

It was no joke, getting our patients out of that town! Every few minutes "Fritz" would drop a shell right in front of our door-way, so when we emerged from our cellar, with a patient, it was a case of "running the gauntlet." Needless to say, we did not linger on our way out of that most unwholesome spot! Our pace, however, was necessarily slow, for climbing over great heaps of wreckage, and picking our way around deep shell holes while carrying a stretcher shoulder-high, was no easy task.

The crash of exploding shells never ceased. All around us the great black columns of smoke, earth and debris shot upwards, as each shell struck and exploded. Again and again the flying fragments of a shell would hum over our heads. At one place, where the walls had been completely levelled we were in full view of the German trenches. They did not let us forget that fact, either, but sent the rifle bullets buzzing about our ears like bees!

On and on we would trudge, through that shrieking inferno of fire and steel, until we had left the town behind us. Then, although occasional shells would drop around us in the open fields, we felt that the danger was over for that trip.

Among the wounded we handled were quite a number of German prisoners. These invariably received the same attention and treatment as our own boys. Whatever may be the bitterness between Canadian and Hun while in the trenches, they are all comrades when brought to the horizontal position.

The treatment accorded German prisoners, whether wounded or unwounded, forms a wonderful contrast to the Germans' treatment of our boys who fall into their hands.

One morning, as we were returning to headquarters for a rest, we escorted a number of German marines, who had been captured the previous night. Some of them were slightly wounded, but all were able to walk. After walking a mile or so, some of them seemed pretty well worn out. On reaching a certain corner of the road, there was a small booth, and there, still within shell range, was the ubiquitous Y. M. C. A. man, handing out hot "Bovril" (gratis) to the soldiers going to and from the trenches.

After having partaken of this refreshment, our prisoners brightened up wonderfully. They chatted and laughed together, and seemed to regard their being taken prisoner as quite a good joke.

That morning after our prisoners had had breakfast, a little incident happened which seemed to me to bring out vividly the grim irony of war. The car that was to take the prisoners "down the line" was waiting out on the road, and was rapidly being filled. One poor fellow, who was wounded in the foot, was limping painfully down the rough path leading from the dressing station to the road. But the Red Cross knows no nationality. In a moment one of our men was by his side, his arm was around the German's waist, while Fritz's arm was round the Canadian's neck, and in that lover-like attitude they made their way to the car. As the German climbed the steps of the car, he turned round, smiled and nodded. In answer, he received a friendly pat on the back, and thus, in silence, but in the best of good fellowship, parted those two representatives of the nations whose guns were striving after mutual annihilation, only a few miles away! As our fine motor ambulance car glided off down the road, a big German sergeant stood up and waved us all a hearty farewell!