

Stories From The Front

Mightn't Be Necessary.

"Don't forget those cigarettes you promised me," wrote a British soldier to his wife. "By the way," he added in a postscript, "the Germans have just started shelling us. You may not have to send the smokes."

Boy Victims Found.

One of the results of the recent fighting on the East Prussian front is the large number of sixteen and seventeen year old boys found dead on the battlefields.

A big Russian guardsman was about to cut down one of these German youths when he changed his mind, knocked the rifle out of the boy's hand and caught him with a paternal grip of the ear saying: "Lad, it's a pity to kill thee." He then gave the young German's ear a vigorous twist and let him go.

Bids Got Mixed.

In the market place at Alford the other day a number of fat pigs had come up for auction, and for one of them the auctioneer started the bidding at 100 francs. "One hundred and five," 110," came the bidding, and "130," and then, to the amazement of the company, a stentorian voice shouted "3,600." Everyone held their breath and then there came from the same voice "Fire!" It was an officer at the adjoining barracks, instructing a squad of artillery recruits in range-finding.

Not What He Expected.

A London bank clerk decided after many sleepless nights, to enlist. But he shied at the task of telling his fond parents, who live in the country, feeling sure that he would break their hearts to have him go to the front. Finally, after profound thought, he wrote them, imparting the momentous news as gently as possible, taking care to point out that he couldn't resist the call of duty. Three days later

a postcard from his mother arrived, saying: "Glad you've joined the army. It will be a nice change for you."

German Generosity.

After the German retreat from Augustoff, a rather striking example of the enemy's generosity was found by the Russians on the corpse of one of their officers. His face had been covered with a handkerchief, and on his breast were lying a gold watch and silver cigar case, while to his shirt was pinned a note reading:

"Highly respected ones: From this officer we took away only his book of reports; his watch and cigar case we have, as you will see, left entirely untouched and uninjured. To our regret we were unable to take this seriously wounded man along with us and care for him, as we have so large a number of our own wounded."

Best of Feeling.

When a battle is not in progress the best of feeling appears to exist between the French and German soldiers who for two months have faced one another on the long line between Neuport and Belford.

So close are the camps to each other that it is possible for the two forces to exchange words. They indulge in good-natured contests, such as shooting at spade targets, with no intention of hitting anyone, and compete for hares, which run between the lines.

A French soldier writes of these amusements:

"A target is painted on a spade and moved through our trench in such a way that it shows about two feet above the ground. The Germans shoot at it. With a stick we indicate the results of their fire, and when one hits the bullseye he is rewarded with the waving of a French flag."

"There is another sort of target practice which is very popular. The region around us is full of cabbage fields, and the cabbage fields are full

of hares and rabbits. These hares sometimes cross our own private meadow. Immediately both trenches are all aflame. Long-sounding volleys follow the poor little beast. He makes a graceful somersault, throws his ears up in the air and falls a martyr to Europe's militarism.

"Then comes the time to divide our spoils. If Brer Rabbit expires on the German half the custom of the country prescribes that a German may leave the trench and get the prize. That day the German cave-dwellers eat 'hasenbraten.' If the animal dies on our side, we delegate a man to fetch him, and we eat lievre fared. But if he should die, most inconsiderately, right on the line then there is trouble. We both rush for our meal while a terrific fire is opened, and we run the risk of being killed by friend as well as by enemy."

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STEBAURMAN'S OINTMENT

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

St. John's, N.F., June 21st, 1913. I was two months laid up with my leg and had two doctors attending me, and they could not cure me. One said I had chronic hip disease, and the other pronounced a sore abscess. I was ordered to Hospital by one of them and I went there.

My father, hearing of Mr. Stebaurman's Ointment, thought he would try some of it. I took from him a half dozen boxes of the Ointment and it cured me completely.

I would recommend the Ointment to any person suffering from bad legs, as it is a positive cure.

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USED DEAD MEN TO KEEP A DOOR FROM SQUEAKING

British Tommy Making Escape From the Germans, Found Way to a Hut Tenanted Only by War's Victims

FEARED NOISY DOOR WOULD BE HEARD

So, as There Was Nothing Else Available, the Fugitive Had to Use the Dead Bodies as Weights

London, Jan. 12.—"And there was the four of us, all snug and cosy-like in the 'hut," said Corporal Frank Wilson, "with the rain hammering on the tiles. My aunt! How I did sleep!"

He doesn't remember just where it was. The day before—or two days before—they had sighted Rouen. He is sure of that. But his company had been thumping along over the broken roads for days, without rest and almost without time for sleep. Each day they marched as far as the strongest could. The weaker fell out by the way, and rejoined when they could.

"So I don't know the name of the blessed place," said he. "Names don't make no difference to you when you're on the hoof. Those towns all look alike, anyway."

Miserable Weather.

That day it had been raining—a slow, persistent, soaking drizzle. Now and then, it promised a gale. They had dragged themselves into the little village and had been billeted in cottages. Few of them had managed to hold on to their blankets. They were almost dying with fatigue.

"Me, I adn't had my boots off for a fortnight," said Wilson. "Struth." The Germans came upon them in the night. The first the British knew was when they heard the bull-like charging roar of the Bavarians as they raged through the streets. There was no chance for resistance. The British piled out of doors and windows and ran. They did not even know in what direction they were running, except that behind them the German rifles were crackling. Wilson was separated from his companions. "I fell in a ditch and lost my rifle," said he. "Then I picked myself up and ran through the dark until I blooming well bust. Then I walked. I 'urt all over. My bones ached, I was that tired."

The Creaking Door.

He ran headlong into a stone fence. There he stood and listened. The firing had long before died out. At first he could hear nothing but the drip of the rain and an occasional whine of the wind. Then he began to hear an odd sound. Creak—creak—creak—it came at regular intervals. Finally he puzzled out the meaning. An old door was swinging on a rusty hinge.

"My word," said he, "I was glad to hear that. I thought maybe I could get under cover from the rain."

So he began a hunt for that creaking door, stopping cautiously, one foot at a time, through the darkness. His hands stretched out in front. At last he found it. It hung from a little outhouse of some sort. He felt all around the four stone walls. There was no other opening. The door swung in, and he stepped inside and closed the door behind him. He put his back against it. Then he listened for the sound of breathing. "Them Germans are artful," said he. "I held my breath and waited, but I couldn't hear a sound."

Started to Investigate.

In an inner pocket, protected from the water that had soaked his clothing by a bit of rubber sheeting, he had a page or two of the London Times. He had planned to read it at the very first chance. With it he had a box of matches—a miracle at the front, where the wasting of a match is held a sin. When he stepped away from the door it began again to swing in the night wind. The rusty hinge complained. He feared it might attract some prowling enemy so he put his back against the door and sacrificed his bit of newspaper to make a flare. He knew there were no windows through which it might be seen.

"It was a little bit of all right, that 'ut," said he. "The roof was tight, and over in one corner there was a pile of hay. 'Gover owned it had kep' a cow, for there was a milking stool upset there by the hay. I could sleep there dry and warm."

His Company.

He held the flaring paper over his head as he braced against the door.

Then he saw that he had company. Ranged about the walls were three dead men. One had pillowed his head upon the armful of hay. Some one had covered his body with an overcoat. He seemed as though asleep, until the dropped jaw and the white eyeballs gleaming in the light of the flare told the story to the living man.

"Two other Johnnies were sitting against the wall," said Wilson. One of 'em I didn't like to look at. He was hurted bad. Blood had run from his middle until I could see it, blacklike and shiny, on the stone floor."

The other had died leaning back against the wall. He was hardly more than a boy, Wilson said—"but a husky lad; he must 'ave weighed all of twelve or thirteen stone"—and somehow a smile had fastened itself upon his lips as he died. No wound was visible. It was as though he had gone to sleep and was dreaming of home. The flare began to singe Wilson's fingers, and he dropped it and stamped out the sparks. Then he stood in the darkness, considering.

Had to Secure It.

"I knew I 'ad to prop that door shut somehow," he said. "I didn't want it to screek. Some one might hear it. Anyhow, the wind beat the rain in through it."

He felt his way to the side of the dead man on the pile of hay and picked up the milking stool and tried to brace the door shut with it. For a moment it held, and then the wind-driven door thrust it aside. Then an inspiration came to him. He went to that young dead man who was sitting so quietly against the wall smiling to himself in the darkness.

"E was stiff," Wilson said. "Like a log he was, or a chair. So I says to him like—only I didn't say it out loud:

"Give us a hand here, mate, and 'old the door to."

His Door Weight.

He dragged the cold man across the floor and propped him with his back against the swinging door. The weight held it firm, and the annoying screek was stilled. One can imagine the dead man smiling gently through the darkness. Then Wilson turned the other dead man off the armful of hay on which he had died and took the covering overcoat and stretched himself luxuriously.

"I 'urt. I was that tired," said Wilson. "For a little time I couldn't sleep, my bones ached so. My eyes they burned like two coals. The last I can remember is the rain falling on the tiled roof."

So the four of them slept there, warm and cosy in the hut, until morning. Wilson recalls that he waked up twice. Why he doesn't know. Perhaps there was a noise in the night. He only stretched himself in greater comfort on the soft hay and slept on.

"Another man I was in the morning," said he in the hospital at Calais. "Aren't it wonderful what a little rest will do for you?"

Some time in the afternoon he was awakened by the thumping of military transports. British motor-vans were streaming past his shelter. So he hobbled out to rejoin his command, and get that wound in front of Arras which now holds him in the convalescent ward. When he left it seemed to him that he owed some little gratitude to his hosts of the night. Wilson doesn't put it that way. He isn't emotional. But he paid them his small tribute.

"I covered 'em with the overcoat," said he, "especially the lad that 'eld the door for me. Then I hitched the door fast with the chain on the outside, so it wouldn't creak again. They'd be all right in there."

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