

# KITCHENER'S MOB



By Jas. NORMAN HALL.

CHAPTER X.—(Cont'd.)  
 "Wot sort of a week you 'ad, mate?"  
 "It ain't been a week, son; it's been a lifetime!"  
 "Lucky for us you blokes come in just w'en you did. We've about reached the limit."  
 "Ow far we got to go for water?"  
 "Bout two miles. Awful journey! Tyke you all right to do it. You got to stop every minute, they's so much traffic along that trench. Go down Stanley Road about five 'undred yards, turn off to yer left on Essex Alley, then yer first right. Brings you right out by the 'ouse w'ere the pump is."

"Ere's a straight tip! Send yer water fatigue down early in the mornin'; three o'clock at the latest. They's thousands usin' that well an' she goes dry arter a little while."  
 "You blokes want any souvenirs, all you got to do is pick 'em up: 'olmets, revolvers, rifles, German 'd'ries. You wite till mornin'. You'll see plenty."  
 "Is this the last line o' Fritzies' trenches?"  
 "Can't tell you, mate. All we know is, we got 'ere some'ow an' we been a 'oldin' on. My Gawd! It's been awful. They calmed down a bit to-night. You blokes is lucky comin' in just w'en you did."

"I ain't got a pal left out o' my section. You'll see some of 'em. We ain't 'ad time to bury 'em."  
 They were soon gone and we were left in ignorance of the situation. We knew only approximately the direction of the living enemy and the dead spoke to us only in dumb show, telling up unspeakable things about the horrors of modern warfare.

Fortunately for us, the fire of the German batteries, during our first night in captured trenches, was directed chiefly upon positions to our right and left. The shells from our own batteries were exploding far in advance of our sector of trench, and we judged from this that we were holding what had been the enemy's last line, and that the British artillery were shelling the line along which they would dig themselves in anew. We felt more certain of this later in the night when working parties were sent from the battalion to a point twelve hundred yards in front of the trenches we were then holding. They were to dig a new line there, to connect with intrenchments which had been pushed forward on either side of us.

At daybreak we learned that we were slightly to the left of Hill 70. Hulluch, a small village still in possession of the Germans, was to our left front. Midway between Hill 70 and Hulluch and immediately to the front of our position, there was a long stretch of open country which sloped gently forward for six or eight hundred yards, and then rose gradually toward the sky-line. In the first assault the British troops had pushed on past the trenches we were holding and had advanced to the opposite slope, nearly a mile farther on. There they started to dig themselves in, but an unfortunate delay in getting forward had given the enemy time to collect a strong force of local reserves behind his second line, which was several hundred yards beyond. So heavy a fire had been concentrated upon them that the British troops had been forced to retire to the line we were then occupying.

They had met with heavy losses both in advancing and retiring, and the ground in front of us for nearly a mile was strewn with bodies. We did not learn all of this at once. We knew nothing of our exact position during the first night, but as there appeared to be no enemy within striking distance of our immediate front, we stood on the firing-benches vainly trying to get our bearings. About one o'clock, we witnessed the fascinating spectacle of a counter-attack at night.

It came with the dramatic suddenness, the striking spectacular display, of a motion-picture battle. The pictorial effect seemed extravagantly overdrawn.

There was a sudden hurricane of rifle and machine-gun fire, and in an instant all the desolate landscape was revealed under the light of innumerable trench rockets. We saw the enemy advancing in irregular lines to the attack. They were exposed to a pitiless infantry fire. I could follow the curve of our trenches on the left by the almost solid sheet of flame issuing from the rifles of our comrades against whom the assault was launched. The artillery ranged upon the advancing lines at once, and the air was filled with the roar of bursting shells and the melancholy whining of flying shrapnel.

I did not believe that any one could cross that fire-swept area alive, but before many moments we heard the staccato of bursting bombs and hand grenades which meant that some of the enemy, at least, were within striking distance. There was a sharp crescendo of deafening sound, then, gradually, the firing ceased, and word came down the line, "Counter-attack against the Guards; and jolly well beaten off too." Another was attempted before daybreak, and again the same torrent, the same sickening smell of hydrite, the same ghastly noon-day effect, the same gradual silence, and the same result.

## H. Damaged Trenches.

The brief respite which we enjoyed during our first night soon came to an end. We were given time, how-

ever, to make our trenches tenable. Early the following morning we set to work removing the wreckage of human bodies. Never before had death revealed itself so terribly to us. Many of the men had been literally blown to pieces, and it was necessary to gather the fragments in blankets. For weeks afterwards we had to eat and sleep and work and think among such awful sights. It was absolutely essential that we should.

The trenches and dugouts had been battered to pieces by the British artillery fire before the infantry assault, and since their capture the work of destruction had been carried on by the German gunners. Even in their wrecked condition we could see how skillfully they had been constructed. No labor had been spared in making them as nearly shell-proof and as comfortable for living quarters as it is possible for such earthworks to be. The ground here was unusually favorable. Under a clayish surface soil, there was a stratum of solid chalk. Advantage of this had been taken by the German engineers who must have planned and supervised the work. Many of the shell-proof dugouts were fifteen and even twenty feet below the surface of the ground. Entrance to these was made in the front wall of the trench on a level with the floor. Stairways just large enough to permit the passage of a man's body led down to them. The roofs were reinforced with heavy timbers. They were so strongly built throughout that most of them were intact, although the passageways leading up to the trench were choked with loose earth.

There were larger surface dugouts with floors but slightly lower than that of the trench. These were evidently built for living quarters in times of comparative quiet. Many of them were six feet wide and from twenty to thirty feet long, and quite palaces compared to the wretched little "funk-holes" to which we had been accustomed. They were roofed with logs a foot or more in diameter placed close together and one on top of the other in tiers of three, with a covering of earth three or four feet thick. But although they were solidly built they had not been proof against the rain and high explosives. Many of them were in ruins, the logs splintered like kindling wood and strewn far and wide over the ground.

We found several dugouts, evidently officer's quarters, which were almost luxuriously furnished. There were rugs for the wooden floors and pictures and mirrors for the walls; and in each of them there was the jolliest little stove with a removable lid. We discovered one of these underground palaces at the end of a blind alley leading off from the main trench. It was at least fifteen feet underground, with two stairways leading down to it, so that if escape was cut off in one direction, it was still possible to get out on the other side. We immediately took possession, built a roaring fire and were soon passing censures of hot tea around the circle. Life was worth while again. We all agreed that there were less comfortable places in which to have breakfast on rainy autumn mornings than German officers' dug-outs.

The haste with which the Germans abandoned their trenches was evidenced by the amount of material they left behind. We found two machine guns and a great deal of small arms ammunition in our own limited sector of frontage. Rifles, intrenching tools, haversacks, canteens, great-coats, bayonets were scattered everywhere. All of this material was of the very best. Canteens, water-bottles, and small frying-pans were made of aluminum and most ingeniously fashioned to make them less bulky for carrying. Some of the bayonets were saw-edged. We found three of these needlessly cruel weapons in a dugout which bore the following inscription over the door:—"Gott tret' herein. Bring' gluck herein."

It was an interesting commentary on German character. Tommy Atkins never writes inscriptions of a religious nature over the doorway of his splinter-roof shelter. Neither does he file a saw edge on his bayonet.

We found many letters, picture post-cards, and newspapers; among the latter, one called the "Krieg-Zeitung," published at Lille for the soldiers in the field, and filled with glowing accounts of battles fought by the ever victorious German armies.

Death comes swiftly in war. One's life hangs by a thread. The most trivial circumstance saves or destroys. Mac came into the half-ruined dugout where the off-duty machine gunners were making tea over a fire of splintered logs.

(To be continued.)

## NEW ICE HARVESTER.

Auto Found More Useful at This Work Than the Horse.

That a motor car can be used to better advantage than horses in cutting ice was shown recently by a Massachusetts man who had a large ice contract to fulfill and was unable to obtain enough men and horses to do the work. In the emergency he utilized a medium-priced car, equipping the rear wheels with demountable rims in which were set two rows of 1-inch spikes. The automobile proved entirely satisfactory in drawing the marker and grooving plow, and later was driven alongside the open water, towing large barred cakes much faster than men could push them. It was found that the ice could be cut about three times as fast as with horses.

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## BRITISH RECRUITING MISSION.

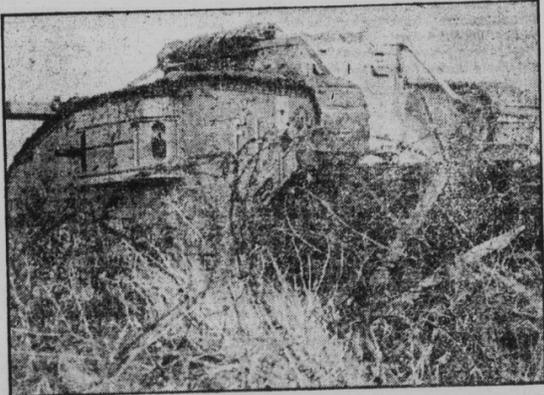
To Secure 20,000 Men From U.S. in Three Months.

For the week ending March 2nd the British and Canadian Recruiting Mission dispatched to Canada 1,089 volunteers for the British and Canadian armies. During the absence of Brigadier-General W. A. White, C.M.G., Colonel J. S. Dennis of the Canadian Expeditionary Force is in command of the recruiting program in the United States. Brigadier-General White is making a tour through the South in an effort to stimulate interest in recruiting.

The pictures accompanying this article illustrate the campaign that is being carried on in New York by the Mission. Brigadier-General White and Colonel Dennis have started a whirlwind campaign for recruiting Britishers and Canadians in the United States covering the next two months. Their ambition is to secure 20,000 men from the United States, if possible, before the terms of the draft convention between the United States and Great Britain become effective. During the eight months the Mission has been at work in the United States it has secured 22,000 volunteers for the British and Canadian armies, and has examined about 16,000 more.



Brigadier-General White has made the point that if a Britisher or Canadian desires to aid the Allies he can do so by promptly volunteering, because the machinery of the British and Canadian armies for training men has been so well developed by three and a half years of experience that it can train a man, put him in the firing line, and have him inviolate home in six months. This has actually been done in quite a number of cases. On the other hand, the United States Government, starting much later, has had its hands full in training the first contingent of the draft numbering about 700,000 men, and the second draft will follow close upon the heels of the first.



## Food Control Corner

The production of food was never of more vital importance than in the year 1918. The food situation of the world is not only grave to-day but it will be increasingly so during the progress of the war and for a considerable time thereafter. The Canada Food Board's duty is to see to it that food production this year be at its maximum.

During the last year or so the cultivation of vacant lots and home gardens in many towns and cities was attended with highly satisfactory results. In Montreal for instance it is estimated that not less than \$100,000 worth of vegetables were grown on vacant lots. Calgary had 1113 lots under cultivation covering an area of 220 acres. It is important that this work is not only continued but elaborated upon. It is desirable that this movement should be instituted in every municipality in the Dominion. Where there are no organizations the mayor of each municipality should at once call a mass meeting of its citizens, including women, for organizing purposes. These meetings should be representative of its leading citizens, the clergy, the press, horticulturists, heads of various societies, public bodies, etc.

A permanent chairman or president and as many officers as may be thought advisable should be elected at this meeting, and at least two committees formed, to include vacant lots and home gardens.

To these can be added committees on publicity, fertilizing and such others as may appear necessary. The town or city should be divided into districts, each in charge of a chairman and a local committee. It has been found expedient to have meetings in each sub-district, presided over by the president or one of the members of the central executive, at which it is important to secure the attendance of those who are disposed to cultivate vacant lots. The importance of these local meetings cannot be too strongly emphasized. The sub-committees will attend to such duties as the securing of vacant land, getting cultivators interested, etc.

The workers should be grouped on land as near their homes as possible. In this connection it will be found that, except in rare cases, the average individual, otherwise employed, has only sufficient time and strength to cultivate a lot 50 x 100 feet.

It is desirable that the growth of standard vegetables only should be encouraged such as potatoes, beets, carrots, peas, beans, lettuce, onions, parsnips, etc. These are high in food value and are easily grown by those who will volunteer for this

## FERTILIZER

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from the patriotic feature of the work it gives a direct money return while adding to the food wealth of the community. The growing of food for home consumption eliminates transportation waste with its attending cost of labor and fuel.

It is the intention of the Board to again prohibit the eating of canned vegetables, in Eastern Canada to Oct. 15th., in Western Canada to Nov. 1st., 1918. This will further emphasize the necessity of garden production on the widest possible scale.

In many places very effective work was done by the firemen and the police. Their gardens were often models in this connection and an incentive to other groups.

## COCOANUTS AND GRENADES.

African Negroes Possess Marvellous Throwing Ability.

Excellent as Canadian and United States soldiers are at "bombing," thanks to their baseball training, they are in proportion to their numbers excelled, it is claimed, by the African negroes in the British and French armies. These negroes, fresh from their savage haunts and but newly arrayed in the steel helmets and modern habiliments of war, possess marvellous throwing ability, the result of years of practice and centuries of heredity in knocking down their meals from cocoanut trees with stones.

They can "shy" pebbles with unerring aim into the top of a cocoanut tree and bring a nut down for supper. When given hand grenades it was found that they could place the destructive little affairs into the Hun trenches without the frequent misses which white troops made. Practically all colored troops from the tropics are

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past masters in this bombing work. The most noted of them perhaps is Corporal G. Roberts from Trinidad, who is attached, with a few of his brethren, to a Middlesex regiment. He is the champion bomber of his battalion and at seventy-four yards is a dead shot, having been decorated twice by the British war office for single-handed feats of daring and extremely thorough execution of Huns defending trenches and pill boxes against the Tommies' advance.

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