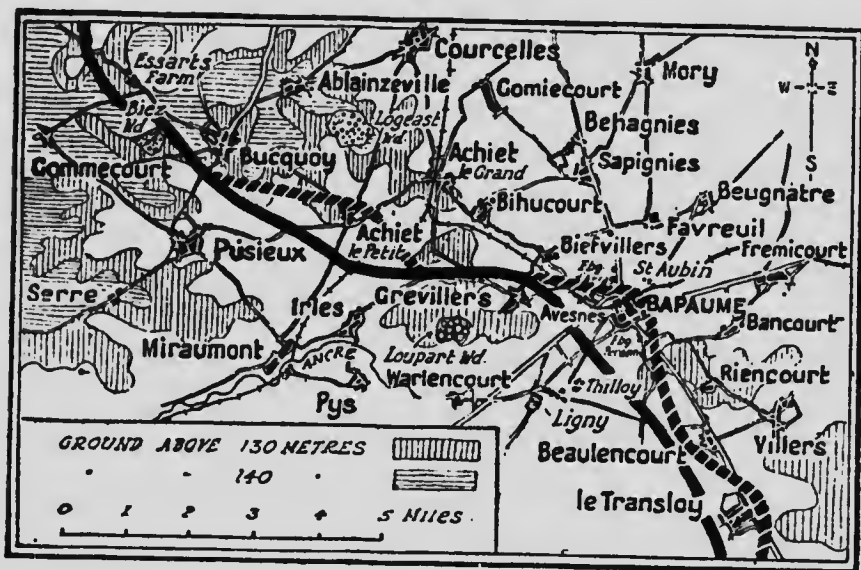


lines—till yesterday morning. The trenches on either side of the Sunken Road were not happy places for Württembergers. For months past our guns had been pounding them so that they were mostly battered down, and only held here and there by little groups of men who dug themselves in. There was no wire in front of them, and here during the wet weather, and now during the great frost, the German troops (as we know



from the prisoners to-day) suffered badly from trench-feet and stomach troubles, and in spite of their moral (they were all stout-hearted men) from what the French call the "cafard," and we call the "hump."

Yesterday morning one or two shivering wretches stood sentry in the German line trying to gain shelter from the knife-blade of the wind. All others were below ground round the "fug" of their braziers. They believed the British over the way were just as quiet in the good work of keeping warm. That was their mistake. In our trenches the men were quiet, but busy, and above ground instead of below. They were waiting for a signal from the guns, and had their bayonets fixed and bombs slung about them, and iron rations hung to their belts. A rum ration was served round, and the men drank it, and felt the glow of it, so that the white waste of No Man's Land did not look so cold and menacing. They were men of the Border Regiment