

SINCE WE LEFT ENGLAND.

AT last we left England to take our place on the field of battle. All hearts were happy and light. In fact, so light that the vessel made the journey across the Channel, a dark ship. We were not at all sure whether we would reach land safely, owing to the possible presence of floating mines. During the voyage a man had been detailed to watch for any black lights, as the mines, I understand, are equipped with these to make them invisible to the enemy.

We arrived at — in the early morning. Everything seemed so spectral and strangely dark. I suppose we had visions of seeing France busy and gay, knowing the people of France are so happy. But on reflection, it was brought home to us that France was at war. The realisation of our dreams was consummated. We must forget our week-ends now for some time to come, and look to the work ahead.

From the station we marched to a rest camp two or three miles distant. It was an up-hill climb, and all were tired after the cramped voyage. However, we arrived there about 5 a.m., and were told that breakfast would be ready at 7.30. Those of us who had the luck to secure hut accommodation slept soundly, while a few who slept outside were fortunate, in that they were on time for breakfast owing to sleeping restlessly. After breakfast we were marched back to the station we left the previous night, to entrain for the "Somewhere in France" which everyone is so familiar with.

Well, we are all on the train, and ready and eager to get up to the front. The whistle on the engine gave a short "toot," and away we go. The familiar "all aboard" was not heard. It is these little things we miss out here. The little "nothings" that make us feel how far we are away. This feeling, though, gradually disappears with time and new experiences. The important circumstance we were grateful for was that we travelled in coaches, and not in trucks, as did the first contingent.

It was getting near the luncheon-hour. We had all kinds of bully-beef (which none of us eat now), biscuits, bread, etc. Also had some tea, sugar and milk. The ingredients were all there but the water. That contingency does not occur in Canada, as water is carried on the train, also a stove. We had neither, as the water we had in our water-bottles had been used to wash our faces in the early morning.

Luck was with us as usual, and a happy thought struck me. I put the tea, etc., in two mess tins, all ready for the boiling water. The boys said, "That looks dandy, but where is the hot water?" I smiled, and Corporal J. Robinson (our solo cornettist), who was with us, and "in" on my plan, played a drinking song. We arrived at —, where the British Army Head-

quarters are, and I jumped out. Ah! my eyes saw what I had expected to see. With the two mess tins in my hand I rushed down the platform like mad—I guess the boys thought I was—and rushed to a locomotive standing idle, and amid the rhythm of the air-pump working, I turned on the cylinder cocks, and—made our tea. I proudly walked back to our carriage with the steaming cans, amid the imploring glances of the less fortunate, while Corporal Robinson played "Perfect Day."

Arrived at our railway journey's end about 6 p.m., and detrained at —, in France. There we were told that any man who was feeling "blue" need not carry his pack, as a transport could take them to our billets. Pleased to say fewer accepted than what I had thought, as our service pack was *some* weight. We started off to our first billets. We all had heard so much of billets that we were not surprised at them when we arrived there about 8 p.m. Before we arrived there, however, we had tea and biscuits served to us by the roadside, as our field kitchen (bless it) had preceded us. We ate and drank heartily, the time being 7 p.m.

An incident happened on our way here that seemed very comical to us, and we often laugh at the recollection. An artillery orderly who was approaching on horseback saw that we were laboriously "plugging" along, and good-naturedly took the edge of the road. He did, though, unfortunately, take too fine an edge, and his faithful steed slipped into a rather deep and muddy ditch. The rider was not in the least dismayed, and clung on to the horse with grim set teeth (but, like anyone else, couldn't swallow it).

During our three days' stay there we had the usual inspection of rifles, ammunition, etc., and had various sports. It was here that we first saw any hostile aircraft, and our anti-aircraft guns were shelling them, and drove them to their own lines. While here we were inspected by the Army Commander.

On the Sunday, Major Beatty, our Divisional Chaplain (he is our real Chaplain, and not the world-known "reel" Chaplin), spoke to us, and we had an open-air service, our first within sound of the guns. He explained to us *why* we had come here. That it was not love of adventure or the desire to kill, but something higher and nobler. That we were here to crush the monster and his hordes from the stricken towns and villages of France and Belgium. I feel sure the spirit of his teaching was taken up by all of us, as we then stood and listened. He reminded us of the well-known term, "Remember Belgium." Past experiences have shown that we cannot possibly forget it, with its rain and mud-sodden trenches. No, we'll remember Belgium all right!

Were moved from here to a rest camp, where we stayed two or three days. At 5 p.m. the last day we were lined up before the Corps Com-