

DRAWING WATER.

"WELL! What do you do with it? Wash in it?" The question was so obviously sarcastic and unkind that the meek assurance that I had not washed for days and days was quite unnecessary. Still the water had certainly gone and in that wilderness of crumbling ruins every additional can of water meant much to all—but particularly to the water detail.

The question, "Do you wash in it?" carried with it, not merely a sarcastic effort to bring a blush to a cheek that was rapidly assuming the hue of a black bear, but also the hint that there would be Sam Hughes to pay if anyone was caught washing in what might otherwise be used in cooking, or in cases of emergency, swallowing as a liquid refreshment. This last, however, is only to be done by those in real need.

Amidst the battered ruins of the little town were several wells but each presented its own difficulties. Perhaps in ourselves we were unattractive, but the gunners who monopolized everything, blasted the reputation of each well by a board bearing a curt intimation that it was not to be used and additionally circulated mysterious rumours that the Borsche was one of the main ingredients of the supply. Careful observation, however, seemed to show that the gunners themselves took kindly to the dope. So confidence returned in spite of the strange taste. Does truth dwell at the bottom of a well? If so, truth as many have suspected has an uncommonly unpleasant taste. But what lay at the bottom of those wells was not connected with truth in any form, since when the unsuspecting reinforcement asked casually after a thirsty carry, the reason of the somewhat strong flavour, he was disconcerted by the answer being summed up in the one word "Fritz." And our own private well, like Cæsar's wife, was by no means above suspicion.

However, the water has still to be drawn and a few of us ramble over to the cook house where the collection of empty cans await us. Here Bob produces a rope and windlass. "Fritz dropped a shell right on the other one," he said, "so I brought this windlass along." Away we went and after a few minutes reached our well, and got busy. It got darker now and a solemn silence stole over the scene. An artillery chap appeared out of a gun emplacement and from him we gathered that a little earlier a shell had dropped in the road just to the left, and that he was expecting a straff. The cans, in some mysterious manner, now seemed to double in size and increase in numbers, and though previously I had insisted that five cans were the least we could do with yet now I guessed that my demands could be met with four. As the night became darker the job increased in difficulty. We had filled about ten cans for the A.D.S. and had still four to go when the first shell whizzed in. That started it. Fritz, it seemed to me, had got wise to us and was putting a special barrage over to cut off my young and giddy career. Of course nobody believed me, and Bob flatly stated that I was an ass, and even intimated that the Kaiser had never heard of me. Visions of predecessors blown to the bottom of the well most unreasonably came to my mind, but now Bob comforted me nobly by announcing that the last can

was filled and that we could hop it with the goods.

Suddenly a huge explosion occurred—everything went red and then inky black—it must have been right on top of us and I wasn't sure that I was alive. But Bob's shrill voice cut in among the bursting of shells, "You bonehead, get your foot out of that dixie and come along—those ain't shells—them's our heavies firing!"

TWO WEEKS IN FRANCE.

(Written for "Now and Then.")

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MAC:—If the Dublin Fusiliers wore Highland dress they would be "kilt" entirety.

FLOSSIE: Yes, dear, the Pope's peace statements are rather wild, but you know he always had a tendency to "roam."

JAS. GOODR: Yes, the O.C. has managed so far but we hear that you are coming back soon.

ART: You say you have been eighteen months in the country without leave and are tired of the country. Die.

WILLIE: The bagpipes have their origin in the old Scottish custom of well-to-do folk carrying home on Saturday night a sucking pig for the Sunday dinner. When passing the neighbours' houses, the "guid man" would make the porker squeal long and loud by giving his tail a violent twist—"Jist tae let them knae." Moved to envy the less fortunate neighbours hit upon the plan of imitating piggy by means of what is now known as the bagpipes.

(Written for "Now and Then.")

THE ACTING TOWN MAJOR.

LIMPID LILYWILLIE, lance-corporal; erstwhile acting Town Major of Bozin, dropped in on the editor the other day. "I've come to arrange about the baths—you can have the seventh—oh! hello—shake—I'm in charge of the natorium works here. Yes, you can have the seventh." We thanked him because it was only the "first," and we were lucky to only have to wait six days for a wash down.

"Do you remember when I was at Bozin? Well, Doddywood made me put up three stripes and said, 'You are Town Major, now, Lilywillie—run the show but keep off the booze!' I started in O.K.—took a look around the town and saw that the estaminet people were hostile. Yep! I picked on one and closed her up; tight as a drum. That changed their music. I soon had 'em running after me and they closed up at eight sharp. I strolled along—there were two sergeants licking her up in an estaminet—it was about a minute after eight. I just popped my head into the door, looked round and silently departed. Madame came running after me, 'Un moment, Monsieur, vous tres bon sergent; une bouteille Champagne pour vous—tres bon, eh?', 'No—no bon,' and I sadly shook my head as if it were all over with her and that I had a painful tho' necessary duty to perform. Her offence was past compromise; and had I not my dire though dirty work to pull off? Well, in the end we made it up. Ah! yes, it was a good home. She was a bon war," and dismally shaking his head and full of dry woe, he slunk off.

(Written for "Now and Then.")

Extract from routine Orders:—

O.C. proceeded on leave -/-/17.

London weather report:—A marked rise in temperature. Stormy towards evening.

BY THE BYE.

LADIES are expensive company; very. If you doubt my word, ask Staff-Sergt. Bye.

One day whilst we were stationed at Oochang he felt the need of a little exercise and started on a visit to a small village in the vicinity.

Strolling along one of the pretty lanes, and occasionally giving his moustache an upward twirl on the off chance of meeting some rustic Mademoiselle, he was surprised and gratified to find that Fat Nell (the M.T. dog, otherwise known as "Lambface") had followed him out of camp and was padding along at his side.

Now the Staff was tickled, in there is something very pleasing in having a well-trained dog following faithfully at heel, looking trustfully into your face when you halt, as if to say "where next, dear master?"

They roamed along happily together until, down in the village Sam encountered one of those charming gentlemen with "M.P." on his arm. Suspecting nothing and feeling well disposed to all men (even to M.P.'s) the Staff nodded affably and was passing on when the Cop hailed him, "Hey! yer no right to have a dog!"

"No!" said the Staff, mildly, astonished.

"No. Army orders, all stray dogs to be destroyed! Shot four to-day."

"Yes. But this is no stray dog. Why, we've had that dog in our Unit since —"

"Well, yer no right to have it. Orders is orders. Yer know what orders ARE, don't yer?"

"Well, look hear" (stepping close to the M.P. and taking him affectionately by the arm), "She isn't really our dog. Belongs to a poor old woman at an Estaminet down the road. Poor old woman. Three sons at the front and a cripple daughter with seventeen kids. The lady thinks the world of her."

"What! Of a daughter like that?"

"Why no. The dog, of course."

"Now look here," said the Cop. "It's like this, I've GOT to take that dog. Orders is —"

"How's the beer in this burg?" ventured the Staff desperately.

"Oh, not TOO bad," said the Cop, brightening visibly.

"Well, come and —"

The Cop took a hurried look up and down the street.

"Over there on the corner. The back door's just by the pump"

And it cost the poor old Staff nearly ten francs to bring his lady friend safely back to camp.

The next evening, as he was setting out, he spotted the affectionate Nell toddling after him.

"Hi! Allez! Allez!" etc., etc. "Beat it. D—n your eyes!"

Poor old Nell turned back with a puzzled look in her faithful brown eyes. It seemed to say, "Oh, these men."

(Written for "Now and Then.")

Our Band is once more on the go. It makes an awful shindy. But that is natural, don't you know. The leader's name is "Windy."