

THE ROYAL IRISH.

URLINGFORD PRIVATE SOLDIER'S
STORY OF FIERCE ENGAGEMENT.

INJURIES TO CAPTAIN SMITHWICK.

Private Cain, of Urlingford, who belongs to the 4th Battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment, told an interesting story of the fighting in France to an "Irish Independent" representative. He was wounded on the shoulder by shrapnel, and is now in the Mater Hospital, Dublin. Having left the troop train the advance was ordered, and after about two miles of a march the Royal Irish were in close quarters with the Germans. The bayonet work he described as awful, and the shell fire unceasing. While the shelling and rifle firing went on, people were running away from their homes and the crops were being destroyed.

HEAVY LOSSES.

His regiment marched on a village called Lascines. The enemy advanced towards the village, and he got a piece of a shell on the farm. There were 900 of the Royal Irish advancing, and afterwards when the roll was called only 55 answered.

The battle lasted from ten o'clock in the morning to ten at night. The scene was desperate. Capt. Smithwick, Kilkenny, who was in charge of his company, was shot through the mouth. The Germans used both shell and rifle fire with terrible effect.

His experience was that though some of the Germans might waver before the bayonet, the majority stood their ground and fought. Their rifle fire is generally accurate.

VESPER SHELLS.

"We had to retire from the trenches," he continued, "owing to the shell fire. It was Sunday evening, and the people who were reciting the Rosary in the village were disturbed by the shells, which burst over them. Some of the church was taken away. About a mile from the village the Germans posted a battery close to a church, and the British were obliged to shell it. A remarkable circumstance in connection with the demolition of the church was that not one of the sacred images were destroyed."

As to the "Jack Johnson," the name given to the German shell, he said its killing capacity extends over three hundred yards, and when it explodes the ground shakes like a moving bog. His wounded arm was bandaged by a comrade, and eventually he was taken to a hospital at the rear.

"The Germans," he added, "are wonderful snipers, and take most accurate aims from trees. Sometimes the Red Cross wagon they carry is a Maxim gun, which is twice as effective as the English gun."

LETTER FROM CAPT. SMITHWICK.

AN AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT.

Mr. R. Smithwick, Co.C., has received the following:—

Husaren, Kaserne,
Crefeld,
Germany,
27-10-14.

My Dear Dick—I am here wounded and a prisoner, and am being well treated. As you have seen by casualty list, the regiment suffered very heavily. It is bad luck being here, but am lucky to be above ground.

I escaped until half an hour before the end without a scratch, then while trying to retire my men to deal with a machine gun, which was enfilading us from the left rear, I was grazed twice on the shoulder, and on the hand, the next got me plump on the right breast; it hit my compass, then on to a rib, and through the muscles on top of my stomach, and out at my left side. Narrow squeak: it knocked me clean out at the time, and I am a bit stiff and sore, but it is going on well, and there is no danger.

This letter is censored, both ends, so I cannot make it too long; please acknowledge it.

My address is:—

CAPTAIN SMITHWICK,
(Royal Irish Prisoner of War),
Husaren, Kaserne, Crefeld,
Germany.

Love to all.—Your fond brother,
J. A. SMITHWICK.

Ballyhale Soldier's Experience.

Private P. Brophy, 18th Royal Irish, of Ballyhale, Co. Kilkenny, writing to a friend, states:—"My leg is improving greatly. I expect to be up shortly. The wound is not healed. I will be six weeks in bed on Monday. I would like to get a chance of getting up.

"P—D— must have been wounded in the second battle at a place called Cordai on the 26th August last. I have not seen him since. It was a big battle. There were a lot killed and wounded. I did see some terrible sights after that battle which I would not like to see again. It was all artillery fire. There were shells bursting everywhere. There was a party to reinforce us. A shell burst in the middle of them. We passed by them. It would make you sick to look at them. We got a bit of our own back in the third battle. Both positions were the same. The Germans were on one hill and we on another, and a valley between. The battle lasted only five hours, when the Germans retired. We captured 350 prisoners, a machine gun, and ten lances. We were kept on the move till 10 o'clock that night.