



The Mud of Flanders.

It isn't the foe that we fear;
It isn't the bullets that whine;
It isn't the business career
Of a shell, or the bust of a mine;
It isn't the snipers who seek
To nip our young hopes in the bud;
No, it isn't the guns,
And it isn't the Huns—
It's the MUD,
MUD,
MUD.

It isn't the melee we mind,
That often is rather good fun,
It isn't the shrapnel we find
Obtrusive when rained by the ton;
It isn't the bounce of the bombs
That gives us a positive pain:
It's the strafing we get
When the weather is wet—
It's the RAIN,
RAIN,
RAIN.

It isn't because we lack grit
Or shrink from the horrors of war.
We don't mind the battle a bit;
In fact that is what we are for;
It isn't the rum-jars and things
Make us wish we were back in the fold;
It's the fingers that freeze
In the boreal breeze—
It's the COLD,
COLD,
COLD.

Oh, the rain, the mud and the cold,
The cold, the mud and the rain;
With weather at zero it's hard for a hero
From language that's rude to refrain.
With porridge muck to the knees,
With sky that's a-pouring a flood,
Sure the worst of our foes
Are the pains and the woes
Of the RAIN,
the COLD,
and the MUD.

Among the Books.

"More Letters From Billy."

More Letters From Billy, By the author of *A Sunny Subaltern*. McClelland, Goodchild & Stewart, Publishers, Toronto, \$1.00 net.]

BILLY" is a Toronto boy. We have not permission to divulge his name farther than that it is, really, "Billy". Just now he is in France once more, after having had the coveted privilege of a "Blighty", but his second volume *More Letters From Billy* reveal a somewhat different lad from the one who appeared first as a "Sunny Subaltern". Wounds and sufferings have taken away much of the sunny joyousness, but the pluck and will are still there, the Canadian spirit that will not be downed.

This second volume, like the first, is made up of a series of letters sent to the writer's mother. *Before A Sunny Subaltern* existed as a book even in thought, she had read the letters to friends. They declared there was genius in them and urged that they be published, hence the first volume at least came as a surprise to the young author. *More Letters* is but a continuation, and those who already know the "Subaltern" will be glad, in this volume, to follow his fortunes still further.

The portion we have chosen to quote for you to-day describes a "field of mud" in Northern France, which evidently differs little from those fields of mud in Flanders of which we have heard so much

It is not necessary to say that the passage describes soldier life in the mud region before the big drive began. "Billy" is now too busy, probably, to write letters at such length. He will have a new and more terrible story to tell if he survives.

In the Field (of Mud).

Dear Mother.— . . . As you will know from my last letter, I'm back with the Battalion again, and the Hun right here is our least worry. He is a quiet, unobtrusive, war-wearied Bosche, who holds the line opposite us and apparently is content to remain so. He heaves over practically no shells save a number of trench mortar-bombs, and his most detestable minenwarfers or minnies. These are not, of course, what you could call life-saving objects, but they travel



General Foch.

Who is in supreme command of the allied armies on the West front.

very slowly, and one can see them coming quite distinctly, so learns to dodge them with great speed and precision. They make a hole about five feet deep and five by nine feet wide, so if they hit you, it's good-bye, boys!

However, as I say, he, the Bosche, is our least worry, but we have one of giant proportions. By the way it seems to be one of a soldier's necessities—if it isn't one thing it's another. This time it is mud,—and what mud—genuine, thick, gluey mud, with excellent body and bouquet—Phew!! Some bouquet. Also, I may add, that there's no lack of it. You see, it has rained incessantly for aeons, it seems, and I give you my word, the trenches actually dissolved before my sceptical eyes, until now they are really "in solution" as a chemist would say. I can assure you that never in my wildest dreams did I picture such a state as we are in—I'm sure you would never recognise me should you behold me now. I'm caked in mud, juicy and wet to the hips, while above are liberal applications, until I resemble a bride's first effort at a half-iced caramel cake.

C'est la vie! The trenches are a mellow (see Webster for definition) mass, nowhere shallower than knee deep, ranging from that to your hips. . . If it was thin consomme-like stuff one would not care, but it is about the consistency of good, long-boiled porridge, and if memory serves me aright, Le Page—he of glue fame—was a Frenchman, but he surely overlooked a bit when he didn't patent this muck. I was wading through it hip deep this evening—or rather last—and was absolutely mired. I could move neither way and the N. C. O. with me was in the same fix. Just as we wrenched and tugged we heard the peculiar "swish—swish—swish" which one of Fritz's rifle grenades makes, and I must admit rather timorously awaited the outcome. She fell pretty close, going well into the mixture and splashing

my left optic with a juicy cupful as she detonated. I had laughingly remarked to the Corporal that we needed a derrick to get out and that was the instrument—I mean the grenade. The mud wasn't nearly as bad as I thought, and I slashed along as fast—well, if there had been a rabbit around I'd have said, "Get out of the way and let some one run who can", for Fritz has no sentiment, and his projectiles no discrimination.

Albeit after dragging through a stretch of this stuff every half hour for a period of time that always seems interminable, I decided to venture overland, taking a chance on machine guns, etc. Well, I did, and evidently failed to observe the best lessons as laid down in "Infantry Training", for a machine gun opened fire, whistling very close, so I deduced I was on the sky line. I may add by this time I was even wetter and muddier than I had been for the four previous days, also chilled to the marrow. Of course I flopped into a shell hole comfortably filled with an admixture resembling the Scotch broth one pays for on the C. P. R. diner, while a few yards distant the bullets went Phut—phut. Just then I heard the "swish—swish" anthem again, and I really believe I breathed a prayer that a chunk of the grenade would hit me below the water-line—I mean legs, so that I could holler for help and have some stretcher bearers pry me out. Needless to say, they didn't, so I'm still left here in misery. By taking deep soundings and heaving the anchor I was able to navigate to Company Headquarters. I am sitting her now in a nice, deep hole, awaiting "Stand to," so thought I'd employ my time in writing you.



Field Marshal Haig.

Chief Commander of the British forces.

The School Garden.

By "THE OWL."

Paper XII.

THIS is a letter to teachers.

Dear Teacher:

Perhaps you tried a school garden last year and it failed. The children lost interest in it. Boys ran over it, when and how you did not know. When holidays began "the end" came; weeds grew up, the ground was neither cultivated nor watered, and when school opened again the garden was only a patch of thistles and pigweed with a few spindling flowers and vegetables half smothered among them.

Discouraging?—Yes, so it was.

But have you thought out just where mistakes were made?

Did you let each child, of those old enough to work, have a plot of his or her very own, with the name of the owner on a placard in the centre of it, so that he or she could have personal pride in it?

Did you use the garden as the material for interesting object lessons? For instance, did you require Willie and Jamie and Mary and Ethel to identify the plants as they grew? To tell you why tillage is necessary? To notice the destructive bugs and find out how to get rid of them? To know the use of bees among the flowers, and birds as insect-killers?

Did you choose plants that grow quickly and easily—such as beets, carrots, lettuce, cress, Swiss chard, nasturtiums, candy-tuft, cornflowers and marigolds?—Or did your ill luck lead you to others that grow slowly and make less show, so that the little gardeners got discouraged? (Note.—Children, like savages, lose show).

Did you forget to make arrangements to have the garden looked after while you were away on your holidays?

Well, don't be discouraged.

Try it again this year, and let the children feel that they are doing war work.

Make your school-yard beautiful as well as useful. The children will take more pride in their vegetable gardens if the whole place looks attractive.

Get some of "the men" interested, and plant out some trees on May Day. At the same time you and the older children can plant roots of shrubs and perennials in a border which will not be trampled. Ask the children to bring roots from home.

When the garden beds are ready (and don't have them where they will interfere with play) have them planted with seeds of things that are hardy, so that they will not blacken up at the first frost.

Later on, about corn-planting time, put in lots of scarlet runner beans wherever vines can be safely trusted. They are beautiful, and useful too.

If you are very ambitious encourage the children to have a school fair—in which case it will be necessary for them to have secondary—perhaps larger—plots at home. Tell them the school garden must be kept in good condition in readiness for the Fair. Make the Fair a big event, to which all the vegetable and flower operations of the summer must lead. Have the children keep note-books in which they must enter notes on their work, and, before the Fair comes off, have them write compositions on their gardening and kindred subjects. Have the best essays read at the Fair, and prizes presented for them. Make a charge of 5 cents per head for all parents and visitors who come to the Fair. That will provide prize money. Also have the "section" bring cakes and pies; make a picnic of the event, and have a field "programme." This will mean that the Fair must be held early, to be sure of fine weather—say towards the end of September at latest.

Dear teacher, all this means that you yourself must give a little extra of your time and energy, but think of the cause for which you are giving it. There is no greater work in the world than this that you are doing,—not for the sake of effect, but for the sake of the future men and women who will have to build up this war-torn world. Incidentally every mouthful of food that you and your pupils raise in the garden, will add just so much to the world's food supply.

At the recent Convention of the Ontario Educational Association in Toronto, Dr. Harold W. Foght of the United States Bureau of Education delivered an address which was full of interest and suggestion to everyone interested in rural development. He told of the wonderful results in scientific agriculture which have been obtained in the little country of Denmark, which now leads the world in that respect,—

and here come you: All this, plished because the best rural school. What Denmark can do, but a teacher must care are books on bulletins which from cost, and at the College can be taken. advantage of teacher, and w sections value her for the exte is where the But if you, d you can do w can invent, su opening the wa What do you worth trying?

A School i The following by one of our s evidently, has l on education. that might be school. Dougl Jones realizes m fore the necessi every part to g to what we call

EDITOR "THE F

I wish to tell was tried in a school was in a

Shortly before year 1916 severa to canvass the p Part of the mo for school sports for playground a gave their service setting up of the When Victoria yard had a teeteer a pair of rings. were well used at hour, at night an I think that co

