

Humours of Rumours of War

Rumour has it that we are going to have a rest. When is it likely to begin? After three weeks of strenuous training and the infinite variety of squad drill we are reduced to the verge of nervous prostration and anxious enquiries may be heard as to when we shall be returning to the Line.

Perhaps, by the time this appears in the mis-spelt print form common to Regimental newspapers, we shall find ourselves in those quiet, home-from-home trenches promised us for the last two years.

By the way, the following are a few facts gleaned from the usual sources (just at present particularly deep and commodious) regarding the latest ground we are leasing from the French.

One informant (who has been there and knows all about it and a good deal more besides) states that the communication trenches line the main street of a large flourishing city.

Street cars stop at the trench head to enable tired and thirsty sentries to run into town for refreshments.

A burning coal mine most obligingly provides the entire system of trenches with steam heat. Food can be kept warm by placing mess tins over the fissures in the ground.

Mud is a thing unknown in this Arcady. Indeed it has been said that the trenches are so warm and dry that a Tank, crippled in the Somme for more serious work, strolls through the lines twice a day spraying water and laying dust.

It is quite the usual thing for the town belles to take their evening promenade in the trenches, when Angelus is ringing, to watch the war and exchange conversation and souvenirs with the bored but contented soldiers.

Pea-nuts, pop-corn and chewing gum are sold at reasonable prices by the ubiquitous French children who, however, are forbidden to swear in these parts in order that nothing may mar the peace of the surroundings.

This is, of course, according to rumours of the more optimistic variety.

Now we come to a new series of rumours altogether. We are not

going back to the trenches at all. In fact, for some reason or another, we will never see the line again. This hopeful lie is said to have engendered from a mysterious but evidently well-meaning artillery officer.

Also, Knick Carter, one of the defectives of "A" Company, states as a positive fact that we are immediately going on the lines of communication somewhere in Havre, or Boulogne, to guard rations, railways, bridges, beer, German prisoners, generals and other details for the duration of the war; i.e., the next 22 years.

Rumours prove the exception to rule that "Truth" is stranger than fiction, and an Army Rumour is indeed a very lying jade.



Regt.-Sergt.-Major J. Kay, D.C.M.

With a Belgian Posy to Canada

Just beyond the stricken streets,
The riven walls and towers,
That yet remains of Ypres,
Blew these familiar flowers.
Violet and Forget-me-not,
Modest both and sweet,
With a wee spray of early "May",
My posy to complete.

Frail, yet bold of heart, they graced
Those livid lanes of death,
Where weary warriors smiled to note
The fragrance of their breath;
And all around, rough sepulchred,
Canadian heroes lie—
Immortal seed in glorious soil,
To raise and bloom on high.

—W.D.D.

"Plum" Again

We fellows in Flanders today,
The ration supply cannot slam,
For with "eats" that are almost O.K.
Our skins we contentedly cram;
One fly in the ointment—
Our one disappointment:
PLUM JAM.

I'm not a fastidious stickler
For epicurean compote,
But why should Maconochie; Tickler;
Pink; Chivers, and others, devote
To Tommy the "Plum"?
Which, ad libitum,
Gets his goat.

There may be some nebulous reason
Why "Plum" is so painfully stable;
Perchance a slim strawberry season,
With currants the same, red and sable;
And, Oh, how we gasp
At the sight of a Rasp-
Berry label.

But having delivered my soul
With more or less obvious gall,
I'll quit the ungenerous role—
This is War, and my doggerel scrawl
Is plainly de trop:
What if we had no
Jam at all?

W.D.D.

The Chaplain Comes Back

At a recent concert one of the artists undertook to make up topical verses at the expense of members of the audience and the chaplain, who had previously given a humorous skit with a lighted candle, was one of the victims, hence the following verses.

A certain young soldier named Kane
Sang songs that were never profane,
And when he sharpened his wits
He could make clever "skits",
And the boys called him on once again.

He once made a skit at a show
On a parson who sat down below,
Who had sung just before
And had given an encore,
With a candle he couldn't out-blow.

Well, Kane looked about and about,
And soon had the Parson picked out.
He said, "Boys, do you know
Why the light wouldn't go?
'Cause the Parson just blew down his
snout.

—The Chaplain.

One thing about trench mud
Seems hardly quite right.
It makes white spots on black things
And black spots on white.