

LONDON'S V.C.

PROMOTION FROM THE RANKS.

Lieutenant John Henry Stephen Dimmer, of the 2nd Battalion the King's Royal Rifle Corps, who has been awarded the V.C., gained during the fierce fighting in Flanders, in a letter to his mother, who resides at 55a, Griffiths-road, South Wimbledon, gives a short but vivid account of the action in which he was wounded. Lieutenant Dimmer was educated at the Rutlish School at Wimbledon. He says:—

"Here is how it all happened. On Thursday, 12th November, at about one o'clock, we were suddenly attacked by the Prussian Guards. They shelled us unmercifully, and poured in a perfect hail of bullets at a range of about 100 yards. I got my guns going, but they smashed one up almost immediately, and then turned all their attention on the gun I was with, and succeeded in smashing that, too, but before they completed the job I had been twice wounded and was finally knocked out with the gun. My face is spattered with pieces of my gun and pieces of shell, and I have a bullet in my face and four small holes in my right shoulder. It made rather a nasty mess of me at first, but now that I am washed and my wounds dressed I look quite all right."

A telegram received by Mrs. Dimmer from the Secretary for War says that Lieutenant Dimmer is "reported to be much improved."

The grey-haired old mother of the heroic young officer has been kept extremely busy in receiving callers congratulating her upon the honor conferred upon her son. She was also the recipient of numerous telegrams and letters of congratulation.

Lieutenant Dimmer's is a case of exceptionally rapid promotion from the ranks. Whilst a youth he showed a great liking for soldiering, and in his early boyhood started the Boys' Brigade in Wimbledon, and brought it up to a high state of efficiency before he joined the army. After leaving the Rutlish school he entered the office of Mr. R. C. Parsons, civil engineer. When there he joined the 1st Cadet Battalion the King's Royal Rifle Corps (Barnet Militia), and was promoted

sergeant when only 17 years old.

In 1902 he enlisted in the King's Rifle Corps, and in the same year was posted to the 4th Battalion in South Africa, where in 1903 he was promoted corporal for reconnaissance work in Orange River Colony, and for military sketching he received recommendations from General Lyttelton and General Ian Hamilton. In 1905 he was made lance-sergeant for work done as scout and signaller in the Mounted Infantry.

The following year he was sent to Belgium and Germany to study the army methods of these nations, and in 1907 he obtained the first class army certificate for education, and was recommended for a commission in consequence of splendid signalling work done. By this time his work had been fully recognised by the Army Council, and in November he was ordered to visit a foreign country on behalf of the Intelligence department of the army, and for his work he received a special letter of thanks.

Lord Methuen interviewed Lieutenant Dimmer in January, 1908, and as a result his lordship recommended him for a second lieutenant's commission, which Lord Haldane ordered to be granted. After this he was specially selected by the Colonial Office to do work in Africa, and there he served until May last, when he came home on leave, only to be interrupted on August Bank Holiday, when he was called up. He then left for the front with the Expeditionary Force.