

Hands Across the Sea.

I WOULD rather not slate Gray as a woman-hater (in fact I have yet to meet one), the attitude he adopted towards the daughters of Eve was that of "suspicious neutrality."

Louis Gray was a son of the soil from the far away West, and he stood upright to the extent of six feet. You have seen the sturdy, electric belted, "I-can-make-you-strong" man in the ads., with a Kaiserish look and a piece of fragile tenderness leaning on the broad shoulder? Well, that's Gray—minus the K. moustache and the F. T.

The war soon dragged Louis into its vortex. The prairie rover became Private Gray with an addition of box-car numbers. Then we met.

He was sitting outside his dug-out with a doleful expression on his face when I brought a parcel to him. He was surprised, for he received parcels about as often as

She probably figures on an amalgamation, and this parcel, I take it, is a sort of introductory circular. Her rolling stock consists of a public-house, the Seldom Inn, doing a profitable business. She has wound up courage at the last blot to ask for your photographic credentials in exchange for her physiognomic chart, and she's single-track and signs herself, 'Miss Agatha Tompkins, waiting reply.'"

"Well, she'll wait a darned long time," he snapped, and walked away.

I thought no more about it until Gray came to me one day with a request for a copy of my photograph, which, after some pressure, he admitted was intended for the eyes of Agatha. After that episode cakes rolled across the Channel with a weekly regularity, and on account of the photographic loan I became a permanent guest at the festive board.



The Tall One: "'Ere, wot if I am a batman; that don't make me a coward."

Shorty: "No, but it makes you a deep dug-out fiend."



Tump-Liner: "Here, whereabouts the Battalion?"

Casualty: "Four miles beyond that village and still going strong."

Tump-Liner: "Gee, by the time I find them I'll be up for desertion."

he got leave. He accepted it suspiciously, suspecting a bully-beef and hard-tack hoax probably, and began unwrapping it with a sceptical smile. There appeared a real pre-war cake encompassed with cigarettes and chocolate; on top rested a neat little note.

"Gee Whizz! What next?" he exclaimed. "Read it for me, old side-kicker, while I dig a hole into Hill 60." He shoved the note into my hand and began operations on the cake. I busied myself with the letter, until noticing the fast disappearance of the cake, I broke off and came in on the mopping-up.

"Well, what's it all about?" queried Gray, when Hill 60 had vanished.

"Did you ever scribble your name on a box-car out West and have it meet you face to face in the East?" I asked.

"Sure; but I don't get your drift, Bud," he replied.

"Well, some unknown quantity of feminine nerve has been grappling with your name, number, line and route.

When it arrived, Miss Agatha's frontispiece didn't hurt the eyes any; she was decidedly a smooth-looking damsel.

Louis decried it, of course, from the contents of the hair-net to the Cuban-heel Oxfords; but I caught him strafing an orderly-room clerk for the probable date of his leave, and drew my own conclusions.

It so chanced that my leave fell due about two weeks later than Louis', so, while he was being put through the third degree at the Base, on the way back to his unit, I was headed for the chalk cliffs of old Albion with an unfractured pay-check.

Sparbrook, where the Seldom Inn was located, was on my line of travel, so I dropped off at the station and soon discovered the place. It wasn't very strong on ornate