

1917?

By
EDWIN BALMER

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CHAPTER XVIII. Breakfast Under Fire.

COMPANY F fled out the front door of the car. Corporal Jim Ashby—his squad numbered two other men besides Kilbane and Swenson—led his four across the tracks, avoiding third rails. He climbed the barriers of the railroad right of way and led on to Madison avenue. The shells seemed to be bursting close. The shock of a detonation rocked the train and all about windows were broken. The white and blue flag of Company F was on the corner of 11th street. All but two of the men who had answered roll call after the wreck replied now. The battalion did not delay for those.

A sergeant, in the khaki of the regular army, rode up on a motorcycle. He found Major Wray, saluted, and handed over written orders. The command came down the column: "Forward, march."

Certainly the shells were bursting closer than a few minutes ago, and they were coming more often, too. There was a big fire lower down in the city—several big fires. The smoke blew in great streams across the sky toward the Hudson. How the big shells were coming! Breakfast under fire? Jim had forgotten breakfast. He felt hungry to remind him of it. He did not need to eat. There was talking in the ranks, plenty of talking, but no one spoke of needing to eat.

What a sight was Madison avenue! If all the throngs who had crowded the boats on the river, the trains and the roads north of the city had fled from New York, where would these people be coming from? Well, some of them were coming from houses and flats and stores, right there on the avenue. Old men, middle aged men, and boys. Men gesturing wild, and excited, men stammering and fumbling, men quiet and pale and too calm were leading their families from their homes to start flight to and—where and how?

That shell! There was no doubt that the shells were bursting farther up town and were coming more often. Women screamed and children cried. Men cursed madly. What was the matter with the forts—what were they doing? Where was the army and all the men who had volunteered? Some one started a cheer for the soldiers marching down the car tracks. The cars in Madison avenue for some reason were not running.

"Where're you from, boys?" "Illinois." "Hurray! Hurray! Some more of the Illinois boys! Hurray! Hurray! Say, some of you fellows are hurt! Been fighting? Where? How did it come out?" "No. Train wreck!" a recruit confessed.

"Bridge blown up before us by spies! some one corrected quickly. "We lost half our men!" he boasted. "Where you going? Long Island?" "Don't know. Hope so!" "They need you there. Our boys were beaten this morning. The regent's landing a hundred thousand men and they're marching on New York. Oh, there's another one. They're shelling New York. Those shells, they're exploding just below there!"

"Column forward! Forward!" some one was hectoring now, not ordering. "Close up, men! Oh, close up!" Corporal Ashby gazed dully at the back of the men in front of him, then to Kilbane marching at his side. The Irish boy's face chalk white. Jim knew that his skin was as black as his legs were as unsteady as he strode.

"Close up! Oh, hang it, close up!" Jim stumbled forward, certain the cry must be meant for him. But Kilbane scurried sidwally at the same instant like others all about. Shell fire. Big explosive shell fire! So this was it, and they were marching into it! "You low quitter. You rotten coward!" Jim's lips whispered at himself. "Go on. You've got to go, and you've got to walk straight. You low, sneaking, cowardly—quitter."

As a shell burst in a building Jim swayed—blind, deaf, insensible. "Shell shock! That's all!" some one was reassuring. "Get up everybody! You're all right! Get up! Get up!" Scores were stunned. Some were mildly mad or babbling, quite insane. Wray, the major, called the men and women who appeared from cellars. "Take these men to safe places, please, and look after them. They'll probably come around all right after a while. You can get a doctor, can't you? One of you is a doctor? That's good." He detailed a couple of the less injured soldiers to assist. "When those men recover, you'd better join any other battalion you can find, unless you happen to learn where we'll be."

Wray, with the captains and the lieutenants, was reforming the companies by physical force, pulling about the men and pushing them into position. "We're going to the subway now!" the officers promised. "We're going as direct as we can to the subway!" The battalion dazedly formed in column. "Forward!" The men trailed through the debris in the avenue and went on. "Column right!" It was marching on a cross street, with Central park on the right. It passed the end of Fifth avenue and went on. Jim recognized Columbus circle. The column headed for the kiosk to the subway and halted. The major went ahead to make explanations. The column learned, while it waited, that the subway or the power plant or something had been damaged so that only a few trains might be run, and the

whole subway system had been taken over by the military. Wray reappeared. Evidently he had won dispensation for his men suffering from shell shock. Company E began to file down under the street. F gratefully followed into the subterranean world where the sound of the shells—even those shells which tore whole business squares to bits and killed or crazed a score of men without marking them—was dull and distant and where you could lie back on the rattan seat of a steel car and be quite safe again. Where the train was taking the battalion and why no one at that moment seemed to care.

Swenson, who sat beside Jim, was opening and closing his hands and staring at them. "That's funny," he said slowly. "It was my right I couldn't feel moving. Now it's the left." Jim again tried the muscles of his hands and feet. Kilbane appealed to him in a whisper. "Is seven time nine sixty-three?"

Jim considered. Then he nodded. "You're awful pain here?" Kilbane touched the back of his head. "Awful!" "Then you and me'll watch each other. They make you dippy after awhile sometimes, ye've heard?" "Yes. I've heard."

"Worth street!" an officer's voice warned. "The next is ours, boys. Brooklyn bridge." Did that mean marching on the surface again or going in cars exposed to fire? Why couldn't every one stay in the subway? It went to Brooklyn safe deep down under the river. The train stopped and every one got out. The shells! They were bursting ceaselessly just above. The concussion of them battered down the subway stairs and the noise above was awful. Not only the shells—screams also and cries of men in panic, terrified, beaten.

"Forward boys! Come on, everybody! Forward!" Smoke-black, blinding smoke, hot and scorching—saddled down into the subway. The battalion struggled through it. There was a fight at the top of the stairs. Soldiers were trying to turn back men who were crashing to get into the subway. They struggled and swore. The battalion brought help to the guards and cleared the stairs. Company F, following Company E, came out to the street. The end of Brooklyn bridge lay before them, shrouded in the smoke which rose from the tenement blocks which were burning. From the smoke men staggered and stumbled—men in uniform and with rifles, uniformed men without guns, and others without uniform or rifle, but wearing the arm bands and the brown shirts of American recruits. Shells burst above them and scurried them on. These were not the monster shells which had been striking further up in the city. These were smaller and came much quicker and burst with two different sorts of detonation. One sort made little noise. The other burst with shock and roar of the same type, only much less, as the shock of the shell which had dashed the battalion.

"Shrapnel! That's that's high explosive!" "Yes!" "Column four! Column four!" the company officers were begging. "Forward! Forward, men! March!" A bugle blew the signal over and over again. The battalion moved slowly toward the bridge. Shrapnel and the quick, ceaseless high explosive shells were bursting above Company F now.

"Oh, I'm hit!" The soldier who cried it caught at Jim's shoulder and dragged there. Beyond him another man went down without cry or gasp. He just crumpled, and the man marching behind stepped on the body before he knew it.

"Forward, men! Forward! You've got to come on! Oh, come on, you cowards! For Illinois, boys! Come on! Come on! Never mind the wounded. Don't look at the dead! Come on, boys! Forward! Come on!" Never mind the wounded! That meant—for Jim Ashby—that he must free himself from the fingers of the man clasping his shoulders. He must let the man fall on his face in the street.

"Ashby!" Winslow, the captain, appealed to him because he was a corporal. At least he had a uniform. "Help bring up those men! Forward! Make 'em come on!" Jim freed himself from the wounded man and laid him, groaning and groping, on his back in the street.

"Come on, boys!" Most of Company F faltered forward a little. For the moment the shells were worse behind than in front. The company advanced further. Winslow's voice cried in praise: "That's the stuff, boys! Don't let the New Yorkers think we're afraid. Come on, now!"

The New Yorkers! If they were the men running from the bridge they had a lot of right to think things about any one else. They were running mad, crazy with fear, and ducking their heads and trying to dodge when the shells were breaking above them. They flung themselves, coughing, out of the smoke, and when officers yelled to them and tried to gather them and get them together they ran or fell wounded and squirming in the street. Only here and

"Oh, I'm hit!" the soldier cried. there a few formed and moved off in order down side streets away from the bridge.

"Come on, boys! Illinois! Illinois forward! We're not going over the bridge! We're not ordered there! We're only going to the river front! Come on! Come on!"

The battalion began to move again. Only to the river front. That so added like some safer place. Anyway, it couldn't be like the bridge. No place on earth or in hell could be like the bridge. No one could live on the bridge. Some men were posted there and were standing and not running at all. They had a field battery and machine guns trained across the bridge. They were just waiting there and not firing. But those men were regulars. That was their business to be in a place like that. Company F, following Company E, turned into Chambers street and marched down it. The shells were not striking there often. They were all breaking over the bridge. The battalion reached South street on the water front. They could see Brooklyn plainly now across the narrow neck of the East river. The whole city seemed to be burning. At least the whole water front was screened in smoke which swept over the river and concealed and now disclosed and concealed again boats coming over from the Brooklyn side. The noise of the guns on Long Island also was louder. They were closer and there were more guns firing. Aeroplanes—one, two, four, six—were in the air over the East river, and above the smoke from Brooklyn a great, globular object swung and swayed in the wind—an observation balloon.

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They should not take too easily the present great wealth of this country that "seems dangerously likely to submerge us in our own prosperity."

"I believe the greatest need of the day—and a need so fundamental as to make other matters inconsequential in comparison—is universal military, industrial and economic preparedness."

He asked for training in military service for all men, greater savings by all classes and greater efficiency in industrial pursuits.

Surface Living. "Most of us continue to live unnecessarily near our surface," said Professor James, when speaking of the stored-up resources of energy hidden in man, and seldom drawn upon. "The plain fact remains that men, the world over, possess amounts of resources which only the exceptional individual pushes to their full use."

Cleanliness and Godliness. Two members of a Latin-American family, staying at a New York hotel, were paying their first visit to the new Turkish baths in the basement of the hotel recently. They stopped for a moment, to survey the room. The pot plants held their attention for a brief moment, but the oil paintings, picturing Biblical subjects, hung so as to almost completely cover the walls, seemed a study to them. "Why has the management of this place put such divinely religious subjects at the entrance to a Turkish bath?" asked one. The other's brow knit for a moment; then came the slow response: "The reason here seems easy," he said; "cleanliness is Godliness."

Thinks the Boys Need It. In the Woman's Home Companion a woman writes: "Comparing our boys with those of the present warring nations, our boys seem to lack culture and physical training. Beside the thrifty European peasants our lower classes of boys are shiftless and lazy. Even one year's enforced military training would make real men of the thousands of poolroom hangers-on and the budding criminals that infest our juvenile courts. It would mean enforced education for boys between sixteen and twenty, and preparedness either for war or life's battles. Think of a nation of healthy, clear-headed boys, trained to discipline, concentration and energy!"

Belated Vindication. The Persians of the time of Cyrus were Zoroastrians. The Persian religion was primitively monotheistic, and they allowed no idols or other material symbols of deity in their temples. There was less enmity on the part of the Jews against the Persians than against the other great nations with whom they came in contact, due probably to the monotheism which characterized the Persian religion. So Cyrus, whatever else may be said of him, was certainly not an idolator.—Christian-Herald.

What is Margarine. Margarine is coming into use much more generally in Europe, since the war made prices of butter prohibitive to people of the poorer classes. Originally composed of beef fat from slaughterhouse offal, with the addition of some essential oil, margarine is now made chiefly of oils expressed from nuts and seeds, the soy-bean, and cotton seed among them, together with a blend of pasteurized skim milk. Physicians declare it to be perfectly wholesome.



FRANK A. VANDERLIP

"If ever a people should pause, if ever they should look abroad and profit by the experiences of others, should comprehend their national dangers in the light of the terrible realities that are being enacted before their eyes in other nations, it is now, and we are that people."

In these words Frank A. Vanderlip of New York, addressing the American Bankers' Association in convention in Kansas City, Mo., warned his hearers

CHAMPION BOY SCOUT DECORATED BY PRESIDENT AT SHADOW LAWN



SCOUT MASTER MCMORRIS GETS DECORATION FROM THE PRESIDENT

Scout Master Daniel McMorris of Hazleton, Pa., went to Shadow Lawn, the summer home of President Wilson, by special appointment with the president, to receive from the latter a decoration awarded to McMorris in recognition of his standing as model boy scout of America. McMorris has the privilege of wearing thirty-two merit decorations, shown in the picture on his left sleeve. President Wilson is seen here pinning the decoration on McMorris' coat.

SALONIKI SEES LIVE REPRODUCTION OF AMERICAN PAINTING, "SPIRIT OF 1776"



"SPIRIT OF 1916" IN GREECE.

As the three men shown in the picture paraded the streets of Saloniki, where they were photographed, they reminded some Americanized Greeks of the American painting, "The Spirit of 1776," and the picture was dubbed, "The Spirit of Greece in 1916." Strictly speaking, however, these men are not Greeks at all, but Macedonian Turks and wandering mendicant musicians, wandering from town to town in the disturbed country. Men such as these have caused much trouble in Saloniki and the surrounding country by their lawlessness, and their activities will probably be restricted severely when Greece begins active operations against the Bulgars and Turks.

REPORTS OF BATTLES ON THE SOMME RECOGNIZE WORK OF "SOIXANTE-QUINZES"



FRENCH "75" ADVANCING ON THE SOMME.

Recent war reports renew the tributes paid since the beginning of the war to the famous French soixante-quinze (seventy-five millimeter caliber) guns, acknowledged on all sides to be one of the best field guns in the world if not the best. The "seventy-fives" are playing very important roles in the fighting on the Somme. A recent account of the meeting of French and English in the captured village of Comblies says: "The French were hammering forward with soixante-quinzes and masses of infantry to the east of Comblies in the direction of Frocourt. Hour after hour there was a tremendous tattoo of French soixante-quinzes coming nearer and nearer, and a final outburst of gun and rifle fire when Frocourt was taken." Picture shows the bringing up to the firing line of a soixante-quinze.

Action of the Sun on Skin.

A beautiful face is a silent recommendation and an index to your state of happiness and health. Even the most peachlike skin proves to be a pleasing background for a dainty brown mole or "beauty spot." But there are blemishes and blemishes, remarks the Popular Science Monthly. What is usually spoken of as freckles are spots of yellowish brown color. Especially after the skin has been exposed to the sun for a long while do freckles make their unhappy appearance. In most instances, however, freckles are the result of the action of the sun on certain cells of the skin, which causes these cells to produce coloring matter, or pigment, which remains there for a long time.

Variability in Men.

"Whatever may be one's reply to the question whether in matters of the body men as a group are more 'variable' than women, the evidence thus far indicates that men are more variable in mind. Femina semper nutabile is probably untrue even when we look to the moods of the individual man or woman; it is certainly untrue as we regard the mental features of the group as a whole. Women seem to be treated chivalrously not alone by civilized men, but even by nature, who experiments with less scruple on the male, wasting many in the process. Thus there are more male than female idiots, as there are more male than female geniuses; and even in the superficial ideas of men and women, Mrs.

Men Likes Fish.

That aquatic birds should delight in sea foods or their fresh-water equivalents is not surprising, but that the hen, strictly a landlubber, should prefer fish above all other foods is less to be expected. It is true, however, in fact, the educational department of the New England Fish exchange suggests that man could learn a lesson in this regard from biddie. That might bear thinking on also. The United States catches more fish annually than every other country, but its inhabitants have never come to a full appreciation of this particular variety of nourishment.

Cynic's Mean Remark.

"You've heard the old saying that a woman's work is never done?" "Oh, yes," replied the cynic man, "and the curious thing about it is that it originated before women got the notion that they were called upon to run the earth."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

Island Rich in Emery.

Emery, the best natural abrasive, is mixed in large quantities on the island of Naxos in the Cyclades group, Greece, from which more than 35 per cent of the world's annual output is now shipped.

Man's Little Failing.

As a general thing, taken by large, men are honest—except with themselves. A man will cheat himself on his score at golf, when he knows that failing to set down the full number of strokes does not make him a better golfer. If he is a fat man and is dieting to reduce, he will shove the weight back a pound or two on his scales, when he knows in his heart he is heavier than that. Then he will tell his friends about "going around yesterday in 62," and "taking off a pound and a half in three days" by his diet. With these two exceptions almost every man is honest. Therefore, all you need to do is to discount what he says about golf or reducing. —Judge.

Strength Test.

A party of English officers serving at the Dardanelles made a wager one day as to which smelled the louder, a goat or a Turk. To settle the wager a goat was brought into the colonel's tent, and the colonel fainted. When the colonel was revived they brought a Turk into the tent, and the goat fainted.

Valuable Material Long Ignored.

Many years ago soap boilers used to have great difficulty in getting rid of a thick, evil-smelling liquid which was the chief by-product of their industry. They ran it into streams and sewers. Presently someone began collecting it and refining it. The result was glycerin as it is known today.