



UNDER FIRE

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BASED ON THE DRAMA
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CHAPTER XXI—Continued.

That was the worst part of it all—the waiting. Heart-rending reports of happenings in many Belgian villages came to the British, for Convoisier was only one of many hamlets that had tragically related. And the British were powerless to aid those stricken people.

Trench 27—the English trench which Streetman had indicated upon his map as being the key to the enemy's defense—lay in the first line of the British. All indications of any special designs that the Germans might have against their particular position, the Englishmen stationed there proceeded to put things to sleep for the general action that was being to come.

After consulting their ammunition counts, there was little to do for the time being, except rest. And that they were glad enough to do after their herculean exertions of those first days of the war. That they were glad of them they did not doubt. But in the meantime there was no reason why they should not make themselves at home.

It was night—the second night following that fatal day when the Germans descended upon the Lion d'Or and robbed Jeanne Christophe of her father. In Trench 27 four soldiers were playing poker under the shelter of a bombproof hut that they had constructed by digging into a side of the ditch. Dirty, unshaven, begrimed, they were nevertheless enjoying to the full their well-earned respite. And the flickering light of the candle which stood upon their rude table revealed no fear upon the face of any of them.

At their end of the trench two men stood guard, while close at hand a persimmon lay upon a makeshift bench, ready for instant use in case the watchers should detect any unusual and suspicious movements in front of them. Out there beneath the stars the first outpost of the enemy had already dug itself in. And in testimony of their alertness the Germans continually played a searchlight upon the British position. That prying shaft of light was never still. Now it swept the top of Trench 27, now flickered upon a tree close by, and then searched the intervening ground between the two lines in an effort to detect some venturous observer.

To the four players in the bomb-proof shelter there came a momentary interruption in the shape of a lieutenant, who wandered into their trench from the left. This youthful officer, whom they had already noted as a bit of all-right, observed them pleasantly.

"Hello, boys!" he said. "They sort of up and saluted, murmuring 'Good evening, sir!'" "How's the game?" the lieutenant inquired.

"Henry, there, is winning all our cigarettes," one of the men said. "The young officer smiled. And then drawing a pencil and a postcard from his pocket, he seated himself and proceeded to write a note to a young woman in London. For Guy Falconer had consistently kept his promise to write Georgette every day.



"Hello Guy!" the Delighted American Cried.

begged the captain to let him climb the tree that rose near one end of the trench, in order that he might try to get the range of the German guns.

The captain did not like the idea. He had been cautioned not to expose his men—and especially his officers—unnecessarily. And he warned Guy that he might get picked off by a German sniper.

"Not a chance!" Guy protested. "Please! It would be ripping really to do something."

The captain perceived that the inaction of waiting for an attack was fast setting Guy's nerves on edge. And at last he gave his consent.

For a little time Guy called out directions to the captain, who stood at the telephone relaying Guy's instructions to the battery. In the light furnished by the British bombs the youthful lieutenant carefully watched the effect of the shells that whistled over their heads and burst increasingly nearer to the Teuton artillery.

"Right on a gun!" Guy shouted at last. "I saw it crumple! That's it! Keep the range at twenty-nine fifty!"

The words were hardly out of his mouth before he came toppling from his perch. The captain and one of the privates caught the limp figure just before it struck the ground, and they laid him tenderly upon the dirt floor of Trench 27.

"They've got him. . . . He's not dead though!" Captain Montague knelt beside the lad and bent over him. And a corporal with some knowledge of first-aid procedure undertook to stop Guy's bleeding. He was seriously wounded—that much was clear. And he was unconscious.

"Beady-eyed!" so Guy had been called by the sergeant. "Awfully hot—the excitement. Haven't seen a German or any decent fellow. But that doesn't matter. Tell mother I'm being careful."

"Never mind that! I tell you I've information that's vital to England," he insisted.

But the captain was still suspicious of him.

"My name's Lee—Walter Lee," Streetman asserted, "formerly of the British army. I've been in business in Belgium—the automobile business. My papers there will prove what I say. The Germans took my factory—kept me prisoner all night in the cellar. That's when I learned their plans from some major—Major von Breug and a Captain Karl. I could listen to them talking—there were holes in the floor from that shell fire. I realized what it would mean to England if I could bring word to the British army of this secret plan of the Germans. During the night I managed to escape through the cellar window. They followed me, and I got one of their bayonets in the shoulder. They left me for dead; but



"An Englishman—a Loyal English man!" Streetman Protested.

It was only a flesh wound. And for the last twenty hours I've been seeking the British position somewhere near Trench 27—for that's the vital spot—when your sergeant caught me."

"Trench 27, eh?" the captain said. "Yes!" Streetman answered eagerly. "Is it near here?"

"Remember, sir, you are not questioning me!" Captain Montague replied. "So you won't believe me? Yes, you've looked at my papers. Don't you convince you?"

"Papers are easily forged!" Montague told him. Still he was somewhat impressed by the other's gab and he allowed the captive to proceed with his story.

"The Germans are to attack tonight in force at your Trench 27, in the hope of cutting through the British lines," Streetman continued. "Your only chance is to bring up every possible man to protect that trench. Otherwise we'll be beaten. You see what it means. . . . Ah! There's your field telephone! Let me communicate with headquarters! They'll understand!"

Japan's Rising Cotton Trade. Japan's exports of cotton yarn have shown a large increase since the latter part of last year. According to the Japan Chronicle, report of investigations made by the Spinning association, exports of various cotton cloths amounted in value to \$23,415,972. This figure is unprecedentedly large and shows an increase of \$4,123,467 over the amount for the preceding six months and \$10,966,488 over that of the corresponding period last year.

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