THIS ORIGINAL DOCUMENT IS IN VERY POOR CONDITION.

# KITCHENER'S MOB

By Jas. NORMAN HALL.

CHAPTER VI.—(Cont'd.)

In addition to this staple, the daily rations consisted of bacon, bread, cheese, jam, army biscuits, tea, and sugar. Sometimes they received a tinned meat and vegetable ration, already cooked, and at welcome intervals fresh meat and potatoes were substituted for corned beef. Each man had a very generous allowance of food, a great deal more, I thought, than he could possibly eat. Shorty explained this by saying that allowance was made for the amount which would be consumed by the rats and the blue-bottle flies.

There were, in fact, millions of flies. They settled in great swarms along the walls of the trenches, which were filled to the brim with warm light as soon as the sun had climbed a little way up the sky. Empty tin-lined ammunition boxes were used as cupboards for food. But of what avail were cupboards to a jam-loving and jam-fed British army living in open ditches in the summer time? Flytraps made of empty jam tins were set along the top of the parapet. As soon as one was filled, another was set in its place. But it was an unequal war against an expeditionary force of countless numbers.

"There ain't nothin' you can do," said Shorty. "They steal the jam right off yer bread."

As for the rats, speaking in the light of later experience, I can say that an army corps of pied pipers would not have sufficed to entice away the hordes of them that infested the trenches, living like house pets on our rations. They were great lazy animals, almost as large as cats, and so gorged with food that they could hardly move. They ran over us in the dugouts at night, and filched cheese and crackers right through the heavy waterproofed covering of our haversacks. They squealed and fought among themselves at all hours. I think it possible that they were carrion eaters, but never, to my knowledge, did they attack living men. While they were unpleasant bedfellows, we became so accustomed to them that we were not greatly concerned about our very intimate associations.

Our course of instruction at the Parapet-etic School was brought to a close late in the evening when we shouldered our packs, bade good-bye to our friends the Gloucesters, and marched back in the moonlight to our billets. I had gained an entirely new conception of trench life, of the difficulties involved in trench building, and the immense amount of material and labor needed for the work.

Americans who are interested in learning of these things at first hand will do well to make the grand tour of the trenches when the war is finished. Perhaps the thrifty continentals will seek to commercialize such advantage favorable opportunities. Perhaps the Touring Club of France will lay out a new route, following the windings of the firing line from the Channel coast across the level fields of Flanders, over the Vosges Mountains to the borders of Switzerland. Pedestrains may wish to make the journey on foot, cooking their supper over night in the dugouts where he lay shivering with cold during the winter nights of 1914 and 1915. If there are enthusiasts who will be satisfied with only the most intimate personal view of the trenches, if there are those who would try to understand the hardships and discomforts of trench life by living it during a summer vacation, I would suggest that they remember Private Shorty Holloway's parting injunction to me:—

"Now, don't forget, Jamie!" he said as we shook hands, "always 'ave a box o' Keatings 'andy, an' 'ang on to yer extra shirt!"

CHAPTER VII.

Midsummer Calm

During our first summer in the trenches there were days, sometimes weeks at a time, when, in the language of the official bulletins, there "nothing to report," or "calm" prevailed "along our entire front." From the War Office point of view these statements were, doubtless, true enough. But from Tommy Atkin's point of view, "calm" was putting it somewhat mildly. Life in the trenches, even on the quietest of days, is full of adventure highly spiced with danger. Snipers, machine gunners, artillerymen, airmen, engineers of the opposing sides, vie with each other in skill and daring, in order to secure that coverted advantage, the morale. Tommy calls it the "more-ale," but he jolly well knows when he has it and when he hasn't.

There were many nights of official calm when we machine gunners crept out of the trenches with out guns, to positions prepared beforehand, either in front of the line or to the rear of it. There we waited for messages from our listening patrols, who were lying in the tall grass of "the front yard." They sent word to us immediately when they discovered enemy working parties building up their parapets or mending their barbed-wire entanglements. We would then lay our guns according to instructions received and blaze away, each gun firing at the rate of from three hundred to five hundred rounds per minute. After a heavy burst of fire, we would change our positions at once. It was then that the most exciting part of our work began. For as soon as we ceased firing, there were answering fusillades from hundreds of German rifles. And within two or three minutes, German field artillery began a search for us with shrapnel. We crawled from one position to another over the open ground or along shallow ditches, dug for the purpose. These offered protection from rifle fire, but frequently the shell fire was so heavy and so well directed that we were given some very unpleasant half-hours, lying flat on our faces, listening to the deafening explosions and the vicious whistling of flying shrapnel.

We fired from the trenches, as well as in front and to the rear of them. We were, in fact, busy during most of the night, for it was our duty to see to it that our guns lived up to their reputation as "weapons of opportunity and surprise." With the aid of large-scale maps, we located all of the roads, within range, back of the German lines; roads which we knew were used by enemy troops moving in and out of the trenches. We located all of their communication trenches leading back to the rear; and at uncertain intervals we covered roads and trenches with bursts of searching fire.

The German gunners were by no means inactive. They, too, profited by their knowledge of night life in the firing-line, their knowledge of soldier nature. They knew, as did we, that the roads in the rear of the trenches are filled, at night, with troops, transport wagons, and fatigue parties. They knew, as did we, that men become so utterly weary of living in ditches—living in holes, like rats—that they are willing to take big risks when moving in or out of the trenches, for the pure joy of getting up on top of the ground. Many a night when we were moving up for our week in the first line, or back for our week in reserve, we heard the far-off rattle of German Maxims, and in an instant, the bullets would be zip-zipping all around us. There was no need for the sharp word of command. If there was a communication trench at hand, we all made a dive for it at once. If there was not, we fell face down, in ditches, shell holes, in any place which offered a little protection from that terrible hail of lead. Many of our men were killed and wounded nightly by machine-gun fire, usually because they were too tried to be cautious. And, doubtless, we did as much damage with our own guns. It seemed to me horrible, something in the nature of murder, that advantage must be taken of these opportunities. But it was all a part of the game of war; and fortunately, we rarely knew, nor did the Germans, what damage was done during those summer nights of "calm along the entire front."

The artillerymen, both British and German, did much to relieve the boredom of those "nothing to report" days. There were desultory bombardments of the trenches at day-break, and at dusk, when every infantryman is at his post, rifle in hand, bayonet fixed, on the alert for signs of a surprise attack. If it was a bombardment with shrapnel, Tommy was not greatly concerned, for in trenches he is fairly safe from shrapnel fire. But if the shells were large-caliber high explosives, he crouched close to the front wall of the trench, lamenting the day he was foolish enough to become an infantryman, "a bloomin' 'uman ninepin!" Covered with dirt, sometimes half-buried in fallen trench, he wagered his next week's tobacco rations that the London papers would print the same old story: "Along the western front there is nothing to report." And usually he won.

Trench mortaring was more to our liking. That is an infantryman's game, and, while extremely hazardous, the men in the trenches have a sporting chance. Every one forgot breakfast when word was passed down the line that we were going to "mortarfy" Fritzie. The last relief, night sentries, who had just rumbled sleepily into their dugouts, tumbled out of them again to watch the fun. Fatigue parties, working in the communication trenches, dropped their picks and shovels and came hurrying up to the first line. Eagerly, expectantly, every one waited for the sport to begin. Our projectiles were immense balls of hollow steel filled with high explosive of a tremendous power. They were fired from a small gun, placed usually in the first line of reserve trenches. A dull boom from rear warned us that the game had started.

"There she is!" "See 'er? Goin' true as a die!" "She's go'n' to hit!" "She's go'n' to—!" All of the boys would be shouting at once. Up it goes, turning over and over, rising to a height of several hundred feet. Then, if well aimed, it reaches the end of its upward journey directly over the enemy's line, and falls straight into his trench. There is a moment of silence, followed by a terrific explosion which throws dirt and debris high in the air. By this time every Tommy along the line is standing on the firing-bench, head and shoulders above the parapet, quite forgetting his own danger in his excitement, and shouting at the top of his voice.

"'Ow's that one, Fritzie boy?"

"Gooten morgen, you Prooshian sauerkraut wallopers!"

"Tyke a bit o' that there one to yer missus!"

(To be continued.)

**Food Control in the West.**

Mr. J. D. McGregor, Western representative of the Food Controller, is organizing work in the West from his office in Winnipeg. The co-operation of all the Provincial Governments in the West has been pledged and various progressive measures have already been adopted.

"A man's own good breeding is the best security against other people's ill manners."—Chesterfield.

## NESTLINGS AS GOBBLERS.

**Proving That Birds Are a Valuable Asset to the Farm.**

The greediest thing on earth is a nestling bird. It consumes its own weight of food each day, with a daily gain of 20 to 50 per cent. in growth. Little else than mouth and stomach, it spends nearly all its waking moments eating.

A young robin in captivity requires fifty earthworms per day and asks for more. The progeny (a nestful) of a pair of European jays were observed by a naturalist to eat half a million caterpillars in a season!

During an outbreak of grasshoppers in Nebraska a few years ago Prof. Sam Hughey saw a long-billed marsh wren carry thirty to her young in one hour. At this rate, reckoning seven hours of feeding time to the day, he estimated that the brood would consume more than 700 per diem, and that the passerine birds of the eastern half of Nebraska, allowing only twenty broods to the square mile, would destroy daily 162,771,000 grasshoppers.

The average grasshopper weighs one thirty-second part of an ounce and is capable each day of consuming its own weight of corn or wheat or forage crops. Thus it would appear that the above-mentioned number of these insects eaten by nestling birds daily would be able to destroy 174,397 tons of crops worth, at an average of $10 a ton, $17,439.

This shows that the encouragement of birds on farms is not a mere matter of sentiment. They return a cash equivalent and have much to do with the success or failure of crops.

No less than 2,717 public and high school boys worked on Ontario farms last year.

It is possible for one to live in full health and vigor for long periods when subsisting on a diet of dried fruits, nuts and a few grains and some of the fresh fruits. It is the dried fruits that furnish the bulk of nourishment to fruitarians. In the summer time when both dried fruits and fresh fruits of all kinds are in the market, even those who are meat eaters in cold weather can plan a healthful and satisfying menu without flesh foods.

**The Prince and the Peasant.**

Our soldier prince has lately taken considerable interest in those peasants who frequent soldier districts and sell choice eatables at equally choice prices. Sometimes he bargains with them himself, in order to test their characters, and it is to be feared that he encounters little more than the purely mercenary motive.

But one old Italian woman recently restored his confidence in her class by exhibiting a spirit of motherly sympathy.

"Poor lad!" she exclaimed, watching him as he studied some Italian coins in his hand. "I dare say he has run short of money, being so far from home!"

Make plans for spring gardening work without further delay. Study and decide what improvements it will be desirable to make about the grounds. Ascertain the number of plants and seeds required, and make provision for them early.


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WAR AND FOOD SERIES. No. 7.—CANDY.

Candy is a luxury rather than a necessary of life but it is a luxury that has received such indulgence on this continent that it has become one of the food problems of the hour. It is not that candy is needed overseas in any great quantities but the sugar that goes into the manufacture of candy is.

Every Canadian who continues to indulge freely in the use of candy which he knows to be made from cane sugar should be filled with reproach for he is simply depriving people who are already hungry of the sugar which they need to keep up their strength and give them energy to fight and work.

Sugar in moderate quantities is absolutely necessary to keep the spark of life burning in the human frame. It furnishes heat and energy. It is necessary for the men who are fighting. It is even more necessary for that portion of the civilian population in Europe which is now in actual want.

In England and France it is served in restaurants in tiny packages. A little pitcher of syrup is frequently substituted entirely for sugar. Candy is a thing of the past. Yet we in Canada and the United States go on in our reckless use of sweets and confections while people over in Europe suffer for lack of the amount of sugar that is necessary for their physical well-being. The money spent for candy in the United States and Canada in the past year is double the amount of money needed to keep Belgium supplied with food for a year.

There is no necessity for giving up the use of candy altogether but there is a crying need for a radical change in the varieties manufactured. Chocolate is the best kind to buy at present and there are many varieties of candy which might be made by the skilful combination of fruit, nuts, etc. Children should be taught to discriminate in the kind of sweets they buy. The candies usually sold at the village stores are apt to be "sugar candies" in the worse sense of the word.

Fully 25 per cent. of the sugar refined in Canada goes towards the manufacture of sweets, confectionery, preserves and other luxuries.

If France's 1.1 pounds of sugar a month is to be maintained, if England is still to have 2 pounds a month for each person, then Canada must reduce her present per capita consumption of 7 lbs. a month.

**An Apple a Day.**

A perfect apple is eaten raw or baked. It must be of fine flavor and appearance. When baking apples, try this method:

Remove the cores and place the apples in a casserole dish. Add to six or eight apples one cupful of syrup, one-half cupful of water, one small piece cinnamon. Mix well, then pour over the apples. Place the lid on the casserole dish and then bake the apples in a moderate oven until they are tender.

Ideal Apple Sauce.—Cut the apples into quarters. Remove the blemishes. Place in a saucepan and add the water. Cook until very soft. Rub through a fine sieve. Sweeten to taste. Flavor with either cinnamon or nutmeg.

Apple Custard.—One cupful of thick apple sauce, sweetened to taste, yolk of one egg, pinch of nutmeg. Mix thoroughly, now fold in the stiffly beaten white of egg. Pour into custard cups. Set in a pan of warm water and bake for twenty minutes in a moderate oven.

Spiced Apples.—Tie the following spices in a piece of cheese cloth: one dozen whole cloves, one-half dozen whole allspice, piece of stick cinnamon, two blades of mace. Place in a saucepan containing one cupful of syrup, one cupful of water, juice of one lemon. Cook slowly for one-half hour. Now add as many cored apples as can be conveniently cooked in this syrup. Cook very slowly, turning the apples frequently; when they are tender, lift in a dish. Soak two tablespoonsfuls in one-half cupful of cold water for length of time that the apples are cooking. Add to the syrup when the apples are cooked. Stir until thoroughly dissolved, then bring quickly to a boil. Pour over the apples.

French Apple Pie.—Line a pie tin with plain pastry, then place a layer of apples, sliced as thin as paper, in the bottom. Sprinkle with cinnamon and brown sugar and a thin layer of finely chopped raisins. Repeat until the pie tin is full. Add two tablespoonfuls of cold water, then cover with strips of pastry, cut one inch wide, in lattice fashion. Bake in a moderate oven.

Apple and Cornmeal Muffins.—Three-quarters cupful of flour, one and one-quarter cupfuls of corn meal, One teaspoonful of salt, six teaspoonfuls of baking powder. Three tablespoonfuls of melted shortening, one and one-half cupfuls of apple sauce, one cupful of water. Mix in the usual manner, then bake in well-greased muffin pans in a moderate oven.

Apple Tapioca.—Peel and cut in quarters three large apples. Place in a pudding dish. Pour over the apples a very sweet tapioca pudding. Bake for twenty minutes in a moderate oven.

Tapioca Pudding.—Wash one-half cupful of tapicoa in several waters. Place in a saucepan and add one quart of boiling water. Cook slowly for one hour. Remove from fire and sweeten to taste. Then fold in the stiffly beaten white of egg. Pour over the apples and then bake as directed.


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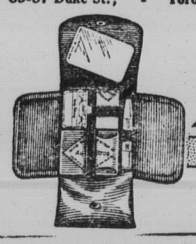

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