

tery. The battery was fighting against time and the German gunners to complete its task before it could be silenced. The first team was crippled and destroyed, and another team, rushed out from the cover of the trees, was fallen upon by the shrapnel tornado and likewise swept out of existence.

Then another shell from the German gun roared over, to burst this time well in the rear of the battery.

The colonel knew what this meant. The German gun had got its bracket. The battery had ceased to fire shrapnel, and was pouring high-explosive about the derelict gun. The white bursts of shrapnel had given place to a series of spout-volcanoes that leaped from the ground about the gun itself. Another German shell fell in front of the battery and a good 200 yards nearer to it. A movement below attracted the colonel's attention, and he saw the huddled teams straighten out and canter hard towards the guns. He turned his glasses on the German gun again, and could not restrain a cry of delight as he saw it collapsed and lying on its side, while high explosive shells still pelted about it.

The teams came up at a gallop, swept round the guns, and halted. Instantly they were hooked in, the buried spades of the guns wrenched free, the wheels manned, the trails dropped clashing on the limber hooks. And as they dropped, another heavy shell soared over and burst behind the battery, so close this time that the pieces shrieked and spun about the guns, wounded three horses and a couple of men. The Major, mounted and waiting, cast quick glances from gun to gun. The instant he saw they were ready he signalled an order, the drivers' spurs clapped home, and the whips rose and fell whistling and snapping. The battery jerked forward at a walk, that broke immediately into a trot, and from that to a hard canter.

Even above the clatter and roll of the wheels and the hammering hoof-beats the whistle and rush of another heavy shell could be heard. Gunner Donovan, twisted sideways and clinging close to the jolting seat, heard the sound growing louder and louder, until it sounded so close that it seemed the shell was going to drop on top of them. But it fell behind, and exactly on the position where the battery had stood. Donovan's eye caught the blinding flash of the burst, the springing of a thick cloud of black smoke. A second later something shrieked, hurtling down and past his gun team, struck with a vicious thump into the ground.

"That was near enough," shouted Mick, on the seat beside him. Donovan craned over as they passed, and saw, half-buried in the soft ground, the battered brass of one of their