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tears in their eyes. However, those who receive letters read them to those who don't, which helps along.

"It seems too bad that the Germans make such a mess of all the beautiful little villages around; they seem to take a delight in knocking the church steeples over first and then through daily shellings finishing the job at their leisure. It is a rather nervy piece of business moving up the roads at night to the trenches, never knowing when the enemy will open fire; they seem to get good ranging on the roads and you pass great holes where the shells have hit. The other day we dug a deep trench and filled it with the brand of gas the Germans use; some of our boys put on a new style of helmet we have and walked through it. The test was highly satisfactory, so we have not much fear in that direction. We are constantly guarded by aeroplanes and the enemy shell them at every opportunity. However they seem to be a very hard target to hit. It is just like a great fireworks display; our airmen are very daring and show no fear.

"It is wonderful the way the poorer classes remain here in the villages which are being constantly shelled. The life a short way behind the firing line is very much like our Canadian life in the bush, everybody rustles for himself. The country round about is very pretty with lots of trees. My ideas of the trenches were sadly shattered. I imagined a barren country with broken trees and bare ground with lines and lines of trenches; instead of that the country looks just as usual with fields, hedges and trees, the trenches being so cunningly concealed that they are hard to detect—as for the artillery no one knows where they are except those immediately concerned.

"The system for taking away the wounded is splendid, noiseless motor ambulances running hither and thither. It is a little hard at first trying to sleep with the chances of being shelled at any time. The shells make a terrific noise, more than anyone could imagine. Of course we have dugouts to get into, but if the shell hits the dugout 'Good night.'

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"The boys in our battalion are fine. I could not wish for a better lot, happy as the day is long and always ready to turn out. Some have been taken away for special work and this almost broke their hearts. We are just like one huge family; we have all the officers we left Calgary with, no additions and they are doing fine. I am telling you this as I fear that some person whom I should judge is afraid to do his bit, has been spreading a rumor that only three of us retained our commissions. We have all retained them and the sooner the lie is wiped out the better.

"It has rained quite a little lately and we are up to our knees in mud, some nights when we are moving we sleep in our great coats, and when that happens it is rather damp. However, we never seem to get ill.

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"Rats seem to abound in the trenches, where they come from nobody seems to know, and when they run along the parapet they frighten one more than the bullets. We have just had a joke—one of our officers rummaging around discovered a tin which he presumed was pepper; with this addition we ate our lunch with great gusto, when suddenly our cook made his appearance and informed us that the tin contained *Keatings Powder*—you can imagine our feelings.

"It is hard to say anything as to the duration of the war as we see only a little bit of it. The Germans seem to be a very scary lot, as when we are quiet at night they are continually sending up flares to see what we are doing.