

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

William Buster Barnett, a well known resident of this city, invaded our sanctum yesterday on official business. Mr. Barnett wished to know what it would cost him to have the following advertisement inserted on top here along with other good reading matter:

"Wanted—500 Female Cats."

When anybody gets to wanting 500 cats all at one time, he's either crazy or going into business. Mr. Barnett assured us that both were partially true; he was "just crazy to go into the cat business."

We beseeched him to warm up to the subject, so he removed his coat and shoes

and the thermometer went up as herewith: "Cat hides sell for twenty cents each. Starting with 500 cats at the end of the year I will have 2500 cats, making a liberal allowance for death and starvation. Of course I will promptly slaughter and sell the hides for \$25. Counting in the original 500 I will have 1750 to start the second year. This year the yield will be 8550 of which 4150 will be males. Their hides will bring me \$83. The third year I will have 6150 to start. This bunch will increase to 30,750 of which there will be 12150 males to be slaughtered. Their hides will bring \$243. At the commencement of the fourth year there will be 24750 in the invoice. They will produce 123750 offspring of which 43750 will be males whose hides will sell

for \$876. The fifth year there will be a total of 523550. I will sell the 223550 male hides for \$4470. Jumping five years I will start the eleventh year with 169104750 head, having sold off \$324025 worth of male hide in the meantime. At the end of twenty years I will have a total of five billion and one cats on hand. It will then be time to retire and enjoy my riches and I will sell all of my cats and receive in even change one hundred million for them. Adding the eighty million received for the male hides I will start down on the western side of life with \$180000000 to fool with. Not so bad in twenty years, is it?" "But, Mr. Barnett, what about expenses, feed, etc.?" we asked, as he caught sight of a telephone pole and started out to climb

it. "There is no expense," he replied, as hurried away, "a cat can always pick up a living."

The Rhyming Summarist

The aphid bit the farmers' grain
And dry weather spoiled its sprouting,
'Looks as tho' we might be short,'
Some of them are shouting;
It might aid
When prospects fade
To start the women hoeing.

Thrift Spasm

This year pick the blackberries
For they will bring the rocks,
And you'll always have tobacco
In your old tobacco box.

The Confessions of a German Deserter

Written by a Prussian Officer Who Participated in the Ravaging and Pillaging of Belgium.

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(Continued from Friday.)

At ten o'clock the French attacked a fourth time. They came on in enormous numbers. Our leaders recognized the danger of our position and ordered us back, abandoning the wounded and much booty. By a superhuman effort we did manage to save the machine guns and ammunition. We retreated



We Went Over the Top.

1,000 meters and took a stand in our former trenches. The officers told us we would have to make a stand under any circumstances and that the reinforcements would come soon.

In a moment the machine guns were set up and soon we were sending a hail of bullets into the ranks of our pursuing enemy. His advance stopped instantly. Encouraged by this success we fired harder, so that the French were compelled to seek cover.

The promised reinforcements failed to appear. About 600 meters to our rear were six German batteries in position, but they maintained only a very weak fire. An artillery officer appeared before us and asked the commander of our detachment if it would not be well to recommend that the batteries be taken back. He said he had learned by telephone that the German line was wavering on its entire length.

Before the commander could reply, another attack en masse followed, which outnumbered us by from five to seven times. Our commander now gave up this position also. Completely demoralized, we retired in flight, leaving the six batteries (36 guns) to be taken by the enemy.

The French stopped their barrage fire because they feared to hurt their own troops. The Germans utilized this moment to bring up re-enforcements made up of all branches of the service. Scattered infantrymen, unmounted cavalry, detached pioneers, had all been assembled. Every makeshift was employed to fill the ranks. Complete reserve units apparently no longer existed on this the third day of the battle of the Marne.

Once more the command was given to turn and take a position and the unequal fight began anew. We saw the enemy advance, and seize the batteries. Then we saw him storming ahead with fixed bayonets. We fought like wild animals. For minutes there raged a bayonet fight beyond description. We stabbed through the breast, through the abdomen, and wherever else we could. This was no occasion to employ the bayonet tactics taught at drill, something which must be left for drill-ground practice only.

The butts of the rifles whizzed through the air and any man's head

which they struck was broken. Helmets and knapsacks had been lost long since. In spite of the superiority of numbers, the French could not defeat this little group of desperate men. We forgot everything around us and fought like bloodthirsty beasts, thinking of nothing else. Part of our men penetrated the hostile ranks and fought to retake the lost cannon. The enemy recognizing the danger, retreated, and tried to hold the conquered guns with all his energy. We continued to stab, to club, man for man, but the enemy held on to the batteries. Every canon was surrounded by corpses, and every minute new victims were created. The artillerymen who were fighting with us tried to remove the breech blocks of the guns.

Three Germans fought four Frenchmen at the third gun which was just to my right. They were all that was left around that piece. At another gun 70 men lay dead or wounded. A pioneer went to the mouth of this gun and with astounding calmness pushed shell after shell into the barrel, touched them off and ran. Friend and foe alike were torn by the terrible explosion. The gun was completely demolished. Seventy to eighty men were killed for nothing.

After an hour's fight, all the guns were once more in our possession. We were now able to approximate the terrible casualties, in the battle for this battery. Dead and wounded by hundreds, infantry, cavalry, artillery and pioneers, covered the narrow strip of ground.

Once more we received re-enforcements. This time four regular companies of infantry had been taken away from another detachment. Even if a soldier takes part in everything, he can get only a very restricted view of what is going on and has absolutely no way of determining how the battle is going.

These re-enforcements had been taken from all different arms and late arrivals had been taken from a division which had been threatened exactly like ours was. This led us to conclude that we could only resist further attacks provided fresh troops reached us. If only we could get something to eat. But there seemed no way to relieve the hunger and thirst which tortured us.

Now, horses galloped up to remove the guns we had left, and at the same instant the French artillery opened a tremendous fire from guns of all calibers. The shells fell among the 30 teams comprising the column. Confusion reigned. Groups of six horses comprising each team sprang into the air, then ran in all directions, pulling their carriages with the wheels up behind them. Some of the terrified animals ran directly into the heaviest fire, only to be torn to shreds with their drivers.

The enemy now transferred his fire to the battery position which we occupied. For us it was only a question of advance or retreat. Retreat? No! The order came to retake the positions which we had lost at the opening of the battle and which the Frenchmen presumably had made ready to withstand a new attack. By this time we had been re-enforced with more cannon fodder and the insane fight could begin anew.

We advanced over a wild field, covered by thousands upon thousands of torn human bodies. No shot fell; the only firing was the hostile artillery continuing to shell our battery positions. Neither the enemy's artillery nor infantry was turned upon us. This made us suspicious and our apprehension regarding what was to come increased as we were permitted to advance unmolested.

Suddenly there was turned loose upon us the fire from a multitude of machine guns. We threw ourselves on the ground and hunted cover. An instant later we again sprang up and continued our march. Once more we

encountered destruction. By this time we had lost almost a third of our men and, exhausted, we halted.

Scarcely had we taken a position before we were attacked from the front and flank. We no longer had an adequate force to successfully resist this double blow, as the enemy, in greatly superior numbers, had practically crushed our force. The left wing was completely cut off and we saw our men throw up their hands and surrender. We who were in the center were unable to come to their assistance; our ranks were being decimated from minute to minute.

"Revenge for Sommepey," sounded in my ears.

The right wing broke and carried us with it in a wild flight. Direct retreat had been cut off for us, so we ran backward across an open field, each man for himself, with a heart bursting with horror and fear as the result of the enemy's murderous fire.

After running a long time we reached a hamlet northwest of Vitry-le-Francois. Without guns, helmets, or knapsacks, the few who had been able to save themselves gathered here.

As a result of this battle the French acquired a large amount of booty. All the guns which had been the center of so much bitter fighting were lost. Of the hundreds upon hundreds of soldiers who participated in the battle, scarcely 100 were left. The others were all dead, wounded or missing. This is what was done to the invincible war machine by the French people, who, before the struggle, had been branded as cowardly and degenerate!

CHAPTER VIII.

We now tried to gather by companies. Of our own company only 12 men remained. Presently others struggled in until there were 20 of us assembled. There is eager questioning everywhere as each man attempts to learn about his comrade or acquaintance. Few questions can be answered, however, as each man had thought only of himself in that fight.

Driven by hunger we approached the village. The first thing we did was to hasten to the wells and drink. We drank as if we wanted to fill ourselves up with enough water to last us the rest of our lives. Only here and there were we able to find anything to eat. A few beets were left in the gardens and we ate them eagerly, without waiting to wash or clean them.

Where is our company? Nobody knows. We are the company, we 20 men. And our officers. "Somewhere surely," said a soldier, "somewhere in a bomb-proof corner."

But what were we to do? No one could decide. Presently a noncommissioned officer of the field gendarmes approached on horseback. It is the duty of this particular class of defenders of the fatherland to round up stragglers behind the front.

"You are pioneers," he called to us roughly. "What are you doing here?" Then he asked us innumerable questions, which we answered as well as we could.

"Where are the others?" he asked. "Over there," said a young Berlin soldier, and pointed to the battlefield.

"The others are dead or perhaps prisoners. Several others have managed to save themselves and are somewhere, perhaps."

"Never mind," the noncommissioned officer said roughly. The conversation had become disagreeable to him. "Wait here, until I come back. Where are the officers?"

Again no one could answer. "What are their names? I shall find them. Perhaps they are in Vitry."

We told him the names of our officers. He gave us identification papers so that we might be able to prove to others inquiring why we were waiting where we were.

"I hope his horse falls and he breaks his neck," said one of our men.

We entered one of the houses which had been robbed, as were all the others, threw ourselves down upon the mattresses to sleep, sleep, sleep. How long we slept no one knew. We only knew that it was night and that some of our company had aroused us. These were newcomers who had been hunting for us for a long time.

"Come along. The captain is outside and he is very angry. He has gathered 17 of his men together and is cursing like the very devil because he could not locate you."

Sleepy, and entirely indifferent to the future, we left the building. We knew that we would be sent into action again but no longer cared. I had never before seen among a body of soldiers such an atmosphere of absolute indifference.

We came upon the captain. He saw

us approach minus our headgear, our uniforms torn into shreds and without guns and knapsacks.

"Why are you running around here?" he roared. That was our reception.

Nobody answered. Nobody cared. Nothing could be worse than what we had been through, but although every one among us felt keenly the injustice of the captain's attitude we all remained silent.

"Where is your equipment?—Lost—Lost—This has been a nice business. The state equips you, you rebel. If all were like you—"

He raved on for a while after this fashion, this brave fellow, who, without any action on his own part permitted the rebels to retreat while he defended his fatherland in Vitry, 4.26 kilometers behind the battle line.

We selected guns from those lying around us in heaps and soon were ready to fight again.

We stood around half asleep, leaning on our guns, and waited to be led once more to the slaughter. A shot fell in our midst. It struck a color sergeant and smashed his right hand. He cried out from the pain. His hand was quickly bandaged. He was the first.

An eyewitness told us how this had happened. He had rested his hand on the gun barrel in the same manner as did all the others except that his hand partly covered the muzzle. The orders provide that the gun be locked if loaded. Turning to the color sergeant, who was writhing with pain, the captain roared at him: "I shall report you for punishment for your gross carelessness and for mutilating yourself in the field."

The color sergeant, a noncommissioned officer, realized that his military career was at an end. We all felt for him. During the months preceding this incident he had always associated himself with the privates.

We never learned whether he was brought before a court-martial. Punishment for self-mutilation was a daily event and many severe sentences were pronounced and thus made known to all the others to serve as a deterring example. The color sergeant's place was conferred upon another, after which the captain disappeared once more in the direction of Vitry.

We marched away and halted at a point northwest of the village. Here we met other pioneers who had been gathered together from various battalions and our unit was once more brought up to 85 men. The officers told us that we would not enter the battle today. Our only duty for the time being was to keep the bridges over the Marne in good condition for the German troops fighting on the other side, so that they could be used in case the battle went against us.

We then marched to our destination, which was at the point where the Saux flows into the Marne.

We reached our destination about six o'clock in the morning. The dead lay around in heaps everywhere. We were camping on a wooded height and could overlook the country for many kilometers in all directions. We saw shrapnel bursting by the thousands. Little could be seen of the men who were fighting despite the fact that many divisions were locked in a death struggle.

Presently we saw the fighting line. The Germans were about two kilometers behind the Marne, which flowed by directly in front of us. German cavalry in great numbers was encamped along the banks of the river.

Two temporary bridges in a very dilapidated condition constructed of whatever materials were at hand were located near us. Preparations had been made to blow them up with thousands of pounds of dynamite. The electric fuses had been strung to the point where they were located and it was up to us to manipulate the switches. Connected with the battle line by telephone, we were in a position to destroy the bridges at a moment's notice.

The fighting became more lively. We saw the French rush to attack and retire again. The fire of musketry increased and the attacks became more frequent. This continued for more than two hours.

We saw the French continuing to bring up re-enforcements constantly despite the German artillery fire.

After an extended pause the French made another attack, employing several different kinds of formations. Each time the waves of offensive troops were forced back. At three o'clock in the afternoon, under a blow which contained the full power of France, our troops were forced to retire, first slowly, then in wild flight. The exhausted Germans could not be rallied in the face of this blow. With



The Fighting Became More Lively.

wild confusion all tried at the same time to reach the bridges beyond which lay safety.

At this instant the cavalry which had taken cover along the river bank galloped to the bridge position. In a moment the bridge was covered with human bodies, all racing for the opposite bank. We could see this temporary structure trembling under this enormous burden.

Our officer saw the situation and he nervously pressed the telephone receiver to his left ear. His right hand was on the switch. Breathlessly he stared at the fleeing masses. "If only the telephone connections had not been broken," he muttered to himself. He knew as well as all the rest of us that he was to act on the instant that the curt order came over the wire.

It was not much that he had to do. Merely make a movement of his hands. Masses of troops continued to rush across the bridge until more than half were safely over. The bridge further above was not in such great demand, and with the lessened congestion almost all who crossed here were already safe. We could see how the first of the French units had crossed, but the bridge continued to stand.

The sergeant who manned the apparatus at this bridge became restless waiting for orders, and finally on his own initiative blew it up. Some Frenchmen and hundreds of Germans upon the bridge found their graves in the Marne.

At the same moment the officer standing next to me received the order to blow up the last bridge. He hesitated to obey, for he could still see many Germans on the other side. He could see the race for the road leading to the bridgehead as all sought safety at the same instant. There a terrible panic reigned. Many soldiers jumped into the river and tried to swim across. The pressure became greater as the thousands still on the other side tried to get back.

The message over the wire became more and more insistent. Finally the officer sprang up, rushed by the pioneer standing at the apparatus and a second later there was a terrible detonation—bridge and men were thrown into the air hundreds of meters. Just as a river at high tide races along, taking with it all manner of debris, so the surface of the Marne was covered with wood, men, torn uniforms and horses. Efforts to swim were futile, yet soldiers continued to jump into the river.

On the other side the French began to disarm such German soldiers as stood there with raised hands. Thousands of prisoners, innumerable horses and machine guns fell into the hands of the enemy. Several of our company were just about to retire with the electric apparatus when something developed which certain of our number had suspected. An error had been made and it was too late to rectify it.

The upper bridge, which had not been used to any great extent by the Germans, should have been left standing!

It had been the purpose of the staff in command to leave this bridge so that the enemy might continue its pursuit of our troops until a certain number of Frenchmen had crossed the river. The plan was to permit enough Frenchmen to pass so that they could be taken prisoner, yet not too large

a force, lest it might prove a menace to the German arms.

After these hostile troops had crossed, the plan was to destroy the bridge to prevent their being re-enforced. That was why the sergeant manning this switch had been kept waiting for the order to blow up the bridge. But the sergeant in the excitement and confusion thought that the cable to which his phone was connected had been disconnected and blew up the bridge on his own initiative while it was crowded by Frenchmen and long before the enemy could have had an opportunity to cut that cable.

At the same time the officer at the switch connected with the explosives under the second bridge received his orders. He afterwards said that the order he received was hard to make out and that he had lost his presence of mind and threw in the switch, thereby killing thousands on the bridge and leaving many other thousands to the mercy of the enemy.

Before there was time for more impressions our entire unit was ordered to Vitry to be assembled in front of the cathedral. With a sigh of relief we hurried away, for the French artillery began once more to send shells with much accuracy over the entire countryside. Wounded men from other detachments whom we passed on the road told us that the French had already crossed the Marne in several different places. Everyone among us voiced the same opinion. We had already sustained great losses on Belgian soil and each day brought new sacrifices. Our lines became thinner and thinner. Many companies were entirely destroyed and all units suffered heavily. These companies whose forces had been reduced to a minimum and with the survivors half starved were opposed by an army well equipped with supplies and arms. The enemy constantly brought up fresh troops while our forces became fewer from hour to hour. We realized that it was impossible to make a stand here. We were constantly learning from soldiers of other contingents that their losses in men and materials were enormous.

I thought of the God of the Germans. Had he forsaken them? I thought it so loud that the others could hear.

"Yes," said another, "whom the Lord wishes to punish is first stricken with blindness. Probably he thought of Belgium, Donchery, Sommepey and Sulpes, and still many other places and let us run into this perdition like flying fiends."

We reached Vitry. Here the misery seemed to be still greater than ever before, for in the entire town there was not a single house that was not overcrowded with wounded. In the midst of all this misery robbery flourished. All residences had been emptied of their furnishings and everything was thrown into the streets to make room for the wounded.

The sanitary squads went over the town and took everything of any value. The munition and railroad columns followed the same practice. They had plenty of room for plunder. This was amply proven by numerous seizures afterward of parcels put in the mail, which contained gold rings, watches, precious stones, etc. The business of the marauders flourished here in Vitry. The soldiers in the supply columns encountered very little actual danger; they had an easy time as compared with soldiers fighting at the front.

We soon reached the cathedral and reported to Lieutenant Elm. He also had defended his fatherland at a safe distance and here in the city, freshly shaved and in immaculate attire he looked very presentable.

The contrast was vivid as he stood before us who were torn, dirty and covered with blood, with unkempt hair, with beards grown and caked with mud and dirt.

We were obliged to wait so we sat down and looked around us. The church was full of wounded; many died under the hands of the doctors. They were carried out to make room for others. The dead were carried to one side, where whole rows of corpses lay. We counted more than sixty.

(Continued Friday.)

The always smiling and popular Douglas Fairbanks in "Wild and Woolly" at the ISIS Sunday night next.

SWOPE & SWOPE
LAWYERS
I. O. O. F. Building
Independence, Oregon