

### A Soldier's Tale

F. A. Brennan, '43

We had just rushed panting into a huge shell hole, and were thanking God for our deliverance from certain death. All was confusion. Our enemy were hiding behind a slight elevation, and we intended keeping them there, as long as our ammunition held out. "Where is Fred?", one of our little party exclaimed excitedly. We looked about us. It was not yet dark; but we would easily have distinguished the carefree countenance of Fred Lawrence, had he been present.

"They likely got him," I replied; and we were all silent a moment. But young Ed. Burns was not as resigned to this conclusion as we were. "He can't be far away," he said, "He was with us, as we crossed that old fence back there. I remember his remark about ruining his 'best clothes' on the barbs. We should be able to see him, if he is lying out there somewhere."

We quickly bobbed up a bit higher to get a better view of the field. In that brief instant, I made out a form not a hundred yards away. "There he is," I exclaimed, "I'm going after him. Keep those Huns back," and with this I climbed out of our refuge and began to crawl slowly and steadily along on the wet field. All this time Fritz was still behind his barricade, and was making it pretty hard for my companions; then, a sudden, sharp pain in my leg made me wince, and I knew that they had seen me too.

Words cannot describe the agony I went through on that night of April 16, 1917. My leg was throbbing furiously, and it was only with great effort that I was able to drag myself along. That dark form still seemed a long way off. A bullet grazed my shoulder, another found its mark almost in the same place as the first. I was steadily losing blood; but still I kept on. "I'll reach you yet Fred, old boy," I muttered, and looked again at that silent figure. What! Did I not see that form move? He's alive! No; it's just a trick of my imagination. And so I raved inwardly, but kept on in that slow painful manner, which allowed progress of only inches at a time. Suddenly the Heinie sent over another barrage.

"They got me this time," I gasped, and clasped my hand to my chest. But, by dint of good fortune, I spied a



small ditch, and with a sigh, dropped into it. "I'll be safe here for a while," I muttered painfully, and then—enshrouding darkness.

When I regained my senses, a fierce struggle arose within me. Should I go any farther? I'm fairly safe here. In all probability Fred is dead, so why not take it easy? But a voice within kept taunting me, "Coward, coward." I fought, argued, tried to banish the thought of keeping on. Memories of home, of friends, and of dear faces which I had hoped to see again, came rushing upon me. Well, if I am to die, I might just as well do so out there, and, with a prayer on my lips, I dragged my pain wracked body out of the ditch.

My objective was only a few feet away now, and calling upon my last ounce of energy, I reached it. "It's me, Fred—Tom." I stared crazily at the object before me. "Oh! Saints in heaven!—It sure looked like a man—fooled me—only a railroad tie—"

This time I regained consciousness in a clean, orderly war hospital at La Guine, and felt a strange feeling of peace come over me as I gazed at a large image of the Saviour on the wall ahead of me. The Sister opened the door silently, and with a smile ushered in a grave faced youth. I muttered the one word, "Fred," and fell into another swoon.

Fred Lawrence is over in Australia now; but every time I see a railroad tie, my thoughts turn across the ocean to Fred, and back to that unforgettable night of 1917, when I had a '*rendezvous* with death.'

### A Pagan's Battle Song

Mensário, '39

Be it Heaven or Valhalla, or the Sunny Western Isles,  
A Lotus Land of flowers where a Houri maiden smiles,—  
'Tis the same to all good comrades as we stand against the  
foe.

We live well and we die well, we care not where we go.

A hearty meal, a flagon full, our broad swords by our sides:  
We live today and drink today and fight today besides.  
Of tomorrow what will happen, Spartan Zeus alone can tell,  
We will storm the gates of Heaven when we gain the walls  
of Hell.