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espied a cow in a field at the roadside and gave chase. There was no other food in sight, so when our quarry threw up its tail and bounced off we set out grimly to run our breakfast down. It was half an hour later that we corralled it in a corner between two broad ditches and were already licking our chops in anticipation when we discovered that our cow was only a big heifer. Twenty-four hours earlier it would have been tragedy. As it was we only laughed. Such is liberty.

At this distance from the border we felt that we were safe from the Germans, but were very much afraid that we might be interned. So we holed up in a farmhouse that had been partly burned down and built a roaring fire out of the remains of the charred furniture, placing some of the potatoes that were lying about in the fire, made a rough bed and went to sleep. Awakening later in the day we raked the blackened potatoes out of the ashes and filled up on them. We were a fearful team; absolutely filthy, uncombed, unwashed, unshaven, and with the Russian's paint still thick upon us. Afterward we went down to the canal and endeavored to knock the worst of it off. I made out to shave Simonds. All danger was passed now. We seemed to walk on air. We were once again British soldiers, and so fell to abuse of one another, finding fault and grouching as all good British soldiers do when they are well off. The terrible razor had never been sharp and lately had rusted from its travels. Simonds swore lustily and threatened me, ordering me at the same time in no uncertain terms to desist from the torture.

Barbarous Barbering

"Well, we want to go into Holland lookin' respectable. What'll they think of British soldiers if they see us? Have a heart!" I expostulated.

"Don't give a damn!" I've had enough for being a Canadian, but I won't stand for this." I left him with his beard still on in patches and the bare spots bleeding angrily. He turned to me then. As I had already committed myself I had to bear in silence his purposely clumsy handling of that backsaw. It was terrible, and Simonds, the scoundrel, laughed like a demon.

The diary summarizes the later events of that day:

"September 10: Fine weather and in Holland. All our troubles are over. We struck a small town called Alboom, where the people did everything they could for us. Plenty of food. Slept in a house."

A man smoking a big pipe and wearing baggy breeches and wooden shoes came up and surveyed us with kindly amusement as Simonds scraped at me with infinite gusto. He was a Hollander; not a "Dutchman." We soon learned that the latter was a term of contempt applied by the farmer to the Germans.

I asked him for some tobacco, which he readily gave to us from a capacious pouch. He waved his pipe at us in friendly fashion and said something which we took to be a question as to our identity.

"English," we said, and in desperation turned to our scanty stock of French: "Soldats; prisonniers."

"Engelsch!" he boomed. We nodded. He simply threw his arms round first one and then the other, upsetting as he did so the ashes from his pipe into my eyes. He lumbered off and shortly returned with a counterpart of himself. He talked rapidly to his companion and waved his pipe. We made out the words "Duitsch," "Engelsch," and enough of others to know that he was telling our tale as he imagined it.

Our fears coming upon us, we gave voice to them: "Intern?"

"No intern," Engelsch. The other took up the story: "Engelsch's govt. Friend." However, our suspicions would not down.

The first man pointed out to the canal where a barge lay and made us understand that it was his. He wanted us to work our passage down the canal with him. They invited us by signs to go on board the barge for breakfast, an invitation which we joyfully accepted. We rowed out to the barge and sat down in the tiny cabin. The meal was plain. On the centre of the table was a loaf of brown bread, quite good enough it was true, but so reminiscent

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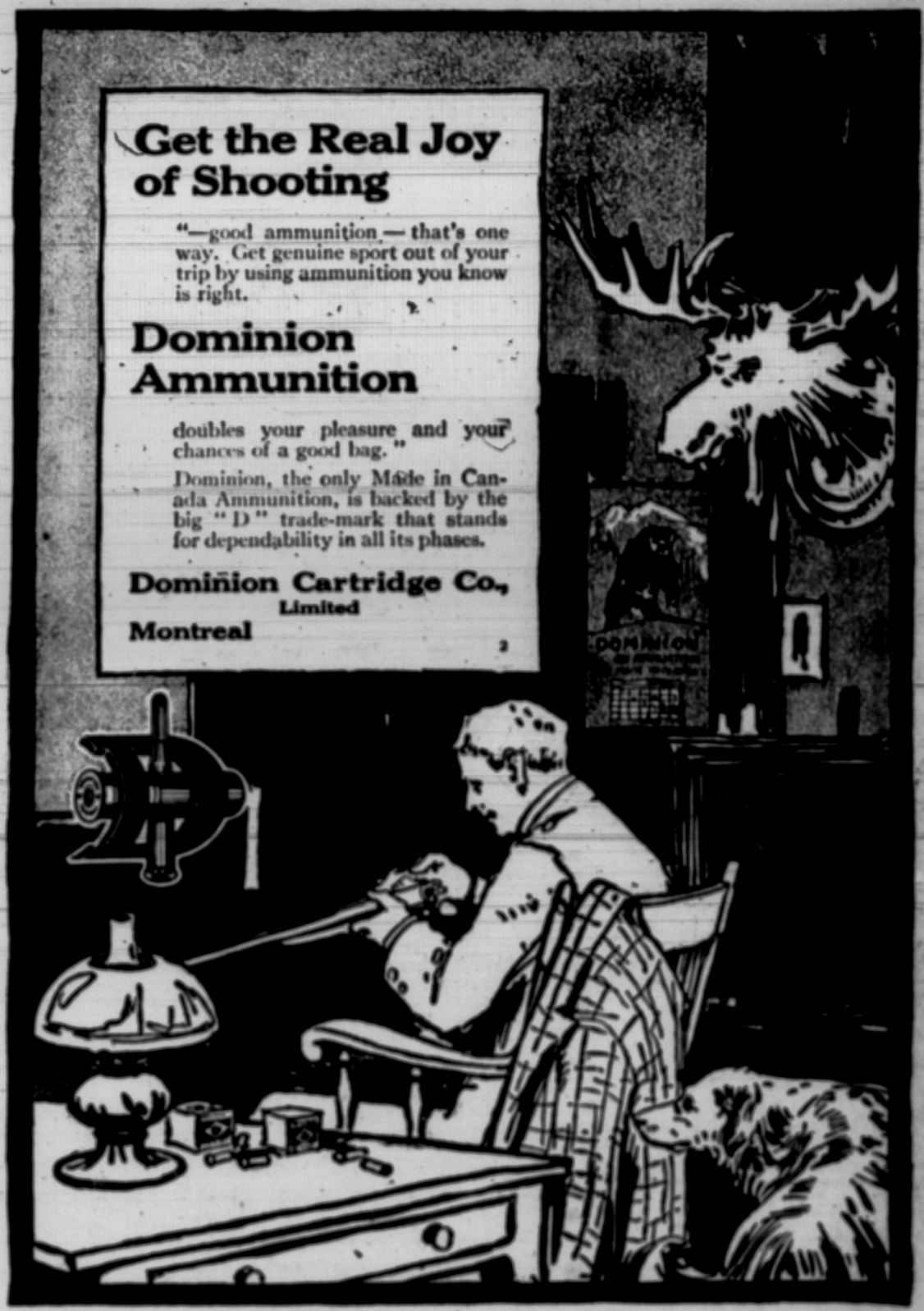
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