To the company commanders, gathered at dark in a much disfigured Boche shelter in the Wood of Somme-Py, the major gave information. "The Sixth took Blanc Mont, and they are holding it against heavy counter-attacks. Prisoners say they were ordered to hold here at any costs—they're fighting damned well, too! The infantry regiments piped down the Bois de Vipre, just as we did the Essen hook. The division is grouping around the ridge, but we're pretty well isolated from the French. To-night we are going on up and take the front line, and attack toward St.-Etienne-a-Arnes—town north of the ridge and a little west. Get on up to Blanc Mont with your companies—P. C. will be there, along the road that runs across the ridge.

CHAPTER VIII

Biting the Boche with the American Saw-Tooth Formation.

Not greatly troubled by the Boche shelling, that died to spasmodic bursts as the night went on, the battalion mounted through the dark to its appointed place. Here, beside a blasted road that ran along Blanc Mont, just behind the thin line of the Sixth, the weary men lay down, and, no orders being immediately forthcoming, slept like the dead that were lying thickly there. Let the officers worry over the fact that the French had fallen behind on each flank, that the division was, to all purposes, isolated far out in Boche territory—let any fool worry over the chances of stopping one tomorrow—tomorrow would come soon enough. "The lootenant says to get all the rest you can—don't—nobody need to—tell—me—tha—"

In the deep dugouts behind the road the battalion commanders prodded at field-maps and swore wearily over the ominous gaps behind the flanks—three kilometers on one flank, five on the other, where the French divisions had not kept pace. Into these holes the Boche had all day been savagely striving to thrust himself, and his success would mean disaster. Already the Sixth had a force thrown back to cover the left rear, disposed at right angles to the line of advance. . . . And orders were to carry the attack forward at dawn. On top of that, after midnight a Boche deserter crawled into the line with the cheering news that the Germans were planning to attack in force on the American flanks at dawn; a division of fresh troops—Prussians—had just been brought up for that purpose. It looked bad—it looked worse than that. "Well," said Major George Hamilton of the First battalion of the Fifth, "orders are to attack, and, by God, we'll attack"—a yawn spoiled the dramatic effect of his pronouncement—"and now I'm going to get some sleep. Cozy, wake me at 5:30—that will be an hour."

And at dawn, while the ridge shook and thundered under the barrage that went before the Boche flank attack, and the Sixth held with their rifles the branch behind the left, the Fifth marines went forward to carry the battle to St.-Etienne.

Noon found them well forward of the ridge, lying in an open flat, while the leading battalions disappeared in pine woods on a long slope ahead. It had fallen strangely quiet where they lay.

Up forward, though, all hell suddenly broke loose. Artillery, machine-guns, rifles, even the coughing detonations of grenades, mounted to an inconceivable fury of sound. "Here comes a battalion runner—there's the skipper, over there—what's up, anyway?"

The second-in-command came through his company with a light in his eyes, and he sent his voice before him. "Deploy the first platoon, Mr. Langford. Three-pace interval, be sure. Where's Mr. Connor? Oh, Chuck, you'll form the second wave behind Tom. About fifty yards. Other two platoons in column behind the company flanks. On yo' feet, chillun! We're goin' up against 'em!"

And so, all four companies in line, the First battalion, a thousand men, went up against the Boche. "Captain," said the second-in-command, as they started, "we're' swingin' half-left. This tack will take up right to St.-Etienne, won't it? We were pointin' a little one side of it before—major give you any dope?" "The Boche have come out of St.-Etienne—two full infantry regiments, anyway, and a bunch of Maxim guns—and hit the second and third in the flank. Must be pretty bad. We're goin' up to hit them in the flank ourselves. 'Bout a kilometer, I'd say. Wait until their artillery spots this little promenade. None of ours in support, you know."

Every man knew, as they moved out of the flat and ascended the slope ahead, that the case was desperate, but to this end was all their strength and skill in war, all their cunning gained in other battles, and their hearts lifted up to meet what might come. "More interval—more interval there on the left! Don't bunch up, you—"

The first shell came screaming down the line from the right, and broke with the hollow cough and poisonous yellow puff of smoke which marks the particular abomination of the foot-soldier. It broke fairly over the center of the Forty-ninth, and every head ducked in unison. Three men there were who seemed to throw themselves prone; they did not get up again. And then the fight closed upon the battalion with the complete and horrid unreality of nightmare.

The silent ridge to the left awoke with machine-guns and rifles, and sibilant rushing flights of nickel-coated missiles from Maxim and Mauser struck down where the shells spared. An increasing trail of crumpled brown figures lay behind the battalion as it went. The raw smell of blood was in men's nostrils.

Going forward with his men, a little dazed perhaps with shock and sound such as never were on earth before, the second-in-command was conscious of a strangely mounting sense of the unreality of the whole thing.

The woods on the crest were as far away as ever through the murk, their strides got them nowhere, their legs were clogged as in an evil dream—they were falling so fast, these men he had worked with and helped to train in war. There was a monstrous anger in his heart . . . . a five-inch shell swooped over his head, so near that the rush of air made his ear-drums pop and burst. He was picked up and whirled away like a leaf, breath and senses struck from him by the world-shattering concussion.

The second-in-command was pulled to his feet by Gunner Nice, who had taken the second platoon. His head lolled stupidly a moment, then he heard words—"an' that shell got all the captain's group, sir—all of 'em! An' my platoon's all casualties—" He pulled himself together as he went forward. His raincoat was split up the back, under his belt. His map case was gone—the strap that had secured it hung loosely from his shoulder. There was blood on his hands, and the salt taste of it in his mouth, but it didn't seem to be his. And the front of the battalion was very narrow, now. The support platoons were all in the line. Strangest of all, the gray slope was behind them—the trees on the crest were only a few yards away.

Behind and to the left the machine-guns still raved, but the artillery fell away. A greenish rocket flared from the pines ahead, and right in the faces of the panting marines machine-guns and rifles blazed. In the shadow of the pines were men in cumbersome green-gray uniforms, with faces that looked hardly human under deep round helmets. With eyes narrowed, bodies slanting forward like men in heavy rain, the remnant of the battalion went to them.

It was the flank of the Boche column which had come out of St.-Etienne and struck the leading battalions of the Fifth. It had watched first with keen delight, then with incredulity, the tortured advance of the battalion. It had waited too long to open its own fire. And now, already shaken by the sight of these men who would not die, it shrank from the long American bayonets and the pitiless, furious faces behind the steel. A few Brandenburger zealots elected to die on their spitting Maxim guns, working them until bayonets or clubbed rifles made an end. A few iron-souled Prussians—the Boche had such men—stood up to meet bayonet with bayonet, and died that way.

A great many more flung away their arms and bleated "Kamaraden" to men who in that red minute knew no mercy. Some hid in holes, or feigned death, to be hunted out as the press thinned. There was a battery of field guns down the slope, 500 yards or so. The gunners—those who were lucky—took to cover after the first burst of fire. "Thank Gawd for a shot at them dam' artillerymen! Battle-sight, an' aim low, you birds—don't let any of them get away!" . . . "Sergeant, reckon the lootenant would let us go down an' take them 77s?"—"Shut up an' work yo' bolt, you dam' fool!—Whatinell you think you are—a army corps?"—"Besides, Mr. Connor's dead. . . ." On the hill beyond St.-Etienne new trenches scarred the slope; there were many Germans milling there, some 1,500 yards away. "Save your ammunition and lay low," the word was passed. "We're on our own out here." And the battalion, a very small battalion now, little more than a hundred men, lay along the crest they had stormed, with their dead and wounded and the Boche dead and wounded around them.

Almost immediately the Boche began to react. He opened on them

From Men That Knew No Mercy.

a storm of fire, high explosive and shrapnel, and his machine-guns dinned fiercely. A counter-attack began to form toward St.-Etienne. Sweating gunners struggled into position with the two machine-guns that were left in the battalion, and these with their crews, were knocked out by shell-fire before either had been in action long enough to fire a clip. But the rifles gave tongue and continued to speak—the last few men are always the most difficult to kill—and the Boche had little taste for rifle-fire that begins to kill at 700 yards. That counter-attack shortly returned whence it came, and the one that followed it went back also.

Whitehead, of the Sixty-seventh company, plumped down alongside the captain of the Forty-ninth. Small, very quick and wiry, with his helmet cocked on the side of his head, he gave the impression of a fierce and warlike little hawk. "Huht's comin' over, Francis," he said. "Bad place; worst I ever saw. Got about thirty men left. Hell that our machine-guns got knocked out so quick, wasn't it? —must be two regiments of Fritzies on our front yonder!"

Captain Hunt, senior in the field, a big, imperturbable Californian, came, and Lieutenant Kelly, promoted by casualties in the last hour to command of the Sixty-sixth company. "How does it look to you, gentlemen?" said Hunt. "Damn bad" was the consensus of opinion, with profane embellishments. Followed some technical discussion. "Well," concluded the senior captain, "we've accomplished our mission—broke up their attack—better hook up with the rest of the regiment. We'll find them through the woods to the right. Move off your companies—Kelly, you go first."

Nobody remembers very clearly that swing to the right, through a hail of machine-gun fire and an inferno of shelling. They found the companies of the Second battalion digging in astride a blasted road, and went into position . . . de . . . m.

"I've organized the company sector with twenty men—all we've got left—you and I make twenty-two," reported the second-in-command, dropping wearily into the shell-hole where the captain had established himself. "Lord, I'm tired . . . and what I can't see," he added in some wonder, fingering the rents in his raincoat, "is why we weren't killed, too. . . ."

That night, lying in its shallow, hastily dug holes, the remnant of the battalion descended through further hells of shelling. The next night tins of beef and bread came up. There was some grim laughter when it came. "Captain," reported the one remaining sergeant, after distributing rations in the dark, "they sent us chow according to the last strength report—three days ago—230-odd rations. The men are building breastworks out of the corned-willy cans, sir—twenty of 'em—"

Some runners got through, and Division H. Q., well forward in a pleasantly exposed spot on the Souain road, built up a picture of a situation sufficiently interesting. Four infantry regiments were thrust saw-wise northeast to northeast of Blanc Mont; all were isolated from each other and from the French, who had lagged behind the flanks. Four little islands in a turbulent Boche sea, and the old Boche doing his damnedest.

More days and nights, slipping, characterless, into each other. Being less than a company in strength, the First battalion of the Fifth was not called on to attack again. They lay in their holes and endured. And after certain days the division was relieved. The battalion marched out at night. The drumming thunder of the guns fell behind them and no man turned his face to look again on the baleful lights of the front.

On the road they passed a regiment of the relieving division—full, strong companies of National guardsmen. They went up one side of the road; and in ragged column of twos, unsightly even in the dim and fitful light; the marines plodded down the other side. They were utterly weary, with shuffling feet and hanging heads. The division had just done something that those old masters in the art of war, the French, and the world after them, including Ludendorff, were to acknowledge remarkable. They had hurled the Boche from Blanc Mont and freed the sacred city of Rheims. They had paid a price hideous even for this war. And they were spent. If there was any idea in those hanging heads it was food and rest.

The Marine major-general commanding, Lejeune, it is related, went serenely to sleep. And they relate further that a staff colonel who, like Martha, was careful and troubled about many things, came to rouse him with a tale of disaster: "General, general, I have word from the front that a regiment of marines is entirely surrounded by the Germans!"

"Yes, colonel? Well, sir," said the general, sadly and sleepily, "I am sorry for those Germans!"—and returned to his slumbers.

The Guard companies gibed at the shrunken battalion as they passed. Singing and joking they went. High words of courage were on their lips and nervous laughter. Save for a weary random curse here and there, the battalion did not answer. . . . "Hell, them birds don't know no better. . . ." "Yeh, we went up singin' too, once—good Lord, how long ago! . . . They won't sing when they come out . . . or any time after . . . in this war." . . . "Damn you, can't you march on your own side the road? How much room you need?"

• • • • • • •

It was nice, back in billets, resting between battles, to sit on a bench in the sun and watch the world go by. Odette, the strapping and genteel daughter of the baker of Croutte-sur-Marne, here herds the duck Anatole into the courtyard of her mother's bakery. (M. Boulanger was last heard from on the Chemin des Dames; Mme. Boulanger keeps the establishment going.) The duck Anatole has been ordered for dinner by two lieutenants of the First battalion, the consideration being 37 francs 80 centimes. Two privates of the Forty-ninth company are choiring softly "Mademoiselle from Armentieres" as she passes. It, is just as well that neither Odette nor Anatole comprend l'anglais.

(To be Continued)

Drinks With His Customers

Nothing Like a Friendly Treat, Says Salesman

"While I thoroughly approve of Prohibition," says a highly successful salesman, "there is much in the good old custom of a friendly drink I should hate to see abandoned. I have closed many sales over a friendly glass, and still do so—though now I confine my treating to non-alcoholic beverages. Personally, I find there is nothing so welcome to a business man, in the midst of a weary afternoon, as an ice-cold bottle of Orange-Crush."

Naturally there's a reason why Orange-Crush is such an excellent "pick-up" drink, and it's this: Actually it contains more energy-replacement value,—or food calories than an equal quantity of fresh ripe oranges!

In making Orange-Crush, the juice of luscious oranges is blended with the delicate flavor of the peel, the zestful tang of the fruit acid found in oranges, lemons and limes, a pure food color such as is used in cakes and candies, healthful carbonated water, pure cane sugar. Nothing else.

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OHIO BOY WINS $1,000

Dean Lucas, 13 years old, of Congress, Ohio, won the third annual national spelling bee held at Washington, D. C., last Thursday under the auspices of 17 newspapers in various sections of the country. Young Lucas was awarded $1,000 in gold.

FOOT DISEASES IN SHEEP

(By Edgar W. Cooley Agricultural Extension Department International Harvester Company.)

Sheep that are compelled to stay in muddy yards or in low, swampy pastures are almost sure to have sore feet. Foot troubles are given different names such as "foot scald", hoof ail, foul foot, and foot rot, but all mean the same.

Foot diseases in sheep should always be treated as contagious and be given prompt attention.

The first symptom is lameness and on examination the foot is found to be feverish and the skin in the cleft of the hoof red and swollen. Soon matter, or pus, forms in the cleft of the hoof and in a short time if left unchecked the disease gets under the skin and spreads under the entire horn, or wall. Blow flies lay eggs in the diseased hoof during the summer months. The maggots spread from the hoof to the wool, finally killing the sheep if left unchecked.

The thing for the farmer to do as soon as he discovers the lame sheep is to get busy and stop the trouble before it reaches the advanced, or chronic stage. If the outbreak occurs in winter or spring the first thing is to provide dry quarters if possible. If it happens in summer put the sheep on the driest pasture obtainable until cured.

If there are but few sheep on the farm they can be caught and each foot treated separately. Treatment consists in cleaning all mud and filth from between the toes and applying something that will cure. In practical experience nothing has proven better than pulverized blue stone or blue vitriol (sulphate of copper) mixed with vinegar or water to a batter and applied with a paddle to the sore.

If the lame sheep are neglected until the disease gets deep-seated all the horn must be pared away from diseased parts with a knife so the remedy can reach the sore. The right way is not to allow the trouble to reach that stage.

VACATION TIME IS HERE

"Married folks must sit down and work out proper plans and make suitable compromises on this matter of the annual vacation," writes Dr. William S. Sadler in the American Magazine.

Vacations are made for wives just as much as for husbands, the doctor urges, and wives sometimes need them more. "I fear men are altogether too selfish about this vacation business," he suggests. "I know any number of men who see to it that they get a vacation once or twice a year, with never a thought about their wives having a vacation. Mother stays at home with the children, while father goes off to recuperate.

"It is always possible to find some place in which each member of the family can enjoy a vacation to his own liking and in accordance with his individual needs. Some can have excitement and change; others can have rest and solitude. They can have the same headquarters, but varying activities."

The doctor has one or two sentences that will strike a responsive chord in many a woman's heart. "I can't see the advantage of vacation parties," he says, "where a woman has to do all the work and the man has all the play. How much of an inspiration to the housewife is the view of a frying pan?"

USEFUL CAT

(Lancaster Central Record)

In order to keep them from straying from the premises, coroner S. H. Anderson tied a cord to the leg of a chicken hen mothering a large brood of chicks. It so happens that Mr. Anderson also numbers among his pets a smart and playful cat, which, whenever the hen starts out of bounds, seizes the trailing cord in its claws and pulls biddie back into proper territory. Mr. Anderson says he is thus relieved of much concern for the safety of the hen and chicks through the attendance given them by this feline guard.

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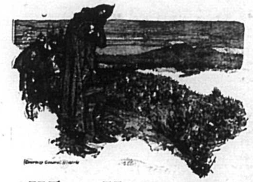

When Xerxes wept

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