

The Old, Old Story.

*Old soldiers never die,
Never die, never die;
Old soldiers never die;
They d—d well fade away.*

It was a glorious morning in early summer, and the callow youth—not long away from the Old Country—swinging up the communication trench, warbling out his little ditty and gazing up at the blue sky, failed to notice the rifle thrust out from a “bivvy” between his legs. Next moment the song ended suddenly, and there was a gasp of dismay and vain clutchings at the dirt sides, as he sprawled full length along the “bath-mats.” There followed a weak flow of profanity as he raised himself to his knees.

“Wot the ’ell you want to do that for?” he demanded of the black visaged, unshaven soldier sitting in the bivvy. “I ain’t done nothin’ to you.”

“Sorry, kid,” and Private Watkins tried manfully to assume a contrite look. “It was my fault for havin’ left my gun lyin’ out there. Come inside an’ have a cigarette, an’ I’ll give you a little old soldier’s advice to help yer out in the trenches.”

Mollified by the old man’s friendly tone, the youth crawled into his two by twice funk-hole, and accepted the proffered “Woodbine.” He was just reaching across for the candle when the old soldier spoke:

“This funk-hole reminds me of a couple o’ years ago—the first time we was in the Ypres Salient. We ’ad —”

“Aw, Gawd!” gasped the youth. “I gotta quit; I gotta quit. Here’s your fag. I should a been on a workin’ party a nour ago.”

“Funny!” remarked old Watkins, as he picked up the hastily dropped fag, and restored it to his pocket. “Funny how he should remember so suddenly what he was supposed to be on.”

These dots represent the lapse of some hours. Private Watkins was on duty as a “gas sentry” in the communication trench, when a Staff Officer approached him.

“What are you supposed to be doing here, my man? Oh, yes, gas sentry; just so. And do you know the value of a gas sentry to prevent your comrades being caught by the deadly fumes? And do you realise the vital necessity of keeping alert, and watching keenly?” And so he rambled on for about five minutes, finishing up with the remark: “It is an ideal day for gas to-day.”

Private Watkins gazed at him for a few seconds, then answered:—

“It sure is, sir. It reminds me of the 22nd of April a couple of years ago. It was a day like this when we was up in the Ypres Salient, and Fritz put over the gas for the first —”

“Quite so, quite so, my man,” hastily interrupted the officer. “Which way did you say I take for the —nth Battalion H.Q.? Good morning, sentry!” And Private Watkins, gazing with puzzled eyes at the fast disappearing figure, remarked to the wide world:

“That’s funny! It’s the fust time I seen one of them ‘brass-hats’ in a hurry to get INTO the front line!”

Imagine, dear reader, that this line of dots represents the flight of time to the next morning, and that “rum-issue” is just over.

Standing on the fire-step, watching the sun just appearing over a cloudless horizon, is Private Watkins, and next to him in the “bay” stands Lance-Corporal Algernon Reginald Meredith-Smythe.

“And the magic sun in blood-red blaze of glory
Leaps o’er the hills through silken morning mist,
And elfin sunbeams gambol like some fairy story
By twinkling dew-drops kissed,”

quotes the Corporal from some long-forgotten issue of the LISTENING POST. “It is worth a year of one’s life to stand here at the break of dawn, and witness the birth of such a perfect day.”

“Yes,” answered the old soldier, “it reminds me o’ the time we was in the Ypres Salient—the fust time, a couple o’ years ago. It was just like this on the morning of the 24th of April when the Huns started to knock ’ell out of us, and —”

But the Corporal had fainted, and, looking down at the prostrate form, Private Watkins said musingly:

“It’s funny ’ow these ’ere toffs always seem to go off sudden like w’en they gets down to ’ard work in the trenches.”

It is evening again, and Private Watkins—his tour of duty

over for the day—is back in his little funk-hole, rolling himself into his great-coat, and muttering the while:

“It’s funny that we never thought o’ digging ’oles like this in the Ypres Salient two years ago—didn’t ’ave no great-coats them days, neither; if we’d ’ad we might ’ave slept warmer some o’ them —” But the voice trails off into space, and a succession of snores proclaims the fact that the old soldier is asleep—to dream, no doubt, of the battles they had in the Ypres Salient two years ago.

IDDY-UMPTY.

What to Pay for Souvenirs.

THERE has been much agitation lately about the present high cost of souvenirs, and it is the opinion of well-informed observers that profiteering has thrust its hydra head over the parapets of the trench zone. It is even believed that a Souvenir Combine is in process of formation, a coalition which can have no other object than to raise the already ruinous cost of *objets d’art* from the dug-out district. We have long agitated for a standard schedule of prices, to govern souvenir trading, and append herewith a list which seems to us eminently calculated to aid the producer, protect the consumer, and prevent the depredations of the middleman.

	Frs.
Hun Helmets, dress, “God Mit Uns” decoration, in good order	50.00
Hun Helmets, dress, “Gott Mit Uns” decoration, shrapnel dented	40.00
Hun Rifles, Mauser pattern, only slightly rusted	20.00
Hun Rifles, Mauser pattern, badly rusted	15.00
Hun Bayonets, saw edge	10.00
Hun Bayonets, plain, American make	8.00
Hun Pistols, 10-shot automatic, .32 calibre, Luger make	60.00
Hun Pistols, 10-shot automatic, .32 calibre, Mauser make	60.00



CANADIAN.
WE’LL SUPPOSE YOU HAD LOTS OF EGGS AT EASTER, FRITZ.
FRITZ (WITH VIVID RECOLLECTION) “GOTT’ NODDING’S BUT SHELLS
(OF EASTER MONDAY)”

Hun Field Glasses, Zeiss pattern	30.00
Holsters for above in imitation civilian hide	10.00
Hun Bayonet Tassels, plain10
Hun Bayonet Tassels, coloured20
Hun Dirks, Solingen steel, unused	25.00
Hun Dirks, Solingen steel, used	27.50
Sheaths for above	5.00
Hun watches, going	5.00
Hun Watches, gone	2.00
Hun Bonnets, field-grey N.C.O.’s,	5.00
Hun Bonnets, common, Kamerad pattern	3.00
Extra rosettes for above50
Hun Shoulder-straps, embroidered ... per pair	1.00
Hun Ground-sheets, very superior	5.00
Hun Mess-tins, complete	1.00
Hun Razors, Sheffield make	1.00
Hun Money, paper	not quoted
Hun Money, war metal	See Swiss Exchange
Hun Belts, leather, “In Treue Fest” buckle	5.00
Hun Belts, leather, “Gott Mit Uns” buckle	5.00

[Please note.—Special quotations on trophy guns, either howitzer or field, on application to D.A.C.’s, C.E.’s., and Div. Trains.]