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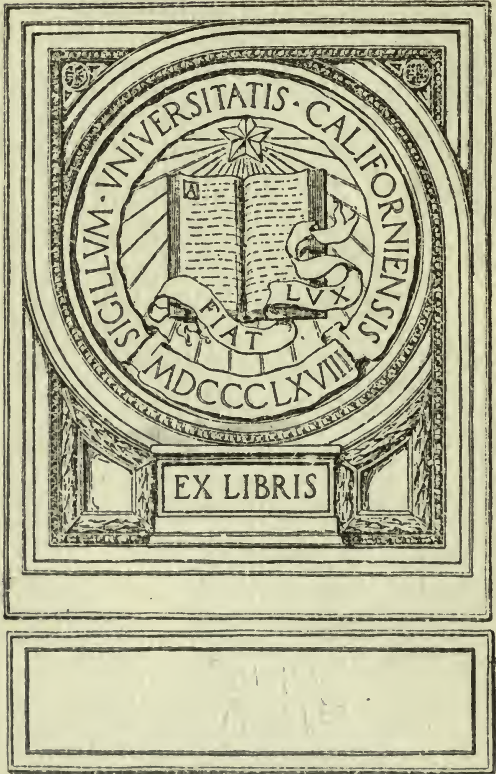
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ON TWO FRONTS

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LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN.

CLERK MANGAT RAI IN HIS DUG-OUT AT ANZAC.

ON TWO FRONTS

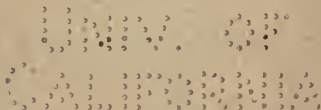
BEING THE ADVENTURES OF AN INDIAN MULE CORPS IN FRANCE AND GALLIPOLI

BY

MAJOR H. M. ALEXANDER, D.S.O.

S. & T. CORPS, INDIAN ARMY

WITH MAP AND FRONTISPIECE



LONDON

WILLIAM HEINEMANN

Dedication

TO

D. M. R.

IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF

INVALUABLE HELP

IN THE PRODUCTION OF THIS BOOK

London: William Heinemann, 1917

FOREWORD

This book has been written during a long period of enforced idleness. It makes no claim either to literary or historical merit, but is a plain tale of personal experiences in the War. Having been written almost entirely from memory, assisted only by the briefest of diaries, I fear that it must inevitably contain some inaccuracies for which I ask indulgence.

To those officers and men whose names appear, I apologise for the liberty I have taken, and sincerely trust that I have said nothing that may cause annoyance.

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ON TWO FRONTS

CHAPTER I

OFF TO THE WAR

AMBALLA in July is very hot and very dull. Any event however trifling which serves to break the monotony is therefore welcome to the weary, sleepy little coterie which gathers nightly at the Sirhind Club. July 1914 was no exception to the rule, so that, when the thunder-cloud of European war burst upon us, every one woke with a start and began to sit up and take notice.

On August 5 came a Reuter's telegram announcing that England had declared war on Germany. Bridge and billiards were superseded by discussions, first as to how long the war would last, and secondly how it would affect us in India. The general opinion was that three months would see it finished, and that the Indian Army, mobilised, would sit tight in India, ready to cope with any disturbances there. Very few even imagined

that Indian troops would be sent to serve in Europe.

But soon we heard that the Lahore and Meerut Divisions were to be mobilised for service abroad. Excitement grew. Officers began to overhaul their kits, and, figuratively speaking, to sharpen their swords. Fresh rumours cropped up every day. The 8th Hussars were under orders to leave at once for France. The origin of this turned out to be that the provident 8th had sent their mess silver to the bank! There had been no orders at all, but they wished to be ready. Then we heard that all officers and men throughout India had been recalled from leave, and that officers in England had been ordered to return. This proved correct. One of the most sleepy and fed-up of our little circle had sailed for home only a week or two earlier. He had gone to get married, and one pictured him arriving at Southampton to be greeted with the news that he must return at once. Some of the gunners had just gone off on a shooting-trip in the hills, the preparations for which had formed one of the chief topics of conversation for the last month: they, too, had to come back immediately. But the feeling of each individual was that, so long as he got to France, nothing mattered. B Battery, R.H.A., belonged to the "Internal Defence Scheme", and I remember their Major, whose command of language was great and

whose medals were few, enlarging on his misfortune very forcibly; but he found his way to Cape Helles eventually and greatly distinguished himself there.

I commanded at that time the 9th Pack Mule Corps, which was employed in Amballa and in sending convoys to the various stations in the Simla Hills. For the benefit of the uninitiated, I will describe briefly the organisation and uses of a Mule Corps, a unit peculiar to the Indian Army.

The Corps, at service strength, consists of eight troops of 96 mules each, in charge of a *kot duffadar* or troop-sergeant-major, assisted by two *naicks* or corporals, and about fifty Indian drivers. The "superior establishment", as it is officially called, includes the Commandant (usually a Major or Captain), two British warrant-officers, each of whom commands a "sub-division" of four troops; two British staff-sergeants as Sergeant-Major and Quartermaster-Sergeant; two Indian officers as Adjutant and Veterinary Officer, and two Indian clerks. In peace-time the Corps has 200 small carts, and four of the troops are then used in draught. The total strength is 768 mules and, roughly, 500 men.

The mules are recruited from the Argentine, China and the Punjab. Some are bred in India at remount-depots from country-bred pony mares and imported English donkeys. The average

height is about 12.2; anything over thirteen hands is a big mule. When carrying a pack (160 lbs.) a mule can go over any ground where a man can go.

An Army Transport cart is a two-wheeled vehicle, weighing only 5 cwt. It will stand any amount of rough usage and knocking about, and will carry a load of 800 lbs. on an ordinary road. With a lighter load, it can be used on the roughest of tracks.

These Mule Corps, which are units of the Indian Supply and Transport Corps, are intended to provide the first-line transport for battalions of infantry, regiments of cavalry, and sapper companies. Water, ammunition, entrenching tools, signalling and medical equipment are carried on the mules, which accompany the troops wherever they may be sent. Mules, in fact, perform the same duties as are carried out by the regimental pack-horses under the British Army system.

No doubt when the war is over the Indian Army transport system will be revised. The material is excellent, and in some campaigns no other form of transport would be of any use; but in my humble opinion the organisation is wrong, and does not adapt itself easily to the various circumstances which may arise. The personal factor—which is so essential in all dealings with Indian troops—cannot be maintained with the present organisation. For the most part, men enlist in a unit because

their friends have already joined it, but on service these men get separated from each other and from the officers and N.C.O.s whom they know. A transport unit has every bit as much *esprit de corps* as a regiment, and once it becomes a mixed unit, composed of men of various corps under strange officers, its work deteriorates. Then, again, one British officer is insufficient: this was proved over and over again during the war, and was fully recognised by the authorities in Gallipoli.

On August 9 came orders for the mobilisation of the 9th Mule Corps, and an inquiry whether it could entrain for Bombay and Karachi on the 12th. This could scarcely have been done had we not started to mobilise the very day war broke out on the chance of receiving some such order. Full steam ahead was the programme, and right well did all ranks play up. There were many hitches and complications, for the whole Corps happened to be away from Amballa at the moment. Orderlies had to be despatched to recall two troops from Kalka: they arrived two days later, having marched eighty-two miles in about sixty-eight hours—not a bad performance in the month of August, with the thermometer at somewhere about 110°. My orders recalling detachments from Simla and Dagshai were cancelled by superior authority, on the ground that they could not be spared from their present duties. This was rather

a poser, but it was circumvented by marching the 38th Mule Cadre into the 9th Mule Corps lines, and taking their men and animals instead. Their C.O., Captain Jack Rendall, of tennis fame, an old school friend of mine, placed all his resources absolutely at my disposal: without his aid we could not possibly have got away to time.

Other complications arose from telegrams descending upon us from various sources. As Brigade Headquarters were at Kasauli, Divisional Headquarters at Dalhousie, and Army Headquarters at Simla, perhaps it was natural that difficulties should arise, especially as this was the first unit in India to be despatched to the war.

The fact that it was the leave season added to our troubles: telegrams take time to reach remote Indian villages, and in many cases do not arrive at all, and it was impossible to get back more than a small percentage of the absentees. Then the amount of office work to be done can only be realised by those who know what Indian officialdom means. A less complacent and imperturbable person than Clerk Mangat Rai would have lost his head; but nothing upsets him. He worked all day and all night, and never made a mistake or overlooked a point. Throughout the campaign he has been the same—always calm and cheerful, never complaining, and always ready to do anything in his power to help.

The last straw, however—and what, no doubt, to any one but a transport officer would seem a very small straw indeed—came in the shape of an order to take with us our 200 Army Transport carts, of which 112 were to go to Bombay, and 88 to Karachi. This meant overhauling all the draught gear, as we had been mobilising as a Pack Corps. The allotments of troops to trains for Bombay and Karachi respectively had either to be changed, or the draught gear redistributed. I chose the latter course as the lesser evil, and somewhere about midnight on August 11 it was finished. Then there was the taking to pieces of the carts, getting them to the station and loading them into the trucks—an exercise we had never practised in the 9th Mule Corps, as carts were considered for use in peace-time only. It was about two miles from the lines to the station. The method we adopted was to tow three dismantled carts behind one complete one.

The men were delighted with the idea of going on service, and worked with the greatest enthusiasm. In Conductors Brown and Green, and Staff-Sergeants Levings and Staton, I had four of the best British subordinates any commanding officer could desire.[1] The adjutant, Ressaidar

[1] The title "Conductor" is for official use only in the S. & T. Corps. Warrant Officers of this rank are always addressed as "Mr."

Ghulam Mahomed—who had previously distinguished himself on a frontier expedition by tackling, single-handed and unarmed, a couple of Afridi ruffians who were attacking his officer—was also of the greatest assistance. He was of an optimistic nature. The question arose as to whether we should take our swords, and I decided that we should not; whereupon the Ressaidar inquired, "But, Sahib, if we leave our swords behind, what shall we do when we march in procession through London to celebrate our victories in the war?"

On the night of August 12 the 9th Mule Corps left Amballa by three troop-trains, two for Bombay and one for Karachi. Loading the mules worked fairly smoothly, but getting the carts aboard was most strenuous work. Fortunately we never had to do this work again, for in France the carts were placed on the trucks whole, and were therefore ready for use as they came off. This means eight to a truck instead of twenty-two, but saves a great deal of time and wear and tear of carts.

All the time loading was going on, Conductor Green, seated at a table on the platform, with Mangat Rai by his side, was paying out the men, giving them advances and arranging for family allotments, there having been no time to do this before. It could not even be finished before the trains left, and was continued during the journey.

Three days of travelling followed: it was hot, but peaceful, and most of the time was spent in making up for lost sleep.

On arrival at Bombay, the orders were to camp at Cotton Green, close to the Taj Mahal Hotel. The management of this hotel had very sportingly offered to put up officers proceeding on service free of charge, so I gladly availed myself of this privilege and spent a week in Bombay in great comfort. Not so my poor men, who were washed out of their tents the very first night by one of the heaviest downpours of rain Bombay had seen for years—four inches during the night of our arrival reducing the camp to an absolute quagmire. Thus early did the men come in contact with the discomforts of active service: it was good training for Flanders.

As each regiment arrived in Bombay, it went straight on board its appointed troopship, accompanied by the transport allotted to it, so most of our time was spent at the docks getting the mules on board. If by any chance the first mule took exception to the gangway, the probability was that all the rest did the same. Sometimes we had almost to carry them on board. With a rope under the animal's tail, and escape barred by a crowd of men, we used to haul and heave. There was one animal which had evidently made up its mind that it would not take a sea-voyage, but after kicking

half a dozen men and scattering the crowd it yielded to the inevitable and stood upon the gangway. There was not then room enough to kick, so some of the men hoisted the beast on their shoulders and bore it triumphantly up the gangway and into the hold: that mule literally smiled over the trouble he was giving.

Embarkation ran smoothly on the whole. Major Cummins, D.A.Q.M.G., was an ideal Staff Officer, always knowing exactly what we wanted. He was never flurried, always polite and ready to help, as was also Major Preston, of the Supply and Transport Corps, who gave us the greatest assistance in completing our requirements. Captains Pemberton and Hogg, of the Royal Engineers, were employed with their company of Sappers in the heavy task of fitting up various commandeered steamers as transports. It was galling for these officers to be working so hard to get other people away to the war while they remained behind. But their turn came later on. Pemberton won a Military Cross in Mesopotamia, and I met Hogg in Egypt the following year.

All my men thought Bombay wonderful, as practically none of them had ever before seen any building larger than an ordinary cantonment bungalow. Some of them had heard of the Towers of Silence, where the Parsees leave their dead to be devoured by crows and vultures,

and were anxious to see the gruesome spectacle; they were, however, not allowed inside the gates.

There was naturally much speculation as to the destination of the large fleet of transports lying in the harbour. People talked of East Africa or Egypt, and were ready to back their opinions. France stood low in the betting, which reminds me that a certain Colonel of Gurkhas still owes me a sovereign: nothing, he said, would induce him to believe that an Indian Division was going to fight in France. We got very little news from the front, and had no idea how serious matters were: rather we wondered whether the war would not be over and our Expeditionary Force in Berlin before the Lahore Division could take any part in the fighting.

When transport had been allotted to each unit, and all the ships loaded, I received orders to take the unallotted balance on board the Anchor Line steamer *Castalia*. The loading of the ship was completed on August 21. A cheery dinner at the Royal Yacht Club that evening included the Austrian Consul, a particularly pleasant man, who was much upset at the idea of war between his country and England. England, he said, had always been the friend of Austria, and he had the greatest regard for Englishmen.

On August 22 the *Castalia*, bearing the Field

Engineers of the Lahore Division, the Headquarters 9th Mule Corps and details, set sail from Bombay. A crowd, consisting of two tired-looking dock-labourers and one fat boy, raised a faint cheer as the ship steamed out of Alexandra Docks.

CHAPTER II

A LONG TIME ON THE WAY

When the good ship *Castalia* sailed from Bombay, her destination was unknown to the officers and men on board. As she was more than half empty, it was no great surprise to learn that her first port of call was to be Karachi, where more troops were to be picked up.

The voyage from Bombay to Karachi was far from pleasant, the weather being very hot and the sea fairly rough. The task of looking after the animals presented considerable difficulty, because most of the men were what they were pleased to call "purra". The nearest colloquial translation to this would be "flattened out". There were, however, sufficient men remaining serviceable to carry out the duties of feeding and watering, and not much else was attempted those first few days. The men were really bewildered, many of them never having even heard of the sea, and, to those who had, it did not seem to be at all what they expected. After a time, they settled down to voyage conditions and apparently quite enjoyed themselves, though there were some—notably the artificers who had practically no work to do—who

remained "purra" until the end of the journey. Fortunately, my two British sergeants were good sailors. They, with the senior *kot duffadar*, Bahawal Din, a very fine man who afterwards won the Distinguished Service Medal in France, and a few of the hardier of the rank and file, got through the necessary duties until we reached Karachi.

As the *Castalia* steamed into Karachi harbour, she met a fleet of transports sailing out, escorted by H.M.S. *Northbrook*. In this fleet was the ship which carried the G.O.C. and Staff of the Lahore Division. General Watkis, the Divisional Commander, was at home on leave when war broke out, and the Division left India in charge of Major-General Brunker, of the Amballa Brigade, his brigade being handed over to Colonel W. G. Walker, V.C., of the 4th Gurkhas.

We remained four days in Karachi. The O.C. ship, Lieut.-Colonel Coffin, R.E., obtained permission to put the animals ashore, and this enabled us to have all the stables thoroughly cleaned out, and allowed the mules to stretch their legs and get some fresh air, which did them a lot of good.

I got into touch here with the balance of my corps, which had gone direct by train to Karachi from Amballa, under the two Warrant Officers, Brown and Green. They had had none too easy a time. An officious young veterinary officer had inspected the animals and announced that there

were two mules suffering from mange. He recommended that the whole detachment should be forbidden to embark. In vain did Mr. Brown protest that at a veterinary inspection, held at Amballa the day before departure, the Corps had been declared free of any infectious disease, and that the so-called "mange" was really a mild form of *barsati*. Had it not been for the good offices of Captain A. J. Rennison, Commandant of the 2nd Mule Corps, which was the other transport unit detailed to accompany the Lahore Division, the probability is that the detachment would have been isolated and left behind. Captain Rennison succeeded in getting leave for a second inspection to be held by a more experienced veterinary officer, with the result that all animals were passed fit, and the embarkation was continued. This detachment of the 9th Mule Corps was distributed to various units and embarked on various ships, as had been done with the Bombay detachment. There is much to be said for this method, but I prefer the system adopted when we went from France to Gallipoli. Then the Mule Corps travelled as a unit, and was distributed at the other end. It is certainly easier and more economical to fit up, say, two ships as mule-transports, than to provide a small quantity of stabling in each of some thirty ships. On the other hand, if one of the mule-ships were torpedoed, or otherwise came to grief,

the catastrophe from a transport point of view would be greater. On the whole, regiments looked after their animals on board ship wonderfully well. Each regimental transport officer was given a list of instructions, showing the routine to be carried out on board, and most of them adhered to it to the letter and landed their animals at Marseilles in fine condition. Still, it would naturally be more satisfactory to the O.C. of a transport unit, who is held responsible, if all the animals travelled under his immediate care or that of subordinates selected by him.

The 32nd Divisional Signal Company and five Field Ambulances embarked in the *Castalia*, filling up all available space to an uncomfortable degree, and on August 29 she moved off from Karachi and soon afterwards caught up some twelve more transports, escorted by H.M.S. *Chatham*. From now onwards the sea kept quiet calm, and the invalids began to realise that the terrors of a voyage were not as great as they had imagined. Every one settled down to a regular routine of work and play. Every day, at noon, Colonel Coffin—accompanied by the Adjutant (Lieutenant Walshe of the Connaught Rangers), the Quartermaster (my friend Jack Rendall, who had been appointed Supply Officer, Sirhind Brigade), and one of the ship's officers—made a complete tour of the ship. In the afternoons we used to exercise the animals.

A little work by the Corps' carpenters made this feasible: by the removal of a few posts, a course was left clear, and, with matting laid down, it was quite simple to walk all the animals round and round their holds. This without doubt helped greatly to keep them in good condition. The mules gave far less trouble than the horses, some of which were very obstreperous at first both at exercise and in their stalls, for they used to get frightened and start kicking. The mule is a cleverer animal than the horse, and adapts himself more readily to new conditions. Sergeant Levings and Jemadar Wali Mahomed, the veterinary officer of the 9th Mule Corps, put in some very useful work in saving the lives of several horses.

Every day we had lectures on the upper deck on every kind of technical subject. Colonel Coffin started a French class, which was very popular. We did not know yet that we were bound for France, but nothing was left to chance, and by now it was the general impression that Marseilles was our destination. For recreation we had concerts, bridge and chess. Inoculations for cholera, enteric and other diseases took place daily, and would probably be included by the large number of medical officers on board under the head of recreation, though some of us thought otherwise.

One of the most interesting personalities on board was the ship's doctor—a very big Irishman

of most genial disposition. He had been an International footballer, and must have been a most objectionable person to bump up against in a "scrum", for his weight could not have been much less than twenty stone. He was a great bridge player and was also very fond of a practical joke. One day he and Lieutenant Walsh, I.M.S. (who was unfortunately killed in France), were playing against Rendall and myself, when the doctor was called away to see a patient. He and Walsh had been holding the most amazing cards, so I took the opportunity of playing a practical joke on the doctor. It was his deal, and, quickly re-sorting the cards, I arranged the pack so that he would deal himself ten diamonds to the ace and the other three aces. Jack, on his left, was to get all the hearts bar the ace. The distribution of the rest of the cards was immaterial. The doctor was only away about two minutes, and when he came back we said, "Come along, doctor, deal away. The cards are cut." When the doctor saw his hand he gave a gasp, then burst into a series of guffaws and smacked his knees with joy. Finally he said, "I'll go five no trumps." "Nonsense," we said, "this is bridge, not tomfoolery." "Five no trumps," repeated the doctor emphatically. "All right," said Rendall. "I'll go six hearts." "Not enough," screamed Walsh; "you've got to go seven to beat five no trumps, and I'll double."

The doctor scratched his head, laughed some more, and announced that he would go seven no trumps. Jack doubled; the doctor redoubled. He solemnly played out every trick of the whole thirteen, and it took the rest of the voyage to make him believe that it was a leg-pull.

The Indian ranks of the Field Ambulance were christened "The Lahore Militia". They looked like anything on earth rather than soldiers. Not even their own officers believed for a moment that they would survive the rigours of a winter in Europe, or that they would stand up to German shell-fire; yet they did both right manfully. It was hard to realise, when we saw them afterwards in France, that these smart, well-set-up stretcher-bearers were the same ill-conditioned scallywags at whose antics (politely called "physical drill") we all used to laugh consumedly on board the *Castalia*. More than one was decorated for valour, and as a corps they behaved with exemplary discipline and courage, reflecting the greatest possible credit on the medical officers who had taken so much trouble to convert what appeared most indifferent material into really useful soldiers.

When the *Castalia* reached Aden she anchored well out in the harbour. A message, informing us definitely that the Lahore Division was going to Marseilles, was received with loud cheers. We had only a few hours at Aden, but, as we were

anxious to get our Indian letters posted, the skipper lent us a boat to pull across to the P. & O. liner which had just arrived *en route* for Bombay. A volunteer crew of officers was called for. Of course every one wanted to go; but there was only room for eight, in addition to the second officer, Mr. Kelly, who was in charge. I was lucky enough to get one of the places; we were lowered over the ship's side, and set off. It was soon apparent that we should never reach the liner, so we altered our course and made for H.M.S. *Chatham*, which was lying much nearer the *Castalia*.

The officers of the *Chatham* invited us on board and into their wardroom, where the surgeon, Hugh Norris,[1] an old friend, gave me several pounds of excellent tobacco which lasted until I could obtain a regular supply from home. The wardroom of the *Chatham* was, without exception, the hottest place I have ever been in, but it made up in hospitality and general cheeriness for what it lacked in ventilation. We heard all about the escape of the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, both of which the junior officers of the *Chatham* told us they could have sunk "absolutely sitting" had they been allowed to open fire. We spent a very enjoyable couple of hours on board, and, when we left, the only

[1] Fleet-Surgeon Norris was unfortunately lost when the *Indefatigable* went down in the Battle of Jutland.

man of our crew who cared two straws whether it snowed ink was Mr. Kelly, who was responsible to the skipper for the safe return of the boat. The next time I saw the *Chatham* was in August 1915, when she took part in covering the landing of troops at Suvla Bay, but on that occasion I was not able to get aboard into the sanctuary of her ward-room, though I would have given much to be able to do so. The return journey to the *Castalia* was quite hilarious, but was safely accomplished. Kelly's sigh of relief, as the boat was hoisted into the davits, must have been heard at Bombay.

In the Red Sea tragedy overtook the *Castalia:* the skipper, Captain Mitchell, who had been out of sorts for two or three days, was found dead in his bunk. He had served the Anchor Line loyally for over forty years, and this was to have been his last voyage. He was buried at sea next morning, the whole fleet halting while the funeral took place, conducted by the Chaplain, Captain Knott. I had sat next Captain Mitchell at meals and had been much struck by his courtesy and kindness. There was no doubt that he felt the responsibility of commanding—for the first time in his long career—a troopship, and his death was attributed to heart-failure, brought on by anxiety.

We had been ordered to look out for mines, and the fleet had not pursued its usual course up the Red Sea, but we arrived safely at Suez, where a

surprise awaited us in the shape of orders to disembark the 32nd Signal Company, complete with horses and transport, and with some details—all to go to Cairo. The ship was then to proceed to Alexandria, where the remainder of the troops were to disembark and encamp. This was a great disappointment, for of course our chief desire was to get on as rapidly as possible to the front. We heard that the Sirhind Brigade had already been landed and that some of its regiments were posted along the Canal—doubtless as a precaution against war with Turkey and internal troubles in Egypt.

At Suez I was taken to the pretty little Anglo-French club on the bank of the Canal, where the latest English and French papers and Reuter's telegrams were available. Having only received a few vague and unsatisfying wireless messages during the voyage, one was glad to get into touch with events again. After the gallant but disastrous retreat of the French Army and the British Expeditionary Force, a stand had been made upon the Marne, and at the time of our arrival at Suez the Allies' armies were advancing in pursuit of the Germans. There were long casualty lists in the English papers, telling the tale of the retreat from Mons.

The passage through the Suez Canal was very interesting to the Indians, and Clerk Mangat Rai was heard to remark that he wished it was all like this. The "purra" ceased from being "purra",

and were keenly interested in their surroundings. There were even then trenches along the Canal bank, and outposts of Gurkhas were to be seen at intervals; but, apart from these, little sign of life was evident, which moved my servant, Rahin Baksh, to remark that he had been taught at school that Egypt was an inhabited country and he would be glad to know where the inhabitants were.

At Alexandria we learned that the ship would be berthed next morning, and all animals landed and camped at the docks. It was expected that we should remain for about three weeks, until such time as a Territorial Division, now on its way from England, should arrive in Egypt; and in the meantime the Lahore Division was to do garrison duty.

Only one gangway was procurable, so, in order to expedite the landing of the animals, we decided to use the slings for the mules and the gangway for the horses. It is surprising how simple a matter is the slinging of animals. At first we slung them singly, but afterwards two together, which really proved better, because the animal did not seem to mind so much having the sling adjusted if another victim was standing by his side. The spectacle of two helpless mules dangling side by side in mid-air, looking around them in blank bewilderment, is quite amusing. As they landed on the wharf, they were led straight to the selected camp close by and picketed in lines. A

guard was posted to keep an eye on the camp, but most of the men remained on board.

In order to give the men a sight of the town, a route-march was arranged the day after our arrival. Headed by Sergeant Levings, on his spirited chestnut mare, the Headquarters of the 9th Mule Corps marched through the streets of Alexandria as far as the parade and sea-wall. They enjoyed the walk, and were much interested in the shops and streets which are quite different from those of India. The local people, for their part, seemed interested in the Indians, and at times cheered them and gave them presents of cigarettes.

The committee and members of the Union Club had very kindly made honorary members of all officers passing through Alexandria. Most of us from the *Castalia* went there for dinner, and very nice it was to sit on the roof of this most comfortable club and enjoy a really excellent meal again. The food on the *Castalia* was never good, and became daily worse till, at the end of the voyage, even a change to army rations was welcome. At the Union Club I met many old friends, mostly on their way to France. The Club was, in fact, absolutely swamped by the honorary members. The permanent and residential members deserve the sincerest thanks for their hospitality, for the descent of an army upon them must have caused great inconvenience.

We were not destined after all to remain long in

Egypt. About the third day after our arrival we learned that the orders had been changed, that the Signal Company was arriving immediately from Cairo, and would re-embark, when the *Castalia*, with the rest of the fleet bearing the Lahore Division, would set sail for France.

The Signal Company came aboard pretty well dead beat. Their stay in Egypt had been a period of perpetual motion. On arrival in Cairo, they had marched in the middle of the night to a camp, whence they had set forth the next morning to take part in a ceremonial parade and march through the city. When they got back to camp they found orders to pack up and entrain for Alexandria that night, so by the time we saw them again they had had about enough. Their C.O., Major Maxwell, R.E., had been ill as a result of inoculation, and was unable to accompany them, so the brunt of the work fell upon Lieutenant Walshe, who was acting for him. My senior *kot duffadar*, Bahawal Din, had accompanied the Signal Company in charge of their transport. He told me that Cairo was a fine city, and that he and his men had enjoyed the ceremonial parade.

Divisional Headquarters were on board a passenger-ship which was berthed just opposite the *Castalia*. The General and Staff and heads of departments were there, including my own chief, Lieut.-Colonel Hennessy, Assistant Director of Transport.

The fleet which left Alexandria, carrying the whole of the Lahore Division (except the Sirhind Brigade, which was left to safeguard the Suez Canal), consisted of fifteen ships: as they passed out of the harbour one by one, and formed up in two parallel lines, they made a most impressive spectacle. This time the escort consisted of H.M.S. *Weymouth* and H.M.S. *Indomitable*, which sailed at the head of the fleet. Soon afterwards seven transports, carrying the 1st Indian Cavalry Division, joined us, and the climax was reached when, on a brilliantly sunny day, this wonderful array of ships met the transports bearing the Territorial Division bound for Egypt, with H.M.S. *Minerva* as escort. A halt was called while the captain of the *Minerva* boarded the *Weymouth*. This spectacle of thirty-nine transports drawn up in so small an area, protected by only three men-o'-war, made one realise as nothing else could have done how much Great Britain owes to her navy, and how wonderful is her command of the sea. The sun was setting as the boat bearing the skipper of the *Minerva* was pulled back to his ship. The scene as the two great fleets moved off again—each to play the part assigned to it in the Great War—is one which must have impressed itself indelibly on the mind of every officer and man who was privileged to see it.

CHAPTER III

A GREAT RECEPTION IN FRANCE

On September 26 the ships carrying the first of the Indian troops dropped anchor in Marseilles harbour. A couple of days previously the escorting man-o'-war had signalled that the convoy formation might be broken up, and each ship was to make her own way into port. Then ensued a sort of general post, the faster vessels gradually forcing their way to the front. The *Castalia*, which had hitherto been compelled to travel well within her powers, now showed what she could do and eventually arrived among the first two or three of the whole fleet. The Marseilles people had had no time to become *blasé* before the Indian ranks of the 32nd Signal Company and the 9th Mule Corps made their appearance. Some sort of a greeting from our allies we had expected; but what actually happened almost defies description.

The first inkling of what our reception was to be came from the ships we passed *en route* to the wharf. On every deck were gathered passengers and crew, waving handkerchiefs and hats in greeting. Then, as the transports passed alongside the

many wharves and quays, we could see large crowds collected at every advantageous point to cheer the Indian contingent and welcome it to France. I could not help contrasting this reception with our send-off from Amballa and Bombay, where nobody appeared to take the slightest interest in our departure. But then the French nation is full of sentiment, and the British just the reverse.

On arrival, officers commanding units were directed to proceed to the steamer which was at that time used as Headquarters Indian Base. I had to report to the Base Transport Officer, in whom I found an old friend, Major Lushington, who was for several years captain of the Supply and Transport Corps cricket team, and had in the season of 1908–9 led it to victory in the Punjab Cup competition. My orders were to disembark as quickly as possible, collect my personnel, mules, carts and material from the various ships, put the carts together at the wharves, and transport everything to the Lahore Division Camp at ParcBoréli, some four miles out of Marseilles. The scheme of transport which had been drawn up in India had been entirely altered, and a fresh distribution was to be made.

Disembarkation continued all day and all night. The mules were picketed at the wharves, by running long ropes through rings fixed in the walls of the goods-sheds and attaching the head-ropes

to these. As had been the case in India, the carts gave the greatest trouble. The Corps blacksmiths were mostly elderly men, and had done nothing for five weeks except eat and sleep, so they found continuous work for hours on end rather trying. The French dock-labourers who worked the cranes went off for their evening meal somewhere about 6 p.m.: they were supposed to stay away one hour, but never returned. Finally I had to go to the Chamber of Commerce and rout out a sleepy official who promised to send them back at once, and by dawn next morning the *Castalia* was cleared.

Leaving my two warrant officers to collect the rest of the Corps, as the ships bearing the various detachments came into port, I formed up an advance party and marched off about 9 a.m. Even at that early hour the streets were alive with people. From docks to camp our little procession passed through streets lined with the good folk of Marseilles, who clapped their hands, cheering vociferously and shouting, "Vive l'Angleterre", "Vivent les Hindous", and "Good-night". This last, considering what o'clock it was, seemed odd; but we found later that "good-night" is the one English expression which every French man, woman and child seems to know. This reminds one of the British Tommy who wrote home that the French seem to know scarcely any English.

"For the most part we 'ave to talk to them in their own lingo, but there is just one English word that every bloomin' one of them does seem to know, and that is *souvenir*."

At some places we had almost to force our way through the cheering crowds. Led by a couple of French boy-scouts, full of the importance of the occasion, the procession—with my Indian adjutant and myself mounted at its head—passed along for all the world like royalty on its way to the Abbey, or like the return of the C.I.V. The heart of Ressaidar Ghulam Mahomed rejoiced exceedingly; he is a fine-looking man, and acknowledged the salutes with a solemnity worthy of a great occasion.

Truly the humble mule-driver entered into his own that day. In India he is accustomed to being rather looked down upon, but this was before the war. His most gallant behaviour on all occasions, under fire and hardship, ought to have changed all that. Here in Marseilles he received a greeting enthusiastic enough to have satisfied the Household Cavalry or the Brigade of Guards. The drivers fully appreciated it, and behaved admirably. It seems as though the treatment the men received at Marseilles influenced their conduct at the front by giving them an unwonted feeling of pride and self-confidence. In their own country, despite the hardships they endure and the risks they run, they are classed as "followers". Here—however

they might be classed—they were treated as fighting men. The result could only tend to increased zeal and efficiency.

The last part of our march lay through an avenue of trees, beautiful in their autumn tints, leading to the Parc Boréli and the race-course on which our camp was to be pitched.

It was an ideal situation. The race-course lies close to the sea, parallel with the famous Corniche Road which runs along the coast from Marseilles to Monte Carlo. Between the race-course and the road are high iron railings. All the time the Division was in camp, crowds glued their noses to those railings, watching the Indians cooking their food and saying their prayers, for the Marseillais seemed to find endless amusement in studying the habits and customs of our men, who, for their part, were only too ready to meet them half-way. It was wonderful how quickly the French and the Indians learned to understand one another. Neither knew a single word of the other's language, but this seemed to make no difference, and in a very short time they became bosom friends.

Divisional Headquarters were established in the offices at the Grand Stand, and there General Watkis, who had arrived in Marseilles from England some time before, took over command of his Division.

By the next day the various contingents of the

9th Mule Corps were in camp together. Sorting them out from the different ships was a most wearisome business. Captain Rennison had to collect the 2nd Mule Corps and take them to another camp, and it was not surprising that we got a bit mixed, and that certain men, animals and carts were temporarily unaccounted for. There appeared to be about 100 men short. It turned out that these had been left in Egypt with the Sirhind Brigade. As soon as all transport had found its way to camp, redistribution began on the new scale.

Sixteen pack-mules and ten carts were allotted to each battalion of infantry, and a slightly larger allotment was made to each of the two Sapper Companies and the Signal Company—all from the 9th Mule Corps. The 2nd Mule Corps was to find all the transport of the ammunition columns and of the Divisional Cavalry. The unallotted balance of the two Mule Corps was to be amalgamated and called "Headquarters Mule Transport", whose duties were to be the maintenance up to strength and in good condition of the transport issued to units; the replacement of all casualties in men and animals; the care of gear and carts, and the veterinary care of the animals; also, of course, the upkeep of the Corps records and interior economy. Captain Rennison, who was senior to me, became O.C. Headquarters Mule

Transport. It took us some little time to get the hang of this novel procedure, and at first our respective adjutants insisted on drawing a hard and fast line between the two Corps, for amalgamation was beyond them. As time went on, however, the arrangement was better understood, and the 2nd and 9th Mule Corps pulled together as comrades in arms.

Our stay in Marseilles was of short duration—only five days in all—and men and animals were daily being handed over to units and leaving the camp for the Advance Base. The weather was perfect, except for one day when we experienced a Marseilles "mistral". This is a cross between a gale and a dust-storm, and is one of the most unpleasant experiences imaginable. All the tents were blown down; everything was covered in dust; our eyes and ears and hair were filled with dust and fine sand. Nothing we experienced in France seemed more utterly uncomfortable than this mistral; but fortunately it only lasted a day.

A ceremonial march through Marseilles by the troops, British and Indian, of the Lahore Division, took place as soon as the whole Division had disembarked, which gave the townspeople a further opportunity of expressing their feelings. They took the fullest advantage of it, enormous crowds cheering themselves hoarse.

We had a good deal of difficulty in getting about

in Marseilles, where the distances are considerable. The trams were crowded, while cabs and cars were very scarce, so that walking was frequently the only means of reaching one's destination. *Pavé* streets are unsuitable for riding. My little New Zealand horse "Mahdi" had landed in excellent condition, though somewhat on the fat side. I bought him in Amballa a few days before leaving, and he turned out a perfect treasure. He is a small, compact animal with plenty of bone, and is a wonderful doer, for all through that first winter he covered his ten to twenty miles a day, and was never sick nor sorry, thanks to the tender care bestowed on him by his *sais* Ajaib Shah. Mahdi, in fact, proved himself a perfect charger. Nothing frightened him or in any way disturbed his equanimity. I was riding down a lane one day at the front when a battery of French '75's let off a salvo just behind the hedge, within ten yards of us. I nearly jumped out of the saddle with surprise, but Mahdi went on as if nothing had happened. He was just as calm when shells were bursting near him. After leaving France, he survived eight months of Gallipoli, and then—safely evacuated—went off to Mesopotamia. I hope to retrieve him at the end of the war, and to keep him until he dies of old age.

On October 2, having completed the redistribution of transport, the undistributed balance left for

the Advance Base. Nothing could possibly have been better than the French railway arrangements. A time-table for the journey showed places and times of halts, and where animals were to be watered, and the exactitude with which this time-table was observed was really miraculous. The train left Marseilles to the very minute, and for the whole three days of the journey the same punctuality was maintained. We had sometimes to water at most unsuitable hours, but that could not be helped. The mule is proverbially an obstinate beast, and he stolidly refused to drink at midnight.

Orleans was our destination. On the first evening of the journey we reached Cette, a place on the coast west of Marseilles, and next morning found us at Toulouse. All along the line were cheering crowds. At every station where a halt was made the platforms were thronged with people, laden with presents of fruit, sweets, flowers and cigarettes, and several times we were given a formal reception by the mayor and other officials who made pretty speeches and wished us luck in the campaign. Rennison and I had been joined by Captain Stevenson, A.V.C., who was to take veterinary charge of our animals, and by two French interpreters, Corporal Paul Singer and Trooper Raymond Moillis, who played an important part with the Mule Corps on the Western

Front. Neither Rennison nor Stevenson could be persuaded to utter a word in French, and it fell to my lot to reply to the speeches and to express our thanks for the overwhelming attentions paid to us. My French is very bad, and my accent so horrible that it sets even my own teeth on edge. But French people are so polite that one is encouraged to persevere. It is true that on one or two occasions I made *faux pas*, the enormity of which was subsequently pointed out by a horrified interpreter, but on the whole I managed to make myself understood, which, after all, is the main thing.

Coming on top of what had occurred at Marseilles, this railway journey bid fair to turn the head of the Indian mule-driver. Beautiful ladies insisted on shaking him by the hand, and pressed upon him cigarettes and sweets, which he loves. "If this is campaigning in Europe," thought he, "I can stand a good deal of it." Never had our men had such a time; but it is only fair to say that, when the real stern business of war began, they took it in the finest spirit.

At Toulouse, where we halted for a few hours, we saw a number of German prisoners at the barracks doing the goose-step—a fine, stalwart lot of men, who had been captured at the Marne; and many German field and machine-guns were also collected there, with other trophies of war. The

waiting-rooms at most of the stations had been turned into Red Cross hospitals, where charming French nurses tended the wounded, pending their removal to more permanent hospitals. They always had tea or coffee ready for us. At one station a very excited English girl was amongst the crowd awaiting the train. She had been born in India, and was delighted at seeing Indian troops again. We collected many souvenirs *en route*, such as picture postcards, and some of the kind people gave us their cards and invited us to visit them after the war.

General Watkis' motor-car was on a truck on our train and I travelled in it a good deal of the way, thereby getting a better view of the scenery, which, especially in the valley of the Loire, was gorgeously beautiful. European scenery is always a joy after the hideous monotony of the plains of India, and a better sample than the midlands of France in early October it would be hard to find. Altogether the journey from Marseilles to Orleans was a delight.

Punctually to the scheduled time, our train reached the troop-siding at Orleans, and was met by Lieutenant Nepean, A.S.C., and many stalwart orderlies of the London Scottish. This was the first Territorial battalion to land in France, and, as every one knows, it covered itself with glory at Messines in November. No one who

had seen the battalion could have been surprised, for a finer-looking lot of men it would have been impossible to find anywhere. They were chafing at being employed at a base on camp and orderly duties; but they had not long to wait for their chance, and, when it came, they took it in a way that won the admiration of all, and set a splendid example to other Territorial battalions.

We had had so much practice in entraining and detraining that it went like clockwork. In a very short time our column was formed up and started for Camp Circottes, where we arrived soon after dark. The Assistant Camp Commandant, Captain "Mango" Browne, of the 47th Sikhs, showed us the ground on which we were to camp, and everything was soon ready for the night. Captain Browne took part with a wing of his regiment in the attack on Neuve Chapelle at the end of October, and was awarded one of the first Military Crosses for gallant leading of his men. He was killed the following March in the big battle of Neuve Chapelle, to the great grief of his regiment and of all who knew him.

CHAPTER IV

HALF-WAY HOUSE

A FORTNIGHT was spent at Camp Circottes, Orleans, to complete the equipment of the troops for the winter. Here the Indian soldier made the acquaintance of garments hitherto unknown to him: woollen vests and drawers of the pattern usually worn by Englishmen were provided, and the Indian gazed on them with surprise and delight. The weather was fairly warm at that time, and a costume of vest and drawers of a delicate pink appeared to him most suitable as a sort of fatigue uniform, though to the English eye it seemed somewhat to lack finish. Cardigan waistcoats and Balaclava caps were served out, and other luxuries unfamiliar in the East. The men were given khaki jackets and trousers of the same pattern as those worn by the British Tommy; but the sizes manufactured for Indians were far too small and made them look ridiculous. Later on we got the long Indian tunic made in khaki which is worn outside the trousers, and in this the men looked smart and well turned out.

The subject of great-coats caused much heart-

burning amongst the mule-drivers. According to the Indian scale of winter equipment, a mule-driver is entitled to what is termed a "coat, follower's"—a short, shapeless garment of dirty yellow colour, lined with thin, worn-out blanket. It is absolutely useless for any purpose, possessing neither warmth nor waterproof qualities, and in appearance can only be described as horrible. The men called them *mehtar ka brandi*, or sweepers' overcoats—the sweeper being the lowest type of menial in the Indian domestic system. There were not sufficient of these coats to go round, and the supply was eked out with some second-hand great-coats and "coats, British warm" (or "coat, *breeches* warm", as my servant called them). There seems to be no reason why the mule-driver, who endures probably more exposure than any other rank of the Army, should be expected to be satisfied with such an inferior overcoat. The Army Service Corps driver gets extra pay and the same kit as a cavalry trooper; but the poor Indian transport man gets considerably less pay and as little kit as possible. It is to be hoped that after this war he will receive better treatment.

Three mules of the 9th Mule Corps died in camp of sand-colic, and we had lost two on the voyage, so that we reached the front with only five casualties. This speaks well for the hardiness of the mules, and for the care taken of them by their drivers.

The 9th Mule Corps consists of six troops of Punjabi Mahomedans and two troops of Dogras—the latter a high caste of Hindu. Under their contract with Government, sworn to on enlistment, Indian soldiers must not allow caste prejudices to interfere in any way with the performance of their duties on active service; nevertheless it is very necessary to consider them and to deal with them discreetly, though firmly. My Dogra *kot duffadar*, one Sunder Das, an elderly man, took a little time to settle down to European ways, and at first used to raise objections about trifles; but by degrees he and all the men came to realise that nothing was further from the wish of their sahibs than to order anything prejudicial to the rules of caste. Once convinced of this, they became very reasonable, and made no bones about small concessions when these were really necessary.

In the next camp to us was the horse-transport. This was a rapidly improvised affair, officered by the Indian S. & T. Corps, and manned by newly enlisted recruits of the A.S.C. Nearly all the S. & T. Corps officers who were home on leave when war broke out had been commandeered by the War Office, and used to raise Divisional Trains for service with the two Indian Divisions, there being no such thing in the Indian system as a Divisional Train.

These S. & T. Corps officers had had a very uphill task. Some of them had been sent to Aldershot, where they had been given a few lectures on the organisation of Trains, after which they had been sent off to various depots to raise them; but they were much handicapped by the lack of trained N.C.O.s. Untrained men and horses were handed over to them, and they just had to do the best they could, and a very good best it was, though at first the men gave a lot of trouble, while the horses developed "pink-eye". This disease was very prevalent. Dead horses were a common sight, and the loss to Government must have been a pretty considerable item.

The dovetailing into one another of the British and Indian systems of Supply and Transport was far from simple. The A.S.C. officers on the Staff of the Lines of Communication and the D.A.Q.M.G. of our Division did not understand the Indian system, and we knew little of the British. In India we had always been accustomed to look to the A.D.T. (Assistant Director of Transport) for orders: now we found that there was to be no such person. Colonel Hennessy, who left India as A.D.T. Lahore Division, was in a very ambiguous position, until it was decided that he should be O.C. Divisional Train. The Headquarters Mule Transport were then attached to the Train, and we began to know where we were; for

at first we had been taking orders from three different sources, and, as they were usually contradictory, we lived in daily fear of being placed under arrest.

Whilst the weather remained good it was very pleasant at Circottes, though every one was naturally eager to get to the front. The Battle of the Aisne was then in full swing, and we all wanted to be in time to have a hand in it. We had no idea how critical the state of affairs really was, for the tide of the German advance on Paris had been stemmed, and the enemy had been thrown back from the Marne to the Aisne and was being firmly held there. The advance on Calais had not then begun. We all quite expected to join the British Expeditionary Force in time to march into Belgium: even the most pessimistic expected to be in Brussels by Christmas. But news of the fall of Antwerp and the disaster to the Royal Naval Division gave furiously to think. Orders came for the Lahore Division to proceed at once to the front, and troop-trains began to leave Orleans daily, each regiment taking its transport with it. The Headquarters Mule Transport remained almost to the last.

We had established in a tent a little mess of our own, consisting of Captains Rennison and Stevenson, the two French interpreters and myself. There we got to know our interpreters better, and to

appreciate them thoroughly. Singer ("pronounced Frenchwise, and nothing to do with sewing-machines", as he told us) was a source of never-ending amusement, and became a great character in the Division. Seldom have I met a man of merrier temperament. He is a Parisian—very much of a "man about town"—and never stopped talking from morning till night. His English was really excellent, but when one says so much in a foreign language some of it must be wrong; he talked so fast that it was difficult to understand him, and sometimes we used to beg him to talk French, because then we needn't try. In addition to English, he could speak German fluently and one or two other languages as well. Whilst at Circottes we received a visit from Singer's father, whom we entertained with great pleasure.

Moillis was a man of different type—much quieter, and more what the French call *sérieux*. He came from Marseilles, but had been farming in South America when the war broke out: like a good Frenchman, he did not wait to be sent for, but came home at once to serve his country. He too spoke fluent English, and was a painstaking, eager instructor. Both Singer and Moillis regarded themselves in a measure as our hosts, and no trouble was too great if they could help us in any way. Singer was officially interpreter 2nd Mule Corps and Moillis 9th Mule Corps, and very

lucky we were to have the services of two such capital fellows.

Rahin Baksh, my bearer, made a most successful cook, and we lived very well on the excellent army rations, supplemented by occasional purchases in the town. Sometimes we used to go into Orleans to dinner, generally walking the four miles in, and coming back by motor-lorry or any other conveyance in which a lift could be obtained. One of the *cafés* in Orleans became a sort of club for officers of the Indian Corps. Very many of those good fellows gave their lives for their country within the next few months, and few escaped unharmed. The chances of the British officer of Indian infantry are not great: there are only fourteen to each battalion, and they cannot help being conspicuous, although their uniform is exactly the same as that of the men.

The people of Orleans seemed to take things very quietly. They were interested in the Indians, but there were no demonstrations as there had been in Marseilles and during the journey. As one got nearer the front, the demeanour of the people gradually changed, becoming quieter, more serious and more determined. Orleans had been the scene of fierce fighting in the war of 1870, and there are still people living there who can remember it: they do not want to see the Germans again, and now, thank Heaven, they never will.

We had some distinguished visitors at Circottes, including Prince Arthur of Connaught. One day a major and a subaltern strolled in to our lines and asked if they might look round: the major was Sir F. E. Smith, and the subaltern Neil Primrose. Major Smith told us that he had been appointed to the Staff of General Willcocks, our Corps Commander, and he seemed much interested in the Mule Corps. The articles which afterwards appeared in the English papers by "Eye-Witness with the Indian Troops" were, I believe, written by him.

It was very amusing to read some of the articles in the English papers which appeared during our stay at the Advance Base. One described a gallant charge by Bengal Lancers; another a night raid by Gurkhas, who were said to have hurled their *kukris* through the air with such accuracy as to decapitate many Germans. A wonderful imagination some of these journalists possess, and wonderful, too, are the ways of the Censor, for when these articles appeared there were no Indian troops at the front at all, and it was some time before there were any Gurkhas. There were only two Gurkha battalions in the Lahore Division, both of which had remained in Egypt with their Brigade; and it was not until the Meerut Division reached the front, early in November, that a single Gurkha took part in the fighting. To the English

journalist every Indian soldier is apparently either a Gurkha or a Sikh. The first Indian regiments to come into action were neither: that honour belonged to the 57th Rifles and the 129th Baluchis, both of which are regiments of mixed composition, containing some Sikhs, but no Gurkhas.

Every day one of us would go to the Staff Office to inquire whether there were any orders for us to leave, as battalions were going daily, and the camp was gradually emptying. When I went to make the usual inquiry on October 18, I found the Staff Office closed and the Staff gone! Our poor little unit had apparently been overlooked altogether. I telephoned to the Railway Transport Officer to ask whether any train arrangements had been made for us, and he replied that we were booked to start at five a.m. next morning, and that we should be at the station at one o'clock. It was a pitch-dark night, and our march to the station, about four miles away, was nearly a serious fiasco. It was very difficult to find the way out of camp, and the fact that the mules, not having carried a pack since leaving India, had apparently decided that their days of bondage were over, greatly enhanced our difficulties. If a mule means to get rid of his pack, he usually succeeds. Loads fell off, and, while they were being replaced, the column got spread out and lost touch. One party of some fifty mules missed a turning, and it was

only owing to the remarkable intelligence of the *naick* in charge that they linked up later with the rest of the column, and we reached the station intact. I had many anxious moments, and the prospect of arriving at the station minus about half my command was not an engaging one. However, all's well that ends well. At 1 a.m. in the station-yard Rennison received the report, "All present and correct", and the train steamed out of the station at the appointed hour. Rennison received from the R.T.O. the schedule of timings, with orders not to breathe a word to anyone till the train had started. I saw his gape of astonishment when he looked at the papers, but had to possess my soul in patience for a couple of hours.

"Where on earth do you think we are going?" he said as soon as we were off.

"Hang it all, you don't mean to say we're not for the front?" was my reply.

He handed me the schedule, and, to my amazement, I saw that our destination was Calais! What could this mean? Were we to leave the Division, and work at a base, or was our front falling back? There was nothing for it but to follow the example of the Liberal Government, and "wait and see".

This journey was very different from the one to Orleans. There was much greater pressure of traffic; there were no crowds, no cheering and no

presents. No halts for watering had been arranged; but progress was slow, and we watered whenever we got a chance. We were timed to reach Calais at eight next morning, but it was not until after 5 p.m. that we arrived. The men had been told that the coast of "Vilayet" (England) could be seen from Calais, and they were greatly excited about this. As a rule, only Rajahs and distinguished Indian officers see the wonderful country of the Sahibs, and the humble driver intended to return to India and tell the people of his village that he, too, had had that privilege, but unfortunately it was raining hard; there was a thick mist, and no white cliffs were visible. This was a great disappointment, but was more than atoned for by the receipt of orders to proceed at once to Wizerne. Hurriedly we searched our maps. Yes, Wizerne was close to what we knew to be the front: we were not to be left behind after all.

In high spirits the journey was continued, and at about midnight on the 20th–21st October the train arrived at its destination. It was pitch dark, and there was no sign of life. I got out to ask for orders, and found the R.T.O. He turned out to be Major Turner, R.E., the eldest of the famous cricketing family, of whom A. J. and W. M. are so well known.

"Where the something something have you

sprung from?" he said. "And who are you, anyway?"

I explained.

"Well, I don't know anything about you. Why didn't you say you were coming?" (Nobody likes being turned out at midnight.)

I explained again, and was told to "get a move on and unload, and when you've got things going come and have a drink." There were no lights at the station, and no orders; so we hastily unloaded and led the mules off the platform and into a neighbouring field. A slight drizzle was falling. It was not a nice night.

When all was finished, Rennison—conscientious as always—put his valise in the field alongside the men, and Singer lay down beside him. I returned to my friend Turner and camped with him in the waiting-room; but it was a short night. By six next morning I was off, mounted on Mahdi, to find Divisional Headquarters. I reported our arrival to Colonel Hennessy, who told me we should not move that day. He was just starting out in a car to visit some of the companies of the Train, and invited me to go with him. The sky seemed to be alive with aeroplanes, which were a novelty to us from India, and we could hear the guns quite distinctly, though they were a considerable distance away. After a most interesting round, the Colonel dropped me at my camp, and

I reported to Rennison that we should not move that day. Hardly had I done so, when an orderly appeared with a note, conveying an order to march "at 2 p.m. in the direction of Ebblinghem"; so at 2 p.m. in the direction of Ebblinghem we marched, dovetailing into a procession of the whole of the Lahore Division.

And so good-bye to journeys and bases and advance bases. Here was the real thing at last. Every step would take us nearer to the front and to the enemy. We of Headquarters Mule Transport recognised that our part was but a modest one, but we were prepared to play it to the full, and to do all in our humble power to further the good cause.

CHAPTER V

IN TOUCH WITH THE ENEMY

On board ship, when studying "Field Service Regulations, Part II.", we had read about billeting and billeting parties. Our orders contained a note to the effect that "billeting parties would be sent to Ebblinghem". We were quite ready for this. "Fall in, Stevie, Singer, and Sergeant Staton." This was our billeting party previously detailed: Singer to do the talking, Stevie by his rank and presence to carry weight, and Staton to do the work. Their orders were quite simple. "You will proceed to Ebblinghem, report to the A.Q.M.G., and arrange billets for the Headquarters Mule Transport." Off they rode, and that was the last we saw of them for about three days.

We marched off gaily at 2 p.m. There seemed no reason why the march should not be entirely uneventful. Ebblinghem was twelve miles away, and we got there at 9.30 p.m. Breakdown after breakdown occurred. Our place was behind the Field Ambulances and in front of the Train: thank the Lord it was in front of the Train, much of which did not get in that night. The Field Ambulances

had wagon-transport in addition to mule-carts, and their wagons were fearfully overloaded. Somewhere after dark there was a longer halt than usual, and, going on to see what had happened, I found one of the ambulance wagons broken down. The wagon was being unloaded and all the load was being piled up in the middle of the road. The Transport Officer of the column, who had a truly marvellous command of language, and the D.A.Q.M.G. of the Division, who was nearly as good, were engaged in haranguing the unfortunate medical officers who had lost their heads. That breakdown delayed the whole Division at least two hours. Everyone took the name of everyone else; the medical Major was going to report the Transport Officer for insolence, and the D.A.Q.M.G. was going to report the medical officers for negligence and incompetence; but of course all was forgotten afterwards, and no reports were made.

When the column reached Ebblinghem it was pitch dark, and there was no sign of our billeting party, so we did the best we could, which was to bivouac in a field and wait till morning. The 15th Sikhs were close to us. Rennison and I, with some of their officers, made our way to a small *estaminet*, where we managed to get some coffee and bread and butter before turning in for the night. Having discovered that Divisional

Headquarters were at Lynde, some two miles away, I turned out at break of day and rode there to ask for further orders. Colonel Hennessy said that we should have gone to Lynde, and that he had diverted our billeting party, who had arranged good billets for us there; but, as these orders had never reached us, we obviously could not carry them out. Our orders now were to get to Bailleul as soon as possible. Colonel Hodson,[1] A.Q.M.G., was just starting in a car for Bailleul to do the billeting, and told me to send a billeting party to report to him at the *Mairie* in that town. I rode back to Ebblinghem and despatched Sergeant Levings and Moillis. We moved off shortly afterwards and marched all day.

It was a longish march, but there were no break-downs this time. When about three miles from Bailleul we were met at a corner by a military policeman, who had been placed there to divert certain troops to Meteren, and Mule Transport Headquarters was on his list.

At about 6 p.m. we reached Meteren in heavy rain after a march of sixteen miles, which rather tried the feet of the aged artificers. Here Captain Alexander, 11th Lancers, Staff-Captain Jullundur Brigade, had arranged billets for us. The whole of that brigade was in Meteren, and we were to

[1] Brigadier-General Hodson, C.B., D.S.O., died of wounds received at Suvla Bay when commanding a brigade.

be temporarily attached to them. Our area consisted of three sides of a square, in the centre of which stood the church; the mules were picketed in a field close by. As we were now without an interpreter, I had to arrange the billets. There were women in all the houses, and in a few of them old men, and I hardly liked putting our mule-drivers in their clean, nicely-kept rooms. There were a couple of barns in which accommodation for sixty or seventy could be found, and some remained with the mules in the field, bivouacking under the carts; but the rest had to go into the houses, and the French people welcomed them with open arms. When it transpired that their last visitors had been Germans—and that very recently—this was not surprising. The doors of the houses still bore the chalk billeting-marks of the Germans—"8 Offiziere", "20 Männer", etc. The enemy had occupied the village for a fortnight, and had been driven out with the bayonet by British troops only a few days before. I tried to explain to the villagers that the men were well behaved and would do them no harm, but this was really unnecessary. The relief of entertaining friendly troops banished any fears they might otherwise have had of the unfamiliar Indian soldier.

Our "superior establishment" were very comfortably housed, the villagers being most anxious to give them every attention. Ressaidar Amir

Khan, the adjutant of the 2nd Mule Corps, a magnificent-looking veteran who had served for many years in the 15th Lancers, with the Veterinary Officer and the Quartermaster Duffadar, had a nice little cottage owned by two old ladies. My adjutant, Jemadar Wali Mahomed, and Clerk Mangat Rai had another. The kitchens were handed over to them in which to cook their food. Beds were offered them, but they all preferred to sleep on straw on the floor, for a four-poster bed is strange to the Indian and he would feel uncomfortable sleeping in one. In their own country they have *charpoys*, low string beds.

Rennison and I found quarters in an *estaminet* at the corner of the square. Here, too, the landlady was eager to prepare her best rooms, but we elected to sleep in an empty room overlooking the street, so as to be ready to turn out at any moment. Orders were to sleep in our clothes, and to leave an orderly at Brigade Headquarters to bring a message if there was to be a move. After seeing everybody comfortably settled, and posting sentries, we returned to the *estaminet*, where the landlady had taken upon herself to prepare a most excellent dinner for us. Rahin Baksh reported that she would not hear of his cooking our rations, and had insisted on providing the food and cooking it herself. During dinner, our hostess told stories of the German occupation. It appeared that the

German General and his Staff had occupied the *estaminet*, and had taken away with them all the bed-clothes, the landlord's only horse, and the few bottles of wine which they had not succeeded in drinking during their stay. "But," said the landlady, with a wink, "they did not find my private store—only the public cellar." Thereupon she produced some excellent *vin rouge*, and joined us in drinking the health of the Allies and confusion to all their enemies, especially that particular German General and his Hunnish Staff.

Madame was a good *raconteuse*. The tales she told made one long to get at the Germans and make them pay in full for their abominable cruelty and cowardly behaviour. Their treatment of the women of the village had been too horrible to describe. No wonder they all looked cowed and dejected: for they were living in terror of the return of the Huns, who had apparently made a clean sweep of all portable articles of any value from every house, had eaten and drunk all they could get, and had commandeered all the girls—as Madame put it—"exactly as if they were requisitioning hay." The only thing to be said for them was that Meteren was not one of the villages where inoffensive non-combatants had been shot. That much the inhabitants had to be thankful for; but, in all conscience, it was bad enough without. Our hostess informed us that when the

British soldiers entered the village and ousted the enemy, the women fell on their necks and hugged them. She herself—careless of the remonstrances of monsieur, who was "oh, so jealous!"—had embraced a burly Highlander for fully five minutes.

During the evening Mollis turned up with Sergeant Levings. After a long wait at Bailleul, they had discovered our whereabouts and ridden back.

We turned in about eleven, and it had just struck three when we were awakened by a stone hitting our window. The orderly from Brigade Headquarters stood at the door with orders for us to be ready to march in two hours. Rennison hastened to the mule-lines, and I to the billets to turn out the men. In almost every house the women, fully dressed, were sitting in the kitchen drinking coffee, far too frightened of the return of the Boches to go to bed. I tried to reassure them by saying that Meteren would never see the Germans again. Our men were loud in their praises of the kindness and hospitality of their hostesses: many had been given coffee, which they were learning to like.

By 5 a.m. we had fallen in, ready to join the column. The destination of the brigade was Estaires, some seven miles south of Meteren, and our road lay through country which had been the

scene of heavy fighting during the last few days. Vieux Berquin and Neuf Berquin, through which we passed, had suffered greatly from shell-fire, both from enemy guns and our own: in both villages the church was badly damaged. This had been the case at Meteren also, and was due to the German trick of posting machine-gun sections in all the church towers. There had been a direct hit on the clock in the church tower at Vieux Berquin, completely shattering its face. Hundreds of refugees were hurrying away from the scenes of slaughter, carrying such belongings as they could manage, some in carts with old worn-out horses, or with donkeys. All looked terribly sad and dejected. It was harrowing to see these long processions of destitute people.

Early in the march our original billeting party appeared. They had had no kit or rations, but had not fared badly, thanks to Singer who was unequalled as a forager: he could always produce a plate of soup or roast chicken or some such luxury apparently from nowhere, and did so on this march. About midday we were sitting by the roadside during a halt, contemplating a meal of bully beef and biscuits, when Singer appeared and announced, "Lunch is ready. Will you have it here, or in that cottage?" We voted for the roadside, in case the column should move off. Immediately four French maidens appeared, bear-

ing plates of steaming soup, followed by other luxuries. It was quite clear that in Singer we had discovered a treasure. Whilst lunching, we had our first sight of the enemy in the shape of a Taube which flew over the column and hovered about for some time.

Three battalions of the Ferozepore Brigade—the Connaught Rangers, 57th Rifles and 129th Baluchis—were sent in motor-buses to Kemmel, in Belgium, to reinforce General Allenby's Division which was hard pressed. These battalions went straight into action somewhere near Messines. It was some time before they rejoined the Division, and, when they did, many a good man was left behind, all three regiments having suffered heavily. Major Barwell, Captain Gordon and Lieutenant Clarke of the 57th were killed, and Captain Vincent of the 129th; Captain Forbes of the 57th and Captain Maclean of the 129th were wounded. The latter, unable to move, was left behind in a village when our troops retired, and Major Áttel, I.M.S., the doctor of the regiment, stayed with him; both were taken prisoners by the Germans, but shortly afterwards our troops retook the village, and they were released. Many stories were told of the gallantry displayed by Captain Singh, the Indian doctor of the 57th, who was given one of the first Military Crosses but did not live to wear it, being killed in action shortly afterwards.

Singh was educated in England, and was as white a man as ever lived. The Brigade was thanked in orders by General Allenby for its timely assistance and gallant behaviour. Thus the first Indian troops to fight in France set a splendid example, which was followed by those who came later.

Estaires was within a mile or two of the fighting-line. The guns boomed loudly; machine-gun and rifle fire were plainly audible, and a heavy battery was in action in the field next to our mule-lines. As before, an orderly had been posted at headquarters to bring word if we were to move. In the middle of the night the firing became very intense, and the rumble of heavy traffic came from the road outside our villa. Rennison woke up, and wondered whether the Division was moving: perhaps we had been forgotten again and should find ourselves in the morning in the hands of the Boche! I went to headquarters to make sure, and found the Staff hard at work. The Jullundur Brigade had taken up a position covering Estaires, and our batteries had gone into action. At ten next morning Divisional Headquarters would march to Locon.

On October 24 and 25 there was severe fighting. Sir John French's despatch has disclosed the fact that on those days he had grave cause for anxiety, and that the arrival of the Lahore Division was

most opportune. On the way to Locon we passed through Vieille Chapelle, where rifle and machine-gun fire sounded as if it were within a few hundred yards of us. General Watkis and his Staff were standing by the bridge over the canal, studying maps and making dispositions, and General Watkis beckoned me to him and asked whether I had seen General Carnegy, commanding the Jullundur Brigade. I said that I had not; whereupon I was told to provide two mounted orderlies to go and search for him. We were told to park in a field hard by and be ready to move at a moment's notice. "You can't go on yet," said the General, "or you might get scuppered." There was a feeling of suppressed excitement in the air. For many of us it was the first experience of war, and we were all on edge to do something. Spare men and mules were told off ready to go up at once with ammunition if required; but, to our disappointment, none was wanted. The great drawback about that part of the country is that it is so absolutely flat that one can see nothing. One might be on the very fringe of a battle and yet be unable to see what was happening.

We were ordered to march along the bank of the Lys Canal to Mauprès, near Locon. All the time heavy firing continued: none came our way, however, and we felt rather out of it. That feeling is not a pleasant one, and I always had it in

France. In trench-warfare this is inevitable for a transport unit. In open fighting, ammunition mules go into action with the troops, but when attacks are made from trenches this is, of course, impossible.

Our stay at Mauprès was brief. The camp allotted to us by the A.Q.M.G. was situated on the east side of the canal, and our billets were in some empty houses on the canal bank, the only line of retreat being across a single drawbridge. Colonel Cobbe, G.S.O. (now Lieut.-General), visited us the next day, and told us to get across to the west of the canal, and to take care to conceal our carts with branches of trees, leaves, etc., as aeroplane observers might mistake them for guns. Several Taubes came over during our brief stay, and we witnessed for the first time contests in the air between our own and enemy machines. It is a curious point that, although during my six months on the Western Front I watched numbers of air fights, I never saw one machine on either side brought down. One Boche aeroplane descended behind our lines from engine-trouble, but that was all.

Comic relief was provided at Mauprès by Sergeant Grainge, our Quartermaster-Sergeant, who walked out of his cottage after dinner one night and stepped straight into the canal, disappearing from view. No harm was done beyond

the soaking of his uniform, but he had to put up with a good deal of chaff from the members of his mess.

On October 28 we marched back to Estaires and reoccupied our old billets, and there we remained for several weeks. That night, being assured that there would be no move and that the Jullundur Brigade entrenched in front of us had the enemy well in hand, we took off our clothes for the first time since leaving Orleans ten days before, and turned into bed. Some of the infantry did not take theirs off for months. In this war there can be no comparison between the infantry and any other arm of the service. I take off my hat to every officer and man of them. Theirs is the greatest danger and the greatest discomfort; the greatest responsibility and the greatest hardship always. And never have they been found wanting. More power to the infantry, whether English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, Colonial or Indian. It is a pleasure to do anything at all to help them, and a privilege to serve in the same force.

CHAPTER VI

THE INDIAN CORPS MAKES HISTORY

From October 26 onwards, trench-warfare set in for the Lahore Division. The Jullundur Brigade held a position from Picantin to Fauquissart, and on their right were the 34th Pioneers, 9th Bhopals and the two companies of Sappers. For a week or two no supports or reserves were available: these units had to hold the line unassisted. They had a very hard time, for fire was incessant. The three batteries of the Lahore Division were in action also, and some French batteries supported the line.

On the 28th an attack was made by our troops on the village of Neuve Chapelle. This involved severe fighting, in which a wing of the 47th Sikhs, the 9th Bhopals, and the 20th and 21st Companies Sappers and Miners played a conspicuous part, suffering heavy casualties. The village was taken, but, in face of the murderous machine-gun fire encountered in the streets, had to be evacuated. In the Sapper Companies, every one of the eight officers was a casualty, and nearly fifty per cent. of the Indian rank and file; but they covered them-

selves with glory. An officer who was present informed Colonel Coffin, the C.R.E., that "nothing could have exceeded the gallantry of the R.E. officers." Captain Richardson, leading his men, was killed, and Lieutenant Almond with him. Captain Paris, at the head of the 21st Company, was hit and believed killed, but he was afterwards found to have been taken prisoner. Lieutenants Nosworthy and Rait Kerr, both severely wounded, were carried back by their men. Both gained the Military Cross. Nosworthy told me, when he returned to the front some months later—minus a thumb, but otherwise recovered from his many wounds—that he had never enjoyed a day so much, and that he had run his sword clean through a fat German officer! The 47th lost a fine officer killed in Captain McCleverty; and Major "Buster" Browne, one of the most popular officers in the Indian Army, was very severely wounded. It is sad to think that so fine a sportsman is a permanent invalid. The 9th Bhopals, too, had heavy losses.

These first few days were spent by us of the Transport in trying to locate the various parties of our Corps, which had been allotted to units. Gradually we found out where they all were and used to pay daily visits to them. For the most part, units kept their first line transport a mile or so behind their trenches—some in farms and some in the open. They had to do a good deal of

shell-dodging, for the Boches shelled all buildings in the vicinity of the firing-line. At night the rations were delivered by the Train to regimental parties, who transferred them to the mule-carts or pack-mules, which took them to the regimental headquarters, if possible, or to the beginning of the communication trenches. Every now and then casualties to the drivers occurred, sometimes when taking up the rations at night from stray rifle-bullets, and sometimes from shell-fire during the day. Units used their mule-transport to replenish their ammunition and for carrying stores: this relieved the men of considerable labour. In the British Divisions, regimental parties, on taking over from the Train, had to man-handle everything to the trenches.

Naick Akbar Khan, in charge of the transport with the 47th Sikhs, was the first N.C.O. of the 9th Mule Corps to be hit. He stopped three shrapnel bullets with his thigh and was removed to Brighton, whence he wrote in a lordly tone, describing the extreme luxury with which he was surrounded and conveying his approval of "Vilayet" as a country. He made no mention of his wounds, though they were severe. In his place Lance-Naick Mangoo was promoted to be temporary Naick—a happy selection, for he proved himself courageous and efficient, and did excellent work both in France and Gallipoli.

Only a few days after Mangoo took over his new command, shells began to fall thick and fast close to the shed in which his mules were picketed. Hastily he summoned his men, and, mindful of Standing Orders, unshackled the mules and led them to a flank. Scarcely were they out of the shed when a "Black Maria" hurtled through the roof and exploded exactly where the mules had been. Not a man or mule was touched. Mangoo was warmly commended for his prompt action and presence of mind.

There were certain places behind the firing-line which the enemy seemed to regard as particularly attractive targets. One of these was Laventie Church; in fact, the whole of the village was an unhealthy spot. For a radius of one hundred yards round the church there was scarcely a house which had not been practically levelled to the ground; the main street was pitted with "crump" holes, and the church itself was a ruin. We used to watch the Boche gunners endeavouring to score a bull's eye on its spire, in which they eventually succeeded. I remember one day, when the bombardment was particularly heavy, Padre Knott rode up on his fat pony, wearing a worried look.

"What am I to do?" he said. "General Carnegy has ordered me to bury an officer in Laventie churchyard at three o'clock, and it's just three now."

I expressed the opinion that this was an occasion when an officer might disobey an order on his own responsibility, and defer the allotted task to a more favourable season. The padre, new to military discipline, thought that orders must be carried out at all costs. He was unaware of a certain paragraph in F. S. Regulations, of a "heads I win, tails you lose" nature, which states roughly that, if you carry out an order which circumstances have rendered foolish, you do so at your peril, but that if you don't carry it out, you are liable to be shot at dawn. In this case, knowing the General, there was no cause for alarm.

It was in Laventie that one of our field batteries, coming into action for the first time, was picked up at once by a German battery and severely dealt with. Before proper cover could be provided, two of the guns had been hit, and several of the personnel killed and wounded. But that Artillery Brigade was fairly fortunate afterwards, at any rate during the winter. So well did they conceal their guns, that the enemy seldom found their positions, and they were to be seen day after day in the same place.

Some inhabitants continued to live in the villages close behind the firing-line, in spite of the fact that they were shelled every day. Picantin was having its morning "strafe" when I passed through on my way back from my rounds one day.

Two aged dames, emerging from a cottage, asked whether it was safe for them to remain in the village: they were reluctant to leave, for it was their home and held all their belongings. I recommended a speedy retreat, at any rate to Estaires. On account of the prevalence of spying, and the casualties caused by snipers in these villages behind the line, it was afterwards decided to clear out all the inhabitants—undoubtedly a wise move—for there was nothing to prevent the Huns from obtaining information in this way. Spies were occasionally caught and brought into Estaires; then, after an interview with Captain Dyce, the A.P.M., they would disappear. Rumour had it that our French neighbours carried out the executions.

On the return of the Ferozepore Brigade, we learnt something of the fighting round Messines: it had evidently been touch and go. The men brought back many trophies in the shape of helmets, great-coats, rifles, etc., and enjoyed recounting how they had secured them. One story told by a *havildar* serves to prove that such a thing as a decent German does exist. The *havildar* and a few of his men lost touch with their company, and were taken prisoners. A German officer who had served in China in the Boxer rising of 1900, and had there learned to admire Indian troops, spoke to them in Hindustani. He

told these men that the Kaiser had directed that any Indians taken prisoner were to have their throats cut, but that he did not intend to carry out this inhuman order. He gave them food, and, when night fell, having relieved them of their rifles and bayonets, told them how to rejoin their unit.

Two men of the 2nd Mule Corps came back full of a thrilling experience they had had, which was corroborated by the Transport Officer of the regiment to which they were attached. Their mules, carrying ammunition, were tethered behind a haystack, and were left behind in the withdrawal of a portion of our line: the drivers were seized and taken into a Hun trench. After a time, their captors being fully occupied with their own affairs, the two Indians managed to slip away. They did not make straight for our lines. Not a bit of it. They sought and found the haystack, recovered their mules, reloaded them with the ammunition-boxes, and strolled in.

The 2nd and 9th Mule Corps were now all together again (excepting those left in Egypt). To ensure proper control, Sergeant Levings was posted to the Jullundur Brigade, Sergeant Staton to the Ferozepore Brigade, and Conductor Green to the Divisional troops. Each was given a proportion of men and animals, artificers and repairing material: this simplified matters considerably, and the two Brigades became self-contained.

I continued my usual rounds, seeing some portion each day, while Rennison was responsible at headquarters and visited the ammunition columns. The adjutants looked after the lines and billets, and accompanied us on our rounds. Very often these were entirely uneventful, but every now and then we would turn up somewhere in time for a shell-storm. One such case occurred when I was visiting the Jullundur Brigade with Sergeant Levings. We had seen all the mules, and were turning back, when we met Lieutenant Betham, of the 15th Sikhs, labouring under a heavy burden of rifles which he was taking up to his quarterguard. This not being "a one-man job", as G. P. Huntley is fond of saying, we lent a hand. On arrival at the quarterguard which was close behind the trenches at Fauquissart, Lieutenant Brunskill, of the 47th Sikhs, asked me to lunch; and, whilst partaking of an excellent stew cooked by him, a shell-storm began. The cottage next to that in which Ralston the adjutant, Brunskill and I were having our meal, received a shell through the roof. There was a good deal of noise, but neither Ralston nor Brunskill took the slightest notice. When I rejoined Sergeant Levings after lunch, he pointed out about a dozen shell-holes along the hundred yards of road between the quarterguard and the cottage, which had not been there when we passed along. To me this

was a bit of an adventure; but to the infantry officers it was apparently an every-day occurrence unworthy of attention.

Brunskill made a reconnaissance one night, penetrating with one man into the enemy trenches, and obtaining information of much value to his Brigadier: for this he received the Military Cross. Shortly afterwards he was badly wounded, and lost his left eye; but he was soon back at the front, only to receive another severe wound in the leg. Last time I met him, in London, he was fuming because the Medical Board would not pass him fit to go out again.

It was arranged that the chargers of all officers who became casualties should be taken over by Headquarters Transport, and kept until required for re-issue to reinforcement officers. This plan gave us a lot of spare horses, and provided employment for our spare men who had previously had little to do.

A French interpreter arrived in camp one morning riding a little bay horse, the property of one of the Sapper officers. He had orders to change it, as it was not up to its owner's weight. There were a good many animals in the lines, and Rennison told him to take his choice. Now, this interpreter had a very good opinion of himself, and especially did he fancy himself as a judge of horseflesh. He said he would like to see the animals

put through their paces. This was done, and he picked out three or four, and, mounting, tried them himself; but he was not satisfied with any of them. He said, "I don't think there is anything here at present which will suit the Major. I will come in again in a few days' time, and see if you've got some more." At his next visit a similar performance was gone through. All the animals came in for criticism. One had "very little bone", another "not much of a shoulder", and so on. Presently his eye fell on a little horse at the end of the line. "Ah," he said, "that looks more like what I'm looking for." Rennison, with a twinkle in his eye, ordered the *sais* to put on the saddle; and our friend trotted complacently away on the self-same animal that he had himself brought in to change. We never heard what the Major said. The interpreter did not seem inclined to tell us when we inquired.

It was during the early days of November that the first Battle of Ypres took place. The Kaiser is said to have decreed the capture of the town on the 1st. Ypres is some fourteen miles north of the position then held by the Lahore Division, and the thunder of the guns day and night was clear evidence of the violence of the fighting. The Germans constantly attacked in our sector at this time, but the Division held its ground tenaciously, though the daily toll of casualties was mounting up.

Large reinforcements passed through Estaires *en route* to Ypres, where the 7th Division—or what was left of it—was bearing the brunt of the attack. The whole of the 1st French Cavalry Division passed our villa one morning, moving north, and a brave show they made in their handsome uniforms—Chasseurs, Dragoons, Hussars—fine men, and mounted on fine horses. At that time the French were still fighting in their peace uniforms, and very conspicuous they were, especially the red pantaloons of the infantry. We dressed up Singer in English khaki, but he retained his French cap. Moillis adopted the *loongi*, or Indian headdress, in which he rather fancied himself.

The story of the Battle of Ypres and the failure of the great dash for Calais can be read in official despatches. The Lahore Divison, though not actually in the battle, played an important rôle, for they held a vital part of the line through which the enemy might otherwise have broken.

It was just at this time that the Meerut Division reached the front, to be greeted by terrific shelling and fierce infantry attacks. The 2nd and 8th Gurkhas, in particular, caught it hot and strong the moment they arrived; the 1st Seaforths, too, and many other units. Here fell one of my oldest and best friends, Captain Beauchamp Duff, of the 1st Gurkhas, who was attached to the 2nd. He

was killed within an hour of reaching the trenches, when taking a company of Gurkhas to reinforce the Seaforths. We had been contemporaries at Clifton and Sandhurst. Captain Wicks, of the Seaforths, another old Cliftonian, who was with him when he died, testified to the gallantry with which he handled his men. Duff had seen a lot of active service, and was a coming man.

On November 15 occurred a memorable event. Field-Marshal Lord Roberts arrived at the front to pay a visit to the Indian troops. A parade was held in the *Grande Place* of Estaires, at which one officer and three men of every unit in the Division were present. In addition, every man who was able to get there fought for a place in the hope of catching a glimpse of the great soldier, and helping to cheer him. He arrived in a motor-car with his daughter, one Staff Officer, and our Corps Commander, General Willcocks, and was received by General Watkis and the Staff of the Division. It was a cold day, and, seeing that the troops were parading without great-coats, Lord Roberts removed his own despite the protests of those with him. He walked round the lines and spoke to many of the men, amongst them my old *kot duffadar*, Sunder Das, who was filled with pride at receiving a word from his former Commander-in-Chief. As every one knows, the name of "Bobs Bahadur" is a household word in India.

Every recruit has heard of his fame. He asked Sunder Das his age, and seemed pleased with the reply, "Fifty-three, but as hale and hearty as many a boy of twenty." Lord Roberts spoke Hindustani with the utmost fluency, though it must have been nearly twenty years since he left India. After the men had been inspected, all the officers were introduced, and for each the Field-Marshal had a word. He asked me to what unit I belonged, and on my replying, "The 9th Mule Corps", he said there had been no such Corps in his day, and asked General Watkis several questions as to our work. The General was good enough to say that the Corps was daily performing valuable services. Lord Roberts, with a word of commendation, passed along the line. As he stepped into the car, Sir James Wilcocks called for "Three cheers for Field-Marshal Lord Roberts." I feel sure that the volume and enthusiasm of those cheers must have given him real pleasure; for every man cheered as if he meant it, and—what is more—every man did mean it. Lord Roberts stood at the salute till the cheers died away; then stepped into his car and drove off.

The next day he died of pneumonia at General Headquarters. One could scarcely believe it: he had looked so fit and well, and walked and spoken almost like a young man. The keenest sorrow was felt by all ranks. It was almost a personal

bereavement; but constantly one heard the remark, "What a splendid death! it was just what he would have wished." From my earliest boyhood Lord Roberts has been my chief hero. It is to me a matter of the greatest pride that, at that last parade, I should have had the honour of being presented and of shaking his hand.

CHAPTER VII

ATTACHED TO THE ARMY SERVICE CORPS

For the greater part of the month of November I was attached to Company No. 3 of the Divisional Train, which served the Jullundur Brigade, and performed the duties of Transport Officer of the Company in addition to my own. The strength of the Company was 88 men and 62 horses. It already had four officers, whereas my own command, in which I was unassisted by any British officer, contained 500 men and 768 mules: this shows the extraordinary difference between the organisation of the Army Service Corps and the Indian Supply and Transport Corps. Orders were that the Train must be kept up to full strength; so when one officer became a casualty I was sent to replace him, pending the arrival of someone from home.

A few words describing the working arrangements of the A.S.C. at the front may help to make this chapter clearer.

From the base, supplies are sent to railhead, which is established at the most suitable railway-station near to the front. Thence they are taken

by the Supply Column—consisting of motor-lorries escorted by motor-bicycles—to the refilling point. The refilling point is changed from time to time according to the position of the troops. It is usually out of shell range, clear of any main road, and may be anything from two to five miles behind the firing-line. At the refilling point, which is for the whole Division, the Supply Officer of each Brigade and of Divisional Troops takes up his position; and supplies of all sorts—rations, ordnance, engineering stores and presents—are dumped there by the Supply Column. The lorries then move away and horse-transport takes their place. Each unit has its allotment of supply wagons, which are kept in the A.S.C. Company lines, and are taken by the A.S.C. Transport Officer to the refilling point. There they are loaded by fatigue parties under the orders of the Supply Officer. Then, if the road is considered safe, the wagons move off in convoys to the regimental dumping-ground. When the regiments are in the trenches, these are well behind the line; when in billets, the wagons go to regimental head-quarters. If the roads to the front can be seen by the enemy—as is often the case—the wagons return to their lines and are taken up after dark.

The selection of a good refilling point is one of the most important duties of the O.C. Train. It is not easy to avoid interfering with traffic, and the

side roads in France are narrow and very bad. Taubes are rather fond of paying unwelcome attentions; but in the Lahore Division we were fortunate in that respect; though many refilling points were "strafed" from the air, ours escaped during my sojourn with the A.S.C.

It is a mistake to suppose—as so many people do—that the lot of the A.S.C. at the front is always safe and comfortable. It is neither, though of course infinitely more so than that of dwellers in trenches. There is always a tendency to imagine that the life of those whose work lies further behind than one's own is a bed of roses. But every job has its unpleasant side.

The change to the A.S.C. did not, after all, make a great deal of difference to me because Captain Bond who commanded the Company, and whom I had known for years, was most reasonable and allowed me, as far as possible, to continue my own work. It did, however, involve my leaving our little mess and going to live with the Company, which was billeted at Les Manoirs, some little distance from Estaires. The change of billets was distinctly for the worse. The villa had been so very comfortable, and Madame was an excellent cook. At Les Manoirs I found the four officers of the Company and the interpreter all sleeping on the floor in one room, in which they also had their meals. The householders were unfriendly

and had refused to put themselves out, and Bond, always kind-hearted, had not insisted on better quarters. The first night I occupied the space under the table; but the next day I found an empty room in a neighbouring cottage, where a blind old man made me welcome. Even the floor of a room shared with five other people is a great improvement on a wet and muddy trench; but there is nothing to be gained by being more uncomfortable than one need be: one never knows when it may be necessary to sleep in a ditch.

My duties with the Company consisted in taking the supply wagons to the refilling point in the morning, and up to the point behind the trenches where supplies were transferred to mule-carts at night. These duties were taken turn and turn about by Bond, Woodhouse (the other Transport Officer) and myself. The other officers of the Company were Captain Langrishe, Requisitioning Officer, and Lieutenant Carrigan, Supply Officer. The latter had the hardest and most responsible job.

The heavy draught horses were much less attractive than my own little mules, and gave far more trouble. True, they did not kick, but they jibbed as no mule ever jibbed, and some could neither be persuaded nor compelled to work. I used sometimes to wish for a few of the spiked iron rods which the *mahout* in India digs into his elephant's head to urge it to greater efforts!

Some of the men of the Company were queer specimens. Murphy, the Sergeant-Major, had risen to his exalted position because it was found that he was able to handle the men. In old days I doubt whether he would ever have reached corporal's rank; but he did very well. Then there was a sergeant who must be nameless because he has committed a military crime! An old regular gunner, he had been invalided out of the service as permanently unfit. On the outbreak of war he tried to join, but was rejected by Board after Board after learning his medical history, so he changed his name and tried the A.S.C., omitting to mention that he had served before. This time he sailed through the Board with ease, and, after all, as he confided to me, "I may have done wrong, sir, in a manner of speaking, but no one's a penny the worse off; and as you can see for yourself, sir, I'm as fit as any man in the Company." And he was, too, and a rattling good N.C.O. into the bargain.

Another character was "Kitch", otherwise Private Jennings. He owed his nickname to a distinct resemblance to the famous Field-Marshal, and on this account he seemed to receive deference from the Company. Jennings was a fine chap, big and handsome. He had been a carter in peace-time, and was very fond of his horses. When a wagon got stuck in the mud, it was always

"Kitch" who was summoned to bring his pair and pull it out.

Then there was Coombs, Woodhouse's servant —a "nut," who was always turned out to perfection, with his hair brushed as if for his wedding. He was always happy and smiling, and thought a soldier's life (when you happen to have the good fortune to be an officer's servant) a most enviable one. I think he had been connected with a racing-stable in civil life: he well might have been, for he was a nice weight for a jockey. Coombs had a tip for every race that was coming on: Bond and Woodhouse lost quite a lot of money following them. He also took the keenest interest in League football and used to discuss it at length with his great pal, Bond's servant. The two of them had a passion for "Woodbines": the market rate of exchange in the Company was five "Abdullas" for one "Woodbine". There's no accounting for tastes.

During November the weather was very bad, and night work distinctly unpleasant. It usually poured with rain, and it was always very dark, no lights being allowed because the enemy were quite fond enough of shelling the roads without being given a light to aim at. The first time I went, a Black Maria pitched in front of the convoy as it reached its destination. The sudden terrific explosion in the inky darkness was somewhat alarming;

but no one was hurt. Woodhouse always seemed to get the worst of the luck. Whenever it was his turn to go, it poured, and the convoy usually came under fire. My convoys very seldom did so.

The refilling point was rather amusing, for there one met one's friends and exchanged lies. There was always the excitement, too, of seeing what had turned up from home in the shape of presents: the number and variety of these were quite extraordinary. Every day large bundles of all sorts of comforts were distributed. If a man had a fancy for wearing four Balaclava helmets, a dozen scarves, and two or three cardigan waistcoats, and for smoking cigarettes at the rate of a hundred a day, he could do so. Parcels from quantities of different funds reached us, in addition to our own private parcels.

A letter of thanks to be sent to the donors of presents to the men of the Mule Corps, composed by Ressaidar Ghulam Mahomed and translated by Mangat Rai, is worthy of reproduction—

"We have great pleasure in expressing our gratitude to the gentry at home who have been taking much interest in sending presents with kind heartiness for the brave veterans at the front who are sacrificing their lives for their benevolent Emperor or are ready to do so. We accept all such presents very gladly, which we will not forget during the rest of our life. We pray that God

bless and reward those gentlemen who have been showing such favour to us. With our solemn prayer that God may always keep Emperor safe from all harms and bestow him a victory over his enemies."

Some of the gifts puzzled the Indians, notably the body-belts which were sent in large numbers. They were far too big to fit the slim and graceful waist of the native of India. The drivers eyed them curiously, wondering what they were for. Some wrapped them round their heads, converting them into a sort of puggaree; others, despairing of discovering their proper use, hung them round the necks of their mules.

People at home were far too good to us. We missed these delicate attentions when we got to Gallipoli: there the difficulties of transport resulted in but few comforts reaching the troops.

A box of Testaments arrived from a lady in England for distribution to British Tommies, and one of them wrote in reply—

"I have read St. John xiv., and in the 14th verse it says, 'If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.' If you would send me a pipe, I should be pleased."

Another letter of thanks which created some amusement at home contained the following remark—

"Truly I may say that in the day of battle He covered my head as with a shield. I was hit in the neck."

At the refilling point there was issued a "ration" of newspapers. One read in the *Times* or *Daily Mail* what had been done the day before. "A quiet day", or "There is nothing to report", figured in the news on occasions when, in smaller wars, large headlines would have chronicled the doings of the Army.

Soon after I joined the Train, the Brigade moved into a different set of trenches, and headquarters were transferred to Lacouture, east of the Lys Canal. Our Company, on an abominable day of sleet, rain and wind, marched to the same village. It was here that the G.O.C. of the Third Division, General Hubert Hamilton, was killed early in the war: his grave is in the churchyard.

We were only a couple of days in Lacouture, as Colonel Cobbe considered the village unsafe for transport; so off we went to Vieille Chapelle, a little further back, where we had good accommodation in a brewery for officers and men, and adequate stabling for the horses. A hard frost set in, which added much to the difficulties under which the horse-transport laboured, for no frost-shoes could be obtained and the great clumsy horses slithered about, fell down, and stayed there.

The journey from the refilling point took hours, so the refilling point was transferred to Vieille Chapelle itself.

A night or two after settling down in the brewery, when I was comfortably asleep, Carrigan walked into my room and woke me up, saying, "You'd better get up; they are shelling the bally house." I went to Bond's room. A council of war was assembled, discussing whether we should move or sit tight and chance it. The shells were coming over about every two minutes and bursting fairly close. It was bitterly cold, and the roads were in such a slippery state that we could never have got the horses along. Bond decided the matter by saying, "Well, the rest of you can do what you like. I'm going back to bed." A few of the shells found the brewery garden, but none hit the house.

At Vieille Chapelle we were well in advance of the positions of many of our field-guns: some of the "heavies" were a mile or more behind. It seemed very strange at first to be living in a house, and sleeping in a bed in pyjamas, in what would formerly have been considered the middle of a battle. So great a sense of security is given by the trench-system, held by troops in whom one has absolute confidence, that ordinary everyday life continues only a mile or two behind the line.

In the town of Béthune, which was often shelled,

all the shops were open and the inhabitants went about their business as though nothing exceptional was happening. There was a *pâtisserie*, much frequented by French and British officers, where tea, coffee, chocolate and delicious cakes were sold. There were three pretty waitresses, who were full of fun and very popular. Singer was a particular favourite of theirs. One day the back part of the shop was hit by a shell, but trade continued as usual. The proprietress must have done good business, which she certainly deserved, for the place was a haven to men from the trenches. Good luck to the *pâtisserie* in Béthune! Two barbers' shops, too, did a roaring trade. You could get your hair cut and a shampoo as well as anywhere in London. Béthune was a typical French provincial town, and had the good fortune to be just the right side of the trenches.

Our next billet after Vieille Chapelle was a horribly dirty farm at Paradis. All farms in Northern France are built round a courtyard: in the middle is a refuse-heap on to which is thrown all the garbage and filth. It seems an unhealthy practice, and the odours which pervaded most of the farms were abominable.

From Paradis, the Jullundur Brigade A.S.C. Company moved to Vendin, and established headquarters in a farm owned by an old man who told interesting stories of the Franco-Prussian War, in

which he had fought. His only son was a prisoner in Germany, taken in the great retreat. Vendin is close to Béthune, within easy walking distance, so this was a popular billet.

One morning, on arriving at the refilling point with my convoy, I was met by Colonel Thomason, who was then commanding the Train, with orders "to run away and lose myself." Further explanation revealed the fact that the King was arriving shortly, and would motor down the road on which our wagons were collected. The men were much excited and anxious to see His Majesty. Unluckily that was impossible, for "losing ourselves" involved going too far away,—and, besides, the men could not leave their horses, so we had to be content with reading accounts in the home papers of the King's visit, and hearing of it from others more fortunate than ourselves. We often used to see the Prince of Wales driving his own car.

Moillis, nick-named "the lion-tamer" because of his saucy boots, got ten days' leave and went off in the highest spirits to Paris. He wore his *loongi*, and on his return asked us to believe that he had been mistaken for an Indian, and had frequently been asked whether he was a Gurkha or a Sikh. He insisted that he had kept up the illusion by pretending that he could not speak French. The humour of this will scarcely appeal to any one

who has not seen Moillis: a more typical Frenchman never breathed. He brought back with him many luxuries, of which a case of whisky and a few copies of *La Vie Parisienne* were the most popular.

The Lahore Division was now taking turn and turn about in the trenches with the Meerut Division, and had moved to what was known as the Festubert line. These trenches were much disliked, as they were the worst in that part.

On the night of November 24 there was severe fighting again, in which both Divisions took part. The 34th Pioneers had a very bad time. Major Kelly, commanding, a keen and able soldier, was killed; also Captain Mackain and Captain Masters, the adjutant. The latter was found with his sword in one hand and revolver in the other, and a dead German stretched across his feet: so he died fighting, like the fine fellow we knew him to be. Captain Wilson was missing: survivors said he was killed, but a letter was received from him two months later saying that he had been severely wounded in the arm and taken prisoner. Only a few days before I had been drinking coffee with him just behind his trench, and he had showed me one bullet-hole through his ammunition-pouch and another through his puttee. The 34th had now only Lieutenants Paterson and Hickman left of their original complement of officers, and 216 men.

Many other regiments were in much the same state, but it was not for another month that the Division got a real rest behind the line. Whilst in billets, they were always liable to be called up to reinforce the Meerut Division, and *vice versâ.*

Leave opened at the beginning of December—a pleasing surprise, for, somehow, the idea of leave while on active service had never occurred to one. Rennison got away for ten days, and I was allowed to return to Mule Transport Headquarters, to take over command in his absence. I was sorry to leave Bond and Woodhouse and their cheery mess—sorry, too, to leave the British Tommy. It had been like old times commanding Tommies again. But I was glad to get back to my legitimate work and to rejoin my own men.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SIRHJND BRIGADE REJOINS THE DIVISION

I REJOINED Headquarters Mule Transport at an abominable farm at La Tombe Willot, and at once began to search for better quarters. I found a nice, clean farmhouse near the mule-lines, and was just settling down when in walked a very young officer in Indian uniform, who introduced himself as Lieutenant Minchin of the 125th (Napier's) Rifles, saying that he had been sent on ahead to arrange billets for his regiment. So here was the Sirhind Brigade at last. It will be remembered that it had remained in Egypt to guard the Canal. It comprised the 1st Battalion Highland Light Infantry, the 1st and 4th Gurkha Rifles and the 125th (Napier's) Rifles.

Minchin showed me his orders, which allotted to the Brigade an area including the billets which Headquarters Transport now occupied, as well as the farm I had just found, so we packed up and moved to Long Cornet, leaving the coast clear for the Sirhind Brigade.

Long Cornet is a tiny village, so small that it had apparently been overlooked as a billeting area;

but there was just room for us. At the house which Moillis had selected for headquarters was a very truculent lady. On being asked for a room for two officers, she announced that her house was scarcely big enough for her own family, and that she was not going to find accommodation for anyone. I insisted on inspecting the house, and, having done so, chalked upon the door of the selected room the mystic words "20 Indians." This had the desired effect. Madame had forgotten that she had such a room; of course it was exactly the thing for the two officers, and she placed it gladly at our disposal.

The arrival of the Sirhind Brigade was very welcome. I looked forward to seeing the balance of the 9th Mule Corps, and having the unit complete once more. It was a grievous disappointment to find that men and mules had been taken away from the Brigade at Marseilles, and replaced by men and animals belonging to two other Corps. The regimental Transport Officers had protested vigorously, but to no purpose. Instead of finding my own men, I found a lot of drivers who, away from their own N.C.O.s, were like lost sheep. The mules were unshod; the draught mules clipped and in poor condition. Conductor Nagle was placed in charge of the transport of this Brigade, with orders to set about licking it into shape as quickly as possible.

The 100 men of the 9th Mule Corps, withdrawn from the Sirhind Brigade, remained at Marseilles until April, although every time reinforcements were wanted to replace casualties I begged and prayed for my own men to be sent. Men of any other Corps were despatched in preference. Consequently, what had started as the 9th Mule Corps, with a few of the 38th attached, was a composite unit made up of men belonging to twenty-three different mule corps when we left the front.

I took the first opportunity of looking up the 1st Gurkhas. Dharmsala, 6000 feet up in the Outer Himalayas, is their station in peace-time, and there I had spent two very happy years, largely owing to the invariable kindness and hospitality of the regiment. Almost every officer was a personal friend, and I knew many of the men. They were all heartily glad to have reached the front after a dull time in Egypt. Captain Money and Lieutenant Rundall took me to their billet to lunch, where we were waited on by Rifleman Churrumoni who had been my orderly in Dharmsala. Henry Money, delighted at having been appointed bombing officer, recounted how he and his men had been receiving instruction in the novel art. Rundall, who was Transport Officer of the battalion, was lavish in his praise of the 9th Mule Corps men who had been with them in Egypt,

and spoke feelingly of his annoyance at their withdrawal.

Churrumoni, the orderly, was a typical Gurkha —all smiles and sporting instinct. Once when on tour in the Kangra district in Dharmsala days, I came upon a couple of pea-fowl in a field. Churrumoni was behind with my gun, so I got off my horse and waited for him. I waited and waited until it was nearly dark, but he never came, so eventually I had to go on. Very shortly after my arrival at camp, in stalked Churrumoni with the gun and—two pea-fowl, one over each shoulder. He must have watched me while I waited, preferring to have the shots himself.

On another occasion Churrumoni said he wanted to shoot doves for his dinner, and asked me for some cartridges. Being rather short of them, I gave him only two. He was away for ages, but returned at last with six doves. He had enfiladed them three at a time! Churrumoni was the only person I have ever seen who continued to smile when suffering from jaundice. Gurkhas are great little men, and he was one of the best of them.

Whilst the Division was in the Festubert-Givenchy trenches, the mule-drivers came in for their share of bad times, and a good many casualties occurred. There was a lot of shelling behind the lines, and the roads along which the transport took up rations at night were swept by stray

bullets. The drivers with units had in many cases to camp in the open, and do the best they could with tarpaulins and straw to make some sort of a living-place under their carts: this entailed great suffering in wet and frosty weather. But always I received enthusiastic reports of their behaviour and of their absolute contempt of fire. Kot Duffadar Fatteh Khan and six drivers were recommended for special reward. On one occasion, when their mules carrying ammunition should have been met by a regimental party at a point behind the trenches, the party did not put in an appearance. Fatteh Khan and his men without a moment's hesitation unloaded the mules and took up the boxes themselves across the open under heavy fire.

The position of the Division, which was now on the extreme right of the British line, separated from the French only by the La Bassée Canal, necessitated the use of the road along the canal-bank for transport work. It was very narrow and riddled with shell-holes, and several accidents occurred. The bursting of a shell would sometimes frighten the mules and cause them to bolt. In this way, at various times, three carts overturned into the canal: in each case the driver was rescued, but the mules and carts went to the bottom.[1] A month or so later a barge stranded

[1] The picture on the cover, drawn by Mr. Lionel Edwardes, illustrates one of these incidents.

in the canal: there being no obvious reason for this, the French authorities dragged the canal and brought forth three A.T. carts and six mules, which had—according to the official report—been dead some considerable time, "judging by their appearance and scent." The French requested an inquiry, pointing out that their Government had had to pay some thousands of francs in compensation to the barge-owner; but the matter blew over, and the amount was fortunately not deducted from our pay!

Being now in immediate contact with the French, we had the opportunity of seeing something of our Allies' work. Though both the Tommy and the *poilu* are fine soldiers, there is a great contrast between them. The Frenchman has none of the smartness of the English soldier—at least, the French infantryman has not—but slouches along, under the heavy burden of his kit, looking almost slovenly; but when it comes to fighting he is all there. French infantry has always been famous for its dash and *élan* in the attack: it has now shown the world that it is not lacking in dogged tenacity in the defence as well. French cavalry are very smart and well turned out. So far they have had but little chance of showing their value, but when their opportunity comes they will not be found wanting. Their artillery—especially the famous ·75 batteries—is second to

none in the world. More than once I had the opportunity of seeing the ·75's in action, and of talking to their officers. Very businesslike and smart is the work of the gunners. One feels that they know their job, and the pride they take in their beloved guns is very obvious. My admiration for the ·75 was enhanced in Gallipoli, when I saw, as it were, the other side of the shield. For at Anzac the Turks had two against us, captured in Serbia. Those guns were among the most destructive that we had to face, and were the most hated because one got no notice of the coming of the shell. The report of the firing and the crash of the bursting shell were almost simultaneous. There was never time to dive for cover.

The main road from Béthune to La Bassée had been churned up by big shells, and looked as though it had been fiercely fought over. The undulating nature of the country here enabled a general idea of the situation to be obtained from certain points of vantage. The ridge of Givenchy and the high ground facing Vermelles—the former occupied by us and the latter by the French—were important tactical positions.

It was in the battle for the Givenchy ridge that the Indian Corps came in for some of the heaviest fighting from the 18th to the 22nd December. Backwards and forwards swung the pendulum; ground was lost, regained and lost again. The

59th Rifles, in a desperate and successful charge, lost four of their best officers. Many battalions distinguished themselves, the Manchesters and Highland Light Infantry particularly. On the 20th reinforcements poured into Béthune, and were pushed up rapidly into the firing-line. Battalions of the Camerons, Black Watch and South Wales Borderers arrived by motor-bus; a Guards Brigade marched in. The arrival of an Indian Cavalry Brigade, which included one British regiment, the 17th Lancers, caused a stir in the town. They left their horses and hurried to the trenches. Guns thundered all along the line. For a time the position was critical, but the reinforcements turned the scale, and on the 23rd it was found possible to relieve the Lahore Division. It was time. Long weeks in the trenches in appalling weather, followed by this ferocious fighting, had played the deuce with them. Hardly a battalion had half its numbers left, and the officer casualties were heavier still. A long rest to recoup was essential, and now that more troops were arriving from England the Division could be spared.

The newly-arrived Sirhind Brigade had suffered most. The H.L.I. and both Gurkha battalions were in the thick of the fighting. The 1st Gurkhas lost four British officers killed and a number of men—amongst them both my hosts of the luncheon-party, and Churrumoni too. Henry

Money had been killed whilst defending his trench with bombs against an overwhelming attack, shot through the head by a bullet fired at close quarters. The others said he was the life and soul of the regiment in the trenches, and was enjoying himself like a child. Rundall, following his Company Commander in an attack on the enemy trenches, had been shot and killed outright. Not only a gallant soldier, he was a man of exceptional talents —an accomplished musician, a clever artist, and a writer of the greatest promise. A book from his pen, illustrated by himself, was published after his death and met with instant success. His only brother, in the 4th Gurkhas, fell in the same battle.

Only a fortnight since the luncheon-party! It was hard to realise that those three strong, healthy men were dead. Well, it is a glorious death, and such is war.

The 125th Rifles got off more lightly, but my young friend Minchin, with his platoon, was missing. I fear that he was killed. It was a sadly depleted Brigade which marched back to billets some ten or fifteen miles in rear, where they were to take a spell of ease.

It seemed like the irony of fate that, during those momentous days, Headquarters Transport should have been located in the best and most comfortable billets that we had during our whole stay in France. These were in Béthune. The

men occupied a large disused brewery. All the Britishers had comfortable quarters in the town, and the officers were in the house of Major Boniface of the French Army, in the Rue d'Aire. The servants had been given instructions that, should any British officers apply to be billeted there, they were to be treated as the housekeeper, who had been with the family for years, would wish Major Boniface to be treated. She carried out her orders to the letter, and we returned at night from the sordidness of the battle-field to comfort undreamed of on active service. One felt ashamed to be in such a house when there was so much suffering close by. Each of us had a separate bedroom, with a beautiful bed, clean sheets and pillows. Everything was just as though we had been at home. Nothing that the housekeeper and the two maids could do for us was too much trouble. It was the only house I struck in France which owned the luxury of a bath-room.

The day we marched with the Division to the rear it was snowing hard, and it was a somewhat bedraggled column that wended its way to the west.

Divisional Headquarters were now established at Lozinghem, in a splendid *château:* the grounds must have been delightful in summer-time. The three Brigades and Divisional Troops were in villages within a four-mile radius. It was a coal-mining district, and huge slag-heaps formed

the chief feature of the landscape. The village in which our billets lay was called Burbure, and here we spent Christmas Day which was fine and frosty—one of the nicest days we had had for some time.

In the morning Rennison and I paid a visit to the refilling point to exchange the season's greetings with our friends. There was a larger crop of presents than ever. Sergeant Grainge, the quartermaster, required extra carts to carry them away. Every man had a Christmas card from the King and Queen, with photographs of their Majesties. Princess Mary's present of an artistic box, containing a pipe, tobacco and a packet of cigarettes, was distributed to all ranks. From Queen Mary also each man received a pair of socks. All these were highly appreciated, and many announced that of course they would not wear the socks: they would be treasured for all time. After the distribution on parade of the royal presents, Ressaidar Amir Khan called for three cheers for the King and Queen, and three more for the *Badshahzadi* (the Princess). These were given with great enthusiasm.

The Lahore Division, being out of the trenches, saw nothing of the extraordinary cessation of hostilities and exchange of compliments and presents with the enemy which distinguished the first Christmas of the war.

A turkey purchased in Béthune, and a plum-pudding from England made our Christmas dinner reminiscent of home. In the afternoon I rode over to Auchel, where the remnants of the Sirhind Brigade were billeted, and had tea in the mess of the 1st Gurkhas, from whom I heard many details of the fight. One could not but be struck by the wonderful cheerfulness of those who remained. The regiment had already lost six officers killed, but the survivors, nothing daunted, showed no signs of depression. Captain Kennedy, the adjutant, had killed two Germans with his revolver and was justly proud of the feat. All were unanimous in praise of Henry Money's conduct, and in regret at the loss the regiment had sustained by his death.

Rennison had returned from leave just when we moved to Béthune. It was now my turn. I had been granted leave and had it cancelled two or three times over; but on December 29 leave opened again. Returning one evening from a long round of visits to the men, I found that mine had been sanctioned.

Bond was good enough to lend me a car as far as Hazebrouck. A regular gale was blowing, and a few miles from Hazebrouck a tree had fallen right across the road. Already two or three cars were held up; but somebody had produced a couple of axes, and we all took turns to hack at the

tree. It was over an hour before the road was clear. Then it was a race to catch the train, but we just succeeded in doing so. At Calais the wind was so strong that one could hardly keep one's feet; but the Channel steamer did not leave till next morning, by which time the force of the gale had somewhat decreased.

I had six clear days in England, and they simply flew. A splendid idea, this short leave. The prospect of it buoys men up through bad times, and helps those at home to live through the strain and anxiety which is their lot.

CHAPTER IX

"NOTHING TO REPORT ON THE WESTERN FRONT"

During the whole of January there was practically nothing doing so far as the Lahore Division was concerned. Two Brigades went into the trenches for four days each, but that was all. The weather was too desperately bad for fighting, and both sides were glad of a rest. All this time we remained at Burbure, merely carrying on with ordinary routine work. For recreation we had bridge—exchanging visits for the purpose with the officers of the Divisional Ammunition Column, who lived close by—bathing at Auchel, and an occasional ride to Béthune, ten miles off. Auchel boasted some first-rate baths, run in connection with the coal-mines, and heated by steam: Singer and I used to ride over there in the afternoon.

Changes had taken place in the Division, and General Keary was in command. Colonel Strickland, of the Manchesters, now commanded the Jullundur Brigade; and Colonel Walker, of the 4th Gurkhas, had the Sirhind Brigade. Colonel Hodson had gone home sick, and Major Lukin combined the duties of A.Q.M.G. with those of D.A.A.G.

There was some reorganisation of Brigades also. In place of the Ferozepore Brigade, a Reserve Brigade was formed of the battalions which had suffered most heavy casualties. The Connaught Rangers, having amalgamated with their own 2nd battalion, joined the Sirhind Brigade, and the 57th Rifles were transferred to the Jullundur Brigade.

The only casualty which occurred in the Mule Corps during this period was one of the mules attached to the Connaught Rangers, which lost its life in a most unexpected manner. One dark night, slipping its shackle, it wandered from the lines. A sentry challenged, "Halt! Who goes there?" Receiving no reply, he repeated the challenge, with the same inevitable result. Mindful of his orders, he raised his rifle and fired at the noise. The sounds ceased. When day broke, the sentry saw before him the dead body of the mule. When arraigned at Orderly Room next morning for "making away with Government property", or some such technical charge, his explanation was that he had mistaken the mule for a squadron of German cavalry. This occurred quite fifteen miles behind the trenches, but an Irish soldier is equal to any emergency.

On January 27 heavy firing heralded the Kaiser's birthday. Orders were issued for "constant readiness", but it was not till February 1 that a move was made. On the Givenchy front the Kaiser's birthday present took the form of about four

hundred dead Germans—the result of five futile attacks on our line.

I have a vivid recollection of another celebration of the Kaiser's birthday a year or two before the war, at Engelberg in Switzerland. The visitors at the hotel were about half British and half German. On January 27 the management provided a special dinner, and the German contingent made merry in honour of the occasion. The health of the Kaiser was proposed in a brilliant and eulogistic speech by a distinguished Englishman, and was drunk by all Britishers present with three "hochs." A German made a suitable reply, and all was *bonhomie* and good comradeship.

After our long stay at Burbure, we parted with reluctance from our kind hostess, whose small boy Emile had become a great favourite in the mess. It was while we were at Burbure that Rennison's own son and heir was born, and Singer created much amusement by suggesting that the infant should be christened "Joffre Burbure".

It was very noticeable how well the Indians got on with the French children. Half a dozen drivers squatting round, talking and playing with the village children, was quite a common sight. By this time a good many of them could speak some French. Rahin Baksh, my servant, had a great knack of picking up words and expressions, and his accent was perfect. I sent him back to India soon afterwards, having really no need for him, and

Ajaib Shah, the driver who had looked after Mahdi, became my orderly, while one Diwan Ali took his place as *sais*.

Our next move was to a place called Robecq. On the way to look for billets there Mahdi made his first and only mistake. Cantering down the road alongside the Aire Canal, he put his foot in a shell-hole entirely concealed by slimy mud, and turned a complete somersault. But neither of us was damaged.

Robecq was very full. The only billet we could get was a portion of a cottage, in which I slept on the floor in the kitchen. Rennison had a tiny room, through which the entire family had to pass on their way to bed. The landlady was kind, though dirty, and we were kept quite busy throwing the soup out of the window when she was not looking.

Our greatest trouble was to find lines for the animals, for the whole country was under water. In the field which we eventually took, *faute de mieux*, the mules were up to their hocks in mud. It was in this billet that I received a thoroughly well-merited snub from one of that hard-worked body of men, the motor-cyclist orderlies. I was awakened about 2 a.m. and handed an official envelope. It contained the routine orders for the day. I was somewhat annoyed at being so unnecessarily aroused.

"Well, sir," said the cyclist, "I can assure you

it's no pleasure to me to bring it to you. Presumably some of my letters are important, and I have to deliver them all whenever I get the chance."

As usual, it was a soaking night. I tried to atone for my lack of intelligence by giving the cyclist—who had been an Oxford undergraduate when war broke out—a good tot of rum. An appalling time these men must have had during that winter of incessant rain and snow. The state of the roads was indescribable, and the orderlies were liable to be sent out at any hour of the day or night. There had been a contingent of them on board the *Castalia*—mostly business men of good birth and education from Bombay. Many of them obtained commissions later on.

During the month of February the Lahore Division held the Rue du Bois sector of trench line on the left of the Givenchy sector. Divisional Headquarters were at Locon. The three villages in which most of the 1st line transport was quartered were Lacouture, Le Touret and Richebourg St. Vaast. All three came in for a good deal of attention from enemy artillery—particularly the last. Instead of it being unusual to encounter a shell-storm on one's rounds, it now became the exception not to do so. But on the whole the transport was very lucky. Sergeant Levings, who had taken up his quarters in Richebourg, had a shell through the roof of his kitchen. He was in the direct line of

the enemy's favourite zone of fire—namely, in a prolongation of the line from the Boche guns to the church—so I ordered him to move. A tombstone had been blown by a shell on to the church roof, where it remained embedded in a former shell-hole.

So regular were the German gunners in their hours for shelling that—acting on the advice of officers quartered in Richebourg—I issued orders for all transport to leave the village at 11.45 daily, and to return at 2.15. In this way they usually escaped the daily "strafe".

The Signal Company selected for their mule-lines the drawing-room of one of the best houses in Richebourg. In the corner stood a grand piano. But there was not much left of the walls, and half the floor of the room above the drawing-room was gone. In this half room was a chest of drawers and a bed. It was not used as a billet, because it had no roof. The whole village had been very badly knocked about. A point which always struck me as peculiar was that, whenever the enemy artillery began to shell, people who knew the district could always tell exactly where it was safe and where unsafe to stand. There were two particularly bad corners between Richebourg and the trenches, known as Windy Corner and Chocolat Menier Corner, which must have been visible from some Hun observation post, for directly any traffic passed them they were invariably shelled.

The transport of the Sirhind Brigade gave a lot

of trouble, simply because the men had no N.C.O. whom they knew, and their *bhaibands*, or relations and friends, were not with them. The Indian driver not only hates being separated from his *bhaibands;* he hates being parted from his mules just as much. And frequently the mules showed their dislike of being parted from the men they knew.

There was one mule which a Transport Officer asked us to replace because nobody could do anything with it. It was a regular *budmash*, and refused either to carry a pack or work in a cart. When it returned to headquarters, all our best men tried to break it to better ways. Amir Khan, a past master in horse and mule-breaking, tried all his tricks. But in vain. Captain Jelbart, A.V.C., attempted further experiments. The mule kicked and bit and reared: nothing could be done with him. Jelbart's last experiment was lashing the animal's head to a tree, and he said that if that failed he would recommend its destruction. On being released from the tree, the mule was worse than ever, and Jelbart said, "Well, he's hopeless. You'd better shoot him." Some reinforcements happened to arrive in camp just as we were going to do so, and one of the drivers, seeing the mule, called out that it was his own and must not be shot. The man had not seen the mule since leaving Amballa some six months previously. He took it over, and that very evening, harnessed into a cart

with another mule, it went quietly on duty. It never gave any trouble again.

On February 21 the 2nd Division made an attack from the Givenchy trenches. Guns of all calibres, both French and English, were engaged, including a newly-arrived 9·2″ which was known as "Mother". This was the heaviest bombardment we had seen up to that time, though it was nothing to what now takes place, thanks to the increase in our guns and munitions. Some enemy trenches were much damaged and evacuated by the Huns, but our men found them full of water and could not occupy them.

Four days later, relieved by the Meerut Division, the Lahore Division went back to billets. We marched in a snowstorm again to Busnes, where we established ourselves near Divisional Headquarters. It was a long ride round the Brigades from there. I used to break my journey in Calonne, where Bond and Woodhouse, with No. 3 Company, were in clover.

From Busnes I rode one day to St. Venant to visit an Indian clearing hospital. Some of our wounded drivers were there. They were splendidly looked after, and the hospital was run on model lines. Another day, Ressaidar Ghulam Mahomed accompanied me to Mametz, where some of our men were attached to the Indian Cavalry. We found there three *kot duffadars* and two *naicks* of the 9th Mule Corps, all from the contingent which

had been left in Egypt. It was a pleasure to witness their joy at seeing their own C.O. and adjutant. They told us that they had despaired of ever seeing the Corps again or any one belonging to it. I tried hard to get them sent back to their own men in Marseilles, but failed.

The cavalry had been having a very dull time. An occasional trip to the front in motor-buses, for the purpose of digging reserve trenches, was the only relief they had from ordinary peace training. Here I found Captain Rendall, who was now Supply Officer of the Cavalry Divisional Train, and Captain Foster, of the 10th Lancers, who had been in the Somersets with me. We had an excellent lunch together in the Staff mess.

After a few more quiet days at Busnes, there began to be signs of increased activity, and a "push" was talked of. But we heard nothing definite until about March 7, when the Division began to return to the trenches, and we marched to Calonne—another night march in pouring rain. Here we established ourselves in a large farm of the sealed pattern description, though a little cleaner than usual. The only objection to this billet was that it was too far from the firing-line. It meant a ride of some ten miles each way before our work began. Divisional Headquarters moved to Lacouture, and remained there during the Battle of Neuve Chapelle.

CHAPTER X

THE BATTLE OF NEUVE CHAPELLE

Many graphic descriptions of the battle have been published, none more so than Lord French's official despatch; and no attempt will be made in this chapter to rival them. As a matter of fact, the nature of my duties and the flatness of the country combined to render impossible any comprehensive view of the fighting.

Terrific firing by the Allied artillery on the 10th heralded the commencement of the battle. Every gun for miles around seemed to be in action, hurling shells of all sorts and sizes on to the enemy trenches at Neuve Chapelle. The first day the Huns' reply was feeble, but on the 11th and following days his artillery supported the counter-attacks of the infantry with heavy fire, and directed a furious bombardment on the roads and villages behind our lines, rendering the bringing up of supports very difficult.

The troops engaged were the Indian Corps on the right and the 4th Corps on the left, the objective of the former being the village of Neuve Chapelle and the Bois de Biez beyond, and that of the latter the village of Aubers and the Aubers ridge. The first assault, delivered by the Meerut Division, met

with complete success; fighting their way through the village, they dashed on into the wood, but the barbed wire in front of a Brigade of the 4th Corps had not been sufficiently demolished, and the Brigade was held up, a battalion of Cameronians losing most of its officers and a large proportion of its men.

The Lahore Division was called up to reinforce their Meerut comrades, and suffered heavily from the "barrage" fire. The ferocity of the counter-attacks necessitated retirement from the wood, for the left of the Indian Corps was "in the air", and a turning movement by the enemy had to be prevented. Many German prisoners were taken: their faces were yellow from lyddite, and they looked terribly scared. About 300 of them marched back escorted by only two men of the Black Watch.

The Mule Transport found its way to some nasty places swept by shell-fire, and bore its share in the resulting casualties. Sergeants Levings and Staton were well to the fore accompanying any convoys detailed for specially unpleasant jobs, and the former distinguished himself by extricating the drivers and pack-mules of the 59th Rifles and 47th Sikhs from a place where he found them under a scathing fire, but standing loaded up with ammunition, waiting for further orders to advance. Naick Mahomed Khan, who was in charge, had been posted there before the shelling began, with

orders to remain there till he was told to move; and remain he did in spite of everything. The roads leading to the trenches presented a horrible sight, strewn with dead and dying British and Indian soldiers, amongst whom the medical officers and stretcher-bearers were all the time at work.

The billet of Headquarters Transport being so far behind the line, small advance depots had to be established from which to issue men and animals to replace casualties, which were, however, remarkably slight considering the violence of the shelling. The 9th Mule Corps lost only fourteen men and sixty-three mules killed and wounded. One driver with the Signal Company had his head blown clean off whilst driving his cart.

The maintenance of signalling communications during the battle was a matter of extreme difficulty, the signallers working under most trying conditions. Lieutenant Drayson, commanding the Headquarter section of the Lahore Divisional Signal Company, had his headquarters in a cellar in the village of Neuve Chapelle, which had literally been razed to the ground. There seemed to be no house with a roof or outside wall intact; the tombstones in the churchyard had been uprooted from the ground and blown yards away, and corpses were everywhere.

It had been hoped to use the cavalry, and the sight of our Divisional Regiment, the 15th Lancers, trotting forward to be ready to break through, was

a cheering one; for since the arrival of the Lahore Division at the front it had never been possible for cavalry to perform its legitimate work. But disappointment was in store. The difficulties proved greater than had been foreseen, and consolidation of the positions gained had to be taken in hand and trench-warfare resumed. The losses of the Indian Corps were heavy, especially those of the Garhwal Brigade which distinguished itself conspicuously, the 39th Garhwals in particular receiving high commendation. But the German losses were estimated to be far larger than ours, and the advance had the effect, at all events, of strengthening the *morale* of our troops. The wounded all came back proud and happy from the fight. Men of the 47th Sikhs in a motor-ambulance talked lovingly of the splendid gallantry of their British officers, and told how they went on regardless of the murderous fire. One sepoy told how he had seen poor Mango Browne charging at the head of his men with his broken arm dangling in its sleeve. When a comrade told him that this officer had afterwards been killed, the sepoy burst into tears.

It was not till later that we knew how great a disappointment the results of the battle had really been; but, notwithstanding this, it was in some measure a success, for it showed that long lines of trenches could be taken, and it proved conclusively for all time the splendid fighting qualities of Indian troops.

CHAPTER XI

THE SCENE CHANGES

ONLY a few days after the Battle of Neuve Chapelle orders arrived for me "to proceed forthwith to Marseilles in connection with the concentration there of A.T. carts." This was rather a shock, and there was much speculation as to what it meant. There were rumours of an expedition to the Dardanelles, so it seemed possible that that was to be our destination.

I was not anxious to leave France. After years abroad, the prospect of a summer in the west was attractive, and, moreover, the Western Front always seemed to me to be much the most important sphere of operations. The Dardanelles would be a side-show. It was with some reluctance, therefore, that I made my preparations to depart.

Before leaving I made an expedition to the new trenches opposite the Bois de Biez. Lieutenant Betham, of the 15th Sikhs, allowed me to accompany him on his usual evening journey. After passing the barricade outside the cottage formerly occupied by Jullundur Brigade Headquarters, a mile or so from Richebourg St. Vaast, the ground

was new to me. Along a track marked by whitened bricks, we passed over an open plain, pitted with shell-holes like the face of a person with small-pox. As we moved forward, heavy artillery fire was being directed by the enemy on the ruins of Richebourg l'Avoué; but all was quiet when we arrived, and the communication trenches, which, according to Betham, "frequently got it in the neck", were as safe as possible that evening.

We reached what had been the German third line, converted to face the other way: behind were enemy barbed wire entanglements torn up by our shell-fire, and in front was the wire recently put up by our men. There were many well-constructed dug-outs, in one of which I found the mess of the 15th Sikhs. Major Carden and Lieutenant Smyth were, I think, the only two officers there who had come over with the regiment from India. Major Carden died of wounds at Boulogne a few months later, having been through everything from the beginning with his regiment. Smyth's name is well known. He gained the V.C. at the second Battle of Ypres for one of the most magnificent acts of heroism in the whole war. Starting with half a dozen men, he brought up bombs across an open space swept by a withering fire. Only Smyth and *one* man reached the regiment with the urgently needed box of bombs. I remember him as I saw him that evening, in a Tommy's long great-coat,

with his head in a Balaclava helmet, looking very youthful, his face wreathed in smiles as usual. Smyth was the only officer of the Lahore Division to win the V.C. in France: there could not have been a more popular award.

Passing along the trenches, we reached the 1st Gurkha position. Here, too, were very few of the original officers. Major Hepenstal kindly showed me round and explained the situation. There had been heavy shelling during that afternoon, and he had seen two Sikhs blown clean out of their trench, but neither had been hurt. We passed some Gurkhas putting the finishing touches to a rough wooden cross on which was inscribed "To the memory of Captain G. S. Kennedy." Captain Kennedy, the adjutant, had been killed a day or two before: he was a splendid officer, beloved by the men, and a grievous loss to the regiment.

The Roll of Honour of the 1st Gurkhas has been a very long one. Few battalions can have lost a larger proportion of officers killed. Of those who arrived at the front only four survive, two of whom have been wounded. A proud record indeed.

We came to a notice-board marked "Danger." It seemed odd in such surroundings, but I noticed that the ground at that point was stained with blood. There were frequent cries of "Khubrdar, sahib!" (Be careful, sir!), and we would stoop as we passed a bit of trench commanded by enemy

snipers. The parapet was too high for Gurkhas: they had to stand on biscuit-boxes when on sentry duty, for periscopes were not at that time in general use.

It was getting dark by the time I got back to Lacouture, where I stopped to see the Signal Company and bid their officers good-bye. With Major Maxwell I found an old cricketing friend, Captain Townend, R.E., of the Meerut Divisional Signal Company. To him it was a last farewell. A very fine fellow was Townend: the way he died was an example of superlative bravery. Whilst superintending a working-party, a high-explosive shell burst in their midst. Men hurried to the rescue, but Townend waved them aside, telling them to attend to the others first. When they picked him up it was found that both his legs had been blown off below the knee, and he remarked that it looked as though his footballing days were over. He died that night—a gallant sportsman if ever there was one.

It was with real regret that I said good-bye to the Corps. Rennison, the two adjutants and the two interpreters came to see me off. It was not long before we met again, but that was the end of our service together, and it had been very friendly. A man who could not get on with Rennison would indeed be hard to please, for nothing ever put him out. His evenness of temper under all conditions

was astounding, and the men of the 2nd Mule Corps think there is no one like their sahib.

I took with me my orderly, Ajaib Shah, and a friend of his, Karim Baksh. We reached Paris the following evening, having gone round by Boulogne. After seeing the Indians settled down in the Red Cross rooms at the station, I accepted a lift in a motor-car from a kind Red Cross lady, and at the A.P.M.'s office I received the pleasing information that the Ritz Hotel provided free accommodation for British officers from the front. This seemed just about good enough, so to the Ritz Hotel I went, and was there given a magnificent suite of apartments, the extreme luxury of which seemed greater by contrast with the farms of Flanders.

That night the first Zeppelin raid on Paris took place. The hall-porter told me that all the visitors in night-attire had thronged the hall: the bolder spirits going out to see the Zeppelins, the more timid asking their way to the cellars. I never woke at all, but slept through the raid, as might be expected of a man who finds himself in a luxurious bed for the first time for months.

In the morning—a beautiful spring morning—I took a taxi and drove to the station, where I found my orderlies very full of the wonderful kindness they had received. They had been given everything they could desire to eat and drink: comfort-

able beds had been provided; and, after breakfast, a lady of surpassing beauty had talked to them and shaken hands with them. They did not understand what she said, but that did not matter. The lady was the Hon. Mrs. Maurice Brett, wife of the A.P.M. and a Red Cross worker, better known as Miss Zena Dare.

I took the two men for a drive round Paris—past the shops, through the Place de la Concorde, up the Champs Elysées and into the Bois. To Ajaib Shah and Karim Baksh it was like a trip to fairyland, and their joy was infectious. Returning to the Ritz, I took them to my rooms that they might see what a first-class European hotel is like. They were especially impressed with the glass revolving doors and the lift, never having seen such things before, and Ajaib Shah asked timidly if I would mind waiting while they went up and down the lift again. It was just like showing a couple of children round.

My orders were to proceed "forthwith" to Marseilles. Colonel Hennessy had agreed to my stopping twenty-four hours in Paris, but even that short delay nearly had disastrous results. One never knows. Once before I had received orders to proceed "forthwith" to take over a Staff billet in India. I went by the first possible train, only to be asked on arrival why on earth I hadn't taken ten days' leave, as the job wouldn't be vacant sooner.

From Paris to Marseilles I travelled with a cheery party of officers invalided from the front, on their way to spend a few weeks at Nice. One was a boy named Thackeray, whose personality attracted me greatly: he was so bubbling over with *joie de vivre*. He had been through the retreat from Mons, and afterwards at Ypres, but he had never been touched. He thought he bore a charmed life. But his luck failed him, for I saw his name in a casualty-list not long after, and read how he had fallen in an attack at the head of his platoon.

At Marseilles I reported myself to the R.T.O., who turned out to be Colonel Pope, late General Manager of the Oudh & Rohilkand Railway, whom I had known at Lucknow, where he commanded the Railway Volunteers. Colonel Pope passed me on to Colonel Marriot, of my own Corps, whom I found in the new mule-lines near the docks.

After being sworn to secrecy, I was told that our guess was correct: the Dardanelles was to be our destination. It had been decided to raise four Mule Cart Corps under an entirely new organisation—each Corps to have ten troops, each troop consisting of 108 mules and 50 carts, with 60 drivers. With artificers, etc., this brought the command to 1080 mules and some 650 men. The "superior establishment" was to be on the old scale, so the disproportion of officers to men was greater than ever. Pack-mules were to remain in

France. I was to command No. 1 Corps, which, together with a portion of No. 2, had already been raised from the transport that had been working at Marseilles throughout the winter. This had been most efficiently done by Captain Pulleyn, S. & T. Corps, and, thanks to him, I found my new Corps ready, fully equipped and with every detail complete. It contained three troops of the 1st Mule Corps, two of the 9th, four of the 15th, and one of a miscellaneous collection. The 1st, whose C.O., Captain Hall, had been sent to the Cavalry Division, is one of the best Mule Corps in the Indian Army, and I was lucky to get them. Their adjutant, Ressaidar Hashmet Ali, had been appointed adjutant of No. 1 Cart Corps—another stroke of luck, for he was a very good officer indeed.

The "superior establishment" consisted of Conductor Brown, 9th Mule Corps, who had been doing depot work all the winter; Conductor Appleby, transferred from the Supply Branch; and Sergeants Clarke (1st Mule Corps) and Smith (15th Mule Corps). Sergeant Clarke was to be Quartermaster-Sergeant, a position he had filled in the 1st Mule Corps. He had been at Marseilles some time, and had all his stores in tip-top order. I arranged that Jemadar Wali Mahomed and Clerk Mangat Rai should join the Corps on arrival from the front, replacing another veterinary officer and

clerk already appointed. I am lost without Mangat Rai, and he and Wali Mahomed are bosom friends.

The command of No. 2 Cart Corps was given to Captain Porch, No. 3 to Captain Rennison, and No. 4 to Captain Aylmer. Captain Bird, O.C. 11th Mule Corps, who had been recalled from the Meerut Division, was spare officer. He had been in Marseilles two days when I arrived. Colonel Marriot told me that if I had come one day later he had made up his mind to give No. 1 Corps to Bird; so my stay in Paris nearly cost me the command. The balance of No. 2 and the whole of Nos. 3 and 4 Corps were to be formed from transport then at the front, which was to be replaced by additional horse-transport. A few days later it began to arrive in Marseilles.

I took up my quarters at the Hotel Regina, where Captains Porch and Bird were already staying, and we managed to put in a very enjoyable time in Marseilles. The mornings were spent in holding inspections of my new Corps. So well had Pulleyn done his work, that practically nothing was deficient or incorrect. It was a great score to get command of the 1st Corps, because we got the pick of everything: by the time No. 4 was being equipped, there was a shortage of clothing and ordnance gear.

The four Cart Corps were styled "The Indian Mule Cart Train, Mediterranean Expeditionary

Force." Colonel C. H. Beville, S. & T. Corps, was appointed to command the Train, with Captain Pulleyn as his adjutant. The Headquarters also included Captain Bird, Conductor Galway, Kot Duffadar Jiwan and two or three orderlies. No. 1 Corps was to sail as soon as ships could be made ready, and on March 27 s.s. *Ramazan* and another steamer arrived in the docks, and work was immediately put in hand to fit up these ships for carrying mules. I spent a good deal of time advising on the arrangements, and planning the disposal of my command on board. It was decided that the whole of No. 1 Corps and one troop of No. 2 should sail in these two ships. Pulleyn, Conductor Galway and Kot Duffadar Jiwan were to accompany us: 577 mules were allotted to the *Ramazan*, and 620 to the other vessel.

Rennison arrived in Marseilles accompanied by Singer, who had managed to persuade the authorities that his services were indispensable till the 2nd Mule Corps actually left France. At Marseilles he made strong representations with a view to accompanying the Mule Train to Gallipoli. "How could the Train," he argued, "find its way through Turkey without a French interpreter; and who more suitable than he, for had he not once spent a night in Constantinople? Moreover, there were to be French troops alongside the British and Indians. His knowledge of Hindustani would be

invaluable." (With his great facility for languages, Singer had picked up quite a lot of Hindustani.) But the authorities were adamant, and Singer had to return to the Western Front. He had a good time in Marseilles, though! Moillis received a commission, and wrote that he had been posted as interpreter to the headquarters of an English Brigade.

Rennison had been ordered to leave four British Warrant and N.C.O.s and one Indian adjutant behind with the pack-mules. He had selected Mr. Nagle, Mr. Green, Sergeants Jennings and Staton to remain, and Ressaidar Ghulam Mahomed. He brought Ressaidar Amir Khan, Sergeants Levings and Grainge with him. I was anxious to get Sergeant Levings posted to No. 1 Corps, but failed. It was disappointing, too, to leave my adjutant and Green and Staton behind: all had performed valuable services, and I should miss them greatly.

Whilst at Marseilles I received a letter from Colonel Hennessy asking for names of any men whose good work at the front I desired to see rewarded. As a result Sergeant Levings was mentioned in despatches a second time: Kot Duffadars Bahawal Din and Fatteh Khan, Naicks Khan Ghul and Mahomed Khan, and Driver Ruph Singh, 27th Mule Corps (attached), received the Indian Distinguished Service Medal. I had letters from

the C.O.s of several battalions expressing their regret at losing their mule-transport and their appreciation of what the men had done, and Rennison showed me a letter he had had from the C.R.A. Lahore Division, referring to the invaluable services of the men of the 2nd Mule Corps with the Ammunition Columns.

Our two transports were ready on April 3, and loading began. It took a long time to take to pieces and load 550 carts. We were booked to sail on the 5th. That morning, at 6 a.m., we started embarking the mules, and the whole 1197 were safely aboard by 11.30. All the animals were slung on board in pairs, and the rapidity with which it was accomplished was very satisfactory. At the last moment it was decided to send Captain Baddeley, of the 15th Lancers, in command of troops in one ship. He had commanded at the front a contingent of mule-transport from the army of the Native State of Indore, and his men and animals were being embodied in No. 4 Corps, whose arrival he was to await at the base. Conductors Appleby and Galway and Sergeant Smith travelled with him; Captain Pulleyn, Conductor Brown and Sergeant Clarke with me in the *Ramazan*.

After an inspection of the two ships by the Base Commandant, we started that afternoon on our journey. The weather was perfect; the prospect

of a few days' soothing voyage, with unknown adventures to follow, was an attractive one. Regret at leaving France was tempered by a pleasant feeling of anticipation.

CHAPTER XII

EASTWARD BOUND

The voyage to Alexandria, to which port the skipper's sealed orders directed him to proceed, was a thoroughly enjoyable rest for everybody. The weather was ideal, and the ship most comfortable, there being ample and well-arranged accommodation for men and animals. The skipper, Captain Leggat, a particularly nice fellow, wished to make over his cabin to me and to sleep in the chart-room; but, naturally, I could not accept this sacrifice. I shared with Pulleyn a large two-berth cabin—better than many one sees on large liners, though the *Ramazan* was quite a small tramp steamer with a speed of eight knots. Captain Leggat, who had commanded her ever since she was launched, took a great pride in her.

Every morning we had C.O.'s inspection. Otherwise, apart from stable routine, no work was done. The other transport sailed just after us, but next morning she had dropped astern and was out of sight, which greatly pleased Captain Leggat, for the *Ramazan* was supposed to be a slower ship than the other, which reached Alexandria only an hour behind us on April 11.

The harbour was full of shipping of every description, including at least a dozen captured German liners which were being used for transports. We went ashore to report ourselves, and now learned something of the plan of campaign. A force composed of an Army Corps of Australians and New Zealanders, the 29th British Division, the Royal Naval Division, and about 30,000 French troops, was to effect a landing in Gallipoli, with the capture of Constantinople as its ultimate objective. The base was to be Alexandria, and the advance base the island of Lemnos. The force had been fitted out with transport on the British scale.

Colonel Koe (now Major-General Koe, C.B., C.M.G.), on being appointed Director of Supply and Transport, had asked for some Indian Mule Transport as a sort of "emergency ration" in case British Transport should prove unsuitable. He had seen Indian Mule Transport in China, and had been struck by its adaptability to rough conditions. At present no rôle had been assigned to the Mule Corps: it was to be used "as required". One hundred and thirty-eight carts were to be handed over to an Indian Infantry Brigade, expected shortly in Alexandria from the Canal bank; the remainder of the Corps was to disembark and camp at Mex Camp, while one Captain, two Subalterns and several N.C.O.s were to be detailed

to accompany the 138 carts. I explained to Colonel Koe that I myself was the only officer with 500 carts, and that Baddeley had received orders to remain at the base. The next morning the *Ramazan* was berthed alongside a wharf, and disembarkation began. We had been at it about two hours, when orders arrived to increase the number of carts for the Indian Brigade to 184. These were to be disembarked and sent to Camp Mex, and the rest of the Corps was to go straight to the advance base.

This was capital news. The prospect of sitting in camp at Alexandria was not an alluring one: having come so far, we wished to see the show. I asked Colonel Koe to be allowed to send four complete troops to the Indian Brigade, *i. e.* 200 carts instead of 184, so as not to upset the organisation, and received permission to do so. I then observed that it was a pity the *Ramazan* had been berthed and not the other ship, because I should have liked to detail the four troops of the 15th Mule Corps from the latter; these were all men of the same caste, and it would be a good plan to keep them together. To my surprise, Colonel Koe at once agreed and arranged for the *Ramazan* to be taken out into the stream and the other vessel brought alongside. It meant a certain amount of extra trouble, as the stuff already unloaded from the *Ramazan* had first to be reloaded;

but it was well worth it, though few officers unaccustomed to the idiosyncrasies of Indian troops would have recognised the fact.

The disembarkation of the four troops was a slow business, for the crew were both unruly and careless. The men at the crane made two or three mistakes, resulting in some cart-bodies being dropped into the harbour. Their recovery by a diver was regarded by the Indians as a miracle. When the man, clad in his weird uniform, disappeared from view, they gaped with astonishment. The reappearance of the lost articles was greeted with loud cheers, and when the diver himself returned to the surface their amazement know no bounds. They had seen a lot of strange happenings during their sojourn in the West, but the performance of the diver was one which impressed them most. The celebrated mango trick was a fool compared to this. If they had dared, I believe they would have dropped a mule overboard, just to see the show again, and expected it to come up alive.

The four troops left for Lemnos on April 17. Transports were leaving Alexandria daily with units of the Australians and of the 29th Division. Probably no finer Division than this ever took the field in any campaign, for it was composed of battalions which had been on foreign service when war broke out. Officers and men were hardened,

trained and desciplined veterans, whose appearance justified the feeling that if there were a tough job to be done, these were the men to do it. The K.O.S.B.s embarked at the wharf opposite to that at which we had been berthed. Their discipline could be gauged from the way they formed up and went aboard: it was proved by their behaviour at Krithia a fortnight later, when they added fresh lustre to the records of a famous regiment.

The *Ramazan* was about to leave Alexandria, when an order was received to "stop all ships sailing." Again it looked as if we were to be left behind. It transpired that the troopship *Manitou* had been attacked by a Turkish torpedo-boat somewhere off Smyrna, and two others were said to be about. Three torpedoes had been fired, all of which missed, though some lives were lost through the capsizing of a boat. H.M.S. *Minerva* had sunk the torpedo-boat.

On April 19 the *Ramazan* got away. She joined a fleet consisting of six French transports, the hospital ship *Gascon* and a British supply ship, escorted by the French cruiser *Jeanne d'Arc*. Late in the evening the cruiser signalled to us to go on alone and make for Mudros harbour, Lemnos.

It was odd that in the *Ramazan* there was nobody excepting myself who could read the Morse code. It was fortunate that I could do so, for we

needed it quite a lot. Having been regimental Signalling Officer in the Somersets for three years, I had not quite forgotten the art. Conductor Galway had to read the signals in our other transport, there being no ship's officer qualified to do so. Late in the night, after leaving Alexandria, the skipper sent down to my cabin to ask me to come up on the bridge and read some lamp-signals. A ship was signalling quite close to us, and the skipper could not make her out at all. She was a man-o'-war, but she flew no flag and was certainly not British, and he thought she might be an enemy. First she sent "What's your name?"; then "Your number?" To this we replied with an electric torch—there being no signalling equipment on board—that we had no number. Most of the transports had been allotted numbers, which were painted on their sides, but for some reason or other we had not been given one. The strange vessel signalled, "State your number at once." We replied as before. Then, "Your destination?" By this time I was in two minds whether to sound the alarm and turn out the men ready to take to the boats. However, her next signal was, "Proceed with your voyage. Good-night." I replied "Good-night," and returned to bed.

The *Ramazan* arrived safely at Mudros on April 22, having seen no sign of the enemy torpedo-boats. During the summer she made several more

successful trips between Alexandria and the Peninsula, but she did the dangerous journey once too often. After being badly holed by a shell at Suvla Bay, she fell a victim to a submarine, and was torpedoed and sunk in September.

CHAPTER XIII

MUDROS BAY

THE scene at Mudros Bay was interesting in the extreme. Probably nothing to compare with it has ever been seen or will be seen again. Mudros is a fine natural harbour of picturesque shape, with numerous small bays; and the island of Lemnos, rather bare of trees but green after the recent rain, made an effective background to a wonderful picture, for in the harbour lay every conceivable kind of vessel that sails the seas. Battleships of the latest class, Dreadnoughts, cruisers, destroyers, torpedo-boats, submarines, mine-sweepers, sea-plane ship, transports of every size and kind, hospital-ships, trawlers, paddle-boats, picket-boats, steam and electric launches, cutters and dinghies were there, British and French. There was one Russian cruiser as well, the *Askold*, a strange-looking vessel with five funnels. The *Queen Elizabeth*, *Triumph* and *Majestic* were close to our allotted berth. Sea-planes were in the air carrying out preliminary reconnaissances.

Many of the transports had lighters in tow to be used for landing guns, animals and stores.

The troops were to land from rowing-boats towed by picket-boats, or from ships' cutters pulled by crews of bluejackets. Practice landings were going on. We saw men lined up on the decks of cruisers and destroyers. On the word of command they leapt into the cutters lying alongside and were pulled ashore, where, led by an officer in the bow, they would spring on to the beach and, taking extended order, advance at the double. The coast of Lemnos was most suitable for this exercise.

There were already several camps on the island, and huts were beginning to spring up in addition to tents, for some of the troops had been at Lemnos for nearly two months. The French had a large camp at the further end of the harbour. On these April days it looked a pleasant enough place to live in; it was very different in September, all parched and burnt up, with not a blade of green grass to rest the eye.

Soon after our arrival, the A.D.T., M.E.F., Major Striedinger, came aboard, bringing the thrilling news that the landing was to begin on the 25th, and that our Corps was to take part in it. The A.D.T. saw no prospect of landing the carts at first, and expected that the mules would have to swim ashore. In the event of it not being feasible to land carts, it had been decided to use our mules for carrying packs. The saddle is convertible.

It is primarily a pack-saddle; but, with the addition of a pin to secure the curricle-bar, a different pattern of breast-piece and a pair of traces and swingle-trees, it can be adapted for draught work: all these extras are carried by the driver in his bundle of gear. There are several Mule Corps which are not equipped with the combined pack and draught saddle; and it seemed rather a stroke of luck for the Dardanelles expedition that ours did not happen to be one of them!

Being a cart corps, we had no receptacles for carrying water as a pack load. I had tried to get some canvas bags or tanks during our brief stay in Alexandria, but without success: this was a great misfortune and was a serious handicap throughout our stay in Gallipoli. It was not until August that we were provided with a sufficient number of really satisfactory water-carrying receptacles.

The *Ramazan* anchored about two ships' lengths from our other transport, just inside the boom which had been laid right across the entrance to the harbour to protect the shipping from submarine attack. We paid her a visit, and learned from Baddeley that they had been there for two days without receiving any orders.

There was great difficulty in getting about the harbour: the only means of doing so was by manning a ship's boat. This was no joke if one

had far to go, for it was very heavy pulling. However, it was absolutely essential that I should see Colonel Koe before leaving Mudros, so Captain Leggat provided a boat and crew, and we rowed about a mile to the Royal Mail Yacht *Arcadian*. On board were Sir Ian Hamilton and the Staff of the M.E.F. Here I received orders to detail 150 carts, with 324 mules and establishment, for service with the 29th Division which was to land at the point of the Peninsula. The rest of the Corps was to go with the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps to Gaba Tepe, about ten miles up the coast.

The plan of campaign was for the 29th Division to attack from the toe of the Peninsula, and push back the Turkish Army, which was known to be entrenched there, into the arms of the Australasians. The Asiatic shore was to be heavily bombarded by the ships, to give the idea that this was the main attack, and a French force was to be landed there, while other feints of landing were to be made by the Royal Naval Division further up the coast. I asked whether the two detachments of my Corps were likely to link up again, and was told that if they did not do so in three days the campaign would have failed. It was eight months before the failure was admitted to be irrevocable: all that time the British and French forces did their level best to turn it into a success.

We were to land, carrying three days' rations for men and animals. Seven days' rations were to be laid out on board, ready to be landed at the first opportunity. No kit whatever was to be taken ashore except what we stood up in: the ships would remain standing off the coast, and we should be able to get what we wanted from them afterwards. I was advised to take ashore the minimum number of men required, and to leave all unnecessary people behind for the present, as there was sure to be difficulty about water. The services of Captains Baddeley and Pulleyn and of Conductor Galway were placed at my disposal. Colonel Koe said that, even with them, we had not nearly enough officers, and that the other Mule Corps from France could spare them better than we could. Baddeley was senior to me, but fortunately we were the best of friends, and he was so keen to accompany the first landing force that the question of seniority did not bother him at all. The *Ramazan* was detailed for Cape Helles, and the other transport for the Gaba Tepe fleet.

I quickly made up my mind that Baddeley should take command of the three troops with the 29th Division, whilst I would accompany the remainder (four troops) with the Australians. The next thing to do was to report myself at Headquarters of the Australian Army Corp. Another bout of rowing, and we drew alongside the Headquarters ship, and

found on board Colonel Lesslie and Major Wagstaff, both of the R.E., who were on General Birdwood's Staff. They introduced me to Brigadier-General Carruthers, the D.A. & Q.M.G. of the Army Corps, and Colonel Knox, the A.Q.M.G. Both these officers seemed much pleased to hear that they were to have some Indian mules, as the question of ammunition and water-supply was rather troubling them, though Colonel Knox was disappointed that we had no water-receptacles. He took me to General Birdwood's cabin to report myself. I had met the General two or three times at Old Cliftonian dinners in India. He is one of the most loyal of Old Cliftonians, and always turns up if he possibly can. After lunching with Major Wagstaff, I repaired back to the *Ramazan* to write my orders, armed with a copy of "Operation Orders No. 1" for the landing at Gaba Tepe. Later on I sent this historic document home by post, but to my intense disgust it never arrived.

That evening I issued my orders as follows: Three troops of the 1st Mule Corps on board the *Ramazan* to land at Cape Helles; Captain Baddeley to command, assisted by Sergeant Clarke (who belonged to the 1st Mule Corps and knew the men). The remaining two troops in the *Ramazan* (belonging to the 9th Mule Corps) to join the Australasian Army Corps at Gaba Tepe, after disembarking Captain Baddeley's party; Captain

Pulleyn to command. The two troops in the other transport were to go direct to Gaba Tepe under my own command, with Conductor Brown. I should have liked to transfer two troops from the *Ramazan* then and there, but this was impossible, as there were no lighters available. These orders involved my moving across to the other transport, and Conductor Brown also. Captain Baddeley and Conductor Galway had to come over to the *Ramazan*.

On the evening of the 24th the ships began to pass out through the boom, all the troops in the finest spirits, full of enthusiasm after the long delay. The Australians and New Zealanders especially were longing for a fight, anxious to prove what Colonial troops could do. Most of them had spent the winter in Egypt, and had been disappointed at not being sent to France; but now they were to have their innings, and they meant to make the best of it. With bands playing, and men cheering wildly, the transports steamed up the harbour. The greetings between the French and British as they passed one another were particularly cordial: it was to be a joint enterprise, in which the Allies learned to recognise each other's worth.

Amongst the transports was a singular vessel. In her port side was a gaping hole, and as she passed us, crowded to her fullest capacity with British soldiers, I noticed that the bridge was sand-

bagged like a trench, and I read on her port bow the words. "RIVER CLY". This was the now famous *River Clyde*: the last two letters had been cut off, for that was where the hole began. She was to be run aground, and put her troops ashore through the hole in her side, the hull of the vessel acting as some protection from fire. Machine-guns were mounted on the bridge to cover the landing.

Our skipper presently received orders to take his ship into the inner harbour, to embark a portion of the Zion Mule Corps. The transport in which half the Zion Mule Corps had come from the base had gone aground, and our ship, being half empty, was to take them aboard. This meant that, instead of making direct for Gaba Tepe, we should have to go first with the Cape Helles fleet, for this portion of the Zionists was detailed for the 29th Division. It looked as though we were to be done out of taking part in the first landing; and in a sense we were, for, although we did land, we only did so to assist the Zionists instead of in our own right. Considering that a month previously this Zion Mule Corps had not even begun to exist, it was distinctly tantalising to be set aside in their favour. However, it was the fortune of war. Besides, they had water-receptacles, and we had not.

Lieutenant-Colonel Patterson, D.S.O., who commanded them, came aboard to arrange for the accommodation of men and animals. A few

words about the Zion Mule Corps are perhaps required in explanation. The Corps had been raised by Colonel Patterson, on the invitation of General Maxwell, Commanding the Troops in Egypt, expressly for service with the Dardanelles Expedition. The men were all Jew refugees from Syria, and were a motley crowd, speaking many different languages. There were six British officers; all the rest were foreigners, and there was one man to each mule. The mules were a fine stamp of animal—much bigger than ours, and the equipment was different. They had wooden crates for carrying kerosene oil tins filled with water, two four-gallon tins on each side, so each mule carried sixteen gallons. Colonel Patterson told me he had not had time to get his tins painted: as it was, they could be seen for miles, glistening in the sun. The raising of this Corps was a remarkable feat: three weeks after the first man had signed on, the Corps had left the base, and inside a month they were under fire. It was the first complete Jew unit to take the field for something like two thousand years.

The whole of the night of the 24th was occupied in transferring the Zionists. It was to our own interest, as well as to the interest of the expedition, to render every assistance in our power, and all the work in the ship was done by the Indians, who were kept hard at it the whole night. The ship was

timed to sail at 6 a.m., and the skipper announced his intention of leaving at that hour whether the Zionists were on board or not. This necessitated Colonel Patterson making a trip to Headquarters to get the orders changed, and he returned shortly before we were about to weigh anchor with authority to delay the start until his unit was on board. It was nine o'clock before we eventually got away. As we passed our former anchorage, I was surprised to see the *Ramazan* still lying at anchor. She signalled that she had had no orders to move: owing to an oversight, her orders to sail with the Cape Helles fleet at daybreak had not been delivered. It was too late then to do anything, and, signalling to her "Good luck", we passed out through the boom.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FIRST LANDING IN GALLIPOLI

It was a glorious morning. A more auspicious day for the great landing could not have been chosen: not a cloud in the sky nor a breath of wind; the air cool and crisp, and the sun shining brilliantly. Soon the sound of guns became audible. The coast of Imbros was passed on the port side, and Tenedos, where the aeroplane base was established, on the starboard. As the outline of the coast of Gallipoli came in sight, all the officers gathered on the bridge, glasses in hand. Colonel Patterson had with him Lieutenants Gye and Rolo: they spoke Arabic and French, which served with some of the Zionists, though many spoke only Russian, and some, strange to say, nothing but German.

The skipper had been given a chart with his orders, showing where to take up his station. It was just like a plan of the stalls of a theatre. There were six rows of berths for transports, and our place was second from the right in the second row—B 2 it would have been in a box-office plan. As we stood on the bridge surveying the wonderful

panorama, the thought crossed my mind that an American millionaire would have given any money to have changed places with one of us that day.

We were almost opposite the mouth of the Dardanelles, standing off what was afterwards known as "V Beach", about a mile and a half out. Here the *River Clyde* could be seen aground near the shore; but the plan had not worked out quite as intended, for she grounded a little too far from the coast, and a pier had to be constructed of lighters to enable the troops to land. It was for their splendid courage in fixing this pier that Captain Unwin, R.N., and two midshipmen received the Victoria Cross. In the *Clyde* were Munster and Dublin Fusiliers, and some of the Hampshire Regiment.

Between the "stalls" and the coast were numerous battleships and cruisers firing broadsides. *Euryalus*, flagship of the Helles fleet, away on our port bow, carried the Admiral and General Hunter-Weston, Commanding the 29th Division: other ships supporting the landing were the *London*, *Lord Nelson*, *Agamemnon* and *Cornwallis*. One or two were beyond the mouth of the Straits. The Russian cruiser *Askold*—conspicuous for her five funnels—and several French ships were firing on the Asiatic side. With the naked eye we could distinctly see the bursting of the shells, and with our

glasses could sometimes follow their effect. Kum Kale, on the Asiatic side, a village of mud buildings, was undergoing a furious bombardment. Shell after shell of large calibre burst over it, and houses and huts were literally blown into mid-air. The hill of Achi Baba, too, was receiving a great deal of attention. Terrific clouds of smoke and dust heralded the arrival on its peak of the twelve-inch contributions of the *Cornwallis* and other ships.

But at V Beach the landing on that Sunday morning had failed. The village of Sedd-el-Bahr was found to contain machine-guns and snipers galore, and it was necessary to defer the landing until the village had been cleared. The men in the *Clyde*, as they emerged from the ship, had almost all been shot down: the men in the tows fared no better. Only a very few got ashore. Late in the afternoon, the ships' guns opened on Sedd-el-Bahr; and, with the assistance of a Brigade, which, headed by the Lancashire Fusiliers, had fought their way up the cliffs at W Beach a few hundred yards to the left, the village was cleared of the enemy. A successful landing at V was effected that night, and in the early hours of Monday morning. The Dublins and Munsters lost between them over 800 men—many of them killed before they ever set foot ashore. A composite battalion was afterwards formed from the

remnants of the two battalions, and called the "Dubsters".

On the Monday the shelling on the European side was less, and the landing was continued successfully. Some of the batteries were put ashore, and we could see the guns being dragged up the rough cliff road and coming into action on the crest. On the Asiatic side there was heavy artillery fire all day, and it seemed as if the French must be meeting with strong opposition. At intervals, transports would arrive from Mudros and drop anchor at their allotted berths. The "stalls" were filling up and we watched anxiously for the *Ramazan*, but she did not appear. Occasionally a picket-boat would come out and a naval officer would shout orders through a megaphone to the skipper of a transport. Then the ship would move out of the line and go closer in to discharge her cargo. We waited eagerly for our turn: surely the mules must be wanted to carry ammunition to the men as they advanced further from the beaches. Colonel Patterson took a ship's boat and pulled over to the *Euryalus* where he reported himself to General Hunter-Weston. On his return we heard that things were going satisfactorily now, but the landing of the covering parties had been effected at a terrible cost, and progress was very slow. Both the hospital-ships had steamed away on the Sunday morning full of

wounded. Now the wounded had to be taken to the empty transports, for no more hospital-ships were available.

At last the picket-boat was seen heading in our direction. Through the megaphone came the question, "Is the Zion Mule Corps on board?"

"Yes," we shouted back.

"Well, you are to go in alongside the *Cornwallis*, and land at once."

The *Cornwallis* was opposite V Beach, a mile or so closer in. She was in action all the time, and when we drew alongside the concussion caused by her big guns shook our ship.

A party of bluejackets, under Lieutenant Bowden-Smith, R.N., of the *Euryalus*, came aboard to assist the landing of the Zionists. The mules were slung from the holds into lighters, which were made fast to the ship. Colonel Patterson had asked for eight Indians to go ashore with each lighter to help his men, and all my drivers wanted to be the first to land. The selection fell on a Dogra, Naick Narain Singh, and men of his troop. When the lighters were ready a picket-boat took them in tow and made for the *River Clyde*. On nearing the pier, she cast off the lighters, and the men had to jump into the water with the mules. Led by Driver Bir Singh, a splendid little Dogra, with four mules, they leapt into the sea which was about up to their necks.

As they stepped ashore, a shell from behind whistled over their heads and plunged into the sand just in front of them. The men knew they would land under fire: they would have been disappointed if there had been none; but this was entirely unexpected. My first thought was that it was a shell with a defective fuse from one of our ships, which had burst short. But one after another they came, and soon we realised that they were being fired from Asia, across the mouth of the Straits. The beach was only a narrow strip of sand, with a low bank under which the first parties from the *Clyde* had taken shelter, but which provided no shelter at all from these "whizz-bangs". They were only small shells, however, and did very little damage. I saw two men sitting under the bank boiling a kettle: a shell burst between the two, hurting neither, but I don't think they got their tea.

It was a busy scene on this strip of beach and on the grassy slopes above. Under the walls of the village of Sedd-el-Bahr, which afforded some protection from the Asiatic shells, was a big camp of French troops; they had piled their arms and were sitting about, smoking cigarettes. The Anson Battalion of the Royal Naval Division was acting as "beach party", pulling guns ashore and dealing with all sorts of stores: they paid no attention to the fire. By now all the machine-guns and

snipers commanding the beach had been disposed of, and the infantry had advanced far enough to put the beach out of rifle range. As the mules came ashore, they were rushed up to an empty space near the French camp and picketed there. A lighter containing water-tins had arrived at the pier, and Colonel Patterson was organising a chain of his men to pass them along from hand to hand. These Zionists were taking their baptism of fire well: they had their fill of it the next few days, for water and ammunition were required at once, and the men had to go straight into action.

Several of the naval officers superintending the landing had had no sleep since leaving Mudros and were pretty well played out, but they carried on regardless of themselves. A lighter containing guns drew in, and men were wanted to drag them ashore and up the slope. Everybody lent a hand. A naval officer fixed a long rope to the gun, and a mixed team of sailors, soldiers, Marines and mule-drivers hauled it up the hill. Everybody seemed to be in a good temper and anxious to help everybody else.

Above the beach a burial party was hard at work digging a huge grave: close by were laid the corpses of the gallant men who had fallen in the last two days. There were quite 300 laid out in rows. A padre and a couple of doctors walked down the lines, collecting identification discs and

making lists. It was a grim sight, but death seems different in war.

"Poor fellows," some one said. "How young they look."

But surely it is not the men themselves that we should pity. For them to die thus is a glorious thing. It is to those who love them and are left behind that one's sympathy goes out. Many bodies lay under the water, close to the beach: weighed down by their heavy kit, men had fallen and been unable to rise. Others had been shot in the boats before they reached the shore. A bluejacket told me that in his boat seventeen soldiers out of twenty had been hit.

A distinguished-looking French General, with an English Staff Officer, was strolling up and down. He hailed Colonel Patterson as an old friend, and the Colonel introduced me to General d'Amade, the Commander of the French force.

Headquarters of the 29th Division were at W Beach. I was anxious to let them know that Baddeley, with 300 mules, was in the *Ramazan*, only waiting for orders to land. Colonel Patterson came with me along the cliff to W Beach, afterwards known as Lancashire Landing, to commemorate the heroic deeds of the Lancashire Fusiliers. On the way we passed the fort of Sedd-el-Bahr, where on two of the huge but antiquated guns direct hits had been made. This fort had

been put out of action during the naval bombardment in March: it was in a very exposed position, in full view from the sea, and the gun-emplacements were anything but up to date. We came upon a party of Engineers pumping water into a canvas tank. They had found a splendid spring in the cliff, and were getting a plentiful supply of water.

The A.Q.M.G. of the 29th Division promised to wire for the *Ramazan* to start from Mudros at once. He wanted pack-mules badly, for it was quite obvious that wheeled transport could not be used until better roads had been made.

It was getting dark when we found a picket-boat to take us back to our ship. The Asiatic battery was at it again, and shells hit the beach, the water and the *Clyde.* Orders came to discontinue landing during the night, for the tide made it difficult.

On our return, Colonel Patterson sent Rolo ashore to look after the men already landed, and ordered Gye to remain until the ship was cleared. It had been a very exciting day. There was no feeling of being "out of it" now: one was in it with a vengeance.

The landing of the Zionists was completed next day. During the morning some more French troops landed near Cape Greco, and we watched them climb the cliff and advance to the attack.

The Turks opened artillery fire at them from front and rear, but their shooting was very bad indeed, and the French went on calmly in extended order. The Asiatic batteries were pitching their shells short, most of them falling into the sea, and such casualties as did occur were from shrapnel fire in front. Some excitement was caused by a Taube visiting the shipping: it dropped six bombs, the nearest of which fell a ship's length from our bows into the sea, making a terrific splash which dispersed the men on the forecastle.

As soon as the Zionists were off, we made for Gaba Tepe. As we steamed up the coast we were overtaken by two famous ships, the *Queen Elizabeth*, going dead slow beside us all the way, and the *Amethyst*. The renowned "Lizzie" is magnificent, with her 15-inch guns fore and aft. The cruiser *Amethyst* had the distinction of having gone further up the Dardanelles than any other ship. Off Gaba Tepe we dropped anchor a mile out, between the balloon-ship and H.M.S. *Ark Royal*, which carried the sea-planes.

The transports of the Australasian Army Corps, with their covering ships and the great sausage-balloon hovering over them, had been visible from Cape Helles. The landing here had been effected with success; but the impetuous Colonials who formed the covering-party had gone too far without supports, and, running short of ammunition,

had had to retire to their first position. They were evidently firmly established now, for the landing was in full swing. It was not long before a tug and lighters came out to us, and the disembarkation of the mules began.

The first impression given by the now famous Anzac position was one of amazement that it could ever have been taken at all. The beach is very narrow, and the cliffs rise almost sheer from the sea. Gaba Tepe Point lies a mile to the south, and it was there that it had been intended to land, but in the grey light of dawn the ships had overshot the mark, and it was well that they did so, for the landing at "Anzac" took the enemy by surprise. They had made none of the elaborate preparations for defence which characterised Cape Helles, and Gaba Tepe, too, as we afterwards discovered. There was no barbed wire, and the Turks had to bring guns up and train them on the beach after the landing had actually begun. But the storming of the heights was a glorious feat of arms of which the Colonial troops and their countrymen are entitled to be proud. Walker's Ridge on the left looks a well-nigh impregnable position, towering above the sea to a height of perhaps 400 feet. The only easy gradient was through the valley afterwards known as Shrapnel Valley and Monash Gully; but this was a perfect death-trap, for snipers and machine-guns lay concealed in the thick under-

growth of the hills on either side. From the sea, shrapnel could be seen bursting on top of the cliffs, over the beaches and on the water, for the position was in full view of the Turkish gunners at Gaba Tepe. Every boat that went ashore was shelled, but luckily the shooting was none too good.

As our first two lighters laden with mules approached the land, one of them began to sink. Hurriedly letting down the end of the lighter, the mules were pushed into the water and made their own way ashore, while the men jumped into the other lighter. All the mules were saddled up, so no equipment was lost—only a few bags of grain and bales of hay. I found Colonel Knox on the beach with his head bound up, having been hit by a splinter of shell the first day. He told me that for the present my detachment would be attached to the Australian Division, and that I was to report to Colonel Marsh, of the A.S.C.

The congestion on the narrow beach was appalling : there was scarcely room to move. The portion now known as Anzac Cove was the chief centre of activity. Here a couple of rough piers had been built by the Engineers, and all day and night picket-boats and lighters were drawing alongside with loads of men, guns, animals, ammunition and stores. Supply and Ordnance depots were established on the beach, where there were already a lot of battery horses and gun-limbers and two sets of

mule-lines. A portion of the 33rd Mule Corps had landed with two Indian Mountain Batteries, and the other half of the Zion Corps was already ashore and attached to the New Zealand Division.

It took three days to clear our ship. The ninety carts had to be put together in the hold and then slung complete into lighters. The hold of a ship, crammed with component parts of carts, is not exactly the place one would choose to work in, and we were terribly short-handed. No naval working party was provided here: the drivers had to do all the work, find parties to escort every lighter-load of mules, and work the mules ashore. But the men worked hard, with little rest, until the job was finished. One nasty accident occurred. A ladder leading from the 'tween-decks to the hold gave way, and a driver fell headlong some thirty feet into the midst of the carts. He was very badly hurt, fracturing a thigh and sustaining other injuries. A signal was made to the hospital-ship *Devanha*, which, with great promptitude, sent a boat for the unfortunate man.

With only one Britisher besides myself, the control of the landing was difficult. It was essential for one of us to remain ashore to run the transport, and I sent Mr. Brown to do this, myself making the journey backwards and forwards, attending to the landings and seeing the ship cleared. Most fortunately, Colonel Marsh could speak

Hindustani, having served for several years in the 9th Bengal Lancers; and he found another man, one Driver Cullen of the A.S.C., who also knew the language and rendered valuable aid. The mules were picketed on the open beach at the south end of the position, called Brighton Beach, and the men scraped out holes in the sandy cliff for themselves.

No sooner was our ship done with than the *Ramazan* arrived and had to be unloaded. She had disembarked Baddeley and his party at Cape Helles on the night of the 29th under heavy shell-fire which had been directed on the transports as well as on the beaches, and the *Ramazan* had to weigh anchor and move out of the way. It was several days, owing to the scarcity of lighters, before the ship was emptied and the whole of my command ashore. One more lighter was sunk coming in, but fortunately it contained only forage. It was arranged that the *Ramazan* should remain as our depot-ship; so all our reserve gear and material was left on board, there being no room for it on the beach.

Before the landing was completed some of the enemy big guns succeeded in hitting the transports: at once there was a general scurry, and all the shipping seemed to be on the move. The smaller craft hastened to the assistance of the damaged ships. The transports weighed anchor

and steamed further out, where they formed up again out of range, while the men-o'-war changed their positions. H.M.S. *Queen* was the flagship during the Anzac landing, and in addition there were *Triumph*, *Bacchante*, *Prince of Wales* and *Ark Royal*. The *Queen Elizabeth* only remained a day or two before going south again. Until the submarines appeared these ships must have had rather an enjoyable time: they had plenty of pretty shooting, and although the enemy tried to retaliate by sending over some big shells from the forts of Kilid Bahr and Chanak, which raised great columns of water where they pitched, no serious damage was done to a single one of our men-o'-war. The lot of the trawlers and picket-boats was a much less enviable one: they had to run the gauntlet of shrapnel fire every journey, and were constantly hit. The cool courage and resource of the midshipmen who commanded the picket-boats was most praiseworthy, as was their efficiency in handling their boats. The skippers and crews of the trawlers were all of the hardy fisherman type, who spend their lives in peace-time braving the rigours of the North Sea. To them difficulties and dangers were a matter of course.

The Turks made furious and frequent attacks, firing incessantly, so that little sleep was possible; but the Australians and New Zealanders had gained their footing and did not mean to lose it. They

were absolutely confident of their ability to hold on against all attempts to drive them out. An advance was out of the question until the Cape Helles troops were able to join up. In the meantime the position at Anzac threatened the Turkish line of retreat, and necessitated the retention of a large force to prevent their communications being cut.

CHAPTER XV

EARLY DAYS AT ANZAC

THE position at Anzac is best described as a bite out of a biscuit. It was a rough semi-circle, the seashore forming the diameter and the trenches the circumference, while no part of the firing-line was much more than a mile from the beach, and on the right and left the flank trenches reached right down to the sea. The whole area was something under 700 acres.

On the right, the trenches ran from low ground by the beach, gradually ascending till at Quinn's Post and Pope's Hill they must have been 300 feet above the sea. Working round to the left, the ground was higher still, culminating in Walker's Ridge—the most commanding feature of the position, whence a magnificent view could be obtained.

Looking to the north, across the low scrub-covered hills, the village of Anafarta could be seen, its tall white mosque standing out conspicuously: beyond were the "W" hills and Suvla Ridge. Near the sea, the country was flatter and more open, and only a few hundred yards outside our

lines were fields of poppies, whose brilliant scarlet added a pleasing splash of colour to the landscape. To the west, across the sea, lay the islands of Imbros and Samothrace. The sun used to set behind Samothrace with all the glory for which sunsets in the Ægean Sea are famous. The view from Walker's Ridge at sundown on a fine day was hard to beat: its peaceful beauty ought never to have been disturbed by the din of battle. Anzac would have been a splendid holiday resort in happier times, with its grand climate in the early summer months: fine golf links could be laid out along the stretch between the old position and Suvla Bay; there is good sea-fishing, too; and those rugged hills must surely contain some kinds of game, while the sea-bathing is of the very best—the water clear and warm, and deep within a few yards of the shore.

Almost everywhere the Turkish trenches were on higher ground than ours. Between the hills were numerous gullies, used as rest-camps for troops out of the trenches, for Headquarters of the Army Corps and Divisions, and for mule-lines: the most capacious of these was the one lying behind Walker's Ridge, which later on became the Headquarters of the Indian Mule Corps, and was christened "Mule Gully". Next to it was "Reserve Gully", beloved by 12-pounder "Anafarta" and one of the '75's. There were three gullies

giving on to the main beach at Anzac Cove, known as New Zealand Gully, Army Corps Gully and Anzac Gully. On the right, Shrapnel Valley was a prominent feature: it led to Quinn's Post and Pope's Hill, two posts where some of the heaviest fighting took place. The upper part of this valley was called Monash Gully, after General Monash, of the 4th Australian Infantry Brigade. Above it, on the right, was Shell Green—a large open tract of grass.

From Brighton Beach, on the right of the position, one passed round a point known as Hell Spit to Anzac Cove, whence by way of Ari Burnu Point the North Beach was reached. The reverse slopes of all the gullies and the banks of the cliffs overhanging the beaches soon became a perfect rabbit-warren of holes, forming the homes of those members of the force whose work lay behind the trenches. Every one who would have lived in a billet in France now had a dug-out for his abode. In the early days these dug-outs were rough and ready—no more than a hole scraped in the earth; but as time went on, and it became evident that Anzac was to be a standing camp, great ingenuity (assisted by skilful larceny!) was shown in the construction and improvement of dug-outs. Some became almost palatial, with roofs, doors, and even floors and windows.

The first camp of the Mule Corps on Brighton

Beach was obviously only temporary: it was merely a question of time before we were shelled out of it. However we had to make the best of it, so we did our utmost to provide cover for men and animals by throwing up earthworks and digging deep into the cliffs, while barricades of bales of hay, bags of grain and biscuit-boxes were formed on the exposed flank. We were mainly dependent on our own efforts, but Colonel Marsh was very good in providing fatigue parties of the Australian A.S.C. whenever possible. The drivers were too busy to spare much time for digging, for they were constantly going backwards and forwards to the trenches on the right, carrying supplies and ammunition. As had been anticipated, the question of watering the animals was a critical one at first. Mr. Brown, remembering that he had read in *Robinson Crusoe* something about scraping holes in the sand, adopted this expedient with instant success, and for the first few days, till it became brackish, the mules had nothing but water obtained in this way. When these water-holes failed, the mules had to go to a well south of Brighton Beach, which could not be approached by daylight; and there was not much time to spare for watering during the hours of darkness, as it was then that most of the work was done.

On May 4 a demolition party of about 150 men attempted to land at Gaba Tepe Point. Very

early in the morning destroyers conveying the party drew in close to the shore, but the enemy were not to be caught napping: they were ready entrenched above the beach, along which lines of barbed wire were stretched. The *Triumph* and the destroyers opened fire to cover the landing, but the resistance was too great, and the little expedition had to be taken off without accomplishing its object. Some of the men who had succeeded in landing made their way along the beach, pursued by rifle-fire from the Turks: and half a dozen, very excited, reached our camp safely, but some had been hit and had to be left behind. This little affair could be clearly followed with glasses from Brighton Beach. The destroyers had been very pluckily handled, for they had gone in within a few yards of the shore to cover the withdrawal of the soldiers. The good feeling between soldiers and sailors was shown by each giving three cheers for the others as the party disembarked at Brighton pier.

A day or two later, before our rough entrenchments could be completed, the expected shelling of Brighton Beach began. A man was seen riding along the sands from Gaba Tepe waving a white handkerchief. It seemed odd that he should be doing so in full view of the Turks, if his surrender was in good faith: it looked rather as though he were making signals to the enemy, and some of us

were inclined to finish him off. However, some Australians on the beach, anxious to secure a prisoner, rushed out to meet him, rendering it impossible to shoot without the risk of hitting them. The man was seized, blindfolded, and taken to headquarters. Whether there was any connection between the two incidents I cannot say, but the fact remains that directly that man was out of the way the Turks opened with shrapnel, fired in salvoes of four guns, right into the middle of the mule camp. Everybody went to ground as far as possible, but cover was inadequate, and men and animals began to fall. As soon as there was a lull—but not before a good many mules had been knocked over—an attempt was made to shift the camp, and the mules were rushed round Hell Spit Corner, where—out of the enemy's sight—they were picketed again. All was quiet for two or three hours, and the men were sent back to Brighton Beach to fetch the saddlery and gear. There was only a guard of one N.C.O. and twelve men present, when Colonel Lesslie, the Military Landing Officer, came along with the message from headquarters that all animals were to be moved off the beach and kept in gullies leading into the hills. Colonel Lesslie had scarcely given the order, when "Beachy Bill", as this gun was afterwards called, opened fire again. The guard turned out at once, and—assisted by Australians and New

Zealanders who were standing about and at once volunteered for the work—hurriedly unshackled the mules and led them away. They were followed all along the beach by the persistent and obnoxious attentions of Beachy Bill, whose fire was more like a violent hail-storm than anything else. The men who had gone to fetch the gear came rushing up, headed by Ressaidar Hashmet Ali, and joined in the rescue. Although the site of our new camp could not be seen by the enemy, they must have known where it was, for the fire was deadly accurate, and before safety could be reached eighty-nine mules and two horses had been hit; the N.C.O. of the guard was wounded, Driver Bir Singh hit in the head, and other Indians and several Australians were casualties. Many mules were killed outright, and many others lay where they had fallen, unable to rise: those had to be shot, and that evening the beach was strewn with dead animals—a pitiful sight.

The next thing to be done was to collect the scattered men and animals and find a new camp. A visit to the 26th Mountain Battery, encamped on the slopes above the North Beach, was not exactly encouraging, for Major Bruce, the O.C., said there wasn't a safe square inch anywhere. We had just started to lay out lines in what seemed a fairly secluded spot when we were told that to settle there was to ask for trouble, so we had to

try elsewhere. Finally Mule Gully was selected, and here we pitched our camp. But now the question of water arose again, and animals were urgently needed for duties on the right flank. After consultation with Colonel Marsh, it was decided to leave a troop at Brighton Beach and to dig them thoroughly into the cliff, whilst the water question was solved for the time being by scraping more holes in the sand. Mule Gully was only about 150 yards from the outside trenches on the left, but the cliffs were steep, and it afterwards proved to be about the safest place in the whole position.

On going round the new lines I noticed a big black mare which had certainly not been there before. This was the horse which our Turkish friend had brought in. Nobody seemed to have a better right to her than our Corps, so I took her over as a second charger. As things turned out I never got upon her back, for there was no possibility of riding at Anzac before the Suvla landing in August, and for those operations I lent the mare to General Godley, and she was killed.

To take charge of the detached troop the services of another Hindustani-speaking Britisher were essential to interpret orders to the men. Mr. Galway had been left in charge on the *Ramazan*, and a signal was made for him to come ashore. He joined Mr. Brown and myself in our new dug-out

one evening, delighted to see something at last, for in France he had been all the time at a base. All night long bullets were whistling overhead, and he told us at breakfast they had kept him awake, for it was his first experience of fire. We walked over to Brighton Beach together, and it was arranged that he should share a dug-out with the Sergeant-Major of the A.S.C., so I left him comfortably established there, promising to visit the detachment every day. That very afternoon Beachy Bill got on to the detachment with disastrous effects: Mr. Galway was killed, two drivers were wounded, and again we lost a number of mules. Galway's death was a great blow: he was a splendid-looking man of considerable ability, with a fine record in the Corps. We buried him that night, not twenty-four hours after he had left the ship, the padre reading the service.

A supply-depot was established at the foot of Mule Gully, in charge of Lieutenants Eliot and Higginson of the New Zealand A.S.C. These two officers joined Brown and me in our mess, and this arrangement lasted for three months. The mess dug-out, in which I also slept, was made very comfortable and quite proof against splinters and bullets. Brown was both architect and builder, and showed considerable aptitude for the work. The earth was dug to a depth of about three feet: walls were made of grain-bags filled with sand, a

large biscuit-box, with top and bottom knocked off, forming a good window on the west side. A roof was put on, strips of wood collected from the wreckage of a boat being used as rafters, with a cart tarpaulin stretched over them, and two inches of earth on top. The whole of the south side above the ground line was left open to give a splendid view across the position to Ari Burnu Point, and Imbros Island behind. The furniture consisted of shelves and cupboards of biscuit-boxes, a tarpaulin on the floor, a large-size bully-beef box as a table, a most luxurious camp-chair contributed by Hashmet Ali, and two stools cleverly made by the Corps carpenter from odds and ends. My valise on a layer of hay was the bed, and when rolled up was used as a fourth chair. The open side was fitted with curtains made of ration-bags, which could be let down to keep out the afternoon sun. It was a perfectly comfortable habitation, though a little cramped at times. The dimensions were not more than seven feet long and five feet wide, and about five feet deep, so that when a court-martial was in progress, involving the presence of ten people, or we gave an extra large tea-party, it was apt to be overcrowded. Brown had an orderly, Kangan by name, whose fame as a cook soon spread. It was really wonderful what appetising dishes he succeeded in serving up with only ordinary army rations to work upon. It was a

long time before any bread or fresh meat rations were issued, but plain bully beef or Maconochie rations were good enough for Kangan: he used some of the spices issued amongst the Indian rations, and produced stews and curries of quite extraordinary excellence.

A good road was soon made by the Engineers from Mule Gully to Walker's Ridge. All the traffic on this road passed the dug-out, so we had many callers who would drop in to tea after coming down for a bathe. All ranks from general officers to private soldiers came to call, and sometimes a General would be sitting in one corner of the dug-out and a private in the other. As likely as not, officer and man would be brothers, or the former an old employé of the latter. Lieutenant Eliot met a Major who used to work for him in New Zealand as a labourer. The discipline was not quite what the regular army has been brought up to expect, but it served the purpose and improved as time went on. I remember one private soldier calling at the dug-out on some business matter: he came in, sat down, removed his hat and mopped his brow, remarking, "Lord lumme, it's 'ot!"

Stories of the Anzac men are legion: the following is typical. A Colonel returning one night to his trenches stumbled over a recumbent figure at the bottom of the trench.

"Hullo!" he said. "Who are you?"

A voice replied, "I'm the —— sentry."

"Oh, are you?" said the Colonel. "I'm the C.O."

"Well, 'ang on 'alf a mo', and I'll give you a —— salute."

But, despite some idiosyncrasies which seemed strange to us, the Anzacs were magnificent soldiers. Much has been written of their martial deeds: the praise that has been lavished upon them is fully deserved. The standard of education and intelligence in the ranks is so high that almost any man is fit to command a platoon, and their physique is wonderful: to watch them bathing was a treat, for the build and muscle of almost every one of them would have done credit to a professional strong man. They are delightful fellows to work with: in my job I came in contact with almost every regiment and every department, both officers and men. To serve with the Anzac Corps was a pleasure and an honour.

The Anzacs called every Indian "Johnny" and treated him like a brother, with the consequence that the Indians liked them even more than they had liked the French. I often saw parties of Australians and New Zealanders sitting in the lines, eating *chupatties* and talking to the men; and Hashmet Ali used to tell me how good they were to the Indians, and how much the men appre-

ciated it. Many complimentary remarks were made by the Anzacs about our mules, too. They were not accustomed to these little, hardy, sure-footed beasts, which seemed to impress them favourably, for they used to talk of breeding them for work on their stations after the war.

For the first three weeks nothing but pack-work could be done. Every night long strings of pack-mules would wend their way up the hill-tracks to the trenches, making the short journey four or five times over and returning to the lines not much before daybreak. The main beach at night was a scene of great activity—always thronged with traffic—the beach officers busy every night landing the many requirements of the Army. The A.S.C. and Ordnance had to do most of their loading and taking over fresh stores during the hours of darkness, for the attentions of "Beachy Bill" and others of his ilk were so persistent in the daytime that work was constantly interrupted.

Those of us whose duties took us to the beach established what was called "The Supper Club", with headquarters in the office (made of ration-boxes and bags) of Major Worsley, O.C. New Zealand Divisional Train. Here, about midnight, cheese and biscuits and rum were forthcoming to those who were honorary members of the club. Colonel Lesslie and his two assistants, the two Naval Landing Officers, Commanders Dix and

Cater, Major Worsley and some of his officers were usually there, and very cheery were the gatherings, which helped us greatly to get through the night's work. An opposition show was the dug-out of the officers of the Intelligence Branch, to which we were sometimes invited. They usually managed to produce a bottle of whisky, and their dug-out was the best in the whole position. A story is told of how one morning, when the red-tabbed intelligence officers, together with others of the General Staff, were poring over a map in this palace, an Australian private, wearing the recognised Anzac costume of shorts and boots only, put his head through the door and called out angrily—

"So you're the —— who sneaked our kettle!"

Fortunately, all the Staff possessed a sense of humour.

About the middle of May it was decided to make an effort to use the A.T. carts on the right flank. Hard work by the Engineers had resulted in a rough road being completed through Shrapnel Valley as far as the bottom of the hill on which stood Courtney's Post, where Major Worsley had formed an advance supply and ordnance depot. If carts could be used, the stocking of this depot would be greatly facilitated, and after a careful survey of the road by day it was arranged to send three convoys of twenty carts each. I accompanied the first, and an adventurous time we had. It was

very dark; rifle-fire, always heavy at night, seemed worse than ever; carts kept tipping off the road, and every time there was a halt the bullets seemed to come closer and to be hitting the ground all round us. The road was commanded by enemy snipers, and it seemed as though they could hear the carts, and opened fire whenever the noise ceased. When we reached the depot there was not room to turn: every cart had to be backed out. On the way back there was further trouble when passing No. 2 convoy, of which Mr. Brown was in charge. No. 3 did not complete the journey till after daybreak, and was shelled by Beachy Bill as it marched back along the beach. However, that night's experience enabled us to arrange with the Engineers for the digging out of a yard at the depot where the carts could turn, and for the construction of suitable passing-places along the road, and carts were used thenceforward on that flank.

The trenches on the left flank were held for the first few weeks by a Brigade of the Royal Naval Division, which was afterwards transferred to Cape Helles: many of them had been at Antwerp. The C.O. of one sector was very jumpy, and three nights running there were messages from him, saying that a strong enemy attack was expected and that we must be prepared to move at a moment's notice. As there was nowhere to move to except the sea, this did not involve any par-

ticular preparations. If the Turks had succeeded in making a successful attack and breaking our front lines, we should simply have been driven into the sea, for we had no second line of defence and no supports. However, so long as the *Vengeance* on the left flank and the *Triumph* on the right were there with their guns and searchlights, we felt a strong sense of security.

On May 14 General Birdwood was hit, and had a very narrow escape, the bullet parting his hair; and the following day General Bridges, commanding the 1st Australian Division, was mortally wounded in Shrapnel Valley—a serious loss for the Australians. He was succeeded by Brigadier-General Walker, late of the Border Regiment.

We received a visit from Colonel Beville, who was arranging for the establishment of headquarters of the Mule Train at Cape Helles, where Rennison with No. 3 Corps was now disembarking. Four troops of No. 3, under Conductor Jones, were detailed to land at Anzac, including two troops of the 9th Mule Corps, commanded by Kot Duffadar Bahawal Din and Kot Duffadar Ghulam Rasul, and consisting entirely of men who had been in France with the Lahore Division. They were allotted to the New Zealand Division and located in Anzac, New Zealand and Reserve Gullies. The number of mules to be kept at Anzac for transport work was now fixed at 600: more could not con-

veniently be watered, though a good well had been sunk just above the North Beach for the animals.

All troops available for reinforcements were sent to Cape Helles. With the arrival there of the 43rd and 52nd Divisions and General Cox's Indian Brigade, attacks were made on Achi Baba, the shells from the big guns bursting on the hill being plainly visible from Anzac; but none of these attacks met with any appreciable success. The enemy's defences, helped by the configuration of the ground, were too strong, and the show was hanging fire. Our prospects did not look too bright, for all natural advantages lay with the Turks; and all we could do was to sit tight, strengthening our positions and waiting till strong reinforcements could be sent from home.

CHAPTER XVI

AN ATTACK, AN ARMISTICE AND SUBMARINES

About the middle of May the Turks apparently made up their minds that they would get a move on by flinging our force at Anzac into the sea; then, their communications being safe, they would proceed to drive off the force at Helles. The best plans, however, are apt to miscarry, and in this case they had reckoned without the Australians and New Zealanders, who rejoiced exceedingly when they heard the attack was coming, and still more when it actually came.

The attack began with a preliminary bombardment on the evening of the 18th. For some reason known only to themselves, the enemy opened a cross-fire with guns from three different directions on Ari Burnu Point, at the same time sending over from the Straits—report said from the *Goeben*—some huge shells, all of which pitched well in the sea beyond the North Beach. The whole bombardment—at any rate at our end of the position—did but little damage, and was pretty to watch, the only disturbing element about it being the reappearance of our old German *bête noire* "Black

Maria ". The first of these landed just over the 26th Mountain Battery Camp, some fifty yards from Mule Gully.

The infantry attack began that evening, was renewed at midnight, and continued, with occasional lulls, until eleven next morning. Everywhere it was repulsed with heavy loss to the enemy. On the left, some of them succeeded in getting in between an outpost, which had been recently occupied by us, and the main position; but one of the destroyers got on to them in the open, and they could be seen running about like frightened rabbits, not knowing which way to bolt. I took up some ammunition during the morning, and had a look round from the observation-post on Walker's Ridge: nowhere had our line fallen back, and the piles of dead Turks testified to the success of the defence. The men in the trenches were in high spirits, for they had thought it a bit monotonous before the attack began, and Cape Helles was getting all the fighting. But this was even better than a recruit's musketry course; although it is difficult there to miss the bull's-eye, here it simply couldn't be missed. The Turks came on in masses with supreme courage, but never had a chance. One of the Australians, when asked by the General whether the men in his trench had given the enemy a rough time, replied tersely, "We gave 'em —— 'ell."

The infantry were enthusiastic in their praise of the gunners, especially of the Indian Mountain Batteries, of which there were two at Anzac. Their officers are British, and the men Indians—mostly Sikhs. The guns are carried on mules, and are wonderfully mobile—just the thing for Anzac, where they proved as invaluable as in Indian frontier warfare. Sometimes they were taken right into the front trenches, and frequently succeeded in knocking out enemy machine-guns with their eight-pound shells. The Anzacs on the left flank had special confidence in Captain Whitting of the 26th Mountain Battery, who finished off numerous troublesome machine-guns.

The enemy casualties during this attack were estimated at 7000, whereas our killed and wounded only amounted to 450—mostly due to the men climbing right out of their trenches so as to get a better field of fire. Enver Pasha was said to be present, and to have issued orders that our force was to be thrown into the sea at all costs. The result must have been a painful disappointment.

The sequel to this attack was rather a humiliating one for the Turks, for they sent in a General Officer with a white flag to ask for an armistice to bury their dead, and, after he had paid two visits, arrangements were concluded. The armistice was fixed for May 24: hostilities were to cease from

seven in the morning till four in the afternoon, and burying-parties were to be allowed to work in No Man's Land between the trenches, but neither side was to go more than half-way across.

The silence that morning seemed uncanny after the incessant din to which we had grown accustomed. The armistice was, of course, a Heaven-sent opportunity to review the whole position, and everybody took advantage of it, feeling it to be unnatural to walk about in broad daylight without ever having to run or dodge. Somehow one did not feel quite happy, though one might have known that the Turk is too much of a sportsman to break an armistice. Had there been Germans against us, it would have been a different matter.

I made a bee-line by the cliff for the famous Quinn's Post, which was then held by Tasmanians—a most important point, for it lay on the crest of the hill; had the enemy occupied it, the whole of Shrapnel Valley and the gullies leading out of it would have been at their mercy. Quinn's was not more than fifteen yards from the Turkish trenches opposite, and the continuous fighting which took place there was chiefly with bombs and mines. It was a wonderfully constructed post, with its tunnels and saps, and more than once the enemy set foot in it, but he never stayed there long, always being driven out by counter attacks. Major

Quinn himself, who never left the Post, was killed there at last, having made a great reputation for himself as a fighting soldier.

Between Quinn's and the trenches opposite, burying-parties were at work, order being kept by a huge Turkish *gendarme* in a long blue coat with a white crescent on his arm, and an R.A.M.C. man wearing the Red Cross. They stood side by side half-way across, responsible for the keeping of the compact. The Turkish trenches were lined with men almost shoulder to shoulder, some unmistakable Germans amongst them—probably Staff Officers trying to gain a little information during the armistice. In front of Courtney's the dead were lying thick, and over to the right on an open space, where the guns had caught them, were hundreds of bodies, and the stench was terrible, many of the dead having lain there for days. Those in the trenches say they get used to this appalling smell, but any one unaccustomed to it experiences a feeling of nausea.

One could not see into the enemy's country beyond the trenches, for these lay on higher ground than ours, while they could see down our valleys; but this did not matter much, as they knew the ground before. I must admit that when I looked at those rows of scowling faces manning the trenches—every man with his rifle in his hand—and thought how much the enemy had to gain by

breaking the armistice, I did not feel too comfortable. Had they done so, it seemed as though Enver's object would have been attained; for, though our men had been ordered to stand to arms during the armistice, many a front-line trench had scarcely a man to guard it; and the communication trenches were too narrow for two men to pass, so there would have been inevitable congestion in getting up reinforcements. But "Johnny Turk" behaved like the gentleman he always showed himself to be in Gallipoli; so much so that the Anzacs rather liked him. How absurd it sounds! and what a ridiculously unreal atmosphere this war has created! After regarding Russia for years as our most dangerous enemy, she becomes our bosom friend, while Austrians and Turks, with whom we have formerly been friendly, we now spend our time in trying to kill. Bulgaria, wavering as to which side it will pay her best to join, makes her decision, and a "wise and far-seeing monarch" becomes "Foxy Ferdie". Truly the world is upside down, and the Devil must be laughing in his sleeve. If only the Prussian vermin could have been exterminated without disturbing the rest of the world, what a blessing it would have been.

The next excitement after the armistice was the appearance in the Ægean Sea of German submarines, which heralded their arrival by sinking

H.M.S. *Goliath*. This was the signal for all transports to be withdrawn, only the *Triumph* and *Vengeance*, who put out their torpedo-nets, remaining with some destroyers to guard our flanks. One morning a submarine was reported off Anzac, and at once several destroyers began searching for her, steaming up and down and circling round and round at tremendous speed; but she managed to discharge a torpedo at the *Triumph*, which was standing about a mile out from shore opposite Gaba Tepe. In spite of her nets, the *Triumph* heeled over and turned turtle in twelve minutes, and in twenty minutes she had disappeared. All the destroyers and picket-boats went to the rescue, and most of the officers and crew were saved, but about 100 lives were lost. The *Triumph* herself was a serious loss, for she had inspired us all with great confidence and had done fine service with her guns. After this disaster the *Vengeance*, too, had to leave, and our flanks were protected by the destroyers *Chelmer*, *Rattlesnake* and *Pincher*. The next day the submarine claimed another victim, the *Majestic*, sunk off Cape Helles within a few hundred yards of shore, where the water was so shallow that her ram remained visible for months.

The extreme seriousness of this submarine activity will be understood if it is remembered that every single thing required by the forces in Galli-

poli had to be brought by sea. Anzac at any rate was already in a state of semi-siege, for the enemy were on three sides of us, and, if the line of communication by sea were cut, the force would starve, and the Cape Helles force would fare no better. The prospect made one think a bit; but confidence in the Navy—the natural inheritance of every Britisher, which had been enhanced by a month's campaigning in close touch with its officers and men—never wavered. Every one knows how that confidence was justified. Supply and ammunition ships and transports bearing reinforcements arrived with unfailing regularity; we might never have known that submarines were about, had it not been for the removal of the supporting ships. Whether the particular submarine which did the damage was sunk by the destroyers we never knew. One could not help a sneaking feeling of regard for her crew, for to travel those thousands of miles from home, with the certain prospect of having to cope with the British Mediterranean Squadron at the end, required no small amount of courage. It was a puzzle where the fuel came from; but we heard of at least one innocent-looking sailing-ship, posing as a Greek, which was waylaid and found to contain large quantities of oil.

An incident—very amusing as related by Commander Dix—occurred in connection with the

sinking of the *Triumph*, though it might well have proved a tragedy. When she was hit, a picket-boat happened to be towing two lighters containing A.T. carts away from Anzac. The picket-boat went to the rescue, casting the lighters adrift, and they went ashore close to Gaba Tepe about a mile from our lines. Dix volunteered to try and get them back, and set out one night in a picket-boat. He drew in alongside the first lighter, stepped aboard her to make fast a rope, and gave the order to steam ahead. The rope broke. Dix, somewhat surprised, fixed it again, with the same result. He examined the rope, to find that it had been cut clean through: evidently some sporting Turk, seeing the picket-boat coming, had got into the lighter, and, while another had presumably gone off to warn their friends, had cut the rope to give the others time to come up. Dix was not going to wait to meet them: he got back into the picket-boat and made off full steam ahead. Had he waited, the probability was that picket-boat and crew would have been scuppered. The Turks unloaded the lighters the next night, and, no doubt, made use of the A.T. carts.

Dix used to amuse the Supper Club greatly with his yarns, especially when he got on to the subject of military tactics. It took three pretty severe wounds to make him relinquish his job as Naval Landing Officer, and the D.S.O. to which he was

gazetted was a particularly well-earned reward, for he did great work on the beach.

The Turks, having failed to get rid of the Anzacs by force of arms, now tried what honeyed words would do. They sent over by aeroplane some leaflets, the text of which ran as follows—

"PROCLAMATION TO THE ANGLO-FRENCH EXPEDITIONARY FORCES

"Protected by a heavy fire of a powerful fleet, you had been able to land on the Gallipoli Peninsula on and since April 25. Backed up by these same men-of-war, you could establish yourself at two points of the Peninsula.

"All your endeavours to advance into the inner parts of the Peninsula have come to failure under your heavy losses, although your ships have done their utmost to assist you by a tremendous cannonade implying enormous waste of ammunition.

"Your forces have to rely on sea-transport for reinforcements and supply of food, water and every kind of war materials. Already the submarines did sink several steamers carrying supplies for your destination.

"Soon all supplies will be entirely cut off from your landed forces.

"You are exposed to certain perdition by starvation and thirst. You could only escape useless

sacrifice of life by surrendering. We are assured you have not taken up arms against us by hatred. Greedy England has made you fight under a contract.

"You may confide in us for excellent treatment. Our country disposes of ample provisions; there are enough for you to feed you well and make you feel quite at your comfort. Don't further hesitate. Come and surrender.

"On all other fronts of this war your own people and your Allies' situation is as hopeless as on this Peninsula.

"All news spread amongst you concerning the German and Austrian armies are mere lies.

"There stands neither one Englishman, nor one Frenchman, nor one Russian on German soil. On the contrary, the German troops are keeping a strong hold on the whole of Belgium and on conspicuous parts of France since many a month.

"A considerable part of Russian Poland is also in the hands of the German, who advance there every day.

"Early in May strong German and Austrian forces have broken through the Russian centre in Galicia. Pryzemysl has fallen back into their hands lately.

"They are not in the least handicapped by Italy's joining your coalition, but are successfully engaged in driving the Russians out of Galicia.

"Those Russian troops whose co-operation one moment you look forward to are surrendering by hundreds and thousands.

"Do as they do! Your honour is safe! Further fighting is mere stupid bloodshed."

The aeroplane attempting to drop the leaflets made a bad shot and dropped them in the Turkish trenches, and the Turks seem to have thought that we had shot them over, for they flung them into our trenches, tied to bombs, with scurrilous remarks scribbled on the back of the leaflets.

As may be imagined, they met with about as much success as Enver Pasha's great attack.

CHAPTER XVII

"THE DAILY ROUND, THE COMMON TASK"

THE title of this chapter will convey a false impression if it be taken to imply that the period to be described was dull. Life at Anzac was never dull, and "the daily round, the common task" furnished at all times a great deal more than the most exacting would have dreamt of asking. Amongst the things we could have done without were flies, sniping and shells.

Flies in an Indian bazaar, or in Egypt, are supposed to be plentiful; but there seemed to be more flies to the square inch at Anzac than are found to the square mile anywhere else, and in Mule Gully—owing to the mule-lines and the supply-depot—they were as bad as in the trenches. All one's food was black with them: it was practically impossible to avoid eating them. We tried mosquito-netting to keep them out of the dug-outs, and fly-papers and fly-flaps to slay them when they came in, but to no purpose. They were a veritable plague which rendered any attempt to sleep in the daytime quite futile:

this was particularly trying because there was of necessity so much night work.

The sniping in June was pretty bad. "Snipers' Nest", commanding the North Beach and the ground above it, was a hotbed of them, and many of our men were hit between Ari Burnu Point and Mule Gully, even in the communication trench connecting them. The North Beach had to be placed out of bounds by day. Then there was a hill on which had been an outpost—known as No. 3 Post—that was unfortunately lost, and, in spite of many gallant attempts, not retaken until the Suvla landing, and from this post the Turks did a lot of sniping. The destroyers used to comb out "Old No. 3" and "Snipers' Nest" from time to time, and this would mean a day or two of respite, but never for long. On the right flank an elaborate system of communication trenches and traverses had made Shrapnel Valley much safer than before; but Brighton Beach was a bad place, and a point just south of it had the ominous name of "Casualty Corner".

It was particularly annoying to be sniped while bathing: one felt so utterly helpless without any clothes on. One's instinct is at any rate to turn up one's collar. The safest place to bathe on the left was just by the flank trench, where a couple of barges had run aground, and one could go through the trench to the beach and undress

under a bank in safety. Often there would be nothing doing, but sometimes it was advisable to crawl behind the barges and lie down in the water. One day three men were having a swim when a sniper opened on them. They swam as hard as they could for the barge and reached its cover safely, but the sniper had not done with them, and fired a few shots at the barges just to show the bathers he was still there. At last the boldest of the three made a run for it, but as he came round the end of the barge the sniper fired, and again as he darted across the beach. This was discouraging for the others, but at last No. 2 decided to have a try. His reception was the same as No. 1's, and No. 3, thinking that the better part of valour was discretion, waited shivering till dark. Another day four men passed my dug-out carrying towels. I called out to them that they had better not bathe as the sniping was bad. But they went on : three were killed and the fourth wounded.

The 9th Mule Corps *dhobi*—one Lachman—acted as a sniping barometer. He washed clothes for all our men and for half the Anzacs as well, and at the water's edge beat them to rags on sharp stones after the manner of his kind. All day long he did this, singing as he worked. He took not the slightest notice of snipers, though he was wounded twice—fortunately not severely—

and it was useless to forbid him to do his dhobying, for he paid no heed. Whenever I went down to bathe, Lachman would give me his permission or withhold it according to the state of the sniping, and I found it wise to follow his advice. He was a plucky little fellow and a great favourite in the Corps.

My orderly, Ajaib Shah, was disturbed during his bathe one day by several shots, and returned saying that Anzac was a very difficult place to remain alive in. Chaffingly, I suggested that cases had been known of men dying of fright, to which he replied—

"Sahib, if a man could die of fright, I should have been dead long ago."

Poor Ajaib Shah was one of the many bathers whom the snipers eventually claimed as a victim, for he was hit through the right elbow whilst in the water. He wept bitterly at having to go away. Just before he left he called me in as arbiter to settle a dispute between himself and his friend Karim Baksh. A lot of money was at stake, for an Indian is always ready to back his opinion to the extent of a month's pay. Was the French for "milk" "lait" or "du lait"? My decision that both were right, and all bets were therefore off, satisfied neither.

Bathing was also permitted at the main beach, where a dive into deep water could be had from

the end of the pier; but the water there was not so clean as at our end, and, although there was no sniping, there was always the possibility of a few rounds of shrapnel from Beachy Bill. In the hot weather evenings the water was alive with men, and it was quite funny to watch the scurry for safety when Beachy Bill began.

Bathing at Anzac was a cosmopolitan affair: talking to a man in the water one never knew whether he was an officer of high rank or a private soldier. This gave rise to some comic situations. A colonel, portly but dignified, was drying himself on the pier when an Australian private, similarly engaged, looked him up and down critically, remarking—

"Say, mate, yer look just about ready for the knife. What 'ave yer been doin', gettin' into the biscuit-boxes—eh?"

With all its drawbacks, the sea-bathing was a perfect godsend: without it life would have been intolerable, for there was never enough fresh water to wash either oneself or one's clothes.

Shelling at Anzac was nearly as common as rain in Ireland, happening almost every day—sometimes more, sometimes less. Occasionally the Turks would open a new box of "assorted shells", and every gun would have a turn. Beachy Bill and Anafarta, or "Annie" for short,

did the most damage until the ·75's appeared. "Christians, awake" was an early bird which occasionally caught a worm or two. "Lazy Bob" was large but tired, and usually "too proud to fight." There was not a great deal of heavy stuff, though three 8-inch shells of a very antiquated pattern fell in Mule Gully one afternoon. Lance-Naick Mehdi Khan staggered up to my dug-out, carrying one of them in his arms, observing, "Kaisa bara goli, sahib!" (What a big shell, sir!) He did not realise that the thing was alive and might blow him to pieces any moment!

Every now and then, of course, there would be extensive damage, but on the whole it was remarkable how few casualties the shells caused, considering that the Turks knew every inch of our position and had all the ranges accurately tabulated. Although work was done as far as possible by night on the beaches, a certain amount had to be got through by day, and the Landing Staff, A.S.C. and Ordnance Corps all suffered heavily. Traverses of ration-boxes were put up at intervals of twenty or thirty paces all along the beach, and, directly shelling began, every man was supposed to take shelter behind a traverse. Colonel Lesslie and Commander Cater used to stand on the pier and wait till every one was under cover, and then stroll back to shelter themselves, unless a boat happened to be coming

in. Then they would remain out in the open whatever happened.

The dug-outs above the beach were often hit, and many a valuable life was lost in that way. Lieutenant Onslow, General Birdwood's A.D.C., a most promising officer and a charming fellow, was killed whilst asleep by one of the few shells which the Turks sent over at night. It was fortunate they did not send more, for at night the beach was always crammed, and we could never understand why they did not turn on Beachy Bill since they must have known what was going on.

The British Staff of the Mule Corps had now been greatly increased. Second-Lieutenant Cullen of the 10th Australian Infantry came as second in command, and several N.C.O.s were attached as interpreters. It was remarkable how many among the Anzacs knew a little Hindustani: some had been in India, and others had worked with Indians in the Fiji Islands. These interpreter billets were rather sought after, because they meant getting out of the trenches and living in greater comfort; moreover, interpreters had the rank and pay of corporals. Many candidates appeared for a preliminary interview who could scarcely speak a word of the language, and seemed quite hurt when they were rejected. Most of the men who were taken on were first-rate fellows, but they

were an ill-fated lot, for one was killed the day he joined; four or five were wounded, and most of the remainder were invalided. There was one, Corporal Kirwan, who seemed to be a magnet for shells, and the superstitious drivers preferred to keep out of his way.

Cullen knew no Hindustani at all and had little natural aptitude for languages, but he was tremendously painstaking and got on very well with the men; and it was useful having another officer, though he was a novice at transport work. He was shy when he first joined the mess, being many years younger than the rest of us, but he soon found his feet and became very popular.

The loss of both Indian officers was a severe blow to the Mule Corps. Ressaidar Hashmet Ali contracted pneumonia and had to go to a hospital-ship. He was very reluctant to give in and begged the doctors to let him remain, but he was sent to Malta, whence he wrote that he was getting on well. Jemadar Wali Mahomed was wounded by a stray bullet while working in the sick-lines: he was back again in a month, very much pleased to have been hit, for it was his fourth campaign and he had not previously had the distinction of being wounded.

When the weather got hot in June, we levelled a bit of ground outside the dug-out and spread a tarpaulin awning over it: here we used to have

our meals, and a very pleasant place it was, for the flies were less numerous than in the dug-out, and we had more air and a lovely view. Eliot and Higginson had crowds of friends among the New Zealanders, who used to look us up whenever they came our way. General Russell, with his Staff Officers, Major Levin (who was killed on the last day of the evacuation of Anzac) and Captain King, were constant visitors: their head-quarters was just above us, on Walker's Ridge. Captain Hore of the 8th Australian Light Horse and his brother-in-law Trooper Lacy, whom I had known in Hobart, spent some of their spare time with us. Hore was a clever artist, and used to produce admirable sketches drawn in the trenches. Captain Acland, who had lost an arm tiger-shooting in India, but insisted on coming with the first contingent, was another of our friends, and Majors Worsley and Gibbs of the A.S.C. The two latter lived together in a dug-out on the main beach and often gave me lunch, for my work took me that way every morning. They ran a splendid mess with Captain Anderson, adjutant of the New Zealand Train, and Lieutenant Rogers, who won the V.C. in South Africa. We were sitting in their dug-out one day when Sir Ian Hamilton and his Staff came ashore. Beachy Bill was active at the time and one shell landed plumb on the pier just before their boat arrived. A

Staff Officer who met the party was evidently urging them to hurry; but as they stepped on to the beach a shell pitched right in the middle of them. We held our breath. But the C.-in-C. and all his party emerged unhurt from the cloud of sand caused by the explosion and walked calmly on—truly a marvellous escape.

I paid two week-end visits to Cape Helles to inspect the detachment of No. 1 Corps, and to confer with Colonel Beville. The four troops which had been left at Alexandria for the Indian Brigade had joined up, so that the major portion of No. 1 Corps was there. A regular service of trawlers worked between Imbros (the camp of General Headquarters), Anzac and Cape Helles.

The first visit was uneventful. Baddeley had been hit in the nose when taking up ammunition the night before, and Pulleyn was now commanding the detachment. Rennison was there and Sergeant Levings and Ressaidar Amir Khan, and it was a great pleasure to see them all again. Sergeant Levings told me very seriously that he wished to make a suggestion—that "as the troops seemed unable to take Achi Baba, and the Mule Corps had 300 carts lying idle, these should be sent out and the bally hill brought in." I found Colonel Patterson, Gye and Rolo in a delightful camp about a mile inland, where they had a sumptuous dug-out and lived in comparative

comfort. The Colonel thought badly of the state of affairs, and predicted that Achi Baba would be impregnable. His Zionists had suffered many casualties, and every one spoke well of their work.

A wonderful change had taken place since the first few days after the landing, the country now looking almost like Salisbury Plain, with thousands of tents and horse and mule-lines. Splendid roads had been made, along which motor transport and ambulances were in use, and there was plenty of room to ride and walk about. There was a large aerodrome between W and V Beaches. The latter had been made over to the French, who now had two Divisions ashore and were holding the right of the line. The Indian Brigade was on the left, and the British Divisions in the centre. Colonel Beville, Pulleyn and Rennison were living in tents, having a large "funk-hole" to which to retire when shelling became too heavy. At Cape Helles they had no sniping or rifle-fire and little shrapnel in the camps behind the trenches, but they made up for this by a liberal allowance of high-explosive shells—most upsetting to the nerves. A good many mules had been killed and wounded, but the casualties in men were proportionately much less than ours at Anzac. Baddeley had just been taken to the hospital-ship when I arrived, but I managed to

see him later on when the ship called at Anzac before leaving for England ; he was then making a splendid recovery from what had been a very nasty wound, for his nose had been transplanted to a position somewhere under his ear. But it was back in its right place when I saw him, and, apart from a pronounced nasal twang and the loss of his sense of smell, he was little the worse.

My second visit to Helles, a month later, was rich in interest. Sniped on my walk to Anzac Cove, shelled on the pier whilst waiting for a boat, shelled in the picket-boat when going ashore at W Beach, and all the way from the Beach to the camp, I arrived just in time for lunch. Scarcely had we sat down when we were told that a ship was sinking. It was a large French ammunition-ship, which, luckily having discharged her cargo, lay not far from the shore. A submarine had fired two torpedoes ; one missed a French battleship, but the other hit the store-ship. As the battleship made off, our old friend the Asiatic whizz-bang peppered her stern with shrapnel. In exactly four minutes the ammunition-ship had disappeared. Her bow rose from the water till she was perpendicular ; then she settled down by the stern. The few men who were on board were picked up by small boats, and only six lives were lost.

Colonel Beville took me to an observation-post and explained the position. With glasses it was very clear, and one could see the lines of trenches distinctly: those held by the Naval Division were being strafed at the time, and the French ·75's on the right of the Allies' line were making a vigorous reply. A general attack by the enemy began at dawn next morning, and during the whole day the beach camps were subjected to fierce bombardment from front and rear, "Asiatic Annie" hurling huge shells across the Straits, which churned up the ground and raised great clouds of dust. W Beach was getting the worst of it, particularly the ammunition dumps and ordnance stores. A party of our drivers had been sent on fatigue duty under an Indian N.C.O. to work on W Beach, and Colonel Beville—seeing how heavy was the fire—told the Sergeant-Major to send a British N.C.O. to take charge. But there was no need: as usual Sergeant Levings had dashed off directly the "strafe" began, and was in the thick of it, looking after the men. Taubes flew over and dropped bombs upon the camps. One could hear the bombs coming with a sort of swishing sound, and it always seemed as though they were falling straight on to one's head. Even Colonel Beville went to ground when he heard that ominous "swish", although as a rule he scorned

to take any cover whatever. The *Peninsular Press* — the *Daily Mail* of the M.E.F. — announced that some 1500 shells had been fired on the beaches that day—the heaviest bombardment since the original landing. But the casualties were astonishingly few.

That evening a squadron of eleven aeroplanes set out from Tenedos to raid Chanak. They made a striking picture as they disappeared in the sky, coloured mauve and red by the setting sun. We counted them as they returned: all got safely back, having successfully accomplished their mission. As the trawler was starting on her journey to Anzac, W Beach was catching it again. Two or three shells hit the ammunition stacks with terrific explosions, the bursts of flame being hastily extinguished by the workers on the beach. The Greek working-parties seemed to take no part in this: they made themselves scarce directly the first shell appeared, and remained in seclusion in the safest spots they could find.

That week-end was the most eventful one I have ever spent.

The hospital-ships, painted white with a big red cross, and with lines of little green lamps at night, always looked very attractive as seen from Anzac. One morning Eliot and I obtained permission to go on board the *Sicilia*, and the visit was a pleasant break in the life we led ashore. It

happened that a heavy swell got up while we were on board, becoming later a regular squall, and it was impossible for any boat to come ashore, so we were constrained to stay the night. The medical officers on board were more than kind, and we had the great pleasure of dining in the saloon with Colonel Gimlette, the P.M.O., and some nurses. It was a treat to talk to a lady again, and to dine at a comfortable table amidst civilised surroundings. Champagne seemed very good by contrast with rum and indifferent water.

Some of my wounded drivers were in the ship, amongst them a Sikh, Chanda Singh, who had met with a terrible accident while acting as orderly to the Hindu doctor of the corps. A friend who shared his dug-out had entrusted to his care what they both thought was a small lamp. Chanda Singh put a match to it, with the result that his left hand was blown completely off and part of his jaw was blown away. The friend, when taking bombs up to the trenches, must have stolen one under the impression that it was a lamp. Chanda Singh was conscious when I saw him in the ship, and talked quite intelligently. It was pathetic to hear him murmur that he would die happy now that his sahib had come to him. It is not surprising that one grows attached to the Indian soldier, for his faithfulness to his own sahib is a thing to wonder at. The doctors gave no hope

of saving him, but I heard that Chanda Singh arrived safely in Alexandria, though I have never been able to ascertain whether he ultimately recovered.

The storm had played havoc with the piers at Anzac, and the tide had risen much higher than ever before and had invaded some of the offices on the beach. If one brief squall could do so much damage, the outlook, when really rough weather should set in, was a poor one. It was not all "beer and skittles" at Anzac in June and July, and yet—though there was much to put up with—there was much to enjoy; looking back upon it all, the recollection of good times predominates over that of the bad.

CHAPTER XVIII

PREPARATIONS FOR AN ADVANCE

THE Dardanelles Expedition seemed to have come to a standstill, but the higher commands knew—what the men did not—that large reinforcements were coming out, and that in due course the attempt to penetrate inland would be renewed. All the energies of the Staff were directed to preparations for the coming advance.

One matter of vital importance was the water-supply. The watering of the troops and animals already ashore caused considerable anxiety, and to cater for thousands of reinforcements as well was a problem requiring much forethought. The water for the men was brought ashore in specially constructed lighters filled from a water-ship. The Turks knew these water-lighters well by sight, and made a dead set at them: several were sunk during the journey from the ship to the shore, and others when lying alongside the pier while the water was being pumped into tanks on the beach. More than once the supply ran short, and the daily water-ration had to be reduced to half a gallon a man—quite insufficient, considering the

heat and hard work. A scheme was drawn up for a pipe system to distribute water all over the position, and an engine was erected under the cliff at Anzac Cove to pump it into a huge reservoir, whence pipes were laid to the various gullies. The enemy could see all this being done and did their best to interfere. They hit the engine and the reservoir, and frequently pierced the piping with shrapnel, so the date by which the scheme was to begin working had to be postponed over and over again. Pending its completion every drop of water had to be carried from the beach to the trenches by mule transport. On the right flank carts were employed ; on the left flank pack-mules, using the receptacles brought by the Zionists who had been sent away from Anzac some time before. As the weather became hotter some of the wells ran dry, thus increasing our difficulties, for we were dependent on these wells for the animals. The drivers and mules were working at very high pressure, the shortage of water making it impossible to have more mules ashore, and there was delay in replacing the heavy casualties amongst the drivers.

Another serious problem was to find accommodation for the reinforcements ; the area of the Anzac position was limited, and few places were even comparatively safe. Terraces were carved out from the banks of the various gullies to form

camping-grounds for the new troops, and fatigue work became so heavy that the men really preferred being in the front trenches. By now the health of the troops was falling off, something like 150 men a day being evacuated sick, in addition to the normal wastage of killed and wounded. The restricted space, the flies, and the necessarily insanitary conditions of life had brought dysentery and jaundice in their train.

Towards the end of July, conferences were held to discuss plans for the advance, and the programme of work which lay before the mule transport—in addition to its ordinary duties—was given to me. It consisted of the transportation of twenty million rounds of small-arm ammunition and thousands of shells and bombs to various advanced points where dumps were to be formed. Three thousand sealed tins containing water had to be taken out for the use of the troops during the advance. Innumerable sand-bags had to be carted to the trenches, and substantial advance dumps of rations were required. The time limit was August 3, by which date all this had to be done. No more mules were to arrive until just before the advance began.

Colonel Striedinger, A.D.T., came ashore from G.H.Q. one day, and I was detailed to show him round the position, so that he could form an idea of the transport arrangements which would be

required. We started on the right and worked our way round the front trenches, visiting several observation-posts on the way, till we got down to the supply-depot in Monash Gully, where we called on Captain Acland and discussed supply arrangements.

In one of the saps, only a few yards from the enemy's trenches on Walker's Ridge, was an exceedingly dirty-looking soldier—a bomb-thrower, whose orders were to throw back two for every Turkish bomb that came over. I asked him whether he ever got the chance of going down to the beach for a bathe. His reply was distinctly comic, considering his position and the nature of his duties.

"No —— fear; we reckon it too —— dangerous."

From the observation-post on Walker's Ridge, we could see the whole of the country across which it was intended to advance. Colonel Striedinger's comment, when we got back, was that it had been the most interesting walk he had ever taken in his life.

What was known as No. 2 Outpost, which had been a quiet and popular part of the position, was now becoming an important centre. It lay about a mile north of Mule Gully and was reached by a communication trench, from which an offshoot led to No. 1 Outpost, held by the Maori con-

tingent. At No. 2 were the Otago Mounted Rifles, whose Colonel, Bauchop,[1] was a friend of Eliot's. We used to walk out there and have tea with Colonel Bauchop in a sort of summer-house he had had fixed up. It was quite a change from the main position; the flies were fewer, and the atmosphere more peaceful. This outpost boasted the best well at Anzac, with a capacity of about 6000 gallons, and cool and delicious water. When first discovered it was something of a death-trap, many being shot on the way there and back; but a trench was dug and cover put up, rendering the well and its vicinity quite safe. Large supplies of ammunition and rations had to be taken to this outpost, which was to be the headquarters of the Staff of the force detailed to advance; but conveying these supplies by pack-mules would have taken so long that we determined to try the carts. Starting from Anzac Cove, there was first nearly a mile of sandy beach for them to traverse, and then a mile of open country. We consolidated the beach to some extent by watering it, and the sappers at night began to build a sunken road, for the whole of the mile of open space was in full view of Snipers' Nest and Old No. 3. However, long before this road was finished, the carts were worked by night,

[1] Colonel Bauchop, C.M.G., was killed on the 7th August at the head of his regiment.

and gradually the traffic itself formed a track good enough to serve the purpose. The shortness of the hours of darkness, especially when there was a moon, was a great trial. There were strict orders that on no account were the convoys to be seen going out to No. 2, as the Staff did not wish the enemy to realise that it was from the left flank that we intended to advance. But one night one of the destroyers inadvertently gave the show away. A convoy was well on its way when the destroyer turned her searchlight right on to it for several minutes, with the result that machine-gun fire opened on the convoy and caused severe casualties. Once before, in the earlier days, the same thing happened when we went outside the line to fetch some shingle. A message had been sent to warn the destroyer that convoys would be out, but there had been some mistake about its delivery. A man who was killed that night was Bajinder Singh—a Sikh who had replaced Chanda Singh as orderly to the Hindu doctor. We were so short of men that all orderlies had to go on duty with the mules also. It was rather odd that these two—the only Sikhs in the corps, and both acting in a peaceful capacity—should have come to grief. There was some difficulty in getting another man to be doctor's orderly; the men regarded it as an ill-fated billet.

The evening after the machine-gun had been turned on to the convoy—while we were sitting at dinner on the terrace—a Turkish gun fired three rounds of shrapnel. The first burst on the beach, beyond the track made by the mule-carts on their way to No. 2 Post; the second pitched a little short of the track, and the third right on it. This seemed distinctly ominous. Brother Turk seemed to be "bracketing" on the track with a view to strafing it later in the evening. It was with some trepidation that the first convoy set out that night; but nothing happened at all.

The unloading of the convoys and stacking of the stores required fatigue parties, and it was very noticeable how worn-out the men were; almost everybody was the worse for wear, and many had dysentery. One could only get the work done by pointing out that the nature of it showed clearly that there was to be a move forward: this would cheer the men up, and they would make an effort. When it became known for certain that reinforcements were coming and a move was to be made, the number of evacuations went down at once. No matter how worn-out a man was, he did not mean to miss the advance. They were a stout-hearted lot, those Anzacs.

The best fatigue parties of all were the Maoris, perhaps because they had not been quite so long

ashore; but, whatever the cause, the way they worked was an eye-opener. One job they were put on to was the widening of the trench to the outpost, which meant pretty stiff digging, but they had it done in a few days. They were very popular—most of them speaking excellent English—and they have pleasant manners, with none of the servility of the Indian about them. The native of New Zealand treats the colonist as an equal. The doctor and the padre used to come and dine with us sometimes. They were highly educated and polished gentlemen.

The shelling about this time was worse than ever—especially on the main beach. Worsley and Gibbs' dug-out, just above the new engine, kept on being hit. Gibbs, returning from a bathe one evening, encountered Beachy Bill and was hit in the foot pretty badly. The same shell got his servant, Private Revel, through the chest, and made a hole through the sailor's hat which Worsley's servant was wearing. That was a bad day for the New Zealand A.S.C., for only a few minutes later their adjutant, Captain Anderson, was hit in the head and died in the hospital-ship the same evening. That line of dug-outs was then evacuated. A day or two later, the New Zealand A.S.C. lost two more officers—Lieutenant Sherring killed in his office on the beach, and Lieutenant Rogers, the V.C., wounded in the

head and shoulder by shrapnel. These two were Australians, and belonged to the 4th Australian Brigade, which was part of the New Zealand Division.

During the preparations for the advance, there was never a day when the Mule Corps escaped casualties. We lost some of our best men, including a splendid *kot duffadar* of the 2nd Mule Corps, who was hit in the calf and had to have his leg amputated. Owing to the late arrival of the sealed water-tins, some had to be carried up by daylight, and Mr. Brown who was in charge had one disastrous day, losing seventeen of the fatigue party and several drivers; but he carried on bravely and got the job done. Some accidents occurred with bombs, too, resulting in severe casualties. As may be imagined, bombs are not a suitable load for a pack-mule; if he is in the least troublesome when being loaded, they are apt to fall off and explode. One night two drivers were killed and an interpreter and five men wounded in this way.

To add to the excitement, we read almost every evening in the "Information" which was published with Army Corps Orders that the Turks were concentrating a large army—said to be 200,000 men—to drive us out, and that an attack with gas and liquid fire might be expected any day. Twice "Information" told us that the attack

would probably occur "to-night". Gas-helmets and respirators were served out, and had to be carried day and night, and lectures given on their use; but it was so hot that one would almost rather have been gassed than wear them. Had a gas attack taken place, the poisonous fumes would have floated down and settled in the gullies; so paths had to be cut from the lines of every troop by which the mules could be taken on to higher ground, where they would, of course, have been shot. Very few animals would probably have been saved if the rumoured attack had come off, but fortunately it never did.

The first of the new troops to arrive was an Artillery Brigade of 5-inch howitzers, and very welcome they were. One of the batteries took up its quarters in Mule Gully, and came into action close by. Major Higgon, the C.O., who had been through all the earlier fighting in France and had won the Legion of Honour, joined our mess for a few days, and surprised us by saying, after he had studied the Anzac position carefully—

"From an artilleryman's point of view, this is an absolutely ideal position; there is only one little thing I would like changed."

We thought he was easily pleased. Then he added—

"If only we could just change over with the Turks, one could wish nothing better."

Higgon was killed in September and was a great loss to the force, for he was a fine gunner and the best of good fellows.

As the date of the big attack drew near, there was renewed life in the men of Anzac. It had been rather disheartening to remain so long on the defensive, and the chance of hitting back was eagerly awaited. Fresh regiments of Australian Light Horse, acting as infantry, and the whole of the 13th Division and 29th Brigade of the 10th Division arrived, and Cox's Indian Brigade which had already played a conspicuous part in all the fighting at Cape Helles.

The scheme of attack was issued confidentially to me to enable me to make the transport arrangements. Act I. was an attack on the trenches at Lone Pine on the right, to prevent the enemy sending troops to resist the main attack on the left. Act II. consisted of an attack from the Walker's Ridge trenches on a hill called "Baby 700"—one of the lower slopes of Chunak Bair—and other local attacks. Act III. was a night-march of a movable column consisting of the New Zealand Division, the 13th Division and the Indian Brigade—moving out past No. 2 and wheeling to the right to attack the Sari Bair range of hills—co-operating with a force of four divisions which was

to land at Suvla Bay. An attack from No. 2 Outpost by the New Zealand Mounted Rifles would assist the movable column by coming up on their right after retaking Old No. 3.

The Indian Brigade—consisting of the 5th, 6th and 10th Gurkhas and the 14th Sikhs—landed at night and camped in Reserve Gully, their Supply Officer, Captain Rebsch, establishing his depot in Mule Gully. He joined our mess, which now underwent some changes: Eliot and Higginson moved out, as their duties took them elsewhere; Brown joined other Warrant and N.C.O.s; and our party now consisted of Cullen, Rebsch, Bird, who had just arrived, and myself.

My orders were to allot a certain number of pack-mules to the New Zealand Division, the 13th Division and the Indian Brigade—the balance to remain as Base Transport. The Australian Division on the right flank, who were not to move, were to have all their transport withdrawn and to carry on as best they could until more mules came ashore. Colonel Marsh managed to get fifty donkeys from Imbros to tide over this period. Conductor Jones, who had been with the N.Z. Division all the time and had done the work of half a dozen men for nearly three months, remained in charge of their new allotment, with Kot Duffadar Bahawal Din as acting adjutant. Second-Lieutenant Cullen was placed in charge of

the mules with the 13th Division, and Captain Rebsch looked after those with the Indian Brigade, in addition to his supply duties. Bird was O.C. Base Transport, and had to supervise the landing of the additional mules.

I sent Cullen out to reconnoitre for new lines somewhere near No. 2 Outpost. He was successful in finding a suitable spot in a gully between Nos. 1 and 2, and we set about making a cutting from the communication trench to the new lines, enabling the mules to get in and out unobserved. To save waste of time in drawing rations, a supply of hay for several days was laid in and stacked in each of the gullies containing mules. Every animal was provided with a small bag tied to its saddle containing three days' grain. Each man was served out with three days' emergency rations.

By the appointed date everything as far as possible was ready, the only serious hitch being the non-arrival of the full number of sealed water-tins. The drivers were done to a turn. How they managed to carry on as they did without more of them breaking down was nothing short of wonderful: for the fortnight preceding the landing they got practically no rest. General Birdwood made a minute inspection of all the transport, and greatly cheered and encouraged the men by saying that he did not know what he would have done without them. The feeling we

all had after his inspection was that mule-transport was the most important thing in the whole of Anzac! Probably every branch of the Service received the same impression, and therein—if one may be allowed to say so—lies the secret of General Birdwood's enormous popularity and success.

One morning, early in August, Ressaidar Hashmet Ali walked into my dug-out. I was never more pleased to see any one. At Malta he had been offered the choice of a trip to England or a return to India; but he had insisted that his sahib had need of him at Anzac, and begged to be allowed to return. They sent him back to Egypt, where he was again recommended for invaliding to India, but fortunately at Ismailia Captain Mayo, a former commandant of the 1st Mule Corps, managed to arrange that Hashmet Ali should come back to Anzac. He came just when he was most wanted, when heavy casualties and overwork were beginning to tell on the men's spirits, and by his tact and encouragement he did much to revive them. It was gratifying that only a few days after Hashmet Ali's return news was received that he, Lance-Naick Bahadur Shah and Driver Bir Singh had been awarded the Indian Order of Merit, and a hospital assistant named Ganpat Rao the Indian Distinguished Conduct Medal—all for their conduct on May 6. This

was a great day for the Mule Corps. The Order of Merit is a very high honour indeed, and one that is rarely bestowed on a mule-driver. Colonel Beville sent a congratulatory wire from headquarters and there was great rejoicing.

On the very day before the great attack began, Anzac suffered another severe loss. Commander Cater, who had become senior Naval Landing Officer after the departure of Dix, was killed at the post of duty at the end of his pier. Every day and every night since April 25, Cater had risked his life with the utmost unconcern, and it was hard indeed that, just when it seemed that the greatest danger was over, he should have been killed. A picket-boat was in difficulties, and in spite of the fact that heavy shelling was going on Cater rushed to the pier to shout orders through his megaphone. There were many gallant men in Anzac, but probably no-one more so than Cater —no-one who had more whole-heartedly devoted himself to his duties. He was one of the best-known figures on the beach, and was mourned by every man who had come in contact with him.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SUVLA LANDING

THERE was intermittent shelling by our guns throughout the three days prior to the attack, and the enemy replied by directing heavy artillery fire on the gullies in which the fresh troops lay concealed. Thus the 13th Division and 29th Brigade experienced the unpleasant sensation of sitting still and being shelled almost directly they came ashore.

On the afternoon of the 6th the first of the local attacks was launched, the 1st Australian Brigade capturing the Lone Pine Trenches by one of the most magnificent assaults that has ever taken place. No less magnificent was the defence of this position against determined counter-attacks, which were made by the Turks daily and nightly for at least a week. The other local attacks, though equally boldly delivered, met with less success, and the charge of the 3rd Light Horse Brigade from Russell's Top was doomed before it began. At 4 a.m. the bombardment by our guns began, and when it ceased at 4.25 the Turks opened machine-gun and rifle-fire so vigorously that it was clear that their trenches

were intact and they were ready. Into a hail of lead the 8th Light Horse rushed out, charging in four waves, followed by the 10th. Only two officers were untouched and very few of the rank and file, but each line dashed over the parapet undismayed, though the men could see those in front of them swept relentlessly down.

Russell's Top is just above Mule Gully, and this charge took place not more than 600 yards from our mess dug-out, near which was a hospital. Soon the tents were full, and hundreds of men, many with ghastly wounds, were laid on the ground outside, where they had to remain in the broiling sun until a passage to hospital-ships could be arranged. Lieutenant Robinson of the 8th, with three fingers broken, called at the dug-out, and anxiously we asked for news of Hore, to learn that he was wounded. I sent Brown up the hill with a stretcher to bring him to the dug-out, and by eight o'clock we had him on the valise, hit in the shoulder and foot. Hore had got almost across to the enemy trenches before he was knocked over; finding that practically no one else had got so far, there was nothing for it but to crawl back, which he had eventually succeeded in doing. He lay in the dug-out all day and got to a hospital-ship that night.

We watched the landing at Suvla of the 10th and 11th Divisions, and saw troops being rapidly

put ashore, supported by the fire of men-o'-war lying in Suvla Bay ; there did not appear to be much opposition at first, though shrapnel was bursting on the beaches. It was later in the day that the Turkish artillery, having taken up fresh positions and found the range, began to make things unpleasant for these troops.

During the night the New Zealand Mounted Rifles had carried out their task of taking Table Top and Old No. 3, with a dash and brilliancy which has won them undying fame. And these were the very men who had worked for me as a fatigue party a night or two before and had been almost too tired to keep awake. It was a triumph of the spirit over the flesh. Men so weak and played out that they could scarcely stand, fought, when the time came, like troops in perfect physical condition. The deeds of the men of Anzac during the battle of Suvla Bay would have been a glory to any troops. No words can ever do justice to what they accomplished in the condition to which four months of semi-siege had reduced them.

The movable column under General Godley had fought its way up the Sazli Beit Dere and the Chailak Dere on to the slopes of Chunak Bair, in spite of strong opposition, and some of the Indian Infantry Brigade and part of a battalion of South Lancashires had actually stood upon the crest and looked down upon the Dardanelles. But the ships

had taken them for Turks and hurled shells upon them—a heartbreaking mistake which gave the enemy time to organise and launch a counter-attack and drive the Indians back.

Then things began to go amiss. The expected support from the Suvla troops was not forthcoming, and a brigade of the 13th Division, which, kept in reserve the first day, had been ordered to advance, missed its way in the difficult country and was cut up, losing its Brigadier and all his Staff. The supply of water to the troops, as had been foreseen, proved a task of extreme difficulty; but, thanks to the careful preparation and arrangements made beforehand, the men of the movable column were watered, though they got much less than they really required. The losses in drivers and pack-mules were extremely heavy. They went out in small parties, so as to be the better able to make use of any cover, but it was a difficult and dangerous job to take animals up these Deres while the battle raged.

Many prisoners were captured, who stated that the Turks had never had any intention of using gas or liquid fire. I saw one German officer amongst them. The emplacements of one of the ·75's with a lot of ammunition fell into our hands, but the gun had been removed. It was particularly appropriate that Captain Cleeve of the Australian A.S.C. should establish himself in the gunpit and pitch his

supply-depot close by, for his depot in Reserve Gully had been the favourite target of this gun. In the dug-outs of the gunners were all their possessions, and in one, presumed to belong to the officer in charge, women's clothing was found. The removal of the gun had evidently been conducted in a hurry, for two Turkish officers were captured clad in pyjamas.

All this time fresh men and mules were arriving at Anzac. At any odd hour a motor-launch (always known as a "beetle") might arrive and have to be unloaded. Convoys, provided with a guide who knew the ground, would go straight into action from the beach, and men were sometimes hit and evacuated before they had ever been to headquarters at all. Often the "beetles" arrived at night, each carrying fifty mules and towing lighters containing more mules.

One night a lighter drifted right away, and a party had to swim out to recover it and push it ashore. Almost every "beetle" which arrived by day was shelled, and Bird had a nasty time superintending the landings. The arrival of Captain Aylmer, Conductor Bruce and Sergeant Dudding brought welcome help.

On the evening of the 7th, Cullen came into Mule Gully to report that work with the 13th Division was proceeding satisfactorily, and as it happened to be his 21st birthday we made him

stay to dinner, and drank his health. The very next day he received a mortal wound in the stomach from a sniper's bullet. He lay under cover of a little bank, to which stretcher-bearers had carried him till it was possible to move him, for during daylight to show one's head was to bring down a shower of bullets. Corporal Wilson, one of the interpreters, volunteered to fetch a doctor, and, running the gauntlet of the fire, returned with an officer of the R.A.M.C., who administered morphia. Cullen was heroic in his unselfishness and thought of himself not at all, his concern being entirely for others.

At dusk he was carried to the pier at No. 2 Outpost, where the wounded lay in hundreds waiting to be removed to the hospital-ships, and devoted medical officers and orderlies laboured day and night; but, despite everything they could do, the wounded suffered terribly from exposure and neglect, for the casualties were so terrific that the medical services could not hope to cope with them. The wounded were not even safe where they lay; quite a number were hit by stray rifle bullets: there was no cover to be had, and the Turkish "overs" just reached the beach. Wilson stayed with poor Cullen till they got him off at midnight to the *Dongola*, where he died the next afternoon.

Two Territorial Divisions, the 53rd and 54th,

had landed at Suvla to support the 9th Corps, but by now the troops which had fought the battle of the 6th to 9th of August were too worn-out to attack again without a rest. It became necessary to consolidate and hold fast what had been gained.

Fresh transport arrangements had to be thought out. The scheme had been elastic so as to fit in with whatever circumstances might arise, and now it was resolved to divide the transport into four groups. "A" was to consist of first-line pack-mules, to remain at No. 2 Outpost and the Sazli Beit Dere under Captain Aylmer. "B" was Base Transport, with headquarters at Mule Gully, which now held 500 animals, under Captain Bird. "C" was Beach Transport at Anzac Cove, under Lieutenant Haddick, a new arrival; and "D" was a detachment handed over to Colonel Marsh for the use of the Australian Division on the right. We had now close on 2000 mules ashore. "A" Transport was shelled in its camps, and performed perilous journeys every day. It was the lot of K.D.s Bahawal Din and Ghulam Rasul to have their troops always as far forward as transport could go. Owing to the failure to take Baby 700, the road from Mule Gully to No. 2 Post was still under fire, and the exigencies of the situation demanded that convoys should work between these two points regardless of losses. It

was here that many casualties occurred to groups "B" and "C", for every convoy that passed along was fired on by machine-guns. One night when there was a full moon this journey was particularly bad, but the behaviour of the drivers was such as to command universal respect. They treated it as a joke. The carts were sent off one at a time, the driver, protected on the exposed side by the boxes and bags which formed his load, being ordered to cross the open space at full gallop. Usually they are forbidden to go out of a walk, and they quite enjoyed this unaccustomed license. But the return journey, when there were no boxes to protect the men, was a hazardous one. The drivers would arrive breathless at the foot of Mule Gully shouting, "Bachgia, sahib!" (I've escaped, sir!), with a broad grin on their faces, except those (and they were many) who had not escaped. These moonlight marches must have been great fun for the Turks, for sniping is a good game for the sniper, though indifferent sport for the snipe.

During the recent fighting the mule-transport at Anzac had lost 63 men and 296 mules killed and wounded, making the total casualties from April 25 to the middle of August—Killed : Second-Lieutenant Cullen, Conductor Galway, 1 British interpreter, and 20 drivers. Wounded : 3 British interpreters, 1 Indian officer, and 154 drivers.

Animals killed: 259 mules and 2 horses. Wounded: 599 mules and 4 horses. Slightly wounded cases remaining at duty are not included.

On August 21, the 29th Division having been transferred from Helles to Suvla, and a Yeomanry Division brought from Egypt, a further attempt was made to advance from the Suvla position, the whole force being under the command of General de Lisle. Anzac co-operated by artillery support and local attacks.

In spite of the wonderful gallantry displayed by the Yeomanry, who could be plainly seen from Anzac advancing across the Salt Lake (now dry), and of the 29th Division, whose never-failing heroism was a byword on the Peninsula, this attack, too, was unsuccessful. The task attempted proved more than human beings could perform.

CHAPTER XX

A TRIP TO EGYPT AND BACK

The failure to achieve the hoped-for results of the attack on August 21 put the final seal on the disaster of Suvla Bay. The whole essence of the plan had been surprise, and, once the Turks had time to prepare their defences, the natural advantages of their positions rendered further advance hopeless. The net result of the battle was an increase in the area of territory held by our forces. The Anzac position remained the same, except that the advance on the left had rendered the North Beach and the ground above it immune from sniping, and the position held by the movable column and the troops who had landed at Suvla was now in direct touch with that at Anzac.

The chance of being pushed into the sea was certainly less, but a return to the former conditions of life seemed inevitable. Speculation was rife as to what would now be the plans of G.H.Q. There were many who thought that evacuation was the only course open to us, on the principle of cutting our losses; for the daily

wastage continued and was bound to increase as bad weather set in, while the only compensating advantage was the retention of a Turkish Army on the Peninsula. On the other hand, many held the opinion that evacuation—or, in other words, an admission of the failure of the expedition—would have such disastrous effects politically as to be out of the question. It looked as though the latter theory obtained at G.H.Q., for signs of preparations to remain for the winter were in evidence. Hospitals were established in tents to hold large numbers of sick, in view of the probability of bad weather making it impossible to evacuate them for days together. Material arrived for improving dug-outs and roofing them in, and large reserves of rations and ammunition were brought ashore.

"The daily round, the common task" was resumed, to the old accompaniment of occasional shelling. Two piers were erected at the North Beach, and the open ground above it became a huge supply-depot. One very welcome change was that bathing from the North Beach could now be indulged in in perfect safety, and was greatly improved by having the piers to dive from. The early autumn weather was delightful, and the longer nights facilitated the transport work. Although there was naturally great disappointment at the result of the Suvla landing,

one saw no signs of despondency or depression. The men remained alert and full of fight.

I paid a short visit to Suvla Bay, where Colonel Beville had now established his headquarters, and where he and his officers lived in tents close to the sea. Allotments of transport to Divisions had been made, with one S. & T. Corps officer in charge of each, while Base Transport, which did the beach work, was under Major Van der Gucht.[1] There was a detachment at Lala Baba, three miles south of Suvla Bay, where Major Watson and Captain Porch lived in tents right on the beach, the mules being picketed on the cliff above. One day an 8-inch shrapnel shell burst in the middle of these lines with the most appalling effect. Sixty mules were killed, or had to be shot, and fifty-five more received wounds. It seemed almost inconceivable that one shell could do so much damage. Luckily the men were not in the lines at the time, and their dug-outs escaped untouched.

Several 9th Mule Corps men whom I had not seen since leaving France were at Suvla—amongst them Naick Khan Ghul, D.S.M.—now a *kot duffadar*. Our old quartermaster, Sergeant Grainge, was also there, employed in the same capacity. Conditions of life at Suvla were much

[1] Major Van der Gucht died in Mesopotamia, where he was commanding the Indian Mule Train.

the same as at Helles—plenty of room to ride about, and the country flat and open by contrast with Anzac. The beach camps were shelled as they had been at Helles. The Bay itself, across which a boom had been placed, was an admirable little harbour, where one or two cruisers were lying. Sometimes they had to move to avoid shells, but the boom rendered them safe from submarine attack.

There was a large tent hospital on the beach between Suvla Bay and Lala Baba, and occasionally some shrapnel used to reach it. On one such occasion the Turks sent a letter of apology, but added that, if we would put a hospital directly behind a battery of guns, it could not be helped if it was occasionally hit by mistake. They certainly never shelled a hospital or hospital-ship intentionally. Another example of the Turks' decent behaviour is contained in a story told by a Major of a regiment which took part in one of the August attacks. The Colonel was missing, and the Major sent out parties to search for him without success. Then he sent a note under a white flag to the Turkish trenches, giving a description of the Colonel and saying that he would be very grateful for any information regarding him. A day or two later a reply was received, stating that the body of the Colonel had been identified and respectfully buried, and all

the contents of his pockets and his ring were returned by the Turks.

About the middle of September I received orders to proceed to Alexandria to carry out certain duties with regard to the provision of winter clothing for our men. Bird was to take charge in my absence.

Major Worsley was returning to Egypt to resume his former appointment in the Egyptian Army, so we went off together to the fleet-sweeper which plied nightly between Mudros and the Peninsula. Some of the 2nd Australian Infantry Brigade were on board, bound for Lemnos, where they were to have a spell of rest. One of them received a stray bullet through his knee-cap whilst lying on deck, although the ship was quite a mile from the shore. The sweeper had brought over the 4th Gurkhas, who had come from France to join Cox's Indian Brigade. I found Captain L. P. Collins, D.S.O., and Lieutenant Hartwell—the only two remaining who had gone with the regiment to France—in the best cabin on the ship, and promptly took it over from them.

Mudros was still full of shipping including several men-o'-war. The Cunard liner *Aquitania*, now a hospital-ship, dwarfed everything in the Bay; another hospital-ship lying alongside her looked like a small tug. The *Aquitania* had

come out as a troopship bearing troops to Suvla Bay.

We reported ourselves on board the Headquarters ship, a fine vessel of the Royal Mail Line, where General Koe and Colonel Striedinger very kindly gave us a sumptuous lunch which was a great treat. Luckily a ship was to leave for Alexandria that day, and passages in her were given to us. It was always a toss-up whether one might not have to wait days at Mudros, and just a matter of luck what sort of ship would be going. It might be a liner or it might be a tramp. Our luck was dead in, for the vessel due to depart that day was a new British India steamer, without exception the most comfortable ship I have ever travelled in. My cabin companion was Lieutenant Carruthers, M.C., of the Dublin Fusiliers, bound on the same mission as myself. At the landing from the *Clyde* he had been wounded, but had soon returned and was, when he left, the only one of the original officers with the battalion.

Worsley and I were joined at a table in a sort of bow-window—more like what one would expect to find in a seaside hotel than in a ship—by another Worsley, a Captain of the K.O.S.B., and by an officer in the Naval Division. The latter introduced himself by remarking, "Good-morning. I'm a war bride, I am." He was a most enter-

taining person, and the four of us thoroughly enjoyed the short trip to Alexandria.

Major-General Wallace was commanding the troops in Alexandria. I had served on his Staff in India some years before, and he was good enough to invite me to accompany him, in place of his A.D.C. who was ill, to a French review at which he had to put in an appearance. Motoring out into the desert, we found the French troops drawn up on the tawny sand, making a most attractive picture in the brilliant sunlight, with undulating sand-hills and occasional clumps of palm-trees behind them. First there was a presentation of medals won for gallantry in the war. The names, and the nature of the deeds for which the decorations had been awarded, were read out by a Staff Officer, and each soldier marched up to the flag-staff, where stood the French General who pinned on the medal and kissed the recipient on both cheeks. Then came a march-past, after which the cavalry trotted away behind the hill, to return at the charge at full gallop with swords drawn. When within only a few paces of the flag-staff, they drew rein, halted, and gave a general salute—an impressive and picturesque scene.

In Cairo we stayed three days at Shepheard's Hotel, and spent the time seeing the sights. The many gardens full of beautiful flowers and shrubs were particularly attractive after the burnt-up,

treeless surroundings of Anzac. Major Gibbs—minus a big toe, but otherwise fit and flourishing—took us in a car to the Barrage Park at one of the dams across the Nile, which was then in flood. The park looked as fresh and green as any to be seen at home.

There was a big prisoners' camp to which we paid a visit. All the prisoners seemed thoroughly happy and contented, and they certainly ought to have been for their treatment was remarkably good. Arriving at sunset, we found evening prayer in progress, and were reminded of the Jamma Masjid at Delhi. Hundreds of Turks were kneeling on their mats, with their heads bowed towards the sacred city of Mecca.

The Pyramids and the Sphinx—especially the latter—impressed me so much that I made the journey to them three times, once at sunset and twice by moonlight. The Sphinx has a wonderful fascination. It seems to make a special appeal to one's feelings in these days of the world war. Looking at its inscrutable countenance, one imagines it is real and not the work of man at all. It seemed to be thinking, "What atoms you human beings are, and how absurdly taken up with your own infinitesimally small affairs! You think they are important, but what are they—even the biggest of them—to me who have been here longer than any man can tell? Even this war, which seems so momentous to you, is

nothing. A thousand years hence all will be the same and I shall still be here."

It is a pity that civilisation has drawn so near to the Sphinx. It ought to lie away in the desert, far from the haunts of man. To find a hotel and tram-lines within a few hundred yards is incongruous.

From Cairo I went to Ismailia to transact my business with Colonel Shairp, Director of Supply and Transport in Egypt, and spent a couple of pleasant days with him and other old friends of my Corps. Rejoining the two Worsleys and Jones-Vaughan of the Rifle Brigade at Port Said, we indulged in surf-bathing and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

At Alexandria I had to wait two or three days for a transport, and visited the Indian Hospital where I found many of my wounded men. Poor fellows, it was pitiful to see them—some of them disabled for life. Ajaib Shah was there, looking terribly thin and pale: two or three operations had been performed, but his elbow was shattered and he will never use his arm again. They were all going back to India, and were glad to go.

The *Manitou*, in which I eventually got a passage, had been attacked by a Turkish gunboat in April; she had also been hit two or three times at Suvla Bay—one shell going clean through the purser's cabin. Owing to terrible overcrowding, the journey back was not nearly so enjoyable as

the passage down had been. Brigadier-General Russell was on board, and Colonel Pope—after whom Pope's Hill was called. Submarines were known to be about, the *Ramazan* having just been sunk, and parades at boat-stations took place three times a day. Life-belts had to be carried wherever one went. Travelling round by the coast of Greece, the *Manitou* took two extra days to reach Mudros. As all the trawlers and lighters that were in the harbour of Lemnos were requisitioned for important transport service at this particular moment, it was some time before we could get away from the *Manitou* and on to a fleet-sweeper to take us back to Anzac. The ship in which the contingent eventually got away fell a victim to a submarine shortly afterwards.

She anchored off Anzac at midnight. Things were just the same. The crack of rifle-bullets reached us from the shore, and the *ping* as they hit the water was an old familiar sound.

At Mule Gully, I found my dug-out transformed into a house consisting of two rooms with doors and windows—almost unrecognisable. Bird had been invalided home, and Brown too, and Pulleyn was in command. Things had been fairly quiet, but the health was still bad, jaundice in particular being very prevalent, while a good many drivers had been sent away with scurvy.

A regular row of houses was being built for Army Corps Headquarters, and there were many

more tents than formerly. A light railway was in course of construction, the trucks to be pulled by mules. The working of this railway was handed over to me, as being a branch of the Transport, and it was very interesting working out schemes and time-tables. Eliot had been wounded in the foot, and Higginson had succumbed to dysentery. Few of those who had landed at the beginning remained. Colonel Lesslie, now C.R.E. Army Corps and temporary Brigadier-General, was still going strong; but all the Landing Staff had changed. Little fighting was going on, each side being content to await the onslaught of the other.

One day three gas-shells came over the top of Walker's Ridge like rockets at a firework display. The explosive was contained in a cylinder, attached to which was a long stick, and when the cylinder burst a cloud of yellow smoke escaped. But the shells must have been badly made, for beyond making a horrible smell they were perfectly harmless.

One felt much safer walking about, though even now there was always a risk. A lance-naick, brought into office one morning to be given promotion, saluted and turned about. As he passed out of the dug-out a stray bullet hit him in the chest, inflicting a fatal wound.

CHAPTER XXI

CONCLUSION

About three weeks after my return, I fell a victim to jaundice and had to leave. I left all my kit behind, expecting to be back in a fortnight.

With about 150 other sick and wounded men, I boarded a "beetle" to go to the hospital-ship. The weather being rough and the "beetle's" engine not very powerful, she could make no headway, so a picket-boat took her in tow. In this way the hospital-ship was reached, but the "beetle" could not be made fast alongside. At last the attempt had to be abandoned and she drifted away, helpless in the heavy sea. Three times the picket-boat managed to throw a line and take her in tow, but each time the line snapped. Nearly every one was sea-sick, and some of the wounded were in a critical condition. It was five hours before we succeeded in making the shore after a narrow escape of collision with another vessel. Whilst at sea, a violent bombardment of our trenches on the right took place, so fierce that it might have been preliminary to an infantry attack. But after half an hour the shelling ceased, and we heard on reaching shore that little harm had been done.

It was three days later before another attempt could be made, but this time it was successful and the hospital-ship left for Malta that night. I little thought that I had seen the last of Anzac, but only six weeks later it was evacuated, as all the world knows.

At Malta, after a short stay in the Convent of the Blue Sisters, now a big hospital, I was ordered home and a long period of sick leave followed, as it was found, on arrival in England, that my eyes had been seriously damaged.

When the final list of honours for the Dardanelles appeared, it was a great pleasure to see that Rennison had been awarded a brevet-majority, Sergeant Levings a D.C.M., and that others of the Mule Train had been recognised.

Some of the Mule Corps men were on the Peninsula from the first day to the last, including Mangat Rai, whose achievement for a Babu was truly remarkable. The only words of complaint he has uttered since the war began were written from Mesopotamia. He described that country as "not very comfortable".

In conclusion, a few words may not be out of place regarding the status of the Indian mule-driver as it is, and as those of us who have his best interests at heart would wish to see it.

In India—the most conservative country in the world—tradition dies hard, and it has unfortun-

ately become almost a tradition in the army of India to look down upon the *drabi* and to regard him as an inferior being for whom anything is good enough. With regard to the treatment of the driver whilst actually at the front during this war I have no complaint to make. Officers and men, of both the Indian and the Anzac Corps, were very generous towards my men, and the mutual relations between the driver and the fighting man were cordial in the extreme. It is of the status of the drivers in India after the war that I am thinking.

The slightly contemptuous attitude that has hitherto prevailed is unreasonable, for, be it in peace or in war, the driver is deserving of more consideration. In peace, from the day he joins his unit he is the hardest worked man in the army, and there is but little time to teach him his drill or to instruct him in his duties. Whatever the weather conditions, his work on the road goes on; when he returns to the lines his mules must be groomed and his saddlery cleaned. There is no welcome "no parade" bugle for him. On manœuvres he is the first man up in the morning and the last to reach camp at night, and he is the last to be considered where comfort is concerned.

In war he shares to the full the hardships of the fighting troops and, as the casualties prove, the dangers too.

It should be remembered that the *drabi* is recruited from exactly the same classes as the sepoy, the only difference being that men of slightly inferior physique are accepted. They do not look as smart and well turned out as sepoys, but this is due to an inadequate clothing allowance, and to lack of spare time for drill: given the same opportunities, a Mule Corps would turn out as smartly as any regiment.

Let the mule-driver's reward for his behaviour during the Great European War be a fuller recognition and more sympathetic treatment in the army. Let Government take the lead by abolishing once and for all that degrading word "follower", and by giving the transport-driver the same standing as the sepoy.

The men of the Army Service Corps hold up their heads with the best; let the Indian transport man be allowed to do the same. It is his right; for a more hardworking, uncomplaining, gallant lot of soldiers than the mule-drivers whom I had the honour to command in France and Gallipoli are not to be found in the armies of the British Empire.

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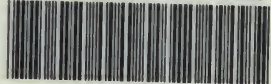

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