

AMERICAN BOY'S GRAPHIC STORY OF TRAINING UNDER FIRE.

Literary Digest.

A letter from a young American officer in France telling of his first experience at the front contains interesting details of the trench-training of army officers from the States. The letter is written to his uncle by Lieut. Paul Remmel, of Little Rock, Ark., and is dated from "A Dirty Little Town in France," on November 13th.

"At the close of school, each American left with a British officer (his friend) for a different division which held a different sector in the ever-changing boundary-line of war—the trench. It was my good fortune to visit in company with a fine young English officer, Captain Bond, a sector upon which ensued enough excitement for any live American. After a day and a half of traveling by train we arrived in the war-area, eight miles from the German lines, the division headquarters of the British Army (First-Army). Here my friend took off his finery and put on his trench-clothes and we both were fitted out with steel hats, gas-respirators, and the long, Webby pistols, to take our last lap to the trenches' edge. We were given two horses and two soldiers to accompany us the remaining eight miles.

"We passed through several French villages, through which raced back and forth English ambulances, ammunition-carts, and huge automobile-trucks bearing fresh fuel (men) to the hell that is forever waging on that front. As we came close, we passed through villages in which there stood no house that was not completely ruined by shell-fire. These villages you would easily recognize if I could only tell you their names. Village after village, ruins after ruins, utter desolation mutely spoken of wild barbaric treatment at the hands of the Germans. Not one soul did we see in these villages as we drew nearer the booming guns we could so distinctly hear.

"In the heart of a deserted village we were compelled to leave our horses and strike out on foot, and after a three-quarters of an hour walk along a camouflaged wood we reached at last the mouth of the trenches. As we bid farewell to level ground and walked down into the trench, I looked overhead and saw seven British planes flying overhead observing for the artillery that was at that moment sending screeching shells into the German lines."

At last they entered the trenches, the entrance to which was situated in the center of a ruined and deserted village. They were German trenches, very well made, though somewhat battered by shells. They were constantly drawing nearer to the German lines, and the writer says:

"At last, after walking around and around, we finally reached the battalion headquarters (it was then 4 p. m. and gradually growing dark), which was quartered, as everything is, in a dugout 45 to 50 feet under the ground. After climbing down the steep steps I came to the dugout, and it was certainly a surprise. The first thing that greeted my eye was a long table, upon which was a cover of spotless linen, with silver placed all around, and grouped around were five English officers drinking tea. Oh, these English, you can not beat them. They go to war with a teacup in one hand and a revolver in the other.

"This dugout was an old German one, which consisted of four rooms, a large dining-room, a signal-room, a kitchen, and bedroom. Imagine that if you can, all fixt up with huge mirrors, lounging chairs, stoves, lighted candles in brass holders. These men were sitting around calmly drinking tea and whiskey while 45 feet overhead the shells were screaming by. I was introduced as the American who was attached for a few days for instruction, and I was made quite welcome; such a welcome I had never had before anywhere. My hosts were a colonel, captain, two majors, ably assisted, and several privates whose only duty it seemed was to look after me and to be sure I saw everything in the way of excitement, and believe me, I did. I was just in time for tea, so I sat down after taking off my tin hat, as the steel helmet is called.

"As I drank my tea I was plied with questions, for I was the first American officer they had seen. I seemed to be refreshing to them because they were constantly laughing at my answers. Just before dinner I was led by the colonel, the two majors, and the captain up the steps to see the heavy guns belch into the night, sending huge missiles of death into the German lines; also the heavy guns of the Huns would grunt in retaliation."

From young Remmel's description his first night in the trenches was not tinged in any way with the horrors of

war. In fact, he might very well have been dining and sleeping at some hotel far from the front save for the sound of the shells overhead. "He writes:

"We had a wonderful dinner, consisting of fresh meats, sugar, cream, and a whole course dinner, even down to cheese and coffee—think of that if you can on the firing-line. These 'blooming Britishers' certainly do live.

"About nine o'clock I went to bed in an adjoining room, about twenty feet square, and my bed was berthlike affair, with heavy blankets, and I slept soundly in spite of the fact now and then I could get the jar of a German shell lighting overhead. I was awakened next morning by the colonel's servant handing me a cup of steaming hot tea, which I drank down with much gusto. I was also brought hot water for shaving and for washing and was told that breakfast was ready. And such a breakfast! You would think that this was some hotel instead of a dugout on the Western front. Wonderfully cooked oatmeal, fresh eggs and ham, hot coffee, tea, and jam greeted me.

"After breakfast I was furnished with two runners (privates with full equipment) and a fine daredevil lieutenant, for the purpose, as the colonel expressed it, of seeing the whole show.

"So I started out with my tin helmet, gas-respirator, a cane, and 45-revolver just as a German machine gun spat out a welcome, the buttets coming 100 feet away. My guide took me down one trench into another, every one named, down into dugouts, bomb dugouts, and out into observation-posts. I looked into periscopes overlooking the German lines, saw Germans walking around, peered into German wire entanglements, saw dead Germans lying in captured dugouts (this hill has been only captured two months). As we walked on the Germans were sending huge shells over us and the English were giving them tit for tat; overhead eight English planes were flying, observing for the artillery. One especially claimed my attention. It would fly around and around, then suddenly swoop down straight for the German trench, getting about 100 feet above the Boche, then let fly his machine gun, which would pop-pop-pop certain death in their trench. Then we would yell. It was wonderful!"

The writer tells of his first experience in observing the work of the artillery. At the top of a hill an officer was directing the fire of the battery, 1,500 yards behind. They were shelling a village held by the Germans not 800 yards from the officer's post of observation. Remmel writes:

"He stooped and shook my hand most heartily and seemed most glad to meet me. He explained everything to me, showing me the tiny telephone his orderlies used to give the range to the battery at his command. He then asked me if I would like to see him make a few hits, and of course I said that I would not mind, secretly tickled to death.

"He told me to put my glasses to my eyes and pointed out a red-brick house on the extreme left of us, a house which he indicated on his pocket map which was reported to be a German company. I instantly glued my glasses to my eyes and I heard him call to his orderlies, who stood four feet behind him with the tiny telephone something which sounded like "two degrees to the left repeat." Then suddenly I heard a distant boom and a screeching through the air, and after a few seconds another boom, and, bless you—the house which I had confined within my glasses blew up into the air and fell back in smoking ruins. His had been a perfect hit."

A Valuable Tree.

What is said to be the most valuable tree in the world from a productive standpoint is the Gantor avocado, or alligator pear, near Whittier. Its average revenue to the owner is \$3000 a year. At one time it was insured in Lloyds for \$30,000, but the company insisted that a high lattice fence be built about it to avert any damage from wind or carelessness, and it was feared that this might interfere with the health of the valuable producer and two years ago the lattice work was removed, causing a cancellation of the insurance policy. Other alligator pear trees in Southern California produce large returns, but none so far has rivaled the Gantor tree, the fruits from which sell at from 50 to \$1 each.—Los Angeles News.

"No one understands me." "That's not to be wondered at, girlie. Your mother was a telephone girl before she married, and your father was a train announcer."—Louisville Courier Journal.

A spark is a tiny thing—but watch it fall into a powder-magazine! A sin may be tiny, but the soul that welcomes it is welcoming danger.—Young People.

Don't Forget the Soldiers in Camp.

The Editor:

From every nook and corner in the State our young men have gone to the camps to learn the soldier's life. Shortly they will represent us on the firing line, and others will be called to service in their places.

While they are training, what can the home folks do to help them? These men are offering their lives for us. All that we can do for them will not equal the sacrifices they are making.

After talking with hundreds of them in the camps, I want to offer three practical suggestions to the people at home as to what they may do. Every person who reads this statement can easily, and should, gladly, do all of them.

First, sent your home paper to at least one soldier at the camp. Pick out one of the men you know and subscribe for your home paper and send it to him. Any member of his family will give you his correct address. Write him a letter and tell him you are sending it. The cost will be trifling. The thought will be appreciated. It is not an act of charity, but an act of patriotic service.

Second, at least once a week, make it a point to write a letter or a card to some soldier at the camp. Send him a magazine or a good book occasionally.

Third, keep your troubles at home. The soldier has enough of his own. Be strong enough and unselfish enough to cut out the trouble parts of your letters. There are plenty of good things to write about. The soldier has a man's size job, and besides, he can't help you. Why worry him when you have a better opportunity to look after your troubles than he has to help you?

Follow these practical suggestions and you will render a service worth while.

W. S. WILSON, Secretary North Carolina Council of Defense. Raleigh, January 31st, 1918.

In Memoriam.

On January 8th Mrs. Sarah Powell Whitley, one of earth's saints passed to her heavenly reward, having just passed her sixty-eighth year. Her husband, Mr. W. H. Whitley preceded her to the grave about four years. She was the mother of several children among whom survive, Mrs. P. A. Holland, Mrs. W. T. Woodard, Messrs. James and Beverly Whitley. She was the sister of Sheriff Powell and Aiden Powell.

More than passing notice should be made of her many rare traits of character. She was an optimist along all lines. She was a leader for good, and by her encouragement and sacrifice identified herself with every organization and movement for the uplift of civic and religious life. A faithful member of Sanders Chapel M. E. Church, her constant attendance was proverbial. She never reached the age when she regarded herself too old for Sunday school membership and attendance. The writer feels honored at having her as a member of her S. S. class and will cherish her record of faithfulness and many words, acts and deeds of encouragement.

She was always to be found at the bedside of the sick dispersing cheer and hope and ministering to the suffering.

She has left as a heritage a good name, a goodly example and a consistent life. May those of us who know her appreciate her virtues, and may we each thank God for the life she lived.

She was laid to rest in the family burying ground near Sanders Chapel church. The funeral services were conducted by her pastor, Rev. C. K. Proctor, assisted by Rev. C. E. Stevens, of Selma, N. C.

MRS. W. A. EDGERTON, Selma, N. C.

Life is what we make it—a garden or a desert.—Christian Herald.

DOCTOR SAYS VINOL IS THE BEST TONIC

Honest Opinion Doctor Gave His Patient

Bedford, Ohio.—"I was in a pitiful condition, weak, nervous and run down so I could not do my housework. I had doctored for years and tried everything under the sun. A friend told me about Vinol. I asked my doctor about it, and he replied, 'It certainly is the best medicine that can be had today. I couldn't give you any better.' I took it, and today I am as well and strong as any woman could wish to be, and it was Vinol that saved me."—Mrs. Frank A. Horkey, Ash St., Bedford, Ohio.

We guarantee this famous cod liver and iron tonic for all such conditions. HOOD BROS., Smithfield, N. C.

SPIERS' Announcement

Semi-Annual Sale Closes Today

On account of the unfavorable weather during our Sale, we will continue to sell all sale goods at the same prices as during the sale for a week or two.

We have still quite a large stock of these goods. We are selling the larger per cent of them cheaper than the wholesale price.

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SMITHFIELD, N. C.

Big Lot Fertilizers Now on Hand At Smithfield and Four Oaks!

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50 Tons Nitrate Soda

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