

## DICK SMITH'S LOVE AFFAIR.

DICK SMITH was a blue strapped individual, who, during three years broken time spent at our great war, had assimilated an assortment of ironware without more than temporarily impairing his physique. In his own words he had been "just lucky." The four gold stripes on his sleeve proved that his good fortune had at least held on four separate occasions.

Since the beginning of the war Dick had thought a good deal about matrimony. Just why is hard to say,

after some deliberation fixed on the Widow Lebrun as his prospective partner.

The widow kept an estaminet, took an occasional flutter in the fish and chips industry, and generally pursued the coin of the troops with true racial thoroughness. Her first husband had been removed by some obscure complaint incidental to the beer business, and she wished to replace him. However, most of the marriageable men of her village had gone to the war, and



THE TERRORS OF WAR.

but he grew daily more keenly aware of the thirty-six hard-bitten years behind him and of the loneliness and lovelessness of his life. Had anyone accused Dick of the dreadful crime of sentimentality, he would probably have had a fight on his hands; but the truth was, Dick was in that perilous state when a man will grasp at the first opportunity of marriage. Wherefore Dick "looked around." Although his outlook was restricted, he, like a wise man, made the most of his opportunities, and

did not appear to admire the widow's full-blown charms. Offers of alliances from the cheerful soldiery of our armies she had invariably repulsed with the formula—"apres la guerre." These few words were indeed a haven of refuge to the widow, as to all other Frenchwomen. She had learned to infuse into these simple syllables a considerable proportion of coquetry, a dash of mature roguishness, a tincture of allurements, and more than a touch of tender regret.