

AMONG THE DISPUTED CRESTS NORTH OF VERDUN

The Salvation Army hut beside the Varennes road was just a ruined wall and a few pieces of gunnysack. A loose and weary soldier was halted before it by a sign which said there would be nothing doing till the morning, and that there was no admission except on business. So he went in immediately.

"Sorry, Buddy, but our truck hasn't come yet and we won't have a canteen here till tomorrow."

"Guess I go to bed hungry," said the visitor, turning away.

"Don't be so. We don't open up till morning. I haven't a thing here for you except—wait a moment—yes, I could let you have an apple pie."

The soldier gaped.

"But, I've only got five hundred francs."

"Nonsense. Take the darned thing. We had only enough stuff to cook the one."

A moment later truck drivers trundling at dusk along the road stand at the side a stimulating picture.

It was a rain-drenched Yankee. On his face was a beautiful smile. In his hands there rested (in passing) a sweet, warm, generous, flaky, spicy apple pie.

The officer, bent over the candle-lit task of censoring letters written from the Argonne battlefield, burst into a sweat and prayed for strength to resist a great temptation.

There before him were two letters written by one soldier. One was to a girl in Brittany, begging her to be true to him and murmuring sweet prophecies of the day when he could come for her and take her back as his bride to America.

The other letter was to his real fiancée in Ohio. And into the mind of the censoring officer had crept the mischievous notion that it would not be a bad idea to swap envelopes.

At last accounts, he was still struggling with the temptation.

There are all gradations of thoroughness in the varying manners which different outfits show when they turn over every stick and stone. Some turn over every stick and stone, every fact and every suspicion. Some are more casual about it.

The record instance for dispatch is told of a French captain who needed only six words and three seconds to turn over his sector to the American captain relieving him. The words were: "Nous ici. Boches là. Au revoir."

Among some of the effects seized from an Austrian regimental P.C. by the Americans last week was a German corps order giving much praise to the First Austrian Division, especially the Fifth Austrian Infantry Regiment, for the heroic and wonderful work it had done in front of the Argonne.

A short time after, when this order was sent to the front lines to be read to the troops of the Fifth Austrian Infantry Regiment, the men of that regiment burst out into a roar of laughter as they sensed the humor of the situation.

For instead of having the order read to them while they were drawn up in line of companies and standing at attention, as was intended by the German higher command, it was read to them by an American infantry captain while they idled in an American prison pen.

To be exact, 800 men and officers, including two majors of the Fifth Austrian Infantry Regiment—all that was left of the regiment except the colonel and his orderly, who managed somehow to escape—were taken prisoners by Americans from the Windy City.

The Americans have informed the German higher command (letter delivered by airplane) that the letter has been properly read to the men of the Fifth Austrian Infantry Regiment, and congratulates the higher command on the wonderful work the men of that regiment will do in the near future, chiefly road building and construction tasks in the American S.O.S.

One of the most brilliant and celebrated of our chaplains stood in the drenching autumn rain looking mutinously at the unending acres of Argonne mud and at the spectacle of his flock plodding through it ankle deep.

"How's the war?" the chaplain asked.

"It's over, I guess, Father. I'm getting ready for the next one."

"Is it England you're going to fight now?" the chaplain asked brightly, a bit of brogue creeping back into his voice.

"Not at all. We must all consolidate and go back home to fight prohibition."

There was a pause, while the rain pattered noisily on their steel helmets. Finally the padre spoke.

"Want a chaplain?" he asked.

When a certain Field Artillery P.C. moved into its new quarters west of Verdun the Artillerymen discovered pussycat and four kittens in a wood box.

But the Artillery P.C. could not remain stationary for long. One day it moved forward two kilometers, and the Artillerymen decided that Polly and her family would do better if they were left behind.

The next morning, when the cook came down to his new quarters to start the breakfast fire, he discovered Polly's four kittens romping over his kitchen floor, while Polly herself lay stretched out in a corner. Polly had moved P.C. during the night, too.

Thirty Austrian soldiers who had just come from Austria to the Western front had never seen an American soldier.

During the American advance north of Verdun these Austrians were thrown in with a regiment of Germans to face the Americans. As the Yanks came forward the Austrians stood up and shouted the one English word they knew, "Republik!"

As the Americans advanced to take them prisoners a German machine gunner in their rear opened fire on the Americans. The Austrians silenced him with their own hand grenades.

A mess sergeant who has charge of three messes at a divisional headquarters north of Verdun is today nursing a badly burned thigh and facial sort of all jarred up as a result of collision with a buck private accused of confiscating property from the enemy.

Private Huggs had driven up in front of the divisional mess shack one morning in a one-lugged, narrow gauge affair that he called an automobile.

"I ain't got much use for this German go-cart, sarge," he said, "and if you promise not to put me on K.P. no more I'll give you the whole shootin' works."

The sergeant, although wary of all German contraptions, sized up the bargain and finally called it a deal.

For several days the divisional staff was awakened early every morning by the coughing and sputtering of the German war machine. It was carrying the sergeant from one kitchen to another.

Complaints came in from privates,



ON GUARD IN THE ARGONNE

lieutenants and even majors. They protested against the automobils' presence so near their sleeping quarters. But the sergeant paid no heed.

One morning he cranked it up, climbed into the seat and was about to sally forth when the thing blew up with a terrific bang. The sergeant was badly burned and shocked, and the machine was so fearfully wrecked that it was scarcely eligible for the salvage pile.

Just what it was that placed the charge of dynamite, or whatever it was, in the engine, no one will ever know. Private Huggs, however, will do his regular turn at K.P.

An officer saw what appeared to be some pamphlets drop from a German plane that flew over the lines not far from his outfit. He walked over and found the area occupied by some colored troops. Stopping a negro sergeant, he asked him if the plane had dropped any German propaganda.

"Dunno, cap'n," replied the sergeant. "If she'd drop any of dat, I reckon it must 'a' ben a dud."

Pvt. Martin Lewis, lost from a patrol on the east bank of the Meuse, had taken off his equipment to facilitate swimming back across the river when he was approached from the rear by two Germans from a famous storm battalion. He succeeded in grabbing his rifle, which was not loaded, but was unable to get at his equipment and ammunition before the two Germans barred his way and called upon him to surrender.

Pvt. Lewis told the Germans they would have to take him, challenging them to a fair bayonet fight. They accepted the challenge.

Pvt. Lewis was wounded in both shoulders, and as a last resort one of the Germans shot him in the left leg. Both Germans are now in an American hospital.

Not long ago a German field kitchen loaded with stum, coffee, cigars and cigarettes for a hundred men, and making a slight and quiet parabolic error to the whereabouts of the somewhat jumpy German line, drove up in the darkness to a battalion P.C. of the 25th Infantry and there started to unload before the delighted Yanks discovered them.

The captors were about to pitch in when a lieutenant rushed out of the kitchen, postponed the feast, hissing out as he did so that there might be arsenic in the stum and that anyway the whole thing was probably a plot.

This turn of events delighted the German cook, who was fatter than any one in Germany is supposed to be in the fifth year of the war and who had just been congratulating himself that even the fiendish Americans could not be so very cruel to one who had brought them such unexpected refreshments. The cook brightened up, however, when it occurred to him that he and his drivers might disarm suspicion by themselves sampling all the rations on hand. They weren't allowed to do more than sample them when the bunch joined in, and in five minutes, 25 Americans had cleaned up a meal which had fattened up for a hundred Germans. The cook was still a bit worried about his scout, who had come on ahead to feel the way and of whom nothing had been heard since. He was told that he would probably meet him before morning. Sure enough, at dawn, in the prison cage far behind, the stray ration detail all met face to face.

"Oh, Johann!" "Oh, Gottlieb!" It was a great reunion.

Because Adam Patercity was of German birth his colonel wanted to discharge him while his regiment was still in America.

"I don't want a discharge," Patercity told the colonel. "I want to go to France and fight with the rest of the boys."

So Patercity crossed the Atlantic with his regiment.

The other day, north of Verdun, Pvt. Patercity, although severely wounded, advanced straight into a machine gun position which was holding up his company's advance. Four of the gun crew surrendered to Patercity. Five were left dead in the pit.

Three K.P.'s detailed to carry chow cans up to the front line were on their way back to the regimental headquarters when the Germans laid down a barrage. They left their emptied cans and sought shelter in nearby dugouts.

After the barrage had lifted, the K.P.'s discovered that their chow cans were too mused up to carry even beans. They brought them in, however, just to show the mess sergeant that a chow detail's existence is not all velvet.

One American soldier proudly lost an annoying but persistent regimental title in the Argonne drive. Because he happened to be one of those men who wear high-heeled shoes and adopt other lengthening subtleties in civil life, the regiment had christened him Shorty, and he never had been able to shake it off.

The other day, when he came marching down a shell-plowed road behind a six-foot German who had a beam pro-

portionate to his draught, Shorty's comrades marveled to see that the German was carrying Shorty's pack. The only weapon the shortest man in the regiment held was a stake that had once supported barb wire.

At 1 o'clock one October morning there crept into the American lines near Grandpré two weary, wet, footsore men who were regarded with natural suspicion until they came face to face with an interpreter named Popoff who happened to be a Russian and who recognized them as compatriots.

Their joy was beyond telling. They could only wave their arms and indulge in repeated salutes strongly resembling a scene at the Russian ballet.

But when they had calmed down they were able to give their hosts a great docket of valuable military information.

It seems that they had been taken prisoner early in the war, one in August, 1914, the other a year later. They had been working at all manner of innocuous labor, road repair, supply transportation and the like, until this Argonne battle began, when they had been forced to work with munitions.

Their repeated suggestion that, inasmuch as peace had been signed between Germany and Russia, it was time for them to go home met only with the cold response that the order for their release had not yet arrived. So, at dusk, three days before, they made a break for the American lines. They traveled by night, hid by day, crawled forward in the rain without food or water or blankets, and arrived safe at last, tired, but bursting with happiness and information.

There is a story east of the Meuse that the white dove of peace flew over the front lines for almost an hour one bright morning last week, and that not a shot was fired at it from either side of the lines. The story has been verified to the extent that two colonels and a major say they saw it.

A white airplane, bearing no insignia of any kind, and of a type unknown on the western front, coursed over the American lines, flying low, then crossed over to the German lines. After idling about for an hour or more it flew away toward the north and disappeared.

He is the interpreter attached to a roaming brigade of Field Artillery, a little French soldier named Bouchette. You have just seen us as to what the Yankees call him.

Their regard for him, however, grew mightily the other night on the eve of the brigade's entry into the fight up Montfaucon way. They had noticed that he had a genius for knowing which kitchen in the outfit would serve the best dinner on any given night and for dropping in there casually at mess time.

They suspected him of an instinct for nourishment, but how great his talents were in that respect they never discovered until this particular night, when sight of the officer, appended to him to use his French to get them a decent meal. At the word, he collected seven francs from each man, vanished into the countryside, came back with a basket full of supplies, and with his own hands prepared such a luscious and wonderful six-course dinner as they had never encountered in all their days.

Fish with a celestial sauce, eggs

transformed past recognition, a salad for the gods—it was a feast unbelievable. There were inquiries, and, when cornered, M. Bouchette admitted that, prior to the war, he had been head chef for the late Alfred Vanderbilt. Now he is trying desperately hard to retain his rank and status as an interpreter.

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"What are the Crown Prince's initials in English?"

"Search me, but in German they're K.P."

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