

Germany.

THE LADIES FROM HELL

In the front lines of the Ypres salient was the Third Brigade made up of Canadian Highlanders, whom the Germans, since that night have nick-named "The Ladies from Hell." In this Brigade were men from parts of Nova Scotia, Montreal, from Hamilton, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver.

To the left of these lay the Second Brigade of Infantry. These were men for the most part from the West. There was the Fifth, commonly known as the "Disappointed Fifth," from Regina, Moose Jaw and Saskatoon. There was the English, nick-named by the Germans "The Little Black Devils from Winnipeg." The Tenth, the famous "Fighting Tenth," with boys from Southern Alberta, mainly Medicine Hat and Calgary and Lethbridge. And there was the Seventh of British Columbia.

It was the Second Brigade which the First was supporting. To the left of the Eighth Battalion, which was the extreme Canadian left wing, there were Zouaves and Turcos. These were black French Colonials. To these unfortunates, probably the Canadians owe their near disaster.

THE POISON CLOUD OF HATE

In the far distance we saw a cloud rise as though from the earth. It was a greeny-red color, and increased in volume as it rolled forward. It was like a mist rising, and yet it hugged the ground, rose five or six feet, and penetrated to every crevice and dip in the ground.

We could not tell what it was. Suddenly from out the mist we men in reserve saw movement. Coming toward us, running as though Hell as it really was had been let loose behind them, were the black troops from Northern Africa. Poor devils, I do not blame them. It was enough to make any man run. They were simple-minded fellows. They were there to fight for France, but their minds could not grasp the significance of the enemy against whom they were pitted. The gas rolled on and they fled. Their officers vainly tried to stem the flying tide of them. Their heels barely seemed to touch the ground. As they ran they covered their faces, noses and eyes with their hands, and through blackened lips, sometimes cracked and bleeding, they gasped, "Allemands! Allemands!"

Some of our French-speaking officers stopped the few running men they could make hear, and begged of them to reform their lines and go back to the attack. But they were maddened as only as a simple race can be frenzied by fear, and paid no heed.

It is in times like this, in moments of dire emergency, that the officer of true worth stands out, the real leader of men. There were a dozen incidents to prove this in the next few hurried, desperate moments. None can be more soul-stirring than the quick thought, quick action and foresight displayed by our own captain. He did not know what this smoke rushing toward our lines could be. He had no idea more definite than

any of us in the ranks. But he had that quick brain that acts automatically in an emergency and thinks afterward.

"Wet your handkerchiefs in your water-bottles, boys!" he ordered.

We all obeyed promptly.

"Put the handkerchiefs over your faces—and shoot like the devil!" he panted.

We did this, and as the gas got closer, the handkerchiefs served as a sort of temporary respirator and saved many of us from a frightful death. We in the reserves suffered least. Yet some of us died by that infernal product. A man dies by gas in horrible torment. He turns perfectly black, those men at any rate whom I saw at that time. Black as black leather, eyes, even lips, teeth, nails. He foams at the mouth as a dog in hydrophobia; he lingers five or six minutes and then—goes West.

THE BRUNT OF THE BATTLE

Marvelous is the only word to describe the endurance, the valor of the Ladies from Hell. They withstood the gas, and they withstood wave after wave of attacking German hordes. And yet even their wonderful work was overtopped by that of the Eighth, which, being exposed on the left by the black troops who had fled, had to bear the brunt of a fight which almost surrounded them.

TEN TO ONE

It was wonderful. I shall never forget it. There were twelve thousand Canadian troops. In the German official reports after the battle, they stated that they had used one hundred and twenty thousand men against us, and one thousand guns. We had not one gun. Those that we had were captured when the African blacks had left. It was our strength against theirs—no, it was white man's spirit against barbarian brutality.

HAND TO HAND

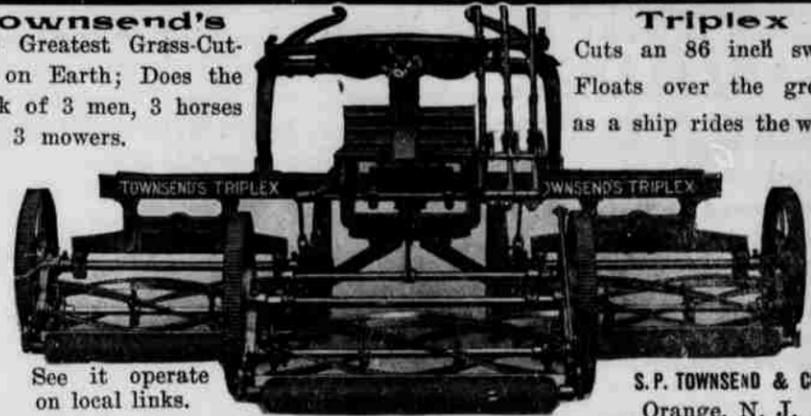
For six days and nights that terrible death struggle continued. Every man was engaged: cooks, doctors, stretcher-bearers, chaplains, every one of us had a rifle. The wounded who had to take their chance of living because there was no way to convey them back to shelter—some of them would sit up, if they possibly could, to load and load again rifles which they lifted from dead comrades. They would hand us these as our rifles got too hot to hold. And still the German attacks persisted. Still they came on. And still we did not budge an inch from our position as it was when the gas first came over. They did not gain a yard, though when the British reserves at last reached us, there were only two thousand of us left standing on our feet; two thousand of us who were whole from out the twelve thousand that had started in to repel the attack.

LEFT OF TWELVE THOUSAND

The two thousand of us were still in the old position. Still we held in our safe-keeping the key of the road to Calais, to Paris, to London and farther. The key to world power which the

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