

SHELL BLEW MAN UP INTO A TREE

And he Was Taken Down Speechless, but Uninjured—Divine Service in a Cave—Scenes of Slaughter

A diary kept by a non-commissioned officer of the 1st Battalion Royal West Kent Regiment, who has just arrived home wounded, throws interesting light on the part taken by that battalion in the Battle of the Aisne. The writer says: "On Saturday, Sept. 12, the battalion formed the advance guard to the brigade, which had orders to cross the River Aisne by way of the bridge at Missy. "The bridge at the north end had been blown up by the retreating Germans, who had left small bodies of troops at the water's edge to prevent the British troops effecting a crossing, whilst they (the Germans) were completing their magnificent entrenched position, which we afterwards learned from peasants around they had been preparing for sixteen days previous to our arrival. "Couldn't Reach River. "The next morning (Sunday, the 13th) saw the battalion still on the south side of the river, it having been found impossible for the Engineers to get close enough to get a raft or bridge of any sort across. "It was on this Sunday afternoon that the West Kents transported was rather unluckily shelled. The transport was resting on the hillside be-

tween the villages of Ciry and Serches, and our artillery was in position behind the crest of the hill, when the Germans, whilst searching for the batteries, dropped a couple of "Dirty Dicks" (alias "Black Marias") in the vicinity of our transport. "The second shot struck the centre of the road between our transport and that of the King's Own Scottish Borderers, and killed five outright and wounded six. The casualties of the King's Own Scottish Borderers were Sergeant-Major McWheenie and a private soldier killed. "A private of the Army Service Corps, who was pushing a cycle up the hill, walked to his death, for the shell burst practically at his feet. The battalion also had nine of its horses killed, the whole of the damage being done by this one shell. "Half an hour after this sad and ghastly affair had happened we had a visit from the Rev. T. Goudge, our regiment's chaplain, from Richmond Barracks, Dublin, who is doing duty with the 5th Division, and he conducted a funeral service over our fallen comrades. "Called to Worship. "Then, turning to the "Tommys" standing around, he said "Seeing that it is Sunday, boys, let us have a few minutes' service with God," and proceeded to a cave on the hill, a few yards from the scene, where he conducted a short service, touching on the incident that had just occurred in his sermon. "This, with the singing of the hymns, "O God, our help in ages past," and "Rock of Ages," touched the heart of every "Tommy" present, who within the last hour had witnessed one of the worst sights of the war.

"It was on this same day that we lost one of our gallant young officers in Captain F. Fisher, who, in attempting to get his company in an advanced position, was picked off by an enemy's sniper, the bullet passing through his head. Captain Fisher was very popular with all ranks, and his last words were, "Good-bye, boys." "The artillery having shelled the woods at the water's edge, our battalion was able to advance, and succeeded in getting two companies across the water by means of a hastily prepared raft during the night of Sept. 13-14. Three men only were able to cross at a time, the raft being very fragile. This took practically the whole night. "Got Safely Across. "The next night saw the other companies safely across. Trenches being dug, the battalion had to remain in these until they were withdrawn sixteen days later to take part in the great left flank movement. "A rather peculiar incident happened to one of the regiment, in the person of Private T. Corps, whilst we were at Missy. A shell burst very close to this man, the concussion of which shot him up into a tree about 50 ft. A sergeant noticing the man up in the tree, asked him—in military language!—what he was doing there, and got quite angry until he had been quietly informed. "When the man was extricated from the branches it was found he was quite unscathed, except for a slight shock, but apparently struck dumb. He remained in the trenches, and three days later was wounded, and returned home to England. "Later news says he is still without speech."

Importance of Rubber In Modern Warfare

WHEN the elusive Emden sent the British steamer Troilus to the bottom of the Arabian Sea the captain of the former made a serious strategic blunder for which the military experts of his own nation can hardly have pardoned him. The loss of 1,300 tons of rubber entailed by the incident caused a temporary shortage in the British market, and incidentally sent up the price, but beyond that it in no wise affected this country. To Germany, however, the cargo would have been of inestimable value, for rubber, like petrol, is going to be one of the deciding factors in this war, outside what might be termed the purely military aspect of it. **FACES RUBBER FAMINE.** Germany is badly in need of rubber, and is now in the first stages of a rubber famine, if we are to believe the news from Berlin that taxi and private motor owners are unable to replace their tyres. This country was not at first alive to the importance of what I might term the rubber weapon. Even as late as the beginning of September large manufacturing firms in Germany tried to secure supplies of crude rubber through Holland, showing that Germany, at any rate, was alive to its importance. Those immediately concerned in the trade in this country, too, realized its value in the campaign, and, with a patriotism that deserves every commendation, they placed documentary proofs of the Teutonic schemes before the British Government. **MADE CONTRABAND.** The result was that shipments to the near countries of Europe were immediately stopped, and rubber was, in the first instance, placed on the list of conditional contraband, then later on gazetted definitely as absolute contraband. In spite of the prohibition, one ship left a port on the East Coast with a small shipment for a place in Scandinavia, and but for the action of one of Jellicoe's vigilant watch-dogs in sending it back, it is quite possible that Germany indirectly would have replenished her supplies to some extent. A Dutch vessel was also pulled up in the Mediterranean by a French warship, and although the cargo was the property of an Englishman, it was escorted into Algiers because the port of destination was not an English one. **TOOK ALL AWAY.** Even when Antwerp fell, Germany failed to get any fresh supplies, the port on the Scheldt, next to London, was probably the most important market in Europe for the sale of crude rubber until the war broke out. Before the British and Belgians evacuated it all its stock of rubber, save an insignificant quantity of an inferior quality was removed to London. Layingmen, perhaps, do not realize the extent to which rubber is used in modern warfare. It is really surprising. First of all, in a land campaign, there come the motor transports, without which the armies could not be adequately fed with either food or ammunition. Speed here is everything. The German army, deprived of its rubber, would be reduced to the condition of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea without its chariot wheels. **IN AEROPLANES.** In aerial transport, too, it is an essential, for it enters largely into the construction of both airships and aeroplanes. Now take the needs of the private soldier. When the bad weather began to fill the British trenches with water, orders were placed by the War Office for rain-proof ground sheets to such an extent that all rubber manufacturers throughout the United Kingdom who could under take a share in a big contract have been kept busy for many weeks. Water-proof capes, cloaks, and saddle covers were also freely ordered. The Army Council have not yet adopted rubber Wellington boots for the soldiers in the trenches, but the Rubber Growers' Association are themselves raising funds to present a large number of them in order to test their value in affording comfort and preserving the health of the soldier. **IN THE HOSPITALS.** Take next the case of the wounded in the hospital. Here, again, rubber comes into use in providing, hot wa-

ter bottles and various kinds of surgical goods that can be packed in less bulk than articles made from any other substance. As regards the men on duty in the North Sea rubber boots and water-proof garments are provided, and hot water bottles in hospital. The most recent application, as many people are already aware, is in the form of a rubber collar, which every man in the Navy will keep on him ready for inflation as an aid to swimming if tragedy should overtake his ship. In ship construction, too, rubber is very extensively used. For instance, for all doors required for watertight compartments, washers, linings, and packings of rubber are absolute necessities. This applies more particularly to submarines, in the building of which special attention must be given to make the raft both water tight and airtight, rubber is the article used to give it that resistance. **USE AT SEA.** Is use at sea, moreover, has by no means reaching its limit. There are even enthusiasts who claim that a six inch sheathing of rubber would make a warship immune from torpedo attack and mine explosion, and enable it to penetrate into any minefield without fear or disaster, but the Admiralty has decided that a state of actual warfare is no time for an experiment. Another development is the manufacture of an aerated or cellular rubber, which has an extreme buoyancy. Its sponsors claim, with what justification remains to be seen, that if the Olympic had between its two skins, a packing of this form of material, it would be too buoyant to sink, and the vessel would have been able to continue its voyage through the mine-field off the north of Ireland without having to put into Lough Swilly. Some people, more generally the unenlightened, think Germany may try to overcome her rubber shortage by setting her chemists to the task of producing synthetic rubber. But rubber growers, if you put the point to them will tell you that "It's a long, long way to Tipperary," and they will proceed to raise a chuckle by informing you that the last attempt to produce synthetic rubber was by making extractions from artichokes grown at Tipperary. **Anyone can repair a roof with Elastic Roofing Cement Paint. It is easy and ready to apply. No heating required. You can do the work yourself with an ordinary whitewash brush. P. H. COWAN, Agent.**

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