

trenches in front of us, lest an enemy raid give the show away. So rigid have been the precautions that none of the Canadian officers and men on leave have been recalled. Not for days later do some staff officers rejoin their headquarters, a bitter disappointed lot. Berlin thinks we are in Flanders; London that we are in the south. All is well.

The sky is clear and empty. Only the stars shine down. These and an occasional flicker in the east and the long-delayed rumble of a bursting shell. For against the eastern horizon is the usual pyrotechnic of trench warfare—neither more nor less. Once every few minutes one of our heavy howitzers send across a shell; a dull report and then a wobbling vibration, before it steadies down upon its course. More seldom Fritzie makes reply—the perfunctory business of the night—a shrill messenger ending in a roar of explosion.

The night is very still. It seems incredible that all this unpreventable hum and bustle can have failed to reach an alert enemy. The watch hand is creeping round—half past three—four—ten past four—an interminable laggard. It is to be the greatest barrage of the war. What will this stunning experience be like? One can only imagine.

"Zero" is set for four twenty, and the pointer has barely reached that figure when behind us there goes up a mighty flare, and simultaneously all along the line, ten miles to north and to south of us, other flares light up the countryside. At the same instant there breaks out the boom of our heavy guns, the sharp staccato of sixty-pounders, the dull roar of howitzers, and the ear splitting clamor of whizz-bangs—a bedlam of noise. Shells whistle and whine overhead; they cannot be distinguished one from another, but merge into a rushing cataract of sound.

In front, right athwart the horizon so far as the eye can reach spreads out a hell of flame and fire and bursting charge, reverberating back to us in mighty unison that the battle has begun. Bright from out this fiery furnace break out quick

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