

Despair—and Freedom

2

been to dinner with them, and had had turkey, potatoes, coffee, butter, eggs, sugar in his coffee, and all the luxuries you could think of. We just sat and stared at him. It seemed impossible that any of our own men would have the sauce to torture us like that, and yet we could not believe that it had really happened. Finally, one fellow could stand it no longer. He was nothing but skin and bone, but he grabbed a dividing board and there were just two wallops—the board hit the Australian's head and the head hit the floor. Then half a dozen more bounced on him and gave him a real licking. When he came to he forgot all about the wonderful dinner he did not have.

Not long after this the Russian doctors proved to the Germans that there was no black typhus in our barracks, and we were allowed the freedom of the camp, except that we could not visit the Russian barracks. That was no hardship to me, nor to the rest of us, except one chap from the *Cambrian Range*, who had a special pal among the Russians that he wanted to see. And of course, when it was forbidden, he wanted to see him all the more.

A day or two after the order I was standing outside the barracks door when I saw this fellow come out with a dividing board in his hand. I thought he was going to smash somebody with it, so I stood by. But he stooped over and jammed one end of the board against the threshold of the door, scratched