

THE GOD OF BATTLES

By Frank Filson

Edwardes, listening, could plainly hear the sound of the German saps being driven toward the Canadian trenches. It was eerie, listening there by the light of the electric torch, burrowing like a mole beneath the slushy Flanders soil and crouching knee-deep in water, to prevent striking his head against the timbered roof.

He wondered often whether the Germans had heard him. Each side was projecting a sap against the trenches of the enemy. When the saphead was ready hundreds of pounds of gunpowder would be ignited; there would be a devastating explosion, and the trenches, damaged beyond repair, would be occupied by the troops behind.

It was thus a race between the Canadians and the Germans. The sap, extended outward from the Canadian lines, was now parallel with that of the enemy, and the extremity of each was barely a dozen yards from that of the other.

The sappers were resting in the traverse behind. Edwardes sat alone in the water, figuring out the plan. So many yards, so many cubic feet of timber * * * Milly, in Toronto; his thoughts always recurred to her.

They were to have been married a month ago. But he had been fighting with his contingent for seven weeks, and the marriage was postponed indefinitely—forever, probably. Not many men would come back to Canada; those who did would be crippled beyond repair.

As he crouched there to his astonishment he found that he could hear the voices of the Germans. There was a flaw in the ground, a section of the crumbling rock, soft as chalk, had slipped, probably as a result of the subterranean operations, leaving a crack in the earth, imperceptible, but conveying sounds clearly.

Two men were talking. Edwardes smiled rather painfully at that. He, as the engineer, had nobody to talk to during those rare minutes when work was suspended. His task was to crouch in the water at the end of the sap, waiting until the time came for a resumption of the work. The German was situated more fortunately.

He could not hear the voices of his own men. They had retired to the traverse, their headquarters, waiting for the relieving party. It was time



Edwardes Did Not Throw the Bomb.

for the resumption. He left the saphead and, bending double, trudged back toward them through the water.

Suddenly the earth rocked about him. He was flung to the bottom of the sap by a terrific explosion. The plank roof collapsed over his head. Stunned, dazed, bewildered, he managed by a supreme effort to keep his face above the water.

In a few moments he understood