

APPENDIX No. 19.

A SUVLA BAY EPISODE.

Fairly late in the day, as we all lay sprawling on the rocks or under the thorn-bushes, I saw a little party staggering along the defile which led up to the Sirt at this point. There were two men with cowboy hats, and between them they helped another very thin and very exhausted-looking fellow, who tottered along holding one arm, which had been wounded. As they came closer I recognised my little lance-jack, very pale and shaky, a little thinner than usual; the other two, one on each side, were sturdy enough—well-built men, one short and the other tall, with great rough brown hands, sunburnt faces, and bare arms. They wore brown leggings and riding-breeches and khaki shirts. They carried their rifles at the trail, and strode up to us with the graceful gait of those accustomed to the outdoor life.

"Australians!" said someone.

"An' the corporal!"

"Where's your boss?" asked the tall colonial

"The adjutant is over here," I answered.

"We'd like a word with him," continued the man. I took them up to the officer, and they both saluted in an easy-going sort of way.

"We found him up there"—the Australian jerked his head—"being sniped and couldn't get away—says he belongs to the 32nd Ambulance—so here he is."

The two were just about to slouch off again when the adjutant called them back. "Where did you find him?" he asked.

"Up beyond Jefferson's Post: there was five snipers pottin' at him, an' it looked mighty like as if his number was up. We killed four of the snipers and got him out."

"That was very good of you. Did you see any more Medical Corps up there? We've lost some others, and an officer and sergeant."

"No, I didn't spot any—did you, Bill?" The tall man turned to his pal leaning on his rifle.

"No," answered the short sharpshooter; "he's the only one. It was a good afternoon's sport—very good. We saw he'd got no rifle, and was in a tight close-hitch, so we took the job right there and finished four of them; but it took *some* creepin' and crawlin'."

"Well, we'll be quittin' this now," said the tall one. "There's only one thing we'd ask of you, sir; don't let our people know anything about this."

"But why?" asked the adjutant, astonished. "You've saved his life, and it ought to be known."

"Ya-as, that may be, sir; but we're not supposed to be up here sharpshooting—we just done it for a bit of sport. Rightly we don't carry a rifle; we belong to the bridge-building section. We've only borrowed these rifles from the Cycle Corps, an' we shall be charged with bein' out of bounds without leave, and all that sort of thing, if it gets known down at our headquarters."

"Very well, I'll tell no one; all the same it was good work, and we thank you for getting him back to us," the adjutant smiled.

The two Australians gave him a friendly nod, said "So long, you chaps!" and lurched off down the defile.

—(From *At Suva Bay*, by John Hargrave, Sergeant in the 32nd Field Ambulance.)