

OUR "HOMES."



OUR billets since our arrival on a foreign shore have been many, and strange have been the places. Our first was a tent camp, where we laid our blankets on the ground and hoped, oh! how vainly, that the mud would not permeate through. Our next was in a barn, where we were allowed the luxury of straw, and even then some complained that the straw got into their clothes and made them feel "itchy-coo." Another move, and we see huts, or rather pieces of canvas stretched over poles and masquerading as huts. We slept on the ground, and our boots were set in the ditch dug through the middle so that when a man stood up he would not put his head through the roof. Sometimes if you were lucky your boots were there in the morning, but more often you were out of luck, and your "cances" were floating several leagues from your "home." Then once again our "home" was moved, and the furniture, in the shape of packs, equipment, and rifles, we carried on our backs, as we could not trust the pantehnicons of this country. After what seemed many moons we arrived at another "desirable residence," where we arranged the furniture to our taste, but found that, as the former occupants had been pigs, things were not as sweet as one would expect from the glowing description given in the advertisement, but as the rent was very just we overlooked any small discomforts, and settled down to new surroundings. The great objection, however, was the fact that the previous lodgers were not content to let well alone, but insisted on paying visits, much to the depreciation of our personal effects. It might be mentioned that at this particular billet we were initiated in the old and, some people say, honoured custom of spending one's last few sous in the purchase of coffee. No doubt this is a very fine way of inducing a soldier to part with his money, but it seems that it is hitting below the belt. We were well acquainted with all our neighbours, and knew their ways and manners, when without a word of warning the "landlord" gives us notice to "quit," and there was no back-saying him, so "quit" we did; but the gods were kind, and landed us in billets that almost resembled the country mansions that one reads

about and sees so few of; but this billet was by far the best we have encountered. And here again we drank coffee, and, mention it not in high circles, French beer at a penny a glass. No, the glass was not included. "Back to the land" is the cry in the West and East of Canada, but out here it has been modernised and now reads, "Back to the tents," and back we went. These houses of rest leave little to be desired, but that which is most desired is a soft floor board. Maybe some genius will in time invent one, but we think that it will be "après la guerre finit." After tents, our next house was a trench with dug-outs as bedrooms. As to this mode of living nuff said. Say, if ever we are allowed the luxury of a real home I'm going to have dirt spread on the floor so that the comparison may be all the more real. All things considered, we cannot complain about the accomodation that has been ours, but there's one thing that we do not appreciate, and that is the nasty habit the previous occupiers have of leaving their pets behind them, expecting us to maintain them in the style that they have been accustomed to. This is impossible, as the Western skin is so much harder than the skin of the average British Tommy. Nevertheless, we did our best, and it is to be hoped that they enjoyed their brief life, which was so ruthlessly brought to a close by a few hundred pounds of steam pressure. May they rest in peace, and no more trouble the hard-working soldier.

LOCIN.

IMPRESSIONS IN THE TRENCHES.



It has been suggested by the numerous friends of the Battalion who read the magazine, THE FORTY-NINER, would like to know how we live in the trenches, so I will try to give a small description as

as seen by me, a non-combatant officer.

After a certain amount of questions put to the much employed guides, I find that the approach to the front line occupied by us was easy and even safe in daylight; on the first trip it came as a distinct surprise to find that one was in the front line, and the Germans but a few yards away.

It was a world of sand bags, mud, and