to our fleet, and our task would be accomplished.

At Sir Ian Hamilton's disposal were the 29th Division, composed almost wholly of seasoned soldiers (the one Territorial battalion attached to it was the 5th Royal Scots (Q.E.R.), who proved right worthy to be associated with this "incomparable division"); the Naval Division, which had received its baptism of fire at Antwerp; the East Lancashire Territorial Division; the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps; some regiments of British Yeomanry; and a considerable number of Indian troops.

On the 23rd of April battleships, cruisers, destroyers, transports, supply ships, fleet-sweepers, steam tugs, picket boats, and lighters, with their rich freight of cheering and vigorous young life, left the harbour of Mudros amid scenes of indescribable enthusiasm, and steered for the island of Tenedos. On the afternoon of the 24th the troops who were to form the

landing parties "were transferred to the warships and fleet-sweepers in which they were to approach the shore. About midnight the ships, each towing a number of cutters and other small boats, silently slipped their cables and, escorted by the 3rd Squadron of the Fleet, steamed slowly towards their final rendezvous at Cape Helles. The rendezvous was reached just before dawn on the 25th. The morning was absolutely still; there was no sign of life on the shore; a thin veil of mist hung motionless over the promontory; the surface of the sea was as smooth as glass." As the light grew, a tender rose suffused the peak of Samothrace and Imbros; Olympus and the ridges of Ida stood out in dark purple against the radiant orient; the lowlier Achi Baba was yet scarcely visible through the draperies of the mist. Then, as the haze lifted and vanished, revealing the clear outlines of the shore and cliffs, the great naval guns began to speak. The Sabbath quiet was roughly broken by the mighty rumour and uproar that rolled over the narrow waters and rumbled among the distant hills. Amid the hurricane of bursting shells that fell around and above the beaches one wondered how any human being could live. There was no reply from the Turkish artillery save a few shells from Asia which fell harmlessly in the sea. The troops were transferred with all speed to the smaller craft in which they were to be towed ashore. Excitement, the strain of uncertainty, eagerness, and hope had kept them awake all night. But there was no sign of weariness as with calm self-possession they went forward to look into the eyes of death.

The landings at "S" and "Y" were timed for 5 a.m., and at the other beaches for 5.30, after a half-hour's bombardment by the Fleet. The 2nd South

Wales Borderers, told off for " S " Beach, were delayed by the current in the Straits, but got ashore by 7.30. They took a position on the high ground near De Tott's battery, which they held until, on the 27th, they came again into touch with the main body.

The landing at " Y " Beach was in the nature of a surprise. The Turks, believing that the rough precipices over the strip of sand were unscalable, left them undefended. The 1st K.O.S.B. and the Plymouth Battalion of the Naval Division, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel Koe, under cover of the cruisers *Dublin*, *Amethyst*, and *Sapphire*, went swiftly ashore, reached the heights, and hauled up reserves of food, water, and ammunition without coming in contact with the enemy. " Y2," or " Gully Beach," a mile and a half to the south, where the Turks expected a landing, was deeply entrenched and strongly held. An attempt to join hands with the troops landed at " X " Beach was frustrated by the force from Gully Beach. A powerful attack from the direction of Krithia compelled Colonel Koe to entrench ; and throughout the afternoon and the following night his wearied soldiers, in ever dwindling numbers, repelled attack after attack of fresh troops, often counter-charging with the bayonet. Our casualties had been very heavy, Colonel Koe being among them. Our men were utterly exhausted. Reinforcements could not reach them in time. They were withdrawn on the morning of the 26th. They re-embarked safely, with their wounded, their stores and ammunition ; the ships' fire and a rearguard of the K.O.S.B. keeping the enemy back from the cliff. Their toil and sacrifice were not in vain. They had achieved their main object. They had engaged heavy columns of the enemy and held them back at the







“W” BEACH, OR LANCASHIRE LANDING, FROM IITH C.C.S, DUGOUT.

critical time from the conflict at the southern beaches.

Shells from the *Swiftsure* swept the cliffs and high ground above "X" Beach. The *Implacable* stood close in to the shore, and loosed off with every available gun. Under cover of this fire the 1st Royal Fusiliers and a beach working party from the Anson Battalion, R.N.D., were put ashore, and the plateau was reached without loss. The Royal Fusiliers advanced against the trenches on the hill S.E. of "W" Beach, but retired before a heavy counter-attack. Reinforcements arriving, they dug themselves in, extending their trenches until, near evening, they came in touch with the force landed at "W" Beach.

That at "V" Beach was the bloodiest of all the landings. Behind a curving beach of 350 yards the land rises in a gentle gradient like the gallery of a gigantic theatre. A sandy escarpment about four feet high ran along some ten yards from the water. Everywhere else the landing force was exposed, without a vestige of cover, to the concentrated fire of machine guns, pom-poms, and field batteries. The Old Fort at Sidd ul-Bahr was demolished by the ships' fire. The guns here and at No. 1 Fort on the opposite bluff were put out of action. But among the ruins riflemen found lairs, and sniped with comparative safety. The beach was a maze of barbed wire which made progress painfully slow. Marksmen on the entrenched slopes could aim at leisure.

Three companies of the Dublin Fusiliers were towed shoreward in boats. The rest of the Dublins, with the Munsters, half a battalion of the Hampshires, and the West Riding Field Company, were put on board the collier *River Clyde*. The side of the ship towards Asia had been painted khaki. Along her sides doorways

were cut, giving on to gang-planks by which the 2000 men in her might quickly reach the lighters she had in tow. She was to be run straight ashore, in the hope that when she grounded the lighters would barge forward and form a gangway from the ship to the beach. Casemates were built, and she was armed with Maxim guns. Her bridges were lined with boiler plate and sandbags. " ' This is my seat in the stalls, and there are many in England who would give a thousand pounds for it,' said the Hon. Arthur Coke, as he fixed on the site for his Maxim casemate on the forecastle. . . . They were to be a grim sort of stalls, and cost him his life." High of heart, with a certain joy of battle and contempt of danger, these men set out upon their perilous enterprise.

Not a shot was fired by the enemy till the *River Clyde* grounded and the tows touched the shore. The shells from the ships had left the defences practically unimpaired, save for the big guns in the forts. A tempest of lead burst from the slopes and trenches, lashing the water round the boats to the whiteness of foam. The sea quickly changed to a more awful hue. Utterly unprotected as they were, some men leaped overboard to struggle ashore; to be held up by barbed wire on the bottom; to be wounded and drowned; to sink with the weight of equipment, and be carried away by the current. A few reached the beach and dashed to the cover of the sandbank: most of them were wounded. Here fell the Rev. Father Finn, the praise of whose courage and devotion was upon all lips. The boats, riddled with bullets, never left the shore again.

When the *River Clyde* touched bottom, her lighters, instead of shooting forward to form a gangway to the shore, were caught in the current and swung out into

deep water. Prodigies of skill and bravery were performed by the naval working party who, in spite of terrible losses, stuck to their task until the lighters were moored in position. A company of Munsters issued on the gang-plank and made a gallant dash for the shore which none of them were to reach. They fell before the storm of bullets as the swath of corn falls to the scythe. A second company attempted the passage, now cumbered with the bodies of their comrades. The landward mooring of the lighters gave way; they swung out again into the deep, and many were drowned in the vain attempt to swim ashore burdened with their equipment. With incredible toil and courage the lighters were again adjusted and made fast. The third company of the Munsters sprinted for the shore; but now a hail of shrapnel was added to that from other arms, and the carnage was terrible.

About 9 a.m. a dash was led by Brigadier-General Napier and his Brigade Major, Captain Costeker. The lighters again slipped from their moorings. The General, his Brigade Major, and many others were killed. Of the 1000 men who up till now had left the ship about 500 were either killed or wounded. Of the gallant Dublins who essayed the landing by boat two-thirds were dead. No more attempts to land were made while daylight lasted. The steel sides and bulwarks of the ship protected from machine-gun, pom-pom, and rifle fire; but occasional big shells from Asia pierced the hull, inflicting casualties. The men ashore, under the sandbank, were in evil case. Had the Turks counter-attacked, their plight would have been desperate. The twelve machine guns, however, on the *River Clyde* restrained the ardour of the enemy. The sufferings and cries of the

wounded, who lay helpless and exposed to the sun through the heat of the day, made irresistible appeal to the lads on board. Although one might not hope to live if he showed his head above the bulwark or boiler plates, many of them risked everything, with or without leave, dived into the sea and swam ashore to succour their unfortunate comrades. Few of these men returned. Indeed, it was evident that the Turks might have killed them to a man; but, for some reason, there were intervals of ten to fifteen minutes when no shot was fired. Many deeds of extraordinary daring were performed that day, but none more brave than that which earned for Midshipman Drewry the Victoria Cross. Although wounded in the head, he took a towline in his mouth and swam to a lighter that had broken loose with its precious freight. The ships bombarded the Turkish positions at intervals; the *Queen Elizabeth* lobbing over her enormous missiles which shivered the ten-foot walls of the Old Fort, and wrecked everything in the suburbs of the village. Late in the afternoon troops landed at "W" Beach tried to work across the high ground towards "V" Beach, but were held up by barbed wire. In the evening 150 men were got safely ashore, and found cover near the ruins of the Old Fort.

Night fell, but without darkness. The lamp of the full moon hung in the sky, and a house burning in Sidd ul-Bahr cast a ruddy glare over the scene. The remaining troops were landed without opposition, the gap between the last lighter and the shore being bridged by the bodies of their dead comrades. They formed up with the survivors from the shelter of the sandbank, and attempted to oust the Turks from the Old Fort and the village. It was rough and difficult going, and the tumbled confusion of shell

craters, boulders, and broken walls furnished cover for men with rifles and machine guns before whose accurate shooting in the clear moonlight attack after attack withered away. After midnight the Turks came down in strength upon the beach. The fierce and bloody struggle that ensued was an indescribable tangle, in which it was often impossible to distinguish friend from foe. The Turks at length retired before the stubborn valour of our wearied men, many of whom had not slept for two nights. "It is not necessary to burn your boats to ensure the courage of desperation. It is as good to have your ships firmly aground. The paladins of that night's fighting knew this, and knew what their position was."

Dawn found the remnant of the landing party crouching under the sandbank, still dominated by Turkish fire. Nearly all the senior officers were either killed or wounded. A task of extraordinary difficulty lay upon those who remained. The fleet had opened a terrific bombardment, plastering the slopes, the ruined fort, the village, and the old castle and hill to the north. Worn out and stiff with exposure and fatigue, but indomitable still, the men were rallied by Lieut.-Colonel Doughty Wylie and Lieut.-Colonel Williams, two staff officers, and advanced under cover of the naval bombardment. Every foot of ground was bitterly contested; but they would not be denied. First the Old Fort, then the village fell into their hands; and by a gallant rush, in leading which Colonel Doughty Wylie fell, the old castle and hill were captured before 2 p.m. Triumphant over every obstacle, the landing on "V" Beach was made good.

In the village of Sidd ul-Bahr our dead and wounded had been treated with horrible barbarity. None of

the wounded survived. Two German officers were caught who, it was found, had instigated the fiendish cruelties practised on the dying Irishmen. They were sent to their account. This is the only case of outrage upon the wounded of which I found indubitable evidence on the Peninsula. On the other hand, there were many stories that reflected credit on the humanity of the Turks.

“ W ” Beach is an irregular stretch of deep powdery sand, 350 yards long, 15 to 40 yards broad, flanked on either side by precipitous cliffs, and overlooked to the S.E. by a ledge of rock some 40 feet high. The land rises gradually to the N.E. through a series of sand dunes and scrub-covered slopes. A deep gully zigzags down the bottom of the valley, by which a trickle of water finds its way to the sea. The slopes were a network of trenches, the gully forming an excellent communication way. Barbed wire was lavished on the beach and in the water. There was an uninterrupted field of fire for machine guns placed in the frowning cliffs, and for riflemen concealed in pit and scrub and trench.

Eight picket boats, each with four ship's cutters in tow, pulled the 1st Lancashire Fusiliers ashore. As the first boat touched ground a terrific fusillade was opened upon them. The men eagerly sprang out and rushed to cut their way through the forest of barbed wire which the ships' bombardment had hardly injured. The carnage was appalling; but there was no flinching. Parties landed on the rocks at either flank, escaping the cross fire that galled the men on the beach. With the bayonet they rushed some Maxims emplaced in the cliffs, which were playing havoc on the main beach. The warships, coming close in, launched a hurricane of shells against the



defenders. Under cover of this fire the wire entanglements were passed, and the companies re-formed under the cliff, whence they issued at once to storm the enemy's trenches. This they did with such resolution, such dash and gallantry, that by 10 a.m. we had a secure hold on the beach; and by 4 p.m. the high ground on both sides was in our hands.

Meantime "W" Beach had become a scene of intense activity. At 9.30 a.m. fresh infantry began to land. Supply ships approached, and, although the Turks attempted to set up an artillery barrage, all that day and the following night stores, guns, and ammunition were brought ashore. A fierce battle was raging round the beach, and the snipers practised assiduously their deadly craft; but the beach personnel and the boats' crews regarded these things not at all.

In the afternoon were landed the staff and personnel of No. 11 Casualty Clearing Station, to which unit, later, it was my good fortune to be attached. These intrepid men proceeded, with the appliances they had brought or were able to improvise, to succour the wounded, gathering them from the more exposed places to the comparative shelter of the north cliff. Firing continued all night. Several heavy and determined counter-attacks by the Turks were beaten off. Every available man had to be thrown in to hold the captured trenches. After the moon set, in the chill of "the small hours," a fire was lit to make soup for the wounded, who were perishing with cold. An order went round, "all lights out," so the fire had to go, and with it the hope of comfort for the brave fellows, who did not think of complaining. Memorable indeed was the weary vigil, in darkness and peril, among the dead, momentarily expecting death.

The Turkish wounded trusted our fellows absolutely. One man with a broken thigh showed no alarm when a rifle was brought. It was used as a splint. He seemed thankful to have fallen into our hands. On Thursday, the 29th, the clearing station was moved to the cliff S.E. of the landing, where it stood for so many months.

In commemoration of the heroic feat performed by the Lancashire Fusiliers, this beach was called Lancashire Landing.

After a heavy bombardment by the French warships, assisted by the Russian *Askold*—*alias* "Woodbine"—a regiment of the French Corps was landed at Kum Kale. They attempted an advance on Yeni Shehr, over part of the classic plain of Troy, but were stopped by heavy fire from an entrenched position. Repeated counter-attacks during the night failed to dislodge them. In one of these they took 500 prisoners whose retreat was cut off by the fire of the battleships. Their tactical purpose had been achieved. Further advance would have been costly, indeed impossible without heavy reinforcements. The landing party was withdrawn on the morning of the 26th, and re-embarked without serious loss.

Escorted by the 2nd Squadron of the Fleet, the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps left Mudros on the afternoon of 24th April, and arrived four miles from the coast, about a mile north of Gaba Tepe, at 2.30 a.m. The men were transferred to boats and Destroyers, and started for the shore, the boats at 3.30, and the Destroyers at 4.10 a.m. The sea, as at Cape Helles, was smooth as a mirror. A danger was that the moon, shining behind the ships, might show them up to vigilant eyes on shore. "By the mercy of God," as one man put it, or "by a most fortunate

mistake of the Navy," as another phrased it, the landing was not made at the place appointed—a small beach which the Turks thought they had made impregnable—but on a strip of sand more than a mile farther north, between two small promontories, 1000 yards apart. At the south end a deep ravine and at the north a small gully break back into the hills, their sides exceedingly steep, and clad with scrub. Inland from the cliffs the country is rough and broken, with steep, rocky hills, flanked by irregular ravines, covered with thick, matted undergrowth, and rising towards the mass of Sari Bair. This beach, with its apparently inaccessible cliffs, was left practically undefended. The boats were silently approaching the shore about 5 a.m., through the haze and twilight, when a Turkish search-light flashed along the water. A number of Turks were seen hastening along the beach, who opened a heavy individual fire upon them. Many were killed and wounded; but the boats were thrust aground, the men leaped ashore, and, with fixed bayonets, charged the enemy. The silence and the gleam of the bayonets terrified the Turks, who fled from ridge to ridge, pursued by the Australian infantry. It was a great charge. Terrible scenes were enacted on these wild uplands, and fighting such as neither assailant nor defender had ever dreamed of. The Australians were to advance a certain distance and dig in; but their unrestrained enthusiasm in pursuit carried them over a country whose labyrinthine under-features were unknown to them but familiar to the foe, until, scattered and exhausted, entrenching in line was impossible. They had to come back; and then their heaviest casualties were suffered. These men, their glorious manhood nurtured in the spacious freedom and independence

of forest and field, never thought of surrender. Wherever they met the foe, whether few or many, they fought to the death.

While these things were being done, landing operations proceeded on the beach under almost unthinkable conditions. Despite the continuous shelling of the enemy's field-guns, 12,000 men and two Indian mounted batteries had been brought ashore by 2 p.m. Then the heavy Turkish howitzers and the guns of the warships anchored in the Narrows took a hand, and, to escape destruction, the transports moved farther from the shore. Through all this tornado of shot and shell the boats came and went, landing troops, stores, and munitions, and taking back the wounded to the ships. As was indeed inevitable, some were hit, and their occupants perished. Nothing could daunt the marvellous boats' crews and the beach working personnel, who carried the stores to safety under the cliffs or up the roads which the engineers were already making. The 1st and 2nd Australian Brigades, completing the Australian Division, were followed by the New Zealand and Australian Division. Supports were sent to the men on the plateau with all speed. Raiding parties charged and put out of action three of the enemy's Krupp guns. But for the assistance of our warships, which plastered the country with their shells, guided by seaplanes, in their search for the enemy's batteries, the position might well have become untenable. The line on which the advanced troops retired, to which supports went up from the beach, extended in a rough semicircle from a mile above Gaba Tepe in the south to Fisherman's Hut in the north. Three times the Turks came on in greatly superior numbers, and hurled themselves in vain against this line. Night brought no surcease of

battle for our wearied soldiers. Men still struggled up the steep from the beach with food and water, and hauled up guns and ammunition. They carried down the wounded and cleared the tracks of the dead. The air and earth trembled with the shock of gun fire ; the ruddy flash of bursting shells rent the gloom ; the patter of fragments and rain of shrapnel made death seem very near. Through the darkness came wave after wave of fresh and vigorous men, shouting the name of Allah, exulting in the approaching doom of the infidel, only to break and recoil from that steadfast line as the billows from the rocky coast. A new horror was added by the burning scrub. The scream of shells, the rattle of musketry, the strangely mingled voices and shoutings of men, and, far away, the deep boom of the mighty guns of the Fleet, combined to make night hideous. But through it all that tired band of great-hearted warriors from beyond the distant seas staunchly held their ground.

Nor did the dawn bring respite. Now, when our men were ready to fall with weariness after twenty-four hours' incessant fighting, the Turks might hope by mere multitude to overwhelm them. From positions commanding the whole line, the beach, and the sea, a storm of shrapnel was launched, while snipers from every coign of vantage poured in a deadly fire. The work of landing and carrying forward stores and ammunition was never for a moment interrupted. The doctors and stretcher-bearers exposed themselves freely, caring for the wounded and the dying. As the Turks came on in ever increasing strength, the warships drew close in and opened fire upon them with all their guns. The advancing lines were tossed and torn with ghastly rents. They wavered, and came to a standstill. As our men sprang from

the trenches the enemy broke and fled. Forgetting weariness in the excitement of victory, they drove the retreating Turks headlong to their shelters; then, choosing a new line, dug fresh trenches and consolidated their position. Here they stayed for the time, unmoved by sporadic attacks or perpetual bombardment; and the enemy did not come again in force. On the beach jetties were built. At great cost, but with a display of the most splendid heroism, the landing was effected, and the position secured.

With the fondness of the Army officer for alphabetic contractions, the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps was referred to in official documents as A.N.Z.A.C. Who first used these letters as the name of the place where that corps won lasting glory may never be known, but it will be strange if the name of ANZAC does not live in history.

The feint made at Bulair owed its remarkable success to the enterprise and daring of Lieutenant Freyberg. He swam ashore with a raft of flares which he lit along the coast, making a tremendous glare. This evidently alarmed the Turkish army entrenched there. The Turkish papers boasted that a great British attack at Bulair had been repulsed! On his way back in the dark the hero of this exploit had a narrow escape from drowning.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE POSITION ASHORE

I HAVE written thus fully the story of the landing because, in its splendid daring and superb heroism, it is without a parallel. The 29th Division, who stormed the beaches round the toe of the Peninsula, and the corps known as the Anzacs, who carried the heights at Gaba Tepe, have taken their places in the very forefront of the world's heroes; and while time endures the glory of their achievement will not perish. It ought to be told again and again until its every feature of splendour and sacrifice is imprinted indelibly on the mind and heart of our people. I have written it also because it sheds a brilliant light upon the perilous nature of our enterprise; because it helps us to understand aright the precarious position of our troops through all the subsequent operations; and because it throws up in bold relief the character of the men to whom it was my privilege to minister—the fine temper of their spirit, their love of high adventure, their conquest of fear, their devotion and forgetfulness of self, and, not least, the toughness of their iron frames.

On the afternoon of the 6th of April the main body of the French disembarked at "V" Beach. Here our Allies landed stores, guns and ammunition, and established their Advanced Base. The undestroyed parts of old buildings were repaired and turned to use

as offices, magazines, etc. They built jetties, and an extensive breakwater which was completed by the sinking of a transport and a battleship. The like was done by our men at "W" Beach. The Commandant at Lancashire Landing had his Headquarters on the lowest sand dune in the throat of the valley. Behind him were the Engineers' Field Park and the Post Office. The Army Service Corps spread along the slope on the left. Transport waggons, animals, and personnel found accommodation on the face and summit of Cape Tekke, while beyond these to the N.W. a 60-pounder battery took position. The Signallers made their hut on the edge of the gully to the right. Above them was the Army Ordnance Camp, the Army Veterinary Corps, and two Field Ambulances. To the right of them was the Sanitary Section, Advanced Medical Stores, and, on the cliff, overlooking the bay, the 11th Casualty Clearing Station. A bit of level ground stretching from the lip of the valley to the N.E. furnished an Aviation Ground. The H.Q. of the VIIIth Army Corps lay on the S.W. slope of the hill beyond, known as Hunter Weston Hill. Spreading over the ground towards "V" Beach were the Indian Transport Corps and various units of Artillery. This arrangement, of course, was the growth of many weeks, during which everything was brought ashore and put in position under continual H.E. and shrapnel fire. The work of the Engineers in building piers and breakwater was peculiarly dangerous. A party of Egyptian labourers was employed under British officers in digging, and especially in road making. Cheery fellows they were, the work going with a swing and a song to which they kept time with pickaxe, shovel, and basket. Looking down upon them from the cliff, they resembled nothing so much as a swarm of bees



at work on a comb. The road seemed literally to grow under their feet. They had been recruited on the understanding that they would not be exposed to shell fire. After a few casualties it was thought well to remove them. A noisy but heartsome crowd, most of us were very sorry when they went. Their place was taken by Greeks recruited from the islands and the mainland, attracted by what were to them dazzling rates of pay and the prospect of speedy opulence. They had not the mettle of the Gypies, and were on the whole a dull lot. Without doubt many of them were in the pay of the enemy. Of course labour had to be secured, and this may have been the best arrangement possible ; but with these sly, oily fellows around, with lynx eyes and accommodating conscience, it was not easy to keep plans and movements secret. In spite of all the vigilance exercised, the Turks seemed at times to possess almost miraculous information. We shall not greatly err if we attribute this to the subtlety and cunning of the Greeks.

To one of these children of deceit a permit was given to open a canteen on the beach. Like M'Lean at the Flood, he "had a boat o' his ain," in which he traded among the islands and brought merchandise to Cape Helles. A wonderful collection of groceries, tinned meat, fish and fruit, tobacco, sweets, chocolate, onions, etc., his ramshackle hut contained ; and these he sold to an eager queue of soldiers at a profit which may be estimated from the fact that his rancid butter touched 6s. a pound. Suspicion of much more profitable commerce with the enemy attached to him. Some mysterious sense seemed to warn him of danger, and he and his boat had vanished for good over the horizon before his infamies were unmasked.

From the hour of landing on the 25th of April until

the last barge quitted the beach at the evacuation, our troops were never one moment safe from shell fire. The batteries behind Achi Baba were persistent in their attentions. On the Asian side there were at least eight batteries which, at brief intervals, plastered the beaches and the area between them and our lines. Occasionally Turkish battleships anchored in the Narrows sent their great shells over us. We were thus constantly under a searching cross fire. There was, properly speaking, no base or rear. Every man, no matter where placed or how occupied, might be truly described as in the firing line. Indeed it was commonly said, with greater truth than perhaps appears, that the firing line was the safest place on the Peninsula. The enemy, however, did not have things all his own way. No sooner were our guns ashore and hauled to their appointed positions than they opened fire upon the Turks ; and the warships roused a mighty din as, from the sea, they pounded the trenches and searched for the enemy's batteries. Two shots from the *Queen Elizabeth* were the cause of much rejoicing. The position of a Turkish transport coming down the Straits was signalled to her by a seaplane. Her third shot sent it to the bottom. This was on the 27th of April. Next day, lying far from the shore, she was able to see, over certain obstacles that hid them from our men, a Turkish force advancing to attack part of our line. She let go at them a 15-inch shrapnel shell which killed 250 of them on the spot. There was no need to do more.

On the 27th of April Sir Ian Hamilton was able to advance without much opposition, the Turks retiring to prepared positions on the slopes and flanks of Achi Baba. That night we held a line running from the mouth of the gully, 3200 yards N.E. of Cape Tekke,

right across the Peninsula to the N.E. corner of Morto Bay—Eski Hissarlik. The French, with the 2nd South Wales Borderers, were on the right, and the 29th Division on the left. The following day a general forward movement was ordered, so as to engage the Turks before they had time to recover and get reinforcements. Our troops, tired as they were, having had practically no rest since the landing, rose splendidly to the demand made upon them. But cartridges ran short in spite of the utmost efforts to get them up from the beaches with the transport available; the guns landed were not yet sufficient in number to give the support required; and not more than a single battalion was in reserve. It was hoped that at least Krithia might fall into our hands. The village, standing amidst its gardens and orchards, with its picturesque row of windmills on the ridge that runs out westward from Achi Baba, offered a clear target to the ships' guns, and great destruction was wrought among buildings; but in the rough country around the great artillery of the fleet was singularly ineffective. The place had been admirably prepared for defence; and although our attack was pressed with great gallantry and persistence, time and again ground gained had to be given up under heavy counter-attacks. In the end of the day the lines had been advanced about a mile. Here our troops remained for the next two days, straightening the line and securing the position. The advance had widened the space and relieved the congestion at the beaches; and, although still under gun fire, the work of unloading and disembarkation went on apace.

On the 1st of May the Turks resolved by a supreme effort to sweep the handful of daring invaders into the sea. Von Zowenstern, assuming *ad hoc* the rôle of

Mohammedan patriot, tried to rouse the fires of Moslem fanaticism by a proclamation in the best prophetic style :

“ Attack the enemy with the bayonet and utterly destroy him ! We shall not retire one step ; for if we do our religion, our country, and our nation will perish. Soldiers ! the world is looking at you ! Your only hope of salvation is to bring this battle to a successful issue, or gloriously to give up your lives in the attempt ! ”

About 10 p.m. a furious bombardment was opened on our lines, under cover of which the enemy came on in great strength in the dusk before the moon-rise. As they crawled forward, those in the front rank had no cartridges and were forced to rely solely on the bayonet. Fortunately for us, reserves and artillery had been landed in the last few days. Even so, it was a very touch-and-go struggle. At one point these quiet men with the bayonet broke through our line. Here, however, they had to reckon with the cold steel and resolute courage of the 5th Royal Scots. This Edinburgh battalion grasped the situation in a flash, “ faced to their flank, and executed a brilliant bayonet charge against the enemy.” With the support of the Essex Regiment they quickly restored the line. The Turks met with no further success. Our counter-offensive, ordered about 5 a.m., drove them back, got them fairly on the run, and, says Sir Ian Hamilton, “ had it not been for these inventions of the devil—machine guns and barbed wire—which suit the Turkish character and tactics to perfection, we should not have stopped short of the crest of Achi/Baba.” As it was, the Turkish attack had been repulsed with sanguinary losses : we had taken 350 prisoners ; but we had to go back to our former trenches. That evening, 2nd May, the enemy attacked again, and again failed. During

the next three days there was sporadic fighting, in which neither side gained much advantage, and preparations were pushed forward for our next advance.

The necessary pauses in our attack gave the Turks time, of which, under instruction of their German masters, they made excellent use, and the positions around Achi Baba were enormously strengthened. The two armies were now face to face on these rough slopes, with their network of gullies and ravines, covered with low scrub and tangled undergrowth, where for many months the tides of battle were to ebb and flow ; and through it all the old hill proudly raised his unconquered head.

Meantime the Anzacs at Gaba Tepe, who were almost literally hanging on by their eyebrows to the position they had taken, were reinforced by four battalions of the R.N.D. Under the rain of shrapnel and rifle fire that came to be regarded as normal, arrangements were made and perfected for hauling supplies of all kinds up the steep and difficult cliffs. There were several bloody encounters with the enemy which left the combatants relatively in much the same position. Snipers on both sides were busy. Good marksmen as many of the Turks were, they had to yield the palm to our clear-eyed, steel-nerved cousins from the other side of the world.

Hearts were stirred in these days by the exploits of two of our submarines, E 11 and E 14. They ran the gauntlet of the thickly strewn mine-fields in the Dardanelles, wrought havoc with the enemy's shipping in the Sea of Marmora, with characteristic daring penetrating the Golden Horn and launching torpedoes under the very shadow of the Sublime Porte. One of them on the return voyage, becoming aware that a hostile transport was following her, actually turned

round in the Straits and sent her to the bottom. Her greatest peril was encountered when she became entangled with a floating mine. She towed it softly into the open sea, where she freed herself from its unwelcome company. These raids made the waters of the Marmora no longer safe for the transport and store ships of the enemy. Instead of following the short and easy route by sea, the Turkish commander had to fetch the bulk of his supplies and reinforcements a long roundabout by rail through Smyrna to the coast of the Marmora, and thence by road to the Straits, ferrying them across by night. Their achievements were fitly recognised by the award of the Victoria Cross to each of the Lieutenant-Commanders.

The 2nd Australian and New Zealand Brigade was withdrawn from Anzac to reinforce the main front at Cape Helles. Looking at Achi Baba, the approach seemed easy compared with the wild country in which they had been fighting, and many were heard to declare that they would take the hill in a week. But appearances are peculiarly deceptive here, and close acquaintance revealed many harsh and difficult features which were softened in the distance. Certain other changes in the disposition of the troops were made, and on Thursday morning, 6th May, the whole line advanced. A sanguinary conflict raged throughout the day with varying fortune, and at nightfall our line had advanced not more than 200 or 300 yards. A fir wood in front of the 88th Brigade illustrates the character of the obstacles encountered. An open approach gave the machine guns concealed in it a free field of fire. They simply mowed down company after company who attempted to carry it. Next day the 5th Royal Scots, well supported by artillery, rushed the wood. Many snipers found among the branches

of the trees, sometimes on small wooden platforms, were promptly dealt with. Their fire had been well directed and deadly. Later, a strong counter-attack drove our fellows out. Again, towards evening, British bayonets asserted their superiority, and the clump of trees passed definitely into our hands. The fighting on the 7th resulted in no marked advantage.

On the morning of the 8th, after a heavy bombardment by warships and batteries, our troops moved again. Progress was made in the centre ; but further advance by the British was necessary before the French on the right could move forward. At 5.15 p.m. a terrific fire was opened on the enemy's positions by our heavy artillery and ships' guns, and at 5.30 the whole line advanced under cover of a hot shrapnel fire from our field-guns. When night fell the French had captured and held two complete lines of enemy redoubts and trenches on our right. Our troops dug in that night on a line from 400 to 600 yards in advance of that occupied on the 5th. But Krithia was not taken, and the full strength of the Turkish position was still before us. During the night of the 9th-10th of May the enemy made violent and persistent attempts to drive us and our Allies from our new positions ; but every attack was repulsed. On the night of the 12th the 6th Gurkhas, belonging to the 29th Indian Infantry Brigade, by a clever stratagem, drove the Turks from a strong position N.E. of " Y " Beach, and advanced 500 yards. From this time till the 4th of June our troops on this front " pressed against the enemy continuously, by sapping, reconnaissance, and local advance, whilst, to do them justice, they [the enemy] did what they could to repay us in like coin " : but no serious general engagement was attempted.

The 29th Division, all that was left of it, was now withdrawn from the firing line for a brief rest, after eighteen days of incessant battle, having made for themselves a name that will live in history and in the grateful memory of their countrymen for ever. The rest camp was formed in the hollow between the beaches and the advanced lines. Trenches and dug-outs were prepared, which afforded a certain amount of protection from flying fragments of shell, where weary men might sleep.

The Anzacs maintained and strengthened their hold upon the positions they had won. Their firing line was close to that of the Turks. "Sapping, counter-sapping, and bomb attacks were incessant. The shelling of both the trenches and beaches was impartial and liberal. As many as 1400 shells fell on Anzac within the hour, and these of all calibres, from 11" to field shrapnel." In one counter-attack on 10th May, the Turkish regiments lost no fewer than 600 killed and 2000 wounded. During the night of 18th-19th May, after a bombardment in which the Turks brought into action larger guns than they had yet used, they launched a series of heavy counter-attacks, all of which withered before Australian marksmanship and the fire of our artillery and machine guns. The battle was over by 11 a.m. The enemy's losses were well over 7000, at least 3000 dead lying within sight of our trenches. Our casualties were 100 killed and 500 wounded. The attacking force numbered 30,000, under command of General Liman von Sanders. Among the many rumours that reached us on "W" Beach was one that von Sanders was wounded, and had returned to Constantinople.

The men were at times perplexed by strange orders that came along the trenches: e.g. "British troops



coming in sight; don't fire." Then it was discovered that the troops passed were Turks. Again, an officer appeared in one sector, saying, "Officer from H.Q. to speak to the Colonel." The Major spoke to him, and sent for the Colonel. The latter detected the ruse and shot the intruder, but not in time to save the Major's life. These are illustrations of German cleverness and daring. Two Australian officers who visited us about that time declared that the Australians hated the Germans, but shot the Turks with reluctance. They thought the Turks were only half-hearted, and made no strenuous efforts to escape capture. A party who brought in a prisoner, asked how they caught him, replied, "We went out to bury a dead Turk. When we reached him, he rose up and came in with us!"

On the 20th of May there was a flutter of white flags and Red Crescents along the Turkish line. Certain officers came out to open negotiations for an armistice in order to remove the dead and wounded. This could be arranged only by superior authorities, so action was immediately resumed. This was the more necessary as suspicious movements in their rear suggested that the Turks were getting reinforcements up and into position while the pause lasted, thus escaping the attentions of our artillery. Stretcher parties who had gone out fell back, and firing began. Then the Turks sent forward a screen of men holding up their hands in token of surrender, while great masses advanced behind them. The trick was seen, and fire opened on them, with the proper effect.

"As the Turks seemed anxious to bury their dead, and as human sentiment and medical science were both of one accord in favour of such a course," a suspension of arms was arranged for the 24th, from

7.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Conditions were correctly observed on both sides. There were many raids, much artillery fire and sectional fighting, but no general action on this front until the early days of June. The Anzacs were performing an important part in holding here a strong Turkish force, greatly superior in numbers and artillery, which would otherwise have reinforced the enemy against our main attack in the south.

The nature of the task on which we were occupied, and the character of the conflict, may be gathered from the fact that by the 31st of May the British casualties alone amounted to 38,636, 1722 being officers. The total battle losses in the three years of the South African War were 38,156.

## CHAPTER V

### AT NO. 11 CASUALTY CLEARING STATION

WHEN our barge moved shoreward from the *Franconia* on the 16th of May, owing to congestion at Lancashire Landing, we steered for "V" Beach. An aeroplane away towards Achi Baba was surrounded by little white puffs of enemy shrapnel, clearly notched against the blue of the sky. She dropped a smoke ball, making a perpendicular line to mark an enemy position for our artillery. Then with a magnificent swoop she sped away to the south and safety. A small steam pinnace was having a rousing time out towards Kum Kale, the shells from an Asian gun plunging around her in the most exciting fashion. She made no effort to escape, content to divert the fire from a more important vessel not far away. Pandemonium was let loose at Sidd ul-Bahr. Hard by the Old Fort a battery of French 75's was busy, the guns going off with a peculiarly harsh, ripping crash; and the Turkish shrapnel burst freely over the slopes. We passed under the lee of the stranded *River Clyde*, and over the lighters to the beach which only a few days before had been the scene of such horror and agony. Traces of that conflict were pretty well removed, and now the sand was a litter of supplies, empty tins, packing-cases and straw, with piles of equipment. Beside the ruined fort was a heap of great stone cannon-

balls. A spread of canvas to right and left indicated the French Base.

No porter waited the arrival of the passengers. Every man looked out for himself and his kit. Three padres and their batmen shouldered what they could carry, trusting Providence to protect what was left, and set out on a hot, dusty tramp over the hill, past the ruined lighthouse and Fort No. 1, towards "W" Beach, with the enemy's shrapnel playing a lively tune around us. A curious confidence one felt then and often afterwards, that the missiles were not meant for him; that everybody was in danger but himself! A G.S. waggon, not overloaded, rattled up behind us. It was stopped and pressed into our service. The baggage of the three padres, two representing Rome and one Geneva, was tossed on board with that of the batmen. Padres and batmen climbed on top. The horses set off at full gallop, and a very precarious "joy ride" brought us to our destination. Two smiling sons of Levi met us there, declaring that it was "the best and happiest load a transport waggon had ever brought."

The 11th C.C.S. was already under canvas. The quartermaster assigned to my friend Father Legros and myself a bell tent on the edge of the cliff looking over the sea to the S.W., thence we could see all that was happening on the wide stretch of water between Imbros and Tenedos; and two minutes' walk to the top of the hill behind us brought fairly in view the whole arena of battle, from Straits to Gulf, on the hither slopes of Achi Baba. We walked round the shore, carefully noting the strength of the positions attacked and carried by the landing parties. Growing familiarity with them only brought into bolder relief the splendour of that heroic achievement. Our men

seem to have blotted out the word "impossible" from their vocabulary.

The next few days, wind from the N.W. and heat brought their usual concomitants of dust and flies. The arrangement of our hospital wards, which consisted of E.P. tents on three sides of a square, with office, operation, dressing, and receiving tents in the middle, did something to modify the discomfort of these for the sick and wounded brought down from the front. In these early days stores and equipment were not too plentiful: many things usually thought necessary came to be regarded as luxuries. But we were dealing with men who, even in weakness and pain, knew how to "endure hardness," and turn the edge of privation with light-hearted pleasantry.

The C.C.S. is one link in the chain of agencies by which the men wounded or fallen sick at the front find their way to the great hospitals at the base. To the wounded soldier, wherever possible, first aid is rendered by his comrades, using the field dressing which is part of every man's equipment. If unable to walk, he is carried to the spot where the regimental M.O. waits to give such further assistance as may be necessary and practicable before he is taken down the lines to the Dressing Station. This is an outpost of the Field Ambulance. The M.O.'s in charge see that dressings, bandages, etc., are in order, take any emergency measures called for, and forward the patient by ambulance waggon or car to the Field Ambulance. The regulation establishment provides three Field Ambulances to each Division. Here is accommodation for considerable numbers. Those who are but slightly wounded, who will soon be fit for duty again, may not need to go farther. Those whose injuries are dangerous may be kept for a time until,

if they survive, it is safe to move them. Others are sent on to the C.C.S., where they are once more carefully examined, dressings are approved or renewed, operations are performed where these have become urgently necessary, and patients are assigned to different wards according to the degree or kind of their injuries or sickness. Provision is made to keep for a time those whom it would be dangerous to move, and such as may be able for light duty, although unfit for full work. The others are put on the way as soon as possible for the more distant base hospitals, which are equipped with every convenience to secure the comfort and proper treatment of the men. Those who are specially fortunate may even make a voyage to dear old "Blighty" itself.

The regulations ordain one C.C.S. to a Division. It was our pride to be attached at the outset to the "incomparable 29th Division"; but as time passed we found ourselves evacuating for the 42nd, 52nd, and naval divisions as well, and the strain upon our staff was serious, although met with characteristic efficiency and cheerfulness. As far as might be, every department of the medical profession was represented among our officers and the more highly trained members of our personnel; while some were past masters in the most safe and easy methods of transport for weak and suffering men. It was all in the way of duty, no-doubt, and only to be expected of our patriotic countrymen; but I never ceased to admire the swift readiness, the sympathetic but firm gentleness which responded to the appeal of pain at all hours of night and day. There was an excellent understanding among the officers, and between them and the orderlies, and the work, even the most anxious and delicate, went through with smoothness and expedition. During and after

the heavier actions men were often brought to us direct from the firing line, many of them suffering from ghastly wounds, and the work at times was almost overwhelming. This meant that every man of us had to stand in, giving what help he could through daylight and dark, while perpetual bombardment shattered the day and made night hideous.

The most of our patients were sent to Lemnos by fleet-sweepers, which anchored as close to the shore as was convenient and safe. An effort was made, not always successfully, to keep one hospital ship near us, to which the more serious cases might be sent. To boys fresh from the life of trench and dugout, who had neither washed nor put off their clothes for weeks, through the burning heat of day and the perishing cold of night, sometimes over the knees in sticky mud, these ships offered a rare treat. Spotlessly clean, with comfortable wards, delicious beds and baths, cold drinks, abundant and excellent food, kindly and skilful attention, with no dust and no flies, the heat tempered by a cool breeze from the water, they seemed in truth a little bit of home or better. A wound that brought one hither might be soberly regarded as a blessing. Evacuation to the fleet-sweepers was usually in the morning, that they might reach Mudros harbour before the boom was closed in the afternoon; and to the hospital ships at hours that might be arranged. From the jetty, composed in part of a sunken lighter, the patients were sent out on barges, towed by picket boats. When the sea was at all rough, this was very jeopardous work, and the peril from the enemy's shell fire was constant. The embarkation was in the thoroughly competent hands of our second in command; and through all the long months of our occupation, although the blast of shells

was often so near that the wounded escaped only because they were lying flat on their stretchers, he never lost a single patient. It was an achievement of which he had every reason to be proud. An impulsive, warm-hearted Irishman, with more than his share of mother wit, and a keen eye for the humorous in the grimmest situation, he possessed gifts which made the beach hands lively when the interests of his charges were endangered. No one willingly incurred his displeasure. But after even the most trying and exhausting mornings he would come into the mess with a twinkle of light in his eye, and a whimsical air of melancholy, telling the most mirth-provoking incidents—the only ones, apparently, that he cared to remember.

The Officers' Mess consisted normally of the Colonel, seven M.O.'s, the quartermaster, and two padres. Among them many types were represented: notably the quiet, strong man, whose nerves nothing affected; the man whose wit and humour were perennial; the argumentative man; the gloomy optimist; and the cheery pessimist. The Colonel, the second in command, and the quartermaster were regulars of the R.A.M.C. The others good-humouredly described themselves as "temporary loots," but before we parted all of them had attained captain's rank. A mess takes its tone infallibly from the C.O. His personality pervades it, and in a thousand unconscious ways makes its impression. Our C.O. was the embodiment of efficiency without fuss, of kindness without weakness. He set high value on the honour of his unit. Nothing escaped his supervision. Everything was made to serve the comfort and welfare of the patients, with a chivalrous regard for his colleagues, and tactfulness in the management of men, all the more effective



because so obviously spontaneous. To the genial influence of our C.O. was due in large measure the spirit of friendly good-fellowship that prevailed. To all of us, in spite of surroundings that were often terrible, the time we spent together there will be a lifelong happy memory. No honour in this war has been more worthily bestowed than the C.M.G. upon Lieut.-Colonel Humphry.

For some time our advanced base was treated to daily bombardment at fairly regular hours, with 6-inch H.E. shells, besides sporadic fire from other guns. The 6-inchers were known indifferently as "coal boxes" or "Jack Johnsons." You might be caught by the first shell, of which you had no warning. If you survived that, you made a bee-line for your "funk hole" and remained there until the big fellows ceased for the time. Our plan was to get swiftly over the edge and cling to the face of the cliff. Following the blasts of the bursting shells, the air seemed to be alive with whistling, shrieking creatures and showers of fragments whizzed over us into the sea. We could see what was happening on the beach and under the north cliff. We were soon in the midst of war's stern realities. On the morning of the 17th we observed a shell touching the top of the precipice beyond the bay and plunging right into the midst of a crowd of men and animals gathered there for safety. Perhaps not one shell in many hundreds would take that exact course; but the death and desolation dealt by this one was a very grizzly reminder that here security would be sought in vain. I had never before seen human beings thus horribly done to death. The mangled victims who survived were brought up to us for treatment. I am not ashamed to confess that the sight of their awful disfigurement and the smell of blood

almost unmanned me. The fashion in which our medical men got to work on that open, shell-swept height, arranging damaged limbs, cleansing and binding up wounds, filled me with a new respect for their manhood and admiration of their skill. One could not live in close intercourse with men like these and altogether escape the contagion of their spirit.

Many more terrible things had to be witnessed in coming days. To be of use, one had to possess not only sympathy but self-mastery. I am sure I did not grow callous, but never again was I conscious of similar weakness. And what men they were we had to help! One evening after sundown Father Legros and I were on our way to the hill for a sight of the battle. Passing the operating tent, we heard a voice speaking with great enthusiasm. "We 'listed for him," it was saying, "we'll fight for him, and we'll win. Now's the time, lads! We'll give it to the Turks. Hold tight! We never retire. Think o' the old battalion! Hold your fire. Keep up your heart, boys. Now, let 'em have it! Forward! Charge!—There they go! We'll finish 'em off! Ha-ha-ha-ha! I told you we'd do it." I looked in at the tent door, and found a poor boy just coming round from chloroform, his operation being over. The surgeon was saying kindly to him, "It's all right, my lad; you're not fighting the Turks now." "What!" he replied excitedly, staring at my figure in the doorway; "there's one!" He struggled to get off the table to "go for" me. I stepped in and reassured him. When he came to himself, his one anxiety was to get back to the firing line without delay. What plucky boys they are! Not all alike, perhaps; but on the whole they are fine.

At times when the work was easier in the wards I was free to go farther afield, to visit the men of the

various units on the beach, in their different camps, and at the front. A more hearty welcome than I received from officers and men alike no one could desire, nor a greater readiness to help in making the padre's work both easy and pleasant. Often I approached busy men with some trepidation ; but I am bound to say that not once did I meet with a rebuff, or anything but courtesy and friendliness. Many of my happiest recollections of that stirring time are associated with life in the trenches and in the firing line.

The position of the chaplain indeed is one of great advantage. For formal and official reasons he holds a certain rank as an officer ; but as far as his work is concerned, this imposes no limitation, and may in fact be regarded as non-existent. The padre is the one man who can meet all ranks on terms of perfect equality, from the G.O.C. in C. to the humblest drummer boy. As soon as men realise that he is not merely " an official of the Church," but a live human being, of like passions with themselves, with goodwill, and probably ability to help them in some of their trials, difficulties in the way of friendly intercourse vanish.

Here I may appropriately refer to the excellent relations that prevailed among the chaplains representing the different denominations. They took friendly counsel with one another on questions affecting their common work ; and co-operation in all ways open to us was an inspiration. The Roman Catholics, of course, were unable to take part in any united service. A regulation which surely cannot be justified to reason shut the Church of England chaplains out of the goodly fellowship of united church parades ; but many of them valued highly the privilege of sharing

in the joint voluntary services held whenever possible in the evenings. Father Legros and I were thrown very close together, living, as we did, for many months in one small bell tent. With the growth of mutual understanding, we became very true and fast friends; each with perfect frankness as to his own position, and genuine respect for the convictions of the other. The friendship resting on this basis opened to us a wide field of mutual helpfulness, and amid the urgencies of war, which treats without mercy all conventions, ecclesiastical or other, the one not unseldom found himself performing duties that would have been appropriate to the other, and this with entire goodwill. In the dearth of chaplains that sometimes occurred, owing to prevailing unhealthy conditions, it was a comfort to know that while one of us was on the ground the lads would not be left without some kindly attention and a word of good cheer. I recall with pleasure the gratitude of patients who belonged to the Roman Catholic faith when I handed to them little booklets of devotions which had been prepared for their use, to which I had access.

My experience leads me to believe that men in the army are pretty easy-minded on questions of church connection and what it involves. Of course, every man is registered as belonging to a particular denomination, or, as they put it in the army, to a particular "religion"—Wesleyan, Roman Catholic, Church of England, Presbyterian, etc. But only a very simple-minded person, or one who thought that his particular church had something to gain by it, would take those registered under any heading as indicating the number properly belonging to that denomination, or "religion." In matters where their interest is not keenly aroused, men are apt to be a little careless, and go

with the crowd in which for the time they find themselves. In practice, even where there is real loyalty to some one communion, the men are not as a rule bigoted or narrow in their sympathies. When left to the freedom of their own will, they make short work of the artificial barriers that hold the churches apart. Close fraternisation under conditions of hardship and peril with men of all "religions" has brought to many excellent fellows a new sense of the things that really matter. Bishop Price of China, who came on special duty to the Peninsula, was greatly charmed with an answer given him by a soldier when he visited the trenches. He saw a chaplain at some distance, and asked a man near by if he was a Church of England chaplain. "Oh, sir," was the reply, "we don't have no religions here: we all live as brothers!" It may not be easy to push these stalwarts back into the old ecclesiastical ruts when the war is over. Will it be worth while trying? Will not the churches themselves be taught something by this dire experience, and set about to prepare in earnest for that great demonstration of unity for which the world is waiting?

Much of the comfort and consequent efficiency of the chaplains was due to the Rev. A. V. C. Hordern, Principal Chaplain, and his assistant, the Rev. A. C. E. Jarvis, C.F.—now Principal Chaplain in Mesopotamia. Their administration was broad in outlook and generous in spirit. The delicate points that arose in the posting and oversight of men representing many religious denominations they handled with tact, courtesy, and conspicuous success. Their personal relations with the men in this high service were such as to deepen the sense of privilege and duty, and to promote friendliness and good feeling.

## CHAPTER VI

### LIFE AT THE BASE

THE mess tent was a poor protection in a bombardment. It was not pleasant to be interrupted at dinner by the untimely enthusiasm of the Turkish gunners ; to return to a cold meal after a period in funk-holes. We owed our mess dugout to the initiative and enterprise of Father Legros. He marked out its dimensions on the top of the precipice. It should not be too broad, lest it catch the shells from Achi Baba ; nor too long, offering a mark for the guns in Asia ; but it must be deep enough to guard us on three sides from flying fragments of H.E. We must just take our chance with the shrapnel. For days we all toiled in relays, digging down into the face of the cliff. Wood was "borrowed," a frame constructed, and a tarpaulin stretched over it for a roof. Rude steps were cut in the stiff earth down to the ledge left in front. Wooden uprights with very insecure hold along the face, with a rope run through them, did not serve as a fence but only marked a boundary. Woe betide the man who should lean thereon. The open front gave us a full view of the sea. The tarpaulin modified the heat and dust, but I think it aggravated the evil of flies. We moved in one evening after dinner. The picture of the company as they gathered in the candle-lit gloom was quite Rembrandtesque ; it also

irresistibly suggested a smugglers' cave. A rough deal table ran the length of the dugout; a bank of earth was left at the back and sides for a "diwan"; empty packing-cases made excellent seats on the other side of the table. An old ship's locker, rescued from the sea, set on end by the entrance, held our stores; and a couple of rickety deck-chairs, salvaged from wreckage somewhere, set on the "balcony," were very homes of luxury.

When the base camp was formed there was no expectation of a lengthened stay. As men and animals increased in number within the crowded area, and the canvas city spread gradually up the slopes, sanitary arrangements good enough for a fortnight were with difficulty adapted to meet the necessities of months. The light soil goes swiftly to dust. With no lack of decayed animal and vegetable matter, it was distinctly "rich." In the heat, flies bred and multiplied everywhere, and held high carnival. When winds came from the N.W., the prevailing quarter, they blew across the camp, rolling right over us on the outer rim, heavy clouds of dust and flies which for hours at a time obscured the sun. The flies, tumbling over the cliff, took hold with both hands, and found refuge in our dugout. The dust settled upon us like bloom on a peach, giving the features a weird expression as it clung to hair, eyelashes, and moustache. Entering the dugout, you had to push your way through legions of these winged children of Beelzebub, who clearly resented your intrusion. The table was black with them. They came down upon the food like hives of bees. When you ventured to take a helping, they rose with an angry buzz, and violently contested the passage of each bite to your mouth. Their activity was prodigious. They explored your eyes, nose,

mouth, and ears. If you tried to write, they crawled over the paper, and tickled your fingers till you could hardly hold the pen. Meantime you breathed dust, and swallowed dust, and your teeth gritted upon dust in your food. Dust gathered thick upon everything. If you laid down a letter, in a few moments it was buried. Knowing ones assured us that these storms came in periods of three days or multiples of three. I recall with a certain horror one spell of twenty-one days during which there was little relief. The wind usually dropped about sunset, and the flies betook themselves to night quarters. Then it was joy unutterable to slip down to the rocky shore, plunge into the briny, and wash off the day's caked dust and perspiration. Then one remembered with sorrow the boys in the trenches, who had to endure all the wretchedness of the day, but for whom evening brought no refreshing swim.

In naval circles there was evidently anxiety on the score of submarines. Warships and others were brought close inshore of an evening, and enclosed by a ring of Destroyers, while a bright look-out was maintained for the unwelcome visitors. By day we had occasional spectacular displays. It is a fine sight to see the T.B.D.'s going at high speed in all directions, and the great battleships—which of course are what the submarines want to get at—manœuvring and firing when they see anything suspicious. The naval men claimed to have sunk several of these noxious craft. Our own submarines, of course, were not "noxious." When one of them came back from a daring dash up the Dardanelles, having "bagged" some four Turkish transports and two torpedo boats, we all agreed that it was magnificent. The comic element was not always absent. One day I watched a concentration



of these marvellous little T.B.D.'s with much firing at an object afloat away towards Imbros, suspected of being a submarine. On closer inspection it turned out to be a dead horse! In spite of the enemy submarines our communications were hardly interrupted. It was thought necessary, however, to transfer troops and supplies at Mudros to smaller ships, for which the submarines had fewer terrors.

The 25th of May was a day of excitements. About 7.30 a.m. a great submarine hunt was started. Obviously the "game" was not far away. In the midst of the commotion, trawlers howling, T.B.D.'s hooting, the report of a gun rang out. A torpedo had been launched at the *Swiftsure*; at the same moment the *Swiftsure* spied her, and fired at the submarine. Both marksmen may have been flurried. Shell and torpedo alike missed by a narrow margin. Then came a report that the *Triumph*, sister ship of the *Swiftsure*, had been torpedoed off Anzac about 12.30 p.m., that she had been beached and all on board saved. Unfortunately, only the first part of the report was true. There was also some liveliness on shore. An artillery officer at H.Q. had just left his tent when a shell entered, killing his two orderlies. From the firing line came the news that some of our men, wearing brown headgear, had made an advance.

On the 26th destroyers scoured the sea, north, south, east, and west, but not another warship was to be seen. Protected by the destroyers, transports and supply ships ventured to approach. Towards evening the old *Majestic* sailed in and anchored a few hundred yards from the cliff. Many precautions were taken for her safety. Her torpedo nets were out, and she appeared to be thoroughly blanketed by other shipping. On the morning of the 27th about

6.30 I looked out of our tent door, and heard a loud report. Next moment there was a great explosion at the side of the battleship farthest from me. A column of water rose as high as her turrets, and I knew that a torpedo from a submarine had got her. The first report was of a shot she had fired at the approaching torpedo, which she had seen. As fortune would have it she missed, and the torpedo completed its fatal journey. At first the ship did not seem even to tremble. About a minute later her spars dipped slightly. There was much excited movement on her deck, and the crew began to spring overboard. Soon the water round her was full of struggling men. Boats, tugs, steam trawlers, and other craft went at once to the rescue. The great ship gradually rolled over, and finally turned turtle, resting on the bottom on her turrets, leaving her ram and part of her hull exposed. It is not easy to imagine a more pathetic and moving sight than that giant monster of the deep wallowing helplessly in her element, and sinking at last like a drowning man. The sea was calm, and help was at hand for the crew. Comparatively few were lost—not more than forty-eight—although she went under in just ten minutes after she was struck. Some were no doubt killed by the explosion, and others were caught by the torpedo nets when she turned over. A number were brought ashore unconscious, and revived by artificial respiration. One fellow afforded a remarkable example of coolness in the midst of appalling circumstances. As the vessel heeled over he climbed up on her side. Steadying himself with difficulty, he calmly undressed and plunged into the sea as if for his morning swim.

It was reported that the submarine had been caught, and proved to be an Austrian. The captain said

he could have torpedoed the ship at 2 a.m., when he took up his position, but waited till 6.30 to give the men on board a chance to escape. If this be true, the captain was a sportsman. In any case, his feat was one of great daring ; and his skill in choosing, despite the twilight of a summer night, the one passage by which the ship might be attacked, was certainly remarkable.

Meanwhile a cloud-burst on the slopes of Achi Baba flooded the trenches and turned everything into a quagmire. The dugouts along the lines were swept of many things that were precious, and men had to make shift to live while almost submerged in mud and water. It was the height of summer, and the heat of day in some measure atoned for the cold of night. That the Turks suffered at least as seriously was a reflection that comforted many sorely afflicted men. Sapping and mining were at a standstill for the time. Every excavation was speedily filled with water. Some of the men brought in wounded and dying these days, and also those brought for burial, moved a deep compassion. Men who at home had everything that love could plan or money could buy, lay on stretchers, rough blankets thrown over their muddy and torn uniforms, and not a soul near who ever knew or cared for them. One did want in some measure to make up for what others would so have yearned to do.

One afternoon, in company with a brother padre and several officers, I rode over to the Big Gully (*Saghir Dere*) to visit certain medical units and other details. What a wonderful and romantic gorge it is!—its earthen cliffs cut into all fantastic shapes by rain and stream ; tributary ravines breaking down at every angle into the main cleft. Scrub and heather grew wherever a root-hold was possible ; and flowers

were still blooming in shady nooks. A multitude of khaki-clad men-at-arms, with their crazy shelters, dugouts, and open-air kitchens, their transport and water carts and animals, crowded the bottom. A big ambulance waggon which served as an advanced dressing station bore many bullet marks; and one patient at least carried away with him a leadensouvenir. We pushed along the narrow winding path between the high cliff walls to a first aid post, which was actually between the enemy's front line and our own. The gully here formed a deep trench right across No Man's Land, and the missiles from both sides passed high over our heads with great uproar. We found sick men under an improvised shelter: one evidently dying, and one who had completed his military service twenty-five years ago. He had been in everything from the beginning of the campaign, and was eager to be back where the presence of the tough old veteran was a tower of strength to the younger warriors. Climbing up through brushwood and shrubbery, we reached a delicious grotto, overhung by a great bulging rock, facing the Turks. Here the M.O. in charge entertained us to tea, and we learned how refreshing that beverage can be when prepared in a soldier's canteen and drunk from preserved-fruit cans. A shell burst on the slope beside us, and a French "75" from above our sheltering rock repaid the enemy with interest.

When we returned to the aid post the dying man had passed away, and his grave was already dug. While we stood around at the burial service, a bullet came with a curious whine, passed between us, crossed the grave, and nipped off a head of gorse. Here we had no thought of danger: but stray bullets often pursue a most erratic course. As we rode down the

glen a fatigue party marched before us with their trenching tools on their shoulders. Without a sound, a lad about ten yards before me slipped to his knees, and two comrades carried him to the wayside. Thinking he had fainted, I asked what was wrong. A white-faced boy looked up and said, "He's dead, sir; he's just been hit." And so it was. No one could have aimed at him: a wandering bullet had found its billet. How narrow is the border between life and death! We had to cross an area swept by shell and rifle fire to reach another unit. A swift gallop in very open order carried us safely over. It had been an experience of some solemnity. When we parted, a young lieutenant, who certainly made no parade of his religion, said, with an accent that showed it was not entirely a joke, "We have the Providence that cares for the padres to thank for our safety."

It was good to see how the officers shared with the ordinary soldiers the hardships of their experience. Quite obviously their first concern was that everything possible should be done for the comfort and encouragement of their men. This, of course, is only to be expected of "an officer and a gentleman," and of one who knows how much in battle depends on the morale and spirit of the rank and file. It also explains in a measure why men are so ready to go through fire and water for their officers. In visiting a certain brigade I found the Brigadier living in a dugout little better than a rabbit-hole. When he and I were inside there was not room left for a cat. The fellows about him were in excellent heart, and not less comfortable than he. The case is not at all exceptional.

While no great operations were in hand we had a fairly steady stream of sick and wounded from the

front. We had no beds to offer ; but with blankets on the ground, or on stretchers for the worst cases, they could appreciate the comparative comfort of the ward tent. Pillows and cushions were supplied in limited numbers by the Red Cross Society ; to whom also we owed mosquito curtains, which mitigated the plague of flies. When there was a press of work the padres lent what aid they could in the dressing tent, At other times they moved among the patients, trying, with such insight as sympathy might give, to bring a little light into the shadows, to touch hurt lives with healing hope ; not forgetting, as opportunity served, to cheer up the burdened orderlies. I will not attempt to describe the sufferings of the wounded. I can only say that on the whole they took their punishment as brave men will. A quite extraordinary solace they seemed to find in a cigarette. I never could smoke myself, and always had to get my smoking done for me. To do the boys justice, they were not unwilling to help. Friends at home most kindly sent me frequent supplies of cigarettes, tobacco, sweets, papers, magazines, books, writing - paper, pencils, etc., besides a variety of games which helped to pass many a weary hour. Men on the Peninsula developed a taste for sweets which surprised them. Perhaps they supplied some craving caused by the lack of fresh vegetables. The man with sweets to distribute need not fear for his popularity. In cases where water might not be given, an acid drop was like the fruit of paradise to the patient consumed of thirst. Magazines were the literature most largely in demand. They furnished what was chiefly required : something light, sufficiently interesting, but calling for no great mental effort. It may seem a small thing, but it is worth the attention of those who want to do their

best for the boys : magazines with continued or serial stories should be avoided. Every magazine should be complete in itself. A few days in hospital often give a lad his only chance to read a bit. To come upon an instalment of a tale the end of which he is not likely ever to see is merely tantalising. He should be spared that annoyance. In the way of games, puzzles possess a quite exceptional value for men who have a little leisure from the awful business of war. They furnish just the kind of relaxation required, calling the tired mind away from its grim occupations. I remember the triumph with which a certain divisional commander overcame the difficulties of "The Road to Berlin"; and I am sure that both he and the officers of his staff were all the better and more efficient men because of this bit of exhilaration.

War brings a fairly complete, if temporary, abolition of the Sabbath. Work must perforce go on Sunday and Saturday alike, and from this men cannot be called for church parade. The enemy recognises no obligation to hold his hand while we engage in religious rites. Voluntary services, however, offer opportunities for public worship to men in neighbouring units who may be free and so disposed. In an open space among the ambulances, overlooking the valley and the bay, on the bright Sunday mornings of early summer, we had excellent congregations; and in the evenings, when hymn-singing of their own choosing was a prominent feature, very large companies assembled. Among them were many Scottish lads whose regular attendance and devout, earnest demeanour, impressed me. Soon I had the profound joy and satisfaction, at their own spontaneous desire, of instructing forty of them, and receiving them into the Church as young communicants. Holy Communion

was observed every Sunday, so that any who desired it might enjoy the privilege before returning to the firing line. Very memorable were these experiences on the hillside, when, amid all the noise and confusion of war, we lifted our hearts to the God of peace, and found comfort, strength, and courage. For God is also a "man of war," and we could hear Him saying to us, "Be strong and of a good courage . . . the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."





THE  
ROYAL  
SCOTS



COLONEL YOUNG AND OFFICERS OF THE 4TH BN. THE ROYAL SCOTS (Q.E.R.)  
WHO FOUGHT ON THE PENINSULA.

## CHAPTER VII

### EARLY JUNE DAYS

FOR some time it had been clear that an important action was imminent. From the casualties, the talk of men from the front, and the transport and medical preparations, we had a good idea of what was happening. In spite of strenuous and repeated counter-attacks, our fellows were resolutely working forward to get within "rushing distance" of the Turkish firing line.

During the temporary absence of their chaplain, I did what I could for the men in the Naval Division. The walk over the open country to their camp was sometimes exciting. On the morning of 4th June, with my Wesleyan colleague I set out to visit them. A deep gully suddenly opened before us, cutting through the almost level land. In the bottom was the transport of one of the naval battalions; the steep sides of the winding ravine affording some protection from the enemy's fire. The lads were nearly all Scottish, and Presbyterians, who had had no religious service for some weeks. They welcomed a proposal to have a short service there and then; scattered in search of companions and friends; and soon quite a goodly company sat along the slope. We sang familiar psalms and hymns, and read the 46th Psalm. The shelter they had found in the gorge lent special significance to the figure of God as the

refuge of His people. For a little we thought together of this, and commended each other to God in prayer. How hearty the lads were. We did not know it at the time, but when we learned that they were destined that night for the firing line and the attack, we felt that we had been guided by a kindly Providence.

We had just reached the French lines when pandemonium in the way of a bombardment broke out. Every gun on the Peninsula and the heavy ordnance of the battleships, which came out for the purpose, spoke at once, creating the most ear-splitting din. Not the most experienced warrior could hear it unmoved. Our way back lay over the zone of Turkish fire; but the enemy's reply was feeble, and no ill befell us. Time and again we stood to look with fascinated gaze at the slopes held by the enemy, where the terrible messengers of destruction were bursting. Points of flame flashed and twinkled amid the dense clouds of black and yellow smoke that enveloped the hill, while the roar and blast of the shells came back like an echo to the detonation of the guns. One cannot withhold a tribute of respect to the iron nerve of the men who, after surviving such a bombardment, were able to put up so good a fight.

At 12 noon the artillery lengthened their fuses. Our men leaped from the trenches and charged with the bayonet. On our own front of 4000 yards success was immediate and striking, trenches and redoubts being captured with splendid daring. The French also advanced everywhere except on their extreme left, where they were in touch with the right of the Naval Division; and the Turks fell upon the Manchester Brigade of the 42nd Division, who occupied the centre of our line. They had made the

farthest advance, and stuck tenaciously to the position which they had brilliantly won within five minutes of commencing the attack. The French were unable to move again that day. It was impossible to advance the right of our line; and in the end of the day the gallant Manchesters were reluctantly brought back. Brilliant achievements are as a rule the most costly. Theirs was no exception; but they had the satisfaction of having inflicted losses upon the enemy out of all proportion greater. Our left had met with serious resistance and had not moved far. The day's operations resulted in an advance of 200 to 400 yards along our centre: 400 prisoners, including 11 officers, were taken. Among these were five Germans, the remains of a volunteer machine-gun detachment from the *Goeben*, who had lost both their C.O. and their machine gun.

All that night we were kept busy with the wounded. Some of the injuries were sufficiently awful, but the great majority were marvellously slight; and the men were in great spirits. They were full of stories about the taking of trenches, charges, counter-charges, and personal encounters with the enemy. Their machine guns had been very deadly. Some blamed others for retiring who themselves, perhaps, had advanced too far. One officer with six men made a great rush and dropped just under the parapet of the Turkish trench, where the enemy made frantic but futile efforts to reach them with rifle fire and bayonet. Seeing some thirty more of his men advancing, he called for a charge, and had just got into the trench when a bomb exploded beside him. Three of his teeth were broken clean off by the gum, but, strangely, his mouth was otherwise uninjured. These men thought of nothing less than of their own hurts.

Their great anxieties were to know how the battle went, and how it fared with their comrades. Some had landed on the Peninsula only the night before. They were marched straight up into the firing line, and were down again wounded in the forenoon. One could sympathise with their "grouse" that, after coming so far, they should be thus summarily dismissed, having never seen a Turk and never fired a shot.

The 1st K.O.S.B. had an unusual experience. They had lost their C.O., and a captain was in command. They found themselves in a position of peril. But there was something dearer to these seasoned soldiers than mere personal safety. They saw the importance of standing fast, and saved that part of the line from disaster. This disinterested valour was recognised, and they were specially thanked by the G.O.C. The Borders have good reason to be proud of this gallant regiment.

My *Franconia* friend, Hanom, was brought in the following afternoon, seriously wounded. He had fallen early in the charge, and had lain almost twenty-four hours, through the heat of day and the cold of night, tortured by the loathsome flies he was too weak to drive away. "Hell could not be worse," he said. Then came doubts which, in such moments, assail even the saints of God. "You trust in God, and yet He leaves you thus, cast aside like a thing of naught." The struggle was fierce, but he won through. Now he was quiet, confident, and joyful. Few survive such injuries as his. The restful mind and self-control he had attained had much to do with a recovery that seemed hardly less than miraculous. He went away with good hope.

Then arrived a young officer in a dying condition. He had lain wounded for three days in an exposed posi-

tion. At peril of their lives, his comrades had got out to him with soup and other comforts; but he could not be moved. Indeed, his case was hopeless from the first.

To realise what war is, you must see that procession of fine, high-spirited young fellows, maimed, bleeding, and dying, and spend hours with them in the hospital wards. Most of them, as I have said, and even the seriously wounded, make light of their own sufferings. Their self-forgetful kindness to one another, and reckless exposure of themselves to danger that they may save their friends, form some of the finest episodes in the records of war.

The nerves often play men very scurvy tricks. I have known men who utterly despised themselves for it, but who could no more control their nerves than they could the winds. Thus it was with a young officer who had been on the Peninsula only two days, and who was almost ready to perish in his self-contempt. One who had been champion boxer on the *Lake Manitoba*, to all appearance with muscles of rubber and nerves of steel, came in quite shattered. He had been in charge of a machine gun. When left alone, he stuck to his gun and saved the situation. He was recommended for the D.C.M. He could not speak without weeping, although he smiled at his own weakness. In a day or two he felt better. Even men who have seen much of war are not exempt.

On the other hand, the very bravest things are done by lads who make no show of strength. One of these early June days there was brought in a pale-faced, spare-built boy, Davis by name, who belonged to the Border Regiment. His case was plainly desperate. His dark, lustrous eyes and bright smile won the kindly interest of everyone, and he was nursed to the end

with tenderness and care. Then a comrade was brought in badly wounded. Before anything could be done for himself, he wanted to know about his friend. Deep and genuine was his grief on hearing that Davis had died that morning. Only then did we hear the story of Davis's heroism. Three days before, standing in a trench eight feet deep, he threw a bomb, which caught on the parapet and rolled back into the trench. He saw it would immediately explode. There were many men near. It was the decision of a moment. There was nothing else at hand, so he threw himself on the bomb, and was terribly mauled. He saved the lives of his comrades at the cost of his own.

Much time was occupied writing letters home for the wounded boys, and, when possible, to the relatives of the deceased. Difficult but very sacred duties were these. It was touching to see how earnest they were that no unnecessary anxiety should be caused to friends and dear ones, and how eager they were to write, if it were only a few words, with their own hands.

Part of my duty was to censor the letters written by the men, signing on the outside such as might pass. This gave one insight into the working of the boys' minds. They were pawky fellows. It leaked out who the censor was; and then it was surprising to find what a popular man the padre was! Even more surprising were the epitomes sometimes given of his sermons.

A portion of my own battalion, the 4th Royal Scots (Q.E.R.), landed on Saturday, the 12th of June, and the remainder on the 14th. The latter had been delayed by an exciting experience. They were embarked at Mudros on the fleet-sweeper *Reindeer*, and set out on their forty miles of peril in the dark that lay between



them and Cape Helles. About midnight there was a terrific crash. The first thought was of torpedoes; the next, of mines. The *Reindeer* had rammed another vessel, striking her amidships. It was a moment of desperate anxiety, but perfect discipline was observed. All hands on the rammed vessel came on board the *Reindeer* before the ships parted. In twenty minutes the ship went down, and the *Reindeer*, not sure what damage she had sustained, returned to Mudros. The experience tried the mettle of these 500 Territorials. I met them when finally they landed on the Peninsula, and saw them off with a God-speed across the country towards the trenches. Fine, stalwart, high-hearted fellows they were, eager for a chance to measure their manhood with that of the enemy. This was not long delayed; and my natural pride in them became an emotion of a higher order. They formed part of the 52nd or Lowland Division, which contained so much that was noblest and most chivalrous in the life of lowland Scotland.

Just at the darkening, a night or two later, a request came from a Field Ambulance inland for a padre to go out and bury a lad who had died of wounds. I walked thither in the dark. The C.O. explained that it was safer to have the burial at night, as the enemy's shell fire had been peculiarly galling during the day. His "pet aversions" were guns dubbed respectively "Gallipoli Bill," "Fat Bertha," and "Asiatic Annie." He told me of one shell which had thrown its fragments a distance of over a mile. I sat with the doctors at the station in their dugout while the grave was being prepared. They were north of Ireland men. Our conversation concerned the excellence of the Shorter Catechism: a curious subject to discuss under these conditions. The shelter was literally dug out

in the floor of the valley. I sat on the edge of a stretcher ; the others sat round on empty boxes : our light was a candle. We had agreed that the Catechism was good material with which to store a child's mind, even if it were not all understood at the time of learning, when an orderly came to say that the grave was ready.

It is difficult to imagine a more impressive scene. A little way from the Station, in the middle of the battlefield, under the cloud of night, the lonely grave had been dug ; and there was laid the still form of the soldier lad, wrapped in a camp blanket. The brief service was conducted by the light of a lantern, which brought out in sombre relief the sad faces of the bearers who stood by. The air was still, and oppressively warm. Through the gloom the crackle of rifle fire, the rattle of Maxims, and the occasional boom of a heavy gun, at times threatened to drown the speaker's voice. Now and then a star shell cut a glowing curve in the blackness, and lit up a part of the fighting area. A Turkish search-light played over the shoulder of Achi Baba, throwing up the ridge in bold, dark outline ; while high over all, in the deep blue sky, the stars were shining gloriously. As I walked back alone over the war-trampled fields, I could not but reflect what strange parts God gives His servants to play.

There was a very wild burst of rifle and machine-gun fire during the night. Next day a young officer called, and his account of it was at once gratifying and awful. One of the gallant regiments that suffered so terribly at the landing got "some of its own back." "The Munsters," said he, "took tea with the Turks last night." They detected the enemy massing for an attack on their sector of the line. They went back from the first trench. The enemy thought they were

retiring, and came on in close formation. A deadly fire from rifles and eight machine guns simply mowed them down. They were about 200 strong, and not one went back to tell the tale. Five Turkish wounded were brought in that night, one of whom was a Greek interpreter compelled by the Turks to fight.

About this time for some days we were under intense fire from Asia, and casualties were unpleasantly numerous. Three fellows were walking together behind our station. The enemy were making things uncomfortably hot. One said, "Let us take cover." "Not at all," said the lad in the middle; "you only get the shell that's addressed to you." Thereupon his packet of trouble found him, and we had him as a dangerously wounded patient. Another youth was out riding with companions. Hearing a shell, he shouted in fun to his friends, "Here she comes, boys! Duck!" He "ducked." The shell just touched the top of his scalp, and carried away the head of the horse he rode.

We had two operating tents. Our principal surgeon was accustomed to use No. 1. One morning, owing to the sickness of his leading attendant, he took his work in No. 2. While he was so occupied a great shell from Asia plunged within a few yards of No. 1, and riddled it with fragments.

Most of our work was suspended when a bombardment was at its height. We watched with a certain fascination the shells bursting on the shore, in the sea, on the face of the cliffs, in dugouts, among horses and ambulances. Some of them came very near our 60-pounder battery on the north cliff. The guns made a most plucky reply. Now and again they seemed to fire out of the very midst of the flame and smoke of a shell blast. One landed on a store of petrol, and

by some miracle only a few tins exploded. They were covered, indeed, by steel rails; but these were twisted and torn. One of the victims at this time was a sailor, a survivor of the *Ocean*, one of the warships sunk in the Straits during the great naval attack.

With the Asiatic guns raking our base, and no effective means of dealing with them, the situation was undoubtedly serious. Out from her retreat at Lemnos, therefore, came the *Prince George*, surrounded by a most active and energetic fleet of T.B.D.'s, an aeroplane scouting ahead for submarines. She took up her position to the N. of Tenedos, and loosed off at Asia in resounding style. There was comfort for us in the mere thunder of her guns as it rumbled along the Straits and echoed among the cliffs. The enemy's fire at once died down. Our 60-pounder battery was keenly on the alert. "If they try to howitzer the battleship," said the officer in command, "we'll take on the howitzer." But the Asian guns lay low: and after creating much uproar the battleship moved southward with its escort, and faded over the horizon. Evening, however, brought a renewal of our trouble. In a day or two a French battleship came along, similarly escorted, and spoke angrily to the Asian offenders, throwing her missiles right over the plains of Troy. Aeroplanes signalled the destruction of at least one heavy gun; and for a time we had less annoyance from that quarter.

The Commandant had asked me to take over the management and supervision of the large new cemetery at Lancashire Landing. It lay above the valley, overlooking the sea, in full view of Achi Baba and the area of battle. He gave me a N.C.O. and fatigue party. The lines were laid out in regular order, the whole surrounded by a barbed-wire fence. The graves were

numbered, each marked with a little cross, and a careful record kept. A broad trench was dug round it, to be filled with prepared soil, with a view to planting appropriate trees. This part of the scheme was not completed at the Evacuation. In the earlier days, when performing our sad duties, we were not molested by shell fire. By and by the spirit of the Hun prevailed, and we became a favourite mark for the enemy's gunners. Happily our casualties were few. The party went down into the trench during the burial service. But the shells wrought havoc among our wooden crosses, and all round the perimeter the ground was pitted with shell holes. It was in all senses of the word a most unhealthy place. My burial party, composed of "light duty" men, was sometimes demoralised by the bombardment. On the worst days this was a matter of some anxiety. Once two parties in succession, collected with much toil and persuasion, failed me; and night was gathering before our fallen comrades found their last long resting-places.

In the little gully running up from the beach, or rather on the eastern side of it, is an old Turkish cemetery. Apparently, it has not been used since some time last century. But Moslems are very sensitive over any seeming disrespect shown to their dead—as, indeed, most people are. This little "God's acre" was quite unprotected, and, without ill intent, foot passengers and cart traffic were beginning to find their way over it, so that the wonderfully well-preserved tombstones were in danger. After conference with Major Blackburn, D.A. and Q.M.G., advanced base, I had it fenced round with strong wooden posts and barbed wire, an act that received approval in high places. A Turkish officer lost his way and strayed into our lines. He was brought down to the base,

quite smart in his attire, and manly in bearing. The Quartermaster-General told me in the evening that he had taken him out for walking exercise in the afternoon. They went by way of the little cemetery, "and," quoth the Q.M.G., "although nothing was said, I took jolly good care that he saw what had been done." The Turk made no effort to conceal his satisfaction. Such little amenities may do something to soften the asperities of war.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE 28TH OF JUNE

OWING to limited space, the site of our Clearing Station was not a matter of choice. We were sandwiched, on an exposed point, between combatant units which, of course, were fair marks for the enemy's guns. We were also in the direct line between the Asian batteries and "W" Beach, on which much of their attention was bestowed. A very slight deflection or failure in their aim brought their shells right into us.

I do not suppose anyone ever forgets the first time he was under shell fire. In my own case, the memory is vivid. A few of us sat in the dugout on the cliff watching the enemy's attempts to sink the shipping in the bay. One boat was set on fire, but the flames were quickly mastered. Another was hit and slightly damaged. Some of the missiles were armour-piercing shells. When they did strike a steamer, which had no protecting armour plate, they passed clean through without exploding, injuring nothing but what was in their actual path. Then the shells began to fall near us, the earth trembling with their shock. Closer and closer they came, and the blasts of their bursting were awe-inspiring. At length one seemed to explode almost on top of us, and the sea below us was roughened by the shower of pieces. "That's done damage," exclaimed the Colonel, springing to his feet and

rushing up the steps. I stood for an instant, stunned, I dare say, but conscious that I would have gladly given all I possessed to be a hundred miles away. Then I followed on the Colonel's heels, to find that, in very truth, damage had been done. Two of our orderlies were killed; two were seriously wounded—one died later; and several tents were wrecked by successive shells. The bombardment was in full blast. Earth and stones were flying, while the song and crash of the shells were terrifying. But, once fairly in the midst of it, the sense of danger seems to vanish, and one's energies are concentrated on helping the injured. The R.A.M.C. officers and men alike showed admirable coolness and courage. Measures were taken to succour the wounded, and, if possible, to snatch the dying from their fate. One who was plainly beyond human help was laid on a stretcher and carried to a little hollow near the brink of the precipice, where we thought he would be safe from shell splinters. While the officers were trying to resuscitate the other, I went down beside the dying lad. I had just entered the hollow when a shell passed my ear and burst on a rocky ledge in the face of the cliff, a few yards from where I stood. It threw up a great mass of earth and stones. A stone struck me on the chest; but the sting was out of it, and no hurt was done. I kneeled beside the lad, who was now *in extremis*. A shell burst behind me, and a splinter struck the stretcher with a snap, close beside my knee.

We never believed that the Turk deliberately attacked our hospital. He had not then at least achieved the brutality of his Teutonic ally; and as far as our observation went, he sought to respect the Red Cross flag. When trouble came our way, it was probably the result of error, or due to failure in the rifling



of his guns. But it is cold comfort, when you are hit by a shell, to know that it was intended for someone else.

The reasons for this outbreak were not far to seek. Two heavy naval guns and several howitzers were landed at "W" Beach to reinforce the artillery. The enemy always knew, by some mysterious means, when anything of importance, like this, was in hand, and sought to interrupt by violence. They were not far from success. Had they lifted their range from 50 to 100 yards, they might have done something to be proud of. As it was, their achievement was one of which no soldier would boast.

As for the guns landed, every device was used to make them inconspicuous, and throw dust in the eyes of the enemy's aeroplane observers. One big fellow was covered from muzzle to limber with all sorts of Tommy's clothing. It was a spectacle not without humour. The boys promptly christened her "the Wardrobe," and the name stuck to her long after she had doffed her heterogeneous raiment.

After the battle of 4th June, our line was shaped like an irregular bow—well advanced in the centre, and bent back at both ends. There was much fierce fighting on following days, resulting in little change of position. On the 18th of June the Turks bombarded us heavily, and on the evening of the 19th launched a powerful attack, breaking through a section of our line. Led by Lieut.-Colonel Wilson, D.S.O., the 5th Royal Scots, with a company of the 4th Worcesters, made a brilliant charge with the bayonet, drove out the enemy, and secured the position. Of the work done by this Territorial battalion some idea may be gained from the fact that, of all the officers who landed with it, no more than three at this time

remained fit for duty, and only one, the medical officer, was left unwounded.

On 21st June, a great effort was made by the French to advance the line held by them on the right. The strongest point in their region was the famous Haricot Redoubt, which had already been captured four times from the Turks, and recaptured by them. Some of the bloodiest fighting in the campaign took place around it, with its deep and skilfully planned trenches, and its wilderness of barbed wire. Our allies made no mistake, and in the desperate struggle of that day "the striplings of the latest French drafts especially distinguished themselves by their dash and contempt of danger." They found in the Turks foemen worthy of their steel. They were formidable alike in defence and in attack. Supported by a heavy and extraordinarily accurate artillery fire, efficiently spotted for by aeroplanes, the French carried all their objectives. They crossed the ravine, Kereves Dere, which hitherto had baffled them, capturing the Haricot Redoubt and 600 yards of Turkish trench. They inflicted a loss on the enemy of not less than 7000, at a cost to themselves of about 2500.

Slightly off colour for a day or two, I made a brief visit to Lemnos, along with a brother padre and several officers who were comrades in misfortune. The fleet-sweeper on which we had voyaged discharged her wounded men on to the *Riwa*, a lovely hospital ship. We waited disconsolately on deck. The S.M.O. of the *Riwa* took pity on some of us, and invited us to tea in his quarters. One of the nurses passed—the first female we had seen for months. My colleague was an enthusiastic soul. He lingered for a moment to pay reverent homage to the divinity, who seemed not a little amused; while we sordid

materialists marched steadfastly towards the sign of the teacup !

Wemet at Mudros a lieutenant-colonel of artillery who was making all speed to Cairo for inoculation against rabies. He told a thrilling story of misadventure. Going in the afternoon, clothed only in his bathing dress, for a plunge in the sea, he had to descend a very steep incline. His foot slipped, and he went down with a rush to the sand, just as a mad dog approached from the north. The animal attacked him furiously, and a desperate struggle ensued. He pinned the brute down until one came and clubbed it. He was bitten in both wrist and legs, but went on his way full of courage and good cheer.

Speaking of dogs and women reminds me of a letter that appeared in the *Spectator* of 9th October 1915. It purported to have been written by a nurse, and gave a fascinating account of the use made of St. Bernard dogs by the nurses at Gallipoli. The dogs sent out by the nurses displayed quite human intelligence. They could distinguish a dead man from one merely in a swoon. When they found a wounded Turk, they brought in his head-gear that the nurses might know they had an enemy to deal with ! The point of the joke, of course, was that neither a woman—nurse or other—nor a dog was allowed to set foot on the Peninsula. Two ladies, indeed, did land—one by special permission, to visit her husband's grave ; the other in breach of the regulations, which brought trouble on all concerned. But it would have been a pity if the *Spectator* had been more suspicious, and suppressed this effort of the imagination. The letter furnished not a little enjoyment to weary men in many a trench and dugout under the frowning Achi Baba.

The 28th of June was a memorable day on the Peninsula. Sir Ian Hamilton decided to push forward our left wing, thus straightening our line and bringing the upper reaches of Saghir Dere into our hands. The troops relied upon for this operation were, on our extreme left, the 29th Indian Brigade; on their right, the 29th Division; and to the right of them, the 156th Brigade of the 52nd, the Scottish Lowland Territorial Division. "In the scheme of attack submitted by Lieut.-General A. G. Hunter Weston, commanding the VIIIth Army Corps, our left, pivoting upon a point in our line about a mile from the sea, was to push forward until its outer flank advanced about a thousand yards. If the operation was successful, then at its close we should have driven the enemy back for 1000 yards along the coast, and the trenches of this left section of our line would be facing east instead of, as previously, north-east. Obviously the ground to be gained lessened as our line drew back from the sea towards its fixed or pivoted right. Five Turkish trenches must be carried in the section nearest the sea; only two Turkish trenches in the section farthest from the sea" (Sir Ian Hamilton's Dispatch).

The bombardment of the Turkish positions began at 10.20 a.m., the fire of our artillery being reinforced by great trench mortars lent for the occasion by the French, and by the cruiser *Talbot* and the destroyers *Wolverine* and *Scorpion*. The 6-inch guns carried by these destroyers were heavy for such small ships. Their enfilade fire upon the trenches on the Turkish right was very effective. The barbed-wire defences were faithfully dealt with by our field-guns. At 10.45 a.m. our fellows went over the parapet.

In their bayonet attack the work called the Boomerang Redoubt fell at once to the 1st Border Regiment,

of the 89th Brigade. The other regiments of this brigade, led by Major-General Marshall, the 1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, and the 2nd South Wales Borderers, swiftly stormed three lines of trenches between the gully and the sea. The 4th and 7th Royal Scots, of the 156th Brigade, east of the gully, reached their objective, capturing two lines of trenches. Farther to the right, however, the rest of this brigade met with strong opposition and made little progress. At 11.30 the artillery lengthened its range on the left, and the 86th Brigade, passing over the ground taken by the 87th, by a most dashing and gallant attack, carried two more lines of trenches, thus completing the task assigned to them. The Gurkhas of the 29th Indian Brigade put the crown on the good work in this section by the capture and consolidation of "the Knoll," a spur running from the west of the farthest captured Turkish trench to the sea.

This is but a brief outline of one of the most gallant and successful actions fought in the campaign. The co-operation of artillery and infantry was perfect, and each part of the scheme was carried out with the precision of clock-work. The advance was made against a brave and resolute enemy, greatly superior in numbers, strongly entrenched, and supported by efficient and well-directed artillery placed in commanding positions. Yet everything attempted was achieved save in one small section to the right of the 156th Brigade. Great quantities of rifles and ammunition were taken. Very heavy losses were inflicted on the enemy at the comparatively small loss of 1750 to ourselves.

The capture of the higher reaches of Saghir Dere made us masters of the entire ravine, from the uplands to the sea. The conditions in the newly taken part of

the gully were indescribably awful. To the ordinary litter and filth to be expected where the Turks had been settled for weeks, were added the wreck and ruin wrought by the bombardment, the scattered remains of food, dishes, firewood, articles of clothing and kit, abandoned in the scurry and scramble of flight before our bayonets. The mangled bodies of the dead, unburied, half buried, or partially dug up by H.E. shells, under the fierce heat, with loathsome clouds of flies, could only be dealt with by fire. The valley with its heaps of rotting refuse, its burning pyres and sickening stench, was a veritable Gehenna.

One may not particularise overmuch in praise of our troops when all did so nobly ; but none will be jealous of the encomium passed after the battle upon the 29th Division by Sir Ian Hamilton, when he congratulated every officer, N.C.O., and man in what he described as " the incomparable 29th Division."

If I single out one Territorial battalion for special mention, it is because it is the one I know best, the officers and men being personal friends of my own ; and because, in soldierly spirit and action, it may be taken as typical of all. The 4th Royal Scots had just been a fortnight on the Peninsula, and this was their first important engagement. Commanded by Lieut.-Colonel S. R. Dunn, they, with the 7th Royal Scots, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel Peebles, formed part of the 156th Brigade, led by Brigadier-General Scott Moncrieff. The 7th Royal Scots were the survivors of the appalling railway disaster at Carlisle, when so many brave men lost their lives on their way to the front. Two lines of trenches were allotted to them for capture. When they went over the parapet they found that other two trenches had to be stormed before they could reach their

objective. The Turk, as we afterwards found in Mesopotamia, is an expert in the construction of concealed trenches. But though taken by surprise, the gallant "Terriers" did not hesitate or flinch. Exposed as they were to a withering fire, they cleared the two extra trenches. Then, with magnificent dash and gallantry, the Royal Scots rushed forward. Against fearful odds and in face of a terrible storm of artillery fire, they captured and held the trenches they had been sent to take, frustrating by their stubborn bravery every effort of the enemy to regain them.

In order of attack Captains Rutherford and Ross commanded the leading companies, supported by Captains Robertson and Pollock, Captains Sinclair and M'Crae coming next. The battalion entered the battle 890 strong. At the first roll-call thereafter less than 200 answered to their names. The Colonel, Majors Gray and Henderson, and six Captains were amongst the killed.

NOTE.—The officer casualties of the 4th Royal Scots on the 28th of June were :—

## KILLED.

Major James Gray.  
 " Jas. N. Henderson.  
 Capt. R. W. G. Rutherford.  
 " G. A. S. Ross.  
 " Geo. M'Crae.  
 " J. Dunbar Pollock.  
 " John Robertson.  
 " R. E. Mackie.  
 Lieut. Charles Paterson.  
 2nd Lieut. R. J. Gibson.  
 " W. J. Johnstone.

## DIED OF WOUNDS.

Lieut.-Col. S. R. Dunn.  
 Lieut. P. E. Considine.

## WOUNDED.

Capt. J. K. M. Hamilton, Adjutant.  
 2nd Lieut. F. B. Mackenzie.  
 " J. Riddell.  
 " L. R. Grant.  
 " J. Fleck.

## MISSING.

Lieut. C. F. Allan.  
 " Archd. Young.  
 2nd Lieut. T. D. Aitchison.

Captain Quartermaster Smith was wounded the night before.

The command of the battalion devolved upon Captain (now Major) Sinclair.

According to universal testimony, the Turks' rifle fire was singularly ineffective : and they simply would not wait for the bayonet. But their shell fire was accurate and deadly. Practically all the damage suffered was wrought by shrapnel and machine-gun fire. The communication trench used was a death-trap. The Turks had its range to a nicety, and plastered it heavily with H.E. and shrapnel. In the resulting confusion some of our men became entangled in other units. Rejoining later, singly and in groups, they somewhat raised our numbers ; but it may be taken that in this action the battalion lost over fifty per cent. of its original strength. Similar losses were suffered by the 7th Royal Scots ; and that fine soldier, the Brigadier, also laid down his life on the field. The 4th and 7th Battalions had taken their places in glory and sacrifice alongside their sister battalion, the 5th Royal Scots. It is glory won at great cost. One thinks of personal friends gone, and others wounded, with a strange mingling of grief and exhilaration. Perhaps the latter is the stronger. For those who survive a return and descent to the commonplace are possible ; but these men have completed life upon a splendid and heroic level, where it will remain for evermore.

It will be seen that the conflict resulted in a severe reverse for the Turks ; but here, as so often on the Peninsula, our men, having triumphed in battle, were denied the fruits of victory, by lack of fresh troops to follow up the routed enemy before he could be reinforced and recover from the reeling blow, and also by shortage of ammunition. Every time we met the Turk on anything approaching equal terms, he was



heavily defeated. Even when, with the advantage of favourable position, fresh troops, and greatly superior numbers, he came against our war-worn men, they rose up, shook off their weariness, and beat him at time and on ground of his own choosing. Let no one think that we were really worsted by the enemy in battle. Very far from that. The soldiers of our armies, new and old, need not begin to dread superiors until they have looked into the eyes of equals. This is no mere patriotic hallucination. We wrested position after position from the hands of the Turk, when every circumstance conspired to help him; and we held these positions in spite of the multitudes he hurled against us with the most desperate valour. We came away in the end only because the force at our command was not adequate to the enterprise, and we had reached the limit of our strength and endurance.

While the great attack was being made on the Cape Helles front on the 28th of June, there was stern fighting also at Anzac, where the Australians engaged the enemy and prevented him from sending reinforcements to his sorely pressed troops before Krithia. On the night of the 29th-30th, the Turks, inspired by Enver Pasha, who had arrived on the scene, made a tremendous onslaught on the Anzacs, with a view to finishing them off once for all. But Enver had not reckoned on the quality of the men in front of him. Two attacks wilted and shrivelled up in the artillery and machine-gun fire that greeted them. Their dead lay in ghastly heaps before the Anzac positions. Baffled and defeated, the survivors withdrew to their defences.

After the rout of the 28th, Liman von Sanders directed the Turks to abstain from any effort to recapture the trenches taken from them, and to

adopt purely defensive tactics. Under Enver's malign influence this wise counsel was rejected, and the strength of the enemy, including reinforcements brought by Enver, was frittered away in vain attacks, in resisting which our troops were occupied during the next few days. It was a peculiarly costly business for the enemy. Within about five days his casualties could not be under 20,000, of whom over 5000 were killed.

I cannot speak in too high terms of the pluck and spirit of our men. This applies especially to the wounded. They had often to be brought far, over very rough country, without roads, to the hospital. They did not always realise how serious their wounds were, but in most of them there was a spirit of unconquerable good cheer. When one thinks of their toils, hardships, and suffering, it seems almost miraculous. The conditions were such that no description can do them justice. But it was the rarest thing to hear a complaint. When I offered sympathy to the wounded, one cheery fellow after another would reply, "Well, somebody must do it, sir"; "We must do it for the old country"; "I'm all right, sir." Their hearts certainly were all right; and the old country will not fail to appreciate at something like its true value the self-devotion of its loyal sons. Our freedom from the oppressor is being made secure. The men in the trenches are paying the price. This will not be forgotten by those to whom freedom is dear.

From amid the clash of battle and the roar of guns, from many a stricken field, where unspeakable hardships are borne by our sons and brothers with unconquerable cheerfulness, where the bravest blood in Britain is poured forth without stint, do we not hear a trumpet-like voice demanding if we are worthy

of the chivalrous heroism, the inestimable sacrifice, displayed and borne for us? It is for us that our comrades endure, and dare, and die. If there be anything in us that is tame and mean, cowardly or selfish, surely it will be scourged to the very death by the thought of what these gallant men have suffered that we might live. Life purchased at such a price must be life ennobled and purified; ready also to make any sacrifice that may be demanded by the cause of freedom and honour, truth and righteousness.

## CHAPTER IX

### HAPPENINGS ON THE BEACH

ORDINARY duties in the hospital claimed attention on Sundays as on other days. It would not do to disappoint the boys of the comforts, especially the cigarettes, the padre was accustomed to fetch round with him! Some management was necessary to find hours for all the services required to suit everybody. It may be of interest to give the programme for one Sunday early in July.

At 9.30 a.m. I took a service for Presbyterians and other Free Churchmen, in the open air; a great many present being from the 89th Field Ambulance—Aberdeen-away lads. We met in the open space surrounded by ambulance waggons and the men's dugouts. There was a very kindly "sough" about the Scottish voices singing the old psalms and familiar hymns. One soon forgot the accompaniment of clanking chains, tumbling boxes, and clamouring cries from fatigue parties on the pier, the whinnying of horses and the tramp of armed men around us, and the penetrating drone of the aeroplanes above us. The hot sun and driving dust were also in evidence.

Then followed a Communion service at 11.30 in the mess tent of the 88th Field Ambulance, funeral service at 2.30, and afternoon hospital service at 3 p.m. At 6 p.m. I had a fine gathering of young fellows

of all denominations, except, of course, the Roman Catholics, also in the open air.

In the afternoon I had a letter from Captain Sinclair, commanding the 4th Royal Scots, and after sunset I walked up to the reserve trenches which the battalion had reached that morning. This was in fulfilment of a promise to take a service as soon as convenient in commemoration of the officers, N.C.O.'s, and men who had fallen on the 28th of June. With some caution I picked my way in the dark through the various lines until I found my friends. The men were gathered in a little open space and sat round in the form of a half-moon. The stars were very bright, but the night was dark, and we could see each other only as shadows. The enemy seemed to enter into the spirit of the thing, and left us absolutely in peace. So there, in the trenched valley, alive with armed men, in perfect stillness, under the quiet sky, we held our service. We sang familiar words, a few of the lads with good voices standing by and acting as a choir. "All people that on earth do dwell," "The Lord's my Shepherd," and "O God of Bethel" were sung with deep feeling. As the music floated away on the light breeze it seemed to rouse the interest of others, and, attracted by the strains, many dim figures moved silently towards us from the surrounding battalions, considerably swelling our congregation. How our hearts were stirred as we thought of the brave men gone, who had so often worshipped with us in the Grange and in the old Cathedral. One felt in a peculiar way a sense of their presence, as we prayed that we might be worthy to cherish the memory of these heroic friends and comrades.

The soldier quickly adapts himself to conditions, and I am sure no more reverent congregation ever

worshipped within the most venerable walls. But, when you think of it, was not ours the most venerable sanctuary of all—the old earth beneath our feet, the walls of ancient night around us, and above us the star-spangled roof of God's great tent?

The lads were going up to the front again in a few hours, so I was specially glad to have this opportunity of speaking with them about the greatest things. Under such conditions mind and heart are very responsive to the divine message. An experience like this leaves abiding impressions and memories. It is pathetic to think how many of these men have already received their call. They gave a good account of themselves, bearing themselves right manfully in the fighting of the next few days.

On a Sunday in July, the *Carthage*, a large steamer, lying perhaps a mile and a half from the shore, was torpedoed. She settled down by the stern. Her bow rose straight up. More than half length of the vessel appeared quite perpendicular for about a minute, then she went plumb down. It was all over in four minutes ten seconds. The ship was empty. She had just unloaded 36,000 shells for the French big guns. The officers and crew were saved. The same afternoon a shell killed one of our R.A.M.C. sergeants while he was asleep in his dugout, where, he had jocularly declared, no shell could touch him. We buried him just before sunset. So busy were the enemy's guns that day that no gathering for worship was possible.

The shells are very capricious in their behaviour. One falls without exploding in the middle of the road, and makes a hole, clean cut, seven feet deep, with a diameter of eight inches. Another blows up a supply cart, killing the mules and leaving the driver unhurt. Another takes off the cap of an Indian driver, and

plunges harmlessly into the bags of sand with which his cart is loaded. Another blows up an ambulance waggon. Wheels and fragments fly up in a cloud, almost suggesting Ezekiel's vision. Another invades a mess tent, shattering a case of aerated water, leaving the occupants without a scratch. Many of them dive into the sea, sending up magnificent columns of water, glistening in the sun. Of course, they were not all so harmless; but the perpetual wonder was that, for the amount of explosives used, the damage should be so small.

One day during my absence our camp was heavily bombarded. Father Legros had had a fatiguing morning, and went into our tent for a moment's rest. Just then a shell exploded near the kitchen, about fifteen yards away. Fearing someone might be hurt, Father Legros rose and ran to the kitchen, where he found one lad killed and others injured. He was not ten seconds out of our tent when a shell landed beside it and blew it to ribbons.

Another day I stood by the mortuary enclosure taking note of the bodies for burial. Finished with this I turned away, and had only gone about forty yards when a shell dug a crater on the very spot where I had stood, bespattering me, fortunately, with nothing worse than earth.

One by one our pet illusions tended to be destroyed. A belief was prevalent for some time that the safest place to be found was the spot where a shell had just burst. There, it was thought, no second shell was ever likely to fall. Nobody believes that now. A second illusion was that no one ever heard the scream of the shell that struck him, and so was spared at least one moment of anxiety. Shells do not all travel at the same speed, and it seems certain that some of

them reach their mark without any warning to the victim. But the evidence is irresistible that, in other cases, the sound of the coming shell outstrips its flight. So perishes another fond illusion.

“The arrow that flieth by day” may in time be taken by some with a certain coolness; but I think no one could ever become quite accustomed to bombardment by night. There is something very weird and “awesome” in the song of these heralds of death as they speed through the darkness. Yet there is a sort of fascination about them too. Often I was attracted to the tent door to watch the flare of their bursting in the gloom, and conjecture where they had pitched.

The Turks were receiving strong reinforcements; but these did not seem to bring any confidence or spirit to the enemy. The attacks he delivered were often in great force, but singularly lifeless. On the 4th of July he advanced against our entire position. In the early morning a battleship in the Straits assisted the artillery against Gaba Tepe; while aeroplanes tried to support the gun fire on other parts of our front by dropping bombs. At 7.30 a.m. the infantry advanced, and, in a section held by the new French Colonial troops, they gained a temporary footing. The veterans of the R.N.D. went to the rescue. On seeing them the Turks bolted and were exposed to a scathing fire. The attack was an utter failure. A prisoner who was brought in with bayonet wounds described the plight of himself and his comrades. They had marched all the way from Adrianople. On their arrival, wearied and weak, they were rushed into the trenches without anything to eat. His appearance corroborated his story. An officer who had been in the battle said that the Turks “crawled out of the trenches like men who had no guts.” This is in



harmony with the French official statement: "In front of the French left, and at very many parts in front of the British line, the Ottoman infantry left their trenches and advanced, but nowhere with the valour and ardour which they had manifested in preceding engagements."

On 12th July the clamour of bombardment woke the dawn. It was the Allies' turn to attack: an effort being made to reach Krithia. The troops first engaged were the French Corps and the Scottish Lowland Division. The day saw fierce fighting. Substantial progress was made, including the capture by the Scots of a formidable redoubt on their right, strongly placed on the edge of a gully. In the night fighting some of the ground taken had to be evacuated. At dawn on the 13th the Scots were relieved by the Naval Division. The lost ground was recovered, and the left of our line moved forward. The French also had advanced some distance on the right. The gains of these two days were consolidated and firmly held. The strenuous character of the struggle is shown by the fact that, between the afternoon of the 12th and the forenoon of the 14th, 2500 wounded men passed through our station.

During these days the torment from heat, dust, and flies seemed to reach a maximum. For the wounded who could not at once be brought in from the open, where water there was none, thirst was maddening. One lad, very badly wounded, had to be left where he fell for thirty-six hours. No one could get near him, the whole ground being swept by machine-gun and rifle fire, with plentiful supplies of shrapnel in addition. I asked how he subsisted without water in the terrible heat. He brightened up at that, and told me that, having his trenching tool with him, he dug as

he lay, and to his great joy almost immediately found water. There were two lads just over the ridge in the same case as himself, but no water was to be found there. They could speak to each other, but neither party could move. And water just makes the difference between life and death. A Scottish lad had lain for about forty-eight hours. His wants were supplied by the water bottles of a Turk and two comrades who lay dead beside him. A South Country man lay in the bottom of a trench, protected from the sun, heavily wounded, for nearly three days. At length a stretcher-party, searching for another man, passed, but had no intention of entering the trench, when whiz went a shell over them, and they dropped into the trench for safety. There they found this poor fellow, still conscious but very far through. He pulled up wonderfully, and when he left us he seemed to be on the fair way for recovery.

Next day Lieutenant Bennett Burleigh, a son of the famous war correspondent, came in, fatally wounded. I buried him in the afternoon. That same day I buried a Turkish officer who had died in hospital. He had been shot by a German officer. The Turks we captured were extraordinarily happy to be out of the scrap. They assured us that many were ready to surrender, if they could elude the vigilance of the Germans. No ordinary power could persuade these fellows to go back to their own lines.

On the evening of 15th July, work being over for the day, I went up to the hill in the dark to watch for a little the flashing shell bursts, the white light of the star shells, the trail of light from the rockets, and the wavering fan of the great search-lights, all picked out in strange distinctness against the gloom. When I turned to come away, a thin, bright silver strip of moon

hung in the transparent blue just over the hospital ship, which lay about a mile from the shore. Out of the darkness her lights shone with piercing radiance. You could not see the ship : only a high white light at the bow and stern, a row of green lights along her side, like a string of emeralds, with a great cross of red flaming in the centre, all reflected in gleaming streaks wavering in the water. It gave one the impression of a great fairy lantern, hung on the moon, shining with almost unearthly beauty.

Lest we should be tempted to forget the grim business of our life, a terrific bombardment burst over us at midnight. The shells came from Asia. They set fire to a heap of ammunition at the base of the cliff. Then ensued a weird scene, suggestive of a nook in Hades. Amid the red glare cast by the blaze, and the crackling of cartridges, dark figures darted about, rescuing boxes of ammunition not yet ignited. Two neighbouring tents caught fire, sending up a broad flame which flashed along the pier and over the water, picking out the shipping in white outlines. A fatigue party heaved sand upon the fire, and by and by extinguished it. It was perilous work, as the Turks, encouraged by this success, increased their fire. Happily no one was hit.

The real cause of the bombardment lent a touch of humour to the situation. It had been intended to embark soldiers going away, and to land reinforcements at " W " Beach : and the enemy were duly informed by their faithful spies. The men going down, and the ship coming in, were, at the last moment, directed to " V " Beach. There the troops were quietly and expeditiously dealt with, while the Turks assiduously plastered " W " Beach with their shells.

The dangers on the shore received illustration on

the evening of the 19th, when, along with others of his unit, Lance-Sergeant Austin Dent, R.A.M.C., was going to bathe. He was caught by a splinter of shell. He was carried back to camp, and in spite of the most careful and skilful attention he sank and died the following day. The son of my old friend, Mr. J. M. Dent, the publisher, he was a young man of refined nature and attractive disposition. His untimely death cast a gloom over the Ambulance—the 88th—to which, on volunteering for foreign service, he was attached.

Bits of good fortune came our way at times. In an hour of heedlessness the Turks allowed one of their supply ships to fall into the hands of our Navy. When the prize was brought in triumphantly, great was the joy and satisfaction to find that she was loaded mainly with eggs: and good fresh eggs at that!

It was not exactly gratitude that took our submarine up the Straits. Her enterprise and success were extraordinary. She came safely back, having sunk twenty-two sailing boats, one gunboat, and another ship, class unknown. She shelled the railway and blew up a munition train. She also went to Constantinople and fired a torpedo at a battleship, wisely retiring before she could learn the result.

About this time monitors began to take a large share in bombardments from the sea. Vessels of shallow draft, they are not easily vulnerable by submarines; nor do they form so good a mark for artillery as do the battleships and cruisers. Some of them carry 14-inch guns, and the effect of their shells may be imagined. They lived under the shelter of Rabbit Island, between us and Tenedos; and the Asian guns received most of their attention. I watched two of them one day as they lay off the south of the Peninsula pounding to powder a strong battery position near

Kum Kale. They moved off towards Imbros and, from a distance of ten to fifteen miles, continued the good work.

The relations between the men of the allied armies were of the happiest. They seemed to have no difficulty in understanding each other. This intercourse produced some queer results. My friend and tent-fellow suggested that "a man wants what he hasn't got." Now, our men were well furnished with simple necessaries. Among the necessaries were included jams of various sorts. The French were also well supplied with food, to which, according to their manner, were added provisions of wines, not to be dreamed of in the British stores. Withal, the soul of the Frenchman yearns for jam; and the British Tommy has an idea that the Frenchman's wine must be excellent and refreshing. So it came to pass that a surreptitious and fairly flourishing trade was established between members of the allied armies. The market rates ruled, I am told, at something like a bottle of wine for a pot of jam. The French, on the whole, I should say, had the best of the bargain. British enterprise carried the venders of jam to the French lines, where their goods were easily and quickly disposed of. But the French wines often proved so "refreshing" that Tommy had to be carried back to his trench. Such things could not be entirely hidden. An embargo was placed on the trade; and then the grumble was that the temperate many were punished for the excesses of the intemperate few!

On the edge of the gully to the right, looking seawards, was the hut of the signallers. Here touch was maintained by telegraph and telephone with H.Q. and with every unit in the field. Cheerful and obliging fellows were in charge; and it was a frequent place

of call, lying as it did on our way to and from the beach. The wireless installation had been several times damaged ; but the hut seemed to bear a charmed life till Sunday, 1st August. Just after eleven o'clock a more than usually violent bombardment took place. A 6-inch H.E. shell plunged through the corrugated iron roof of the dugout, and exploded with disastrous effect. I ran to the spot, and found the hut a wreck. Six men were killed outright, and nine were wounded, some of them grievously. More seemed to be hurt by fragments of the iron roof than by splinters of the shell. It had struck about the middle of the roof, and the effect of the explosion was forward. The men in front were killed, those in the middle were injured, and those at the back were practically unhurt. The instruments sustained only trifling damage. With splendid nerve, Corporal Walker, R.E., although shaken by the terrible experience, set himself resolutely to repair the damage ; and he told me that within thirty-five minutes he had all connections restored and in working order. " He reopened communication," says Sir Ian Hamilton, " by apologising for the incident, and by saying that he required no assistance."

These six poor fellows were eating their lunch at one o'clock : I buried them at three. Two hours later another shell killed two men in the A.S.C. Stores, on the other side of the valley ; and yet another killed two men in the R.E. Park, about 300 yards from our station. A pathetic thing about one of the last was that he was working on a notice-board for me, to be put up at the cemetery gate. His officer wrote to say that he had just finished the job when he was killed. Very well he had done his last bit of work.

The adversaries, however, most to be feared by our

soldiers were not the men in the opposing trenches who watched with lynx eyes for a chance to use rifle or bomb, nor the gunners who made such good use of the weapons they had, nor the Taubes with their horrid bombs ; but the unseen hosts that bred disease and sickness, which, just because they were not seen, were apt to be ignored. Great care was taken by the authorities to have all water for drinking and cooking purposes properly sterilised, and the food supplied keenly scrutinised. But in these matters the average soldier is a happy-go-lucky fellow, unaccustomed to watch very narrowly what he eats and drinks, and old habits are not conquered in a moment. On the whole, however, things tended to improve with the disappearance of flies, the great germ-carriers. There was very little typhoid ; for this, no doubt, the almost universal anti-typhoid inoculation was to thank. There was considerable dread of cholera ; but not a single case of true cholera was detected. This complete immunity from the most awful scourge may be due to anti-cholera inoculation, although everything possible was done to keep away the conditions in which these diseases flourish. Dysentery cases, rather numerous for a while, tended to decline. Jaundice was perhaps more prevalent, but fortunately of a mild type, usually overcome by a few days of rest and reasonable treatment. A few suffered from rheumatism, measles, diphtheria, various kinds of fever, chest troubles, and skin affections, but not more than might be expected normally among a like number of men.

## CHAPTER X

### THE GREAT VENTURE

FROM the deck of a hospital ship lying off Cape Helles, on the 6th of August, I watched a terrible pyrotechnic display. An armed Sweeper came alongside to take off patients for Mudros. She was fair game for the Turks, who let loose at her some of their biggest shells with intent to sink her. If we had been hit, it would have been due to our keeping such company.

Soon the Turks had enough to fix their attention elsewhere. Battleships, monitors, even the amazing little T.B.D.'s joined with the land batteries in pouring a tornado of shot and shell over the enemy's positions. The various shells emit different coloured smoke—white, bluish grey, brownish yellow, and black. They hung a dense filmy vapour round the hill, ripped and torn by the flash of bursting shells as the thunder-cloud is split by lightning. The roar of the guns and the distant growl of exploding projectiles heightened the impression of dread. Surely there can be few more awful spectacles on earth. Away far up the Gulf of Saros we could see the ships under the smoke of a great bombardment.

The artillery fire died down, and the smoke drifted away from the slopes of Achi Baba. At 3.50 p.m. an attack was launched against 1200 yards of Turkish trench opposite our right and centre. The 29th Division was again to the fore, the brunt of the work



falling mainly on the 88th Brigade. The 42nd Division on their right fought a stubborn battle for possession of the Vineyard, west of Krithia road, and not till the 13th was our hold of it made secure. Sections of the enemy's line were carried most gallantly, but before the overwhelming force developed by the Turks they had all been relinquished by nightfall. The enemy's trenches and communication trenches were crowded with troops. They had been preparing for an attack. Our fellows wished for nothing more. We had the bad fortune to anticipate them by an hour or two. The action was, however, in the nature of a feint; the purpose being to distract the Turks' attention from the great operations in the north, and to retain here as many of their troops as possible. These objects were fully gained.

Matters had practically reached a condition of stalemate at the south end of the Peninsula. Russian co-operation in strength on the coast of the Black Sea was part of the original scheme. This had been departed from, and several Turkish divisions had thus been set free for the Dardanelles, adding greatly to the difficulties of our task. Sir Ian Hamilton decided to use the reinforcements sent to him in a "great venture" from Anzac and Suvla, designed to carry the ridge of Sari Bair, and, "working from that dominating point, to grip the waist of the Peninsula from Maidos to Gaba Tepe." This would enable him to strangle the Turkish communications southward, and so clear the Narrows for the Fleet. For such an enterprise the Anzacs, by their tenacity and courage, still held the door open.

The strategical and tactical diversions employed thoroughly hoodwinked the Turks. Under the very nose of the enemy, Anzac was heavily reinforced, the troops landing in the dark and finding shelter in

the trenches surreptitiously prepared for them by the tireless Australians and New Zealanders. It was intended by the containing attack at Cape Helles, a feint in the vicinity of the Bulair lines, and an attack by the Anzacs on Lone Pine trenches, so to distract the enemy's attention that a surprise landing might be effected at Suvla Bay.

The ridge of Sari Bair runs, roughly, northward, rising in a series of heights, Battleship Hill, Chunuk Bair, Hill Q, and Koja Chemen continuing in the lower Anafarta Ridge. From the main ridge it falls towards the sea in rocky scrub-covered spurs and under features, with a succession of valleys breaking up from the shore. The Anafarta Ridge lets itself down westward through rough terraces and cultivated land to the sandy plain, which stretches to the Salt Lake. This lake, which is dry in summer, is cut off from the Bay of Suvla by a causeway of sand. On the south of this plain are several hills, outrunners from the Anafarta Ridge. Along the shore on the north lies the ridge of Karakol Dagh.

According to plan, the Anzac force was to make its way up the valleys, and storm the main ridge, while the troops to be landed at Suvla Bay should swiftly carry the lightly defended Anafarta Ridge, turn the Turks' position, and link up with the Anzac force, when, together, they should complete the discomfiture of the enemy, and carry the movement to victory.

The first part of the scheme was carried out with as great success as could possibly be hoped for. The capture of Lone Pine trenches was one of the most heroic incidents in the war. A position of enormous strength, the trenches, covered with great tree-trunks, were hardly damaged by the bombardment, and defended the occupants effectually from shrapnel.

The Australians who assaulted rushed across the open under a murderous fire, tore up the logs, and, plunging into the semi-darkness of the trenches, dug out the Turks with the bayonet. For six days they held the ground thus won against the most furious counter-attacks. Of the nine Victoria Crosses given for the fighting this month on the Peninsula, seven were claimed by the heroes of Lone Pine.

In the early morning of the 7th, an advance was made in the centre, from what were known as Walker's Ridge and Quinn's Post. It was in the nature of a forlorn hope. It is evidence of the gallantry displayed that, of the 750 men who went forward, only 113 returned. But they had shaken the nerve of the Turks, who, expecting another attack, dare not move their troops from that position to help their hard-pressed comrades elsewhere.

While part of the Anzac force was thus engaged, and holding the position, the rest was divided into two covering columns and two assaulting columns for the main operations. I cannot here follow in detail the brilliant work done by these columns. The right covering force was to open up the ravines, capture the enemy's positions commanding the foothills, and protect the right flank of the left covering force, which was to march along the beach northward to the hill Damakjelic Bair, where it could come into contact with the force landed at Suvla, and guard the left flank of the left assaulting column. The objective of the right assaulting column was the ridge of Chunuk Bair; that of the left, the summit of Koja Chemen Tepe, the highest point of the range.

It was essential that the right covering column should take Old No. 3 Post. Recaptured from us by the Turks on 30th May, it had been made practically

impregnable to any ordinary assault. The stratagem by which it fell deserves special record. Nightly, for a time, exactly at 9 p.m. H.M.S. *Colne* threw the beams of a search-light on to the redoubt, and opened fire on it for exactly ten minutes. Then, after a ten-minutes' interval, came a second illumination and bombardment, commencing always at 9.20, and ending at 9.30 p.m.

“The idea was that after successive nights of such practice the enemy would get into the habit of taking the search-light as a hint to clear out until the bombardment was at an end. But, on the eventful night of the 6th, the sound of their footsteps drowned by the loud cannonade—unseen as they crept along in the darkest shadow which fringes a search-light's beam—came the right covering column. At 9.30 the light switched off, and instantly our men poured out of the scrub jungle and into the empty redoubt. By 11 p.m. the whole series of surrounding entrenchments were ours!”

Bauchop's Hill was taken, and the mouth of Chailak Dere opened for the right assaulting column. With the capture of Table Top by the New Zealanders, an extraordinarily brilliant bit of work with bomb and bayonet, the task of the right covering column was accomplished.

The left covering force pushed northward, rushed the trenches, and occupied the hill Damakjelic Bair, safeguarding the left rear of the whole Anzac attack.

The left assaulting column set out at 12.30 a.m. on the 7th. Ascending Aghyle Dere, the column split at the bifurcation of the ravine, the northern part to attack Koja Chemen Tepe, the southern against Hill Q. At dawn the latter held the ridge west of the farm

below Chunuk Bair. The former also had progressed well.

The right assaulting column ascended by Sazli Beit Dere and Chailak Dere, and captured what was known as Rhododendron Ridge, a quarter of a mile short of Chunuk Bair.

It is impossible to exaggerate the difficulties overcome in this advance in the dark, through dense scrub and barbed wire, scrambling on hands and knees over broken and precipitous rocks, exposed to a hail of random bullets. Yet, exhausted as they were, these men went forward to a fresh attack on Kojia Chemen Tepe and Chunuk Bair. They had thus far driven the enemy from ridge to ridge ; but now the resistance was hardening. In spite of bombardment by artillery and the Fleet, reinforcements were arriving from the direction of Battleship Hill. The gallantry of wearied men availed not against superior strength. But our men held what they had gained, and prepared for the night. The help expected from Suvla did not come ; therefore all that was intended was not accomplished. But, in the words of General Birdwood, endorsed by Sir Ian Hamilton, "the troops had performed a feat which is without a parallel."

In the early morning of the 8th, the crest of Chunuk Bair was captured. A unique and glorious record is that of the 7th Gloucesters, a regiment of the New Army. Every officer and senior N.C.O. was either killed or wounded. Reduced to a few small groups of men, commanded by junior N.C.O.'s and privates, they fought dauntlessly from midday till sunset.

An attack on the north slopes of Kojia Chemen Tepe did not succeed ; but the Australian infantry concerned inflicted sanguinary losses upon heavy columns of Turks, who repeatedly attacked them in their original

position. There was still no sign of help from Suvla.

On the morning of 9th August, an attack was launched against the ridge north of the crest of Chunuk Bair. Two battalions, the 6th Gurkhas and the 6th South Lancashires, reached the summit of Hill Q, and far below them to the east they saw the gleaming water of the Straits, and the long convoys of the Turks raising the white dust on the European and Asian shores. Now was the moment for the main assault to be delivered by a column which, advancing from Chailak Dere, in the dark and confusion had lost its way. A storm of shell made the position untenable. The Turks advanced in overwhelming numbers, and when the column did arrive it was too late. The New Zealand and New Army troops who held the crest of Chunuk Bair defied the utmost efforts of the enemy to dislodge them. They were relieved that night by the 6th L.N.L.R. and the 5th Wiltshire Regiment. These, at daybreak, were shelled by every enemy gun, attacked by a full division plus a regiment of three battalions, and overwhelmed by sheer weight of numbers. As the mass of Turks came over the crest, followed by heavy reinforcements, and charged down the western slope, they were caught in a concentrated machine-gun and artillery fire from batteries and warships, which literally chewed them to fragments. Few of them lived to return. Simultaneously a fierce attack was made upon our men at the farm, and on the spurs to the N.E., which developed into one of the bloodiest battles ever fought. When it was over, no Turk was left alive on the western slope. But the expected co-operation from Suvla had not materialised, and, despite the intrepid courage and heroic gallantry displayed, "the grand coup had not come off."

The work of the Navy in concentrating at the appointed place, at the appointed time, the military forces from points as far apart as Imbros, Mudros, and Mitylene, respectively distant by sea from Suvla 12, 60, and 120 miles, was beyond praise. The landing was a complete surprise to the Turks, and was achieved without mishap. Of the operations that led to such a dismal end, the barest outline must suffice.

Suvla Bay, two miles wide, opens to westward between Point Suvla on the N. and Point Nibrunesi on the S. The 11th Division had landed before dawn on the 7th, and cleared the Turkish outposts from Lala Baba and Ghazi Baba at the tips of the horns of the Bay, and from No. 10 Hill, N. of the Salt Lake; and had captured the ridge of Karakol Dag. The 10th Division came soon after, from Mudros and Mitylene.

The two divisions moved in a line eastward from the Salt Lake under Turkish artillery fire from the heights, which was effectively replied to by the ships' guns. The conditions of the march were trying in a high degree: under a blazing sun, in still air that throbbled with heat, over sand that burned. In the afternoon, wearied and tormented with thirst, they came to a standstill. After a thunderstorm with rain, a further advance was made, and that night Yilghin Burnu, a hill on our right, was captured—afterwards called Chocolate Hill, when turned to brown by the burning of its fleece of scrub.

News that all was not well brought Sir Ian Hamilton himself on to the ground that evening; but both corps and divisional commanders had allowed things to get so out of hand that it was impossible to organise an attack at once, when, haply, a favourable decision might have been snatched at the eleventh hour. The attempt made on the main Anafarta Ridge on the

morning of the 9th was already too late. The Turks were now present in strong force ; and operations were interrupted by a scrub fire. On the 10th an unsuccessful attack was made on Ismail Oglu Tepe, a spur running out from the main ridge. The 53rd Division (Territorial) which, with the 54th, had meantime arrived, this same day made a vain attack upon Anafarta Ridge.

The position we had reached was consolidated, and preparation was made for a second attempt. The 29th Division was brought from Cape Helles, and the 2nd Mounted Division from Egypt. The attack was directed against Ismail Oglu Tepe. It was planned for the afternoon of 21st August, when, it was thought, the Turkish gunners would be blinded by the sun, which would also show up their positions clearly. It so happened that a luminous haze almost concealed the enemy positions and threw out in bold relief everything to the west. This lessened the efficiency of the artillery fire, leaving a more difficult task for the infantry, who had to advance over the open plain. The 11th Division attacked on the right. The failure of one brigade through loss of direction threw the movement out of gear. The 29th Division on the left captured the trenches on Scimitar Hill ; but their progress was arrested by a forest fire ; and then, owing to the failure of the brigade noted above, they were exposed to a punishing cross fire, before which they were compelled to fall back.

The Mounted Division now advanced across the plain from Lala Baba under a terrific hail of shrapnel. The "superb martial spectacle" they offered has been described by Sir Ian Hamilton in a passage which must surely become a classic. When darkness fell they charged the hill, and the watchers cheered as



they thought the crest had been won. It had not. In the position taken they were enfiladed by the Turkish machine guns above them, and before day-break all were back in their original lines. Anafarta Ridge remained unconquered.

Meantime on the Anzac front a number of smaller actions were fought, with little result beyond a slight extension and strengthening of our position. On the 21st a foothold was secured on Hill 60, to the S.E. of Ismail Oglu Tepe. After fierce fighting on the 27th and 29th, it passed wholly into our hands, making sure our communications between Anzac and Suvla Bay. Both sides now settled down to the routine of trench warfare.

## CHAPTER XI

### KIDNAPPED

BEING a trifle off colour, I was dispatched to a hospital ship for a forty-eight hours' rest. The doctors were, as I have found them everywhere, right good fellows. The captain proved to be the son of an old Stirling friend. There were 500 wounded men on board, and no padre ; so there was plenty of work for me to do. Almost at once I was called to attend a young fellow—an interpreter—who had received a mortal wound. I had seen him at the clearing station, and his quiet courage and manliness greatly attracted me. I found a younger brother—also an interpreter—sitting with him in a paroxysm of grief. They joined very fervently in the prayer offered, and a radiant look came into the eyes of the dying man as he whispered his gratitude. Delirium followed, and he died early the following morning.

That evening I conducted my first burial at sea : a memorable experience. A Greek labourer had passed away in the afternoon. The captain and a few of his men stood round the body, with bowed heads, under an awning on the lower deck. The sea, unquiet during the day, had become quite calm. It was very dark. Gleams of red and green from the ships' lights shimmered tremulously across the water, as the " clay tabernacle " slipped from the stretcher and plunged into its ocean grave.

This was my first burial at sea : the second was not long delayed. In the morning the bodies of the young officer and another who had " passed in the night " were lowered into a little steam pinnace, followed by the captain, the officer's brother, and myself. We steamed out into the main stream from the Dardanelles. The wind was boisterous, and the little boat heaved and tossed on the waves, which rolled, white crested, around us. Standing up amid the troubled elements we prayed, recalling many of the Master's words of comfort and good cheer for the bereaved and sorrowing. Since it had pleased God to take to Himself the souls of our brothers, we thus committed their bodies to the deep, looking forward with certain hope to the great day when the sea shall give up her dead.

As we beat our way back to the ship, the air was full of grim reminders that " in the midst of life we are in death " ; but just then the words of Christ seemed to come with a strange new and tranquillising power to my own heart : " I am the resurrection and the life."

During this day and the early part of the following night the wounded arrived rapidly, and, having received her complement, the ship was ordered to go. When I wakened the next morning, instead of getting ashore as had been intended, I found the vessel cutting her " furrow free " through the sunny waters on her way to Alexandria ! Who laid the plot to secure a padre for the voyage it is not for me to say ; but when a kindly M.O. and a friendly ship's captain lay their heads together, strange things may happen. Apart from the sadness of seeing so much suffering so heroically borne, life in the ship was very pleasant.

There were many extremely interesting men on

board, quite ready to talk of their experiences. Colonel — had been wounded and crushed by a fall of earth. He was keen on the value of humour in trench warfare. As an illustration, he told of an attempt to raise a sandbag barricade at a point dominated by a Turkish sniper, who fired from a steel plate loophole in an enemy trench. It was an ugly job. The men lay with their sandbags until shown that the thing could be worked as a kind of game. The dodge was to pop one's head swiftly up and down, in and out, to draw the enemy's fire, then bang with the sandbag before he had time to reload. Soon the utmost hilarity prevailed, and the work was splendidly done!

The Colonel lay wounded in a tent under a cliff at Gully Beach, where he was supposed to be quite safe. He felt sick, and his lieutenant rose to help him. At that moment a great rush of earth from above pushed the lieutenant forward. Had he not risen the instant he did, he must have been killed. The Colonel was buried under the tent and debris. The lieutenant tore up the tent and dug down to the face of the Colonel, who when he was got out was unconscious, but was brought round by artificial respiration.

I spoke with an Essex man who had been at the landing on 25th April—one of the tough warriors who formed the backbone of the 29th Division. His account of the fighting was lurid and picturesque; but I cannot forget the look of thankful recollection with which he told me, amid the desperate perils of the battlefield, of the *comfort of a trench*.

There were curiously divergent views on special points. One keen young officer spoke of the Turks' callousness as to the fate of their fallen. He had

seen their dead left, no effort being made to get them in. Once two bodies were hung in a kneeling position on barbed wire to draw our fire, so that our fellows, rising to aim, might be got by snipers. The ruse failed; but what treatment of the dead! On the other hand, Colonel — thought the Turks wonderful for the way in which they got off their dead. True, they sometimes buried them in parapets, or covered them lightly with earth in the bottom of the trenches. This he accounted for by necessity.

There was a man on board who had been blown up by a H.E. shell. It threw him into the air, his limbs going, as a comrade said, "like flails." He fell on the parapet of a trench, where he lay unable to move. It was thought that his spine was broken, and he was sent here as one quite knocked out. He proved to be suffering from nothing worse than shock. He had gained mastery of all his limbs; and although he had a few bruises and was a bit shaken, he was evidently to be all right.

One bonny boy, one of "the children," as we sometimes called them, of the Naval Division, had had his leg taken off at the knee. He was making no ado about himself, but he was distressed to think what this meant for his mother, and the thought of how he was to break the news to her was a sort of nightmare to him.

Having been carried away as a sick man, I could only be discharged to a hospital. In his statement sent for the guidance of the hospital doctors, my friend the ship's M.O. had said—he could not have said much else!—"This officer is inclined to make light of his troubles." It was enough. The good men were put upon their guard, and would not believe a word I said! O kindly indiscretion! O reputation-blasting compliment!

Now, in hospital there are recognised ways of dealing with sick men, also with men who pretend to be sick. But there is no rule covering the case of a man who is only said to be sick, and is brought in against his will. I must go under one or other of the known categories. They decided to make me a sick man, and put me on milk diet! In like evil case was a friend, a staff officer from Cape Helles, who for his sins was also accounted sick and put under similar regimen. Our mutual woes brought us very close together. This was literally true, as the hospital was crowded.

Soon relentings that touch the hearts of all good men visited our medical authorities, and we were permitted to escape for many hours each day from the discipline which, to a sound man, seems so wooden. For the shortage in the commissariat we found ample compensation in the city; and the Union Club, most generously thrown open to all officers in khaki, was a very haven of rest.

Scottish Presbyterianism is splendidly represented in Alexandria by the Rev. Dr. Mackie, Consular Chaplain, and missionary to the Jews from the Church of Scotland. The city is at present a great military centre, with many camps and hospitals. Dr. and Mrs. Mackie have thrown themselves whole-heartedly into the work among the soldiers. The hall under the church on the beautiful square has been transformed into an attractive Soldiers' Rest and Refreshment Room, with facilities for reading, writing, games, and music. Tommy and Jock know how to appreciate a good thing, and this is largely taken advantage of. Those who know Alexandria and the conditions prevailing there will best understand what a debt of gratitude our countrymen owe to these patriotic toilers.

Dr. Mackie said that congregational work was largely in abeyance. We found him visiting in the hospital. This work had the first call upon his service, because, as he strikingly put it, Great Britain is to-day identical with the Kingdom of God. Anything done to heighten the efficiency of her fighting men, and to promote the success of her enterprise, is, at present, the most direct service that can be rendered to the Kingdom of God.

We were shipped on board a transport that proved to be a "lame duck" and quite unseaworthy. Three days later we were transferred to another ship, and finally got under way. The start was none too propitious. We left about 6 p.m. When fairly out in the open sea something went wrong with the engines. They were stopped, and we lay at anchor for some hours with the lights of Alexandria flaming on the horizon.

We followed a very crooked course, zigzagging perpetually, that we might not fall a prey to submarines. The transport that sailed before us met her fate off Rhodes. Our lucky star was in the ascendant. As we rounded the N.E. point of the island of Crete it was nearly sunset, and the serried ridges of the mountains rising through a purple haze presented for a time a striking spectacle. I remembered St. Paul's opinion of the Cretans long ago. His estimate of them seems to have been shared generally in those days. I wondered what his judgment of the inhabitants would be if he were here to-day, and knew the gallant struggle they have made for freedom from the Turk and union with the nation of their choice. It would be a case of "revised opinion," I imagine.

In the early morning we passed the islands of Tinos and Andros. The captain gave me interesting particulars of each as we passed. Tinos, he assured me, was

famous for the beauty of its women. This is corroborated by the *Mediterranean Pilot*, from the pages of which I cull the following: "The Tinians are skilful, industrious, hospitable, with a simplicity that is interesting; the women, amongst the most beautiful in the Archipelago, possess a graceful carriage and extremely pleasant manners." Alas! we were too far at sea to behold clearly anything smaller than a house.

The Bay of Mudros cuts the Island of Lemnos almost in two. It forms a splendid landlocked harbour. Across the mouth of the harbour was stretched a double boom to guard against enemy craft. At the entrance through the boom lay a torpedo-boat destroyer, like a great hound watching at the portal of a mighty treasure-house. - And treasure-house in verity it was, as the value of battleships and merchant vessels lying there must reach a colossal sum. Multitudinous tents on the rising ground everywhere around gleamed white in the evening light. It was pleasant to see the strips of green along the coast and running up the slopes of the protecting hills. Here were a number of large hospitals under canvas, affording asylum to many of our sick and wounded from the Peninsula; rest camps for wearied units from the firing line; and shelters for fresh arrivals from home, who were here sorted out and sent forward to their places in the field. As we moved in, two transports passed us on their way out, carrying men for the front. The decks were thronged with strapping fellows in khaki, whose cheerful and manly bearing gave weight to their assurance that they were not "downhearted." When we cheered them, their rousing reply was something to remember. The sound of their voices singing popular songs floated to our ears across the water as they passed into the distance. Then in the failing light, almost ghost-like, swiftly and



silently a hospital ship followed them, painted white, with a band of green round her hull, broken by great red crosses, which, in the gloaming, looked like splashes of blood.

On my return to Cape Helles there were signs of approaching rain. It seemed wise to take measures against possible flooding before the energy gathered on the voyage had vanished. This was the more necessary as my friend Father Legros was already gripped by the sickness that was to deprive us of his presence for a couple of months. Wood for "sleepers" was got from the engineers: the quartermaster furnished old packing-boxes. These were pulled to pieces, and the boards laid on the "sleepers" which had been placed on the floor of the tent. This formed a quite good wooden floor, raised some inches off the ground. A trench round the outside carried off the bulk of the surface water.

To make the rain more welcome, a terrible dust-storm occurred on the 23rd of August, enveloping the whole base in a thick, suffocating khaki pall. The season for flies was drawing to a close, but they were making the most of their fleeting opportunities. It was little anyone could do in the conditions, but hearts were kept up amazingly. In lucid moments, when the dust clouds parted and we caught glimpses of each other, as often as not the greeting was a hearty laugh. "The mind is its own place, and in itself Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven." Only the resounding eloquence of Milton could have done justice to the situation.

It is usually well into September before rains fall heavily on Gallipoli. The first drops arrived on the 25th of August, and a most refreshing effect they had upon the dust-laden atmosphere. The next day was

perfect. The ships rocked gently on the bosom of the sea with an air of serenity, as if there were no evil passions or ill-will in the world. That impression was corrected by the deep growl of great naval guns from somewhere in the Gulf of Saros.

The sunsets lost nothing of their splendour and beauty with the failing year. Mount Athos is never seen from Cape Helles save at evening when, in some conditions, he conquers the distant haze. On Monday evening, 6th September, he stood out more distinctly than I had ever seen him: an irregular pyramid of dark purple on the horizon, against a saffron sky. Imbros lay asleep in draperies of transparent blue, watched over by the towering peak of Samothrace. The wind had sunk to a gentle breeze that just stirred the surface of the water. The masts of the ships lying at anchor, silhouetted against the evening sky, swung lazily to and fro. How peaceful it all seemed! Was it not calling us into fellowship with the greatness and tranquillity of God? How soothing to the soul, worn and wearied with the strife and turmoil born of the pettiness and restless passions of men!





SOME OFFICERS OF THE 5TH BN. THE ROYAL SCOTS (Q.E.R.) WHO FOUGHT  
ON THE PENINSULA.

## CHAPTER XII

### PRIVILEGE AND PERIL

AT the request of Major Spiller, Camp Commandant, I arranged to have service at H.Q. of the VIIIth Army Corps on Sunday mornings at eleven o'clock. Many of the young fellows there, clerks, signallers, etc., could not get away from camp for service elsewhere. Lieut.-General Sir F. J. Davies, K.C.B., who took over the command of the VIIIth Corps on 8th August, gave me a most cordial welcome, breezily announcing his intention to "sit under" me.

The General has a warm place in his heart for Scotland. His frank admiration of our beautiful capital attracted a loyal citizen at once. He knows the Border country well, and is interested in things ecclesiastical among us. I owe more to him than I can say for his friendly sympathy and support. He and the officers of his staff were regular in their attendance at service, and the discussions he raised on points of interest at the close, when time permitted, were not the least valuable feature of the morning's fellowship. I would like to record my gratitude also to Generals Gibbon and De Rougement, Colonel (now Brigadier-General) Hamilton Moore, and Colonel (now Surgeon-General) Yarr, C.B. The last-named succeeded my friend Colonel Girvin as A.D.M.S., and his friendship and kindness brightened many of the darker hours at Cape Helles.

Another regular fixture came to be a Sunday evening service, after sunset, at the 52nd Divisional Headquarters. Major-General the Hon. H. A. Lawrence and his staff gave me every assistance. I owe special thanks to Colonel Maclean, to whom, in the first instance, the arrangement was due. To his military competence and many accomplishments this officer adds the distinction of being the champion amateur piper of Scotland. We had usually a large company of men from the neighbouring units, who often came down from the firing line on Sunday mornings. They sat on the parapets of the trenches facing westward. The red glow of sunset lit up their eyes as we began the service. Half an hour later it was too dark to read; so our closing praise was usually the Doxology, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." And right heartily it was sung; for, even on the battlefield, there are perpetual reminders of the lovingkindness, the grace and mercy of the Most High.

It was my practice to have Communion service at least once every Sunday where this was at all possible. The men down from the front seemed specially to value it, and our tent was often quite full. There was a peculiar solemnity and impressiveness about these Communion services with men many of whom had narrowly escaped death, and would go forth on the morrow to face it again. The fellowship of the Holy Table yields a certain tranquillity and strength to the hearts of men who lack not courage, but to whom the long-drawn conflict brings weariness.

I was struck with the frequency with which clergymen there said to me that one great outcome of this war, and the experiences through which it is bringing us, will be a heightening of the value attached to prayer. It has led many a man to pray who was not

accustomed to pray ; for multitudes who have never been prayerless it has lent a new sincerity and earnestness and a deepened sense of reality to their communion with God. We are getting a better understanding of the things that can be shaken, and a clearer view of the things which cannot be shaken. Of course, all men will not be affected in the same way, but it will be strange if, in future, there is not a greater readiness to take counsel with God about all life's affairs.

☛ Movements of troops considerably reduced my Sunday morning congregation for a time, but a group of hearty fellows gathered on the hillside at 9.30, and got a bit of "home" to warm our hearts in common worship, and in remembrance of our friends. My afternoon service in the hospital was held in one of the tent wards. The tent was divided, with a doorway in the middle. The orderlies took a pride in making the one end as like a church as possible. The "pews" were made of piles of blankets ; the pulpit consisted of a big box, with bales of mosquito-netting and a cushion on top. Here the congregation of orderlies and "walking patients" assembled. The patients on stretchers in the other end of the tent were supplied with hymn-books, and, being well within earshot, took part in the service. A larger number were free from various units to come in the evening to the conventicle on the "brae," and the hymn-singing was always a special feature, as I left the men to say what they wished to sing.

We often had the boom of guns, the shriek and explosion of the enemy's missiles on these occasions. On Sunday night, 5th September, for the first time I was interrupted by shell fire. A large high-explosive shell from Asia burst not far from us ; the acrid smoke

coming with the wind enveloped us and made speech impossible for a moment. I asked the lads if they would like to take cover, but they preferred, as they said, to "stick it," so they sat tight until the service was finished. Then we found that one of our orderlies had been killed and one wounded by the shell. Sheriffs, who was killed, was an Aberdeen lad, a fine fellow who was sadly missed by his comrades. He was sitting with one or two others outside the dugout, at dinner, preparing to go on duty for the night. One of them said that the shells were growing dangerous, and suggested that they should take cover. Sheriffs replied, "It's of no use; if you are to be killed by a shell, you cannot escape." Just at that moment the shell burst and a huge fragment killed him on the spot. The fellow sitting next him was only scratched by the gravel thrown up by the explosion.

After six services of various kinds on the beach, I walked out in the dark to the rest camp. The 4th Royal Scots had come down from the firing line, and a service had been arranged for them and others just behind Divisional Headquarters. Not fearing unpleasant attentions from the Turk, the officers brought lanterns and electric torches, which enabled me to see the faces of the men in the front rank as they reclined on the ground in a semicircle. There is a certain weird impressiveness in a service conducted under these conditions, the sense of which does not wear off. In the darkness, perhaps, the distractions are fewer, and men find it easier to concentrate upon the business of the hour. And one's heart warms to the lads, wearied with the long vigils and toils in the firing line without a thought of flinching; lads who have thrust their own bodies between us and our foes, taking all risks that we may remain free and secure. Colonel Young



spoke a few words to the battalion. It was the first chance he had had of speaking to them since he arrived in the Peninsula. You cannot get men together for an address in the trenches. For those present, all of whom understood the circumstances in which he came out to take command of the battalion, the sentences he spoke were peculiarly touching and could not fail to strengthen the bonds of loyalty and affection that bound the men to their Colonel.

Of my walk back to the beach three vivid impressions remain: First, the difficulty of avoiding shell holes, due to the industry of the Turkish gunners, which occurred in the most unexpected places. Second, the multitudinous lights piercing the darkness in a broad belt across the Peninsula, marking the rearmost lines of our own people and the French. These lights, of course, shone only in one direction, and were carefully concealed from the enemy. Third, the Turkish search-lights blazing behind the hill. There were two of them, one apparently looking over the shoulder of the other. The more distant one, from some position far up the Straits, maintained a steady glow over the crest of Achi Baba; the other played swiftly to and fro over the whole of what might be called on that side the danger area for the Turks.

In the midst of work on the 16th, two telegrams came in asking me to take burial services a few miles inland, for lads who had just been killed in the firing line. After a pretty quick march of over an hour and a half, I found the place of graves, behind our own firing line, and not far from the Turkish trenches. There were three lads to be laid to rest, and six of their comrades from their respective battalions were present. Three men who had been up with supplies came past on an Indian transport cart. They stopped

and came to the service. The graves are in a little flat stretch of ground just over the lip of Krithia Nullah. We were well in front of our own big guns, the missiles from which went screaming over our heads, while the enemy's rifle bullets struck, with little sharp reports, on the rocks and hard earth around us. The lads had grown used to these things, and seemed to stand by the graves with as great composure as if they had been in the Grange Cemetery.

I secured a seat with the lads on the transport cart, drawn by two tight little Indian mules, who seemed to know by instinct the will of the dusky Jehu beside me. It was a roughish drive in a cart without springs, over roads that are no roads; but it afforded an interesting variety in experience. The Indian Transport is a marvellously efficient department of the Service. We owe very much, I am sure, to the placid industry of our fellow-subjects from our great Eastern Empire.

The changing of the wind from day to day no doubt marked the swing of the year. Two days strong east winds blew, working round to the south. Our little roadstead was protected only from the north and north-west winds that had hitherto prevailed, so the ships were exposed to the full blast. Sailing vessels of all sizes, and lighters, old and new, dragged their anchors and made for the boulder-strewn beach. It was an exciting scene for a while. A tug came to the rescue of a big ship. After a struggle, she fouled the anchor chain with her propeller, and tossed helplessly under the ship's bows, in danger of a collision that might prove fatal to both. The screams of her horn for help were almost human in their appeal. A little steam pinnace finally raced out and pulled tug and ship to safety.

Some men of a unit in the Big Gully were anxious for a service. I walked out one afternoon with a young friend, Dr. Campbell from Edinburgh, and found them in their shelters and dugouts among the cliffs in a gorge that breaks down upon the gully. The men drew up on a slope hard by the levelled space where the horses were tethered. The quartermaster raised the tunes, and they sang vigorously, undisturbed by the neighing of the animals or the uproar of artillery : the cliffs giving back impartially the sounds of worship and of war. A *Taube* swam snoringly over us before our half-hour's service was done. Possibly she thought us too insignificant to justify a bomb ; but she may have given the Turkish gunners a hint. At least the shower of bullets and shrapnel grew heavier when she had passed.

A bombing school in the vicinity was responsible for much of the racket. The boys must be trained to throw live bombs, so that they may have confidence in the trenches.

A bit of unrehearsed comedy farther down the valley enlivened proceedings. It was a very densely populated area, and the water belonging to each formation was jealously guarded. A lad had penetrated the defences of a neighbouring unit, and broached its water-cart. Then an irate watchman came upon him, and the lad, his can, and contents made a confused retreat in quick time across the dry bed of the ravine, to the accompaniment of language that surely made water more necessary than ever !

On 27th August, hearing that the 4th Royal Scots had come back from the firing line and were lying in what were called the Eski lines, something less than a mile from the Turkish trenches, I set out to visit them. Noon was not long past and my shadow was

still under my feet, when I moved over the sunlit hollow that lay between us and Achi Baba. In the distance the floor of the valley looks quite plain, but you have not gone far until you find yourself in the midst of a network of trenches and dugouts that stretches right across the Peninsula. There are also deep shelters for animals and stores, to protect them from flying fragments of shell and shrapnel. Here and there over the maze wave Red Cross flags, marking the points where the wounded may find succour. The land in the south-west, towards Cape Helles, has been stripped bare of wood; but farther inland there are still groups and belts of trees, with stretches of arable land, in other years the home of wheat and barley, tomato, cucumber and melon, now all trampled to dust. An occasional vineyard that has escaped the devastation makes a splash of green on the brown earth. Out in the open I came upon a patch of pavement, with a deep well, which clearly marked the site of a farm steading, but of the buildings not a trace remained. Then we reach rougher country, rising into little hills, with clumps of fig and olive trees. Here it is dangerous to walk at large. There are numerous cunningly hidden batteries in the wooded flanks of these hills, and it would be easy to stumble into their line of fire. We therefore take to the bed of one of the nullahs that carry the streams from Achi Baba down to the Hellespont—the blue waters of which we see now and then, where they wash the feet of their guardian crags.

Thickets of brushwood and bramble cling to the banks of the nullah. In the sides, at intervals, are dug the little caves which form the cooking, sleeping, and living rooms of the men posted here, protecting them from anything but a direct hit from a shell.

The brook that meanders through the reeds in the bottom furnishes water for the horses, but cannot be used with safety for anything but washing by the soldiers. Drinking and cooking water has to be brought at some risk from the springs, of which, fortunately, there are a few in the neighbourhood. Once in the nullah, or little gully, you cannot see over the edges, and there is safety in keeping your head down. The men greet you from their shelters as you pass, all hungry for news. A little sap on one hand leads you to a gun emplacement, the "marrow" of many around, where a French "75" has just been put in position. Marvellous guns these French 75's are, for quickness of fire and accuracy of aim. The gunner is proud of his "pet" and chats pleasantly about its powers. At a range of 3000 or 4000 metres its fire is absolutely deadly.

When I reached the lines held by the 4th Royal Scots, among the first to greet me were the two sons of my townsman, Sir John Cowan, both full of life and energy and good cheer. Two things put the fellows in a good mood to welcome the padre—they had just had tea, and the mail had arrived bringing letters and papers from home. I don't suppose any of them ever realised how good a cup of tea could be till they had it in these trenches; and certainly a line or two from home have a value and power of which they never could have dreamed. I found the lads in all sorts of attitudes—reading, writing, chatting, smoking the ubiquitous cigarette, or joining in the strains of a rollicking song. Their uniforms are the worse for the wear. They are tanned brown with the sun. Tired too they are, and with good reason, for their service has been hard and continuous. But through it all they carry the undaunted heart and the manful spirit of

resolute good cheer. A word or two here, question and answer there, a handshake and good wishes in passing, were practically all that time allowed, for darkness comes suddenly in these latitudes, and I must get back through the labyrinth before sunset.

Some of the younger men came with me to point out the shortest way home. I struck a big sap and set off towards the setting sun. It would be very easy to get wandered amid the perplexing cross trenches. These the soldiers have named after well-known thoroughfares at home. Clapham Junction and Piccadilly are conspicuous illustrations. I was feeling something like a stranger in a strange land, when suddenly I felt a curious mingling of the familiar with the unusual as I came upon the lower end of Leith Walk!

The Colonel of a certain battalion one day pointed out to me a tall, fine-looking young fellow, a "full private" in the ranks. He is a "scholar and a gentleman." He had his "Blue," took a distinguished "first" in Classics at Oxford, and forthwith enlisted at his country's call. He was coveted by Headquarters for some work connected with the Staff, but preferred to "stick to his guns." When I saw him he was swinging a pick to good purpose deepening a trench. This led me to think of the strange mingling of classes, whose lives are usually very far apart, which has been brought about by this war. Men from the pulpit, the college, the Bar, and the Exchange rub shoulders with those from the shop and the warehouse, clerks, railwaymen, policemen, and ne'er-do-wells from the streets. These men face together the common dangers, perform the ordinary tasks, endure without "grousing" the inevitable hardships of trench warfare, in a spirit of extraordinary good-fellowship. The old dividing lines

are forgotten. Manhood responds to the appeal of manhood, whether its speech be that of Parliament Square or of the Cowgate. It is not surprising if friendships are formed that in other days would have been thought incongruous and impossible. Some prejudices at least have been shattered and some eyes opened. For those who have passed through this experience, life can never slip back into the old grooves again. Even from the title "ne'er-do-weel" the "ne'er" must be expunged. Possibly when he finds himself once more in his familiar haunts, the qualities that marked him in former days may reappear, but he has put it beyond all doubt that there are conditions in which he can "do" as "well" as his so-called "betters."

## CHAPTER XIII

### IN THE FIRING LINE

A GLORIOUS Indian summer we had in October 1915. It is impossible to convey an adequate impression of the sweetness of the mornings, as the flush of dawn over the sea faded in the growing light, and the dew-clouds, hiding the islands all save the higher peaks, like vast banks of whitest wool, vanished at the touch of the sun. The days were bright, and the skies unclouded. The heat was tempered by cool breezes, now from the south and again from the east. It looked like compensation for all we had endured in months past.

Three enormous flocks of geese passed high over us one evening, with their peculiar cries, each in the familiar "V" formation. They headed away to the south-east over old Troy, in search of warmer climes and more congenial waters. A few days before we had watched with interest similar strings of flamingoes. These last recalled old memories. Their ancestors were accustomed to pay us annual visits in Palestine. Very picturesque they were as they came down, with their red legs and snowy wings, for long rests on the blue waters of the Sea of Galilee.

One was tempted to defy the Turks and take the chances of the open country. One day I rode round the cliffs to visit the Field Bakery. The tents and ovens lay on the farther side of a little gully running



down westward to the shore. A great stack of excellent loaves stood at the top, ready for the supply carts. Multitudinous lumps of white dough lay side by side in the baking-pans ready for the ovens. These were heated entirely with wood brought partly from Egypt, and partly from the Ægean islands. A brigade of wood-choppers were kept busy all day, many tons being consumed in baking the 26,000 bread rations supplied daily by that single bakery. Only by slow degrees does the layman come to realise what the feeding of an army means.

One Monday afternoon I set out, accompanied on horseback by an orderly. We crossed the old battlefield, passed through the rest camp,—in which, by the way, there was very little *rest*,—and rode on to a position which saw some stern fighting in the early days of the campaign. Here, in a little cemetery, under the shadow of a bushy olive, sleeps the son of my fellow-townsmen, Sir Robert Maule. The graves are neatly kept, and are evidently tended with loving care. We turned down into the neighbouring nullah, for protection from flying fragments of shot and shell, and rode along to the point known as “Clapham Junction.” There I left my escort with the horses and proceeded on foot, past the place of graves where I had buried three men the week before, till, nearing the head of the nullah, further progress was barred by barbed-wire entanglement. Passing the armed guard, I entered a big sap, which with many twistings and windings led me at last to the Headquarters of the 4th Royal Scots. Here, the Colonel being on the rounds with a general officer, I was most hospitably entertained by the doctor. I wonder if tea ever tastes quite as good as after a long hot tramp in the bottom of a narrow, corkscrew trench, to the music of big

guns ! Under the doctor's guidance I visited the lads along the sector of the firing line which they held against the Turks. What a labyrinth the trenches form as you approach the front. Without the little direction boards and cards at the ends of the various saps and trenches, wandering, for the novice, would be certain, and even with them all he is the better for an expert guide. I found the lads occupying their respective parts of the line, some keeping a sharp look-out from the points of observation—using the periscope with discretion ; some attending to the periscope rifle, with which a man can take good aim and fire, while keeping well under cover ; some were ready at steel-plated loopholes, to exact penalty of unwary foes ; some stood by the machine guns, prepared on a moment's notice to let loose a storm of lead upon any point of danger. Others were absorbed in the homely, but not less necessary, duty of making tea. The fellows bore evident traces of weather and work—brown faces, hands, arms, and knees ; attire not just suitable for Princes Street, in either quantity or quality. The close life of the trenches, and the long strain of constant vigilance, especially after the fierce experiences of action many have come through, have to some extent affected the physique of the men. But you may walk from one end of the lines to the other and never see a gloomy face or hear a grumbling word. They will tell you that they did not come here for a picnic, and that they are no worse off than their neighbours. I found a spirit of genial good-fellowship prevailing among them ; and came away with the deepened conviction that our lads are splendid.

There were grizzly sights also to be seen by means of the periscope. From one point I saw many bodies

that had lain unburied for long, on a slope between the opposing trenches. The ground was perpetually swept by rifle and machine-gun fire; to approach the bodies would mean certain death. While I was there a shell from one of our own batteries exploded prematurely. Fortunately it had just passed over our trench when it burst. It played terrible havoc with the parapet, but did no further injury. It would be what Tommy calls "rotten luck" to be knocked out by one of our own guns!

My time was short, as I had far to go, and must get home in reasonable time. I had to promise to go back on Wednesday and stay overnight as the guest of the Colonel and the doctor. The sun had set before I reached the horses in the nullah; and although we made good speed, darkness swallowed us up when not more than half-way home. We were moving quietly through the lines of the Naval Division, near the middle of the big hollow, when at a given signal a terrific burst of cheering rose right across the Peninsula. Whistles were blown, and in defect of drums tin cans were beaten. All the Allied batteries fired a salvo of twenty-one rounds. You can imagine the uproar tearing to shreds the tranquil air. As the clangour rolled away over the trenches we had just left towards the Turkish positions under Achi Baba, the shrilling of the bagpipes and the clang of the French bugles seemed to split a way for themselves through the din, while high overhead the northern sky was aflame with coloured flares. By way of explaining this demonstration to the Turk, and cheering him up, messages were thrown into his lines announcing the great victories of the Allies in France.

When I returned to the firing line on Wednesday afternoon, there was time for a more leisurely talk

with the lads. The Brigadier took tea with us in the Colonel's dugout, and then I spent an hour in the lines under the Colonel's guidance, being initiated into the mysteries of bombs of various kinds, machine guns,—which fire from 450 to 600 shots a minute,—saps and mines, sally-ports, etc. Once, looking over the parapet with a periscope, I saw the earth being thrown up by the Turks on the side of a communication trench, but the workers kept well out of sight.

One was conscious of a certain eeriness as darkness swiftly fell over these gashed and torn uplands, where thousands of human beings were concealed, not many yards apart, eagerly watching for a chance to kill each other. If nerves grow a little jumpy at times under these conditions it is not surprising. A sudden burst of rifle fire from parts of our line, with rattle of machine guns, was vigorously replied to by the Turks, and for the moment seemed to promise some excitement; but it died down as quickly as it had arisen, and the reason for it remains obscure. Probably the "jumpiness" referred to may account for it.

There is no "quiet of night" in the firing line. The crack of rifles and the "phit" of bullets in the trench parapets go on all the time. Sometimes the leaden messengers sing overhead, and without impact there is a strange sharp explosion, which no one can explain. Sounds carry more easily in the night air, and a curious medley it was that greeted the ear as the waning moon rose over the scene.

We had just retired to rest in the little dugout, a stretcher having been thoughtfully provided for me, when an orderly arrived to say that a serious accident had happened. The Colonel, who is in telephonic communication with every part of his sector, learned that, owing to the premature bursting of a bomb, all

four members of a bombing party had been seriously injured. One man was able to walk with the help of two comrades, and was very brave about it, as he moved off down the sap towards the dressing station. Two were very badly mangled and quite unconscious. They were sent right on to the clearing station, but one of them passed away before reaching it. The kindness and solicitous tenderness of the lads towards their wounded comrades were most touching, and did much to illumine a very dark picture. I can never forget the time spent with the Colonel at a junction of the trenches, waiting for the lads to pass: the shuffle of the carriers' feet and their hushed voices as they guided their precious burdens round the angles and curves of the narrow sap; a brief pause while we saw that all was in order; then forward again in the dim moonlight, leaving us alone in the night, with a depressing sense of helplessness. It was after midnight when, with sad hearts, we returned to rest.

In the morning before breakfast, I walked round the lines to the bombing station to see the fourth lad who had been injured, in the hope that I might be able to do something for him. I found, however, that his comrades had succeeded in getting him also down from the firing line. At this point the Turkish trenches come pretty close to ours, and, with the periscope, I could see them very distinctly. I had looked only for a moment or two when a bullet smashed right through the periscope, a couple of splinters striking the hand in which I held it. The shot was a very fine one. "John Turk" is certainly to be congratulated on his marksmanship. The splinters made only superficial scratches on my hand, enabling me to "swank" as a wounded man when I got back to the beach!

I have spoken already of our sunsets, but I cannot refrain from noting again how they excelled in beauty, splendour, and awesomeness. It is not hard to see where Ezekiel got his imagery of the "great cloud with a fire enfolding itself, and a brightness round about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire." One evening a great bank of dark sepia lies along the horizon, glowing upward into a dull rose, passing to light orange under the edge of a broken pyramid of dark irregular clouds, the apex of which almost touches the meridian. The clouds cast a broad band of purple shadow on the quiet steel-grey sea, stretching from the horizon to our cape, over which the ships move in clean, black silhouette. Again, the "sun lies bleeding" on what seem cliffs of burnished copper, and all the west is soon aflame with the glory of red and gold. Once more, great crimson streamers rise athwart the sky, touching as with fire the black and slate-coloured clouds that fleck the dome; while in the lower realms of air, rose, pink, orange, saffron, blue and gold are marvellously mingled. In the clear transparency against this wonderful background lie near us the white hospital ships, with their lights of green and red; and away in the distance, the black cone of Mount Athos, seen only at even. This night also we catch a glimpse of the lower heights of Lemnos; and looking north-eastward past Imbros and lofty Samothrace, we see the coast of Bulgaria for the first time.

But it is not always thus. One evening, after a dull grey sunset, a sudden squall broke upon us from the south-west. Fortunately we had just finished dinner, as all the loose earth about was hurled into our dugout and over the table, our lights being extinguished. Then through the darkness came torrential rain,

accompanying a thunderstorm. The black night was cleft by gleaming flashes that lit up all the sea. As the wind and rain increased in violence, and the sea rose, the boats lying at anchor were soon in distress, the anchors dragging on the sandy bottom; and we heard the cries of the seamen vainly trying to save them. There was no great danger to life, but the boats were doomed. The morning was clear and beautiful, but the beach was a sorrowful sight: boats, barges, and lighters strewed the shore with wreckage, and just in front of our tent a two-masted ship lay pathetically on its side, in about a fathom of water.

Services varied greatly in the matter of attendance. An hour had, of course, to be fixed for every service, but no man could tell where duty might call when the hour arrived. I had at one of my services a congregation of *five*, all told. If it was small, perhaps we might describe it as select. It consisted of one Lieutenant-General, two Major-Generals, one Major, and one Captain. The men who would have swelled our numbers were away absorbed in work caused by the storm described above.

One Sunday evening I had a large company, in a trench behind the Lowland Divisional Headquarters. It was a clear, quiet evening, and our service was quite undisturbed until the very end. Then a gigantic flame shot up from the high ground west of Krithia, its lurid glare touching even the brows of Achi Baba. It blazed fiercely for almost two minutes, then a rocket sped far into the sky, and at the signal, just as we finished "God save the King," the whole air trembled with the roar of artillery. It was an ingenious ruse to deceive the Turks. Many tins of petroleum and petrol had been collected, and a great

pile of combustible material thoroughly soaked with these inflammables. At 7.10 p.m. precisely a light was applied to the pile. It appeared as if a magazine of ours had been blown up, and the hope was that the Turks would, out of curiosity and joy, look over their trenches to see the blaze. Then, at the signal of the rocket, every gun on the Peninsula let loose its thunder on the Turkish trenches. Thereafter our men were to encourage the enemy with ironical cheers! The thing seemed to go through all right, as far as our part was concerned, but whether "John Turk" played up to it or not is another question. Clearly, he did not like it, as he treated our trenches at once to a perfect storm of rifle fire, all along the line. Probably he expected an attack after the artillery demonstration.

The music of a brass band floated across the Peninsula as I rode home. Some of the more recently arrived troops had brought with them means to enliven the longer evenings. It was most inspiring as the strains rose clear and strong on the night air. Even my horse pricked up his ears and went forward at a merrier pace.

Hardly had the cloud of night fallen darkly over us on the 28th of October than we became aware that a ship bound hither had been sunk a few miles away. We saw the flash-light signals, and the red glare of the danger lamps, with tokens of much excitement amongst the shipping which swiftly gathered on the scene of the disaster. Fortunately the wind dropped in the afternoon and the sea was almost calm. The gloom was momentarily split by the red flash of a gun, and we supposed that an enemy submarine had been seen and fired on. With one or two others I waited on the beach till after midnight, hoping to be of use should any survivors be brought in.



About midnight, when the weird situation and the anxiety and uncertainty of the moment had evidently impressed his mind, a sailor lad remarked to me, "We can never be sure of the next moment," thus quite simply introducing a serious and interesting conversation about eternal things. The remark holds true always and everywhere on earth, but just then there was much to make us realise life's insecurity. I had left a little before some who were very close to the borderland; away out there in the quiet night we could not but fear that friends and comrades had gone down in the cold depths; the thunder of distant artillery suggested the bombardment of the Bulgarian coast; while over us once and again shrieked a Turkish shell, plunging with a vicious splutter in the sea beyond. It never should be unnatural to think and speak of the great things that concern life, death, and immortality; but under these conditions it is almost inevitable. What is the outcome to be in the days before us? Many a man has said to me in effect, "It would be strange if, after this experience, we were not better men."

We were told, on what seemed good authority, that there were no survivors. No authority in the world, however, but only the certainty of black truth can prevent a man from hoping; so we went home, resolutely expecting better tidings with the morning. Nor were we disappointed.

The accident apparently was due to the necessity for sailing without lights in the dark. It turned out that one of our medical officers and several members of our staff were on board the ship that was sunk. Fortunately, all of them were saved. It was quite dark when the collision occurred. At first many thought they had been torpedoed. When the truth

dawned, there was a rush to get on board the other ship, which did not seem much damaged by the collision, and many were able to reach it, with some of their belongings, before the two vessels drifted apart. The medical officer took no part in the scramble, but quietly undressed on the dark deck. When the list of the ship became so decided that she was obviously sinking, he slipped into the water and swam towards the other vessel. After about twenty minutes he was picked up by a boat, and taken on board. The sailors, with their usual bluff kindness, contributed articles of attire, incongruous enough no doubt, but very welcome, had him warmed and fed, and soon he was quite himself again. The survivors were taken on by the ship to her destination, and it was not till two days later that our friend turned up to tell us of his experiences.

On 16th October, Sir Ian Hamilton relinquished his command and left for London to report on the situation in person, the command being taken over by Sir C. C. Monro. Sir Ian's farewell message to the army was bravely phrased, but there was evidently a sore heart behind it. I spoke with many on the subject. The question of evacuation was now engaging the mind of the authorities; but until the final decision should be taken, all the positions in our hands were held with the old courage and tenacity. Of what this cost there were many things to remind us.

One day a young Edinburgh boy was brought in seriously hurt. His wound was of the kind not much to look at, but which suggests internal trouble. He was brought a long way, and was sadly weak from loss of blood. My heart yearned over the lad, he was so patient and quiet while the doctors toiled to save him. By and by, when he was able, bit by bit he told me his story about his home, his brothers at the war, and

his own enterprise when little over eighteen years of age. He was attached to a field ambulance, and had been doing yeoman service in helping to rescue the wounded and get them to places of safety. On Saturday morning, at a dressing station far behind our firing line, where one would not anticipate danger, he was tidying up outside in view of officer's inspection, when he was hit by a rifle bullet. It may have been the work of a sniper. We had a little friendly talk about the greatest things, and prayer together, which gave him great comfort. Then he went to sleep. Next morning, the Sabbath, found him very low; and in spite of unremitting attention and tender care, he passed away soon after midday. On Monday we laid him to rest in the little cemetery where so many of his brave comrades are buried.

Then I heard of the death of a patient, also from Edinburgh, who had been with us suffering from varicose veins. A shell wounded him in hospital, breaking a leg and an arm. He looked up at me smilingly and said, "Maybe I'll get home to Edinburgh now." It was another city he was bound for.

## CHAPTER XIV

### BLIZZARDS

ADVANCING autumn brought changeful weather. Sometimes a huge sea, driven by the south wind, would tumble in tawny billows at the foot of the cliffs ; the rain pelting on the taut canvas of the tent ; the sun shining through the storm with a pale lustre, touching the drops of rain on the tent ropes to points of silver. Withal, the days were warm ; under shelter, almost oppressive.

The threat of coming rain led to much industry in digging drains and trenches round tent, hut, and dug-out, to carry away surface water ; while tarpaulin and waterproof were greatly in request for roofs. These were kept in position with stones and sandbags. We did not go there in search of luxury, and certainly it was not thrust upon us. But in wet, cold nights it was the fellows in the trenches who had the worst of it. In dry weather life was just tolerable ; but when blanket and greatcoat were soaked with chilly rain, when mud grew deeper, and boots and putties became of one piece, encasing feet and legs like plaster of Paris casts, and anything in the way of a fire was out of the question—then, the most willing imagination could hardly do justice to the situation. Nothing but downright grit carried our men through such experiences.

Up-country, very elaborate preparation was made for

the rough weather in prospect. An extraordinary transformation of the whole face of the country was the result. Thousands of men were busy with pickaxe and spade. Enormous trenches, with parapets piled high and recesses in the sides, were dug for the troops, and huge shelters for the animals. Dugouts were extended and deepened, roofed over with waterproof material, and protected by drains from rain-flooding. A curious underground life men are compelled to lead in a country where there are no houses—where a house would only serve as a target to draw the enemy's artillery fire. For all that, they were cheerful companies who gathered in these subterranean quarters, especially in the larger "cavities," where officers of exalted rank no less than humble subalterns sat down to their frugal meals at a plain deal board. It is a great tribute to the efficiency of the Army Service Corps to say that there was no pinching of actual necessities, when one considers the conditions under which supplies had to be transported, landed, and distributed. Of course there were no luxuries, but a wise use of what was provided produced a certain amount of comfort. And, after all, comfort is a comparative term!

While much has been written with perfect truth about the cheerfulness of our soldiers under very trying conditions, no one would believe us if we said that there were no grumblers. There are some men so built that, no matter where they are, they will find something to complain of. The type had its representatives there, as everywhere else. The padre had to listen to their tales of woe with what patience he could muster, and finally get credit for lack of sympathy because he declined to interfere with other officers' duty, and secure special treatment for men who did not

deserve it. Then we had the "soft" lad—who was not always just a lad—who had been carried into the service by some wave of patriotic emotion. He had come to know that this life of hardship and trial was not for him. He had never been well since he realised what it meant. There was no specific disease about him; he was just done up. His only chance of recovery was to get away home for a while. Could the padre not suggest some means for transporting him thither? These types were not very numerous, but they cannot be quite ignored.

Many of the sufferers are naturally very sorry for themselves. This is true more of the sick than of the wounded. Most men take their ill fortune philosophically; while some are plainly elated when a "gentlemanly wound" enables them to leave the arena of strife without discredit!

A trawler plied daily between Suvla and Anzac, Imbros, Cape Helles, and Tenedos. To the latter island I paid a visit with one of our officers, Captain Jackson, to purchase provisions for the mess. We stayed over-night, finding shelter with the British Consul. The picturesque little town of white-walled, red-tile-roofed houses is huddled together on the lower slopes running down to the bay which forms the harbour, on the north side of the island. The entrance is guarded on the right by an old fortress, now a French hospital; and on the left by a jutting promontory, which is artificially extended to form a breakwater. The hill rises steeply on the west to a height crowned by a hoary ruin; then sinks westward, rising again to the highest peak in the island, Mount Elias, 625 feet high. From the bay the land rises gently to the south, and, on the east, swells up into a fairly high bluff, with a string of windmills. The

island is about six miles long from N.W. to S.E., and about three miles across at the broadest part. There are some 4200 inhabitants, a third of whom are Moslems. The main products are corn, cotton, oil, and wine. This last is held in high estimation.

The harbour was crowded with shipping—small Greek sailing vessels, which, according to naval experts, have changed little in shape, size, or character for many thousands of years. The venders of provisions, greengroceries, etc., have their stance near the harbour. A few, more pretentious, have "shops," planted down anyhow, displaying most of their goods in the open air. The Consul's brother, with his knowledge of the language and local conditions, assisted us not a little in our marketing. This was done in the leisurely fashion which, here as elsewhere in the Orient, is essential to the making of reasonable bargains.

Long lanes run straight up the steep slope, cut at right angles by numerous small streets, overhung in many places by grape vines. We threaded our way upward till we issued on the open moor; then we climbed to the crest of the ridge. The evening was calm and clear, only westward and in the south hung a soft blue haze. Very distinctly we saw Cape Helles and the frowning height of Achi Baba behind. Everything was so peaceful that, but for what we knew, war might have been a thousand years away. Across the Dardanelles, guarded by yellow cliffs, the eye wandered to the Asian Olympus, with old Brusa at its foot; and southward over the heights of Ida, whence the gods looked down upon the gigantic struggle immortalised in the Iliad. Just over against us lay old Troy with her storied plains: all seen with gem-like clearness in the transparent atmosphere of evening.

Among our sick and wounded I often found pure-

blooded Jews. The personnel of the Zion Mule Corps was entirely Jewish, recruited in Egypt, mainly among refugees from Palestine. Men who had known the benefit of British protection against the exactions and oppressions of the Turk in their Eastern homes felt, when the day of decision came, that they could not do other than identify themselves with their benefactors. Strange it was when one asked a man where he came from, to have him claim the Holy City as his native place; and with the Jerusalem lads Arabic was the easiest language for conversation. Very earnest these sons of Jacob were in support of the great enterprise; and excellent service they rendered. On the other hand, we had Scottish and English Jews, rankers and officers in various regiments, not less loyal and patriotic than men of pure British blood. I had a lad from Glasgow for some days. He fought a plucky battle for his life. He suffered gladly for the only home and fatherland he knew. He was of the stamp of the little Jewish boy in his own city who asserted that "*We thrashed the English at Bannockburn!*" He had served himself heir to the traditions of our people, and spoke no language but English. When the war is over, the devotion and self-sacrifice of these men will surely be remembered to them for righteousness, leading, perhaps, to more kindly interest and consideration.

On the 12th of November Lord Kitchener visited Cape Helles in the course of his inspection of the Gallipoli positions. No doubt he saw as much in his brief walk as most other men would see in a month. A son of the Emerald Isle, however, did not seem to think so. "Och, aye," he said, "he wad look at Achi Baba loike the rist o' thim, an' think it was aisy!"



On the 15th of November, after a bombardment that recalled the features of the earlier times, our fellows charged and took possession of certain trenches. It was done at little cost to us, as, no doubt, the Turks had suffered heavily, and were demoralised by the artillery. By the following morning they had recovered sufficiently to make three counter-attacks, in one of which they succeeded in entering a trench that had been taken from them. Their triumph, however, was short-lived. The Lanarkshire Yeomanry dug them out with the bayonet, and sent them flying once more.

During the bombardment a strong south wind began to blow. The serious feature of a storm from the south was that it cut us quite off from communication with the outer world. When it is remembered that the Peninsula furnished nothing but rather doubtful water, that every ounce of food, munitions, and supplies had to be brought overseas and landed on the shore, it will be seen how perilous the position of the army would have been had boisterous weather continued for any length of time.

The wind gathered strength as the days passed. It was soon blowing a hurricane. The crested billows broke with damaging effect on our breakwaters and piers, and threatened destruction to the shipping in the harbour. Men were kept busy strengthening the stakes of our tents, and others were toiling at the dugouts in which we hoped to find refuge when the storms set in for good. Our faces tingled with the whirling sand. In the evening I rode out to 52nd Divisional Headquarters and conducted a service after sunset. I had just got back and safely into our mess dugout when rain began to fall, and a thunder-storm of wonderful grandeur and magnificence broke over the sea and the islands.

The climax came on Wednesday. There had been a slight lull during the night. The dawn lit up a sky of mottled clouds, tinged with pink, edged with crimson and gold, gradually fading to grey, and a sea which still roared angrily around the shore. The wind increased in power with the rising day, and by noon a very high sea was running. The waves dashed impetuously over the hulks which formed the break-water, the piers showed signs of strain, the barges and other craft that could not make for the open sea were in evident danger of being driven ashore. Later in the afternoon the sea rolled shoreward in tremendous, foaming billows that plunged in white cataracts over the hulks, sending jets and spray more than mast high. One of the hulks which had been cracked by the storm on Monday parted amidships and settled slightly at bow and stern. The timbers of the piers gave way, under the impact of the mighty waves; the structures crumpled up, and were hurled in wreckage on the beach. A stone jetty built by our enterprising Allies, the French, was dashed to ruins. Lighters, picket boats, etc., were torn from their anchorage and piled in chaos on the sand. An old barge that sank a few weeks before in some depth of water was lifted and thrown with disastrous effect upon the derelicts on the shore. An Italian schooner which grounded a little way out in the last considerable storm was now finally broken up, and swept in fragments to the foot of the cliff. A lighter on which a Sweeper had off-loaded a number of boxes and parcels was lashed to the lee of one of the hulks. Late in the afternoon she worked herself free, and in three minutes was ashore. Fortunately her timbers held, and although her deck was awash, most of her cargo was salvaged the following morning. The sun set over a scene of

turmoil and fury. The darkness lent an element of dread to the voices of the tempest, and the crash of tumbling waters on the wreck-strewn beach.

Then I had to ride up country for a burial service. The wind had dealt hardly with the telegraphs, and sagging wires added a new danger in the gloom. One hanging over our path, caught and threw me flat on my horse's back, and I had reason to be thankful that I had escaped decapitation. The animal almost seemed to *sense* peril, and answered at once to the touch of the bit. Arrived at the cemetery, I found Mr. Semple and a large company waiting. The graves being dug, the bodies were reverently lowered to their resting-places. The wind howled mournfully over the trench-torn hollow and great drops of rain plashed in our faces as the dim figures closed in round the open graves. I took the service for three men of the Ayrshire Yeomanry, and Mr. Semple took that for three men of the Lanarkshire Yeomanry, who had fallen in the recent fighting. Then from the bugles rang out the appealing music of "The Last Post."

The night drew on with heavy rain, and loud rolling thunder. The lightning was beyond description splendid. The night was very dark, the light of the moon being quite obscured. The sea was roaring like a vast monster under the lash of the tempest. Then a mighty sheet of flame would flash across the heavens, torn by gleaming, twisted, and broken lines, and for a moment the wide welter and turmoil of foaming waters, with the white hospital ships riding at anchor, leaped into view. Some tents were blown down, several dugouts were unroofed, and others were flooded by the torrential rain. Father Legros and I put in the hours of slumber as best we could in a tent which the fierce wind had pretty well filled with damp and mud.

The storm abated with the dawn. The eager men collecting the wreckage on the beach seemed to be rejoicing in the largess of the storm—the gift of fire-wood. “It’s an ill wind that blows nobody good!”

On Sunday afternoon, 21st November, I was bereft of my congregation. A bombardment on a very large scale, in which the Turkish and our own artillery took part, broke out about four o’clock, and it was not in my heart to “fault” the lads who found the view from the hill at five o’clock so fascinating. The sound of the guns and of the bursting shells, borne on the evening breeze, was tremendous, and as the dusk fell the flash of exploding shells on the long slopes of Achi Baba lit up with lurid gleams the lowering sky. The rattle of musketry and the whir of the machine guns suggested that infantry were on the move. We learned afterwards that the Turks began the bombardment, preparing for an attack to recover certain lost trenches. No sooner, however, were they over the parapet than showers of shrapnel and streams of lead from admirably placed machine guns made them rue their folly, and they—what were left of them—scuttled for their trenches. Abortive attempts were apparently made to rouse them to another effort, and fixed bayonets could be seen gleaming over their parapets; but they were not having any more that day.

Among those in the thick of the battle were some of our Edinburgh boys. One of them came to me a few days later and showed me the Testament which I had given him when the battalion was at Preston Street School. He had carried it in his pocket constantly. A Turkish bullet had ploughed its way right through the book, but did not quite reach his side. He showed me the bullet, and where it had lodged

harmlessly inside his belt. He felt, he said, as if he had been struck by a sledge-hammer ; he was, however, only "winded" for the moment. There is no doubt that the Testament saved his life.

It need not be supposed that there is any charm about the New Testament, so that one may hope to escape injury when carrying it. Only once in a great while a bullet finds its way to the sacred volume and has its course arrested. A small Bible was brought to me one day through which a hole was fairly drilled by the bullet that killed its owner. On the other hand I have seen a pocket-book, a belt buckle, and a pair of binoculars, to each of which a man owed his life. I may mention, as a curiosity, that a bullet entered a lad's pocket and split itself fairly in two on the edge of a razor he happened to be carrying.

The New Testament has a value for a man quite apart from its chance of turning a bullet ; and very many have found this out for themselves. In hospital it was a common thing to see a lad on his stretcher, quite unobtrusively, but with evident appreciation, reading his New Testament. I handled a great number of these books, and found them not, as a rule, simply dog-eared from carrying in the pocket, but well thumbed, which sufficiently testified to the use made of them.

For three days my tent companion, Father Legros (who had happily returned to duty), and I were busy putting our winter residence into order and getting our belongings fixed. The bell tents, with single fly canvas, were no longer supposed to afford sufficient shelter, and in big storms were liable to be blown away. A series of large holes was therefore dug in the earth along the face of the cliff, and roofed over with tarpaulin. Our "hole" was just about 9 feet

by 11 feet in floor space, but we could stand up in it quite comfortably. The wooden floor, formerly in the tent, we transferred, with excellent effect, to the dug-out. Wood was scarce, but you would be surprised to see the uses that can be made of the sides of packing-cases. A box set on end, with shelves in it, makes a wonderful cupboard. By moving circumspectly we managed to avoid serious collisions. The first night, when everything was damp, we were pretty cold, but after that, in spite of high wind, rain, and thunder-storm, we were fairly comfortable. It is curious to reflect that if, at home, we spent a night under similar conditions, we should certainly catch our death of cold; while there it seemed to make little difference. Doubtless the six months' experience of what was practically life in the open air had some hardening and toughening effect.

On Friday, 26th November, began a blizzard which lasted till well on in Sunday, blowing rain on Saturday and snow on Sunday. We were fortunate to be in our dugout, while the high winds swept over us at night. It was desperately cold. The mud made everything comfortless; although not so trying in itself as heat with dust and flies. By Monday afternoon the wind was much less violent, and Tuesday dawned in beauty, the sun kindling his fires on the snowy peaks of Imbros and Samothrace. The next three days were most inspiriting, calm, bright, crisp; the earth like a board underfoot, and the sky unclouded above; the quiet sea, disturbed only by the long wakes of the wonderful little T.B.D.'s in their sleepless search for submarines, reflecting all the splendours of the passing day. It was good simply to be alive.

During the blizzard we had a good many patients in our wards. They wrapped themselves up in their

blankets, and, instead of sitting about as usual, they lay down close together, and succeeded in keeping each other fairly warm. They were on the whole a very cheerful crowd. Some men were not so fortunate. About seventy were sent on a trawler to a certain island where they were wanted. The sea was very stormy, and broke perpetually over the trawler's decks, drenching the poor fellows to the skin. To the miseries of cold and wet was added that of seasickness. When, after some hours, they arrived off the island, it was found impossible to land. There was nothing for it but to return, facing all the agonies of the voyage over again.

I had a message from a brother padre, asking if it were possible for me to go up and see him. I walked to the rest camp and found him in a trying plight. He was suffering from dysentery, lying in bed in his little dugout, with a sheet of waterproof flapping about 18 inches above him for a roof. There was only one thing to be done, and, by mid-afternoon, he was snugly on board the hospital ship.

The rain and sleet, with frost and snow following, wrought abundant discomfort at Cape Helles and Anzac. The Australian Corps, indeed, suffered heavily. Many of the men, accustomed from infancy to do battle with heat and dust, now saw snow for the first time. But the full weight of the blizzard fell on the IXth Corps, at Suvla, and especially upon the much-enduring 29th Division. As the rain gathered on the hills, it poured down in cataracts, turning the dugouts into swirling pools and the trenches into raging torrents. Few indeed of their possessions men could salve in the difficulty of saving themselves.

The Turks, who occupied higher ground, opened a heavy fire upon the victims of this evil fortune; and

a touch of horror was added by the obscene things brought down by the flood from the Turkish lines.

Friday evening brought sleet and frost; and our men, whose wraps had been swept away, with scanty food, or none at all, had to pass the night in wet clothes that clung to their bodies and froze as hard as boards. No wonder if a stream of men, frost-bitten, limped to the ambulances through the sleet and the hail of shrapnel. The new day brought no relief. Trenches and dugouts were full of water in which rifles and ammunition were lost. The wind grew in keenness and bitterness till Sunday, the 28th. If the Turks had cared to attack they might have had the position for the asking. But probably they also were suffering, and may have been thankful to be left unmolested. Many men died, and many more were incapacitated for service. A number lost one or both feet.



## CHAPTER XV

### LAST DAYS ON GALLIPOLI

WHEN the blizzard had spent itself, a young officer called to accompany me to the French firing line. Our object was to photograph the grave of a young Edinburgh officer who fell when our men were in that particular sector on the 12th of July. Knowing the spot, he kindly undertook to guide me. We rode to a point in Achi Baba Nullah and, leaving the animals there, we walked up the nullah to the music of the batteries. Approaching Romano Well, we saw quite a picturesque sight. The men were down from the front to draw water. It was carried in old petrol tins which were very various in hue. When the tins were filled, a long line of khaki-clad figures streamed into the nullah and along the twisting path, like the winding of an enormous snake, with unique splendour of colour. Arriving at our destination close by the Headquarters of a French battalion, we got over the parapet, and I was glad to find the grave bearing evidence of careful attention. While in the district we took the opportunity to get views of several other graves. One, on the other side of the French H.Q., was in full view of the Turkish trenches. The French officers, however, assured us that there was no danger "for a minute to take a photograph." The Major in command entertained us most hospitably. We learned that his men took a special pride in tending the graves

of the British who had fallen along this sector. I expressed to him the gratitude which I know all relatives will feel for this friendly thoughtfulness. The third grave lay on our way down the communication trench, and in searching for it we had our only experience of Turkish fire directed at ourselves. The range, however, was too long for accurate marksmanship, and we were able to take our photograph, and get back to the trench in safety.

The country at that season is about its barest. The various shades of brown and ochre of the soil are relieved only by the verdant splashes of the evergreens; and on these it was pathetic to see the branches, shattered and broken by rifle and artillery fire, drooping with withered foliage.

I was home in time to see a man from the Big Gully with his head and left leg in bandages. He was very badly hurt, but after having his wounds dressed was quite anxious to talk. He told me he had been cook to a company, and in pursuit of his calling had built a fire, and put on a tin of bully beef to boil. His conviction was that in ignorance he had placed the fire over ammunition that had been dropped and buried there. The heat of the fire exploded the ammunition, with disastrous effects to his face and leg. Others tell me that the bully beef, boiled in a sealed can, is quite capable of mischief of this sort without the assistance of cartridges!

The local name for bombardment was *strafe*. Has the word come as a permanent addition to the language, I wonder? It is one of widely varied significance as used on the Peninsula. You *strafe* the flies when you destroy them, the bread when you slice it, the firewood when you saw and chop it. You *strafe* the earth when you dig it for a dugout; you *strafe* a

piece when you take it at chess ; and so on, until finally you strafe the candle when you put the light out at night !

Before the worst Turkish strafing in December began, I walked with Colonel Boswell of the Ayrshire Yeomanry to the firing line, and visited the sector held by his men. We followed the path along the bed of Krithia Nullah, with dugouts at intervals on either side. The withered bramble bushes along the banks make a prickly network among the rough grass. We followed the windings of a long communication trench, which led us finally into the firing line. Side " streets," bearing such names as Argyll Street and St. Vincent Street, betokened the presence of men from the West Country. A fine, strapping set of fellows the yeomanry are, reared, as most of them have been, in the wholesome air and employments of the country. They appeared to be in excellent health and spirits. There was not a man of them but brightened up at the coming of the Colonel, who had a word of greeting and good cheer for each of them by name as he passed. His own breezy, genial humanity had much to do with the cheerfulness prevailing throughout the ranks. At the junction of several trenches the Colonel hails a smiling-faced youngster. — Colonel. " Hallo, Allison, what's wrong? You're rather white about the gills." — Allison. " Ay, sir, I hae just washed masel'." Homeric laughter along the hollow ways from men who know how a good wash alters the aspect of the trench dweller.

There was soon ample evidence that the Turks were being furnished with guns of larger calibre and shells greater in number and vastly superior in quality to anything we had hitherto seen. Their 6-inch guns in Asia were making " W " Beach a very unhealthy

place. But it was not easy to think of any spot on the Peninsula that would be more salubrious. Most of the actual fighting was counter-battery work ; and rumours of coming evacuation were persistent. For ourselves in the 11th C.C.S. we had a very sudden "fitting" to make. Our winter quarters on the cliff overlooking the sea were practically complete. Our dugouts promised to be fairly comfortable, and wooden huts for the patients had taken the place of tents. The thought and labour expended on them seemed to be well repaid. Tuesday evening was falling, like most evenings for the last month, over a tranquil sea, and we were settling down as usual, with minds as contented and quiet as conditions permitted, when, like a bolt from the blue, came a command from Headquarters to move ourselves, camp, and belongings, to a new site some distance inland, "within three days." "Ours not to make reply ; ours not to reason why." It was a bit of the fortune of war. It was rumoured, indeed, that the Turks had demanded our removal, as our presence there hampered them in their bombardment. They were anxious not to outrage the Red Cross flag, but could not be responsible for results if we remained where we were. The move was not destined to put us out of harm's way, as the sequel will prove. But go we must. Only when the shelters, built with such care, were dismantled, and desolation crept over the slope, did we realise how fond we had become of the old place with its multitudinous memories, not all tragic ; for the "humorous side of things" shows up with a strange persistency even amid the grimmest scenes, and a wonderful spirit of good-fellowship grows among men who daily and nightly share together experiences of peril. Very fain would we have carried the sea with us. How

companionable it had proved, in all its changing moods, during the seven months we had dwelt by its waters.

Our new quarters were in full view of the whole field of operations on the end of the Peninsula. Owing to the formation of the ground we could hear the crack of even a single rifle on the slopes of Achi Baba. It was a weird scene at night, when star-shells shed a fitful radiance on the trenches, when rifles and machine guns spoke, when trench mortars hurled red death across the scarred earth, and the flash of an occasional big gun split the darkness, as its report threatened to split the ear.

Mr. Cairns of Broughty-Ferry was now a near neighbour. Mr. Goldie of Dalmuir and Mr. Campbell of Glasgow lived in the 3rd Lowland Field Ambulance close by; and Mr. Semple's dugout was only a short ten minutes' walk from us, so there was quite a company of the sons of Levi within easy hail. We sometimes felt like constituting the Presbytery!

The great change for the better in the weather after the last blizzard had an excellent effect on the physique of the men. They were, on the whole, looking very fit and well. They were full of life and spirits. When relieved from more serious duty, they played football with tremendous enthusiasm, and without regard to consequences. Even the padres are unable to resist the fascination of the game. I had one as a patient with an injury to his knee, sustained when bravely struggling goalward with the ball! The "Gallipoli Cup," presented by the Army Corps Commander for competition among teams representing the various units in his command, roused the keenest rivalry. When the "final" came off, the excitement, I am sure, was quite equal to anything ever seen at Tynecastle or Easter Road! It is a fine thing for the lads. It brings

respite from the thought of the Turks, shells, bullets, long night vigils, and other concomitants of war; and the effect of wholesome interest and exercise seems not less beneficial to the mind than to the body.

At the instance of Sir C. C. Monro, our forces operating in the N.E. Mediterranean had been divided into the "Dardanelles Army," commanded by Lieut.-General Sir W. Birdwood, K.C.B., and the "Salonica Army," under Lieut.-General Sir B. Mahon, K.C.B. Early in October the 10th Division was transferred from Suvla to Salonica.

In November it was decided to evacuate the Peninsula. Thereafter our operations were intended to keep the Turks occupied, and to prevent them from suspecting our design. The enemy's artillery was strongly reinforced, and our airmen reported the making of roads and emplacements for very heavy pieces. The heaviest of them did not at once come into action. Probably they were relied on to give us the *coup de grâce* when their guns should be massed for the final effort.

The Turkish fire greatly increased in intensity during the latter part of December. The guns and aeroplanes set free by our evacuation of Anzac and Suvla could now be concentrated against us. Achi Baba and Asia held high carnival. Things were constantly happening around us in all parts of our area. Casualties were numerous and severe.

An attack, designed to distract the attention of the Turks from Suvla and Anzac, was made by us at Cape Helles on the 19th of December. Ships' guns, monitors, and all the land batteries took part in the bombardment. An agitated drapery of smoke surrounded Achi Baba. This was rent by a sheet of flame, followed by a terrific report, which announced that one of our mines had

been exploded. A spirited advance was made along Krithia Nullah, and 200 yards of the main Turkish communication trench, west of the nullah, were captured and held. Our casualties were something over 200.

On the 21st there was a dropping artillery fire everywhere, and many bombs were falling. A tremendous rain-storm burst over us. When the sun looked out again the ground had gone to deep, soft mud, and all the hollows were covered with sheets of shining water.

To the rain, I think, we owed our safety. A large shell from Asia pitched within a few yards of our tent. It came at a slant, and went about nine feet in the ground before exploding. The rain had toughened the clayey soil so that it effectually muffled the shell; and nothing worse than clumps of earth came rattling on the roof of the tent.

Friday the 24th was a more than usually lively day. In addition to the daily gifts from the Turkish artillery, we had several visits from hostile aeroplanes, which dropped their bombs with fine impartiality. It is not easy to aim straight when throwing missiles from a machine travelling at a great speed and thousands of feet high. One bomb dropped beside the mortuary at the hospital and laid out two members of my burial party. It was a small bomb. We had reason to be thankful that it was not one of the monsters, of which a sufficient number were falling within view. Strange it is when the aeroplane is lost in the clouds, so high that the whirl of her propeller has become a light musical hum, to hear the whistle and crash of a bomb fallen apparently from nowhere. That night, in the clear moonlight, an aeroplane came over us. We heard her quite plainly; but, bright though the sky was, no eye among us was sharp enough to pick her out.

Our Sunday evening congregations were too large for a hospital tent. The Commandant at Lancashire Landing kindly gave us a large marquee, which might serve as reading and recreation room when not in use for public worship. It was seated with boxes of biscuits ; and electric light was to be installed. Our first service in it was held on Christmas Day. Mr. Nicholl, my Church of England colleague, conducted the devotional part, a few shells coming rather near. I had just begun the sermon, when there was a violent explosion close beside the tent. A lad sitting by the doorway slipped to the ground. Two others fell over with a groan. Mr. Nicholl rushed to the door and dropped there. The first boy died in a few minutes, the other two were badly hurt, and Mr. Nicholl had his thigh torn with a fragment of shell. I was standing between him and the shell. A box of biscuits at my right hand was smashed, the tent canvas was torn around me, but I was not even scratched. Mr. Nicholl, I am glad to say, made a good recovery, and the boys also did well.

It was a sad ending for our morning service, but there was no time for moralising. In the evening I struggled through the mud to the rest camp, and had Christmas service with a great company of lads who gathered at the Band Dugout. A press of wounded coming in delayed our dinner for a while ; but it was none the worse for that. It had been a busy day, and we were all rather tired and hungry. We had a turkey, specially brought from Tenedos, plum pudding, and a satisfactory supply of equally indigestible things. A spirit of right good comradeship always prevailed in our mess. It is not surprising that absent friends were remembered with more than usual warmth.

I agreed with the Colonel that it was wiser not to have



many men together for service by daylight. Our three o'clock service on Sunday the 26th was therefore given up. I had just returned from burials about three o'clock when a large shell pitched right into the church tent, about fifty yards away, and blew the whole place to fragments. I wondered at the moment if the Turks were trying to emulate the Huns in the destruction of ecclesiastical edifices! This put a stop to the evening service. One could not blame the boys if they were a little shy of the place.

The evening was spent plunging through a sea of mire looking for certain Edinburgh officers who had returned from Suvla with the 29th Division, my young friend Captain Kingsley Darling having been among the last to leave that spot at the evacuation. I was impressed then and afterwards with the quiet, matter-of-fact way in which those who went through it referred to what was certainly one of the most astonishing feats in history.

Returning in the dark, by happy fortune I stumbled upon a service Mr. Semple was conducting, and was refreshed by an excellent sermon on "Good news for all peoples."

Next evening I ventured to address my lads of the 4th Royal Scots on the advantages our nation has already derived from the war challenged by the Hun. It is a profitable line to take. We can see many losses; the gains may not be so obvious, but they are not less real. To know them makes for comfort and strength.

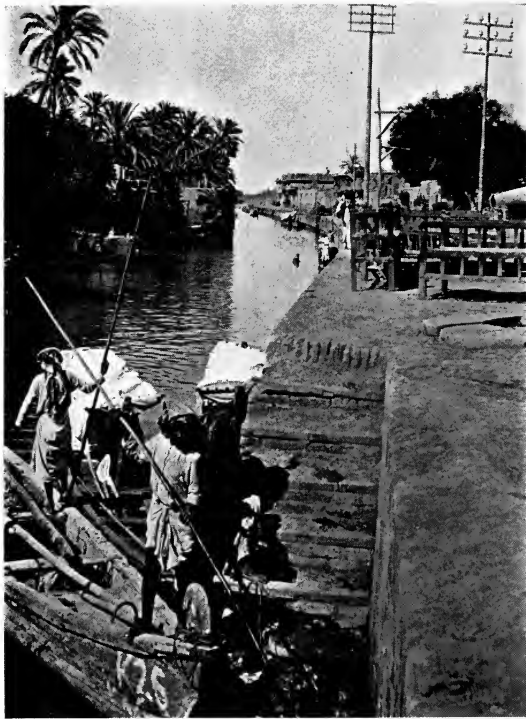
I dined afterwards with the doctor and the adjutant in a deep hole, about six feet square, in which they ate their meals by day and slept by night. It was protected above by a Maltese cart cover. Our table was the bottom of a packing-case; and our viands were passed down to us, so to speak, through the skylight.

The doctor was then the only survivor on duty of the officers who came to Gallipoli with the 4th Royal Scots.

In the early morning of the 29th, after a heavy bombardment, our men captured the continuation of the trench part of which they had taken on the 19th, so that the whole of the main Turkish communication trench was now in our hands. It was very deep, with roomy dugouts—"shell, bomb, and everything proof," as a wounded sergeant put it. However, when our men got into it they were treated to a torrent of H.E. and shrapnel which was not quite innocuous. The Turks then sent forward bombing parties; and we did the same to meet them. A party of fifty Turks took a wrong turning and got into a trench where our fellows snowed them under with bombs.

When darkness fell these December nights, a bright watch was kept on Asia from a "look-out" near Sidd ul-Bahr. Whenever the flash of a gun was seen, the wail of a siren pierced the night. This gave sometimes as much as twenty-six seconds' warning to take cover before the shell arrived, and must have been the means of saving many lives.





'ASHÂR CREEK FROM THE GATEWAY OF BASRAH.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE EVACUATION

THE decision to evacuate raised a problem without a parallel in military history. Our whole position was absolutely unique, and possessed, as General Monro said, every military defect. We were on hostile soil, strung out along a rocky, barren coast, liable to be cut off from supplies and reinforcements for weeks at a time by the storms of winter. The landing-places were dominated at easy range by the enemy's guns. Supplies had to be brought ashore in face of a storm of fire, and carried up steep and difficult cliff ways, over rough and broken ground, through thorny and stinging scrub, pelted by showers of shrapnel, while high explosives rent and tore and made an inferno of the slopes. The enemy actually in touch with us occupied superior positions, were always from 15,000 to 20,000 more in number than our entire force, and had very powerful reserves within easy call. In spite of our activity, by both aeroplane and submarine, his communications were not seriously threatened.

The Navy was "father and mother to the Army." The Navy carried us to the Peninsula, sustained and fed us there, and maintained our communications. The support given by the great warships alone made possible much that was accomplished. Only the Navy could transfer us to other fields. But how was the Army to be embarked ?

To disengage from the enemy whose trenches in many places were distant but a few yards from ours, to slip out with all our impedimenta under the very eyes of an alert and powerful foe, to embark and sail away from beaches commanded at known ranges by a numerous and excellently appointed artillery, was an enterprise fraught with extreme peril. There were thoughtful experts who estimated that we should lose a third of our whole strength.

Success depended upon absolute secrecy and peaceful weather. If the Turks had received any inkling of what was happening, they might have inflicted appalling casualties; or they might have rejoiced the city on the Golden Horn with the sight of thousands of British prisoners. If the sea had risen under the lash of the tempest, when our operation was half completed, no power on earth could have saved us from destruction.

Along our lines there was no appearance of change. The normal artillery and infantry activities were maintained; and there was no apparent slacking of business between the beaches and the trenches. There was nothing to excite his suspicion when the Turk looked outward over land and sea by day; and the all-important operations of the night were screened from his view by darkness.

The evacuation began with Suvla and Anzac. On the night of the 10th of December many ships stole into the bay at Suvla and approached the shore at Anzac, the warships taking their firing stations without. Under cover of the gloom, this and succeeding nights, all available hands were occupied conveying materials to the beaches, silently and swiftly, whence they were dispatched by boat and barge to the transports awaiting them. The big guns removed were replaced

by dummies, only a sufficient number being retained, meantime, in position to keep the Turks entertained. Pains were taken to obliterate all traces of nocturnal toil which might attract the eyes of aeroplane observers. With the dawn everything ashore appeared as it had been, and the shipping had vanished from the sea. All sick and wounded were sent off during these nights, and only the fittest remained for the last hours.

A sudden cessation of fire all along our lines on successive nights was designed to accustom the Turk to expect it without suspecting that we had gone. At the same time an ingenious contrivance prepared a series of explosions at intervals on the parapets, resembling rifle fire, which should give the empty trenches the appearance of being still held in force. Certain new trenches were also prepared in suitable positions, lest it might be necessary to fight a rear-guard action. The main embarkations took place on the nights of the 18th and 19th, when the operations were assisted by a haze that gathered heavily over the shore and the sea. A few guns had to be left at Anzac, but these had been rendered useless. All other guns, ammunition, cars, animals, equipment, and stores of value were got safely away; and the last man had been ferried to the transports before the dawn. The first intimation to the Turks of anything unusual was the firing of heaps of material, not worth the risk involved in removal, along the shore. When day broke, silence had fallen over the cliffs and the beaches; the ships with our gallant soldiers had already passed over the horizon. The Turks awoke to find the trenches between them and the sea empty, and only the discarded litter of the vanished foe upon which to gratify their cupidity.

What had seemed all but impossible had been

accomplished ; but not a moment too soon. That evening a tempest of great fury raged along the coast, making matchwood of the wooden piers and jetties, and creating a welter in which no boat could have lived.

The situation at Cape Helles remained ; and with the concentration against us of men, heavy ordnance, and war-planes set free by the evacuations farther north, it could only be described as serious. Was it possible that the ruses which misled the enemy there would deceive him again ? Would not his suspicions now be thoroughly aroused ? Could our movements, in this more exposed position, be effectually hid from the more numerous aeroplane observers ? No doubt our General's order as to our holding this end of the Peninsula at all costs fell into the enemy's hands, as was probably intended. The landing of troops and guns, and the vigorous attacks described above, he may have found it hard to reconcile with any purpose of retiring. Above all, he may well have thought we could never be so mad as to hope that we could do a second time, with the enemy alert, what we had succeeded in doing once, only because we had beguiled him into somnolence.

The same general lines were followed as at Suvla and Anzac. One stratagem was slightly improved upon. After several nights of regular firing at certain times, silence fell over our front lines. The Turks thought we must be gone. Visions of loot enticed them over the parapets. They advanced with growing confidence to our trenches, only to be met by a withering fire which few of those venturesome ones survived. When the quiet of our actual absence did come, the Turks clearly thought they had bottomed that stratagem. "Once bitten twice shy." So, like



Brer Rabbit, they lay low, leaving us ample time to make good our departure. On Thursday night, 6th January, they did muster courage to attack, and gained a foothold in part of our line. A counter-attack at once cleared them out; and there was no more heart in them for exploits of this kind.

The French, most of whom had already left the Peninsula, embarked at "S" Beach, while our troops made use of "V," "W," and Gully Beaches.

Strange it is how the affections twine round a locality with simple continuance there. For well-nigh eight months we had never known one moment of security from shot and shell, and were close witnesses of their ghastly work; yet it was with a curious sinking of the heart that we obeyed the order to go. As instant obedience to any command is the soldier's duty, he need not expect much warning, and packing may therefore be somewhat swift and confused! Our kits were piled high upon two mule carts. On the top of each sat a N.C.O. reminding one of nothing so much as a hen trying to spread herself over too big a setting of eggs! We set out through the gloom, over roads that were not just perfect. The whole structure of kit swayed ominously as the carts jolted now over a deep rut, and again into an unsuspected shell hole, to the peril of the men on top. We walked in close order round the carts, gathering and restoring the bundles that escaped the vigilance of the exalted guards.

After some tribulation we reached the crowded beach with our possessions intact. These were put in a heap near the pier, and over them we stood rather forlornly waiting for orders to embark. It was not easy to see any system at work in the terrible congestion of traffic, and momentarily we expected the

Turks to open fire. At length one shell did come over with nerve-racking shriek. It plunged into the water close by us. The effect on the beach was instantaneous. The crowd disappeared as if by magic. Every man at first fell down flat, then immediately sought some place of safety. Order emerged from chaos, and after another period of anxiety, unbroken by further shells, we were called to go on to a barge. But alas for our kits! We were allowed to take with us just what each man could carry. There, on the sand, we left much that was precious, which we never saw again. But, what will you? It is war, and those who go campaigning must take what comes as a bit of the day's work. One trembles to think what might have happened if the Turks had let loose their high explosives upon us as we were bunched up upon the water's edge.

The wind was not high, but there was a heavy swell on the sea. Our barge rolled with the rolling waves, and we had to clutch grimly at any support to avoid slipping into the deep. After an anxious search of the open sea, and much shouting of her name "ahoy!" our transport was found. We scrambled aboard somewhere about midnight. In what was originally the "saloon" of the steamer, in all sorts of attitudes,—sitting, reclining with support of bags, or stretched at full length on the floor,—we put in the remaining hours of darkness.

When the eve of the final embarkation came—8th January—there were good reasons for anxiety. The weather, hitherto favourable, showed signs of breaking. As the night drew on the wind increased in violence and a heavy sea rose. Destroyers could no longer come alongside the sunken steamers at the end of the breakwater whence men had up till now

embarked, and recourse was had to motor barges, which came within reach only at imminent peril of stranding.

The officers and men of our unit, under Captain Eves, who had remained at the station to attend to any cases that might come along till the last minute, had an eerie experience. They were to be sent for at 11.30 p.m. Two hours later they were still waiting in the midst of the wide, dark loneliness. Telephones were no longer working, and in the conditions prevailing no messages could be sent. It was a weird thought that in the rush of the closing hours and the confusion of the storm they had been forgotten. At last they moved, and, reaching the wired trench at the top of the valley, were told it was just "touch and go" if they would get off at all. Slaughter or capture seemed to be the alternatives before them; but on sprinting to the beach they found that action had been stayed by an accident at Gully Beach. One of the motor barges had grounded there in the rough sea. The men on board were brought ashore, and marched under the cliffs round to "W" Beach. The congestion caused was mastered with a little delay, and the last barge had left the shore when the ammunition magazine blew up with a prodigious explosion. Some men left ashore to burn abandoned stores were picked up by destroyers. A few guns, most of them worn out, were as at Anzac rendered useless, and a number of animals which it was impossible to remove were destroyed. The enemy claims of great spoil in guns and stores were simply ludicrous.

One submarine was known to be in the vicinity, but storm and darkness must have interfered with her programme. One battleship, the *Prince George*, was struck in the night by a torpedo, which failed

to explode, and she completed her voyage in safety.

By daylight on Sunday morning, 9th January, destroyers, motor barges, and other craft according to instructions were making their way to Imbros, still within view of the Peninsula. The Turks, not yet realising the true state of affairs, plastered the beaches and Hunter Weston Hill with H.E. and shrapnel; and one explosion was observed, like the eruption of a small volcano, which showed that one at least of the giant howitzers, tardy Teutonic gifts, was in position at length, and ready for action, but just too late to cause us anxiety.

In this movement one man was wounded. Several were hit by flying fragments from the great explosion when the magazine went up, but these are not to be reckoned as inflicted by the enemy. Not one man was killed. The operations were planned and carried out by Lieut.-General Sir F. J. Davies, K.C.B., embarkation being in charge of Major-General the Hon. H. A. Lawrence, with whom co-operated, on the part of the Navy, Captain C. M. Staveley, R.N.

A few days saw the complete clearance of Imbros, and the curtain fell upon one of the most heroic episodes of all history.

Our first move was to the beautiful sheltered harbour of Mudros. Quarters were assigned to us in what was romantically called the "Dogs' Home"—in other words, a details camp, where we awaited further orders. How strange it was to feel safe; to walk out without the expectation that a bullet or fragment of a shell might find you at any moment. Strange, but also very pleasant.

The landlocked bay on the shore of which our camp stood spread out its shining breadth beside us,

bearing on its bosom mighty battleships, hospital ships, transports, and other smaller craft innumerable. Multitudinous canvas cities, starting at the water's edge, stretched far inland. The white tents clustering on the distant slopes of the encircling ridges appeared like flocks of sheep seeking the tender grass which here and there tinted the barrenness with a promise of spring.

Here for the first time in many days there was leisure to reflect and to pass in review the ever-memorable experiences we had passed through. For myself, I had reason to be thankful for good health vouchsafed during the long, trying days on the Peninsula, where one was beset by unseen enemies at every step. The conditions of life in the small crowded space occupied formed a perpetual threat to health. The most careful sanitary measures were taken; but nothing could quite nullify the influence of tainted water, clouds of germ-laden dust, billions of infection-spreading flies, and fierce heat. Our ranks were thinned even more by sickness than by wounds and death. The chaplains suffered severely. The average term served by chaplains on the Peninsula was just under two months. Save for two quite insignificant periods, during which duty was not wholly remitted, I was able to take full work from the day of our landing, early in May, until the evacuation in the beginning of January.

A second cause for thankfulness was preservation from wounds and death. There was, properly speaking, no "base" or "rear" on the Peninsula. All the area occupied by our troops was dominated by the enemy's guns, from the first hour to the last. We were under heavy cross-fire, from the ordnance behind Achi Baba on the one hand, and from the Asiatic batteries on the other; while German war-planes took every

opportunity to drop their bombs where they supposed them likely to do most damage. I suppose there was no man on the Peninsula who had not one or more escapes which seemed nothing less than miraculous. I had seen comrades slipping down silently and expiring without a groan with bullet wounds. I had seen men blown to pieces, and others suffering ghastly wounds from shell fire. I had felt the hot breath of these messengers of death in my own face, as I knelt by the dying. No one pretended to be indifferent to these awful happenings; but they were beyond our control; to worry about them would only unfit us for our work. Long familiarity with them produced a habit of mind which simply accepted them as part of the day's programme, and carried straight on with duty. By God's great mercy I passed through it all with nothing worse than a couple of scratches on my hand, a light blow with a stone thrown up by a shell, and an occasional bespattering of earth from explosions near at hand.

In the work itself there was much to make up for the risks run. It was indeed a high privilege for which one might well be ready to make sacrifices. Duty brought me into close contact with our gallant lads in all phases of their chequered experience. I met them when, high-hearted and enthusiastic, they set foot on the historic beach, under the yellow cliffs to which great memories cling, and made their way with rifle and pack across the open country to the shelter of the trenches forming the rest camp. The rest camp did not escape the unwelcome attention of hostile artillery; and the "fatigues" to be undertaken, especially in the way of digging, made the name the subject of much humorous comment.

The exuberant spirits of the men delivered routine from monotony, and found appropriate expression in

the games, notably football, which they played with a fine contempt of danger. I had many opportunities of being with our soldiers in the reserve and support trenches and amid the excitements of the firing line, when summer suns had baked the banks hard and brown, when winter blizzards had turned the bottom of the trenches into slush and sticky mud, when rain flooded the dugouts and almost arctic cold chilled the blood; through strenuous days and watchful nights; in peaceful times, and again in the thunder and uproar of bombardment, when all around us "there fell a ghastly dew" of lead and iron, and one wondered how any man could possibly escape destruction. Under all conditions, I found them brave, confident, and for the most part cheerful. This sharing of common perils, inspired by one loyalty, pursuing a like end, supported by the same hope, begot a mutual relationship which made easy an unusual intimacy of intercourse; and it is one of the joys of life to remember with what freedom men, naturally reticent and slow to speak of such things, opened their minds to me, and conversed about the greatest of all matters.

As long as prudence permitted, we worshipped together on sunny slope or in shady gorge; but as artillery fire grew more intense, any gathering of men in the light of day was apt to attract the attention of the Turkish gunners, with disastrous effects. Then we met after sundown, under the stars; or, in stormy weather, betook ourselves to whatever shelter might be found. Often, in dimly lit dugouts, heart-to-heart talks and prayer seemed to lend a new worth to life, opening the way to fresh nobility and strength. Never to be forgotten are the times when, after an action in which many friends and dearly loved com-

rades had made "the supreme sacrifice," weary, grief-stricken men gathered to hear the word of comfort, and to wait humbly on Him who is able to give "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

One cannot easily imagine a more soul-stirring task, or a higher privilege, than that of ministering to the lads who were brought into our station sick, wounded, and ready to die, as one knelt beside them in their distress, and sought to help them to a fresh view of the "great Physician." How one's heart yearned over the dear boys—many of them, indeed, literally boys—with the glow of righteous battle still brightening their eyes, going down into the valley of the shadow; heroic boys, with spirit near akin to His who laid down His life that others might not die. No one could witness as I did, time and again, the manifest victory over pain and fear wrought by the power of Him "who is able to save even to the uttermost," without a strengthening of his own faith and a deepened sense of reality in spiritual things.



## CHAPTER XVII

### LEMNOS AND EGYPT

THE time spent on the island of Lemnos passed pleasantly enough. Day after day the sun shone, his heat being tempered by a cool breeze. The conditions for walking were ideal; and, when duty permitted, Father Legros and I stretched our limbs across country. The grain was already springing, and broad reaches of green braird were sweet to look upon. On some parts the plough of wood, drawn by patient oxen, was still in action. The seed is scattered on the surface and then ploughed down. So while the peasant guides the oxen, his wife or daughter "shoos" the birds away. It was curious to see these simple operations going forward in the interspaces between the hills and military camps, while masses of men were being drilled on the pastoral slopes, and lusty, khaki-clad youths here and there played football with energy and enthusiasm. In the glorious climate, life may without hardship be reduced to very simple elements. Many things rightly classed as necessities with us would be luxuries here. Where needs are so few and easily supplied, poverty comes with laggard step.

The history of the island may never be traced back to the day when the lame smith Hephæstos landed here, thrust from the blue by an angry Zeus; but many are the fragments of antiquity that seem to

promise a rich harvest to the excavator. Some places, such as *Castramuni*, seem positively to cry out for excavation. This name may be derived from *Castra Romana*. It indicates what was probably a Roman settlement, away to the north-east of Mudros. It occupies the crest of a conical hill, overlooking Palæopolis and the many-bayed shore. Climbing to the summit one sunny day, we found an opening in the ground, and warily let ourselves down into the darkness. By the light of candles we had brought, we saw the heads of arches and columns, which probably formed part of church or temple in far-off days. We had evidently entered by the roof.

As a medical and non-combatant unit, we were taken to Alexandria in a hospital ship. A stance for our camp at Wardian, by the side of the dusty highway, liable to be flooded by rains which did not fail to come, with electric trams and all sorts of traffic continually on the move, hardly did justice to Alexandria in the eyes of the new-comers. Meetings with old friends in the city, with common experiences of Gallipoli to discuss, delivered us from all monotony.

The days spent here were necessary for the purpose of refitting after the tear and wear of eight months' service and the replacing of kit, etc., lost at the evacuation. We had an opportunity to see on what a gigantic scale preparation is made at the Base to meet the needs of a modern army. The Ordnance Stores spread over a vast area. Their contents are bewildering in amount and variety. There is system and order, however, in what seems chaos to the outsider. Each department is in charge of a responsible officer, and all are linked up with the central office. The goods are classified and grouped together in different sections. Here is found every article of

material equipment for every unit in the service—artillery, cavalry, infantry, medical, sanitary, transport, etc. etc. This means big guns and small arms, with appropriate ammunition, limbers, waggons, harness and trappings, tents and tent furniture, appliances for cooking, articles of clothing, needles and thread, boots and boot-laces, and the thousand and one things that experience has shown to be needful. Each unit is furnished with a "Mobilisation Store Table" wherein are specified the things to which it is entitled. Under proper authorisation the quartermaster draws these, up to the number indicated, from the sectional depots, and the material equipment of the unit is complete.

For food and maintenance the army looks to the Army Service Corps. Here again things are done on a scale of impressive magnitude. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that whole streets are built of packing-cases filled with bully beef, "vegetable rations," biscuits, preserved fruit, condensed milk, etc. These, with tea, coffee, sugar, salt, pepper, cheese, butter, potatoes, oatmeal, when available, are issued in quantities proportioned to the strength of the unit drawing them. Candles, lighting oil, carbide, etc., are also supplied. On active service a supply depot is attached to each division, and arrangements for distribution are made with the quartermaster of each of the units composing the division.

It is a wonder that everything goes as well as it does, when one considers the enormous business transacted, its infinite variety, and the men with but short training who have had to be put in positions of responsibility. When you have to do with officers who understand their work and put their heart into it, there is no trouble.

In the desert west of Suez, where next we encamped, things seemed very quiet and tame after the stir and excitement of the Peninsula. We felt positively grateful to the officers who opened a bombing school near by, the familiar crash of exploding missiles breaking pleasantly for us the dull, peaceful monotony!

The boys had a good time on the whole. Drill, exercise, and games—especially football—kept them fit. The fascinations of that last game are irresistible to the soldier. Often you would see officers, N.C.O.'s, and men chasing the leather with an enthusiasm that left no room for thought of personal safety or dignity!

One could never tire of the arresting beauty of dawn and evening, as the sun rises over and sets behind the desert hills, with never a cloud in all the sky. Peculiarly delicate are the tints of violet, pink, pinkish purple, saffron, and pearl, over which the eye passes to the deep azure above. Suddenly they vanish as the sun leaps into the sky, glorious in his splendour, flooding the world with golden light. With what absolute supremacy he "rules the day" in these lands. Even in the early days of February the man who goes abroad with unprotected head is apt to rue his folly. In the heat and glare of noon all desert creatures rest, and the wide reaches of glowing sand, when no wind moves over the wastes, become the home of brooding silence. As the day declines, there is a revival of life, and with the fading light the hues of tender loveliness come forth again, painting the lower heavens in colours that must for ever be the rapture and the despair of the artistic soul. One evening I watched the play of changing beauties away in the direction of Mount Sinai, the outrunners of which were visible from where I stood. Touched by the almost level beams of the sinking-

sun, they appeared like battlements of terra-cotta, under a sky of pearl, pink, and violet. The graceful stems of many palms rose in the middle distance, throwing up their dark green fronds against the radiant background with indescribably charming effect.

The canvas city spread around us to north, south, east, and west, with wide open spaces that served as parade grounds. After the bugles greet the dawn and the bagpipes stir the laggards with "Hey, Johnnie Cope, are ye wauken yet?" it becomes a scene of great and varied activity. Tents must be opened, the flies tied up, and the contents set in orderly array without. Weapons and equipment are cleaned and polished, ablutions performed, and breakfast disposed of. Then the level spaces are alive with masses of men out for drill and physical exercise. Fatigue parties move off on different tasks intent. Mule-carts and camels, with hoarse shoutings of their dusky drivers, are busy hauling and carrying goods to meet the multitudinous needs of an army. Now and then the shrill whistle of an engine announces the approach of a military train with its precious human freight; and the white gleam of fresh tents makes new inroads upon the tawny monotony of the sand.

When the sun sets, darkness descends swiftly upon us. On moonless nights, a change, as if wrought by enchantment, passes over the camp. The light within transforms each tent into a luminous pyramid, clean cut against the superincumbent gloom. Gathered in groups and squares and thrown out in lines, one could imagine them as gigantic Chinese lamps picking out the borders and pathways in a maze of fairy gardens.

It was good news for us that the command in this

district was to be taken over by the Corps Commander under whom we served at Cape Helles. The arrival of the General and his staff brought quite a sense of home. I am sure that campaigning was never conducted with happier relationships between Commander, staff, and subordinates. To an excellent mutual understanding was added a spirit of frank, open-hearted goodwill, the inspiration of which could undoubtedly be traced to the genial and competent personality of the General himself.

A short walk from camp brought us to the bank of the great fresh-water canal which carries a belt of verdure across the wilderness from Bulak to Suez. The embankments are fringed with reeds and rushes. Here and there on each side is a concrete structure that looks like a small doorway. These are the sluices regulating the flow of water from the canal into the irrigation ditches. The ditches are considerably below the level of the soil. The water is raised by means of the familiar water-wheel, turned in the same way as our old horse mills, now by a camel, again by a buffalo, or by an ass. It is a refreshment simply to listen to the gurgle of the water as it pours from the wheel, and to watch it as it flashes away in shallow channels and runlets, spreading life, beauty, and fruitfulness wherever it goes. Water is the wizard that works wonders here. At the magic of its touch waving grain fields, vegetable gardens, and orchards spring into being, high over them all towering the date palms. Surely in all nature there is nothing to match in gracefulness those slender-stemmed, green-domed trees of the desert.

Not a great distance off were palm groves, orchards, and gardens. Then was the time of blossoming for the almond trees. Their great masses of bloom are

strikingly beautiful as seen against the greenery of the palms. Walking through one of the gardens I saw the skin of a leopard which had been rudely "stuffed," and was much the worse for the weather. The owner of the garden is a capable manager. Everything is in excellent order, and evidently he makes the most of the fruitful soil. He is also very proud of his English. He told me that four years ago the leopard had come and "eat two sheeps of me. I tie out a little cow, and myself hide. He creep to eat the little cow, and I shoot him." Leopards were frequently seen in those days; but now, with all the multitude of troops, "they come not near."

One day an enormous khaki-coloured locust dropped into my tent. What could have brought him to the padre's tent in search of *green* things? He looked very wearied, poor chap. He may have come from the land of Goshen, and, like certain ancient wanderers in the wilderness, he was no doubt yearning for the "onions, leeks, and garlic" left behind him in his dash for freedom!

The gallantry and resourcefulness of our flying comrades are as well known to the foe as to ourselves. It is their business to find out everything possible about the enemy, the positions held, the number and disposition of his forces, etc., and to distract and harass him, especially with bombs. To drop these with any approach to accuracy the machine has to be brought down pretty low, coming at times within range of Maxim-gun fire. One officer flying out from Suez made his bomb attack all right; but his machine was peppered by a Maxim, and his petrol tank penetrated by a bullet. He happened to be chewing a bit of gum. With this he at once plugged the hole in the tank, and came safely home.

Of this same officer, someone asked a friend why he made a practice of chewing gum. "He is such a nervous fellow," was the reply, "and this helps to steady him." Flying one morning he found something wrong with his engine, and came down at a spot too near the enemy for comfort. He repaired the mechanism, sniped at by the enemy all the time. He started the engine himself and leaped on board. Only partial repair was possible, and owing to the defect the aeroplane could not rise high enough to clear certain hills. Instead of returning to safety with his "crooked" machine, however, he skirted the hills, completed his reconnaissance, and just managed to get back to our lines before coming to ground. When exploits like this are carried out by *nervous* men, you know what to expect from others!

Little spirals of sand are a not uncommon sight in the desert. They spring up almost like wriggling snakes, rush along swiftly for a short distance, and then suddenly dissolve. But one day every eye was arrested by a majestic khaki form advancing slowly towards our camp. The air was perfectly still, but this gigantic column of sand whirled violently on its base, approached within about a hundred yards of us, and moved on at a rate of about three miles an hour. It was not less than twenty yards in diameter, four or five hundred feet high, quite clearly defined, and while the head swayed against the sky, the base swept round with a "swish" like that of an enormous skirt. All light, loose things were caught, swirled in the vortex, and thrown out far up in the blue. A weird and impressive object it was, with its slow, dignified movement in the clear sunshine, with its mysterious internal agitation. It is little wonder that the untutored children of the wilds have, from ancient days, associated those strange



phenomena with the supernatural, regarding them with feelings akin to terror as the dwellings or chariots of spiritual beings. It was out of the whirlwind, it will be remembered, that God spoke with Job ; and it was by a whirlwind that Elijah went up into heaven.

We took over from an Australian unit at Serapeum, on the Suez Canal, just north of the Bitter Lakes. The sand shone white in the sun ; and in the moonlight its billowy ridges were strikingly beautiful. It is a place of historic interest. Just about here Moses must have led enfranchised Israel across the Red Sea, whose waters then covered these sands. The stele of Darius near by commemorates one of the early attempts at canal building. A mile or two to the north is the spot where the battle was fought on 4th February 1915. The Turk then learned his lesson, and was in no hurry to renew the experience.

While there was little fighting, no vigilance was relaxed ; but many found time for fishing and bathing, and aquatic sports were frequent. The world's great waterway through the desert—a pathway of silver across the brown flats—is always an impressive sight, especially at night. Gigantic ocean liners with flaming search-lights show up picturesquely through the shadows ; yet do they seem strangely out of place amid the barren waste, like monsters of the deep strayed from their element.

A flying visit of the Prince of Wales had a visibly heartening effect. His frank disposition, his plucky spirit, and freedom from all "side," conspire to make him a prime favourite with the men. But withal, soldiers "on active service" are always dissatisfied if they are far from the seat of "action" ; so it happened that many were longing for France, and some, like myself, for Mesopotamia.

Before leaving for the land "between the rivers" I had the privilege of taking a Communion service for my friend, Dr. Mackie, in St. Andrew's Church, Alexandria. How good it was to have a crowd of heartsome young fellows come at the close for a hand-grip and mutual wishes of God-speed.

Communion in spring always seems to bring to the heart something of the hopefulness and good cheer which the season of reviving nature suggests. The burden of this awful war, with the sorrow and anxiety that press upon us all, makes doubly precious the comfort and sustaining power of our most holy religion. The war has brought wintry darkness and depression into many a heart and home. Much that was fair and brave and full of promise in our nation's manhood has passed away like the bloom and leafage of a bygone summer. But now, through many a rift in the gloomy canopy, God's sunlight visits us again, warming the hearts that have never quailed, touching to new energy the high resolve that has upheld us through all the wintry days, and kindling with the glow of fresh assurance the eyes that look for victory.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE MESOPOTAMIAN CAMPAIGN

THE pilgrimage of Wilhelm II. to Palestine and Syria was prompted by no mere *wanderlust*. It was not a simple visit of pious remembrance to the holy places of the faith he professed ; its ends were not fulfilled by the disfigurement of the Jaffa Gate at Jerusalem, the presentation of a golden cross to the tomb of Saladin, and the erection of a piece of pompous vulgarity in the temple at Baalbek. It was part of a much greater design, the working out of which saw a professedly Christian sovereign claiming friendship on a footing of equal brotherhood with a Moslem despot stained with every crime which the Christian faith condemns, standing by " in shining armour " daring " the Concert of Europe " to lift a finger in defence of the weak and helpless victims of Abdul Hamîd's foul rage. It seemed incredible to a world that had not yet been horrified by the cruel wrongs, the outrage, and massacre of unoffending human beings that desolated Belgium in the autumn of 1914. Then it became manifest that the German Emperor, with all his loud-mouthed calling on the God whose every law he trampled underfoot, was fit fellow of the brutal monster who murdered the Armenians.

In truth, however, Wilhelm cared no more for Abdul Hamîd than that worthy cared for the moral law. When the revolution came, Abdul Hamîd was thrown to

the dogs with entire composure. Friendship must be made with Turkey at all costs. German influence must be established in Constantinople. The place left vacant in the Emperor's heart by the ex-Sultan and his *entourage* was open with great goodwill to Enver and his crew if they were docile, and willing to be used to promote German interests.

Enver was a man after the Kaiser's own heart. By a curious freak of circumstances his name became a sort of symbol of the freedom desired by the Young Turks. He was a man of mediocre abilities and great ambition, whose self-conceit made him an easy mark for skilful flatterers. The Germans found in him a ready tool, as unscrupulous as they were themselves. The Turkish army was reorganised and trained by German officers, and equipped with arms and munitions under their supervision. With the arrival of the *Goeben* and *Breslau* in Turkish waters, the Germanisation of the navy was complete.

The object to be served by this manipulation was not obscure. Teutonic influence had obtained certain concessions, notably that for the building of a railway down the Mesopotamian Valley, connecting Constantinople with the Persian Gulf. In the spring of 1911, the German Consul, whom I saw in Aleppo, assured me that this highway of communication between East and West would be complete as far as Baghdad in five years from then. But for the outbreak of war, his forecast would very nearly have come true. No doubt it was intended to develop the enormous latent wealth of the Mesopotamian plains, and to turn into German channels such trade as existed in the Persian Gulf. But it is obvious that, with the resources of the Turkish Empire at her command, and with a clear run from Berlin to Basrah or Koweit, Germany

would be able to aim a serious blow at British prestige in the East, endangering our position in India. That she had this in view is not a matter of surmise. It was a German obsession that India was wearied of our rule, and was ripe for revolt. German secret agents toiled to foment discontent and stir up a spirit of rebellion. A benevolent Fatherland sought to further in underhand ways the illicit introduction and distribution of arms; thus increasing the work to be done by our gunboats in the Gulf, and adding to the variety and value of their captures.

When Turkey entered the war, the hour seemed to have struck to remove the mask; to end the long process of tortuous diplomacy, and boldly seize the coveted prize. At the instance of Berlin the Caliph summoned the Moslem world to *jehâd*—war in defence of the Faith: a holy war. It was fondly hoped that the cry of "Islâm in danger" would sap the loyalty of the Mussulmans of India, and rally the followers of Mohammed from all lands to crush the infidel. In the brave and chivalrous Haj Wilhelm, to whom in the hour of crisis the Crescent had become dearer than the Cross, they would find a modern Saladin to lead them on to triumph. How fitting, then, to his imperial brows the diadem of all the East!

Unfortunately for his dreams, the astute wire-pullers in Berlin had forgotten or ignored some rather important facts. In regard to the Caliphate, Baghdad never willingly acknowledged the primacy of Stamboul. For Mohammedans east of Baghdad and Suez the Sultan's claim to the Caliphate was weakened by the fact that he was of alien race. A true "successor" must spring from the people of the Prophet. The misrule of the Turks, their cruelty and extortion, had not endeared them to subject peoples. Our Moslem

fellow-citizens in India were too familiar with the character and spirit of Britain to believe that their faith was in any danger. These things account for the feeble response made to the proclamation of *jehâd*, and also for the swift gathering of the Arabians round the Grand Shareef of Mecca—himself belonging to the Koreish, the tribe of Mohammed—when he raised the standard of revolt.

The unveiling of this plot against our very existence as a ruling power in the East, left us no choice but to protect our interests in the Gulf and in Mesopotamia by means of an armed force.

In operations which so closely concerned the future of our great Dependency, the initiative lay with the Indian Government. On 7th November 1914, Brigadier-General Delamain with the Poona Brigade occupied the village of Fao, at the mouth of Shatt el-Arab. Thence he moved by ship to Saniyeh. Two other brigades arrived on the 13th under Sir Arthur Barratt, and an indecisive action was fought with 2000 Turks at Sahain. On the 17th, a force advancing from Basrah was met and defeated, with 1500 casualties to our 353. Basrah was reached by land and river on the 22nd, and occupied on the 23rd. Here a great base camp was formed. An attempt with gunboats and a small land force was made on 4th December to clear Kurnah of the enemy. It was renewed on the 7th. Some of our troops crossed the river on the morning of the 8th, taking Kurnah in the rear; and on the 9th the Turks surrendered. Here, 50 miles upstream from Basrah, our force entrenched. Lieut.-General Sir John Nixon, with reinforcements, arrived in January, and took command. On the 20th, 5000 Turks with six guns were driven from a strong position to the north. A garrison of 1000 men at Ahwaz,

guarding the pipe line from the oil-fields to Abadan, on 3rd March in a reconnaissance to westward, encountered a force of 12,000 Turks, and in their retreat inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. On the 4th, our cavalry had a skirmish with 18,000 Turks near Nakhailah. On the 12th, Kurnah and Ahwaz were bombarded with trifling effect. The main Turkish attack was made at Shaibah, with a view to advance on Basrah. The enemy were 18,000 strong, with twenty guns. A three-days' battle ended in the rout of the Turks with 6000 to 7000 casualties. We captured much spoil; and the defeated Turks, in their retreat, suffered many things from their erewhile friends, the Arabs. They made no stand till they had put 100 miles between them and Basrah.

At midnight on 31st May we advanced against certain mounds north of Kurnah, occupied by the enemy. The country was under water. Some of our men went in boats. Some waded through deep water. Anyone hit, if not killed, was pretty sure to be drowned. The gunboats gave effective help. The Turks, taken by surprise, were driven from the mounds. We took 250 prisoners and three field-guns. The pursuit was pressed by land and river, more guns, ammunition, and prisoners being taken. On 3rd June we entered 'Amārah, 75 miles from Kurnah, taking 730 prisoners, of whom 30 were officers. Nūr ed-Dîn, the Turkish commander, collected the remnants of his army and retired to Kut el-'Amārah, a town of about 4000 inhabitants, on the left bank, in a loop of the Tigris, less than 100 miles upstream of 'Amārah as the crow flies but 150 miles by river. From Kut el-'Amārah runs the great canal, Shatt el-Hai, joining the Tigris with the Euphrates at Nasiriyeh, a hundred miles away.

A road across the wilderness from 'Amārah to Ahwaz

forms the base of a triangle of which the sides are the Tigris and the Karun, with the apex at Mohammerah. We had thus command of that district, protecting the pipe line. But this did not guarantee Basrah against attack by way of the Euphrates. To make the position secure we must hold both ends of Shatt el-Hai ; otherwise the force holding one would be liable to flank attack from the other.

In July, General Gorringe led a column from Kurnah, through extremely difficult country, and on the main stream of the Euphrates encountered a Turkish force which retired towards Nasiriyeh. He pursued, accompanied by gunboats, stormed the defences of the town on 24th July, and took possession on the 25th. The enemy fled along the Hai towards Kut, leaving guns, ammunition, and 700 prisoners. Their losses, apart from prisoners, were 1800 ; ours about 600.

General Townshend now advanced from 'Amārah, and found the Turks entrenched astride the river, seven miles from Kut. In the engagement that ensued, the Turks were heavily defeated. At dawn on 29th September they were seen to have fled in the direction of Baghdad. In the pursuit over 2000 prisoners were taken. Our casualties were under 500.

So far the expedition had been brilliantly successful. Had we been content to strengthen our hold on what we had won, a grave tragedy would have been averted. By the capture of Kut and Nasiriyeh, what may be called the legitimate objects of the expedition had been achieved. But now it was decided to advance on Baghdad.

Townshend's force consisted of little more than a single division wearied with the long march and hard fighting of the last ten months. They were a good 300 miles, by river, from their base, and abso-



lutely dependent on river steamers for supplies. The Indian Government had decided to build no railway, because it could not be worked to profit when the war was over. It was better, apparently, to lose the war than that they should be at the expense required to ensure victory. The decision was fraught with tragic consequences. The river had shrunk in the suns of summer; its treacherous shallows and numerous mud-banks made navigation difficult, at times, almost to impossibility. One steamer firmly aground in mid-stream might hold up all traffic for days. Advance must be slow to maintain touch with supplies. The force was cut off from hope of reinforcement, and hostile Arabs hung upon their flanks.

The men had, indeed, an unbroken record of victory behind them. They had thrashed the Turk wherever he had stood up to them. They had survived the worst of the weather, and were entering the finest period of the year. They had passed the worst of the country with its marshes, creeks, and canals. Except the Dialah, no great natural obstacle interposed between them and Baghdad.

On the other hand, the Turks in retiring were going towards their sources of supply. We were advancing against a foe who was being rapidly and heavily reinforced, in positions he had had ample time to make impregnable. If, by some miracle, we reached Baghdad, our work would only be begun. The city is without defences. To make it secure, positions many miles distant would have to be taken and held in force. How this was to be done by a single division no one has yet told us. I do not discuss the political considerations that may have been supposed to justify the venture. From a military point of view it stands utterly condemned.

In the advance there were frequent brushes with the Arabs, and a force of 4000 Turks was routed at 'Azizîyeh. On the 12th of November Lajj was reached, on a left bend of the river, seven miles from Ctesiphon, where the Turks were strongly entrenched.

On 21st November Townshend attacked, and the battle raged for five days and nights. How fierce the fighting was may be judged from the fact that the Turks lost over 10,000 in casualties and 1300 prisoners. Our casualties were 4500, of whom 800 were killed. But while our numbers were shrinking, those of the Turks were increasing hourly. In a prolonged conflict on these terms, the utmost heroism could not save us from extinction. The valour of our soldiers had received signal illustration; but, to escape envelopment by overwhelming numbers, we must go back. Our wounded were dispatched by river to Kut, and on the night of the 26th our retreat began. At 'Azizîyeh the Turks succeeded in surrounding us. Our men cut their way through, losing 150, but accounting for 2500 of the enemy. Harassed by Arabs and pressed in rear by the Turks, our wearied but resolute men pressed on, and, with a rest of three hours at the end of twenty-seven miles, covered no less than forty-two miles before halting for the night, having reached the utmost limit of their strength. A short march of four miles on the morning of 3rd December brought this sorrowful procession of footsore and utterly exhausted men within the defences of Kut.

Four Turkish divisions closed round the town. By the 5th of December the investment was complete. On the 23rd the Turks were reinforced by a division from Gallipoli, and Nûr ed-Dîn made his first and

only great effort to storm the defences. He failed : and his casualties numbered 700 to our 190.

There was no fear of capture by assault ; but unless provisions could be got through, famine might soon do what Turkish force had failed to accomplish. Townshend thought he could hold out for over a month. No one doubted that within that time he would be relieved.

Two Divisions, which had been brought from France, formed the Relief Expeditionary Force. To these were added certain Territorial battalions brought from India ; and later came another Division, which had fought with distinction at Gallipoli. At once became painfully evident the incompetence and lack of foresight which provided no means of transport but the river with its treacherous bed and labyrinthine windings. Rain might be expected any day, turning the ground to be crossed into a morass. A railway, which a false and stupid economy had vetoed, would have been of priceless value. General Aylmer, V.C., commanded the relieving force. General Nixon, having retired owing to ill-health, was succeeded in supreme command by Sir Percy Lake.

On the 4th of January 1916 the enemy were found entrenched astride the river at Sheikh Sa'ad. On the right bank, on the 7th, General Kemball took over 550 prisoners. On the left bank the battle lasted two days. Then the enemy retired to el-Wâdy, a stream that enters the Tigris from the north, five miles up from Sheikh Sa'ad. Attacked on the 13th, the enemy retired two miles to Umm el-Hannah. Here, at Fallahîyeh, about four miles, and at Sinniyât, six miles farther upstream, were three lines of defences between the river and the great Suweikhah marsh. Each crossed the river and rested on marshes on the other

side. Rain and mud now made operations almost impossible. A vain attempt was made on 21st January to carry the Turkish lines. Little was done till 23rd February, when an advance on the right bank secured el-Aruk, opposite Umm el-Hannah. The rain cleared; with drying winds movements in the desert became practicable.

The strongest of the Turkish lines crossed the river seven miles downstream of Kut, ran out into the desert by way of es-Sinn, to Dujailah Redoubt—a mound covering the remains of many cities—and thence south-westward to the Hai. General Aylmer resolved to attempt the capture of this redoubt by a surprise attack, and so to turn the position. It was a daring but feasible scheme. On the night of 7th March the march was made in the dark over an uncharted desert. Direction was perfectly maintained. At dawn we were within striking distance of the redoubt, which, practically undefended in fancied security, lay at our mercy. Then the cup of victory earned by the skill and precision of that long night march was dashed from our lips. The enemy swiftly manned the trenches and the redoubt. Our belated attack, although pressed again and again with great intrepidity, made no real impression on the position. To continue the attack would have been futile. Shortage of water and food made retirement to our former position necessary.

General Aylmer was superseded by General Gorringe. The relieving force was now augmented by another Division, to which was assigned the capture of Umm el-Hannah lines. Careful and industrious sapping had brought our men within a hundred yards of the enemy's first trench. At 5 a.m. on the 5th of April the attack was delivered. In two hours all five Turkish lines were taken. The attack on the Falla-

hîyeh lines was held back until the advance could be made under cover of darkness. It was entirely successful. The Division swept the right bank clear of the enemy, and held the ground opposite Fallahîyeh. Vigorous Turkish counter-attacks were repulsed with heavy loss, and we retained possession of the ground gained.

It was now the season of floods; the Tigris, swollen by the melting of mountain snows, found the weak places in the *bund*, and its waters literally swamped the country. There was little time to think of anything but self-preservation in the welter of mud and water. An attempt was made on the 9th of April against the Sinniyât position, but without success.

On 12th April a Division was taken to the right bank of the river, and our troops gradually forced the enemy back until on the 17th they captured Beit 'Îsa, a position of great strength, four miles from es-Sinn, enfilading the Turkish lines at Sinniyât. The night that succeeded was made hideous by the fury of the counter-attacks. Our line, however, held firm. Not fewer than 10,000 Turks took part in this battle. Of these at least 3000 were slain, and also several German officers.

On the 23rd of April an assault was made on the Sinniyât position. The first and second lines were carried. Operations were cramped by the encroachments of the river and the marsh. It was impossible to hold these lines against overwhelming reinforcements. The relieving force had failed to accomplish its mission.

Meanwhile the beleaguered garrison at Kut, the object of so much vain solicitude and futile effort, was being reduced to dire extremity. Horses and mules at first came under the butcher's knife, and

such stores as existed were rationed with the utmost care. A measure of relief came with the discovery of a store of grain on the 24th of January. But for this the surrender must have come many weeks earlier. The heavy Turkish artillery played upon the town by night, and enemy aeroplanes dropped bombs, shattering the wretched jerry buildings of the Arabs, and adding to the litter and debris never scarce among a native population. Disease was thinning the exhausted ranks, and as their stores vanished, the grim eyes of famine stared them in the face. But with the lengthening days towards the end of April, hope deferred and famine made even the stoutest heart sick. On the night of 24th April the river steamer *Julnar* attempted to break through with supplies. It was a forlorn hope. She grounded four miles downstream from Kut, and became an enemy prize. On the 29th April, having endured a siege of 143 days, General Townshend surrendered, with about 8070 men of all ranks, of whom 2070 were British. Khalîl, the Turkish commander, returned his sword to General Townshend, and treated him with courtesy and respect. The sick and wounded were sent down the river to Gorringe ; the others passed into Turkish captivity.

With the fall of Kut ended one phase of the Mesopotamian campaign. There was no point in our pursuing aggressive tactics now until we should be in a position to retrieve our losses and to vindicate the honour of British arms. This seemed to be the view of the Turks. They vacated certain positions on the right bank of the Tigris, which we occupied without opposition. They continued, however, to hold Sinniyât in strength, and entrenched themselves on the right bank of the river and on both sides of the Hai over against Kut. The retention of that town was plainly

the chief object of their strategy. About two miles downstream they erected a monument to celebrate the surrender of the British garrison.

I have spoken of the lack of proper transport to supply the necessities of our soldiers in their bitter hardships. A more terrible scandal was the absence of anything that could be called provision for the treatment of our sick and wounded. No praise is too high for the medical officers with the units in the field and at the stations on the river. What men could do they did for their unfortunate comrades. But what are we to say of arrangements that made unclesed Tigris water the only drink for patients tossing in fever and racked with cruel thirst ; which made cold bully beef and biscuits the daintiest diet available in cases of typhoid and dysentery ; which left injuries undressed until simple wounds became gangrenous, and splendid young lives were thrown away ; which brought grievously wounded men down from the front jolting in agony in springless carts, to wait on the bank, exposed in storm and darkness, for transport down the river ; which packed them on the iron deck of an unprotected barge, along with patients suffering from every kind of disease, without regard to sanitation, for a voyage of many hours, under the pelting rain and wintry cold of night ? Was this the best that could be done in their hour of need for the lads who so gallantly went forth into the wilderness to do battle for all that we hold dear ? Oh, the pity of it !

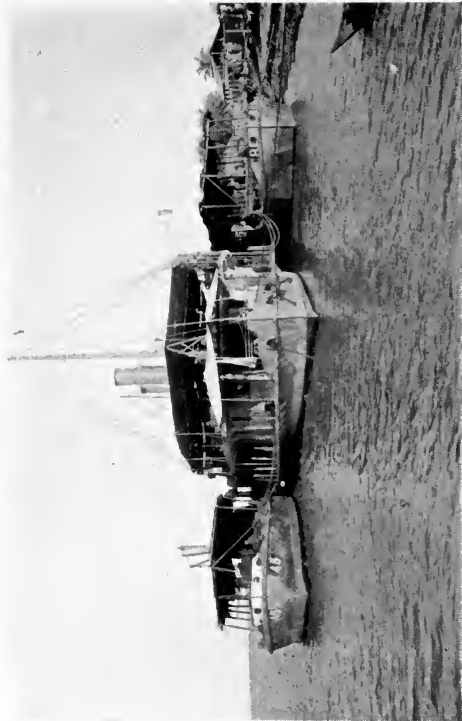
The student of history will marvel that the Indian Government failed to acquaint itself with the true character of the enterprise, and the prevailing conditions. He will wonder at their seeming indifference to the well-being of the troops and the success of the

expedition as compared with their interest in so-called economy. He will be amazed at the callous complacency that could boast of a more favourable financial balance at the end of the first year of war, knowing that every rupee saved was at the expense of a gallant life.

The Imperial General Staff assumed control of operations in Mesopotamia early in the year. The radical changes and reorganisation necessary could not be accomplished at a bound ; but a new and wholesome influence was swiftly felt throughout every branch of the service. Errors were repaired, deficiencies supplied, and a spirit of competence and efficiency permeated the force, betokening the presence of the master mind, full of happy augury for the future.



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RIVER STEAMER WITH BARGES ON THE TIGRIS.



KURNAH : RIVER FRONT OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

## CHAPTER XIX

### BASRAH

THE general hospital to which I was attached was one of those sent out from home to meet the emergency that had been discovered in Mesopotamia. Equipment and stores went direct to Basrah by transport. Staff and personnel, including nurses and orderlies, sailed by hospital ship. I joined them at Suez. As we moved out into the Gulf, Port Tewfiq looked very picturesque with its red-tile roofs, its palms and acacias, standing clearly against the sunset. We passed at a little distance the palm groves that shelter the "Springs of Moses." The dreamlike peaks of Sinai were just visible in the transparent dimness before the dawn. To relieve the tedium of heat with a following wind, and the moist discomfort which it engenders, we speculated as to the direction of el-Medina, Jedda, and Mecca. Although we could not see them, it was interesting to feel so near the sacred soil and sternly guarded cities that have played so great a part in the religious history of mankind.

The staff of the hospital had been recruited on the "pals" principle. The medical officers were all either friends, or friends of friends, and the utmost good-fellowship prevailed. Our thoroughly competent C.O., Lieut.-Colonel Delap, was an experienced officer, in whom geniality and efficiency made an attractive combination. His second in command, Major Burgess,

was a surgeon of high distinction, whose magnetic personality had much to do with drawing together a company of men as perfectly equipped professionally as any who ever set out on patriotic service. The padres, Father Bradley, R.C., and Rev. L. N. Green, C. of E., were already part of the institution, and their brotherly goodwill made things easy for me. Services, and lectures on the Orient, of which many were now to have their first experience, found interested and thoughtful audiences.

Bombay, with its cupolas and spires backed by the tumbled confusion of mountains that surround the harbour, was drenched with the early monsoon. Here we transferred to a smaller vessel, which could cross the bar at the mouth of Shatt el-Arab, and go straight up the river to Basrah. Our nurses were left meantime; and with the first news of the "great German victory" at Jutland to cheer us, we set out for Mesopotamia.

In the Gulf we kept in view most of the way the forbidding Persian mountains, and barren crags breaking down upon the sea, with, here and there, at long intervals, scattered fragments of "Paradise" on the shore. Five days' sailing brought us through the mud-flats, which the industry of the rivers in carrying down alluvium is gradually building into an extension of the Asian continent. We entered the river about eight o'clock on a Sunday morning, proceeding upward between palm-clad banks, breasting the waters brought down from the Armenian uplands by the Euphrates and Tigris. The river appears to be from 200 to 300 yards broad, and about 20 feet deep. The water is tawny in colour, and the current swift and strong. Embankments a few feet high confine the river to its own bed. Swamps at a lower level than the river

stretch some distance on either side, and in these the date palms grow with great luxuriance. Very refreshing to the eye is the dark green of their fronds. Here and there a creek cuts a watery avenue through the greenery, and from the upper deck one could see the spread of lateen sails catching the sun among the palms. At the outer edge of the palm groves begins the desert, stretching, dim and weary, away to the horizon. The whole country is flat, at no point more than a foot or two above the level of the river, whose gift, indeed, it is ; for the soil has all been carried down and deposited by the stream within the last few thousand years.

We passed the town of Abadan, on the left bank, to which the pipe line brings down the oil from the Anglo-Persian oil-fields. Its most striking features are a series of enormous tanks, and a row of charming residences along the margin of the river. There are spacious, brick-built houses at intervals along the brink of the stream. Very cool and pleasant they looked amid their embowering greenery. We saw occasional specimens of the Arab mud village which looked squalid enough ; also the light structures of reed mats bent over bamboo frames which furnish the riverine semi-nomads with all the shelter they desire. Naked fishermen throwing their shoulder nets in the shallows ; others, with boats, spreading their drag nets wide in the stream ; women carrying water in their pitchers poised gracefully on their heads ; buffaloes with only their noses above water ; and cattle with their Arab guardians in the green interspaces of the palms, were about all the living creatures to be seen.

We came upon a large vessel which, we were told, had been sunk by German orders in the early days of the war. The object was to block the fairway of the river against

our ships. There is ample width and depth of water left, however, for all our purposes. The funnel and masts remain above water and form an excellent guide for our mariners. The sunken vessel serves as a monument of baffled Teutonic ingenuity.

Our anchorage was reached about noon, and we lay there for the rest of the day, while crew and men were busy with manifold operations. What a scene of varied activity the broad bosom of the river presented. What a contrast with ordinary conditions in this sluggish and sleepy district. Government stores and hospitals line the bank hard by the temporary landing stages. Great vessels serving as transports, and ships of war are anchored in midstream. All sorts, sizes, and shapes of smaller craft churn the waters, in a state of perpetual unrest. The evil-looking Arab dhow, with its suggestion of slave traffic, moves alongside the ancient *mahailah*, with its turned-up ends, and roofed shelter of bamboo rods and reed mats, the very image of the Noah's Arks that charmed our childhood. Very picturesque are the long, narrow native boats, or *ballams*, with white awnings, a scantily clad rower at bow and stern, making what almost seem miraculous passages across stream through all the swiftly moving traffic. One tiny canoe I noticed—a dugout—in which a man barely found room to sit; but he boldly and successfully braved the current and the wash of passing steamers, propelling his cockleshell with what looked like an enlarged teaspoon!

At Basrah we heard a happier version of the "German victory." Here also came the heavy tidings of Lord Kitchener's tragic fate. His is an imperishable place in the grateful and admiring memory of a mighty country. Among the men sorrow, indeed, was universal. But there was no weakness in it. The hard

glitter of the eye, and the jaw set with grim determination, boded no good to those who might rejoice in that bitter tragedy of the sea.

Basrah is a name familiar to all lovers of Sinbad the Sailor. From this port that adventurous merchant set out on his marvellous voyages. The Basrah of Sinbad, however, lay a few miles to the south-west of the modern town, which has also a history of some centuries behind it. Embowered among palm groves, on the right bank, about two miles from the river, it is approached by a creek, or waterway, with a road along the edge. 'Ashār, the village at the mouth of the creek, may be called the port of Basrah. North of the creek stands the custom-house. Along the bank, and between this and the large barracks, lies the native village with narrow, straggling bazaars. The creek is spanned by two bridges. To the south, on the river margin, stand the business premises of European merchants, who are the main importers of foreign goods. One firm, Messrs. Lynch Brothers, owned an excellent fleet of river steamers which proved invaluable to our army.

Dates form the chief export. In normal years the annual export totals 90,000 to 100,000 tons. At an average price of £5 per ton, f.o.b., this represents a considerable revenue to a poverty-stricken country. I am sure the town was never before as prosperous as it is to-day. The British pay two or three times as much for transport, labour, and commodities as the Turks were accustomed to give—when they gave anything. Everybody in the place is "on the make." It is their harvest-time, and it may soon be over. When the merchant knows that you must have his goods, that you cannot get what you require elsewhere, it is not so easy to drive a bargain with him. For example: with water conditions such as they were in Basrah district, it is impossible

to exaggerate the usefulness of permanganate of potassium. You could buy it at home for 1s. a pound before the war. The 'Ashâr merchant demanded for it 1s. 4d. an ounce !

After an exceptionally wet season and high floods the water still "prevailed" in the palm groves on both sides of the river, to the depth of about a foot. The roads linking up the various units and connecting them with the river were just raised causeways through the swamps, which, as they dried up with advancing summer, made the air savoury. The army base was established mainly on the right bank of the river. North of 'Ashâr creek great hospitals, Indian and British, lined the brink. South of it business premises and spacious houses were converted into army offices and warehouses ; while alongside them were immense stores of everything that the army might require. The barracks at 'Ashâr and the castle at Basrah were occupied by our troops, British and Indian. Back from the river, among the palm groves at Makînah, and also at Magîl, some four or five miles to the north, there were other hospitals and camps. 'Ashâr was the headquarters of the River Transport, with workshops where minor repairs could be executed on the ships. On the left bank the R.N.A.S. had a base station with a wooden jetty ; farther inland were the hangars and workshops of the R.F.C., and certain hospitals. The isolation or cholera hospital stood at the mouth of a creek about two miles downstream. Some three miles farther down, on the right bank, stood a pasha's palace with spacious gardens, which had been turned to admirable use as a convalescent hospital.

Our hospital camp was pitched near by the R.F.C., on the edge of the desert. It was not exactly pleasant



to find a cholera burying-ground 150 yards from our tent door, the latest interment there taking place on the night of our arrival. As the whole area was liable to flooding by a higher tide—for the tide runs far up the river—one could only admire the care with which the hospital site had been chosen !

We had been assured at Bombay that Basrah was a hotbed of cholera. That was a gross exaggeration, but there was enough of it about to impress upon us the necessity for care. Some of the men were rather nervous about it. At times men with a touch of colic were almost scared to death. A lad came to my tent to apologise for some duty undone. He looked ill. "In fact, sir," he said, "I seem to have lost grip of everything." He swayed ; I caught him as he fell, and half carried him some distance towards his own quarters, when he fairly gave way, and was deadly sick. The orderly medical officer kindly came at once, and helped him over the collapse ; but he was far from happy. In his fear he forgot his manners. Looking up with white face and glittering eyes he said, "If only it's not that d—— cholera, I don't mind !" It was not, and he soon recovered ; but the fright had nearly killed him.

At this time there was little fighting at the front. Snipers, of course, were busy, and periodical bombardments were sending a few wounded to the hospitals. But the health conditions on the river were terrible. In one week there were no fewer than 17,000 sick men to be cared for. Hospital accommodation was now being rapidly increased, with medical staff and personnel ; but resources were still greatly over-taxed. Our hands were full before we had any reasonable equipment or stores. The heat by day was oppressive, reaching at times 125° Fahr. in the

shade. Dust and flies were not so trying as they were on the Peninsula, but for all that they often made life a thing of torture. Mosquitoes and sand-flies were legion, plying their nefarious craft chiefly in hours of darkness. The ordinary mosquito-net, if properly used, kept out the mosquitoes; but it was no defence against sand-flies. The bite of these little creatures, which are almost invisible in dim light, was like a prick with a red-hot needle. A net of sufficiently small mesh to keep them out prevented the circulation of air, and threatened suffocation. The ordinary protective ointments and lotions were used with but little effect. One friend of mine in desperation sprinkled his bedclothes with kerosene, and applied it to his person. The cure seemed to me worse than the disease. Many men suffered from blotches and inflamed swellings caused by the bites, which added a new misery.

The experiences they had come through had a depressing effect on many of the patients; but for the most part the old spirit of unconquerable good cheer prevailed. This was all the more to the credit of the boys as the "comforts" which friends at home so gladly contributed for were very scarce in Mesopotamian hospitals. Anything to read and while away the interminable hours was hardly to be got for love or money. The cigarette which Tommy loves he could only dream of. Even a scrap of paper to write a letter home could be obtained with difficulty. It was a great day when some bales of hospital clothes arrived. The boys at last got out of clothes which they had worn day and night for months, and in their white vests, blue trousers, and scarlet cummerbunds, a very picturesque set of brigands they looked.

As time passed, these deficiencies were in some

measure supplied by the gifts sent for distribution by my own friends and others who responded generously to appeals; but the heat brought trouble that no "comforts" could obviate. Mesopotamia boasts one of the hottest summer climates in the world.

One story that "went the rounds" in Mesopotamia I cannot refrain from telling. The cold packs essential for cases of heat stroke, and other necessary purposes, consumed a great quantity of ice. Another ice machine was a matter of urgency. A demand was sent to Bombay, where the authorities, with an eye to economy, looked round for something that might do. They found a second-hand machine which was forthwith purchased and dispatched to Basrah. The engineers were much exercised as to how the mechanism should be erected. When at last it was set up, they found that it was a *steam laundry*!

For any commodities to be purchased from native shops or army stores we had to cross the river, making use of the native ballams. There are two boatmen to each, one at bow and one at stern. They are armed with bamboo poles with knobs of bitumen at the ends for hand-grips. Walking with bare feet on the boat thwarts, they push her with the poles upstream along the shallows. Then, heading her across the river, they lay down the poles, grasp their oars, and pull with might and main. The current carries them down, and they reach the other side about level with the spot they started from.

The unloading of cargo has furnished work for a very heterogeneous lot of people. The boatmen on the river, the neighbouring Arabs, and the natives of adjoining villages are having the time of their lives. They are paid out of all proportion to anything they have ever known for the poor service they can render.

They are very keen on biscuits, preserved fruit, jam, etc.

Along with Mr. Green I set out one day for Basrah in a ballam. The creek was literally swarming with motor-boats, steam-launches, row-boats and ballams, and the cafés along the shore were buzzing with white-turbaned coffee-drinkers and smokers, rejoicing in the shade and nearness of water. A little farther along the swamp comes close to the creek, and palms, gracefully festooned with vines and other trailers, hanging over the water, make exceedingly pretty bits. Bathers plunge from the shore, and wallow delightedly in a stream that makes no pretence of being clean.

A British sentry guarded the mud-brick gateway of the city. This led into a long, wood-covered, winding bazaar, of the type familiar to any visitor of Oriental towns. Little shops with full front open to the street, and goods spread out to the edge of the roadway. What a curious medley of commodities they offer. In one small *Dokkân* (shop) you will find crockery and glassware, hardware, drugs, groceries, articles of clothing, flash jewellery, etc., jostling each other for room, and all with an indescribable air of cheapness. This is fallacious, as you find when you try to buy! The salesman sits in the midst with the aspect of a scarcely awakened sphinx. The tinsmiths, shoemakers, bakers, silversmiths, and goldsmiths have their own areas. And there are the inevitable cafés, with earthen floor and unclean tables and benches, where so many loungers seem to pass their earthly existence. Of the curiously mingled company in the streets, the most striking figure is that of the saucy, independent-looking Arab, his coloured kerchief bound to his head by a stout woollen rope, his cotton shirt covered by a

rough cloak of hair, his feet thrust into red leather shoes or long-legged boots. He is seldom unarmed. He swings through the crowd with a fine easy stride, and an air of perfect composure and conscious superiority. If any of his womenkind are with him, they follow very meekly in their simple blue smocks, carrying uncomplainingly their children and the fruit of the morning's marketing.

We held our religious services in the hollow of the square formed by the hospital camp. Parade services were impossible. We joined our forces to make the best and the most of voluntary services. These made successful appeal to patients who were able to move, and to the free men about camp. The officers on the staff set an admirable example of regularity and reverence. This, in the field, counts for more than might be imagined. There was a Y.M.C.A. hut a little way off, and the secretary, an Indian gentleman, brought over his cinema once a week to enliven things among us. Our C.O. by and by succeeded in getting a large dining tent, and spacious recreation, reading, and writing tent erected. Concerts—excellent concerts, too—were provided by members of our own personnel. Many of them in peace time were professional singers and entertainers. Their trained gifts were put to most valuable use. At times a military band would discourse stirring music in the square. These things, with an occasional lecture, helped to break the monotony. The lectures were often repeated at the Y.M.C.A. Let me describe one of these occasions.

After supper, I walked over to the local Y.M.C.A., and found a large company of men sitting in the open air outside the mat-covered hut which forms the depot. The new moon showed like a bent lath of

silver above us. The front rank of the audience was clearly visible in the light of a single lamp ; the others waxed indistinct in the dim shadows behind. They were singing a familiar hymn with their accustomed swing, to the vigorous lead of the secretary. They had come to hear a talk on some ancient history and geography, with references to modern episodes that more nearly concerned them. They made a most excellent audience. There was nothing stiff or formal about that company, either in dress or otherwise. The air was close and hot. You would not have recognised the lecturer himself, as he strolled over in the dark, clad in shirt and trousers, with neither cap nor collar, and sleeves rolled up over the elbows ; and, even so, perspiring, as he expounded features and movements of the far-off world when Babylon still was " great."

There was a fine field for lectures and services at the Y.M.C.A. huts, at the barracks, camps, and hospitals throughout the Base area. It is a pleasure to acknowledge the courtesy and helpfulness of the secretaries, the officers, and Miss Jones, the matron in chief charge of the nurses in Mesopotamia, in arranging for these, and taking steps to make them useful.

On the 18th of July news reached us that Sir Victor Horsley had died of heat stroke at 'Amārah on the 16th. It is not too much to say that the event cast a gloom over all the hospitals on the river, and filled many hearts with sorrow. I met Sir Victor first on the Peninsula, where for a time, with characteristic courage, he placed his marvellous skill and insight at the service of his brethren. We met again in Egypt. We agreed then to look out for a meeting in Mesopotamia, and I was anticipating this with keen

pleasure when the blow fell. Ever careful of others, he was apt to do rash things himself. One can never afford to take risks with the Mesopotamian sun. He is no respecter of persons. Sir Victor had attained exceptional eminence as a surgeon, especially in brain surgery. To his delicate and skilful manipulation of head wounds undoubtedly many owe their lives to-day. He was a man of brilliant mind, strong and earnest convictions, and resolute courage; withal high and gentle of heart; free from all suspicion of pretence: a thorough English gentleman. Cut down in the midst of his abundant labours, he died a true patriot's death.

The sun is the one thing we can be absolutely sure of in the Mesopotamian summer. The moment he appears above the eastern horizon he grips you by the neck, and there is no escape or respite till he sinks exhausted among his many-coloured pillows in the west. I am haunted by the memory of certain lines which were sung with great gusto in childhood's days under the leaden and oft-times dripping skies of the "Old Country." How we envied the nations of those happy regions "where on Essequibo's banks, eternal summer reigns." And Paradise, "where not a cloud ever darkens the sky," was hymned as rejoicing in "cloudless, high, eternal noon." What a sinking of heart these ideas cause after three months' subjection to the red-hot tyranny of the unclouded sun! From the realisation of all such dreams, may a kindly Providence deliver us!

Days come that leave one without energy to do anything—even to write. It is desperately hot, and a strong, burning, dust-laden wind blows from the desert. It laps round one, like tongues of flame, drying up the perspiration before it has time to form on the

skin. It is curious how one gets accustomed to dust, without growing to like it one whit better; but I don't think one could ever get used to the limpness wrought by the combination of high temperatures and hot winds. It makes harder than ever the battle which the poor boys in the hospital tents have to fight against depression. And wonderful success they achieve in a business which even at the easiest is strenuous.

Weak and worn with illness, privation, and hardship, they are as keen as mustard on the course of the war. Many of them have been in one or more of the engagements that have marked the campaign. They are most vivid annalists; and, needless to say, there are striking discrepancies between their accounts and those which the authorities have deemed fit to publish. Many of them are skilful strategists. In each tent there is at least one man who knows exactly what should be done to bring matters to a speedy and successful issue. Frequent conferences are held upon the general situation, in which views are expressed that would surprise those who sit in the seats of the mighty; which might be quite worthy of their consideration for all that! Withal there is among them a deep vein of humour, and a wit that flashes in the most unexpected times and places. A burst of hilarious laughter from a tent usually means that some irrepressible jester has wrought a whimsical joke out of very unpromising material. One lad had lost weight rapidly, and it seemed as if his limbs were about to vanish. His neighbour sagely observed, "You had better take care or you will be arrested as a vagrant for hanging round without visible means of support!"

This faculty for extracting fun out of grim and



forbidding subjects is very characteristic of our British soldiers. It does not in the least mean that they lack either seriousness or sympathy. They don't wear their hearts on their sleeves. They shrink from any display of the deeper emotions. But they know each other thoroughly. A laughter-provoking remark is not misunderstood. You will often see a man with a jest upon his lips doing, at great personal cost, a kindness to a suffering comrade. Their fun does something to preserve their self-respect, which they might feel compromised by too open show of feeling ; and no one can deny that it often helps brave men over the rougher parts of their experience.

At Magil, some four miles upstream of us, on the right bank, was a very large and varied camp. The commandant was a Scotsman, Captain Macfarlane,<sup>1</sup> the youngest officer I have seen in such an important command. There was, however, nothing youthful or immature in his control of the camp. Frequent visits to the men there left very happy memories. There were quite a number of old Gallipoli friends among them. After lecturing in the moonlight one Saturday evening I stayed to preach on Sunday morning. The principal chaplain (C. of E.) was one of my audience ; and at a later hour I had the pleasure of attending a service conducted by him. This is worth relating merely as an illustration of the friendly goodwill existing among the padres.

A rise in temperature was expected the last week of August. It is called the "Date Ripener" ; and it did not fail to come. Just then my C. of E. colleague

<sup>1</sup> The son of Bailie Macfarlane of Edinburgh, Captain Macfarlane was an officer of the Black Watch. Rejoining his regiment, in which he was held in the highest respect and affection, he fell, after the capture of Baghdad, while gallantly leading an attack.

and I were ordered to proceed up river, nearer the front. The depressing task of collecting necessary kit for the journey was relieved in unexpected ways. A padre's Indian boy had yielded to temptation and committed an offence for which only corporal punishment is regarded as adequate. The padre, however, could not inflict the punishment himself. He wrote a letter to the A.P.M. (Assistant Provost-Marshal), who attends to these matters, asking him to give *the bearer* "twelve of the best"—*i.e.* twelve lashes. Saying nothing of its contents, he gave this letter to the boy, instructing him to deliver it to the A.P.M. The boy met a Lascar on the way and asked where the A.P.M.'s office was, as he had a letter for him. "Oh," said the obliging Lascar, "I am going that way, and will take the letter for you." Nothing loath, the boy gave him the missive, and returned serenely to his duty. Too late the padre learned the truth: the only question remaining is what the Lascar thought of British justice!

## CHAPTER XX

### ON THE RIVER TIGRIS

A GENERAL kindly gave me a look at the large map of Mesopotamia prepared by Sir William Willcox, whose name is so well known in connection with schemes for irrigation in this country; and furnished me with a smaller scale map which proved extremely useful. His own keen interest in the country, its history and antiquities, leads me to hope that ere long we may have a work on Mesopotamia from his facile and vivid pen. We went on board our steamer at Magil jetty. Each man provided himself with ten days' rations from a shed with all sorts of supplies near the jetty. The voyage to Sheikh Sa'ad, the advanced base to which we were bound, should not take more than four days; but there were the mud-banks to think of. Another padre, who came later, drew rations for us a second time; so we were in clover. The "clover" consisted of tinned meat of various kinds, and army biscuits, with sugar and tea.

As the tide comes up in full volume beyond Basrah, the water here can never get below tide-level. It was then at its lowest, and although at ebbtide navigation was somewhat precarious, very large vessels came up comfortably when it turned. Higher up, however, the process of drying goes on and the streams grow tenuous and shallow. Boats of the lightest draught are used for transport, but even these too often touch

the bottom. It is not at all an enviable experience to be held up on a mud-bank from four to six days.

As the autumn advances the river makes up its mind as to the bed in which the main current is to flow until the coming of the rains. The streams wandering over the wider bed gradually fall in to swell the volume in this. The heavier current deepens the fairway, making easier the passage of ships.

Our steamer is one specially built for navigation of the Tigris and the Karun. Lashed on each side of her is an old barge, and these almost treble her carrying capacity. It is a modern ship with a Noah's Ark on either side, toiling upstream like a duck with an overgrown duckling under each wing. The steamer is a double-decker, with awning over the upper deck. There is no pretence of luxury either in the fittings or in the fare. There is a "saloon" with little cabins opening off it in which luggage may be stored. There is a table, but no chairs. Boxes turned on end do very well. The officers on board are divided into "messes" of four or six, and these take the table for meals in turn. We use our own utensils, crockery, and cutlery. Unfortunately my batman was running a temperature, and was taken off at the last moment. The lad given me in his place was a theological student. He made a brave struggle against adverse circumstances, and we fared really very well. "Districts" on deck were assigned to the respective messes. There we planted our sleeping-gear, and rested serenely till the dawn.

Indian warriors marched on to the barges, where, under awnings, bags containing supplies for them had already been placed; and our "flotilla" got under way. The palm groves continue for some miles above Magil. We passed a long green island on the left, and just beyond it opens the mouth of the

Euphrates. In old time this river joined the Tigris much farther up, at Kurnah; but more recently it has taken a short cut across the marshes from the neighbourhood of Nasiriyeh. Its waters are clear, while those of the Tigris are tawny. For quite a distance the two streams refuse to mingle, the clear and the tawny water flowing side by side in the same channel, reminding one of the confluence of the Moselle and the Rhine. The river is fairly straight as far as Kurnah; the bends, at least, are on a generous scale, and, as the water is deep, navigation is easy. At Kurnah we pass the old mouth of the Euphrates, which is crossed by a bridge of boats. Little water from that river now reaches the Tigris here. Kurnah is one of our stopping-places, mud-buildings and palms running along the right bank of the river. Here we put ashore the body of a man who had died of cholera. Desperately quick work it was. He was attacked at ten, and by twelve o'clock he was gone. We were carefully disinfected; but this experience put us in quarantine. We drew over to the left bank and tied up there for the night, doubtful if we should be allowed to proceed. Our Indian soldiers went ashore and bivouacked among the palms. When the fires died down with which they had cooked their evening meal, their flickering lights shone like the flash of fireflies through the gloom.

Kurnah is the traditional site of the Garden of Eden. The view along the shore is pretty enough, but in other respects it is not easy to think of conditions less Edenic. The neighbouring swamps are the home of malaria, and noxious insect life flourishes exceedingly. It is well to speak softly, if you speak at all, when you look in the glass after a night spent in this paradise! One lad volunteered the opinion that it

wouldn't need a angel wi' a flamin' sword to keep him out o' Eden. The remark was perhaps not original; but it had the merit of saying what he meant. Another, in a reminiscent vein, observed that this was the place where Adam stole the fruit. The traditionalists are blissfully unaware of the fact that at the time they fix for the experiences of Adam and Eve, the waters of the Persian Gulf still rolled over the site of Kurnah.

The morning brought permission to proceed. Above Kurnah the river becomes narrower, and its tortuosities begin. It twists and turns in the most disconcerting fashion, reminding one somewhat of "the links o' Forth" below Stirling. At times there is hardly room for the "flotilla" to pass. When a swift turn has to be made against the current, especially round what is called a "hairpin bend," some astonishing seamanship is displayed. The bumping of the barges against the banks has smoothed them to something resembling a plastered wall. If the land rose a little more rapidly the water would cut for itself a straighter bed; but the total rise from the sea to Baghdad is only III feet. The stream is thus free to saunter along at its leisure, leaving a track like a "burbled" ribbon of light across the chocolate plains.

Our passing aroused the interest of the Arab communities dwelling near the river. Men, women, and children in a state of great excitement came rushing pell-mell, intent to sell fish, vegetables, chickens, and eggs. What a motley crowd they were—naked children, ragged men, dishevelled women. The scanty clothing of the men revealed in many cases a splendid figure. Grown away from the constraints of civilisation, their frame has received a full and natural development. The sombre blue smock, girt round the

waist, prevailed among the women ; but, in case of need, they do not scorn a bit of rough sacking. Some of the older girls wore most brilliant overalls. One I noticed clad in flaming red ochre, another in dazzling blue, and another in chocolate brown on which were picked out innumerable small circles of yellow.

But everything else was forgotten in the wild pursuit of our "flotilla" with its possible market for their goods. When a barge was close to the shore, business went forward briskly. When we were nearer midstream, they dived, waded, and swam with great dexterity. Small green melons were thrown with some skill. The barge was, of course, a fairly big mark, and I don't think any of them were lost. I am not so sure about the money that was thrown ashore. The chickens, I fear, had a very unhappy time, especially when held aloft in one hand while the swimmer struck out for the ship. Several men and boys swam out and climbed on to the rudder of the nearest barge, which was just under water, and there made a not very successful appeal for alms. They gave place to a blind man. He came out under the guidance of another, who, pointing to his sightless orbs, appealed *ad misericordiam* not quite in vain. One Indian was so eager for a good bargain that he overreached (literally) and fell with a splash into the river. It was now evident why two men and a woman had followed us in a boat. This was their opportunity. They pulled him out of the water and hoisted him again on board ; an enterprise more to their profit than mere bargaining.

The "Tomb of Ezra" is the chief object of interest between Basrah and 'Amārah. It is a large building on the right bank of the river with a lofty blue dome. There are a few trees around it, and crazy shelters

for pilgrims, both Jew and Moslem, who frequent the shrine. One tale is that Ezra expressed a wish to be buried near the sea. When the camel carrying his body reached this spot it knelt down, and nothing could persuade it to rise and go on. This was taken as a sign that the appointed place of sepulture had been reached, so here the remains of the great man were laid to rest. Civilisation, alas! is often the enemy of the beautiful and the picturesque. The railway was a prime necessity, and thankful were we to see evidences of its swift progress at last. But the railway huts and other hasty structures that now crowd the bank at "Ezra's Tomb" make one thankful that he saw the place before the iron monsters brought disfigurement.

For the most part, it is a dreary prospect that meets the eye beyond the banks of the river. On all sides the plain stretches away to the horizon, with little to break the monotony of coarse grass and desert scrub. An occasional clump of trees marks an Arab village or saint's tomb; here and there the fragile cane-built shelters of an Arab community press down upon the shore, while at long intervals a square of mud walls encloses a more permanent settlement. The sun almost seems to pour down liquid fire, and a south wind burns like the blast from an open furnace. This land, which in ancient days nursed to strength the mighty empires whose history fills the records of the past, is now a vast wilderness of desert and morass, cut through by hundreds of channels hollowed out aimlessly by rising and receding waters. It ought to be one of the world's greatest sources of supply for food and fruit. It yields but a pitiful fraction of what might be won from its broad acres and deep, rich soil, and supports in an exiguous life a few handfuls





1.



2.

1. EZRA'S TOMB.

2. KUT EL-'AMĀRAH, AFTER BOMBARDMENT.

Decorative printer's marks consisting of various symbols and patterns arranged in a grid-like fashion at the top of the page.



BLACK WATCH IN FIRING LINE AT SINNIYÂT.

of withered Arabs. The application of Sir William Willcox's scheme for the draining of the marshes, the control and guidance of the waters brought down from the "land of Ararat" by the rivers, would swiftly produce a transformation which might well be the wonder of mankind. We have seen in Egypt what "miracles" may be wrought by irrigation works executed on generous lines and managed with insight and skill. May we not hope that our coming hither will bring the dawn of a new day for this home of hoary and splendid traditions; that the long and dreary night of desolation may soon pass, and the far-spreading wilderness "blossom as the rose"?

At 'Amārah I was met by Major the Rev. J. H. H. M'Neill, senior Church of Scotland chaplain. He brought an excellent programme of a week's work in 'Amārah for me. It began immediately on landing with a sermon to many hundreds of young fellows gathered for Sunday evening service at the Y.M.C.A. My good friend Colonel Bond, O.C., the British General Hospital, had invited me to stay with him, and his hospitable kindness left me without a care. Here I had the pleasure of meeting the keen observer and competent scribe who chooses to be known as "Martin Swayne." His descriptions of life and scenery in *Mesopotamia* are as vivid and accurate as his beautiful sketches in colour are artistic and true.

A broad canal runs out from the left side of the Tigris into the desert, where it finally loses itself. Downstream from the canal, between it and the river, stands the town of 'Amārah. Beginning at the canal, the bank for a considerable distance is faced with brick. Most of the vessels that ply on the river are able to come pretty close to the side, even when the water is low. The stream is spanned by a bridge of

boats, which is opened at intervals to allow vessels to pass. Along the river front there is a row of houses, two storeys high, square, substantial, built of brick. These are very largely used to-day for stores, hospitals, and offices for the work of the army. The bazaar opens on the river, and at this end is covered by a lofty roof. The shops are fairly clean, and the curious "hotchpotch" of commodities for sale are displayed with some approach to taste. As you go inwards, the roof disappears and any old rag supported by a stick serves for shelter. The usual crowd of Arabs is augmented by our soldiers, our fellow-citizens, the dusky warriors of India, and an occasional hospital nurse on the outlook for "curios." It is amazing what you can buy here, amid surroundings of the utmost squalor and a perfect Babel of chaffering bargain-makers. If you are not careful, you may walk off triumphantly with souvenirs of Mesopotamia which were manufactured in Manchester or Birmingham, imported by enterprising merchants, the only thing Mesopotamian about them being the price you have paid for them.

There are many workers in copper and brass who turn out utensils rough but serviceable. There is only one native artificer who works in silver. He specialises in sleeve links, buttons, napkin rings, etc., with pictures inlaid upon them in antimony. His masterpieces, so far as I have seen, are Ezra's tomb, and boats on the Tigris. These he has reproduced so often that I suppose he could now do it blind. They look quite pretty, however, and as he has no opposition the worthy man is overwhelmed with orders. This makes him very independent. If he does a thing for you, it must be regarded as a favour. If you trust an article from him, and you are not there when

it is ready, he will calmly sell it to the first comer, and you have only yourself to blame for missing your market. Near the centre of a great square which opens on the river stands a grisly structure—the gallows—in these stormy days seldom long without its “tassels.”

On the other side of the river are long reaches of palm grove and garden, with here and there something of a jungle, which furnish a convincing demonstration of the amazing richness of the soil. Vegetables grow almost “while you wait.” Cucumber, melon, vegetable marrow, bringal, and tomato exult in opulent rivalry. The vine, the pomegranate, fig and mulberry, apricot and lime bear out of all proportion to the labour expended on them. Willows flourish along the river brink, and on the levels beyond the belt of cultivation the camel thorn grows with rank luxuriance. How eloquent it all is of the possibilities of this old land, the fabled scene of the garden which was “planted eastward in Eden.” Very sure I am that, in competent hands, with the means that could be so easily supplied, the reality would soon excel in riches and beauty all that has been dreamed or imagined in the past.

Among the greenery to-day twinkles the white canvas of many tents, and in the ampler spaces, presided over by the palms, are long hospital wards, where the sick and wounded soldiers of Britain and India are cared for until such time as they can return to duty, or gather strength to make the voyage down the river. Such institutions as these cannot be completed and equipped in a day, but I am bound to say that the arrangements here are now such as to move one to thankful admiration.

The week was a fairly busy one. I made the round

of the hospitals under Mr. M'Neill's guidance, and spoke with many of the men. I preached in various places, and lectured a few times. The boys were keenly interested in the Biblical associations of the country, and often the half-hour after a lecture was the liveliest of all, when they came with their remarks and questionings. Sometimes they were a little bit out in their reckoning. One referred to the country with more reverence than knowledge, as "partly the Holy Land where Jesus used to walk." A keen-faced boy questioned me closely as to whether there were now any remains of "the pillar of salt." I did not fall to his meaning at first, so he explained, "the pillar of salt Lot's wife turned into." He meant to have a chip of that pillar to take home to his mother! A "hefty chap" with a New Testament in his hand wanted to know how far up the river Sodom and Gomorrah were. He had been misled by Biblical names attached to unknown places by our soldiers. It may be of interest to note that no lad trained north of the border ever came to me with inquiries such as these. I have had a good deal of cross-examination, however, about the birthplace of Abraham, the Tower of Babel, Babylon, Nineveh, and other places famous in history: not least about the Garden of Eden.

As one ascends the river the heat moderates. It is still pretty fierce in the direct rays of the sun, but the nights are cooler. Indeed, in the early hours in bed on deck the cold wakened me. It was the first time I had felt cold for many months. We had a glimpse of the Pushti Kuh Mountains in the morning. In the afternoon they were very clear, and seemed to be quite near. The curving stream and wide flats tended to monotony which there was little to break. I saw what

I think was a hyena coming down to the river to drink. Dense coveys of sand-grouse kept flying around all day. Eagles and vultures came flapping over us and settled on the mud-banks in the stream. A snow-white, solitary flamingo, with his long slender pink legs, stalked among the shallows like a swan on stilts.

The higher we go the more difficult navigation becomes. Two men who have studied the habits of the river from boyhood stand with the captain on the bridge and advise as to the safest course to steer. When shallow water is feared, a lad is placed on the outer edge of each of the two barges to take soundings with a long pole, singing out in Hindustani, "Three feet," "Four feet," "Plenty of water," etc., according to the result of each sounding. With the narrowing of the stream the current grows stronger, and progress is slow. We had many narrow escapes, and at length found ourselves fairly aground. A "flotilla" was stuck fast in the fairway above us, and a second some distance below us. Yet another followed us and went firmly on to the mud between us and the last named. For over an hour all the four struggled vainly to get free. Soundings taken from a rowing boat showed that there was plenty of deep water ahead. An attempt was made to kedge off. The anchor was slung to the stern of the rowing boat, and the chain put on board. The boatmen then pulled upstream, paying out the anchor chain. They had not gone far against the current when they had to slip the anchor. The chain was then pulled in by means of a steam winch, and as the anchor held fast we moved a little, but not enough. The captain sent the boat ashore with a stout cable, which was there made fast. Returning to the steamer, the boat took out the anchor and chain as before. The boatmen grasped the cable,

and by it pulled the boat with its cargo against the stream, the length of the chain. The anchor was slipped, and straining at once on the anchor and the cable we moved forward, and to our great relief were soon on our way again. The others were not so fortunate. Some of them got free an hour or two later ; but one, and that, alas ! carrying our mails, formed a metal island in the stream for several days !



## CHAPTER XXI

### AT THE ADVANCED BASE

It was a very pleasant sight to see my friend Green gesticulating on the bank at Sheikh Sa'ad. We were attached to Advanced Base Headquarters, and were members of the Commandant's mess. The Commandant and staff officers were thorough gentlemen, and their acquaintance with the whole situation made their counsel specially valuable. Here we met a constant stream of most interesting men, officers of all ranks, with varied and thrilling experiences, whose talk about the incidents and aspects of the campaign was absorbing and illuminating.

Sheikh Sa'ad is an ordinary mud-built Arab village on the right bank of the Tigris, which saw the last of its native inhabitants when we took possession in January. The village is the least important feature. A city of white canvas spread along the bank of the much-winding river. The clay cliffs rose in September to a height of about 15 feet above the stream. Along the brink were high earthen embankments. Traces of the simple husbandry pursued by the villagers in peace time are to be seen among the streets of tents.

Here was a great army base, with hospitals,—seven of them,—rest camp, engineers' field park, post office, and railway station: the Army Ordnance Corps, with workshops, and the Army Supply Stores cover much ground. There is a Y.M.C.A., a canteen, and two

native "bazaars"—squares of packing-cases in the open—offering at strictly controlled prices commodities not included in rations. The troops defending the line of communications are encamped near the perimeter. Here is also the "River Head," and all shipping business is transacted along the river bank.

Green and I were at first jointly responsible for oversight of all men in this area, except the R.C.'s. Changes were numerous and constant. Colonel Goodbody, A.D.M.S., was then the only officer on the spot who had been present at the fighting in January.

Sheikh Sa'ad was what might be called the "bottle neck" through which all troops and supplies of every kind had to pass on their way to the front, and it was the first halting-place for those who, for whatever reason, were bound rearwards. We were thus brought into touch with officers and men of every unit, alike when they went forward full of hope and confidence, and when they came back sick or wounded.

At the advanced base, while we heard the guns and saw the flash of bursting shells, we were in no real danger from them. Aeroplane bombs were vicious but infrequent. Here, as on the Peninsula, the invisible foes were most to be feared. When they achieve their stealthy entrance the strong man is soon brought low. Sanitation was strictly attended to, and our camp was free from the more deadly forms of sickness. Flies are not easily suppressed. Mosquitoes and sand-flies were not numerous, and one could dispense with mosquito curtains. But there was one wretched fly that carried on its nefarious work by day. It resembles the ordinary house-fly, and sits down upon you with such an air of innocence that you suspect nothing until a sharp pain startles you. By this time he has bitten through the cuticle and is

regaling himself at the crimson spring. He is not poisonous, as far as I know, but he is a loathsome creature. One has no more mercy on these pests than the Hun had on the Belgians. In their lust for blood and delight in torture they closely resemble the apostles of *Kultur*.

My first burial was that of a lad belonging to the Black Watch, who had died in a local hospital. The cemetery lies a considerable distance out in the desert plain. In the failing light it was not quite easy to find. The place was pointed out to me by the officer commanding the farthest outpost. He showed me the way through the barbed wire, but said he could not allow me to go out without an escort. Hearing that a burial party was waiting for me, he withdrew his objection, and I reached the cemetery before the grave was complete. The bearers with the body arrived a few minutes later. By this time the sun had set, and with the gathering dusk a hush fell over the wilderness. The men were still toiling in the grave. The soil is very difficult to dig. It is like cutting through stiff toffee. A corporal and two men, fully armed, arrived from the outpost officer, bidding us get back behind the barbed wire with all speed. It was almost quite dark before our sad task was finished, and we left our comrade sleeping under the clods of the night-wrapped plain. I reached our tent just in time to receive the Bishop of Nagpur, who was visiting this part of the lines. He looked in to compare notes with me about Palestine, which he visited in the spring of 1911—the year when I last was there. He was full of appreciation of our missionaries whom he had met. The robust manhood of "Paterson of Hebron" had especially impressed him.

The Army authorities erected a cinema outfit not

far from the Y.M.C.A. Tent. The engine was under cover, but the screen was outside, facing the embankment, which formed a sort of gallery where the men might sit and not seriously interfere with each other's view. It was a real boon to the fellows during the long dark evenings. It was close to the hospitals and so easily reached by sick men able to go out. It was not far from the rest camp. I went down occasionally to see what sort of a show it was, and sat down unobserved in the midst of the gathering. All parts of the Empire were represented in the crowd, and the different angles from which men look on the world came out clearly in the comments made on the pictures. The show itself was a rather insipid affair, but there was plenty of "ginger" and not a little "brimstone" in the remarks passed. Unfortunately, most of them were quite unquotable; but, in spite of the language in which they were couched, nothing could obscure their sparkling wit and whimsical humour. I dare say it is true that Tommy means no more by the three words that seem to constitute his main stock of adjectives than we do when we use quite mild forms of speech, and that his thought seldom sinks to the level of the words he employs; but the habit is one which every high-minded man must regret. The men are not greatly impressed by the mimic tragedies of the screen. The "hero" of one piece had got his affairs into such a tangle that the only way of escape he could think of was suicide. Having chosen his drug, he was on the point of swallowing it, when a voice, undoubtedly "frae Glesca," exclaimed, "He'll no tak' pushion, but just a dose o' *magnetic sulph*!" This travesty of a prescription too familiar in this charming climate, sent the audience into fits of merriment.

It was my duty and privilege to visit occasionally

the men at the front, especially those belonging to the Scottish regiments. The chaplains and secretaries of the Y.M.C.A. most kindly arranged for services, lectures, etc., and introduced me to the men in camp and trench, so that my path was plain. Let me give some accounts of what such visits meant. By four o'clock one Saturday morning I was astir, got my belongings packed, strapped, and carried to the train. The appointments in the "Desert Express" are not quite as luxurious as those in a Pulman car, so I took a wicker chair along, and found not a little comfort therefrom. The open waggons were loaded with provisions, munitions, and materials required by different Army Departments. Over these were squatted a multitude of men, fully armed, who were put down for duty at various places on the way.

It would be highly inconvenient for the men at the front, who largely depend on it for supplies and reinforcements, if the railway were cut. It is, therefore, defended by a stout fence of barbed wire and a system of strongly held blockhouses. These stand at intervals of about five hundred yards along the line. "Blockhouse" is a technical term, which may be applied to structures of various form and character. Here it stands for a fairly large dugout with roof of timber and earth, surrounded by a deep, circular trench. It is inconspicuous, not easily seen from a distance, while the occupants obtain a good view of what is transpiring on the plain without unduly exposing themselves. Even in the grey of the morning, before the dawn, you never go far without observing some movement of armed men.

As the light grows in the East and the shadows rise from the plain, here and there in the distance clouds of dust become visible; and soon, with the aid of field-

glasses, you can distinguish under them the slow, stately swing of the camel caravan, or the long, winding string of Indian mule carts; and you realise that the railway, while the most important, is only one among other means of reaching with life's necessities the men holding posts of danger in the wilderness.

The "Railway Station," where we scramble out of the trucks and deposit our goods in the dust, is purely a creation of the war. The tents, huts, and small mountains of miscellaneous stores have sprung up like mushrooms in the waste, and will most likely vanish with the dawn of peace. Water pumped up from the shrunken river is led hither in a canal to sustain the life of man and beast. It is a scene of great animation to-day. Provisions, fodder, ammunition, equipment, firewood, etc. etc., are distributed among the transport carts sent by the various units encamped or entrenched within a certain radius. The goods are packed on the carts and securely fastened, with no little din and shouting, English and Indian, with much dust and excitement, for which recalcitrant mules are mainly responsible. In such conditions you have a chance to realise the opulence of the British N.C.O.'s vocabulary! Meantime, beside us, under the shade of a water tank, reclines a group of our dusky fellow-citizens from the East, enjoying a quiet game of cards. "Do you see, sir," said my batman, "how these Johnnies deal the cards?" They give them out from right to left,—the Western custom, I believe, being to deal from left to right. They also take the cards from the bottom of the pack, instead of from the top, as with us—a curious illustration of the contrariety existing between East and West.

The H.L.I. were posted at "the Narrows," and

had charge of the pickets along a sector of the river front, furnishing guards for certain batteries in the area. An Englishman is in command. His interest and pride in his command could hardly be exceeded by a genuine Highlandman.

The second in command is a Scot, a namesake of my own, a keen and efficient soldier, and an enthusiast for the pipes. My friend, Mr. M'Caul, the Scottish chaplain attached to this brigade, guided me round the various sections of the camp, making acquaintance with the men. The Brigadier greeted me with a genial welcome as a "brither Scot." A loyal member and elder of the Scottish Kirk, he was among the first on parade for early morning service on Sunday, and he presided at my lecture that evening. That afternoon we walked over the plain towards Beit 'Îsa, and along the riverine trenches, when the General explained to me the course of the battle in which he had taken a distinguished and gallant part. It was the occasion of some of the hardest fighting seen in Mesopotamia. Of the pandemonium it was, abundant evidence remains. The surface of the earth is furrowed by labyrinths of great trenches, rent and torn by shot and shell, and literally sprinkled with empty shrapnel cases and live small arms ammunition. Tattered rags of uniform flutter among the desert scrub. Broken and twisted weapons and fragments of accoutrements are scattered about. Of the more gruesome relics of the fight I may not write; but you can well imagine what they are when you consider what hurried and perfunctory burial alone was possible amid the confusion, din, and danger of those awful days. After the wild delirium of unhallowed strife, how peacefully the foemen sleep in their shallow graves.

We had to move with circumspection, as a skilful

Turkish sniper from the other side of the river was making rather good shooting. Retracing our steps in the twilight, we found a wooden cross. "Near here," said the legend, are buried two gallant officers who fell on 18th April. How pathetic and forlorn appeared that solitary symbol, with its vague inscription, standing amid the gathering shadows in the wide and silent wilderness.

Sunday brought a truly Sabbatic air and a delicious sense of security and restfulness. The reason for this was that a truce had been arranged with the enemy, during which an exchange of prisoners was being effected. From sunrise to sunset no hostile act on either side might be done. The big guns were left to slumber in silence, and not even the sniper's rifle might bark at the most tempting target. We could, therefore, walk abroad alone or in groups with minds at ease. The brief respite was very sweet to war-worn men.

I watched the progress of one of our paddle-steamers making her way up the river, the opposite side of which was held by the enemy. Only the funnel and rigging appeared above the river banks. From the top of the foremast the white flag was fluttering. She moved forward in the midst of a quiet that might almost be felt. She carried the Turkish captives whose handing over was to purchase freedom for some of our friends who had the misfortune to fall into hostile hands.

Church parade, Communion service, a meeting with the men in the R.A.M.C. Tent, and a tramp some miles over the plain for service with the guard and personnel at a howitzer battery, occupied the day till evening. We got back in time for lecture at 6.30. The Sergeant-Major had rigged up a good wind-screen



and a brilliant acetylene lamp in an open space within the camp. Adherents of all creeds and persuasions come freely to a lecture, who may be shy of attending any particular "Service." Thus the padre finds his opportunity to deliver a message which little regards ecclesiastical divisions, but is much concerned with the deepest needs of human hearts and lives.

## CHAPTER XXII

### ON THE MESOPOTAMIAN FRONT

HERE I had my first experience of flight in an aeroplane. It has been my ambition ever since the flying machine came into vogue, and the chance was too good to be missed. I was strapped securely in the observer's seat, with a trusty pilot in charge behind me. The initial rush across the aerodrome, increasing in speed until we fairly took wing, was exhilarating. During the swift climb to a high altitude, the horizons seemed to be rushing away as the view widened. When the machine got properly into her stride, I settled down to thorough enjoyment. One gets used to the noise as the miller does to the din of the mill, and the fierce current of air from the propeller is broken by the wind-screen. It was like riding in the most comfortably appointed motor-car, with this difference, that there was absolutely nothing to "bump" on. As one looks down upon the world, far below, he has a strange sense of *hovering*, and no consciousness of the great speed at which he is going—certainly not less than sixty miles an hour. Everything on the surface of the earth is seen with gem-like clearness, but on a greatly reduced scale—the broad expanse of the plain; the camps laid out with mathematical precision; the railway; the blockhouses; the dark tracery of the trenches, and the clear windings of the river, with what seem like toy boats plying on its waters. One might be looking down upon a great

map or a carefully executed drawing. Still, I could understand what the airmen mean when they speak of developing "air eyes," for much practice is necessary before one can distinguish the minute and delicate things so full of significance to the skilled observer. How delightful it is when you sweep round in a wide circle like some mighty bird in the blue. When the engine eases off for the descent, and you go with a wild rush down through the fields of air, it is pure joy, as of children tobogganing on a snowy slope. While still far from the ground, the plane rights itself, and glides slowly down, at last touching the earth as daintily as a dove alighting.

About the middle of October, General Sir C. C. Monro, having been appointed Commander-in-Chief in India, visited us. Accompanied by General Maude, now commanding the army in Mesopotamia, and his staff, he inspected the line of communications and all sections of the front. The days of campaigning controlled from the semi-ignorance of distant Simla were now well over; and personal contact with the supreme military authority in the Orient brought strengthening of hope and confidence. There was no longer fear that the tasks and needs of the army would be misunderstood in high quarters; and intelligent support in all emergencies might be relied upon.

About the end of October we moved from the tent that had hitherto sheltered us to quarters in the village. Green and I were domiciled in a hut of a single room, 24 feet by 12 feet in dimensions. The walls had been partly smoothed with mud plaster applied by the "skilled" hands of Indian workmen. There was no glass to make windows and no wood to make doors. Muslin, sent by some kind soul at home, stretched over the window openings, admitted the

light and kept out a modicum of dust and flies. The doorway was covered by a curtain composed of empty sacks held together by bits of wire. For a roof cane mats were stretched over thin stems of poplar. A thick layer of earth was laid over these, rolled firm, and covered with mud plaster. The ceiling—poplars and cane mats—looked as if it had had a coat of dark varnish,—the effect of much smoke in other days; because, of course, there was neither grate nor chimney. We were fortunate in having tarpaulin to spread on the mud floor, which kept down the dust and prevented too rapid tear and wear of the soft surface. The walls were adorned with certain war maps and specimens of high art culled from magazines, etc.

The sparrows were most indignant at our intrusion upon their domain, and chattered their remonstrances as they sought, with bill and claw, to force a way through the ventilation holes near the roof which we had stuffed with paper. More successful but less fortunate were certain scorpions which came in, only to encounter a tragic fate. Mr. Green was the happy possessor of a monkey which lived in a box on the top of a high pole by the doorway, and was easily the most accomplished gymnast in the camp. He was "great pals" with the puppies in the neighbourhood, and was inclined to be friendly with all white men. But he gibbered and grinned with rage, threatening extinction to every dark-skinned man who approached. He seemed to take them as some sort of rivals for the favour of the white men! The monkey had his uses too. We came to know very many of the young fellows who were attracted by his antics. He also acted as a kind of sign-post. Strangers in camp who wanted to see a chaplain were directed to look out for a monkey on a pole!

One morning we had quite a refreshing breeze of excitement. In broad daylight a number of robbers raided our camels, cut out some half-dozen, and drove them rapidly away. The camels were in charge of Arabs, who were probably overawed by the marauders. Several troops of cavalry were speedily on the robbers' track. From the roof, which commanded a wide view of the plain, we were able to watch developments, until pursued and pursuers both disappeared from view in the distant folds of the plain towards the mountains. Two aeroplanes, with their machine guns in position, joined in the chase. What the losses of the robbers were, I am not in a position to say; but I do know that in the late afternoon the raided camels came leisurely back, with one to the good (!), and that our warriors returned, rather tired, but quite satisfied. It may not have been a particularly warlike operation, but with rifles crackling as they did for a while that morning, there is always a chance that things may suddenly take a more tragic colour.

I remarked, quite innocently, to the D.A. and Q.M.G., on the depravity of the rascals, and their cool insolence, in thus attempting to steal our camels; and received some instruction as to the laws of property that prevail where an army is in an enemy country. There is no absolute *meum* and *tuum*. What we have is ours as long as we can keep it. There is no theft, but only legitimate capture, in taking what belongs to the enemy, if possible. No moral delinquency is acknowledged on either side in following the

“ancient rule, the simple plan,  
That he should take who has the power,  
And he should keep who can.”

One Saturday morning I rode out to a burial in a

storm of dust that was at times so thick that I could hardly see the ears of my horse. It was a relief to get out on the river afterwards. I had arranged to visit two Scottish regiments at the front. Landing at Arab Village, a subsidiary base a few miles upstream, I crossed the river by a bridge of boats with Mr. Simpson, who was in charge of the Y.M.C.A. Tent at Fallahiyeh. We walked thither in the teeth of the suffocating dust-storm. I enjoyed the hospitality of his little tent, pitched picturesquely on the bank of the Tigris and open to the winds of heaven. Then came a most friendly welcome from the Rev. A. Macfarlane, the chaplain of the Black Watch, who had charge of the Seaforths as well, and in the evening I addressed a goodly company of young men in the Y.M.C.A. Tent. As darkness came the wind fell, and the dust almost ceased from troubling, but the dawn brought proof that neither had done with us yet. I rode with Mr. Macfarlane to the Seaforths, who were in camp a few miles away. There was some doubt as to whether a service was possible. Finally the men were paraded on part of the river-bed left dry by the shrinking stream, in the hope that the high banks might afford a little shelter. The hope was vain, and with the exception, I think, of one stormy day on Inchkeith, in the late autumn of 1914, the service was the most difficult I ever conducted. We could not always see each other, but I hope we all supported our trials in a spirit worthy of the country that bore us. Here I found some old friends, and formed acquaintance with Colonel Anstruther and his gallant regiment, to which, later, it was my good fortune to be attached. In the afternoon I took two services in different places. The Black Watch were in the trenches, so no service with them was possible.

THE  
OFFICERS OF THE SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS.



OFFICERS OF THE SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS.

THE  
ARCH  
OF  
CTESIPHON



THE "ARCH" OF CTESIPHON.



In the Reserve Officers' Mess that evening, dining with the padre, I heard much of recent exploits which have brought fresh laurels to a regiment whose record is not dim in the annals of British warfare.

One was struck by the multitude of fishermen in khaki who plied their patient task, with simple line or rod and reel, all along the stream. The fish were plentiful but wary, and the labours of these hopeful disciples of Izaak Walton were not often greatly rewarded. The best basket of recent days was got when the German airman, "Fritz," came over, and dropped a bomb which, no doubt to his chagrin, exploded in the river. One fish of eighty pounds weight, another of forty, and many of smaller size, stunned by the explosion, fell an easy prey to the lynx-eyed watchers on the bank. I am afraid they rather hoped that "Fritz" might soon return!

On the Monday morning the padre and I rode over an old battlefield at Umm el-Hannah and Fallahiyeh, where the evidences of the late titanic strife had been largely obscured by the traffic of our troops. Approaching the zone of fire, we left our horses in a safe place beyond range of the enemy's guns and went forward on foot. The Brigadier-General, an old Edinburgh school-boy, gave us a breezy greeting and a God-speed as we entered the long winding communication trench which led us to regimental headquarters dugout, where we met a Colonel. An orderly was told off to guide us round the whole section of the firing line held by the Black Watch. We made close acquaintance with the methods and weapons used against the Turk, and had several periscopic views of the front Turkish trench at distances varying from 70 to 120 yards. It was like old times to hear the angry hiss and spit of the bullets, and the

crackle of the rifles that in this region are never silent for long. It was very pleasant to greet the fellows who in their advanced and cramped positions are stemming the approach of danger and enduring hardness with the high cheer of good soldiers. What our country and Empire owe to these gallant, resolute men can never be fully told.

That evening I lectured to a splendid crowd who gathered in the open space in the camp of an English regiment.

I had gratifying evidence of the fit condition of our men during a week spent with them near es-Sinn. Mr. Hudson of the Y.M.C.A., who was my host, had prepared for me a programme of lectures. It was a time of strange inaction. As the Turks were quiet and their big guns evidently asleep, I was never in any sort of danger. As one officer after another said, it was difficult to believe that there was "a war on." The trenches cut this way and that across a wide area might seem to be only ditches, and the larger of them canals, prepared against the rising of the waters, which could not now be long delayed. The plentiful stretches of barbed wire would then be fences to restrain the wanderings of browsing herds, which we might suppose to be just over the horizon. Kut el-'Amārah, the home of tragic memories, lay calmly beyond the river, almost, as it seemed, within bowshot, in the sweet serenity of a late autumn day, her tawny walls showing through embowering palms and the dark green of her gardens. Only when, in this hollow, you stumbled on a group of armed men under the sheen of bristling bayonets, or from that recess there appeared the grim muzzle of a mighty dog of war, you realised, as with a shock of surprise, the grizzly game that was being played.

On six out of seven evenings I spoke for over an hour to crowded audiences of men ; and I am bound to say no man need wish for more attentive and interested hearers. They are uproarious in their enjoyment of what they consider a good joke ; but they are not daunted by heavy weather on the long roads of History or in the dust of Archæology. They love a bit of description, or narratives of personal adventure ; but they are keen to learn all they can of the past and present of the country they are in. Its Biblical associations strongly appeal to them, and arouse a fresh interest in the whole story of the Scriptures. They come on Sunday evenings in their hundreds, and listen with no less apparent relish to discussions of religious themes.

They form an audience such as one has practically no chance of ever meeting under other circumstances. To begin with, they are young men. A very small proportion indeed can be over thirty-five years of age. The great majority must be well under twenty-five, while a large number have not yet seen twenty. They represent nearly every profession, trade, and calling. The gulfs that yawned between them in the old life have been bridged by their common sacrifice, devotion to the one cause, and fellowship in experience new and strange in a land far from all that was ever familiar and dear. No great gift of insight is required to see that men like these, full of youthful vigour, ambition, and hope, thrown together in the mighty maelstrom of war, with all its excitements and uncertainties, present unusual problems to those who seek to interest and help them. On the other hand, I am sure that, with very many, old misconceptions of ministers have "gone by the board," and they listen now with hearty goodwill to the padres, who are

sharers of their life, whom in former days they would have "turned down" without a hearing.

It was an eerie experience walking home at nights across the wide dark spaces, between guards who carried a lantern and rifles with fixed bayonets. The lantern warned sentries that we were not marauding Arabs, and so prevented them from shooting us at sight. My bed occupied one side of a small tent attached to the Y.M.C.A. shelter, and my friend's bed the other. My clearest memory of the place is hearing, a little after 9 p.m., a drowsy voice observing, "It grows late very early here," just as I sank deliciously into temporary oblivion. The noises of the camp starting before 5 a.m. persuaded me that it also grew early very soon!

The Y.M.C.A. secretaries at Sheikh Sa'ad were busy men. They took a large and generous view of their privileges and duties. There was no limit to their beneficent activities. They were there to promote the physical, moral, social, and spiritual well-being of the soldiers; and as far as the interests of the lads were concerned, it may truly be said that "nothing human was alien to them." Tired men found welcome rest under their roof, thirsty men refreshing drink. The comfort of a cup of tea, coffee, cocoa, etc., was always available; and when the supply of "smokes" ran low elsewhere, there was ever hope in the Y.M.C.A. canteen. Much-coveted writing-paper they found here, and opportunity to write. Matter to read, and games for quiet hours were not wanting. When the military authorities found the cinema burdensome, the Y.M.C.A. took it over, and ran it to perfection. Concerts were organised in which the boys were encouraged to exercise their gifts, which were often of a high order. More vigorous outdoor games were set on

foot. I had the honour to be president of Sheikh Sa'ad Football League, my special qualifications for office being a comprehensive ignorance of the rules of the game and an enthusiastic interest in the play. There was keen competition between teams representing the different units. The officers subscribed liberally and the Association made a generous contribution, which enabled us to present a silver medal, suitably engraved, to each member of the winning team.

There was a fine tone of wholesome manliness in the religious work of the station. It was honest and frank in its evangelical character and aim. There was nothing merely academic or theological, nothing merely emotional or sentimental. It was direct and practical. The lads were made to feel that this Christianity was in truth a man's religion, a very perfect faith for a soldier. This impression was made at least as much by friendly and brotherly deeds as by the words of the preacher. It was a high privilege to be associated with these men and their work. Personally I am grateful for some of the greatest opportunities of my life.

When the cinema exhibition was over for the evening, and the Indians who knew no English had withdrawn, you would see the circle of our own men contract as they pressed in closer to hear a talk on some subject of interest—patriotism, self-respect, true manliness, and such-like. - Once a week if possible an evening hour was devoted to a lecture. The lads were out for fun, it is true, and every gleam of wit and humour was keenly appreciated; but they were out for knowledge as well. A lecture which lightly touched off the contrasted characteristics of East and West was immensely popular; but I have seen them sit with strained attention through a long and admirable discussion of

Indian religion, or a dry but excellent statement of the contribution made by Assyriology to Biblical study, and cheer vociferously at the close. They were fascinated by tales of personal travel and adventure; and anything about Palestine—its geography, its history, its peoples and their faiths, the holy places, etc.—never failed to attract them.

But the great occasions were undoubtedly the Sunday evening meetings, when at times as many would be gathered outside as could find their way into the large marquee. No matter how tired one might be, this never failed to refresh and stimulate. I remember one day when long hours in the hospital wards and services with men of individual units in different parts of the camp had apparently used up most of my strength. When darkness fell, out near the perimeter of the camp, with a few borrowed lamps we made a circle of light, and the men gathered to worship and think together of the "good soldier of Jesus Christ," breaking the stillness of the desert with their songs of praise. Then over the dusty ways down to the Y.M.C.A., where the boys, choosing their own hymns, sang with a will. It was an inspiration to hear them render "All hail the power of Jesus' name," to their favourite Welsh tune. A great and eager crowd listened with the closest attention to a simple talk on the perfect work of Christ. Then, after the National Anthem and the blessing, they melted away into the dark, leaving one with a strange sense of exhilaration and thankfulness. A noble privilege indeed it was to talk with these men about the high things of faith, and the secret springs of purity, loyalty, courage, and strength.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE NEW OFFENSIVE

DURING the months of summer and autumn there was ceaseless activity along all our lines from base to front, on the river, and on the sea. Care was taken that when hostilities were resumed nothing would be left to chance. Everything that could be foreseen was provided for. The assumption by Sir Stanley Maude of Chief Command of the army in Mesopotamia, and the appointment of Sir G. F. MacMunn as Inspector-General of Communications, marked the beginning of a new day. Among their many qualifications for high command these officers possess the instinct that selects the right men for particular duties, and the genius for well-placed confidence. Under their influence there was an immediate bracing of the spirit and a fresh tone of heightened efficiency in every branch of the service.

When the situation in Mesopotamia became known, there was manifest a certain feverish anxiety to send everything at once, which tended to produce congestion and confusion. Great steamers lay in the river at Basrah, loaded with supplies, which, owing to lack of labour, could not be discharged for weeks. Thus it was quite true to say that there were abundant supplies in the country; but it would not have been true to say that they were available for the men. Medical units

also came tumbling in, and multitudes of doctors, who often had long to wait before they were in a position to put a hand to work. Much time was required to find for each an appropriate place in the system, and to take them to their appointed stations. Of medical agencies there was now no lack ; but this did not mean that unfortunate men had at once the attention and comfort they needed.

It is evident that the problem of transport laid a very heavy responsibility upon the I.G.C. The difficulties were met and overcome with a rapidity and skill which reflect the highest credit upon all concerned. The capricious behaviour of the Tigris bed was a perpetual source of anxiety. The number of suitable steamers was greatly increased, and the pressure on ordinary vessels was relieved by specially constructed hospital ships. A railway was built from Magil to Nasiriyeh, and that from Kurnah to 'Amārah was pushed on with all speed. A line was laid from Sheikh Sa'ad, connecting with all our forces between the advanced base and the Hai. The railway embankment was of earth. There was uneasiness as to how the rain might affect it. I remember certain black days when a cloud-burst submerged the line near Twin Canals ; and the lifting of the shadows, when the subsiding waters left it still usable, and, with a little repair, better than ever. So much depended on that double streak of steel across the desert. This little railway carried up to the front on an average 300 tons a day. Enormous strings of camels were secured, which were admirable in dry weather, but apt to come to grief through slipping in mud. The mirage played strange tricks ; one of the most curious was to see a long camel caravan suspended in mid-air, moving along the rim of the horizon. In addition to mule and



waggon transport, there came a large fleet of extraordinarily efficient light Ford motors. These little cars did wonders. They were troubled, indeed, with a very soft surface; but when the rain cleared they quickly made a fair track. Carrying from three to six cwt., their speed was a most valuable asset.

By the end of the summer everything on the long line of communications was going like clockwork. There were abundant supplies at the front, accumulations of all necessities at the advanced base and easily accessible points, and a constant stream of munitions, making the position secure. The medical arrangements, hospitals, clearing stations, ambulances, with land and water transport, were as complete and efficient as the most critical could desire.

The men had recovered vigour of body and mind, and were eager to renew the fray. General Maude had the wisdom that knows how to wait for the right moment, and then strikes with all its might.

Meanwhile there was no action of importance. There was always a certain amount of counter-battery firing, and the appearance of a head above a parapet was the signal for a tragedy. Warfare in the air never ceased. "Fritz" played second fiddle to the R.F.C. They appreciated his sportsmanship; but there was no maudlin sentiment about going for him when their chance came.

I was struck with the quality of many of the fresh drafts who passed up the river. I found in the camp one day a group of fresh solders from the North Country. Strong, purpose-like fellows they were, whose tanned features and powerful limbs spoke of a life spent in the fields. "We're a' fermers," volunteered one benevolent-looking giant. Then they explained that they had been for a time "starred

men," but now, to their relief and satisfaction, were getting their chance to do their bit in the army, and were proceeding to join the 1st Seaforths. They were sad at the loss of a comrade who had come almost thus far with them. The way of his going illustrates one of the dangers our boys have to face in this campaign. He stumbled on the barge by which they were travelling, fell into the river, the water closed over him, and they saw him no more. The big-hearted lads were more concerned about this than the risks awaiting themselves at the front, whither they were eager to move.

The weather was an uncertain factor in all calculations. The weather-wise opined that after two unusually wet seasons we might be pretty sure of a lighter rainfall this year. They proved to be right. There was a downfall early in December which hindered movement somewhat, as our troops began to take up position for the coming offensive. It was, however, a hardly disguised blessing. It washed down the atmosphere and sweetened the air. It effectually laid the dust, and as the ground dried, the traffic quickly formed roads with a good, hard surface, over which even the heavy guns and their "caterpillar" tractors passed with comparative ease. Once or twice operations were interfered with, but not for long at a time. From the month of October until well into March, when the heat began to grow oppressive, finer weather for all purposes cannot be easily imagined. The sky was clear, the air crisp and light; and if it was pretty hot at noon, this was atoned for by the coolness of the nights. Occasional storms emphasised the general excellence. It may be said, therefore, that General Maude was greatly favoured by fortune. I'll not be denying that. But it must be remembered that he

knew how to take advantage of his good fortune, and make it the minister of victory.

Our first step forward was taken on Friday, 14th December. A heavy bombardment at Sinniyât led the Turks to expect an attack there, and they sent a couple of battalions to reinforce that position. A crossing of the Hai was effected at two points, the cavalry getting over without casualty at Basrugîyeh. The Division moved forward and dug in before the Turks on the left side of the Hai. The cavalry dealt faithfully with marauding bands, and reached the river west of Shumran. The R.F.C. dropped a bomb on the pontoon bridge at Shumran, hampering the Turks' communications.

We had a stream of injured men from these operations. Further experience confirmed the view formed long ago, that wounded men are extraordinarily cheerful men. Often there is not much of a face to be seen for bandages, but the bit you see is smiling, and the man is very badly hurt indeed who will not respond to your inquiry with a breezy, "I'm all right, sir," "Top hole," or some such phrase.

They are proud to have taken a hand in the great war. If there is a shade of disappointment anywhere, it is because they have never seen a Turk. In this warfare the entrenched enemy naturally uses every scrap of protection afforded by the position where he has laboriously dug himself in; while his assailants have to move against him across the open plain, without cover of any kind. Many of these boys would gladly go back again on the chance of getting the concealed foe out of his labyrinth of drains.

It quickened the blood to hear the older men, with years of service behind them, speak of the way in which the advance was made. Our troops, the bulk of

whom were young fellows, who had never smelt powder before, walked forward in a shower of bullets and shrapnel in perfect order, as if they had been on manœuvres. The veterans declared it was the most beautiful sight they ever saw. The younger men did not speak of this. They took it, apparently, as just a bit of what was ordinarily done in war. But they expressed great surprise that so few were injured by the tornado of fire that broke over them. This, indeed, is a surprise perpetually renewed in battle. Very obviously, if "every bullet found its billet," the sad lists in the newspapers would be vastly grimmer than they are.

A weird experience was that of a young officer who was shot through both knees. Unable to move, with one or two wounded comrades he had to spend the night in the open. When darkness fell the jackals came howling and sniffing around them. They were able to keep off these prowlers in the gloom. This apparently gave the cue to the Turks, who presently treated the area in which they lay to a heavy dose of shrapnel. The dawn brought them succour.

One boy had his arm off just below the shoulder. "It's only the right arm," he said; and then, with a smile, glancing at his left, he added, "I'll soon learn that one to do what the other one did." And so they go and come, the unconquerable spirit of their race supporting them through trials that well might break a brave man's heart.

In hospital I found a man who lacked but seven months of sixty years. He had been several times wounded, but recked little of that. Now, however, sickness had gripped him, and he found the consequent debility most depressing. All his concern was how he might speedily get back to the front! Near him was

a boy, not yet much over fifteen, although he had been through most that had happened in this region. So far he had not had a scratch. He was almost well of the slight trouble that brought him in, and to his great joy would be back to duty in a day or two. With this spirit in the sons of our land from fifteen to sixty, what may we not achieve?

There is a great difference between levity and cheerfulness. No one who knows them would accuse the lads of levity. They are neither insensible nor indifferent to their surroundings. They

“hae misfortunes great and sma’,  
But aye a heart aboon them a’.”

Into the reasons for this high-heartedness probably most of them have never inquired, and might find it difficult to name them offhand. The strong and vigorous manhood that is in them accounts for much—the manhood that refuses to be overawed by danger or depressed by suffering. They are convinced that Motherland and loved ones, their honour, freedom, and safety, are worth fighting for, and if need be, worth dying for. Somewhere in their mind also, although perhaps not so clearly, is the consciousness that their cause is just, and that a righteous God may be trusted to see that the principles of His own kingdom are vindicated. Such men are not easily cast down; they will even look death in the face with a smile.

The third week of December was warm. The snow disappeared from the mountains on the N.E. horizon, and the river rose a few feet. We were busy mainly in securing the positions taken on both sides of the Hai, and facing the Abu Hassan Bend, E. of Kut. An attempt to cross the Tigris W. of Shumran on the night of the 20th was abandoned owing to the fierce

machine-gun fire encountered. The attempt was probably only a feint.

A prisoner taken about this time gave away the Turkish signal for a British advance by night. At sight of three red flares from the front line the Turkish artillery would open fire. Three red flares were sent up from our front line, which was close to that of the Turks. A perfect Hades of fire broke out from Turkish guns of every calibre, and lasted about an hour. Thus was the enemy encouraged to waste his precious stock of shells.

My friend Mr. M'Caul went down the river sick. I was temporarily posted to the Indian Division, and attached to the B.F.A., the lads of the H.L.I. being my chief charge.

I left Sheikh Sa'ad on the afternoon of 7th January, travelling on a waggon of 4·5 howitzer shells. Snow, which had fallen on the more distant mountains, was beautiful in the glow of sunset, showing up the dark outline of the nearer range. The chocolate desert, dried in wrinkles after rain, was like a vast crocodile-skin. Our camp was at "Cow's Hump," not far from the scene of battle. Kut el-'Amārah, with its embowering palms, some 5000 yards away, was the one patch of green to relieve the eye amid the wilderness of brown and grey. In this district the grass grows rankly, and through the brown covering of last year's growth a fresh young braird was now struggling for "a place in the sun." From "Keary's Castle," an observation post erected for the General commanding the division, an excellent view of the whole battlefield was obtained—not that there was ever much to see, save when the big guns sent up a flash and a cloud, or the winding supply columns made their way across the plain.

The officers of the mess, Lieut.-Colonel Gibson, C.O., Padre Knott, D.S.O., Captain Graham, and others, had a perfect genius for kindness. Their generous treatment of a stranger dropped from the blue among them is not to be forgotten. The evening of the 8th found me settled at the advanced stretcher-bearer post, in a nullah less than 2000 yards from Kut. My companions were Captain Duncan, I.M.S., who spoke Hindustani like a native,—our orderlies were Indians,—and Captain Stanley, R.A.M.C., who had been for years a medical missionary in Baghdad and Mosul, a master of the language and lore of Mesopotamia. We formed a subsidiary mess of the Ambulance; a very ideal company.

The Indians are curious fellows. They made little holes for themselves along the sides of the nullah. Any old thing served as a cover. Quite comfortable they seemed, each man curled up in his shelter like a spaniel in his kennel. With the doctors were two Indian officers known as assistant surgeons: very efficient fellows. We were within easy distance of the battlefield, so that the wounded might be brought in quickly. Ledges for them to sit or lie upon while having their wounds dressed were formed along the bank. In some places canvas was stretched across the nullah, affording protection from the sun by day and the dews by night. Larger shelters were dug, and covered with canvas in which the more serious cases might rest while waiting for the ambulance waggon. Refreshment was also provided—hot tea, milk, cocoa, beef-tea, etc., and biscuits or bread. It was a treat to see the boys who were not too seriously hurt enjoying these things.

We were just "in the nick of time." Next morning the battle began. After a heavy artillery preparation our men advanced to the attack. They carried at a

rush the East Mounds, a line of great strength, which it had been feared would cost us dear. The enemy in many cases were dazed by the terrific bombardment, and, as the boys put it, "quite tame." But there was plenty of fight in the Turk in other parts, although he had to give ground before our impetuous attack. All our objectives were reached that day. There was a lull in the fighting on the 10th. It was thought that the Turks were retiring that night, and our artillery roared away to "speed the parting guests." This proved to be wrong. He had actually reinforced his lines, and the fighting on the 11th was of a most sanguinary character. The Turks were pushed farther back, and suffered terrible losses, both from artillery fire and in the closer fighting. Our casualties, too, were high. The procession of wounded men from the H.L.I. showed clearly that this intrepid regiment had been where it ever wishes to be, in the hottest of the battle.

I was not without means to form a fairly accurate picture of what they had come through, in addition to their vivid narratives. One night, during an intense bombardment, I had to cross an area over which shells were flying, and passed under the fire of two of our big howitzer batteries shooting at short range. The air seemed to be literally alive with the terrible missiles, whirring, whistling, moaning, buzzing, droning, as they sped on their deadly errand. The night was very dark. What with the flash and explosion of the guns, and the more distant crash of bursting shells, the effect was nothing short of terrifying. I could almost imagine myself back once more in the stormy Gallipoli days!

The men who came in on the 11th, who had fought for a year in France, and had been through the fighting



at Neuve Chapelle, Ypres, and Loos, assured me that they had never experienced anything that approached in violence and destructiveness that day's tornado of fire.

Some men appear to be built with nerves of steel. From an inferno of shells and bullets and bayonets, of blood and death, and men panting with the passion of slaughter, these fellows walk back to us with limbs, body, or head swathed in crimson-stained bandages as calmly as if they had come in ordinary course to pay a morning call. They will smoke a cigarette and chat about the fortunes of the fight. If they give voice to any regret, it is that they have not been permitted to see the job through.

One young officer, a few weeks before had been wounded in the shoulder; but, finding that the use of his arm was not impaired, he refused to report wounded, and stayed with his regiment. In this push he had the bad luck to be hit in the other shoulder, and this time, unfortunately, the arm was at least temporarily paralysed. There was no help for it; back he had to come. His talk to us, however, was not of wounds and suffering, but of positions taken and held, and of others to be attacked. When he left us, in spite of pain, and loss of blood too plainly evidenced on his torn jacket, he moved with firm, elastic step, a fine, upright figure of a man. God grant him swift recovery. The world has need of high hearts like his.

The lads are often very quaint in their description of their injuries. One boy, whose nationality need not be stated, fairly "stumped" both medical officers and orderlies. He said he had "got a lick in the oxter wi' a bullet"! Fortunately the padre was at hand to translate. The spirit of the young fellows

is marvellous ; but we need not wonder if some of them are not enamoured of life in the trenches. One came in with a bit of shrapnel through his arm. The wound disabled him, but did not seem to be dangerous. I encouraged him with the assurance that it was likely to heal quickly. " Oh ay," he said cannily, " but not *too* quick, I hope." How alluring the prospect of peace and quiet in hospital must be after the racket and anxiety of these apparently endless days and nights of battle.

A lad still " in his teens " who had been rather badly knocked about, expressed to me his surprise that he had felt no fear in battle. He was of a delicate organisation, extremely sensitive to pain, instinctively shrinking from anything that might hurt. Yet he had gone over the parapet and out among the flying missiles, quite unafraid. It did not take long to elicit the truth. He never lost the sense that the Father was caring for him. The effect of this was that *he* did not need to care, and so could give his mind wholly to duty.

The going out of some of these brave young lives, at times, without recovering consciousness, is one of the hardest things we have to face. But, ever and anon, one will pass, not as a man who feels that he is put " down and out," but with the light of triumph on his face, having found Him who has made him " more than conqueror."

I had several long tramps in the dark to bury men near where they had fallen. One night I reached the place of burial just before sundown. Parts of the way we traversed, bent almost double, the trenches being shallow and the eyes of the enemy clear ! It was a sight to see how our heavy shells had ripped and rent and torn and tumbled the earth along lines formerly

held by the Turks. It was exciting to see the great shells from our trench mortars lobbing over like huge footballs on to the Turkish position, and to watch the immense black clouds that rose where they exploded. They are very dreadful instruments of destruction. Shelter was found from snipers for a little in a deep nullah, with a regiment, the Colonel and Major of which proved to be old friends. The two had had a miraculous escape. They were having a cup of tea when an enemy shell passed right between them and burst on the edge of the nullah, not eight feet from them. They were both blown flat down, and the cup which was in the Major's hand flew off into the blue. Neither of them was a whit the worse. One sniper, who was particularly annoying, seemed to have his perch in a tree beside the town across the river. As the sun set, however, his malevolent activity ceased, and we ventured out to the place of burial.

The scene was not without a certain weird beauty. A short stretch of rough tangled scrub and broken ground lay between us and a bend of the river. Beyond the silver sheen of the water the town and surrounding trees stood out in silhouette against the dark crimson glow of the western sky. One by one the big guns ceased fire, and amid a stillness that might almost be felt the solemn words of the burial service were spoken. With a sad farewell to our brave comrades, we left them to their last long sleep. Walking back under the cloud of night, over the wide open spaces, brings one a strange sense of loneliness, although multitudes of human beings are crouching in the earth within a radius of a few thousand yards.

"Home" was a hole dug in the earth, about seven feet by six feet, and some four feet deep. It was covered by the flap of a tent, and approached by a

cutting in the side of the nullah. Herein were stowed my worldly goods, and herein did I sleep the sleep of the tired when the day's work was done. We kept very good hours, on the whole, save when a rush was on. Then the night was as the day. Water was not plentiful. I had not actually to wash in my shaving water and then reserve it for a ravishing plunge during the day, but that was the luck of better men. Alongside my dugout was that of the two medical officers. When it was too wet or cold outside, we took our food in it. A walking-stick was placed across the trench between the two earthen shelves that formed their beds. On this we rested a small wooden packing-case and it served as our table.

After the 11th the fighting was not so fierce. There was time to move among the men and the batteries. On the 17th I met the Army Commander, who was exceedingly pleased with what had been done. He thought the Turks would soon go from the Bend, when the good work could be continued elsewhere. He was a true prophet. An attack was planned for the morning of the 19th. We listened in vain for the bombardment. First a wounded man strolled in, then a wounded officer, with news that the attack was postponed. A deserter said that the enemy were retiring. Patrols reconnoitred; then the Punjabis rushed across to find only dead Turks in the trenches, but very many of these.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### ROUGH WEATHER

THE next push was to be made along both banks of the Hai, by two Divisions. The one Division, just to west of us, were digging new trenches preparing for the attack. This was mainly done by night. But the Turks had the range of the lines, and their machine guns made good practice. The division suffered casualties at the rate of about forty a night. The elevation at which many of the guns were fired, intending to catch men on the divisional parapets, brought the bullets right over us, and into our nullah. Quite a collection of these souvenirs was made by protesting orderlies. We liked still less the shrapnel to which they sometimes treated us. One evening our dinner was quite spoilt, owing to the terror that overwhelmed our Indian cook!

The Brigade was put in to hold the captured sector. Our part in the work for the moment being done, we were withdrawn, and remained some days on the edge of the battle area. We watched many very terrible bombardments. A great wall of dark smoke from the big shells, punctured by the flash and white puff of the shrapnel, rose lazily skyward over the fated trenches. Some of the enemy's firing was very wild, occasional shells plunging not very far from us. News of the battle trickled back to us in more or less reliable form. By pressure deliberate but inexorable, the enemy

were forced back towards the river which they soon must cross. Many prisoners were brought in. Such German officers as were captured did not seem to think it a suitable fate for "supermen." The Arabs were entirely philosophical for the most part. A "hefty" fellow whom I found looking through the barbed wire came from Jerusalem. He knew a number of my friends there, and had much of interest to talk about.

In due course I was posted to a Division and attached to the Seaforth Highlanders. Thus my ambitions were gratified. A tramp of some fourteen miles over an unknown wilderness, with a transport cart fetching my belongings behind, was a good preparation for the heartsome welcome of my new friends. The regiment was in the trenches at Sinniyât, but was due out directly. I had my quarters with the reserve officers; and next day we moved up to the "central area" camp, above Arab Village, some 600 yards from the river. The relieving regiment, the Leicesters, moved out after sunset, going for their spell in the trenches. Their departure would have been a rare subject for an impressionist artist. As they moved off, company by company, their lines showed up sharply against the claret of sunset on the horizon; and then the night enveloped them. Our men came in a few hours later.

The desert when the surface is dry makes an excellent parade-ground. Football posts were erected in suitable places, and the game as usual was immensely popular. I saw a polo-ground staked out, with a big roller lying by. A mile or so beyond these, to the N.E., was the edge of the marsh—the home of multitudinous wild-fowl. "Washing" parade" was a very important function after fifteen days "in the drains."

The Turks made some very good long-range practice

with shrapnel at groups of men in the open. But there were more deadly perils to fear. A company of Indian soldiers was out marching, unfortunately in close order, when one of them accidentally kicked a bomb that must have been lying there for ten or eleven months. It exploded at once, killing one man and wounding seven.

On the 30th of January rain fell heavily. Next morning was radiant, but the wind blew steadily from the S.E.—the rainy quarter. Towards evening there was a lull. The sky had become black, and brilliant sheet-lightning was playing over the marsh, lighting up the snowy slopes of Pushti Kuh. With a sudden burst of fury and a crash of thunder the wind came from the N.E., accompanied by a merciless shower of hail. I had the misfortune to be out when the storm broke. I heard the whack, whack, whacking on the ground beside me, and then saw the white sheen of the hailstones in the lightning flashes. I felt many blows on back and shoulders, which happily were protected by a thick fur-lined waterproof. A few found more vulnerable spots, which ached for the rest of the night. When I saw the hailstones, many of which were bigger than a golf ball, I was thankful that none had found my head. Then the rain fell in sheets, and thunder roared overhead. The flaps of my little tent were left unfastened in the quiet eve. Now the rain lashed in with the flapping canvas. A bank of hailstones had formed in front, and white balls swam in the water covering the floor. Belongings were hastily thrown up on a box or two, and a waterproof over the bedclothes prevented the rain soaking through more than a single ply. Our drains and ditches were flooded, and our side of the camp submerged. Only the tents with a fair "bund" around them escaped inundation. Some were in very bad case.

I had not more than an inch in mine. Our fellows got out, directed by the Q.M., and cut new ways for the water, along which they "slunged" it with the flat of their implements towards an area beyond the perimeter.

What a sight of deep, sticky mud the place was in the morning. Our mess dugouts were flooded. How the kitchen orderlies got any breakfast for us at all remains a mystery. The men's quarters, happily, were slightly higher, so they escaped with little discomfort. The morning dawned calm and beautiful. In my walk to and from the hospital I found victims of the storm over which I shed no tears—rats and mice killed by the hailstones; but a poor little lark with a broken wing was a very pathetic figure. Enterprising youths, who ploughed their way to the marsh, found many waterfowl, geese, and ducks, either dead or so injured that they were easily taken.

The storm was strictly local. A picket of ours, in the desert not far away, had neither a hailstone nor a drop of rain.

The battalion moved out to the Narrows on the night of 2nd February, meeting and passing the Black Watch on their way down to the camp we had left. These moves were made at night, and in silence. Very impressive was the great dark winding column, pushing in stillness through the pale moonlight, which enabled it to avoid the deeper sloughs of despond the recent rains had left.

It was our turn to picket a sector of the river front and to furnish artillery guards. To visit all my "parishioners" involved a walk of from eight to ten miles, for the most part through narrow winding trenches. The opposite bank was strongly held by the enemy, and one had to walk warily anywhere in the neighbourhood of the river. I was not fired at deliberately



more than two or three-times, and then at ranges too distant for accurate shooting. By means of the telescopic periscope from certain of our strong positions, the camps and dispositions of the enemy could be very plainly seen. At times the view was remarkably assisted by the mirage, which seemed to lift things bodily into the clearest visibility. Our fellows greatly enjoyed the change. It was quiet and, as long as rain kept away, comfortable. It was a great contrast with last year, when the mud and cold were terrible, and life in the trenches unspeakable. This year a spell in the trenches was, in comparison, a period of pleasant rest. This no doubt accounts in a measure for the successes achieved. Instead of wet, weary, blood-chilled men charging over sodden ground, sinking over the ankles in sticky clay that retarded every step, exposed without a scrap of cover to the withering fire of the enemy, you have stout and hearty men, eager for the fray when the artillery preparation is complete, leaping over the parapet, rushing across the field of fire, and swiftly coming to grips with the foe, their strength unexhausted and their spirit high.

We were not permitted to forget the stern business that called us hither. The big guns going on the Hai drummed an accompaniment to most of our thoughts. Cheering news reached us on 4th February that the enemy had gone from the eastern side of the Hai, and next day we heard that the U.S.A. had broken off diplomatic relations with Germany. This put us in good spirits, which apparently the Turk resented, and showed his displeasure by subjecting our camp to an hour's intense bombardment. Tea was over, and in the tranquillity of the dying day I thought the boys might sing a few hymns by way of practice for the Sunday service. I was just moving to suggest

this when whiz went a couple of shells overhead, bursting with a tremendous report. "All into the trenches!" rang out the Colonel's voice. No second bidding was needed. Some of our tents and effects were blown about; but a deep trench is a good protection. Many of the boys seemed to take the thing as a great joke! Firing ceased for about ten minutes, and we concluded that it was over for the day. Permission was given to leave the trenches, the Adjutant warning everybody to be ready to return instantly if the firing was resumed. We had not reached our tents when the uproar began anew, and worse than before. The purpose of the lull was obvious enough. We made sure that the trouble was over before leaving the trenches again. In less time than it takes to tell, the camp had assumed its normal aspect, and the evening closed without further alarm. However, before the skirl o' the pipes invited the weary soldiers to rest on their "wee pickle strae," there was careful look-out for accessible places of refuge to which resort might be made if danger threatened in the hours of night. I had a lovely "funk hole" dug in the floor of my tent! There was no occasion to use it. But it was quite a comfort to look that way when certain thoughts crossed the mind!

Sunday was a day of storm, hazy, working to rain in the evening. The regiment paraded for service in the morning on what was part of a battlefield in April last year, with grim relics of the combat around us, and the crosses that mark the last resting-places of our gallant dead showing in the nearer distance. One would require "a throat of brass and a voice like the whirlwind" to contend successfully with the warring elements. But, although it is none too comfortable for them, the boys have entire sympathy

with the padre in adversity, as long as he shows no sign of shirking! In the afternoon, I rode out to our farthest picket, and there, under the sheltering bank of a nullah, I found about a hundred men gathered from the neighbouring trenches. The haze also afforded us some protection, but it could not be trusted. Even while we worshipped, two men, not far from us, paid with their lives for a brief appearance above the parapet. When the service ended, rain was beginning to fall. Our mutual adieux were swift. The men made with all speed for the cover of their dug-outs, and I helter-skelter across-country for the camp.

Another move came with the suddenness one learns to expect. This is the sort of experience to make one expert in packing. It also sheds a brilliant light on the advantages of a small kit! Orders to go came suddenly on Wednesday afternoon about four o'clock; and soon after dark all of us who were in camp started out on our return to the central area, with instructions to observe silence. I'm afraid the wretched transport carts treated these instructions with contempt; but their creaking may have been taken for the yelping of discontented jackals! The roads had recovered from Sunday night's rain. We made good progress, and reached our destination about midnight. Only one untoward incident marred our joy. The mules drawing a cart which contained mess stores and officers' clothing not returned from washing, slipped on the bridge crossing the river. Result—stores and clothing are claimed by the rapacious Tigris which absolutely refuses to give them up!

The rest of our men came on Thursday night, marching through a terrible downpour of rain. They were not relieved till after midnight. Arriving at the bridge in the early hours of the morning, they found it

broken, and a wait of three or four hours was inevitable. In the circumstances you could have excused a little gloom and depression. But here you find a rare combination of manly grit and Highland spirit. When things are at their worst, one will strike up a rollicking song. It is caught up and sweeps along the column with a rush like a forest fire. The fellows joke, rag each other, and indulge in all sorts of pleasantries, until you might think them schoolboys let loose for holiday instead of burdened soldiers, under the cloud of night, struggling through an endless morass, dragging along Lewis gun "perambulators" or other encumbrances, with no hope of a change, or even of shelter at their journey's end. Between eight and nine o'clock they began to arrive, hungry, weary, wet, cold, and muddy, but incorrigibly cheerful.

On the 15th we heard the good news that our gallant fellows had finally disposed of the Turks on the right of the Tigris, over against Kut. A direct hit had broken the pontoon bridge, and over 1400 prisoners and 46 officers fell into our hands. With the clearing of the right bank, the time was approaching for the big push at Sinniyât which should open the way not to Kut only, but to Baghdad itself. The weather was threatening. That evening we saw a heavy shower falling between us and the setting sun. It looked like a gigantic curtain of sparkling beads hung from a dark canopy. Saturday brought news that the total "bag" of Turks up the river exceeded 1900, with 2 Brigadiers and 86 officers. With this to encourage them, our battalion moved up to the support trenches at Sinniyât.

The attack planned for that afternoon was entrusted to the Brigade. The purpose was, after artillery preparation, to attack the right half of the Turkish position; if that were successful, then the left half

should be attacked. The rain had made the going heavy. I was among a group of interested spectators on a mound at some distance. Two Indian regiments went over the parapet. The first and second Turkish lines were carried with few casualties. Consolidation was begun when the Turks were seen massing for counter-attack.

On Tuesday, 20th February, the Tigris rose suddenly and flowed "from bank to brae." It is an interesting circumstance that some weeks before an old riverine native had said, quite as a matter of fact, that the river would be in flood on the 20th. The existing bridges were put to considerable strain. Barges which got loose and drifted down with the current were a constant danger. One had broken the bridge at Arab Village, and that a little higher up was also broken for a time. Crossing the river by these bridges was always a matter of anxiety. A gun was being taken over by the upper bridge near us, when the horses became restive, and gun, horses, and three men were all thrown into the river and lost. It is evident that the great volume of water made the bridging of the stream a difficult and perilous task.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE CAPTURE OF BAGHDAD

THE attack at Sinniyât was resumed on Thursday, the 22nd, the same general plan as before being followed. My post was at the collecting station, where all the wounded would be seen as they left the front for the advanced dressing station. The bombardment opened at 10 a.m. When it ceased the Seaforths and an Indian regiment attacked, and carried the first and second Turkish lines with comparatively few casualties. Our bombing officer, Lieutenant M'Donald, in his eagerness, went perhaps too far forward, and was killed by one of our own shells. The Indians were on our left. The work of consolidation was going on when the Turks counter-attacked. They came thrice, in no great strength, and were easily repulsed. Then they came in considerable strength. The position was critical. The officer commanding our left platoon, seeing what had happened, at once strung out his men along the deserted line, and held it against the Turks. Lieutenant Mackenzie's swift initiative and courage, which undoubtedly saved the situation, were recognised by the award of the D.S.O. on the field.

Unaware that the left half of the Turkish position was to be attacked that day, I went up to see how it fared with our lads, as no more wounded were coming in. Just then the bombardment began afresh, the Turks

making a spirited reply. The place was decidedly unhealthy. I took refuge with our M.O. in his little aid post, where he was not long without work to do. Captain Young of the Black Watch was hit by a shell in the communication trench hard by, and brought in on a stretcher. His injuries having been dressed, I went down with him to the collecting station. Meanwhile, at the front there was a strange repetition of the events of the morning. Two Indian regiments, and a platoon or two of the Leicesters, went over the parapet against the Turkish left when the bombardment ceased. Again the 1st and 2nd Turkish lines were taken with ease. Then the Turks counter-attacked. Once more the position was critical. This time it was the Seaforths' right platoon that came to the rescue. Sergeant Steel, seeing a machine gun being carried back by the Indians, seized it, and with the assistance of Private Winder, rushed it back into the trench. Although not a machine gunner, he got it into position and opened fire, holding up the Turk advance until reinforcements arrived. For this splendid action and other brilliant bits of work, Sergeant Steel received the V.C., and Private Winder the D.C.M.

One incident of the day seems worth recording. Realising how much better a man fights when his inner man is rightly provided for, our regimental cook busied himself with his duties in the spacious kitchen dugout. A row of well-replenished dixies made pleasant music on the glowing embers, and sundry tempting odours permeated the air. He sat down for a moment at the side of the dugout, complacently viewing the scene, when a 6-inch shell plunged right among the dixies, with devastating effect. Nothing but boiling liquid came his way ; but the scalding was

bad enough. His only grouse was that the "bally thing" didn't come before the dixies came aboil!

A carelessly thrown burning cigarette or unextinguished match caused a fire. The blaze was tremendous, and it speedily caught another, which added to the general illumination. The effect, seen from Sinniyât, was very grand. Certain explosions sent momentary spurts of red flame high into the dark sky. These were caused by the bursting of bombs, by which several officers and men of the Black Watch reserve were wounded.

Most of the lads who had fallen in the fight had to be buried in the darkness, immediately behind the lines. Such as could be brought back I had taken to the little cemetery at the foot of what was called Jullundur Street the next day. I went round our lines, but found our men busily occupied organising bombing raids, etc. The Colonel of the Black Watch, to whom I appealed, as his battalion was in support, kindly gave me a fatigue party, with whose help the burials were carried out.

There is a keen, friendly rivalry and mutual admiration between these two Highland regiments. The Colonel spoke most warmly of what the Sea-forths had done. I said that we were all very proud of it. "Yes," he said, "and with good reason. But"—this with a smile—"it should have been us!" And so it would have been if high resolve always to be in the forefront when hard blows are going could have carried them there.

Our gallant comrades at Shumran conquered all difficulties, and threw their bridge across the swollen river. A perilous and daring enterprise it was. A terrible fire from Turkish guns of all calibres was concentrated upon that reach of the stream, and the water around these adventurous men was bubbling



with shells and bullets like a huge cauldron boiling. The work was done with almost incredibly small losses, and our troops speedily made good their footing on the left bank of the Tigris. There was some sanguinary fighting in which our machine guns did fearful execution; and it was reported that 1000 prisoners had been taken. This threatened the Turkish communications. To avoid being taken in the rear, they must go from Sinniyât. On the night of the 23rd it was clear that they were going.

The Black Watch went through us to take up the pursuit; and in the morning we were all after them, full cry. No pen can ever describe the awful sights we beheld as we passed over the trenches vacated by the Turks. They were not indeed vacant, but their occupants had "ceased from troubling." We took an immense booty in guns, trench mortars, rifles, ammunition, and equipment, which the enemy had discarded in their hurried retreat. It was one of the sweetest mornings in spring. To get out from among those ensanguined trenches, close and filthy, with their dread occupants and overpowering stench—to get away from them all, out into God's open country, with the fresh young grass springing under our feet, the placid river whispering at our side, and the cool breeze from Pushti Kuh fanning our cheeks—it was like entering a new world.

The Turks could make better speed than we, inasmuch as they could abandon their burdens, and they were retiring upon their supplies; while we had our full equipment to carry, and every step forward lengthened the distance between us and our sources of food and munitions. We had indeed to "go softly" to permit of supplies reaching us by river as required. But in view of the suddenness with which new develop-

ments came upon us, it is infinitely creditable to those responsible that our needs were so swiftly and so adequately met. Also it was no bad thing for the lads who had had little exercise in marching for some time, to escape long tramps in the heat until feet and muscles had a chance to recover tone. The thorny scrub, at times passed through, was trying to the knees of the kilty lads ; but the men were in great spirits, and the congratulations that came from all quarters to the Seaforths put them in excellent temper. We halted for the night in the open between the river and Suwadah Marsh ; and among those who came round with kindly greeting were our own Brigadier and the Corps Commander.

I was singularly fortunate in being with two Scottish regiments in succession just when they were in the thick of the fighting ; and I shall ever remember, with deep affection and pride, the splendid enthusiasm and gallantry of my countrymen. Their sterling qualities have never been more sternly put to proof. On Sunday morning, 25th February, when all was packed and ready for the march, the battalion was paraded. It was the first chance of having them all together after the stirring events of the last few days. The Colonel, addressing them, said, "I want to tell you how well you have all done. It is true that some fine men are gone ; but we have this comfort, that they fell in the hour of victory, and that their heroic sacrifice was not made in vain. The reputation of the Seaforths is second to none in the British Army, and you have added to it. If in future we can maintain that reputation, or add to it, we may know that we are all right ! I congratulate you and I thank you." The Colonel is not given to much speaking. The sincerity of his utterance greatly

cheered the men, and I am sure no one felt that day's journey long. We found our bivouac a mile or two from Kut, on the river bank. There was a splendid company of officers and men at our evening service, which was one of thanksgiving and commemoration.

There was no need to occupy Kut el-'Amārah. The only living things left in it were a few stray cats and wretched dogs. A natural curiosity took me through the place on Monday. The palms that had sheltered the snipers were badly blown about with our shells. Many of the jerry houses were in ruins, and the top of the minaret, which the Turks had used for observation, was knocked off. The broken-down mud walls, the filthy streets, and the scraggy palms with drooping and withering fronds, made upon me an impression of indescribable squalor.

I examined with interest the monument erected by the enemy to commemorate the surrender of the British garrison. A canvas cover flapped round it, designed, I suppose, to protect the cement from the direct sun's rays until it should set. The panels with inscriptions had not been put in. It may serve to commemorate the defeat of its authors. Hard by the German imperial coat of arms flamed in glowing colours at the head of a grave, which doubtless covers Teuton dust.

The little warships quitted themselves right valiantly, harassing the Turkish retreat with their fire, and destroying and capturing the Turkish shipping. I took the chance of a passing boat to run downstream and purchase some desirable things for the mess. At Sheikh Sa'ad, I found Captain Carpenter of the *Moth*, whose intrepid work won great admiration. He showed me the damage his ship had sustained from Turkish missiles; but a prouder show was the *Basrah*,

a hospital ship captured with its full complement of staff and patients. One patient on board was Cowie, of the Black Watch, a wounded prisoner. He was just able to get around a little. At the approach of the *Moth*, he got up and called all on board to surrender as his prisoners! Judge of his relief at this timely rescue.

I picked up my battalion again at 'Azizîyeh. The pile of boxes and parcels brought along gave the padre, I fear, a factitious popularity! The goods found their place in the "kitchen cart," and I fell in for the march with my comrades. It was designed to rest for ten minutes at the end of each hour. In reality the rests were a little more frequent. The lads did not suffer so much from weariness as from sore feet. The dust, too, at times was very trying. At Ze'ur on the morning of 7th March the ration ship did not arrive in time to load the carts, so it proceeded ahead of us upstream. This was a godsend to the boys with sore feet, who were able to take turns riding in the empty carts. That day we came upon the first traces of a stand made by the retreating foe. The cavalry, hanging on their rear, had run into a trench, well concealed among the scrub and strongly held. A brilliant charge by the Hussars scattered them; but it was a costly business. I counted the carcasses of fifty horses lying in the scrub.

That evening we reached Ctesiphon, the limit of Townshend's heroic march. The "Arch" lifted by the mirage had seemed to dominate the country for many miles. We bivouacked in what is called the *Bustān* or "Orchard." There is no orchard now, but it is still enclosed by the enormous earthen mounds that defied the prowess of Julian the Apostate, within the loop of the river, east of Ctesiphon.

Seleucia on the right bank is marked now by only a few scattered mounds, and of all the splendour of Ctesiphon only the "Arch" remains. The others were busy with various duties, so I walked over to it in the morning thatched with the cameras of men who wanted photos for souvenirs. The "Arch" is in reality the ruin of a Persian palace, dating probably from the first century B.C. A considerable part of the arched roof still stands over what may have been the council chamber or banqueting hall. It is 90 feet in height, 90 in width, and 150 in length. It is built throughout of brick, with at points a strengthening of wood. The back wall remains, but the front of the hall is gone. To the south a high front wall, facing east, joins the corner of the hall. It is ornamented with niches for statuary which has quite disappeared. The spring of an arch about half-way up on the inside shows that the height was divided into storeys, where may have been the living apartments of Sassanid royalty.

At Bâwi, west of Ctesiphon, a pontoon bridge spanned the river. To this point a Division moved, and other two Divisions proceeded along the left bank towards Baghdad. The Division at the pontoon bridge, to be followed later by another, was to cross here to the right bank and approach the city on the south. We were all packed up and ready to move when evening came. Packing was not difficult, as each man was allowed only 20 lb. of kit, and carried in his haversack a little bully beef and a few biscuits, with a bottle of water, as viaticum. Night drew on apace, but marching orders hung fire. A heavy waggon had broken the bridge. We lay down for an hour's fitful sleep. Summoned to start, we had moved a hundred yards on the way when we were stopped again ; and here we

remained. The current had brought full tilt into the bridge a raft thoughtfully put in the water by the Turks. It knocked out a pontoon, and the damage took long to repair. There was something fascinating in the night, without even a canvas roof over you, with an unhampered view of the wonderful star-spangled vault bent over the Mesopotamian plain. But it can often be very cold. I have seen ice on the buckets in the morning. The dawn brought orders to proceed, and once in full swing on the road one forgot the sleepless night until the heat of noon insinuated suggestions of an impossible siesta! The boys were evidently tired. The feet were dragging heavily through the dust, when the pipes strode in front and struck up an inspiring strain. Then every sign of weariness vanished into the everywhere.

That afternoon we heard the noise of heavy firing ahead of us. We had not expected to meet opposition here. The cavalry had mistaken direction in the night and ran into a Turkish position which it was intended to outflank. The supporting infantry brigade stood in to take the weight of the battle. It was into this strife we walked in the late afternoon. The firing died away with the failing day, and we lay down and slept in our tracks. The cold was very keen, and much time was spent rising to stamp around and restore circulation which tended to stagnation while one slept.

Our most provident and efficient Q.M. had arrived overnight with two carts and emergency rations. Bright and early astir, we had our haversacks and water-bottles replenished, and went forward, strung out in artillery formation. The Turks had retired from the position they defended the day before, but their long-range guns were putting in some fairly

good shooting. We crossed the trenches they had made. They were shallow, not intended for serious defence, but only to retard our progress. The trenches probably gave them the range more accurately, and their fire now increased in intensity. A high wind and dust, with haze, were very trying. The fury of the shell-fire growing, orders were passed round to dig in. Trenching tools were plied to good purpose, and soon very little of the army was to be seen. The doctor and I dropped into the corner of an old Turkish trench. The assistant surgeon put up a Red Cross flag on the parapet, that men might know where help was to be obtained. This at once drew a torrent of high explosive and shrapnel. The enemy of course could not see that it was a Red Cross flag. But it seemed to indicate the presence of men, and that was enough. That trench did seem very shallow! At a lull in the firing the flag was plucked down, and we breathed more freely—so freely that I fell soundly asleep and was only wakened by the doctor observing, "They're going on again." So up and forward we went.

The doctor and I had arranged to stick together and keep a position from which we could swiftly reach casualties in any platoon of our battalion. The advance was made in spells of say 150 or 200 yards, the men lying down for a few minutes between them. We took advantage of such shelter as dry water-courses offered, as long as this was available. By and by we reached the open plain, without cover of any kind. We could now descry dimly in the distance the greenery pierced by the cupolas and minarets of Baghdad. The shells were taking toll of our soldiers in different parts of the field; but so far the Seaforths seemed to bear a charmed life. I

had just made a not very flattering remark about Turkish marksmanship when two shrapnel shells burst beside us, and I had the mortification of being the first man in the regiment to be hit. The remark with which I turned to the doctor, "Well, here's a job for you," may be taken as qualifying the former! He deftly applied the field dressing, binding up my broken jaw, and with a sad heart I stepped rearward. But as I looked back and saw the boys swinging forward undaunted through the tornado which I was leaving my pride in them touched a higher point than ever.

The fighting for the day was nearly over. The Turks retired during the night, and in the morning our gallant men advanced without further opposition. The first British soldiers to enter the city of Baghdad were the Black Watch and the Seaforths. They were received by the inhabitants with every demonstration of joy. For three days the people feasted. All work was abandoned. Dressed in their brilliant, rainbow-hued finery, they lined the river-banks, crowded the windows and housetops, picnicked in the gardens, and strolled at ease through streets that for weeks past had witnessed a reign of terror. In this rejoicing Jews, Christians, and Moslems alike shared, with the exception of a few Sunnis who had been associated with officialdom, and who now anticipated lean days. It was resolved that, in all time to come, the 11th of March should be observed as a feast in Baghdad, to commemorate the deliverance of the city from the tyranny and oppression of the Turk.

Meantime our troops advancing on the left bank had cleared the Turkish rearguard from the Dialah; and were marching on the city from the N.E.



In my "retreat" I encountered the Brigadier, whose practical sympathy secured for me a horse, and would have provided an escort, but I preferred not to take any man away from duty just then. Some miles back in the desert, as the gloaming fell, I found a dressing station, with friends of my own in charge. Tents and everything else threatened to fly off into the void on the wings of the dusty wind, which grew in violence as the night advanced. I rose three times to shake the soil off my stretcher. Once I looked out unguardedly, and my helmet set off at a wild pace. I pursued hard, but there was danger that I might not find the station again in the dark, so I left it to its fate. Naturally the quartermaster has a bright eye for all regimental property, but will it be believed that, next day, crossing the great wilderness on his way to Baghdad, he actually found the helmet, and had it waiting me when I reached the city! He is a veritable providence to the battalion.

A motor ambulance took me part of the way, through dust unspeakable, and a river Red Cross boat the rest, to Bâwi, near Ctesiphon. The O.C. of the hospital there was persuaded to let me board a steamer going up to Baghdad with a medical unit, the staff and personnel of which were old friends. Thus I was able to rejoin the regiment before they had time to settle in their new quarters.

Just then arrived one of our men, who the night before had had the misfortune to be captured by the enemy. His captors and himself were then caught by robbers, who relieved them of their weapons and all superfluous clothing. Eluding the vigilance of his guard, in his Edenic attire he stumbled on a company of Indian soldiers, who rigged him up in oddments of their own kit. The disguise thus effected was such

that he ran risk of being shot as a spy when he approached our lines !

My own joy was shortlived. Without ceremony the doctor consigned me to kind and skilful hands in a neighbouring ambulance. It was occupied chiefly by Indian patients. Weather that is charming to us seems to chill the blood of these dusky children of the sun. Many of them had perfectly awful coughs, which wakened hollow echoes in the large premises of the railway station where we were housed. If they were half as ill as they made themselves appear, their case was well-nigh desperate. These honest fellows have none of the foolish British inclination to disguise or minimise personal ailments !

A one-time resident in Baghdad told me a story of the building of this section of the railway to meet that from Aleppo which is too good to keep. The Wâli had agreed to cut the first sod, and it was a very great function indeed. Meissner Pasha, the German engineer in charge, presented to him a beautiful silver spade, with polished ebony handle. He spoke a few gracious words, thrust the spade into the ground, and turned it to throw out the earth. The *ebony* handle snapped in two with the strain, and behold it was *white* inside ! As the Wâli ruefully contemplated his broken gift, an unsympathetic Briton remarked, " Pinewood ebony made in Germany ! "

The General, an old Seaforth, acting military governor, hearing of my plight, sent for me to stay with him in the Citadel. The advantages of this arrangement in the newly captured city are obvious.

A rich booty was taken with the city. The railway track was practically uninjured. Many engines and much rolling stock were of great use in subsequent operations. Immense stores of arms and ammunition

were found in different parts of the city, in one case no fewer than 2800 revolvers of recent types. The Citadel enclosure contained arms of all kinds. There were stacks of rifles in the arsenal of types both ancient and modern. I saw heaps of cartridges with heavy, flat-nosed bullets. Alongside recent guns were others very old, enormously thick in the barrel, and highly ornamented. On one side was a mound of iron cannon-balls of many sizes, sadly rusted.

A pile of "flammenwerfer" was found, which it was said Khalil refused to use unless we first used gas. Gas plant was also discovered, but it also was never brought into action. Apparently it was not intended to employ this unless we led the way. The old methods of barbarism were good enough for the Turk, without the new instruments of "frightfulness" invented by the Hun.

Attempts had been made to blow up the arsenal. The brickwork had been broken in places, but on the whole it had resisted the dynamite, and much of the plant was quite capable of use. In the town a good deal of damage had been done. One street was almost entirely in ruins. The large warehouse of Messrs. Lynch Bros. was wrecked. The machinery in the cloth factory where cloth for army uniforms was made had been destroyed with hammers, and some of the buildings were ruinous. One hundred and fifty barrels of paraffin were burned. We had seen the glare of the bonfire in the distance. But there was evidence everywhere that much greater plans of destruction had been left unfulfilled. Although the Turks knew that we were coming, our actual arrival was sooner than they had calculated. Holes in many buildings were prepared for the sticks of dynamite that were to blow them up, but time failed to carry out this beneficent scheme. The bazaars had been looted, much masonry and

woodwork being broken down and burned. The merchants carried off and concealed the poor remainder of their goods, so the "shops" yawned, forlorn and empty, upon the gloomy covered ways. Immediately after our entry goods began to reappear in a timid and tentative way; and soon a very good business was being done. The cafés revived almost at once; and I was struck with the well-stocked and prosperous appearance of several drug stores.

There were some portly, well-nourished figures in the streets. These proved to be mostly Moslems from the suburbs. But as a rule the people were thin and pale, bearing evident traces of the anguish and uncertainty of recent days. This was true especially of the younger women. In spite of the sense of relief, and the brave smile they wore, it would take time to banish the shadows of fear that lurked in the depths of lustrous eyes.

I spoke with several natives of the city, who gave me a blood-curdling account of the enormities practised by the Turks before our arrival. The leader in this atrocious business was one Sa'ad ed-Dîn, a relative of Khalîl Pasha, the Turkish Commander-in-Chief. He was Chief of Police in the city. His office and his relationship to Khalîl made him in effect the most powerful man in Baghdad; and the depths of depravity and infamy he reached stagger imagination. Neither property nor person was sacred in the eyes of this monster of cruelty, rapacity, and lust. A favourite game of his was to compel the merchants, on pain of death, to give full face value for Turkish bank-notes. A Turkish note for a sovereign (18s.) could be got the day before our entry for 2s. Many who had refused submission to this iniquity were taken to the police office, and suffered death by the bowstring.

Sa'ad ed-Dîn's greed was his ruin. It blinded him to his danger. Engaged in a comfortable bit of looting in fancied security, he was caught by some of our men; and the news of his capture sent a thrill of joy through the whole city.

A comparatively mild case was that of two men whose names, for obvious reasons, I do not give. They were imprisoned on trumpery charges, and condemned to death as traitors. The case against one of them was that he had a portrait of King Edward VII. in his room! For ten days they were in fetters in a loathsome dungeon. They were permitted to communicate with friends, and by sale or mortgage of their property raised what money they could, giving the proceeds to Sa'ad ed-Dîn and the Provost-Marshal. The fetters were at once struck off, and their sentence commuted to six months' imprisonment.

The Turks were in a fever of excitement at the impending fate of Baghdad. A week before our arrival, "Anwar Basha"—Enver Pasha—wired to Khalîl, "Fight on until I can send you reinforcements"; and again, the day before our entry, "Fight to the last man; it would be easier to give up Constantinople than to surrender Baghdad." On the day when the British were already on the outskirts of the city came the despairing order to collect all the men in Baghdad and district who had paid the military tax, and so were exempt from service, and take them to Samarrah. This order came too late.

The attitude of the populace galled the Turks. When on the point of leaving the city, the Assistant Governor-General, Faik Beik, declared, "Though we are now leaving Baghdad, we shall return with 100,000 soldiers—Bulgars, Turks, Austrians, and Germans—to destroy the city and kill the inhabitants who rejoice at

the coming of the 'British.'" The German Vice-Consul, his imagination heated by misfortune, announced that Liman von Sanders, who had commanded in Gallipoli, was already on his way from Aleppo with 50,000 men.

Instructions were issued to the Arabs in the vicinity of Baghdad to break down the dykes, so that the land might be flooded to our hindrance and embarrassment. This was, in part, accomplished; but the damage was detected and repaired before much harm was done.

The principal buildings—the Citadel, the great barracks and hospitals, the British Residency, the American Consulate, etc.—stand along the left bank of the river, and on the right bank, especially to the east, are many fine houses. Behind these "front lines," with their palms, fruit trees, and green shrubs, there is little to distinguish the city, with its narrow winding streets and bazaars, and close Arab quarters, from the ordinary Oriental town, except its famous mosques and tombs and the ruins of its ancient walls and gates. A pontoon bridge spans the river. The ancient town stood on the right bank. It has vanished, leaving few remains. The railway and tramway stations lie to the west, and gardens and orchards press close around the city. The fresh vegetables were a real luxury after the course of bully beef and biscuits; and our weary men regaled themselves with oranges that were abundant and excellent.

A Persian poet described Baghdad as "a sun of gold, a river of silver, a sky of turquoise, and a soil of bronze." Its older history reaches back to dim antiquity, as is proved by the bricks found in the river-bank bearing the stamp of Nebuchadnezzar II.

Its period of glory begins with its new foundation by the Caliph Mansûr, grandfather of Harûn er-Rashîd, in 762 A.D. As metropolitan city, it took the place formerly held by Seleucia, Ctesiphon, the mighty Babylon itself. The seat of the Caliphs and the home of the Faith, there centred in it a world of religious and romantic interest for all the Moslem East which the vicissitudes of its history had done little to dissipate; while in political and commercial influence it remained supreme. Its vicissitudes were many and violent. It fell in succession to the Mongol Hulagu in A.D. 1258, to Tamerlane (Timur Beg) in A.D. 1401, to the Persian Shah Ishmael I. A.D. 1516. It was captured for the Turks by Suleiman the Magnificent in A.D. 1534, and lost to the Shah Abbas the Great in A.D. 1624. It was besieged and taken in A.D. 1638 by Murad (Amurath) IV., when the inhabitants were perfidiously put to the sword. Then fell the blight of Turkish domination upon the city and the land, under which the fountains of prosperity were dried, and beauty withered away. But *Baghdâd esh-Sharîf*, "the Illustrious," still exercised its spell upon the mind and heart of Islâm. Its possession was the asset of highest value to the Turks in Asia. It is not too much to say that its capture by the British dealt the most smashing blow to German dreams of conquest and empire in the East.

It may be hoped that the weary centuries of misrule are over at last. The people trust the integrity and high purpose of the Power now established astride the Tigris in the ancient seat of religious and political authority in Mesopotamia. Their confidence will not be put to shame. The breath of freedom will quicken the spirit of hope and enterprise. Beauty and fertility will return to the vast plains where untold wealth

waits the hand of the husbandman. Trade and commerce will revive. The sun will shine upon a people happy and prosperous, under an authority that secures for the toiler the fruit of his labour, respects the rights of all, and, without respect of persons, guarantees justice to every man, even the humblest.



THE  
BRITISH  
RESIDENCY,  
BAGHDAD.



1.



2.

1. THE BRITISH RESIDENCY, BAGHDAD.  
2. PONTOON BRIDGE, BAGHDAD.



CAFÉ AND MOSQUE, FROM ROOF OF CITADEL, BAGHDAD.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### IMPRESSIONS OF THE MEN

SOME general impressions derived from more than two years' companionship with our soldiers, under the conditions indicated in the foregoing pages, may not be without interest.

On the whole it is safe to assume that the qualities shown by our men amid the vicissitudes of their soldier life were not born in them after the war began. Some of them may have grown to strength more rapidly than they would have done under conditions of peace ; but the experience of the last three years has mainly furnished opportunity for the display rather than the creation of character. The lads seem to have changed. The truth is that we only know them better.

The average soldier is a sportsman, in whom is a spirit of high adventure. He believes his cause is just ; and his blows are the more vigorous because there is a good conscience behind them. But war has also for him the features of a mighty game, to which the spice of peril adds interest, and risks are encountered with a thrill of exhilaration. From the worst buffetings of fortune he comes up smiling. It is the rarest thing to hear ill-natured criticism of the enemy. " Johnny Turk " is an antagonist to be overthrown, and, to score a victory, the soldier will do all he knows. But he respects a stout and honourable foe. The vials of his wrath and contempt are reserved for the " Pigs " who do not " play the game."

This spirit, developed on the playing fields at home, receives illustration in strange places. I found a game of football in full swing behind our lines at Gallipoli, and saw, as I approached, a man knocked out by a Turkish shell. He was carried off the field on a stretcher, and the game proceeded with a fine disregard of danger. The lad was not seriously hurt. When I spoke to him, his one annoyance was that the Turks had "copped" him just as he was in the act of kicking a goal for his side!

The soldier is a man of feeling. There is nothing about him of the blubbering emotionalism of the Hun. He has himself usually very well in hand; but he cannot altogether hide the depth and tenderness of his love and friendship. A long-looked-for letter from home, some unexpected token of remembrance and affection, will surprise him into a moment of unwatchfulness, and you get a glimpse of his heart. There, jealously guarded, are the things that make life sweet and strong, and worthy to be lived.

A fine big fellow came in with a bullet through his lung. The doctors took a serious view of the case. We propped him up with cushions at the edge of the tent. He was too weak to do anything for himself. By his direction I took a photograph from his pocket and set it up on an old packing-case by his side where he could see it without moving. It was the photo of his wife and two little daughters. He seemed never to take his eyes off them. He gained strength wonderfully, and in three days was able to be moved. I went to bid him God-speed. As he put the photo into his pocket he said quite simply, referring to his recovery, "'Twas them as did it, sir."

The soldier is patriotic. That may seem a superfluous thing to say. No one will think so for whom

patriotism has been interpreted anew by the intrepid daring of our sons, and the splendour of their sacrifice. In this our comrades from the Emerald Isle have their full share.

A burly Irishman came in with many wounds. His case was quite hopeless. Even so, he could appreciate the humour of his appearance. "What are you?" asked the doctor kindly. "Sure, I'm half an Irishman." "And what's the other half?" "Holes and bandages," came the answer like a flash. They gave him morphia to soothe him, without much effect. Soon the ward was filled with a rich, mellow voice, singing—what think you?—

"Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the waves.  
Britains never, *never*, NEVER shall be slaves."

With the echo of that patriotic song on his lips he went down into the dark valley.

The soldier is courageous and chivalrous. Of his courage it is enough to say that it is not usually the courage that knows no fear, but that which knows fear, and conquers it. The youth goes over the parapet and faces death with no less heroism because his knees knocked together in the trench before the attack. The things men are perpetually doing in kindly consideration for wounded and suffering comrades, taking great risks to help them, clearly unconscious that anything remarkable is being done, betray a fine, high, and chivalrous nature.

I am often asked if the experience of war is making the men more religious, and if there is among them a growing interest in the creation of a new and better world for days to come. Those who know the men best will speak with the greatest caution. Any judgment of value must take account of the natural

reticence of our race ; and this brings in an element of uncertainty. It may be said with confidence, however, that the men are not thinking much about the world of to-morrow. The task of the present sufficiently absorbs them. It may be described as the clearing of the site for the erections of the future ; and perhaps it is as well that, meantime, they should concentrate upon this. But we may expect a more serious outlook and a deeper sense of responsibility in men upon whom the problems of life, death, and immortality have been thrust amid the grim uncertainties of the battlefield.

There are many things to show that religion is a real interest in the lives of the men. It would not be wise, indeed, to draw sweeping inferences from the multitudes who attend voluntary religious services. They will go with at least equal eagerness to concert, lecture, cinema show, or anything that breaks the monotony. At the same time there is much genuine enjoyment of the services ; and they give great opportunities to the padre with insight and knowledge of his business. The boys soon tire of prosy philosophy, and they have no use for exercises in theological hair-splitting. The padre who preached to a regiment, about to go into action, on the Synoptic Problem, was a for-wandered creature who had missed his vocation. The brother who enjoined a company—Aberdeen lads ; therefore born theologians and controversialists ! —to give special attention, as he was about to preach a “ deep sermon,” in which he was soon plainly out of depth himself, furnished a little entertainment without much profit. But if a man has any vital message, and will talk straight about the things that matter, with practical bearing on character and duty, he will never lack a responsive and sympathetic audience.

A large proportion of the men have been church-goers all their lives. Their interest in public worship is not the result of any change in them. It meets what is to them a felt need, and pleasantly reminds them of happier days. It would be strange if there were not others for whom things, it may be long familiar, have taken on a new and comforting significance.

There are, however, many who have not been church-goers, of whom it has been rashly concluded that they care nothing for religion. Were the boys altogether to blame? What was done to make the church an attractive place for young fellows of high spirit, with the hot blood of youth leaping in their veins? Were they not often frozen out by a certain stiff reserve, or repelled by a portentous and dreary solemnity that has foisted itself upon many as becoming to the service of Christ? To the Church as an institution these lads gave the go-by; but that does not mean that there was in their hearts any deep disloyalty to Christ. Among these lads the great, inspiring verities of the faith find ready welcome. It will be the Church's own fault if, in years to come, they are not her strength and glory.

There is much unobtrusive but sincere and manly piety, which shows itself in times of stress. A lad came in with many wounds, any one of which, with slight change of direction, might have proved fatal. Speaking of his experience, I said it must give a man seriously to think. He looked up with a quiet smile and said, "Aye; but I had dune my thinkin' afore."

My judgment is that the war has not produced any great moral and spiritual change in the men. Those who had the "root of the matter" in them have

probably benefited most by the experience. Some who were merely indifferent may have been roused. Of those who were frankly hostile to religion, or openly regardless, one need not be surprised, considering what war is, if many have been more or less brutalised.

We expect Christianity to make a man loyal, steadfast, and brave, and we are not disappointed. But an ungrudging tribute of admiration is due to the splendid qualities displayed by many who make no claim whatever to be religious. I have met such men off duty, on board ship, and elsewhere: some who might be described as "a bit wild"; others whose chief concern in peace times is obviously "sport"; hard drinkers, addicted to "sultry" language, accustomed to play for high stakes, for whom a game would have no interest if there were nothing to gain or lose. I have been struck with the spirit of hearty good-fellowship prevailing among these men. Their patriotism, in the commonly accepted meaning of the term, is beyond all question. I often wondered how they would acquit themselves amid the grim and awful circumstances of war. The answer is quite direct and unequivocal. They have on the whole quitted themselves like men. They have endured hardship and privation not only without complaint, but with cheerfulness. They have borne manfully their full share of toil. In the perils of battle they have been not less eager, skilful, and intrepid than their fellows. With a fine chivalrous disregard of self, they have sought to relieve and succour their suffering comrades. No forlorn hope will lack leaders and volunteers if they are near. When at last they have been brought low, I have seen them meet their fate without quailing—nay, with a certain appearance of



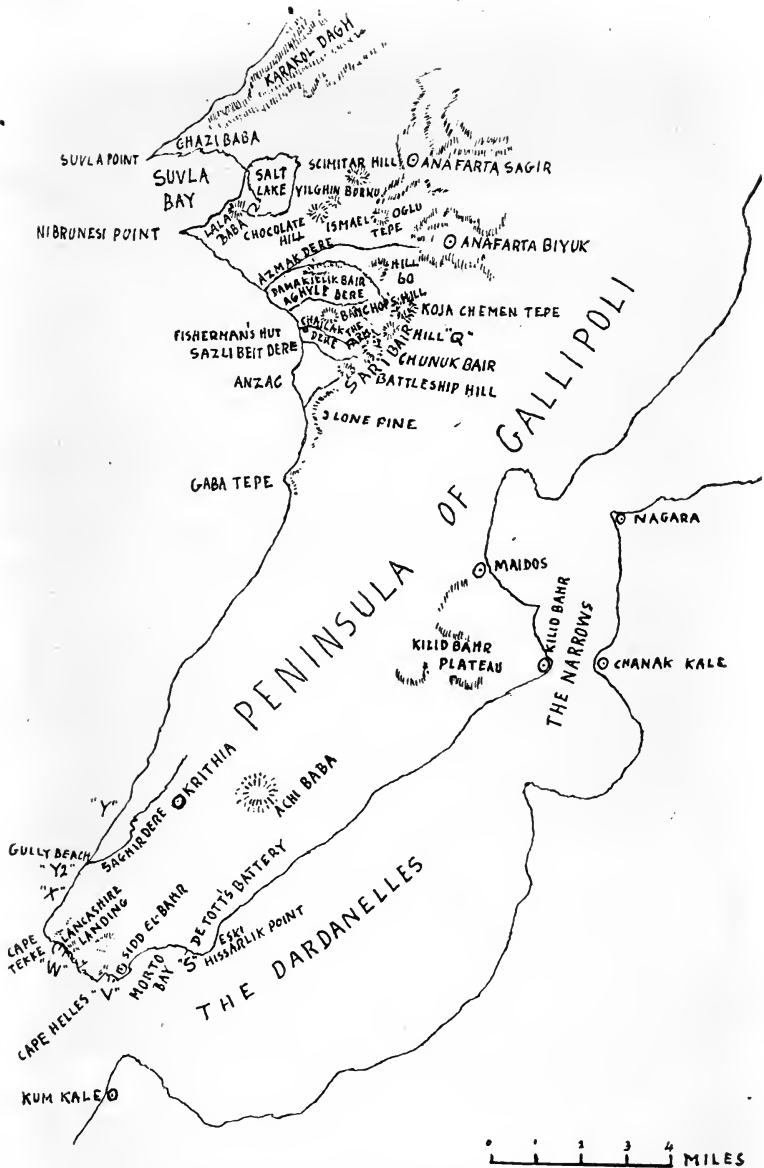
elation, as of men who feel that death is glorious when endured in a great and holy cause.

Thinking of the problem here suggested, I have often wondered if there be not much implicit, or unconscious, Christianity in these men. This may seem to consort but ill with some things mentioned above. War, it may be said, brings out the best that is in men, and so magnifies it that the rest may be obscured. But what if this best be the deepest thing in them, the truest expression of their real selves? It is but a suggestion. One turns hopefully to the phrase of the old theologian, *Anima naturaliter christiana*.

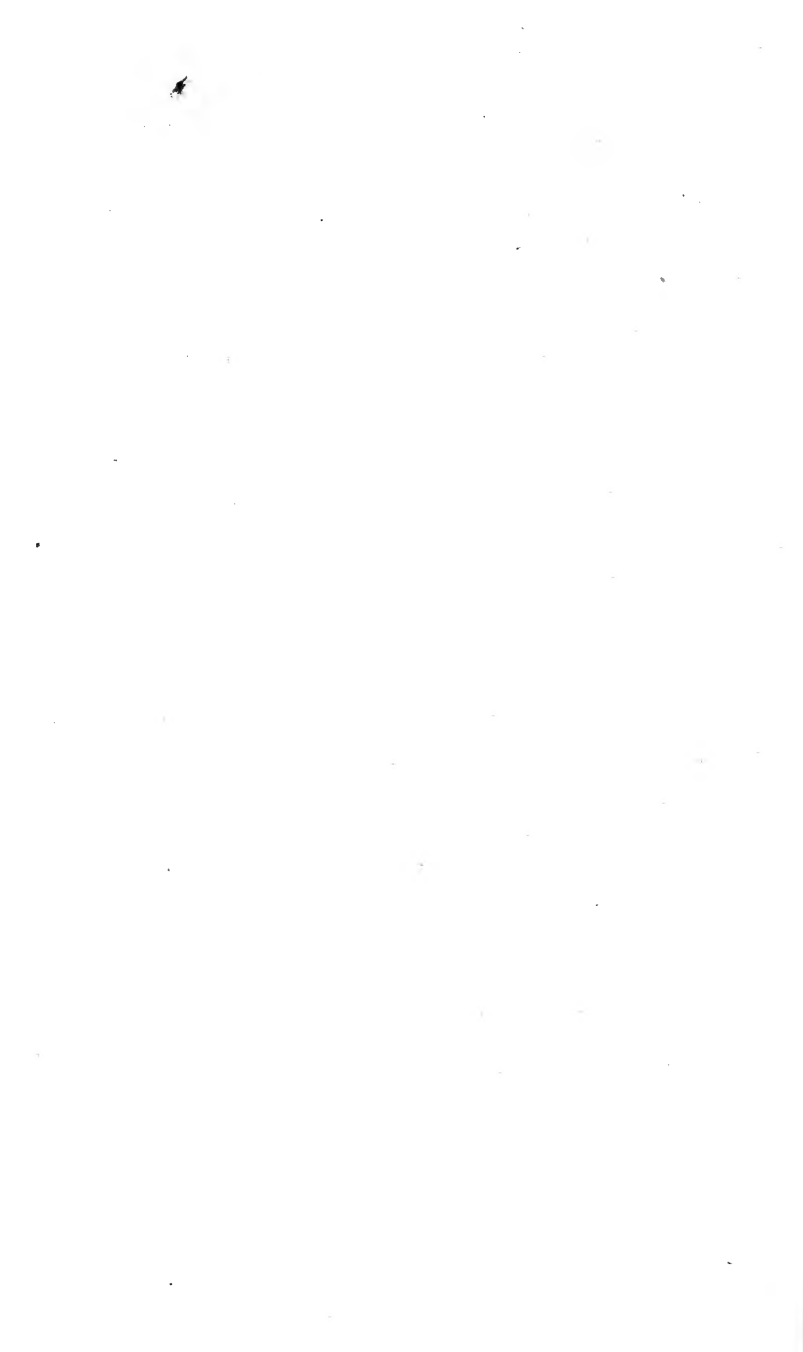
There is another class of men for whom the war has done something—the “wastrels.” This class is not confined to the drouthy fellows in rags, with many police-court convictions against them, who hang about the corners of the streets. Wherever they come from, the experiences of war have enabled some of them, at least for a time, to “find themselves.” Caught in the wave of patriotism, they have been lifted away from their old surroundings and accustomed haunts. *Nolens volens* they have mingled daily with men of nobler antecedents and higher character, in an atmosphere where worthy conduct is expected of every man. Under the strict and impartial discipline of the Army, strong and wholesome influences have wrought upon these men, leading many of them to recovery of self-respect. Of the moral revolution this involves I need not speak. Will the change prove permanent? Will it stand the strain of return to the old home and the environment of former days? These questions only the future can answer. Personally I believe that not a few lives, by the grace of God, will henceforth be purer, braver, and stronger. How-

ever that may be, one cannot but be thankful for this glimpse of what is possible for men whose failure, hitherto has probably been largely due to the paralyzing conviction that nobody expected any good of them.

If a man prove his manhood alongside theirs in a common experience of hardship and peril, he will win the soldiers' respect, without which they will never give him their confidence. It is well worth while, for they are men of whom we have every right to be proud. The average soldier is not, indeed, a saint, in the conventional or any other sense; nor would he be grateful to one who said he was on the high way to that distinction. He is a man of fairly keen observation and sane judgment, with a full share of shrewd common sense. If he often falls below his best, he knows that he is not very unlike many who might call themselves his "betters." He abhors cant. He is a man of swift and generous impulses, liable also to be moved by sudden gusts of passion. In the hospitals we saw all sides: the best and the worst, the noblest and the most pitifully sordid, with all that come between. These men belong to the true breed of British warriors: "grouching" over trifles of discomfort and inconvenience, and meeting with uncomplaining and heroic endurance the greatest disaster and the bitterest loss. Blind to neither their excellences nor their failings, we should accept them thankfully for what they are, with their big-hearted, wholesome humanity, a stout bulwark of our freedom. God grant that we may prove worthy of the sacrifices so heroically made for us.



SKETCH MAP OF S.W. END OF PENINSULA.









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