

With the Guns

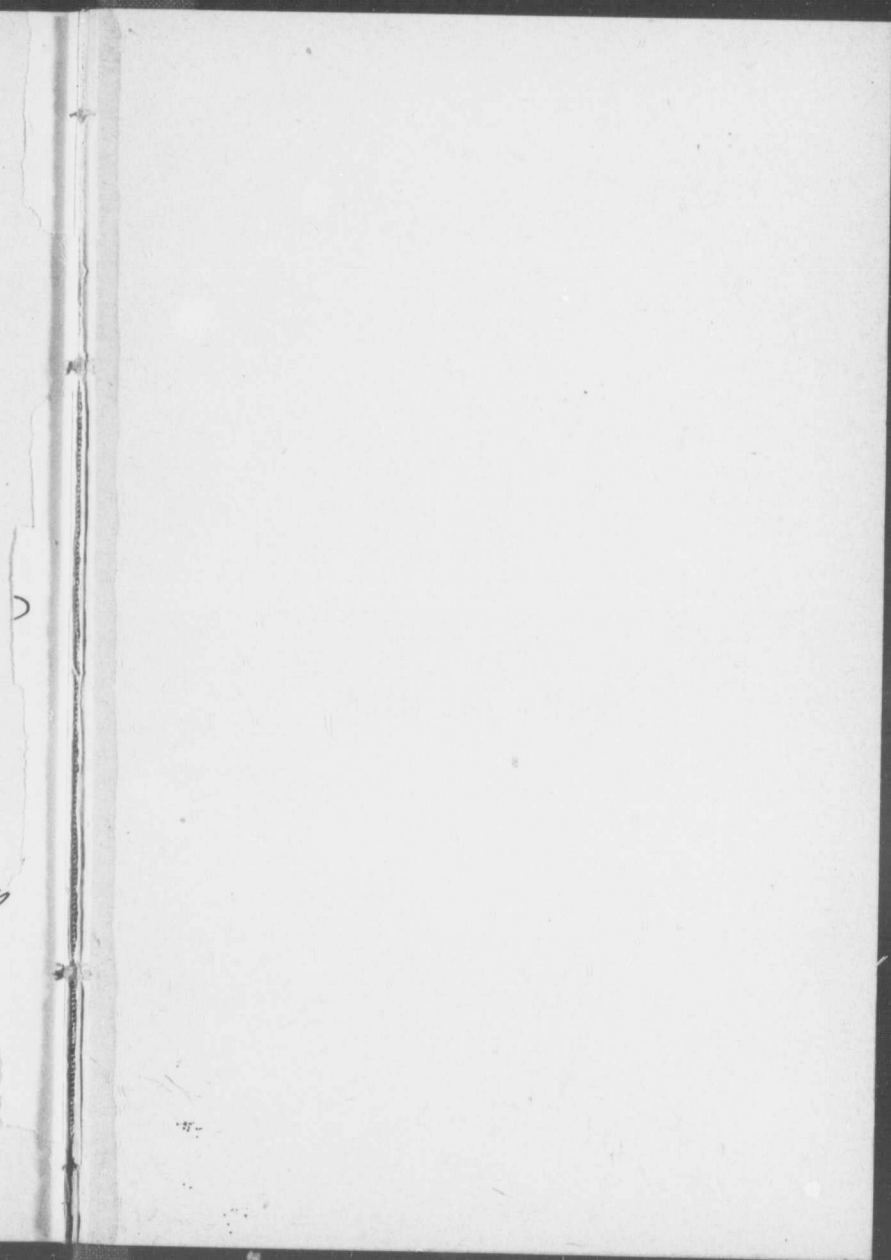


E. W. B. MORRISON
Lieutenant Royal Canadian Artillery

837.



WITH THE GUNS



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WITH THE GUNS

IN SOUTH AFRICA

BY

LIEUTENANT E. W. B. MORRISON

D BATTERY

ROYAL CANADIAN ARTILLERY

*Illustrated with Photo-Engravings and from
Sketches by the Author*

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DEDICATION:

TO THE BOYS OF THE OLD BRIGADE.

Where would I be when my froat is dry?
Where would I be when the bullets fly?
Where would I be when I come to die?
Why som'ers a-nigh my chum ;
If he's liquor 'e'll gimme some ;
If I 'm dyin' e'll old my 'ead,
An e'll write 'em 'ome when I 'm dead.



APOLOGY.

The writer's apology or excuse for publishing this book is that many people asked that it be done. The letters which form the chapters were written home from the front and published in the columns of the Ottawa Citizen and Hamilton Spectator. They were written during the not abundant leisure of an artillery subaltern in the field with the mounted forces that went out as Canada's second contingent to South Africa. After I came home people were good enough to say they would like to have these letters in book form so as to preserve them. A number of newspapers also supplemented the suggestion. The fact that some of my dearest journalistic foes were among those that lured me on to make a book did not immediately arouse my suspicions. They may have meant well. Anyway, here is the book.

In these letters I endeavored to give a pen and ink panorama of the war as I saw it—to show my friends at home the war through my eyes. When it is remembered that the letters were written often under heavy pressure, good natured people will excuse their imperfections. On the other hand, possibly, the fact that they contain rough and ready impressions of soldier life by one living the life may have also caused these impressions to contain more local color than might otherwise have been the case. If occasionally they are too redolent of the smoke of goat dung fires, dead horses, iodoform and stale blood, please remember this. War is not a parlor game. As Huck Finn said about the Pilgrim's Progress, you may find "some of the statements interestin', but tough." Well, war is both. One merit only I claim: I have tried to make the picture true to life.

THE AUTHOR.



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WITH THE GUNS

CHAPTER I.

FORMATION OF MOUNTED CONTINGENT.

When the war with the Boers commenced in the autumn of 1899, and the colonies offered contingents of troops to assist the Mother Country, Canada was asked to send a regiment of infantry. Bitter was the disappointment of the officers and men of the Canadian mounted troops, especially of the artillery, for it had been repeatedly referred to by inspecting imperial officers as the most efficient branch of our service, and as such was anxious to show its mettle. The cavalry, too, felt very badly, and with reason, for Canada is a country of horsemen and it was thought that if Canada was to be represented in a military sense the gentlemen of "the white weapon" should not be ignored. However, we of the mounted arms did our best to help the infantry off and many of us even went down to Quebec to give them a cheer, though we could not be expected to feel very joyful. All these years we had labored in camps of instruction in summer and in the armories during the cold nights of winter, ever stimulated by the hope represented by the will-o'-the-wisp of active service ahead of us. Here at last the chance had come, but we were passed over. It is hard to realise it now, but in those days our grief was very real. The war was expected to be over in three months.

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But nearly everything comes to those who wait. One cold evening in December came a brief cable bulletin announcing that General Buller had been repulsed at the Tugela and lost twelve guns. The British empire gasped with mingled horror and indignation, but there were men in this corner of the empire who smote their hands together and whispered to each other: "That means a second contingent, and this time—the guns!"

Events succeeded each other then with great rapidity. A second contingent was asked for, this time all mounted troops. A brigade division of artillery under Lieut.-Col. C. W. Drury, two battalions of mounted rifles under Lieut.-Col. F. L. Lessaru and Lieut.-Col. Herchmer. Later on Lord Strathcona raised and equipped the corps since known as Strathcona's Horse. The rush for commissions in these corps and the eagerness of men to enlist was remarkable. It is not an exaggeration to say that thirty thousand men could have been secured as easily as three thousand. As for getting a commission—it was like seeking an election to parliament. It must be kept in mind that by this time it was quite apparent that the Boer campaign was not going to be in any sense a picnic. The disasters at Nickolson's Nek and Stormberg, the retreat from Dundee, the ghastly slaughter at Magersfontein, and lastly the shock of Buller's repulse at the Tugela, had convinced everyone that the war was likely to be a hard and bloody contest. Those who were enlisting knew what was expected of them. On December 27th the composition of the new corps was gazetted with the names of the officers, and before night the work of enlistment and mobilisation was well under way. The batteries, known as C, D and E batteries, Royal Cana-

dian Artillery, mobilised at Kingston, Ottawa and Quebec respectively, under Major J. A. Hudon, Major W. G. Hurdman and Major G. H. Ogilvie. Major Hurdman commanded the Second battery C. A. of Ottawa, previously, and had the honor to be the only militia officer commanding a battery in the brigade division for active service. The nucleus of the mounted forces was furnished by the Royal Canadian Dragoons, the Northwest Mounted Police and the Royal Canadian Artillery. Later on in South Africa the first battalion of the Canadian Mounted Rifles had its name changed to the Royal Canadian Dragoons. Lieut.-Col. T. D. B. Evans became commanding officer of the second battalion soon after its arrival in Africa, Lieut.-Col Herchmer being invalided home.

The work of equipment and mobilisation went on with wonderful rapidity. The artillery brigade division, which only existed on paper, on the morning of Dec. 27th was fully horsed, equipped and ready to proceed to port of embarkation on Jan. 15th. Thanks to our excellent schools of artillery, this was rendered possible, and officers and men were well up in their work. On the date mentioned D and E batteries proceeded to Halifax and sailed on Jan. 21st on the S.S. Laurentian for Cape Town. There they were joined by the second C. M. R. and took part in what was known as the Karroo campaign after Cape rebels, during which they experienced greater hardships than at any succeeding period of the war, but had no actual fighting of any account. On coming out of the desert at De Aar the Canadian Mounted Rifles (the first battalion of which had arrived in the meantime with C battery, R. C. A.) were sent up to join in Lord Roberts' advance from Bloemfontein to

Pretoria. D and E batteries, R. C. A., were in orders to accompany them to form part of General Hutton's mounted brigade, but at the last moment the order was countermanded, probably on account of the condition to which the artillery horses had been reduced by the desert marches. These two batteries were placed on line of communication temporarily. C battery was despatched on its arrival at Cape Town with an expedition via Beira and Rhodesia. By a succession of forced marches that battery reached the scene of action in time to take part in the relief of Mafeking. It was subsequently employed under Lieut.-General Baden-Powell in the Rustenburg district and north of Pretoria, where it saw considerable service. In May E battery, under Major Ogilvie, joined General Sir Charles Warren's column and had several engagements with the rebels southwest of Kimberley, and, later on, with the Boers in the Free State. D battery was ordered to Bloemfontein about the middle of June, and a few weeks later to Pretoria, from whence it proceeded north on July 16th with General Ian Hamilton's column. From that time until the brigade division concentrated to return home it operated east of Pretoria. At the end of July it proceeded with Lord Roberts' advance to Balmoral, and a month later, when the advance was resumed, came in for the third day's fighting at the battle of Belfast. After that the left section of D battery was attached to General Hutton's force and brigaded as horse artillery with the Royal Canadian Dragoons (formerly first M. C. R.), and the Canadian Mounted Rifles holding Belfast, Wonderfontein and Noitgedacht. The other two sections of the battery under Major Hurdman proceeded with General Hamilton's division in the advance on Lydenburg and

took part in several engagements while co-operating with General Buller's army. On returning from there the right and centre sections were placed on detachment at Machadodorp, where Lieut. McCrae had two spirited fights, and at Krokodile Poort. After General Hutton returned to England the Royal Canadian Dragoons, left section D battery R. C. A., and the C. M. R., were included in Major-General Smith-Dorrien's force, and saw a good deal of fighting in the district about Belfast. This was the only period during the war that the Canadian cavalry, artillery and mounted infantry were together in action, and very high praise was bestowed upon them by General Smith-Dorrien.

The series of letters which follow were written during the campaign and deal largely with the experiences of the left section of D battery, R. C. A., which the writer commanded on detachment nearly seven of the ten months of its service, but also incidentally with the other Canadian units with which we served. The foregoing resume of the history of the second contingent will render the letters more intelligible to the reader.

CHAPTER II.

THE TROOPER ON THE TIDE.

After two weeks of rush and work from the time the order had gone out for the contingent to mobilise the batteries and squadrons assumed a definite shape. If I outline the circumstances under which D battery R. C. A. was "made out of mud" in a fortnight, or rather evolved from a vacuum in the atmosphere, it will no doubt be typical of what was going on at every point of mobilisation. D battery was armed with the guns of the Second (Ottawa) battery, and its stores, harness and equipment had to be brought up to war strength by levying on the Third (Montreal) battery, the militia stores and by private purchase. The men were recruited from Ottawa, Guelph, Port Hope, London and elsewhere. The horses had all to be purchased, branded, fitted with harness and, in many instances broken to travel in harness. Then all the books and records that are such an important part of a corps' interior economy had to be commenced. The only saving clause was that everybody was eager to work and everything was at our disposal as quick as wire and railway could bring it. My part of the show during the first week was to sit down in a cubby hole at the armories, pensively figuring from early morn and until far into the night on the difference in the number of "springs, clip, carrier ring" carried by a battery on a depleted peace footing and a rather nebulous condition of war strength. (A six-gun battery on a war footing had never been seen in Canada before.)

Every hour a telegram would flash to Montreal : "Rush three spare wheels, six breech mechanism wrenches, four T vent rimers, and pair of handcuffs." We of D battery will never forget how the officers of the Second and Third batteries worked to assist. At Montreal they stayed in the armory for nearly a week and all day Sunday boxing up and shipping out every sort of miscellaneous stores as quickly as the telegrams came in. The same was true of officers of the militia everywhere, including Col. Cotton and the headquarters staff. We were going to the war and they were not, but that high esprit in the militia of Canada, the existence of which has always been a mystery to me, made every one of them feel that our honor was their honor, and, to use a homely synonym, though only a score could fish, the hundred stood ready to cut bait. From the heterogeneous mass of men, horses, arms, equipment and spare stores hurled upon him, Major Hurdman and his officers evolved D battery and we had two never-to-be-forgotten mounted parades before entraining. That the list of killed and wounded at these parades did not exceed that of the war is due to the fact that the young Canadian artilleryman can ride anything, is afraid of nothing, and rather dotes on taking chances. If an imperial gunner knew that we took out six-horse teams of crazy horses which had never been together before (some never in harness and the harness keeperless, at that) and galloped in column of route, he would have fainted. But the world has yet to know that the Canadian soldier can go anywhere and do anything.

As I say, the same thing was going on all over the country. Time was the essence of the contract, as the lawyers say, and Canada had to deliver 3,000 mounted

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troops in South Africa at the earliest possible moment. I do not personally enjoy that style of creating field batteries, but it is not a bad thing to know that it can be done. In fact our militia batteries do the same thing every year on a slightly smaller scale, so the work was not by any means new to us. On Jan. 15th D battery left Ottawa amid the cheers and tears of thousands. It is needless to say the cheers predominated. At every town, village and way station crowds waited to shout and wave flags as the train rushed by. Here my letters take up the story :

St. Flavie, Que., Jan. 16.

In the grey dusk of a winter dawn the troop train carrying D battery R. C. A. pulled into Riviere du Loup station. Immediately the cheery trumpet call for stables rang out on the frosty air and the men turned out to water the horses and feed them as they had done the previous evening at Point St. Charles. No men or horses ever made a more comfortable journey by rail than this battery is doing. The train consists of 15 cars, a pullman for the officers, a dining car, colonist sleepers for the men and special cars for the horses.

A very comfortable night was passed because everyone on board was tired out with the hard work of the past fortnight and slept like the proverbial top. Since crossing into this province there has been nothing in the shape of an ovation or send-off to the troops by the people in the towns passed. At Point St. Charles, near Montreal, there was no public recognition of the presence of the troops, but no doubt the uncertainty as to the time of their arrival had much to do with it. At Bic, Rimouski, and other places to-day the people turned out pretty well. This morning the train is running down the south shore of the St. Lawrence over the Inter-colonial. The interior economy of the battery continues on board train just as if in barracks. There is less snow on the ground as we get nearer the ocean and the

weather is comparatively mild, which is a good thing for the horses, as they are less likely to take cold. A fact that is forcibly brought out by this trip is the value of the Intercolonial as a strategical road. If it was not in existence the troops of the second contingent would have had to march from Quebec to the nearest ocean port, because they would not be allowed to go through the United States.

Moncton, N. B., Jan. 16.

This afternoon and evening the train carrying D battery was accorded a series of ovations at every point passed. At Metapedia the cheering commenced, and from that point until late to-night crowds saluted the soldier boys from the west. The enthusiasm was intense. At Bathurst, N. B., the warden and councilors boarded the train and presented the battery with a beautiful silk flag, and an address, wishing the battery success. At Campbellton and Newcastle, where the train stopped, half of the population was at the station. It was a beautiful moonlight night, and all the girls crowded along the cars shaking hands with the soldiers and exchanging hat pins, valuable brooches and even kisses for buttons. As the train sped past the smaller stations long drawn-out cheers indicated the presence of hundreds of people lining the track, who had waited up to see the boys go through. The enthusiasm in this province had a very cheering effect.

Halifax, Jan. 20.

This city for the past week has been the scene of the mobilisation of Canada's second contribution of military force to the empire. From the far west to the Atlantic coast the quotas of troops have been recruiting and the batteries and squadrons are now concentrating in this military stronghold for embarkation to commence their long voyage to help the sister colony at the other end of the world. It is a busy and inspiring scene, and even here where the people are used to the sight of troops, the citizens view with the warmest enthusiasm the gathering

of Canada's own little army for foreign service. The streets are decorated, the clubs are open to the officers, entertainments have been arranged in profusion and everything is being done to show that the national spirit which has been so remarkably awakened by this war is as strong in the city which lies under the guns of Britain's sentinel citadel of the North Atlantic as it is on the prairies of the west or among the mountains of British Columbia.

The soldier boys from Western Canada, most of whom had never actually seen a British soldier of the imperial army, felt a thrill of pride and an awakening sense of the meaning of the present movement, if any of them had not done so before, when they viewed the grim old citadel crowning the white slopes of the mound-like hill overlooking the city and harbor, and saw, too, the little red cross flag of Britain fluttering from a staff upon its highest point. On the ramparts with rifle on shoulder tramped the British sentinel just as he has tramped for over a century and a half, and at sunset the little jack flutters down and is saluted by a thunderous gun just as it has done year in and year out since long before Wolfe died to plant the same sturdy little bit of bunting on the pinnacle of Quebec. It is curious, when you think of it, that the large proportion of the population of Canada has never seen an imperial soldier on duty. When the Canadian soldiers from the west arrived here they looked at the soldiers of the Queen with interest and admiration, and no doubt thoughtfully considered whether they would be able to as worthily uphold the flag in the day of trial. And it must be said that Canada's soldiers compare favorably with the "reg-lars." They surpass them in physique, and while they lack to some extent the barrack yard polish that the drill-sergeant puts on the "recruity," they more than make up for it in spirit and dash and a certain air of self-reliant readiness to hold their own.

All day the streets are alive with military preparation. Mounted police orderlies with "buzz saw" felt hats are galloping about on hardy cayuse horses whose shoeless hoofs have never trod a city street before ; fatigue par-

ties are marching from the dockyard to the armory and from the armory to the exhibition grounds; the officers are clinking their spurs up and down the streets, and all is bustle and the hurry of preparation. At the imperial dockyard the Laurentian is being loaded with the guns and equipment of D and E batteries under the personal direction of Col. Stone, R. A., and Major Hurdman; at the armory Col. Macdonald, Major Donaldson and a large staff from Ottawa are issuing kharki uniforms to the men; and the horses are being re-shod and prepared for the long sea voyage. Everybody is working with a will because D and E batteries are mightily pleased that they are to get away on Saturday, while the mounted infantry and C battery will not leave for nearly a month. There is a selfish dread lest little Bobs should inflict a solar plexus blow on the Boers and that the sailing of the Canadians should be canceled. However, if Kitchener says the war will last a year there will be a chance for everybody. The arrangements for the transport of the troops by rail have been admirable and the fitting up of the Laurentian is excellent. The officials have all profited by the experience gained with the first contingent and everything is working very smoothly. Red tape has been thrown to the winds and practical common sense is prevalent in every department.

The Halifax people have been exceedingly kind and unremitting in their efforts to amuse and entertain the officers and men from the west, but the military have unfortunately been too busy to take advantage of the courtesies extended. For instance, there was a levee held by the lieutenant-governor one afternoon and four hundred or five hundred people attended to meet the officers who are going on active service, but, lo! only one turned up and though he did his best to be thoroughly representative the levee was declared a failure from a social standpoint. The men are also being looked after and the various churches are tendering them receptions, turkey suppers and concerts.

On Friday night there was a most elaborate smoking

concert in the armory for the men, a dinner at the Royal artillery mess for the officers, and other festivities, but the most of the men, in whose honor the entertainments were given, were standing by their horses down in the rain and mud at the government dockyard waiting for the tide to rise eighteen inches so that the horses could file in the lower port-hole without hitting their heads. Some of the horses, by the way, behaved very badly when they found that they were to be sandwiched in layers in a long, mine-like gallery, and they had occasionally to be man-handled roughly to bring them to time. The horses were led in a gangway and along a passage on the port, starboard or midship sections of the hold, and as they arrived at the end of the passage, which is dark as hades, the poor nags were broached to—we're nothing if not nautical already—and then three wide planks were dropped in slots beside each horse, its halter tied at the rail in front and there it was boxed up in a stall just its own size. It could not stagger, or roll or lie down. Every twentieth stall was left vacant, and air circulated along narrow passages between the midship and other sections.

The people of Halifax on the whole were very kind but the cabbies and some of the merchants showed a disposition to take advantage of the boys in uniform because they were flush. One cabby at last furnished the worth of the amount he stuck three officers for whom he consented to drive from the exhibition grounds to the city. One gunner, who is such a notoriously bad driver that his friends say the moment you see him take up the reins you can be sure there is going to be an accident, elected to pilot the cab from the driver's seat. Halifax is built on a ridge, and all the cross streets are very declivitous. The gunner officer galloped all the way. It was well enough on the level, but when the party came to the cross streets he took them down and swooped round into Hollis street like a battery coming into action. Naturally the sleigh slid and swung like a pendulum, caromed on a lamp post, and cabby was neatly shot out into the gutter. The horse gunners, being used to fast

going over rough ground, sat tight, and the outfit galloped gaily up the street to the hotel leaving the extortionate cabby to follow on foot.

On board the *Laurentian*, Saturday, Jan. 20.

Well, at last we are afloat and lying out in the stream waiting for the fog to clear off ere we leave for the Cape. It has been a very exciting day. Everybody was up early, and anxious to get his baggage down to the dockyard and be off. Most of the officers had been up all night, and had been receiving showers of farewell telegraphic messages which continued to drop in until the parade formed, and even followed them out in small boats to the troopship. The two batteries paraded at 10 o'clock. All the horses and equipment had been shipped, so it only remained to march on board. It was a dull drizzly day, with fog and rain, and the streets were muddy to a degree. The brigade division of artillery was inspected by the general, Lieutenant-Governor Daly and the minister of militia, who all spoke very pleasantly. Then the long muddy march to the dockyard commenced. The crowd all along the route was intensely enthusiastic. Every class and color was represented, and they cheered and sang and waved flags and threw bonbons at the boys; and the old women blessed them, and the young women smiled on them, and the chunky little Leinsters stood in squads at every corner and eyed them curiously and enviously as they tramped by.

At the dock the scene was very dismal. The fog settled down and a driving rain fell, but nothing could dampen the enthusiasm of that crowd. General Lord Seymour and all the dockyard dignitaries were there, and British officers in mufti were quietly sizing up the Canadian soldiers. As the hour for departure drew near the cheering commenced and continued. The troops stood on the dock with the water dripping off their noses until they marched on board, and the scene was very suggestive of Kipling's *Birds o' Prey* March:

Cheer! The mud is cakin' good about our trousers.
Cheer! An' we'll never live to 'ear the cannon-roar!
The Large Birds o' Prey
They will carry us away,
An' you'll never see your soldiers any more!

But there was the difference that our soldiers were being seen off by an immense and warmly sympathetic crowd. After the usual farewells, General and Mrs. Hutton and Colonel Stone, R.A., went down the gangway and were warmly cheered, the call was "all for shore who are going," and then the big liner pulled out so easily that the wharf, with its mass of dripping parasols and fluttering handkerchiefs, seemed to drift mysteriously into the mist and disappear. After proceeding into the harbor the Laurentian came to anchor, and a fleet of ghostly steamers crowded with cheering shadows came out of the mist and hovered about the trooper, firing salutes, which were duly returned.

The departure of the second contingent was not so spectacular as that of the first, but it was very business-like and suggestive of war and its hardness.

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ON BOARD THE LAURENTIAN.



OFFICERS OF D BATTERY AND ATTACHED NURSES.

CHAPTER III.

THE VOYAGE TO CAPE VERDE ISLANDS.

On Board Troopship Laurentian, Jan. 30.

It is not likely that any of the 400 officers and men of D and E batteries of the second contingent will ever forget the first twenty-four hours at sea on board the troopship Laurentian. After pulling out from the dock at Halifax, she lay in the stream until 8 o'clock Sunday morning. When at last the anchor was weighed, the steam winch which jerked it out of the continent of North America also severely wrenched the heartstrings of many a man who hung over the rail watching the big chain links climbing reluctantly out of the water. We were surely off for the war, and in all probability not a few were looking their last at Canada's shores. The Laurentian forged ahead, and the tugs and steamers began to whistle. It was a bright, cold morning. As we neared George's island we could see the red-coated garrison running down to the shore, and the women and children standing at the barrack room doors to wave us farewell. As we came abreast a signalman on the beach began to wave his flag vigorously, and then a number of us who had a smattering knowledge of the code read off: "Good-bye! Safe passage." As the trooper steamed past Macnab's Island towards the entrance to the harbor, a white line of breakers appeared ahead, as if the old North Atlantic were already showing its teeth. Every one went down to breakfast, and when they came up the Laurentian had just cleared the harbor and slowed up to let the pilot off. He carried a satchel of letters containing last messages to friends ashore, and was duly cheered as his boat bobbed off towards a pilot schooner lying some distance away to take him aboard. Then the Laurentian plowed out into as fine a specimen

of a rolling ocean swell as you would care to encounter. There was a brisk southwest breeze blowing, and the Laurentian forthwith began to justify her nickname of the "Rolling Polly," which was tagged to her when she was the Polynesian. (Be it observed that a "she" usually changes her name for better or worse.)

The men were feeling very gay, climbing upon the bulwarks and lifeboats, squatting in squads on the stacks of compressed hay and temporary deck structures—for the Laurentian looked like something of a cross between a floating barnyard and a derelict livery stable—and the officers were promenading the quarter-deck, making themselves agreeable to the pretty nurses and feeling very proud of themselves, when suddenly a change came over the spirit of their dream. The laughter and skylarking among the men ceased. Many of the officers became glum, as if they had just commenced to "remember the pit from which they were digged." Every one seemed to be preoccupied and thinking of home. The "Rolling Polly" alone seemed to get gayer every minute. She swaggered along in a very unladylike style, and then began to try to stand on her head and turn handsprings. Anon she would sit down on her stern, and the water would boil up around her and submerge the deck. In a word, she cavorted around like a giddy old maid in her first bathing suit. But the gunners did not seem to appreciate her vivacity. They commenced to disperse from the decks, and soon the compressed hay bales were lined with prostrate forms, and the bulwarks presented the appearance of a lot of limp dummy figures hung out to dry. On the quarter-deck the passengers held out longer, but it was only a case of the influence of mind over matter. Some tried to walk it off, others tried to brave it out with white faces and clenched teeth. The four nurses hung out well, but by lunch time the mess room was decimated, and at dinner, when somebody hummed:

Wot t' 'll, the gang 's all here—

it looked as if the brigade division had gone down to

the banks of the Tugela—and gone back. At lunch a junior major commanded the brigade division of two batteries; at dinner a junior captain commanded the brigade division, and junior “loots” commanded batteries. There was hardly a non-com. or a sub-division available for evening stables.

And the horses—the poor old horses, crammed and wedged in like sardines above and below decks! The “Polly” took seas over the bow, the scuppers clogged with sawdust and chips, and a couple of tons of water was sluicing about from side to side through the poor animals on deck with every roll of the ship. A sub. went to the troop deck to get a squad of volunteers to go down among the horses, and clean the scuppers. Generally speaking, batteries D and E, Royal Canadian artillery, did not care at that moment whether they saw Kruger or McGinty first. They sat in rows, with their backs against the deck house, with their heads on each other's shoulders or between their knees. When they were asked to volunteer they raised their heads with the dull, abstracted gaze of a deceased codfish. Poor fellows! If their best girls could only see them now! And below stairs in the hammock deck were scenes not to be told. Sergeant Henderson, Gunner Cameron, Gunner Pryke, Gunner Smith, Driver Williams and a few other Ottawa boys responded to the call, and down they went among the rolling horses and sluicing waves of sea water on the lower deck. It took some time to find the scupper gratings, and there they had to remain, keeping them clear until the deck was free of water. It was pitiful to see the horses. The sea got higher and the pitching became more violent. Poor old Aberdeen, an ex-trooper of A battery, got cast in his stall during the night, and turned legs up. It was an awful job to cut him out. He appeared done for, but his man stood by him, and during the day the poor old beast would gamely regain his legs and stand there swaying weakly until a heavier lurch than usual would send him down broadside, for he had been taken out on to the open space between stalls. His driver continued to sit

by his head comforting him, and soon he would scramble up on his pins, only to go down again. We thought he would be dead in the morning, but he held out and did not kick the bucket until the 23rd. The evening of the first day it blew a gale, and the horses were badly knocked about. In the morning a lot of them were looking very ill. Ability, the best charger among the horses brought from Kingston, was bleeding from the nose, and in the afternoon he died. An hour afterwards a steam winch tackle was attached to his remains, and, in the presence of nearly all the men of D battery who were able to attend the obsequies, the pathetic, limp, sprawling body was jerked into the air and dropped over the side with a great splash. The last seen of Ability, his body was careering sternward over the waves, now a shiny back and now four waving legs above the surf, as the sea gulls swooped down and circled about the carcass, with creaky-hinge cries of interrogation. Several hundred sick and white-faced soldiers stood along the troop deck and watched the body shoot by. Somebody began to whistle "The Place Where the Old Horse Died," but there was no levity among the A battery draft. They assisted at the steam winch, and helped the poor old body overboard as sorrowfully as if they were burying a comrade. That night three more horses died, and next day two more, including Aberdeen. Many horses were sick. Exhaustion, pneumonia and congestion of the lungs were the prevailing complaints, but the truth seemed to be that the poor brutes had been jarred all to pieces by the plunging of the ship. Some of them had their bodies worn raw by chafing against the stalls. During the next few days the sight of a horse's carcass plunging by on its way astern was quite common. The men soon recovered from their seasickness, and made a raid on the eatables in the canteen on the afternoon of Monday, Jan. 22. They had plenty of money, and it was not an uncommon sight to see a man with a tin of sardines in one hand and a can of pineapples in the other, consuming both indiscriminately. Jan. 23 was calm and mild. We had entered the Gulf

stream, and huge nets of seaweed were swimming past. Notwithstanding that the sea was almost as calm as a pond, the Laurentian continued to balance herself on her keel like a rope-walker on a slack wire. Every one had recovered from the mal de mer, but the suffering of the horses kept the officers anxious and the soldiers depressed. That night two more horses died, and nearly a dozen were sick. Little Apathy, one of the best horses in D battery, got very ill, and the men stayed up rubbing its legs and doing all they knew for it. The veterinary department did not seem to be able to do much for the suffering animals. Finally the sergeant of the section to which Apathy belonged got a bottle of Scotch whisky somewhere, and poured it down his throat. Next morning the little beggar was looking quite spry. It was difficult to know what to do with the horses. They simply drooped down in their stalls until they rested on the slings, and there died. Lieut. "Gat" Howard, who has had a lot of experience in handling horses on board ship, rendered invaluable assistance, as also did a quiet little mounted police sergeant named Perry, who was in charge of twenty-two Mounted Rifle horses.

One of the first orders issued on board ship was that there was to be no shaving. Consequently all hands but the chaplain grew beards. A week out from port the whiskers had pushed themselves out sufficiently to make everybody look very disreputable, and at the mess table jokes were rife on the subject. It was suggested by Lieut. McCrae that we all shave our upper lip a la Kruger, before landing at Cape Town. Some irreverent subs. already insisted that they could distinctly hear the wind blowing through their whiskers. In any event, it was decided old Neptune would have a busy day if he undertook to play barber to the outfit when the Laurentian crossed the line.

Wednesday, Jan. 24, was bright and warm. It seemed as if we were running into spring weather. The mild, balmy air had a good effect on the horses, and they brisked up wonderfully. By this time the non-coms. and men had recovered from seasickness, and the

regular duties of the voyage were systematically arranged. Physical drill twice a day, the investigation and inventory of stores, fatigues' cleaning ship and shifting hay bales, getting up awnings, etc., kept all hands busy. A permanent board on dead horses was appointed. Major Hurdman having taken over the duties of brigade division commander for the voyage, Capt. Eaton was appointed C. O. of D battery, Lieut. "Gat" Howard, who was going out to take charge of a Colt battery, being attached to D battery for duty as a subaltern. Stores of all sorts were served out to the batteries by the quartermaster-sergeants, and it is due to the militia department to say that they were of excellent quality, and nearly everything requisitioned for to bring the batteries up to a war strength seemed to have been supplied by Col. Macdonald and his department. This was the first day that the ship's company settled down to the routine of the voyage and seemed to enjoy it.

The first Sunday at sea, Jan. 28, was an interesting experience. The Laurentian had just been seven days out, and had made nearly 2,000 miles, an excellent run. The weather was delightful, not too warm, though we were nearing the tropic of Cancer. Early in the morning the Laurentian spoke a large sailing ship which was bound from San Francisco to Antwerp, and had been 149 out! The usual passage is about 130 days, so the marine insurance people must have been feeling nervous. Though the ship was over a mile away it could be seen very distinctly. The sailing ship captain was very anxious to be reported, but had no curiosity about the troop ship, in fact he had probably never heard of the Transvaal war. Later in the day we had a very nice church service on the main deck, Rev. Mr. Cox officiating. The batteries lined up on each side of the deck, and the D battery game rooster stood on one leg on a deck house vis-a-vis to the reverend gentleman and benignly surveyed the scene. An orchestra of D battery men assisted, and the men sang lustily. Rev. Mr. Cox, who was very popular with all on board, preached an appropriate and suitable sermon.

The men of D battery had a game rooster, a fox terrier and a monkey on board. The monkey was very seasick in the gale. On Jan. 24, while the officers were having some pistol practice over the rail he got frightened, dug his way out of his cage, and shinned over the awning down into the stables below decks, subsequently reappearing in the cabin of Major Hurdman, where it did a lot of mischief. He got hold of a handsome Bible presented to the commandant by the Ottawa Ladies' Auxiliary and tore the book of Ecclesiastes out of it. Then he got down the major's field glasses, took them out of the case and is alleged to have been peering out of the porthole with them when apprehended. He also developed a taste for military literature, and digested portions of the Queen's regulations and several drill books.

There was great fun when the first bathing parade was held. An immense canvas bath, capable of holding twenty-five men, was strung up on the parade deck, and at 6 a. m. D battery was turned out in subdivisions in their unadorned beauty. The morning was rather cool, and as the men thought the sea water would be cold, the first lot turned out reluctantly. They scrambled into the bath and all squatted down, for there was only about a foot of water in it. Then the old Irish bos'n appeared with a hose, and, shoving the nozzle over the side of the bath, proceeded to soak them indiscriminately with a three-inch stream, accompanied by wild yells of a commentary character as: "Bedad, I'll teach yez to kape clane! How d'ye like that now?"—(soaking some poor gunner full in the face). "Didn't the parson tell yez claneliness wuz next to Godliness? If anybody calls ye dirty spalpeens now tell him he's a liar!" Meanwhile the men had discovered that the sea water in the hose had been warmed with steam, and they began to tumble over each other and yell with laughter as they dodged the hose stream. They enjoyed it so much that when the time was up it was difficult to get them out so as to let the next lot in. The report taken to the troop deck by the first squad brought the others up on the jump, and they all thoroughly appreciated it.

He was orderly officer, and at breakfast the daily question was fired at him after morning stables: "How are the horses?" "Well," he said, "if this sort of thing keeps on the brigade division will be horse de combat when it reaches the Cape." They yanked him out with the steam winch and dropped him overboard.

A couple of horse handlers were to have come on board the Laurentian to assist in handling the horses during the voyage, but they did not materialise. The professional advice of even one man skilled in the care of horses on shipboard would have been invaluable. There were plenty of willing hands, but no experienced person to give instructions as to what to do in emergencies. Officers and men had to learn by experience.

Two stowaways were found on board. One of them was an artilleryman in uniform from Moncton. Both were attached to E battery, and made to do duty. (The other, a mere lad, on arrival at the Cape, enlisted in Kitchener's Horse, was in all the fighting north of Bloemfontein, and on arrival at Pretoria exchanged into the Royal Canadian Dragoons. He was in all the fighting around Belfast, and had a horse shot under him. He could not have been more than seventeen years of age.)

Cape Verde Islands, Jan. 31.

At daylight this morning the sky was dirty and a slight sea running. The captain and first officer were on the bridge peering for the islands. About 6 o'clock there was a dull hump on the horizon, scarcely discernible between the slate-colored sky and water. That was the Island of San Antonio, 22 by 13 miles, 7,000 feet high, producer of coffee, bananas and a hybrid handful of rascally Portuguese. Later on the island loomed up until it looked like a blue-black thunder cloud ahead, with the ends neatly sloped off to the horizon. We ran down along the east side and soon got in close enough to see a couple of small fishing villages snuggling into dents in the high, jagged, red gneiss rock that seemed to slope from the top of the island sheer down to the sea. The little square white houses, with their black windows,

dotted here and there on the rock, were ridiculously like what you see in a cheap chromo of "picturesque and romantic scenery" or the variegated landscape on the front of a theater drop curtain. We came down along the east coast of San Antonio and turned in a roadstead seven miles wide, running west between the latter and San Vincent.

As soon as it was known that land was in sight officers and men were on deck with every sort of binocular and field glass, scanning the rapidly developing landscape. "There's land in sight!" yelled a gunner down the hatchway to a comrade. "Is dat so," came back a voice from the bowels of the hold. "Say, jest grab me a handful, will yer?" It became misty and rainy as we neared Porto Grand harbor. Bird Rock was right ahead, and the hills on the left looked like jagged heaps of brown peat, against the slightly brightened southern sky. The Laurentian came to anchor in the midst of a number of British transports, which had run in to coal on their way either to or from the Cape. H. M. S. Cambrian was also there, and the officers exchanged visits. Early in the afternoon the Laurentian weighed anchor and pursued her voyage.

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CHAPTER IV.

CAPE VERDE TO CAPE TOWN.

Troopship Laurentian, somewhere near the Equator,
February 4.

This is Sunday, and probably the people at home are remembering us in their prayers. We need it. Late last night we ran out of the southeast trade winds, and to-day we have been in the doldrums, with a dead calm or a slight following wind. We are nearing the equator, and the temperature is 130 degrees in the stoke hole. In the lower hold, where most of the horses are, it is rather bad. The air is so thick and rank that you imagine you could pick it out in chunks with a pickax. The stable pickets cannot endure it for more than a few moments, and are allowed to sit on the ladder leading down the hatchways. In every part of the ship the horses are dripping sweat, and panting as if they had just finished a race for their lives. Some of the poor brutes have seen their finish, and at the moment of writing the ominous creaking of the steam winch—unfortunately a familiar sound—announces that another poor old gun horse is going to “start for Canada,” as the men say when they see a body taking the back track, flapping its ears and waving its legs as it hurries over the waves sternward. Our casualty list is eighteen now, and whenever a horse dies it is at once jerked out, night or day, because it becomes ancient and unacceptable very rapidly in this weather. Stable duty under present circumstances is awful. Many of the men have nothing on them but breech clouts, and the subalterns have been relieving each other from hour to hour. If you could see them coming up out of the hold with nothing on but trousers, undershirts and whiskers after a round of duty, you would

not recognise in the limp, perspiring figures the spruce young chaps who paraded in Canada three weeks ago in winter uniform, with the temperature coquetting with the zero mark. But the work has to be done if the poor horses are to be saved, and to the credit of officers and men be it said there is not a grumble. It's all in the day's work. The horses are being rubbed down and watered and tended with great care, and all the ports are open and the wind sails up to catch the slightest breeze. Though the stables have been cleaned as thoroughly as possible, the combined stench of the ammonia, the bilge water and the sweating mass of horseflesh in that black hole of a hold is something to shrink from. It pervades the whole ship, and the mess room is not exempt, as the only port holes in the cabin open on the upper deck stable. It is one satisfaction, however, that the Turkish bath seems to be doing the sick horses good, sweating the influenza out of them. Those that died to-day, probably did so from general weakness and lack of air. They are all shedding their coats just as if it was springtime. Indeed, we are running suddenly into the hottest kind of summer season. Several butterflies appeared on board to-day, and the ordinary garden fly is getting out his last year's duster. Altogether, the "line" will in future dwell in the minds of the second contingent as the rubicon between the North Atlantic and Hades.

The passing of the line was duly celebrated. The crossing was made at 11:30 on the morning of Feb. 5. The men of the brigade division were drawn up on deck and at the proper moment the ship fired a gun and the gunners sang "Rule Britannia," "God Save the Queen" and gave three cheers for Her Majesty. In the evening Neptune came on board with his wife. They were received at the forecastle by a guard of honor and the trumpeters, who played them aft. Nep's whiskers were the envy of all the young subs. The big canvas bath was rigged up on the parade deck, and there Neptune held his court for over an hour. Whenever a man's name was called out he was seized by his comrades, who handed him over to Neptune's tarpaulined police, who

hustled him struggling into the big bath, where he was duly shaved. One gunner, a husky young chap, who rejoices in the name of "Bingo," put up a great scrap, but the police called on the military forces to assist them, and he was duly soused. None of the officers was compelled to undergo the ceremony. Dr. Vaux was called for, but he made a flying rush for the quarter-deck and distanced his pursuers. Those who wished to escape the infliction, after a suitable number of examples had been made, were allowed to buy off, the money going to the sailors' widows and orphans' fund. About \$45 was realised in this way.

It would be interesting to know on what principle the reading matter was selected which the good people of Canada sent with the batteries. Otherwise, there is little that would interest the average gunner in it. Here is a handful picked at random from a box: Titus, a Soldier of the Cross; Malcolm Kirk or Overcoming the World; The Cottager Artisan; Boys' Own Paper; The Wrestler of Philippi; The Awakening of Kohath Sloane; Ten Nights in a Barroom ('steen copies); Intra Muros, a Dream of Heaven; The Young Ladies' Magazine (copies to burn); Richard Bruce, by the author of In His Steps; The Travelers' Guide from Death to Life; The Gospel Trumpet. In the other boxes there are girly-girly romances of the villain-still-pursued-her order, beautiful new books of which the cover names do not correspond with the "innards," and standard works that have been thrown back on the publishers' hands because the binder left out a dozen of the most interesting chapters, and so on. These, with bunches of well known magazines six months old, form the bulk of the library. And there is not a set of Kipling, in fact, only one or two volumes of his least interesting works on board. The ocean from here to Halifax is strewn with literature so dry that it was absolutely in need of being wetted. No doubt the people meant well. It was the lack of appreciation in the soldiers that was to blame.

This morning we had church parade and turned out for the first time in kharki. The batteries looked very

smart. The uniform has the effect of making the men look bigger than in the blue. There was lots of fun learning to put on the puttees, which, it may be mentioned for the benefit of the uninitiated, are thick woolen bandages about three yards long, with which the legs are swathed from the shoe to the knee. Besides being exceedingly difficult to put on, they are deucedly warm, which combination of reasons is probably why they have been selected for use in an extremely hot country in the face of an alert enemy who does not send in his card when he is going to make an early morning call. The process of putting them on is so intricate that valuable advice and assistance have been solicited from the doctors and nurses who are adepts at bandaging limbs. When they are on they look well, which is at least some consolation. The weather is so hot that all the officers are sleeping on deck.

The visit to Cape Verde Islands made a pleasant break in the voyage, and we can hardly realise that we are only ten days from Africa. The young lieutenant of the Cambrian who boarded us there was a fine young chap, a typical jolly British naval officer. He told us all the news that came by the returning transports and hospital ships from Cape Town. Among other things, he said that a peculiarity of the wounded was that their nerves seemed to have been almost shattered by the awful experiences they had, especially at Magersfontein, where they said the bullets pattered among the rocks for hours like a veritable hailstorm, killing many men already wounded. When the Laurentian steamed out of the harbor she was cheered by each British ship and saluted with dipped colors.

An event on board which will be of interest to Masonic brethren all over Canada was the meeting held in the mess room of the Laurentian on the Monday evening before our arrival at Cape Town. There were about twenty-five members of the craft present, including three 32 degree gentlemen, a D. D. G. M. (a driver in D battery!) and several masters and past masters. It reminded one of the poem of Kipling on My Mother

Lodge. Outside the lodge room the brethren represented all ranks and degrees, but inside all were brothers :

Outside: "Sergeant!" "Sir!" "Salute!" "Salaam!"

Inside: "Brother!" an' it never did no harm;

We met upon the level and we parted on the square,
An' I was junior deacon in my mother lodge out there.

Curiously enough, the non-coms., gunners and drivers present represented a sub-division each from D and E batteries, and among all present the Ottawa section of D battery formed more than half the gathering. It was unanimously decided if possible to get a dispensation from the grand lodge of Canada to form a military lodge in the brigade division of the Royal Canadian Artillery for the campaign, and if the application is granted there will be no difficulty in forming a first-rate lodge. Major J. J. Mason, secretary of the grand lodge, will be communicated with. It is a common thing for regiments in the British army to have lodges, and it was through these military lodges that Masonry was introduced into Canada and the American colonies previous to the revolution. During the perils incident to war Masonry is often very useful in mitigating the hardships of service.

It is strange to see the sun and moon making their diurnal and nocturnal tours in the northern sky.

The steamer passed many flocks of flying fish. They look very much like snowbirds, being white and having the same fluttering flight.

One horse, which was very sick, lingered for three days on the ragged edge of dissolution. To all intents and purposes he was dead on his feet, but he refused to drop. One man was heard saying to another: "Is old 207 still alive?" And his man responded sadly: "You bet your blank blankety blank; he's just too plucky to die."

There is a very imposing little fort on the top of a crag overlooking the harbor of Porto Grande at Cape Verde islands. One of the Canadian officers asked Lieut. Wygram, of the Cambria, if Portugal had a garrison in the colony. "Aw— yes," replied the young

sailor with true British contempt, "believe they have a garrison here. Two men and a boy or something like that."

One officer has a servant who is a regular Micky Free, and his witticisms and funny breaks are the regular breakfast table theme. This morning he was giving "his man" a bath, and after the douse it is the proper thing among the knowing ones to get a pail of fresh water to rub down with and remove the "sticky" feeling of the brine. The bather told his servant to go and get a pail of fresh water, and after he had waited nearly five minutes the man returned dripping with perspiration, but bearing a pail of lovely cool water. (It was almost impossible to get cool water on board for bathing purposes, because the condensing engines were running continually during the latter part of the trip). The officer plunged his head into the bucket and then commenced to swear and rub his eyes vigorously. "I thought I told you to get fresh water," he roared. "So it is fresh, sir," retorted his man. "It's salt, you son of a sea cook," bellowed the victim of misplaced confidence, rubbing his smarting eyes. "Well, it's fresh salt water, sir; leastways I just pulled it up out uv the ocean meself."

February 6 the batteries struck high water mark in the loss of horses, four dying during the twenty-four hours, including the old bay gun horse, which was "too plucky to die." The poor old chap had been in a dying condition for five days and every hour he was expected to croak, but he stuck to it. The men fed him on gruel, for he was too weak to eat hay or oats. He fell down repeatedly, but was helped to his feet and every effort was made to save him, but he finally died of sheer exhaustion. It was painful to any lover of horses to see the unfortunate animals dying day after day without being able to do anything for them. First their heads would begin to droop and their noses to run. They would refuse to eat and grow rapidly weaker until their eyes closed and they leaned against their narrow stalls until they sank from exhaustion and weakness. Some

of them were afflicted with what was called "ship staggers." These would suddenly go mad apparently and indulge in frantic war dances, breaking down their stalls and trying to climb over the other horses until they collapsed in a heap on the ruin they had wrought, after cutting and bruising themselves horribly. As the increase in the mortality left a number of vacant stalls the sick horses were shifted into places where they



"TOO PLUCKY TO DIE."

would have room to lie down ; but when a horse lay down it seldom got up any more. Some of them struggled hard in their death throes and would bite mouthfuls out of the two-inch boarding around the stall, seize a supporting girder in their teeth, stiffen out and go where the good horses go. Horse funerals became so common that no one would bother turning round as a carcass plunged over the side.

The flag signallers of D battery became so expert before the end of the voyage that they could hold long conversations between three stations, of the forecabin, the bridge and the deckhouse aft. The conversations were duly recorded, and subsequently read over to the mess, the wit of the repartee earning for the signallers the title of wigwags.

There was very little sickness on board. There was plenty of hard work, which kept everybody active and healthy.

Seldom was a more pleasant company ever on a long voyage together. Long voyages are said to be trying on the temper, but the best of feeling prevailed throughout, and with the hard work and occasional periods of recreation, the time passed so rapidly that, had it not been for the prospect of active service, it would almost

have been a matter of regret when the voyage came to an end. After passing the equator the weather became delightfully cool, with brilliant moonlight nights. The horses improved in health, though there was scarcely a day that the steam winch did not come into requisition.

A social feature of the voyage was "the horse board," which convened daily in Captain Howard's cabin to regulate the affairs of the universe, after which, having duly "inspected the horse," the board adjourned. On February 14, the birthday of the president of the board, a celebration was held, and a feature of the entertainment was a huge earthenware punch bowl, the exterior of which was decorated with the portraits of the members of the "board," taken from life by one of the officers, and other embellishments in the shape of the arms of the R. C. A., a picture of the Laurentian, etc. It is to be preserved as a memorial of the voyage. That day the wind had freshened up, and there was quite a plunging sea on. It was an acrobatic feat to drink the host's health with Highland honors, and the mess room tables at a balancing angle of 45 degrees, more or less. We had all the old songs, which sound so much better and are so full of sentiment when you hear them badly sung 6,000 miles from home, as compared with much more artistic renditions at home. In *The Gloaming*, *O Promise Me* and other venerable vocal chestnuts were listened to with respect, and the toast of Sweethearts and Wives had a significance not before realized by most present, and many eyes had a suspicious glint as well as a faraway look in the silence following the toast.

The last week of the voyage was very busy. The issues of belts, revolvers, extra clothing, haversacks, water bottles, etc., were made from the quartermaster stores. Water was scarce and no washing was permitted. Some of the gunners tried washing their kharki in salt water, with the result that it took all the color out and shrunk them badly, giving the uniforms the appearance of having been soaked in paste and stiffened out.

CHAPTER V.

ARRIVAL AT CAPE TOWN.

Camp Green Point, near Cape Town, Feb. 20.

The officers and men of D and E batteries, Royal Canadian Artillery, have had the experience of their lives crowded into the past four days—such an experience as has not been duplicated in the history of Canadian soldiers before. It has been so varied, interesting and comprehensive, and has been pressed into such a short time that it is difficult to realize or mentally digest the panoramic succession of impressions of the past few days.

On Friday last, February 16, it was announced by the captain of the *Laurentian* that we would make Cape Town that evening and run into an anchorage, provided there was not too much sea on and the night was not dirty. For the previous 24 hours there had been quite a sea and a stiff head wind blowing. Neither men nor horses, however, were incommoded in the least, as they had got their sea legs and rather enjoyed the rolling. The horses had become quite cunning and would sway about in their stalls, balancing themselves to the motion of the vessel with quite a nautical air. After getting down into the temperate zone, very few died, though our list of casualties had run up to 27, and many of those left looked very fit for crow bait. (It was rather amusing after we landed and the battery was horsed up, to see some of the old chaps swaying from side to side, balancing their riders, evidently anticipating that the dock would commence heaving like the deck of the "Rolling Polly.") Captain Nunan, of the *Laurentian*, had made his calculation so accurately that at 6.30 on Friday evening we sighted a revolving light on the starboard bow about twelve miles off, which marked Dassan Island,

thirty-five miles from Cape Town, and after dinner we sighted another light nearer Cape Town. By that time the fore part of the ship was crowded with soldiers watching for the first glimpse of Cape Town. A gorgeous harvest moon rose and lighted up the tumbling sea till its billows looked like molten gold. Along came a big mail steamer and we saw the "liner's lights go by like a grand hotel" and gave her a cheer and sent up three rockets so that she could tell 'em that she saw us when she reached England. Then the huge bulk of Table Mountain loomed up in the moonlight with a fringe of lights along its base and one big light in the eye of the couchant lion which swept the sea every 30 seconds with a sleepless vigilance. The crew began to get the anchors ready on the forecastle, and everybody crowded forward on the bridge and forecave to get a view of the harbor and shipping. The moonlight made everything almost as clear as day, and the scene was one never to be forgotten. The harbor was crowded with shipping—huge troopships and men-of-war. On the shore the myriad lights sparkled from the city, and above soared the steep, scarred sides of Table Mountain, its top capped with fleecy white clouds. Up went some more rockets from the bridge announcing our arrival. The Laurentian threaded her way through a crowd of liners and then, at a quiet order from the captain on the bridge, the big anchor went over with a crashing splash and the chain followed with a roar. The anchor did not "bite," and she began to drift down on another grim hulk silhouetted in black against the moonlit sky astern of us. Over went a second anchor, and after a voyage of 26 days she came to her moorings in the tideway. Nobody paid much attention to us, and we began to realize at once that the arrival of Tommies in Table Bay was an old story.

Everybody was too much excited at the prospect of going ashore next morning to sleep much that night. All were getting their baggage on the deck, packing Wolseley kits, and discussing the probabilities of what had occurred since we heard the last war news a fort-

night before. At daylight all was astir and on the quarterdeck there was a hurried pajama parade of the officers at 6 o'clock, when a boat came along with two men in it to communicate with the captain regarding coal and stores. As soon as it was in hailing distance there was a yell for news and the man in the bow put his hand to his mouth and yelled: "Kimberley was relieved yesterday!" A cheer followed. Then the question "What else?" and we soon knew that otherwise affairs were in statu quo since we last heard the news. Soon after along came a smart white and gold admiralty launch with two staff officers and a lady on board. The officers came on board and were immediately closeted with Major Hurdman. The launch steamed off a short distance and the lady languidly took snap shots at the gunners clustered on the parade deck and in the rigging. The bay, if not so picturesque by day as by moonlight, was doubly interesting. A cable's length ahead of us lay a big Indian troopship crowded with "lathy Sikhs" and horses. On the starboard bow a still bigger transport, the America, loaded with English Tommies—two field batteries and two regiments. Not far off were two more loaded with Australian Mounted Infantry. The bugles and trumpets on board were sounding the reveille, and up on the side of Table Mountain the morning gun from a fort garrisoned by South African troops saluted the rising sun and the flag on which the sun never sets. The arrival of all these troops from the ends of the empire on the same day was a remarkable coincidence fraught with great import for the future of the empire, and it was much commented on.

The Laurentian lost no time in pulling into the quay, threading her way slowly through the shipping, the Canadian gunners cheering and being cheered by the other troopships in succession. On that bright morning it was more like the scene of the arrival of a number of huge excursion steamers with crowds on pleasure bent than several thousand men on the edge of a campaign. As we forged slowly in towards the grimy docks, hundreds of ugly cormorants sat in rows upon the spiles

and buoys and every now and then one would rise up, stretch its sooty wings and yawn derisively as if to remind us that all flesh is grass and lots of men as good as we were fertilising the veldt in the Transvaal. But over all and above all rose the majestic lion-like shape of Table Mountain dominating the scene, immutable and firm as the empire of which it is the emblem.

Soon all the glasses were trained on the quay we were approaching and, sure enough, as we expected, there was Lieut.-Col. Drury, our brigade division commander, waiting for us. What a cheer went up when the men recognised him! For the colonel is the ideal of the Canadian artillery and the man we have always expected to lead us into action if ever that happy day arrived. Every officer and most of the men had gotten their artillery training under his supervision in the days when the expectation of foreign service had not entered into the heart of man to conceive. With the colonel was Capt. Panet looking very bronzed and fit after his two months' up country service.

After the Laurentian was tied up the British transport and naval officers came aboard and the landing of stores and ammunition commenced. The weather was very hot, but it was found we could not land the horses until everything else was unloaded, so the poor brutes had to swelter through another twenty-four hours. During the day the Cape Town people sent abundance of fruit on board, and the chaplain and nurses who went up town came back with bouquets of roses and carnations. The first thing that impressed us with Cape Town was the number and varieties of colored races, not only variegated in color but in religion and costumes—East Indians, Kaffirs, Coolies, Soudanese, Arabs and Egyptians—fezs, turbans, the slouch hat of the Cape "boy" and the bare woolly heads of the Zulus. The next thing that impressed us was the heat and sandy dust—but that is another story. A British troopship pulled in ahead of us and a transport loaded with horses and Bombay cavalry astern. We all worked together during the day debarking stores, assisted by gangs of Kaffir

stevedores, and that evening after work stopped we all went visiting from ship to ship. And such a menagerie as there was on that quay ! Bronzed British Tommies of the typical sort you see in the war pictures, fierce looking turbaned sowars, loop-hatted Australians, spindle-shanked Indian cyces, City of London Imperial Volunteers, and last but not least, "the gentlemen in kharki ordered south" from Canada with their saw-rimmed "pony" hats fastened with thongs of rawhide round the back of their heads instead of under their chins. They promenaded up and down the quay and looked at each other's ships and discussed their voyages and compared notes on the countries they came from. It was a scene to furnish an imperial unity orator with the material for much flowery oration. The novelty of it appealed even to ourselves and any who had not appreciated that the empire was "the vastest that has been" began to realise it. The East Indians could not express their sentiments very well, but they perched in rows on the bulwarks of their ship, gravely observing their white comrades and grinned amicably at the remarks of the other fellows.

The British artillery officers visited the R. C. A. and some of us visited the S.S. America to see how they carried their horses. The moment we went on board the colonel commanding, a handsome bronzed and grey old gentleman, recognised Captain Eaton, and said : "Did I not meet you at the manoeuvres in England two years ago ?" It turned out that Captain Eaton had been attached to his battery. The old colonel could not do too much for us in the way of showing us about after that. He came down personally with his vet, and went over the horses with us. All the horses were on one deck. None were placed amidships, and there was a small racecourse laid with horse mats where they were exercised daily. The feed boxes were of zinc and all the appliances were of the most comfortable and substantial sort. Most of the horses were remounts taken from the London cabs and the young lieutenants told us that when they shouted "Keb!" or "Charing Cross,"

" Ammersmith 'Igh!" the half of the horses popped out their heads from the boxes and pricked up their ears. The batteries lost 12 horses out of 300. When we saw the recherche stabling accommodation they had on board we wondered that the R. C. A. had brought any horses in at all. This disposition to wonder was dissipated when Captain Eaton visited the Australians next day. They had brought 500 horses over crammed in any old way on four decks. They were put in twelve in a bunch broadside into stalls without divisions just as the batteries in Canada load their horses in box cars when they go to camp. When the ship rolled or plunged the horses made cushions for each other. The voyage lasted thirty-one days and they only lost 2 per cent of the horses! However, they did not encounter any very heavy weather or they might have lost enormously. It was just a question of taking a chance, and they took it. The horses looked well and were fat and frisky.

On the Saturday evening a couple of us went up to see what the city of Cape Town looked like. Colonel Drury had warned the officers to be careful as it was not safe to be too open in your expressions regarding the war in that place. We found that it was true. The city is a picturesque, quaint old place, and its population made up of all races on earth, and its buildings of every style of architecture. The streets are paved with mud, flat and hard as asphalt. The people stroll in shoals along the middle of the streets, and are a brilliant throng even in the moonlight, with their white dresses, red and yellow turbans and fezs. All the hansom cabs are gorgeously painted and gilded and bear such names as "Dashing and Bold," "Napoleon the First," "Swift and Sure," etc. We chartered the "Dashing and Bold," and went up to the City club, where the officers had been put up, and enjoyed a pleasant hour on its deep cool verandas, looking down on the city and harbor.

On Sunday, the 18th, the batteries disembarked the guns and horses, got all their stores together and moved

off by 5 o'clock for Greenpoint camp, two miles outside Cape Town, and under the shadow of Table mountain on an immense plain of kharki colored dust, amid thousands of kharki colored troops, mule batteries, "four-point-seven" guns, mounted infantry who rode little 12-hand Burmese ponies, camps of convalescent, wounded and sick, we pitched camp. It was a dreadfully hot, hard day all through, but not much different from what every battery experiences in Canada when it goes to the annual camp. Worry, vexation and dust, kicking horses, missing bits of small equipment, sweating, swearing, and finally a catch-as-catch-can supper with a pipe and a bed on stony places of the ground. There was no grumbling. Everybody worked cheerfully and swore freely to ease their consciences and expedite stevedores and all went well. The horses panned out much better than we expected. Some of them looked very badly and we thought the most of them could hardly walk out to camp let alone draw the guns packed with ammunition, but they fairly romped off with them when harnessed up.

On Monday and Tuesday the wind "she blew a hurricane and then she blew some more" and we had an awful time. The sand filled the air in clouds so that you could not see your hand before your face. Imagine the worst blizzard you ever saw with sand substituted for snow and that is what it is like. The men's eyes got full of sand, the tents and food were full of sand, our noses were full of sand. Major Hurdman sent down and purchased an outfit of goggles and it was very funny to see the grimy-faced officers and men tumbling about their work with goggles on and the dirt caked about their eyes, ears and nostrils so they were deaf, dumb and blind, because if you opened your mouth it was immediately filled. To-day the storm has cleared off and the weather is beautiful but hot. All the men are well and the horses are being got in shape to go up country.

CHAPTER VI.

PREPARING FOR THE FRONT.

The fortnight which the Canadian artillery put in at Greenpoint Common was a busy time. The heat was not so bad, about the same as the July days in Canada, but the high winds and daily dust storms were awful. We were comforted at the time by being told that they were far worse up country, but throughout the whole campaign, not even in the Karroo desert, did we ever have anything so continuously bad as the sand storms blown up daily by the Cape sou'easter.

Camp Green Point, near Cape Town, Feb. 24.

The Royal Canadian Artillery has been in camp here a week, and has just got orders to prepare to go to the front. At the same time comes news of the fight with Cronje, in which the Royal Canadian Infantry was heavily engaged and lost eighteen men. As a matter of fact, we heard the latter news privately from Colonel Herbert three days ago, but it only got into the Cape Town papers this afternoon with the names of the killed. It is a curious thing that the papers here are away behind the times in war news. They had the speech of Premier Laurier in the house of commons commenting on the heavy loss of the Canadians before they had any particulars about the Canadians being in action. This afternoon Lieut. McCrea got a list of the killed from the British intelligence department, and went to each tent and read them out. We have not heard who the wounded are yet. The gunners are keener than ever to get up. To-night they are sitting about on their kit bags discussing the prospective departure for the front,

and figuring how long it will take us to get to Kimberley and take a hand. The men of the artillery have put in a week of hard work getting the horses, guns and themselves ready to move, and now all things are ready. So far everything has been so like the ordinary routine of camp life at Niagara or Barriefield that the men have hardly realised that they are close "up against it." 'To-day ball ammunition was served out for the drivers' and non-coms.' revolvers and the gunners' carbines, and the outfit is on a war footing. The big gun ammunition was issued at the dock when we landed. The drivers and non-coms. are wearing heavy Colt revolvers in holsters on their hips, and twelve rounds in the pouches on their belts, and look quite cowboyish with their pony hats and kharki. The horses have picked up wonderfully and look well. The night before last there was a heavy sand storm, and a camp kettle blew through the picket lines. The horses had been frightened and annoyed by the flying gusts of gravel, and they stamped. The forty horses on the Ottawa section pulled up the picket pins out of the sandy plain—picket ropes, heel ropes and all—and tangled themselves up in a kicking, squealing mess of horse, ropes and profanity, the latter supplied by the stable picket and the orderly officer, who had to disentangle them in the dark. It took nearly two hours to get them straightened out and the pins put in again, but nobody was hurt. The other sections were just as bad, and it was an awful bother to right matters in the dark, because we only had a couple of candle lanterns, and the storm blew them out.

This camp is opposite the entrance to Table bay, which the Canadian boys insist on calling "the lake," and nearly every morning there are from one to three transports in the offing making in with more troops, ever more troops; some of them go to Maitland camp and some come here. You can hear the newcomers cheering in the harbor when the wind is fair. Later on a city of tents arises in a new corner of the big plain. Next day where a large camp stood in another portion of the plain you see a waste of kharki sand and a shimmer of

empty tin cans on it and you know that some other corps has got away and made room for another ship load. So the big military machine moves on and swallows up the Tommies. They disappear into the interior, some of them to reappear in the convalescent camps strolling about with canes and crutches or sitting on the sand dunes looking out across the ocean with wan faces and tired eyes that have looked into the jaws of death. But the chaps who are going up are as jolly as larks. They are singing and laughing and cheering from sundown to last post, and no hard work or sights of the seamy side of war abates their ardor. The Canadian artillerymen have already become great favorites, though they do not buy champagne in the bars and cut such a swath in the city as the infantry did. The gunners are quiet but deadly business-like. They stay in camp nearly all the time and only go down town on duty. They are so hard worked that sleep is a luxury. The Cape Town people have got to recognise them by the "pony" hats they wear, and since the parade through the city last Tuesday they think the artillery are all cowboys and the horses bronchos—this because of the way the horses cut up every time they passed a double-decker street car and the plucky way the drivers handled them. The South Africans admire our big horses (theirs are nearly all small) and the way our men ride.

On Thursday afternoon there was a half holiday in camp for the men to attend the military sports. The sailors were in from the fleet, and all loyal Cape Town turned out to see. At half an hour's notice the R. C. A. put in a tug-of-war team which beat the sailors of the Powerful, the winners up to that time among the entries, but was subsequently beaten in the finals by the crew of the flagship Doris after a most exciting contest, during which the Cape Towners rooted for their fellow-colonials like good ones. Considering that our men were used to pulling on cleats instead of on the grass, this was a fine showing. Gunner Williams, of E battery, also won the half-mile race, making a grand stand finish amid great cheering.

On the previous day Rudyard Kipling visited the lines of the Royal Canadian Artillery, and went all over the camp, but everybody was so busy that no one noticed him. He chatted with a number of the men, including a driver of D battery, who recognised him from his portraits, and told about it afterwards. We were all very sorry not to have seen him. The following afternoon, after taking in the military sports, Chaplain Cox, Lieut. McCrae and I rode over to the Mount Nelson hotel to try to get a glimpse of the little great man, so as to be able to "tell them that we saw him" at home. The Mount Nelson hotel is a very large and beautiful semi-summer resort, in the suburbs on the far side of Cape Town. We left our horses in the courtyard, and went in to stroll about on the chance of getting a glimpse of Mr. Kipling, but he did not seem to be about, and the hotel people did not seem to know much about him. (They were nearly all French and Germans, and the poet's name on the placard registers they hang up in the hostelries here was spelt "Kipling!") As it was said Kipling was leaving for Kimberley that evening, and the gunners were anxious not to miss seeing him, one of them enlisted the services of a young cavalry sub. in kharki who was lounging about the rotunda, told him who they were and what they wanted, and asked what the chances were of seeing Kipling either then or at dinner in the evening, for they were booked to dine there with Mr. Ewan, of the Globe, who had been out to camp and had been moved to pity on them by experiencing half an hour of sandstorm. The "loot" said he knew Kipling personally, and he was sure Mr. Kipling would like to meet us if he was about, and he volunteered to look him up. This was beyond our wildest expectations, and as we had heard that Mr. Kipling was much bothered by people, we assured the sub. that we did not want to trouble him, but just to get a glimpse of our literary hero. As the sub. was a nice fellow one of us asked him to find out if Kipling was in the hotel, and if so we would remain on the chance that he would be about that evening. The sub. went away and returned in a few minutes to say that Kipling had

been there half an hour before, but had gone out. This was disappointing, so after thanking the young cavalryman we left to take a ride about the city. At the door one of the hotel employes whispered in awe-stricken tones that the cavalry sub. was Lord Wolverton, and seemed to think the dusty trio in the cowboy hats would proceed to drop dead. We had just got into our saddles when the genial "loot" came hurrying out to say that Mr. Kipling had appeared on the scene, and if we got a move on we would see him. Throwing our reins to the orderly who tumbled in, and, sure enough, there was the author of *Soldiers Three* talking to a man at the hotel office. It did not take an instant to spot him, because he is so like the photographs of himself. Short, square-built, with a large, slightly bald head; a round face, black moustache, and large dark eyes that have a jolly twinkle behind the spectacles. He is always smiling and interested in all that is going on around him—in fact, the sort of man who, if you had never seen him before and happened to sit next him in a street car, you would be sure to open a conversation with. He was dressed in a loose kharki-colored suit, with a turn-down collar. We Canadian gunners stood afar off and devoured him with our eyes as we thought of all the good half-hours he had given us reading his works. After getting through with the man he was talking to Mr. Kipling bustled over near us and stopped to read a newspaper war extra that had been stuck upon the wall. He stood there for some time, and the gunners continued to gloat, then as he turned to come away and passed quite close to us with a friendly glance at the "three gentlemen in kharki ordered south," the temptation was too much. The gunner with the most nerve stepped forward and spoke to him. It was no doubt an impolite thing to do, but the subsequent unanimous verdict was that if the chance had been missed we would have kicked ourselves all the way back to Canada. When we explained that we had heard he had visited the camp on the previous day, and were sorry we had not known he was there so we could have shown him about, Mr. Kipling laughed.

"That is all right," he said. "I heard you cursing considerable" (he did not know one of the trio was the chaplain because the latter was wearing a lieutenant's uniform) "and I could tell you were up to your eyes in work licking things into shape to get to the front and not wanting to be bothered with visitors, so I did not wish to interrupt. Are you all from the west? You talk like Winnipeggers." And so we had a pleasant five minutes' chat. He had been up near the front, and he told all about it. "You think it is bad out at Green Point with the heat and sand storms and that; but it's hell up there. Don't worry. You'll see lots of service. One bit of advice I'll give you—look out for the water and don't drink any that has not been first boiled. The worst difficulty you will have is in keeping your men from it. The only way to do is to fine them. No use giving a man 'C. B.' (confinement to barracks) when you are in the field. Fine them. It's the only way to do." He said a number of other things, spoke knowingly about the horses and gave some good advice that is not for publication. Saying he would probably see us at Kimberley and wishing us a safe return from the campaign, he shook hands and went away. Shortly after he left for the front. Mr. Kipling came out to South Africa a fortnight ago, and had been staying at Wynberg until Wednesday, after returning from a trip up country before the relief of Kimberley. He evidently intends to see some of the fighting before he returns to England.

This evening was guest night at the mess of the Cape Garrison Artillery, of which we are honorary members. There was a large gathering. The officers are a most hospitable and interesting body of men, because they have fought in nearly all the native and Boer wars for the past twenty years. It is a semi-permanent corps, and about half the officers and men are up at the front now on detachment. They tell us all about the country, and describe the fighting of the Boers and native tribes. A big chap named Kyle, who has a bullet scar on the side of his head, received at Ingogo, and was one of the few surviving eye-witnesses of the slaughter at Isandula,

told us some of his wonderful adventures. He and "Gat" Howard got swapping yarns, and the rest looked on and admired. At last they degenerated to fish stories, and "Gat" Howard told how in the salmon rivers of British Columbia the run was often so large that a man could cross the river dry shod on the backs of fish. Lieut. Kyle capped it by remarking that in some of the South African rivers the fish ran so thick that they crowded hundreds out on the bank to die. However, "Gat" Howard got even with him later on, but that is another story. At the mess that evening some eloquent imperialistic speeches were made, and the colonials from the two ends of the earth fraternised, and concluded the evening by drinking to Absent Comrades, preceded by a short and feeling speech by Capt. Stewart, of the Royal Canadian Infantry, who is at the base, and a member of the mess.

Feb. 27.—Our departure for Kimberley was postponed at the last moment, and this morning comes news of the surrender of Cronje. There was great excitement and not a little joy in Cape Town. About noon the forts began to fire a salute in honor of the event, and all the steamships in the harbor turned on their whistles and steam syrens and dressed the masts with flags. As there were to-day 137 steamers in Table Bay, the volume of sound can be imagined. For over half an hour they kept up a continuous hoarse roaring—not the chirpy blasts of American excursion steamers at a boat race, but a steadfast, prolonged bellow. At a distance it sounded as if the city was actually humming with excitement like a huge bee. The R. C. A. was drawn up in a hollow square, and Lieut.-Col. Drury read Lord Roberts' dispatch, and three lusty cheers were given. This afternoon the Pomeranian, which arrived yesterday, unloaded her mounted infantry, and they came into camp. They only lost nine horses on the voyage, and are in good shape.

By the way, as soon as the Laurentian arrived here Col. Drury allowed the artillery to shave. Inside of

thirty minutes there were enough whiskers blowing overboard to stuff a bed tick.

One thing about South Africa, the flies are very unobtrusive. At night our tents are fairly black with them inside the canvas, but they never buzz about or interfere with the proprietors. In the morning they depart as quietly as they arrive. There are no mosquitos or insects of any kind to bother us except small sand beetles.

The Canadian nurses are out at Rondebush hospital in the western suburbs of Cape Town in a large camp. They have the rank of lieutenants, and each has her own tent and servant. The work is not too hard, except when a large batch of sick and wounded come in late at night. The hospital arrangements, the furnishing of the tents and the delightful locality, not to speak of the pleasures of being looked after by the deft and pretty nurses, are enough to make the dusty, hard-workd gunners want to reach out for a bullet and pull it in. There are nurses from England, New Zealand, Canada and Australia out here. Those who have been through previous campaigns wear ribbons.

CHAPTER VII.

ORDERS TO MOVE.

This letter was written in the days of cheerful anticipation, ere the breath of the Karroo desert had blighted our horseflesh, or the chill of line-of-communication work had numbed our first hot enthusiasm for war. Those were the days when we hourly expected orders to join Lord Roberts' victorious army on its way from Paardeberg to Bloemfontein. We of the artillery will always feel a certain amount of regret that we did not get to the front and into action then. Our horses were in magnificent condition, the men well trained and enthusiastic. At no time later in the war, I believe, were the guns ever quite so fit. If the artillery did anything later it was in spite of wornout horses and many another drawback. The gunners could shoot just as well then as they could and did four months later, and drivers who could handle partially broken horses in six-horse gun teams originally could do anything with them after two weeks steady work at Greenpoint. Later service hardened the men physically, and inured them to hardship of all sorts, but their actual value on the fighting line was as high then as later. However, it was the fortune of war.

Camp Green Point, March 4.

Events have been transpiring with bewildering rapidity within the past few days. On Thursday about 11 o'clock the hoarse orchestral roar of the steam whistles in the harbor, the booming of guns and the hoisting of flags on the shipping and at the lookout stations on the

top of Table mountain announced that the British had scored another success, and everybody knew it must be the long-expected relief of Ladysmith, which proved to be the case. In the afternoon and evening Cape Town was in a very excited state. The streets were filled with crowds of loyalists cheering and jubilating. In the evening all officers and men were confined to camp, as it was expected there might be some disturbance. Mobs of colored people and white men paraded the streets singing patriotic songs and waving flags. They made a demonstration in front of the Cape Town News office—a Boer publication—and stoned the windows, but were dispersed by the police and military patrols. In the afternoon there was some trouble because the flag was not hoisted on the parliament buildings, and the crowd put it up themselves. At night, though the city was illuminated, the parliament buildings and government offices looked dark and sullen. It was no time for the pro-Boer population to make themselves conspicuous, and they wisely refrained.

On Friday morning D and E batteries broke camp and moved out with all their tents and baggage, and were taken for a route march by Col. Drury. The brigade division returned to the same ground an hour later and pitched camp again. In the afternoon word came out from the city that the Boer prisoners would begin to arrive that night or the following evening, and detachments of all the corps were ordered to be ready to guard them during their transfer to the ships that were to take them around to Simon's Bay. On Saturday evening 500 arrived and were received by seventy of the Canadian Mounted Rifles and other troops. This morning a detachment of D battery paraded at daylight armed with revolvers and marched to the lines of the Warwick regiment, where they were met by other detachments and proceeded to the dock. The Boers were brought in by train in cattle trucks and passenger coaches and unloaded near the wharf. Between every few cars on the train was a carload of red-coated Tommies with loaded rifles and fixed bayonets. As the Boers detrained they

were marched between a double line of guards from the train to the ship. They were mostly a dirty-looking lot—all shapes, ages, sizes and colors, a regular Coxeys' army, and they smelt worse than a Galician emigrant train. Some were insignificant little halfcaste boys of fourteen to sixteen years of age, and others were old men of 60 or 70. These two classes predominated, which seemed to indicate that the majority of the able-bodied men had escaped before Cronje's surrender. All day the prisoners continued to arrive in batches of from 600 to 800. One man made a break for liberty, and was promptly brought to the ground by a shot from the rifle of one of the British infantry. He was hit in the neck, and will probably die. A Boer was found hiding in one of the carriages by a gunner of D battery, but the gunner had not the heart to shoot him, because he was a mere lad, though the orders were that any prisoner making any attempt to escape should be shot at once as an example to the others. Thousands of spectators witnessed the detraining of the prisoners. Cronje was brought down by special train in a saloon carriage, and was taken direct to Simon's Bay and placed on board the flagship Doris, much to the disgust of the Cape Town loyalists, who thought he did not deserve such good treatment; in fact, one paper declared that he deserved lynching.

The D and E battery detachments returned about 8 a.m., and church parade was held at 9:30. At 12:30, after morning stables, while the officers were getting ready to go to mess, the adjutant of the brigade division came into the lines with orders that the right and center sections of D battery, four guns, were to proceed at once to the station to entrain for the front. Immediately all was cheering and excitement on the part of the lucky ones who were to go, and the left (Ottawa) section and E battery, who were to remain behind, felt very sore indeed. The left section, after posting pickets on their tents and harness to prevent deficiencies being made up by illegal requisition (for no man is your friend when the word is "marching order") turned to loyally and helped the other

two sections to strike tents and hook in. In forty minutes from the time the order was handed to Major Hurdman the right and center sections moved out with guns, tents and three days' rations. It is doubtful if any British battery could beat that record. The destination was not known, but on reaching the train it was found that there was a reported insurrection among the Cape Dutch at Victoria West, a station about twenty-four hours' run northward. A thousand of the Scots and Grenadier guards, 500 Australians and some yeomanry were going too. Capt. Eaton accompanied the detachment of D battery to the train, and when it was found that they would probably be in action in thirty-six hours, he secured permission to accompany them, provided he could get his baggage down in time. He galloped back to camp, a light prairie wagon was hitched to a couple of gun horses from the left section and the outfit started for the station at a gallop. Meanwhile the two sections had entrained with a rapidity which drew expressions of approval from Colonel Cook, the British transport officer, and the train was just moving out when the captain came galloping into the station yard, his horse covered with foam. As he saw the train pulling out Eaton put spurs to his horse and tried to overtake and board it from the saddle. It was too fast for his jaded mount and got away without him. As the captain rode slowly back to the station platform his extempore comments on the situation are said to have been a masterpiece even for an officer of the corps that has come to be known among its friends as the big D— battery. However, all came out well, because it was found that the train with the guards had not pulled out, so Capt. Eaton got away later in the afternoon. The left (Ottawa) section remained at Greenpoint camp. There were fifty-five gunners and drivers, and they all said the same thing in fifty-five different ways.

The Royal Canadian Artillery officers have been the guests of the Cape Garrison Artillery mess since their arrival. The officers are a very fine lot, and the "colonials" are great friends. There is more in common be-

tween the colonials (so-called) than with the British, and the South Africa men are all keen for imperial federation and a voice in the imperial parliament. They have the same complaint as Canadians, that imperial authorities, through lack of local knowledge, have sacrificed the interests of their country in international matters, such as boundary questions. They are all intensely loyal with a loyalty that is broader than that of the average Britisher.

The camp is infested with flies, dogs of every shape, size and breed, and an equally variegated assortment of Cape Town pedlars. Most of the latter don't speak much English, and it is very funny to hear them yelling: "Ice cream—soldier water!" The flies get worse every day, but they are not very troublesome. At nightfall they pour into the tents and go to roost on the interior of the canvas until it is actually black with them. Nearly every tent has its dog. There is something about soldiers that attracts dogs. Some of these canine recruits are exceedingly well bred, and their owners must miss them. There are fox terriers, bull terriers, wire-haired terriers and a lot of others that are just dog.

Last evening after mess several of us went over to see the latest batch of Boer prisoners. A Cape garrison officer who speaks Dutch acted as interpreter. The prisoners said they were well treated and very comfortable. They would not talk much about the war, but they were quite cheerful and sociably inclined, seeming rather pleased at the attention they were attracting. One old chap talked a good deal in Dutch, and then suddenly switched off into English. He said his name was Richard Henry Malloney, and that he had been born in Cape Town, but had lived up in the Transvaal for fourteen years.

There is a batch of Kaffirs who were captured with the Boers who are herded together in the open, about a hundred yards from the mess tent of the Cape Garrison Artillery, with a chain of sentries round them. They are kept there in the open, day and night, and though they are half naked and the nights are chilly, they get

on all right, and are quite jolly. It is a curious sight to see them in the moonlight, all lying cuddled up in a heap like a pile of old rags on the ground, and the sentries, with their gleaming bayonets, standing about leaning on their rifles. If you pass near them you will hear the sound of voices coming out of the heap, and occasionally a squeal or a laugh, as some of the frolicsome rascals roll about and tickle each other.

Since being left on detachment my section has had to have an acting sergeant-major, battery orderly and quartermaster-sergeant, and the interior economy is carried on with all the frills of a separate command. The commanding officer has his trumpeter, holds "office" (the military police court), awards punishments, makes the guards turn out and present arms to his command and has the privilege of sending notes to other commanding officers asking them, with his compliments, why in Hades they dare allow their horses to march across his lines going to and from water, and so forth. When an apoplectic colonel gets a note like that from a sub. it nearly proves fatal, more especially because it has to be attended to. We are beginning to appreciate the yarns of the Royal artillery subs. about the fun of being on detached service up north, for the practice of splitting up batteries into section commands and distributing them about at different points is very prevalent, notwithstanding the red book theories. And the young "loots" revel in it. The left section of D battery is hard at work qualifying itself to act independently as a separate command, and to see it go drifting across the plain in a cloud of kharki dust to take up a position for action would make the boys at home green with envy. Both gunners and drivers are well up in their work now, and the horses are fit to run for a man's life. It's fine, even if it isn't war—yet.

March 7, 1 p.m.—The left section has just received orders to move out at 2:45 for the front. Hooray!

CHAPTER VIII.

OFF TO THE FRONT.

The following letters of the series deal with what was known as "the Karroo campaign." When the Canadian troops left Cape Town we had no idea of what was ahead of us, further than that we were to make an incursion from the railway into the rebel district in the western section of Cape Colony. The larger portion of the Dutch population at that time were on the ragged edge of rebellion, and probably nothing but the heavy blow struck by Lord Roberts at Paardeberg prevented a general rising before, which would have resulted in the cutting of lines of communication and the paralysis of military operations against Bloemfontein and Pretoria. As it was, there had been several outbreaks, especially in the western districts. Lord Kitchener had taken a column in from De Aar and dispersed the rebels at Britstown, after a sharp engagement. We thought our work was to be similar. Instead of that it was to be a six weeks' march through what was practically a desert, I believe the hardest march of the war.

Victoria West, March 11.

This is Sunday morning. We know it because an Anglican clergyman invited the force here to attend divine service in the athletic ground on the other side of a mud wall near the camp, and we were surprised to learn in the course of the service that this is the second Sunday in Lent. We are camped on the karroo outside the little village of Victoria West, half a day's march

from the railway and in the rebel district of Cape Colony. The weather is delightful, and the village, with its white church tower, nestles in a valley between two high kloofs, looking very much like the pictures you see in the illustrated papers, low mud and stone houses like small forts, with stone and mud walls around them. On a hillside a few hundred yards from the village is a Kaffir kraal composed of caves in the ground and mud shacks, with low mud walls. At a distance the place looks like an aggregation of pig pens, and a nearer inspection fails to dissipate the illusion, when you see and smell the herd of small and large bipeds lying or crawling about in indolence, squalor and dirt. We are camped on a sandy and stony plain, whose nakedness is partially covered with a tough, coarse gorse. On the horizon to the south are our old friends the kopjes, low blue hills shimmering in the heat waves of the karroo. A faint, cool breeze tempers the heat to the Canadians (D battery, R. C. A., and Major Howe's two squadrons of rough riders are here, besides some yeomanry), and altogether it is an immense improvement on the awful sand and dust and scorching heat of Green Point camp, near Cape Town. We are in the face of the enemy, too, and two squadrons of Australians and New Zealanders are off to the front endeavoring to locate the rebel force, while we wait for more troops. Meanwhile we are enjoying the Sabbath rest. After church parade (we paraded armed) the long-looked-for mail arrived most opportunely, and we are reveling in literature and letters from home—a huge bundle for the men and none for the officers. However, we have the illustrated papers, and it reduces the temperature ten degrees to see the pictures of snow blockades, ice-boating and skating, and to read the "down-below-zero" jokes that go with the cartoons. Talk about eating snowballs! We would almost trade a letter from home for a good, big juicy snowball, and that is saying a good deal. Though after all the heat is no hotter than an average Canadian August day during a "dry spell," but there is not such a thing as ice in this country, which makes a difference. The nights are

delightfully cool, and the men like the climate. They are getting as hard as nails. To those who think the interior of South Africa is a wild region the little village here is a revelation. There are general stores, millinery shops, two hotels (at one of which some of us had an excellent dinner last night), and you can buy almost anything you can get in a Canadian city. A nice little milliner worked all this morning putting mauve-colored silk pugarees on the officers' helmets and covering them with kharki. It is difficult to see what keeps the village alive. There are no industries, and no one seems to work except in the stores and hotels. Around the place is the karroo on which feed herds of goats, the only symptom of agricultural life on the horizon. Two-thirds of the population are colored in variegated strata, from black to pale gold. The natives who live in houses are very cleanly and wear white linen and pink calico, much befrilled and flounced. Some of the Dutch girls are very good-looking and dress well.

The Ottawa section joined the remainder of D battery here yesterday by route march from the railway, and the orphan section was heartily cheered as it came into camp. At 1:30 on March 7 the Ottawa section received orders from Col. Drury to join the rest of the battery at this point. At 2:30 the section was ready to move off, with the tents and baggage packed. It entrained at Cape Town, and the Ottawa boys were introduced, for the first time for most of them, to an English railway, with its little toy box cars and bogies. It is a narrow gauge line, and the horse cars only hold eight to ten horses. They are so narrow that our big horses cannot stand crossways in them, and as tying the horses is not allowed the animals were turned in loose, to fight it out among themselves. From the kicking, biting and squealing that went on during the trip we thought two-thirds of them would be ruined when the trip was over. It was also a very difficult and dangerous operation to feed and water them en route, as they could not be taken out, and the doors could not be opened lest the horses should jump out or be jostled out. The men had to

crawl through the windows and over the backs of the horses to get the nose bags on those farthest from the windows. Luckily none of the men was hurt, and when we detrained thirty-six hours later only one horse was lame, though numbers of them had been bitten and kicked. In some instances the horses kicked holes in the sides of the cars.

The troop train was under the command of Major Jackson, of the North Lancashire regiment, who, with Capt. Wilde-Brown and a hundred of their men, was returning to the front after escorting a trainload of Boer prisoners to Cape Town. There were also several companies of English militia. The latter would not compare favorably in physique or discipline with an average Canadian rural militia battalion. At the station the Cape Town people were very kind and supplied the troops with matches, lime juice, fruit, etc., free of charge. The arrangements en route were excellent. At the station the Canadian artillerymen were furnished with tea, sugar, biscuits and excellent canned meat. I received a printed timetable, showing the stations where the train would stop to feed and water men and horses. At every station of any importance on the line there was a transport officer. En route the train got four hours behind the schedule, but this did not dislocate the arrangements in the slightest degree, as the transport officers arranged by telegraph to change the feeding places. On arrival at these points commissariat sergeants had hot water in iron pots ready for the men to make tea, a pot to every ten men. Each compartment in the coaches held eight men, and for each meal there was issued a two-pound tin of "bully beef" and sixteen biscuits for each compartment, with a mess tin of tea for each man. The Canadian gunner officer was made an honorary member of the Lancashire officers' mess, and they made it exceedingly pleasant on the trip up. This was the regiment to which Lieut. Wood, of Halifax, had belonged, and the officers spoke very appreciatively of the action of the officers of the Royal Canadian Infantry who had erected a stone over his grave on their way up to Mod-

der. The Lancashires were a fine lot. They had been through all the fighting from Orange river to Cronje's surrender.

The people of Cape Town gave the train a great send-off. All through the suburbs the track was lined with people cheering and waving flags. You would think it was the first troop train of the campaign going out instead of one of a hundred that had gone before. At the camps which we passed the troops lined the fronts and cheered. Far into the night crowds cheered us at every station. Next day farther up the country, as we approached the disaffected district, the enthusiasm disappeared, and the Dutch population looked at us sulkily or muttered under their beards, though they did not dare make any open demonstration. The train ran steadily northward all night, and in the morning it was climbing the foothills to reach the great tableland of the karroo. The line was so crooked that the rays of the rising sun came in alternately at the windows on each side of the train, and its hot glare searched out every corner of the compartments and made traveling uncomfortable. About 10 o'clock we reached the karroo, and during the rest of the day ran through a most God-forsaken region—a stony plain, with here and there hills of kharki dust, their faces pock-marked with bunches of blue-green sage brush. Occasionally we passed desolate-looking corrugated iron houses or one-story mud huts, with large stone dykes around them, but not a sign of agriculture or ranching, except occasional herds of wild goats and fat-tailed sheep. At the native kraals cute little black babies were running about stark naked and bare-headed in the heat. The Canadian boys took a great fancy to them and carried them around at the stations, feeding them on fruit and soft bread. The babies also took a fancy to the soldiers and seemed content to stay with them. In fact it was difficult to prevent the Ottawa gunners taking one along as a mascot, and the parents did not seem to worry at the possibility.

At daylight on the second day Victoria road station was reached and the artillery encamped beside a stag-

nant pond on the sun-baked karroo. Col. Sir Charles Parsons was there with 150 Australian and Tasmanian troops. The two sections of D battery and a hundred New Zealand Mounted Infantry had gone west from the railway to this village. The Ottawa section was ordered to remain two or three days until the Candaian Mounted Infantry arrived to escort us to Victoria West. The country was very disaffected, and 3,000 Boers were reported westward, near Carnarvon, 75 miles away. Their patrols were also near the railway, and the night before could be seen signaling with lights on the hills half a dozen miles off. That night, as soon as it got dark, the signaling commenced again, and was answered from the hills east of the railway. It was also reported that the column of Australians sent out from De Aar, farther up the line, had had a scrap with the rebels and sustained considerable loss in wounded. The Ottawa section was served out with small arm ammunition, and the shells in the limbers were fused and everything prepared for eventualities. It was a bright moonlight night, and you could see a considerable distance over the karroo. Here we got our first countersign—"Africa." All told there were only 200 troops with our two guns, and it was rather an anxious evening. Sir Charles Parsons, the officer in command of the troops mobilising for the expedition, is one of Kitchener's right-hand men, with a Soudan education and a collection of war ribbons that run into a double row on his kharki frock. Kitchener himself had been down two days before to look over the ground, and was having troops rushed up. About 11 o'clock Col. Adair came into the artillery lines and said that the orders had been changed. The Ottawa section was to move next day to join its battery at this place, and a train with four troops of the Canadian Mounted Infantry would arrive in an hour. Next morning reveille went at 4 a.m., and by 6:30 the gunners had breakfasted, struck camp and were ready to move off. It was then found that the car with the mounted infantry saddles had been mislaid down the line, and they could not move for some hours. As the artillery was anxious to move out

and rejoin their comrades, who were reported to be awaiting reinforcements, Col. Parsons allowed them to go on without an escort, as the distance was only nine miles. At 7 a.m. we moved off, with scouts 1,000 yards in front and on the flanks, and, after a two-hours' march, reached here without seeing anything of the enemy. With D battery were 150 New Zealand Mounted Infantry, splendid troops, and some Imperial Yeomanry. Shortly after the Ottawa section arrived the New Zealanders broke camp and moved westward to throw out a cavalry screen. Later on the Canadian Mounted Infantry arrived and took their places.

The right and center sections of D battery, with their escort of New Zealanders, marched into this place on Wednesday afternoon and drove out the Boer patrols, which occupied the village. They bivouacked on the square, and the guns were parked there by order of the British staff officer in command. During the night there was an alarm. The place was commanded by three hills overlooking the valley on which the village is situated, and it was a nasty position to be caught in. Officers and men stood by the guns the rest of the night, and the New Zealanders were under arms. Next morning Sir Charles Parsons arrived on the scene and ordered the camp moved out on the karroo half a mile east of the village, where we now are. We have just heard that E battery has arrived at Victoria road station and will likely reach here this evening. As soon as enough troops arrive we are to move against the rebels.

You hear some funny breaks in camp occasionally. Just now a cowboy is yelling: "Close the corral. Somebody pinched me water bottle!"

When a broncho began a bucking performance in the rough riders' camp this morning some gunner yelled: "Boys, come out an' see de bronk doin' de hootchy-kootchy!"

One of the peculiarities of the artillery organisation is that only one surgeon and one veterinary is allowed to every brigade division of three batteries, consequently when a battery is detached it has no doctor or veterinary.

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE KARROO DESERT.

On the line of march, west of De Aar, March 19.

On the afternoon of Wednesday, March 14, D battery and 300 Canadian Mounted Infantry marched from Victoria West to make a junction at Carnarvon, in the rebel district of Cape Colony, with a column from De Aar. It was a very mobile force, or would have been but for the transport, which consisted of a menagerie of ox teams, mule teams and donkey teams. As the line of march was practically through a desert the column had to carry food for men and horses, fuel for cooking and water. Halts were made at stagnant ponds, which the horses had to drink from, but at many halts there was no water fit for cooking or drinking purposes. The big wagons with their teams of sixteen oxen, and almost equally extended and much lazier inspans of donkeys spun the column out to the length of about three miles, while they reduced the speed to about the same number of miles per hour. The first afternoon it was intensely hot, and a dust storm blowing, circulating the karroo real estate in blinding clouds. You could not see a hundred yards to the front or to the rear. The long line seemed to wind out of kharki mist behind and disappear into the dust ahead. Men and horses were turned in color to a yellowish green and were about as tough and dirty a crew as could be imagined. Everybody was in good humor, however, at the prospect of fighting.

At night we went into bivouac in the dark on stony ground, beside an irrigation pond of rotten water. The picket pegs would not bite in the rocky soil, and after the lines had been put down with sixty horses on each the pegs unanimously pulled out, and in a few minutes

the horses were kicking and squealing about in a net of heel ropes, head ropes and picket ropes. Luckily they were too tired to stampede. We bivouacked on the warm sand with a full moon over our heads. The night was rather cool, but we all slept like tops, though it was strange to be awakened at moonset by the level rays of the moon shining along the flat karroo.

Next day we made an early start and pushed on through the desert. In places it was perfectly flat to the horizon, with here and there a blue kopje standing out like a rocky island on the bosom of Lake Huron. For many miles the trail followed along a series of flat valleys with low surrounding hills, which reminded us very much of the plain at Deseronto, so well known to all Canadian artillerymen, except that the hills around looked like gigantic smelting works dump heaps and the plain was barren except for the small karroo bush, an obtusive little plant which resembles some people in that you think you can sit on it with impunity, when, as a matter of fact, you cannot. The winding trail was marked ahead by the shimmer of sunlight on the whitening bones of horses and oxen and the sheen of discarded bully beef tins.

About 10 o'clock in the morning we ran into a cloud of South African locusts. They covered several square miles, and were so thick that they looked like a rusty fog, lying about thirty feet above the karroo. They were all flying one way, and they went skimming over the battery so close that the drivers knocked them down in dozens with every slash of their whips. During a halt some of the men fired stones through the flock, and the locusts were so thick that you could hear the missile "swish" through them for a hundred feet or more. The stones were only an inch or so in diameter, and the "swishing" sound was caused by the impact on the numerous locusts they struck in their flight. This fact conveys the best idea of the thickness of the cloud which actually did obscure the sun and covered the country like a mist. Not only was the air filled with them, but the ground was covered so completely that its natural

color was obscured. When a staff officer galloped along the column about fifty yards out on the karroo the locusts on the ground rose up around his horse like dense dust. The larger locusts were as large as a man's finger, but the most of them were like our grasshoppers, which they much resemble in shape. We were divided in wondering how anything could grow in a land afflicted with such a pest, and how that immense mass of insect life kept itself alive on the karroo.

The battery and mounted riflemen "outspanned" at 11 o'clock, tied the horses to the gun wheels (the best kind of picketing on the march, by the way,) and as we were moving out after lunch we saw E battery coming in the distance and a cloud of dust. We pushed on, and they went into the camp which we left. At 4 o'clock we bivouacked again, fed and watered and had a short sleep, and "inspanned" again. (Batteries don't "hook in" out here, they "inspan.") We marched all night by moonlight, arriving at Campeon's Poort about 3 o'clock a.m. It was cool, even cold, marching, but the column moved very briskly, for such an aggregation, making sixteen miles in seven hours. The march was very trying on the men, who were completely worn out. Drivers fell asleep and tumbled from their horses, and gunners tumbled from the guns and several were nearly run over. It was an unique experience, however, moving along through that silent country enveloped in a cloud of moonlit dust. Early in the evening the men sang and chatted on the guns, but soon they became too tired and sleepy. The dust on the trail was so deep that the wheels made no sound and it was like moving with a ghostly procession in a dead land. Every now and then a message would travel along the column from miles in the rear, "Halt for the transport!" and the telephonic communication would pass on until it reached the head of the column away in the dust mist ahead. After a few minutes the order would come back from the advance guard, "Halt!" in long drawn out cadence, and each unit in succession would halt and dismount its men, who immediately lay down in the dust and

slept. After 15 minutes the faint sound of much yelling far in the rear would indicate that the big ox and donkey teams had caught up and then "The transport-is up-p-p!" would pass to the front and "Prepare to mount!" "Mount!" "Walk mar-r-rch!" would come back and the ghostly column would glide forward again in silence for another hour. The horses stood the march much better than the men and were not much fagged.

The following morning reveille sounded at 9 o'clock but most of the men were astir before that. Shortly after the commanding officer, Colonel Sir Charles Parsons, joined us, having driven from Victoria road station in a Cape cart. We inspanned at 2 p.m. and marched on over a more hilly country until 6 p. m. It was intended that we should have supper and then march all night, but a bicycling Boer we met on the road was induced to give up certain information regarding the condition of affairs at Carnarvon which caused Colonel Peters to halt that night for the other troops behind to come up. We bivouacked in a lovely fertile valley where we saw grass for the first time since we left Cape Town. Also green corn and fruit trees. Thousands of sheep and goats were feeding on the hillsides. In the valley was a typical Boer house—low, solid, and whitewashed, surrounded by numerous dyked enclosures and having in its vicinity a most ornate graveyard. The graveyard was ornate in that it was surrounded by a very handsome high stone wall of many colored stones and had quite an artistic arch at the gate and a fine tomb within. Much out of keeping with the archway and wall was the tumbledown, cheap looking wooden gate. From a slab over the archway we gathered that a numerous collection of the remains of the descendants of E. W. B. Deville was resting within.

That night it was announced that we would have fresh meat and potatoes served out in the morning and with regret it must be admitted that the news overshadowed in importance all other considerations—even the emotions aroused by the picturesque beauty of the

sunset in that charming valley or discussion of the prospects of a fight had no place. But the aesthetic in man's nature does not long survive a persistent diet of bully beef, hard biscuit and milkless tea. Even the path of glory gets tangled up with that way to a man's heart that is alleged to lead through his stomach. At mess we discuss which is preferable, a karroo appetite with bully beef or a home appetite with a Delmonico dinner. The conjunction of the two would be heavenly.

On Saturday, March 17, we celebrated St. Patrick's day by making our triumphal entry into the rebel town of Carnarvon, the first objective point of the expedition. D battery, escorted by two squadrons of the Canadian Mounted Rifles under Colonel Herchmer and Major Howe, marched in about 10 o'clock of a blazing hot day. Carnarvon is an oriental looking little town planted down in the middle of the karroo, and a few small shade trees by assiduous irrigation have been encouraged to grow in its streets. There are two quite handsome churches, but the rest of the buildings are low, flat-roofed, stucco structures painted white, or raw red shacks of unburned brick plastered with mud. As the troops wound along towards the town the inhabitants could be seen running for the town hall, where two British flags had been draped on the front of the deep piazza. (There were no flags flying anywhere). There were gathered all the maids and matrons of the place and they had a sumptuous lunch of tea and jam sandwiches prepared for the incoming troops. We marched on past to the camp ground and outspanned, after which the gunners held the drivers' horses while they were marched over and fed. When the drivers returned the gunners went over. The officers were entertained by the chief of police in his office. He seemed to be the only loyal official left in the town. He was in uniform and wore the Rhodesian medal. The whole town and country, we were told, was rotten with sedition. The people had no grievance except cussedness and sympathy with the Boers. The chief of police, a few days before, when the rebel force was near Carnarvon, tried

to raise a homeguard and could only muster thirty-six men. After a lengthy and deeply appreciated whiskey and soda with the chief of police, the officers went out and had some lunch on the piazza. The ladies of Carnarvon certainly worked hard to feed the hungry troops that morning, but it is very doubtful if the task was congenial. The young ladies were prettily dressed and seemed well educated, but spoke English with a decided accent.

About 6 o'clock in the evening E battery R. C. A. and two squadrons of Australian Mounted Infantry came in and were received with equal hospitality by the natives. We now have a very mobile column consisting of twelve guns and six squadrons of Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Mounted Rifles with some yeomanry. Yesterday being Sunday we had divine service out in the boiling heat and one man of D battery dropped with "a touch of sun." We have quite a number of cases of dysentery and "touch of sun," but nothing serious. No matter how tired the men are or how badly they want a rest there are always some of the numerous chaplains around to wheel them up on a Sunday morning for church parade. You might have thought that after being on route march across a desert for a week, the men would have been allowed to sleep in the first day they have camped. But no. The chaplains apply for church parades and the commanding officers have to comply, else there will be a howl that the men are being deprived of the consolations of religion. The consolations of religion are all right, but a little common sense is not a bad thing in its way. If the church parades were held in the cool of the evening it would not be so bad, but from 10 to 11 a. m. is about the warmest time of the day before the afternoon breeze comes up. The other colonial troops do not seem to be as well looked after in the matter of the consolation of religion as the Canadian corps, but they seem to have a sufficiency of water bottles, small arm ammunition and dubbin, so they worry along.

In the afternoon when we were all settling down to

sleep the back sleep coming to us, or to write letters home, or to re-arrange our baggage in the light of the experience of a desert march, it began to blow a sand-storm. There is a fine red sand up here like what you see in the sand-glasses for boiling eggs at home. When the wind blows this sand sifts in everywhere. No box can be closed tight enough to keep it out. Half an hour after the storm commenced tents were filled with sand which got into our kits, our eyes, ears and stomachs. At mess you could hear your spoon rasping on the sand in the plate. The jam had a film of red sand over it and the coffee was nearly full of sandbars. If the officers of the Ontario Artillery Association could hear how we blessed them for that mess hamper they presented to D battery they would know the gift was appreciated thoroughly. It has been a source of comfort ever since we started on the march. All the dishes have sliding covers and when a sandstorm is on and it is desirable to consume as small a proportion of sand as possible the benefit of this arrangement is fully recognised. All afternoon it stormed, with occasional showers of rain which the hot wind nearly boiled as it fell and dried up a moment after. Some tents went down and half their contents went gyrating across the desert to windward. We lay on the tent curtains inside and our servants squatted on the guys outside all afternoon.

The officers have all discarded their swords and carry only revolvers.

Some of the London Yeomanry raided a Boer pumpkin patch under the impression they were melons.

After a violent sand squall: Bareheaded gunner rushing down the lines—"Did anybody see a pony hat going past at the double?"

After D battery and the Canadian Mounted Rifles entered Carnarvon on Saturday, the news of the surrender of Bloemfontein was bulletined.

Yesterday morning the column broke camp at 4 o'clock and an hour later it was marching with a full moon directly in front and the rising sun directly in rear.

The Boers along the line soaked the troops for

everything they bought. D battery officers paid \$1.75 for a water melon. Everything else was in proportion.

"Everything is coming our way" yelled a gunner as the head of the swarm of locusts cut into our marching column, and you could see them darkening the hills and plain for miles away.

When we are to have a night march the battery bivouacs about 4 p. m. and the men are allowed to sleep until 8, after watering and feeding the horses and themselves. "Lights out" sounds at 6 o'clock. The other night the sun was shining quite warmly when "lights out" went, and a gunner lifted up his voice in imitation of the sergeant-major: "Hi! I say, you there! Blow out that sun."

There are many good features in connection with campaigning in this desert. For instance there are no flies, mosquitoes, or insects or pests of any kind, except a few sand lizards and bugs which do not annoy the men. The climate is dry, there is no dew, the sand is warm and clean to sleep on at night. The heat and scarcity of water are the main hardships to be endured—the same drawbacks which makes Hades so undesirable a place of residence.

CHAPTER X.

DELAYED BY RAINSTORMS.

The evening before Colonel Drury's column left Carnarvon a flying column consisting of one section of D battery under Lieut. McCrae, a squadron of Canadian Mounted Infantry under Captain Macdonald, and some New Zealand troops, was sent on ahead to Kenhardt. We expected to see them again in a few days, but it is characteristic of the uncertainties of war that Lieut. McCrae and his section did not again rejoin the battery until three months later at Bloemfontein. It was also characteristic that whereas the chief danger from marching through this desert region arose from drouth, our accidents and hardships resulted chiefly from too much water. For the first time "in the memory of the oldest inhabitant" rain fell in torrents for three days, making the rivers in front impassable and paralysing our line of communications so that horses and men nearly starved before we succeeded in getting out of the desert region :

Van Wyck's Vlei, March 25.

Here we are, D and E batteries, R. C. A., the Canadian Mounted Infantry, New Zealand Mounted Infantry and Imperial Yeomanry, in the rebel district of the Karroo, 100 miles northwest of De Aar. We left Carnarvon four days ago and have had a very severe march northward through the dusty desert. The water, which is stored in ponds along the route, is rather better than what we got south of Carnarvon, but that is not saying very much as the horses can scarcely be induced to drink it and many of them are sick. It is gradually dawning

on us that the colonial brigade under Colonel Sir Charles Parsons, is making the most arduous march of the campaign. We are in the Karroo desert over a hundred miles from our base of supplies and further from any possible base ahead. We expect to make a junction with the force under Lord Kitchener of Khartoum either at Kenhardt or Prieska. Meanwhile we are marching slowly on through the country much delayed by the big transport column by which everything has to be carried, food, forage, ammunition, fuel and drinking water. It is practically the same as marching in the Soudan, but our men and horses are standing it very well. Owing to the transport column the march is very tedious. Some days we make 25 or 30 miles, and on other days only 12 or 15 when the sand is deep, and the bullock teams get stalled. At night we sleep in the open and picket the horses to ropes stretched between the wagon bodies and the limbers. Such a bivouac is comfortable at night, but in the day time there is no shade and the men would rather be on the march than sitting about in the sun. The water supply is so doubtful that the marches have to be regulated so as to reach a pond at every halt. The Boers usually have dams built near their ranches where water is stored when it rains for their stock, and these have to be depended on to water the horses of the brigade. Lord Kitchener is driving the rebels down in this direction and it is proposed to catch them between the two columns and crush them, probably at Kenhardt. The population through this part of the country is much impressed by the strength of the column and wonder where all the troops came from. The Kaffir mule drivers tell us that they say we will either die in the desert or be cut up when we meet the enemy, the wish being father to the thought, for practically the whole of the people up this way are disloyal. They particularly hate the colonial troops and say they have no business coming there to help the rooineks. But they also seem more afraid of us than of the British soldiers.

On the 23rd we inspanned at 3:30 and marched without breakfast towards Van Wyck's Vlei, where the force

arrived about 9 o'clock over a very dusty road and heavy sand, the gunners having to walk most of the way. Vlei is a lake, but there is not much sign of any lake here, except a larger stagnant pond than usual. The village consists of about twenty square, flat-roofed, mud-brick buildings scattered about over a square mile of absolutely barren valley, like the sun baked bottom of a dry mud puddle. The Boers had been in a week before and looted the place. Most of the inhabitants have fled to Cape Town and elsewhere. The postmistress and telegraph operator, a young girl, told us how the Boers had ridden in at daylight and came to the office of which they demanded the keys. The girl refused to give them up but they threatened to shoot her, and, woman-like, she fainted, but hung on to the keys. The Boers took away the telegraph instruments and what money they could get, but left the safe unopened. They looted a number of the houses, and then retreated northward. When the force under Colonel Drury marched in we found half a dozen wagon loads of refugees who had come from Kenhardt, Uppington and towns away to the northward. The force bivouacked on the ground among the houses of the village and before breakfast or dinner, or whatever the meal was, could be cooked, a hot wind and sandstorm came on. As there were no tents we sat around in the dirt. The officers of D battery ate under their wagon and they had porridge with condensed milk. Half a minute after the meal commenced the driving storm covered everything with vagrant horse hair, dirt and sand making the food uneatable for any but hungry men. A Canadian hobo would have "scorned the entertainment," or at least would never think of lunching in the heat and dirt in the middle of a hotel stableyard, which is the nearest parallel to the situation. When the dust storm abated a heavy rain storm came up, the first we had experienced since we landed. There was a small cottage near by which had been looted, and the officers took possession of that place. A looted house is a pathetic spectacle. The house did not present a very imposing appearance from the outside. It

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was a square, one story mud brick cottage much like the adobe huts or ranche houses in Mexico. In front was a little garden about 20 x 40 feet, with a toy-like picket fence around it (wood is worth its weight in silver up here), and within the little enclosure were three hard bitten azalea bushes which had never seen better days. All around the house was a flat plain of dried mud. This place was typical of the other houses in the village, which were sprinkled around anywhere over a square mile of the desert. The house referred to had evidently been occupied by an English family of refinement, for the interior bore no resemblance to the squalid and desolate exterior. It was furnished with good furniture, including old fashioned iron bedsteads of artistic design with pink and white canopies of linen and lace over them. There were many handsome pieces of bric-a-brac, ornaments of ostrich feathers, painted ostrich eggs and curious plants in vases. In the large pantry were many valuable pieces of painted china, and the pictures on the walls showed taste in selection. The house had been thoroughly ransacked, bureau drawers thrown open and the contents turned out, letters and papers strewn about the floors, curtains torn down. In one room was a large bedstead with a baby's cot beside it. In the dining room the remains of a partially eaten meal were on the table. Hats and feminine wearing apparel were lying about.

It rained all the afternoon—a perfect deluge. The water did not soak into the sun-baked desert, and in an hour the water was six inches deep among the horses and about the guns. This wide, flat valley seemed like the bed of a great river which had been temporarily dry but now was in flood again. The men were got under cover in the few buildings about. The Ottawa section of D battery was in luck. The largest house in the village stood about three hundred yards outside the lines. The owner and his family had gone to Cape Town but the place was in charge of some colored people. Permission was secured from the agent of the owner for the men to sleep in the place. They took their blankets over and bedded down in the dining room, kitchen, car-

riage house and in a lumber garret. The house was nicely furnished for this country and the men took good care of the place. In the evening some of them found a magic lantern, with a complete set of slides, in the garret. A rubber sheet was hung on the wall with the white side out. Gunner Picot manipulated the lantern and the rest of the crowd lay on their blankets on the floor and enjoyed the entertainment. It was a wet, dreary night, the camp being entirely inundated and the horses half-leg deep in water and mud. The guard and picket had no place they could lie down and they spent a night of hardship. Over at the looted villa the officers bunked comfortably. During the afternoon and evening, after they had made their men as comfortable as possible, there was nothing to do and nothing to read except a few old books and children's primers, and the letters which were strewn about the floors. A couple of officers unearthed a large bundle of love letters which had evidently been written by a particularly nice and well-educated girl. Some of them were written from a seminary called The Gardens. It was not quite proper to read correspondence not intended for publication, as it were, but the weather was so beastly and nothing on earth to do, and the letters were so well written and so interesting that the temptation was too great. By the time they got through the two young Canadians were nearly in love themselves with the girl they had never seen, who wrote so piquantly and rallied her lover so mischievously and withal was so tender and womanly, though she was but a girl. It was like reading a particularly good love story in manuscript, with the rather grim war setting supplied by the disheveled little house, the muddy arms and accoutrements piled about the room, and the cheerless bivouac outside with the lines of bedraggled horses strung in dripping rows between the guns. As they read the letters the readers got to wondering what the girl was like and if the love affair had ended happily or if the hero had gone off to the front, or whether the bundle of letters had been returned and how they came to be there. "My own dearest darling boyjie," she called

him, and her letter was full of Dutch words which had no meaning for Canadian ears. She was feeling "naar" some days, which was apparently sad, and she told him her mother said she just scrawled when she wrote him and that "I just cheip you af, but it is nago as I can't write another nise, so old boy you must toch maar excuse my scrawl" because she cannot write slowly when she writes to him. In another place she coquetishly expresses regret that she ever became engaged. "Man alive!" she wrote, "but I ought not to have said yes so soon after saying no; but I felt so sorry for you when you begged so nicely." Then she relents later on (the young man had perhaps been flirting with some other girl and called down wrath upon his head) and wrote: "Now, don't go and get mad or naar about this. I am only teasing you a little. Suppose I were to give you the mitten, to how many more girls will you go? I dare say you'll have another one within a month or three months. Good night, my boy. I am so vaak now." There were many interesting things in the house besides the love letters—Christmas cards "From us all to Katie." Children's exercise books apparently corrected by a governess (there are no schools hereabouts because the population is so sparse, but there is a teacher at nearly all the ranches), and in the back of one book was written in a child's handwriting: "In this book I have sixteen sums—ten right and six wrong. Isn't that v. b.?" We also struck some school text books that had more condensed information about the country than all the expensive guide books we had bought, and these were read with avidity to pass the dreary afternoon and night.

During the night the rain let up and in the morning the water had disappeared off the Karroo as quickly as it had appeared, leaving the surface deep in thick, tenacious mud. It was intended that the brigade should move out at 6 a. m., but the transport wagons with their heavy loads and sluggish, unwieldy teams of oxen and mules were hopelessly bogged and the march had to be postponed. The camp was moved to a drier place, or

rather, a spot where the mud had not been churned up so much, and trenches were dug around the horse lines to divert the water. It rained off and on all day March 24, the heaviest fall of rain in the memory of the oldest inhabitant. There was another downpour of rain all day Sunday and a regular river ran through the camp. The poor horses had a hard time, but the men, except those on guard and picket, were fairly comfortable in the houses. We were in great luck to have been caught by the storm where there were houses, because the ground was so soft, so liquid, in fact, that tents would not stand for a moment, and we would have been exposed to the weather without even a dry spot to lie down.

On Sunday the officer commanding the Ottawa section received the following invitation after morning stables :

The left section, D battery, R. C. A., respectfully present their compliments to Lieut. Morrison, and request the pleasure of his company at dinner, 1.30 p. m., Sunday, 25th March, at Ottawa branch, Hurdman's Hotel, Van Wyck's Vlei. Sans ceremonie. R. S. V. P.

The following bill-of-fare was enclosed as an entirely unnecessary inducement :

Soup—Chicken broth, a la mouton.
Entrees—Veal cutlets, baked heart.
Roast leg of lamb, boiled mutton, fricasse chicken.
Vegetables—Carrots, onions, parsnips.
Dessert—Golden syrup, tea, coffee, cocoa, cheese.

Considering that the official bill of fare for that day was bully beef, hard tack and tea, it must have taken some cash and trouble to discover the material for such a recherche spread. It is needless to say the invitation was accepted with alacrity. The people in the house, who were very good to the Ottawa boys, loaned some china and table ware, and mess tins did duty for the rest. A big table had been rigged up in the dining room, and those who could not find seats at the table sat along the wall on each side. There was a howling rain storm outside, but it failed to damp the festive spirit of the

occasion. After the dinner there were songs. At the close I expressed my satisfaction at the excellent work of the section since the opening of the campaign, and hoped the gathering was only the first of similar reunions that the Ottawa section will hold in after years to fight their battles over again, and recall under more comfortable circumstances the hardships they were now undergoing. After the usual cheers three score muddy gunners adjourned to the inundated picket lines for afternoon stables.

This morning the rain had ceased, and the ground began to dry up, or, more properly speaking, the river had ceased flowing through the lines. The horses were moved out to a gravel ridge a few hundred yards from camp, where they would have a chance to dry off. The storm had not been an unmitigated evil, because the long, dry march had put the horses' feet in bad shape, and standing in the mud and water for three days improved their condition. It has put all the dry rivers in flood in front of us and on our line of communication in rear. The result is that we are already short of forage, and to-day are feeding chaff, which is not good stuff for heavy work.

The Boers poisoned the water supply here by throwing dead sheep into it, and we have to bring our drinking water three miles from wells.

The day before the troops left Carnarvon there were four Kaffir weddings in the town. After the wedding bells the bridal couples marched solemnly along the principal streets, in the middle of the roadway, preceded by a master of ceremonies and followed by all the women and children in the neighborhood. Afterwards there was a wedding dance, which much resembled a cakewalk.

When the officers of D battery wake up in the morning in their bivouac under the transport wagons the first thing they see is the name painted on the axle, "Ottawa Car Company." It seems quite homelike. Some people may think it is hard to sleep under a wagon, with a circle of horses and mules tied to the wheels all round, but when you are tired enough—as a gunner always is—

you would not exchange the accommodation for a parlor suite in the Waldorf-Astoria. When you have been on the move from 4 a.m. one morning to 2 a.m. the next you can get more condensed sleep into an hour than you ever did in your life before. To be sure, the view from your chamber is not extensive or particularly attractive. You look through the spokes of the wheel on one side and see a horse's legs, a Karroo thorn bush and a heap of stones, on the other side a horse's head, with its prehensile upper lip extended, trying to pick some straw out of your hair. There are no song birds on the Karroo, but usually just before daylight a mule tied to the water cart in the next alley will lift up its voice in joyous greeting to the purpling east. The mule is the canary bird of South Africa. Its voice seems to suit the landscape, which is harsh and forbidding.



OFFICERS' QUARTERS, VAN WYCK'S VLEI.

CHAPTER XI.

THE COLUMN RETURNS.

Van Wyck's Vlei, April 3.

The Carnarvon field force has returned to this place after occupying Kenhardt, 80 miles north of here, after a week of hard marching. Kenhardt is in the heart of the rebel district, and its occupation, which was accomplished without any serious resistance, was the objective point of the expedition. After leaving here a week ago the main body advanced to Oliphant's river, which was found to be in flood, or rather, an almost impassable morass, as a result of the heavy storm reported in my last letter. The advance body, composed of five troops of mounted infantry and a section of D battery, under Lieut. McCrea, the whole commanded by Capt. Macdonald, had crossed the river before the storm, and they pushed on to Kenhardt, which they occupied without resistance, the rebels dispersing as they approached. As the main body, or rather its transport, was blocked by the river, Colonel Sir Charles Parsons, with six horses in his Cape cart, pushed on after the advance column and entered Kenhardt with it. Not only was the main body blocked in front, but the line of communication was interrupted by the floods in rear, and the whole force was placed in a precarious position through lack of supplies, as we have to carry food, forage and fuel in this barren country. This is the winter season here, and the winter season means a period of alternate drought and flood. In the more clement seasons there is sufficient fertility developed in some favored valleys to raise a few crops and to keep enough thorn bush alive on the hills to sustain herds of goats. At present there are hardly any supplies of forage to be obtained, except some chaff. The main body, consequently, began to feel the belly

pinch, and made a desperate effort to push on after the advance. Thirty-six oxen were put on one wagon and tried to ford the river, but it took a whole afternoon to get it across. At this rate of progress it would take the outfit a week to make a mile, and as we were consuming our supplies with alarming rapidity the horses were reduced to a ration of chaff with a handful of wheat, and they began to get very thin. At this juncture news arrived from Colonel Parsons that Kenhardt had been occupied, and we were ordered to make the best of our way back to Carnarvon and meet any supplies that might be coming up. We picked up our traps and moved out with alacrity, the information being that the rest of the column would make its way across country to the railway. We were to make our way out to De Aar, and there it was expected that the third battery, C, of the brigade division, would join us from Cape Town, where it arrived last week, and the whole force of colonial troops, artillery and mounted infantry, would go up to join General Lord Roberts. We are fondly hoping that there may still be some fighting for us up there, for we have honestly earned our title to a share in the grand finale of the war.

This campaign of the colonial force, though it has not been attended with much fighting, has been of great value to the colony and the empire. The rebel Dutch had been running things as they liked all through this portion of the colony, and the rebellion was rapidly assuming proportions which threatened the success of the campaign in the Free State and the Transvaal, as it would have been necessary to detach troops to suppress it and guard the single railway line back to Cape Town. The serious character of the development in the campaign was shown by the fact that Lord Roberts sent Lord Kitchener to conduct the operations of this force. The rebels thought they were comparatively safe from effective military operations, because it would be almost impossible for an infantry force to operate in this region without establishing bases of supply and extensive lines of communication. The swift and daring advance

of this mobile mounted force which could detach smaller flying columns in any direction, struck terror into the rebels, who had not bargained for such vigorous and active measures for their dispersion. Being essentially cowardly when the odds are even, they hastened to return to the role of peaceful ranchers without offering any organised resistance to the keen, quick moving Canadians and Australians for whom the desert had no terrors, and who were ready at a moment's notice to make dashes of forty or fifty miles in any direction from the line of march if any enemy developed in force to oppose the Queen's authority. If we did not have any serious fighting we accomplished the entire pacification of a district the size of Ontario by doing a cakewalk through it with a chip on our shoulder, so to speak. The troops are now as hard as nails, and so are the horses that have not left their bones on the desert. The big Canadian horses, that everybody said would die like flies up here, have stood the severe service exceptionally well. The Australian and New Zealand horses have not done nearly so well. The Canadians have also stood the climate well, and though they have suffered much from dysentery, due to the extremely bad water, they rapidly pick up again without having to be sent back from their units. However, we are not out of the desert yet by any means, having a march of 150 miles before us from here to De Aar. If we could only get supplies of food and forage it would be a comparatively easy matter, but the men are on reduced rations at the time of writing, and there is nothing but chaff for the horses, and both are losing flesh and strength though otherwise in good health. There is no complaining, it being accepted as a natural condition of affairs on active service, though more sophisticated troops might view with alarm being 150 miles from anywhere, in a desert and with our line of supply practically cut off. The stores along here are sold out of everything but writing ink and clothes pins, and they cannot get any supplies either.

On Sunday, April 1, the first fatality occurred in the second Canadian contingent. There is a large irrigation

dam or lake here, the largest in South Africa, from which the place takes its name, Vlei being the Dutch for lake. As the water in the valley is impregnated with salt, the different units were ordered to water their horses at the dam, which is very deep. The men had been warned not to go in too far lest the horses should get out of their depth, but it was rather difficult to control a hundred or so of thirsty animals all anxious to get to the water at once. While the horses of D battery were being watered at noon Sunday, one ridden by Driver Robert Bradley, of the Ottawa section, got into a deep hole quite close to the shore and began to flounder about. At first it was not thought there was any serious danger, as the animal began to swim out with Bradley on its back, but, owing to the steepness of the side of the hole, it could not gain a foothold, and rapidly became exhausted from its struggles. The officer in charge of the parade immediately took measures to extricate the horse and man. Bradley shouted that he could not swim, and Driver Hal Walters at once jumped in to his assistance, while the others were trying to reach the horse. Just as Walters reached Bradley the horse sank, and Walters seized Bradley and was swimming out with him when Bradley apparently got tangled in the head rope and was jerked out of his grasp. He sank at once and did not come up. The horse came up and was dragged into shallow water, so exhausted that it could not move. A dozen gunners at once jumped in and commenced diving for Bradley, and they were joined a minute later by several men from the West Australians, who were camped on the bank above. The water was very muddy, and nearly as thick as pea soup. In about two minutes from the time the man sank a West Australian named Thomas Firn found him at the bottom in 15 feet of water.* A rope had been secured in the meantime, which Firn caught, and Bradley was pulled out. Hospital Corporal Whitton arrived a few minutes later, and measures were at once taken to resuscitate the unfortunate man, who was black in the face and unconscious. Other medical men arrived later, and in ten

*Firn subsequently received the Humane Society medal for his bravery.

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minutes respiration was induced and Bradley seemed in a fair way to recover. He was carried over to the only tent in our lines, where he was stripped, rubbed down, given stimulants and wrapped in blankets. He recovered consciousness, but soon became delirious. During the afternoon he became very weak. Dr. Worthington and Corp. Whitton were unremitting in their attention, and the surgeons of the other corps were called in consultation. At first they thought he must have been struck by the horse while under water, as there were symptoms of internal injury. His pulse was weak and he had difficulty in breathing. Though every thing possible was done for him by the doctors and his comrades of D battery, he gradually got weaker, and died shortly after midnight. A postmortem showed that the lungs were clogged with mud and sand from the dirty water which had filled them during his immersion, and his case was hopeless from the first. The officers of D battery selected a place for the grave on the side of a stony kopje, overlooking the camp and the valley. During the



A LONELY GRAVE ON THE
KARROO.

morning the whole battery turned out, as a fatigue party, and constructed a road from the camp up the side of the kopje, clearing the stones out and placing them in a row on either side. The rocks were cleared from around the grave, and a circular kraal of rocks built to protect it. After the interment in the afternoon a huge cairn of rocks was erected by the battery over the grave, and on the side of the cairn was placed a slab of rock, on which had been neatly cut a field gun and the inscription. The funeral was very impressive. It was attended by the whole force. The massed trumpeters of the brigade sounded the salute as the coffin was carried out, the escort presented arms and the officers and men of the force saluted as the funeral party passed through their ranks.

At the conclusion of the service the trumpeters sounded the beautiful call "first post;" after the three volleys had been fired "last post" sounded, and then the low, mournful sound of "lights out" echoed down the valley. Colonel Drury and the officers and men of the force stood for a few moments at the salute and then the Carnarvon field force marched away and left the body of their comrade in its lonely grave on the African Karroo.

To-morrow we march at daybreak for De Aar, and hope to get through in a week if the transport can keep up. The force will move straight across country, and as there are no roads most of the way we will likely have some difficulty in getting through. The horses are so thin that their sides look like lattice screens.

A letter from Driver Bradley's widow arrived in camp a few hours after he was buried.

Now that the rainy season is on it is a not unusual sight to see a sentry pacing his beat on the Karroo with nothing on but his pony hat, a shirt and belts, while the rest of his clothes are drying on a bush near by. You'd think he belonged to a new clan of Highlanders.

The "bully beef" used by the force is a very superior article, and would be acceptable as an item of any bill of fare. It is ready cooked and invariably good. The slighting references to "bully" are based exclusively on the natural aversion that arises from having it as an article of diet eight days a week and five weeks a month.

The Canadian horses get on well in the African climate, though the British army officers at Cape Town thought they were too large and would be marks for the diseases that afflict horse flesh in this climate. The only thing that bothers them is that they cannot live exclusively on a diet of South African atmosphere.

You hear funny things in camp occasionally. The other day a young driver was heard apologising to his horse as he doled out its feed of chaff, which has constituted the ration since the transport gave out. "Kru-ger," he said, patting the old trooper affectionately, "this is the last year I sell all my oats and have to feed this stuff."

Two native mule drivers were treated to half a dozen

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lashes with a sambok the other day, by order of the commanding officer. The sambok is a heavy ox whip, and the lashes were administered on the bare back. Though the lash is abolished in the army, military law prescribes it in small doses for camp followers. It is the only punishment the thievish Kaffir understands.

The fuel used on the Karroo is goat dung. On every ranch there are stone kraals where the herds are kept at night to protect them from the jackals. The manure dries in these kraals and is cut out in large slabs like peat. Ten minutes after the troops go into bivouac the air for a mile around is impregnated with the unfragrant incense of this odorless, but useful, fuel. It makes a very hot fire and burns rapidly.

When moving the guns out of the camp at this place on our way north last week the wheels of Sergt. Belford's gun turned up fourteen large silver spoons which had been buried deep in the ground either by some Boer sympathisers who had fled from the village or by the loyalists who desired to hide them from the looters. The heavy rains had softened the ground so much that the gun wheels cut down to the cache and stirred up the silver. As nobody was left to claim it the treasure trove was distributed as souvenirs.

We see by the papers there was an earthquake in Canada last month. There was also an earthquake felt at Carnarvon when we were there. It occurred at 12:15 a.m., and was productive of a rather amusing incident. The orderly officer of D battery had just lain down after taking the guard when the shock occurred. He got up to make sure if it was an earthquake or an explosion. An Imperial Yeomanry sentry was pacing his beat with a fixed bayonet flashing in the moonlight and a foot-fall you could hear a hundred yards off. The officer asked him if he had noticed anything a moment before, and the sentry gazed about the landscape and said "No." "Didn't you notice that earthquake just now?" asked the officer. "No, sir. Hi didn't see no earthquake," said the sentry. The other sentries had noticed it, however, and the officer was satisfied he had not got 'em again.

CHAPTER XII.

STARVING HORSES.

Carnarvon, S.A., April 7.

The Carnarvon field force is resting here for twenty-four hours prior to commencing another march across the Karroo eastward to De Aar Junction, where we are to report on the 14th. The distance is about 150 miles over a little-known country, and as the miles in this country are very elastic, the distance in geographical miles is probably much greater. It would give us no trouble if there was only something for the horses to eat, but the poor animals are very much worn down, many of them having been foundered by eating the wheat, which, with chaff, seems to be all we can get for them, and little of that. It was expected that when we got back to this advanced base there would be plenty of hay and oats, but we have only got a small quantity of oats and some straw, and are on short rations of that. The men have been on short rations, too, but they don't mind that if the horses were only fed up. Just now a load of oat straw was brought into camp, and when the drivers were called up to draw the ration they came on the run, as if it was something good to eat for themselves, and fairly fought over it, each man grabbing all he could for his "moke." It is particularly unfortunate that the horses cannot be fed up, because the Canadian gun horses and troopers have stood the arduous service splendidly. Their feet and backs and shoulders are in fine shape, and their general health is excellent, but they are being played out for lack of food. Even the horses that have been foundered by the wheat get well after a few days' marching with the care their drivers give them. A horse will be found in the morning so stiffened up that it can hardly move ten feet apparently. It is put in the center gun

or wagon team, and the other five horses practically pull it along all day. Every halt it lies down in the harness, and often the driver has to put the whip on it to prevent it falling down on the march. It is kind cruelty, however, because if the horse goes down it will have to be shot, whereas by lugging it along for a day or two it usually recovers. The vitality of the Canadian horse is wonderful. The Australian and English horses do not stand the service nearly so well. Yesterday six dead horses marked the line of march from Blaau Spruit to this place. Only one horse in D battery dropped, and it was the most awful-looking skeleton you ever saw in draught. It was left for dead some distance back, but half an hour after the old chap walked into camp and the boys gave him a cheer.

It is pitiful to see the old troopers play out on the line of march. We, of the artillery, will be trudging on through the sand when we will come upon a horse of the advance guard standing by the roadside, swaying groggily on its legs, its neck stretched out and its eyes glazing in death. When it hears the clank of the guns and the tramping of the horses in the column it will reel forward in a game effort to join the ranks, only to tumble in a heap. The battery passes on and a minute later the sharp crack of a pistol announces that some more horse flesh is fertilising "the wild and waste Karroo."

The morning we marched out of Van Wyck's Vlei a New Zealand Mounted rifleman died at reveille. He had been suffering from dysentery. They got permission from Major Hurdman to bury him beside Driver Bradley in the little cemetery we constructed on the side of the kopje. "We did not want to bury the boy among a lot of Dutchmen and Kaffirs," said the New Zealand officer, "we would rather think of him as sleeping beside his Canadian comrade on the Karroo."

The wear and tear of the force in men as well as horses is considerable. A good many men are ill with dysentery, due to the awful water. The rain has not made the conditions any better, as twenty-four hours of Karroo sun dries ponds into putrid puddles. Day before

yesterday, when the grand rounds was riding into camp, the sergeant's horse stepped on one of our cooks (it was before daybreak, and dark, and the man was asleep in his blankets). He had his head cut, and bled and yelled considerably, though not seriously hurt. He probably thought the enemy was upon him. Later in the day Col- lar Maker Moore, of the center section of D battery, had his arm broken while helping the transport mules over a donga. An ingrate mule kicked him.

The march of the Carnarvon field force will be one of the achievements of the present war. When we reach De Aar we will have covered at least 500 miles through a country practically as barren as the Soudan at this season of the year. Even here in a village of 800 inhabitants we had trouble to-day in getting enough fuel to cook the men's supper to-night. The actual distance the main body has traveled, as measured by the map, is about 400 miles, but the so-called roads are mere paths across the Karroo, and they wind around in all directions to avoid dongas and kopjes, so that the actual distance is greatly increased. It was a very monotonous march because the scenery is constantly the same on the Karroo. It is like moving along slowly at sea. You see a kopje ahead that does not seem to be far off, but you travel for hours before you get abreast of it, and hours more before it is out of sight. The landscape is so devoid of variety that it is very difficult to recall any place you camped at even three days before. In talking over the events of a few days back it is amusing to hear the means taken to locate an incident. "Where was that?" one will ask. "That was the halt where you got a drink from the C. M. R. chaps." Or "that was the bivouac near the Boer house where the pretty girl was so scornful and said she was heart and soul for the rebels." Or "that was where we got a cup of coffee at a Boer house, and the cup they gave the major had a picture of Kruger on it." "No, it was the bivouac where the sergeant-major's horse got at the bag of wheat on the gun and killed itself." Day after day we rode along, sometimes in a seething cloud of dust, other times in deep sand or

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mud. A winding column in front, the same in rear, Kar-roo thorn bush and dried mud all around, a flat-topped kopje or two on the horizon. When a sandstorm blew you got sifted full of fine sand until you could hear your eyeballs grate as they turned in their sockets. If there had been a rainstorm the column would pass a deep donga full of mud and water, and the batteries would be halted by a report that the transport was mired. Then all the gunners had to be marched back with drag ropes half a mile to find a top-heavy transport wagon and a dozen little mules in the bottom of the donga, the wagon hub deep in the mud and looking very immovable and the poor little mules wriggling about in a squealing heap, tangled up in their mesh of harness, while the Kaffir shrieked, "Eck! Eck! Chalu-lu-lu!"—and a lot of gibberish that was probably cuss words, while the fishing-rod whips waved and the lashes circled like snakes in the air and cracked like pistol shots. The little mules would be squealing and plunging and miring until one or two got down in the mud under the others' feet. Then the gunners would make two lines of their drag ropes, and, hooking one to each side of the wagon, they would walk off at the word, and, with a whole battery on each rope, pull the big wagon, mules and all, helter-skelter out of the donga on to the level. Then behind this transport wagon would be a mile or so of all sorts of vehicles—water carts, forage wagons, ambulances, transport wagons stretching out of sight behind the last kopje passed. Each in turn would come up, dash down into the donga, bring up in the mud at the bottom, amid shrieking and cursing Kaffirs, cracking whips, kicking mules and broken harness. Then the drag ropes, with the kharki gunners on the end of them—"Walk—March!" and out the outfit would come. Occasionally a mule team, by reason of its strength or the superior skill of its drivers, would flounder through and clamber straining up the opposite bank amid yells of encouragement from the gunners and comments rudely humorous and complimentary to the drivers and the mules. All this under a red-hot sun that would make your soul fry within you. After

all the first line of transport was over then the gunners would be marched off to gather stones to throw into the bottom of the donga to corduroy it for the heavy transport and big ox teams coming later. Then they would march back to the guns, and the column would meander on through the sand and thorn bushes. It was a gay life, but the Canadian boys never grumbled even when they marched at 4:30 in the morning, with little or no breakfast, and had only half a hardtack till 6 o'clock at night, and were so hungry that the mess orderlies dare not go down into the lines with the camp kettles among the hollow-eyed men lying about the guns, unless a sergeant accompanied them, to put the restraint of discipline on the demands of hunger. How many people at home have ever seen a really hungry crowd of men—not merely men with sharpened appetites, but absolutely lean and hunger-driven by continuous shortness of food? Even then the saving humor of the Canadian does not desert him. "Come this way, people!" yells a lanky, wan-faced lad, in imitation of the circus man's drawl, "the an-i-miles are now about to be fed!" Or when the food is served out an old corporal shouts "Feed!" the signal at stables to put the nose-bags on the ravenous horses. Or another dry chap will grunt: "Well, thank God fur a bite; many a man would make a hog uv himself." And everybody finds time to grin. Then having had a good feed, or at least taken the wrinkles out of their stomachs, as the boys say, they roll themselves in their blankets, light pipes and once more begin to heartily discuss the prospects of the campaign. The comfort fund of the people of Canada has done much for the health and comfort of the men in this campaign, and Major Hurdman expends it freely in getting extra food for them whenever possible, but on this march there were long stretches where money would not buy anything.

To-morrow morning (Sunday) we leave on our march out of this wilderness to De Aar, and won't we be glad when we get there!

It is a common thing in the artillery to have two brothers driving—that is, riding the gun horses—in one

gun detachment. In fact, it is a combination much encouraged, because they usually work well together from mutual interest. But the Ottawa section of D battery has a novelty, father and son driving in the same gun detachment. Driver Hare, sr., rides the lead of No. 6, and his son, a mere lad, though tall for his age, rides the center. And there are not two more reliable drivers in the battery or the service.

It will give some idea of the way good water is valued in this country to explain that if a man is giving you a drink he hands over the bottle of whiskey and makes you say "when" to the pouring of the water. You may think this is a giddy bar-room jest, but it is an actual fact.

A gunner of D battery had an unpleasant experience yesterday. On the previous day he was detailed to lead a sick horse. At the noon halt he was detained on some fatigue work until the battery was moving off, when he made a rush for the column, and clambered on a gun carriage, thinking somebody else would have looked after the horse. But that is not the way things are done on this sort of job. On arrival at the night halt the horse was reported missing, the rear guard had not brought it on nor had any other unit. The gunner was given some hard tack and a tin of bully beef and ordered to go back for the horse in the morning, and overtake the column here. To his credit be it said that he acquiesced cheerfully, and admitted that the punishment fitted the crime. He left on his lonely journey at daybreak, and found the horse in the possession of a Dutch farmer, who at first refused to give him up, but the gunner had a persuader with him. The Dutchman pretended to have lost the halter, but the gunner drove the horse before him on the road until he met a man who lent him a strap to lead it with, and at 6 o'clock last night he marched into camp, having covered thirty miles in twelve hours. It is even betting that no gunner in D battery will forget to look after a horse he is entrusted with in future.

It may be mentioned incidentally, and you can paste the fact in your hat, that there is not 10 per cent. of the

Dutch of Cape Colony loyal. Most of the houses we stopped at had pictures of Kruger and Joubert conspicuously hung upon the walls, while in others there were suspicious blank spaces in the places of honor, from which pictures had been taken down when our column hove in sight. There were very few men at any of the ranches we saw, and the women were often outspoken in their dislike for the British. They usually dissembled their dislike to the extent of charging extortionate prices for a cup of coffee, the only thing they ever seemed to have for us. Two cups for a quarter was the usual rate, and generally it was vile.



A GUN HORSE AFTER THE KARROO MARCH.

CHAPTER XIII.

OUT OF THE KARROO.

De Aar, April 16.

On the evening of Good Friday the Carnarvon field force completed its march of 500 miles through the north-western portion of Cape Colony. About 5 p.m. the column halted and bivouacked on a hill in sight of this place, where we were due to report on the 14th. The last 150 miles of our march from Carnarvon in the rebel district to this place was for the most part through a better country than the Karroo district, and we would have had a comparatively pleasant march during the concluding few days of our long and arduous trip had it not been for the wornout condition of the underfed horses, whose endurance was tested to the utmost. We had expected at Carnarvon to get a good supply of forage for the remainder of the trip, but only half rations of hay and oats materialised. The consequence was that the horses got weaker and weaker, and the last days of the march they died like flies. Of the two batteries of artillery D only lost seven, but E lost about twenty, while many of the remaining horses were so weak it was all they could do to carry their harness into the last camp. The men were not any too well fed, but many of the drivers fed their hard-tack to their horses, and at each halt the poor brutes ravenously ate up the little Karroo thorn bushes, roots and all. The suffering of the horses dampened the spirits of the men, but they did all they could to help their four-footed comrades along, both the gunners and drivers of D battery voluntarily dismounting and marching during the most of the time.

To the care bestowed on the horses by the men of that corps may be attributed the comparatively low death rate in D. The Canadian Mounted Rifles and Australian

and New Zealand mounted troops suffered very heavily. Every morning each bivouac was marked by its quota of dead horses, and the line of march was dotted with them. In the artillery the riding horses of the non-coms. were gradually taken over to fill up the vacancies in the gun teams. Then the gun teams began to be reduced from six to four until on the last day E battery had five vehicles reduced to four horses. D battery made it a matter of pride to reach De Aar with full gun teams, and it succeeded, but the senior non-coms. were the only ones left mounted besides the officers.

It was a good Friday for the whole force when we sighted De Aar in the distance shortly before sunset on April 13, and went into bivouac prior to the march in next morning. We had done the record march of the campaign, and we were glad it was over, and we were in touch with civilisation again. The gunner officers put up a tent and had their first bath in weeks, during which they had slept with their clothes on. When they came out of it they felt as if a load had been removed from their consciences.

Meanwhile the tired men of the artillery went to work and cleaned up their guns and harness and repacked everything as neatly as possible, so as to demonstrate to their British comrades that though they had been in the Karroo for six weeks it could not take the gloss off them. Their equipment might be weather beaten, their horses gaunt and hungry, their uniforms torn and ragged, and they might "have food on their clothes," like Mr. Kruger, but the mechanism of the guns was bright and oiled, every bit of steel burnished and every old bucket and blackened camp kettle and drag rope and pick axe was strapped and packed like unto a diagram in the handbook. The men were at this work when a great yelling and cheering commenced, which spread all through the camps of the cowboys and Australians. Away off in the valley towards De Aar they had caught sight of a railway train—the first they had seen in forty days—winding its way like a little black worm along towards a gap in the kopjes. The men then began to realize that they

were once more in touch with civilisation—civilisation as represented by a railway junction, two stores and a bar-room, a plain dotted with tents and kopjes of commissariat stores covered with huge tarpaulins, such being De Aar.

Unfortunately, the work of preparation for the entry into De Aar proved abortive. Good Friday night a heavy, cold rain set in, drenching the men to the skin and turning the bivouac into a sea of mud. About 9 o'clock in the morning the Carnarvon field force made its entry into De Aar in a pouring rain, the men with their overcoats and waterproof sheets around them huddled in dripping groups on the guns, and the wornout horses staggering through the mud. Nobody took much notice of us in the camps, as marching in columns are too common to attract much attention. As we passed the station there was a train loaded with men, horses and stores. The men wore cowboy hats, and at first we thought they were C battery, R.C.A., from Cape Town, but found it was a couple of troops of mounted infantry under Capt. Moodie, and men and horses belonging to D and E batteries that had been left at Halifax when we sailed. With them was Captain Mackie, who has since been appointed quartermaster of the artillery brigade division, and attached to D battery, where he is at home among his Ottawa friends.

The Canadian artillery made a wet camp in the rain next to the Queen's regiment, the officers of which very kindly invited the Royal Canadian Artillery officers to lunch while the regiment did as much for the men. In the afternoon the rain cleared off, we got our tents up and are now fairly comfortable, though it rained all day Easter Sunday, and this plain, which has been camped on by tens of thousands of troops en route to the front since the war began, is a morass of putrid mud in wet weather.

At last we have got forage for the horses—oats and hay three times a day, and you can see them fatten while you watch. We are also drawing all sorts of supplies out of the British government stores, including a full out-

fit of nose-bags, the bottoms having been eaten out of the others by the starved horses while chasing single grains of oats around the corners during the lean weeks on the Karroo. Another significant item in the requisition was a new outfit of drivers' whips, vice the ones used up in keeping the traces stretched over many a hot, dry, weary dusty mile. This morning we got a new issue of clotning, kharki serges and Bedford cord riding breeches, the latter of every possible color from chocolate to pale mauve, pepper and salt and white. They are all of one size, but of two shapes, one very tight and the other as baggy as those which adorn the figures in pictures of sunsets on Holland canals. The material is extremely good, and they will wear forever apparently. As soon as we have refitted we are to go forward to Bloemfontein to form part of the colonial division of Roberts' army for the campaign on Pretoria. But you will know more about our future movements ere you read this than we do now.

There are not a great many troops here now, mainly ammunition columns, army service corps companies, engineers and some infantry. No mounted troops but ours. Infantry is at a discount now, the word is all for mounted men—artillery, cavalry and mounted infantry being rushed up to the front. And yet some wise people have said that the day of the horse in war is past. The bicycle does not seem to figure at all in this war, else they should have sent a flying column of steeds that did not consume forage up to Van Wyck's Vlei and Kenhardt. The bicycle, however, has too many limitations to make it much of a factor in war.

The Canadian militia department should furnish every battery with sets of breast harness for the markers. If D and E had had breast harness on the desert march it would have proved invaluable, as horses with sore backs and shoulders can be worked in breast harness until the sore spots heal.

The roads on the Karroo are so crooked that in two days' march the winding of the trail increased the distance twelve miles in fifty. The peculiar thing is that

there is no reason for it except that the first wagon over the road wandered about probably in search of water, and every wagon since has followed it through the inherent conservatism of the Boer.

In peace time the artillery has no chaplains. In this campaign all three chaplains sent out from Canada have been posted to the artillery. The gunners are at a loss whether to be flattered or not, but considering that they have only one doctor and one vet. to three batteries they are inclined to think their spiritual comfort is better provided for than their material well-being.

The latter part of the march from Carnarvon to De Aar was through a more fertile and more loyal country than the Carnarvon and Kenhardt districts. At some places the residents presented us with baskets of pomegranates and quinces as we marched through. (It sounds luscious to read that the Canadians were refreshed with pomegranates and quinces during their arduous march, but as a matter of fact the Canucks would not exchange a good Canadian apple for all the fruit with hifalutin names in South Africa.)

CHAPTER XIV.

REFITTING AT DE AAR.

When the Canadian artillery and mounted infantry came out to De Aar they found they were in orders to proceed at once to join in the march from Bloemfontein on Pretoria. They also heard that C battery, R. C. A., had been sent round by Beira to take part in the relief of Mafeking. In a few days the mounted infantry duly departed, but the artillery did not get any orders. Days went by and at last it gradually became known that the guns were slated for "line of communications" and would miss the march on Pretoria. At that time it was supposed that the capture of the Transvaal capital meant the end of the war, and the bitterness of our disappointment must be measured by that fact. As the three weeks, which was originally named as our term of "l. o. c." service, extended into months, the feeling became one of dejection, especially as De Aar was very unsanitary, and the health of the men latterly became so bad that over one-third were in the hospital all the time. These were the days when the men of the Canadian artillery used to go over to the station and read the daily war bulletins, telling of the achievements of Hutton's mounted brigade, and turn away with tears in their eyes when they thought of what they were missing and of the prospect of going home without having got into action. Of course, ultimately, they got their share of fighting, but those bitter weeks will never be quite forgotten. The following series of letters from De Aar should be read in

the light of this knowledge. At first we did our best to keep up our spirits and the spirits of our men, but toward the last it became very trying. It was never explicitly stated why the artillery did not join in the advance on Pretoria as originally intended, but the surmise was that it was on account of the condition of the horses after the Karroo march. However, we had received fifty excellent remounts from Canada at De Aar, and such was the recuperative powers of our Canadian horses that they would have been found fit a fortnight later, when the advance took place, had the brigade division been called on. Probably the imperial officer who reported on the batteries did not take this into account.

De Aar, April 23.

Since its arrival at this camp the Carnarvon field force, having completed its work of flattening out the insurrection in the northwest portion of Cape Colony, has been broken up. D and E batteries, R. C. A., under Lieut.-Col. Drury are refitting for the next move. The squadron of the Canadian Mounted Rifles, under Major Howe, which was with the main body, and the other colonial mounted infantry, have gone on to Springfontein. The right section of D battery, under Lieut. McCrae, and the squadron of Canadian Mounted Rifles, under Capt. Macdonald, which was detached to Kenhardt, has come out of the Karroo to the railway at Victoria road. This force hoisted the British flag at Kenhardt, and its work up there is excellently spoken of by Sir Charles Parsons. It had a hard trip, and Lieut. McCrae lost five out of thirty-five horses. D and E batteries were lucky in meeting here the forty-five remount horses left at Halifax, which came on with the Milwaukee, and have put us in marching trim again. Mules have been furnished us for the transport wagons, which releases a number of horses for use on the guns.

De Aar is not a very healthy place, as the plain has been camped over by thousands of troops since the war

began, and the stream which intersects the plain is little better than an open sewer. The camp is defended by seven redoubts on the surrounding kopjes, built of earth and topped with railroad iron. They are armed with howitzers, and are located in out-of-the-way places, so that very few even of the troops in the camp know where they are, or, indeed, that they are here at all, as they cover a radius of three or four miles. It is curious the ignorance that exists in a large camp like this regarding the occupants of the camp and its surroundings. As a rule, each corps keeps to its own lines and does not know even the name of the corps lying next it, though their tents may be only a hundred yards away. A few enterprising spirits may go visiting about, but the large majority never care to wander from their own fireside except to go over to the railway station and what passes for a town. The town in question consists of a wire-fenced street, with a straggling line of cottages, two depleted general stores, a hospital with 350 sick and wounded, a fat little cemetery adjacent to the hospital on the muddy plain, in which there is a monotonous similarity in the epitaphs—"Died of enteric fever, aged 23;" "Died of wounds, aged 28"—without even a "Dulce et decorum" et cetera. (Even the epitaph fictionist cannot find it in his heart to declare in bold black and white that it is "dulce et decorum" to die of dysentery for your country.) There is a very scratch lot of corps in camp, here in the anteroom to the theater of war. There are drafts of artillery, cavalry and infantry in little unsociable bunches of tents among the kopjes, outposts miles out on the veldt snugly ensconced in little sheep pens of railroad iron, which replace the more picturesque sandbag redoubt and earthwork glance of former days. Oh, yes, and right next to us is a large British regiment with many tents and many men, and it bears a county name to which is attached many honors in the army list. The men's uniforms are ragged and dirty; a lance-corporal passed the tent just now with his one chevron hanging to his arm by a thread, and his buttonless shoulder straps flapping in the wind. Most of

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the older men are unshaven, and the camp of the regiment is very quiet. There is none of the light-heartedness and sky-larking among the men that marks the other corps off duty. If you ask who they are and what they are doing here you are told that "the Blank lost eleven officers at Colesberg." The number of men lost is never mentioned—only the number of officers. This fact is peculiar. If you are of a prying turn of mind you will be told that they occupied a kopje and got careless about keeping a lookout and the Boers crept upon them—and the regiment lost eleven officers. That must be the reason they look so pre-occupied and keep so quiet, and are here at De Aar instead of on the ragged edge of the front.

But there are other interesting features about De Aar. It is the principal railway junction in South Africa and of superlative importance in this time of war, as the seven howitzer batteries capped with railroad iron testify. If the Boers raided into De Aar they would cut off Kimberley and Bloemfontein from communication with Cape Town and leave both places and the forces north of the Orange river "in the air," to to speak, because it is the junction where trains from all three places meet. All day and all night long the trains toil in and out of the little station west of our camp. Now it is a lot of yeomanry, officered by "two lords and three baronets," as the little English clerk at the station tells you with much gusto; then it is a huge, lengthy, slow-moving train of supplies and bridging material, which crosses here an hospital train from the front, and as the latter goes by you get a panoramic composite-photograph impression of pale, pain-wrenched faces, red cross badges, white-lined bunks, neat compact dispensaries, nurses' caps, with worn, tired faces in them, concluding with an appetising whiff from the kitchen car and a fast receding group of convalescent Tommies dangling their kharki legs over the rear platform. Then a special train across from Naauwpoort, with Gen. Hunter and staff, or some other big man, followed by a dozen truck loads of Alabama mules marked (the trucks, not the mules) "Glan-

ders. Return to Cape Town and disinfect." On the other switch from the glandered mule train is a car containing four horses sent out by the Duke of Teck for his sons at the front. "Cost £360 each," the little English railway clerk tells you—and they look it. Stalls padded, horses with knee-caps and tail bands on, four English grooms in attendance. A glandered mule puts its head out of its truck, looks at these equine aristocrats and opportunely brays "Hee-haw! Hee-haw!" as much as to say: "I see your finish," for the democracy of death is in the air and glanders, no less than enteric, loves a shining mark.

It is interesting to note that all this immense current traffic—the ebb and flow of war—is under the direct control of three Canadians. Lieut.-Col. Girouard is the director of all the railways; Capt. de Lotbiniere is the deputy director of the Bloemfontein line, and Capt. Nanton, an R. M. C. graduate, is deputy director of the Kimberley line. The little English clerk at the station speaks their names with a respect almost amounting to the reverence he bestows on the titles of the lords and baronets who are leading the warlike yeomanry to the front. Another young Canadian who occupies a leading place in civil and military estimation up here is Capt. McInnes, son of Senator McInnes, of Hamilton, who distinguished himself much as the engineer in charge of the defense of Kimberley. The Kimberley papers mention his name third as chiefly deserving the credit of saving that place from falling into the hands of the Boers. Col. Sam Hughes has come to the front, too, and has gained credit as an efficient intelligence officer with the column operating against the Cape Colony rebels near Prieska. Capt. Bell, well known in Ottawa and among the military men of Canada as A. D. C. to Gen. Hutton, is very ill with enteric at the Deilfontein hospital south of here. That is the hospital where Dr. Fripp, physician to the Prince of Wales, is in charge, and Cecil Rhodes' sister is a nurse. It is said to be the best equipped field hospital that has been. One of D battery men was there with a broken arm. He was very anxious to get away

to rejoin us, and the doctors kindly convinced him that his arm was not ready for use yet by turing the X-rays on it and showing him that the bone was not quite knit. They have all the very latest apparatus and instruments, and no expense has been spared to fit out the hospital.

The men of the Royal Canadian Artillery and Canadian Mounted Rifles are wondering what has become of the Red Cross comforts which were so abundantly shipped out here for the troops. On the Kenhardt expedition through the Karroo there were no provision made for the comfort of the sick, except such as the limited medical supplies afforded, and most of the time the unfortunate dysentery patients had nothing better to tempt their appetite or hasten their recovery than bully beef and biscuit. There was a large convoy of sick who had to be taken out in wagons over 200 miles through the karroo from Van Wyck's Vlei to Victoria Road. The medical staff did all in its power to make them comfortable, but during no part of the war have the sick been more in need of special comforts than on that trip, as no supplies could be secured en route. The men who were well needed nothing extra and expected nothing, though those of D battery would often have fared hardly had it not been for the comfort fund provided by the citizens of Ottawa, Guelph and elsewhere, which was used to purchase additions to their rations. Since we have arrived here Col. Drury has received a letter from some society formed by Canadian ladies in London offering to supply the men with underclothing, cholera belts, socks, shirts, etc., and we are afraid the requisition we sent back will make their heads swim, for there was no water fit to wash clothes with in the karroo country and the men wore their dirtyable articles until they parted with them forever. Consequently they are in need of almost all the articles usually embraced in the title of "gents' furnishings." While we are under great obligations to our countrywomen in London, the Canadian soldier boys read in the papers about the Red Cross and other comforts that are being sent out by kind friends in Canada and naturally wonder how none of these comforts have

appeared to mitigate the rigors of the Karroo campaign, because they are in Africa somewhere and the bulk of the Canadian force in this country was in the Carnarvon expedition. Possibly they will reach us later on.

The general impression of good authorities at the time of writing is that the war will last three or four months yet.

The Canadian nurses, Misses Horcomb, McDonald, Horne and Richardson, passed through here on Saturday night en route from Kimberley to Bloemfontein. They have been doing excellent work at Kimberley. One of the English nurses associated with them there died of enteric and two more are sick, but the Canadian girls are well and their zeal is not a whit abated by the dangers they have passed.

When the artillery is out drilling here they have lots of fun scaring up hares and buzzards. When a hare is scared up by a brigade division of guns it can only run to the front as the line extends a quarter of a mile and poor bunny's efforts to escape with the line of horses coming on after it are amusing. There is rather good shooting about here, many springbok being in the vicinity.

Yesterday afternoon by way of recreation a party of us went up hunting springbok. The springbok is a prong-horned deer about half the size of our red deer and extremely swift. They do not bound like a red deer but more like a rabbit or a kangaroo. Every now and then they spring forward and fairly skim through the air 30 or 40 feet. There are any number of them about here and as the season is dry they have to resort to the irrigation pools to drink and to stay in their vicinity. Capt. Eaton, Capt. Mackie and myself went out after them, taking eight or ten mounted gunners to act as beaters, and we had more fun than a football match. Three miles from camp the party separated to round up the springbok and the excitement began. The veldt is as flat as the prairie except for kopjes here and there and you can see for miles. We soon flushed half a dozen bok and they commenced to run with incredible swiftness. They

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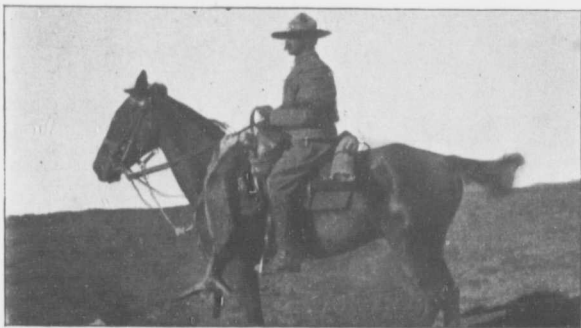
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OUR BIVOUAC.



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seemed to streak along the grass, they traveled so rapidly. When they were headed by a mounted gunner they would turn in their own length and streak off in another direction. When cornered they would dart through the line of horsemen and the fastest mount in the bunch could not begin to head them off. As we went on more bok were flushed and the hunt became laughably exciting. The deer were darting in every direction and the horsemen galloping after them. Even when they came close, before you could pull up your horse, dismount and fire they would be four or five hundred yards away, and you might as well try to shoot a bird on the wing off a horse's back at full gallop as try to shoot a springbok. In the midst of the excitement a herd of 25 or 30 came streaming across the veldt and went right through the party, which was now distributed over three or four miles of ground. Everybody galloped to try to head them off, but they drifted over the veldt like a cloud shadow. Those who got within 500 or 600 yards of them got off their horses and pumped two or three .303 carbine bullets into the bunch, but though we saw the dust spots all around them and several spring straight up in the air, none dropped. The herd separated and some of them charged right through the horsemen. One ran right for Capt. Mackie and the latter put his bay horse after it and the two ran neck and neck for a couple of hundred yards when the bok left the horse as if it was tied to a fence. The horses entered into the spirit of the fun and the moment they sighted a springbok would go after it ventre a terre. The veldt is full of jackal and rabbit holes, and every now and then a horse and rider would turn a somersault. Capt. Mackie is 6 ft. 5 in. and rides a 17-hand horse. He was chasing a bok when his horse took a header and he went on after the bok himself, making one complete revolution in mid-air, as the circus posters say, before he struck this terrestrial ball. And the earth trembled. Luckily he was not hurt at all. The horses began to get excited and go strong and every few minutes somebody would be down. Gunner Alexander,

of D battery, had one arm broken and the other dislocated, and Driver McDonald, of E battery, had an arm dislocated, and these accidents rather put a damper on the sport. Curious to relate, notwithstanding all the riding and shooting, we did not bring home a single bok, though every carbineer was certain he had hit one or two and the .303 bullet had failed to stop them. They were all also converts to the verity of the old school book legend that when the bok hears the report of a gun he bounds into the air and avoids the bullet. We had also the consolation of knowing that though the officers here have been hunting springbok since the war began there is only one authentic instance, so far as we have heard, of a bok being brought into camp. But we had a great afternoon's fun.

The nights are getting very cold and we have difficulty in keeping warm. May in South Africa corresponds with our November. If it continues to get colder until July and August it will be decidedly uncomfortable, as our men are all equipped for a hot country. They will need heavy underclothing, woolen socks, Balaclava caps and thick cholera belts. The latter are wide web-knitted belts for the protection of the back and abdomen and are a safeguard against dysentery.

CHAPTER XV.

ON LINE OF COMMUNICATION.

De Aar, May 7.

D and E batteries, R. C. A., have had three weeks of line of communication work similar to what the infantry had when they came out here first, and the gunners are heartily sick of it. They don't have to build railway sidings or handle supplies, but they are occupied in what the authorities term "making a show of guns on the line of communication." The show is made by distributing D battery all along the line from Orange river to Victoria road. Lieut. McCrae's section has been at the latter place since it arrived back from Kenhardt. Lieut. Van Tuyl's section was ordered to Orange river last Sunday, and my section and E battery are at this camp. De Aar is not a joyous place to put in the time. The water is bad, and it is very unhealthy. The hospital is full and the patients are dying at the rate of twelve or fourteen a week. The doctors and the parson are the only people who are busy. We drill in a desultory way, and supply gun carriages and occasional firing parties for funerals. The rest of the time we sit about in the microbe-infected dust and wonder if we left our 'appy 'omes for this. The only excitement is at 8:30 a.m. each morning, when the querulous notes of the "sick call" are heard, and as the procession of patients goes past in Indian file marshaled by the battery orderlies we count how many more have gone sick from each corps. The hospital here is not a very enticing place, and many of the men will do anything rather than go into it. Most of the patients are in long corrugated iron shacks, and whatever has been said of the model hospitals around Cape Town does not apply here. The patients are all huddled together in rows, delirious men shrieking and keeping the rest awake, dying men

sending those about them into a blue funk. The flies, now that the cooler weather has come on, are awful, and when the miserable patients get too weak to keep them off they batten on their eyes, faces and lips, and there is no hand to fan them away. It may be asked where are the nurses. Well, there are eight or ten of them here, but without any desire to belittle the work of these brave women, it must be said that the British army nurse does not perform the functions that we associate with the name of nurse in Canada and the States. She is an officer, with the rank of lieutenant in the army, and her executive duties are those of a superintendent rather than a worker. The "ministering angel" business is mostly done by Tommy orderlies under her direction. In one of the papers recently to hand we read the speech of some army doctor in England who was complaining that the army here was "cursed with lady busy-bodies and amateur nurses." De Aar hospital could stand a few of these amateur nurses, if by that he means nurses who go into the ward and nurse as our Canadian nurses do. This week one of the Ottawa section, Gunner E. Picot, died in the hospital of enteric, and during the last days of his illness the men of the battery went over to the hospital and looked after him themselves. They put a screen over his bed to keep the flies away, and did all they could to make him comfortable. Of course it cannot be expected that hospital arrangements up here would be very good, but when volunteer nurses are so plentiful it seems a pity their services were not made use of. Gunner Picot, who died on May 2, was himself serving as hospital orderly when he took enteric, having volunteered for the work, though three orderlies had already died of fever. Four days after he was down with enteric, and in five days he was dead. On the afternoon of May 2 he was buried in the military cemetery, Col. Drury and nearly all the officers and men of the R. C. A. at this place being present. The authorities do not allow the usual three rounds of blank to be fired over the grave here. Its frequent repetition would have a depressing effect on the patients in the hospital. A considerable number of the R.

C. A. are in the hospital with enteric fever, dysentery and other complaints, but this is the only death so far. It has been dismal work, this line of communication business, and officers and men are tired of it. They have no heart for work, and, in fact, so many men are sick that it is difficult to get full detachments for drill. All there is to do most of the time is stable routine, and between whiles we sit about grousing and watch the vultures sailing around about in the blue sky overhead, inspecting us and giving us their merry ha-ha. The other day Col. Drury marched all the artillery out to a river about five miles north, where the men had a swim, and we spent the day in picnic style, but with guards out, returning at night. The men enjoyed it very much, and it cheered them up wonderfully. Of course we are only having the same experience as other corps, nearly all of whom have to do their stunt of "line of communication" work, but it is very trying. If the men had the excitement of an occasional fight to keep their minds off other matters it would be all right, but this sitting down and doing nothing to the tune of twelve deaths a week is dispiriting, especially to troops like ours, who came out expecting to get their fill of fighting. The staff officers tell us Roberts has 200 guns over Bloemfontein way, and somebody has to do the protecting of the railway just now, that we will get our chance later and get all we want. So with that we have to be content. The other day the draft for the Royal Canadian Infantry was here for two hours on its way over to Bloemfontein, and we met Capt. Winter, Capt. Carpenter and a lot of fellows we knew.

Lieut. McCrea, of D battery, had a close call when crossing Oliphant's river on his way to Kenhardt. The river has marshy banks, and is about 1,500 yards wide. He had occasion to cross several times superintending the work of getting the guns across when his horse became exhausted and fell on him pinning him under water. Before they were rescued horse and man were nearly drowned.

There is one article that the Canadian soldiers will import into Canada from this country when they go

home, and that is the "water cooler." It is an inexpensive canvas bag of any size with the neck of a bottle, or a wooden spigot, sewn into the corner of it. The bag is filled with water and hung up, preferably in the sun, and the water exudes slightly through the canvas. The result is that the water is kept as cool almost as if it was iced, even on the hottest day. On the Karroo campaign the men on nearly every gun had a water cooler hanging to the limber.

Though we are temporarily on line of communication duty the Ottawa section is endeavoring not to forget the art of war. Last Wednesday the section marched out to Brak river for the day, and while it was absent one of the pickets left in camp strolled over to visit the camp of a detachment of Royal Engineers lying next to us. A slight unpleasantness arose, and the gunner, who is an ex-Ottawa football player, proceeded to clean out the camp, which he accomplished in style. He knocked out six men, and a sergeant who interfered was thrown bodily through a tent. The Kaffir mule punchers reinforced the sappers, with the result that two of them had to go into hospital. It is said that when the gunner departed it looked as if a cyclone had gone through the camp. A charge was laid against him by the officer of the engineers, and it was a very funny sight when the case came up at office next morning. A procession of lame, halt and bandaged invalids wended its way over to our lines to give evidence. One Kaffir had a head on him like a split watermelon, another man had a crutch, and they all wore an aggrieved air and many bruises. The sergeant, corporal and several sappers gave evidence which could not fail to convince anybody that they had been victims of assault and battery. The gunner got off with ten days C.B. It is said that the engineers purpose building a redoubt around their camp should the Ottawa section not move out before he is released.

CHAPTER XVI.

GUARDING THE RAILS.

Camp De Aar, May 21.

During the past week the brigade division of artillery sent out by Canada has been very much dispersed and the staff disbanded. It was expected when the Royal Canadian Artillery came to South Africa that it would be taken through the war as a brigade division, but Col. Drury has never had his three batteries together since they landed, and the organisation is now hopelessly broken up. C battery is at Bulawayo; four guns of E battery at Rooipan, west of Belmont, the other section being at the latter point; the three sections of D battery are at Fort Munster (Orange river station), De Aar and Victoria road, respectively. We have not had enough fighting to suit us, and from the present outlook the chances of further service are slim.

To-day De Aar is en fete over the news of the relief of Mafeking. The Kaffirs are dancing and the garrison are holding sports. Every man has been served out with a package of cigarets and a gill of rum. To-night there was a torch light procession and military tattoo.

It was expected that the Ottawa section would be moved up to join Sir Charles Warren at Belmont, but Col. Sir Charles Parsons, who commanded us on the Karroo march, has indicated that he desires the two guns for a swift little punitive expedition to Kolkue, a place in the mountains fifty miles northeast of Orange river, where a small force of Boers have got their tails up and are enjoying themselves. The British force will be composed of the Ottawa section and an escort of mounted infantry. After we get through with that the section is slated to join Gen. Warren, unless the rumors of an armistice prove true and put

an end to operations. We have done our share of line of communication work, and are heartily anxious to jump De Aar.

The officers of D battery have been mainly engaged during the past week in assisting to court-martial the English militia, and are kept traveling the line. Lieut. McCrae sat on no less than five courts at Beaufort West and other points; I acted on three here and at Victoria road, and Major Hurdman was president of another. Line of communication work is very trying on discipline, as the troops are much on detachment and are apt to get slack, especially if a corps has not been well disciplined prior to taking the duty. D battery has only had two courts since landing, and they were for offences not directly connected with service duties. The infantry is detached in small parties guarding bridges, and when the days are warm the sentries are not troubled with insomnia.

The weather is becoming much colder, especially at night, and even in the daytime it is often unpleasantly cool when the wind is from the south. (It will be noted that the balmy breezes here come from the north.) Expecting that Africa was a warm country we left all our thick clothing and underwear at the base, consequently we have trouble in keeping up the circulation when the thermometer goes down to freezing point, as it did the other evening. Before we left Cape Town all the men were issued with sweaters, but on the hot Karroo march most of them threw their sweaters away. Last week a box of comforts arrived, which proved very welcome. There was a pair of warm woolen socks for every man, a tin of tobacco contributed by "some friends in London" for each man; also Balaclava caps, handkerchiefs, writing paper, etc. The socks were knitted by some of our fair countrywomen at home, and with many of them were kind messages from the donor. One pair was labeled: "For the biggest man in the contingent," and they were unanimously awarded to Capt. Mackie, R. C. A., who is six feet five inches. He will no doubt duly report their receipt. The men greatly appreciated the gifts, and the

kind friends at home who made the articles will be pleased to know that they have helped to keep some "absent-minded beggar" warm at night.

On Friday Gunner E. P. O'Reilly, of E battery, died in the hospital here of enteric fever, and as his battery was up at Belmont his remains were interred by the Ottawa section of D battery with military honors. The deceased was a son of J. E. O'Reilly, Q.C., master-in-chancery at Hamilton, and he was a former member of the Hamilton Tigers. He was attending McGill college, studying medicine, and enlisted there for the second contingent. Deceased had only been ill a week. The deaths here from enteric fever continue daily, and it has been found necessary to enlarge the little cemetery.

This section has had a good deal of sickness, but none of the cases is serious at the present time. The places at which the right and center sections are stationed are much healthier and the men are in fine shape.

The brigade division staff has been broken up, Surgeon-Major Worthington and Veterinary-Major Massie having joined Gen. Sir Charles Warren's force; Chaplain Cox has gone to Bloemfontein, and Adjutant Thacker is invalided to Deilfontein hospital. Capt. Eaton, of D battery, has been appointed railway staff officer here, so that our mess at headquarters is reduced to Lieut.-Col. Drury, Major Hurdman and myself, all that's left of "the boys of the old brigade" at time of writing.

Miss Horne and Miss Richardson, two of the nurses who came out with us on the Laurentian, have been very ill with fever at Bloemfontein, but are recovering. The Canadian nurses have been doing splendid work, and as there are 4,000 patients in the hospital there they have been very busy. Miss Macdonald and Miss Hurcomb have forty-six patients under their charge. The mortality among the nursing staff has been quite heavy already, and many are ill.

Some philanthropist should present the Kaffir church at De Aar with a bell. At present worshippers are summoned by a most ingeniously constructed tocsin, consisting of a piece of railroad iron two feet long hung on a

piece of telegraph wire between two steel rails set upright in the ground. It is a sight for a Sabbath morning to see the old sexton standing out in front of the chapel solemnly belaboring this contrivance with a coupling pin. He is quite an artist in extorting melody from it.*

Lieut. McCrae is of a philosophic turn of mind, and has a love for the curious and unique in art and nature. He is engaged in making a collection of gems of profanity, scintillations of genius evoked by the conditions and trials of war from the Canadian intellect. While on detachment up Kenhardt way he acquired a most interesting nucleus for his collection. Unfortunately, they have now been copyrighted and are unavailable for publication in book form. There was one troop sergeant-major of the cowboy push who was a veritable gold mine for the young collector. He was what is known as a "cold drawn" cusser. For instance, when the mule transport got stuck in a spruit he would say to the head man of the mule punchers (the only one of the Kaffirs who understood English): "Willie, did I call you a chocolate-colored _____ last time?" "Yaw, boss," says Willie, with a grin. "Then you're a triple-asterisked _____! See?" The dashes represented a cursory review of Willie's probable origin and of the fruit of his genealogical tree for at least two generations back; a comprehensive, if possibly libelous, description of his personal habits and of the sins that did most easily beset him, accompanied by charges embodying a catalogue of crimes so ingeniously monstrous as to challenge definition by the criminal code, and closing with a lurid and

*It had a bell when we passed down through De Aar eight months later. Perhaps somebody took the hint, for, after all, the world is smaller than we think. At Pretoria station on our way home an old Scotchman came up to me and shook hands. "Ye'll no remember me?" he said; "but ma name is Baikie, an' Aw come frae Peenars-poort. A freen' o' mine in Canada sent me oot the letters ye wrote frae the Poort. Losh, mon, but Aw laughed! Aw took them over t' show t' the Miss Cronjes, and they were real pleased." You can imagine I began right off to try to remember what I had written about the ladies in question, but I was relieved to know they had been pleased.

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picturesque prophecy of his future condition, immediate and eternal, if Willie did not forthwith get those mules out of the mud. Willie would say: "Yaw, boss," and then proceed to interpret the remarks to the rest of the sjambok twirlers. Willie must have been a good understudy, because the mules never failed to come out of the mud.

This being the official celebration of the relief of Mafeking every man of the 1,200 in camp was served with a gill of navy rum to-night. Judging from the symptoms in the air at the time of writing it is no wonder the temperance orators denounce Rum with a big R. They should particularly specify navy rum, after a drink of which forty-rod tastes like pellucid spring water out of a babbling brook 'neath the shadow of the aspens. Latest bulletins from the seat of war indicate that De Aar will need to be relieved to-morrow. There was a torchlight procession, military tattoo, bonfire and a dance. All the canteens are wide open and Tommy is going large. The feature of the procession was the Rough Riders' yell given by the Ottawa section of D battery. The British Tommies were tickled to death, and everybody wanted to know what it was. We told them it was the war cry of a fierce tribe of Indians in Canada called the Ottawas. The Kaffirs were particularly taken with it. They swarmed alongside our men, and every time the yell went they showed their ivories until you would think the tops of their heads would drop off, and already they are trying to imitate it. In some future native war you may hear of an impi of warriors, whose "lean locked ranks went roaring down to die" yelling: "Ot-ta-wa, Ot-ta-wa! Ra! Ra! Ra!"

It is a common remark among the gunners that "the infantry came out for a picnic and got the fighting, and the artillery came out for fighting and got the picnic." It is scarcely fair to the gallant infantry, who have done so splendidly, but the sister arm is disappointed at not getting an equal share. Of course, every one says somebody must do the important, if unexciting, line of communication work, and there are thousands of other troops

in the same case, but it is also true that none of them came as far as the Canadians have done to see fighting. Down at De Aar there is a good deal of sickness. One company of garrison artillery which came here 200 strong two months ago is reduced to less than half of its effective strength, and has lost an officer. The company has been waiting for a battery of four powerful howitzers, capable of throwing a 280-pound shell 7,000 yards. The howitzers arrived this week, and are being set up on their carriages, but there are not enough men left to man them. The only recreation at De Aar is hunting springbok and peacocks, but the sport is poor. Springbok hunting is something like this: You sight a bok at 6,000 yards and begin to stalk him. When you have laboriously reduced the distance to 5,923 the bok lifts up his head and gets his eye on you. (You can see across the level veldt as far as you can see.) At 5,899 the bok looks up again, and then calmly trots off to a range of about 9,000 yards. Then the fun begins all over again, and when you are tired you go home and pick the thorns out of yourself. Peacock hunting is the same, only more so.

On Saturday Capt. Mackie and I went up to Belmont with a carload of ammunition. Belmont is where Methuen fought his first important battle with the Boers on Nov. 26. It is a station on the railway between Orange and Modder rivers. The battlefield affords an interesting example of the style of fighting the British have indulged in at such an expense in casualties. A triple line of kopjes runs parallel with the railway, and the Boers had formed extensive breastworks and small forts of rocks on the tops. They had also constructed an extensive line of rifle pits on the veldt to the south of the kopjes, and extending across the railway, evidently anticipating in their artless Boer fashion that the British would come up the railway, take the kopjes in the flank and enfilade the defenders as they retreated back from the first line to the second and third across the open ground. But the British did nothing of the kind. They came up on two successive days to reconnoiter the position. Then they advanced in force, left the railway,

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swung away over to the west and advanced straight against the face of the lines of kopjes over 5,000 yards of absolutely level ground without a vestige of cover. When the Boers found the first line of kopjes too hot for them, and, after decimating the attacking force, they ran down the rear slope and occupying the next line, and so on, necessitating three assaults. Result: In the pretty private graveyard of a Boer farm house there are a number of big graves shaded by gigantic cactus bushes and lotus trees. Over them are handsome and ornate wooden crosses with the words burned into them: "Dulce et decorum," etc., and "Here rest the bodies of two officers and fifteen men of the Fifth Fusiliers," or Coldstreams, Northhamptons or Grenadier Guards, as the case may be. On the bleak tops of the rocky kopjes are the graves of a few Boers, or rather the bodies of the unfortunate beggars, with a few rocks thrown on top of them, from under which the whiskered skulls grin hideously. There you have an epitome of the war. The little station and adjacent buildings at Belmont are fairly riddled with bullets. The rocks along the fronts of the kopjes are pock-marked with shrapnel. The Royal Canadian Infantry was stationed here some weeks after the battle, and there are many familiar names decorating the rocks and buildings, among others those of several who subsequently died at Paardeberg.

Capt. Mackie and I met with a very kind reception, and dined in the evening with Gen. Sir Charles Warren and staff. The general is organising a force to move through Griqualand to put down any rebels that remain in that section. During the afternoon Col. Sam Hughes arrived from Cape Town to take charge of the intelligence department of the column and later on E battery, R. C. A., arrived by route march from De Aar, having lost four horses en route. It is proposed to form a corps of scouts to be known as Warren's scouts, and the charge of them was offered to Capt. Mackie and me. Capt. Mackie, who has been released from the duties of quartermaster by the disbanding of the staff of the brigade di-

vision, R. C. A., immediately accepted. I cannot leave my section of artillery at De Aar.

In a little private graveyard on the battlefield of Belmont there is a grave standing alone. It is that of a woman, and there is a verse on the stone commencing: "Sheltered from the storms of life." The rest of the verse was knocked away by a splinter of shell.

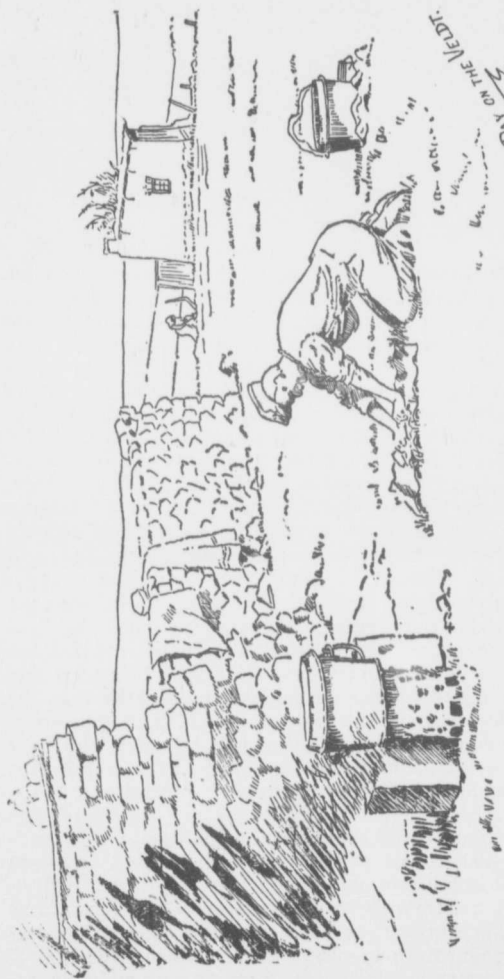
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CHAPTER XVII.

SOMEBODY HAD TO DO IT.

Camp De Aar, May 28.

Here we are in the seventh week of service on the line of communication, and we like it less every day. Milton has told us that "they also serve who only stand and wait;" four hundred and ninety-three people have assured us that we will get enough fighting when we do get in; a statistical gentleman in the ammunition column with a plateglass widow in the upper left-hand corner of his face has reminded us that though 480,000 Germans started for Paris only 200,000 actually got there; the assistant inspector-general has blandly drawn to our attention the fact that we had a campaign up in the Karroo district; and they all conclude with the philosophic summary to the effect that "somebody has got to do it, y'know." Still we are not happy. The only bright spot of the past week was the news that our sister batteries, C and E, had been in action, and the conviction gains ground that our time must come soon. Meanwhile it is being forcibly borne home to us that the microbe is mightier than the sword, for we have lost more men and have more men hors de combat than the other two batteries who have had the satisfaction of fighting. Indeed the only breaks in the monotony of our existence is a funeral or a court-martial. Some day a Kiplingesque pen should tell the world of the joys of soldiering on the line of communication—(excuse me while I grouse!)—sitting down on your tail in the rain and the cold, or the heat and dust, watching a narrow gauge railway over which drag trains of howling troops (how their cheering entered into our souls!) going to that seventh heaven called "the front;" or down trains bearing loads of raving sick and pale, ar-



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rogant convalescent wounded, who sympathise with us as from a giddy height, and tell us of the fun at the front—that front so near and yet so far. And so the days run on, one exactly like the other. No news, except an occasional letter or paper from home, or a yellow slip on the bulletin board at the station announcing another victory (which we have to turn out and celebrate); nothing to do but get up in the bitter cold at reveille, water, feed and drill, drill, water and feed; mount guard, “take it” and turn in. Nothing to read and nothing to do but keep your men and horses as fit as you can for the eventful hour that may at any time bring the long-looked for “orders.” (Men rotting and dying with enteric and dysentery, horses hair-staring, shivering and skin and bone.) The pay call sounds once a month, and the poor beggars “go on the shout”—some of them—and that night the guard tent is full, and the bard of the occasion lifts up his voice from the midst thereof in a maudlin dirge—a sort of blank verse epic in sing-song recitative: “Me brother’s at the front fightin’ like a man, an’ I’m lyin’ here behind a ——— kopje actin’ chambermaid to a ——— old scraggy moke an’ waitin’ to be carted over to a ——— old rotten horsepital. This ain’t what I come out for. I ain’t afraid to fight. Just put a Boer up agin me—half a dozen uv them. But we never see no Boers, ’cept prisoners, an’ we never see no bullets—only pills, always pills, or get yer kit an’ trek to hospital. Then it’s ‘temperature 106,’ ‘rest on yer arms ’versed,’ s’lute the corpse, an’ they don’t even give yer three blank in the air. I want to go up with me brother an’ fight like a man,” etc., etc., far into the night for all the camp to hear. In vino veritas. When they are sober they do not grouse, but just sit about and think or turn to their work like wooden men. Truly, it is a sweet life. You can’t get leave and you can’t slack discipline, and you can’t leave camp half an hour lest “orders” come.

This is not intended as a grumble. As the wise men say “somebody has got to do the work, y’know,” and there are thousands strung along the interminable lines

of communication in this war in just as bad case as we. It is merely intended as a bit of local color—a phase of the war game that doesn't get into the newspapers because it is not picturesque, this work of the men who only stand and wait—or die of enteric for their country. "Dulce et decorum"—nit!

Last week was quite lively and exciting. Besides a funeral we turned out and celebrated the relief of Mafeking, as already related, and on Friday we loyally celebrated the Queen's birthday with a bonfire, sing-song, an issue of rum and some cordite salutes. (There was no salute here lest we disturb the enteric patients in the hospital.) In the afternoon there was a gymkhana and a rifle match. You have heard a great deal about the Boer shooting. Well, some forty of them from the surrounding country entered in the rifle matches, but they were not one-two-sixteen with the Canadians and British. The Ottawa section of D battery entered five or six men, and they won everything worth having. Corporal Whitton won the 200-yard shoot, and Brigade Sergeant-Major Long won at 500 yards and the aggregate; an R. A. M. C. man and a Royal Engineer got some of the money, but our men scooped \$40 out of a total of \$50. The gymkhana races were very good, quite a number of officers' chargers and ponies being entered. I rode Major Hurdman's big chestnut in one of the events, and came in second.

The only way we can keep warm at night—for fuel is scarce—is by self-administered doses of navy rum taken hot. Hot navy rum is warranted to make a cigar store Indian turn handsprings, but it does not fizz on us a little bit, owing to the combination of low temperature and high altitude.

Capt. Thacker has returned from the model hospital at Deilfontein, and speaks highly of that gorgeous institution. It is said to be the finest military hospital that has been. Everything in it is stamped with the crest of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and a royal surgeon is in charge.

The small Kaffir children are suffering very much

from the cold. Most of them have no clothes on at all. Others have oat bags, with holes in the sides for their arms to go through. They swarm around the cooks' fire like little animals, eating up all the bones and refuse and scooping the remnants out of the bully beef tins with their fingers. The other night twenty-seven babies died of cold in the Kaffir "location" near here.

When we were on the Karroo march in February it made us feel cool to see the illustrations of ice-boating and skating in the papers sent out from Canada. On receipt some kind friend might send us some "hot spell" scenes, including a picture of a summer girl. Also a consignment of coonskin coats. This campaigning in a climate a few notches above zero arrayed in a chocolate ice cream costume is not what it is cracked up to be. We have recently come to the conclusion that the man who wrote about "Afric's sunny fountains" did not know his business. The weather is bitterly cold—like our Canadian football weather in November. We have a stove in our tent made out of an empty grease cylinder, and have trouble keeping warm at that. Last night the water in the tent was frozen nearly to the bottom. At this rate there should be snow up here next month. In future you can bank on the fact that Afric's sunny fountains cut some ice.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN HOSPITAL.

In Hospital, Deilfontein, June 17.

Our friends the microbes have got hold of me at last, and I have been in hospital for the past ten days. It is only a question of time until they get hold of you out here. They come in various guises, but usually amount to much the same thing in the end. Fever and dysentery are popular forms, but these do not have any particular relation or similarity to the same diseases at home. The fact of the matter is that a consistent course of alkali water, boiled or unboiled, eventually corrodes the "innards," and then you have numerous excessively painful complications in your little inside, with or without fever. I was alone with my section at De Aar when taken ill, and when the C. O. came back from Kimberley he got me interested in hospital life after a few days more of ineffectual effort to bluff it off. On Sunday night I absorbed a dozen drops of laudanum to deaden the pain, and now have a faint recollection of having my Wolseley kit bed spread on the floor of a guard's van and being rolled in my fur "kaross." I was put in charge of a big fellow, who said he was the sheriff of Colenso, with instructions to "put me off at Deilfontein." The van was dimly lighted, and there were two "dead" engines and a long train in front of it, which made it joggle about even more frantically than these boxes usually do. Some time during the trip we picked up quite a collection of stray soldiers—a Canadian Mounted infantryman, a Royal artilleryman and some who were just Tommies. I have rather a faint remembrance of hearing them sitting talking in the semi-darkness for what seemed several centuries. They were very good to me, and when finally we arrived at the desolate little grey station the Canadian

insisted he should see me up to the hospital because I was a Canadian, but the Royal artilleryman would not hear of anybody but him taking charge, "cos 'e's a gunner officer, mate," and I guess he had his way. The burly old sheriff of Colenso assisting, I was duly unloaded and my bed rolled up, and I started off with the gunner. There is nothing here but the hospital, which is represented by a number of long corrugated iron sheds and a hundred tents and marquees. The chief staff officer had been notified by telegram that I was coming, and he was very nice. I was taken into one of the huts, as the wards are called, to wait until the necessary papers were made out. Most of the patients seemed to be asleep, but one sat up in bed and grinned at me. He was a ghastly-looking object in the dim light, for he had a bandage round his jaws and over the top of his head, and, with his grizzled beard and white face, he looked like a dead man who had been disturbed after being partially prepared for interment. The voice sounded all right, however, when it said: "Hello, Morrison! Got you, too?" Then I recognised jolly Major Kelly, of Gen. Warren's staff, with whom I dined a few weeks ago at Belmont. He had been shot through the chin, shoulder and arm in the night attack near Douglas, when E battery, R. C. A., and the force with it, came within an ace of being cut to pieces. Young Peyton, Warren's A. D. C., was in another bed in the same ward.

When the hospital staff officer came back he took me into an adjoining ward and I was assigned a bed—a neat iron bedstead, with a real mattress on it and lovely white pillows and sheets. I had not slept in a bed for four months. Later on a smooth-shaven gentleman in kharki (whom I afterwards knew as one of the most distinguished physicians of Guy's hospital, London) came to investigate me. He was accompanied by a pretty nurse, with large, dark eyes and a rich Scotch accent. As I had not been able to eat or drink anything for thirty-six hours and was pretty well used up he gave me something to ensure a night's rest and said he would see how I looked in the morning. I slept quietly, except that dur-

ing some stage of the game a chap over in the corner raised up his voice in the accents of a lost soul. He was calling for the nursing sister. "Sistah!" he screamed. The ward was all dark and it sounded ghastly. After a few abortive screams the voice in the dark dwindled into a whining moan: "Merciful God, won't somebody come to me." Nobody seemed to be in wild haste to go to him, which seemed strange, but later on I understood. He was the only real case of funk I have run across among officers or men in this campaign. In subsequent days it became rather a source of malicious amusement to see such a self-centered and selfish individual so thoroughly well scared. Luckily, though, such exhibitions are extremely rare.

Next morning I had more opportunity to size up my surroundings. Our ward contained ten beds. Next to me on one side was a young Scots Greys' officer, convalescing from dysentery, on the other a young English Roman Catholic Chaplain; in the opposite corner was Lieutenant Ross, of the Royal Canadian Infantry, who had been slightly wounded in the side near Thaba N'Chu, and has since been invalided to England with dysentery. There was a captain of Ceylon Mounted Infantry, a captain of Imperial Yeomanry and some casuals. The head of this hospital is Dr. Fripp, physician to the Prince of Wales (whose august royal monogram ornaments all the crockery and glassware in the hospital, by the way). Some of the best physicians and surgeons in London are on the staff, an array of scientific talent, I am told, though all kharki doctors look alike to me. There are over 700 officers and men in hospital here in charge of twenty doctors and forty or fifty nurses. Our day nurse is a very bright, hard-working little girl with lots of fun. She bullies us about dreadfully. The chief of all the nurses also has her headquarters in this ward. She has a profile like the Duke of Wellington, is six feet high and straight as a grenadier. There are also various distinguished British females staying here, amusing themselves with the belief that they are

helping on the good cause by their presence. Far be it from me to say they are not doing so.

We had Capt. McLaren, of the Thirteenth Hussars, in here for two days on his way down from Mafeking to Cape Town. He was wounded twice during the siege, and his right leg is three inches shorter than the left. He told us all about the gossip of the siege.

The only event of really national importance from my point of view is that after ten days on an exclusive diet of milk and soda water I have been promoted to bread and butter, but if the concertinaed streak of chain lightning on the temperature card at the head of my bed becomes less zig-zaggy the authorities are going to let me out of bed for an hour in a day or two. Beside these considerations such trumpery matters as the clash of empires or the wreck of worlds do not cut any ice in the circumscribed horizon of yours truly.

In Hospital, Deilfontein, June 19.

You would not think there was much humor to be extracted from hospital life, but that is a mistake. The average Englishman never becomes amusing until the "cavalry screen" of his reserve has been broken down by conditions that would knock all the friskyness out of the average man. It may not be a brilliant streak of humor, but it is as admirable in its way as it is unexpected. In our ward the patients lie along in a row on either side of the gangway, with the blankets pulled up to their chins, and as the day nurse comes in bowing and smiling she draws a fire of "chawf" that is really good in its way. Then the night sister departs amid a chorus of "Good-nights" (it is a brilliant sunlit morning), "Pleasant dreams!" etc. Then each patient gets his little thermometer and lies in his cot with a cherubic expression, solemnly sucking it. This is the only occasion during which silence reigns in the ward during the day. Then the sister comes around to mark the temperature on the chart at the head of the bed, and the "chawf" begins again: "Aw, I say, sistah, that man Toller over there created a beastly disturbance last night. Kep' the

whole ward awake." Poor Toller has had a glass tube through him for two months and is reduced to a wisp of bones and Pajamas awful to see.) "He's commencing to get fat and obstreperous." "Yes, sistah," says another libeler, "he actually has to tie his cholera belt on with strings, he's getting so beastly corpulent." "That's so, sistah," pipes up poor Toller, "there is a rib on one side I missed when I was counting them this morning. Beastly bore—ah, having to go over them twice."

There is a big captain of artillery from India across the aisle. He is six feet five inches tall and was never very fat, but he has been on his back for three months with enteric (milk diet most of the time), but is now convalescent. Everything about him seems to have shrunk. The geometric definition of a line is the only thing which describes him—"length without breadth." All except his feet—they remain normal. When the nurse goes out for a moment he kicks the blankets off and waves his legs in the air for all to admire, does this ossified giant. During the day he regales us with the sayings and doings of Miss Daisy Leiter, the viceroy's sister-in-law, in India. Miss Daisy is cutting a wide swath in the east. She is keen on sport of a masculine variety, and they say she is particularly expert at pig-sticking, which enables people who don't like Daisy to make witty remarks about the hereditary proclivities of Chicago people.

Over in the corner of the ward is a perennially cheerful young infantry "loot," a nephew of Lord Roberts. He has a bullet in his knee and came near losing his leg. He has been six weeks in hospital, and will be there six more before he can walk, but he is the life of the ward and the plague of the nurses. When the Junolike superintendent of nurses comes sweeping through the ward he halts her, unabashed, to complain of the scandalous scene he has witnessed—a young man with his arm round the nurse. He considers it his duty to report the disgraceful affair in the general interest of the ward. He does not scruple to mention names—the culprit was again Mr. Toller, and he calls upon several witnesses to corroborate

the charge. The sister is dissolved in blushes, for she is a very sedate and businesslike sister, albeit very pretty. The austere superintendent also blushes at the very idea of such a thing being mentioned. (Of course, the awful occurrence happened when poor Toller was being moved from his cot to his chair for his daily half-hour "up.") And Toller, the unregenerate, pipes up : "Well, you needn't be so beastly jealous, Roberts. She only said she'd be a sister to me."

Then we make pools on our temperature, which is taken twice a day, and recorded on the zig-zag charts at the head of each bed. This is permissible because there are no serious fever cases in the ward, though a continuous rise in "temp." may transform a probationer into a full-fledged enteric. It is often pathetic to hear them argue that a sudden skyrocket on the chart was caused by their having drunk a hot cup of tea just before the thermometers came around. There is a young doctor over the way. He is suffering from "hospital sore throat." His "temp." goes up—scarlet fever—two stalwart orderlies march in and carry his bed off with him in it to a fever ward. You have a snooze and wake up in an hour and there is another man and another bed in place. This evening the doctor who was attending me when I came in is a patient in the bed next me with incipient enteric. Such is life in a military hospital.

Bloemfontein, June 24.

While I was writing the foregoing I got a telegram saying the battery was under orders for this place, en route to Pretoria, we hope. The major knew I would not like to get left, and as three or four days would elapse before the sections from Orange river and Victoria rejoined he thought I might be fit. Of course, I immediately got speech with my own particular surgeon, and asked him when I could leave hospital. (I had to bring all my diplomacy to bear, because if you don't get a discharge from hospital you cannot rejoin your corps.) He said about ten days! He was a nice young chap, and I asked him to guess again. He said seven. I pre-

tended to be quite satisfied, and got leave to get up the next day for a preliminary canter in the ward. On the third day after I told him about the battery and mildly suggested that I would like to rejoin. He certainly was a nice young man, but he couldn't possibly let me go, he said, until the day after to-morrow.

The day after to-morrow was running it close, but I caught the first freight train in the morning for De Aar, and, with my batman, arrived there about 11 o'clock. The camp ground of the battery was bare as a baby's bald head! The battery was gone. I went to the railway staff officer and asked him where it was. "About two hundred yards up the yard," he said. Sure enough there was the train just ready to pull out. We caught it just in time. That afternoon we reached Naaupoort and about midnight Norval's Pont, where we had to remain fifteen hours waiting for an engine to take us on. We saw the bridge that had been destroyed by the Boers, the scene of the fighting where Gen. French crossed the river, etc. At 2 a.m. yesterday we pulled in here.

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CHAPTER XIX.

ON DETACHMENT AT EDENBURG.

When Pretoria was captured the opinion became general that the war was over and nearly all the correspondents went home. Before many weeks elapsed, however, De Wet, in the Orange Free State, and Botha, in the Transvaal, became very active. D battery, R. C. A., got orders for Pretoria, but on arrival at Bloemfontein the battery was retained, owing to the necessity of troops to assist in the effort to capture De Wet's force operating east of the railway in the Free State. Two sections under Major Hurdman were sent out to Sannah's Post, the scene of the disaster in March, to reinforce the troops there, and my section was ordered to Edenburg, a town on the railway, south of Bloemfontein, the object being at that time to prevent De Wet crossing the railway in case he should get through Gen. Rundle's line. After a fortnight on this duty the battery entrained again for Pretoria to join Gen. Ian Hamilton's column.

Edenburg, June 30.

We have been making some quick moves during the past ten days. Last week I was in Deilfontein hospital; last Sunday evening I heard prayers for the Queen in Bloemfontein cathedral; to-day my section is entrenched on a hill with our guns trained on this peaceful-looking town, waiting for Gen. De Wet's commando. When the left section reached Bloemfontein last Saturday D battery was all together again for the first time since we parted with Lieut. McCrae's section at Carnarvon on March 18. We were all as happy as clams at the re-

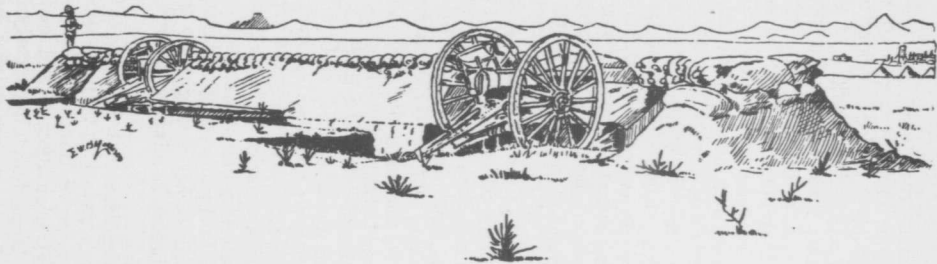
union, but it did not last long. On Monday afternoon we were entertaining the Canadian nurses at five o'clock tea when a hurry-up order came for my section to report to Gen. Knox at this place. Inside of an hour we moved out and entrained by 6:30 in the dark, and an hour later were on our way. My fifty men and a bunch of infantry they were sending out to guard a bridge down the line were accommodated in, or rather on, a flat car whose last freight had been coal, as you could discover by the chunks in the small of your back. It was a bitterly cold night, but we all huddled together spoon fashion, with our blankets over us, and were fairly comfortable. The men were in excellent spirits, and there were the usual jokes about everybody having a lower berth in our Pullman. We bumped along for four or five hours, and about 2 in the morning were dumped out at the side of the track in the dark and mud, for it had been raining heavily here. We picketed the horses to the guns and sat down to wait for daylight. Having managed to get some fuel, a very scarce article in this treeless region, a fire was lighted, coffee boiled and the men sang and smoked till morning. At daylight camp was pitched near the station, and we had just settled down when a staff officer came over to say that the general would inspect us at 1 o'clock. He arrived prompt on time, accompanied by his brigade-major, Capt. Kerr, of the Gordon Highlanders, and staff. The general made a very thorough inspection, and it was evident therefrom that he had been an artillery sub. himself in the days of his youth. He is a fine-looking old soldier, with a very red face and a very white moustache. After the inspection he took me up on a moundlike hill about a quarter of a mile from the station, where two companies of the Norfolk regiment were entrenched. The hill commands the town and the veldt for about 5,000 yards in all directions. The general marked out three positions on the top of the hill facing east, north and southwest; and ordered me to construct three two-gun earthworks with magazines. Now, fortification is not included in an artillery course at Kingston, though I have always held that it should. There is

every facility at the Royal Military College for giving officers attending the school of gunnery at Tete de Pont a superficial knowledge of engineering, but the facilities at the college are never placed at the disposal of officers. They are not even allowed the use of the library. Considering that the militia constitutes Canada's first and last line of defense, it has always seemed to me rather ridiculous that the officers of that force should be debarred from receiving any advantage in the way of instruction at the college, that institution being almost entirely reserved for the instruction of cadets, most of whom never enter the militia or permanent corps. In the college grounds there are numerous examples of temporary bridges, entanglements, entrenchments, field works, etc., and when I was taking my artillery course I made it my business to spend Saturday afternoons over there. It is one thing to study diagrams of these works in the handbooks and quite another thing to see the works actually constructed. The cadets were very kind in affording information, and in that unofficial way I picked up in a couple of months a fair smattering of engineering such as is useful in the field, and was decidedly so on this occasion. If I had been compelled to tell the general I could not construct a two-gun battery we would have been rather in a hole, as there is no engineer officer here, and the infantry did not know anything about other entrenchments than their own. The general put the infantry at my disposal for working parties, and I marked out the batteries and put my section to work on the first. In a day and a half (most of the digging was in rock shale) we put up as smart a little earthwork as you would want to see. The infantry waited to see our battery go up, and then modeled the other two on it. We made two gun emplacements connected by a deep trench, with a magazine covered with railroad iron, sand bags and earth. The face of the work was covered with loose grass, so that at a distance it cannot be distinguished from the rest of the hill. Our horses are picketed under cover below the hill, and in case of an attack they will be shifted

round to the opposite side of the hill from which the attack comes.

This morning the forces here manned the trenches at 9 o'clock. The village is held by two companies of infantry, the mounted infantry of the Northumberland regiment hold the station and their horses are placed under cover in a deep river bed between the station and the village, while our two guns and two companies of the Norfolks hold this hill, commanding both the village and the station. A Boer commando is reported at Reddersburg, sixteen miles from here, and we are hoping they will come this way. One of the Norfolks' sentries was sniped the other night, but otherwise all has been quiet. The mounted infantry brought in a couple of prisoners on Thursday. When the trenches were manned this morning all the tents were struck, so as not to afford any mark for the enemy. The infantry was practised in retiring from the village on the station, which is also entrenched and it is the intention, if we are hard pressed, to abandon the village and hold the station and this hill until reinforcements arrive from Reit river, six miles distant, where Colonel Sir Kenneth Kemp is stationed with four companies of the Norfolks. After we had been a couple of hours in the trenches this morning the Commandant rode up on the hill and inspected us. He expressed himself well pleased, in fact was quite complimentary.

The day after we arrived the General ordered us out for shell practice at the Spitz kopje. Nearly all the senior officers of the force rode out to watch us and there seemed to be a good deal of curiosity to see what the Canadians could do. The ranging point was a couple of mounds of whitewashed rocks about four feet high on the side of the kopje. We went into action, direct method, at the gallop and opened at 2,800. The practice was fairly good and in a dozen rounds we landed three shells plumb on the target. Our time shrapnel did not work so well. One burst 500 yards from the gun, but the others mostly burst on percussion and the fuses seemed to burn too slowly. This may have been due to deterioration, the shells having been fused for nearly four



THE CANADIAN EARTHWORK AT EDENBURG.

months. We retired and took up another position, opened at 3,000 yards and got the range on the third round at 3,100, making a target. Again, however, the time fuses were unsatisfactory, having to shorten them down to 9 1-4 (equal to 2,200 yards) before we got a burst in the air. As a result of the firing the general ordered up a supply of fresh ammunition from Springfontein.

This is the most pleasant post we have had since coming out here. Horses and men are well fed, and though the weather is bitterly cold at night, we are fairly comfortable. When you wake in the morning your blankets are covered with hoar frost. The men are issued with rum three times a week, and to-morrow, being Dominion Day, the General has ordered a special issue of grog to the Canucks. The officers here are very pleasant and no one can do too much for us. The evening we arrived I dined with the mess of the Norfolk regiment, and the day we fired at Reit river I lunched with Colonel Sir Kenneth Kemp and the officers of the right half battalion Norfolks. I have also been made a member of the Paradise club, which is quite an institution here. The club room is in the railway staff officer's quarters at the station. According to the rules, the club opens when the R. S. O. gets up, and closes when he goes to bed "with his boots on or otherwise." (The R. S. O. sleeps in the club room). Donations to the club in the shape of Scotch whiskey, cigarets and reading matter are thankfully received. Infractions of the rules are punished by fines in kind. This afternoon we had a gymkhana on the veldt under the hill here and it was lots of fun. The General, who is a dead game old sport, rode in one of the events. Altogether we are managing to enjoy ourselves very well with a judicious mixture of hard work and relaxation.

We have a splendid view from our position here and the country is more attractive than any portion we have yet seen. The town of Edenburg is quite pretty, the streets having irrigation ditches and being lined with trees. There is a large church like a cathedral in the center of it. Yesterday it was my painful duty to take the

range of the church and other prominent points in the town with a view of knocking the buildings into their original bricks in case the Boers force us to evacuate it. I also had the ranges paced for 4,000 yards in every direction from the top of the hill and marked. My men are in excellent health, and quite a number whom we left in hospital have rejoined.

CHAPTER XX.

WAITING FOR DE WET.

Edenburg, July 7.

This morning we heard heavy guns firing over to the northeast in the direction of Reddersburg and have been keenly anticipating the appearance of the enemy, but have heard nothing yet. Funny enough, shortly after the big guns were heard, a rifle bullet came singing over the hill here, not far from a Norfolk officer. The natural inference was that the Boer snipers were out, but it subsequently transpired that a mounted infantryman in the camp below us had accidentally loosed off while cleaning his rifle. This has been a rather busy and interesting week. Last Sunday morning the troops not on duty attended divine service in the big Dutch church in the village. The preacher would not officiate for the rooiniks, so the service was read by General Knox and Colonel Custance and the Tommies sang the hymns right lustily. Only half a dozen of the inhabitants were present. The church is in the style of a century ago, with a high pulpit with something like a candle extinguisher suspended over it. Beneath the pulpit is an immense partially unrolled scroll, intended, I presume, to represent the Mosaic scroll, though there did not appear to be anything written upon it. Many of the pews are quite luxuriously furnished and rows upon rows of gigantic fat old Bibles, bound with brass, lined the book rests. These Bibles are very characteristic of the Boer. The imprint showed that they had been recently imported from Holland, but they are cheap and flashy imitations of those big old brass-bound tomes that you see in the hands of Oliver Cromwell in the contemporary portraits of that great soldier and dictator, three hundred years old. It is also characteristic that the church organ is a large and really

very fine modern instrument, but painted in barbaric colors. It was quite picturesque to see the stolid Tommies sitting in rows in marching order with their rifles between their knees, listening to the soldierly old "brass-bound" General reading the service in the same voice and tone that he would read a proclamation to the troops on parade. Never did a preacher have a more attentive congregation. Tommy does not do anything but just sit at attention when a general talks, and they all wore a look of conviction that for at least once in their lives they were listening to the word of the Lord coming thro' "the proper channels of communication."

On Monday morning we had orders to march out northwestward, escorted by two troops of mounted infantry, but Sunday night it began to rain in that whole-hearted, thorough way that characterises the infrequent storms in this country. It is hardly correct to say it rains. The water simply falls out of the sky. Though we were on a hill top and our tents deeply trencched around, the water came through the canvas and under the canvas, until everything was more or less damp, not to say soaked. Next morning it was still pouring down when we got a catch-as-catch-can breakfast, hooked in the drenched and shivering horses and were all ready to move off when, after the manner of the army, an order arrived cancelling the expedition. All day it rained, but we got a big mail from home with lots of newspapers and were comparatively happy. By the following morning the weather had cleared, but the country was flooded for miles around. Only the everlasting kopjes stuck their heads up and the view from our hill was very like the one old Noah must have enjoyed in the latter days of the greatest flood that has been. We moved our horse lines further up the hill and spent the day putting the finishing touches to the entrenchment and magazine, which, I am glad to say, had not been injured by the water. General Knox came up to see "the Canadians' fort," as the Tommies call it, and was so pleased with it that he said he would like to get a photograph of it. The men of the section have taken quite a pride in it and worked to make

it as neat in appearance as it is serviceable for defence. The General has procured 500 rounds of extra ammunition for us, with which we have filled the magazine and are now loaded for Boer. "The Canadians' fort" is considered quite a model fortification, and nearly all the officers who visit here from other posts are brought up to see it. The Norfolks and Northumberlands are good-naturedly jealous of it and call it the "gunners' toy Gibraltar," but they can't get around the fact that the critical old General says it is all right, and the strongest as well as the best constructed earthwork on the hill. It is a funny thing, but the infantry never thought of marking the ranges around his position until we came here. When the Boers occupy a position they invariably mark the ranges all around it, which largely accounts for the accuracy of their fire. As soon as we came here the gunners paced the distances in every direction for 4,000 yards, and I made a chart showing the range to every kopje, kraal or prominent point in sight on which we might have to turn the guns. A couple of days' afterwards a general order came out instructing all the other troops in the district to go and do likewise. You would have thought a thing like that would have occurred to them before.

On Wednesday morning the guns marched out in a northwesterly direction, with the mounted infantry of the Norfolks and Northumberland Fusiliers as escort. We marched across country, and the going was very heavy. As the spruits were all in flood, the crossings were difficult to negotiate. The scouting of the fusiliers in advance and on the flanks was excellent. Mounted on scraggy little native ponies, something like our cayuses, they scoured over the kopjes like smoke, searching out every hill, spruit and donga for a couple of miles in front and on the flanks. The General and his aide came along and about five or six miles out ordered the guns into action on the top of a long, rocky kopje about fifty feet high, the sides of which were so steep as to be nearly at an angle of 45 degrees, while the top was flat and just wide enough to platform the guns. I fancy he chose it

to see how we could drive, and it was a nice test, because the horses had to go at it as hard as they could gallop in order to scramble to the top, and then there was barely room to wheel, as the kopje went down straight on the other side, and there was a possibility that if the horses were not well in hand at the top they would go over. To tell the truth, I don't believe the General thought we could get up, but when they got the signal the two guns came at it like runaway fire engines. The big six horse teams went up the side of the kopje in scrambling bounds, the lead and center drivers wheeled their teams on the top just in the nick of time, and the next moment the guns were unlimbered and in position, while the limbers scrambled to the bottom again amid a clatter of sliding stones. It was one of the prettiest bits of artillery driving I have seen, though whether the risk was justifiable under the circumstances is not for me to say. The General has a reputation for putting the troops under him to severe tests. As a gunner officer himself he couldn't help being pleased with such driving, but he didn't say a word except to call me down for not dismounting my gunners before negotiating such an obstacle. Of course I should have done so, but I was not going to let him think that the Royal Canadian Artillery didn't take obstacles like that every morning before breakfast, with all hands on board.

The General pointed out a white speck on a kopje 3,600 yards away, only visible through glasses or Scott's (telescopic) sight, and told us to range on it. Owing to the clearness of the atmosphere at this height (6,000 feet above the sea), distance is very deceiving. My first shell burst fully 1,000 yards short, and the General smiled. About the third shot we got on to the spot and dropped our shells all around it and occasionally right on the target. It was not what I would call good target shooting, but if the enemy had been on that kopje they would have been rather uncomfortable. There were two things I learned that may be of interest to Canadian artillerymen. One was that the fuse scale is at best a very rough guide. In this climate, with shells that have

been fused for three or four months it does not come within three or four divisions of the proper fuse. For instance, we got the range at 3,600 yards, which calls for a 17 fuse, but I had to drop down to 14½ before I got an effective time shrapnel. Another thing is that it is impossible to get a gun to throw true at a long range if the wheels are not level. Owing to the roughness of the rocks on the top of the kopje the right wheel of my No. 1 gun was about four inches lower than the left. I made the necessary deflection, as laid down in the books, and increased it, but the gun kept throwing at least 100 yards to the right of the target. The General said the gun was not properly laid, so I went and laid it myself, allowing more deflection, but with no better results. As he still seemed sceptical, I had the impudence to invite him to check the laying himself. He did so, but his shot was no better than the others—worse, in fact. We then manhandled the gun about until we got it on an even platform, and the first shot fell right on the target.

Though the General gives us lots of work he is exceedingly good to us, and seems to take a special interest in the Canadians. We have cart blanche in drawing forage, and our horses are once more in good condition, for the first time since the Karroo march. The men also live like fighting cocks. Jam three times a week, fresh meat, potatoes, soft bread, tea, rum and chocolate. The weather is getting warmer, and though the frosts are heavy at night the days are delightfully balmy. There are no flies to bother us, and it is simply ideal weather for camping. We have not a sick man. If the enemy will only look in occasionally we can stand a lot of this sort of soldiering. Lady Roberts sent us down an outfit of fine thick woolen socks this week, which proved very acceptable.

There is any amount of small game about here—geese, ducks, hares, plover and a big water bird called a coram, which is good eating.

Here is an hospital incident that struck me as being very dramatic. An R. A. M. C. officer lay sick unto death with enteric. His wife, who had been living in Cape

Town, came up to nurse him. Day after day she came into the hospital and sat by his bedside devotedly tending him. He continued to get worse, and towards the end, as is usual in such cases, became delirious, and then sank into a stupor. Just before he died he spoke. "Margaret, dear, where are you? Why don't you come to me? Come to me and kiss me, dear!" Then he died. His wife sat with her hands in her lap, gazing at him distractedly with dry eyes. Her name was not Margaret. A nurse covered the face with a sheet and led her away, and all the ward was sorry for her.

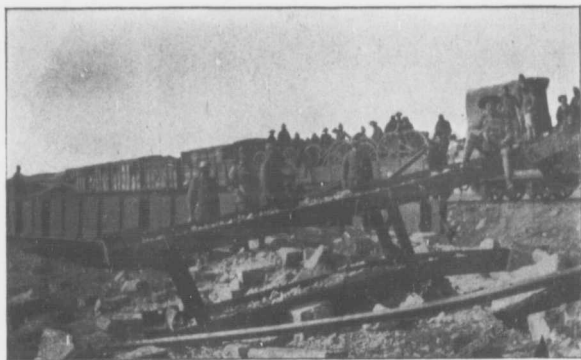
CHAPTER XXI.

AT PRETORIA.

Fort Wonderboom, north of Pretoria, July 15.

Events have been moving rapidly with D battery R. C. A., within the past week. Last Monday evening I was sitting in the railway staff officer's room at Edenburg with some of the boys when an orderly appeared with an automatic salute and a large blue envelope. We were expecting to move out with a nice little column of mounted infantry and our guns next morning and I said to the other chaps: "Here's the orders for our campaign." It was, but not the one I meant. It read: "Prepare to entrain your detachment to-morrow morning for Pretoria." The Brigade-Major had sent the orderly all over the camp looking for me with the good news, knowing how pleased I would be. After the members of the Paradise club (which was the R. S. O's office) had duly celebrated the event I went up to Fort Canada, paraded the section and promulgated the order. You should have heard the boys yell! Next morning we entrained the guns but had to wait until late in the evening before we got horse cars. We did not get away until 1 a. m., loaded in open trucks. A crowd of the officers came down to see us off and could not do too much for us. They were as pleased at my luck as if they were going themselves. At daylight we pulled into Bloemfontein and were told that we would be joined during the day by the rest of the battery, which had been out at Sannah's Post. My section remained on the train, and about 9 o'clock along came Capt. Eaton, whom we had not seen for six weeks. He had been up to Mafeking, and had crossed over to Pretoria. There he got the news that D battery had been mobilised again, and came down as fast as the





DE WET'S WORK.



NO. 5 GUN DETACHMENT R. C. A.

dilapidated railway could carry him and had joined Major Murdman and the right and center sections a few days before. Shortly after the rest of the battery came in, and for the first time "the gang was all there," since the Karoo days. As we could not leave until 6:40 that evening (no train had left for Pretoria for two days) we went up town and the first people we met were Capt. Rogers, of Ottawa, and Miss Macdonald and Miss Richardson, two of the nurses who came out with us on the Laurentian. There is not much of interest in Bloemfontein. It is about as imposing in appearance as Berlin, Ont., but smells very badly at long range. The afternoon we spent in packing the battery into about half as many cars as would hold it. Everything but the horses was on flat cars, the men on top of the guns. The officers were in the guard's caboose, which was of the dimensions of a good sized packing case. About fifty people—officers, civilians and officials—wanted to go up the line too, in urgent haste to reach Pretoria, but we were under a rush order from Gen. Kitchener and carried no passengers.

For two days and two nights we rushed northward at an average speed of nearly ten miles an hour, past Roodival, with its wrecked station, burned cars and little lines of graves beside the track, where sleep the dead of the Railway Pioneer regiment amid the debris; past Honing Spruit, with its bullet-spattered buildings, and little shelter trenches, where the released prisoners from Pretoria stood off the Boers so well a fortnight ago (more graves); past the fire-blackened rocky kopje beside which the Derbyshire militia were cut up; and so on to Kroonstadt, over deviations, past blown-up bridges and culverts, between vistas of torn up track, the rails lying in squirming lines beside the right-of-way, bent into all sorts of shapes, the graves becoming thicker and the asvogs circling in sluggish flocks over the carcasses of horses and oxen that dotted the blackened veldt. On the second morning we pulled into Elandsfontein, a suburb of Johannesburg, and from there on we ran among derricks and stamp mills and the huge tailing heaps of gold mines as far as the eye could see. At Irene we fell

in with a lot of the Canadian Mounted Infantry, including Major Bliss, Lieut. Borden,* and, later on, Col. Girouard.

At noon we pulled into Pretoria along with our friends of the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, a magnificent regiment. If we had been a little earlier we would have had the honor of being reviewed by Bobs, but as it was we marched through Pretoria city and out here. As we approached we heard the boom of big guns and the rattle of rifles just over the kopje, but night was closing down and we were not engaged. We are to be part of Gen. Ian Hamilton's force, and the Connaught Rangers and other crack corps are camped near us.

*Lieut. Borden was killed two days afterwards in the fight at Whitpoort, when the Royal Canadian Dragoons practically saved the Dublin Fusiliers from being wiped out. The colonel of that regiment subsequently wrote Lieut.-Col. Lessard a very handsome letter in recognition of the gallant aid rendered on that occasion, and expressing sympathy at the loss of Lieut. Borden and Lieut. Birch.

CHAPTER XXII.

OUR BAPTISM OF FIRE.

Dewegendrift, July 21.

D battery, R. C. A., has been in its first action, and has come off well. Two transport drivers, half a dozen mules killed, and a lengthy list of narrow escapes sum up the result of the day. This column had already had several small engagements, outpost affairs with little loss; but to-day we had two artillery duels, and though our loss did not amount to much, it was our baptism in artillery fire and very interesting, as such events in a young soldier's life always are. It has been the custom on this campaign to detail a number of guns to accompany the rear guard each day and a section of our battery takes it in turn. This morning the center section under Lieut. Van Tuyl was on duty with the rear guard, which remains behind to protect the big supply column and baggage. The other two sections of D were with the advance guard. We moved out at 7 o'clock, and had only been on the road about twenty minutes when we heard the Boers open with artillery on the camp we had left. They came up over a kopje about 2,000 yards from the supply train and camp, aiming at our baggage wagons and Lieut. Van Tuyl's guns, apparently. The first shell went over and the second struck beside the wagons, killing two transport drivers and six mules. Then there was a general scatteration of the transport vehicles. Lieut. Van Tuyl moved his guns on to the side of a kopje and came into action with good effect. The Elswick battery of long-range guns and a couple of pom-poms followed, and an artillery duel ensued while the transport was scurrying to the front. Getting eight miles of transport wagons, Kaffirs, mules and oxen on the move under shell fire is no joke, but our guns soon silenced those of

the enemy, and all was quiet again. All this we of the advance guard listened to in a wood a couple of miles off, kicking ourselves that the affair had not started sooner, so we would have been in it. However, we had not long to wait. When the firing ceased in rear the advance guard moved forward and came into a wide stretch of open rolling country, commanded by a kopje to the north. We were marching slowly along with the cavalry out in front and the lines of infantry closer in, when there was a "boom!" from the kopje over two miles to the left, and then we heard an eerie whistle like the wind in the chimney of a haunted house (and it gave you about the same chill down your spine), then a shell plunked into the ground a couple of hundred yards from the battery and threw up a cloud of dust like a dynamite blast on a sewer. Major Hurdman wheeled the battery into line and we got "action left." Before our horses were clear with the limbers there was another boom and doleful whistle, this time over our heads, and a shell plunged into the ground about 150 yards right in rear of the battery. Says I to myself, says I, they've got us bracketed—one short and one long—the next will land right on us. Now any man who did not listen for the next shell with extreme anxiety must have more nerve than most people. All this time we were working away with the usual "fire discipline" routine prior to opening fire ourselves, but every second seemed a minute, and while I mechanically gave my orders and looked after things as we have had it drilled into us, my senses were keenly alive to the fact that there was another shell coming that would probably divide the bracket and do other things. At last she came—"boom!"—I heard the crooning whistle in the air coming right for us, and I thought for three seconds that I was the only man on earth and that shell was bound to land in the pit of my stomach. Whoo-oo-oo, it swooped down over the heads of my section, and threw a shower of dirt and gravel over the men on the limbers as they moved to their proper position in the rear. Then we opened fire, and I got very busy looking after the working of my own guns. After that I think I can honestly

say that the shells didn't bother me much. One after the other they came over our heads and burst near the wagon line in rear of the guns. Then up came a couple of pom-poms on our left. (There is no doubt the pom-pom is the comedian of the battlefield. Everybody laughs when it commences. It is difficult to explain the humor except, as a gunner expressed it, it makes a noise like the impatient pounding of the hired man at the back door on a cold winter's night.) Pom-pom-pom-pom! it went and then, after a brief pause, pom-pom-pom-pom! again. Next the big howitzers opened to the right and left of us, and from feeling like a little lonely battery all out by itself in the wide, wide world we began to feel that there were others, and that the chaps who were chucking the shells at us so carelessly were probably getting as good as they sent. It is a very comfortable feeling.

Meanwhile D battery was throwing some shells itself. We got the range at 4,000 yards without trouble, and then proceeded to sprinkle twelve pounder shrapnel over that kopje in a way that must have kept Brother Boer dodging. The men worked splendidly. A regiment of infantry came hurrying past the rear of the guns going to the right, and the Tommies yelled genially: "Give it to 'em, Canydians!" and our boys jollied them as they passed along. A shell came over us just then, and I turned to see if it had damaged the infantry, but it had dropped just in rear and about ten yards from a straggler behind the column. It was amusing to see the coolness of the Tommy. He went out of his way sufficiently to look into the crater made by the shell, then hitched up his rifle sling and tramped on as nonchalantly as if some one had tossed him a bouquet. The Boers changed their fire on to the pom-poms and the long line of transport coming up, and then switched back to us, bursting a time shrapnel in the air with beautiful precision just over and in front of the battery. The bullets pattered on the ground around us, but the "remaining velocity" was not sufficient to enable them to do any harm—they bounced on the ground like peas. At this juncture Gen. Hamilton came up and ordered the ad-

vance guard to go on and leave the flank fight to the main body. So we trekked on while the firing continued all afternoon. We camped at 2 o'clock. Later on the rest of the division came in. They had captured five Boer ambulances and sustained a loss of a few wounded. Our casualties, except the drivers and mules, were nil, but we had had our baptism of fire all right and were correspondingly happy. The men will be steadied down by having been "shouted over," and are now ready for business. Their conduct to-day was admirable, and the fact that we had no casualties is no criterion of the warmth of the situation during the first part of our artillery duel.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

UNDER LORD ROBERTS.

Pinaarspoort, July 30.

Two weeks ago to-day we opened our campaign north of Pretoria, under Gen. Ian Hamilton, and, later on, Lord Roberts and Kitchener. It has been a lively fortnight, what with marching, fighting and the vicissitudes of storm and flood, but with the exception of the fighting the work here is not one-two-sixteen with roughing it on the Karroo. It is a regular picnic, with the excitement of a brush with the enemy thrown in nearly every day. Horses and men are well fed; we only march about twelve to seventeen miles a day, and then there is the additional interest of moving with a big army and comparing British troops and British methods with those of Canadians and other colonials.

I don't know whether you got my letters describing our start on this campaign and the artillery action of the 21st at Onverwacht. They were posted when we were a considerable distance in the enemy's country, and were taken in by convoys. When we marched from Fort Wonderboom north of Pretoria, on the morning of the 16th, we expected a severe engagement almost immediately, as the Boers had been holding a line known as the Pyramid kopjes, about 8,000 yards northwest of Fort Wonderboom, and it was our business to drive them out. The infantry and artillery moved across the level veldt towards these kopjes, deployed for action and expected every minute that the enemy would open fire. D battery was supporting the infantry advance. As we got nearer and the fire did not come it was thought the enemy was reserving it to give us a blast at a decisive range, but after spending the whole morning approaching the kopjes with proper precautions, it was found that the enemy had

evacuated the position, and our infantry occupied it without resistance. Then we swung off to the northeastward, and early in the afternoon made a junction with the other brigades of the division near an evacuated Boer camp, where there were seven or eight fresh graves. About 4 p.m. the whole force arrived at Waterval. This was the point on the railway north of Pretoria where the British prisoners had been kept, and we saw the elaborate wire stockade, with row upon row of iron electric light poles, where they had been herded together for many months. On the march we heard heavy cannonading to the east of us, and learned that the other divisions had been engaged. Just after we went into camp the Boers tried their long range guns on us, and a couple of shells burst on the left of our line. Next morning our division moved northward toward Hamman's Kraal, and it was magnificent to see the column, preceded by a fringe of mounted infantry, winding like a huge million-legged snake over the open, undulating ground.

In its general characteristics the country was open and rolling, the big rounded hills covered with high, yellow grass, except where immense tracts had been burned black by grass fires. Occasionally there were swales covered with stunted trees, not unlike the Canadian "haw" tree, but at no point were the wooded patches thick. About noon D battery was halted on a hill about 1,200 yards from one of these patches of wood, and we were ordered to outspan and take the horses to water at a spruit in a gulch about half a mile to the left. I happened to be orderly officer that day, and was taking the horses down through the rocks to the water when there was a rattle of rifle fire from the woods in front of the battery. As we supposed there was a thick screen of scouts and mounted infantry to the front, I did not see any cause for alarm, only hurried on with the horses to get them watered so that we would be in shape for a warm afternoon's work in case the scouts had got in touch with the enemy in force. We had only reached the spruit when a hurry-up order came to bring the horses back. When we emerged from the donga the sit-

uation looked quite alarming. Our guns had been unlimbered on the top of the hill, and the scouts and mounted infantry were retiring through them at a gallop. Two guns that had gone forward on our right into the valley below the crest of the hill our battery was on came up out of it going hell-for-leather and swung into action, prolonging our line to the right. Capt. Eaton was signaling for our horses to gallop, and we lost no time in rejoining the guns. Then we learned our scouts had been ambushed in the trees about 1,200 yards in front and had retired. In a few minutes some more guns and pom-poms galloped up on our left, and we discovered that we were on the ragged edge of the front, and did not know how strongly the woods at close rifle fire were held by the enemy. However, the firing stopped, the cavalry screen moved into the woods again and we followed. Even then we did not really appreciate what a close call we had had until we entered the edge of the wood. There we met a scout lugging his saddle along; his horse had been shot under him. Then we passed an ambulance by the roadside, with two pair of feet sticking out of it. The doctor in charge said one man was dead (ten bullets in him) and the other badly wounded. There were also some dead horses. It appears a party of about fifty Boers had lay in ambush in the trees and let most of the scouts go past them before they were discovered, quite accidentally, by some foragers, and opened fire. Before our battery had halted Capt. Eaton had gone forward looking for a watering place and must have passed close to them. It was rather lucky for us we stopped to water when we did, or we might have walked into them, depending on the scouts and mounted infantry who had gone on ahead. We heard no more of the enemy that day, but that night at Hamman's Kraal one of the sentries was killed and stripped naked.

The following three days we moved to form a junction with the divisions to the east, and every day there was constant sniping on the outpost line and occasionally a crackle of rifle fire during the march.

On the 21st the Boers attacked our rear guard with

artillery, and the center section of D battery, under Lieut. Van Tuyl, had it pretty hot for half an hour. One six-inch shell burst right in the section and covered the gunners with dust. When it cleared away it was found that only two transport drivers and a bunch of mules had been wiped out. Later in the day the other two sections had a hot artillery duel with some Boer guns, which attacked the division from the north, and fired on the battery and the transport. We silenced the guns temporarily, and since that we have been told by the Montmorency Horse who visited the enemy's position that there were four dead Boers there, and at the next Boer laager they visited there were nine fresh graves—facts which we heard with unholy joy. Next day the division camped at Rustfontein, near Bronkhorstspuit, and the Boers annoyed the outposts a good deal. In the afternoon the General sent for a section of D battery to go out and disperse some of them, who were gathering in a hill. Lieut. McCrae's section was next for duty, and in fifteen minutes it moved out. It proceeded to the top of a hill to the east, and there Mr. McCrae saw about seventy Boers on a kopje 4,000 yards away. He brought his guns up at a gallop, and immediately the Boers opened on him with artillery in a concealed position, but he paid no attention to the shells, planting his shrapnel among the Boers on the hill. At least one man and horse was seen to go down, and from the way the shells burst and the Boers scattered there probably were other casualties. Gen. Cunningham was well pleased with the result of the engagement.

Our next halt was at Bronkhorstspuit, the scene of the massacre of the Ninety-fourth regiment in December, 1880, and there we were joined by Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener, and marched next day for Balmoral on the way to Middleburg. No one who took part in that march will ever forget it. The weather had been perfect up to that time—warm days and frosty nights—but that day we had to face a piercing cold wind, such as we have in Canada sometimes during the football season. It went right through us, and we shivered miserably all day, while the dust from the burnt veldt got into our eyes

and stung like acid. We marched on and on, praying for night and camp, but this was only the overture of our miserable experience. When we were about two miles from camp it began to rain, not in torrents, but in a steady, sickening downpour. Coming when we were thoroughly chilled, it was decidedly unpleasant. We made a wet bivouac in long grass and squatted under the guns and limbers. Having marched an hour before sunrise, with very little breakfast and having had nothing to eat all day, we were faint with fatigue and hunger, and the chill wind on our wet clothes made the flesh creep. The men were in better case than the officers, for they had their great coats, one blanket and waterproof sheet each, while some of us had only our capes on the saddle. Anxiously we waited for the wagons to come up, so that we could get something to eat, but darkness fell and so did the rain, but the transport wagons came not. At last the news arrived that one of the big "cow guns" (4.7 drawn by fourteen teams of oxen) had got mired in a spruit several miles back and blocked the supply column. Soaking wet, chilled to the marrow and hungry, we had to make up our minds to spend the long night in the open without shelter or blankets. The men gathered some wood, which was very scarce, and made a couple of small fires, but the wood was soon burnt up. Capt. Eaton and Surgeon-Major Worthington went foraging, and got six eggs, one for each of us, and that was all I got that night. I sat by a fire in the mud and burned the soles off my shoes trying to warm my feet. At last the fire went out, and I thought it must be about 3 a.m., but when I looked at my watch it was only 10:30. When the fires went out the situation was too miserable for words. The rain continued to fall in sheets, and the wind blew cold enough for snow, I began to think I saw my finish, and finally stumbled off through the mud to a small Boer house near by, where I found all the officers of the Connaught Rangers huddled in one small room on the floor. In the corner was a heap of rubbish, the debris of the looting of the place, in the midst of which a bulldog had buried

himself, and was pathetically engaged in guarding these remains of the lares and penates of the late household. Somebody warned me to 'ware the dog, but I was too tired to bother about a little thing like that, so I went to sleep with the bulldog, who was also, I suppose, too miserable to object at that late stage of the game. At daylight we turned out, and Capt. Eaton and I went to meet the transport. We found it at the drift about three miles back. One of the big guns was partly overturned at the side, and in the middle of the river a big, fat Red Cross wagon was standing placidly blocking the way. The road and the hills around the drift where the belated transport was parked was a sight. Over 250 mules, horses and oxen were lying about dead or dying in all sorts of attitudes. Near our transport wagons Lieut. McLaren, of the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, had died of exposure, and later on we learned that nine men of different corps had also died. The rain had ceased by this time and the sun came out. By 8 o'clock our transport reached camp, and soon men and horses were eating as if they would never stop. It was announced that as the transport was exhausted the army would not move that day. We had just got enoughhardtack and bully beef stoked away to make a pipe enjoyable when we saw the road in front of us filling up with troops returning. It was the advance guard turning on its tail and heading back along the muddy road for Bronkhorstspuit. At its head rode Lord Roberts on a big brown horse with a white face; on his left hand rode Kitchener, looking rather morose, while "Bobs," chirpy and smiling, was returning salutes and chatting with Gen. Somebody on his right. Then followed a very smart staff and a lot of Indian soldier-servants, looking very picturesque in their colored turbans and oriental equipment. Major Denison, who is one of Bobs' right-hand men, came up to us to congratulate us on having been in action, and to tell us the news. Lord Roberts had decided to return to Pretoria and wait until the Delagoa Bay railroad, along which line we were advancing, was repaired, so that we could bring on our supplies by

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A BATTLEFIELD OF THE FORMER WAR. EIGHTY BRITISH DEAD
ARE BURIED IN THE KRAAL ON THE LEFT.

rail. French had already reached Middelburg, and we were all to go back temporarily.

Yesterday we marched back to Bronkhorstspuit and camped near the battle ground, where lie the brave soldiers of the Ninety-fourth, the second battalion of the Connaught Rangers, about 100 of whom were treacherously killed by Cronje in the last war. Two companies of the Ninety-fourth, with the headquarters of the regiment, under Col. Anstruther, were marching to Pretoria, ignorant that war had been declared, when the Boers ambushed them. Out of 250 men 156 were killed and wounded, including the colonel and six officers. The British are buried in several small stone kraals by the side of the road. In one large grave sixty non-coms. and men lie buried. They have rested there for twenty years waiting to be avenged. The Boers had desecrated the graves, broken the headstones and thrown down the walls around the graves. We marched over the battlefield in the early morning, and with our battery marched the Connaught Rangers. As they approached the graves the Irishmen were allowed to break ranks, and they swarmed around the enclosures, and, taking off their helmets, stood bareheaded and silent, gazing at the place where their comrades have slept for twenty years awaiting the vengeance that is now being visited on the cow-

ardly foe by whom they were so treacherously slain. It was an impressive sight. The Connaughts said nothing, and the army marched silently by watching them with their dead, but I would not like to be the Boers the next time this force gets at them.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE HORRORS OF WAR.

When Gen. Lord Roberts advanced to Balmoral he found that the Boers, instead of giving battle, as was expected, were retiring rapidly before our cavalry and mounted infantry, so that on the evening we marched into Balmoral Gen. French occupied Middelburg, farther east. Lord Roberts evidently saw that in order to follow up Botha at the rate he was retiring it would be necessary to rebuild the wrecked railway to bring up supplies and repair it ahead as the army advanced. Accordingly, Middelburg and Balmoral were strongly occupied, and Hamilton's division* returned towards Pretoria, detaching forces to hold each point along the line. With the Connaughts and Royal Fusiliers, our battery was dropped at Pienaarspoort, sixteen miles east of Pretoria.

Pretoria, Aug. 6.

I am in here on leave from Pienaarspoort, where our battery is on duty pending the general advance under

*I think it well to explain here that I am not writing history—only what I saw. For instance I have no opportunity of actually knowing why Lord Roberts returned from Balmoral at that time. It is largely inference. The same applies to the movements of the army divisions after reaching Balmoral. I know Hamilton's division came back, because we were with it. I believe Gen. Pole-Carew's division (he pronounces his name "Polly-Carry") was there too, because we stumbled into his vacated cantonment near Pienaarspoort, but we lost cognisance of him in the operations. When I tell you that we not unusually had to wait for papers from home to tell us what we had been doing the reader will appreciate the dazzling and refulgent ignorance of events which illuminates the path of duty for a unit in a great army.

Lord Roberts to round up Botha. The railway is being rapidly repaired eastward, and trains are running during the day to Bronkhorstspuit, which is the "rail head" for the present. The fighting does not seem to be over by any means. A yeomanry colonel was killed just outside of this city a few days ago, and a sentry was wounded last night not far from the hotel quite early in the evening. You have already heard of the sharp fight Gen. Hamilton had twelve miles west of here last week. We were not in that, but our friends of the Berks regiment had twenty-three casualties, including the colonel and major. I was on rear guard with them not much more than a week ago, and it is hard to realize that they are knocked out so soon. It was the same with young Borden; we met him at Irene on Saturday, and we could hardly believe it when we heard he had been killed on Monday.

Sergt. Belford and I rode in here yesterday sixteen miles from Pienaarspoort, and the country we traversed is a picture of the ravages of war—ruined and burned houses, deserted farms and manor houses, brokendown fences and dead horses, mules and oxen everywhere, smelling to heaven and disfiguring the landscape with their bloated, grotesque bodies. Even the wild animals that should eat them have been scared away, and the vultures—well, they're "living retired." Like their friends the army contractors, the war has made them fat and impudent. In the course of our ride we only saw one or two houses that were occupied, and we passed many places that must have been the residences of wealthy burghers in the antebellum days.

Here we met "Gat" Howard and Major Wynn, both in on furlough, also Major Boulanger, and heard all the gossip of the army corps. All the Canadian nurses are here, and so is Chaplain Cox. Every time you turn around you meet somebody you know. But apart from the people you meet it is hardly worth the trouble of coming in—the stores are empty, you cannot buy anything for love or money; that is, anything you want. There is a match famine and a tobacco famine, nothing procur-

able but Boer tobacco, one pipe full of which will knock you out like "dope," but to our poor beggars who have been smoking tea and coffee and chewing tobacco it is better than nothing, and has the one virtue in that it goes a long way, because one pipeful twice a day is as much as an able-bodied man can stand. Then there is no beer, and only officers can buy whiskey, and that only with their meals at the Grand hotel. To be sure, I slept last night between sheets for the first time since I left Deilfontein hospital last June, but, to tell the truth, I was so beastly cold (there were about three ounces of bed clothes on the bed) that I awoke numerous times to wish that I was snugly stowed away in my blankets among the rocks on top of Fusilier mountain. As Mulvaney says, the army spoils your taste for the luxuries of civilised life. Nobody is allowed on the streets after 7 o'clock without the countersign, and it is like a city of the dead after that hour, the silence only broken by the occasional clatter of a mounted patrol through the streets or the sharp bark of a sentry or a shot in the darkness as I heard last night as I came back from the club to the hotel. (The club here is a Godsend to the officers on furlough. If you know the ropes, you can get a drink there without the necessity of an application in writing to the commander-in-chief of the forces.) No doubt you think I write a good deal about eating and drinking, but these essentials loom up large in the scheme of existence of us poor Tommies. Oh, ye chaps who kick about being "ten miles from a lemon," what do you think of an Irish regiment—Irish, mark you!—that has not had any whiskey in its mess for over two months. Also, you want to be ten miles from a hardtack for twenty-four hours to discover that you are living near to Nature's heart, and it's the marble heart at that. However, life on the march is a great life—sleeping under the stars, up and trekking before sunrise, eating whatever you can get, a brush or two with the enemy, or maybe an engagement every other day to add a spice of excitement, and then the evening bivouac, when the huge snakelike column coils itself for sleep and thousands of lights wink out in the twilight

until you think you are in the center of a great magic city that has sprung into being in an hour on the lonely veldt and kopje.

Our battery, with the Connaught Rangers and Royal Fusiliers, is guarding a narrow gorge through which the broken railway runs between two mountains east of here. One section is on top of the mountain, another is on outpost four miles away at a village, with a name I am too lazy to attempt to write ; the other is holding down the base of the mountain. Lieut. McCrae and I take turns of forty-eight hours each manning the rock sangars on the mountain top, with a détachment of gunners. There is a view for ten miles around, and our business is to watch the Boer patrols and see that they don't cut the railway line. You would laugh to see us starting out with our detachments to climb the mountain with our blankets, grub, pans, kettles and all the rest of it on our backs. We look like a party of prospectors going up the White Horse pass in the Yukon, except that the trail is a deuced sight steeper and rougher. Once up, however, it is comparative pie. All we have to do is to lie around the guns and snooze or read or write letters, except two lookout men, who inspect the horizon constantly with binoculars. When they locate some Boer parties we wait for a chance for a shot if they seem likely to come within range, or, if not, flag their whereabouts down to camp, and the information is heliographed to other detachments to keep their eye on them. The men racker like it, and so do I. We build sleeping places of rocks, about the size of a decent tomb, and spread a rubber sheet over the top and are as comfy as could be.

We had visits in camp several times from the Misses Cronje, nieces of the general. They are very nice, well-educated girls, and quite fashionably dressed. As we marched into camp last Sunday we passed them on the veldt driving home from church in a stylish Victoria, with a fine pair of carriage horses, and a little Zulu boy on the box. It looked curiously out of place on the veldt, and reminded one of the southern outfits "befoh de wah." When the Misses Cronje visited our camp they were at-

tended by three strapping Zulu waiting maids, their freshly oiled faces shining out of enormous snow white sun-bonnets. Cronje pere and the girls' two brothers are away fighting against us. I may be a Foxy Quiller, but I am inclined to think that the social attentions of the young ladies are not prompted so much by a desire for the pleasure of our society as a patriotic impulse to assist the Boer cause by obtaining a knowledge of our position. Our Commandant has been advised that Botha proposes to try to cut the line at this point.

I walked down to-day to see the Kruger residence. It is a tawdry little mansion on a very dirty street, and the only striking features about it are the two stucco lions behind which Oom Paul was wont to pose when he was being photographed. What would really be a very fine square in the center of the city, flanked by the Raadzal, the palace of justice, the Grand hotel and other buildings, is spoiled by the ugly Doppe church in the center, which, however, will likely be pulled down. The palace of justice is twice as large and very much more effective architecturally than the Langevin block in Ottawa. It has been turned into a hospital and accommodates thousands of patients. The business methods here are most easy-going. On Wednesdays and Saturdays all the shops close at noon. On other days they close from 1 to 2 for dinner. The banks are never open in the afternoon. It is a mystery to me where the people of the Transvaal have gone. In the course of our march of nearly 150 miles with Gen. Hamilton I don't suppose we saw more than a dozen houses that were occupied. They cannot have come into Pretoria because fully a third of the houses here are vacant or occupied by the troops. The only explanation is that they have trekked off into the part of the country still held by the Boer troops.

Canadians should get the contracts for furnishing army wagons to the Imperial Government. The prairie wagons made for our troops are far and away the best transports in the army. They are lighter, more compact, easier for draught and hold just as much as the

heavy, cattle-killing concerns in use by the British corps. Counting the Karroo march, those with our battery have probably done a larger mileage than any in the army, and they have never even had a tire reset since they started. In the stampede of the transport when the Boer guns fired into it at Onverwacht, a big army "buck" wagon, drawn by a score of mules, tried to jockey one of our six-mule prairie wagons off the road. The gunner driver in charge of our transport spurred ahead, took a wheel off the other fellow and rolled the big "buck" in the ditch without as much as splintering a spoke. The Canadian horses are also doing very well in this country. Our battery has only had twenty-five remounts since it came to Africa. My section is still horsed exclusively with Canadians, as we were on detachment at Edenburg when the new horses were received. A number of the remount horses have died or given out since that, but we did not lose a Canadian horse on the last campaign, and they came in as fresh as when they started. In marked contrast was the Elswick battery, which was brigaded with us. By the time we returned from Balmoral that battery was done up.



GUN IN A SANGAR
ON
FUSILIER HILL.

CHAPTER XXV.

AT PIENAARSPORT.

Pienaarspoort, Aug. 13.

The Boers are having the horrors of war brought home to them in a manner that they are never likely to forget, and it will be worse before it is better, unless they give in soon. As I have already mentioned, in the districts we have passed through most of the farms are deserted, the buildings are ruined, the stock stolen or driven off. In the few places that are occupied there are only women and the native servants. It is coming near spring now, and unless the crops are put in there will be a year of more hardships ahead of them. As nearly all their horses have been commandeered in the districts over which our armies have operated, they have no means of tilling the land. In fact, it is hard to tell how the women are living now, as practically all they have has been taken, even if it was paid for, and all sorts of supplies in the towns are at war prices even when procurable. When Sergt. Belfort and I were returning from Pretoria last week we had an insight into the misery of one of these Boer households. We stopped at the only occupied farm we passed on the journey to get a cup of coffee, as we had started before sunrise without any breakfast on our sixteen-mile ride. The house was occupied by an old man and his two daughters, but as we rode up to the door there was a young man standing there who seemed somewhat alarmed at our sudden appearance, as also did the womenfolk. They invited us to come in and provided the coffee. They were very intelligent people; in fact, I have yet to make the acquaintance of the "ignorant Boer" you have heard so much about—and the old man and the eldest daughter could speak English well. The

women looked pale and miserable. The elder was the wife of a Boer farmer over near Natal. She had left there last February to visit her father here, she told us, and had not been able to return. She had not heard from her husband since, but she had heard that her home was burned and the farm ruined. "I don't know whether it is worth while to go back now," she added, with a bitter laugh. As we were talking to the old man and the girls, the young man whom we had seen at the door came in hurriedly and said something in Dutch, upon which the girls jumped to their feet, and, running to him, shook his hand and kissed him passionately, and he went out as quickly as he came in. "He is our brother," the girls explained; "we had not seen him since the war began until he came in last night. He is now going into Pretoria to give up his arms." We accepted the explanation, but I had my doubts that they would take such a heartfelt farewell of him if he was only going into Pretoria to take advantage of Lord Roberts' proclamation and return to them. He had probably come in to pay a flying visit to his family and was alarmed by our visit into making a sudden departure to rejoin the army. We gathered that from the anxious inquiries of the girl as to what direction we were going when we were leaving the house. However, having partaken of their hospitality, we did not feel like going out of our way to make trouble for them.

Yesterday Captain Eaton and I paid a visit to the Cronjes, relatives of the general, who live near our camp. The mother and two daughters live there alone, with their native servants. They are very pleasant, intelligent people, though only one of the daughters speaks English well. The father and two sons are away fighting with Botha. The girls had been educated at a boarding school in Pretoria, and we carried on a very interesting conversation, in which the English-speaking daughter acted as interpreter for her mother and sister, who just knew enough English to follow what we said. They had not heard from their male relatives for four months, and did not know whether they were alive or dead. The eld-

est girl had been at school ten years, and she told how a few years ago Kruger had ordered that no English should be taught in the schools, but the children wanted to learn it, and prevailed upon the teacher to instruct them clandestinely. They used to put their English books inside the covers of the Dutch text books, so that if any one came into the school they would think they were studying Dutch; but the secret leaked out, and Kruger had the teacher dismissed, and appointed inspectors to visit the schools at unexpected hours to see that nothing of the sort occurred again. They told us that most of the Kaffir servants were deserting the families they knew and leaving the womenfolk alone. Theirs, however, were still with them. When we were going away the old lady brought out a photograph of her husband, and told her daughter to ask us if we came across him during our campaign after Botha not to deal hardly with him, but to let him come home. The sweetheart of one of the girls is also with her father.

We have been having it quite lively along here during the past week. On Wednesday the Boers fired on a train east of here and killed three men and a number of horses, and wounded seven of the infantry. Yesterday they fired on a train about three miles up the line from our position and killed one man. The line has been repaired as far as Middelburg, and supplies are being rushed up by train prior to Roberts' advance against Botha, which commences this week. The other day they sent up about 300 Boer women and children, whom the government has been supporting at Johannesburg while their husbands are out fighting us. They are to be handed over to Mr. Botha to look after himself. The women were very defiant. They sang the Boer national anthem and made threats as to what will happen when we tackle Botha. The Kaffirs are already commencing to give trouble, and are looting the Boer farms and abusing the unprotected women whose husbands are away fighting. Some of them have been captured, and will likely be hanged.

To-day we had a gymkhana in camp, the officers and

men of the Connaughts, Royal Fusiliers and D battery taking part. A good afternoon's sport was enjoyed, and there was lots of fun on the side. The bands of the two regiments furnished music, and there were horse, mule and pony races and attractive sports. Our battery, as usual, did well, especially in the mule race, where we won first, second and third, in a field of about thirty. It was a great race. Some of the mules bolted for camp, others refused to go at all, while others energetically bucked their riders off and went on languidly grazing. In the hundred-yard dash for men, which was run in heats, as there were about fifty entries, a Canadian gunner easily won first. Capt. Eaton entered in the officers' race, but the foot soldiers were too much for him. He and I also rode in the officers' race. It was a six-furlong scurry over rough ground, starting on the slope of one kopje and finishing on the slope of another. There were eleven entries and we rode for blood. I won handily on Major Hurdman's big bay charger and Captain Eaton was third in close finish for place. The pony race was for everything that wasn't a mule, and there were enough entries to make it look like a charge of the Light Brigade. They came up the hill in a cloud of dust and waving whips, horses and men going down in heaps, but wonderful to relate nobody was hurt particularly, though some of them are probably running yet. While the sports were going on all sorts of side shows were in full blast—the live Aunt Sally (a whiskered Tommy with his face blackened and a Kaffir crinoline on), the shell-game man, the manipulator of the dice and all the time-honored accessories of the race course on a Derby day. Long-legged Tommies with wild Irish yells dashed about on fiery but diminutive donkeys, and all were as jolly and careless as if the Boers were not sniping at our pickets a mile away.

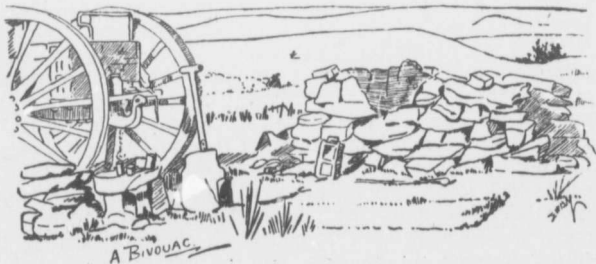
My section has just got orders to march to-morrow with two companies of infantry at daylight. I don't know where we are going, but I suppose to poke up some of the Boer commandoes that have been firing on the trains near here. We are glad to move, for it was our turn to-morrow to take over the post on the sum-

mit of Fusilier Kop. At this time of the year there are heavy, cold wind storms, lasting 48 hours, every few days. On our last tour of duty, the wind nearly blew us off the kop and it was so piercingly cold we could not sleep for two nights. But I suppose you are tired hearing about our blooming hardships. When the sun comes out warm again we forget all about them.

Talking about hardships, we are nearly out of matches and completely out of tobacco, except the Boer variety. Anybody who doesn't think smoking Boer tobacco is a hardship should try it once. You can buy it in yards like tarred rope and it tastes nearly as well. French Canadian tobacco is rather strenuous, but this would dope a habitant in two minutes.

It is remarkable how knowing the horses have become on this campaign. The other day the officer at Pretoria who is responsible for this district got flurried about the safety of Merwe station, east of us, and wanted to know what the artillery here could do to aid the post there in case it was attacked. He wanted a report on it and Major Hurdman detailed me to go over the ground. Taking a small party, we rode out through the poort, or gorge, in the mountains and arrived by a circuitous route at a kopje about four miles off. We had been out of sight of the camp during the whole trip and ascended the kopje from the side furthest from the poort and camp. When I got on the top I unbitted my horse and turned him loose to graze while I was looking over the ground and making a map of the locality. As he was out on a spur of the kop and there was a rocky precipice nearly sheer down beyond him I thought he could not wander far, but after grazing for a while he walked over to the edge and stood gazing pensively across towards the mountains four miles away, where the poort which led to camp was in plain view. Suddenly a clatter of sliding rocks attracted my attention, and the next thing I saw was my old mount disappearing over the side of the kopje. I ran to the edge and there he was sliding down among the boulders, fifty feet below. The descent was at least an angle of 50 degrees and every minute I ex-

pected to see him going head over heels, but he jumped from rock to rock like a goat, and on reaching the bottom he headed for the poort as straight as an arrow, and scampered off. How he ever made his way I don't know, over the rocks, spruits, bogs and kopjes, but he turned up in camp half an hour after, had a roll and trotted to his place on the picket line. His arrival caused a stir because they thought the Boers had emptied the saddle. When the old chap departed I thought he knew what he was about, so I sent a man back to camp by the way we came out. He got the horse and we reached camp after nightfall. But I don't take any more chances of Durban not knowing his way for a short cut home after this. I sent in my report and map and the Pretoria authorities were pleased to convey their commendation of it to me through the "proper channels." Which was very nice of them.



CHAPTER XXVI.

WILGE RIVER.

As the railway was pushed on, temporary bridges and deviations taking the places of bridges destroyed, there was a gradual movement of troops along the line towards Belfast, which was to be the first objective point of the army when Lord Roberts came out from Pretoria the next time to lead us forward. Belfast is on the edge of the mountainous region which extends throughout the Eastern Transvaal to Lydenburg in the north, and Koomatipoort on the border. It was expected that Botha's army would make its last stand in these mountains, and it was generally conceded that the Boers could make their final round-up, a la Cronje, a very expensive business for the British troops if they showed the same tenacity that they exhibited in resisting Buller through Natal. As we know now, they attempted to do so, but were prevented by Lord Roberts' strategy. Meanwhile, as I say, the troops were moving east along the railway towards Middelburg, and the cavalry and mounted infantry were scouting forward towards Belfast, occupying Pan and Wonderfontein.

Wilge River, Transvaal, Aug. 20.

A week ago my section of D battery was ordered up here by route march, accompanied by the Royal Fusiliers, and a company of the Connaughts. At the last moment an order came for the headquarters of the battery to accompany the section. Lieut. McCrae was left to hold the kop at Pienarspoort and Lieut. Van Tuyl followed us one day in

rear. Just before we moved out the Connaughts' outpost was attacked and there was a sharp interchange of rifle fire in which the Boers suffered. We marched to Elandsfontein that day, and next day at noon reached Bronkhorstspuit, where the infantry all remained except three companies of the Fusiliers who came on here with us. We relieved the Essex regiments and two guns of the Eighty-Third battery, who moved on to Balmoral. The morning we left Bronkhorstspuit an outpost of the Welsh regiment was attacked and an officer wounded. On arrival here we entrenched ourselves with the guns facing north, but, as a report arrived last night that the Boers are advancing in force from the south with two guns, we constructed another entrenchment facing that direction and are ready to fight either way. This morning a troop of Marshall's Horse, which has joined us, went out about two miles north and were attacked by a large force of the enemy who sent them in pell-mell. One man was dismounted and the bullets pecked up the dust all round, but no one was hurt. This afternoon the pleasing intelligence came in that a commando of 500 Boers with two guns are coming north towards us; De Wet is 25 miles southwest heading this way; we have a commando immediately north of us, and Erasmus with 2,500 is northwest, and another force northeast, so the prospect for a hot time for this post is good. We have only our two guns, three companies of infantry and a troop of scouts, but we are well entrenched and can hold our own till there is good skating in Hades unless they rush us at night. The Boers were on the hills all afternoon taking a look at us, but they did not come within range. They don't seem to like the Canadians much.

A curious incident occurred on the march up here. At Bronkhorstspuit we were awakened about 1 o'clock in the morning by a shot followed by the trilling of an officer's whistle and shouting. In a moment the bivouac was humming like a hive. The infantry stood to arms, and we manned our guns and awaited developments, thinking a night attack was on. It turned out that the adjutant of the Fusiliers had suddenly gone crazy. He

woke up in the night, fired his revolver at one of the men and proceeded to raise the deuce. He was sent back to Pretoria next morning. He was a nice young fellow and I saw a good deal of him when we were on outpost duty together at Pienaarspoort. It is remarkable the number of officers and men who have been afflicted with brain trouble during this war. The severe strain tells.

Another tragic incident occurred at Bronkhorstspuit while we were there. Four soldiers of the Welsh got hold of a small keg of rum which had been dropped off a transport. They drank it all. Two of them were buried on the hill beside us that afternoon, and the other two were reported to be dying when we left. Navy rum is good stuff in its way, but it is not intended to be absorbed through a hose.

A sense of duty leads me to touch on a very indelicate topic, and it is remarkable that some notice has not been taken of the sufferings of our troops in a certain respect by the philanthropists who are so anxious for the welfare of the gentlemen in kharki ordered south. To put it brutally, but explicitly, the army in South Africa is afflicted with vermin to the point of desperation, and nobody seems to have any sort of panacea for their woes. If a plebiscite was taken among the rank and file at any time since they landed as to what they would desire most, next to being ordered home, the overwhelming demand would be for a surcease from this evil. Its existence has given a new verb to the English language, i.e., "to louse." To see a regiment or a brigade or division "lousing" itself is a sight for gods and men, but not women. The moment a corps halts, even on the line of march, thousands of men strip off their accoutrements, coats and shirts, and, sitting on the ground in the broiling sun or bitter wind, proceed to make the verb active. The army louse is of a large variety with a peculiar black mark on the back, which the Tommies insist is the "broad arrow"—the stamp and symbol which distinguishes everything in the army of the Queen-Empress. "The pale martyr with his shirt of fire" is not a patch on the poor Tommy

in his greyback shirt. It may be truthfully said that every Tommy is a host in himself. But, seriously, the whole army suffers dreadfully, pestered by day and kept awake at night. Luckily the officers escape this scourge, but the men who have to wear the same clothes for weeks at a time are never exempt.

Well, we are enjoying ourselves very much up here, despite the little drawbacks such as half or no rations. The men are in good health and spirits. Active service agrees with them. If we get into a really tight place, as present circumstances seem to indicate among the immediate probabilities, I hope we will be able to give a good account of ourselves. There seems about as much fighting to be done as there ever was. Certainly the Boer seems full of it. "We never get a hap'-orth's change from 'im." He is everywhere and always looking for trouble.,

The first mail we have had in three weeks arrived this morning. We sat up till all hours waiting for it last night, having got a message it was coming, but at the last moment were disappointed, the train having broken down. There is joy in the tents of the "Canydians," but the poor infantry are feeling blue because they got no letters from home. All the news we get about the war in China and even here we read in the Canadian papers. This sounds odd, but there are no newspapers here, and all the news circulates by word of mouth. We hear all that happens within fifty miles of us, and the more important international items, such as the assassination of King Humbert, reach us after a week or ten days, but otherwise we are dead to the world. You can imagine under such circumstances how letters and papers from home are welcomed. We have absolutely nothing to read between whiles. My library consists of a kharki Bible and an artillery field service handbook, of the vintage of '90. When I get tired of reading about the wars in the Old Testament (those Israelites were cracking good fighters!) I read about farcy buds, glanders, "How to harness a mule," as laid down in the field book, and compare that and other things "as laid down" with

actual practice, "as she is did" on campaign. The contrasts are sufficiently startling to be interesting. By the way, I got a letter this mail from Mrs. General Knox from Edenburg, enclosing a lot of photos she took of the Ottawa section there, and conveying the General's regards and congratulations that we are getting our share of the fighting. The generals out here are very nice that way. When you have been once under their command they take a fatherly interest in you afterwards.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FORAGING.

Wilge River Station, Aug. 25.

Like Dickens' little Joe "they do be always a-movin' of us on." After a very pleasant and interesting week at this place (which, by the way, is pronounced Viljy), we are under orders to leave to-morrow for Belfast, east of Middelburg, and, we hope, to take part in the final round-up of Botha. Yesterday "Bobs" went through on a gorgeous special train, very unexpectedly, and we knew there was something up. The field-marshal was taking considerable risk in making the run even with the large escort he has with him, as the Boers are all along quite close to the line and, if they knew he was coming, would have had little difficulty in holding up the train with a sufficient force.

Though the Boers have been within 3,000 yards of us for several days, they have not attacked this station, though they chased in our patrols every time they went out until at last we stopped sending them, being content to hold what we had, namely, the station. Every morning we were up an hour before daylight and manned the trenches waiting for an attack, but they didn't come. After daylight a mounted infantry patrol would go out in the early part of the week and then the fun would commence. While we waited for breakfast we would sit on the platform of the little station and watch the patrol with our glasses. It would disappear into a gorge behind the kopjes north of us and pretty soon we would hear a rattling fusilade of Mausers, and next minute the scouts come racing out of the gorge, or scrambling down the rocks. It was intensely interesting to watch them come out and count them to see if the Boers had got any of them. The last day they went out four rider-



less horses came tearing back making for camp, and we thought the Boers had got some of them at last, but a little later we saw the riders straggling down the rocks on foot, running for their lives. The cheeky Boers followed them with their fire until their bullets began to whistle around the station, but all escaped with the loss of one saddle. The horses came galloping for camp and went head-over-heels over our barb-wire entanglements. After that the commandant decided to let the Boers alone as long as they refrained from sniping at the camp, our force being so small that we could do no more than hold our own.

Later on, however, we ran out of supplies, and I got leave from the Major to take a patrol out to look up some. We were especially in need of salt for the horses, as they would not eat their oats and were getting sick. I took three of my own men and we struck off south-east. We were lucky enough to get thirteen dozen of eggs, half a bag of rock salt for the horses, some chicken, fresh pork, onions and carrots. As we could not carry all the eggs we left eight dozen at Eloff's bridge, telling them we would be back next day. From what we learned later I rather think the people we got the stuff from put up a job to round us up next day, which was very ungrateful, as we paid Pretoria prices for all we took.

Next day we went out, but chose a different route, as the Boers got most of the patrols from a knowledge of the methodical British manner of always going out the same way and returning by the same road at the same hour. Instead of moving in a bunch as the other fellows do, we spread out a quarter of a mile apart. The ground is very rolling and one of the benefits of this formation is that some of us would be on the ridge while the others were in the hollow all the time as we moved along. Besides, not more than one man would get in range with the enemy in case we came suddenly in touch with them. Our experience was that the formation worked well. As we went down to the ford of a river, Sergt. Stinson and I in advance, saw nothing of the en-

emy, but the other two men in rear saw a patrol of Boers scurry over the rising ground on the far side of the river and disappear. If we had gone by the same road as on the previous day they would have been in position to cut us off, but as it was we swung to the right and came down to the farm from the direction furthest from camp. We put a lookout on some high ground so that no one could approach within two thousand yards of us. Then we reconnoitered the farm, went in, got our swag, and started back. When we arrived at our first outpost on a kopje near the camp, the non-com. hailed us and came down. From their high lookout they had been watching us and eleven mounted Boers who had been trying to round us up all afternoon. They pointed out how after they retired beyond the ridge the Boers tried to get round one flank and had then sent four off nearly three miles to get round on the other, but our extended formation prevented them coming near us without being seen by one of us. The non-com. pointed them out to us on a ridge about two miles off. They had dismounted and were lying down in the long grass while their horses grazed, and to a casual observer the outfit looked like a bunch of horses or mules innocently grazing on the veldt.

Next afternoon we went north of the railway. By that time we were out of salt, sugar, pepper and everything except tea, bread and trek ox. If you ever tried stewed trek ox without salt you would appreciate our extremity. We scouted carefully up through the kopjes and out over the rolling veldt to the northeast until we came to the Onspruit coal mines. The manager, an ex-British soldier named Houghton, was at home. He came out wearing his medal as a guarantee of good faith and told us there were a lot of Boers in a kopje about a mile over. They had taken seventeen head of cattle from him that morning and he wished we had brought a gun along to shell them out. He took me inside and his wife and daughter supplied the men with coffee and scones. They had hardly any supplies of their own, but Mrs. Houghton wery kindly gave me a pound of nice

table salt for the mess and I got a lot of coarse salt for the men. We returned by a different route and had no trouble with the enemy.

The same party which had tried to round us up near Eloff's bridge having got very impudent and approached our lines on the southeast side that afternoon, Major Cooper, the commandant, and Major Hurdman decided to try to trap them to-day. All the mounted men available were sent out under Captain Eaton and Captain Kerr, of the Fusiliers, to lie in wait for them while a mounted infantry patrol was sent out an hour later to go over the same ground we had done and act as a decoy. But the wily Boer did not bite and the party returned after dark empty-handed. This sort of thing was very interesting and gave us something to do all the time. At time of writing the news is that there has been some fighting at Belfast to-day, so we will likely have some of it when we get there.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BATTLE OF BELFAST.

When all things were ready Lord Roberts ordered a general movement on Belfast and came up himself to direct it. Three days' fighting ensued. If the correspondents had not all gone home it would have figured in the papers as a battle of the war. It appealed to me as a fine exhibition of strategy and the handling of a great army. The Boers held a strong position in force. Lord Roberts sent French around towards their right, followed by Pole-Carew's division, while the main army occupied their attention at Belfast, and General Buller from Natal came up from the south to make a junction with Lord Roberts and strike the Boers' left flank, which rested on the railway at Bergendal, between Belfast and Machadodorp. On the third day of the fighting, when we reached the scene, that was the situation. The Bergendal Kopje, after being subjected to a terrific shelling, was assaulted and captured about sundown. Next morning was very foggy. When the fog cleared later in the day the Boer army had retired on Machadodorp, fearing to be surrounded by General French's turning movement driving them into the right angle formed by Roberts' and Buller's armies.

Belfast, Transvaal, Aug. 31.

Yesterday afternoon D battery, R.C.A., had the honor of being inspected by Field Marshal Lord Roberts. We arrived here during the fighting of the 26th and were under fire, though not in action, during the day. As I told

you in my last letter, the left section at Wilge river got orders to move to this point on Saturday evening last, directions being to march ten miles west to Bronkhorst-spruit and be ready to entrain there at 10 a.m. It was characteristic of the utter lack of knowledge among units up here as to what is going on that we did not know whether it was a section move or if the whole battery was going forward. In fact we did not know with any degree of certainty where the rest of the battery was. We were up next day before daylight, broke camp and marched off at 6:30 with an escort of Marshall's Horse and halted at Bronkhorstspruit station exactly at 10 o'clock. We found the center section which had been posted on a kopje some distance north of that place, drawn up at the station ready to entrain, and within a minute a train bowled into the station with the right section. Such is the way things work in a British army. The right section train went on, as owing to the railway being such a toy affair and the engines so worked out, they could only carry one section at a time. The center section did not get a train until 4 o'clock, and we did not get away until 9 p.m., having to load everything in the dark—a lovely job. Meantime a train went past with the Gordon Highlanders, and they told us the Canadian Infantry with Colonel Otter were stationed at Esterfab-ricken, twenty miles down the line towards Pretoria. The left section pulled into Middelburg about daylight, and we found ourselves alongside the center section train. Middelburg is a very pretty little town all built of stone and containing some handsome buildings. General Hutton was in command there, but I did not see him. He came on later to Belfast with Major Hurdman and the center section. For some reason our train moved out first at 8 o'clock, probably because Lord Roberts' provost marshal had bunked down under the guns in one of the open trucks forward—but that is another story. I was traveling in style, my horse and myself having a very dirty horse box to ourselves.

It was nearly 3 o'clock when we pulled into this place. The two guns of the right section were in action behind



W. M. M. M. M.
R. 2

Bergendal Kopje
On Aug 27 the 2nd Bde of Rifle Brigade
had 26 killed & 57 wounded in
skirmish from the ridge in the
background.

A TYPICAL LOER POSITION.

earthworks a couple of hundred yards from the station and there was evidently a big fight in progress on the surrounding hills. As we hustled our horses out of the cars a six-inch shell burst about 300 yards north of the station and another near some troops on the left. It did not take us long to detrain and hook in and we moved over to join the right section just as the next train with the rest of the battery came up.

The ridge in front of us was lined with troops to either flank as far as we could see. On the left was a high round-topped hill with a monument on it, from which two naval 4.7 guns spoke at leisurely intervals, sending their shells across the front towards the right side with long-drawn hideous screeches. On the ridge to the right two sections of field artillery and a 4.7 were hammering away. Directly in front of us was a cut in the ridge through which the railway went on to Machado-dorp. The Boers had a Long Tom on a truck which they ran round a curve and fired occasionally. It was our business to watch this gap and nail Mr. Long Tom if he came too close. On the right, but out of sight below the ridge, a tremendous cannonade was in progress in the direction of what we knew later was Bergendal Kopje. When I mention that the battle line that day was 30 miles long you can understand how much we saw of it, though we were lucky in being near the critical point—the apex of the angle at Bergendal-Belfast. Our infantry support consisted of two regiments, and I remember being impressed with how quickly and well each man had entrenched himself with earth and sods. Not long after the battery arrived Lord Roberts and his staff rode up, and as our infantry escort began to cheer after he had spoken to them the news rapidly spread that Bergendal Kopje had been captured. As he came past us the Field Marshal said to Major Hurdman: "Well, I told you I would have your battery up and here you are." (All the way up we had heard from the railway staff officers that the "Canydians" were to be "expedited" by direct orders from headquarters.) He inquired how the horses and men were and was extremely kind.

The right section had it rather warm during the morning. The Boers had a six-inch gun on the car, which they ran up to an opening in the hills and fired and then ran back. The first shell burst less than a hundred yards in front of the guns. Some of the men went out to pick up pieces as souvenirs, and while so engaged another shell came stuttering over and landed within ten feet of them. The wind of it knocked two of them down, but the others crouched in the first shell hole and were not hurt by the explosion. There was heavy fighting in front of Buller, southeast of our position, and he routed the Boers, capturing a pom-pom. The British loss was quite heavy, but the Boers suffered severely also.

Next day we were brigaded with the Twentieth and Seventy-Fifth batteries of Royal Artillery and once more found ourselves part of General Ian Hamilton's division. Gen. Hutton came over to see Major Hurdman and me. Lieutenant "Gat." Howard, Lieutenant Straubenzi and other officers of the Canadian Mounted Rifles, who are also here, visited us, and we exchanged experiences. General Hutton wanted a section of our battery to go on a reconnaissance with the Mounted Rifles and Royal Irish, and as I was next for detachment my section was detailed. Luckily, as it turned out, the order was countermanded as far as I was concerned. The force went out and had a little fight which I was sorry to miss, but the same morning orders came that the battery was to parade at 2 o'clock with Brabant's Horse to be personally inspected by Lord Roberts. Since coming here the battery has been issued with kharki helmets and "British warm" coats (kharki peajackets), the latter covering a multitude of sins in the way of worn out clothes, and the battery was looking its best when it formed up to meet the eye of the Great Little Man of the British army. Sharp to the minute "Bobs" came galloping up with his staff and after receiving the salute rode through the battery with Major Hurdman, asking questions about the corps and the Canadian army. At the conclusion of the inspection the officers were called out and we were all

presented to the general. He asked us what corps we belonged to at home, how long we had served, etc., and when he got through, exclaimed in a pleased tone of surprise: "Why, you are all artillerymen, aren't you?" Possibly he got the idea from the fact that there are artillery and cavalry officers in the Royal Canadian regiment, and some infantry officers in the mounted infantry that we also had cavalry and infantry officers in "the most scientific branch of the service." If that impression prevailed at headquarters no wonder they were slow in bringing the artillery to the front. Artillerymen, like Kipling's Jollies, "can do something all round," but infantrymen and cavalrymen need to be born over again before they become gunners. Lord Roberts asked if we were comfortable or wanted anything, and the C. O. said all we wanted was some more fighting. "Bobs" laughed in his pleasant way and said he would try to accommodate us. He said he was very much pleased with the appearance of the battery, that he had heard about it from Lord Minto, and that the men were a very soldierly and capable looking body.

No wonder the army idolizes "Bobs." He has such an unaffectedly friendly way with him and a total absence of "side," traits, by the way, which characterize all the real generals in the army whom we have met. It is only the duffers who stand pedestal-like upon their dignity. "Bobs" has what the old Scotchwoman called "the come hither," in his eye that draws all men to him. He returns the salute of the Tommy standing rigid by the roadside as pleasantly and punctiliously as that of a brass bound brigadier at the head of a shining staff. And Tommy, who is a sentimental animal underneath his tan and dirt, marches off swearing to himself that he'd bleedin' well die for little "Bobs." Amid all the cares of handling a quarter of a million men he is never too busy to walk down from his private car to say a cheery word to a convoy of wounded, as he did yesterday, or to turn out with all his staff to inspect a Canadian field battery, because he knows it will give them pleasure. The promise which he referred to about bringing us up here was

given when we were with him at Balmoral a month ago, and when last Friday we were holding down the trenches at Wilge River and saw "Bobs" whirled by in his special train to resume the advance up here we thought he had forgotten. But he hadn't.

It is probable that my guns will be attached to General Hutton's brigade of mounted infantry, as the General wants the guns. He says he will give us a good show in the fighting that is going.

Here is a bit of genre from the line of march: Infantry column halts after a long tramp and the sweating Tommies sit down in the dusty road—

First Tommy (in a tired tone)—"Soy, Bill, what's the nyme o' this here plaiçe?"

Second Tommy—"Abraham's Krawl."

First Tommy—"Thank Gord, it ain't another uv them stinkin' fouteens!"

Two officers of the Cape Garrison Artillery, the corps which entertained us so hospitably at Cape Town when we landed, came up here yesterday with a big 9.2 gun on a railway truck. We had them at dinner last night. The gun is a monster, throwing a 300-pound shell nearly nine miles. When it recoils, notwithstanding the recoil buffers on the carriage, it sends the car, with the wheels braked, back 27 feet on the track. They tell us that there are troops guarding all the lines of communication from here to Cape Town, and it is significant of the state of the country that, notwithstanding the guarding of the line, an attempt was made to wreck their train not far out of Cape Town by placing two large boulders on the track. After that they traveled only by day and it took them sixteen days of railway travel to get here.

It is said that war stimulates literature and the arts. It is to be hoped that this war will stimulate somebody to write some distinctively Canadian songs. We feel the want of them out here. The Maple Leaf is all right in its way, but the Canadian Tommy does not take kindly to its somewhat stilted phraseology. Besides, his soul yearns for something to express his weariness for home



THE BERTHOUSE
BIRCHST
ZAK

THE BOTHA HOUSE
BERGENDAL ZAK

AFTER THE BERGENDAL FIGHT.

and the girl he left behind him., and it is rather humiliating to have to appeal to the American muse for the wherewithal to express the longing. Around the bivouac fire *The Girl I Loved in Sunny Tennessee* has the call, with *My Old Kentucky Home* a good second. For *My Old Kentucky Home* read *My Old Canadian Home*, and it expresses the emotion which swamps the soldier's soul as he sits beside a smoky fire on the top of a wind-swept kopje on a moonlight night. Later on when the sentiment enters into the inmost recesses of his being you will hear a triful tenor strewing upon the still night air that melancholy melody, *Oh, Break the News to Mother*. Then turn over in your blankets and mentally endorse what General Sherman said about War.

This evening 1,800 prisoners came in from the enemy, having been released by the Boers. Some of them were captured at Nicholson's Nek and other early engagements of the war, and have been with the Boers ever since. They say that Lord Roberts' action in sending the Boer women and children into their lines has greatly hampered them and made it necessary to release the British prisoners. Naturally the Boers thought Lord Roberts was very mean not to continue feeding their wives and families for them in Johannesburg while they were busy fighting us. The prisoners were in very fair condition, though some were weak from low diet, and the clothes and shoes of others were worn out. The Dorsets who were captured at Nicholson's Nek had just been exactly ten months in captivity, having been captured on Oct. 30 and released on Aug. 30. Nearly all the officers were retained by the Boers, but some escaped by taking off their rank badges and mixing with the men. The released prisoners were furnished with rations and rum here, and they spent the whole night singing and cheering, keeping us all awake. Among them were two Canadian mounted infantry and six Strathconas. The Canadians spent the night with us.

Lieutenant McCrae is lying on his blankets on the other side of the tent singing *Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes*. Such allusions are painful and unneces-

sary in view of the present chronic condition of our mess hamper. Besides we have nothing to smoke but that rancorous Boer tobacco. There is no doubt the late General Snerman was right.

CHAPTER XXIX.

TRANSFERRED TO GENERAL HUTTON'S FORCE.

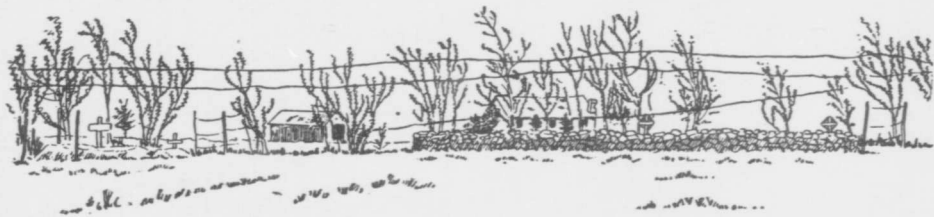
When it was found that the Boers had retired from the Belfast-Bergendal position, General Buller pushed on after them in the direction of Lydenburg, which is in the mountains north of Machadodorp. Lord Roberts remained at Belfast until September 11th, when he moved forward with his staff to Machadodorp. On Sept. 2 the division of Gen. Ian Hamilton got orders to move from Belfast towards Lydenburg direct, via Dullstroom, as General Buller was held up in a tight place in the mountains and it was desirable to throw another force on the enemy's flank to release him. This division departed on Sept. 3, but my section, having been transferred to General Hutton's force, did not form a part of it. The other two sections of D battery, under Major Hurdman, proceeded to Lydenburg and saw arduous service among the mountains. On one memorable afternoon they were under Long Tom fire for about four hours, unable to reply and right out in the open. The fact that the battery did not lose a man is an eloquent tribute to the ineffectiveness of this sort of long range fire. The infantry suffered a good deal, one shell killing and wounding nineteen men in a regiment. After the capture of Lydenburg the other two sections of D battery were stationed at Machadodorp and Crocodile Poort respectively. In the meantime I had been busy working up my horses, and commandeering others which were roaming about the veldt, until I had enough to turn

out a very respectable horse artillery detachment which subsequently proved very useful for reconnaissance. To resume the story as told by the letters:

Belfast, Transvaal, Sept. 5.

About 4:30 this morning we were awakened by heavy firing over to our left in the direction of Nooitgedacht. There were pom-poms and big guns going. An order came from General Hutton for my section to get ready to go, but it was countermanded later, as the enemy had been driven off. Before daylight they had penetrated the outposts of the Canadian Mounted Infantry and attacked vigorously, but were driven out after a fierce little fight in which two officers, Saunders and Moodie, and six men were wounded.

Yesterday I rode over to the Boer position at Bergendal, near where the hardest fighting occurred the first day we were here. The Boers were on a low rocky kopje exactly like a fort, with clear, level ground all round it. In a hollow behind the kopje there was a large stone kraal in which they placed their horses and about 200 yards behind that a large stone farmhouse and corrugated iron barn. When I got there the wounded had been removed and the dead buried. Our artillery had played on the position for three hours and the practice was good, though the range was over two miles. The kopje itself and the ground immediately around it was pock-marked with shell craters and the big rocks were riven and splintered by the lyddite. It was difficult to understand how anyone could have lived. Dead horses were everywhere and in the kraal behind the poor brutes lay in dozens, some with their blankets on. The farmhouse must have been a pretty place in happier days. There was a large flower garden around it and a long windbreak of blue gum trees near by. But it was now a scene of desolation. Dead horses lay among the flowerbeds. There were huge holes in the walls and roof where the shells had crashed through and burst inside, smashing bedsteads and tables to pieces and setting fire to the



BRITISH AND BOER GRAVES, BERGENDAL.

woodwork which still smouldered. The corrugated iron barn had been showered with shrapnel bullets until it looked like a sieve, and the branches of trees littered the ground. We did not know the particulars of the infantry attack which preceded the artillery action, and which was executed by Buller's troops, but they must have suffered heavily. Near the house were the graves of three officers and twenty-two men of one regiment—Second battalion Rifle Brigade—and besides them the graves of one officer and ten men of the Boers—all the enemy's dead we found. We heard that the Liverpool regiment had also suffered heavily, but I don't know where their men were buried. In fact, though we were here at the fight, you probably know more about what actually happened than we do, because an engagement covers a lot of ground and the troops engaged only know what they see in the position they happen to occupy. The generals know what happens all over the field, but they don't take the troops into their confidence further than to announce results—that the enemy had been beaten and retired. You could trace the line of the infantry advance by parallel lines of little heaps of cartridge shells, where each man had lain on the veldt firing. Here and there some tufts of cotton batting in the grass, a bloody sock or a torn coat marked where some poor chap had been wounded or killed. Otherwise, but for the dead horses, shell holes and the shattered buildings and new-made graves, there was no trace of the fierce fight which must have raged about the farm before the artillery fire was turned upon the position in the afternoon.

Among the wounded I saw the day after the fight was a big Highlander. He had been shot in the side of the mouth and the bullet was still embedded in the muscles of his jaw, but he was laboriously engaged in chewing a hardtack, while he told some of his friends about it. "A handfu' o' us lads were rushin' the trench an' Aw stopped t' tak' aim at a Boo-oo-r wha got up t' fire at ma chum on the left. Ma mooth was girmed up o'er the stock o' ma rifle when this ithter deevil fired at me

from the richt. Aw fired at th' ither chiel first, and then went at 'im wi' the bayonet. But, losh! the begger let's his rifle doon and yawps oot: 'Aw surrender! Yur a Breetish soldier—ye winna kill me!' The impidence uv im." The relater of the incident stopped, felt his wounded cheek and spat out some hard tack with blood on it, then added quietly: "Aw pit me bayonet intil him twice t' mak' sure." "Weel done, Jock!" "Guid mon!" echoed the listeners heartily. From which it will be gathered that the Highland regiments at least have got tired of conducting fighting on five o'clock tea principles in this campaign.

When we came into the station here on our arrival, amid the hurry of detraining, my attention was attracted by the pathetic figure of an old man, seated on a bench. He had a long beard and was so much better dressed than the average burgher as to attract attention in times when everyone in kharki or out of it is travel-worn and dirty. A middle-aged woman, apparently his daughter, sat beside him and was acting the part of comforter, with much gentle solicitude, but the old man appeared bowed down with grief. With his hands clenched in his beard and his elbows resting on his knees he sat leaning forward gazing at nothing and quite oblivious to the cannonade and bursting shells. I thought at the moment that he was some well-to-do burgher whose place had been burned, but I heard later he was General Snyman, of Mafeking fame. Under an assumed name he had tried to get a certificate as a non-combatant from the British but was informed on by a Kaffir and made a prisoner. He was awaiting transportation to Pretoria just after the discovery of his identity when I saw him.

I began this letter on the fifth, but it is now the tenth. This morning divine service was held and General Roberts and Lord Kitchener were both there, so I had a good look at them for nearly an hour as they stood out in the middle of the hollow square. "Bobs" is certainly a wonderful little man for his years. It was very close and hot, but he stood up the whole service, though

any number of men dropped in the ranks. Kitchener gives one the impression of not feeling very much at home as a member of the staff. It may be a mistaken impression and due only to his manner in public, for "the terrible Sirdar" looks the part in a most satisfactory way. Big, grim and unapproachable-looking, he takes his place always with scrupulous exactitude on the right rear of the field marshal, but well out to the front of the staff. I have never seen him chatting with anyone, even when the staff is "standing easy." He has nothing of the heavy tragedy air, but you instinctively think of something powerful and calmly ferocious under restraint. To his strong, handsome face the overshot forehead gives a lowering appearance, and, underneath his deep brows, the eyes look dull and apathetic until they undeceive you with a momentary leonine flash. Though so tall he is rather heavily built, and moves with a deliberateness that would be sluggish were it not for the impression of a tremendous physical strength capable of being gradually roused into irresistible activity. He is the sort of man who would lyddite sixteen thousand of the enemy, light a fresh cigar and lyddite sixteen thousand more without a thought of anything but military exigency and the welfare of the state. He is, in a word, the very antithesis of his small, alert, cheerfully benevolent-looking chief.

The preacher's text included the words : "Are there not enough graves in Egypt that ye have brought us into this land?" and, somehow, I could not keep my eyes off Kitchener.

This is a very trying climate. Yesterday dawned with a heavy, clammy fog, almost rain, and driving piercing wind. Later in the day it cleared up, but the wind blew a cold gale with clouds of sand and dust. Last night it was away below freezing point, and the men had coal fires in their tents (there is any amount of coal in this vicinity). This morning it was so oppressively hot that the troops dropped in dozens at the church parade and to-night it is so cold that we are wearing all the clothes we have. At last the Red Cross comforts are

commencing to reach us—a bale of warm kharki flannel shirts and a huge box of chocolate, which latter the men bolt with the eagerness of school boys, it is so long since they had anything sweet. Fever and dysentery have broken out again here with much virulence, and the men of my section are going into hospital in squads. We would be decimated were it not for the convalescents who are rejoining daily, men we left weeks ago at Bloemfontein and Pretoria.

CHAPTER XXX.

AN ARMY ON TREK.

Belfast, Transvaal, Sept. 7.

You have heard those "descriptive battle pieces" that the bands play commencing with "the sounds around the bivouac fires at night," the sleeping army (represented by low, sweet music with a fetching tremolo to it), the loud, martial notes of the trumpet reveille, the bivouac awakening to life, the regiments marching off to the music of their bands, the opening gun, the roar of musketry, the trumpets sounding the charge, the rout of the enemy and the grand finale of national airs. It is very inspiring. But would you like to hear how it is in real war? I will try to describe it:

Darkness has settled down upon the army. A thousand bivouac fires are flickering on the hills, men are grouped about them picturesquely, their silhouetted figures throwing long black shadows on the grass. There is a low murmur of conversation around the fires, punctuated by occasional frantic outbursts of profanity in the surrounding darkness, from which you gather that "somebody has taken my blankets." In the acoustic background, so to speak, is a pandemonium of angry yells muted by the distance, not unlike the noise of "an angry mob" as represented by the supes behind the scenes in a Shakesperian drama, but multiplied a thousandfold. That is the belated transport coming up in the distance. Down the lines the bagpipes begin to try their notes like awakening birds, and then break forth in a burst of wild, sweet melody that sounds weirdly in keeping with the hour and scene. Beyond the hills the burning veldt, fired by the enemy, casts a great reflection on the sky as of a distant burning city. The pibroch ceases,

and somewhere in the near foreground some iconoclast, with no music in his soul, barks out blithely :

'Way down on the Hanky-Pank,
Where the bullfrogs jump from bank to bank,
Because they have nuthin' else to do-oo-oo !

Then the groups about the camp fires begin crooning, and some one will strike a popular chord, and you will occasionally hear a really good chorus—one of Chevalier's coster songs, Soldiers of the Queen, Annie Laurie, Home, Sweet Home, or, from the "Canydians," She Was Bred in Old Kentucky, or I Wants Yo' My Honey. Suddenly a rifle cracks sharply. Then another and another. No, it isn't a night attack. It is only the commissary shooting trek oxen for our breakfast.

The music gradually ceases. The last transport has rolled creaking up, the Kaffir yells have died away, the groups about the fires have rolled themselves in their blankets and the great houseless city is nearly asleep, when there is galloping of horses and bleating Cockney calls of "Rough-ry-y-ders, 'Ello-a-a!" Some of those bleedin' yeomanry have lost their way, and are looking for their bivouac, bawling and riding over everything like a herd of stampeded sheep. You can hear them blundering into bivouac after bivouac of regiment, battery and squadron to be received with crashing volleys of profanity, before which they recoil shocked and confused.

At last the camp sleeps. It is only 8 o'clock, but that is as late as midnight to men whose day begins two hours before sunrise. Against the background of a peaceful monotone of snores, sounds the click-click! of the lantern-helio tirelessly flashing orders to other winking lights on kopjes a dozen miles around. A sentry barks out a hoarse, sharp challenge. There is a low reply, followed by: "Stand, visiting rounds! GUARD TURN OUT!" Sometimes, if it has been a rum-issue night, the sharp demand for the countersign will be answered with a bibulous jeer by a straying party who have been "visiting out," and you will hear something like this: "Ad-

vance one of you blank-blank-blankers and give the countersign, or I fire!" The click of a cartridge pumped out of the magazine into the breech lends force to the remark. He gets the countersign. Even a boozy Tommy knows enough not to monkey with the buzz saw.

(You will wonder how Tommies get drunk on half a gill of rum. Well, they gamble for the drinks, and the winner takes the pot too often.)

Now, then, bring on your pianissimo music. The bivouac slumbers. The fires flicker and die out. A waning crescent moon rises in the east and impotently vies with the radiance of the glorious southern stars. Silence and mystery brood over the sleeping thousands. Many are dreaming of home, and you think of the thousands more in distant lands who are thinking and praying for them. To-morrow night some of these sleepers will occupy their last long bivouac on the cold, grey kopjes, with a heap of rocks for a blanket. But the soldier never thinks of that. He lives in the strenuous present, or, if he gives a thought to the morrow, he thinks it will be some one else. He has been often under fire, and it was always some one else who stopped the bullet. Why not the same to-morrow?

Reveille! But there is no clangor of trumpets or clarion bugle calls as in the "descriptive battle piece," for the simple reason that trumpets and bugles are not allowed to be sounded when an army is in touch with the enemy. It would be an advertisement of our position and numbers. You only hear the guard scuffling about among the sleepers. "Reveille, sergeant!—Reveille! Wake up!" Alas, that realism should so clash with art! The sergeants go along the lines waking their men by the simple but effective method of pulling the blankets off them and letting the keen, before-the-dawn chill do the rest. I regret to say that the new day is ushered in with a ripple of subdued profanity, sleepy, but none the less heartfelt. All soldiers do not swear with their waking breath, but in giving tips to the musical composers I can only deal with dominant notes. It is still quite dark. The fires are relighted and there is the crackling

of thorns under the pot. There is no singing or whistling—everyone goes about his work in sulky silence during this gloomy, chilly hour before the dawn. The sergeants yell briskly: "Get ready to feed, No. 1"—"Get ready to feed, No. 2." Gradually the rosy east gets rosier, and the spirits of the men rise with the sun. Down at the supply park, where the huge provision convoy rests, the all-pervading chorus of yells from the Kaffirs commences. The bustle of preparation for departure reinforces it with a medley of sounds, and high above all rises the skirl of the bagpipes uplifted to the tune of Hey, Johnny Cope, Are Ye Wakin' Yet, with the thud-thud-thud of the big bass drum mercilessly lambasted by a brawny, bow-legged Hielan'man, balancing the instrument on his rotund stomach, while his arms revolve in the air like a double-barreled windmill.

I don't know how it is, but no army regulations seem to apply to the bagpipes. They are a law unto themselves, and play when they like and all day Sunday. Even a corps commander hesitates to brave the nemo me impune lacessit of a high-spirited Highland regiment. It is in my mind that a noted corps of the Highland brigade in this same campaign being furnished with helmets and ordered to wear them, made a bonfire of the headgear in the middle of their bivouac.)

But to resume. Shortly after sunrise the army begins to move, but the bands don't play. The bandmen are carrying stretchers. First the advance guard of cavalry or mounted infantry canters off, then a regiment of infantry forms fours and trudges silently away, their feet swishing through the dry veldt grass and a low cloud of kharki-colored dust drifting to leeward. More infantry and then a battery of artillery goes rumbling and clanking off. And so on until the advance guard and main body is strung miles ahead, after which, with much yelling, whip-cracking and creaking of heavy wains the transport follows, while the infantry and artillery of the rear guard sits watching it for hours, when they, too, take the road and the army is strung out like a huge kharki snake undulating over the veldt, a snake ten miles from





OUR FRIENDS THE ENEMY.

From a Boer photograph.

tip to tail, crawling round kopjes, squirming through passes, writhing over ridges and down through valleys. Its head of mobile mounted troops feels this way and that in front, just like that of a snake.

Away in rear the still morning air suddenly pulsates with a deep, long-drawn Boom-m-m! And then, like an echo among the kopjes, Whoo-oo-oo! followed by a short, sharp, vicious bang! The column halts and everybody listens. Another Boom-who-oo-oo-oo—bang! The rear guard is attacked—the tail of the snake has been trodden on. You can see nothing; but the whole body waits. Another shell, and the scared birds come flying past from rearward, while from the head of the column aide-de-camps come galloping back, going to see what is up. Again, from the direction of the rear guard, Bang! Whoo-oo-oo! (A silence while you count ten, and then)—Bung! That's one of our rear guard guns replying. Another and another. Those are twelve-pounders. Pom-pom-pom-pom-pom! In querulous crescendo — Penk-penk-penk-penk-penk! Then high above the notes of all the smaller fry, the deep, deliberately dignified Boom! of the six-inch "cow gun" ("big, brown, broad-breeched beggars o' batterin' guns," each drawn by thirty-two oxen)—Haroo-oo-oo-sh! Whang! That's a lyddite shell tearing up a kopje. Now they are at it, hammer and tongs, both pedals down and the stops out. Rat-tat-tat-tat! like a tack hammer on a coffin lid. The infantry are in it. Away over the ridge there is evidently a good, sharp little scrap on, but you don't see anything. The rest of the column just stands and listens. The noise gets louder. "Battery—prepare for action!" "Infantry—charge magazines!" The gunners dismount and load in a trice; the infantry stand up, elevate the muzzles of their rifles and there is a prolonged clicking rattle as the magazines are filled with cartridges. But the row in rear dies away, and finally all is quiet. The aide de-camps gallop back, there is a whistle and the infantry in front get up out of the dust and trudge on, the artillery follows and the big kharki serpent writhes on for another hour or so.

Next there is a rattle of rifle fire in front. Again the column stops. This time it is the head of the serpent that is bruised. Again the fires dies down, and on it goes. you pass the horribly businesslike-looking ambulances standing beside the road ten minutes later, and count the number of pairs of feet sticking out of them. A dazed trooper stands beside his dead horse with his saddle under his arm. He has been as near death as the breadth of your hand, and he doesn't half like it.

Finally the main body is attacked. There is the old familiar, distant boom! but it sounds rather differently, because it is succeeded by a hideous, stuttering whistle coming through the air towards you, and you listen to it coming for five or six long, uneventful seconds, during which you have leisure to speculate on your chances of living to a ripe old age. On its arrival it does one of two things: It plumps into the ground, explodes with a muffled roar and throws up a kharki geyser of rocks and earth. Or it bursts in the air. You've been in a thunder storm when the clouds were close over head and the flash of the lightning and the riving crack of the thunderbolt were simultaneous. Well, it's just like that, except that this thunderbolt comes from a clear sky, and is followed by a shower of bullets, gravel and fragments of jagged iron. (Those shells that explode in the air are called time shells, and every one of them is a Hint to the Unconverted.)

Even at this juncture there is a woeful lack of stirring battle sounds. The trumpets and bugles are mute, the shouting of the captains fails to materialise, and the band doesn't play. A few quiet orders are given, the guns wheel into line, the infantry extends and the men lie down. The gunners dismount, put up the lids of the axletree seats and kneel down close behind them, the horses walk away to the rear with the limbers. The commanding officer takes his glasses and picks out the target. The guns commence to bark, the pom-poms gallop up and get very busy and noisy; the cow guns come grunting into line and the placid bullocks stand chewing their cuds watching the shells burst as they wait to be outspanned

and taken to the rear. Then the same old orchestra you heard in the morning, or at least a similar one, performs for an hour or so. The enemy is silenced, and the column winds on towards its next bivouac.

CHAPTER XXXI.

BOER TREACHERY.

In Camp, near Belfast, Sept. 24.

There was a very impressive funeral here this evening—one of the most impressive I ever attended, though there was no “funeral director” and no coffin or hearse, and not even a floral tribute or a preacher. In fact, it was a decidedly amateurish affair, regarded from the standpoint of the conventionally impressive funeral. Even the grave diggers were amateurs, and there was not a bit of crape in sight. We were all Canadians together, and we were burying two troopers of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, who were killed on patrol yesterday afternoon. The sun was just setting behind a kopje as we silently formed in square around the double grave in a little hollow near the camp. The bodies, sewn up in their blankets, were lifted out of the ambulance on stretchers and laid on the ground beside the grave. Bodies look more impressive when prepared for burial in that simple way than they do when incased in rosewood caskets with silver plates. A group of Boer women and children came over and stood near regarding the proceedings with impassive curiosity from the depths of their big sunbonnets. They had had funerals of their own around here, for behind us were half a dozen fat-looking fresh mounds of earth on the veldt, mementos of the first day's fighting three weeks ago. The bodies of the two Canadians were handled gently into the grave, and a trooper jumped down and arranged them. Then Lieut.-Col. Lessard called the parade to attention, and, as no chaplain was available (where are all our chaplains these months past?) Mr. Best, the young Y. M. C. A. representative, recited a few scripture texts, led the singing of two verses of Rock of Ages Cleft for Me, and said a short prayer. Mr.

Best was not spectacularly impressive arrayed, as he was, in an old worn kharki suit, boots, spurs and a pony hat, but what he said and the way he said it was impressive. The troops leaned on their rifles and listened to him intently. One lad, probably a former chum of one of the bundles in the blankets, stepped aside from the ranks and sat down abruptly in the grass. When Mr. Best had concluded he took up a handful of the red, fresh earth and threw it into the grave, repeating the usual formula. The sun sank behind the hill, and the bugle sang the slow, sweet notes of the "last post." Then there was an embarrassing pause, and we all seemed to be wondering whether all had been done to make the burial really legal, when a hard-faced little trumpeter stepped out of the ranks, advanced to the grave, and, turning to his colonel, saluted with automatic precision. Producing a little, dirty, frayed Union Jack, such as you see children playing with on the streets at home, he looked about, undecided, stuck it in the top of the mound of new earth, saluted again, and marched stiffly back to the ranks. It has become so unfashionable of late years to be sentimental about the "old flag" that the silence became painfully embarrassing. I glanced across at the opposite ranks and caught a glimpse of the weather-beaten face of old Sergt.-Major Page. I actually believe there were tears in his eyes. If I was mistaken I apologise. In any case there were others. A Boer baby, frightened by the silence, began to cry in its mother's arms. A gruff order was given, a squad stepped briskly forward and rapidly filled up the grave, and we marched over to supper.

To tell the truth, we felt particularly badly about the killing of these two young fellows. In the first place, we had just got the news that Botha's army was finally dispersed, a number of guns captured and the war, as a war, ended. Therefore, it seemed a needless sacrifice. In the second place they had been done to death in a manner which, if the killing had been done by any other civilised enemy but our "brother Boer," would have been characterized as something akin to murder. The patrol of four was returning to their post near Wonderfontein

when they saw some men in kharki signalling them to come over to a kopje. Thinking it was our western patrol from this post, they rode over to them, and were fired upon at 200 yards. Seeing they were trapped the four young fellows jumped off their horses and put up a desperate but hopeless fight. Their treacherous enemy was under cover, and they were in the open. In a very short time Spence and Radcliffe were killed, Thornton dangerously, pernaps mortally, wounded, and the fourth man ran to his horse and escaped to our outpost to tell the tale. The cowardly Boers retreatel before an avenging party reached the scene. If the Canadians come upon any of the enemy during the next few days it is very unlikely that any addition will be made to Bobs' 16,000 prisoners.

Talking about sacrifices, I notice in recent papers (two months old!) that not a few newspapers and public men in Canada are talking about the sacrifices the Dominion has made for the empire in this war. It might be will to go softly on this line. Surely the speakers or writers are not aware that Australia has over 10,000 troops out here, besides a contingent of some sort in China, and that little New Zealand, with a population of half a million, has 2,000. The Dominion, with a population nearly twelve times that of New Zealand, sent out barely 3,500 troops, all told, and one-seventh of that number were contributed by the private purse and patriotism of Lord Strathcona. I make the statement subject to correction, but I believe that the contingents from Ceylon and other little dependencies you hardly ever hear of, number in the aggregate as large a force as that actually contributed by "the first colony of the empire." That the Canadians have made such a name for themselves in this war is distinctly due to their quality and not to their numbers. Neither is it the fault of the young men of Canada that more were not out here. Goodness knows, there were enough of them wanted to come out. But regarded strictly as a national "sacrifice" on the altar of our common country the chilly statistics should deter wise people from boasting. It is an indication of what

was expected of Canada that Gen. Hutton's recommendation for the first contingent called for over 5,000 troops. I do not know whether this is generally known, but I do know that it is a fact.

We have had it lively enough during the past week, the Boers having attacked five or six times at different points, but not in force, and were driven off in each instance with a small loss in killed and wounded. The Royal Canadian Dragoons have been rather unfortunate, losing altogether two killed and nine or ten wounded. The Coldstream Guards, Berks, Scottish Borderers, Naval Contingent, Royal Canadian Dragoons and my section of D battery are here. The other two sections are at Machadodorp, twelve miles east, and Krokodile Poort. Major Hurdman and Lieut.-Col. Drury are in Pretoria, arranging for our prospective return home. Fever is very prevalent, owing to the number of dead horses, oxen, etc., the debris of the three days' fighting here. We have been doing our best to bury them, but it is a hopeless task. Over 25 per cent. of my men are in the hospital. There are six large graves full of Boers a couple of hundred yards from our lines, and I don't believe they are buried very deep. A dead Indian may or may not be a good Indian, but Boers are objectionable dead or alive in this climate. And he's a brave man who wants to take any chances at this late stage of the game. The other afternoon the C. O.'s commanding units had to ride out beyond the outposts to examine the Boer position and the ground. One of the party was a little major of the Scottish Borderers, who has the reputation for never getting "fed up" on fighting. When the party was well out to the front of the outpost line, Col. Lessard said in his precise English: "Perhaps, gentlemen, it would be well that you ride in ex-tended ordaire. They always shoot at parties from those rocks over there." "What!" said the little major, "that kopje! Good afternoon! I will meet you further on." And half the party went with him. "Bah!" said the colonel. "Those infantrymen! They do not like getting shot." I presume he meant getting shot at.

You would not wonder at the good opinion entertained of Canadian troops out here if you saw the splendid work of the Royal Canadian Dragoons (formerly First C. M. R's). On parade they look like a regiment of cowboys, with their shaggy little ponies, prairie hats and rough-and-ready uniform—for their original kit is worn out, and they wear any sort of clothes they can pick up. I have seen every variety of mounted troops out here—regular cavalry, mounted infantry, regular and irregular, and none of them are in it with the "Canydians" for the sort of work to be done. Their outpost work is the best I have seen by long odds, for the simple reason that they know how to keep under cover. So far, all the British soldier has learned in this war is to keep under cover when he is being fired at. When not being fired at he chooses for preference a conspicuous position on the sky line or a hill top, and the Boers know just exactly where he is and how many of him there are. The Canadians keep under cover all the time, taking up their positions before daylight, and the Boers never know where they will stumble on them or how many will be there. The value of this was shown the other morning when they attempted to cut the railway near here. A body of Boers attacked the main body at Nooitgedacht, while fifty galloped off to a flank to get round and blow up the rails. There was one man posted in some rocks over on the flank, and when he saw the fifty going past him, instead of running to his horse, which was also under cover, and making off, he opened as rapid a fire as possible on the enemy. Taken by surprise, and thinking they had stumbled into another position, the fifty Boers wheeled around and rode off as hard as they could go, abandoning their object. I was speaking to some of Botha's men who fought in all the battles down Natal way. They were particularly intelligent men, and they bore the strongest possible testimony to the bravery of the British soldiers, especially the infantry; but they spoke with regret, rather than admiration, at the manner in which they threw away their lives. "They would come walking towards us when they were ordered to advance against a

position we held," said a keen-looking chap with gold eye-glasses, "and we just shot them down as quick as we could load and fire. It was like a battue. We often spoke among ourselves how sorry we were to kill brave men like that. But what could we do? We always shot the officers in preference to the men. They were brave too, but foolish. Why did they bring their men up like that?"

CHAPTER XXXII.

GARRISON DUTY AT BELFAST.

Belfast, Z. A. R., Oct. 2.

The left section of D battery got the first mail we had for a month this morning. Major Hurdman sent it out from Pretoria in charge of a convalescent gunner, and he did not get here any too quick, as just after the train passed Pan station, west of here, the Boers attacked it and cut the railway. It must have been a sharp fight, as we heard the firing here. Our people lost five killed and fifteen wounded. We are very glad they did not get our mail, because we have been hungering for several weeks for news from the outside world.

The fighting still continues—insignificant little affairs from the standpoint of a big battle, but quite serious enough to the units engaged; in fact, they often lose more than in the big engagements. The Canadian Mounted Rifles and Royal Canadian Dragoons have lost more men in these scrimmages than they did during the advance on Pretoria. The enemy are in isolated bodies of a few hundreds among the mountains, and they operate more like brigands than regular troops. Lieut. McRae went out with his section from Machadodorp on Wednesday and had a scrap. None of his men were hit, and they inflicted some loss on the Boers, as the dead horses found on their position attested. The Royal Canadian Dragoons went out north of here yesterday, and were attacked by a large force of Boers about four miles from the outposts. The fight lasted three hours, and the firing was very hot; but our men have become such artists in taking cover that they didn't lose a man. One trooper had his horse killed and another horse was wounded. They drove the Boers for some distance through the rocks, but the latter were reinforced from

Nooitgedacht, and the Royal Canadian Dragoons had to draw off and return to camp. We are going out after them with the guns. If they had had the guns yesterday we could have bagged a lot, as they were in nice range. But the Commandant here is chary about letting the guns away, as he is apprehensive of an attack. Col. Lessard entertains the view that the best way to ensure the safety of a position is to keep the other fellows busy looking after their own safety. (In other words, the best way to defend yourself is to soak the other fellow on the southeast corner of the jaw.) The Commandant is a soldier of the old school, and he shakes his head and gravely enunciates the reminder that our role at this point is "defense, not defiance." Gen. Hutton is a strong believer in the "offensive-defensive" tactics, but he has gone to Pretoria. However, we expect that Col. Lessard will be in command to-morrow and the newer tactics will rule.

The present weather is very favorable to the Boer morning attacks, such as they made at Pan to-day, because a heavy mist prevails until 8 or 9 o'clock two or three times a week, making it comparatively easy to get through the outposts. By the way, there has been an investigation as to how the Boers captured the C. M. R. outpost and rushed the camp at Nooitgedacht, a week or two ago. The men who were taken prisoners on the outpost have since got away from the Boers and returned. The inference, of course, was that the men were asleep, or at least not on the alert, or they would not have been captured without firing a shot and alarming the main body. A fortunate circumstance has enabled them to entirely exonerate themselves. Commandant Dirkson, of Erasmus' commando, happens to be in our lines, having been given a safe conduct through to consult with Botha, further east, about surrendering. Dirkson led the attack at Nooitgedacht, and he gave evidence as to how the Canadian outpost came to be captured. With a party of Boers he got through the lines at another point and approached the C. M. R. outpost from the rear just before dawn. Thinking it was the relief, which arrives

from camp at that time, the outpost allowed them to approach, their challenge being answered by Dirkson, who speaks English well. Before they discovered their mistake in the dim light the Boers were on them in overwhelming force, and resistance was hopeless. The main Boer force then came in by this outpost and rushed the camp, but were repulsed and compelled to retire, but the C. M. R.'s had two officers and nine men wounded in the attack.

Prisoners are surrendering here every day. The women in the town are in many cases helping on the work by sending out copies of the proclamation to their husbands. (With the exception of about half a dozen, all the male residents of the place over fifteen years of age are out fighting us.) On Saturday morning a well known local Boer, named Coetsie, whose wife lives in a very handsome house near our camp, came in during the night to surrender. He was armed and had a led horse with him, but in some way he got through the cavalry outposts and infantry pickets without being discovered and went to his house. He was suffering from enteric fever. In the morning his wife came over to the camp, leading him by the hand as if he was going to execution. She had come to surrender him. On approaching Col. Les-sard's tent he took off his hat. When the colonel came out he stepped humbly forward and handed over his rifle and bandolier. The guard came up and took him away, and his wife returned to her home crying bitterly. The war was over as far as the Coetsie household was concerned. This morning an old man and his four sons gave themselves up with their horses. They said they were tired living up in the rocks like monkeys. Yesterday I had a talk with about sixty prisoners who had come from Machadodorp. They were lying in groups on the ground, some wrapped in gaudy bed quilts and traveling rugs, others with parasols and umbrellas up. A chain of sentries with loaded rifles and fixed bayonets paced around them. Most of the prisoners looked like our own farmers with their "store clothes" on. A few looked like the typical hobo, and carried bully beef tins with wire

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NAVAL GUN AT BELFAST.

handles on them. On the whole, they were very intelligent men of their class, and nearly all could speak English. (The English-speaking Boers talk English better than the English themselves. They enunciate their words clearly and distinctly, with hardly any perceptible accent, use no slang phrases and choose the best words to express themselves. They talk book English, pure and undefiled.) The prisoners talked very sensibly about the war. Said one man, who had fought in Natal against Buller: "What we should have done was to concentrate our strength at Pretoria and fight the final battle there. Then, if we had been beaten, surrender honorably. A few thousands such as there are in the field now, broken up into commandoes, cannot possibly fight two hundred thousand. The result is that the country is being ruined. Our troops in the field take what they want from the farms, and what they leave your troops take. Here our chiefs suppress your proclamations and tell the burghers they will be sent to St. Helena if they surrender. You cannot frighten a dopper so much as by telling him he will be sent to St. Helena. So they are afraid to surrender. They would rather fight to the death." A few of the prisoners were evidently Hollanders, pale-faced, anaemic, clerkly-looking chaps, quite different from the sturdy, wiry Dutchman who now entertain a thorough contempt for them. They say the Hollanders are cowards and always stayed in the rear during a fight. The Boers speak with grim satisfaction of how recently on several occasions the lyddite shells from our long range guns overshot the mark, landing among the Hollanders and doing much damage.

It has always appealed to me as amusing that so many of the Boer warriors carry parasols and umbrellas, and yet it is very characteristic. The Boer is a compound of all that is unsoldierly in style and soldierly in action. The appearance of a commando of Boers riding along in the sun on their shaggy, little, unkempt ponies, or trudging placidly along on foot, every second man holding a gaily-striped parasol or an umbrella over his head would not impress a representative from the war office as quite

the thing. And the effect on those German officers, fresh from the Excise Platz of Potsdam and Berlin, must have been maddening. Yet, when the firing commenced, these guileless rural militia folded up their umbrellas, and, no doubt, carefully placed the elastic bands on them, and then sallied into the rocks where they put up a brand of fighting that earned them the respect of the best army in the world. And possibly they were far fresher and more fit because they carried this unsoldierly equipment than the British infantryman, staggering along in the heat under his heavy brain-racking helmet. Perhaps as the Boer sat comfortably in his chantz and shot down our brave, but overloaded, infantry as they toiled breathless up the kopje, he smiled too in his artless Boer fashion. The problem is a great one.

From what I have seen of the Boer I am inclined to think that he will rapidly settle down under British auspices. They take their defeat with calm philosophy, and there is no apparent rancor in their souls against the British. They are rather proud of the fight they put up, as they have a right to be, but they recognise now, if not a year ago, that it could only have one result. Mingled with this is a strong appreciation of the lenient manner in which the British have treated them and a certain wonder that a nation so strong as they now know her to be should have suffered Majuba hill to remain unavenged for twenty years. It is incorrect to suppose the Boers as a whole are ignorant. They may be badly informed regarding the outside world, and somewhat behind in their knowledge of current events previous to the war, but they are sensible, level-headed people, and now that they are getting a better perspective view of themselves and the rest of the world they are ready to adapt themselves to the new condition. Especially as the Boer has a keen eye to the main chance, and already he is realising that it may be better for his pocket, if worse for his patriotism, if these Britishers with the plentiful, shiny gold sovereigns are to become a permanent feature in the landscape. The fact of an army of occupation being maintained here for a year or two will be a present source of

income for the residents. For the rooineken will have eggs, milk, butter and sundry other products, even with eggs at 5s. a dozen and milk a shilling a quart. The addition of one hundred thousand non-producing consumers to the population, as represented by the army of occupation, will be the first fruits of the war for the Boer. It will bring a lot of money into and distribute it in the country. By the time the army of occupation is being reduced to garrisons the influx of civilian population will have commenced. The British army has done more than carry fire and sword into the Transvaal and Free State. It has been an enlightening force for a population that has lived up here largely cut off from the outer world. Every little field column and garrison is doing missionary work. The soldiers talk to the people and tell them things and answer their questions. Thanks, largely, to Lord Roberts' policy, the best of relations exist between the troops and the people. The individual British soldier bears no ill-will against the people he is fighting. When the fighting is over and the village or town captured he turns in and helps nurse the baby of the people near where he is camped, and is anxious to be friendly and sociable. If he is stationed there a few weeks he knows everybody in the place, and has made a little circle of friends just as if he was quartered in a town at home.

The view that the Boer will take kindly to the new order of things may seem odd in view of the constant fighting up here. The opinion is based on a somewhat extended intercourse with residents of the districts and prisoners from practically all over the central and north-eastern part of the country. Of course, the Boer is subtle and diplomatic, and may conceal his real feelings, but I think, on the whole, the expression of sentiment is too unanimous to be other than sincere. The men who are fighting are of two classes: Those who have not seen or heard of the proclamations and are afraid of transportation, and those who have excellent personal reasons for not wishing to be captured.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A RECONNAISSANCE.

Belfast, Z. A. R., Oct. 6.

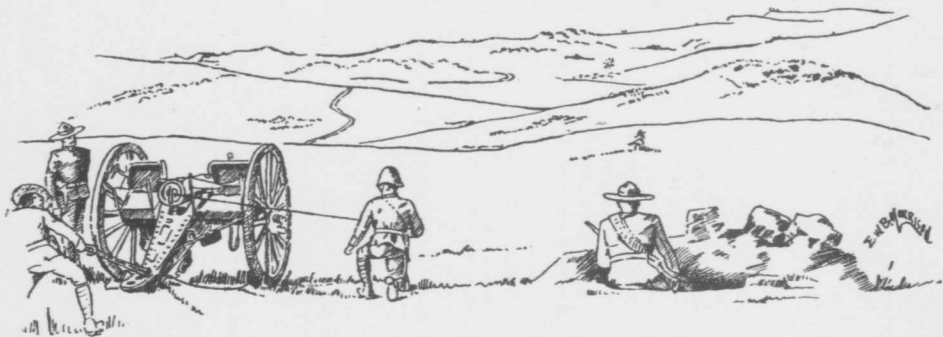
We had quite a sharp fight north of here yesterday, and it was unique in its way, because it was the first time that the two branches of the Canadian mounted service have been in a fight together. The force also was composed entirely of Canadians, with a Canadian officer in chief command. Lient.-Col. Lessard, of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, succeeded to the command of the troops here on the 4th, when the King's Own Scottish Borderers, of which Col. Godfrey was the commanding officer, were relieved by the Royal Irish. The Boers to the north of us had been annoying the dragoon pickets a good deal; in fact, you couldn't move about on the line without being sniped at, so the Colonel ordered out a small force to worry them a bit. There is a deep, broad fertile valley about nine miles to the north, where the Boer commandoes have been harboring, and it was reported to be full of cattle, which we could use in our business. The object of the expedition, in addition to worrying Brer Boer, was to "go, look, see," with a view to future action. The force consisted of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, a Maxim, Lieut. "Gat" Howard's Colt gun detachment and half of my section, D battery, R. C. A. We moved out at 8 o'clock, and when we arrived at the outposts the Boers began to pop up on every kopje to have a look at us. The country was very rough, consisting of kopje after kopje, rising one above the other for six miles to the northward, where a dominating ridge on the sky line, we knew, overlooked this happy valley. The main body halted here, while a troop of the Dragoons, under Lieut. Sutton, proceeded to the right several miles to "make good" a flanking ridge. The R. C.

D.'s have become artists at this, and it was pretty to see them work. "Making good" a kopje is done in this way: One horseman, called a pointer, advances straight towards the rocky crest of a kopje; a quarter of a mile behind him two more advance, and about the same distance in rear the rest of the troop in line, with wide intervals. When the pointer gets within a couple of hundred yards from the kopje if they shoot him you know the Boers are there. Of course, they don't always hit him; but the chances are that way. It requires a lot of nerve and courage on the part of the pointer, but it is a great improvement on the late lamented British method of advancing infantry brigades in quarter column or artillery brigade divisions in line—and discovering the Boers were there. Or even the British mounted infantry method—as we saw it done elsewhere—advancing a troop of men all bunched up. It takes a high order of courage in the individual men of the force to do it properly; but the relatively small proportion of Canadian troops in this army of a quarter of a million men did not win their reputation as fighters for nothing.

Meanwhile we could see Sutton's troop, like little black ants, crawling up over the slope of the kopje on the right, the devoted pointer away on in front riding as steadily and straight to the front, as if there wasn't a Boer in the same township. A party of the enemy came out of a kopje immediately in front of us, but out of sight of Sutton's party, and galloped across to reinforce those on their left. In the clear morning air of this country they looked almost in rifle range, but when we loosed a shell at them ranged for two miles it burst short, though directly in line. Another at 4,500 yards nearly did for them, and they switched off and galloped over the ridge in rear. By this time they were popping up in all directions and scurrying about, and on the crest of the big kopje on the sky line, which was our objective, there was quite a bunch of them overlooking all our movements. There was a crackle of fire in front of Sutton's pointer, but he only dismounted and halted. Evidently the Boers had fired and were retiring over there. The pointer waited

for a few minutes, then mounted again and rode forward, and the whole troop disappeared beyond a ridge on our right front, from whence a sharp fusilade began. A troop under Lieut. Straubenzie advanced to "make good" a high rocky kopje on the left, and the main body went straight forward. We had to go down into a valley, cross a nasty boggy spruit and climb a steep kopje on the farther slope. It took some time to find a crossing place, and when we got up where we could see anything, Sutton had crossed from our right flank and seized the next kopje in front by a flank movement. "Gat" Howard was on top of it with his Colt gun detachment, and the rat-tat-tat of the Colt mingled with the scattering fire of the Dragoons. They were having a hot interchange of compliments with the Boers, who had retired to the next rocky ridge higher up. We put in a few more shells, and then the enemy retired towards the left. There was a large, steep slope of about two miles before we reached this second position, and found they had sloped off down a ravine to the left into the big valley I have spoken of. We hurried to the left, and, passing through a poort in the rocks, found ourselves overlooking a great level valley about five miles wide and twenty or thirty miles long. In nice range below us was a farm house surrounded by a thick grove of trees, and "Gat" Howard was plugging away with his Colt at some Boers who were scurrying towards it for shelter. We went into action beside him and put half a dozen shells into the clump of trees (range 2,500 yards). A big smoke arose, and we thought we had set the farm house on fire, but we subsequently learned that the house itself was not in that part of the grove but a little to the right, just behind a spur of the ravine down which we were firing, and as there were women and children in it we were glad we had not got on to it, though, of course, we would have been quite justified in shelling it, under the circumstances.

Lieut. Howard got permission to take his Colt detachment and some dragoons and go down into the valley to investigate. Shortly after he disappeared down



BOERS ON THE SKY LINE.

the ravine our men were fired on from the extreme right, from the bold kopje about two thousand yards farther north, which had been our objective when we commenced our advance in the morning. We were ordered over in that direction and fired some shells into it, after which Sutton advanced to make it good, with Lieut. King in support and Straubenzie in reserve. When the kopje was occupied Col. Lessard sent for us in a hurry, and when we reached the top there was a splendid view of the great valley for miles in each direction. He pointed out some low rocky ridges in the valley to the right, where there were a number of horses, and said a party of the enemy had retreated into them. The range was about 4,000 yards, and our first shell dropped quite close to the horses. Some of the Boers mounted and started to ride away, and our next shell burst just among them. When the smoke cleared only one was seen riding off. He stopped and went back to where his comrades had been, but evidently there was no help for them and he galloped away. Meanwhile the colonel had seen a second party away out in the valley to the left working round towards the farm house below, to which Howard's party had gone (and evidently had a fight, as we had heard a lot of shooting, but now all was quiet in that direction). We fired a few shells at our extreme range, and though we failed to reach them they swerved off and changed their course.

It was then after three in the afternoon and as we were nine miles from camp, Colonel Lessard decided it was too late to go down into the valley, though we could see several hundred head of cattle and sheep there grazing. We had had a successful day and penetrated much further than he expected, and the Colonel was well pleased. The enemy don't like shells. If only rifle fire had been opposed to them they would have clung tenaciously to the lower kopjes as they did on Tuesday and made an all-day fight of it. As it was, the affair apparently being over, he ordered me to return to camp slowly and the remainder would follow as soon as they got word to "Gat" Howard, of whose party nothing

had been heard for an hour, to return. As I moved off the Colonel passed us riding towards the left and laughingly remarked that now he had to go and find "my Gat." "In the game that ensued I did not take a hand," but it must have been very funny despite the tragic features involved. We went on back towards camp according to orders, and after passing the main body there were some scattering shots in rear, but it was one of those days you could not hear firing far and we were soon out of earshot. We were looking back expecting the rest of the force to follow, but could see nothing of them, and soon found ourselves without any escort or covering force. There is nothing more helpless than artillery on the march without escort, because one close range volley will kill enough horses to put it out of business. However, I had my orders, so I put out scouts on the flanks and went on through the kopjes feeling very uncomfortable, and was very glad when safe inside the outposts.

The rest of the force came in nearly two hours later, and Colonel Lessard narrated in his vivacious style what had occurred. "When you left," he said, "I told Sutton to return from the last position as soon as the artillery was clear. I went over to the left to find where 'Gat' Howard was. I questioned the men who were covering the ravine leading down to the farm. They knew not where he had gone. Then—my God!—I hear that Colt gun—rat-tat-tat!—'way off on the right. Then again, rat-tat-tat!—and then the Mausers singing! I mount and ride hell-for-leather up on the near kopje; I look through my glass. My God! There was that fellow 'Gat' 'Oward' way out on the far kopje, your last position, fighting the whole Boer commando alone! A riderless horse came galloping back. I said to myself, My God! Here we have had such a beautiful day, and this 'Oward spoils it all! I send my adjutant to tell him to retire and look through my glass again. One horse goes down, struggles on its feet and plunges down again; then another and another all in a heap! My God! We have had such a beautiful day and here

'Oward spoils it all. The Boers will have him and all his men. We will have to get him out of the hole. I order up Sutton and King and there we meet Mistare Gat coming back with his men on foot and the Mausers zip-zipping around him and he as mad as a hen that has been wet! Then he says, 'S'y, kernel, w'at yo' want to cl'ar off an' leave me fur?' How the devil did I know he was going to turn up 'way over on that kopje on our right when I sent him down to the farmhouse on our left!"

To make a long story short, the Boers came swarming out of the rocks after "Gat" Howard and attacked the Dragoons, being no longer deterred by the presence of artillery, and Colonel Lessard had trouble covering the retirement of the dismounted men. As the Colonel said: "My men, they know how to advance all right, but they do not know how to retire. You cannot get them out of a fight." It was getting towards night and the Colonel's patience was sorely tried by the conduct of the dismounted men whose retirement was being covered. Instead of hurrying to the rear these chaps would not hurry and even stopped every now and then to take a hand in the fight.

As for the irrepressible "Gat" Howard, it appears that he went down on the left into the big valley and then, hearing our guns on the extreme right later, he passed right across the front down in the valley and came up where we had been in action. He said afterwards that he understood he was to "make good" the front at the last position. Unfortunately, not expecting "Gat" to reappear, we had retired and instead of meeting us, Howard tumbled into a large party of Boers who must have been concealed thereabouts. They poured a close fire into his party and how any of them escaped is a wonder, for the Boers were not a hundred yards from them. It was here that young McCarthy, son of Mr. Hamilton McCarthy, of Ottawa, the well-known sculptor, was badly wounded. Another man was hurt by his horse falling on him when it was shot. Six horses were killed, but Howard and his men dropped behind the

rocks, fought the Boers off with the assistance of the Dragoons and escaped, covered by the rest of the force.

"Gat" Howard has become almost as conspicuous a figure in the British army of South Africa as he was in our Northwest field force. He deservedly bears the reputation of being one of the bravest men in the army, and, his critics add, one of the most reckless. Yet there would appear to be a method in his madness, because though he has been in many tight places he has not lost many men. His detachment is composed of Ottawa boys and they will go anywhere with him. He is the bete noir of commanding officers, for they never know when he will get into a hot corner and involve a lot of troops to get him out. He is blessed with a positive optimism that makes him think he is always right, and if he went into the Lydenburg mountains and tackled Viljoen's army single-handed on his own responsibility and a British army corps was not sent to back him up he would be as "mad as a hen that has been wet." For a man of his years and physique he is a marvel of energy and endurance, and everybody likes "Gat." His Colt gun is an insignificant looking little affair on a galloping carriage drawn by one horse, but it is a terrible weapon in action, as he handles it. When he's in a tight corner, as has happened on several occasions, and can't get out any other way, he takes the little gun off the carriage, tucks it under his arm, and lopes off with it, returning for the rest of the outfit at some more convenient season. When I first came up to Pretoria I heard a good story about "Gat's" first introduction to the general staff, which is quite characteristic: It was somewhere south of Vaal river. The staff was on a hill and in front was a big kopje, fairly fermenting with Boers, and the General was waiting for a flank movement that was in progress to prepare it for an infantry frontal attack. Up gallops "Gat." "S'y, gen'ral, whar's th' enemy?" The General, thus unceremoniously addressed, looked at him coldly and pointed to the kopje in front. "All right," says "Gat," and started for the kopje with his gun as

hard as he could gallop. "That man must be crazy," said the General. "He'll be killed. Go after him and order him back." When the aide got up to "Gat" the latter was "straddlin' the trail" of his little gun and frescoing the front of the kopje with streaks of lead, while the Mausers sang a tune around him. The aide returned to the General rather warm and flustered and reported: "General, I delivered your awder an' he told me to tell you nawt to fret yourself—that he was all right—bai jove!" "Go down and tell him to retire this instant," said the General. A few minutes later two men rode up the hill. One was "Gat" and he was enquiring in his own peculiar way whether Her Majesty's forces had come out here to play lawn tennis. The other was the aide. There was a bullet graze on his horse's shoulder and he was endeavoring to impress "Gat" with the knowledge that he objected risking his valuable life carrying orders to him.

A couple of rather nice looking Boer girls live near our camp and lately they have been in the habit of coming over in the evening for a talk. One speaks English and the other understands it pretty well, but does not speak much. At first I flattered myself that the object of these visits was the pleasure of my society, until I noticed that when the time came to go the silent sister would say something to the other in Dutch and she would ask: "If you pleas', what is the news? Has Wiljean surrender'?" (The only news source up here is the brief circular note sent to the commanding officers of units every evening to read, initial and return to headquarters.) At last I became curious regarding this special interest in "Wiljean" and on questioning them closely they confessed with many blushes and twistings of apron strings that the silent sister's beau, a Johannesburg Zarp, is with Viljoen, and she was anxious Viljoen should surrender so he should not be killed. "She says Debnor fights in the first position," explained her sister, "and she thinks if there is a big battle he will sure be shot. He rode past here the day before you came in. We wanted him to stay here and surrender, but he said:

'Neeah. We will be back to-morrow to drive the rooin-eken into Middelburg.' I told him, 'Yes, you will go back to Middelburg in the spoorweggen,' (that is, in the cars as a prisoner), "but he only laughed and rode on with his commando. He is a fool, but my sister is sad about him all day long. She had not seen him since before the war began." I asked her what she meant when she said he fought in the first position, and the girl explained that in a fight the Boers always hold three lines of kopjes. The young, active men are put on the first; the older men on the second, and the Hollanders, commandeered men, and those they are doubtful about, on the third.

I fancy the English-speaking girl's best young man is with the commando north of us, because when we were returning from the fight last night she met us all alone some distance out from camp and enquired eagerly if we had taken any prisoners. I told her we hadn't. "Did you kill many?" I told her we had killed a few. "Ai, Ai," she said, and her face disappeared in her sunbonnet.

It is wonderful how news travels among the Boers. They are just like the Indians in our Northwest. Though there are none but women and children in the town here and the place is surrounded with a double line of cavalry and infantry pickets and outposts within a radius of three miles and there is supposed to be no communication through the lines, the women here often get word of important occurrences in other parts of the army long before we do. For instance, the other evening I was over at the dragoon mess and Major Hall said: "Mrs. Coetzie asked me to-day if it was true that General Buller was going back to Pretoria. I should not wonder if there is something in it because these people always seem to hear things before we do." Later in the evening Col. Lessard came in with a telegram in his hand. "Well, gentlemen, we'll soon get orders for home now. General Buller is going back to Pretoria. He will pass through to-night." We all laughed. Madam Coetzie had once more scored a beat on the intelligence department. (Buller was at Nelspruit, sixty miles east.)

I see the papers are discussing the merits of Canadian horses for army purposes. Of about forty horses, the strength of my section when we landed in Africa, I have still 27—a remarkable showing when you consider that some of the batteries out here have been entirely rehorsed twice since the war began. I haven't a sick horse on the lines and they are as fit as could be expected after the eight months' hard usage and hard work. It would pay the government to take the lot home as an advertisement of the endurance of Canadian horseflesh.

Lieutenant McCrae, with the right section of D battery, is still at Machadodorp, twelve miles east, and we hear he has been having some fighting. Lieutenant Van Tuyl, with the center section, is at Crocodile Poort. Major Hurdman is with Lieutenant-Colonel Drury in Pretoria, and I imagine from the numerous telegrams for returns, etc., they are arranging for our early departure for home. We should get back about in time for the partition of the Christmas turkey.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WAR BABIES.

Belfast, Z.A.R., Oct. 14.

On Thursday about noon a man rode in here to report that 300 Boers had raided his farm about six miles southwest and had fired at him when he was getting away. The man was a Yankee from Po'keepsie, N. Y., and he said he could lead us right to the kopje where they had their laager. Two troops of the Royal Canadian Dragoons went out with the guns. We advanced cautiously on the farm and "made good" the kopjes around it, but failed to flush a Boer. Colonel Lessard thought the man must have exaggerated the force, because as there were only about 100 in our outfit they would surely have sailed into us. But the Yankee was positive and insisted that the Boers were in laager behind a kopje about two miles off. Being sceptical that a largely superior force of Boers would neglect the chance to attack under such circumstances and at the same time not caring to risk a mix-up with such a force so late in the day and far from camp if they should prove to be there, Colonel Lessard decided to return to camp. As we moved away, sure enough the Boers popped up and fired at us, but did not follow us up. The wisdom of the Colonel's action was amply demonstrated. Yesterday morning there was a deuce of a racket over in the direction in which we had been—big guns, little guns, pom-poms and Nordenfeldts all barking at once. About breakfast time an officer rode in and told us that a force under General Mahon had stumbled on to our friends who had shelled him with a Long Tom and miscellaneous smaller guns, and repulsed him with the loss of some transports and a casualty list of 40 killed and wounded. He was retiring on Macha-

dodorp and had sent this officer into Belfast to wire the news. In the afternoon French's division came out from Machadodorp to cover this place, and we learned that the Boers have gathered in force north and south of us. We must have had rather a close call on Thursday. Probably the reason the Boers did not attack us was because they had a bigger game on and did not want to reveal their presence there in force prematurely. Instead of 300 there are over a thousand and with lots of guns. If we had poked up that laager on Thursday there would have had an interesting matinee performance. Later reports indicate that the Boers have been mobilising north and south of here for several days past. To-day a division under General Smith-Dorrien is mobilizing here.

The officer who came in yesterday told us that Mahon's force found the bodies of six men of Buller's army a few miles southeast of here. From the appearance of the bodies it was evident that the poor fellows had been wounded in the battle here six weeks ago, but had been overlooked and died of their wounds. One man had his helmet under his head. They belonged to the Liverpool regiment. This is one of the terrible incidents of war. These unfortunate men may have been lying there for days before they died, and though British troops were within a few miles of them, probably in sight from the kopje on which they lay, they were too weak to move or signal to attract attention. Even if they fired off their rifles it would be supposed that it was only some Boer snipers and no notice would be taken. Their regiment probably supposed they had been taken prisoners. No doubt this is the fate of not a few who appear on the casualty lists as "missing."

Mr. Best, the Y. M. C. A. representative, who is with the R.C.D.'s, has supplied my men with towels, tobacco, stationery and a number of other articles they are badly in need of, for they have seen very little of the Red Cross supplies or "comforts" we hear so much about since coming out here. Mr. Best is an indefatigable worker,

a regular "handy man," and he is an exemplification of how useful a non-combatant can make himself. Anything from holding the led horses in the firing line to acting chaplain at funerals, and on Sunday, is included in the range of his duties, and he is equally efficient and reliable in either role. Mr. Best is one of the best sprinters and all-round athletes in Ontario. For some weeks past there has not been a chaplain here except the Roman Catholic chaplain of the Royal Irish, and Mr. Best, in addition to his numerous other duties, acts as Protestant chaplain. After the battle here he officiated at the burial of most of the men killed in that fight.

At the request of the Commandant, I have been preparing sketches and maps showing the locations of the British graves about here for the authorities at Pretoria, so that they can be discovered and identified after the war. In the course of this work I have developed an infant industry. Some of the Boer women saw me drawing the graves near here and the next day two of them came over on behalf of a Mrs. Jourdain, wife of a worthy burgher, who is out fighting us, to know if I would not sketch her six-month-old baby! They explained that the baby was born since the father went on commando, and the proud papa has never seen it, so the mother wanted the picture to send. Of course I couldn't refuse and now I have two or three more requests, accompanied by presents of eggs, to "write the pictures" of more war babies. One woman wants her baby sketched "in the altogether" so as to show papa how fat he is! The fact of their being able to send these sketches out is additional evidence of the amount of communication that goes on through our outpost lines between the inhabitants and the Boer commandoes. I pointed this out and told the women if they were caught at it we would probably have to burn their houses. They put up a great cackle in Dutch at this and then one of them asked what harm it was to send out a baby's picture. I said that was all right but some information would be sent out that would enable the commandoes to jump in on us some dark night and make orphans of a lot of little babies in



MRS. JOURDAIN'S "WAR BABY."

Ca-nahda. At this they laughed and said : "Neeah ! Neeah ! If you go out they will shoot, but they will be no shooting in here because we are here." Which the same certainly sounds feasible. All we have to do is to show our noses outside the outposts and the Boers are on deck right away ready for a scrap, but they never snipe into our camps as they do in other places. With the force and guns they have had around here the last few days they could have come in and raised merry Hades with us prior to the arrival of French and Smith-Dorrien, but they never bothered us at all.

There is any amount of military employment offering for the young officers who are out on this war. Any capable colonial officer can get a commission in the imperial army, but it is necessary to have a private income, because you cannot live on your pay in a British regiment in time of peace. But a large number of officers are re-

quired for the mounted police force which is being formed under General Baden-Powell; 30 subalterns are wanted for service on the west coast of Africa and Cecil Rhodes wants a number to command a force to police the work on the Cape-to-Cairo line, which is to be proceeded with as soon as the war is over. On the Transvaal Mounted Police subalterns are offered pay and allowance equal to about \$2,000 a year, and captains \$3,000 with 10 per cent. increase if quartered near Johannesburg. The men will get \$1.75 per day and all found. One officer and 33 men of the Strathcona's have taken on, but the service is not regarded with much favor on account of the country. It will be rather lonely work quartered on detachment in a small place like this with nothing to do but live when off duty. Of course for a while there will be plenty of employment chasing Boer commandoes, and a good chance of being sniped on patrol. The regular troops of the army of occupation will be quartered in the centers of population and the police will be posted on detachment to patrol the districts.

I have just heard that French's force has got into the Boers south of us and cut them up pretty well. It was one of the rare occasions in this war when the cavalry got an opportunity to use their swords. After this war the sword must surely be relegated to museums of antique arms. It loads down a horse and man unnecessarily and that in a campaign where every ounce of horseflesh counts. You never see a sword except with the cavalry, who cling to it with tenacious esprit de corps. The infantry officers, as a rule, carry only canes, the other mounted troops revolvers; general and staff officers no arms at all. In these days a man with a two dollar revolver is more than a match for the most expert swordsman. And they are not all experts by any means, notwithstanding the amount of time wasted both in the cavalry and artillery practising the sword exercise. In the few affairs that have occurred when swords have been used you hear stories of troopers falling out of their saddles in wild attempts to swipe the dodging Boer and then being killed or captured at leisure by the enemy. The

lance is the only sort of steel that has made itself respected by the Boer. The lancer has such a long reach that it is almost impossible to dodge him even if the enemy throws himself flat on the ground, a favorite method of eluding the swordsman. This knowledge lends moral effect to a lancer charge and aids its "breaking up" influence on the enemy. When they see the lancers coming they know that if the charge gets "home" it is all day with everybody, because a busy lancer has not time to accept 59th minute surrenders coming down the home stretch. Knowing that if the worst comes to the worst he can probably elude the swordsmen the Boer is encouraged to hold his ground and try to stop the charge with accurate shooting before it gets home, but when he sees the lance pennons whistling towards him his first and last idea is to get a good start in the opposite direction.

This isn't so bad: A big Tipperary man came over from the Royal Irish lines and got talking with our men about the C. I. V's. being allowed to go home first—a sore point all through the army. "The C. I. V's.," said Mr. Dooley's compatriot, "shure them's the chaps that be always surrindhering. The Boers ketched some uv them whin they wuz brigaded wid us. 'Who are the lahds?' says the Boo-ers. 'We're C. I. V's.' says the lahds. 'Oh, let them go.' says ould Botha, 'we kin ketch thim again whin we want thim!'"

I see by an old magazine that came to hand recently that Kipling has written a story called *The Outsider*, dealing with the delicate subject of the relations between imperial officers and colonial troops out here. As usual, he has struck a keynote, and the picture is true to life. You might think it was exaggerated, but it rather falls short. I must say that latterly the relations have been better, for the simple reason that the imperial officers are gradually shifting their point of view. They regard the colonials as tribes of shockingly hard-swearing, hard fighting animals with whom it is neither fitting nor altogether safe to interfere. They have reason for this. The other night the provost marshal at Machadodorp went into the lines of

a distinguished Canadian corps and peremptorily ordered the men in a tent to put their lights out. ("Lights out" is never enforced on campaign because fires are burning all night as a rule.) The men asked who he was, and he told them it was sufficient for them that he was an officer and he ordered it. They told him to go to several places and mind his own business, that they had fought all through the campaign and had always put their lights out when they were good and ready, and that they had officers of their own to tell them what to do. He insisted and said things, whereupon one of the men in the tent drew his revolver and shot the provost marshal's light out. Then they threw a blanket over his head, escorted him out of the lines and fired several shots after him to speed him on his way. They are now under arrest. I suppose it was another case of some green officer trying to enforce Chelsea barrack routine on the veldt. I don't suppose it could be my friend, Lord Roberts' provost marshal, though the headquarters are at Machado-dorp.

I forgot to tell you about my adventure with the chief provost marshal of the army. It was late at night, and I was entraining my section at Bronkhortsspruit to come up here. We were in a hurry. The fighting had been were coming down, and we were afraid we would be late for the scrap. The other section had gone on. When my section was nearly all loaded we found that two non-coms. of the Guards had pre-empted about half a car, and it was covered with beds and baggage. As there was just room on the truck for the rest of our transport, I told them they would have to shift into one of the loaded trucks and bunk down the same as my own men among the guns and harness. One of them replied that these were Major Poore's traps, and they were his men. I said I didn't care if they were Lord Kitchener's. I had orders to entrain at once and we needed the space, and were in a hurry. They undoubtedly seemed shocked at this. We had the last vehicle, a big "buck" wagon, ready to load when I found that the baggage and the men were still there. Well, I said what you might suppose

I'd say under the circumstances; among other things, that if Major Poore's men and baggage were not out of there in two minutes and into the next truck they would be in the ditch. "I don't know what Major Poore will say, sir," said one of the Guardsmen, as they proceeded to shift with an air of dignified reluctance. We got loaded, mules and all (you never loaded mules in the dark?) and pulled out. I bunked down regally in the guard's van, for I was commanding the train, and forgot all about "Major Poore" until next morning, when some of the men told me that a staff officer who looked like Lord Kitchener was riding on a flat car under a gun. They also reported that he did not seem to like the language they had used, and had been heard to remark that "these Canydians were good soldiers, but they used the most shocking profanity he had ever heard." At Middelburg I saw our passenger on the station. He certainly looked like Lord Kitchener, and the railway staff officers were treating him with a great deference that nothing but the red tabs of the general staff ever evoke from these gentlemen. They were not going to send our men on ahead of the other section which preceded it and which we had overtaken. I commenced to feel decidedly uncomfortable. I didn't know who Major Poore was, but it was evident I had been entertaining an angel unawares—or rather not entertaining him. I was going to invite him to take up his quarters in the van, but in the meantime the van had been cut off and I had to get in with my horse. When the railway officials found that the distinguished staff officer was traveling on a flat car under a gun they wanted to put on a special coach for him, but he wouldn't hear of it. When we pulled in here several of Lord Roberts' staff met him, and were loud in their condolences on his rough trip. (When we had stopped en-route to carry water for the engine from a pond a quarter of a mile away I saw the red-tabbed gentleman sitting under his gun writing on a big dispatch portfolio, and I thought sure my name was Dennis). At Belfast I inquired who he was, and was told with bated breath that he was Lord Roberts' provost marshal, and had been

down in Pretoria prosecuting the conspirators. I thought he would be prosecuting me next. But I met him afterwards, and he did not seem to bear any ill-feeling. In fact, he was very nice, as all the really big men are out here. To the fact that he was on board our train, which resulted in it being pushed on, we were indebted for being "in it" here on the last day of the fight. But if Major Poore doesn't like strong language I don't think he will soon forget his all-night ride on a flat car with the Canadian gunners.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE BIG MAN IN WAR.

Belfast, Oct. 23.

You never saw anything shrink like the government gray back shirts we brought out with us. When they were issued to us they were all one size—big enough for nightgowns. I'll say that for the contractors. If this cruel war isn't over soon we'll be selling them to the Kaffirs for necklaces. I don't know how the big men are getting on at all, at all. Which reminds me of the fact that the big man in war is likely to become as obsolete as the spike studded mace and the battle axe. He belongs to the days of the muzzle-loading rifle six feet long and weighing thirty pounds; the days of the back-breaking knapsack and the deadly field piece, which could lob a ball as big as a toy balloon into a vacant lot three squares away. Lighter weapons and long range fighting have made the big man not only not an advantage, but an incumbrance to an army. In the mounted corps he breaks down the horses and overloads the guns; in the infantry he makes too big a target without any compensating advantage. It is pathetic to see a 250-pound Guardsman flattening the grass behind a small ant hill and trying to imagine he is under cover as the Mauser bullets pee-weep over him. There are a lot of men out here enjoying three, more or less, square meals a day who would be dead if they had been six inches taller, or in the hospital if they were that much broader. I think it was Theodore Hook who was going to fight a duel with a large man, when the latter protested that it would not be a fair fight, because he presented such a much better target than his diminutive challenger. Hook suggested that they chalk out his size on the large man and any shots outside the chalk line shouldn't count. The

same thing applies in war. The medium-sized or small man has just as much endurance (I think many will agree with me that he has more, taking into account the chances of disease) as the big man, and can do the work better. He is lighter to carry if mounted on horse or gun; he can secure cover more easily, and he is quicker and makes less of a target. The only remaining advantage to the big man in war is for the bayonet charge, but bayonet charges are usually up the side of a kopje, at least in this war, and when the top is reached the big man is away back among the "also rans," not from any lack of desire to get there, but because he carries too much of a handicap in the shape of too solid flesh. A bayonet argument seldom lasts over half a minute, so the distance flag drops on him, and they turn him in to bury the victims of the men who arrived earlier.

There is nothing new here. We are sitting tight, and our friends the Boers are sitting on the hills north of us. We have little fights with them once or twice a week. When you want an afternoon's sport all you have to do is to go out to the outpost line and snipe. It is not a very dangerous amusement as long as you don't move far enough out to let them stalk you from a flank. The range is always long, and it is largely a question of discovering where the other fellow's bullets are coming from and then getting "on to the target." If you can make the Dutchman shift first "that counts you wan," as Mr. Dooley would say. Gen. Smith-Dorrien is now in chief command here, and there are a lot of troops, but we are not doing anything yet.

I see by the intelligence circular notes that Mahon's fight south of our outposts last week was a "successful engagement," and that his loss in killed and wounded was forty, not thirty. If that was a successful engagement so was our battle of Ridgeway, because the enemy not only did not follow up on that occasion, but they retreated.

The Gordon Highlanders are here with us. One of the officers told me yesterday that out of fifty officers in the two battalions of that regiment they have

lost fifteen killed and twenty-two wounded since the war began. They haven't lost anything like the same proportion of men, luckily. The Gordons got up a gymkhana here on Friday, and they had a regimental drag made up from a ten-mule "buck" wagon. The Kaffir drivers were dressed up as Arab sheiks, with striped blankets and turbans. One of the young subs. was dressed as a girl, and it was one of the best make-ups I ever saw. He was a beauty. He was the first really good-looking girl we've seen in months. The racing was good, especially the mule race, in which there were nearly fifty entries. Lieut. Straubenzie, of the R. C. D.'s, won third in the steeplechase, and the Dragoons won all the places in the flat race. There was such a mob of Tommies round the only booky that we couldn't get our money up, otherwise we would have made a killin'.

There is a heavy thunder storm here nearly every afternoon at four as regular as the clock. This is the highest point in the Transvaal, and we are in luck to be here, so far as I can learn. At Machadodorp, only twelve miles away, but lower, the heat and flies are awful. At Pretoria also it has been over 100 in the shade, and the heat keeps up all night. Here we have not had what you would call a warm day yet, and often at night there is frost—it is always cool enough to make a "British warm" comfortable. The thunder storms we get here are different from those in Canada, and much more spectacular. In the first place they extend around half the horizon, and are a uniform blue-black. The other half of the sky will be a deep blue and the sun shining. A big flock of birds flying across the face of this black cloud, with the sun shining on them, looks like a white cloud or drifting smoke. At first some of our men, seeing them at a distance, thought they were the smoke of time shells. One peculiarity of these daily storms is that they advance against a strong wind. When the slatey cloud has covered the sky to the zenith a great dun-colored cloud appears on the horizon, climbing towards the zenith until it has changed the thundercloud to the kharki color and blotted out the country in its advance

like a great mist. Next the wind stops blowing for a breathless second, and there is a blast of cold air from the opposite direction, rising in a minute to a perfect hurricane dust storm. This is followed by heavy hail stones, which, I desire to state, are not as big as hens' eggs, though quite large. Finally the rain arrives. Yesterday afternoon the wind took the iron roof off the horse corral; took it through the air over forty feet and threw it on top of the mud shack I am residing in. The din was what you can imagine. We thought a six-inch shell had landed. The wind blew large stones off the corral wall.

The wind does the strangest things in this country. I have frequently sat in my tent when there was absolutely a dead calm and watched a whirlwind go past less than 200 yards away, wrecking shacks and carrying pieces of corrugated iron ten feet square into the air as many feet, causing iron shacks to collapse like card houses, and carrying a column of dust, paper and odds and ends a couple of hundred feet in the air. All this going on 200 yards off and there would not be enough draught at my tent to blow a match out. These are what are called "sand devils," which reminds me that I better call a halt or I won't have a shred of reputation for veracity left, like the young sailor who told his mother about having seen fish flying in the air.

I don't know whether this war is any nearer being over than it was six weeks ago. If it is we haven't noticed any symptoms about here that would lead to that conclusion.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

WITH GENERAL SMITH-DORRIEN.

A week or two previous to the date of the following letter it was reported that Belfast was to be made the base of operations for a large force under Gen. Smith-Dorrien. Accordingly, the troops soon began to gather with their transport, and the General himself arrived to take command. He had commanded the XIX brigade in Roberts' army, of which the Royal Canadian Infantry formed a part, on the advance to Pretoria, and now he was kind enough to ask specially to have the Canadian mounted troops attached to his force. From that time on we had plenty of fighting, and when, eventually, we got orders for home feelings of heartfelt regret were expressed that we had not got under that general months earlier. We certainly enjoyed ourselves under him, and it was just the sort of work the men liked—hard while they were at it, followed by a good rest; then another trek and fight and some more rest.

Belfast, Nov. 5.

The Canadian troops here had one of the toughest experiences of the campaign this week. On the afternoon of Nov. 1 Gen. Smith-Dorrien issued orders for the force to leave on a night march southward in two columns. One column was under his own command, and consisted of the Fifth Lancers, Gordons, three troops C. M. R., under Major Sanders; two guns of the Eighty-fourth battery, and a "cow" gun (five-inch). The other was commanded by Colonel Spens, of the Shropshires, and consisted of the Royal Canadian

Dragoons, two guns of the Eighty-fourth battery, left section of D battery (acting as horse artillery), two pom-poms, a "cow" gun and the Shropshire regiment. All afternoon it was raining heavily and cold, with showers of sleet. We were provisioned for five days and traveled light without tents. Col. Spens' column moved out at 6 o'clock, just as it got dark, and was to make a wide detour to the southwest. The other column moved out at 7 o'clock towards the southeast, and was to make a junction near the Koomati river, about fifteen miles south. Our column marched away in the rain and darkness. A heavy mist, with a driving gale of cold wind, enveloped us and made it very difficult for the units of the column to keep in touch. The expedient was adopted of strewing small pieces of phosphorus along the trail. When we moved out a cordon of infantry was placed around Belfast and every house guarded to prevent any information getting out to the enemy; but, as the sequel proved, the Boers were well informed as usual. Near midnight we halted on the open veldt, tired and wet and cold. The wind was piercing, and blew a gale, the rain fell in sheets, with constant thunder and lightning, and the mist obscured everything within sixty yards of us. As may be imagined, we put in an uncomfortable night, and it seemed as if morning would never come. There was the choice of walking about to keep warm until you were so tired you couldn't stand; then lie down and take a mud bath under the delusion you were resting yourself, until you got so cold you had to get up and stumble about some more. There were orders against smoking, so you couldn't even light a match, let alone a fire, to make a warm drink. There was no grumbling, however, and we congratulated ourselves that the weather was so bad we would be sure to find the Boers at home in the morning. During the march in the dark one of our horses fell with the driver under it, and both were dragged along about twenty feet, the man under the horse, before it was discovered. The driver had his leg badly crushed and the kneecap injured, but he behaved very pluckily and rode on a limber until an ambulance

was found later in the night. Another driver's horse also fell on him and hurt his leg, but he would not be left behind, and rode on the guns during the rest of the trip.

The Royal Canadian Dragoons, under Col. Lessard, with my section acting as horse artillery, formed the advance guard in the morning, when we moved out to the attack. The poor horses were shivering so much that they could scarcely stand up, and it was almost impossible to make them face the storm. We had not gone far when the advance was fired on from a house on the right, not a serious attack, but just to tell us that they saw us. Lieut. Turner went over with his troop to investigate the place, but the Boers had lit out, and he found only an old woman there, who insisted that the Boers had not fired from the house itself. My guns were in position to shell the place, but on hearing the report the commanding officer decided to let it alone, and we went on. By that time the mist had lifted considerably, but it was still very hazy. As we hoped, at the next rise the Koomati river was in sight. Down below a level plain stretched about two miles, with a hill at the end, on which we saw a lot of Boers. Our advance guard, under Lieut. King, skirmished forward toward this hill, and were heavily fired on. Trooper Macdonald was shot in the head, and another lost his horse. The cavalry had to retire, and the Boers followed them. Col. Lessard asked for the guns, but the chief of artillery had come up. We wanted to go down the plain a bit and help the advance out, supported by the rest of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, but the shooting was getting brisk, and instead of letting us go forward the C. R. A. ordered us back about 600 yards to the top of the ridge behind, and placed the two guns of the Eight-fourth battery on a ridge farther back to cover us, orders having arrived from the General that owing to the bad weather we were to return to Belfast. We were not sorry to return, but we did not want to return just then. We could hear the guns of the General's column hard at work on the left front. Meanwhile the Boers were making it hot for the Royal Canadian Dragoons, and we lost no time in taking

up the new position, and as the enemy emerged on the plain coming after them we opened fire. Our shooting was satisfactory. Lieuts. King and Turner, who were off to the flanks in front, could observe the effect, and they say the first shell dropped on a squad of Boers just as if it was a target. With eight or ten shells we cleared them off the plain, and one of the Royal Canadian Dragoons came back to say that they were hiding in a gulch at the end of the plain and just at the foot of the hill. We set one of our long range "blue" fuzes for 4,000 yards, and it went plump into the hollow. The Boers came out in bunches of twos and threes, and swarmed back over the hills like ants. We gave them two or three more of the "long blue," and wished we were a couple of thousand yards closer.

Then the order came to retire, and the column turned on its tail and struck northeast toward the Carolina road, where we made a junction of the General's column, also retiring on Belfast. The Boers we had been fighting and those that the other column had run against joined forces and came after us as brisk as possible. As we debouched on the Carolina road, after crossing a branch of the Koo-mati river, the pom-poms stopped to water their horses, and the Boers came down on them. "Gat" Howard's Colt gun, under Sergt. Holland ("Gat" was in Pretoria), did some good work there, supported by a troop of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, under Lieut. King, and they are credited with saving the "pom-poms." The Boers continued to follow us up, and got into the Lancers and Gordons at 200 yards, inflicting about a dozen casualties. About the same time we heard that the C. M. R., who had formed the advance of Gen. Smith-Dorrien's column, had lost Lieut. Chalmers killed and Major Sanders and two men wounded. I don't know what our total casualty list was—about twenty.

On the march home you would see war in its least inviting aspect, but withal a splendid panorama of war "as she is did." It would have made a good military picture. The rain was falling in sheets, and the wind blew swirling clouds of clammy mist through a strag-

gling column of as wet, wornout, muddy and oddly-garbed men as you ever saw. Men and horses were as nearly used up with cold, hunger and fatigue as it was possible to be and still move. The dripping, shivering horses staggered along through the mud and storm with hanging heads and trembling limbs, their riders with faces so pinched and drawn with hunger and fatigue that you could scarcely recognise men you knew and met every day. They were wrapped up in all sorts of grotesque ways. Infantrymen with helmets on top of slouch hats to shed the rain, artillerymen with their pony hats over Balaclava caps, or with bandana handkerchiefs tied over their ears, and their shoulders wrapped with horse blankets and waterproof sheets; Highlanders with waterproof sheets tied round their waists and hanging down like women's dress skirts; cavalry with numnahs strapped to their stomachs, and white rubber sheets swathing their legs and horse blankets over their heads and shoulders. And so the procession dragged on—ambulances with wounded, stuck in the mire; huge ox-wagons of ammunition crawling along, the miserable Kaffirs too cold to yell or wield a whip. Mules huddled in squirming heaps on the ground, attached to immovable transport wagons, and past them all the column hurried; every man for himself—the poor rear guard to sweep them all up. And through it all and the howl of the gale came the muted thud of the Mausers and the spatter of the rear guard fire. It was a retreat from the weather, not from the enemy, but it had all the elements that make a retreat in bad weather so distressing and horrible. We passed infantrymen lying prone in the mud, just as they dropped in the ranks, not caring whether they lived or died. I saw men piled on the seats of the ammunition wagons any old way, their heads hanging down on one side and their feet on the other, and a great coat thrown over them as if they were sacks of oats. By the side of the road I saw something like a dead ox lying in the long grass. The soles of a man's shoes caught my eye, and I rode over to investigate. It was a big nigger lying prone on his face in the mud, with a sack over his head.

I poked him up and he said he was "seek." From the way he was soaked into the ground he seemed to have been lying there all day, but as we were carrying all the played out infantry our guns had room for I could not do anything for him. In fact the affair had developed into a case of get to Belfast or die, for very few of the troops in their present exhausted condition could have stood another night in the open without food or fire. (Our transports were to have met us that evening, but they had all gone back when the retire was ordered.) Farther back we passed our buck wagon, which had been attached to the ammunition column. It was stuck in the mud and the pole broken. Lieut. Bliss, of the C. M. R., who was acting transport officer, had taken care to get the ammunition out, and we found it safe in the Gordon lines when we returned.

The left section pulled into camp at 3 o'clock, and had hardly strength enough left to unharness and feed the horses. I sent a man ahead, and the cook, who had just got in ahead of us with the transport, had hot tea for them. In twenty-two hours we had had no sleep, one hardtack and a chunk of bully beef, had marched nearly forty miles and fought a small fight, soaked to the skin and shivering with cold all the time. I hear that several men died in the other corps. That night we had an issue of hot rum. Next morning only two were reported sick, and one of them was sick before he started. Our horses were also all right, and kicking and fighting in the best of spirits when the sun at last showed itself. No doubt Canadian men and horses are tough. "Boys, I couldn't sleep all night thinking of you," said Bombadier Harry Cameron, who was left in charge of the camp.

The C. M. R.'s put up a plucky fight at the time they lost Lieut. Chalmers. They were out as the advance guard in the early morning, and the guide took them the wrong road. Major Sanders became convinced of this, and took up a position on a kopje, while he sent back word to the General, who ordered them to return. In the meantime the Boers had attacked them, and in retiring a sergeant had his horse shot. Major Sanders was

endeavoring to get the sergeant on his horse, when it was also shot, and threw him heavily, nearly stunning him. They then made a bolt for it on foot. The Major was shot in the side. He lay down behind a rock, and the sergeant brought the news to Lieut. Chalmers, who immediately came back with a mounted party. The Boers were firing at the Major, and the bullets were spattering on the rock behind which he lay, and, seeing that some more casualties would result if they came on, he signaled to Chalmers to go back. The brave fellow went back, but returned with a party of dismounted men to get his commanding officer out. They occupied a Boer trench in front of the kopje, and kept down the Boer fire while the Major made a run for it. But in the fusilade that ensued Chalmers exposed himself and was shot through the heart.

The funeral of Lieut. Chalmers took place the following afternoon. Gen. Smith-Dorrien and his staff attended, and most of the officers of all the corps in camp. The pallbearers were officers of the Canadian corps in camp and the Queensland Mounted Infantry. The Royal Irish sent their band and the Gordons their pipers. We furnished the gun carriage and the Canadians turned out in force. Col. Evans came up from Middelburg, and Captain Ogilvie, of the R. C. R., was present, also Father Sinnett and all the chaplains in camp. The young officer was buried in the Canadians' private cemetery behind our camp. Unfortunately, there are a good many of these private cemeteries of ours out here. "If blood be the price of sovereignty, by God, we have paid it fair!"

Trooper McDonald, of the R. C. D.'s had a remarkable experience. When our advance was driven in he was wounded and left behind when the column retired. A Mauser bullet struck him behind the ear, but glanced off his skull and ran round his head under the skin, coming out at the eyebrow. It left a hole so small you could hardly distinguish it, but his eye and the side of his face was black as if he had been hit with a club. The Boers took him prisoner. "You Canadians are the fellows

we want to catch," the field cornet told him. "What are you fighting for out here?" "I'm fighting for my Queen and country, same as you are doing for yours," replied McDonall. They took him into a house where there were a lot of women, but they would not do anything for him and got him put out in a sheep kraal. A guard was placed over him, but he looked so badly used up that the guard thought he was safe to go to the house for a cup of coffee. While he was gone McDonald grabbed the field cornet's horse and galloped off. There were Boers all round, and he had a hard night getting through them, but the dirty weather helped him out. When some distance from Belfast his horse broke its leg and he had to walk the rest of the way, getting in the following afternoon. You may be sure we were all glad to see him.

On Sunday morning I took a non-com. and ten mounted men with three gun teams and went out after our ox wagon, which had been left five or six miles out the Carolina road by the ammunition column when we retired. (Ox wagons are scarce and we needed it in our business.) We found the wagon; also some Boer patrols, but we extended along the ridge while the wagon was being got out of the mud and repaired and made such a show that the Boers must have thought we were the advance guard of another flying column, for they sat on the hills observing us while the rest of our party got the wagon away.

This little town is in turmoil this evening. All the women and children whose men are out fighting have been ordered to leave at daybreak. It is rough, but just treatment. There is weeping and lamentation among the women, who are hastily packing a few boxes with their valuables and leaving their homes with a very good chance of never seeing their furniture or goods and chattels again, if indeed their houses are not razed by the soldiers in search of fuel. There are many distressing scenes, women going about the town weeping and exchanging condolences, and the little children clinging to their skirts and crying in uncomprehending sympathy.

It is no joke to go trekking off into the veldt with a small family now that the rainy season is on. It is hard, but it is war. The iron hand of Kitchener is being felt, and while the scenes of distress and suffering make us sorry for the individuals, the policy which dictates the act is sound. It is the only way to bring the rabid Boer to his senses. In most instances the women are allowed to go out to look for their husbands and bring them in. If they succeed in doing so they will not be expelled. So the decision lies with the Boers themselves. The hard cases are where the women do not know where their husbands are or even whether they are alive.

We leave on another trek at 3 o'clock to-morrow morning with General Smith-Dorrien's flying column. My section will act as horse artillery with the Canadian Dragoons in the advance guard.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

TWO DAYS' HARD FIGHTING.

Belfast, November 9.

We returned yesterday with General Smith-Dorrien after two days of "extremely hard fighting" (vide official report) south of here, at Witkloof and Lilliefontein, on the Koomati river. On the second day the Canadians fought one of the most spectacular actions of the war, and I suppose it would not be out of place to say that we won much glory, seeing that a number have been mentioned in despatches, and several V. C.'s may come out of it. The satisfactory thing about it was that it was a purely Canadian affair—Canadian mounted troops pitted against five times their number of mounted Boers. We fought a hard fight, against an enemy whose dash and bravery exceeded anything yet done by the Boer in this war; we repulsed a well-planned attack, which, if it had been successful, might have meant a serious disaster to British arms, and our losses, while heavy for the number engaged, were wonderfully small, considering the odds we fought against and the wild melee that followed the charge and repulse of the Boers. The fight was one of the finest military spectacles of the war. One Canadian trooper, who was severely wounded and lay on the ground watching the charge and fight at close quarters, which concluded the engagement on the second day, said he would not have missed being wounded for the privilege of being a spectator of the scene. Anything more thrilling or fine in the military spectacular way has not been put on canvas.

To begin at the beginning, we had reveille at 1 a. m. on the 6th of November, and at 3:30 the column moved from the place of rendezvous, about two miles from the

Canadians' camp. The column was under General Smith-Dorrien's command and consisted of two squadrons Fifth Lancers, Royal Canadian Dragoons, C. M. R.'s, two guns D battery R.C.A., four guns Eighty-fourth Battery, two five-inch "cow" guns, section pom-poms, two regiments of infantry and the usual complement of R. A. M. C., engineers, bearer corps, etc. Though we were only going for a three days' trek the baggage column was nearly six miles long. (Some corps travel with a wagon train like a circus procession, even if they are supposed to be going light.) The fog was so thick when we moved out that the greatest care had to be taken to prevent the column losing touch. When the sun struggled out, however, it dispersed the mist and we had lovely weather the rest of the trip. The route was southward towards the Koomati river, and our business was to fight the Boers wherever found and burn the farm houses that are being used as barracks in which they harbor.

The Royal Canadian Dragoons and my two guns, with a pom-pom, formed the advance under Lieut.-Col. Lessard. About 9 o'clock in the morning the Boers began to show up on the hills, and it was not long before the guns were busy breaking up groups with long range fire. The man who made the tangent sights for our guns must have got tired before he got all the way down. They are graduated for 4,000 yards, and I'll swear we can do accurate shooting at 6,000 yards with them. My gun layers have to estimate after 5,000. I just tell them "give her 5,000 with a turn" (that means our estimate of 5,000 yards on the tangent sight with an additional twist to the elevating wheel.) All morning it was an advance guard action with long range fire, the Boers retiring slowly from ridge to ridge, and we had to gallop forward and seize the successive positions. We were acting as horse artillery. Though I say it, as shouldn't, our shooting that morning and during the whole trip was fine. When we began smashing Boer groups of a dozen men or so, at three miles and over, the General sent down a

staff officer on two occasions to ask the range of special shots. "Officially" we should not be able to hit anything over 4,000 yards. Several times during the day the troops with us applauded when we planted a particularly good one at extreme ranges, and during the afternoon the General rode up and personally complimented us on our shooting.

We continued to move steadily forward all morning, driving the Boers from ridge to ridge, until we approached the Koomati river. Then there was a lull in the fighting, and the men watered the horses and had lunch. Before they could feed there was a movement of troops towards the left front. The main body had come up and a section of the Eighty-fourth began pounding away on the left. We hooked in and galloped over. There were no Boers in sight, but a few Mauser bullets were skipping along. The Eighty-fourth were firing at a grove of trees far to the front, where the officer said he thought there were some Boers concealed. We moved on to the front. Somehow the troops had got rather bunched up. The Shropshire Regiment was marching in front of us, in line, the Royal Canadian Dragoons in line on our left, and the transport was gathering on the ridge behind where the Eighty-fourth was in action. We had moved forward about a quarter of a mile down a gentle slope towards the Koomati, though not in sight of it, when suddenly the little Colt gun went into action about 300 yards to the left and commenced to work a blue streak. That meant Boers and lots of them, close. In another instant the Mauser bullets came streaming around us. Colonel Lessard took in the situation at a glance. "Morrison—the rocks," he yelled, and pointed to a low, ugly-looking kopje about 1,700 yards in front. We immediately went, half-left and then half-right, and galloped forward through the interval between the Shropshires' line and the Dragoons. When well clear to the front we halted and went into action. Then how the bullets did squeal around us. The Shropshires lay down, the Dragoons dismounted and sent back their horses, and the transport on the ridge stampeded at a gallop.

The thought flashed through my mind: Here, we've got to get some shells into these people and disconcert their aim mighty quick or they will put us out of business. Our fire was wild at first, but it was my fault. Just as I dismounted a couple of bullets kicked up the dust about twenty feet in front of me and that gave me the wrong tip. I thought they were spent, though I should have known better, from the vicious whirr with which they ricocheted past. I opened at 2,500. It went over. Then dropped to 2,200. Still over, and the Mausers coming thicker than ever. The lead driver of No. 6 gun got it in the shoulder and went down. I dropped to 2,000 and then to 1,800. That took the top of the rocks. Meanwhile the gunners were working like demons and we were putting the shells in with great rapidity. Having got the target, we reduced gradually to 1,650 yards and went into time shrapnel, bursting them beautifully along the front of the kopje. Up to this time our two guns and the gallant little Colt, under Sergeant Holland, were doing all the fighting. Everybody was more than hunting ant hills. And no wonder. The thing was so sudden and the fire so hot that it dazed us for a few minutes. How my section escaped so easily nobody who was there could understand. It was just a case of pure luck. At one stage of the game the Shropshires stood up and fired three volleys to draw the fire off us, and that helped us a bit. When we got into time shrapnel the fire from the kopje soon commenced to slacken, and we knew we had got the drop on them at last. Then a section of the Eighty-fourth came half way down the slope on our left rear and sent over to us for our range and fuse. They began to pound away too, and the fire gradually died away. We had expended a lot of ammunition with our rapid firing, so I let up, but immediately the Boers began again, so we had to keep on, but firing more slowly. A five-inch cow gun came up on our right, and when I gave the officer the range, 1,650, he looked serious. (Theoretically, rifle fire can destroy artillery at 900, and Boer Mauser fire at 1,650 "ain't no violets.") However, the infantry had now gone forward to the attack, and the

Boers had something else to think of besides annoying the guns. The cow guns having come up, the General gave orders for Colonel Lessard, with my section, the pom-poms and some infantry to set off on a wide turning movement, so the Colonel ordered me out. Subsequently we found that this kopje was the Boer stronghold and practically impregnable. After we went away the infantry attacked it, but were repulsed with six killed and twenty wounded.

How my section got off so easily will always be a mystery to me. I think it was pure gall that saved us, and the fact that we got the drop on them so quickly and rattled their aim. I am satisfied that if instead of jumping out to the front and turning loose we had wheeled about and sought a (theoretically) safer position back on the ridge behind, we would have lost half our men and horses before we got there, because the Boers could have leisurely popped us off with nothing to disturb their aim, and as the guns wheeled they would have presented a beautiful target. It was rather a vindication of my view that when you find yourself in a tight place the best defence is to soak the other fellow "often and frequent."

My men behaved splendidly. The gunners simply paid no attention to the bullets and I couldn't make them kneel down. They just worked the guns for all that was in them.

Colonel Lessard made a wide turning movement to the right which threatened the Boer line of retreat by the Carolina road, and it was not completed until late in the afternoon, when the Boers abandoned their position and began to pike off along the road in squads. Owing to the difficulties of the ground we only were able to reach a point about 5,000 yards from the road. My guns did some good practice even at that range. One shot in particular was a bird. It was the last time we were in action that day. We got into a new position and saw a group of the mounted Boers hurrying along. They were well over the 5,000-yard range. Our first shell dropped right on them and knocked over a man and his horse. A

while afterwards we saw the man get up and go for cover to a spruit, but he must have been hard hit.

The Boers were as angry as hornets because the houses were being burned. During the afternoon they captured Major Bliss, of Ottawa, and were going to shoot him. He was acting as galloper for the General, and had his horse shot under him. However, after taking his belts and spurs they let him go. After his horse was shot he ran for it and refused to "hands up" when they galloped after and surrounded him. They called him a ——— fool and asked why he didn't surrender. He said the Canadians were not in the "hands up" business.

That night the force bivouacked near Koomati river, where our turning movement had terminated. We found that we had less than 150 rounds of ammunition left, and we had no ammunition column with us. Nearly all the ambulances were full and they were sent back to Belfast. My lead driver on No. 6, W. R. Hare, had been shot through the shoulder, a severe, but not dangerous wound. His son, who rode the center team, took the lead team as soon as his father was shot and worked right on like a brick, taking the gun out of action. When I asked him later if his father was hard hit he said: "I don't know, sir; I hadn't time to look." It reminded me of that poem of Kipling's about the driver's brother who was shot, but the driver went right on and "wheeled his horses handsome when it came to 'action front!'" The last verse is:

The moral of my story is easy to be seen—
You haven't got relatives when servin' of the Queen;
You haven't got no brothers, fathers, sisters, wives or sons.
If you want to win her battles, go and work yer bloomin' guns!

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE REAR GUARD ACTION.

November 7 will always be a memorable day for the Canadian mounted troops. In the morning the orders came that the force was to return towards Belfast, and the Royal Canadian Dragoons with the section of D battery, R. C. A., was to form the rear guard under Colonel Lessard. In this case the rear guard was the place of honor, as the advance guard had been on the previous day. Colonel Evans, with the C. M. R., was to look after the right flank—an equally arduous task. As I said before, we had a very long transport column, out of all proportion to the size of the force, and occupying about six miles when strung out on the road. The rear guard was given three companies of infantry as supports. In order to understand what followed it is necessary to explain that the country is treeless, with great rolling ridges. It is usually two to three miles from the crest of one ridge to the next, and rocky kopjes are located here and there. In rear guard work you have to wait until the transport column toils over the far ridge before you abandon the ridge behind and then make a rapid retirement to take up a position on the ridge they have passed over, and so on. Not only have you to wait for the transport, but you also have to wait for your infantry supports to reach that ridge too. That means that at one particular period in each successive retirement the guns and cavalry supports are anywhere from two to three miles behind the column and infantry supports and, as it were, isolated for the time being until they can abandon the ridge and retire to the next. Colonel Lessard had 95 troopers, the present fighting strength of his corps, and my two guns to stand the Boers off the rear of the column, and it was necessary to spread this little

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force across a line of two miles, and there would be no supports for two miles in its rear at the successive junctures in the retirement I have described. Colonel Evans had only 60 men of the M. C. R. with two Eighty-fourth guns, and he was some three miles back along the right flank of the column. The bulk of the troops were at the head of the column, nearly five miles away. Colonel Lessard has had much experience in this war and he knows what the Boer can do in the way of making it hot for rear guards. We all knew, for that matter, and we were all rather grave as we sat on the grass talking it over while the main body and interminable transport column trailed slowly off over the distant ridge on the sky line. The Colonel put half his men on the left rear and the rest on the right rear, with the guns and a cordon of scouts well out all the way round. Then we sat waiting developments while the transport was slowly getting itself together and pulling out. We hadn't long to wait. The Boers began to crop up on the hills in a semi-circle of three miles round our position. Then we saw them streaming along the Carolina road on the right flank to re-occupy the stronghold from which we had driven them the day before. We opened fire on them, but they kept right on. Luckily, Colonel Evans, acting on his own initiative, galloped back along the flank of our column and seized this position, which was on our left rear as we faced the enemy. It was a fine piece of work, and the Mounted Rifles, 60 against 350 Boers, punished them heavily. The Boer got a taste of his own tactics, for in that instance the 60 Canadians held the kopje and drove back the 350 Boers. While Colonel Evans' men held them at bay two guns of the Eighty-fourth Battery fired on them. Then the Boers commenced to retire in bands of 25 to 50, and as they came in view of us we dropped shells on them at 5,000 yards, firing to our left rear as we faced our enemies on the hills.

But now we had troubles of our own to our proper front (the rear of the force). The Boers became very impudent. For miles around we could see them in small

parties working towards us and passing behind the kopjes going in a direction so as to get on the left flank of the convoy. Colonel Lessard sent word to the General for reinforcements. Shortly after a message came from Colonel Evans asking if we could spare some men. Meanwhile our guns were hammering away, but as fast as we drove the Boers off one ridge they appeared at another. Ammunition was getting rather low, so I emptied my ammunition wagons, filled my gun limbers, and told Corporal Macdonnell to take the empty wagons back to the column, preferring to depend on limber supply for the sharp rearguard work I saw ahead. This act was a bit of the luck that stayed with us all day. In the crisis later on, if we had been hampered with the ammunition wagons we would never have extricated No. 5 gun, and afterwards we had the comparatively fresh wagon teams to replace our exhausted gun horses.

Well, the Boers commenced to press us and my guns were moved back alternately to better positions. Up to this point we were holding our own nicely on the rearguard, thanks to Colonel Lessard's excellent disposition of his force. Though the Boers were numerous, we were not worrying much, because we had fought together enough to entertain a sublime conviction that the dragoons, our guns and the Colt could go in on one side of the Transvaal and out the other; but in previous fights we were not hampered with looking after a big transport column. The infantry were also slow in getting back to the far ridge, and we had to hang on to our position until they reached it. Meanwhile it looked as if we had the whole Boer force on our hands.

It was about 11 o'clock, and we, of the rear guard, had been hard at it for three hours when a Boer appeared on a ridge on the right rear with a large looking-glass and began signalling rapidly across our position towards the left flank. At this time the tail of the transport column had not got over the ridge two miles back, which was to be our next position, and the rear guard was in that condition of being "in the air" that I have already described. Just for a joke we laid a gun on the man with

the mirror, ranged for 3,500 yards, and dropped a shell so close to him that he disappeared in the dust. He threw the mirror from him as if it was red hot and piked for cover as fast as his legs could carry him. Everybody roared with laughter. Immediately after a courier came hell-for-leather from the right rear (the opposite end of our line) to say that Lieutenant Cockburn, who was holding that corner with two weak troops, was being heavily pressed. Colonel Lessard ordered me to take a gun and go over to help him. Leaving Corp. Kerr in charge of No. 6 gun, I started off with No. 5 as fast as we could go. It was over a mile and a half across, some of it up grade, and when we arrived the horses were rather blown for they had been worked hard the previous day. Things were certainly hot over there when we arrived. The Boers were swarming up from the southwest and coming on with determination. As we unlimbered and went into action the Mausers began to incise the air around us. As our shells drifted into the Boers they dismounted and took cover, but still continued coming on—rushing from cover to cover and firing. I asked Lieutenant Cockburn to extend some more men further to the front to keep them off the gun until we put the fear of the Lord into them. He did so and we kept on soaking in shrapnel. We had not fired a dozen rounds when Colonel Lessard came galloping across from the other flank, and as he got up he shouted: "For God's sake, Morrison, save your guns!" It was certainly warm around there, but I did not see any cause for serious alarm, as we were holding them nicely, but the Colonel's manner suggested that there was something up. I asked if I would fire another shell or limber up. "Limber up!" he shouted, "They're coming down on our flank to cut us off!" And he pointed towards our left rear. One glance was enough. For over half a mile back on our left flank the Boers were swarming over the hills from the west. Good old Cockburn looked too, and without a word he turned and shoved in the rest of his two troops against the enemy we had been firing at. Not a man hesitated. One chap, as he jumped off his

horse and unslung his rifle, looked at me with a cheerful grin and said : " I guess we can see our finish, sir." Colonel Lessard rallied all the men who were left and rode towards the left flank to try to hold back the flanking force. They were a mere handful and the Boers were in strength.

Meanwhile I sent my mounted orderly, Gunner Gamble, to hurry up the other gun on the far side of the plain. It was already well on its way to the ridge, but not going fast enough. No. 5 limbered up smartly and we started at a gallop for the ridge, which was our next position. We had not gone fifty yards before the Mausers began to sing Hark from the tomb! They also came from another direction. I turned in my saddle and saw a sight the like of which had not been seen before in this war. Square across our rear a line of Boers a mile long was coming on at a gallop over the plain, firing from their horses. It looked like the spectacular finale in a wild west show. They were about 1,500 yards away, but coming on rapidly and shooting at our gun, most of them, to try and stop it. I looked up the plain to the ridge we had to reach and I thought indeed we saw our finish. The Mauser bullets streamed around us and the so-called explosive bullets cracked in the air on every side like miniature shrapnel. On we went, hell-for-leather, the drivers' whips going and the Mausers crackling. Every moment I expected a horse to go down, but still our luck held with us and they were not gaining. They were firing from their horses and their aim was wild. Then my poor old horses began to fag. They slowed from a gallop to a trot and gradually from a trot to a walk. And we were barely two-thirds of the way to the ridge yet. The Boer line was coming up on us rapidly, so I judged the time had arrived for case shot. We halted and went into action. They were too far off for case (its extreme range is 400 yards), so I gave them shrapnel at 1,200. It smashed through the line and burst a hundred yards behind them. Those immediately opposite to us scattered to the right and left, but still came on. I gave them another at 800. It burst nicely about 50 yards in

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front of them and the shrapnel bullets made a wide gap. But the line still came on. Off to our left I saw the little Colt gun overtaken, and then I realized that it was no good trying to stand them off, because, even if we cleaned out those behind us, the long line would still envelop our flanks and swamp us. So we limbered up and started again to make one more effort to reach the ridge and our infantry supports. I dismounted my gunners to lighten the gun, and the horses, having had a brief respite while we were in action, broke into a trot again, the gunners running alongside pulling on the traces. We were bound they would not get a Canadian gun. All this time the Boers were shooting at us from their horses, but seeing they couldn't stop us some of them pulled up to dismount and take better aim. One horse was hit but didn't drop. There was a dragoon who had been riding with us all the time, all that was left of our escort, and when we halted to go into action he would halt and blaze away. I sent him to see if Colonel Lessard could spare a few men from the flank fight on the left to help us out. We were now getting near the infantry supports, and if we could get up to them we could get into action again. But, Great Scott! the infantry turned and started for the rear. By this time the line of Boers was not much over 300 yards from us, and a handful of the Canadian Dragoons were engaged in a mounted melee with them all across the plain. Riderless horses galloped about and men staggered along with dripping wounds. Colonel Lessard's little force, which had been so gallantly holding the flanking force off our left, was now rolled back fighting desperately. The messenger I sent saw Lieutenant Turner first and the brave fellow, though wounded in the neck and arm, went energetically to work pulling his men from the flank fight to cover us. They threw themselves from their horses and poured a close fire into the Boer line behind us, but there were not a dozen of them all told. We came abreast of the retiring infantry. They hadn't fired a shot. I asked a man on the flank where their officer was. He pointed him out. The men were quite cool, marching along like

automatons. I rode across their front to the officer and asked him to turn his men about and fire a few volleys while I got my guns into action. He answered shortly: "I can't do anything," and continued on with his men over the crest of the ridge. There were, I believe, three companies of them, as many if not more than all the force we had in the fight. Without infantry support I did not think it safe to go into action, so we went on. Then up came Colonel Evans with his C. M. R.'s to reinforce us, and sailed in. There were only sixty of them, but together with the R. C. D.'s that were left they brought the Boers to a stand, at least those in front of them. The long line of Boers enveloped their flanks and, reaching the top of the ridge, began firing down into the spruit below, where a lot of the transport was huddled.

At this moment General Smtih-Dorrien and his staff came up. He called me to him and asked me if I had lost many men. I said no. Old No. 5 was looking pretty tough. The horses were staggering where they stood, some of them wounded. The gunners, completely exhausted, were lying over the seats, two of them bleeding from the lungs with their exertions in bringing the gun out. The General asked me if I could cross the spruit and take up a position on the hill beyond and stop the enemy, who were streaming along our left flank. I said I could. My other gun had got out ahead of us all right. We crossed the spruit and up the slope on the other side as far as the horses could stagger and went into action again. The Boers had come on top of the opposite ridge on either flank and were firing down into the transport at the ford. We cleared them off there assisted by two guns of the Eighty-fourth that now came up. The Boers streamed along on our left flank across the spruit trying to cut us off again, but we shelled them back. While we were in action here I had my ammunition wagon teams brought back and hooked on to the guns and we were ready for business again.

After we had ceased firing, Colonel Lessard came up. He looked ten years older. "Emslie is killed," he said

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simply. "Turner wounded in two places, Cockburn and the two troops that were with him are gone—wiped out!"

But there was no time to be sorry then. The pom-poms and the two 84th guns with some infantry reinforced us and we had to move back and take up another position to cover the column, for the Boers were supposed to be meditating another rush. But they had had enough, and about five o'clock we got into camp, having fired 240 shells during the two days.

Later in the evening we heard that Lieutenant Emslie was not dead. The bullet had entered his breast below the heart, but passed across through the lungs. Turner fought on with his two wounds until Colonel Lessard ordered a sergeant to take him to the rear. Of Cockburn's two troops (about 30 men) only six escaped. The rest were killed, wounded or captured. About ten o'clock at night most of the men who had been prisoners came in, having been released by the Boers, and an ambulance went out and got the wounded, some of whom had fallen into the hands of the Boers, who used them very well. They seem to rather like the Canadians, and even asked some of our men if they would join them. They explained the whole affair. The Boers had captured a lot of 12-pounder ammunition from some British horse artillery and they wanted to get hold of our guns. These Boers are reported to be a very superior lot, numbering over a thousand. They were splendidly mounted, well dressed, and most of them had Kaffir servants.

Though the Colt carriage was captured, Sergeant Holland pluckily saved the gun by taking it off and riding away with it when the Boer charge was almost up to him. Then a funny thing happened. The Boers thought they had captured the gun and tried to turn it on my gun. They couldn't understand how it worked and even turned it upside down. When they found the gun was gone they were so angry they burned the carriage. It is a good thing that "Gat" Howard was not out with it, or there would likely have been one more casualty on our side. The R. C. D.'s had 3 killed, 12 wounded and 16 missing, which, after all, was not heavy, considering the work done, and the loss inflicted on the Boers.

Colonel Lessard, Colonel Evans and myself were mentioned in despatches by General Smith-Dorrien, and the Canadians were highly praised. As we came into Belfast next day a train load of Tommies cheered us. In his report the General said, speaking of the action :

"Colonel Lessard with the Canadian Dragoons and two Royal Canadian guns, the latter under Lieutenant Morrison, covered the rear, and I have no praise too high for the devoted gallantry they all showed in keeping the enemy off the infantry and convoy."

He referred to the Boer charge as "an event unprecedented in the war." He also referred to the great dash displayed by Colonel Evans and the C. M. R. in seizing the Boer stronghold earlier in the day and holding 350 Boers at bay until the latter were dispersed by the artillery.

This morning we buried our dead. The little Canadian cemetery was too small. We had to take down the wall and enlarge it.

There were many pathetic and humorous incidents. I remember as we were in action, to try to stop the charge, seeing a dragoon shot near us. He threw his rifle in the air and fell from his horse, but one foot remained in the stirrup and you could see his face shining white in the grass. His old troop-horse had been standing while he fired off its back, and now it looked round at the dead man and began to nose his face as much as to say, What's the matter, old chap?

The lead driver of my No. 5 gun is a very quiet young fellow who never swears (a rarity in this outfit). While we were getting the gun away he was grinding his teeth and swearing a blue streak all to himself. His No. 1, who rode next to him, was telling me he was saying " ——— the ——— Boers, they'll never get this gun ——— them!"

The Dragoons tell me there was an old Boer with white breeches on who rode along on our flank towards the last, away ahead of the others, plugging away at the gun as quick as he could load and fire. He was so intent on his work that he rode straight in among our dragoons

without noticing where he was until it was too late. He's gone der cemetery down.

I'm very much attached to my old horse. When we got into that hot place the first day and the bullets were coming thick, I happened to look round, and my mounted orderly had coolly turned his own horse broadside to the fire and was keeping Billie behind him so he would not get hit.

Some women here, who were allowed to go out to the commandoes north of us to get their husbands to come in, have returned unsuccessful. A Boer girl told me last night that the husbands said the Canadians were going away the end of this month and then they were coming to drive the Tommies out of Belfast.* The British are offering any of our men who will stay on as scouts, ten shillings a day extra.

*They tried to carry out their purpose, but failed, though in the attacks the Belfast garrison had about 150 casualties.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE BURNING TREK.

It should be explained in connection with the following description of a burning trek that for several weeks previously every effort had been made to cause the Boer commandoes in the vicinity of Belfast to surrender or disperse. All the men of Belfast were outside fighting us, while their families were fed by the British government in the town. The commandoes which surrounded us were not "in the field" in a military sense. They harbored in the farm houses and villages, and a military force could march through these places and not see a Boer in arms, but the moment it turned to go back every peaceful cultivator would dig up his rifle and bandolier and swarm on the rear and flanks, shooting down as many as possible. Every farm house was practically a barracks, and every village a depot for supplies of ammunition, adroitly secreted. The situation was intolerable. It had existed since before General Smith-Dorrien took command, but with his keen insight and energy to get at the root of things, he began at once to remedy the conditions. The women in Belfast who had husbands out fighting were told to inform their men that they must either surrender and come in or take their families out and support them. They all sent back jeering replies. The General ordered the families to be furnished with transport for a limited quantity of necessary bedding and clothing and sent them out to join their husbands. Then the jeerers were unreasonably wroth. To the occupants

of farm houses and the inhabitants of one or two villages, notorious as the harboring places of commandoes, it was explained that Mr. Boer must get out in the field like the Queen's troops and play the game fair, or go out of business. If farm houses were to be used as barracks and villages as laagers, they would have to be destroyed, as laagers were when captured. This notification, given weeks in advance, elicited not the slightest attention from the Boers. When it was clear that they did not propose to conform to the demand, the General carried out his promise, apparently much to the surprise and indignation of the Boers. Still, they had nobody to blame but themselves.

Belfast, November 21.

Just after I wrote my last letter we were ordered out for a five days' trek, and it was announced that we would leave for home as soon as we returned. It must be confessed that a good many of us Canadians felt rather blue. A month ago we would have welcomed the order with joy, but on nearly every trek somebody must get hit, and it seemed rough to think that some good lads might be cut off at the last moment with "the trooper on the tide" for home. However, the men did not seem to mind it a bit (it's always the other fellow who is going to stop the bullet!) and with us it was difficult to convince enough men they were sick to furnish a camp guard. We had some court-martial prisoners and they sent in an application to be allowed to go, too (they had "carried on awful" according to the Tommy guard when the word came in that we were in a tight place the last trek), so I went to see the General about it. He is very strict in such matters, but after considering the circumstances he explained that he did not see how it could be done unless the prisoners were entirely released, such being the army regulations. After taking the matter into his serious consideration he sent over a communication to the effect that "as a mark of his appreciation of the magnificent

work and gallant conduct of all ranks of the section under your command" in the recent fighting, the G. O. C. directed that the prisoners be released and their sentences commuted. Of course this pleased the section very much, and the boys were ready to go through a hotter place than the Steilpoort valley, if necessary. Besides, they all had a little account to settle with our old friends the enemy up there, and we would not have been quite satisfied if we had gone home without wiping it off the slate.

Bright and early on Tuesday morning we marched off. The force was the same as that which went to Lilliefontein except that for infantry we had the Gordons and the Royal Irish, two of the best fighting regiments in the service. The Canadians as usual were in the advance guard with the Fifth Lancers and two pom-poms. Colonel King commanded the advance and General Smith-Dorrien the main body. We were bound for the Steilpoort valley north of here and were to come round by Witpoort and Dullstroom, half way to Lydenburg. It was in the Steilpoort valley that the Royal Canadian Dragoons and my guns used to have our little fights before Smith-Dorrien's force mobilized here. The valley is about six miles wide and twenty-five miles long. It is fertile and well watered and full of fine farms. When our little force used to go out on reconnaissance and get into the rough and rocky hills overlooking the valley, the well-fed burghers would swarm out of the farms in the valley and have a lot of fun with us. That we did not have many casualties was not their fault. It was also some of them who killed two of the Dargoons by dressing up in kharki and enticing them over to a kopje, where they shot them down in cold blood.

The advance guard had just got into the hills when our friends were out as usual with their tails up sniping from behind every rock; but when the guns and pom-poms came into action at a gallop and soused the kopjes with shells, they discovered that this was the time they were up against it. They retreated from one position to another and we followed them up all day, the advance

guard on the right and the main body on the left. About four o'clock the main body debouched into the big valley and we sat on the hills and covered the transport, becoming in turn the rear guard towards night. When the column had camped we had to skate our guns down the side of a mountain about 500 feet high, drag shoes on and drag ropes out, and it was with the greatest difficulty we prevented them rolling down. Heavy clouds began to gather, and just as we reached the bottom there was a regular cloudburst. In half an hour we were soaked to the skin and the ground was covered with water several inches deep. Being now in the valley bottom the going was very heavy, and it was dark when we reached camp. The rain had let up, but the ground on which we bivouacked had been churned into deep, tenacious mire that clogged the gun wheels and stuck to the tired men's feet until you would think they had snow-shoes on. We had to wait several hours for the water to soak into the ground before we could lie down. However, it was none so bad that night. The mud made a soft bed and we were too tired to mind the wet, and, for a wonder, it was not cold. The heavy rain on our faces wakened us several times during the night, and it was a very wet, muddy, stiff and bedraggled crew that Old Sol sighted when he peeped over the hills in the morning.

When the column pulled itself out of the mud we moved on, the Canadians in advance, and had not gone two miles before the Boers opened on us. One of my guns took up a position just behind the crest of a ridge with "Gat" Howard's Colt on the left, and we soon got them moving. There were a number of very fine farm houses near by, and we saw the Boers leaving them and making off. The provost marshal came up from the main body, removed the Boer women and children, with their bedding, and proceeded to burn or blow up the houses.

From that on during the rest of the trek, which lasted four days, our progress was like the old time forays in the Highlands of Scotland two centuries ago. The country is very like Scotland, and we moved on from valley to

valley "lifting" cattle and sheep, burning, looting and turning out the women and children to sit and cry beside the ruins of their once beautiful farmsteads. It was the first touch of Kitchener's iron hand. And we were the knuckles. It was a terrible thing to see, and I don't know that I want to see another trip of the sort, but we could not help approving the policy, though it rather revolted most of us to be the instruments. I am glad to say the artillery were exempt from the work. During the days that followed it was our duty to go into action on the hills and cover with our guns the troops that did the burning. We did not get anything like a fair share of the loot, but I don't think my men objected to that. We burned a track about six miles wide through these fertile valleys, and completely destroyed the village of Witpoort and the town of Dullstroom. The column left a trail of fire and smoke behind it that could be seen at Belfast. Some of the houses that were too solidly built to burn were blown up. Away off on a flank you would see a huge toadstool of dust, rocks and rafters rise solemnly into the air, and then subside in a heap of debris. Ten seconds afterwards a tremendous roar like the report of a cow gun would rend the air and the dust would blow slowly away. Many of the houses were surrounded by beautiful gardens abloom with roses, lilies and hollyhocks, and embowered with fruit trees. As we sat by the guns we would see a troop of mounted men streaming off towards a farm. With my glasses I could see the women and children bundled out, their bedding thrown through the windows after them. The soldiers would carry it out of reach of the flames and the next moment smoke would commence curling up from the windows and doors—at first a faint blue mist, then becoming denser until it rolled in clouds. The cavalry would ride rapidly away and the poor women and children, utterly confounded by the sudden visitation, would remain standing in the yard or garden watching their home disappear in fire and smoke.

But to return to the narrative of our trip. About noon on the second day the R. C. D.'s with Howard's

Colts (he had got two since the Lilliefontein fight) were advancing in extended order towards a line of kopjes with my guns in support when we came to a spruit. The cavalry went on, but I stopped to water the horses. I have always taken the precaution of unlimbering my guns and going into action whenever I unhook my horses to water, and this was the occasion that justified the practice. My horses had just gone into the spruit when a Mauser cracked on the kopje in front of us, and the next moment a crashing rifle fire ran along the crest of the kopjes for a quarter of a mile like a zig-zag feu de joie. The dragoons wheeled and came tearing down the slope, and the rifle fire crackled on the kopjes until you could not hear yourself think. We laid our guns and sent shell after shell up to cover them, and I expected every minute to see the Boers come down after them. When I had leisure to look around a mere handful of R. C. D.'s were galloping in, and the slope was covered with riderless horses careering wildly about. I thought the Boers had made a killing for sure this trip. The bullets commenced to go past us and things looked serious, when I was much relieved by seeing two troops of the Third Mounted Infantry come galloping up on either side of us, dismount and take cover in the spruit to support the guns. Neither of Howard's Colts had come back, and we thought old Gat had got it at last. Meanwhile my guns were hammering away for all they were worth. Two pom-poms came up at a gallop, then the Gordon's Maxim, a section of the Eighty-fourth Battery, and finally the General himself with the cow guns. When all this menagerie got to work the row was something awful. This kept up for some time, when all at once during a brief lull I heard the unmistakable rat-tat-tat-tat! of Howard's Colt away out to the front right under the kopje. I turned my glasses on that part of the slope and my heart jumped with joy. There was Gat with his men behind a little clump of rocks not 400 yards from the top of the kopje busy "nailing coffins." I went over and told the General that the Colt and some of our Dragoons were up there. He could not believe it at first. No one

could think that any men who could come back would not have come back out of that fire. The General sent for the infantry to attack the position, and while the Gordons were deploying the guns, kept the ridge smoking with shells. It was fine to see the Gordons go in—cautions and steady as if it was a field day. One young officer caught my eye as he strode forward at the head of his men. He had a beautiful retriever dog at his heels and his rifle tucked under his arm, and for all the excitement he showed he might have been out grouse shooting on the hills of his native shire. As the Gordons began to climb the kopje the Boers made off down the farther side and didn't wait for the bayonet. As soon as they crowned the kopje I rode forward with the ambulance to see how the Dragoons had come out. They had only one man hit. Howard's horse had been hit three times. The most of them had only galloped back a few hundred yards until they came to a spruit. They had rolled off their horses and let them go while they took cover and sat tight, ready to stop any advance if the Boers had tried to rush my guns. It was a mighty smart thing. If they had been British cavalry they would have tried to gallop out of the fire and the Boers would have got half of them on the way.

The column marched into Witpoort, a pretty little village surrounded by hills. The guns were placed on the hills and trained on the place, and the cavalry and mounted infantry rode into it and looted and burned every house and shop, except one belonging to a British subject. The flour mill was blown up. We sat on the hills and watched the scene. When the mounted troops rode back they looked like a gang of dissolute pedlars. Their saddles were hung like Christmas trees with shawls, clocks, mandolins, tea kettles, lamps—every sort of imaginable article—besides chickens, ducks, geese, sucking pigs, vegetables, and agricultural products galore. All we gunners got was the merry ha-ha, and such unconsidered trifles as the bloated cavalry chose to donate to us.

On the third day out about 9 o'clock the guns were

called up in a hurry to a position overlooking a pretty valley full of farms and cattle. On the far side in nice range a Boer convoy with a lot of wagons and cattle was making off. My guns had them for five or ten minutes under fire before they could get over the ridge, and perhaps we didn't slate them! While we were busy with them other Boers were working down in the valley trying to drive herds of cattle and sheep into the ravines. When we got through with the convoy we turned our attention to them, and had more fun than a patron picnic. We didn't want to kill the cattle, of course, but to hold them until our cavalry could go down and seize them. A herd would be piking up the hill and we would drop a shell just in front and stop them. Then the Boers would drive them into a spruit out of sight, and we would drop a shell in the spruit ahead of them and stop them there. The General came up to see the fun, and the rest of the advance guard sat on the hills laughing and applauding. We never hit a cow or a sheep, but in half an hour we had them all rounded up, afraid to move in any direction. Then the General sent the R C. D.'s down and they got 150 head of cattle and 500 sheep. As cattle are worth £20 a head and sheep £4 each to the army it was calculated that our half hour's work netted about £4,000 to the British government. The cavalry were sniped at a good deal in getting in the stock, and they burned all the houses in the valley. As soon as we were through the General pushed on my guns and left the cavalry to lift the cattle. Our convoy was coming up and we had to push on with a troop of the C. M. R., a few Lancers and later on a handful of Gordons through the roughest sort of mountain defiles, kopjes all round in easy rifle range that had not been "made good." By Jove, I was nervous. Every turn in the road we expected to get soaked, but the Boers only sniped a bit. In a couple of hours we got out into more open country and were all right. But I don't enjoy scouting through defiles with field guns.

On the following morning the troops were up long before daylight and marched off at 4 o'clock, leaving the

baggage and transport in camp under an infantry guard. We had no trouble getting up at the right hour. You could hear alarm clock bells in nearly every heap of blankets, and the veldt hummed like a telephone office. (When a soldier loots a house the first thing he grabs is the clock.) In the dim, early dawn, the column, nearly all mounted troops, moved swiftly north. We were going to sack and burn the town of Dullstroom. Nobody who was there will ever forget that day's work. About 7 in the morning our force seized the town after a little fight. The Boers went into the hills around and there was nobody in the town but women and children. It was a very pretty place, nestling in a valley. The houses had lovely flower gardens and the roses were in bloom. It was another Grand Pre, but I wasn't introduced to Evangeline if she was there. We seized a hill overlooking the main street and placed all the guns on it, while the cavalry galloped through and skirmished up the hills beyond. The Boers drove in our outposts on the flank and began sniping the guns, and we had all to turn loose, and amid the row of the cannonade and the crackle of rifle fire the sacking of the place began. First there was an ominous bluish haze over the town, and then the smoke rolled up in volumes that could be seen for fifty miles. The Boers on the hills seemed paralyzed by the sight and stopped shooting. When the lull came General Smith-Dorrien invited the artillery officers to go down into the place with him on a sort of official appearance—"just tell them that you saw me" style of thing. The main street was full of smoke and fiery cinders, and as the flames belched out in huge sheets from one side or the other our horses shied and plunged from side to side. The place was very quiet except for the roaring and crackle of flames. On the steps of the church were huddled a group of women and children. The children didn't seem to know whether to cry or be diverted by the spectacle. The women were white, but some of them had spots of red on either cheek and their eyes blazed. Not many were crying. The troops were systematically looking the place over, and as they got through with

each house they burned it. Our Canadian boys helped the women to get their furniture out, much as they would do at a fire in a village at home. If they saw anything they fancied they would take it ("muzzle not the ox that treadeth out the corn!"); but they had not the callous nerve to take the people's stuff in front of their faces. Of course in the case of shops it was different. But you should see the Royal Irish on the loot! They helped the people out with their stuff by heaving bureaus bodily through the windows and putting pickaxes through melodeons. You'd hear one yell: "Begorry, Tim, here's a nice carpet. Oi think Oi'll take it home for the woman. Lind a hand here." R-r-r-ripp! Up would come a handsome pile carpet in strips, and so the work went on, the officers standing by laughing at the fun their men were having. I went into a very pretty little cottage standing in a rose garden on a side street. The C. M. R's and the R. C. D's were looting it, but really helping the woman out with her stuff more than sacking the place. The woman was quite a good-looking, lady-like person, and the house was almost luxuriously furnished. She was breathlessly bustling about saving her valuables and superintending the salvage operations. A big dragoon would come up to her and say in a sheepish sort of way: "What you want next, lady?" and she would tell them and they would carry it out. As I stood looking on she turned to me and said: "Oh, how can you be so cruel?" I sympathized with her and explained it was an order and had to be obeyed. She was a good-looking female in distress and had quite the dramatic style of an ill-used heroine. I certainly was sorry for her—we all were—until the house began to burn and a lot of concealed ammunition to explode and nearly killed some of our men. But all the same it was a sad sight to see the little homes burning and the rose bushes withering up in the pretty gardens and the pathetic groups of homeless women and children crying among the ruins as we rode away.

On the return trip the Canadians formed the rear guard and the Boers followed us up sniping. Once they

occupied a long, low kopje parallel to the line of march and opened a warm fire at about 1,500 yards on our guns. One of the escort, a sergeant of the Third M. I., was mortally wounded and died before the ambulance came up. We shelled the Boers out, but they followed on and delayed us so that it was 4 o'clock when we of the rear guard got in.

We expected to get it hot when we started on our return march to Belfast next day. The mounted troops were detached under Colonel King to hover on the flank and rear, but beyond a bit of sniping there was no fighting worth mentioning. We picked up a lot of nice horses, and a few of the C. M. R., under Corporal Eaton, lay back on the trail and killed a Boer, as a hint to them not to follow on. We pulled into Belfast at 2 o'clock on Saturday, and from then on we were busy preparing to go home. On Monday evening the Gordons entertained all the Canadian officers (we are as great pals with the Gordons as the infantry were) and after dinner we had the Cock o' the North by the pipers, and made a night of it. Last evening I dined with General Smith-Dorrien and got a copy of the General's farewell order to the Canadians. The General himself was very kind, and the farewell contained most flattering references to the services of the R. C. D's, C. M. R's and my guns during the time we had been a part of his force. It read :

"Major-General Smith-Dorrien cannot allow the Royal Canadian Dragoons and the left section D battery, Royal Canadian Artillery and the Canadian Mounted Rifles to leave his command without thanking them for the grand work they have performed for him in the Belfast flying column. In eight of the last nineteen days they have been engaged with the Boers and have proved themselves splendidly brave and mobile mounted troops, and it has afforded the Major-General much pleasure to be able to send through General the Hon. N. Lyttleton to the Field Marshal commanding-in-chief detailed accounts of their feats of arms, and to have been able to bring to the special notice of the commander-in-chief five officers and seven non-commissioned officers and

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men for distinguished conduct in the field during these operations.

"In wishing them all 'good-bye and good luck' he has no words to express how great a loss they will be to the flying column. He can merely say that he would choose no other mounted troops in the world before them if he had his choice, and he sincerely hopes the day may come when he may have them again under his command."

We did not know how popular we Canadians were until the time came for us to go. Everybody seemed really sorry. Even the Boers said nice things about us. An old woman said to me: "We like you Canadians. I hope you will get home safe to your friends." The artillery offered to entrain our guns for us, the Royal Irish band played us out to the tune of Auld Lang Syne, and the Gordons lined the track, officers and men, and cheered themselves hoarse. At every camp we passed the men turned out to cheer us. The General and his staff came down to see us off, but arrived too late. He sent word after us by the C. M. R., who were on the train following, expressing regret that he had not been able to say good-bye to us personally.

The center section, under Captain Eaton, arrived from Godwan and joined us on the way down. They have had a hard time with fever and horse sickness. Sergeant Evatt died and many men are ill. They lost half their horses.

Now we are on our way back to Pretoria over the same bloomin' old railway and on the same bloomin' old flat cars. The only difference to be noticed is the increased number of graves along the track, more bullet and shell holes in the railway station buildings and a general look of more permanence and strength on the part of the field earthworks. Yesterday the Boers attacked Balmoral, Wilge River and Bronkhorst spruit simultaneously. A shell had gone in at the window of our old mess room in Wilge station and cleaned it out. At Brug spruit a fight was in progress as our train pulled in, and we thought it would be necessary to detrain, but the Boers made off when our train arrived.

I forgot to tell you that among the refugees in the church at Dullstroom were a lot of the Belfast women and children who had been turned out, including Mrs. Jourdain and her "war baby" and my little friend Johanna. I used to call her Johannesburg because she did not like it. She could not speak English, but that hadn't prevented us carrying on a very active flirtation. (Johanna will be very sweet when she is sixteen.) Mrs. Jourdain had not been able to find the father of the "war baby" and was beginning to be afraid he was killed. I gave the children some chocolate, and we parted there in the burning town with mutual good wishes and expressions of regard. Such is war.



JOHANNA.

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CHAPTER XL.

BACK TO PRETORIA.

Pretoria, November 25.

D battery, R. C. A., arrived here at 1 o'clock on Thursday and went into camp in a swamp behind the palatial artillery barracks built by Oom Paul for his Transvaal gunners. We turned over all our horses, except my own, to the British government. We had 66 left out of 137, and they were valued at an average of £21 each, which speaks well for the endurance of the Canadian horses and for the care the drivers took of them. Many of the men were quite blue at the idea of parting with their good old nags. Here we met C battery for the first time since the brigade division was organized.

Colonel Drury and staff have gone to Cape Town, and Major Hurdman is in command of the brigade division. The day after we got in here Captain Eaton and Lieutenant McCrae were taken down with fever, and have gone to the Yeomanry hospital. As Lieutenant Van Tuyl has gone on the railway under Girouard for a year, I am for the time being the only officer on duty, and temporarily in command of D battery. We have handed in all our ammunition and transport, our men have been re-clothed and we are ready for home.

We have recently lost two men of D battery by fever; Sergeant Evatt, of Port Hope, and Artificer Moore, of Guelph, both good men, whose loss is deplored by the corps.

"Gat" Howard has been appointed to command a battery of six Colt guns and a corps of one hundred Canadian scouts for special service out here for six months longer. The corps will be unique in that the men will all draw the colonial pay of sergeants and the

badge is to be a maple leaf with three chevrons over it to commemorate the fact. "Casey" Callaghan, Ryan, McMillan and most of the Canadians who have made a name for themselves as scouts have been enrolled, and with the redoubtable "Gat" as major commanding, it should be a hot combination. General Alderson has been kind enough to offer me the captaincy in it, but I don't know yet whether I can arrange to remain.*

Col. Lessard, of the Canadian Dragoons, who was in command of the Canadians at Belfast, has been furnished with a copy of the following recommendations with instructions to show them to the O.C. D battery, R.C.A. It is addressed to the chief of staff of the division:

"Sir: I have much pleasure in forwarding attached statements on the gallant behavior of officers and non-commissioned officers of the Royal Canadian forces in the action of the 7th November, 1900, between Witkloof and Lilliefontein on the Koomati river. I must in bringing them forward emphasize the fact that the behavior of the whole Royal Canadian rear guard under Lieut.-Col. Lessard was so fine that it makes it most difficult to single out for special distinction. There is no doubt that men sacrificed themselves in the most gallant way to save the guns, which they succeeded in doing.

"These statements, added to what I know myself, enable me to bring forward five names for special distinction. The four first of them I emphatically recommend for the proud distinction of the Victoria Cross, and the fifth for some special mark of Her Majesty's favor:

"1.—Lieutenant H. Z. C. Cockburn, of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, with a handful of men, at a most critical moment, held off the Boers to allow the guns to get away; but to do so he had to sacrifice himself and his party, all of whom were killed, wounded, or taken prisoners.

"2.—Lieutenant R. E. W. Turner, later in the day

*Major Howard was killed in action on Feb. 17, exactly one year from the day he landed in Cape Town.

when the Boers again seriously threatened to capture the guns, although twice previously wounded, dismounted and deployed his men at close quarters and drove off the Boers, thus saving the guns.

"3.—No. 185, Private W. A. Knisley, of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, in a most gallant way, carried out of action under a heavy and close fire No. 172, Corporal Percy R. Price, of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, getting wounded himself in doing so.

"4.—No. 176, Sergeant E. Holland, of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, did splendid work with his Colt gun. He kept the Boers off the two 12-pounders by fire from his gun at close range, and then when he saw the Boers were too near for him to escape with the carriage, as the horse was blown, he calmly lifted the gun off the carriage and galloped off with it under his arm.

"5.—Lieutenant E. W. B. Morrison, Royal Canadian Artillery, for the skill and coolness with which he worked and finally saved his guns.

"I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

"H. L. SMITH-DORRIEN,

"Major-General Com. Flying Column."

By the way, Corporal Price, the man who was saved by Knisley, known in the regiment as "Plucky Little Price," is a cousin of Lord Roberts. He comes from near Peterboro, I believe, and the family is Canadian. He has distinguished himself on several occasions. After being rescued by Knisley he caught a loose horse and went into the fight again and had his horse killed under him.

We expect to leave here for Cape Town about the 28th November, and it is doubtful now if we reach home by New Years. It is very warm here with heavy rain every night. Our camp is in very swampy ground and not at all healthy. I hope we will get out of here without any more sickness. Lieutenants Turner and Emslie, who were wounded at Lilliefontein, are progressing favorably, but will not be able to go home with us. Driver Hare, of the Ottawa section, who was severely

wounded, is doing well, but will not be able to return with the battery. Lieutenant Straubenzie, of the R. C. D.'s, has been taken down with enteric, and will not be able to accompany us home.

Now that we are pulling out, though we are all glad to be getting home, there is a certain amount of regret at leaving while so much fighting remains to be done. There is a general expression of opinion that in the next war the Canadian troops should be formed in one division. Judging from the credit each arm has gained in the force they have fought in, they would unitedly form a combination it would be hard to equal. That is the opinion that has been repeatedly expressed by imperial officers. It is half the battle to be acting in concert with troops you can thoroughly depend upon. This is not intended as a reflection on any other troops, but it is everywhere admitted that many corps cannot adapt themselves to the work in hand the way the Canadians do, and I suppose all colonials do. It is now a matter of regret with the imperial authorities that the Royal Canadian Artillery did not get in earlier in the war. It has always been considered in Canada that the artillery is the best arm of our service. Without the least intention of detracting in any way from the splendid service of the infantry and other mounted forces, I honestly believe that Canadians could have shown themselves to be among the best gunners in the world. They handle their horses well, and as gunners have a splendid eye for distance. We never used range finders, consequently could open an effective fire very quickly. That so late in the war we were used, though field artillery, as horse artillery, makes us regret that we did not have a chance to show our form early in the campaign when our horses could whip the guns over the ground like things of no weight and our drivers could handle powerful six-horse teams as a rider handles a single horse. However, I don't believe the authorities will make the same mistake again.

There is just the least chance possible that Canadian and other colonial troops may become affected with that

baleful disease known as swelled head as a result of their success in this war. Colonial troops out here chum together more or less and discuss matters, and gradually get it into their heads that they are the salt of the empire. This esprit of the colonies is all right, but they should not forget that it is the magnificent organization of the British army that made their good work possible. That complicated system of red tape which many inveigh against as useless placed them in their positions at the front under competent corps commanders, fed and clothed and maintained them in good fighting trim or carefully looked after them when sick or wounded. Relieved of all anxiety on these important points, all the colonias had to do was—fight. It is a fine thing to realize that the old, staid, conservative central army system of the empire is the complement of the young, dashing, enterprising youth of the daughter nations. One did its all-important work surely, steadily, without ostentation, but with the accuracy of the stellar system; the other ate its bully beef and biscuit every morning and went out to fight with all the gay thoughtlessness of the young blood, perhaps scoffing at the red tape, a broken strand of which might have paralyzed all their gallant efforts. This is a view of the co-operation of the forces of the empire, which, I think, should never be lost sight of.

We send our New Year's greetings ahead. Roses and lilies and lilacs are blooming here, but I don't think any of us will be sorry to exchange them for the nice, clean, beautiful snow of old Canada.

CHAPTER XLI.

EN ROUTE FOR CAPE TOWN.

Worcester, Cape Colony, December 10.

All that are left of the Canadian mounted forces are here on their way to the sea and home. There are less than a thousand all told, cavalry, artillery, and mounted infantry. The rest of the muster roll is represented by killed, wounded, sick in hospital and those not lost but gone before. The remainder represent the hard-bitten remnants of a hard-fought campaign. They are not pretty to look at, but it would be difficult to pick out a man in the bunch with whom you would care to take a liberty if he had his gun handy. Or even if he hadn't. They are the job lot that remains of a force which for nearly a year has been sifted by bullet and shell, fever, rheumatism and all the ills that flesh is heir to, including a very small percentage of cases of pom-pom fever, Mauteritis and sky-line fever. The residue is pure gold, speaking strictly from a military standpoint. I am not rash enough to go bail for their other virtues.

We thought that by this time we would be on the ocean headed for Halifax. Instead of that we are on the top of a most broiling hot hill overlooking this pretty town, with the 18 guns of the R. C. A. brigade division unlimbered and trained on the town and surrounding country and supported by our Dragoons, C. M. R.'s and Australian troops. How it came about is rather a long story. At Pretoria we turned in all our horses, mules and transport and were under orders to leave by train on December 1 and sail from Cape Town on the 5th. The night before we were to leave the other colonial troops at Pretoria, Australians, New Zealanders and South Africans, entertained us at dinner at the Transvaal hotel. General Baden-Powell was there, and Colonel

Pilkington, who as Captain Pilkington had been up with us on the Karroo march, occupied the chair, and Major Hurdman, the senior Canadian officer present, replied to the toast proposed by the General. There was a hot time in the Transvaal that night. When the representatives of the daughters of the empire got together telling each other what good men they were you could feel your head swelling as the truth gradually dawned on you that the term "colonial," instead of being the designation of a people "a little lower than the angels" was in future to be synonymous in the military Valhalla with that of Mars himself. By which I would have it inferred that the colonial has emerged from this war with a mighty good opinion of himself. And he has a right to it, just as long as he does not forget that there are other pebbles on the strand. But I think he has too much sense to do that.

On Saturday morning we broke camp at Pretoria and entrained at the station. There had been a very heavy rain storm the night before, and when the train was ready to start we were told that the line had three wash-outs within seventeen miles south of Pretoria and we would have to wait two or three days. We could stay on board the train, they said. Next we heard that it would take a week to fix the line, and on Sunday night we got orders to draw horses and transport, detrain the batteries, cavalry, etc., and trek south towards Cape Town. Everything had been packed on the trains for a 1,200 mile run, and you may suppose we cursed our luck. We had reveille at 2.30 a. m., detrained, re-horsed and were off before 6 o'clock. The weather was very hot, but we pushed along and made 17 miles and rail-head beyond the breaks by 2 p. m. Then we had to entrain the outfit again. That night we slept at Elandsfontein, a suburb of Johannesburg (trains do not run at night), and the following night we were at Kroonstadt, famous in this war as the residence of an Irish staff officer, who invited all the Canadian officers to dine with him, and opened unlimited champagne for the glory of the empire. Here we also met our old friend, General

Knox, who had commanded at Edenburg when the left section of D battery was there early in the war, and has ever since taken a fatherly interest in us, and now congratulated the section on its luck and wished us a safe trip home.

Day after day we bumped on down the little narrow-gauge road, pitying the poor Tommies huddled in dripping groups beside the line at bridges, camps and culverts. There was a constant repetition of the dialogue as the train rumbled slowly past :

"Where are you going, Canydians?"

"Home!"

"Lucky chaps! Good luck to you and a safe journey!" And they turned sadly away or stood gazing wistfully after the train. Every little camp had its lonely grave or two, and at the numerous places De Wet had cut in on the line were skeletons of burned trains and the little cemetery enclosure that was the complement of each. One night we stayed at Edenburg. The Norfolks, or part of them, were still there. All the other members of Paradise club were gone, some of them on the last long trek. My friend, Major Eden, the jolly railway staff officer and president of the club, is now commandant of the place, and so cumbered about with the cares of a suddenly arrived flying column that the evening we had looked forward to had to be postponed, perhaps forever.

The following morning we pulled out of Edenburg at dawn and an hour later stopped at Springfontein. I was hustling along the platform on the inevitable quest for something to eat when I met a big officer in a staff cap. "Where do you fellows think you're going?" he said. His face looked familiar and I thought he must be somebody I had met before. "Cape Town and home," I said. "No, you're not," said he of the brass cap, and there was a jolly twinkle in his eyes that took the edge off the abrupt contradiction. "You only think you are." I glanced at his shoulder straps and saw crossed swords. This was a general! A real, pukka general, because only real pukka generals ever

talk to subalterns as if they were equals. Continuing, he said he was afraid we would be detained before we got much further. There was trouble in Cape Colony—big trouble apparently—6,000 rebels reported to be mobilizing south of Norval's Pont, a great rebel convention at Worcester and a general feeling of unrest. He didn't think it was quite as serious as made out, but still precautions were necessary, and much as he regretted having to interrupt our homeward journey it would be necessary. He said a good deal more, and we had quite an interesting chat. When he went away I asked the railway staff officer who the general was and he said: "Why, that is General Hector Macdonald, of Khartoum fame." The General is a fine-looking, big, broad-shouldered man with a fighting jaw, a resolute mouth, and a frank, pleasant expression, though he smiles only with his eyes. He wore a plain kharki uniform that had evidently been much washed, and the only marks of rank about him were the staff cap and cross-swords on his shoulder straps. I don't think he even had a ribbon on his breast, though he is entitled to sport lots of them.

On arrival at Norval's Pont we found that the Orange river had risen sixty feet, making all the drifts impassable, so there was no immediate danger of De Wet making a junction with the Cape rebels, and we were ordered on to Worcester. We did not see any signs of disaffection in the Colony except the trainloads of sulky, angry-eyed burghers who passed us on their way back from the great rebel gathering. Of course it was not to be expected that they would dare be nasty to three trainloads of Canadian troops, but what engrossed our attention was the almost forgotten sight of inhabitants voluntarily flying the Union Jack and the equally novel spectacle of summer girls in nice white starched costumes waving handkerchiefs to us from the houses, and distributing papers and Christmas annuals to the men at the stations. At first we felt quite shy. We were entirely unused to such attentions. But we got over it. Civilisation, however, had its drawbacks. A big, slow-

spoken "loot" from Pile-o'-Bones shared a compartment with me. He came in one day with a bag of oranges, took out one and sat looking at it reflectively. Then he said :

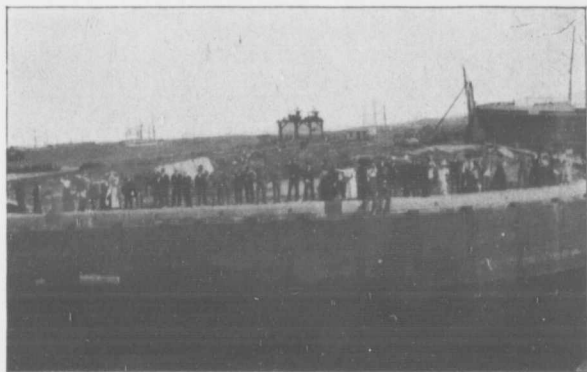
"Ain't it h—ll fer t' hev t' pay a shillin' apiece fer these things after commandeerin' nose-bag fulls without money an' without price?"

Yesterday morning we were stopped here and went into camp on a hill overlooking the town. Most of the inhabitants are bitter rebels and will have nothing to do with us. As the temperature is something over a hundred in the shade their coldness does not chill us much. We are giving a ball to-night to entice some of them out.

On the trip down thirty-nine men of the cavalry were poisoned either with cheese or bully beef and had to be left behind. Some of the cases were serious. We also had to leave our sick and wounded at Pretoria until the railway is repaired, but hope most of them will reach us in time to sail. Among the officers left are Lieutenant John McCrae, D battery; Lieutenants Turner, Emslie and Straubenzie. The gunners all hope Mr. McCrae will get down in time, for we all like Jack. All the senior officers are in Cape Town. This is the first time the three batteries of the brigade division of artillery have been together. We found E battery here from Kimberley on arrival. Major Ogilvie is commanding the brigade division.

Apparently General Baden-Powell was as favorably impressed with the Canadian gunners as other generals were. He had C battery, R. C. A., with him at Mafeking, Rustenburg and Warm Baths. At the colonial dinner at Pretoria he told about his first experience with the Canadian gunners : At some fight there was a British battery with the advance guard and C was with the main body some distance to the rear. The Boers suddenly opened fire on the advance and Baden-Powell ordered the British battery to open and sent back for the Canadians. In telling what happened the General said : "Our battery took up a position, unlimbered and then they began this sort of thing: 'Off-f-f-f! —On-n-n!





FRIENDS ON THE PIER AT CAPE TOWN.



THE ROSLYN CASTLE AT CAPE VERDE.

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Off-f-f!' (Here the General cleverly imitated the action of range-takers at work.) This interesting operation was suddenly interrupted by a bang! The Canadian battery had come up at the gallop and found the range at the first shot." (None of the Canadian batteries ever use the range-taking instruments. They could get the range quicker without them.)

CHAPTER XLII.

THE VOYAGE HOME.

Troopship Rosslyn Castle, Cape Verde Islands,
December 28.

Two weeks ago we were camped on a hot hill overlooking the rebel town of Worcester in Cape Colony. An hour after I wrote my last letter we got orders to entrain immediately for Cape Town, and by 3 o'clock next day were in Maitland camp under the shadow of Table Mountain and felt the cool salt sea breeze, which also blew in the reverberations of the big guns of the men-of-war as they saluted the departure of the Canada with Lord Roberts on board homeward bound. The camp was full of Australians, who were also to sail the next day, but one. On the 12th we embarked our guns and baggage. Nearly all the baggage of officers left at the base when we went up country a year ago had been broken into or opened with duplicate keys and rifled, which was not very creditable to somebody. That day Surgeon-Major Devine arrived from Pretoria with all our sick and wounded who could be moved, but a considerable number had to be left, including Lieutenants Emslie, Turner and Straubenzie of the R. C. D's. Of dead we are leaving behind us 41, divided among the three corps as follows: Royal Canadian Dragoons, 20; Canadian Mounted Rifles, 12; Royal Canadian Artillery, 9.

On the morning of the 13th the Canadians and Australians paraded through Cape Town and were addressed by the mayor and cheered by the populace. At 4 o'clock the Rosslyn Castle cast off and an immense crowd cheered us from the dock. Among those who came down to see us off were Major "Gat" Howard, Captain King, of the R. C. D's, who is remaining on the staff;

Lieutenant King, of C battery, who has joined B.-P.'s police, and all our men who are remaining in South Africa; also Captain Mackie, who is going home via England. The British war ships manned the rail, and the crews of the merchant ships cheered in succession as we passed out into the bay and had our last view of Cape Town and Table Mountain bathed in the golden light of a southern summer afternoon.

General Forrestier Walker and Sir Alfred Milner addressed the troops on the wharf before we embarked and spoke very nicely.

Lieutenant-Colonel Drury is in command on the Rosslyn Castle and we have 42 officers, 7 nurses and 900 men on board. At the last moment the guns of C battery were left at Cape Town at the request of the military authorities, as they are short of field guns thereabouts.

The first day or so out there was a rolling sea and a good many were seasick. Then it quieted down and the weather was delightful until Christmas morning, when a rough northeast (wholesale) trade wind came on and did much to spoil the enjoyment of the Christmas dinner. Apart from these little incidents we have been leading a superlatively lazy life. There is hardly anything to do, and all hands are eating, sleeping and loafing with an industry that has turned lean, dusty subs into fat, clean-shaven loungers. Think of the luxury of hot and cold baths with water ad lib. to men who for ten months have had to shave, wash and bathe in a quart cup of water (and that's no vain veldt vitticism!) We have no horses, guns or harness to look after; nothing to do but live; nothing to eat but food; nowhere to go but to sleep; nothing to drink but what is laid down on the wine card. The steamer is very comfortable, but the feeding of the men was not satisfactory at first.

On Saturday the 23rd there were sports on board. The weather was very warm. The same evening we passed across the line without ceremony. On Christmas eve D battery officers and a few friends had a re-union and drank to "absent friends" both at home and in Africa. I do not know but what everybody on board was not a

little homesick as a result of the advent of the Christmas season, though that same evening the gunners gave a concert and entertainment which should have cheered up everybody, for it was very entertaining. Christmas day we had a morning service, and it would be incorrect to call it joyous, seeing that the most of the congregation were on the ragged edge of sea-sickness, and the chaplain, after a valiant effort to hold the deck down, telescoped his peroration and cut the doxology. By the dinner hour the old boat was reeling and staggering and jostling swells in a most dissolute fashion, and there was plenty of elbow room at mess.

This morning we were wakened by yells of "Land Ho!" "Boers on the sky line, whoop!" On the starboard side the high, serrated outline of St. Jago was silhouetted against the purpling east. We have to stop at St. Vincent to coal.

The incidents of the voyage so far have not been startling. One of the numerous baboons "on the strength" fell overboard on Christmas day, which cast a gloom over the unit to which he belonged until he turned up later in a stateroom aft, having climbed in a port as it went by. On the day before Christmas Colonel Evans lost his dog Spud, which had been with him in the Yukon and South Africa. The veterinary, and, I may say, the medical talent of three corps, was lavished on Spud, but the poor old chap checked in and was buried at sea. He died of pneumonia, which reminds me and nearly all of us who dropped down from 11,000 feet at Belfast to sea level, have got beastly colds and irritation of the bronchial tubes. One officer has pneumonia. It is characteristic that our physical souvenir from Africa's sunny fontains should be colds. It reminds me of a remark I heard at a bivouac fire one night. They were discussing the lack of heat in Africa when one remarked thoughtfully, but with a chirp of hopefulness in his tone: "Say, I shouldn't be surprised if it wuz jes' as disappointin' in hell when you get there."

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CHAPTER XLIII.

ARRIVAL IN CANADA.

Transport Rosslyn Castle, January 6.

This is the fourth, and, I trust, our last Sunday out. The sea is very rough, the dead lights closed and the decks wet; the brass cuspidors in the smoking-room are skating up and down the floor like curling stones as the ship rolls and plunges. Every now and then there is a particularly enthusiastic heave followed by a crash of crockery and jingle of glassware—please excuse the writing. Last night it was very rough, with the pleasant combination of a beam sea and head wind. Just before dinner we carried away the try sail. I don't know what the try sail is, but judging from the tone of respect with which the third officer, who sits next to me, mentioned the fact, it must be a matter of some importance. After dinner we nearly ran into or were nearly run into by a four-masted sailing ship which dashed across our bows out of the gloom of the storm. The steamer was thrown out of her course just in time, otherwise we might have finished up the campaign with some Birkenhead drill, because there is not boat accommodation for quite half those on board, and it is still a long swim to Halifax. During last night the Rosslyn cut so many capers that were nearly thrown out of our berths, and about 2 a. m. everybody was awake and most of the officers were up. Water was dripping into the cabins through the skylights, and an intruding wave nearly washed Major Hurdman out of his state room. At the morning service in the saloon to-day the parson, pale but firm, spoke eloquently on the text: "Fight the good fight," with his arms clasped round the pillar in the center of the aisle. The parson, unfortunately, is not a good sailor.

It has been a rough passage ever since we left Cape Verde and the steamer has not been making very good time. My last letter was posted at St. Vincent. We were there for 36 hours coaling, and all the officers went ashore. St. Vincent is an interesting place to spend four or five hours in. After that it commences to pall. Two days after leaving we celebrated New Year's day and the advent of the twentieth century. It was a subdued celebration, because we had a dozen cases of enteric in the hospital which had developed during the voyage, and some of them were rather bad. On the afternoon of New Year's day Sergeant Inglis, of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, died, after only a week's illness, and on Wednesday morning his body was slid over the stern rail, the ship laying to for a few minutes during the ceremony. The dead soldier leaves a widow and small family in Winnipeg. This afternoon we had another example of the uncertainties of war, when Lieutenant Sutton, of the R. C. D's, died of enteric. He had been all through the campaign with his troop from first to last and never lost a day or missed a fight through wounds or illness. He was one of the handful of officers left with what remained of the regiment during the fighting around Belfast, and he was only taken sick the day after we sailed for home. It seems impossible to realize that he is dead. Before embarking at Cape Town he cabled Mrs. Sutton to meet him at Halifax.

During the voyage weekly concerts have been given by the different corps under the direction of a committee of which Lieutenant McCrae was the indefatigable secretary. On the occasion of the last one there was a collection for the Sailors' Widows and Orphans' fund prefaced by such a neat and effectively eloquent speech by the secretary that it extracted £25 from the company. The programs were remarkably entertaining because there is much talent in the outfit.

The voyage has been long and tedious. Going out we were busy all the way looking after the horses and preparing for the campaign, so that the time passed with comparative rapidity. On this voyage we have had noth-

ing to do except issue clothing, pay the men, do the routine duties and kill time. Under the circumstances it is not to be wondered that time dies hard. The rough weather made many ill. If they were not actually seasick, the constant rolling and plunging, accompanied by the agonizing juggle of the screw as it whirled clear of the water every fifteen seconds had a headachy and nerve-rasping tendency. Then the pace of the Rosslyn Castle decreased the nearer we got to home. At one time after leaving Cape Town it was in the vicinity of the 300 mark. To-day it was only 171 miles. It is quite an experiment transporting men after a long campaign 7,000 miles from a South African summer to the depth of a Canadian winter, and it is to be hoped it will be quite successful. Though the men themselves may be in good health, still they have not the reserve of energy that men have under normal conditions. A program of athletic sports arranged on board, for which good prizes were offered, fell through at the last moment for lack of entries. Among 900 young men, many of whom are athletes of considerable reputation, this was suggestive.

January 8.

At daylight this morning it was very cold, with a northeast gale blowing and a bouncing sea from forward. The Rosslyn Castle not being heated for cold weather, was exceedingly draughty, to say the least of it. Just as I awoke someone lifted up his voice and wailed: "Take me back to South Africa!"

"That's the stepmother's breath coming in the ventilator, all right," howled another. Later on occasional ones dressed themselves and went on deck to reconnoiter, coming back with chattering teeth to announce, quite unnecessarily, that "It's c-c-c-cold."

About breakfast time the first officer heaved the "dipsy" lead, and when it came up from 300 fathoms deep there was a handful of Canada on the end of it. Lieutenant McCrae got some on the point of his finger and went around showing it. It was our first glimpse

of Canada, so to speak. At noon we learned that we were only seventy miles from our anchorage and were correspondingly joyful. The afternoon was spent in packing baggage and preparations to disembark tomorrow. Also in discussing the approaching disruption or at least interruption of old ties, acquaintanceships and friendships.

By the way, in the rush of events before we left Belfast, I forgot to mention an interesting incident at Nooitgedacht, being the killing of the leader of the Boer party, who shot young Spence and Radcliffe, of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, so treacherously several months ago. Villamon, the man in question, was known to both the Dragoons at Belfast and the C. M. R.'s at Nooitgedacht. One fine day in November he forsook his usual stamping ground around Belfast and rode over Nooitgedacht way, where he did not know the country so well. "Casey" Callaghan and Davis, the half-breed scout, were returning in the early morning from an unsuccessful attempt to catch a field cornet (pronounced "falconet"), whom they had been laying for all night, when they sighted Villamon riding along all galliant and gay. They knew the country and they raced for a point to cut off the Boer's retreat and succeeded. He raced for another kloof and was soon floundering girth-deep in one of those treacherous Transvaal bogs. This was what the Canadian scouts had been playing for. They rode down to the edge of the bog, dismounted with much deliberation and proceeded to take pot-shots at Herr Villamon at 500 yards. Finding his horse hopelessly mired, he jumped off and ran on through the bog. They hit him the first shot but did not drop him. He ran on screaming with fear. They hit him three times in five shots. As Casey graphically described it, "he squealed like a pig." The last shot caught him in the back of the head, scattering his thoughts upon the grass, and he died. They took his rifle, horse and bandolier and told some Kaffirs to bury him. The killing of Herr Villamon made a considerable impression on the surrounding commandoes.

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While on the disagreeable subject of killing people, I may mention also that we were informed before leaving Belfast that one of our shells on the morning of the first day's fight at Lilliefontein killed General Fourie and Commandant Prinsloo, the latter a brother of Prinsloo, who surrendered to General Hunter. The Boers reported that on the morning of the first day's fight the two officers were standing together when a shrapnel burst beside them, killing both and wounding Commandant "Winkler" Grobler, one of the numerous family of Groblers. As our guns were with the advance guard and threw all the shrapnel that was fired that morning, the General concluded that they were our victims. While Lieutenant Cockburn was a prisoner the Boers also told him it was a shell from the Canahda guns that killed them, so I suppose it is safe for us to claim the honor.

When we were in Pretoria on our way home the Strathcona Horse had recently been through on their way to join General Knox. Evidently they had painted the town a delicate heliotrope, for it was common to hear the caution that if so-and-so did not do so-and-so "he would be cast into a den of Strathcona Horse."

By the by—and this is positively the last—I heard a good thing from the big cowboy "loot" from Pile-o'-Bones. We shared a stateroom, and while I was shaving in the morning he would lie in his berth on a level with my ear and drawl out the funniest yarns and rowdiest poetry I think I ever heard. It was all new and fresh with the breezy ozone of the wild and woolly west. However, I won't inflict any of it on you. One morning, though, he said: "Had a run-in with a Portugee barber daown Cape Town. I wuz in the chair an' he pom-poms me with the old gag, 'Razor hurt yo', sare?' I wasn't feelin' any too good-natured and I sez: 'Well, if you're skinnin', 'taint so bad. But if you're shavin', it's hell.' An' the little dago went an' got mad about it."

Halifax, January 10.

On Tuesday evening about 7 o'clock we sighted the lights of Halifax and shortly after the pilot came on board. An hour later the Rosslyn Castle anchored in the harbor and the tug with the medical officer was soon alongside. The roof of the deckhouse was covered with snow and the boys set up a happy yell when they saw it.

Colonel Macdonald, of Ottawa, arrived with his staff and all the troops had to be paraded to receive their Canadian pay. This took several hours, and it was nearly 2 a. m. when we turned in. Meanwhile the steamer was thronged with visitors, and we received showers of telegrams of welcome from our friends all over Canada. Early Wednesday morning everybody was on deck eager to get a glimpse of the snow-clad hills and the city. The big steamer moved slowly up to its berth amid salutes from the citadel and the warships, the blowing of steam syrens and the cheering of successive crowds on the pier heads we passed. The troops answered cheer for cheer and the ship answered gun for gun. By 9 o'clock the Rosslyn Castle was berthed. Hundreds of privileged people were on the wharf to welcome relatives and friends. The weather was cold, raw and lowering, with flurries of wet snow. The second battalion Royal Canadian Regiment formed the guard of honor, looking very smart. As the successive batteries and squadrons filed down the gangway loaded down with kit bags and rifles, the crowd cheered lustily. Then came a long circuitous march through the city to the armories, through streets crowded with cheering people and adorned with flags and decorations. At the armory the men had lunch and were then allowed to spend the rest of the afternoon in the city.

Montreal, January 11.

We left Halifax Wednesday evening in two trains for the west minus much of our baggage, which by some mismanagement was not got on board or even out of

the ship's hold in time. We were also short about 100 men who missed the trains.

All next day we were running through New Brunswick. At Newcastle a salute was fired by a party with an old nine-pounder, and at Campbellton a guard of honor of the Seventy-second Regiment paraded on the platform and presented arms. Large crowds assembled at every station to cheer the trains. The troops never got tired of looking at the snow and gloating over the amount of firewood in this God-favored country. The baboons and monkeys did not seem to admire the country so much, and as they sat shivering at the car windows they were objects of intense interest to the people, especially the small boys.

The time had dragged heavily towards the end of the voyage—days seemed weeks and weeks months—but now the time seemed to fly on golden wings, and we could hardly realize that most of us would actually be Home on the morrow. At nearly every station we got more telegrams from kind friends up country.

Ottawa, January 11.

Well, we got to Ottawa, and were tendered a big reception, as you know. After it was over I had gotten into a sleigh with a friend to make the home run, when a small-boy chum of mine climbed on board too. He is a very polite little boy, and after he had snuggled down in the robes he piped out: "Mr. Morrison, did you have a nice time at the war?" We all laughed, but the more I think about it the more I am sure that I "had a nice time at the war."