

WRITER FULLY DESCRIBES CONDITIONS IN THE BRITISH TRENCHES AT "WIPERS"

London, Sept. 17.—Some new points of view are presented in the course of an article from an authoritative British source which has been placed at the disposal of the New York Times. Just what a man will see and what he is likely to feel if he visits the allied front line near the Somme at the point where the British army has just made one of its many steps forward are the writer's theme. After describing the general character of the country he recounts his progress through the communication trenches. He says:

Walking with your head two feet under cover along a neat crack in the earth with a sharp corner every few yards, finally you turn the last corner into the actual firing trench. It is a trench to gladden the connoisseur's heart. How the men must have worked whenever they were not fighting—and is digging less dear than fighting to the soul of youth?—in order to model this perfect line of defense and offense; its shapely firing step and clear-cut vertical walls and massively squared buttresses! Here is no gapping V-shaped ditch to collect the enemy's trench whistlers in, and the men know it. You walk along the trench and see just pride as well as confidence in their faces.

It is noon now, and some of them are blowing on hot tea to cool it, or eating out of their dished hot stew of meat, potatoes and peas. It has not always been thus in the English firing trench. The English only learn war in each of their wars by degrees, but now they have learned it. The day is fine, and other men are asleep, basking like cats in a state of beatitude on little sunny shelves and bunks cunningly sculptured out of the trenches' firm clay walls.

One little knot of men off duty are bending over a comic paper at a corner. The wary old trench dweller always looks a corner, because he can jump around it at the shortest notice and put a solid angle of earth between himself and anything noxious that drops in. On the other side another group cheerfully reopens that undying theme of debate among the British soldiers—the merits and demerits of the salient at Ypres.

"How long was you at Wipers?"

"Four months."

"Well, I was there five months, so what right have you to speak?"

A general laugh greets this method of proof and some one else cuts in.

You meet officers anxious about nothing except to know what there is in the last English papers. Sentries on duty, with all the crowing of their brass-green steel helmets dipped cunningly down to the parapet's level, report that nothing is stirring over the way. These helmets used to be ugly and highly protective. They looked like the barber's basin that Don Quixote took to be the helmet of Mambrino. The sentries' heads are prettier, and also more virtuous. It covers more of the neck, though not so much as the blue-steel skull caps of the French. Lines are artistic. Worn at the proper angle, it makes the comely young sentry look rather like Donatello's David at Florence.

With stooping heads the sentries report "nothing doing." That means nothing visible, nothing audible.

Peering over the parapet for a moment you see only a wilderness of bare earth, pitted thickly with conical holes from three to eight feet deep. Four hundred yards away is the skeleton of a dead village. No sign of life is to be seen there except perhaps one of the larks which sing cheerfully through cannonades that would make the pheasants in faraway Sussex nervous, or else a big hawk slowly quartering ground and sending the larks into a retirement as modest as that of German airmen. And yet you know that waste is infested; that you need only to raise your head a foot higher to find a bullet dipping itself with a quiet flick into the loose earth behind you; that if you crawled out on your stomach and peeped over the edge of each shell hole you reached you would come at last to one in which men in wide-skirted gray tunics with narrow red bands round their caps were crouching, some of them nursing their one good friend, a machine gun, some of them digging hard to connect hole with hole till a row of fortifications was turned into a line; some of them resting tucked into little cavities scooped in the earth or near the side of a hole like sandmartens' nests on the wall of a quarry, and starting apprehensively up at bomb-laden British biplanes wheeling above in the sky overhead as the larks in the grass look up at a hawk.

Kindness Surprises Captives.

You all know this, because on the way up this morning you talked with a number of Prussian and Saxon prisoners in one of the cages the little camps where the latest captives rest for some days safe out of range of their friends' heavy guns till they can be sent on by train to the base or to England. Three days ago they came down broken-hearted to the cage, their faces lined and drawn with mental overstrain, some of them still mechanically making deprecatory gestures of surrender and entreaty. As they marched today all the lines were smoothed out. They had been fed and had slept for many nights and had found that the "murderers" described to them by their own Sergeant inflicted nothing but offers of cigarettes. So they began to expand in the unexpected sunshine of good treatment and they told what life had been like in the shellholes,

its good points and its bad. The food had been good, but sometimes it did not come because the British guns would draw a kind of fence of falling shrapnel across a piece of country, a sort of showerbath of bullets dropping along the line, so nobody could cross the line without being hurt. Still the bread and meat and chocolate, when they did come, were good and the water was sometimes mineral water in bottles. The trouble was that the British guns would not cease firing and the British aeroplanes would not go away, nor the German ones come out of their sheds.

Sometimes the men in the shellhole would see British troops in the open within rifle range, but would not dare shoot lest British airplanes should see where they were, and send word to a British gun and bring down a high explosive shell on the old shellhole to bury them all alive by a second rearrangement of the earth. You perceive this apprehension just because you twice today have seen the end of a stiff black booted leg protruding out of the wall of an old shellhole.

Other questions about their life at the front the prisoners answered freely. Had they talked politics? Yes. There were a number of Social Democrats in the army and every one thought great changes would come when the war was over, but not now. Were there any desertions? No. Many men would be glad to be prisoners, but would not desert. Many more still would surrender if the German officers were not so quick to shoot men who put up their hands, and if all the German soldiers knew that the Allies did not kill prisoners nor have them scalped by savages.

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Correspondents' Corner

GREAT SHEMOGUE

Great Shemogue, Sept. 20.—Dr. Chas. McF. Avar and wife, accompanied by their guests, Dr. and Mrs. Heaton, of Pennsylvania, and Mrs. Smithing of Scranton, Penn., motored here on Tuesday and were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. James Coleman.

Mr. and Mrs. Devalerms are receiving congratulations upon the arrival of a baby girl at their home on Tuesday.

Miss Eva McMorris spent a few days last week the guest of her cousin Miss Gertrude McMorris, Murray Rd.

Mr. Joseph Melanson of Moncton was here on Sunday.

Miss Nell Cadman, Phoenix, Arizona, returned on Saturday after spending a week in Shediac.

Mrs. MacPeak and family, who have been spending the summer with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Brien, returned to her home in St. John this week.

Mrs. Murray Tower of Upper Cape was the guest of her aunt, Mrs. Jas. Treachin, this week.

Private Daniel Spence, who enlisted in the 14th Battalion three months ago, returned home Saturday, having received an honorable discharge on account of his physical condition.

Mr. and Mrs. Guy Jones of Boston, Mass., and Mr. and Mrs. Alder Jones of Bayfield, were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. James Treachin on Monday.

Miss Roslyn Cadman of Moncton is spending her vacation at her home.

Miss Mayne Spence spent a few days this week at Bayfield.

Mr. Earl Johnson and sister, Miss Vesta Johnson, of Chapman's, called on friends here Monday evening.

Wormwood Scrubs, six useless muscles were taken from one side of the wrist of a patient and transferred to the other, with the consequence that the man, who was previously paralyzed in the hand, can now raise his wrist and extend his fingers.

In one of the military hospitals a little while ago there was a patient who had part of his arm shot away, so that the nerve was missing over four inches. In these circumstances to pick up the ends of the nerves and unite them was impossible. The surgeon who had the case in hand made inquiries at other hospitals in London, and he found that at one of them a man was to have a leg amputated at half-past three the same afternoon.

Orders were issued so that the moment the limb was severed it was put in a saline bath and taken to the military hospital in a taxicab. The patient, under an anæsthesia, his damaged arm was opened, and a piece of healthy nerve from the other patient's amputated leg was substituted for the injured portion. The operation was completely successful, the patient recovering the use of his hand, which had been paralyzed.

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