A REGIMENTAL SURGEON IN WAR AND PRISON

A REGIMENTAL SURGEON IN WAR AND PRISON

A REGIMENTAL SURGEON IN WAR AND PRISON

BY

CAPTAIN ROBERT V. DOLBEY,

M.B., M.S. (Lond.), F.R.C.S. (Eng.),

Royal Army Medical Corps.

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1917

CONTENTS

PREFACE

THESE recollections of the fighting in France from August to November, 1914, do not pretend, in any way, to be an authentic history of the Campaign. They are merely the record of the work and wanderings of a regimental medical officer in part of the Retreat, the Advance, at the Marne, the Aisne, and the fighting at and near La Bassée. There they come to an abrupt conclusion, for, in the grey dawn of a foggy October morning, I was taken prisoner and, with my wounded, my orderlies and stretcher bearers, conducted through our long and eventful pilgrimage into Germany. From the moment the miracle of the Marne occurred we had little doubt that nothing would stop our victorious progress to the Rhine. Little did I think that the invasion of Germany, on my part, would take place in so ignominious a fashion. When I say that the regiment to which I had the honour of being attached was the 2nd Battalion the King's Own Scottish Borderers, of the 13th Brigade,

and that ours was the Fifth Division, I may plead ample justification for these pages.

In this Division there were three Brigades, the 13th, 14th and 15th. None of the four battalions of the 13th Brigade, the Scottish Borderers, the West Kents, the Yorkshire Light Infantry, and the West Riding Regiment needs words of mine to sustain its honour; that lives in the official records of this Campaign. To this day in France they speak of "*La Cinquième Division qui était à Mons.*" If these pages seem only to be concerned with the doings of this battalion, I may plead that a regimental doctor has no time for other regiments. To us the Retreat and the Advance were epitomised in the roads we took, the fights we fought, the billets that gave our battalion the few precarious hours of sleep that we can remember. If the recollections of these days seem to be at variance with official records, one can only say that in the fog of war we saw only one small sector of the line—our part; only one road from Le Cateau—the road we took. All else is merely the remembrance of fatigue beyond expression, of swollen and painful feet beyond the appreciation of pain; of sleep that kept men swaying on the march; of companies

of men that fell over one another at the halts and lay in the roads to sleep, from sheer exhaustion, until they were kicked into grumbling life again.

The chapters of this book which tell the tale of Germany as a prisoner saw it, of the prisoners' camps at Crefeld, Minden, Sennelager and Güetersloh, of the nightmare that was the winter of 1914–1915, are officially correct. The recollections of those days were engraved, so indelibly, on the brains of all who experienced them that no lapse of time can change the well-remembered records of that period.

A REGIMENTAL SURGEON IN WAR AND PRISON

CHAPTER I

THE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IN THE RETREAT

I HAD left British Columbia at the end of the second week in July 1914, for a very brief visit home. As our ship, delayed by fog and the southward-bound icebergs in the Atlantic, passed the northern coast of Ireland, we heard of the trouble in Dublin: news came to us that the Scottish Borderers, on their return to barracks from an attempt to stop Nationalist gun-running, had fired upon the mob. All Roman Catholic Ireland was said to be ablaze. Irishmen on board our ship—who were in touch with the political condition of their island—predicted that Ireland would be in the grip of civil war within the next month. In the chancelleries of Europe all was peace, except for the smouldering flame in the Balkans, where Austria was trying to fix on Serbia responsibility for

the crime of Serajevo. The political atmosphere was full of troublous Ireland. None dreamt that the difficulties of that island would so soon be overwhelmed in the European catastrophe so swiftly approaching.

The Congress of Surgeons of North America, of which I am a member, was holding a meeting in London from July 26th to July 29th : all the stars of the surgical firmament of Europe were in England. The first night of the meeting the big Austrian surgeons read their papers and withdrew. The next day the German stars departed. Then, while all were wondering, the great French professor admitted that mobilisation orders tore him unwillingly, and with misgivings, from the London he was beginning to know.

The Medical Department of the War Office accepted readily, for service in the Base Hospitals of the Expeditionary Force, men who had seen service before. My unit was to mobilise at Woolwich on August 15th, for immediate embarkation. In a few days we were off, in all secrecy at night, to Southampton. In a line, the transports, column after column of ships, following the careful and tortuous route across the Channel, made their way to Havre. No ships of war to be seen ; but all the time, we were con-

scious of the watchful guard of the Navy that allowed so many ships to pass without misfortune. At Havre we received the enthusiastic welcome of a population that had been, until lately, full of misgivings as to the material value of the Entente Cordiale. The nation was much relieved by our presence. The cloud of doubt and panic was now lifted. England, always given far greater credit for political influence in continental affairs than her military strength ever justified, had now come to the rescue.

A rest camp for us on the heights above the harbour. All day the splendid, regular regiments marching down—to the station and the train that carried them east towards the Belgian frontier.

There was even now work for us to do, for the heavy marching, in full kits, under a blazing August sky, found the weak spots in the reservists. Some of our men were coming back by train to Havre; and all of them reservists. They were the men who had just been called up to the Colours; there had been no time to get them hardened, and new boots had blistered soft, civilian feet. The warm fireside and the sheltered life told their story, in the heart that could not bear the burden of the pack;

the well compensated valvular or muscular weakness, that was sufficient to perform the functions of everyday civilian life, now showed its lack of power to accommodate itself to strain. The tubercular focus in the lung, that, unsuspected, had not prevented the performance of civilian work, was now exposed by the searching test of long marching, cold nights and fatigue undreamt of. Exhaustion, flat feet, varicose veins, rotten teeth that could not bite the biscuits; and we saw what the wastage of war could be.

Days of restlessness in Havre followed; anxiety lest the war should be over before we could take our part. Then came the fighting in Belgium near Mons, and the wounded arrived on the night of the 23rd August and the succeeding days. How glad we were to get some work to do!

At St. Nazaire the chance we longed for came, and five of us left the hospital, of which we were already sick to death, and boarded the train for Le Mans to get further orders. At Le Mans, no orders; nobody knew anything. So we took the responsibility on our own shoulders, climbed on the first train that left in the direction of Paris, saw some of the motor transport of the Fifth Division at a wayside station,

stopped the train, got out, and after many wanderings, reached the famous division on its retreat. We were a scratch lot for regimental medical officers; one of us on leave from India, where he was doctor to an Indian Railway; another, one of the most distinguished of the younger heart specialists in London, a man for whom "Auricular fibrillation" had no terrors; two of us, of much general medical knowledge but no special leanings; and myself, by way of being a bit of a surgeon. We were badly wanted; for the casualties among medical officers had been great. Regimental medical officers, with their advanced dressing posts in good position when fighting commenced, too busy with their wounded to notice the retirement of the fighting lines in front, had awakened to find themselves in the forefront of the battle. They were faced with the choice of waiting by their wounded, of dodging the German infantryman, for whom the Red Cross brassard meant less than nothing, or flight. Many of them, to their credit, stayed with their wounded, and paid the penalty of duty with their lives or with many months in a German prison. One of us was detailed to the Manchesters, one to the Norfolks, the third to the East Surreys, the fourth to

the West Ridings, while it fell to the lot of the 2nd Battalion the King's Own Scottish Borderers to have me for their surgeon.

The history of the K.O.S.B. is the story of Mons. Thrown out in front of the Canal, on the 23rd, they sustained the attack all day. One Company, under Major Chandos Leigh, advanced through potato fields to drive out the enemy from the wood that enfiladed them. The skirmishers in the wood turned out to be a division of German troops, and the remnants of this Company had to take what shelter they could in the ridge and furrow of the potato field. Their Company Officer stayed behind to see to some wounded, and was never heard of again. Some gained safety; others, many of them wounded, found temporary security among the sheltering potato tops. The wounded prisoners were taken to Boussu to a Belgian hospital; thence to the prisoners' camp at Sennelager, near Paderborn, in Westphalia. During the night of the 23rd the banks of the canal were held by each of the opposing forces, sniping, in the dark, at one another across the water. Then came the retreat, easterly and a little southerly to Bavai and Le Cateau. The Scottish imagination was, I fear, far too matter-of-fact to harbour any such beautiful

delusion as the story of the Angels of Mons. All were much too tired, too exhausted, too thirsty; their thoughts were only of the interminable road, the halt that never seemed to come, the tea that was so badly wanted. A more imaginative regiment, no doubt, might conceive the story of the Angels; the ground was ready for such a seed. What illusion more likely in the fatigue of a disordered, subconscious mind? But the Scottish people, though they may have no time for fancies, are not untouched by history; for the regiment passed the monument to the great Marlborough near the field of Malplaquet, and wondered what the spirit of the Great Captain would have said, to see British troops in such retreat before the foe.

At Le Cateau the regiment acted as rear guard to the rest of the Brigade; and suffered much in consequence. Far too tired to march any farther, on the night of the 25th they had only strength to dig themselves in, and fight all day long on the 26th. Then, refreshed by what was, to them, so precious a rest after the forced marches of the preceding days, they joined the battered remnants of the Fifth Division in St. Quentin. At this point the Fifth and Third Divisions were inextricably mixed. Here, a

subaltern and 100 men, and they imagined that they were the last survivors of their regiment; there, another subaltern, with his little group of men—also the last survivors of their battalion. The whole Brigade was, for the moment, broken up into fragments. All Scottish soldiers would attach themselves to Scottish officers of any battalion; and other soldiers to other officers. A Scots Fusilier officer meeting a K.O.S.B. officer would exchange the men who had been attracted by the similarity of the bonnets, and, after a few inquiries as to their transport, get on again. The transport was a great rallying point. So it came about that within three days of Le Cateau all this heterogeneous mass of men belonging to the Third and Fifth Divisions had separated itself out into its proper constituent elements, and the Army was an Army again. Staff Officers would stop at cross roads to direct these scattered units to their proper divisions. The transport hurried on ahead so that the roads might be clear for infantry. The A.S.C. left piles of bread and biscuit and bully beef at each cross road. Every man would take what he could carry, and hurry on again. Blind instinct led them towards Paris; some with-

out caps, some with stockinged night-caps on their heads; their rifles and ammunition and water bottles their only kit. Packs had long since been discarded, or safety would never have been reached. The Guards alone retained their full marching equipment and paid the penalty of the strict law of discipline. Guardsmen might fall out by the roadside or drop dead from exhaustion, but their packs would still be in place. This absolute discipline might strain a damaged heart beyond its breaking point, but the stern rules of peace training were inexorable. A Guardsman never loses anything; he has always got his entrenching tool, his emergency ration is never broached. But even the most broken man would cling to his rifle and ammunition. That he never discarded. Duty dragged us on in front. This kept all men going who would otherwise have followed the dictates of faint heart and sore feet. The Division was disorganised for the first three days after Le Cateau; but we were never an undisciplined mob. The unconscious sense of discipline and order, that comes from years of the barrack square, kept this Division of ours together. On the third day not one could have told that the Army had been in such a retirement. The

regiments were only at half strength; but they were regiments again. Tried by hardship, of an endurance splendid, were the men who faced around at the Marne. Our regiment that had left Dublin 1,100 strong, a bare fortnight before, by this time numbered just over 500 officers, N.C.O's and men. But now there was nothing that they could not face; morale unequalled; driven but undefeated still. In a dream we marched, unconscious of the towns we passed, the villages we slept in; fatigued almost beyond endurance; dropping to sleep at the five-minute halt that was the reward of each four miles covered. Whole companies, dozing as they marched, fell forward drunkenly on each other at the halts. Sleeping men lay, as they had halted, in the roads, and were kicked uncomplainingly into wakefulness again. Officers alone, from a sense of duty and responsibility, remained standing, lest the sleep that drugged their footsteps might find them wanting when the order came to fall in and march again. Once more forward, with feet that hurt like a hundred knives, as new surfaces of frayed sock rubbed over fresh blisters, with legs that were no longer conscious of the sensation of pain. None but a Regular Army could

have done it; and after the war we shall worship the gods of spit-and-polish and barrack square again. If ever a war has shown the value of discipline and training, it is this.

At Crépy-en-Valois the K.O.S.B. and the West Kents fought a rearguard action, with a spirit as unimpaired, a courage as undaunted, as that with which they had faced the oncoming host in the shallow field trenches at Le Cateau. This fight gave the rest of the Brigade time to get on and out of the closing net.

At last, rearguard fights were no longer pressed by the enemy. An action, conceived as defensive, automatically became an offensive. It was then that we knew that the Miracle of the Marne had come about. We had no idea why we turned; we supposed, in a dull, uncomprehending fashion, that the baited trap had now been sprung, and that we were, at last, to turn and rend our quarry. Never could we understand why the Germans did not take Paris. We felt that we could have done nothing to stop them, if they had wished to occupy it. French officers themselves have christened it the "Miracle of the Marne"; so incomprehensible it was.

Later on, one came to talk over matters with Russian officers, and heard how they had driven the civilian population of East Prussia headlong into Berlin. Then came the certain conviction that it was the sacrifice of Russia; the offering of the Warsaw Army Corps, all unready, upon the altar of the Treaty with France, that had saved a threatened Paris from the invader. For once the German General Staff had panicked; and recalled many divisions from France to stay the terror that filled Unter den Linden with groups of starving refugees from East Prussia.

How does a regimental medical officer do his work and what is his equipment? This I was curious to know; for I had not been a surgeon to a battalion in the field for thirteen years. In the South African War we had been provided with a Cape cart, for the medical panniers, and an ambulance for the wounded. Now, all that was changed and for the better. No more regimental ambulances. Regular trained N.C.O's and men of the R.A.M.C. instead of the willing, but only partially instructed, regimental orderlies. The doctor to each regiment is now provided with a light, two-wheeled Maltese cart, that carries the medical and surgical

panniers. These contain a comprehensive selection of medical and surgical instruments, medicines, condensed milk, and beef extract; all as complete as it is compact. Lacking only rubber gloves and sterilisable surgical gowns, there is hardly an operation, of an urgent character, that an adaptable surgeon cannot do in an emergency. Given a house, a stove and a regimental doctor's equipment, his trained N.C.O., and he will have all the essentials of a temporary hospital. Two water carts, each with its orderly, trained to the cleaning of filters and the chlorination of water, complete the regimental equipment for which the surgeon is responsible. The source of the water supply is his job. He has to see that sentries are posted over the doubtful wells and the ponds that collect the farmyard drainage. With the Pioneer sergeant and his men the doctor goes, at each bivouac, to choose the sites for latrines; see that all holes are filled and refuse cleaned up when the regiment leaves its billet. His staff also comprises sixteen stretcher bearers, equally at home with the heavy stretchers as with the band instruments that find them occupation in times of peace.

CHAPTER II

THE MIRACLE OF THE MARNE

THE Retreat was over. The last rearguard action fought by the 13th Brigade, to cover the retreat of the Fifth Division, south-west of Lagny, had been successfully conducted at Crépy-en-Valois by the 2nd Battalion King's Own Scottish Borderers and the Royal West Kent Regiment. The Expeditionary Force halted, dressed, collected its scattered transport and turned again in a north-easterly direction, through Coulommiers to the Marne. Of the K.O.S.B. 600 turned again to the Advance; the rest were scattered. Some of the wounded, the lucky ones, were in England; others less fortunate, lay in hospitals, schools, churches and convents, in improvised houses and barns, all along the line of the Retreat from Mons and Le Cateau to Crépy. Most fortunate were those who were given shelter in the Belgian convents near Mons: far less fortunate were their brothers in arms who only found a

painful lodging on the straw of French churches and schools. Most miserable of all were those who lay in manure on the floor of cattle trucks that had brought German cavalry horses to Belgium. For in those early days our wounded were often without surgical dressings, food, water, or any medical attention whatever. One of the brightest features of the retreat was the gallant and unselfish way in which regimental medical officers, Field Ambulances and other medical units stayed behind with their wounded on the way. They had seen their poor fellows bayoneted on the field, after Mons; and rumour, credibly it seemed, brought stories of German brutality, of stretcher bearers with their hands cut off and eyes gouged out. Yet these devoted people stayed behind; some with fifty, others with three hundred, hastily collected in improvised hospitals by the way. The story of these medical officers and orderlies without food, or dressings, or any comforts for the wounded, facing insults and cruelties from the advancing Germans, makes an epic in itself. After Mons the lightly wounded and some of the severely wounded were removed by train and arrived safely at Havre. After Le Cateau, with very few exceptions, only

those who could walk to the trains or get precarious shelter in the transport waggons or in the Field Ambulances ever quitted the field. All severely wounded had to be left behind to the tender mercies of the foe.

In Coulommiers, a town of picturesque old houses and many bridges crossing clear streams, the inhabitants welcomed us very gladly. For the Germans had only just left, and every wine-shop and café were in ruins. Time alone had saved this town from systematic sacking. The heat was intense as we marched out toward Doué, but later in the afternoon rain fell and added to our discomfort. We bivouacked that night in a farm at Doué, so hastily deserted by the Germans that their food lay untasted on the tables in the courtyard and nothing but wine had been consumed. Nor had there been any stint in that, for the farmyard and outbuildings were full of empty bottles. German officers, fearing a surprise, always dined in the courtyard of the farms; the tables neatly laid with tablecloths looted from the linen chests. From the number of wine glasses, lying broken on the ground, it was clear that after each drink the glass had been thrown on the ground in sheer wanton waste and a spirit of destruction. But their pre-

parations had been in vain, for we came in for the feast while the food was yet warm. In the houses chaos and destruction reigned. Clocks lay broken, crockery smashed, chests of drawers emptied of their contents, linen and clothes lying knee deep on the floor all stained with mud from German boots. All but the religious pictures were destroyed; and from this we deduced that the division we were following was probably Bavarian or Würtemburgian. When a German soldier snatched a few moments' rest in the beds he lay on the clean sheets with his filthy boots and took no trouble to avoid soiling even the most delicate bed linen. Nor was this all, for in nearly every house these men had left filthy evidences of their bestial habits behind them. They certainly succeeded in rendering the beds and bedrooms uninhabitable for any of us who might wish to sleep.

There were a few German prisoners, slightly wounded and exhausted men picked up in woods and barns and outhouses. They were tired and very hungry, but impudently self-assured. At Coulommiers station that morning we had seen about 150 German wounded being carried by our men to the ambulance train that was lying there. Fat and smiling Germans were being carried on the shoulders

of our orderlies to the train ; here in clean linen on swing cots with English nurses and doctors to attend them they were going to make their way in comfort to St. Nazaire. But what of our prisoners in Belgium ? No ambulance trains, nurses or doctors for them ; nothing but the filth of the floor of a horse box, exhibited at each station to a jeering crowd of Red Cross orderlies, nurses and soldiers. And when they called for food or water, nothing but a shower of stones and abuse for the "*Engländer gefangener.*" It was, perhaps, lucky for these German wounded that we were unconscious of what our comrades suffered.

From Doué next morning we marched through St. Cyr toward La Ferté-sous-Jouarre. At the station of La Ferté I found that some juvenile German soldiers had spent a few idle moments, before destroying the station, in punching all the tickets in the ticket office : these were lying strewn about the floor. I kept one as a souvenir. All night and all next day our guns and the French thundered, shelling the German transport in its retreat along the hilly roads and steep ravines of this wooded country. Apparently the whole of our artillery and the French artillery on our right had collected near together ; far

into the night they blazed away, shooting on the map, shelling the roads to hinder the German transport hurrying to the Marne. At St. Cyr the kindly people came to give us bread and jam ; crowding round us with evidences of heartfelt relief at our approach. One young woman complained of unspeakable treatment at the hands of their late visitors. In those days, no word of the systematic outrages on French and Belgian women had reached our ears. We had been far too tired and far too hungry up to that time to pay much attention to any possible outrage on the civilian population. We saw little evidence of physical cruelty, only of a mad spirit of destruction ; houses fired in drunken orgies. We rather thought that most looting had been carried out by the transport drivers, the commissariat and other details that accompany the German transport. Had the German infantry been half as tired as we were, we felt sure that they had in the weight of their packs alone more than they could carry as it was ; nor would they have been inclined to carry off even minted gold, if they had found it.

These good inhabitants of St. Cyr were soon to be compensated for their misfortunes

by the sight of about seventy prisoners whom we passed as they were being marched into the town with an escort. A very patchy lot of men they were ; some huge, some very small and puny ; but all with the hulking, loose kneed, shambling walk that is so characteristic of the German. One can always tell German infantry by their gait, even if it is not possible to see them clearly or to recognise the spike upon the helmet. A German soldier in full regimentals crouches as he walks ; that is, provided he is not marching to attention. All soldiers crouch and lean, to a certain extent, from the weight of their packs, but the German more than others, as his pack is higher up upon his shoulders. With bent knee, all loose jointed, I have recognised them at night silhouetted against a lighter background. All these German prisoners at St. Cyr were hungry-looking and tired, but they were not cowed ; rather there was an impudent curiosity about them. For they had made the great discovery, and for once German High Headquarters were wrong ; the English did not kill all prisoners. Only as we passed a group of Frenchwomen did they lose their composure ; for, in those days, the women in this part of France

were smarting under the sense of many injuries.

Leaving St. Cyr behind us, we made the last heights before the long gradual descent to the Marne. There was much intermittent shelling, and once the battalion was in action, advancing in a very perilous manner across some open fields, under shrapnel fire. But the brunt of the fighting was borne by the Third Division on our left. Saacy was our destination, and it was our object to cut off as much German personnel and transport as possible before it could cross the fine bridge there. Apparently there were only two bridges in this part of the Marne which were intact, the one at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre and ours at Saacy. The whole of that lovely September afternoon the 13th Brigade lay on the slopes within a couple of miles of the bridge and watched the contest for the wooded heights above the river, through their glasses. For the woods which rose sharply from the river were very strongly held, especially by two batteries of artillery; ten guns in all, particularly well screened from view. But our Divisional cavalry and horse artillery were well up and across the river; and the Germans, stampeded for once out

of their usual methodical ways, omitted to blow up the bridge. They trusted to artillery fire to dispute our passage. A beautiful sight it was to see our mounted men and guns work up the slopes in front of us; they seemed to take the steep ascent at a gallop, unmindful of the fleecy clouds of cotton wool that were the enemy shrapnel. The gunners unlimbered at the edge of a wood and in a cornfield that bounded the fringe of trees on the south side. We could clearly see them running to bring sheaves of corn to screen the guns from view. Then the red tongues of flame stabbed the green background of the wood, as they shelled the German transport on the reverse slopes of the hill. But the cavalry suffered from the shrapnel fire; and, often, we could see little groups of riderless horses tearing down the slope of open ground to the river below; and the tiny figures of dismounted men trying to head them back. All that afternoon we lay in the sun, regardless of the fact that we were well in range of the German guns, had they not been otherwise employed. About five o'clock came the order for our regiment to advance to support the 14th and 15th Brigades, who had made the crossing safely and were now in action in the depths of the

woods away to the left of our cavalry. The 15th Brigade consisted of the Cheshires, Dorsets, Norfolks and Bedfords, and it yielded nothing in excellence to the 14th. The latter was made up of Manchesters, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, East Surreys, and Suffolks.

Through the winding streets of Saacy we marched on to the handsome stone bridge that crossed the river. This town appears to be a favourite summer resort; for all along the river banks were tied launches and skiffs and houseboats. Across the bridge we passed the undamaged château and gained the steep road in the shelter of the woods. It was a blazing hot afternoon. All the way this narrow road was blocked with light transport of the 14th and 15th Brigades, ammunition waggons and water carts: the crush was great and we could hardly get past. A constant stream of wounded men flowed by, walking or carried on stretchers to the field ambulance below. Many of these stretcher cases, mostly men of the Cornwalls, did not need the red labels pinned to their tunics that spoke of dangerous wounds. That was written on their faces, in the grey pallor, the closed eyes, the restlessness and the beads of cold sweat upon

their foreheads. Being the forward doctor, I had to see these men and, assuring myself that hæmorrhage was stopped, to transmit them to the rear. And in the woods were wounded men, too; these we collected and brought to the edge of the road as we advanced. A first field dressing and half a grain of morphia on the tongue; and my orderly and I were off again. It was shrapnel in this wood that was taking the toll of these men's lives. How the transport of these two brigades escaped destruction, with ourselves, in the narrow winding road we shall never know; if the range of the shrapnel, now bursting beyond us, had been shortened we should have been in a bad way indeed. There was no going back here; the batteries of artillery could not possibly have turned; the wood was impassable; and, had the transport managed to turn, so steep was the road that the maddened horses would have plunged the whole of us in destruction on their way. Then came a call—by this time we were well up in support of the 14th Brigade—for a doctor to go to the Cornwalls. The commanding officer was wounded, the doctor was dead and things were looking badly. I spoke to Coke and went off through the

woods with my orderly, only to find that they did not want me; the medical officer from the reserve battalion had the dressing station well in hand.

There had been quite a lot of casualties among the regimental medical officers in our Division during the Retreat and the Advance. My regiment had lost two; one, Gibbon, wounded at Mons; another, Bell, killed on his way to fill the vacancy from the Field Ambulance. The West Ridings, too, had lost their doctor. Only the Yorkshire Light Infantry and the West Kents had their original medical officers left. Our brigade was short of doctors.

On my way back I had an excellent view, from a sheltered corner of the wood, of our aeroplanes flying very low and trying to locate the enemy guns. But all day long they searched without success, and we were held up. The guns were so well dug in and screened that our observers could not spot the flashes. Not until nightfall did one German gunner elevate his gun to take the tempting chance our aeroplane was giving. This flash was at once observed, and our guns plastered the wood with shell, while two companies of the Yorkshire Light In-

fantry stormed the slope and took the batteries undamaged. I remember that we were very thankful that the task of storming this uninviting hill did not fall to our lot. But those guns had done their work; for they had held up the Fifth Division the whole of that afternoon.

That night we held the ground the other brigades had made. Lying well out, beyond the wood, we were the advance, and to us fell the duty of picketing the roads and paths and providing the patrols. Then came the rain, steady and persistent, and, hot though the day had been, the night was cold. Headquarters, comprised of Coke, Dering and myself, soon had a good fire burning. Sergeant Robertson, the most excellent of all men cooks, fried our bacon and soaked biscuits in the gravy. The company officers, one by one, appeared from the darkness and we sat down on the wet ground to the best meal of the day. To me this scene will always be very memorable; for this was one of the few occasions that our officers all messed together. Dirty and begrimed, our chins unshaven for two weeks, we were yet a very merry party in spite of the rain. Sitting there in the red reflection of the fire, I thought they were a collection of the best

and finest looking fellows any regiment could show. The meal over, the officers returned to sleep with their respective companies in the wood. Now we were going very light; our transport with the men's and officers' kits was miles away across the Marne; and if one man in five had a waterproof sheet he was very lucky. All packs had been discarded in the Retreat; there was not a greatcoat in the regiment; only a very few officers had Burberrys. But all these good fellows went back to their companies, hollowed out places in the dead leaves to lie upon and slept in the rain without covering all that night. Our officers showed that they could bear exposure just as willingly, uncomplainingly and well as did their men.

After a damp and wakeful night, the battalion snatched a hasty breakfast at the first light of day, paraded and started north in column of route. We were the leading regiment of the brigade on that most eventful day, which followed the passage of the Marne, and, as ours was the leading brigade of the Division, we were immediately behind the cavalry and horse artillery. The forward position of our regiment left to me the responsibility of first attention to all wounded on the line of march. The cavalry doctors

were far too spread out in the open country to keep in touch with the field ambulances, now far behind us. All around in the fields were evidences of yesterday's fighting, pathetic brown bundles lying on the ploughland and stubble as they had lain all night; here singly, there in little groups they lay as they had fallen the evening before. The fighting had gone on far into the night, so the medical officers and their stretcher bearers had been unable to find the wounded. One fears that the cold and exposure of that rainy night had helped, only too surely, the final dissolution of many seriously wounded men. It is not necessary to say with what care these missing men had been searched for. It is ever a point of honour with regimental doctors to get their wounded under cover the first night. Very difficult it is to see a crumpled khaki figure on ploughland. My duty it was to ride off the line of march to see that these were really dead and beyond all help; to scan with the help of my keen-eyed orderly the hedges and ditches before I hurried back to join the regiment on the road. Here, issuing from a farm-house, was a little group of wounded men who had lain all night in shelter but had seen us on the march; there, in a little wood, were others who had stayed

beside a wounded comrade. After their immediate needs had been attended to, I left them by the roadside to await the coming of the field ambulance. At first all the bodies, lying in the fields, were clothed in khaki; later on, grey figures were to be seen and, as the pursuit continued, these grey bundles became more frequent. When, later in the day, we found our dead, it was always a trooper of our cavalry who, greatly daring, had gone too far ahead in the pursuit and thereby paid the last penalty for his rashness. In fields close by were dead cows, victims of the searching shrapnel, and tiny calves standing so patiently beside their unresponsive mothers.

The story of the German retreat was written all along the road. They discarded from weakness as a man does from his hand at bridge. First, were innumerable wine bottles, all empty; then full bottles lying smashed in the ditches by the roadside, and boxes of cigars. Pictures, some cut from their frames others intact, leant drunkenly against the hedges. Stationery half buried in the roadside vegetation. The transport was hard pushed to have to abandon the loot of many French châteaux; and officers' loot withal. Then curious specimens of plunder appeared, hanging on the roadside hedges,

trampled in the mud—the loot the marching infantry alone could take by reason of its lightness, women's gear, soft frilly things, which the simple German soldier was taking home to his wife, so light to carry and so eminently French. Then transport horses, shot and methodically stripped of saddlery and shoes ; later, we came upon poor beasts, dead, but with shoes intact ; then horses, still methodically shot, so as to rob us of any possible future use of them, but with saddlery left on—merely cut from the traces. The pursuit was growing fiercer, and the plight of the wheeled transport was, at every mile, more urgent. Farther on, by the roadside, with hanging heads and bent trembling knees, were abandoned horses which there had been no time to shoot or strip ; some standing, others too foundered to rise. The dead animals blocked the pursuit, their bellies so swollen with gas that their legs stuck out at an angle with their bodies. Then came the abandoned wagons themselves. Flour, a bright yellow pea flour for making the universal soup, was lying in bright ochreous patches all along the line of retreat ; harness, sausage machines, cutlery, cooks' gear—all abandoned. Evidence of the thorough work of the German regimental

butchers was here; first, whole carcasses, carefully skinned, had been thrown away; later, as the pace grew hotter, quarters of meat methodically and neatly jointed.

So frantic was their haste, that, when we would come to the narrow stone bridges that crossed the streams at the foot of little valleys, we could see where three transport wagons had raced to get first to the bridge. They had met and jammed between the parapets and blocked the road. Then we saw where they had been lifted over the parapets and thrown into the stream below; drowned horses and upturned wagons in the water.

This retreat was worse conducted than our own from Le Cateau; for there we got our transport well away ahead, so that the roads were not blocked for infantry and artillery. Here the Germans had kept their transport back too late, and every road was indescribably jumbled with guns, infantry, motor-cars, and wagons. This was by far the most satisfactory day the Expeditionary Force had seen since war began, and compensated in a large measure for our retreat from Mons.

Still on and on we pressed, the cavalry and horse gunners, just ahead of us, on the next rise of this rolling country; guns unlimbering

on the reverse slopes and shelling the enemy over the ridges. All seemed to be done in parade order. Here, in a field near by, we saw German guns, buried up to the hubs, and abandoned in a morass they had encountered when, tempted by a promising stubble field, the artillery had left the crowded road to get away in the open. All along the roads were bicycles by the hundred; at first most carefully run over by transport wheels, their tyres removed. Later, when time pressed, and they could not remove the tyres, the cyclists merely cut the rubber in long slits, with their knives. As the day progressed, bicycles, intact, were lying abandoned in the ditches. The Cyclist Corps had evidently been left as rearguard; but finding the roads all blocked in front of them and, being unable to ride across country, they had left their wheels and struck out across the fields on foot. But there was order in disorder. The abandoned motors told the story of the flight; at first we found them with tyres removed and sparking plugs taken away; engines smashed. Farther on the tyres were cut; the machinery hastily broken with hammers. Still farther, cars were abandoned, uninjured, as they had run out of petrol—German staff cars these, with divisional flags

flying beside the lamps in front. And all along the roads in ditches, by haystacks, were German dead and wounded; victims, for the most part, of the shrapnel that hurried their flight. Infantry, clothed in field grey, Jaegers in green, troopers with skulls and cross bones and other badges on the front of their high képis. The wounded were collected in groups by sheltering haystacks, in the charge of one of our wounded or dismounted troopers. And very proud the escort was, pretending, as I came up, to a stern discipline that Woodbine cigarettes, in German lips, belied. The wounded had not been attended to, and my orderlies and I were kept busy, putting on first field dressings, making them comfortable in hay, giving morphia and leaving instructions to await the field ambulances. Very grateful were these Germans for small attentions; they used to call me "lieber Doktor," I remember, and try to give me their identity discs with messages to transmit. But there was no time to wait, and my German was too deficient to be of use to them; for we had to catch up with the Column again. At one place, by the side of the road, was a small disused quarry, all grass-covered. Here, as I passed, were six wounded German troopers, and a horse gunner of ours, with his right

arm in a sling, to guard them. As I rode up they seemed to be *in extremis*, cold, sweaty, pale and groaning. "They aren't hurt much," volunteered their guard; "it's only the Lancers pricked them with their lances." But, seeing their tunics red and bloody, we ripped up the cloth and found, even as our trooper had said, that each man had been merely pricked in the muscles of the back—tiny punctured wounds barely half-an-inch deep. What meant, then, all these evidences of distress? Two of them were coughing and spitting into their hands and examining what they coughed up. Then came to me the explanation. These troopers on foundered horses had been overtaken by the 5th Lancers, who, in a most merciful way, had just touched them with the point of the lance as they passed by. The Uhlans, glancing back in terror at the advancing point, felt the stab, shrieked and fell from their saddles. Then the logical German mind told them that this lance-thrust had probably penetrated their lungs; so they spat into their hands to see the blood come up. But of blood there was not so much as one speck, so shallow were their wounds. Then their introspective, literal minds added still further to their terror; for they concluded that they

must have internal hæmorrhage. Hence their state of mental distress. When I reassured them of the trifling nature of their wounds, they smiled and soon were borrowing cigarettes from their generous escort. Now I have spoken with many cavalry medical officers of great experience in lance wounds in this war, and they all agree that, never to their knowledge, has any German trooper held his hand and failed to take the ultimate advantage with a lance. Our troopers, when dismounted and at the mercy of Uhlans, have been most mercilessly lanced; and lance wounds are the most terrible in war. Seldom have I heard so splendid an instance of a kindly spirit of forbearance as that which filled those troopers of the 5th, the Royal Irish Lancers.

German prisoners there were, in fives and tens and fifties; and in the village of Chanzy six hundred; all sitting by the roadside quite contented, without arms or ammunition. These they had hidden in the woods before they gave themselves up. Guarded by single troopers or wounded artillerymen, hungry and exhausted, they seemed glad that it was over. I wondered at the time why, in that wooded country, especially when we were advancing far too quickly to make an examina-

tion of woods possible, they had come down from cover to the roadside to surrender. When the Army settled down before the Aisne it was not uncommon for men of the A.S.C. and other details in the rear to return from their daily bathe with starving German prisoners. When our men were safely stripped and in the water these wretched men would come to the river bank to surrender.

All day long we followed this, the VII. German Army Corps (if we may safely judge by the description on their abandoned transport) until we arrived at the village of Chanzy. There were 600 German prisoners corralled in the foldyard of a farm. On the outskirts of this village we bivouacked for the night, in a stubble field, and slept with the sheaves of corn for beds. And in the far distant darkness we could just see tiny points of flame that were the German camp fires. Our cavalry were all done ; and there was nothing for us but to remain here for the night and push on again to-morrow.

That evening I learnt, from the signal officer, of a curious incident that illustrates the resource the Germans displayed, even in so disordered a retreat as this. I have made mention, a few pages back, of a group of

German wounded collected round a haystack. One of them, badly hit by shell in the left side, appeared to me to have had an injury to the spleen and to be suffering from internal hæmorrhage. He it was who called me "lieber Doktor," and tried to press his identity disc upon me. I had noticed, in the casual way one notices these things in the stress of so much work, that one of our field telephone cables was suspended from the eaves of the stack. This cable was laid from the cavalry advance guard to divisional headquarters in our rear. Later in the day, when we had passed on, it became necessary for the signallers to lift this cable upon their shepherd-crooks to allow our heavy "cow-gun" battery to pass along the road without damage to the wire. The signaller tried to get in some slack in order to lift his cable, but found it firmly attached to the haystack. Impatiently he pulled when, to his vast surprise, the side of the stack fell outward and exposed a German soldier, unarmed, sitting in a little recess in the heart of the stack; a broad grin on his face and the earpiece of a telephone attached to two wires that tapped our cable. This intrepid fellow had learnt all the orders that divisional headquarters had sent to the advance guard; and it was clearly his intention

to slip away that night and rejoin his army by passing through our lines. We agreed that it required a considerable amount of pluck to stay behind on such an errand as this in the midst of our advancing army. In fact, though the German retreat was hurried and, in a measure, disorderly, the transport especially showing all the evidence of a panicstricken retreat, it was not entirely disorganised. There was order and efficiency in the way the abandoned equipment was destroyed, and the unwounded prisoners, who came in to give themselves up to us, had carefully buried or destroyed their arms and ammunition. And in many cases the distinguishing marks of their regiments had been removed.

That night our second reinforcements arrived in charge of Ferguson and Gillespie; the latter, fresh from Oxford, with the makings of a most excellent officer in him, showed no sign in his confident, smiling face of the fate that awaited him. He was shot through the head, in our attack on La Bassée, died in my farm-house dressing station, and was buried beneath the pear tree just behind the buildings. Ferguson, an old officer of the 1st Battalion, had come to rejoin from the Malay States, where he had been rubber-planting for

the last eight years. Strange to say, he was in the half battalion of which I was in medical charge in South Africa ; we held Naawpoort Nek, a baldheaded kopje, half way between Krugersdorp and Oliphants Nek in the Megaliesberg.

The new draft settled down for the night ; the moon was at the full ; and the night was very cold. Smith and I slept, very close together, in the straw, but the early morning cold soon waked us. Smith went to his company, I to see the morning sick drawn up in the half light beside my Maltese cart. Successfully I parried the many requests of the more sorry than sick to be allowed to ride, for part of this day's march, upon the transport wagons. Then, glowing with an inward consciousness of the stern sense of duty that condemned many a poor, footsore devil to slog along the long day's march that lay before us, I presently returned to the ashes of last night's fire. There Sergeant Robertson was already filling the morning air with the delicious fragrance of ration bacon. Thus do we earn our breakfasts. But I must absolve regimental medical officers, as a clan, from any want of real sympathy with blistered feet. I had been a regimental doctor before, and I well knew that had I been com-

plaisant in this matter, before noon we should have had half the battalion on the transport. The moral effect of a weak medical is very bad for any battalion; and Tommy, or Jock, as I should say in this case, much though I love him, requires some firm treatment in the matter of easy rides, in a position of elegant leisure, upon the already overburdened transport.

Soon we were off again. The West Kents took the lead of the brigade; but this time we left the line of the German retreat and our eyes were not gladdened again by the sight of abandoned equipment and dead or dying Germans. The day was vile; cold and very wet. Our only consolation was the fact that the German prisoners we were bringing with us were also without overcoats; and the distant prospect that we might find billets at Hartennes. One of our prisoners, a fat Red Cross orderly, had, round his shoulders, one of the excellent German ground sheets and I dearly wanted to rob him of it. But Divisional Orders against looting were not lightly to be broken. All day long his fat face shone from beneath the shelter of this sheet; while my hands froze and the rain wetted me to the skin. The German ground or waterproof sheet is another instance

of the excellence of the enemy's equipment. Fitted with rings and buckles, it serves the purpose both of a ground sheet or a tent, while either end may be converted into a hood for rainy days. Another feature of their equipment was the method they had of hooking water bottles and haversacks on to their belts. In some of our men's equipment the water bottle was at the back; so situated that the whole kit had to be taken off for the man to get a drink. It was excellent in one way, that it did not encourage excessive drinking; but it is only fair to the designers of our equipment to say that this purpose never entered their view. Haversacks of cow hide, with the hair on, are both light and very dry; the direction of the hairs, being downward, ensured excellent drainage for rain. The German pack is carried on the shoulders higher up than ours, hooks on more easily, and, with the great-coat encircling it above, makes a very compact kit. The entrenching tool is a small spade carried at the side; and not the combination pick that our men carry hanging from the equipment behind. Another neat contrivance about the German uniform is the use made of the two buttons, on either side of the slit in the tail of the tunic, as hooks

to support the belt. This allows an even disposition of the weight of the equipment, both behind and at the sides above the hips. The uniform cloth is softer and more smooth-faced than our rough serge, and, though perhaps of not such good material, yet seems to be quite as serviceable. The German field grey, when wet with rain, shades off very well into a background of wet, dark earth. In moorland and in heather this field grey is infinitely superior in colour to our khaki; for the green shade of our cloth makes a most marked contrast to the black, dead winter heather. But, on ploughland or against hedges or green woodland, nothing can compare with khaki. To this I, who have had so many searches for wounded in ditches and on ploughland, can only too surely testify. But against yellow stubble, in the afterglow of a September evening, the dry German field grey is positively blue, in absolute contrast. In the morning or evening mists, however, it is not so wonderfully invisible as the new French horizon blue.

Late that evening we approached Hartennes; and an increasing fear filled us that there would be no billets left, and that we should have to face this driving rain in open bivouac. But it was not to be; for Lindsay,

our billet officer, had got excellent quarters in the farm for the men, and in the château for us. On such a day as this there is little of "Tommy's irrepressible gaiety" to be observed; all of us were sick and miserable, cold and wet. Most of the battalion had a mild form of dysentery as well. But straw, and fire and tea, roused their drooping spirits; and the loud chatter of contented men filled the billets, while the guard shared their rations with the prisoners. Soon the guard, by the use of the wonderful *lingua franca* with which Tommy holds converse with all the world, were soon in deep conversation with their prisoners. The château gave us shelter; but it was cold and damp and the fires would not burn. The German soldiers who had inhabited the house the previous evening had pillaged and plundered everywhere; lamps and crockery all broken; linen chests and clothes-cupboards capsized upon the floors of every room. They had taken care to render the bedrooms uninhabitable for us by a lavish use of the filthy measures they employ to defile the beds and bedrooms they had occupied last night. We agreed that the German was an obscene and filthy beast; and lay upon the floor of a room downstairs to snatch what sleep the

cold and the condition of our wet clothes would allow. It was part of my duty, on arrival in billets, to arrange for the disposal of Sergeant Thompson, the orderlies and stretcher bearers. They were always housed near me at Headquarters, so that I might keep an eye on the water carts, and be close to the medical equipment on the Maltese cart. But our water carts were almost useless; both of them had got in the way of shrapnel at Le Cateau. The filters were out of order and the jolting of the rough roads dislodged the packing with which we hoped to stop the leaks. When once the filters were rendered useless, we had to rely upon bleaching powders to chlorinate the water. The epidemic of dysentery and diarrhœa was a great anxiety to me; for, if it spread, it would most seriously interfere with the efficiency of the battalion. But what could one do; there were French women with water and wine in every town and every billet. Unripe fruit abounded; and it seemed hopeless to correct things, no matter how one tried or how rigid were the rules with regard to water and fruit. Nor can one pretend that biscuit and bully is an ideal diet for such a complaint.

Next morning, thoroughly warmed and

fed, we went upon our way still north and east in the direction of Soissons. In the distance we had heard, all day and night too, it seemed, the thunder of the French heavy artillery on our left. Soon we were upon the high tableland that forms the southern barrier of the valley of the Aisne. We were cheerfully confident that nothing but the Rhine would stop our advance. As we approached Serches, lying in its cup-shaped hollow among the woods, we could see the shrapnel bursting in the air far to our left. On the far horizon the French guns were making excellent practice against the heights above the Aisne, then strongly held by the enemy. All that day the weather had been particularly vile, and we were all looking forward to shelter and warm food in some kind of billets. Judge then of our disappointment, when we got orders to parade and ascend the steep hill again. Wet and miserable we struggled on, nearer to Ciry and the Aisne, and passing, on the way, the West Kents lying in improvised trenches overlooking the town. Down the steep hill we went, through the winding streets and on to La Sermoise. At the cross roads we halted just behind the Cavalry Brigade; then turned into a walled farm-house, woke

the occupants, lit fires and prepared the evening tea and bully beef. Hardly three hours' rest, and no sooner, it seemed, had we comfortably established ourselves for sleep on the stone floor of the kitchen than urgent orders came from the Cavalry Brigadier to get out and back to Serches again. The cavalry reconnaissance in the dark had got into touch with the enemy, in force, at Missy Bridge. The bridge was blown up; and our position, so far advanced, had become perilous in view of the possibility of a counter-attack in force. The companies were roused, grumbling, from lofts and stables; transport horses harnessed up and, in pelting rain, at 2 a.m., we faced the climb up Ciry Hill and the four mile trek back to Serches. But there were two men for whom the cold and exposure had proved too much; these I had to leave behind, in the care of the Fifth Lancers, until such time as the ambulance would pick them up. In the morning we hoped that the Brigade would continue its advance. If the Cavalry had to retire, these men, both incipient cases of pneumonia, would be faced with the job of finding their way back as best they could. But they cared for none of these things; all the Germans on the Aisne would not have moved

them, at that moment, from the warmth of borrowed French blankets.

All the way back I marched with Pennyman, our senior subaltern and machine-gun officer, and gathered much information as to the distinguished record of the regiment to which I was attached. As dawn was breaking we got into billets in the vaults of the old church, converted in the time of the Revolution into a barn; here we had more tea and bacon and slept on the boards. Hardly, it seemed, had we dropped to sleep before the companies were paraded and we were off again. The day was beautiful, clear and blue; and we could admire the beauty of the autumn tints on Ciry woods as we descended the hill again. As we expected to be in action soon, and as the guns of Condé Fort were searching the wooded slopes, the heavy transport was left behind with Murray, our Quartermaster, and the battalion Sergeant-Major McWhinney. Down through Ciry again we went; the light transport carrying rations, the machine-gun section, ammunition mules, and last, but not least, my precious Maltese cart with Sergeant Thompson imperturbably in charge. The West Kents, the leading regiment of the brigade, preceded us and occupied the fine

old town of La Sermoise, lying on the edge of the plateau just above the Aisne, and, at that moment, heavily shelled by high explosive and shrapnel. We halted for the morning on the edge of a cornfield among the woods of a cup-shaped hollow behind La Sermoise. Here, screened from enemy aeroplanes, we lay and made up for the lost sleep of many nights. All the morning our cow-gun battery of 60-pounders, on the high ridge behind us, shelled Condé Fort, while the big German howitzers vigorously responded. For all the world it seemed as if invisible trains were continually passing on some celestial railway above our heads. Late in the afternoon we were off again along the road to La Sermoise, halting dangerously at times, in column of route by the wayside. Fortune favoured us in that no searching Taube found us before we gained the shelter of the substantial houses of the town. In the gathering dusk the battalion marched down the wooded roads to Gombeen Wood, where they bivouacked for the night; while I established a dressing station in the shelter of the high walls of a little farm in the main street. Looking back I cannot help wondering that I chose so hazardous a position. At that moment it was safe;

but in less than ten days the German guns began the systematic shelling of La Sermoise and all its buildings. As night fell the West Kents were heavily in action at Missy Bridge; and late into the darkness the machine guns kept up a continuous fire, like the hammering of a pneumatic rivetter upon steel construction work. Rapid rifle fire burst from both banks of the river. When the firing had ceased we made our way to the battalion to see Dering and get orders for the morrow. Silently the battalion lay, in the trenches, on either side of the road commanding the wrecked bridge. Stealthily we approached, and in whispers, for the river was barely fifty yards away. We learnt that the attack was for dawn and that we were to force the passage of the Aisne. Pennyman and I returned to La Sermoise and spent a restless night lying on the tarpaulin that covered my Maltese cart. At 4 a.m. Thompson came out with two fried eggs, the only eggs in the little town; then Pennyman left me and with his machine-gun section started for what, we all knew, was going to be the most difficult task we had yet embarked upon.

Anxiously I leant upon the stone wall of the village overlooking the silent river, now

wrapped in its cloud of morning mist. A single rifle shot, the hammer of a German machine gun, and I knew the battalion was at the river's bank. Soon the machine-gun fire became almost continuous and rapid fire rolled up and down the river banks; and I did not need anyone to tell me that the regiment was in a most desperate engagement. Going back into the village to see Croker, the medical officer of the West Kents, then established in an excellent temporary hospital of his own, I arranged to get on down to the river, if I could possibly manage it. He would take charge of all the wounded K.O.S.B.'s whom I might send back. Croker then was able to get into touch with the 13th Field Ambulance; and I would look after his regiment now engaged with the K.O.S.B.'s in the perilous crossing. My Maltese cart was ready; the old black horse, that had dragged it all the way in the Retreat from Mons, was plainly disgusted with the early hours and a miserable feed of hay in a strange stable. The stretcher bearers fell in and we set off down the sloping lane towards the river. In the lee of a wall we were in shelter from machine-gun and rifle fire; but the high explosive shells were tearing up the road before us, and we had to

take to the fields to seek the cover of some haystacks. The open meadows were swept with rifle and machine-gun fire ; there were no sheltering hedges or ditches ; and it was clear that the Maltese cart could come no farther. Leaving Sergeant Thompson to make the best of his way back to the village, the stretcher bearers and I, in very open order, ran for it across the open to the ditch that crossed the field some 200 yards away. The ploughland was very heavy going ; but we got there, hot and triumphant, and very much afraid. We were badly wanted, that I felt sure ; and we could not wait very long. Still another wide open field had to be crossed before we could gain the shelter of a bank and a row of big poplars near the river edge. Another sprint, and we were under cover again behind the bank. In this spot was the Major commanding the field company of Engineers, cool and most collected, disdaining the shelter the bank gave us, and he doubted whether I could get across. The temporary pontoon bridge the Engineers had put up, further down the river, had just been blown up by a shell, and the only way for me was the canvas raft that, by chance, might still be intact. The two battalions were across, he told me ;

there had been very many casualties he was sure; there was no doctor across the river; and he wished me luck. Telling the stretcher bearers to keep open order and take good cover, I found a practicable ditch that led to the rushes by the river bank, and gained the friendly shelter of the reeds; outwardly calm, for one of my men had plumped down near and was watching me; but inwardly trembling. A hail across the river; a subaltern of the Engineers answered me and said that the canvas raft was sinking, and would I go to the pillars of the ruined bridge; there I might shout to the Sergeant-Major, who would ferry me across. This meant a run of 50 yards along the tow-path, and a glance showed me the danger. For, beside a long heap of white stones, there lay four of our men; and they were very still—for the snipers had got their range well against that white background. But the snipers failed *this* time; and, from the shelter of the twisted steel girders of the bridge, I hailed the Sergeant-Major of the Engineers. A machine gun was posted close behind him, and it took me some time before I heard that this boat was sunk and my only hope of crossing lay in the canvas raft, if it could be

persuaded to float. Then a loud shout behind me, and from a cottage in the shelter of the road embankment I saw a soldier waving. This could only mean that wounded men were in that cottage, and I crawled along the embankment to see what I could do. Across the path was the body of one of our Cyclists, a Seaforth Highlander by his identity disc, who had carried his reconnaissance a little too far the previous evening. In the cottage were several wounded; these I dressed and gave the morphia they were in such need of. That night they would be carried to La Sermoise. Then I learnt that another Cyclist lay wounded in the toll-gate house, on the bridge head itself, and that no one had been to see him since he had dragged himself inside the previous afternoon. Now, the road was enfiladed badly; a well-timed run and I was through the window. Here lay my man with a fractured spine; in no pain, for he had not felt his legs from the time he was tumbled from his bicycle beside the door. He was in urgent need of relief to one of his abdominal organs; this done, I made him comfortable, gave him some cigarettes, left him reading the regulations for wheeled vehicles crossing

the bridge, and told him I would return again that night. He was a Lancashire Fusilier and he could not read French ; but I left him quite happy and at ease. Dropping down the bank again, there was still that fifty yards of the path to be covered. How I hated those white stones ! But the sniper was late again, and I was beside my stretcher bearer in the friendly rushes. Another conversation shouted above the tumult, and the Sapper officer consented to try the crossing to ferry me across. Now, this raft was constructed of green canvas, stuffed with hay, attached by a guy rope to a wire that spanned the river. But the raft had already done yeoman service in ferrying men and officers of the two battalions across, and was waterlogged. Anxiously I watched him, balancing precariously, as he worked the clumsy thing ashore. But, for this fellow, the bullets flicked the surface of the stream in vain. I looked round and, of all my sixteen stretcher bearers, only one was beside me. Gingerly we stepped upon this submerged craft and pulled ourselves across, and I was with the reserve company of my battalion. Now this Sapper officer's name was Johnston ; afterwards he got the

V.C. but was killed at Ypres in December. I shall not easily forget what an everyday affair this crossing might have seemed; so splendidly indifferent he was. A climb up the bank; a rush across the road; a swift tumble down the other side, and we were in the wood; a wood that seemed alive with death. How thankful I was that we had come in time; for there were wounded men everywhere and one didn't know where to begin. Then a corporal spoke to me and I turned aside to a little hollow; and there lay young Amos, one of our junior subalterns. Only the day before I had spoken to him as we lay lazily listening to the overhead shelling in the woods behind La Sermoise. He had behaved most gallantly at Mons, bringing in a wounded man of his platoon under a very heavy fire at a range of less than fifty yards. I remember I told him that he must have had a very watchful Guardian Angel. Now again had his Guardian Angel come to him; but with a wreath. He must have died very swiftly, for the aorta had been severed. He was the most promising of our junior subalterns, just from Sandhurst; yet he had become, already, a capable officer. But life was very short for all the officers in this battalion;

and if death had not come now, it would surely have overtaken him in the next three months.

At the edge of the wood, in a line with the shallow shelter trenches that our men had thrown up, was an old stone barn; clearly the one place in all that wood for my dressing station. Established there, the wounded were brought to me, dressed, and such crude surgery as was possible attempted. We had only the small surgical haversack, but it did good work that day. All day long the firing was incessant; and our two companies, spread out along the fringe of the wood, were badly enfiladed. Steadily the stream of wounded poured in until, in the shelter of that wall, there were soon over 150 wounded and dying. But our morphia never gave out, and my orderly was a very great help. All the time the rifle bullets cracked like whips above us. Then an enfilading machine gun worked steadily round our right flank, and the wounded, behind the wall, were in danger. Out we went and fetched them into the narrowing angle of shelter that was left; still the angle of safety narrowed, until I thought we should never keep our wounded whole. Then Pennyman was brought in, all limp and grey and cold; there was blood

on his shirt in front, and my orderly, seeing the position of the wound, said, too loudly, that he was gone. This roused him, and I knew that the age of miracles was not past and that the bullet had just missed the big vessels at the base of the heart. Then an officer of the West Kents, Willoughby-Bell by name, was rushed to me in haste by the men of his platoon ; he was bleeding furiously from a wound high up in the neck, and his carotid artery was divided. Fortunately I had a bandage and scissors in my hand, and I plugged that severed vessel against the bone of the hard palate. Very seldom is it that a surgeon has the satisfaction of knowing that he has most surely snatched a soul from death ; but this satisfaction was mine, for I sent him safely back to the Field Ambulance four days later. Coke and Dering and all our officers were splendid on that dreadful day, walking all along the line, encouraging the men, giving me a good word and, all the time, supremely contemptuous of the death that rustled through the undergrowth. The German snipers were posted up the trees in the rising ground on the right flank and took a steady toll of our men : it was they who got Amos in the open, and

Pennyman serving his machine gun. One felt that one was very glad to be so close up and to be so helpful, and yet one felt so strangely helpless. There was so much to be done, and so many for whom surgery could do so little—the abdominal cases that died so soon; the brain cases that took so long to die. And of all the dreadful wounds in war the lacerating brain wound is the most harrowing; restless, noisy, delirious, the unhappy victims struggle with the men who would restrain them, babbling of private matters, of domestic things, crying for water and yet spitting it out when brought. Morphia is useless, chloroform alone prevails to still that brain to sleep, for an hour or two, until the morphia acts. But we were never short of morphia or of chloroform; for that we can be grateful.

About six the firing died down; and we could withdraw our furthest company and entrench ourselves in safer shelters in the wood. Poor "D" Company again had got it badly; flung right out on our right, it had suffered the worst from sniper and machine gun. When it was safe to cross the road again and explore for a suitable shelter for the night I found, by lucky chance, the

very place for my purpose. A semi-modern house built on the foundations of a twelfth-century farm-house, in a high-walled garden; four huge rooms and two big fireplaces placed in the stout cellars of the building. Great, groined ceilings that would withstand almost any shelling; stone walls of unimagined thickness; glass doors that opened to the gardens. Soon the floors were swept and garnished; large fires lit, clean straw from a neighbouring wheatfield laid down, and all was ready. It was clear that no ambulance could reach us that night. On mattresses and blankets, robbed from the rooms above, the chosen few of all our wounded were to lie. But it was getting dark and there was much to be done. The boat repaired and an old punt discovered, soon the lightly wounded were ferried across the river and sent back, with good guides, to the food and tea and warmth that I knew Croker had waiting for them in his hospital at La Sermoise. Then I hurried back to the wood and the hardest work began; but I had left them a little too long and the morphia had begun to wear off. The wood was full of groans; of cries of men who thought they had been forgotten; of stertorous snores of unconscious brain cases. Never could one

forget such a night as this: pitiless rain; no lights we dared to show for fear of bringing upon us the machine guns that were so near; no stretchers. Hastily improvising from waterproof sheets and blankets, stretched on saplings, we gradually got the wounded to our hospital. There tea was ready and grateful warmth and more morphia and soft straw. The stretcher bearers now across the river, worked like the good fellows they were and toiled up the slippery clay banks with their painful freight all through the night. But it was hard to find the wounded in the dark and some were very still; and those that lay far out in the wood kept silent, when help was so close, for fear we were an enemy patrol that had come searching through the wood. Wounded men, like wounded birds, creep into ditches and bushes to hide. Wounded men in a wood at night. The recollection yields nothing in horror to Dante's "Inferno" itself. Not until 3 a.m. did we cease to hunt and find and bring them in; and then we left some out. For next morning they reported three men lying out; two were dead, they would have died anyhow. But one was very much alive; and though we tried to make amends, by giving him the hottest and most frowsty corner by the

fire in the hospital, he recovered sufficiently to complain of our careless search, and still complaining, but otherwise fairly well, was carried off by the ambulance four days later.

Now the 13th Field Ambulance could not send their wagons to Missy to take away the wounded; for the roads had been heavily shelled to incommode our wheeled transport; and the groping searchlights from Condé Fort and Chivres Hill were ever on the lookout for ration wagons. For three days our regimental headquarters tried to move Brigade headquarters to order the ambulances to help us out; but ambulances were precious and we were left with all the wounded on our hands. Over 150 of them, K.O.S.B. and West Kents, lay on the straw in hospital; but my Maltese cart had crept down from La Sermoise to the river and brought the medical and surgical panniers, beef tea and condensed milk. The feeding of the wounded was most difficult; but my requisitions to the Field Ambulance were never disregarded and, every night, the orderlies would come back loaded with tins of beef tea, milk, and dressings and morphia.

But wounded men cannot, especially if they be British, live on beef tea and ration biscuits alone. So I cast about for fresh

sources of supply. In a fine, moated house, a mile away along the river, might lie the food we wanted. Every evening, as the mist of dusk gave shelter from the ever vigilant snipers on Chivres Hill, I went out with an orderly to loot what I could. But the farm-house was occupied by a farmer and his wife who had been left in charge by the owner. The proprietor of this house and farm was, strange to say, an Englishman, who had married the lady of this house many years ago. The place itself, a most beautiful example of fourteenth century building, had been partly wrecked by German shelling. At first it was not easy to establish satisfactory relations. All the way through France this quixotic army of ours had paid its way. No! Madame had no chickens: the Germans had taken all! And if she had, they had no eggs; did not Monsieur le Majeur know that this was not the season for eggs? And even if there were eggs, they were all under hens and in the process of being hatched. But "*les pauvres pauvres blessés,*" I urged softly; and Madame's heart melted. Jean would get me eggs! Monsieur need not go to the hen roost with him. Milk? How would Monsieur expect milk when the German shells had so terrified the cows?

Butter? Perhaps a very little portion for a wounded officer! Nevertheless, we always left laden with good things; and I came to look upon my evening walk as the most pleasant part of the day, the only exercise I ever got. Nor were these little trips quite free from excitement; for the Engineers were building a new pontoon bridge and the Germans knew it. By day the watchful aeroplane hunted for this, the only means of crossing the river, and the ranging shells searched the river morning and night. Nor were the snipers altogether asleep. But luck was with us; and the pontoon bridge suffered little damage. The chief harm was done to the fish; for the exploding shells sent them floating down the stream in hundreds, belly upward, much to the delight of "A" Company that lay entrenched by the river; they pulled them out with improvised landing nets.

But our position was a perilous one from a military sense. Two regiments of the Brigade, thrown across the river and occupying the main road and the village of Missy, three-quarters of a mile in advance, were thrust, like a wedge, into the German position on Chivres Hill. The West Kents were entrenched along the road, their headquarters

in dugouts burrowed under the high bank. We held the woods by the river and detached "C" Company, under Connell, our second in command, to hold Missy in conjunction with the East Surreys from the 14th Brigade. The latter held the line from the Bridge of Venizel to Missy. Later on, the West Ridings took over Missy village and endured a dangerous and exciting fortnight under constant shell fire. There the reserve companies of that regiment lived an underground life, in cellars, with all who were left of the obstinate French inhabitants; nothing would persuade these men and women to leave their homes. But our flanks were both in the air; and we had no line of retreat save by the damaged pontoon bridge. Why we were not rushed, we could never understand. We came to the conclusion that our salvation lay in the fact that the Germans were probably as much afraid of us as we were of them.

Night and morning they shelled the road bridge, which they suspected we were trying to repair; the trenches, the pontoon bridge, the working parties they knew were out also shared the attentions of the German gunners, but never did they actually get the hospital with a high explosive shell. The roof and walls were riddled with shrapnel, rifle and

machine-gun fire, but the main building survived. Shells fell in our garden, in the fields beside us, in the road. We never knew whether they spared us deliberately or whether we were too well screened by trees. Regimental headquarters, then consisting of Coke, Rupert Dering and myself, led an irregular life between an old stone cider cellar, dug deep into the bank that sheltered us by day, and the hospital. This cellar provided them both with rather damp straw beds; and in the hospital we met for breakfast and our evening meal. I slept above the hospital and was awaked always at five by the morning shelling; the glass had all, long since, been blown in, and such dressing as I did was a very draughty performance. But the back of the house looked on to the West Kent trenches, and the practice the German gunners made was excellent. Once I heard a shell coming and saw the haystack tremble and quiver as it lodged inside, without bursting. But our curiosity never led us to disinter that shell from the hay.

The ambulance came at night to fetch my wounded away; the 14th Field Ambulance from Serches over the bridge at Venizel; the 13th, through La Sermoise down to the river bank. And the stretcher bearers carried

the men across the pontoon bridge. But they never liked the job, for they ran a constant risk from shelling. The groping fingers of the searchlight and the star shells on Chivres Hill would discover them on the road, and the orderlies fled hastily to the ditches. The German position was on Chivres Hill, a long wooded range that lay back 600 yards from the river and dominated our whole position. It was very strong, well entrenched, and well wired in.

The Yorkshire Light Infantry, who had been left as the reserve battalion of the Brigade in La Sermoise, had one very bad day from shrapnel in Gombeen Wood that guards the approach to Condé Bridge. When I crossed the river that night, to look for some West Riding wounded that had lost their way, I met the K.O.Y.L.I. medical officer busy with the hundred odd casualties his regiment had suffered there. For shrapnel fire in a wood is most terrifying; the balls fall in all directions; one is never safe, and the crashing of the bursts of shell through the branches of the trees exaggerates the terror.

Condé Bridge was the weak point on the river and our patrols kept a sharp eye on it at night, especially as the Germans were

often crossing the stream to fetch hay and fodder from the French farm-house. This bridge was always strongly guarded, and in the early days one of our motor-cars with two intelligence officers, blindly trusting, had paid the last penalty for their rashness. On the road stood the car, twisted sideways as the engine had stopped, the driver and its two occupants all dead: nor could we in that no-man's-land salve the car or bury its grim occupants. When we evacuated the Aisne the car was still there, with its dead freight, and for all we know it is standing there to-day.

We had German wounded in our hospital, trophies that we took at the crossing—small dark Würtemburgers; and they watched me with frightened, rabbit eyes. We had to keep two of them for four days when ambulances could not get to us; one terribly wounded in the back. Whenever one of our soldiers, badly mangled by a bursting shell, was brought into their room they looked at me with timid furtive eyes, as if they feared that I should make reprisals. But they were very patient and uncomplaining; the other wounded men liked them and shared chocolate and cigarettes impartially between them. And when the ambulance

took them away, they gave us their photographs. In those days there was no animosity at all on the part of any of us toward the German; only a sincere admiration for their soldierly qualities and the patience with which their wounded endured their sufferings.

One night, at Missy, Dalrymple, the subaltern in charge of "D" Company, accompanied by Skinner, his sergeant, did a very fine bit of cutting out work up the river. The Germans had been using a motor launch and two rowing boats to cross the river, and "D" Company determined to have them. Silently they made their way right into the enemy territory one night; but the launch was moored by chains to rings in the wall. Skinner, undaunted, muffled his chisel with cloth and cut through the chain. At every stroke they feared the wakeful enemy patrols; but luck was with them and they towed their fleet of boats in triumph down to us.

All this time, and we held the bridge and road at Missy for three weeks, we lost constantly by shell and snipers and my hospital was always full. Many of our casualties arose from sheer carelessness. The West Kent trenches ran in front of an orchard; and that was more than our men could

stand: the apples were red and Tommy would not be denied. Heedless of danger he would go out with a long pole to bring his prizes in. But the sniper, from the tree tops, knew his weakness too; and those rosy apples were bought by very bitter sacrifice. Nor could our men resist fishing in the river. They could not wait for the bursting shells to do their fishing for them. Often the officers watched, with horror, before they drove the fishermen back to their dugouts, the vain attempts of some modern Izaak Walton to beguile the fat chub with chunks of bully beef.

There was the greatest difference between our dour and silent K.O.S.B. and the mercurial Londoners that made up so many of the men of the West Kents. There was always laughter and talk as I walked along the West Kent trenches, on those still warm afternoons when the German gunners took their rest, to see some friends in Missy village. Three most charming officers they had who were always kind and generous to me; Martin, the C.O., who was later our Brigadier, Buckle, the second in command, and Legard, the Adjutant. The last two lost their lives at Richebourg l'Avoué, on that last dreadful day in late October, when the West Kents paid so

great a price for disputing the advance of the Prussian Guard before La Bassée.

The morning shelling roused us early; Coke and Dering would come to the breakfast that Turnbull, Dering's servant and our cook, would prepare. Bacon, tea, ration bread occasionally and (tell it not to Madame of the farm) perhaps a little of her butter or an egg or two that I had extracted from her the night before by the use of magic words, "*les pauvres pauvres blessés!*" We never lingered long at breakfast, for we never could tell when the inquisitive shell, that fell in the garden, might not find the house instead. After our first meal, I made my morning visit to yesterday's wounded and saw the morning sick parade. The rosy apples told their story in the dysentery that plagued both battalions; but we felt that the cold and exposure of the nightly vigil in the trenches were, perhaps, as much responsible for these internal disorders as the fruit. Fortunately for us all I was able to take the worst cases into shelter; for I had beef tea, castor oil and opium to relieve them. After a day or so, back they returned to duty again. When the hospital work was over, a funeral or two, in the dahlia beds beside the garden wall, had to be conducted with all ceremony.

There was no prayer book in the regiment; but use had made us familiar with the funeral service. Leaving the orderlies to exercise their art of carving upon crosses for the graves, I stepped lightly across the road to the headquarters cellar; carefully choosing the little bit of cover that was the snipers' despair. Dering would then send my request for one or more ambulances to Brigade. Leaving him with Coke to settle the affairs of the battalion, I would steal a corner of Dering's straw bed and finish the sleep I had been robbed of by the early morning visit of the ambulance. After luncheon, when the sun worked round, we would idly watch the Taube that sought to locate our heavy gun battery in the woods by La Sermoise. Their method of signalling, in those days, was by coloured tracers of smoke, that the observer dropped like tiny silk ribbons in the sky. When above the battery the aeroplane would perform a figure of eight; the centre represented by the crossing of the lines would be right over the target. If the resulting shell was too much to one or the other side, or over or under, the correction would be signalled by a coloured tracer. They did not pay much attention to our anti-aircraft guns. But when our machines were

up—for all the world like amber dragon flies with silver shining bodies, in the clear blue sky—the whole heavens would be filled with the fleecy clouds of cotton wool that were their shrapnel. Occasionally we would see combats in the air; but nothing seemed to result beyond the driving away of the enemy aeroplane. When aeroplanes are sent up to observe, they have no right to fight. Sometimes one of our machines would be above us, and the falling pieces of shrapnel casing would drive us back to our funk-holes until the display was over.

We would often discuss German methods of war, and I found no false pride among our regular trained officers. The initial surprises in this war have been worked by the enemy. He it was who first discovered the value of heavy howitzers and the mortars that reduced Liège and Namur; the art of and the use of the machine gun, and the extraordinary mobility of that weapon. Then there were the risks his machine-gun section would take in pushing up a gun at night to effect the deadly enfilade. We had known at Mons his superiority in aeroplanes. The development of the sniper's art, in his hands, we first met with in the passage of the Marne. Now, we have for countless decades known the

sniper; we have met him on the Indian Frontier; we have felt his power in South Africa; but we have never employed him as a real adjunct in our wars. The German snipers, as far as we could gather at this time, were from the Jæger battalions; and recruited from the forest rangers of the big Imperial and ducal forests of East Prussia. Later only did I learn that sniping was also a disciplinary measure. Men, convicted of minor offences in the German trenches, would be sent out with 24 hours' supply of food and 200 cartridges; the empty cases they had to show, as evidence of their exertions, behind or near our lines. These sharpshooters were most excellent shots, and, in those days, must have had fixed rests and telescopic sights. The trees of Chivres Wood, whose foliage hid the snipers, were 700 yards from our long communication trench along the Missy Road; yet he would get the men of our fatigue parties, time after time, and usually through the head.

Sitting one evening, in the warmth of the declining sun, outside headquarters cellar, we saw the most wonderful of all wonderful escapes. The men were out of their dugouts, on the grass at the edge of the wood; their voices, loud, Scotch and argumentative,

floated up toward us; suddenly without warning a "*rafale*" of high explosive shell burst among them; four shells, bang, ba-bang, bang. When the smoke cleared and I was among them, I found, instead of the fragments of humanity I had expected, that one man only had been scratched.

The moral and physical effect of shelling seems to vary with the degree of burial by the earth of the blown-in trench; to be partly buried by a shell is always a shock to the nervous system and most of us had that experience at one time or another. An unexpected sound found that our nerves were rather jumpy for many months after. But men who have been completely buried and have to be dug out are often in a most pitiable state; crying and distraught, though nowhere actually wounded. Then it is that a big dose of morphia and a quiet rest works like a charm; for, in six hours, the man will usually be able to return to duty; relieved by the sound sleep that, more or less, washes out the memory of this shock to his higher cerebral centres.

The effect of fatigue is interesting to analyse; the strain is far more nervous than physical. After the bad day we had on crossing the Aisne, and the still more

anxious night with the wounded, all of us who fed together were strangely affected as soon as the immediate strain was lifted from our shoulders two days later. We would always want to sleep; anywhere and at all hours; at our meals especially. Conversations were broken off by one or the other falling asleep. Turnbull, our cook, had to wake us up in the middle of a meal. We would wander in our talk and strange delusions filled our minds. They tell me that I talked of horses with white fetlocks; and I am not a horsey man. I know that Dering could not get his mind off chickens in a farm. Coke, also, had his special delusion. After a few days these delusions would fade away; but the excessive sleepiness and a strange appetite for sugar, in the form of jam or chocolate, would remain with us always.

One night a very young intelligence officer came in to join us in the bully beef stew that Sergeant Robertson would cook for us day by day at La Sermoise and bring across the river in the darkness. He was serenely confident, and his mission was to make a night reconnaissance of the German position by Condé Bridge. We would say nothing

to dissuade him, but gave him some warning of what we ourselves had learnt from our patrols. Never again did we hear anything more of him; nor did we then think that he would have the ghost of a chance of getting back. As he said good-night to us we thought of the motor-car near Condé Bridge, with its ghastly occupants, and shuddered.

It must not be taken for granted that the German position was allowed to rest in peace during those soft September days. Our gunners sprayed the trees with shrapnel and made the snipers most uncomfortable; while our big cow guns, on Ciry ridge, plastered their trenches with high explosive. But we had far less ammunition to waste than they. One of the favourite efforts of our big guns was to shell Condé Fort in the early hours of the morning; at the time, so our intelligence agents told us, that the enemy ration parties came to draw their supplies. Three or four shells at 2 a.m. must have annoyed them intensely. Anyhow, we always got shelled at Missy most savagely the day after such attentions on the part of our 60-pounders. It was after one of these night shellings that the spire of Missy Church at

last fell; it had been shelled constantly the whole fortnight. I had been to see the interior, or what was left of it, a few days previously when the whole nave was a mass of ruins.

General Cuthbert, our Brigadier, came one day to say good-bye on his return to England. He had been in command of the 13th Brigade from the beginning, and we were all very sorry that he was leaving us.

About this time there was a spy scare, and we were all on the look out for two officers in French uniform who might be expected in a Staff motor-car, at any moment. Any officers answering to this description who attempted to get information would have been very sharply dealt with. I heard afterwards from French officers that it was a favourite trick of the enemy to send spies, dressed as British officers, behind the French lines; and, in the uniform of French officers, behind the British lines. They trusted in the unfamiliarity of the respective Armies with Allied officers; and the natural disinclination to submit possibly genuine Allied officers to the insult of arrest as spies.

Before this war, as a civilian, I cherished some of the commonly held views as to the

ability of Regular Army officers; but the more I had to do with regimental headquarters the more highly I began to appreciate the very high level of capacity and general intelligence displayed by the average Commanding Officer and Adjutant of an infantry regiment. It is one of the disadvantages of a free country that every fool is free to criticise and condemn those who, in particular, may not and certainly would not trouble to answer criticism so ill-informed. But there is one thing that has been established as a result of this war; it is that it requires as much ability and a good deal more character, to run a regiment well than to run the affairs of an average business house.

Soon came the news that the whole Fifth Division was going back to enjoy a really good and well-earned rest. We had heard this before; but on this occasion the most sceptical believed that we had a holiday before us. So, when we were relieved by the Lancashire Fusiliers, we marched back to Ciry, over the familiar pontoon bridge, in the highest spirits, nor had we one regret in leaving Missy behind us. In the courtyard of the high walled barn that sheltered my Dressing Station on the first dreadful day of crossing, we left Amos and forty-seven

N.C.O.'s and men; in my hospital garden many more. It will be my first and most pleasant duty to write to the Professor of Moral Philosophy in Paris, whose home we used as a hospital, to tell him how grateful we were to be able to trespass upon so hospitable a house. His linen and blankets, I feel he would agree, could never have been put to better purpose. And his dahlias, beside his garden wall, will gain an added beauty from the British and German dead that nourish them.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST BATTLE OF YPRES

BACK, that night, we marched through La Sermoise to Ciry to bivouac in the woods all next day. We were uneasy lest our promised rest should not, after all, come about; but still we had faith. When, however, the next day took us on to Serches, and the following days to Hartennes, of familiar and unpleasant memory, the sad conviction dawned upon us that we were in for no manner of rest this time. On Ciry Hill we paused beside the grave of our Regimental Sergeant-Major, McWhinney, who, together with Captain Murray, our Quartermaster, had been blown up by the same shell some two weeks previously. As a rule, the road through the wooded slopes of Ciry hill was hidden from the guns on Condé Fort; but just at this spot a white ribbon of road peeped out from among the green and lay in the full view of the enemy position beyond the Aisne. Thus, when our transport and

the West Kent wagons halted to allow the Cavalry ambulance to pass, a big shell fell among them. At the moment the ambulance was passing, Murray and the Sergeant-Major were sitting by the roadside. The shell killed poor McWhinney outright; Murray was badly wounded; many transport men were killed, with two of the medical officers of the ambulance. Murray died later, and is buried at a farm near Serches. There were 6 feet 5 inches of McWhinney and every inch was good; both were most invaluable officers.

From Hartennes we marched to Longpont; and we felt convinced that we were off to Ostend. Probably we should garrison the town, we thought, and live in one of the big hotels; how we would enjoy the last of the summer bathing! Marching always by night, and hiding in the woods by day to escape the observation of the watchful Taubes, we pressed on to Longpont and Villers-Cotterêts.

Now, the long rest in Missy trenches, wet and cold and exposed, had brought about a peculiar neuritis in the feet of all officers and men. This, no doubt, was partly due also to the fact that we had not had our boots off for three weeks. There was a

peculiar numbness of the big toe especially, and intense pain in the feet on marching, but after a few miles the pain was relieved, only to return with redoubled vigour when a halt was called and we might rest. Rest, however, we could not; but kept marching up and down the road. By day when we tried to sleep in billet or bivouac the pain kept us all awake. The only remedy was to keep our boots on while we slept; and to take the phenacetin we were so plentifully supplied with. A very lame and halting battalion passed through Villers-Cotterêts one night; and after a most exhausting march came down the hill to the quiet mill and farm of Wallu. Of all this long march, of all our billets and bivouacs, these two days' rest at Wallu are the pleasantest recollection. Arriving at five in the morning, the companies took immediate possession of the farm and mill and lay down to sleep. But for Headquarters we could see no place, till we spied a house, a shooting box by the antlers that adorned the outer walls, and the large kennels behind the house. We were very tired, short-tempered, cold and hungry, and I fear, we battered on the door with no great ceremony. Judge, then, of our astonishment when an upper window was

raised and a beautiful young lady leant out and asked in perfect English who we were and what we wanted! Profuse apologies! All we asked of Mademoiselle was a room to sleep in! Then an elderly gentleman appeared and welcomed us very kindly; throwing mattresses from his upper windows and giving us the key of his lower rooms. We very soon laid the mattresses on the floor, and Coke was soon asleep. But, by this time, our host had appeared in a flowered dressing-gown. He woke his servants, lit the kitchen fire and helped the mess sergeant to cook us breakfast. Two very pleasant days followed in the society of that charming young lady and her father. When we left, Miles, the transport officer, presented our hostess with Punch, one of the transport horses, now quite exhausted, but giving every hope, with food and care and rest, of regaining his former vigour. Mademoiselle was delighted, especially when we told her Punch's story: how he had been hit high up in the neck at Mons and dropped for dead, the traces cut and the horse abandoned. But what was Miles' surprise to find in his transport lines, three days later, on the morning of the battle of Le Cateau, that the dead horse had come to life. Among all

the crowded transport of the Third and Fifth Division the gallant horse had found his way in the necessary disorder of a very hurried retirement, back to his own regiment again. The wound had merely the effect of stunning the horse temporarily.

From Wallu we marched past Bethancourt, north of Crépy, the scene of the last rear-guard action the battalion had fought in in the great Retreat, and on to Pont Ste. Maxence. Crossing the river Oise on a pontoon bridge, we entrained and made our way through Amiens to Abbeville. We detrained, and in two days, partly on our feet and partly by French motor transport, the whole Brigade reached St. Pol. Here we billeted one night with the village priest and set off towards Bethune through the industrial and mining region of North-Eastern France.

On the way we got into touch with the French Cavalry and Colonial troops, Senegalese, Turcos, Spahis in all their highly picturesque equipment. But we did not fail to notice how spent and exhausted the horses, not only of the artillery ammunition trains, but also of the cavalry, appeared. Ours were in no better case.

Finally we arrived at Beuvry and billeted

at the château. In the huge stable yard there was room and enough for the whole battalion and their transport. Our hostess, a widow, made us very welcome, prepared us an excellent dinner, and with her two daughters, entertained us most kindly. We slept in real beds that night, but not for long as far as I was concerned, for at two in the morning I was called up by the French surgeon in charge of the infantry battalion in Beuvry, and bidden come with him, in haste, to see a man who had been badly wounded by a French sentry. I woke up my sergeant, and packed our surgical panniers on to a stretcher and brought it along with us to the house where the wounded man lay. The story was a strange combination of circumstances ! An old man, sixty-five years of age, deaf and dumb, had chosen that night at 11.30 to go for a walk in the village street. Being deaf he could not hear the French sentry's repeated challenge ; being dumb, he could not have answered, if he had. So the sentry shot and only too well. It was war, and the country was alive with spies ; one could not blame the sentry. But the old man was "*in extremis*." I gave him ease of his pains, while the French doctor comforted the relatives. When I got back to the only

real bed I had had since I left England, it was time to move on again: the battalion was at breakfast, and the transport fallen in. Coke made a very graceful farewell to our hostess, and we marched out for Annequin in the densest of dense fogs, little knowing that the fog was to be our salvation.

Making our way past the stone barricades that blocked the street, we swung right-handed beyond the town and marched, still in fog, along the road that faced the château and the woods of Vermelles. Here we were again in touch with the French on our right, and for the time, we and the West Kents, who followed us, were under the command of the French Brigadier-General. The fog showed signs of lifting, so trenches were hurriedly dug in a field of sugar beet beside the road; the road ditches were deepened to form a reserve trench and the regiment gained safety. And not a moment too soon; for, the fog lifting, we were within 300 yards of the woods that encircled the château. Had we still been in that open road, it would have spelt disaster. At a cross road was a small restaurant. Here I established my advanced dressing station; while half a mile back along the road that was at right angles to our position, the second and third dressing

stations were placed; one behind a line of haystacks; the other farther back in a deep culvert where the railway crossed: farther back still the Maltese cart was driven into the courtyard of a farm under a high slag heap. From this farm an easy road led back to Annequin, so that the line for the evacuation of the wounded seemed fairly secure. But when I got back to the battalion, Dering's sound judgment showed me that I was wrong, for he feared that the slag heap would be shelled as an observation post belonging to the heavy French battery behind it, and that my sergeant with the Maltese cart would be in danger. But now the fields were swept with rifle and machine-gun fire; in the distance the blue-jacketed French Hussars galloped for the railway embankment and safety. It was too risky to get back now, and I certainly could not send a stretcher-bearer. Lying in the ditch with my back to the enemy, I watched the shrapnel screaming over us to sweep the crest and slopes of the big slag heap: watched the mine shafts and mine buildings gradually crumble and disappear and felt worried for Sergeant Thompson. The gunnery practice was excellent. Soon there slipped down beside me a young French sous-officier of the 11th

Hussars, Bazin by name, the son of the man who wrote "The Nun": he spoke excellent American, and beguiled me with stories of the Uhlans he had shot at Longwy and in Alsace. Quite a number of these exploits I could well believe, for he was very cool and quiet under the shelling that we were having. Small, dark and debonair, he was the incarnation of Doyle's "Brigadier Gerard." Then I slipped across to the little house to see that the stove was lighted and all ready for the casualties that were sure to come. Beside the wall of the house, and in shelter, were two beautiful French armoured cars that had crept quietly up from behind. On one was mounted a pom-pom, on the other a mitrailleuse; both of the most exquisite design. Little, low, grey cars they were with the muzzle of the gun pointing out behind through a mantlet of steel, that showed the marks of many shrapnel balls. The officer in charge of the Colonial artillery exhibited his two treasures; then, getting an order from his staff, he boarded the mitrailleuse car and proceeded to go into action. Now, just here was a lane that led at right angles up to some haystacks in front of the enemy position: the road was sunken and the shelter good. On the reverse

gear these two little cars followed one another quite slowly and cautiously, under the shelter of the bank, until they reached the cover of the haystacks. Then they commenced firing point blank into the wood; the pom-pom in series of five shells; the mitrailleuse so rapidly that one could not count. The French mitrailleuse fires much more rapidly than our machine guns or the Germans'. Then the enemy spotted them; a shell fell in the roadway, and out of action came those cars bounding down the lane at full speed, to draw up once more triumphantly beside my wall. The French gunner calmly unscrewed the hot barrel of the mitrailleuse, replaced it by a cold one, and looked to me for the approval I could not withhold.

Then the West Kents from behind our position arrived to take over part of our trenches, and the French General came to consult his two English Colonels. At 3 p.m. precisely —they compared their watches—the attack would start: the West Kents on the left and the French infantry on the right. At 3 p.m. exactly, the West Kents, two companies of them, rose from their trenches and rushed forward to the assault. Then the enemy declared their strength and fire was poured, as it seemed, from hundreds of machine guns

within the wood and along the château wall. Down went the men of the West Kents taking cover in the high tops of the sugar beets: fortunately high enough to cover the man and his pack. As the French battalion rose to advance the enemy fire was on them. The French were very gallant in the matter of charging. They are quite different from us. Our men charge in open order and short rushes; the French in platoons like coveys of partridges. They rise together and spread out like a fan, then again converge in a hollow or a bank, like a covey jugging in a grass field at night. Their line of advance was open stubble beyond the roots, and the October sun shone brightly on them, twinkling on their red legs. They would chatter together: one could hear their voices well behind. Then they would agree on another good bit of cover and rise to spread out; then close in again. But the German machine gunner was no fool, and trained his gun where they had dropped, and as the red caps appeared all together above the sheltering fold of ground, he let them have it. It could not be done, and back came the blue and red figures, back into the West Kents' trenches. On the yellow stubble were the thick parti-coloured bundles, so vividly distinct in the sunshine.

The West Kents had fifty casualties that afternoon, and Croker, speaking to me later, could not say enough for the most intrepid way in which the French doctor and his stretcher-bearers went right out among the sugar beets under very heavy fire to find, pick up, and bring back quite a number of the wounded.

The K.O.S.B. then fell back to the road and made a flank march of about a mile to the left, and, opening out, advanced under cover of the trees and hedges to attack the village of Cuinchy, just west of the canal. There was a lot of front to cover, and we could not afford to have a company in reserve. "A" Company held the main road out of Annequin and the big barricade. "C" Company, led by Gillespie, rushed the cemetery in great style and held it. "B" Company advanced over open ground and dug themselves in, with Smith, the company commander, badly wounded in the arm. "D" Company, as usual, struck a bad patch to the right of the canal where the enemy were in strength, and at last won to the shelter of some haystacks. My main dressing station was placed in a cottage well behind, under the charge of Thompson, the most reliable, and kept, by orderly, in touch

with the Field Ambulance right back in Annequin. I watched the companies into action, standing with Coke and Dering by a cottage. But soon the machine-gun fire told us that "D" Company was getting it badly, and I knew that this was no place for me. With my orderly I found a sheltered path up to the left flank of "D" Company and broke in the door of a house on the main road. Soon we had the fire lighted and all the mattresses from above brought down to the warm kitchen. Peeping over the wall, we found that what we had feared was correct; the open ground over which the company had advanced had taken its toll of men and officers, and on the ploughland in front of the sheltering belt of sugar beet I could see the tell-tale straps on the bodies of two officers. They were lying on their sides and were very still, and I knew what that meant. The rest of the company had won the cover of the haystacks, and had thrown up a shelter trench in the roots. Then dusk fell, and mercifully put an end to the fight; though the field was almost as light as day with burning haystacks and star shells. Our guns had set light to the haystacks behind the enemy trenches; every movement of ours was visible, and the search for wounded

among the green tops of the beets was quite a ticklish task. It was difficult enough to find the wounded, right away in front of the trenches, the undaunted fellows who had led the company far ahead; and not an easy matter to keep one's sense of direction. Only by the methodical beating of the roots, in line, could one be sure that one's stretcher-bearers would not become disorientated and wander on into the enemy trenches. Five burning haystacks I had taken as my landmark, but no sooner were we out than the same haystacks seemed to be duplicated suddenly at all points of the compass. Times without number machine guns opened fire, stretchers had to be dropped and cover taken by lying flat. But we got them all back, and then I turned to two haystacks where some other wounded lay. There I found Dalrymple wounded in the thigh, but very excited and happy; he was proud of the men that afternoon, and refused the morphia I offered him to ease the pain of the stretcher journey that was before him. Many men were dead and many wounded beyond hope. In the open among the first to fall were Major Allan and young Woollcombe. Death had come to them very swiftly and without pain; they lay as they pitched

forward without movement, shot through the heart.

Very busy were we in that little house: sixty wounded for morphia and dressings. They were most grateful for the warmth, for wounded men suffer acutely from shock, they are so cold, so sweaty and so thirsty. When the morphia acts and the tea and the inevitable cigarette, that incomparable sedative for shaken nerves, arrive, the whole aspect of a dressing station alters. Unless a man is wounded desperately, he soon becomes quite cheerful and very talkative. Morphia stills the pain without having a great narcotic effect in times of excitement like this. At three o'clock in the morning the last wounded had been taken to the main dressing station, and the ambulances were waiting. Dalrymple was eating an egg, and in the most wonderful spirits: he had changed his mind about the morphia. Smith was in great pain; the paralysis of his hand showed a serious nerve injury. Only yesterday his wife had written, hoping that he would get the "nice" wound that would bring him safely back to her: her wish was granted, for it was quite plain that Smith would have to be, for many months, at home before his arm was well again.

The ambulance drove away and we were

free to sleep, but not for long. At the first light, the machine guns woke me again. Back we went to the little house that did us such good service the night before. But this time things were better organised, and seven dressing stations were established; three along the front line in sheltered cottages; four in easy stages between the line and the village of Cambrin, where our headquarters were.

With difficulty I found the senior French officer—he was then engaged with one of our artillery observation officers; the barrel of a mitrailleuse poked through the tiles of a house. My wishes stated, this very courteous officer put the whole town at my disposal. Any house I liked to take and all the resources of the town were mine. So Thompson was installed in the Mairie. We had to break the doors down; but I felt that the best only was good enough for the wounded of our battalion. In each of the two smaller stations were two stretcher bearers, with stoves alight, kettles boiling and dressings ready. To every station a sheltered path, a row of willow trees or a sunken road. The wounded were brought straight in and help was ready at once.

Again poor " D " Company, this time under

Caird from "C" Company, with Macrae as his only subaltern, had its usual bad luck. Orders had been given out the night before from Brigade for an attack by "B" and "D" Companies at dawn. It appears that the German information was not faulty, and the enemy was ready for us. In the night, just after our night patrol, under the indomitable Sergeant Skinner, of motor launch fame, had got into touch with the Dorsets to our left along the canal, the watchful enemy had run a machine gun into the back garden of my dressing station and had us enfiladed.

At dawn the companies rose and advanced to the attack; but it was more than flesh and blood could stand, and there was nothing for it but the cover of the roots. But here the roots were thin and the men's packs showed above the green tops. Up and down that line of packs the machine gun swept until our field gunners forced it back. All day were the enemy infantry in front sighting their rifles on the packs, shortened the range a trifle and picked off our devoted men. When I crept along the roots that night there were thirty-nine all lying in a row. One could only tell the dead because they did not groan when shaken; all were stiff with cold or death. The wounded were dragged

out by the heels into the trench and safety, the dead we had to leave. There was one unconquerable man with bright red hair, almost more conspicuous than the bonnet, which all men in action are ordered to remove. He was in a state of *rigor mortis* with his rifle to his shoulder and his cheek pressed closely to the stock; a little shelter trench thrown up before his red head and his entrenching tool left in front for cover. He had realised that his worst enemy was the machine gun on his left and had turned to fire at it: he must have collected a lot of other men's ammunition, for in addition to his own 150 rounds, he had fired at least 200 more before death fixed him in the attitude of life. I knew the man for an old soldier; he had the Belgian ribbon in his bonnet that only the original men of his battalion had got from the Belgian girls the night before Mons.

All day long from one dressing post to another I made my way. We must have been the despair of the snipers; they had got five of our signallers on their way with messages, and the pipe-major was lying in the ditch, very badly wounded, but sufficiently alive to be more worried about his pipes than his wound that we dared not

properly dress. Two pellets of morphia on his tongue was the best that one could do.

That day, "D" Company lost both its officers; Caird, the "C" Company Commander, badly wounded in the early morning advance, lay out for twelve hours before we could get to him: Macrae, the sole surviving officer of yesterday's engagement, was hit in the head, and died later in the ambulance. And the Dorsets on our left were in worse trouble than we, for they had advanced in force against Givenchy. All day long the machine guns hammered and shrapnel swept that unhappy regiment. By evening they had 400 casualties, including sixteen officers. So light was the field of fire—the brewery behind them was ablaze—that the Dorset doctor could not get to all his wounded, and they lay out that night. When morning broke and the fire died down only the slightly wounded were alive; the cold rain and exposure effectually robbed the rest of their chance of life. Here, then, was an instance of the value of warmth, tea and a sheltered dressing station. Of one thing one can be certain, that severely wounded men will not stand the exposure of night on the field and survive. Wounds associated with much shock, compound frac-

ture of the hip and shoulder joints, and fracture of the thigh, chest wounds, will often do quite well, and rapidly recover from the initial shock when the soldier is kept warm, and morphia given.

Late that night the ambulance came to Cambrin and evacuated the majority of the wounded; but the others were on my hands all night. About midnight the Presbyterian Padre, who always kept a kindly eye on this, the only Scottish regiment of the Brigade, came out to bury Major Allan, Woollcombe, and the rank and file. In the early hours the Pioneers, under Sergeant Pike, brought in the dead and buried them in the orchard behind a little farm.

Next day the fight continued, but we had learnt our lesson and knew that Guinchy was far too strong to storm. No more expensive onslaughts. But the enemy were not inclined to let us rest, and attacked the cemetery and the barricade, happily without success. That morning our machine gun under Anthony Dering was in action close to the advanced dressing station. My work over, I went across the road to Connell. At that moment the machine-gun corporal was hit in the chest. As he sank down, I well remember that our feeling was not one of

horror, as one might expect, but of surprise and wonder that so much dust could rise from his tunic. Later on, I took some stretcher bearers out to empty the advanced dressing station of wounded, and on the way conducted the reserve half-company led by Robertson, one of our newly-arrived subalterns, up to reinforce "B" Company. I knew the road well, but, just as we arrived at the lane that led up to "B" Company's trenches, a tremendous cheer rose from the whole line of German trenches. A furious burst of machine-gun fire followed and the whole German line rising to the attack charged down upon us. Particularly in the direction of "D" Company, now in command of Ferguson, did the main attack appear to be coming; and that company had been sadly depleted during the previous two days. Robertson's half-company was caught in the open and the position was critical, but there was no hesitation about this young officer. Ordering his men to double he ran them rapidly up into the trench in front. If the enemy had burst through we were all done. On either flank we were cut off. But "D" Company held fast and the attack fizzled out before our trenches were reached. Ferguson told me that though 2,000 at least

had cheered, only 200 Germans had charged and our rapid rifle fire stopped them, the rest turned tail and fled. The scare over, we set to work to collect our wounded, now increased by Dorsets, Yorkshire Light Infantry, and some Belgian soldiers. The latter were very brave and insisted on being allowed to bring their rifles with them to the ambulances. Why they were so keen to keep them, when they were all more or less severely wounded, I could never discover.

Among the K.O.Y.L.I. was a machine-gun corporal, afterwards known to fame as the "Bermondsey V.C." He was a very gallant fellow, and, though severely wounded in both thighs was very anxious to tell me that he had just that day been awarded the "Médaille Militaire" by the French, for conspicuous service at Le Cateau. Holmes, that is his name, retiring with the remains of his section, had come across one of our field guns, the leading horses and all the gunners laid out by a burst of shrapnel. Cutting out the leaders and putting a Bombardier, the only survivor, on the limber, he mounted the wheels and brought the gun out of action into safety. But the pace was hot and he did not tarry in his headlong flight, so the poor Bombardier was jerked

off the limber, and was never heard of again.

Late that night we were relieved by the French, and the Colonel of the battalion, with some of his officers, came to sup with us at Headquarters—minced bully beef and eggs was the feast. The Colonel told us that as a lad he had fought in the war of '70. Most businesslike they were as they led their battalion to relieve us, bringing their telephone, and creeping in silence along the grass by the side of the road up to our trenches. But our men, asleep from sheer exhaustion, grumbled loudly at being wakened and set up a loud chorus of " Where's ma entrenching tool," etc. : all flavoured with the British soldier's favourite adjectives, as if there were no such things as German machine guns within 200 yards. When they were finally persuaded to leave their trenches, they chattered so loudly down the road that our French friends were positively aghast at such indifference to the risks of war. But we were always like that.

That night, as the ambulances had not yet arrived, I stayed behind at the main dressing station in Cambrin and slept on the floor of the best bedroom of the Mairie. Next morning a little procession, headed by

the Maltese cart, pursued the battalion back through Annequin and Beuvry to Richebourg l'Avoué, where we halted. The Germans had evacuated the town, leaving evidences of their late occupation in a number of dead horses that smelt to heaven, and many graves. Among them officers' graves, begarlanded with evergreens, and each surmounted by the dead man's helmet. It says a great deal for the respect our soldiers paid to these graves that weeks after the helmets were still in place. The retreating German doctor had left a message pinned on to the door of a house for the English doctor who, he knew, would be following: it was to the effect that there was a child in the house, sick of meningitis, and that it should not be disturbed. The room was hot and crowded with men and women, Belgian refugees, but the German doctor was right, and the child was gravely ill. Medicine was given and full directions for treatment left, together with a supply of beef tea and condensed milk.

Weeks later when I was a prisoner, I met that German doctor in La Bassée, but he laughed as he asked me about the child. "What soldiers you English are," he said. "Did it not strike you that that child had

no less than two mothers and four fathers in the house? If you had during your halt also searched the attics you would have found six of our telegraph signallers left behind. You did not even cut our telephone cable and we got the most accurate information of the strength of your Brigade as you passed through."

It was all so true. We never did suspect anxious relatives of being spies or search the half-ruined houses, or even cut the fine insulated copper wire that lay so abundantly along the roadside: though we often remarked on the careless and extravagant way the German engineers left their wire behind them. We shall never become masters of spying or intrigue. The art of bribery, even, we do not understand, as this war has so abundantly demonstrated. We learned at last: but at what a cost! Can we wonder that during the early months of war every move of ours seemed to be anticipated, and every important Brigade order known to the enemy as soon as to the battalions themselves?

In the street at Richebourg I noticed a curious freak. A lime tree, not more than 6 inches in diameter, had been perforated by a 3-inch shell; a round hole was cleanly driven through it, yet the tree was otherwise

intact and still standing. That night we bivouacked at the distillery west of Lorgies, and knew that La Bassée, four miles away, was our new objective.

In the night we went along the main chaussée, the important highway towards La Bassée, to the crossroads at Lorgies. There we woke up Headquarters of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, then sleeping in the soft straw on the floor of an inn. We were to relieve them before dawn and I naturally wanted to find a good house for my dressing station; as sheltered as possible, and yet reasonably near to the front trenches. A regimental doctor who is not up with the Companies is no good. To expect wounded men to be brought half a mile or so to the rear to a dressing station, is to ask too much of stretcher bearers; to require a wounded man to cover the dangerous half-mile behind the trenches, helped along slowly by his pal, is to provide the sniper with a mark of which he well knows how to take advantage. Often and often, times without number, have unwounded men been sacrificed in bringing back a wounded man to the doctor.

Coke, the most careful of commanding officers, would only be satisfied if he himself

inspected the trenches which his battalion was expected to occupy, and if he personally got into touch with the battalion on either side. In the prisoners' camps in Germany you will meet one or two companies of many of the regiments of the British Army, captured at one swoop after desperate resistance. The enfilading machine gun, that is pushed up at night into the gap between two battalions and dominates both lines of trenches at dawn; therein often lies the key to these captures on a large scale. To get into touch, to keep in touch and to keep on keeping in touch; that saves a battalion from disaster.

Back again to our billets, and before dawn we were all safely in position. My dressing station was chosen in a most suitable walled farm-house, built in a square, with a central fold yard, pigsties and cowhouse all round; granaries and tobacco-drying kiln on top. It lay just behind the line of trenches, and a sheltered way for wounded ran behind the hedge of the tobacco field. Headquarters were established in the cellar of the house to my left front. On our right lay the Cheshires strung out in trenches to the town of Violaines with its sugar factory, with its dominating chimney. Violaines itself was

occupied by the Cheshires and the Dorsets. On our left the Manchesters held trenches to Illies.

We had been lent temporarily to the 15th Brigade, and we did not like it a little bit. At length came the expected order to attack, and very gallantly over the open, through fields of the eternal sugar beet, went "A" Company. The cow-guns behind us and 18-pounders had plastered the enemy trenches with lyddite and storms of shrapnel swept the parapets, but although the German trenches were well constructed and timbered, most of the enemy took shelter behind the big sugar factory in front of which they had dug their trenches. Now, an evening reconnaissance had been previously made, and the presence of six machine gun emplacements determined; this was reported to Brigade. So when "A" Company, very much attenuated by this time, advanced to the attack these machine guns opened out and proved the accuracy of the reconnaissance. There was nothing for it but to take what cover could be had, and to withdraw at night; Lindsay and Holme, who led the attack, escaped unhurt, but the company lost about 50 per cent. of its strength. There are times when men apparently go

mad and nothing will restrain them. Such a case happened here ; for Sergeant Stewart and some men would not take cover, but dashed off over the open stubble, six men to storm the whole of La Bassée. There they fell, and there they lie to this day, as far as I know. Stewart had done his twenty-one years and had just got an excellent job as timekeeper in a factory in Scotland. He had been ill at Wallun, and I had seen much of him. The attack that "A" Company made disclosed one curious fact, that in the front German trenches, not more than 300 yards away, a light field gun was mounted, firing point-blank shrapnel on our forward trenches. One of our sergeants coming back with a message was hit by an unexploded shrapnel shell : his pack was torn clean away as well as his tunic, but beyond intense shock and a grazed shoulder he was intact.

For two weeks we lay in front of La Bassée, until we knew every church tower and the windows of the sugar factory by heart. All went well with the medical arrangements ; and though a constant stream of wounded kept me constantly busy, we always got our wounded in before daylight. Night after night we beat the roots in front of the trenches

and searched the ditches. But once we were at fault. Two men of " A " Company, friends, as every individual soldier has a pal with whom he shares everything, were hit in front of the trenches and we couldn't find them. They had mistaken our stealthy search for the approach of an enemy patrol and kept quite still when help was once very close at hand. One had a fractured spine —the other a shot through the shoulder. The man with the fractured spine was in no pain, and with the privileges that attend friendship, cursed his comrade for not bringing him in. But his friend could do no more than drag him to a ditch. They quarrelled all night; and still quarrelling we found them next day. In the morning a pitiful little flag was seen waving; a very dirty handkerchief tied to a stick.

From the roof of the farm hospital the whole line of trenches was easily in view, and I noticed how extraordinarily conspicuous the flat caps of our soldiers were. They never blend into any landscape, and the most carefully concealed trenches are given away by the even circles that are so foreign to any natural background. No wonder that the Taube, that quartered the ground, could direct so accurate a shrapnel

fire upon our trenches. There is, in fact, no compensating advantage in the flat cap; there must be a break in the contour of any form of headgear to make it unnoticeable. The feather the Queenslanders wear, the drooping plumes of the Bersaglieri mask an otherwise conspicuous hat. The German helmet, were it not for the tell-tale spike, is as good as any. Here, one day, Gillespie, one of the most promising and responsible of all our subalterns, was brought in with the type of brain wound for which surgery, that can often do so much, could do nothing at all. We buried him the next day under the pear tree behind the farm-house.

One of our subalterns, Cox, was to the casual observer not the least the type of man for the stern reality of war. A perfect knowledge of French and a fondness for the intellectual life marked him as a most un-English soldier, but in that æsthetic body lived a most splendid spirit. When some men of his Company had their heads down behind a parapet and were at the mercy of the German attacking party that had their heads up and covered every inch of our parapet with rifle fire, Cox rallied his men and got their heads up to see where they were shooting, in spite of machine-gun fire that sprayed along the

trench and flicked dust from the parapet. Ready wit came to his aid, and calling out, "You are not afraid of a pack of blooming German waiters, are you?" he pulled up his platoon. The wound in his neck that was the fine he paid did not prevent him sticking to his job all day long; only at night, when all was quiet, did he come to me for dressing, and then insisted on going straight back in spite of the strongest objections I could make. He was killed at Hill 60. The ambulance wagons used to come to Lorgies, to the cross roads, but the regimental stretcher-bearers have to carry the wounded the long distance from the hospital to the crossroads. The position of these crossroads on the map coincided with the "L" of Lorgies; hence, when special messages were sent to the field ambulance, the place of meeting was always designated by its map position in relation to one of the letters of the printed word. So much has this map reading and map designation become the feature of the Service that it is told of one private soldier addressing his chum, "Where shall I meet you, Bill," "At the second 'o' in bloody," was his reply. One morning, gazing idly in the direction of the German trenches with my glasses, I noticed a soldier get out of the trench and

run back to pick up something, and then return to the trench again. He had his pack and helmet on, and I knew that he would not be carrying his equipment for pleasure. Luncheon, it so happened, was served that day in a dug-out, substituted on account of increased shelling for the village house, where we were before. When I told Coke of what I had seen, I found that he had already gauged the seriousness of the situation and realised even without my piece of evidence that we might well have to meet an attack in force. It was wonderful luck that we moved that morning, for the house was blown to pieces after we had had breakfast.

Just after luncheon an urgent call came from the Cheshires; their C.O. had been wounded and their doctor could not get to him, would I go? Of course I would, and did. We got him safely to a cottage, with a hot stove, dressed his wound and gave morphia, not only to relieve pain, but also to still the lung movement as far as possible, and thus attempt to stop the hæmorrhage into the chest cavity which follows these wounds of the chest. But Mahony was an old West African Officer, and the shock was great. Officers and men of long tropical service stand severe wounds very badly.

Though I got him safely back to ambulance that night, I heard that he died later. Our return from this cottage was barred by an enemy machine gun making such excellent practice on the door that it was madness to try to get out. When I had finished with Mahony, I went up to the top attic. And as I looked the enemy attack developed and the German infantry left their trenches. To me it was in many ways the most interesting sight I had seen; for, from this point of vantage we could watch the whole attack from the beginning.

Now we were always told, and up to now it had been our experience, that German soldiers had no initiative, that they were automata; that they charged in swarms, because the individual advance was impossible to such men drilled so thoroughly by the machine that they were incapable of separate independent action. But these Germans broke all these rules as they had so often done in other ways before. They poured out of the ends of the trenches, spread out into most perfect open order and advanced at the double; nor was any officer visible. Some ran and dropped, so that I thought the whole line had been wiped out by our fire, but these men were foxing; and those who fell face

downward soon got up to run forward again. Not so with the killed or wounded, they lay on their sides or, spinning round in the air, they fell supported by their packs, in a half reclining position. They were sitting with their backs to our trenches, their heads dropped forward, and they looked as if they were asleep. We saw that that was the sleep that knows no waking ; for they stayed like this, quite still, all the afternoon. Taking the cover of every natural object, they got behind trees or wagons or mounds of earth ; so they advanced up to within 100 yards of our position, and our field of fire not being good, there they found shelter. The under-officer was especially gallant, for he ran to a mount of light soil, laid his glass on the top and closely examined our trenches, with elbows spread upon the top. From time to time he would turn his head to speak to two orderlies who crouched beside him like spaniels. The Cheshires fired a number of rounds, but owing to the intervening leaves and branches, they could not get him. I knew him for an under-officer by the shape of his helmet and the sword that hung by his side.

During a lull we brought Capt. Mahony to the hospital and found much to do that had arisen in my absence. Later on at head-

quarters we heard that the enemy had occupied some cottages, known as "Les trois maisons." Sounds of a cold chisel on brick came plainly to us, and we knew quite well what that foreboded, for it is the pet practice of the enemy to knock hunks out of a house wall to enable them to poke through the nose of a machine gun and enfilade our trenches. Something had to be done. It meant a bayonet attack at night with all the attendant horrors of night attacks; for in these operations men get confused by the darkness; they bayonet one another as well as the enemy, they lose their way, they lose their sense of direction and wander on to enemy trenches. This would mean much work for me later, so the hospital was cleared and the wounded handed over to the Manchesters' doctor in Lorgies. The empty hospital was cleaned, fresh straw laid on bloody mattresses, and all was soon ready for the casualties we expected. But the situation was not comfortable. As night fell the fighting at Violaines increased in intensity, big high-explosive shells burst with a boom of a thousand thunders in the village. This strange boom, I learnt soon after, was the shell-burst of the 38-centimetre gun that had just arrived behind La Bassée from Antwerp.

The Cheshires were very weak—none of us had supports—and if the line gave on our right, our flank would be turned. An officer patrol returned with the news that the enemy was in such force that our proposed bayonet attack was off. "C" Company then fell back into the tobacco field that lay in their rear.

Returning to the hospital we found some tea ready, but I was not without grave misgivings, so intense was the machine-gun fire and so unusual these strange explosions on our own front and over all the way to Violaines. The stretcher-bearers were so exhausted that we should have to keep for the night any wounded that might come in. In their dug-out behind the hospital they lay down to sleep. All was quiet, save for the restless groaning of the wounded just brought in, but I was uneasy and could not sleep. The sense of impending disaster oppressed me, and though we were accustomed to sleep through anything in perfect security behind our infantry, there was an ominous sound in the rising machine-gun fire. More of the big booming; the big shells were falling near the hospital now. Another visit to headquarters. The Divisional Staff were there in the trenches and a retirement was more than probable.

Half-way back the machine-gun fire rose in a crescendo; a German cheer, and something moving on our right against the red glare that was Violaines on fire. There was no mistaking the spiked helmets. If I did not run for it I should be cut off from the hospital. It was 2 a.m., and the enemy were through and behind and around the hospital. I barred and bolted the door and turned to wake Thompson.

Our only chance in the world was to get out by the back, but the wounded were awake and frightened, and our job was to stay with them. A glance through the back windows showed us the foldyard full of Germans firing through the windows, charging round the house.

All men, in moments of great mental tension, instinctively and unconsciously, give vocal expression to the strain; some cheer, some shout, a few, only a very few, are silent, and they for want of breath; but the Germans grunted like pigs. The fear of death was on us all; the sense of impending dissolution, but all the time one was influenced by the extraordinary grunting noise the enemy made. Then I realised in a flash that we had no Red Cross flag; nothing to show that we were a hospital. But still they

hesitated; they feared an ambuscade. They came close to the windows that were on both sides of the main room where our wounded lay, and fired point blank inside. It is curious that when the muzzle of a rifle is fired close to a window, not a single pane, but the whole sash falls inside. I dimly wondered at the cause of this; fear alone does not drive completely away the capacity of one's brain for receiving fresh impressions, and none could have been more frightened than we. But the glass fell on the wounded and there remained but the shelter of the cellar for us all. Down the steps we dragged them and blocked the foot with empty barrels. Then they burst in; still quite dark. How could they know we were a hospital? One could not have blamed them if they had bayoneted us. Again they feared an ambush and would only come to the top of the cellar steps, firing at us through the barrels. This, I thought, is the finish! But contenting themselves with placing a guard on the top of the cellar steps and over the cellar window that opened to the grass outside, they left us. Then came the dawn and they saw the blood-stained dressings, the medical equipment, the surgical panniers. It was clearly only a hospital. They quieted down and I essayed

a journey up the steps to make our surrender. As I advanced, the sentry fired ; I was very quickly back and resolved to try the window.

If fear of death proclaims the coward, then all men are cowards ; but fearing death as they do, there are yet many men who fear more to appear afraid. Only in the imagination of the lady novelist or the war correspondent or those who fight their battles at the Base, does the man exist who knows no fear.

I next tried my luck with the sentry over the cellar window, Thompson pushing me through. My friend the sentry was calm, and waved to me to come forward. I did not even have to put up my hands. But Thompson was less lucky, for another soldier came round the corner of the house and his bayonet went through Thompson's tunic. The under-officer, a tall man with a very decent face and a large goitre, spoke to me in French ; told me he had got the stretcher-bearers too. He made me responsible for any attempt at escape. Beyond that, I was free to attend to the wounded and to keep the stove alight. But he must trouble me for my field glasses, my camera. No ! German soldiers do not loot cigarette cases or money from prisoners.

Again, he must ask me to be good enough to precede his search party, to make sure the

barns and lofts were not hiding armed British soldiers. Yes! I would please go in front; I would also please observe the bayonets behind me. And I took no risks, calling loudly in every barn so that, if any wounded or stragglers (and men in a bout like this will creep in anywhere) were hiding, he should put up his hands at once. Fortunately the barns and lofts were free, and I could descend to the stove where my servant was making tea.

The German soldiers struck me as quiet, stolid fellows who were quite fresh. The guard trooped into the kitchen, easily unshipped their packs on to the floor, took off their helmets and put on the flat forage caps. They were Prussians of the 27th and 120th Regiments, and they were from the Magdeburg district. A noise of many feet attracted me, and I looked to see a machine gun carried up to the loft above; while twenty-five snipers went to the tobacco storeroom that overlooked the deep ditches into which our battalion had retired close to Lorgies. A few tiles knocked out of the roof and the machine gun and snipers were hard at it. Most businesslike I thought them. Then our own cow guns opened on the farm and blew away two of its wings. Now, we had been shelled for weeks on the enemy side of the farm, and

the east wing and gateway had been destroyed; but our own lyddite was far the worse. Where a German shell would blow in the whole of one wall of the farm, our own lyddite shell from the 60-pounder would blow in both. Standing in the doorway looking into the foldyard and pretending to be quite calm, I saw the machine-gun party and the snipers drawn up inside the inner wall of the west wing. The shelling had driven them from the roof. Then came a shell; both walls were blown in and the Germans hurled across the foldyard. Soon the hospital was filled with German wounded; among them, to my regret, the under-officer who never stole money from prisoners. His was a bad brain wound and he was only just alive. Then the shelling grew worse, and we were forced to the cellar, wounded and guard together. But Sergeant Thompson and I disdained the cellar and adopted what we hoped would appear a nonchalant air. As a matter of fact we were safer under the groined ceiling. Soon there was nothing left of our farm but the hospital main room and the cellar; these survived owing to the massive stone walls and wooden beams. Then the shelling stopped and the wounded were brought up again; the stove relighted.

The wounded Germans were very good. They relied so implicitly on us and were very grateful. Repeatedly one of them said, in French, that he had every confidence in us. But soon this was for a time altered, for two brain cases began to cry out and struggle and call for water and babble of home and domestic things. Why was not I doing something for them ? demanded the new under-officer, who was now in charge. In vain I said, " It is delirium, they do not really feel pain." " Then why do they cry out ? " said my very literal inquisitor. And all the guard looked very ugly indeed. My French was not sufficient to enter into detail about the subjective sensations of pain. " See now," I exclaimed ; " this one calls for water, I give it and he spits it out. Regard the morphia I have injected. Yes ! there is one other thing ; chloroform ; but the danger is great in such a case ; see the brains already upon the floor ! "

There was only one thing to do with that threatening circle round us ; chloroform we gave, and prayed they would not stop breathing. One of them did, but only for a while. When we had succeeded in sending them to sleep, the morphia did the rest. Then bandages were reapplied, and we were restored to favour.

The German soldiers again upset the cherished opinion of a lifetime ; under stress they were not all phlegmatic ; when wounded they were not always brave and quiet and stolid. One of them, busy firing in the trench quite close, suddenly screamed out loud, threw down his rifle and ran for the hospital and me, with his hands to his face. A bullet had passed under his chin, through his tongue and out by the open mouth. A reassuring examination, my confident opinion that he was not about to die, that the wound was not serious, a little morphia, and I was " lieber Doktor " again. But one thing they do not do—they do not crave a stimulant, as our men do and make tea on every occasion ; they munched their bread and cheese and did not even as much as ask for our tea. This may be partly due to the fact that they suffer less strain, for they did only twelve hours in the trenches and twelve hours in billets in La Bassée, while our men were all their time in the trenches, and we had no supports.

That afternoon a young German officer was brought in with a compound fracture of the thigh. He was very open and pleasant, and for a moment I wondered at the courage that allowed the application of the splint without a groan. Then I tested and found

that his sciatic nerve was severed, and the absence of pain thereby explained. Three times we had to drag him to the cellar when our guns shelled us again. He also had confidence and good faith in all that we did, and he said so too.

Three months later while in a prison camp, a German officer rode past me on the road, returned my salute, looked hard at my face and drew up. "Do you remember," he said, "that officer you looked after at La Bassée?" "Yes," I answered, "perfectly!" "Well! you will be sorry to hear that he died of tetanus three weeks after he left you." But my feelings towards Germans had changed, and I did not feel the least bit sorry; though, I omitted to say so at the time, as far as I remember.

That evening our battalion counter-attacked, and for a moment so close did their advance progress that we thought we were saved. Unable to conceal our delight we were hustled to the cellar and threatened with death should we even attempt to make a signal. But it was not to be, and the fire died down. At ten o'clock it was considered safe to get us out of the farm-house and escort us back to La Bassée. The stretcher-bearers carried some wounded, but

the Germans in a most callous manner forced their own men to march; even those with head and thigh wounds, such as we ourselves would always carry save in great emergencies. The escort was very jumpy and anxious to get away, and my protests were disregarded.

I have mentioned the first under-officer who held command of our detachment. He was a nice fellow with a goitre in his neck; he had been under chloroform more or less all day to still the ravings of his damaged brain. I shall not forget that before the shell laid him out, he came to see me, after he had seen the way we looked after the first dozen of their wounded, giving me back my camera and field glasses and thanking us for our work.

No sooner, however, did we reach La Bassée than an officer halted me and our escort and ordered me to be stripped of every bit of my kit; this chivalrous fellow strung my glasses round his shoulder and contemptuously gave the rest to be divided among the escort. Had my watch, money and other treasures not been hidden inside my riding breeches I should have lost them all.

Although I say it, who shouldn't, the German soldier receives very inferior treatment at the hands of his own regimental

medical officer to that which our rank and file receives. I was soon to meet only too many of their regimental doctors. Clad in their becoming long blue coats, very similar to the combatant officer's uniform, they appear to be possessed of the desire of appearing to be more the soldier than the doctor. When well out of danger, they discard at every opportunity the huge 8-inch red cross their regulations prescribe. With high shining black boots of a splendour unimagined in wartime, spurs, sword and revolver, they are quite prepared to meet the brutal and licentious soldiers of Britain. But, as for attention to their wounded, they do nothing and seem to care nothing, merely giving their orders to dressing orderlies. To soil their hands with blood would be to imperil the snowy whiteness of their stiff linen cuffs. Now, I want to make it quite clear that I refer to the regimental medical officer, and not to the doctors of the field ambulance, who were of very different stuff.

These German regimental doctors, as far as I could see, and from their own admissions, were never within two miles of a firing line, unless all was perfectly safe. They never went out to collect their wounded, but left it all to their armed stretcher-bearers. These

latter took their turn with their rifles all day in the trenches, adorned with the Red Cross, and at night went out to look for wounded, still heavily armed. Now this is an indisputable fact, and is borne out by the evidence of very many of our wounded prisoners. That such stretcher-bearers as these would only find the wounded that lay close to hand and in sheltered positions, goes almost without saying. Indeed, I know from my own experience with them at La Bassée that their wounded were for hours often out at night, and they had, on an average, to wait at least twelve hours longer for their morphia than our own. When I speak of morphia with regard to wounded men, I do not wish to convey the impression that our wounded got, save in the rarest exceptions, any morphia from the Germans; that was far too precious for "Schweinhund Engländer."

Most important is it that a responsible person, though medical officer himself, should go where his stretcher-bearers do; for there are good and bad stretcher-bearers. And if the search for wounded is not systematically laid out by the doctor, he may be certain that some will be left out all night.

CHAPTER IV

IN GERMAN HANDS

In La Bassée I was separated from my wounded and my orderlies and taken to the dressing station of the 120th regiment, installed in a café in the main street of the town. But there was no sign of camaraderie on the part of my German confrères to me. This puzzled me at first ; for in medicine and surgery there are supposed to be no frontiers, no international boundaries ; later on, of course, I got to know that the German doctors and nurses behaved most vilely towards our wounded and prisoners.

I was hungry, and I did not mind telling them so. A small steak of horseflesh was eventually brought to me and some beer, and I was graciously permitted to occupy a corner of a table, over the rest of which a wounded German major sprawled. He finished his meal in silence, rapped his empty beer mug on the table, and said in excellent English, " I am wounded, you see, and by a dum-dum

bullet ; what swine you English are ! " This I denied with heat, and soon we had an excited audience. Each of them kept repeating stories of his personal knowledge of dum-dum bullets being discovered on English prisoners ; and of the wounds which they all were certain were made by explosive bullets. Out they rushed me to some houses to see the wounds caused by explosive bullets, the existence of which I had denied. They showed me five or six men with big lacerated exit wounds. " Show me my own wounded," I said, " and I can show you the counterpart of every wound like this in them." So to a dirty house we went ; and, sure enough, there were our English wounded lying on the bare floor, and by great good fortune exhibiting just as bad wounds as those existing among the Germans. Our men were frightened, but were comforted by seeing me. To those who were in dire need, and they were many, I gave the last of my morphia. When I suggested that they might, at least, have mattresses, the senior German doctor said, decidedly, No !—they were lucky to be alive after all their countrymen had done. Back in the café the argument was renewed. I told the wounded major, the only reasonable one among them (the less militant and

non-combatant branches of the German service are always the most savage), the reason of all this talk of dum-dum bullets. All this misunderstanding about explosive ammunition, I said, lay in the pointed Spitz bullet that we had copied from the Germans themselves. We had no dum-dums ; they could believe it or not, as they liked. I had seen hundreds of rounds of ammunition poured out on the floor of very many dressing stations. That was the order with the English ; no ammunition in hospitals or ambulances. To do the major justice, he did not believe it, and said so without ceremony. The whole trouble, I went on, lay in the fact that we are using a most unstable bullet ; instead of, as in the Boer war, using a cylindrical bullet with its centre of gravity in the centre, we were using a cone-shaped bullet with its centre of gravity at the base. Contrary to all laws of mechanics this bullet was forced to travel point foremost when the base should have gone first, so, when any surface was struck obliquely, the bullet turned and went through sideways. Hence the small entry and the huge lacerated exit wound. The worst offender was the German, as it was the smallest—this they denied with many oaths ; the best, the French bullet that was so big. There were, of course, in all

armies, men who might mutilate a bullet in the savage anger that follows the death of a friend. Yes, in all armies, they assented, except the great and noble army of the Fatherland!

"Let us now," said the major, "examine an English rifle, and I will show you how you English have given to your army the means of mutilating these bullets," and he pulled from his pockets three of our cartridges with the tips broken neatly off. An English rifle was produced: "Now," he said, "we will get the wounded soldier from the back room to show us the parts of this English rifle." And a wounded man of the Cheshires was brought in. "Explain the mechanism of this rifle." And the private soldier did so. This the breech, that the magazine, this the safety catch, and here the cut off! "Stop!" said the major; "the cut off, and what is it intended to cut off?" "'Taint to cut off nothing," said our man, "it's to shut off the magazine." But the major would not have it. "It is clear," he said, "that this soldier is lying, for had it been used to shut off the magazine alone, as one sees it can, why not call it the 'shut off'?" "And now," turning to me, "what is this hole in the cut off? Don't lie to me, as the soldier did. I will

show you." Producing a good English cartridge he put the point into the hole in the flat metal plate and slammed the cut off home. Lo! the tip of the bullet was broken clean off! Here was proof most damning and circumstantial. But I had had time to think. "The hole in the cut off," I rejoined, "is made by the armourer in order to hang them on a string in the armourer's shop." It was weak, but it was all I could think of. Afterwards I learnt that it was really the correct explanation of an apparently useless hole. The English soldier was then produced again, the demonstration once more gone through; but he was staunch and swore he had never seen it used for that purpose or even heard of it. My suggestion that it was a German discovery merely added fuel to the flame.

I was sent into an inner room and told to sleep with a private soldier on one narrow mattress. Now this would have been considered a deadly insult to a German officer, many of whom would rather die than sleep with one of their private soldiers. But I cared for none of these things, and soon we were both asleep. Waking, I reflected that I had had many a more unpleasant bedfellow. I had not bathed for three weeks;

but he had hardly so much as seen water for three months. Yet the wind is tempered to the shorn lamb in the matter of smells as well as other things. The end organs of olfactory sense in the nose become blunted by custom, and the smell of unwashed humanity is no longer appreciated after a while. Only a drawing-room soldier would have smelt us. All these long unwashed weeks we had often discussed the matter. Why was it we did not smell? and why had our toe-nails not grown if we had not removed our boots for weeks? Be the explanation what it may, we all might have been using lavender bath salts every morning and none of us a whit the wiser.

Next day a little horse meat was placed for me on a table with the head doctor. He preserved the cold official manner. I did most of the eating. Then a serious conversation followed. I was to be liberated, I was informed, in ten days and sent to Holland; in the meantime I should be required to work in this dressing station and take charge of it. I would, of course, be on parole not to escape during that time. Word had now reached this regimental doctor of how well we had looked after the wounded of his regiment in our farm-house. Gladdened by the news of

impending liberation I would have agreed to anything. So I was sworn, much hand-shaking, much reiteration of *parole d'honneur*, the small dark eyes of my interlocutor sternly gazing into mine. All day I was free to work in that hospital and to take charge of German wounded in the row of small houses on both sides of the street. Steadily the stream of casualties came in, were dressed by me, and the heavily-armed German orderly who was also my gaoler. Methodically I examined all the German wounded in the houses. What a state they were in! One must admit they were almost as brutal to their own wounded in La Bassée as they were to ours. But my wounded English I never saw again; they had gone, so I was told.

In these houses all the German wounded were on mattresses; all jumbled together with nothing but their first field dressing on their wounds, and the German first field dressing is a piece of pink boracic lint wrapped up in a gauze bandage; a flimsy thing compared with ours. For food: the plain soldiers' ration of thick soup and black bread, regardless of whether the wound was in the stomach or in the leg. As the brain cases were unconscious, they perforce had to starve and the bowls of food beside their mattresses

were black with flies. Here I found my nice under-officer, quite unconscious, and very near his passing. The wounded lay so thick that there was not room to step between them. Begging for ease from pain, for the necessary needs of hospital nursing, calling me "Lieber Doktor" too! I gave them all the morphia I had stolen from the medical stores in the café, and did my best, though a poor one. "Why can't I feel my leg?" said one who spoke English well. And I saw a limb, blue mottled, cold and senseless, telling of the gangrene that had supervened days previously, of the leg that should have been taken off long ago. What could I tell him, but that absence of pain was, at least, a good thing, and I would speak to the head doctor when I saw him?

But the sights and sounds of hospital were not all that I saw from that café window. I could just see over the top of the curtain, and even then the passing soldiers knew me and cursed me for an Englishman. On the kerbstones of the pavement was a Jaeger regiment, resting from their long march; for they had just arrived from Antwerp. Down the middle of the street rode smart German officers. All day long the regiments passed, infantry and cavalry, transport and artillery.

I counted in one day, at least, a division of cavalry and four divisions of infantry alone; some with the dust of Bruges upon their feet, others muddy from the local trenches, but marching quickly to their billets. Fifty thousand men, at least, I saw in those two days, passing north and south.

The infantry with their loose-limbed gait were not entirely impressive, very patchy, very footsore, of all sizes and shapes, some marching well under their heavy packs, and others bowed down and walking with a stick. Little difference was noticeable between them and our soldiers. In the rear of each battalion there were very well set up under-officers, and they saw to all little matters To each regiment were attached eight machine guns; and every double company had its ambulance wagon. The ambulance wagon took the place of our regimental Maltese cart. There was room in it for four lying-down cases, and cupboards near the seat for drugs and surgical dressings. And these ambulances were empty. To have sore feet is a crime, and there is no extenuation in the German army.

But my heart sank when I saw their cavalry and artillery horses; horses groomed, brass work all shining, the hoofs of the officers'

chargers blacked. I had come from an army where the horses were all skin and bone and sore backed and foundered, and here were young animals, fresh and in excellent condition. How could one compete, I thought, with such an army as this? The cavalry were all armed with the lance; both Dragoons, with red and white pennants, and the Death's Head Hussars. But all the troopers were so wooden, such bad hands, riding on their horses' mouths, rising so stiffly in their saddles. They should have seen our Cavalry Brigade of the Fifth Division; we may not have had many horses, but the men could ride.

Back the next afternoon came the regimental medical officer, whom I had replaced. After that, he said, I would no longer be required. And why had I been in the garden so often, when I had given my *parole d'honneur*? It was clear they did not want me in La Bassée; window-gazing by an English prisoner did not suit the official eye, and it had been reported; and the back garden commanded a view of the trenches I had lately left. So with the escort of a wounded man, a volunteer from Magdeburg, I set out to march to Haisnes. Before I left I had another talk with the head doctor.

Where was I going? Ah! that he could not say. Send a letter to England? Impossible! The wounded German soldier whose leg required amputation? So! there were many, but they could not do operations here, and the field lazarettes were full! It was a long march for me and my escort was waiting—*Auf wiedersehn!*

On the road I was the object of much interest, and the butt of many gibes from the regiments on the march. "Schweinehunde Engländer!" became quite familiar to my ears. Black looks, too, from the passing officers, my escort plainly aghast that I did not salute. Taken to report at the big stationary hospital in Haisnes, I was conducted into the dining-room and gravely inspected by the whole mess. I looked at the coffee; one officer remembered, and a cup of lukewarm fluid was my reward. Then I was marched out again to another village. On the way the deep boom of an unfamiliar gun startled me. Behind a cottage was a huge gun with a short fat barrel pointing to the skies. Set up on caterpillar wheels, it was dragged by a traction engine. Carelessly screened by branches of trees it lay well behind the line, and feared no aeroplane of ours. Yes! it was one of the 38-centimetre

guns from Antwerp, said my guide. And I looked again at the thing that had dropped the big shells into Violaines and the garden of my hospital on the night of the big attack. At last we reached a resting place in the house inhabited by an officer of the Divisional train. Standing, we waited until he was seated at supper. All laughed at his sallies. His personal servant, who dared not answer, was the butt of his endless buffoonery. Finally he rose; so did we. The officer retired to bed upstairs; we to share a heap of straw on the floor of the room in which we fed.

Next day a march to a Feld Lazarette, which corresponds roughly to our casualty clearing hospital. One of the doctors had been at the German Hospital in Dalston. They did not want me: did not know that I was coming. Why did not someone send a messenger? It was quite like home again, and just as irresponsible! They let me see the English wounded, and one young soldier I found much disturbed. No word could he gather of last night's examination except "amputiert," but that was enough, and he thought they were about to cut off his leg in sheer vindictiveness. It was quite all right, he said, there was no pain, he was sure it would do well if left alone.

One glance was enough to enable me to assure him that if all the College of Surgeons of England were there to see him, they could come to no other conclusion. Another case of gangrene from injury to the big vessels of the leg above the knee joint. I left him unhappy but comforted. He was in the Cheshire regiment, too, and had known me before. The surgery I was allowed to see. The surgeons wore gloves and sterile gowns, and some were very human. When I left in a motor ambulance for Douai that evening I felt that I had come across efficiency and kindness in one German hospital at least. For forty miles, to Douai, we passed through the French industrial villages and saw everywhere the Divisional trains, ammunition stores and commissariat. The very men, most probably, who did such dirty work in Belgium, but now they were tame; all the wine and cognac were long since finished.

At Douai, after a long examination at the office of the Commandatur, I was taken to a tiny room at the railway station. The door opened and shut behind me; but there was another occupant, the machine-gun officer of the Dorsets—he was taken in Violaines in that last dreadful night that saw my finish too. A small gas stove, one

table, the bare floor for bed and that was all. An hour later five more scarecrows arrived ; in their torn tunics, frayed puttees, capless, with three weeks' beard, they could only be British officers. Three of them South Lancashires, two of them from the D.C.L.I. ; all taken at Illies on the same night. We were thankful, anyhow, to be alone. During the week that we stayed in this appalling room we got quite accustomed to the hard floor. For food we depended on the French Red Cross, kindly and charming ladies, who endured very much at the hands and from the mouths of our sentries, to bring us food. And such food too ! Excellent in quality, abundant, well cooked, not since our arrival in France in August had we fed so well. Twice a day we looked for them and their cheerful greetings, and we can never be sufficiently grateful for their unforgettable attentions. We had no exercise except an occasional walk across the paved yard. The rest of the station buildings were packed with French civilians and the lavatories were unspeakable. There one day came a curious adventure. In the lavatory a French peasant was standing close beside me. Our sentry had turned away for the moment, when, to my astonishment, my neighbour spoke in

English without turning his head: "I'm a French officer disguised, I go to Boulogne to-night, thence to England: if I can send news to any of your people give me a letter at six to-night here." Now by chance I had a list of all the names and addresses of the whole seven of us ready for just such an occasion as this; in fact, I had intended to try quite a different person. Turning round I pushed against him and thrust the paper into his blouse. He was not a spy as we afterwards had feared, but a good fellow who kept his word. So well did he keep his promise that very soon after we had all been reported "missing" by the War Office our respective families each got a letter from him. It was not till nearly two weeks later at Crefeld that the Germans let us write.

It is in the rule the Germans make of not allowing any communication by prisoners when confined or in hospital in occupied territory of France or Belgium, that the only hope for the men long "missing" lies. Apparently it is feared that information may be carried to England or France. If an officer or man lies wounded in hospital in occupied territory, even for as long as six months, he is not allowed to communicate with his people, nor may he receive letters.

Only after prisoners are taken into one of the prison camps in Germany itself are they allowed to write.

One morning we were all interrogated, singly, in a private room by an officer who said that he was of the staff of the Foreign Office in Berlin. Speaking perfect English he asked me my regiment. A doctor! "So! then why do you wear an artillery button on your tunic?" My servant was a Garrison artilleryman, and, one of my buttons having been lost, he had given me one of his own. This, I found, was merely to impress me with the profundity of his knowledge and observation; for he had already received a report about me from La Bassée. The regiment you were attached to? But I'd forgotten! "Let me see," he said pleasantly, "if I can't refresh your memory." "Shell shock, no doubt," he remarked with a smile. "Your Brigade and Division?" Again I had forgotten! "What a dreadful thing!" and pulling out a chart, marked in black and white figures, he showed me the German Intelligence chart of the British Expeditionary Force. Army Corps, Corps Commanders' names, Divisions, Brigade, even the regiments with their commanding officers all neatly printed. Black and white

diamonds represented the artillery, oblong figures the cavalry, squares the infantry battalions. "Let me see now," he continued, "2nd K.O.S.B. Ah! here it is, 13th Brigade, 5th Division; General Smith-Dorrien, Charles Ferguson: Cuthbert, your Brigadier."

I was speechless, he seemed to know it all! And he smirked at me, as if to say, "Now you see what German High Headquarters can do in the matter of intelligence." "There's nothing in that," I said, "that you couldn't get out of any daily paper," but I was most uneasy. Softly, he purred, "So! Your late colonel is now a prisoner. Yes! at Magdeburg." "Now," he said briskly, "we shall be able to have quite a nice chat. When did you land in France and where?" Then I told him the truth; for it was clear he was trying to find if there had been any British troops in Belgium before the Germans crossed the frontier at Liège. "We know everything about the perfidy of the British Government; we found all the secret treaties when we took Brussels. Oh! Yes! You were with the K.O.S.B.

"It is an abominable thing"—he rapidly switched off the other subject—"that you should use coloured troops against us."

But I didn't see why the natives of India should not have a word to say as to the fate of their own country. It was clear that all that was to be settled in France. He wouldn't see it in that light.

After seven days at Douai, I was taken away to the Kommandantur and marched off to the station. On the way, I remember, a French woman offered me chocolate and a boy some cigarettes. My guard threatened them savagely, and they hesitated, but I turned and accepted them with thanks.

CHAPTER V

CREFELD

THE journey from Douai by train to Cologne was made in unwonted luxury. Instead of the cattle truck that, at this time, was the car *de luxe* reserved for the transport of wounded British officers, I made the journey on the wooden seats of a third class carriage in the company of my escort, two soldiers of an infantry regiment. Through devastated Belgium we passed, and I began, as I looked upon the fair land destroyed, to believe the whispers of Belgian atrocities which had reached us in the English newspapers as we lay before La Bassée. The attitude of my escort was peculiar; later on I began thoroughly to understand it. When the ubiquitous German officer passed through the train and regarded me with an air of studied ferocity, my escort copied his example to the life, and bellowed at me not to look out of the carriage window; but when this threatening cloud of German discipline had

passed, they shyly offered me a portion of their black bread and sausage. Even then I noticed that the frightfulness of the German officers and soldiers varied in direct relation to their distance from the trenches. The further away they were from the front, and, judging by their uniforms the less likelihood of their ever having been under fire, the more savage did they appear. So I was not surprised then at the attitude of the doctors and Red Cross nurses, when the engine driver leant out of his cab as we drew up at each station shouting that *Engländer gefangener* were on board.

Now, though the hand of the German was heavy on this land, there was order everywhere; every Belgian station was a Red Cross depôt. No German soldier need get out of his carriage; food and drink were brought to him by young women with huge red crosses on the bosoms of their white dresses. Wounded men, German only of course, were redressed by willing hands, and their nursing wants attended to in the little hospital that was the feature of each railway station. There were English wounded too in trucks at the front of the train, but they were allowed to rot in the filthy straw. I could hear them asking for water and food,

and the unfeeling laughter of the crowd that ran to gaze upon so entertaining a spectacle came to me down the platform. I asked to be allowed to go to them, but this was "*Streng verboten.*" When I was finally marched along the train at Cologne, I saw our English wounded lying on the unclean straw without either food or water, without change of dressing or any nursing conveniences. Fractured thighs I saw with painful, twisted legs; men with shoulder wounds standing to save their bodies the torture of the jolt of the stopping train; prone figures with lacerated brains snoring into eternity and unconscious of their fellows' sufferings. Now, horse manure is the most perfect breeding ground for tetanus bacilli, but there was a very kindly Providence that ever looked after our wounded in German hospitals. Our men, alone of all the wounded, received no tetanus antitoxin to protect them, yet they suffered far less from this terror than either German or French. When prisoners' limbs were amputated, often by the surgical amateurs who were held sufficient to practise the art of surgery upon the prisoner, it was the English prisoner who failed to die from shock and secondary hæmorrhage.

My escort, though officially brutal, were

yet unofficially very kind. They drew the blinds of the carriage when we drew up at a station and hid me, while they asked the gentle Red Cross maiden for food and drink for three. When this precaution was not taken, the Red Cross attendant would hand in three cups of coffee and three ham sandwiches; but catching sight of me in the corner, she would indignantly withdraw one cup and one sandwich. "*Nein! Engländer!*" with as much ferocity depicted on her countenance as her inexpressibly homely face would allow. I shall not forget, too, how one of my escort slept on the rack at night, the other beneath the seat, so that I might have the seat to myself.

Across the Rhine we slowly steamed, and I looked with interest to see the starving women and children, the smokeless factory chimneys, the depression that our papers told us were the results of the naval blockade. But I must have come at the wrong moment, for of starvation I saw no sign; the factory chimneys smoked gaily—only an enthusiastic crowd of fat and comfortable men and women waved handkerchiefs to the Red Cross ambulance train that was steaming across the bridge behind us.

Arrived in Cologne station, I was again

interrogated and, for the moment, lodged in the off-duty room of the German station guard. The atmosphere was hostile, but I sat on a chair and took up a German illustrated paper. At this, with the bellow of an outraged bull, the under-officer leapt up, seized the chair from under me, tore the paper from my hand, and then taking from his pocket an English soldier's knife, proceeded to give an illustration of the uses to which the various parts were put. "This," pointing to the big knife, "to cut the throats of wounded sons of the Fatherland; that," exhibiting the spike, "for the English doctors to gouge out the eyes of the wounded defenders of their country." I should have heard more interesting explanations had not my escort come for me and marched me out. It should never be forgotten in the years to come, when the sloppy sentimentalists in England begin to find excuses for the enemy, that all this talk of dum-dum bullets, the use of the various implements in Tommy's knife, of the barbarities to German wounded, were the official propaganda of the German Government. Our prisoners at Mons were taunted with these stories, so the Germans must have been well prepared beforehand to expect these brutalities from the English.

I was conducted to a cell opening on to a public subway in the station. There I found a Belgian civilian accused of spying, so he said; but he was probably placed there to try to extract information from me. He stank abominably, as did his cell; a bucket in the corner was the only sanitary convenience. After one hour he was taken away, and to my delight three English officers were brought in—two flying men and a fellow in the South Staffords, the battalion that had just come from South Africa and formed part of the 7th Division. The flying men had had an interesting experience in a fog. Their engine had failed and they had come down almost on top of a German cavalry regiment; then the engine reacted, and they gained the friendly shelter of the fog bank a few hundred feet up. Off they went, the Uhlans pursuing the noise above them in the mist. Then the engine stopped again, and down they came. "You are my prisoners," said an excited young officer riding up; and there was no doubt about it. These two fellows were treated very well so long as they were in the hands of the cavalry regiment that took them. But once away, they experienced the usual sample of official German frightfulness to prisoners.

We were hungry and had no food nor any prospect of it. Through the keyhole we were the object of the curiosity of many eyes. The guard, I believe, were charging a small fee to allow half-minute inspections of the mercenaries of that force which the Kaiser so happily described as the "contemptible British Army." The door opened and a resplendent General officer came in. Motioning us to be seated, he looked at us and his contemptuous eyes were full of doubt. "Officers? So! Commissioned officers? So!" And well he might doubt, for we looked ruffians indeed. Dirty, covered with Flanders mud, unshaven, the South Staffords officer without tunic or cap or greatcoat, a transparent oilskin waterproof over his shirt; his missing kit the spoil of his captors. But we were not ashamed to ask for food, and we got it. The inspection over, our General wrapped himself in his nice blue cloak, to avoid contamination with such filth, and departed. Then the train to Crefeld. A short march through the crowded hostile streets, and we were glad to get the safe shelter of the Hussaren Kasernen.

The 11th Hussar barracks, crowned with barbed wire above the high brick walls, was our resting place, and there we met

a queer collection of some six hundred Allied officers—French Territorial officers from Maubeuge ; Russians of Samsonoff's Warsaw Army Corps, that glorious sacrifice of Russia upon the altar of a threatened Paris ; Belgians from indomitable Liège with their famous General. A hundred British officers were we, and amongst us were representatives of almost every unit of the British Army.

In the barracks we all lived in little rooms, each holding about twelve officers and impartially mixed. In order that no differential treatment might be suspected, a selection of all nationalities occupied each room. The idea seemed excellent on the face of it and just, but it was designed with a knowledge that it would make all uncomfortable, and it did. Also it was to be hoped that it might create dissension among the Allies. It did not do that, though such a condition might easily have followed.

The English wanted, and insisted upon having, at least one window open, in spite of their numerical inferiority ; the Russians with every article of clothing piled up and blankets covering their heads, shivered in extreme discomfort until the abnormal English were asleep. Then surreptitiously, the window would be shut. We woke stifling in the

frowst. The window opened again, the sons of Albion slept, while our Allies suffered torment from the *courant d'air* that was their pet abomination. At exactly three minutes to eight the assembly bell sounded. A hurried rush to put on clothes, often the German nightshirt concealed by a greatcoat, a hasty tooth brush in the cold wash-room and then the parade.

But we were again at a disadvantage beside our immaculate Allies. The French were at their very smartest—they always seemed to bring a big trousseau with them. The shiniest of boots adorned their feet; elegant beards, well trimmed. Our Belgian friends were very smart too. The Russians immaculately dressed in black top boots and grey overcoats. But we lacked many articles of kit. Our Expeditionary Force had travelled light. Our caps were the chosen spoil of our captors, likewise our puttees and tunics. We were mostly wounded too, and where the blood and necessary cutting had not destroyed our tunics, they were badly repaired. Inches of pink leg showed above the boot and below the unbuttoned laces of our riding breeches. Some appeared with civilian caps and overcoats, some unashamedly with a blanket round them; and we were often late for

parade. We must have looked a set of vagabonds beside our well-groomed Allies. The only thing that saved us from official reprimand was the fact that we were inspected last; a tribute to the contempt in which our gaolers held us. Our Adjutant, Vandeleur, was garbed in the most abominable little Belgian cap and overcoat. He gravely saluted, half in military fashion, half the ostler's touch of the cap. But the Commandant was fat and kindly, and bore us no ill will for our untidiness.

A high brick wall bounded the gravel parade ground where we played football; in the centre of the detached blocks of buildings that formed our dwellings lay a bath house where we had shower baths in detachments. Our food was fairly good, but very plain, and there was a canteen where sardines and buns could be bought. We suffered no physical cruelty; but every humiliation, rudeness and insult, on occasion, from the under-officials was heaped upon us.

I was lucky, and was given charge of the wounded English officers in the reserve lazarette, one hundred yards away. In this hospital there were about fifty of our officers; many in grave danger, all wounded and

abominably neglected, on beds with straw mattresses and coarse linen sheets. There was no nursing, even for the very worst cases; nobody but Heinrich, the orderly, who smelt vilely of stale beer and onions, and forgot to return to duty when he went with his *Liebe* to the town. There was a female known as "Schwester," really no more trained than a ward maid, whose efforts were confined to cleaning the operating-room; a resident young doctor, plainly showing the unqualified student in every medical and surgical attention that he attempted. But he was kind, and our visiting doctors were kind. By kind, I mean that they did not ill-treat the wounded, but they made no effort to have the bad cases watched or bathed, or to have any of the rules of nursing applied. Fresh sheets were supplied weekly, if Heinrich's overnight beer permitted. One young officer, severely ill and in acute pain, suffered everything at the hands of these incompetent orderlies; he had not had one bath in the six weeks he had been in the hospital. I was promoted to the dressings under supervision, but not allowed to perform any other medical or surgical treatment. But my most useful rôle was as the nurse, to change the draw-sheet, to give the daily baths in bed,

to sweep away the crumbs that were the torture of a tender back, to guard and protect the prominent bones of painfully wasted hips against the bed sore that was a constant threat, shifting pillows, brushing helpless hair and teeth. One poor fellow, wounded in the lungs, paid many penalties at first for my inexperience. I never quite realised before how little the average doctor knows of nursing, the little dodges to make the helpless comfortable, to conjure sleep in wakeful nights. Thus employed, I was allowed out in a collection of civilian garments, to walk in the country or even in the town of Crefeld. But I must wear a Red Cross, and carry a pass. Despite my Teutonic clothes, I could not escape recognition, and soon I gave the town a miss and confined my walking to the country near. The Anglo-Saxon head gives its owner so badly away. In a country where the men are brachycephalic, short-headed and flat at the back, it is easy to recognise the dolichocephalic, the long head, the prominent back of the occiput that is so characteristic of the English skull. But the little boys were very well behaved, curious but not rude, and they did not throw stones—by far the best behaved people in the whole country.

The farming was excellently well done and the state of farm buildings and stock good. The farmers were then sowing their winter wheat, and the rye was two inches above the ground and this in mid-November. The farms were small, only from 100 to 150 acres, and well tilled. These people had also discovered the secret of good arable farming and covered the fallow with plenty of good farmyard manure. Liquid sewage was brought out in tank carts and generously watered on the fields. The farm work was entirely done by women and girls, save that entailing the management of horses. All teamster and wagoner work and ploughing were done by old men or half-grown boys. The cabbage crop and the root crops were then being harvested. In this arable country there were partridges and hares in abundance, and the grey crows that were collecting in the fields preparatory to their winter flight to Norfolk.

One night the orderlies were noisier than usual; clattering along the corridors so much that sleep was impossible in hospital. Then one burst into my room and read the glad tidings of the loss of the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth* and several other ships at Coronel. We would not believe it, and yet

it was the authoritative word of German High Headquarters.

Soon a familiar air was heard outside the hospital windows; we could hardly believe our ears! A group of school children singing "Rule Britannia"! It was their ironical way of cheering up the wounded prisoners; the local boys' school with their Pan-Germanic headmaster leading them. It seems that this, of all our National songs, hurts the German nation most and fills them with thoughts of hate and frightfulness. It is indeed an arrogant song and full of pain for German naval enthusiasts. We laughed and pretended we did not mind. But there was no "Rule Britannia" when the Falkland Island affair became known, only descriptions of fearful odds in fight against a combined English, French and Japanese Fleet.

No description of the reserve lazarette at Crefeld would be complete without reference to Erasmus, a well-known surgeon and a *Geheimrat.* He would come in consultation to see our very badly wounded and could sometimes be persuaded to take them to the Civil Hospital, the *Krankenhaus,* in Crefeld. There they could have some nursing attention and the benefit of Erasmus' own skilful and kindly hands. The nurses at

this Civil Hospital, though all trained in England, were full of stories of dum-dum bullets, of English doctors who gouged out the eyes of German wounded. What can one do with such a people? Their medical knowledge alone should have told them that the operation of gouging out eyes is an anatomical impossibility. It is possible, of course, to burst the eye in violence. Only by very great effort and the use of special instruments and big curved scissors can the most skilful surgeons remove an eye. How then can one explain, except as part of deliberate official propaganda, the suggestion that such an operation could be done with the spike, provided by a thoughtful Government, to remove stones from horses' hoofs?

It may seem a little thing, but I feel, and I am not alone in this way of thinking, that these deliberate official German lies about the spike in the knife, the hole in the cut-off of our rifle, and dum-dum ammunition have accounted for hundreds and hundreds of wounded and unwounded British prisoners being shot in cold blood. Not only that, but the savagery was carried as far as the field hospitals, the Government hospitals and the Roman Catholic hospitals. Many German doctors and nurses avenged their

country's fancied wrongs on the bodies of our wretched prisoners.

One day tremendous uproar rose in the Hussar barracks—an attempt at escape by three Russians. All English, French and Belgians were arrested in their rooms and locked in the big mess, and the quarters of all the Russian officers rigidly searched. Some Russians were suspected of having a great deal of money secreted about them, hence this rigid inquiry, but the money was not to be found! It appears that three Russian officers were determined to escape. The new canteen manager was a German, speaking Russian well, and of a most sympathetic attitude. Who better than he to assist them? Yes! this engaging person would, for a consideration, buy, for prisoners, things outside the camp that were forbidden! "He was sorry for prisoners," he said. So convinced were the Russians of the genuine nature of his sorrow that the question of escape was broached. Our sorrowful friend looked grave. "Yes, it might be done, but it would be very expensive." "A motor, car! So! Yes, it was possible! But the officers would understand, of course, that it was a hanging matter for the chauffeur; he must be well paid. He would look about the town of Crefeld.

Yes ! perhaps 500 roubles would do it." But day by day the price went up until nearly 2,500 roubles was necessary to persuade the reluctant chauffeur. The money was paid, civilian clothes provided, coloured arm badges too, such as privileged civilians wear when they come to the camp on business. Seven o'clock ! The night is dark. Three men in civilian clothes pass the sentries, outwardly bold, inwardly quaking. The first turning to the right, to the right again, here was the car standing and the chauffeur started the engine ! Holland in an hour ! The passports of Dutch merchants were all ready, there should be no difficulty at the frontier. The car drove through the town and stopped —but at the Police Station. Our sorrowing and sympathetic canteen manager was a police spy. Three crestfallen officers returned ; searched in the thorough way Germans know so well and sent off to a fortress. The Commandant triumphant and the Government richer by 2,500 roubles !

On November 25th forty French doctors left for France, and we were very hopeful. Every day we English medical officers were told that our turn might come at any moment.

One Sunday morning there was unusual bustle in the camp ; plainly written here

the same "inspection fever" that is met with whenever the senior officer of a district comes to look and see. We were to be inspected by Freiherr von Bissing, then Commanding the 7th Army at Münster, now known in the records of infamy as the Governor of Belgium. He inspected the French, then the Russians, then the Belgians. To all he had condescending things to say. Then came our turn, and at the sight of us he halted and bellowed, "Are these the English officers?" And well might he ask, for we did look a job lot. Some in uniform, others in half undress, all who had greatcoats in complete undress underneath their greatcoats. Some in service hats, some in civilian caps, others with no cap at all. Some wearing putties and some wearing gaiters, many with pink leg or drawers showing. One officer in a blanket! "What," he yelled, "is the meaning of this? I have seen the French officers, and they are smart, soldierly people. The Russians and Belgians also have I seen; and they are as officers should be, but you—you are a set of tramps!" He paused, and looking at our Adjutant, who saluted, in ostler fashion, by touching his disreputable cap, "Who are you, and what are you doing in those

clothes ? " " I was wounded at Le Cateau and stripped of everything but my shirt and trousers, by German soldiers," was the very calm reply. " And that officer there, what is he doing in a blanket ? " pointing towards the fellow who was in the rear rank. " I am recently wounded, and the German soldiers robbed me of everything. I have not had time to get any new kit." Then the great von Bissing departed. In appearance he was a short man with a very lined face and big bags under his eyes ; he looked as if he was no stranger to every kind of debauchery and had the marks of vicious living plainly written on his face.

Always they hated us worse than the other prisoners, always they suspected us of contumacy. Nor were they in those days altogether wrong. As if to threaten us with frightfulness in case we misbehaved, a large notice was displayed all over the camp. In this document was mentioned the fact that German doctors, nurses and prisoners had been very badly treated in England and France. Yet, so great was German Kultur, that reprisals would not be taken on us helpless prisoners, for the actions of our peoples and Governments. But it behoved us to pay strict obedience to our orders or

the High German Government would have to reconsider its decision. This was the only entertaining thing in the camp. It was printed in German, French and English and bore Freiherr von Bissing's signature.

But I soon had to leave my lambs in hospital, for orders arrived that I was to leave, not for Holland, but, alas ! for Minden.

CHAPTER VI

MINDEN

At the end of November, 1914, four of us departed together, with a fully armed escort, two bound for Minden and two for Münster. A long weary train journey lay before us, during which we were the cynosure of all eyes; a travelling wild-beast exhibition, if we might judge by the attitude of the people. Two of us on arriving at Minden found that, as usual, we were not known, not wanted, not expected. There is the same orderly confusion in Germany as in England, the only difference being that in Germany no one may criticise. This is infinitely soothing to the authorities and saves a lot of trouble.

We slept that night in the hospital with some English soldiers who had been wounded at Mons and Le Cateau. They told us dreadful stories of the first two months in German hospitals. Not all survived their sufferings, but they agreed that things were

a little better now. They complained of the roughness of the German surgeons, but they admitted that, in some ways, they were almost as bad to their own men. I heard German soldiers howling with pain when some minor but very painful operations were being done on them at this hospital without an anæsthetic. To the German mind, suffering is a test of nobility of character, and the soldier is expected to be hardened to pain. That pain, especially unnecessary pain, has the opposite effect and destroys one's resistance to painful sensations is an established fact in all the world, but it has not yet penetrated to the German military surgeon. Besides, chloroform is expensive and it takes time to administer it, time that might be spent in walking the fashionable promenades in the smart blue cloak that marks the German officer.

Our men were very glad to see us, if only for one night, and were sorry to lose us in the morning. The next day we were sent off in a cab at our own expense; fourteen marks, I remember. But why should not a prisoner be made to pay? He should be thankful to be alive! This is ever their attitude. A drive of three or four miles,

with an armed escort, brought us to our prison camp, situated, as our gaolers told us, on the site of the battle of Minden, where we once fought with the great Frederick against the French.

Minden is a camp containing 15,000 prisoners; French and Belgian, and a few convalescent English soldiers. Also there were here confined a number of English civilians. These civilians were schoolmasters, teachers, clerks, and men from specialised British industries; they were treated like dogs, or perhaps, more strictly speaking, like English soldiers, prisoners of war. This is a flagrant breach of international agreement. They slept with coloured French soldiers, were covered with lice, had no means of bathing, but were extraordinarily cheerful under it all. I must not forget some Kroo boys from the Gold Coast, who gloried in their British nationality. These unfortunates had been taken off British ships in German harbours.

The camp was divided into two. Long wooden huts in rows and between them roads dominated by an ostentatious display of out-of-date field guns. The prisoners were crowded together regardless of sanitary or

hygienic regulations, their food was abominable and insufficient; of clothing they had nothing but that in which they stood. We two medical officers lived in a small room at the end of the hospital hut. It was fairly comfortable when we had once pasted paper all over the cracks in the thin matchboarding of which the huts were constructed. There was usually coal for the stove. We could make tea ourselves, but our midday meal was brought to us by an orderly. In a little room opposite were two Russian doctors, both very charming fellows. The pretext under which our detention here was justified was that thousands upon thousands of English and Russian prisoners captured in recent victories were shortly coming to Minden. For ten days we had no work to do, then we were assigned work under supervision. This consisted of attending to the morning sick, both French and Belgians. We were not allowed to treat or speak to our own wounded, for an English doctor might be capable of inducing riot or disturbance! Here we had an unequalled opportunity of treating lice-itch, and all the other diseases that follow in the train of filth and the disregard of sanitary precautions.

One morning buying provisions in the canteen, I was approached by a German under-officer, the Assistant Inspector of one of the laagers, a bloated and truculent person. Good morning! had I seen the latest order of Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria? No more English prisoners to be taken alive! Quarter only to be given to the volunteers like the London Scottish. Did I not agree that it was an excellent order? What other fate could the English mercenaries expect? Was not the regular Army recruited from the workhouses and the gaols? Yes! he had lived fourteen years in England, between Bristol and Bath; knew every part of England, used to play football at one time. Ha! the great Tirpitz, how superior to the bungling amateur, Winston Churchill. Soon the noble German Navy would blow us from the sea.

I listened, unwilling to stop the words that condemned this swine out of his own mouth. For he had been guilty of gross treachery to the country that had given him a living; he and countless others I met in Germany had eaten our bread and salt for from ten to twenty-five years. This one crime alone is sufficient to put these people beyond the pale of our hospitality in the future.

Among our prisoners was one, a private in the Royal Fusiliers. He had a compound fracture of the humerus, and the arm had been set in an improper way. Vicious union had taken place and, twice, it had to be broken again. Each morning he would go to the German doctor. I heard the stifled English shouts and walked out to meet him. He was pale and sweaty. "What have they been doing to you?" I asked. "They've been a progging of my arm again," he complained. Now there were two large unhealed wounds in the arm, and it was clear there was dead bone inside. Daily probing is a most unsurgical procedure; it can tell one nothing one did not know before; it is exquisitely painful and introduces fresh organisms into the wound.

"What do they tell you?" I asked. "They tell me to go outside and sing 'God save the King.'" Thus did the German doctor carry on his little bit of war behind the lines.

Suddenly one morning we were hastily summoned to the Kommandatur, and ordered to prepare, immediately, for a journey to Sennelager near Paderborn.

CHAPTER VII

SENNELAGER BEI PADERBORN

On a dirty, wet day, December 15, 1914, we arrived at Sennelager. A big prisoners' camp with a large military training camp was established there. The awkward recruits from the farms and towns of Westphalia were here collected and licked into shape. There were advantages in the combination of camp and barrack; on the one hand, the sight and presence of so many troops intimidated the prisoners; on the other the daily exhibition of the captives that spelt their fellow soldiers' prowess, on the Western front, encouraged the young idea. The whole was under the command of General Roodewald. He was lame, halt, blind of one eye, and frequently a lunatic. But he was a veteran of the war of '70. He hated the English with the impotent fury of the old man, who, though himself far too old to go to the trenches, never tires of declaiming upon the privilege the young

soldier has in going to the trenches in Flanders to shed his blood for the glory of the Fatherland. Now the young recruit in these days had lost quite a bit of his enthusiasm, as the weeks drew closer and his class would be soon called up. Early in the war, when he thought everything would be over in a few months, and before his own class could be possibly called up, the young German had the courage of seven lions. But after his course of training he found that the idea of shedding his blood for the glory of the Fatherland, in the cold, damp trenches of Flanders, had ceased to attract him. Therefore the "blood and fury" speeches of the General on his departure for the accursed "*Krieg*" left the young soldier cold.

I saw none of the savage brutality to recruits of which I had so often heard, in my view of the German barracks system. Infinitely patient, they took their little squads of wide-eyed raw recruits; never more than six men at a time for the first few days. They taught them to move their wrists, how to bend the knee, how nature intended the ankle joint to work. We saw it all and very good it was. Later, in platoons of half-companies, they would be out, on the moors or in the barrack squares, learning squad

drill, morning, noon and night. Sham fights in the darkness, machine-gun courses; steadily, remorselessly it went on. They lived in the big barrack in which four of us medical officers had a room, and very civil and quiet and well-behaved they were. There were no remarks as we passed them on the stairs, politely making way for us. Often it made us wonder what there could be in the Prussian machine that made these simple boys the savages they became.

Our first impressions of Sennelager were most depressing. We saw it, walking from the Kommandantur, where we were searched, and there I lost all my medical notes. In vain I protested against the loss of notes made on 1,300 English, French, German, Belgian wounded, that I personally had seen. They contained, I was most gravely informed, evidence of the most damning nature of the use of dum-dum bullets by the English. Nor did I ever see the records of my work again. But what were these dejected beings we met along the road inside the camp? Tall, lean, hungry men in ragged khaki tunics with wisps of thin cotton shirts peeping from the rents in the ragged trousers; with blue hands and red noses, and white, waxy cheeks; wistful eyes; hair long and

unkempt, the beards of months upon their chins; hatless, save for skull caps made from the lining of khaki pockets. They wore no boots, but large wooden sabots, full of straw, water and the snow that covered the ground. Wearily they dragged one clumsy sabot after another. What breed of vagabond was this that masqueraded in torn and ragged but still unmistakably British khaki? "Who are you?" I said to a small group that were hanging round the canteen: the room that German soldiers used for meals and beer and songs. "First Life Guards, sir!" "And you?" "First Battalion Gordon Highlanders!" "And you?" "Third Grenadier Guards, sir!" What hell was this that turned such men into these scarecrows? Hopeless, helpless, friendless; most of them wounded, all of them starving, every man lousy; many dragging crippled limbs behind them on sticks or home-made crutches. They lived in wooden huts—long low buildings with a stove at each end; lying on the floor on straw palliasses that were alive with vermin. Two hundred to a room that should have held forty. Moisture dripped from the roofs all day and night, upon the palliasses and the blankets that covered the floor. They were officially called blankets, but they were made

of flannelette, one very thin, the other not so thin, and both unspeakable. Strings stretched across the room bore the garments that had been their shirts. The huts were full of the smell of frowsty humanity. Their dining-table the floor, a bowl and spoon their only tableware; for forks and knives were forbidden lest they should attack their gaolers. The bowl did duty for food and for washing as well. The only water supply for washing a stream that wandered through the camp. This brook contained sewage and filth, but all day long they washed their clothes to kill the lice. Naturally inclined to be clean, there were some of our men who stripped and washed in the stream every morning through that bitter Westphalian winter. The regulation greyback woollen shirt had long ago succumbed to the frequent washings, and had been replaced by a thin cotton shirt; some even had no shirt at all. They had no drawers, no undervests, no socks; bits of putties and rags were wrapped around their feet. The non-commissioned officers were better off. They had slightly more food; they had small messes to themselves; they did not have to go on fatigue, and they could keep their clothes and boots and great-coats. But they were not allowed to have

any executive authority. N.C.O.'s of other nationalities, French and Belgian, were allowed some degree of control over their men; but the English were suspect; they might have raised rebellion in the camp.

There were only 300 overcoats. When we protested we were told that some sold their coats. "What did they sell them for?" we asked. "Bread, and in some cases cigarettes," was the reply.

Food was given out at 6 a.m., 12 o'clock midday, and 6 p.m. At 6 a.m. a bowl of artificial coffee; it was black and hot, and it smelt; but it was food. Being made from burnt barley or maize, it was certainly devoid of caffeine; there was no danger from it of over-indulgence in stimulants. With this was eaten part of yesterday's ration of bread. At 12 midday came soup, usually of potatoes, cabbage or swedes, sometimes thickened with a little barley. At times shreds of meat were visible. There is no doubt that some meat was put into the big soup cauldrons, but the English were farthest from the kitchen, and the starving French and Belgians had first go at it. It was every man for himself in that camp. Once a week porridge, once a fortnight "roll-mops," half a pickled herring with a little cucumber; two half-

herrings to three men. Very occasionally we had fish soup made from salted herring or cod ; dreadful days these, for the smell alone would drive the men away. Once a week a little cheese. Often horse beans in hot water formed the bill of fare. Daily the ration of bread, 3 ounces each—we measured it—eight men to one half-quartern loaf of black bread. Bread was made of rye, wheat and potato flour, always sour, but always greedily devoured by all our men. It was for this bread that they had sold their greatcoats when any had been sold. Supper varied little from the midday meal. Men on fatigue got one inch of sausage and one extra piece of bread, but their dinner was then postponed until three o'clock in the afternoon.

Fatigue consisted of pushing and pulling large wagons that went to the station to fetch supplies ; but this was a privilege usually kept for the French. Most of our men were told off for six hours' work daily, road making on the moors in snow and water. But many liked the fatigues, for they were in the open air and vastly preferred anything to the smelly camp.

The punishment was of two kinds ; solitary confinement in cells on bread and water, and tying to a post. The first for such a crime as

hesitation to obey the order of a French N.C.O. and any lapse from camp discipline. The second was reserved for minor crimes such as theft of food, an odd potato stolen at mealtime, for instance, or falsification of returns. This latter was a fearful crime, and was committed by the men who returned the number of their mess as 10 whereas it was really 9; one having gone to hospital. The others would have a gargantuan feast, an extra one-tenth share each of bread or horse-bean soup. From two hours up to five hours at a time they were lashed to posts in the camp, their hands tied behind them, their arms encircling the posts that supported the barbed wire. The Westphalian winter was bitterly cold and our men had, in the majority of cases, no underclothes or boots. When they were cut down they were frozen; collapsed from exhaustion and had to be taken to the hut that by courtesy was called the hospital.

There were three separate camps at Sennelager, each holding about 4,000 prisoners, for there were about 10,000 French and Belgian in addition to our men. Each camp was ringed with double barbed wire fences, 14 feet high, enclosing an electric high power wire fence. Fortunately none of the prisoners

suffered from this electrical device, the two chief casualties being the General's dog and a German sentry—a simple countryman who touched the wire with his finger to see if it would work. It did. We were accused by some mysterious process of reasoning of responsibility for his death.

The system of not employing our own N.C.O.'s and giving authority to French N.C.O.'s frequently gave rise to friction. There was no doubt in our minds that the authorities tried to sow dissension between the Allies. One of our men, after a wakeful night spent in scratching, had been awakened in the morning by a kick from the French lance-corporal. Now our men do not invite attentions of this kind from any N.C.O., not even a Frenchman. So our man rose and beat the disturber of his dreams. He was tried for his life for the crime of striking a senior officer who was deputed with authority by the German High Command, and was doing his sentence of seven months' hard labour when I left. Many of the men were tempted, by offers of food and pay of a few pfennig a day, to go to work on the farms, in factories and in mines. They had, in fact, no option, for the invitation to volunteer for such work amounted to a practical threat.

The French were tractable prisoners ; the gentlemen, of whom there were many in the camp as private soldiers, were delightful and charming and very kind to our men. The rest of the French prisoners made the best of a bad job. The General himself would stop on the road and speak to a crippled Frenchman—" Misguided man," he would say, " I'm sorry for you. You've given your money to Russia and your men to England, now you've lost both."

The Belgians were clever, many of them knew German and filled minor posts in the camp. They were also very good to our men. The Belgian soldiers were very clever in essaying attempts at escape. For this they were rewarded with a special uniform, a dark coat with one light blue sleeve and one red sleeve, a cap half blue, half red. This garb made them always conspicuous.

German authority always discriminated against our men in every way ; in the matter of food, in the question of clothing, in the method and manner of punishment. A very few, French and Belgians only, could get underclothing from the Germans during the winter of 1914–1915.

In Sennelager was confined with us an Army Chaplain, who remained behind at

Butry with the doctor and the wounded. He had given up his horse, in the Retreat, to a dismounted officer, and stayed where he could be of most service. Much he endured during his ministrations among our soldiers, both there and in the railway trucks with wounded men on their way to Germany. In Sennelager he was allowed a certain degree of liberty; he might visit the various camps and, with an escort, be allowed out of the main prisoners' laager to go to the neighbouring town. He was invaluable to all, for he bought condensed milk, eggs and oatmeal for the bad cases. Our men in hospital owed very much indeed to him for the recovery they made. To fall seriously ill in such a place was almost surely to die unless nourishing food could be supplied. There was no special hospital food to be obtained from the Germans.

The sanitary conditions of the camp were appalling. There was no attempt made to enforce sanitary discipline among prisoners; the laws of hygiene were deliberately disregarded. The sewage of the camp was taken away in leaky iron tubs, and deposited within a hundred yards of the stream above the camp. Now this sewage contained infectious material of typhoid, bacillary dysentery,

tropical dysentery, and many other diseases. It percolated into the water of the stream which was the sole supply of water for washing clothes, persons, or the food bowls. The men themselves suffered from skin diseases due to the irritation of lice and itch ; we had sulphur ointment for the latter diseases, and men could be occasionally marched down to a bath, but this was of little avail when there were no facilities for killing lice and other vermin in clothing or in the palliasses. We medical men protested again and again, without effect. At one time one of our medical officers drew up an excellent working scheme to destroy lice, and for a moment it was provisionally adopted, only to be discarded later on. Nothing was done to replace this method of clearing the camp of vermin, nor was any other arrangement instituted.

The camp was swept by almost every infectious disease ; scarlet fever, pneumonia, typhoid, dysentery of both kinds, cerebro-spinal-meningitis, mumps, and measles. The vast majority of these diseases were due to neglect of sanitary and hygienic precautions. There were also a number of cases of beriberi ; afterwards I learnt that nearly every prisoners' camp in Germany suffered from

this disease. But the outbreak of this disease was almost entirely due to accident; it was due to the rice that formed a good part of the diet, but chiefly to the conditions under which the food was prepared. All food was cooked by superheated steam, in huge boilers; this method destroyed the essential vital substances in the vegetables and beri-beri resulted.

The German medical staff of the hospital consisted of Eberkind, the head doctor, an incapable and ignorant administrator; the surgeon, an alcoholic Pole, either indifferent to, or unfamiliar with the principles of surgery. The physician was a Jew with no force of character and fearful of contracting infectious diseases, who was yet careful in the diagnosis and treatment of our sick men. As far as he was able, he tried to help, but being devoid of moral courage, his efforts did not carry him very far. The assistant physician was a Belgian, the son of the Belgian Consul in a neighbouring town. Born and bred and educated in Germany he was in every respect and sentiment a German, yet he came under suspicion, and was alternately employed as a doctor or interned in a Belgian civilian camp. Nevertheless he was keen and able in his work, and could be trusted to deal reasonably

with our sick. It was to these two men, the Jew and the Belgian, that we trusted the care of the English on our departure, and we felt sure that they would give them all the attention in their power. In addition to these there were four German medical students, truculent, and not well grounded in their work. Their chief function was to overlook the work of the prisoners' medical officers, Russian, French and British, and to obstruct, as far as possible, our treatment. Daily we went down to the hospital to see the English morning sick, two of us to see the surgical, two to see the medical cases. All our work was of the most elementary character, we were not allowed to do any surgical operations or to undertake any responsible duty. We were only allowed to give certain harmless stock medicines; we were not allowed to admit into hospital or to vary the diet of patients. All this was done by our official superiors, the German doctors and medical students.

One morning, at sick parade, we noticed a very great increase among the sick, and all were from the Irish regiments. We were furious at what we thought was an attempt to evade fatigues on so large a scale. We were always ready, as medical officers, to assist

men who were really unfit to escape fatigue. Then an N.C.O. came up to us and said that the men wanted to ask our advice. Late last evening, it appeared, an order had come out that all Irish Roman Catholics should parade in a big empty hut in the camp. There they were addressed by an Irish-American; he declared that the great heart of noble Germany bled for the men who were forced to fight for brutal England. The High German Government had, therefore, decreed that all Irish Roman Catholic soldiers were to be removed to a camp at Limburg; there they would be better fed and better clothed, and have cigarettes, and in that paradise there would be no fatigues. But the men reported this to the N.C.O.'s and came to see us about it. We, of course, told them that they had to go, it was an order, and there was no choice. But we warned them against any attempt to suborn their allegiance, and we advised the N.C.O.'s to declare their Irish blood and Roman Catholicism in order to accompany their men. Now very many N.C.O.'s in Irish regiments are not Irish, nor are they Roman Catholics; but many of them made the declaration and were included. On my way back to England from Germany I met my old Sergeant, a native of Ireland, Irishman

and a Protestant, and his history of their subsequent treatment at Limburg was interesting.

They really did get good food and clothes and boots, neither were there any fatigues; and though they were sounded by Irish-Americans, there were not more than 30 out of 2,500 who joined the enemy, and these could be told by the obvious favour shown them.

Then the story of the Munster Fusiliers was told to me by one of their N.C.O.'s. How at the end of the day at Le Cateau they were left behind to cover the retreat of their brigade. At night the wounded and unwounded prisoners were removed to a French château and well treated; their officers were taken from them. In the morning a General officer addressed them, in English; they knew him for a General by his uniform and his staff. He began his speech: "England hates Germany, England hates the Irish, therefore Germany loves the Irish." He had decided, he explained, to keep the Irish at that château, and to treat them well. And they were well looked after, fed on loot from French houses, cognac and red wine. On the tenth day the General returned; he announced the fall of Paris and the capture of the English Expeditionary Force,

and repeating the usual formula, that the great heart of noble Germany bled for the sufferings of Ireland under the brutal heel of England, assured them of his benevolent intentions. The German army, it was explained, would be honoured to be brigaded with such men ; for did not the whole world ring with stories of the bravery of Irish soldiers ? He would not ask them to fight against the English reinforcements ; for they might then be fighting against their brothers, forced to enlist in England's army. But if they would join the legions of victorious Hindenburg, he would be delighted. The Munster Fusiliers merely said: "Send us to join the English prisoners." Then the General turned and cursed them for ungrateful brutes. And so I found this Irish regiment at Sennelager when I arrived.

The Germans tried the same methods with the Mohammedans at Sennelager ; all but a few who, frightened, denied that they were followers of Islam were sent away: first to a camp near Berlin, then in accordance with the German promise, to Turkey. These men were all French Colonial soldiers, and from all that they said it was certain that they would not fight against France, no matter how great the force or the temptation.

No German women were ever allowed to come near the officers' or men's camps, save only on Sunday afternoons, when they came to see the wild-beast show from the other side of the wire. But the medical officers in some camps went to meals at a canteen in which German women were serving. Occasionally these young women would be inclined to be friendly, not exhibiting the spite which in earlier days they showed towards us. In one camp, we may call it Charlemagneburg, four medical officers used to go to meals at a canteen frequented by German soldiers. The young lady there took a violent fancy to one of the English prisoners. She had lost her "Schatz" in the war and was ready to replace him, even by one of the hated English! Now this English doctor was round and plump and of a cheerful brightness, so that he filled the gentle Fräulein's requirements in the matter of figure. She hated, she always said, the lean Englishman. He used to talk German to her; she would come to the garden of the hospital in the evening to continue the conversation. One day she asked him, would he like to escape? She would bring him civilian clothes the next night and they would go off together to her father's farm that lay close to the Dutch frontier. Once there, she

knew the smugglers' paths across the border, she was more than familiar with the contrabander's trade. What was the good of living so near the frontier, if they did not make use of it? She would take him to Holland and go with him to England. Now, the fellow longed to get away from Germany. For months he had given up hope, and now, here at hand, was the chance of a lifetime. But what a penalty the girl would have to pay! Never again could she come back to Germany. He had his own matrimonial arrangements planned long ago. He could not marry her, and being a very white and perfect knight, he could make no other proposal. So he reluctantly refused. But she would not believe and piqued at his refusal, said that he was afraid. That was not his case by any manner of means, for he got away in uniform, alone the next night, only to be captured on a bridge that crossed the river. When I got to know this man, I learnt how much escape from prison meant to him, and I wondered whether there was any German who would hesitate for one moment to secure his own release, no matter what the cost might be to an English girl who might be prepared to help him.

There were a very large number of surgical cases, the most urgent, perhaps, the large

class of nerve injuries with consequent paralysis of muscles. We could not persuade the surgeon to treat them properly or to allow us to undertake the necessary massage or electrical treatment, or even to send them to the big hospital in Paderborn, where they might have received surgical attention. The camp hospital consisted of six rooms, the cubic capacity of each being sufficient for fifteen or twenty patients ; into every one of these rooms were crowded at least seventy men suffering from every variety of infectious disease. There was one ward set aside for scarlet fever cases, but no attempt was made to secure proper isolation. Each room was in charge of Red Cross orderlies of various nationalities under the command of an under-officer. In these wards the sick and wounded lay on straw palliasses placed on iron beds, double-decked, one above the other. The most unsuitable cases were grouped together. Acute pneumonia cases and cases of pulmonary tuberculosis lay, side by side, and coughed in each other's faces. It was only to be expected that the resolving cases of pneumonia developed tuberculosis of the lungs, and the tuberculosis cases pneumonia. Both these diseases in a very bad form were very common.

In the hospital there were no sanitary conveniences, no nursing utensils of any kind; men who were actually ill had to go 50 yards in the coldest weather to the latrines. There was only one clinical thermometer in the whole camp; this was passed indiscriminately from mouth to mouth without any attempt at disinfection. One large bucket in the corner of each room was the only sanitary article. Our men had to bring their lousy blankets with them from the camps and place them on still more verminous palliasses in the hospital; they slept and were nursed in their clothes. There was no hospital linen whatever, not one sheet or shirt or bed-gown or pillow. A man would come into hospital gravely ill with pneumonia, for instance, and pass the whole weeks of his disease in the same shirt, tunic and trousers, with which he had come out to France four months before.

Times without number we would go to see the Chef-Arzt, the head doctor, and politely draw his attention to the high rate of mortality among our men, to the incidence of epidemic diseases. But for our pains we were met with the vulgar order, "Shut your jaws." "Get out."

Feeling that we medical officers could not allow our representations to be so com-

pletely disregarded, we resolved on a protest to higher authority. We were, after all, placed in a position of responsibility under the provisions of the Geneva Convention; no matter how indifferently the Germans treated that international agreement, we were still bound by it. We were not, and would not, in any circumstances whatever, be considered to be prisoners of war. Medical officers are exempt from that! even though they may have to submit to the same treatment that is meted out to other prisoners. What would we have to say to the relatives of our men when we got home and the question was asked, "And what were you doing all this time to acquiesce in these barbarities?"

Now, concerted action spells mutiny under German martial law, and though not, technically, prisoners of war we were still amenable to its provisions. I therefore drew up a comprehensive report on the deplorable death rate among the British prisoners, and brought forward evidence to show that it was directly due to the disregard of sanitary conditions, the lack of hospital equipment, the feeding of the sick and the appallingly verminous condition of our men. The report predicted outbreaks of typhus fever and

cerebro-spinal-meningitis, arising from lice and the lack of hygienic observances. Finally the letter asked for an inspector to be sent from Münster, the official headquarters of the Prisoners of War Department, to enquire into the truth of all these charges. I then put it forward, in the proper form, to the Chef-Arzt for transmission.

It should be remembered that, as far as medical and surgical knowledge was concerned, one of us held the Diploma of Public Health of London and was conversant with the whole realm of modern sanitation and hygiene. This officer was also an authority on tropical diseases, such as malaria, dysentery, and beri-beri. Of knowledge of these special diseases the German doctors, never having been abroad or having the opportunity of becoming acquainted with their conditions, were absolutely ignorant. The rest of us were better qualified to give opinions in other medical and surgical matters than the official German doctors.

The report was presented; an outburst of fury and invective followed. Very politely I requested that it should be forwarded. Threats of court martial and condign punishment. After the lapse of a few days it was clear that my request had not been

granted. I made another formal demand, and they, knowing that I might use the civil post office, if they continued to refuse the request that I was entitled by my office to make, finally forwarded it, after a most insulting message had been conveyed to me by one of our orderlies who spoke German fluently. Two weeks later came the answer; but not as I expected. A telegram came from Berlin. I was to be sent to prison in the men's camp. No inquiry; no trial deemed necessary; for I had been guilty of the impertinence of criticising German medical methods. Then, of course, once German High Headquarters had pronounced its verdict, the varnish was off the Hun and we saw him at his worst. Previously in a rather anomalous position, a prisoner in fact, yet not technically a prisoner, I had enjoyed in hospital the very slight measure of respect that is given by German hospital orderlies to prisoners even when they are acting as medical officers. Kindermann, the lazarette inspector, an under-officer, had apparently been waiting for this chance. He yelled and bellowed and swore at me; using all the filthy language he had picked up in the gutters of Düsseldorf where he had been the leader of the municipal band before the

war. All the orderlies, the passing soldiers, the German recruits (the patients even leapt from their beds), collected to see so interesting a spectacle. The German soldiers applauded; the prisoners were half-frightened and wholly indignant. Furious, I told him what I thought of him, and threatened to report him to the General. Hauled off by sentries with fixed bayonets I was put with French and Belgian soldiers in a hut. Here for three weeks, incredibly lousy, I lived on the men's food and water, and I suffered many things at the hands of the German soldier who was in charge of the hut. Every conceivable insult, indignity, and humiliation were my share. But the experience was quite worth while. I had never got so close to our men as I did on that occasion. Casual, in the matter of saluting before, only to be expected in the state of want and degradation to which they had been brought by prison life, they were now immaculate in every outward and visible attitude of respect they offered me. Little presents would be laid on my blanket while I was out, bits of cheese, a sardine wrapped in paper, or half a herring. I would cheerfully have done three months for such evidences of kindly feeling. The Germans were

furious at their failure to humiliate me in the eyes of our men. The sentry, hot with anger, threatened any who approached me. The French and Belgians were incredibly kind. I made friendships among those men that I shall always cherish. A boy in the K.O.S.B. who had been in Major Chandos Leigh's Company at Mons, crept under the wire at night to steal for me, at great personal risk, some planks from a building near by. A low bed was made and my blanket raised a little above the louse runs on the floor. My servant would crawl in at night, and to the hut he brought my first parcel from home. We had a tremendous supper that night.

In February came the first parcels of food and clothes from friends in England, and the change in the condition of the men was wonderful; almost incredible. Realising that they had not been forgotten; more from the tonic effect of remembrance than from the food received, though the result of English food was priceless, they recovered their self-respect. Proud, their hunger half-satisfied for one or two days by the English food, they gained new heart and spirit and cared nothing for the German rule. Obedient to regulations, they showed an amazing

cheerfulness in captivity. The loud talk of men, now half-fed after months of starvation, echoed through the huts at night. Like the children of Israel in Babylon they had in the past hung their harps on the willows and sat down by strange waters; and some of them had wept. But now their voices were raised in story, argument and song, where before there had been nothing but dumb misery. They did not mind now if the war lasted three years more, provided that we won.

Two bitter pills the German had to swallow. He could not sow dissension among the Allies and he could no longer break their spirit. Our men would quarrel with the French, would fight with them, would make up rhymes about them, but there was never bad feeling.

I say, in all earnestness, that, with very few exceptions, all the Germans in the camp were harsh and cruel to our men. More particularly those who had lived, before the war, in England from fifteen to twenty years; had married English women and had families, then and now at liberty in England, and enjoying the free life of the country their men were betraying. They knew all Tommy's tricks and his language,

and they used the knowledge, gained in England, to bring these Englishmen to punishment. So lacking in any moral courage were they, that they dared not run the risk of being considered to be pro-English. So they, the more, abused us and were heavy upon us to prove the completeness of their German sympathies.

The most contemptible trait that Germans show is the lack of moral courage; these signs of moral cowardice. I do not believe there is one man in Germany, of fighting age, who dares to call his soul his own. There is not one whose naturally simple and kindly feelings are not overwhelmed by the official orders to be brutal. Only surreptitiously, when they were certain they were not observed, would they unbend and be their natural selves. One mean hound in particular, the under-commandant of one of the camps, and later, in charge of Stohmüller Camp, was known to have an English wife and six children in England; yet in this camp there were always many of our men tied to stakes all through the winter. Under the guise of assisting our English chaplain, also a prisoner, in his services, this man would sometimes ingratiate himself with some of us; all the time we felt he was trying

to make his position in England secure after the war.

The Prussian military machine is a relentlessly efficient thing; but I am not in agreement with the commonly expressed opinion of my countrymen with regard to it. The Prussian military domination must be broken, but we must in a way respect the authors of this rule. A Prussian may fear God and the Kaiser, but he does not fear anything else; he is not afraid of us or of any of his enemies, and that is why he does not kill prisoners. But the Saxons, the Würtemburgers and, especially, the Bavarians, they are the contemptible people in Germany. They are bound to us by many ties, and yet they dare not show any consideration to our men made captives. They fear their prisoners; they fear to have a disarmed man behind them. Most of the killing of prisoners has been done by these people, and we should not forget it. The quality of mercy is only found in brave men. Fear and hate go hand in hand, and savagery attends both. That is why the Bavarian kills his prisoners; he is nervously afraid that the wounded captive behind him may have a bomb concealed. I have many times been thankful that I was taken prisoner by Prus-

sians, by men of a certain age, and not by the young officer who kills to show his equanimity in the face of danger. Often, the worst instances of butchery of stretcher-bearers and other unarmed prisoners may be put to the credit of the young officer of Bavarian, Würtemburgian or Saxon troops.

Malingering was always in the official German eye; every prisoner was a malingerer until he died or in other ways proved his illness. The diet in the hospital or convalescent hut was based on this principle. Diarrhœa and dysentery diseases, the recognition of which was much dependent on prisoners' statements, were always treated with suspicion. For the first twenty-four hours rice water only was given; afterwards water with a little rice. When the prisoner in sheer hunger and desperation, declared his recovery, he was sent back to the heaviest fatigue in the bitterest weather. Thus there was much concealment of disease, the worst possible condition for the propagation of epidemics; starving men preferred the horse-bean or potato soup and black bread with dysentery to rice water in hospital and a possible cure.

When, at last, the expected epidemic of cerebro-spinal-meningitis broke out among

our men and the French, our opinions were overridden, and it was officially termed "influenza of the head." When the rash broke out, the dislike to light and the coma developed, the diagnosis was changed—"measles with meningial symptoms"—was the official verdict. From the beginning we urged lumbar puncture to examine the cerebro-spinal fluid. *Streng verboten!* But *verboten* or not, one night we did this operation on one of our men and found the tell-tale cloudy fluid, we strained and found the intracellular diplococcus. Then we took the matter up again with the Chef-Arzt. "Disobedience of orders!" he roared. But we were responsible medical men, we urged. Even then he tried to hedge; but the evidence was overwhelming and cases of "meningial measles" still poured in. Then when the worst was done, and the patients had infected all their companions, the huts were wired in, but no sanitary measures instituted beyond that. Now there was at that time only one proved and successful treatment, the injection of Flexner's serum into the spinal canal. But they would not let us have it. There was, we were told, a German preparation, a vaccine, a different thing but quite as good; great and noble Germany

did not have to go to America to learn anything. The untried German vaccine failed and the men were doomed to die for the crime of not reacting to official German preparations.

As could only be expected, the type of soldier employed as a sentry in prison camps was often so afraid of his charges that he fired at them for any and every breach of discipline. If he had the least reason to believe that a prisoner or prisoners were behaving in a suspicious manner he would shoot. One night a poor Frenchman came out of his hut to go to the latrine ; challenged very loudly by the sentry, he halted ; then becoming frightened, he turned and went back to his hut ; but an under-officer, then on his rounds, pulled out his revolver and shot the Frenchman dead.

There were also at Sennelager about 150 Grimsby fishermen ; taken with their catches of fish in the early days of the war, they were nevertheless treated as mine-layers. Their heads and beards half shaven they were dressed in particoloured clothes, half red, half blue, a kind of convict dress. Brought, after suffering many things to Sennelager, they were treated in all respects as prisoners-of-war, with the one exception that they

did not do heavy fatigues. One of them was standing in a queue before the camp kitchen holding out his tin bowl for the midday soup. Whether his smoking of a cigarette was the pretext, or whether the men were not quiet while waiting for their food will not be known. He, however, was standing quite quietly, when the German sentry hit him over the back of the head with the butt end of his rifle. He dropped and was taken to the hospital. Here he developed epileptiform fits, but in spite of that was sent on fatigue to cut wood. When I arrived two months later he was having from ten to fifteen fits a day, and examination of his skull showed a depressed fracture, and that an operation which should have been performed long ago was urgently needed. He was sent away to Paderborn where he disappeared from our knowledge.

Now, about February, 1915, the first German wounded arrived from England, unfit for further service; they brought stories of good treatment and good food. Their only complaint was that they had no black bread and no German sausage. I asked one of our head doctors one day, in the course of conversation, whether the return of these men and their report could not be used to

ameliorate the condition of our prisoners. "No," he said, "of course the English treated our German prisoners well, they are afraid of the avenging wrath of German Michael if they did otherwise!"

Among the German recruits who came to be trained at Sennelager was a young battalion of Jaegers, well-behaved and well-educated young men. The Jaeger is proud of his corps and draws the same distinction between it and the ordinary infantry regiment as the Rifle Brigade does in England. After six weeks' training with us they left—just before Christmas—for the front, full of enthusiasm. Six weeks later they were back again, the remains of the battalion; 200 out of 1,100 who had left us. No more songs now! They had been up against the English and had done well; and they brought back with them packets of Woodbine cigarettes that our men in the trenches had presented; one packet for each dead Englishman buried. This occurred in the days of an informal Christmas truce. They were soldiers and good soldiers too; not of the stay-well-behind-the-lines-kind, and they bore no animus against our men.

The difference between a German regiment that has been to the trenches and one that

is in training is very marked. The tried soldier is quiet, he has no inclination to jeer at prisoners, his singing days are over. The recruit, however, sings all the time; on the march he is ordered to sing. One can hear the sergeant-major shouting "*Singen Sie.*" And their songs are of simple, homely subjects as a rule; of home, of peace, of quiet farms, of golden harvests. There are, of course, the more arrogant songs like "Deutschland über Alles" and the "Wacht am Rhein." But on the whole one cannot fail to be struck with the quality of the verses. German songs are melodious, simple, and speak of noble subjects. The French songs, barring the "Marseillaise," are trifling and often vulgar; but our English songs are futile: American rag-time and the odious "Tipperary." If songs be a test of national character, then the German has this much to his credit.

The efforts made by the authorities to impress prisoners with the inexhaustible supply of men were childish but amusing. Each day they would march the training battalion by different roads and in different uniforms through the camp; it appeared in full marching order, in light marching order without the helmet, in linen fatigue

dress ; but it was always the same battalion ; and the battalion sang loudly as it passed through the camp. The transport and the machine guns too, came by different roads, but it was the same transport and the same machine guns. We found that out, for the French pasted bits of white paper on the hubs of the wheels. Nor could the Germans understand the reason for the jeering laughter that greeted the exhibition of their well-known wagons. It was all a part of German method ; orderly, well-reasoned out. For might it not be that the prisoners would write home of these endless soldiers, and thereby bring their recalcitrant Governments to heel ? The censor would see to it that no such reference would be erased from French or English letters.

Then on March 6, 1915, came orders for me. I was released from prison and taken to Güetersloh, an officers' camp, about twenty miles away.

CHAPTER VIII

GUETERSLOH

On the outskirts of this little town, lying almost at the foot of the Teutoburger Wald, and chiefly renowned for its beer and sausages, is a half-finished lunatic asylum. There, within a high barbed-wire fence, is an officers' prisoners camp, containing nearly 1,000 officers in all; about 400 Russian, 450 French, 75 Belgians and 60 English. The Russians, contrary to our preconceived idea of their mastery of tongues, do not speak any language but their own as a rule. They are very well built men, but they show melancholy in their faces. To hear Russians talking together is to think that they are on the point of tears. There is sadness in their music. Far and away the most artistic of all our fellow prisoners, they play every instrument of music, sing very well, are devoted to religious exercises, while some of them painted very well indeed. But they were restless under confinement, more easily depressed

by bad news and most fertile in expedients for escape.

The French were depressed also, for the most part, though there were a number of them who were gay and light-hearted. The French territorial officer, with wife and family and an established business, naturally takes confinement badly. The English on the other hand being less complex and less highly organised, bore their captivity very cheerfully. We are truly the most sane nation in Europe. If there was any insanity in connection with our prison camps in Germany, it was to be found among our gaolers, not among ourselves.

The Belgians were very good friends of ours; were cheerful in a wonderful way, and played our games, and played them very well too. Representatives of all nationalities were mixed together in the separate houses that formed this prison. They agreed very well indeed, on the whole. But the French were at times annoyed that the Russian steam roller, as it was called, should roll backwards! The Russians, for their part, felt quite confident that it was the sacrifice of the Warsaw Army that saved Paris; in moments of irritation they would ask if it were true, as the last three months' reports had said,

that the French were still attacking Souchez ! There was a feeling of resentment between the Belgians and the French ; the former felt that their Gallic neighbours had left them in the lurch, while they were holding up the German advance at Liège. But all this was merely superficial ; below the surface lay mutual respect and a determination not to allow the Germans to sow dissension between us.

Strange as it may seem, the English were the most popular of all nationalities in the camp ; not that there was any particular charm about us, but all realised that we, as a country, were fulfilling our share of war ; that we, alone of all the Allies, were a plus quality, had lost no territory, had swept the seas and captured German colonies. The English, though numerically small, were the dominant factor in the camp. This was pain and grief to the Germans, and they retaliated by disciplinary measures, inflicted on all prisoners indiscriminately, but intended to hit the English in particular. The English seemed to initiate everything ; the games, the tea in the afternoon, the international tea parties that cemented friendships and smoothed away misunderstandings, the regulations for the use of the baths, the physical

exercises, the right that every Englishman had to keep his window open at night, regardless of the shivers of his Allies. But the English were all so cheerful and so sane. To be depressed or melancholic was to play into the enemies' hands. In our casual, irresponsible way, we seemed to instil confidence into our fellow prisoners. It was pure selfishness; and in many ways we could understand how abominably offensive we, as a nation, could be in other circumstances. The English never indulged in pointless speculations as to the probable duration of the war. We always maintained that it would be a long war; and that we must make the best of it. Not that we knew for certain whether the war would be short or long. But we did know that the short war was the German war, that all Germany wanted this war to finish, that the German soldiers hated the idea of another winter campaign. Our attitude caused alarm and consternation among the German sentries. "Why so permanent a tennis court is it that you construct; it should for years last?' was the very frequent question of soldiers and sentries about the German camp. "Oh, that's all right; we shall want it for next winter, the summer following and the winter

after that," we would carelessly reply! Though they hated us, yet they believed us in their hearts, and a settled gloom filled their faces. If what the hated English said was true, there would be another winter in the trenches. Hans and Fritz had, up till now, successfully dodged the obligation of fighting, and found that the less dangerous task of guarding prisoners amply fulfilled their military aspirations. Oh! dread thought! They would not be able to evade active service much longer. The rheumatism, the loose cartilage in the knee, the weak heart could not be expected indefinitely to deceive the doctors, and their turn would come. For the average German soldier hates war; the last thing in the world he wants to do is to go to the trenches. He was comfortable, married, and his job was good before the war. On every side the universal question to us was as to the probable termination of this dreadful struggle. Not that this prevented them from making excellent soldiers when they did eventually get to the trenches. Always they questioned us, "How was it that the Allies, after being so decisively beaten, did not seem to realise it?" Not that they thought that official Government reports were wrong; they were always right. Did they not put satis-

fying postscripts to the disquieting bulletins, such as, "The English report is clearly a lie; and is intended to bolster up the failing courage of our chief enemy. Reference to the official report of German High Headquarters will show how much truth there is in this lying statement?" It was the English, the stiff-necked race that hid behind the sheltering strip of sea, who were the object of their hate; the English merchant who did not fight himself and still carried on his business. Ten thousand devils! how high the prices obtained! How the freights were rising! How rich their fat rival was getting! Sitting in comfort on his English office stool, while the German merchant, in the trenches or looking after prisoners, nightly contemplated his ruined business. How they hated us! In impotent rage they filled their papers with articles against England, the traitors who fought with Frenchmen and Russians, and kept business going as usual. The English merchant was the chief object of hate; no wonder the submarine was so popular.

But with all this hatred concentrated upon England, even the Germans showed a certain degree of respect for us in a way. We always obeyed reasonable orders; we were never late for parade. We would get the same

punishment as other prisoners, but it was seldom the necessity arose in our case. On one occasion some of the French and Russians came late for parade; they had apparently gone to sleep, and we were all kept waiting for twenty minutes on the sand of the parade ground. The Commandant was angry, and gave vocal expression to his rage; his displeasure was conveyed to the under-officers, they in turn visited it upon the prisoners; but even that did not produce the sleeping Russians. Now, the English were always placed in the rear of the other companies, and their inspection took place last of all the prisoners, as if to show them their proper place in the estimation of their gaolers. Cigarettes were lighted by some of us; our Allies, also tired of waiting, copied our example. A perfect crescendo of yells and barks issued from the Commandant; French and Russians were hauled up before him and summarily given three days in prison for daring to smoke on parade. But our treatment was different. The interpreter came down to us saying that the Commandant had asked him whether he thought that the English officers were smoking. "I told him," said the interpreter, "that I was sure that British officers never smoked on parade!"

All the winter and spring, both at Sennelager and Güetersloh, *The Continental Times*, a vile rag printed first in English, subsequently in Russian as well, was published free, and distributed to the prisoners. It purported to be a neutral newspaper published for the benefit of Americans in Europe. Every page was filled with extracts from speeches and writings of Ramsay Macdonald, Philip Snowden, Roger Casement and a certain coterie of dons at Cambridge. Houston Stewart Chamberlain, too, wrote of the triumph of German culture and the degeneracy of the country that had given him birth. Much ingenuity was displayed in publishing the lie that contained a grain of truth. It was, of course, obviously a German Government paper, intended to impress and deceive neutrals and depress prisoners. If only one proof were wanted, it was in the tiny column of advertisements. It was clear that the paper was subsidized; for, in Germany, the advertisements had to pay for the increased cost of paper.

The Russians in Güetersloh made a well-planned and organised attempt at escape. Their leader was a very able officer, speaking German fluently. Long grey Russian coats were cut down and altered to resemble

German tunics; boots, caps and equipment were mysteriously obtained. One wet February evening a file of German soldiers, under an officer, marched across the parade ground to the prison gate. The sentry on duty at the gate presented arms, and the little detachment passed through. The officer turned and cursed the sentry for his slackness in saluting. That was sufficient, all doubt faded from the sentry's mind; none but a German officer would curse a soldier with such a flow of language. Better not report it, thought the sentry, so he said no word about it when the relief came. That night, seven little bundles of clothes in seven little beds. Not strange that they should have their heads covered; so many Russians sleep like that! The house porter made his rounds, satisfied that all his charges were safe and in bed. Next morning, sixteen hours later, came discovery. A pandemonium of yells from the Commandant, who, we hoped, would have a fit, he was so purple with rage; the sentry and the house porter immediately were included in the next draft for the trenches. All games for prisoners were stopped; no smoking allowed in the houses; breakfast half an hour earlier. As usual, the punishment fell upon the English. They

all played games; but they, though totally in ignorance of the plot, would cheerfully have suffered ten times the punishment, if these sporting Russians could win their way, in safety, to Holland. There was no pursuit; the Germans are far too wise, and have much better use for their men than to chase prisoners. It is simpler and more effective to stop the roads, the river and canal bridges; anyway, the line of sentries on the frontier would as easily arrest prisoners as German deserters. For over a week these good fellows braved hunger, thirst and cold in February in the wet bushes of the Teutoburger Wald. Within five kilometres of the frontier one fell into a quarry and broke his leg. They must leave him, he insisted, and get on! He would shout and attract attention later on. Given cigarettes and a water bottle he would be quite happy. No! foolish chivalry, making a litter out of branches, will carry the poor wretch the five kilometres to safety. Fatal delay! the precious hour wanted gave the German mounted patrol their chance. Halt! and they fly for their lives into the undergrowth. A fusillade and their leader shot dead; the woods scoured, and the others recaptured and brought back in triumph to Güetersloh.

Solitary confinement for a week or two was their lot, and then a fortress from which there will be no more escaping.

At one camp in Germany—it shall be nameless—the tale is told of another attempt at escape, also engineered by Russians. The sleepy sentries up till now were unconscious of the burrowing moles beneath. Then a new sentry, recovering from a wound, arrived. He was fresh from Flanders, and knew all about mining and countermining. For him the "pick—pick" beneath his sentry box in the silent night only too surely tells the story. The clods of earth finally give way, and a Russian head appears. The first man helps his comrades out to meet a ring of smiling German faces around the hole. Too fertile in expedients for escape are these Russians and English; and the fortress has more visitors until the war is over.

The interpreter in Güetersloh was a snake in the grass; he spoke a mixture of English with American slang. "I know England better than you do," he used to say. We had no doubt of that. The representative of a German business house in England has every excuse to wander round the country; why not make a little pocket money from a grateful Government, when the English are

such fools and spying is so safe? He used to put facetious comments, all in execrable taste, in the letters we received from home, and remarks in the private letters that officers wrote from Güetersloh to their wives at home. Rotund and oleaginous, he appeared to be trying to make his position in England secure again when the war should be over. Jovial and hearty, he was suspected on fairly good grounds of having a Scottish wife in Aberdeen. The most warlike of high knee boots clothed his shapeless nether limbs. Many a letter of ours he destroyed; of that I have only too certain evidence.

He used to get *Punch* and the *Daily Mail*; we might see the cover and the dates, no more. Afterwards, it became clear to the returned prisoners that some of the fits of rage that the Commandant indulged in coincided with the more pointed of *Punch's* excellent jests and cartoons. None of us would wish to limit *Punch's* fun out of consideration for possible reprisals on ourselves. The outbursts of anger were harmless, and we were convinced that the Germans would not hurt us very much for our country's papers. In all the German periodicals there was fury, not at all suppressed, at the English comic papers. We all felt convinced that

Punch hit the Germans on a very sore spot. When a particularly biting picture appeared, "An average Prussian family having its morning hate," we were punished by having our deck chairs confiscated. The English alone had these luxuries, bought at great expense from the German canteen. But the Commandant was very touchy one morning: "I will not have the lazy English prisoners lolling in deck chairs, while the sons of the Fatherland are bleeding in the trenches," he remarked. But those chairs were restored a month later. The higher in rank the German officer, the more loudly he shouts at his men; they have no sense of personal dignity in this matter, and believe in the value of noise to point their orders. How he hated us! and how we cherished that hatred! What a compliment to the English and all that we were doing in the war!

We read all the German papers, and they were full of English news; at least two-thirds of every edition consisted of articles dealing with England, her share in the war, and the speeches of her Ministers. They never omitted anything in the more important speeches made by our responsible Ministers; but they cleverly took the sting out of them for the benefit of the German public, by

contrasting them with the unwise speeches of other English politicians, who might be, as far as the unenlightened German masses were concerned, of as great importance as the Cabinet. Always great attention was paid to all that Lord Kitchener said; his speech on the treatment of English prisoners did more good to us in Germany than any other effort. Whenever a strong speech was made by an English Minister, the *Berliner Tageblatt* would point out in a foot-note, "How can the German people now doubt that England is our chief enemy; that her desire is to humiliate us? Read these English speeches and understand that no peace can be made with this nation of pirates."

But there were other articles in the papers, too, some by "neutral diplomatists," others by "a high authority at the Vatican." These were all feelers to test the pulse of public opinion. They would suggest that Belgium should be restored, that Poland be given up, and wait to see the storm of indignation that followed in the Press. But there was always the conviction, all through Germany, and noted often in the periodicals, that in spite of undoubted German victories, the German armies had never gained the decisive strategical or political victory that

should have been their reward. Often they longed for the genius of a Napoleon to have snatched the ultimate decision of victory. But all their leaders feared to take the gambler's risk and win or lose it all.

Do not let us forget, in the contemplation of our own national mistakes, and their name is legion, that the Germans have made blunders too. One cannot too often insist that the German blunders were epoch-making. Four stand out as decisive in this war. If any one of these four mistakes had not been committed, the war would have been over and France overwhelmed. A defeated France, and as the *Kölnische Zeitung* says, "what better lever could we have to extort concessions from England?" Germany has lost the war four times and she knows it!

Our military methods were a constant puzzle to the authorities in Güetersloh. How could an Irishman, for example, be an officer in the East Kent regiment, an Englishman in the Scottish Borderers? Who ever heard of a Würtemberger an officer in a Prussian battalion?

There was only one punishment in Germany for all offences or crimes, and that was to go to the "Krieg." Was it burglary, bigamy, disobedience of orders, attempts to

malinger, the merest suspicion of being a Socialist, a suggestion that a sentry was kind to prisoners, and the sentence was the same. The fear the elderly Landsturm had of the trenches and the war kept a silent tongue and strict discipline in all men of military age. Only the aged and the women dared to complain ; and they, as in all countries, were most vindictive towards their enemies.

The Iron Cross distinction has, unfortunately, drawn a great deal of spiteful and ungenerous comment in England. It is a very distinguished order, and loses none of its distinction by being somewhat freely bestowed. There are several classes of the Iron Cross ; the higher grades of this decoration are given to successful diplomatists, General Officers in high command and many other hardly worthy people. But the Iron Cross, as we understand it, of the lowest class is given to every soldier of a battalion that distinguishes itself in action. For instance, one whole division of the German Army which stormed the Zwinin Ridge in the Carpathians and turned the hitherto successful advance of the Russian Army into defeat, was decorated. The German Government presumes that every man in Germany does his duty to his country ; but it draws a very fine

distinction between the man who does his duty and risks his life and the man who does his duty, draws big pay and enjoys war bonuses in safety. The latter, I need hardly say, does not get the Iron Cross. But the infantry in the trenches, the men who win the fight and pay the price, they get it, and if they do conspicuously well, they get another Iron Cross of a higher order as well.

The incidence, the bestowal and the multiplicity of our decorations makes one wish for the juster and more simple German plan. The regiment to which I was attached in France has still some officers and men left who were at Mons and have been in all the fighting since. Every such officer, N.C.O. and man has earned a war decoration ten times over ; but their names do not appear in the honours list. In Germany the whole battalion would have been decorated long ago.

There was an officer in Güetersloh who, on occasion, appeared to be quite a human person. He was the head doctor, and had returned from the States to Germany at the outbreak of war ; he had been captured by an English cruiser, while a passenger on an Italian ship, and released in virtue of his age. Placed in medical charge of the camp, he

proved very kind to our officers in an official way; but even he was overwhelmed by the Prussian machine. To me he was good, allowing me to work in the hospital and to look after our own officers. The English medical officers at Güetersloh were not permitted, as a rule, to work in hospital; all the work was done by French, Belgian and Russian doctors under the orders of this German surgeon. But even when we would be talking of America or even of medical subjects, his attitude would undergo a complete change, if his orderlies were near. Naturally an exceedingly kind and able surgeon, he dared not show his character, but had to adopt a formal, official brusqueness in the presence of his men. When we left Güetersloh he dared not come to see us off, as he would have liked to do; but he merely waved his hand behind the curtain of his bedroom window. How such a man, whose loyalty to Germany was above any breath of suspicion, could have allowed his natural courtesy to be over-ridden by the want of moral courage to risk the fear of being misunderstood, it was hard to understand. He was the kindest man I met in the whole of Germany, and he would look after our officers well, when the time came for us doctors to go.

One day, on parade, the interpreter asked whether any of us who had influential friends in England would give him our names. For this strange request we asked his reason. There was none, it was an order given to him; perhaps it was to improve the condition of the prisoners. But we suspected some *Schweinerei;* and determined not to commit ourselves to any course that would enable distinctions of any kind to be made between us. "All British officers," we answered, "have so many influential friends that it would be a matter of difficulty to decide a point like this." In three days' time we discovered the reason. The German Government was determined on reprisals; to punish us for the differentiation in the matter of treatment of submarine men and other sailor prisoners in England. Three of our officers were chosen, two of them being of Guard regiments. They were taken to Cologne, to the military prison, for six weeks, with solitary confinement. No talking; no smoking; half an hour's exercise in the prison yard daily. For the first three days they were devoured by bugs, until the Commandant gave orders to have the cells washed in paraffin. All reprisals on prisoners are futile and contemptible. When we enter

into a competition in reprisals with Germany, one can very soon see who is going to win. Anyhow, it is an unkind thing to visit one's disapproval of certain conditions of warfare on helpless captives. One cannot be too kind to prisoners.

There was always a certain degree of excitement in the camp when a new draft of soldiers went off to the trenches. The Commandant would address them in his best fire-eating style. "How fortunate they! to be about to spill their blood in the trenches! Contrast their position with his! Unable, by the infirmities of age, to die for his country on the fields of glory." He threw his useless sword upon the parade ground, after one such harangue, and forgot all about it when he was lifted on to his white horse. The subsequent procession, with the local brass band, was halted until his senile wits could remember what he had done with it, and an orderly could be despatched to pick it up. But the draft did not in the least want to spill their blood on the field of glory. We knew that very well, for one of them was a house porter in one of the buildings and he implored us to say that the war would soon be over. But we did not like his way with us in the past, and I fear that we could give

him but very cold comfort, pointing out the privileges of being allowed to die a hero's death, much in the same way as did the Commandant. Nor was it long before he found the special Valhalla that is reserved for German warriors. For in ten days' time we heard that he had met death in Flanders.

The German officer in his long blue cloak with its high dark-blue collar, is a very splendid person; even the deficiencies of the Teutonic figure are gracefully hidden beneath its folds. The broad beam, the champagne-bottle thighs are well obscured. His shapeless legs are encased in the most hideous of gaiters. Nothing English or well fitting about them, they are almost cylindrical in shape; for they are not made to fit the wearer, but are manufactured, by order, of the comfortable roominess that sturdy Teuton legs demand. The German officer's cap is lighter and far better made and designed than our own. It is constructed of soft stuff and rises well in the front above the peak. But the German cavalry officer is often found in English gaiters and English field boots, with comfortably wide and shapely riding breeches.

For obvious reasons one cannot write fully of prisoners' camps in Germany whilst the war continues. Much has to be suppressed

for the sake of the unfortunates who remain. We were all convinced that there would be no more reprisals, nor any fear that prisoners would be shot, provided our own Government continued to treat German prisoners, in England, as it does at present. Only if there were great social upheavals, of which we saw no sign whatever, did we think that there was any fear of our parcels of food being confiscated. The German Post Office is the best thing in the country, and after the first three months we felt that nearly every parcel, if well addressed, reached its destination. There is a very genuine pride among the Germans in the excellence of their Post Office; and they would resent, most strongly, any suggestion that they might be guilty of such a contemptible act as to steal parcels of prisoners' food.

Towards the end of June we got news that some, perhaps all, the medical officers were to be returned to England. The other officers in Güetersloh heard of it with mixed feelings; partly of sorrow that they were losing us and their only bulwark in case of illness; partly of great gladness that we were really to be free. They came to see us off when the morning arrived and sat with us at breakfast, but not to eat. We did all the eating. They

were too sad to think of food just then, and their eyes in some cases were not innocent of tears.

On our way we foregathered at Sennelager to collect the N.C.O.'s and men of the R.A.M.C. and to pick up other medical officers. The conditions there were much better than at the time of my departure some four months before. Sanitation and hygiene had so much improved that the fear of epidemic diseases was largely over. Baths were regularly given to our men, and they had ovens in which to bake their clothes. A great cloud had lifted from that unhappy camp. For, far worse than the horrors of war is the daily dodging of the destroying Angel within relentless barbed-wire fences, when death, in the form of typhus or cerebro-spinal-meningitis, claims its daily toll of victims. The fact that no one can get out of the camp ; the knowledge that nothing is being done to relieve ; the helplessness in the fight with lice, the ubiquitous hosts of these dread diseases—all these constitute the terror that stalked through all the prisoners' camps in Germany.

The body louse is not only the host of the special organism that gives rise to typhus, but the eggs themselves are infected and the disease is transmitted to the eggs and three

generations of successive lice. It was easier for the medical officers to bear than for the men, for the doctors had so much work to do; too busy they to worry over the pain in the back of the neck, that was the dread signal. As for the men, they had only to wait the turn that took them raving to the hospital. But biological discoveries are made in prisoners' camps with regard to lice and their destruction. In the sandy soil of Sennelager were many ant heaps, and it was found that the enterprising insects would hunt most carefully through shirts spread out upon the ground near their nests and carry off the louse and her eggs in triumph.

At Sennelager, while looking from the windows of the hut in which we were confined, I noticed strange and unfamiliar badges on the shoulders of passing British soldiers. "Fifth Western Cavalry" was one, and I knew I had met at last the Canadians of whom we had heard so much. A word to the sergeant-major, and all Canadians (and there were eighty of them) were paraded at night in one of the huts. Slipping the sentry, after dark, I went round to see them, and such good fellows they were. All of them had been wounded and most of them gassed as well. They wanted

nothing in this world but a gun and a hole in the barbed-wire fence. They were proud that they had done so well, and told me of their progress through Belgium into Germany. They had not been badly treated on the train; their wounds had been dressed, and food and water given. Kitchener's speech had caused a radical alteration. They told me how the German soldiers came to see the "Red Indians" whom the British Government had brought from Canada; how the Germans found white men and not the skins and features that they had expected. "Why did you take a hand in the war?" the Germans asked; for this unity of our Empire was a thing they could not understand. Even the position of Ireland was, to them, a thing incomprehensible. So the progress of these Canadians into Germany was almost a triumph and bore nothing of disgrace. I looked at every wound and most were healed. Every name was recorded, and it was well that I did so; for from the Canadian Red Cross Society in London I found that only ten per cent. of their men had been reported officially by the German Government. Accordingly seventy names were telegraphed to Ottawa and taken from the list of "missing"—that most dread-

ful of all the columns of casualties in war.

Now we were all surprised that, as we were so soon to leave Germany, no effort was made to tinge this part of our journey with the pleasant recollections that last so long. But the Germans were thorough, even now, and the medical officers were put to sleep in empty huts, on straw mattresses again; in the train, too, we had the well-remembered third-class wooden seats and railway cattle trucks to sit and sleep upon. A most disagreeable under-officer came in charge of us. But at Brussels, how great the difference! After a bowl of good soup, strawberries were brought to us; and, as the ambulance train steamed in, we medical officers found first-class compartments reserved for our comfort. The wounded were put between sheets—poor devils who had not seen a sheet for eleven months! All was immaculate and clean. The frontier reached, the explanation became clear; for the kindly Dutch exclaimed at the sight of officers and men being done so well, in such a train, and in such linen sheets! We did not hesitate, however, to tell them that this was German "eyewash" for neutrals. We reached Flushing at night, and in the morning we were well at sea, watching four

of our destroyers sweeping up to the German coast. Midday saw us at Tilbury, and Home once more.

CHAPTER IX

HOME

CHIEF among the many things that made our return to England dear to us was curiosity as to the state of the country, of which we had heard so much in Germany. How was it with the England that we knew before the war? How had she lasted under the strain?

Was it true, as the *Kölnische Zeitung* said, that all England was covered with contemptible posters calling on men to fight, that there was in the United Kingdom a condition of moral compulsion that was no whit different from the obligatory services in Germany? That every man in England seemed to be busy persuading the other fellow of his duty to enlist; that the politicians were still at the same old game of trying to make political capital out of the nation's difficulties? They declared that every fool had still the right to air his folly, even in such a time of crisis as this. Did the *Hannoverische*, ever the most savage of our

critics, tell the truth when it declared that young men in England, of great possessions, the elder sons of the first families in the land, were evading their duties? They were wearing uniforms, certainly, said this critic, but they were finding sheltered jobs on the Staff or as A.D.C's. to Generals of the various commands. There was no lack, so the paper said, of young men trying to obtain commissions in the Army Service Corps and the Ordnance Corps, in reserve Cavalry Regiments, in the home service battalions. How different, it pointed out, from the attitude of the sons of the great German houses; they always held that great expectations and great possessions entailed great responsibilities in fighting for them. Such young officers, in Germany, were to be found in the infantry in the front line and not in positions of security.

Was the *Berliner Tageblatt* right when it said that the Church of Rome was against the Allies, and had decided in favour of the Central Powers; that the priests and the Sinn Feiners had stopped Irish recruiting, in spite of all that Redmond did or said; that the much-advertised Irish regiments were full of Englishmen; that Scotland had done its duty in the matter of recruiting;

that England was a poor second; that Wales and Ireland were nowhere; that the homes of English chivalry in Elizabethan times, Devon and Cornwall, were dead to the call of duty, but that the East Coast and the North were sound? That in fact "the Teutonic parts of the United Kingdom, the Germanic elements in the population," had a sense of national responsibility, while the Celtic elements had none? They repeated the lap-dog legend. The smart young women of England, they said, had their arms full of Pekinese, but their nurseries empty; the women of the working classes urged their husbands to join the army so that they might enjoy the separation allowances.

These things and countless others we had read in the German Press and we wondered whether any of them were true.

It was not necessary to be home any length of time before one realised that the "intelligent neutral" had been provided with just a sufficient basis on which to build an indictment that allowed his prejudice full play without doing violence to his conscience. For the rest, it was necessary to avoid the pitfalls into which the German critic or his neutral informant had fallen — generalisation from particular

instances. Perhaps there were young men whose object seemed to be to get into the uniform of an officer somehow, and then, this end gained, they appeared to adopt the attitude that they had done all that was necessary. Perhaps the men of England do not wear a sense of duty and obligation on their sleeve; in Germany, we were told, it is a national trait. The *Tages Zeitung* had said that there were many military "nuts" to be seen; too many in the less reputable districts of London late at night. The Provost-Marshal, we had heard, was a very busy man, and the term "temporary gentleman" had become a word of very common reproach. All this, as representing a phase, may be true; but it did not affect the record of the trenches, "nuts" included; and no German who has had experience of the fighting qualities of our men at the front will be tempted to lay much stress on the shortcomings which loomed so large in the eyes of his stay-at-home countrymen.

But there was one splendid effect of the war, that even the *Berliner Tageblatt* drew attention to; it was to be seen on all sides, especially in the casualty lists. The German Press always gave us credit for publishing our losses in full. This war had

drawn all Englishmen from far countries home again. What could point better to the German nation the need for Colonial possessions? How much to be preferred to the non-expansionist policy that had buried so many sons of Germany in the United States! All the black and piebald sheep (and one critic said that degenerate England provided many of these) had come back to the fold in the crisis, many of them now gathered into that great and splendid fold from which there is no straying. The "no-good" Englishman, and I knew him well in Canada, had come home from the ends of the earth to serve, and by his ultimate sacrifice there to expiate the crime of unadaptability.

In the German papers there were learned articles, too, about the future of their race, as to how the nation was to be compensated for the loss of the young and strong males. It was suggested that the State should take care of the children born to unmarried women in the war, provide a weekly pension for the mothers, and a husband out of the casualty lists, in order that no social stigma might remain attached. The increased proportion of male over female children had been noticed, and was expected to become

still more marked. Wounds, illness and exhaustion, nervous and physical, it was said, so reduced the dominance of the males that the females became prepotent, and an increase in the birth rate of boys resulted.

We were curious to see how the young officer of the new Armies would turn out. The Germans always held that this would be the weak spot in what was known as Kitchener's Army. It is absolutely necessary for an officer that he should have an officer's mind; he must be brave, have in full a sense of duty, and of his responsibilities. The officers of the Expeditionary Force had been of so high a quality that it would, of necessity, be difficult to follow them. To be brave is essential, but this does not necessarily mean not to be afraid of death; if that is a test of courage, then all men are cowards. But he who leads must have more fear of appearing to be afraid than of death itself. He must not be too young, for youth, though very splendid and careless of danger, is irresponsible. Youth wins the Military Cross, but youth may also neglect to visit his sentries. Nor must a combatant officer be too old, for in this modern life "nerves" come to the man of forty-five, and war and sudden death

are the supreme tests of mental organisation. There is no room for neurasthenics in the front trenches. And with age, so often, comes the crystallised brain that receives no new impressions; the thickening of cerebral blood-vessels that makes reasoned thought impossible in the actual noise and tumult of battles. There can be little doubt that the young officer of Kitchener's Army in so far as he has been tested has in the majority of cases made good. The record of the campaign, the testimony of his superiors are witness to the fact.

And what of religion in this war? My own experience prior to my being taken prisoner was not long enough or wide enough to entitle me to pass judgment on the conditions obtaining in the war as a whole. In those early days some of us were tempted to think that never had there been a war in which religion as a great emotional factor had been so completely absent. There were abundant evidences of God, everywhere in the field. One could see Him in the blessed relief that morphia gives; in the limit to human endurance of pain, so quickly reached; in the merciful euthanasia that precedes death; in the bullet that missed; in the tetanus that passed our prisoners by

in Germany; in the blunders that the Germans committed. To what extent did our Church interpret these things for us, and so help us in this fight? Some of us missed the stern Old Testament teaching and the type of Cromwell's military chaplains. In their place seemed to figure prominently Bishops and leading dignitaries more filled with the doctrine of humility than with the righteous anger that should have thundered from the pulpit; making excuses for the enemy; too tolerant of evil; turning the other cheek. I leave it to others to decide whether there was any foundation for this view, and, if so, whether as the war has progressed, the conditions have changed.

In Germany the Lutheran and the Catholic Church had been organised for war, just as every other department in the State. There, if you wished, you could find the Old Testament reincarnated in the war; bigotry, religious fervour, sacrifice, fanaticism. But this attitude of their religious instructors was a great help in the land; and sent the young men out to war as young men should go. The Roman Catholic Church in Germany was Catholic only in name. English Roman Catholic prisoners received grudgingly of the comforts of religion. One of

my fellow medical officers, a Roman Catholic, asked in vain to see the priest. The French and Belgian officers, men who were indifferent to religion before the war, found, as they so often said, that they had need of spiritual support. What an opportunity the Church of Rome has missed! The men of France and Belgium ready and willing to return to Mother Church, but definitely restrained by the alleged political leanings of the Vatican. France, once the elder daughter of the Church, has been hurt and is not ready to forgive.

I have heard it argued that, as a war economy, the abolition of the military chaplain is advisable. It may be doubted whether the consensus of military opinion, as a result of this war, would endorse this view. A good parson, and there are good and bad ones, as there are good and bad doctors, can radiate the right and proper spirit for a soldier to take with him to war. He can do no end of good, if he is full of faith and of the righteousness of the cause; of a cheerful countenance when things are bad. But he must be with his regiment; he must be with his men in the trenches; nor should he fail to impress upon his men that, in this war, they are fighting for a cause that God

would wish them to uphold. Let him teach hatred to the enemy now, and not forgiveness until the war is over and right triumphant.

In part of its theory, at least, the *Tages Zeitung* was right; for this war has been a triumph for the blonde races of humanity. It is, indeed, the day of the fair-haired and blue-eyed men. The more pigment a man has in his skin, the less able does he seem to stand shell fire. Rifle fire, machine guns the dark men will face, but not the long ordeal of high explosives. The nervous organisation of a man is the test in this war. And in the dark races it seems as if their nerves are nearer the surface. All the coloured troops of every army have shown this. The only exception is the Turk, but he will be ready himself to admit that our shelling in Gallipoli was not effective. Even the big naval guns failed in their effect, both moral and material, as their fire was direct and not high-angle. But there is one fact that the *Tages Zeitung* failed to recognise; and here, without doubt, lies the explanation of the dominant position occupied by the blonde races. The education of the dark peoples of this earth is, as a rule, much inferior to that enjoyed by the fair. Education confers self-control and a

sense of duty. This it is that keeps a man firm in the trenches. Superstition and panic go hand in hand. Self-reliance marches with knowledge and education.

What do we think of Tommy? we are often asked. Is he not a wonderful person, so happy, always exhibiting the irrepressible gaiety for which he is now world-famed?

If the truth be told, in spite of the journalists, there is no joy in battle; no fierce delight in conflict, no happiness, no gaiety in the trenches under fire. But the one splendid, precious thing in connection with war is the high sense of duty that takes men and officers back again, time after time, when skrimshanking is so easy. Tommy wonderful? Of course he is wonderful; he is the most wonderful thing in the world when he belongs to the infantry of the line. What does his country mean to him that he should make this offering of his life? Is it worth the sacrifice? Who can doubt it?

One is often asked whether doctors do not get hardened with all the casualties they see. If by " hardened " is meant that we have no time for sentimentality, no time to say, " Poor fellow! does it hurt? " only time to ask, " Where are you hit? let me

help you; open your mouth, and I'll put these tablets on your tongue," then all of us are hard as stone. If to eat our beef and biscuit with hands all bloody is to be hardened, then we are hard indeed. But we are not really hard; no one is hard; we are only very practical and know that there are things such as death and fallen comrades, of which we do not speak. We lose some members of our mess; at the next meal we draw our seats still closer, have more rations to eat, perhaps two eggs where one was all our share before. But the names of the departed are not mentioned any more.

It is natural to look upon a regimental dressing station or hospital as the most pitifully miserable place in the world. But it is not so, certainly not in a dressing station when the wounded have had tea and morphia and are warm. The only place where happiness dwells is in a hospital. And the reason of this extraordinary spirit does not, as some cynic would say, lie in the fact that the men are wounded and therefore out of the war for a few months. No! it is in the sacrifice these men have made; the duty done, the wound that is the receipt, stamped and signed upon their bodies, from God and

their country. That explains the wonderful cheeriness of the blinded; the good spirits of men who have lost their limbs.

And this idea of sacrifice is the oldest in the world; the Old Testament is full of it. Men, in those days, used to make burnt offerings, used to give something to God. Now we only approach God to ask for something; for help in trouble; for absolution when we fear that death in battle may overtake us. But wounded men have laid their sacrifice upon the altar and it has been accepted. There is not the same cheerfulness in the medical wards of a hospital. Enteric and dysentery cases, even when convalescent, are not so happy. They have made a sacrifice too; but no more than a non-combatant might and they have not the receipt to show.

War is essentially a masculine occupation; the idea of woman as the complement of our lives vanishes. She is no more necessary. From the moment of going out to battle, as far as active service troops are concerned, and until the rest behind the lines or the well-earned leave is taken, the idea of woman as woman is non-existent. We are only conscious of fatigue, of hunger, of heavy packs, of the dull misery of the trenches,

and the billets we yearn for. That is why we, the fighting troops, could never understand the stories of plunder and Belgian atrocities.

So far as we were concerned, we had so much to carry in our packs, that we could not have carried even minted gold as loot. We were far too tired to have given even one thought to the women of the towns we occupied, save and except that women meant, usually, fires burning and food cooking. We inferred that all the crimes against women that were committed in Belgium were at the hands of the Transport, the Commissariat; the less militant branches of the Army. They alone were not tired, were dragged by weary horses, had sufficient to eat and always a place in which to sleep.

Wyman & Sons Ltd., Printers, London and Reading, England.

LITTLE GREY SHIPS

By **J. J. Bell**, author of "Wee Macgreegor." *The Daily Telegraph* says: "This is an illuminating little volume; atmosphere and spirit are in it. Mr. J. J. Bell here takes us into the lives, as they are being lived in these anxious and adventurous days, of the men of the mine sweepers, patrol ships, and other craft working continually in the North Sea, ships of which we hear so little, but which are doing such brave and splendid work." 2/6 net.

BALLADS OF BATTLE

Written and illustrated by **Sergeant Joseph Lee**, Black Watch. *The Spectator* says: "Of the verse that has come straight from the trenches, the 'Ballads of Battle' by Sergeant Joseph Lee, are among the very best. In him the Jocks have found a true interpreter."

3rd Impression, 2/6 net

BATTERY FLASHES

By **"Wagger."** *The Daily Mail* says: "Extraordinarily good reading. It is a homely account by a signaller in the Territorial Artillery of his day's work in training and at the Front. He writes of the little things of a soldier's life, of camp trials and camp joys, of food and letters and leave, of shopping adventures among the French folk behind the trenches, and so on, quite as much as of the bigger things." *2nd Impression*, 2/6 net.

LONDON: JOHN MURRAY

THE PANGERMAN PLOT UNMASKED

Berlin's formidable peace trap of the drawn war. By **André Chéradame.** Translated by LADY FRAZER. With an Introduction by THE EARL OF CROMER, O.M. A famous French writer, who has for many years made a special study of Pan-Germanism, here lays bare the principal objects of the plot.—*The Glasgow Herald* says: "The present reviewer, having read and re-read the work in the original, recommends all his readers to buy, borrow, if not indeed purloin, what in its way is the most striking book of the war on the Allied side."

With 31 *Maps.* 2/6 net.

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

By **Sir Theodore Cook,** Editor of *The Field.* A vigorous presentation of the various facts which make it impossible for the Allies to offer ordinary terms of peace to the German Empire at the close of hostilities. No more forceful or timely appeal to the determination and endurance of the British Empire at the crisis of this bitter war could well be imagined 5/- net.

LONDON: JOHN MURRAY

FRANCE TO-DAY

By **Laurence Jerrold.** A comprehensive survey of modern France in peace and war by a life-long student of France: her people, her soldiers, peasants, wage-earners, bourgeoisie; her Government, politics, and customs; her soil and her cities; the French spirit, French philosophy and literature, French youth, and how France once more as of old has stood against the invader. *The Evening Standard* says: "A brilliant book, one of the best ever devoted to the study of France."—*The Daily Express*: "Few living Englishmen know France as well as Mr. Laurence Jerrold knows it."—*The Daily News*: "He knows France as a Frenchman knows her." 7/6 net.

THE COMING WAR

By **Ambrose Poynter.** "The Coming War" deals especially with the inevitable industrial conflict as it affects Great Britain and her Dominions, and contains valuable and striking suggestions as to the best methods of preparing to meet new conditions. The author is particularly well qualified to deal with the subject, both from long and careful study, and from a wide personal knowledge of the conditions of life and trade in both the Old and New Worlds. 3/6 net.

LONDON: JOHN MURRAY

MY YEAR OF THE WAR

Including an account of experiences with the troops in France, and the record of a visit to the Grand Fleet. By **Frederick Palmer,** accredited American correspondent at the British Front. *The Spectator* says: "A book which every English reader will enjoy, not only for the sparkling quality of the writing, but because it gives Britain a most gratifying certificate of good conduct. Mr. Palmer's opinion is worth having."—*The Daily Telegraph:* "Here is a real man, with quick sympathies and a generous heart, who has set down, with the skill of a practised observer, the things he has witnessed."

4th Impression, 6/- net

A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN WAR-TIME

By **S. P. B. Mais.** This is an attempt to put on record in a series of seventeen short sketches the many ways in which war has affected the outlook of the youth of to-day. *The Morning Post* says: "You must read this book from beginning to end if you wish to understand how triumphantly the Public School spirit has justified all that has been said of it, in prose or poetically, in the last fifty years."—*The Pall Mall Gazette:* "They are brisk, absorbing, and fully packed sketches that Mr. Mais supplies of the varied aspects of school life in time of war." 3/6 net.

LONDON: JOHN MURRAY

Series 9482