

## THE RED TRIANGLE

### PICKED UP IN THE LINE.

By George Leslie Stryker.

A few yards in front of our new line lay an equipment. It had been ditched, we assumed, by one of our wounded during our assault on the enemy's third line that morning. We held fast his former support trench on several hundred yards' front in spite of two vicious counter-attacks, and were rapidly converting its parados into a parapet with bags of chalky earth, our artillery pounding his gun positions the while.

The water bottle attached to the "harness" out in No Man's Land tempted me. It might be a "dud," and it might be a prize. It was worth the hazard. Our own bottles were empty; our throats were parched; we were spitting chalk. The sea mist now gathering would protect me some from snipers. And this same mist might encourage him to essay another counter before dark. Over I went and was rewarded by nearly a full bottle of water. The haversack on the salvaged harness was open, but a notebook containing a letter had been overlooked. We quickly slaked our thirst and wished the blighter one bon chance.

The letter was from a girl, and, of course, I read it.

"I'm bubbling over with enthusiasm," she wrote. "My yearning is to be gratified. I go to France to-morrow. We nurses, like you boys, don't consider we've done our bit till we do get to France, after coming all the way from Canada, you know. I don't know where I'll be assigned to, but wouldn't it be romantic if you were to come hobbling along to my hospital with one of those 'darling blighties' you talk about? Still, I don't wish it because it's as you say, you're there to 'blight the blighter'."

"Regarding the other, the—well, your proposal! Well, dear, when you have done your bit and I have done mine, then may be we'll talk about the to-morrow, eh?"

"Just like a girl," chimed in our section commander. "Always keeps a guy in suspense. I wonder if Mac was badly wounded?"

### Still the Boche came.

Suddenly a salvo of "rum jars" unsteadied the earth about us. A terrific barrage for about five minutes ensued, impelling us to hug the bottom of the trench and improvised funk holes. We were on the alert the moment it lifted. And through the thickening mist we could discern forms preparing to hurl moral thunder in the shape of cylindrical sticks. Our machine guns crackled, our Mills' bombs crashed. And still the Boche came on and on. There were no wire here as yet, of course, which made his access easier. He gained a footing. There was a rush of bayonets and short range rifle fire. He was driven out. I felt half stunned and, like a few others, discovered I had a "blighty." Soon it was bound and I was away. At the road dressing station my wound was properly dressed and, as they say, I was well away.

Men who die of wounds at the dressing station are placed outside. There were two

such cases here. I stepped to one of these lying on a stretcher while I awaited the "blightly wagon" and looked at the tag. It was "Mac." I raised the cloth from his face to make sure. Then, half unconsciously I uttered a "Good-bye, old pal." He had done his bit, and I happened to know he had done it well. The ambulance carried us to a clearing station and then whirled us on to a hospital.

At the hospital it was found necessary to perform a slight operation on my arm. When I came to a nurse had her fingers on my pulse. Later she returned and said, "You can't guess what you were doing when under the anæsthetic?" She was a new nurse in France, she said, and what happened amused her. Then she told me I had been singing, "There's a ship that's bound for blightly."

### The Nursing Sister.

This nursing sister was a recruit in France, I mused, as I probed my hospital treasure bag for the missive picked up in the line. My surmise was confirmed when she informed me that she had an acquaintance in my own unit and asked if I knew him. I did. And an indefinable expression of satisfaction stole over her face when I added that he was a good soldier. It would be cruel to tell her all I knew of "Mac" at that moment.

There was a French as well as an English hospital in this ancient town of Hazebrouck on the road to the base. It had recently been bombed from the air in spite of huge, conspicuous Red Cross signs. Preparations for removal were already under way by the hospital authorities. Apparently the Boche had just discovered that his long-range guns could reach this centre. At any rate, they registered a few shots on the rendezvous of La Clesse that day.

Towards evening cavernous sounds of bombing Gothas sent a shudder through the wards. Several of our own machines were seen ascending to thwart their aims. Suddenly there was a crashing cascade of bombs on the other side of the town. The Hun planes were withdrawing, dropping their death loads as they went.

Our stretcher cases were all well away to the new tent hospital farther a rear, the sister said, only a score of walking cases remained awaiting the return of the busy ambulances.

The whirring of aircraft had all but subsided when a terrific smashing roar struck everyone tense and a volcano-like mass of brick and debris rose from one corner of our hospital. Immediately everybody, patients, staff and all, were ordered to run for their lives. A steady siege-shelling bombardment by the blood-hungry Hun continued. And Kultur added another bar to its destruction cross. Only the Imperial O.C. remained behind. From the hill where we retired to await the ambulance Col. Taylor could be seen searching where the first shell had struck. Fatalist, perhaps. At any rate, he had been at Mons and was as indifferent to death as he was to decorations. To him all good achieved in war was but duty.

The next day I inquired for my nurse. The matron asked if I knew her? I felt that I did because I knew "Mac." Then the

matron told me a sad story. And I told her one that related to it. And we read together that portion of the sister's letter I had repeated to the boys in the line: "When you have done your bit and I have done mine, we'll consider the to-morrow." Both had done their bit now.

And for them I like to think that the glory of the Great To-morrow has dawned.

### A WASH-OUT.

There's a spluttering of bullets and a straining of the eye,

Whilst one and all are trying to look cool;  
But beneath our calm demeanour there's a nervous tension high

In the hope that we will perforate the "bull."

The simple rule in shooting is to get the foresight blade

In the centre of the V that is behind;  
With the bottom of the bull then sighted on the line that's made,

A bull's eye on the target you should find.

Well I refrained from breathing as I rapidly took aim.

To keep a steady arm is the first  
Essential thing that's needed, and I tried to do the same,

Though I felt as if my head was going to burst.

As I gently pressed the trigger I was shocked at what took place,

That I got a rude awakening I'll agree;  
For the butt-end of the rifle took a notion to my face,

An eye-opener it almost proved to me.

The bullet left the barrel, I could swear my aim was true,

But its billet I don't think will ere be found,  
For it proved to be a ricochet. The course it did pursue

Was one of ploughing over all the ground.

Then the marker he waved merrily his tiny wash-out flag,

Which told the range at large I had a miss,  
Now if I'd had an inner or an outer or a mag,  
I never would lament my fate like this.

I was firing at 200 when the bullet went agley,  
Then I noticed, oh, I was a blessed fool,  
The rifle it was sighted for 600, so you see

The reason why I didn't find the bull.

### THAT STORY AGAIN.

The sergeant had been working hard to get his awkward squad into shape, but with very poor results; so after trying everything he knew, he yelled, "Squad, halt! Stand easy! Now, boys, I's going to tell you a story. When I was a little tot, mother bought me a box of wooden soldiers, which I happened to lose a few days after, and I cried and cried. Nothing would pacify me until mother said, 'Don't cry, son, you'll find them some day.' And believe me, I've found 'em."

MAJOR W. H. KIPPEN, D.S.O., M.C., Overseas Representative of the Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-Establishment, is at all times pleased to give to all members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, or any persons interested in Canada, any information dealing with Demobilisation, Re-Settlement, and Re-Establishment of soldiers in civil life, either by letter or by personal interview at his Office, 6 Hanover Square, London, W.1.