#### Private Smith of the 90th

Written for The Western Home Monthly by Edith G. Bayne.

A platoon of soldiers swung down the straggling cobble-stoned village street. They marched at ease for they had just left the trenches after eighteen days' fighting, and were bound for the town of - where food and rest and recuperation awaited them.

An old Flemish woman stood at the door of her little auberge, in the deserted hamlet, and stared in bored listlessness at the oncoming column of dusty dishevelled and wholly unrecognizable troops. She had taken heart of grace and returned to her old home where little of any value remained, and was the only living creature in the place.

Suddenly, as the men passed opposite to her, she uttered a cry and darted out

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--!" she exclaimed, in terror. "Come on Smith!" shouted the corporal.

"Go on. I'll catch up," returned the private.

"My son! Do not go to G-," said the old woman. "Do not go there. Do you not know that -

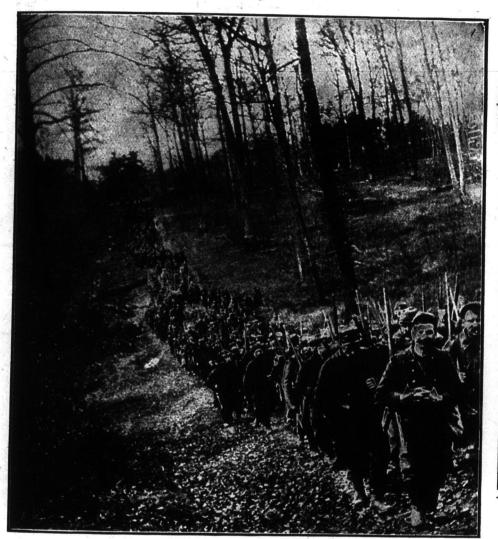
"Listen, madam," said the private gently, as he disengaged himself from her "my name happens to be Albert, all right, but I am not your son."

He spoke in the best Flemish he could

muster. She gazed at him with growing

perplexity.

"Then—who are you? Ah, you would joke with your old mother! I, who sent you off with a smile on my lips and a pain here."



En Route to the Relief of the Men in the French trenches.

A division of fresh French troops en route to the relief of the French soldiers worn out by the fighting in the trenches

into the roadway. The corporal gave the alt and the men came to a stand- her heart. still and turned with mild curiosity to find that the old woman had seized the

arm of a private about halfway down the line, and was greeting him with a great display of affection and delight.

"Albert! Albert!" she cried, while she patted his mud-covered arm, and drew him any of them They lie concealed in the church of St. Gabriel. You will walk into a trap!" her and removed his tattered cap. He stood there in the warm spring sunshine, a handsome dark-eyed young fellow of twenty-eight or so with a slim well-knit form and the ready smile that had defied the buffets of outrageous fortune many a time. As she renewed her exclamations and began to pour a volley of questions at him in rapid Flemish the corporal advanced.

"What do you want, mother?" he pointing to the inscription. demanded.

'He is my son," she said.

One of the men tendered her a bit of said, sadly. money but she shook her head and clung closer to Private Smith.

"Her son!" and a laugh passed down the line.

'Her troubles have driven her dippy—poor soul," said the corporal. "Form! March on!"

But Smith did not fall in, for the woman was whispering to him with intense emphasis. He had picked up a few words of Flemish during the past three or four months, but he could understand very little of what she said. He did, however, understand her to ask where he and his companions were going. She awaited his access breathlessly.

She pressed her knotted hands over

"No, no, — believe me, I am Canadian. We are a company of the 90th Rifles, and we are on our way to our billet."

Private Smith had now concluded that the old creature was partially, if not altogether demented. It was with difficulty that he tore himself away.

"If I see your son Albert, I will tell him you are well and still at home," he countered, as he drew off. Over the doorway of the auberge were the letters: Albert Heerwyck.

"Is that your son's name?" he asked, She nodded.

"You will not come back alive," she

He laughed lightly. "If there's to be a fight," he said, as he waved his hand in farewell, "the 90th will be the victors. I will, myself, madam, ring the belfry-bell so that you may know. You will hear it and know that it means victory."

It was three miles to G---. Smith caught up with his company just as it was ascending the last hill overlooking the city. He told the corporal of the old woman's warning. The officer was skep-

"If we listened to the tale of every old woman in this land we'd be running around in circles," he said.



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