

## DICK SMITH'S LOVE AFFAIR—contd.

When Dick first strode into her estaminet, the Gaiety of the Pas-de-Calais, and threw himself into the nearest chair with pay-day abandon, and demanded bottled beer, the widow said to herself, "There's a man!" She wasn't far wrong, either; not that Dick was a paragon of masculine beauty by any means, but he had a certain rough and ready heartiness both in appearance and manner which took the eye of the susceptible widow. In consequence her "apres la guerre" was decidedly more provocative than usual, and led Dick seriously to lay himself out for her capture. In reply to her formula, Dick gravely pointed out that "apres la guerre" seemed as remote as ever, and that the widow was losing valuable time and seriously imperilling her matrimonial prospects by taking cover behind a discouraging and deceptive phrase.

The widow was rather taken aback. This was the first time she had met anyone who took it for granted that her charms were not imperishable, and she was disposed to resent the implication, but it was difficult to feel really angry with a man who was incapable of understanding her shrill sarcasms, and whose eye expressed a generous appreciation of the very attributes to which he denied longevity. Moreover, the way he man-handled bottled beer aroused her admiration and appealed to her business instincts. Such a being was to be propitiated at least, so she swallowed her annoyance and devoted herself to the civilities of her occupation.

Dick progressed well with his wooing, interrupted as it was by trips into the line. The widow soon saw that his intentions were honest, and as she got to know him, began to look forward to his visits with actual pleasure. Dick, too, appreciated the situation. He developed a taste for pot-a-feu and praised and patronized the widow's cooking liberally.

At last Dick decided to "take a chance," as he described it, and proposed. The widow had been expecting it for some time, and without any unnecessary hanging back agreed to marry him. She had, she explained, a nice little nest-egg made from the estaminet, and a part interest in a tiny farm which she helped to work.

Dick heard these details with no abatement of interest.

The widow went on to emphasize the economies she had effected, and the provision she had made for the hard times she looked for. She showed Dick a variety of food-stuffs stored away in reserve. Then, as a crowning touch, she opened Bluebeard's cupboard and disclosed to his astonished and disgusted gaze piles of Maconachie, stacks of salvaged bully-beef, and tin after tin of jam and biscuit.

It was too much. Dick fled.

## Strafing the Bomb-Droppers.

It was one of those clear, still nights of early summer, and Jerry could be heard high up in the air—"oo-oo-oo"—you know the sound he makes just before unloading his cargo of explosive.

The "oo-oo-oo" came closer, and then a bomb fell—Bingo!—like that, in an uninhabited part of the Pas-de-Calais. Another bomb fell—nearer. A third fell very close—a dud (good old Jerry!).

By this time aircraft shells were whining upwards into the night, and machine-guns punctured the ozone with bursts of fire.

Someone dashed to the transport gun and cut loose, and the things he did to that Bosche plane, you wouldn't believe (wisely not).

The "oo-oo-oo" sounded faint and far off, and finally ceased. Still the gunner remained beside his weapon, watching and listening.

A motor-cycle throbbed by along the main road two hundred yards away.

That did it. The gunner sprang to his post and poured a stream of bullets into the empty sky.

## Dangers of Bomb-Proofing.

There are frequent discussions amongst back-line persons about the dangers that beset the path of the bomb-proofer. We feel it our duty to settle this matter once and for all by the following statistics:—

Number of bombproofers in France—2,000,000.

Total casualties since the beginning of the war due to the following acts of God and the King's enemies:—

|   |     |     |     |     |    |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Vin blinkitis   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 37 |
| S.R.D. saturation   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 42 |
| Bed-sores   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 29 |
| Over-eating   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 18 |
| Over-work   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 0  |
| War-worn  | ... | ... | ... | ... | 0  |
| Religious melancholia                                     | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1  |
| Street accidents  | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3  |
| Collapse of Billets                                       | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2  |
| Apoplexy induced by war arguments                         | ... | ... | ... | ... | 17 |
| Injuries incurred through disagreements with front-liners | ... | ... | ... | ... | 24 |

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THE SUPERMAN