

"And I must say the men are bricks. I never in a single instance heard a complaint. They lay there in a row waiting their turn—mangled and torn by every torture that art could devise and ingenuity perfect. One poor chap had his hand badly torn and begged me to try and save it. The tendons were cut and the metacarpal bones shattered, and I was finally forced to amputate at the wrist.

"May 14th. I was forced to stop writing—had an order that we must evacuate camp in two hours. There was quite a scramble getting ready. We started at 8 p.m. and trekked until 3.30, about three miles behind the firing line. The whole division moved and it was all done like clock work. We have taken up quarters at a certain point where a tremendous attack is supposed to be made. It was a weird march, made in absolute darkness, so aircraft could not detect us, as they might shell the roads. I have a jolly good horse—call her 'Nellie'.

"The whole firing line is a constant succession of flares, lighting up the sky like streaks of lightning. I forgot to tell you I have been lucky enough to be appointed surgeon to the 8th Battalion, which the Port Arthur and Fort William boys are in. Unfortunately it was reduced from 1,000 to 400 men, but they have the reputation of being the only men that stood the gas.

"It was a terrible scrap. Out of the four regimental surgeons of my brigade, two are dead and one hit in the back with shrapnel and is paralyzed. So you see my job is not entirely devoid of interest and entertainment. Out of twenty-two stretcher bearers eight are left.

"Our division is reinforced almost up to strength again, and have the sublime confidence that they can lick three times their weight in Germans. The German infantry is flat. They move slowly, lack vivacity and *elan*, but their artillery is superb. We hope to be moved up to the attack in another day as we are all feeling fit.

"Two hours later. Had to stop my letter and go to orderly room. We have orders to stand to and be ready to move at any minute. There is a continual roar of artillery. First comes a lively hurricane of German shells, then will crash out the answering tempest. It is impossible to describe the shell fire. It is like rain lashing a pond, and the rifle fire is like a million devils driving tacks. I think we are in for a delightfully warm entertainment.

"The Germans are really excellent people to fight with, and they have tenacity, courage, a wonderful organization and pay inimitable attention to detail; but they lack what we might call *esprit de corps*, which is engendered by an Anglo-Saxon love of sport. To the typical Tommy, war is a big game. Of course this is no gentleman's war. Often the guns are blazing away all night, and there is mighty little rest for anybody. Aircraft are constantly buzzing overhead like enormous flies. There is mud and blood and crimson bandages and an intolerable stench, and the miracle of the whole thing is to find out what witchery, or lure, or fascination, can induce men to leave comfortable firesides to go into it. Really, I can't analyze it. These are things at the very back of life and no other outlook in front of them; there is distance to win through, pain to bear; life to defend and death to face. You are a savage again, elemental and primitive, but in the last word a savage. You are unprejudiced, simple and free. All your day is dotted with incidents and thrills and cardiac spasms. Gentlemen in Canada, now abed, will curse themselves because they are not there.

"There are so many things I might tell, stories of quiet heroism, of