



DUG-OUTS IN YPRES SALIENT

"NO MAN'S LAND"

FOR nine months, between the second and third Battles of Ypres, the Canadians occupied a length of the British front along which conditions were favourable for the practice of trench-warfare as an art. In those days a division could put in all three brigades, and each brigade could hold its front with two battalions "in" and two resting in reserve. Active men yawned in the front line then, and went out looking for trouble. The strip of country between Germany's parapets and ours had its name changed from "No Man's Land" to "Canada"—and we policed that strip of country more effectively than some cities are policed. Grass grew between the hostile trenches in those days—acres of grass. "No Man's Land" was an actual territory then, bounded by parapets which often stood intact for weeks at a time and dotted with landmarks that remained in recognisable shape day after day. Under very favourable conditions one could take the air of a night in that old playground and perhaps not see a Boche at all or draw so much as a shot.

But the "No Man's Land" of to-day is quite another kind of place. The parapets which bound it are continually in a state of demolition or repair. The earth before and behind our trenches is torn to shapelessness by mines and heavy shells and harrowed by shrapnel and fire of searching machine-guns. The trenches are broken by huge pits large enough to engulf houses. Aerial torpedoes make a hell of earth and air over all this tragic region. The front-line trenches of friend and foe alike cease so frequently to exist as trenches, and become nothing more definite than confused locations in a field of raging battle, that the name of "No Man's Land" loses its significance for hours and days together.

When the Germans struck the salient with a flood of exploding metal and swarming men on the morning of the second of June, with the intention of crushing it

level with the rest of the British front—the most terrific blow ever delivered on that harassed place—battalions of the Third Canadian Division were in the trenches. The storm of shells broke upon them suddenly, closing the way of their supports with a shattering wall of annihilation, tearing the forward defences to shapelessness and deluging the ruins with fire and metal. Two General Officers of the Division were caught in that storm. One of these, the commander of a brigade, was wounded, and, later, made a prisoner; the other, the commander of the division, stunned and deafened by the concussion of bursting shells, was seized with a Berserker rage when surrounded by the enemy. He had commanded a brigade of the First Canadian Division at the Second Battle of Ypres. He had fought through and out of many desperate situations; and now, hemmed in by German bayonets, he continued to fight. He was not a young man, nor a fire-eater. He was a lover of honourable peace. But he fought to a finish that day, and fell at last with at least three vital wounds in his body.

His spirit fired every man of his division that day. What the Germans took, they took from dead men—and they paid for it with death. Then the First Division struck in counter-attack, avenging the Third and re-winning the graves of their comrades with their own lives.

But this "Pictorial" does not pretend to be a history. It is a little collection of authentic photographs; and these disjointed sketches are nothing more than attempts to explain the spirit of the subjects photographed in a general way.

The story of the June fighting in the Ypres salient is told in the second volume of "Canada in Flanders"—as clearly and as fully as it can possibly be told until professional historians go calmly to work at it in the quiet days after the war.