

THE 8<sup>TH</sup> BATTALION'S PAGE

## SKETCHES AROUND M-----S

The popular conception of war as a series of closely following dramatic and heroic incidents is one which we think is destined to be obliterated when the values of war in a life, and life in a war come to be understood.

Not the least interesting part to us seems the review of the characteristics and mannerisms of a few of the men we have met in our stay in Flanders.

The first to come to our mind is a genial soul locally known as "Uncle Joffre", to the men and officers amongst whom his particular work takes him. Short and somewhat round of figure with which a beaming smile and ruddy tan complexion will assist: he is capable of an extremely rapid transfer of his person from one spot to another, particularly when his health demands it. His opening remarks upon entering a hut or dug-out may appear a trifle cryptic, but convey to his friends a world of meaning—thus: "Good morning", (this with an engaged smile). "I've just come up that very steep path. I wonder if you have a——" (shaking jar picked from floor) "No, nothing doing, what's in this one, ah! That's better, just a little won't hurt me I think: ah! that's the real is'n't it, er? The General was around this morning, and he said to me, Uncle Joffre, the men are looking splendid. And I said, yes sir they are the finest in the world, and he agreed with me, so I took just a little one on that, and came down here—No! I think it's a little too early in the morning—well, that's so, one does'n't know when one may get another, here's ho."

It must not be thought that considerable adventure does not come his way. Only a few days ago he was observed to be approaching the farm of Grand Monk, at a prodigious pace, arms and stick going furiously. He was easily breaking all previous records for the great cross country walk, from the Piggeries. The guard scarcely got beyond the preliminary hitchings up for the slope when he had already made the Haven of the Mess, and sank exhausted upon a chair. Many hands rushed for a reviere and gratefully accepting, he wiped the copious perspiration from his head with a "Phew! that was a close shave." pressed for an account he said, "Gentlemen, I had scarcely left my hut when, crash! Five coalboxes broke where I had stood. I was bound for the Piggeries, and when half way, again four coalboxes lit right behind me. I hate to run, it looks bad, and is hard on the digestion, but I increased my pace by about 3 miles an hour. Arrived at my first calling point I lost no time in passing on to Grand Monk, when, you would hardly credit it, eighteen more fell right in the place I had left. Tremendous stuff, eight inch I think, at least, and for no apparent purpose but to 'snipe' at me. Those Boches are marvellous, how they knew I was out the devil only knows. However I saw their plan firing on the square and if I could only make the billet in something like 4 1/5 seconds, I was safe. I made it, and only just in time for, Gentlemen, three more fell half way between there and Grand Monk. Gad, I think I'll wait till it gets a little darker before returning. I don't particularly care for all that attention; it reminds me of that front line trench I was in, where they made a practice of potting at me with Jack Johnsons whenever I passed down the line, and did I ever tell you of my experience at Fes—"

Unfortunately we were called away and still have that to hear. No doubt a man so marked by the hostile artillery, was the recipient of such compliment so early in the game. How he keeps so cheerful under it all, we do not know, but it is a great spirit.

S.L.

## ON DIT

Will Doc Crozier prescribe medicine and duty on his civilian sick parade.

For heavens sake never put "Windy" on listening post again." This is the prayer of the boys of No. 2 Company. Four stand-too's in one night get a man's goat.

Right in the trench—some ranging—what! The first two grenades landed dead on, and they haven't dared to put a sentry there again. Then they started strafing the Tenth and I located the exact spot they were firing from. Of course I am pretty sure I killed them all, but maybe I just frightened them.

If only the C. O. would leave "Wife Gwenade Weggie" in the firing line all the time, how it would relieve the monotony.

One of our soldiers wants to know if a writ can be issued on a man of Khaki. He left a number of broken hearts during his leave in England, and word now comes to the front, that breach of promise proceedings are to be commenced. Give us your opinion.

"Slim" must have been put on the cook wagon to fatten up, or has he grown too tall for the trenches.

At one time it used to be, got a cigarette? Only issues. (a pause) Oh! anything will do. But now "Arf a mo" cigarettes are not "Arf bad" since Tucketts of Hamilton have the making of them.

(Surely this should be good for a special gift from certain cigarette manufacturers.)

The sublime optimist—"When I get back to Canada."

The gloomy pessimist—"I think the first five years of this war will be the worst.

After much banging on the door of a certain place where only stars, crowns and stripes are viewed with favour, the following was heard, "Open Mademoiselle, we officers servants, we got plenty money." No names—no pack drill.

## THE WORKING PARTY

"Laborare est orare"—Simple tag of Roman days, Meant in our modern parlance, "He who worketh also prays."

As we slither down the slipway, every step is fought with ill. Brothers of our working party, let us pray for Kaiser Bill.

Load the trucks and load the flat cars, fill them see that all is good.

Better fifty miles of pushing, than a furlong carrying wood.

Off we go, the rain is dripping down my trusty friend.

Now the bitter grade we're hitting, backs are breaking as they bend.

Mark the bombs—ah! see the black flash, how that shell the ether sears.

Bump—jump—crash! A rail is missing, heaven bless those engineers.

Fifteen minutes feckless fozzling; Strain and struggle might and main.

And we bide here till the dawning. We must lift her on again.

Strafe those snipers! They have heard us. By the flare-lights balefull glare

They will wing us if they're lucky, then our outfit's out of gear.

Sulphuretted are our speeches as we stumble through the sloughs

Watch me leave a full length imprint in the mud from head to shoes.

Oh! my puttees muddy coated, oh! my rifle full of earth. All to-morrow must I clean ye, keeping time to Minnie's "werf"

In the trenches we dump our burdens; turn again with lighter heart

All is fair unless machine guns, chance to dish us "a la carte".

"Laborare est orare", question; Was the Roman right? Let him come and test his theories. Take my place and work to-night.

"Ebor".