

## Papa's Tepe

(By Percival Gibbon in the "Daily News").

ATE in the afternoon, after a day of wind and thin rain and heavy cannonading, the infantry came slowly in long lines across the bare and sodden slopes, and gathered in a dip of land behind the final brow that overlooked Adrianople.

From a fire-control station on the right flank, I had been watching the target of the battle. Below the heights upon which the 7th Division of Bulgarians were established, there was a wedge of flat land at the intersection of the rivers, and on it there rose a little three-humped hill, whose contour bore a fanciful resemblance to a biretta. Hence its name—Papa's Tepe, Priest's Hill. Across its shoulder faint through the screen of the rain, glimmered like a vision the walls and minarets of the city, while on it and over it there sprang into view blots and smudges of fresh smoke, as the guns combed it to make ready for the assault. The little elderly officer on the fire-control station swung his arms like a cabman to warn them, and from time to time murmured a comment on the shooting. "A hundred metres shorter; two degrees to the left"—and in a hoarse gut at his feet an orderly telephoned his words to the battery, a mile away in the rear. Thirty seconds later came the ring and roar of a gun, the high diminishing whoop of the shell, and a spout of flame and smoke as it burst on the scarred forehead of Papa's Tepe. Later in the day a Turkish gun which had been groping about the right of the position, contrived to burst a shrapnel just above the gun position, and the little elderly officer was the only man it killed.

### Facing Fire.

The business of the infantry, when its time came, was to go down the hill and across the level, and take Papa's Tepe with the bayonet. Meanwhile they waited in their hollow, with the rain driving across them, three battalions of silent men, of whom only the officers wore in uniform. The rest wore the coarse brown clothes and red sashes of Bulgarian peasants and artisans. Their blunt, incurious faces were lifted towards the skyline before them, above which there sprang into view plume after plume of feathery shrapnel smoke that hung a second, and then shredded in the wind. From time to time a great fortress gun uttered its pending shout, and the air was shrill with the wail of the shell that soared over them and burst far behind. It was a fore-taste of what was to come when the order moved them off and they went across the brow into the face of the fire. They seemed to watch it all with a dull, almost animal indifference, utterly different from the demeanour of troops who know the effects of shell fire and discount it. In their patience and stillness was more than a suggestion of that fatalism which used to be ascribed to the Turks.

It was already night in the east when their orders arrived and the first half-battalion went forward towards the brow, with their rifles and long, old-fashioned bayonets carried at the trail. They went slowly, plodding up the slope with the heavy, deliberate gait of ploughmen, and, from behind, their backs seemed bowed and laborious. For some moments they were black against the darkening sky, as they crossed the summit of the ridge, and upon that sign the Turkish fire quickened. Where before it had drizzled, now it grew to a tattoo and there joined with the cannon music the more urgent noise of rifle fire. The Bulgarian trenches on the left answered; the mitrailleuses began their stammering roar; of a sudden the leisurely long-range battle had intensified to a heart-seizing uproar. At the core of it, out of sight, the first half-battalion moved as though a flying web of bullets. A palloping orderly brought the summons for the second to follow it.

### The Toll of the Day.

A little to the right of their line of march, there was a patch of broken ground just over the brow, whence I could see down to the level and across

it to Papa's Tepe—could hear, too, like wind in a keyhole, the whine of lead on the wing. There was no abatement of the noise of fire; rather, as each trench that could bear on the fight filled with men, it increased, and, to emphasise its vehemence, one could now see against the darkness the flash of the guns. It seemed impossible that anything could live down below between the two fires; but as I watched, the second half-battalion went by and passed down the slope at its sober gait. There was a grey glimmer of sheepskin-clad backs; the receding line loomed for a space of seconds, and then merged into the darkness; but already the ground over which it passed was dotted with the still shapes of men, and the third half-battalion was coming up to do its share.

It was incredible. Surely patriotism is an emotion as well as a quality. But in these men patriotism—if it was patriotism that governed them—sat so deep that they went forward into that whistling hell of bullets with the demeanour and at the pace of labourers going to their toil. They neither cheered nor hung back; theirs was a steadiness and docility beyond all discipline. It was as though they were hypnotised. In them the Orientalism which has failed the Turk was potent and victorious. Like the captured guns they turned on the forts. The tales with which the Censors regaled us of their spiritedness, their loud ferocity and eagerness, were feeble by comparison with the truth.

Half a battalion at a time, the three regiments went into action, passing out of sight to press on towards the trenches where the Turks waited for them, where those who came alive through the fire would charge with the bayonet. It was ten o'clock at night before the Turkish fire slackened, and we knew that of those half-battalions one had driven through to the foot of the hill. Down on the level ground the dead and dying were everywhere, and when at last the firing ceased, the lanterns of the stretcher-bearers, searching for wounded men, flickered to and fro. The rain had passed over and stars were coming out. Over the side of Papa's Tepe, where the dead lay stiffening in the trenches, I saw in Adrianople the lights of windows, bright and steadfast.

## A GORGE.

### Battle with Earth.

(By EDEN PHILIPOTS, in the "Westminster Gazette.")

Reflection swiftly reveals the significance of a river gorge, for it is upon such a point that the interest of early man is seen to centre. The shallow, too, attracts him, though its value varies; it must ever be a doubtful thing, because the shallow depends upon the moods of a river, and a ford is not always fordable. But to the gorge no flood can reach. There the river's banks are highest, the aperture between them most trifling; there man from olden time has found the obvious place of crossing and thrown his permanent bridge to span the waterway. At a gorge is the natural point for passage, and Pontifex, the bridge-builder, seeking that site, bends road to river where his work may be most easily performed, most securely founded. But while the bridge, its arch springing from the live rock, is safe enough, the waters beneath are like to be dangerous, and if a river is navigable at all, at her gorges, where the restricted volume races and deepens, do the greatest dangers lie. In Italy this fact gave birth to a tutelary genius, or shadowy saint, whose special care was the raft-men of Arno and other rivers. Their dangerous business took these federators amid strange hazards, and one may imagine them on semi-submerged timbers, swirling and crashing over many a rocky rapid, in the throats of the hills, where twilight hound and death was ever ready to watch them from return to smooth waters and emblems. So

a new guardian arose to meet these perils, and the boldest navigator lifted his thoughts to Heaven and commended his soul to the keeping of San Gorgone.

Sublimity haunts these places; be they great as the Grand Canon of Arizona and the mountain rifts of Italy and France, or trifling as this dimple on Devon's face of which I tell to-day, they reveal similar characteristics and awake like interest in the mind of the intelligent being who may enter them.

Here, under the roof of Devon, through the measures that press up to the Dartmoor granite and are changed by the vanished heat thereof, a little Dartmoor stream, in her age-long battle with earth, has cut a right gorge, and so rendered herself immortal. There came a region in her downward progress when she found barriers of stone uplifted between her and her goal; whereupon, without avoiding the encounter, she cast herself boldly upon the work and set out to cleave and to carve. Now this glyptic business, begun long before the first palaeolithic man trod earth, is far advanced; the river has sunk a gully of near two hundred feet through the solid rock, and still pursues her way in the nether darkness, gnawing ceaselessly at the stone and leaving the marks of her earlier labours high up on either side of the present channel. There, written on the dark Devonian rock, is a record of erosion set down ages before human eye can have marked it; for fifty feet above the present bed are clean-scooped potholes, round and true, left by those pervasive waters. But the sides of the gorge are mostly broken and sloping; and upon the shelves of it dwell trees that fling their branches together with amazing intricacies of foliage in summer-time and lace-like ramage in winter. Now bright sunshine flashes down the pillars of them and falls from ledge to ledge of each steep precipice; it brightens great ivy banks and illuminates a thousand ferns, that spring and stud each little separate knoll in the great declivities, or loll from clefts and crannies to break the purple shadows and shield fern frond spritely where there is most light; the polypody loves the limb of the oak; the hart's tongue hunts the coolest, darkest crevices and hides the shy beauty of silvery mosses and filmy ferns under cover of each crinkled leaf. And secret waters twinkle out by many a hidden channel to them, bedewing their foliage with grey moisture.

On a cloudy day night never departs from the deepest caverns of this gorge, and only the foanlight reveals each polished rib and buttress. The air is full of mist from a waterfall that thunders through the darkness, and chance of season and weather but seldom permit the westerling sun to thrust a red-gold shaft into gloom. But that rare moment is worth pilgrimage, for then the place awakens and a thousand magic passes of brightness pierce the gorge to reveal its secrets. In such moments shall be seen the glittering concavities, the fair pillars and arches carved by the water, and the hidden forms of delicate life that thrive upon them, dwelling in darkness and drinking of the foam. Most notable is a crimson fungus that clings to the dripping precipices like a robe, so that they seem made of polished bloodstone, and hint the horror of some recent and dreadful death in these loud shouting caves. Below, the mass of the river, ink-black under its creaming veil of foam, shouts and hastens, above, there slope alone upwards the cliff-masses to a mere ribbon of golden green, high aloft where the trees twine their arms, yet admit rare flashes from the azure above them. Beech and ash spring horizontally from the precipices, and great must be the bedded strength of the roots that hold their trunks hanging there. With the dark forces of the gorge dragging them downward and the sunshine drawing them triumphantly up between gravitation and light—they poise, sentient and struggling as it seems—destruction beneath the life beckoning from above. They flourish thus above their ultimate graves, since they, too, must fall at last and join those dead tree skeletons whose bones are glimmering amid the rocks below.

Here light and darkness so cunningly blend that size is forgotten, as always happens before a thing inherently fine. The small gorge wrought of a small river grows great and bulks large to imagination. The soaring sides of it, the shadow-loving things beneath, the torture of the trees above, and the living river, busy as of yore in levelling its ancient bed to the sea, waken wonder conquest over these fire-baked rocks. The head goes out to

her and takes pleasure to follow her from the darkness of her battle into the light again, where, flower-crowned, she emerges between green banks that shelve gently, hung with wood-rush and meadow-sweet, sorrel and golden saxifrage. Here through a great canopy of translucent foliage shines the noon sunlight, celebrating peace. Into the river, where she spreads upon a smooth pool, and trout dart shadowy through the crystal, and brightness burns, until the stream bed sparkles into amber and agate and flushes up in sweet reflections beneath each brier and arched fern-frond bending at the brink.

One chronicles, then, this slight scratch on the face of the earth as a good and finished thing; one experiences within it just that emotion rightly to be demanded of any gorge. Nor does the rivulet lack correspondence with greater streams in its human relation; the id complete in every particular, for man has found her also; and dimly seen, amid the very tree tops, where the gorge opens to light, and great rocks come kissing close, an arch of stone carries his little road from handlet to hamlet.

## The Real Simple Life.

### TWO DANGEROUS RULES

We have tried earnestly and with a humble and a contrite heart to understand some of the initial complexities of the simple life, and we retire from the field, beaten, baffled, humiliated. How we have yearned for the simple life, prayed for it, worked for it. But now it is all over. Henceforth we shall do as we please.

It is the advice to wives that has been issued by the Simple Life Association that has finished us. It seems a pretty underhand trick to sic our wives on to us, and just as we were trying to be good. And with each counsel as this, too. Here is the first of three rules: "Teach your husband to abstain from meat and intoxicating drink." Well I guess not. Not cutlets for dinner, flanked with fried potatoes, and followed by uric-acid-free wholemeal marmalade role. And a glass of apple juice. And this villainy is supposed to promote the simple life! Now we are trying to be calm, judicial, equitable. But if any attempt is made to foist this atrocity upon us after a hard day's work there will be a pyrotechnic display of the simple life that will probably lead to police remonstrances.

And just consider the second of these rules. "Receive him after absence due to tact." There are more divorces due to conjugal "tact" than all other causes put together. If there is anything that arouses a man to blind and paralytic fury it is a display of tact. Now if these simple life people had advised the woman to tell her husband exactly what she thought of him, and in that variety of unstudied language that arises unbidden to the lips in moments of emotional inspiration, they would not only have helped the sacred cause of domestic harmony, but they would have proved that they really do know something of the simple life. Can't they understand that the simple life means living without rules and not with rules, that it means acting without premeditation instead of by system? Can't they understand that the simple life means doing what you please within the limits of decency, doing it when you please and how you please? There is no simplicity in doing something that you don't want to do merely because you are idiot enough to believe that it is good for you. That is not simplicity. It is complexity, elaboration, intricacy. If I feel that I should like a little midnight repast in a downtown restaurant with pate de foie gras and some of those cunning liquids favoured by civilization I am leading the simple life when I do these things. But if I eat bran, not for liking bran, and because I believe it to be good for me, I am not leading the simple life at all, but the complex, intricate, and elaborate life. Therefore let us lead henceforth the really simple life. It is the only life of true virtue, and therefore the only truly happy life. Let us eat and drink whatever we please, so that our days may be long in the land. And if our wives should attempt to teach us to "abstain from meat," if they should attempt the slightest display of the "tact" upon any occasion whatsoever, we will remember our new and noble principles and we will act toward them with that elemental simplicity that we have made the guiding star of our lives.—"San Francisco Argonaut."