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VIVID STORY OF LA BASSE BOMBARDMENT

Graphic Story Told By Pte. Bob Caldwell in Letter to Mother—Hell's Horrors Discounted.

Private Bob Caldwell of the 2nd Battalion writes the following letter describing the battle of La Basse to his mother, Mrs. Caldwell of Iroquois. It is dated from France, June 18, and reads as follows:

"We came out of the trenches yesterday after several days' occupation. In the papers of June 17 there is mentioned that a British attack between Estane La Basse road and La Basse canal was repulsed after they had occupied the first line trenches. I was in that region and spent my birthday where that attack was at its strongest. On the 13th at 3 p.m. our artillery opened fire on the enemy's trenches, which ran from forty to three hundred yards from our line. We were forced to evacuate the trench at forty yards distance owing to the nearness of the heavy shells and I secured a good position for the gun at three hundred yards range and worked hard to make it secure, and at 6 o'clock got it so that a shell would have to light right on it before putting us out of business.

Not One Sided

"The bombardment at 7 o'clock fell off. Believe me, the bombardment was not all one-sided, for the Huns answered us well, but the trenches they bombarded were evacuated. At night we had to build three more positions for our gun and keep up a fire on the enemy's trenches at intervals of half an hour or so, thus preventing them from repairing the damage done by our artillery.

"Your parcel came that night and often when the rapid fire came I had a wedge of cake in my hands. The next morning we made a thorough preparation for the attack and consolidated our position in every conceivable manner.

Plan of Attack.

"We had neared their trenches at the forty-yard point and here the attack was to be made by one of our battalions and on the left by an English division. Once their line was broken we were to bomb them out of their trenches. From our positions we were to keep up a rapid fire until our bombers had come along the trench. This progress was to be marked by a blue flag on the parapet.

"At 3 p.m. a heavy bombardment opened up on their trenches. Shells of all sizes were hurled at them. As the time advanced the bombardment grew in intensity.

Rain of Shells.

"At 5.45 the real bombardment started and shells to the number of over two thousand a minute were hurled at a frontage of one thousand yards. The Huns knew our intentions and were replying in a goodly way. The din was awful. At 5.55 every one was warned to lie flat in the trenches for a mine was to be exploded and three minutes later the most damnable explosion announced its success. Large pieces of earth went heaven-high and then came crashing to earth. The crater was over forty feet deep and ninety yards long. One of our fellows remarked regretfully that he saw no helmets in the air. The shock was scarcely over till we were at the guns and opened rapid fire in their trenches in front.

But One Desire.

"The noise was now maddening. Every one had the same desire—to kill! Shells dropped a few rods away, tearing the parapet to pieces and the earth was rising and falling and groaning under the ferocity of it all.

Went with Cheers.

"At 6.15 over the parapets to our left, went the boys with a cheer—many of them fell with that yell still on their lips the others tearing like mad across the forty yards, someone falling at every step. Over the enemies' shattered parapets they went and we lost them. In the excitement we forgot everything but that our men were in the first line and we were to protect them. Crammed into the little position with the gun I carried on the work of destruction. Box after box of ammunition was eaten up by it, and the gun was so hot that asbestos gloves were necessary to handle it.

Flag Advances.

"Two or three minutes from the time the charge had elapsed the fellow observing shouted that the blue flag was advancing. I had to keep my eye one hundred yards in advance of it. On came the flag, sometimes

on the double. It suddenly stopped, stayed stationary a minutes and then fell back a little. The gun was too hot to work so I had to get in a new barrel. We worked like mad men at and a minute later it again spoke destruction. (The blue flag had fallen back a couple of hundred yards.) A large shell fell where it was—away it went with its bearer. An hour later the firing abated somewhat. We had no news of what we had done but we were too busy making repairs to find out. At 9.30 the bombardment resumed and the bursting shells in the dusk made awfully weird the land around.

"The Germans were counter-attacking in strong forces and we were at the job again. A couple of hours later our boys were forced to fall back. They had pierced the Huns' third line.

Hell But Shadow.

"In church the pastor warns his congregation of hell and its terror. In that attack and the one of the next day hell would have been but a shadow; the work of Satan would have been chivalrous compared to the butchery here. One shell landed about twenty yards from us in our trench. Five poor fellows were blown to fragments and four others were wounded. That is but what one shell did.

Youth And Age.

"Among the prisoners that passed us were two I noticed, a young chap of sixteen wounded in the hand. His face was beaming with smiles for he knew he was safe. The other was an old man of fifty or thereabouts. There were tears in his eyes as he told us that he had a wife and five children at home. He, too, knew he had been snatched from an almost inevitable death. Could they not afford to smile?

"That day between our trenches and the enemy's was one of our chaps wounded. He was nearer their trenches than ours but was facing ours and from time to time with extreme difficulty he waved the water bottle at us. The sun was scorching. Everyone attempted to get near him but all were shot at and several shots were fired at him. I wonder if the prisoners I spoke of and those in the trench were the same?

"We are back from the firing line for another rest. During the seven days we had less than two hours' sleep a day. I am well and hope you are all the same."

Life-saving Dogs

"The French government is using a number of dogs for the purpose of finding wounded on the battlefields. It is said that they find many men who have crawled into shelter after being wounded and might otherwise be easily overlooked, especially at night."—News item

And so the dog adds one more to the manifold proofs of its usefulness and its friendship for mankind. Yet it is not enough, perhaps, to make the vivisectioners pause. The procession of dogs into the serum-poison laboratories will continue undiminished. Many of these identical life-savers may come to their end in the torture chamber. A handsome reward, to be sure. But what of that? The serum mania, like other manias, is no respecter of either dogs or persons.



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Warsaw in War-Time

Warsaw is the same as ever. It is Sunday, and the church bells are ringing. The Boulevard de Cracovie is filled with promenaders. The weather is bright, and the air almost warm under the influence of the sun's cheering rays. One sees many pretty toilettes and still prettier faces. It was Mickiewicz who said: "The Polish women are the most beautiful in the world." Yonder, in a setting of green, is the great poet's statue on an imposing pedestal. One wonders why the inscription should be in Russian; would it not be possible to take advantage of the generous proclamation of the Grand Duke Nicholas and have it engraved in Polish?

The nave of the cathedral is filled with worshippers, listening with rapt attention to the oratory, at once delicate and powerful, of a priest still in his prime—the Abbe Gralevski, one of the finest preachers and one of the most devoted Polish patriots in the capital. He was a deputy for Warsaw in the first two Dumas. Two years ago he withdrew in a large measure from political life, and devoted himself to social work and school reforms.

His audience seemed spell-bound by his eloquence. The Abbe had touched a sympathetic chord in describing the national country life with its simple manners, ancient ballads and local costumes. I saw tears running down old men's cheeks as the vision of their dear native country took form and color on the orator's word-landscape.

Economic Foundation Of History

The popularity of the Marxian dogma is due to the facts that, in the first place, it is an interpretation of history, just as the theory of Evolution was an interpretation of progressive variation in nature; and, in the second place, it appears under certain circumstances to be primary. Without some economic foundation obviously no history whatever is possible. Food is the first consideration of life, and under certain circumstances, becomes the only condition that matters, it does not follow that food is the only motive of life. On the contrary, food as motive is predominant only where food is precarious; as soon as food is comparatively secure, other motives begin to play; and in advanced societies these other motives overlay the economic as a building stands upon its foundations. Threaten the security of food and, of course, all the motives made possible by secure food are shaken and become relatively insignificant. The economic motive, in fact, can be found at the bottom of all other motives; but this is not to say that all other motives are economic, or even that economics enters into them. Because at the bottom of every structure you will find a foundation which is naturally the first condition of the structure itself, it does not follow that the structure is all foundation!

The Mule

Mules are long-suffering patient and much-abused servants of ungrateful man. The humbler servant, the proverbially meek and lowly donkey, has plenty of altruistic sympathizers to speak up for his rights. But the mule!—he is the scorned embodiment of all round "cussedness, and the adjective "mullish" is plain evidence that his most conspicuous trait has become a classic. But the obstinate mule has his nobilities as well as his faults. He has borne the greatest conquerors in safety over the Alps and Pyrenees, and known when to draw his front and hind feet sharply together when the edge of the precipice was dangerously near, and needed no guiding hand to show him which way to turn next. Therefore when we saw by a headline in a local paper lately that a mule was to blame for having "committed suicide" we looked again and saw that the animal had merely stood still when he was appealed to go forward, and therefore got killed by a speeding trolley car, which probably could not be stopped in time to save the poor animals life. We are told to go and learn of the aut if we would get virtue and wisdom; we might also learn of the instructive mule, if we were in diplomacy and had a gulfy precipice gaping suddenly at our feet, with only a few inches of margin at the slope. We never hear of a mule making a false step; hence, obstinate a creature though he be, we may also learn of him.—Catholic Standard and Times.

Politicians and Corporations.

The Canadian Northern seems to have a sinister influence in both federal and provincial politics. How did it come that the G.N.W. took orders from the C.N.R. to destroy political messages affecting the Manitoba graft scandal?

Browne—Whatever became of Diggs? You remember he took a Ph. D. in Greek poetry.

Gray—He's scanning meters for a gas company.

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