

"ALLIED" By Sarge.

When one goes down town, one often sees little knots of Belgian and French soldiers, some looking austere in their navy blue uniforms surmounted by black cloaks, their shiny jack-boots and their little postmen's caps with stiff glossy peaks, others in khaki like ourselves, wearing those rakish triangular caps such as we used to make as youngsters out of paper, with a red tassel dangling over their forehead, giving them a pseudo-comic appearance. Between ourselves and these visitors there is not that degree of fraternising one would expect among the soldiers of three countries fighting in a common cause. No doubt the difficulties of language are largely responsible for this, and, again, there are so many of them and so many of us that there is not the same excuse for overstepping the conventions and hailing them, as there would be if we saw them only rarely.

But the other evening I had a recon-
tre with a couple of Belgians that had all the charm of novelty. After spending the evening down town I stepped into a fish and chip house on my way to the bus to get a box of matches. Inside the door were two rosy-cheeked "flappers" flanked by two young fellows in "civvies." Between them they had a couple of note books and a small dictionary. The lads were trying with painful clarity of enunciation to make themselves understood but it was quite evident that they were not succeeding. As I entered, one of them cast a fleeting glance of despair in my direction, so I asked him in French what was wrong. With a radiant smile and most polite salutations he begged me to secure the addresses of the ladies.

I did so, and duly inscribed them in their note books. Then ensued a catechism of these enthusiastic young fellows with me acting as interlocutor on behalf of the girls and the fish-and-chip man.

After telling us some rather thrilling experiences, they remarked, with a quick change of expression, but, "ma foi," how there was "beaucoup de plaisir et beaucoup a manger en Angleterre!" Tomorrow afternoon they were leaving for France—they would have their uniforms before they left—and soon they would be with the Belgian Army. And, oh, how they were glad!

The picture of these bright-eyed lads with all their pent-up enthusiasm breaking out in their faces and actions will not soon fade from my memory. While I stood contrasting the prosaic, rather business-like way in which I had enlisted with the hazards of their experience, one of them asked: would Monsieur be so good as to ask the ladies if they would dine with us to-morrow, and would Monsieur come, too? No, Monsieur was very sorry that he could not come, but he would ask the ladies. They agreed, and the appointment was made for eleven-thirty in front of the shop. I would have given three days C.B. to have been with these jolly young innocents the following day.

Now the girls had to go in—they lived just around the corner. When they had left I suggested that we three comrades go down and have lunch together. By this time I had caught their élan and was willing to be as noisily enthusiastic as they. So we three musketeers went rollicking off arm in arm. We had gone only a couple of blocks when they pulled