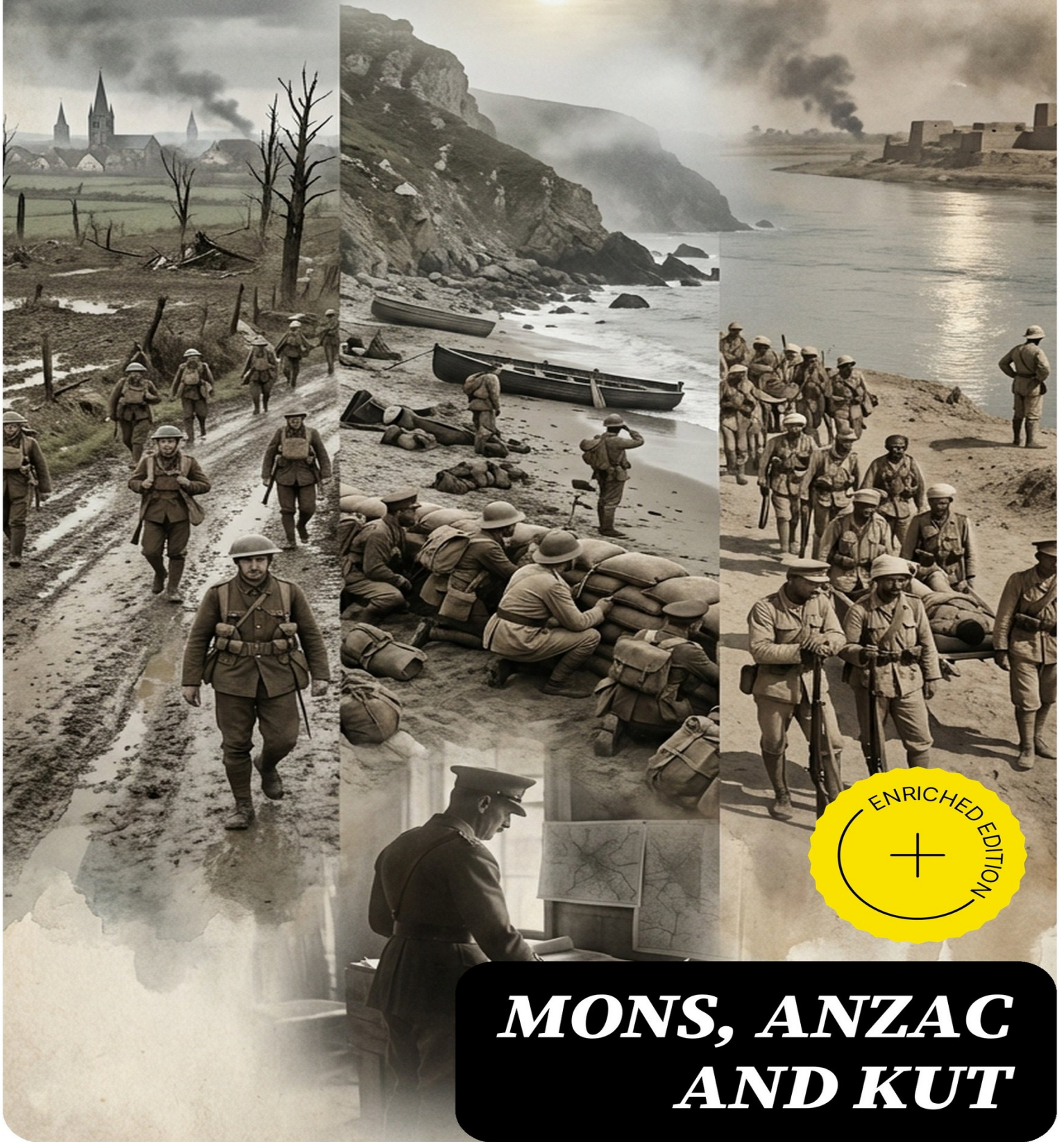


AUBREY HERBERT



MONS, ANZAC AND KUT

Aubrey Herbert

Mons, Anzac and Kut

Enriched edition.

Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Gavin Avery

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PREFACE

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Journals, in the eyes of their author, usually require an introduction of some kind, which, often, may be conveniently forgotten. The reader is invited to turn to this one if, after persevering through the pages of the diary, he wishes to learn the reason of the abrupt changes and chances of war that befell the writer. They are explained by the fact that his eyesight did not allow him to pass the necessary medical tests. He was able, through some slight skill, to evade these obstacles in the first stage of the war; later, when England had settled down to routine, they defeated him, as far as the Western Front was concerned. He was fortunately compensated for this disadvantage by a certain knowledge of the East, that sent him in various capacities to different fronts, often at critical times. It was as an Interpreter that the writer went to France. After a brief imprisonment, it was as an Intelligence Officer that he went to Egypt, the Dardanelles and Mesopotamia.

The first diary was dictated in hospital from memory and rough notes made on the Retreat from Mons^[1]. For the writing of the second diary, idle hours were provided in the Dardanelles between times of furious action. The third diary, which deals with the fall of Kut, was written on the Fly boats of the River Tigris.

In a diary egotism is inevitable. Julius Cæsar cloaked it by using the third person and Lord French by preferring to blame others, rather than to praise himself, but these devices are no precedents for one who is not a

generalissimo. There remains anonymity. True, it is a very thin covering for modesty, but, like a modern bathing-dress, it may serve its purpose.

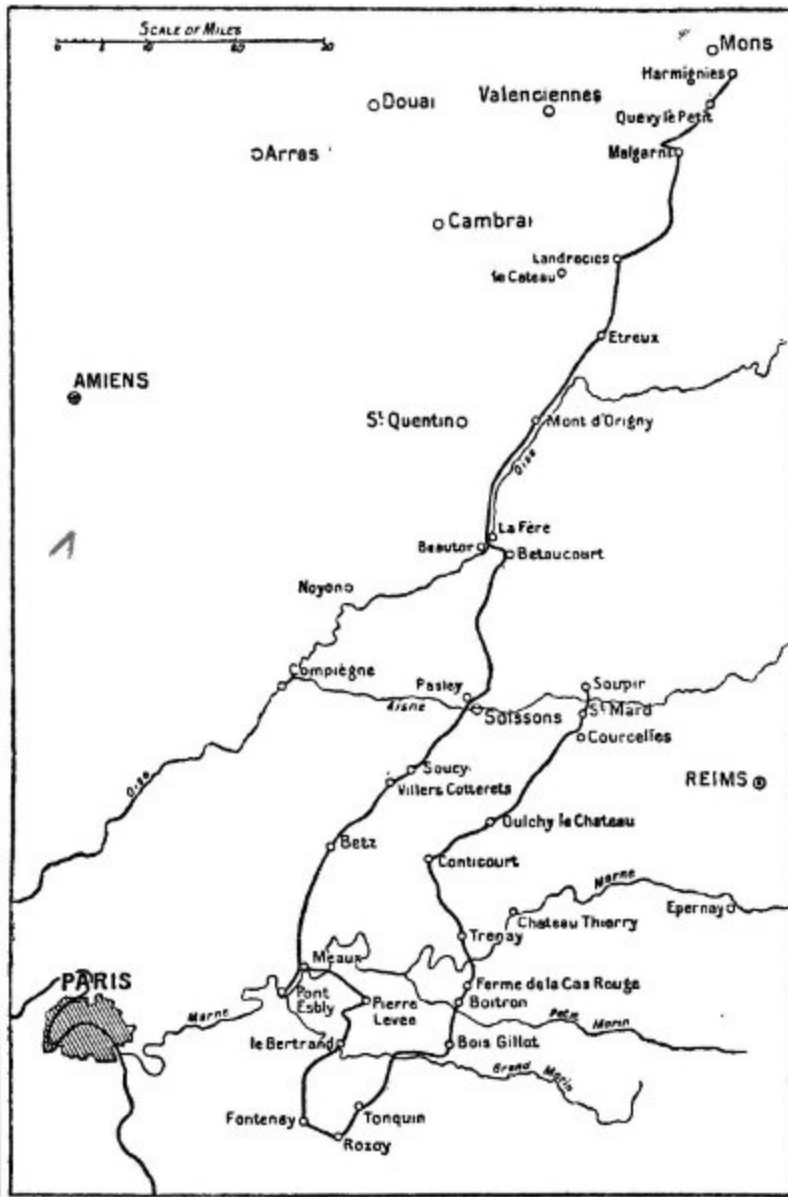
When dots occur in the journal, they have their usual significance. The author was thinking his private thoughts, or, perhaps, criticizing some high authority, or concealing what, for the moment, at any rate, is better not revealed.

In the Retreat from Mons, only Christian or nicknames have generally been used. In the case of the other two Expeditions, names have been used freely, though where it was considered advisable, they have occasionally been disguised or initials substituted for them.

This diary claims to be no more than a record of great and small events, a chronicle of events within limited horizons—a retreat, a siege and an attack. Writing was often hurried and difficult, and the diary was sometimes neglected for a period. If inaccuracies occur, the writer offers sincere apologies.

MONS 1914

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MONS

AUGUST 12-SEPTEMBER 13, 1914

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On Wednesday, August 12, 1914, my regiment left Wellington Barracks at seven in the morning. I fell into step in the ranks as they went out of the gateway, where I said good-bye to my brother, who left that day. It was very quiet in the streets, as the papers had said nothing about the movement of troops[1q]. On the march the wives and relations of men said good-bye to them at intervals, and some of our people came to see us off at the station, but we missed them.

We entrained for Southampton—Tom, Robin, Valentine and I got into the same carriage. We left Southampton without much delay. I was afraid of a hitch, but got on to the ship without any trouble. On board everybody was very cheerful[2q]. Most people thought that the first big engagement would have begun and very likely have ended before we arrived. Some were disappointed and some cheered by this thought. The men sang without ceasing and nobody thought of a sea attack[3q].

The next day (the 13th) we arrived very early at Le Havre in a blazing sun. As we came in, the French soldiers tumbled out of their barracks and came to cheer us. Our men had never seen foreign uniforms before, and roared with laughter at their colours. Stephen Burton of the Coldstream Guards[2] rebuked his men. He said: “These French troops are our Allies; they are going to fight with us against the Germans.” Whereupon one man said: “Poor chaps, they

deserve to be encouraged,” and took off his cap and waved it and shouted “Vive l’Empereur!” He was a bit behind the times. I believe if the Germans beat us and invaded England they would still be laughed at in the villages as ridiculous foreigners.

We were met by a Colonel of the French Reserves, a weak and ineffective man, two Boy Scouts, and a semi-idiotic interpreter. We shed this man as soon as we were given our own two excellent interpreters. We had no wood to cook the men’s dinners, and I was sent off with Jumbo and a hundred men to see what I could find. A French corporal came reluctantly with us. We marched a mile, when we found an English quartermaster at a depot, who let us requisition a heap of great faggots, which we carried back.

After breakfast I was sent with Hickie to arrange for billeting the men. Hickie rode a bicycle and lent me his horse, which was the most awful brute I have ever mounted in any country. It walked ordinarily like a crab; when it was frightened it walked backwards, and it was generally frightened. It would go with the troop, but not alone, and neither whip nor reins played any part in guiding the beast. Hickie couldn’t ride it. Some French soldiers threw some stones at it and hit me. Finally we got a crawling cab, then a motor, and went off about 11 kilometres to the Café des Fleurs, where the camp was to be. It was a piping hot day. We got a house for the Colonel and Desmond belonging to Monsieur Saville, who said he was a friend of Mr. Yoxall, M.P. He had a very jolly arbour, where we dined. In the afternoon the troops came marching up the steep hill in great heat. Hickie and I found a man rather drunk, with a very

hospitable Frenchman. The Frenchman said: "We have clean sheets and a well-aired bed, coffee, wine or beer for him, if he desires them." There was no question about the man's desiring them. Hickie almost wept, and said: "How can you keep an army together if they are going to be treated like this?" The sun had been delightful in the morning at Le Havre, but was cruel on the troops, especially on the Reservists, coming up the long hill.

The French had been very hospitable. They had given the men, where they had been able to do so free of observation, wine, coffee and beer. The result was distressing. About twenty of the men collapsed at the top of the hill in a ditch, some of them unconscious, seeming almost dying, like fish out of water. The French behaved very well, especially the women, and stopped giving them spirits[4q]. I got hold of cars and carried the men off to their various camps. Jack, Tom and I slept all right in a tent on the ground. The next day I was sent down by the Colonel with the drum-major, to buy beer for the regiment at 1s. 1d. a gallon, which seemed cheap. I met Stephen while I was buying things. He told me we were off that night, that we were to start at ten, but that we should not be entrained till 4.30. I lunched with Churchill, who very kindly tried to help me to get a horse. Long sent me back in his motor. At the camp, the Colonel complained that the beer had not come, and that the drum-major and the men had been lost. I commandeered a private motor and went back at a tremendous rate into the town, all but killing the drum-major at a corner. We had a capital dinner. M. Saville gave us excellent wine, and the Colonel told me to make him a speech. We then lay down before the march.

The next camp captured a spy, but nobody paid any attention. About 10.30 we moved off. It was a warm night with faint moonlight. Coming into the town the effect was operatic. As we marched or were halted all the windows opened and the people put their heads out to try and talk to us. At about half-past eleven it began to rain, but the men whistled the Marseillaise and "It's a long way to Tipperary." The people came out of the houses, trying to catch the hands of the men and walking along beside them. We were halted in front of the station, and waited endlessly in the rain. We then had an almost unspeakable march over cobbles, past interminable canals, over innumerable bridges, through what seemed to be the conglomeration of all the slums of all the world, to light that always promised us rest but never came. It poured without ceasing. At last we arrived at the station, and when we saw the train pandemonium followed. Everybody jumped into carriages and tried to keep other people out, so as to have more room. We were all soaked to the skin, and nobody bothered about any one else. After that we got out and packed the men in. Tom, Charles, Jack, Hickie and I got into one carriage. Lieutenants who tried to follow were hurled out. It was very cold. Tom had a little brandy, which did us some good. At about 5 a.m. we moved off. The next day we arrived at Amiens.

Saturday, the 15th, we arrived at Amiens to see a great stir and bustle. We had not had much to eat. We found several officers of the Coldstream Guards in their shirt-sleeves, who had got left trying to get food. I got masses later on at a wayside station, and a stream of people to

carry it, and returned with rousing cheers from the men. At every station we were met by enormous crowds that cheered and would have kissed our hands if we had let them. They made speeches and piled wreaths of flowers upon the Colonel, who was at first very shy, but driven to make a speech, liked it, and became almost garrulous. At Arras we had the greatest ovation of all. An old man in the crowd gave me a post-card, which I directed to a relation at home and asked him to post. This he did, adding a long letter of his own, to say that I was well and in good spirits. This letter and my post-card got past the censor.

Late that night we came to a place called Wassigny, where, after a lot of standing about, we went up to a farmhouse. Hickie and I lay down on the floor in a sort of an office at about half-past two, with orders to be off at five. The Colonel slept outside, half on and half off a bench. He never seemed to need sleep.

We left the next morning, Sunday, the 16th, at five, for Vadencourt. I was wearing Cretan boots, and my feet already began to trouble me.

At Vadencourt we met the Maire[\[3\]](#) and his colleague, Monsieur Lesur. He took us first of all to the most beautiful place for a camp, a splendid field by a river for bathing, wooded with poplars, but no sooner had we got there than we were told the Coldstreamers had the right to it.

In Vadencourt everybody helped us. The people threw open their houses, their barns and their orchards. They could not do enough; but it was a long business and we had not finished until 1 o'clock, by which time we were pretty tired. Then the troops turned up, and we had to get them

into billets. After that we lunched with the Colonel. The French cottages were extraordinarily clean, never an insect, but plenty of mice rioting about at night. There were many signs of religion in all these cottages. Most of the rooms were filled with crucifixes and pictures of the Saints. The priests seemed to have a great deal of influence. Vadencourt was very religious, and the morning we went off they had a special service for the men, which was impressive. All the people seemed saintly, except the Maire, who was very much of this world.

The men had fraternized with the people and, to the irritation of the Colonel, wore flowers in their hair and caps. There was no drunkenness—in fact the men complained that there was nothing strong enough to make a man drunk. Generally there was not much to do, though one day the men helped with the harvest. The people could not have been kinder. It was, as one of the men said, a great “overtation.” Every day there was a paper published in amazing English. In one paper we found a picture of Alex Thynne, with contemptuous and angry references to a speech he had made against English tourists going to France; he wanted them to go instead to Bath, in his constituency, and so to please both him and his constituents.

It was a quiet life. There was very little soldiering, and that, as some one said, was more like manœuvres in the millennium than anything else. Everywhere corn was offered for our horses and wine for ourselves, but there was a great fear underlying the quiet. We were constantly asked whether the Germans would ever get to Vadencourt, and

always said we were quite sure they would not. We used to mess at the inn close to my house. Of French troops we saw practically nothing, except our two interpreters, Charlot, who talked very good English, and Bernard, a butcher from Havre, a most excellent fellow, who was more English than the English, though he could only talk a few words of the language. There was also another interpreter, head master of a girls' school in Paris. He said to me: "Vous trouverez toutes espèces d'infames parmi les interprets, même des M.P.s."

One day Hugo said that it would be interesting, before going into battle, to have our fortunes told. I told him he could not get a fortune-teller at Vadencourt. "Not at all, there is one in the village; I saw it written over her shop, 'Sage Femme'." ... I was very comfortable in my house, which was just out of bounds, but not enough to matter.

Monsieur Louis Prevot came in one day, with a beautiful mare, brown to bay, Moonshine II, by Troubadour out of Middlemas. He said that she could jump two metres. Her disadvantages were that she jumped these two metres at the wrong time and in the wrong place, that she hated being saddled and kicked when she was groomed: while Monsieur Prevot was showing me how to prevent her kicking she kicked right through the barn door. I bought her for £40. I think Prevot thought that the French authorities were going to take his stables and that I was his only chance. When she settled down to troops she became a beautiful mount.

That day I went with Hickie through Etreux to Boué, foraging. I drove with a boy called Vanston behind a regular man-killer. It was far worse than anything that happened at

Mons. Vanston talked all the time of the virtue of Irishwomen, of the great advantage of having medals and the delight old men found in looking at them, of the higher courage of the unmarried man and his keen anxiety to get into battle, and of the goodness of God. Hickie was upset because he thought that the man-killing horse was going to destroy the Maltese cart, which was, apparently, harder to replace than Vanston or me.

The night before we left the Colonel gave us a lecture. As an additional preparation for the march we were also inoculated against typhoid, which made some people light-headed.

We left Vadencourt on August 19th, Hickie and Hubert both ill, travelling on a transport cart. I rode ahead, through pretty and uneventful country. At Oisy, Hickie was very ill, and I got him some brandy. We were to camp beyond Oisy. When we got to the appointed place the Maire was ill and half dotty. S. and I laboured like mad to find houses, but at last, when our work was finished we found that they had already been given to the Coldstreamers. Some of the people were excellent. One old fellow of seventy wept and wished that his house was as big as a barn, that he might put up the soldiers in it. A rough peasant boy took me round and stayed with us all the afternoon and refused to take a penny. But some of them were not so kind. In the end, billets were not found for a number of officers and men, who slept quite comfortably in the new-mown hay. We passed a big monastery where two Germans, disguised as priests, had been taken and shot the week before. I slept in a house

belonging to three widows, all like stage creatures. They had one of the finest cupboards I have ever seen.

The next morning (August 20th) we marched off to Maroilles—a big dull town, and again some of the people were not overpleased to see us. Here we had an excellent dinner. I slept at a chemist's. Hickie was sent back from Maroilles to Amiens with rheumatic fever. We got up at 4 o'clock the next morning (August 21st), and had a pretty long march to Longueville by Malplaquet.

As we crossed the frontier the men wanted a cheer, but they were ordered to be quiet, "so as not to let the Germans hear them." This order gave an unpleasant impression of the proximity of the Germans.

The men began to fall out a great deal on the road. The heat was very great. Many of the reservists were soft, and their feet found them out. Their rough clothes rubbed them. Tom carried rifles all day, and I carried rifles and kit on my horse, while the men held on to the stirrups.

By this time the Maires of France seemed to be growing faint under the strain of billeting. We never saw the Maire of Longueville. The country made a wonderful picture that I shall never forget. We marched past fields of rich, tall grass, most splendid pasture, and by acres and acres of ripe corn which was either uncut or, if cut, uncarried.

There was any amount of food for our horses, but one felt reluctant at first at feeding them in the standing corn. I went ahead when I could to forage for the mess, and because Moonshine danced continuously and produced confusion.

We lived chiefly on hard-boiled eggs, chocolate and beer, but we did better than most other companies, because

generally, as Valentine said, the officers' vocabulary was limited to "omelette" and "bière."

Longueville is a very long town, with fine houses, and we did capitally there, but the men were tired. No. 3 dined luxuriously at a farm. Hugo and I billeted at two houses close to each other. At 6 o'clock I went to get some rest, when my servant told me that the order had come to stand to arms at once, as the Germans were close upon us.

I went outside and heard one cannon boom very faintly in the distance. Women were wringing their hands and crying in the streets, and the battalion was ordered to stand to arms. Then, after a time, we were ordered to march at ten, and went back to quarters. At this time we began to curse the Germans for disturbing the peace of Europe.

The women of the village brought us milk, bread, everything they could for the march. While we were dining the order came to make ready for a German attack. We went out at once. Bernard took me up and down various roads, and we put iron and wire and everything we could lay hold of, across them, making a flimsy defence. When we returned we heard that we were to march at 2 a.m., and at 11 those who could lay down to sleep. The woman in my house was very kind in getting bread and milk. At 2 o'clock we began marching. The horses were all over the place. Moonshine nearly kicked a man behind her heels, and Tom just missed being killed by the ammunition horse in front. It was very dark.

We marched to a place called Senlis. Dawn came, and then an enemy aeroplane appeared over us, which everybody at once shot at. Moonshine broke up two

companies in the most casual way. The aeroplane went on. In Belgium the people were very good to us, during the week-end that we spent there. They were honest and pathetic. There were no signs of panic, but there was a ghastly silence in the towns.

Beyond Senlis we were halted on a plain near a big town which we did not then know was Mons. We were drawn up and told that the Germans were close to us and that we had to drive them back. Valentine and I lay down under the shelter of a haystack, as it was raining. It was a mournful day in its early hours. At about 10 a.m. I was sent for by the Colonel, who had been looking for me, he said, for some time. He told me to ride after S. to Quevy-le-Grand. I rode fast, and caught up S. We stabled our horses and went round the town. Soames, a Staff officer, told us we could have both sides of the road—as we understood, the pompous main road. Unfortunately he meant both sides of an insignificant road we had not even noticed. We took one of the biggest and most beautiful farms I have ever seen for Headquarters, and proposed to put seven or eight officers in it. We then, as usual, found that this house and all the rest had been given to the Coldstreamers, and we went to hunt for other billets. I thought I heard cannon, faint and dim. As we went on with our work the noise grew louder and louder. There was a big battle going on within four or five miles. Then in came the battalion from Senlis (which was burnt twenty-four hours later) at about twelve, and got into billets, while, at last, we had luncheon. Valentine and I were eating an omelette and talking Shakespeare, when suddenly we saw the battalion go past. We both got cursed because we

had not been able to prophesy that the battalion would start within twenty minutes. We marched on till about half-past three, through rising and falling land, under a very hot sun. We were getting nearer to the battle. The sky was filled with smoke-wreaths from shells. "We are going slap-bang at them," said Hubert. At 3.30 we found ourselves on a hill, by a big building which looked like a monastery. The road was crowded with troops and frightened peasants. Below the road lay the green valley with the river winding through it, and on the crest of the wooded hills beyond were the Germans.

We left our horses and marched down to the valley. As we passed the village of Harveng I inconsiderately tried to get a drink of water from a house. The men naturally followed, but we were all ordered on, and I had nothing to drink until 7 o'clock the next morning. The men, or some of them, got a little water that night.

From behind us by the monastery the shells rose in jerks, three at a time. The Germans answered from the belt of trees above the cliffs. Our feelings were more violently moved against Germany as the disturber of Europe. I went into the first fight prepared only for peace, as I had left my revolver and sword on my horse. Tom said: "For goodness' sake don't get away from our company; those woods will be full of Germans with bayonets to-night." We never doubted that we should drive them back. The Colonel called the officers together and told us that the trees above the chalk cliffs were our objective. We then lay down in some lucerne and waited and talked. The order to move came about 5.30, I suppose. We went down through the fields rather footsore

and came to a number of wire fences which kept in cattle. These fences we were ordered to cut. My agricultural instinct revolted at this destruction. We marched on through a dark wood to the foot of the cliffs and, skirting them, came to the open fields, on the flank of the wood, sloping steeply upwards. Here we found our first wounded man, though I believe as we moved through the wood an officer had been reported missing.

The first stretch was easy. Some rifle bullets hummed and buzzed round and over us, but nothing to matter. We almost began to vote war a dull thing. We took up our position under a natural earthwork. We had been there a couple of minutes when a really terrific fire opened. We were told afterwards that we were not the target—that it was an accident that they happened to have stumbled on the exact range. But even if we had known this at the time, it would not have made much difference. It was as if a scythe of bullets passed directly over our heads about a foot above the earthworks. It came in gusts, whistling and sighing. The men behaved very well. A good many of them were praying and crossing themselves. A man next to me said: “It’s hell fire we’re going into.” It seemed inevitable that any man who went over the bank must be cut neatly in two. Valentine was sent to find out if Bernard was ready on the far left. Then, in a lull, Tom gave the word and we scrambled over and dashed on to the next bank. Bullets were singing round us like a swarm of bees, but we had only a short way to go, and got, all of us, I think, safely to the next shelter, where we lay and gasped and thought hard.

Our next rush was worse, for we had a long way to go through turnips. The prospect was extremely unattractive; we thought that the fire came from the line of trees which we were ordered to take, and that we should have to stand the almost impossible fire from which the first bank had sheltered us. This was not the case, as the German trenches, we heard afterwards, were about 300 yards behind the trees, but their rifle fire and their shells cut across. We had not gone more than about 100 yards, at a rush and uphill, when a shell burst over my head. I jumped to the conclusion that I was killed, and fell flat. I was ashamed of myself before I reached the ground, but, looking round, found that everybody else had done the same.

The turnips seemed to offer a sort of cover, and I thought of the feelings of the partridges, a covey of which rose as we sank. Tom gave us a minute in which to get our wind—we lay gasping in the heat, while the shrapnel splashed about—and then told us to charge, but ordered the men not to fire until they got the word. As we rose, with a number of partridges, the shooting began again, violently, but without much effect. I think we had six or seven men hit. We raced to the trees. Valentine was so passionately anxious to get there that he discarded his haversack, scabbard and mackintosh, and for days afterwards walked about with his naked sword as a walking-stick.

When we reached the trees in a condition of tremendous sweat we found an avenue and a road with a ditch on either side. We were told that our trenches were a few yards over the farther hedge, faced by the German trenches, about 250 yards off. There was fierce rifle and machine-gun fire. Night

fell; the wounded were carried back on stretchers; we sat very uncomfortably in a ditch. I was angry with Tom for the only time on the march, as he was meticulous about making us take cover in this beastly ditch when outside it there was a bank of grass like a sofa, which to all intents and purposes was safe from fire. We were extremely thirsty, but there was nothing to drink and no prospect of getting water. After some time we moved down the road upon which we lay, getting what sleep we could. In the earlier part of the night there were fierce duels of rifle fire and machine-guns between the two trenches. It sounded as if the Germans were charging. Our men in the road never got a chance of letting off their guns. Most of us dozed coldly and uncomfortably on the hard road. I woke up about 2 a.m., dreaming that a mule was kicking the splash-board of a Maltese wagon to pieces, and then realized that it was the German rifle fire beyond the hedge, hitting the road. I walked up the road for a few yards and heard two men talking, one of whom was, I suppose, Hubert, and the other must have been C. Hubert said: "Have I your leave, sir, to retire?" "Yes, you have; everybody else has gone; it is clear that we are outflanked on the left, and it is suicide to stay." The battalion was then ordered to retire; No. 3 Company, doing rearguard, was ordered back to the fields which we had already crossed. I said to Tom: "I hear upon the best authority that this is suicide." Tom said: "Of course it is; we shall get an awful slating." We moved back. There was a faint light and a spasmodic rifle fire from the Germans as we went back to the fields we had crossed. We could not make out why they did not open on us with shrapnel, as they had

the range. We lay down on the new-cut hay, which smelt delicious. It seemed almost certain that we should be wiped out when dawn came, but most of us went fast asleep. I did. At 4 o'clock we were hurried off. We went down into the blinding darkness of the wood by the road we had gone the evening before. We went through the wood, past the monastery, up into the village. There we waited. The road was blocked, the villagers were huddled, moaning, in the streets.

The men were very pleased to have been under fire, and compared notes as to how they felt. Every one was pleased. But they felt that more of this sort of thing would be uncivilized, and it ought to be stopped by somebody now. In the dawn we crossed a high down, where we expected to be shelled, but nothing happened. We were very tired and footsore.

At 7 o'clock we got to Quevy-le-Petit and had a long drink, the first for seventeen hours. The smell of powder and the heat had made us very thirsty. Two companies were set to dig trenches. We were held in reserve, and all the hot morning we shelled the Germans from Quevy-le-Petit, while their guns answered our fire without much effect. One shell was a trouble. The remainder of the — Regiment (men without officers), who had had a bad time at Mons, had a shell burst over them and rushed through our ranks, taking some of our men with them. This was put right at once.

We were told that a tremendous German attack was to take place in the evening; we disliked the idea, as, even to an amateur like myself, it was obvious that there was hardly any means of defence. To stay was to be destroyed, as the

8 A colloquial name for expanding or soft-point ammunition originally produced at the Dum Dum arsenal in India; such bullets were controversial and their use in war was restricted by international agreements at the turn of the 20th century.

9 German phrase meaning “We are comrades,” here spoken by a German soldier to indicate friendly or fellow-soldier intent; spelling 'kamaraden' is the German word Kameraden.

10 A city in central Germany on the Elbe River; in World War I it was frequently mentioned as a possible destination or holding place for prisoners of war.

11 A German-language term used by the author to describe the officer in charge of the doctors; literally ‘upper-city’ (Oberstadt), its precise military or administrative meaning in this passage is unclear and may be a colloquial or transcriptional form.

12 Short for Kut (Kut-al-Amara), a town on the Tigris in Mesopotamia and the site of a major First World War siege and British surrender (the Siege of Kut, concluding in April 1916) during the Mesopotamian campaign.

13 A hot, dry, sandy wind of the North African and Middle Eastern deserts (also spelled khamseen), common in Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean in spring and known for sudden oppressive heat and dust.

14 The name of a Royal Navy warship mentioned by the author (H.M.S. Bacchante), a vessel active in Mediterranean waters during the First World War.

15 The Goeben refers to SMS Goeben, a German battlecruiser that operated in the eastern Mediterranean

and was transferred to the Ottoman navy in 1914, playing an active role in Dardanelles operations.

16 Kaba Tepé (often spelled Kaba Tepe) is a headland on the Gallipoli peninsula that formed part of the ANZAC sector and served as a landmark and base area during the 1915 campaign.

17 The Lusitania was a British passenger liner (RMS Lusitania) torpedoed and sunk by a German U-boat on 7 May 1915, an event that caused international outrage and heavy loss of life.

18 Anzac is an acronym for the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps and is also used for the Gallipoli beachhead where those forces landed on 25 April 1915 during the Dardanelles campaign.

19 The Red Crescent is the equivalent of the Red Cross used in many Muslim-majority countries; during WWI the Ottoman medical services and volunteers often operated under this emblem.

20 "Jack Johnsons" was a soldiers' nickname for very large enemy shells or heavy guns, named after the American boxer Jack Johnson; it refers generically to heavy artillery rather than a single technical model.

21 Kemal Bey here denotes an Ottoman officer and is very likely a reference to Mustafa Kemal (later known as Atatürk), who served at Gallipoli, although 'Kemal' was not an uncommon name and exact identification may vary.

22 Imbros is an Aegean island used by the Allies as a naval and logistical base during the Gallipoli campaign; it is now known by its Turkish name, Gökçeada.