

six months' earnings of his share of the Tecolote Mine; and from the brief notes of L. W., who was acting as his agent, there was more of it piling up. So he played it carelessly, like the plunger he was, and fortune—and Mrs. Hardesty—smiled.

He won, on the Street; and, though the stakes were not specified, he seemed to be winning with her. It was a question with him whether a woman of her kind ever thought of such a thing as marriage. She had money of her own, and all that money could buy; and her freedom, whatever that was. In this new world about him all the terms of life seemed changed and transposed and vague, and he never quite knew what she meant. Every word that she said when they discussed life and love seemed capable of a double intent, and whether by freedom she meant to yield or to escape something he had never made out. All he knew was that at times she seemed to beckon him on and at others to fend him away. She was fickle as fortune which, as he plunged and covered, sometimes smiled and again wore a frown.

**B**UT it was sparkling and stimulating as the champagne he now drank, this new life with its win and lose, and he played his stakes with the stoical repose of a savage, the delighted abandon of a boy. His broker was always Buckbee, that gay, laughing Beau Brummel who had given him his first start in the world. It was Buckbee who had met him when he first came to the Waldorf with his assays and his samples of ore and, after much telephoning and importuning and haggling, had arranged for his interview with Stoddard. That interview had resulted in Rimrock's first clash with Stoddard, and he had hated him ever since; for a man who would demand a controlling interest in a mine for simply lending his name was certainly one who was fully capable of grabbing the rest if he could. So Rimrock had fought him; but for Buckbee, the broker, he had nothing but the best of good will.

To be sure Buckbee worked for Stoddard—that was plainly made evident at the time they had made the first deal—but he was open-hearted and honest and generous with his tips, and Rimrock found they were good. Buckbee even went further, he arranged credit for Rimrock at one of the biggest banks and when in his plunges he was caught short of funds the bank made him loans on his note. They took no chances, for he was rated at millions as half owner of the Tecolote Mine, but it helped out mightily as he extended his operations and found his margins threatened. But all this buying and selling of stocks, the establishment of his credit and the trying out of his strength, it was all preliminary to that great contest to come when he would come out into the open against Stoddard.

Whitney Stoddard was a man rated high up in the millions, but he was fallible like the rest. His wealth, compared to Rimrock's was as a hundred dollars to one, but it was spread out a hundred times as far; and with his next dividend, which was due in December, Rimrock would have nearly a million in cash. To Stoddard, at the same time, there would come

nearly the same amount of money, but it would be gone within a few days. There were obligations to be met, as Rimrock well knew, that would absorb his great profits and more. The Tecolote Mine, before it began to pay, had cost several million dollars in dead work. That money had been borrowed, and while Rimrock took in velvet, Stoddard was obligated to pay his debts.

Several months went by and, patient Indian that he was, Rimrock still followed on Stoddard's trail. He looked up his connections with the Transcontinental railroad and there he made his first strike. Although he moulded the policies of that great corporation and seemed endowed with unlimited power his actual holdings in the stock of the company were almost ridiculously small. Yet he took advantage of his dominating position and the influence it gave him with the directors to make such coups as he had made with the Tecolote, building the branch line which had given value to his mine. As a business proposition it was a good investment for the Company, but who was it that reaped the big profits? By the investment of less than three million dollars—which

he had borrowed as he went along—Whitney Stoddard had acquired practically a half interest in a property which he valued at a hundred millions. And now he was bucking the Hackmeisters!

The thought of this man, who had come up from nothing and was even yet barely on his feet, deliberately attempting to break the great copper combine was hardly credible to Rimrock. He marvelled now at the presumption of Stoddard in offering him fifty millions for his half and the control of the mine. From what he could gather Stoddard had never possessed fifty millions, nor did he possess them then. He was trading on his name and travelling on a shoe-string; quite the common thing in New York. But Rimrock knew as well as he knew anything that a man like Stoddard was dangerous. As sure as the time came, by some hook or crook, he would beat him out of his mine. The thing to do was to beat him to it—to raid his newly acquired Navajoa stocks and then pinch him until he let go of Tecolote. But it must be done secretly, not a word to anybody, not even to Buckbee or Mrs. Hardesty.

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## CANADA in WAR PAINT

By CAPT. RALPH W. BELL

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**W**E aren't happy; our clothes don't fit, and we ain't got no friends! Rations are not up yet—confound the Transport Officer—it's raining like the dickens, as dark as pitch, and we've only got one bit of candle. Some one has pinched a jar of rum, that idiot batman of mine can't find a brazier, and young John has lost his raincoat. In fact it's a rotten war.

We had lobster for lunch; it has never let us forget we had it! The Johnny we "took over" from said there were 7698 million bombs in the Battalion grenade store, and there are only 6051. The Adjutant has just sent a "please explain," which shows what you get for believing a fellow.

The little round fat chap has left his gum boots (thigh) "Somewhere in France," and fell into the trench tramway trying to wear an odd six on the right foot, and an odd nine on the left. George has busted the D string of the mandoline, and A. P. has lost the only pack of cards we had to play poker with.

It's simply rotten war!

John has a working party out of sixty "other ranks" and says they are spread in two's and three's over a divisional frontage. He has made two trips to locate them, and meditates a third. His language is positively hair-raising. If he falls into any more shell-holes no one will let him in the dug-out.

Those confounded brigade machine gunners are firing every other second just in front of the dug-out. Heaven knows what they are firing at, or where, but how a man could be expected to sleep through the noise only a siege artillery man could tell you.

George went out on a "reconnaissance" recently. George is great on doing reconnaissances and drawing maps. This time the reconnaissance did him, and the only map he's yet

produced is mud tracings on his person. Incidentally he says that all the communication trenches are impassable, and that no one but a cat could go over the top and keep on his feet for more than thirty seconds. (N.B.—George fell into the main support line and had to be pulled out by some



It will be fun to hear what John says when he comes home.

of John's working-party.) George says that if the Germans come over it's all up. Cheerful sort of beggar, George. My new smoke-helmet—the one you wear round your neck all the time, even in your dreams—is lost again. This is the third time in the course of six hours. The gas N.C.O. has calculated that with the wind at its present velocity we should be gassed in one and three-quarter seconds, not counting the recurring decimal.

John has just told a story about a bayonet. It would be funny at any other time. Now, it simply sticks! ..The cook has just come in to say our rations have been left behind by mistake. Troubles never come singly. May heaven protect the man who is responsible if we get him! John has told another story, about an Engineer. It can't be true, for he says this chap was out in No Man's Land digging a trench. No one ever knew a Canadian Engineer do anything but tell the infantry how to work. It's a rotten story, anyhow.

Just look at this dug-out; a bottle of rum on the table—empty. The odd steel helmet, some dirty old newspapers, and a cup or two (empty!) and a pile of strifes from the Adjutant six inches thick. My bed has a hole in it as big as a "Johnson 'ole," and there are rats. Also the place is inhabited by what the men call "crumbs." Poetic version of a painful fact.

John says this is the d—est outfit he has ever been in. John is right. My gumboots were worn by the Lance-Corporal in No. 2 platoon, and they are wet, beastly wet. Also my batman has forgotten to put any extra socks in my kit-bag. Also he's lost my German rifle—the third I've bought for twenty francs and lost.

This is a deuce of a war!

The mail has just arrived. George got five, the little round fat fellow nine, A. P. two, and John and me shake hands with a duck's-egg. Still the second mentioned has his troubles. One of his many inamoratas has written to him in French. He knows French just about as well as he knows how to sing! Nuff said!

John has "partid" to his triple-starred working-party. The men have not got any letters either. You should hear them! The most expert "curser" of the Billingsgate fishmarket would turn heliotrope with envy. George is feeling badly too. He lent his flash-light to dish out rations with. That is to say, to illuminate what the best writers of nondescript fiction call the "Cimmerian gloom!"

A. P. has had letters from his wife. Lucky dog! She takes up four pages telling him how she adores him.

This is a beastly rotten war.

Fritz is a rotter too. My dug-out is two hundred yards north by northeast. Every time I have to make the trip he never fails to keep the Cimmerian gloom strictly "Cim." And the bath-mats are broken in two places, and I've found both of them every time.

Another strafe from the Adjutant. May jackals defile his grave, but he'll never have one in France, anyhow. "Please render an account to Orderly Room of the number of men in your unit who are qualified plumbers."

We haven't any.

If we had we should have mended the hole in the roof, which leaks on John's bed. It has only just begun to leak. It will be fun to hear what John says when he comes back. Only he may be speechless.

The little round fat fellow is still reading letters, and A. P. is hunting in his nether garments. "Kinder scratterin' round!" So far the bag numbers five killed and two badly winged, but still on the run.

Somebody has turned out the guard. Yells of fire. After due inspection proves to be the C.O.'s tunic. It was