

**PSYCHOLOGICAL AFTERMATH
ADDS TO HORRORS OF BATTLE**

Trivial Incidents Touch Memory's Chord and Warriors Weep or Rage—Outbreaks Are Heartrending as Awful Recollections Start

By ELLEN ADAIR

Specially written for the EVENING LEDGER.

LONDON, Oct. 14.—The after effects of battle on the mind of the individual fighter are not seen easily, and yet one has but to touch certain chords of memory—the casual mention of a date, the name of a French town, a note of music—and surprising evidence of nerve-strain will result at once.

A large and burly policeman who had done wonderful fighting at Loos in the famous "London Scottish" regiment proved a most charming individual to converse with on this military. There was little that he did not know concerning hand grenades, tactics and so on. As he lay peacefully tucked up in his little hospital cot—a few days of convalescent humanity—one would scarcely have imagined him in any character other than the cheery, smiling, genial London "bobby" whose duty it was to control the Piccadilly traffic and pilot babies and old ladies across the crowded streets.

But we all knew the little story of his special fight at Loos. Coming upon four temporarily unarmed German soldiers, he pitched his own rifle and revolver away, and, flashing upon the astonished men in all his great strength, strangled each one in turn with his hands!

TOUCHES MEMORY CHORD
All went well with our little hospital chat until a foolish nurse referred indirectly to this special deed. A chord of terrible memory was touched. The reference woke that short-lived space of madness again. The effect on the ex-minion of the law was sudden and startling. His eyes glared like those of a maniac and the veins stood out on his forehead. Stammering and stuttering unintelligibly, he twisted a corner of the siderdown quilt in his big hands, and then very deliberately tore that corner into shreds. He was back again on the terrible battlefield of Loos, one man against four Germans, and strangling each of the enemy with his hands. It seems to me there is a psychological kink or flaw in the poise of the average man who has seen much fighting in the present war. It is only natural that such should be the case. One has to walk warily with him in discussing certain phases of warfare. There are places so dark in his memory that they must not be touched. An acquaintance of mine came through a pretty sharp experience in a famous skirmish "somewhere in France." His leg was shot away and he lay out for three days and nights in the wind and rain before he was brought in. The new artificial limb which he now wears is so perfectly made that he walks without a limp. To outward appearance he is the same gay, cheerful youth as of pre-war days. He is not unhappy. He will talk of past battles and of the war freely. But in his mind there is one dark spot.

and probably always will be—the sight of a deep pool of water or a small, dark pond is anathema to him. He cannot bring himself to walk past either. He will go to any inconvenience to avoid them. He can give no explanation, and the subject must never be mentioned!

His doctor thinks that during the three days and nights when he lay, minus a leg and in great pain, out between the trenches, he must have crawled near a rain-filled shell hole, and the memory of that black pool is somewhere deep in the recesses of his brain.

But no one will ever know. Another soldier of my acquaintance, who had "got his" in Mesopotamia, absolutely refused to have any kind of plant or growing thing near him during convalescence. He had had to be placed so that he could not see the trim lawns through the wind-downs, and if any visitor brought him flowers he turned his face to the wall and wept.

His face was scarred and burned. And his hatred of flowers was due to the fact that a Turkish sniper, his body and head cleverly disguised with foliage and flowers, had crawled toward this British soldier through the long grass and buried a hand-grenade full in his unsuspecting face.

REMEMBERS 'MAILED MONSTERS'
Yet another soldier cannot bear the sight of an ordinary steamroller such as is used for repairing roads. They remind him forcibly of the "mailed monsters" of Somme," those British juggernauts of death which carried all before them at that historic battle.

"All day long it was like that—tanks and men, men and tanks, racing hither and thither, obliterating and stamping out the trenches, or rounding them up in dazed and broken bunches.

"Mind you, the ground's not like what you see at home—nice, rolling grass fields, with bits of green hedges, and that sort of

thing. Oh, no! It's just one huge, torn, tumbled mass of earth, pock-marked with shell holes and craters, deep and ragged holes which go down feet and feet, and into which you could put and hide a whole company of men. Well, then, just picture to yourself these cars going straight through that. No track, no road did they take—there were none to take—but just straight ahead!

"The armored cars, huge, ungainly, hideous, went ahead in a sort of stupid lollipop. To see them run up toward a crater, poised for a moment on the ridge, then plunge down, as we thought, to destruction, then suddenly emerge again, grunting and spitting fire.

"We ran alongside or behind them, with fixed bayonets, yet feeling immensely secure.

"The Germans were in full rout at places, fleeing from the terror, or backing into our midst in droves and being shepherded to the rear by the British. My last view of the famous tanks, just after I was shot down, was a blurred and misty vision of them trundling about the horizon with men streaming before them—German prisoners."

And as the soldier finished his narrative, into his eyes came the strange reminiscent gleam which one always sees when men who have been wounded talk of their past experiences, and which shows that on the mind the after-effects of battle are very real and very poignant.



ELLEN ADAIR



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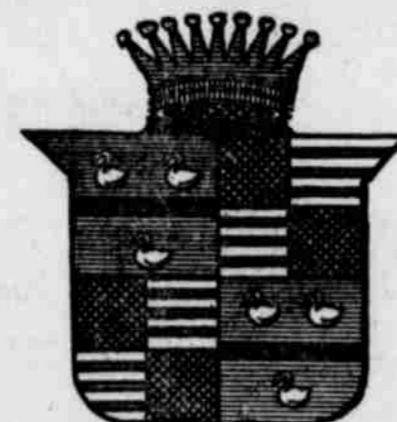
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