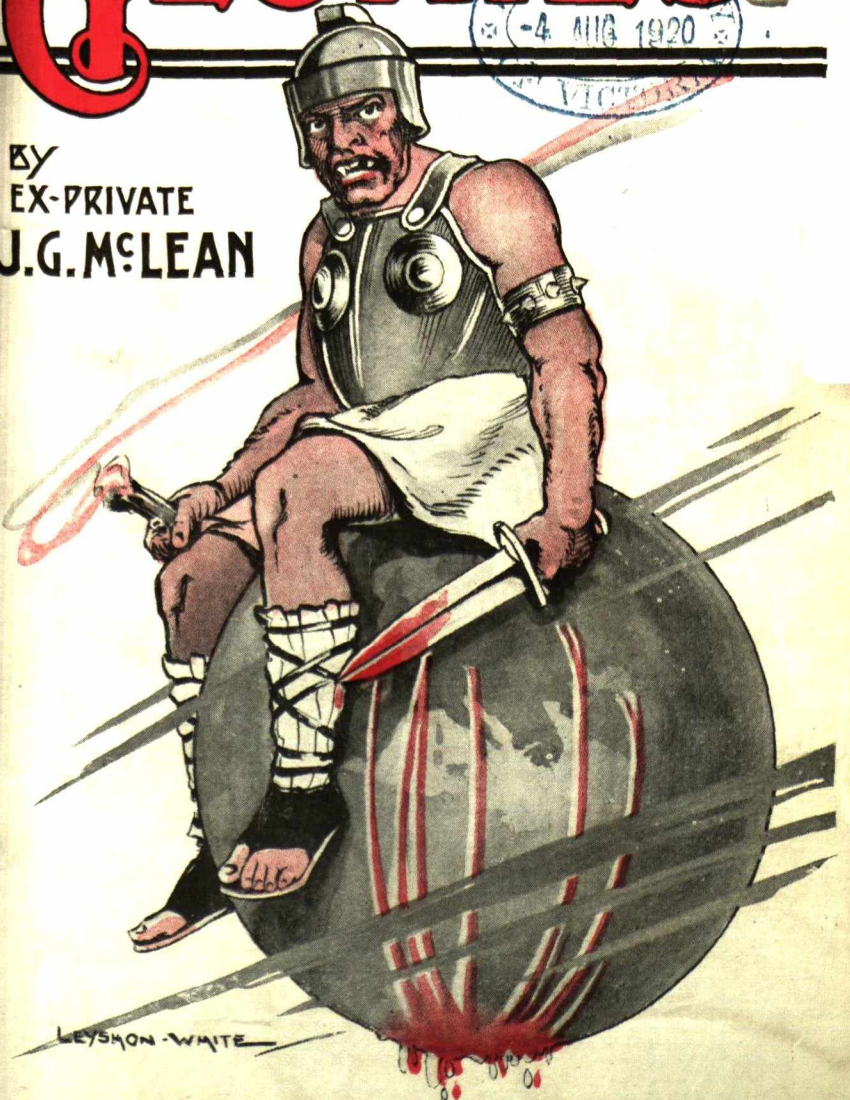


WAR *and its* GLORIES

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WAR AND ITS GLORIES

War and Its Glories

By

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AUSTRALASIAN AUTHORS' AGENCY
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WAR AND ITS GLORIES

CHAPTER I.

FROM AUSTRALIA TO FRANCE.

They were perilous days, so the papers told us. They were days when every true lover of his country and his King was duty bound to enlist and help to hold the enemy from the gates. Every hoarding carried its glaring appeal to the manhood of Australia to enlist and fight for "Liberty and Right," and from every platform came the wild bellows of panic-stricken patriots for volunteers to smash the savage, brutal, bloodthirsty and every-thing-that-was-vile-and-villainous Hun. The apostles of the Prince of Peace, considering a howl for Blood and Glory to be more profitable and spectacular than an appeal for Peace and Justice, turned their pulpits into recruiting rostrums, and bawled for battle and the blood of the enemy. Dropping the Bible, and grasping a paste-board sword in their hands, they sprang upon the public platform and bespattered and outlawed the enemy as an arch fiend and foe of God and God-like men.

They were stirring times indeed, and it is not to be wondered at that men, maddened by the jour-

nalistic Jeremiahs, the prevaricating politicians and the mendacious ministers, went out in battalions to slay the unspeakable German and "make the world safe for Democracy." The men "on the cables," men gifted with an imagination that would excite the envy of the most successful novelist, infuriated the world with stories of German atrocities; the "statesmen" made them pannicky by detailed accounts of German aspirations in regard to Australia, and the zealous pietist invested them in the mantle of the Crusaders, and sent them forth to slay or be slain in the defence of Christendom and the prosecution of a Holy War.

In April, 1916, I found myself a member of the Australian Imperial Forces, sworn to serve His Majesty King George V. well and truly until the conclusion of the war and six months afterwards, since for the safety of the King, of the Christian faith, of my native country and for the smashing of militarism, I had been urged to join the Army.

Not that I was alarmed for the safety of the King and of Christianity. As a King I regard the present holder of the title to be a good and just man. but I have ever looked upon Monarchism with the bitterest antipathy, and never for one moment did I pay any heed to the blood-lapping apostates of Christendom who played upon popular fury by proscribing the people of Germany as outcasts from Christianity and enemies of God. It was because I held Militarism to be the foulest enemy of suffering humanity, and because I believed that my humble services might help to save this great country from

its blighting influence, I joined up with the army of Australia. I believed, as many another did, that in going over to fight the German we were relieving Australia from the menace of Militarism, and ridding the world of its most terrible burden.

Two years of service more than served to cure me of this delusion, for from the day that I entered camp in May, 1916, I realised that Militarism is dangerous and destructive wherever its demoniacal disciples are allowed to hold sway. Long before I had received the wound at Mont St. Quentin, which released me from the clutch of callous Militarism, I had realised that this was not a war of peoples, but of rival groups, composed of Militarists, Commercialists and Imperialists, using their hapless, ignorant countrymen as pawns in the bitter struggle for supremacy.

I need not enter into any details concerning the six months of training which we underwent prior to embarking for England. Suffice it to say that, long before that period had elapsed, most of us realised that we had bartered our freedom, for no man of independent spirit could tolerate the tyranny to which we were subjected nor recall it without a sense of shame.

On 2nd October, 1916, we sailed for England on the transport "Nestor" and, after an uneventful voyage, reached the Old Country on the 16th of the following month. There we underwent two weeks' training and semi-starvation, at the conclusion of which we left for France, arriving at our destination on 29th December. Many weeks of strenuous

training followed before we became efficient enough to be allotted to our respective battalions.

On 14th March I, in company with many others, passed through the ghastly field of Delville Wood to join up with our unit. All around the country lay shell-blasted and desolated, its disfigured surface littered with débris and discarded equipment of every kind. Appalling as this scene of destruction appeared to us, nothing shocked our as yet unseasoned minds so much as the human corpses which encumbered the field, for the struggle had been so intense about this sector that no time could be spared to attend to the dead.

Late that night we reached our battalion. Thence commenced my experience of War and Glory.

CHAPTER II.

THE SOMME TO BULLECOURT.

On the morning of 18th March, 1917, the Germans retired from their positions on the Somme. Within a few hours of their evacuation the 15th Australian Infantry Brigade was following swiftly in pursuit of the retreating enemy. As we went forward, battalion after battalion, in full marching order and heavily laden with ammunition belts, I could hear on every side emphatic voices asserting that their owners "were damned glad to be getting out of that muddy hole behind, whatever lies ahead," a sentiment which was shared by every man in the brigade.

After marching about three miles we began to ascend a sharp rise, when the order to extend in artillery formation was passed along to the battalion commanders. Every man then knew that death might be whistling about us at any moment, and all were prepared for it. When we reached the crest of the hill we were relieved to find that all was quiet, without any sign of the enemy.

We had now left the battle-scarred Somme far behind us and, as I looked back upon it, I could not help thinking of the thousands of gallant men who lay sleeping for ever amidst that maze of trenches, which writhed about the country like rivers of mud.

For four hours we pressed onwards, growing more weary at every step beneath the weight of our packs, till upon reaching the summit of another rise we were met with a brisk fire from rifles and machine guns, when we instantly forgot our fatigue. In a very short time we had extended in fighting order and then, with bayonets fixed, we commenced the advance, going forward in fifty yard rushes. We were now in open country without a particle of cover, but the men went forward in splendid formation, until we were within four hundred yards of the enemy. We then opened fire and, so deadly did it prove, that the enemy evacuated his position within half-an-hour from the time the engagement commenced, leaving us in undisputed possession of the field, our casualties being very light.

On that same day Bapaume was occupied by our Division.

On the following day our Battalion doctor (Captain Hughes) was killed, and his death was mourned by all, for he was a true friend to the rank and file.

For the next few days we had a very hard and trying time, for rain and snow had retarded the progress of the transports and, as a result, our rations were of a very poor and meagre nature, while to add to our discomfort the trench was knee-deep with mud and slushy water. We were prepared to accept these hardships in good part, for the reports of our comrades on either side, that the invader was being steadily driven back, were very encouraging and reassuring.

By this time our artillery was moving up, and it

was a wonderful spectacle to witness the magnificent display of horsemanship on the part of the drivers. Guns, drawn by six horses each, were to be seen thundering along the road at full gallop, the drivers steering an accurate course and urging their noble animals on with voice and whip. Suddenly they would swerve from the road and draw up into a prepared position with a dexterity that was perfectly astounding. As I stood in my muddy trench, I marvelled at the wonderful rapidity with which the drivers unlimbered their horses and, swinging round, galloped furiously along the way through shell and shrapnel, till out of range of the enemy guns. The work of the highly-trained gunners is a veritable revelation of skill and efficiency, for on this occasion they had prepared emplacements, and were sending forth a crushing fire within fifteen minutes of the arrival of the guns.

The next few days was spent in scouting and reconnoitring, during which time we were not greatly troubled by the enemy. Early one morning we heard that in all probability we would be back in the thick of a fight before the day was out. Soon afterwards we were moving forward in the direction of the enemy positions. After a two-mile march we were ordered to halt, remove packs and assume fighting order. This done we sat down, concealed from view in one of those deep cuttings, or sunken roads as they are termed, which are so numerous in that country. Presently our transports arrived, followed by pack-mules laden with ammunition, consisting of ball and Mills' hand grenades, the latter

being the most favored weapon of the soldier at close quarters. We were issued with as much ammunition as we could comfortably carry without hindering our progress, and then we sat down to await further orders.

For four weary hours we sat on the cold wet ground, our bodies shivering and aching with the keen, cutting wind and the snow, before we received the order to "Fall in." Never before were we so pleased to obey an order, for we were fairly benumbed with the cold. My teeth were chattering in an alarming manner and, as we moved forward, I felt that it must be occasioned by fright, but on glancing at my mate I saw that he was suffering from the same complaint, which considerably reassured me, for I knew him to be a brave and fearless man who had been many times under fire. Gradually the numbness began to disappear as the blood regained its normal circulation and, after we had walked about half a mile, my teeth became controllable.

We were told that the enemy was strongly entrenched in a position two miles in front, and that our job was to take possession of this trench.

After a deal of tedious marching and manoeuvring, we eventually contrived to reach a deep railway cutting within seven hundred yards of the enemy, where we stood for a brief halt to make final adjustments in preparation for a charge.

We were not kept in suspense this time for, as soon as all were ready, our Commanding Officer gave

the order, "Over the top in batches of twenty," and we advanced in extended order, with fixed bayonets.

Clearly to understand the magnitude of the task which confronted us, I must explain that, to reach our objective, we had to advance over seven hundred yards of level country, utterly devoid of the slightest particle of cover. Immediately the first twenty sprang over the top they were met with a withering fire from rifles and machine guns, while the enemy batteries who seemed to have our range to an inch were sending over shrapnel and high explosives with deadly precision. Nothing daunted, our boys continued to vault over the top, some to sweep onward, but many to sink to the ground wounded or battered to death by the missiles of destruction which dropped from the air like hail.

I, being in the rear, was amongst the last twenty to go over. From the moment the first batch sprang forward until our turn came the time was about five minutes and, speaking for myself, I can say that, with the thunderous crash of the bursting shells and the savage, piercing whistle of the bullets, which at times passed within a few inches of me and my comrades, I felt decidedly nervous. I could not help admiring the iron nerve of a corporal who was standing near by for, in the midst of the hellish inferno which was raging around us, he was calmly smoking a cigarette with an air of cool indifference which one would only expect of a man who had been born on a battlefield and had been accustomed to this bloody business since infancy.

Just as I was registering a mental vow to keep

close to this man, the sharp command of "Over the top, remainder!" rang out, and over the top we went, dazed with the force of the bursting shrapnel and blinded by mud and smoke. Fifty yards in front of me a huge shell burst, excavating a hole six feet deep in the ground, and scattering mud and fragments of steel in all directions. Into this hole I dived for cover and lay panting, till I had regained my breath. On looking back I saw that two of the men who had left the "hop over" bank with me were already out of action, while many more lay about the field, some wounded, some writhing in their dying agonies, and some lying still and dead.

Forward we plunged again as fast as we could go for another fifty yards or so, and then down again. Looking round I discovered that I had outstripped my former companions, and was now amongst the second line that had left the "hop over" bank. Although our ranks were sadly thinned by the galling fire we had passed through, it seemed miraculous that so many had come through unscathed.

The enemy position was now clearly visible at a distance of about three hundred yards, and we accordingly sent in five rounds of fire, which had the effect of reducing the enemy fire to a slight extent. Another rush and another volley, and then all recognised that the supreme moment had arrived. Not a word was spoken, not an order delivered, as we sprang from the ground, and with bayonets glistening in the setting sun, charged towards the enemy. No order was necessary, no urging required, for in that wild moment all thoughts of humanity and

mercy were banished from our minds by the brutal, barbarous impulse to avenge with human blood the lives of our fallen comrades.

Half-blinded by perspiration, we at last reached the enemy trenches but, instead of the fierce opposition we had expected to encounter, there was not a man there to dispute our entry, for the Germans had evacuated and were retreating with the utmost speed.

Almost simultaneously the crack of hundreds of rifles and machine guns broke upon the air, and before the fleeing enemy had reached cover our fallen comrades had been avenged in a terrible manner.

One of the most noteworthy features of this battle was the splendid work performed by our regimental stretcher-bearers. In the thick of a most terrific fire, they were to be seen moving calmly and fearlessly amongst the wounded on the field, bandaging and staunching gaping wounds, and quickly bearing away the stretcher cases to a place of comparative safety behind the lines. On this day the bearers went about their work of mercy with a courage and fearlessness that won the admiration of every man in the Brigade, and also the lifelong gratitude of many a stricken soldier on that bloody field. No praise can be too high and no honor too great for the men who go out at such a terrible risk to bring comfort and relief to their suffering fellow-men.

Darkness had now drawn over the land. The night was bitterly cold and we were almost famished, for we had eaten nothing since early morning. Fritz had now stopped shelling, but every man had to

stand to his post in order to guard against a successful counter-attack on the part of the enemy. It was miserable work, and we did not know that we were shortly to be relieved by another battalion. About ten o'clock we saw the figures of the incoming men looming up in the darkness, and shortly afterwards we were marching back over the country we had captured a few hours before.

CHAPTER III.

A MILITARY TYRANT.

From 17th March till 7th April the Australian troops had been steadily gaining ground, until the Hun had been forced to retreat to the much vaunted and allegedly impregnable Hindenburg line. We had now been resting for two or three days and, by way of recreation, had been employed for eight hours a day with shovel and broom, clearing away the mud which clogged the roads leading to the front line. So tremendous was the volume of traffic which streamed along these roads every day that, unless hundreds of men were continuously employed in clearing and maintenance work, they became impassible in an incredibly short space of time.

On the morning of 10th April we were aroused from our slumbers by a sharp order to turn out and hold ourselves in readiness to move off in fifteen minutes' time. Snow was falling, and the weather was bitterly cold, but well before the fifteen minutes were up, our battalion, a thousand strong, was lined up four deep, in full fighting order, ready to move off. Our colonel, a blasphemous, excitable man, was galloping up and down the line, bawling out orders to all and sundry and using language which

would have earned him a good spell in clink, did he use it in a public place in civil life.

I might state that on the previous night I had been asked to accept the position of regimental stretcher-bearer, as one of our bearers had been severely wounded in the last stunt. I felt rather dubious about taking this job on, for I knew it to be anything but a pleasant one, but at length decided to accept it. Consequently when we moved off that morning, I was marching at the rear of our company, carrying a field-stretcher and a rifle. According to the army regulations, a regimental stretcher-bearer is classed as a combatant, and must carry a rifle and ammunition, unlike the ambulance-bearer who wears the Geneva Cross and is rated as a non-combatant.

As we trudged along in the direction of Bullecourt, where fierce fighting had already commenced, we were told that we were to occupy the reserve line of trenches, which were roughly about two miles from the front lines.

We reached the reserve line at mid-day, in pouring rain, and immediately set to work to excavate temporary dugouts in which to pass the night. It was wretched work, for the rain never ceased all day, but we contrived to scoop out a series of wet, muddy holes, capable of holding three men apiece, in the side of the trench, and into these we crawled to spend the night. This was one of the most miserable nights that I have ever experienced, for the rain dripped in on us all through the night, and, to make matters worse, the dugout was so small that

we were compelled to sit with knees drawn up to the chin. Sleep was out of the question and, as I sat there listening to the thud-thud of artillery, I bitterly cursed the existing order of things which places in the hands of an autocratic few the power to plunge whole nations into such a vortex of death, destruction and misery as that which was prevailing.

If only the workers of the warring nations would withdraw themselves from the trenches and place in their stead those primarily responsible for this outbreak, war would not last a week. If the militarists and moneyed magnates of Germany, whose ungodly greed was responsible for this cataclysm, were put face to face with the profiteers, landlords and bellowing parsons of Britain and her Allies, whose avarice and savage Jingoism cost the world thousands of valuable lives every day, I say that if these men were placed in the trenches to fight their own battle, there would be no more bloodshed, no more brutal slaying of man by his fellow man, with its concomitant evils of pain, misery and grief and its natural corollary of poverty, hatred and savage lust for revenge.

What an anachronism it is, to speak of this as a civilised age, when men who own not a foot of land, or a pound's worth of property in their own country, allow themselves to be used as butchers by a handful of rapacious capitalists or military maniacs to slaughter the unfortunate slaving dupes of rival capitalists in a foreign land! What an awful reflection it is upon the intelligence of the working, and therefore the fighting classes of the world, that

while they hold in their hands the power to abolish war, by demanding that all international disputes be settled by Arbitration, they still suffer their minds to be poisoned by a perjured press till their passions are inflamed to a state of murderous madness!

In this strain I was soliloquizing, when suddenly I was aroused from my reverie by one of my mates who, waking from a short nap which he had contrived to secure in some miraculous manner, began cursing the Kaiser, his ancestors and relations, and the war in general in a most emphatic tone. The day was just breaking as we crawled out of our dugout and washed ourselves in a neighbouring shell hole, comforting ourselves meanwhile by the reiteration of the soldier's philosophic phrase, "Things are bad, but they could be worse."

After a breakfast of hot stew we were marched on to the main road, where we discarded our rifles and equipment and set to work with shovel and broom upon the road again. Red Cross ambulances in great numbers were coming from the firing line, for in the fierce battle which had commenced on the Australian sector that morning, our casualties had been very heavy. Wounded men came limping and dragging themselves along in a pitiable manner, and slightly wounded men, with their arms around less fortunate comrades, assisted them in their dolorous passage to the dressing station. Many men fell exhausted in the mud, by the wayside, and some never rose again, for their life blood was blended with the mud long before the over-worked stretcher-bearers could reach them.

We were in the reserve line for two days when we were relieved, and set out to reach a village about six miles distant. Just as we were about to commence the journey, our Colonel rode up on his well-groomed horse, and announced that, owing to the fact that the marching of the troops had not pleased him of late, rigid discipline was to be maintained on this occasion. Many of the men were suffering from sore feet, and altogether the battalion was far from fit to stand a solid march of this description, having been in action since January.

We set off at a good brisk pace, and everything went well for about three miles, when we left the slushy road and commenced a struggle across ploughed fields. As we stumbled and staggered over these bogs, the pace began to tell upon many of the men who began to straggle to the rear, while all the time the Colonel galloped up and down the column, cursing the men and ordering the platoon commanders to keep their men blocked up. Several of the men could go no further and dropped out of the ranks unseen by the Colonel. One man in front of me, who was utterly exhausted, fell back and asked the officer at the rear of the company for permission to drop out and take a spell. This officer, a kind-hearted man, readily granted his request, but just at that moment the Colonel rode up and, with a curse, ordered the man back, and abused the officer for allowing him to leave the ranks. Hurling blasphemy at all and sundry, he put spurs to his horse and galloped up to the head of the column, to abuse and vilify further the unfortunate men who, under

the most heart-breaking circumstances, were struggling bravely to keep the pace up.

When we were within three hundred yards of our destination I noticed the poor fellow abovementioned, lurch unsteadily and then, before anyone could catch him, he fell heavily on his face in the mud. We were quickly at his side, and from the bottom of my heart I bitterly cursed, for the poor man was unconscious, rolling his head from side to side in the mud, and crying in a pitiful manner. We unfolded our stretcher and laid the insensible man upon it, and it was then that the officer, who had been abused a while before, showed that not only was he a splendid officer and a brave man, as all knew, but also that he had a heart of gold. One of our stretcher-bearers had been ordered on ahead, which left us with only three men, but this splendid officer came to our aid and shouldered a corner of the stretcher till we reached the dressing-station, about a mile away. A doctor examined the man and ordered him to be removed to the hospital without delay.

Thus ended but one incident in one of the most trying marches I have ever experienced. It is regrettable that one should be compelled to write in such strong terms of an Australian leader, but the consensus of opinion amongst the men who were unlucky enough to be serving under him was that he was a discredit to Australia.

On 13th April the glad news that our Division was going back for a long spell was passed from dugout to dugout. The following morning we were

on our way to Mametz, a rest-camp about eleven miles distant, which we reached early in the afternoon. Here we were comfortably installed in tin huts and, although our amiable Colonel saw to it that we were kept drilling at full pressure, we were nevertheless extremely glad to be out of the mud-choked trenches for awhile.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FEDERAL ELECTIONS.

It was during our stay at Mametz that the question of the Federal Elections began to occupy the attention of the soldiers, and as a result most of our spare time was devoted to political arguments. Heated and able debates were to be heard at night right throughout the camp, as to the respective merits of the Labor and so-called National parties. But here, as in many other cases, military Prussianism disclosed itself in all its tyranny, for military police were placed to patrol the huts, with orders to crime any man who dared to speak after dark. This had the effect of losing many votes for the Labor cause, as I shall presently show.

It is only since returning to Australia that I have become fully acquainted with the many injustices for which the Nationalist Government has been responsible, but I would say that none of these outrages upon the liberty and conscience of a democratic people can outrival the dastardly swindle perpetrated by this National party upon the Australian soldiers in France.

While posters and placards blazoned forth the virtues of the "Win the War" party along the whole

battle front; while wall, shed and dugout voiced an eloquent appeal to vote for the "Nationalists and Victory," not one word was to be found anywhere in support of the Labor cause. While pamphlets, reeking with the vilest sectarian slush that ever emanated from the mind of a bigot, were widely circulated in advocacy of the cause of the Ministerial party, not a line was distributed setting forth the true aims and aspirations of the Official Labour representatives. While English Tory newspapers, containing scurrilous attacks upon the Australian Labour Party, were easily obtainable, Australian Labour papers were prevented from entering the trenches. I know that it has been asserted that these papers were not delivered on account of the acute congestion which was constantly occurring in the postal departments, but the fact remains that, while numerous papers from a small country town in Victoria reached me safely, not one of the many dozens of democratic papers posted to me ever reached their destination. The few that I did receive were surreptitiously smuggled over in parcels of food and comforts. Finally, while the Labor-supporting soldiers of the rank and file were prevented, by an order from Headquarters, from placing the truth before their comrades, Brigadier ——— stood up before three thousand men and harangued them in the interests of the National party, in direct defiance to the Army Regulations, which forbid an officer in uniform to address troops upon a political subject.

By such despicable methods were the Australian

soldiers kept in ignorance of the true political situation.

They were not told that these Ministerialists were not the true representatives of Australia's working classes, but merely Tory reactionaries and Labor renegades who had betrayed the confidence reposed in them by the workers of Australia and bartered their support to the minions of Capitalism in exchange for the pay of a Cabinet Minister. They were not told that freedom of speech had become a thing of the past in Australia, or that the Nationalist Government had set up a dictatorship as ruthless as the German one the Australians were fighting to destroy. Nor were they told of the devilish devices resorted to by these self-same Ministerialists in their futile endeavor to fasten the shackles of Prussian militarism upon Australia's young manhood.

No! The fact that the Australian soldiers were fighting for their country, the fact that their great distance from home prevented them from learning the true state of affairs was taken advantage of by a set of scheming sharpers who cheated them, swindled them and lied shamelessly to them, in order to win from them the support required to batter down the opposition of young Australia's democracy.

CHAPTER V.

THE FIELD OF BULLECOURT.

We had now been enjoying our so-called spell at Mametz for about three weeks, when one night at about nine o'clock our curiosity was aroused by a great amount of bustling and talking going on at the end of the lines. Shortly afterwards the N.C.O.'s entered the huts and ordered the men to stand to, to receive an issue of 120 rounds of ammunition. We were then informed that we were to move off early in the morning, but were not told our destination. Sleep was then out of the question, as the men were busily employed in preparing for the morning, and the rest of the night was spent in grumbling over the short period of our spell out of action, and speculating as to our probable destination on the morrow.

Early in the morning we were astir and had finished our breakfast just as the day was breaking. Soon afterwards we were marching in the direction of the town of Albert, whence, as we soon learnt, we were to entrain for a destination unknown to us. We eventually reached Albert railway station in pouring rain, and most of us were wet to the skin,

which, although a decidedly unpleasant experience, is the every-day lot of the soldier in winter time.

Within fifteen minutes from the time we arrived at the station we were packed into horse trucks, which are the usual vehicles of transport provided for the common private. Of course our well-dressed, well-groomed and over-well-fed officers always had a first-class carriage attached to such trains, in which they travelled in ease and comfort, without risk of becoming contaminated by contact with the common scum. It is this system of segregation and discrimination which is mainly responsible for the establishment of a military caste which is a detriment, a danger and a disgrace to the democratic army of Australia and the country it represents.

As the train sped on we were naturally curious to know where we were going to, until at last one of the N.C.O.'s told us that we were to journey by train as far as Bapaume, and then march to Bullecourt to participate in the fierce struggle that was raging about that sector. As it was now midday we made a meal of "bully beef" and iron wafers, and shortly afterwards we arrived at Bapaume. We were immediately marched through the outskirts of the town into the open country. After about two hours' marching we halted at a spot at which, on both sides of the road, a number of dugouts had been excavated, to which we were presently allotted for the night.

We were now within six miles of the front line, and it could plainly be seen that an extensive battle

was raging, for the enemy were pounding every road of communication leading to the front line with their heaviest shells, and also were making terrific efforts to silence our numerous batteries which were belching forth a frightful hail of death upon the enemy trenches.

As darkness crept over the land, the bombardment increased in violence and intensity, the booming grew louder till it became a wild roar, and the earth rocked and trembled in an uncanny manner, as the night was slashed by the white hot flame which leapt from the cannons' mouths at each discharge. High in the heavens countless star shells were bursting and flaring, momentarily turning night into day, whilst lower down the blazing searchlights flashed across the miles of battle front with lightning-like rapidity, disclosing the scene of slaughter and destruction in all its fury.

As the searchlights switched across our front we could plainly see our munition drivers hastening in the direction of the artillery. It was only possible for the ammunition column to carry supplies to the guns after dark, and even at night the enemy succeeded, with the aid of search lights and flares, in making things hot for these courageous men. On this occasion the Germans were shelling with great accuracy, and more than one man passed out whilst carrying shells to the roaring guns.

The bombardment continued throughout the night with great fury until at day-break the firing was reduced considerably on both sides. After breakfast we were told that, with the coming of darkness,

we were to move forward to take up our position in the support trenches, and during the rest of the day we were busily employed in cleaning our arms, and receiving extra belts of ammunition, and also a plentiful supply of the deadly Mills' hand-grenades. Our captain assured us that our position in the line would be one of the hottest on the whole front—a veritable hell of destruction—a prediction which subsequent experience proved to be only too correct. Naturally this warning served to dispel a good deal of the usual light-hearted banter in which the soldiers indulge, although it did not quite banish it altogether for, even in the face of the most appalling danger, the Aussie retains much of his wonted buoyancy of spirit and is as ready to crack a joke as he is prepared to sell his life as dearly as he possibly can.

Darkness was falling as we commenced our march to the scene of battle. Just after starting I had a narrow escape from being crushed to death beneath a large balloon which suddenly collapsed whilst being lowered. As on the previous evening, the artillery on both sides opened up with terrific violence, and soon the night was made hideous with the roar and crash of bursting shells, the nerve-racking whine of shrapnel and the savage hiss of flying bullets, whilst all the time the earth rocked and groaned in a horrible manner beneath the concussion of the high explosives. As we advanced the fury of the artillery seemed to become accentuated a hundredfold, and at last it began to tell upon the men. Here and there they began to drop out,

utterly unnerved by shell-shock, and finally one poor fellow, who an hour before was a strong, healthy man, suddenly fell upon the ground a raving lunatic. He was taken back to the rear and confined to a padded cell, from which he was discharged three weeks later with his reason restored, but shattered in health and strength.

We were now within two miles of the support lines, and the nearer we got, the more difficult became our task of advancing without being seen, for Fritz was continually sending up star shells which lit up the surrounding country very plainly. As each shell flared out we were compelled to halt and stand perfectly motionless with our heads bowed, in order to escape detection, and it was in this tedious fashion that we at last reached a sap, which partly concealed us from the view of the enemy. It was about half an hour from the time we entered this sap that we reached the support line of trenches and, although the shelling continued with undiminished intensity, no casualties occurred, except that our Colonel, Padre, and Doctor were put out of action by gas shells, through not donning their gas helmets quickly enough, for Fritz was sending over gas shells very frequently at this time.

* . . . *

When I commenced to write these notes I decided that nothing but plain facts, the awful, cold realities of this war should be written, but now that I have reached the part of my narrative which explains the great battle of Bullecourt as I saw it, I shrink from recording the awful horrors of this

bloody conflict. Even the mind—hardened to a certain extent by daily contact with death in its most agonising forms, recoils in horror from the thought of narrating such frightful scenes, the very recollection of which makes the blood run cold in one's veins.

As I mentioned in the earlier part of these notes, the battle of Bullecourt had been raging with unabated fury since 11th April, the present date being 10th May. To the Australian 4th Division must be given the laurels of Bullecourt, for they were the pioneers of this battle as far the Australians were concerned. One battalion of the 4th Division in particular, the 46th, earned undying fame when, on that fateful morning of 11th April, they sprang from their trenches, and in the face of a devastating fire, swept grandly on over the shot-torn hell of No Man's Land upon the German trenches. To the onlookers it seemed as if nothing could resist this magnificent charge. But, alas! this splendid effort was doomed to tragic failure, for the much vaunted Tanks which were to have provided a covering barrage, proved to be worse than useless, and as a result the gallant sons of Australia, advancing over open ground without a particle of cover, were subjected to a frightful hail of lead from rifles and machine guns, which cut down the ranks in an appalling manner. Even in the face of such a fire our men may have carried the day were it not that the barbed wire entanglements, which should have been cut by the blundering tanks, were still standing intact. Against this cruel

barrier the Australians hurled themselves undauntedly but with terrible results, for as they writhed and struggled in the heroic endeavor to break through, the enemy turned every available instrument of destruction upon them, and there then ensued such a scene of carnage and massacre that has never been surpassed in hideousness throughout this long and brutal war. As wave after wave of men came on, they were caught in the wires' cruel embrace and held till they were actually cut to pieces by the awful storm of lead which swept across that fatal area. For seven hours these heroic men held out, until at last they were forced to retire from sheer exhaustion and lack of numbers, for of the 1000 men who went over the top in that fatal charge, but eighty-seven were able to answer the roll call the following morning.

A few days later the 2nd and 4th Divisions again "hopped over," and on this occasion they succeeded, with the aid of the artillery, in gaining a footing in the famous Hindenburg line although at a heavy cost. Fierce hand-to-hand fighting then lasted for many days, with our boys slowly but surely driving the enemy back, and extending their hold on the Hindenburg line of defence. Let me here mention that those ignorant people who assert that the Hun cannot put up a fight at close quarters are laboring under a huge delusion, for although I am proud to be able to say that the Australians are superior to the Germans in a hand-to-hand encounter, nevertheless I have found the latter to be very brave and worthy opponents.

After what I have written on this momentous battle the reader may be able to form some estimate of its colossal nature, and also of the casualties. I will not attempt to describe the ghastly sights which met our eyes every yard of the way as we made our way along the sap to the support trenches. Dead men's bodies, swollen and awfully mutilated, lay about on every side, for many valuable lives had been sacrificed in the digging of this sap.

At last we reached our position, dead tired and sickened by the sights we had seen. This trench had been dug but a few days, and signs were not wanting to indicate that here also much blood had been spilled in the excavation of this line of defence. Never in the history of the war were so many guns trained upon such a small sector and in the opinion of experts this artillery barrage, which continued for ninety odd hours I was there, was the heaviest and most destructive that the world has ever known.

Throughout the night and the next day we lay in the bottom of our trench, and during that period we had no casualties to speak of, but as the second night came on the shelling became terrific, in fact, words could never adequately describe its intensity and destructiveness. Soon after it commenced the word was along, "Stretcher-bearers at once," and as I was still a regimental bearer, I and three fellow-bearers were soon over the top and hurrying towards the wounded man. This man, one of the bravest I ever met, was badly knocked about and bleeding freely, but it was not long before we had deposited him safely at the first aid post, where a doctor and

staff were engaged in rendering first aid to the wounded. From this post, the ambulance (Red Cross) bearers carry the wounded to the ambulance waggons, some three miles behind the lines. The regimental bearers carry only from the front and support lines, to the first aid post, the distance at Bullecourt being approximately one mile.

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Our company moved up to the Hindenburg line the following morning, and from that time, until we were relieved by the "Tommies," the stretcher-bearers worked continuously without a rest. Never have I been so near the verge of utter collapse as I was before we were relieved, for, quickly as we removed the wounded, we were unable to keep pace with the ever increasing stream of casualties. Many of the bearers were killed, and many more were wounded, yet my mates and I, passing through a continuous hail of shell, came through it all unscathed.

I will not attempt to set down the impression which this field of carnage, this awful spectacle of once strong men, now still and broken and battered beyond all recognition, left upon me, but I would say that such men as Chaplain-General Rentoul, head of the Presbyterian Church, would be far better employed in teaching the true gospel of Jesus Christ than in using his privileged position to abuse and vilify the members of another faith, whose adherents have proved themselves to be as loyal and courageous as any other section of the community.

Of those perjured preachers who literally screamed with rage at the merest mention of an

early peace and who cried aloud for more of Australia's sons to be hurried to the slaughter I would ask: Have they stood upon the field of battle and witnessed but for one short hour the awful, never-to-be-forgotten scenes of murder and brutality which went on for over four long years and, if they were allowed to sway the minds of the belligerents, would have continued for many more years? Have they lived through but one hour of a bombardment when the air was full of hissing death, when the screams and cries of mangled, dying men were only drowned by the whining of the dreaded shrapnel and the crashing roar of bursting shell, and when the very inanimate earth trembled and groaned as if in protest against such a fiendish exhibition of human barbarity? Have they lived to feel the blood, aye, the very brains, of a fellowman spattered across their faces, and turning, beheld a ghastly quivering heap of mangled flesh and blood, the mortal remains of a dearly loved comrade? In short, have they seen anything of this senseless, useless saturnalia of slaughter and destruction, this frightful sacrifice of blood and gold which went on all those long weary years?

The answer is obvious. If they had, they would either perish in sheer agony of terror, or they would creep fearfully away and hang themselves for the lying, perjured villains that they are,—Judases who have forsaken their Christ and the cause of Humanity, bartered their servile souls to worship at the bloodstained altars of the twin devils, Mammon and Mars.

Is it to be wondered at that the very name of Christianity was a mockery and a by-word in the trenches, when the very men who, by nature of their calling, should have been striving their utmost to bring this insane slaughter to an end, were whooping madly for Blood and still more Blood? Is it to be wondered at that these alleged apostles or disciples of the Prince of Peace, who literally wallowed in the blood of murdered men, are looked upon as blasphemous liars by the diggers who have faced death a thousand times?

Rather would it be remarkable were it otherwise, for those white-chokered gentlemen who urged on the savage dogs of war, and who eighteen years ago exultingly gloated over the bloody butchery of inoffensive Boers, are the pious prototypes of the black-coated fraternity who, in Germany, offered up their supplications to an outraged God, for the successful slaughter of their enemies, "in the sacred cause of God and Fatherland."

After being in support and front lines for four days, we were relieved by a London Division, which marched in at one o'clock on the morning of the fifth day. Needless to say, we were all profoundly satisfied to get away, for no man could remain in such a place for very long without running a grave risk of losing his reason.

At daylight we had left the battlefield four miles behind us, and although the men were gradually recovering their natural buoyancy of spirits, there was not one amongst them who did not bear upon

his face the impression of physical and mental suffering.

At last we reached the village of Vaulx, and to our delight we saw a huge placard informing us that an Australian Comforts Stall was near and open to all. In a very short time we were enjoying a steaming hot cup of cocoa. At such a time as this, when men have been without sufficient food for days, the good work done by the officials of the A.C.F. and Y.M.C.A. was brought forcibly, but nevertheless pleasantly, before the soldiers, who are not slow to express their gratitude.

Feeling wonderfully recuperated by the hot cocoa, we shouldered our rifles and packs and proceeded to the centre of the village, where we remained for the day. As may be imagined, we were glad to lie down anywhere we could and drown the recollections of the past few days in slumber, for most of us had not slept for four days.

In the evening we were marched back in the direction of the line, and as we stumbled along in the darkness, we were told that our work was to carry cylinders of gas, and a new weapon for discharging them. After marching about a mile with shells screeching and crashing on every side, we suddenly received warning that Fritz was sending over gas shells, and were ordered to don gas helmets immediately. Now to march in daylight with a gas protector covering the face is a very unpleasant task, but at night time it is a hundred times worse. It meant death to remove them and, as the instinct of self-preservation is as strongly implanted in the

breast of the soldier as in that of anyone else, we stuck to our helmets for over a mile, when we were allowed to remove them as we had then passed through the gas-laden area.

Our officers showed great caution on this night, and it was mainly due to their fine leadership that we were able to deposit the gas cylinders in the front line and return to the village of Vaulx without a casualty, while other battalions engaged in the same work suffered heavily.

The following day our Captain, a brave soldier and a right good fellow, informed us that in a few hours' time we would be moving back to the reserve line, where we could look forward to a quiet time. Needless to say this news was hailed with general satisfaction, for we were all weary and utterly worn out, and badly needed a rest in order to strengthen our nerves, which were in anything but a sound condition.

CHAPTER VI.

IN BILLETS.

Although the first two weeks following our relief from Bullecourt was in a sense a spell from then onwards the hours of drill were gradually extended, the discipline became more rigid, and the work more arduous, until the daily routine became much the same as that of the training camps in England; a senseless, unnecessary imposition of military tyranny, and a useless wastage of human energy—which was greatly resented by the weary, war-worn victims of “discipline” who were compelled to undergo it.

About this time our Colonel departed for England, and to those who read these notes it will be readily apparent that the rank and file were anything but sorry to see the last of this officer, whose brutal, domineering methods had earned for him the dislike of all, with the exception, of course, of a few servile, cringing souls with whom the Battalion was burdened.

Our new Colonel was a typical Australian in appearance, well over six feet in height, and of a strong, soldierly build. He had achieved distinction on Gallipoli, where he had been held in high esteem

by the men under his command and, although we soon discovered that he was a strict disciplinarian, he was unanimously voted to be an infinitely superior leader to the one we had just been rid of.

At this time we were billeted in the heart of rural France in a small village which had fortunately escaped the devastating hand of the Hun. The scenery was really beautiful; splendid, undulating country rolled away on every side, covered with crops of every kind in the early stages of maturity. Indeed, the soil is of such wonderful fertility that the cereals excel anything I have even seen.

As in all other French villages through which I have travelled, no fit men of military age were to be seen, the farming being carried out entirely by women, young girls and old men, thus the bounteous crops were a splendid proof of the diligence and spirit of these hard working peasants of France, who, in the absence of husbands, brothers and sons fighting in the defence of their native land against the military slaves of Germany, carried on the food production of France in order that she might not starve or weaken in the struggle. As I watched these toil-worn women of France labouring in the fields, for many long and weary hours a day, in the most uncongenial weather, I felt that they were deserving of the highest honor that a grateful country can bestow upon those who rally to her support so faithfully in the hour of peril.

Many of the Australians spent their leisure hours in assisting the women folk at their work, for the Aussies have a very warm regard for these kind-

hearted people of France, who always treated them so generously, and never failed to greet them with a cheery smile and kindly words of welcome. At first the language problem presented a rather formidable difficulty, and at times the pantomimic antics of the Aussies and the violent gesticulations of their hosts in the endeavours to carry on a conversation were very amusing. Nevertheless it is remarkable how quickly each contrived to pick up a little of the other's language, for in a very few days the "official" language of that little village in France was a wonderful mixture of broken French, pidgeon English and Australian slang, of which latter lingual commodity our French hosts soon possessed quite a creditable collection.

CHAPTER VII.

INSPECTION BY KING GEORGE V.

We had been in this village for about eight weeks, during which time extensive training had been the order of the day. It was dull and tiring work, with nothing out of the ordinary occurring to break the monotony, until we were told one day that on the morrow we had a route march of nine miles to a prepared sports ground, where the Australians were to be inspected by His Gracious Majesty, King George. After which a military carnival, in which the competitors were entirely Australians, was to be held, and this the King would also witness.

Most of us would have been very satisfied with this programme were it to be carried out in the vicinity of the camp, for although we were all imbued with that natural feeling of curiosity which the presence of a celebrated personage of great or ill repute invariably evokes, I must say that, had we been given our choice, the majority of us would have stayed in camp on the day of inspection, for the average Australian has very little adoration to spare even for a king, and certainly is not greatly smitten with the idea of tramping eighteen weary miles for the purpose of gazing upon the august countenance of one.

However, in this matter the choice lay with higher authorities than the common cattle in the ranks, and at an early hour the next morning we were on our way to the sports ground, with the Colonel riding at the head of the column, on his big black charger, making the pace a perfect cracker. The road was rough and the day hot, and before we had covered two-thirds of the distance the perspiration was dripping from the men, while all the time the officers were yelling to their weary men to "Close up" and "Dress by the right," for the ranks were beginning to straggle badly. Although there was a welcome absence on the part of this Colonel of the vulgar abuse and downright blasphemy such as characterised the methods of our former leader, the journey was nevertheless the very reverse of pleasant, and when we at last reached our destination we were all suffering greatly from fatigue, while the feet of many were blistered in a most painful manner.

Shortly after our arrival the royal car hove in sight, and as we sprang to, to the sharp command of "Attention," we observed that this car was followed by several others of little less grandeur in which reclined a few military "Brass Hats" and a number of bright plumed parasites who enjoy a rich and workless existence by virtue of the ignorant Englishman's fervid love of royalty and a perverted public sense of the splendid and spectacular. To an Englishman, and, of course, to all other people who are so lamentably steeped in mediaeval ignorance that they cannot govern themselves without the aid of a monarch, a king with a host of aides

and other degenerate wasters to surround him, would be as a dog without a tail.

As the car drove steadily past the seven thousand Australians drawn up in three sides of a square, order was given to extend three hearty cheers of welcome to the King.

It was afterwards reported in the various newspapers that the Australians had accorded "a mighty ovation" to His Majesty, but as one who took part in this review I must say that the reporters responsible for these descriptions must have had very keen ears or else, to put it mildly, a very vivid imagination, for the cheer which greeted King George and his party was, comparatively speaking, a very feeble one; for which rather significant circumstance it might be discreet to assign the reason that the men were still suffering from the effects of the fatiguing march.

On stepping from his car the King was immediately surrounded by the red tabbed Brass Hats and fawning parasites who had accompanied him, and we saw no more of him till he mounted the box which had been erected in order to enable him to obtain a commanding view of the military carnival.

The programme commenced with an exhibition of physical drill by two hundred men of as fine a physique as one could wish to see. Dressed in white jerseys and blue knickers, they presented a truly magnificent spectacle of athletic manhood, and the manner in which they went through the various exercises left nothing to be desired. The next item was an exhibition of Australian artillery galloping

into action, which ranked with the most brilliant and unerring display of horsemanship that I have ever witnessed—a sight which more than compensated us for the rigours of our morning march.

The King remained with us for about two hours, during which time we had an ample opportunity of studying him. He appears to be a man of weak physique, and left upon us the impression that King George is a very ordinary person, lacking the bearing and personality of such men as President Wilson, Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and other great public men of to-day. As far as personal appearance goes, King George is a disappointment.

There was one incident which occurred in connection with this event which excited more interest amongst the soldiers than the sight of King George, and proved rather disastrous to the men concerned in it.

A score or more of our Battalion, after the King had left, decided to commence the journey back to camp on their own initiative, in order to walk the distance in a more leisurely manner than would be possible were they to wait until the Battalion was due to commence the march.

The outcome of it was that they were ordered to parade before the orderly rooms the following morning, where they discovered to their consternation that the Colonel had sentenced them to thirty days' second field punishment, which meant that they were debited with the sum of £7/10/-, in addition to which they were compelled to respond to the defaulters' bugle every half-hour between the hours

of 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. This latter form of punishment is, to a man of independent spirit, a most humiliating affair, and as the men concerned were good soldiers in every respect they felt their punishment most keenly. The stoppage of £7/10/- from their pay was also a gross miscarriage of justice, for it meant that for one hundred and fifty days these men (the majority of them were only drawing 1/- a day) were unable to obtain the few comforts necessary to supplement their meagre rations, which their pay was the sole means of providing.

This matter excited so much resentment and hostility amongst the men against the man responsible for such a drastic procedure that the sentence was a few days later reduced to seven days' confinement to barracks without any loss of pay, which reduction we believe to have been brought about by our Company Commander, Captain Stockfeld, a kind and capable officer, who placed the matter before the Brigadier.

Our Colonel was afterwards engaged in many bloody battles, and proved himself to be a capable leader and a brave and fearless soldier, a fact which earned him the greatest respect by his men, for there is nothing that men admire more in a leader than coolness and courage in facing the dangers which are so real and ever imminent in modern warfare.

CHAPTER VIII.

POZIERES.

A fortnight after our inspection by His Majesty we marched out of the little village to the railway station to entrain for Pozières. Many and sincere were the good wishes showered upon us by the kind-hearted people we were leaving, for a warm bond of friendship existed between the "Digger" and Madame, and, of course, the vivacious Mademoiselle.

Arriving safely at Pozières we began to practise on an extended scale the latest methods of warfare adopted by the British Army in view of the altered tactics in use by the ingenious Hun.

During our stay here we were afforded the opportunity of viewing the great battleground of Pozières and the great cemetery in which repose so many of Australia's bravest and best.

Walking through this now historic field, which a few months earlier had been the centre of such bloody carnage and the scene of the Australians' greatest triumph, the tremendous difficulties with which our men had been confronted were plainly apparent, for every commanding position in the vicinity was occupied by the enemy, who literally had our men at their mercy as they advanced across

the low, flat country which intervened. And yet, in spite of the appalling odds, the "Diggers" had swept over this shot-torn field and routed the enemy from his well nigh impregnable positions, sending him fleeing across country in disorder.

On every side the fields bore silent testimony to the sanguinary nature of the conflict, for acres and acres of small wooden crosses stretched around, marking the last resting place of thousands of Australia's noblest sons. Acres upon acres of gallant young Australians lay still, battered and broken, beneath those mounds of green—martyred by German greed and lust of conquest.

All around the country was quiet and peaceful in sharp contrast to the tragic scenes of violence and death which had been enacted on this spot a few months before, and the awful inferno still raging a few miles further on. Roaring cannon no longer crashed forth their freight of ruin and destruction upon those meadows, and cracking rifles no longer sent death hissing through the air. No mangled human bodies, swollen and distorted into inconceivable hideousness lay half-buried in the filth and slime of the battlefield, no loathsome stench of putrid bodies arose to defile the sweetness of the evening air. No glassy, unseeing eyes stared wildly up from bloated, blood-stained faces to the smiling sky above; no rigid arms, with hands clenched tight in the long-drawn agonies of Death, were raised on high as though invoking the vengeance of Heaven upon the instigators of this monstrous massacre.

All was still and peaceful, so peaceful indeed that

one could almost imagine that one stood in the last resting place of the pioneers of a small country town, nestling in the wattle-scented solitudes of Australia, were it not for the awful significance of the ages and dates upon the small wooden crosses. For they told not of sturdy pioneers, resting after long lives of usefulness and good works, but of young men hurled violently into Eternity ere their lives had scarce begun. They told not of fathers passing peacefully away in the bosom of their families, but of young men perishing in pain and misery far from their loved ones at home.

Here lay a young boy—God knows only too young—who was lowered to the grave, with his fair face smashed to pulp and his strong young body torn and mangled in a manner that brought horror to the faces of men long accustomed to such sights. There lay a young father who had passed from this world, not with the kisses of a wife and children upon his lips, but with his entrails bestrewing the ground, his limbs convulsed and his face distorted with the frightful agony of a lingering death.

X Would to God that some power could but transport those loud-mouthed braggarts and perjured preachers of the doctrines of the Prince of Peace, and all others who talk of the glory and the uplifting influence of War, to the midst of this gigantic Murder, with all its barbarous and bestial surroundings, and thence deposit them for but one short hour in this grim and awful harvest field of Death at Pozières. Then may be the truth would be told; then they would never dare to poison the innocent minds

of young children with lying boastful tales of war and glory, nor would they ever dare to bless Murder as an instrument of Heaven without the constant dread that God in His wrath would strike the breath from their wretched bodies and hurl them headlong into the lower circle of Satan's inferno which, Dante tells us, is specially reserved for traitors and perverters of the truth.

CHAPTER IX.

MOVING UP TO YPRES.

During the last week in July we entrained for the north, where we remained in billets within three days' march of the firing line, for several weeks during which time strenuous training was the business of the day.

On 16th September orders came for us to be ready to move forward, and the following morning at an early hour we marched off, with the people of the village standing in front of their dwellings, waving a last farewell. As far as the eye could reach there was to be seen a solid, moving mass of infantry, the sea of broad-rimmed hats denoting that all were Australian soldiers. The military bands were playing at the head of their battalions, and the men swung briskly along to the lilt of the music, some singing, some whistling and a few marching silently, evidently deep in thought.

All day we continued our march and when at night time we spread our blankets and threw ourselves down upon them, we slept as only exhausted men can sleep. Astir at an early hour on the following morning we moved off again, and after an hour's marching crossed the Belgian frontier. At

midday we reached our destination, about seven miles behind the front line on the Ypres sector.

Although the traffic behind the lines in the Somme area was stupendous, it paled into insignificance in comparison with the vast, seething mass which poured along the lines of communication on the Ypres sector without ceasing, night and day. Motor vehicles of all sizes and descriptions roared and panted their way through the slush and mud, horse-drawn waggons and guns thundered past in thousands, all combining to create a medley of sound perfectly deafening.

As before mentioned, it is only by employing a large number of men on maintenance work that the roads can be kept in a passable condition at all. On the Ypres sector this work was carried out almost entirely by Chinese who have been recruited from the French colony of Cochin-China. These men are decidedly slow and lazy workmen but, as they receive but one franc per day as wages, this may account in a measure for the leisurely manner in which they go about their work. Of course, they are not allowed to roam about at their own free will for, while they appear to be a very docile and inoffensive crew, they would in all probability prove a serious menace to the civil population if allowed the same privileges as ordinary soldiers and workmen, and for this reason they are compelled to live in compounds surrounded by an impregnable fence of barbed wire.

On the evening of 24th September we again moved off every man, including the stretcher-bearers,

heavily laden with ammunition. On our way we had to pass one of those dreaded "corners" which the enemy shells churned and blasted ceaselessly day and night, named "Shrapnel Corner." We negotiated this corner without a casualty, having apparently chosen an opportune time, for only occasional shells were then dropping on this spot. Luckily our route did not take us through "Hell Fire Corner," a fact for which we were all truly thankful, for this danger zone was nothing less than a raging inferno of shell and shrapnel at any hour, in the midst of which men, horses, guns and transports were being smashed to atoms with appalling frequency.

Pushing on as rapidly as possible, we at last reached the banks of the Zillebeke Lake where we halted, this being the reserve line at that date. On our right lay the shell-shattered city of Ypres and, in spite of its distance from us, we could plainly perceive the awful ruin wrought by the invading Huns' artillery. Here and there a large building stood out gaunt, battered and tottering, while all around lay half-ruined houses and unsightly tracts of stones, bricks and debris to mark the place where but three short years ago the people of Ypres lived and flourished. On every side as far as the eye could reach stretched a ruined, desolate land, for the Ypres sector had been subjected to a frightful rain of shell for nearly three years, and as a consequence there was not a square inch of it that was not literally blasted to powder. It was a terrible sight—terrible even amongst the countless scenes of

vandalism and despair to be met with wherever the invader could work his maniacal will.

We passed the night in comparative comfort, in spite of the cold and the heavy bombardment of the enemy. Although the night was very dark, the surrounding country was almost as light as day, for counter-battery work, or artillery duels, were going on; our big guns flashing and roaring in an awesome concert along the whole line, while Fritz's eternal star shells cast an unearthly glamour over the whole scene. Away in the distance wild flying figures, like the awful phantoms of a madman's dreams, were hurtling through the crashing furies of "Hell Fire Corner," where hour by hour hapless victims were being shattered to fragments; while the uncanny rocking and groaning of the tortured earth served to complete that attribute of the diabolic with which the whole scene seemed imbued.

Morning dawned without a casualty, but just about sunrise a huge shell crashed into one of the dugouts, the result being six men more or less badly knocked about, but no fatalities.

At two o'clock that afternoon we started off to reach the support lines.

CHAPTER X.

TO "SUPPORTS" AT YPRES.

At two o'clock on the afternoon of 25th September we moved up to the support lines. Although the journey itself was devoid of incident it was nevertheless remarkable for several tragic scenes which were witnessed, while covering the odd mile which separated us from the "supports." As I mentioned before every road of communication leading to the front line was choked with traffic amongst which the enemy artillery wrought much havoc. Menin Road in particular suffered severely in this respect, for it ran almost through the centre of the Ypres sector and carried an enormous number of guns and transports daily, for which reason the Hun, by means of high explosive shell and shrapnel, established danger zones at various points along its course which proved to be the deathtraps of many a brave soldier and gallant steed.

Ordinarily there was a period of from three to five minutes between each shell-burst, but at certain times of the day and night the shelling increased to such an extent that seconds only elapsed between the explosions, making each spot a perfect tornado of flying steel. On this particular day the shelling

was of an intermittent character, which afforded us an opportunity of observing the manner in which the brave ammunition drivers gamble with death in the discharge of their perilous duties.

As we made our way to the lines we watched two ammunition waggons thunder along the Menin Road till they came to within about three hundred yards of a "hot" spot where they halted, waiting for a shell-burst. Presently there came a long drawn whine, followed by a muffled roar as a great shell ploughed its way into the road, and the next instant the drivers with whip and spur were urging their horses over the spot at such a terrific pace that the wheels seemed to bound from the road's surface at every stride. With necks outstretched and flanks extended, the splendid horses responded to their riders' urging as though they understood the danger and responsibility which depended upon their efforts. Fascinated with this awful race with Death we watched in an agony of apprehension for the safety of these flying figures, till we breathed a great sight of relief as we saw them at last draw clear away from the dread spot but a few seconds before another great shell crashed its way into the earth with a sullen roar, which seemed to hold a world of disappointment in its angry tone,

Day and night this nerve-shattering work went on, the drivers contriving to cheat "Krupps" of a victory until a horse stumbles or the enemy batteries suddenly change their time-table, as they frequently did, and then the results were sickening.

Day and night this nerve-shattering work went on,

To the drivers and gunners of the Australian Army I take off my hat in homage to their bravery and ability, for they have won the admiration of every "foot-slogger" in the A.I.F.

The shelling had now become intense, for we were within a few hundred yards of the support line, and Menin Road seemed to be receiving more than its usual share. Through this avenue of bursting shell came a large motor lorry which seemed to be immune from destruction. But, alas! just as we were mentally congratulating the driver upon his skill and good luck, a big shell crashed directly on to the lorry, blowing it and its freight to atoms.

It was a sickening sight, but it seemed as nothing compared with that which we beheld upon entering the support trenches. Heavy fighting was in progress at the time, and from the front line came a party of stretcher-bearers carrying a badly wounded man to the dressing station. Though shells of every sort and size were bursting all around them, these gallant men never flinched or deviated from their course. Slowly and carefully, lest any undue jolting or swaying should accentuate the agony of their wounded burden, the little band moved onward till at last they reached a narrow belt of barrage-blasted land, when every spectator held his breath in suspense.

One minute passed, and they were in the midst of it, unscathed as yet and undauntedly pressing forward. Another minute and they would have been clear away from that dread spot, when suddenly they became obscured in a storm of bursting shell.

When the smoke and flying dèbris cleared away but two men remained alive and recognisable as human beings.

Saddened and depressed by this tragic spectacle we turned to our various duties with a deep sorrow in our hearts for the splendid men who had gone "west" in that heroic and futile effort to rescue a disabled fellow man.

As darkness set in our C.O. sent word along the trench for every man to seize the opportunity of getting some sleep, for at midnight we were to proceed to the front line where sleep would be out of the question. Most of us had been engaged in former battles, and knew from experience how essential it was that we should take advantage of this opportunity, and therefore, despite the roaring of guns and crashing of shells, the majority of us were soon buried in merciful oblivion.

CHAPTER XI.

POLYGON WOOD.

At midnight we were awakened from our slumbers by an order to file out on to the track leading to the firing line. With a hand-shake and a fervent "Good-bye and good luck!" I left my two good comrades, who were bombers and marching to the front, and hurried to the rear to join my companion stretcher-bearers, and the journey commenced.

As we stumbled along half-asleep everything seemed wild and unreal to our deadened senses, and to most of us this weird midnight march seemed like the continuation of an uneasy dream. We were soon awakened to the reality of things by the bursting of a couple of shells close to the track. Immediately there came an urgent call from the centre of the file for stretcher-bearers. Quickly we hurried to the spot to find two men stretched upon the ground. On examination we discovered that neither had been actually wounded, but both were badly affected by shell-shock, one of them having lost his speech entirely. As both were capable of finding their way back to the R.A.P., we instructed them to do so and hurried forward to our comrades.

From then onwards we were compelled to observe

the greatest caution, for Fritz was sending over a continuous stream of star shells, which illuminated the country surrounding with a deadly brilliancy. At the appearance of these shells we had to at once assume the prone position, there to wait till the flare had burnt itself out and darkness had once more closed over our path.

It was a tedious, oath-provoking journey, stumbling and groping our way along the shell-blasted track with a plunge to earth and cover at almost every chain of the distance. To our Captain must be given the credit for the skilful manner in which our march was carried out for, while we suffered but two casualties in the whole of the journey, another Battalion moving up at about the same time was stripped of one-third of its strength by the enemy artillery which had observed it.

I have no desire to criticise or condemn officers who have doubtless endeavoured to do their best, but the fact remains that many hundreds of good Australian soldiers have been lost as the direct result of incompetent leadership. Rich men's sons and Toorak snobs are pitch-forked into jobs, about which they know absolutely nothing, and entrusted with the lives of a number of men with the result that many a brave Australian becomes a martyr to the stupidity and incapacity of his leaders.

After five hours' marching we at length reached the front having covered the magnificent distance of two and a half miles in that time! The front line was nothing more than an irregular line of shell

holes with a white tape stretched along to mark the position.

Although there were still fifty minutes to go before the "hop over" was timed to commence, our Captain told us not to waste our strength in endeavouring to scoop out a trench but to get as much rest as possible, advice which we were not slow to profit by.

All the time we lay in our places of concealment awaiting the signal to go over, the artillery of both sides were pounding away in a nerve-racking manner, the high explosives bursting with such a roaring and crashing that it seemed incredible that human flesh and blood could endure such a hellish torment.

For fifty long minutes we lay in these slimy holes awaiting the signal to advance, and at last it came. Just as the dawn was breaking, there descended upon that narrow strip of No Man's Land a fiery rain of destruction, the horror and awesomeness of which no man's imagination could even faintly picture. It was our covering barrage.

For two minutes our men waited and then, springing from the earth, went forward in the wake of that wave of bursting steel, a long irregular line of grim, tigerish figures, creeping remorselessly upon the foe.

Never will I forget that early morning charge for, despite the fact that our artillery were putting over so tremendous a weight of fire upon the enemy country, the Germans were hurling down upon us such a hail of shell that the air was fairly shrieking, and men went down at every step.

Nothing short of complete annihilation could have stemmed that victorious advance and, in spite of the withering rifle and machine gun fire which swept across from the enemy trenches, but a period of minutes had elapsed before our men were right amongst the Germans, who, completely demoralised by the hideous bombardment of our artillery, threw up their hands and called upon their "Kamerads" for mercy. The kind of mercy meted out to many of them I will not attempt to describe.

Although they had reached their objective much remained for our men to do, for the enemy, from his support lines and various other places of concealment, was pounding in a deadly fire and inflicting heavy casualties. However it did not take long to "dig in" and consolidate the newly-won position, and before long the diggers were resting in comparative safety.

The capture of this sector was considered a particularly meritorious performance, for previous attempts to capture this stronghold on the part of other than Australian troops had failed disastrously. Heavy as our casualties were, it was one of the most thoroughly planned advances that the Australians took part in, the artillery and infantry co-ordinating with a precision that was almost miraculous. Platoon and company commanders led their men in a fearless and courageous manner, exhibiting a coolness of judgment and a knowledge of the job in hand that has seldom been surpassed.

Our company commander was right amongst his men leading them on with splendid bravery, but,

alas! this gallant gentleman and man amongst men fell, mortally wounded, just as the objective was reached. Many of our best officers fell that morning, men whom it was a pleasure to serve under. Expressions of sorrow and sympathy, on their behalf, were to be heard on all sides, many of the men who had served under our captain in the Gallipoli campaign being entirely unmanned to hear of the death of that splendid man.

As I was forced to relinquish my end of the stretcher early in the battle, owing to my wandering into the path of one of Krupp's travelling iron foundries, I can scarcely be convicted on a charge of blowing my own trumpet in mentioning the splendid services rendered by the regimental stretcher-bearers on this historic occasion.

As Australia knows to her sorrow this battleground of Polygon Wood was the scene of such slaughter, savagery and mutilation as has seldom been equalled in this long and bloody conflict, and while the world has a fairly accurate knowledge of the prodigies of valour performed by the infantryman, the average person is inclined to regard the stretcher-bearer as the possessor of a "cushy" job, and as a consequence but imperfectly appreciated his services.

Although war and violence are brutal and barbarous, there is in the possession of a rifle, hand-grenade, or any other weapon of defence or offence, a certain savage satisfaction, doubtless engendered by the knowledge that, while the enemy may get there first, there is an even chance on the other

hand that you may. But to the stretcher-bearer, bereft of every weapon, threading his way slowly over the broken battleground with his wounded charge, there comes a feeling of helplessness and a sense of the utter inability to "hit back" that seems greatly to accentuate the dangers of the fire zone.

Though the air was lashed by a fiery hail till it seemed to shriek in torment, and not one inch of that dread battleground seemed free from hissing death, there was never a falter on the part of this devoted band. Calmly and carefully they went about their duties, staunchly dressing and bandaging the wounds of their hapless comrades. This battle was remarkable for the hideous mutilation of its victims, so fierce and deadly was the fire that men were struck again and again as they lay helpless on the ground. To my knowledge four bearers dressed the wounds of over thirty men in the first fifteen minutes of the battle, of which number several expired within a few moments after being treated and a third of the remainder never lived to come out of hospital. All through that awful day the bearers toiled unceasingly and, when at last night closed in, but six men out of a total of sixteen were left.

Of the awful sights which remained upon this bloody field of Polygon Wood I shall say nothing, for the wildest powers of imagination could not conjure up a faithful picture of that dread scene in all its terrors. God knows they were now quiet and harmless enough, these countless, sprawling bodies with silent tongues and shattered limbs, but from

every pair of glassy, unseeing eyes staring up from that shambles there came a mute appeal for the vengeance of God upon the instigators of this colossal murder.

Would to God that those crowned vampires and their capitalist satellites who, by their sordid greed have precipitated this conflict, could be forced to stand upon the battlefield while the fiendish weapons which their ill-gotten wealth has called into being are reaping their harvest of death, and there compelled to undergo the tortures of their own devising. Who doubts that it would be a fitting punishment were they driven to their doom, with the concentrated death agonies of a million war's victims lacerating their coward hearts.

CHAPTER XII.

HOLDING LINE AFTER POLYGON WOOD.

Our battalion held the newly-won ground for four days, at the expiration of which time we moved back about four miles for a few days' rest.

Four days later we again moved up to the front line, and for ten days occupied the support and front trenches. During this time the shelling was of a terrific nature, for the enemy, maddened by the loss of this valuable sector, was concentrating every available piece of artillery upon this spot in the vain endeavour to pulverise our defences and force us to evacuate. Scarcely a day passed which did not witness a savage and sanguinary battle somewhere on this front and, although each and any of these were of a sufficiently bloody nature to attract the notice of the historian were they occurring at isolated periods, in the wild whirlwind of war they lost their identity and came under the general and comprehensive heading of the Battle of Menin Road.

In this great struggle the pioneers and engineers suffered terribly for their work was constant and continuous, carrying them into the midst of the most destructive fire that the enemy could deliver. Every road of communication was being pounded merci-

lessly night and day, rendering the repairing work particularly arduous and dangerous.

Amidst all the horror and savagery of these long weeks of unceasing slaughter, one thing shone out resplendent in its testimony of the triumph of faith and true Christianity over the terrors of barbarism and human ferocity. It was the conduct of two padres. Wherever the scythe of Death was sweeping, these two brave men, one a Presbyterian and the other a Roman Catholic, were to be seen toiling ceaselessly. Weary and worn as any soldier of the line, they nevertheless stuck gallantly to their posts, bandaging and soothing the wounded and comforting the dying in their last moments. No grander spectacle could be conceived than that of these two splendid men standing amidst the horrors of War, the living symbols of the Prince of Peace, with gentle hands assuaging the agonies of the suffering, or with reverently bared heads committing them to their Maker. Although in Australia, as all over the world, a score of thousands of black-frocked hypocrites profaned and outraged the name of God in carrying on the propaganda of the militarist and capitalist from the pulpit of their churches, we shall never hear the voices of these two above-mentioned padres raised in strident glorification of war, or of the vile social system which makes possible the precipitation of war. For these men, who have emerged from this fiery ordeal unscathed, unsullied and undaunted, realise only too well the true significance of this bloody massacre. They now realise to what frightful extremities magnates will resort

in order to gratify their craving for power and influence and to satisfy their hunger for gold.

These good men, who have done so much to mitigate the terrible rigors of a soldier's life in the trenches, have, by their countless acts of kindness and companionship amongst the diggers, proclaimed themselves to be true followers of that great doctrine which so many of the foremost humanitarians of the time have embraced, that is Christian Socialism.

These notes would be incomplete without the following exposition of the downright tyranny and cruelty which is rampant in this democratic army of Australia.

It has been the custom in the case of an officer collapsing under shell shock or nervous trouble either to return him to Australia with conduct sheet marked "Good," or else place him in a position well behind the lines away from the roar of the guns. This you will agree is in every genuine case but right and human. But take the case of two young boys who, at the ages of nineteen and twenty years respectively, left Australia with the First Division.

Having fought right through the Gallipoli campaign, they crossed over to France, taking part in Pozières and many of the worst terrible battles of 1916. Striplings in age and build, these brave veterans of twenty-one fought and suffered manfully in what they deemed to be the cause of liberty and humanity. Shell-shocked and bullet-scarred they never faltered, until one awful day as we were going to the line the hellish roar of the shells shattered

their over-strained nerves as it has done with many another brave man. They were absolutely incapable of advancing further and, dropping out unseen, they made their way back to Headquarters where they reported that they were unable to face the shell fire. Were they given their discharge or sent to a light billet behind the lines?

To the everlasting disgrace of the A.I.F. these two boys were tried by Field General Court Martial and sentenced to a term of two years' imprisonment with hard labour.

Of those good people who for the past four years have been reading and believing "faked" cables concerning atrocities that were never committed, I would ask: Could anything more barbarous or inhuman be imagined than this imprisonment and degradation of helpless boys whose only "crime" was that of being so broken and shattered in the defence of their country that they could no longer endure the tortures which modern warfare imposed upon them? Could anything be more infamous than this outrage, committed not upon an enemy in a moment of mad hatred, but upon the defenders of one's own country by callous Militarism.

You who, in your pitiable ignorance, speak of Prussian Militarism, as though in Prussia alone Militarism were vile and reprehensible, when will your beclouded brains grasp the fact that this beast is the same wherever it shows its ugly head? Founded upon Fear and maintained by Force, it is the free man's foe, the antithesis of Liberty and the negation of Democracy.

The soldiers of the line dare not unite in protest against cruelty or neglect. The Iron Fist has but the individual to deal with, and its blows fall frequently and heavily, inspiring fear and hatred in the breasts of its helpless victims.

Awful rumours come filtering down the line of companies of brave French soldiers slaughtered in cold blood, because they dare to protest against being uselessly massacred through the incompetence of a blundering General. Not a day passed that did not see a hapless British soldier placed against a wall and shot down like a dog for some trivial offence which in civil life would earn him nothing worse than an acquittal and a caution from a justice.

So the game went merrily on. Brutality and Oppression rode rampant in this democratic army, till the common soldier, whose courage is beyond impeachment, cursed his tyrant leaders and execrated the wave of patriotic sentimentalism which bore him irresistibly to the recruiting office to fight for "Liberty and Right."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NEW YEAR—1918.

The New Year found us holding the line in the shell-torn region of Messines. This sector had been captured some months previously by the 3rd and 4th Australian Divisions. It was the first important engagement that the 3rd Division had taken part in, but the Australians nevertheless proved themselves to be as dauntless and invincible as the veterans of Gallipoli.

It was a terrible sight, this field of Messines, with its whole surface torn with mine craters seventy yards wide and fifty feet deep, literally covered with the festering bodies of slaughtered men.

The first ten weeks of the New Year were spent in feverish preparation for the great drive which the Germans were about to deliver. Night after night for many weeks every man was engaged in the task of strengthening the trenches and erecting barbed-wire entanglements. It was terrible work, carried out under continuous artillery and machine-gun fire, which thinned our numbers to a shocking extent.

By the middle of March, despite the adverse conditions under which we laboured, the whole front

appeared to be so fortified and protected that it seemed absolutely impossible that the enemy could penetrate it, and many an Australian soldier, embittered by the loss of a brother or a friend, looked forward to the day when he should be avenged upon this seemingly impregnable sector.

But it was at this time that the German War Lords began to drive their military slaves over the top in countless hordes on and about the Somme sector and, as all the world now knows, these heavy massed attacks were conducted in such a thorough manner that they swept the British Fifth Army before them like chaff, hurling it back a distance of twenty miles on a thirty-mile front in seven days. The situation at this time was, to say the least of it, intensely serious, for every hour brought fresh intelligence of British defeats along the whole area.

Imagine the bitter feeling of the Australian soldiers when the news came through that Bullecourt, Bapaume, and finally Pozières, were in German hands again. Bullecourt and Bapaume and Pozières, soaked with a legion of Australian blood and littered with their bones, abandoned by the retreating British to the enemy!

We had been expecting the enemy to attack at any moment on the Belgian sector. Then the news came through that the 1st Australian Division had entrained for the Somme, followed by the 5th and 3rd Divisions a day later. Three days of horrible suspense followed, and then the order came through for our Division to proceed to the scene of the slaughter. We were immediately relieved by a London Divi-

sion, and soon the last of the Aussie soldiers were marching to the station to join up with their comrades of the 1st, 3rd, 4th and 5th Divisions to stop the hitherto victorious enemy and hold his legions at the very gates of Amiens, the key to victory. Already the 3rd, 4th and 5th Divisions had engaged the enemy and were putting up a magnificent fight, but their losses were appalling.

In pouring rain we reached the city of Amiens, where we detrained. The city was now almost deserted, for the enemy was shelling this old world city with deadly accuracy. As a result of the terrible bombardment to which this town was subjected the civilians were compelled to flee in disorder, leaving behind them all their belongings, as did their compatriots earlier in the war. It was a pitiable sight, these unfortunate women and children with here and there an old man tottering along amongst the throng, flying from the homes that had sheltered them so long, to hunger, cold, and the good God only knew what miseries that lay ahead.

At twelve o'clock that night we reached the reserve line, having walked a distance of seven miles in drenching rain, and burdened with a heavy load of ammunition and hand grenades. The enemy were shelling furiously at this spot, and ere morning dawned many of our comrades had passed out from the inhuman scene of slaughter.

CHAPTER XIV.

MONT ST. QUENTIN.

To the common private of the line the task of describing those awful weeks of blundering and slaughter becomes an impossibility. The good people of Australia sat in their cosy armchairs and read of wonderful victories achieved by the Australian troops without stopping to count the cost, without realising the fact that this hideous toll of flesh and blood could have been reduced to a mere fraction had a competent staff been in charge of operations.

It was the time when the Australian troops were called upon to accomplish what seemed to be the impossible: the stemming of the victorious advance of the Germans. The enemy had swept everything before them, driving Gough's wretched army as though they were a mob of cattle. It was a heart-rending sight to see the British galloping back out of danger as we advanced, scuttling away from the death which the Australians faced without faltering.

Yard by yard and mile by mile the enemy were driven back, and Australian blood literally soaked the field of France from Morlancourt to Villiers Brettoneux. In the first few days the Twelfth

Brigade, which met and held the enemy, lost 1600 men.

Many splendid deeds of valour were performed in those perilous days, splendid acts of heroism that could never be surpassed, but despite the lustre which these exploits cast upon the Australian Army, that light can never blot out the hideous orgy of blood and misery which ensued as the direct result of official stupidity and incapacity.

The American troops had now begun to arrive in large numbers and, with the advent of the republican regiments who fought superbly, the issue was never in doubt. It was the turning point of the war when the Army of Germany reeled back, broken and disorganised. Yet, despite the fact that capitulation of the enemy was practically assured with fresh American troops pouring in daily, there was no rest for the exhausted Australian battalions.

Drunk with success, the Australian leaders continued to hurl their decimated battalions into the thick of the bloody conflict. Battalions, reduced to a little more than one-third of their original strength, were sent again and again into the most appalling battles in order that a group of mad militarists might appease their inhuman appetite for blood and glory.

On 4th July, the Australians, in conjunction with the British and Americans, took part in a terrific battle around the village of Hamel, and even the most blood-thirsty of the bellowing parsons and priests and reactionary protégés of Plutocracy, with which our social order is cursed, would have had

their blood-lust fully sated, could they have gazed upon the ghastly saturnalia of slaughter which followed. Mass upon mass of savage humanity struggled forward, imbued with but one desire and that to slay the enemy who sent destruction, hot and hissing, from his place of concealment.

Man in his egoism mouthes of his civilisation and advancement, but were his ancestors of a thousand years ago able to view that July battlefield, they would spurn their descendants from them as degenerate demons, polluted by the spirit of the fiends incarnate. Heedless of this lesson of ten thousand years of murder and destruction, man goes merrily on his way, slaying and despoiling his fellow-man, calling down upon himself misery, poverty and economic slavery. The true history of these awful weeks of bloodshed and suffering will never be told. The men of the ranks, while they know the true significance of such frightful slaughter, are incapable of ascertaining the definite facts. There is no responsible officer with the full facts in his possession who dares to reveal the truth in all its hideousness.

Leaders will be overwhelmed in honours and decorations while the men they murdered, aye deliberately murdered in their quest for Glory and Renown, lie rotting on the battlefields of France, silent and unable to give the lie to the praise which a nation shall shower upon its idols.

Little more remains to be told of my participation in this conflict, for at the battle of Mont St. Quentin I received the full contents of an explosive bullet which placed me amongst the fortunate ones bound for "Blighty" and ultimately for Home.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

The great world cataclysm is officially declared at an end. British, French, German, American, Japanese and nondescript mercenaries continue to fight side by side in the hopeless endeavour to re-shackle the fetters of Imperialism and Plutocracy upon the victorious democrats of Russia, but the world is officially at peace. From the skies of India giant British aeroplanes shower down bombs upon the helpless populace to lull them into peacefulness and docility, while hapless Ireland, tortured and bleeding and writhing beneath the Iron Heel of a foreign tyrant, hurls back into their brazen mouths the mocking, lying carols of the Bells of Peace.

Hatred, Jealousy and Suspicion find voice the whole world over, so bitterly as to affright the heart of the bravest man; while gaunt Want and Famine stalk through Man's wide dominion, striking down their cowering victims at every stride.

On every hand arise the sounds of strife, and from every land where the dignity of Man is beginning to assert itself, there roll forth the rumblings of Revolt. For the sweet, bright Dawn that was to

have followed that long, mad Night of murder and barbarity has not yet broken.

From the hideous field of carnage and destruction the worker, having served his turn as an obedient homicide, must divert his energies once more to the task of filling his master's coffers. Laying aside his blood-stained weapons he must bend his back to toil, the old helpless, never-ending grind of the wage-slave.

Bound in the chains of economic serfdom, he struggles wearily onwards, vaguely wondering why things are not as they should be and waiting hopefully for the realisation of that new world which, his masters assured him, was to be his should he go forth and give battle to the enemy.

It has ever been thus, and ever shall be, until——

Some day, Man, groping his way blindly through Life, dependent upon a host of parasites for guidance, shall tear aside the dark veil of superstition and ignorance which beclouds his vision and arrests his progress. Some day he shall hurl from their pedestals Kings, Judges, Holy Men and the innumerable host of fetishes whom, in his pitiful blindness, he has supported and bowed down to through countless ages past.

Then, and only then, shall strife and bloodshed be banished, and the world made "safe for Democracy."

For the hope of the world lies not in the perpetuation of the Priest and the Imperialist, but in the destruction of those barriers which divide sect from

sect, and nation from nation; in the great and splendid movement of Internationalism which shall sweep away all the past prejudices, both religious and national, uniting the democracy of the world under one banner.

The world is moving slowly but irrevocably towards this goal.

Despite the frenzied appeals from Press, Platform and Pulpit for a speedy return to the old, vile conditions with "Work, and still more work," as the great slogan, the toiling masses of the world are surely and irresistibly moving in the direction of emancipation.

Never before in the history of mankind has there been such a mighty social upheaval as that which the past three years have witnessed the whole world over.

Those whom the world believed to be invincible have been laid in the dust; monarchs, proud and tyrannous as Satan, are refugees from the subjects who once licked their feet in subservience.

Just as the mightiest tyrant has been reduced to the level of a common malefactor, so shall those villainous forces whose interest and influence have precipitated war from the beginning of time be cast into perdition, and Man shall see, not a voracious vulture hovering overhead to despoil whom it may in safety, but the true Dove of Peace, bringing Comfort and Contentment to afflicted Mankind.

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