

28 FROM BAPAUME TO PASSCHENDAELE

with birdlike trills, as triumphant as a lark's song to the dawn. It was a woman's voice singing behind the shutters of a shelled city! . . .

Some English officer was there with his gramophone.

II

AN ATTACK NEAR LE TRANSLOY

JANUARY 28, 1917

THE "show" (as our men call it) near Le Transloy yesterday was more than a raid—those daily in-and-out dashes which are doing most deadly work along our line. It was an attack for the definite purpose of gaining an important bit of ground on the slope which goes down to the ruined village and of driving the enemy out of some strong points. The interest of it, involving the capture of six officers and 352 men of picked regiments, is the way in which we caught the enemy utterly by surprise and the rapid, easy way in which the whole operation was done. A touch which seems fantastic came at the end of the adventure when these young Germans, still breathless with the amazement of their capture, were bundled into omnibuses which had been brought up near the lines to wait for them—the old London omnibuses which used to go "all the way to the Bank—Bank—Bank!" in the days before the world began to crack—and taken to their camp on our side of the battlefields.

It was a grim, cold morning—piercingly cold, with a wind cutting like a knife across the snowfields. Not a morning when men might be expected to go out into the nakedness of No Man's Land. It was a morning when these German officers and men of the 119th and 121st Regiments, the Württembergers of Königin Olga, were glad to stay down in the warmth of their dug-outs, cooking coffee on the little stove with which each man of these favoured troops was provided, to the great envy of Bavarians on their right, who go on shorter rations and fewer comforts. They had some good dug-outs in and near the Sunken Road—which runs up from Morval to Le Transloy, and strikes through a little salient in front of our