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"THE GREAT WAR AS I SAW IT."

By Canon F. G. Scott, C.M.G., D.S.O., of Quebec, Senior Chaplain of the First Canadian Division.

Our own orders to move came two days afterwards on August 7th, and I left for St. Feuchien. I went off in my side-car to the quaint old village. It is situated on the top of a low hill, and consists of a few streets and some large buildings standing in their own grounds. One of these was the country home of the Archbishop of Amiens, and this was to be our billet. I entered the grounds by a broken-down gate and drew up in front of a large brick building; one wing of this was a chapel and kept locked up. In front of the building was a well full of empty tins and other refuse. The interior of the place had once been quite fine, but was now absolutely filthy, having been used as billets. The billiard tables, however, could still be used. The room assigned to me was on the ground floor at the back. The dirt on the floor was thick, and a sofa and two red plush chairs were covered with dust. A bed in the corner did not look inviting, and through the broken windows innumerable swarms of blue-bottle flies came from the rubbish heaps in the yard. The weather was very hot and there was apparently no water for washing. I made an inspection of the building upstairs, but all the rooms had been assigned to different officers. The Archbishop's room was very large with a huge bed in it, but wore an air of soiled magnificence.

The Hour Draws Near.

Everybody was in a great rush and, although I did not know when our attack was to take place, I felt that it might happen at any moment; and so, not worrying about my billet, I started off in my side-car to see General Thacker at Chateau Longeau. I found, as I passed through Booves and other villages that the whole Canadian Corps was concentrated in the neighborhood. The dusty roads were crowded with lorries, tanks, whippets and limbers, besides numbers of men. When I got to Chateau Longeau I found, to my surprise, that the General had gone to Battle Headquarters in Gentelles Wood, and an officer whom I met in the road told me that zero hour was on the following morning. I determined therefore not to return to the archiepiscopal palace at St. Feuchien, but to go off to the attack. I returned to Booves, where I washed and shaved and had dinner in a damaged house with some officers of a light trench-mortar battery, and after dinner started on my way to Gentelles Wood. It was a time of intense excitement. Less than a week ago we were about to make our great attack at Amiens. The warm summer evening was well advanced when I reached our Battle Headquarters behind the wood. All the staff officers were so busy that to ask one a question was like putting a spark to a powder-magazine, so I kept out of their way and journeyed up the road to the barrier beyond which no vehicle was allowed to pass. I said good-bye to Lyons, and then started off to find the trenches from which the 16th Battalion was going to lead the charge.

CHAPTER 17.

The Battle of Amiens—August 8th to 16th, 1918.

It was strange and exhilarating to go off on an expedition of that kind in the cool air and fading light of the evening. Something told us that at last the hour of victory was drawing near. The moving of the Corps had been so splendidly conducted and the preparation had been so secret that success seemed assured. This was an achievement which was completely different from all our past experience. The only question was, had we taken the Germans by surprise, or were they waiting with massed forces in the trench to resist our attack? As I left the outskirts of the wood behind me, and

made my way over the green plain, now fading into the twilight, I passed a battalion of the 3rd Division marching a line of trenches. I had a talk with some of the men and told them that I had heard from a tank-officer that nearly one thousand tanks were to be engaged in the attack on the following morning. Far over to the left, on a rise in the ground I saw the remains of a village, and was told that a mud road across the fields would lead me in the direction of the 1st Division front. I met as usual many men whom I knew, and finally some officers of the 15th Battalion in a dugout. The light began to fade and I had difficulty in seeing far ahead of me, but the track at last brought me to a sunken road which turned to the right. Here on the hill-side more men were waiting in dug-outs, and I was directed to a quarry, on the top of which I was to take a path that would lead me to a group of trees, where I should find the Headquarters of the 16th Battalion. When I got to the quarry I found many roads there, and whether it was that the information I had received was incorrect or that I was more than usually stupid I do not know. I wandered up and down for a long time, tripping over bits of wire and slipping into holes, before I was able to get to the top of the hill and look over in the direction of the German lines. At last I found a track which had evidently been used by men going up to the front. I went along it for considerable distance and found myself on what appeared to be a plateau, but as far as I could see, no object stood out against the starry skyline. Shells were falling in the fields to the left and at different points on the Eastern horizon the bright light of a German flare would tell us the position of the enemy's lines. I went on for some distance, straining my eyes in the darkness to see if I could discover any trees. I thought I had lost my way again. Suddenly the dim figure of a man approached, and when he came up to me, I found he belonged to one of the Imperial battalions from whom we were taking over the line. He asked me the way to the quarry, and I was able to tell him. Then he gave me the direction I had to take to reach my destination. I resumed my walk along the narrow path and at last, to my great delight, I saw a black object in the distance. When I came up to it I found it was the group of trees for which I had been looking. The trees were growing out of a curious round hole in the ground. Here, a signaller of the 16th Battalion happened to turn up and acted as my guide. He led me down a path to the bottom of the hole where were several dug-outs. In one of them I found more men of the Battalion. They were intensely keen over the prospect of a great victory on the morrow. I was told that the battalion and the companies which were going over in the first wave were in advanced trenches to the left. So, after bidding the men good-bys and good luck, I started off. At last I reached the trench, and getting down into it found the headquarters of the battalion had arrived there not long before. On asking where the Colonel was, I was taken to a place where a piece of canvas hung down the side of the trench. When this was lifted, I looked down into a little hole in the ground and there saw the C.O., the Adjutant, and another officer studying a map by the light of a candle. The place was so tiny that I had to crawl in backwards, and finding that there was no room for a visitor, I soon took my departure. The Colonel ordered me to stay in the trench, but I had made up my mind to go forward and see the companies which were going over in the first wave. They lay along the side of a road some distance down the slope in front of us. In making my way there I passed a trench where the 5th Battalion were waiting to follow up the advance. A German machine-gun was playing freely upon the spot, but no one got hit. When I came to the advanced companies of the 16th Battalion, I passed along their line and gave them my blessing. It was splendid to meet and shake hands with those gallant lads, so soon to make the attack. They were in high spirits in spite of the seriousness of their enterprise.

A Wonderful Moment.
The barrage was to start at 4.20, so I left them about 4.10 to go back to Battalion Headquarters in the trench, as I intended to follow up the advance with the stretcher-bearers. On my way back I met the Colonel, his orderly, and his piper who, a few minutes later, was killed in the attack. I shook hands with them, and the Colonel said "Now, Canon, if anything happens to me don't make any fuss about me; just say a few words over me in a shell-hole." I said "You will come out all right, Colonel, there will be no shell-hole for you." Then, as my senior officer, he ordered me back to the trench. I told him I would go over the top with him if he wanted me to do so, but he would not hear of it. When I got to the trench only a few minutes remained till the barrage was to start. I climbed upon the parapet and waited, looking off into the darkness. It was a wonderful moment. When the German searchlights went up we could see that there was a wood on the other side of the valley in front of us, and its outline began to grow more distinct against the gray of the morning sky. I could see to right and left a great stretch of country sloping gradually into the darkness. (Continued on Tuesday.)

PROBS:—Tuesday, fine and moderately warm.

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4,500 yards Princely Mills Dress Voiles in a large range of light and dark patterns—full 40 inches wide, and sold regularly from 45c. to 75c. a yard.

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