Prisoner Five-One-Eleven

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Donald H. Laird

The Author five months after entering Switzerland.
Weight 181 pounds.

PRISONER FIVE-ONE-ELEVEN

BY

TROOPER DONALD HARRY LAIRD
4th Canadian Mounted Rifles
An Exchanged Prisoner of War.

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PREFACE.

MY effort in setting forth my experiences in the trenches and in German hospitals and prison camps cannot be wholly valueless.

At this time, when all the freedom-loving nations whose homes constitute an emblem of patriotism, honor and faith, are combined against the insolent ravages of hatred and despotism, it is only too certain that many others must undergo what has already happened to me.

If those who are not already alive to the barbarity and consciencelessness of the common foe of humanity can be made to see by the experience of another, what their own loved ones may suffer, surely they will be pricked into a keener sense of their own responsibility, and so become efficient tools in the suppression of this gigantic crime against the world.

If the following pages serve in any way to the detriment of German autocracy my desires will have been fully satisfied, my aims in giving them to the public amply justified.

The people of Canada and the United States cannot understand a national conscience so bereft of honor and every form of decency as is that of Germany. For this reason, they are slow to realize the danger, slow to anger and slow to act, being most unwilling to recognize motives so debased as those which have actuated the Kaiser from the beginning.

I say to you my brethren of the New World, that, until we rise up in the supreme might of our fullest resentment against the curse of despotism and crush it as utterly and as effectually as one would grind the head of a serpent under his heel, we will not be doing our duty to our loved ones, our Country and our God!

DEDICATED

TO MY OLD COMRADES

OF THE

4th CANADIAN MOUNTED

RIFLES.

CHAPTER I.

LOOKING BACK.

TO me, August, 1914, lies deep in the past; like some remote beginning made distant by the multitude of happenings between. In those days my quiet little home town of Blenheim, Ontario, was a happy place. Sheltered from the perils of statecraft by the great Mother Country, England, Canada was free from entangling alliances, and the rumor of war in Europe served only to increase our feeling of security.

Even England's declaration of war did not seem such a mighty thing at first. With her forty-thousand trained troops ready for instant service on the continent, her great Navy and the help of Russia, France and the small nations opposed to Germany, we felt no anxiety over the situation. Least of all did we dream of a part for ourselves in the struggle.

The wise-heads were freely predicting victory over Germany in less than three months, and we wondered at the impudence and shortsightedness of the Kaiser in provoking a conflict so obviously beyond his power to terminate. And then came the call for volunteers. We were surprised—we could not believe that England would need us—but we all agreed it was our chance and so the enlisting began.

When the first Canadian Contingent sailed away, thirty-five thousand strong, our enthusiasm and pride were boundless, though some of us who were left behind would have given our chances of paradise to have gone along.

In January, 1915, I enlisted with the Seventh Canadian Mounted Rifles at London, Ont. The cavalry appealed to me more than any other branch of the service, and at that early period the changed methods of fighting on the western front had not yet done away with horse troops.

Our training period at London was full of an eagerness to get to the front—we worked hard and enjoyed it all, the horses as well as the men, and, as we had to break our own horses, there was no lack of excitement. The work was much more enjoyable than infantry training, and I fear we cavalry fellows felt somewhat superior to our lowly comrades on foot.

I was one of a mounted machine-gun squad that soon became the terror of the camp. Our close association in our work gave us vast opportunities to get together on measures of devilment and persecution, and we were quite impartial with our attentions. There was a nervous little sergeant and a tall, solemn-faced corporal, who were never safe. We used to smoke the sergeant out by stuffing rags down the chimney and then, under the pretense of helping him put out the fire, throw cold water all over his bedding and his clothes. The corporal was a different proposition. He had a brand of stories that would have made a professional mourner shed tears like a high school girl at the movies. One of us would give an imitation of a highly interested listener, doing his best to laugh at the proper time, while the rest of the crew busied themselves about the corporal's quarters. If the corporal was unfortunate enough to tell many stories his possessions would be scattered to the four winds and it would take him about two days to get back into livable condition again. This was a highly enjoyable prank to all of our little band save the fellow who had to do the listening. Of all the pale wit I have ever encountered, the corporal's stories were the nearest approach to the ideal. Poor old chap, pneumonia got him in a training camp in England.

The most startling character with whom we came in contact was our riding-master. He was strangely out of place in a regulation uniform, his whole mien and bearing crying out for the checked trousers, loud shirt, flowing mustache and six carat diamond of the circus ring. His language, while without elegance, was forceful beyond description, and his assortment of cuss-words was a never-ending source of wonder and amazement to us all. He was the very apostle of profanity, never by word or deed discouraging it in any way. Along with his unsavory accomplishments this man must have had some musical training for he swore in rag-time, waltz-time—from double p to double f with

all the expression and fervor of the true artist. We lost him in England, how, when or where, we never knew.

Our training camp was alive with rumors most of the time. One day we were to be sent to Egypt, the next day to France, but the weeks and months dragged on and our impatience grew to grumbling. What did the Government mean by keeping us there inactive so long. With a war to win, how could they overlook US?

Then, one day, the order came to pack up and make ready to leave. Ah, here it was at last, the Government was coming to its senses; we wrote to everyone with whom we had been on speaking terms, telegraphed to some, and made an awful mess of packing. Next morning we were told to unpack as we would not be going just yet. How foolish we felt when we thought of all those letters and telegrams.

The next time we got orders to pack we did it better, and confined ourselves to letters in expressing our goodbyes. Again there was something wrong, and we did not leave. By the time we were ordered to pack for the third time we had no confidence in any order; another bluff, we said, but our packing, thanks to practice, was just about perfect. No letters this time—we had been fooled twice—we refused to be fooled again, but we were, for the next morning our train was waiting and at nightfall we reached Montreal.

A crowd, including many pretty French-Canadian girls, masking their personal aims by candy, flowers and post-cards, surrounded us at the station.

With the traditional gallantry of real heroes we sought to make returns for the kindness and consideration of our besiegers and, I dare say, the promises made to those patriotic young ladies, if collected, would resemble the combined obligations of all the secret societies in existence, with a few of the more exacting conditions of a pre-nuptial agreement thrown in. Every girl wanted a correspondent at the front, and our boys were soon supplied with addresses which, I am sure, they had occasion to refer to long before reaching the trenches.

The Caladonia, on which we were to sail, was a small vessel, accommodating about four hundred and fifty men and seven hundred horses. As we went on board an inspection officer with a pair of searchlight eyes

gave us each the once over. Once was enough, for this fellow's eyes seemed to penetrate to the very deeds of one's ancestors. Childish pranks, way back in your early school days, were magnified to the heights of treason, and I know that most of us, while enduring his scrutiny, had visions of facing a firing-squad at sunrise.

Just what the idea was we never knew, for old "Bright-Eyes" did not open his head, and none of us were questioned or examined in any way. We may have been subjected to this as an antidote for the self-esteem instilled by those French-Canadian girls. If so, I can vouch for the wisdom of the measure.

The boat seemed a pleasant change to us after our all-day ride on the train, and in spite of our close sleeping quarters, we passed a comfortable night.

We were up early the next morning for a last look at Montreal and another look at the girls. We got both and a rousing send-off from a big crowd on the pier besides. At another pier close by we saw a big liner being made ready for transport service, and we wondered sadly if the soldier boys who sailed away on her would carry with them some of the addresses we were so fondly treasuring. There was a suspicion that they might.

At eight o'clock our little boat swung away from shore and we were soon enjoying the trip down the St. Lawrence. We were not required to drill that first day, and there was nothing to disturb our musings. Amidst all the loveliness of the scenes about us it was hard to realize that we were destined for the world's mightiest struggle, for a place of pain and suffering and death. The warm June sun, the quiet water, the far blue sky and soft colors of the landscape, so filled the heart with the eternal charm of peace that the mind forgot the object of our mission, the very presence in the world of evil things. What a thing of joy life was that day!

We were given exercise drill next morning and some simple work in signalling. It was all over by noon, and, with our equipment securely packed and grooms and helpers to care for the horses, our afternoon was again given up to gazing and dreaming.

Following our training in camp we were a healthy lot, and with many days of this boat life ahead of us our spirits rose to heights that threatened to wreck all semblance of discipline. We played games, scuffled and

ran about the deck giving vent to the "pep" that was in us. For the most of us the enthusiasm of youth crowded out all consideration of the future, and when we thought of the Germans, if we thought of them at all, it was with a feeling almost of pity. What a splendid thing it is our dreams—the ones we make ourselves—are always on the sunny side.

There was a sober moment for all when we looked upon the Home Land for the last time. There was a mist that half-hid the shore line, for the day was dark, and a light rain was falling. For me, however, there was another mist more potent, a mist of tears that was somehow strength, tenderness and love all blended into one. Several hours later we came in sight of a huge rock, towering up from the water, and we were told this would be our last sight of Canada. What a significance it held for us, and how long we gazed even after it, too, had been swallowed up in the mist and distance behind.

We were out to sea when morning came, and we noticed with curiosity that the sailors were bringing up tubs partially filled with water. These they placed about the deck, and some of us were not long in finding out what they were for. As for myself, I was suddenly conscious of an uneasy feeling, a feeling that kept me from thinking of anything but my stomach, and a moment later one of those tubs became the object of my serious and undivided attention. Seasickness was a new one to me, but I had no reason to feel lonely, for the tubs were soon doing yeoman service. I have always marvelled at the powers of the mathematician who figured out just how many tubs to provide and just how much water to put in each one of them. I think I was the first to get sick and the last to get well, though many others contended mutely but eloquently with me for that distinction. Part of the time I was afraid I would never reach France. It was a pity, I thought, to die thus without doing my bit, and I wondered if they would bury me at sea. This was during the early, incipient stages, later I didn't give a d—— where they buried me.

Our officers tried to make the time pass pleasantly for us at sea. We had drill, all kinds of sports possible on the ship, and much time to ourselves, but the four-

teen days we were on the water began to be an awful bore at the last, and we were glad to reach England.

A convoy of small patrol boats picked us up near the southern end of the English Channel on our way in, and we entered Plymouth Harbor at night without once having sighted land. Our first glimpse of the Mother Land came the next morning as we looked at the old town and the heights rising behind it. These heights were crowned by forts and guns mounted in the open, and in the waters of the harbor were several war-craft that filled us with pride and enthusiasm as we noted their trim, business-like appearance and great speed. We found much to look at until the order came to leave the boat at one o'clock.

The insignificant looking little train that awaited us at the station was a great joke to us at first. It seemed to be entirely too small for the job assigned to it, and we wondered how our long corporal would ever get folded up enough to fit into one of those diminutive compartments. With mock ceremony we packed ourselves and our belongings in as best we could and the train departed. We passed through a tunnel to the level, open lands behind the hills, and were soon sailing along among some of the finest rural scenery in all the world. The charm of the English landscape is nowhere more pronounced than in this very region, and we had come upon it in the most delightful season of the year.

At the town of Exeter we were given sandwiches, cake and tea—the Mayor and his wife looking after our comfort and welcoming us most cordially. Without further stop we reached the ancient town of Canterbury about midnight, and marched in through the gate in the great wall that still surrounds the older portion. Trains do not run into this part of the city, and we marched through the curious, narrow streets to Victoria Barracks, which had been set apart for cavalry training.

We spent only a week in this quaint old town, and our training consisted of dismounted cavalry drill entirely. Then we were moved to Sommerset Barracks, near Shorncliffe, where we were given a stiff routine and whipped into shape as fast as possible. Our day began at 4.30, with breakfast at 5 o'clock. Then came inspection, parade and drill in mounted manoeuvres; dismounted action and signalling, with an hour off for

dinner. After dinner there were more manoeuvres, cavalry saber drill and other work which lasted until 5 o'clock or later. The horses were then attended to and we came in for supper at 6 o'clock. Supper over, we were off until roll-call at 9.30.

For three months we went through this same programme each day, and then there was a call for volunteers to go to France at once. We all volunteered—just like it reads in the headlines—and myself and ninety-nine others were allowed to believe ourselves among the most fortunate men in the British army by being chosen.

This bunch of one hundred were joined to the 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, and we were at once initiated into the mysteries and terrors of putting up a pack. A corporal had to fix mine up, and when it was ready I surveyed the dimensions and wondered how many such packs a motor truck would carry. I was deep in mental arithmetic when the corporal began showing me how to adjust the pack to my person. I nearly fainted, but that didn't get me anything but a brusk invitation from the corporal to be on my way. It was just like walking around with a hand-car strapped to your neck.

My new regiment was already under orders to leave for the front and was quartered about three miles from our old barracks. Here we were put into tents and waited patiently for the word. We could not go anywhere or do much of anything for the order might come at any moment, so we just stuck around and tried to show enthusiasm in the face of terrific odds. By the time we were having about seven fights a day the order came.

We left England one evening at six o'clock, and five hours later reached France.

On the way over I had a taste of something quite novel. I was put on submarine guard duty. This consisted of being stationed at the forward end of the boat with your rifle loaded and bayonet fixed, with orders to look out for submarines. As it was raining and so dark I couldn't see my nose I was naturally at a loss where to look for the subs. Then, too, in case one did make itself visible by some preternatural means, how was I to act, what was I to do? I gave this long and earnest consideration, and finally decided

that if one of these new-fangled saurians clambered over the rail ahead of me, turned on all its lights and insisted upon taking liberties with me, I would shoot off all five cartridges in my gun, break my bayonet over the monster's hindquarters and, as a last desperate effort to alarm the boat, wring my hands. I was spared any actual difficulties, however, as it was such a bad night that a commander would have been shot for taking a submarine out in it.

At B, where we landed, we had to march up a long hill to our camp, and it was here we first got a taste of the penalties inflicted upon those who try to take along too much luggage.

Up the steep hill we went, over slippery cobblestones; stumbling, sweating, cussing and puffing like wind-broken horses. The officers had to kid us along with exaggerations of the nearness of the journey's end, and, at that, most of us were "all in" by the time we made the grade.

Well, here we were in France at last. Here our ambitions of so many months would take shape; here we would find the full meaning of such words as duty, service and honor, and, maybe, of heroism—glory and —death.

CHAPTER II.

UP THE LINE.

THE second morning after reaching B. we took the train for "up the line."

The journey, which lasted nearly ten hours, was without incident or interest to us until we began hearing the guns. At the first sound of the firing I was possessed by a strange, indefinite feeling, as if I had suddenly lost something of great value without knowing exactly what it was. There is something in the voices of the great guns, when one is bound for their immediate vicinity for the first time, that seems to take all the interest out of life for just an instant. We soon caught sight of observation balloons far away to the east of us hanging so motionless they seemed like spots against the sky. An aeroplane came into view, and we forgot the guns in watching it, thrilled by admiration for the man who rode the high wave of danger there in the limitless heaven alone. Friend or foe, we knew not which, but we did him homage in our hearts.

At four o'clock in the afternoon we left the train at C, and marched to billets about three miles distant. The weight of our packs was a sore burden long before we reached our destination, but we did not complain. Our appreciation of the danger before us was a wonderful tonic against the minor hardships of that march. Our company occupied an old barn that night—a loose, wooden structure, whose yawning door and dark interior were far from inviting. To most of us, however, these features were of small importance after our march, and we were soon stretching ourselves in the hay in the utter abandon of weariness.

Of course, the hay had "cooties" in it—no soldier's tale would be complete, or even considered authentic, without a paragraph or two devoted to "cooties," and what to do when you get them. I can cover this ground very briefly by telling you exactly what not to do, which

is equivalent to warning you against all the things you want to do. Simply remember that war is H——, and that "cooties" are an essential and inalienable adjunct thereto. There are worse things than "cooties"—the fellow who started this war, for instance.

The miserable night we spent in that old barn may have touched the hearts of our officers, or, perhaps, even they, were not without blemish. At any rate we had an easy time of it next day, and both the following days, and then came the order to get ready for the trip in. Getting ready consisted of strapping together enough stuff for a polar expedition, after which, with the help of three or four men, you get the pack securely fastened on your back. At the psychological moment the men let go of the pack and you walk off with it. It is very simple, although many war books treat the pack as an instrument of torture.

At the end of a walk of something more than fifteen miles we went into rest-billets, four miles behind the front line trench of the Ypres salient, at a point due west of Messines. Messines at this time, November, 1915, was held by the Germans, whose trenches, located on higher ground, gave them several distinct advantages over the Allies' position.

These rest-billets were rough wooden huts, built very low down and roofed with building paper the same color as the ground. Each hut had a maximum capacity of twelve men. I am very positive about my figures on this point, because there were fifteen men in the hut where I was quartered and three of them had to sleep on top of the others.

We started in at three o'clock the next afternoon and reached the front line trench soon after dark. There was a good deal of firing going on as we came in through the communication trench, and at one place we had to crowd up against the wall and make room for two stretcher-bearers going out with a dead soldier. The body was covered with a blanket, but the feet and the head were exposed. The man had been struck in the head and there was little human semblance left. I have often tried to remember how I felt as I looked at that body. The sight was so intimate, so near at hand, so unmistakably a part of the game I too was playing, that it both fascinated and repelled me. There was no fear, the sight really brought me courage; there

was no thought of self, only a vast and tender pity for that unknown comrade, that still figure caked with mud and filth and vermin.

In the front line trench we were divided up and placed in pairs between men who were veterans at trench fighting. Our months of cavalry training were of little value to us here. If we had only know, if we could have had even a little infantry work, how it would have braced us for this occasion. But there we were, like fish out of water, with the shells bursting about us and the star-shells going up on all sides. Machine-guns were tapping away, and there were so many different sounding explosions that we felt lost and bewildered.

The first thing we learned in the trench was the significance of some of the sounds. I noticed the old timers ducking every time a certain modulated humming was heard, and asked them why they ducked. They told me it was time to duck when you heard that sound —that it was a rifle-grenade, a very dangerous explosive proposition. I had no difficulty in out-ducking any of them after that bit of information. It is surprising how quickly a fellow picks up things in the trenches, a dummy on the parade ground is never quite so dumb among the bullets and the shrapnel.

Out in front of us the machine-gun bullets were ripping the bags along the parapet, and others were whirring past over our heads. I must have had an anxious look on my face for one of the "old heads" came close to me and, looking me squarely in the face, said, "Don't worry, son, if you're going to get it, you'll get it." I came to understand in time what is meant by this simple creed of the trenches. It has been quoted many times, it cannot be quoted too often. Until one can assume that attitude he will not be of much use in trench fighting. Where death lurks in every move men must have something simple in the way of faith.

We learned a lot our first night from the men about us. They were kind and seemed to understand that we didn't want to admit our ignorance by asking too many questions. They helped us fill bags for the parapet, repair trench walls, reinforce the firing-step, and showed us how to keep down out of danger in going about our different duties.

There was quite a bombardment going on further up toward the point of the salient some five or six miles distant. We could hear the guns and see the flight of the shells. The bursting shrapnel showered red-hot bits of metal in all directions. The shells travelled in a dull yellow haze and the trench-mortar projectiles (the sausages, rum-jars, pigs and minnies) on their slow ambling course through the air, gave off a dull red glow. The German batteries were located behind an elevation. We could see the flash when the gun was fired, the shell when it made its appearance coming over the rise, and the flare when the shell burst in the flat ground among the trenches. It was a most fascinating sight, and we watched it as often as our work would permit.

About three o'clock we were told to get some sleep before "stand to," and, with our tired bodies and heads full of newly acquired and unfamiliar terms, we sought a dry spot on the firing-step and tried to obey orders. No use, the "cooties" and the excitement had Morpheus buffaloed.

At "stand to" we were greeted by some artillery fire and the machine-guns pecked away at a lively rate. The Germans occupied an elevation above us and in our trenches, on account of the character of the ground and the water being only three or four feet deep, we had to depend upon the sand-bag parapet for our main protection. With mud and water up to our knees it was very difficult to get around and keep down out of harm's way behind the bags, and this difficulty cost us men every day.

The rum ration is issued as soon as "stand to" is over and before the men are down from the firing step. It was mighty welcome to us our first morning, for we were cold and wet as snails, and the thick, heavy stuff had a kick to it like an eight-bore duck gun. A spoonful is enough for anybody and this is the amount that is issued to each man. I remember one fellow who discovered the rum jar in a dugout, and, having a taste for booze, drank a liberal quantity. He died.

Breakfast is usually preceded by a more or less successful attempt to clean up the trench and make it presentable. I may state that our attempt on this particular morning in question was in the nature of a

failure. The trench looked like a section of sewer when we started, and its appearance was not materially changed by our efforts. Our appetites, however, suffered little discouragement from our surroundings. and we were soon initiated into the mysteries of trench cooking, which include many shortcuts in the instantaneous preparation of food.

Being curious about everything we moved about the trench looking for some of the things we had been told of. The only thing of interest I could discover was a periscope, and I looked through this at the German trenches. This proved to be a very poor means of entertainment, for, while there were plenty of Germans within some fifty yards of us, they might as well have been in Berlin, so far as my seeing them was concerned. We asked about the rats and were told they were all right—that they were tame and gentle and often slept on the fellows' chests on cold nights. I began hoping for a mild winter.

Then something happened—one of those incidents that give the trenches so much charm in the eyes of the reading public.

I was close to an angle of the trench, and, turning, saw a soldier looking through the periscope. Suddenly he raised up and fired over the parapet, ducking down again without having drawn a shot from the German trench. Then began the first and last sniper's duel I ever witnessed during my entire experience in the trenches. Our man would cautiously expose a little of his head from time to time, endeavoring to draw the German's fire and get a glimpse of him at the same time. The German was a wary individual, and it was a long time before he fired his first shot. I was fascinated by this game of death and watched each move of my comrade with intense interest. I soon concluded that this was a contest of patience and prudence, like the great game of poker, and I wondered who would get excited and give away his hand first. The duel had lasted perhaps twenty minutes, and there had been four or five shots apiece exchanged when I noticed that the strain was beginning to tell on our man. He was nervous and seemed to have lost his deliberation and caution, bobbing up and down in his anxiety to catch his opponent off his guard. The next shot ended the duel and our man came tumbling down into the trench with

an ugly bullet wound in his forehead. No, he wasn't killed, but he deserved to be. Caution is the first duty of a soldier, and you can't serve your country by taking unnecessary chances.

Some of the men in our trench had been in the fighting from the first and their tales of German atrocities were so frightful and inhuman as to be almost beyond belief. Some of these stories have been told, many never will be told, and, as for myself, I pray that I may in time forget the barbarities of the accursed Huns. Their scheme to intimidate and break the spirit of the allies' resistance by horrible villainies, perpetrated upon innocent and defenceless women, children and babies, has failed utterly as all their plans, conceived in lust and hatred and carried out in ruthless savagery, must fail eventually.

Dinner time in the trenches around Ypres is no season of lazy enjoyment. There is always enough firing going on to make one apprehensive lest a shell muss up the soup or scatter fragments of some nearby comrade all over the place. Between bites it is well to keep a keen eye out for trench mortar projectiles, as these pests have a distressing habit of landing in the trench and suddenly occupying all the space about to the exclusion of everything else. The trenches would be a great place for the loophounds who spend most of their time badgering the waiters and kicking on the service rendered at our best hotels.

During the afternoon an observation balloon belonging to the Germans broke loose and floated over our lines. So far as we could tell there were no observers aboard, and we watched the big bag wandering round in the air above us and wondered what would happen to it. At last it got into an upper air current that took it back over the German lines and an aeroplane was sent up to bring it down. This was done by puncturing the balloon with machine-gun fire, though it was a long time before the balloon finally reached the ground.

Aeroplanes were in sight all the time above the lines, and two of them finally got together directly over us. They circled and dived and twisted until we nearly went crazy with suspense. One of them would turn loose a few rounds from his machine-gun when he got in a position that suited him, and then the other would manoeuvre and get his gun into play. We expected

every minute to see one of the combatants come whirling down, for it didn't seem possible for their gun fire to fail at such short range. But they both ran out of ammunition before any serious damage was done, and retired behind their respective lines.

The German planes at that time were faster than those of the allies, and outnumbered the latter by a substantial majority, so that it was a difficult matter for the allied air-men to get much information of value concerning the movement of troops, concentration of guns, etc. The allies had the worst of it in the air to start with, and our men, who made names for themselves then as pilots, had to be stars of the first magnitude.

Our instruction period in the front line trench lasted only twenty-four hours, and the next night, after going in, we went back to our huts, three miles in the rear.

Cold, and tired and wet, and with every bone in our bodies aching, we huddled together in those wretched little hovels and were soon lost to the world. All the "cooties" in the world could not have kept us awake.

CHAPTER III.

DOING OUR BIT.

WITH a full day's rest we were all "pepped up" and ready for our next trip in.

This time we took over a section of trench ourselves, our regiment relieving the Strathcona Horse and the Fort Garry Horse, two regiments that had been pretty badly used up by their long sojourn in the Ypres salient.

Raw troops usually do a lot of unnecessary firing their first night, and we were warned not to give our hand away in this manner. The Germans were rather quick to guess the presence of new regiments, and had been known to launch attacks against them on many occasions. The night passed off rather quietly, but we got a sight of the rats which kinda' "puts the wind up yu,'" as the British "Tommies" say.

The Germans sent over a few shots early the next morning and cut loose with their trench mortars from time to time. I was talking to a Lance Corporal and another comrade under a traverse shortly after breakfast when, for some unaccountable reason, I walked away from them and around an angle of the trench. I had barely stepped around the corner when a "rum jar" (a German trench mortar projectile) landed squarely on the traverse above the two men, and they were blown to shreds. The force of the explosion threw me on my face, and I had my first taste of shell shock, although it was rather mild. No one had noticed me leave the group under the traverse, and when I suddenly made my appearance around the corner I was greeted by such looks of astonishment that I knew well enough what they had thought. This experience taught me to keep out in the open where I could see what was coming and to use my eyes all the time.

During the first night we heard a peculiar sound like the tap of a hammer on metal a long way off. This remained a mystery to us until the next day, when we

were told that the Germans had been tunnelling under our trench for a long time, and that the sound we had heard was the sound of their picks and excavating tools in the ground under our feet.

Mining operations were carried on very extensively by both sides, the mining of Messines Ridge by the English being the most notable piece of work. Here the English Engineers worked for two years in placing twenty-one mines, and when they were exploded the entire Ridge was reduced to the level of the surrounding country. It was stated that Lloyd George, Premier of England, made a trip to a channel port and remained awake all night in order to hear the blast when these mines were fired.

We pulled off a raiding party our second night and got away with it in excellent style. About a dozen of us went across No Man's Land to the German wire entanglements where, at the whispered command, we dumped our bombs into the enemy's trench and beat it for safety. We had the good luck to get well back before the star-shells went up, and, by alternately lying flat and running between flares, we all got back to our trench. It did not seem so dangerous to us on our way over, but when the flares commenced lighting up No Man's Land like a city street, and the machine-guns started their patter, there was not a single one of us who did not sincerely regret having volunteered for the job. I have heard it said that there is something strangely fascinating about waiting for a machine-gun to open up in your direction. I don't know the author of that remark, but, whoever he was, he must have been long on theory and short on practice.

The weather was very disagreeable at this time. November in the Ypres salient is rainy, and there is a cold, raw wind blowing most of the time. We had snow and sleet and our trench was just about the same proposition as a farm ditch in Canada at the beginning of winter. We floundered around, performing the necessary duties and bits of service required of us until we were plastered with mud from head to foot, and so cold that the water in the trench felt warm to us. There was not a pair of rubber boots in the regiment, and no place where we could dry our puttees and shoes. In spite of all this very few of us ever had colds, and

I did not see a single case of "trench-feet" or frost-bite the whole time I spent in the trenches. I may add, truthfully, that there was no stomach trouble.

At the end of four days we went back to support a trench fifty yards behind the front lines. Here we slept in the day time and went out with working parties at night. Four days of this and we were shifted to the reserve trench, three hundred yards back of the front line, where we stayed eight days, going back to rest-billets at the end of that time.

The farther away from danger you get the more work you have to do, and the farther you have to go to do it. And as the work is always up in the front line trench you are really better off there than anywhere else, unless the enemy happens to start a little something extra, in which case you are hustled up front in a hurry, anyway.

Our rest-billets were three miles back, and from here we took in all kinds of materials needed for maintaining the trenches, food, ammunition and supplies of all kinds. We would start off at three o'clock in the afternoon, get to the front shortly after dark, work there all night and get back for breakfast about seven in the morning. Every man was a skilled section-hand in thirty days.

We used to take in materials and supplies on a little narrow-gauge hand-car. This car had a habit of squeaking miserably about the time we came within hearing of the Germans, and nothing we could do ever helped it in the least. We would work on it by the hour, oil it up like the owner of a new Ford, and try it out in every conceivable way. Everything would be lovely until we got within about two hundred yards of the Boches, and then the bloody car would start its music. The infernal thing came near costing us our lives a dozen times, for its plaintive notes could draw more machine-gun bullets than a whole regiment looking over the top.

One morning an aeroplane followed a gang of our men on their way back from the front and dropped two bombs among our huts. One of the bombs went through the roof of a hut and killed and injured twenty-two men. The wounded men all died later, after terrible suffering, the bomb having contained a deadly poison.

A few days later another aeroplane followed a gang in which I was returning to camp. You can imagine we gave that plane a good deal of attention, and all of us stayed outside our huts while it was in sight. Being unable to get a shot at us inside the aviator did not drop any bombs that morning, and we were not troubled again at that camp.

As time went on we were moved about from place to place along the front, getting nearer to the point of the salient all the time. In February, 1916, we went into billets behind Ypres, and all our operations from that time on were confined to the zone of greatest activity.

Around Ypres there was always fighting, and the artillery was never quiet. Trench mortars and every known form of explosive projectiles were used continually, and whole regiments were exhausted by the casualties of trench warfare without once going over the top. Day after day our ranks grew thinner, and it was impossible to keep recruited up to strength, our number being around seven hundred most of the time.

Men were killed so fast we did not try to form close friendships after a few experiences, preferring to save ourselves the heartache when the stretcher-bearers came. New men were continually coming into the regiment; we would see them for a day or two, and then there would be new faces, and these would hardly grow familiar before they, too, were gone. The stretcher-bearers came and went in their ceaseless routine, bearing away shattered beings and still forms who, but a little while before, had been linked to life by all the ties of love and longing and hope.

A little way from the point of the salient was a bog where the ground was so soft that a trench could not be maintained in it. Here in the early fighting men had sunk into the treacherous mud and been killed and their bodies, many of them, stood partially erect, assuming grotesque attitudes of the living. Their faces, washed strangely white by many rains, peered out of the darkness with each dawn, and their clothing, frayed and torn in shreds by shrapnel and machine guns, flapped incessantly in the wind and fell away, exposing the poor, shriveled bodies that were such a mockery to life.

There, before the eyes of the men in the trenches, stood those grewsome reminders, those faithful senti-

nels so grim and determined, saluting, saluting, saluting to the end, in their pitifully dumb attitudes that never changed.

Day after day the living looked into those wan, set faces until they blotted out the images of their own loved ones. All night long the wailing winds wrought out complaints that seemed to come from that ghastly parade ground of the dead. And at the voice of the machine-guns those helpless shapes would writhe and toss their arms about, as if imploring of the living the peace they could not find in death.

And every one of these had been somebody's loved one—the joy and blessing of another life, and, even as the bullets flayed and outraged their pitiful clay, some woman's heart held close the memories of each and every one.

Is it strange the light of reason goes out of men's minds sometimes "over there"—do you wonder that they curse and fire upon a corpse one moment and caress it with shuddering endearments the next?

Spring came on about Ypres with all the soft allurements of Nature's gentlest mood. Even in the grim setting of our business of murder and death we responded to the beauties about us. Men do not lose their tenderness and sympathy in the trenches, they only lose the outward habiliments by which we are wont to know these attributes in simple life. The big things are all magnified, but simplified, there in the shadow of death.

I had been most fortunate, for I had not been sick or wounded during the entire winter in the trenches. My regiment had been depleted several times, and we received recruits every day, though our strength was seldom more than six or seven hundred.

There was little for me to learn about trench fighting for I had done all kinds of duty and worked at everything connected with it. No Man's Land in front of our position was better known to me than the old yard at home where I had played as a child, and my instincts had been sharpened by practice until I avoided danger as naturally as I breathed. But I did not become foolhardy with my good luck, for I had an example, early in the spring, of the fallacy of such things.

A young recruit who had been with us a short time had had several narrow escapes and had come through

one or two dangerous situations in a most amazing manner. He grew to have a great deal of pride in what he evidently considered his individual superiority over danger, and was always taking risks and boasting about it. One day a comrade reproved him for a show of carelessness, and the recruit laughingly remarked that "the Germans couldn't get him," and deliberately thrust his head up above the parapet. A sniper's bullet got him in the cheek, and from the yelling he did it seemed that for once, at least, he considered himself all out of luck.

While it seems that the fellow who is most afraid gets it first, there is a middle path between recklessness and cowardice that is the safest to pursue. Being as careful as your duty permits is what makes a good soldier, and duty, after all, is the real gauge.

It had been rumored several times during April and May that we were to have a month's leave. We welcomed this news for we were fed up on trench life and our regiment had been in since the previous November without a single break.

Our next regular turn in the front line began on the night of the twenty-ninth of May, and as we were making ready to leave our rest-billets official notice of our month's leave arrived. Our leave was to begin as soon as we returned from our four days in the front line, and with this happy prospect we marched away singing in that glorious May afternoon, down to a doom from which but few of us ever returned.

To us, the four days that separated us from our heaven was but a mere incident, something that might delay but never prevent our pleasure, and as we went in through the communication trench we boasted of our great good fortune to the men we were relieving. How they envied us and called us lucky, and how we lorded it over them in mock disdain and affected not to be on terms of intimacy with such miserable outcasts.

We saw ourselves already going out of this hell and terror, this existence of filth and vermin and death—out into the world as we fondly remembered it, with its liberties and the joy of living. We would be men, not targets. Respectable, not unclean, safe and sure in our right to live and enjoy.

Now that our release was so near at hand we prized life more than ever. We took no chances and did our duties well, with a certain pride in our past period of service, now so nearly ended.

May thirtieth was about the usual day in the trenches—some artillery fire, some machine-gun fire, a little of the trench demolished, a few men killed. At night our patrols reported everything quiet in the German trenches and our working parties roamed about in No Man's Land to their heart's content, without once stirring up the machine-guns.

May thirty-first was another quiet day and again that night our working parties were unmolested. The Huns were evidently well content to take it easy, and we did not force matters by any unusual activities. We hoped the Germans would continue their loafing until our period was over. It was such a novelty that we enjoyed it immensely in spite of the fact that we were impatient and longed for the freedom back of the battle lines. The fellows gathered about in little groups talking over their plans, and I think that each one of us had enough in mind to take up every hour of that month's leave.

June first was a long day for with only a few hours more to go, the time began to drag heavily on our hands. There is no monotony so trying as that of the trenches. You are dependent entirely upon the enemy for your amusement (if one may call it that) and when they chose to sit idly without firing a shot an hour seems a long time.

Everything was so quiet all up and down the front that we wondered if the Germans were letting down. But we had little interest in anything beyond getting through the next twenty-four hours as quickly as possible, and we sought our slumbers early.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BOMBARDMENT.

JUNE second welcomed us with a perfect dawn. The sun, rising from behind the heights occupied by the Germans, cast long, broken streams through the trees of Sanctuary Wood.

There was but one disquieting feature to us in all our surroundings—the cuckoos were calling to one another in the wood behind us in an excited manner. We called these birds our hoodoos, for they never failed to make a lot of noise just before a heavy artillery attack. Some of our fellows glanced behind them and muttered imprecations on the cuckoos—then it came.

With a suddenness and fury past all understanding the monster artillery action for which, all unknown to our intelligence department, the Germans had been preparing for weeks, burst upon us. Out of that rare and peaceful sunrise came the havoc of death, blighting in an instant the charm and quiet of those early hours.

Heavy guns, light guns, guns of all calibres—mortars, grenades and every means of annihilation were directed against us. Shells and projectiles burst everywhere about us with a force that lifted us off our feet, hurled us and threw us about like leaves in a gale. The ponderous concussions tore and rended the ground into vast black clouds of seething dirt that spread fanwise, shutting off the sight of everything. Bits of shrapnel and pieces of bursting shells deluged the ground, killing and maiming the men in the trenches, and the sharp, acrid gasses released by the myriad explosions stifled and choked and blinded like some devilish sting.

Helpless in the torrent of this irresistible force men were disintegrated like clods. Hands, legs, bodies and heads were rended into bits like saw-dust and blood sprayed the air in spots like mist. Shreds and particles of flesh lashed the faces of the survivors and

covered their clothes with clinging persistency. The noise was intolerable and the torture of the incessant shocks brought blood from the nose and ears.

Plagued beyond endurance men ran to and fro in the trench, struggling with mangled impediments that caught and clung with the dumb, resistent lack of consciousness. Flayed and brutalized reason forsook its wonted channels and ceased to function, and the senses sunk to a sub-normal state in which suffering alone was active.

For two hours this blizzard of destruction swept over us and I was still alive. Our trenches were gone, filled in and destroyed utterly, the ground dug up, stirred and churned, thrashed and thrown about. The bags of the parapet had been swept away, torn and rendered into nothingness, and there was not a vestige of cover left to offer protection for the pitiful few of us who remained. The Germans had the range of our trench so perfectly that their shells and projectiles were landing with all the accuracy of rifle fire, and there was a constant screen of spouting earth all about me that made it impossible to see any distance.

The continual beating pulsations of the explosions made me faint and weak, my body seemed numb, and the rocking and swaying of the ground gave me a sense of being tossed about in the water. Each movement was accomplished with the greatest effort, though at times I was thrown about by the nearness of bursting shells. The area of one explosion would overlap the area of another and between these I would be flung against the earth with terrific force.

My clothes were bitten to pieces by the sharp pieces of shrapnel, and I was covered with blood and fragments of flesh, although I had not been wounded myself, so far as I could tell.

Once when the clouds of dirt lifted a little I saw an enemy areoplane just above me, and knew by that that our own artillery was not taking a hand in the action.

The bombardment had been so sudden and terrific that no attempt had been made by our officers to issue any orders, or if there had been any such an attempt it failed naturally. In the face of the conditions that existed no order could have been given that would have brought us any relief. The Germans had concentrated

such a heavy fire on our trench that it was only a matter of time until we were wiped out.

At last I attempted to retire, and was joined by two comrades whom I had not seen before. We started to go back along our old communication trench which had been blown in and afforded us no protection whatever. We crawled along hugging the ground as closely as possible, zig-zagging our way among the mounds of earth and sprawling out to rest every few feet. It was desperately hard to make any headway, for the shock of the bursting shells tumbled us about and spattered us with dirt until we were bewildered and could scarcely get our breath. The volume of force about us held us back and forced us to the ground, and it was like trying to lift a heavy burden when we moved. We would go forward a few steps, straining and gasping in our bitter efforts; stumbling, lurching and falling here and there among the dead and other obstacles.

We had gone perhaps fifty feet in this laborious manner when there was an explosion near my feet and I went down with a strange feeling of limpness all along my left side. My comrade on the left was all in a heap and the poor fellow a little ahead of me on the right had his head stretched up and was groping about his eyes with his hand.

I do not know how my mind recorded those things that happened to my comrades. It was not thought or perception as we know it normally. As I look back upon it my senses refuse to build the picture again. It is as if I had dreamed it, or like a story made familiar by many tellings—I have the mental image of that instant, that is all.

My condition was of but little interest to me. I realized in a mild way that I was wounded, but everything was so vague and unreal, and I was so weary and worn out with the strain that I felt no pain. It was almost a relief to have it over with, to know there was no possibility of continuing the struggle, no need to contend further against those overwhelming odds. The raging fury about me was still so incessant, so unrelenting that it absorbed all my consciousness—yes, the bombardment was the one reality in all my field of comprehension.

There must have been a little lapse of consciousness after that for what I next remember seems clearer to

me and I am able to piece together more of an idea of my surroundings. My comrade on the left was dead and the one on the right had his eyes blown out but was still alive. Shells were falling and bursting everywhere, criscrossing one another in a tangled mass as they reached the ground. I watched them feebly, wondering how long it would be till one came near enough. And I hoped the one that got me finally would be close enough to blot out everything at once. There was still a little instinct in me that cried out against prolonging the torture.

I had forgotten about my wound until I tried to move, then there was the feeling that my foot was gone. I tried to examine my leg. I felt it and was reassured. Then I struggled and raised my head. I could not see my left foot, it had been covered with earth displaced when the shell exploded. I thought it was gone entirely, and in the light of those previous horrors it was most trivial and unimportant. Death was so imminent, so seemingly sure, that a foot amounted to nothing.

As time went on and death still delayed I was actuated by another desire to get further away from the front. I worked myself around and rolled partially over, freeing my foot from the soft dirt in which it had been embedded. The foot was useless and felt very heavy, but I was only mildly curious to know how badly I was injured. In my uncertainty and groping around I crawled against the poor chap whose eyes had been shot out and he complained in an unintelligible manner, mumbling testily something about my bothering him. I was able to go only a few feet before using up my energy, and sank down on my right side near a little ridge of earth on the edge of a shell hole.

I knew from my weakness that I must have lost a great deal of blood, and I realized that I would never get very far from the spot where I lay. There was no hope that I could escape much longer. I had already lived far beyond the seeming possibilities, but the habit of life is a tenacious thing, and even in the face of my hopeless situation my thoughts refused to focus themselves upon death. If you're going to get it, you'll get it—the words of the old soldier came back to me suddenly and I understood then what they could be made to mean. Like all truth their very simplicity lends

them easily to many purposes, to the evil as well as to the good, and, as a motto to live by, there are others I would sooner choose. But alone and menaced by countless deaths that day these words brought me comfort, eased my anxiety and gave me hope.

I was just sinking into semi-consciousness when I became aware of someone at my side. I heard a voice that sounded far away and felt the touch of hands. My senses were too dull to comprehend what was going on, nor do I know to this day the facts concerning that strange circumstance. But I have pieced out enough to know that a stretcher-bearer braved that hurricane of death in his blind devotion to duty, dressed my wound, and, I believe, gave me some morphine.

I like to believe that that hero lives and that it shall be my privilege someday to know him. Courage such as he showed is beyond acknowledgment—his disregard of self a beautiful and powerful example of all that is biggest and best in man. Perhaps he gave his life that day among the dead and dying; he must have expected death at any rate when he started on his errand of mercy. He could not have hoped to save a single life by his daring, for there, in that inferno, there was not one chance in a million that he would find a single man alive, and even less chance that he himself would live to travel twenty feet. His only possible reward lay in reaching some wounded man and making him a little more comfortable before another shell put one or both of them beyond all earthly things. What a meagre satisfaction for so great a sacrifice—how little to be gained where everything seemed lost.

It is but another instance of the unknown heroes, the unsung martyrs, who in their great moment, transformed and glorified, go down into the dark valley all alone, bearing a cross for freedom and for right. These things are the only splendors over there, these things of the soul and the conscience, wherein men win victories over self.

Other wars have been heroic, brilliant, decisive. This war is but a sordid, filthy drudgery where death comes to you in a mud-puddle, fighting a nation of murderers, ravagers and scoundrels. Our men are not contending against men, but against a servile horde of loathsome, bestial perverts, to whom treachery and the foulest crimes against mankind are stepping-stones to prefer-

ment and praise—the praise of a brutal maniac whose only human attributes are bigotry and hate.

After the stretcher-bearer left me I sank into a semi-conscious condition filled with strange hallucinations and weird visions. I seemed sinking to the depths of oblivion, slipping away from the torment to a place of peace. All my desire was centred upon rest and relief and what pain I felt was seemingly of another world, something belonging to the past in the depths of a previous existence. Wandering flashes of thought stirred at intervals and at last stillness prevailed.

The bombardment lasted for six hours, and for four hours of that time I must have lain unprotected on the field, in the path of that merciless torrent. It is a miracle too strange for belief and the weight of the wonder that grows in my brain as I think of it is so intense, that I am ill at ease and must think of other things.

I came back to consciousness a little before the bombardment ended. I heard the noise, but it seemed far off and the trembling of the earth was more like a pleasant rocking motion than the jar and shock of the previous hours. My senses, however, became stronger and I was just beginning to suffer acutely once more when the bombardment ceased entirely. It was a little while before I realized what had happened. My body was still jumping and my senses reeling, and all about me the earth seemed rolling and tumbling like the waves of the ocean. This kept up for several minutes, but to my tortured sensibilities they seemed hours, and then the Germans fired a mine which had been located near our old first line trench, and the ground rose in contortions like an earthquake, heaving and billowing and bursting on all sides of me.

I was just far enough away to escape being killed, but I was shaken up severely and the dirt thrown up by the explosion nearly covered me. I thought it likely that other mines would be set off, but I felt no further anxiety. I had lived through too much that day to get pessimistic now that the show was so nearly over.

At length the smoke and dust cleared away, and I saw men coming toward me with their guns slung upon their backs. They were Germans and they knew full well that no opposition awaited them. Out of the eight hundred men in our regiment when the bombardment

began I did not see a single survivor at the close, and of all those comrades who stood with me in that trench on the morning of June second I have seen but three since. I know of a few others, and there must be some who are still prisoners in Germany, if they have survived the hospitals and the prison life.

I had known of many instances of the Germans killing the wounded, and I was uncertain as to what would be my fate. I hoped they would not come too close for from a little distance away they could not tell whether I was alive or not. I could see they were neither Prussians nor Bavarians, which eased my anxiety somewhat, and I lay very still, hoping to avoid discovery there among the piles of loose dirt. In this I was disappointed, for three Germans finally came up to me and after rolling me over brought a stretcher and placed me upon it.

I realized I was a prisoner in the hands of the enemy, the enemy I had fought for nine weary months; the enemy who, if my observation and information were correct, would spare me no suffering, no indignity, no hardship or humiliation in their cruelty and hatred.

And I wished that I had died!

CHAPTER V.

A PRISONER.

MY captors carried me to a first-aid dressing station back along their communication trench about a hundred yards from their front line. This station was built on a level with the bottom of the communication trench and off to one side of it some ten or twelve feet. The building was made of lumber, and it was sand-bagged on all sides and over the top. Inside there was one room, perhaps twelve feet square, without equipment of any kind, the patients being handled and treated on stretchers.

I was carried into the dressing station where there was a doctor and an assistant. The doctor was a man of about thirty, of slender build, with a large pair of glasses and mustache. Over his regulation uniform he wore a large white apron which fastened closely around his neck and wrists and extended down to his shoe tops.

My uniform was so tattered and torn that very little effort was necessary to expose my wounded leg. It was then that I discovered the nature and number of my wounds. There were five wounds in all, one just below the left knee on the outside, one just above the knee on the inside, two further up on the outside, and a large wound in the hip. Besides these there were two wounds in my left arm and a slight wound near the inside corner of my left eye. The principal wounds were the one below the knee and the one in my hip, the latter covering a large area from which the flesh had been completely torn away.

The German doctor and his assistant washed my wounds hurriedly, applied some iodine from a large bottle with a piece of gauze, and bandaged me up. All my wounds had been caused by the single shell which burst at my feet, and the only way I can account for my escape from death is that the soft ground over which I was travelling must have given little resist-

ance to the penetration of the shell, and that it burst far enough below the surface to greatly hinder its killing power.

German wounded were coming in thick before I was removed from the dressing-station, and I discovered others on stretchers along one side of the communication trench waiting to be taken further back to hospitals. I was put down here to wait my turn with the rest, and I noted that the German trenches were very much deeper and slightly wider than ours had been. Just off the communication trench on both sides were dugouts large enough to accommodate twenty-five or thirty men. These dugouts were well under the ground and supported by timber roofing and posts.

While I was examining the details of things around me a German soldier, a lad of not more than seventeen, came up to the side of my stretcher, and looking about cautiously to make sure he was unobserved, dropped a couple of cigarettes and several pieces of loaf sugar on the blanket which covered me. He also produced a match, and, while I was suffering a great deal, I did my best to show my appreciation by lighting up one of the cigarettes. We could not converse as neither of us knew enough of the other's language to make ourselves understood, but the German boy managed to say "Kamarad," and that helped the pain a little bit. It was the first and last instinctively kind thing done for me during my entire period in Germany.

I must have been in the communication trench for an hour or more before receiving further attention. Then I was taken in my turn by the stretcher-bearer and carried for nearly a mile through trenches to a clearing station, where I was again put down.

During our early progress through the trench a few shells from the English artillery burst not far from us. The stretcher-bearers made frantic efforts to get into places of safety, and I was handled more like a bag of potatoes than a wounded man. Every time they heard a shell overhead these fellows literally dropped me and ran for some sheltered spot. I was greatly surprised by their very apparent fear of shells, and I wondered if this was characteristic of all German troops. If it was, I thought, no wonder they dig their trenches so deep and their dugouts so far under ground. I

found out later that the Germans are very much afraid of shell fire.

After dark an ambulance arrived at the clearing station, and I was put into it along with three wounded Germans, and taken to a hospital in Mennin, six miles away. We travelled over the Mennin road which had been fought over during the two previous battles of Ypres and the cobble-stone construction made the ride a terribly painful one for me. Our driver seemed to have no consideration for wounds or anything else, as he drove at least thirty miles an hour all the way.

I was put to bed at the hospital as soon as we arrived, and some time later was given a piece of black bread and a cup of something they told me was coffee. Upon tasting it I discovered it to be another German lie. This coffee (?) was made of ground acorns and a worse tasting mess you could not construct in a laboratory. I did not try to eat the bread and I couldn't drink the coffee, but nature was about to ring down the curtain for that eventful day, and I was soon asleep.

I slept soundly until awakened next morning by an orderly. This fellow shook me so roughly by the shoulder that my first thought was that I was being roused for duty in the front line. When I saw that German uniform I came to in an awful hurry. The orderly had come to take me to the dressing-room for examination by the doctor, and I was soon undergoing some of the roughest handling I ever hope to endure. The bandages were jerked off my wounds without ceremony, and, as the doctor here was far from a heavyweight in the profession, no attempt whatever was made to operate, and in about five minutes I was again bandaged up and ready for bed.

Before leaving the dressing room I was subjected to a long period of questioning—some of the questions being so technical and detailed that I had no idea what they were talking about. A list of the few questions I can remember would look something like the following:

What is your nationality?

What is your name?

How do you spell it?

Where do you live?

Near sea-coast, or in the interior?

What rank are you?
What regiment?
Have you any German ancestors? If not, why not?
Are you married?
Why not?
Who was your mother?
Who was your father?
How much money have they?
Have you any brothers?
Will they fight?
Have you any sisters?
How much do they weigh?
What are you doing here?

The last question was asked with a stern severity meant to crush me completely. All I could do was laugh in the pompous doctor's face, and I really believe he almost had an apoplectic fit. From the tales I had heard I fully expected to be boiled in oil, but with a snort like a walrus he bade the orderly take me out of his sight, and I was hustled off, very ungently, to my bed.

There were several Belgian Sisters of Charity in the hospital, and these washed the patients' hands and made them as comfortable as possible—I mean the Sisters. Poor things, they had nothing to work with and their efforts met with little encouragement from the Boches. The soap in this hospital gave me a very low opinion of German efficiency, for you couldn't have made that stuff lather in a churn.

My first noon meal was a little surprising to me. I say little because there was not much of it. It consisted of what the Germans alleged to be soup. If there was anything in it besides water and dirt it entirely escaped my observation, and, believe me, I was about hungry enough by that time to be rather observing. I inquired if I had been put on a liquid diet because they feared my disabled foot might be a case of gout, but I guess my German was a little faulty.

At three o'clock in the afternoon I was again placed in an ambulance with three other patients and subjected to more German atrocities. Just opposite me in the other top section of the ambulance there chanced to be another Canadian, a man from my own regiment I soon found out. We talked a little and were both

very anxious to know what had happened to our commander, Brigadier-General Williams. Suddenly a voice from below exclaimed, "This is General Williams down here." I was able to look over the edge of my bunk and verify that most astounding assertion.

I never pitied anyone more than I did that brave and loyal soldier, for he was a soldier first, in spite of the fact that he had risen to a high command. His heart was broken by the disaster that had overtaken his regiment the day before. All his thoughts were for the boys, his boys, who had been wiped out in that awful Hell. He felt it most keenly that we had had no artillery support, and that we had been taken by surprise. Such a bombardment as was launched upon us must have taken weeks of preparation, but our Intelligence Department failed to get wind of it.

General Williams was wounded in the arms and head, and was so bandaged that he could speak only with the greatest difficulty.

Upon arriving at the railroad station we were taken aboard a finely equipped Red Cross train with appliances of all kinds and operating rooms in charge of doctors and nurses. I was put into an adjustable bed, so called, I presume, from the fact that it is impossible to adjust yourself to one, and, exhausted at last by my attempts, I fell asleep. The sleep did not last long and I spent the remainder of that horrible night in a frantic endeavor to keep that adjustable bed from adjusting itself with me inside of it.

Early the next morning we reached Iseghem, and I was subjected to another infraction of the speed limit over a cobble-stone road. The hospital here had been a convent, and it was about as cheerful as a bunch of artificial flowers. The windows were high and full of stained glass that was a most effectual means of keeping out the light.

My wounds had become infected from lack of attention, and by the time I was examined by the doctor in charge at this hospital, I had a high temperature and was delirious at times.

As I had no appetite and was too sick to eat, the Germans brought me a large, well filled plate of food. This they put down out of my reach, and in one of my lucid intervals a German underofficer produced a

post-card and a pencil and suggested that I might like to write to my family. It worked all right—I wrote a short note telling my mother that I had been captured, that I was all right and not to worry, and, I added of course, that I was being well treated and well fed by the Germans. I didn't dare say that I was being badly treated, and that plate of food seemed a guarantee that I would get enough to eat as soon as I was well enough to eat it. It was another German trick, the meanest, low-down, cowardly trick I ever fell for in my life. That was the only plate of food I saw while I was in Germany.

Lying to a fellow's poor, anxious mother when he is all shot up, full of infection and about ready to "go west" would be below the national decency of a tribe of cannibals. But to trick that fellow's weakened mind into doing the lying himself, over his own signature, for the sake of the "Fatherland"—truly that despicable depth of treachery and deceit is reserved for the Kaiser and his followers alone.

CHAPTER VI.

ON OUR WAY TO GERMANY.

MY first night in Iseghem hospital was full of suffering, though, mercifully, I was delirious most of the time.

In the morning I was taken into the operating room and was struck by the appearance of the surgeon there. He was a man who had evidently gained a high place in his profession, for he was distinguished looking, and all his movements gave evidence of the expert in his chosen field of action. There was no indecision, no delay. He examined me with great care and determined at once upon an operation.

This operation was a complete success in every way, and I want to say that I am grateful to that surgeon whose high ethical sense of his obligation to humanity rose above the sordid considerations of German militarism, and gave me the full benefit of his great knowledge and ability.

When I came out from under the anaesthetic after the operation, I was laughing wildly, waving my arms about and shouting, "Whiz-bang; whiz-bang." Then I began yelling for the stretcher-bearers on the double and kept this up for a while. Gradually, as I regained consciousness I quieted down, and it was not long before I went to sleep. My fever abated rapidly and my only suffering was the pain in my hip, following the operation. Dressing my wounds caused a great deal of pain, and as this was done every other day during my stay, I came to dread it terribly.

There was another Canadian in a bed near my own, a fellow who had had one leg shot off. This fellow's case had been neglected and infection had gone so far by the time he was finally operated on that there was no chance to save him. The surgeon, however, did the best he could, and after the poor fellow died he saw to it that he had a decent funeral.

We could hear the big guns from the hospital at times, and we wondered how things were going. I was terribly anxious to know how far the Germans had penetrated our lines in their attack on the day I was captured, but of course there was no way to find out. It may seem strange, but the rumble of those guns was a sweet sound to me. In spite of all I had passed through I longed to be back in the trenches. There is something in any line of effort pursued long and rigorously that claims our interest and attachment.

There were a few English and Canadian wounded men in the beds around me, and the few of us who were able to talk did our best to cheer our more unfortunate comrades. We talked of everything we could think of so long as we could get an answer out of anyone else, and even addressed ourselves to the German orderlies, underofficers and helpers about the hospital.

There was a sentry detailed in our room who was a rather kind-hearted fellow. He would listen to us and try to appear interested, although he could not understand a word of it. We had no nurses and this sentry would sometimes do little errands in our behalf. One day he left his rifle standing near the door and went out of the room for some reason or other, probably to do something for one of the patients. As bad luck would have it an underofficer came in during his absence, and noting the rifle (it is a serious offense for a German sentry to leave his rifle while on duty made an awful fuss about it. The poor sentry was no doubt severely punished for his humanitarian instincts. Such things have no place in German military procedure.

During our conversations we often discussed our probable fate. We were all agreed that we would be taken into Germany and made to work as soon as our wounds would permit. I remember I tried to imagine working on such a diet as we were getting in the hospital, and the very idea of it was so absurd to my mind that I felt sure the prisoners who worked must be better fed than those in the hospital.

I spent twelve days in the hospital of Iseghem, and my wounds were just beginning to heal nicely when I was informed that I was to be taken to Germany at once. I could hardly believe they would subject me to such inhuman treatment, and told the underofficer that I was in no condition to travel, believing that if I

made enough objection I would gain my point. The officer only laughed at me and shortly afterwards I was on my way to the railway station again. By the time I arrived my wounds were bleeding profusely, and I was sick with pain and distress.

The train on which I was to make the journey was a dilapidated affair. There were no cushions on the seats and rough boards had been placed between them to accommodate the men who could not sit up. The wounded were brought in and dumped unceremoniously into these improvised bunks, the only attendants being the inevitable sentry and an orderly who contented himself with efforts to appear important. There was no doctor in charge and nothing was done to make the men comfortable. Some of the poor fellows were in terrible agony, and their cries and pleadings would have aroused the sympathies of a statue.

Across the aisle from me was an English officer who had been riddled with machine-gun bullets. His sufferings were horrible and his cries for morphine were enough to chill your blood. During the intervals when his pain eased a little he talked to me and I learned that he had been wounded and captured in the fighting around Arras. With a raiding party of twelve men he had gone out to bomb German dugouts. They had been discovered and the whole party wiped out by machine-gun fire. The officer had crawled about in an attempt to get back to his own trench, but, being so badly wounded, had become confused and crawled near enough to the German lines to be captured. It was a terrible effort for him to talk, and my own suffering, keen as it was, seemed trifling compared to his.

Our train moved very slowly and we were jostled about continually by backing into sidings to let troop trains pass. My wounds were bleeding profusely, and I was drenched with blood before we had gone ten miles. The blanket over me took up a great quantity of the blood in a short time, its weight and the chill, wet surface adding to my discomfiture. There were no windows open in our car and the air was stifling and filled with a chalky dust that irritated my eyes and throat. I asked the orderly for a drink of water, but he paid no attention to me, and the sentry, of course, would perform no service for us. He looked

very ridiculous with his air of bravery and importance. It certainly was a most important post—guarding twenty-five or thirty men so badly wounded they could hardly lift a finger to drive the flies away from their faces.

By nightfall my sufferings were almost unbearable and the other men, most of them, were crying out and pleading for attention. The moans and groans and sharper cries of anguish kept up all night long. It seemed to me a number of the men must be dying, so great were their struggles and contortions, and I expected to see a number carried from the train when morning came. This did not happen, however, and if any of the sufferers went west in those dark hours they were allowed to stay where they were.

Our first long stop was at Brussels, where we arrived about ten o'clock in the morning. German Red Cross nurses, wearing little caps and a red cross on their left shoulder, brought us acorn coffee and black bread with a dab of turnip preserves smeared on it. If there had been any possibility of eating the dry bread, it was entirely eliminated by the preserves. A more evil tasting concoction could not be compounded in a pest house. I swallowed the insipid, cold coffee (?) and there was enough dust washed down from the accumulation in my throat to make me feel like I had eaten a meal. I was so miserable and hopeless I could not even appreciate the sight of the beautiful buildings of Brussels. What has been called the most beautiful capital in Europe was to me a place of torture beyond words.

The Red Cross nurses did nothing for us by way of alleviating our sufferings, and we had no medical attention of any kind, although we must have spent at least two hours at the station. Outside we could see crowds moving about plentifully sprinkled with gold tape and various hardware of the German officers. Fat, low-browed men past middle age, these German officers got on my nerves most horribly. Their arrogance and self-importance and their insolence and insulting demeanor toward the population provoked my freedom-loving nature to rebellion, and I would have considered it the privilege of a lifetime to have been able to account for a few of them before suffering their vengeance.

CHAPTER VII.

TRAVEL AND TORTURE.

JUST outside of Brussels we crossed the canals that are such a distinctive feature of this locality. The carefully cultivated land that lies between the canals is protected from overflow by low dikes, and the very flat nature of the country makes the water in the canals appear above the level of the lands outside. Against the background formed by growing crops the traffic on the canals stood out conspicuously and there was a quiet charm about the whole scene which soothed me wonderfully. I forgot the pain and loneliness in thinking of home, and the intensity of my longing to be safely there again brought a drowsy weariness that was almost sleep.

When I again became conscious of the scenes about me it was nearly dark, and I could see but little of the country through which we were passing. At one place I saw people working near the railroad with a German soldier on guard over them—at another, some Russian prisoners repairing a road.

Our second night on the train was, if anything, worse than the first. There was less noise and commotion due to the fact that most of the wounded were by this time too weak to complain, but the intensity of the suffering was greater and men who had cried out in their anguish before now moaned in a half-delirious state. As for myself, I was so weak from pain and lack of food that my surroundings were tinged with unreality, the bumping of the train alone arousing me from time to time from my lethargy. I think I was given a drink of water some time during the night, but am not sure of it, as my head was full of all kinds of crazy dreams.

I have no recollection of crossing the German border early the next morning, or of passing through Liege, which we did some little time before. The first place I remember was Aachen, our first stop on German soil.

Breakfast here consisted of soup which again defied all efforts of the imagination. It was not even efficient as a gargle for the dust and swelling in my throat, and only served to disturb and irritate the organs of digestion which had been so long inactive.

At Aachen we changed cars for the last part of the journey, being put into cattle cars attached to a regular freight train. The floor space of these cattle cars was divided off into small compartments, by nailing boards upright from the floor so as to form partitions a few inches high between them. I was placed near the door in the aisle formed by the compartments on either side. There was not even straw provided for these compartments, and we had to lie on the rough floor with nothing under us but our blankets. The door of our car was locked as soon as we had been loaded into it, and the train switched about the yards for a long time, bumping us about and causing us fresh agonies.

I had no idea where we were going, and began to believe that the Germans intended to haul us around until we finally died of the hardships and suffering. I might have been tempted to meditate upon the vagaries of fate if I had had enough strength left to meditate. As it was, this last phase of the journey blended into the previous horrors without developing anything new or novel, and we reached Julich more dead than alive.

Julich is in Rhineland, Prussia, about 40 miles west of Berlin, and is a city of twenty-five or thirty thousand people. The streets are very crooked and lead away from each other at abrupt angles. A stranger would lose his boarding house in that town.

I was carried on a stretcher to the hospital, which was located more than a mile from the railway station. This was a welcome variation to the ambulance rides I had endured at other points, but I was past appreciating a little thing like that.

The hospital had been a school and was a large building, three stories in height, the different floors being divided into wards. Each ward had twenty beds in it, and I was placed in a ward in one of the rooms on the second floor. Here I found Russians, French, Belgians, English and Canadians, all mixed together. I thought at first there might be some system of plac-

ing similar cases together in order to facilitate better methods of treatment, but soon found out my mistake. There was nothing that even remotely approached system in that hospital. Patients were dumped into the first empty bed the stretcher-bearers came to, and the doctor got around to them in whatever order pleased him best.

After I was put to bed an orderly brought me some soup" among the patients. I was never able to find out soup which was distingushed by the name of "aeroplane how it got its name, the only possible similarity to my mind being the odor, which, I must admit in fairness to the aeroplane, was worse than any gas engine exhaust I ever smelled.

I did not sleep that night, hunger and suffering being too acute to allow me a moment's rest. There were no lights in our ward and the loneliness and wretchedness of my plight was in no way lessened by the presence of the other patients, for they were no better off than I, most of them, in fact, being in worse condition. The night was a fitting termination to that journey so full of horror and distress.

Some time during the following morning I was taken down stairs to the dressing-room and my wounds dressed for the first time in nearly seventy-two hours. The roughness of the doctor and his assistant caused me the keenest suffering, and I was in a bad, nervous state when I finally got back to my bed. The attention given my wounds was very crude. The old dressings were removed and fresh ones applied, no examination being given the wounds themselves and no attempt being made to cleanse them. The doctor was a lazy individual, too indolent to be very offensive. He tried to joke once or twice while I was in the dressing-room, and although I had no notion of what the joke was about, I tried to laugh and appear interested. What could be fairer than that, I thought.

I was not taken upstairs again, being placed in one of the beds on the lower floor. I was glad of this change for there were some English patients about me here, and I soon struck up an acquaintance with them. One of the fellows who had a little money and had been in the hospital a long time gave me a post-card and I wrote home, hinting that I was hungry. Of course, I

was afraid to hint too hard for fear the card would never get by the censor.

The food here was worse than ever—the bread blacker and the acorn coffee more insipid than what we had had in Belgium. The soup, too, was further removed from classification as a nutrient and was too thick to be useful even as a substitute for water. In fact, the water that was used in that soup was entirely wasted—another slam on the vaunted German efficiency in my eyes.

Much to my surprise my wounds eased up a great deal and I began feeling better at once. Two days after I got to Julich I was so much better than I talked to the Englishmen about me and began taking an interest in life once more. My associates did their best to cheer me up, going so far as to repeat to me menus of notable meals they had eaten at different times. This was a form of diversion that we became strongly addicted to, our hunger being so great that we could not forget it long enough to talk on other subjects. One of the Englishmen who could get about was in the habit of going to the stairs which led down to the kitchen, from which point of vantage he would bawl out orders for all sorts of rich and delicious food, returning with the air of a waiter heavily laden with an elegant repast. His antics in serving this to the rest of us kept us laughing in spite of the bitter irony of the situation. One day our comical friend encountered one of the cooks in the stairway, an old fat girl weighing nearly three hundred, and she gave him such a box on the ear that this form of amusement was rarely indulged in thereafter.

Some of the fellows had a deck of cards, and the ones who could move around spent their time playing with the rest of us. The principal games were poker and five hundred, but sometimes we tried to learn French games in order to entertain our friends of that nationality. I think it would have been better if we had tried to teach them our games, as I am sure they would have made better progress than we did, and it would have at least given us a chance to even up with them for the pennies they took away from us so easily.

We had nothing to read in the hospital, and the time dragged fearfully for those of us who were waiting for our first word from home. Letters came from

time to time for the men who had been in the hospital long enough to get in touch with their families, and now and then they received packages from the Red Cross—bread, tinned meats, cigarettes and a few other articles. The food was shared usually among the less fortunate ones, the possessor usually getting the smallest share.

The poor Russians were worse off than any of us, for they got little or no attention from the doctor, and scarcely anything at all to eat. They were nearly all large, solemn-faced men, their great, gaunt frames showing up sharp and angular through their tattered rags. We would give them odd bits of food from our own meager portions, because we could not bear the sight of their pleading eyes which were always fixed upon us while we were eating. Heaven knows how many of these unfortunates died of starvation. They were mild and gentle natured, and their attitude at all times was one of dumb and unreproachful suffering that touched your heart and made you curse the very day Germany came into existence as a Nation. For what Germany has done to the Russian prisoners alone, she deserves national extinction. There is no place in the world for a people so devoid of every instinct of justice, humanity and decency. To entertain thoughts of peace before these murderers and ravishers have fully atoned for their crimes is to invite to the shores of the new world all the nameless and unspeakable filth of German origin which has already blotted out all that is sacred, pure and sweet in the lives of millions of God's creatures.

And make no mistake, my friends in Canada and the United States, this struggle will never be won over the powers of evil by anything less than the combined strength of the righteous peoples of this earth. I have been close enough to the fighting forces of Germany, and close enough to the source of her inspiration and ideals, to understand a little of the enormous power that is vested in that arch-fiend, the Kaiser.

But don't get the idea for an instant that the Kaiser alone is to blame, that with his passing Germany would become peaceful and fit for admission into the brotherhood of nations. Fools may mouth about not fighting the German people— don't be caught by their ignor-

The Author the day he arrived in Switzerland.
Weight 139 pounds.

ance of the facts. The very heart of Germany is cankered with the hate and intolerance, the lust and arrogance which alone have brought on this war. And the German people individually and collectively are rotten in their own hearts with this national disease. It is their one creed and religion, the only thing they have ever been taught, the only thing they have ever learned. So long as there are Germans enough to fight the present menace to freedom, honor and truth will exist.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOSPITAL.

THERE is a vague fear that comes to the wounded prisoner in Germany. It is the fear that his mind will give way. The starving and suffering and the sympathy that he feels for others is almost beyond endurance at times, and as he becomes more and more depleted, less able to withstand the nervous strain of those carefully calculated and long drawn out tortures, there are times when reason seems to lose its way, to wander a little and grow faint with misery.

Wounded prisoners are at all times by-products to the Teuton mind, mere bits of useless human material that must not be allowed to take up time, consume food and otherwise enjoy the prerogatives of active and useful beings. The wounded prisoner is made to feel that he is an unwelcome burden, and they endeavor by their scorn and neglect to add humiliation to his other miseries. The wonder is that any of the prisoners keep sane. It is just another great testimonial to the power of hope.

We all did our best to keep up a cheerful appearance for there was seldom a time during my stay in Julich that some of us did not need all the help we could get. One of the favorite forms of combatting the mental bug-bear was singing. Everyone could enter into this and it seemed especially effective in dispelling our darkest moods. Hymns were sung a great deal, as they are in the trenches, although we exhausted the entire repertoire of each member of our group.

Although the hospital was located in the centre of the town there was very little to be seen that interested us. Flags were flying from all the houses and buildings, and sometimes we saw troops marching by. The people on the street were never interesting. They seemed to lack individuality, and there was a dull sameness about all of them, even the children, that always reminded me of our soup and black bread. I was forever hunting for a happy look on somebody's face and always missing it.

One Sunday a German Lutheran preacher came in and preached to us. There was not a single soul in the bunch who understood more than three or four words of the sermon, but it made us feel better. When the sermon was over the preacher asked someone from the congregation to pray. It was a long time before anyone responded, but one of the Englishmen got up at last and put in a hope that the war would soon be over and that the Germans would be all shot to H——. We all said, AMEN, except a Frenchman who knew only one English word—delighted. He said this, and was sincere about it, too.

Later on the old preacher brought us a couple of English books, but they were by outcast authors who had been stung by the Kulture-bug, and their laudatory remarks in favor of Germany made us all sore. I tried very had to forget the names of those two authors, and I am glad to say I succeeded, otherwise I might be fooling my time away hunting for them.

A fellow came to the hospital soon after I did who proved to be a regular pest. He had been a travelling millinery goods salesman in Canada, and we thought at first that he had lost a considerable portion of his brains somewhere in the fighting. It was difficult to believe that a fellow so evidently lacking in gray matter could have managed to get into the army. His big idea was that Canada after the war would develop an aristocracy of her own. He had it all figured out and could talk by the hour of the vast benefits to be derived from said aristocracy. He was too thick to understand when the boys kidded him and asked him to explain his views, and we had him talking most of the time. He was the most cordially disliked man I ever knew.

In one of the beds near mine was a Russian prisoner who had his feet and hands frozen after he was captured. The Germans left him on a stretcher outside a dressing station for several hours in the hope, no doubt, that he would be frozen to death. By the time I came to know him this poor fellow had lost all his toes and most of his fingers. He had never had any medical care and was in an awful condition. One day I happened to be watching the Russian when I saw him take the index finger of his right hand between his teeth, and with a quick jerk pull it off at the second

joint. He spat it out, and noticing that I was looking at him smiled at me with a friendly, wholesome cheerfulness. He never complained, and was so grateful for the least thing done for him that our hearts went out to him, and we did what we could to make the remnant of his life bearable. When I hear people saying unkind things of the Russians, the picture of that simple, kindly martyr comes back to me, and I feel that some day we shall honor, love and esteem the people of his race.

In another bed near mine was a British soldier who had a leg amputated above the knee. The operation was evidently the work of an amateur, for the flesh had receded and left the bone protruding. He was removed from his cot one morning to a small room near by, tied down to a table, and the doctors, without giving him any anaesthetic, cut off the bone with what appeared to be a mallet and chisel. The door was open and I saw them hitting something with a mallet, presumably a chisel. The poor chap suffered terribly and made a lot of noise. For several days after the operation he was continually in such pain he could not eat nor sleep.

The Belgian patients were a clannish lot. They did not mix in with the rest of us, seeming to be busy with their own affairs. They were very different from the French whose generosity often threatened their well-being. I did my best to learn a little French, and finally got the hand work fairly well under control, but I could never make the words mean anything to my instructors. They would laugh most heartily at my efforts and never grew tired of working with me, but in the end it was a failure. I picked up more Russian than I did French.

The German orderlies were always talking about great German victories. They told us of seeing the ruins of London portrayed in a moving picture, and so much other guff that we were almost afraid some of it must be true. I never saw a bunch of people kid themselves along on wind and self-importance like those Germans. Every morning they would have some fresh pipe dream about Germany's supremacy. They would walk around the hospital with their chests thrown out like pigeons in a kind of super-paroxysm of exaltation and pride. I would like to see some of

those fellows when Germany gets what is coming to her. It will have the fall of Babylon beat a hundred ways.

There was great rejoicing among the Germans when Lord Kitchener and his party went down on the ill-fated cruiser Hampshire. "Kitchener kaput, kreig fertig" (Kitchener is finished, the war is over) they would say, and glare at us as if challenging us to dispute them. They told us so many evident lies that we didn't know what to believe, and so we believed this tale about Kitchener even less than the rest.

Soon after the first of August wounded German soldiers began coming to the hospital at Julich. This was just after the battle of the Somme, and in a few days the place was crowded. We all knew that the allies had struck a powerful blow somewhere, and that the hospitals nearer the front must be overflowing. Another indication of allied success was the changed demeanor of our proud German orderlies. They lost some of their chestiness and stopped their boasting of German victories for a long time.

The wounded Germans had a very different lot from ours. They were well fed, had beer three times a day, and the doctor was busy among them all the time. We noticed that these wounded men had a very different attitude from those who had not been up against defeat, the orderlies and those about the hospital. It was like a funeral around the place, for when a German once realizes there is something bigger, better and stronger than Germany and the Kaiser all his "pep" leaves him with a rush, and he is the sickest-looking mortal you can imagine. With the egotism and four-flush gone there is nothing left by which you can distinguish a real German from any other ordinary tramp. I don't mean to insult the tramps by insinuating that anybody would ever believe they could be guilty of what the Germans have committed.

One of the Canadians in the hospital used to take long chances stealing the beer from the Germans. He would stand around and appear interested in something until some German went to sleep or had his attention attracted elsewhere. Then the Canadian would cautiously push the mug of beer away from the side of the bed with his foot until he got it around behind another bed. Here he would pick up the beer and walk

off with it to some safe place, returning with the empty mug later. This trick was never detected by the Germans, and always amused us greatly.

I have already mentioned a fat old girl who was employed as one of the cooks in the basement of the hospital. At times wounded prisoners were allowed to help the cooks prepare the meals. Potatoes boiled with the jackets on was the regular dish after potato harvest began, and we used to volunteer to help the cooks take the peelings off. In this way there was an opportunity to get an extra bite of potato now and then. We became very expert in attracting the fat woman's attention so that the fellows behind her back could sneak a morsel. We would always sit in a circle with the old woman in the centre, and, while a fellow on one side of the circle kept her attention employed, those on the other side almost choked themselves to death on the hot boiled potatoes. It was quite a puzzle to the woman why there was always such a shortage in the quantity of potatoes. At last she caught a fellow with his mouth full of hot potato, and that little game ceased to be practical. We all called our fat cook Von Hindenburg when there was nobody about to hear us.

I think the authorities of the hospital furnished the food and employed our fat friend to hold down the quantity consumed. She certainly was a wonder when it came to feeding a lot of people on nothing. One day we caught sight of her going away from the hospital with a great basket of food, the more she saved on us the more she had to take home. We understood the game after that.

The doctor's assistant, a kind of manager of the hospital, was a Prussian sergeant-major, whose face would have made an ideal emblem for the much heralded policy of frightfulness. This fellow was long on how to run a war. His plan was to kill everything in the wake of the army, gooseberry bushes and old maids included, so that there would be no opposition develop in the captured territory. I sometimes argued with this mild and tender-hearted person, and one day I asked him point-blank how he would like to be killed himself, granting that he should be among the wounded on the defeated side. I wish you could have seen his face. He had never before considered that he might be on the losing side. Slowly the idea reached his

heavily armored brain, and at last he gave it as his opinion that wounded men ought to be spared. If there is ever any shortage in the visible supply of ivory after the war, it can easily be made up by removing a few pounds from the heads of a million or so Germans of the ordinary or garden variety.

I was fortunate enough to have several conversations with a wounded German who had received the iron cross. He had lived in Edinburgh for several years, but had been recalled for military service, and while his training period was on war had been declared. This fellow was sore on the whole proposition, and told me quietly and earnestly that the next time he got into the fighting he was going to get captured. He felt the same as I did about the Germans in Germany —that there was no hope for them so long as the Kaiser and the old programme of education and domination of personal rights existed. He had little hope of anything better for the Germans without a decisive defeat at the hands of the Allies, so, of course, was far from jubilant at the prospects of his kinsmen.

During the early days of my war experience I considered the iron cross, awarded to German soldiers. on the same basis as the decorations bestowed by the Allied Governments. After being in Germany a short time I changed my mind on this subject. About every soldier you saw was wearing an iron cross. No wonder Germany is short of iron for manufacturing munitions.

There should be some good money for the junk dealers after the war in gathering up iron crosses. Every family in Germany will have three or four, and it's my guess they can be bought right by that time.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM HOSPITAL TO PRISON CAMP.

I SPENT three and one-half months in bed at the hospital in Julich. The wound in my hip was very slow in healing, owing to the lack of nourishing food, and my general condition was far below normal. I could not sleep at night and became very nervous, my mind working in spite of my efforts to quiet it. The result of this was that I soon had the day and night turned about. I would sleep in the day time and lie awake at night. I dreaded the dreary loneliness of the dark hours and people my thoughts with all manner of dire calamities.

My left leg was paralyzed below the knee, due to the severing of a nerve, and this caused me a great deal of morbid uneasiness. I had visions of myself going through life crippled and useless, an object of pity all the rest of my days. I did not know at that time that the doctor who operated upon me at Iseghem had united the ends of the nerve, and that I would eventually regain the full use of my limb.

As the number of the wounded Germans increased at the hospital the prisoners were sent away to prison camps as fast as possible. A great many of them were in no shape to leave the hospital, but were hustled out to make room for the Kaiser's men. We missed our comrades terribly, and the incoming Germans made the place more and more distasteful to us.

One day I was told to get up. I was weak and dizzy and almost fell to the floor when I tried to rise. The next day I was able to get away from the bed on a pair of crutches, and by the end of the week I was getting around fairly well. I had no use of my foot, and the toe dragging and getting in my way at all times. The doctor finally fixed up a bandage around my leg near the knee with a piece of cloth extending down to my great toe as a support. This served the purpose in a crude way, but was hard on the toe. My companions had

many a good laugh at my expense, for I was most certainly a funny sight going about with that toe haltered up at an acute angle. One of the Frenchmen was in the habit of calling my toe.

It was much better being able to get about the hospital, and I made considerable progress by exercising all I could. There was a fenced-in yard where we were allowed to go, and I stayed out there every minute I could. At one side of this yard were two large walnut trees loaded with nuts which were nearly ripe. We soon found out that these walnuts added considerably to our diet when properly dried out, and we spent hours collecting them and stowing them away in safe places. One night there was a big wind storm and the next morning the ground was covered with walnuts. We had picked up about half of them when one of the hospital officials put in an appearance and promptly confiscated the entire lot. He did not stop at that, for he sent all the help out in the yard to gather the walnuts, and they climbed the trees and beat down every nut in sight. They don't waste walnuts on prisoners in the "Fatherland."

The Germans were all crazy over the zeppelins. Every time they caught sight of one they would run to the windows and stare and wag their heads in a frenzy of delight. The poor boobs believed all they were told about the devastation caused by zeppelins in England, and they could never understand our lack of interest in them. While I was in the operating room one day having my wounds dressed a zeppelin passed by flying very slowly. It was not more than three hundred feet high, and I had a splendid view of it. This machine had seven or eight propellers, and the hum of its motors running at low speed gave me a keen appreciation of its mechanical perfection and adjustment. Its movement through the air was as smooth and graceful as the flight of a bird, and it ascended and descended about perpendicularly. A few days later I saw five zeppelins going in a westerly direction at a great speed. It was about five o'clock in the evening and I concluded they were bound for another raid on London. Early the next morning, before it was light, I was awakened by their return. I sincerely hoped they had lost some of their "baby-killers."

The only visitor who ever came to the hospital was the orderly's girl. We tried our best to fuss her, and I think we succeeded rather well, for the pair gave our ward a wide berth after the first few visits. I have had the hardest time ever since trying to imagine that orderly really in love. The way he drank beer and ate sauerkraut was enough to make you burst into tears.

One of our articles of diet about this time consisted of a small fish pickled with cucumbers. I like to think that the Germans fixed up this dish especially for our benefit, as I would hate to believe that anyone else, even a German, had to eat it. Another rare delicacy that graced our sumptuous repast at times was sauerkraut soup, the brine in which the sauerkraut is kept with enough water added to it to keep it from choking you to death. I think I am correct in assuming that there is not a great deal of nourishment in such a dish, and, as for the taste of it, give me embalming fluid straight.

I remember the first letter I got at the hospital. It was from my brother, a captain in the Royal Medical Corps. He spoke of sending me a quantity of cigarettes and some money. That letter lifted half my burden for several days, and before the pleasure of its receipt had faded I got a letter from my mother. There is no use trying to describe what this letter meant to me. Imagine for yourself and then multiply that by a hundred.

The cigarettes and money from my brother did not arrive until long after his letter, and I had just about made up my mind that some judicious German had received them by mistake (?) when they made their appearance. I noted at once that the Germans had charged me a little over 33 1-3 per cent. for changing good English money into German money of something less than half the buying power, but as I had no board to pay and had been figuring on being robbed of the whole amount, I put the proceeds in my hip pocket and sat down to smoke.

I have heard it said that you lose the desire to smoke after a certain length of time. If that is true, I had not gone long enough, for that first cigarette tasted better to me than any before or since. It just natur-

ally put me back in the running, and I forgot all about the things I didn't have, even the food question didn't seem so important.

We were not supposed to smoke in the hospital, but I got by with it and smoked wherever and whenever I liked, which was everywhere and all the time.

The German evened up with me for all my bliss for I never did get the parcels of food and things my family sent me from home. Some of these turned up in Switzerland many months later, but I have a rather good notion what became of most of them.

The time came at last for me to leave the hospital for a prison camp. Five of us were told one evening to get ready to start the next morning. We were taken to a store-room where they issued us each a prison suit, a thin black affair with yellow stripes down the trouser legs, a dinky hat without a brim, and an old pair of shoes. We had no socks and our feet were wrapped in old rags. This was fortunate in one way for the shoes I got would have been too big without the rags. These shoes laced up the outside, something no other race of men but the Germans would stand for I am sure. I almost stood on my head trying to lace them, and after I had completed the job I was afraid they would fall off.

We marched off at one o'clock the next day, four fellows with good legs and myself hopping along on one crutch. They don't even give the prisoners enough crutches in Germany.

The guards set a pace to suit the fellows with the good legs and forced me to keep up by pushing me along. I was all in when we reached the station which, as you will remember, was a mile from the hospital.

The train we took out of Julich was another dilapidated passenger affair. It must have been as good as they had in the way of equipment, for it was the principal train of the day in that direction, and there were a number of well-dressed civilians on board.

I was too worn out with my walk to the station to pay any attention to the country we travelled through. About three o'clock we reached Cologne, and here I began to sit up and take notice. Cologne is a good looking city with a wonderful cathedral, and we all had hopes of getting out on the street for a look around. Instead, we were taken to a basement room in the

station and locked in the dark until six o'clock. At this time a underofficer came in to see if we were properly miserable, and we asked him for a drink. Thinking that we meant beer (the only beverage known to a German) this fellow gave us to understand that beer was no good for Englishmen. When we finally made him understand that we wanted water to drink he went out, and after a long absence returned with a pitcher filled with warm water. As we were past the point of being surprised at anything a German did by this time we moistened our mouths a little and turned our attention to something else.

One of our party had a bit of candle in his pocket, and we began to examine our quarters. The walls of the room we were in were covered with the names and addresses of other prisoners. Some of them dated back to September, 1914. There were names of all the nationalities among the allies, even some that looked like a Chinese laundry ticket. We put our names on the wall with a stub of a pencil and felt like real travellers at a summer resort.

At ten o'clock at night we were put upon a train with a lot of German soldiers. These fellows were feeling rather happy, for they were on leave. They ignored us entirely, which was mutually satisfactory. It was impossible for me to get into a position to relieve my hip and there was no sleep for me although the others managed to rest pretty well.

Hanover was the next large city where we stopped. Here we spent about two hours, but were not allowed to get off the train. The station was very large, and we saw a great many civilians getting on and off the trains. German girls were selling flowers, books and flowers, but there was nothing to eat in sight, not even candy or chocolate. One of the girls had a very busy pair of eyes, and was evidently ready to talk to us. We were off the Germans, however, from any standpoint and would not have been interested in a princess of the blood that morning. Two hours in Hanover and then we were on our way again.

We soon came into some very fertile country cut up into small tracts and very densely populated. The little brick houses with their rough looking roofs were thickly scattered everywhere and the fields and small plots were wonderfully well tended. There were many

women and children working in the fields, as well as Russian prisoners and German soldiers. The latter had been sent home from the front to help with the harvest. Most of the crops were vegetables, cabbage, turnips and potatoes, but there were some fields of wheat, rye and barley.

All the operations were going on under military supervision, a guard with a rifle being stationed with each group of workers.

I heard many stories of the bestial and brutal acts of these guards, of their utter contempt for all decency in the treatment of the women, girls and children under their control. Many of these stories I would not believe if they had not come from the lips of men who were present themselves and saw the things they recounted. If half the stories told of these cowardly ruffians are true the lot of the working woman in Germany at the present time is below that of swine in other countries.

One thing I heard from the lips of an old German amused me greatly. He said there was a great effort being made to get Irishmen to come to Germany so that the women of the country could be supplied with husbands. I thought of the pretty Irish lassies with their ready wit and quick tongues, their winsomeness and their gayety, and I added another mark in the long column of German failures.

The prison camp at Stendal was our destination, and we reached this scrubby little town at four o'clock in the afternoon.

CHAPTER X.

AT STENDAL.

I HAD my first look at horse-drawn street cars in Stendal. They were funny looking, dumpy affairs, built two stories high, and we all had a good laugh at them in spite of our hunger and discomfort.

Our train had been collecting other prisoners as we came along, and there were about twenty of us who made the trip to the prison camp together. We were driven off by guards the same as a flock of sheep, and I was subjected to more pushing and crowding in their efforts to keep me from lagging behind.

It was two miles to the camp, and I was a wreck by the time we got there. If you don't believe it, just tie the big toe of your left foot to your knee, take a crutch with a sharp point and try keeping up with a bunch of enthusiastic walkers for two miles. Provided you hadn't had a square meal for nearly five months and was all shot to pieces with rheumatism, you would get some idea of how I enjoyed this trip.

The prison camp was located on a tract of land containing about twenty acres. Around the outside ran two high wire fences about 20 feet apart, and outside of these were located sentry boxes built up twenty feet or more above the ground. There were five of these sentry boxes along each side of the enclosure. Inside the enclosure wire fences running the full length of the tract divided it into five long strips, or compounds, as they were called. There were six huts in each compound, three on each side, built against the fences and extending the entire length of the compounds. These huts were long, low and wide, made of rough lumber and whitewashed inside. There was a space of about thirty yards between them for the prisoners to exercise in. A road ran along one side of the camp and across this about midway of the camp was located the Commandant's quarters.

We were sent to this Commandant's quarters where all of us were closely questioned and the particulars recorded. Then we were given a pair of thin blankets, a tin basin and a prison number. My number was 5111, and you can bet I was sincerely sorry for every one of those other 5110 fellows.

The prisoners were assigned to companies of about 320 men each and each company had two huts allotted to it. It was crowded in our hut with 160 men in it, for most of the room inside was taken up by bunks which were built in units of sixteen, double deck style. The room left in the aisles was not enough to accommodate the men, and we had to get into our bunks when we were all inside the hut at the same time.

At one end of the hut was an insignificant little stove, fenced about with quarter-inch chicken wire. The allowance of coke for twenty-four hours was one small bucket full, and it lasted just about two hours. The remainder of the time the huts were damp and cold and we suffered keenly in our thin and insufficient clothing. I cannot imagine men surviving a winter in such a place.

There were no sanitary measures provided in the huts, and no lights whatever, though large arc-lights were strung all around outside the enclosure thick enough to make escape impossible.

The beds were supplied with filthy old mattresses stuffed with straw. This straw had never been changed and was the lurking place of black fleas, a species of torment beside which the "cooties" of the trenches fall into innocuous desuetude. The principal difference between the two is that the "cooties" content themselves with crawling about your person while the fleas are meat eaters and never seem to get fed up. They jump from place to place taking out a bite at each stop, and the poison of the bite raises a welt on you like a gum-drop. Ten minutes after I got in bed the first night I was crazy with flea bites, and it was the same thing every night. The only thing that makes it possible for you to endure the fleas is that they remain in the bed and do not bother you during the day.

There were a couple of German Jews who did a flourishing business in flea powder. It took eight cents worth of this stuff to keep the old and infirm,

sick and indigent fleas away from you for fifteen minutes. The robust fellows in vigorous health didn't mind it in the least. It just frightened them and made them work faster. And, of course, the fleas that the powder affected, were hungrier than ever when they finally got into working order again.

We had to buy our own candles if we cared anything about seeing at night. These cost us twelve cents a piece, and were also handled by the German Jews. The Jews must have secured the flea powder and the candles from some enterprising official about the camp for there was no possible way by which outsiders could communicate with the prisoners.

Each hut had two orderlies appointed from among the prisoners at different times to sweep out and make a bluff at cleaning the place. As the hut was without any means of ventilation it was always worse after sweeping than before, so we soon cut out the cleaning and spent as much time out of doors as possible. The only sleep I ever got was when I could find a sunny spot protected by the hut from the wind.

Our food was brought in to us by two prisoners appointed to the job. They carried everything in a tub and we dipped into it with our tin basins. One tub of soup or acorn coffee was all that 320 men got for a whole meal. Our bread was issued to us each morning, a piece about the size of a bun to each man, and this had to last him 24 hours. Of course, there was nothing to prevent him from eating it all at the first meal, nothing but the fear of death and any slight consideration he might have had for the next two meals. As soon as we got our bread in the morning we lined up and waited for our tub of acorn coffee. This was hardly ever warm and the bread, which was more like a piece of slick mouldy leather than anything else, firmly resisted all efforts at mastication.

The noon meal consisted of soup that would have turned the stomach of a buzzard. On Tuesdays and Fridays the soup was made out of some kind of fish that must have been caught by the first discoverers of the country, judging from the odor. For supper we had what was left from the noon meal, with enough water and dirt added to it to make it regulation weight.

On Sunday evening we were always given a raw fish, salted beyond all recognition. We gave these to the

Russians, poor devils, and they were grateful for them at that.

I was soon in a bad way mentally, for the constant hunger and my inability to sleep, coupled with my low resistance and lack of care, hindered my wounds from healing and made me suffer excessively. I am satisfied I would have died in a short time if it had not been for an Englishman and another Canadian who had begun to receive parcels of food from the Red Cross and their people at home. These splendid and unselfish fellows shared their food with me in spite of the fact that they had to go hungry two or three days each week in order to do so. They might have had a fairly easy time of it had they chosen to keep all their food for themselves, for they were getting two loaves of bread and a package of tinned meat apiece each week. Nor did they limit their kindness and consideration to the food they gave me. They sang and talked to me a great deal and kept me from thinking of myself as much as they could. The Englishman was eighteen years old and the Canadian twenty-three, and they had both had a considerable season of fighting before their capture.

I was so morbid and disheartened that I worried a lot about taking their food. I thought I was going to die anyway, and that the food I took from them would in time reduce them both to my own pitiable state. They laughed at me, of course, but when they realized how sincerely I believed my contentions they devised a clever means of satisfying my scruples, and at the same time furnished me with a means of helping myself out of my deplorable melancholy.

Both these fellows were able to work, and they went each day with a gang of prisoners to labor in the fields. This necessitated their being away from early morning until after dark each night. They suggested to me that, as I was unable to get out of the hut, I might be of great service to them by watching their food during their absence, and by having some sort of preparation made for supper upon their return. Glad of any chance to show my gratitude to them I at once agreed to this plan and set about doing everything I could think of for them. I cleaned their bunks and washed what few extra garments they had. I watched their food and got up the best excuse for a meal I

could, even going to the length of fixing up a sort of table. When they returned that evening they were lavish with their praises and immediately began arguing with each other about what they should give me for my services. The Englishman wanted to pay me in money, but the Canadian thought I should receive a share of the food, say, a third, for my work. I finally joined in the argument and before long we had agreed upon terms that were satisfactory even to me. You can imagine something of my mental condition when I tell you that I did not once suspect those fellows of putting up a game on me.

My new interest in life, the thought that I was doing something for my benefactors, was a wonderful help to me. All day long I kept busy at trifles, even doing fancy work in my struggle to substitute usefulness for morbid idleness. The improvement I hoped for was not long in coming, and as I soon began to receive parcels from the Canadian Red Cross my fears of starvation abated and my bodily condition improved.

I wish I could say something big enough and fine enough to fit the work that is being done by the Red Cross organization of the Allied countries. Wherever there is pain and suffering and death there the faithful servants of this great cause can always be found. In the trenches, in the hell-blasted wastes of No Man's Land, even beyond the borders of hostile lands, surrounded by the hate and vengefulness of an enemy as implacable as death, the Red Cross reaches out a hand to you, and, if within the power of human accomplishment, you will be saved. Mirrored in the aims and acts of the Red Cross are the precepts and the teachings of the gentle Nazarene—the spirit of His faith, the saving grace of His love and sacrifice touch men's souls again to-day through this great agency.

CHAPTER XI.

PRISON LIFE.

THE one event of the day at the prison camp was the arrival of the mail. It came at four o'clock, and there was never a man left inside the huts who could manage to get to the gate.

There were many tragedies in this daily happening. Men who had no hope of a letter or a parcel would crowd around the carrier and insist that they were expecting something, that they were being overlooked and unfairly treated by the officials—anything that would serve as a pretext to bolster up their longing and disappointment. Poor devils, I have seen them while the rest of us were reading our mail, going away by themselves so that others might not see their anguish, hiding from our happiness that hurt them so.

The misery of those about me began to weigh heavily upon me. A new kind of melancholia gained dominion over my imagination, and all that I could do seemed powerless to free me from this plague. Those who are well enough to work are immeasurably better off than the men who cannot get away from the prison camp. The changed surroundings keep them free from the continual mental picture of suffering and the healthful air and bodily activity serve to make them tired and able to sleep at night.

I brooded more and more on the pitiable condition of my companions, and I had plenty of material from which to draw inspiration. There were some who were hardly ever out of their beds; others so badly torn to pieces that, even with their wounds fully healed, they were so disabled as to be almost helpless. Then there were a great many tubercular cases, some in the more advanced stages, and these attracted my sympathies most of all.

There was some kind of a hospital around the camp, but I never knew where it was located. A man had to be in a very serious condition before he was sent to

the hospital, and the tubercular patients never lasted very long after being admitted. In our very weakened conditions it seems miraculous that there was not a greater spread of tuberculosis in the camp, for there were enough advanced cases in every hut to have infected a whole city, and the conditions in the huts were ideal for a rapid spread of the plague.

With the approach of November the weather at Stendal became much colder. There were blustery, rainy days, and the ground was frozen quite hard at night. The huts became almost unbearable, for we had to stay in them more during the day and without fire the cold, damp atmosphere of the interior pierced our thin clothing and caused us the bitterest discomfiture.

At last, in sheer desperation, the men organized boxing matches in an effort to relieve the awful monotony. These were held once a week and they helped a little for we spent the time between them in preparing for the next occasion, and our earnest desire to make each one better than the last gave us much to do. We had several experienced boxers in our hut, some of whom were in good enough shape to go into easy matches, thanks to parcels they were receiving from home and from the Red Cross.

The matches were always staged at one end of our hut, the sections of bunks being moved away so as to provide an open space large enough for a ring. Everything had to be in the most approved style, posters and bills advertising the event, a ticket office where those who had money were allowed to buy tickets at a trifling cost, trainers, swipes, seconds, managers, referee, time-keeper, and any other sort of official that our ingenuity happened to suggest. Those in attendance perched themselves upon bunks and crowded into the open space around the ring and promptly at the appointed hour the bout commenced.

A great many bets were always placed on the outcome, bets consisting of flea-powder, candles and anything else that happened to be available at the moment. Sometimes the bets were arranged through the services of betting commissioners, a group located on one section of bunks sending out their commissioner to cover all bets up to the limit of their capital.

The bouts themselves were often fair exhibitions, and the crowd was never lacking with applause. We

shouted and beat one another about in the most approved fashion, encouraged our respective champions and added advice and admonitions at all times. Nor did we fail to show our disgust when our man was losing. You would have thought some of us had bet twenty thousand pounds on the result, by the way we seemed to take it.

The Germans made no objection to these boxing matches, although they refused to let us indulge in other sports. We were told that the officials had permitted the English to play football during the earlier periods of the war, but that it had been suddenly stopped. The first prisoners must have been much better fed than we were, for there were not ten men altogether in my hut who could have withstood five minutes of a football game.

There were several artists and draftsmen among the men in my hut and these were in the habit of drawing designs for us on handkerchiefs to be worked in silk thread. The Red Cross sent us handkerchiefs and by paying liberal profits we were able to get hold of needles and thread.

It was pitiful to see how much time the prisoners spent on this kind of work. Of course, they took pride in doing the best they could, but the principal reason for their painstaking efforts was to fill up the time that hung so heavily upon their hands. If a man could spend some time in a prison camp in Germany he would never need to have the danger of idleness preached to him, and I believe that a month's experience of this kind would cure the most confirmed loafer in the United States or Canada. Loafing doesn't seem so bad when there are lots of things you could do, but when you are compelled to loaf it is quite another matter.

I was smoking a great deal about this time for I still had plenty of cigarettes left out of the stock my brother had sent me from England. The excessive smoking aggravated my nervousness, and I finally reached a point where I could not sleep even in the day time, going for days and nights without once closing my eyes. I became possessed of an idea that my sleeplessness was but a symptom of some deep-seated disorder, and, with my thoughts centered upon myself, I entered a most agonizing period of mental torture.

While I had been concerned with thoughts of others I could sometimes shake off my depression and enter into things with some show of interest. Now that my pity was all lavished upon myself I lost interest in everything, and could not stimulate myself enough to take part in the activities of my comrades. All their efforts to arouse me were in vain. I realized the danger of my condition, but was powerless to lift myself from the depths of despondency.

There is one great hope that always buoys up the prisoner who is able to work in the fields. That is the hope of escape, and in thinking and planning how to escape his mind is active, his interest keen and alert and he is able to resist the mental ills that beset those whose condition makes escape impossible. None of the prisoners ever talked to me about their plans of escape. It may have been because they wished to spare my feelings or because they feared to share a secret of such vital importance to themselves. But I knew that every man who went out of that hut in the morning on his way to work had dreams and visions and well calculated plans of evading his guards. If there was no hope whatever of escape, if every chance and opportunity could be removed there would be few prisoners alive at the end of the first two months in the prison camp.

I wish there was some way to make fit for publication some of the stories I heard from the lips of the men who worked in the fields. I have listened to many tales of the barbarity, indecency and low moral standard of the German soldier in France and Belgium, and I have seen the evidence of their acts in those countries, but the stories of my comrades in the prison camp had to do with German soldiers' treatment of German women, girls and children, and are lasting indictments against the whole nation, its rulers, its aims and its ideals. God deliver the earth from the curse of German "Kultur." It is only a bundle of abominations, and has for its very corner-stone the ruination of the souls of womankind.

CHAPTER XII.

HOPELESSNESS.

THE boxing matches opened up the way for other amusements. Some of the men in our enclosure organized a debating society, and, while it did not arouse much enthusiasm it resulted in a benefit to those who possessed talents along this line. The questions debated before the society had to do mostly with conditions and the relations of nations after the war. As we were never molested by the guards or other German officials during the evenings the debating society often furnished an outlet for attacks on Germany. Some of these were brilliant bits of oratory, especially those contributed by one or two highly intelligent Frenchmen who spoke English. I must not omit another character, a fellow I have already mentioned, the millinery salesman who had been such a pest at the hospital. The debating society offered him an opportunity to air his unpopular opinions and his amazing nerve, even in the face of the most discouraging disapproval, prevailed against all our efforts to shut him up. His attempts to monopolize the stage on all occasions resulted in the gradual decline of the organization, much to the disgust of those sincerely interested in its welfare.

Our next effort at entertainment was a concert. This was quite an undertaking, and we spent a lot of time getting ready for it. Some of the prisoners had received musical instruments from the Red Cross or their families at home, and our orchestra, when it was finally complete, consisted of a 'cello, three violins, a French horn and two cornets. As our plans developed there were added musical turns, vaudeville skits, singing acts and monologues until we had a well filled programme. The artists got out posters and advertising, committees worked on the arrangement of the programme, and a manager was elected to have full charge of the affair. After two weeks of rehearsing and drill-

ing the programme was ready for presentation, and I can truthfully say that the performance would have made a hit anywhere.

There was a cockney Englishman, the leader of the orchestra, who was a wonderful violinist. This man had enlisted at the outbreak of the war with the French Foreign Legion in Algiers, had fought all through the early period of the war in many of the fiercest battles, and had finally been wounded and captured. He had been in the prison camp for nearly a year, when I arrived, and much of this time, before he began receiving parcels, he had managed to subsist on the prison fare. His playing the night of the concert was a marvel to me as it was to the others.

Through all the hardships, misfortunes and suffering of his war experience the soul of the artist had remained dominant and supreme, safe and sure beyond the reach of pain. And he lifted those poor, humiliated and broken spirits about him to a level with himself, to a kinship with the divinity that comes to those who create, who lose themselves in sweetness, love, beauty and devotion, and from these mingled ardors bring forth pure delight. Lost to all about him, he played on and on, going from one melody to another, catching us up and whirling us away in the impulsive strains of some wild Hungarian dance, touching us with the languor and pause of soft incidental music from the operas, thrilling us with the impassioned dreams of Liszt, Rubenstein, Mozart and Wagner and ending, at last, with Annie Laurie, played as I never dreamed it could be played by mortal hands.

In the great sigh that was almost a sob from every one of us, the master read our hearts and understood. His was a triumph beyond the dreams of power, a sweet and gentle triumph over the hearts and souls of men.

At the close of the concert we sang "God Save the King," and, though we expected all kinds of harsh treatment to follow our burst of patriotism, we were wrong for once, and the incident passed without notice.

The men who went to work in the fields often came in at night with vegetables concealed about their clothes. By agreement one man would devote his attention to onions, another to carrots, another to turnips or potatoes, and it was surprising the quantities

of these vegetables the fellows used to secrete about them. One little Englishman was in the habit of tying up the bottoms of his trouser legs and filling them with whatever he could lay his hands on, coming back to the camp at night with enough plunder to last a whole family a week. Our facilities for cooking were so limited that most of the vegetables never did us any real good, but we got some satisfaction out of the thought that they didn't go to swell the food supply of our enemies. The most trivial disadvantage to the Germans was a great delight to us, and the fellow who came into camp with the biggest load to his credit assumed the proportions of a hero in our eyes.

I remember a funny story a fellow told me about one of our comrades, one of those men who take a keen delight in doing anything they are made to do the wrong way. While engaged in loading cabbage on a wagon our cantankerous friend persisted in throwing the cabbages clear over the wagon. The guard spoke to him several times, but he pretended not to hear and kept on firing away like a man throwing bombs. The other prisoners were enjoying the discomfiture of the guard who seemed unable to understand such a lack of sense on the part of the unruly one. When at last the Teuton mind became aware of the intentional mischievousness behind the prisoner's attitude of ignorance there was something doing. With the flat of his sword the guard gave the prisoner a rap that effectively cut short that gentleman's horse-play.

Our thirst for world news and war news was never satisfied for we were denied any form of English or French reading matter. The authorities circulated a newspaper called the "Continental Times" that was printed in all languages, and which was meant to depress and disturb the prisoners by its accounts of vast German victories and its pro-German sentiments and expressions. According to this paper the war was almost ended, the Allies everywhere having suffered the most crushing defeats. Violent and ridiculous attacks on allied statesmen, the President of the United States, and everything and everybody opposed to German supremacy filled its columns and its cartoons and illustrations (wholly lacking in sense or cleverness) were often vulgar and ignorant to an astounding degree. The paper claimed to be a neutral publica-

tion printed for the benefit of Americans living in Europe, but if any American could have read the headlines without turning a handspring he would have been a slacker of the worst type.

The paper devoted most of its venom to England for the hatred of England is the biggest thing in the minds and hearts of the Germans. They fairly "eat that stuff" as one of our fellows remarked one day following a most senseless display of animosity on the part of one of the orderlies in the hospital at Iseghem. I actually believe most of the Germans would die of anger and disappointment if they knew the facts of England's superiority over Germany on the battlefield. No wonder the Kaiser keeps them so fed up on lies and that "Me and Got" stuff—it's his only hope.

Sentries patrolled the outside of the camp day and night, but they were never allowed to speak to the prisoners and the prisoners were kept back away from the fence at all times.

My attention was attracted one day by one of the sentries who had stopped and appeared to be leaning against the fence. This was a very unusual thing for a sentry to do, their duty requiring that they keep walking all the time. I was wondering what the fellow's actions might mean when I heard the report of a rifle, and saw the sentry tumble over on the ground. Some other sentries came up, picked up their comrade and bore him away to one of the sentry houses. Notwithstanding a feeling of sorrow for the poor chap, we thanked God there was one less.

I spent much of my time in my bunk, for it was the only place I could keep warm, and, as the company of others became very distasteful to me in my peculiar fits of mania, it offered me the only privacy I could hope to secure. Many of the men by this time were confined to the hut, and they wandered about from place to place seeking the sympathy of others. While I pitied those men beyond measure, I had no desire to talk with them, and their frequent attempts to cheer me up irritated me to the point of distraction. I had reached the stage where I was powerless to help myself and most unwilling to have others try, preferring the self-inflicted tortures of my morbid musings to anything offered by my surroundings.

I cannot bring myself to chronicle all the varying depths of my depression, nor could I by the closest application recall a fraction of the hallucinations which beset my wandering mind. My physical being, so long inactive, seemed unimportant, and I was growing more unconscious of the need of food each day. I believe I was actually getting out of the habit of eating, though my appetite often conjured up the liveliest dreams of rich viands and sumptuous repasts. After these imaginary delights I was more disgusted by our wretched food than ever, and often missed a meal from sheer lack of interest in it. Even the better food I received from the Red Cross failed to tempt me sometimes.

If there had been the least attempt to provide medical care for the prisoners I would most certainly have attracted attention and been removed to a hospital. But, as no doctor ever visited our hut during the entire period of my imprisonment at Stendal, I was safe with my beloved mania for pity and the other eccentricities of my hallucination. But there was an event near at hand which was to rouse me again to an interest in life.

CHAPTER XIII.

EXAMINED FOR DISCHARGE.

THE only foreign official who came to inspect the camp at Stendal during my five months there was the Danish Consul. His coming was not mentioned to us, and we did not even know who he was when we saw him. One of the officials from the Commandant's office acted as his guide, and the inspection consisted of walking in at one door of a hut and walking out at another.

During an inspection of a prison camp by an official of a neutral country, the prisoners are supposed to have the right to complain of unsanitary conditions, lack of food, lack of medical attention, brutal treatment or any other irregularities. And it is the duty of the official of the neutral country to note these complaints and report them in the interest of humanity. The unceasing efforts of Mr. Gerard, the American Ambassador, to alleviate the suffering of prisoners during his stay in Germany will be remembered as a signal instance of the performance of this duty.

The Danish Consul was imbued with none of Mr. Gerard's commendable qualities the day he visited Stendal. He was so plainly in a hurry to complete a most distasteful task that he did not deviate from a direct line of flight, once he entered a hut, but reached the door at the other end in record time. His fat German companion was puffing and perspiring and trying in vain to carry on a conversation as a kind of camouflage. The Dane did not even wait for his German host to open the door, but dashed out of our hut a good two yards ahead of his guide.

The Germans evidently wanted to pull off a bluff inspection that would cause them no embarrassment, and they most certainly selected the right party when they chose the Danish Consul.

A few days after this mock ceremony we heard that the Swiss Commission was coming to Stendal to examine English prisoners for exchange. As rumors were

always thick about the camp most of us received this news as an attempt on the part of the prison officials to kid us and make us feel worse than ever.

After all the systematic detail practised upon us to make life miserable and dishearten us to the last degree, we could not believe that any good thing was in store for us—least of all, that we would ever get out of Germany by the consent of German officials. So the rumor of the coming of the Swiss Commission fell upon deaf ears and our hearts failed any response. Personally, I was too ill and dejected to give any heed to my comrades when they sought to tell me things and this new topic was of no more interest to me than any other.

There were some, however, who believed that we would be examined for exchange, fellows who were not yet ready to give up the fight, but they were few and their opinion influenced nobody but themselves. It was, therefore, a great surprise to most of us when, on the 25th of October, 1916, the Swiss Commission arrived at Stendal.

I cannot describe the change that took place in our hut. Every Englishman forgot his months of torture and illness and displayed the greatest interest in life. There were but few who could hope to be passed for exchange, or even hope for the consideration of the Commission, but every man tried to make himself believe that he would be passed, that he was as good as passed already, and nothing could shake their faith. Such was their need of comfort that they clung to a hopeless belief, knowing it hopeless, yet not daring to admit its hopelessness.

There was a bit of grim humor in the situation for every last man, even the prisoners of some of the other countries, outdid himself in an effort to make it appear that he was totally disabled and therefore a fit subject for exchange. The poor, starved creatures hobbled about the hut, adding in every way they could to the misery and dejection of their appearance, assuming grotesque attitudes meant to convince observers of their disability and lack of bodily efficiency. It was such a scene as might well turn the mind of a sane man—its pathos beyond the power of narrative.

My own condition was such that I felt sure the Commission would pass me for exchange. None of my

wounds had healed, and the two largest ones were in very bad shape. The starving and lack of treatment had served to keep the raw surfaces of the flesh from forming scar-tissues, and there was an incipient form of infection that caused the wounds to give off a thin, watery discharge that was fearfully disagreeable. I had become so accustomed to my wounds and so dispirited that for a long time I had refused the efforts of those who tried to give me some sort of attention.

There were two stretcher-bearers in our hut who did everything they could toward dressing the wounds of the others. They washed old bandages and tore up pieces of clothing in their efforts to provide material, and they were very insistent and regular in their operations. But for these two men many of us would have developed far worse complaints than the ones we suffered, and it was only due to them that I made the least effort to care for myself.

So little interested was I in the proceedings about me that I remained in my bunk as usual the morning the Commission visited our compound. While I was sure they would pass me, yet I did not feel much inclined to present myself before them. I had lost all the joy of living so long before that the prospect of being free held but small hope for me. In fact, I actually feared to be turned out on my own initiative after this life, which had been but the shadow of an existence. My instincts had become so abnormal that I was afraid of anything different, any change that would bring upon me the least personal responsibility. I had grown used to misery and constant suffering and an idleness that was as vacant as death, and I could not bring myself to prefer the seeming peril of sane and normal living. I thought with horror of having to make decisions for myself, of going about from place to place, of meeting other people with whom I must talk and to whom I would be a spectacle of curiosity and pity. And then I thought of returning to my home and being a useless burden to my family all the remainder of my life. Everything grewsome and frightful possessed my mind and the inordinate fear of any change predominated my whole outlook.

When the time came for the inspection of the men in my hut we were ordered over to another hut and lined up alphabetically. I was hustled out of my bunk

without ceremony, and made to take my place in line with the others before the members of the Commission who, four in number, occupied chairs about a table. There were three Swiss doctors and one German doctor. A Swiss doctor acted as chairman or chief of the Commission, and the others kept records of the proceedings.

There was no loss of time in examining the men. Each man was called in turn and asked a few questions, after which he was sent back to the line to wait the further pleasure of the Commission. Each man's name and prison number were called together. Mine was Laird, 5111. I tried to appear very natural when I hobbled out in front of the table with the long stick I used for a cane, fearing somehow that I might be guilty of something prejudicial to my case. The Swiss doctor asked me to put down my cane and walk across the floor without it. I had not walked a step without the cane up to that moment, but I managed to take a few steps, though I had to seize the table to escape falling. I was asked where and how I had been wounded and the nature of the symptoms I suffered. When I told them my leg had been paralyzed since my capture, they sent me back to the line without any physical examination whatever, and I was sure that I had been rejected. I wished then I had not tried so hard to give an honest account of my condition, and cursed myself for a fool.

I did not know until twenty-four hours later that I had been passed. At that time an official came to our hut and read off the names of those who were to leave the camp. Out of five hundred examined, only twenty-one were passed.

Two days later I was taken to the Commandant's office at headquarters and issued a suit of thin, worn underwear and a pair of wooden-soled clogs. The underwear was of no possible benefit, being too small and not fit to put on. The shoes were almost worthless, for they had only strips to fasten them on with, and these did not protect my feet in any way from the cold.

Back at the barracks I was told to get ready to leave at four o'clock the next morning. Getting ready consisted of sitting down and waiting. I did not dare lie down for fear I might go to sleep and so be left behind. I was beginning to have some little interest in getting

away from my prison life, because I knew others would be going also, and I felt assured they would look after me. I felt wholly incapable of taking care of myself, and was still sunk to the depths mentally. My memory was so defective I feared I would forget I was to leave in the morning and fail to present myself among the others when the time came. A hundred trivial things harassed me, and I was so nervous and excited that I could scarcely stand.

An underofficer came to our hut during the evening and began selecting the best overcoats he could find among the men. These he said were to be given to the men who were to leave. There was instant objection on the part of those who were destined to receive the coats. The men in the camp needed the coats much worse than those who would soon be in Switzerland where they would be provided with every need and comfort, and we refused positively to take a single coat.

The underofficer with true German pig-headedness insisted and threatened until there was almost a riot among the prisoners. Many of the men who had been disappointed in the outcome of their examinations for exchange were in no mood to be bullied by any German, least of all a petty underofficer, and most of them now considered their positions hopeless and death preferable to continued sufferings, such as they had already undergone. Realizing the danger of his position the underofficer blew his whistle for the guards and they arrived just in time to prevent real trouble.

I do not know yet what prevented the men from wreaking vengeance upon the underofficer, for they were beside themselves with anger, and in their hopeless state they were beyond the fear of bullets or any punishment that might follow. Their action in defying their tormentor, however, had a decided effect in mitigating the order concerning the overcoats, for we were finally allowed to make the selection of coats among ourselves. Enough extra coats were found among the bunks to supply the few that were needed, the men who were leaving taking the old and badly worn garments and leaving the best for the men in camp.

The German idea had been to clothe us with the very best coats they could find in an effort to make us appear to better advantage when we reached Switzerland.

They cared not how the remaining men might suffer during the coming winter in camp if they could only make those leaving the country appear to have been well treated. With all their vicious brutality every German wants to avoid bringing upon the Fatherland any breath of criticism and no lie or deceit is too black to serve their purpose.

There was no sleep in our hut that night. The excitement caused by the broil with the underofficer and the desire of most of the prisoners to send messages to their families kept the place in activity all night long.

I felt like a deserter at thoughts of leaving these men who had been my companions for so long, who had suffered with me and been kind to me, many times to their own detriment. A normal being could not have taken pleasure in leaving these poor wrecks to such a doom as they faced in that accursed hovel, and in my deplorable condition their fate was doubly appealing. Far from being elated over my good fortune I reached the darkest depths of despair and spent the night in gloomy silence, sitting in my bunk.

I was roused from my morbid stupor by the underofficer who came at four o'clock to conduct our party to the station. We were assembled quickly and driven off without allowing us time to take leave of our comrades, most of whom seemed to have lost all interest in life. To this day I can hear the door of that hut slam behind me as it did in the sombre dark hours of that dismal morning, and it remains to me, as it ever will, the most doleful reminder of my experiences in the land of the Huns.

CHAPTER XIV.

BOUND FOR SWITZERLAND.

I GOT along on the march to the station must better than I had anticipated, and there was a train awaiting us when we arrived.

We had no guards over us, only an underofficer, and for once we were not bullied or roughly treated in boarding the train. Most of the windows were broken and there were no cushions in any of the compartments. Our thin prison garb and our tattered overcoats were a poor protection against the cold, though we were no more uncomfortable than we had been at the camp.

We travelled very slowly as usual, but were not held up on this part of the run by troop trains. The country was flat and well cultivated, and we saw numerous groups of prisoners under guard working everywhere about the fields and on the roads. These prisoners were all garbed as we had been at the camp, and most of them had no shoes or hats. They worked in a manner that gave evidence of the strictest supervision, and I did not notice a single prisoner look up as our train passed, though some of them were within a hundred yards of the track.

At noon we crossed the River Elbe at Magdenburg, and a little later changed cars for Leipzig. We had hoped to receive better treatment after leaving the prison camp, especially in the way of food, and when we stopped at Magdenburg at the noon hour we felt sure we would be fed. This was another idle hope, however, for, when we asked for something to eat, we were summarily refused. We did not even get a drink of water. Our least question brought out a string of epithets from the underofficer, swine-dogs of all varieties, and others we were glad we did not understand. If there is anything in this world I hope I shall never understand it is the German language. Even to hear a word of German spoken in ridicule or jest gives me such

a rush of resentment that I am hardly responsible for my behavior. If any of my readers are ever tempted to speak German to a man who has been in a German prison camp, please remember that I warned you, and, whatever you do, don't ever express the hope that he has learned a lot of German over there.

There are a great many towns between Magdenburg and Leipzig, and early in the afternoon we began being held up by troop trains again. These were travelling in all directions, there seeming to be a large movement of troops on. We noticed the dilapidated condition of all the rolling stock of the railroad and the poor condition of the tracks. The heavy traffic of war had reduced the engines and cars to a sorry plight, and the rails were worn and deeply cupped out in many places. We did not wonder at the slow speed and roughness of the travel after this. Even at that time Germany had paid a heavy toll in the depletion of her railroad properties, and the condition by this time must be very critical indeed. Every means of transportation has been strained to the utmost, and the steam railroads have borne the brunt of the traffic everywhere. With no time or facilities for replacing this wear and tear the movement of troops from now on should be an increasingly difficult matter, and the shipment of supplies more and more fraught with danger and delay.

Forty additional English prisoners joined our party at Leipzig, and we were lined up, four deep, with a very heavy guard of low-browed Prussian soldiers completely surrounding us. With a great show of military exactitude and bearing, accompanied by much noise and guttural commands, we were herded off at a lively pace. In spite of their prodding and cursing I was unable to keep up with the rest of the party, and they had to slow down at last to a rate that would permit me to keep in the ranks.

The trip to the barracks where we were quartered was not a long one, but I was completely exhausted by the time we got there, my weakness and excessive effort resulting in a kind of fainting spell that lasted for several minutes, during which time I had to hold on to two of my companions for support. Some of the other men were in bad shape also, owing to lack of food, but this did not affect our tormentors, for they

kept us standing in the courtyard of the barracks at least twenty minutes.

Following this ordeal we were taken to a little temporary shanty and given some macaroni soup. It is not possible that this could have had any nourishment in it to amount to anything, but we were famished and felt much revived as soon as we had eaten it.

All about the large enclosure surrounding the barracks we saw squads and companies of German youths drilling. The officers in charge were very cruel to these boys and beat them around in the most heartless manner. Not a few of the lads had bruises and cuts on their faces, and one slender little fellow, not more than fifteen years of age, seemed to have had his arm broken by some sort of brutality. He was standing by himself doing the best he could to keep from crying, but no attention was paid to him by any one, and he was still there when we left the barracks.

We were marched back to the railroad station by the same route we had come. Our party must have been a most ridiculous sight—forty crippled English prisoners and about as many heavily armed and pompous guards, each with the air of a guard of honor to some royal potentate. We wondered if they were afraid we would escape and return to the prison camp on the eve of our deliverance. The humor of the situation makes me laugh yet when I think of it, but I wasted none of my strength in hilarity then. It was just another German bone-head stunt, pulled in the guise of efficiency and kultur, and we were far past being surprised at anything a German or a crowd of Germans did.

We left Leipzig just at dark and continued our slow journey, bumping into switches and side-tracks to let troop trains pass and making long stops at unimportant points along the line.

There were no soldiers on our train, and we were again guarded by a single underofficer, having been deprived of our guard of honor as soon as we left Leipzig. Sleep was as impossible as ever, though we were all so tired out and miserable that we fell into a dumb sort of lethargy that was like the effects of a drug. Our compartment was so crowded we could not assume a lying position, and this forced us to keep the same position through the long hours of the night.

Dresden was our next important stop, but we got in too early for breakfast, I guess, as we didn't have any. Most of us were half-starved, our appetites having suddenly reasserted themselves since leaving Stendal, and we suffered again all those keen agonies of our earlier starvation period.

All day long heavy trains carrying big guns and artillery of all kinds, ammunition, horses and war materials, thundered past us on their way to the western front. These trains stopped only for water and fuel, and they were travelling at a reckless speed, considering the condition of the tracks. The few soldiers we saw on the supply trains looked worn and anxious, and I did not envy them their duties, for I expected to see one of the trains go into the ditch at any moment.

There were not stops at any towns of importance during the day, and night found us still dragging along on our seemingly never-ending quest for food and rest. My mind was a little relieved of its melancholy by the more acute pangs of hunger, and I was returning slowly to a more normal mental attitude. Thus encouraged, my hunger was not of such great importance to me, and I actually welcomed consciousness of bodily suffering as a good indication that I would soon be free from the more distressing ills of the mind.

My comrades complained a great deal during the night. They were tortured by thirst and begged for food, and some of them, because of their cramped positions in our crowded compartment, became unruly and threatened to get us all into trouble. The guard was not anxious to get into a general fight, for the men were too desperate to care what happened to them and would have made a most determined effort against his life. No matter how brave in appearance a large number of German soldiers may be, the individual is nearly always yellow. Their strength lies in massed formations, not in personal bravery and efficiency, and the soldiers of any allied nation are superior, man for man, to those of Germany. Our guard was no exception, and was very careful not to press matters too far, finally promising to give the men a drink at the first opportunity. This satisfied them, and the rest of the night was given over to plain misery.

Our breakfast at Frankfort the next morning was a little better than any meal we had had so far, consisting of a small piece of wurst and coffee. The wurst ran true to type, and was filled with such evil smelling herbs and vegetables as to resemble a home-made poultice. The coffee was blacker than we had been used to, but this only resulted in making it taste more like embalming fluid. Our guard sat at another table and was served with two helpings of various things we didn't get.

Before breakfast some of us asked to be allowed to wash our faces, and after a considerable period spent in arguing the matter with the proprietor of the restaurant we were taken into a small dark room and given a pail of cold water without soap or towel. For this princely dip they charged us each twenty pfennings, and our guard seemed peeved because he did not get a commission out of it.

Frankfort was the first city where we noticed women and girls doing all the work around the railway station. Even the train guards were girls. Among the baggage rustlers were women who reminded me of the pictures I used to see of John L. Sullivan. If it was not for the women of Germany this war would be a far easier proposition for the Allies. They work harder than the men and stand for anything so long as they can be made to believe that old "Me-und-Gott" is for it. You might get through the ivory to the brains of some of the men, but those German women—one look spells hopeless.

Two hours after leaving Frankfort we passed through Mainz and began getting into hilly country along the Rhine. We followed the river for a long time and saw many of the old castles far up the heights on the other side. Winding white roads led among the terraced vineyards that had just yielded their harvest of grapes, and in places people were busy with the last operations of the season.

There was much traffic on the river—lumber and coal barges and steam boats of all kinds. The officials were evidently making the river take the place of the railroads as far as possible. In some places new wharves and piers were being built and freight was piled up on these awaiting transportation.

We crossed the Rhine above Karlsruhe and reached that city about four o'clock in the afternoon. The big station was badly damaged and the platforms were torn up and the bricks scattered about in confusion. Gangs of men were busy repairing the damage, and a number of Prussian officers were swaggering around under their profusion of gold cord and self-esteem.

Our guard tipped off the cause of the trouble to us when he began reviling the English. It was just after an air raid in which our air-fighters had been able to give Germany a taste of her own medicine. We were tickled to death when we realized that we were actually viewing the results of our comrades' work, and there was not a man in the crowd who did not forget about himself and his troubles in the enjoyment of our enemy's discomfiture. After all the boasts about London being destroyed this was a sweet sight to us, and we could scarcely keep from making some crack about it to those imitation Von Hindenburgs strutting up and down the platform.

There were many soldiers and more trains of artillery, and we could see barracks and a training ground not far from the station. Our appetites were again very persistent, and though we waited in Karlsruhe more than two hours we were not allowed to get off the train, and so no food.

At Strassburg, where we arrived at ten o'clock at night, we were marched to a bunch of low huts and given some soup. We nearly fainted when the guard told us we could buy coffee if we wanted to. Girls were doing the cooking and general work around the huts and one of these sold us the coffee and treated us almost like human beings. I guess she wanted the money. If any of us had any misconceptions concerning the quality of the coffee, we were soon dispelled, for the stuff was quite up to the German standard of vileness.

We roamed about the huts until five in the morning. We had gone so long without sleep that we did not even try to lie down, and we were beginning to be a little excited at the prospect of reaching Switzerland.

There was no breakfast for us before we left, but we didn't mind it so much because our guard had to go without his breakfast also, which was something quite unusual.

By day-break we were well into the Black Forest, and the scenery was entirely different from anything we had seen along our route. Although we were already at a high altitude our train was still climbing laboriously toward the clouds, and we could see far away beneath us in places farming lands and little villages, streams and roads, in strange contrast to our nearer surroundings.

The varying character of the trees at different levels produced a novel sight, and at times we saw grim old castles perched upon the very tip of some lonely peak far above us. Rabbits and deer were quite common, and not in the least disturbed by the noises of the train.

We passed through several tunnels and over many trestles, creeping higher all the time, until we reached a little tourist village about four o'clock in the afternoon.

Here the scenery was grand and majestic, compelling our undivided admiration in spite of our ills and suffering. In the presence of this mighty creation of nature, man was of such small moment that we forgot ourselves fascinated and charmed by the infinite grandeurs about us. The evergreen trees which at this level rose on all sides were so dense they seemed to form a carpet upon which one might walk without breaking through. Far above us the evergreens gave place to stunted trees that had lost their leaves and but thinly veiled the rugged, rocky slopes.

We were permitted a little time to gaze upon the wonders about us before being herded into the little tourist hotel for another meal—of soup, as we supposed. Imagine our surprise when we entered a lovely little dining room and found a real meal awaiting us. There was meat—real meat, and splendidly cooked—potatoes and other vegetables—wonderful bread that one actually wanted to eat—preserves and butter and cream and sugar and coffee and tea, and a plate and spoons and forks and knives and napkins and tables and chairs—and everything as clean as a baby's bottle—yes, everything but ourselves.

We fell upon the food with spasms of delight, choking it down with ravenous gulps, afraid of some German cruelty that might crop up at any moment and paralyze our joy. I have always been right-handed

and not since early youth have I taken a chance on enlarging my mouth by the improper use of my knife at table, but I staged a turn in that little dining-room that day that will never be equalled by any contestant in a long distance, double-handed eating contest. I was superb, simply wonderful, my technique and accuracy faultless, my capacity limited only by the visible supply. From an object of abject misery I was transformed in an instant to the heights of genius and art. I became a master, securely enthroned within my chosen field. For the brief interval of that meal I feared neither the plaudits nor the slurs of men. I was inspired.

It is my recollection that we ate the flowers and the cut glass before we were satiated, and the proprietor hastily removed a pet parrot on his return to the kitchen, after bringing in three dishes of cracker crumbs as a last frantic response to our entreaties.

Our meal finished, we felt like heroes instead of prisoners. I forgot that I had a beard several inches long and that my last bath antedated by last shave by several weeks. I wanted to go away by myself to some quiet spot where I could put my hand on my aching stomach and give myself up completely to gastronomic reflections.

But for all our changed attitude toward life we were still prisoners, and within an hour we were again on our journey. Many were the longing looks cast upon that little hotel as we left in the gathering darkness and conversation brightened up and became something more than grunts and grimaces. Food may not take the place of everything, but it came so near doing so that night that we didn't worry about the other things.

We found we could sleep a little, and even when we were awake things were vastly different than before. There was a comfortable feeling in place of the gnawing, vacant sensation we had known so long. A spirit of fellowship beginning again to make itself apparent. All my bitter experiences of the past six months were fading fast, and I suspected the Germans of feeding us in order to dull the edge of our resentment. If so, I thought, they had not guessed badly at that.

By midnight our train increased its speed very perceptibly, and we knew we had passed the highest point and were beginning the descent to Lake Constance.

This was another delightful reminder that we would soon be out of Germany—away from the hatred and torture and barbaric injustice of the most barbaric and unjust nation the world has ever known.

Do you wonder that we spent the rest of that night almost beside ourselves with excitement; that we sang and talked of home, for all the world like a bunch of college boys? With the nearness of freedom, tenderness and hope, and the love of our country and our dear ones, came surging over us all. God knows, in the humiliation and wretchedness of those months, now so nearly ended, we had come to feel all these blessings as lost to us forever; things not to be recovered this side of the grave , and coming once more to a near prospect of their enjoyment was like finding life and its glories all over again.

CHAPTER XV.

A FRESH CALAMITY.

KONSTANZ, Germany, is only about half a mile from the Swiss border, and within eight of Constance, Switzerland. Here we left the train and proceeded to the hospital of a large military barracks, where we found nearly four hundred other British prisoners from camps all over Germany. These men, like ourselves, were to be examined for internment in Switzerland, and I discovered among them two of my old comrades in the 4th C. M. R.s. They were badly shot up, and it was easy to see they had been accorded much the same tender consideration I had received at Stendal; in fact, all the men gave evidence of the same neglect and brutal treatment.

My two friends and myself held a regular reunion, talking over old times and asking questions about other comrades. But there were no answers to our questions. I could tell them nothing, and they had no information concerning a single one of the eight hundred who had looked with us at the sunrise there before Ypres on the second of June.

We were greatly surprised a little later to see the Colonel of our old regiment. He gave no evidence of having been wounded, though all the other officers were reported to have been either killed or badly disabled during the bombardment. We did not have an opportunity of discussing that memorable day with the Colonel, for he failed to pass his examination, and was not with us in Switzerland later on.

There was a large square courtyard surrounding the barracks, and here my two comrades and myself walked together talking of the joys that awaited us such a little way off. We could not take our eyes from the farther shore of that beautiful little lake that separated us from our heaven, and we were sorely impatient to be free from the detestable insolence of the Hun—his crude bigotry and his sickening self-esteem. We had been rather fed up on everything German, and

longed for the sight of civilized people in a land free from the rank barbarisms of the Dark Ages.

Some German officers were training a bunch of recruits in machine-gun and infantry tactics out on the parade ground a little way from us. The officers seemed appointed for the sole purpose of knocking the men around, for, instead of words of instruction, they employed blows, and they certainly had the recruits hopping some. We couldn't help wondering how long an officer in one of the Allied training camps would last if he started anything like these pig-headed slave-drivers were getting away with.

Right here is another Germany fallacy. They beat all the individuality and initiative out of their soldiers, and then send them up to the trenches to fight while the officers fill up on beer and launch their thick witted oaths against the decent people of the world in the safety of some position many miles removed from the front. And yet to-day you will hear a crank now and then holding out at length upon the efficiency and marvellous perfection of the German army. It would take more manhood and decency than a hundred thousand German soldiers have to constitute a voter in any other country in this world. No human being fit for citizenship would stand for what the Kaiser and his bunch have made of Germany.

Our second day in Konstanz another Swiss Commission arrived, and four hundred and fifty prisoners were examined in a hurry. Fifty of these were rejected and sent back to the prison camps from which they will, in all probability, never have another opportunity of escape.

It was awful to see these poor unfortunates driven away under a heavy guard of Prussian flat-heads. Most of them seemed to lose all interest in life, and a few collapsed at the thoughts of the terrors to which they were returning. Their disappointment was worse than being shot, and when we remember that it would be at least three months before they could hope to get in touch with their homes and the Red Cross organization of their country, during which time they would have to subsist upon German prison fare alone, the shooting has numerous advantages.

Seeing our comrades driven off under these sad circumstances spoiled all our own anticipations for the

future, though heaven knows we had little enough in prospect if we had only known.

Another day passed, and then we were called out and told to pack and get ready to leave. There was not so much as a handkerchief in the whole crowd, so the first part of the order didn't carry much weight, but we were ready to leave all right.

Then we were lined up, and another heavy guard of Prussians marched around a corner and lined up beside us. An officer bawled out, "Look!" and the guard loaded their rifles with a vast show of importance. "What's the play?" whispered one of my comrades, but I had no idea.

With the guards on each side of us we marched to the train. We noticed the engine was on the wrong end of the train and headed back for Germany instead of in the direction of Switzerland. But this did not disturb us. We had seen so many examples of German efficiency that we supposed this was typical of the others. It occurred to us that they might be backing into Switzerland in order to avoid wear and tear on the cow-catcher in case we hit anything.

The guards got on the train with us, and then, to our amazement and horror, the train started back the way we had come—back into that accursed land we had thought ourselves leaving forever. We thought it must be a case of German treachery, and we could get no information from our guards as to where we were being sent, no idea of the fate which awaited us.

Our hopes and anticipations dashed to earth we lapsed once more into the sullen attitude of men condemned to death, for at that moment we considered our chances of freedom gone forever, our existence only a matter of a few weeks or months.

Our return was over the same route, but all the glories of the Black Forest failed to rouse any response from us. Our despair was pitiful, and some of us were so disheartened as to be beyond the reach of sympathy. The few who tried to look on the bright side found it a task too great for their powers, and finally subsided with the rest of us into a gloomy silence that grew more oppressive the further we travelled.

All day long our train kept up its heavy grinding passage through many tunnels and over trestles that spanned numerous deep ravines. There were no stops

for food, and we were not even offered a drink of water by the guards who preserved the best traditions of German ideals in their total disregard of our needs.

It was midnight before we left the train at Rastatt, a miserable little town not far from the northern edge of the Black Forest. The streets were dark and the old pavements very rough, and I suffered in my efforts to keep up with the rest of the party on our march to our new prison.

An old fort had been set aside for prisoners, and here we were crowded into a long tunnel-shaped building as damp and disused as a sewer. A little straw lay in heaps here and there upon the floor, and this was the only provision for our reception. Our entire party, numbering four hundred, had to occupy one room which was hardly big enough to accommodate half that number.

Some of the men were nearly dead with tuberculosis and many of them had large running wounds that were very offensive and badly infected. These poor sufferers had to pack themselves in with the rest of us, and lie down as best they could upon a floor as unwholesome as that of a stable. There was so little straw that it afforded little or no protection from the cold, wet earth, and we were so thickly packed in that it was impossible for any man to move about in order to get into a more comfortable position. The air soon became sickening with the fearful odors and, having no ventilation, the place was suffocating by morning. Those who were not sick and badly wounded were nauseated and dizzy from the confinement in such close quarters, and there was not a man who was not actually suffering acutely from the results of his first night in this pest house.

For breakfast we had to go to a miserable little cook house where we received a day's rations of black bread and some more of the unbearable acorn coffee. The bread issued to each of us for a whole day was less than half enough for one meal, and it was plain to be seen that no preparation whatever had been made for the four hundred men of our party. The officials had simply sent us to the nearest place they could think of and those in charge of the camp at Rastatt were not provided with any extra food, being left to their own solution of the problem of feeding us.

We found the old fort quite in keeping with ancient models of its kind. There was a moat surrounding the walls, and the only entrance was over a drawbridge hundreds of years old. The walls were very thick and nearly twenty-five feet in height, enclosing an area of nearly ten acres. Three big buildings stood inside the walls on one side of the enclosure. These were long and low and had loop-holes along the sides. They were covered with three feet of earth and a heavy sod had formed entirely over them which hid them from above.

Three large stone huts were built in behind the wall at one place extending toward the moat and at about the level of the footings of the wall. Entrance to these huts was through small iron gates, and these furnished the means of ventilation and light for the interior. The huts were used to accommodate nearly one thousand French civilians deported by the Germans from Lille. These miserable creatures were forced to labor in the fields, and men, women and children were driven about and stabled together in the huts like animals. Their clothing was in tatters, and many of them were suffering from different diseases and the hardships of their bitter existence.

The food given us must have been procured by the officials by reducing the issue to the civilians, and even the little we received must have been a sore loss to them. By their demeanor it was easy to see they had been subjected to harsh and brutal treatment at the hands of their captors and the attitude of their guards was enough to drive us all nearly mad. There was no chance missed to bully and annoy the helpless ones, and the men were beaten and cuffed upon all occasions.

In spite of the ill treatment and their wretched condition the civilians did their best to welcome us and let us know that they, as citizens of France, appreciated the English soldier. They even gave us some white biscuits which were sent to them by their Government, and these alone kept us alive and the civilians as well, for there was very little nourishment in the food the Germans gave us. It was worse by far than the prison fare at Julich, and we were nearly starved by the end of the first week. The soup they gave us was merely insipid dirty water with rotten par-

ticles of vegetables or mouldy barley in it. There was no attempt made to cook it, and often, when the barley chanced to have bugs and worms in it, we had no choice but to swallow these pests. To tell the truth, the bugs and worms were much better food than the barley. The bread could not have been eaten by anything short of machinery, and the acorn coffee was about the same color and appearance as the soup. Everything was in such small quantities that one might easily have mistaken our meals for doses of medicine, especially from the miserable appearance of us all.

At first we presumed that something had gone wrong with the negotiations between England and Germany over the terms of our exchange, but after a week in this abominable hole we began to get back into the old hopeless rut of despondency.

In the camp at Stendal some of the prisoners were in good health, and, with the food received from the Red Cross, there had been no immediate danger of anyone starving to death. Here it was different, for all the men were in the worst possible condition physically, none but the most desperate cases having been passed by the examining board, and the food was so insufficient that we doubted our ability to exist upon it another week.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HELL OF HELLS.

OUR guards would not tell us what had happened, and when we asked them if England and Germany had disagreed concerning our exchange they cursed us and ridiculed the idea that there had ever been an agreement between the two countries. In our own minds we were convinced that it was a plain case of German treachery, and that we were to be sacrificed to the cruelty of our hated enemies.

The weather was so cold by this time, and our clothes and shoes in such wretched condition, that we could not go outside our prison to get exercise and escape the filth and dangers of that pestilential place. Most of the men had nothing but rags wrapped around their feet, and the ones with wounds needing dressing had to use the same bandages over and over again, as there was nothing from which to make new ones.

It would be impossible to imagine a more terrible place than that long, low, damp and dark prison, with its filth and contamination. Think of crowding four hundred sick and wounded men into an unventilated room scarcely large enough for two hundred and keeping them there, day and night, with nothing but a cold, wet floor to sit upon and sleep upon. Remember, that fully twenty-five per cent. of those men had tuberculosis, some of them in the most advanced stages, and that the rest were suffering from infected wounds that were discharging.

As their suffering and hopelessness increased the men became sullen and despondent, and there was no attempt to conceal the fear and suspicion with which we regarded one another. There were no serious quarrels although there was wrangling and unpleasantness most of the time, and an undercurrent of menacing personal antipathy that we were all afraid of. Each one of us had reached a stage mentally where we could no longer trust ourselves, and it was this distressing lack of confidence that made us suspicion others.

We were not even concerned about the very sick men who were taken away from time to time as their condition became desperate. These poor fellows were removed by the guards on stretchers, and we never saw any of them again. It was generally supposed they were taken to some kind of a hospital, but I am of the opinion that they were allowed to die without the least attention. There was no doctor about the place at any time during our stay there, the prison seeming to be without either organization or head.

My own condition was no worse than that of a majority of the prisoners, and with many about me much worse off than I was, I did not suffer such mental tortures as I had at Stendal. I was convinced that those who escaped disease would starve to death before long, and I felt a determination to live as long as possible.

With absolutely nothing to do from morning till night, and sleep out of the question, with all but a very few of us, each day represented a full twenty-four hours of suffering.

We could not even buy candles, as we had been able to do at Stendal, so there was no light at night. We took our places upon the floor a little before darkness arrived, and there we remained without moving the whole night. It was horrible to sit there in silence and know that all around you others were doing the same, all of them too much taken up with their misery to heed your own. I expected every night that some one would go mad, and I guess everyone else expected the same thing. But no one did, and we dragged through the endless hours awaiting some horrible catastrophe.

Time lost all significance, even the arrival of our food being without power to distract us. Even the guards seemed to notice an evil portend in that atmosphere of gloomy silence and left us alone as much as possible.

Some of the poor civilians brought us a few of the white biscuits from time to time, and we shared these in a mechanical way, more from the force of habit than from any desire to eat. I do not recall a single instance where a man sought to take advantage of another, and there was none of that show of ravenous

hunger so generally supposed to prevail among those who are starving.

Many of the men would sit upon the floor day and night with their heads down, giving no evidence of life save when the meals were being eaten.

If there had been any system of looking after prisoners at this place something would certainly have been done, as it was getting into such fearful condition that it threatened even the health of the guards. I have read some things concerning prison life in Germany and know the general opinion of most people to be that prisoners are, for the most part, fairly well treated. I am ignorant, of course, of prison life outside of Stendal and Rastatt, and some of the camps may be put in shape upon short notice and so appear to good advantage during an inspection. But at both the places referred to, not a single regulation reported to prevail for the benefit of the prisoners actually existed.

I have read long lists of sanitary measure and equipment, descriptions of highly efficient fumigating systems for the cleansing of the clothing of prisoners, and much about food, housing, heating and the general care and treatment of the men. These things may exist in some German prison camps. They did not exist at Stendal or Rastatt, and the less that is said about the food, etc., the nearer the account will approach the truth.

Every man among us knew that he was running a race with starvation, and all our thoughts were centered, not upon our suffering, but upon living as long as possible. This gave us a purpose and freed us to some extent from the dangers of self-contemplation and self-pity. At the most desperate crisis human will always plays a large part, and the more hopeless the situation grows the stronger becomes the power of resistance.

Strange as it may seem, I was not so depressed as I had been in the camp at Stendal, although my condition was much more serious and my surroundings far worse. It was as if I had reached the limits of suffering beyond which it was impossible to go, and beyond which nothing further remained save death.

I lived on, day after day, almost unconscious of those about me, holding on to the thread of life by every

instinct of nature. Even thought was suspended in this intense effort where every impulse was directed to the simple act of living.

How much longer I would have survived I cannot say, but I was more dead than alive when, at the end of four weeks, we left that hell of hells.

I have never known how many of our men died in that horrible place. My powers of observation were so impaired and my own weakness so great that I knew but little of what went on about me at the last, and, as we were split up into different groups upon reaching Switzerland and sent to different destinations, there was no opportunity to ascertain the number of men remaining out of the original four hundred sent to Rastatt.

In the face of the fact that we were virtually exchanged prisoners, delayed only through some technicality from enjoying our full rights and privileges as such, Germany's crime in inflicting that last four weeks of torture upon us becomes black indeed. To starve and mistreat prisoners the way they do in the camps is bad enough, but to be guilty of the infamy of deliberately attempting the lives of men in such wretched physical condition as we were when, by all the accepted rules and regulations of civilized warfare we were no longer prisoners in the strict sense, adds another almost unbelievable crime to the acts of this vile and abominable people.

It was before dawn on the fifteenth of December that we were loaded upon a train and started again in the direction of Switzerland. I can imagine nothing more revolting than the sight of our unhappy band, and it is no great wonder our guards chose the hour they did for our departure.

Many of the men were no doubt left behind, being too nearly dead to stand the journey. I can never forget the horror attending our preparations to leave our vile den that was so much more like a morgue than a prison. To this day I have sudden starts produced by some recollection of that awful occasion, and in my dreams, at times, I feel again the terror that possessed me, there in that charnel house of the Huns.

I have heard it said that many bury their youth in the trenches, that the experiences there are so cheer-

less and fraught with terror that joy and light are driven from the heart and mind. Compared to the days I spent at Rastatt, my nine months in the trenches seem bliss. For, to one who has known such a depth of human misery as I shared with my four hundred comrades in that ancient dungeon, all other ills of life must seem like joy.

CHAPTER XVII.

LEAVING THE LAND OF THE BOCHES.

THE train which carried us on our return to Konstanz made good time, for we came to our journey's end at dusk. That last ride in Germany is too indistinct for me to say much about it, and, as it lasted only a day, I am glad to pass over its grewsomeness and suffering and hasten on to the brighter things beyond.

We had nothing to eat during the day, but upon our arrival at Konstanz were given some very good soup which strengthened us wonderfully. An elegant Swiss Red Cross train was waiting at the station, and as soon as we had finished our meal of soup, we were permitted to go on board without further attention from our German guards. The Swiss attendants and officials of the train were polite and kind, and did everything within their power to assist us and make us comfortable.

Within a very few minutes the train started, and in five minutes more we had crossed the Swiss border and were out of Germany at last. Near the border, on the Swiss side, was a little village, and here a crowd of people had assembled to welcome us. They were shouting and waving their hats as we passed through, and it was pitiful to see the efforts of some of our poor fellows to respond to these kind greetings. Hardly one of us had strength enough to shout above an ordinary voice, but we waved our hands and did the best we could. Our hilarity was a strange mixture of weak gratitude and helpless exultation which took the form of tears in many cases. When other forms of expression fail, tears offer the one sure medium.

As we sped on we passed through many towns and villages, and at all of these crowds waited and welcomed us with cheering. We were the first English prisoners sent into Switzerland for exchange, and the enthusiastic welcome given us everywhere spoke vol-

umes for the attitude of that brave little Nation. With a large percentage of her population German sympathizers Switzerland has been able to maintain a neutrality that has given her the respect and esteem of all the belligerents, a neutrality that has taxed her powers and the endurance of her people most cruelly.

After a two hours' run we reached Zurich where we made our first stop. Here there was an immense crowd, and it seemed that every person in it had some gift for us. Sandwiches, chocolate, candy, cigarettes, flowers and post-cards were most in evidence, and I know there must have been food enough left at the finish to take care of several more train loads of starving prisoners.

The people crowded into the train, slapping us on the backs and giving us such a royal welcome that we were soon outdoing ourselves in an effort to show our appreciation. Most of the people were Swiss, but not a few were English, and these were so overjoyed at seeing us that they almost did us bodily harm in their frantic demonstrations.

After a long stop at Zurich we journeyed on more leisurely and came to Berne very early in the morning. At all the stations along the way we were hailed by large crowds supplied with food and comforts. Our welcome could not have been a warmer one had we been Swiss soldiers returning from the dungeons of the Huns. At Berne we were given a splendid breakfast, and our party split up into three groups. The tubercular patients were sent to one place, those suffering from other diseases to another, and the third group, the men whose wounds were the principal trouble went to Murren. I was included in the latter group, and we left Berne at four o'clock in the morning for the resort in the Shadow of the Jungfrau.

At Interlaken, the gateway to the mountains, we changed to an electric railway that runs for miles on the edge of frightful precipices, at times seeming to hang out over abrupt descents of thousands upon thousands of feet. For three hours we pursued this exhilarating pathway toward the clouds, and then stopped for lunch at a quaint little village nestling at the foot of Jungfrau. Although the mountain was more than twenty-five miles distant we seemed to be looking straight upward at its summit. The dazzling

beauty of this pure white peak is most startling, and the realization of its great height fills one with the profoundest admiration.

From this stage of the journey we travelled several thousand feet by an ingenious sort of lift, consisting of two cars arranged on a cable device so that one car ascended while the other was descending. This was a scary ride, and we were all glad to get to the top. Now that we had reached safety we were not anxious to tempt fate in any unnecessary manner, and the dizzy heights we were scaling were not conducive to our peace of mind.

At the landing place on top we again boarded an electric line and skirted the edges of some more fathomless abysses for a distance of perhaps two miles.

Murren, where we were to spend our internment, is the loftiest hamlet in all Switzerland. It is shut in by mountains on every side, and one wonders at the hardihood of the people who first located this tiny community so far above the rest of the world.

The hotels of Murren are elegant and modern in every way, this having been one of the principal resorts before the war shut off Switzerland's chief resources, the tourists. By accommodating interned men at these hotels the British Government and other Governments have been able to give Switzerland very substantial support in her time of need, and the Swiss feel and appreciate this to the fullest extent.

Hearty English cheers greeted us as we came into the station, and one of our enthusiastic welcomers was playing "Home, Sweet Home" on the cornet.

Our party was split up among the different hotels and the first act of our hosts was to see that we were well and heavily fed. At my hotel a splendid meal awaited us, and we were urged to eat before making any attempt to get ourselves into fit condition to mingle with civilized society. We were assured that there would be plenty of time to improve our personal appearance after we had given our long-neglected stomachs the merited attention.

At that meal we absolutely disproved the popular belief that a starving man will die if you feed him too much. There may be several different kinds of starvation, and there may even be some truth in the conten-

tion that a stomach which has been empty for months should not be too hastily filled. And from practical observation of some seventy-five or eighty cases, I am most heartily in favor of thorough feeding.

When we had at last exhausted the food and ourselves as well, the meal ended, and we were shown at once to our rooms. The room to which I was assigned was such a dream of cleanliness and comfort that I instinctively shrank back at the contrast between it and the filthy quarters I had inhabited such a short time before. I could scarcely bring myself to defile that immaculate place by my unclean presence. The attendant was most gracious, and pointed out that I could rid myself of my wretched clothing in the bathroom without fear of contaminating the marble flooring. This I did, and violated another of the well-grounded rules of personal hygiene by taking a most sumptuous hot bath within a very few minutes after that tremendous meal.

My bed was so soft and alluring that the very novelty of its comfort made me uneasy, and I was some little time going to sleep. I slept until far into the next day, and came back to consciousness in wonder and surprise. I had slept very little during the past months, and this first long slumber seemed to have wiped out the effects of my previous suffering. I felt almost normal, and was possessed by such an inordinate desire to rest that I lay for hours in a sort of drunken enjoyment of my surroundings. It seemed to me then that I could have lived all the remainder of my life in that luxurious bed without a single regret. Truly, thought I to myself, this is the life.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ALMOST HEAVEN.

MY first need in my new surroundings was something to wear, and this was provided at once in the shape of two full suits of khaki and all other necessary apparel. With my fresh linen, my new clothes, my twenty hours of sleep, and the repast of the day before, I was feeling almost too good to be true by dinner time. I felt so good indeed that my experiences in Germany were already beginning to lose their horror, and I was able to discuss them quite calmly with correspondents and others about the hotel. By comparison I found that my lot had not been unusual, the other prisoners having suffered the same general treatment that I had while confined in German prison camps. Each interned man had many stories of brutalities practised by the Germans, and all of us agreed that we were extremely lucky to be alive. Of all the prisoners the Germans hate the English prisoners most, for with the entire absence of honor which characterizes the German mind, they have never been able to understand England's idea in entering the war, attributing to her only a selfish desire to meddle and interfere with their brazen attempts at world domination.

We were all overjoyed to get news of the progress of the war and to find that the Allies had been so successful in overcoming their early disadvantages. Of course, we found out the truth concerning the great German victories, the destruction of London and the many other lies told us by our captors. It was a bitter blow, however, to find out that they had told the truth about Lord Kitchener's death. The place occupied by this great soldier in the hearts of his men during the early part of the war made his loss almost irreparable to us.

My wounded hip and paralyzed leg had the early attention of an eminent Swiss specialist, and it was from him that I learned the real debt of gratitude I owed the

German doctor who had operated upon me at Iseghem. By the use of electricity the Swiss doctor was able to prove that the nerve which had been severed in my leg, and which was the cause of the paralysis, had been united successfully, and that I might hope for a complete recovery in time. I was directed to another physician for electrical massage treatment, and during my entire nine months in Switzerland I received this treatment every day for a period of thirty minutes or more.

A prisoner sent into Switzerland for internment or exchange is given the very best care possible, and if at the end of one year's time, or sooner in some cases, the man is unfit for further military service in the opinion of a designated examining board, he is sent home. Men who regain their full health and make a recovery sufficient to fit them again for military service are interned in Switzerland for the duration of the war.

I want to say that the Swiss authorities take their job of mending prisoners very seriously and there is nothing left undone that will in any way contribute to the ultimate recovery of the men entrusted to their care. If a soldier has a chance on earth of getting well, he will realize that chance in Switzerland. After a few weeks I feared they would have me in such good shape before the year was up that I would stand no show whatever of being sent home, for my wounds healed rapidly, and I was soon able to notice a wonderful improvement in my paralyzed leg and foot.

Thus relieved of all worry for the future, I began such a season of enjoyment and pleasure as I cannot imagine under any other circumstances. From the blackest depths of hopelessness and despair, I had come suddenly into the possession of everything fair and desirable. Can you wonder that my stay in Switzerland will ever be for me the pleasantest recollection of my life.

The winter season in Murren is filled with all manner of sports, skating, snow-shoeing, tobogganning, ice-hockey and many that we do not see in Canada or the United States. It is a festival time, and before the war tourists flocked here from all over the world to enjoy the novel scenes and exciting displays of skill and daring on the part of the champions in all lines of

winter sport. It would require a book of ample proportions to chronicle all the happenings of that winter among the mountains.

The only sport I could take part in was tobogganing, and I never hope to see another such slide again. It was two and one-half miles long; starting at the station you rode up on the lift and coasted down again, doing the distance in about five minutes. It was wildly exciting, and I never tired of it.

We had an orchestra which I joined soon after coming to Murren, and this organization raised quite a substantial sum of money from concerts given in behalf of the Swiss Red Cross. We went on several tours and this helped to take up our time as well as give us pleasant diversion. It was surprising how the fellows practised and worked in getting up the programmes. Every man seemed bent on getting the most he could out of life, now that life was so well worth living.

There was a dramatic club, and they staged a number of clever shows, finally succeeding so well with their efforts that they spent a great deal of their time travelling. There were a number of really high class performers in this organization, and they worked as hard as did the fellows in the orchestra, their days and nights being filled with rehearsals.

Some of the men who had talent in writing, and others who had been newspaper men before going to war, organized a newspaper called the B. I. M.—British Interned Murren. Through the Red Cross arrangements were made for shipping in a linotype machine, presses and all necessary equipment, and the paper was a success from the first issue. I am of the opinion that it didn't take long to pay the Red Cross for the machinery and supplies needed at the start, for there was lots of advertising, and the wily promoters and managers of the sheet had some money-making schemes always working at full blast.

Either the British Government or the Red Cross opened up a moving picture show, and we enjoyed the best pictures that could be secured without cost to us personally. In fact, everything that could be imagined was free. There was no chance to spend money without some very careful planning, and those who stayed in Murren all the time almost forgot the existence of it entirely.

The weather during the winter was extremely cold, but there was very little wind, and the days were clear and bright. The hotels were built for comfort, and it was a real joy to get into them after some time spent in the crisp, invigorating air outside. A few tourists came in spite of the discouraging conditions of travel, and these entered into the spirit of things, and added a great deal to the general holiday appearance.

The hotel where I was quartered was located at the edge of a sheer precipice more than a mile above a little village, and I could look down upon the people moving about the place from my window. They appeared no larger than ants, and the quaint little cottages with their wide eaves looked like chips scattered about in a snow bank.

Toward the end of winter I was sent to Lucerne for some special treatment in a noted hospital at that place. Here I remained a month and my stay in that lovely city is another undying memory of that land of beauties. I cannot imagine a more satisfying place than this peaceful haven of rest, with its wonderful lake and the two great peaks which stand like sentinels, one on either side.

Spring is late in coming in those high altitudes, and it was not until May that the snow began to melt at Murren. In the valleys below the grass had been green for a long time, and from my window I could look down to lovely vistas of pasture lands that were rarely refreshing in comparison to the vast expanse of solemn white which still covered the heights.

We soon began to hear the thunder of avalanches, and at times we saw them crashing down the side of some mountain about us. These vast tumults of nature are inspiring in their terrific destructiveness, and the pathways they leave seemed gouged out by some enormous tool. Trees, rocks and earth are swept away and mingled together in such a fury of descent that one is fascinated by the sight and watches until the last fragment has sped out of sight into some yawning abyss. Man's insignificance makes one feel small indeed in the face of one of these gigantic spasms of force and pride and self-esteem are forgotten as you hear, miles away below you, the thunder of the millions of tons of debris suddenly brought to a standstill.

I could never keep from thinking of the bombardment when I saw or heard an avalanche.

By June fifth the snow had disappeared, and warm weather came on all at once. I have never seen such delightful shades of green or such luxuriant growth of grasses. Flowers, too, came on with a marvellous splendor and the place was a paradise by July.

Dominion Day, July first, was celebrated by all the Canadians by a trip to Gunten. We left Murren early in the morning, and from Interlaken travelled by water up Lake Thun on a little steamer chartered for the occasion.

The grandeur, beauty and charm of the scenery about Lake Thum is indescribable, and the glories of the mountains, sky and bright colors of the landscape are reflected in the quiet depths of the clear water. The changing wonders of the panorama that greets the newcomer in this enchanting spot are like nothing I have seen elsewhere, the trees, the waterfalls, the towering mountains, every sight which greets the eye, possessing the maximum of individual beauty. It is a fairyland where it is easy to believe that life and love are the two realities.

A banquet had been prepared for us at Gunten, and with speeches, songs and much hilarity we celebrated our National Holiday. Our Swiss hosts, adepts in the art of entertainment, outdid themselves, and we were made to feel that everything was ours. As one of the fellows said, "I believe they would give us one of those mountains if we had anything to carry it in."

There was with us on this excursion a most extraordinary character—an American of Scotch descent from Philadelphia. His story is such an unusual one that I must give it as it was told to me.

During the early days of the war this fellow chanced to be in Montreal on pleasure bent—he being a confidant and close associate of John Barleycorn and an earnest traveller while in communion with the spirits. Passing down the street in a most enthusiastic and care-free mood his Scotch blood was highly inflamed by the distant, wild and crazy notes of bagpipes.

After much effort and inquiry he succeeded in locating the pipers, who were out on recruiting duty, and followed them in an ecstasy of delight all over the

city, finally landing at the recruiting station. So entranced was our inebriated friend that he joined in the spirit of the ceremonies about him with such zest that when he awoke the next morning he found himself a duly constituted member of the 13th Battalion, Canadian Highlanders.

Though surprised and puzzled, he was, nevertheless, game to the core, and too fond an admirer of Scotch highballs to admit that they had served him a mighty scurvy trick. So he stuck it out and went to the front, and after a season of fighting in the trenches was wounded and captured by the Germans.

His wound being a very insignificant affair he realized that it would be impossible for him to get exchanged through the regular channels without some clever bit of subterfuge. He at last hit upon the idea of taking off a man afflicted with shell shock.

He procured a couple of canes, and whenever he was under the observation of German officials or attendants he would wobble about shaking and falling like a fellow bereft of all control. As time went on he added the stunt of throwing a fit whenever a German came near him—going up into the air with a terrible yell, throwing his sticks and landing in the most dangerous and agonized postures, after which he would stiffen out and make grewsome noises and gradually come back to life with the air of one well-nigh done to death.

His struggles were so terrifying that the Germans got to be very sick of him, and it was not long before they found an excuse to send him before an examining board. Incredulous as it seems, this board was unable to detect anything false about his act, and certified him for exchange into Switzerland, where he arrived shortly after our own coming.

He was a big, red-headed chap, with all the nerve in the world, and after knowing him and seeing some of his antics I do not wonder that the Germans wanted to get rid of him. Even if they had been convinced of his mockery he was entirely too annoying to shut up with a bunch of slow-headed Prussians. He would have had them all worse off than he appeared to be in a little while.

My summer in Switzerland will ever be the brightest recollection of my life. It was like a fairy existence,

made bright and winning by each day's fresh enchantments, and I lived it like a gourmand, stuffing and cramming my consciousness with the beauty and bliss of the fleeting hours—sleeping, eating and enjoying with the care-free abandon of a child.

We were all children there at Murren, reborn to a world of goodness, to a life of promise, after the depths of Hell. And our gratitude for our deliverance made us look deep into the hearts around us for something fair and commendable, something different from hatred, suspicion and injustice, and we missed the mean and little things of existence in the glow of our joy and appreciation.

CHAPTER XIX.

HOME.

IN September I was again examined, and the board finding me unfit for further military service, I was certified for exchange home.

There were four hundred of us in the party that left Murren on September fifteenth, four hundred who will never again find the joy they found in that journey.

Our special train carried us through Geneva, without a stop until we came to the French border. As the train went over the line we yelled and beat one another in the wildest paroxysms of joy. We were free at last, back in the land of our Allies, back where we could oppose the Kaiser and all his rotten hordes by our every conscious act.

At Aix-les-Bains we were tendered a welcome that was most impressive. French cavalry were drawn up and a big French band played "God Save the King" and the "Marseillaise." Champagne flowed like water, and everybody seemed to have gone crazy at the same minute. I remember carrying on a spirited and quite satisfactory conversation with several French girls who were spilling words faster than a piece of machinery could have done. It made no difference about the talk, we were thoroughly in accord, and I could not have enjoyed myself more fully under any circumstances. Those French girls are not dependent upon words to get their meaning across, and the whole population have a way of making you glad that you are alive, without going into details about it.

We also stopped at Lyon, where another great crowd had assembled. Here we were met by a British staff officer, and the enthusiasm and hilarity was again turned on. The Mayor gave a wonderful address in English, which was responded to by the English officer in French, after which we were all loaded into autos and taken out to some beautiful gardens, where we

discovered a banquet prepared in our honor. And it was such a banquet as goes to your head as well as your stomach, for, before we had finished, everyone was on the most delightful terms with everyone else. I couldn't help wondering what the Germans would think to see such fellowship among the different ranks —some of those old dog-faced Prussian boys would have died on the spot.

When we returned to the city we bade good-bye to our Swiss train and the dignified Swiss doctor who had been in charge of our party. I can see him yet as the train pulled out on its return, standing upon the back platform, the very picture of official high mindedness and executive efficiency. Even in the hour of our great happiness we regretted this parting of the ways, for, in our gratitude to Switzerland for all it had done for us, we felt how inadequate indeed had been our acknowledgment, how small our return for the blessings derived.

A British Red Cross train, the finest I have ever seen, carried us from Lyon to Paris. This run was made with only one or two stops, and we reached Paris the next morning. No time was lost even in Paris, where we stopped for only thirty minutes. Travelling steadily we reached Havre at four o'clock in the afternoon, and went at once aboard a boat due to leave for England at dark. I went to bed at once, and knew nothing more until I awakened next morning to find myself back in Old England again.

Of course, there was great excitement and rejoicing, and we were treated like returning kings. I spent twenty-four hours at the General Hospital and then went out to the Canadian Convalescent Hospital at Wokingham, where there was some more noise and greeting, band music, food and other excesses.

Imagine my surprise to find the officer in charge of the Home one of my own townsmen, Major Robert E. Wodehouse.

We were given ten days' leave, and I took this occasion to visit Scotland, for I had always wanted to see that land of my ancestors. Coming back I took train for Liverpool, where I went on board the hospital ship which carried me back to Canada.

The voyage consumed eight days, and was uneventful to the point of distraction to one whose every impulse

was strained in an excessive desire to reach home at the first possible moment.

I landed at Halifax one week before the disaster, and suffered some more demonstrations, during which I occupied a front seat.

From there I went to London, Ontario, and was given leave at once, arriving home on the morning of November third.

It seemed to me as I came into Blenheim that all the people, living and dead, who had ever inhabited that community must have been assembled at the station. I was shaking with my pent-up feelings like a man with shell-shock as I got off the train, and the uproar of the crowd did not suffice to quiet me any. I couldn't talk, so they just boosted me into an auto and took me home, and, as I stepped over that threshold I had not crossed for nearly three years, the sudden full realization of what the world is fighting for to-day took possession of me, and I whispered—HOME.

In the quick torture and the blinding death
  Where duty must forever lead the brave,
Life's glories are so sure and safely won
  There is no need to mark the Hero's grave.

Thoughtless of self in their grand sacrifice,
  For all that man has loved and honored most;
The Sons of Canada have set her Flag on high,
  In far-off Flanders, 'gainst the traitor host.

And through the years to come, a thankful world
  Shall bless their courage and their faultless might,
That would not let them stand supinely by
  While others died for honor and for right.