

RUDYARD KIPLING'S GREAT STORY OF THE WORLD WAR

A Quarter of a Million German Prisoners In One Month—Victory All Along the Line From Ypres South.

IX.—BEGINNING OF THE END FOR GERMANY.

Every battle has its peculiar characteristics. St. Leger (Aug. 26, 1918) was one of heat, sunshine, sweat; the flavor of at least two gases tasted through respirators or in the raw; the wall of machine-gun bullets sweeping the crests of sunken woods; the sudden vision of wounded in still-smoking shell holes or laid in the sides of a scarp; sharp whiff or new-spilled blood, and here and there a face upon which the sun stared without making any change. So the hours wore on, under a sense of space, heat and light; death always just over the edge of the space, and impudently busy in that light.

Lagnicourt was shelled a little by a high-velocity gun between Sept. 4 and Sept. 6, and seventeen bombs were dropped on the battalion, wounding two men.

By all reason there should have been a bitter fight on that ground, and full preparation for it was made. But the enemy, after St. Leger, seemed fit to withdraw himself suddenly and unexpectedly out of all that area. For one bewildering day and night "the bottom fell out of the front," as far as the Guards Division was concerned. It is a curious story, even though it does not directly concern the battalion. Here is one detail of it:

Dead Horses and Flies.

On Sept. 3 the Second Brigade toiled in from Monchy in full war-kit, and, tired with the long day's heat, formed up west of Lagnicourt before dawn, detailed to win, if they could, a thousand yards of so of cherted-up ground. Only a few hundred yards under a creeping barrage, one gun of which persistently fired short, and—found nothing whatever in front of them save a prodigious number of dead horses, and a few corpses and an intolerable buzzing of flies.

As they topped the ridge above Lagnicourt they saw against the first light of the sun dump after German dump blazing palely toward the east. That was all. They wandered, wondering, into a vast, grassy, habitable plain that stretched away toward the Bapaume-Cambrai road. Not a machine gun broke the stupe-

fying stillness from any fold of it. Yet it was the very place for such surprises. Aeroplanes swooped low, looked them well over, and skimmed off. No distant guns opened. The advance became a route march, a Sunday walk out, edged with tense suspicion. They saw a German cookhouse wrecked on the grass, and, beside it, the bodies of two clean, good-looking boys, pathetically laid out as for burial. The thing was a booby-trap arranged to move our people's pity. Some pitied and were slow to hit by the concealed mine. None made any comment. They were tired with carrying their kit in the sun among the maddening flies. The thousand yards stretched into miles. Twice or thrice they halted and began to dig in for fear of attack. But nothing overtook them, and they installed themselves about dusk in some old British trenches outside Boursies, four miles and more as the crow flies from Lagnicourt. At midnight they came their rations and the punctual home letters across that enchanted desert which had spared them. They were told that their brigade artillery was in place behind the next rise, ready to deliver barrages on demand, and in due course the whole of our line on that sector flowed forward.

The Hindenburg Line.

Operations against the Hindenburg Line were to open in Sept. (1918) with the attack of fourteen divisions of the First and Third armies on a twelve-mile front from opposite Gouzeaucourt in the south to opposite Soucy-Cauchy, under the marshes of the Senesee River in the north. It would be heralded by two days' solid bombardment along the entire front of the First, Third and Fourth Armies, so that the enemy might be left guessing which was to hit first. When the First and Third armies were well home, the Fourth would bludgeon the German position in the south, and leave the whole thing backward.

The share of the Guards Division in the northern attack was to cross the Canal du Nord at Lock 7, north of Havrincourt, on a front of a mile; then work through the complicated tangle of the Hindenburg support line directly east along the ridge from Flesquieres village to Premy Chapel, which stands at the junc-



"The prisoners, 80 of them, were herded into a wood, where they cast off their helmets on the ground, laughed and shook hands with one another to the immense amusement of our people." Published by arrangement with the New York Times.

Drawn by George Van Werveke.

tion of the roads from Novelles, Maroing and Graincourt, and to consolidate on the line of the Marais-Graincourt road.

Enough rain fell the day before to grease the ground uncomfortably, and when at 3:30 a.m. the Irish guards moved off from their reserve trenches west of Lagnicourt to their assembly positions along the Denicourt-Graincourt road to Bullen Trench, the jumping off place, it was pouring wet. They were not shelled on the way up, but the usual night work was afoot in the back areas, and though our guns, as often the case on the eve of an outbreak, held their breath, the enemy's artillery threatened in the distance, and the lights and "flaming onions" marked their expectant front.

The Attack.

No. 2 Company (Captain C. W. V. Bence-Jones) supported No. 3, and No. 1 (Lieutenant the Hon. B. A. A. Oxilvy) No. 4. They stayed for a moment in the trench, a deep side one of the Hindenburg pattern, which the Scots Guards had left. It was a healthy spot, for the shells were localized here and the dirt flung up all along it in waves. Men scrambled out over the sliding, flying edges of

it, saw a bank heave up in the half light, and knew that, somewhere behind that, was the canal. By this time one of the two Stokes guns of the Mortar Battery and half the gunners had been wiped out, and the casualties in the line were heavy; but they had no time to count. Then earth opened beneath their feet and showed a wide, deep, dry, newly-made canal with a smashed iron bridge lying across the bed of it, and an unfinished lock to the right looking like some immense engine of war ready to do hurt in inconceivable fashions. Directly below them, on the case on the eve of an outbreak, held a collection of agitated pin-heads, the steel hats of the Scots Guards rearing ladders against the far side of the gulf. Mixed with them were the dead, insolently uninterested, while the wounded, breaking aside, bound themselves up with the tense, silent preoccupation which unhurt men, going forward, find so hard to bear. Mobs of bewildered Germans had crawled out of their shelters in the canal flanks and were trying to surrender to any one who looked likely to attend to them. They saluted British officers as they raced past, and, between salutes, returned their arms stiffly to the safe "Kamerad"

there were a few moments of blessed shelter ere they scrambled out and re-formed on the far side. The shelling here was bad enough, but nothing to what they had survived. A veil of greasy smoke, patched with flame that did not glare, stood up behind them, and through the pall of it, in little knots, stumbled their supporters, blinded, choking, gasping. In the direction of the attack, across a long stretch of broken rising ground, were more shells, but less thickly spaced, and craters of stinking earth and colored chalks where our barrage had ripped out nests of machine-guns. Far off, to the left, creaming with yellow smoke in the morning light, rose the sullen head of Bourlon Wood, which the Canadians were faithfully paying the debt contracted by the Second Battalion of the Irish Guards in the old days after Cambrai.

At the crest of the ascent lay Saunders Knap, which marked the point where the Scots Guards would lie up and the Irish come through. Enemy aeroplanes now swooped down with machine gun fire; there seemed no way of getting out artillery to attend to them and they pecked like vultures undisturbed. Then Battalion Headquarters came up in the midst of the firing from the line established themselves in a dug-out and were at once vigorously shelled, together with the neighboring aid-post and some German prisoners there, waiting to carry down wounded. The aid-post was in charge of a young American doctor, Rhys Davis by name, who had been attached to the battalion for some time. This was his first day of war and he was mortally wounded before the noon of it.

"Kamerad!"

The trench filled as the day went on, with details dropping in by devious and hurried roads to meet the continual stream of prisoners being handed down to Brigade Headquarters. One youth, who could not have been 17, flung himself into the arms of an officer and cried, "Kamerad, Herr Offizier! Ich bin sehr jung! Kamerad!" To whom the embarrassed islander, brutally:

None recall precisely how they reached the bottom of the canal, but

The Beginning of the Glorious End—Sweeping Over the Hindenburg Line—"the Bottom Fell Out of the Front."

"Get on with you. I wouldn't touch you for the world!" And they laughed all along the trench, face as they dodged the whizzbangs out of Orval Wood, and compared themselves to the "wurrums" begging for mercy."

Back area rumors and official notifications were good, too. The Ninth and Second Corps of the Second Army, together with the Belgian Army, had attacked on Sept. 28 (1918) from Dixmude to far south of the Ypres-Zonebeke road; had taken all the heights to the east of Ypres, and were in a fair way to clear out every German gain there of the past four years. A German withdrawal was beginning from Cambrai, which at the end of October was under, though not actually in, our hands, and Maubeuge, lay thirty-five miles of France, all opening the way for such hastily made defenses as the enemy had been able to throw up after the collapse of the Hindenburg systems. There, then, the screw was turned, and on Oct. 8 the Third and Fourth Armies attacked on a front of seventeen miles, our junction with the French First Army a few miles above St. Quentin. Twenty British divisions, two cavalry divisions and one American division were involved. (Copyright, 1923, by Rudyard Kipling.)

The German Losses. The Germans had, during September, lost a quarter of a million prisoners, several thousands guns and immense quantities of irreplaceable stores. Their main line of resistance was broken and overrun throughout; and their troops in the field were feeling the demoralization of constant withdrawals, as well as shortage from abandoned supplies. Our people had known the same depression in the March push, when night skies, lit with burning dumps, gave the impression that all the world was going up in universal surrender. But work was still to do. Between Cambrai, which at the end of October was under, though not actually in, our hands, and Maubeuge, lay thirty-five miles of France, all opening the way for such hastily made defenses as the enemy had been able to throw up after the collapse of the Hindenburg systems. There, then, the screw was turned, and on Oct. 8 the Third and Fourth Armies attacked on a front of seventeen miles, our junction with the French First Army a few miles above St. Quentin. Twenty British divisions, two cavalry divisions and one American division were involved. (Copyright, 1923, by Rudyard Kipling.)

IRVIN S. COBB AT THE THAW TRIAL

Trial of Harry K. Thaw a Succession of Thrills—the Incident of the Family Doctor and Rentless Jerome.

I recall one murder trial from which no one big thing stands out because all the way through it was made up of climaxes and thrills, lapping one on the other. This was the first trial of Harry K. Thaw for the murder of Stanford White.

Editors and reporters are forever dreaming of the perfect murder story—which will be the story of a young and pretty woman, preferably an actress, accused of killing a rich man by poisoning him, with a lot of mystifying features and complications to go along with it.

Lacking such, the next best thing from a newspaper reporter's viewpoint was the case of this young millionaire spendthrift, already known everywhere for his freaks of extravagance, killing a genius, on account of a rarely beautiful woman, upon the top of New York's most noted building, a building which was itself a creation of the victim, during the opening performance of a summer roof garden show, and, as a result, of Broadway first nighters for eyewitnesses.

If there were missing from the crime any of the elements which make up a great newspaper story, the trial which followed provided an ample plenty.

On the day Evelyn Thaw, show girl and artist's model and town beauty, took the witness stand and told her wonderful narrative with such a wonderful dramatic effect and finish, the correspondent of one of the big London papers sent his paper more than five thousand words—sent it by cable at regular trans-Atlantic toll rates from a temporary cable office that had been fitted up in the corridor of the court house.

As a reporter for one of the New York afternoon papers, I wrote in longhand a total of more than 500,000 words of running report—enough words to make eight sizable summer novels. And I was only one of the evening newspaper reporters there.

From a reporter's point of view, you couldn't beat that trial as a continuing story.

There was something to write about every minute. There was the money that was poured out by the Thaw family to pay the expenses of the defense—vast sums being spent on a defense.

There was the battle of the insanity experts—and the list of them was a directory of the high-priced alienists of the East—which lasted, off and on, a month.

There was the line of divisions in the family pew, as we called the long row of seats set aside for the kin of the prisoner—at one end, the white-haired, proud old mother, and her daughter Alice, Countess of Yarmouth, the printing of whose title gave a daily garish to the story; and at the other end, Evelyn Nesbit, Thaw's navy blue school girl in costume, "her testimony clothes"—always with her little actress friend at her side—a "wounded bluebird" and a Broadway sparrow, one of the descriptive writers dubbed them.

There were the exaggerated ego, the dementia Americana, Dr. Brinton D. Evans' brain storm, and of view, the rest of the alienist's picturesque jargon.

There was the savor of the stage and the studio; the weird reveals of certain so-called rich Bohemians; the family skeletons in a grinning procession; the thread of intrigue which ran all through the theme, stringing plots and scandals together.

All these things, and each of them, helped to make a murder trial that ran at high tension, without sagging or dull.

Finally, there was the intellectual fight between the two leading lawyers, and this in itself furnished one of the big features, if not the biggest, of the whole trial.

For the state—Jerome, quick and catlike in his bodily movements; a veritable needle-gun in his mental play; reaching his conclusions with the mechanical precision and swiftness of a cash register or a patent adding machine; terse, abrupt, snappish, yet when the spirit moved and the occasion suited, indulging in out-

bursts of denunciations eloquence fit to make your scalp scrawl under your hair.

The Silver Tongue. For the defense—Delmas, almost the last notable survivor of the old southern and western school of silver tongues; imported, like a grand opera star, at tremendous cost from his own Pacific slope to dazzle a jury of matter-of-fact New York business men; suave, courteous, stately; a collier of sonorous phrases, wearing rings on his fingers and bells on his voice; and a tongue forked for a biting sarcasm.

But, after these years it is not the war between these two great lawyers, nor the fuddled prisoner at the bar, nor the woman in the case that stands out clearest in my memory, but an incident that centers about a physician who was called by the defense as their first witness.

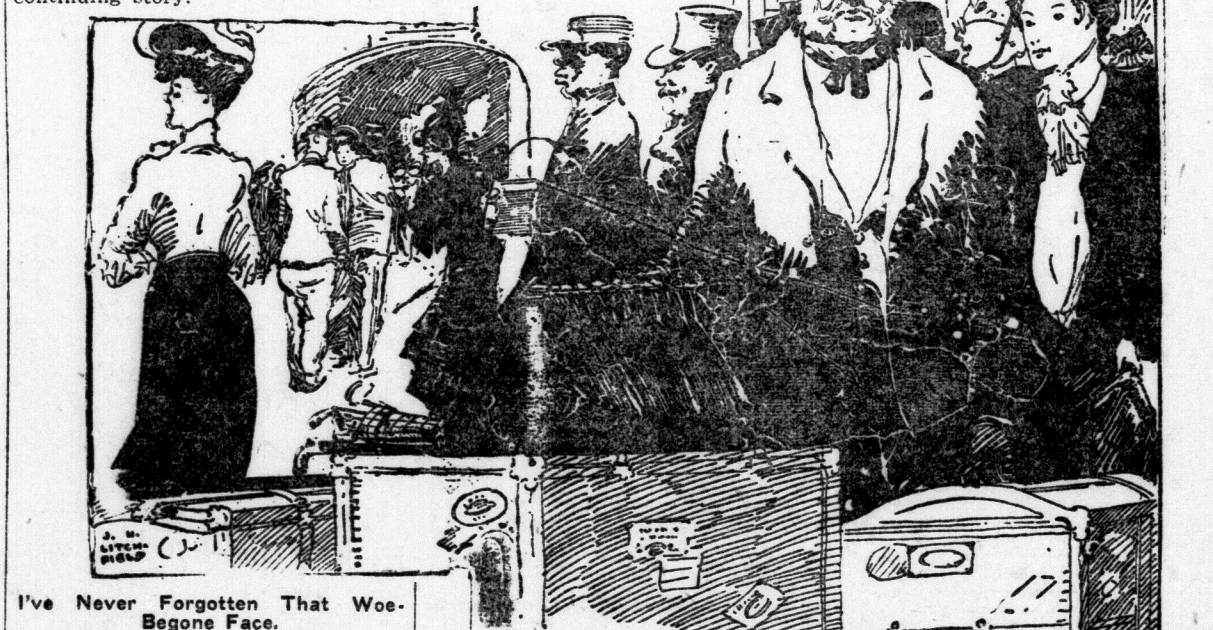
One of Thaw's massive battery of lawyers—it has since been conceded that he had several times as many as he needed—made the mistake of undertaking to qualify this gentleman as an expert in insanity and, having committed that blunder, piled a worse one on top of it by putting in him a hypothetical question framed on the evidence of the other side.

Undoubtedly the witness was a practitioner of standing and ability in his home community. But he was no alienist.

Danced On the Scrape. And when it came time to cross-examine, it didn't take Jerome a minute to find this out. Always a relentless cross-examiner, he went at the witness blood raw. He ripped him to pieces and danced on the scraps.

Before our eyes the witness sat there and visibly lost flesh. At first it was funny; then it was lamentable; then it was pitiful.

For weeks thereafter an unhappy family physician was hanging about the court room seeking what he called a vindication and begging the lawyers for Thaw to put him back to work and give him a chance to ex-



I've Never Forgotten That Woe-Begone Face.

Something Every Minute.

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