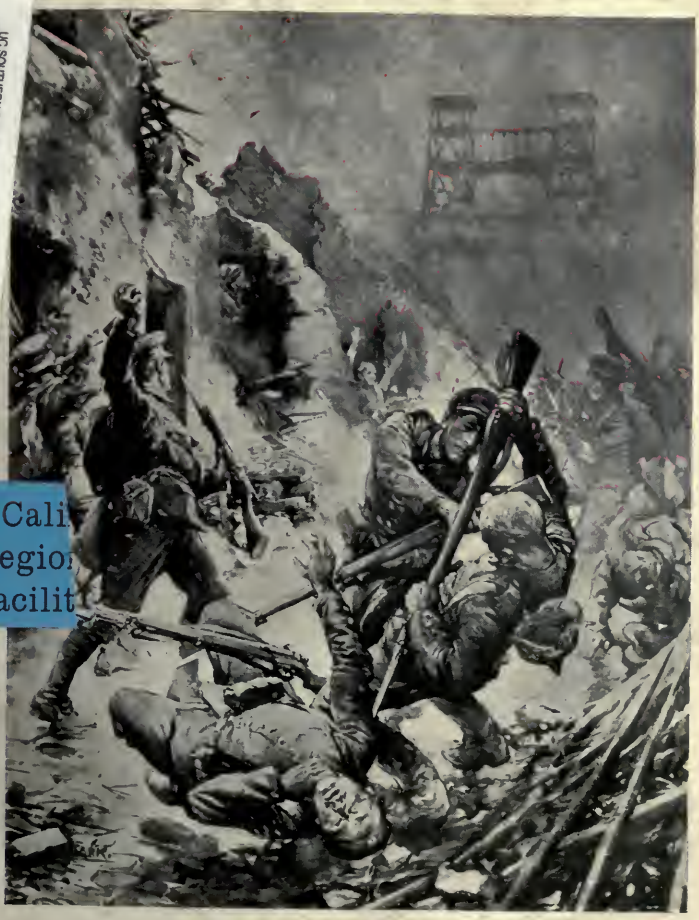
Pen Pictures of British Battles.



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1917.

PEN PICTURES
OF
BRITISH BATTLES

Painted by Author
and Artist.

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CONTENTS.

EDITOR'S NOTE.

Though Sir Walter Besant called War correspondents "the scene painters of history," it may be questioned whether any pen or brush, trained on the land, sea and air battles of the present War, can depict more than a corner of the great devastating drama.

This little book, embracing extracts from famous books, may help the reader to visualise some of the outstanding battles in which Britain has played a not inconspicuous part; and if they inspire those still fighting, and those behind them in support, with a firmer confidence and a greater endurance—if, too, these records of undaunted heroism, often against odds, enlighten readers in other lands as to the character of British fighting men—their publication in this informal style will be justified.

Full acknowledgment is here made to the authors and publishers who have kindly permitted quotation; and to the proprietors of two great illustrated weekly papers who have lent for reproduction original sketches appearing in their pages.

April, 1917.

THE BRITISH VICTORY OFF THE FALKLANDS: FIRST STAGE OF THE ACTION BETWEEN BRITISH BATTLE-CRUISERS AND THE GERMAN ARMOURED CRUISERS.

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I.

THE VICTORY OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS.*

By Richard Wilson, Litt.D.

THE affair off Coronel put the heads of the British navy upon their mettle, and within forty days it was followed by a counter-stroke, complete and effective. Silently and with steady determination, preparations were made to deal with the *Scharnhorst* and her companions; and the man who was entrusted with the work was Vice-Admiral Sir F. C. Doveton Sturdee.

To the east of the southern portion of South America lies the British group known as the Falkland Islands. Due east of the large island called East Falkland, Sturdee's squadron came within sight of Von Spee's cruisers, the British admiral having been helped in finding the "quarry" by the clever wireless signalling of a lady and her servants who lived on the islands, and who were afterwards presented with valuable

* *From "The First Year of the Great War." By Richard Wilson, Litt.D. (W. & R. Chambers.)*

gifts by the British Admiralty as some slight acknowledgment of their timely help.

After the battle off Coronel, the *Glasgow*, along with the battleship *Canopus*, had put into the harbour of Port Stanley, in East Falkland. The former vessel had been damaged, but she was quickly repaired; and when Admiral Sturdee arrived from home, she took her place in his squadron, her officers and men being eager to set things right with the Germans. It was reported that Von Spee's squadron was going to make a raid on the Falklands; but when he came round Cape Horn he found awaiting him eight British ships of war, and, so far as we know, this was a complete surprise to him.

At about half-past nine in the morning the *Gneisenau* and the *Nurnberg* drew near to Port Stanley Harbour with their guns trained on the wireless station. Between them and the harbour was a long low stretch of land running eastward, behind which lay the *Canopus*. The surprise of the Germans must have been great when they were met by a smart fire across this low-lying land at a range of about six miles! The two ships stopped, considered, and turned away, hoisting their colours, however, as they did so. About the same time the *Invincible* sighted other hostile ships between nine and ten miles distant; and in a short time the British squadron was moving from the harbour towards the enemy's five ships, which could

be plainly seen to the south-east. The day was fine, with a calm sea, a bright sun, a clear sky, and a light breeze from the north-west.

The British vessels at once began a chase in extended order, and the hearts of our men must have been deeply stirred by the admiral's simple signal, "God save the King!" One of the signallers afterwards wrote: "It was taken up and flung far and wide through space by each of the fleet in turn, until it seemed as though it would never cease. I consider it a privilege to have been one of the few to bear the signal." A little after noon Admiral Sturdee came within suitable range of the five enemy ships, and decided to attack with the *Invincible*, the *Inflexible*, and the *Glasgow*. How the officers and crew of the last-named vessel had longed for this happy moment!

The signal was given, "Open fire and engage the enemy," and the *Inflexible* began the battle, followed a few minutes later by the *Invincible*. This firing was at a range of about nine miles—no opportunities for boarding here, cutlass in teeth, and pistols in both hands!—but the British gunnery was so good that three of the German ships turned away. Then the *Glasgow*, with the *Cornwall* and the *Kent*, gave chase. We shall follow their work when we have considered that of the heavier craft.

The *Invincible* engaged the enemy's flagship, the *Scharnhorst*, and the *Inflexible* the *Gneisenau*,

the fight being a running one, and the range varying from about eight to nine miles. Before long the German flagship took fire, lost one of her funnels, and slackened her firing. "The effect of our fire," writes Admiral Sturdee, "became more and more apparent in consequence of smoke from fires, and also escaping steam. At times a shell would cause a large hole to appear in her side, through which could be seen a dull red glow of flame." Yet the German kept grimly on with her work.

The *Gneisenau* now gamely faced the *Invincible* and the *Inflexible*, but about 5 o'clock she lost one funnel and was on fire in several places. She continued, however, to reply to the British gunners with a single gun, until, an hour later, she suddenly heeled over and sank. Here is an entry in the diary of one of her officers: "5.10, Hit, hit! 5.12, Hit! 5.14, Hit, hit, hit again! 5.20, After turret gone. 5.40, Hit, hit! On fire everywhere. 5.41, Hit, hit! Burning everywhere and sinking. 5.45, Hit! Men dying everywhere. 5.46, Hit, hit!"

After this the officers had something else to do than make entries in a diary. Boats had been lowered from the *Invincible* and the *Inflexible*, life-buoys and ropes were thrown into the water, and about 300 men were saved, "including their captain—a tall man with a black beard."

Meanwhile the *Glasgow* and the *Cornwall* had fought and sunk the *Leipzig*. Like the other

German ships, she took fire fore and aft, and as the shades of night were closing in she turned over on her port side and disappeared. The *Cornwall* began to lower boats when the *Leipzig* was settling down, but the British Captain leant over the rail of the bridge and said, "It's no good; she's going."

While this was going on the *Kent* was dealing with the *Nurnberg*, after a desperate chase with only a small amount of fuel to rely upon. When the engineers had done their best and worked up the speed well above the rate which the *Kent* could do "officially," they reported that their coal was almost used up. Then the captain suggested that the boats might prove useful in such a case! No sooner said than done! The boats were promptly broken up, the pieces smeared with oil, and packed by the stokers into the furnaces.

This use of the boats had suggested other means of providing fuel, and soon the men were hurrying to the furnaces with officers' arm-chairs, chests, ladders, and anything which would burn. So the speed limit was much further exceeded, the *Nurnberg* was caught and sunk, but not before she had put up a stiff fight. Fire was stopped on the *Kent* when the German hauled down her colours, and every preparation was made to save life. As the ship sank the British sailors saw a group of men waving a German ensign fastened to a staff. Only five

Germans were rescued alive from the doomed ship.

Only one of the German ships, the fast cruiser *Dresden*, escaped from the battle, the clouds which overcast the sky in the evening assisting her in getting clear away. The darkness closed in, but near midnight Admiral Sturdee received a message from H.M.S. *Bristol* to the effect that during the action two enemy transports had been destroyed near the Falklands, their crews being removed before the ships were sunk. So ended a memorable day in British naval history.

DESPERATE STRUGGLE FOR THE CHÂTEAU DE MONDEMENT DURING THE BATTLE OF THE MARNE.

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II.

THE BATTLE OF THE MARNE.*

By Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

ON September 11 the British were still advancing upon a somewhat narrowed front. There was no opposition, and again the day bore a considerable crop of prisoners and other trophies. The weather had become so foggy that the aircraft were useless, and it is only when these wonderful scouters are precluded from rising that a general realises how indispensable they have become to him. As a wit expressed it, they have turned war from a game of cards into a game of chess. It was still very wet, and the Army was exposed to considerable privation, most of the officers and men having neither change of clothing, overcoats, nor waterproof sheets, while the blowing up of bridges on the lines of communication had made it impossible to supply the wants. The undefeatable commissariat, however, was still working well, which means that the Army was doing

* *From "The British Campaign in France and Flanders." By Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. (Hodder & Stoughton.)*

the same. On the 12th the pursuit was continued as far as the River Aisne. Allenby's cavalry occupied Braine in the early morning, the Queen's Bays being particularly active, but there was so much resistance that the Third Division was needed to make the ground good. Gough's Cavalry Division also ran into the enemy near Chassemy, killing or capturing several hundred of the German infantry. In these operations Captain Stewart, whose experience as an alleged spy has been mentioned, met with a soldier's death. On this day the Sixth French Army was fighting a considerable action upon the British left in the vicinity of Soissons, the Germans making a stand in order to give time for their impedimenta to get over the river. In this they succeeded, so that when the Allied Forces reached the Aisne, which is an unfordable stream some sixty yards from bank to bank, the retiring army had got across it, had destroyed most of the bridges, and showed every sign of being prepared to dispute the crossing.

Missy Bridge, facing the Fifth Division, appeared at first to be intact, but a daring reconnaissance by Lieutenant Pennecuick, of the Engineers, showed that it was really badly damaged. Condé Bridge was intact, but was so covered by a high horse-shoe formation of hills upon the farther side that it could not be used, and remained throughout under control of the enemy. Bourg Bridge, however, in front of the

First Army Corps, had for some unexplained reason been left undamaged, and this was seized in the early morning of September 13 by De Lisle's cavalry, followed rapidly by Bulfin's 2nd Brigade. It was on the face of it a somewhat desperate enterprise which lay immediately in front of the British general. If the enemy were still retreating he could not afford to slacken his pursuit, while, on the other hand, if the enemy were merely making a feint of resistance, then, at all hazards, the stream must be forced and the rearguard driven in. The German infantry could be seen streaming up the roads on the farther bank of the river, but there were no signs of what their next disposition might be. Air reconnaissance was still precluded, and it was impossible to say for certain which alternative might prove to be correct, but Sir John French's cavalry training must incline him always to the braver course. The officer who rode through the Boers to Kimberley and threw himself with his weary men across the path of the formidable Kronje was not likely to stand hesitating upon the banks of the Aisne. His personal opinion was that the enemy meant to stand and fight, but none the less the order was given to cross.

September 13 was spent in arranging this dashing and dangerous movement. The British got across eventually in several places and by various devices. Bulfin's men, followed by the

rest of the First Division of Haig's Army Corps, passed the canal bridge of Bourg with no loss or difficulty. The 11th Brigade of Pulteney's Third Corps got across by a partially demolished bridge and ferry at Venizel. They were followed by the 12th Brigade, who established themselves near Bucy. The 13th Brigade was held up at Missy, but the 14th got across and lined up with the men of the Third Corps in the neighbourhood of Ste. Marguerite, meeting with a considerable resistance from the Germans. Later, Count Gleichen's 15th Brigade also got across. On the right Hamilton got over with two brigades of the Third Division, the 8th Brigade crossing on a single plank at Vailly and the 9th using the railway bridge, while the whole of Haig's First Corps had before evening got a footing upon the farther bank. So eager was the advance and so inadequate the means that Haking's 5th Brigade, led by the Connaught Rangers, was obliged to get over the broad and dangerous river, walking in single file along the sloping girder of a ruined bridge, under a heavy, though distant, shell-fire. The night of September 13 saw the main body of the Army across the river, already conscious of a strong rear-guard action, but not yet aware that the whole German Army had halted and was turning at bay. On the right De Lisle's cavalrymen had pushed up the slope from Bourg Bridge and reached as far as Vendresse, where they were pulled up by the German lines.

It has been mentioned above that the 11th and 12th Brigades of the Fourth Division had passed the river at Venizel. These troops were across in the early afternoon, and they at once advanced, and proved that in that portion of the field the enemy were undoubtedly standing fast. The 11th Brigade, which was more to the north, had only a constant shell-fire to endure, but the 12th, pushing forward through Bucy-le-long, found itself in front of a line of woods from which there swept a heavy machine-gun and rifle-fire. The advance was headed by the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, supported by the 2nd Inniskilling Fusiliers. It was across open ground and under heavy fire, but it was admirably carried out. In places where the machine-guns had got the exact range the stricken Fusiliers lay dead or wounded with accurate intervals, like a firing-line on a field-day. The losses were heavy, especially in the Lancashire Fusiliers. Colonel Griffin was wounded, and five of his officers with 250 men were among the casualties. It should be recorded that fresh supplies of ammunition were brought up at personal risk by Colonel Seely, late Minister of War, in his motor-car. The contest continued until dusk, when the troops waited for the battle of next day under such cover as they could find.

The crossing of the stream may be said, upon the one side, to mark the end of the battle and pursuit of the Marne, while, on the other,

it commenced that interminable Battle of the Aisne which was destined to fulfil Bloch's prophecies and to set the type of all great modern engagements. The prolonged struggles of the Manchurian War had prepared men's minds for such a development, but only here did it first assume its full proportions and warn us that the battle of the future was to be the siege of the past. Men remembered with a smile Bernhardi's confident assertion that a German battle would be decided in one day, and that his countrymen would never be constrained to fight in defensive trenches.

The moral effect of the Battle of the Marne was greater than its material gains. The latter, so far as the British were concerned, did not exceed 5,000 prisoners, 20 guns, and a quantity of transport. The total losses, however, were very heavy.

Apart from the losses, the mere fact that a great German army had been hustled across 30 miles of country, had been driven from river to river, and had finally to take refuge in trenches in order to hold their ground, was a great encouragement to the Allies. From that time they felt assured that with anything like equal numbers they had an ascendancy over their opponents.

WAR IN THE AIR: A DUEL OVER THE FIRING LINE.

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III.

A GLIMPSE OF CANADA IN FLANDERS.*

By Lord Beaverbrook.

THE end of the month was marked by one or two very daring reconnaissances by Lieutenant Owen, of the 7th (British Columbia) Battalion, up the bed of the Douve River, and by a great aeroplane battle.

The aeroplane battle occurred upon a morning warm and bright with sunshine. The conditions were admirable for flying and observing, and, as usual, a German Albatross took advantage of them. Soaring high against the warm blue of the sky, over Bailleul, over the headquarters of a division, over our brigades and trenches and back again, it glinted like silver in the morning sun. The snow-white blobs of bursting shrapnel from our anti-aircraft guns followed its graceful sweeps and curves—followed and followed, but never caught it up; and thousands of our men stared after it. But a more dramatic spectacle was in store for the watchers on the brown roads and in the brown trenches.

A British machine appeared suddenly low

* *From "Canada in Flanders" (Vol. I.). By Sir Max Aitken. (Hodder & Stoughton.)*

against the blue, mounting and flying out of the west. The men in the Albatross were evidently so intent on their task of observing the landscape beneath them and keeping well ahead of our blossoming shrapnel that they failed to observe the approach of the British 'plane as soon as they should have for their own good. They were heading west when they saw their danger, and instantly the Albatross swerved round and sped towards home. But the British flier had the heels of the German and the advantage of the position. It circled and dipped, and down through the clear air aloft came the rippling " tap-tap-tap " of the aërial machine-guns. Again and again the enemy's frantic efforts to escape were frustrated by the skill and daring of the British pilot and the hedging fire of the British guns. Suddenly the gun of the German 'plane jammed and ceased; the pilot was hit and wounded; the Albatross commenced a rapid descent, in which it was followed by the British 'plane to within 1,000 feet of the ground. Then, under heavy shell-fire from German batteries the victorious machine rose and flew away undamaged, and the unfortunate Albatross struck the earth between the front and support trenches of the 14th (Montreal) Battalion and turned turtle. The German pilot was dead; the observer, slightly wounded, crawled to our support trenches and surrendered. The German batteries kept up a hot fire of high explosives and shrapnel on the machine with the object of smashing it beyond

hope of repair before the Canadians could salvage it. They made several direct hits, but our men sapped out to the wreck and managed to bring most of it in, piece by piece. Among the articles brought in was the machine-gun that had jammed in the heat of the fight. This was found to be a Colt gun. Closer examination proved it to be one of the original guns of our 14th Battalion—to whose lines it had just made such a dramatic return! The gun had been abandoned during one of the desperate and confused fights of the Second Battle of Ypres half a year before.

In these months of September and October great efforts were expended on improving the line. Work in the front positions was done by the occupying battalions, and the troops in reserve came up night after night to assist their labours and to create new secondary positions and drive through fresh communication trenches. Even the training of new units was occasionally and rightly sacrificed to the performance of this essential task. The weather was, on the whole, favourable for these operations, with the exception of three days of rain early in September and a wet week late in October. The 1st Division, long on the ground and fortified by the experience of what good trenches mean for comfort and safety, was pre-eminent in these exertions, as would be proved by the trench-map with its continuous increase, month after month, in the black and zigzag lines of new work. Each tiny

scrawl on the surface of such a map represents the labours of hundreds of men, extended over many nights. Second and third lines grew apace, so that a sudden attack of the enemy would still leave trenches to be held and would reduce the German bite to mere nibbles at the forward trench. The communication trenches are driven true and straight from well in the rear, and up these the ration parties toil in safety night after night under their burdens of food, water, ammunition, and R.E. material to feed the front line. These parties know well enough the difference between well-made lines and bad ones. Stooping under the heavy weights as they struggle on through the dark, they will bless in army fashion a smooth and dry surface underfoot and a sound high parapet which protects them from the casual German shells which are searching for them, or the intermittent whistle of the long-range bullet humming on its errand in the dusk. Messengers or stretcher-bearers with their burdens can move backwards or forwards even by day along the well-built hollow, and all those who pass are protected both from the arrow that flieth by night and the terror which walketh in the noon-day. Very different is the story of a badly-kept line. It finds carrying parties struggling in, hours late, exhausted by wading through mud and water, and delayed by continually climbing out and walking outside the trench to avoid impassable sections. Here an unlucky shell or a casual bullet may take its toll. The men struggle back with

difficulty, arriving hardly before the dawn, and with their period of supposed rest and recuperation turned into the most arduous of labours. It is not too much to say that the efficiency of a regiment or division can be tested by a comparison between the state in which it takes over and that in which it leaves its trenches.

The creation of secondary positions is as important as that of communication trenches, and on this task the Canadian Corps worked unsparingly throughout the autumn.

The disposition of a brigade is two, or on occasion three, battalions in the front line and one or two in support or reserve trenches. But in most cases even the leading regiments will not have their whole strength in the firing trench. One or two companies lie close up in support or reserve to reinforce any threatened point. The nearness of these supports is a very present help in time of trouble, and gives confidence to officers and men, who would be nervous if they knew that no assistance was nearer than a mile away in distance and an hour in time. But these lines must be dug under cover of dark, so the men toiled with the spade through the nights of autumn and blessed the dawn which put a term to their labours. Their record is written on the scarred earth from St. Eloi down to Ploegsteert. Let us hope that the corps which took their place in March was duly grateful for the blessing of a well-constructed line.

YPRES AFTER BOMBARDMENT.

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IV.

THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES.*

By JOHN BUCHAN.

THE present writer first saw Ypres from a little hill during the later stages of the battle. It was a brilliant spring day, and, when there was a lull in the bombardment and the sun lit up its white towers, Ypres looked a gracious and delicate little city in its cincture of green. It was with a sharp shock of surprise that one realised that it was an illusion, that Ypres had become a shadow. A few days later, in a pause of the bombardment, he entered the town. The main street lay white and empty in the sun, and over all reigned a deathly stillness. There was not a human being to be seen in all its length, and the houses on each side were skeletons. There the whole front had gone, and bedrooms with wrecked furniture were open to the light. There a 42-cm. shell had made a breach in the line, with raw edges of masonry on both sides, and a yawning pit below. In one room the carpet was spattered with plaster

* *From "The History of the War." By John Buchan. (Thos. Nelson & Sons.)*

from the ceiling, but the furniture was unbroken. There was a Buhl cabinet with china, red plush chairs, a piano, and a gramaphone—the plenishing of the best parlour of a middle-class home. In another room was a sewing-machine, from which the owner had fled in the middle of a piece of work. Here was a novel with the reader's place marked. It was like a city visited by an earthquake which had caught the inhabitants unawares, and driven them shivering to a place of refuge.

Through the gaps in the houses there were glimpses of greenery. A broken door admitted to a garden—a carefully-tended garden, for the grass had once been trimly kept, and the owner must have had a pretty taste in spring flowers. A little fountain still plashed in a stone basin. But in one corner an incendiary shell had fallen on the house, and in the heap of charred *débris* there were human remains. Most of the dead had been removed, but there were still bodies in out-of-the-way corners. Over all hung a sickening smell of decay, against which the lilacs and hawthorns were powerless. That garden was no place to tarry in.

The street led into the Place, where once stood the great Church of St. Martin and the Cloth Hall. Those who knew Ypres before the war will remember the pleasant *façade* of shops on the south side, and the cluster of old Flemish buildings at the north-eastern corner. Words

are powerless to describe the devastation of these houses. Of the southern side nothing remained but a file of gaunt gables. At the north-east corner, if you crawled across the rubble, you could see the remnants of some beautiful old mantelpieces. Standing in the middle of the Place, one was oppressed by the utter silence, a silence which seemed to hush and blanket the eternal shelling in the Salient beyond. Some jackdaws were cawing from the ruins, and a painstaking starling was rebuilding its nest in a broken pinnacle. An old cow, a miserable object, was poking her head in the rubbish and sniffing curiously at a dead horse. Sound was a profanation in that tomb which had once been a city.

The Cloth Hall had lost all its arcades, most of its front, and there were great rents everywhere. Its spire looked like a badly-whittled stick, and the big gilt clock, with its hands irrevocably fixed, hung loose on a jet of stone. St. Martin's Church was a ruin, and its stately square tower was so nicked and dinted that it seemed as if a strong wind would topple it over. Inside the church was a weird sight. Most of the windows had gone, and the famous rose window in the southern transept lacked a segment. The side chapels were in ruins, the floor was deep in fallen stones, but the pillars still stood. A mass for the dead must have been in progress, for the altar was draped in black, but the altar

stone was cracked across. The sacristy was full of vestments and candlesticks tumbled together in haste, and all were covered with yellow picric dust from the high explosives. In the graveyard behind there was a huge shell crater, 50 feet across and 20 feet deep, with human bones exposed in the sides. Before the main door stood a curious piece of irony. An empty pedestal proclaimed from its four sides the many virtues of a certain Belgian statesman who had been also mayor of Ypres. The worthy mayor was lying in the dust beside it, a fat man in a frock coat, with side-whiskers and a face like Bismarck.

Out in the sunlight there was the first sign of human life. A detachment of French Colonial *tirailleurs* entered from the north—brown, shadowy men in fantastic weather-stained uniforms. A vehicle stood at the cathedral door, and a lean and sad-faced priest was loading it with some of the church treasures—chalices, plate, embroidery. A Carmelite friar was prowling among the side alleys looking for the dead. It was like some *macabre* imagining of Victor Hugo.

The ruins of old buildings are so familiar that they do not at first dominate the mind. Far more arresting are the remnants of the pitiful little homes, where there is no dignity, but a pathos which cries aloud. Ypres was like a city destroyed by an earthquake; that is the simplest and truest description. But the skeletons of her great buildings, famous in Europe for

500 years, left another impression. One felt, as at Pompeii, that things had always been so; one felt that they were verily indestructible, they were so great in their fall. The cloak of St. Martin was not needed to cover the nakedness of his church. There was a terrible splendour about these gaunt and broken structures, these noble, shattered *façades*, which defied their destroyers. Ypres might be empty and a ruin, but to the end of time she would be no mean city.

One of the truest of our younger poets, Rupert Brooke, who died while serving in the Dardanelles, wrote in his last months a sonnet on the consolation of death in war :—

> "If I should die, think only this of me:
> That there's some corner of a foreign field
> That is for ever England. There shall be
> In that rich earth a richer dust concealed."

In the salient of Ypres there are not less than a hundred thousand graves of Allied soldiers, sometimes marked by plain wooden crosses, sometimes obliterated by the *débris* of ruined trenches, sometimes hidden in corners of fields and beneath clumps of chestnuts. That ground is for ever England; and it is also for ever France, for there the men of Dubois died around Bixschoote and on the Klein Zillebeke ridge. When the war is over this triangle of meadowland, with a ruined city for its base, will be an enclave of Belgian soil consecrated as the holy land of two great peoples. It may be that it will be specially set

apart as a memorial place; it may be that it will be unmarked, and that the country folk will till and reap as before over the vanishing trench lines. But it will never be common ground. It will be for us the most hallowed spot on earth, for it holds our bravest dust, and it is the proof and record of a new spirit. In the past when we have thought of Ypres we have thought of the British flag preserved there, which Clare's Regiment, fighting for France, captured at the Battle of Ramillies. The name of the little Flemish town has recalled the divisions in our own race and the centuries-old conflict between France and Britain. But from now and henceforth it will have other memories. It will stand as a symbol of unity and alliance—unity within our Empire, unity within our Western civilization —that true alliance and that lasting unity which are won and sealed by a common sacrifice.

BATTLE OF JUTLAND:
FIRST SIGHT OF THE ENEMY'S HIGH SEAS FLEET

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V.

THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND BANK.

By H. W. Wilson.

THE chase and destruction of an enemy takes many hours. Nelson began his battle at Trafalgar at noon, or soon after; the Germans took good care not to engage before the afternoon was well advanced. There was enough time to destroy a detachment, but not enough to complete the destruction of a large fleet. The mist further diminished the advantage which the British possessed in their heavy guns, and enabled the Germans to count on using their numerous 6-in. weapons with success.

Contact with the enemy was obtained. At 2.20 p.m. Admiral Beatty received reports from his light cruisers indicating the proximity of the enemy, and at 2.35 the smoke of a considerable fleet was seen to the E. A seaplane was sent up from a seaplane-carrying ship to reconnoitre the enemy, and transmitted back the first reports about 3.30.

Admiral Beatty at once formed line of battle, steering E.S.E. at 25 knots, with the Fifth Battle

Squadron 10,000 yards off to the N.N.W. The enemy (five battle-cruisers under Vice-Admiral Hipper, with light cruisers and destroyers) was now 23,000 yards distant. Admiral Beatty seems to have decided that it would be unwise to wait till the Fifth Battle Squadron could join up with him and form into line with his six ships.

The enemy, on seeing him, had turned S. toward the German Battle Fleet, which was steaming up from the S. some 50 miles off, and he followed. At 3.48 Beatty opened fire at a range of 18,500 yards (or rather more than 10½ land miles), and the enemy did the same. Six British ships with broadsides of 32 13·5-in. and 16 12-in. guns were now shooting at five German ships, whose broadsides were 16 12-in. and 28 11-in. guns. Beatty slowly closed on the enemy till a distance of 14,000 yards parted the squadrons; meanwhile the light cruisers were engaged with craft of their kind.

It was in this preliminary action with the odds in our favour that two of Admiral Beatty's splendid battle-cruisers—the *Queen Mary* and *Indefatigable*—were destroyed.

The loss of these two ships reduced Admiral Beatty's armoured ships to four and his weight of metal to an approximate equality with the German battle-cruiser squadron, which was still five ships strong, no single vessel in it having as yet been put out of action. At 4.8, Beatty was in some degree supported by the fire of the 15-in.

guns in the Fifth Battle Squadron, which opened at 20,000 yards—a long range in misty weather—and the enemy's fire seemed to slacken. A submarine attack was beaten off by the vigilance and skill of the British destroyers, which soon after 4 were flung in on the enemy in a great attack, meeting in their impetuous charge a German light cruiser and 15 destroyers.

All through this encounter the battle-cruisers were still pounding one another and rapidly nearing the German Battle Fleet. From 4.15 to 4.43 he reports that the fighting was "of a very fierce and resolute character," but at 4.18 the third enemy ship was seen to be on fire. The haze had now thickened, and the enemy could only be dimly made out. At 4.38 the German Battle Fleet emerged from the mist to the S.E., and was seen and reported by the Second Light Cruiser Squadron, scouting in advance, to Admiral Beatty, who at 4.42 turned in his course, steaming N.W. instead of S.E., towards Admiral Jellicoe and the British Battle Fleet.

The Germans turned in the same way, their battle-cruisers taking station at the head of the enemy's line and pursuing Beatty. As they executed this turn, the Fifth Battle Squadron closed them, steaming in the opposite direction, engaged them with all its guns, and then turned and fell in astern of Beatty, who now had eight ships in line, proceeding at a speed of something over 21 knots. The enemy's battle fleet was in

action, and the Germans had concentrated in superior force on a part of the British Fleet.

The range was 14,000 yards and the enemy was getting heavily hit, while he was apparently not making many hits on the British ships. After 5, one of the German battle-cruisers—perhaps the *Lutzow*, which, according to the enemy, received 15 or 16 heavy shells—left the line damaged. At 5.10 the sixth ship in the German line—a Dreadnought—was reported to have been hit by a torpedo, and it is just possible that she sank, as a huge cloud of smoke and steam was seen just after where she had been. The Germans were now edging off to the E., learning either from Zeppelins or their light cruisers that the British Battle Fleet was coming up to the N.W. Admiral Beatty reports that "probably Zeppelins were present," though they appear to have been seen only by neutrals in the first stage of the battle.

The head of the German line at this part of the battle was getting severely punished, and a second of the German battle-cruisers had vanished, leaving only three enemy battle-cruisers in line. The first stage of the battle was over. Beatty had led the Germans to the British Battle Fleet, which was sighted at 5.56 10,000 yards away to the N.

The position of the Fleet was as follows:—Beatty, with four battle-cruisers, and astern of him the four fast battleships of the Fifth

Battle Squadron, was now turning sharply eastwards to pass across the head of the German Fleet and prevent it from edging E. and getting away in that direction. This movement of his would have enabled him to "cross the T" of the enemy's line—*i.e.*, to pass at right angles across it, raking the ships as he passed, which is regarded as the most advantageous position that can be obtained in battle—if the enemy had not turned. N. of Admiral Beatty's ships was the British Battle Fleet, with three battle-cruisers under Hood on one wing, and three or four armoured cruisers under Arbuthnot on the other. On a line generally parallel to Beatty's was the whole force of German battle-cruisers (3) and battleships (22), slightly astern of him, so that the German ships at the southern end of the line were out of the battle—too distant to fire. The head of the enemy line was some 12,000 yards from him, and about 22,000 yards from the British Battle Fleet.

Beatty's eastward turn compelled the enemy to turn, and enabled the British Battle Fleet, if it desired, to move in behind the High Sea Fleet and cut it off from its bases. To reinforce Beatty in these critical moments, Hood steamed in fast with his three battle-cruisers, and swung magnificently into position at the head of Beatty's line. There he received a terrific fire from the enemy, 8,000 yards away, and a few minutes later the *Invincible*, his flag-

ship, was struck by the combined salvoes of the German Fleet and she sank. Three battle cruisers were gone, and of their combined crews of 2,500 men a mere handful were saved. Beatty at 6.35, about the time when the *Invincible* sank, turned S.E. A little earlier, Rear-Admiral Arbuthnot, with three weak armoured cruisers, struck the German Battle Fleet, which was apparently almost hidden in smoke. His intervention prevented a dangerous German torpedo attack on the British battle-cruisers, but in rendering this last service he perished.

The *Black Prince* was very badly hit. The *Warrior* was disabled, and in extreme danger. Probably the German ships were attacking these vessels with concentrated salvoes—battleships of the super-Dreadnought class firing at pre-Dreadnought armoured cruisers. The German shooting must have begun to deteriorate, as the *Warspite* was quickly got under control, and with but slight damage rejoined the Fifth Battle Squadron, which was now taking station astern of Admiral Jellicoe's Fleet.

At 6.17 this Fleet entered the battle. The First Battle Squadron was the first to engage at 11,000 yards, closing the enemy slowly to 9,000 (which is very short range indeed, and would allow the Germans to use their 6-in. guns). The light was very bad. The Germans were shrouded in haze; their destroyers sent up thick clouds of coal smoke, which obscured an

atmosphere already choked with the fumes of bursting shells, and the smoke from the numerous fires in the ships engaged. From the van of the Battle Fleet never more than five German ships could be seen, and from the rear never more than twelve. The British constantly strove to close, but were eluded by the enemy, who utilised destroyer attacks to cover his retreat. But, difficult though it was to shoot with accuracy, Sir J. Jellicoe reports that in this phase of the battle the enemy ships were repeatedly hit, and one at least was seen to sink.

The *Marlborough*, in the First Battle Squadron, specially distinguished herself, firing seven salvoes (if with all her guns about 70 13·5-in. shell) at a battleship of the *Kaiser* class; at 6.54 she was so unlucky as to be hit by a torpedo fired from a German light cruiser, which she sank. She was the only British ship to suffer in this way. A great cloud of smoke rose from her and she listed violently, then recovered, and nine minutes later re-opened fire. At 7.12 she poured 14 salvoes with great speed upon a battleship of the *König* class, and drove her from the line.

The flagship, *Iron Duke*, at 6.30 engaged a Dreadnought of the *König* class in the German Fleet, hitting her at the second salvo, which was a remarkable gunnery performance at a range of 12,000 yards and in the clouds of smoke. The enemy turned away and escaped. The other ships of the Fourth Battle Squadron were mainly

engaged with the German battle-cruisers. The Second Battle Squadron attacked the German battleships, and also fired at a damaged German battle-cruiser, from 6.30 to 7.20; at 7 p.m. the British Fleet turned S., and shortly afterwards S.W. The battleship engagement closed about 8.20, when the enemy disappeared in the smoke and mist. He lay to the W. of Admiral Jellicoe's Fleet, and orders were issued to the British torpedo craft to attack him. About 8.20 Beatty pushed W. in support of the light cruisers which had been ordered to locate the enemy's position, and came upon two battle-cruisers and two battleships, which he attacked at a range of 10,000 yards. The leading German ship was struck repeatedly, and turned away sharply with a very heavy list, emitting flames; the *Princess Royal* set a three-funnelled battleship (possibly the *Helgoland*) on fire. A third ship was battered by the *Indomitable* and *New Zealand*, and was seen heeling over, on fire, drawing out of the line. Then about 8.38 the mist came down so thickly that the battle was broken off, the enemy fleet being last seen by the larger British ships about 8.38, steaming W.

At 8.40 a violent explosion was felt by the British Fleet. This was probably caused by the destruction of a big ship.

Beatty steamed S.W. till 9.24, when having seen nothing more of the enemy, he assumed that the Germans were to the N.W., and proceeded

N.N.E. to the British Battle Fleet. He says: "In view of the gathering darkness, and the fact that our strategical position was such as to make it appear certain that we should locate the enemy at daylight under most favourable circumstances, I did not consider it proper or desirable to close the enemy battle fleet during the dark hours."

STORMING THE VILLAGE OF LOOS:
HAND-TO-HAND FIGHTING IN THE STREETS.

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VI.

THE CHARGE AT LOOS OF THE LONDON IRISH

(18th London).

A VIVID account of an incident at Loos, which has become historic, was given by one of the London Irish Regiment who was wounded during the charge :—

"One set of our men—keen footballers—made a strange resolution; it was to take a football along with them. The platoon officer discovered this, and ordered the football to be sent back—which, of course, was carried out. But the old members of the London Irish Football Club were not to be done out of the greatest game of their lives—the last to some of them, poor fellows—and just before Major Beresford gave the signal the leather turned up again mysteriously.

"Suddenly the officer in command gave the signal, 'Over you go, lads!' With that the whole line sprang up as one man, some with a prayer, not a few making the sign of the Cross. But the footballers, they chucked the ball over and went after it just as cool as if on the field, passing it from one to the other, though the bullets were flying thick as hail, crying, 'On the ball, London

Irish!' just as they might have done at Forest Hill. I believe that they actually kicked it right into the enemy's trench with the cry, 'Goal!' though not before some of them had been picked off on the way.

"There wasn't 400 yards between the trenches, and we had to get across the open—a manœuvre we started just as on parade. All lined up, bayonets fixed, rifles at the slope. Once our fellows got going it was hard to get them to stop, with the result that some rushed clean into one of our own gas waves and dropped in it just before it had time to get over the enemy's trench.

"The barbed wire had been broken into smithereens by our shells so that we could get right through; but we could see it had been terrible stuff, and we all felt we should not have had a ghost of a chance of getting through had it not been for an unlimited supply of shells expended on it.

"When we reached the German trench, which we did under a cloud of smoke, we found nothing but a pack of beings dazed with terror. In a jiffy we were over their parapet and the real work began; a kind of madness comes over you as you stab with your bayonet and hear the shriek of the poor devil suddenly cease as the steel goes through him and you know he's 'gone west.' The beggars did not show much fight, most having retired into their second line of trenches when we began to occupy their first to make it

our new line of attack. That meant clearing out even the smallest nook or corner that was large enough to hold a man.

"This fell to the bombers. Every bomber is a hero, I think, for he has to rush on, fully exposed, laden with enough stuff to send him to 'kingdom come' if a chance shot or stumble sets him off.

"Some of the sights were awful in the hand-to-hand struggle, for, of course, that is the worst part. Our own second in command, Major Beresford, was badly wounded. Captain and Adjutant Hamilton, though shot through the knee just after leaving our trench, was discovered still limping on at the second German trench, and had to be placed under arrest to prevent his going on till he bled to death.

"They got the worst of it, though, when it came to cold steel, which they can't stand, and they ran like hares. So having left a number of men in the first trench, we went on to the second and then the third, after which other regiments came up to our relief, and together we took Loos. It wasn't really our job at all to take Loos, but we were swept on by the enthusiasm, I suppose, and all day long we were at it, clearing house after house, or rather what was left of the houses—stabbing and shooting and bombing till one felt ready to drop dead oneself. We wiped the 22nd Silesian Regiment right out, but it was horrible to work on with the cries of the wounded all round."

BRITISH TROOPS IN ACTION ON THE GALLIPOLI PENINSULA.

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VII.

THE LANDING AT V BEACH, NEAR SEDD-EL-BAHR.*

By JOHN MASEFIELD.

THE men told off for this landing were: the Dublin Fusiliers, the Munster Fusiliers, half a battalion of the Hampshire Regiment, and the West Riding Field Company.

Three companies of the Dublin Fusiliers were to land from towed lighters, the rest of the party from a tramp steamer, the collier *River Clyde*. This ship, a conspicuous seamark at Cape Helles throughout the rest of the campaign, had been altered to carry and land troops. Great gangways or entry ports had been cut in her sides on the level of her between decks, and platforms had been built out upon her sides below these, so that men might run from her in a hurry. The plan was to beach her as near the shore as possible, and then drag or sweep the lighters, which she towed, into position between her and the shore, so as to make a kind of boat bridge from her to the beach. When the lighters were

* *From "Gallipoli." By John Masefield.* (*Heinemann.*)

so moored as to make this bridge, the entry ports were to be opened, the waiting troops were to rush out on to the external platforms, run from them on to the lighters, and so to the shore. The ship's upper deck and bridge were protected with boiler plate and sandbags, and a casemate for machine guns was built upon her fo'c'sle, so that she might reply to the enemy's fire.

Five picket-boats, each towing five boats or launches full of men, steamed alongside the *River Clyde* and went ahead when she grounded. She took the ground rather to the right of the little beach, some 400 yards from the ruins of Sedd-el-Bahr Castle, before the Turks had opened fire; but almost as she grounded, when the picket-boats with their tows were ahead of her, only 20 or 30 yards from the beach, every rifle and machine gun in the castle, the town above it, and in the curved, low, strongly trenched hill along the bay, began a murderous fire upon ship and boats. There was no question of their missing. They had their target on the front and both flanks at ranges between 100 and 300 yards in clear daylight, 30 boats bunched together and crammed with men and a good big ship. The first outbreak of fire made the bay as white as a rapid, for the Turks fired not less then 10,000 shots a minute for the first few minutes of that attack. Those not killed in the boats at the first discharge jumped overboard

to wade or swim ashore. Many were killed in the water, many, who were wounded, were swept away and drowned; others, trying to swim in the fierce current, were drowned by the weight of their equipment. But some reached the shore, and these instantly doubled out to cut the wire entanglements and were killed, or dashed for the cover of a bank of sand or raised beach which runs along the curve of the bay. Those very few who reached this cover were out of immediate danger, but they were only a handful. The boats were destroyed where they grounded.

Meanwhile the men of the *River Clyde* tried to make their bridge of boats by sweeping the lighters into position and mooring them between the ship and the shore. They were killed as they worked, but others took their places; the bridge was made, and some of the Munsters dashed along it from the ship and fell in heaps as they ran. As a second company followed, the moorings of the lighters broke or were shot; the men leaped into the water, and were drowned or killed, or reached the beach and were killed, or fell wounded there, and lay under fire, getting wound after wound till they died; very, very few reached the sandbank. More brave men jumped aboard the lighters to remake the bridge; they were swept away or shot to pieces. The average life on those boats was some three minutes long, but they remade the bridge, and the third

company of the Munsters doubled down to death along it under a storm of shrapnel which scarcely a man survived. The big guns in Asia were now shelling the *River Clyde*, and the hell of rapid fire never paused. More men tried to land, headed by Brigadier-General Napier, who was instantly killed, with nearly all his followers. Then for long hours the remainder stayed on board, down below in the grounded steamer, while the shots beat on her plates with a rattling clang which never stopped. Her twelve machine guns fired back, killing any Turk who showed; but nothing could be done to support the few survivors of the landing, who now lay under cover of the sandbank on the other side of the beach. It was almost certain death to try to leave the ship, but all through the day men leaped from her (with leave or without it) to bring water or succour to the wounded on the boats or beach. A hundred brave men gave their lives thus; every man there earned the Cross that day. A boy earned it by one of the bravest deeds of the war, leaping into the sea with a rope in his teeth to try to secure a drifting lighter.

The day passed thus, but at nightfall the Turks' fire paused, and the men came ashore from the *River Clyde*, almost unharmed. They joined the survivors on the beach, and at once attacked the old fort and the village above it. These works were strongly held by the enemy. All had been ruined by the fire from the Fleet,

but in the rubble and ruin of old masonry there were thousands of hidden riflemen backed by machine guns. Again and again they beat off our attacks, for there was a bright moon and they knew the ground, and our men had to attack uphill over wire and broken earth and heaped stones in all the wreck and confusion and strangeness of war at night in a new place. Some of the Dublins and Munsters went astray in the ruins, and were wounded far from their fellows, and so lost. The Turks became more daring after dark; while the light lasted they were checked by the *River Clyde's* machine guns, but at midnight they gathered unobserved and charged. They came right down on to the beach, and in the darkness and moonlight much terrible and confused fighting followed. Many were bayoneted, many shot, there was wild firing and crying, and then the Turk attack melted away, and their machine guns began again. When day dawned, the survivors of the landing party were crouched under the shelter of the sandbank; they had had no rest; most of them had been fighting all night; all had landed across the corpses of their friends. No retreat was possible, nor was it dreamed of, but to stay there was hopeless. Lieut.-Colonel Doughty-Wylie gathered them together for an attack; the Fleet opened a terrific fire upon the ruins of the fort and village, and the landing party went forward again, fighting from bush to bush and from stone to stone, till the ruins were in

their hands. Shells still fell among them, single Turks, lurking under cover, sniped them and shot them; but the landing had been made good, and V beach was secured to us.

This was the worst and the bloodiest of all the landings.

THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME: THE COLDSTREAM GUARDS' SPLENDID CHARGE.

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VIII.

THE COLDSTREAM GUARDS AT THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME.*

By Philip Gibbs.

AND now I must tell a little more in detail the story of the Guards in this battle. It is hard to tell it, and not all can be told yet because of the enemy. The Guards had their full share of the fighting, and of the difficult ground, with strong forces against them. They knew that would be so before they went into battle, and yet they did not ask for better things but awaited the hour of attack with strong, gallant hearts, quite sure of their courage, proud of their name, full of trust in their officers, eager to give a smashing blow at the enemy.

These splendid men, so tall and proper, so hard and fine, went away as one might imagine the old knights and yeomen of England at Agincourt. For the first time in the history of the Coldstreamers, three battalions of them charged in line, great solid waves of men, as fine a sight as the world could show. Behind them were

* *From "The Battles of the Somme." (Heinemann.)*

the Grenadiers, and again behind these men the Irish.

They had not gone more than 200 yards before they came under the enfilade fire of massed machine guns in trenches not previously observed. The noise of this fire was so loud and savage that, although hundreds of guns were firing, not a shot could be heard. It was just the stabbing staccato hammering of the German Maxims. Men fell, but the lines were not broken. Gaps were made in the ranks, but they closed up. The wounded did not call for help, but cheered on those who swept past and on, shouting "Go on, Lily-whites!"—which is the old name for the Coldstreamers—"Get at 'em, Lily-whites!"

They went on at a hot pace with their bayonets lowered. Out of the crumpled earth—all pits and holes and hillocks, torn up by great gun-fire—grey figures rose and fled. They were German soldiers terror-stricken by this rushing tide of men.

The Guards went on. Then they were checked by two lines of trenches, wired and defended by machine guns and bombers. They came upon them quicker than they expected. Some of the officers were puzzled. Could these be the trenches marked out for attack—or other unknown trenches? Anyhow, they must be taken—and the Guards took them by frontal assault full in the face of continual blasts of machine-gun bullets.

There was hard and desperate fighting. The Germans defended themselves to the death. They bombed our men, who attacked them with the bayonet, served their machine guns until they were killed, and would only surrender when our men were on top of them. It was a very bloody hour or more. By that time the Irish Guards had joined the others. All the Guards were together, and together they passed the trenches, swinging left inevitably under the machine-gun fire which poured upon them from their right, but going steadily deeper into the enemy country until they were 2,000 yards from their starting place.

Then it was necessary to call a halt. Many officers and men had fallen. To go farther would be absolute death. The troops on the right had been utterly held up. The Guards were "up in the air" with an exposed flank, open to all the fire that was flung upon them from the enemy's lines. The temptation to go farther was great. The German infantry was on the run. They were dragging their guns away. There was a great panic among the men who had been hiding in trenches. But the German machine gunners kept to their posts to safeguard a rout, and the Guards had gone far enough through their scourging bullets.

They decided very wisely to hold the line they had gained, and to dig in where they stood, and to make forward posts with strong points.

They had killed a great number of Germans and taken 200 prisoners and fought grandly. So now they halted and dug and took cover as best they could in shell-craters and broken ground, under fierce fire from the enemy's guns.

The night was a dreadful one for the wounded, and for men who did their best for the wounded, trying to be deaf to agonizing sounds. Many of them had hairbreadth escapes from death. One young officer in the Irish Guards lay in a shell-hole with two comrades, and then left it for a while to cheer up other men lying in surrounding craters. When he came back he found his two friends lying dead, blown to bits by a shell.

But in spite of all these bad hours the Guards kept cool, kept their discipline, their courage, and their spirit. The Germans launched counter-attacks against them, but were annihilated. The Guards held their ground, and gained the greatest honour for self-sacrificing courage which has ever given a special meaning to their name. They took the share which all of us knew they would take in the greatest of all our battles since the first day of July, and, with other regiments, struck a vital blow at the enemy's line of defence.

THE ADVANCE ON BAGHDAD: BATTLE ON THE DIALA RIVER.

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IX.

THE MOONLIGHT BATTLE FOR BAGHDAD.

By Edmund Candler.

THE last fighting before Baghdad is likely to become historic on account of the splendid gallantry of our troops in the crossing of the Diala River. After the action at Lajj the Turkish rearguard fell back on Diala, destroying the bridge which crosses the stream at its junction with the Tigris. We pushed on in pursuit on the left bank, sending cavalry and two columns of infantry to work round on the right bank, and to enter Baghdad from the west. Speed in following up was essential, and the column attacking Diala was faced with another crossing in which the element of surprise was eliminated. The village lies on both banks of the stream, which is 120 yards wide. The houses, trees, nullah, and walled gardens made it impossible to build a road and ramps quickly and to bring up pontoons without betraying the point of embarkation. Hence the old bridge-head site was chosen. The attack on the night of the 7th was checked, but the quality of

courage shown by our men has never been surpassed in war. Immediately the first pontoon was lowered over the ramp the whole launching party was shot down in a few seconds. It was a bright moonlight, and the Turks had concentrated their machine guns and rifles in the houses on the opposite bank.

The second pontoon had got into the middle of the stream, when a terrific fusillade was opened on it. The crew of five rowers and ten riflemen were killed and the boat floated down the stream. A third got nearly across, but was bombed and sank. All the crew were killed. But there was no holding back. The orders still held to secure the passage. Crew after crew pushed off to an obvious and certain death. The fourth crossing party was exterminated in the same way, and the pontoons drifted out to the Tigris to float past our camp in the daylight with their freight of dead. The drafts who went over were raised by volunteers from other battalions in the brigade. These and the sappers on the bank share the honour of the night with the attacking battalion. Nothing stopped them, save the loss of the pontoons. A Lancashire man remarked: "It is a bit hot here, but let's try higher up," but the gallant fellows were reduced to their last boat. Another regiment, which was to cross higher up, were delayed, as the boats had to be carried nearly a mile across country to the stream. After the

failure of the bridgehead passage the second crossing was cancelled, but the men were still game.

On the second night the attempt was pursued with equal gallantry. This time the attack was preceded by a bombardment. Registering by artillery had been impossible on the first day in the speed of the pursuit. It was the barrage that secured us the footing—not the shells, but the dust raised by them. This was so thick that you could not see your hand in front of your face. It formed a curtain behind which ten boats were able to cross. Afterwards, in clear moonlight, when the curtain of dust had lifted, the conditions of the night before were re-established. Succeeding crossing parties were exterminated, and pontoons drifted away, but a footing was secured. The dust served us well. The crew of one boat which lost its way during the barrage were untouched, but they did not make the bank in time. Directly the air cleared a machine-gun was opened on them, and the rowers were shot down, and the pontoon drifted back ashore. A sergeant called to volunteers to get the wounded out of the boat, and a party of twelve men went over the river bank. Every man of them, as well as the crew of the pontoons, were killed.

Some 60 men had got over, and these joined up and started bombing along the bank. They were soon heavily pressed by the Turks on both flanks, and found themselves between two woods.

Here they discovered a providential natural position. A break in the river bund had been repaired by a new bund built in a half-moon on the landward side. This formed a perfect lunette. The Lancashire men, surrounded on all sides but the river, held it through the night, all the next day, and the next night against repeated and determined attacks. Those attacks were delivered in the dark or at dawn. The Turks only attacked once in the daylight, as our machine guns on the other bank swept the ground in front of the position. Twenty yards west of the lunette there was a thin grove of mulberries and palms. The pontoon was most vulnerable on this side, and it was here that the Turkish counter-attacks were most frequent. Our intense intermittent artillery fire day and night on the wood afforded some protection. The whole affair was visible to our troops on the south side, who were able to make themselves heard by shouting. Attempts to get a cable across with a rocket for the passage of ammunition failed.

At midnight on the 9th and 10th the Turks were on top of the parapet, but were driven back. One more determined rush would have carried the lunette, but the little garrison, now reduced to 40, kept their heads and maintained cool control of their fire. A corporal was seen searching for loose rounds and emptying the bandoliers of the dead. In the end they were

reduced almost to their last clip and one bomb, but we found over 100 Turkish dead outside the redoubts when they were relieved at daylight. The crossing on the night of the 9th and 10th was entirely successful. With our cavalry and two columns of infantry working round on the right bank the Turks were in danger of being cut off, as at Sanna-i-Yat. Before midnight they had withdrawn their machine guns, leaving only riflemen to dispute the passage. The crossing upstream was a surprise. We slipped through the Turkish guard. He had pickets at both ends of the river salient where we dropped our pontoons. But he overlooked essential points in it which offered us dead ground uncovered by posts up and down stream. Consequently our passage here lost us no lives. The other ferry near the bridge was also crossed with slight loss, owing to a diversion up-stream. The Turks, perceiving that their flank was being turned, effected a general retirement of the greater part of their garrison between the two ferries. Some 250 in all, finding us bombing down on both flanks, surrendered. The upper crossing was so unexpected that one Turk was actually bayonetted as he lay covering the opposite bank with his rifle.

By 9.30 on the morning of the 10th the whole brigade had crossed. Soon after 11 the brigade was complete and the pursuit continued. The Turks continued their rearguard action, and in

the afternoon there was fighting in the palm groves of Saida, and the Turks were cleared with the bayonet, after artillery had combed the wood. The main body was holding the El Mahomed position, one and a half miles further north—a trench line running nearly four miles inland from the Tigris. We attacked this in front, while another column made a wide turning movement on the flank, and the enemy evacuated it at night. On the morning of the 12th we entered Baghdad. Our force on the right bank, after defeating the Turkish rearguard in two actions, reached the suburb on the opposite side of the Bridge of Boats. A brigade was ferried across in coracles, and at noon they hoisted the Union Jack on the citadel. Meanwhile the cavalry continued the pursuit and occupied Kazimain after slight resistance. Four damaged aeroplanes and 100 prisoners were taken, in addition to the 300 captured on the left bank. The gun-boats are still in pursuit of the enemy, who are reported to be entrenching 16 miles north of Baghdad, covering the entrainment of troops.

X.

THE BATTLE OF ARRAS.*

By Philip Gibbs.

TO-DAY, at dawn, our armies began a great battle, which, if Fate has any kindness for the world, may be the beginning of the last great battles of the war. Our troops attacked on a wide front between Lens and St. Quentin, including the Vimy Ridge, that great, grim hill which dominates the plain of Douai and the coalfields of Lens and the German positions around Arras. In spite of bad fortune in weather at the beginning of the day, so bad that there was no visibility for the airmen, and our men had to struggle forward in a heavy rainstorm, the first attacks have been successful, and the enemy has lost much ground, falling back in retreat to strong rearguard lines, where he is now fighting desperately. The line of our attack covers a front of some 12 miles southwards from Givenchy-en-Gohelle, and is a sledge-hammer blow, threatening to break the northern end of the Hindenburg line, already menaced round St. Quentin. As soon as the enemy was forced

* *From the "Daily Chronicle" and "Daily Telegraph."*

to retreat from the country east of Bapaume and Péronne, in order to escape a decisive blow on that line, he hurried up divisions and guns northwards to counter our attack there, while he prepared a new line of defence, known as the Wotan line, as the southern part of the Hindenburg line, which joins it, is known as the Siegfried position, after two great heroes of old German mythology. He hoped to escape there before our new attack was ready, but we have been too quick for him, and his own plans were frustrated.

So to-day began another titanic conflict which the world will hold its breath to watch because of all that hangs upon it. I have seen the fury of this beginning, and all the sky on fire with it, the most tragic and frightful sight that men have ever seen, with an infernal splendour beyond words to tell. The bombardment which went before the infantry assault lasted for several days, and reached a great height yesterday, when, coming from the south, I saw it for the first time. Those of us who knew what would happen to-day, the beginning of another series of battles greater, perhaps, than the struggle of the Somme, found ourselves yesterday filled with a tense, restless emotion, and some of us smiled with a kind of tragic irony because it was Easter Sunday. In the little villages behind the battle lines the bells of the French churches were ringing gladly because the Lord had risen,

and on the altar steps the priests were reciting the splendid old words of faith. "Resurrexi et adhuc tecum sum. Alleluia" ("I have arisen and I am with thee always. Alleluia"). The earth was glad yesterday. For the first time this year the sun had a touch of warmth in it, though patches of snow still stayed white under the shelter of the banks, and the sky was blue and the light glinted on wet tree-trunks and in the furrows of the new-ploughed earth. As I went up the road to the battle lines I passed a battalion of our men, the men who are fighting to-day, standing in hollow square with bowed heads while the chaplain conducted the Easter service. Easter Sunday, but no truce of God. I went to a field outside Arras and looked into the ruins of the cathedral city. The cathedral itself stood clear in the sunlight, with a deep black shadow where its roof and aisles had been. Beyond was a ragged pinnacle of stone, once the glorious Town Hall, and the French barracks and all the broken streets going out to the Cambrai road. It was hell in Arras, though Easter Sunday.

The bombardment was now in full blast. It was a beautiful and devilish thing, and the beauty of it, and not the evil of it, put a spell upon one's senses. All our batteries, too many to count, were firing, and thousands of gun flashes were winking and blinking from hollows and hiding-places, and all their shells were

rushing through the sky as though flocks of great birds were in flight, and all were bursting over the German positions with long flames which rent the darkness and waved sword-blades of quivering light along the ridges. The earth opened, and great pools of red fire gushed out. Star shells burst magnificently, pouring down golden rain. Mines exploded east and west of Arras and in the wide sweep from Vimy Ridge to Blangy southwards, and voluminous clouds, all bright with a glory of infernal fire, rolled up to the sky. The wind blew strongly across, beating back the noise of the guns, but the air was all filled with the deep roar and slamming knocks of the single heavies and the drum fire of the field guns.

The hour for attack was 5.30. Officers were looking at their wrist watches as on a day in July last year. The earth lightened. A few minutes before 5.30 the guns almost ceased fire, so that there was a strange and solemn hush. We waited, and pulses beat faster than the second-hands. "They're away," said a voice by my side. The bombardment broke out again with new and enormous effects of fire and sound. The enemy was shelling Arras heavily, and black shrapnel and high explosive came over from his lines, but our gunfire was twenty times as great. Around the whole sweep of his lines green lights rose. They were signals of distress, and his men were calling for help.

It was dawn now, but clouded and storm-swept. A few airmen came out with the wind tearing at their wings, but could see nothing in the mist and driving rain. I went down to the outer ramparts of Arras. The suburb of Blangy seemed already in our hands. On the higher ground beyond our men were fighting forward. I saw two waves of infantry advancing against the enemy's trenches, preceded by our barrage of field guns. They went in a slow, leisurely way, not hurried, though the enemy's shrapnel was searching for them. "Grand fellows," said an officer lying next to me on the wet slope. "Oh, topping!" Fifteen minutes afterwards groups of men came back. They were British wounded and German prisoners. I met the first of these walking wounded afterwards. They were met on the roadside by medical officers, who patched them up there and then before they were taken to the field hospitals in ambulances. From these men, hit by shrapnel and machine-gun bullets, I heard the first news of progress. They were bloody and exhausted, but claimed success. "We did fine," said one of them. "We were through the fourth lines before I was knocked out." "Not many Germans in the first trenches," said another, "and no real trenches either after shelling. We had knocked their dug-outs out, and their dead were lying thick, and the living ones put their hands up." All the men agreed that their own casualties were not high, and mostly wounded.

The Next Day.

By three in the afternoon yesterday the Canadians had gained the whole of the ridge except a high strong post on the left, Hill 145, which was captured during the night. Our gunfire had helped them by breaking down all the wire, even round Heroes' Wood and Count's Wood, where it was very thick and strong. Thélus was wiped utterly off the map. This morning Canadian patrols pushed in a snowstorm through the Farbus Wood, and established outposts on the railway embankment. Some of the bravest work was done by the forward observing officers, who climbed to the top of Vimy Ridge as soon as it was captured, and through a sea of heavy barrage reported back to the artillery all the movements seen by them on the country below.

In spite of the wild day, our flying men were riding the storm and signalling to the gunners who were rushing up their field guns. "Our 60-pounders," said a Canadian officer, "had the day of their lives." They found many targets. There were trains moving in Vimy village, and they hit them. There were troops massing on the sloping ground, and they were shattered. There were guns and limbers on the move, and men and horses were killed. Beyond all the prisoners taken yesterday by the English, Scottish and Canadian troops, the enemy losses were frightful, and the scenes behind his lines must

have been and still be hideous in slaughter and terror.

The Battle of Arras is the greatest victory we have yet gained in this war and a staggering blow to the enemy. He has lost already nearly 10,000 prisoners and more than half a hundred guns,* and in dead and wounded his losses are great. He is in retreat south of the Vimy Ridge to defensive lines further back, and as he goes our guns are smashing him along the roads. It is a black day for the German armies and for the German women who do not know yet what it means to them. During last night the Canadians gained the last point, called Hill 145, on the Vimy Ridge, where the Germans held out in a pocket with machine guns, and this morning the whole of that high ridge, which dominates the plains to Douai, is in our hands, so that there is removed from our path the great barrier for which the French and ourselves have fought through bloody years. Yesterday, before daylight and afterwards, I saw this ridge of Vimy all on fire with the light of great gun-fire. The enemy was there in strength, and his guns were answering ours with a heavy barrage of high explosives.

This morning the scene was changed as by a miracle. Snow was falling, blown gustily across the battlefields and powdering the capes and

* Increased to 19,343 prisoners and 257 guns on 2nd May.

helmets of our men as they rode or marched forward to the front. But presently sunlight broke through the storm-clouds and flooded all the countryside by Neuville-St. Vaast and Thélus and La Folie Farm up to the crest of the ridge where the Canadians had just fought their way with such high valour. Our batteries were firing from many hiding-places, revealed by the short, sharp flashes of light, but few answering shells came back, and the ridge itself, patched with snowdrifts, was as quiet as any hill of peace. It was astounding to think that not a single German stayed up there out of all the thousands who had held it yesterday, unless some poor wounded devils still cower in the great tunnels which pierce the hillside. It was almost unbelievable to me, who have known the evil of this high ridge month after month and year after year and the deadly menace which lurked about its lower slopes. Yet I saw proof below, where all the Germans who had been there at dawn yesterday, thousands of them, were down in our lines, drawn up in battalions, marshalling themselves, grinning at the fate which had come to them and spared their lives.

THE GREAT EXPLOIT OF E. 11: TORPEDOING AN ENEMY VESSEL OFF CONSTANTINOPLE.

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XI.

WARFARE UNDER WATER.*

By Rudyard Kipling.

They bear, in place of classic names,
  Letters and numbers on their skin.
They play their grisly blindfold games
  In little boxes made of tin.
Sometimes they stalk the Zeppelin,
  Sometimes they learn where mines are laid
Or where the Baltic ice is thin.
  That is the custom of "The Trade."

NO one knows how the title of "The Trade" came to be applied to the Submarine Service. Some say the cruisers invented it because they pretend that submarine officers look like unwashed chauffeurs. Others think it sprang forth by itself, which means that it was coined by the Lower Deck, where they always have the proper names for things. Whatever the truth, the Submarine Service is now "the Trade"; and if you ask them why, they will answer: "What else could you call it? The Trade's 'the trade,' of course."

It is a close corporation; yet it recruits its men and officers from every class that uses the sea and engines, as well as from many classes that never expected to deal with either. It takes them; they disappear for a while and return changed to their very souls, for the Trade lives in a world without precedents, of which no generation has had any previous experience—a world still being made and enlarged daily. It creates and settles its own problems

* "*Sea Warfare.*" *By Rudyard Kipling.* (*Macmillan.*)

as it goes along, and if it cannot help itself no one else can. So the Trade lives in the dark and thinks out inconceivable and impossible things, which it afterwards puts into practice.

Four Nightmares.

Who, a few months ago, could have invented, or, having invented, would have dared to print such a nightmare as this: There was a boat in the North Sea who ran into a net and was caught by the nose. She rose, still entangled, meaning to cut the thing away on the surface. But a Zeppelin in waiting saw and bombed her, and she had to go down again at once, but not too wildly or she would get herself more wrapped up than ever. She went down, and by slow working and weaving and wriggling, guided only by guesses at the meaning of each scrape and grind of the net on her blind forehead, at last she drew clear. Then she sat on the bottom and thought. The question was whether she should go back at once and warn her confederates against the trap, or wait till the destroyers, which she knew the Zeppelin would have signalled for, should come out to finish her still entangled, as they would suppose, in the net. It was a simple calculation of comparative speeds and positions, and when it was worked out she decided to try for the double event. Within a few minutes of the time she had allowed for them, she heard the twitter of four destroyers' screws quartering above her; rose; got her shot in; saw one destroyer crumple; hung round till another took the wreck in tow; said good-bye to the spare brace (she was at the

end of her supplies), and reached the rendezvous in time to turn her friends.

And since we are dealing in nightmares, here are two more—one genuine, the other, mercifully, false. There was a boat not only at, but *in* the mouth of a river—well home in German territory. She was spotted, and went under, her commander perfectly aware that there was not more than five feet of water over her conning-tower, so that even a torpedo-boat, let alone a destroyer, would hit it if she came over. But nothing hit anything. The search was conducted on scientific principles while they sat on the silt and suffered. Then the commander heard the rasp of a wire trawl sweeping over his hull. It was not a nice sound, but there happened to be a couple of gramophones aboard, and he turned them both on to drown it. And in due time that boat got home with everybody's hair of just the same colour as when they had started!

The other nightmare arose out of silence and imagination. A boat had gone to bed on the bottom in a spot where she might reasonably expect to be looked for, but it was a convenient jumping-off, or up, place for the work in hand. About the bad hour of 2.30. a.m. the commander was waked by one of his men, who whispered to him: "They've got the chains on us, sir!" Whether it was pure nightmare, an hallucination of long wakefulness, something relaxing and releasing in that packed box of machinery, or the disgustful reality, the commander could not tell, but it had all the makings of panic in it. So the Lord and long training put it into his head

to reply: "Have they? Well, we shan't be coming up till nine o'clock this morning. We'll see about it then. Turn out that light, please."

He did not sleep, but the dreamer and the others did, and when morning came and he gave the order to rise, and she rose unhampered, and he saw the grey, smeared seas from above once again, he said it was a very refreshing sight.

Lastly, which is on all fours with the gamble of the chase, a man was coming home rather bored after an uneventful trip. It was necessary for him to sit on the bottom for awhile, and there he played patience. Of a sudden it struck him, as a vow and an omen, that if he worked out the next game correctly he would go up and strafe something. The cards fell all in order. He went up at once and found himself alongside a German, whom, as he had promised and prophesied to himself, he destroyed. She was a mine-layer, and needed only a jar to dissipate like a cracked electric-light bulb. He was somewhat impressed by the contrast between the single-handed game 50 feet below, the ascent, the attack, the amazing result, and when he descended again, his cards just as he had left them.

The Exploit of E 11.

E 11 "proceeded" in the usual way, to the usual accompaniments of hostile destroyers, up the Straits, and meets the usual difficulties about charging-up when she gets through. Her wireless naturally takes this opportunity to give trouble, and E 11 is left, deaf and dumb, somewhere in the middle of the Sea of Marmara, diving to avoid hostile destroyers in the intervals

of trying to come at the fault in her aerial. (Yet it is noteworthy that the language of the Trade, though technical, is no more emphatic or incandescent than that of top-side ships.)

Then she goes towards Constantinople, finds a Turkish torpedo-gunboat off the port, sinks her, has her periscope smashed by a six-pounder, retires, fits a new top on the periscope, and at 10.30 a.m.—they must have needed it—pipes "All hands to bathe." Much refreshed, she gets her wireless linked up at last, and is able to tell the authorities where she is and what she is after.

* * * *

In due time E 11 went back to her base. She had discovered a way of using unspent torpedoes twice over, which surprised the enemy, and she had as nearly as possible been cut down by a ship which she thought was running away from her. Instead of which (she made the discovery at 3,000 yards, both craft all out) the stranger steamed straight at her. "The enemy then witnessed a somewhat spectacular dive at full speed from the surface to 20 feet in as many seconds. He then really did turn tail and was seen no more." Going through the Straits she observed an empty troopship at anchor, but reserved her torpedoes in the hope of picking up some battleships lower down. Not finding these in the Narrows, she nosed her way back and sank the trooper, "afterwards continuing journey down the Straits." Off Kilid Bahr something happened; she got out of trim and had to be fully flooded before she could be brought to her required depth. It might have been

whirlpools under water, or—other things. (They tell a story of a boat which once went mad in these very waters, and, for no reason ascertainable from within, plunged to depths that contractors do not allow for ; rocketed up again like a sword-fish, and would doubtless have so continued till she died, had not something she had fouled dropped off and let her recover her composure.)

An hour later : " Heard a noise similar to grounding. Knowing this to be impossible in the water in which the boat then was, I came up to 20 feet to investigate, and observed a large mine preceding the periscope at a distance of about 20 feet, which was apparently hung up by its moorings to the port hydroplane." Hydroplanes are the fins at bow and stern which regulate a submarine's diving. A mine weighs anything from hundredweights to half-tons. Sometimes it explodes if you merely think about it ; at others you can batter it like an empty sardine tin and it submits meekly ; but at no time is it meant to wear on a hydroplane. They dared not come up to unhitch it, " owing to the batteries ashore," so they pushed the dim shape ahead of them till they got outside Kum Kale. They then went full astern, and emptied the after-tanks, which brought the bows down, and in this posture rose to the surface, when " the rush of water from the screws together with the sternway gathered allowed the mine to fall clear of the vessel."

Now a fool, said Dr. Johnson, would have tried to describe that.

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