BETWEEN THE BIG PARADES

by

FRANKLIN WILMER WARD

Between the Big Parades

IN EVERY CITY AND TOWN AND VILLAGE OF THE UNION THERE IS A BIG PARADE WHEN THEIR SONS MARCH OFF TO WAR, AND A BIG PARADE WHEN THEIR SONS MARCH HOME AGAIN

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TO

That patriotic breed of men, living and dead, who, since the inception of the American colonies have proudly subscribed to the oath of a citizen soldier, without thought of remuneration or personal gain; but with one ambition, namely, to be prepared to participate if need be, in the military defense of their Country; this story, by one who has marched with them for more than forty years, is most affectionately dedicated.

F. W. W.

AN EXPLANATION

MANY, many times during the fashioning of this narrative, the Author has asked himself whether an apparently light, facetious and careless style, is a fitting method in which to express the day by day lives and achievements of American soldiers who served their Country in the Great War.

He trusts before he is convicted of having used frivolous colorings, however, that his critics will pause to analyse the real foundation, or background, upon which the tale is based. That is an atmosphere of optimistic nonchalance and indifference that was assumed by our troops when not actually engaged in the stern adventure of mortal combat. A smiling non-chalance, wit and humor that often masked conflicting emotions, in which forlorn loneliness and hardship were blended drop for drop with personal pride, honor, morale—even fatalism.

It is fitting to say that every event pictured here is based upon fact and truth. Sometimes perhaps, the facts may not be in exact accordance with the tale as told, but each has its derivation in some situation that arose during the war. The Button Box story, for instance, which flavors of the improbable, is based upon the fact that a button box and its contents as indicated, actually were left with a regimental adjutant by an officer who recklessly challenged death.

The book in its entirety aims to hold aloft red WAR, at the arm's length of a servitor who saw its wretchedness and misery, its monstrous, savage deadliness and wanton destruction. A servitor who devoutly prays that American fathers and mothers, young and old, for the ultimate security of themselves, their children and their homes, will insist so long as they live, upon a Federal military and naval establishment with strength enough by force of arms on land and sea, to prevent the world's predatory peoples even when combined, from insulting their Flag and taking from them all those things which their National birthright entitles them honestly and rightfully to have and to hold.

CONTENTS

BETWEEN THE BIG PARADES

PROLOGUE

"Two million voices bid city's God speed to twenty-five thousand troops in impressive farewell parade down Fifth Avenue. Stern faced earnest men tramp five miles in stirring military spectacle, receiving a fresh ovation in every block from massed banks of humanity." (Headlines of a New York newspaper, August 31, 1917.)

I

THE VOYAGERS

PRIVATE WILLIAM SMITH, United States Army, drew his bayonet from its scabbard and scanned its long, keen edge, as one might look at a razor blade before submitting it to the strop. He then proceeded to etch his initials with its point, upon the frame of a lower bunk in the hold of the *U.S.S. Calamares*, which lay warped to a pier in the James river at Newport News.

The initials were undoubtedly engraved in anticipation of questions which might later arise, as to original occupancy and claim to the bunk. There was nothing bizarre about the close, dim compartment, into which Private Smith and his companions had just been herded, but rather a strong smell of tar and sweating men, for the ship was loading with a full cargo of youthful Americans.

The chaff had been sifted from the wheat, leaving strong healthy wholesome grains, human grains, moving slowly in close column of files, up the gangways. Sun-bronzed young products of the United States, nourished, hardened and trained. About to break into the great problem of life, like so many yearling colts in a breeder's paddock; filled with wonderment that their world is so large. In an army, after all, a man is merely a grain—animated by a flare of intimate relationship.

Time was when all these virile grains, heard the call of marching men, the call of the drums, the call of the Colors—and this is the answer to those enigmatic calls. Like stage-struck youths, who wish to be actors in mimic comedy, they are war-struck "doughboys," who voluntarily accepted parts in a tragedy—the most fascinating tragedy in which human beings participate—which is WAR.

Private Smith is tranquilly admiring his handiwork, when he becomes conscious that "Top" Sergeant Duggin is also observing it.

"How did that get there?" asks Duggin, pointing to the initials.

"What, that?"

"Y-e-h!"

"Why I put it there."

"How did you put it there?"

"How did I put it there?"

"Y-e-h!"

"With the point of my bayonet."

"Let's see your bayonet."

Private Smith draws his bayonet from its scabbard, and hands it to the sergeant, who looks it over critically, from hilt to blade point.

"You might have ruined that point, so it wouldn't go into a Hun; who in turn would bump you off. Keep your weapons, *as issued.* The Army don't give a damn about you personally, Son, but you're let for the war. Understand, *you're let*. After the Army leased you, it fed you, clothed you, trained you—for just one thing, to *kill* and not get killed through your own fault. It gave you weapons to kill with; but if you go west, because your bayonet's dull, or your rifle barrel's full of cigarette butts, matches and lead pencils, when it ought to be—as issued, the Army will say: 'just a dud, a dead dud—*a total loss.*' Remember, the Army didn't lease you because it liked the shape of your finger nails, or the color of your eyes. The Army leased you for the war, to keep your weapons fit, handle them as you've been taught, do as you're told—and keep your mouth shut. See!"

"*I see*, S-a-r-g-e!"

As the sergeant passed on, Smith perched on the edge of his bunk, fished a package of cigarettes from a pocket of his blouse, and said to no one in particular:

"That's a new one, *let for the war*, and me calling myself a volunteer."

For two weeks hence, Smith and his ilk breathe the refreshing salt-laden air of the broad Atlantic; listen to throbbing engines deep in the ship, grinding rhythmically; churning propeller blades, beating ceaselessly; and always the trembling vibration of rigging, decks, holds, bunks . . . overhead, underfoot, everywhere.

A kind of bravura, generates in the soul of strong men who find themselves sailing over a restless sea, on their way to war. A bravura, that seems to destroy completely all thoughts of former occupations, or activities. There is much upon a troopship, that develops such a mental attitude. The gruesome drill, for instance, called "*Prepare to Abandon Ship!"*

To appreciate fully its various actualities, one must visualize a world of rolling waves, capped with the wind-blown spume of the sea; a dull leaden cloudy sky, or even utter darkness, and cold penetrating wind—with a sheer plunge of many feet, from the boat deck to the seething, frothing waters below. Dropping over the side of a ship at sea, is a process that undoubtedly requires all the manhood an ordinary individual can muster. It is at such a time that the appalling, terrifying greatness of the ocean impresses itself—despite bravura.

Among the various details of this naval exercise, which is of great personal importance and interest to those who participate in its valedictions, is the injunction, that if a lifeboat or catamaran, to which one is assigned, cannot, for some reason or other be launched, it is not permissible to crowd into or upon any other—just as no transport, in the convoy of nine troopships, is permitted to render any assistance whatever to the luckless vessel that may have received a destroying shot-hole in her side. Under such circumstances, therefore, one is essentially—between the devil and the deep blue sea.

Then comes relationship with a so-called life jacket, which upon entering the "danger zone," must be worn continuously day and night. Adorned with a stuffed collar, about six inches in diameter, that insists upon standing upright, particularly when one is in bed. A four inch thickness of cork sections, tied securely about the body and projecting vulgarly upward from the waist line, completes the contrivance; which has all the refined qualities of the tortures, heretofore reserved exclusively for the medieval rack, to say nothing of the unmilitary picture a corpulent officer presents, when required to drape himself in such a keglike *cuirasse.*

Idealistically, should a plunge into the sea become necessary on a black tempestuous night, with seething phosphorescent combers, breaking against a pitching ship; an appropriate gesture for an American soldier would be to overpower the scream of nerves by tightening the stomach muscles, face aft—where the flag flies—even if it cannot be seen; execute the right-hand salute,

hum loudly a few bars of the swan-song, to overcome noisy chatter of teeth, ask the mercy of God, and jump nimbly over the ship's rail: without further mental reservation as to what may be awaiting in the dark, splashing, salty reaches of the offing.

Again, one is reminded of the importance of two aluminum identification disks, worn round the neck against the skin. One, to be taken by the person recovering the body of the dead man, and forwarded to an individual, or official, with the frolicsome title of "Burials." The other to remain attached to the corpse.

All such things unconsciously develop bravura.

On the lower deck aft, a prize ring had been temporarily erected around which a mass of soldiers watch a sparring bout between Private Smith and a much heavier but slower antagonist.

From the saloon deck above a number of officers are also following the match—a fast and furious one, swiftly placed glove-socks landing with unerring precision upon an older and less experienced man who is plainly outclassed by the quick-thinking, well proportioned, darting youth. A pupil of the Jim Corbett school of dancing, who by clean living and plenty of practice has grown into a man hard to beat.

Toward the close of the fourth round the youngster sends his burly opponent to the ropes, practically out. Another jolting sock will undoubtedly settle the matter. Suddenly Smith stops fighting long enough to glance at the referee:

"No use of a knock-out, he's let to the Army for the war; a K-O might dull him up. *Eh?* Sergeant Duggin!!!"

A few minutes later one of the officers called to the winner from above and asked him to report after he got back into uniform. It was in this way that Private Smith secured the highly distinctive rating of personal orderly, or *striker*. . . . Of whom more anon.

* * * * * *

It was close to four o'clock on the morning of the 29th of May, 1918, eleven days out of Chesapeake Bay. The sea ran smoothly, with occasional undulating swells that caused the *Calamares* to rock fore and aft, with a gentle swing, like a slowly moving pendulum. A soft sea-breeze from the starboard quarter, frolicked with the wide hat-brims of the soldier lookouts. Far off, to the eastward, in the orange-white light of a May dawn; like a pair of stalwart gulls sailing out of the sky, came the graceful forms of two American *destroyers* from the French coast, their variegated lines of camouflage, growing more and more distinct against the disappearing tints of a Spring daybreak.

Graceful, swift, subtle—deadly. Pointing straight for the *U. S. S. Huntington*, the guardian shepherd of the flock, the snarling lead-wolf of the pack. Flash after flash, their signal lanterns dot and dash greetings, in yellow lightning-like measure, and it seems as though the little fellows bustle with pride and cockiness, as they dip and dance to within a grenade throw of the cruiser, and then turn sharply eastward, each with the American colors standing out straight and clean at the gaff. Having "shown off" so to speak, they settle down to business, and take their places in the foreline as outguards to the heavy, lumbering troopships that follow laboriously in their wake.

During the day, eight additional destroyers join the fleet and as the last dances up, slender and graceful as a sunburnt débutante, it seems as though a chorus of jolly but sinister sea-wolves, are singing: *Hail! Hail! The Gang's All Here!* as they cut and cross, turn and sprint, round and about the convoy in a manner that leaves no question as to the perfect seamanship of their masters.

And now, in the early twilight, comes the passing of the mother wolf—the cruiser *Huntington*. Her shepherding is to give way to her more nimble, more sanguinary companions of the coast. She has guided her overgrown cubs, boldly, over nine-tenths of their journey. Now, quietly,

without a sound, without a flutter, she turns her bow, Westward Ho! . . . and silently lays a course for Home. All eyes follow her, until she disappears in the melting tints of a multi-colored sunset.

Hail and farewell, *U. S. S. Huntington*, you are a superb old tin-pan, and the very best wishes of the navy-neutralized doughboys, go with you.

BLASTING SUBMARINES

In the heart of the bad lands, is the way a cow-punching landlubber from Arizona, might express the present nautical bearings of the convoy. And if there had been any question about that, it quickly disappeared shortly after three o'clock in the afternoon of the last day of the voyage. Steaming due east, with the hazy shores of Belle Isle outlined ahead, a sudden metallic rumble, with a rasping accompaniment, like the glancing blow of a huge sledge hammer against the hull, sent a quiver through every soul below decks. An instant later, came the call to quarters and a rush to deck stations.

A depth bomb dropped by a destroyer in the immediate vicinity, caused a violent underwater concussion, which vibrated against the side of the hull. All the troopships suddenly move off their course in a spoke-like formation, steaming full ahead in all directions, some letting go with their aft batteries: among them the *Calamares.*

Two aeroplanes appear to drop abruptly out of the sky, and hang so low, their observers are readily seen bending out over the fuselage, searching the translucent reaches of the sea. Then somebody shouts shrilly—"*There it is!!!"* Meaning a periscope.

The destroyers are dashing madly about, those off to the southward maneuvering swiftly, depth bombs dropping intermittently from their cradles, the hornets darting away over sectors of water, that an instant later rock and boil, with the latent detonations. A number of these destroying cylinders splash into the sea within a narrow radius, while signals are flashed from ship to ship by semaphore flags and lamps.

The boom of cannon, the rumble of bombs, the whir of aeroplanes combine in a medley of clamor—and its anybody's fight—for all the soldiers can tell. Certainly many a gallant ship has been vanquished without one-half this water-rocking action. But so far as the military officers are concerned, their elbows are bent upon the rails, their feet in the scuppers and their training in field combat and related subjects-not worth a plugged nickel.

The head-hunters are now busily searching for oil on the sea's surface, an infallible sign that the crew of a submarine has been sent to eternity, without so much as a chance to bespeak the mercy of God. All of which, at the moment, seems quite all right, when one happens to be sailing in forty fathoms and remembers the eleven hundred and ninety-eight men, women and helpless little children who perished with the destruction of the *Lusitania*, to say nothing of the *Admiral Ganteaume*, the *Falaba*, or the hospital ship *Asturias*.

After a short interval, the ships of the convoy return to their normal formation, and exultantly steam across the broad sunlit Bay of Biscay, over the mine fields at the mouth of the Loire: a huge sausage-shaped captive balloon riding in the air a short leg up the river.

Gathering dusk, on the 30th day of May, finds the *Calamares* after a voyage of thirteen days, moored to a long stone jetty with oddly shaped picturesque houses confronting it just across a cobbled street, as if in grotesque menace against its further intrusion. . . .

In the semi-darkness the huge ship's perfectly motionless bulk appears to be lying snugly in the middle of the historic French municipality of St. Nazaire.

II

FRANCE ON MEMORIAL DAY

NO war destruction is observed anywhere about the city. That the natives are a part of war-torn France, is indicated only by certain abnormal features; such as the black mourning dress of every woman old or young who walks abroad. Black, worn it seems, with a sense of individual pride, as well as mourning. The utter absence of men between the age of sixteen and fifty, is particularly noticeable.

Detachments of German prisoners of war, in shabby gray-green uniforms, work as laborers about the narrow streets and in the warehouses, guarded by crippled French veterans. The gloom of the people generally, shown by voice and gesture, seems to indicate that to them, the end is only a question of time.

France is apparently standing on the brink of calamity, rumors are that a million nationals have abandoned Paris, that the Government has been set up at Bordeaux, that Marshal Foch has conversed with Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Orlando, to the effect that if America does not quickly enter the arena of hostilities with substantial manpower, there will exist immediate danger of Allied defeat.

Incidentally, a single American division does not seem nearly so large and mighty in France, as it did at the training camp in South Carolina. But it's Memorial day in the U. S. A., and it is fitting that soldiers celebrate . . . "Hey, Gendarme! Indicate a worthy place, where a man may quench his thirst!"

COLORED SOLDIERS

In the warm and mellow sunshine of the following day, the strangers find the route to the loosely built frame barracks, in which they are temporarily quartered, lies through the huge camp of an American colored Stevedore regiment. Thousands and thousands of men in working shifts for both day and night. Magnificent specimens of manhood they are, brown, glistening and powerful, almost supermen, many of them bare to the waist, doing their bit wonderfully well.

But should you not be out on the line, with your white brothers, Colored Man? Should you not be required to accept ALL the dangers of the white man's burden? Here you are doing the work that is given you to do, doing it *most efficiently*. But the white brothers are being killed and gassed and wounded, they are slowly being exterminated. Not so with you, Colored Man. Most of your race are willing and anxious to be out there, some of them *are* out there, but only a few thousand.

In war, you should be permitted to fight, if your training warrants, otherwise as time goes on, you will continue to increase and multiply; while the white brothers decrease and diminish through battle death and disease. It is unjust to civilization of which you are a part, that the white man carry the battle burden alone.

THE FOUR HORSEMEN!

Ridiculously early on the morning of June 3rd, the Americans were introduced to the peculiarities of French railroad transportation, including the notice *40 Hommes et 8 Cheveaux*.

A train made up of a number of undersized box-cars, for the division machine gun troops, and an antiquated combination baggage-passenger coach, stood ready to receive its lading. The coach was furnished with a capacious baggage section into which all sorts of impedimenta were closely packed. The larger of the two passenger compartments is reserved for a brigade commander and his aide, while six Division staff officers will occupy the other.

Each staff officer had purchased supplies for the noonday meal, in accordance with travel orders; three of the party having added a bottle of vintage wine to the ration. They are about to place the packages aboard, with their equipment, when an overlord approaches in the person of a brigadier general, U. S. A., who inquires as to the exact contents of the bundles. He then indicates peevishly, that orders *positively forbid* Americans taking spirituous liquor of any kind aboard a troop train.

"Here, soldier," calls one of the officers sharply, addressing Orderly Smith, who is conversing with several companions of the same rating. "Take these bottles and dispose of them at the hotel across the square. Tell the garcon the officers who purchased them have decided to drink the oil in the sardine cans instead." The staff officers slowly realize that a bottle of fine old *Chablis* 1897, consumed with a loaf of dry bread, may cause the imbiber to teeter unsteadily and perforce, reënact the drunkard role of *father*, in *Ten Nights in a Barroom*; or even develop a major case of delirium tremens, accompanied by a maudlin decision, that a jump through a car window is really, the proper thing to do.

"Peacock, Yes?" says one, sotto voce.

"Rather, poppy-cock," mumbles another.

"Badly poisoned with the viscid laudanum of 'Regulations,' " wheezes the third.

" 'Dressed in a little brief authority—glassy essence—like an angry ape, plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven as make the angels weep,' " hisses the fourth.

All unanimous, in devoutly thanking the good god of soldier-men, their lot is not cast to serve under such a fusser.

In a short time the last box-car door is closed upon its soldier occupants, and the train rattles away to the northward, midst the shrill toots of a toy whistle on a funny looking locomotive. The six staff officers sitting three abreast, opposite each other, with hardly room to move. . . .

As the companions will hereafter appear, more or less prominently, in these pages, we now present them to our readers, as "The Surgeon," "The Judge Advocate," "Intelligence," "The Inspector," "The Adjutant," and "The Sanitary Inspector."

So close together are they seated that the Sanitary Inspector, being a particularly huge man, immediately receives a maximum of attention from those beside him; so large is he, in fact, that a consultation is called, in the interests of comfort, at the conclusion of which there is a readjustment and he is placed between two officers selected with reference to a minimum avoirdupois. Incidentally there and then they christen him, by acclamation—"Porthos."

It is a bright sunny, crystal-clear day and the country through which the troop train jerks and bumps is not only very clean and quaint, but exceptionally beautiful and interesting. It is the country, that for hundreds of years, contributed generously to the troublous history of France. None of the wayfarers have been informed as to their final destination, apparently such an unimportant detail not being considered any of their blurry business.

About noon they pass slowly through the historic city of Nantes, and under the walls and battlements of its ancient castle, where De Retz and Forquet were imprisoned.

"It is here," volunteers the Judge Advocate, "the famous Edict of Nantes was issued by Henry IV, himself."

"Along these identical highways, knights of old, enveloped in full shining armor from helmet to solleret, urged their caparisoned steeds," adds Intelligence.

"Do you mean knights in full armor, or full knights in armor?" asks the Surgeon, probably thinking of the vintage wine.

"Both expressions would at times be correct," retorts Intelligence.

"It must have been exceptionally hot and uncomfortable inside that armor, when the warm summer sun shone upon it for any length of time," reflects the Adjutant.

"Really, on a fervid summer day, I should have disliked to be in a baronial chamber, when some of those fat knights removed their armor, after a hard ride," comments the Inspector, looking pointedly at Porthos.

In this atmosphere, charged with historic memories of proud warrior barons, the companions open their paper bundles and draw therefrom loaves of bread, cans of sardines, corned beef, and cheese.

"Who owns a can-opener?" some one inquires.

Jackknives galore, with corkscrew and other attachments are produced, but no can-opener appears.

The Adjutant asks one of the officers sitting nearest the door leading to the narrow hallway, to call Smith from the baggage compartment. The latter enters a few moments later wearing no web-equipment except a belt and haversack.

"Have you a can-opener, Smith?"

"Yes, sir." The instrument is promptly produced.

Then the young soldier suddenly takes on a mysterious manner, snaps the lock on the inside of the door, carefully draws down the curtain, faces the officers, carries his haversack around to the front of his body and draws therefrom the three bottles of *Chablis* 1897, which he places on the floor. He then withdraws without a word.

At the conclusion of the meal, Smith is again called.

"See here," says the Adjutant evenly, "these officers have been discussing the advisability of placing you in arrest for disobedience to orders. You recall, I ordered you to dispose of these bottles. It seems you did not obey that order. There may have been mitigating circumstances. It may be the hotel people would not take the bottles back, and that you had to return hurriedly to board the train. Very good. It has been decided to give you just five minutes to dispose of them."

"Yes sir," replies Smith, with an expressionless face, as he picks up the empty bottles and throws them out the window, then turns about, raises the shade on the door and leaves the compartment.

Throughout the afternoon, slowly moving hospital trains pass the Americans, each car with large windows, behind which are berths two high, occupied by wounded French soldiers swathed in bandages: sometimes blood, stained. The p*oilus* pale and motionless, their haggard eyes listlessly staring from the windows, indifferently realizing, perhaps, that United States troops are actually arriving.

These rolling hospitals, with their shattered and pain-racked human freight bring to the companions their first introduction to the real atmosphere of mortal combat. Heretofore, it had been visionary, fleeting, imaginary, like a disconnected dream. But here is the actual, physical wreckage of cruel, unyielding, relentless WAR. For the first time they are boot to boot with the torturous, rankling, bloody trail of armed conflict:

The first horseman appeared on a white horse. He was Conquest, according to some, the Plague according to others. He might be both things at the same time.

Then out leaped a flame-colored steed. His rider brandished over his head an enormous sword. He was War. Peace fled from the world before his furious gallop.

Another winged animal bellowed like a thunder clap. He who mounted it held in his hand a scale in order to weigh the maintenance of mankind. He was Famine.

The fourth animal came with a great roaring—a pale, colored horse. His rider was called Death, and power was given to him to destroy with the sword and with hunger and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

After a fashion, these American soldiers had trailed the Second Horseman for a year agone and traveled far afield in his wake, but this is the first time they have actually crossed his mad, desolating path.

Through the deep shadows, caused by these passing hospital cars, had the Fourth Horseman cast his ghastly and forbidding eyes at their train? Had his sword of destruction dashed its invisible but deadly point into the destiny of any of its passengers? A few hours would tell.

The troop train rolled slowly northward, its toy whistle tooting constantly. Toward evening a stop was made at Amiens, where a meal was provided for the soldiers, while the officers dined at the railroad restaurant. Then the journey continued, the train rolling on again, lightless, cheerless and dismal, through a melancholy night.

In the early hours of the morning, just before dawn, it slowly approached the environs of Rouen. A drear night indeed, for the six companions, sitting cramped and upright; cinder and dust covered, jolted and knocked; seeking at times a cool draught of air to diminish stagnation by opening a window, and then closing it again to relieve the shivers.

Splashes of purple-gray light are breaking the deep velvet blue of an eastern sky; no one is quite astir. It is too early to converse, even about the possibilities of breakfast.

Then the young aide of the general officer in the next compartment appears to be standing in the narrow passageway, half hidden in semi-darkness; he seems to be working at their little glass door. No one is wide enough awake to assist him. What the devil does he want, at such an hour—he's only a lieutenant anyway. At last the door slides open. The aide is speaking directly to the Surgeon.

"The General's compliments, Sir, he is ill. He wishes to see you." Instantly the request is complied with.

A few minutes elapse, some one has lighted a cigarette, indicating full consciousness. The little sliding door is again opened, far enough to permit the Surgeon to thrust in his head. He speaks in a low voice.

"It is acute dilation of the heart—the General will die, in a few minutes." Then the door is dosed.

The little door slides open a third time, the Surgeon enters quietly, unobtrusively, and takes his seat. He addresses the Adjutant, in an ordinary voice.

"As senior officer present, you are in command of the train. The general is dead."

From dirty car windows they watch the miracle of the dawn. To some of them another picture presents itself from far off across the Atlantic. It is the picture of a wife and young daughter, standing on a long covered wharf that juts into the James river at Newport News; who are bidding an officer a brave farewell. And now, presto! His body lies in the seedy compartment of a clumsy troop train, rolling northward through strange country, rolling, rolling nobody knows where.

Daylight comes slowly, broad and mellow: the train jolts to a stop at the diminutive station of a village, called Darnetal, just outside of Rouen—where some five hundred years ago Joan of Arc, La Pucelle, was condemned in her nineteenth year, by French ecclesiastics, and burned at the stake by an English garrison occupying the town.

A litter is procured from a medical detachment in one of the box-cars. The General's body is carried to the shed, the colors of the United States hide it from view. Soldiers form in double

lines along the platform. An officer stands at the head of the bier with a pocket prayer book in his hand. He waits silently until the formation is complete. Then he reads the Twenty, third Psalm. . . .

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.—

The officer closes his little book. He asks those near the remains to repeat with him the Lord's Prayer. Then a bugler off on a flank of the lines, sends forth the night-call . . . "Taps."

And thus end the simple soldier obsequies for Brigadier General Robert E. L. Michie, of the Regular service, who dedicated all his life's energies to the National Defense. They leave him on the station platform, with his young aide-de-camp, as a guard of honor.

The sword of the Fourth Horseman is unerring. . .

Far behind its schedule the troop train again moves northward.

Strangely enough, there is no crape hanging, no post-mortem grief. Maybe the passing hospital trains have subconsciously hardened the companions to a realization that death—is the bosom friend of war.

Two staff officers occupy the vacant compartment—stretch out in solid comfort and watch through the window an aeroplane hanging high in the crystal clear blue sky. It slowly climbs aloft and disappears in a soft white summer cloud—like an ascending soul.

Gradually the panorama changes, gradually it loses its symmetric beauty; slowly the surrounding country becomes bald, harsh, war-torn; and to these strangers there comes an unmistakable echo of the thundering gallop of Conquest, beating relentlessly through northern France.

They look out upon a mass of British troops, resting at one point; a flock of Chinese Coolies working along the tracks at another. A cluster of French soldiers are passed, wearing light blue overcoats, although the day is warm. They squat on the ground: bread in one hand, huge pieces of cheese in the other; wine bottles within easy reach.

Again a large number of Portugese infantry are encountered, some of their officers wearing two silver stars on the gaudy collars of their light gray tunics. American doughboys in a box-car forward toss out cigarettes. A "two star" officer catches one nimbly and runs for some distance alongside the slowly moving train, motioning for further contributions. This to the intense amusement—even boisterous delight, of the doughboys, because to them "two stars" is the insignia of a *Major General*. The scene, therefore, froth with comedy.

None of the Portugese bear arms, and later it is learned they are alleged to have "broke" on the British front, for which gesture their martial activities are for the nonce restricted to the care and mending of military highways.

War now becomes evident everywhere, huge ammunition dumps are passed, factories and sheds that have been turned into improvised hospitals, their roofs painted a grayish white with great red crosses superimposed. Here and there in partially wooded fields, small temporary burying grounds are distinguished by groups of little wooden crosses or upright boards of varying types and design, erected, no doubt, by the hardy but affectionate comrades of those who have perished. At intervals aeroplanes at great altitude glide silently across the sky.

III

WITH HIS MAJESTY'S ROYAL BRITISH ARMY

THE following morning finds the American troops at their journey's end, for a few fleeting days at least. The staff officers unstrap their steel and leather in the rooms of private residences, or billets, so called, in the city of St. Riquier, in northern Flanders, and hasten to rejoin those from whom they parted in far off South Carolina. Here in an ancient Flemish town they again salute their chief, with whom they served for many years in local emergencies at home, the eventuality along the Rio Grande, and now in a foreign war.

What a gathering of the clan it is to be sure, with regiments passing every now and then, marching at attention their bands playing Yankee airs, through the narrow winding cobbled streets with two foot side, walks, as they parade to their new stations, appearing thoroughly out of place against the gallery of aged rustic men, stout-legged children and square-rigged peasant women, wearing wooden shoes. Behind whom is a background of low, cramped, century old dwellings, garnished in the ancient quaintness of form and color, with narrow low-hanging Holland doors, plus one-shuttered windows.

The marching regiments themselves appear particularly odd in such an environment, and without their Colors, which, like many other embellishments of faded martial glory, cease to be the fashion, and have been sent to Boulogne, to be stored during the period of combat service. Regiments stripped for action, so to speak: like pugilists shorn of their glowing bath robes, as they step into the arena.

St. Riquier is a typical Flemish town, dominated by a flamboyant abbey church of immense size and extreme architectural beauty, with a sacristy that contains a famous fresco of a curious "Dance of Death." An uncomfortable and withal stoical town; the natives, or what is left of them, pointedly conveying the implication at every turn, that not even a wild-flower should be pulled from the road-side unless replaced by a *franc*.

Incidentally, the town boasts a historic field-stone tower, made famous by an alleged temporary imprisonment therein of the Maid of Orleans, whose person, it may be said in passing, represents the provincial Frenchman's beau ideal of femininity, i. e., a well rounded woman, some five feet six inches tall, and say one hundred seventy pounds, without wooden shoes.

Legend indicates that during the Maid's visit to St. Riquier, it's ancient inhabitants registered a solemn vow to abstain from bathing until her cause was victorious. And be it said, ever since that far gone day, probably in honor of her memory, the citizenry have kept inviolate the pledge of their progenitors, to the extent that not a single bath-tub has been installed in any ordinary dwelling of the town.

Medieval Flanders, near the North Sea, wherein it has been the Prussian boast, they will ultimately push the Anglo-Saxon swine—which at the moment, includes a large number of American offshoots.

The voyagers are now a part and parcel of the Second Army of 'Is Majesty's Royal British Expeditionary Forces, in every sense: except the matter of collective fealty—and *God Save the King!* Strange as it may seem, the orders for this attachment brings no "anvil chorus" from the ranks; although Daly, the division Ordnance, remarks to his friends Farrell and Moniz: "You'll hear no more protests from the 'Irish' 69th of New York City, on account of their having been separated from us, and assigned to the 'Rainbow' Division on the southern front."

NIGHT RIDERS *A LA MODE*

Rather late on the first evening of the Americans' arrival, the conversation of a number of officers sitting comfortably on a veranda of the nonpariel billet, was interrupted by a large number of inhabitants dashing past toward the open fields, coupled with a sound approaching from the east, that might be described as an intermittent buzzing in the dark. More and more accentuated, as seconds drift by, the drumming comes louder and louder through the silent void of the sky.

"Bet ees ze Boche riding out on ze night raid!" rapidly explains the host.

A moment later the British "archies," as the anti-aircraft gunners are called, send their searchlight beams into the great dome. Half a dozen shafts of yellow light move slowly through the void; first in one direction, then in another. Suddenly all the beams concentrate at a point above, and form a gigantic pyramid in the darkness.

High up, at the apex of the beams, a diminutive butterfly shines like burnished gold, against the brilliant concentrated fight. *It is a Boche bomber!*

Furiously the ground guns blaze, and a moment later curious round cotton-like blotches break out lazily within the yellow pyramid, apparently up near the butterfly, which sails on, either unmindful or contemptuous of the bursting shrapnel shells, and glides northwestward with motionless wings, toward England.

Maybe it would be better to call it a wasp, rather than a butterfly.

Then, without the slightest preliminary warning there comes an ear splitting crash, as though all the furies of hell had suddenly broken loose. A crack, ten times as sharp as a midsummer thunderbolt, shakes the ground like a destroying earthquake. Close upon it comes another report, equally rending.

The wasp has dropped some of its venom on defenseless Abbeyville, a short distance away.

"Hell's bells!" exclaims the Inspector.

"Eet ees what we have vere frequent, eet *ees* hell. But one may become accustom to anything," replied the bomb-experienced host.

WITH A "FURRIN" ARMY TO BE SURE

Yes, they are indeed serving with a "furrin" army. An English speaking one, but as different from their own in dress, temperament, gesture and personality as a Chinaman is from a Spaniard. The one native resemblance lies in the fact that the same language is used, although when it comes to the military vernacular there are instances of no understanding at all.

An American officer, be it said, prides himself on standing erect, head up, chin out; an aggressive out-spoken person who calls a spade a spade. His uniform fits snugly, his cap is worn squarely. Usually he is quick of foot, alert, precise. On the other hand, his British brother ordinarily bends fashionably at the waist line; droops rather forward when he saunters along the road or around town, aided invariably by a stout cane with a hook handle.

He uniformly appears preoccupied, somewhat bored, fed up—but always a gentleman; and quite partial to marmalade, hot tea and Scotch whisky. The only way a stranger can learn his name, is to ask for it bluntly. As to uniform, his tunic is over large and open at the neck, with a few peculiar devices about it, either on the shoulder straps or lower sleeve; such as a gilt royal crown or two, a few lozenges, accentuated by various sorts of emblematic devices on the lapels, sometimes with a dash of color here and there. His cap is a soft, shapeless affair, tossed upon the head at a rakish angle, frequently with a patch of flannel, red, blue, or even green, fastened around the band—all of which means absolutely nothing to the Americans.

As to vocabulary, “striker” or orderly Smith, sounds the first question of difference.

“Sir, does the colonel know what these British call a ‘striker?’ ”

“No, Smith, what do they call a ‘striker?’ ”

“They don’t call him a ‘striker’ at all; they call him a ‘batman.’ And the colonel ought to see some of them,” registering extreme contempt for the British species.

Freight cars are called trucks, just as a motor truck is called a lorry, which sometimes mixes things up a bit, as may be observed by the following incident.

A troop train, carrying a regiment of American infantry north from Brest, in some way dropped off a baggage car along the route, which happened to be loaded with the regimental officers’ bedding rolls and other impedimenta, including the entire field equipment of the commanding officer. The latter had firmly established a reputation over a period of years, as being particularly hard boiled. His supply officer, a captain charged with loading, transportation and supply generally, instantly responded whenever the colonel called: “Hi!” Hi, was a celebrated “go-getter,” a human fire-cracker in dynamic energy and perseverance.

“I want you to see the British railway officer, or whatever they call him,” snapped the colonel, “and locate *that car*. No ifs or ands, *get the car!*”

“Yes, Sir!” replied the captain, following the words with a quick salute and a perfect “about face.” Direct to the British headquarters he hurried. A well groomed “Tommy” snapped to the “present,” as he entered the building.

“Where is the railroad officer located?” Inquires Hi, who might just as well have asked the location of the red planet Mars. But the American is tall and menacing, as a matter of fact he is a bit peeved, for it was late in the afternoon when the summons to the colonel’s quarters arrived, and at the moment Hi was engaged in a heated argument with a companion, as to the relative merits of Haig & Haig vs. Jonnie Walker; bottles of which were being sampled.

After a few minutes, the American found himself standing before a particularly good looking English officer, about forty years old; to whom he had been directed as being the G. O. C. There were two things uppermost in Hi’s mind at the moment, first, the immediate recovery of the baggage car, and second, to get back as soon as practicable, to the argument.

“In some particularly idiotic way,” he exclaimed, “a baggage-car full of the men’s duffels and the Old Man’s roll, was sidetracked somewhere between Amiens and this dump. I am here to *get* it. Can I have your assistance, or am I going to get it alone? Time counts with me. If the Old Man’s roll goes, I go—and you go, and everyone that had anything to do with it *goes!* The Old Man is a personal friend of the King, in fact they grew up together!” (Hi was particular not to say what King he referred to.)

The English officer looked at him in a highly puzzled way, and drawled:

“I say, just what the devil is a baggage-car, full of duffels and the old man’s roll?”

Trying to keep his patience, the American explains that duffels are soldiers barrack-bags and the old man’s roll is the colonel’s bedding roll.

“Well, look here, I will do what I can about it, I mean to say, I can hardly do it myself, you know. But won’t you have some tea, or something?”

“Tea, tea, *no!* I want no *tea*—I want the *baggage car!”*

“Quite, but you see I am the General Officer Commanding the 66th British Division, and I assure you the truck you wish is not concealed anywhere about my headquarters.”

The captain’s confusion at the general’s announcement of his identity and high rank was indeed painful. Hi meekly apologized, and explained he thought he was speaking to an officer of his own rank, and that G. O. C. meant “Go Out for Cars” or something of the sort.

As he backed toward the door, the G. O. C. caught the humor of the situation, and promised to put his whole transport service at work to find the truck—or rather, the baggage car.

IV

THE SANITARY INSPECTOR

WHAT might be said about sanitation since the Americans arrived in France would undoubtedly cause the chief sanitarian in Washington to jump into the Potomac. They will probably blot out the rating at General Headquarters, as soon as they can do so gracefully. Sanitation without sewers or latrines, bath-tubs or hot water, laundries or wash-tubs. Shades of the manure that was lugged for miles in South Carolina, to be burned because of its fly-breeding qualities. Yet a basket of manure may be taken from a French farmer only over his dead body. A farmyard without a large manure pile near the kitchen door, is unheard of. How would the chickens feed? Where would the pigs wallow, the pigeons find sustenance? Sanitation to the French tiller of the soil or even the villager—is a Yankee joke.

Every time a column halts along a road and the soldiers go *en masse* into the woods, the Sanitary Inspector's face is a study. Sanitation, the answer in *La Belle Francaise is . . . Bla-h-h!* However, should the particular Sanitary Inspector of whom we speak, have lived somewhere about the year 1625 and perchance been observed by Louis XIII, he would undoubtedly have been drafted into M. de Treville's life guards as a King's Musketeer, not only on account of his deep and resonant voice, his perfect knowledge of Gallic verbs, his bulk and great physical strength; but also because of his deep knowledge of French literature, his limitless study of gastronomy as it was practiced by the masters Béchamel, Parmentier, Brillat-Savarin, and the modem M. Simon. To say nothing of his unconditional reverence and affection for the form and color, sound and scent of the rare wines of France.

The learned Porthos, for thus he is now called by his comrades, today at noon mess indicated the close proximity to St. Riquier of the historic Forest of Crecy.

"I visualize those brilliant armies," he said, "there on a summer's day in 1346, the chivalry of England and France face each other, their squires and pages and men-at-arms about them. Knighthood is in flower, armor glistens, banners wave. It will be the cross-bowmen—clouds of arrows; and then the charge of knights, knights-banneret, and their fighting vassals. The field radiates with massed nobility of the most powerful kingdoms on earth.

"But as the gauntlet of defiance is hurled, some unkempt English bumpkins release a few dozen cannon balls, propelled by *gunpowder*—used for the first time in Europe. Suddenly a ball strikes a haughty powerful French prince full in the middle of his armor-plated torso and knocks him upside down, a position from which he cannot right himself on account of the deep dent in the middle of his cuirass.

"At the unheard of noise of the cannon, mailed horses bolt in frantic alarm, while gallant knights and their retinues are flattened all over the field by the whizzing balls: those not instantly killed later die of mortification, for the very thought of being knocked over by a vulgar yokel—break their aristocratic hearts."

MOVING ON

Two weeks at St. Riquier is apparently considered a sufficient interval to inure or saturate, so to speak, the Americans with the virus of "Thomas Atkins," and they move southwest some thirty kilometers (a kilometer being roughly five-eighths of a mile), under the personal supervision of

Olmsted, G-1, of the general staff—the redoubtable, exceptionally efficient "lone wolf" who, with Stemberger, Loree and several non-leave taking assistants, arrange everything.

The little village of Escarboten is the new base. The soldiers have been furnished with a British type rolling, kitchen, with brass hubs and other shining ornamentation, that if kept clean and polished, makes a very attractive and agreeable receptacle from which to issue well-cooked food. The officers of the division staff are now divided into small groups of two or three, and in the assignment of billets remain together. In the establishment of eating places ordinarily six or eight companions form a "mess," with one of their number elected or supplicated to operate it—in addition to his other duties. Such assignment carries with it the locating of a domicile with sufficient kitchen and dining-room space: plus the hiring of a native female cook, and the purchase from inhabitants of meats, mostly veal, and other necessities.

The new billet assigned to the Surgeon, Porthos and the Adjutant is by no means pretentious, and before accepting it they decide to make a few courtesy calls upon their juniors, to pay their respects, and incidentally observe how the latter have fared. In due course they visit the billet of the Quartermaster, whose able assistant and nephew Floersheimer, had preceded the staff and naturally secured an exceptionally comfortable billet on the outskirts of the village for his immediate chief and uncle. Upon the arrival of the callers the latter is about to unpack.

"Don't unpack, 'Q,' " purrs the Adjutant, "sorrow, but you're in the wrong billet."

"It was assigned to me by the town major," protests 'Q,' who for a moment looks as wicked as the hole in the front end of a 14-inch seacoast rifle.

"Increasing sorrow. He made an error, this is our billet. Yours, 'Q,' is on the Rue de Junior, that is, a two-story black brick on the north side of Main street just after you pass the apothecary shop."

With these words the transfer is completed in accordance with the time-honored custom of selection by seniority, as practiced by and on American officers.

Later Private 1st class Smith, for he has recently been promoted, arrives with the impedimenta and makes camp in three well-furnished and comfortable rooms. It may here be said in passing that Smith's method of accomplishing his duties and also finding out what he wishes to know vary largely with the ordinary moods of his chief, i.e., the Adjutant. Sometimes he works silently, even stealthily. At other times he hums or softly sings while at his tasks. Sometimes he speaks only when spoken to, at other times he becomes boyishly familiar. Albeit his general conduct is largely controlled by a pair of sharp blue-gray eyes, that observe, furtively, which way the wind blows.

On this particular occasion, while unlimbering a bedding-roll, he tries out a verse of *"It's a Long, Long Way to Tipperary,"* and finding it does not bring a glance in his direction, he follows along:

"This is my birthday, Colonel."

"Let's see, twenty-one, Smith?"

"No, Sir, twenty."

"About what do you weigh, Smith?"

"Hundred and sixty-nine, Sir."

"I did not think you were that heavy."

"I gained six pounds since we left the States, Sir;" then: "Would the Colonel care to tell me something?"

"Just what is it you wish to know, Smith?"

"Why is it a Division like *ours* has to serve with these British?"

"Why, it's like this, Smith, the British are pretty well done in, cut up I mean, and some sort of an Agreement made here in Flanders between the high commanders required the United States to designate a number of divisions to help them out. The Agreement undoubtedly called for one

particularly tough 'shock' division—made up of highly educated rough-necks, foot-ball players, hammer-throwers, prize-fighters, plug-uglies, bouncers, intrepid rascals, human bull-dogs, lion-tamers and man-eaters. Naturally, as you can understand, we were sent, as the specifications left General Pershing no other alternative."

"I see," replied the soldier.

On account of his close connection with the throne room, undoubtedly he had been delegated by the "guard-house lawyers" in the barns, haylofts, wagon, houses and other lodgments of his associates, to put the question at a suitable and appropriate time.

The host of the three staff officers at their new and delightful billet, is an elderly Frenchman, whose demeanor is marked with culture and refinement. His home a beautiful, ivy covered château, with a wooded park surrounding it. He welcomes the trio warmly and with the courteous ease of a well-bred gentleman.

What particularly attracts the Adjutant's attention as they walk about the grounds, is a kitchen arrayed with numerous copper pots and pans hanging in orderly alignment, and two buxom women busying themselves preparing the noonday meal.

Porthos, as has been explained, speaks perfect French, while his companions can interpret only a word or two. But during the conversation that is carried on between their host and Porthos, the Adjutant picks up just one word.

After a short time the little party separates, the soldiers three retracing their steps toward the village.

"What did the Frenchman say, during your conversation, when he used the word *oeuf*?" asks the Adjutant pointedly to Porthos as they trudge along a narrow thoroughfare.

"*Oeuf*. Let me think. Well, oh yes—I remember. He inquired of me the approximate manpower America can furnish if necessary. I placed it at 30,000,000 men, and it tickled him so much he asked if we would care to have a little lunch—*eggs* and bacon or something. But I did not feel we should take advantage of his hospitality on such short notice—"

"Oh! So that's the way it is! He invited us to luncheon and you decided to decline for the party. Beautiful military business! But hell, what can be expected from a doctor? By any chance do you remember, Sir, having read what a famous story-writer made Napoleon say to the Brigadier Gerard who muddled a mission?"

"No, my amiable friend, just what did a famous story-writer make Napoleon say to the Brigadier Gerard, who muddled a mission?"

"The expression was—'Gerard you are the first swordsman of the Grand Army, but the damndest *fool* in France!' "

In due time the companions arrive at a dusty, unkempt canteen-tent, with tables of rough boards shakily topped over trestles, and round wooden stools. There they seat themselves and purchase crackers and watery cocoa—all that is left to buy, and which they consume moodily, midst dirty wooden dishes, crumbs and hungry buzzing flies.

THE ESCARBOTEN CLUB

Evening finds the trio formally inaugurating a social organization at their billet. An organization that will doubtless hold a prominent place in any accurate narrative of the division that may, in the future, be written. That is to say, a club is organized in the card room of the château, a beautiful salon furnished throughout in cardinal red, which had been placed at their disposal by the generous host.

Several prospective members had been invited. It may be explained the main object of the Escarboten Club, for so it was named; in fact the sole idea, was the advertising and ultimate

selling to substantial officers of the British and French forces, the technique and personal financial advantages when thoroughly absorbed and understood, of the great American game of draw poker.

Needless to say, a delightful evening was enjoyed by the founders.

* * * * * *

After five days at Escarboten, another move is ordered; this time to the vicinity of Beauval, a little town some fifty kilometers due east, that is toward the front.

What a difference fifty kilometers due east makes. Beauval, according to reports received by Intelligence, is a night-bombers' paradise. No Hun airman would ever think of passing over it without dropping a bomb or two, as a sort of reminder that sooner or later there will be no Beauval.

After two days, or rather nights, spent at Beauval, there is unanimous agreement by all ranks that the accuracy of reports of the Intelligence section is superb. The enemy apparently had observed the forward movement from the air, and is sending down generous stanzas of his 'ymn of 'ate. Incidentally there is a British airdrome just up the road, which may be additional pollen to attract the bee.

Getting away from the war for a moment, it may here be recorded the "ghost walked" to-day for the first time since the shores of Cape Charles faded into the mists. Pay day with everybody receiving large quantities of beautiful white paper French money, which you hold up to the light and see a picture. It will be a busy night for the enlisted crapshooters throughout the sector—and also at the local international of the Escarboten Club.

Beauval is full of undersized British soldiers, with shining brass buttons and ill-fitting shoddy uniforms. Little chaps, distinctly cockney. Undersized, because practically all of the brawn has been sapped from the British Isles . . . drawn for sacrifice to the Red God, War. Leaving only bubbles of froth: which having settled on the bottom of the National vat, are likewise to be thrown upon the fodder beds of the blazing front.

The British Isles, where not so long ago, one of their greatest warriors and patriots, the Field Marshal Lord Roberts, earnestly preached and solemnly begged his indifferent and thoughtless fellow countrymen to make adequate preparation for the land defense of the Empire. But the crystallized attitude of the people was—fine old top, "Bobs," great old boy, but:

There'll be no more war—
England 'ates that sort of thing,
Mothers needn't worry;
Peace with 'owner
Is now our motter—
An' Gawd Save the King!

Incidentally, the initial cost of that popular public decision was the first hundred thousand. An irreplaceable loss that will be felt by the Empire for centuries to come. Yet, in the years just previous to every great war, civilization dreams a dream, a dream of permanent peace.

Motor lorries are everywhere, their stolid soldier drivers living aboard the huge covered trucks which in time they consider their own, and decorate the fore interior partition with bright colored gewgaws and pictures cut from magazines, just as they were wont to decorate the walls of 'Arriet's kitchen, back in old Cheltenham.

The narrow streets are crowded with soldiers from Australia and New Zealand, young and old, here to fight for the British Nation of which they form a potent unit. Dressed in olive-drab uniforms, wrapped puttees and broad-brimmed hats fastened up at the side, like Roosevelt's Rough Riders when he led them up San Juan Hill. Or was it Kettle Hill?

Fine looking fighting men, usually swinging along the narrow sidewalks two and two; deep of chest and broad of shoulder, strong of character and arm and leg. Careless and pugnacious, never saluting their officers, or any other officers; seeming to breathe contempt for their little British brothers, and not even looking at the Americans, whom they probably adjudge as just a little better than nothing.

But don't attempt to bump any of the Yank tribe off the narrow sidewalks, Ausies, as they say you do the little Tommies; for if you do something rough and disagreeable may suddenly happen to you.

The peculiar characteristics of the Australians were explained recently by a British officer during a regular meeting of the Club. It seems an English brigadier, to whose brigade a battalion of Australians had been assigned and were about to report, sent a message to their commander, indicating he would review the column at a prescribed point on the road as they entered his sector.

Beautifully gotten out, the General and his entourage lined up formally at a crossroads. The Australians approached. Their first company lounged by at route step, officers and men glancing in the General's direction merely through individual curiosity, and without any attempt at a salute or change of cadence. The second and then the third company followed suit.

This was too much for the English G. O. C., who galloped up to the side of the young giant commanding the column and, in a cutting voice, exclaimed:

"Look here, I say! Your troops slouched past me without a single officer saluting or a company at attention. Never witnessed such miserable marching—discipline and courtesy abominable. Quite the *worst* in the British Expeditionary Forces!"

To all of which the Ausie commander replied, happily:

"Purple onions, but wouldn't the New Zealanders be sore if they heard that?"

GAMBLERS' LUCK

On the evening of the paymaster's visit, the Club remained in executive session from eight until shortly after eleven o'clock. There were present two British majors, a French captain and the charter members. The shutters of the billet had been carefully closed. An ancient bureau drawer, turned upside down on two empty Dewar liqueur cases, with an army blanket spread over it, acted as a table. Candles, stuck into the necks of tall Rhine wine bottles, furnished the illumination.

The meeting opens with a statement of the Surgeon, the Club's president, that five francs will be the limit, represented by a blue chip. That, on account of the uncertainty of everything in general, no checks or promissory notes will be accepted by the bank. That a pair of jacks, or better, shall be required to "open" a pot, each member contributing a blue chip initially. Thereafter, the dealer alone will contribute a "blue" before shuffling the cards.

The educational session proceeds smoothly, only interrupted now and then by one of the student players remarking, for instance:

"Now what abat this, not sayin' I 'ave it, but I am thinking. That is, I mean to say, are five cards of a different suit, but in numerical order, for instance, more valuable than five hearts, for instance, not in numerical order?"

Such questions are answered by the President, the charter members paying close attention to everything.

As the hour approaches eleven, some difficulty develops in opening a pot. Several times the cards change hands with cadenced contributions from each dealer, which ultimately results in an enticing number of "blues" in no-man's land.

Then Porthos draws, what in the Club vernacular would be called Essie, Bessie and Tessie, with two Johns, or three queens and a pair of jacks. The French member in the meantime carefully separates three of his cards and lays down the other two, then remembers he should have "opened," for which oversight he asks pardon. Porthos boosts the Frenchman, who responds: the remaining charter members watching the operation intently, like two foxes who are trying to make up their minds whether or not the sleeping hare is surrounded by a trap.

Then Porthos again reaches for a chip . . . and war intervenes with an *air bomb!* CRASH! *z-z-z-z-!!!* The fiends of hell burst forth, apparently right in front of the billet door, their devilish organs of agitation overturning the table, extinguishing the candles and scattering cards and chips into the sudden ebon blackness.

"It's the General's billet across the way!" some one shouts as the membership dash into the street.

A bomb has detonated at one side of the G. O. C's. temporary abode, tearing out a part of the wall but injuring no one. A second bomb, however, finds the center of the picket line of headquarters horses, killing some instantly, breaking the legs and mortally wounding others. Heart-rending wails of the poor dumb beasts pierce the moonlit night. No shriek of pity can approach that of a stricken horse.

Poor dumb creatures, faithful, willing, patient; giving all they have of bone and sinew: hauling, dragging, straining. For what? A rough pat on the neck, a few oats and a hank of hay. Kindly-eyed, passive, submissive, struggling under the burden. Trying with might and main to obey. Often bending under a yoke that is too heavy; they stagger, totter, stumble, drop and die; or are maimed and killed after this fashion. Knowing nothing about saving the world for Democracy, or battle glory, knowing only faithfulness to man.

Horses, like men and bees, have their aristocrats, their middlemen and their drones. The difference is that in war a drone-man may snatch a priceless pearl from the turbulent sea of conflict, just as a drone-bee, in the ascending spiral of the swarm, may out-wing the hive, reach the queen, and gain esthetic joy. But in the mud and muck and madness behind the battle lines, where the drone-horse drags his weary way, there are for him no pearls of glory, no queens—only heavy harness, onerous loads, burning sun, hungry flies, cutting wind, rain, cold, the lash—and death.

Beyond the horizon, in the Great White Camp, must there not be a place for the willing horse, who never breaks the Ten Commandments, lives dean, and dies faithful?

The valley of the shadow runs extremely narrow here, and the traveler, whether man or beast, is beset by many dangers.

V

PERSHING!

IF the shades of Turenne, Frederick, Wellington, Lee, and Grant should ride into Beauval today they would not receive a passing glance. Because all interest centers upon a live soldier who arrived this morning about eleven o'clock. A gentleman who runs the American Expeditionary Forces—every minute. Incidentally, he rates *four stars*.

Some old soldier wrote:

> O them big bugs hev' bigger bugs—
> Thet jump on 'em and bite 'em;
> An' the bigger bugs, hev' bigger bugs,
> An' so—ad infinitum!

Four stars includes the infinite.

The Commander in Chief, and this is our first sight of him, looks exactly like a man who can win a war if anybody can. He brings into fancy Napoleon's observation, that: "The Gauls were not conquered by Roman legions, but by Caesar." *Pershing*, whose name will live as one of America's greatest captains so long as "For God and Country" remains the motto of his Alma Mater. Maybe longer. He personifies American energy, skill and determination. Terse, accurate and plain-spoken, his spear knows no brother. One look at him forces this conviction. No wonder some of the old Indian fighters on the French front are having a tough time of it.

The Division staff are presented individually, maybe it would be better to say inspected individually.

"General," he says firmly to the G. O. C., "I looked over one of your regiments on the road west of here. Men look fit, but carry too much equipment. Get some of it off."

"Yes, Sir!" is the answer. And some of the equipment will come *off*—British or no British!

One of the Commander in Chief's aides, a former United States Ambassador to France, accepted an invitation to lunch with the staff. It was the first time they had been in contact with an American officer from the French front and they knew little or nothing about activities there, with the exception of a loosely connected story of a local exploit of American troops at Seicheprey and Remières Wood. Therefore intense interest was manifested in Colonel Bacon's story of later developments.

"On April 25th," he said, "our First Division relieved the French infantry on the front near Montdidier, and on May 28th they captured Cantigny, after a rehearsed show. The German counter-attacks in the action were extremely violent, his desperate opposition with infantry and guns of all calibers, apparently being a determined effort to counteract the effect an American victory would have on German morale. The French high command, even then, had little confidence in the ability of green American troops to stop the enemy.

"By May 31st the great German push toward Paris, only forty miles away, had arrived at the Marne and turned westward. It was going strong until it reached Château-Thierry, where it collided with the 7th U. S. (Motorized) Machine Gun Battalion.

"A short distance north of the town our Second Division was rapidly lined up to check the enemy advance down the valley. But still the French really feared the issue and placed some little

French battalions on the flanks as ‘protection’ and encouragement. We were led into action, so to speak, by the apron strings of veteran Frenchmen. The on-coming Germans delivered furious blows, but the American division took their losses, sneered collectively, *stopped* the advance and rolled it up. Not only that but three days later, on June 4th, we took the offensive and pushed the enemy out of Belleau Wood, then captured the village of Bouresches against the most desperate resistance of Germany’s best veteran storm troops.

“During the fighting the Germans received a moral beating far worse than the physical, for they had openly derided the initial appearance of American troops (even to the extent of placing a sign on one part of their front bearing the words ‘Welcome Yanks!’). They now realized that Americans were here not only in substantial numbers, but that they would fight recklessly.

“What they found on the field, when they gathered up their dead, undoubtedly spread throughout their army; that is, practically all their soldiers who had contacted our infantry were killed with a *single* bullet, for in the fighting each of our men selected one of the on-rushing veteran enemy, deliberately aimed at him and killed him. That type of marksmanship was a revelation to the Boche.”

There are no “Wuxtras!” here. No newspapers of any sort, except the *London Times*, which carefully tells its readers nothing about the technique of the war, its daily battle news being confined strictly to long lists of officers of the British forces who during the preceding twenty-four hours have died in action. These lists undoubtedly convey the picture of bloody conquest much more emphatically than any description could do.

Colonel Bacon’s story was therefore the first graphic news that had been received by the “lost” division from their comrades on the American front. It may be said to have been the first optimistic note that reached them since their arrival in France.

* * * * * *

As the Adjutant and Porthos walked together toward their billet at the end of the day, the latter said: “I felt it necessary to use a few cautionary words to Smith this morning regarding certain recent activities of our housekeeper. It seems she made him a present of three brass insignia from the uniforms of British soldiers, and, frankly, I look with deep suspicion upon sudden gestures of generosity by middle-aged French women of a certain type toward young, good-looking American soldiers. Hence, I lectured him upon the serious aspects of indiscriminate licentiousness.”

“What did he have to say about it?”

“Oh, a trite remark and a promise to keep out of her way in the future.”

Pvt. 1st Cl. Smith had been acting as handy-man at the Club, since the local branch opened, and part of the billet was tenanted by the civilian occupant, an evilly romantic female with a wine-puffed flirtatious smile; by no means a flapper: maybe, yes, some twenty odd years agone; but at present a Tinamou bird with “eclipse” plumage. Withal, a melancholy fowl who is fond of expressing the hope that in the near future, some one will drop upon her grave a tear.

The British insignia, representing different types and design of regimental coat of arms, appeals strongly to American soldiers, who attach them to trouser-belts so they may be admired whenever there is opportunity to remove the blouse. Vanity and nothing more. Yet, vain desire for admiration does not stop with young soldiers. In the case of some of the middle-aged officers it takes a different turn perhaps: such as having the head shaved where the hair is thin, and covering the spot with a smeary coat of *axle-grease*, in a fond hope of returning some day to the U. S. A., not only with a soldier’s glory, but also the bald spot completely obliterated by a heavy crop of hair—*grown in France*.

A GENERAL COURT MARTIAL

The first general court martial in the Division has just adjourned *sine die*, at one of the buildings on an air field just outside of Beauval. The court had been convened to try a soldier who disappeared and had recently been picked up and returned to his regiment. The charge was a grave one, "Desertion in the presence of the enemy."

Major Egan, 107th Infantry, was President of the court, while Captain Farmer, 108th Infantry, acted as counsel for the accused. Both officers were prominent attorneys at home.

"Gentlemen of the court," said Captain Farmer, in his opening address for the accused, "when the Articles of War were promulgated, far back in the early days of the American Army; their creators had no conception, no visualization, no thought of such a war as that in which we are now participants. The whole world, as a matter of fact, was in complete ignorance of a conflict in which high power rifled cannon and accurate long range fire would play a major part.

"Battle lines, when those Articles were written, came together on a restricted field, sword to sword, shot to shot, bayonet to bayonet and butt to butt.

"This young American volunteer soldier is charged with violating the Seventy-fifth Article of War, in that he ran away, deserted, if you please, *before the enemy*, for which offense he may suffer death, or such other punishment as the court may direct.

"I ask you, gentlemen, to acquit this youthful soldier upon the ground, that he was *not* before the enemy, as intended or contemplated in this antiquated Article. A man cannot be in the *presence* of the enemy when the enemy is five kilometers away from his regiment—."

At this point in the proceedings a military band on the grounds just outside the court room made further oratory impossible. The band was playing a dirge! At its conclusion many voices began to sing. Counsel for the accused intimated that perhaps if the President could have the meeting outside transferred to a more distant locality, he would be grateful.

An orderly was dispatched to learn what was going on: the court taking a short recess. A few moments later the soldier returned and reported a burial ceremony was taking place over the remains of a British soldier who had been killed by a bomb during an air raid the previous night.

Captain Farmer looked out the window in a deep study. . . The ceremonies halted suddenly, as the hum of enemy planes seeped into the court room from aloft; then an ear-splitting, nerve-wrecking smash a short distance away, was followed immediately by a rat-tat-tat of machine guns from the planes, and an instant later the discharge of anti-aircraft artillery.

When quiet returned, the President addressed the counsel for the accused:

"You were making the point, Captain, when the court recessed, that this neighborhood cannot be considered 'in the presence of the enemy;' pray proceed."

The counsel arose with obvious embarrassment and, in a grave voice replied:

'If you please, the accused has decided to throw himself upon the court's mercy: by advice of counsel."

FLANDERS' FIELDS

After a continuous run of ten days in and around Beauval, with the performers hard at work rehearsing from early morning until dark, the circus has gathered up its trappings for a little trip into the country, over the 4th of July, where it will be pretty sure of some free fireworks.

This time the show moves northwest a hundred and fifty odd kilometers, and reopens rehearsals in the neighborhood of a little jerk-water village called Nieurlet, near St. Omar, with

the fields all about glowing with poppies through the yellow wheat, beautiful and red—like battle glory.

Nieurlet consists primarily of two blocks of Main street, a church, three *estaminets*, and canals running in every direction. In all probability the series of canals were initially fashioned by the ancients to conserve the huge quantities of blood that flowed from French and English warriors during their many encounters in this cock-pit of Europe, the aforesaid blood later being used by the forethoughtful natives for purposes of fertilization.

It should be remembered that *everything* is saved in France. The nationals hereabouts like the citizenry of Venice, are partial to water transportation, and the soldiers billeted on the surrounding countryside will probably spend their holiday rowing up and down the dikes—at one franc the hour.

It looks like another bomber's hunting ground, and as billets are none too plentiful in town, the trio select a farmhouse in the country.

As the officers approached the house their interest was momentarily centered upon the person of the biggest Chinaman they had looked upon since Li Hung Chang visited their home land. The tall, huge bulk sat complacently on a rude bench, at the edge of the path, watching them lazily through blinking almond eyes.

"You in army?" cracked one of the Americans, halting abruptly before the overgrown child of Confucius.

"Yessee, mlee have lot Chinee here. Work on roads, savee?"

"Then get up. *Quick!* Stand up! Understand?"

The elephantine arose with more agility than might ordinarily be expected for the size of him.

"Muchee Mellicans dlat come, make lot trouble, mebbe."

"While Americans here, stand up when they pass or when they speak to you, savee? If you not stand up—Americans might give you wash-ee in nearby canal-ee, maybe."

"All samee muchee fine day, yes-ee."

And as the companions pass on Porthos gleefully sings a verse, composed for the occasion; which, like all his poetry, is terrible:

> O Infidel, knowee—you stand on your toe-ee,
> Before great Bul-lonee E'Mar!
> Or by Allah Pathy, he'll give you a bath-ee,
> O Chinky Petruskee Skivahh!

They enter the kitchen of the farmer's abode; a room damp and cheerless but exceedingly clean, the stone floor sodden with moisture. It is simply furnished, with a small stove containing a peculiar round firepot to receive twigs of dry wood; a bare table, the top of which seems so spotless and dry that doubtless it is daily carried out into the air and sunshine for submission to soap, water, scrubbing brush and a strong human arm; for sunshine rarely invades the room which is shaded by the low overhang of a thatched roof. A few rude, three-legged stools make up its furnishings. The only ornament on the walls is a large ornate crucifix.

The companions are effusively greeted by the farmer's daughter, a fair and robust type of Flemish beauty. A creature without opportunity to absorb later-day culture, refinement, education; yet languorous as a southern moon, and particularly gentle in her pastoral mannerisms. Wooden shoes, indeed, but a clear unpainted complexion, as soft and blooming as a wild rose. Lingering fondness for the female of the species undoubtedly gives the trio a momentary interest in this young rustic: an interest which, in peace-time, might have been more or less impassive.

No attempt will be made to describe her, except to say she appeared to be about twenty, with a lippy mouth, dark glossy hair, bright eye's, generous curves, in fact very much an all-round French woman.

"Some bambino!" comments the Adjutant.

"Rather attractive for the type," vouchsafes the Surgeon.

"Motion seconded," answers Porthos, "with the Four Horsemen riding roughshod through the country, it is such as she who has manufactured the hardy stalwarts of present-day France! A medieval type that Michelangelo would have raved about—"

"In a few minutes," interrupts the Adjutant, "if you keep on, we will hear her hair is the shade of ripened grapes, viewed at midnight by the light of Vesuvian flames. Yet her large black eyes—"

"Her eyes are not black," counters Porthos didactically, "but rather a deep liquid brown—"

"Well, brown, black, purple, whatever they are, get her started busting some eggs in a frying pan," commands the Surgeon, with hungry and petulant emphasis.

As usual, Porthos has the advantage of being able to converse fluently in the native tongue. Unceasingly he talks to the fair maid of Nieurlet while she busies herself at the diminutive stove, glancing admiringly from time to time at the Adjutant, it seems, as she answers Porthos in low short sentences.

"She has just told me she is thinking of throwing her hat at M. le Adjutant. I explained that she does not express herself quite properly; what she means to say is she 'is thinking of setting her cap for the Adjutant,' " at which banter Porthos laughs boisterously.

A dozen fried eggs, bread, butter and six bottles of excellent red wine are at last placed upon the kitchen table, and the maid leaves her wistful admirers to themselves.

"You see," explains Porthos, helping himself to five eggs, "there is a native psychology immersed in the intellectual activities of a French female which is observed and understood only by those who have closely studied the mental characteristics of the Gaul. Ordinarily, only three eggs and one bottle of wine per person would have been provided. Hence, it was necessary for me to invent a means by which we could have an additional quantity of eggs, bread and wine.

"What do I do? I merely describe you," indicating the Adjutant, "as one of the richest men in the American army, easily worth 10,000,000 francs, unmarried, no relatives, careless with money, exceptionally tractable, lover of country life—and very partial to substantially built women.

"What happens? Well, first the coquetry we have observed, then the generous quantity of victuals and bottles!"

As a golden summer sun bends its radiant glow behind the western horizon, the maid appears around a comer of the house carrying two huge iron pails, each with a capacity of about five gallons. Tripping lightly down a short path to the edge of the canal, she gracefully reaches forward and fills first one and then the other, without so much as letting go of either.

"Porthos," slowly reflects the Adjutant, watching the young woman intently, "that girl is undoubtedly the love-result of a merger between a later-day Hercules and a lady Samson. And, so far as I am personally concerned—she's YOURS!"

A half hour later the contents of the last bottle, fragrant with light tantalizing perfumes of wild flowers, flows downward upon its last journey, delight, fully touching the taste-chords of the palate, as Porthos puts it.

"I suppose there is no use asking the Amazon for a toss of black coffee, with a 'spot' of cognac, from papa's dusty little old brown jug?" inquires the Surgeon.

"No use. She probably never heard of coffee," replies Porthos, the heights of whose knowledge at times almost stun his companions.

The conversation is interrupted at this point by the reappearance of Mademoiselle Dufour, carrying a large earthen plate containing six eggs and a thick veal chop, which she places upon the table and again busies herself preparing a meal.

After some talk with the young woman, honest Porthos interprets, sheepishly:

"She says it is for 'one beeg blonde la-la American' who brings the Adjutant's luggage. She says his name is *Captain* William Smith. 'He ask me to call him Beelie. He say he is the Adjutant's *manager*. Veery good looking.' "

After a stay of four days at Nieurlet, the Americans point eastward toward Ypres and the Line.

On the way hence, Private Smith, in one of his bursts of boyish confidence, informs the companions he experienced much difficulty in bidding good-bye to "*poor* Fleurette Dufour," but promised to write to her often, as the dominie agreed to translate his letters for her.

"What would that sweetheart of yours over in the U. S. A. say if she heard of this carrying-on?" some one asked the soldier.

"The last sweetie I had in the U. S. A., Sir, married a 'conscientious objector,' just before we sailed."

* * * * * *

Forty kilometers by bus brings the Americans behind the East Poperinghe front, with a base at Oudezeele; the staff, opening for business on the main street, directly opposite an old-fashioned inn, over the door of which a half obliterated sign announces to those who travel the unpaved thoroughfare that it is *Au Coc Hardi*. In due time it will in all probability become the Manhattan Club for èlite doughboys, meaning the conquerors at the various "craps" games that grow and multiply everywhere.

VI

THE LINE

THE Americans are now assigned to the Second British Army, which holds the immediate front. Ludendorff has time and again driven his rams against the British bulldogs hereabouts. In one of these attacks the Fifth British Army was driven in, badly hurt, but the Third held. Then the rams made a break in the human wall between the extreme right of the British and the left flank of the French; a dangerous point for a puncture. But they did not succeed in opening a breach wide enough to reach behind.

The vital necessity for "unity of command" along the whole front had become apparent, and Marshal Foch was made generalissimo of all the Allied troops in France. Foch, the quiet, academic soldier, the pious military lecturer on the maintenance of the integrity of national territory. The studious teacher, who riveted into the young minds of his pupils year in and year out his offensive combat formula, plus the will of the commander; namely, that "true battle is the battle of manoeuvre in which, thanks to the forces which the commander has reserved and constituted in such a time that they can be usefully employed, thanks also to the judicious application of that fruitful principle 'the economy of forces,' it is he, and he alone, who will preside over the various phases of the struggle, and will at last be definitely the master of its decision. *Where* he chooses and *when* he chooses he will launch the decisive attack which is the expression of his will, and which alone gives victory." Or, again:

"A leader worthy of the name will, under all circumstances, avoid the *parallel battle*. In this two armies are drawn up in two ever-extending lines facing each other. In such a battle the result, of necessity, depends upon the mere valor or ability of the soldiers; it is at the mercy of any incident, as of local panic, and the General commanding is deprived of all means of action. He has abdicated his function through ignorance or sloth, and can do nothing to master his fate."

Foch, the master mind, who, when war comes to his country, drops the role of schoolmaster and puts into practical execution in the field, the theoretical principles he had created in the class room.

Ferdinand Foch, whose name history may elevate to the sixth place in the gallery of the world's greatest captains, that is, abreast as a conqueror, with Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, Gustavus Adolphus and Napoleon.

The result of his selection by the Allies is that French are sent to support the British, and the German drive stopped at Villers-Bretonneux, near Amiens in Picardy.

At that time the Second Army held the line to the north, with Ypres and the Channel ports as its major responsibility. Later the Germans launched a drive along the Ypres-Lys front, with the result that the Second Army, after a number of hard, grueling rounds, became a bit groggy. Foch again supplemented the British forces, but the German advance took Wytschaete Ridge and later secured the dominating Mount Kemmel.

While the German Marne drive had been unsuccessful, and the capture of Vaux by American troops on July 1st ended the Teuton dream of occupying Paris, nevertheless the French were weakened to a point where further substantial support of the British line was impossible, and another well directed bash might reasonably result in a clean knockout. Hence the placing of the Americans in front of Kemmel Hill and at other points contiguous thereto, all under an American corps commander, with Simonds and Haskell as his senior staff-counselors.

The Surgeon, Porthos and the Adjutant again select a billet in the country, some distance outside Oudezeele. About an hour before sunset they approach a little red brick house surrounded by a flower-laden garden. The only signs of life visible were a cat sitting near the gate, post cleaning its face with a paw, a few hungry buzzing flies, and an old, old lady looking now and then over her shoulder at a blaze of orange-red clouds that block the western edge of a summer sky as she arranges some blooms in a vase before a roadside shrine; a shrine erected in honor of a Saint who, unquestionably, sits near the throne of the Great White God.

The old lady lives alone with her shrine, her flowers and her cat. War does not mean so much to her now, perhaps, as it did one day in September of the year 1870, when news reached Oudezeele that her youthful husband had perished in the battle of Sedan.

Maybe the shrine is kept green and beautiful with flowers in the love-memory of that young soldier of France. Perhaps she considers these strange Americans are his comrades; here to crush, as he tried to do, the mortal enemies of her beloved country; which may account for her gentle courtesy and simple kindness to them.

As darkness cloaks the graceful countryside, a distant rumbling thunder and roll of heavy guns is plainly heard. To the westward the moon is sailing through a maze of summer clouds, while a reddish glow stretches like a sinister shadow across the eastern sky.

The Escarboten Club is slowly losing its popularity, the interest of its membership seeming to be drawn gradually to another and vastly more important gamble; namely, that of life and death; for the mutilation mill has begun to grind. The first soldiers of the division killed by small arms fire have been reported; one from Vanderbilt's Engineers, another from the 108th Infantry.

It requires much painstaking and patient effort, in many formulas, to teach a soldier all the mechanics of combat. But the sound of an enemy *shot*, whistling across the void, is also necessary to bring into consciousness the stern reality of mortal conflict.

With the realization that the screaming missile is a death challenge, a psychological change takes place in the ordinary process of reasoning. The nerves grow taut, muscles harden, jaws set, like those of a man who is suddenly angered at the act of another and gradually lashes himself into a rage; except, with the soldier, there is intermixed in his emotions a consuming and all powerful passion to get the thing over with, and the results of training are subconsciously applied to this end.

From that moment, if properly ganged up, he will edge forward till the last of the pack have dropped. Edge forward so long as those around him do likewise, for by that process alone is there an ultimate chance for victory, and a return to normalcy. Again, his chances of being killed are no greater forward than where he stands. It's like a hungry Atlas lion confronted by a North African tiger, at whose throat it instantly springs, feeling, at best: it is a long chance for safety and a warm meal.

Speaking of meals, there is an established brotherhood between the British Army and the Americans in this he-man's war, that every now and then sticks its head over the stone wall of Anglo-Saxon reserve and sends a flirtatious smile across to the untutored warrior Yanks at work in their tirocinium garden.

Amongst the British in their immixture thus far with the Americans there is no such thing as flattery or artful compliment. In fact there are no compliments of any kind. To them the Yanks are just so many two-legged, upstanding, young-fellow-my-lads. Or, to put it rather roughly: fodder for the guns. And a type of fodder that is very much better than no fodder at all. Beyond that—well, fodder. *Quite!*

We express our idea of their appreciation of us in this simple way so as to emphasize the fact that no Britisher has, during the emergency, or ever will, become obsessed with the conviction that upon the "Amoricans" *everything* depends.

Helpful, undoubtedly, but blime: *fodder!*

On the other hand, from the race-relationship standpoint, nothing is left undone by British high command and its various branches that will in any manner aid, assist, support and sustain the American brother. It was not many days after their arrival behind the front that word reached Oudezeele from various outlying regiments that the men were not getting enough to eat. A serious situation, to be sure. Not that the men were starving, but the British ration they received did not seem sufficient to fully satisfy their appetite.

This information was forwarded to the local British "Q," and by him apparently submitted to high command, with the result that a general officer "Q" visited American headquarters to see about it.

"Decidedly, your ranks are receiving exactly the same ration per man that our ranks receive. But if it is not found sufficient we will increase it. Yet, it does seem decidedly strange that your ranks should require more to eat than our ranks. They must be extraordinary eaters, absolutely, what?"

"The difference, as I see it, General," replies the American G-1, "lies in the fact that your soldiers appear to eat several times a day. They seem to have breakfast and then in the middle of the morning some tea, crackers and marmalade; then a midday meal; then in the afternoon some more tea, crackers and marmalade, and later on, the evening meal. In other words, they appear to be at it practically all the time, but rather in small portions. On the other hand, our soldiers eat, officially, only three times a day. But, believe me, General, when they eat *they eat!*"

As a direct result of the conference, each American soldier thereafter received one and one-half British ration per diem. And no further complaints were recorded about buck-starvation.

* * * * * *

The Americans are about to take over a sector of the front line. Detachments of officers and men have been assigned to duty, with British "holding" troops, to learn the details of positions their forces will ultimately occupy.

In this sector, ordinarily, from daylight until about ten o'clock in the morning, a quietude prevails that is almost uncanny, and visitors from afar might properly wonder if all they have heard of the constant crash and smash of conflict is true. But, usually about 10 a. m., a British *heavy* lets go, a few moments later a German gun responds, or vice versa, and from then on the dyadic business of the day continues more or less violently till, say, four in the afternoon, when both sides stop the war for a bit of tea, after which business is resumed and continues late into the night without substantial interruption.

One picture of the detail of "learning the ground" may suffice. It is the picture of a small dug-out, well covered up. Damp, cheerless and filthy; boxes to sit upon, tallow candles for light.

It is the command post of a British company of the line. A lieutenant occupies it, with his batman and a few runners. All of them fed up, Gawd, fed up; with the guns, the slaughter, the whole bleedin' "hoccasion." But standing fast. Quite!

An American captain, who speaks German fluently, with his company officers and several enlisted men, stumble through the mud and over half-sunken duck, boards, led by a British soldier-guide. They reach the dug-out about 11 p. m.

"Cheer'o, Uncle Sam, have a drink, what?"

The insignia of American rank is all Greek to the British lieutenant, hence the familiarity.

"Good evening! Out here to get acquainted, you see. Taking over the sector in a short time."

"Quite, but have a drink."

"Thanks, no. Here to get a line on the way you do things, you vets. We're neophytes at this sort of a racket."

"Well, I mean to say, really, the only way to know the sloppy old ground is to go out and welter around on it. I'm about to wander about; always do it twice during the night; come out with us."

"Suits me. Let's go!"

It should be explained, the British lines were not a continuous system of prepared trenches on this sector of the front, but rather an imaginary line, supported at intervals by strong points that angle out to the edge of No-Man's Land, between which patrols cover the terrain during the night.

The two officers, each with a soldier behind him, leave the command post. It is very dark, with desultory firing. On and on through the mud and blackness they tread their way cautiously, the British officer stopping here and there to contact alert groups of mud-bespattered soldiers in lean-tos or shallow dugouts. Gradually, as time goes on, it seems to the uninitiated American officer that the inspection trip is becoming interminable.

"I say, somehow, I think we're out of bounds," at last whispers the lieutenant. "Waters," addressing the soldier behind him, "just where do you make it we are?"

"I think we're in the bloomin' crotch between the 'Un strong points. In their lines, if y' awsk me," is the whispered reply.

Then suddenly, out of the darkness, comes a challenge:

"Wer da?"

"Silence! Von Arnim—*fool*," hisses the quick-witted American captain in his best German. The only "Von" the American's mind registered at the moment was Von Arnim, who years before had published a military text-book, the translation of which received wide circulation in the United States.

A fraction of a second later the little party are dashing back precipitously, expecting every moment a "flare" will illuminate the ground.

A SLIP OF THE TONGUE

Another incident may be told that comprised part of a day's, or rather night's' work in this particular command post. Shortly after midnight, on the second day of the Americans arrival, the captain was seated with the lieutenant commanding, discussing the dispositions to be made at daybreak, when a staff officer bursts in upon them.

He is faultlessly gotten out, in fact so scrupulously clean is his leather and so fresh are the red patches on the lapels of his well-cut coat, indicating "'staff," that both officers glance at each other in mutual admiration.

"Which of you commands here?" he blurts, without so much as a "cheerio" or other salutation common between officers and gentlemen.

"I do, Sir," answers the British lieutenant.

"Well, look here, I have just been about the wire in front of your south boundary. Schoolboys could do better setting out. I want you to take every man you have; go out yourself and set the wire properly, if you know what I mean. Da wire in its present condition is worthless; the Boche could swim through it, without wire-cutters. I mean to say, go out there now, or I'll have to spot you immediately."

"I will attend to it at once, Sir," replies the lieutenant, in an even voice, as he starts for the dug-out steps.

Then suddenly he whirls about, his automatic leveled at the staff officer.

"Don't move or I'll let go! Captain, will you search this man for weapons?"

"*What*, what is the meaning of this outrage, unheard-of disrespect, wait—"

"Don't explain to me! Possibly I am making a grave mistake. If so, my superiors will see to it. You will be sent to the rear, where you can explain your activities."

A few minutes later the staff officer, with an escort, left the dug-out.

"What caused you to suspect him?" asked the American, after the "alert" had been sent forward.

"That faultless garb and the polished leather. Quite all right in the morning when officers first get out, but not at midnight, in the mud. What made you suspicious?"

"*Da* wire!"

"Exactly; it was the only slip of the tongue he made. But it settled things."

The following afternoon the battalion commander visited the dugout, congratulated the lieutenant on behalf of the G. O. C., and indicated, in a casual way, that the customary procedure had been ordered.

After a few days, the Americans were relieved and late at night bid "Cheer'o" to the British lieutenant. With a soldier guide, they tramp westward through the murk to the command post of the officer commanding the sector. He occupies a much larger dug-out but just as wretched. Down a dozen dirt stairs, candle lights squinting through stagnated tobacco smoke; against the walls rough wooden bunks, covered with unlimbered bedding rolls. Half a case of Scotch whiskey in one corner.

As they enter the commander is pacing the dirt floor, rather unsteadily. He stops for a moment and leers at the newcomers.

"Reporting out, Sir," says the captain, saluting.

"What? Who ordered that?"

A young lieutenant darts toward the American as the officer's back is turned during the pacing.

"Tight, quite."

"Thanks."

"I say, who told you *that*?"

"Orders from our headquarters, you know, directing all American detachments to report at the narrow-gauge railhead at 2 o'clock—"

'Well, I say you remain right here, if you know what I mean; right *here*!"

"I am not subject to your orders, Sir, when they conflict with those of American high command."

"Well, stay here or, by Gawd I'll spot you, 'ell of a 'urry to get away where it's safe! You stay 'ere until I say go. Right 'ere, by Gawd!"

The American is in a quandary; the narrow-gauge flat cars will leave at 2 a. m., and if his detachment is not aboard it will involve a long march over unknown country; an exhausting march, made necessary by no reason other than the drunken decision of an officer without authority to change his orders. On the other hand, he has no desire to be "spotted;" that is, to have charges of any character lodged against him, even by this irresponsible fool. He is still pondering the matter when a British soldier crashes into the dug-outs shouting:

"The front line is sending up S O S rockets!!!"

"*What?* S O S rockets!"

"Yise! The Boche are coming over!!!"

"Send up the artillery S O S!" shouts the young lieutenant, as three soldiers dart from the enlisted section of the dug-out, to execute a sober officer's command.

"Now out of 'ere, all of you!" bawls the commander. "You see you're in the 'y! Out, I say, by Gawd! Are you afraid of 'Un shells?"

"I'm afraid of nothing!" retorts the now infuriated American, edging close to the commander. "We're going out, you—" There discipline and self-control intervenes.

The S O S signals, red, over red, over red, for British artillery concentration, are instantly honored, the guns seeming to boom from all directions.

"Geeze, he didn't come out of his hole to see us off, did he, Captain?" shouts a husky soldier as they file into the open.

"The answer is, he's a dug-out hound!" is the icy reply.

The little detachment spreads out with wide intervals and make their way to a railroad embankment, over which they climb and trail along a ditch that hugs the grade. An enemy shell bursts twenty yards in front of them; another off to the left. Another! Things are getting hot along the ditch. They clamber to open ground, making toward the Rennin-La Clytte road.

They barely leave the slope and spread out again in the intermittent darkness when a heavy shell strikes with a terrific blast almost amongst them. All but two of the party are either killed or wounded. The uninjured reach the road and locate a dressing station seeking help, but finding it choked with wounded men, they return to the field. . . .

The captain, Langer, is slowly, very slowly, regaining consciousness. His half-opened eyes stare dumbly at beautiful lights that seem to hang above him in the sky. A roaring fills his ears and carries to his stunned senses a realization of what has happened. He tries to shake off the stupor by endeavoring to move his arms and legs.

The men! He must look after his men. But he cannot raise himself. He cannot even sit up. His right side seems to be frozen. . . . How beautiful those rockets really are. That white flare reminds him of the Star of Bethlehem. . . . He wonders what relation the *Destroyer* is to the *Prince of Peace*.

But come, come! Where are his lieutenants? He calls loudly:

"Tillion! Clemens!"

"Over here, Captain! Are *you* down?"

"Yes. Are you?"

"I'm pretty fair, Sir, except that a perfectly good shoe has been blown to hell and some of my toes with it."

"Where's Tillion?"

"I'm down, too, Captain, with a crack in the back. Not overly painful."

Above the din a crippled horse shrieks sharply. Gradually, two and two, these wounded soldiers pair off in the semi-darkness. The multi-colored lights in the heavens give the fields a hellish glow. Stunned and injured men are moving about drunkenly here and there. A soldier's kneecap has been torn away; others have lacerated legs and arms; others lay motionless. Those whose wounds are not serious carry or drag the others. The captain, though conscious and now on his feet, between two of his men, is practically paralyzed on the right side, with bleeding cuts from head to foot.

Ultimately, they all reach the dressing station, take their places behind the line of wounded, lying along the road, and await their turn. Later some of them, including the captain, are sent to hospitals in England, where they remain many months. The sector "commander" digging his dug-out deeper and deeper the while. . . .

But then it takes all kinds to make an army.

THE CUP THAT CHEERS

At this period of the war rum invigoration in the trenches is frequently in evidence. Yet, after all, an educated, work-a-day, white collar individual, accustomed, perhaps, to a gentle woman's solicitude, inured to clean sheets, a maximum amount of sleep, a tub, a spotless napkin (shall we say, the fundamentals of peace-time comfort?), who, in the course of human events, over which he has no personal control, finds himself existing day by day in a cold, clammy, mud-begrimed, rat and vermin infested, dirt-walled dugout, ensconced in mother earth, like some living thing in a widened grave, with hell to pay on the outside and the tense anxieties imposed by responsibilities his Country has given him on the inside. We repeat, an ordinary individual in this decidedly putrescent environment is liable to form an attachment, even an affection, for the bottle.

Be horrified, oh, teetotaling, well-fed neighbor, but take a try at it in a field bordering No-Man's Land, day in and day out, through the four seasons, before you preach the condemnation of those who live and *die* in these sepulchers.

MOUNT KEMMEL

The fact that the Dickebusch Lake front is flat, treeless and under constant observation from Mount Kemmel makes it a particularly dangerous sector to hold. Some American infantry now occupies the half-finished earthworks of the so-called East Poperinghe Line, a defensive position in the Dickebusch and Scherpenberg sectors of Belgium. That is to say, in front of it are two other intrenched lines where an American regiment now occupies a sector.

The enemy will have to take these before reaching the last, where the ultimate result will be: hold fast, swim the channel, or become a guest of the Central Powers for the remaining period of the war. Of course, assuming your name is not on one of his projectiles in the interim.

Crimmins and his American engineers are now at work preparing to develop positions with a view to an attack upon Mount Kemmel. A tough proposition, to be sure, but then there were the arguments at Lookout Mountain and the Battle in the Clouds, which the grandfathers of these Americans finally settled.

How can that blackish, ominous hill be successfully carried? That is the question the G. O. C. is at work upon daily, poring over every type of military map available, studying contours, roads, distances, and combat possibilities, visiting various points on the ground from which personal reconnaissance can acquaint him with the natural characteristics of the terrain, discussing various features of a half-formed plan with various experienced officers, respecting the elements necessary for success, with a minimum loss of manpower.

THE KING COMETH

"Look here, we have learned, you see," said an aide-de-camp of a British lieutenant general, who had called upon the chief of staff of the American division, "what I mean to say, my General has been advised the King's itinerary will include this sector within a fortnight.

"Now, of course, it is tremendously important to us, that is, my General. Well, the King, you see, may wish to look about, at a small formation of your Amoricans. Of course, we are not quite sure he will wish to look about, owing to his silly old itinerary. But should he wish to do so, if some sort of a small show could be put on for him. I mean to say, a detachment perhaps, and a bit of a cheer and that sort of thing. That is, of course, rather, if your General wishes to do so."

"I am sure he will consider it a great honor," interjects the American chief of staff.

"What? Thanks, quite. But, you see, the King ordinarily, that is he usually, walks about in front of the ranks, you know. Awfully good sort about that. Inspects rather casually all ranks as he pawses. Of course, well, the King, you see, will not say *anything*, absolutely!

"Now, that is, when the King's retinue arrives at a point. I mean to say, the point where it is arranged to have him look over the Amoricans. Here, you see, when the retinue arrives at the point, an equerry will step from one of the motors. No one else, of course, will step from any of the other motors until the King steps from the motor from which the equerry has stepped.

"In this way, you see, there will be no confusion as to just who the King is. I mean to say, rather, just *where* the King is. If you know what I mean.

"Well, now, when the equerry steps out of the motor, that will be the cue for your General to walk casually up to the motor, from which the equerry; however, the King will step out, you see. The King has a habit, when he steps from a motor; I mean to say he ordinarily strikes the ground twice with his stick. Of course, that means nothing whatever. It may be the King will not strike the ground at all. But, either way, it means nothing, decidedly.

"Here, there should not be too many of your people about for clatter and chatter, you see, are deuced distasteful to the King. You know what I mean, don't you?

"Now, your General will address the equerry and say: 'O'Ryan of the Amoricans.' The equerry will, that is, the equerry ordinarily answers: 'Quite.' Of course, he may bow rather. Then the equerry will face the King squarely, and repeat: 'O'Ryan of the Amoricans.'

"At this point, the King may again strike the ground with his stick; in any event, he will look at your General and say: 'O'Ryan.' Your General; well, of course, he will come to the salute, as the King looks at him, and just before the King says: 'O'Ryan.'

"Then, the equerry will step up to the King and indicate the formation or something of the sort. Provided the King decides to walk past all ranks of your formation, your General will walk abreast the King, decidedly. You see, in our Army, all ranks that may be about, but not in formation, ordinarily give a cheer as the King concludes.

"After the King has finished walking about, he may turn to your General. He *may*, I say, turn to your General and say: 'Quite,' or something of the sort.

"As the King returns to the motor, it is our custom; I mean to say, all our ranks give another spontaneous cheer just as the King is about to step into the motor. Before he steps into the motor, he may stop a moment and face your General. This, you see, will be your General's cue to again execute the salute.

"Now, all ranks, I mean to say, if it could be arranged that all ranks cheer spontaneously, as your General raises his hand to salute the King. The King, hearing the Amoricans cheer, may continue to face your General and say: 'Quite.' He will not return the salute until later on.

"Of course, if the King does not say: 'Quite,' I mean to say, it means nothing at all. Do you catch my drift? For the King may be frightfully preoccupied, with the itinerary and many other things, and the King jolly well does as he pleases. But, after the King is seated in the motor, the equerry will shake hands with your General and say: 'Topping! Quite,' or something of the sort.

"Well, after the retinue enter the other motors, the equerry will enter the King's motor, which will be the signal for the other motors to continue upon the itinerary. And, as the King's motor is about to move out, the King will return your General's salute. I think you see what I mean, don't you?"

"Perfectly," answers the chief of staff.

"Thanks, quite."

A few days later His Majesty arrived at the American commander's headquarters shortly before noon. A war-strength company of infantry was lined up in review formation nearby, while on three sides of the parade ground hundreds of American doughboys assembled, primarily to see, at first hand, the person of a monarch.

This gallery of soldiers has been instructed as to what will be expected of them or, rather, what is desired of them at a given signal.

As the King finishes the review, a deep voice bawls:

"Three cheers, for King George!! Hip!! Hip!!" And an instant later silence gives way to deep-throated, resonant cheers that boom and vibrate against the foliage of the adjacent forest. So loud and spontaneous is the roaring volume of applause that the King hesitates momentarily, smiles warmly, looks pleasantly about and then continues toward the parked motors.

After His Majesty's departure, a ranking British general remained for luncheon with the American commander.

"I say, those spontaneous cheers of your Amoricans stopped the King, rather, for a moment. Husky voiced fellows, decidedly. Made a jolly fine impression. Quite."

"The men, General, have been carefully trained to do as they are told. I am not so sure the word 'spontaneous' is fitting. But when somebody shouted 'Three Cheers' they CHEERED!"

And the British commander answered in the vernacular:

"Quite!"

AN "IRISH" PROMOTION

Like an actor, who for a time has stood in the wings, awaiting his cue, the Judge Advocate, whom we introduced on the St. Nazaire troop train, again steps into our pages. The J. A. is a well fashioned soldier, with an exceptionally soft voice. Sometimes he really purrs. Incidentally, he is *one* of the best swordsmen in the Division. We emphasize the adjective, because a champion could not be definitely selected, without a bloodletting contest, with the Senior Aide handling the second sabre; albeit, an unthinkable event. One might as well look for such sword-play, between Abdul Aziz and Ali Pasha.

But every now and then, under certain exigencies of the service, the J. A. comes out into the open, like a bird in a Swiss clock, and then the softness of his voice is replaced by a snapping and particularly rough inflection, as though the trained mildness of his manner had been beaten down by an aggressive fighting instinct, which the refining influences of education and culture are not able to conquer. It is at these moments he becomes redoubtable, grim, and withal extremely sarcastic.

His present irritability is occasioned by the fact that right here in the middle of the war, like a bolt out of the blue, has come the news that he has been made the recipient of an "Irish" promotion. That is, a reduction in grade from lieutenant colonel down to that of major. The facts, according to his explanation, are that the pen-and-ink soldiers across the sea, in Washington, U. S. A., appear to have made up their sheltered but omnipresent minds that law officers of combat divisions over here in the trenches have too much rank. In any event, *no* change of any character has been made in the Tables of Organization for the past *four weeks*. An unheard of situation, to be sure. But take it or leave it, is the answer, and as a result mean and unpleasant words continually issue from the classic mouth of the worthy J. A. . . .

THE INSPECTOR LAUGHS LAST

Sometimes, in this he-man's war, it is just as well not to inject too much imagination into the pictures that present themselves day by day, wherein, be it said, comedy insists upon forcing itself uninvited. At the noon meal to-day, Porthos, as imperator of the mess, sat at the head of the table, surrounded by the Surgeon, Judge Advocate, Intelligence, Inspector, Ordnance and Adjutant.

Hardly had they seated themselves, when the party was thrown into a convulsion of suppressed mirth by a passage of words between the Judge Advocate, on the one hand and Wainwright, the Inspector, on the other.

"The General sent for me today," said the J. A., in his softest tones, "and intimated he is going to send one of the senior officers of the staff to our Army School of the Line, at Langres, in the South of France. He asked how I would like the assignment? Noting he was open-minded on the matter, I smiled politely and declined with thanks, reminding him that a judge advocate, as such, would not be eligible.

"I told him, however, that, in my opinion, a man like you, Colonel," addressing the Inspector, "should be sent, as your experience in the Spanish War gives you the necessary background. The General agreed with me, and it looks like an exceptional opportunity for you."

The school at Langres, it may be explained, is about as popular as a crutch with senior American officers. An assignment there means a long grind of over two months of intensive study in the mechanics and practice of combat leadership, a complete separation from comrades and troops, together with the ever present thought that failure to pass the examinations will constitute isolation from the line.

The Inspector is a soldier of inherent courage and great moral sincerity, a man who does not consider there is any appreciative difference, under the shirt, between those who carry the burden and those who carry the sword. Yet hidden beneath the bark of this gently swaying oak a fiery temper lies.

Hardly had the J. A. concluded, when a knife and fork from the Inspector's hands clatter violently to the table. Righteous indignation, makes it very difficult for him to express his rancor.

"Why, why! I must say I bitterly resent your presumption, Sir, in taking it upon yourself to speak for me or about me. I consider it a trick—a ribald trick, to use my name without consulting my wishes. Hereafter mind your own business, Sir, and I will take care of myself ."

The diatribe is interrupted by the appearance of Lieutenant Eddy, an aide of the G. O. C., who salutes the Inspector:

"Sir, the General's compliments. He desires to see you as soon as you shall have finished mess."

A few minutes later the Inspector bursts angrily from the room, and loud and long the laughter rings, in which, it may here be recorded, the Adjutant's mirth constitutes a leading, not to say uproarious, part, for to him the situation is brimful of real comedy.

After lunch the officers return to their respective duties and the incident is forgotten. About five o'clock on the same afternoon the Adjutant reports, with routine papers, at the General's quarters. After a few minutes the latter, in his mildest manner, says:

"Colonel, I have decided to send YOU to the School at Langres."

"ME!" blurts the Adjutant.

"I have definitely decided that you will go. Turn your work over to Battenberg as soon as practicable. Be ready to leave in about a week, so that you will arrive at Langres not later than the 29th of July. Good afternoon."

And fate shot her shuttle through again, adding another thread to the fabric of Destiny, as they put it on the screen.

By Allah, Langres!

That night, in the companions' billet, Porthos and the Surgeon sat speechless with indignation. The human trilogy, formed by war, was to be broken. What legerdemain, what black art had the Inspector used to have the assignment transferred to their bunkie?

The morrow found the Adjutant immersed in that variety of gloom, which cannot be alleviated, except by the wearing process of time. On the way to his workshop he met Colonel Vanderbilt of the Engineers.

"Cheer'o!" salutes the Adjutant.

"Cheer, bla-h-h!" answers the Colonel, "I have just received a cable stating that I have been promoted a brigadier general, and upon acceptance will return to the States—"

"Congratula—"

"But I am not sure I want it. Give up the regiment for a rating that means nothing at all to me; leave them here and go home at a time like this? How will it look?"

"Friend, when I took on in this sacred war for democracy I made up my mind to take everything just as it comes; no tacking against the tide, no dodging the punch; then, no matter what happens, there will be no one to say, if he had only let his destiny alone. 'Do as you're told, and keep your mouth shut,' still holds good. Gawd! suppose you had to go to *Langres*?"

"Langres is much preferable to *home*, at this time," replied the colonel, unconvinced.

As they separated the Adjutant was inclined to think his friend was right. In any event, as he reached headquarters, the popular aphorism of the Tommies soared above all the casualty lists and "secret" communications he found there, to wit: "Wot t' 'ell, in war it makes no blurry odds!"

For many years to come books, plays and scenarios will doubtless entertain the people of all lands with the exploits and activities of the ordinary soldier-man in the Great War. No song or story, however, will perhaps ever touch upon the front-line work of a few of America's millionaires, managers of great railroads, prominent statesmen, bankers, lawyers, engineers, writers, physicians and clergymen, who tossed their peace-time activities to the high heavens in order that they might serve with the American Expeditionary Forces, doing their bit quietly, giving every ounce of energy they possess, submitting, like the lowliest soldier in the ranks, to every edict of discipline, subordination, restriction and routine, without a word.

Unsung now, and perhaps forever, yet cheerful in the thought that they contributed all they had, arm for arm, head for head, and man for man, to their country's fighting strength. Proud, to be sure, of the records they will leave to their posterity, as combat soldiers, but without the least desire for public commendation. Still, these few lines may serve as a reminder to those who, in the future, may wish fairly to weigh all the types of American manhood that made up the armed forces of the United States on the high seas and on the battle fronts of France.

CASSEL THE ANCIENT

The war., thus far, seems to consist primarily of a Cook's tour, plus bombs and gun-fire. Or, as Porthos puts it, we are circumnavigating, without expense, all the show places of France and being paid for it.

Just after sundown, on a clear summer evening in July, several of the senior members of the Staff motor to Cassel, a short distance to the south, for a farewell dinner, in honor of those sentenced to the Army School of the Line, at Langres. It is probably fortunate for Napoleon that he is not soldiering in these pedantic days for, mayhap, as he were about to enter the St. Gotthard Pass, on his way hence to his Italian campaign, a wireless would intercept him, with orders to report at Langres for the War College course before inaugurating further offensive operations.

Cassel was the headquarters of Marshal Foch during 1914 and 1915. An ancient fortified city, its embattled history harking back to the Roman invasion. Cassel is the Roman *Castellum Morinorum*, and the one point in France declared sanctuary by the Germans, whose planes never bomb it.

The victory of Robert, the Friesian, over Philip of France, in 1071, was won here; also that of Philip VI of France, over the Flemings, in 1328, and that of the French, over the Prince of Orange, in 1677.

Colonel Starr, Division Intelligence, who is an archeologist—even more, a savant of the secret history of Bourbon, France, informs us it was at Cassel, about the year 1750, that Louis the Quince fell madly in love with an inn-keeper's daughter, much to the chagrin, even utter consternation, of both the Pompadour and Du Barry.

It may be said, in passing, that, unless all signs fail, history may repeat itself, with respect to some of the American kings hereabouts, for there are two daughters of the proprietor of the Hotel du Sauvage who seem to reincarnate all the fascinating qualities of the original.

Cassel is built upon a plateau, the apex of the loftiest mount in Flanders. So high are its heavy walls above the flat stretches of the plain which reaches for uncountable miles to the east and southward that, sitting out on the narrow perchlike veranda of the hotel, a British aeroplane, homeward-bound in the crystal twilight, flies far below. Entranced, the Americans watch its flight without hearing even a suggestion of the whir of its propeller blades. Like some belated bird of prey, it glides westward in the void and circles majestically to the neighborhood of its nest, not quite sure of the exact locality until sharp flashes of glowing darts, like animated lightning bugs, far down on the ground, indicate the way, and it disappears gracefully into the deep, purple shadows of the valley.

And now, as darkness gathers, the Americans gaze, spellbound, into a sector of the deadliest of all the inventions of human ingenuity, the Western Battle Front, boiling and seething, like a gigantic cauldron of the inferno. How fascinating it is, at this height. Fascinating, because it is too distant to see the mutilation process or hear the groans of the mangled and the death rattle of those whose souls are fleeting to an everlasting peace.

The only sound that reaches Cassel is a deep, low, vibrating roar, made up of the combined detonations of heavy guns, bursting shrapnel and shrieking projectiles. But *there is the battle line* in all its deadly magnificence. The sky above, a glowing curtain of flaming red, and under it white slanting patches of ghastly Véry lights, star shells and the greenish pallor of illuminating parachute flares, hanging almost stationary in the air, to make No-man's Land so bright that a trench rat may not attempt to crawl over it without being observed.

Rockets! There seems to be hundreds of them, green, red, white, shooting skyward, or hanging aloft, with shining colors arranged systematically, one above the other, in different combinations that carry battle signals from the rear to the forward trenches, and vice versa. Along the front, volcanic splashes of flashing white heat, flanked by coiling grayish smoke, with blood-red lining, indicate the accuracy of heavy cannon far behind the battle line.

It seems impossible, inconceivable, that this awful havoc, this hell's kitchen, has boiled and bubbled for four mortal years without destroying every living thing in Europe.

An epochal night of jubilee and wassail at the Hotel du Sauvage, many the toasts that are drunk, songs that are sung, and bottles that are emptied.

POUNDS, SHILLINGS AND PENCE

There is no doubt about the fact that it takes all kinds to make an army, and the following tablets of truth are subscribed to more clearly establish this reality.

A young American ranker lieutenant, with years of experience in the Guard, has, with his company, taken over a sector from the British in front of Kemmel hill. We use the noun *ranker* as a compliment to experience, because practically all officers of Guard regiments come from the ranks—and are proud of it.

The young lieutenant was in command, by virtue of the fact that his captain had been detached and sent to school. A *sector*, in a company sense, means a strip of front about one hundred yards in length, with trenches consisting of a series of connected shell-holes, reënforced by occasional strong points, where the terrain permits, as previously described. Ordinarily, with the British, this dot-and-dash type of sector would be commanded by two subalterns, one in charge of the right and the other the left element, with a company command post to the rear. But with this American company it was necessary for its single officer to take the right and assign a reliable and experienced sergeant to command the left.

The soldier selected was Sergeant McGraw. A man nearing middle age, as fearless as the wrath of God, and a born leader, but with two insurmountable obstacles to that righteous ambition which all efficient noncommissioned officers usually carry about with them, namely, promotion to a lieutenancy. In the case of Sergeant McGraw, one of these obstacles consisted of a broad and rich brogue, as deep and green as a field of shamrocks, coupled with a personal disrespect and utter disregard for even the primary principles of the lexicon of rudimentary etymology. The other, and much more unfortunate, was the spree cross, or curse.

But Sergeant McGraw belonged to that cult which takes to a soldier's uniform like a baby takes to a bottle. With him it was not the drums or the colors that thrilled or gave him solace. But rather the feel in his hands of a "beauthiful" rifle, with a strong, stout stock that could be swung with fine balance after a little practice. In other words, "fight" was as much a physical relish to McGraw as a dear spring day, a fine plow and strong horses are to a healthy dirt farmer.

It was most natural, therefore, that in due time after his enlistment he should throw his soldierly characteristics of loyalty and attention to the company's efficiency, across the perspective of his officers, with the result that he became a corporal, then a sergeant, and was reaching toward the diamond chevron of a "top" sergeant-when along came a spree.

McGraw went overseas a sergeant. Rough, ready, apathetic and dependable. The American company had bedded down, scouted no-man's land, decided upon cross-fire targets, and charted the German front lines. In fact, reached the "ready" point.

It was about 10 o'clock on a mid-summer morning that the lieutenant commanding heard a voice from the parapet above his lean-to. The voice was calling.

"I say! Down there, where's your commanding officer?"

Looking up, the lieutenant for an instant could hardly believe his eyes for there above him stood a well gotten out, elderly and rather heavy set British staff officer, in full silhouette, against any sharp-eyed German who might wish to observe him from an observation post.

"I am the commanding officer," answered the astonished American.

"Well, I say, where's Jerry, what?"

"He's along a line about seventy-five yards due east with the heavy stump of a tree—"

"How do you *know* he is?"

"I know *damn* well he is. He pots every iron helmet we raise—"

"Tush, tush. How can you know where he is if you continually remain down there. I say, come up here won't you, now?"

It sounded like a challenge. Friendly, perhaps, and from a fellow soldier, yet undeniably a challenge.

The lieutenant promptly climbed up to the side of the British officer.

"I say, young man, you see you will never be a real military leader unless you expose yourself frequently before all ranks. Let the men see you up here. It gives them confidence in you, quite. If you know what I mean."

After a few more words, upon the necessity for cool, rash courage on the part of leaders, the British officer strolled off with a "Cheer'o" toward McGraw's wing, hitting the ground now and

then with his heavy yellow crook-cane, at much the same sort of a gait that might have been expected of him had he been out for a morning stroll in Hyde Park.

Hardly had his back turned than the American disappeared from the parapet like a veritable shot out of a gun, murmuring his hopes of some day possessing the reckless intrepidity of that officer—a man absolutely devoid of fear. Fearlessness of such a type always brings adulation from those who are stolidly climbing the mountain of seasoned courage.

"Who is commanding down there?" again asks the British officer as he arrives above the left wing post.

"Oi im, Sor!" shoots back Sergeant McGraw.

"I say, where's Jerr—"

The sentence is not completed when a crumpled human being plunges headlong into the trench. A sniper's bullet had registered through the head.

Sergeant McGraw lifts the officer upright, by brute strength, then lays him gently on the filthy duck-boards. He is stone dead.

"Gad hiv' mercy on his sowl," murmurs the soldier.

Now Sergeant McGraw knew his Regulations. He knew they required that an inventory, when practicable, be made of the effects of a deceased officer by the senior soldier present and a statement of the circumstances under which the death occurred. The work was accomplished with McGraw's usual thoroughness, and upon a leaf of his note book there was carefully inscribed: Field glasses, pistol, wrist watch, gloves, gold ring, eyeglasses, pocket compass, four letters, notebook, silver pencil, wallet containing nineteen pounds sterling, eight shillings, five pence.

These effects were carefully placed in one of Sergeant McGraw's spare issue-stockings, together with the statement and inventory duly signed: "Michael McGraw, Sergeant, U. S. Army." Under cover of darkness, the remains and effects were turned over to a detachment from British headquarters.

Ordinarily, that gesture would close such an incident. But some forty-eight hours later the lieutenant commanding received a communication, from American high command, containing pertinent directions, namely: "Major _____, R. B. E. F., recently killed during front line inspection duty, was known to have at least forty pounds sterling on his person the morning of his death. Immediate, careful and thorough investigation of the matter is directed."

"Sergeant McGraw," said the lieutenant, when the soldier presented himself, "I cannot conceive of a more serious charge which could be made against an American soldier than that contained in the communication I hand you to read."

Slowly the sergeant perused the letter.

"Sor, sure the heart iv me's brokin intirely; that you, Sor, should accuse owld Sargint McGraw of such a protestint crime. By me perishin' sowl, it's a frame-up, Sor. It's the same owld persicution the plottin' hathens hev' bin layin' against the pore Irish fir hundreds of years. They saw me name was Michael McGraw. Hist! sez they, we'll get another wan. We'll accuse the mick of robbin' the corpse of a brave mon. O win will the persicution iver end, Sor? They're the mortal inimies of me race, Sor."

"Do you mean to say to me directly, honestly and as a noncommissioned officer, that everything, every English pound you took from that dead officer's person you placed in the inventory and turned in?"

"Sor, I do!"

"Well, it is your word against theirs. Go back to your post, Sergeant, but if another British officer, or any kind of officer, is killed in your sector do not touch the body until I arrive. Understand?"

“Sor, I do.”

VII

VIA PARIS

THE following afternoon the Adjutant left for Boulogne, and upon arrival met, quite by accident, an over-tall American, who, some years ago, in the piping days of peace, occupied a berth in the New York Senate. "'Shop" talk developed the fact that the latter had more recently occupied a berth in one of his Country's destroyers, on a business trip across the Atlantic, and is traveling hence to inspect the American Northern Bombing Squadron, operating over the North Sea and the British battle front, from the vicinity of Dieppe and Dunkirk. The stranger was Franklin D. Roosevelt of Hyde Park, N. Y., farmer, lawyer, sailor, and Assistant Secretary of the United States Navy.

The next morning found the Adjutant occupying a room *and bath* at the Hotel Crillon, Paris, with Pvt. 1st Cl. Smith in the immediate offing.

Paris, charming as ever, yet war is in evidence everywhere. The Louvre, with its magnificent gallery d'Apollon, its priceless relics of the old masters, and the great Emperor, is closed, with sand bags stacked high around its walls; also, the Invalides, where Napoleon rests with his brothers, and Marshals Duroc and Bertrand; also, the Sorbonne, where Richelieu sleeps; also, the quaint Museum de Cluny, with its wonderful chinaware and phony *girdles de virtue*.

At night, not a single light on streets or houses, except one great green lamp shining gruesomely, on top of Eiffel Tower, to guide French airmen patrolling the sky. But Maxims, Cirós, Larués, The Black Cat, The Dead Rat, and other joy-centers are wide open until eleven o'clock, when the doors are shut to all—except those *in the know*.

LANGRES

The next afternoon the travelers arrive at the lower level railroad station at Langres and board a curious rack-and-pinion train of cars that labors noisily up a sharp incline to the fortified city 1500 feet above. The town, like Cassel, is ancient, historic, and built upon a narrow plateau, like a megalithic eagle's nest perched in the clouds. It is the *Andematunnum*, and traces its history to some fifty-eight years B. C.

All of which means little or nothing to the Adjutant at the moment, and far less than that to Smith. But here stood the ancient capitol of the Celtic Lingones tribe of eastern Gaul. Everything about the city indicates trite antiquity. The furnishings of the Adjutant's billet in the shabby attic of an antiquated house on the narrow Rue Vernette, certainly must have been in daily use for at least two hundred years.

Langres is a rare and perfect example of an important old French fortress and garrison town, with ramparts, casemated works, and escarpments between the six drawbridge gates that indent its massive walls, garnished here and there with masses of crevice-grown vines.

The Army School of the Line, in Carteret Barracks, is exactly as advertised. Nine to five, or finishing time: plus lectures on one or two evenings each week. No orgy of excitement here, but several old friends from the division in evidence, like Sherman, Wickersham, DeLamater and Tuck, who are student officers at the Army Staff College, and hungry for news of what is going on out on the northern front. . . .

It does not take many days for a freshman to learn there is one marked characteristic about the faculty, namely, that they are the most flamboyantly courageous, aye, valorous military officers in Europe. It seems a real pity to keep such fearless soldiers at a quiet school. Their place is on the blazing forefront.

This reckless courage is indicated in every problem they create for the student body: their solution always resulting in victory. No frontal attack that does not win, no envelopment that does not speedily and soundly beat the surprised and confused enemy, no flank attack that does not reach its objective, no rear guard action that does not adequately delay the opposition forces, and no foraging expedition that does not bring home the bacon.

So peculiarly courageous and masterful are they that the more successful students are solving all problems by sheer heroism. Recently the class went into the country, along the Roman road (in several motor trucks), equipped with maps, drawing board, compass, rule, pad and pencil. The trucks suddenly halt.

"We now distribute a slip containing them first phase of the problem. You have five minutes to write and sign your answer," says the instructor in charge.

The slips contain the following: "You are commanding the support of an advance guard of an infantry brigade marching south. At this point several shells from enemy artillery, firing from the southwest, strike in your vicinity, killing three of the point of your advance party. What are your orders?"

On the east side of the road there is low ground for some distance ahead which would give moderate protection. The Adjutant writes:

"Send men to build up point. Order support to advance along low ground on east of road, until fire slackens. Dispatch message containing this decision to commander, with number of losses."

The slips are handed in and the trucks move forward about a mile, when they again halt and the second phase is distributed. The Adjutant reads: "*Having continued straight ahead along road, disregarding artillery fire*, at this point, etc., etc."

If the next field problem indicates that a line of thirty Big Berthas, hub to hub, are laying down a barrage across a narrow pass and the students asked what they will do, the Adjutant's reply will be: "Charge straight through barrage and gain objective!"

"GRAPEVINE ROUTE"

Every possible precaution is taken throughout France to prevent information from getting abroad respecting the activity of the army. All letters are carefully censored and orders issued from time to time prohibiting the distribution of military information. Yet, in one way or another, the student officers keep in pretty dose touch with the activities of their comrades in the field.

News has recently reached the line school that Americans, in far away Flanders, have, on several occasions, met the enemy in engagements and minor actions. Through July, August and early September they have engaged with him on the Poperinghe Line, the Dickebusch sector, and in a major engagement along Vierstraat Ridge. In the latter push, the Germans refused to become seriously involved, and, after some sharp fighting, evacuated Kemmel Hill.* In this latter operation the 105th (Andrews, later Berry), and the 106th (Taylor) Infantry regiments, with the 105th Machine Gun Battalion (Gardner), were the front line contestants, the battalion commanders being Maslin, MacArthur and Bulkley in the 105th Infantry, Gillett, DeKay and Hildreth in the 106th Infantry.

In these operations Lieutenant Colonel Liebmann and 1st Lieutenant Howard were the first American officers to be killed. They were followed by Fuller, H. L. Conway, Knowles and Gray;

while Langer, Potter, Granat, Turner, H. F. Smith, Clarke, Van Holland, Hodes, Peppard, Scanlon, Bonny, Clark, Ulrich, Anderson and Stillman were wounded. Salisbury, the surgeon, with a hand badly shattered by a direct hit, tried to carry on in the care of stricken, until loss of blood required his "tagging" as wounded also. Tobin of the 107th Infantry, gassed and cited in orders; Davies of the 106th Infantry also wounded. Two hundred and twenty-one enlisted men were killed, one thousand and seventy-two wounded and gassed.

The death of Lieutenant Colonel Liebmann, at this early stage of battle activities, is a real loss. He was a charter member of the brotherhood that helped materially to create the first foundations upon which the division was built. And now, struck down in an instant, with his life's aspirations just dawning; within the fraction of a second he was precipitated from the summit of his highest ambition. Smashed, by the direct hit of a high explosive shell, without the chance of a shot for shot, claw for claw, man for man. In his death the Americans lose as brave and generous-hearted an officer and gentleman as ever wore a soldier's uniform. However, the loss of many other Americans, just as manly and just as valuable to the Nation's weal, may also be mourned before many months are over.

The "Grapevine Route" also brings the news that the "Surgeon" Maloney, another aborigine and former President of the Escarboten Club, has been detached on account of physical disability contracted in line of duty, and so the camaraderie of the three companions has been permanently shattered by war's norm and Porthos is the only one left at the front. Further, that Colonel Andrews is now temporary overlord of the 53rd Brigade and Colonel Berry commands the 105th Infantry.

*In deference to courageous leadership and to officers who were killed or wounded, their names will be included in the battle chapters.

THE BUTTON BOX

With battle-death there sometimes come strange details, in which fatality plays a leading role. This fey tale is an example. . . .

"Sir, X reported back from hospital this morning," said the adjutant of an infantry regiment to his commanding officer.

"You don't mean X of your button-box story?"

"The same, Sir, but a shadow of his former self, with fatalism sticking out all over him. I took the liberty of assigning him out front with his old command."

"I had an impression he was pretty badly wounded. It's strange he is back so soon."

"Really skin and bones now, Sir, but eyes that shine like diamonds."

The adjutant's button-box story begins in a small city at home. It entails the youthful love of a man and a woman. A love as deep and pure as that of Pygmalion and Galatea, or Gabriel and Evangeline, as intense as any that ancient or modem poetry or prose creates.

It involves an educated, strong, high-powered college graduate and a pure, simple-hearted, radiant maid, who married. No particular wealth on either side but a fund of gentle breeding, refinement and education. Their fetish was companionship and home. She could bake and sew and sing. With him, it was a smoke and a book—and *you.*

The young husband makes his way as a lawyer, slowly, satisfactorily. Both are supremely happy. Charmed with their life and prospects. Then, about three months before America enters the war, the young wife suddenly dies. Dies, as a slender branch full of blooms in a flower garden might wither overnight and fall lifeless among the green leaves of a rose bush.

"X" follows the coffin to a graveyard, oblivious of those who go there with him. He appears to hear nothing, know nothing. But his eyes, which never leave the coffin, are filled with a feverish, almost insane, brilliance. He acts entirely unlike sorrowing mourners at funerals usually do. He acts more like a marble image—without emotion, without tears, without movement, except the movement of the gleaming eyes roving up and down and across the simple casket.

At last the body is lowered into a grave, but the statuesque immobility of the young husband continues. Women are weeping softly close to him. Some one touches his hand, as a signal it is time to go. The hand does not respond. It is ice cold.

Then the grave is filled with soft earth, and when the laborers complete their work the marble man returns to life, falls upon the loose ground, sobs and calls a name.

Comes the Call to Arms. During the ninety days, before its clarion notes electrified the nation, "X" had done nothing but drink. Everything he owned, which was not very much, had gone from him. Given away, or sold, until what was left consisted of a few beads that belonged to her; a ring, he had slipped from her dead finger; a few studs, a pair of cuff-buttons and the unpretentious scarf pin that he wore when they were married.

These trinkets he had kept in a little metal button-box. The box and its contents comprised his Holy Grail.

Being a college man, sharp, big-bodied, fearless and clean, he pushed forward through the mobilizing pack, out to the front of the herd, and went overseas with a substantial commission.

Then the time came to go in, into the push, over the top at daybreak. He will lead them over. Those who will follow him would follow him anywhere, because of his simple kindliness, his modesty and his unpretentious courage. But it is not those who will follow of whom he is constantly thinking. Out in No-Man's Land there is a trail that leads through the darkness and will take him to her more quickly than any other route can do. The Great White God could not refuse a reunion, if he dies in such a way, and he is enamored of death.

But the button-box! No filthy ghoul shall desecrate with his putrid fingers, those little things she wore.

"Jimmy," (he had known the adjutant at college) "I'm going over early in the morning. You know all about everything. I wish you—I want you to keep something for me. This button-box, until I see you again. If I don't see you again, and you get back home, bury it, Jimmy, deep in her grave."

"Sure, 'X,' I'll keep it for you until you want it."

* * * * * *

"You did quite right, Captain, to send him out again. He'll be more contented. But you still have the button-box?"

"Yes, Sir."'

The regiment moved out the following morning, fighting forward doggedly. Two days later "X" left his command post to make a reconnaissance, in plain view of Kemmel Hill. A heavy shell exploded at his feet and literally tore him to pieces.

In the darkness of evening his remains were gathered up by his men and taken to the rear. Artificers nailed together a rough coffin from the boards of ammunition boxes. As many as could be spared saw "X" buried, a squad of soldiers firing a salute. Tearful Flemish farm women of the neighborhood laid wild flowers upon his grave.

FLOTSAM AND JETSAM

Hooker drifted into Langres one morning shortly before noon. Hooker, it may be said, qualified for the Naval Academy some years ago but did not agree with the discipline and quit. Then he went to Yale and got through, although a frolicsome jump across a table very nearly ended his scholastic activities there. Then he took a law course and received an LL.B.

About that time he joined the National Guard and rose slowly to the rank of major, and then rapidly eliminated himself from the service. When the war-dogs barked he was a mere civilian, but he bought a railroad ticket to Camp Wadsworth, S. C., and enlisted as a private in his old regiment, which was training there. Then he was detailed to take the officers' school course, from which he graduated as a major and was assigned by the War Department to his home Division.

Hooker, it may be said, is down, away down, but not out! Hooker never could be quite out. The Adjutant is hurrying at noonday along the walk behind the rampart that leads to the Place St. Ferjeux, where his mess is established. He is gazing intently at the beautiful panorama stretching away for miles, over the magnificent valley of the Marne, when he meets Hooker, who does not look so well.

The situation is explained briefly, concisely and intelligently. It seems Hooker had been assigned to take the get-rich-quick course at the Line School. A fifteen-day course for field officers. Passing through Paris on his way hence in the late evening, some one had infringed upon what Hooker considered his inalienable rights. He was not in a particularly cheerful mood. Maybe it was *stimulante*; maybe it was the pitchy darkness, maybe it was both. In any event, he promptly knocked the blighter for a goal.

Come to find out the fellow was a member of the Paris detachment of the American Military Police. Three hundred odd years ago their forces would have been called Richelieu's Constabulary.

Well, anyway, after an examination and a lot of bla,h-h, Hooker was released to continue his merry old voyage to this neck-of-the-woods, being assured that charges of felonious assault, or something, upon the person of a subordinate in the lawful execution of his office would follow in due course.

Hooker carefully explained the situation was serious only to the extent that he did not have a sou and was greatly in need of nourishment. Naturally, the Adjutant invited him to mess, which invitation was instantly accepted.

After lunch, Hooker reported to the director of the school, who looked him over coldly and indicated a message had been received from Chaumont, ordering his immediate return to Flanders, where charges of a serious nature had been forwarded. Recalling the financial details of his story, the Adjutant provided sufficient francs for a meal-ticket and bid him adios.

Now comes the news that Hooker arrived at Douglas Farm, the advance headquarters of the Division, about 8 p. m., on the 31st of August, and reported to Colonel Ford, the chief of staff. As the charges had been received, the reception was short and frigid. Incidentally, the G. O. C. is as jealous of the good name of his outfit and its personnel as a gentleman is of his word of honor.

But the military situation is tense. The division is undertaking its first major engagement at daybreak; namely, an assault upon Mt. Kemmel. Hooker's regiment is to play the leading part, but is woefully short of senior officers, most of whom are at one school or another. In fact there is but one major with the command—and here is Hooker!

The chief of staff has a short conference with the G. O. C. in an adjoining room and then returns.

"The division commander directs that you report to the commanding officer, 106th Infantry, tonight. You will say to him that you are to be given command of the leading battalion in

to-morrow morning's action. The leading assault battalion. After the affair, action on the charges received from general headquarters will be taken."

"My compliments to the General," replies Hooker, "and say to him the assignment suits me perfectly. The more distance I can place between these headquarters and the leading assault battalion the more pleased I shall be."

It was a long hike to the command post of his regiment. A matter of six kilometers. Jerry was shelling the roads and it was very dark. Hooker had no automatic, no steel helmet, nothing in fact that is ordinarily required for protection or defense. At the first supply dump he encountered on the side of the road, within the regimental area, he borrowed some battle trappings salvaged from dead or wounded.

The next morning he led his bayonets to their objective, although the Boche hit him. When the G. O. C. read the regimental operations report of the action he called the chief of staff and said:

"Tear up those Hooker charges and throw them into the waste-box."

Incidentally, that is one way to jump a get-rich-quick war course.

A REUNION

After his graduation at the Line School, the Adjutant, who had recently been promoted to a colonelcy and assigned to command the 27th Division Trains and Military Police, returned to the north of France, via Paris. The morning after his arrival at the latter city two soldiers met him as he left his hotel. Pvt. 1st Cl. Smith, having joined his companion-in-arms, Pvt. Pike, of 27th division headquarters troop. The latter smiled a greeting with his salute and delivered a letter from the G. O. C's. senior aide.

That this particular aide is essentially a fighting man would carry no unusual distinction. The quality albeit that entitles him to any notice in these pages is his remarkable faculty for procurement. Drop him on an ice-field in the Arctic Sea, allow him a short time for orientation, and it's ten to one he will discover a hot meal. Place him at any point within a day's march of a British officers' *sales depot* and he will not only locate the place but return to initial station with as much refreshment as a gentleman may carry with martial decorum.

His letter reads:

"I am sending Pike to Paris with a car for you. We moved south on September 4th, to the Beauquesne area; there until the 20th, then relieved two British divisions, in the Gouy area. What I am anxious to have you do, if you will be so patriotic, is to bring up from Paris four bags of flour, three hams, a dozen live boiled *langouste*, the largest obtainable; two dozen sardines, and a case of dry champagne. We want to give a surprise luncheon to Prince Rupprecht, whose army, according to 'Intelligence,' is on our immediate front."

The Adjutant leaves Paris with the groceries the following afternoon, by the Clichy Gate, motoring north over an excellent road, well kept and straight as an arrow for miles at a time. Through Beauvais, which has not been touched by the boll weevil of armed conflict, on northward to Amiens, with the countryside practically normal.

Turning northeastward, the war-blight becomes more and more apparent until it seems as though its maximum brutality is reached as the car approaches the environs of Albert. There the Destroyer's wasteful ravages are everywhere in evidence. Strong trunks of trees, cut in jagged, unsightly shapes, stark and leafless, naked and shorn. Mills and factories wrecked and abandoned, a tall chimney here and there punctured or broken; while pale-blue and white signs proclaiming "Chocolat-Menier" to sweet-hungering travelers, bend, smashed and mud-bespattered against an opaque sky.

They pass through Albert in the late twilight. Not so long ago here stood a happy, prosperous and peaceful municipality of nine thousand souls. Now it is a flattened mass of debris. Miserable, lightless, homeless. Its beautiful old passion Post, the Church of Notré Dame de Brebières, raked and torn from nave to belfry; its bronze Madonna holding aloft The Child, which graced the summit of its spire, now hanging outward ten degrees below the horizontal: but still holding The Child at arm's length—in the Holy name of Christianity.

The road from this point is broken and dark and it is not until after ten o'clock, on a chill September night, that the Bois de Buire is reached: where the rear echelon of the division staff is housed.

In a Nisson hut, with his subordinate, Hutton, and a few spent soldiers, busily consolidating huge lists of wounded, sits Colonel Montgomery, or "Porthos;" now the Surgeon, his face haggard with fatigue, his uniform soiled and blood-begrimed. The two friends embrace.

"Where is everybody?" asks the newcomer, who, up to that moment had no intimation the Americans had been engaged.

"Ah, where *are* they? Hundreds are dead, thousands wounded. We have been through hell, with the lid strapped on! Nearly dead myself, but to-day—*we smashed the Hindenberg Line!!!*"

VIII

THE HINDENBERG LINE

He hath broken the gates of brass: And smitten the bars of iron in sunder. Psalm cvii., 16.

LET us now become imaginary wayfarers on the road to Ronssoy, in the late September of 1918, and watch that which as fanciful observers, we shall hereafter witness.

Running eastward toward the front, the road gradually undulates and curves, first northeast, then south, east, and then east, until it reaches Ronssoy. It is a broad, hard highway. But when choked with war, that is with motor lorries, ammunition trucks, supply wagons, gun caissons, ambulances, tanks and marching men, it is not so easy to traverse. However, it remains open until the village of Ronssoy is passed for a short distance, where an interdiction prevents wayfarers from traveling further: because across it, and for several kilometers north and south, German soldiers have built a fortress.

The sector of country which the fortress covers is open, knobby and gently rolling from Vendhuile at the north to Bellicourt at the south. A field long and thin longitudinally, rather than deep from west to east, with no foliage now, other than that found in narrow gorges and little sunken groves.

Everything has been cut down, root and branch, by hostile military artisans, plus shot-shell and small arms fire. A tremendous field, upon which to become lost is an easy matter, for zig-zagged trenches run everywhere, dug slowly by men with light picks and shovels; with wide holes yawning between, which have been dug instantly by rending projectiles. A shaggy, tortuous, monster field that can swallow twenty thousand men with the same ease an elephant swallows a peanut.

Over toward the enemy a high ridge, or hog-back, lies some 2000 yards beyond the forefront, or outpost line. That is to say 2000 yards further east. This ridge roughly parallels the entire front and constitutes, generally, the main fortifications; which are bastioned by three strong points, known as The Knoll, Guillemont Farm and Quennemont Farm. From these strong points run so-called switches, or sunken communicating lanes, that will permit the occupying troops to speedily shift from one fighting line to another.

Into the eastern slope of this ridge, or main fortification, the St. Quentin canal passes through a tunnel. The tunnel has a length of 6000 yards, is built of solid masonry, and is from 60 to 70 feet below the apex of the ridge. The tube is 30 feet wide at its top and 54 feet at the level of the water, which runs from six to nine feet deep. In this tube the hostile garrison is quartered. The front, or outpost line, connects with these principle or main defenses by many ravines and concealed communication trenches. . . .

Ordinarily, the word *fortress* denotes a series of towering military earthworks, invested with massive repellents, and a citadel of heavy masonry upon which the flag flies.

But the ancient rules of fortification have been highly modernized here. The battlements of this fortress comprise the tunnel ridge, or hogback; the bastions are concrete strong points, with exterior slopes, glacis, blast slopes and aprons; the escarpments are declivities, which fall away from deep entrenchments, carefully oriented to receive a plunging fire from the rear if the defenders are compelled to evacuate; the flying buttresses are networks of heavy barbed wire entanglements, supported by strong pointed stakes; with passages cleverly arranged for bucking

shoots from nests of machine guns laid in range to sweep them day and night; the galleries are roomy tunnels leading from outer works to the main defenses and into the tow-path of the canal. Approach galleries from the parados, or eastern slope of the hogback, permit reënforcement of the garrison under cover of the high ridge.

Thus, may be described, *the Fortified Defenses of the Hindenberg Line.*

THE OBJECTIVE

The mission General Sir Henry Rawlinson had accepted, on behalf of the Fourth British Army, consisted primarily of exerting pressure upon the enemy front, between Cambrai and St. Quentin. Toward the middle of September, the progress of his army, working in conjunction with the French left wing, followed the course of the Somme valley and arrived at the Hindenberg Line: where it met obstinate resistance and halted. At this point the two American divisions acting with the British army were assigned to charge the Defenses.

The battle plan requires that the Americans alternate with Australian troops, under the high command of Sir John Monash, an Australian lieutenant general. The initiative of the action is to be taken by the Americans comprising the II Corps, Major General Read commanding. The sector of front, assigned to the 27th Division, under Major General O'Ryan, consists of that part of the defenses directly west of the tunnel and extending slightly beyond its north end. The 30th Division, under Major General Lewis, will fight that sector lying south of the 27th. The entire terrain had been unsuccessfully attacked by British forces.

An Australian Corps is to pass through, or leapfrog, the Americans when the latter reach their objective; which is a line running roughly north and south from Le Catelet to a point just east of Nauroy. The main attack on the tunnel front is to be preceded by a preliminary operation of one American infantry regiment, for the purpose of advancing the general line of departure to the outposts of the Defenses.

THE MORNING OF SEPTEMBER 27TH

The 106th U. S. Infantry is assigned to make this preparatory attack on the outposts of the Iron Front on the early morning of September 27th. A fortified front of 3500 yards.

In the black of the preceding night, covered by strong patrols, squads of soldiers uncoil white canvas tape, a little over an inch wide, and fasten it to the ground with metal staples. The white ribbon to more clearly signalize a jump-off line in the darkness. The bayonets under Colonel Taylor, move up to this ghostlike alignment, seeming to twist and bob here and there like weird young poplars in a supernatural forest.

Major Gillett, the "Hooker" of our story, places three companies of his battalion along the south sector of the tape, keeping one in support.

Major Kincaid, the Judge Advocate, temporarily assigned (to replace DeKay, who had been detailed to school, and wounded just before his departure), divides his battalion, placing two companies along the center section of the pallid tape, holding two in support.

Captain Blaisdell leads three companies of his battalion to the ribbon, on the north sector, keeping one in support.

The pieces of the regimental machine gun company cover each of the battalions. So do those of the one-pounder and trench mortar platoons.

A covering detachment, on the left flank, is assigned from the 105th Infantry (by the Division commander's personal orders); the 105th and 106th Machine Gun Battalions, a detachment from

the 102nd Engineers, and three tanks for each infantry battalion make up the "shock" troops: while nine battalions of British field artillery horse up in the rear.

Signal troops, under Hallahan, and his subordinate, Howe, are waiting to function. Contact aeroplanes taxi up, ready to circle the field and watch for ground flares, or shining tin discs, that will indicate high-water points of the advance. Forward dressing stations are prepared to administer to the fodder of hungry guns.

THE SIGNAL

As minute hands of the officers' watches point to 5:30 o'clock, midst the tomb-like silence of a cold September dawn, a single fieldpiece is discharged! The next moment a burst of fire from the guns of nine battalions of British artillery is the answer to the signal, and all along the front coalescent sheets of exploding flame bounce, seethe and creep forward, at the rate of one hundred yards every three minutes. Fifty per cent of this destroying barrage is shrapnel, thirty-five per cent is high explosive shell, and fifteen per cent is concealing smoke. Through it all twangs and whines the wasp-like buzz of a concentration of copper-nosed bullets from ninety-six machine guns, each of which fires two hundred rounds every minute.

Behind this tearing hell-fire, hugging it as closely as safety permits, comes the human engines of destruction: *the infantry*, with belts and bandoliers of rifle ammunition strapped about them: pockets filled with hand grenades. Iron battle hats pulled low over their faces; gas masks hanging from their necks; bayoneted rifles pointing forward horizontally, ready to destroy; feral eyes glinting and narrowed—watching for a *kill*. Feeling ahead in semi-darkness, sometimes herding with the pack, and then almost alone.

Gradually the smoke settles over them and it becomes solely and completely a matter of the survival of the fittest. At six o'clock Blaisdell signals his battalion has taken The Knoll! Quick time: but a few minutes later a powerful counterattack hurls him back. In this way raw fury ebbs and flows. Now they creep forward again! . . . *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, gallop triumphantly over the field.*

Moans of wounded, groans of dying, everywhere about them, likewise the spectacle of mutilated dead.

Kincaid's battalion has the assistance of the tanks for a time and gradually edges towards its objective, taking many prisoners.

Now the Boche put down a counter-barrage of shell and poison gas. The tanks are receiving a smothering fire and have practically ceased operations.

Gillett's companies fight forward, bayoneting here, grenading there. They lose touch with the troops on their left flank—but move onward in the tumult.

Mineola! Mineola! *

*A voiced idiom for the hardship and brutality of war which the men of this regiment used throughout their battle service.

THE LONG DAY

Bitter fighting, bayonet thrust and bullet is the order of the long bloody day. Captain Hardy has been killed in the thick of it. Callahan, another captain, is dead and lost on the field. Sullivan, another captain, is wounded and taken prisoner.

Smash as they will, enemy projectiles blaze and machine guns spit, into their ranks, while gas-shells burst all about them. Peterson has perished, Jackson and Hook lie dead among their men . . . every shell and every bullet sweeps a vital approach position! Lieutenants Rudkin, Behrens and Maloy have been destroyed—facing east.

In spite of barrage, in spite of smoke, in spite of bullet, bayonet, butt and hand grenade—veteran enemy fire never slackens. Roane is a casualty, Wilson is wounded, also Ward, Boullee, Campbell, Lenox Brennan and his brother York, all are down. At intervals in the uproar, voices come in fragmentary vibrations that reach the ear and then stretch forlornly away again:

Mineola! Min-e-o-l-a—

They capture the three strong points and lose them! Scanlon, fighting forward, meets an enemy detachment; he gathers his bayonets and dashes into the Germans! He falls mortally wounded shouting: "Get them! never mind me,"—and succumbs.

For the nonce civilization has disappeared; replaced by primeval instinct. The crapshooters are all here, but now they toss the bones with death!

Bryant and Paris are killed near the regimental command post. Curtis, Ostberg, Anderson and Rozeck, have perished. Whitlock of the Engineers, has died. Many men in small groups led by noncommissioned officers are on the objectives but the lance is without the force to penetrate further, or even to hold its thrust, except on the extreme right where a detachment stands fast until it is beaten to a pulp, although Sergeant Minder with four bayonets keeps a stretch of trench at Quennemont Pit Lane until the morning of the 29th when they are relieved by troops of the 108th Infantry.

All the company officers of the *first* battalion are dead or wounded except Ryan. In the *second* battalion every company officer is dead or wounded. In the *third* battalion every company officer is dead or wounded.

Who gives more than that? Who asks more than that???

Over on the north sector the 105th Infantry's supporting detachments are likewise giving all they have. Burke and Rudin die in the storm. Lieutenant Turner and a group of men become separated from their company. He rushes an enemy machine gun nest and destroys the crew; his little detachment follows him over three enemy trenches fighting hand-to-hand. He is wounded but reaches the fourth trench which he captures. His diminutive party of nine bayonets resist a counter-attack—until finally they are completely surrounded and in the last charge Turner is killed.

In the smoke, Corporal Close, 106th Infantry, finds himself alone near a group of Germans. Single-handed he destroys three and takes ten back to the prisoner of war cage.

Privates Rawlinson and Reynolds, 106th Infantry, one a shipping clerk from Brooklyn, the other a cow-puncher from Texas, advance together in the early morning and get tangled up in the wire. Working out they find themselves separated from the pack, in fact lost. A corporal of the 105th in the same boat joins them. In a little while they come to an enemy trench which they follow cautiously and arrive at an angle in the ditch. Rawlinson, who is leading, sees a number of Germans sitting near a dugout entrance munching black bread; heavy machine guns are pointed over the parapet above them.

A council of war is held in the offing which results in Rawlinson and the unknown corporal climbing out and advancing to the precipitous wall of the trench into which they each drop a hand grenade. Reynolds an instant later appears around the angle and lets go with his rifle. There is nothing more to it after that. The Germans able to do so raise both hands high above their heads and cry "Kamarad!" Then an unexpected incident transpires. From the dugout a considerable number of Germans appear with hands up. Among them three officers.

But the Americans are *lost* in a welter of scarred churned earth, rusted wire, headless trees, and gaping shell holes. Rawlinson who thinks quickly motions to the officers to *head the column* while Reynolds climbs out of the ditch and places a fresh clip of ammunition in the chamber of his rifle as an indication that there will be no *monkey* business.

Slowly the prisoners of war mount the parapet leaving their arms in the trench. The three companions inwardly gasp as German soldiers continue to leave the dugout entrance, and climb to a forming column. Five-ten-twenty-five, maybe the whole Hun army!

After the last man appears Rawlinson slides to the bottom of the trench and drops a hand grenade into the dugout entrance as a parting salute, so to speak.

The German officers who *know the terrain* lead the way and after a time the column reaches an American dressing station where a captain-medico is attending the wounded. He immediately requisitions a number of their bag as litter bearers. The exact number is not of record but forty-two not required, continue up a road until the Adjutant of the 105th Infantry, meets their cavalcade.

Rawlinson requests and receives a receipt for the catch indicating it will justify absence from the field should there be any question about it on the part of comrades. Incidentally, the question with them does not involve the Articles of War or refinements of military discipline, but rather the "gang code." It is the gang, they are thinking about: the gang who may miss them and stamp them "yellow," when mess lines form again in front of the rolling kitchen.

Inquiry throughout the division failed to discover the identity of the unknown corporal. It may be he was killed after they returned to the field, or it may be the inherent modesty of high courage kept him silent, for intrepid men seldom wish to shine in the radiance of their exploits.

NIGHT

Falling shadows of twilight are now upon them: magnifying the ghastly aspect of the field. The thunder has materially abated, perhaps to let the cannon cool. They are no longer calling *Mineola!*

A young lieutenant and two soldiers, all wounded are lying at the bottom of a shell-hole. There were five of them, but one died; a helmet covers the face. The only uninjured one is straddled out up at the top peering into the haze, a Lewis gun couched over the edge, handy grenades are thrust into soft sloping ground close by.

There is no conversation now, no soldier eccentricities, no small talk, no kicks about the food dished out by Jimmy Stew, no knocks about the marches. All the billet belly-aches are crowded out by pain of wounds, hunger and thirst.

"No daily bread in this rotten spot. Hey, Lieutenant? No chance, *no* chance."

Yearling colts? Yes, their paddock widened out by thousands of miles and then drawn in again to a narrow, viscid mud hole, with red-hell overhead instead of underneath.

They are all silent now. Without movement, except for gleaming eyes that fix upon Jules Goldberg lying quietly up there. He seems high above them and moves a hobnailed boot iteratively, to let them know he is alert.

Who'd thought a kid like Jules Goldberg would lie there ready to beat off the Hun. But how long could *he* hold out with his gun and a few grenades. . . .

No chance, *no chance!*

* * * * * *

From the broad fighting standpoint much has been accomplished. The enemy's morale has been ripped to shreds; the Americans have shown him a full line of their wares; they have captured two hundred and seventy prisoners and God alone knows how many Germans have been wounded or have perished. Of the American enlisted men three hundred and twenty-three have been destroyed; eight hundred and six have been wounded; two hundred and fifty-seven gassed, and ninety-four are missing.

All those dead Americans perished, as the soldiers of every country and race have died for thousands of years before, each entitled, friend and foe alike, to the epilogue:

Brave, brave are they high named to-day,
Who fought the fight—and lived;
But the bravest of all were they
Who pressed to the front—and died,
Unnamed, unknown.

It should be said that the lack of any reserve or supporting force was due to the specific instructions of high command; that the preliminary attack be limited to *one* infantry regiment. This because the major attack on the second day following, namely, the 29th of September, constituted a part of Marshal Foch's general plan involving the initiation of four great offensives, and required a maximum effort on that day.

Incidentally, an order which required one regiment to negotiate a frontal or parallel attack upon a heavily fortified front of thirty-five hundred yards was an egregious tactical blunder, and indicated ignorance of the most primary elements of combat. But then, it was Baron Jomini, we think, who said: "Show me a general who never made a mistake and I will show you a general who never made war."

NEW BLOOD

During the night Pierce's infantry brigade, the 54th comprising the 107th and 108th regiments, relieve Blanding's brigade, the 53rd made up of the 105th and 106th regiments. Patrols from the former, reconnoiter the front, evacuate wounded still on the field and relieve groups holding out here and there.

In early hours of the rainy, bleak morning of the 28th, the 107th on the north and the 108th on the south occupy soggy ground from which the attack had been launched the day before. No strategy is to be invoked in the parallel battle scheduled for to-morrow. No grand tactics of any kind, no high command dispositions that may be changed during the fight; nothing except the minor tactics required in a technical arrangement and movement of the several regimental subdivisions.

The deadly drama requires the dumping of a gigantic load of coals through a shute into a coal-bin. The shute is the divisional sector, the coals are the bayonets, the coal-bin the Fortified Defenses.

There will be no major envelopments, flank turnings, feints at one point and real assaults at another. No "Up-Guards-and-at-'em!" after the assailants have fallen into a trap. It will be just plain London prize-ring rules, a frontal *battle-royal*, with brass knuckles. Shades of Napoleon, Moltke, Lee, Foch, even the Langres faculty!

In the strategic judgment of high command the only way to fill a coal-bin, and thus drive the rodents out, is to dump the coals through a shute into the bin. Which may all be fair enough. Any coal-man knows that.

THE SHUTE

Half the bin, that is four thousand yards of it, goes to the 27th Division, the other half to the 30th. One portion of the 27th's half is allotted to the 107th Infantry and extends from a point about seven hundred yards west of The Knoll, southward to a high point on Guillemont Farm road and about eight hundred yards west of the farm. Both strong points, The Knoll and Guillemont Farm, are included in the regimental sector.

Fisk's battalion is on the right with two companies in front and two in support. Egan's battalion is on the left in the same formation. Tompkins' battalion will support them.

The other portion of the 27th's half of the bin, is a responsibility of the 108th Infantry and runs south from Guillemont road to a point near Valley Post including an enemy strong point at Quennemont Farm and a section of Malakoff Wood.

Thompson's battalion is on the right with L and I companies, in front, the other two in support. Maldiner's battalion is on the left with F and E companies in front, the others behind them. Couchman's battalion will support the fighting bayonets from the rear center.

The letters of the four front line companies are especially indicated on account of the strange combination they make at such a time. L-I-F-E—there in death valley. *Life* which represents the brawn, the blood and bone of American youth about to enter the high school of battle, where DEATH presides.

The 105th Infantry will follow along the northern area of the 107th's sector and form for attack toward the northeast with a view of exploiting ground about Vendhuile, to prevent flank attacks from that quarter. Maslin fights one battalion, Bulkley and MacArthur the other two.

A provisional battalion organized from effective bayonets of the 106th Infantry reenter the field in support of the 107th,—for every ounce of coal available is required to fill the bin.

The 301st Tank Battalion will support the advance. Gardner's 105th and Bryant's 106th machine gun battalions are again to shoot the pebble barrage, one behind each regimental sector.

Conrow's 102nd Engineers (less F company which goes in with the infantry), and King's 104th Machine Gun Battalion are held as divisional reserve.

Four brigades of British field artillery and a heavy gun brigade will put down a barrage, perhaps the deadliest in the war; for this mass of armament equals approximately one gun to every twenty-four yards of front.

Shades of Gettysburg with its few dozen "Napoleons," smashing grape and canister into closed gray ranks. The grand old fellows sitting round a stove in the village grocery store are going to feel dwarfed to toy proportions when these new veterans get back home, stalk in, and unlimber. But then, it is all a matter of expansion; the rolling old world, grows bigger, smarter, wealthier. And going right along breast to breast with it, the old rotter—*war*—grows stronger, more scientific and more deadly.

THE 29TH OF SEPTEMBER

A moment before 5:50 o'clock on the morning of the 29th of September, Colonel DeBevoise, 107th Infantry, at his command post near Ronssoy, has settled everything; and Colonel Jennings, 108th Infantry, at Pimple Post—has everything settled. Colonel Andrews, 105th Infantry, has completed his preparations, and Colonel Taylor, 106th Infantry, has placed what is left of his regiment in the hands of Major Gillett, as a provisional battalion.

In the mirk and mire and waxy mud of a cold dark September morning, everything is again ready. Artillerymen are tightening their short lanyards, machine gunners have their fingers on the triggers, tank pilots are ready to roll, and the bayonets *toe the tape!*

Once more a signal gun! Once more the second that seems an age: then Hades bellows forth, this time with more horrendous gesture. And now hell-fire is coiling and seething and smashing: *eleven hundred yards in front* of the infantry. Because out there in shell-holes and captured trenches there remain unsuccored groups of disabled officers and men, and the bull-dog last-standers still holding on after forty-eight mortal hours, sans food or water; like the youngster Lieutenant Tom Ward, and his bunkie Lieutenant Boullee, who, leading their men eastward, are crumpled up, the latter so badly that he slumps forward semiconscious into a shell hole, the former with enough strength left to minister to his comrade. And Sergeant Minder, with his embattled companions. Groups such as these *must* be protected rather than killed by the fire of their own army. Hence, the distance of the barrage.

Had it not been for the *faux pas* of the 27th instant, another American regiment could have been added to the assault and the barrage laid directly in front of the infantry, instead of more than two-thirds of a mile ahead of it.

But now, the horrisonous blizzard sweeps down forward of the high-water mark of the 27th. This time it is 45 per cent high explosive shell, 45 per cent shrapnel and 10 per cent smoke, while the crepitations of spitting machine guns, lost in the din of the heavies, are as deadly as a cobra's sting.

Smoke hangs low over the field and fills the ground holes, which is some advantage to the American bayonets working forward through the smudge.

The 107th immediately brushes into fire resistance, from strongly occupied trenches southwest of The Knoll and hard fighting ensues. Every inch of ground is being bitterly contested. They trek into and over deep enemy ditches then through wire. Reaching Willow Trench the work with bullet, bayonet and grenade, is rough and bloody. No tactics now: *just raw fighting.*

At a trench, apparently running to The Knoll, an overwhelming lead-storm meets them and they go horizontal for a while. But other groups are resolutely approaching the strong point cutting their way through to this modem gehenna. It's murder, hell-to-breakfast carnage, but the damned Knoll must be silenced, captured and held.

To the 107th and its supporting troops of the 105th has been given the super-task of taking the open end of the tunnel, under the main enemy defenses to the north, as well as the protection of the division's left flank or, to be accurate, the American corps' left flank.

Fisk's battalion of the 107th with Clinton's (Bulkley having fallen) of the 105th reach the tunnel's mouth but their losses are staggering. Captain Crump has perished, his lieutenants Terry and McAnerney are wounded. Buell is down, desperately hurt, likewise Andrews and Wilson of the machine guns and one-pounders. Willis has died and hundreds of youthful soldiers have passed to the Camp of the Great White God. Adsit and Gadibusch are wounded, McIntyre captured. But they are *protecting* the left flank which has nothing to fasten to, for troops of the Third British Corps on the north have not come up. German flank attacks coming from the direction of Vendhuile or beyond the left edge are being neutralized, thus permitting the American lines further south to work forward.

Tompkins' support battalion of the 107th is flung in. It stiffens the line substantially, at the current price. That is, in a short time all the officers of one of the companies E, are killed, Hayward, Hammond and Schwab; while in the others, Nicols, McKenna, Dennis, Drake and the surgeon, Bull, are wounded.

Sergeant Napper, with a group of men, reaches the north mouth of the tunnel but cannot withstand gas and withering fire from the northeast, a counterattack in force sweeps them back to Willow Trench and heartens the enemy—for the flank is now practically in the air.

Molyneaux's company of the 104th Machine Gun Battalion has worked well forward on the extreme left; McLeer has just joined him. The trigger-pullers in their immediate vicinity are intensely interested in what they see coming from the northeast, namely, four hundred Germans in mass formation advancing down the Macquincourt Valley from Vendhuile, in the invincible Royal Prussian slaughter formation. It is a flank drive timed to the minute; like the blow of a pugilistic champion whose ring experience dictates the moment for the knock-out punch. This collective punch will hit the American flank a deadly blow.

Molyneaux is also intently watching all this but does not fire a shot until the "shockers" are within 300 yards of his ten concealed machine guns. Then off they all go squarely into the advancing mass, a leaden cloud-burst! It's like a strong wind bending a field of ripened wheat except that this wheat does not straighten up again. Indeed a debacle! The sun comes up like a ball of red blood and stares at the slaughter.

At Guillemont Farm further south it is no longer a battle—it's black fury. There is no battle line now; it is a force of groups rather than the formal fighting movements of platoons and companies. Each man is his own captain—'is own 'ero or 'ound.

It's a swirl of American courage. The valor of ignorance perhaps but there is no jumping the job, no break-up and no panic which in the history of war has cost armies so much, like that at Waterloo and the first Bull Run. . . .

In a few moments thirty charging Germans are but a dozen or so. Those left standing push their hands aloft and shout: "Kamarad!"—in the din. In an instant twenty charging Americans within ten feet of their goal are heaving forward *all down*. A whole section leaping at a trench drop together—the rat-tat-tat-tat-t— of a machine gun being the last reaction their mortal senses register.

In the crash and smoke they cannot hear the crack of their own rifles—the recoil against their shoulders being the only proof it is pumping lead. They drain out trenches only to have them fill up again from some unseen bunghole. Egan is being carried off the field; his adjutant Floyd, is also wounded. Bradish takes the battalion.

The strong point is at last captured—but its bloody murder to be sure. . . .

Three company commanders have been destroyed, Nicoll, Hall and Cramer; while lieutenants Walrath, Rambo and Robinson lie dead. Byrnes is wounded.

Groups continue to ooze ahead. At times sand and pebbles fall upon their steel helmets like hail on a tin roof—the backlash of a heavy "crump" digging a crater. The blows of the sledge hammer of combat are falling here aplenty.

Sergeants Eggers and Latham, with Corporal O'Shea, are separated from their platoon in the smoke and take cover in a shell-hole, to figure things out. A wild cry for help reaches them. It is coming from a disabled tank some distance away. Mortar fire and machine gun bullets sing intermittently. They start over the field toward the tank but half way across O'Shea is killed. The others reach the tank and carry out a wounded officer and two soldiers, place them in a shell, hole, then return and dismount a Hotchkiss gun which they drag back to the shelter—*mount it*, and sprinkle the front, muttering: "They're paying for you O'Shea!" At nightfall, they take the wounded back to an aid station, also the Hotchkiss—as a souvenir.

In the 107th, three hundred and sixty-nine soldiers have perished; and eight hundred and seventeen, are wounded or gassed.

The provisional battalion of the 106th has moved grimly forward in the haze mopping up the 107th's ground. After it advances about 700 yards Gillett is wounded by machine gun bullets. It is his second knock-down in action. This time he takes the count.

Gradually they edge forward and join groups of the 107th and 105th with whom they remain throughout the day. The gallant Blaisdell who led a battalion of the 106th on the 27th is killed. Webster is mortally wounded and carried off by the Germans. McDermott the regimental "operations" volunteers to lead a company, and is wounded; also Ryan, DeLoiselle, Brandt, Doty, Ellerman and Gilman.

Twenty-one soldiers of the left-over detachment are dead; forty-three are wounded or gassed. . . .

Over on the south side it is only a short time after the "jump off," that the 108th Infantry comes into contact with a plunging fire from the direction of the Quennemont strong point. They mix it with the enemy in the first trench they reach. It is not long before they are fighting more like tiger-cats than men. Squads meet hundreds, hundreds meet squads. Sometimes the squads fight it out—while they last.

A constant trickle of men worm onward, often on their bellies, the muzzle of their rifles a little bit ahead. They crouch, rise, and lunge forward. A rattlesnake coils and strikes about the same way.

Maldiner's battalion takes ground sometimes a yard at a time for five mortal hours against all the infernal ingenuity of the Defenses. The capture and consolidation of the Quennemont Farm strong point is accomplished by some of the fiercest fighting of the day.

Perhaps it is just plain atavism, a shadow of the ferocity of their sires, that glowed at Antietam and the Bloody Angle: or even the primitive emotions of their half-ape forebears, a latent drop of whose blood had remained red within them throughout the ages, a single remaining savage atom that is having its day in court.

In L company, two officers are dead, Fuller and Lathrop; the other two, Riffe and Varney are wounded. In I company all the officers have been destroyed, J. W. Smith, McKay, Crosby and Kerr. Of the others, Bentley and Somers of the machine guns, are dead. Hodder is wounded. All this in the glorification of an honest sense of duty.

Thompson's battalion has Balakoff Wood to contend with. His front line companies under Sandberg and King succeed in passing to the south of the Quennemont strong point through an avalanche of fire and smoke with dozens of assaults, scores of rushes, hand grenades preceding violent wrestling bouts and free, for-alls, with butts and bayonets instead of fists. King is wounded.

Brown gathers a composite company and captures a position in the main defenses also four pieces of field artillery, eight machine guns, and two hundred and twenty-six prisoners.

Mêlée is everywhere. Detachments reach the main defenses, south of the village of Bony: confronted by masses of wire, some filter through where the barrage has torn channels, others *climb over it!*

Sims, Welsh and Laughlin perish in the storm. Barager and O'Rourke are wounded. Thompson although injured and gassed declines to relinquish command.

Sergeant Gaffney, with an automatic rifle, crawls forward alone, seeing red, after all his detachment falls. He makes out a machine gun crew, who do not see him in the smoke . . . he kills them all, takes the gun in hand and holds the nest until reënforcements reach him; then he leads a group into the main defenses and they capture eighty prisoners.

The entire regiment is now engaged. In Couchman's battalion Winnek has been killed; McCabe and A. T. Smith are wounded, also Page the signal officer. Their lines are on the edge of

an abyss, looking in: but by no means tottering, for the disdainful impetuosity of fear, less youth, brilliant novices in an ancient game, makes tottering impossible.

Two hundred and sixteen of them, have been slaughtered; seven hundred and forty-six, wounded or gassed.

We again return to the north sector where throughout the long day the 105th Infantry engages in a series of clashes along the open flank. Its support line from Duncan Post to Fleeceall Post has been maintained stubbornly. No better fighting has occurred upon the field than that of its soldiers, in conjunction with those of the 107th, in the attacks on The Knoll and the capture of major portions of Knoll Switch and Causeway Lane.

But even in this seething turmoil where the harrow of combat is reaping its fill, the droll injects itself. A tall large-framed young lieutenant is slowly making his way through the smoke with a battalion wire section. As a ground-draft temporarily lifts the smudge he observes the rear portion of an American tank standing almost upright in a deep ditch which it has been unable to traverse.

Thinking its personnel may need assistance the lieutenant hurries to the trench, slides to the bottom and there encounters a little man dressed in blue denim, his face smeared with grease and soot through which sweat trickles freely.

"Looks as though you're stuck," says the lieutenant, "can we do anything for you?"

The small man straightens up, sways easily from right to left and looks at the towering figure before him.

"Are you an officer?" he asks.

"Yes, why the question?"

"Well, I am an officer too! Everything is all ri—" and turning his back impolitely upon the lieutenant he bends under the nose of the tank and joins his crew on the opposite side.

"Good luck!" shouts the lieutenant muttering, "cuckoo," as he continues on his way, recalling the answer to the well-known Humpty Dumpty nursery riddle. . . .

Over on the extreme left a trench full of bayonets are organizing for another try-out. In the haze and about two hundred feet aloft, a German observation plane suddenly circles over them its pilot leaning out, playfully waves his hand, a friendly gesture to be sure at such a time.

As the plane quickly turns eastward the officer in charge of the group exclaims:

"He's on his way to give the artillery our position; we'll get a few tons of iron shortly!"

He is about to move out and disperse his men when a resounding crash echoes a short distance off, and a smashed aeroplane with one wing pointing skyward indicates the artillery will not be informed of the position. A detachment of machine gunners settled that! And the youthful enemy pilot lay where he fell until darkness covered the field—maybe longer.

In the 105th, two battalion commanders are desperately wounded, Maslin and Bulkley. Ross is down. Two officers of G company, Maxson and Warschauer, have perished. Another company commander, Slosson, is dead. Merz and Feldt, are wounded. Hobbs is dead; Callahan, O'Connor, Clissett and Van Holland are wounded; also the signal officer, Florian.

One hundred and forty-nine soldiers have been destroyed. Six hundred and ninety-six are wounded, gassed or missing.

In the 105th Machine Gun Battalion twelve men have died; sixty-five have been wounded or gassed.

In the 106th Machine Gun Battalion, Beattie is wounded. Five men have perished and forty-seven are wounded or gassed.

Of the Engineers seventeen men are dead; ninety-five of all ranks are wounded.

The Signal Battalion has three men dead, and twenty-one of all ranks wounded.

The Medical troops and Military Police have lost four men, and thirty-four of all ranks wounded.

At the cost indicated the Americans have shattered the Hindenberg defenses as far as the village of Bony.

In the late afternoon the Australians, who had leap-frogged earlier in the day, attack with splendid élan, but the line north of Bony was not entirely cleared of the enemy until the morning of the 1st of October.

And so through the night, and into the morrow, continues this red foot fury that has spread like a plague from time to time throughout the history of the world. And so the clerk from Wall Street and the farmer from Chautauqua county live until they die, hard, boiled laborers of, the battlecult, blood bespattered human engines of war. Fight has formed the system of their logic and their purpose for a year agone and now they have exploited it! O Duty!

Throughout the clash of these reckless men, there have been obscure and smoke-bound intervals which may be called the fog of battle or the wasting hours of mortal combat. But the details of it all belongs rather to the biography of the regiments than to a narrative of this character.

Let us now attempt a calm conjecture of the enemy's shattered morale, his broken spirit. No battlefield was quite like this and after all the months of intensive labor required in the construction of the defenses he firmly believed impregnable, unconquerable: now lie devastated and smashed!

Like the Greek phalanx at Cunaxa the Americans held their own against almost insurmountable odds and earned the right to recognition in that company of patriots, whose deeds will live so long as the flame of freedom burns.

Ancient heroes stood before their peers upon a field meeting perchance charioteers, charging elephants and men-at-arms, with lance and buckler; sometimes beset by four or five to one, sometimes performing acts of individual valor that live through the ages. But ancient heroes stood sword to sword with their antagonists and never were beset with high explosive shell, poison gas, liquid fire, bursts of machine gun bullets, aerial bombs, trench mortar and tank fire—before all of which their individual activities would have appeared as jellyfish before an ocean's breakers.

HERE VALOR SLEEPS

For countless years, hardy men and women have hewed a living from the soil over which this red thunderbolt has passed; simple farmers who brought forth children and worshipped God, without a single thought or impulse of destruction; should we say the killing of fellow men. Without a dream of the human blood that has poured itself out in flagons upon the soil of their peaceful farms. They thought naught of the Four Horsemen. To them, war was a King's prerogative; '70 had shown that. And gradually they had ceased to dread, ceased to think about war until suddenly it enveloped them like a heavy snowdrift.

Now, the fine, strong simple sons of M. Guillemont and his neighbor M. Quennemont have been destroyed. Their lands lie churned and shattered, their homes wrecked and flattened. And all about their torn fields a stomach-turning smell, a smell that pervades orchard, hill and plane. An odor unexplainable that issues not from dead animals, birds or fishes but issues only from dead men upon whom the sun shines.

To-day, the first of October, large detachments of soldiers who have survived the blast are back upon the field engaged in identifying and carrying the dead to designated points.

A deep and penetrating silence blankets the sector. The horror of war stands out visible in all its ghastly nakedness. The victory of conflict is apparent in the stark bodies of friend and foe. Here are dreadful sights which those who look upon them will never in their lives forget. Hundreds, yes, thousands of dead in every conceivable degree of mutilation lie motionless upon the field.

Corpses are formed row by row. Close by, shallow graves are being dug for temporary interment. The debris of fury. Healthy growing blossoms chipped off by the mad gardener. Stark, still things that war fascinated and then overpowered. The very essence of the apocalyptic prophecy.

Each of them some mother's handsome boy. Yet, O Mother! where would you have him be. What end more glorious? Look at it in this wise, O Poor Mother. For your son is not just an inanimate body—your son is one of your Country's immortals.

In youth what the urge to be a soldier feeds upon, is an inscrutable mystery that only the gods of the ages can explain. Yet today this urge is as fascinating, enveloping and withal natural as it was when Sargon the Akkadian beckoned to the healthy sons of the Semites to leave their elders and their tribes and join him in the conquest of the Sumerians which trooping of adventurous semi-civilized manhood resulted in the creation of the first North Babylonian state some three thousand eight hundred years before the advent of the Christian era.

During the smash of mortal combat the participants see dimly, the noise, the smoke, the rush, the frenzy—all tending to abnormalcy. But after the tempest passes and the hurricane of passion subsides, a stillness covers like a cowl the spirits of the survivors who cannot escape the emotion that they tread over a massive pyre. At such a time comes a full realization of the brutal tragedy which has been enacted.

Here are passed the remains of officers whom those that walk the field have known intimately, and young soldiers, mere boys, who served about them, exemplars of America's present-day manhood. But an attempt to describe it all will not be made; it would be too horrible.

Late in the afternoon a chaplain points silently to the body of a splendid youngster lying with an outstretched arm. One of the fingers on the hand is missing except for a small white knob. The finger has been cut off to obtain a ring the soldier wore.

The dead have been despoiled during the night by human vultures abroad in the darkness. The ghoul, the human bat, has been feeding upon the slain even as they fed at Waterloo. Ghouls following their trade in the wake of glory. In many cases the pockets of the fallen are turned inside out, a signal perhaps to the next buzzard that the corpse is clean. But to the honor of the Americans at work upon the field be it said their indignation knows no bounds and a quick merciless death will follow the discovery of a ghoul at work.

* * * * * *

To-day a visitor came to the St. Emily chalk quarry, a dismal God-forsaken, ragged cliff, propped up by tiers of yellowish chalk where the division commander occupied an advance command post during the battle and still remains. The visitor was from General Pershing's headquarters and arrived in a beautiful limousine, with a perfectly new red-white-and-blue sign plate attached to the wind shield.

The visitor was their luncheon guest at Beauval, Colonel Bacon, who had come to see the battlefield and hear at first hand the details of the action. The new commander of trains and military police is assigned to guide him. They leave the chalk cliff and descend to the roadway where the visitor's car awaits. At this moment a British "heavy" in position under the west bank of the quarry sends a how-de-do over to Jerry. Concomitantly every pane of glass in the beautiful

car is smashed to atoms. Much embarrassment is felt over the accident for it is a long ride to Chaumont these cold October days without wind shield or glass in one's car. But certainly war is hell!

Then comes that dyed-in-the-wool guardsman Wade Hayes, acting like *Hamlet*, because the fortunes of war have ruthlessly torn him from the brothers of the 107th infantry and sentenced him to "battle report duty," at General Headquarters, A. E. F.

"WE WAS IN A CRUMP-'OLE, 'IM AND ME!"

An optimistic sky-pilot, was Chaplain Kelley, and some one had told him on the very best authority that a number of American dead had been lying for three days on the eastern slope of the town of Bony. That is, east of the main defenses of the Hindenberg Line.

The chaplain hurried the news to the division commander who while a bit skeptical nevertheless wished to investigate the report, as the position of the bodies on the far side of the town would indicate beyond question that the Americans had not only reached Bony, which skirts the hogback, but had actually passed through the town. Thus settling once and for all the American high-water mark in the battle.

The commander of trains is directed to accompany the chaplain on a tour of investigation and they motor as far as Bony and from there start off afoot. The ground to the eastward gradually falls away from the hogback for a distance of about 600 yards where a road runs north and south.

Searching as far as the road then north to Vendhuile without success they return toward Bony crossing the open fields to the southwest. They have climbed practically to the summit of the tunnel ridge when suddenly they halt at the sound of an approaching air-tearing projectile. An instant later down on the road they had traversed but a few minutes before a huge ball of dirt and smoke coils into the void and the crashing noise of a "whiz-bang" from an enemy minnewerfer meets their ears.

Hardly has the dust settled, when another ripping, *z-z-z-z*— splits the air! Assuming the guns are strafing due west it is probable a slight elevation of the muzzle will bring this shell somewhere in the immediate vicinity of the investigators and they jump into a large shell crater, or "crump-hole," and coast breathlessly to the bottom.

A shattering smash a few yards away, then black fumes emitting gangrenous fragments of metal and yellow sticky turf and sand, indicates that experience is indeed a great teacher, the shower raining down upon them accentuating the accuracy of their calculations. A few seconds suffice for all this.

"Chaplain," inquires his companion, rubbing the dirt from his face, "does this sort of thing, get your *wind up?"*

"Not quite," coughing out some sand, "but Lord, it does cause me to sweat *inordinately!*"

The reconnaissance was unsuccessful.

* * * * * *

British troops continue the action forward. The Americans in the meantime have been given a few days to rest and reorganize but are about to again move eastward.

IX

THE COLONEL TAKES ANOTHER TRIP

ABOUT 4:30 p. m., on the 9th day of October, a conversation was taking place in an earthbound, sandbag protected, corrugated iron hut in the Bois de Buire occupied in part by the Senior Aide. The discussion had to do with the question of preference when a man is really hungry, between a fine fat chicken roasted *à la broche* under the personal direction of a distinguished French *chef* in a high-class Paris hotel; as against an old-fashioned Vermont turkey cooked nut-brown by an experienced American housewife in the kitchen of an upcountry home.

The discussion is interrupted, by the arrival of the Junior Aide, Lieutenant Eddy, an officer who combines youthful elegance of manner with tactful subordination. He salutes his companion's visitor:

"The General's compliments, Sir, he desires to see you.

A few minutes later, the commander of trains stands rigidly at attention before his chief.

"Colonel,"—the General's voice seems to have that, you-are-going-to-Langres, purr in it. "I have decided to place you in command of the 106th Infantry and give its present colonel some well-earned rest by transferring him to your assignment with the trains. The transfer will be effective immediately."

From this day the Colonel's responsibilities were to take a more austere complexion. Fate has shot its shuttle through again. From now on an entirely new and restricted military atmosphere will surround him. In this man's army, "latitude" ends with the division commander—and his staff.

In so far as regiments are concerned, it is "theirs not to reason why." The officers and men of a regiment, or even a brigade in the field know nothing, absolutely nothing about current national policies, allied combinations, or strategic activities. Nothing of what Foch, Haig or Pershing, may have in mind with respect to the most appropriate and effective way of winning the war.

An army or corps commander may be consulted by higher command, with respect to tactical expediency and ordinarily a reasonable latitude is granted as to just how and when the desired movement of their troops will begin. Even a division commander may accept the responsibility of using his own judgment in departing from a strict compliance with superior orders. As, for instance, in the case of G. O. C's., decision regarding the preliminary attack on the Hindenberg outposts, where, although orders of high command directed that but one infantry regiment participate, he sent additional infantry and engineers to build up the left flank which he found to be unsupported, or in the air.

But with brigades and regiments, acting as part of a division, neither latitude nor any activity analogous thereto is tolerated. Their exact combat boundaries, the precise time of departure from a given point and their objective or progressive objectives, are prescribed in orders received by their commanders, who, if they are successful leaders, require in turn, unquestioned and unconditional obedience from their troops.

"Pack up, Smith, off again to a regiment. Perhaps you wish to remain with the headquarters troop. I will get a man out there."

"I'd like to go with the Colonel. Know where everything is. Would like to stick it out to the end of the journey."

Boy like.

"Hurry things up."

Late the same afternoon, without waiting for mess the new regimental commander and Striker Smith proceed eastward in a car, with a general officer. The night lowers and with it a cold rain. At eight o'clock, darkness and choked roads have prevented the locating of the regiment which is also going forward.

At a narrow winding lane off the main road they are attracted by the sound of laughing men and in a lean-to partly concealed by a ragged blanket nailed over the narrow entrance they find two American soldiers preparing instantaneous coffee in a tin cup over a small fire burning in an iron bucket.

The soldiers have bread and marmalade which they generously share with the three visitors explaining they lost their company in the darkness and will rejoin it in the morning. The smoky coffee is passed to the visiting strangers from time to time in loving cup fashion.

It should be recorded that the general officer was one who during the previous years had patiently constructed and trained his peace time organization, of which these unknown doughboys—like two blades of grass in an acre of green lawn—are now a part. The officer was the Division Commander.

This designation, however, means little or nothing to the soldiers. They may perhaps know that a general commands a division, but military rank to them begins and ends with their *company* officers. They may have a knowledge of the appearance of their battalion commander, even their colonel. From there upward and sideways, it is simply "officers," or "brass hats."

An hour later the wayfarers find asylum in the military gallery of a crescent-shaped chalk quarry, at Templeux-le-Guérard. A sad bleak hole that would do a thriving tourist trade in peace time, should its owners employ an expert publicity man to advertise it as a consummate representation of The Cliffs of World's End, where lost souls assemble in communion, just before they drop into the Pit.

To procure the best effects sight-seers should arrive about nine o'clock on a dark night—preferably when there is a chill drizzling rain, and follow along a ghastly yellow chalk path that intersects the main highway, cross a plank bridge over a chasm, at the bottom of which might reasonably flow the River Phlegethon, then descend along a dismal ramp until they arrive at a gallery floor of hardened chalk which stretches through the darkness in a concave direction, like the Seventh Circle of the Inferno.

On the left, that is to say—west side of the gallery they would see with the aid of pocket flashlights a number of small cells or chambers, dug with pick and shovel into a chalk wall, and used as habitations by Teuton warriors. The solid mass of chalk extending above their ceilings upward of forty feet, a thickness which amply protects occupants from any type of descending projectile known to man.

It has been suggested that the tourists observe the cells on the west side, keeping close against the wall of the gallery because on the right or east side of the winding floor there extends nothing but black night and emptiness, this edge being formed by the sheer rounded wall of the quarry which drops precipitously to the bottom of the pit: a pit that in the stygian darkness seems fathomless. Thus again are the cells on the crescent-shaped cliff protected from high power guns, for a shell detonating on impact with the floor of the huge hole, would do no more damage to the cavities high above than it would to a passing eagle.

It is in one of these dark, musty, grave-like holes, that Pvt. Smith lights a candle and unlimbers a bedding-role for one who in the future we shall frequently call the "Old Man," that being a term commonly used by officers of the American army when referring to their colonel in his absence. That is, when some other appellation, caused by varying circumstances—is not interposed.

"Be careful where you tread when you go out, Smith."

"Yes, sir; Good night, sir."

Thus the day closes.

JOINING UP

Early the next morning as the colonel approaches the town of Nauroy, through a choked and sloppy road filled with soldiers, lorries, and whatnot; American troops are observed in a field facing the highway. Unkempt appearing "'bucks" that are hungry but powerful looking. Their commander comes forward smiling, really smiling, in all this mess and salutes.

"What outfit, Captain?"

"First battalion, 106th Infantry, Sir?" cracks out the reply, "I am Captain Edmunds commanding."

"How are you all?"

"Tails up, Colonel, it's a fight or a frolic with us—never better, Sir!" and again the optimistic smile.

The colonel is directed to regimental headquarters at a farm house in Nauroy and leaves the battalion with a well defined opinion that its commander belongs to that cult who add to their prayers:

"And if you 'as to die,
As it sometimes 'appens, why,
Far better die a 'ero than a skunk;
A-doin' of yer bit,
And so—to 'ell with it—
There ain't no bloomin'
Funk, Funk, Funk!"

In a broken down creamery with one small window opening into a farmyard the Old Man partakes of noon mess, and has an opportunity to make a critical survey of each member of the regimental staff, with very favorable results. They are young, well set-up, with the appearance of intelligence, aggressiveness, and "guts."

The colonel also makes the acquaintance of a soldier officially registered as Cook Nicholas Giannakopulos who carries on his broad shoulders the responsibility of procuring food, cooking and serving it to the regimental staff. Unofficially he is called, Nick the Greek.

Out in the farmyard, apparently another "critical" survey, has not ended with such favorable results.

"This is Private, 1st class, Smith, men. He's joining the regiment with the new colonel," is the way a sergeant-major introduces the strange soldier to a group of headquarters men.

As the sergeant leaves the group, a rather loud cut-up questions:

"What's your job, soldier?"

"Colonel's orderly."

"Orderly?"

"Yes, been his orderly all the way through."

"You mean 'striker,' don't you?"

"Well, have it your own way, Buddy."

"Do you know what old soldiers call it in this outfit?"

"No, what, Buddy?"

"They call it, dog-robber."

"They do, eh?"

"Sure do—dog-robber."

"What's the old soldiers call you, Puddin'-head?"

"If you wasn't here with the new colonel, I'd puddin'-head *you*."

"If I wasn't here with the colonel, I'd 'punk' you on that big beak of yours, Puddin'-head."

Then two web-belts hit the ground, followed by two blouses. The soldiers suddenly form a thin circle that hides from any but close-up spectators what is going on inside. But hardly has the circle formed it seems before it dissolves again, and two doughboys are observed lifting up and half carrying a comrade toward a barn entrance.

As the clan foregathers some one says:

"That was a whale of a 'crock.' you handed him, Smitty."

"I eat a puddin'-head like that every morning before breakfast. Any of you clucks got a cigarette?"

Many are offered.

THE OPEN ROAD

Promptly at 3:20 p. m. the regiment dears Nauroy, the band out ahead playing a lively march with worn instruments, in many cases patched with chewing gum or adhesive tape; its musicians making up in enthusiasm what they lack in instrumentation.

On the open road, as the column proceeds, Lieutenant Colonel True a Regular officer, reports for duty as second in command. A well fashioned gentleman with a bearing as stern and nerveless as a French grenadier of the Empire but well mannered and respectful, maybe a bit over respectful, feeling perhaps that having been thrown bodily by the fortunes of war into this ultra-Guard atmosphere, anything may happen.

The column marches until dark, a thin rain or mist falling as darkness settles down. Headquarters is billeted on the outskirts of the village of Montbrehain, in a one room house which had but recently been vacated by the Germans, a fact that causes a particularly careful search to be made of the cellar, to see if Heinie has by any chance left a little "peace maker," in the shape of a bomb or mine attached to a wire which being pulled or tripped over will instantly indicate how he feels about Americans.

The menu for the evening meal consists of cold boiled potatoes, cheese and bread with black coffee to be made on a little stove in the room.

"No eggs I suppose within a hundred kilometers," snaps the Old Man, addressing Nick the Greek. But a deprecating shrug of the shoulders is the only reply.

"Melt the cheese, pour it on some bread, we'll imagine we're eating scrambled eggs!" is the next command.

Into what primitive depths at such a time as this is the human, perforce, submerged. But the mere gesture of living has now become so grim a business that there is little inclination to think about food.

After mess a few headquarters officers sit about the room. A heavy bombardment both fore and aft, acting as an aid to digestion; whining shells pass aloft with a "crock" in the distance or a shake of the earth nearby. The British heavies in the immediate neighborhood, returning the skirl of hate, gun for gun and shell for shell, through the rain.

Rain, says the historian, lost Waterloo. But if Napoleon had been fortunate enough to acquire the type of guns that are functioning hereabouts, the future of Europe, as Charras said, would have been changed, rain or no rain.

* * * * * *

"It takes every kind to make a war," remarks a visiting officer on his way to join a forward command. "Just before I left my old division on the American front, the G. O. C. was called upon to make a strange decision and one far out of the ordinary. Charges of cowardice in the presence of the enemy had been formally lodged against a company officer. The G. O. C. studied the charges carefully and found there was not the slightest doubt of guilt; the officer had flatly refused to advance during a push and his company had gone forward without him; the one mitigating circumstance, if such it could be called, was the fact that it was his first trick in combat.

"The G. O. C. decided to send for the accused and examine him—There is nothing left for me to do in your case, Lieutenant, but have you tried. You know, of course, what that means; a conviction in the old days meant a sentence of death, the most ignominious death a soldier can die, barring that of a traitor. Should a military court place such a sentence upon you it would undoubtedly be approved and executed. I am thinking of the honor of the division and the disgrace such a conviction would bring upon it as well as upon your family. I have decided, therefore, to give you another chance to relieve yourself of this disgraceful accusation. We go over again at dawn tomorrow, and you will be given an opportunity to shake off this fear, this cowardice, of which you are accused, yes, practically convicted.

" 'I am going to send you in with one of the leading echelons; not in command of soldiers this time but as an observer with a forward element.'

" 'Thanks, a thousand thanks, General. The first ordeal was terrible! Please God, I'll make good this time.'

"As he left the command post, the General's cold gray eyes took on for a moment a sympathetic gleam. Undoubtedly many conflicting emotions had caused that decision; the disgrace to an American command, the hanging of the accused, the mother and father—over there.

"The following afternoon, a death-pale shadow of a man crept before the General in the custody of a few soldiers. A man who seemed to have aged ten years in as many hours.

" 'Sir, I couldn't stand it; the guns, the shells, the shrieks. Oh! those mangled boys! The awfulness of it all! Sir, I couldn't stand it, try me, shoot me, but God! I ran away again! I flunked again! Christ knows I couldn't be a party to it—'

" 'Get the surgeon,' snapped the G. O. C. to an aide."

" 'Colonel, take this man with you and have him examined. Come here (whispering), poor weakling, is what you fellows call shell-shocked; what I call a gibbering lunatic. Send him to the rear; he's cracked wide open.' "

" 'Yes, sir. Undoubtedly psychopathic personality.'

Verily one American in every five hundred thousand is like that.

FOLLOWING HEINIE

The next morning the regiment clears the village at 7:30 o'clock for Premont. As it moves out a heavy enemy shell that luckily proves a "dud" accomplishes a fair hit on the regimental mess cart, containing dishes, utensils and rations, all of which are demolished. Fortunately Nick the Greek is not injured physically, although badly cut up over the loss of his utensils, which had been rustled with great discrimination from the furnishings of every billet in which he operated.

In the gray cold of an austere and forbidding day, with mud, fog and drizzling rain dominating, the column passes slowly through a road reeking with an expanse of slime and sodden carnage of war. Corpses of both friend and foe are all about. Here and there soldiers have laid their fallen

comrades by the side-paths near some shattered hedge; their last respects consisting of a blanket or haversack placed over the face, a reversed rifle stuck into the ground; sometimes with a piece of paper, torn from a notebook with the dead man's name and organization, secured in the trigger guard. In most cases the German dead lay where they fell to be buried when somebody finds time.

Wounded soldiers of both armies file to the rear in never ending lines of canvas covered ambulances, crowded to overflowing, with putty colored "walking" wounded, swathed in bandages, sitting silent and nerveless beside the drivers; many of the latter are young women. From the rear openings heavy, muddy, hobnailed boots are all that can be seen in passing by those whose curiosity tempts them to turn their heads.

Detachments of prisoners of war, battle stained, gaunt and hungry, sombrously plod past puffing new found cigarettes. Youthful motorcycle couriers in Highland togs screw in and out through the traffic, their well-muscled legs in loosely fitting shorts showing high above the knees, flying mud splashing against the bronzed flesh and fling away again through the weight of accumulation.

Dead draft animals everywhere, their heavy harness still about them. Wrecked vehicles of all sorts clutter the road side, from smashed general service wagons to gun caissons. Ammunition of every description, from web-belts and metallic drums of machine gun cartridges, to the ponderous charges for heavy artillery—all dumped in utter confusion during the retreat.

Then the miserable shell-torn villages that have stood the brunt of the artillery of both armies until jagged, shattered walls are all that is left of what had been prosperous, sleepy settlements. And over all this, and into it and through it, sweeps the intermittent bursts of never-ending fire from high power guns; for only a mile or so forward a determined veteran enemy is contesting every foot of road and valley over which he slowly retreats or doggedly makes a stand; unable, no doubt, to get the fact through his laboring mind that he is being slowly but surely beaten and beaten at a game in which he had considered himself preëminent and unbeatable.

The thin column twists and turns in and out between all this, marching sometimes two by two and sometimes one by one, through field and road and flattened town. The entire district is practically a desolated waste.

Fighting, after all, is but an incident to the war soldier. Long marches, extremes of temperature, rain, mud, searching cold nights in the open, digging of earth, hunger, carrying of weight, loss of sleep. It is all these things that constitutes a substantial part of his burden.

Wherever opportunity offers the faithful musicians strike up the regimental marching song written in the early days by the band leader, Barney Toy. The chanteymen lead off and the words are taken up by the lusty throated soldiers who sing with a well timed rhythm that bids defiance not only to the Hun, but all the hardships and privations as well. Here the devil-may-care nonchalance of American soldiers, asserts itself:

Hip, hip, hip, hip, hooray,
We are march, march, marching away;
And so help me Sister Hanna,
We'll defend the Starry Banner—
In the good old Yankee Doodle way!
So step, step—step into line,
For a trip, trip, trip to the Rhine!
With the boys that never balk—
The 106th New York—
Of the good old U.—S.—A.!

Here again, if one can recognize it, is the "feel" of marching men. One temperamentally inclined, might call it "the soul of troops."

The head of the column reaches Premont at 11 a. m. Another miserable battle-torn town. The drizzle of early morning, is now a steady rain, and in northern France—how it can rain in October.

It is here the new commanding officer becomes very well acquainted with the officers of his regiment and the officers become intimately acquainted with him.

A conference is called for 2 p. m. Sixty officers are gathered in a stuffy room. The Old Man stands in the centre of the group and as the minute hand of the big British issue-watch which he holds in his hand points to the hour of 2 he begins to talk. A few minutes later the door of the room squeaks halfway open and closes again.

The Old Man interrupts his remarks to inquire the name of the gentleman who has just entered? An almost inaudible voice responds: "Lieutenant Blank—"

"Make way for Lieutenant Blank—" Directs the colonel.

"Sir, from now hence, two minutes delay in this regiment may mean a trip to Blois—and home. Incidentally I observe you are not shaved. Sixty officers are here promptly—you are not. War history is replete with disaster through *individual tardiness*. The officers of this regiment will be prompt to the second in military matters, great and small. Those who are not will leave it, if my recommendations are accepted."

Then the conference continues. . . .

The same day, that is, shortly after midnight the water-soaked command trudges from the town over a road which adds much to the length of the journey but insures its moving intact, barring shell casualties, to La Trou aux Soldats in time to occupy a ridge southeast of the adjoining town of Busigny, in the early morning.

It is a listless march in the gloom of midnight hours: but here time is nothing—whether it is daylight or dark, cold or hot, wet or dry—is nothing.

After an hour, the head of the column arrives at a crossroads, near Maretz: where, according to "Operations" map they turn sharply to the south.

A wiry British military policeman is at his post at the intersection. May it here be said none rendered more loyal and faithful service than His Majesty's M-P's stationed at isolated road-junctions in northern France to guide marching men.

"Is this the road to Soldiers' Hole?" asks a staff officer.

"Yice, this is the ride down the 'ill abut two kilometers, Sir. You can see the 'Ole from 'ere, where the flimes is. They're shellin' *'ell* out of it!"

"Cheer'o!" is the parting salutation, as the march continues on through the soggy night . . . with a bloody curtain of lurid fire hanging in the mists to the eastward over their left shoulders and corpse-like star shells streaming now and then through the red inferno. Yes, "shellin' 'ell out of it," is right; for in the distance down a wet curveless road everything seems either to flash fire or smoulder.

Back of the thoroughfare that runs through La Trou aux Soldats toward Busigny there is a forest where the troops bivouac for a few hours. The battalion commanders' orders, however, are to make a personal reconnaissance of a ridge on the southeastern environs of Busigny.

The regimental officers take for quarters, a two story, four room brick house with a sloping roof facing the highway. As they enter a strange officer who has been sitting dry and comfortable close to the fireplace arises and registers keen delight at their arrival . . . "All safe and sound. Splendid!" The Old Man passes into the back room, where Smith lights a candle. For some minutes gab continues from stranger, whose voice is deep and resonant:

"Never in my life heard such shelling. The British guns just behind the house are undoubtedly drawing the Teuton fire. Possibly if one of you staff officers would go out and present the Colonel's compliments to the battery commander and request he change his gun positions we would be far, far better off—"

Only response to suggestion from staff officers is the sound of wet pistol belts and musette bags squashing against the bare floor.

Stranger saunters into back room where the Old Man is in no mood for twaddle at such an hour.

"Colonel, Sir, we are practically out of firewood, if you could have your man go out and forage for—"

"If you desire firewood, Sir, go out and get it yourself! Incidentally I do not recall having noted your assignment to this regiment. Your presence in this billet can very properly be classified as that of an interloper.

"*Adjutant!* Oh, Captain—find this officer a billet elsewhere."

As the strange officer withdraws a broad grin which might be called a "black laugh," spreads over the features of Striker Smith, who soggy with rain is getting the bedding-roll arranged on the floor, for the night. The laugh, however, quickly disappears a second later, as Smith exclaims:

"—that one cracked the roof . . . something fell on the floor, upstairs!"

A few minutes later:

"I would like the colonel to meet my father and mother when we get back home—"

"Buck up, Smith! What's the matter? You will see your parents some day. Anyway—Shut up."

"Why, I'm fine—"

"Shut up!"

"Yes, Sir."

The incessant thunder of the guns rocks the house;

"Smith, ask the operations officer to bring me his sector map and get another candle."

A few moments later he is back with map and candle.

"Good. Be about just before daybreak. G'Night."

"Good night, Sir."

In the front room a half hour later there is only one officer on duty. "Operations." "Operations," youthful, clear-eyed, tireless and unruffled; awaiting reports of the reconnaissance from the battalion commanders, alert for orders from higher command; writing up the war diary, watching the technique of the regiment, as a navigating officer watches the course of his ship. Sitting there silently: super-faithful "runners," lying near him on the floor.

In the back room bending over a rough box for a writing table, with the stub of a candle for light, the colonel is penciling a letter to his wife, over there. A letter recounting his new fortunes, many details of which are omitted and their places taken by optimistic expressions, more or less fictitious.

SILK HATS

A drear cloudy daylight finds the regiment marching through the little town of Busigny, wet and mud-bespattered; the band playing, however, ranks closed up and in good order. The din of the night replaced by superficial silence, that seems to be harshly broken by the rhythmic music.

The grotesque develops even here. On the sidewalk, some distance ahead of the regimental staff, two dancing, wriggling Americans, "three sheets in the wind," are observed, wearing upon their heads, not steel helmets or overseas caps; but rather, glossy high silk hats. Hats, of an

ancient vintage unquestionably and something on the order of a type popularly known as, “funeral plugs,” in some sections of the U. S. A. The roisterers are jazzing about playfully.

The Old Man approaches, obviously not at all in sympathy with the performance:

“Where did those hats come from?”

No answer, but a well defined facial registration of abashment.

“Throw them away.”

There is an instant of hesitation, they are looking squarely into the eyes of the colonel. Then the hats come off and are tossed aside.

“Get into the ranks.”

Another second of hesitation, and then two half staggering playmates leave the sidewalk and engulf themselves in the marching column. Pvt. 1st Cl. Smith meanwhile looking them over narrowly, as they move hence; maybe with a view of later identification, should military necessity require future official contact, maybe from personal desire for a “warm-up” if an excuse offers.

* * * * * *

At 9 a. m. a defensive position is occupied along the ridge just outside the village. A position which the faculty of the Army Line School, might mark “excellent.” Dirt is flying everywhere; for these veterans fully appreciate that digging deep gives much peace of mind—especially during a shell-storm.

X

THE TOWN OF ST. SOUPLET

THE daily marches recounted in the last chapter, were incidental to the broad requirements of the Fourth British Army's general advance. On the 6th day of October, with the 30th U. S. Division out in front and the 27th in support the Americans had again assumed positions as "shock" troops relieving the Australians, who had leap-frogged them on the 29th of September and continued forward. Ten British battalions of light artillery and eight of heavy (with some auxiliary troops), rolled along with them.

From the Hindenberg defenses the Australians as the centre corps of the army had forced the Germans eastward about six kilometers to a line connecting Beaurevoir-Montbrehain-Canal des Torrens where the last defenses of the Hindenberg system were taken. Thus the strongest fieldworks ever constructed in the history of military engineering had been completely neutralized and after years of effort and bloodshed the broad fields of France to the eastward lay open to the assailants. So sure, had been the Germans of the impregnability of the defenses that little or no attempt was made to organize the ground from Montbrehain eastward to the Selle river.

By the night of the 8th of October the 30th American still in front had taken ground to a line from Brancourt to Premont. The following day the attack was resumed in the general direction of the town of St. Souplet and on the 10th of October the 30th American advanced in a continuous series of open country fighting against stubborn but unsuccessful actions by the Germans and had arrived on a line roughly connecting St. Benin-St. Souplet-Vaux Audigny, establishing a position along the west bank of the Selle.

The enemy occupied a strong position on the heights east of the river which was exceptionally advantageous to defend and as he had shown an intention to withstand further pressure, the advance at this point was halted, it being evident a "prepared" attack would be necessary to dislodge him.

On the night of the 11th-12th, the 27th relieved the 30th as assault troops on the front, the 105th and 108th infantry regiments occupying the west bank of the Selle with the 106th and 107th in support.

MR. FRITZ MAKES A RAID

Owing to the resolute opposition indicated above it was determined to ascertain if there had been any supplementation of enemy strength on the immediate front and Mr. Fritz, or rather 1st Lieutenant Fritz, 108th Infantry, with twenty bayonets carefully selected from a much larger number of volunteers were assigned to procure identifications. The British artillery accepted the responsibility of putting down a "blind alley" or box barrage, which may be described as a shell storm so delivered on the ground, that its fall on hostile trenches will conform to the general lines of a huge inverted ∩ its parallels forming an alley about 200 yards in width and reaching eastward from the river to its base some 300 yards beyond.

On all sides of the shrapnel formed ∩ for a distance of 500 yards in each direction out beyond its base lines, smoke and high explosive shell will drop in large quantities to blind the enemy's lines and hold him mystified as to what may be going on along the general front.

Four o'clock in the afternoon is selected to further mix things up, for any activity at "tea time" has heretofore been unheard of. The enemy, of course, deciding it cannot be a local affair, as no Britisher would ever think of breaking so sacred a gentleman's agreement as that of taking the customary time out at four o'clock for tea. By German reckoning, therefore, it can be nothing less than a general attack.

Rafales of artillery fire now fall; smoke covers everything outside the murderous box barrage. Fritz and his men step into the Selle, and wade across holding weapons and ammunition head high, for the cold stream reaches to their armpits. Up the blind alley of fire they go, rocked and shaken by detonations along the alley's walls; over the railroad embankment they dash and make out dugouts full of German soldiers awaiting the lifting of the infernal bombardment: the parallel fire being accepted as part of a destructive barrage.

Fritz and his bayonets suddenly leap into their midst, like so many devils out of a smoking caldron. A few moments later two German noncommissioned officers and twenty-one privates, are being hustled across the river. Soaked and dripping they soon find themselves crowded together in front of a regimental command post at St. Souplet, where they are identified as part of a Wertemberg division that a short time before, according to "Intelligence" reports, were operating in the Vosges, thus indicating their recent transfer to the Somme front.

Lieutenant Fritz's raiders miraculously escaped without losses, only two men being slightly wounded.

DIGGING IN

The general situation remains unchanged from the 12th to the 17th of October; that is, during the time the 106th occupies the ridge in front of Busigny. The latter position is a particularly trying one as it stretches across treeless country and is without protection except that secured from new earthworks, which are submitted to constant artillery and bombing fire, the German airmen having been quick to note new trench lines before they could be satisfactorily camouflaged with foliage.

On the other hand it is vitally necessary that the ground be thoroughly organized, for if the enemy receives substantial reënforcements and develops a determined counter-offensive against the Selle river line the two forward regiments may not be sufficiently strong to hold against an aggressive assault. Accordingly, the Busigny ridge and adjacent ground, would become the main line of resistance.

Captain Edmunds 1st Battalion had been placed on the lower slope to the right. The 2nd Battalion is on higher ground to his left, with Captain Ireland of the Langres class, commanding. The 3rd Battalion is in reserve.

The colonel and his staff spend much of their time on the lines, the real *feel* of the regiment is there; the men, the animals, the odors of trenches, the scent of forage, the fumes of wood fires, and the smell of coffee and bacon, even onions, cooking in the rolling kitchens, all blends into the indefinable atmosphere of coördination, and becomes as intimate a part of the whole as the soldiers themselves, as essential to the regimental picture as the Statue of Liberty is to Bedloe's Island.

But it seems that no matter what the hour of the day or night, the colonel visits the little command post of the 1st Battalion, it is always the same—Crump! Crump! Crump!

"Is there ever a time, Captain, they are not sending something over to you?"

"Most all the time, Colonel, but the men are pretty well covered up except the advance posts which are concealed by foliage from the air."

"Come to my headquarters at Busigny, on Sunday for dinner; it will get you out of this for a short time at least."

"Delighted, Sir."

We are told the incessant, never ending beat of jungle war drums and savage voodoo tom-toms, gradually wear out the nerves of civilized strangers by their ceaseless droning until they drive him mad. But here are the tom-toms of civilization, culture, higher education. Carefully trained minds have invented another type of war drum which also beats incessantly and sends forth not only a nerve wrecking drone but iron and steel as well. Tom-toms, calculated to kill scientifically and collectively, yet, without that personal premeditation, which would make the killing "first degree" murder, in a court of criminal process.

The regimental command post at Busigny occupies a large rambling house practically stripped of furnishings. On the day of their arrival the Old Man selected for his sleeping quarters a small rear room on the ground floor.

At nightfall the same smash and bang of artillery fire that surrounded them at La Trou aux Soldats continues its racket. Late in the evening walking into a large front room used as the Adjutant's office and orderly room he finds it empty except for a few runners. The colonel calls Smith.

"Are there no officers about?" he asks.

"Yes, Sir, they are all in the cellar, Sir."

Crump! z-z-z!!!

"What? In the cellar. Where is the lieutenant, colonel?"'

"In the cellar, Sir. He has the second best bunk, against the east wall. The Boche built a lot of fine bunks down there, Sir."

"Who has the 'first' best bunk?"

"Nobody, Sir. I think the lieutenant-colonel reserved that for the commanding officer. He said the colonel would probably be down later on."

"So."

Zoom! Crump!

"Just how do you get to the cellar, Smith?"

"Right this way, Sir. I'll bring the bedding-roll right down."

* * * * * *

With a view to a good Sunday dinner an old Frenchwoman who *can* cook is temporarily engaged to supplant Nick the Greek, (this without disparagement to his proficiency), and negotiations are completed for a real meal—vegetable soup, roast veal, baked potatoes, bread from the village baker and red wine.

Sunday noon arrives and a little group of officers stare admiringly upon large portions of steaming soup with big slices of bread floating invitingly on top. The meal begins, the soup is delicious . . . then a deafening roar, a blinding flash accompanied by smashing glass: and hot iron chisels into the plaster walls of the room. The diners jump hastily to their feet but as Captain Edmunds attempts to do so he staggers and is caught in the arms of one of the staff as he slumps forward bleeding from wounds in the chest and arm.

Later they take him away in a British ambulance, and the name of another gallant officer is added to the regiment's roll of seriously wounded. Here then—is fate.

THE COUNCIL OF WAR

On the 16th of October, about five o'clock in the afternoon, the battle plan for taking the heights of the Selle and ground to the eastward the following morning is explained by the G. O. C., to his brigade, regimental and machine gun commanders sitting about a round table at division headquarters which has moved into Busigny.

The plan indicates in minute detail the various features of the action which includes first a barrage of 18-pounders and 4.5-inch howitzers, to be laid down by English and Australian artillery. Behind it the 105th and 108th regiments of American infantry, will cross the Selle river and advance to the Arbre Guernon ridge, where the 106th and 107th infantry will pass through them, and lead the advance to the final objective—roughly three kilometers southwestward, along the St. Maurice river. Again a parallel action within restricted regimental boundaries or zones of advance.

Later in the evening a similar conference takes place at the command posts of the regiments with the battalion commanders present; and still later in the night is explained to the company officers out at the smaller command posts of the battalions.

We now push our story out across the Selle river to the fields lying to the east and north which take the form of rolling hills and green hedges with tortured tree, stumps here and there chopped off by lead and iron which in the half-light resembles the drawn up legs of mighty fallen giants ripped off at the knees and blackened by a lightning bolt. The country rolls with heavy land billows lifting here and dropping there as though some millions of years ago an angry and tempestuous sea had suddenly mocked the power of Almighty God Who struck it fast in contempt of its fury, and as numberless years rolled by, cloud dust settled upon it, pollen swept over it from afar, and without changing contours it gradually turned into solid ground with green things springing up. Then trees came whose offsprings would still beautify it were it not for one devilish thing—War.

From the 17th to the 19th of October there occurred upon these fields as fine an exhibition of mobile field fighting as the fell Americans had given during their foreign service. Battle-tuned they are veterans now—what there is left of them. Graduate fighting men who know all about such chowder parties. The printer's devil has through experience become a master artisan.

Early in the gray-blue light of a dank October dawn, haze through which a thin rain seeps; over on the northerly portion of the front with the 50th British Division on their left the 108th leads out behind a fine British barrage, with the 107th in support and Bryant's 106th Machine Gun Battalion, under Morgan, Roberts and Platt, aiding with showers of skimming lead.

Woe unto those who cross their path this morning, for the catastasis of their steel-capped pugilism will be enacted here.

The Selle is crossed with little difficulty, but at the railroad enemy fire stiffens and in a short time is coming from everywhere. The advance is made, slowly, and by hard fighting. The Germans are worthy antagonists, first-class fighting men, there can be no question about that—particularly upon the part of those who have actually broken a lance with them. About 7 o'clock Bandival Farm is taken after a determined assault. The 108th regiment fights admirably there.

It creeps slowly forward for an hour then a strong counter-attack is delivered on its left and bends it back a short distance by sheer weight of fire. But the resistance is like billowy waves that dash turbulently upon a broad sandy shore only to wash back again unsupported. The American flank is built up from the rear and the counterattack peters out.

Off to the northeast some 500 yards from Bandival Farm a German strong point is throwing lead accurately from machine guns and rifles. It is a well organized position and withstands the British artillery's destructive fire. Not until late afternoon by infiltration and guts, is it captured with heavy casualties on both sides. But the sight of blood, evisceration and death provoke no slowing up now; rather a super-determination to get forward and have the damn thing over with.

Right elements of the 108th have gained the Arbre Guernon-La Cateau road and the general line runs from this point to a spur about 1200 yards northeast of the Bandival Farm. The spirit of the regiment has been excellent throughout the day but as it digs in for the night it plainly shows the effect of its losses.

The same morning over on the southern sector of the front, with the 30th American on its right, the 1st assault battalion of the 105th Infantry, moves out at zero hour behind the barrage, with Gardner's 105th Machine Gun Battalion, under Egleston, Biglow, Whitney and Leake, peppering its immediate front. It is soon caught fairly in a violent counter-barrage and crumples under the punishment. The 2nd Battalion of the regiment leapfrogs into first place, groups of the 1st going forward with it. Continuous opposition is met until they reach the village of Arbre Guemon where Ireland's battalion of the 106th Infantry joins its right element and participates in the occupation.

As the Americans arrive at the western entrance of the village, an enemy gun caisson sweeps off through the eastern gateway at a mad thrashing gallop; a volley of rifle bullets go buzzing after it as a sort of adios. There the Yanks let the matter rest. After the village is thoroughly mopped up, a line is formed across the eastern outskirts. Then outposts are established along the entire front and the soldiers eat their first food since early morning—biscuits and chocolate cakes.

The operations of the day would not be completely related without a description of the 106th Infantry's activities. Just before dawn officers and men stand about in fog-laden darkness like so many hell-hounds waiting for a kill. The prepared position on the ridge in front of Busigny has been abandoned and lines form east of it on the plain. The whole countryside is as quiet as a country churchyard.

Now, a lone signal gun cracks the stillness, like the scream of a startled forest deer. A moment later the void rips asunder with ribbons of red fire filtering through a misty darkness. At 6:20 a. m. the battalions move out in extended formation, marching across crooked hills and dales in the shell-storm. The inevitable cry of *Mineola!* ringing everywhere in the cold watery vapor: this time it acts as a guiding call for those who lose their way in the fog.

The advancing lines are being punished by a heavy counter-barrage that is also raking the 105th further east. But to these rear echelons there is no chance for retaliation. The regiment is plodding through a huge parabolic arch of shell fire; British guns behind it supporting one end of the arch, enemy artillery the other. Shells hiss in both directions highly accentuated by smashing shrapnel bursting on the field.

A thought that presents itself most forcibly on such an incomprehensible occasion, is what an infinitesimal speck after all—a human being really is.

With soldiers all about them, the regimental officers tramp forward in the fog, three seniors with wide intervals in front, three others behind. They have marched perhaps an hour when a whiff of hot agitated air shoots past the colonel's head so close that for an instant he thinks it has burned him. A moment later, Tom Cronan, regimental "Intelligence," exclaims:

"That was a close one!" as he stoops and picks up his field glasses from the ground.

A super-hot missile from a bursting shell somewhere nearby in the mist, had streaked by within the split of a stop watch, and fanned the staff officer's shoulder so closely that it parted the leather strap of his binoculars like the slash of a razor blade. It is these flying fragments that cut one off quite as effectually as the heavy lumbering knife of a guillotine.

There is no wavering in the weird phantom-like lines that pass through the smoke infested mist during this grueling, defenseless advance. Rather it seems a plod and determined movement of nerveless men who do not hesitate at battle shapes and forms, any more than physicians falter at bedsides of patients stricken with deadly contagious disease; or sailors falter in a rending gale; or

missionaries hesitate to move amongst savages. It is not inborn physical courage under such circumstances so much as it is training which forces the human body to obey the will.

Shortly after 7 a. m., the colonel and his staff reach their designated command post in the hamlet of Escaufort, the second in command being directed to continue forward with the battalions to see that they reach their ordered objective—the west bank of the Selle river.

Escaufort is a settlement of humble tanners and farm workers. It consists of a single narrow lane about sixty paces long hedged by a number of rude one or two room cabins. On the south end of the lane the command post is established, and field telephone wires unreeled forward. The hut has two rooms and a cellar, the latter being equipped with frame bunks constructed by the Germans. In the thoroughfare just outside an enemy "heavy" recently dropped a projectile, carefully estimated no doubt to scrap their former handiwork and in fact everything else, animate or otherwise. As luck provides the shell chiseled into the wet surface so deeply that its detonation resulted in the digging of a crater of substantial depth, but with no serious result outside a radius of ten feet from the core.

A battalion of the 4th Australian field artillery rolls eastward across the open country south of the settlement, where its men dismount, hurry here and there placing field pieces, detaching animals and digging trail spades into soggy ground.

As the commander comes into speaking distance riding a big-boned roan horse the Old Man accosts him:

"Just where do you figure on placing your fire? We have men about all the way from here to Arbre Guernon. You know, I take it, where Arbre Guernon is located?"

"Yes, rather," replies the Australian officer at the same time urging his mount off toward his far battery; a gesture undoubtedly meant to indicate the conversation has definitely ended so far as he is concerned.

About 10 a. m., the lieutenant colonel reports that fog, smoke and gas has made it an absolute impossibility for one officer to locate all the regimental subdivisions along the wide stretch of country comprising the brigade boundaries along the Selle.

Bearings and direction are easily lost in a thick, opaque, enveloping mist the same as they are in darkness, particularly in open rolling shell serrated country.

The compass, says the Langres faculty, but these troops are marching in widely extended lines of skirmishers to conserve lives and rifles from shell bursts. Strangely enough the Langres faculty created no problems where rain, thick fog, smoke and poison gas entered into the calculations. With the professors, it was always fair weather. But then theoretical combat rushing headlong against the practical is comparable to a batch of Wappachugian bamboo-spear throwers—charging a company of veteran American infantry.

The bombardment constantly sweeping the ground, plus mist, undoubtedly accounts for the non-arrival of a single runner or messenger at the command post. Incidentally if anyone were to ask how man or beast within the shell swept area can live? The answer would be: God only knows! Yet experience indicates that casualties from shell-fire in open country are not nearly as severe as might be expected.

No orders have been received for the command to cross the Selle which is a fortunate circumstance in view of the situation. But the colonel decides immediate contact with his battalions is vital, for no matter what the meteorological or battle conditions are, a regiment out of touch with its commander may spell ruin to the "leader" and his regiment as well.

Leaving the command post (designated in orders) in charge of the lieutenant colonel and with a few regimental officers the colonel hastens to the front. He finds a large detachment of his 1st battalion in a sunken road near the river, its commander, Brown, with a wound in the right cheek. The officer resolutely declines to give up his command upon the ground it is a mere nothing.

Things on the right over toward St. Martin Rivere are not so good. The enemy is apparently standing doggedly at Mazingheim off to the southeast in the sector of the 30th Division. Shortly after noon the fog lifts and disappears, burned up by a warm autumn sun.

Two battalions of the regiment apparently have become widely dispersed in the fog and smoke, while a message by runner from Ireland of the 2nd battalion indicates he has crossed the river in the absence of orders or the return of his runners and is fighting for ward toward Arbre Guernon.

Groups are found at many points, some nestled in hastily prepared fox-holes or lean-tos, tucked in pairs behind hillocks or ground swells, busily engaged as the officers approach, tying shoe strings, rewrapping puttees, and arranging something or other. It is difficult under the circumstances to know just how many of these men warrant the title of "stragglers;" that spineless tribe of whom a great Confederate cavalry leader said: "Let the straggler be disgraced in the eyes of all honest and patriotic men; let the artful dodger on the battlefield receive the retributive bullet of his gallant comrade."

The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonor'd and unsung.

Perhaps the American army in France had not been in combat long enough, to get round to the official organization of "straggler extermination squads."

However, large numbers of the stowaways sheltered temporarily in various types of abris, are undoubtedly good soldiers who are lost from their companies in a true sense of the word, for they promptly respond to orders and rejoin their comrades in the sunken road.

After nearly two hours of searching and gathering up of groups in the din, the reorganization process is practically completed and two skeleton battalions line up, with the commander of the 3rd missing. Off some twenty yards behind them there is a dead man, an American engineer, whose heroism had been overtaken by fate. He slants partly upright in a grotesque posture against a sand bank, one arm almost horizontal in rigor mortis points eastward, as if indicating to his living comrades the direction in which glory awaits.

Hardly has the reorganization been completed at 1:40 p. m. when a runner from the brigade commander, Blanding, hands the colonel an order directing him to move his command to the Arbre Guernon line at 2 p. m., and the dribble of a regiment, which has shrunk to less than four hundred rifles, moves forward across the Selle through fire and gas dispersion coming from its right fore-flank.

As they advance up a steep fairway toward the town, "Intelligence" stops to search, for military information, the corpse of a shrunken German infantryman in a patched uniform whose body has rolled part way down the hill until stopped by a tree stump. In the dead soldier's short frock-coat with pockets in the tail pleats, he finds an Iron Cross and a small photograph placed together in a worn envelope tied with a piece of cord. The photograph is that of a stout sunny-faced German woman of thirty sitting in an armchair with three young children grouped about her. On the back of the picture there are three words and a Christian name. The words are *Zu leiben Vater*. Meaning in English. "To dear Father."

In the meantime Hallahan and his divisional signalmen are establishing wire communication to the front through the battle sectors.

American Engineers, in addition to their assignment as divisional reserve (which includes the 104th Machine Guns and a Squadron of the 20th British Hussars), had been given the task on the previous night of building plank bridges across the Selle to aid the initial assault. In this work they received severe punishment, their dead lying about the river bank.

During the task in the darkness, a husky engineer had been ordered to carry a plank to the river. Sometime later still sweating under the load and muttering tuneless oaths he made out the figure of one of his officers.

"Say, Lieutenant," he growls, "where the hell *is* that river? I went out and waded across the creek, carried this plank to the foot of the hill yonder then I thought I was lost and brought it back."

"That's no *creek*, soldier, that's the Selle *river*" was the laconic reply.

UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS

The work in the field during the day has dearly demonstrated how woefully weak the regiment is in available rifles. A great majority of its best officers and men are dead or wounded. The few who remain are still aggressive soldiers, determined and persistent, whom the October winds have chilled through and through—but not with discouragement. Patient nerveless endurance has, perhaps, taken the place of emotional patriotism. Numbers constantly diminish, wounded men slowly trickle by; and stragglers increase: leaving only a few brave bayonets out in front to stand fast and take the brunt.

* * * * * * *

Hopeless of receiving enlisted replacements, a call is sent out early in the evening for volunteers from supply and mess detachments, wagoners and horseshoers. To their credit be it said they practically all volunteered. Forty-one was all that could be spared, and equipped with weapons of wounded and dead comrades the little band marches off under a supply sergeant, resolved in this crisis to be counted among the fighting line participants.

With these volunteers there goes limping a member of B Company who has just about recovered from a shrapnel wound. He is a member who always watches intently the movements his comrades execute; he knows all about the manual of arms and how bayoneted rifles should be fired or otherwise used in combat; he knows all about "crumps," air-bombs, and singing bullets. Although he has courage aplenty he cannot handle weapons because he is only a very strong and handsome *dog*. Don joined the colors at Yorktown Heights back in 1917; and accompanied the regiment throughout its journey. The embarkation orders strictly forbade taking animals of any kind overseas with troops, but orders meant nothing to a dog like Don, who had joined for the war. His size, for he is a large dog, prevented his doughboy comrades from putting him under a blouse or in a duffle bag and carrying him past the guard lines.

Upon arrival on the pier at Newport News a soldier who had him in charge was brusquely directed to "get rid of that dog immediately." A half-hour later the soldier returned to the gangway without Don.

"What did you do with the dog?" an officer inquires.

"Gave him to a weeping old lady who had just seen her grandson off. She promised to give him a good home if he don't run away, Sir," replied the soldier, registering deepest types of youthful sorrow and misery.

The first day out, however, Don came romping into the midst of his comrades at the breakfast line-up aboard the transport. It may be he did run away from the weeping old lady and swam

around to the far side of the ship or maybe he clambered up one of the heavy hawsers but just how he did get aboard is a secret that has never been wholly disclosed, although rumor has it he was transferred at the entrance of the pier, after much parley, not to a weeping old lady, but rather to an ordinary seaman of the American navy and became "ship's mascot." Anyway if Don *was* taken on as a mascot he deserted his ship upon its arrival in France, followed his bunkies wherever they traveled and was with them breast to breast throughout all their marches, battles, engagements and minor actions.

At Vierstraat Ridge in Flanders, he received a machine-gun bullet would in the left foreleg, and on September 29th while his company was in action on the Hindenberg Line he was wounded in the neck by a shrapnel missile which knocked him over and for some time they thought he was going "west." He has just about recovered from the latter wound and is off again limping a bit, but on his way back with a company cook, to join the "gang."

Don's service record is one which thousands of fighting men might well be proud. When and if he leaves the Army he will receive the highest official rating authorized for *character*. Although he did go absent without leave for three days on one occasion. Yet that is liable to happen any war-dog in France. There are those who say it was a love affair, but soldiers are always prone to magnify the slightest gossip which has to do with affairs of the heart.

Investigation indicates his A-W-O-L was more or less technical in character. The facts are of record that a shell exploded a few yards away from Don on his first day in action and he decided then and there that the law of self-preservation applies as well to dogs as men, so with milk white teeth chattering he moved off to the rear.

After three days absence Don evidently made up his dog mind that deserting his old comrades was hardly an honest thing to do; in any event he returned to the front line trenches and has carried on faithfully ever since.

In the fanciful future history of the Kingdom of Dogs, Don will rate the coronet of a marquis or even a duke.

Shortly after the little band disappear in the mirky darkness a mud-bespattered courier sloshes into the command post carrying an important looking message from division headquarters.

"I hope to God it's word replacements are being sent to us, Jimmy," cracks the Old Man, addressing his adjutant. The latter quickly breaks the seal, and reads aloud:

"Select immediately eighteen enlisted men, preferably noncommissioned officers, to take course at Candidates School for Commissions, at Langres. They—"

"Stop!" hisses the colonel, "Read it to me day after tomorrow; maybe by that time we can comply by sending all the enlisted men in the regiment

THE RUM RATION!

"Where there ain't no ten commandments,
An' a man may quench 'is thirst!"

Two very human characteristics are involved in this story; one of these has to do with mental composure under stress of violent agitation, the other with personal judgment as to the good and bad qualities of liquid refreshment.

In war, unlike peace, the habit of moderate drinking is, of necessity, predicated upon the question (1) of where a drink is to be found, and (2) the opportunity to take it in that leisurely fashion which is customary among officers and gentlemen.

Again, much depends upon the character of the drink, it may be greenish lukewarm water from a passing soldier's canteen, it may be hot black coffee from a cast-iron bucket or it may be fine, mellow King George IV's Favorite Old Scotch Whiskey. Luck, chance and environment decide.

Practically all officers will agree that Scotch is preferable as a mild stimulant, except when some unavoidable circumstance requires them to be abroad during the early hours of a raw and chilly morning with dawn far distant and the bite of the wind as keen as a sword blade. At such a time there are many who hold a drink of piping hot coffee has exceptional merit.

The British as a rule are not coffee drinkers. But they regulate all that sort of thing. In fact the history and traditions of their army has developed a practical working knowledge within their ranks of the various values of liquid refreshment and stimulation.

With the British army, war service appears to have been reduced to a matter of cycles which consist, so far as their officers are concerned, of the-London-Times-reading-polishing-up-and-getting-out cycle; eating and visiting cycle; and the hiking and fighting cycle. Naturally liquid refreshment is closely interwoven with each of these.

A British officer, like our own, will fight and hold, take punishment as a matter of professional sportsmanship and go to his God, without a whimper, if no restriction is placed upon what he considers to be his personal rights. In this connection, from time to time during the progress of this tale, mention has been made of "drink" on diverse occasions. So much so, indeed, that a question may arise as to whether or not the subject has been given too much emphasis.

On the other hand we cannot be unmindful of the fact, the immutable fact that good fighting, like good writing, has always gone hand in hand with drinking. Alexander the Great, Dante, Cervantes, Turenne, Beaumont, Shakespeare, Dr. Johnson, Wellington, Bobbie Bums, Poe, Grant, and many other stalwarts in the field of arms and literature were particularly friendly to the bottle. In fact, many of them would have considered the drinking of water akin to poison.

In statesmanship the same conclusion applies: the historic incident of one of our Country's most learned senators and orators, when about to address the United States Senate on a subject of nationwide importance, drank a goblet filled to the brim with pure rye whiskey, and when a startled attendant offered an equal amount of water was graciously admonished with: "Thank you, I am no longer thirsty."

But the venerable British Empire back in the misty isles of the past instituted an alcoholic custom in its Army which became a tradition long before any of us were born.

This consisted primarily of giving its soldiers a generous potion of rum, known as the "rum ration," just before an assault.—"The rum they serves you out before the charge."

After absorbing a rum ration the soldiers of a British square invariably saw numerous varieties of multicolored rockets—even in the daytime, then hoarsely exclaimed, "Gawd Save the King!" and charged heroically, should we say, blindly into the foe.

Now, being a part and parcel of 'Is Majesty's Royal British Army, during the early evening of the 17th of October there arrived at the regimental command post, several containers of 'Is Majesty's Royal West Indian Rum, aged in 'Is Majesty's Royal cellars at Jamaica, sealed with 'Is Majesty's Royal Arms, and shipped to the front with that same care, deference and precaution, as 'Is Majesty's Crown Jewels would receive under similar circumstances.

It is brown, it is heavy, it is delicious. As to its potency a few drops are calculated to make a turtle-dove fight an eagle.

Rolling kitchens have been standing by awaiting darkness to go forward with hot food, for the front lines have received no cooked rations for fifteen hours. The rum will go up with the kitchens under direct charge of two supply officers, Mullarky and Rosboro.

Incidentally, it had occurred to the second in command that perhaps occasions will develop before many days are over when a little of the rum may be needed at headquarters. Accordingly,

a seal is broken and a measure poured into a water can. Later a canteen is procured which is filled with the rum and strapped across the lieutenant colonel's shoulder for safe keeping and possible first aid.

It may seriously be said that it is not the practice of officers to drink intoxicants of any type during action; the heavy responsibilities of combat are in themselves sufficiently stimulating without artificial incitement. Again, the average officer is fully aware of the fact that Bacchus is a false and confusing god. . . . Of the canteen of rum more anon.

THE 18TH OF OCTOBER

Let us now accompany the attack lines as we find them on the morning of the 18th of October. Two battalions of the 107th Infantry have been consolidated for the assault, with the third in close support. At 5:30 o'clock they leapfrog the 108th's line and lope forward gaining momentum during the advance and when enemy fire grows intense they smash in with the impetus of a highly augmented and perfectly trained star football team—for these truculent sportsmen are endeavoring to smash that which will *kill* them.

As the advance approaches a road running southwest from Jonc de Mer Farm, strong enemy fire is encountered from the latter on the right and La Roux Farm to the left. The bayonets charge and recharge these strong points.

Fire may slow them up now, but like hungry serpents they continue to edge nearer and nearer their prey, ruthless, relentless. Combat rages intermittently and spends itself in furious blows.

During the afternoon Jonc de Mer Farm is taken, at the bayonet point. Later La Roux Farm capitulates under the same pressure. The Americans move on again and halt practically exhausted, on the crest of Jonc de Mer Ridge.

Turning to the right wing, the 2nd battalions of the 105th and 106th Infantry regiments are in front, the merged 1st and 3rd battalions of the latter in support.

Soon after their advance begins German machine gun and sniper fire is encountered coming from hedges northeast of Arbre Guernon which holds up the left element and prevents it from keeping abreast with the right of the 107th's line.

By 7:30 a. m. they have advanced to an unimproved road about six hundred yards east of the start line. Here Ireland, who is leading his battalion, is wounded, "tagged" at a dressing station and sent to the rear. He reports at the command post, swaying as he salutes, and requests to be allowed to return to the line. The Old Man coldly orders him into the cellar to rest. It was the colonel's intention to leave him there when headquarters moves forward. But an hour later he observes Striker Smith carrying out the bedding-rolls and follows him to the roadway. Ireland accompanies the staff as far as the new command post at St. Souplet where the Old Man pats him on the shoulder, without saying a single word, as he continues forward to rejoin his battalion.

"True," says the colonel addressing the second in command, as Ireland disappears, "that fellow is not stunting, as the aviators say; he has got to that state where he is snatching at danger like some of the 'old army' snatched at a dram."

St. Souplet is a little God-fearing tree-shaded tranquil French village, with a peace time population of perhaps two thousand souls. The Germans have occupied it for many months. It has but one show place, that is a church, the spire of which has been punctured squarely by a swiftly moving shell: leaving a gaping hole up near the apex which from a distance looks like a black eye.

Headquarters are opened in a corner shop with a vaulted cellar, the owner evidently anticipating its use as a bombproof in the event of war. Everything having been set in order the Old Man goes to call on the commanding officer of the regiment on his left, in a spirit of liaison.

Finds the latter's command post a short distance away. Upon arrival a young staff officer at the entrance respectfully suggests it would be better perhaps to wait a short time before going in, as "at the moment the commanding officer, Sir, is having a heated conference with an officer of equal rank."

The Old Man brushes past and goes in, then returns hastily to the entrance, and agrees with staff officer. The "officer of equal rank" passes out shortly and the colonel of the 106th Infantry enters and meets an again old comrade whom he had last seen months before when they dined together at the Ritz, in Paris: the Old Man on his way to Langres, the other on his way from Langres carrying the honor of "first in the class," back to the old division.

"Deb," the hard-hitting, lean wolf, fight-or-frolic, ingrained Cavalryman; who now commands the 107th Infantry and has lately been promoted to brigadier general of the line, but declines to leave his bayonets at such a time as this. Verily to be admired one must be admirable.

"Deb" is a latter-day incarnation of a celebrated commander of the sabres comprising the gray Confederate Cavalry Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia, nicknamed "Jeb;" except to the extent that desk soldiers in Washington separated "Deb" from his cavalry in the early days of the war, for which he never forgave them. Again when "Deb" wears whiskers he keeps them well trimmed, while "Jeb" let his grow wild.

At the moment of meeting, "Deb" is grasping a large rather greasy looking piece of cold meat in one hand, with the other he shoves toward his visitor a battered and discolored tin plate containing additional slices: and suggests: "Take some, really very tasty."

His "operations" officer, Brady, appears and quietly moves a candle over to a map spread across the end of a long table; checks regiment's position with a blue pencil, then places the map before "Deb," and returns to his field telephones. The two colonels talk "shop" from the battle-map for a short time and then separate, exchanging "cheer'os."

Meanwhile bayonets of the right wing continue to creep forward. A detachment arrives at a position west of the Jonc de Mer-Mazingheim road where they take all the fire the enemy can safely withdraw from the 107th's line further north. Other groups are signalling from points to the southwest. The right of the line has advanced a considerable distance but experiences hard punishment from the south. The 30th Division is meeting exceptionally strong resistance down there with the result that the 27th's advancing right flank is unprotected for some distance.

During the afternoon left flank elements of the right wing join the 107th's lines and participate in the capture of Jonc de Mer Farm. They halt with their left resting on the latter farm and the right bent back to an unimproved road.

Throughout the day St. Souplet has been filling up with wounded. The division surgeon, Porthos, is everywhere. Large receiving stations under his orders, are established in a school house and on the ground floor of a huge tannery. At the latter place visiting American officers gaze with wonder at three prisoners of war who have been impressed from a passing detachment a half hour before to assist the medical troops.

They are running here and there. Yes, running, in their dirt-gray uniforms and round peakless caps. So the Great Imperial German Army has come to *this!* The prisoners are mere children, pale little fellows not a day over fifteen. Young chaps like one would see in any grocery store at home, back in the 90's, same dancing blue-gray eyes; frank grinning kids, only thinner than the home caste. Delivering bed-pans instead of groceries. No doubt well infected with the virus of the Kaiser's war posters, one of which the Americans pull from the wall over in the schoolhouse where German soldiers had been billeted.

The poster proclaims that "American means savage, who gives no quarter and expects none," or words to that effect. That if captured certain questions will be asked of them. Then follows a half dozen primary school lessons all of which are calculated to teach the German soldier, if

apprehended, he must know nothing. The lessons clearly indicate that the Imperial German Intelligence Service have missed the American viewpoint by a mile; for having become acquainted with Jerry's education along this particular line many months ago, questions are rarely asked war prisoners, their *pockets* ordinarily producing all the military information required. It may be a few well worn letters from home, a small notebook, or even a half finished missive written by the soldier, tells the tale.

Again it is found the Teuton having carefully memorized the A-B-C lessons usually becomes a bit chagrined or nonplused when he finds he is asked *nothing* and if presented with a few cigarettes he naturally wishes to be sociable—and talk.

The young clear-eyed lads hurry about hoping perhaps that by working at the double the savages will not eat them alive. Poor kids, if the savages could they would gladly concentrate their influence with a view of getting them jobs in Smitzberger's chain grocery stores over in the U. S. A., feeling confident that in time they will grow up and marry Lena, Tillie and Louisa, the owner's beautiful daughters, become abnormally fat and ultimately succeed to the business when Smitzberger retires and moves back to Schneverdingen, Yah!

At mess time some of the medicos lead the boys to a rolling kitchen and feed them more real food than they have tasted in any one week since the cradlerobbers kidnapped them in the name of the Fatherland.

* * * * * *

The Division has now arrived at a point where diminished rifles, utter exhaustion, and the absence of a single soldier replacement makes a continuation of the battle-royal most difficult. But the adversary is tottering, slowly bleeding to death, and the only thing to do when an adversary totters is to put everything into one last punch and pray most piously for Saint Mike's aid in the ultimate decision

AERIAL COMBAT AND WIENER SCHNITZEL

Along toward dusk a German plane flies low over St. Souplet and drops a shower of leaflets calculated to turn the Yanks into German sympathizers, all of which again indicates, yes, emphasizes, the complete isolation of the Teuton mind from the tides and currents of congenerous Americanism. The doughboys scramble for the circulars with very much the same enthusiasm that Hawaiian youths might dive for coins flipped from a tourist steamer, the difference being that in the case of the leaflets they are considered far more valuable than mere coins for they constitute the very quintessence of souvenir.

Then a British plane suddenly appears from nowhere in particular flying just as low and they begin to shoot it out. Every one jumps into the open at the near approach of the firing. The planes are diving, zooming, darting around each other in the mist, the rat-tat-tat-tat of their machine guns drowning the noise of propeller blades. Everybody's eyes watch the acrobats like baseball fans rivet on a ball leaving a bat with three bases full. Only in this game the bases are red, and the home plate is CRASH. Now they whisk away in the haze to settle it somewhere else and all that is left for the fans is the fast diminishing racket plus the familiar boom and crunch of the heavies.

A few minutes later a column of German prisoners tramp westward, to be turned over to Shanton and his military police. On many faces are the drawn, pale characteristics of malnutrition or slow starvation, and the forlorn agony of utter defeat. Lieutenant Colonel Engel of the 107th, stands with a staff officer on the edge of the road watching them pass. With a twinkle in his eye

he speaks in a loud voice supposedly to his companion but plainly audible to the half starved detachment:

"Der Speisezettel wird sein was ich dir sage. Mitt woch haben wir Schweine Knoechel, und Donnerstag haben wir Sauer Kraut; Freitag giebt es Fisch Knoedel, und Samstag—Wiener Schnitzel!" *

The marching prisoners stagger at the words, for a moment their cosmic sense carries them back to that "old" Germany of the plentiful days of peace and it is not until the sharp orders of their guards start them forward again, that the spell is broken.

* "The bill of fare will be what I tell you. Wednesday we have Pigs Knuckles, and on Thursday Sauerkraut, Friday it gives Fish Balls, and Saturday—Wiener Schnitzel!"

XI

THE LAST DAY

ON the morning of October the 19th the 107th reaches forward before daylight and gains the Basuel-Mazingheim Road, the 108th behind them in support. At six o'clock they again renew the advance for about six hundred yards and halt on the crest of the ridge west of the St. Maurice River which is practically their final objective. The lines dig in, the left element making a slight adjustment to gain contact with the British on their flank. Here they rest.

The price on that portion of the front has been eighty-three soldiers of the 107th dead, with three hundred and seventy-three casualties. In Tompkins' battalion, Raven, Stock, Lockyear and Potter have died and Hawkins is wounded. Bradish commanding the 3rd battalion is wounded, also Boehm. Roaler, the adjutant, is dead. Fisk, the younger, commanding the 1st battalion, has perished; likewise Hellquist, his intelligence officer; Gow of the machine guns has been killed; while Lumley, Hall, Graham-Rogers, Terry, Greaney and Adsit are wounded.

In Thompson's battalion of the 108th, Sandberg, Vogt, Prangden, Spicer, Campbell and Veit are wounded. In Couchman's battalion, Roos, Brietbeck and D. D. Smith have perished. Farmer, Fiero, Wright, Horsburg, and Stuart are wounded. In Merrill's battalion O'Connor has died. Spawton, Brecht, Hallock, Mitchell, Fitz and Cross are wounded; also Martin and the Chaplain—J. C. Ward. Forty-two men are dead. Two hundred and thirty-one are wounded or gassed.

But the Germans are no longer carrying attack to the enemy; that gesture has vanished like their reserves. They still fight to be sure but the old aggressive fire no longer burns. Even this skeleton American division now pushes them backward like an exhausted pugilist who has nothing to put behind his weakened blows; yet, is too game to give up. Or better still the gray Confederate army of the immortal Lee, after it was no longer able to procure men or sustenance, and lost through weakness alone. The Germans on the immediate front are like flickering candles, they need but these shadows of American regiments to blow them out.

At five o'clock the same morning on the right, two eschelons have been formed in the darkness, Lieutenant Colonel True, of the 106th overseeing the job. MacArthur has the first provisional battalion, Ireland the other. Open formation, or skirmish lines is the fighting order. A detachment of the 102nd Engineers will build up the right.

The soldiers wait impatiently in the chill of wet grass, indomitable as those who crossed the Delaware with Washington. Here and there the voices of the chanteymen growl raucously: "Let's go!" The commanders in front are awaiting the signal "Forward." At 5:30 they move out. It is going to be an action primarily against machine guns, the country being seamed with hedges affords excellent cover for the peppering devils.

An inspiring spectacle indeed, to look over the fields and see long lines of men in the dawn-light, sinister shadows, moving forward with grim steel-cold passion, less faces half covered with battle helmets. Beneath them cruel nerveless eyes looking into nothingness yet the hypostasis of destruction. An advance, that might be likened to the antennae of a monstrous octopus muzzling out across the field, worming slowly, relentlessly, toward an enemy that its hypersensitive brain records, is coiled somewhere in the offing.

They push on, the 1st battalion edging toward the right. With this easing off the reserve battalion moves forward and occupies the left sector. There is no support now, no reserve—the *LAST man is in!*

Enemy groups confront them. They dash forward as relentless as the will of God. They charge and drive their adversaries before them shouting like Apaches; capturing many: cutting those who elect a try-out. . . . Bulk no longer; here it is one by one.

In a swale four soldiers are resting at the end of a bloody round:

"Geeze it wuz de likes of dose guys, what thought we wouldn't fight," growls one.

The others answer, only by flicking their bayonets back and forth through tall wet grass to remove red-brown smears.

The line advances to a highway, on the far side of which there is a mass of wire. It is the Basuel-Mazingheim road paralleling the front, and offering a fine opportunity for enfilading fire from the enemy strong point at the latter village. But there at the moment Jerry is having his hands full trying to keep the 30th American off his shoulders.

The men halt while officers make a reconnaissance to find suitable openings in the wire. Then the road is crossed by rushes, the wire negotiated, and again they move forward. Now a long stone wall looms before them. But nothing is insurmountable; once under it, they breach the wall with pickaxes.

Beyond them lies an extensive orchard. Intelligence reports have stated the place is infested with sniper and machine gun nests. It looks like a pretty tough nut to crack. It is now 9:30 a. m., but strange, the line is not being potted as it approaches.

The Americans do not fire for they can see no targets. The lull is becoming uncanny. Ground all about is generously pitted with shell craters, and the men occupy them to get their breath. The orchard is on the western outskirts of Jonquiere Farm locally known as North Chimney. The farm itself is about a thousand yards west of the St. Maurice river. Just this side of the latter lies their final objective, and area of exploitation.

Combat patrols approach the orchard, penetrate it—it is deserted! The lines move in without firing a shot although a few hundred forefingers are toying with rifle triggers. The patrols out ahead creep cautiously forward toward the stone farm buildings to explore them, by no means a pleasant undertaking. In a short time they signal to proceed.

Now comes taking the farmhouse, its windows blown out by the concussion of the guns, its outer walls half covered with parasite moss. Hedging the entrance are torn and crushed bushes upon which roses bloomed. Here *anything* may happen. A little button pressed somewhere could send the house into the air. Incidentally the *mine* is the only method of destruction not met, since 1st sergeant Dougherty and four companions were blown to pieces in the Vierstratt Ridge affair.

In they go with a rush, everything they have ready! The building also seems deserted but a moment later their quickened senses distinguish a faint cry from an inner room, a cry in English. It is someone feebly calling, "Help!" There is a rush to the room. Again almost anything is expected!

Startled eyes observe two German litters upon which lie captured American soldiers seriously wounded. So badly off, in fact, that the Germans could not move them. Canteens of water stand beside each litter and blankets cover the sufferers. They say they were treated kindly and that the Germans left them about a half hour before.

An officer and two men enter an adjoining room. On a table a human leg reposes. It has apparently been amputated close to the hip, and still remains covered with what there is of gray-green trousers and the short boot of a German infantryman.

A soldier picks up the gruesome thing and with all his strength tosses it through an open window. As he does so the cloth of the trousers remains in his hands, and a bare, yellowish, booted leg hurtles across the yard.

Ghastly? Sickening? Yes—but War.

Here then on the steps of the farmhouse, but a half an hour before, may have stood a German officer watching through his field glasses the approaching Americans. About him are a few worn-out half-famished soldiers. He has been through it all, a brave Teuton. Private of Uhlans when the conflagration started: now Herr Captain.

The Americans in their thin, inexorable skirmish formation are slowly approaching; slowly vanquishing his iron spirit, slowly breaking his heart. This then is the last rung, the end of his hopes and ambitions. The *Barbarians* are creeping steadily forward.

It is the inexorable answer to all the *kulture*, science, super-efficiency, of the Teutonic Imperial Empire. The Barbarians are reaching relentlessly toward victory! Yes! He sees what the Spartans saw when the Athenians beat them: what the Athenians saw when the Macedonians beat them. Again Barbarians—this time called *Americans!*

Perhaps he is thinking aloud:

"Damn, these Yanks! Damn, these verdammte Indianer. They are verrüct—they *love* steel!

"Yah, a man who invents a knife to fight with, they make him *famous!* They name a city after him. Bowie—Yah, imagine the schweinhunde, getting close together and cutting each other to ribbons, die teufel!

"But, Gott! How strong, well fed, youthful, they are! Unsere jungen—ours? All gone, mutilated, crippled, destroyed—*lost.* Der Vaterland cannot fight for four years and continue to produce well nourished, powerful *youth!* It is impossible.

"We cannot stand against these pigs—these hogs for punishment. Shall we fight until extermination? Or, Herrgott! Take the medicine. Fall back. Yah! Toward die kinder, toward mutter, weib and heim—die kinder . . . mutter, weib, heim.

"Das Wilhelm? Bah! Four years is enough; enough of war, enough of Wilhelm—of 'Me and Gott!' If we have der iron man, der IRON Chancellor—BISMARCK!!! Yah! Instead of the putty Hohenzollern—*then*: Sieg! Sieg! Und Deutschland über Alles!"

AT THE ST. MAURICE RIVER

The entire line has moved forward. Enemy machine guns are again active along the front. "Happy" Smith, with his Vickers guns lumbers up; Ireland indicates what is on his mind. The Vickers are mounted in the cupola of a barn. How they were carried up the rickety ladder and mounted on a narrow platform, is another story.

Combat patrols again press forward, this time as far as the St. Maurice river. By their activities, which include placing steel helmets on the end of bayonets and rising them slowly above the brush, the enemy machine gun fire is located. The Vickers in the cupola do the rest.

At 2 p. m. the line advances to the objective in prolongation of the 107th's battle front and lies down.

What has been the cost on the right?

In the 105th, Buckley, Bergen and Cunningham have perished. Giblyn, Doyle, Blakeley, Hogdon, Morris, Clarke, Brown, Carl Ross, Camman, Carlin and Cippery, are wounded.

In the 106th, Longfellow is dead. Brown, Ireland, Dunspaugh, Clark, Watson, Long, Vincent, Guttzeit, Henrici, Hudson, Fenty, Moore, Spencer, Marquard, Davis, Polka, Tilden, Clayton, Smith, Walker, O'Hara, Rice and Marshal are wounded or gassed. Thirty-two enlisted men have been destroyed and there are two hundred and nineteen other casualties.

In the 105th Machine Gun Battalion, Matthews and Galvin are wounded. Sixteen men are dead and sixty are casualties.

In the 106th Machine Gun Battalion, Bryant, the commander, is wounded; also Glass, Sopp and Wood. Six enlisted men have perished and thirty-two are casualties.

The 102nd Engineers have twenty-two men killed and two hundred and thirty-three of all ranks wounded or gassed.

On the other hand, during the four days of combat the division has captured forty-eight enemy officers and fourteen hundred and sixty-three men. Their dead and wounded it is of course impossible to estimate.

THE END OF THE TRAIL

Shortly before one o'clock on the morning of the 21st of October the front line is taken over by the 6th British Division. The march of the 106th infantry to the rear is indicative of that of the other shadowlike American regiments. What their officers and men need, more than anything else in the world, is hot food and sleep: O Sleep!

A zigzag march across-country toward Arbre Guernon is necessary in order to avoid the heavy shelling on the roads which continues ruthlessly. The groups, weary near to death, march like so many specters. Black fields are littered about with the slain of both armies. In the dark a heavy ammunition limber rolls squarely over a dead man. Poor fellow.

And each of these torn corpses, friend and foe, are the marvelous work of God; have known the beauty of the rising sun, cool breezes, perfect health, strength, manhood, the delights of the rainbow, blue skies and calm starry nights, soft music, the dance, the yielding freshness of women, friendships of strong men—*youth!* All of them have known childhood, boyhood, potent youth and then the gesture of a gallant soldier; comradeship, *glory*—and oblivion!

Rest Eternal, grant to them, O Lord!

"RED CROSS!"

At Arbre Guernon, on the way back, the exhausted men receive a potion, that is, a drink of 'Is Majesty's rum; a real blessing to the worn-out troops, "with 'tummies that are 'oller, and 'eads a 'anging wearily." Sleepless, except for that found in the open fields, with biting October winds—and the guns.

About two o'clock in the morning, the swaying column of *misérables* arrive at St. Souplet. There Captain Bobo, with his merciful Red Cross unit, is waiting with hot cocoa, biscuits and quantities of cigarettes; which brings forth sleepy but ardent thanks. Canvas packs do not bulge now; no longer an extra pair of shoes is attached to them. Nothing is left of formal field equipment but perhaps a trench shovel or pick, hanging loosely here and there: now and then a bayonet hilt over which a German helmet is hung. Years ago the Indians on the western plains would have called the latter a *scalp*.

They are trudging west again, the orders are Escaufort three kilometers away. A few minutes after the main column had departed from the Red Cross station, a gaunt sergeant with a dozen hollow-eyed mud-bespattered men stumbles in.

"To what outfit do you belong, Sergeant?" asks the kindly Bobo.

"'Sir, this is Company K, 106th United States Infantry;" is the staid reply.

Uniforms ripped and torn hang on many, bare garish skin standing out sharply against the rags; some with breeches half gone, showing legs bluish with the cold.

Jumping over hedges and brambles, crawling through barbed wire, climbing dry walls of farms. Leaping like squirrels one minute, and digging like woodchucks the next cannot be properly accomplished without rips and splits, particularly when such gyrations are incident to a matter of life and death.

These soldiers seeing it through indicate a quality of physical reserve, a fabulous endurance, which enables them to carry on under the stress of violent exertion far beyond any personal estimate they may entertain of their capacity to do so. It is almost reckless to say men can sleep while marching but the ranks of the Americans, or what is left of them, tramping westward in the darkness oscillate from side to side and sway forward with the thud of footbeats before them. Asleep, their cradle song the rhythm of boots, against the metal road.
How well he knew, who wrote:

It-is-not-fire-devils-dark-or-anything,
But-boots-boots-boots-boots-movin'-up-an'-down-again!

At three o'clock in the morning, the last man is horizontal upon rank straw in barn or tannery, comfortless perhaps, but out of the cold night wind. It had been given them to toil almost to prostration. In the darkness there are moans and mad noises, for exhaustion both mental and physical has in some cases developed temporary dementia. Verily, while victorious the regiment has reached the nadir of its fortunes.

Orders are to move westward by bus at seven o'clock the same morning, and when this announcement is made to a drowsy group of officers in darkness broken only by the feeble glimmer of a candle, a tired voice pipes:

"Y-e-a-h, Lafayette—*we are here*."

The regiment, as such, has practically disappeared, decimated; where thirty-six hundred stood, there now marches barely four hundred. All the other regiments of the division are in the same condition. But the thought of "what they will say about us at home," no longer causes any concern.

Clouded dawn brings nothing to these worn-out men but rough food and another miserable day in their herded, half-animal existence. A thin cold rain is falling. Heavy covered motor lorries await along a soggy road. At the rear end of each they bodily lift a soldier aboard, who in turn clasps the hand of a comrade to help him clamber in with magazine or automatic rifle, pack and personal equipment. The band has a hard time of it loading their Helicon horn and bass drum men, for soldier-musicians would just as soon consider separating themselves from their instruments, as a young mother would think of handing over her baby to a gang of pirates. Like the gentlemen they are, the company officers are the last to be pulled into the sleepy crowd.

The road is hedged with wounded, many upon litters: Yanks and Heinies alike, both treated in exactly the same manner—just wounded soldiers.

Lying on two stretchers, side by side an American and a German; the latter badly off, but conscious. The former with an indolent wound, barring tetanus, will probably get by; he looks at the other sympathetically, but without any particular expression of friendliness. Then slowly he takes a cigarette from a package, lights it and leaning over places it carefully in the mouth of the German.

Here is the answer to the question, so often asked by civilians: do the soldiers of opposing armies hate each other? Collectively, the Americans call the enemy Boche or Hun. But individually he is Jerry or Heinie. After all the propaganda of alleged savagery, all the boiling hate for the "fiends." Here's the answer on the litters. The Yanks are fighting for home and country, and Jerry will tell you: "Ve're doing dot too."

Perhaps this tempered spirit of camaraderie is developed through the prescience of each others glories, perhaps by the horror of bloody discussions. On the field they will kill each other by any violent method: but the killing is solely after the fashion of the old Rio Grande verse

The tarantula jumped on the scorpion's back,
And gleefully cried, cried he—
I'm going to kill you, you poisonous sun-baked gnat!
For if I don't—you will surely kill me.

RETROSPECTION

From the time the Americans of the *two* divisions arrived in the line west of the Hindenberg defenses until they were relieved in the vicinity of Catillon and the St. Maurice river, they pushed the enemy twenty-eight kilometers toward the Fatherland, captured one hundred and fifty-two enemy officers and fifty-seven, hundred and ninety-four enlisted men; a locomotive and train of cars, nine heavy guns, seventy-two field pieces, seven hundred and forty-one machine guns, forty-seven trench mortars, and twenty-four hundred and six rifles—plus *souvenirs* ranging from huge motor trucks to Iron Crosses not inventoried.

It is appropriate to say that perhaps no military divisions in the forces of the Allies worked together day by day in more friendly unison and with more cordial helpfulness and goodwill than these Guard divisions; made up almost wholly, on the one hand of men from the southern states of South Carolina, North Carolina and Tennessee: proud and gallant sons of immortal sires who helped to carve the glorious history of the Confederate States Army. Brave and determined soldiers, beside whom any American division would consider it an exceptional honor to serve; and particularly was this so with the troops of their *brother* division from the northern state of New York.

XII

ONE NIGHT STANDS

HEAVY, lumbering motor lorries transport the regiment to Brancourt. From that cracked village, where they stop to ration, there comes a number of one night stands. Each day the regiment boots it to some shattered village further west. From Brancourt it marches to Bellicourt, then to Hesbicourt which is reached at 2 p. m., on the 23rd of October in a slashing cold rain.

It is a particularly miserable day with the floodgates wide open. As the drenched regiment arrives at the outskirts of the completely flattened settlement (for not a single structure of any character has been left standing), a half-wrecked Nisson hut sprawls lamely just off the road, one end of its roof lying flat while the front part, meaning a number of deeply rusted sheets of corrugated iron which remain together, keeps a slice of ground partially dry, although from time to time gusts of air tosses in the rain. Yet a windfall indeed and even better luck a diminutive French stove stands half upright against the slanting iron of the rear.

There are no formal occupation ceremonies. Headquarters merely moves out of the soaked column and takes possession of the "mansion." The battalions continuing into the settlement, dripping horses drawing wagons and rolling kitchens at the rear. All passing in review before the broken-down command post, without music, pomp or formality.

A magical thing about a traveling regimental staff is the fact that however isolated its senior officers appear to be, always hovering in some mysterious place, close at hand, are faithful soldiers.

The colonel being hungry and wet seeks conversation with his *maistre d'hôtel-sommelier*.

"Where's Nick?" he calls, "I say out there; some one get hold of Nick the Greek!"

A few moments suffice, and Nick stands shedding water at the entrance.

"Nick, what about a dash of *Solera* sherry, a large *Sole Bordelaise*; then a double portion of *Filets Mignons*, and potatoes *Parmentier* with a large bottle of *Quinta Boa Vista* port? Yes! But Nick, what about *food*?"

"No fire burn, in dam' rain."

"Have you any dry kindling?"

"Some in mess-cart, dam' rain soon soak—"

"Suppose you move this cracked stove out to the edge of the hut, and build a fire in it. You'll have to stand outside while you work, for there is not an inch of space inside. If you could get hold of a larger umbrella—"

"Ha! Ha! Umbrell'—*hell*" and he moves off to get his supplies.

The meal ultimately consists of smoke, bread, cheese, marmalade, boiled coffee, and *more smoke*. There is no land flowing with milk and honey here.

The next morning the regiment marches to Roisel and arrives shortly before noon: where orders are received to entrain at 1 p. m. for a rest area farther south.

Waiting for the train to be made up Headquarters stand bunched about a fireplace in the angle of a shattered house. The open hearth and a portion of the chimney being all that remains upright. On the road in front of them a British ration wagon rolls lazily past. A soldier is driving, behind him a Chinese coolie squats complacently. The officers watch it vaguely in the absence of anything else to do. It reaches the railroad tracks a short distance down the street. Then,

suddenly they observe hell open its mouth and emit a monstrous blast! A roar and a leap of flame from out the ground hurls wagon and all into the air.

When the dirt and debris settles, some one says: "delayed action mine." A mine planted deep under the tracks with devilish ingenuity a month before had functioned. Both occupants of the wagon and the animals are torn to shreds. A circular crater twenty feet in diameter and almost as deep, yawns where a moment before the railroad tracks had been. Cowardly method of murder, to be sure; but then all's fair in war. The ripped and twisted tracks cause a long delay.

While the colonel and his staff stand about in the shattered ruins, two strangers arrive from General Headquarters, A. E. F., in a highly polished limousine. Two colonels beautifully gotten out, with untarnished golden-faced red-white-and-blue brassards on their arms to indicate majestic authority. Thin lipped, conventional and thoroughly orthodox. Some one whispers: "Real Brass Hats."

Usual greetings are exchanged; then notebooks and pencils appear.

"Yes, yes, the regiments all reached their objectives. Very good, indeed."

"That is, what was left of them, not having received a single enlisted replacement," interjects the Old Man shortly.

"Yes, yes—now just where were you during the advance of your regiment in the action?"

"With them in the field or wherever I thought it necessary to be," is the colonel's sour reply—wondering, where the heck were *you*?

It is not until long past dark that orders are received to march to Tincourt, some ten kilometers away. A cold rain is falling steadily but the pedestrian exercise will develop warmth. Incidentally the hike will be the second negotiated in twelve hours.

At 10 p. m. the waterlogged column reaches its destination and drops along the road in the wet grass. Here, the hour for future movement by train, is found to be decidedly uncertain. Information about transportation. seems to be at odds, so to speak, but that must be expected when delayed action mines function, with a train on the off side of the explosion.

A baleful night that traces in its miserable quietude and gloom the trembling chaos of a broken world. In the darkness the colonel and his second in command tranquilly squat together on a low stone wall unnoticed: except by the rain and cold. Water trickles from the brims of their steel helmets like it would from a tin roof.

A bleak billet indeed, crowded with obscurity and cloaked in a strange silence which is broken only by the common sounds of the night such as the swishing of rain-soaked leaves falling from autumn touched trees, a low hollow laugh, or a curse from the ranks of prone men lying in the wet bosky shadows.

No lights, no fires which may draw the bombs of hovering Teuton airmen whose eyes catch the merest glimmer, like bees spot the burst of a honeysuckle bud. From a distance comes the shrill whistle of a locomotive, momentarily cracking the silence.

"True," says the Old Man to the lieutenant colonel, whose bulk looms large beside him: "Whatever the future may have in store for us, *che sarà sarà, Senor*, but the fighting is over for a short time at least, and I am in a mood for relaxation, to the extent of a large—even generous man-sized drink from the canteen of 'Is Majesty's rum, you carry."

"I have been wondering if this moment ever would arrive?" is the pithy rejoinder: as the canteen is detached and handed over. The stopper is withdrawn and the container adjusted to a horizontal position. The next instant a strangling sensation appears to grip the Old Man's throat, and he violently ejects a mouthful of the fiery fluid—

"What in the name, *hic*, of the nine gods of war, *hic*, have you put into that canteen?" he demands chokingly.

"It has never been opened, never left my person, since the night it was filled at Escaufort; that I'll swear—

"Why, hounds of hell, taste it—it's *gasoline*, rather than rum!"

"*Sahib*, truthfully, it is a rotten drink—" is the reply a few moments later, as a gurgling sound subsides, "and the only way I can account for the gasoline flavor is that the can into which I poured the rum, before placing it in the canteen, was a *petrol* can instead of a *water* can."

As though the error merits some appropriate punishment, he again raises it slowly to his lips, murmuring:

"*It was crawlin' and it stunk, but of all the drinks I've drunk: I'm gratefullest to one from—"* A slight cessation and then the refrain continues, *"—E'll be squattin' on the coals givin' drink to poor damned souls—"*

The gesture of his purpose to again raise the canteen, caused the colonel to take hold of it. It was perfectly vile, but the Old Man made the grade.

At 1 a. m. a train slowly worms up the tracks, like a huge black snake reaching forward through the vague, cheerless night. An hour later, the last wagon has been loaded on the wet flat cars, the last animal entrained; and like them, the silent veterans are in the straw of the 40 and 8's. The toy whistle toots, and the troop-train rattles slowly south toward a rest area.

As the colonel throws his musette bag into a corner of a windowless passenger compartment, he remarks to Pvt. 1st Cl. Smith:

"Bill, much of the chill seems to have left the air; it seems to be getting considerably warmer."

Smith's reply, is a smile in the dark.

A "REST" AREA

The next morning the bedraggled command left the train at Corbie and booted it to Bussy les Daours, which is located within an ordinary march of the ancient and historic city of Amiens, near where at Villers Bretonneux, our Canadian cousins, stopped the flank drive of the Germans; and by their cool courage and fighting spirit, earned for themselves a proud place in the history of British arms. What the heroic Canadian Corps of three divisions, showed the enemy at the second battle of Ypres, and that of Saint Elvi in April, and Sanctuary Wood in the Ypres salient in June of 1916, they again exhibited here. The fellowship of the Canadian troops contained a spirit which arose to its highest combat efficiency when pitted against overwhelming odds in the theatre of adversity.

Amiens, where some time ago, that is to say, in the year 481, the Frankish throne was mounted by Clovis a fighting king, who conquered Roman rule at Soissons, then rolled up the savage Germans at Zulpich; and at Poitiers crushed the enemy Visigoths.

Amiens, where the magnificent Cathedral of St. Firmin, the martyr, one of the most beautiful in France, dominates the city; its stately flat twin towers reaching high to Heaven, even without finishing spires, although diminutive "arrow spires" squat upon them, the so-called "caprice of a village carpenter." Its facade ornamented with no less than twenty-two heroic sized statues of saints; its three front entrances embellished with some forty-two full-sized statues of disciples and martyrs.

The good Abbe Pierre Camborde, attached to the regiment as official interpreter, when asked why the ancient religious paid such marked attention to exterior garnishments of this type, replies with learned clerical gravity:

"In 'ze earlee day, or what you say, earlee epoch of Europe; 'ze peeple ordinair, are without learning, 'zat is edducasecion, 'zey cannot read or write.

"It was a consequence 'zat Christian history, biblicale precept and secular tradicion of 'ze Church could not reach 'ze masses through religious litrature, catechism and prayer book. So 'ze teachings of 'zat earlee day are taught by illustracion. 'Ze people become acquainted through 'ze eye, with 'ze saint's and martyr's appearance, by 'ze statues inside and outside 'ze church.

"Very well, 'ze clergy teaches to them by word of mouth 'ze history of those whose images are represented. 'Zen 'ze father and mother teach 'ze children; when 'ze children grow up and marry, 'zey teach their children, and so on. In 'zis way did 'ze sacred ornamentacion spread 'ze Word of God and 'ze gospel of Christianity.

"You see, 'ze clergy, in 'zat early day, were veery smart, and know best how to spread 'ze mandates of 'ze Great Master.

" 'Zey were, what 'ze beeg surgeon, you call Porthos, teach me to express in English: Wise Guys, Yez?"

* * * * * *

A rest area, so-called, is a place where troops drill from morning until night, barring time out for noonday mess. The only pleasant feature about it lies in the fact that it is so far removed from the front that at least the everlasting cacophony of the guns cannot reach it.

Heavy drafts of recruits are pouring into the ranks; issues of clothing of all types are being made to the veterans. In a very short time a fine looking regiment of 3000 men is created like a Phoenix arising in youthful freshness out of its own ashes.

From the long reaches of the sun-baked shores of the Rio Grande, to the yellow poppy-clad fields of Flanders and the wretched soggy soil of the Somme Valley; the old command has journeyed far and is again building itself up to travel. It may be, its ranks will not reach the end of the trail, until they cross the frontiers of Germany with convincing passports hanging round their slender waists in grayish cotton-belts with little leaden pellets pointing down.

SECOND-STORY MEN

Bussy les Daours, where the regiment "rests," is a cold, mud-infested hamlet, destitute of paved sidewalks or other civic improvements. No pale radiant moon, fireflys, traveling troubadours, or strains of guitars hereabouts. Nothing but mud and replacements, both rather soft. Headquarters is established in a rambling sombre house, untenanted, barren of floor covering or any sort of furniture except beds with bare dirty mattresses, and a few squeaky chairs.

The days are sunless and chill with black cloudy November nights, cold and bleak.

"Smith, what about firewood?" asks the Old Man, returning from the drill field in the late afternoon. "Bringing in a few pieces now and then, is insufficient—get a lot of firewood!"

"It's very hard to get, Sir—"

"Everything that's worth while is hard to get. Take two or three of the sharpest of your friends, make a wide reconnaissance, there must be wood about."

It is long after dark when Smith reappears, followed by a group of *safari*, comprising three heavy-footed, rosy-cheeked, big chested "bucks," particularly heavy looking in their bulky, loose fitting overcoats. Each is carrying huge armfuls of cord wood.

"Put it right here men where it can dry out," are Smith's orders. Then addressing the colonel rather darkly, "We'll be back again in half an hour."

The foragers lumber out, their rough hobnailed shoes pounding heavily over the bare floors.

Half an hour later they return, again overburdened with wood.

"I think that will be sufficient for the time being," says the colonel, "Fine of you men—getting enough to eat?"

"Yes, Sir, plenty to eat," and again the hobnails clatter off.

A few minutes later Smith returns:

"Wouldn't care to tell the colonel where we got it a good distance from here; but there's all we will need. Night's best time to get it. Those three men can work all around these Frogs, when it comes to getting anything without anybody knowing it." Then lowering his voice and looking about to be sure they are alone: "Flyest men in the regiment, two of them professional second-story men, back home—"

"So? They looked honest enough to me."

"Not a sound, Sir, worked like ghosts, as they got it out of the shed in the dark."

"Just where is the shed?"

"Rather the colonel would not ask me, Sir. We got a little for our own billet, too."

A few days later, two Frenchmen bow themselves into the office of the commanding officer; one the Town Major, the other a stranger.

"Moi Colonell, eet ees M. Compigne, 'zat I have 'ze honaire to introduce. Eet is a rumor, 'zat 'ze great American regiment ees to leave and again strike deadly blows against 'ze motal enemies of France. 'Ze children pray, through 'ze night—"

M. Compigne at a signal lopes forward with a deep bow as oceans of Gallic words run together without attempt at punctuation or estop and flow from his lips, flooding the room with lingo.

"—What the devil is it all about, major?" asks the Old Man.

"Moi Colonell, eet ees 'ze *firewood*. Eet ees 'ze cords, 'zat ees taken from 'ze woodhouse of M. Compigne, by 'ze soldiers for *you*."

"Yes, firewood. What is its value?"

"Ah, eet ees but 'ze trifle, Moi Colonell, if you will sign 'ze claim, for forty francs, eet ees all M. Compigne begs."

"How about twenty francs—cash?"

Much talk, between the Town Major and M. Compigne. Then—

"Say thirty francs, Moi Colonell."

"Bla-h-h! I have changed my mind. A cord is ridiculous, rather a few arm's-full."

More talk between the Frenchmen. Then—

"Twenty francs, cash, ees acceptable to M. Compigne, Moi Colonell."

And they leave the colonel, bowing deeply, repeating: "Monsieur *merci.*"

"I say, Jimmy—Adjutant! Oh, Jimmy; send for Smith, I want to see him . . . *Professional second-story men, eh!"*

QUITE A "HOCCASION"

Predicated upon the principle, that all work and no play makes Jack a dull officer, it is decided after much discussion as to ways and means, that perhaps the holding of a "first annual" banquet of the officers of the regiment, may be found practicable. A dinner committee accordingly reports that an excellent hostelry, namely Goberts, at Amiens, can be made available; although it has been pretty well battered by bomb and shell fragments.

But every obstacle is surmounted and on the evening of the 6th of November, the officers travel hence in two large motor lorries; feeling rather awkward by virtue of the fact that having lived in the mud and muck of the front for what seems an age, it is a task indeed to rehabilitate

conventions almost forgotten. Incidentally, the Old Man has requested that no officer appear without a *white collar*.

The lorries arrive promptly and the gentlemen of the regiment file in. Naturally the bar, with a brass rail, becomes the concentration point where they gather like flying midges around a flaming light. Then into a large dining room, opened for the first time since a German drive was halted near the city, they stroll, evincing surprise that the dinner committee had even procured "place cards."

Great brass candelabra with clusters of army "issue" candles illuminate the hall. Rain is dripping through broken windows of the skylight overhead. But what of that?

Then a syncopated rhythm of Hawaiian jazz is heard. The real thing, and in marches the Division Jazz band, with violins fiddling, banjos ringing, guitars strumming and ukeleles twanging. It is a real Roman holiday.

Everyone is there, everyone is properly and appropriately introduced. Porthos speaks, DeBevoise speaks, Taylor speaks, the Old Man speaks. Porthos speaks again; then a third time, after which he is suppressed.

Then toasts are drunk to soldier friends who are absent, including Generals Dyer, Lester, Wingate, Stotesbury; and Hines—who ferried them over.

In the middle of post-festivities doors open at one end of the room and a number of Australian officers stand at the entrance drawn by a wish to see what it is all about. A few seniors approach the colonel who courteously accepts an invitation to go with them and meet their "party."

A few minutes later he returns and stages a climax by announcing:

"The officers in the next room, are the gentlemen of the 4th Australian Field Artillery, who supported our advance from Busigny and followed us so closely with their guns, that we had a hard time keeping in front of them!"

As one man the Americans spring to their feet, raise their glasses and utter a mighty: "How!"

An Australian shouts: "Long live the United States of America!"

The Americans blast: "Long live Australia!"

Now a soldier steps to the piano and sings, *Night and the Shadows Falling*. It is Sergeant House, of the Intelligence Section.

At eleven o'clock, the Old Man closes the banquet. Ponderous lorries carry the gentlemen of the regiment back to the mud hole.

But what a "hoccasion" it's been!

XIII

A LEAVE OF ABSENCE

SHORT leaves are being given to officers who rate them, and the colonel gets five days. As "Deb" of the 107th, who now commands the 53rd Infantry Brigade, is going to Paris on some private business, they leave for the capital together and in due course arrive at Henri's where each places one foot on a brass rail, begin with an *apéritif* of Amontillado sherry, and finding only moderate results gradually adopt champagne cocktails.

Here the great joss booze is omnipotent and a little plain drinking may be considered excusable for the reason that with those, shall we say, with heavy responsibilities; it develops among other things—forgetfulness. Somehow, up close to the crash the thing is not taken seriously. Nobody seems to think of the Reaper while wallowing in the Slough. Maybe the Good God of soldier-men controls all that sort of thing. It is after they get away from it and begin to calculate when they are due back again that the care destroying propensities of the great joss becomes all-powerful.

Maybe again, it is the Good God of soldier-men, Who, in spite of all the ravages of war, keeps a supply of wine plentiful as He did once before when—as Saint John inscribed:

"There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:
And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage,
And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. * * *.
His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.
And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.
Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.
And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bear it.
When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made into wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,
And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now."

ARMISTICE!

The day after the companions arrived in Paris, namely the 9th of November, news spreads that an Armistice is being celebrated in the United States. But Paris does not confirm any such happy event, and Paris should certainly know.

But, now it is the *11th of November!* The real Armistice Day! Paris is soggy with rain. Paris is mad, utterly mad with joy. Parading French women, thousands upon thousands of them, old and young, fill the boulevards; skirts bedraggled, wet to the knees. Singing the *Marseillaise*, singing it wildly, hysterically. While voices with a higher pitch, shrill: *"On a Signer L'Armistice—Dieu soit merci!!!"*

Girls spring upon the running boards of motor cars moving slowly through the throngs; sometimes they clamber over the sides: shouting convulsively, *"La Guerre est fini! La Guerre est fini!! Dieu soit merci!!!"* Crazy with delight.

The wild feudal scourge of the *Four Horsemen* is, for the present, at an end!

Now it is Armistice Night; an Arabian Night! The daring figurants at the Folies Bergére, will go flat this evening . . . It is a night for wine, song; wild and patriotic music—that stirs the blood to the boiling point.

Every Frenchman without reference to the length or cut of his whiskers, kisses every one he meets with or without whiskers. A little American Red Cross nurse stands in the lobby of the Hotel Continental looking wistfully out toward the Rue de Castiglione. "Deb" bows. She smiles and explains she is long overdue at headquarters but every time she attempts to go out all the Frenchmen try to kiss her. Pretty tough on the poor girl—and the Lone Wolf, the Judge Advocate, "'Q," and the Senior Aide all hidden away, up there in the bosky.

The companions dine at Ciro's, which is packed to the doors. Everybody in a high or low state of frolicsome intoxication. Everybody singing, between drinks! A large rotund, middle-aged bounder, in a British uniform, with a face like a boiled *langouste* who has been in the war since the beginning, right here in Paris, is exceptionally boisterous. Some fighter, no doubt about that, probably unbeatable: as a booze fighter.

High words at his table. He is maximum tight, in fact crazy drunk. Now he is trying to lift a French woman onto a table. The lady screams shrilly! Then a heavy champagne bottle enters the picture; crashes squarely on the fellow's forehead, causing an ugly wound from which much blood flows. Creating transitory excitement, as he is carried out by the waiters.

It is midnight, joy is unconfined, in some cases partly unattired. The grisettes in cheap black dresses march in from the streets; not an impropriety to-night. They march through the narrow aisles, singing, kissing everybody—eating every scrap of cold food that may have been left on smeary dishes.

Girls in cotton stockings and wrinkled shoes are standing on tables, throwing kisses, wriggling their bodies. Decency—wow: virtue—bla-h-h! With the French, apples grow to be eaten. Old Father Adam received much caustic criticism with respect to a pome incident: but there never was an Armistice night in the Garden.

Armistice!!! What that word means, particularly to mud soldiers. No more fighting, no more killing, no more blankets nailed over windows, doors and dug-out entrances; no more rotten trenches with their huge brown rats, no more twenty-four hours a day without proper food and sleep; no more noise of guns, extreme hardship, and blood-bespattered men. Verily: *Unarm, Enos! The great day's work is done!!!*

And here are the victors on top of the world; some of them wondering—where William II and his psychic equilibrium is? Where Von Hindenberg, who built the Defenses is? Ludendorff, the great military strategist? Von Schlieffen and Moltke the younger, who turned him over? Von Bulow, Von Baumgarten-Crusius? And old Von Arnim, who told how dough, boys should be trained so they cannot be beaten?

"Where are they all to-night?—Hey, Garcon—!"

Foch, and his *poilus*; Haig, and his *tommies*; can tell you where they are!

Black Jack, with his four stars, his perfect military figure, his iron chin, and his *yanks*; can also tell you where they are. Quite!

Is it fate with the Teuton? So long as he keeps his mastership of super-culture, intelligence, science and learning, within the levees of peaceful commercial, industrial and professional enterprise; he prospers, is happy: and grows fat.

But a mirage from time to time, seems to inflate his ego with an irresistible ambition to conquer with the sword; and as a result, his torrent of conquest seeps over the embankments, into the inviting lowlands of world domination; where the mirage draws him forward toward—destruction. Is it the call of a siren, a national siren—or is it Teutonic fate?

LEAVING 'IS MAJESTY'S ARMY

During the last days of November, the "lost" Americans quit the British Army's theatre of activity. Leave it in much the same fashion the *U. S. S. Huntington* left the convoy, as recounted. in the early pages of our story. A few "cheer'o's" and a rolling off, silently into the night.

The Americans learned to know the British soldier very well indeed and came to realize, beyond peradventure, that there is, after all a Nordic brotherhood; a brotherhood engendered primarily perhaps by a conviction that the male Anglo-Saxons in their entirety have all the resolution, determination and courage, required to qualify them as master soldiers.

As Porthos leaves the British sector in a highly battered motor car, he indites this frightful verse as a memoir of the occasion:

We're a biddin' you adieu,
Tommy A.
An' we 'opes, we 'elped you through,
Tommy A.
We did our bloomin' best—
Which ain't no blurry jest!
But now we're quittin' you,
Tommy A.

All ranks are now camped in the Le Mans area under American administrative control. Turbulence has completely subsided. Here the cold Northern Star looks down upon a real Breton winter. A winter that is practically sunless, with wet slushy snow when it does not rain. Rain! Low-hanging dreary days, everything wan and soppy with a steady unrelenting drizzle. Windows of the billets dripping rivulets which form fantastic ribbons that chase each other downward on the panes. Rain! Dank, miserable and melancholy. Perhaps nowhere on earth is there such a precipitation as that which occurs on the peninsula of Brittany and its environs, during the cold, gloomy months of winter.

The command post is located at Thorigné which lies about one hundred and sixty kilometers, as the bird flies, southwest of Paris. The battalions are billeted in huts, barns, brick-sheds, and dwellings at the neighboring hamlets of Nuille Le Jalais, La Briel, Dollon and St. Michel.

The daily return of large numbers of semi-effective wounded is swelling the ranks. Soldiers only fit for light duty, many of them bare wrecks of their former brawn; limping slowly about the villages with canes and crutches, or with arms and hands and heads still bandage-swathed; others with white patches across an eye. Weak and infirm men, smashed and shattered.

Among them Major "Hooker," with a useless right arm but plenty of rollicking "gab," being a lawyer, as well as a brave soldier; but a mere shadow of the Langres—"Hooker." Pleasantly hooked up with the wine of France in respect to which nobody blames him.

He allows it would be pleasing if he were to be reassigned to his old battalion, the 1st. Itching to get back to the "gang." The Old Man greets him warmly and figures it out the Eagle suddenly alighting in the midst of his breed will mean a bacchanalian gala, even a series of them.

Everything will be just as the Old Man says it will be and he says it will be better for "Hooker" to take the 3rd Battalion; where he will be received placidly and the following morning—show them *who he is.*

Practically all the wounded officers have reported from hospitals except those with major injuries.

Invalids, all these returning wounded men, National invalids; who could have gone home from the hospitals of England and France; but requested most earnestly to be returned to their companions, in the cold and rain of Brittany, to share the hardships of a winter camp. Should we say, living descendants of the Norsemen.

General Wingate has returned to his Alma Mater from the American front with his home-grown field artillery brigade, including Delaney's 104th, Weld's 105th and Smith's 106th regiments, with Schohl, Blakeslee (wounded), Higginson and Walker among the medalists. Each command bringing citations containing the chivalrous words: "for conspicuous courage and determination in action against the enemy, and fire efficiency in support of the infantry divisions with whom they served." The General, staff-flanked by Lovell, Schoellkopf, Van Norden, Andrews and Hill Jones.

Colonel Hayward and his 15th (Colored) Infantry, have rejoined, many officers and men wearing the *Croix de Guerre* won on the French front for gallantry in action. Many of the soldiers wearing the French uniform. A very interesting study in military psychology is this 15th Infantry. Led well, they fought well. Napoleon knew what he was talking about when he said, "there are no poor regiments, there are some poor colonels."

Word also comes of the splendid records made in action on the French and American fronts by Donovan's 165th Infantry—with the Rainbow Division. Boyers 1st (Robinson with it), the 51st (Saulspaugh with it), Howlett's 2nd (Jackson with it), Foster's 52nd, the 53rd (Reagan with it), Bates' 54th, and Pooley's 55th pioneer infantry regiments. Also the exceptional work of Austin's 57th, Grant's 59th and Pendry's 32nd regiments of heavy artillery. W. I. Taylor, Byrne, Paul Loeser, Thiery and Miller winning enviable official praise for distinguished service in their coast artillery assignments. Kearney, Humphreys and Cassedy also heard from, the latter badly wounded.

Corps headquarters "Brass Hats," many miles away, send formal request for explanation "by indorsement hereon," *why* attendance report of the regiment on the occasion of a long practice march and maneuver, where heavy packs and all field equipment are ordered to be worn, indicates many absentees from the ranks? The colonel registers red-hot indignation but gradually cools off and replies that divers men were wounded rather severely, during the various battles, engagements and minor actions in which the unit participated during its front line service, and that hundreds of these wounded and gassed veterans have returned to the regiment in a sub-normal physical condition and are being excused by the commanding officer from participating in all hikes where heavy marching order is a requirement.

No return indorsement indicates incident is closed.

The strength of the command has increased to upward of four thousand officers and men. It is no longer made up of troops from one locality, it is rather a microcosm which includes nationals from several States of the U. S. A.

DECORATIONS

Many military decorations, both American, British and French, for marked individual courage in battle are being received; a majority of them going to the breasts of soldiers whose personal appearance and inherent modesty would never cause them to be selected to play a part requiring

an exemplification of "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in an action with the enemy."

In this connection it may be said that once upon a time over in the U. S. A., in a near-snowstorm, the colonel spent part of an afternoon following his chief and tabulating names from a line of enlisted men "passed" by the G. O. C., with a view to their assignment in orders to the Division Candidates' School for Commissions. No fat soldier was passed, no undersized soldier, no bow-legged soldier, no four-eyed soldier.

Now, after the battle-storms are over, by the strange irony of fate, very few of the real war-heroes who are being decorated for valor would have been "passed" in the near-snowstorm for reasons of soldierly bearing, physical perfection, or military handsomeness.

A Congressional Medal of Honor man wears thick-lensed spectacles; a modern Horatio-at-the-Bridge never could stop a pig in an alley with his legs; while the noblest Spartan of them all, is a squat, quiet chap, barely over regulation height, who, in a masculine beauty show with a top prize of $10,000, would not bring a cent to the pound.

It may further be said in passing, that the general military appearance of heroes has much in common with the vernacular adopted by some of them in their formal field orders, to secure required results.

One of the recipients of a Distinguished Service Cross, a tough "ancient" sergeant of the old school, led a small detachment in the capture of a machine gun nest, during which exploit its entire crew were killed.

The orders and instructions to his detachment of eleven bayonets is recorded by one of them, about as follows:

"Corporal, take four of these buzzards and go down along the trench twenty full paces. See? *Count the paces.* Then get them up on the fire step and when everything is set, fire a volley obliquely at the Hun nest right out in front of us here. Don't fire up in the air but *at the nest!* Then rapid-fire the rest of a cartridge clip. After that, hell-bent them back here at a dead run. When the worm-eaten Boche gets a line on your fire he'll move that peppering baby of his, round toward where your fire comes from and let go all he's got. The moment he does that, me and these muck-soaked gorillas is going to *rush the nest!* You follow us as soon as you get back. *See?"*

Here then, on the field stands reality supplementing the idealistic. Mud-soldiers displacing the heroic fighting figures of popular fancy. Extraordinary heroism by no means confines its accomplishment to those who look and act the part.

HORSE AND HORSE

Every Saturday morning in the American army the troops and their entire equipment are inspected. In the regiments it is a practice of commanding officers to visit each of their battalions to see things for themselves. The Old Man was busy at this work in his area when a general officer also deeply interested in local military conditions, joined him. This General, above and beyond his wide professional wisdom, knows everything about the breeding, care, feeding, doctoring and training of horses; in fact, animals generally. In his deep knowledge of the subject he takes uncommon pride. He is a field artilleryman by nature, a worthy successor of Vaquette de Gribeauval.

They are inspecting the picket line of one of the battalion supply detachments when the General's practiced eye falls upon a worn-out horse, its ribs protruding, its head hanging wearily, altogether a sorry sight. Since there is no more shelling it is not practicable to get rid of half-dead animals through the medium of "lost in action."

"Colonel, here is an animal—" patting it kindly on the withers, "in whom you should take a personal interest. It is thoroughly run-down."

"I have a keen interest in all animals, Sir, but I am essentially an infantryman, and what I do not know about putting pep into bone-yard mounts would fill a large volume. On the other hand, I know of your experience and success in taking jaded horses like this one and, as if by magic, turning them into 'blue-ribbon chargers.' Nothing, Sir, would please me more, than to be taught even the rudiments of the art."

"Good! Here, Lieutenant," addressing the officer in charge of the corral, "for the next three weeks do not give this animal—with the white fetlock on his off foreleg—any work at all to do. Have him exercised by walking every day. Have him fed a hot mash of ground oats and cut hay in short rations, about six times daily. Your colonel is going to see personally that this is done."

"Yes, Sir," snaps the lieutenant to whom a word from a general is the same as a word from a god.

During the afternoon the Old Man calls upon his brigade commander, a general officer whose headquarters is also located at Thorigné. In recounting some of the day's activities he mentions the incident of the worn-out horse.

At the word *horse*, the general is all interest, for above and beyond his wide military knowledge he knows everything about the breeding, care, feeding, doctoring and treating of horses; in fact, animals generally. In his deep knowledge of the subject he takes uncommon pride. He is a cavalryman by nature, a worthy successor of Joachim Murat.

"Let us ride over and look at the horse!" he says.

At the picket line he pats the animal kindly on the withers, opens its mouth, feels its chest: then shakes his head dubiously. . . .

"Colonel, you couldn't fatten that horse if you fed him a diet of codliver oil for a year. He is at least eighteen years old and all in.

"Lieutenant," calling the officer in charge, "'have you another chestnut with a white fetlock on the off foreleg?"

"Yes, Sir, two of them!"

"Let me see them. Good. This animal is close enough. Keep it in mind as a substitute. Continue the feeding as directed, but hereafter each Saturday morning immediately after mess have the old horse led into the forest, so far in that if he neighs it cannot be heard here. Use this animal in its place on the picket line. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly, Sir."

It was about a month later that the general of artillery extraction again accompanied the colonel to the corral on a Saturday morning and was shown the (substitute) horse, now completely restored.

"Colonel," he said pleasantly, "I must say one of the secrets of your success lies fundamentally in the fact that you *always* do exactly as you are told. I congratulate you."

"Was it not Solon who said 'he that hath learned to obey will know how to command.' But seriously, my appreciation of the commendation of superiors, Sir," replies the Old Man meekly, "is only exceeded by an earnest desire to please them."

CHRISTMAS

Among the American soldier émigrés, it is Christmas—in the Department of the Sarth: the same as it is all over the Christian world—and over there at home. Over there, where there are forest-smelling Christmas trees large and small, green wreaths, mistletoe, red berries, presents in

pretty packages, greeting cards. Also mothers, wives and little kiddies wishing they could see the émigrés, just as the émigrés are wishing they could see them.

The chaplains: Eilers, the Roman Catholic; Hanscom, the Congregationalist; and Powell, the Methodist; being soldiers and true men of God, are companions, living together under the same roof, eating at the same board, respecting the denomination of each other as real he-men should always do.

They had asked the émigrés for contributions with which to purchase presents for all children big and little of the five villages where the regiment is stationed. The reply of the soldiers is prompt and historically liberal.

Soldiers are always generous-hearted men. It may be this generosity is a hereditary attribute which found its germ at the Crucifixion: where the Son of God; His voice coming down in the semi-darkness, as if from far away, called: *"I thirst!"* and a poor simple-hearted soldier of a Roman legion, standing in the dark shadow of the Cross, exclaimed:

"Certainly this is a righteous man!" and pouring vinegar and water, a portion of his lowly ration, upon a sponge he placed it on a reed and held it aloft to The parched lips. And when the suffering Jesus had taken the bitter drink, His voice was again heard, saying: *"It is finished."* An utterance of immortal liberation.

He felt the kindly offering was an impulse of a generous heart that pitied Him. And for over nineteen hundred years the humane gesture of an obscure, slave-like legionary has been carried on and on among the soldiers of civilization. It is not too much to say the simple act of that lowly Roman soldier, will live in history so long as Christianity lives, that is, forever.

With funds donated by the doughboys one of the chaplains went to Paris and purchased large quantities of dolls, baby-carriages, drums, trumpets and sweets. The Red Cross and the Knights of Columbus generously sent presents of candy, cigars and cigarettes in abundance for the soldiers: themselves only grown-up children.

And now it is twelve o'clock on Christmas eve. Soft, feathery snowflakes fall through a still winter night and cover the house-tops of Thorigné. In the darkness, Sergeant Bigelow, solo cornetist of the regimental band, stands upon a rampart of the Cathedral on the hill. The clear sympathetic silvery notes of his cornet ring out above a tranquil, nigrescent village and fill the winter darkness with notes of that most beautiful of all Christmas carols—"Holy Night."

Then the band leader, Warrant Officer Toy, marches his veteran musicians into the ancient church, where they play specially arranged music at a Midnight Mass.

Comes Christmas Day, and all the little French children are dancing about with their rosy cheeks and sturdy bare legs. They don't seem to know much about Santa Claus and hanging up their stockings; many them have no stockings. But they are assembled in the village parks, happy children—like all children.

When they grow up it will be about time for another slaughter; and away they will go, like their fathers and grandfathers and great-grandfathers. An amplitude of prophecy perhaps, yet it seems to be the retributive law of nature, and nature is inexorable.

Some of the deep-chested soldiers lift the smaller tots upon their broad shoulders, so they can see better. Many of these husky wet-eyed men have little tots too—*over there*. Little tots who are missing their daddies very much indeed, on this Christmas Day. Some tots over there, like some tots the soldiers are holding: will never see their daddies any more. Men can steel themselves against danger but not against the longing for their loved ones. Nostalgia and loneliness cover these big Americans like a blanket.

But—*Merry Christmas!* The band is playing a lively air; the kiddies are dancing about, singing, hugging their pretty toys and eating candy. A huge Christmas tree is glittering with tinsel and bright colors.

Merry Christmas to everybody! Peace on earth—the first in four years—and to all men of Good Will.

* * * * * *

Winter drags on; there is a remoteness about a little French village to which ordinary Americans cannot, to save their souls, become reconciled. It's like putting a Florida coast swordfish in an aquarium and expecting it to feel at home. There are no starry heavens hereabouts, usually cloudy nights and sunless days: very much unlike God's own country.

Incidentally, everything God's own country can do for her soldiers in the way of food and clothing is being done: for which thanks are duly registered. But the grand old U. S. A. cannot build warm billets and eating houses for her sons; hence, in the middle of a sunless winter, when the bugles sound the mess call in a flurry of wet snow, her sons squat about the rolling kitchens, eating their fare in the open. The roof of their dining-room is high heaven, the floor mother earth, and the cloth a thin layer of winter snow.

Watching these young Americans at their daily tasks, it is difficult to fancy that in the far future years many of these upstanding muscular men will totter infirmly to seats provided in automobiles, and parade before loud plaudits of another generation as the Nation's Grand Old Veterans.

The soldiers as a whole are contented, their morale is excellent. . . . What a wonderful military asset *morale* really is. Once implanted in the ranks and care, fully cultivated, it will grow, magnify and yield a splendid crop. Morale is *pride*.

Above morale, there is but one higher sphere of soldierly conduct, a sphere seldom reached by ordinary troops: it is called "fatalism." The French at Verdun reached this sphere. Marshal Petain describes it, when he says: "The soldiers who won the Battle of Verdun were men who had been hardened by two years of fighting. They fought with little of the élan upon which the Foch school places such emphasis, they fought with a touch of *fatalism*, with their principal inspiration in their determination to defend their homes and families from the invader. The public's idealization of these soldiers contained something fantastic; their real wretchedness and suffering were never understood by the people who insisted upon making them supermen."

* * * * * *

A piece of paper indicates there is to be an interdivisional exercise out in the fields, whereat all the infantry regiments of the two American divisions billeted in the sector will participate in a contest requiring what amounts practically to military perfection.

Long before daylight on the frosty winter morning of the event the villages are alive with activity. Men are at work everywhere putting the finishing touches to their personal equipment, adjusting full packs, furbishing steel helmets, cleaning horses, harness, wagons—even the rusty iron tongue-chains of escort wagons, have been detached and rolled for hours in bags of sand and shavings, until they shine like polished silver. Then they are placed under the flannel shirts of husky wagoners to keep the dampness away, until the time comes to move out.

Such is *morale* in healthy growth and they march a mile and form on a flat cold wind-swept field where the regiment remains being inspected and judged until afternoon, by officers of the division staff.

Late in the day a letter is received from the G. O. C., informing the colonel his regiment lost first place by the "closest possible margin" and only after a lengthy discussion on the part of the umpires. When the note is broadcast, *hell* breaks loose in the battalions; where it is allowed, as

indicated in confidential reports of the captains—they are better men than the winners, on the hoof, man for man, gun for gun, or fist for fist.

The Old Man's message to them is: that to lose after hours of discussion by a lot of *staff* officers . . . is *not* to lose at all!!!

That evening a dinner is held at Montfort, where division headquarters is stationed. It is an exclusive staff affair, and from the moment Porthos arrives and takes his seat it is apparent to his brother officers that he is in a particularly ugly mood. He absorbs a large bowl of onion soup as though it were a teaspoonful.

Porthos has a deep and affectionate interest in the affairs of the 106th which has been emphasized during the past months by several contributions of pork chops and other delicacies; including some very choice old *Chateau Latour* to the mess of his former bunkie. To such a degree had his generosity extended that the Old Man's obligations reach a point where something has to be done: with the result that after careful consideration, Porthos is formally presented with a warrant constituting him an *honorary corporal* in the regiment.

The dinner concludes, and Porthos, arises to speak. Immediately there is the devil to pay. He is challenging the umpires of the contest, one after the other, to state their reasons, out in the open, for giving *the* regiment second place.

"—piccolo player in the band executed about face more quickly than the bass-drum player. A soldier in the rear rank of one of the companies sneezed uproariously just as an umpire passed him. One of the escort wagons had a gob of fresh mud on the offfront wheel."

"*Enough!* roars Porthos, giving his voice its full power and tone: the tone, be it said, of a bell-buoy; and burning those who formed the majority, with his fiery eyes. "*So!!!* Now we have it at last! Having rolled a mile plus to the drill field, over a sodden countryside—there's a trace of fresh mud, MUD, on a wheel!

"There sleeps to-night in the cold of battle death throughout France, eighty thousand Americans either identified or known but to God. A million four hundred thousand French, and nearly a million British. Each of whom gave their lives for what? That this land may remain a democracy; that the principles of government of the people by the people and for the people shall be maintained. And may the soft breath of the Great White God who moves the grasses on their silent graves keep the fog of forgetfulness from settling upon our hearts!

"They *all* sleep here to-night, and the ground in which they lie is consecrated by their bodies. Yet *you*, who call yourselves Americans, *American officers*, of a division whose soldiers paid the full price in battle death, that this soil should not be dishonored! You, I say, *you* have the temerity, the *brass*, to sit calmly here and say a splendid American regiment lost first place in a contest; has been penalized because a little fresh *mud* is discovered by some of you on a wheel of one of its thirty wagons; that the rim of a wheel is found slightly discolored! Not by something foul and impure. Ah, no: but rather—*by the Sacred Soil of France!!!"*

Such then is this thing called morale, even as it may be cultivated in the understanding of an *honorary corporal*.

DEAD-GONE

An *estaminet*, according to the French dictionary, is a smoking room or place where smoking is allowed. But like other so-called masculine nouns the word is subject to latter-day reinterpretation. In a general sense an *estaminet* while not an inn, as the English use the designation, is rather a small public house where a man may quench his thirst, procure a decent meal and become acquainted with the proprietor and his family.

Outside of any work females of the family may do in fields or household; it is customary for the mother to do the cooking, daughters to do the serving and father to do the collecting of the *addition* or reckoning. The father usually wears a large winding moustache, smokes comfortably and looks as though he is always thinking of bed-time. With him it is a natural case of do as I *say*, not as I *do*. All of which is a long established custom of the country and follows the lines of an old Breton song which classifies the position of the female-partner in the household by indicating that "the peasant loves his wife and would rather see her die than one of his cows."

It can truthfully be recorded, however, that in these saloons of rustic France a wayfarer receives to the last sou—exactly what he pays for.

In the village of Thorigné there is a very good country hotel or inn, also an *estaminet;* and as the latter has more or less to do with what we shall here unfold, some particulars regarding it are here recounted.

During the winter of 1918-19, this *estimenet* was operated by the family of M. Gorenflot which comprised father, mother and two grown daughters. The oldest of the latter, Mathilde, managed a sort of barroom occupied nightly by doughboys, that is to say, American soldiers. The success of Mathilde as a bar-maid laid essentially in the fact that she was a mannish woman, without the slightest sex appeal either by virtue of feature or complexion, with large red hands and a sharp brassy tongue, almost as heavily built as the largest of her clientele. Another thing she was more or less pragmatic, pert, entirely fearless, should we say pugnaciously masculine: but no "buck" will fight skirts.

On the other hand her younger sister, Jeannette, who never participates in the barroom activities, is a petite, amative French girl of twenty, refreshing to look upon, with sparkling black eyes, glossy brown hair and perfect chalk-white teeth. A well-proportioned woman except, perhaps, for rather large flushed hands abnormally developed by farm work, the dishes and the washing. But withal as inherently modest and guileless in her rustic femininity as any child born and bred under the restricting spiritual mandates of Holy Mother Church.

All this is said because it has been noted by his regimental confreres that Pvt. 1st Cl. Smith, U. S. Army, spends practically all his spare time in the kitchen of M. Gorenflot's abode. And again, the fact that although Smith had been reared in the Protestant faith under the guidance of a devout mother, he is regularly observed on Sundays in attendance with dame Gorenflot and her daughter Jeannette at mass in the Catholic cathedral on the hill, where he clumsily or rather awkwardly apes the genuflections and praise movements of the inbred faithful.

The smoke of this idle gossip, it may be said, has pervaded even the reserved precincts of the colonel's quarters, and the latter being keenly philosophic, observes that a new love affair has apparently surrounded and engulfed his orderly, but to his mind it is a great improvement over any of the others Smith has participated in—and walked out on.

Perhaps this would not have been recounted here had it not been for a somewhat dramatic not to say tragic incident that cast its shadows across the living room of the regimental commander on a cold, drizzly mid, winter afternoon and constituted, so to speak, an element or by-section of his ordinary day's work.

The Abbe Camborde knocks and quietly enters, a quizzical smile playing about the comers of his ample mouth:

"Pairdon, moi colonel. A young French woman eez here, who has come from far in 'ze north of France. How she travel I do not know. But she say shee meets 'ze colonel in Flanders, in 'ze last early summer. She say to explain she eez Mademoiselle Fleurette Dufour."

"So. Fleurette Dufour?"

"She say to tell moi colonel, Fleurette of Nieurlet, in Flanders."

"Oh, of course, Fleurette. But how the he—, pardon Abbe. Yes, I know her; ask her in. And Abbe, get hold of my man, Smith."

"Ah, moi colonel, 'zat ees another story. Smeeth ees run out at breakneck speed. Hees cleaning 'ze brasses in 'ze front orderly room. 'Zen he sees 'zis young woman approaching 'ze house, well, he drops 'ze brasses—and fly like 'ze wind through 'ze back door, like 'ze devil ees after heem."

"I'll see Mademoiselle Dufour, Abbe."

"Ah, *c'est vous, mon colonel! Hollo!* Eet eez you! *C'est bien de vous revoir*—to see you again M'sieur L'Adjutant! An' 'ze beeg colonell—Porthos—he lives? He eez with you here? You see I study 'ze Angleesh, I speak Angleesh good, *yes?* Keese me, moi colonell."

"Yes, Colonel Porthos lives and is very well. But he is not here. You look so fine, Fleurette. But your shoes, they are wringing wet-soaked. You will catch cold. Come, sit by the fire and dry them. *No, no,* do not take them off, they will dry more quickly if you leave them on. How did you come so far from Nieurlet?"

"I come weeth my papa to Montfort, where he sells 'ze pigs: and I walk from zere—"

"You walked from Montfort in the wet—you are *some* girl, Fleurette, to take so long a walk."

"But teel me, moi colonel, you know—I love 'ze Billee, what you call, 'ze manager—Captain Smeeth. Well, he write me two leetle letters in Angleesh, look, zere is one . . ."

The colonel takes the letter. It is a note sheet of Red Cross stationery, and dated at Langres, France. It reads in part:

"Darling Flue: I am here with the Adjutant who the great American, Pershing, sent for to consult. The Adjutant is in a rotten mood all the time here at Langres, except when we are in the company of the great soldier, General Pershing, who said to me the other day, Bill, you and your men must each knock over at least a dozen Heinies. I told him I had already bumped plenty and would bing some more when we get back. He said, Good boy, Bill. And he pulled out a big segar and gave it to me * * * ."

The colonel hands the letter back to the French girl. The last trace of a smile has left his face.

"Afteer 'ze beeg battle, I nevaire hear from Billee again. Was it—he ees *mort*—keeled?"

"*Alors,* Fleurette, your Beelie Smith, is what we say in English, *dead-gone*. You understand—dead-gone. Disappearance. Missing!"

Copious tears spring from the dark-brown eyes of the big maid of Nieurlet; and the good Abbe Camborde leads her to the side-car of a motorcycle, the enlisted chauffeur of which has been *ordered* to answer no question, of any character, which may even remotely relate to any enlisted man of the regiment, during the trip to the cattle exchange at Montfort. . . .

After breakfast the following morning Smith brought some green cord wood into the colonel's office, laid a few logs on andirons in the fireplace and went to work upon them with a big French bellows.

"*So!* You've stopped running?" blurts the Old Man.

The soldier lays down the bellows, draws from his pocket a large envelope which he opens and quietly displays a set of lace-trimmed doilies. He then uses the old Yankee trick of answering one question, by asking another.

"How much does the colonel think I paid for them over at Dollon last night?"

"How much?"

"Four francs, ten centimes, Sir. Why one of them is worth that."

"Who did you buy them for, that lethargic Jeannette Gorenflot?"

"Jeannette?" (registering utter amazement), "Why no, Sir, she wouldn't have any use for these. I bought them for mother. I showed the colonel the last present I sent her."

"Bill," said the Old Man evenly, "the heed you have for your mother, is the only thing that keeps me from calling you an inveigling philanderer who is slowly developing a distaff complex. Repeat what I have said in the next letter you write to your mother."

"Yes, Sir, I will be glad to."

At the noon mess, Operations is making conversation:

"That soldier, Smith, is by no means all bone and muscle. He looks ahead. When all the 'bucks' hereabouts are practicing French which will never be of any benefit to them; that lad is working on his own vocabulary."

"I have no doubt about it, Murray," replied the colonel, "the boy has brains and is a natural go-getter. But just what do you mean by working on his own vocabulary?"

Operations quiet answer brought forth boisterous laughter from the head of the table. The reply was:

"Why he came in this morning and asked if I knew where he could get hold of an English dictionary to study up the language of God's own country,' as he put it, 'and learn the meaning of such words as, philanderer, distaff, complex, and others that Abbe Camborde uses sometimes when he is talking in English. Being a Frenchman,' Smith concluded, 'I don't like to ask him the meaning of words that belong to my own language.' "

THE COME-ON

It was shortly after noon on a clear cold day, the Americans had been out since early morning on a battle-exercise, there being no let-up on training, for after all it is only an armistice and not a treaty of peace. Again keeping troops busy is essential, for Satan finds many things for idle hands to do.

The door of the colonel's office opens and the regimental adjutant enters:

"Sir, I have to report that while we were in the field this morning, a young woman of the village, was criminally assaulted by a member of the regiment."

"Criminal assault! Gad, *what next?* Alleged horse-play a few weeks ago, resulted in the death of a fine soldier, and now criminal assault—"

"We have the man, Sir."

"You mean to say the rotter has actually been apprehended?"

"Yes, Sir, the mother of the girl made the charge. 'Operations' and I suggested that they accompany us to the village mess lines. The men were lining up and as the two women passed along, the girl suddenly pointed to a private and shrieked. The soldier nervously mumbled: 'I guess I'm it.' "

"What then?"

"We sent him to the guardroom, Sir, in close confinement."

"Splendid. It looks like a dear case and if it proves to be as simple as it seems, we'll hang him on a high gallows over in the park with every soldier in the command present. An example of quick retribution is absolutely essential. It must be done, Jimmy. But what a terrible disgrace to the old regiment."

The second in command is directed to procure affidavits from the victim and her mother, with such supporting evidence as can be gathered; in fact a complete formal investigation upon which official charges will be based.

The lieutenant colonel's report finds the soldier was on sentry duty along a road on the outskirts of the village where Madam Cocot's house is located. Her affidavit indicates the man entered her home while she was absent. The soldier admitted his presence in the house but swore he was invited. It is his word against the widow and her daughter.

The following morning the colonel called upon the division judge advocate.

"Thirteen hard-boiled officers must make up this court with backbone or guts enough to render a verdict without qualification or equivocation. This case must be prosecuted to the limit without delay and a harsh example made, otherwise as things are going *anything* may happen!"

The judge advocate promises to take the matter up, but does not appear to be as keen for instant action as the colonel wishes. . . .

Each day along toward evening it was the Old Man's custom to walk for an hour or so with the lieutenant colonel out into the country. Accordingly a few days after the incident, on a clear cold afternoon the two officers are hiking along a road that leaves the village toward the south. As they pass out the colonel happens to glance up at a small entresol window of an ancient-looking house, and there observes a girl grinning amiably and beckoning to them. It is distinctly a flirtatious gesture—it is not only flirtatious—it is a come-on!

Neither officer pays the slightest attention to her action, although a few moments later the colonel makes a facetious remark, about a rag and a bone and a hank of hair: but the jest is lost—

"Colonel, that's awful!" gravely replies his companion.

"Nothing awful about it, *Senor Juañ*, merely the gesture of a French girl in a mood for dalliance."

"But it happens to be the girl who preferred the charges in the assault case!"

"The devil you say!!!" exclaims the colonel, stopping abruptly on the road.

The following day Madam Cocot is sent for, also the Abbe Pierre Camborde.

"Please say to Madam that in a few days, out there in the park, we propose to hang the soldier her daughter identified. And that she and her child are to have fine seats up close to the gallows."

The Abbe interprets the words to the woman, whose face sags and becomes a dull white.

"Mais! Non! Mon Colonel!"

"Say to her—why not?"

"She say he have a mother in America; she say he fought well for France; she say he should be punished by paying to her as many francs as you wish she have, moi colonel, but kill the poor boy—NEVAIRE! That would, she say, be savage."

"So many francs? So, that's the way it is. Bah! Tell her to collect the francs herself—"

And she left the room hastily, commending the savage Americans to the mercy of the saints.

The general court martial having been ordered was in due course convened and the soldier acquitted of the charge. When his captain lectured him later in the day on the hidden evils of lust the man listened attentively. But when the discourse ended, he offered: "The captain will agree it was a lucky thing for me the colonel glanced up at *that* window."

A NEW CORPORAL

Pvt. 1st Cl. Smith has received a promotion. He is now a Corporal. Incidentally, the colonel has recently become a little concerned about him. Smith is just an atom in the ebb and flow of an army, a typical American soldier, loyal as one of Napoleon's Old Guard. While his bunkies are shooting "craps" over in the hayloft, Smith is hanging around headquarters waiting for something to turn up.

But a gradual and progressive blanching of the boy's clear russet-leather complexion has been observed, coupled with a short choppy hem which bodes no good. The wan nights and days in wet clothes, water-soaked squelching shoes, cutting wind, the marches, the strain, the heavy pack, and the bedding-down on stone floors or again, sodden earth. . . .

All this has taken its toll on the full-chested, strong armed, hard hitting youngster—as it has on thousands of his comrades. Even the doctor-born Porthos straightens up perceptibly, searches the

big-fisted soldier with professional eyes and vaguely shakes his head at the short catchy cough. Yet, he is only a young colt and perhaps a few weeks in soft blankets and “muv’s” gentle care, will fix him up—like the warmth of a summer shower brings up a drooping grass-blade.

IV

HOME!

HE was an ordinary looking old soldier, who to all appearances belonged to that classification which constitutes about one-tenth of one per cent of every thousand enlisted men: namely, the pow-wow-guard-house-lawyer type, whose individuality is wholly barren of the inferiority complex.

He marched into the regimental adjutant's office wearing a rather woebegone expression on his seam-drawn face. His service overcoat was a bit large for him but the latter fact, be it said, was neutralized to a great extent by two faded gold "wound stripes," sewed in the regulation manner on the right sleeve. His heavy hobnailed shoes slammed jerkily on the floor as the heels knocked together and his right hand snapped rigidly to an old soldier salute.

"Sir! Private Higgleson, L company, 106th infantry, has the permission of his captain to speak to the commanding officer."

"What do you wish to speak to the colonel about, Higgleson?" asks the adjutant, in that sympathetic voice that veteran officers unconsciously use to veteran subordinates.

"It's about getting back home, Sir, on account of *the* family."

A few minutes later Private Higgleson repeats his perfect military gesture before the Old Man.

"Sir, over home *the* wife is in bad health and has to live on what I can send her out of my pay, with two small children: one three, the other five. My job is awaiting me, Sir. I've been through it all (moving forward the right sleeve with the wound stripes), and I was told this morning by a friend of mine at division headquarters that the 102nd Engineers are going to start for home in two days. My little family needs me, Colonel, and the war is over. If I could be transferred to the Engineers it would mean a lot to the wife and children. I went through with the best of them in every push from East Poperinghe to the St. Maurice river—"

"I will request your transfer to the Engineers immediately, Higgleson," interrupted the colonel. "You may take the request to brigade and division headquarters yourself. Glad to do it for you."

The formal request was prepared by the adjutant in a few minutes, signed by the colonel and handed to the wounded veteran. This transaction was completed at 6 p. m., on the 16th of February. The time and date is noted herein because during the following fifteen hours two unlucky incidents transpired with respect to the home-going of Private Higgleson.

The first was that Captain Jones, of L company, called quite by chance on his friend Captain Cooke, the regimental adjutant, about 8 o'clock the same evening and the latter casually mentioned the Higgleson incident.

"Higgleson!" exclaimed Jones. "He never had my permission to speak to the colonel or anyone else; the fellow is a false alarm, a rotter. He stole that overcoat or borrowed it from a real soldier. Wounded nothing, he has bluffed his way through and has been on the carpet a dozen times, always keeping just inside the wire. First on the mess line and last when there was anything to do. His service record shows he enlisted as 'single, with no dependents.' "

The second incident included the fact that the following morning the 106th Infantry was ordered to prepare to move to Brest. The first regiment of the division to go.

"If Private Higgleson is still with L company," said the colonel, after the adjutant had recounted his conversation with Captain Jones of the evening before, "direct that a reliable sergeant take him to the guardhouse of the 102nd Engineers and procure a receipt for him. Then

have the sergeant (addressing a letter) hand this personal note to the commanding officer of that outfit."

The note had to do with regimental sociology.

It may be said by way of a sequel that (with Higgleson forcibly attached) the Engineers were among the last troops of the division to leave France.

* * * * * *

Probably ten minutes after the orders for entrainment were received, every soldier in the five villages was ambulating about getting things ready to go home. With such lightning speed does the "grapevine" function on momentous occasions. Stolid indifference disappears like a Hun's buttons before a Yankee jackknife. Half effective mouth organs are pulled from pockets and warmed up. Men are dancing about with their bunkies as happy as hungry kids robbing a cherry tree. What a thrill the word *home* can give youthful émigrés—old ones too for that matter.

They work ceaselessly, clean up, delouse, wash clothes, sew on buttons, have hair cut. Yeh! Going Home, Madeline!

Four days later, that is, the 20th of February, as the coy, flirtatious beams of an early spring dance about the countryside, they arrive at Brest and march up the steep, cobbled thoroughfare that leads to the Pontanezon Barracks: where they are welcomed with the same whole-hearted and fraternalistic greeting that a French regiment would receive upon entering Berlin.

It may be, this is because they have insisted upon asking every enlisted representative of the Service of Supply, unlucky enough to come within hailing distance—"Who won the War?" Which banter the colonel frowns upon heavily, but is not wholly able to stop.

They are the first troops of the division to have the honor of lightering out to the ponderous *Leviathan*, lying anchored far off in the bay. It is freely rumored the reason for this honor lies primarily in the *error* made by the division *staff*, in marking the regiment "a close second," at the field contest heretofore mentioned. It may have been this, or it may have been the *staff* wished to prevent another "speech" by the loquacious, roaring-tongued Porthos.

Shortly after noon on the 26th of February officers and men alike stand about the wide decks of the ocean giant, watching the shores of France fade into the grayish mists of the broad Atlantic and gradually disappear beneath the horizon. Some of them salute, others murmur: *"Adieu! Vive La Belle France!"*

LOOSE LEAVES

There are many other things that could be recounted for the entertainment of those sheltered ones who in the future years may find interest in this cross section of America's part in the Great War.

There could be told a tale of the most unnatural battle, soldiers ever were called upon to fight. Where no quarter was given to a weaker foe, and even-handed fair play was forgotten. The orders were not for conquest alone but rather cold, relentless extermination, without pity, or mercy. *Nous avons fait comme les singes.* A battle of which American soldiers rarely speak even when alone with each other. But let that pass. We shall call it, "The Battle of La Morpion," or, in army vernacular, "The Cootie!" A stubborn fight indeed, in which delousing machines played the part of heavy artillery, without which the ultimate victory would have been practically impossible.

There could also be told the story of the Great Review of the Division, some twenty-six thousand strong, held upon the so-called Belgium Plain, near Le Mans, where the Commander in

Chief of the American Expeditionary Forces and their own Division Commander sat their mounts together: the massed bands of two hundred and forty-six veteran musicians and trumpeters playing "The Thunderer" and "The National Emblem," under the leadership of a master musician, Sutherland. Colors and guidons waving gaily over a field of glistening battle helmets.

The broad apparently lifeless lines begin to move; now they are in full swinging stride approaching the reviewing officers; brigade and regimental chiefs with their war staffs dance their horses past, the soldiers behind them closed up in solid Phalanx formation; like animated blocks of iron, thirty-six men abreast, with thirteen thousand polished bayonets at the port, blue and raw, like acres of growing steel bent to leeward by a mighty wind. The machine guns massed behind them and then the spotless trains.

A horde of Spartans: a portentous legion four times plus the strength of a Roman legion of the Empire and as killers a thousandfold more potent. A moving multitude of primal energy, of youthful straight-hitting American manhood, a manhood which though not born to arms has achieved a proud place among the warriors of history. Indeed, a spectacle of cadenced bone and blood and iron, such as an unpretentious soldier can hope to witness but once in a lifetime. . . .

There could also be told a story of the homeward voyage of the great *Leviathan*, its American Navy personnel doing everything humanly possible for their war brothers of the American Army. . . . Of the latter's first sight of the sky-line of Manhattan island in the early hours of a spring morning; of how their collars tighten with a choking sensation at the throat, unbidden tears in their eyes. Tears that no battlefield horror could make them shed.

But no wonder, they are actually seeing the home-land. Majestic Old Father Knickerbocker's island, the old sidewalks of New York! How good it all looks to them. The harbor from Fort Hancock to the Narrows a mass of water craft. City, State and National officials churning about in two-story boats, shouting: *"Welcome Home!"* A million whistles, bombs, drums, bands, aeroplanes, what not?

And over it all, in the void of a sun-covered sky, hovers: the Great White Dove, called PEACE! . . .

Then ferryboats chunk out of Hoboken docks and bump in somewhere on the East river. Policemen aplenty pushing back crowds of men and women, all of the latter throwing kisses. Many wiping away tears of real joy. A train of cars moves out, every station is passed slowly, their platforms and grounds full of patriotic people crying: *"Welcome Home!"* Doughboys quietly interested, but not excited; each soldier apparently watching for a familiar face. They detrain at Camp Mills in orderly, technical fashion and march off to barracks, everybody pretty hungry, but plenty of real old-fashioned U. S. A. food ready for all of them.

Comes the next morning and with it daily attendance reports: showing mean average of forty per cent *absent without leave*—including Smith, the recently promoted corporal. For many months Smith had provided boot-hooks and other necessary articles from mysterious places. Without him, even razors and soap are unprocurable. He is like the air one breathes, scarcely noticed until withdrawn. The colonel is practically helpless—and distinguished guests due to arrive at any time.

"Adjutant! I say, Jimmy—Corporal Smith has gone A. W. O. L., fine noncommissioned officer that! If he is not back by noon, put a paragraph in to-day's orders reducing him to the rank of ordinary private."

"Yes, Sir."

Early the following morning Smith brings in some coffee—

"So! Went absent, eh! Where have you been?"

"Went home to see mother—she wouldn't let me out of the house. Old bed—great eats—"

"Bla-h-h! You're a private. Fine soldier, A-W-O-L!"

Smith is all around the Old Man, in and out, taking care of everything, sharp eyes furtively watching every action and move of the colonel. Noiseless, silent. There is a quality in the youngster, or veteran soldier, whichever you will, that breathes powerful, roguish American youth.

"Tell the Adjutant I wish to see him. When he arrives see that we are not disturbed."

"Yes, Sir."

The regimental adjutant enters a few moments later.

"Jimmy, great dinner at the Waldorf last night. All the commanding and field officers invited. The *old town* knows how to do such things. But kindly hero-reverence was magnified by the speakers until most of the overseas outfit seemed fed-up.

"But, Jimmy, after it was over a substantial looking 'cit' stopped me in the lobby; said he was Bill Smith's dad. Made a father-and-mother appeal about son being demoted. Seemed pretty hard hit over it.

"I told him nothing could be done. I was not thinking so much about the Smith family, as what the regiment would say if orders are issued at these headquarters reducing a noncommissioned officer to the ranks one day, and promoting him to his original grade the next. That's jellyfish stuff. But if it were not for the damned orders, I'd be inclined—"

"I did not issue the orders, Sir, have been so busy, as you know; intended to do so to-day—"

"J-i-m-m-y, really: you are not only a brave and skillful officer, but by Gad—you're a *great* diplomat!"

After a few days at Camp Upton, Corporal Smith left the army with a crowd of his soldier companions: each with a folded bit of heavy white paper stowed away in one of the four pockets of their coarse uniform blouses. On these certificates were inscribed, among other things: *Army of the United States of America. Honorably Discharged*. Character: Excellent."*

The last camp fire is out. There they go, honorably discharged. Saluting the Old Man as they move past. Soldier after soldier, company after company; marching to a railroad train that awaits them: on their way from the American Expeditionary Forces of the Great War—into the streets and lanes of their homeland. Out of the camps of the mighty: privates, wagoners, mechanics, cooks, musicians, buglers, horseshoers, corporals, sergeants, lieutenants, captains, field officers: back to the pursuits of peaceful citizens of the Republic.

All of them on their way to native homesteads, far and near throughout the Union. All of them—except that stark glorious detachment which remains behind in France. The immortal detachment whose blood tints their Country's proudest banners. The real heroes who *walked the world's great altar stairs that lead through the darkness up to God.*

And the stricken detachment of warrior invalids who cannot go home: who are doomed to suffer for many years to come as a result of their fine courage and gallant fidelity to Duty.

Again in memory, we see them all: their shadowy forms in the chill of early dawn, moving about in the acts and scenes of the Great Adventure. There in the raw mists, individuals and masses, coming and going, in the wings and out upon the red-lit stage of the inexorable tragedy.

Some of them played minor parts, like our own; others were cast for roles that required the heroic. Many live here to-day, others live in the Eternity of the Great White Camp: and in the sanctified memory of their loved ones, their companions—and the people of the United States of America.

* Some years later Corporal Smith died at a veterans' camp in the Adirondacks—a result of tuberculosis contracted in France.

EPILOGUE

"New York's greatest welcome home given as soldiers parade up Fifth Avenue. Celebration surpasses All in City's history.

"New York never saw such a parade. When it dispersed a soldier said 'Well, it was hell over there, but this makes up for everything.' Maybe they did not actually know what we all thought of them until they marched up the Avenue yesterday and saw that mass of thrilled humanity."

(Extract from a New York newspaper, March 26, 1919.)