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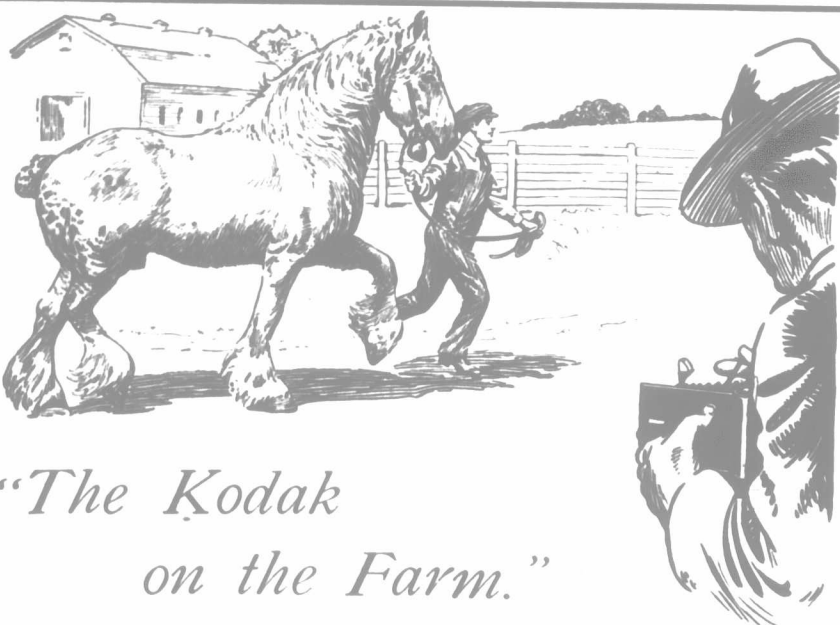
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TORONTO.

that she would be called upon for my sake to become an adventuress.

As for the two hundred pounds, that part didn't signify. I needn't suppose she was thinking of it; thank Heaven, whether we worked or were idle we would still have our settled hundred and twenty pounds a year each. It was our reputation for which she cared most, and she was sure the least evil that could befall us would be to blow up.

"Better do it on a grand scale in a thirty horse-power motor-boat than in a gas-meter bath-tub of a five-room flat in Clapham," I remarked; and somehow that silenced Phyllis, except for a sigh.

Since then I've been in a whirl of excitement preparing my watery path as a motor-boat adventuress, and buying a dress or two to suit the part. It doesn't even depress me that Phil has selected hers with the air of acquiring a serviceable shroud.

I've finished up three serials in as many days, killing off my villains like flies, and creating a perfect epidemic of hastily made matches among titled heroes and virtuous nursery governesses. Scarcely an aristocratic house in England that wouldn't shake to its foundations if fiction were fact; but then my fiction isn't of the kind that anything short of a dislocated universe could possibly make fact.

Phyllis, with the face of a tragic Muse, has been writing letters to her clients recommending another typist—quite a professional sort of person, who was her understudy once, a year or so ago, when she thoughtlessly allowed herself to come down with measles.

"Miss Brown never puts 'q' instead of 'a,' or gets chapter titles on one side; and she knows how to make the loveliest curlicues under her headings. Nobody will ever want me to come back," the poor girl wailed.

"All the better for them, if you're going to blow up, as you are convinced you will," I strove to console her, as I tried on a yachting-cap, reduced to two three-farthings from four shillings. But she merely shuddered. And now, when at last we have shut up the flat, turned the key upon our pasts, and got irrevocably on board the "Batavier" boat, which will land us in Rotterdam, she has moaned more than once, "I feel as if nothing would be the same with us ever, ever again."

"So do I," I've answered unfeelingly.

"And I'm glad."

(To be continued.)

Tommy's Tub and Firing-Line Footlights.

The British, it seems, are taking a chapter out of the German Encyclopedia of Efficiency. We are hearing more and more of Tommy as a fighting-machine, and perceive a new tendency in the War office to regard the private as a problem in psychology. By a United Press correspondent, William G. Shepherd, we are shown two novel items in the equipment of England's fighting force. While there still lingers some doubt as to which side heaven especially favors, England—recalling that "cleanliness is next to godliness"—makes sure of second place by providing its men with baths. In the instance quoted this particular aid to efficiency was worked out independently by a typical subject of his Majesty, mentioned in a dispatch to the New York Evening Sun. He appears thus:

I can show you a young English officer, who probably wears a monocle, whose stride is Piccadilly, and who never loses his well-bred expression of being bored, even while he is showing you over the great bath-house and laundry which he started some months ago.

"Well, here's the bag of tricks," he says as he waves his riding-stick across the entrance to the red building in a certain town. "You see there were an awful lot of our men who got no chance to bathe during the early part of the war. Some of them went three months without bathing. I've got two of their shirts nailed up in picture-frames, which ought to be presented to the British Museum. It isn't the dirt so much as the little animals. What? Well, we took this jolly old place and turned it into a cleaning-house for the soldiers."

"We" is really this London chap.

"Had to work with what we could find

here," he explained. "We're bathing a thousand soldiers here every day. It takes a soldier an hour to go through the mill, and he comes out with his uniform sterilized and with his socks, shirt, and underwear all clean and fresh and darned."

"How do you get his clothes washed and dried so soon?"

"Oh, you see, he doesn't get his own underwear and shirt and socks back. He gets a layout that was left by some soldier yesterday; he leaves his layout here, and some soldier that comes tomorrow will get that. Beat these patent-drier sort of things, doesn't it? Couldn't get the patent-drier things here anyhow. Did the best we could. Get just exactly the same results. Man turned out in an hour; not a bug left in his clothes; not a germ on him; underclothes fresh as new. Thousand a day going through this old thread-factory now. Rather interesting, what?"

In the most matter-of-fact manner, this young English officer shows you a marvel in the way of adaptability and efficiency. There is not a waste motion in the place. The big tubs are so efficiently used, and the drying-rooms yield such vast results, considering their small space, that it looks as if the building had been made for a bath-house in the first place.

A hundred Frenchwomen, churning away with washing-machines of every description, which the young officer had found in the neighborhood, were happily chanting a French song when we went through the wash-room.

"Rather a happy lot, that?" said the young army man. "They'd all have been out of work if it hadn't been for this jolly old bath-house." This young officer has done a man's-sized job in this war with a lack of waste motion that ought to make him a great laundry-proprietor in peace-times, or a great soldier.

But England is no longer satisfied to attend merely to the physical well-being of its soldiers. Modern warfare, at its best and worst, means a terrible mental strain on the fighting man. England's strength has been said to lie in the dogged, calm persistence of the typical Tommy. Lest this be turned to frenzy in the mad, unnatural, inhuman business of war, some means is sought of relaxing tension, when occasion permits. The method followed in the particular locality already observed is described by Mr. Shepherd as follows:

In a town not a great distance from the bath-house is "The Follies." It's a theater. If you're wondering why theatres are run in London in war-time you have only to come out here where the audience is made up nightly of 3,000 or more men who have been in the trenches face to face with death, and are going back again, and you will see the cheering values of theatrical amusements.

The object of this theatre is to make the soldier behind the trench-line forget all about the war. It has exactly the same object as the remarkable new convalescent hospitals in the war-zone, which are nothing more nor less than "rest-cures" for tired or nerve-strained men, and not hospitals for wounded or sick men.

"The Follies" is a real theater in a fair-sized town. It's a soldiers' show. The six men who make up the troupe were soldiers, excused from shooting and fighting just because they could sing and dance and make other soldiers forget themselves. There are two performances a night; the place is always packed, and the British soldier troops out happy and laughing. They do not go in companies but in crowds or singly, as they please, just as they would go to a show in London.

The night I saw "The Follies" there were London officers around me who enjoyed the show as heartily apparently as if it had been given in a music-hall in London. The song-hit of the night was this:

Here the military bands a-playing
"Rule Britannia" and "God Save the King."

But for the fellows in the trenches
Thinking of their wenchies

There's one song only,
When they're sad and lonely,

And that's "Little Johnny Morgan"

On his old mouth-organ
Playing "Home, Sweet Home."

—Sel.