

# MISSSED BY THE CABLES

## Graphic Incidents of the War, Told in Soldiers' Letters and by Wounded Men From the Front.

### BLOOD-COLORED RIVER

Private Thomas O'Dea, a Falkirk man in the 2nd Battalion of the Seaforth Highlanders, describes the retreat of the Germans after the battle of the Marne. He says:

The Germans are now, of course, in retreat and before their entire army operating against us had got across, our engineers had blown up the bridge. I could understand then the appearance of the river when we reached it. There were thousands of dead Germans floating in it, and the water was just the color of blood. We had heard the report of a bridge being blown up as we reached it, and when we came that length we worked around to the right flank of our own forces.

The engineers in the meantime were putting up a pontoon bridge, and on this we at length crossed the river and approached the famous battleground of Sedan. The Germans were in a good position, about

300 yards away, while our men formed a skirmishing line. When the Germans saw us their big guns began to play on our position, and we lay in the trenches there for four days. It was not thought advisable to charge the enemy because our artillery hadn't yet come up behind us.

DR. J. L. HUGGAN'S BRAVERY

Jedburgh friends of the late Dr. J. Laidlaw Huggan, who was killed at the battle of the Aisne, the 16th September, have received some particulars of his service. Dr. Huggan was a member of the Army Medical Corps and was attached to the third battalion Coldstream Guards.

Writing to Miss Rose Innes, Jedburgh, from the regimental headquarters of the Coldstream Guards, Buckingham Gate, on 5th inst., Col. J. A. G. R. Drummond Hays says: "Yesterday I saw Lt. Soames, Coldstream Guards, who has just returned to this country wounded. He was on the staff of the 4th Brigade, to which the 3rd Battalion of this regiment belongs. He is going to write to the Ladies, Jedburgh, about Dr. Huggan, as he knows all about him. He told me Dr. Huggan was extraordinarily gallant, and two days before he was killed he was recommended for the Victoria Cross for organizing and leading a party of volunteers to remove a number of wounded from a barn, that had been set on fire by German shell fire. The work was carried out under a very heavy shell fire, and all the wounded were saved. Mr. Soames will tell Dr. Huggan's relatives all about it, but I thought you would like to know in case they say nothing."

Dr. Huggan, who was a native of Jedburgh and played Rugby with Jedburgh club for many years, was one of the Scottish wing three-quarters in the match between England and Scotland, played at Edinburgh in March

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last. At that time he was a member of the London Scottish Rugby Club.

TRIBUTE TO A HERO

An Englishman, who has just returned from France, tells how, making his way by the banks of the Aisne in an attempt to take cigarettes to the troops, he came across a solitary grave near Chaisy-aux-Bacs. Twice he passed it, and his attention was arrested by the fact that kindly hands each day strewed fresh flowers over it. On the pontoon bridge near by a French detachment was guarding guard, and the soldiers explained that the lonely grave was the last resting-place of an English soldier, who, quite alone, had there fought his last fight till overwhelmed by numbers.

During the great retreat he had strayed from his comrades and fallen exhausted from fatigue. Unable to find them he took up his quarters in an abandoned carriage, but thirty-six hours later the Germans appeared on the other side of the Aisne and fired at him. Undeterred by the fact that he was utterly alone, he replied and such was his determination and accuracy of aim, that the villagers declared that he accounted for six German officers, one of them a general, before he fell under a volley. The French buried him where he had fought, erected a cross, and in honor of his gallantry laid fresh flowers each day on his grave.

Standing beside it, unobserved, he told how the soldier died a soldier's death, and then showed the inquirer the ruined carriage, in which the shot marks bore testimony to the fierceness of the fight. At the retreat of Mons, he was buried on September 10, 1914. David M. Kay (No. 3054), of the 5th Lancasters.

MASTER OF BURLEIGH'S GALLANTRY

Private Reid of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, invalided home, spoke as follows of the gallantry of the Hon. R. Bruce, Master of Burleigh, at the retreat of Mons.

He was too brave, if anything. He simply wanted to be at 'em, and at them he went. I don't know where his sword was, but he hadn't it when I saw him. But he had a rifle with a fixed bayonet just like the rest of us. I saw him being wounded, but he fought on gamely till he and his party of brave fellows were cut off and surrounded.

SAVED BY HIS CAP BADGE

Private Robert Berry of the Seaforth invalided home to Methil, has a tale of a remarkable escape to tell. With the brigade he had crossed the

Aisne on the second night of the battle, and took up a position on the hills. In the grey of the morning a Taube aeroplane located and signalled by means of smoke bombs. Soon after sheets of shrapnel enveloped the hill. Several bullets from these sped past, inflicting minor cuts.

He was firing at the heads of the enemy as they popped up and down in the trenches at 600 yards range, when a rifle bullet caught his cap hitting the hedge and driving it through the cloth into his scalp, where it was found by the doctor. The bullet was deflected upwards, and the private was thus spared to tell the tale. Capt. Anstruther, of Beuchicrnie, in command of the company, was struck down at the same time. Captain Anstruther is one of the soldier sons of Colonel Anstruther, who fell at Majuba Hill in the first Boer War.

So much has been written of the fighting, writes Neil Munro, in the London Chronicle, as if it automata wrought to a glowing heat, pelting at one another like sparks in a red-hot furnace, oblivious of all but ever-present danger and the weapons which their hands held. The retreat from Mons got a fresh and vivid interest for me when I heard three days of it described this afternoon by a Scottish soldier, a clock, still going, lying in a ditch, a burn where I thought there might be trout; above all, a bend of the road not far from Solesmes where I got on the roof of a barn, and saw, through my glasses, away to the west the Goredons. It was there where they got nailed, poor fellows, close at least 80 of them, and the German first expeditionary force, the Rotten luck for the Goredons! That's how more than half a battalion of them are prisoners.

LE CATEAU

Next day he walked to Le Cateau. "It's a town," he said, "about the size of Queen's. I think, lying in a hollow with a lot of spinning mills about it, and the sourest kind of apples you ever tasted. When I got into it, Le Cateau was packed with automobiles of our staff, with transport wagons, artillery and cavalry. Their kits were spread out on the pavements; they hadn't slept since Saturday, and you may guess they looked pretty tired. They were all busy that afternoon, inquiring for my corps, and I felt like a wandering sparrow. Nobody seemed to know anything. In a shed behind an inn called the Moon I slept four hours that night as sound as a whistle, though I knew the Germans were not six miles from us and fifty times our numbers, and when I woke in the morning the whole town was being shelled, and their 'Taubens' were flying over us. Every man, woman, and child belonging to the town was streaming out on the high road to St. Quentin. They were used and they tottered; they drove donkey-carts and pushed perambulators; they seemed to have all put on their Sunday clothes, and they had the most absurd burden-bearings, string-bags full of eggs or spools.

Terror. By Jove, you should have seen them!

ON THE PARIS ROAD.

"I got a lift in a wagon from a man who had all his family and a cat piled in it, and drifted with the flood along the Paris road for a place called Ham, for an A.S.C. man told me (quite erroneously, as it happened) that our chaos were there. We came to a part of the road where a long row of carcasses of meat had been abandoned; further on, the road was strewn with bread, biscuits and jam tins. 'By Jove!' I thought, 'we're shifting in a hurry!' The road, remember, was blocked with traffic, all going in one direction—a host in khaki mixed up here and there with panicky civilians. Some day I may tell you more about the look of things exactly there, but not just now.

A STREAM IN SPATE

"And they were dreadfully in the way, for our men and staff were pouring back too, remember, and badly needing all the room there was. If ever there is an enemy in Britain you advise the civil populace to make tracks long before they hear the guns. I was dreadfully put about, though for these people; and it was quite a relief to get away from them and tuck on to a regiment not my own about six miles south of Le Cateau—either Busigny or Wasigny—where we put up a rather pretty scrap. Next day I walked for nearly three miles to St. Quentin, a smallish town that was like to burst with British troops when I got into it. They poured in at one end and out at the other like a brown stream in spate, carrying the civilian population like drifted twigs among them. You never saw such a sight as that. A holy mess! It looked as if something was bound to jam. Broken companies of every regiment except my own kept pouring through; our ambulance cars, supply wagons, and artillery swished and clattered without end on the caseway, and half a dozen that were on them were sound asleep. In the square was a bunch of brigadiers and aides, pouring over maps; London buses with the names of London streets and English firms on them were there in scores; one of them nearly ran me down, and jumping to save myself I sprained my ankle.

BY THE HENDON BUS.

"It's a Fattish, farming country, good, I should say, for pheasants. The trees were hanging with apples and pears. I remember one place where a man in charge of a drove of sheep was sitting on a basket reading

a book, and paying no attention to the stream of game. He was either the wisest man in the world or the craziest. Sitting on the cart I could see for miles across the country, and away on the right and left was our cavalry, and artillery spread out and making for cover and position in little woods and behind small hillocks. They were going about their job as if I realized that some of the thoughts I had had for the last 12 hours were wrong. And, after all, I didn't get to Ham; with my usual luck, the cart broke down, and I got on a Hendon bus to La Fere, and there it was I got this arm from a splinter—no, not a shell, but of a more prosaic thing, a spoke of a water cart a shell had burst on. It's getting on quite nicely, thank you. And, oh, by the way, tell the British public to teach their children French, it would be twice as jolly for us out here if only we knew French.

DEATH OF PRINCE MAURICE

William Darlow, of the 1st King's Royal Rifles, who was discharged from hospital at Birmingham, tells a graphic story of how Prince Maurice of Battenberg met his death. Prince Maurice had been ordered to storm a German position and capture some guns which were doing a lot of damage. On the advance they came to a wood which was too thick for them to get through conveniently, and they had to cross an open field. Prince Maurice was leading his men across this open space when a shell fell and burst right by him. He knew that his injuries were mortal, and wished the men good-bye. He was carried to a field dressing room, but died before it was reached. Darlow, who was also wounded and was taken into the dressing room immediately after the Prince, said that the regiment were all deeply sorry to lose him. He was a fine officer, capable in every way and always kind and considerate to his men. Before they went into action that morning, the Prince had given them cigarettes and mufflers.

IF BACK HURTS USE SALTS FOR KIDNEYS

Eat Less Meat if Kidneys feel like lead or Bladder bothers.

Most folks forget that the kidneys, like the bowels, get sluggish and clogged and need a flushing occasionally, and in every way and always kind and considerate to his men. Before they went into action that morning, the Prince had given them cigarettes and mufflers.

# BRITISH CAVALRY—ASCENDENCY OVER THE GERMAN HORSEMEN

The late G. W. Stevens, writing of the charge of the 21st Lancers at Omdurman, used some such words as "The mistakes of British cavalry are the fruitful seed of 'British glory.'"

When one remembers that charge, the hot-headed conduct of the Union Brigade at Waterloo, and many Peninsular incidents, we are persuaded that that sentence, with its nice balance of praise and blame, is justified (says a writer in the Pall Mall Gazette).

The British cavalry of to-day probably makes its mistakes like other people. It has certainly covered itself with glory in the two months' campaign. But its training and its second alike assure us that it has learned the true lesson of usefulness, and that there will be no costly folly of the Balaklava and Omdurman type.

TRUE CAVALRY SPIRIT

All eye-witnesses agree that the British cavalry are better horsemen, better mounted, better trained, and better armed than the German. They have preserved the true cavalry spirit, despite the attempts made after the South African war to degrade them into mounted rifles, and they are trained, as the German cavalry are not trained, to work also on foot.

The Uhlans, armed with carbines and lance, and unused to infantry work, are at a hopeless disadvantage against them. There is a certain amount which, at the cost to itself of a few wounded men, puts its "bag" of 2,000 Bosene horsemen. That regiment has not charged; it has relied on fire action.

But when the cold steel is used our men have proved themselves no masters of their enemy. The new cavalry rapier is an enormous success. It is a thrusting weapon, pure and simple, and the cavalryman, leaning forward on his horse with sword-arm extended, has a reach several inches longer than that of a Uhlans with his lance.

It would not perhaps be well to enter too closely into a discussion of our cavalry methods. Suffice it to say that they make our mounted force independent of any support, and that which they receive from the Horse Artillery, always the dashing of all arms of the service, and that there is not an officer who would hesitate to launch a single squadron against a whole regiment of German horse. Moreover, there are now very few German regiments which would await the onslaught.

As much will depend during the next few days on the cavalry fighting in North France and Belgium, it is eminently satisfactory to know that our men have so completely established their ascendancy.

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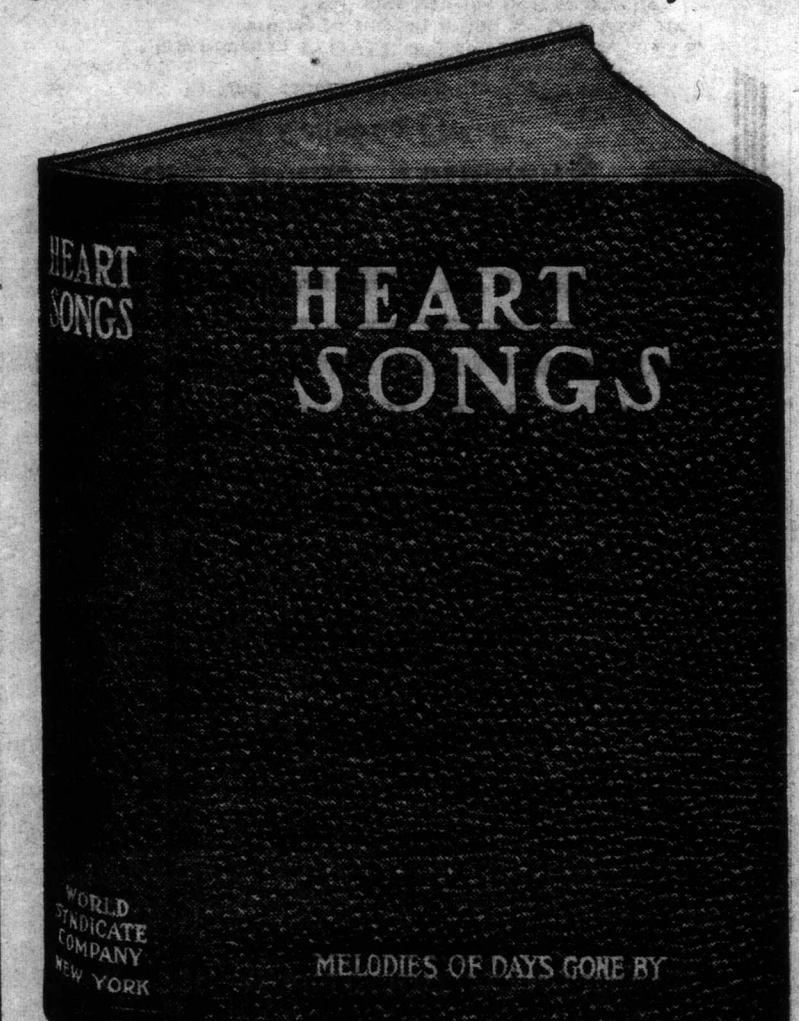
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