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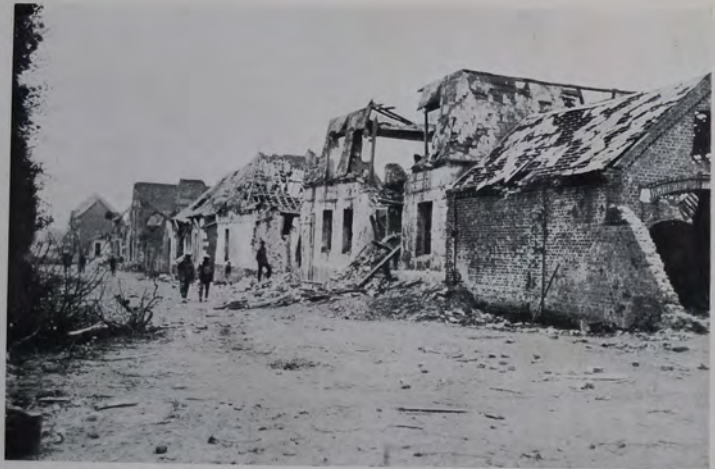
Recollections of an
Amateur Soldier



A VILLAGE THERE WAS

RECOLLECTIONS *of an* AMATEUR SOLDIER

BY

C. A. L. TREADWELL

O.B.E.

A Captain in the New Zealand Forces in the Great War

Author of

"NOTABLE NEW ZEALAND TRIALS"

NEW PLYMOUTH, N.Z.

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Dedicated to My Wife

FOREWORD

A BOOK about the war needs no apology, even though it is twenty-one years ago since its author set out on his crusade with as fervent hopes and high ideals as inspired his fellow-countrymen under Richard Cœur de Lion eight centuries ago.

Such a book revives the memories of a generation shaken to its core by emotions the strongest of all—emotions that embraced or loosened all others of which we human beings are capable. The chords struck by the events of the war are still vibrating in this world, and, perhaps, in the ethereal worlds surrounding it. But it is not all music that moves its listeners—some notes find an answering vibration where others do not. From the reception of a certain type of war-book one would imagine that the reaction to the circumstance of war by the few square pegs in round holes among the troops engaged finds a responsive harmony in its readers. But that kind of book misses the high spirit of the majority of our soldiers and the aspect of war to the normal Briton, whose mind and heart and soul saw the braver side. To him mud was not something with which to bespatter his whole outlook until it became itself muddy; mud was only one of the many incidents of war that had to be faced and overcome

with a jest. Fear, too, was acknowledged as a fact, like the mud, but it could not endure, and in the end the good soldiers—and the great majority of Captain Treadwell's companions of his two years' continuous and intense service in the line were good soldiers—won a serenity and gaiety that were as pure gold. And it is the gaiety and serenity reflected from his own mind that pervades his book. He and his friends of all ranks in the infantry rode above the storm. This spirit was not won by a failure to realize the cataclysms about him, even though he was a mere boy when he set out in 1915. His book brings home to us the extreme youth of the fighting line, where thirty was old age. Youth has not the innate reserves of strength upon which maturity can draw, and physically he was far from robust; but until his physical reserves were entirely exhausted, typical of his fellows, he moved amongst the wreck, enthusiastic, cheerful, immersed in his job. His book is an antidote to the work of many writers who describe the effect of war upon the abnormal soldier—fortunately for the Empire, to be numbered among a pathological minority—a minority constitutionally unfit for war and who in a Utopian army would have been drafted out for jobs in the back areas. The strength and spirit of the real soldier raised war to something that became normal and domestic—he pushed to one side the shadow of death and mutilation and starred the ordinary routine of the soldier's life on active service. No wonder that

most ex-service men find it hard to be impressed by the Pacifists' wholesale condemnation of war; they cannot forget the steel into which their mates were forged even at the price of going through the flame—they can think of no other process by which men are so purified, and Captain Treadwell looks at the war more from the point of view of its product than of the process. We of the Wellington Regiment, to whom the book brings back so many impelling memories, are grateful to him for it; but he has also done the nation a service in painting another picture of that patient, cheery, unselfish hero, the infantryman.

CLAUDE H. WESTON.

Wellington,
11th November, 1936.

PREFACE

THIS book tells quite faithfully the experiences of an infantry officer during the Great War. He left New Zealand in 1915, and served in Egypt, France, and Belgium. In 1918 he was medically unfit for general service and organized in London a law office for the New Zealand troops.

The original object in writing this book was to record for my sons what their father did in the Great War, for sons are curious young people and it is as well that they should be told the truth.

The incidents recorded are all clear in the memory of the author. That is hardly surprising. They were happenings during a period of high excitement, when experiences sank deep into the memory. The life was so unexpected and unusual.

Regimental histories abound, telling the exploits of different units; great Generals have written their stories; but perhaps, after all, to go through the war alongside an infantry soldier who spent most of the time in that select area known as "the line" is the best way, from a purely human point of view, to understand what the Great War was really like.

As these pages were being written, all the old feelings welled forth and it was impossible to think of the enemy except as the Hun or the Boche.

Those feelings have mellowed now, but the incidents recorded would not ring true if the old war-time expressions gave way to the more polite substitutes.

There are many strange experiences recalled here; all are true, and my hope is that success has come to the effort to express just how the war appeared to a member of the infantry.

That is the object of the book. There is no attempt at sensationalism, though the book necessarily abounds in adventure.

The illustration on the jacket is an adaptation by my son Anthony of a popular drawing by Neil Gray, issued early in the war period.

For the very sympathetic foreword to these pages I am indebted to Colonel C. H. Weston, K.C., D.S.O., V.D., one time Lieutenant-Colonel in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, and at present Judge-Advocate-General.

I am also deeply indebted to Mr. T. Lindsay Buick, C.M.G., F.R.Hist.S., and Mr. P. Riddick for the friendly advice and valuable assistance they have proferred me both in revising my typescript and also in the correction of the proofs.

C. A. L. TREADWELL.

12 Orchard Street,
Wellington.

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THE STORM BREAKS—ENLISTING FOR SERVICE ABROAD

To have lived in the most exciting and dangerous years of the history of the Empire has been the lot of my generation; and what more could youth desire? We knew well enough the difference between patriotism and jingoism as the days rapidly shortened towards the fateful 4th August, 1914.

In New Zealand, some five years before the Great War began, most of the young men paid about as much attention to learning how to bear arms as they do to-day. It could hardly have been less. That was the position when Lord Kitchener came to these shores, which was between four and five years before we got to grips with that navy whose officers drank to *Der Tag* and that army which enjoyed the reputation of being the finest human machine for destruction in the world.

Except for a small Permanent Defence Force, we then had a purely voluntary force of amateur soldiers, who certainly lacked in numbers but did their best to match that deficiency by their quality as soldiers. The trouble, however, was that only the smallest proportion of our young men were at all interested in soldiering.

Partly to have a body of men fit for commissioned rank in an emergency, and partly because university

students ought to show an example in good citizenship, the university colleges, in co-operation with the Defence Department, created a corps—or, more accurately, four companies—of infantry, called the Officers Training Corps, popularly known as the O.T.C. Into that corps poured most of the best type of students. They were treated to special attention, and their training was of a more intensive nature than was the lot of the other infantry companies.

Looking back to the Victoria College O.T.C., of which I was one of the privates, I realize that many of the officers who later served so well in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force there began their first military training. All those who played games, and many who were what we later knew to be "medically unfit," marched and doubled and sweated and shivered in the ranks of the O.T.C. Most of that corps were young men, but two of the privates were elderly professors—they must have been forty years old at least; one was a scientist of distinction and the other a professor of languages. The latter was a German by birth and received a very rough time when war actually broke out. Both of these professors marched in the ranks of the O.T.C. alongside their students and manfully tried to keep up with the exacting demands of irate sergeants.

For about two years I served in the ranks and was one of the corps who displayed especial interest in the job. Alongside me in my section was a fellow-student, Laurence Wardrop, who was probably the closest friend I ever had. Before those days, and later at the war, he and I enjoyed a friendship of

the most precious nature that men can share. There was a special camp during one Christmas holiday season when I was in the O.T.C., and Wardrop and I volunteered, for it was a voluntary affair. Those of us—and there were about a hundred—who attended that camp were specially favoured, and many were soon after given the opportunity of joining some other company in the Wellington Infantry Battalion as second lieutenants, or, as these most important gentlemen became known during the war, "one-pip artists." This Christmas camp was ideally sited at a settlement called Kaiwhaiki, which was some thirteen miles up the Whanganui River. There was plenty of level ground close up against some steep hills, and, best of all, there was the great slow-moving river itself, where after strenuous hours of "physical jerks," marching, drilling, bayonet fighting, digging trenches, and mock attacks we refreshed our tired and sweaty bodies.

The officer in charge of the camp was a "pukka" soldier, a Major of the Brigade of Guards. He could swear, and roar, and bite, and make us jump to it. Woe betide us if we did not spring to it as he would expect his own regiment to spring to it. He would fly off into a terrific temper; he seemed loath to praise our efforts at first, but by the time he had knocked us into shape at the end of the camp he unbent to such a degree as to be almost enthusiastic. In any event, he seemed to think that we were as good as raw colonial material could expect to be. The only other professional soldier in camp was the sergeant-major, Jock Rose. He was seconded for

a time from a Scottish regiment. What he did not know about company drill, the parts of a rifle, and indeed everything that a soldier ought to know, was very little. We never discovered anything he did not know. In many respects he was the antithesis of Major Lascelles. He rarely lost his temper, yet he extracted from us all the maximum effort we were capable of giving. He was not explosive, as was the Major, but he was insistent and had the eye of a hawk. He never slacked for a moment during drill hours, but he was a very human being when we stood easy for a breather or as we swam in the river. In the evenings we would gather round him and cross-examine him for information, and he never became impatient with our questioning. Later, when the war broke out, he left New Zealand with a commission, and rose to field rank. Ultimately he returned to New Zealand, shattered by shrapnel, after most distinguished service. As a non-commissioned officer, and later as a commissioned officer, he was one of the most popular soldiers in the New Zealand Forces. I doubt if there was a more efficient.

When the Christmas camp was over we returned to the weekly parades in the city, but they were dreadfully dull in comparison. Then I heard of a vacancy in the Zealandia Rifles, one of the companies in the Wellington Battalion. In a few weeks' time I was standing in front of the second half-company, very shyly at first, let me admit, as second lieutenant. Somewhere about this time Kitchener came to New Zealand to have a look at our defence material,

human and otherwise. He must have been horrified at the country's inefficiency in matters military, for there was an immediate stimulus given to publicity to encourage and enforce recruiting. The voluntary system had just been converted into a compulsory military-training system.

The youth of New Zealand enlisted in thousands—many enthusiastically, many grudgingly, and some most reluctantly. Some dodged too many of the parades and found themselves in the Magistrates' Courts paying fines. There was little, if any, public disapproval of compulsory military training. To-day there can be no doubt that it was on account of that system New Zealand was able to place so rapidly in the field a Division of unrivalled efficiency among the British colonial troops.

In 1913, unfortunately for me, as it transpired, and solely because my military interests were interfering with my law studies, for I was heading for a barrister's career, I resigned my commission and severed for a while my connection with soldiering. Had I not done so I might have started my adventure with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force as a captain instead of in the capacity of the most junior second lieutenant. That, however, matters not at all now, though I kicked against the pricks at the time. My old friend Laurie Wardrop, who had retained his interest in the army, was able to leave New Zealand as a lieutenant.

During the time between my resigning my commission and being accepted for service overseas I concentrated upon my law examinations and was

admitted as a solicitor before I left New Zealand. Later, when the war was over, I was called to the bar, or, as we in New Zealand less attractively put it, I was admitted as a barrister.

Towards the end of 1913 I joined Sir William Sim, one of the Judges of our Supreme Court, as his associate, and it was while I was thus engaged, so pleasantly and so profitably, that the 4th August, 1914, arrived. I was living in Dunedin at this time, that city being the centre of the district over which Mr. Justice Sim presided as Judge. Now and then a Judge would help a brother Judge by going into his district to assist in absorbing some of the congestion. At the beginning of August, 1914, we had journeyed north to Christchurch to help the Judge there to catch up on some arrears. The whole country was then thoroughly alarmed at the prospect of war with Germany, and it was difficult to concentrate on any kind of business. It was not surprising, therefore, that when work commenced after our arrival cases that were in the list for trial were being settled out of Court. It seemed that private conflicts were out of joint for the time. One of the cases which, however, went to trial was being heard when the Registrar surreptitiously handed me a note as I was typing the evidence for the Judge. I glanced at it and then unobtrusively handed it to the Judge. "Where did you get this?" said he sharply. I told him that the Registrar had just received the news and that it was reliable. With a characteristic shrug of his shoulder the Judge leant forward on the bench. "Gentlemen, I have just

heard the news that Germany and France are at war," he said to counsel sitting below him.

On went the trial, but it was difficult to be interested in the private differences of individual persons when those two great nations were at each others throats. After a few minutes the contending counsel conferred. "If your Honour would adjourn this matter for a little it might be to the advantage of the parties," said one of the counsel. "How long do you require?" asked the Judge, with an approving nod. "A few minutes will suffice, if your Honour pleases," was the answer. "This honourable Court will resume in five minutes"; and the Court crier repeated the Judge's direction. Before, however, the five minutes was spent the litigation was settled and I was making the necessary arrangements for the return of the Judge to Dunedin.

The next morning we left for our home town and at about four o'clock arrived at the Dunedin Railway-station. The interest in the threatened war was increasing every hour. I saw the Judge into a taxi and sent him home, and then, sending my luggage ahead, I walked across the street into my chambers and opened my mail, after which I left the Courthouse for the day and hurried into the city. The excitement was growing. War, in which Britain would be involved, must come. Was not the treaty to respect the neutrality of the little country of Belgium a solemn undertaking? I walked out to the seaside suburb of St. Kilda to my boarding-house.

"Hullo, Reid! things are looking ominous now,"

I exclaimed, as I met one of the officers of the Permanent Force at the doorway.

"Yes, it looks as if it has come at last. Robertson and I are off to Wellington by the train to-morrow morning."

"There will be war before you get there, if I understand this message," I commented, as I handed the evening paper to Colonel Reid.

He read the famous message from the King of the Belgians to our King George:

> Mindful of the numerous marks of friendship of Your Majesty's predecessors, as well as the friendly attitude of Great Britain in 1870, and of the proofs of sympathy she has over and over again shown us, I make the supreme appeal to the diplomatic intervention of Your Majesty's Government to safeguard the neutrality of Belgium.

"Kings do not telegraph to each other like that unless in extreme circumstances," I suggested to Reid.

"There is a telephone call for you, Mr. Treadwell," said one of the housemaids. When I returned I shouted, "England has sent an ultimatum to Germany to get out of Belgium by midnight."

Reid looked up doubtingly.

"I am telling you what one of the sub-editors of the *Otago Daily Times* has just told me over the telephone," I assured him.

Following the announcement in the Old Country that war had been declared the news was telegraphed

to every unit of the Empire. On the 5th August, 1914, the citizens of Wellington were attracted by notices posted on walls and fences in the city that at 3 p.m. of that day the Governor would make an important announcement from the steps of the old Parliamentary Buildings. At the foot of the notice there appeared a statement that such announcement did not involve a declaration of war.

At the appointed time fully 12,000 citizens had gathered in the Parliamentary grounds to hear the announcement. Suspense, mingled with excitement, kept everyone pent up with emotion. Precisely at 3 o'clock the Governor, accompanied by the Prime Minister (the Right Hon. W. F. Massey) and the leader of the Opposition (the Right Hon. Sir Joseph Ward), came forward upon the steps. They were greeted with tumultuous applause.

Then came a silence, deep and expectant, when His Excellency the Governor unfolded and read a message from the King:

> "I desire to express to my people of the overseas Dominions with what appreciation and pride I have received the messages from their respective Governments during the last few days. These spontaneous assurances of their fullest support recall to me the generous self-sacrificing help given by them in the past to the Mother Country. I shall be strengthened in the discharge of the great responsibilities which rest upon me by the confident belief that in this time of trial my Empire will stand united, calm, resolute, trusting in God.
>
> "GEORGE R.I."

"To that message," said the Governor, "I have sent the following reply:

> "New Zealand desires me to acknowledge Your Majesty's gracious message, and to say that, come good or ill, she, in company with the Dominions and other dependencies of the Crown, is prepared to make any sacrifice to maintain her heritage and her birthright."

Then followed a storm of applause. The Governor raised his right arm, and there was something in the gesture that brought instant silence. He then cried: "Fellow-subjects, since I sent out that notice to you this morning I have received another telegram. It is very short. I will read it to you."

There was an impressive hesitation and then he read:

> "War has broken out with Germany.
>
> "HARCOURT."

Cheer after cheer followed that announcement. All was enthusiasm and patriotic emotion. Then Mr. Massey, the Prime Minister, stepped forward and called for three cheers for the King. They roared out from every throat. More cheers followed for the Prime Minister himself and for the Governor. Some one called for three hoots for the Kaiser. They were given vehemently enough. Then, as if moved by a single desire, the great crowd stiffened to attention and sang the National Anthem. When that died down the Governor stepped forward and said to the people:

"I propose to send the following message." He glanced at a paper in his hand and read aloud: "The Empire will stand united, calm, resolute, trusting in God."

Mr. Massey then addressed the people and concluded an inspiring address with these words:

> "Our first duty is to do everything we possibly can to protect our country and at the same time to do everything we can to assist the Empire, and when we have done everything that mortal man can do the rest must be left in the higher hands of He that keepeth Israel and Who neither slumbers nor sleeps. My message to you in the most trying moment of history is keep cool, stand fast, do your duty to King and Empire."

Sir Joseph Ward, the Leader of the Opposition, also addressed the people, urging them to unwavering loyalty.

The National Anthem was again sung by all, and it was followed by the singing of "Rule Britannia." Again and again the National Anthem rang out. Then only, long after the Governor had driven away, did the crowd disperse.

The gage of war was taken up.

Next morning the Dunedin bells rang out the news, men and women poured out of shops, standing in groups excitedly talking about war. In the main square of the city someone started to sing "God save the King," and in a moment thousands sprang to attention and sang again and again our great national hymn. As I passed along to the Defence

Office recruiting had already begun. Crowds of young men were putting in their names for service. Catching hold of Robertson's arm as he pushed his way in, I followed him inside.

"I've just time to catch the train, Treadwell," he said as he wrung my hand.

"Damn your train! What about enlisting?" I said.

"You will have to go to Wellington, I should say, that's where you really belong, and Otago will want to put only their own men into their quota."

I left him and, getting into a queue of men, was soon in front of a table where a sergeant was seated taking particulars. I passed on then to the medical officer in the next room, and unfortunately I knew him well.

"I'll pass you fit all right, but you cannot join up here; Wellington is your centre, you know."

"Well, give me your medical certificate and I will take a chance," I replied.

I then went through to a room where men were being sworn in. There again I knew the officer in charge, and in a moment I was out on the street, having been told to go to Wellington.

It was then only a question of a little time. I saw the Judge and we came to an agreement that I should leave him when I was called up in Wellington. He suggested that, as we should be going to Wellington for the Court of Appeal, it might be arranged for me to leave him then. In the meantime the Main Expeditionary Force had been formed, it had left, and reinforcements were pouring in. I sent

my application form to Wellington, but it was a long time, or at least it seemed a long time, before I was informed that my application was in order and that I would be called to the colours in due course.

In April, 1915, the Judge went to Wellington for a sitting of the Court of Appeal, and with him went his son and I. His son was to take over my job when we reached Wellington, for I had received notice to go into camp.

Adventure goes to the heart of a young man gladly. Khaki, the cloth of men, was soon taking the place of "civvies." My mother, who always had faith in me as a successful barrister, could not help a sigh as I ran downstairs for the first time in khaki.

"The Bar can wait a bit, mother, and when we all come back we'll see if your hopes about me will be realized. In the meantime, as a perfectly good daughter of a soldier family you will understand," and I kissed her gaily.

Camp life again! What an adventure! Yesterday I was working inside with pen and paper, looking up law reports, and to-day out in the open, drilling, filling my lungs with fresh air, and jumping out of my skin with high spirits. A troop-train from Wellington had taken a detachment of us to Palmerston North. Those of us who went there had temporary commissions, and on our performances depended whether those commissions were to be confirmed or not. We marched from the railway-station to the Showgrounds. The local band played us to our new home. It was cold and raining as we took over our billets, which consisted of great

draughty barn-like buildings. Hot cocoa and some bread and butter helped to keep the cold out, for it was wellnigh the middle of winter.

Reveille at six in the morning found us up and ready for the trials—ready for whatever might be in store for us. "Physical jerks" on the Showgrounds under the direction of a midget sergeant-major soon revealed how soft we really were. It is one thing to play games once a week, or even to go for long walks each day, but "physical jerks" soon showed how many muscles were under-developed. At the end of half an hour a collection of sweating, panting officers cooled off under the influence of a cold shower. Then breakfast, followed by drill—marching and turning, and all the elementary movements that we thought we knew so well. Under the hawk-like eye of that efficient little Sergeant-Major Cheeter we were rapidly disillusioned. We knew nothing about drill. "Left turn; as y' were," and the recruits—for that was what we were—stood aghast. Had we been expected to turn in that fraction of time? We had been, and soon we did, but at first we did not dream that it was possible. In a week I felt that I could turn right, or left, or about, as required. But no matter how proficient we became, that was no reason why the little sergeant-major should unbend or express the slightest approval! The constant demand for improvement on the one hand, and a willingness to try on the other, soon produced results. Lawyers, clerks, farmers, and, indeed, men of every calling, rapidly began to look like soldiers. No leave was granted,

except perhaps a few hours in the evening after lectures. The training was as up-to-date as training which was varying every month according to the dictates of experience at the Front could be. The best that could be said of it was that discipline and physical fitness, together with the principles of infantry training as laid down in the *Manual of Infantry Training*, were all developed. The backaches and all the other physical aches that tortured the body for a week or two gave way to fitness, and at the end of some six weeks we marched out of those Showgrounds and entrained for a large concentration camp in the Wairarapa. There we were despatched to our district quotas, and, curiously enough, though I had not been allowed to enlist in Otago I was relegated to the Otago quota. This was probably due to the fact that my papers had been signed in Dunedin.

I was given a platoon of raw recruits, hardly any of whom had ever worn a uniform before. They were a curious mixture and represented every social grade. They were all enthusiastic, for none of them were pressed men. While it had been compulsory for men to train for a period in the territorial army, it was a matter of choice whether they should join an expeditionary force for service overseas. This platoon of mine seemed to have little or no experience of soldiering, which rather pointed to the fact that the compulsory military training was not then combing out the young men very carefully. However, all were imbued with the spirit of adventure. I attended to my first duty and took a roll of their

names and particulars. It did not take long to memorize their names, and it was no time before I knew their individual characteristics and outlook on life. It was heart-breaking trying to impart to some of the men the rudiments of military training. Many seemed to have only the haziest notions as to which was their left and which their right foot.

Every day it was "physical jerks," a dip in the river, drill, drill, drill, turning and marching. The men all tried to learn, and those who lasted the distance became grand soldiers. After a fortnight there was a medical examination. The training had found out some weak spots. Some of the men were discharged from the camps as unfit. They were heart-broken. Later, no doubt, they joined up again, but in the early days the authorities could afford to be fastidious, and the standard of physical fitness demanded was extremely high.

The training-ground was a flat open space, large enough to accommodate thousands of troops. The ground, over which a river had once flowed, was covered with large smooth boulders, which we had to collect, and to-day great piles of these stones can be seen standing in the tilled fields, monuments to the organized efforts of the troops. It was a back-breaking job to bend one's back and lift and carry those stones from one end of the field to the other, and go on doing so for an hour or two. However, the fields were soon cleared, and they became excellent parade-grounds on which to march, to turn, to practise rifle exercises, to indulge in bayonet fighting, and to do those thousand-and-one

things that are necessary in the making of a soldier.

Life in tents was soon understood. Now and then great wind-storms, with which the district was occasionally cursed, would tear over the camp, levelling to the ground imperfectly pegged tents. Only on Sundays was there an invasion of the fair sex. Train after train brought battalions of visitors. There were, of course, mothers and sisters who visited the camp with a single purpose. Blythe maidens would wander in twos and threes till they were accosted by a like number of soldiers. The camp became a matrimonial agency of unexampled success. The readiness of many of the girls to marry soldiers with whom they were barely acquainted found its explanation in the emotional circumstances inevitably associated with war.

I rapidly learnt to know the men whom later I was to lead overseas. Most were of the simple labouring type, rough in exterior but full of manly qualities. A platoon commander is to his men, at times, rather as a priest is to his penitent. The amount of his pay that a man should allot to his mother or sister, or to his sweetheart, often formed the subject of advice. Then one would want to know whether he ought to marry a young woman who, quite by accident, of course, had stumbled into his tent a few Sundays before. To write letters was a new experience for many, and it was only with much exhortation from the platoon commanders, to say nothing of the influence of the camp padres, that many of the men could be induced to undertake the exhausting business of letter-writing. Later,

when on active service, a printed post-card in the following form was supplied, and many of the men regarded it as a gift from the gods. Those of a non-literary turn would make the card suit their needs by striking out the portions that did not seem to apply to the moment.

Nothing is to be written on this side except the date and signature of the sender. Sentences not required may be erased. If anything else is added the post-card will be destroyed.

I am quite well.

I have been admitted to hospital
sick / wounded { and am going on well and hope / to be discharged soon.

I am being sent down to the base.

I have received your { letter dated..... / telegram ..... / parcel.....

Letter follows at first opportunity.

I have received no letter from you { lately. / for a long time.

SIGNATURE ONLY:

DATE:

What a boon to the hater of letter-writing! Everything that he wished to say was on that wonderful post-card! However, the authorities must have realized that a few printed words were hardly a satisfaction to anxious hearts in New Zealand, so the supply of those post-cards diminished and the exhortations of the padres and of the platoon commanders increased.

Camp life seemed to suit everybody. I throve under our life in the open air. The men soon became very martial; they learnt to take a pride in their appearance. Perhaps the sisters and sweethearts encouraged the shining of the brass buttons and the well-turned puttees. Platoon rivalry, too, helped to sustain the enthusiasm. I procured for my platoon a kettledrum from the district whence my men were drawn. This helped them in their marching, and the platoon always seemed to be the best in that regard.

The farm and general labourer who had never thought much about anything before began to take an interest not only in his clothes, but in his job. The men were often to be seen off parade practising rifle exercises, or trigger-snapping, or some other item of their daily jobs which had been worrying them. The result was invariably satisfactory. There was, too, the feeling that, as the New-Zealanders and the Australians had landed at the Dardanelles *en route* for Constantinople, it would never do to miss the next reinforcement by getting drunk or being absent without leave. Crime, even of the most venial sort, was practically unknown. Sometimes, too many beers in town would deliver a man into the clutches of that reviled body of men known as "Red Caps."

The general training took less than three months. Then came the long-wished-for order that the troops should march to Trentham, the site, near Wellington, of the large concentration camp where all the troops were fitted out for the journey overseas, and where, too, some rifle practice could be got.

The march south to Trentham was always an event in the training of the reinforcements. It was looked upon as one of the spectacular episodes in the life of the trainee, and was a test of the efficacy of the work already done. The distance by road was about twenty-five miles, and used to take a full day on the march. The route was over the Rimutaka range of mountains, the highest point on the march being about 1,800 feet above sea-level.

The day for our march broke fine and we were to make an early start. The order for dress was full marching order, with the exception of the pack, an exception most welcome to any soldier. The pack was not issued till we reached Trentham.

The troops rapidly settled down to a swinging march, and by the time the first five miles had been traversed and the foot of the mountain reached the whole column was striding along like veteran troops, keeping a steady rate and a good bearing. All along the route there were batches of civilians, who gave us a cheer as we passed by. It was a settled determination in the minds of the people of South Wairarapa that this journey should be in the nature of a triumphal march. As the troops slowly ascended the long tortuous mountain road the civilians collected at the halting-places and every man received some kind of fruit to quench his thirst. As the march progressed higher into the heart of the Rimutaka mountains the broad stream of water that ran in the valley below receded and narrowed in the distance. The mountains above and below the route were steep and forbidding, though here and

there, as the road turned into gullies, large patches of bush were penetrated. The road was dusty and the twists and turns were innumerable. The newspapers always commented on the behaviour of the troops as they made this famous climb, and such was the spirit of my reinforcement that every man marched as to the manner born for the sake of his unit. At last the top of the mountains was reached. Out of dense bush the troops emerged and gazed upon the long narrow tape of road twisting and turning down the steep mountain-slopes. On the southern aspect of the range there was little vegetation on either side of the route. At the summit the halt for lunch was taken. No man had fallen out; their reputation for marching was secure, for the rest of the journey was first downhill and then along the flat valley of the Hutt. At the top of the range the girls of the district had congregated and made ready great cauldrons of boiling water which were soon converted into refreshing tea, and the men were treated to sandwiches and cake apart from the ration that each was given when he left camp.

When the march downhill began and the troops said farewell to the hospitable Wairarapa there was cheering and laughter and tears. Down the mountain road swung the men with their heads and shoulders well back, singing with the joyous spirit of youth. In France the New Zealand troops were always known as the Silent Division because of their disinclination to sing on the march, but going down this mountain-side they sang with a will, and the civilians joined in with them as they swung along.

At the foot of the mountain, a distance of about four miles, a band met the head of the column. The troops now entered the more thickly populated district of the Hutt valley, and the road was lined with civilians, who cheered us on our way.

It was easier to get leave when we reached Trentham. Arrival there meant that in a short space of time we would be on our way by troopship. Wardrop and I foregathered, and we spent many evenings at my home at the Hutt, where I had lived until I had gone to Dunedin to act as associate to His Honour Sir William Sim. As the time for leaving approached, it took its toll on the happiness of my mother, to whom I was naturally devoted. To me the whole war was then a great adventure, but to my mother and to all other mothers it was agony. Wardrop had lost his own mother when he was a young boy, and in consequence of his friendship with me he was like another son at my own home. Wardrop was a man of extremely fine character. He was of the happiest disposition, and not a mean thought ever entered his mind. He came of Shetland stock, and he faced all his troubles and trials with an optimism that was rare. In spite of his natural disposition to take a cheery view under all circumstances, he was always concerning himself for his less fortunate friends, and his innumerable kindly acts were generally performed in such a way as to conceal their author. Later in the war he had an opportunity, in terrible circumstances, of showing the quality of his manliness, and he did so with the highest degree of chivalry and bravery.

It was within a week or two of my arrival at Trentham that his draft left New Zealand, but into that limited time we crowded a great deal of happy companionship. When he left, my mother parted from him as if he had been one of her own sons.

Hardly had Wardrop left than news arrived that we would have to leave earlier than had at first been intended. There had been heavy losses at the Dardanelles and the troops had not yet reached Constantinople. "Still, it will be too late," growled most of the impatient. "The war will be over before we can have any fighting, and we shall have chucked up our jobs for nothing but physical jerks."

"The Colonel wants you, Treadwell," said the officer of the day one morning, as I was explaining the parts of the rifle to a squad of my men.

"Take over, sergeant," I said as I went off to the orderly room, wondering what the Colonel could be wanting me for.

"Major Ross, the Officer Commanding the Reinforcement, has selected you as his ship's adjutant, Treadwell," said the Camp Commandant. "You are to go into town with him at once and see what the job entails."

I could not help smiling with relief. There were rumours that some of the officers would not be going away with the next draft. "Thank God, I'm booked, then, sir. That means that I'm not to be one of those unlucky devils who will have to stay behind for a later reinforcement."

The Camp Commandant stood up and, shaking

hands with me, said, "That's the spirit, my boy; and now you will find Major Ross at the mess waiting for you." In a few minutes Major Ross and I were speeding away to Wellington, tearing up the dusty twenty miles of road to town.

As we bowled along I learnt there were two ships to take this reinforcement, the *Willochra* and the *Tofua*. The latter was taking some of the artillery and mounted troops, while most of the infantry were going in the *Willochra*.

We went to the *Willochra* and spent an hour or two learning our way about and generally what was entailed in looking after the personnel of a troopship. The accommodation for the men was dreadfully congested. A year later there was a reclassification of troopships for the purpose of deciding, with a due regard to the health of the troops, the number each ship could carry. After the classification the good ship *Willochra* was classified as fit to convey 800, all ranks. On this particular trip she carried 1,450. After learning what there was to do on the ship, I took the rest of the day and the night on leave. To be adjutant of the ship, I could see, meant that there would be much to do, but I had a fine cabin and it was an honour to have the job.

Next day, when I returned to the camp, I told my platoon that they would have to do without me for the voyage. It was decent of them to resent the news, but I explained to them that I would see that they received good treatment on the ship, and I would take them over at the end of the journey. I promised to come back when we had to meet the Boche, and

they were appeased. They were a great band of men, and every man did his best for the unit. The appalling thing is that they were nearly all killed on the Somme, when we ultimately reached that inferno, and by that time I had parted company with them. I believe no body of men could have been more determined to do their job well than that little band, and to have gained, as I believe I did, their affection and respect is one of the incidents of the war that I value most.

On the voyage across, the senior sergeant took my place with the platoon, but I made a point of seeing them daily.

At last the news came that we were to leave Wellington on the 13th November. Leave was granted the whole reinforcement, and the next day there was a great void in the camp, for two thousand men had disappeared to their homes. I spent the last few days at my home, compressing into that time the saying farewell to a hundred friends. Business was not altogether forgotten, life policies were assigned and a will was made. It was not wise to sit quietly at home for too long; it would never have done to have shown overmuch emotion.

The day before leaving I reported on board ship. The roll of the reinforcement and the innumerable returns that had to be completed demanded a clerical staff and a decently large room as an orderly room. The clerical staff arrived about the same time as I did, and a large cabin between decks was duly converted. Staff-Sergeants Gray and Cameron so busied themselves that in a few minutes the typewriter was ticking off the orders of the day, or some

special instructions for the information of the troops on the morrow.

November the 13th was Rose Day, and its significance was recognized by the people of Wellington. The troops were all mustered. Equipment had been handed out to every man and his receipt taken for the dozen-odd articles of clothing and culinary utensils for which he was for the future to account. One of the jokes of the camp was the quartermaster, a large, red-faced man with a peppery temper. He used to throw the articles before the men and with a gabble and a roar, which was supposed to be a recitation of the list of articles, he would finish off the harangue with a "Sign here" in such a tone that the terrified soldier would sign "here," grab his belongings, and flee to make room for the next man.

Rose Day was a day never likely to be forgotten. The morning found me hard at it, getting things ready, issuing further instructions for the information of the troops who were to arrive in the afternoon. Passes on to the wharf were reserved for the next-of-kin of the troops. The general public were barred from coming on to the wharf. Then the hour for the route march through the city came, and I slipped away from the ship to take my place with my comrades. That march was a stirring incident. Every man held himself up proudly, even if it were only for the purpose of hiding his feelings. Seven bands played the column through the city to the ships' sides. Thousands upon thousands of citizens lined the route, and every soldier as he passed

along had a rose thrust into his tunic, his hat, or his rifle, or into all three. The great adventure had indeed begun, and the noise of the shouting and cheering and the brave music of the bands drove the deep feelings and emotions well underneath.

With the public excluded from the wharves and only those who were dear to us standing by the sides of the ships as we were embarking, the lumps grew in our throats and we had to hasten our final farewells lest there should be some sign of tears. Soon there were shrill sirens, renewed shouts of farewell, and cheers from a thousand husky throats. The ships were gaily decorated with flags, which seemed to fly cheerily over the scene. Then the ships began to slip slowly away from the wharf, to the touching refrain of " Should auld acquaintance." The sun shone gloriously on a scene which Nature did its best to make as little as possible sad or ominous.

This business of parting was a bit too overwhelming. Around me I saw strong men unashamedly in tears.

" Major Ross wants you in the orderly room, sir," said a runner, pushing through a mass of men to the rail against which I was leaning. I gave a wild wave of last farewell and made my way to the orderly room and in a moment was giving directions to the officer of the day. Men were soon being led by guides to their bunks in the bowels of the ship. They had to scramble down a rough, steep stairway leading to the abysmal holds, where bunks were erected tier on tier.

CHAPTER II.

OUTWARD BOUND

THE *Tofua* and the *Willochra* moved away from the wharf and steamed down the majestic harbour accompanied by every conceivable craft. For a time they halted while messages were sent and received, and then with a few cheery blasts both ships turned their noses towards the Heads and slowly steamed out into the straits, bound for Lyttelton, the port of the city of Christchurch. The great adventure had indeed begun.

Orders which obtained on all troopships for the safety of troops on board had been posted, and each day from the orderly room I issued for Major Ross, the Commanding Officer, further orders, among other matters appointing an officer of the day. An officer of the ship's guard was likewise appointed. At first it was found more effective for the officer of the day to visit the different quarters for the purpose of settling the men down, rather than by issuing instructions through the daily orders. Movement of the men on board was very restricted, for the ship was grossly overloaded with human cargo.

Rapidly the men were shuffled into their places, and on the second day I received from all platoon commanders a complete return of allotments of berths, so that it was only a matter of seconds to find

out where any of the 1,450 men were to be found. On the second day the two ships called in at Lyttelton, where a special train was waiting to take the reinforcement to Christchurch. There the Eighth Reinforcement marched through the main streets, to the great joy and cheering of the citizens. It is said that the march through stimulated recruiting enormously. The sight of those splendid fellows, marching like seasoned warriors, would have shamed any young man into khaki. In the evening all were back on board ship, and without further ado both vessels turned seawards, bound for Australia.

An acquaintance with the routine of life on board was rapidly acquired. Between 9 a.m. and 10.30 a.m. the Commanding Officer inspected the whole ship. He was always accompanied by one of the steamers's officers, the military officer of the day, and the ship's sergeant-major. During inspection the men were sent on deck and a close examination of their quarters was made. Down in the deep holds of the ship, as she lifted and fell away under the influence of the sea, the examination was perhaps less meticulous than higher up in the cooler atmosphere. Down there was no place for land-lubbers to linger. However, the examination was always strict enough to ensure that the quarters were clean. Discipline was to be maintained only by making all officers and N.C.O.s keep the closest eye upon the men under their particular command.

In that great company of men it took no time for the ubiquitous Crown and Anchor board to show itself, and, although it was forbidden to gamble,

there were many complaints that the greenhorns were being fleeced of all their money.

The Commanding Officer was a man of strict discipline and an explosive mind. "Treadwell, this gambling on board is damnable and you must stop it at once. See to it." It was so easy to say "See to it," but it was a very different proposition to do the seeing to it. I quietly brooded over the problem. The approach of the orderly officer towards a school of Crown and Anchor addicts was always heralded in plenty of time for the board to disappear and for the players to be concentrating intently on books. Something more subtle was needed.

Among the small detachment of artillery on the *Willochra* was Gunner Wardrop. He was the younger brother of Laurence Wardrop, my good friend, who had left a few days ahead of me. He was built on a pattern very different from that of his elder brother, and knew all about the "sport of kings" and various forms of gambling. He had left a responsible job in Wellington to join the adventure, as so many others had done. He was an extremely sophisticated young man. I sent for him. Appearances always meant much to Gunner Wardrop, and he soon came to the orderly room spick and span, looking every inch a soldier. I smiled at him. He looked as if his smart appearance was meant to convey to me the fact that he had not been doing anything wrong. "The Commanding Officer is very much concerned about the gambling that is prevalent, and I propose to put an end to it." Wardrop looked at me in a curious way which, if it did not suggest

guilty knowledge, at least revealed some uneasiness. "I have not yet completed my list of ship's police, and I propose to put them in your charge," I went on, pretending to see nothing of the relief and amazement that swept over his face. "You will be promoted to temporary sergeant while in charge of the police. Now go away and prepare the necessary plans for the immediate extinction of Crown and Anchor and report to me as soon as the plans are perfected. About turn." Temporary Sergeant Wardrop marched off and I smiled as I re-entered the orderly room, for I knew that I had made no mistake in choosing him as police sergeant. The remainder of the police were carefully chosen and handed over to Wardrop. They were chosen chiefly on account of their *savoir faire* and general character.

Sergeant Wardrop soon had a plan of action. He divided his police into three or four groups. He ascertained who were the owners of the Crown and Anchor boards, and in a few days there was not a board to be seen on the ship. Gambling, except for comparatively rare appearances, was a thing of the past. One of the Crown and Anchor "kings" was reported to have said, "That damned sergeant has skinned all the schools and has taken the boards as security for the moneys owing and unpaid to him!" While I took no trouble to ascertain how the evil had actually been stopped, I was pleased to be able to assure the Commanding Officer that the trouble was entirely at an end. It was smart work by the

ship's police, but I do not know that their methods were entirely orthodox.

The allocation of deck-space as parade-grounds was one of the matters that demanded ingenuity. The ship's orders for the fifth day out show how I managed to meet the situation:

No. 1 Parade-ground—
Boat deck forward of companion-way, both starboard and port.—Artillery.

No. 2 Parade-ground—
Boat deck, port side, aft of companion-way.—D Company.

No. 3 Parade-ground—
Boat deck, starboard side, aft of companion-way.—C Company.

No. 4 Parade-ground—
Port promenade deck to aft of No. 5 hatch.—A Company.

No. 5 Parade-ground—
Starboard promenade deck to aft of No. 5 hatch.—B Company.

No. 6 Parade-ground—
Promenade deck aft of No. 5 hatch.—N.Z.M.C. and N.Z.V.C.

Thus the four companies of infantry, the battery of artillery, and the medical and veterinary sections all had their allotted spaces.

The parade-grounds, however, were hardly used at all for the first week. As the *Willochra* cleared New Zealand and headed for the Australian coast the weather, which had been fine, began to change. Dark clouds loomed up and quite suddenly the ship began to smash her nose into walls of rolling water. As I stood with the chief officer on the bridge, having

a spell after a strenuous day, I asked him what the promise was from the weather. "The bottom is out of the glass; we are in for a dirty time," he growled. Steps were taken to meet the threat. As many of the holds as could be battened down were closed and all movables were placed in some safe position. With the holds closed, canvas funnels were led down into the ship's bowels, and down these tubes there rushed the first heavy puffs of a Tasman Sea gale. Rapidly the wind increased, and soon it was shrilly rushing through the rigging. When the darkness began to close in as the sun sank behind some distant clouds, the ships started to toss and to plunge stiffly into the rising seas.

"You had better go and get some sleep while you can, Treadwell," advised the chief officer. I therefore clambered down in the gloom to my cabin. I felt my way with difficulty. Already the saloon was empty and there was every indication that the uneven plunging of the ship was having some effect upon the land-lubbers.

I slept in spite of the rising gale, for I was tired out with the many jobs of the day. I awoke in the morning to find that the ship was tossing violently in a full gale. Scrambling into my clothes and slipping on my greatcoat, I made for the bridge again.

The sight was awe-inspiring. The second mate was on duty, and, standing beside him, I watched the ship, loaded to capacity, climb up a huge hill of raging water, tilt over the crest, and then rush down the other side. As it rushed down it met the next wall of water coming up. Dipping its bow into

the wave, it divided it, and clean up to the very bridge of the ship sprang the green water. Looking down fascinated by the tremendous spectacle, I watched the waters rush over the ship's side and along the scuppers. To right and left the storm raged madly. No one dared to show himself on deck. The parade-grounds witnessed no parades. The sun was hidden behind dense black clouds which scudded wildly across the sky. There was something rather sluggish about the *Willochra's* movements. She showed no liveliness in the tremendous activity that was swirling round her. Stolidly, almost sullenly, she stuck her bows into the advancing seas. She was so deeply laden that it seemed, as she tumbled down those great hills of water, she might easily plunge right into and disappear beneath the advancing walls. There was no semblance of speed so far as the ship was concerned. The speed was all with the sea: it did the rushing forward. Watching the giant rollers and the vessel being tossed about, I wondered if the ship's officers were quite satisfied. By this time the captain had emerged from his cabin half-dressed but covered by a heavy overcoat. The two officers gazed at the glass and kept the ship's head carefully right into the storm. Their faces indicated concern and anxiety, which was not reduced as the wireless operator scrambled up the ladder to report that the *Tofua* was miles astern, hove to, and had suffered some damage to a lifeboat on her deck.

Harder the wind blew, higher mounted the seas, and slower turned the ship's engines. As I remained on the bridge, transfixed by the majestic terror of

the scene, one large roller, not running parallel with its fellows, caught the ship on the starboard bow and lashed its furious way along the deck with its huge bulk. Then seeming to pause for a fraction of a second while the steamer rolled as if in an agony, it took fresh strength and, catching the roof and one side of a butcher's house on the deck, it whipped them off and took them with it over the side. The deck hands did what they could to save the rest of the room, and here and there a sailor could be seen crawling along, clinging to stays and rails, as he made sure of the lashings about the decks.

The storm raged for three days, and during that time the troops suffered. Even with the ventilators driving fresh air down below, there were great patches of sleeping accommodation that were rank and stuffy. The evil smell of vomit and the groans of the seasick, for some of the men became very ill, made life below a veritable hell. Only the Commanding Officer, his staff, and the officer of the day moved about the ship. Feeding the men was very difficult, though after the first two days it was surprising to see the number who made their uncertain way to the mess-rooms as the seasick bugler dubiously sounded the call to food.

However, the storm broke at last. The sun, at first fitfully, struggled with the scudding clouds and then more successfully till it blazed forth. With the sun shining, out of the bowels of the ship clambered pale, green-faced, exhausted troops. The rank smell seemed to cling to their clothing. However, in an hour or two the fresh wind—for the storm had

gone—blew away the green in their faces and the smell of the sickness. Smiles and grumbles, manly grouches, took the place of agonized groans. Then came the unexpected cry of "Land ahead!" All staggered to the ship's side, for the first call was to be at Albany and we could not have got that far. But land it was, and the news was soon spread. On account of the storm, the smaller ship, the *Tofua*, would have to put into Hobart for essential repairs. We slowed down in speed so that the *Tofua*, which had not been able to breast the storm nearly as well as we had, could catch up. The *Willochra* slowly approached Hobart, and a charming town it seemed as we entered the harbour. It looked like a small edition of Wellington, which we had so recently left behind.

As the ship tied up at the wharf the Tasmanians, in their thousands, came down to the water's edge to see their unexpected visitors, and we received a generous welcome. A parade was called on the wharf, and the whole force marched through the town to the cheers of the citizens, who showered fruit and flowers upon the men. The discipline of the men was splendid, as, indeed, it had always been with this reinforcement. Up a hill called Mount Wellington we marched. Some on board had evidently been there before, for the news soon spread that there was a brewery at the top of the road. On arrival at that haven a halt was called, and the proprietors, by their generosity, soon convinced the troops that Cascade ale was as good as the home product. The march was taken slowly, for the men

had been through a really bad experience during the last few days. Coming downhill, however, there was a spring in the marching and a cheerfulness displayed which perhaps, after all, was due to the generosity of the proprietors of Cascade ale.

The damage to the *Tofua* was soon repaired, and next day both vessels stood out to sea again to the cheers of those good Tasmanians. The next port of call was Albany, and we were soon on our way there at full speed.

In due course we reached Albany, where we stopped to take on fresh vegetables and water. The quantity of fresh water that fifteen hundred men can consume in a week is heavy, even if rigid economy is practised. From the time of the ships' leaving New Zealand every care was taken to restrict the use of fresh water within reasonable limits. Now that the ships were about to steam for three weeks without touching shore the regulations for the use of fresh water had to be even more strictly enforced.

Albany, where the ships stayed for a few hours, was a hot and dusty place compared with cool, green Hobart. The troops were given shore leave for an hour or two. Then in the evening all the troops, save one or two, who were left behind in some hotel, returned to the ship and the *Willochra* and *Tofua* were soon turning their noses outward bound for Suez. The authorities were not very free with their information, and it was not known for certain, except perhaps to the ship's officers, what was to be the next port of call. The general impression was, naturally enough, that Egypt was the end of the journey. So

far all the troops from New Zealand had gone to Egypt, and there was no reason to suppose that this boat-load was destined for any other place. On the contrary, the heavy losses already sustained at the Dardanelles suggested the urgent need for reinforcements.

As the ship headed towards the Equator the men emerged from their sleeping-quarters down below and lay in rows upon the decks by night. Palliasses do not entirely remove the natural impression that the decks were hard to lie upon. They, however, eased the situation, and it is really only a matter of habit to become accustomed to sleep on any horizontal surface, hard or soft.

Men are really babes in many ways and need nursing. It required not only definite orders several times repeated, but also the watchful eyes of the officers, to see that the men protected their heads against the ever-increasing heat of the sun. One or two men actually went down with sunstroke, and their sufferings seemed to impress upon even the least intelligent the advisableness of wearing hats.

As adjutant of the ship, there were many calls on my time and I had little opportunity to loaf or dream. The orderly room was really a general information bureau. Articles lost were reported and articles found were handed over at the orderly room. Of necessity, the men had too much leisure on their hands, and, having spent their allowances at the canteen, some pilfering went on. No publication in routine orders was nearly so effective in putting a stop to this kind of petty theft as was the treatment

meted out to an offender by his companions when he was caught, as one or two were, red-handed. Rough treatment of an offender for a crime which seemed to the troops one of the most heinous soon minimized the trouble. Outward physical signs of violence on a man's body were usually overlooked when I knew that the marks had been earned at the hands of an outraged soldier for pilfering.

One other change became necessary. The ships, as they quietly steamed northwards, showed no lights at all by night. Every porthole was black. Now and then the protection would fall from a light, and it did not take long before an angry message came out of the ether from a watchful destroyer that the ship was showing a light. Although we did not have an armed convoy, there seemed always to be some man-of-war near by during the nights. The sensation of moving about on a black deck with no light to be seen anywhere was a strange one. The men growled and cursed as they stumbled over the reclining form of a " digger," almost as emphatically as did the prostrate soldier curse the stumbler. Father Neptune came on board on the " Line," and officers and men went through the lathering process, followed by a ducking in a canvas tub. It was a break in the monotonous journey. As the ship neared Egypt the information was circulated that we would disembark at Suez and go overland to Cairo.

The whole ship's company woke from its torpor. For days the stifling heat of the tropics had taken away all energy; men lay upon the deck writing, playing cards, yarning, or mending their clothes.

But when the news came that they were nearing the journey's end it was as if a fresh breeze had come on board ship and had blown away the lethargy produced by the unaccustomed heat. For a few days the ships had been steaming up the Red Sea. There had been a strong wind blowing, but it was like the hot blast from a furnace. It seemed to make matters worse.

The last few days were spent in tallying up the men's kit. Boards of Inquiry were set up to decide if missing articles issued should be charged against the man who had lost them, or whether the loss should be charged to the public account. If the loss of kit was a matter not involving negligence on the loser's part, His Majesty's Government was usually debited with the cost, and it speaks well for the eloquence or imagination of the losers of the kit that in most cases a reasonable excuse for its disappearance was offered and accepted.

One of the last issues to the troops consisted of a field dressing. This certainly suggested to the mind that this expedition was not necessarily a picnic. Into the pocket inside the tunic went the field dressing. The component parts were explained. The phial of iodine, the packing and the wrapping, and how to use them all, received earnest attention. The day before the troopship steamed into Old Suez orders were issued for disembarkation. A landing ration was issued to each officer and man, just in case the train journey was delayed and food proved to be unobtainable. The ration consisted of half a pound of bully beef, half a pound of biscuits, four

ounces of cheese, and every water-bottle was filled with lime-juice.

There was some delay in arranging for the landing of the troops, and the troopships lay some hours in the stream. Meanwhile Major Ross and I went ashore for information. As the ship dropped anchor in Port Ibrahim, which lies two miles south of the town of Suez, every soul on board wanted to disembark. It was only to the Commanding Officer and his adjutant that this was immediately possible.

Landing officers came aboard with some information, but it was necessary that responsible officers should go ashore in order that the landing of the troops and the entrainment for Cairo could be easily effected.

As I was pulled across to the wharf in one of the ship's boats the hot sun beat relentlessly down. Again, the wind, instead of cooling, only aggravated the condition. It did not take long to get in touch with the authorities, and, as the troops could not be landed for some hours, I hailed an open brougham, which I soon learnt was called by the Egyptians a *gharry*, and with Major Ross drove through Old Suez. Having been accustomed to modern cities, the drive through Old Suez was a strange experience.

The *gharry* itself was old and worn, and its springs most inadequate. The driver was a dirty native with a cast in one of his eyes which served to give him a sinister appearance. The horse was a mere matter of skin and bones. Its ribs stuck out as if the poor beast was dying of starvation on its legs. Its knees were eloquent of its weakness.

As we sat facing the back of the driver, wretched poverty-stricken children beset us with cries for *baksheesh*. At first the cries seemed piteous and urgent, but it was soon recognized that the children were merely professional beggars. During those war days these Gippo children certainly made more money by their begging than they have made since. A large number of the children, too, bore evidence in their deformed eyes of the presence of congenital disease. The garments worn were appropriate to their calling —a tattered shirt made from a cast-off skirt of their mother was all their clothing. Their feet were bare, though the earth was baking hot. They had no covering at all for their heads, which had obviously been accustomed from birth to standing the full force of the tropical sun.

When we told the driver to show us the town, the first thing that occurred to his mind was a brothel. "Lady nice, cheap, Capitaine," said he, with a grin that was almost a leer. "No, you beast; show us the streets, the buildings, the mosques." Unperturbed by our menaces, the *gharry* driver rose to his feet and flogged his poor starved beast into motion. The animal meandered on; it certainly broke out of a walk, but only just; it never reached a trot. Perhaps to impress his fares, perhaps because it was natural to him, the driver called aloud as he drove down the centre of the streets. He cared hardly at all for any rule of the road; his object seemed to be to get as near as possible to running down the indifferent pedestrians who strode across or stood conversing upon the highway. Also it

seemed to be the habit of the pedestrians to allow themselves to be almost run down by the *gharry* drivers and then to step aside.

Approaching a corner, the driver would change his cry to "*Shemalak*" or "*Menak*," according to whether he wanted to turn to the left or to the right. As the *gharry* wended its way, it turned into neglected narrow streets which twisted and turned. Some were so narrow that the *gharry* could proceed along only with difficulty, and to avoid the vehicle any pedestrian had to flatten himself against the side of the building. Then some expressions of obvious disapproval were exchanged by the driver and the pedestrian. Eyes glared balefully, and the language was eloquent of hatred and contempt. One or two old mosques, which on account of the pressure of time it was impossible to enter and examine, were pointed out. The tiny shops opening on the streets were a novelty to us, but beyond gaining an impression of the dirt, squalor, and poverty of this, our first Eastern town, we noticed little else. It was later, and at leisure, at Cairo, that we came to know the habits of an Eastern city.

On returning to the ship, disembarkation orders were issued, and before long trains were bearing the whole of the reinforcement to Cairo. The trains themselves were noisy and dirty. The wind blew clouds of soft sand into the carriages. It was right in the middle of a very black night that the train stopped at last and the troops heard the long-wished-for command to detrain. The train had pulled into some sort of siding, and the only sign of life consisted

in a few groups of men carrying hurricane lamps. One officer, who proved to be in charge of the guides, for such were the groups of men awaiting the train's arrival, sought out the Commanding Officer and under his orders the whole body of the reinforcement was soon being led away into the inky darkness. As a number of the men had contracted measles on shipboard, the whole reinforcement was placed under some form of mild quarantine. We were led to a large encampment, and there we received our quota of huts and accommodation. No man was allowed in the meantime, until the ban of quarantine was lifted, to leave his camp. A guard was formed and care was taken to see that the quarantine regulations were strictly observed, so that the infection should not spread to neighbouring units. It is doubtful whether this form of segregation was effective, because all the units in the camp had some cases of measles.

CHAPTER III.

EGYPT

As the first day broke on the Eighth Reinforcement in Egypt the troops woke to find themselves part of a considerable body of all arms who had come from New Zealand and Australia. The men were accommodated in tents, though there were many long huts made of the flimsiest wood. They were barely shelters from the high winds and the heavy rain-storms. The top of the walls of these huts were separated from the roofs by an open space of some eighteen inches. This was in order to prevent the huts from becoming too hot to use. It had, however, the disadvantage of letting in the light sand that blew about whenever the wind rose. Some of the huts had an arrangement, after the style of a shutter, to close during a sandstorm. These long huts were used for mess huts and social huts.

Instead of returning to my platoon, as I had expected, I was appointed acting-adjutant for the camp, as the regular adjutant had to leave on duty elsewhere for a month.

Life was interesting in this great concentration centre, and it became more interesting when the ban of quarantine was lifted and leave was given not only to visit friends in the neighbouring camps, but also to visit Cairo.

Until the ban was lifted the troops had little chance of seeing the Egyptian natives. Only those natives with a specially marked pass indicating that the bearer had business in the camp were allowed to pass the guard barrier. One exception only was there, and he was Makmuud, a native Egyptian in his early teens, who was made rather a pet by the New Zealand troops. He found, as few of his countrymen apparently ever found, that honesty pays. He used to act as a general messenger-boy for all and sundry, and his reward was many piastres. In addition to which he had acquired a tunic and some socks far too large for him but of which he was very proud and for which he was the envy of his native contemporaries. He was a quiet young boy, and no doubt he earned and received enough money to make him rich in the eyes of his fellow-Egyptians. Let us hope he had the sense to keep his easily-earned piastres.

When leave was at last granted to the Eighth Reinforcement, Wardrop and I—for Wardrop's reinforcement, too, was no longer in quarantine—made for the great city of Cairo. The camp where we were quartered was near the railway-station of Zeitoun, some five miles from Cairo. By train it took but a few minutes to reach the city.

What met our eyes as we stepped out of the train surprised me, even though I had been warned by Wardrop, who had already some experience of the city and of the ways of the Cairene women.

A horde of harlots met every train, and for a few hundred yards as we walked along the road we

were pestered by these harpies. If we had taken the slightest notice of them the task of ridding ourselves of these social pests would have been considerably prolonged.

In 1914 there was no such thing as importuning in New Zealand, and to be faced with it on the huge scale prevailing in the East was a surprise to the troops, to which importuning many good men fell.

Warning after warning was issued from the moment the first troops arrived in Egypt from Australia and New Zealand. Warnings, however, are of little use to the thoughtless adventurer, and many paid a terrible price for their indulgence with the Cairene women of the streets.

The first troops from New Zealand and Australia suffered fearfully from the disease-infected harlots. At last the situation became so bad that the men took into their own hands the task of cleaning up the brothel area, which consisted of one principal street and some minor ones, comprehensively called the Wasser. A raiding party, consisting of Australians and New-Zealanders, twice attacked the whole area. The houses were, in many instances, tall buildings of several floors in height. The floors were reached by ascending concrete winding stairs. These stairs were foul to a degree and stank with the misuse to which they were subjected. On each floor would be a brothel run by some old native virago and filled with a dozen or so of young Cairene women. Nothing whatever was done to ensure that the women were not infected. The rooms themselves were foul, and generally their appearance was

sufficient to warn any ordinary intelligent man of the danger of incontinence in such a locality. However, even moderately intelligent young men lose their judgment when under the influence of intoxicants, and there was no difficulty in their procuring drink of any kind.

The two raids, popularly known as the "Battles of the Wasser," were conducted with the object of preventing the continued misuse of the premises attacked. The men went in force into every brothel and despite of shrieks of the harpies they cleared every stick of furniture from the rooms and piled up the debris in the streets. They drove out the women, who ran screaming in all directions. Grand pianos were lifted bodily out of doorways three or four floors above the street and sent hurtling to the ground, where for a confused moment or two the strings played a last wild tune. The whole heap was then set on fire and the local fire brigade was prevented from functioning till the destruction was complete. Then another war began. The colonial troops were attacked and blackguarded from all quarters. The G.O.C. Cairo District used the strongest terms in reprobating the violence, and likened the troops to untamed savages. Out of the trouble, however, emerged much good. A cleaner Cairo resulted. Every woman desirous of plying the ancient trade had first to obtain a health certificate. The women of the old area were examined, and those infected were immediately placed in a concentration camp, known as the "barbed wire," behind which she remained until she received a clean

bill of health. Constant supervision of the women was then insisted upon, and woe betide the woman who did not report for her regular examination.

When Wardrop and I walked into Cairo the immediacy of the dangers from infected natives had been largely removed, though it was still possible for the more intemperate soldier to make a sad fool of himself.

Every night the different units would set up their pickets to parade the streets and comb the Wasser area for their own troops. The men on these duties carried bayonets only, while the officer in charge of the picket would carry his revolver. The Wasser had been substantially improved when I did duty as officer commanding the pickets, and little trouble was experienced, save, perhaps, from women who complained of not receiving their dues. They did not receive much satisfaction for their injured feelings.

The women, save the keepers of the houses, were all young girls of an age probably varying from thirteen to eighteen. There was no shame in the make-up of these prostitutes; they regarded their mode of earning their living as legitimate as any other.

When I had been in camp for a month I was re-posted to my platoon, the adjutant having returned to Zeitoun. Sergeant Anderson, the senior sergeant in the platoon, took over his section. It seemed like old times to be among the men again, and the men were glad to have me back. As one of them expressed it: "An officer can be confided

in, but who could tell his private affairs to a sergeant?"

The training of the Division was now carried out in real earnest. Schools were established for teaching the most modern methods of warfare in the light of the late experience in France. The Commandant was Lieut.-Col. Colston, of the Grenadier Guards, while his subordinate officers were all officers of the famous "Contemptibles" who had been wounded and so disabled from further service at the Front.

Just before I was sent for a course of training there, my platoon was served out with the modern short rifle. In New Zealand all the training had been with the out-of-date long-barrelled rifle. For one particular reason, if for no other, that type of rifle would never have suited in Egypt. There was a long strip of bare barrel, which under the hot sun of Egypt would have been unbearable, while the whole of the barrel of the short rifle was encased in wood.

Generally, the training was much as had been taught in New Zealand. I sweated with my platoon in the sun learning how to attack and repel, in sections and in platoons. To rise and rush forward in a temperature far higher than that experienced in New Zealand found out the weak spots in our physical condition.

Out into the great desert every morning the platoons of infantry would go to do their "physical jerks" and infantry training. The surface was sand and, though fairly hard, made marching heavy work.

Dysentery and colic made ravages in the ranks in very short time. Swallowing the flying sands of the Egyptian desert, rendered foul by its occupation for thousands of years by natives who regarded the ordinary rules of sanitation as unimportant, must have aggravated the trouble. The strongest of the men went down in agony to the cursed dysentery; indeed, few escaped altogether. I became a victim, and had it not been for my good luck in being reappointed acting-adjutant, enabling me to rest, I should soon have found myself in the hospital at Ismalia. As it was, with a large supply of bismuth at one time and opium pills at another, and with a minimum amount of exercise, I managed to keep going. "Once the sand gets inside, you know sir," said my batman, one morning as I lay writhing on my palliasse, "it's the very devil to get right again." However, the will to get better goes far to help, and by sheer determination not to see the inside of a hospital I kept on my feet. So many of the poor fellows who had come with me from New Zealand were on their way back labelled unfit through dysentery.

One day when I was renewing my supply of opium pills from my friend the D.D.M.S. I had a narrow escape form hospital. "Let's see your temperature," said the Colonel, as he shoved his thermometer between my teeth. At that moment I was feeling particularly ill, so with as careless a manner as I could assume I removed the instrument while the Colonel turned to write a chit for some more pills. Placing the glass tube on the table, I asked the

Colonel if he had ever read De Quincey. "Naturally, I have." "Well, I'll wager that he did not take his opium in the filthy way you make me take it," I retorted. "To become an addict through pills would be impossible." As I said this I lifted the chit from the table and, pointing out through the window a camel coming into view, hurriedly departed, leaving it to the D.D.M.S. to find that he had not taken my temperature after all. Intermittently the sand-colic, or whatever the trouble was, laid me low and I had to lie on my bunk instead of careering over the hot sand. Providentially, when it seemed as if it would have to be hospital after all, for one cannot go sick too frequently, Watson, the adjutant, went away for another month or so, and back into the more sedentary life of camp adjutant I went.

Once, when Watson returned and I took over my platoon again, I went with them out to the desert parade-ground, and as they divided up into sections for drill a captain of a camel corps came dashing up covered with dust and sweat and in a fine state of alarm. Riding up to me, who happened to be the only officer in view, he said, "Can you bring your men over at once to the native camp? There is an all-fired row over there and the natives are breaking camp." "Are they armed?" I asked, "because we are not; we've only our rifles and bayonets." "That's all they have themselves, but the real trouble is that if they clear out and the camels clear off there'll be the very devil to pay."

I called my men together, fixed bayonets, and doubled off to where the trouble was, about a quarter

of a mile away. As we were hurrying to the scene of the disturbance the camel corps officer remarked that the corps had been getting more and more troublesome, and he felt sure that some German agents were at work among them.

The camp was a large square, the camels being in long lines, each beast apparently secured by a halter. The discord at the camp was rife; the loyal N.C.O.s were gesticulating and threatening, but the majority of the men seemed bent on mischief. Evidently they could not quite agree whether they should let the camels go or simply clear out themselves. They were all shouting and threatening; the camels were thoroughly alarmed and angry. There are few animals more dangerous or unpleasant to deal with than an angry camel. They were making their cry of anger and blowing through their teeth a curious balloon-shaped sac. Even at their native caretakers they were snapping in fury. What would have happened in a few minutes it is impossible to say. To me it looked as if the whole camp would break up in an uproar.

To each side of the square I despatched a section of men, who spread out with rifle and bayonet at the ready, pointing towards the native soldiers. As well as possible their N.C.O.s warned the men that if they touched their rifles or attempted to leave camp the white soldiers would fire on them. There must have been at least five hundred natives there, but the glint of steel in the hands of my platoon quickly brought them to reason. Sullenly the men went back to their camels and sat down, murmuring

ominously. A runner despatched to other New Zealand troops resulted in the arrival of a further detachment, and as soon as things were definitely quieter the O.C. of the camel corps took me through the camp lines. "Frankly, I've never seen such an evil-looking lot in my life as these Gippos of yours," I commented. "You'll wake up one day with a dagger in your heart." "Oh, they're not as bad as they look, old man; and, anyhow, they wouldn't have the pluck to hurt me," was his unconcerned reply.

The situation was a curious one. The native troops were numerically strong enough to have defied my platoon, even if my men had had ammunition. But they were a poor lot of troops and easily succumbed to a show of fight on our part. When additional troops turned up, with a section of the men I went with the officer in command of the camel corps and searched two large stone buildings near the camp, where it was suspected that there were enemy agents. Through both buildings we went, carefully looking into every corner and cranny in spite of the expostulations of the native owners. Both buildings were residences of well-to-do natives and in one was a harem. The ladies certainly did not come up to the generally accepted standard of Eastern attractiveness and charm; they were a sullen, frightened lot. That Egyptian gentleman would gladly have knifed us as we systematically searched his home.

This incident, which at no time did I regard as an affair of grave danger, was looked upon as a

very serious one by the camel corps commander. "So much is said of the Egyptians rising, and so much distrust is fermented among the men, that I should not have been surprised to know that this was a deliberate plot as a part of a general uprising," said he. I, with complete ignorance of Egyptian affairs, only nodded my head. My men and I were grateful for a much more interesting morning than marching and drilling on the desert sands could possibly provide.

A few days later I was back again at camp headquarters in the adjutant's place, and while there orders were received from Army Headquarters for the whole battalion to parade and, with some Australian units, to march through the city of Cairo with fixed bayonets as a display of strength to intimidate the Egyptians from a threatened rising. Through the city, along the main streets and down into Old Cairo, where only the Egyptians lived, they marched, strong lean giants with their bayonets gleaming in the sunlight. The glances from the natives were clearly hostile, but the display of strength of His Majesty's colonial troops sufficed to persuade the natives that they were safer where they were than in attempting any uprising designed to drive the British out of Egypt.

The women showed no hostility towards the troops: it might have been better for the troops if they had. On the contrary, in the streets one was pestered with the native and foreign prostitutes. Walking along, unless a native policeman were in sight, it was impossible to avoid hearing the

seductive invitation of these harpies. One particular type was the French woman who touted for trade while riding in a *gharry*. She dressed herself in the attractive garb of a well-to-do Egyptian lady wearing the *yashmak*. As the *gharry* approached an officer it would slow down and pull up to the kerb. Then the officer, if he were a lieutenant, would hear a "Capitaine" spoken in a high whisper, or "Colonel" if his rank were, say, captain, and he would see a pretty-looking woman leaning forward in the two-seated carriage, beckoning him to take the vacant seat beside her. The natives resented this adoption of their women's garb by the hated foreigner, and rumour had it that several of these interlopers met with violent death.

To New-Zealanders the Eastern attitude towards the prostitute was a revelation. In New Zealand there were neither recognized localities nor permitted prostitution. Indeed, New Zealand was singularly free from this pest, as it is of most other human pests and parasites. Therefore, for me, who hitherto had not been beyond the shores of my native land, the open approval of this type of woman, and the legalization of establishments for the purpose, came at first as rather a shock. It took very little time, however, for me or any other colonial to accept the custom of this country.

At a theatre called the Kursaal, which was exclusively for the entertainment of officers or natives of the professional or business class, I met the most attractive foreign and native "birds." The Kursaal provided a programme of the old-fashioned

variety type. There was singing, instrumental playing, and the low comedian—usually very low and stupid. The stalls were occupied by the natives, and the dress-circle, which was divided into cubicles, by the British officers. Wine and supper could be had at a reasonable price, but the better-class prostitute plied her trade as hard as she could. One only needed to remember the tragedy that had befallen many comrades through falling for the seductions of these women to keep on guard. The victims were usually claimed when they had been drinking too heavily.

After the Kursaal one evening I, with two or three others, wandered down into the native quarter, and there saw the well-known cancan and many other sights of crude depravity. The whole scene formed an appalling contrast to the life led in our own native land. Bad habits die hard, and it needed a battle greater than that of the Wasser to eradicate the evils that throve among the natives of that city.

One day I had a full day's leave, and with me went Lieutenant Tole. Standing by the entrance to the Museum, we watched the men and women of Cairo shuffling past in their long black gowns. The women had their faces partially concealed with the *yashmak*. They were still the beasts of burden and carried unbelievably heavy loads upon their heads.

It was impossible to stand on the pavement for a minute without being invited to buy some gee-gaw by an itinerant male vendor, or being solicited by a woman, so we turned into the Museum. There we saw mummies and statues of Egyptians of

thousands of years before, dressed as their countrymen of to-day are dressed. One of the most fascinating exhibits in Cairo lay before our eyes. "Who is that tall chieftain?" said Tole, standing before one imposing exhibit. It was Amenemhat III, of an old, though not the oldest, dynasty. He was different from the usual type of Egyptian, with his very long upper lip, high cheek-bones, and ears that stuck out. His departure from his type was supposed to be due to his father having married into the pure Egyptian royal family.

Then, in a show-case near by was the death-mask of the famous Teti. He was indeed of the ancients. In the same show-case was a beautiful woman's head in moulded clay. The workmanship was so fine that even then, thousands of years after its execution, could be seen the red veins in the eyes.

Wandering out of the Museum, we made for the mosques. They were worthy of the most careful examination. Into some of them the infidel was absolutely refused admittance, as we found to our annoyance. Not even *baksheesh* enabled us to cross the threshold. However, there were many famous mosques to be seen. Into some of these we drifted. Compelled first to remove our shoes, we would enter and see kneeling, in apparent deep devotion, some natives. No matter how evil they were in business, they certainly appeared devout enough on their knees in their churches.

One of the mosques in good repair, for many were very dilapidated, was the red mosque, Muaiyad.

We entered through magnificent bronze gates. The mosque was built in A.D. 1400.

Then we visited the colossal mosque of Sultan Hassan. The outer walls were a hundred feet high and they were capped with a cornice which projected some six feet. The cornice was made from stalactite, the use of which was at the period typical of Arabian architecture. The window-frames, the portals, and the capitals of the columns, too, were ornamented with stalactite. The minaret was noble indeed. With a square base, it rose to its great height of three hundred feet, gradually merging into an octagon.

The blue-tiled mosque of Ibrahim Agha was a beautiful church. Its decoration of azure tiles was unique. "This mosque is wrongly named," I remarked as I examined the guide-book, "and it is hardly surprising. It was usual to name mosques after their founders, but as the founder was the renegade Mameluke Kherbek, who was the first Pasha of Egypt under the Ottoman Sultans, it was hardly likely that the representative of that oppressive dictator could sustain his name on the mosque after the foreign power had been removed."

"I don't know. It would have been more sporting to have left it. We would have done so had it been British," said Tole.

"That," I said, "shows that your knowledge of the barbarous treatment of the Arabians by the Turks in those days is not profound."

From one mosque to another we went, noticing individual differences in each, though there was always the open court, with the fountain in the centre

which was used as a prelude to worship. Often it was difficult to find the tomb of the founder, which was almost invariably within the building named after him. We found, however, that it was usually concealed from the public gaze by a screen, but inquiring for it was generally sufficient to gain us permission to see it. In the sanctuary containing the tomb was the niche showing the direction of Mecca, and there, too, was the pulpit.

On coming out from one of the mosques, Tole noticed, embedded in an outer wall, a round cannon-ball which was said to have been fired by the French when Napoleon paid his visit a hundred years before.

After leaving the mosques we made our way into the shopping-centre, known as the Muski. It was a magnet for the foreigner. Down a main thoroughfare, into a narrow winding street, then right into a congested block of open shops and we were in the Muski. The streets were very narrow indeed, not wide enough for a *gharry*, and even the water-bearing donkeys seemed to take up all the width of the way. The shops consisted of open cubicles, the wares being displayed so that the passer-by could see them, and the owner sat within or stood by the entrance. Every shopman tried to inveigle us to buy. Seeking some souvenir to send to New Zealand, we halted before a silk merchant. At once, with obsequiousness characteristic of the native, the shopman found cushions for us to sit upon, and then began a long and involved harangue upon the virtues of the articles he had to sell. Having been warned of their ways of selling, we were ready

for the man. First, it was 700 piastres for a beautiful silken kimono. Then I went to the other extreme and offered 25 piastres. With a cry of horror and a waving of hands, and calling upon the mercy of Allah, he then said he would sell at 500 piastres to the gallant officer, though it was under cost. We then pretended to take no further interest and started to examine some cheap handkerchiefs. But the Gippo was determined to sell. At a nod from his master, a small neatly dressed Egyptian boy entered carrying a tray and some black coffee. While we were sipping this the salesman continued the good work. The kimono was priceless, exquisite, and so on. We started to take notice of some brassware in the next cubicle. At once the price of the kimono dropped again. Still it was far too high. As we rose to depart one of us casually offered a price. We were prepared to go without waiting to listen further, though the shopkeeper uttered another wail of abject woe and was again ruined if he thought of selling at such a figure. We took no notice and strolled into the street. The Gippo rushed after us and accepted the price offered. As Tole and I turned back to secure the article the Gippo was again all smiles. The sale had been satisfactory and play-acting was no longer necessary.

After having the article carefully packed we wandered then from shop to shop. There were, beside the silks, carpets for sale in another shop, then brassware, scents and incense, coffee, edibles, and a thousand-and-one things in the hundreds of tiny shops set up in the congested Muski.

The people who infested the locality were themselves a curious mixture; there were the grinning negroes from the Sudan, the dismal fellahin, the sneaky-looking Levantines, the Shereefs, and just round the corner (for they always seemed to be sneaking just round the corner) were the unfriendly-looking Bedouins. They invariably appeared untamed and antagonistic, and they always seemed to stalk away quickly as an officer approached, setting their *burnouses* flying as they made off. The water-carrier, too, was often to be seen in the Muski; at times the burden was borne by a mule or a donkey, while sometimes a native would carry the skin round his shoulders. It is not to be wondered at that his trade was exclusively amongst his fellow-countrymen. No Briton would risk drinking from a gourd which had met the lips of those unclean-looking natives.

Emerging slowly from this native quarter, we were guided, in another native quarter, to what was alleged to be the oldest Egyptian house—a recognized show place. In that old building we were shown a passage-way which led to the bedroom of the Egyptian potentate. Apparently the gentleman had three wives, for just at the entrance to the bedroom were two narrow oblong recesses. They were about three feet in height and width and about six feet in length. The two wives who were not wanted for any particular night were locked up in these two recesses. There they were safe, so it was explained, and they could not fight each other!

After leaving the ancient house, dinner at

Shepheard's Hotel, followed by a dull evening at the Kursaal, brought the day's outing to an end. Camp was reached in a *gharry*.

The next day's leave was taken up by a trip to the Sphinx and the Pyramids at El Gizeh. Everyone who has not seen the Pyramids wonders how the ancients ever built them; and seeing them certainly does not solve the problem. They each stand, magnificent monuments to ancient worship and philosophy, in the solitude of the Libyan desert and many leagues from where the great blocks of granite were originally hewn.

It was a typical Egyptian winter morning when we rode out on our chargers the few miles to visit the most popular sight of all Egypt. As we rode along the well-trod road that leads to the Pyramids, we saw these sepulchres loom greater and greater. Leaving our horses with our grooms, we walked the last five hundred yards, for we wanted to approach the scene decently composed to accept the grandeur they displayed.

First to the Sphinx we walked, and, standing there in the increasing heat of the morning sun, we tried to reflect on the scenes that the inscrutable Sphinx had overlooked in the long years since it raised its proud, haughty head on the sands of the desert. Its lion's paws are arrogantly placed before its human head which has seen the Egyptian sun rise on the horizon since the Fourth Dynasty—between 3,800 and 4,000 years B.C. The atmosphere of calm could not be imbibed in an hour or two of quiet contemplation; it requires a lifetime's living in the

vicinity to understand all that is implied in the image of that great Eastern god. The head was, even at this date, little affected by time, though there is the physical mark on his nose, said to have been caused by the vandalism of Napoleon when he visited the scene, showing his contempt for ancient grandeur by causing his artillery to fire at the head. As we silently gazed at the great Sphinx, it looked as if it was only waiting for an appropriate hour when it would rise in its wrath and, with a godlike fury, sweep all infidels from the great desert that was its alone.

From the Sphinx we walked over to the Great Pyramid, wherein once lay King Cheops. With a base of some 760 feet square and a height of 480 feet, it was deeply impressive in its massiveness. When we contemplated the fact that the whole edifice, save for two or three small rooms in its very heart, was solid, it was difficult to realize how the great blocks of stone could ever have been transported the many miles after being hewn. The Pyramid had once been covered, but the outer covering had ceded to time's ravages. To-day, only the bare stone is to be seen.

Removing our shoes, we entered the narrow porchway, or entrance, and followed along a narrow passage not high enough to allow a man to walk upright. Into the stifling atmosphere of that tomb we clambered, until at last it opened up into a room, and then, a little higher, another room, the true tomb of the ancient Egyptian monarch Cheops, or Khufu. The deadly stillness and the fetid atmosphere

made it no place wherein unduly to linger, and in a moment or two we were sliding and slithering back along the passage, then out into the blinding glare of the sunlight. Any decent feeling of respect for the memory of the ancient king was immediately dispelled by the score of professional beggars who met us as we emerged, crying loudly, "*Baksheesh, baksheesh!*"

The day was well advanced towards noon as we remounted our horses and ambled back through the villages along the main road to the city. By this time we were thoroughly annoyed with the persistent beggars who would rush out to the passing horses, crying for alms. Australian and New Zealand troops of all ranks became accustomed to curse these loafers in no measured terms, and Tole and I were no exceptions. The beggars at times showed resentment to their being cursed, but their resentment was usually restricted to baleful glances. Stone and stick throwing, and sometimes in a crowd a dagger-thrust, were not unknown. But these acts of hostility were attempted only when the cowardly native felt assured of safety.

On another occasion, as I was lunching in town, I was sitting with a fellow New-Zealander, named McGregor. We had the rest of the day to ourselves, so together we set off for a stroll through the outlying districts of the city. After walking for an hour we entered an essentially native village. There had been trouble with the natives, and it was an order of the day that officers should always be armed if passing through these villages. Thinking nothing

of that particular matter, we entered within the village-walls and noticed at once that the native men were all extremely hostile in their attitude. No women were to be seen. One or two snarling dogs and a few children were on view as we reached what appeared to be the centre of the settlement. As we were crossing the square there was a high-pitched yell from our left and out of one of the round huts rushed a tall native girl bereft of clothing. "*Jigajig*, officers," she yelled, and rushed straight at us as if she would embrace us. At once I instinctively pointed my cane in front of me and she ran right into it and collapsed in a fury on the road. Whether this was all part of a plan or not, it is impossible to say, but at once the whole village turned into the square and the men, raising light sticks they held in their hands, threatened and cursed like a pack of dervishes. Their object was to get close to us, so that we could not use our arms. However, turning half-way towards back to back, after seeing that shaking our fists and sticks was useless, we whipped out our revolvers. That kept the angry horde some yards away, but still the yelling and threats increased. Then a red fez appeared in the crowd. It was a native policeman. Calling to him to clear the way for us had little effect on that representative of the law. Immediately he caught my eye he slunk off, grinning maliciously.

"We'd better get out of this, old man," said McGregor. So, squaring our shoulders and with revolvers pointing straight in front, we stepped forward. At once the cowardly mass gave way and,

pressing on, we pushed through a gap in the crowd, glancing now and then sideways to anticipate any attack from the flank in the event of there being a sufficiently intrepid native among them to make the attempt. It was with great relief that we left the village behind.

"That was pretty hot, old man," said McGregor. "I thought we should have to fight our way out."

I assented.

"There's only one gentleman I would like to meet now," I said.

"That nigger policeman, I suppose," said my companion.

"The Force would be one short if I could lay my hands on the swine. The whole thing looked like a put-up job."

"Nothing riles me so much as a nigger who dares to sneer or snigger at a white man in a hole," growled McGregor, as we sat on the raised dais in front of Shepheard's Hotel, drinking a gin and ginger and watching an old-fashioned world stride past.

Other excursions to scenes of interest were taken now and then. Near Zeitoun was a wretched little village named El Matariya. To this village I often made my way. When the Holy Virgin fled with Christ into Egypt, tradition has it that she rested beneath an oak in El Matariya. There, fenced in, is what the guides assured me was the tree under which the Holy Mother had rested. Gazing at its gnarled trunk, with the branches bending down as if in the last stages of extreme age, it was not difficult to imagine that the tale might be true. Actually the

tree was a sycamore, of perhaps three hundred years of age. Inquiry established that the tradition was that this was not the original tree which gave the Virgin shelter, but that it was planted on the very spot on which that tree had grown. By leaning over the barrier, I secured with a penknife a piece of the bark. Turning from the tree, I saw, a few yards away, the well from which the exhausted Mother quenched Her thirst. This well, unlike the others sunk in that district, contained pure fresh water, free from brackish taint. I tasted it. The story runs that it was brackish like the others till the Holy Lady tasted it and bathed the infant Christ in its cooling stream, when it immediately became fresh and has so remained ever since.

"This country is full of legend. The Bible is the best guide-book here, I should say," said McGregor, who was with me at the time. "Let us go out towards the west," he added. "There's a Cleopatra's needle somewhere about here."

We strolled down an ill-formed country lane and then, looking over a hedge, saw, standing alone in a large field, the needle.

"Its fellow is on the Thames Embankment, isn't it?"

"I believe it is," I said. "We'll see it when we go over there."

Gazing at it, we could see that it bore the marks of time. The hieroglyphics were disappearing. Standing alone in a barren field, the needle looked out of place; it seemed to need some Egyptian sepulchres round about it.

Leaving the needle, we walked farther to the west till we came suddenly upon a wide expanse of water. "This is the Ismalia Canal. Look at that red bird bearing down on us," I exclaimed with delight as I saw an Egyptian boat with huge red sails bellying in the wind, approaching at a tremendous speed. The boats—for many more appeared—seemed to be part of the sunset. The red sails gave a fantastic colour to the blue and grey that formed most of the colour scheme.

The sailors brought their craft, apparently made almost flat-bottomed, right up to the shore and skilfully prevented them from rushing to destruction.

"What an evil-looking lot those sailors are!" I exclaimed.

"If cleanliness is next to godliness it won't avail these cut-throats much," replied McGregor.

Sitting by the water's edge, we watched the sun grow a deeper red, then, remembering how black the nights were, we hurried back eastward to our camp.

Reporting at camp headquarters next day, I learnt I was to lose my platoon for good. I was transferred to the Wellington Regiment, to which district I really belonged.

"It's no use kicking against the pricks, men," I said as I took my old platoon out for the last time. "I'm very sorry to leave you. You and I understand each other, and, whatever happens in the future, I know you'll play the game as you have done ever since we've been together. Good luck to you all." I then went to each of my men separately,

shook hands, and, not feeling quite certain of myself, turned and left them. "They were a splendid team of men," said I, years later, as I glanced at a photograph of the platoon, "and, as fate had it, nearly every one of them was killed or wounded."

Having spent a few months on the flat hot desert at Zeitoun, orders came out that the whole force was to move at last to protect the famous Suez Canal. "It looks as if we are here for keeps," I said, as I sat in a restaurant at Zeitoun with my old friend Wardrop. He had recently returned with his battalion after a successful affray with the Senussi.

"I heard the reason to-day," said Wardrop, laughing. "Some great General arrived, saw the present troops lying on the banks of the Canal, and rudely asked the O.C. Canal Force if his troops were there to protect the Canal or the Canal there to protect his troops. So the General has ordered the defence troops, of which we form part, to move out into the sands of the desert, miles beyond the Canal. It's there we are going. There's no 'pub,' no club, in the desert."

"Perhaps the Turk is coming across in force," I said hopefully.

"Let us hope so," replied Wardrop. "You can't help feeling that it is only playing at war here."

As we strolled back into camp I was sent for by Colonel Hall at camp headquarters. "Treadwell, you are to wait behind."

"Not go with the Division, sir," I said, aghast at the Colonel's word.

"Don't be so impatient, my boy. We've a man

awaiting court martial and I want you to prosecute him, and you can then join us on the Canal.

Relieved at the news, I took the file and, on examining the papers, found that a Maori was charged with assault and doing actual bodily harm.

"You know, Treadwell, in spite of the fact that law is your profession and you think that British justice can be dispensed only within the four walls of your courts, you must admit that, taking it all round, the court martial is the fairest court of all."

"Of course I know that's the popular view among soldiers, particularly senior officers," was my reply, "but it is all wrong, Colonel. The court martial is bound to be unfair."

"What nonsense, man!" said Colonel Hall impatiently. "We wash out all technicalities and get down to bare facts. If a man's guilty, he's found guilty, and no matter how tricky or clever his lawyer or next friend may be he can't trick the plain common sense of a court martial."

"You may be right, Colonel," I said, not anxious to rouse him too far, "but really it is not so. The officers who comprise a court martial are inexperienced and unable to sift evidence. They jump at conclusions and ignore the safeguards which we lawyers make for even-handed justice."

"Rot, Treadwell, rot! Everyone knows that the technicalities are swept away and common sense remains."

"Oh, well, sir, have it as you say," I said, laughing, "but you'll never convince a lawyer that Judges can be made out of inexperienced laymen."

"Well, try your theories on the Maori whom you are prosecuting. It's a plain case of assault, and six months' detention awaits him."

I proceeded to examine the evidence on which his case relied. It was indeed a plain and sordid case. Master Rewa (this name is fictitious) was a half-caste Maori who had run amuck in Cairo. With a number of his mates he had one evening spent an hour in one of the brothels in the Wasser. While there drink had been consumed and, as one of the witnesses described the proceedings, "it was a rough party." As the evening sped on, Rewa fell out with his temporary lady friend. With an oath, he had sprung up from the couch on which they had been reclining. The Arab lass swore at him and demanded her piastres. Rewa told her she would get nothing. Then the trouble started. She sprang at him and tried to put her hand in his trousers pocket. Rewa struck her in the face. She yelled, and then Rewa lost his head, for, taking her by her hair, he dragged her across the room, tearing hanks of hair from her scalp. He then brutally struck her in the face, blackening both eyes and flattening her nose so that the blood gushed down her face.

By this time the whole place was in an uproar and the Arab lady received further manhandling. Her scanty garment was in shreds and both her breasts bore evidence of violence. The Red Caps arrived at the double and Rewa was dragged off to the guard-room, while the Arab girl was taken on a stretcher to hospital. For some weeks she stayed

there mending, and as soon as possible a charge was laid against the Maori.

Rewa had made a statement amounting to a confession of the charge.

"The Colonel is right," I mused, "this is plain enough, and no doubt when he hears the finding he'll tell me that it bears out his contention."

A few days later the whole force moved off from its comfortable camp at Zeitoun for the Canal zone, leaving behind only a comparatively few troops to clean up the camp.

I stayed behind, spending in Cairo the few days before the court martial.

The trial of the Maori was heard in the camp grounds in the Australian lines. A New Zealand officer had stayed behind to defend Rewa. Together we proceeded to a mess hut where the trial was to be held. We agreed that the prisoner had no chance, and the only question was the punishment to be meted out for this brutal assault.

The court consisted of three officers—two Australians and one Englishman. An Australian Major presided.

I expected Rewa to throw in the towel and plead guilty, but he decided to try his luck with a trial. I opened the case and called the evidence. The Arab girl told her story without being shaken in cross-examination. The Red Caps and one or two of Rewa's companions were also called. They corroborated the girl's story. The prosecution closed with Rewa's statement being proved. No evidence

was called for the prisoner, and there was little, if any, defence put to the court.

Then the court retired, and after the time it ordinarily takes to smoke a cigarette they returned. Rewa was not guilty, they said. There was an exclamation of surprise from all who heard. Even Rewa seemed unable to believe his good fortune. After he had been discharged the court rose.

"Come and lunch with me, unless you are in a hurry to get back to town," said the president of the court.

As the prisoner's friend and I were drinking a whisky and soda in the Major's mess-room, I asked him how the court had been able to acquit the Maori.

"Why, that was easy, Treadwell. That man would have been guilty all right in the case of a decent girl, but for one of those trollops of the Wasser what she got was part of the risks she runs. That was something she could expect to happen if she entertained a half-drunk native." *Fiat justitia, ruat coelum,* with a vengeance!

"Well, Treadwell, what did the blighter get?" said Colonel Hall, as I reported to him.

"Not even a reprimand," I replied. "I think he's down on the New Year's honours list!"

I took the train which landed me near to the Canal. There a D.A.C. wagon was going on to the camp, and in it I dumped my gear and my batman. There was a good deal of activity down to and across the other side of the "ditch."

When I reported at brigade headquarters the staff captain took me to the large tent of the Brigadier-

General. As we stood outside waiting for word to enter, I heard the loud cries—bullying, they sounded—of the General.

"Come in, Puttick; come in, man! What are you waiting outside for? Can't you see I'm ready?"

Puttick jumped inside, and after him I followed wonderingly. As soon as I collected myself I saw seated before me not a raging bull or even an angry man. The General was a broad man with a full face. The face showed animation. His large eyes shone brightly as he appraised us both.

"A new officer just reported, sir."

"What, just reported! Where have you been? Been ill, just out of hospital—what?" The words came out in loud tones which seemed almost shouting.

"No, sir, I remained behind for a court martial."

"I see. What's your regiment?"

"He's posted to 2nd Wellington, sir."

"Well, send for the adjutant. You stay and have dinner with us, Treadwell, and later you can go off to your unit."

After dinner, which, for the locality, was a sumptuous repast, I went off with the adjutant.

Next morning I took over my new platoon. "Hell-fire Mack" was the company commander. He had been a sergeant-major in the Permanent Defence Force in New Zealand, and rumour had it he was a good "drill." He certainly cursed and swore and terrorized, but he saw very little fighting. I soon settled down and "Hell-fire" treated me with indifference, which was really high praise. The

training in the O.T.C. under the Guards officer and the Scottish sergeant-major stifled criticism.

Soon the battalion was hard at training. Every battalion commander was kept on his toes by the indefatigable "Bill" Braithwaite, as the Brigadier was called.

"Bill" Braithwaite was a great asset to the New Zealand army. A professional soldier seconded from his regiment, the Welsh Fusiliers, to New Zealand, he was a past-master at breaking in the raw, if enthusiastic, troops. Every detail, whether in drill, in dress, or in training, was ever under his microscopic eye. Woe betide the private whom he met with badly-rolled puttees. Every day in the broiling heat, when the men were resting, the officers gathered and listened to his lectures. "Bill" was full of roar and criticism, but he was the kindest-hearted of men. He was ever thinking of the men's welfare; that was subordinate to one thing only—efficiency.

At that time, in spite of his energy, in spite of the heat of the tropical days, "Bill" Braithwaite must have weighed fifteen stone. He had three chargers, which he rode hard. One he bought himself. It was a small Arab. It was short, hardly bigger than a pony, and a stallion. It was a perfect nuisance, but the General professed an admiration for the pure-bred Arab. To see that heavily-built General astride the diminutive horse was a sight indeed. I used to watch the General riding round the camp on the sturdy little beast, wondering how long it would stand the strain.

As the new year advanced the heat grew more unbearable. The flies increased, and the sandstorms also. The hot sands were too much for me, and sand-colic soon levelled me to the floor of my tent. Sand-colic is an agonizing disease. Sad lack of control of the "innards" increased the trouble. Officers and men were reporting sick in increasing numbers, but I was afraid to report sick. My batman, who was a loyal servant, soon got on terms with the sick-corporal and a large supply of opium and bismuth pills disappeared from the sick-tent. That saved me from "going sick."

The sand penetrated everything, even when it did not blow about. When, however, the wind stirred it up camp life was unbearable.

"Food here is coated with sand or flies, or both, sir," said my batman one day. It was blowing hard and I grunted assent as I left the tent when the mess call was sounded for lunch. The wind was high and the large mess tent was carefully laced. The ground-ropes were tightened and to get inside I crawled under a flap. The tent was intolerably hot, yet to open the flap would have let in the driving penetrating sand. As it was, all the food was gritty and the only thing at all palatable was a whisky and soda, for the sand sank to the bottom of the glass.

The sand, however, was no worse than the flies. Even far out in the desert, away from the insanitary Gippo, the flies came in their millions. Eating meals was no easy task if it was desired to avoid masticating flies. As two new arrivals were vainly attempting to eat their bread and jam without including the

flies and were having little success, I had mercy on them.

"There's only one way to beat the fly to your mouth," I told them. "Watch the latest technique, my friends."

The two turned towards me as with one hand I held a piece of bread, then taking up a knife in the other I pushed it under the muslin that kept the flies out of the butter. With a quick movement, born of practice, I nipped a piece of butter on to my knife and a moment later it was spread on the bread.

"Now watch carefully," I said. I took the bread in one hand and waved the other open across the bread as rapidly as I could. "It is necessary almost to brush the bread or the flies will ignore you." While I was talking I raised the bread towards my mouth, all the time waving the other hand vigorously. Then, when the bread was too close to my face to allow any further waving, I opened my mouth and in dashed the piece of bread; the other hand kept waving all the time. "The mouth must be open sufficiently wide to enable immediate entrance of the bread, otherwise there may be delay, and that's enough for the fly. You must, however, be careful not to open your mouth too wide, for that's an open invitation for the flies to investigate."

The new arrivals were impressed with the fact that it was a complicated business.

"Practice, that is what you need—merely practice." But I spoke too soon, for as I opened my mouth two flies entered.

The drill went on day after day, and with night

patrols. The morning drill usually finished by a march to the Canal, and then any day the passengers on the ships as they passed along their way could see great men swimming in the Canal or lying about on the edge of the bank—stark-naked. It was a long swim across and back, and only a very few did the journey.

On the 20th March word was sent round that on the morrow the Prince of Wales would visit the troops, and it was ordered that the drill should not be interrupted, as the Prince wanted to see the troops in the normal course of their day's work. The camp was put in spick-and-span order and the officers were told that the welcome to the Prince should be an enthusiastic one.

The Prince arrived according to plan, riding a beautiful horse. He cantered hard over the sandhills and ambled through the lines of cheering New Zealand troops. He looked but a youngster, but he sat his horse well, and anyone who knows how to manage a high-spirited horse goes a long way towards earning the approval of colonial troops.

Rumour succeeded upon rumour that the troops were to be moved to France. "Latrine rumours" was the designation of any reported move unless it appeared in black and white in battalion orders.

At last the orders were published, and soon the whole camp knew that the troops were off to join the British Army in France. There were a thousand-and-one things to attend to. When Wardrop and I met soon after the news came out he expressed the sentiments of all.

"I've been fumigated, inoculated, and medically examined till I've passed every test that the medical corps in its ingenuity could devise." I nodded sympathetically, for the wounds made by the paratyphoid inoculation were very painful.

My platoon was duly equipped, every man had been medically examined and inoculated, and I was beginning to know the men as well as I had known the platoon I had brought away from New Zealand. Then I was separated from them again.

"Bill wants you," said the orderly officer.

"Who, the General?" I asked. "What the hell have I done?"

"Go and see, my boy, and be quick."

I buttoned up my tunic, put on my Sam Browne belt, and in a few minutes was at the General's tent.

"Treadwell, I want you to be my orderly officer. I think you'll like the work. Puttick will tell you what you have to do. Get your traps shifted across at once. Colonel Cunningham has agreed to the transfer."

I hardly knew what had happened as I thanked the General. My batman soon shifted my traps, and a few minutes later the General took me with him on an inspection of part of his command. I rode the General's Arab, while he galloped along on a huge roan mare. The Arab may be a flying steed, but I found the stallion too small for speed, and his action was a jerky one to which it was by no means easy to become accustomed.

That afternoon two brigades had a sham fight

and I found myself working frantically on the Arab with messages to the different battalion commanders.

The position of orderly officer is not one authorized by Army Regulations, but all the Generals had their junior staff officers, and I wrapped round my left arm the blue band denoting a brigade staff appointment. Life was easier then and the colic abated somewhat.

Then came the final orders for embarking at Alexandria.

"You take charge of all the details on brigade headquarters and proceed with them and our chargers by the steamer *Haverford*," said the General one morning to me. "I'm taking the rest of the staff officers with me on the *Ascania*. When you reach Marseilles, proceed at once to brigade headquarters and wait for me."

CHAPTER IV.

FRANCE AND THE FRONT LINE

I SOON gathered my small command together, and at last the day came for leaving Egypt, if not for ever, at any rate "for the duration." The day was a bad one for me. I awoke with my throat burning and my head aching. I must have looked a picture of misery, for the staff captain noticed me and ordered me to hospital. I sneaked away to my tent. There I lay in agony. The colic had returned furiously. Swallowing five aspirins, I cleared the headache away and then carefully avoiding the staff captain and with the help of my batman I walked slowly to the siding along which lay the troop-train. Into a compartment I crawled. The sergeant-major soon assured me that the unit was entrained and at last we moved off for Alexandria.

"Try and be sick," advised Dr. Good, who shared the compartment. Raising myself till my head was out of the window, then thrusting my fingers down my throat, I soon brought about the desired result.

For the rest of the night the train slowly laboured along to the seaport. It was just breaking dawn as the train drew up at the wharf, alongside of which was the dark form of a huge ship.

Struggling out, I dug up the ship's officer on duty, and probably because I looked half-dead he arranged to take the unit on board then and there.

Embarkation was nearly complete when I heard the familiar roar: "Treadwell! Where's Treadwell? Oh, there you are. Well, go to bed and don't you get up. I'll send the doctor to you." I protested the embarkation was not complete. Another roar from the General sent me scrambling on board and I was soon in bed. It was an agonizing time, but the doctor quickly relieved me. When I woke later the ship was leaving the harbour, bound for France.

The *Haverford* was a large tramp ship, carrying a very mixed cargo of humans and horses. At that time it was known there were some enemy submarines in the Mediterranean, so the ship's orders were that, day and night, all were to wear lifebelts. I was probably the only man on board who did not do so. For some days I lay in bed suffering all the pains that an overdose of hot sun and the sands of the desert could impose upon the human body. Although the effects of the sun wore off in two or three days, it was not so easy to subdue the inflammation due to the sand.

About the fourth day out my harassed sergeant, who, perforce, was in charge of the headquarters unit, came to the cabin worn out and worried.

"How much longer is this ship going to take to reach France, sir?" he asked, scratching his head in distress.

"Why, what's the worry, sergeant?" I asked. "Are all the men seasick?"

"Damn the men, sir!" he said. "Sorry, sir. It's the horses I'm worried about. The man who supplied the feed, sir, ought to be court-martialled.

There's no more barley for the horses and mighty little other feed. If I had not insisted on loading some bales of hay we would have no horses to land."

"Whew! That's bad business, sergeant," I agreed. "You'll have to put a guard over your hay or it will be taken by some of the other men."

"I thought of that. There's a man sitting or sleeping on every bale, day and night."

The sergeant had been a saddler in a small inland town and had never had much responsibility in his "civilian" days. The anxieties of commanding a unit of men in addition to the care of his horses was getting him thoroughly worried.

"It's only a Divisional Ammunition Column boat, so I suppose we ought to have expected this," he went on, growling.

"Don't worry, sergeant; I'll get up to-day and help you."

"Don't you move, sir; I'll be all right. It's not so bad that it might not be worse," and the sergeant withdrew after his ambiguous comment.

I crawled out of my bunk and, wrapping my greatcoat over my pyjamas, went on deck, to find that the ship was passing Malta. The ship herself was black. Not a glimmer of light was to be seen, but Malta, in the distance, was a blaze of lights shimmering in the night. Next morning saw the big ship slip past the island of Pantellaria and Cape Bon.

The weather, which had been calm, changed and a high wind soon produced a rough sea. As a result

the *Ascania* slipped back and as it passed behind spoke to the *Haverford.*

"A cheery message for you," said "Sparks," as he dropped in to see me in my cabin. "Your General sent his love and tells you to do as the doctor orders, and, if you don't, you will have to go to hospital."

"Tell him that I am going on well and that when we arrive at Marseilles I'll get his unit away all right."

On the night of the seventh day out I had shaken off the worst of my trouble and saw the first glimpse of the country over which we had came so far to fight. Along the coast towards the harbour of Marseilles towered old-time fortresses. Then darkness descended as the ship slowly made her way up the coast towards the harbour. As the sun went down, a thousand searchlights began playing about, combing every square yard of the sea. The strong glare lit up the ship till she was literally bathed in light. It was impossible to see ahead, on account of the lights, and the way the captain navigated his ship into those blinding beams was uncanny. At last the lights of the city were seen, and just beyond the inner harbour the anchors were dropped and the *Haverford* waited for the next day's orders.

Early on the following morning the ship moved up and at once the disembarkation began. I saw that the men were collected and the horses taken off. A genial railway transport officer met me at the wharf and took me to the train, which was then waiting for its load.

"This looks like a quick departure," I said, pointing to the train made up at a siding.

"Perhaps; but, on the other hand, perhaps not. You'll receive your orders later, and then you'll have to get away quickly."

"Then, if you've got a road that is not cobbled or a bit of soft ground handy I'll take the horses there till we have to leave. It will do them good to have a little quiet exercise; we have been a week on shipboard."

The R.T.O. found an open yard near the railway-station, and there I took my unit. Then, leaving a few men in charge of the horses, I let the other men loose for an hour so that they could see the city.

Down the main streets I strolled. After months of the arid deserts of Egypt the sight of green trees lining the streets and bending in the wind was indeed a welcome change.

Again, as in Cairo, I was accosted by the street women. Some had charm, but many looked jaded and unclean. The New Zealand troops were unknown to the populace of Marseilles, and the tall spare figures from the Antipodes caused a lot of open comment. Men and women came up to me asking what the letters N.Z.R. on my epaulets meant. It was a new experience for the New-Zealanders to see the Continental indifference to the concealment of public conveniences which were always hidden away in New Zealand. At last, after wandering aimlessly about, I sat, with an artillery officer, under a canopy on the footpath, watching the world go by and sipping *vin blanc*.

At lunch-time orders came to entrain, and in an hour the train moved off, to the hurrahs of a large collection of townspeople who had come to see this new band of their allies.

The train had been lengthened to accommodate several of the units. Four of us secured a small compartment to ourselves, designed to seat six persons. The first part of the journey northwards was through beautiful vales and hills covered with green grass, and intersected with streams of rushing water. There I saw the intensive French cultivation. In pockets of soil on the slopes of the hills the farmer had planted his grape-vines.

As the train lumbered along, with frequent stoppages and many screams from its shrill horn, the peasants watched it with its new troops on board. It always stopped somewhere for meals, so that tea could be procured, and during these stoppages there was ample opportunity to get in touch with the peasants. The French girls at all the larger stations had been advised of the coming of a troop-train, and they came with fruit and cakes for the men.

At night I took my turn sleeping on one of the seats, the rack, or the floor, but, as the stoppages were just as frequent and noisy by night, no one got much sleep. Food consisted of Army rations—bully beef and biscuits. Dr. Good, who was on the train, did what he could for me; but, in the circumstances, nothing much could be done, and that kind of food ration undid all the benefit I had gained on the ship. The pains all returned, and for the three days spent on the train I grinned and bore it.

At last the train stopped at Abbeville. There the animals were detrained, and on we went till the journey's end was reached next day at Hazebruck. Here guides met us and led the troops away. They were used to long marches, but the marches had been made on sand, and, in addition, for the last fortnight there had been very little exercise. However, they moved off and for miles we tramped along the *pavé* roads. To me, who was sick and as weak as a kitten, it seemed that the journey would never end. For ten long miles I struggled on.

At last the village of Roquetoire was reached. The billets were all allotted, and after seeing that the men and horses were housed and fed I walked over to my own billet, where brigade headquarters was to be.

The billet was a magnificent old stone chateau. There was a moat round the chateau, and a stone bridge had taken the place of a drawbridge.

I was mostly concerned with finding my bed, and was soon taken to a large bedroom by the French custodian. He explained to me that the Comte de Reinz was somewhere about Verdun fighting for his beloved country, while his wife and daughter were in Paris.

"Monsieur will occupy the room of Mademoiselle, if you please," said the old servant. I looked round. The bed was a huge one, very high off the ground. It was of the typical French four-poster design, and had a roof from which hung heavy blue and white curtains. Almost opposite the bed were two huge mirrors, each about seven feet in height and five

feet in width. They were in a corner of the room and at right angles to each other. There were no modern conveniences in the chateau, but it was not long before I was sitting in a hip-bath trying to rid myself of the dirt of the train journey and that awful march. Coker, my batman, mixed up a warm milk drink, and, swallowing this as well as some bismuth, I was soon climbing into the bed.

Next day I walked round the lines. The horses had stood the strain well, and the men were settling down with such comforts as they could procure from the villagers.

Two days later a telegram came: the General would arrive in an hour or two. Procuring a motor-car from Divisional headquarters, I drove down to the ancient town of Aire, and then on to Bourgette, a small village near by.

The General arrived with the rest of headquarters staff.

"How are you, Treadwell?" asked Lampen, the Brigade Major; "the old man has been worrying about you."

"Why, who's been gassing about me?" I asked. Putting on as lively an appearance as I could, I told the General the news of his command. Not a word did he ask about my health.

"That's all right, Major; the old man has not said a word. I'll be fit in a day or two."

Next morning at breakfast, at which I did not show up well, the General said, "I've sent for Colonel Begg to overhaul you, Treadwell."

"Oh, I'm all right, sir. In a couple of days I'll be a hundred per cent. again."

The General testily remarked, "Then, there's no harm in the A.D.M.S. giving me a chit that you are all right."

An hour later the Assistant Director of Medical Services arrived, and in a quarter of an hour I was lying on my back on a stretcher on my way to a field ambulance.

"I'll stay here, sir, and do just what the doctor says. I don't want to clear out now, just as we have arrived," I said to the General.

"You do as you are told, Treadwell, and you'll be back soon. Anyway, you have to go, so be quiet."

I cursed my luck, the A.D.M.S., and, when I got to the field ambulance, everything else that crossed my mind. For a week I lay on my back on a stretcher—the sort the wounded are carried upon—within an inch or two of a clay floor. The room was a stone one. It had been swept, but the walls showed the stains of age and damp.

"There's only one way to get out of this, and that is to play up to these damned quacks," I said to Chaytor, the transport officer, when he visited me one day.

"This is a queer trick for fate to play," I thought, as I lay gazing on the filthy walls opposite my stretcher. "What a waste it would be to come all this way and then be sent back! But I must not allow this depression to seize me or I'll never get fit. The Christian Scientists say we are masters of our bodily ailments: we'll try out their ideas."

"If you buck up you'll soon be out," said Chaytor encouragingly.

Day after day I simply determined that I was getting better and better. Apart from my own determination to get well quickly, I took everything the doctors gave me, for, if doubting the efficacy of my own efforts, I gladly accepted medical reinforcements. In a week or two I was allowed to return to brigade headquarters.

"Lost a bit of weight," commented the Brigade Major sympathetically. I agreed.

"Where's the General?" I asked.

"He's gone across to 'Blighty' for a few days. Your own Colonel is temporarily in his place."

In the next few days I picked up strength and was able to do my job when the General returned.

"There's a move in the air, Treadwell. Puttick's under the weather, so you'll have to do his job, my boy," said Major Lampen. "Cast your eye over this map. Here we are at present, Roquetoire. To-morrow, with Monsieur Daraux and your batman, you are to take this route." Here Lampen ran his pencil along the map till it stopped at Doulieu, near Armentières. "When you get there, see the Mayor and find accommodation for every man and beast of the brigade."

Next morning we set out. I had already secured the parade state of the four battalions and brigade headquarters. Daraux was a middle-aged Frenchman, one of the interpreters lent to the foreign troops. He was a short, bandy-legged little man with a fierce beard and still fiercer moustaches. His

hatred for the Boche was wholehearted. He was most obliging and helpful, and protected the New-Zealanders from any unfair advantage his countrymen tried to take.

Arriving at Doulieu, I called on the Mayor. Monsieur le Maire was affability itself. He had a list of every house, barn, and stable fit for the accommodation of man and beast. This was the first time he had been asked to accommodate colonial troops, and he wanted to know what kind of people they were. Perhaps he thought they were like his own country's black troops.

In about two hours the village had been carefully looked over and areas were set aside for the different brigade units.

Almost opposite the Mairie, or Town Hall, was the husk of the local church. The interior had been burnt out. Only the tall bare walls remained.

"How did that happen, Monsieur?" I asked, in all innocence.

"Salle Boche, Monsieur." The Boche had, he explained, deliberately set it on fire as he passed through in the early days of the war, after billeting his horses in the church overnight. Hate blazed in the little Mayor's eyes as he stood with me at the entrance to the church.

"Some day they shall pay for all this, Monsieur."

"What swine, Monsieur Daraux, to go out of their way to do such a thing!" I commented.

"This is but one of many similar acts. You will understand why we hate the Boche as we do."

This was the first act of savagery I saw. Later,

many were seen, but the horror of that desecration was a lasting one. The effect of it on the New Zealand troops as they billeted at Doulieu was marked. This was not "according to Hoyle," and it was one of the acts that hardened the hearts of the troops towards the Hun.

I stayed with Monsieur Daraux overnight and returned to Roquetoire next day. The billeting met with the approbation of the Brigade Major, who, after examining the allocation and comparing it with his own information, decided it was not necessary for him personally to check it on the ground.

After spending a few days at Roquetoire, during which time I rode with the General from unit to unit so that the latter could examine the training, orders were issued for the move eastwards of the Division.

The brigade left its billets on the 14th May, and Lampen and I rode ahead to see that there should be no hitch for the troops, who had between twenty-five and thirty miles of marching to do that day.

As the day wore on, the bursting of the shells over Armentières became plainer and more ominous. On the whole, however, the front was quiet.

The sun was down and the dusk gathering in as the chits came to hand announcing that each of the brigade units had arrived and were settling down in their new homes.

Next morning we were early astir, the horses were brought, and after breakfast the General took his Brigade Major round the units so that I could show them both the disposition of his

command "on the ground." We were only about five miles from the front line, so it was too close for the troops to do any training in the open, especially as now and then a German aeroplane could be seen flying at an enormous height above the lines.

After a few days resting and checking up their equipment, orders were received to distribute the full ration of ammunition for the men, including hand-grenades.

Next day, as the light was failing, the brigade took over a sector of the front-line trenches. The extreme left of the sector was taken over by my own battalion. Its left flank rested on the River Lys, and the route to the trenches lay from Armentières, through a village named Houplines, and then down long saps or communication trenches. In front of the battalion sector was the remnant of a village then in the hands of the enemy.

Brigade headquarters was a comfortable billet indeed. Situated in the main street, it had been headquarters of brigades for many months, and the needs and ingenuity of its occupiers had made it very habitable. All the brigade staff officers, their batmen, and their cook lived in the same house, which was a large brick one with the usual conveniences common to the place—exclusive of a bath.

Within a hundred yards of brigade headquarters was the typical town square, but it was larger than the usual square. Part of it was beautified by tall trees, and on the northern side was the local cathedral, Notre Dame. From the square a street called Rue Sadi Carnot ended at another but smaller

square which had earned the soubriquet of Half Past Eleven Square. The Town Hall looked down Rue Sadi Carnot. In its tower was a large clock, which during the early days of the war had been struck by a shell, causing it to cease work at 11.30; hence the name given by the foreign troops to the square.

Many of the citizens still remained at Armentières when the New Zealand troops entered within its walls. For some months it had, apparently, been the policy of the troops in the line just in front of the town to make the war as little troublesome as possible. It was essentially a "quiet sector." The citizens had seen little danger in remaining in their homes and caring for their goods and chattels. Many of the shops and restaurants plied their trade vigorously and profitably.

As Monsieur Daraux and I were walking along the main street late in the afternoon, I invited him to dine with me that night. "We'll find the best restaurant and have the best French dinner we can get, for to-day is my birthday."

"Bon, Monsieur, just a little souvenir," and entering a bookshop he soon emerged with a volume of *Choix des Fables de la Fontaine*. "Many an hour of amusement you will find in these pages, Monsieur."

Finding a good restaurant was not so easy, but at last in Half Past Eleven Square, at "Au Boeuf," we sat down and celebrated the occasion.

"The difficulty here, of course, is, if I say '*Vin blanc s'il vous plait*' I get some stuff only just palatable," I said, as I ordered the meal. A few

words from the interpreter remedied this, and some good vintage wine was soon forthcoming.

As we sat by the window contentedly sipping our *cointreau* and black coffee, and watching the civilians and soldiers passing along the square below, I remarked, "Is it not an unnecessary risk, Monsieur, for these civilians to remain here?"

"They fear pillage, Monsieur, and there has not been enough shell-fire to make them afraid."

"Well, Monsieur, the time is coming. We are taught to keep up the pressure all the time. We have to gain the ascendancy over the Boche. If they fire a dozen rounds of shell, we shall fire twice as many back at them."

"At present, Monsieur, from what I hear, the opposite is the position."

"Well, Monsieur, *nous verrons*. I only hope that those foolish civilians will realize the danger soon enough."

As we looked down, a beautiful young girl with blazing red hair came out on to the pavement, laughing and joking with two of the New Zealand soldiers.

"I did not know you had French 'Titians,' Monsieur."

"Why not, Monsieur? But she is indeed a lovely girl."

Presently the meal was over, and, with one last drink to the future of each other's country, we sauntered back, down Rue Sadi Carnot, across the Square, and to brigade headquarters.

"Would you like to come round the line to-morrow, Treadwell?" said the General.

"Yes, sir. What time do we leave?"

"Four ac emma. Tell the cook to give us a snack, and arrange for the horses. We can ride to the other side of Houplines and then walk back along the line. Better have a look at the map and mark the battalion headquarters. Send a runner with a message to the battalion commanders to expect me."

At that time it was not known if the messages spoken over the military telephones to battalion headquarters could be tapped by the enemy. For that reason messages regarding the movement of troops, or any other information likely to be of use to the enemy, were delivered by hand.

With two runners the General and I set out shortly after four o'clock. At that time there was no movement in the town, and as the four horses trotted down the main road which led to the village of Houplines the noise of their iron shoes ringing on the cobble-stones was so loud that it seemed as if, in the still hours before daybreak, the enemy could hear our small party.

It took only a few minutes to clear the town, and a few minutes later we entered the village of Houplines. We first passed a square which, because there still remained a few lines of heavy barbed wire used by the Germans as a means of defence, was called by the troops "Barbed Wire Square." There, later, I was to pass through some scenes of great excitement and violence. The village of Houplines

was a long, narrow hamlet. There was one main street, at the beginning of which was the spectre of a destroyed church, while at the end was the Town Hall. There were buildings straggling along the road on both sides. The street itself ran parallel to a canal. At the end, the canal reaches a small river known as the Lys, and those buildings had been the temporary property of the enemy. At the end of the road we dismounted, telling the batmen to return at noon.

We then passed a dump, consisting mostly of engineers' requirements—great heaps of steel bars and wire netting, and stacks of empty sacks—all for use in building and repairing trenches. Then into a deep sap we went, and after walking 600 or 700 yards, came upon battalion headquarters, known on the map as Cambridge House. This consisted of three or four rooms, once a cellar of a large dwelling. The roof and sides of the cellar were protected from shell-fire by several layers of sandbags.

Ascertaining there that the runner selected to take us round the sector was ready, we and our guide then set off down the long sap leading to the left flank of the General's command. It was Irish Avenue by name, and it led, seemingly a mile in length, to the front-line trench, No. 89. Dawn was breaking and the troops were standing to. There was a quiet alertness about them as they sat on the fire-steps in the front line. At every bay there would be the demand for the night's password. Whether or not it was a pleasure to them to pull

up a General, the progress was slow on account of incessant halts and examinations. A General in the front line was an unusual sight at that time of the morning.

The front line had been allowed to fall into a bad state. There were gaps all along the route. The guide seemed to call "Down" every ten yards. It was as well, too, that he was obeyed, for it was impossible to escape the hawk-eye of the Hun sniper. Suddenly there was a "zip" as a bullet struck the parapet just above the General's hat.

"What's that, Treadwell? Can he see us?" asked the General, in some concern.

"These trenches need repairing, sir," said the guide.

"They do," muttered the General. At that moment Colonel Cunningham, who commanded the battalion in this part of the line, appeared. He had been told that the General had looked in at his headquarters, so he hurried after him.

"Cunningham, these trenches are no good. I was nearly shot just now," spluttered the General in a tone suggesting that the Colonel himself was responsible for the incident.

"Zip, zip," and two more bullets tore their way through the parapet, again narrowly missing the General.

"We'll just hurry past here, sir," said Colonel Cunningham, not caring or daring to tell the General that the parapet was so imperfect that rifle-bullets had penetrated it.

The General needed no further persuasion, but

all the way along he was ordering his battalion commander to effect repairs at once, and was rapidly calculating how many thousand sandbags would be necessary to erect a wall of sufficient height not only to conceal but to protect the troops.

The front line was in very low country, and although it was nearly midsummer it was damp and unpleasant. The effect of the stream running across No Man's Land was to make it impossible to dig below ground, and so the trenches in that locality consisted solely of sandbags raised from the level. The sector had been such a quiet one before the New-Zealanders took it over that the troops had not taken enough care to keep it in "good tenantable order and repair."

Leaving the Colonel at the edge of his sector, the General and I walked into the next one. On looking in at one company headquarters we were offered a cup of coffee, which we drank sitting in a tiny dugout made entirely of sandbags, except that the roof was protected from the elements by some sheets of corrugated iron, illicitly obtained from the dump.

The General subjected the company commander to a vigorous cross-examination as to his strength and dispositions, till the unfortunate officer did not know if he was on his head or his heels. The General then jumped out of the quarters and suddenly the Hun conducted a local strafe. For a full five minutes the eighteen-pounders shrieked across and searched the support lines, less than fifty yards behind where we were taking cover. The company commander

was terrified, not that any harm should come to himself, but that he should have a General killed or wounded on his hands.

As soon as the storm of shells slackened he hurried both of us, as quickly as he could persuade the General to move, out of his own sector, so that if the General was to be killed it could happen in someone-else's territory! The General did not need much persuasion. It was our first experience in France of shell-fire, and it was lively while it lasted.

We went back through a long sap, calling in to talk to the battalion commander, who gave us a late breakfast. We then spent another hour walking and picking out on the ground places of importance which had been noticed previously only on the maps. The horses duly arrived and we all hurried back to brigade headquarters.

Then the General exploded to his Brigade Major.

"Lampen, the trenches are in a dreadful state. They're no protection at all, man. The first thing the men must do is to build up the front line. See to it, Lampen; and let me see the order before you send it out. And send for the battalion commanders or seconds in command. I can't have this state of affairs. Why, the damn place is positively dangerous, Lampen." He roared and stamped about his room while the Brigade Major assured him the thing would be attended to at once.

It was just as well that the General had had personal experience of the imperfect state of the front line. The engineers' dump was rapidly depleted

of anything useful to make the front parapet fit for its proper purpose.

The New Zealand troops were not prepared to allow the sector to retain its reputation as being a home away from home. Orders were given to the artillery and the infantry that the superiority complex was to be developed. At that time every round of artillery fire sent over to the Germans was met by them with a half-dozen in reply. It was the same with the infantry. The snipers on the other side of No Man's Land had gained a most definite moral superiority. Cleverly secreted in the trunks of trees or in carefully concealed bays in the front or support trenches, they wrought havoc at first among our troops.

The casualties began to mount in twos and threes each day till the troops got as cunning as the Boche. Gradually, by infinite patience and courage, our snipers turned the tables on the enemy. By carefully examining No Man's Land in small parties, one or two nests were discovered and the occupants killed or driven out.

For some weeks the Boche resented the attempts of the new brigades of artillery to register ranges and to gain an ascendancy over their own gunners. Furious retaliation followed any fire on the part of the New Zealand artillery, and if any machine-gunners dared to sweep the trenches opposite the Hun felt that that insult could be met only by a furious bombardment. That state of affairs, however, could not be allowed to last, and both armies

had strenuous duels, the one seeking to gain, and the other to hold, a moral ascendancy.

As a result of this activity the town of Armentières became a dangerous place to live in. The civilians, however, were not easily evicted, and it was only when toll was taken of their ranks that a general evacuation took place.

One morning as Lamb, the brigade signal officer, and I were walking across the town square the sound of a high-speed shell of unusually large dimensions startled us. Experience of shell-fire warned us instantly that it was coming near. There was no time to seek cover. With a rush and a roar the shell buried itself and exploded in the tower of the Church of Notre Dame. Running in the opposite direction, we reached a small restaurant opposite the church and at the far side of the square. Shell after shell came whistling through the air. They were not of the comparatively slow "how." type which gradually ascend and then rush down to their job. These shells were travelling much faster and at a flatter trajectory.

"That's a naval gun, Treadwell," remarked Lamb, "and it's damned good shooting, too." Hardly a shell missed the church. Clouds of dust and bricks went flying into the air as each shell exploded in the building. Some of them missed the tower and went on to burst in buildings just beyond. The bombardment lasted only five minutes, but during that time it was lively enough.

As the shelling ceased we made our way to the church. Great gashes had been torn in its tower,

and on the side exposed to the shell-fire holes large enough to admit a wagon could be seen. In a brick building beyond, which was used as a hospital, a few stray shells had entered, but through the bravery of the orderlies the patients had been safely removed.

"That was hot shooting, Lamb. I expect that's a reprisal for something that has annoyed them." We learnt later that the Germans had brought up a naval gun in retaliation for some long-distance shooting against Lille.

When the civilians who still stayed in Armentières saw the desecration of their church they began to reflect upon their wisdom in remaining at home. Many then began to leave for Paris, or the less fortunate for the concentration camps. Their stay was becoming more dangerous each day as the artilleries fought each other for supremacy. Gradually as the Germans were being subdued they vented their wrath on the town itself, with the result that the civilians began to pay with their lives for their foolhardiness.

A few days later Lamb told me he was going up the line to see the communications. I spent the day with the General, taking over a new job. The battalions all had intelligence officers, and a brigade intelligence officer was needed to co-ordinate all the information the battalion officers collected.

"What you have to do, Treadwell, is to know all the places referred to in these reports. You will have to be able to tell me the net results of the information: movement of troops, reliefs in the line,

new gun-pits, and any concentration of troops which might indicate a raid."

I spent the day poring over the locality maps, which showed all the trenches across No Man's Land, and all the information that had been collected from the observation posts or aerial reconnaissance. I allotted the area in front of the battalion sectors to the battalion intelligence officers as ground for their particular attention. The form for the daily reports was settled, and from it I could quickly learn the wind direction and velocity, and the movement of troops, and new works opposite the brigade area.

As I went to the door of brigade headquarters to see the battalion officers start off to the units, a runner came rushing down the street.

"Mr. Lamb is killed, sir," he exclaimed as he reached me. "The Hun sent a solitary shell of shrapnel into the Rue Sadi Carnot, near Half Past Eleven Square, and it killed Mr. Lamb and a 'civvie,' who were walking down the street."

Brigade headquarters was very depressed that night. Lamb had been one of those quiet, retiring fellows. He never obtruded himself into the conversation. He was usually doing something connected with his job. Often, however, when things were quiet, he and I would saunter out and roam over the town, seeing the sights, such as they were, and between us there had developed a friendship which left me much depressed when the fatal news reached me.

"He was a quiet gentleman, Monsieur," was the

comment of Monsieur Daraux, as he and I were sitting sipping coffee after dinner.

From a small raid the next day a German prisoner was captured, and as he was being taken down the streets of Armentières by an escort of two New Zealand soldiers they were halted by a frenzied woman. She was the widow of the civilian who had been killed the day before alongside Lamb. With a knife held high, she rushed at the prisoner and was only just prevented from stabbing him. Shrieking wildly, "Murderer! Murderer!" the unhappy woman was gently led away. Grief had unhinged her.

At the time I was walking back from some shopping and told the General of the incident.

"This is war, Treadwell, and they allow these civilians to stay here to be killed! If I had my way there would not be a civilian in this town by this time to-morrow. How the devil can we be sure that the place is not full of spies?"

I nodded. "I'm going spy-hunting to-night in Houplines, sir. Look at this report: 'Careful observation indicates rather strange movement of civilians in a house behind the canal, and there is a marked increase of pigeons in the locality,'" I read aloud from a report of a battalion officer. "I'm taking a sergeant and a runner when it is dark and we will see if we can lay our hands on the spy."

The General was interested.

"Well, be careful, and don't run any unnecessary risks," he said.

That night we three bicycled into the village of

Houplines, then, crossing the canal at a lock, we carefully approached the house which was under suspicion. We had not gone far when a hand-grenade was thrown and exploded near us as we crouched in the long grass. Peering into the dark revealed nothing.

"Let's get up to the house and see if there is anything to be seen," I said. We approached the house. It was an abandoned—long abandoned, by its appearance—farmhouse. There was not a sign of life or movement, and after spending an hour or so exploring we three disappointed men returned to our bicycles. The mystery of the hand-grenade was never solved. It might have been thrown by a spy, or even a frightened civilian, or perhaps a New Zealand soldier having a little unauthorized practice. Next day nothing could be seen indicating anything suspicious at all.

Rumours of spies and pigeons carrying messages were countless, but it was never proved that either existed except as pictures in the minds of imaginative observers.

By a single burst of shrapnel the Boche drove from their homes the civilians still remaining in Armentières. It was a lovely bright morning and the shops were all open. In Half Past Eleven Square the soldiers were gazing into the shops or drinking *bock* in the restaurants. One shop was always a centre of attraction, for there worked the beautiful red-haired girl whom I had noticed from the "Au Boeuf" some weeks before.

Then came that single burst of shell-fire. It

scattered the crowd in the street, but on the footpath outside her shop, in the midst of a group of killed and wounded soldiers, lay that beautiful red-haired girl. A piece of shrapnel had penetrated her breast.

"That's what makes war so bloody cruel," said one of the men to a corporal as he carried the poor girl back into the shop from which she had emerged so gaily a moment before.

After this tragedy there was an order giving all civilians a month to evacuate the town, and a general exodus soon started. Some, however, preferred to stay till the last day allowed, and some of them paid for their stupidity.

"Treadwell, I want you to go and see Colonel Stewart and explain to him this spy business behind his lines. If he puts a couple of men to watch early in the evening they might be able to catch the spy, if there is one to catch—and don't forget your steel helmet. I saw you in the street yesterday without it. How do you expect the men to obey orders if you officers don't?"

The General had seen me, as he said, the day before. I had strolled from brigade headquarters about fifty yards to a popular restaurant, known as Lucienne's, after the girl who presided over it. It was when I was returning from afternoon tea that the General had seen me.

I set about getting ready for my trip to Houplines. First I procured a bicycle, and then, after fixing up a number of things that needed immediate attention, I set out for Houplines—again completely forgetting my "tin hat." The "tin hat" was heavy

and clumsy, and it took some weeks' continuous wear to get rid of the pain in the head it gave its wearer. However, having completely forgotten the "tin hat," I rode along enjoying the beauty of the early morning as much as the cobble-stones would allow. After leaving the town the cobbles were not so marked, and I was able to ride at times upon the deserted footpaths.

Having delivered my message, I started on my return journey. As I was leaving the main collection of houses that formed the village, and was riding gaily along a stretch of road which led into Barbed Wire Square, the Hun started to bombard this stretch. He worked a full battery, which ranged all along the road on which I was proceeding. It was then, to my horror, I remembered that I was not wearing my "tin hat." There came a clap of a bursting shell high above, and down rained the shrapnel bullets. In front, on each side, and behind me they descended. I could see them strike the hard cobble-stones and bounce into the air.

In the next few seconds I tried to make up my mind whether to stop and dash to the right or left. But the hail was all about me. In my predicament I just went on pedalling, and miraculously I was not touched. It seemed to me that the whole road had been deluged with lead. Then in a moment it ceased, and, realizing my lucky escape, I sprinted forward. Fifty yards farther on lay four soldiers who had just been killed in the very strafe from which I had emerged scatheless, and they, poor devils, had been wearing their "tin hats."

I sped onwards and did not slacken speed until I handed the bicycle over to the brigade runner to whom it belonged. I did not dare tell the General what had happened, for again I had gone out in the teeth of a strong brigade order.

A few days later, as I was comparing the different intelligence reports, I noticed that some new defences—or, at any rate, breastworks of some sort—were being erected well behind in the right sector of the brigade command. The observation of this bit of news had been obtained by a corporal working under one of the battalion intelligence officers. He gave the locality from which he had made the observation as Eglise Sacré Coeur.

Telling the Brigade Major I was going to have a look for myself, I started off with my batman for Houplines. The ruins of Eglise Sacre Coeur stood just past Barbed Wire Square. The whole of the body of the church had been already levelled by shell-fire. The woodwork had been set alight, and, except for the spire, the church was a heap of bricks. It had lost all its spiritual significance, and it was on that account that the soldiers were using the spire as an O. Pip, or observation post. It was badly knocked about, but mostly externally. The spiral stairway could still be used, though at times as I climbed it I found a gap of two or three steps which had to be got over by clinging to the side of the stairway.

The corporal who had been using this O.P. preceded me up the spire.

"It was pretty hot here yesterday, sir," said he

as we crawled up the tunnel which led to the top. "The Hun suspects this is an O.P., I think, for he amused himself yesterday by shelling it, and all the time I was sitting on the top observing. Every moment I expected a direct hit from a bit of his high explosive. I scrambled down, but only just in time, for the gap we are passing was caused by a direct hit yesterday."

"Bairnsfather must have been thinking of you," I said. "Have you seen his latest cartoon, with the observer gazing out of the top of a chimney and a shell passing through just beneath?"

"The observer in that case was an officer," replied the corporal. I laughed.

At last the top of the spire was reached. At the side facing east, and overlooking the enemy country, a shell had made a hole. A board had been placed across so that it should not be obvious to the vigilant Hun observer, and behind this we sat on a rafter. As the corporal pointed out the well-known spots on the ground, I compared them with the map which I had spread on my knees.

As I was making a cross on the map to indicate the position of the new breastworks that were being erected behind the line a sharp "whiz," followed at once by an explosion, startled us. A shell had landed in the ruins of the church beneath us. Another shrieked past and burst in the roadway behind us. Then two came almost together, one of them striking the base of the spire.

"If that's all, we'll stay, but, if not, we will

adjourn this meeting, corporal. I'd hate to see, from such close quarters, the spire being knocked about."

"Well, sir, if this is to be a repetition of yesterday the sooner we get out the better."

As I hastily folded my map and raised myself up from the rafter a battery of eighteen-pounders concentrated with a furious hate on the spire. Two shells struck the base of the spire, while two burst on the ruins below. Down the spiral stairs we scrambled. It was not possible to descend quickly, on account of the gaps that had to be negotiated and the poor light.

"The Hun seems to know we are here," panted the corporal. Shell after shell burst round our ears as we clambered down. "Whiz-bangs" give no chance of escape. The first thing is the "whiz," and if it is coming straight there is no chance to escape the "bang." It is different with the "how.," for with a little experience a soldier can tell by the note of its flight if the shell is coming near or not.

At last we reached the bottom, then, waiting for a while to get our breath and for a break in the strafe, we sheltered behind a huge mass of bricks. Presently we made a dash for it, and by running as fast as we could were soon out of the zone of shelling.

From that day the church-spire was abandoned as an O.P., and in a few days, in order to place at rest any doubt in their minds as to whether it really was being used for such a purpose, the Boche turned a battery of 5.9's on it again and demolished it completely.

After I had been acting as his orderly officer in Armentières for a month, the General sent for me.

"Treadwell, your Colonel wants you back with him. His adjutant is not suiting him, and he suggests that an exchange be made. Would you like to go back to your battalion?"

The question came as a shock. I thought for a moment.

"Well, sir, you've been jolly good to me, and compared with the life in the trenches this is luxurious, but I hope you don't mind if I say I'd like to get back to my regiment. It does not seem right that I should be enjoying comparative comfort and greater safety than my own regimental officers. I'm grateful to the Colonel for offering me a job senior to most of his other officers."

"Oh, you'll get promoted if you go; I insisted on that," said the General; "and there's an allowance, too, as adjutant."

"It's awfully good of you, sir, and I hope my successor will suit you all right."

CHAPTER V.

TRENCH WARFARE

NEXT day I hied off to Cambridge House, for the 2nd Wellington Regiment was taking its turn in the line. I had already handed over my job to my successor, so the Colonel took me in hand and showed me the ropes.

"I want the orders got out promptly and the whole staff tuned up. There's a lack of co-ordination which I have not time to attend to," remarked the Colonel. I had a look round the battalion headquarters. From the outside all that could be seen was the tumble-down ruin of a brick building. Inside was a very different picture. The entrance was on the side farthest from the enemy and was reached by a deep sap. Part of the sap was concealed by an overhead covering. Both the interior and the exterior walls of the headquarters were strengthened and protected by well-filled sandbags. The cells forming the living-accommodation consisted of a room in which I had a table and my two clerks their typewriter. There was a table in the next room, which was the mess-room, and adjacent to it the cook had re-created a French oven, on which he displayed his skill. The batmen slept in a room just beyond headquarters. The officers were quartered in the cellar, the Colonel and his second

in command sharing one division, and the signal officer and I sleeping on wire-netting stretchers erected one above the other in the office.

In one small corner sat the signalman on duty. The "dash, dot" of the instrument seemed to be working all day and most of the night. There was a field telephone system between company headquarters and Cambridge House, and a land wire back to brigade headquarters.

When the weather was wet the place was damp and muddy, and when it was dry the air in the cellars was fuggy. For lighting we had a kerosene-lamp and candles.

The day after my arrival I went round the line with the Colonel and met the company commanders at their posts. Three of them were pleased to see me and congratulated me on the promotion. The fourth, however, resented the appointment. He had wanted the job himself and openly told me that I had no right to it. I tried to placate him, but I never succeeded in making friends with him. He seized every trivial ground for complaint and for a while made my life miserable. He had had longer service in the field and had done well on Gallipoli, but he was a bully to his men and subordinate officers, and as he had set his mind on being adjutant he did all he could to show his resentment.

"Look here, sir, I wish you would have a word with the O.C. of A Company," I said at last. "He will do nothing I ask him to do. His returns are always behind and he openly defies me. I don't want to cause a row, but either he must comply

with battalion orders or you had better appoint someone whom he will respect."

Colonel Cunningham sent for him, and after a long talk to him the breach was closed. So next day I dined with A Company and, although relations were never cordial, there was no more open friction.

It was now my job to send in reports to brigade headquarters. I examined the battalion officer's intelligence reports and, at about midnight or in the small hours of the morning, I signed a report to brigade headquarters advising them shortly of the situation.

For the eight days in the line there was very little time to sleep. The day began about six o'clock, when my batman brough me a cup of tea. I would then get up, shave, and wash. There would be another report to examine, and any messages to deal with which had come in after I had gone to sleep the night before, and which had not been urgent enough to need my being awakened.

Breakfast was soon despatched, after which the Colonel would hold his orderly room, discuss the plan for the day, and give instructions for the daily orders. Men going on leave had to be inspected, as every man had to look neat and well-groomed. Messages from the companies would then come in requiring attention. The Brigadier would want returns for everything his imaginative brain could think of. The casualty lists had to be revised. Visits up the line took an hour or so. Requisitions for trench requirements from the engineers' dump had to be approved of.

These were the usual happenings on an average day, and somewhere about 11 p.m. I would clamber up to my bunk, which was within eighteen inches of the roof of the cellar, to drop off to sleep, only to be awakened an hour or two later to sign the telegram reporting the situation as it then was. It was a long day, but the work suited me.

One morning as I was going over the messages that had come in overnight I saw the situation report.

"Corporal, what's this? Why wasn't I given it to sign?"

"You signed it, sir," said the corporal, with a grin; "that line across the page is your signature."

"Well, corporal, I'll have to be more careful in the future, for I was unconscious when I made that mark."

"Well, sir, I thought you were, but you sat up and held it in front of you. When I saw you draw your pencil across the telegram and fall back asleep I did not think you knew much about it. I'd have wakened you up if there had been anything unusual in the report."

Among the officers who slept at battalion headquarters was an artillery officer. He was detailed from the batteries co-operating with the battalion, and his job was, in case of artillery fire being called for, to direct it and generally to advise the batteries of what was going on in the line.

"I'd like to have a shot one of these days, Robbie, if you'll let me," I said to Lieutenant Robertson one night as we were standing out on the parapet inhaling the fresh air.

"When are you coming out?" asked Robertson.

"The day after to-morrow," I answered.

"Well, if you'll look me up at the O.P. at the Mairie I'll show you the ground over which I shoot."

Remembering this promise, when my battalion was behind the line I walked over one day to the village square. I went into the well-shelled Town Hall and in a few minutes was sitting with Robertson in the tower of the building. Eagerly I followed his finger as he pointed out the spots in the rear of the enemy line on which his guns had registered their range. As we were sweeping the area with our glasses I gripped his arm.

"Look at that wagon: what about a shot?"

"That, my boy, is an ambulance, and we don't do that sort of thing on this side of No Man's Land."

Looking again, I could see that it was indeed a covered ambulance. It was skirting a wood in the distance, and it was only by watching carefully that the Red Cross could be seen on the side of the wagon.

"Where's the battalion headquarters opposite us?" I asked a moment later. Robertson pointed it out. From that distance it looked like a concrete pill-box. While we were gazing at it Robertson suddenly drew my attention to some movement about fifty yards from the headquarters.

"What is that, Robbie?"

"That's a group of officers making for the battalion headquarters. There's probably a relief being arranged. Would you like a shot at them?"

"I would indeed."

Robertson turned at once to the telephone at his hand and called up his battery. He gave the map reference of the headquarters and told the officer at the battery to be ready to fire about twenty-five yards north of that mark when the bell rang again. I watched the four heads and shoulders steadily advancing along the shallow sap till the leader was about thirty yards from the headquarters. Then I violently rang the bell and almost at the same time the battery officer fired his four guns. It was an eighteen-pounder battery and the shrapnel sped like lightning towards the group of men. Hearing the shells coming, the four men made a dash forward, but before they could reach the door the shrapnel burst above them and, to my joy, I saw one of them throw up his arms, while the others dived for the entrance.

"Good shooting," I shouted; "that will make them more careful in the future." Then, realizing what I had said, I turned to Robbie. "What a lot of savages we are becoming, Robbie." He grunted unimaginatively; it was just an incident in the day's job.

I made my way back to Breuvart Factory, an old mill where two of the companies were camped when the battalion was out of the line. It was at the end of a short road which ran through Barbed Wire Square. Although many troops could at almost any time of the day be seen moving about in this locality, it was a very quiet spot; the enemy paid it no attention at all. At the end of the road was a house in which the battalion headquarters

staff lived. Farther down on the other side of the road was the orderly room.

As I neared my billet I passed, on the opposite side of the road, a small brick house, one of a row, at the gate of which stood Madame Salomé. Her husband was away fighting and she stayed on in her little home in spite of all the danger.

"*Bon jour, Madame,*" I greeted her as I passed by.

"*Bon jour, Monsieur,*" and she asked if there was any news. The newspapers came fairly regularly and the French peasants relied on them for their information, so I stopped to talk to the woman, telling her the latest about Verdun as reported in the papers.

"Would Monsieur like a cup of coffee? The pot is already hot." Entering the little house, a typical home of the French artisan class, I sat on the chair drawn up near the stove, which was a long iron one jutting into the middle of the room.

Madame Salomé soon produced cups of coffee and we sat down to enjoy it. On the wall opposite were two crude enlargements.

"Your parents, Madame?"

"*Oui, Monsieur.*"

"I expect they found this place too dangerous, eh, Madame?"

"*Mais non, Monsieur,*" answered my hostess, "they are dead; the Boche killed them both."

"But, Madame, kill two old people!" I said incredulously.

"*Oui, Monsieur;* it was in this very room.

Monsieur will remember that it was in October that the Boche retired through this town. They were angry that they were not winning as quickly as they expected to do, and they had lost many soldiers already. As they passed through this town some came down this very street, and one huge Boche rushed into this room. He was a great blonde beast of a man and seemed to fill the room. When he entered, my mother was seated knitting, just where you are sitting, Monsieur, while my father was here on this side of the stove, reading the newspaper. The whole thing was over in a moment. He thrust his bayonet through my poor mother, and then through the newspaper my father was reading and into his heart. In a moment I had lost both my father and my mother."

The little woman was overcome at the recollection of the terrible crime.

"I escaped through the other door, and he was in too much of a hurry to trouble about me, Monsieur."

"My God, Madame, if that sort of thing happened in France, no wonder you hate the Boche."

At that time there was always much controversy about the atrocities allegedly perpetrated by the Huns in the early days of the war. This piece of evidence went a long way towards settling the matter in the battalion mess. There was always a feeling that the cause they were fighting was a righteous one, and when cruelties such as this were heard of, and the graphic drawings of Raemakers seen, all

felt that the devil himself was loose and that we were really engaged in a holy war against him.

A few days later I was walking down the Houplines road towards Lock House, in which one of the companies was housed. I wanted to see the company commander about some reinforcements. I was just entering the portion of the village where the houses were built closely together on both sides of the street, when suddenly came the alarming note of an approaching shell. It was a howitzer—a 5.9. The note changed as it approached, and I realized that it was coming very close. I instinctively crouched into a doorway as the shell buried itself in a small brick house on the other side of the road, less than fifty yards away. Waiting in the doorway to see if it was a prelude to a strafe or just a solitary registering shell, I saw that it had descended through the roof of the house, exploded, and emptied the contents of the house out on to the footpath through the torn walls.

As no shell followed, I proceeded on my way. Reaching the pile of debris which had just been deposited on the road, I noticed in the broken bits of furniture some leather-bound books. Feeling curious, I picked up one, and to my utter surprise found it was a translation, made in 1837, of Sir Walter Scott's *The Pirate*. I picked up half a dozen of this edition of the Waverley Novels and took them with me. On returning by the same route an hour later, I found that someone else had taken the balance of the set, and no doubt they are valued

as souvenirs in some New Zealand home, just as I cherish my half-dozen.

Then, after another eight days in the line, the battalion returned to billets in reserve. Battalion headquarters were again at Breuvart Factory. The orderly sergeant reminded me that one of the men was to be court-martialled for being absent without leave. Accordingly a field general court-martial was duly appointed for the trial of this man, and the officers forming the court were duly warned.

The day fixed for the trial was the day after the battalion was to make a local raid in the left sector of the brigade front. The raid was to be made by one of the company commanders and a picked body of volunteers, a hundred in strength, over a short front covering about a hundred yards in breadth. I had volunteered to take part in the raid, but unfortunately the adjutant of the 1st Battalion had just been killed in a similar raid and Colonel Cunningham flatly refused to let me go.

The special raiding party, armed with rifle and bayonet, crept out into No Man's Land at 11.5 p.m. Five minutes before this a small party had gone ahead and cut the barbed wire which the enemy had placed beyond their front line as a defence. Then, as the party lay flat on the ground, the artillery put down a barrage on both the front and support trenches, so as to keep the enemy from rushing up reinforcements. As I watched the terrific hail of shells, the bursting of the high explosive in the trenches, and the shrapnel overhead, I wondered if any of the Boche could survive. The

whole show was brightly illuminated by a thousand Verrey lights, which the Germans fired into the air to enable them to see what was happening.

After about twenty minutes there was a pause in the artillery shelling, and then down came the hail again, this time about a hundred yards farther into German territory. As the barrage lifted, the raiding party dashed forward into the enemy trenches. Prisoners were taken, those who would not come readily were shot, documents and maps were collected, and grenades hurled down the deep dugouts lying off the trenches. Then back came the party, full of booty and with enough prisoners to enable the intelligence corps to identify the enemy occupying the front line opposite. It was a great fight, a desperately hot encounter, and, although there were casualties on our side, many of the Huns had been killed and all the information wanted had been procured.

When the raid was over, the artillery duel continued fitfully for a while, but gradually died down. As the party returned they were welcomed back as heroes by their comrades, and after a hot meal and a good tot of rum they went to their billets to sleep. As soon as the reports were all in, indicating that all ranks who had been in the raid had been accounted for in some way or other, I made my way to my own bunk.

On the next day I prosecuted in one of the strangest courts martial in which I was ever to take a part. The court met in the orderly room in a house near Breuvart Factory. The house was

one of a long row of small brick houses, all of which were intact and had not yet suffered from the devastating effect of shell-fire.

The three officers forming the court sat on a bench behind a long table. The prisoner was marched in. Then the officers were sworn to try the accused justly. After the charges were read to the prisoner and he had pleaded "Not guilty," I opened the case and had just called the first witness, when the Hun decided to retaliate for last night's raid. He selected the row of houses of which the temporary court-house formed one.

At the corner of the street nearest the enemy the first heavy 5.9 shell fell. It smashed into an *estaminet*, and the following shells advanced methodically by about ten-yard leaps along the line of houses. Now and then, instead of keeping his firing in a dead-straight line, the Hun would send some shells into the square. As they approached the court martial I wondered what would happen. After a huge shell had burst in a field at the back of one of the houses, less than fifty yards away, the President adjourned the trial into the cellar below. Down clambered the court, the prosecutor, witnesses, prisoner, and guard, without distinction.

The cellar was a large one, and apparently one of the few in the district, for in a few moments the civilians remaining in the village scurried into the cavern also. There were some broken chairs which could be used by the court if placed against the wall. A very rickety table, about three feet by two feet in size, acted as the court table, and it was

used by everyone who had anything to write. The sole illumination consisted of two candles, which had been hastily procured from the orderly room. The only other light was a faint glimmer of daylight just discernible through a small ventilator.

The prisoner stood before the table with his escort of two men, and the trial was resumed. The civilians—old men and women, some young women, and one or two children—huddled together on the floor and watched the strange proceeding.

The shells burst nearer, and each time they burst the detonation extinguished the candles. Hastily a match was struck and they were relit. The witnesses were called and, haltingly, between the bursts of the shells and the crashing of the houses near by, the trial went on to its conclusion. The prisoner was duly convicted and sentenced to twenty-eight days field punishment.

Then the shelling ceased and we all crept up the stairs. After making sure that the " hate " was over, the civilians scurried like rabbits to their own warrens. While I stood at the doorway, a shell burst at the end of the street and a civilian who had emerged from the *estaminet* dropped like a stone, dead. His carotid arteries had been severed by a piece of high explosive.

" Fancy staying here when you don't have to!" said an ambulance man as he looked to see if he could do anything for the man. " The man who stops here voluntarily is looking for trouble." Next morning there was not a civilian in Houplines.

One day, as I was examining the snipers' reports

with the intelligence officer, I remarked, " Simmonds, you've got the Hun where you want him, apparently. Here's another report, that your men have cleared out two more snipers' posts opposite." Simmonds, himself a wonderful rifle-shot, grinned.

" I've got a great team of enthusiasts. For weeks it was the very devil. The Tommy battalion we relieved had not taken sniping really seriously. The result was that the Hun had been able to organize a very good system. They've got telescopic lens and work on some system of co-operative effort. Do you remember how, at first, if anyone dared to show his head it was shot off?"

" I do; it was damnably worrying."

" Well, in the nights we made holes in parapets, carefully camouflaged them, and as soon as light came our men would sit quietly behind them and watch for any movement. Gradually we got to know where all the sniping-posts were. Then, just as systematically as Herr Hun, we destroyed them one by one. They still have better instruments than we have; you don't seem able to get the lens I've requisitioned for," growled Simmonds.

" I'd like to go round your snipers one morning," I said.

" Right," answered Simmonds; " we'll work a little stunt for your private information."

That night, by arrangement with the artillery officer on duty in the line, a piece of the front-line parapet opposite was blown in by a few rounds of high explosive. After breakfast next day Simmonds and I walked down the long Irish Avenue, then,

turning to the right, made our way to the trench opposite where the enemy front line had been blown in.

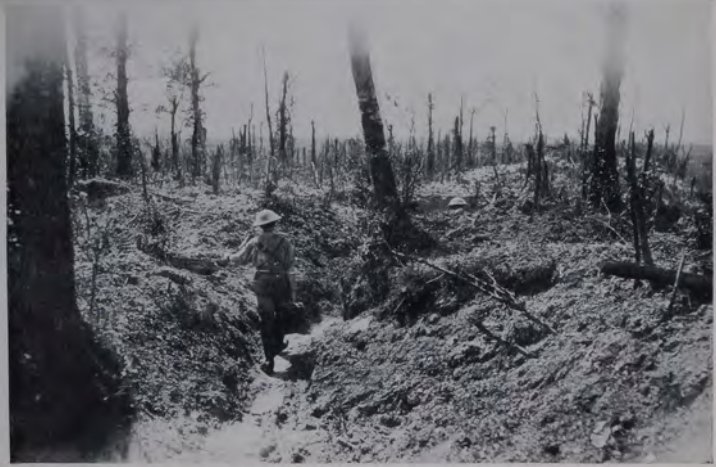
Coming to a sniper on duty who had his rifle placed on a rest while he was peering through the concealed aperture, he said, "We've been having some sport this morning, sir. Last night's shoot was just right; it knocked a hole in the parapet so that the Hun has to go almost on his knees to pass in safety."

"Have a look, Treadwell," said Simmonds. Simmonds carefully elevated a periscope so that he could also watch. I took the sniper's post and, peering through the hole in the parapet, I saw in front of me a stretch of enemy front line about a chain in length, in the middle of which was a gap torn by the strafe.

"Look to the right of the gap," hissed Simmonds. I looked, and at once saw the tops of two steel helmets bobbing up and down as their owners advanced towards the gap.

"Have a shot as they make a dash for it." I took a sight along the barrel of the rifle. Keeping a watch for the appearance of the first Hun and sighting the rifle on the side of the gap farthest from the approaching enemy, I waited. Suddenly I saw a man dash across the gap and disappear into the safety of the covered trench. A moment later the second appeared and I fired.

"Got him," cried Simmonds. I saw number two throw up his hands as he fell forward.



ON THE WAY TO THE LINE

"Good shot, sir," said the sniper, who had been watching through another periscope.

"Not good, but lucky," said I, delighted with my success.

"We've been having some fine sport all the morning," said the sniper. "Already we've bagged four of them, and this makes the fifth."

"He'll throw up some sort of a screen soon," said Simmonds, "so that they can pass without being seen, and to-night they will fill up the hole. But I've got a surprise for them. I've got a couple of machine guns which are going to register on the spot. They'll register with single shots, so as not to alarm them, and then when the working party is out we'll spray them."

That night the enemy went out and started repairing the damage. They were seen by a party sent out to watch for them. As soon as the information was brought back the spraying began, and the yells that arose told of the success of the ruse. However, in spite of intermittent firing through the night, the enemy pluckily stuck to their job and when dawn broke the snipers saw, to their surprise and admiration, that the gap in the wall was closed. Another spot was therefore selected, and the artillery opened up a piece of the parapet for some other snipers to operate upon. Thus went on the duel between the rival snipers. Casualties were suffered on both sides, but at last the pluck of the New-Zealanders prevailed and observing from the front-line trench lost a lot of its terror.

"How much longer are we to endure this

in-and-out sort of existence, old man?" said the medical officer as he and I were standing on the Houplines Road.

"There are rumours of all sorts of moves. The Aussies' stunt just south was a mess, and we may have to relieve them for a change."

"The rumour I heard was that we were bound for some big show on the Somme."

"But we are not fit for any very strenuous show yet; the men have had no real exercise," said I, as I lit a cigarette. "What's that?" I said as a cry went up from a group of men a hundred yards away. We looked in the direction the men were excitedly pointing.

"One of our sausages adrift," said the medical officer, "and the wind blowing towards the Germans."

About half a mile away a great observation balloon, which was known to all as a "sausage," had broken away from its moorings. It was rising rapidly into the air.

"Where are the poor-devil observers?" I asked as I watched the huge balloon shooting up. Then it seemed to slacken in its upward leap and began to drift towards No Man's Land.

"There's one of them," cried the medical officer, pointing with his finger at a small object which dropped from the basket underneath the gas-bag. Then his parachute opened, and in a moment the man beneath it could be seen swinging violently to and fro as he came down.

"There's the other," and down fell a second black

object, which stayed in its violent descent as the great white umbrella opened.

"Rat-tat-tat"; then the "whir" of a machine gun. Both of us started in horror.

"God, they can't be such swine as to fire on those helpless devils!" I cried. Then another machine gun opened fire on the moving targets.

"What damned rotters! They haven't a spark of sportsmanship in them," said the M.O. Down, down, they fell, incredibly slowly it seemed, while the German machine-gunners, to their shame, fired bursts of bullets. Then as they neared the ground they were lost to view.

"I wonder if they are on our side or on the other," I said. We were too far from them to see where they had fallen.

"The poor devils are probably full of lead, so it doesn't matter," muttered the M.O. Later, we learnt that both men had fallen within our lines, unharmed.

Then, as if determined to deprive the enemy of a rich prize, all the "Archies"—for that was the name given to the anti-aircraft guns—opened furiously. There must have been twenty of them barking viciously as they hurled their shrapnel into the air. To our amazement, we heard the enemy "Archies" open fire at the slow-moving target. Soon the air was full of the noise of the guns, and the shells could be seen bursting all round the huge target. For half an hour there was a furious bombardment of the great balloon, and yet not one hit was recorded.

Derision usually accompanied any reference to

the "Archies," but after this dreadful exhibition of inefficiency they were the butt of every joker. The last view of the balloon was as it was lumbering slowly a mile or two across in enemy territory, quite intact. It was not safe for an "Archie" gunner to reveal his unit after that exhibition. Their inability to hit their targets was notorious.

And so from day to day we waged war against the Hun. Every day saw us gaining superiority, which was maintained and improved in all areas. The Hun artillery ammunition became very scarce as the battle of the Somme developed, and our own artillery would pound his front line, his supports, and his rear lines, and hardly a shell would be sent to us in protest. Our snipers dominated theirs, and at night it became rare for our patrols to meet any from the other side of No Man's Land.

One broiling hot day in July I stood outside the headquarters in the sap which led the way up to the line. In my hand was a much-repaired copy of *Stars of the Desert*, by the Indian poetess Lawrence Hope. It had been left by some previous residents. We were a mile behind the front line, and the birds were actually singing in the sunlight.

"I'm going to lie in the sun for an hour, sergeant," I called back into the cavernous headquarters. A moment later I was over the sap and, finding the remnants of an old tree, shedding just enough shade for me, I sat under it. The grass was long and green. A smashed pear-tree and some apple-trees, together with a few gooseberry-bushes, were evidence that once this had been a fruit-garden.

I opened *Stars of the Desert*, and soon, under its lazy Eastern influence, I forgot the war, the battalion orders, the shelling, and the rest. I watched the smoke of my cigarette spiral upwards, and the war got out of focus. There was peace: no sound, no booming of the guns, no deadly rattle of the machine guns. I must have been slipping into a sleep when "whiz"—and plump into a tree twenty yards away an eighteen-pounder shrieked. I sat up, bolt upright, as a second shell smashed into the wreckage of a wagon which had been lifted against a tree-trunk by some huge shell. The birds had gone, and there was the stinking smoke of the explosion in my nostrils. Peace had gone, and in a moment I was making for the sap, which, although only a few yards away, was not reached before the two other guns had emptied their hate on my fruit-garden. Cursing the Hun in the unbridled way of a soldier, I dropped into the sap and was soon back in the cellars preparing some further matter for the orders of the day.

"Do you know, Treadwell, I have never been round the line at stand-to and I'd like to see what goes on," said the medical officer.

Next day before dawn we tramped up the line, giving the password as we passed the posts. The first we reached was a gas post. The man on duty had to sound the alarm by hitting a shell-case if the gas alarm was heard or if he noticed it himself. Down the long sap, Irish Avenue, we went. It was raining slightly and the going was very slippery. As the front line was reached the stand-to had just

begun. Men were coming sleepy-eyed, cursing and grumbling and trailing their guns behind them. It was beginning to break dawn, and was cold and miserable. As we scrambled along the front-line bays we could see the faces of those bored heroes as they sat on the fire-step ready for any unexpected adventure from the other side. In the corner of every bay stood an observer peering into the gloom. We stood on the step alongside one and peered over. It was safe enough then to do so, as there was no machine gun trimming the top with bullets.

Looking up and down into the gloom, one could see little at first; then up would go a solitary Verrey light, and for yards around the area would be illumined. As the light slowly descended it lit up No Man's Land. In the distance could be seen the barbed wire, while here and there were the dark patches signifying shell-holes. It was a gloomy, damp scene.

On calling in at company headquarters after the stand-down had been ordered, we sat round a coke brazier and drank a mug of tea. Life had begun in the line as we went on our way. Rifles were being cleaned, boots were being scraped and oiled; here and there a man would be shaving in a cup of water.

"I say, Treadwell," said Captain Scott to me one morning, "I don't know what to do with Private Blank, who has just done forty-eight days field punishment for A.W.L. He came up yesterday from battalion headquarters and was as scared as he could be. He cleared out in an hour, and was brought back

with the rations. I saw him coming back with Sergeant Smythe. Smythe said to him, 'You ——, if you move one —— inch from here I'll blow your —— brains out,' and he jammed against his neck a Hun revolver which he carried. The sergeant had not gone five minutes before Blank was gone, and he is now in Armentières with the Red Caps. He's white-livered, and a damn bad example to the others."

"I know that fellow," interjected the medical officer; "he can't help it. It simply isn't in him. If he knew he'd be shot it would make no difference; he can't control his nerves."

"We'll have a talk to him, Scott, when he is returned," I replied. "Bad as his example might be, it looks more like a medical case than anything else."

When Blank came up from the town police I had him sent to me. He was an undersized, poor specimen, and was nervous and miserable.

"I can't stand it, sir," he told me, and it was clear he could not. "If I was to be shot for it, I could not stay in the line through the night. Every moment I can see a German coming over the top at me, or I expect a shell to land right upon me. I know I'm a coward, sir, but my nerves simply get me at night-time. I thought I could do it, sir. I volunteered early in the outfit, but since the raid, when the shells seemed to burst all round me, I can't face it. I'd rather die then go through a night in the line again, sir." Blank stood shivering and his face was twitching.

"Go and see the M.O., Blank," I said.

The M.O. gave Blank a careful overhaul, and the next I heard of him was that he was going back to New Zealand unfit for service. Blank was completely unnerved by the constant shelling, poor devil.

In front of the Hun wire was an outpost which we had taken over from the enemy. Curiously enough, he left us there and it was a useful listening-post.

"I'm going to try a telephone out to the listening-post to-night, sir," said Corporal Dibble. "I think it is sufficiently far from the Hun to enable the post to talk loud enough to use a field telephone." Dibble was a remarkable man. Shell-fire seemed not to worry him at all, and in a raid or in normal trench warfare he would imperturbably repair any broken line. His coolness under fire was inspiring.

"I'd like to come with you," I said. "I've never been beyond our own wire."

That night, about midnight, we crept out through a hole in the front line, and, crawling over a ditch, we were soon fleeing into the gloom for the gap which we knew was in our wire. "Down, sir," hissed Dibble as three or four lights sprang out of the enemy front line and, mounting up, hovered brightly over the middle of No Man's Land. I dropped flat and, looking up, saw that Dibble had found the gap in the wire. Behind him I scrambled through the gap and out into No Man's Land. It was wretched going. There were dozens of shell-holes, into which we tumbled every moment or two to hide from the bright lights of the rockets. At last, with a hissed

password to the lookout in the listening-post, we both crawled in. It was grim business for those two lookout men. They were without any head-covering save their own steel helmets. Any moment a shell might find them out; any moment a nervous machine-gunner might sweep No Man's Land. Even when it was quiet it was eerie. It was a job for a hero.

As I sat in the hole while Dibble fixed up the telephone and got in touch with company head-quarters, it was strange to see, for miles north and south, intermittent Verrey lights springing nervously and brilliantly into the black night. One could tell by the lights the position of the enemy's front line. Now and then, but seldom in comparison with the number sent up by the enemy, a light would spring up from our side. Sometimes the lights would reveal a party working on some wire or scouting, then "whir" would go the deadly machine guns.

In half an hour we wormed our way back, feeling the telephone-wire as we returned, then through the tunnel in the front line.

"Christ, sir, I thought you was a Hun," gasped the sentry in the front line as we stood up. "I was nearly sticking it into you."

"Thanks, sentry, for sparing us," I said.

We then tramped back into the gloom. Dibble was pleased that the telephone worked well.

"A tot of rum will make you sleep, corporal," I said as I poured out two rations. In a moment or two we had our boots off and were soon fast asleep on our bunks.

For over two months we were in and out of the left sector in front of Houplines. In the line my daily work began about half past six and ceased between eleven o'clock and midnight. During the sleeping-hours I was always wakened once. Some time in the small hours of the morning the weather and situation reports came in from the company headquarters. These were received by the signaller on duty at battalion headquarters. He consolidated the four reports into one and then got my approval for the message to go on to brigade headquarters. He would wake me up, and automatically I would listen to the message and sign it. Sleep could be taken very sparsely if one had to accommodate oneself to long hours. It is largely a matter of habit how many hours one spends in sleep.

The work in the line included battalion orders daily, noting casualties, changes and promotions, attending to the demands of insistent company commanders, arranging leave for all ranks, sending quotas to schools of instruction, and a thousand-and-one other details which made the job of adjutant far too much involved in paper. This was the result of turning a war of movement into a stationary one. The latter gave the staff plenty of time to call for returns of every imaginable description. Bairns-father could joke in his inimitable way about returns of plum and apple jam consumed, but it was no joke at times trying to comply with the requisitions issued from away back in safety. The nearer the front line the troops were, there you found greater reason and

understanding. It was the corps quartermasters who seemed to misunderstand so much.

As I sat down in the signal office one morning I noticed that one of the signallers was amusing himself by taking down a message from a wireless receiving-set that was installed in the room. He handed a jumble of letters to his companion and together they tried to decipher the code.

"What are you doing?" I asked the sapper.

"It's the war news the French send out from the Eiffel Tower every morning, sir, but it is all French, so it is not much use to us."

"Let me have a look at it and I'll see if I can give you the latest from Verdun."

From that day as the messages were received I translated them and circulated the news to the companies. We used to type out the news, and the companies would pin up the sheets on their notice-boards.

And so the war went on, letters from New Zealand and going on leave helping to brighten the daily life. It was not a bad sort of war: there was cover, not many casualties, for the Hun soon showed a preference for the quiet life, and we did pretty well as we liked in No Man's Land.

Only we, the real aristocrats of the army, knew and understood night life in the front line—save, of course, the observation officers sent up by the artillery covering the sector. The artillery might be on the right of the line on the parade-ground, yet we of the infantry supplanted all other arms

in the responsibilities of meeting and defeating the enemy.

Only the infantry spent the long nights looking across the way at the enemy; only we could hear him talking and shouting in his front line. We, too, always received first attention from him.

Night life in the trenches was a unique experience. It had no precedent and no counterpart. Passing along the front line from bay to bay, to be held up by sentries gruffly demanding a password, was part of the life. Then, standing on the fire-step when all was quiet and looking over towards the Boche, one gazed across the way which the world called No Man's Land. Ares, the great God of War, stalked up and down that way. He and Death stalked it nightly. You could see him pass as you peered into the black night. It must not be thought, sinister though he was, that he liked the impenetrable black of the night as he swung up and down the way. He and Death would chuckle as with sudden lights some poor working party was revealed and the body-ripping machine guns spat out their messages. No mortal might tread the path with impunity—only War and Death.

Gazing across the way, one moment there would be pitch darkness, and then, as if Ares himself had ordered them from the depths below, great streaks of light would leap into the air, reach their allotted heights, and then glare down brilliantly and balefully upon No Man's Land. Ares usually called up only white lights, and they almost all came from the eastern side of the way. So long as the white lights

revealed nothing, the usual calm would continue; but if the gleam of bayonets or a body of raiders could be seen, up into the air Ares would call red lights. Then would the guns speak, taking the locality beneath the red lights as that to be shelled.

Thus nightly, without intermission, would those lights, brilliant and searching, spring up from the front line across the way, exploring nervously. As long as the darkness lasted would Ares search his way with the Verrey lights for something to destroy.

Settling down to stagnant life in the trenches was not good for the soldier. The spirit of aggression was likely to be forgotten. Moreover, the spirit of superiority was essential. For these reasons each battalion had its turn at raiding the enemy trenches. Raiding was a highly scientific job, and it was by no means a rush over and back again.

On one occasion the orders to carry out a raid reached the 2nd Battalion of the Wellington Regiment, and after going into the matter we chose the 16th June, 1916, as the day for that event. I had to prepare the orders after receiving the necessary information from the Colonel. The 1st Battalion of the regiment had recently carried out a raid during which the adjutant, who had been allowed to participate, was killed. Consequently, although I volunteered for a place in this raid, I was forbidden to go.

A party of a hundred men was selected from those who volunteered. They went into a back area and there theoretically attacked the trenches. An aerial photograph had been taken of the spot and

from it a replica of the Hun trenches was erected and, as I have said, attacked. Every man had to know just what his job was.

One felt very much out of it when the party arrived on the night of the raid. One's personal friends were looked up and wished *bon voyage* and a safe return. On this occasion we had the assistance of a box barrage. The gunners shelled, with an intensity we had never before experienced, a line beyond the area to be raided, and during the raid kept on shelling. Before the raid the Germans were sent into their dugouts by the heavy bombardment. The party hopped off at eleven o'clock, met the enemy in their trenches, shot a number of them, and took one or two prisoners and a quantity of maps, orders, and other material likely to help Army Intelligence people.

Watching the raid from the subsidiary line of trenches, it was an awesome spectacle to see the first bombardment and then the sheet of fire starting up all around the raided sector. Of course, we suffered a good many casualties, and a few of our officers were killed. There was no sleep that night for any of us, and one did what was possible to accelerate the departure of the wounded through the clearing-station. Two officers had to wait two hours for an ambulance to come to the first-aid post in the village; the ambulance-drivers were apparently not game to face a dash through the village.

That night, after the raid, I went all round our trenches. The enemy fire had made a mess of them. Great gaps were showing in the front wall, and the

back area was generally knocked about. Cookhouses were destroyed and communication trenches blocked. Apparently we smashed up the Hun trenches and wire badly, for working parties were hard at the task of repairing them next night. We switched the guns on to them, and from their yells knew that we must have caught some of them.

For three months we lived with the knowledge that at any time a shell might put an end to our individual troubles. Every night we went to sleep to the music of the bursting shells. Sometimes the music was almost soft, the shells bursting up on the hills of Messines or down on the flats at Fleurbaix. More often there was a bombardment on our front or on that our our neighbour. Then, there was the knowledge that the wind nearly always blew from the Hun to us—and he was fond of gas attacks. Again, there was always the risk of a raid, and sometimes the reality of one. To this we opposed a spirit of aggression. The morale was splendid, but nerves got a bit jagged from time to time.

The men, too, were not getting enough exercise. Added to the lack of exercise, it was hard to keep one's feet dry. The mud of Flanders was very real, and physical inaction and wet feet took their toll in trench-feet. We all got it more or less. The feet turned a combination of red and blue, first on the soles and then up towards the ankles. The trouble increased, and our unit chiropodist had his hands full. It was very hard to keep the feet properly attended to. The men got slack, and although I issued certain orders, disobedience of which was

a serious matter, the trouble did not ease up until I started to put the threats of punishment into force. The orders were that every man had to rub his feet with whale-oil twice a day. So long as the circulation was stimulated the oil seemed to keep out the effect of the dampness. Physically, the men got rather soft. While we did our best to give them exercises during their turn out of the trenches, it was not satisfactory, for the trenches and No Man's Land needed a lot of attention, and working parties were always drawn from the soldiers out of the line.

During most of the time we were in the line between the months of May and the end of August, 1916, my Colonel was a fellow-lawyer, and he was very efficient. Remembering that Napoleon had said that an army marched on its stomach, he applied the principle to the men in the trenches. The transport had to do everything to ease the lot of the men in the line. The men appreciated this, and "Bill" Cunningham, as the "diggers" familiarly called him behind his back, was respected as understanding the needs of his men. Sometimes, perhaps, he forgot that his officers were men too; but, may be, that did not matter. An officer ought to be able to do two men's jobs, and some of them did.

At last orders came along that we were going out for a rest. How we cheered the good news! Going out for a "rest" was the rather grim joke of an austere Army Commander. The translation was, of course, that we were to get out of the trenches and become fit for some bigger show. There was a stupid mistake made over the transport on this

occasion. The orders I received were that the men were to proceed by road to Steenwerck, and then by train and marching we were to reach one of the most attractive villages we ever stopped at.

The march out of Armentières will not easily be forgotten or forgiven. Although the other battalion of the regiment marched light, we had to carry on our poor weak backs our full packs. Care was taken at once to have an ambulance march behind, and the number of stragglers was high. It was not their fault—at least, it was not the fault of ninety-five per cent of them. Their legs were weak, their feet were sore, and their boots were misshapen and worn. That march was one of the most painful events we endured. Steps of a violent nature, bordering on the insubordinate, were taken by the Colonel to prevent a repetition of such a blunder. The battalion moved over again and entrained. At last Pont Rémy was reached at about two o'clock in the morning. We then marched about seven kilometres to Airaines, where we were to rest.

Airaines is a place of tender memories. There, for the first time in France, we really rested. We nursed the men. The officers used their private purses to increase the supply of vegetables. Entertainments were devised. Pleasure was sought to drive out of our system the insidious effect of exhaustion that three months' intensive trench warfare had created. We all soon responded, though for the first two weeks nothing was done, except taking care of sore feet and fitting out with boots and clothing.

When I had time I found Airaines a most

attractive township. It was situated in the Pas de Somme. It was in the midst of most fertile fields. The villagers seemed brighter and of a better type than those on the border of Belgium. The houses were untouched by shell-fire.

We of the headquarters staff were very happily billeted, though two of us did not realize it at first. Two houses accommodated us. The Colonel, I (his adjutant), and my dear friend the medical officer had the pleasure of staying *chez* Madame Tetelin, while the other three officers rested *chez* Monsieur Jumez. Monsieur Tetelin was away at the war, but he left behind him a funny old captain of the retired class—whom we all called "the Count"—to stay with his wife. Madame Jumez had her husband at home. I remember him well. He was a tall, loose-limbed man between fifty and sixty years of age, with a very deep voice.

Now, the French, we found, were very keen on one commodity, and that commodity was money. Both Mesdames seemed well-enough off, and not likely to worry much about the billeting fees they would get on our account. But we were in for a shock. As I was the linguist, I approached Madame Tetelin, a rather good-looking and haughty young woman, in the early thirties. I explained that we all wanted to feed together, and would she be good enough to provide a dining-room and accommodation in which to do our cooking. Madame did not appear to be particularly keen. She explained that she had her two children and her cousin, and so on. She certainly conveyed the impression that she would

prefer not to be so put about. We were a pacific lot, and we hated rows. Madame was a kind woman to put us up, and her husband was away at Verdun. We therefore stole away and made arrangements with Madame Jumez, who had a nice large dining-room. We agreed to pay her extra, and she was to lend us the dining-room and let us have the use of her kitchen. Then Madame Tetelin heard of the arrangements. She had spirit. She had been ignored, she had been insulted! She would have nothing to do with us; we could go and get our beds elsewhere. Madame Jumez had stolen a march on her! Nothing I could say helped a bit; she was implacable. So we all went about our duties and left the lady in a storm of fury.

The only one of us who had missed the row was my friend the doctor, who had been away with his medical unit. He returned alone and entered the house of Madame Tetelin, making full use of her sitting-room. He lighted his pipe, he got out a book, he sank into the easiest chair, and, I fear, he placed his feet on the table. It was into this scene of quiet content that Madame entered, still in a blazing fury. She addressed the doctor in a torrent of furious French. The doctor, who did not understand a word, thanked her nicely and said he had everything he wanted. Then her threats and her fury could not be mistaken, so he removed his feet from the table; he probably also took his pipe from his mouth. He was standing bewildered as I came in, and he told me that she had a funny way of saying she was pleased to see him. I explained the position to him

and he fled for the interpreter. Monsieur Daraux, as good a man as ever fought the Hun, appeared, and I sat back and listened to the finest duel of words. On the one hand, beauty scorned, furious at our going elsewhere, and perhaps furious at the loss of extra fees. On the other hand, a grand little man, full of love of us and furious at the apparent unreasonableness of his countrywoman. He dressed her down eloquently. Had we not come from the very end of the earth to fight for her? Had we not made arrangements so as not to worry her? Where was her patriotism? Where was her shame? She began to melt. She had not understood. He made our peace with her. She turned out to be the most generous, kindly soul possible, and vied with Madame Jumez in doing things for our comfort. We were utterly spoilt with their attentions. The two ladies gave us a farewell dinner the night we left for the Somme: it was a glorious affair—a dozen courses, with all the choicest *hors d'oeuvre*. The wines, too, were of the oldest vintage, to say nothing of the regimental whisky. The dinner finished some time or other and somehow or other. We sought our beds, to be wakened what appeared to be a moment later for the start of our march to the Somme. There were real tears as we left. The villagers had displayed the utmost kindness to the men, and one and all regretted the need to leave one of the happiest places it was our lot to visit.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SOMME

WE started out for the Somme in great spirits. Physically we were all as fit as possible and our dejection had entirely gone. We were an optimists' club. The relations between the officers of the two battalions were right at last. The 2nd Battalion was formed of troops who had arrived at Egypt too late for the Peninsula or had returned from hospital, and the 1st Battalion, nearly all of whose officers had been at the Dardanelles, were inclined to treat us as new-comers. The feeling was resented, and the rivalry between the officers of the two battalions was not in keeping with the best traditions of soldiers. As soon as we reached Airaines the senior officers got together and we all paraded as a regiment, attended church parade together, gave each other mess dinners, and provided wagons to take one another home. The result was completely satisfactory: we were one regiment. The regimental spirit having been established, there was no more pettiness between us, only healthy rivalry.

After leaving Airaines the battalion marched to Cavillon. The last ten minutes of every hour on the march we rested on the side of the road. It took us some time to get used to the fact that in France we had to march on the right side of the road.

Every battalion had its own padre, whether Protestant or not. My battalion was fortunate in its padres just as some others were not so fortunate. We had a Church of England padre for some time, but the padre who was with us longest, and he left us only when a wagon ran over and broke his legs when he was asleep one night, was Chaplain Captain C. Walls, of the Salvation Army. He was enormously popular and deserved to the full his popularity. We had no Roman Catholic padre, so when we reached Cavillon, as it was the duty of the adjutant to arrange church parades, I called on the local *curé* on behalf of the battalion's Roman Catholics. He was a dear old man, whose name eludes me. In the short space of time we were in Cavillon he and I saw a lot of each other. He was a very devout son of his Church. On the morning we left I called on him to wish him farewell. The dear old man blessed me and wished me well. There was only one regret he had with regard to myself—I was a Protestant. I comforted the old chap and assured him that if ever I wanted to change my faith I would come back to Cavillon to get him to do what was necessary.

What a terrible place was the Somme! It had, of course, a special meaning to the New Zealand soldier. To him it comprised in area everything east of Amiens. Mametz Wood was the stopping-place before we moved into the line preparatory to depriving the Hun of Flers. How that place sticks in one's memory! The wood itself was frightfully knocked about. Great trees were split in twain where shells had struck them. Where we stopped

we had as next-door neighbours some South African heavy artillery. When they fired their 12-inch guns the concussion seemed to lift one off one's feet.

The Germans, as I have already mentioned, were fond of digging deep dugouts for their headquarters. In the wood where now we halted there was an exceptionally deep dugout; it must have been three or four stories down. All sorts of weird tales were told of it. One was of a woman, apparently an officer's lady friend, who had been found dead when our troops took the wood in the July advance. The wood was so sinister in appearance, and the dugout so deep and mysterious, that I should have been surprised if there had not been tales about the place.

When I reached Mametz Wood I had no cigarettes, so I took my batman for a walk after locating from my map the situation of the village of Mametz. I walked to the place where the village ought to have been, if the map was correct. I asked a soldier of a labour battalion where Mametz was. "Here, sir; you are standing right on the spot." The map said that it was quite a large village. The truth was, there was not a brick left standing. Not a sign of the village could be seen, except that the ground was covered with red brick-dust.

Going up the line to see where we were to jump off was a curious job. I was riding quietly along the road on a staid old mare called Nell. It was wonderful how staid a horse could be in all that bedlam. I noticed on my left a short railway-line, on which was one of those colossal guns measuring about fifteen inches across the diameter of its maw.

Just as I passed the gun it was fired. My horse seemed to rise straight up in the air, and I went on a few more feet on my own account. I hope that shell wrecked something important when it landed!

The battle-ground was a curious sight. The Colonel and I had a good look at it. To get on to the ground we had to walk over shell-holes of varying sizes. The earth was simply turned inside out. It looked tortured.

As we neared the front line, which we reached by walking overland, Delville Wood was on our right, and farther on to the left lay High Wood, which changed hands so many times in the July affair. Now only a corner belonged to the enemy. With our right on Delville Wood we were to push towards Switch Trench, and then on to Flers. How we did so has been recorded many times, both officially and unofficially. I merely desire to say that I corroborate the statement that we took the place. It was my battalion that had a hand in the taking. How that first day sticks in one's memory! My battalion was added as a fifth battalion of the Rifle Brigade, which was ordered to do the taking. The bombardment which the artillery gave us was entirely satisfactory. It pleased even ourselves. I remember marching along with the third company of the battalion as it advanced to Switch Trench. The enemy shells were raining down, and how we escaped was marvellous. The reason was that the Hun's shrapnel was badly timed and burst too high. Many a time did I hear the rattle of the shrapnel on my steel helmet, but they did no more than jar a little, which shows

clearly enough how high the stuff was bursting. The real blessing was that the ground was soft from the previous bombardment. There was no more deadly shell than that fired from the German 5.9. The high explosive has a terrible effect. Its lateral burst was murderous. However, it required some substantial resistance before it exploded, and it did not get it till it had penetrated some distance into the soft ground; then it spent its deadliness more or less harmlessly.

What a curious effect it is to walk along with your fellow-men under the hail of a barrage from the artillery! It is no boast to say that you are not afraid. The feeling of leadership and responsibility quite overcome any feelings of fear. Then, there is pride: I could not imagine anyone showing the white feather in the height of battle. I have seen it displayed along the quiet uncanny trenches in front of Armentières, but once the battle began the ancient fighting spirit of our primitive forbears came quite to the surface. If one had hair on one's back, it would have been standing straight out!

We halted in a new-made trench about fifty yards in front of Switch Trench. The Colonel selected a huge shell-hole as a desirable residence for himself and his headquarters staff. I can see that hole to-day. We descended into it, and in next to no time had round its crater a platform on which we rested. At the bottom of the crater was a "dud." Whether it was one of our own or theirs I did not notice. All I can vouch for is that it was about a foot in diameter. However, events did not allow us time

for any nice consideration as to its nationality. As I said, I can see that hole to-day. As we gazed ahead of us, there was a shallow basin stretching along the foot of rolling downs. A clump of trees partly concealed a sunken road right in front, while on the right lay Flers. More to our right was a sharp slope, on the reverse side of which our wounded were already stretched out receiving attention. It was there that quite a number of doctors paid the price of their devotion to duty.

After we had consolidated our position the Germans put down a furious barrage, and then, magically it seemed, dots of men rose out of the earth and started to come towards us. They were about eight paces apart, and nothing, it seemed to me, could prevent a hand-to-hand fight. Then our guns came down. They descended like hail on the advancing troops, who disappeared just as mysteriously as they had appeared. The counter-attack died in its birth.

One other incident, as we watched the troops advancing, is well worth recording. Down the sunken road suddenly came a German four-gun "whiz-bang" team. They must have been regular troops. Gallantly they swung off the road. The guns were turned round and, so it seemed to me, they started to fire at us. Of course, by this time all the wires that our heroic signallers had laid were broken to bits, so I wrote a message to the "heavies." I gave them the map reference of the spot where the battery had opened fire. Under the Colonel's direction, I wrote the message in triplicate and sent off three

runners separately. They all delivered the message, and in time there came rumbling over our heads some colossal shells. They were wonderful. In a few minutes it was all over. They struck the exact place, and as the smoke drifted off we saw that men, horses, and guns were blown away as a haystack would go before a cyclone. They were gallant gunners, those Germans, but we were thankful for the "heavies."

The shell-hole as a home was not a success. Shells were bursting far too close to us for comfort, so we looked round for a better hole. We found it and went to it; and only just in time. On our right we discovered a little trench called Ferret Trench. It was about seventy yards away. One of the runners left his haversack behind in the hurry of leaving. He went back, within a quarter of an hour of our leaving, to find the hole gone and in its place a huge crater. Apparently a shell had hit the dud and waked it up.

Ferret Trench was a well-made German trench. We slept there the first night, but it was not healthy, as the Germans had not forgotten it; one shell nearly got the Colonel. Next morning we left it. In any event, we were due at Flers any time. Just after we left Ferret Trench the Germans hit it with high explosive. We had a lucky run on the Somme!

As we came out of Ferret Trench we descended a small incline where the wounded were being treated at a first-aid post. There was a curious sight near by. Into the face of the low cliff the Germans had cut holes just big enough for a man to crouch in to avoid shrapnel. Some half-dozen of them had

been using these holes the day before. They were still there—dead. Apparently one of our "heavies" had burst some high explosive in front of them, and concussion had done the rest. They looked as if they were quietly sitting there, except for their colour, which was unmistakable.

As I was walking along on the first day, I heard, through the awful noise of the bursting of the shells, a man yelling for help. I went a little out of my way to see what it was. There was a German soldier sitting at the bottom of a shell-hole, hands well up, and yelling, "Stretcher, stretcher!" It was, of course, quite impossible for me to oblige him, and as I looked down at him I thought of him as a poor tool of the Kaiser's insatiable ambition.

Our next stopping-place was the village itself, and glad indeed was I to reach it. I found with some difficulty the dugout which was to be our headquarters. The front entrance was covered by the trunk of a shattered tree. My batman and I reached the other entrance, and our entry was hurried and rendered decidedly ungraceful by an approaching shell. It was wonderful how one could foretell if a shell was going to burst near or on one. This one nearly caught us.

The new home was a well-made dugout. There were two or three floors. There were rooms for sleeping in, an office, and plenty of other accommodation. The Germans had left in a great hurry, and my batman secured for me a very fine black blanket, which is now on one of the beds at home in New Zealand. For those who have never lived

in a German dugout it will be difficult to believe that they were in many respects undesirable. As one lay snug and safe at the bottom of those dugouts the sound and the thump of shells above created a curious psychological effect. It unnerved one. The tendency was to want to stay below ground, for the noises above sounded so awe-inspiring. It was much better for one's own moral courage to keep on top and live in the open trenches. The Germans were too fond of building deep and safe dugouts. They sapped initiative and courage.

After we had taken possession, the next morning, accompanied by a faithful runner, I went round the line as then formed. The front line was a couple of hundred yards in advance of the village, if I may still refer to the shambles as "the village." The support line was just in front of the village. As Black, my runner, and I poked our noses out of the trap-door we were saluted by a couple of shells that burst just a few yards beyond us. We made a dash for a sap running to the main road. Here we waited a few minutes and then ran to the south end of the village, where one of the company headquarters was stationed. There I had ten minutes with the company commander. The Germans seemed to be shelling his quarters somewhat persistently, so I bade him good-day and went round the corner, where I found the real reason for the shelling. There rested one of our tanks, which had come to a stop on account of a shell having burst underneath, putting the engine out of order. We stayed for a while talking to an officer who had been inspecting the great iron

monster. This was the first occasion that tanks had been used in the war, and we were very proud to have had a couple as company the day before. They were, in those days, huge monsters, not the natty little whippets which appeared later. They used to lumber ponderously along, laboriously clambering over a hillock, across a ditch, or over a tree. They were a tremendous success. Quite near to where our friend had ended its career there was evidence of a German nest of machine guns. The old tank had quietly lumbered up to the gunners and as quietly pressed the nest flat out. Tales were told of how the machine guns furiously pelted the tank. One can easily imagine the unspeakable horror of the Huns as these iron machines slowly came at them, spitting a shell like an old pompom. Indeed, they mixed that kind of ammunition with the Maxim. I saw a good deal of these tanks during the war. They looked quite irresistible. They were a belated but effective reply to the German method of using many machine guns in co-operation with the infantry. It took two years to invent and place the tank in the field, but when it came it soon debased the value of the machine guns of the enemy.

My runner and I passed the tank and took to a sap and then onwards to the support line. We had a good look round and were beginning to congratulate ourselves that the war was becoming a little less dangerous, when suddenly the Germans put down a barrage right in front of us. This was, no doubt, to stop any reinforcements from coming up. Then " Jerry " lengthened the range of some of the

guns and traversed the support line, to our great discomfort. He certainly had the range of the trench to a nicety. Looking over the trench, I soon saw the reason: they were beginning a local counter-attack. I looked at my revolver, imagining that I should be needing it very soon. They came over in great style, but our front line was ready for them. The Lewis guns ripped out their death-rattles. The men stood up on their parapets and fired as fast as they could. Then they got to grips. It was the first time I had seen the bayonet used, and our men had been well trained. Stab and thrust, yells and hurrahs, shell and rifle shots—what a sight to remember! Those of us in the support line were getting ready to advance. Then some of the Germans got into the trenches, but not for long. Almost at once they began to retire. As they clambered up the trenches to get away they were bayoneted. Soon it was all over, and a remnant only of a plucky raiding party returned to tell the tale. The guns eased up and it was comparatively safe for us to continue our way along the trench till we came to the sunken road that led into the village. We walked down this lane and were quickly home again in the doubtful security of the deep dugout.

Imagine, if you can, how difficult a job it is to feed troops who had advanced over shell-torn country and gone not a yard or two, but several miles. The front line was all new, the ground was heavily shelled all the time, the roads were cut to pieces, and the work of our transport officer, Lieutenant Riddiford, was worthy of the highest praise.

As the dusk settled down to darkness on the first night of our stay at Flers, the Colonel sent me outside to look for the coming of the transport with the food for the men in the line. The night was very dark and a storm was coming up. The clouds were swinging darkly across and the wind was hissing through the limbs of the poor torn trees that still remained standing. The road up which the transport would come, if it could get through, was in front of me as I stood in the doorway of the dugout, and swung away to the right, from where we had come the day before. The trunks of two mighty willows lay a yard or two in front of me, split by the bursting shells. On my left was the sound of the rattling machine guns. They were just over the slope where I had been during the daytime and had seen the German raid. Now and then a shell would come dashing wildly into the village, and, for my peace of mind, too near to where I was standing. The dugout was by the cross-road, and the Germans had the cross-road marked down as a place to shell.

There was little shrapnel while I stood there. It was mostly the fast-flying 18-pounder high explosive. It came so quickly and so angrily that one had little time even to speculate on the comparative safety of one's position. Now and then, with a louder and deeper sigh and more slowly, would come the heavy 5.9, the pride of the German artillery. I think if it had been a British gun it would have had pride of place too. When it hit it rent asunder whatsoever it struck, and left a great gap to mark its arrival. The shelling came frequently, for the

Germans knew that now was the time for reinforcements and transport to come up.

Almost to the expected moment the transport arrived. Wagons laden with food came crashing through the debris, along the remains of the old highway, and led by the imperturbable transport officer. I called the company orderlies, who were waiting under cover, and in a few moments the wagons were unloaded. The Colonel came out and gave his orders to the transport officer, who, with perfect calm, led his command over the broken ground back to the shelter of Green Dump.

A day or two later we advanced, and Headquarters took up its position in a very exposed spot which was called Factory Corner. There was no factory left. The brick walls had fallen inwards, and there was a cellar below, which we found after some difficulty and during a period when the Germans were shelling the corner most vigorously. However, as usual, we dodged trouble. Factory Corner was a poor place to live in.

There was one thing we came across which we had heard of but had not met before. In a corner of the cellar was a bag of black eggs about the size of duck-eggs. Each egg had a match-like attachment. They were the new bombs. We practised with them, and could throw them a long way, but their effect was not very deadly. They never supplanted the stick bomb in favour with the Germans, and neither kind was a patch on our Mills bomb.

For the week or two—or was it a month or two?—that we fought the battle of the Somme the

weather was execrable. We struggled through soft ground saturated with rain, soft mud nearly to the knee, rain in bucketfuls, wet through, and often with an insufficient supply of rum. What a life it was! From the 14th September to the 4th October, the historian will say, we were on the job. But he would not understand. Time was not counted in hours and days; it was counted by incidents, and it seemed to be æons. It was sheer endurance. Sleep was not necessary, for substantially we did without it. Food, luckily, we did not have to do without. Even in the front line after a push, the orderlies brought up hot soup or stew. Imagine, if you can, hot stew to a man who has fought himself to a standstill, who has been straining his eyes looking out for the enemy, who has not had time to notice that he was cold or saturated. The organization for bringing up the food made the endurance of the men possible.

On one night I certainly got some sleep and also a certain amount of crude amusement. In a short line of trench we were occupying, the medical officer and I found a hole level with the bottom of the trench and at right angles to the line of the trench. It was just wide enough for two of us to crawl into and lie down at length. It was raining hard, and the trench was covered with a thick emulsion of mud, about six inches in depth. We could just keep out of the wet. My friend insisted, in spite of my advice to the contrary, in taking his boots off. He said they had not been off for days and he was going to take them off. He did. We got off to fitful sleeping

and as the first sign of dawn came I opened my eyes. The boots had been reposing on their owner's legs when we dropped off to sleep. During the night they fell off, and when I awoke I saw both of them in the trench; only an inch of them was visible, the rest being under water. The wisdom of having taken off his boots was not so apparent to the doctor when he tried to get them on again. It was a sad sight!

I mentioned rum a few moments ago. The Army was made up of all sorts of people, and we had a few prohibitionists. One very cold night on the Somme we were so cold and miserable that we were all shivering, and our feet were sore. Then an issue of rum arrived. I passed the word to the men in the trench to have their pannikins ready. Two of them told me, as I came along with the jar, that they did not drink spirits. I told them they would, on that account, get the greater benefit from it. I made them drink their tot and never had any further objections to their taking it. Rum pulled many of us round some very nasty corners, and if it is necessary for me to make my peace with the prohibitionists let me assure them that their brothers took it medicinally.

The order came at last that we were to be relieved. We crawled out, filthy but elated. We knew that we had done well, and we also knew that we had not had a shave for three weeks. I remember feeling very indignant with an officer who had just joined up and who met us coming out of the Somme. I hailed him, for I had known him well in New Zealand. He

looked at me and turned away. I was indignant; this was surely not a time for cutting one's old friends. I understood later, however, when I managed to reach a looking-glass. I had a beard and had not washed for a long time. I did not recognize myself!

The Colonel, two runners, and I were the last to leave Savoy Trench, our last abode on the Somme. We waited till all the companies had been relieved, and then, dog-tired but proud, hoisted our haversacks on our backs, and on a cold, wet afternoon stumbled along. On the way we looked in at an old battalion headquarters which we had used. It was the short trench where Goldstein and I had slept one night. In the mess-room there was a rum-jar.

"If the fairies would only put something in that jar," said the Colonel, "we would not feel so cold." One of the runners bent down and shook the jar.

"It's half full," he shouted.

After two long tots the world was quite a different spot. The blood ran merrily again and our feet no longer felt as if they were lead. We stepped out of the trench to begin our overland tramp, but had not gone a dozen paces when "whiz, bang," and two shells from an 18-pounder battery screamed just above our heads and burst thirty yards in advance of us. Two seconds later the other two guns of the battery fired on the same target and the two shells burst less than half that distance in front of us. We should probably have been scared badly at our narrow escape if we had not found that rum, but, as it was, we actually laughed. For two

or three weeks we had been wet and cold and miserable, shot at and shelled every hour of each day. We were thoroughly overstrung by then.

No further shells came to worry us, and after heavy tramping for two or three hours through the drizzle we arrived at our resting-place at Fricourt. The battalion occupied tents which kept the rain out, more or less, but the ground was foul and sloppy.

For two days I was busy compiling a complete casualty list, and it was a dreadful list when it was done. We had more casualties during those three weeks than we had all ranks when we first attacked Switch Trench. Fortunately we had been able to maintain our strength.

CHAPTER VII.

BACK TO REST AND ON LEAVE

WE caught a train at a place we called Edgehill, and after hours of travelling in a horse-truck we reached Longpré just before midnight. We knew it was a horse-truck, for there was unmistakable evidence of its having been used by that useful beast quite recently.

At Longpré we were ordered to march to our billets at Erondelle. We were tired, absolutely worn out, and our feet were suffering from the mud and wet, and yet we had to march eight kilometres (about five miles). We started miserably enough, marching alongside a railway-line, and then, to our anger, a train caught us up and went past—empty! I do not remember finishing the journey, but I did so, and Erondelle, a village not far from Abbeville, took care of us. The men dropped on the ground and fell asleep. The officers were just as tired; but the men may remember being wakened up pretty roughly and ordered to take off their puttees, boots, and socks. The feet had to be rubbed with oil. I am sure that insistence upon looking after the feet kept a large number well who otherwise would not have been fit.

After a day or two up went the spirits of the troops, and I signed many a leave pass to Abbeville. We rested four days, then marched to Pont Rémy, caught a train, and emptied out at Bailleul at three o'clock in the morning. We then spent two and a half hours in marching under the stars the eight kilometres to Strazeele. That afternoon we took buses to Armentières, and into the trenches again we went—our old sector. We came out to rest and here we were in the line again! However, it was a quiet place and no one wanted to stir up trouble—at any rate, not for a while. I found my sandbag bed near the roof of Cambridge House just as I had left it.

My battalion, after a decent rest behind the line, took over a sector of the trench, with the village of Fleurbaix as the headquarters of the battalion in reserve. It was a quiet sector, and as Christmas approached we did nothing to spoil the spirit of peace on earth, but I cannot vouch for the good will towards all men.

Christmas Day was not likely to be forgotten in a hurry. The good friends in New Zealand had sent plum-puddings in great abundance, and cookers were overtaxed to prepare a suitable meal for this day. The Divisional General came round the line to wish the men a merry Christmas, and we slipped and slithered on the duckwalks behind him. I succeeded at one particular spot in sprawling headlong into the mud, but had the saving grace to remark, as I wiped the mud off my face, that I did not tread well then, at which feeble joke

everyone roared with delight. I rather suspect it was my miserable appearance that was the cause of most of the hilarity. That night the Roman Catholic padre called and went round his particular cares, and then we settled down to a mild game of poker. I tactlessly held a royal flush to my Colonel's four of a kind and have regretted it ever since. Money is not everything!

A few days later the Germans shelled the village. We were occupying a doctor's house and came in for some pretty close shaves. There was an old woman who had remained behind in the house, and as the shelling became more intense and it seemed sensible to descend to the cellar she came with us and stood over in a corner handling her rosary, crying "*Bon Dieu, preservez nous.*" After a while the shelling ceased, but I shall not easily forget the old woman. There should have been an order evacuating all civilians to beyond, say, ten miles of the front line. Old age was never meant to stand the strain of shell-fire.

While the staff captain was away for a period of instruction, I was taken from my own battalion to replace him on the staff of General Earl Johnston. The General was the antithesis of my former chief, General Braithwaite, for whom I had been orderly officer until I rejoined my battalion as adjutant. While, on the one hand, General Braithwaite was always sharing in every job one had to do, no matter how trivial it was, General Johnston did not think the subordinates on his staff were worth anything

at all unless they did the whole of their job without any interference on his part. When I took him some returns or memoranda, he would sign without looking at the documents. Somehow he would know they were all right. He always saw to it that he had a staff whom he could trust implicitly. His way was singularly effective in keeping one right up to the knocker. As staff captain I was naturally in close touch with General Johnston, and my chief concern with him was to make him understand that if he persisted in showing himself above the trenches he would probably be sniped. He was a real worry to me, for he never had the smallest idea of fear for himself, though he was for ever anxious for the comfort and protection of the men of his command. Six months later he was sniped, while standing on a fire-step in the front line before Messines, and the brigade lost a fine leader.

While I acted as his staff captain I was billeted on an old couple in the village. The village was called Rouge de Bout. In a house farther down the road was a young woman whose name eludes me. She was the local school-teacher and spoke English very well. We used to pass the evenings together, each teaching the other our mother tongue. On some occasions I used to read Guy de Maupassant's short stories to my host and his wife. They would sit by the fire and chuckle at those wonderful tales.

I remember a ridiculous rhyme that the schoolmistress taught me. It ran somewhat like this, and had to be repeated as fast as possible:

"Bon jour, Madame. D'où venez-vous, Madame?"

"De l'église de Notre Dame, Madame."

"Y'a-t-il beaucoup de dames, Madame, dans l'église de Notre Dame, Madame?"

"Mais, oui, Madame, il y a tant de dames dans l'église de Notre Dame, Madame, que l'église est remplie de dames, Madame."

For some reason it was not easy to get leave. One's turn seemed an unendurably long time in coming. Those who returned whetted one's appetite, and the tales of kindness that people of every rank of life were extending promised a most delightful time for the soldier *en permission*. Leave came at last. There is the memory of the train from Hazebruck, the arrival at Boulogne. I waited a day or two there and searched the quaint old town from end to end. The hotel at which I stayed was a large white one near the wharves, opposite to the town itself. We were very welcome, for we had more money than most of the troops.

There was one church, on the top of the hill, that I remember. It was l'église Notre Dame. I liked it better than most of the French churches. The colouring inside was a pale blue; the usual harsh red and dark blue were absent. The cheap crudities in plaster or terra-cotta that represent the saints in most of the churches were absent. Indeed, it seemed a quiet resting-place, as a church should be.

I examined the great gates that opened under the stone wall that surrounds old Boulogne-sur-Mer. There was the Porte des Dunes, which consisted of three entrances through the great wall, and the

most beautiful Porte de Calais. The Porte de Calais spoke of ages gone. It was, like the Porte des Dunes, a three-gate entrance, though one of the entrances was bricked up. The open gateways were about twenty feet high, but above that the plain but beautiful masonry continued for another forty feet. Over the centre entrance were some arms—perhaps the arms of the ancient city—while above them was a piece of statuary. The wall on either side of the main gateway set off at an angle of some forty-five degrees and then sloped back at a right angle. The result, most pleasing to the eye, was that the outer entrances, if one may so describe them, were beneath the junction of the battlement, which it met at a right angle. The whole effect, which was enhanced by tall trees growing alongside, was fine and full of Old-World charm. I walked round the city wall, which was a regular promenade. It disappointed me; I hate looking into the back yards of uninteresting dwellings. Moreover, the view was partly obscured by buildings.

One of my English friends had given me a letter of introduction to a French *avocat*, or barrister, who was practising his profession at Boulogne. He was reputed to have the best practice at the criminal Bar. I called on him. He was very polite, but lacked the usual vivacity of the Frenchmen I had met; he seemed more like an Englishman. He spoke our language without difficulty, and that was accounted for, no doubt, by the fact that his son-in-law was an Englishman.

I wanted to hear a French trial, and as the

criminal assizes were sitting I went to the Palais de Justice next morning. It was not unlike an English Court so far as furniture was concerned. There was a high bench for the Judges, seats in front for the solicitors and counsel, and a box for the jury or witnesses. I thought that the men whom I took to be sitting in the jury-box were the hardest-looking lot of jurymen I had ever seen. There was a long rail below the bench, to which witnesses walked and gave their evidence. I stayed all the morning and was much diverted by the proceedings. It transpired that the gentlemen sitting in the jury-box were prisoners awaiting their trial or sentence. The spectators were not inclined to be so awe-struck as the British public is in a Court of law. The Judiciary was represented by three members. The one who sat in the centre wore a high black hat and did all the talking; the others wore a different kind of headgear.

The trials were weird parodies of trials. The clerk would stand and charge the prisoner. The job of prosecutor was a soft one; he did not have to open his mouth. The Chief Judge took the matter in hand. The onus of proof lay on the prisoner. There was no evidence of the British theory that the prisoner was innocent until he was clearly proved guilty. Not a bit of it; he was as guilty as could be until he had clearly proved he was innocent. The Judge would attack the prisoner in the most violent way. Nothing that was said by way of answer would satisfy him. He shouted and gesticulated. He seemed to work on the principle, "If you are not

guilty, what are you doing here?" The Chief Judge had one weakness, however, and the crowd seemed to know it—he admired a nicely turned ankle! If the prisoner was a pretty girl he would alter his manner entirely. He would address her in a most tender manner. One girl who was charged knew her job. The evidence was pretty clear, but the Judge was not satisfied that the police had not made a stupid blunder in supposing such a demure young woman could be guilty of such a crime. She took the Judge into her confidence. She smiled at him. She was indignant at the foolish policeman who said he saw her taking the goods. Of course, the shopman was mistaken when he swore that she had promised never to do such a thing again if only he would not prosecute. Tears, a glass of water to save a faint, and the Judge conferred with his brethren. He then turned to the charming prisoner and, after noting where she lived, told her she had proved herself to his satisfaction and to the satisfaction of his brethren quite innocent. The girl knew her Court and worked her arts very successfully.

The next prisoner was a dirty, untidy slut, also charged with theft. The evidence was not at all clear, but the Judge bullied her. When she cried he told her not to play with the Court. He pooh-poohed everything she said as unbelievable, and without conferring with his mute brethren gave her six weeks. She was led away protesting her innocence. If she had been tried in an English Court she would have been acquitted without the jury leaving the box.

The prisoners awaiting trial or sentence, by their

appearance, seemed fit inhabitants for the dreadful Isle de Diable. They were the most desperate-looking criminals, and grinned and talked as their fellow-criminals were put through the mill. It would be quite wrong to say that the men underwent a trial of justice! Sometimes the Judge became very excited and the witnesses would reply very rudely to him, but he did not seem to mind. It was not surprising that the witnesses were rude; they were certainly subjected to great indignities. I left that Court of justice devoutly thankful that I lived in a country where justice was real.

The next morning I boarded one of the ferry steamers which was daily conveying troops to their leave in "Blighty."

At Folkestone a train was waiting and within an hour or so it pulled into Waterloo Station. I had arrived in London at long last.

Only a colonial can understand my feelings when the train arrived in London—London, the centre of the "Home" we had heard of all our lives! It was our Mecca. London was the capital of the British Empire. London called up all the associations with the Crown. London housed the King for whom we had come to fight. London used to shelter great statesmen such as Bolingbroke, Pitt, Gladstone, Beaconsfield, Chamberlain. London held for me an attraction that was an affection. It was dearer than any other place on earth. It has been the hope of generations of colonials—on many occasions gratified—to visit London. London, the throbbing heart of the Empire! As I stepped out of the train at

Waterloo I stood spellbound and gazed round about. There was not far to gaze, but my dream had come true. Imagine a dream coming true! Recollect the hundreds of dreams, delightful situations, desires all but realized, only forestalled by waking! That was the usual thing, but this dream came true. I was in London! I would have liked to walk down the streets patting the walls affectionately just to show that I was glad to be Home. Later, when I was unfit for active service and lived in London for eighteen months, my feelings of affection for it did not weaken, but grew deeper and deeper. I wonder how many of us would have left London if only we could have stayed at Home. I was a colonial, with not the smallest idea of direction of any place in this dear great city. I had arranged, under advice from an English officer, to stay at the Junior Naval and Military Club. I taxied there. I hardly noticed the address. I dumped my gear in my bedroom and dashed out to continue my acquaintance with London. First, I reported to our military headquarters because the paymaster was there, and, having made a reduction of my credit with him, I sallied forth and consumed—that is the only word—the sights. For a while I was with a friend, but in the afternoon he had to visit a relative. I did not mind that; London was my friend. I had a guide-book, for I did not want to waste any time in getting to the sights I had been longing to see.

What I saw that day is a confused jumble to me. I only knew that I recognized hundreds of old friends. Imagine, if you can, what it is for a stranger to

stand and see Buckingham Palace actually in front of him. A Horse Guardsman on duty saluted me. I had seen him a thousand times before, but in pictures. I waved to Nelson and actually stroked one of his lions. I was glad to be there before the beautiful statue of King Charles in Trafalgar Square was boxed in as a protection against the Zeppelins.

Late that night, gloriously tired, I told a taxi-driver to drive me home to the Junior Army and Navy Club. He did so. The place was changed. The entrance was different. I knew I was excited and tired, but I could not make it out. I must have looked bewildered, for a steward came to me and asked if I wanted anything. I told him he had altered the place since I was there in the morning. He assured me that he had not done so, and, looking up his record, assured me that I was not on the books as staying there. I was dumbfounded. It was the Junior Army and Navy? Yes, no doubt in the world about that. Well, I was in a fix. I did not know a soul in London. All my gear was somewhere, but I could not say where. Several officers tried to help me and went off to their beds in despair. I was completely bewildered. Then a wave of optimism swept over me. I pressed a florin into the hand of the steward and implored him to find out where I lived. He dived into a telephone-box while I stood outside and wondered where I ought to be. He returned in a few minutes. "Sir, you are expected at the Junior Naval and Military Club. They were wondering what could have happened to you." He

had earned that florin. A taxi did the rest. But I had been truly lost in London on my first day, and it was really an easy mistake to make, if you think of it.

I was out as soon as possible next day. I had only a few days' leave and there was so much to do. My friend and I then, more or less systematically, saw the principal sights: the great art galleries, the Strand, Waterloo Bridge, the House of Commons, Westminster Abbey, and St. Paul's. I found a beautiful little chapel down Savoy Street, and later I came to bless that place. It was a spiritual home indeed, and the chaplain became a great friend of mine. I saw Somerset House, with its myriads of documents. The Law Courts attracted me beyond most things. There is the same dignity in our New Zealand Courts: we have the air, but not the age. I heard Sir Leslie Scott, who was rather like the leader of our own Bar of those days. I listened to the deep rich voice of Sir Edward Carson as he deigned to tell the Judge something about his brief. The Old Bailey, too, with its several Courts, was hard at work. What a beautiful building the new Old Bailey is!

Then we went a little farther east. The whole world was swinging round the Bank of England corner. I looked inside and was nearly terrified by two men in a strange uniform. I felt that they thought I had come to steal the bullion.

Those were happy days indeed. I was not calm enough to assimilate all I saw. It was one long glorious experience. Later I was able to see the

places without the details all being blurred with the excitement, but not on those first few days in London. I had friends to see in Bristol and in Wales. I wanted, too, to seek some family connections in Manchester. But they all had to wait—*après la guerre*, as we used to say to everything that could wait.

At night, after dinner at Romano's, or the Cri, or the Au Petit Riche, in Soho, we visited the theatres. On the whole, they rather surprised me. Though the acting was supremely good, the buildings themselves seemed small. Of course, the Palladium and the Coliseum were not small, but the others seemed so.

Leave ended with a jolt, and before I realized it I was bound for Folkestone, where I had just time to see some dear friends before I was rushed across the Channel to rejoin my battalion. The feelings that I carried with me were beautiful. Nothing much mattered—I had been to London and it was just as I had wanted it to be.

CHAPTER VIII.

NORTHWARDS TO MESSINES

THE year 1917 began quietly enough, the troops on both sides of No Man's Land wanting a rest after the months of strenuous fighting in the Somme area. The spirit of aggression which all of us were expected to have burning fiercely under our tunics was allowed to smoulder very quietly. Fleurbaix was a sleepy sector, and it seemed a pity to spoil the peaceful atmosphere.

"There appears to be a lot of inquiry coming through Signals about men and equipment," said King, the signal officer, to me one day; "it looks as if we were going to be turned out of this spot."

He had hardly mentioned the possibility when the Colonel came in with news of a move north. "We are going into the Le Bizet sector, just on the other side of Houplines."

So it was a case of pack up and move off, and one day in February the battalion moved out to make way for a battalion of the King's Liverpool Regiment. We started off from Elbow Farm and made our way slowly past Rue Jonathan, Tin Barn Avenue, Wye Farm, City Avenue, Bay Avenue, to Nieppe. There we rested for a day or two, then took up our shovels and gum-boots and slid into the worst home we had met in the trenches.

The area had its right resting on the banks of the Lys. The land was low-lying, much was under water, and as the Colonel and I were walking round the front line admiring our new home I wondered how our predecessors had allowed the trenches to get into such a state of disrepair. It could never have been occupied if the Hun had not declared the area a closed season for shooting. Everything was quiet, and we were able to scramble past great gaps in the front line without any sign of objection from German observers. It was not a case of walking; it was only possible to progress by bending low and pulling our legs out of one boghole after another.

We had only one runner with us; he was Potter, the Colonel's batman. As we were sliding along, hurrying past gaps and staggering into filthy mud-holes, Potter stopped us with a grunt as he pointed to a gum-boot sticking out of the mud.

"You'd better salvage it, Potter," said the Colonel. Potter humorously seized hold of the boot and with a "Good morning, it's time to get up" to the boot he gave it a pull. The next moment he dropped it with a yell—there was a leg in it and both came away in his hands. The trouser-leg and the rotting flesh gave us all a shock, so unexpected was it. We hurried past and the company commander had the mortal remains of some unknown soldier reinterred.

For about a month we endured the discomforts of a neglected area. It was midwinter, and the snow and slush made things most miserable. It was almost impossible to keep one's feet dry, apart from

the cold, and in varying degrees we all suffered from the cursed trench-feet. Every night we rubbed whale-oil into our numbed toes, and by that means were able to avoid hospital. Then we moved out of the inhospitable Le Bizet and handed over to our friends the Aussies a much-improved but still dismal habitation.

We were gradually making our way north. This time we passed spots well known to the troops—Motor-car Corner, Le Bizet, Chapel Rompu, Cross Road—and at last arrived at a dry camp, Le Romarin, well to the rear of Plug Street, where we rested for a good while. We were away from shell-fire, except for a very occasional "heavy," for which we instantly arranged an overwhelming retaliation.

It was heavenly to get back to our transport lines, where there was a change of clothing, a horse to ride, and two or three fair-sized townships not far off. To be in Divisional reserve seemed almost improper, it was so far away from the zipping machine guns and the "whiz-bang" of the 18-pounder, to say nothing of the sniper.

Company commanders took the opportunity of checking up their stores of equipment and requisitioning for shortages. The men were encouraged to pay more attention to their appearance, and with better food and no worry about raids or working parties life for a week or two was comparatively pleasant. Leave to "Blighty" was increased, and every day or two detachments of eight or ten were given leave passes.

"Nice quiet spot this, Treadwell," grumbled

Goldstein, the medical officer; "everyone seems to be working but us." We were standing outside our mess hut watching lorry after lorry passing continuously, all overloaded with beams, girders, and wire. The artillery were invading the area, giving a horrible suggestion of coming trouble. The ammunition wagons were unloading incessantly on to dumps. We silently gazed at the activity, knowing full well that if we were not moved out of the area we were in for something pretty big.

Then we took over the front line and sat in front of Messines. Already Messines had a reputation for desperate fights, and there we could see the skeleton of the village, which was on the brow of a low hill, looking down on us as we sat in the trenches near the bottom of the slope.

Before we adopted the front line as our own, we rested a day or two in Plug Street Wood. Messines, Plug Street, Hill 60—names that will live for ever in the history of the Great War: we were right in the heart of the old trouble, with all the indications of a lot more to come.

While leave increased rapidly, the officers were sent off in twos and threes to attend special instruction courses in some branch of warfare; there were courses in bombing, musketry, bayonet fighting. Even the senior officers had their special courses to attend. To a Commanding Officers' school went Colonel Cunningham while we were at Le Romarin, and across from the 1st Battalion came Major Weston, who later, as a battalion commander, performed deeds of great daring and leadership.

Major Weston, like many of the other officers of the Wellington Regiment, was by profession a lawyer. He came from a well-known New Zealand family of lawyers, and when war broke out was practising in New Plymouth. He was a man rather short of stature but full of energy and of a seeming inferiority complex. His deference to the views of others was more apparent than real. While he would listen with an attention suggesting acquiescence in any views that were expressed, his attitude was really one directed not to hurt the feelings of his fellow-officers. Only when he was thoroughly offended by some unsportsmanlike attitude did he really raise himself in anger. His leadership was real, and he gave the impression that he knew not fear. For the next few months he had many opportunities of showing his soldierly qualities, and proved himself one of the ablest and most intrepid leaders in the New Zealand Division.

The battalion was not allowed to remain long in Le Romarin, and we were soon marching down the long straight road from that locality to Plug Street Wood. On the map the wood was called Ploegsteert, but it was, is now, and always will be Plug Street to the thousands of British soldiers who passed through that village.

It seems but yesterday that we took up a short tenancy of the accommodation available to troops in the wood. The battalion headquarters consisted of some rain-proof shelters known as Creslow. From there, by routes through the wood with such names as Regent Street, the Strand, Oxford Circus,

Piccadilly Circus, Hampstead Lane, the companies were led to their quarters. Some of the troops kept along the principal cobbled street through the village to Hyde Park Corner, and there, in some tunnels, found lodging.

Hyde Park Corner, named after a famous place, was famous too, but for another reason. At that cross-road had been some of the bloodiest fighting in the earlier days. At the corner the main road went to the left towards Red Lodge; to the right was Mud Lane, leading to St. Ives. Had it been peace-time a road would have been seen that went on over the Plug Street hill, straight on to Messines. That road, however, was not usable past Hyde Park Corner, except intermittently. At the corner of the roads the hill was tunnelled, so as to give accommodation for troops. The tunnels were in the reverse side of the hill from the Hun, and gave safe lodging for the hundred or two who stayed there from time to time. These tunnels were called the Catacombs. They provided the safety all right, but they made the troops loath to go out into the open. The morale of troops lodged in such caverns was never improved.

The corner itself was a dangerous spot to loiter in. Often a stray shell would come screaming high in the air, seeking traffic at that point. The shells that searched that locality were mostly howitzers, for the brow of the hill had to be negotiated and the fast-flying "whiz-bang," which travelled on a flat trajectory, was not of much use for that kind of job. The howitzer could be heard, first with its

distant scream, and then, if it were coming towards one, it could be heard changing its scream to a louder note, and in a flash a soldier would know if it were coming too close. If the note did not vary at once, one could be sure that it did not have one's name on it and that it would pass by, some safe distance away.

Even the howitzer could not be sure of finding the cross-road, and one of the sights not likely to be forgotten was that of a huge 5.9 burying itself into the square of God's acre, which had been made in an open glade on the other side of the road from the Catacombs. There for a while had been a cemetery. Most of the victims had been killed in the hand-to-hand fighting in the early months of the war. A sight to be remembered—for, once seen, it could not be forgotten—was that of a huge 5.9 plunging in that sacred plot of ground and then bursting upwards, disturbing the rest of those poor bodies. The cemetery was just a ploughed field when we saw it; the rough wooden crosses were lying at all angles to the earth; many were lying flat on the ground, yards away from where they had been originally planted.

When the battalion reached Plug Street Wood the plan to attack Messines was well on its way to completion. Under every tree in the Bois de Boulogne were guns of varying calibres. Gunners could be seen every day digging gun-pits, or installing their precious guns, or putting some camouflage over those exposed to the hawk-like eye of the German aeroplanes.

At every fifty yards was a pile of artillery

ammunition, and, although the Germans searched the area many times daily, hardly ever was a hit registered on those dumps.

The day after we reached Creslow, Major Weston and I walked up to the new line which we were to take over, and which lay opposite Messines. The route we took was one afterwards taken a hundred times by the New Zealand troops until we attacked the village in June.

It was a cold, frosty morning—too cold and perhaps too early for any German gunner to worry us. At Hyde Park Corner we turned left, skirting the wood on our right, passing a large first-aid post and another battalion headquarters. Then we came to a tall, elegant brick house which we all knew as Red Lodge. Red Lodge was the scene of great heroism in the days when possession of the wood was in dispute. A few hundred metres farther on we turned east and passed Hill 63 on our right. Down the road was a shrine of wood, with the effigy of Christ crucified still intact. We turned then sharp to the right again, and fifty yards farther on came a sharp turn to the left and we were heading down a long lane fringed with giant poplars. Before the war this lane must have been a picture, with small closely tilled farms on each side. Half-way down, on our right, was La Plus Douve Farm, which we also knew by the less picturesque name of Ration Farm dump. Indeed, the naming of the outstanding places in this area had been performed by someone in a very bad temper. Farther on, to our right, was Stinking Farm, where a company commander

had his headquarters. At the end of the line of poplars was St. Quentin Farm, to the left of which was a trench containing a gallery of sandbag rooms called McBride's Mansions. That was our headquarters when we were not right in the line. We soon looked over our new area. It was right opposite the village of Messines; our right was Stinking Farm and our left Boyle's Farm.

It was not long before the whole battalion was settled into what was to be our jumping-off place for a mighty battle. The area was quiet enough. No Man's Land was a poor place to wander about. There was a ditch which probably was once a tributary of La Douve River. Our trenches were in a fair state, but badly sited, being too far from the enemy's front line and not nearly parallel to it. To leave the trenches at the height of a general attack, having much farther to go to reach the front line at the left flank, would certainly lead to confusion.

One day I was walking down past La Plus Douve Farm with Richards, my batman, and there we came upon a small working party concerned in bringing up to the front line a supply of "plum-puddings"; not the edible reminder of Christmas, but what was known to the technician as M.T.M. (medium trench mortar) ammunition. As we passed the dump of about fifty plum-puddings a Hun aeroplane could be heard and only just seen in the heavens above.

"If that 'plane sees that dump he'll cause trouble," I remarked. We went on, passing the first-aid post, three hundred yards farther down, flying its Red Cross flag. After crossing a field,

we were just dropping into the trench off which was battalion headquarters, when a terrific explosion and a concussion in the air startled us. Jumping up from the trench, we saw a huge cloud of smoke ascending from half-way up the poplar lane.

"It's the plum-puddings, sir," cried Richards. "That Hun must have spotted them."

It was indeed the plum-puddings. Every man of that working party had been blown to atoms. For months a "tin hat" could be seen thirty feet up, embedded in one of the poplar branches. A few days later the Germans claimed that for some time they had suspected that we were hiding ammunition under cover of the Red Cross flag! It was a typical Hun lie. The Red Cross flag was three hundred yards from the dump, and the dump was only a very temporary one, for the "puddings" were on their way to the front line. A hole was made which reached half-way across the road and was deep enough to swallow an ammunition wagon.

It was while we were at McBride's Mansions that I experienced one of the few psychic manifestations that crossed my path. In the everyday experiences of peace-time little, if anything, ever so disturbs the mind as to render it susceptible to that unknown influence which we call psychic. Time after time, however, during the war, when men were hourly living on the very brink of eternity, with frequent violent reminders of that fact, manifestations were experienced which cannot be accounted for except as psychic experiences or the strangest coincidences.

One night, some time in April, I had retired exhausted, and was soon fast asleep. A vivid dream possessed me. I dreamt that, as I was standing outside the headquarters, I watched a great fight in the air between two Hun aeroplanes and a single English one. I can remember the feeling of confidence as to the ultimate issue of the fight, for in those days our aircraft was definitely superior and had the aerial right of way, which the enemy but rarely challenged. As the aeroplanes dived and slipped and whirled about one another, I watched, fascinated by the sight. Then suddenly out of the clouds from behind the Englishman swooped a third German 'plane, and at once a stream of tracer bullets could be seen flying towards the Englishman. The tracer bullets hit the petrol-tank, and a moment later the English 'plane was hurtling to the ground in flames. I watched it as it fell headlong, then suddenly, before it struck the ground, all went black and I woke with a start. When Richards came in with a cup of tea for me in the early morning I told him what I had dreamt.

The next night my dream was actually enacted, and the whole battalion saw that gallant fight and ultimate death of the English pilot and his observer. As in my dream, the crash to the ground was not seen, for the aeroplane fell on the far side of Plug Street Wood. Many other soldiers had strange manifestations and premonitions. They may be discussed as coincidences, but that certainly would not satisfy those who experienced them. The continuous strain, the ever walking along the lip

that divided this world from the next, may have tuned us up to a state of experiencing psychical phenomena which in more prosaic and less eventful days would never be experienced.

The front line was a quiet one, due, so the Army Intelligence report said, to the fact that the line opposite was occupied by Saxon troops.

In looking at an aerial photograph of our sector, the great difference in the distance between the right and left sectors from the enemy front line could be seen. The Army Corps Commander, with his eye on the future battle, decided to put this right. Accordingly in the dead of night a party of four hundred men from another battalion moved into No Man's Land and advanced the front line half the whole distance across.

To anyone who was not in that operation the anxieties and difficulties of it might easily not be realized. To carry it into effect four hundred officers and men silently advanced into No Man's Land and actually with picks and shovels dug a deep trench under the nose of the unsuspecting enemy. It needed only a sharp barrage from some batteries and the whole exploit would have been defeated.

In order that the line of the proposed trench could be dug accurately, a small band of engineers went out in the night and marked with thin white tape the adjusted trench line. The operation itself was carried out in the pitch-black night by the four hundred men, whose sole concern was to dig a trench at least five feet deep, and so silently that the alert enemy should not hear those picks

thudding into the ground, or the shovels lifting the stones and soil out. The Wellington Battalion provided a screen. This consisted of four parties, whose orders were to fight to the finish if attacked. The protecting party were to fight it out to enable the diggers to get back. So out, well beyond the line of the new trench, silently went the covering party, and there they stayed straining their ears and eyes for evidence that the enemy had learnt of the enterprise. Lying flat on their stomachs, with only their heads up as they peered into the gloomy darkness, those men stayed till a runner crept up with the news that the trench was dug, the diggers were home, and they could now go home themselves. Perhaps only those who have strained their eyes in No Man's Land can realize the feelings of those men.

The Hun woke up next morning to find that the enemy front line was a hundred yards nearer than when he fell asleep the night before, and that for six hours the enemy had silently dug a trench under his very nose. The actual digging began at 9 p.m. and the diggers finished their job at 3 a.m.—six full hours, every minute of which was of acute anxiety to all involved.

So life went on before Messines. Every now and then the Hun would send us a shower of shrapnel to convince us that he was still a very superior person, but whenever he did so we hammered back at him with a fury far exceeding his.

Every day the engineers were improving roads, and artillery batteries were coming up and settling down into nests that they made for themselves. The

airmen were always on the alert to prevent the Hun from seeing too much. If any intrepid German 'plane showed up in the heights, two or three of our 'planes would chase him off. Whenever a "sausage" ran up into the air one of our hawk-eyed airmen would make a dash for it.

The Hun knew something was happening, and every night he sent up his flares, nervously searching No Man's Land; this was especially the case after we had built the new trench in No Man's Land.

Then came orders to get out and hand over our leasehold premises to the Aussies. We did so gladly.

"Another 'rest' for us, sir," grinned Richards, when I told him we were on the move.

"I expect so," I replied; "there'll be more training, more getting fit and developing the fighting spirit."

Just before we left, however, the Hun bombarded us with minnenwerfers, so we told the artillery and the whole of our guns, from 15-inch howitzers to the noisy 18-pounders, fired full speed for five minutes, sweeping the whole enemy area opposite. Then we stopped and not a sound could be heard; there was no reply.

"Von Kluck will send a note of apology in the morning," grinned King, the signal officer. "That show must have given them hell—a foretaste of pleasures to come."

It was a delight indeed to get back and gallop over the fields on my mare. We returned to Tatingham, the small town a few miles from St. Omer where we had stayed before for a "rest." Then

PLUG STREET WOOD

for the next fortnight we revived our morale, which, if not impaired by our long spells of trench life, was dulled. Now we had new boots, new clothes, open-air training, horse-shows, plenty of leave, extra rations —anything to buck us up and prepare us for the next show. The change worked wonders, and before the fortnight had passed the whole battalion was on its toes again. The casualties had been met by reinforcements. Every day our band played to us, and when, on the last day of May, 1917, we left the friendly village of Tatingham for Zuytpeene, near the old town of Cassel, we were fit for anything: our spirits were high indeed.

"Just put most of my stuff in my sleeping-bag and leave it with the quartermaster," I said to Richards.

"Right, sir. Are we in for a short, sharp war?" he asked.

"We'll know in a couple of days," I said. "In the meantime you know nothing." He went off, and, travelling light, the whole battalion took two days to march back to the concentration camp in the rear of Messines. The artillery had increased enormously. Every day new batteries were taking up fresh positions, and the air was full of gun-fire as the gunners registered their shooting on some well-known marks to which they had to pay particular attention when the time came.

The last day we left Petit Sec Bois and marched an easy fourteen miles to the concentration camp at a spot called De Seule.

"I am out of this show, Treadwell," said Colonel

Cunningham, " and so are McLean, Rauch, Chaytor, and McKenzie. Major Weston is coming over to take charge."

" You'll miss the battalion, Colonel," I said. " You're lucky in one way, but the old battalion is hard to leave."

" I know that, Treadwell, but the General insists, so I'll probably go on leave and see you all when it's over."

I shook hands with my Colonel. He and I had worked alongside each other since the early days in Armentières, we had gone through the Somme battle together, and it seemed strange to be doing a stunt without him. However, his successor was a man for whom I had the strongest affection and the greatest respect as a leader—he was always so imperturbable under all circumstances.

" Hello, Treadwell, you coming with me?" asked Major Weston as he entered the mess hut. In a few minutes we were hard at it, and battalion orders were issued advising the battalion that we were about to clear the Hun off the Messines Ridge, and that we were to take the village itself.

" We've got the Irish on our left and the Aussies on our right," I said to Major Weston; " the old Hun won't know whether he is coming or going once this trio begins on him."

The enemy was then thoroughly alarmed at the indications of something about to happen. Every day at dusk he shelled all the roads with gas and tear shells. He felt that something was coming, and that right early, for the amount of artillery

retaliation he received for the slightest shelling was disproportionately severe.

Of course, all the world knows that the New-Zealanders captured the village of Messines. We would have captured Berlin on that day if it had occurred to our General to ask us to do so. The training in the rear of the line had fitted us for anything. I remember gazing most earnestly many times at a model of Messines. It was two or three hundred feet square and was a miniature of the village on the other side of No Man's Land which we were to take. The route I was to take was up the left side of the village, and I saw the spot where we expected to establish headquarters. Later on we did so. How we took the village does not matter at all. The experiences that befell me during the famous 7th June are quite unforgettable.

The day before, we were at a camp called De Seule. I remember the tall Salvationist padre standing in the midst of the battalion as it squatted on the ground. This was just before we moved up to take our battle position. He conducted a short service, praying for victory and asking Him to receive those who did not answer the roll-call on the morrow. The hymns we sang fervently were accompanied by the padre on his accordion. All men worth the name are devout enough when they are facing death. The service was at dusk, and as soon as it was quite dark we set out in double rank for our posts. We marched along routes called " X " or " Y " or " Z " on the map supplied with the orders. The Hun was very nervous and was shelling all the

back areas. He had noted the routes; I suppose his airmen had photographed them for him. To distress us he shelled with two particular kinds of shells: tear shells, with which he adroitly mixed some mustard-gas shells. It was an awful march. I walked with Major Weston at the head of the column. With us was the gas expert, a sergeant. We wore our gas-masks hanging in front of us. A shell would come over and would drop within a few feet of us. This happened a dozen times at least. Herr Boche was firing well that night. The sergeant would suddenly yell "Gas," and we would clap the masks on our faces and then struggle on with the beastly things over our mouths and noses. It was hot and difficult without the masks, with them it was torture. However, it was worth it. I have seen men lying on the ground frothing at the mouth as a result of not wearing their masks. I never expect to see a more unpleasant sight than the poor devils retching in their agony. Death by gas must have been unspeakable torture. It is difficult even now, after these long years, to regard without horror the fact that the Boche, without any warning, loosed gas on the Canadians at Ypres and slew them when they were defenceless. The men responsible for the introduction of gas into the war have a terrible indictment to answer.

It was hardly dawn when at ten minutes past three on the 7th June the battle started. We had taken up our positions, waiting for zero hour. There were all sorts of arguments later on as to whether the mines started first, or the guns, or both together.

My recollection is that as I sat in my mud dugout in the support line the guns started first. I should say they had been going for ten or fifteen seconds, when the very earth rose in its wrath. It rose in several places. I saw it rise in one place right in front of where I was about to cross. I saw a huge black spectre rise out of the earth. It was of a tremendous size, and seemed to stretch for a hundred yards across. As it rose out of the earth red fire rose up with it. The red fire shot right to the top of the black spectre, and it shot up in places within its very body, and then it disappeared. As that mine rose, it threw concrete pill-boxes and platoons of German soldiers into the air. It must have struck terror into the hearts of all who saw it. Then we advanced on the village, and the bombardment was truly intense. The German artillery recovered from its shock and placed a barrage right in front of our going. However, it could not hit every bit of ground, and it missed the track upon which I trod.

As I was passing along one short bit where the shelling was most animated, a huge 5.9 entered the trench in the next bay to the one along which I was walking. After I had wiped the earth out of my eyes I pushed on. In the bay where the shell had exploded there were some dead and wounded. I tipped the neck of my water-bottle into the mouth of one of the latter and went on. The stretcher-bearers were just behind me. Later on I found that an officer who had been killed in that bay was Gerald Fell, a fellow-lawyer, who was rising to the top of his profession in my own town in New Zealand.

He was later buried under a willow-tree a few yards farther on.

As I went on with a few of the men from the headquarters signallers, a Canadian officer rushed towards me yelling. I thought he was demented. I still think he was—very nearly; but it was relief that was affecting him, not shell-fire. "Digger," he cried, "come over here with me." I went with him; it was hardly out of my way. We stood on the lip of a huge crater. It seemed a hundred yards across and was very deep. At the bottom was a German pill-box which had been tossed into the air like a feather and had rolled to the bottom of the crater. The Canadian told me that for two years he had been tunnelling under Messines. He told me how the Boche had counter-tunnelled, but how now he had won and his mine had won. It certainly was awful.

I left my Canadian tunneller to glory in his achievement and clambered up the slope of Messines across the bar of the shrieking shrapnel, and made my way round the left of the village until I found my allotted headquarters. It was the remains of a mill—Blauen Molen the map called it. It was well registered by the artillery. The trip to it and the mill itself were most exciting. How I took messages and told companies what the C.O. wanted, I am not sure. The signallers somehow kept the line going to the reserves behind, for when we received an S.O.S. from our front line I was able to get through and ask for the guns. We got them—or, rather, the Boche did. That was when he started to counter-

attack. How he ever hoped to succeed I cannot imagine. The two Australian Divisions on our right and the Irish one on our left were a combination that nothing on the enemy side could face.

What a noise and confusion that battle was! We got to grips with the Hun as we seldom ever did. It is at times such as that that one "sees red"—one becomes quite primitive again. There was no rest. The trenches were bad—very shallow—but fortunately the enemy, on the whole, was too badly shaken to take advantage of that. What we had to worry about most was the long-range machine-gun fire. As I write this, an incident comes back to me with great clarity. Our battalion intelligence officer was Lieutenant Jackson, one of the best and bravest of the battalion. During the height of the battle he and I lay on our stomachs on the knoll just a few yards in front of Blauen Molen. Jackson pointed out in front, about nine hundred yards ahead, where some of our men were having a bombing duel with some Germans. A rifle was lying by us, so we had a bet on Jackson's ability to hit one of the German bombers. Jackson took a bead on one German whom I could plainly see through a powerful pair of binoculars, and fired; a second later the German fell dead. Whether it was a coincidence or not, Jackson won the bet, which was duly paid when next we found a bottle.

And now, after years have passed, I look back on those exciting few days and I recollect, as if it were yesterday, the mines that leapt into the sky and the great gashes they made in the earth; the

scrambling forward in the midst of bursting shrapnel; the high-explosive shell as it burst in the next bay in the same trench; the mad Canadian tunneller; the first-aid post on the slope up to Messines; the hurricane of shells that laid a barrage across our way; the hurrying through it, miraculously unhurt; then the dash over the brow and finding a smashed-up mill where we established our headquarters; Jackson and the bet I lost; the increased barrage and the abortive counter-attack; darkness and a slackening in the shelling; then after an hour or two, in which one snatched at sleep, the dawn; the passing-along of the wounded; the many, many dead; the messages of success; the great Australians who went out into the blue and forgot to send back news of how they fared, so that we had to send to inquire; then a day's consolidating and reporting; a cup of tea and some iron rations; another night and day; and then relief. What a fight it had been! And what a victory!

The casualties had been heavy, though only two officers had been killed. Whether it was coincidence or not, both those officers had said good-bye to me on the night we assembled for the attack and had told me they knew it was to be their last "show." No one else had suggested such a thing, but these two officers were quite certain their time had come to make the crossing. One of them, Captain R. F. C. Scott, was lying asleep in a shallow trench on the night after we had captured the village, and a shell burst over him and he just changed his temporary sleep into the permanent one.

CHAPTER IX.

LA BASSE VILLE, PASSCHENDAELE, AND THEN TO ENGLAND

I WAS just entering the orderly room one morning two or three days after we had come out of Messines, when a brigade runner handed me a message: "10/123 Pte. John Jenkins arrested St. Omer yesterday send escort—Jones, Major, A.P.M." (The number and the name of the soldier are fictitious.) I called "Sergeant-Major," and in a moment the highly efficient sergeant-major doubled up.

"Did not this man go over the top?" I asked.

"I'll see, sir. I handed him over, as you ordered, to his company."

Nerves are rotten, uncontrollable things, and many a man has been unable to control himself and has in consequence been termed coward; and some, no doubt, have paid the penalty that goes with cowardice in the field.

This young man, who had several convictions for some more or less grave offences, had been awaiting trial just before the battle. It was a rule of our battalion that any man awaiting trial or in the battalion quarter-guard should go "over the bags" at zero hour, otherwise some of the less worthy would commit a crime for the purpose of dodging a battle. Private Jenkins was awaiting trial for

absence without leave, and was suspected of being a bad slacker. I had detailed the regimental sergeant-major to see him and order him to report to his platoon officer and to tell him he was to go into the battle on the following morning with the rest of his comrades. He was specially warned of the consequences to him if he cleared out now that he knew we were going into action the following morning. In spite of the warning, he escaped and we went into the battle without him. The escort duly brought him back, and it then fell to me to carry out the unpleasant duty of prosecuting him for deserting in the face of the enemy. I detailed the best barrister I could find to defend him. He was hopelessly guilty and was duly convicted, and the Court sentenced him to be shot. The Brigade Commander supported the sentence; the Divisional Commander did the same. When the papers reached the Corps Commander he recommended also that the sentence be carried into effect, and this was also the recommendation of the Army Commander. The chances of that young soldier then seemed slender; but Sir Douglas Haig, on the score of the soldier's youth, commuted the sentence to ten years' imprisonment. The commutation met with a mixed reception. The men who were most indignant were from his own platoon; they felt that he had disgraced them. And they were the men, too, from whom the firing party would have been drawn. Probably it was a case of uncontrollable nerves. Some men were constitutionally unfit for fighting, but there was no way of testing them till they were under shell-fire.

On another occasion, this time just before another battle, there was a very "hard case" in the quarter-guard awaiting trial. He had an appalling crime-sheet. The Colonel thought he was good material wasting, so sent for him and had a frank talk with him, telling him that he was worthy of better things. He added that he proposed to place him in a responsible position and that he would be doing most responsible work in the battle on the morrow. The man had expected further condemnation, and instead he was receiving encouragement. He was made a messenger on the headquarters staff. He became a magnificent runner, never flinched in his hazardous jobs, and covered himself with glory. His trial was washed out and he was decorated for conspicuous gallantry in the field. From that day he never went wrong. His trouble was not nerves, but I suspect he had been handled badly at first and had got his back up.

We were soon hard at it again with another "rest." This time we were not sure where we were heading for, though it ultimately proved to be the Salient. By marching and by train we reached St. Marie Capelle. When we arrived there we found a tiny village at the bottom of the hill on which Cassel rests. The people in the village were the dullest folk, and they spoke a vile patois instead of French; they called it Flemish. It was a kind of German. During the week or two we were there I picked up some of the words, but the only ones that remain in my memory are *vool wera*, which meant vile weather.

We trained very hard and, except for frequent trips to the top of the hill, and once or twice to towns farther afield whenever we were able to "jump" a lorry, we stayed in the village. We kept fit physically, and when we set out ultimately for the line we were jumping out of our skins with high spirits.

In order to keep the regiment *au fait* with the latest changes and developments in the art of modern warfare, all branches had their specialists. We had bombing specialists, machine-gun specialists, gas specialists, sniping specialists, and to all these specialists we were for ever sending officers, non-commissioned officers, and men for instruction. They were sent to schools of instruction set up in the back areas. Only once during the long period I was at the war did I manage to "wangle" a school of instruction. They formed a school of instruction for adjutants with a view to their promotion to staff captains. For a short period I had been staff captain to General Johnston, of the 1st Brigade, so that when the chance came I was sent to a school of instruction at Cassel. It was a great improvement upon trench life. The training was most pleasant. The teachers were all professional soldiers. I remember sitting at a table discussing one phase of the instruction while at the head of that table, directing the discussion, was our Army Commander, Lord Plumer, who proved to be much interested in his colonial troops.

One of the reasons why this life had advantages over the trench mode of living was that I slept in

a luxurious bed at La Belle Sauvage Inn, right at the top of the hill. From there I could look miles out across the fields of Flanders, while immediately beneath me were five huge windmills whirling round joyously to the winds.

I do not know that the course of instruction did me any good on the lines expected, but it did in another way. The life of an adjutant of a fighting battalion was very exacting. The hours were desperately long, even if there was not much doing on the front we were occupying. I rarely went to bed much before midnight. I would be up again about six o'clock, and when we were in the front line there was always the interruption in the very early hours of the morning to check the weather and situation reports. It was a great life indeed. The most serious disadvantage attaching to my job was having to take part in all of the four big engagements in which the battalion fought while I was in France. It was a sound practical rule that the officers should take part in alternate battles. That insured that there would be always a fair proportion of old hands in the event of a disaster. They applied the rule to the colonels, with the result that the new commanding officer, in order to be aware how our particular headquarters was run, had to have the adjutant with him. That is how it came to pass that I took part, luckily without stopping a "Blighty" or worse, in the battles of the Somme, Messines, La Basse Ville, and Passchendaele.

Our stay at St. Marie Capelle soon ended, and back to Plug Street Wood we were taken in motor-

lorries. We stopped at Hyde Park Corner, and then went, in the opposite direction from Red Lodge, along Mud Lane.

I remember an unpleasant episode as Major Weston, the intelligence officer, and I were making our way in the gloom to St. Ives Post-office, where our headquarters was to be. St. Ives Post-office may have been an office once; it was now merely a cellar with a trench running up to it. When we were about ten or twenty yards from a short line of trench two shells came over and missed us by inches. They were "whiz-bangs." I ducked and so did the intelligence officer, but Major Weston did not. Then the other two guns of the battery fired and the shells came just as near, if not nearer. The intelligence officer and I started to race for the trench, but the Major went on walking. It was most annoying, but if he had decided to walk we could not run, so reluctantly we went back and with him proceeded with apparent dignity to our destination.

Next morning Major Weston said to me, "Oh, I am just going up to the front line to see the position." He demurred at my going with him at first, but finally agreed. We took a runner with us and walked down a long sap. As we approached the front line, lying in front of the village La Basse Ville, day broke fully. We had to be careful—at least, I thought so. Our right sector was held by a small body of men under a captain. It was in the vicinity of a demolished factory. The front line consisted of three strong points, each entirely disconnected and consisting of a half-hoop of trench

long enough to hold a half-company of men. To my surprise, Major Weston led the way, overland, to the second post. I told him I thought he was foolhardy. He did not seem to think so. We crossed the same way to the left sector, right in front of the village, which was held in strength by the enemy. After we had bid a cheerful good-bye to the lieutenant in charge of that half-company we started back. The officer warned us of snipers, and showed us where the sap leading back began. We had left the runner behind at the first strong point. Major Weston said that he thought we would return " this way," saying which he scrambled out of the trench and started to return overland. As we strolled back in full view of the Hun, if he had cared to look, Major Weston remarked what a beautiful morning it was. My feelings were not altogether directed to the beauty of the dawn, but I hoped that neither he nor I would find it necessary to drag the other to safety. We were not noticed. I think we were exceptionally lucky. However, it is the man with such imperturbability who gives confidence to others.

One of the battles I was most proud to take a part in was that of La Basse Ville. We took the village and lost it, and took it again and held it. La Basse Ville was a village with its right flank on a canal. About five hundred yards beyond the village, and near another township, was a bridge. The other township was Warneton. This town was interesting to us, for at the time we were sitting opposite to it the rumour reached us that in it there

was a factory used by the enemy for boiling down human bodies for fat.

During the battle of La Basse Ville battalion headquarters was in a trench quite near to the village itself. About half the battalion went over the top on the first occasion, after a heavy artillery bombardment; but the village was very important to Herr Boche, so he counter-attacked with at least two battalions and took it back again. In the taking he made use of most intense and concentrated artillery-fire. It was an isolated battle in the order of things, so he had much less space on which to use his many guns. He had a nasty habit of putting a heavy barrage of his 5.9's on the support line to keep away reinforcements. On this particular occasion the shelling was very severe in the vicinity of battalion headquarters, and the runners' jobs were hazardous in the extreme. As I have said, we were driven back from our captured village by a very great superiority of numbers. A week or two later, after we had girded up our loins and after a good drum fire from our artillery, we launched another attack and took the village, driving the enemy helter-skelter towards Warneton. We established three posts beyond La Basse Ville and consolidated. The enemy counter-attacked furiously, but we beat him off in great style.

The Boche almost succeeded in one attempt. On that occasion about fifty of them crossed the bridge at Warneton and sneaked down the bank of the canal until almost abreast of our nearest post. Had they succeeded in outflanking that post they could

have turned the others out, and we might have been driven out of the village again. One of our officers, Lieutenant Nichol, had gone over with the Stokes mortars, and when all his men had been killed or wounded he stayed in the front line and took over the right post. It was he who noticed the Huns coming down the canal-bank, and, leading seven or eight men, with a cheer, attacked them with the bayonet, killing about a dozen, shooting some more, and the rest fled.

Lieutenant Nichol really earned the Victoria Cross, but he was awarded only the Military Cross. We used to say that the awards granted were not, by any means, always commensurate with the service rendered. Another of our men in this battle charged a couple of machine-gun nests and was awarded the Victoria Cross for most conspicuous gallantry.

After we had won this battle we were allowed a real rest for a day or two. The Corps Commander came along and told us that there was not a better battalion in the field of France. We believed him, and his statement is proudly recorded in the battalion diary.

One of the vivid recollections of that show was the most intense and concentrated shell-fire to which we were subjected. There was one incident just before the battle that comes to my memory. At that time our aeroplanes had the command of the air, and the Boche used to choose odd moments for his dash across to have a look at us. I was walking down the main sap with a runner one morning, and had reached a somewhat exposed spot known on the

tired. He was showing us the Arc de Triomphe, and inside he was pointing out the many French victories, most of which I am bound to admit I had never heard of before. He was boasting in a way that rather riled me, and, recalling a story which I had heard, I suddenly cried out, "Monsieur, there is a mistake here; there is a battle omitted." He ran to my side. "Where, Monsieur mon Capitaine?" he said. I examined the list of victories again and added, "I cannot see Waterloo." He took my chaff all right and in a moment we went off and had a bottle of wine on the result of that battle.

In the mad rush we saw as much as possible. We went out to Versailles and saw the great sights there. In the city of Paris we could see only the outside of many of the buildings, as they were closed for the duration of the war. To my regret, this applied to the famous Opera House. We entered Notre Dame and saw the rose window. But I do not like French churches; they are too gaudy, as a rule.

My recollection of the underground railway is that it was not nearly so efficient as the system in London, while the road traffic was a perfect menace. The taxi-drivers drove all over the road. I have never seen anything so untamed as the taxi-driver of Paris. As one crosses the road on foot he seems to chase one across. It is not a bit of use looking just one way to see if the traffic is approaching; you must look both ways, and you are lucky if you cross without some thrill. The best way to get across a road is to take a taxi—it will drive straight across!

While I was in a Paris restaurant, I heard a very good story concerning the Americans. It was September, 1917, and the Americans had got no nearer to the front line than Paris, though they had declared war in April. There was a good deal of feeling against them, and no doubt the old soldiers of the British Empire and of France were inclined to be terse. In one corner of the restaurant there were some New Zealand soldiers, in another part some Australians, while at a third table were some Americans. The Americans had not seen the New Zealand hats before. They were very much like their own. After a while the New-Zealanders went out, and one of the Americans called across to the Australians, "Say, Aussie, who are those guys just gone out? They're not Americans." An Aussie looked up from his tea and, in a voice that all round about could hear, said, "No, you silly blighters, they're soldiers." There was a silence and then a roar of laughter. Apparently a lot of people in that restaurant could understand English.

When I reported back to the battalion all that the Colonel said to me was, "Yes, and now what you need is a good rest."

When I returned from leave I was ordered to report to Army Corps Headquarters for special duty. I wondered what it was that those august people living at Corps Headquarters could want with a mere junior officer of the line. I was told to report to the General Commanding. Sir Alexander Godley told me that a few New Zealand politicians were coming over to see the troops and he wanted them

taken charge of. I was to show them something of the life in the line and bring them to Corps Headquarters in as agreeable a way as circumstances permitted. I was to have the use of one of the General's motor-cars for the purpose, and I was to leave at once, as the boat would be arriving at Boulogne with them any day. What a piece of luck it was! Here was I with the Corps Commander's car and chauffeur, off to spend a few days at Boulogne and then to take charge of some more or less important politicians. I wasted no time in getting started, and the Sunbeam purred away from Hazebruck.

I put up at Boulogne and thoroughly enjoyed waiting for the politicians. After two or three days I was conscientious enough to wire the General that I was still waiting. I was ordered to go on waiting. At last, after a few more days waiting, Dr. A. K. Newman, a well-known New Zealand politician, showed up; the others had changed their minds. I had known this particular gentleman for some years, as he was from Wellington. We spent the next day or two in travelling to Corps Headquarters. I shall not forget our drive from Boulogne. The boat arrived late and we reached a Belgian village by tea-time. I went to a little *estaminet* I knew and saw the proprietress, telling her that a most important personage from New Zealand had come across, partly to taste her famous omelets. She was delighted, and when later we met in New Zealand after the war the politician used to remind me of the wonderful omelet I treated him to that night.

After this came some intensive training in a dull little village called Bayenghem. The only memory it contains for me is that it was near a village called Lumbres. The maidens of Lumbres were beautiful. They had large black eyes and beautiful skins, and looked foreign to France. Lumbres, they told us, used to be a Spanish settlement many generations before, and these lovely girls were evidence of it.

Those rests where we rested not had a wonderful effect. The absence of shell-fire and the sound of it had its effect, and when at last we set out east for Ypres we were fighting fit. We needed to be. The marches were long, and after a while we ran into the most awful devastation that encircled Ypres. At Poperinghe, where we rested for a day or two, the shelling could be seen and heard. The activity in the air was great, and the movement of troops and material indicated that we were in for another push. The weather was bad, and had been for some time. The ground, which had been turned up by shell-fire, was a quagmire. My recollections of that devastated city of Ypres is one of sadness. The cathedral and the Cloth Hall were no more. There were bits of walls standing, but that was all. The roads through the city were kept clean, and wagons could dash through the oft-shelled town and disappear through the Menin Way and down the corduroy road towards Passchendaele. Down that road for a few hundred yards, and then a few yards off the road, were some trenches and dugouts. We stayed there for a few days until we hopped across

the Hannebeck and took Kronprinz Farm from the Germans.

For a few days before the 4th October we were collected in a series of trenches sited just off the famous Menin Road. The weather was vile. The road was corduroy, but the mud lay thick on top of the wooden beams and we slid about as we made our way up or down the track.

The trenches were fairly deep, and the soft soil was soon converted to mud. The only exercise we got was when we walked to the bottom of the road to reconnoitre the land over which in a few days we were to attack.

The whole area was a depressing place. There seemed always to be a damp haze by day and we woke up to find a deep fog about us. The Hun was nervous and we were always being shelled. The Menin Road was a death-trap, for it was well marked down by the artillery, and, as there was much movement of troops, there were numerous casualties.

The night before the attack was damp. Two of the companies slipped across the Hannebeck just after midnight and took up their positions for the attack. The other two remained on the west side of the ditch, and with them, in a ruined farm building, stayed battalion headquarters. By this time the Hannebeck was no longer a stream, but a line of shell-holes filled with muddy water.

Passchendaele was the last of the four heavy battles in which I took part. Colonel Cunningham, who had been originally posted to the battalion, had been doing duty on brigade headquarters, but he

now returned to us. Major Weston, who had commanded the battalion at Messines and La Basse Ville, was promoted and took over another battalion. No one had been under-studying me, so into the battle of Passchendaele I went. I did not object, as it was all in a day's work, and I should have felt pretty miserable if the battalion had gone into action and left me behind.

The ground, which had been churned up by long and heavy enemy shelling, was a morass. To walk along, one had to pick one's way round the lips of shell-holes. There was not a square yard of ground that had not been shelled, and the condition of the area became worse as later in the day we advanced over ground we ourselves had been shelling. If we did not walk most carefully we would slip into a hole and in a moment would be at least knee-deep in mud.

Zero hour, which was the name we always gave to the hour selected by the powers for starting a battle, was 7 a.m. It was now raining, and after having seen that all my obligations to my Commanding Officer and the company commanders had been duly discharged I waited under the shelter of an open shed that had once been a stable. It was twenty-five minutes before our zero hour when the Hun clapped a barrage right down on top of us. The barrage took a straight line, running only about twenty-five yards in front of where I was standing. It traversed the Hannebeck. If it did not lift or cease I realized that it would not add to the joy of battle when once we started to advance. After

it had been roaring its fury for a while the stretcher-bearers brought in a shell-shocked officer. If there is one sight that is unpleasant, it is to see a badly shocked soldier. He would lie on the stretcher without the slightest control over his nerves or muscles. When a shell burst closer than usual his whole body would shake like a jelly. The muscles all over the body seemed to go a-jingle and twitched in the most horrible fashion.

As the moment approached for our zero hour, our artillery roared out in a most terrible fury. Apparently the barrage was first laid precisely on the Hun's front line of troops. The reason was made evident to me later. There had been an enormous concentration of our artillery, and in a short time the enemy fire lessened; no doubt our gunners had marked down the position of many of their batteries and gave them particular attention, to their great discomfort. In fact, later on we captured many guns which had been rendered useless by our gun-fire. The explanation of the heavy enemy gun-fire which had commenced before ours was that they had selected as the zero hour for an attack on us a time twenty-five minutes before our own. Their attack did not develop.

At half past seven the Colonel told me to take a runner and see if the companies had been able to gain their first objectives. I remember that I was not to report back at the Hannebeck, but was to seek out our selected battalion headquarters, where we hoped to be. As soon as we started off we ran into a very heavy barrage. The runner, Private

Black, and I crossed the Hannebeck and ploughed our way up the incline on the other side. The ground was appalling. It was so soft that we were more often than not up to our knees. There is one thing one likes to have when one is in a heavy barrage, and that is the ability to move quickly. We were rather like flies on fly-paper. As we were scrambling along I came upon an unfortunate horse that was up to its belly in the mud. It was no use for the driver in charge of it to pull at the reins; the only way to release the animal was to get a team of horses and pull it out after some of the mud had been dug away from the front. As to what happened to it I have no knowledge, but its chances were slender, poor beast.

A little farther on we came to the enemy front line. It consisted of a trench made of a series of shell-holes connected by short trenches. That our barrage had descended right on top of this line was clear from the fact that the whole of it seemed filled with German dead. The line of dead lay as far as one could see. It was a terrible slaughter.

I made my way farther up, bearing slightly to the left. I did this in order to reach a certain distinguishing-mark, otherwise I should have run an excellent chance of losing direction. It is difficult enough at any time to keep direction under heavy shell-fire, and the ground was so soft that every footstep had to be placed with care; and, added to that, on this occasion, when we reached the flat, the direction had to be changed slightly. I had taken the precaution to secure bearings in order to assure

correct direction. As we got on to the flat, actually a low plateau, the enemy were shelling it most viciously with shrapnel. The shrapnel was more accurately timed than it had been on the Somme the year before, and we were lucky to come through it whole.

I found the landmark, and had a few words *en haute voix* with a small group of men who were standing about waiting for something or other, and then moved off in the new direction. It was most uncomfortable walking under that intense shell-fire. It was impossible to tell whether any particular shell would get us. There were so many, that Providence was the only thing to pin one's hopes to. I came across two or three of our signallers bemoaning the fate of their precious wires. They were brave men indeed, our signallers. Whether there was a hope or not, they were always out repairing on the chance that, at any rate for a few minutes, we might be able to use the line. As I was searching for my new home, which I knew was to be an open piece of trench, the sun came out and some enterprising signallers tried to signal forward by means of the helio. It was the only time I had seen it used in France, and it was interesting to see if it would work. After a while, to their great joy and my complete astonishment, there came back the answering flickering. It did not last long, for there was always a great deal of smoke from the bursting shells.

As I was standing for a moment talking with my runner, we were facing a small group of soldiers

about fifty yards away. Suddenly, in the inferno of the shell-fire, one large high-explosive shell burst right in their midst. As it struck the ground it burst with devastating effect; the men were all killed or wounded. The effect of a shell bursting is upwards and outwards, somewhat like a parasol upside down. One of the men at whose feet the shell had exploded was hurled up into the air. So great was the disrupting force of the shell that as the man's body was blown into the air the limbs were torn from it. In effect, it was as if the shell had burst within him.

During a battle it was not possible to notice if a shell was coming near unless there was a lull in the shelling. During the trench warfare, however, when the shells were visiting us singly, one would hear first the explosion at the cannon's mouth; then, if it were a howitzer, the noise of its approach would be a sighing sound, which, as the shell came nearer, would change to a deeper note, and it would appear to hurry. If the shell burst very near, it would sound just overhead, and with a little experience a soldier could tell if it was to be a near thing or not. If, on the other hand, the shell was a "whiz-bang"—that is, an 18-pounder—all one would hear would be the pop of the explosion, a whir or shriek, and a bang as the shell burst. There was no time to wonder how near it was to be. It was called a "whiz-bang" onomatopoeically.

We found the headquarters at last, and the Colonel came along all right. He had a capital sense of direction, and had been up to one of the company

commanders himself to see how the battle was waging. The rest of the battle of Passchendaele, so far as my battalion and myself were concerned, lasted for another three days. We did all we were asked to do, and finished up in Kronprinz Farm according to plan. It was a costly business, particularly during the last day, because we had advanced without the full support of the artillery, the soft ground preventing their coming up. Then the rain set in and the ground became a swamp and the guns shot most erratically. It was not the gunners' fault, for as they were fired the guns would slip back and spoil the shooting. Many of our guns fired very short in consequence of this, and casualties from this cause became inevitable.

One wet day I had been up in the early morning to see a company commander about his dispositions, and was returning alone, when, to my astonishment, to say nothing of alarm, I heard a shell coming towards me as if it were going to be a near thing; but, to my indignation, it was coming from the wrong direction. It burst thirty yards from me and had come from our own guns. To add to my annoyance, a wretched German machine-gunner noticed me and in a sportive mood took a long shot at me. Fortunately, except for a short burst, he did not persist, and so I was not obliged to lie long at the bottom of a mud-pool to avoid his bullets.

On one occasion on the first day, as I was walking down a decline, I came across a battalion of troops. As the shelling had been—and, indeed, was at that moment—very heavy, I thought some of our troops

were coming back, a thing they had never done before. Of course, I was wrong. It was a battalion of prisoners moving to the rear in charge of a couple of our men. They were rather a weedy-looking lot on the whole, and were not comparable with those we had gathered in on the Somme or at Messines.

At last the order came for us to be relieved, and we were duly replaced in that dreary field of battle. It took the battalion many hours to get out. The going was indescribably filthy. It was impossible to hurry; indeed, it was hardly possible to keep one's feet. Some engineers had laid a long line of duckwalk, but the wretched things slipped sideways when one or two of us stepped on to them. When we did get out we were all exhausted. It had been raining, and had it not been for the fact that we managed to get hold of a rum issue many of us would not have been able to stand up to the last day of the battle. My faithful groom had brought Esther down the Menin Road as far as possible. He helped me on to her patient back, which I reached with a struggle, and then she did the rest. Sure-footed, she picked her way over the slippery corduroys and landed me back where shells troubled not and where there was a change of clothing waiting for me. I had left out my batman, Richards, as he had been with me in every other stunt, and I knew that he would be of very little use to me for the two or three days I anticipated the battle would last. He was the best type of batman, and, although he would not want to go into such a battle as Passchendaele if he had only himself to think of, he was deeply

distressed he could not come with me. It was good to see his face when I turned up safe and sound.

On the second night out from the battlefield we reached Poperinghe, and on the outskirts of that village we occupied some hutments. The enemy aircraft were very busy over our lines and took great risks. They carried out raids during the nights, and on the night we rested at Poperinghe a squadron came across and paid us a visit. We knew they were coming over, for the sound of their engines differed from our own. Then came the terrific explosions near by as their bombs hit. Aerial bombs were very powerful, and there were few duds. That there was one, however, I have every reason to be thankful. It seems as if it were but yesterday that I was lying down on a bed in the hutment, thoroughly exhausted, when there was a whirring sound and a terrific thud outside. I did not shift, and the thing that thudded did not explode, so I waited for the morning. Outside the hutment, a few yards away, the aerial bomb had penetrated into the soft ground and had failed to explode. Had it exploded, there would have been a complete absence of hutment and its contents.

There was a Chinese labour gang a few hundred yards away, and a bomb had exploded in their midst, killing their English sergeant-major. I heard that it took weeks to collect that gang again. They scattered in every direction, and it was with the utmost difficulty that they could be induced to resume work.

As we were resting at Poperinghe for a day or

two, the New Zealand Rifle Brigade came up to go into the line to share in that ill-fated attack on the heights of Passchendaele. Among the officers was my old friend Wardrop. He called in to bid me farewell. He had spent eighteen months in England, mostly in hospital. To see him again was a joyous surprise. We spent some hours together, and just before we parted he assured me that he knew his time had come. He did not complain; his chief thought was of satisfaction that after nearly two years in hospital he had at last come across to join his old regiment and fight, and yet he knew he was to have only one chance. I reminded him of my luck, and told him he would have the same.

On that fateful 12th October he led his men most gallantly against the German pill-boxes. He received some shrapnel in the thigh, and a machine gun ripped into his chest. He knew he was passing on, and when the stretcher-bearers came to lift him he refused to let them touch him, but told them to take some of his men who lay beside him. He was the bravest of men, and died just as I, who was so intimate with him, knew he would die. His death separated me from the greatest friend I ever had.

After the disastrous attack on the 12th and 13th October we were called into the line again, and there we stayed for a day or two shivering in the wet and cold and cursing our fate. Headquarters was an advanced post called Otto Farm, round which there had been some fierce fighting. We were thoroughly exhausted by the strain, the irregular food-supplies, and the discomfort. At last the

Canadians came in and took our place, and out we crawled and back to Dickiebush and thence by train to Bayenghem. Our feet had the trench disease, our clothes were torn and wet, and altogether we were pretty miserable. Then up went our spirits again. We were given copious leave, and were just getting back to form, when back to the line we went.

Immediately after Passchendaele an order come from somewhere in the clouds that a few officers and other ranks who had had a strenuous time might have a fortnight's rest at the seaside, north of Boulogne. I was one of those who was given this leave and, with my batman, made for Wimmereux. I had a complete rest there and began to realize how greatly I had needed one.

When we got to Wimmereux we found that the Portuguese Army was concentrated within a mile or two of the place. They were a weedy lot, and all sorts of stories were told of their physical condition. Disease of a particularly loathsome type was alleged to be rampant throughout the army. The officers and men were all undersized, and round and narrow shouldered. The whole army was very unmilitary in its appearance. Later—in March, 1918—when they were in the line and the Germans made their last but mighty effort to win the war, so little resistance was offered by the Portuguese, it is said, that the enemy simply formed up in column of route and marched through. Not a sign of resistance from England's oldest ally! How are the mighty fallen! *Deposuit potentes*—and they alone had to shoulder the odium of their fall.

At Wimmereux the Australian and New Zealand troops had a camp to themselves, while the Portuguese were farther down the road and on the opposite side. One day some Australians had a difference of opinion with the Portuguese, and, to our horror, we learnt that the latter had knifed two of the Australians. That night my batman asked me if I was going into town, and hoped I was not. He said he was going out, and would I please not ask him where he was going. As we were dining, several of my fellow-officers told of some rumours about retaliation by the Australians for the stabbing, but details were lacking. That night the Australians and New-Zealanders, without, of course, any officers, raided the Portuguese camp and retaliated with interest. I heard there were a hundred casualties. Next day my batman was singularly evasive when I asked him if he knew anything about the raid. An inquiry later revealed that the " counter-attack " had been successful, and the enemy had learnt that it is unwise to knife Australians.

CHAPTER X.

LONDON AND PEACE

WHEN the fortnight's rest at Wimmereux was over I returned to the battalion. The holiday had done me great good and I was once more fit. The New Zealand Division had been used too much, and it was not nearly so effective as it had been. The engagements in October soon showed the Army Commander that good troops can be overworked. As a consequence, the whole Division moved; reinforcements were sent for, and everything was done to restore the unit to its previous condition.

During most of November we were at Wizernes, and supplied working parties for the line. To get there we had the use of a light railway. I used to go down to the starting-place and see the parties entrain. They looked like giants in the toy train as it bumped along on a very ill-constructed line. With irritating frequency the train went off the rails. The men did not seem to mind that if they were outward bound, but when it happened as they were coming home after a long day's work it was quite another matter. Then we moved back to Hoograaf, a dull Belgian village, where we expected to stay till after Christmas.

Now that the war had been going for three years, and threatened to continue to do so for as

many more, we had a reserve battalion stationed on Salisbury Plain, and more particularly at Sling, The new arrivals for the infantry from New Zealand and those discharged from hospital went there before being drafted over to France. My turn came now, and on the 9th December, 1917, I said good-bye to those good fellows with whom I had lived so long. I expected to be in England for three months, but as events developed I did not return to France.

I made my way to Boulogne and then across to Folkestone by one of those leave boats which scurried across the Channel with a destroyer leaping alongside and ahead, as a dog does when taken out for a walk. Then to London. There was not so much joy this time, for I was worn out and my old trouble due to the sands of Egypt was recurring. After a day or two in getting my things to Sling Camp to await my return after leave, I took the train west to Swansea. There I spent Christmas with some relatives. For the first time I saw small bands of men and women going from house to house singing carols. To sing in tune seemed easy to them, and each voice might have been professionally trained. Soon after Christmas I left the south of Wales. The city of Swansea did not attract me at all, and the seaside resort, Mumbles, fell far short of fascinating me, although I was easy enough to please after the long time I had spent in France.

Anxious to see Manchester, I had accepted an invitation to spend a few days there. What a relief Manchester was! The city seemed intensely business-like, the buildings were tall, and the streets clean.

Some of them, however, were cobbled, and I could not forgive that. Then back to dear old London, and my leave was up.

Out on Salisbury Plain I took up my job as adjutant of the reserve battalion of my regiment. There we taught the new arrivals how we carried on the war across the Channel. The men were anxious to learn, and Sling Camp sent over the reinforcements fully trained to fight alongside their veteran brothers.

The work was a great relief, and I enjoyed it and the many entertainments that the people of England provided for her soldiers, and that, of course, included us. There was a huge Y.M.C.A. hut equipped for theatricals, and many a good play, well acted, was put on by amateur actors. Sometimes the leaders of the professional stage came along and helped, to add to our enjoyment. During the short time I was there Sir Frank Benson and Lady Benson, with their company, did a season on Salisbury Plain solely for the entertainment of the soldiers.

One day I received an order to repair forthwith to London and to report to the G.O.C. there. Away I went, and there General Richardson asked me if it would be possible to arrange for all soldiers to make their wills, and whether it would be possible to set up some sort of legal office to cope with the thousand-and-one things that required to be met with legal experience. This seemed like New Zealand again. The chance of spending three months organizing a legal office was even better than running a reserve

camp. Leave from camp was granted to me, and for the next two or three days I was given a room in which to work and told to organize a system on paper.

While I was doing so I collapsed, and the unfeeling Director of Medical Services sent me by ambulance to our hospital at Walton-on-Thames. The fury that possessed me was enough to keep my temperature up. I was particularly anxious to get my scheme working, but it was not possible from my bed, with a nurse starving me, as I thought, and then feeding me on bismuth. However, I made a bargain with her that, provided she let me out in ten days, I would do everything she asked of me. Towards the end of my stay in hospital I was able to sneak out of the grounds and make my way to London for an hour or two and there talk over the scheme with the General. He was not aware then that my leave had been self-granted. However, the Chief Medical Officer knew, and we arranged that I should take all his beastly medicine and lie up in town as much as possible.

The General had been receiving all sorts of inquiries from the Minister of Defence in New Zealand, and from the Chief Justice, to see if it were not possible for each soldier to declare in writing that he had made a will and stating where it was, or that he did or did not want to make one. The old will form on the page at the back of the pay-book had many serious disadvantages. It was usually ignored by the soldier. He would use the book up and lose it. Sometimes when it was taken

from the dead body of a soldier it was so mutilated by the bullet or shell that had killed its owner that the will was indecipherable.

I devised a scheme that worked smoothly from the beginning. I issued a carefully prepared memorandum to all units in France, Egypt, or England, making their commanders responsible for seeing that all ranks under their command completed a proper will form or endorsed on such form a statement that the soldier did not want to make a will, or that he had already made one and gave the address where it could be found if required. It was a remarkable achievement. The printers rushed the job of printing the instructions and will forms, and on the 6th March, 1918, ten thousand forms were sent across to the troops in France, and every unit commander complied with the order before the dreadful 21st March.

When the wills started to come back I gathered a small staff of old soldiers who had been solicitors or solicitors' clerks in the days of peace, and we checked the thousands of wills.

The unit commanders did their jobs so carefully that 48,500 forms were duly completed, and only two and a half per cent. were invalidly drawn or executed. No doubt many of the invalid wills would have passed muster as soldiers' wills, but it was my aim that the wills should stand the test that a will had to stand when there is no war to loosen the requirements of due execution. Should a testator be killed, we would send his will to New Zealand. The work was very heavy, but I had been careful

to collect as clerks men who understood what was going on over in France, and it was a point of honour with my staff that, as we could not be over there, we would work day and night, if necessary, to do our job and look after the affairs of our fellow-men in the line. Unluckily for me, the doctors branded me "Home service," which meant in their cryptic way that I was not fit for general service overseas. When the reserves in England were combed out soon after the German attack in March, 1918, we all tried to pass the doctor, but none of my staff were fit, and we had to bear the brand of being unfit for the line for the remainder of the war. But we made up for it as best we could. Our office lights were going every night in order to cope with the ever-increasing work that was coming in for our consideration. There were a good many non-combatant units at headquarters, and many of the non-commissioned officers used to think it smart to dog it over the man who was across on leave. It was, of course, only those who had not been to France who used to be a pest to the soldier on his short leave.

I remember one officer, when the March offensive was at its height, coming up to me as I was examining the list of officers of the headquarters staff. I indignantly showed him that I was labelled "Home service," while he, lucky blighter, was marked "General service." His eyes almost dropped out of his head when he saw the list. He muttered something and went away. Next day when I glanced at that list I saw that there was an alteration. The officer in question was now marked "Home service"

on a new list! We all looked at the war from our own point of view, after all!

The General took an interest in my job and had it turned into a legal office for the use of the Expeditionary Force. Jobs of every sort began to pour in. Marriage misfits were numerous. The ladies used to regard themselves as hardly done by when they learnt that they had to get their divorce in New Zealand if they wanted to rid themselves of their soldier husbands, as they could not get a divorce in England. While our soldiers did not have vast territories in the form of prickly-pear farms, as our Australian contemporaries had, there were other tales of untold wealth to offer to the English ladies of their choice. Time after time soldiers would come to me seeking advice on divorce. I remember one country lad who had lived in the very backblocks of New Zealand coming to me. He had fallen to the seductive charms of a "perfect lady" who thought she had met him before somewhere in Piccadilly! They married the day after they had met on the street. The faults in these marriages were prettily evenly divided. Our men were not quite so innocent as some believed, while, on the other hand, some of the wives were without scruple or diffidence.

No unit of the Force had a better idea of the various types that went to make up our army than my law office. The powers of attorney required showed that some of the soldiers were far from being poor men. There were some wills requiring special drawing, involving the disposal of many

thousand pounds' worth of assets. Some of the wealthiest who had come away had done so without making any disposition of their property in the event of their death. We experienced all the incidents of a complete solicitor's office, except, alas, the costs! The solicitors in London, and in particular one large firm, allowed me to make very free use of their services, for which they received inadequate remuneration.

So much work was there that until after the Armistice I did not take any leisure, and was unable to search for the many places in London that I longed so much to visit.

In some way or other I got to know the Superintendent of the Law Courts while I was in London. I think his name was Smith. One morning in May, 1919, I read in the *Morning Post* that the Bench and Bar proposed to welcome Lord Reading back from his duties in America. I telephoned Mr. Smith and expressed a wish to see the ceremony. When I reached the Lord Chief Justice's Court, Mr. Smith pushed his way through the crowd of barristers that filled the well of the Court and I followed closely on his heels. He showed me into the hinder seat of the dock. Some ladies were in the front seat, and I learnt later that one of them was Lady Reading.

After a while Lord Birkenhead led Lord Reading and a great array of Judges on to the bench. As soon as they were seated Lord Birkenhead addressed the Bar—nominally the Attorney-General, Sir Gordon Hewart, representing them—and expressed his

feelings, as representing the Judiciary, towards Lord Reading in the most polished and accomplished style. He recalled his distinguished services to his country not only as Chief Justice, but as plenipotentiary in America. He did not forget to mention, too, that during Lord Reading's absence Mr. Justice Darling had filled his place with complete satisfaction. When Lord Birkenhead had finished I thought I had heard the best speech I was likely ever to hear. Then Sir Gordon Hewart addressed the Lord Chancellor in an able speech, but it was not so effective a speech as Lord Birkenhead's. When he had finished, Lord Reading leant forward and in a speech far and away superior to those that had preceded his replied to the eulogia. Lord Reading's speech was a masterpiece for arrangement, matter, and manner. It made a very great impression upon me at the time.

I have a small souvenir of that occasion. As Lord Reading was replying, Lord Birkenhead was leaning back in his chair and he slowly tore up two pieces of paper. As soon as the Court was cleared I suggested to Mr. Smith that he might go on to the bench and retrieve the torn papers, and that we could then share them, as I felt sure they were notes for the Lord Chancellor's speech. They were; and I have half of them now in my possession as a memento of a very interesting occasion.

While in London I had the opportunity of joining a detachment going to the East under General Dunsterville, but, again, just as I was making arrangements, the doctors would not pass me.

One great good that came out of the evil of the war was the religious effect it had on all ranks. It is not easy in these days to remember clearly the spiritual outlook of the young man before the war. It is very difficult to recall pre-war experiences, because the mental effect of the war placed all that had gone before rather out of focus in one's memory. Before the war the young man was, however, generally indifferent to matters of religion. The years before the war, too, were luxury years, when prosperity, with all its baneful concomitants, was much in evidence.

During the war there was always the Sunday church parade—unless, of course, we were in the line. Old soldiers will remember that, at first, church parades were boring happenings, to be dodged if possible; but later, as the soldiers reached the war zone, these parades were sought after. Perhaps it was partly due to the fact that the padres were able to realize from very practical observation how near we lived to eternity. Men were inclined to hang on the lips of the padre. With Death at one's elbow it was easier to face the realities of life and the hereafter. In the face of death men were anxious to be prepared spiritually for the crossing-over if the occasion should arise. The particular denomination was not a matter of such great importance; it was the comfort of the Word that mattered.

Incidents that last in my memory are those of the church parades before the battle of the Somme in September, 1916, and before the battle of Messines in June, 1917. The earnest and fervent demeanour

of the men on those parades showed that religion was real. There were no scoffers. The sight of men praying before a battle is one never to be forgotten. I can see them now. A grand body of physically perfect men all uniting in their praise of the Lord, into whose hands they placed themselves, is an inspiring sight. During those moments they were removed from the earth; they were standing before Christ, seeking His blessing and vowing to go on in His fight. It required the war, with all its significance, to remind most of us of ourselves. There we took stock of ourselves, and those of us who came through are the better for the reminder it gave us of our religious obligations. I believe the brotherhood that army life created made us religious. We saw things as they really were. We had no self-seekers, no luxury, no ease, but we were all the time face to face with Christ himself. The war has made a lasting effect on most of us; we are, I feel sure, the better for it. Our faith in the Lord is definitely stronger.

In France we had our parades, and in London when I was unfit for general service I naturally continued to attend church. In the Royal Chapel of the Savoy, where the Reverend Hugh B. Chapman was chaplain, I listened to some of the sanest and most eloquent sermons. The little padre used to check the confusion of thought of his congregation, and sanely and manfully directed their devotions. Every Sunday night the little chapel was packed, and when I came to know him I used to help him in his service by reading the lessons for him. I often

think now of the curious incident of a soldier in khaki—a colonial, too, from the youngest Dominion—standing at the lectern of one of the oldest churches in old London and reading the Bible lessons to a London congregation, men and women who probably hardly knew of the country whence he had come.

When later I left England, on saying farewell to the padre he pressed into my hands a beautiful ikon which he had received from a Russian nobleman who had been obliged to flee his country. The head and hands of the Madonna and the Christ are exquisitely painted, while the clothing and head-dress are of silver, beautifully embossed. It is indeed a work of art. It makes one wonder why that vast nation, whose religion was expressed so much by symbols, should so readily deny its faith.

One of the effects of the war that will last will be the more active and regular observance of religious duties displayed by a great proportion of the male population. It would be strange if the result of placing vast numbers of men alongside eternity was not to have a definite effect on their spiritual outlook.

It was difficult to work contentedly in London in 1918. One felt a slacker, sleeping in a comfortable bed at night, eating good food, running no risk, while one's comrades were facing the mighty German assaults at first, and then pursuing the foe in their retreat. From March to June it was agony to be in uniform and yet not to be fighting. It did not seem so bad when we were winning, and for the

last few months before the end we did not feel it so keenly.

On the Friday before Armistice Day I had gone to Torquay to defend or prosecute in some courts martial. At lunch there was a rumour that an armistice had been signed. I caught the next train back, only to learn that it was a false alarm. However, it was obvious that the end was coming soon, and London was the place to be in when it did come.

It is not difficult to remember Armistice Day. It will be very difficult ever to forget it. We were working away in our rooms. We knew that the war was coming to an end and that we were going to win, but it had been so long in coming that I, for one, felt unable to slacken until the surrender came.

In the morning of the 11th November the news came through. A weight slipped off our shoulders. I simply left the office and went out into the streets. The sirens were hooting, the bells were ringing, the motor-horns were honking, and men and women were rapidly filling the streets in thousands. "All clear" was sounded in every street.

No one had a thought of anything but that at last the war was over. I walked out alone into the enormous crowd that collected in Kingsway. Girls without hats rushed out of offices, formed rings round any soldiers they met and danced with the maddest joy, and before they fled on down the street they kissed their prisoners. Everyone was laughing and singing, till I came to the corner of a side street in Kingsway, where I saw a young widow standing wiping the tears from her eyes. She simply could

not forget her husband, who would not be coming back to her.

Along the way to the Strand I pushed, and out of the Strand and through the Mall to Buckingham Palace. There were some odd millions of people beside myself who had thought of the same thing. We all stood at attention and sang "God save the King" till we were hoarse. Somehow I found my way back to the Strand. It was crowded with the joyous throng, when suddenly the shouts of joy changed in tone. I shall never forget that change. There was a cry from all, full of emotion, full of affection, full of the deepest feeling; then the cry was caught up and the cheering had almost a prayer in it. The King and Queen were riding by. They were in an open carriage and their only escort was two policemen.

That was a time when true feelings were bared; there was no veneer about the cheering. Affection and loyalty were unmistakable. We could all have cried with the joy of seeing the man who personified all that the Empire stood for.

If for any fleeting moments of his life the King had ever doubted the sentiments of his peoples, that reception would have reassured him. Crowds, when they speak under the stress of great emotion, are true indices of public opinion. At that moment the King knew, as perhaps he never knew before, how his people loved him.

On that day it was impossible to contemplate anything calmly. It would have been a sin to try to do so. We had won the fight at long last, the

enemy was utterly vanquished: to-morrow we could think.

The strain of four years had snapped; it was delirium, we were light-headed; the effort, too great to contemplate, had succeeded; British justice had prevailed; right had vanquished might; all was well with the world. The work had been done nobly by great men. The ground had been prepared for a noble and a lasting future. We were too excited to contemplate an ignoble peace. We had no idea that politicians could possibly tarnish our work. On that day only one thing mattered. It was over at last, and we had won the war. We had done our job.

The rest of the day was just a confusion of shouting and cheering and wandering about amongst the great crowds that gathered in the streets. It was useless trying to do anything but join in with the throng. As in a flash, one's whole outlook on life had changed. A few hours ago the hostile shells were speeding across No Man's Land seeking to destroy; the Hun was then flying and fighting, still bearing arms; Death was always lurking about. But now it was all different! We still wore the garb of destroyers, but we were no longer fighting and killing. The enormous load of anxiety was lifted, and it did not matter what we were doing now.

Dinner that night at Romano's was a wonderful, joyous, noisy affair. There were toasts to acknowledge from every near-by table, from complete strangers who were just too glad to worry about convention.

We had won the war—that dream had come true!

It had been at times a doubtful sort of dream, too. I do not suppose we ever thought we should not ultimately win, but in those long winter days in the trenches in France, and in those terrific battles of the Somme, Messines, and Passchendaele, the day seemed far away—too far really to regard as something worth while thinking about.

Later, on Armistice night, probably in order to keep out of trouble, I entered a theatre. There was some sort of patriotic drama being acted, but neither the actors nor the audience seemed to worry much about the play. Every few minutes there would by a clapping and a cheering and some one would start one of the well-known war-songs. The show would halt, the actors on the stage would line up facing the audience and join in the laughter and the singing. Then off they would go again, only to be halted a little later to join in another song that someone in the pit had started. At the end of the show one of the principals came to the footlights, made a patriotic speech, and called for three cheers for the soldiers in the audience, and everybody slapped them on the back.

After a few days we all settled down again to hard work. The return of the soldiers to New Zealand, which was called repatriating them, was pushed on apace. My law office was crowded with "clients" who wanted divorces started or proceedings defended. Many wanted to return to New Zealand on account of urgent private business.

I found it very difficult to find time in which to see the sights of London in such a way that

I should remember them. The nights, however, were easier to move about in than they were in the war days, for one of the first changes made in London after the signing of the Armistice was the cleaning of all the blackened street-lights. For years the streets of London had been dark gullies with never a light to help the wanderer. Soon all the lights were shining brightly again and the gaiety of night life returned with all its old vigour.

During the last few months of my stay in London there were some wonderful parades of regiments returning home from the war. There were two special triumphant marches which will always be remembered. One was the march of the British troops, headed by Sir Douglas Haig. The shouting and the cheering still echo in my ears. It was at the end of that march that Sir Douglas Haig hurried to Queen Anne Gate, called on Lord Haldane, and left him a book inscribed to the greatest Secretary of State for War that England ever had, thereby showing the soldier's manly appraisement of Lord Haldane in contrast to the opinion voiced previously by some of the less chivalrous politicians.

The other march of triumph was that of the British colonial troops. Londoners had learned to know and love the colonials, and they made this very clear on that day.

Slowly at first, and then more rapidly, the New Zealand troops were sent back to their homes across the seas. Many of our troops took brides with them, and most of them have settled down happily enough in their new homes here at the Antipodes.

At last it came the turn of my office to pack up and go home. One hot June day, reluctantly, I taxied to Fenchurch Street Station, caught the train to Tilbury, and the s.s. *Briton* was soon making her way down the Thames. Now that there was no turning back, the ship could not go too quickly. It was overcrowded. The deck accommodation was hopelessly inadequate. At Panama I went ashore for an hour. The passage through the canal was the last we saw of land till, nearly three weeks later, we caught sight of New Zealand. The voyage was inexpressibly dull. We were all jaded and worn out. It was only as we drew nearer to New Zealand that we were able to shake off our lethargy.

One morning as I stood on the deck I saw the ship turn towards Pencarrow Head. A little later she passed between the Heads and the pinnacled Barrett's Reef, heading due north, making towards Somes Island. In a quarter of an hour she swung a few points to the westward, opening up the western shores of Wellington Harbour; a few minutes later there was a further swing to the west, and the wharves were in sight.

Then came a cursory glance from the Port Health Officer. I managed to go off on a tender ahead of the troops, and the great adventure which had started more than four years before had come to an end.

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