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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AT SUVLA BAY ***

AT SUVLA BAY

**Being The Notes And Sketches Of Scenes, Characters
And Adventures Of The Dardanelles Campaign**

By John Hargrave

("White Fox" of "The Scout ")

**While Serving With The 32nd Field Ambulance, X Division, Mediterranean
Expeditionary Force, During The Great War**

*To
MINOBI*

*We played at Ali Baba,
On a green linoleum floor;
Now we camp near Lala Baba,
By the blue Aegean shore.*

*We sailed the good ship Argus,
Behind the studio door;
Now we try to play at "Heroes"
By the blue Aegean shore.*

*We played at lonely Crusoe,
In a pink print pinafore;
Now we live like lonely Crusoe,
By the blue Aegean shore.*

*We used to call for "Mummy,"
In nursery days of yore;
And still we dream of Mother,
By the blue Aegean shore.*

*While you are having holidays,
With hikes and camps galore;
We are patching sick and wounded,*

By the blue Aegean shore.

J. H.

*Salt Lake Dug-out,
September 12th, 1915.
(Under shell-fire.)*

TURKISH WORDS

*Sirt-summit.
Dargh-mountain.
Bair or bahir-spur.
Burnu-cape.
Dere-valley or stream.
Tepe-hill.
Geul-lake.
Chesheme-spring.
Kuyu-well.
Kuchuk-small.
Tekke-Moslem shrine.
Ova-plain.
Liman-bay or harbour.
Skala-landing-place.
Biyuk-great.*

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AT SUVLA BAY

CHAPTER I. IN WHICH MY KING AND COUNTRY NEED ME

I left the office of The Scout, 28 Maiden Lane, W.C., on September 8th, 1914, took leave of the editor and the staff, said farewell to my little camp in the beech-woods of Buckinghamshire and to my woodcraft scouts, bade good-bye to my father, and went off to enlist in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

I made my way to the Marylebone recruiting office, and after waiting about for hours, I went at last upstairs and "stripped out" with a lot of other men for the medical examination.

The smell of human sweat was overpowering in the little ante-room. Some of the men had hearts and anchors and ships and dancing-girls tattooed in blue on their chests and arms. Some were skinny and others too fat. Very few looked fit. I remarked upon the shyness they suffered in walking about naked.

"Did yer pass?"

"No, 'e spotted it," said the dejected rejected.

"Wot?"

"Rupture."

"Got through, Alf?"

"No: eyesight ain't good enough."

So it went on for half-an-hour.

Then came my turn.

"Ha!" said the little doctor, "this is the sort we want," and he rubbed his gold-rimmed glasses on his handkerchief. "Chest, thirty-four—thirty-seven," said the doctor, tapping with his tape-measure, "How did yer do that?"

"What, sir?" said I, gasping, for I was trying to blow my chest out, or burst.

"Had breathing exercises?"

"No, sir—I'm a scout."

"Ha!" said he, and noticed my knees were brown with sunburn because I always wore shorts.

I passed the eyesight test, and they took my name down, and my address, occupation and age.

"Ever bin in the army before?"

"No, sir."

"Married?"

"No, sir."

"Ever bin in prison?"

"No, sir."

"What's yer religion?"

"Nothing, sir."

"What?"

"Nothing at all."

"Ah, but you've got to 'ave one in the army."

"Got to?"

"Yes, you must. Wot's it to be—C. of E.?"

"What d'you mean?"

"Church of England. Most of 'em do."

Awful thoughts of church parade flashed through my mind.

"Right you are—Quaker!" said I.

"Quaker! Is that a religion?" he asked doubtfully.

"Yes."

I watched him write it down.

"Right, that'll do. Report at Munster Road recruiting station, Fulham, to-morrow."

We were all dressed by this time. After a lot more waiting about outside in a yard, a sergeant came and took about eight of us into a room where there was a table and some papers and an officer in khaki.

I spotted a Bible on the table. We had to stand in a row while he read a long list of regulations in which we were made to promise to obey all orders of officers and non-commissioned officers of His Majesty's Service. After that, he told us he would swear us in. We had to hold up the right hand above the head, and say, all together: "Swhelpmegod!"

I immediately realised that I had taken an oath, which was not in accordance with my regimental religion!

No sooner were we let out than I began to feel the ever-tightening tangle of red tape.

What the dickens had I enlisted for? I asked myself. I had lost all my old-time freedom: I could no longer go on in my old camping and sketching life. I was now a soldier—a "tommy"—a "private." I loathed the army. What a fool I was!

The next day I reported at Fulham. More hours of waiting. I discovered an old postman who had also enlisted in the R.A.M.C., and as he "knew the ropes" I stuck to him like a leech. In the afternoon an old recruiting sergeant with a husky voice fell us in, and we marched, a mob of civilians, through the London streets to the railway station. Although this was quite a short distance, the sergeant fell us out near a public-house, and he and a lot more disappeared inside.

What a motley crowd we were: clerks in bowler hats; "knuts" in brown suits, brown ties, brown shoes, and a horse-shoe tie-pin; tramp-like looking men in rags and tatters and smelling of dirt and beer and rank twist.

Old soldiers trying to "chuck a chest"; lanky lads from the country gaping at the houses, shops and people.

Rough, broad-speaking, broad-shouldered men from the Lancashire cotton-mills; shop assistants with polished boots, and some even with kid gloves and a silver-banded cane. Here and there was a farm-hand in corduroys and hob-nailed, cowdung-spattered boots, puffing at a broken old clay pipe, and speaking in the "Darset" dialect. At the station they had to have another "wet" in the refreshment room, and by the time the train was due to start a good many were "canned up."

Boozy voices yelled out—

"'S long way... Tipper-airy..."

"Good-bye, Bill... 'ave... 'nother swig?"

"Don't ferget ter write, Bill..."

"Aw-right, Liz... Good-bye, Albert..."

We were locked in the carriage. There was much shouting and laughing.... And so to Aldershot.

CHAPTER II. A LONG WAY TO TIPPERARY

Aldershot was a seething swarm of civilians who had enlisted. Every class and every type was to be seen. We found out the R.A.M.C. depot and reported. A man sat at an old soapbox with a lot of papers, and we had to file past him. This was in the middle of a field with row upon row of bell-tents.

"Name?" he snapped.

I told him.

"Age?"

"Religion?"

"Quaker."

"Right!—Quaker Oats!—Section 'E,' over there."

But my old postman knew better, and, having found out where "Section E" was camped, we went off up the town to look for lodging for the night, knowing that in such a crowd of civilians we could not be missed.

At last we found a pokey little house where the woman agreed to let us stay the night and get some breakfast next day.

That night was fearful. We had to sleep in a double bed, and it was full of fleas. The moonlight shone through the window. The shadow of a barrack-room chimney-pot slid slowly across my face as the hours dragged on.

We got up about 5.30 A.M., so as to get down to the parade-ground in time for the "fall in."

We washed in a tiny scullery sink downstairs. There was a Pears' Annual print of an old fisherman telling a story to a little girl stuck over the mantelpiece.

We had eggs and bread-and-butter and tea for breakfast, and I think the woman only charged us three shillings all told.

Once down at the parade-ground we looked about for "Section E" and found their lines in the hundreds of rows of bell-tents.

Life for the next few days was indeed "hand to mouth." We had to go on a tent-pitching fatigue under a sergeant who kept up a continual flow of astoundingly profane oaths.

Food came down our lines but seldom. When it did come you had to fetch it in a huge "dixie" and grope with your hands at the bits of gristle and bone which floated in a lot of greasy water. Some one bought a box of sardines in the next tent.

"Goin' ter share 'em round?" said a hungry voice.

"Nah blooming fear I ain't—wot yer tike me for—eh?"

Every one was starving. I had managed to fish a lump of bone with a scrag of tough meat on it from the lukewarm slosh in our "dixie." But some one who was very hungry and very big came along and snatched it away before I could get my teeth in it.

We had continually to "fall in" in long rows and answer our names. This was "roll-call," and roll-call went on morning, noon, and night. Even when your own particular roll-call was not being called you could hear some other corporal or sergeant shouting—

"Jones F.—Wiggins, T.—Simons, G.— Harrison, I...." and so on all day long.

There were no ground-sheets to the tents. We squatted in the mud, and we had one blanket each, which was simply crawling.

We were indeed in a far worse condition than many savages. Then came the rain. We huddled into the tents. There were twenty-two in mine, and, as a bell-tent is full up with eighteen, you may imagine how thick the atmosphere became. One old man would smoke his clay-pipe with choking twist tobacco. Most of the others smoked rank and often damp "woodbines." The language was thick with grumbling and much swearing. At first it was not so bad. But some one touched the side of the tent and the rain began to dribble through. Then we found a tiny stream of wet slowly trickling along underneath the tent-walls towards the tent-pole, and by night time we were lying and sitting in a pool of mud.

About a week later when the sergeant-major told us on parade that we were "going to Tipperary" we all laughed, and no one believed it.

But the next day they marched us down to the Government siding and locked us all in a train, which took us right away to Fishguard.

Some of the men got some bread-and-cheese before starting, but I, in company with a good many others, did not.

The boat was waiting when they bundled us out on the quay.

It was a cattle-boat and very small and very smelly. There were no cabins or accommodation of any sort: only the cattle-stalls down below. Six hundred of us got aboard. Out of the six hundred, five hundred were sick. It was a very rough crossing, and we were all starving and shivering. I had nothing but what I stood up in—shirt, shorts, and cowboy-hat, and my old haversack, which contained soap, towel and razor, and also a sketch-book and a small colour-box.

The Irish sea-winds whistled up my shorts—but I preferred the icy wind to the stinking cattle-stalls and insect-infested straw below. We were packed in like sardines. Men were retching and groaning, cussing and growling. At last I found a coil of rope. It was a huge coil with a hole in the centre—something like a large bird's nest. I got into this hole and curled up like a dormouse. Here I did not feel the cold so much, and lying down I didn't feel sick. The moon glittered on the great gray billows. The cattle-boat heaved up and slid down the mountains. She pitched and rolled and slithered sideways down the wave-slopes. And so to Waterford.

From Waterford by train to Tipperary. It was early morning. The first thing I noticed was that the grass in Ireland was very green and that the fields were very small.

We had had no food for twenty-seven hours. I found a very hard crust of bread in my haversack, and eat it while the others were asleep in the carriage.

CHAPTER III. SNARED

"CRIMED"

"Off with his head," said the Queen.—Alice in Wonderland.

*"Charge against 31963—
Failing to drink some oniony tea;
Ha! Ha!
What! What!
I can have you SHOT!"*

*D'you realise that
I can have you lashed
To a wheel and smashed?
What?
Rot!
Yes—SHOT!
D'you realise this?
Right—turn!
DISMISS!"*

Lemnos: October 1915.

Born and bred in a studio, and brought up among the cloud-swept mountains of Westmorland, amid the purple heather and the sunset in the peat-moss puddles, barrack-life soon became like penal servitude. I was like a caged wild animal. I knew now why the tigers and leopards pace up and down, up and down, behind their bars at the Zoo.

We only stayed a week in the great, gray, prison-like barracks at Tipperary. We looked about for the "sweetest girl" of the song—but the "colleens" were disappointing. My heart was not "right there." We moved to Limerick; and in Limerick we stopped for seven solid months.

For seven months we did the same old squad-drill every day, at the same time, on the same old square, until at last we all began to be unbearably "fed up." The sections became slack at drill because they were over-drilled and sickened by the awful monotony of it all.

During those seven dreary months, in that dismal slum-grown town, we learnt all the tricks of barrack-life. We knew how to "come the old soldier"; we knew how and when to "wangle out" of doing this or that fatigue; we practised the ancient art of "going sick" when we knew a long route march was coming off next day.

We knew how to "square" the guard if we came in late, and the others learnt how to dodge church parade.

"'E never goes to church parade."

"No; 'e was a fly one—'e was."

"Wotchermean?"

"Put 'isself down as Quaker."

"Lummy—that's me next time I 'list—Quaker Oats!"

By this time I had been promoted to the rank of corporal.

Next to the regimental sergeant-major, I had the loudest drill voice on the square, and shouting at squad-drill and stretcher-drill was about the only thing I ever did well in the army—except that, having been a scout, I was able to instruct the signalling squad.

Route marches and field-days were a relief from the drill square. For five months we got no issue of khaki. Many of the men were through at the knees, and tattered at the elbows. Some were buttonless and patched. I had to put a patch in my shorts. Our civilian boots were wearing out—some were right through. Heels came off when they "right turned," others had their soles flapping as they marched.

My "batman," who cleaned my boots and swept out the bunk, had his trousers held together with a huge safety-pin. The people called us "Kitchener's Rag-time Army." We became so torn, and worn, and ragged, that it was impossible to go out in the town. Being the only one in scout rig-out I drew much attention.

"'Ere 'e comes, Moik-ell!"

"Kitchener's cowboy! Isn't he lovely!"

"Bejzus! so-it-is!"

"Come an' see Path-rick—Kitchener's cowboy!—by-the-holy-sufferin'-jzus!"

I found an old curio-shop down near the docks, and here I used to rummage among the gilded Siamese idols, and the painted African gods and drums. I discovered some odd parts of A Thousand-and-One Arabian Nights, which I bought for a penny or two, and took back to my barrack-room to read. By this means I forgot the gray square, and the gray line of the barracks outside, and the bare boards and yellow-washed walls within.

I used to practise "slipping" the guard at the guard-room gate. This form of amusement became quite exciting, and I was never caught at it.

Next I got a very old and worn copy of the Koran.

By this time I was a full-blown sergeant. I made a mistake in walking into the sergeants' mess with the Koran under my arm. It was difficult to explain what sort of book it was. One day the regimental sergeant-major said—

"You know, Hargrave, I can't make you out."

"No, sir?"

"No;—you're not a soldier, you never will be—you act the part pretty well. But you don't take things seriously enough."

We were often out on the Clare Mountains for field-days with the stretcher-squads. Coming back one day, I spotted two herons wading among some yellow-ochre sedges in a swampy field. I determined there and then to come back and stalk them. The following Saturday I set out with a fellow we called "Cherry Blossom," because he never cleaned his boots. I took a pair of field-glasses, and "Cherry" had a bag of pastries, which we bought on the way. We stalked those herons for hours and hours. We crept through the reeds, hid behind trees, and crawled into bushes, but the herons were better scouts. We only got about fifty yards up to one. For all that, it was like my old scout life—and we had had a break from the gray walls and the everlasting saluting of officers.

There were rumours of war, and that's all we knew of it. There were fresh rumours each day. We were going to Egypt. We were to be sent to the East Coast for "home defence." That offended our martial ardour. When were we going out? Should we ever get out? Had we got to do squad drill for "duration"? Had

Kitchener forgotten the Xth Division?

Now and then a batch of men were put into khaki which arrived at the quartermaster's stores in driblets. Some had greeny puttees and sandy slacks, a "civvy" coat and a khaki cap. Others were rigged out in "Kitchener's workhouse blue," with little forage caps on one side. The sprinkling of khaki and khaki-browns and greens increased every time we came on parade: until one day the whole of the three field ambulances were fitted out.

The drill went on like clockwork. It was as if some curse had fallen upon us. The officers were "fed up" you could see.

And now, just a word as to army methods. Immediately opposite the barracks was a cloth factory, which was turning out khaki uniforms for the Government every day.

For five months we went about in civilian clothes. We were a disgrace as we marched along. Yet because no order had been given to that factory to supply us with uniforms, we had to wait till the uniforms had been shipped to England, and then sent back to Ireland for us to wear!

The spark of patriotism which was in each man when he enlisted was dead. We detested the army, we hated the routine, we were sickened and dulled and crushed by drill.

The old habit of being always on the alert for anything picturesque saved me from idiotcy. Whenever opportunity offered, or whenever I could take French leave, I went off with sketchbook and pencil, and forgot for a time the horror of barrack-room life, with its unending flow of filthy language, and its barren desolation of yellow-washed walls and broken windows.

And then we moved to Dublin.

CHAPTER IV. CHARACTERS

It may be very amusing to read about "Kipps" and those commonplace people whom Mr. H.G. Wells describes so cleverly, but to have to live with them in barracks is far from pleasant.

There were shop-assistants, dental mechanics, city clerks, office boys, medical students, and a whole mass of very ordinary, very uninteresting people. There was a fair sprinkling of mining engineers and miners, and these men were more interesting and of a far stronger mental and physical development. They were huge, full-chested, strong-armed men who swore and drank heavily, but were honest and straight.

There were characters here from the docks and from the merchant service, some of whom had surely been created for W.W. Jacobs. One in particular—Joe Smith, a sailor-man (an engine-greaser, I think)—was full of queer yarns and seafaring talk. He was a little man with beady eyes and a huge curled moustache. He walked about quickly, with the seamen's lurch, as I have noticed most seagoing men of the merchant service do.

This man "came up" in bell-bottomed trousers and a pea jacket. He was fond of telling a yarn about a vessel which was carrying a snake in a crate from the West Indies. This snake got into the boiler when they were cleaning out the engine-room.

"The capt'in ses to me, 'Joe.' I ses, 'Yes-sir.' 'Joe,' says 'e, 'wot's to be done?'

"'Why,' ses I, 'thing is ter git this 'ere snake out ag'in!'

"'Jistso,' says the capt'in; 'but 'oo' ter do it?'—'E always left everythink ter me—and I ses, 'Why, sir, it's thiswise, if sobe all the others are afeared, I ain't, or my name's Double Dutch.'

"'Very good, melad,' ses the capt'in, 'I relies on you, Joe.'—'E always did—and would you believe it, I upped an 'looked that there great rattlesnake out of the boiler with an old hum-brella!"

There was a clerk who stood six-foot eight who was something of a "knut." He told me that at home he belonged to a "Lit'ry Society," and I asked him what books they had and which he liked.

"Books?" he asked. "'Ow d'yow mean?"

"You said a Literary Society, didn't you?"

"Oh yes, we 'ave got books. But, you know, we go down there and 'ave a concert, or read the papers, and 'ave a social, perhaps, you know; sometimes ask the girls round to afternoon tea."

I had a barrack-room full of these people to look after. Most of them got drunk. Once a young medical student tried to knife me with a Chinese jack-knife which his uncle, a missionary, had given him. He had "downed" too much whisky. Just as boys do at school, so these men formed into cliques, and "hung together" in twos and threes.

Some of them, like the "lit'ry society" clerk, had never seen much of life or people; had lived in a little suburban villa and pretended to be "City men." Others had knocked about all over the world. These were mostly seafaring men. Savage was such a one. He was one of the buccaneer type, strong and sunburnt, with tattooed arms. Often he sang an old sea-song, which always ended, "Forty-five fathom, and a clear sandy bottom!" He knew most of the sea chanties of the old days, one of which went something in this way—

*"Heave away Rio! Heave away Rio!
So fare thee well, my sweet pretty maid!
Heave away Rio! Heave away Rio!
For there's plenty of gold—so we've been told—
On the banks of the Sacrament—o!"*

An old Irish apple-woman used to come into the barracks, and sit by the side of the parade ground with two baskets of apples and a box of chocolate.

She did a roaring trade when we were dismissed from drill.

We always addressed her as "Mother." She looked so witch-like that one day I asked—

"Can you tell a fortune, Mother?"

"Lord-love-ye, no! Wad ye have the Cuss o' Jazus upon us all? Ye shud see the priest, sor."

"And can he?"

"No, Son! All witch-craftin' is forbid in the Book by the Holy Mother o' Gord, so they do be tellin' me."

"Can no one in all Ireland read a fortune now, Mother?"

"Ach, Son, 'tis died out, sure. Only in the old out-an'-away parts 'tis done; but 'tis terrible wicked!"

She was a good bit of colour. I have her still in my pocket-book. Her black shawl with her apples will always remind me of early barrack-days at Limerick if I live to be ninety.

CHAPTER V. I HEAR OF HAWK

Seldom are we lucky enough to meet in real life a character so strong and vivid, so full of subtle characteristics, that his appearance in a novel would make the author's name. Such a character was Hawk.

When you consider, you find that many an author of note has made a lasting reputation by evolving some such character; and in most cases this character has been "founded on fact." For example, Stevenson's "Long John Silver," Kipling's "Kim," and Rider Haggard's "Alan Quatermain."

Had Kipling met Hawk he would have worked him into a book of Indian soldier life; for Hawk was full of jungle adventures and stories of the Indian Survey Department and the Khyber Pass; while his descriptions of Kashmir and Secunderabad, with its fakirs and jugglers, monkey temples and sacred bulls, were superb.

On the other hand, Haggard would have placed him "somewhere in Africa," a strong, hard man trekking across the African veldt he knew so well; for Hawk had been in the Boer War.

Little did I realise when I met him on the barrack-square at Limerick how fate would throw us together upon the scorching sands and rocky ridges of Gallipoli, nor could either of us foresee the hairbreadth escapes and queer corners in which we found ourselves at Suvla Bay and on the Serbian frontier.

I spotted him in the crowd as the only man on parade with a strong, clear-cut face. I noted his drooping moustache, and especially his keen grey eyes, which glittered and looked through and through. Somewhere, I told myself, there was good blood at the back of beyond on his line of descent. I was right, for, as he told me later, when I had come to know him as a trusty friend, he came from a Norseman stock. The jaw was too square and heavy, but the high-built chiselled nose and the deep-set clear grey eyes were a "throw-back" on the old Viking trail. Although dressed in ragged civilian clothes he looked a huge, full-grown, muscular man; active and well developed, with the arms of a miner and the chest of a gorilla. On one arm I remember he had a heart with a dagger through it tattooed in blue and red.

I heard of him first as one to be shunned and feared. For it was said that "when in drink" he would pick up the barrack-room fender with one hand and hurl it across the room. I was told that he was a master of the art of swearing—that he could pour forth a continual flow of oaths for a full five minutes without repeating one single "cuss."

My interest was immediately aroused. I smelt adventure, and I was on the adventure trail. Hawk was not in my barrack-room, and therefore I knew but little of him while in the old country. I heard that he had been galloper-dispatch-rider to Lord Kitchener in South Africa, and I tried to get him to talk about it. As an "artist's model," for a canvas to be called "The Buccaneer," Hawk was perfect. I never saw a man so splendidly developed.

And Hawk was fifty years old! You would take him for thirty-nine or so.

But "drink and the devil had done for the rest"—Hawk himself acknowledged it. His vices were the vices of a strong man, and when he was drunk he was "the very devil."

He was "the old soldier," and knew all the ins and outs of army life. I quickly became entangled in the interest of unravelling his complex nature. On the one hand he was said to be a desperado and double-dyed liar. On the other hand, if he respected you, he would always tell you the naked truth, and would never "let you down." He knew drink was his ruin, but he could not and would not stop it. Yet his advice to me was always good. Indeed, although he had the reputation of a bold, bad blackguard, he never led any one else on the "wrong trail," and his advice to young soldiers in the barrack-rooms was wonderfully clear and useful.

If he respected you, you could trust your life with him. If he didn't, you could "look up" for trouble. He was honest and "square"—if he liked you—but he could make things disappear by "sleight of hand" in a manner worthy of a West End conjurer.

He was a miner, and had a sound knowledge of mining and practical geology which many a science-master might have been proud of. He had the eyes of a trained observer, and I afterwards discovered he was a crack shot.

Some months later, when the A.S.C. ambulance drivers were exercising their horses, he showed himself a good rough-rider, and I recalled his "galloper" days. And again at Lemnos and Suvla he was a splendid swimmer. He was an all-round man. Unlike the other men in barracks—the shop assistants and clerks—Hawk never missed noticing small things, and it was this which first drew my attention to him.

I remember one night hearing a woman's voice wailing a queer Hindoo chant. It came from the barrack-room door. Afterwards I discovered it was Hawk sitting on his trestle bed cross-legged, with a bit of sacking and ashes on his head imitating the death-wail of an Indian woman for her dead husband.

Hawk knew all the rites and ceremonies of the various Hindoo castes, and could act the part of a fakir or a bazaar-wullah with wonderful realism.

By turns Hawk was a heavy drinker and a clear-brained man of action, calm in danger.

In those early days of my "military career" I looked upon him only as an author looks upon an interesting character.

Months afterwards, on the death-swept peninsula, Hawk and I became fast friends. The "bad man" of the ambulance became the most useful, most faithful, in my section. We went everywhere together—like "Horace and Holly" of Rider Haggard fame: he the great, strong man, and I the young artist scout.

If Hawk was out of camp, you could bet I was also—and vice-versa.

Of Hawk more anon.

CHAPTER VI. ON THE MOVE

We moved to Dublin after seven months of drill and medical lectures in barracks at Limerick.

After about a fortnight in the Portobello Barracks we crossed to England and pitched our camp at Basingstoke. Here we had two or three months' divisional training. The whole of the Xth Division—about 25,000 men—used to turn out for long route-marches.

We were out in all weathers. We took no tents, and "slept out." This was nothing to me, as I had done it on my own when scouting hundreds of times. It amused me to hear the men grumbling about the hard ground, and to see them rubbing their hips when they got up. It was a hard training. Still we didn't seem to be going out, and once again, the novelty of a new place having worn off, we became unspeakably "fed up."

Here at Basingstoke we were inspected by the King, and later by Lord Kitchener.

Then came the issue of pith helmets and khaki drill uniforms, and the Red Cross brassards on the left arm.

Rumour ran riot. We were going to India; we were going to East Africa... some one even mentioned Japan! There was a new rumour each day.

Then one day, at brief notice, we were quietly entrained at Basingstoke and taken down to the docks at Devonport before anyone had wind of the matter.

All our ambulance wagons, and field medical equipment in wickerwork panniers, went with us, and it would astonish a civilian to see the amount of stores and Red Cross materials with which a field ambulance moves. And so, after much waiting about, aboard the Canada.

CHAPTER VII. MEDITERRANEAN NIGHTS

Intricate and vivid detail leave a more startling imprint on the memory-film than the main purport of any great adventure, whether it be a polar expedition, a new discovery, or such a stupendous undertaking as that in which we were now involved.

The fact of our departure had been carefully kept quiet, and our destination was unknown. It might have been a secret expedition in search of buried treasure. Yet, in spite of all precaution, we might be torpedoed at any moment and go down with all hands, or strike a mine and be blown up. We knew that victory or defeat were hanging in the balance, and perhaps the destiny of nations. But while the magnitude of the venture has left no impression—I cannot recall that we ever spoke about it—commonplace details remain.

The pitch bubbling in the seams under a Mediterranean sun; the queer iridescent shapes of glowing, greenish phosphorus in the nighttime sea; the butter melting into yellow oil on the plate on the saloon table; the sickly smell of steam and grease and oil from the engine-room; the machine gun fixed at the stern with its waterproof hood; the increasing brilliance of the stars, and the rapid descent of evening upon the splendid colour-prism of a Mediterranean sunset—these, and thousands of other intimate commonplaces, are inlaid for ever in my mind.

We went about in our shirts and drill "slacks," and the scorching boards of the deck blistered our naked feet. In a few days we became sun-tanned. Each one of us had a sunburnt V-shaped triangle on the chest where we left our shirts open.

The voyage was uneventful. The food was poor. There was very little fresh water to drink. It was July. The heat was fatiguing, and the sun-glare blinding.

The coast of Algeria on our right looked bare and terribly forsaken. It had an awfulness about it—a mystery look; it looked like a "juju" country, with its sandy spit running like a narrow ribbon to the blue sea, and its hazy, craggy mountains quivering in the noonday heat.

Hawk and I were in the habit of coming up from our bunks in the evening. We used to lean over the handrail and watch the wonder of a Mediterranean sunset transform in schemes of peacock-blue and beetle-green, down and down, through emerald, pale gold and lemon yellow, and so to the horizon of the inland sea, in bands of deep chrome and orange, scarlet, mauve and purple.

Hawk was the only man I discovered in all those hundreds of apparently commonplace souls who could really appreciate and never tire of watching and discussing these things.

I had often heard of the blue of the Mediterranean. But I must confess that I rather thought it had been exaggerated by authors, artists and poets as a fruitful and beautiful source of inspiration.

I never saw such blues before: electric-blue and deep, seething navy blue, flecked with foam and silver

spray; calm lapis-lazuli blue; a sort of greeny, mummy-case blue; flashing, silk-shot blue, like a kingfisher's feathers. Sometimes the sea was as calm as a mill-pond, and you could see down and down and down.

There is a certain milky look in the waters of the Mediterranean which I never saw anywhere else. What it is I do not know, but it hangs in the water like a cloud. Once there was a shoal of porpoises playing round us, and they curled and dived and flopped in the warm blue seas.

At night Hawk and I stood for hours watching first one constellation "light up," and then another, till the whole purple-velvet of the Mediterranean night sky was pinholed with the old familiar star-designs.

It struck me as most extraordinary, and almost uncanny, to see the same old stars we knew in England, still above us, so many hundred miles from home.

Phosphorescent fragments went floating along beneath us like bits of broken moonlight.

In watching and talking of these things, I quickly perceived in Hawk a man who not only noticed small detail and took a real interest in Nature, but one who had a sound, natural philosophy and a good idea of the reasonable and scientific explanation of things which so many people either ignore or look upon as "atheistic."

We did not yet know whither we were sailing. We knew we were part of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, and that was all.

One day we put in at Malta.

Here the fruit-boats, all painted green and red and white and blue, came rowing out to meet us. The Maltese who manned them stood upto row their oars-and rowed the right way forwards, instead of facing the wrong way, as we do in England. They were selling tomatoes and pears, apples, chocolate, cigars, cigarettes, Turkish delight, and lace.

Continually they cried their goods—

"Cee-gar-ette!"

"Cee-gar-ette!"

"Tomart! Tomart!"

One man recognised us as the Irish Division, and shouted—

"Irish! Irish! My father Irish—from Dundee!"

Here were diving-boys in their own tiny boats, diving for pennies. They were wonderfully lithe and graceful, with sun-tanned limbs and dripping black hair.

Here, too, was a huge old man, who was also diving for pennies and tins of bully-beef. He was fat and sun-browned, and his muscles and chest were well developed.

"Me dive for bully-beef!" he shouted. "Me dive for bully-beef!"

Never once did he fail to retrieve these tins when they were chucked overboard.

The tomatoes were very large and ripe, and the tobacco and cigarettes exceedingly cheap and good. Most of the men got a stock.

The next day we put to sea again.

It was a real voyage of adventure, for here we were, on an unknown course, sailing under sealed orders, no one knew whither, nor did we know what would be the climax to this great enterprise.

Would any of us ever return across those blue-green waters?... Or would our bones lie, a few days hence, bleaching on the yellow sands? ... Mystery and adventure sailed with us—and each day the heat increased. The sun blazed from a brazen sky, the shadow of the halyards and the great ventilators were clear-cut black silhouettes upon the baking decks.

The decks were crammed with that same khaki crowd of civilians who had cursed and sworn and drilled and growled for ten long months in the Old Country. You imagine what desperate adventurers they had suddenly become. Some had never been out of Ireland, others had been as far as Portsmouth, and taken a return voyage to the Isle of Wight. And each day we zigzagged across the blue seas towards some unknown Fate... death, perhaps... victory or failure—who could tell?

Until one day a thin, yellowish-white streak appeared upon the sea-line; little groups of palms huddled together, and here and there a white dome or a needle-minaret. And so we warped into harbour, through the boom and past the lightships, to join the crowd of transports and battle cruisers lying off this muddled city—the city of wonderful colour, Alexandria.

CHAPTER VIII. THE CITY OF WONDERFUL COLOUR: ALEXANDRIA

*Scarlet-orange;
Beetle-green,
Flashing like a magic screen.
Silken garment,
'Broidered hood;
Richly woven gown;
Flashing like a pantomime,
In and out Aladdin's town.*

*Fretted lattice;
Dancing girl;
Drooping lash and ebon curl.
Silver tassel;*

*Scented room;
Almond "glad"-eye-look.
Queersome figures prowling round,
From some kiddies' picture-book.*

*Graeco-Serbian Frontier,
J. H., October 1915.*

The coal-yards and dingy quays looked gray and chill. Here were gray-painted Government sheds, with white numbers on the sliding doors, dull gray trucks, and dirty sidings.

A couple of Egyptian native police in khaki drill, brown belts, side-arms, red fezes, and carrying canes, both smoking cigarettes, swaggered up and down in front of an arc-light.

There were dump-yards and gray tin offices, rusty cranes, and a gray floating quay. Gangs of Egyptian beggars in ragged clothes and a flock of little brown children continually dodged the native police as we sailed slowly through the docks. They were the only touch of colour in a muddle of Government buildings, stores, and transport ships.

We were all crowding to the handrail looking overboard. The Egyptian sunset had just vanished and the deep blue of an Eastern night held the docks in a haze of gloom.

The pipe band of the Inniskillings was playing "The Wearin' o' the Green" in that mournful, gurgling chant which we came to know so well.

One of the little Egyptian beggar-girls was dancing to it on the floating quay down below us by the flicker of the arc-lamp. She was a tiny mite, with a shock of black hair and brown face and arms. She wore a pink dress with some brass buttons hung round her neck. She danced with all the supple gracefulness of the out-door tribes of the desert, never out of step, always true and rhythmic in every motion of arms and body.

When the pipes on board trailed away with a hiss of wind and a choking, gurgling noise into silence the little dancing girl began to sing in a deep, musical voice—the voice of one who has lived out-of-doors in tents

*"Itta long way—Tipple-airy!
—Long way to go!
—Long way—Tipple-airy!
Sweetie girl I know!..."*

She sang in broken English, and danced to the tune, which she knew perfectly.

The khaki crowd aboard whistled and cheered and laughed. Some one threw a penny. The whole gang of beggars scrambled after it, and there ensued a scrimmage with much shouting and swearing in Arabic.

We could see the city lit up beyond the dull gray docks.

Next morning we went for a route march through Alexandria. We marched through the dockyards. Gangs of native workmen in native costume-coloured robes and bare feet, turbans and red fezes—were working on the transports, unloading box after box of bully-beef and biscuit and piling them in huge "dumps" on the quays. Rusty chains clanked, steam cranes rattled and puffed out whiffs of white steam.

But they did not hustle or hurry. They worked under the direction of English sergeants and officers, loading and unloading.

At last we got outside the zone of awful ugliness which follows the British wherever they go. The docks were left behind and the change was sudden and startling.

It was like putting down a novel by Arnold Bennett and taking up the Koran.

I did not trouble to keep in step or "cover off." My eyes were trying to take in the splendid Eastern scenes. Here were figures which had come right out of the Arabian Nights.

Was that not Haroun Al Raschid, Commander of the Faithful, disguised as a water-carrier, with a goatskin bottle slung over his shoulder, and great yellow baggy trousers and a striped cummerbund?

Here were veiled women and old men squatting under their open bazaar fronts, with coloured mats and blinds strung across the narrow streets. Fruit sellers surrounded by melons, and beans, tomatoes and figs and dates—a jumble of colour, orange, scarlet, green, and gold. Pitchers and jars and woven carpets; queer Eastern scents; shuttered windows and flat roofs, mules and here and there a loaded camel, two Jews in black robes, a band of wild-looking desert wanderers in white with hoods and veils.

Egyptian women carrying little brown babies; who would believe there could be such figures, such colour and picturesque compositions?

It was a short march, but we saw much.

So this was the land of Egypt. It was good. What a pity we could see so little of it...

There were very smartly dressed French women with faces powdered and painted and scented. Old men with hollow eyes and yellow parchment skins all creased and wrinkled squatted on the cobble-stones, smoking hubble-bubbles and long ivory-stemmed pipes.

Arab boys selling oranges ran about the streets. The heat was stifling—the shadows purple-black, the sunlight glared golden-white on the buildings and towers and minarets.

Here were curio-shops with queer oriental carvings and alabaster figures.

It was like a chapter of my *Thousand-and-One Nights* come true, and I remembered the gray barracks at Limerick and the incessant drill.

At last we marched back through the docks and aboard the Canada. Next morning we were sailing far away upon a blue sea. Just a glimpse of the city of wonderful colour and we were once more creeping closer and closer to the mystery of our unknown venture.

Many of us would never pass that way again—and each one wondered sometimes if he would be claimed by that Mechanical Death which none of us fully realised.

Only a few short hours—a day or two longer—and we should be plunged into battle. A bullet for one, shrapnel for another, dysentery for a third, a bayonet or death from weakness and starvation.

The great game of luck was gathering faster and faster. We loafed about on deck and wondered where we were going and what it would be like... our minds were thinking of the immediate future. Each one tried to make out he didn't care, but each one was thinking upon the same subject—his luck, fate, kismet. How many would return to old England—should I be one; or would the Eastern sunshine blaze down upon my decomposing body on some barren sandy shore?

We passed many of the Greek Islands—some came up pink and mauve out of the sea, others were green with vineyards; once or twice a little triangular-sailed boat bobbed along the coast.

The uncertainty was a strain, and we felt utterly cut off, until at last we sighted a sandy streak, and later a line of volcanic-looking peaks—the Isle of Lemnos.

CHAPTER IX. MAROONED ON LEMNOS ISLAND

LEMNOS HARBOUR

*Within the outer anchorage
The ancient Argonauts lay to;
Little they dreamt—that dauntless crew—
That here to-day in the sheltered bay
Where the seas are still and blue,
Great battle-ships should froth and
hum, And mighty transport-vessels come
Serenely floating through.*

*With magic sail the Argonauts
Stood by to go about;
Little they thought—that hero band—
As they made once more for an unknown land
In a world of terror and doubt,
That here in the wake of the magical bough
Should come the all-terrible ironclad now
Serenely floating out.*

Written on Mudros Beach: Oct. 7, 1915.

July the twenty-seventh.

The deadly silence...

The tenderfoot on an expedition of this sort naturally expects to find himself plunged into a whirl of noise and tumult.

The crags were colourless and shimmering in the heat. The harbour was calm and greeny-blue. One by one, with our haversacks and water-bottles, belts and rolled overcoats, we went down the companion-way into the waiting surf-boats. Again and again these boats, roped together and tugged by a little launch, went back and forth from the S.S. Canada to the "Turk's Head Pier"—a tiny wooden jetty built by the Engineers.

I asked one of the straw-hatted men of the Naval Division, who was casting off the painter, what the place was like—

"Sand an' flies, and flies an' sand—nothinkelse!" he replied.

No sooner ashore than the green and black flies came pestering and tormenting like a host of wicked jinn. The glare of sunlight on the yellow sand hurt the eyes. The deadly silence of the place was oppressive—especially when you had strung yourself up to concert pitch to face the crash and turmoil of a fearful battle.

The quiet isolation and khaki desolation of jagged peaks and sandy slopes was nerve-breaking.

You could see the thin lines of the wireless station and little groups of white bell-tents dotted here and there.

Robinson Crusoe wasn't in it. Sand and flies and sun; sun and flies and sand.

"Wot 'ave we struck 'ere, Bill?"

"Some d—d desert island, I reckon!"

"A blasted heath..."

"Gordlummy, look at the d—d flies!"

"Curse the — sun; sweat's trickling down me back."

"And curse all the d—d issue..."

"What the holy son of Moses did we join for?"

We growled and groaned and cursed our luck. The sweat ran down under our pith helmets and soaked in a stream from under our armpits. We trudged to our camping-place along the shore. One or two Greek natives followed us about with melons to sell. Parched and choked with sand, we were only too glad to buy these water-melons for two or three leptas.

The rind was green like a vegetable marrow, but the inside was yellow with pink and crimson pips—the colour of a Mediterranean sunset.

One day ashore on this accursed island and the diarrhoea set in. I never saw men suffer such awful stomach-pains before. The continual eating of melons to allay the blistering thirst helped the disease. Many

men slept close to the latrines, too weak to crawl to and fro all night long. The sun blazed, and the flies in thousands of millions swarmed and irritated from early morning till sundown.

At night it was cold. The stars burned white-hot—a calm, fierce glitter.

Hawk and I “kipped down” (slept) together on a sandy stretch overlooking the bay. We could see the green-and-red electric lights of the hospital ships waiting in the harbour—for us, perhaps...

The “graft” (work) was fearful. All day long we were at it: hauling up our equipment from the beach where it had been dumped ashore. Medical panniers, operating marquee, tents and tent-poles, cook-house dixies, picks and shovels, bully and biscuit boxes and a hundred-and-one articles necessary to the work of the Medical Corps in the field: all this had to be man-handled through the sand up to our camp about a mile away. And the sun blazed, and the flies pestered and stung and buzzed and fought with each other for the drops of sweat streaming down your face. How long should we be here? When were we going into action?... The suspense was brain-racking. The diarrhoea increased: everyone went down with it. Some got the ague shivers and some a touch of dysentery.

We became gloomy and bodily sick. We wanted to get into it—into action...

Anything would be better than this God-forsaken island. Why the dickens did they leave us moping here: working in the blazing heat, and crawling to the latrines in the chilly nights? For goodness' sake, let's get out of it! Let's get to work!... So the days dragged on.

The natives wore baggy trousers and coloured head-bands. They sat all day near our camp selling melons, tomatoes, very cheap and tasteless chocolates, raisins, figs and dates.

We used to go down to swim in the little bay-like semicircle of the harbour. The water was always warm and very salt. Here were tiny shoals of tiny fish. The water was clear and glassy. There were pinky sea-urchins with spikey spines which jabbed your feet. The sandy bed of the bay was all ribbed with ripples.

The island was humming and ticking like a watch with insect-noises: otherwise the deadly silence held. There were red-winged grasshoppers and great green-gray locust-looking crickets which whistled and “cricked” all night.

We had to fetch our water from the water-tank boats, about a mile and a half distant, and haul it up in a water-cart.

Gangs of natives were working under the military authorities. There were Greeks and Greek-Armenians, Turks and Ethiopians, Egyptians and half-breeds of all kinds from Malta and Gib. They were employed in making roads and clearing the ground for huts and camps.

And all the time we had no letters from home. We were actually marooned on Lemnos Island: as literally marooned on a barren desert isle as any buccaneer of the old Spanish galleon days. We went suddenly back to a savage life. We went down to bathe stark naked, with the sunset glowing orange on our sunburnt limbs. Here it was that Hawk proved himself a wonderfully good swimmer. He was lithe and supple and well-made—an extraordinary specimen of virile manhood—and he spent his fiftieth birthday on Lemnos!

One day came the order to pack up and man-handle all our stuff down to the beach ready for re-embarkation. At last we were on the move. We worked with a will now. The great day would soon dawn. Some of us would get “put out of mess,” no doubt, but this waiting about to get killed was much worse than plunging into the thick of it.

August the 6th saw us steaming out at night towards the great unknown climax—the New Landing.

CHAPTER X. THE NEW LANDING

A pale pink sunrise burst across the eastern sky as our transport came steaming into the bay. The haze of early morning dusk still held, blurring the mainland and water in misty outlines.

Hawk and I had slept upon the deck. Now we got up and stretched our cramped limbs. Slowly we warped through the quiet seas.

You must understand that we knew not where we were. We had never heard of Suvla Bay—we didn't know what part of the Peninsula we had reached. The mystery of the adventure made it all the more exciting. It was to be “a new landing by the Xth Division”—that was all we knew.

Some of us had slept, and some had lain awake all night. Rapidly the pink sunrise swept behind the rugged mountains to the left, and was reflected in wobbling ripples in the bay.

We joined the host of battleships, monitors, and troopships standing out, and “stood by.”

We could hear the rattle of machine-guns in the distant gloom beyond the streak of sandy shore. The decks were crowded with that same khaki crowd. We all stood eagerly watching and listening. The death-silence had come upon us. No one spoke. No one whistled.

We could see the lighters and small boats towing troops ashore. We saw the men scramble out, only to be blown to pieces by land mines as they waded to the beach. On the Lala Baba side we watched platoons and companies form up and march along in fours, all in step, as if they were on parade.

“In fours!” I exclaimed to Hawk, who was peering through my field-glasses.

“Sheer murder,” said Hawk.

No sooner had he spoken than a high explosive from the Turkish positions on the Sari Bair range came screaming over the Salt Lake: “Z-z-z-e-e-e-o-o-o-p—Crash!”

They lay there like a little group of dead beetles, and the wounded were crawling away like ants into the dead yellow grass and the sage bushes to die. A whole platoon was smashed.

It was not yet daylight. We could see the flicker of rifle-fire, and the crackle sounded first on one part of the bay, and then another. Among the dark rocks and bushes it looked as if people were striking thousands of matches.

Mechanical Death went steadily on. Four Turkish batteries on the Kislar Dargh were blown up one after the other by our battleships. We watched the thick rolling smoke of the explosions, and saw bits of wheels, and the arms and legs of gunners blown up in little black fragments against that pearl-pink sunrise.

The noise of Mechanical Battle went surging from one side of the bay to the other—it swept round suddenly with an angry rattle of maxims and the hard echoing crackle of rifle-fire.

Now and then our battle-ships crashed forth, and their shells went hurtling and screaming over the mountains to burst with a muffled roar somewhere out of sight.

Mechanical Death moved back and forth. It whistled and screamed and crashed. It spat fire, and unfolded puffs of grey and white and black smoke. It flashed tongues of livid flame, like some devilish ant-eater lapping up its insects... and the insects were the sons of men.

Mechanical Death, as we saw him at work, was hard and metallic, steel-studded and shrapnel-toothed. Now and then he bristled with bayonets, and they glittered here and there in tiny groups, and charged up the rocks and through the bushes.

The noise increased. Mechanical Death worked first on our side, and then with the Turks. He led forward a squad, and the next instant mowed them down with a hail of lead. He galloped up a battery, unlimbered—and before the first shell could be rammed home Mechanical Death blew the whole lot up with a high explosive from a Turkish battery in the hills.

And so it went on hour after hour. Crackle, rattle and roar; scream, whistle and crash. We stood there on the deck watching men get killed. Now and then a shell came wailing and moaning across the bay, and dropped into the water with a great column of spray glittering in the early morning sunshine. A German Taube buzzed overhead; the hum-hum-hum of the engine was very loud. She dropped several bombs, but none of them did much damage. The little yellow-skinned observation balloon floated above one of our battleships like a penny toy. The Turks had several shots at it, but missed it every time.

The incessant noise of battle grew more distant as our troops on shore advanced. It broke out like a bush-fire, and spread from one section to another. Mechanical Death pressed forward across the Salt Lake. It stormed the heights of the Kapanja Sirt on the one side, and took Lala Baba on the other. Puffs of smoke hung on the hills, and the shore was all wreathed in the smoke of rifle and machine-gun fire. A deadly conflict this—for one Turk on the hills was worth ten British down below on the Salt Lake.

There was no glory. Here was Death, sure enough—Mechanical Death run amok—but where was the glory?

Here was organised murder—but it was steel-cold! There was no hand-to-hand glory. A mine dispersed you before you had set foot on dry land; or a high explosive removed your stomach, and left you a mangled heap of human flesh, instead of a medically certified, healthy human being.

Mechanical Death wavered and fluctuated—but it kept going. If it slackened its murderous fire at one side of the bay, it was only to burst forth afresh upon the other.

We wondered how it was that we were still alive, when so many lay dead. Some were killed on the decks of the transports by shrapnel.

Our monitors crept close to the sandy shore, and poured out a deadly brood of Death.

The crack and crash was deafening, and it literally shook the air... it quivered like a jelly after each shot.

The fighting got more and more inland, and the rattle and crackle fainter and farther away. But we still watched, fascinated.

The little groups of men lay in exactly the same positions on the beach. That platoon by the side of Lala Baba lay in a black bunch—stone dead. We could see our artillery teams galloping along like a team of performing fleas, taking up new positions behind Lala Baba. So this is war? Well, it's pretty awful! Wholesale murder... what's it all for? Wonder how long we shall last alive before Mechanical Death blows our brains out, or a leg off...

Queer thing, war! Didn't think it was quite like this! So mechanical and senseless.

And now came the time for us to land. A lighter came alongside, with a little red-bearded man in command

—
“Remind you of any one?” I said to Hawk.

“Cap'n Kettle!”

“Yes!”

He was exactly like Cutcliffe Hyne's famous “Kettle,” except that he smoked a pipe. We huddled into the lighter, and hauled our stores down below. Some of us were “green about the gills,” and some were trying to pretend we didn't care.

We watched the boat which landed just before us strike a mine and be blown to pieces. Encouraging sight... At last we reached the tiny cove, and the lighter let down a sort of tail-board on the sand.

CHAPTER XI. THE KAPANJA SIRT

One had his stomach blown out, and the other his chest blown in. The two bodies lay upon the sand as we stepped down.

The metallic rattle of the firing-line sounded far away. We man-handled all our medical equipment and

stores from the hold of the lighter to the beach.

We had orders to "fall in" the stretcher-bearers, and work in open formation to the firing-line.

The Kapanja Sirt runs right along one side of Suvla Bay. It is one wing of that horse-shoe formation of rugged mountains which hems in the Anafarta Ova and the Salt Lake.

Our searching zone for wounded lay along this ridge, which rises like the vertebrae of some great antediluvian reptile—dropping sheer down on the Gulf of Saros side, and, in varying slopes, to the plains and the Salt Lake on the other.

Here again small things left a vivid impression—the crack of a rifle from the top of the ridge, and a party of British climbing up the rocks and scrub in search of the hidden Turk.

The smell of human blood soaking its way into the sand from those two "stiffies" on the beach. The sullen silence, except for the distant crackle and the occasional moan of a shell. The rain which came pelting down in great cold blobs, splashing and soaking our thin drill clothes till we were wet to the skin and shivering with cold.

We were all thinking: "Who will be the first to get plugged?" We moved slowly along the ridge, searching every bush and rock for signs of wounded men.

We wondered what the first case would be—and which squad would come across it.

I worked up and down the line of squads trying to keep them in touch with each other. We were carrying stretchers, haversacks, iron rations, medical haversacks, medical water-bottles, our own private water-bottles (filled on Lemnos Island), and three "monkey-boxes" or field medical companions.

Those we had left on the beach were busy putting up the operating marquee and other tents, and the cooks in getting a fire going and making tea.

The stretcher-squads worked slowly forward. We passed an old Turkish well with a stone-flagged front and a stone trough. Later on we came upon the trenches and bivouacs of a Turkish sniping headquarters. There were all kinds of articles lying about which had evidently belonged to Turkish officers: tobacco in a heap on the ground near a bent willow and thorn bivouac; part of a field telephone with the wires running towards the upper ridges of Sirt; the remains of some dried fish and an earthenware jar or "chattie" which had held some kind of wine; a few very hard biscuits, and a mass of brand-new clothing, striped shirts and white shirts, grey military overcoats, yellow leather shoes with pointed toes, a red fez, a great padded body-belt with tapes to tie it, a pair of boots, and some richly coloured handkerchiefs and waistbands all striped and worked and fringed.

It was near here that our first man was killed later in the day. He was looking into one of these bivouacs, and was about to crawl out when a bullet went through his brain. It was a sniper's shot. We buried him in an old Turkish trench close by, and put a cross made of a wooden bully-beef crate over him.

The sun now blazed upon us, and our rain-soaked clothes were steaming in the heat. The open fan-like formation in which we moved was not a success. We lost the officers, and continually got out of touch with each other.

At last we reached the zone of spent bullets. "Z-z-z-z-e-e-e-e-pp!—zing!" "S-s-s-ipp!"

"That one was jist by me left ear!" said Sergeant Joe Smith, although as a matter of fact it was yards above his head. Here, among a hail of moaning spent shots, our officers called a halt, made us fall in, in close formation, and we retired—what for I do not know.

We went back as far as the old Turkish well. Here Hawk had something to say.

"Our place is advancing," said he, "not retiring because of a few spent bullets. There's men there dying for want of medical attention—bleeding to death."

The next time we went forward that day was in Indian file, each stretcher-squad following the one in front.

A parson came with us. I marched just behind the adjutant, and the parson walked with me. He was a big man and a fair age. We went past the well and the bivouacs. I could see he was very nervous.

"Do you think we are out of danger here?" he asked.

"I think so, sir" (we were three miles from the firing-line). A few paces further on—

"I wonder how far the firing-line is?"

"Couldn't say, sir."

A yard or so, and then—

"D'you suppose the British are advancing?"

"I hope so." And after a minute or two—

"I wonder if there are any Turks near here...?"

I made no answer, and marvelled greatly that the "man of God" should not be better prepared to meet "his Maker," of Whom in civil life he had talked so much.

It was just then that I spotted it—a little black figure, motionless, away beyond the bushes on the right.

CHAPTER XII. THE SNIPER-HUNT

He lay flat under a huge rock. I left the stretcher-squads, and, crawling behind a bush, looked through the glasses. It certainly was a Turk, and his position was one of hiding. He kept perfectly motionless on his stomach and his rifle lay by his side.

I sent a message to pass the word up to the leading squads for Hawk. Quickly he came down to me and took

the glasses. He had wonderful sight. After looking for a few seconds he agreed that it looked like a Turkish sniper lying in wait.

"Let's go and see, anyway," said I.

"Chance it?"

"Yes."

"Righto."

Hawk led the way down into the thorn-bushes and dried-up plants. I followed close at his heels. We crouched as we went and kept well under cover. Hawk took a semicircular route, which I could see would ultimately bring us out by the side of the rock under which the sniper hid.

Now we caught a glimpse of the little dark figure—then we plunged deeper into the rank willow-growth and bore round to the right.

Hawk unslung the great jack-knife which hung round his waist and silently opened the gleaming blade. I did the same.

"I'll surprise him; you can leave it to me to get in a good slash," said Hawk, and I saw the great muscles of his miner's arms tighten. "But if he gets one in on me," he whispered, "be ready with your knife at the back of his neck."

A few steps farther brought us suddenly upon the rock and the sniper. Hawk was immediately in front of me, and his arm was held back ready for a mighty blow. He stood perfectly still looking at the rock, and I watched his muscles relax.

"See it?" he said.

"What?"

"Dead."

There was the Turk—a great heat-swollen figure stinking in the sunshine. As I moved forward a swarm of green and black flies, which had been feeding on his face and crawling up his nostrils, went up in a humming, buzzing cloud.

A bit of wood lying near had looked like his rifle from a distance; and now we saw that, instead of lying on his stomach, he was lying on his back, and looked as if he had been killed by shrapnel.

"Putrid stink," said I; "come on—let's clear out."

And so our sniper-hunt led to nothing but a dead Turk stewing in the glaring sunshine. We rejoined the squads. No one had missed us. This first day was destined to be one of many adventures.

CHAPTER XIII. THE ADVENTURE OF THE WHITE PACK-MULE

That night was dark, with no stars. I didn't know what part of Gallipoli we were in, and the maps issued were useless.

The first cases had been picked up close to the firing-line, and were mostly gun-shot wounds, and now—late in the evening—all my squads having worked four miles to the beach, I was trying to get my own direction back to the ambulance.

The Turks seldom fired at night, so that it was only the occasional shot of a British rifle, or the sudden "pop-pop-pop-pop-pop!" of a machine-gun which told me the direction of the firing-line.

I trudged on and on in the dark, stumbling over rocks and slithering down steep crags, tearing my way through thorns and brambles, and sometimes rustling among high dry grass.

Queer scents, pepperminty and sage-like smells, came in whiffs. It was cold. I must have gone several miles along the Kapanja Sirt when I came to a halt and once more tried to get my bearings. I peered at the gloomy sky, but there was no star. I listened for the lap-lap of water on the beach of Suvla Bay, but I must have been too far up the ridges to hear anything. There was dead silence. When I moved a little green lizard scuttled over a white rock and vanished among the dead scrub.

I was past feeling hungry, although I had eaten one army biscuit in the early morning and had had nothing since.

It was extraordinarily lonely. You may imagine how queer it was, for here was I, trying to get back to my ambulance headquarters at night on the first day of landing—and I was hopelessly lost. It was impossible to tell where the firing-line began. I reckoned I was outside the British outposts and not far from the Turkish lines. Once, as I went blundering along over some rocks, a dark figure bolted out of a bush and ran away up the ridge in a panic.

"Halt!" I shouted, trying to make believe I was a British armed sentry. But the figure ran on, and I began to stride after it. This led me up and up the ridge over very broken ground. Whoever it was (it was probably a Turkish sniper, for there were many out night-scouting) I lost sight and sound of him.

I went climbing steadily up till at last I found myself looking into darkness. I got down on my hands and knees and peered over the edge of a ridge of rock. I could see a tiny beam of light away down, and this beam grew and grew as it slowly moved up and up till it became a great triangular ray. It swept slowly along the top of what I now saw was a steep precipice sloping sheer down into blackness below. One step further and I should have gone hurtling into the sea. For, although I did not then know it, this was the topmost ridge of the Kapanja Sirt.

The great searchlight came nearer and nearer, and I slid backwards and lay on my stomach looking over.

The nearer it came the lower I moved, so as to get well off the skyline when the beam reached me. It may have been a Turkish searchlight. It swept slowly, slowly, till at last it was turned off and everything was deadly black.

I started off again in another direction, keeping my back to the ridge, as I reckoned that to be a Turkish searchlight, and, therefore, our own lines would be somewhere down the ridge. Here, high up, I could just see a grey streak, which I took to be the bay.

I tried to make for this streak. I scrambled down a very steep stratum of the mountain-side and landed at last in a little patch of dead grass and tall dried-up thistles.

By this time, having come down from my high position on the Sirt, I could no longer see the bay; but I judged the direction as best I could, and without waiting I tramped on.

I began to wonder how long I had been trudging about, and I put it at about two hours.

"Halt!—who are you?" called a voice down below.

"Friend! stretcher-bearer!" I shouted.

"Come here—this way!" answered the voice.

I went down to a clump of bushes, and a man with a rifle slung over his shoulder stepped forward, and we both glared at each other for a second.

"Do yer know where the 45th Company is?"

"No idea," said I.

"Any water?"

"Not a drop left."

"We're trying to get back to the firing-line but we're all lost—there's eight of us."

"I'm trying to get to the 32nd Field Ambulance—d'you know the way?"

"Yes; go right ahead there," he pointed, "and keep well down off the hills—you'll see the beach when you've gone for a mile or so—"

"How far is it?"

"'Bout four miles;" and then, "Got a match?"

"Yes—but it's dangerous to light up."

"Must 'ave a smoke—nothink to eat or drink."

"Well, here you are; light up inside my helmet."

He did; this hid the lighted match from any sniper's eye. The other seven men came crawling out of the bushes to light up their "woodbines" and fag-ends.

"Well, I'm off," said I, and once more went forward in the direction pointed out by the corporal and his lost squad.

"So long, mate—good luck!" he shouted.

"Same to you!" I called back.

And now came sleep upon me. Even as I walked an awful weariness fell upon every limb. My legs became heavy and slow. That short rest had stiffened me, and my eyelids closed as I trudged on. I lifted them with an effort and dragged one foot after the other. I knew I must get back to my unit, and that here it was very dangerous. I wanted to lie down on the dead grass and sleep and sleep and sleep. I urged my muscles to swing my legs—for I knew if once I sat down to rest I should never keep awake.

It was while I was thus trying to jerk my sleepy nerves on to action that I came upon a zigzagged trench. It was fully six feet deep and about a yard wide. It was of course an old Turkish defence running crosswise along the great backbone of the Sirt. I knew now that I was nearing the bay, for most of these trenches overlooked the beach.

There was a white object about ten yards from me. What it was I could not tell, and a quiver of fear ran through me and threw off the awful sleepiness of fatigue.

Was it a Turkish sniper's shirt? Or was it a piece of white cloth, or a sheet of paper? In the gloom of night I could not discover.

However, I determined to go steady, and I crept up to a dark thorn-bush and stood still. It did not move. Still standing against the dark bush to hide the fact that I was unarmed, I shouted—

"Halt! who are you?" in as gruff and threatening a tone as I could command.

Silence. It did not move. I ran forward along the trench and there found a white pack-mule all loaded up with baggage; I could make out the queerly worked trappings, with brass-coins on the fringed bridle and coloured fly-tassels over the eyes. It was stone dead and stiff. Its eyes glared at me—a glassy glare full of fear. The Turkish pack-mule had been bringing up material to the Turks in the trench when it had been killed—and now the deep sides of the trench were holding it upright.

I trudged away towards the beach and lay down to sleep at last among the other men of the ambulance, who were lying scattered about behind tufts of bush or against ledges of rock.

When weighed down with sleep any bed will serve.

And this was the end of our first day's work on the field.

CHAPTER XIV. THE SNIPER OF THE PEAR-TREE GULLY

We used to start long before daylight, when the heavy gloom of early morning swept mountain, sea and sand in an indistinct haze; when the cobwebs hung thick from thorn to thorn like fairy cats'-cradles all dripping and beaded with those heavy dews. The guard would wake us up about 3.30 A.M. We were asleep anywhere, lying about under rocks and in sandy dells, sleeping on our haversacks and water-bottles, and our pith helmets near by. We got an issue of biscuit and jam, or biscuit and bully-beef, to take with us, and each one carried his iron rations in a little bag at his side.

So we set off—a long, straggling, follow-my-leader line of men and stretchers. The officer first, then the stretcher-sergeant—(myself)—and the squads, two men to a stretcher, carrying the stretchers folded up, and last of all a corporal or a “lance-jack” bringing up the rear in case any one should fall out.

Cold, dark, shivery mornings they were; our clothes soaked in dew and our pith helmets reeking wet, with the puggaree all beaded with dew-drops. We toiled up and up the ridges and gullies of the Kislar Dargh and the Kapanja Sirt slowly, like a little column of ants going out to bring in the ant eggs.

Often we had to wait while the Indian transport came down from the hill-track before we could proceed, and we always came upon the Engineers' field-telegraph wires on the ground. I would shout “Wire!” over my shoulder, and the shout “Wire!... Wire!... Wire!” went down the line from squad to squad.

From the old Turkish well I led my stretcher-squads past the gun of the Field Artillery (mounted quite near our hospital tents) along a track which ran past a patch of dry yellow grass and dead thistles—here among the prickly plants and sage-bushes grew a white flower—pure and sweet-scented—something like a flag—a “holy flower” among the dead and scorched-up yellow ochre blades and the khaki and dull grey-greens of thorns. We went along this track, past the dead sniper which Hawk and I had so carefully stalked. Near by, hidden by bushes and rank willow thickets lay a dozen more dead Turks, swollen, fly-blown and stinking in the broiling sun. We hurried on past the Turkish bivouacs—many of the relics had been picked up by the British Tommies since last I saw the place: the tobacco had all gone—many of the shirts and overcoats which had been lying about had disappeared—the place had been thoroughly ransacked. We trudged past the wooden cross of our dead comrade and we were silent.

Indeed, throughout those first three days—Saturday, Sunday and Monday—when the British and Turks grappled to and fro and flung shrapnel at each other incessantly; when the fighting line swayed and bent, sometimes pushing back the Turks, sometimes bending in the British; when the fate of the whole undertaking still hung in the balance; when what became a semi-failure might have been a staggering success: in those days the death-silence fell upon us all.

No one whistled those rag-time tunes; no one tried to make jokes, except the very timid, and they giggled nervously at their own.

No one spoke unless it was quite necessary. Each man you passed asked you the vital question: “Any water?”

For a moment as he asks his eyes glitter with a gleam of hope—when you shake your head he simply trudges on over the rocks and scrub with the same fatigued and sullen dullness which we all suffered.

Often you asked the same question yourself with parched and burning lips.

One after another we came upon the wounded. Here a man dragging a broken leg along with him. Here a man holding his fractured fore-arm and running towards us. Sometimes the pitiful cry, faint and full of agony: “Stretchers! Stretcher-bearers!” away in some densely overgrown defile swept with bullets and shrapnel.

And so at last all my squads had turned back with stretchers loaded with men and pieces of men. I went on alone—a lonely figure wandering about the mountains, looking and listening for the wounded.

I came now upon a party of Engineers at work making a road. They were working with pick-axe and spade—clearing away bush and rocks.

“Any water?” they asked.

I shook my head.

“Any wounded?” I said.

“Some down there, they say,” said a red-faced man.

“Damn rotten job that,” muttered another, as I went on.

“Better keep well over in the bushes,” shouted the red-faced man. “They've got this bit of light-coloured ground marked—you're almost sure ter git plugged.”

“Thanks!” I called back, and broke off to my left among the sage and thistle and thorn.

I went now downhill into an overgrown water-course (very much like the one in which I used to sleep and eat away back by the artillery big gun). Here were willows and brambles with ripe blackberries, and wild-rose bushes with scarlet hips. “Just like England!” I thought.

And then, as I crossed the little dry-bed stream and came out upon a sandy spit of rising ground: “Z-z-ipp! Ping!”—just by my left arm. The bullet struck a ledge of white rock with the now familiar metallic “tink!”

I went on moving quickly to get behind a thorn-bush—the only cover near at hand. Here, at any rate, I should be out of sight.

“Ping!”

“Crack—ping!”

I could hear the report of the rifle. I lay flat on my stomach, grovelled my face into the sandy soil and lay like a snake and as still as a tortoise.

I waited for about ten minutes. It seemed an hour, at least, to me. The sniper did not shoot again. In front of my thorn-bush was an open space of pale yellow grass, with no cover at all. I crawled towards the left flank and tried to creep slowly away. I moved like the hands of a clock—so slowly; about an inch at a time, pushing forward like a reptile on my stomach, propelling myself only by digging my toes into the earth. My arms I kept stiff by my side, my head well down.

But the sniper away behind that little pear-tree (which stood at the far end of the open space) had an eagle

eye.

“Ping! z-z-pp! ping!”

I lay very still for a long time and then crept slowly back to my thorn-bush.

I tried the right flank, but with the same effect. And now he began shooting through my thorn-bush on the chance of hitting me.

Behind me was a dense undergrowth of thorn, wild-rose bramble, thistle, willow and sage.

I turned about and crawled through this tangle, until at last I came out, scratched and dishevelled and sweating, into the old water-course.

The firing-line was only a few hundred yards away, and the bullets from a Turkish maxim went wailing over my head, dropping far over by the Engineers whom I had passed.

I wanted to find those wounded, and I wanted to get past that open space, and I wanted above all to dodge that sniper. The old scouting instincts of the primitive man came calling me to try my skill against the skill of the Turk. I sat there wiping away blood from the scratches and sweat from my forehead and trying to think of a way through.

I looked at the mountains on my left—the lower ridge of the Kapanja Sirt—and saw how the water-course went up and up and in and out, and I thought if I kept low and crawled round in this ditch I should come out at last close behind the firing-line, and then I could get in touch with the trenches. I could hear the machine-gun of the M—'s rattling and spitting.

I began crawling along the water-course. I had only gone three yards or so, and turned a bend, when I came suddenly upon two wounded men. Both quite young—one merely a boy. He had a bad shrapnel wound through his boot, crushing the toes of his right foot. The other lay groaning upon his back—with a very bad shrapnel wound in his left arm. The arm was broken.

The boy sat up and grinned when he saw me.

“What's up?” asked his pal.

“Red Cross man,” says the boy; and then: “Any water?”

“Not a drop, mate,” said I. “Been wounded long?”

“Since yesterday evening,” says the boy.

“Been here all that time?” I asked. (It was now mid-afternoon.)

“Yes: couldn't get away”—and he pointed to his foot.

“'E carn't move—it's 'is arm. We crawled 'ere.”

“I'll be back soon with stretchers and bandages,” I said, and went quickly back along the water-course and then past the Engineers.

“Found 'em?” they asked.

“Yes: getting stretchers up now,” said I. “Awful stink here! Found any dead?” I asked.

“Yes, there's one or two round here. We buried one over there yesterday: 'e fell ter bits when we moved 'im.”

I went on. Soon I was back in the ditch beside the wounded men. I had successfully dodged the sniper by following along the bottom of the bed of the stream. With me I brought two stretcher-squads, and they had a haversack containing, as I thought, splints and bandages. But when I opened it, it had only some field dressings in it and some iodine ampoules.

I soon found that the man's arm was not only septic, but broken and splintered.

“Got a pair of scissors?” I asked.

One man had a pair of nail-scissors, and with this very awkward instrument I proceeded to operate. It was a terrible gash. His sleeve was soaked in blood. I cut it away, and his shirt also.

I broke an iodine phial and poured the yellow chemical into his great gaping wound. Actually his flesh stunk: it was going bad.

“Is it broke?” he asked.

“Be all right in a few minutes; nothing much.” I lied to him.

“Not broke then?”

“Bit bent; be all right.”

With the nail-scissors I cut great chunks of his arm out, and all this flesh was gangrenous, and mortification was rapidly spreading. My fingers were soaked in blood and iodine.

I cut away a piece of muscle which stunk like bad meat.

“Can you feel that?” I asked.

“Feel what?” he murmured.

“I thought that might hurt. I was cutting your sleeve away, that's all.”

I cut out all the bad flesh, almost to the broken bones. I filled up the jagged hole with another iodine ampoule. I plugged the opening with double-cyanide gauze, and put on an antiseptic pad.

“Splints?” I asked.

“Haven't any.”

So I used the helve of an entrenching-tool and the stalks of the willow undergrowth.

I set his arm straight and bandaged it tightly and fixed it absolutely immovably. Then we got him on a stretcher, and they carried him three and a half miles to our ambulance tents. But I'm afraid that arm had to come off. I never heard of him again.

The other fellow was cheerful enough, and only set his teeth and drew his breath when I cut off his boot with a jack-knife. Wonderful endurance some of these young fellows have. There's hope for England yet.

CHAPTER XV. KANGAROO BEACH

"COMMUNICATIONS"

*The native only needs a drum,
On which to thump his dusky thumb—*

*But WE—the Royal Engineers,
Must needs have carts and pontoon-piers;
Hundreds of miles of copper-wire,
Fitted on poles to make it higher.
Hundreds of sappers lay it down,
And stick the poles up like a town.
By a wonderful system of dashes and dots,
Safe from the Turkish sniper's shots—
We have, as you see, a marvellous trick,
Of sending messages double-quick.
You can't deny it's a great erection,
Done by the 3rd Field Telegraph Section;
But somewhere—
THERE'S A DISCONNECTION!*

*The native merely thumps his drum,
He thumps it boldly, thus—"Tum! Tum!"*

J. H.
(Sailing for Salonika.)

Kangaroo Beach was where the Australian bridge-building section had their stores and dug-outs.

It was one muddle and confusion of water-tanks, pier-planks, pontoons, huge piles of bully-beef, biscuit and jam boxes. Here we came each evening with the water-cart to get our supply of water, and here the water-carts of every unit came down each evening and stood in a row and waited their turn. The water was pumped from the water-tank boats to the tank on shore.

The water-tank boats brought it from Alexandria. It was filthy water, full of dirt, and very brackish to taste. Also it was warm. During the two months at Suvla Bay I never tasted a drop of cold water—it was always sickly lukewarm, sun-stewed.

All day long high explosives used to sing and burst—sometimes killing and wounding men, sometimes blowing up the bully-beef and biscuits, sometimes falling with a hiss and a column of white spray into the sea. It was here that the field-telegraph of the Royal Engineers became a tangled spider's web of wires and cross wires. They added wires and branch wires every day, and stuck them up on thin poles. Here you could see the Engineers in shirt and shorts trying to find a disconnection, or carrying a huge reel of wire. Wooden shanties sprang up where dug-outs had been a day or so before. Piers began to crawl out into the bay, adding a leg and trestle and pontoon every hour. Near Kangaroo Beach was the camp of the Indians, and here you could see the dusky ones praying on prayer mats and cooking rice and "chupatties" (sort of oatcake-pancakes).

Here they were laying a light rail from the beach up with trucks for carrying shells and parts of big guns.

Here was the field post-office with sacks and sacks of letters and parcels. Some of the parcels were burst and unaddressed; a pair of socks or a mouldy home-made cake squashed in a cardboard box—sometimes nothing but the brown paper, card box and string, an empty shell—the contents having disappeared. What happened to all the parcels which never got to the Dardanelles no one knows, but those which did arrive were rifled and lost and stolen. Parcels containing cigarettes had a way of not getting delivered, and cakes and sweets often fell out mysteriously on the way from England.

CHAPTER XVI. THE ADVENTURE OF THE LOST SQUADS

Things became jumbled.

The continual working up to the firing-line and the awful labour of carrying heavy men back to our dressing station: it went on. We got used to being always tired, and having only an hour or two of sleep. It was log-heavy, dreamless sleep... sheer nothingness. Just as tired when you were wakened in the early hours by a sleepy, grumbling guard. And then going round finding the men and wakening them up and getting them on parade. Every day the same... late into the night.

Then came the disappearance of a certain section of our ambulance and the loss of an officer.

This particular young lieutenant was left on Lemnos sick. He really was very sick indeed. He recovered to some extent of the fever, and joined us one day at Suvla. This was in the Old Dry Water-course period, when Hawk and I lived in the bush-grown ditch.

Officers, N.C.O.'s, and men were tired out with overwork. This young officer came up to the Kapanja Sirt to take over the next spell of duty.

I remember him now, pale and sickly, with the fever still hanging on him, and dark, sunken eyes. He spoke

in a dull, lifeless way.

"Do you think you'll be all right?" asked the adjutant.

"Yes, I think so," he answered.

"Well, just stick here and send down the wounded as you find them. Don't go any farther along; it's too dangerous up there—you understand?"

"All right, sir."

It was only a stroke of luck that I didn't stay with him and his stretcher-squads.

"You'd better come down with me, sergeant," says the adjutant.

Next day the news spread in that mysterious way which has always puzzled me. It spread as news does spread in the wild and desolate regions of the earth.

"... lost... all the lot..."

"Who is?"

"Up there... Lieutenant S— and the squads..."

"How-joo-know?"

"Just heard—that wounded fellow over there on the stretcher... they went out early this morning, and they've gone—no sign, never came back at all—"

"'E warn't fit ter take charge... 'e was ill, you could see."

"Nice thing ter do. The old man'll go ravin' mad."

"It was a ravin' mad thing to put the poor feller in charge... "

"Don't criticise yer officers," said some wit, quoting the Army Regulations.

The adjutant and a string of squads turned out, and we went back again to the spot where we had left the young officer the evening before.

The cook and an orderly man remained, and we heard from them the details of the mystery.

Early that morning they had formed up, and gone off under Lieutenant S— along the mule track overlooking the Gulf of Saros. That was all. There was still hope, of course... but there wasn't a sign of them to be seen. The machine-gun section had seen them pass right along. Some officers had warned them not to go up, but they went and they never came back.

There were rumours that one of the N.C.O.'s of the party, a sergeant, had been seen lying on some rocks.

"Just riddled with bullets—riddled!"

The hours dragged on. I begged of the adjutant to let me go off along the ridge on my own to see if I could find any trace.

"It's too dangerous," he said. "If I thought there was half a chance I'd go with you, but we don't want to lose any more."

Those ten or twelve men went out of our lives completely. Days passed. There was no news. It was queer. It was queer when I called the roll next day—

"Briggs!"—"Sar'nt!"

"Boots!"—"Sarn't!"

"Cudworth!"—"Here, Sar'nt!"

"Dean!"—"Sar'nt!"

"Desmond!"—"Sar'nt!"

"D—."

I couldn't remember not to call his name out. It seemed queer that he was missing. It seemed quite hopeless now. Three or four days dragged on. Everything continued as usual. We went up past the place where we had left them, and there was no news, no sign. They just vanished. No one saw them again, and except for the "riddled" rumour of the poor old sergeant the whole thing was a blank.

We supposed that the young officer, coming fresh to the place, did not know where the British lines ended and the Turks' began, and he marched his squads into that bit of No Man's Land beyond the machine-gun near "Jefferson's Post," and was either shot or taken prisoner.

It made the men heavy and sad-minded.

"Poor old Mellor—'e warn't a bad sort, was he!"

"Ah!—an' Bell, Sergeant Bell... riddled they say... some one seen 'm—artillery or some one!"

It hung over them like a cloud. The men talked of nothing else.

"Somebody's blundered," said one.

"It's a pity any'ow."

"It's a disgrace to the ambulance—losin' men like that."

And, also, it made the men nervous and unreliable. It was a shock.

CHAPTER XVII. "OH, TO BE IN ENGLAND!"

It may be that I have never grown up properly. I'm a very poor hand at pretending I'm a "grown man."

Impressions of small queer things still stamp themselves with a clear kodak-click on my mind—an ivory-white mule's skull lying in the sand with green beetles running through the eye-holes... anything—trivial,

childlike details.

I remember reading an article in a magazine which stated that under fire, and more especially in a charge, a man moves in a whirl of excitement which blots out all the small realities around him, all the "local colour." He remembers nothing but a wild, mad rush, or the tense intensity of the danger he is in.

It is not so. The greater the danger and the more exciting the position the more intensely does the mind receive the imprint of tiny commonplace objects.

Memories of Egypt and the Mediterranean are far more a jumble of general effects of colour, sound and smell.

The closer we crept to the shores of Suvla Bay, and the deathbed of the Salt Lake, the more exact and vivid are the impressions; the one is like an impressionist sketch—blobs and dabs and great sloshy washes; but the memories of Pear-tree Gully, of the Kapanja Sirt, and Chocolate Hill are drawn in with a fine mapping pen and Indian ink—like a Rackham fairy-book illustration—every blade of dead grass, every ripple of blue, every pink pebble; and towards the firing-line I could draw it now, every inch of the way up the hills with every stone and jagged rock in the right place.

Before sailing from England I had bought a little colour-box, one good sable brush, and a few H.B. pencils—these and a sketch-book which my father gave me I carried everywhere in my haversack. The pocket-book was specially made with paper which would take pencil, colour, crayon, ink or charcoal. I was always on the look out for sketches and notes. The cover bore the strange device—

JOHN HARGRAVE,
R.A.M.C.
32ND FIELD AMBULANCE.

printed in gilt which gradually wore off as time went on. Inside on the fly-leaf I had written—

"IF FOUND, please return to

*Sgt. J. HARGRAVE, 32819, R.A.M.C.
32nd Field Ambulance,
X Division, Med. Exp. Force."*

And on the opposite page I wrote—

"IN CASE OF DEATH please post as soon as possible to

*GORDON HARGRAVE,
Cinderbarrow Cottage,
Levens,
Westmorland."*

I remember printing the word "DEATH," and wondering if the book would some day lie with my own dead body "somewhere in the Dardanelles." Printing that word in England before we started made the whole thing seem very real. Somehow up to then I hadn't realised that I might get killed quite easily. I hadn't troubled to think about it.

We moved our camp from "A" Beach farther along towards the Salt Lake. We moved several times. Always Hawk and I "hung together." Once he was very ill in the old dried-up water-course which wriggled down from the Kislar Dargh. He ate nothing for three days. I never saw anything like it before. He was as weak as a rat, and I know he came very near "pegging out." He felt it himself. I was sitting on the ground near by.

"I may not pull through this, old fellow," says Hawk, with just a tear-glint under one eyelid. He lay under a shelf of rock, safe from shrapnel.

"Come now, Fred," says I, "you're not going to snuff it yet."

"Weak as a rat—can't eat nothink, PRACTically... nothink; but see here, John,"—he seldom called me John—"if I do slip off the map, an' I feel PRACTically done for this time—if I SHOULD—you see that ration-bag"—he pointed to a little white bag bulging and tied up and knotted.

"Yes?"

"It's got some little things in it—for the kiddies at home—a little teapot I found up by the Turkish bivouac over there, and one or two more relics—I want 'em to have 'em—will you take care of it and send it home for me if you get out of this alive?"

Of course I promised to do this, but tried to cheer him up, and assured him he would soon pull round.

In a few days he threw off the fever and was about again.

Hawk and I had lived for some weeks in this overgrown water-course. It was a natural trench, and at one place Hawk had made a dug-out. He picked and shovelled right into the hard, sandy rock until there was quite a good-sized little cave about eight feet long and five deep.

The same sickness got me. It came over me quite suddenly. I was fearfully tired. Every limb ached, and, like all the others, I began to develop what I call the "stretcher-stoop." I just lay down in the ditch with a blanket and went to sleep. Hawk sat over me and brought me bovril, which we had "pinched" on Lemnos Island.

I felt absolutely dying, and I really wondered whether I should have enough strength to throw the sickness off as Hawk had. I gave him just the same sort of instructions about my notes and sketches as he had given me about his little ration-bag.

"Get 'em back to England if you can," I said; "you're the man I'd soonest trust here."

If Hawk hadn't looked after me and made me eat, I don't believe I should have lived. I used to lie there looking at the wild-rose tangles and the red hips; there were brambles, too, with poor, dried-up blackberries. It reminded me of England. Little green lizards scuttled about, and great black centipedes crawled under my blanket. The sun was blazing at mid-day. Hawk used to rig me up an awning over the ditch with willow-stems

and a waterproof ground-sheet.

Somehow you always thought yourself back to England. No matter what train of thought you went upon, it always worked its way by one thread or another to England. Mine did, anyway.

It was better to be up with the stretcher-squads in the firing line than lying there sick, and thinking those long, long thoughts.

This is how I would think—

“What a waste of life; what a waste... Christianity this; all part of civilisation; what's it all for? Queer thing this civilised Christianity... very queer. So this really IS war; see now: how does it feel? not much different to usual... But why? It's getting awfully sickening... plenty of excitement, too—plenty... too much, in fact; very easy to get killed any time here; plenty of men getting killed every minute over there; but it isn't really very exciting... not like I thought war was in England... England? Long way off, England; thousands of miles; they don't know I'm sick in England; wonder what they'd think to see me now; not a bad place, England, green trees and green grass... much better place than I thought it was; wonder how long this will hang on... I'd like to get back after it's finished here; I expect it's all going on just the same in England; people going about to offices in London; women dressing themselves up and shopping; and all that... This is a d—place, this beastly peninsula—no green anywhere... just yellow sand and grey rocks and sage-coloured bushes, dead grass—even the thistles are all bleached and dead and rustling in the breeze like paper flowers...

“And we WANTED to get out here... Just eating our hearts out to get into it all, to get to work—and now... we're all sick of it... it's rotten, absolutely rotten; everything. It's a rotten war. Wonder what they are doing now at home...”

CHAPTER XVIII. TWO MEN RETURN

I shall never forget those two little figures coming into camp.

They were both trembling like aspen leaves. One had ginger hair, and a crop of ginger beard bristled on his chin. Their eyes were hollow and sunken, and glittered and roamed unmeaningly with the glare of insanity. They glanced with a horrible suspicion at their pals, and knew them not. The one with the ginger stubble muttered to himself. Their clothes were torn with brambles, and prickles from thorn-bushes still clung round their puttees. A pitiful sight. They tottered along, keeping close together and avoiding the others. An awful tiredness weighed upon them; they dragged themselves along. Their lips were cracked and swollen and dry. They had lost their helmets, and the sun had scorched and peeled the back of their necks. Their hair was matted and full of sand. But the fear which looked out of those glinting eyes was terrible to behold.

We gave them “Oxo,” and the medical officer came and looked at them. They came down to our dried-up water-course and tried to sleep; but they were past sleep. They kept dozing off and waking up with a start and muttering—

“... All gone... killed... where? where? No, no... No!.. . don't move... (mumble-mumble)... keep still... idiot! you'll get shot... can you see them? Eh? where?... he's dying, dying... stop the bleeding, man! He's dying... we're all dying... no water... drink...”

I've seen men, healthy, strong, hard-faced Irishmen, blown to shreds. I've helped to clear up the mess. I've trod on dead men's chests in the sand, and the ribs have bent in and the putrid gases of decay have burst through with a whhh-h-ff-f.

But I'd rather have to deal with the dead and dying than a case of “sniper-madness.”

I was just recovering from that attack of fever and dysentery, and these two were lying beside me; the one mumbling and the other panting in a fitful sleep.

When they were questioned they could give very little information.

“Where's Lieutenant S—?”

“... Gone... they're all gone...”

“How far did you go with him?”

No answer.

“Where are the others?”

“... Gone... they're all gone...”

“Are they killed?”

“... Gone.”

“Are any of the others alive?”

“We got away... they're lost... dead, I think.”

“Did you come straight back—it's a week since you were lost?”

“It's days and days and long nights... couldn't move; couldn't move an inch, and poor old George dying under a rock... no cover; and they shot at us if we moved... we waved the stretchers when we found we'd got too far... too far we got... too far... much too far; shot at us...”

“What about the sergeant?”

“We got cut off... cut off... we tried to crawl away at night by rolling over and over down the hill, and creeping round bushes... always creeping an' crawling... but it took us two days and two nights to get away... crawling, creeping and crawling... an' they kep' firing at us...”

“No food... we chewed grass... sucked dead grass to get some spittle... an' sometimes we tried to eat grass to fill up a bit... no food... no water...”

They were complete wrecks. They couldn't keep their limbs still. They trembled and shook as they lay there. Their ribs were standing out like skeletons, and their stomachs had sunken in. They were black with sunburn, and filthily dirty.

Gradually they got better. The glare of insanity became less obvious, but a certain haunted look never left them. They were broken men. Months afterwards they mumbled to themselves in the night-time.

Nolan, one of the seafaring men of my section who was with the lost squads, also returned, but he had not suffered so badly, or at any rate he had been able to stand the strain better.

It was about this time that we began to realise that the new landing had been a failure. It was becoming a stale-mate. It was like a clock with its hands stuck. The whole thing went ticking on every day, but there was no progress—nothing gained. And while we waited there the Turks brought up heavy guns and fresh troops on the hills. They consolidated their positions in a great semicircle all round us—and we just held the bay and the Salt Lake and the Kapanja Sirt.

So all this seemed sheer waste. Thousands of lives wasted—thousands of armless and legless cripples sent back—for nothing. The troops soon realised that it was now hopeless. You can't "kid" a great body of men for long. It became utterly sickening—the inactivity—the waiting—for nothing. And every day we lost men. Men were killed by snipers as they went up to the trenches. The Turkish snipers killed them when they went down to the wells for water.

The whole thing had lost impetus. It came to a standstill. It kept on "marking time," and nothing appeared to move it.

In the first three days of the landing it wanted but one thing to have marched us right through to Constantinople—it wanted, dash!

It didn't want a careful, thoughtful man in command—it wanted dash and bluff. It could have been done in those early days. The landing WAS a success—a brilliant, blinding success—but it stuck at the very moment when it should have rushed forward. It was no one's fault if you understand. It was sheer luck. It just didn't "come off"—and only just. But a man with dash, a devil-may-care sort of leader, could have cut right across on Sunday, August the 8th, and brought off a staggering victory.

CHAPTER XIX. THE RETREAT

It happened on the left of Pear-tree Gully.

Pear-tree Gully was a piece of ground which neither we nor the Turks could hold. It was a gap in both lines, swept by machine-gun fire and haunted by snipers and sharpshooters.

We had advanced right up behind the machine-gun section, which was hidden in a dense clump of bushes on the top of a steep rise.

The sun was blazing hot and the sweat was dripping from our faces. We were continually on the look-out for wounded, and always alert for the agonised cry of "Stretcher-bearers!" away on some distant knoll or down below in the thickets. Looking back the bay shimmered a silver-white streak with grey battleships lying out.

In front the fighting broke out in fierce gusts.

"Pop-pop-pop-pop!—Pop-pop!" went the machine-gun. We could see one man getting another belt of ammunition ready to "feed." Bullets from the Turkish quick-firers went singing with an angry "ssss-ooooo! zzz-z-eeee!... whheee-ooo-o-o! zz-ing!"

"D'you know where Brigade Headquarters is?" asked the adjutant.

"I'll find it, sir."

"Very well, go up with this message, and I shall be here when you come back."

I took the message, saluted and went off, plunging down into the thickets, and at last along my old water-course where I had crawled away from the sniper some days before.

I made a big detour to avoid showing myself on the sky-line. I knew the general direction of our Brigade Headquarters, and after half-an-hour's steady trudging with various creepings and crawlings I arrived and delivered my message. I returned quickly towards Pear-tree Gully. I stopped once to listen for the "Pop-pop-pop!" of our machine-gun but I could not hear it. I hurried on. It was downhill most of the way going back. I crept up through the bushes and looked about for signs of our men and the officer.

I saw a man of the machine-gun section carrying the tripod-stand, followed by another with the ammunition-belt-box.

"Seen any Medical Corps here?"

"They've gone down—'ooked it... you'd better get out o' this quick yourself—we're retreating—can't 'old this place no'ow—too 'ot!"

"Did the officer leave any message?"

"No—they've bin gone some time—come on, Sammy."

Well, I thought to myself, this IS nice. So I went down with the machine-gunners and in the dead grass just below the gully I found a wounded man: he was shot through the thigh and it had gone clean through both legs.

He was bleeding to death quickly, for it had ripped both arteries. Looking round I saw another man coming down, hopping along but very cheerful.

"In the ankle," he said; "can you do anything?"

"I'll have a look in a minute."

I examined the man who was hit in the thigh and discovered two tourniquets had been applied made out of a handkerchief and bits of stick to twist them up. But the blood was now pumping steadily from both wounds and soaking its way into the sandy soil. I tightened them up, but it was useless. There was no stopping the loss of blood.

All the time little groups of British went straggling past—hurrying back towards the bay—retreating.

It was impossible to leave my wounded. I helped the cheerful man to hop near a willow thicket, and there I took off his boot and found a clean bullet wound right through the ankle-bone of the left foot. It was bleeding slowly and the man was very pale.

"Been bleeding long?" I asked.

"About half an hour I reckon. Is it all right, mate?"

"Yes. It's a clean wound."

I plugged each hole, padded it and bound it up tightly. I had a look at the other man, who was still bleeding and had lost consciousness altogether.

It was a race for life. Which to attend to? Both men were still bleeding, and both would bleed to death within half an hour or so. I reckoned it was almost hopeless with the tourniquet-man and I left him passing painlessly from life to death. But the ankle-man's wound was still bleeding when I turned again to him. It trickled through my plugging. It's a difficult thing to stop the bleeding from such a place. Seeing the plug was useless I tried another way. I rolled up one of his puttees, put it under his knee, braced his knee up and tied it in position with the other puttee. This brought pressure on the artery itself and stopped the loss of blood from his ankle. I could hear the Turkish machine-gun much closer now. It sputtered out a leaden rain with a hard metallic clatter.

"Thanks, mate," said the man; "'ow's the other bloke?"

"He's all right," I answered, and I could see him lying a little way up the hill, calm and still and stiffening.

I found two regimental stretcher-bearers coming down with the rest in this little retreat, and I got them to take my ankle-man on to their dressing station about two miles further back.

It's no fun attending to wounded when the troops are retiring.

Next day they regained the lost position, and I trudged past the poor dead body of the man who had bled to death. The tourniquets were still gripping his lifeless limbs and the blood on the handkerchiefs had dried a rich red-brown.

CHAPTER XX. "JHILL-O! JOHNNIE!"

"A" BEACH

SUVLA BAY

*There's a lot of senseless "doing"
And a fearful lot of work;
There are gangs of men with "gangers,"
To see they do not shirk.
There's the usual waste of power
In the usual Western way,
There's a tangle in the transport,
And a blockage every day.
The sergeants do the swearing,
The corporals "carry on";
The private cusses openly,
And hopes he'll soon be gone.*

One evening the colonel sent me from our dug-out near the Salt Lake to "A" Beach to make a report on the water supply which was pumped ashore from the tank-boats. I trudged along the sandy shore. At one spot I remember the carcass of a mule washed up by the tide, the flesh rotted and sodden, and here and there a yellow rib bursting through the skin. Its head floated in the water and nodded to and fro with a most uncanny motion with every ripple of the bay.

The wet season was coming on, and the chill winds went through my khaki drill uniform. The sky was overcast, and the bay, generally a kaleidoscope of Eastern blues and greens, was dull and grey.

At "A" Beach I examined the pipes and tanks of the water-supply system and had a chat with the Australians who were in charge. I drew a small plan, showing how the water was pumped from the tanks afloat to the standing tank ashore, and suggested the probable cause of the sand and dirt of which the C.O. complained.

This done I found our own ambulance water-cart just ready to return to our camp with its nightly supply. Evening was giving place to darkness, and soon the misty hills and the bay were enveloped in starless gloom.

The traffic about "A" Beach was always congested. It reminded you of the Bank and the Mansion House crush far away in London town.

Here were clanking water-carts, dozens of them waiting in their turn, stamping mules and snorting horses; here were motor-transport wagons with "W.D." in white on their grey sides; ambulance wagons jolting slowly back to their respective units, sometimes full of wounded, sometimes empty. Here all was bustle and noise. Sergeants shouting and corporals cursing; transport-officers giving directions; a party of New Zealand sharpshooters in scout hats and leggings laughing and yarning; a patrol of the R.E.'s Telegraph Section coming in after repairing the wires along the beach; or a new batch of men, just arrived, falling in with new-looking kit-bags.

It was through this throng of seething khaki and transport traffic that our water-cart jostled and pushed.

Often we had to pull up to let the Indian Pack-mule Corps pass, and it was at one of these halts that I happened to come close to one of these dusky soldiers waiting calmly by the side of his mules.

I wished I had some knowledge of Hindustani, and began to think over any words he might recognise.

"You ever hear of Rabindranarth Tagore, Johnnie?" I asked him. The name of the great writer came to mind.

He shook his head. "No, sergeant," he answered.

"Buddha, Johnnie?" His face gleamed and he showed his great white teeth.

"No, Buddie."

"Mahomet, Johnnie?"

"Yes—me, Mahommedie," he said proudly.

"Gunga, Johnnie?" I asked, remembering the name of the sacred river Ganges from Kipling's "Kim."

"No Gunga, sa'b—Mahommedie, me."

"You go Benares, Johnnie?"

"No Benares."

"Mecca?"

"Mokka, yes; afterwards me go Mokka."

"After the war you going to Mokka, Johnnie?"

"Yes; Indee, France—here—Indee back again—then Mokka."

"You been to France, Johnnie?"

"Yes, sa'b."

"You know Kashmir, Johnnie?"

"Kashmir my house," he replied.

"You live in Kashmir?"

"Yes; you go Indee, sergeant?"

"No, I've never been."

"No go Indee?"

"Not yet."

"Indee very good—English very good—Turk, finish!"

With a sudden jerk and a rattle of chains our water-cart mules pulled out on the trail again and the ghostly figure with its well-folded turban and gleaming white teeth was left behind.

A beautifully calm race, the Hindus. They did wonderful work at Suvla Bay. Up and down, up and down, hour after hour they worked steadily on; taking up biscuits, bully-beef and ammunition to the firing-line, and returning for more and still more. Day and night these splendidly built Easterns kept up the supply.

I remember one man who had had his left leg blown off by shrapnel sitting on a rock smoking a cigarette and great tears rolling down his cheeks. But he said no word. Not a groan or a cry of pain.

They ate little, and said little. But they were always extraordinarily polite and courteous to each other. They never neglected their prayers, even under heavy shell fire.

Once, when we were moving from the Salt Lake to "C" Beach, Lala Baba, the Indians moved all our equipment in their little two-wheeled carts.

They were much amused and interested in our sergeant clerk, who stood 6 feet 8 inches. They were joking and pointing to him in a little bunch.

Going up to them, I pointed up to the sky, and then to the Sergeant, saying: "Himalayas, Johnnie!"

They roared with laughter, and ever afterwards called him "Himalayas."

THE INDIAN TRANSPORT TRAIN

(Across the bed of the Salt Lake every night from the Supply Depot at Kangaroo Beach to the firing-line beyond Chocolate Hill, September 1915.)

(footnote: "Jhill-o!"—Hindustani for "Gee-up"; used by the drivers of the Indian Pack-mule Corps.)

The Indian whallahs go up to the hills—

"Jhill-o! Johnnie, Jhill-o!"

They pass by the spot where the gun-cotton kills;

They shiver and huddle—they feel the night chills—

"Jhill-o! Johnnie, Jhill-o!"

With creaking and jingle of harness and pack—

"Jhill-o! Johnnie, Jhill-o!"

Where the moonlight is white and the shadows are black,

They are climbing the winding and rocky mule-track—

"Jhill-o! Johnnie, Jhill-o!"

By the blessing of Allah he's more than one wife;

"Jhill-o! Johnnie, Jhill-o!"

He's forbidden the wine which encourages strife,

But you don't like the look of his dangerous knife;

"Jhill-o! Johnnie, Jhill-o!"

The picturesque whallah is dusky and spare;

"Jhill-o! Johnnie, Jhill-o!"

*A turban he wears with magnificent air,
But he chucks down his pack when it's time for his prayer;
"Jhill-o! Johnnie, Jhill-o!"*

*When his moment arrives he'll be dropped in a hole;
"Jhill-o! Johnnie, Jhill-o!"
'Tis Kismet, he says, and beyond his control;
But the dear little houris will comfort his soul;
"Jhill-o! Johnnie, Jhill-o!"*

*The Indian whallahs go up to the hills;
"Jhill-o! Johnnie, Jhill-o!"
They pass by the spot where the gun-cotton kills;
But those who come down carry something that chills;
"Jhill-o! Johnnie, Jhill-o!"*

CHAPTER XXI. SILVER BAY

On the edge of the Salt Lake, by the blue Aegean shore, Hawk and I dug a little underground home into the sandy hillock upon which our ambulance was now encamped.

"I'm going deep into this," said Hawk—he was a very skilful miner, and he knew his work.

"None of your dead heroes for me," he said; "I don't hold with 'em—we'll make it PRACTically shell-proof." We did. Each day we burrowed into the soft sandy layers, he swinging the pick, and I filling up sand-bags. At last we made a sort of cave, a snug little Peter Pan home, sand-bagged all round and safe from shells when you crawled in.

I often thought what a fine thing Stevenson would have written from the local colour of the bay.

Its changing colours were intense and wonderful. In the early morning the waves were a rich royal blue, with splashing lines of white breakers rolling in and in upon the pale grey sand, and the sea-birds skimming and wheeling overhead.

At mid-day it was colourless, glaring, steel-flashing, with the sunlight blazing and everything shimmering in the heat haze.

In the early afternoon, when Hawk and I used to go down to the shore and strip naked like savages, and plunge into the warm water, the bay had changed to pale blue with green ripples, and the outline of Imbros Island, on the horizon, was a long jagged strip of mauve.

Later, when the sunset sky turned lemon-yellow, orange, and deep crimson, the bay went into peacock blues and purples, with here and there a current of bottle-glass green, and Imbros Island stood clear cut against the sunset-colour a violet-black silhouette.

Queer creatures crept across the sands and into the old Turkish snipers' trenches; long black centipedes, sand-birds—very much resembling our martin, but with something of the canary in their colour. Horned beetles, baby tortoises, mice, and green-grey lizards all left their tiny footprints on the shore.

"If this silver sand was only in England a man could make his fortune," said Hawk. ("We wept like anything to see—!")

I never saw such white sand before. One had to misquote: "Come unto these SILVER sands." It glittered white in a great horse-shoe round the bay, and the bed of the Salt Lake (which is really an overflow from the sea) was a barren patch of this silver-sand, with here and there a dead mule or a sniper's body lying out, a little black blot, the haunt of vultures.

I made some careful drawings of the sand-tracks of the bay; noting down tracks being a habit with the scout.

In these things Hawk was always interested, and often a great help; for, in spite of his fifty years and his buccaneerish-habits, he was at heart a boy—a boy-scout, in fact, and a fine tracker.

One of the most picturesque sights I ever saw was an Indian officer mounted on a white Arab horse with a long flowing mane, and a tail which swept in a splendid curve and trailed in the sands. The Hindu wore a khaki turban, with a long end floating behind. He sat his horse bolt upright, and rode in the proper military style.

The Arab steed pranced, and arched its great neck. With the blue of the bay as a background it made a magnificent picture, worthy of the Thousand-and-One Nights.

Day by day we improved our dug-out, going deeper into the solid rock, and putting up an awning in front made of two army blankets, with a wooden cross-beam roped to an old rusty bayonet driven into the sand.

We lived a truly Robinson Crusoe life, with the addition of Turkish high-explosives, and bully-beef-and-biscuit stew.

Our dug-out was back to the firing-line, and at night we looked out upon the bay. We lay in our blankets watching the white moonlight on the waves, and the black shadows of our ambulance wagons on the silver sand.

It was in this dug-out that Hawk used to cook the most wonderful dishes on a Primus stove.

The language was thick and terrible when that stove refused to work, and Hawk would squat there cursing and cleaning it, and sticking bits of wire down the gas-tube.

He cooked chocolate-pudding, and rice-and-milk, and arrowroot-blancmange, stewed prunes, fried bread in bacon fat, and many other tasty morsels.

"The proof of a good cook," said Hawk, "is whether he can make a meal worth eating out of PRACTically nothink"—and he could.

There were very few wounds now to attend to in the hospital dug-out. Mostly we got men with sandfly-fever and dysentery; men with scabies and lice; men utterly and unspeakably exhausted, with hollow, black-rimmed eyes, cracked lips and foot-sores; men who limped across the sandy bed, dragging their rifles and equipment in their hands; men who were desperately hungry, whose eyes held the glint of sniper-madness; men whose bodies were wasting away, the skin taut and dry like a drum, with every rib showing like the beams of a wreck, or the rafters of an old roof.

Always we were in the midst of pain and misery, hunger and death. We do not get much of the rush and glory of battle in the "Linseed Lancers." We deal with the wreckage thrown up by the tide of battle, and wreckage is always a sad sight—human wreckage most of all.

But the bay was always full of interest for me, with its ever-changing colour, and the imprint of the ripples in the gleaming silver-sand.

And the silver moonlight silvers the silver-sand, while the skeletons of the Xth sink deeper and deeper, to be rediscovered perhaps at some future geological period, and recognised as a type of primitive man.

CHAPTER XXII. DUG-OUT YARNS

*Oft in the stilly night,
By yellow candle-light,
With finger in the sand
We mapped and planned.*

*"This is the Turkish well,
That's where the Captain fell,
There's the great Salt Lake bed,
Here's where the Munsters led."*

*Primitive man arose,
With prehistoric pose,
Like Dug-out Men of old,
By signs our thoughts were told.*

I have slept and lived in every kind of camp and bivouac. I have dug and helped to dig dug-outs. I have lain full length in the dry, dead grass "under the wide and starry sky." I have crept behind a ledge of rock, and gone to sleep with the ants crawling over me. I have slept with a pair of boots for a pillow. I have lived and snoozed in the dried-up bed of a mountain torrent for weeks. A ground-sheet tied to a bough has been my bedroom. I have slumbered curled in a coil of rope on the deck of a cattle-boat, in an ambulance wagon, on a stretcher, in farmhouse barns and under hedges and haystacks. I have slept in the sand by the blue Mediterranean Sea, with the crickets and grasshoppers "zipping" and "zinging" all night long.

But our dug-out nights on the edge of the bay at Buccaneer Bivouac were the most enjoyable.

It was here of a night-time that Hawk and I—sometimes alone, sometimes with Brockley, or "Cherry Blossom," or "Corporal Mush," or Sergeant Joe Smith, the sailormen as onlookers and listeners—it was here we drew diagrams in the sand with our fingers, and talked on politics and women's rights, marriage and immorality, drink and religion, customs and habits; of life and death, peace and war.

Sometimes Hawk burst into a rare phrase of splendid composition—well-balanced rhetoric, not unworthy of a Prime Minister.

At other times he is the buccaneer, the flinger of foul oaths, and terrible damning curses. But as a rule they are not vindictive, they have no sting—for Hawk is a forgiving and humble man in reality, in spite of his mask of arrogance.

A remarkable character in every way, he fell unknowingly into the old north-country Quaker talk of "thee and thou."

Another minute he gives an order in those hard, calm, commanding words which, had he had the chance, would have made him, in spite of his lack of schooling, one of the finest Generals the world could ever know.

On these occasional gleams of pure leadership he finds the finest King's English ready to his lips, while at other times he is ungrammatical, ordinary, but never uninteresting or slow of intuition.

He was a master of slang, and like all strong and vivid characters had his own peculiar sayings.

He never thought of looking over my shoulder when I was sketching. He was a gentleman of Nature. But when he saw I had finished, his clear, deep-set eyes (handed down to him from those old Norseman ancestors) would glint with interest—

"Dekko the drawing," he would say, using the old Romany word for "let's see."

"PRACTically" was a favourite word.

"PRACTically the 'ole Peninsula—"

"PRACTically every one of 'em—"

"It weren't that," he would say; or, "I weren't bothering—"

"I'm not bothered—"

"Thee needn't bother, but it's a misfortunate thing—"

"Hates me like the divil 'ates Holy Water."

"Like enough!"

"A pound to a penny!"

"As like as not!"

"Ah; very like."

These were all typical Hawkish expressions.

His yarns of India out-Rudyard Kipling. They were superb, full of barrack-room touches, and the smells and sounds of the jungle. He told of the time when a soldier could get "jungling leave"; when he could go off with a Winchester and a pal and a native guide for two or three months; when the Government paid so many rupees for a tiger skin, so many for a cobra—a scale of rewards for bringing back the trophies of the jungle wilds.

He pictured the Himalayas and the Hindu Kush, describing the everlasting snows where you look up and up at the sheer rocks and glaciers; "you feel like a baby tortoise away down there, so small, as like as not you get giddy and drunk-like."

One night Hawk told me of a Hindu fakir who sat by the roadside performing the mango-trick for one anna. I illustrated it in the sand as he told it.

caption: Dug-out, September 9, 1915.

1. The fakir puts a pinch of dust from the ground in a little pile on a glass plate on a tripod.
2. He covers it up with a handkerchief or a cloth.
3. He plays the bagpipes, or a wooden flute, while you can see the heap of dust under the cloth a-growing and a-growing up and up, bigger and bigger.
4. At last he lifts up the cloth and shows you the green mango-tree growing on the piece of glass.

"He covers it again—plays. Lifts the cloth, shows you the mango tree in leaf. Covers it again—plays again. Takes away the cloth, and shows you the mango-tree in fruit, real fruit; but they never let you have the fruit for love or money. Rather than let any one have it, they pluck it and squash it between their fingers."

CHAPTER XXIII. THE WISDOM OF FATHER S

One day, while I was making some sketch-book drawings of bursting shells down in the old water-course, the Roman Catholic padre came along.

"Sketching, Hargrave?"

"Yes, sir."

And then: "I suppose you're Church of England, aren't you?"

"No, sir; I'm down as Quaker."

"Quaker, eh?—that's interesting; I know quite a lot of Quakers in Dublin and Belfast."

Who would expect to find "Father Brown" of G. K. Chesterton fame in a khaki drill uniform and a pith helmet?

A small, energetic man, with a round face and a habit of putting his hands deep into the patch pockets of his tunic. Here was a priest who knew his people, who was a real "father" to his khaki followers. I quickly discovered him to be a man of learning, and one who noticed small signs and commonplace details.

His eyes twinkled and glittered when he was amused, and his little round face wrinkled into wreaths of smiles.

When we moved to the Salt Lake dug-outs he came with us, and here he had a dug-out of his own.

When the day's work was finished, and the moonlight glittered white across the Salt Lake, I used to stroll away for a time by myself before turning in.

It was a good time to think. Everything was so silent. Even my own footsteps were soundless in the soft sand. It was on one of these night-prowls that I spotted the tiny figure of Father S— jerking across the sands, with that well-known energetic walk, stick in hand.

"Stars, Hargrave?" said the little priest.

"Very clear to-night, sir."

"Queer, you know, Hargrave, to think that those same old stars have looked down all these ages; same old stars which looked down on Darius and his Persians."

He prodded the sand with his walking stick, stuck his cap on one side (I don't think he cared for his helmet), and peered up to the star-spangled sky.

"Wonderful country, all this," said the padre; "it may be across this very Salt Lake that the armies of the ancients fought with sling and stone and spear; St. Paul may have put in here, he was well acquainted with these parts—Lemnos and all round about—preaching and teaching on his travels, you know."

"Talking about Lemnos Island," he went on, "did you notice the series of peaks which run across it in a line?"

"Yes."

"Well, it was on those promontories that Agamemnon, King of Mycenæ, lit a chain of fire-beacons to announce the taking of Troy to his Queen, Clytaemnestra, at Argos—"

Here the little priest, as pleased as a school-boy, scratched a rough sketch map in the sand—

"All the islands round here are full of historical interest, you know; 'far-famed Samothrace,' for instance."

Father S— talked much of classical history, connecting these islands with Greek and Roman heroes.

All this was desperately interesting to me. It was picturesque to stand in the sand-bed of the Salt Lake, lit by the broad flood of silver moonlight, with the little priest eagerly scratching like an ibis in the sand with his walking-stick.

I learnt more about the Near East in those few minutes than I had ever done at school.

But besides the interest in this novel history lesson, I was more than delighted to find the padre so correct in his sketch of the island and the coast, and I took down what he told me in a note-book afterwards, and copied his sand-maps also.

After this I came to know him better than I had. I visited his dug-out, and he let me look at his books and Punch and a month-old Illustrated London News, or so. I came to admire him for his simplicity and for his devotion to his men. Every Sunday he held Mass in the trenches of the firing-line, and he never had the least fear of going up.

A splendid little man, always cheerful, always looking after his "flock." Praying with those who were about to give up the ghost; administering the last rites of the Church to those who, in awful agony, were fluttering like singed moths at the edge of the great flame, the Great Life-Mystery of Death.

He wrote beautifully sad letters of comfort to the mothers of boy-officers who were killed. Father S— knew every man: every man knew Father S— and admired him.

His dug-out was made in a slope overlooking the bay, and was really a deep square pit in the sand-bank, roofed with corrugated iron and sandbagged all round. Here we talked. I found he knew G. K. C. and Hilaire Belloc. Always he wanted to look at any new drawings in my sketch-books.

It is a relief to speak with some intelligent person sometimes.

Such was Father S—, a very 'cute little man, knowing most of the troubles of the men about him, noticing their ways and keeping in touch with them all.

CHAPTER XXIV. THE SHARP-SHOOTERS

Just after the episode of the lost squads we were working our stretcher-bearers as far as Brigade Headquarters which were situated on a steep backbone-like spur of the Kapanja Sirt.

One of my "lance-jacks" (lance-corporals) had been missing for a good long time, and we began to fear he was either shot or taken prisoner with the others who had gone too far up the Sirt.

One afternoon we were resting among the rocks, waiting for wounded to be sent back to us; for since the loss of the others we were not allowed to pass the Brigade Headquarters. There was a lull in the fighting, with only a few bursting shrapnel now and then.

This particular lance-jack was quite a young lad of the middle-class, with a fairly good education.

But he was a weedy specimen physically, and I doubted whether he could pull through if escape should mean a fight with Nature for food and water and life itself.

Fairly late in the day as we all lay sprawling on the rocks or under the thorn-bushes, I saw a little party staggering along the defile which led up to the Sirt at this point.

There were two men with cow-boy hats, and between them they helped another very thin and very exhausted-looking fellow, who tottered along holding one arm which had been wounded.

As they came closer I recognised my lost lance-jack, very pale and shaky, a little thinner than usual, and with a hint of that gleam of sniper-madness which I have noticed before in the jumpy, unsteady eyes of hunted men.

The other two, one each side, were sturdy enough. Well-built men, one short and the other tall, with great rough hands, sunburnt faces, and bare arms. They wore brown leggings and riding-breeches and khaki shirts. They carried their rifles at the trail and strode up to us with the graceful gait of those accustomed to the outdoor life.

"Awstralians!" said some one.

"An' the corporal!"

Immediately our men roused up and gathered round.

"Where's yer boss?" asked the tall Colonial.

"The adjutant is over here," I answered.

"We'd like a word with him," continued the man. I took them up to the officer, and they both saluted in an easy-going sort of way.

"We found 'im up there," the Australian jerked his head, "being sniped and couldn't git away—says 'e belongs t' th' 32nd Ambulance—so here he is."

The two Australians were just about to slouch off again when the adjutant called them back.

"Where did you find him?" he asked.

"Up beyond Jefferson's Post; there was five snipers pottin' at 'im, an' it looked mighty like as if 'is number was up. We killed four o' the snipers, and got him out."

"That was very good of you. Did you see any more Medical Corps up there? We've lost some others, and an officer and sergeant."

"No, I didn't spot any—did you, Bill?" The tall man turned to his pal leaning on his rifle.

"No," answered the short sharp-shooter; "he's the only one. It was a good afternoon's sport—very good. We

saw 'e'd got no rifle, and was in a tight clove-'itch, so we took the job on right there an' finished four of 'em; but it took some creepin' and crawlin'."

"Well, we'll be quittin' this now," said the tall one. "There's only one thing we'd ask of you, sir: don't let our people know anything about this."

"But why?" asked the adjutant, astonished. "You've saved his life, and it ought to be known."

"Ya-as, that may be, sir; but we're not supposed to be up here sharp-shootin'—we jist done it fer a bit of sport. Rightly we don't carry a rifle; we belong to the bridge-buildin' section. We've only borrowed these rifles from the Cycle Corps, an' we shall be charged with bein' out o' bounds without leave, an' all that sort o' thing if it gits known down at our headquarters."

"Very well, I'll tell no one; all the same it was good work, and we thank you for getting him back to us," the adjutant smiled.

The two Australians gave him a friendly nod, and said, "So long, you chaps!" to us and lurched off down the defile.

"We'll chuck it fer to-day—done enough," said the tall man.

"Ya-as, we'd better git back. It was good sport—very good," said the short one.

Certainly the Australians we met were a cheerful, happy-go-lucky, devil-may-care crew. They were the most picturesque set of men on the peninsula.

Rough travelling, little or no food, no water, sleepless nights and thrilling escapes made them look queerly primitive and Robinson Crusoeish.

I wrote in my pocket-book: "September 8, 1915.—The Australians have the keen eye, quick ear and silent tongue which evolves in the bushman and those who have faced starvation and the constant risk of sudden death, who have lived a hard life on the hard ground, like the animals of the wild, and come through.

"Fine fellows these, with good chests and arms, well-knit and gracefully poised by habitually having to creep and crouch, and run and fight. Sunburnt to a deep bronze, one and all.

"Their khaki shorts flap and ripple in the sea-wind like a troop of Boy Scouts. Some wear green shirts, and they all wear stone-gray wide-awake hats with pinched crown and broad flat brims."

When at last the mails brought us month-old papers from England, we read that "The gallant Australians" at Suvla "took" Lala Baba and Chocolate Hill; indeed, as Hawk read out in our dug-out one mail-day—

"The Australians have took everythink, or practically everythink worth takin'. They stormed Lala Baba and captured Chocolate 'ill—in fac' they made the landin'; and the Xth and XIth Divisions are simply a myth accordin' to the papers!"

CHAPTER XXV. A SCOUT AT SUVLA BAY

Many times have I seen the value of the Scout training, but never was it demonstrated so clearly as at Suvla Bay. Here, owing to the rugged nature of the country—devoid of all signs of civilisation—a barren, sandy waste—it was necessary to practise all the cunning and craft of the savage scout. Therefore those who had from boyhood been trained in scouting and scoutcraft came out top-dog.

And why?—because here we were working against men who were born scouts.

It became necessary to be able to find your way at night by the stars. You were not allowed to strike a light to look at a map, and anyhow the maps we had were on too small a scale to be of any real use locally.

Now, a great many officers were unable to find even the North Star! Perhaps in civil life they had been men who laughed at the boy scout in his shirt and shorts because they couldn't see the good of it! But when we came face to face with bare Nature we had to return to the methods of primitive man.

More than once I found it very useful to be able to judge the time by the swing of the star-sky.

Then again, many and many a young officer or army-scout on outpost duty was shot and killed because, instead of keeping still, he jerked his head up above the rocks and finding himself spotted jerked down again. The consequence was, that when he raised himself the next time the Turks had the spot "taped" and "his number was up."

This means unnecessary loss of men, owing entirely to lack of training in scoutcraft and stalking.

Finding your way was another point. How many companies got "cut up" simply because the officer or sergeant in charge had no bump of location. As most men came from our big cities and towns, they knew nothing of spotting the trail or of guessing the right direction. Indeed, I see Sir Ian Hamilton states that owing to one battalion "losing its way" a most important position was lost—and this happened again and again—simply because the leaders were not scouts.

Then there were many young officers who when it came to the test could not read a map quickly as they went. (Boy scouts, please note.) This became a very serious thing when taking up fresh men into the firing-line.

Those men who went out with a lot of "la-di-da swank" soon found that they were nowhere in the game with the man who cut his drill trousers into shorts—went about with his shirt sleeves rolled up and didn't mind getting himself dirty.

There were very few "knuts" and they soon got cracked!

Shouting and talking was another point in scouting at Suvla Bay. Brought up in towns and streets, many men found it extremely difficult to keep quiet. Slowly they learnt that silence was the only protection against the hidden sniper.

I remember a lot of fresh men landing in high spirits and keen to get up to the fighting zone. They marched along in fours and whistled and sang; but the Turks in the hills soon spotted them and landed a shell in the middle of them. Silence is the scout's shield in war-time.

It fell to my lot to make crosses to mark the graves of the dead. These crosses were made out of bully-beef packing-cases, and on most of them I was asked to inscribe the name, number and regiment of the slain. I did this in purple copying pencil, as I had nothing more lasting: and generally it read:—

*"In Memory of 19673,
Pte.—
Royal Irish Fus.
R.I.P."*

I had to be tombstone maker and engraver—and sometimes even sexton—a scout turns his hand to anything.

We had our advanced dressing station on the left of Chocolate Hill—the proper name of which is Bakka Baba.

Our ambulance wagons had to cross the Salt Lake, and often the wheels sank and we had to take another team of mules to pull them out.

The Turks had a tower—a gleaming white minaret—just beyond Chocolate Hill, near the Moslem cemetery in the village of Anafarta. It was supposed to be a sacred tower, but as they used it as an observation post, our battle-ships in the bay blew it down.

Flies swarmed everywhere, and were a great cause of disease, as, after visiting the dead and the latrines they used to come and have a meal on our jam and biscuits!

During the whole of August and September we were under heavy shell-fire; but we got quite used to it and hardly turned to look at a bursting shell.

I must say khaki drill uniform is not a good hiding colour. In the sunlight it showed up too light. I believe a parti-coloured uniform, say of green, khaki and gray would be much better. Therefore the Scout who wears a khaki hat, green shirt, khaki shorts and gray stockings is really wearing the best uniform for colour-protection in stalking.

The more scouting we can introduce the better.

Carry on, Boy Scouts! Bad scoutcraft was one of the chief drawbacks in what has been dubbed "The Glorious Failure."

CHAPTER XXVI. THE BUSH-FIRES

There are some things you never forget...

That little Welshman, for instance, lying on a ledge of rock above our Brigade Headquarters with a great gaping shrapnel wound in his abdomen imploring the Medical Officer in the Gaelic tongue to "put him out," and how he died, with a morphia tablet in his mouth, singing at the top of his high-pitched voice—

*"When the midnight chu-chu leaves for Alabam!
I'll be right there!
I've got my fare...
All aboard!
All aboard!
All aboard for Alla-Bam!
... Midnight... chu-chu... chu-chu..."*

And so, slowly his soul steamed out of the wrecked station of his body and left for "Alabam!"

One evening, the 25th of August, bush-fires broke out on the right of Chocolate Hill.

The shells from the Turks set light to the dried sage, and thistle and thorn, and soon the whole place was blazing. It was a fearful sight. Many wounded tried to crawl away, dragging their broken arms and legs out of the burning bushes and were cremated alive.

It was impossible to rescue them. Boxes of ammunition caught fire and exploded with terrific noise in thick bunches of murky smoke. A bombing section tried to throw off their equipment before the explosives burst, but many were blown to pieces by their own bombs. Puffs of white smoke rose up in little clouds and floated slowly across the Salt Lake.

The flames ran along the ridges in long lapping lines with a canopy of blue and gray smoke. We could hear the crackle of the burning thickets, and the sharp "bang!" of bullets. The sand round Suvla Bay hid thousands of bullets and ammunition pouches, some flung away by wounded men, some belonging to the dead. As the bush-fires licked from the lower slopes of the Sari Bair towards Chocolate Hill this lost ammunition exploded, and it sounded like erratic rifle-fire. The fires glowed and spluttered all night, and went on smoking in the morning. I had to go up to Chocolate Hill about some sand-bags for our hospital dug-outs next day, and on the way up I noticed a human pelvis and a chunk of charred human vertebrae under a scorched and charcoaled thorn-bush.

Hawk and I kept a very good look-out every day. We noted the arrival of reinforcements, and the putting up of new telegraph lines; we spotted incoming transports, and the departure of our battle-ships in the bay.

In fact, between us, we worked a very complete "Intelligence Department" of our own. We made a rough chart showing the main lines of communications, and the position of snipers and wells, telegraph wires to the

artillery, and the main observation posts and listening saps.

"It's just as well," said I, "to know as much as we can how things are going, and to keep account of details—it's safer, and might be very useful."

"Very true," said Hawk; "'ave you noticed 'ow that little cruiser comes in every morning at the same time, and goes out again in the late afternoon? Also, two brigades of Territorials came in last night and went round by the beach early this morning towards Lala Baba; I see the footprints when I went down for a wash."

The colonel had camped us on the edge of the Salt Lake on this side of an incline which led up to a flat plateau. Into this incline we had made our dug-outs, and he was now planning the digging out of a square-shaped place which would hold all our stretchers on which the sick and wounded lay, and would be protected from the Turkish shell-fire by being dug into the solid sandstone.

I was looking about for sand-tracks and shells, and I noticed that the grass had grown much more luxuriously at one level than it did lower down. This grass was last year's and was now yellow and dead and rustling like paper flowers.

"This," said I to Hawk, "was last year's water-mark in the rainy season."

"That's gospel," said Hawk; "and what would you make out o' that observation?"

He smiled his queer whimsical smile.

"Why, I guess we shall be swamped out of this camp in a month's time."

"Yes; practically the 'ole of this, up to this level, will be under water."

"Then what's the good of starting to dig a big permanent hospital here when——?"

"Yours not to reason why," said Hawk; "it's a way they have in the army; but I'm not bothering."

Each section dug in shifts day after day until the men were worn out with digging.

Then the long, flat rain-clouds appeared one morning over the distant range of mountains.

"You see them," said Hawk, lighting a "woodbine," and pointing across the Salt Lake; "that's the first sign of the wet season coming up."

Sure enough in a few days the colonel had orders to shift his ambulance to "C" Beach, near Lala Baba, as our present position was unfavourable for the construction of a permanent field hospital, owing to the rise of water in the wet season.

Soon after this, Hawk was moved to the advanced dressing station on Chocolate Hill, and I had to remain with my section near the Salt Lake. Thus we were separated.

"It's to break up our click, too thick together, we bin noticing too much, we know the workin' o' things too well, must break up the combine, dangerous to 'ave people about 'oo spot things and keep their jaws tight. Git rid o' Hawk—see th' ideeah? Very clever, ain't it? Practically we're the only two 'oo do feel which way the wind blows, an' that's inconvenient sometimes."

I asked Hawk while he was on Chocolate Hill to note down in his head the various snipers' posts, and the general positions of the British and Turkish trenches.

There came a time when I wanted to send him a note. But it was a dangerous thing to send notes about. They might fall into the hands of some sniper and give away information.

Therefore I got a bar of yellow soap from our stores, cut it in two, bored out a small hole in one half, wrapped up my note, put it inside the soap, clapped the two halves together, stuck them together by wetting it, and completely concealed the cut by rubbing it with water.

I then asked one of the A.S.C. drivers who was going up with the ambulance wagon in the morning to give the piece of soap to Hawk.

"He *hasn't* got any soap," I explained, "and he asked me to send him a bit. Tell him it's from me, and that I hope he'll find it all right—it's the best we have!"

Hawk got the soap, guessed there was a reason for sending it, broke it open and found the note. So a simple boy-scout trick came in useful on active service.

CHAPTER XXVII. THE DEPARTURE

Now came a period of utter stagnation

It was a deadlock.

We held the bay, the plain of Anafarta, the Salt Lake, the Kislar Dagh and Kapanja Sirt in a horse-shoe.

The Turks held the heights of Sari Bair, Anafarta village, and the hills beyond "Jefferson's Post" in a semicircle enclosing us. Nothing happened. We shelled and they shelled—every day. Snipers sniped and men got killed; but there was no further advance. Things had remained at a standstill since the first week of the landing.

Rumours floated from one unit to another:

"We were going to make a great attack on the 28th"—always a fixed date; "the Italians were landing troops to help the Australians at Anzac"—every possible absurdity was noised abroad.

Hawk was on Chocolate Hill with our advanced dressing station. I was on "C" Beach, Lala Baba, with the remainder of the ambulance. I had lost all my officers by sickness and wounds, and I was now the last of the original N.C.O.'s of "A" Section. Except for the swimming and my own observations of tracks and birds and natural history generally, this was a desperately uninteresting period.

Orders to pack up ready for a move came suddenly. It was now late in September. The wet season was just

beginning. The storm-clouds were coming up over the hills in great masses of rolling banks, black and forbidding. It grew colder at night, and a cold wind sprang up during the day.

Every one was bustling about, packing the operating tent and equipment, operating table, instruments, bottles, pans, stretchers, "monkey-boxes," bandages, splints, cooking dixies, bully-beef crates, biscuit tins—everything was being packed up and sorted out ready for moving.

But where? No one knew. We were going to move... soon, very soon, it was rumoured.

Within every mind a small voice asked—"Blighty?" And then came another whiff of rumour: "The Xth Division are going—England perhaps!"

But it was too good to believe. Every one wanted to believe it... each man in his inmost soul hoped it might be true... but it couldn't be England... and yet it might!

One night the Indian Pack-mule Corps came trailing down with their little two-wheeled, two-muled carts and transported all our medical panniers away into the gloom, and they went towards Lala Baba. It was a good sign.

Everything was gone now except our own packs and kit, and we had orders to "stand by" for the command to "Fall in."

We lay about in the sand waiting—and wondering. At last towards the last minutes of midnight we got the orders to "Fall in." The N.C.O.'s called the "Roll," "numbered off" their sections and reported "All present and correct, sir!"

In a long straggling column we marched from our last encampment towards Lala Baba. The night was very dark and the sand gave under our feet. It was hard going, but every man had a gleam of hope, and trudged along heavy-laden with rolled overcoat, haversack and water-bottle and stretcher, but with a light heart.

The advanced party from Chocolate Hill met us at Lala Baba. Here everything was bustle and hurry.

Every unit of the Xth Division was packed up and ready for embarkation. Lighters and tugs puffed and grated by the shore. Horses stamped and snorted; sergeants swore continually; officers nagged and shouted.

Men got mixed up and lost their units, sections lost their way in the great crowd of companies assembled.

Once Hawk loomed out of the darkness and a strong whiff of rum came with him... he disappeared again: "See you later, Sar'nt—lookin' after things—important—practically everythink—"

He was full of drink, and in his hurry to look after "things" (mostly bottles) he lost some of his own kit and my field-glasses. He worked hard at getting the equipment into the lighters, notwithstanding the fact that he was "three-parts canned."

Every now and then he loomed up like some great khaki-clad gorilla, only to fade away again to the secret hiding-place of a bottle.

And so at last we got aboard. It was still a profound secret. No one knew whither we were going, or why we were leaving the desolation of Suvla Bay.

But every one was glad. Anything would be better than this barren waste of sand and flies and dead men.

That was the last we saw of the bay. A sheet of gray water, a moving mob on the slope of Lala Baba, the trailing smoke of the tug, and a pitch-black sky—and Hawk lurching round and swearing at the loss of his bottle and his kit.

An old sea-song was running in my mind:—

*"But two men of her crew alive—
What put to sea with seventy-five!"*

Only three months ago we had landed 25,000 strong; and now we numbered about 6000. A fearful loss—a smashed Division.

We transferred to a troop-ship standing out in the bay with all possible speed.

Still with the gloom hanging over everything we steamed out and every man was dead tired.

However, I found Hawk, and we decided not to sleep down below with the others, all crowded together and stinking in the dirty interior of the ship.

We took our hammocks up on deck and slung them forward from the handrail near one of the great anchors.

I had a purpose in doing this. I had no intention of going to sleep. By taking note of a certain star which had appeared just to the right of a cross-spar, and by noticing its change of position, I was enabled to guess with some exactitude the course we were laying.

For the first two or three hours the star and the mast kept a perfectly unchangeable position.

I woke up after dozing for some minutes, and taking up my old stand near the companion-way again took my star observation. But this time the star had swept right round and was the other side of the mast. We had changed our course from south-west to north. Just then Hawk came up the companion-way, no doubt from a bottle-hunt down below.

"It's—Salonika!" said he.

"We've turned almost due north in the last quarter of an hour."

"I know it,—been down to the stokers' bunks—it's Salonika—another new landing."

"They keep the Xth for making new landings."

And so to the Graeco-Serbian frontier and a fresh series of adventures, including sickness, life in an Egyptian hospital—and then England.

CHAPTER XXVIII. LOOKING BACK

The queer thing is, that when I look back upon that "Great Failure" it is not the danger or the importance of the undertaking which is strongly impressed so much as a jumble of smells and sounds and small things.

It is just these small things which no author can make up in his study at home.

The glitter of some one carrying an army biscuit-tin along the mule track; the imprinted tracks of sand-birds by the blue Aegean shore; the stink of the dead; a dead man's hand sticking up through the sand; the blankets soaked each morning by the heavy dew; the incessant rattle of a machine-gun behind Pear-tree Gully; the distant ridges of the Sari Bahir range shimmering in the heat of noon-day; the angry "buzz" of the green and black flies disturbed from a jam-pot lid; the grit of sand in the mouth with every bite of food; the sullen dullness of the overworked, death-wearied troops; the hoarse dried-up and everlasting question: "Any water?"; the silence of the Hindus of the Pack-mule Corps; the "S-s-s-e-e-e-o-o-op!—Crash!"—of the high explosives bursting in a bunch of densely solid smoke on the Kislar Dargh, and the slow unfolding of these masses of smoke and sand in black and khaki rolls; the snort and stampede of a couple of mules bolting along the beach with their trappings swinging and rattling under their panting bellies; the steady burning of the star-lit night skies; the regular morning shelling from the Turkish batteries on the break of dawn over the gloom-shrouded hills; the far-away call of some wounded man for "Stretchers! Stretchers!"; the naked white men splashing and swimming in the bay; the swoop of a couple of skinny vultures over the burning white sand of the Salt Lake bed to the stinking and decomposing body of a shrapnel-slaughtered mule hidden in the willow-thickets at the bottom of Chocolate Hill; a torn and bullet-pierced French warplane stranded on the other side of Lala Baba—lying over at an angle like a wounded white seabird; the rush for the little figure bringing in "the mails" in a sack over his shoulder; the smell of iodine and iodoform round the hospital-tents; the long wobbling moan of the Turkish long-distance shells, and the harmless "Z-z-z-eee-e-e-o-ooop!" of their "dud" shells which buried themselves so often in the sand without exploding; the tattered, begrimed and sunken-eyed appearance of men who had been in the trenches for three weeks at a stretch; the bristling unshaven chins, and the craving desire for "woodbines"; the ingrained stale blood on my hands and arms from those fearful gaping wounds, and the red-brown blood-stain patches on my khaki drill clothes; the pestering curse of those damnable Suvla Bay flies and the lice with which every officer and man swarmed.

The awful—cut-off, Robinson Crusoe feeling—no letters from home, no newspapers, no books... sand, biscuits and flies; flies, bully and sand...

Stay-at-home critics and prophets of war cannot strike just that tiny spark of reality which makes the whole thing "live."

However many diagrams and wonderful ideas these remarkable amateur experts publish they won't "go down" with the man who has humped his pack and has "been out."

Mention the word "Blighty" or "Tickler's plum-and-apple," "Kangaroo Beach" or "Jhill-o! Johnnie!" or "Up yer go—an' the best o' luck!" to any man of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force and in each case you will have touched upon a vividly imprinted impresssion of the Dardanelles.

There was adventure wild and queer enough in the Dardanelles campaign to fill a volume of Turkish Nights' Entertainments, but the people at home know nothing of it.

This is the very type of adventure and incident which would have aroused a war-sickened people; which would have rekindled war-weary enthusiasm and patriotism in the land. Maybe most of these accounts of marvellous escapes and 'cute encounters, secret scoutings and extraordinary expeditions will lie now for ever with the silent dead and the thousands of rounds of ammunition in the silver sand of Suvla Bay.

The stars still burn above the Salt Lake bed; the white breakers roll in each morning along the blue sea-shore, sometimes washing up the bodies of the slain—just as they did when we camped near Lala Baba.

But the guns are gone and there the heavy silence of the waste places reigns supreme.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AT SUVLA BAY ***

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