

BATTLE OF SOISSONS AS SEEN BY WRITER ON FIRING LINE

By JOHN ASHTON.
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Paris.—I have just returned to Paris to rest up a day or two and get a few necessities after a week at the front of the left wing of the allied armies who are facing General von Kluck's army.

Farther to the east in a line extending from Reims to near Verdun the French are holding their ground against a fierce onslaught of the Germans under the prince of Wurtemberg.

I will recount what I have witnessed during the last few days:

Leaving Meaux, we made our way through Varennes and Lizy, the scene of fierce fighting during the battle of the Marne, some details of which I gave in my first letter. All the dead have now been interred and the wounded removed from the several deserted villages through which we passed.

Find Wrecked German Plane.

Before arriving at Leerte Milton we came across a German aeroplane which had been brought down by the British. The English flying squad have been doing grand work in the air not only as scouts but in attacking hostile air craft. It is reported that no less than seventeen German aviators have fallen victims to the English flying men.

On approaching Villers-Cotterets, in the middle of the forest of that name, we came across several military automobiles, lying by the side of the road, which the Germans had abandoned in their hurried flight to the north. Two of these were marked "Field Post" (field or military post). A little farther on we encountered six large German motor trucks which had evidently been destroyed by the Germans; everything was burnt up except the iron work. These wagons had been left in the road to delay pursuit, but the French had overturned them into the ditch on each side of the road.

Meet German Prisoners.

It was dark when we arrived at Villers-Cotterets. Before we had time to get out of our auto I heard a cry: "Voilà les Allemands!" (here come the Germans!) and, indeed, a moving gray mass soon came into sight, surrounded by a cavalry escort. There were about 100 of them, prisoners, marching in the cold rain. Many of them wore Red Cross arm bands, and I noticed a few officers among the bunch. Their expressions were sour and sullen, but considering their privations, they looked fit enough physically.

These were men that had got lost in the forest and failed to catch up with their columns. Many prisoners are taken in a similar way on both sides. Sometimes they come straggling in half starved to death.

Pass Night in a Chateau.

We passed the night in an old chateau. The town was full of troops, and the hotels packed with officers, so we were very lucky to get under cover at all. A few days previously the Germans had occupied the town, the staff having made their headquarters at this same chateau. The chambermaid left in charge of the house (the owner and his wife having fled) told us that the Germans had taken away some valuable Gobelin tapestries; the smaller tapestries had been left. They had also taken away some silver plate, but had left behind many pieces of considerable value.

We slept on the floor in the library, in a separate building, one of the finest private libraries I have ever seen, containing several thousand volumes. A very elegant secretary in the library had been forced up, the contents ransacked, and the top wrenched off and thrown on the floor. I had nothing to cover me with, and as it was cold I slept very little.

We could hear the guns booming the greater part of the night.

Approach the Firing Line.

Starting out early in the direction of Soissons, we came upon the Thirtieth regiment of French artillery, at but five miles from the latter town. We could hardly believe we were so close to the firing line, but there they were, twelve guns (known as the Seventy-five), pounding away across the valley to where the Germans were entrenched.

We stopped our auto at a respectable distance and approached the batteries on foot. The ammunition wagons and extra horses and men were all drawn up silent and motionless behind a hedge a short distance from the guns. There was no danger then, as the Germans were replying only to other French batteries lower down the valley.

Very soon the men not busy at the guns began to surround us, begging tobacco and cigarettes. It is an awful thing for these poor soldiers to be deprived of the comforting weed. I saw a great deal of this later, on the field and at hospitals.

We had intended to go directly into Soissons by the main road, but the French officers dissuaded us, saying that the Germans would certainly shell our autos. So we went by another route, to go by Vauxbain, a village lying in the bottom of the valley, two and one-half miles from Soissons.

Under German Shell Fire.

We stopped at an ancient, picturesque chateau, turned into a hospital, to inquire about the wounded. Hard-

ly had we arrived in front of the gates when German shells began screeching over our heads. We scarcely knew where to go for safety. A fearful crash on our right just behind the hospital showed that the German range was getting nearer. Some of our party naturally became alarmed. Then we all crouched down behind our autos as another shell whistled close to us and dropped in a garden. Two of the spent pieces actually fell at our feet and a few seconds afterwards another spent piece of shell, still hot, struck one of our party on the leg.

It was evident that we were in great danger. Some one said, "stand by the cars."

It was a good job we did not take this advice; but we might have done it if at that moment a woman at the door of the village wine shop across the street had not shouted: "Come inside, for God's sake!"

Flee into a Cellar.

We did not need twice asking. Hardly had we got across the threshold when a tremendous noise like a million rawhide whips cracking at the same moment, followed by the noise of falling masonry, showed that we were in for a regular bombardment. Everybody rushed for the cellar.

As soon as the dust and smoke had cleared away someone crept up the steps to look out and returned saying one of the turrets on each side of the entrance gates to the castle had been completely demolished by the last shell. And still they came, and there we huddled looking into each other's eyes, as well as the dim light would admit, in that little wine cellar with its solid vaulted roof that we prayed might not give way should the house be struck. I shall never forget the time spent in that cellar. There were twenty-three of us, including about seven women of the village and a little boy. We were there from 10:30 a. m. until a little after noon, with shells dropping all around us. One dropped five yards from the door, the shock breaking every pane of glass in the house and making an enormous hole in the roof. Another shell struck the ground about twelve feet in front of our cars, just grazing and mashing a portion of the village cross.

Everything has an end, and we could hear the shells bursting farther and farther away. Still it was deemed prudent to lie low for a bit.

Eat as Shells Screeam.

After a time one of the villagers went out at a rear door and brought back a big dish of fried chipped potatoes and bread, so that with the wine in the cellar we made a hearty lunch under the circumstances. We were very hungry, as we had eaten nothing since the previous evening.

When it was safe to get out we found that the shell that dropped near the cars had burst two tires on the car I rode in, had smashed all three of the wind shields, and filled the car bodies and covers full of holes. The cars looked as if they had been peppered with machine guns. Luckily the engines were not damaged in the least.

The Germans, being deeply entrenched in old chalk quarries, a sort of natural fortress in the hillsides overlooking Soissons, continued to reply to the numerous French guns with impunity and occasionally to bombard Soissons and Vauxbain. Up to the time of my leaving this same thing had been going on for over a week.

Soissons is in a pitiable state. The Germans have not spared its old cathedral with its two Gothic spires.

From the rear of the hospital at Vauxbain we had a fine view of this grand old landmark. One of the steeples is broken off about half way, and the other has a big hole in the side, plainly seen three miles off.

I passed about four days here. The artillery firing was terrific from morning to night. The battle rages over an enormously extended front.

I saw some shockingly wounded men while at Vauxbain. The night before I left five men were brought in with fearful injuries in different parts of the body. A German shell had dropped among eight artillerymen serving one of the French guns. The other three men were killed on the spot. This is just an incident among hundreds that are happening every day.

At one village I passed through, where the Germans had left 160 wounded, most of whom were brought in under cover two days after the battle by the French, the doctors asked me, implored me, to try and get some milk for the wounded. Nearly all the cattle have been driven out of the country to safer places or have been requisitioned either by the German or the French forces. Many lives are lost on both sides through exposure and lack of attention after being wounded. Cases of gangrene and tetanus are not infrequent. The doctors and nurses are doing heroic work, but it often happens that they are very much overcrowded before they have a chance to remove those wounded who are able to be sent to other hospitals. At Vauxbain the hospital was crowded. There were 400 people there, and the house had only accommodations for 100.

Huge Jewish Army.

Petrograd.—A quarter of a million Jews are with the Russian forces. This is the largest Jewish army ever gathered since the fall of Jerusalem.

FARMERS INSTITUTES FOR THE MONTH

LIST OF MEETINGS FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER.

GOSSIP FROM STATE CAPITAL

Items of Interest Gathered from Reliable Sources and Presented in Condensed Form to Our Readers.

Western Newspaper Union News Service
Farmers' institutes were started last week by the agricultural extension service of the university farm in both central and northern Nebraska. The list of speakers includes a number of the veteran institute lecturers, as well as a number of trained recruits new to Nebraska audiences. The approximate number of meetings scheduled for the month is thirty-eight. Four of these are agricultural short courses. The institute dates for the balance of the month in central Nebraska are: Lebanon, October 15; Bartley, October 15 and 16; Holbrook, October 16 and 17; Trenton, October 17; Champion, October 19; Culbertson, October 20, 21 and 22; Cambridge, October 22 and 23; Saronville, October 23 and 24; Genoa, October 21, 22 and 23; Raymond, October 29 and 30.

Law Stands in the Way.
Physical, financial and legal difficulties stand in the way of the proposed irrigation project for Kearney, Gosper and Phelps counties, according to a report formulated by Engineers Walters and Pease of the federal reclamation service. It was intended to take the water for the project from the Platte river and store it for use when no rain fell to help out growing crops. The experts pay stress on the following features which work against the plan:

The water supply at present is not sufficient to meet the demands, hence there could be no added drain.

Cancellation of a multitude of water rights would have to be undertaken and this would involve long and expensive litigation and possible defeat in the courts.

Welcome University Students.
Twelve churches in the capital city threw open their doors to the university students Friday night. It was the night set aside for the annual church reception to new and old students and practically all of the larger churches invited the students to get acquainted. The largest number of students attended the reception at St. Paul's church. The crowd was estimated at more than 400. Two separate receptions were conducted, one for men and one for women, until 9 p. m., when the two were turned into one. Musical programs with short talks from the pastor were given in most of the churches. Dancing featured the entertainment provided by one church.

Will Start Suit to Collect Fund.
Suit to collect the long outstanding insane fund accounts—something others failed to do—will soon be started by Auditor Howard against Dakota, Boone, Burt, Gage and Stanton counties. The total principal involved is about \$18,000, with interest of about one and a half times that amount. When the auditor started collection there was a total of \$300,000, counting principal and interest, outstanding against thirty-three counties of the state. Part of it has been gathered in. The law under which the collection is made has been tested out in the state supreme court in the case of Douglas county. That county had to pay a total of \$100,000 several years ago.

Back From Flour Rate Hearing.
U. G. Powell, rate expert for the state railway commission, has returned from Chicago, after attending the hearing before the interstate commerce commission on flour and wheat rates from Nebraska and Kansas to California points. The railroads have changed their first application by proposing to raise both flour and wheat 10 cents per 100 pounds. They are also offering to reduce the intermediate rate to Tucson, Ariz., from \$1.12 to 75 cents on flour. Nebraska millers are resisting the increase.

Taxable Property in Nebraska.
All of the taxable property in Nebraska found by assessors this year amounts to \$471,933,972. The exact amount was known in July, but the verification of the totals for each item in the grand assessment roll was not completed until last week. The total is a slight increase over the total of last year, but is the smallest increase since the revenue law of 1904 went in effect. The assessed value of property is really only one-fourth of the actual value as found by assessors and equalized by the state board.

Visitors at the state penitentiary will have an opportunity to contribute toward the moving picture machine which Warden Fenton is planning to secure for the institution. Convict Cartoonist Naylor is preparing a sign which will be placed on the contribution box in which donations to the baseball fund were placed during the summer months. The warden plans to show the pictures in the new dining rooms, the walls of which are coated with white so that they can be utilized as screens.

HAVE FOOLISH ROW, THEN GET MARRIED

Sweethearts Ask Warrants for Each Other, but Secure Marriage License Instead.

GIRL STARTED THINGS

Swore They Would Never Rest Until Each Had Unplugged All Troubles in the World on the Head of the Other.

Los Angeles, Cal.—Grace Belle Somy and Asa H. Hoffman had a foolish fuss several days ago. Grace is dark and attractive, and is proprietress of an active institution which she calls her temper. Asa is better natured, young, and not ineligible to the rank of Romeo.

Both are photographers, both photographers for their living, both think they know the best methods of making both the photographs and the living. They had intended to get married, but when Asa said that Grace was bungling her finishing work on the photos, Grace told him some things about his labor that were not complimentary or conciliatory.

That started things and they swore they would never rest until each had unplugged all the troubles in the world on the head of the other. Things reached such a stage that Grace trotted up to city prosecutor's office with her woes. She wanted Asa Hoffman, the terrible thing, arrested. What charge? Oh, any charge, just to get him behind the bars.

The city prosecutor could not be so obliging.

While Grace was in the office, a deputy was listening to the troubles of Asa Hoffman. He wanted Grace arrested, just to teach her a lesson. When each began to analyze the trouble, each found it very small. Each was in rather a shamed mood. Each rose to go.

The door to Mr. McKeeby's office opened and Grace walked out. She walked directly against Asa Hoffman, who was standing ready to leave Deputy City Prosecutor Morton's office.

"You!" said Grace.
"You!" said Asa.
They looked, they frowned, and they smiled. "Let's forget it," said Asa.
"All right, you naughty boy," said Grace.
"Let's get married," said Asa.
"When?" asked Grace.
"Now."
"How?"
"Wow!" was all Asa exclaimed, and he fled for the license bureau.

While Grace was waiting for the groom-to-be to return, Police Judge



She Wanted Asa Hoffman, the Terrible Thing, Arrested.

White dropped into Prosecutor's McKeeby's office to discuss a case. Back came Asa with the license, and also a ring.

Police Judge White married them, City Prosecutor McKeeby gave the bride away, and the bride kissed them both and said they were just lovely.

But the congratulations had to be short, for there was a woman waiting to tell the city prosecutor how her husband had beaten her.

New Jersey Woman Escapes Punishment When Prosecutor Gets Glimpse of Her Size.

Camden, N. H.—Prosecutor Kraft, who has made a reputation for sending wife beaters to jail, was called up the other day to consider a case where the shoe was on the other foot. George Quinn caused the arrest of his wife for giving him a thrashing.

Mr. Kraft was told that was Mrs. Quinn's method of sobering up her husband when Quinn needed heroic treatment. He then sent for the woman with the intention of telling her she must not take the law into her own hands. The prosecutor was not equal even to giving a reprimand when he saw a little woman, whose head did not reach to the shoulders of her husband and who weighed 100 pounds less. He ordered her released without comment.

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NOT EVEN AN ACQUAINTANCE

American Girl Surely Had Reason for Complaint Against Impertinence of Accoster.

You remember how in the piping days of peace, when something simply had to be done to make talk, there was a hue and cry about American girls in Berlin and the dreadful things they did under pretense of studying music. Here is a story of one of them which the New York Evening Post Saturday Magazine's special war correspondent has sent over with the explanation that it was all he could get past the censor at this time. A Berlin paper reports that a quiet street in Charlottenburg was suddenly alarmed by shrill cries of "Police! Police!" A great crowd promptly collected about the person responsible for the disturbance, an excited young woman, obviously American.

"Arrest this man, officer," she said as soon as a policeman appeared. "I am Miss Ellington from Cincinnati, U. S. A., and he had the impertinence to speak to me."

The policeman, guided by the young woman's accusing finger, picked out the culprit.

"The man is a stranger to you?" he asked.

"An entire stranger," replied Miss Ellington. "I have only been taking violin lessons from him for six months."

She knew.
A new drama was being rehearsed, and the two women who had prominent parts were not on the most friendly terms.

"In this scene," remarked the tall, stately blonde, "I am supposed to leave the stage at the rear, while you stand in the front facing the audience. What will be your cue to resume your lines?"

"Why," replied the glowing brunette, without hesitation, "the look of satisfaction on the faces of the audience."

Impossible.
"Women may learn to smoke and drink."
"Well?"
"But they will never adopt the habit of getting behind a newspaper at breakfast and contributing only grunts to the conversation."

Bound to Be.
"Pa, what is an extremist?"
"Any woman who dresses in style, son."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

YOUR BLOOD

is the canal of life but it becomes a sewer if clogged up. All life consists of building up and tearing down and just in the same manner that the blood carries to the various parts of the body the food that the cells need for building up, so it is compelled to carry away the waste material that's torn down. These waste materials are poisonous and destroy us unless the liver and kidneys are stimulated into refreshed and vigorous life.

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