

nerve tissue on the others.

We were obliged to work and loaf and sleep in dug-outs and cellars (my dressing station was in a tunnel), for the Bosche shelled our unlovely village every day or two, and turned machine guns on it when he thought we needed a change. Now and then an aeroplane dropped a few bombs, and fragments of shrapnel fired at hostile planes spattered the village streets; and always there was the disquieting possibility of a "premature" or "rogue" from our own guns firing over us.

The days drew into weeks of persevering rain and sleety snow, and it was wretchedly cold and cheerless in the underground billets. The coal ration would last two or three days, with careful husbanding, and we went without fire the rest of the week. Our blankets grew damp and mildewed, and all the world was ankle deep in soupy, yellowish mud. "Bloody awful," the men called it, and all hands were thoroughly well fed up with their lot; then, about the middle of March a welcome order came, and we moved over to the neighbouring village of C—. On the day after we left the overworked headquarters dug-out was given a long last rest, for a direct hit by an eight inch shell completely wrecked it, and two soldiers, making it ready for our successors, were blown to pieces.

Our billets in C— were above ground and fairly comfortable and we were quite happy there, until one day a couple of big "Mothers" trundled up behind their "caterpillars," were installed in an orchard near-by, and began blowing large chunks out of the enemy landscape. This hurt Mr. Bosche's feelings, and one afternoon he retaliated by knocking the stuffing out of our peaceful little hamlet.

One shell completely wrecked our fourth battery officers' mess room—furniture, dishes, gramophone and records—everything except three bottles of "Trench Elixir" that alone remained whole. Another wrecked and set fire to the quarters of the officers in charge of the "Mothers." Served them d—d well right, too, we neighbours thought, and didn't hesitate to tell them, for the blinking fools fired when the Hun balloons were up, and their flashes were promptly spotted. It doesn't do to take chances with the wily Hun. He is a keen observer, an exceedingly clever artilleryman, and we have a whole-hearted respect for his fine assortment of soldierly qualities.

Happily he didn't make a direct hit on either of the big guns that afternoon, and of course they were moved away during the ensuing night. Happily, too, there were only four casualties, and as usual the fine display of British daring, for the bucket brigade was soon at work in the face of bursting shells, and a certain officer's servant, knowing that some hand grenades were stored in a burning barn, went in and brought out the blazing boxes they were in. I saw this myself.

One of our batteries was established fifteen hundred yards behind the firing line, in a shallow, bowl-like valley, about half a mile across. There was no cover, but it was hidden from the enemy by the rim of the bowl over which the guns fired. The four emplacements were in a row fifteen yards apart, with three dug-outs for the gun crews forty yards in the rear. The whole occupied a little square of ground about seventy yards to the side. For various reasons it was not a satisfactory position, so the guns were withdrawn and then the Germans were

helped to discover this former location, by the ruse of tracks leading to it from the road, and snow shovelled off the dug-out roofs. They quickly got its exact position through their (then) admirable aeroplane observation, and straightway tried to put the supposed battery out of action. Within an hour they sent over about three hundred 5.9 high explosive shells from batteries that were probably not more than four or five thousand yards away.

Their shooting was beautifully accurate. The shells tore up the ground into great craters and ridges in front of, between and behind the empty emplacements and dug-outs. They all fell within a radius of a hundred yards, yet there were only two direct hits. One shell slanted through the back part of an emplacement roof, and would probably have destroyed the limber and killed most of the gun crew; and the other destroyed one of the dug-outs. The men within would all have been killed. Now had the battery been there and conditions such that the Germans could have followed up their bombardment by an infantry attack, their advancing men would, nevertheless, have suffered terribly, from the fire of the three undamaged guns.

At C—, the afternoon they tried for the "Mothers," over two hundred high explosive shells came into the village. The church tower was damaged, a lot of window glass broken and a few houses were wrecked, but most of the projectiles did nothing more than make a big noise and a hole in the garden. Having seen these things, one understands how enough men and guns, especially machine guns, which lend themselves to secure concealment, may be left, even after the most thorough and searching "artillery" (Concluded on page 12.)

## THE TURN IN THE ROAD



## SKETCHES BY GEORGE CHAVIGNAUD

**P**OUFF! . . . What is a mere turn in the road to a jolly big automobile from Paris? An automobile full of wealthy people who stop only at the great inns along the road and look at men and women as though the living, breathing world were on exhibit at some art collector's shop. See! It comes purring up out of the distance. Its tires beat a soft tattoo on the cobbles. It scarcely slows for the turn! It honks barely twice—a laconic, imperious warning to those who may be coming from the other direction on the other side of the Turn of the Road! Observe, m'sieu. . . . A careless chicken dies under the wheels! A hand tosses silver, in payment, from the tonneau of the car. It is gathering speed. It is dwindling! It is out of sight!

And yet here at this turn in the road a village has existed since before the days of Charlemagne—oh, long before that. For a turn in the road is always an excuse to stop one's horse and order a cup of Grenadine (if you like grenadine—which you oughtn't), or even to put up for the night. So there is an obliging Estaminet here called "The Inn of the Arrival of Good Friends"—pretty idea. And there is a forge and a little grocery shop, and some cottages belonging to the aged great-grandchildren of a dead duke's retainers—and an artist girl from America boarding in the thatched house next the cure's.

Ah! How much more she knows than the people in that automobile. The old women, as they toss the lace-bobbins on their "pillows" at the side of the road, whisper that she will one day make the view from this little "Turn in the Road" famous! Indeed, she is painting a wonderful landscape of the Valley of the Ancrè from a little hillock at the back of the Cure's orchard not fifty feet from the road. (It is a painting so wonderful that none of the village can recognize it but—hein! What is art if it may not tell lies?) This picture will make the village known everywhere and bring greater custom to the estaminet. Thus the estaminet will buy more food for guests, and the blacksmith will learn to do automobile repairs—and sell petrol as well! . . . A mere turn of the road! Indeed!

Pouff! What is a mere turn in the road to an advancing wave of grey-coated soldiers? Eh? This little elbow of a hill along which the road comes courting the curves of the Ancrè? Nonsense! Catch it in enfilade. See? That bit of a wall standing yonder—probably the estaminet. There may be a machine-gun concealed there, no doubt. And another may lie waiting perhaps in the shadow of that heap of ruins—that was the cure's house. But should Germans be afraid of such trifles? Vorwärts! Jump the silly ditch they call a river. Up the slope! Up over the hillock where the artist girl sat who was going to make the Turn in the Road famous. . . .

Eh?  
From the shadow of the estaminet's last wall, from the heaped debris of the cure's house comes the song of the wood-pecker on a hollow tree! Though those ruins are still smoking from their last bombardment they still hide machine guns there—many and many of them. They have been there—for weeks. And for weeks and weeks the grey men

have been trying to get up onto that little hillock beside the Turn in the Road. And for weeks they have been dying just a few feet from where the blacksmith would have had his underground petrol tank in accordance with the regulations from Bruxelles!

Ah—and here again is the artist—an artist with one eye and the thunder of all Hell for his brush—and he, too, sits on the hillock in the far end of what was once the cure's orchard, and he, too, commands a view of the valley of the Ancrè. A nine-point-two! He sits on the very spot the artist girl used to occupy—not fifty feet from the Turn in the Road.

**P**ROBABLY the original artist, nature, was an amateur at the business of beauty-making. It's queer that the second turn-in-the-road artist should have picked out this particular country to change so many pictures. It must be because war prefers the most beautiful places in order to make as much change as possible. Belgium was beautiful. Generations of lazy people had made it. Nothing had ever been hurried in that country. The buildings grew into the trees, the trees ran into the green of the fields, and the fields melted into the sky. And the people were almost part of the buildings. They had that settled-down look. To drive them out was like scraping green things off an old wall. The whole blessed country of Belgium had grown together into a mass of what art folks call human interest. That's why the artist found so much to interest him in Belgium. Nothing much had been changed by that busy Im-Person—Progress. And the second artist that pointed his range-finding eye around the turn in the road—he had very little to do with getting on in the world, either. The country might as well be sent as swiftly to hell as possible. It was too soft, too aged, too beautiful—too sentimental. So the war artist whopped his 42 cam. brush round the turn in the road once more, and he blasted another chef d'oeuvre of damnation. And he is the greatest artist of all, because in one blasted minute he can undo the work of centuries.



Both of the artists who did the turn in the road had their turn at the simple, true-Belgian picture presented by this diligent dame of the dingy room.