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WHAT ONE FINDS ALONG THE BRITISH FRONT IN FRANCE

According to an authoritative British source, tapped by the London correspondent of the New York Times, the British trenches along the Somme are models of skill, the finest trenches that have been dug since the beginning of the war. The men are in what he describes as "neat tracks" in the earth with a sharp corner every few yards. The old trenches were gaping V-shaped ditches, well calculated to collect the enemy's trench mortars. The present trenches are mere slots, and the shell that reaches them has to drop down almost perpendicularly. To have built these trenches the men must have dug as skillfully and as unweariedly as they have fought, and he says that they took almost as much pride and joy in the one occupation as in the other. The English, remarks the correspondent, only learn war in each of their wars by degrees, but now they have learned it. There is no more for the Germans to teach them; they may teach a few tricks to the Germans.

A Never-Ending Debate
Describing what one may now expect to find in the British front-line trenches, he writes:
One little knot of men off duty are bending over a comic paper at a corner. The wary old trench-dweller always likes a corner because he can jump round it at the shortest notice and put a solid angle of earth between him and anything noxious that drops in. On the other side another group cheerfully reopens that undying theme of debate among the British soldiers—the merits and demerits of the salient of Ypres.

"How long was you at Wipers?"
"Four months."
"Well, I was there five months; so what right have you to speak?"
A general laugh greets this method of proof and disproof, and some one else cuts in. You meet officers anxious about nothing except to know what there is in the last English papers. Sentries on duty with all the crowns of their grass-green steel helmets dipped cunningly down to the parapet's level report that nothing is stirring over the way. These helmets used to be ugly and not highly protective. The new make of helmet is more ornamental and more virtuous; it covers more of the neck, though not so much as the blue-steel skull-caps of the French, with their turned-down brims, and its lines are artistic. Worn at the proper sentry look rather

like Donatello's David at Florence. With stooping heads, the sentries report "nothing doing." That means nothing visible, nothing audible.

Scanning No Man's Land
Peering over the parapet for a moment you see only a wilderness of bare earth, pitted thickly with conical holes from three to eight feet deep. Four hundred yards away is the skeleton of a dead village. No sign of life is to be seen there except perhaps one of the larks which sing cheerfully through cannonades that would make the peasants in faraway Sussex nervous, or else a big hawk slowly quartering ground and sending the larks into a retirement as modest as that of German airmen. And yet you know that waste is inhabited, that you need only to raise your head a foot higher to bring a bullet dipping itself with a quiet flick into the loose earth behind you; that if you crawled out on your stomach and peeped over the edge of each shell hole you reached you would come at last to one in which men in wide-skirted grey tunics with narrow red bands round their caps were crouching, some of them nursing their one good friend, a machine gun, some of them digging hard to connect hole with hole till a row of fortuitous dots was turned into a line; some of them resting tucked into little cavities scooped in the earth or near the side of a hole like sand-martens' nests on the wall of a quarry and staring apprehensively up at bomb-laden British biplanes wheeling in the sky overhead as the larks in the grass look up at a hawk.

Kindness Surprises Captives
You know all this, because on the way up this morning you talked with a number of Prussian and Saxon prisoners in one of the cages, the little camps where the latest captives rest for some days safe out of range of their friends' heavy guns till they can be sent on by train to the base of the English. Three days ago they came down broken-nerved to the cage, their faces lined and drawn with mental overstrain, some of them still mechanically making deprecatory gestures of surrender and entreaty. As they marched to-day all the lines were smoothed out. They had been fed and had slept for whole nights and had found that the "murderers" described to them by their own sergeants inflicted nothing but offers of cigarettes. So they began to expand in the unexpected



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HENRY BLAIR.

ed sunshine of good treatment and they told what life had been like in the shell holes, its good points and its bad. The food had been good, but sometimes it did not come because the British guns would draw a kind of fence of falling shrapnel across a piece of country, a sort of shower-bath of bullets dropping along the line, so nobody could cross the line without being hurt. Still the bread and meat and chocolate, when they did come, were good and the water was sometimes mineral water in bottles. The trouble was that the British guns would not cease firing and the British aeroplanes would not go away, nor the German ones come out of their sheds.

German Officers Shoot Deserters
Sometimes the men in the shell hole would see British troops in the open within rifle range, but would dare shoot lest British airmen should see where they were and send work to a British gun and bring down a high explosive shell on the old shell hole to bury them all alive by a second rearrangement of the earth. You perceive this apprehension just because you twice to-day have seen the end of a stiff black-booted leg protruding out of the wall of an old shell hole. Other questions about their life at the front the prisoners answered as freely had they talked politics. Yes, there were any number of Social Democrats in the army and every one thought great changes would come when the war was over, but not now. Were there any desertions? No. Many men would be glad to be prisoners, but would not desert. Many more still would surrender if the German officers were not so quick to shoot men who put up their hands, and if all the German soldiers knew that the Allies did not kill prisoners nor have them scalped by savages.

Big Increase in Sailors Wages
(Halifax Mail)

It's a great thing to be a sailor these days. Jolly Jack Tars of the merchant marine, and even the boys who can tie a reef point or take the trick at the wheel, of a fishing smack, walk jauntily along Water St. with their chests stuck out and their hands in their trouser pockets gently squeezing a roll of greenbacks as big and as firm as a hawser. There's a material reason for their jauntness. Sailing masters, steam masters and shipping masters are all bowing low before the independent sailors. To get their services they are willing to pay a higher price per day, per week, per month than plenty of ministers—not cabinet ministers—are receiving.
As for ship's cooks, you simply can't touch them. Another few years of such prosperity and every son of a sea cook, to say nothing of the dandy himself, will be hand-honking his way through the streets with a six-cylinder car.
It was not always thus in Halifax. Within the memory of men whose hair is only slightly sprinkled with grey, it was an easy matter to walk along the water front in Halifax and pick up men for before-the-mast service at from fourteen dollars to eighteen dollars a month for ordinary season, while there were plenty of A. B.'s to be had for only a trifle more. A good ship's cook, one that could fix up salt horse so that it would almost pass for beefsteak and make a duff most delicious, could be had for from twenty-five to thirty-five dollars a month.
To-day go along Water Street and you will find men who couldn't tell a bowsprit from a jibboom, being offered forty, fifty and even sixty dollars a month. Almost any kind of a hash-maker can get fifty dollars, while a real cook turns his offer up at any offer less than eighty while some of them demand more.
Some phenomenal wages have been paid for tugs. A steamer in port last week wanted two men. She had to get them at once before starting for across Atlantic. She was forced to pay each man thirty dollars for the run across and also agree to furnish a return trip.
With such wages prevailing, the recruiting sergeants find the water front a poor field.

FAMED ENGLISH RUNNER DIES IN AUSTRALIA.

Belated words came from Australia of the death of Albert Bird, an extraordinary distance runner from Sheffield, Eng., who went to the Antipodes with Frank Hewitt, the holder of the world's professional half mile record of 1 minute 53½ seconds. Bird is said to have covered over 11 miles in an hour, and to have run 41 miles over the roads in Australia in 4 hours 3 minutes which seems incredible. He was built much on the lines of Alfred Shrubbs. He weighed 121 pounds and was only 5 feet 4½ inches tall and yet had phenomenal stride of 7 feet 8 inches. Like Shrubbs he had the habit of racing against relays of men. He once defeated 9 men in a 10 mile race, the first man running two miles and the others a mile apiece.

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