

Russell C. Hubly

"G" COMPANY,

OR

Every-day Life of the R. G. R.

BEING A DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT OF TYPICAL
EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF THE FIRST CANADIAN
CONTINGENT IN SOUTH AFRICA.

BY

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ST. JOHN, N. B.

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1901.

TO MY COMRADE,
PATRICK MCCREARY,
WHO, ON FEBRUARY 19TH, 1900,
FOR THE "OLD FLAG,"
POURED OUT HIS LIFE-BLOOD ON THE SANDS OF AFRICA,
AND MADE US THRILL WITH PRIDE AT HIS
GLORIOUS DEATH,
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.



PREFACE.

As you all know, a recruiting office for the enlistment of "G" Company of the First Canadian Contingent was opened at St. John in October, 1899. I was Principal of the Hampton Superior School at the time, but determined to enlist, made application and was accepted.

The contingent sailed from Quebec on October 30th, and arrived in Africa on November 29th. There it had eleven months of good hard work, and experienced almost everything which could possibly happen to a battalion on active service.

A great number of the men were invalided with rheumatism, fever, and other sickness. I, myself, contracted a severe form of bronchitis, which rendered me almost speechless, and settled in my right lung. I was sent home, arriving at Sussex on Oct. 2nd.

Yielding to the many demands of my friends, and desiring to make some use of my time during my illness, in modesty, not claiming merit, I undertook this work. It has been a source of pleasure to me, in that it made the time pass more rapidly, and kept my mind from brooding over the unfortunate weakness of my voice and illness.

Already, then, in one way my little book has a measure of success. It presents to you conceptions of events as received by me. I want you to keep this in mind. I do not profess to picture scenes as witnessed by other eyes than mine. If my description does not tally in all respects with the ideas you have already received, be merciful, and consider that perhaps I am not gifted with that power of drawing true conceptions.

I make one claim for my book : to me it is truth.

I ask the reader to deal gently with it, and to pray, with me, that those literary vivisectionists will leave my child alone. Why

should they, in their greatness and lofty perfection, condescend to mutilate this creature of an humble mind?

To the *Cape Times*, of Cape Town, I am indebted for the matter of the second chapter (which I hope all will read). For the rest I am under obligations to my own presumption, a contemplation of which often staggers even me.

Hoping that you will derive, at least, some amusement from my book,

I am, at all events,

Your Friend,

RUSSELL C. HUBLY.

Sussex, N. B.



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“G” COMPANY, R. C. R.

CHAPTER I.

GOOD-BYE, SWEETHEART, GOOD-BYE.

Wheel! Oh, keep your touch; we're goin' round a corner.

Time! mark time, an' let the men be'ind us close.

Lord! the transport's full, an' 'alf our lot not on 'er—

Cheer, O cheer! we're goin' off where no one knows.

—*Kipling.*

“G COMPANY, 'SHUN!’” and one wondered where on earth the little lieutenant got his voice; why, it would have done credit to an old salt who had roared his orders against the winds of the Atlantic all his life. It seemed to start in his very boots and work its way up, though how it ever got through those blue putties is a mystery; but still it did, gathering strength by the effort, until it culminated in that word “'shun” (short for “attention”) in a manner to make the windows rattle and “G” Company spring to the alert.

We had been watching this little lieutenant, who dodged around so smartly on his little be-puttied legs, and the more we watched the more we liked him, and concluded that when he took two paces to the right and one to the rear (as he always did when giving an order), and drew his shoulders up to his ears and then jerked them into proper place again, as if he were hurling the command with all his might, the best thing we could do was to obey.

How the spectators eyed him! “Who was this school-boy, anyway, who gave his orders in tones of thunder, and wore his little military cap in such jaunty

style, resting on his right ear and one inch above his handsome little eyebrow? And what *has* he got on his legs?" But the little lieutenant, quite oblivious to the comments of the bystanders, took two paces to the right and one to the rear, and hunching up his shoulders, belched forth: "G Company, 'shun!" One simultaneous movement among the men and a heavy thud as the right foot took its place beside the left. "Form fours: right; by the left, quick march!" Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp, and "G" Company swung away on its first step towards the dark continent.

Such a march as that was! The men were dressed in the uniform of the corps to which they belonged. There, of course, was the red coat and blue-black trousers of the infantryman. The artilleryman, with his little round cap and pants with broad yellow stripe, marched side by side with a member of the 8th Hussars, with his big boots and rattling spurs. "Yellow Belly" we called him, because of the wealth of yellow facing upon his tunic. But, whether horse, foot, or artillery in the days gone by, now they bore the proud appellation, "G" Company, R. C. R., and every man among them was proud of the trust conferred upon him, and determined that whatever honours the future held for the R. C. R., "G" Company should win a fair proportion.

How the people shove, and push, and jam, and — There's Mary gone and fainted, and goodness knows how many more! Now the ranks are broken, and there are thousands in the procession who have no business there. "Look out, you fellows! don't tramp on him. Squad, halt! bring him along, you three; quick march! I don't see why he can't leave the stuff alone." "Stand back, will you! give us a show!" "Give us a show yourself; how can we get back?" "We can't get

through this! look out, you fellows, don't get cut off from the rest." And so on until the station was reached.

And who does not remember the crowd there? how the police were shoved to one side, how the people simply would not be denied, and how the great side doors were forced by the mob of angry beings shut out by the police. Why, twenty doors could not have withstood that rush. And why shouldn't it be so? Isn't Tom going to the war in South Africa? and that's not just around the corner! And who knows whether Harry's coming back or not? Keep us out? well, I guess not! And inside! Will I ever forget it! Every inch of space occupied wherever a human being could stand or cling; and those who found no foot-room, on the shoulders of others, without fear of falling, so dense the crush; and ever on the move, surging this way and that. To us, on the train, it looked like a billowy sea of upturned faces, of eyes and open mouths—we on an island. How could the train move out?

Mother was there, who smiled bravely in order that the dear departing boy might not be depressed by a sight of her tears, though she knew of the long, weary, anxious hours to come, when her heart would cry for Charlie and her arms ache to enfold him. And where is Charlie? That is he, over half way out the car window and waving farewells to her. She feels that she must reach him for one last embrace. How can she get through the crush? She appeals to those around her, who, taking in the situation at a glance, shoulder her through. Mrs. Smith declared afterwards that she never once touched the floor until she felt Charlie's arms around her neck and his warm kisses on her cheek. "Good-bye, my dear, dear boy. God keep and bring you safely back to mother."

Sweetheart was there, struggling with her tears and doing her best to understand why this great trouble was coming into her life, and trying hard to make a cheerful sacrifice of her love. But O, the pain at her heart! They were to have been married next month, and he was getting along so nicely, too. Now everything breaks, and she is to be left alone for a whole year—perhaps for ever. "Don't cry, Lizzie Heart, I'll soon be back again; think of our joy then." "Ah, Jack, if I could go too; but O, the long, long weary winter, and the dread of it all! You can't go; you must stay with me. But no! what am I saying? Go, Jack, go, and God bless you." With a long, tight hug, and eyes streaming, she bids farewell, and so pays her tale of suffering needed by the Empire.

"You're a son after my own heart, my boy; I wish I were young enough to be with you. See that you honor the medals worn by your father." It was an old man who spoke, proud to send a son to the war for right.

But this is no time for embraces. The great iron monster throbs, as if in sympathy with the pent up emotion of anxious hearts, which can find vent only in the quiet seclusion of home. Slowly the drivers revolve, and the engine, carefully brushing humanity aside, cuts its way through. And now the feelings of the crowd find vent in prolonged cheering, which gradually dies away as the train makes way into the night, bearing so many young hearts out into the mystery of war; ah! for some, the mystery of death.

All along the line the same enthusiasm prevailed. It seemed to the departing heroes that the whole country was ablaze. Hampton was wide awake, and rent the air with its brass band and loud huzzas. Little did Hampton realize that for one of its brave sons, going to the far

away front, that was the last farewell. Little did she realize that it was given to her to produce one of the heroes of the empire—one who, at all cost, could nobly do his duty, and, when the time came, knew how to sacrifice himself for Comrade, Queen and Empire.

And Sussex! and Moncton! Why, the places seemed to be on fire, and the people gone mad. (Say, you fellows, do you remember Bruce kissing the girl at Moncton? He leaned out of the window and seized her by the shoulders, then lifting her up, greeted her with a smack like a pistol shot.) How the people cheered! Then the great-coated parade to the Brunswick for supper, and the start again, with the 74th battalion band, which had accompanied us from Sussex, doing its best at the "Girl I Left Behind Me." Chatham Junction next. (I tell you "Mac," the tailor, has not a girl at the Junction—she lives at the station. He cut me out, so I ought to know.) "What's up with Newcastle at this unearthly hour? The station's on fire! No, it's a bonfire in honour of her boys." "Who is Bert talking to? Well that beats me! there's a tear running down Charlie's cheeks—caught a cold in his head, I suppose. My, what faces he's making! I'm blowed if he isn't crying."

Away again, past Campbellton, who, in its wild enthusiasm, forgot that winter was coming on. Away into Quebec, and by and by into the city, where "Old England" shed her blood for us. Now we were on our way to pay the debt, perhaps with a heavy interest.

We were quartered in the immigration building. Here we remained until the companies from the West arrived.

On Sunday, the 29th, we attended divine service in the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. The celebration of the holy communion occupied some time, as again and again the table was filled with soldiers.

On the memorable 30th of October, 1899, spick-and-span in our new rifle uniforms and equipment, we paraded to the Esplanade for inspection by Lord Minto, General Hutton and Sir Wilfrid Laurier. The ceremony kept us standing at attention for three hours, after which we paraded the streets for one hour, reaching the dock at 3 p. m.

It is little use trying to describe the crowds or wild enthusiasm that prevailed. Every rank in life was represented; yet there was no difference. The clergyman jostled the priest; the orange mingled with the green; the wealthy made way for the beggar; tear dimmed eyes glistened as brightly as those sparkling with merriment; the sorrow of the widow was comforted by the sorrow and sympathy of the sweetheart.

The dock was, wisely, prohibited ground until the troops had embarked; then the gates flew open, in surged the crowd like a huge tidal wave, covering at once every inch of ground.

Scarcely perceptible at first is the movement as the huge "Sardinian" makes way from the wharf; but the narrow strip widens, and soon we feel the motion of the screw. The rigging and sides are thronged with eager soldiers, anxious for a last smile from a loved one on shore. The great tension of feeling is relieved by the burst of song:

"Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the wave,"

and, as the steamer increases the distance, comes faintly to those on shore the strain:

"Britons never, never, never shall be slaves."

We were accompanied for a distance by several small pleasure boats, crowded to the utmost. They kept up a steady string of "Auld Lang Syne" and "The Girl I

Left Behind Me.' At regular intervals the great iron bull-dogs, keeping watch on the citadel, barked forth the salute.

As the sun sinks to the horizon, and the beloved heights of Quebec, crowded with anxious friends waving white farewells, become dim with dusk and distance, one by one our companions leave us, until with a God-bewith-you farewell the last steamer departs, and we are sent forth, the representatives of a nation—a gift from daughter to mother—to prove to the world that truly we came of the blood; and that insult to England—Our England—meant an affront to every Briton, no matter by what name he be known or under what sky he be reared.

(But my! it's sorrowful work, this parting, isn't it, Albert? I had to sing or shout all the time to keep from crying. What! are you crying? Well, I'm with you.)



CHAPTER II.

A BACKWARD GLANCE.

AS far back as 1836 we find the Dutch burghers of the Cape becoming dissatisfied with the government. Indeed, in that year took place what is known as the "Great Trek," and to this may be traced the foundation of the Transvaal and Free State.

The first party of emigrants, ninety-eight persons in all, was under the leadership of Louis Trichardt and Johannes Rensburg. After suffering untold hardships, the little band, reduced to twenty-five souls, reached Natal. A second party, commanded by Hendrick Potgieter, and numbering one hundred and fifty men, women and children, and including three Kruger families, left their homes in the Tarka and Colesberg districts and made their way to a tract of land lying between the Vet and Walsh rivers, ceded to them by Makwana. Their encampment was somewhere near Winburg. Subsequently large bands migrated from colonial centres. In 1837 Piet Retief, at the head of a large party, arrived in the camp, and soon afterwards was appointed Commandant-General. The population numbered over 1,100.

The principal cause of the Great Trek may be said to be the emancipation of the slaves. In a manifesto, put forth by Piet Retief before emigration, he complains, not without reason, that the remuneration offered by the government as compensation to the farmer for the loss of his slaves was in no way adequate; and that so much red tape stood in the way, that by the time the farmer received his money it covered very little of his loss. Complaint was also made that the government was far

too lenient in the punishment of neighbouring hostile tribes, who were continually a source of dread to the settlers.

A further cause of migration was the feeling that the Dutch entertained against the missionaries whom, they affirmed, incited the neighbouring tribes to deeds of violence.

In turn, the missionaries trumped up a charge of gross cruelty by the farmers towards the Kaffirs. From seventy to eighty arrests were made, but although the trial at Graham's Town acquitted all, the burghers had the idea that it was useless to expect justice so long as a powerful religious organization could gain the ear of the government more readily than they. Not unnaturally they turned their eyes to the vast lands to the north and thought of emigration.

In the manifesto of Piet Retief it was conspicuously set forth that the chief aim to be kept ever before the eyes of the trekkers would be to "uphold the just principles of liberty."

From the settlement of the first band of emigrants under Potgieter, until the establishment of the Transvaal Republic in 1856, the settlers were kept busy fighting with the blacks. Their worst enemy was Mosekatse, chief of the Matabele. The many heroic deeds recorded of this period rival those of the pioneers of America. A strong commando was organized and severely punished the Matabele, who were driven far to the north.

It is interesting to notice that the name of Paul Kruger appears among those of the first Emigrant Volksraad.

As an example of the bitter feeling held by the burghers against the British, it is related that Henry

Cloete, Her Majesty's Commissioner under Governor Sir George Napier, for Natal, on his arrival to assume the duties of office, was invited to attend a mass meeting of Dutch women to be held in the court house. No sooner had he entered than the doors were locked, and Her Majesty's Commissioner forced to listen to speeches, couched in the most impassioned language, against the British. Nor was he released until a resolution had been passed in which the meeting unanimously resolved that "sooner than submit to English rule they would trek, barefooted, over the mountains to liberty or death." However, although burghers fully armed went about the streets, there was no serious opposition to the district of Natal being proclaimed a British colony.

In spite of internal feuds between the followers of the two great leaders, Mauritz and Potgieter, the settlements around Winberg grew in population, and in 1849 Her Majesty's sovereignty was proclaimed.

The Republic party, under Prætorius, did not remain contented with the new state of affairs. So mischievous were the efforts of Prætorius to stir up strife between the Boers and the British authorities that a price of £2,000 was offered for his capture. Nevertheless he was elected Commandant-General by his compatriots on both sides of the Vaal River, and was appointed, along with F. G. Wolmarans and J. H. Grobbelaar, to arrange terms of peace with the English.

Her Majesty's ministers having resolved not to sanction the annexation of any further territory in South Africa, the conference was responsible for the celebrated Zand River Convention, which was signed on the 17th of January, 1852, granting independence to the Boers of the Transvaal. Two years later the same course was adopted toward the Free State.

An important step in Transvaal history was the adoption of the constitution of the Republic at Potchefstroom, in January, 1856, when Marthinus Wessels Prætorius was elected president.

The constitution provided for a meeting of the Volksraad once a year, with Potchefstroom as the seat of government.

The revenue was to be derived from the following sources: The sale of ammunition (a government monopoly), licenses, transfer dues, fees and fines of court, and a cattle and land tax; absentee landlords to pay double the amount of the tax. There was to be no equality of coloured people with the whites recognized either in church or state; but slavery was strictly prohibited. The press was declared free. (It was left for Mr. Kruger to manacle it.)

In the following year an effort was made to bring about a union between the Transvaal and Orange Free State, for which purpose President Prætorius visited Bloemfontein; but negotiations fell through. The name of Paul Kruger appears as one of the signatories to the agreement by which the independence of each state is recognized. In 1860 the seat of government was transferred from Potchefstroom to Pretoria.

The Boers proved totally incompetent to rule themselves, and matters went from bad to worse. The country was continually disturbed by civil war, and we read that Paul Kruger was well to the front in the affairs of the day. The rebellion of the Secocœni, in which the Boers suffered severely, brought things to a crisis. Thinking burghers recognized that the time had come when the paramountcy of one of the great European nations must be declared. Strange to say, the Boer had the idea that it would be better to have any other nation

as master rather than England as a friend. Aid was sought from Portugal, Germany, and even Belgium, without success. However, no serious obstructions were offered to the annexation of the Transvaal to the British Crown, which took place in April, 1877.

The leader of the Republican party at this time was Paul Kruger. He viewed with dismay the re-establishment of the British power in the Transvaal, and lost no opportunity of stirring up the minds of the malcontents. He, with Piet Joubert, was sent as delegates to England to negotiate for disunion. *En route* they sowed discord among the Cape Dutch, and on their return, disappointed and angry, they still further incited these against the authorities.

The historical gathering of Paardekraal lasted for seven days, from the 6th till the 13th of December, 1880. The Boers raised the standard of independence and invested Potchefstroom, Standerton, Leydenburg, Rustenberg, and other places. Of these Potchefstroom, beleaguered by Cronje, was the only one to surrender.

When the rebellion broke out the whole British force in Natal did not exceed 1,100 men of all ranks. General Colley had, on the other hand, to combat strong, compact commandoes, who were thoroughly acquainted with every krantz, kloof, and kopje in the country.

The Boers seized Laing's Nek on January 28th, 1881. As a counter stroke Colley seized Majuba Hill, commanding the Nek. The British, numbering 600 only, were ordered to await the Boer attack. The enemy, 2,500, swarmed up the slope. A panic seized the English and they fled precipitously down the other side. What followed was not war, but slaughter. Colley was killed. Soon after Majuba, an armistice was arranged. The Royal Commission consisted of Sir Hercules Robin-

son, Sir J. H. Villiers, and Sir Evelyn Wood. The Republican party of the Transvaal was represented by Paul Kruger, General Joubert, and W. W. Prætorious. A document was signed granting complete self-government to the Transvaal, subject to the Suzerainty of Her Majesty.

In 1882 Kruger was elected President, and in 1884 we find him in London at the much-talked-of London Convention.

As this brings us well within our own times, I shall hurry over events. The Transvaal Government lost no opportunity of discriminating against British interest.

When the great gold-fields of Johannesburg were suddenly displayed in all their wealth, the acts of the Boer authorities resembled those of a body of school children rather than those of statesmen. The government was intoxicated by its sudden acquisition of wealth. All the evils attending a full treasury were known to the state. Open thefts by officials were brought to light in the Raads. The most flagrant abuses were winked at by the highest in the land. Too much money was coming in and the dishonest grew rich by malpractice, while the state was enfeebled, its lower class of burghers impoverished, and the money-maker, the British Uitlander, treated as an outcast.

Before the Jamieson Raid, unequal taxation was not carried on to an intolerable degree; but since 1896 the unalterable policy has been to discourage immigration and harass the Uitlander. A deaf ear was turned to all appeal for justice; for equal treatment of Briton and Boer; for even a fair security for life and property. Millions of money were raised by burdensome taxation on industry and spent in converting the country into a huge fortress-arsenal. A scheme was hatched in Pretoria

for the strangulation of British interests in South Africa.

Quietly rifles were placed in the hands of every Boer male of fighting age. Kopjes all over the country were converted into fortresses bristling with modern guns. Almost every house and barn became a receptacle for ammunition and implements of war. Pretoria was turned into a huge granary. When well-ordered commandoes were within striking distances of strategic points and bridges honeycombed for dynamite, then, and not till then, did Kruger issue his proclamation of war, for he well knew that the ultimatum of October the 9th, 1899, amounted to nothing less. It also proved to be the death-warrant of the Boer Republics.

The war was thus forced upon England at a time when the great nations of the earth were inclined to make light of her reputed greatness; at a time when her colonies were thought, by outsiders, to be full of disaffection, almost ready for rebellion. Britons all over the world resented this, and were waiting for an opportunity to display their loyalty. The Boer, all unwittingly, supplied the wished for chance. Canada, Australia, and New Zealand at once placed contingents at the disposal of the Mother Land.

Thus it came about that recruiting offices were opened at different points of the Dominion of Canada and a regiment sent forth, not as a necessary but as a desirable auxilliary of the British forces.

CHAPTER III.

THE "SARDINIAN."

IT is not to be supposed that a regiment such as ours could settle down on board a transport as easily and quietly as a regiment of the line. We were men who knew nearly as much about the moon as the handling of a rifle, and were as little accustomed to discipline as could be. With the exception of the permanent men, we had no idea of soldiering beyond that gained at a militia camp. So it is not to be wondered at that our first night on board the "Sardinian" proved anything but comfortable. Disorder prevailed. Food was served, but everyone did not profit by it. Hammocks or bunks were provided for all, yet many could find neither. Some settled for the night in sheltered places on deck, only to be driven below by the crew, who expected bad weather.

The first day on board saw the officers getting us into order—the different companies appointed to quarters and told off to messes. About five hundred were assigned to hammocks slung to the ceiling of the first deck, which was also the dining deck. By day the hammocks were stowed, leaving plenty of room for the tables. The remaining five hundred slept in bunks on the second deck.

The officers were quartered near the stern. The troops occupied the middle decks, with the hospital, a compartment scarcely large enough to admit of twenty bunks, and the "clink," a hole down below which admitted of nothing but a damp, musty, tar-and-oakum smell, well forward.

"G" Company was fortunate enough to be quartered on the first deck, and slept in hammocks, on the star-board side. Their mess tables extended from the forward to the middle hatch, in one line down the centre of the deck, with the mess tables of other companies on either side.

The cooks' galley was amidships on the upper deck, so that all our food, with the exception of extras, had to be carried down stairs.

What with sea-sickness and the novelty of the life, it took us the best part of the week to get into shape; but gradually we settled to the routine, and took life as a matter of course.

While the sea-sickness was yet on us, and we were pretty low spirited with heaving all our victuals over the railing, an event occurred which deepened the gloom—one of our number died. He had been sick since leaving Quebec.

A funeral at all times is most impressive. Even at home, in the old church-yard, we can not peer into the yawning earth without being visited by serious thought; even when the friends of the departed bear him to his last resting place, and, as gently as may be, lay him down to sleep; when the open grave is surrounded by sympathy, and the grim features of the "Skeleton King" are somewhat hidden by floral tributes, even then we can not, unmoved, hear the words: "Earth to earth; ashes to ashes; dust to dust;" or hear without an inward shudder the dull thud of falling clay upon encased earth.

Here there were no softening surroundings, no weeping relatives, no beautiful flowers. But as the words: "Man, that is born of a woman, hath but a short time to live," came from the lips of the chaplain, every soul was filled with awe and every eye strained to catch a

glimpse of that which lay upon the shutter ready to be tilted into the sea. As far as appearances went, it might have been anything rather than the remains of a comrade lying there. So swathed and weighted was it that it had no shape.

During the short service the tension of feeling was such that a deep sigh came from the men as a splash told of the burial.

The whole scene was so foreign to anything before witnessed by us that we might well have thought it a dream. The crowded deck; the awe-stricken faces; the solemn tones of the chaplain; the shapeless mass lying there all tended to make it appear unreal. The gloom stayed with us for the remainder of the day.

After we were properly settled, the routine, subject to change, was as follows:

Reveille—Every one arose; hammocks were rolled and stowed; bathing parade on the forecastle; every one washed and shaved before breakfast.

Rations—The orderly-man for each mess drew the extras from the quartermaster's stores and bread from the baker's galley.

Cook-house Door—The orderly-man drew the coffee from the cook's galley; the troops had breakfast, after which an hour was spent getting clean for parade, while the orderly-man washed the dishes and scrubbed and sanded the floor.

Sick—The sick were paraded before the doctor.

Office—Prisoners and defaulters were paraded before the officers to be "weighed off."

Parade—Dress-parade for inspection and drill; every man had to be accounted for by the non-com. in charge.

Inspection—The captain of the ship, the colonel and staff made a thorough inspection of the ship.

Cook-house Door—Dinner; the orderly-man drew the dinner from the cook's galley; it generally consisted of fresh meat, soup and potatoes, with extras of fruit.

Parade—Afternoon parade for drill.

Rations—Orderly-man drew bread and extras, such as dried fruit, jam, or something of the sort.

Cook-house Door—Orderly-man drew tea, and troops got supper.

Retreat—Sunset.

First Post—9.30 p. m.

Last Post—10 p. m., hammocks were unrolled and slung.

Lights Out—10.15 p. m., darkness.

The novices in "G" Company were many, but our non-coms. knew the manual from cover to cover and soon, with much shouting and many extra drills, brought us to "toe the line," no easy matter when the deck was at an angle of thirty-five degrees.

First among the non-coms. was the colour-sergeant. He resembled "Bobs" in one respect—he was a terror for his size. He had been known to some of England's military stations as gymnasium instructor to the "Berks," by whom he was not regarded as being an angel. Having obtained his discharge while the regiment lay at Halifax, he had been knocking about the country since, finally bringing up in St. John. He turned up at Quebec as colour-sergeant of "G" Company. He was a short, thick-set man, with slightly-bowed legs, a large head, and broad, high forehead. His face was not unpleasant; his voice good.

Next in order was "Parady." His make-up would have delighted the heart of Dickens. He was a man of average height, but thinner than it is good to be. His "sandy" moustache did not hide his mouth. His eyes were blue and never looked at you for more than a moment. But his gait was his peculiarity. His legs were little more than bone and sinew, and when he walked he did it by jerking his weight from one foot to the other. It gave you the idea that one leg was shorter than its mate. He seldom spoke without shouting, and

seldom shouted without swearing. It is said that he could take a maxim-gun apart in the dark and put it together again without a light. To his face we called him sergeant; behind his back he was "Parady."

If you never saw long "Joe," then you have missed seeing what Nature can do. His full height left the six-foot mark behind, and if you stood him up against a wall he would show you where it left the plumb-line. He was slightly built, but strong, and carried his rifle as lightly as though it were a wand. His long neck was ornamented by an Adam's apple resembling a gable projection and supported a small head. His face was pleasing. But his moustache was the pride of the company. Of a tar-and-oakum colour, it projected far beyond his cheek on either side and, when properly waxed, became an ornament of great taste (and smell). He seldom swore, but looked at you with unutterable contempt. A thorough soldier he was and knew it. We got him from Quebec and so were apt to regard him with distrust, but he was a credit to the company and treated his men as men.

Our particular section-commander was at once our terror and our pride. One day, in the early part of the voyage, we were drawn up on the parade-deck, leaning on our rifles, and

"Watching 'er 'eave an' fall,"

when suddenly a stentorian voice bawled out that magic word "'Shun'" with such a power of authority that we immediately stiffened into rigidity. Although sorely tempted, we dare not look around to see from whom came the order. We were saved the trouble, for there stalked in front of us a good six-foot-one of flesh and blood. He at once informed us that we were d—d farmers, and made a h—ll of a mistake when we left the

potato-patch. He called us everything but our proper names, and each new appellation had an adjective to it: usually a double-jointed one. He endeared himself to our hearts by giving us at least ten free passes to a still warmer climate; after that the trip became so familiar that we lost the count. Once, when we came to the slope instead of the shoulder, we thought he would vanish in blue blazes; but the atmosphere cleared, leaving him still towering above us. When dismissal time came, the man who knew his own name was lucky. That night we dreamed of an incubus with bayonets for horns, innumerable limbs, each decked with three stripes, and a volcano where its mouth ought to be.

But afterwards, when he had whipped us into shape, and we could present with the best of them; when we got used to him, and he began to call us by name, without the adjectival phrases, we began to like him; when we knew him better, and lived with him in the same tent, and he did not lord it over us, but took our part against the unjust colour-sergeant, we were proud of him for making men of us, and knew that we had the best section-commander in the "push." (The sailor from Buctouche will take the wind out of my sails if I lie. Won't you, "Dout"?)

There was one other section-commander, but suffice to say of him that he gained and maintained the ill-will of his section.

Some of the corporals were permanent men, and, of course, were proficient in the drill; but there were those who knew very little, and therefore knew it all, and treated us accordingly.

It is a strange but true fact that the fewer stripes on a non-com's arm the more he considers himself as "boss" of the "crush." While the sergeant and corporal are

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the backbone of the army, yet they are not nearly so much in evidence as the lance-corporal (one stripe), who considers himself to be on an equality, in authority, with the colonel; and makes it his special care to make life miserable for his fellow-man. Now and then, of course, there is an exception, as, for instance, "Sandie." Now *he* was quiet and unassuming, and never showed his authority unnecessarily.

But, oh! that red-headed "lance-jack" from the Island! One was heard to ask: "Where his tongue got the secret of perpetual motion." Another thought he must be a descendant of him of whom it was written:

"With eyes so blue and hair so red,
And tusks so sharp and keen;
Thou'lt fright the shades when thou art dead;
And h—ll won't let thee in."

Needless to say, we cried with sympathy when he lost his stripe, and had to swab the deck with the rest of us.

I think of all our doings, while on board the "Sardinian," the bathing parade heads the list. At reveille we were turned out of our hammocks by "Parady," who, with much shouting, ordered us to "show legs," which meant to roll out. Just as we were we rushed up the gang-way and fell in on the parade deck. Pyjamas, shirts, flannels, or nothing, was the dress. At the word of command away we went at a dog-trot, the colour-sergeant leading, down the larboard and up the starboard side of the deck, jumping over coils of rope, dodging between the wheel-house and after-hatch, slipping and sprawling; some one was sure to fall, to be buried immediately beneath a small mound of humanity—a mass of bare legs and arms, hopelessly waving amid striped pyjamas and tricoloured flannels. Up again and away around the deck. Then "knees up" bawled the colour-

sergeant, and away we went again, ten times more grotesque a sight than before, with arms akimbo and knees jerked as high as the chin at every step. After ten minutes of this we made for the forecandle, where the hose of salt water gave us a good bath. We then rubbed the blood to the surface and dressed, feeling fit for any undertaking.

While in the tropics, the dress for parade was as follows: Trousers, with the legs rolled above the knee so as to leave the feet and lower legs bare; grey shirt, with neck-band loose and rolled down, front unbuttoned and tucked well inward so as to expose the neck and chest to the sun, shirt sleeves rolled above the elbow so as to leave the lower arm bare; red worsted cap, so folded as to deny all shade to the face. You will see at a glance that this was nonsense. Besides being tormented by the heated decks, our feet had to avoid the many steam pipes. Many a foot was so burned by these as to require treatment; many arms were so sunburned that the wearing of the sleeve was painful; to see a chest with the epidermis peeling off was no uncommon sight, while, if a red nose be a sign of dissipation, we must have been on a horrible "bust," for besides being red ours were swollen. The complaints of the men were many, and the colonel cancelled the order of bare feet.

Sunday morning! and a more glorious could not be. Sunrise on land, where mountain peaks catch and toss from crag to crag the sportive rays long before the hollows shake off their deep, peaceful sleep, has ever been a theme of joy to the poet and of admiration to mankind. Sunrise at sea is none the less beautiful, although twilight, its herald, scarcely prepares us for the grand event.

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Wrapped in contemplation of nature's beauty and filled with self-depreciation, we stand on the fore-castle. The huge steamer cleaves the calmness of the sea with scarcely a disturbance of its glassy surface, although it leaves a troubled "milky-way" behind. The growing light barely admits of the discernment of the horizon: a circumference so exact that we wonder what the Almighty uses for a compass, and why He deigns to utilize us as a centre. Here and there on the sky line we see a speck: a pin-point, so minute that the eye holds it but a moment, and even while we look it is gone, only to appear again, again to be lost, and our hearts warm within us as we realize that, in all probability, over there are human beings like ourselves, afloat on God's mercy, depending on Him to temper the wind and waves to suit our frail humanity.

Suddenly the light becomes stronger and, as we gaze, a golden pathway is cleft upon the sea. It widens until we imagine we are looking right in through the "Golden Gates," and gazing at forbidden glory. And, as we drink in the splendour of it, we are so transported to things beyond that we are not surprised by the burst of swelling praise which greets the ear:

"Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!

Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Merciful and Mighty!

God in Three Persons, Blessed Trinity."

The words accord so well with the emotions of the heart that we fail, for a moment, to realize that a voluntary communion service is being held on the quarter deck; but prefer to believe that angel bands are hovering near hymning their Creator's praise.

Yes! although so far from home, we have that blessed Bond of Fellowship which unites us to loved ones separ-

ated by physical differences. They, in the little village church so far away, gather around the Father's table; we, on board, by faith, partake of the same feast, and so, as one family, commemorate His precious death and burial. Yes! seas may roll between; vast distances may divide; even the "valley of the shadow" may part us, but we have a Bond in Christ which naught can sever, and which holds for eternity.

Instead of the regular parades, on the Sabbath we had three parades, in the morning, for worship. The Catholic first; followed by the Evangelical, and lastly, the Anglican.

Sunday afternoon was spent by a great many in writing home; others shuffled cards between decks. The great majority preferred to lounge at ease in some shady spot on deck, and dream of home or the life of the unknown future.

But the evening was the best time of all, when we gathered on the forecastle, and it was not yet time for the Y. M. C. A. man to bring out the little melodeon. Then the atmosphere breathed sentiment, and scarcely one, I dare say, in all that throng but saw plainly the sweet, girlish face of her who was praying for him at home. And as the twilight deepened it was her dear eyes which gave the light. And later, when he gazed at the brightening stars, they were her laughing eyes, sparkling, which he saw and made him smile.

We had our little discomforts on board. For instance, it was no easy matter to shave with salt water, no lather brush or looking-glass, and a dull razor.

Perhaps you were orderly-man, and fell down the hatchway; if so, you landed at the bottom in a puddle of barley-soup, with six or seven pounds of "salt junk" in your lap, and potatoes rolling over the deck. You

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were soothed and comforted by the jeers which greeted your contortions.

Perhaps, for no fault of your own, you found yourself in the "clink" for seven days, all because you accidentally, not knowing it was he, told an officer to "soak his head."

Then, again, your rifle and side-arms would persist in taking a ramble, and refuse to be found until "no end of a row" was kicked up by the orderly-sergeant. When discovered somewhere at the other end of the deck, the rifle looked as innocent as ever, just as though it were never out of bounds, and the side-arms protested against the idea of bayoneting anybody.

We also had our little amusements, such as smoking concerts on the quarter-deck, when a passable programme would liven up an hour or two. Not unfrequently a few of the officers took part and we liked them better for it; or boxing on the fore-castle, when, I am sure, such science was put in practice as is not found in the "Pugilist's Guide."

At night, after "lights out," and we, looking like huge cocoons in our hammocks, were slung up by head and heels to the ceiling, from which hung countless other cocoons, I have lain and laughed the tears down my cheeks at the mimicking powers of my comrades. When talking had ceased and, here and there, a snore told of sleep, suddenly, loud and clear, would sound the crowing of a cock from the other end of the deck. Immediately the challenge would be accepted by a shrill chorus of answering roosters, only too eager for the fray. Then a mastiff, roused by the noise, would send his deep-mouthed bay from a bunk beneath, only to be answered by the growling of bull-dogs, the shrill barking of curs and howling of hounds. It was only natural

that so many dogs should arouse the feline tribe, and soon yellow cats, maltese cats, black cats, white cats, big cats and kitties, spat and mewed in a shocking manner. The bellowing of a cow told of a dog worrying her tail; the squealing pig ran around the deck with a cur hanging to each ear. So the noise continued, until in the hubbub it was difficult to say whether the rooster barked or the dog crowed or what really did sing. By and by the dog let go the tail, the curs got tired of pig's ear, and we settled for sleep, the silence broken only now and then by the shrill crowing of some bantam, or the crash as some sleeper's hammock gave way, landing him among the dishes on the table beneath.

So the time at length came when, looking dead ahead, we saw a bit of haze, darker than the rest, hovering over the horizon. All morning we crowded the forecastle, but long before noon we knew that our voyage was over: the bit of haze had developed into Table Mountain. By 6 p. m., on the 29th of November, we were safely docked in Table Bay.



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CHAPTER IV.

"GETTING USED TO IT A BIT."

OUR long sea voyage of nearly eight thousand miles was over. The bay was crowded with shipping: every description and variety of craft were there. Steamers of the great ocean lines, known to the world, lay side by side, gently swinging to the swell. There was the black funnel of the American line, with its white band, to distinguish it from the wholly black of the Anchor line. The smoke from the red funnel of the Dominion line, with its white and red bands, mingled with the smoke from the red funnel, single white band, of the Allan line.

A large proportion of the steamers were numbered on the bow. These were the transports which brought so many of England's best to fight for England's glory. The swarming decks of two or three marked them as fresh arrivals like ourselves. We were given the precedence over these, and moved to dock about 4 p. m. As we passed among the shipping, cheer after cheer came from the transports, while the blowing of whistles was deafening. On moving to the wharf, we were welcomed by the prolonged cheering of civilians. Mixing freely with the whites were many Kaffirs and Cape boys. We enjoyed looking at the good-natured scramble which took place for the coins we threw among them. Our money was a great curio to them.

After tea, guards were formed, the dock cleared of civilians, and we allowed to stretch our legs on the wharf. We swarmed down the gangway. Oh, how good to

walk on something firm! It was fun to see us rolling around on our sea-legs. All too soon we were ordered on board. We occupied the time until last post by gazing at the twinkling lights of the city and many-coloured lights of the harbour. But what riveted our attention was the huge mountain, lifting its grim immensity high into the heavens. Its rugged face, scarred by the anger of ages, appeared, in the dusk, as a perpendicular wall: the work of giant hands. How long it had stood thus as a sentinel over the country beyond: a country rich in gold and precious stones! For whom does it keep watch and ward? Let the "Meteor Flag of England" answer as it shakes its folds to the breeze and from that lofty height flings its crosses against the sky.

Next morning we disembarked and encamped at Green Point, about two miles from the pier. Owing to one of those unaccountable freaks of the military authorities, we marched by a roundabout way, avoiding the principal streets of the city and thereby disappointing the populace, who had spared no energy or expense in the way of decoration to give us a royal welcome.

The day was spent in preparation for the front. We were visited by hundreds of civilians, among whom were many Canadians. In the evening we were allowed to visit the city. It was good to roam about the brilliantly lighted streets, gazing at this and that, or lurching at a restaurant in such a manner as to make the keeper stare and charge triple the ordinary price.

It was a great pity that some of our number could not avoid the saloons, and would persist in mistaking every bearded chin for the "jowl" of a Boer. Many returned to camp that night filled with a false sense of their own importance, but weak in the knees. They

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awoke next morning to the humiliation of being left behind as "guard to the stores."

On the first of December we paraded to the station, and were agreeably surprised by the send-off given us by the people. The line of march was thronged with cheering crowds. Almost every house that made any pretence to greatness was decorated with bunting. Again and again we passed under the folds of the good old flag. Many and many a fair white hand waved the Union Jack, while they who had no flag to wave cheered us forth to victory. This was no hollow enthusiasm: no mere show of good-will. We were brothers by the blood that flows through every artery pulsated by the great heart of England. We were wanderers, the same as they, far from the old home-land; but every year away from home but makes that home more dear, and we could not hear the whispered word of the mother's failing strength without showing to the world that her sons were brawny lads. And the world would do well to learn that the farther we stray from England the greater our love for her; and the greater our freedom and liberty the more we are bound to her throne. So it shall ever be. England lives in her colonies, and can they become great without adding to her splendour? Is it possible for them to become strong without adding to her stability? Her glory is our pride. The least taint of her name becomes our shame. And when she dies, then exit Canada, exit Australia, exit India, Tasmania, New Zealand, and exit the world.

At the station we were treated to soft drinks and eatables. The ladies begged our badges, and gave a handkerchief, glove, or some trinket in return, exacting a promise that it should be brought back "after the war." The memory of bright, smiling faces stayed with us for a long time.

The railway carriages were built after the same plan as those in England. The compartments were six feet long by six feet wide, and contained a small folding table. We were packed in, eight to a compartment, our equipment with us.

At first we passed a most beautiful succession of farms, gardens, orchards and forest. Orange trees, just past the blossom, glistened in the sunlight; vineyards, with their newly-formed clusters stretched in regularity; orchards of figs and apples gave place to bits of forest, usually of pine. Now we passed a cottage, almost hidden in front by the wealth of flowers. Here a mansion, standing among its pines, and approached by long avenues, told of some wealthy merchant of the city seeking the peace of the country.

About twelve miles out we passed Wynberg, where England has since built one of her many hospitals for her maimed and war-broken soldiers.

During the afternoon we passed many farms and small villages. As night came on we threaded our way in and out among mountains of a low range. Now and then we burrowed through a tunnel.

When morning came we looked forth upon a new world; everywhere stretched the velt with its unnamable colour and stunted vegetable growth. Far to our right were rugged, barren mountains, blue with heat and dim with distance. Here and there we passed a Kaffir kraal with its mud huts and naked youngsters. At regular intervals stood the stone huts built by the Cape Government Railway for its section-men. These could usually boast of a windmill and irrigated plot of ground. As we crawled over a bridge or culvert, we were greeted by a hearty British cheer from the guard stationed there. Every little water-way, every bridge, and almost every station had its garrison.

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Yonder, again, our attention was attracted by a mass of moving objects: hundreds of goats picking up a living from the stunted growth of the veldt. Away over there, nestling at the foot of a kopje, we saw a clump of trees, and we knew that a Dutchman, having made an oasis in the desert, was smoking his pipe or drinking his coffee in content.

With the exception of a few along some river course or those in a garden, we saw few trees. Here and there was a large bush with white thorns from two to five inches in length. Afterwards we met it quite often: the "watche-enbitji" of the Kaffirs.

We passed many groups of tiny begging darkies. I say tiny, because the mothers send out the smallest, often naked, well knowing that they are the most apt to excite pity. We threw our biscuits and not a little money to them, for which they scrambled good-naturedly.

At appointed stations we were served with coffee, biscuits and "bully-beef" (the commissariat canned beef was always spoken of as "bully-beef," and so it is known to the whole British army). The people at the stations did all they could to supply us with luxuries by way of fruit and cakes. They seldom took money, but were pleased to accept a badge.

Early on the morning of December 3rd (Sunday), we arrived at De Aar, and had our tents pegged to the veldt by 8 a. m.

De Aar boasts of a good station, three well stocked stores, several dwellings with creditable gardens of trees, a long, low building filled with Kaffirs, a fair hotel with bar attached, three or four windmills, and a well-favoured Anglican church, where even the Kaffir boy, who pumps the organ, wears a gown.

Have you ever been out on the streets on a midsummer day, when the wind blew its best, and drove the dust, in dense whirling clouds, into your face? If so, you know a little about the sand storms which tormented us at De Aar. The wind lifted the sand and drove it with a velocity sufficient to sting the cheek. It got in our eyes; it got in our ears; it was drawn into the nostrils, causing them to bleed, and it painted us its own colour. Not content with that, it thickened our soup, and gave grit to our meat, while the last canteen of tea from the dixy (dinner-pot) was more sand than brew. Nor could we keep it out of the tents, lace the door ever so taut. Add to these discomforts the scarcity of water, and you will form a good idea of our experience of De Aar. Why, we even robbed the graveyard of the water necessary to keep green the memory of the departed, and so the flowers withered and died. When that gave out we contented ourselves with very little to drink, and a face wash every other day.

Here we remained until December 7th, when, being relieved by the Essex Regiment, we entrained for Orange River, about seventy miles north. It required two trains of coal trucks to carry us and our baggage. We pitched our tents that night on such a ground, I am sure, as never tent was pitched before. A terrific rain and thunder storm converted the sand into a kind of semi-liquid. So strong the gale, it was almost impossible to hold the tent down. But with Albert, the strong man, on the pole, and a man for almost every rope (we were fifteen to a tent then), we managed to keep it from going up. The storm passed as quickly as it arose. We pegged our ropes and turned in; but not before we had cleaned "Brown Bess," and had her ready for action. Next morning we found that we lay between the Gordon

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Highlanders and Shropshires. Not far from us were several tents, over which flew the red cross. They were occupied by the wounded from the front. Under marquees were the Boer prisoners, some of them wounded, guarded by the glistening bayonets of the "Kilties." The Boers were curious to see a Canadian, and greatly surprised to find him resembling other white men. They had been led to believe us to be savages, or at least barbarians, and could not understand why their quarrel with England should embroil us.

"G" Company was on outpost that night and furnished the visiting patrol. For those who have never tried, on a pitch-dark night, to make way over miles of unknown ground, dotted thickly with ant hills, and honey-combed by burrowing animals, and covered with stones about the size of a pail, it will be hard to understand the work of a patrol in South Africa.

A patrol is a body of men, if large, commanded by an officer; if small, by a non-com. The duty is to go the round of outposts to ascertain that all be well. The distance is from two to ten miles. About ten o'clock at night George and I, in charge of a corporal, started to visit an outpost, stationed somewhere beyond the kopje, which we could just discern in the distance. We had not gone far when we brought up in a wire fence. The noise, caused by our entanglement, brought a challenge from the gloom on our right.

"Halt! who comes there?"

"Patrol."

"Stand, patrol! Advance, one, and give the countersign."

Away went the corporal, cursing and stumbling, and vanished in the dark. After awhile we heard:

"Pass, patrol, all's well."

We listened for the returning steps of the corporal, but no sound came. We whistled, and were answered from away off to the left. Puffing, stumbling and swearing, the corporal came up and asked us what in h—l we meant by wandering all over the d——d country, and why we couldn't stay where he left us.

We took our bearings from the kopje and stumbled on. I brought up the rear. Suddenly George and the corporal vanished, but not for long. On they scrambled, the corporal consigning all burrowing animals to a still more barren country, and, if report be true, a much warmer one. His temper was not improved by the challenge which came faintly out of the darkness. I dare not record the name by which the corporal knew that sentry. However, away he had to go and give the countersign. We could not hear whether he added anything to it or not. I know that when we laughed the next time he stumbled over an ant hill, he failed to see the joke, and used language not taught in our Sunday school.

Stumbling into this and out of that, we made our way around the kopje, but failed to find the outpost, who, the corporal surmised, had gone to h—l before his time. We were about giving up the search, when "Halt! who comes there!" told us that we had at last made connection. Back we went, lucky if our shins were not badly bruised, and super-lucky if without long search we found the bivouac.

While lying at Orange River we were employed in building railroad sidings. There was something humorous in the idea of these lawyers, doctors, teachers, dentists, and men almost unknown to hard labour, straining under the weight of heavy sleepers and railway ties. But they did their work too well, for, after

that, if heavy fatigue work were to be done, Canadians were called upon to do it; and we were proud of it.

On Sunday, December 15th, the left half battalion was packed into coal trucks and followed the right half, which, the day before, had gone to Belmont. Throughout the journey we were drenched by showers. On our arrival we pitched tents on wet ground, and slept the night in wet clothing. One of our mess caught a severe cold, and reported at the hospital. He died of tonsillitis on Wednesday morning, and was buried in the afternoon. His death was a great shock to the rest of us in the tent. We were just beginning to know him as a man of Christian principles, who was not ashamed to stand by the side of the Y. M. C. A. man and show himself as a soldier of the great army. He was only a private with us; who knows to what rank he was promoted? We were sorry he went; men like him were needed to keep up the tone of the regiment. We carried him out to a grave dug on the battle field of Belmont, and there laid him down, bare-footed and bare-headed, wrapped in his great-coat. He sleeps alone, the first Canadian buried in African soil. A few, headed by his boon companion "Alf," dressed the grave and placed at its head a whitewashed stone, bearing, in tar lettering, the words "Our Comrade," and "Canada."

CHAPTER V.

CAMP LIFE.

TO the Canadian the word Belmont is almost as well known as the name of one of our principal cities. Those who watched the movements of the First Contingent know that the miserable little cluster of an half dozen miserable little buildings, famous because of the battle of November the 23rd, 1899, became a base of supplies for Lord Methuen; and that the R. C. R. lay here, jealously watching England's interests and keeping the line open to the front for more than nine weeks.

That the regiment was benefited by its long experience of garrison duty; its continual round of outposts; its heavy fatigues; its long route marches and strict discipline, I will not deny; but at best it was a weary time. At first, when our minds and hands were occupied with trench-digging and burial of many decaying corpses and rotting carcasses which lay on the kopjes, and the outpost work was new, we enjoyed it, and could eat our hard, stale commissariat loaf with a relish. But when the novelty wore off, and it was either out all night or get up at 3 a. m. to man the trenches, the monotony began to eat into our bones, and we could not eat more than half the hard, stale commissariat loaf.

That loaf needs description. It was baked somewhere down the line: at Orange River or De Aar. It weighed one pound, and was usually burnt on one side. It was tossed into a box car or coal truck. On reaching its destination it was thrown or kicked out the car and rolled on the dirty floor; often it rolled in the sand. The orderly-man, under the direction of the orderly-

corporal, carried it in a blanket, too apt to be lousy, to the mess, when, gritty with sand, it was served to the soldier.

Water for drinking or cooking had to be brought either by train from Orange River or by an ox-team from the Thomas farm, two miles distant. For washing we drew from a well.

But Belmont is so well known that I shall not give any more general details. It was here that we became acquainted with each other, and sized up our officers. We began to know whom to trust and whom to suspect; from whom to borrow and whom to refuse. And that is useful knowledge. Of course, the men in your own tent and mess became well known, and each knew just how to treat the other. For instance, we in No. 8 tent knew that "Mac" was bound to be late for the 3 a. m. parade unless awakened by the toe of a boot. And that the "Kid" really needed the odour of the corporal's sulphurous oaths to arouse him from his trance-like sleep. And unless the sailor from Buctouche was made to take a reef in his mizzen-mast topsail he was apt to spin a most improbable yarn. No one was overly surprised when "Wannie," with a well directed blow under the chin, rolled the sergeant under the flap: there had been "bad blood" between them for some time. Of course, the sergeant, being in his bare feet, did not "take it up." All knew when a letter from the "widow" at Cape Town came for the "School Teacher," but beyond a joke or two nothing was said, and they all enjoyed the tobacco and cigarettes which she sent.

The day came when a new-comer struck No. 8 tent, as well as every other tent in the line, and stayed in spite of all that could be done to put him out. George felt that somebody, he could not say whom, was inside

his shirt. The corporal felt that somebody was inside his shirt. The sergeant, the tailor, the school teacher, each felt that somebody was inside their shirts; while "Dout," the sailor, was confident that a great many somebodies were inside his shirt. Yes, the fact could not be denied, that whenever the corporal moved, he moved not alone; and that wherever the sergeant went, he was accompanied by that which stuck closer than a brother—and bit, too, if the truth be told. Every man carried them with him. The officers knew their company, and could not shake them off. How do I know? Because "Wannie" was sent by an officer to buy "bug death," and that was a sure sign that the plague was on him. Lice here! Lice there! It became the general thing immediately after breakfast to strip and slaughter the enemy until none remained to tell the tale. But next morning the charge had to be renewed, or the depredations of the foe became unbearable. If you don't believe me, ask Albert; he never lies.

A C. I. V. (City Imperial Volunteer), leaning out the window of a passing car, overheard the following conversation:

"Well, old man, how goes it?"

"Not too bad," was the reply. "Our section captured and put to death about a thousand of the enemy."

The C. I. V. pricked up his ears; here was news for his next letter home.

"You see," continued he addressed as old man, "it was this way. We were rather warm with our walk, and the enemy, with much persistence, attacked in great numbers. We took off our coats and charged; I am sure I killed fifty." The C. I. V. leaned further out the window. "And," continued the speaker, "if they bother us to-night there will be a general engagement in the morning. Did you ambush any?"

"I got ten," answered the other. "They opened out in skirmishing order along the seams, and we could hardly see them with their "khaki" jackets on. But we intend to make it warm for them to-morrow."

The train moved out and carried with it the wondering C. I. V. His next letter home told of Canadians who thought nothing of killing a thousand Boers, and who charged in their shirt sleeves.

It was one of those almost unbearable sweltering days when, looking off across the veldt, the eye is deceived by the radiation of heat and sees beautiful lakes of water, studded with green islands; or when, if you stand between the rails of the line and follow their course with the eye, they recede into a shimmering body of water. But we know that where that water lies is nothing but the glaring sand, and that those beautiful green islands exist only in the eye.

Few who could find shade were abroad that day. The greater portion of the battalion lay in the tents. All who could, crawled beneath the few railroad trucks upon the siding and enjoyed a snooze in the shade. Away off on the different kopjes the ironstone radiated heat as though hot with internal flame; and even the dead Boer, who grinned at you from the heap of stones, preferred to turn black with the heat instead of decomposing as he should. It seemed too hot for the lizards to play over the face of the dead; so they hid themselves in the pockets of his coat or peeped at you from his shoe. The sentry found it impossible to sit upon the heated rocks, and stood leaning on his rifle and gazing in a sort of stupor into the shimmering haze of the distance. You would have thought him alone, had you not known that underneath those blankets, stretched between the largest boulders and propped up by rifles, were swelter-

ing the men of a section, perhaps a whole company, each waiting to take his turn in the blazing sun.

The whole camp was "fizzled" into stillness; even the hens tied to the tent-poles of the Munster Fusiliers ceased to cackle. The horses of the R. H. A. were away for water, two miles distant.

We in No. 8 tent lay on our backs, with our knees drawn up, and bad tempers. The flaps of the tent had been rolled as high as possible to admit of a breeze. On the face of the "Kid," "who," the corporal said, "could sleep in spite of h—1," the sweat stood out in drops as he groaned in a troubled dream. Every one was in a mood for quarrel, and inclined to wish for ice-cream or even a drink of cool water. Nobody dared to speak to the corporal, who tossed from side to side. So hot was the iron of the tent-pole that to touch it meant a blister, and that was in the shade.

Suddenly the "alarm" sounded. All was changed. It might have been a day in winter as far as we were concerned. We pulled on our shoes; few stopped for putties. Slinging on our bandoliers, and buckling side-arms as we ran, we formed ranks in the incredible space of two minutes. And the battalion was ready.

The Munster Fusiliers, rolling out of their dreams of "Ould Ireland," kicked their horses awake and fell in. The guns of the R. H. A. alone remained undisturbed, but not for long. A cloud of dust in the direction of the farm grew larger and larger until it resolved itself into galloping horses. Up they came, with heaving sides and foaming bits, and soon the guns were limbered up: the R. H. A. was ready for action. It is safe to say that had the artillery been in camp, the whole command would have been in readiness in four minutes after the alarm.

Of course, the twelve mile march was in vain. The Boers had fled, and we, disappointed, returned to camp.

The outpost duty was heavy and unpleasant. Of all the kopjes garrisoned, Scott's Ridge was the most disliked by the troops. There the sentry often did his sentry-go by the half-buried and half-decayed body of a Boer. It was no uncommon sight to see a foot sticking out of the ground, or a disfigured face looking at you from a stone pile. It is needless to say that the odour resembled that of a flower garden. Even after our fatigue parties had given these poor remains the decent burial denied them by friends, the air still bore a perfume resembling that of the rose.

Christmas day was hot with sand storms, and, in spite of beer and one scrawny chicken per mess, was miserable. We could not help comparing the plenty of the far away home with the fare with which we were served. And in spite of all we could do, no metamorphosis transformed the sergeant's "phiz" into the loving features of mother, or changed the sun-burned faces of comrades into the smiling, merry countenances of friends at home.

As we lay on our backs and watched the tobacco smoke wreath the tent-pole, our minds reverted to the dear old home. We knew as well as that we breathed just how the mother, smiling, would come down stairs and kiss all a "Merry Christmas;" how presents would be handed around; how this and that was "just what I wanted so badly," and "how could you guess?" But each could not be deceived by the spirits of the other. Mother, while her lips were for those around her, gave her heart to the "dear boy," who at that moment lay on his back digging his heels into the sand of South Africa. Any one could see that father's jokes were rather forced.

And the girls laughed for fear that they should cry, and then did both at once, as girls will.

And then the dinner! The smoking goose stuffed out of all symmetry! Was it fancy? or didn't the dinner taste as well as when he who liked "the wing, the leg, a piece of the breast and lots of stuffing," was home and filled the chair now empty. And how could the pudding be eaten without him to take the third slice? It was no use; they couldn't help thinking of the absent one, and the day was not like Christmas at all. No more it was for the absent one, who was humming to himself:

"Do they miss me at home,
Do they miss me?"

Though every one did his best to make the day pass pleasantly for his fellow man, yet it was at best a poor Christmas.

We had plenty of company while at Belmont. The Munster Fusiliers were of a class well calculated to keep one's face stretched in a smile. Their drollery, uttered in almost unintelligible speech, was laughable in the extreme. Their tents were receptacles for various articles looted from the farms in the vicinity. It was not uncommon to see a scout come in with a live duck, or even goose, tied to his saddle.

Then, again, the Cornwalls, the Royal Horse Artillery and the Queenslanders, at different periods were pegged to the veldt, and helped to pass the time pleasantly.

It was not possible for a thousand men to be herded together for any length of time without some occurrence of sickness; and, although we had but one death at Belmont, we had a considerable sick rate. Every morning those who are ill are mustered by the orderly-corporal and paraded before the doctor, who retains in hospital the worst cases and ministers to the rest. The following

gives you a fair idea of the proceedings when our French doctor was on duty. Doctor and hospital-corporal are sitting on boxes amid a general litter of bottles, bandages, instruments, and so forth. Enter first patient.

Doctor—"What's de matter wid you, my man?"

First Patient—"I have a headache, doctor, and spots before my eyes."

Doctor—"Why you eat so much? Poke out your tongue." (To the corporal): "Give this man a number nine." (Enter second patient.)

Doctor—"Well, my man, what's de matter wid you?"

Second Man—"I have a sore heel, sir."

Doctor—"Den for why you wear de boot? Let me see dat heel." The man takes off his boot and shows a heel with running sore. The doctor squeezes out the matter, which caused the man to make a wry face. "What for you grin lak dat? Doan you grin at me. See you wash dat well and come back to-morrow." (Enter third patient.)

Doctor—"What's de matter wid you, my man?"

Third Patient—"I have cramps and headache. I think I've got the fever."

Doctor (in great anger)—"Who tole you you got de fever? You study medicine? Den why you come to war? Poke out your tongue. What for your tongue so white? Why you eat so much? Tell me dat, hey? Corporal, give dis man a number nine. You come here and tell me you got de fever, I put you in de tent-guard, see?" (Enter fourth man.)

Doctor—"What's de matter wid you?"

Fourth Man—"I've got the rheumatism, sir."

Doctor (very angry)—"De devel you haf de rheumatism! How you know you haf? Do you sleep wid your eyes open? It may be some oder d——n 'tism' you haf

got. Doan tell me what you got; tell me what you feel. Let me count de pulse. Poke out your tongue. Noding's de matter wid you. You go on to-day fatigue, you hear? You come here when you not sick I haf you in de tent-guard." And so on until all have been examined.

While the health of the body was thus well maintained, the welfare of the soul was also a matter of consideration. As is well known, we had three chaplains with us, as well as a representative of the Y. M. C. A. Services were usually held on Sunday at 5.30 a. m., and it was a grand sight to see those warring men, gathered from all parts of the empire, giving praise to Him who alone giveth victory. But it is of the Y. M. C. A. work I want to write. At first the men were inclined to make light of the Doctor and his little melodeon; but as they began to know him better, and saw him night after night, in spite of snubs, bring out the lantern, melodeon and hymn books, they listened to him with better attention. By and by, when he furnished pens and paper for writing home, and did all in his power to make things more pleasant, and never intruded, but always knew, just what to say and when to say it, he gained their confidence. I can see him now, the central figure of a crowd gathered around the melodeon. One holds the lantern, which makes the tents around appear as pyramids of darkness and throws the faces of the men into strong relief. With tact, the Doctor selects well known hymns; the men sing heartily. The address could not be said to be oratorical, except for the true oratory of the heart. Generally it was a sound, practical talk of the temptations in a soldier's life. Nor were these meetings wanting in testimonials. One thing about the speakers: we were sure of their sincerity; none would dare the many

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jeers to be borne from the soldiers without true righteousness. I make the following statement cautiously: I believe that every man in the regiment was benefited in some way or other by the work of the Y. M. C. A. A man would as soon doubt his eyesight as doubt the sincerity of the Doctor. That one so young could succeed in winning his way into the hearts of men is a sure sign that the grace of God was with him.

Nor did he administer to our spiritual needs alone. Many a time he freely gave of his medical knowledge; and, when we were down to the hard rations, he procured luxuries for us, selling them, I believe, at an actual loss. You think that a small matter? I tell you that only prisoners and soldiers on the field know what a luxury is. Why, I remember one day I was orderly-man, and the rest of the boys were on Scott's Ridge. I determined to give them a treat. So gathering up the old dirty, musty crusts of "punk" (bread), I soaked them in the old tin wash dish. By much perseverance I got a half pound of sugar, a pound of flour, and three eggs. The whole having been mixed into a mass of something, I carried it over to the boarding house, and, by much coaxing and not a little flattery, I got the "collahed gal" to allow me to slip the wash dish and its contents into the oven. Although the "gal" was about fifty years of age and very corpulent, you should have seen her laugh. She laughed with her whole body. With arms akimbo, she shook and shook like a large body of jelly. The sight of my bread pudding was too much for her. When I thought it was done I drew it forth—a lovely brown on top. But oh, the weight! My arms ached before I got it half way to the Ridge. But I was repaid by seeing the way in which my comrades disposed of it. They cleaned the old wash dish right

out, and vowed that of all puddings that was the best. Not one of them got sick.

Can you wonder, then, that we were thankful to the Y. M. C. A. for any luxuries. The Y. M. C. A. ought to be proud of their choice of a man as their representative. The R. C. R. was proud of him. If he ever wants a friend, let him call on the "Boys of the Old Brigade."

And shall I tell you the name of the "Doctor?" No. He lives among you doing his Master's work. He lives in the grateful memory of many who will, perhaps, never see him on earth. Ere this he has had honourable mention at the great white throne by those who fell on the field.

The Y. M. C. A. did well to send such a man to the front. I congratulate the Y. M. C. A. on having such a man available, and am sure that nothing but success can attend it so long as such men are in its ranks.

Too much can not be said of the Catholic chaplain and his work; but the newspapers have done so much in that way that I shall add only that I think more of the Catholic church than I did before. That church must have realized what a grand opportunity was given, and I admire the way in which that opportunity was seized and turned to account. To those who were unbelievers on the field, the work of the chaplain must have been a powerful argument in favour of Catholicism.

It is a pity that the Protestant churches were not equally alive to the great opening for the example of true Christian character. How is it that while England and America are resounding with the praise of this Catholic, we hear nothing of the other two chaplains? How is it that every soldier of the R. C. R., be he Catholic or Protestant, bestows honour upon him, but dismisses with a shrug of the shoulders the mention of

the others? How is it that the Protestant church is loud in praise of the Catholic chaplain, but has no words of commendation for her own?

While at Belmont rumour after rumour kept us in expectancy of a move to the front. But one fine day rumour crystallized into fact, and we had orders to join the advance on the Orange Free State.

"G" Company was doing duty at Richmond, twelve miles north of Belmont, when it received orders to join its battalion. The word was given at midnight; we marched at 2 a. m., arriving about sunrise. We entrained that afternoon for Gras Pan, where we were brigaded with the Gordons, Shropshires and Cornwalls.



CHAPTER VI.

THE MARCH.

IT is not the intention of the author to make this work a history of the R. C. R., else it had been necessary to relate the Sunnyside affair of "C" Company and the Douglas affair of "G" Company, when it had the honour of being in company with the Royal Scots Greys. But rather it is the purpose of the writer to present such typical scenes as to enable the reader to form a pretty accurate idea of the life of the regiment. Therefore I shall not closely follow the happenings of any one particular march, but present to you ideas of the most striking occurrences which are liable to be part of any march. And I shall record that only which came under my notice.

Having been aroused long before daylight, the 19th Brigade was ready to march at the first streak of dawn. For an hour before all had been bustle. Some sort of a breakfast had been served; perhaps it was coffee and biscuit; perhaps it was meat and soup, with the command to save the meat for dinner. The defaulters had filled in the latrines; fatigue parties had cleaned up the camp ground, so that nothing remained to tell that an army had bivouaced there. Men from each company had been told off as baggage-guard; fatigue parties had loaded the huge transport wagons and filled our water bottles; the mules had been kicked, or kicked themselves, into harness; and lastly, the officers had proved companies, and the battalion had stood to arms. Just as the gray light of dawn steals over the veldt, the voice of the colonel rings out: "Royal Canadians, 'shun!" An instant's rattle of rifles and thud of many feet, and

silence has it. "Slope arms! the column will advance, number one directing; quick march!" The last order is repeated by the captains, as each in turn gets his proper interval, and the battalion is on the move.

As we are near the rear, we have the vantage point of observation; and indeed the sight of England's army on the move is a memorable one. You can get the best view when the advance is up a wide, gentle slope. Then the mind can grasp the magnitude of the movement.

Beyond the Gordon "Kilties," who are immediately on our right, extend the ranks of another infantry brigade; beyond that, squadron after squadron sweeps along, and away off, dwindled into pygmies, are the flankers.

On our left swings along the Highland brigade, with shrieking bag-pipes and barbarous dress, both relics of by-gone days. Flanking them are the guns of a battery, with wheels cutting into the sand.

Spreading out before us, brigade after brigade crawls up the slope; battery after battery foams along; squadron after squadron now creeps, now sweeps onward until each in turn tops the hill and stands out perceptibly against the sky, then disappears down the opposite slope. As we come to the summit a glance backward reveals a long line, seemingly without end, of groaning transport wagons trailing after. Here and there an ambulance, with a huge red cross painted on its side, makes way with the rest. The whole earth, as far as the eye can reach, is covered with humanity in some dress or other. On all sides is sweeping along this great weapon of war—this great instrument of peace.

The cracking of whips, the shrill unintelligible yells of the Kaffir drivers, the loud groaning and creaking of the wagons, blend into one harsh, discordant sound.

Now, with a loud rending, grinding creak, a wheel of a wagon settles into a burrow, and in spite of kicks and blows the mules refuse to bring it out until part of the heavy load is removed. Then, with the baggage guard tugging at the bits, and the Kaffir plying the raw hide, amid the curses of the transport sergeant and groans of the wheel, the wagon, with many queer noises, forges ahead. The load is replaced, the mules surprised by the bamboo and raw hide into a trot, and the transport takes its place in the line.

Over there a battery is in trouble. One of its fine horses, without warning, has taken sick, and before the driver has time to realize it, is dead. One of the lead horses is "thrown into the harness," and away goes the gun, having been delayed just five minutes.

Yonder a cavalryman has dismounted in a way not taught in the riding school. His horse, breaking its leg in a hole, has pitched its rider over its head. With the sanction of the "vet." a bullet is sent crashing into the beast's skull; a fresh mount is furnished from the lead horses, and the trooper gallops after the squadron.

Meanwhile the sun has been busy getting in his work. Already the water bottles are getting light, and it is but ten o'clock. By eleven scarcely a bottle contains a drop. The heat is overpowering; the beasts are covered with sweat; the ears of the mules have a forward droop; the flanks of the horses have a downward tendency.

As for us, we stagger on with tongues apparently as big again as when we set out, with throats on fire and lips cracked and raw. A clump of trees is seen in the distance, and we know that a farm house is there, with its well and pond. Our stride becomes more firm; the animals prick up their ears and quicken the pace. Why, what does this mean? We are not heading for the farm,

but gradually sheering away from it. With a sickening sense we realize that a halt is not to be. It is only too true—we pass a good mile to one side. Down go our spirits, and down goes the last drop of water ; down, too, go more than one of the beasts.

At noon we rest for an hour, or perhaps two. We eat our meat, if we have any, and munch a commissariat biscuit.* The food but increases the thirst. The start is made with lagging steps. We stagger on for an hour, not caring much for formation. We come into a damp tract of country, with here and there a dark, slimy pond. The ranks are broken as one after the other rushes for the water. The men, regardless of mud, fall on their stomachs and drink eagerly of the now muddy liquid, putrid with decayed vegetable matter. The doctor rides up and forces the men to leave.

At the next halt water is served from the water cart. I have been sentry over that cart when I did not relish the duty. I have seen men almost fight for the small portion allowed. I have seen them surging around that cart with eyes like those of the demented and faces of a pale yellow tinge. I have heard them shout in thick, unnatural tones for one mouthful of water ; and it was my duty to deny when I would a hundred times rather have complied. I indeed, alone, would have been a straw to dam a flood but for the officers ; they had all they could do to enforce discipline and protect the precious water.

We cover the last stage of the march in a sort of stupor. Numbers, unable to go farther, fall out. There a "Kiltie" leans against an ant hill for support; here another lies stretched dead to the world; there a man is in a fit, and under the care of the doctor. We pass many a one lying at full length, as though in the last sleep ; they are cared for by the ambulance corps.

At last, with straps cutting into the shoulders, with rifles grown in weight, with belts tightened, we come to the last half mile. Before us stretches a strip of country covered already with bivouacing regiments and tethered animals. But what gladdens our heart is the sight of that pond, acres in extent, which promises relief from this dreadful thirst. With a final effort we pull ourselves together and swing down the slope with a *credit-able stride and singing, as best we can, "The Maple Leaf Forever."

Soon we are assigned our place and we pile arms. Throwing our equipment on the ground, away we go in search of water. A glance in the direction of the well shows that it is useless to go there—it is surrounded by thousands. We make for the pond, and there drink ourselves happy regardless of the fact that some dozens of mules are in the water and that a great many men are already enjoying the luxury of a bath. We are soon with them, now swimming, now drinking, now helping to pull out a mule stuck in the mud. It is from this pond, at once a bathing pool and watering place, that we draw water for cooking.

A night march, be it not too long, is not so bad as a march by day; that is, if you have light enough by which to see the holes, wire fences and ant hills. But we have marched when ant hills could not be seen (as "Andy," who fractured a rib over one, can testify), and when the wire fence became a snare of the Boer, and the hole in the ground became a resting place for a transport wagon.

Then again, if you have marched all night, towards morning sleep, instead of being tired nature's restorer, becomes her enemy and attacks the eye with many sharp pains. The eyelids become heavy, and will fall in spite

of resolution. By and by you think it all a nightmare and fall up against your neighbour. You are awakened for a moment by a dig in the ribs from the butt of his rifle. The ten minutes' resting halt seems to be of a second's duration, because you are unconscious before you strike the ground and awakened before you reach the home-and-mother part of your dream.

However, if you are lucky, you at length bring up on the banks of some stream, or by the side of some "bloomin' fontein," and wish your biscuit, like the widow's cruise of oil, would not fail. You munch it very slowly, and carefully pick up the least crumb. Then, with a comrade, you build a shack out of your blanket, and, hiding your head therein, sleep the sleep of the just—or damned.

But what sinks the heart to the boots is outpost duty. You have marched since an hour before sunrise, and now, late in the afternoon, you see, with heartfelt gratitude, the bivouacking regiments before you, and dream of a good night's rest. Already you can smell the smoke of the dung fire. The regiment halts, and you prepare to unharness yourself. Almost like the words of doom sounds the command: "'G' Company, 'shun! slope arms! form fours! by the left, quick march!" You are too tired, hungry, and thoroughly miserable to grumble. You set the jaws firmly together, and move off for duty. It is a good two hours before the orderly-men bring up the coffee. You are in luck if it does not rain, not that the rain could keep you awake between the hours of sentry-go; but you are apt to dream bad dreams if you lie in a puddle, and are almost certain to awake with a pain in the back, or find that the oil has hardened in the joints. To say the least we were not surfeited while on the march. What would the "Kid's" mother say if

she saw him pick a rind of melon from the ground, where it had been thrown by a Kaffir driver, and greedily devour it? What would any mother say if she knew that her boy was so hungry as to pay six-pence to a Kaffir for a small biscuit, made of flour and water, and cooked in fat fried out of goats' guts: the biscuit, guts and fat all in the pot at once? What would that mother think if she heard her boy declare that these tasted better than doughnuts?

Why, I have digged with my hands for potatoes, in ground from which the crop had been taken, until my back ached, and then counted myself lucky if I had my canteen half-full of baby "spuds."

Once, I remember, I had fallen out, and made my way to a farm-house which had been badly wrecked by the regulars. There I found a C. I. V., whose horse had died, and an Australian, who also had lost his mount. We went to work to prepare a meal. The C. I. V. produced a fraction of an ounce of tea leaves; the Australian brought a few grains of sugar and a piece of biscuit from his haversack. I also brought to light a few pieces of biscuit. The remains of a bed-frame supplied fuel, and soon the canteen was "sizzling" on the fire.

But what furnished the backbone of our repast was a canteen full of bits of dried pumpkin, which we found spread on the floor of the bed-room. If there were a few feathers among them, what is the difference? I liked the dish so well that I filled my canteen with pumpkin and feathers, and carried it with me into bivouac. The sergeant declared that he had tasted nothing better since leaving Canada.

Our transport wagons were not always able to keep pace with the march, and therefore were sometimes late getting into camp. Once, after a march of eighteen

miles; we bivouacked on the gentle slope of a small kopje. The wagons had fallen behind, and we were without food, blankets or overcoats. The night was bright, with full moon, and cold even for South Africa: just such a night as we in Canada get toward the last of September. We built fires of heather and kept ourselves warm. But the "Kid" had gone to sleep on our arrival in spite of the cold. We pitied him, the corporal and I, and lifting him to his feet we walked him to the fire. When we let him go he sank like a bag of flour, and lay like a log—we had failed to awaken him for a moment. The wagons came in at 2 a. m., and we slept like the dead for the rest of the night.

On the march into Jacobsdal "G" Company formed the escort to the naval guns. It took a team of thirty-two oxen to each gun, and even then progress was very slow. Once they got stuck in the Riet River. Canadians were harnessed in and took the gun right up the bank. We were late getting into Jacobsdal and found the regiments already in camp. "Wannie" and I searched the town for something to eat. I knocked at the door of a miserable little house, and was answered by an old gray-headed woman. She was in great trouble. Tears were chasing each other down her cheeks. Although she could talk no English, yet she understood it very well. I inquired as to her trouble. Standing to one side, she pointed to an inner room, the door of which was open. There, stretched on a rude bed, was an old man, her husband. He was very near the valley of the shadow. A bloody bandage but partially hid the wound in his head, and now and then he groaned in unconsciousness. Poor old lady! It was a hard parting from him who had walked all through life by her side; and now to be taken in such a manner! She was absolutely

destitute of food. Our search that day resulted in a loaf of bread and an ounce of sugar.

In South Africa it seldom rained by day, but frequently the night brought driving showers. If you try hard, perhaps you can imagine us during a night of rain. At first we resolve to sleep it out; so, spreading the great-coat on the ground, we hide ourselves in the blanket. The rain sounds above like thunder, and we grip the blanket to keep it from the wind. We dose for an hour and awaken to find that the blanket has blown to one side. Your thin kharkee (I spell it as the soldiers always pronounce it) is soggie with water. Up you get, put on your great-coat, which almost weighs you down, and there you are for the night. We crowd around the black fire-place, and even defy with a song the anger of the elements; but it is miserable work, and we welcome the sun as a friend indeed.

I think I can not do better than close this chapter on the march, with a short description of the commissariat mule. In the first place, the mule has the power to look well or ill as occasion demands. If he gets a whimper of the visit of the "vet," he will droop both flanks, cover up his face with his ears, and convert his sides into the semblance of a picket fence, at the same time agitating his frame with the most prolonged and dismal shudders. The doctor throws one glance at him, and marks No. 45,936 (each animal is numbered on the hoof) as unfit for duty, and the mule has a holiday. When he likes he looks as sleek as a kid glove.

Then, again, the mule loves to take a good belly ache. Why, I have seen him, without any warning, throw himself down in the harness and, refusing to be helped by anything given for his betterment, die for spite. He was immediately rolled to one side to feed the vultures.

It was very selfish of him to die, because that left his mates to haul the load without his aid. Or, without any provocation, he will suddenly down with his head and throw his hind understandings at the head of the Kaffir driver. He, being used to the joke, mildly removes several inches of hide from the sides of No. 45,936 with a contrivance of bamboo and raw hide, kept for the purpose. After an hour's reasoning the bamboo and raw hide get the better of the argument, and the mule proceeds, not the least discomfited by his defeat. But his greatest delight is to get snarled in the harness. He will persist in choking himself with the breeching of his mate, and will not be loosened until the harness is cut, thereby blocking the train for some time. Suddenly, he will lie down in harness and appear to suffer untold agony. Death is "at his door," and he is cut loose, rolled to one side, and left to die; but he does not. No sooner do his mates proceed with the load than up he gets and makes for the nearest pond of water. After slaking his thirst he follows the convoy, and some day is captured and traced to his proper place by means of the number on his hoof.

When out of harness he is up to all kinds of tricks. He and his mates are tied together by one thong and allowed to roam at will. Soon it becomes necessary for the Kaffir to unsnarl them—No. 45,936 is choking himself, or being dragged by the neck by his mates. Once in a while the Kaffir is too late, and the mule eats no more mealies.

But oh, his song! Perhaps you have heard an ass bray—perhaps one is braying now—in the stillness of the night, and thought it was a grand rending of Wagner's "Tannhäuser." Well, I tell you that the braying of an ass cannot be compared to the song of the mule. I have

heard him, like the nightingale, sing the night through. Perhaps he chooses midnight for the rendering of his most pathetic solo. Words cannot tell of the pathos in his tones. I, although often taken for an ass, have never been regarded as a mule, and therefore cannot understand his song; but am sure that his lament has something in it about his far off home in America, else why do all the other mules join so readily in the chorus. I tell you that the "Germain Street Male Quartette" is not in the same class with the mules of the commissariat. But when the mule makes up his mind to "go out of mess" (die), he chooses a spot near an officer's tent and there dies. When daylight appears he is rigid, with a large ball of pure white froth oozing from his nostrils. There he lies, and in a few days becomes very fragrant; so much so, that a fatigue party is told off to drag him to his grave. So no more of 45,936.



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CHAPTER VII.

BATTLE, MURDER, AND SUDDEN DEATH.

A ping—a groan—a heavy fall :
A soul went by me in the night.
Now, where it went I cannot tell ;
But this I know, and know full well,
Had it been mine, it went to hell.

—*R. C. H.*

WHERE is the Canadian who does not thrill with pride at the mention of Paardeberg? Where is the Canadian who does not know the whole story : who does not see plainly, in imagination, the whole picture in all its gorgeous tints, with background of loyalty and colouring of blood?

Every school-boy knows the tale, and longs for manhood ; every school-girl, with blanching cheek but kindling eye, has heard how the raw, undisciplined sons of Canada led the way and forced the victory.

Hitherto, when enemies have dreamed of conquest, and turned covetous eyes toward the wealth of Canada, they had troubling visions of Lundy's Lane, and, shivering, they drew back. Henceforward, for a protection greater than Quebec, stronger than Kingston, and more formidable than Halifax, shall stand for Canada the memory of Paardeberg. And when, in years to come, will be read the history of the Anglo-Boer war, and federated South Africa will glow in the pride of its triumph under the Union Jack, then will Paardeberg shine on the brilliant page, at once a crown to loyalty and a menace to those who would assail England without reckoning with her colonies.

I shall not attempt to picture that of which I saw but a small part. While in battle a private in the ranks has but little opportunity for observation. He can comprehend that only which transpires in the immediate vicinity of his position. I have another reason for not going into detail. I have been much interested in the many newspaper accounts of the battle written by returned soldiers, and have been struck by the many apparent contradictions and statements which I regard as being untrue. Yet I believe that they were truths to those who wrote them. They observed from a different standpoint (or liepoint), that is all. It teaches me that two people, especially when labouring under strong excitement, cannot see alike.

It was when we were before Cronje. We had marched our twenty-three miles the night before, and at 7 a. m. on the 18th of February we struck the Modder at Clip Drift. Here we found a battle in full swing. The surrounding kopjes belched forth smoke as the great guns hurled the shells at the enemy, while the incessant rattle of musketry blended into one continuous roar. The Boers were strongly entrenched in the river bed, and, facing outward, kept the English at bay on both sides. To get to our position we had to ford the Modder, and stopping only to relieve ourselves of great coats and drink our morning coffee, in we went. I shall never forget that scene. Two ropes, to aid in crossing, were stretched across the stream. Slinging our rifles, and putting our valuables in our helmets, one after the other, we took the river, chin high. Owing to recent rains the current was terrific, and if one's feet were carried down, in spite of all his efforts, they appeared on the flood below him, and remained afloat until forced under by a comrade. Now a rider and horse rolling over and over were carried

down stream. Now a transport wagon would upset, and one or two of the mules drown. Here a gun, crossing, went completely under, but owing to its extreme weight appeared right side up on the other bank. "Long Joe" lost his balance and floated out on the flood until assisted to regain his footing. Thus we crossed the Modder, and at the double took the firing line, the Gordons on our left and Cornwalls on our right.

By far the hardest worked men that day were the stretcher-bearers. All day long they toiled at their work of mercy, binding up the wounds, and receiving the last love messages for home. Soon they had more than they could do. And many a brave soldier died without even the presence of a comrade to receive his last words. Many a wound proved fatal for the want of attendance, and he, who was the darling of some far away home, died in the sand for the want of a touch of a loving hand. So we kept it up all through the intolerable heat of South African day, and when, as the western slopes of the eastern kopjes were bathed in the blood of the dying day, we finished our work with a brilliant charge, many and many a face lay gazing skywards, never heeding the Southern Cross as it brightened to the night, or even feeling the dew, which was warm when compared to the damp already on the brow.

The Cornwalls lost their colonel in the charge. But the bulk of the casualties fell to us. As a result of our first battle, we left twenty-three Canadians in the hollow sandy graves of Africa. Will they sleep as well as under the snows of Canada?

At dark we retired for well-earned rest. Roll call showed eighty-seven casualties to the R. C. R.

And now occurred one of the many heroic deeds of the war. The stretcher-bearer of "G" Company, known

to every one as "Pat," insisted on going over the battle-field—out on that cold, dark field of death might be some wounded one needing his help. So out he went; out into the night; out into a greater shadow than that—the shadow of death.

We can but guess what happened. Next morning "Pat" was absent from roll call. Search was made without success; every part of the field carefully examined. Then we thought of the improvised hospitals. There, in one of the bell tents, crowded with maimed and dying, was "Pat." The Shropshires had found him in one of the deserted Boer trenches. In the darkness he had stumbled among the enemy and received a volley, for he had three horrible wounds—two in the chest and one in the skull. He was unconscious and breathing heavily. It did not need the eye of a doctor to tell that death was near. We tried to revive him: talked of home and mother, of Hampton and friends. But no! "Pat" went to be decorated for heroism before a greater, grander majesty than that of England, for I remember reading in an old book that "Greater love than this hath no man, that he lay down his life for his friends." We buried him away out there where so many heroes await reveille—away from friends and the beloved hills of Canada.

Sunday night we lay down to sleep conscious of duty well done. We had marched all the previous night; with scarcely any breakfast and half rations for the day we were hurried into battle; for thirteen hours we, enduring agonies of thirst and scorched by a blazing sun, lay under heavy fire; again and again we advanced over perfectly open zones, swept by the bullets of the enemy. The order to charge was a blunder. No charge could live under that fire for such a distance. But, when the

command was given, the Canadians sprang to obey in a manner that won respect from the line regiments and words of commendation from the brigadier-general, Smith Dorien. Previous to retiring, we were drenched for the night by heavy rain. After drinking a small ration of coffee, we, with a great shortage of blankets, went to sleep in our wet clothes. In spite of hunger and cold we slept soundly.

Next morning I found that, fifteen feet from me, lay another who was asleep with eyes open. He had a dark red blotch on his tunic, under his arm. Poor boy! he would never wake again. His eyes did not repel, but had retained the far away look which had been his last. Did they see the little Shropshire home, with its garden of marigolds and forget-me-nots? or were they dwelling with love on the face of that dear old lady sitting in the armchair before the fire and reading a letter from her boy: "The war will soon be over, mother, and I'll be back again." No, he would never go back; but one day the light will fade from the eyes of the old lady by the fire as she reads from the newspaper: "Killed at Clip Drift, Private Smith, No. 1806, Shropshire Regiment."

We awoke on Monday morning different men from what we had been. Hitherto we were boys in the stature of men. True, we were inured to hardship and feared comparison with none as far as the physique of the regiment was concerned; but one thing we lacked—we had not been tried. Now we had been "in it," and "through it," and every man held his head a notch higher; every man stepped more firmly; and the look in the regimental eye was one of calm fearlessness and quiet confidence. We had been weighed in the balance and we upset the "bloomin'" scales. The question on

our lips that day was, "What will they say of us in Canada?"

When searching for "Pat" I visited the brigade field hospital. There were from six to eight wounded in each tent—some lying on stretchers and some on the ground; and to a novice at war they presented a picture which hung itself forever on the walls of memory. Their ages ranged from sixteen to forty-five years. There lay the fair-haired boy, even now breathing his last. He had borne the terrible gnawing pain from the horrible wound in his chest with great fortitude; but in the effort to keep from crying out, the great drops stood on his forehead. Again and again he repeated that dear name "mother." He was only a boy—sixteen—and dead! dead before he knew manhood. Yet he knew what takes us a lifetime to learn—how to die.

By his side lay one with both legs shattered above the knee. Would he rather live or die? Think what it must be to lie, day after day, looking into the black, black future, to know that you will always be a burden to friends. He knew that both legs would be amputated close to the hip, but that he must travel in an ambulance to Modder River before it could be done. Pain brought no groan from his poor, pale, feverish lips; but as he thought of his wife and little ones in the far away England home, tears chased each other down his sunburned cheeks, and he covered his face with his helmet. For men can not bear that others should behold their grief.

A glance at the next will do. He had been dead for some time. The hole in his head told of the leaden messenger that had summoned him to a painful death. By his side lay one who never more should behold the light of day. A mauser had shot away his nose and right eye, while the left was so badly injured as to render sight

impossible. One rending, blinding, stinging flash of light had crossed his sight, and left him forever to walk in darkness. He lay on his back with a bloody bandage tied around his head. As he thought of his great misfortune, groan after groan rent his frame, for he had not yet learned to say "Thy will be done."

All was not silence in the tent. One all this while was picturing in loud tones the scenes of delirium. As he was carried to this and that point of his past experience, his voice became loud and harsh or soft and gentle. Now he was a child again by his mother's knee: "Now—I—lay—me—down," and as he muttered the childish prayer his eye softened. Then he seemed to be in a drunken row, and poured forth such oaths as drive children to hide behind their mothers, and make strong men look about in a dazed manner, as though expecting something awful to happen. Now he was wandering down some river path and talking words of love to her who even now was waiting at home for him who would never return. Suddenly raising his voice and stretching forth his hands, he cried: "I'm coming." No more delirium for him; no more pain, suffering and sorrow. Death, in mercy, closed its hand and bore away a soul.

From the 18th until the 28th of February were days and nights of anxiety, hunger, cold, wet and misery until we ceased to pity the dead and congratulated the wounded.

By day we were in the trenches shooting at Boers we could never see; or we were lying flat on the veldt with the burning sand beneath, the scorching sun above, and a rifle whose barrel blistered the hand.

Perhaps we were holding down some kopje, and spent the day in getting cool and the night in getting warm. We were hungry all the time. It is true that now and then, when the captain was not looking, we killed a

sheep. But then you must admit that fresh, fat mutton, cooked before the blood had time to clot, and eaten without salt, is not the best of food. In fact, it but increased the hunger, and the whole system cried out for that which it could not get—vegetables and salt. We all suffered more or less from diarrhœa and dysentery. Usually we had plenty of water, such as it was. We drew from the river, below the Boer laager, and, by and by, when the enemy could no longer stand the stench of rotting carcasses, they threw them into the stream, and the water, to us, had a sweetish taste. Later, when you could stand on the bank and count from twenty to forty dead horses and oxen, blue with decay, and with hair for the most part rotted off, floating within sight; and when gangs of men were continually at work stream-driving these to keep them from lodging on the rocks; and you noticed that a great many carcasses were in such an advanced stage of decomposition that they broke in pieces, then the water had a still sweeter taste. And afterwards, when, so it is reported, ninety dead Boers were taken out in one day, then the beverage was tasty indeed, and you could almost hear the waiter say, "One lump or two?"

While before Cronje we were cheered, like the Israelites of old, by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. Our pillar of cloud was the huge balloon, which, day after day, soared aloft and reported the movements of the enemy. Our pillar of fire was the great searchlight of Kimberley, which, night after night, looked at us through the gloom, and cheered us with the news that "the Diamond" belonged to England still. We watched for it as for a friend. So long as it shone we knew that all was well with Kimberley.

You can hardly imagine what anxious work it was to

do sentry-go at night on the kopjes. Usually it rained, and you sat on a boulder with your rifle over your knees and eyes staring into the darkness. You listen to the dull booming of the guns. Suddenly a terrible rattle of musketry comes through the inky blackness, and you wonder "what is coming off." This gradually dwindles to straggling shots and dies away.

Away off over the veldt a light springs up; then another and another, and soon a steady glare illumines the night; and you can not account for it, but know that it is the work of the enemy, because a Tommy dare not light a match without hiding its light in his helmet. Now volley after volley of musketry shakes the air; now a general bombardment seems to be in course, as gun after gun roars to the night, their flashes lighting the clouds. Again you wonder "what is coming off."

Daylight at length dawns; and, looking around, you see all just as it was the day before. Over there the enemy still hugging the river bed; there are the Gordons going out to take up position; up goes the balloon, and another day of the great fight begins.

But there came a night which was destined to be the night of all nights to the Canadians—a night long to be remembered by the Boers, for it was then that the war was broken; never since has the enemy made a stand. "G" Company had been on a kopje (since known as "Starvation Kopje") for two days and nights, and were very hungry, when, at 6 p. m. of February 26th, we marched up stream about two miles and took to the river bed, where we were served with biscuits and coffee. At 8 p. m. we made our way in single file through the heavy undergrowth on the river bank, until we struck the end of our outmost trench, running out over the veldt at right angles to the stream. We poured into

this, while "H" Company kept to the cover of the bushes. We were preceded by "F" Company. We were allowed to crouch in the trench and get what sleep was possible. At 2 a. m. word was passed for the front rank men to fix bayonets, the rear rank to carry picks and shovels. Then out over the trench we went. We knew that not a bush, not an ant hill, scarcely a straw, was between us and the enemy, but that the tract over which we were advancing was as devoid of protection of any kind as though it were the frozen surface of a lake. In the darkness we were ordered to grasp with the left hand the rifle of our left hand man in order to keep the ranks. Forward we crept with almost noiseless tread: never a word except the whispered command. On we went, certain that some would never come back, yet without a faltering step. The rear rank, with entrenching tools, followed noiselessly. What were we going to do? None of us knew, but we felt that the time was at hand when mothers would be left to mourn.

Suddenly, without a warning shot, the enemy poured a murderous volley into our advancing line. Every man fell. Those who were not killed or wounded hugged the ground, while the rear rank dugged as do the miners in narrow passages—now lying on this, now on that side, now on the stomach. The blows of the pick were not loud enough to drown the groans of the wounded. Meanwhile volley after volley, in straggling succession, came from the trench in front. One unearthly, continuous shriek of flying bullets appalled the ear, while more rapid than the click of a typewriter came the "crack" of the explosives. It seemed as though the furies were out in all their fury and were celebrating a coronation ceremony overhead. I lay and waited my turn to come; I was sure it would. A groan on my left

told of a bullet gone home ; a sigh on my right told of a soul released ; a babel of groans and smothered cries told that death was abroad, and why should he pass me by ?

“Zing-ng-ng-z, your turn next,” said the mauser, spitefully. “Ping-ng-ng-piss-ss-s-s, I got a hair out of you,” said the ricochet, as it kicked up the sand. “Hiss-ss-spit,” said the dum-dum ; “I kissed you that time.” “Swish-sh-sh-sh,” said the big martini ; “I did for your chum.” And still I lay and waited until death was satiated, and only an occasional messenger flew by.

Meanwhile our rear rank had digged a trench of sufficient depth to insure safety, and to this we retired. The wounded were carried to the trench from which we had advanced. The sight here was gruesome indeed. By the flickering light of a candle, which had to be doused, as it drew the fire of the enemy, the doctor plied his bloody trade. Now he bends over a poor chap with a bullet through the head, and twice hit in the chest. “Our-Father-who-art-in-Heaven — Hallowed-be-Thy-I-killed-a-sheep-and-if-you-will — Oh-murder-murder-help-you’re-killing-look-out-you-fools-oh-murder-Our-Father-who-art,” and so on, in his delirium mixing prayers with curses, he pours forth a torrent of meaningless combinations, until the blood from his wound at length chokes him, and his mutterings sink into guttural ejaculations.

The trench filled with wounded, the flickering candle, the dancing, gruesome shadows, the hiss of the bullets, the delirious flow of talk from the wounded, and the red-handed doctor, all combine to give the impression that an horrible dream holds the mind and no reality. One member of our company was shot through the abdomen, and suffered all that man can bear. One after the other the wounded were brought to the doctor, dressed, and sent to the rear.

We held the trench until daylight ; then, as the light strengthened, looking through the holes, we saw five stark objects lying between us and the enemy. We saw, too, that the Boers held a trench parallel to ours, and not more than sixty-five paces from where we lay. How so many of us escaped death can never be explained. We were discussing our morning coffee, and wondering how long before the order to charge, when a shout from somewhere drew our attention to a white rag tied to the barrel of a rifle and waving from the Boer trench. We were cautious and did not believe that it meant surrender ; but, as man after man came forth and threw his rifle on the ground, it dawned upon us that our long stretch of anxiety was at an end—that for a time, at least, the awful tension, the fearful expectancy of death, the terrible, terrible sacrifice of life, were all past ; and for the present we could draw a good, free breath without fear of it being the last.

We felt like school-boys, although none who saw us with gaunt, haggard faces and unkempt beards, with ragged clothes and worn out shoes, would have taken us for anything but tramps. We shook hands ; we joked, laughed, and even the hum of a song was heard. We looked forward to a good night's sleep, when we could take off our boots and even unwind those long putties, which made our legs look like—dear knows what—I don't.

As he saw the enemy rise from the ground one might well believe that the last trump had blown the great reveille. And certainly their appearance bore out the idea that they had been defunct for some time. Tall, thin, rakish looking men, with rope-coloured hair, and a thin beard of the same. Dirty and unkempt, with clothes ill-fitting and ragged, out they scrambled. As they marched by, on their first step toward St. Helena, they

presented a wonderful sight. There was the tall, slight, true Boer: you could mark him every time. He shambled along in worn-out shoes and patched clothes, while from beneath his old felt hat, drawn well down over his forehead, he cast sharp glances to right and left, or looked stolidly to the front. Here and there you picked out a foreigner—a Swede, a German, an American. You could tell them by their careless air. Mercenaries they, who had nothing but wage to lose. Mingling with the whites were the blacks, unwilling slaves of the Dutchman. All were allowed to take with them what personal effects they chose, and scarcely one but carried a bundle. As you watched the ragged, dirty, motley mob shamble by, it burned unwillingly into the brain that this undisciplined horde, this miserable band, this crowd of hungry, gaunt, lean, lank, disreputable looking beings had defied for ten long days and nights the discipline of England. They had played with the hissing bullet, and laughed at the bursting shell; and for every life that left their ranks they took a life again. We can not deny that bravery was known amongst them. We must admit that they knew how to suffer. We are forced to grant that they made a noble stand, and we have to acknowledge that they stood defeat with great fortitude.

A fatigue party was sent to bury our dead. I shall call your attention to two bodies which lay not far apart. The face of one was beautiful in its calmness. Serenity dwelt in every feature. The birth of a smile hovered around the half-parted lips, and never a care troubled the smoothness of the brow. As you gazed upon the face you saw nothing but happiness there, and you were filled with emotions of the heart, but knew no fear. If that were death, who fears to die? You could watch for hours that beautiful stillness of peace; but turn away with a sigh which is neither of happiness nor sorrow.

How different are the emotions as you look at the other! He lies on his back in his own blood. His hair is matted with gore and sand. A frown of pain is frozen on the brow. A shudder seizes your whole frame as you cross the sight of those eyes, and the chills play up and down your backbone as you try to withdraw your gaze, but can not. Your thoughts carry you, an unwilling captive, into regions you fain would shun. You wonder why death appears so hideous now, when a few moments before you feared him not. If this be death, who dares to die? All day long the chills continue to trickle up and down your back. But next morning you cook your breakfast over a dung fire just as before, and instead of an imaginary trickle you feel a real trickle up and down your back: that is, if you have them, and they bite.

The surrender of Cronje took place on the morning of February 27th, the anniversary of Majuba Day. It was fitting that the stain put upon the British arms nineteen years before should be so gloriously blotted out. For nineteen years the Boer had held the reins of government. For nineteen years the English Uitlander had lived in semi-servitude. The surrender of Cronje was the knock-out blow to the Boer.

In their trenches we found many good blankets, cooking utensils, and not a little flour and tobacco; while of arms and ammunition there was no limit.

That day scarcely a man but was frying pancakes of flour and water. That night we slept like babies, with our little (?) bare "tootsie wootsies" peeping from beneath the blankets.

On the Tuesday following we again took up the march, and, after considerable hardship and a few forced marches, arrived at Bloemfontein on March 15th, 1900.

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CHAPTER VIII.

FEVER.

We've got the fever in the camp—it's worse than forty
fights ;
We're dyin' in the wilderness the same as Isrulites ;
It's before us an' be'ind us, an' we cannot get away,
An' the doctor's just reported we've ten more to-day.

—*Kipling.*

“GEE whiz !” said the “School Teacher,” as we approached Bloemfontein, “I wish we could march into St. John just as we are : wouldn’t the women ‘scoot’ and the men stare !” “The whole d—d lot of us would be ‘clinked,’” observed the corporal, with a wink, as he ejected a squirt of tobacco-juice in the direction of the “Kid.” Now the “Kid” had met with a misfortune and lost the rear of his trousers ; but by ingenious manipulation of a foot square of kharkee had made an apron, which in calm weather effectively hid the defect. Not that the “Kid” was the only one thus fantastically dressed, but he was pretty well up in the world by birth and it amused the corporal to see him “knuckle” to the hardships. There was another St. John man in a much worse plight. He was forced to be content with little more than legs of trousers ; not because he was lazy, but because he had not the necessary kharkee wherewith to make the patch. Some wore clothes found in the Boer laager and some wore clothes made of blankets. We were known as the ragged brigade, anyway, and ragged we were.

We were not allowed a pass into Bloemfontein unless we were neat in appearance, and much patching was in

order. Many cut off the lower portion of the trouser legs and used it for patches: the putties, of course, hid the deficiency. Those whose clothes were so far gone as to render mending impossible borrowed from those who were more fortunate. I was obliged to look for a pair of pants every time I wished to visit the city. Thus, by changing the presentable clothes from one to the other, we all managed to get our turn. But, in spite of everything we could do, we were the most ragged among forty thousand.

We had hardly bivouacked outside the city before the brigade was struck with fever. Our own section-commander laid his long length on the veldt, and had to be carried to the brigade field hospital. Soon after him the "Kid" took fire; he was followed by "Long Joe," and a number of others. One after another they went down, and were carried away. Of course, it was the water we had been drinking. For five weeks we had been literally living on fever. And when the strain of battle and excitement was removed, and good food put in the stomach, and we lay at ease, then the destroyer "got in his work."

We were all sorry when our captain succumbed. He had endeared himself to every man; yet no man could place his finger on any one action and say: "I like him for this." No; he won his way into our hearts by his every-day life and manner of handling us. We had thorough confidence in him, and openly boasted that we had "the best captain in the 'push.'" But the fever took him away to the hospital, and after that they wished to invalid him to England; but, pshaw! the captain didn't want any of their "free passes," except to the front. On his way the Boers took charge of him for awhile; but there! we knew he would be all right, and so he was.

You have read and heard a great deal about the field hospitals in South Africa, and you exclaimed: "If this be true, how horrible!" I believe that the worst account you have read was no exaggeration. But you have fallen into the error of regarding these horrible accounts as representing the average field hospital instead of regarding them as descriptive of the exception. For my part, I shall never cease to wonder at the way in which England conducts this war. To my mind, the surprising thing about it all is, not that we were supplied with half rations, but that we had any rations at all. Not that there was a shortage of blankets, but that there was one blanket. Not that the fever patients were fed on condensed milk, but that they were fed at all.

It is all very well for those at home to criticise, but they are as ignorant as the baby in the cradle of the wonderful, almost insurmountable difficulties that were met and overcome by the commissariat department. Nor can they form, by merely reading descriptive accounts, an adequate idea of those difficulties. To understand, one must have at least looked over the ground—and such a ground! If the Boers had been given a perfectly level country with power to raise what barriers and difficulties of all kinds, to offer resistance to an enemy, that they chose, I am sure that the result would have been far short of what the country now is.

There are men right here in Canada who cannot control and provide for a family, but will show you in five minutes how to carry an army, without losing a man or beast, through an hostile, barren country. Bah! let them stop that foolishness, and talk about the price of tobacco or something else within the range of their comprehension.

I guess our field hospital, during our stay at Bloem-

fontein, was in as bad a condition as any other. Marquees and bell-tents were provided, but were insufficient to accommodate all the patients. A large number lay under huge tarpaulins stretched between waggons. They were thus protected from the sun, but not from the driving rain and wind. I have seen men in high fever lying on nothing but a blanket between them and the ground, and too weak to pick the vermin, which became more than a nuisance, from their clothes. In the same tent were men so weak with dysentery that, in the absence of the orderly, their clothing became filthy, and lucky was he who had two shirts.

Under a wagon I saw a living skeleton. It housed one of the Kaffir drivers, and was so weak with fever that it had no strength to brush away the flies, which crawled at will in and out its mouth and nostrils. And no one was by to brush the pests away. Think of it! What must the suffering be to a patient, burning with fever, lying under a wagon in a terrific rain storm? Compare the loving attendance which these same men would get at home, if they suffered but the slightest ill, with that which was theirs while life and death wrestled for the mastery. It was a happy day for him when a patient was transferred from the field hospitals to one of the many city buildings. There, indeed, all was comfort. In the place of the rough and ready orderly, the nurse moved with quiet tread and gentle touch. The blanket gave place to a clean, comfortable bed, and change of underclothes took place of the filthy shirt. Clean water for face washing was no longer a luxury, and a bath could be had at stated times. The food, too, was prepared with good skill, and many tempting dishes were brought to lure the convalescent back to health. Almost every building of size was converted into an

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hospital. The nuns gave up their convent and practised with no unskilled hands the art of nursing. The government building housed hundreds of patients, and a British "Tommy" filled the presidential chair, or at least occupied a cot which stood in the room of the chair. The college and public school buildings were filled with the wounded and sick of "Old England." And many luxuries and comforts were contributed by the townsfolk.

Day after day, night after night, the ambulance wagon, with its load of maimed, mangled, war-broken humanity, rolled into the city and stopped before one or the other of the many hospitals. When it stops a man with a bloody bandage around his head is assisted to alight. He will never see again. The next is one who has been shot through both legs. He will never walk again. Here is a man who has to be lifted forth. Why, he is cold! He will never breathe again. And so on, one after another, they are taken into the building, and, if not badly wounded, they praise God for the bullet that brought them to such comfort.

Day after day the slow procession makes its way to where, on the confines of the city, the ground has a strange knack of heaving at regular intervals, so that it appears in little mounds and hollows. Day after day, if you care to notice, you will see that the number of mounds has increased.

It is said that one day the sunset saw fifty more of these than did the sunrise. And under every mound sleeps a soldier, and for every soldier some heart mourns.

I have seen as many as nine bodies waiting outside the cemetery, for interment, and still the heavy dead-cart and gun carriage lumbered up the street.

The knowledge that you yourself might soon be

wrapped in a flag and carted up to the graveyard, and there securely shovelled under and left to talk to none but one on either side, knocks the sentiment out of you, and, almost without a shudder, you can watch body after body disappear to glut the worms. But enough about the grave—I'll be able to tell you more about it by and by : perhaps very soon.

It does not follow that because we had reached Bloemfontein, all our troubles came to an end. Far from it. The fatigues were heavy. All water, for a time, had to be carried from the city, at least a mile distant. Wood was very scarce, and had to be carried from three to five miles. The rainy season was approaching, and was heralded by terrific rain storms, which, before we got our tents, made us most miserable.

Aside from this we were drilled twice a day. The "chuck" (bread) was bad and scarce, and no man pretended to live on his rations, but purchased freely at high prices. Even the regimental monkey, tied to the pole, eschewed the food and fell to eating lice. Failing thus to maintain life he gave it up as a bad job and was torn alive by the dogs.

A word about our officers. I will begin with the colonel. Of course, he was beloved by all. Who could resist his powers of fascination, as he strode by, with a heavy scowl on his brow, and with head bowed, as though afraid to meet the eye of the regiment? Was he ever known to speak a kind word to those under him? Was he ever known to commend? Yes. I remember that when we lay at Belmont he was commissioned by a superior to convey words of praise to the R. C. R., and how gallantly he did it! How we adored him! He turned it in such a way that we wondered that we were permitted to wear the Queen's uniform. And if we

overstepped the bounds of regimental propriety, and was paraded before the colonel, was he ever known to take an excuse? Did he ever bend from the rigid discipline that was so galling to his civilian soldiers?

Then he was so gentlemanly. Why, one day he formed the battalion, and kept us fully thirty minutes in a rain storm to tell us that one of our number was a "G—d d—d liar." How we worshipped him as we realized that we, who at least pretended to be gentlemen, had the privilege to serve under such a man. Didn't the men go in mourning when a bullet scraped his jaw? Certainly. But what for?

How different it was with the second in command! Every man really did like him, so that he was known as "Good Old Larry." Who that saw him pass by with that large, red, jovial face, could help liking him? Who that heard his cheery voice, as he tried to brace us up, could do else but like him? When we drilled for him, we did it with a snap that the colonel could not get out of us, for "Larry" stimulated us with judicious commendation, whereas the colonel was never satisfied, and we gave over trying to please him. Larry always treated us as men. Who was it that jumped on a wagon on Christmas day, but could scarcely be heard for cheers, as he wished us a merry Christmas? Larry it was, with hearty good-will looking out of eyes, with hearty good-will shining from his large, red, jovial face, and hearty good-will in every tone of his voice.

There was another little officer who was deservedly popular. Major Pell—; but there, you would not be able to get near his name if I did spell it for you. He expressed such an interest in our welfare, and took such a pride in us, that we immediately fell in love with him. Who could help it, when his cheery little foreign voice

sang out, "Steady, my lads, steady," and his kindly eye took us all in its fatherly embrace? Did we straighten up and feel better when he inspected? I believe we did. We felt that here was a friend who sympathized with those in the ranks.

But there was an officer who rode a big horse, and when the battalion had formed preparatory to a march, his duty was to gallop from one company to the other and report to the colonel. Everybody loved that man, and loved his self-satisfied pomposity. I have heard men swear and the oath sounded rough to the ear, but he swore so smoothly that it sounded awful. We were but dogs under his feet, and we loved him for it. One day, on board the "Sardinian," this great man slipped and was saved from falling by the hand of a common soldier. Regaining his equilibrium, he frowned on the man and said, "How dare you lay hands on an officer?" That man would have died with love of him. They say that before the war he was in the Yukon, and his men were going to drown him one night out of sheer good will. I cannot answer for the truth of that.

O the pity of it! that when it is so easy to win and maintain the good will of the men, so many officers will not even exert those graces necessary. Think of it.

The officers of "G" Company were all right. The little lieutenant was much liked by all. We felt that it was a shame to keep such a smart youngster tied to a company, so handed him over to "Bobs" with the "tip" that he could draw pictures very well. "Bobs" gave him lead pencils and paper and set him to work. What did the little lieutenant do but get "water on the knee." Then, when the doctors wanted to cut off his little leg, what did he do but "fly off the handle" and keep his leg. Yes, and he has it yet, and a fine little leg it is this day.

We held our other officers straight without difficulty, and never once had them up for court martial.

Perhaps the ladies of St. John remember sending Christmas parcels to "G" Company. I have no doubt that when the "goodies" left Canada they were very dainty and fit for the table of a king—for the ladies of St. John are not behindhand in the art, besides which many had personal interests at the front.

But, my oh my ! Christmas came and went ; January, February and March passed by, and still those good things did not reach the R. C. R. On April 6th they were distributed. A great many of the parcels contained a sort of mildew. The nuts and confectionery had become soft and sour. Nevertheless there was plenty that was good, and it was share and share alike. We had the first real "tuck out" since leaving home, and many words of praise were heaped upon the ladies of St. John. "Long John," of our tent, said he bet that a young lady of Golden Grove had stoned the raisins for his pudding.

The sad part of it all was, there were not a few boxes unclaimed. They, whose names were on the lids, had fallen asleep long ago. Had the boxes been distributed at the proper time they would have enjoyed the contents. As it was, the boxes of our dead were divided among the living.

The religious services during our stay at Bloemfontein were very interesting. The pews were filled with men from the different regiments. Men from the A. S. C., the R. A. M. C., the D. C. L. I., and from any other combination that you like to make from the alphabet. From the artillery, cavalry and infantry ; from this Light Horse and that Light Horse ; from Remington Scouts, Lord Roberts' Scouts, and other Scouts ; from Kitchener's

Horse, Roberts' Horse, and dear knows whose Horse. A very few civilians sprinkled over the audience relieved the monotony.

In the pulpit, in turn, you listened to the most powerful speakers among the chaplains of the British army. Those who have never heard it can not imagine what the singing was like. The voice of the full choir was drowned in the mighty roar that ascended from the pews. The volume of sound conveyed the idea of great compressed power, and as the multitude sent forth the song you wondered that the ear could stand the reverberations. These warlike men had not come there to jeer or mock at religion. Most of them were professors, and had come, glad of the opportunity to lay aside the implements of war and spend an hour in peaceful worship. Here they were united in spirit with loved ones across the sea, and the full churches, the hearty singing, and prayerful attention, attested to the many hearts which, after all, were followers of the Prince of Peace.

The market of Bloemfontein was a place of much interest to "Tommy." Early in the morning in came the great ox-teams (sixteen head to a team), urged by the great whips, and drawing the great wagons. The old Boer sat in the wagon and smoked. What do you suppose he had for sale? A dozen eggs and three pounds of butter. Before you could turn around he was sold out—eggs at eighty-five cents and butter for the same price per pound. One old Dutchman, with great solemnity, proceeds to arrange, in little piles of three pounds weight, a lot of very small potatoes, such as our farmers leave in the field or feed to the hogs. Each pile is sold for a shilling. The same with other vegetables, all of which are miserably small. But the troops have to be smart to procure even these, for they are bought as soon

as displayed. Small, starchy apples sell for six cents each. There was always plenty of meat, and the price was not too high.

It was the custom of the stores to post in the windows two lists, one of the goods for sale, and the other of goods they did not keep. The list of missing commodities usually contained everything eatable; the other was made up of hair-pins, button-hooks, and so on.

The hotels at this time were unique. No butter, no sugar, no potatoes. You dined on beef, gravy and bread, and paid down your three-and-six. Yet there never were hotels so crowded. For hours before the meal every seat was spoken. They were twice filled, and filled again, until not even bread was to be had. The same thing day after day, until a supply train was allowed through; then food became more plentiful.

And if you want to know any more about it, ask your brother or your cousin, or somebody else's brother or cousin. Surely you have some one who was there, and will tell you.



CHAPTER IX.

HOSPITAL LIFE.

I WILL tell you nothing about what happened the other side of Bloemfontein, simply because I know little more than you do about it. But we may both rest assured that the R. C. R. did its duty in every way, and that "G" Company ate its share of the jam; if it did not I am much mistaken. However, as I said before, I am unable to record what did or did not happen, but will venture to say that "Scotty," the greasy cook, made just as poor tea and just as watery soup as he had done before.

In order to keep within bounds of my actual knowledge I shall have to ask you to bear with me while I relate what happened to us who were invalided as being unfit for further service in South Africa; not because it was my experience, but because it will give you a good idea of the life in the convalescent and hospital camps of South Africa.

One day the convalescents of many diseases were paraded, with all belongings, at the early morning hour of 6 o'clock. Weak from this and faint from that, we executed a sort of dead march to the railroad, which we struck about a mile from the station. We were told that the train would be along in a few minutes. Down we squatted, or lay and waited, one hour, two, three, and no train came. There we waited in the scorching heat until 11.30 a. m. The train was not made up of beautiful hospital carriages, but simply of open trucks, which yesterday carried coal, guns, or supplies. Into these we were packed so closely that there was neither

room for sitting or lying down. Soon after starting we were served with "bully-beef" and "hard-tack," about as acceptable to the bowels torn with dysentery and diarrhœa as a dose of arsenic, and almost as liable to prove fatal to a patient recovering from fever as an overdose of laudanum. We were forced to stand up and enjoy the scenery or stoop over and enjoy a cramp. When night came on we were exceedingly cold, and shivered every bone in our bodies.

We arrived at our destination, Norval's Point, at 3 a. m., after a ride of 136 miles. In the dark we were told off to marquees and were soon asleep. The night was exceedingly dark, and those who were troubled with dysentery and diarrhœa could not find the latrines. Next morning the camp ground was covered with filth, and it was in connection with this that we first met the colonel-doctor in charge of the camp. He was about sixty years of age, but wonderfully strong and wiry in appearance, although his face was almost purple with excessive drinking. His pipe was his inseparable companion, and his hands were always in his trousers pockets.

That morning, Sunday, he drew us into a hollow square and made a speech in undoubtable Irish accents, and, by the aid of many expletives, gave us to understand that he was determined to have a thoroughly clean camp, even if he had to put on one hundred flying sentries. He wound up by saying that he had a box of tobacco to distribute, although he was sure we did not deserve it.

Every morning we were inspected by him, and every morning he called for volunteers for fatigue.

"Well, my man, can you do a little fatigue? No, you don't look able; lie down in your tent." To the next he says: "Can you do a little fatigue?" "No,

sir, I have the rheumatism." "Then a little exercise will do you good; fall out."

One day he called for fatigue volunteers and about twenty stepped to the front. Turning to the remainder he said: "Men, you're shirking. I've dealt with men now for twenty-three years, and I know you better than you know yourselves; not one of you but is fit for a little work. Sergeant-major, fall these men in for fatigue and send those who volunteered back to their tents." There were those who played the "bluff" on the old man, but he was watching them."

One day he stopped in his inspection, and, fixing his eye on a tall, well man, he roared out so as to be heard by all: "Hello, you here yet? Why, we're having a fine time, you and I, aren't we? We've been here for six weeks now, living on jam and milk in our tea, hey? Want a change, don't we? Sergeant-major, send this man to join his regiment." There was no fooling him.

I must seize this opportunity of giving you some idea of the Soldier's Home and its work. Norval's Point, like every other large military camp, had one, and its influence for good on the minds of the men cannot be over estimated. Usually it consists of a large marquee, used, in the evening, as a place of meeting, and as a reading room by day. Also a second marquee used as a coffee stall. If you saw the way "Tommy" goes for that coffee you would be surprised. Deprived of his beer, he willingly makes coffee a substitute, and is much better for it. Usually penny buns are sold as well, and the supply seldom keeps pace with the demand. Day after day the coffee bar is crowded; night after night the prayer meeting is conducted; and so the soldier is kept from wholly slipping away into badness, and welcomes this link to his better life.

It never does a "Tommy" harm to think of his mother and dear ones, and the sermon that brings them to his mind makes him call the preacher a "bloomin' toff," and that is his word of strong commendation.

Besides that, the Soldiers' Home is a medium through which charitable people send "Tommy" a great many comforts. If there is no postal service, the Soldiers' Home undertakes the work, and supplies paper and envelopes free of charge.

In a convalescent camp, such as at Norval's Pont, you meet with men from a great many different regiments. In our tent we had a "canny" Scot, a broguey Irishman, a man from Worcestershire, who could hardly understand his own language, an English towny from Manchester, a guardsman much given to fits, and myself, wheezing at every breath like a cord drawn across the open end of a tin can. When not in a fit, the guardsman was talking of his hard life in the Guards, the pride and envy of the British army. He characterized the strict discipline as "h—l on earth." But then he admitted that he had been hard to manage. He was only seven years a soldier, yet had three full crime sheets.

It was most amusing to hear the Irishman talking to the Scot. Neither could understand the other, and each upbraided the other for not talking good English. The Worcester was just as bad. The rest of us got along very well. Every one seemed to have no difficulty in understanding the Canadian.

One day the commandant took it into his head that we were threatened with attack, and resolved to form us into a kind of scratch battalion. It would have done you good to see us line up. Infantryman, cavalryman, artilleryman; men from the A. S. C. and R. A. M. C. and cooks all fell in, and on wobbly legs marched out to

the trenches and took up position. The trench was just across the line, about a mile distant, but in that short walk over one hundred fell out, although each would have staggered on if possible, but the heat and disease were too much for them and down they went.

Death is of little moment to men in hospital. Those surviving dismiss the remembrance of a chum with the words, "Poor Tommy snuffed it after all."

Of course one sees many sights of suffering. I remember, after I went to the hospital marquee, the case of a young fellow whose hand was a mass of corruption from blood poisoning. Twice a day the orderly-man used to dress it with acids, and every night the doctor cut away the putrid flesh. Never a groan escaped him, although it made me queer to see the agony in his face and drops of sweat on his brow.

In military hospitals things are not conducted just as they are in our hospitals at home. For instance, we were often awakened by the weird shriekings of a man in a maniac-fit in the next tent. Froth covered his lips as he struggled under the weight of the other occupants of the tent who were holding him to the ground.

At last, one bright day, we were marked for the Cape and given passage in first-class carriages. Indeed it seemed as though all our troubles, except illness, were at an end. We were well treated on our journey. At Taous River we got the first real home-made biscuits we had tasted since arrival in Africa. The ladies were very kind, and not only gave us the biscuit, but had spread them with butter—real, good butter, golden butter—not axle-grease, or boot-dubbin, or soap, but real butter made from milk, milked from a cow. Did we like it? No, we never tasted it; we simply looked for more, and we got it. And when we were full, really full, they

brought around saucers of jelly—good fruit jelly, home made—not that tinned stuff, with seeds, roots, leaves and stems boiled into a kind of mush and labelled “jam,” but real downright jelly, such as our mothers used to make; and we so full we could not eat it! Couldn't we? Well, where did it go, then? Do you see that man in the corner? He is just recovering from a case of dysentery which almost left his mother a mourner. Well, he ate three slices of bread and butter, two biscuits, drank two cups of tea, and now his saucer has no more jelly in it than if it were fresh from the dish-cloth. Full! Who's full when jelly is around? We thanked the ladies of Taous River and took courage.

In the early morning we pulled into Wynberg. It was raining steadily, but goodness me! here were the ladies out again, around with cakes and cups of steaming coffee. We were piled into ambulance wagons and driven to the hospital, which consisted of many huts and military buildings. We were soon parcelled out to our different places, and settled down to this new phase of existence.

Each hut contained from twenty to thirty cots, supplied with good, clean bedding. The hut itself was one of those corrugated iron affairs, with an opening of four inches for ventilation under the eaves. It being winter, the wind, entering here, often blew out the lights, and even lifted a corner of the bed-quilt. Indeed, the hut was very airy; but then it kept out the rain.

We had good food, good doctors, and good nurses. There was a day sister (we always called the nurses sisters) and a night sister to each hut. They spared no pains to make it comfortable and pleasant for the patients. Every day bunches of calla lily blossoms were set upon the tables and also many varieties of heather

with blue, white, and pink blossoms. Each man had a small locker standing between his cot and the next, and he took great pride in keeping it tidy.

As in the other hospitals, we were a mixed lot : men from different regiments and suffering from different ailments. The man on my left was an Englishman who, years ago, had gone to America. When the war broke out, he procured passage to Africa in one of the transports carrying mules. On his arrival he joined one of the colonial forces and, at Kimberley, in October, he had his right fore-arm shattered by a ball. Ever since, he had been fighting to keep his arm from amputation. He was a bright, educated fellow, and determined to take both arms home or none.

On my right was a man very low with dysentery ; he was too weak even to sit up. His temperature played around 102° and sometimes rose to $104\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$. It was pitiful to see him, night and morning, as the sister read the thermometer. He would scan her face as though to read her very thought ; and when she marked the clinical chart and hung it up above his cot, how eagerly he scanned the figures ! As he saw that it had not lowered, a look of despair settled on his face. He was beginning to see what we all knew : that his days were numbered. So on, down one side and up the other ; each man bravely bearing his part of suffering and generally doing all he could to lighten that of his comrade.

Outside, the site and scene are beautiful. The grounds are gently rising, forming an immense mound, upon which have been built twenty-seven huts ; these, together with the military buildings, are capable of housing 2,000 patients. The place is well treed. Lofty pines, forever waving in the wind as though trying to hush the weary patients into restful sleep, tower over

the mound. Here and there, glistening white in the sunlight, is seen the less tall "silver leaf"; while still farther back, at the base of the kopje, they grow so thickly that they form a wood of almost snowy whiteness. But the best of all are the giant, massive kopjes, which, in rear of the camp, raise their immense forms, silent and grim; or else struggling with tempestuous clouds, which at this season are continually assailing their peaks.

At the foot of the mound spreads out the town, beautiful with its trees and old Dutch houses sprinkled among those of more modern design. Looking from the hospital, far out beyond the town, you may catch a glimpse of the karoo stretching, an ocean of greenish-brown, towards the horizon line. Or, looking south, you see the greener Atlantic madly hurling itself against the snowy beach.

After two weeks at Wynberg, we were paraded for Cape Town and ordered to embark for England. The ship "Canada" was not long in leaving the bay, and soon we felt the swell and generously gave our dinners to the fish. Although sick on the outward trip, a great many suffered again, but lightly, and three days from port saw us all in good spirits, if not in good health.

Gambling was carried on to a terrible extent. There were as many as fifteen concerns, and no matter where you turned the voice of a leader was heard shouting: "Step up with a pound and walk away with a penny," or "The more you put down the more I pick up," or "Here's the fairest and squarest game on the boat," or "Esmeralda wins this time. A three to one chance; 'oo says Peepin' Tom?" "Weary Willie, Weary Willie, ten to one on Weary Willie," or "Top of the 'ouse; 'oo'll take a card?" One thing peculiar I noticed:

Tommy would not gamble on Sunday morning, but he was off soon after noon.

We made a four hours' stop at Madeira. Without doubt, the most beautiful sight of my life was this island as we approached it, and cut the waters of this placid bay. It was long before we could make out the buildings, but as we drew nearer, what appeared as ragged rocks shaped themselves into houses of no mean order. We steamed into the harbour and lay to. Truly, the city, from the decks of the steamer, presented a picture of great beauty. The houses were, for the most part, white with red roofs, and looked neat and clean. The city was not built on a plain, but rather in a series of terraces, climbing the mountains, until the dwellings appeared as mere bird-cages clinging to the heights. Lending colour to the picture were the vineyards and orchards which make Madeira famous to the world. In and out between the prettily painted houses you caught glimpses of their green foliage, making a beautiful background. The whole might well have been some artist's conception of Paradise. Yet is Madeira the home of vice to a degree, equalled, perhaps, by no other city of its size.

The natives came off in boats to sell their wares. The water teemed with small boats, offering all kinds of fruit. Parrots and canaries were sold cheap. Beautiful feather and wicker-work, as well as laces and silks, were exposed for sale.

But what afforded the chief amusement were the divers, who were expert in the art almost beyond belief. Little fellows, not more than four years old, dove from the shoulders of another standing in the boat, and caught the pennies thrown into the water before they had time to sink from sight. For sixpence, older ones would dive from the railing of the ship. Seldom did they lose a

coin. At least fifty of these diving boys swarmed around the steamer. It seemed to be immaterial to them whether they were in or out of the water. When we continued our voyage, scarcely one on board but had some souvenir of this beautiful island of the sea.

Without adventure, we awoke one morning to find ourselves at anchor in Southampton Downs. Shortly after daylight we gripped the pier. We had been classified on board ship. Those who were fit went on furlough. The rest of us were sent to hospital at Aldershot. After a stay of five weeks I was shipped for Quebec, where I arrived on September 30th, 1900.



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CHAPTER X.

THE HOME-COMING.

ON the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia, right down by the sea, there stands a city which has long been proud of its loyalty. Here, more than anywhere else on this continent, have the good old customs of England been observed. Here that English conservatism, which holds on to the old and is loth to try the new, is plainly marked. But all that does not hinder this little city from making the most of its beautiful harbour, and being a close rival of its sister city in its sister province; and many are the petty little spites entertained between them. But when it comes to a question of downright loyalty, then they are sisters indeed, with but one thought and one mind and no rivalry.

But this city of Nova Scotia has long been given over to things naval and military. Ever since the "Shannon" sailed so proudly up the harbour, and brought as a prize the bloody-decked "Chesapeake," the warships of England have sailed in and out. Ever since the Duke of Kent waltzed with the belles of Halifax there has been one continual round of military balls, where the scarlet of the army mingles with the navy blue.

But of all the dancing done in years gone by, the khaki balls outshone them all. And it was: "Oh, were you to the khaki banquet?" and "Didn't our Nellie look just lovely with her khaki beau?" and "Who'd have thought that khaki was such a becoming colour?" and "Are you going to the khaki ball?" "What do you think of my khaki bonnet?" and "Isn't my khaki waist just too lovely?" and khaki this and khaki that; and the cat that didn't have khaki kittens was no class

at all. And how particular the ladies were to pronounce it rightly! (You will notice that, out of deference to the ladies of Halifax, I have spelled the word correctly throughout this chapter.) And, strange to say, although each was sure of the pronounciation, yet no two gave it the same twang.

But what a craze that was! Old ladies with khaki parasols and khaki faces; young ladies with khaki bows and khaki laces; fops with khaki neckties and khaki shoes; and coloured girls with khaki skirts and khaki dudes. The wonder is that Halifax did not turn into khaki. But the day came when the khaki boys sailed away across the sea to fight for England's glory. And Halifax gradually quieted down to a khaki ribbon or two. But khaki had got into the heart of more than one beautiful girl, and many sleepless nights were spent by anxious loves awaiting the khaki return. But the city on the whole had spent itself out, and went to sleep for the summer, awaking towards the last of October with renewed vigour and appetite for khaki. The first contingent was expected home by the steamer "Idaho."

Everybody agreed that the home-coming should surpass anything before witnessed by Halifax. Committees were formed, and the whole city delegated to give the returning heroes a heart-warming welcome.

The streets were simply avenues of bunting. Many private buildings were nearly hidden by flying emblems. The folds of the Union Jack floated everywhere, and everywhere was met by waving ensigns. The windows were gorgeous with "Good Old Bobs," "Bobs Did It," "Paardeberg," "Our Heroes," "Sunnyside," and such like lettering in gold. Even sombre old Brunswick street was aflame with colours. The city triumph arches were magnificent with bright coloured mottoes, flags and maple

leaves. The illuminations surpassed anything of the description before seen in Halifax. The railway station and hotels were ablaze with multi-coloured electrical lights. Every public building was illumined, and almost every dwelling made some attempt at decoration.

Nor was the harbour behindhand in the display. There, in its placid depths, were faithfully reflected the myriads of lights of the hill city. Mean, indeed, was the boat or craft that was not lit with coloured lights.

The "Idaho" was late, and great was the anxiety. The ladies had to re-cook the meats of the banquet.

But Halifax awoke, on the third morning of expectancy, to the fact that the "Idaho" was safely docked and the troops awaiting disembarkation.

The whole population poured forth to witness the grand sight of the war-tried sons of Canada marching proudly home. All who could in any way claim the right to a ticket were admitted to the dockyard. Yes, there were the loved ones drawn up upon the deck and ready to swarm down the gangway. The officers come first. What a cheer ascends from ship and shore as the major embraces his wife. Then, with faces browned and straightened backs, with shoulders square and heads held high, down they came, the heroes of the Empire. The weary waiting of anxious hearts was over. For a whole year love had fed on memory. Now hugs, kisses, and fond embraces told of the joy of realized hope. Tears were there, but not of sorrow. And if, here and there, an aching heart looked in vain for the face of a loved one, her agony was not noticed amid the general joy. And how manly they looked, these soldier men, for men they were now, strong in experience of life and death. Who can blame them if they scarce bestowed a thought of remembrance upon the comrades left across the sea?

Ah! the joy of reunion to mother, father, and friends had left no room for sorrowing thought, and all was happiness.

Of course, there was a procession, but all eyes were for them. And as the khaki regiment, headed by "H" Company, came through the dockyard gates, Halifax was in ecstasy. Old ladies, with tears of joy coursing down their cheeks, watched their sons march by in triumph. Fathers, with trembling hands and emotional voices, broke into the ranks to greet their boys. Sisters clung to the soldiers, and tripped along in hysterical excitement.

Up on the shoulders of exultant friends goes the captain of "H" Company. The Halifax lieutenant is swept off his feet and walks no more. The ranks are simply one struggling crowd. "H" Company has no order or formation, but seems to be having the struggle of its life. An on-looker from some vantage point could mark the progress by the continual roar of hurrahs. At length the common was reached, and the battalion formed for a short service. Even the glistening bayonets of the guard failed to keep the civilians from mixing in the ranks. After that the soldiers were marched into the armory and formed into a hollow square, while they were welcomed home by simple ceremonies.

The school children of the city had been massed in the gallery, and, in a manner that showed careful training, sang "The Khaki Heroes' Return":

"Our brothers are home again,
Give them a cheer,
Hip, hip, hurrah!
There are none more brave than they,
Fearless and strong they went away,
Maimed and scarred are some to-day,
Give them a cheer.
Hip, hip, hurrah! hip, hip, hurrah!"

And after the ceremonial speeches, which were all delightfully short, came the banquet. And what a spread! There were roast turkeys and boiled turkeys of all descriptions, ages and sizes, from the grave old gobbler of a dozen summers to the giddy chick that pipped the egg last May. There were chickens and middle-aged roosters and old hens, done up in such style that none knew which was which, but ate a quantity of all.

And there were all kinds of beef—cold beef and hot beef, and beef that was luke-warm and beef pies; and no one could tell whether he ate from a tender heifer or from an old ox. And all that is to the credit of the ladies.

And there were apple pies and blueberry pies, and gooseberry, raspberry, and blackberry pies. And cranberry sauce and apple sauce, and sauce that had no name. And there was chow-chow this, and "ketchup" that, until the tongue was blistered and the eyes wept for joy. And all kinds of potatoes—silver dollars, early rose, coppers, kidneys and white elephants—all mashed up together.

There was Adam's ale and ginger ale and lemonade, but no liquor. And that is to the credit of Halifax.

And hovering over all, flitting from one to the other, now there, now here, was the beauty and grace of the city. "And won't you have another piece of this, just for my sake?" and what could you do but take it? You were already full to agony, but for her sake you would martyr yourself. And another says: "Do try this; I know it's good, I made it myself!" and what could you do but down it? And another: "Why, you're not eating anything! have a piece of pie?" and you look at her in a dazed way and choke it down.

But all matters of joy and misery must come to an end, and so did that banquet. And there was not one case of apoplexy.

After that friends were admitted by ticket to the drill hall, and at last relatives were free to claim their loved ones. It was pleasant to see the many embraces and hearty hand-shakes as one and another were carried off to homes so long waiting for this day and the soldier-boy's return.

But it was not all joy there. Tears were in more than one eye, and the firmly pressed lips of more than one told of pent up sorrow. There were those who marched away in full health and strength. To-day they were miserable wrecks, who came home to die. They were claimed by weeping friends, who saw the hand of death in the loved ones' faces, and knew that they should hold them but a short while.

There was a lady noticeable in her sorrow. She had come from Prince Edward Island to witness the troops return, although there was no joy for her. When they had sailed away her boy was with them; when they returned they left him behind. He died in battle. Although still weeping over her sacrifice, she thrills with pride at the memory of his heroic death, and is soothed by the knowledge brought to her that her boy was the darling of the company. Poor lady! She had another boy still in Africa, and was in hourly dread of the report of his death also.

Gradually, as this and that one were led away by friends, the crowd melted away, and those who had no friends wandered about the city, where they found plenty of entertainment.

The military banquet of the evening was a brilliant affair, and so was the city torch-light procession.

Thoroughly tired out, but well pleased with the reception extended by Halifax, at 3 a. m. "G" Company entrained for St. John.

Breakfast was served by the ladies of Sussex in their usual pleasing style. Albert nearly lost his hand in the crowd.

Since early morning the people had been congregating at the I. C. R. station, St. John, until now the crush was prodigious. Hour after hour the crowd waited, standing first on one foot, then on the other. But at last both feet came squarely down and everybody yelled. The small piping voice of the little girl and the small piping voice of the old man joined in the roar of "There she comes." And out they came. Cheer after cheer rent the air as this one and that one was recognized. Some were carried to their homes, some were driven, and some never could tell how they got there.

Till this day, "Long John" cannot tell whether he fell into her arms or she fell into his, but is inclined to think that they each fell half way. Anyway, he is positive that they drove to Golden Grove in triumph. And would you believe it! the "Kid" now steps around St. John, the admired of all admirers.

And you know all the rest. But after this don't say that loyalty is dead in Canada. I tell you that the Anglo-Boer war called forth the latent fire and crystalized the love which Canada bears to "Old England." If you doubt it, you are no Briton, and you have no part in Canada.

Loyalty has been taught in our schools during the past year in a most gratifying manner. I know of no school house where the Union Jack does not float from its staff on the grounds. But I do know of many and many a one where the room is bright with bunting, and

eager faces and sparkling eyes attest to love of country. Never was such a wave of patriotism felt in our land as stirs our hearts to-day. And never shall a stain be placed upon the Good Old Flag, which in South Africa was dyed a deeper hue by the mingled blood of England's offspring, so long as there be men in Canada or mothers to rear them.

