

KEEPING THE HUN ON HIS TOES IN THE ARGONNE

ALMOST 20 years ago, in a little village in Kansas, Wesley R. Childs looked with sorrow upon the closed shutters of a little brown house just across the street. He called his wife to his side and invited her about adopting the Dillon children—a boy and a girl, the elder scarcely five years old. Mrs. Dillon had died that morning, and the two children were to be sent away to an orphan's home.

"Yes," said Mrs. Childs, "we can take them. And we must raise them as though they were of our own flesh and blood."

So the Dillon children were adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Childs.

One day last week, on a hillside near Very, France, a gray haired man was seen wandering about from shell hole to shell hole, crawling over the barbed wire entanglements as he made his way from one object to another.

The man continued to walk about. Shells were exploding on the hillside, and the machine guns rattled not far away.

Presently the searcher stopped and knelt down beside a still object. Wesley R. Childs of Kansas, a Y.M.C.A. worker in the A.E.F., had found the body of Sergeant Joseph A. Dillon, his adopted son.

To a sheltered spot over which whirling shells passed at irregular intervals, to a graveyard on the hillside where several crosses were stuck in the ground, the father, although he had been severely gassed while conducting the search, summoned the aid of a chaplain and two men and buried his son.

At a crossroads in the Argonne there is a sign which reads: "American barber shop in first dugout to right. Shave with German razor, 50 centimes. Hair cut with the Crown Prince's scissors, 1 rank. Hot German towels in daytime only. We use our own soap. Don't bring your kammarades."

The first American division that landed in France brought with it a Spanish noodle from Dallas, Texas. Details carried many things since he came to France. Besides saluting the colonel of his regiment, he has learned to wear a gas mask and to hug the earth when he hears shells whistling overhead.

Dallas slept in a German dugout last week and got cooties for the 'steenth time since he has been in the Army.

An American private, astride a water barrel that was being drawn on a cart by a mule, was telling the mule what he thought about the animal's balking in the middle of a road that was being constantly shelled by the Germans when a direct hit was made on the mule. The mule vanished from sight save his head, which was thrown several yards up the road, and a couple of legs which were hitched to the cart. The driver was thrown from his seat, unhurt. He got up on his feet, wiped the mule from his face and said to a much shaken comrade who hugged the earth nearby, "That's what the damned cuss gets for balking!"

Private Elmer Little of Kansas was rounding up Boches at Vauquois Field the first morning of the battle when he ran across a short, stocky German who ran when he got sight of the Americans.

Private Little wanted very much to capture for himself a Boche, so he ran after the fleeing enemy, who ran into a dugout. The Yank trailed in after him and found himself face to face with 28 other Boches, including two officers. He made them all prisoner.

Mail has been delivered to many of the regiments in the front line. Mail orderlies have been constantly under fire, and one bag of letters was pierced several times by machine gun fire as it was being carried up to the men.

A cook in a certain California unit found a German machine gun near his kitchen at Very. An American balloon which afforded great attraction for German airplanes was anchored only a few hundred yards away. The cook set up the machine gun near the kitchen, and several times the past week the slum has burned while he has mowed the machine gun at a low flying airplane.

Once the hum of a German airplane was heard above the din of the artillery barrage. The cook deserted his frying pan and ran to the machine gun. A few moments later the German airman succeeded in setting the balloon on fire, and a few moments after that the plane paused in midair, dipped and then nosed down to the ground near the burning balloon.

Officially, the fall of the German at-

man is credited to shrapnel and machine gun fire, but the cook tells his comrades on the Q.T. how it really happened.

An American major lay in a shell hole 10 hours while two wounded snipers from his battalion kept off the Boches. Every time a German patrol would start out to capture the wounded officer the two snipers, although one was shot through the thigh and the other had a nasty wound in the left foot, would open up. Aid came after 13 hours when the regiment forced the Germans back.

The boys from the Coast are wondering what to do with a mule that has been assigned to their division. Some one has suggested shooting him, but it is against the rules to shoot a perfectly able-bodied mule. They have pastured him in an open field a number of times where German shells explode night and day. They have heard the shells explode at night and dreamed of finding the mule blasted to bits on awakening, but always the mule is feeding peacefully on the short grass.

The main trouble is that the mule makes a noise like a gas alarm. Several times the gas guard was accused of giving fake alerts during the night, and each time the guard faced his accusing comrades with a denial.

Private Mathews was a battalion runner. He carried a message to divisional headquarters and was told to remain there for a few minutes until he was wanted again. He took off his cap, hung it up with some other caps in the dug-out and waited.

Presently the general called the runner and gave him a message to carry back. As he passed out of the dugout the runner hurriedly snatched a cap. Private Mathews never wears a helmet when he is carrying messages—and started back across the field. He passed a French colonel on the road who stood aside, smiled and saluted. Mathews drew up and returned the salute, wondering the while what it was all about.

It was not until after he had reached battalion headquarters that he found he had taken the general's cap instead of his own.

A shell landed in the exact spot where a platoon sergeant had told Private Lewis to go and pick off a German sniper who was holding up the advance.

"Got him, all right," said one of the doughboys.

But their fears vanished when two more shots were heard from the hill top. A few moments later the sergeant himself went up to see what had been done with the sniper. Private Lewis was still lying in firing position and was watching a mound of earth two hundred yards away for the appearance of a Boche helmet.

"I nearly got him that last time," said Lewis. "I'll get him next shot or know the reason why."

The shell burst had shot away Private Lewis' right foot and had wounded him severely in the hip, but he was still after his Boche.

A Q.M. sergeant who could not resist the temptation to leave his task of sorting out overcoats to go off chasing Huns entered a dugout containing 35 Germans. He had no rifle, but his hip pockets bulged with hand grenades. With three grenades he killed 15 of the Germans. With his fourth and last grenade he forced the remaining 20 to surrender and marched them back to his regimental P.O.

When the commander of one regiment was killed, the major general in command of that division took command of the regiment, leaving his chief of staff in command of the division. Men who saw him on the field noted with astonishment that he wore an issue uniform, hip boots and a sou'wester.

One group of 18 disconsolate Boches had a hard time persuading any one to lock them up.

This little knot of 18 decided that, so far as they were concerned, the time had come for a separate peace, so they slipped through their own lines, the other night and headed for America.

They rather expected that their arrival would cause something of a stir, but they found everybody busy as bees, and, anyway, the sight of a line of Boches filing to the rear of our lines is such a common sight these days that no one would give them a second glance.

So, considerably surprised, the 18 got as far back as the headquarters of a division in support before they could induce any one to listen to their

story. A division which is not even in the line feels scarcely called upon to be bothered with prisoners. The division telephoned the corps, would the corps please send up right away and rid them of these unpaying guests? Certainly not, said corps coldly. Corps was too busy. Corps would consent to receive the prisoners, but division would have to deliver them at the corps cage.

In despair, the officer on whose neck the 18 were hanging rushed out to the crossroads and intimidated an M.P. into going without his lunch so that he might escort the captives into captivity.

Hermann Schmidt, late of Forty-second Street, New York, where he tended bar, and more recently of Yonkers, where he ran a little cafe of his own, has been taken prisoner. He is now in duration not noticeably vile, and doesn't seem to mind. It should be explained at this point that Hermann was taken prisoner by the Americans, not by the Germans.

For, just before the war broke loose, Hermann, who had an old sweetheart of his in Germany, went back to get her, and though he had taken out his second naturalization papers in New York, he was grabbed and clapped into the German Army.

For four years he has served the Kaiser's purposes, and when it came his turn to be captured, it was just his luck that the opposing troops were from his old home town and numbered among them, without doubt, some of his thirdest customers. Hermann's status has not yet been decided.

A colored unit was moving up to take its place in the line of battle. It was early morning, and daylight had not yet begun to break.

"Hey, sergeant," came a voice from over in the brush to the left; "when we all goin' to find them Boches?"

"Never you mind, child, you all gonna find plenty of them things 'fore long."

"Well, I sho hope so, sergeant," came the voice. "If I don't get rid of dis mean feelin' 'fore long I 'sne give you to carve up on the mess sergeant, sho!"

Two colored doughboys were resting in a shell hole when a Boche shell fell overhead and exploded a few yards away.

"You hear dat baby sing, Buddy?" queried one.

"Sho did," the other said. "But you all gwine ter hear de angels sing if you don't get dat black noodle o' yourn down."

A certain Artillery regiment had been studying and firing artillery problems for over eight months. These problems were worked out and fired at sham trenches on practice ranges. As the firing ceased the announcement would follow: "End of problem."

The regiment went into action in the Champagne attack. For over two hours

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hurled high explosives upon German positions, firing this time upon real trenches and real batteries. Yet, when the bombardment ceased, a chief of section stepped up with this remark: "Captain, is this the end of the problem?"

When the Infantry lines moved forward at 4 o'clock on a recent morning, Cook Ferguson was AWOL. Look as they did, the other cooks could not find him. They branded him as a deserter and calculated that he had gone over the hill when the real test came.

But when noon came Cook Ferguson was back on the job, and as happy as a lark. When the doughboys went over the top at 4 o'clock he had gone over with them. He brought nine Boches back with him.

An American liaison officer who knew little French and a French Artillery officer who knew little English had important business together during the height of the recent fighting.

"Henri," said the commandant to a young sergeant, "I have seen you talking to Americans several times. Can you speak English?"

"No, mon commandant," answered Henri simply.

For all that, Henri and the American officer were soon engaged in vivacious conversation. At its conclusion the commandant turned to Henri.

"But you speak English very well," he said.

"No, mon commandant," Henri still insisted. "We were talking in German."

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ALONG THE BRITISH FRONT

THERE is one subject which the Americans who are fighting with the British Army and have had the distinction of helping to break the Hindenburg line north of St. Quentin will talk about at length. This is the intrepidity and general fighting ability of the Australians.

Behind the barrage which preceded the Yanks in their attack went some Australian officers. The barrage was tremendous and fearful thing. It was by far the most deafening, most prolonged noise those Yanks had ever heard. But if there were any flutterings toward confusion, they were stilling by the mere sight of the Australians. One Aussie officer strolled behind the line of bursting shell leading a little fox terrier, who seemed to be as accustomed to the barrage as her master and to enjoy it. Another walked slowly with his hands in his pockets, his rifle slung under his arm and a cigarette in his mouth.

"The safest spot on the battlefield is just behind your own barrage," he told the Americans, "and that means it's a whole lot safer than crossing Fifth Avenue on a Saturday afternoon."

Yanks and Aussies got along together like old time friends who haven't seen each other for ten years, and, after each had had the opportunity to see the other in action, vied in passing compliments around.

"If you fellows don't look out," said one beaming Aussie, "you'll ruin this blasted war."

An Aussie who wound up at an American hospital with a shrapnel wound in the arm still had his rifle with him.

"Leave that in the salvage pile," said an American medical officer.

Said the Aussie, by way of explanation: "I've carried this gun three years. It's been in seven battles and it has gone to the hospital with me twice. I've got it nicked, you see. Every time I get a Jerry I nick it once. I only put 'em on when I'm sure. I've got 11 nicks," he concluded, and exhibited them on the under side of the stock.

"Oh," said the medical officer.

The Yanks with the British show the effects of their environment. They have acquired all the British slang, colloqu-

alisms, and military terminology. They will tell you a certain place is near the R.E.D. and when you ask what the deuce the R.E.D. is, they will explain, paternally, that it is a Royal Engineers' Dump. They talk a lot in initials, say "right-o" with a persistency and consistency which convinces you that it is natural and habitual, and they call Fritz Jerry.

General Sir Douglas Haig, British commander in chief, called at an American headquarters, and around this headquarters they still talk much of his visit. They like him.

The headquarters was in the edge of a wood. It had been raining. A sergeant found the General trying to keep his footing on slippery duckboards while he endeavored to ascertain the whereabouts of the American commander's but from the signboards. The sergeant led him to the place he sought, but the American commander and most of his staff, following his troops, had left for a more advanced P.C. Two second lieutenants and two sergeants were holding down the recently vacated office.

"I'm Haig," said the General in such an "I'm Bill Jones" tone of voice that the Americans didn't realize who their visitor was for a full half minute. When they did they explained that their commander had gone up ahead.

"Just wanted to wish him luck," said the General. Then he shook hands with the two lieutenants and the two sergeants and left.

Bad news may travel quicker than good in some places, but it doesn't along the German front. Maybe it's because the German officers see that it does not. Many of the Germans captured by the Americans north of St. Quentin had maps in their possession, printed maps of the whole battle line which they evidently kept for their own information and use. None of their maps showed the German retreat from the St. Mihiel salient. That profane intrusion into France, recently effected by the Americans, was outlined as prominently as of old. Questioned, none of these Germans had heard of the St. Mihiel defeat. All of them, however, knew of the British victories between St. Quentin and Arras, probably because most of them had participated in the retreat out of the Picardy salient

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