

THE LISTENING POST



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THE LATEST CRAZE. NEW SPRING PASTIME. FASCINATING GAME OF « OVER THE TOP ».

With the return of Spring the exciting sport of « Over the Top » seems about to attain a universal vogue. At latest advices it appears to be catching on even in America to the exclusion of other pursuits.

To see it at its best one must travel to the northern part of France. A brief description of the method of play is roughly as follows :

Large parties of men are concealed in ditches on either side of a stretch of country of varying width. This space is called « no-man's-land. » One side wears a costume of « khaki » reinforced in some cases with sand-bags. The other side is dressed in « field-gray ». Both alike are called « heroes » by the populace of their respective countries, and « troops » or « canon-fodder » by their leaders.

When the date of the match has been decided on by those who direct the sport, a mountainous quantity of material is collected which it is impossible to describe in detail although the three most necessary items are war correspondents, embalmed grub and medical supplies.

When the kick-off comes the khaki's throw large amounts of hardware at the field-gray's and then at a given signal begin to walk towards them. The field-gray's then throw as much metal back as possible, throw their hands up and shout : « Kamerad ! » (Note here : It is very desirable that the field-gray's should shout « Kamerad ! » as soon, as often and in as large numbers as possible. Otherwise it delays the game). They are then considered off-side and are out of the game for good.

The khaki's then continue going forward until they reach the goal when they disperse to look for souvenirs with the exception of certain of their number who run about with pots of white paint and brushes and mark « CAPTURED BY THE — BATTALION OF THE — » on any object of high value.

The khaki war correspondents then sit down with large note books and long pencils and throw hysterics about « the amazing valour of the troops ...the utterly unprecedented uproar of the guns.... the silken shiver of the shells », etc., so that the khaki stay-at-homes who are not in khaki may vi-

cariously taste the joys of the game, and may, by proxy, sniff the atmosphere of the contest as they munch their diminished supply of toasted war bread and margarine at breakfast.

Several miles away the field-gray war correspondents are doing precisely the same thing in exactly the same way. They also have won the game. It is a habit with them. They never do anything else. They praise ecstatically the masterly strategy of the Chief Figure in field-gray in withdrawing hastily his cannon-fodder from the region of the contest ; and laud enthusiastically the wonderful acuteness which has left in the hands of the khaki's the necessity of providing food for the many thousands of field-gray's. Oh, the cunning of it !

Showers of iron crosses are thrown over the surviving cannon-fodder, the bells of Berlin—those of them which have not been melted down for the purposes of the game—are rung and rung, the school children are allowed to work for the Government from dawn till dusk planting spuds instead of burying their emaciated noses in the textbooks of Kultur ; and all field-gray adults who are not in field-gray are permitted to offer two ounces of their already attenuated bread ration towards the maintenance of this charming sport.

The medical students and budding surgeons on both sides get excellent and abundant practice, and everybody's happy !

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### OURS .. OR THEIRS ?

Oh ! fast the shells were flying,  
And the night was bright with flares.  
In a deep hole I was lying  
Lest they catch me unawares.  
I thought of the daisy flowers ;  
I thought of the Golden Stairs ;  
For some of the shells were « ours »  
And some — worse luck — were « theirs ».

And now, O Gods of the Battle,  
Give ear to a Sapper's prayers !  
When the loud-mouthed cannon rattle  
And they send over dozens of « theirs »  
I shall face them, calm and steady,  
But the soul within me cowers  
When the « 60's » come to the « ready »  
And send over showers of « ours ».