

A TERRIBLE JOURNEY

STORY OF OFFICIAL STUPEFY COMES FROM INDIA.

A Body of Territorials Who Were Sent Across One Thousand Miles of Desert in the Heat of Summer With Inadequate Hospital and Train Service Suffered Untold Agonies From Thirst and Heat Stroke.

A N amazing story of the tragic death of British Territorial soldiers landed in India has been revealed in London Truth. It appears that the men were despatched on a journey of more than 1,000 miles through the desert without proper medical attendance and with nothing to protect them against the terrible heat.

The story which in Truth is entitled "A Troop Train Tragedy," is as follows:

"Indian military administration has not covered itself with glory during the war, but none of its blunders has been more inexcusable and more shocking than the recent tragic journey of a troop train from Karachi to Peshawar. Not all the facts have yet been divulged even in India, indeed, so far as I have seen, the newspapers there have only published short and colorless reports emanating from official sources.

"But the numerous letters that I have received, many of them from army officers, testify to the horror the affair has excited among all acquainted with the details, and but for the preoccupation of the press and the public with the war the story would assuredly raise a storm of indignation here at home.

"In the month of June the railway journey from Karachi to Peshawar, a distance of over 1,000 miles, is one of the hottest in the world. For some hundreds of miles the line goes through the baking Sind desert, where the shade temperature is anything up to 126. Mail trains perform the journey in twenty-four hours. Troop trains take from two and a half to five days for the same journey because—the health and comfort of soldiers being of the highest importance—they are drawn by the slowest engines and have to give place to all other passenger traffic.

"On this journey, a severe ordeal even for acclimated white men, the military authorities at Karachi despatched about a thousand British soldiers just disembarked from the transport which had conveyed them from England. The men were sent out as drafts for various different units in India, territorial and regular. As usual the troop train was made up of old third-class carriages which, with the exception of the wooden seats, are little better than good trucks. Into these vehicles the soldiers were packed like sardines.

"One correspondent says they were still wearing English clothing. There were no punkahs or fans. Ice was supplied at Karachi—nominally one pound per man, but half of it melted before they received it. I am assured that the only water being drunk was what was carried in the men's water bottles, and that there was neither water nor any accommodation for washing.

"Three doctors traveled with the train, but, like the men, they were new to India, and so, devotedly though they worked, they were hopelessly handicapped by their lack of experience as well as by their own sufferings from the intense heat.

"Two second-class carriages, each with lying-down accommodation for two patients, had been set apart for use as a hospital.

"The train pulled up at Rohri, 229 miles from Karachi, 23 hours after it started. By that time a number of men were sick, dying or already dead from heat strokes. Seven corpses were removed from

the train at Rohri and 32 patients in a critical condition were taken across the River Indus to the Civil Hospital at Sukkur, where in spite of everything that could be done for them five more died. During the half at Rohri a meal was served in the station shed, where the troops were shielded from the rays of the sun only by an iron roof. When the journey was resumed more heat strokes occurred and a carriage had to be turned into a mortuary.

"As the result of urgent telegraphic messages a further but inadequate supply of ice was obtained en route, and at Lahore the train was met by a staff of medical officers, nurses, and orderlies. Sixty-seven patients were transferred to the cantonment hospital at Lahore. For the rest of the journey a medical man with Indian experience accompanied the train and an extra engine was provided to expedite it.

"At Rawalpindi 37 more patients were taken from the train to the hospital. This made the total number of hospital cases 136. A semi-official statement issued from Simla gave 15 as the total number of deaths, including those of Rohri, but my correspondents assert that there were at least 25.

"A number of junior officers from regiments in the Punjab went down to Karachi to meet the drafts for their units. They returned with the train. I am told that they unavailingly pointed out the danger that would arise from the overcrowding, the heat and the slowness of the journey, and took the precaution of obtaining for themselves an extra store of ice, which they handed over for the use of the sick. The danger might have been lessened, if not removed altogether, by giving the men simple accommodations (there is no shortage of rolling stock), such as means of ventilating the heat as other travelers get and a faster train service. But the callous stupidity of the staff was imperious to reason or warning, and these unfortunate soldiers were ordered forth on a journey whose horrors could only be feebly imagined.

Returned Men Badly Stung by Toronto Barber.

(Toronto Telegram)

Two lads—the home of one is in Merritt and the home of the other in Hamilton—had just come back from the front, and were passing through Toronto this morning. They were tired after their journey, and needing a shave and haircut, went into a barber shop.

When number one was finished with the bill was \$2.75. The soldier had been through a good deal and bore the marks of his campaigning experiences, but this staggered him. He wanted to know what had really happened to him, and the obliging artist of the scissors laboriously penned the following items:

- Shave, 15 cents
- Massage, 35 cents
- Antiseptic, 35 cents
- Haircut, 25 cents
- Mange Shampoo, 60 cents
- Violet ray, 25 cents
- Septic, 35 cents
- Tonic, 10 cents
- Total \$2.75

He paid. His comrade also parted with \$1.25 for a haircut, shave and massage. Then the two appealed to the police. Three policemen in turn gave their opinions regarding the barber, but they also told the men they could do nothing for them. Accordingly, the lads, who, by the way, fought at Ypres, St. Eloi,

Courcelles and in the general Somme advance, told their story to the Telegram.

These are the people we are fighting for," said one. "A man comes back after hard and bitter work at the front and it seems as if he is only a victim for robbery. We haven't any too much money, either," he added.

"Neck massage," said the victim of the larger bill. "Talk about getting it in the neck, this is a fine example I didn't ask for all these things, and I don't even know if I did get them in the name of everything that's pink in a 'mange shampoo' anyway? I'm not a dog and I'm not mangy. It's an infernal shame, that's all, but we are only relating our experience to warn some other poor chap from the front what to expect in this town when he arrives. What do such people think a returned soldier is—a millionaire or an easy mark?"

When the facts were related to Crown Attorney Corley, he gave the opinion that no action could be taken against the barber. "What evidently happened was that the knight of the shears having finished one item, suggested to the victim the advisability of having something more, and so the bill mounted up. Doubtless the soldier scarcely knew what was being done to him, but apparently got the service for which he was asked to pay. I am sorry the bill was paid. If the soldier had delcided to foot it the matter could have been ventilated in court and something might have been done."

A BIBLE HILL HERO.

What the Red Cross Do For Our Boys Overseas.

Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Walton, Bible Hill, Truro, N. S., are in receipt of the following, respecting the wounding in action of their brave lad Pte. S. Walton.

Canadian Red Cross Society,
14-16, Cockspur Street,
London, S. W. 1.
21. 4. 17.

INFORMATION BUREAU.

Dear Madam
I beg to inform you that Pte. S. Walton, No. 415, 839, Royal Canadian Rifles, who is now at Ionic St. Hospital, Rockferry, Cheshire, England, is suffering from a shrapnel wound in his right arm. He has been visited by our Representative, who reports that he is looking very bright and cheerful, and is being well looked after. He will be regularly visited by us while he remains in hospital, and we will send you reports as to his progress from time to time. Should he ask for any extra comforts they will be supplied him from this Office. With best wishes for his speedy recovery.

Yours truly
CONSTANCE SCOTT,
Per E. S. O

The above is one of the strongest reasons why you, me, and everybody should support the Red Cross work. Those Red Cross people look after your boys away over, not only in England, but right up at the front as well, and don't forget the Y. M. C. A., work either.

Just gladly pay what you can when they pass the hat.

Huns Shot His Mother.

Because She Had "Wished the Kaiser Was Dead."

A postal card came through the Milwaukee postoffice in the last two days addressed to a Milwaukee son of a German mother who will not allow his name to be used, which brought both a message to him of his mother's health and her execution by the German authorities.

The card was addressed to "My Son." The card said that she was getting along well, and said: "I wish the Kaiser was dead."

The card came through, but the inscription across the card was to the recipient:

"Your mother was shot at sunrise. The censors."

The story developed when the young man tried to enlist in the U. S. Navy and presented the card as evidence of his reason for being enrolled. He had not been naturalized and was for the time rejected.

PAT'S CONTRACT.

There had been a quarrel in the street and in the ensuing fight one of the belligerents had died.

Pat Muldoon was duly charged with murder, and poor Mrs. Muldoon sought high and low for means to help her erring husband. At last she discovered that an acquaintance of his was to serve on the jury.

To him she went, offering her savings of £10 if he would induce his colleagues to bring in a verdict of "manslaughter."

The verdict was duly returned and Mrs. Muldoon hurried to the friend in need.

"Here 'are, Mike!" she said. "May the powers bless ye! Here's the £10. Did ye have much of a hard job?"

"Did I indeed! It took me two hours to get 'em to agree to that verdict. The rest all wanted to acquit him."

FOR A RAINY DAY.

They say the Scotch are a cautious race; spendthrifts, perhaps, but cautious.

Sandy was in a bar the other day and had just finished his drink, when in strolled a southern friend.

"Hello Sandy! Just going? Oh don't! The restrictions don't apply in this country, do they? Just stop and have another wi' me."

"Na, na," replied Sandy, "Ah's had no ma drink for the day. Ah'll no be havin' another, thank ye! But," as an inspiration struck him, "ye can pay for the yin Ah've just had, if ye like!"

THE DE'IL OF IT.

An Irishman, having signed the pledge, was charged soon afterwards with being drunk.

"It was absentmindedness," said Pat, "an, a habit I have of talking with meself I sed to meself says I. 'Pat, come in an' have a drink.' 'No,' says I, 'I've sworn off.' 'Then I'll drink alone,' said I to meself, 'an' you ken wait outside,' says I, 'An' when meself cum out, faith, an' lo an' behold you if Pat wasn't drunk."