

## *News from the Front.*

The following is an extract from a letter received by one of the students from Private Pat. H. Ashby:—

We are back again in our old billets and are not at all sorry, for there is less mud around here and we have better places to sleep. We were absent from here for twelve days, and during that time I think the realities of this war were brought nearer to me than ever before.

We left here one Sunday morning and, when about half way to our destination, I began to notice the amount of traffic on the road. It was getting greater every minute. In the distance I could hear the roaring of artillery above the noise of the traffic, and I found myself almost in trouble several times, for I was following the movements of three aeroplanes overhead. The first indication I had of them was when I saw some shells burst a little way off to the right, and others bursting nearer until they reached immediately overhead. I then looked ahead of the puffs of smoke and sure enough I saw an "Allemand," and wasn't he going some! He was making a final dash for the German lines, and was leaving a long trail of smoke behind him, fifty to a hundred yards in length. Then I saw one of our battle aeroplanes making for him. No wonder the German put on speed! But it was of no use, ours was gaining steadily on him and finally made a dash straight at him. Of course, I've scraped the bark off more than one tree by this time, and have been yelled at to pull off to the right, but I'm seeing things and look up again. The shelling has stopped for fear of hitting our own machine. Ours is circling around the German, and as I pull up for a moment

I hear their machine guns rattling away, a sound never heard in any other war. But some one calls me, "Pat!" I thought I heard someone call my name. Then someone grabbed my leg as I was looking the other way. It's "Dooley" Richardson, of the 24th Victoria Rifles. We grab each other by the hand and "How are you?" we both yell together. Drivers yell to "get out of the way." Motor lorries toot, toot, toot, but they can't push us off the earth. So, "What's doing out here?" I ask. "A battle's on at——, and we've been standing to all night." "Try and see you again." "Be good." I wave my hand, my horse thinks I'm going to hit him, and we part again in a hurry.

The roads are becoming very much worn in places and it is hard to turn out for the big motor lorries. I pass horses and men plastered with mud. It is hard to tell the colour of some horses. We halt in a little village for a few minutes, and see some French-Canadian troops. We start again, and after a few miles we come to the top of a hill overlooking quite a bit of country, and the atmosphere in the distance looks smoky. I can see big blotches of black smoke suddenly appearing low down on the skyline. I know that to be shrapnel. A few miles farther on and I come to the barns where No. 2 Company will billet. I pack the "kitchen" into an old shed, and start back to look for the place chosen for the horses. I hauled rations to the companies that night and saw a fine display of bursting shells along the firing line. This bombardment kept up for two or three days, but finally died out and left things fairly quiet. Of course, there is always some battery firing.