

Only a Few Miles Long, but It's a Front Hed by Sammies!

THE United States is now holding a sector of the Western front under battle conditions—not a big sector, but a real one. The official admission of this fact—suspected ever since the Germans on November 13 reported the presence of American soldiers near the Rhine-Marne canal, in Lorraine—gives pause. Back-of-the-lines stories by press correspondents are now a thing of the past; the picture of American troops in battle with Germans changes from imagination to reality.

Under what conditions, then, and where



—From The New York Evening Post

are the American troops now facing Germans across No Man's Land? The location of the sector, as yet officially withheld, is, nevertheless, relatively certain. "In the neighborhood of the Rhine-Marne canal, near the Lorraine frontier, in front of Nancy and Lunéville, stands Pershing's small army," is the way one editor puts it. Another account locates the front anywhere between St. Mihiel and Epinal. This region has been quiet ever since the first month of the war, when the Germans were defeated on the Grand Couronne before Nancy.

Incidentally, the Americans are actually nearer the Rhine than any other Allied troops, except the French who hold a small corner of Alsace. According to "The New York Evening Sun" they are facing Germans at a point about midway between the great fortresses of Metz and Strasbourg, and any appreciable advance would drive a wedge between those two cities and put the Americans within striking distance of the Rhine itself. In addition it is historic ground the Americans hold, for there also occurred some of the sharpest fighting in the Franco-Prussian War.

Similar vagueness exists as yet as to the extent of the American sector. That it is of considerable length is indicated, says one journal, by the statement that in the artillery clashes of the last week the guns in one burst of firing spoke along several kilometers of front. Moreover, the casualties suffered also occurred at points some distance apart.

In climate and topography the Ameri-

can sector is rugged, judging from press accounts. The country thereabouts is hilly, woody, broken, damp and extremely cold. To Americans arriving in what they have always heard of as "sunny France," it must be desolate country, indeed, remarks René Benjamin, writing in the Paris "Journal":

"They arrive—these big soldiers with a nonchalant air—in our harsh Lorraine, rude and naked robust and poor. Their eyes, accustomed to shield themselves against the glare of the sun, open wide in astonishment at the poverty of the villages—the low, earth-colored roofs, the aerial dung heaps at the doors, and the walls from which foulness drips. Then their minds, appealed to by the hard lot of our race, soften at the thought that the heavens are not kinder to a country for which they know so many men have given their lives."

The location of the American sector is also not without importance in the general scheme of Allied transport. According to Secretary Baker, the Americans have already constructed 600 miles of railroad to help supply the sector. Moreover, congestion of ports in Northern France by shipping from England probably also had to be considered in the selection of this sector and the present American sea base. However, these objections are partly counterbalanced by the nearness of the sector to Germany, particularly because the American front will be highly suitable for air operations against Germany.

When not in the trenches the Americans are billeted in small French villages behind the lines, many pictures of which have been sent home by correspondents in the last six months. A striking difference is noticed, however, by a writer in the Paris "Journal" between the attitude of the poilu and that of the American toward these homely barracks. The Americans like things clean, it appears. In fact—

"They change the aspect of every house which they enter. Our men sleep in the granaries or the stables; they install themselves in the straw or mingle with the animals, and they have as companions of their dreams the chalk-colored mouse and the romantic spider. The men from America, on the contrary, sweep, scrape and scrub. They purify the stable and whitewash the granary. But they create a void wherever they clean up. The spirit of poesy flees when they empty the garrets. They do not want



—From The Baltimore Sun

Moreover, the importance of a trench

to sleep with the owls. Their nights are without mystery. They eradicate even the odor of the gathered harvests, and for them winter retains no memory of summer."

When food is mentioned, one easily guesses that the Sammie, used to his American sweets, ice cream, cake, soda water, chocolate, not to mention turkey and chicken, finds in his meals his greatest burden. In the trenches, of course, things are very simple. As one dispatch says:

"All the men are apparently well satisfied with the food. Two meals a day are always served, and sometimes there are three. For breakfast the men frequently get a large bowl of oatmeal as the principal dish, while at dinner there is beef or some other meat and vegetables. Supper sometimes brings bacon, corned beef hash or canned salmon. There is always good white bread made from American flour, and plenty of it."

But out of the trenches what little tragedies are revealed to an observing French correspondent, writing to the Paris "Journal":

"I know that after their arrival it was a very great disappointment to them to find themselves still fed on canned meats. Since they sailed they had been fed on nothing else. Now, in poking his nose into one corner after another, one of the soldiers discovered, in a pigsty, a young porker recaling himself on sugar beet leaves. Their favorite vegetable! The soldier approached the pig, and lifting his hat, said politely:

"Dear pig, whom I may also call our ally, if you will give me a part of your repast you may have this whole tin of canned meat."

"And he added, as an extra inducement: 'I'll even open it for you.'"

"The pig made no response. But war is war. The American helped himself. 'Now they all use the beet leaves. One by one they pass before the cook, who gives them a slice of the whitest possible bread, potatoes and beef in gravy. While they wait



—From The New York World

they imitate the cries of animals, whistle, sing and accompany themselves by beating with their forks on their mess plates. And that makes a droll contrast with the very grave and serious appearance of these big fellows, in their long coats, which recall those worn by Javert and Jean Valjean.

"The big Americans smile, roll their eyes, and are happy to talk about things which even the mention of makes one more hopeful, tell these little fellows that, for certain holidays, their government is going to send them turkey and sweet potatoes. But this is only a promise—as yet without confirmation. 'They dream of that promise in eating their daily ration. In the evening they eat it in the dusk, their feet muddled, their mess platters in their hands, out in the cold and the fog.'"

Intimate Pictures of the War—Locked Country

Now that the men are in the trenches, what do things look like? The last week

has given many pictures from the different special correspondents, telling of Americans within thirty feet of their German enemies. There is the vivid picture sent by Thomas M. Johnson to "The New York Evening Sun" shortly before the last artillery brush, not the least of which is typical American trench humor:

"We stepped down from the firing step. The glory of war seemed utterly absent. From that lonely gray wilderness we heard splashing water. A trench soldier came toward us saying, 'Join the navy and see the world.' He chuckled as he passed in water up to his knees. The spell is broken by such men. Nothing matters.

"We slipped and waded through upward of a mile, and that trench at one time was only sixty yards from the Germans. We didn't talk, even in whispers. Then we came to a smashed up place where three men had been killed. 'Here,' said the major, 'a big shell exploded, and we walked down through the crater without more being said.'"

"We got over the top here," said the major. "It's all smashed up here. Walk singly, five yards apart, so if they see us they won't get more than one or two."

"The American trenches," runs another dispatch, "are all in more or less marshy ground, making the use of 'duckboards' necessary at all times, except when the trench water and mud are frozen.

"In every dugout the soldiers work almost constantly at the pumps, keeping out the water which seeps in. But the watery conditions are unfavorable for trench rats, and few of them are seen. One unit spent more than a week in the line before seeing a rat, and he apparently was in a hurry to get some place where the ground was drier.

"In some places the artillery is on ground but little higher than the trenches, although a number of our batteries manage to keep 'dry feet' most of the time."

Another writer, Lincoln Eyre, made a

night visit to the American sector for "The New York World." Soon after passing a dugout, popularly known as the "Waldorf," the party entered the communication trench, where appeared again the old enemy, mud:

"Thousands of duckboards are required to floor the liquid mud at the bottom of every trench. Again and again in the course of our promenade we plunged into water and mire up to our thighs. Some trenches have been wholly untenable. We traversed only one which engineers had put in commission the night before. The firing trenches are in little better condition.

"The major gave us a brief description of the lay of the land. The trenches at this point form a rounded salient so that the Germans, whose observation facilities, owing to the high ground back of them, are better than ours, are able to enfilade certain parts of our line. The ground on which the opposing lines are laid is quite flat and at places so marshy it is impossible to dig trenches. 'Lipson' patrols unite the open spaces.

"A man needs to be a good swimmer for that work," the major said. "Some of these swamps are regular lakes."

The Americans Have Carried On In Fine Style

Under such conditions within the last week, American infantry, brilliantly supported by American artillery, have clashed repeatedly with the enemy, sustaining casualties, yes, but inflicting losses equally as large, if not larger. Particularly striking was the twenty-minute "strafing" that the Sammies gave Fritz one evening, tearing up a large section of front line trench and probably breaking up a local attack. As one correspondent wrote:

"It was a very lively and spectacular affair. The bombardment extended over a considerable area, and for a time the whole sky was lit up with the flash and flicker of red, white, green, and yellow—as our infantry or that of the enemy signalled back, 'Give us barrage,' or 'Don't give us barrage,' or 'Gas shells coming.'"

Indeed, one French artillery officer, who served at Verdun, praised the work of certain American batteries as "almost perfect." This good work, incidentally,

"Landing Regularly on the West Front"

"The last I remember in the time before I reached the hospital," said another wounded man, "is seeing something moving through the fog. I determined to get some Germans approaching out of the fog as the barrage lifted. He brought his automatic rifle into play and saw two of the Germans fall. He kept on firing until shell splinters hit him in the head and arm.

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"So at last, remarks "The Cleveland Plain-Dealer," though it may be very short, there is an American sector:

"America is fighting with American soldiers as well as with American food and American munitions. American boys are standing shoulder to shoulder with French or British or Belgians, sharing the hardships and the perils of the common cause. More than ever before is the reality of war brought home to the American people. More than ever before the American people are determined to make the war as brief as possible—if for no other reason, to bring home the boys who are to-day holding the 'American sector,' somewhere in France."

served to heighten the morale of the infantry, who, as one correspondent wrote:

"Chucked-to-day when he was told how the barrage came right slap down on the Dutchman the minute he started to get fresh. While the artillery commander chuckled too, he showed reports that our barrage had beaten the German barrage by thirty seconds."

The glory of these short bouts went to the artillery, but the men in the trenches were the ones to face the supreme test. In the words of one dispatch:

"The men conducted themselves well during the enemy bombardment. Several wounded



—From The Boston Daily Globe

refused to go to the rear to have their wounds dressed, and at least one wounded man after having his wound dressed returned to the front line, where he remained throughout the night."

Several men were caught at a listening post just outside of the barbed wire, within forty feet of an enemy listening post, by the German barrage:

"Then hell broke loose," said one of the men there. For fifteen minutes the enemy broke hundreds of high explosive shells over the post and the surrounding ground, cutting off the men there. Two of them were killed in the first few minutes.

"Another man who was at the post told the correspondent later, as he was lying in a cot in a field hospital, that he saw four Germans approaching out of the fog as the barrage lifted. He brought his automatic rifle into play and saw two of the Germans fall. He kept on firing until shell splinters hit him in the head and arm.

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In The American Magazines

THE monthly magazines for February are unusually full of good war articles, though a few, such as "The American Magazine," lean somewhat to the idea of the "magazine business as usual," seeming as yet not willing to admit that the biggest interest to the reading public is the war.

Russia
FOR views of the Russian middle, which ever finds new and unfringed interpreters, one may turn with profit to the February issue of "Mansey's," in which Frederick Austin Ogg, of the University of Wisconsin, asks and answers many angles of the question, "Is Russia in Dissolution?" In "Hearst's" Charles Edward Russell defines a "Bolshevik," having had excellent opportunity to gather material while with the American mission in Russia last summer. Something more picturesque is "Miss Amerikan," from the hand of Olive Gilbreth, starting in serial form in "Harper's." William Hard lightly dramatizes the Bolshevik attempt "To Split the German" in the "Metropolitan," giving the narrative of an imagined Inter-Allied Conference at London, "a project levelled at two possibilities which, it is submitted, can never be attained separately: First, to drive a wedge of genuinely democratic truth into Germany; and, second, to lay the tentative foundations of a genuinely democratic international order."

The Neutrals
FROM Russia one may turn with interest to a view of the starving neutrals, pictured by Edwin Bjorkman in both "Scribner's" and "The World's Work." It is not a cheerful picture. As a friend of the author remarked last July in Christiania, "We have nothing but money over here now," words "which give the crux of the peculiar situation which the war has created in the small northern countries. To them the war has come carrying fortune in one hand and famine in the other. They have never been richer in the one thing supposed to be capable of procuring everything else. They have never been so poor in all those things that, under normal circumstances, make money worth having."

France
IT IS France, however, that in point of space receives the most attention in magazines of the moment. "Why France Wants Alsace-Lorraine," in "The World's Work," is not so new as the account of an Allied dream easily pictured in the title, "Bordeaux-Odessa versus Berlin-Bagdad." What is suggested is a railroad roughly following the 45th parallel from Bordeaux to Odessa, crossing the Berlin-Bagdad route at Belgrade, and implying a stretch of territory favorable to the Entente that would sever the Mitteleuropa scheme at the waist.

Other views of France at war may be found in Francis B. Sayre's article on the Y. M. C. A. at the front, in "Harper's," and in Octave Forsant's chronicle in "The Atlantic," "Keeping School Under Fire: A Record from Rheims," which ends with this comment:

"The result of the investigations that I made shows that during the thirty months that the schools were open thirty-seven shells fell upon the school buildings, and two of them went through the roof, luckily while the children were absent—into the rooms where the sessions were held every day. More than a thousand projectiles of all calibres fell within a space of less than 100 metres from the schools, in which space they killed seventy-six grown persons and eight children who never attended school. Not a single teacher or pupil was wounded."

Away From the War
THOSE who flee war discussion or find time for other matters will find excellent diversion in Meredith Nicholson's "Chicago" ("The Valley of Democracy"), in this month's issue of "Scribner's." Champ Clark's biography begins in "Hearst's," while "Harper's" is publishing the letters of James Whitcomb Riley. In the "American" one finds Harold Bell Wright's first magazine article, a war throbb, entitled "The Sword of Jesus." The interesting personality section of this magazine is brightened by intimate views of Edison and the famous Mayo brothers of Rochester, Minn., who have made it a pleasure to occupy the operating table.

A Smile or Two
"WHY, daughter, you never told me before that you loved this young man!"

"Well, mother, I didn't know it myself until yesterday. I never saw him with a uniform on before."—Yonkers Statesman.

Mrs. A.—Are you troubled much in your neighborhood with borrowing?
Mrs. B.—Yes, a good deal. My neighbors never seem to have anything I want.—Boston Transcript.

"Hi, Bill! Here comes a gas wave!"
"Thank heavens! This toothache's almost killin' me."—Cartoons Magazine.

He—Are you fond of indoor sports?
She—Yes, if they know when to go home.—Tiger.

"My son has some grit in him, I can tell you," said a father. "Been eating war bread, I suppose."—Liverpool Post.

O Captain! My Captain!

By Walt Whitman

O Captain! my Captain! Our fearful trip is done;
The ship has weathered every rack,
The prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear,
The people all exulting,
While from eyes the steady keel,
The vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm; he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchored safe and sound;
Its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!
But I, with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

THE spirit of Abraham Lincoln, like government "of the people, by the people and for the people," has not perished from the earth. Perhaps the name of no other great American hero of the past has been so frequently on the lips of people during the present world struggle as that of Lincoln. This note of Lincoln's supreme contemporary interest was especially emphasized in an address delivered a few months ago by Dr. John Wesley Hill, chancellor of the Lincoln Memorial University, of Cumberland Gap, Tenn.—an institution, by the way, which is said to have been the first to respond officially to President Wilson's appeal for volunteers. The address above mentioned ran as follows:

"At the Battle of Marathon, the Athenians, outnumbered ten to one by the Persians, achieved a memorable victory and the salvation of their country, because, as the fable runs, the spirits of Castor and Pollux, their national heroes, led the Grecian charge.

"The annals of every people are full of instances showing how the inspiration of the heroic dead has stirred the hearts of patriots to noble and triumphant action.

"It has remained for America to produce a figure which, embodying the typical characteristics of our democracy, makes appeal to the sympathies and the aspirations of all mankind, wherever and whenever engaged in the struggles of liberty against despotism.

"In a very true sense, and it is perhaps the most striking fact in the entire history of the present war, the cause of the Allies finds its deepest inspiration in the character, the principles, the convictions, the utterance and the achievements of Abraham Lincoln.

"Lloyd George, the foremost English statesman of the day, finds the most perfect expression of the soul of the present contest for the enfranchisement of Europe in the words of our backwoods President, which he quotes as the justification of the Entente policy.

Abraham Lincoln—To-day

making this quotation did not speak of Lincoln, the American. Lincoln has outgrown the boundaries of nationality and towers as a world figure, standing in the forefront of a world crisis, his words full of world wisdom.

"When the eyes of the immortal emancipator closed in death, Stanton, his great war secretary, exclaimed, 'Now he belongs to the ages,' which was but another way of declaring, 'Now he belongs to humanity, because he is the enshrined reality of democracy.'"

"And to-day the nations enlisted in the grim and final struggle against autocracy find their sustaining inspiration in the spiritual leadership of Abraham Lincoln.

"France, who copied our institutions in 1793; England, who has enfranchised her subjects; China, who arose against the Manchu dynasty and built a republic moulded on the Constitution of the United States; gladly acclaim the democracy of Lincoln, while in the midst of the successful strivings of Russian democracy, up from the night of centuries of oppression, the bright guiding star which illumines its pathway and glorifies its goal has been the deeds and political creed of Abraham Lincoln.

"And it is the spirit of Lincoln which leads the United States to-day in the holy crusade of freedom in which we have enlisted, and it will be the 'Spirit of Lincoln in Arms' that will lead the Allied hosts to a glorious and final victory over the foes of democracy.

"And if you would know the secret of this invisible leadership; if you would find the only explanation behind this new and thrilling uprising among our own people for the protection of humanity, I have but to refer you to the two-minute address that Lincoln delivered at Gettysburg, which to-day belongs to the world.

"You remember those immortal words: 'The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what was done here.' And then he went on to express the hope that out of the blood of those who had given their lives for their country, this nation might have a new birth of freedom; that government with those words which President Wilson has already quoted and which every speaker everywhere during this war will quote. You remember them: 'That government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth.'"

"Ah! if Lincoln were here to-day—and I believe he is.

"Somehow I seem to see his serene spirit looking down upon us from the summit of these American centuries, and thus speaking and listening he hears that prayer which he offered at Gettysburg now trembling upon the lips of all the liberty loving nations of the world, the prayer for a 'new birth of freedom,' and that government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

"In the light of that prayer, my friends, it is not difficult to understand the meaning

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By Walt Whitman

O Captain! my Captain! Our fearful trip is done;
The ship has weathered every rack,
The prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear,
The people all exulting,
While from eyes the steady keel,
The vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
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Labor

"LOYALTY LABOR WEEK" begins to-day. Under the auspices of the American Alliance for Labor and Democracy, organized labor will hold demonstrations throughout the country for the purpose of arousing a spirit of greater unity and enthusiasm for America's cause.

The backbone of the newspaper dealers' strike in New York City is broken, according to latest reports at the time The Review went to press, many of the strikers having accepted the terms of the publishers.

Ten thousand girls, members of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, quit work in this city for an 8 1/2 per cent increase in wages for piece workers and 8 1/2 a week for week workers, also a forty-nine hour week.

The Commercial Telegraphers of America have set April 28 aside as "open organization" day. An attempt will be made to organize all the telegraph operators of the Western Union and Postal Telegraph systems. They have given notice to the companies that any attempt to punish employees for joining will be followed by an order for a general strike.

Between 1,000 and 1,500 weavers in Philadelphia have struck for a 15 per cent advance in wages and changed working conditions.

Streetcar service in St. Louis has been completely halted. The striking motormen and conductors are demanding increased wages, revision of working hours and discontinuance of alleged unfair discrimination in favor of women conductors.

The 1,200 longshoremen who quit work on the piers of the Southern Pacific Steamship Company voted to submit their grievances to the local adjustment board of the United States Shipping Board.

