

TAM THE SCOUTS

By EDGAR
WALLACE

A REPRISAL RAID

There are certain animals famous to every member of the British Expeditionary Force.

There is a Welsh regiment's dog which ate up the plan of attack issued by a brigadier-general, who, as a striking resemblance to somebody who was not Napoleon, thus saving the Welsh regiment from annihilation and reproach. There is the dog of the Middlesex regiment, who always bit staff officers and was fourteen times condemned to death by elderly and traceable colonels, and fourteen times rescued by his devoted comrades. There is the Canadian same chicken, who sat waiting for blue-inch shells to fall, and then scratched over the ground they had disturbed; and there is last, but not least, the famous mascot of General Hospital One-Three-One, Hector O'Brien.

Hector O'Brien was born in the depths of a Congo forest. Of his early life little is known, but as far as can be gathered, he made his way to France by way of Egypt and Gallipoli and was presented by a grateful patient to the military stores and ambulance staff of One-Three-One, and by them was adopted with enthusiasm.

Hector O'Brien did precious little to earn either fame or notoriety until one memorable day. He used to sit in the surgery before a large packing-case, wistfully watching the aides and scratching himself in an absent-minded manner. A chimpanzee, who was not, as it were, very profoundly, and the statement that he is a deep thinker though an indifferent conversationalist has yet to be proved; but it is certain that Hector O'Brien was a student of medicine, and that he did, on this memorable day to which reference has been made, perambulate the wards of that hospital from which he was adopted, and shaking his head in a sort of melancholy helplessness which brought joy to the heart of eight hundred patients, some hundred doctors, nurses and orderlies, and did not in any way disturb the melancholy principal medical officer, who was wholly unconscious of Hector's impertinent imitations.

Second Lieutenant Tam, who was a frequent visitor at One-Three-One, had at an early stage struck up a friendship with Hector and had, in his belief, taken him on patrol duty. He strapped tight to the seat holding with a grip of iron to the buselage and chattering excitedly.

Thereafter, upon the little uniform jacket which Hector wore on state occasions were attached the wings of a trained pilot. It is necessary to explain Hector's association with the R. F. C. in order that the significance of the subsequent adventure may be thoroughly appreciated.

Tam was "up" one day and on a particular mission. He looked down upon a big and irregular checker-board covered with numbers of mad white lines which radiated from a white center and seemed to run frantically in all directions. One of the subsequent zigzags of yellow running roughly parallel. Behind each of these were thousands of little yellow spots.

Tam looked over and came round on a haphazard turn, with his eyes searching the heavens above and below. A thousand feet beneath him was a straggling wisp of cloud, so tenuous that you could see through it. Above was a smaller cloud, not so transparent, but too thin to afford a lurking place for his enemy.

Tam was waiting for that famous gentleman, the "Sausage-Killer," the sworn foe of all "O. B.'s."

He paid little attention to the flaming lines because the "Sausage-Killer" never came direct from his aerodrome. You would see him streaking across the sky, apparently on his urgent way to the sea coasts and obnoxious to the existence of Observation Balloons.

Then he would turn, as though he had forgotten his passport and railway ticket and must go home quickly to get them. And before anybody realized what was happening, he would be diving straight down at the straining gasbags, his tracer bullets would be ranging the line, and from every car would jump tiny black figures. You saw them falling straight as plummet till their parachutes took the air and opened. And there would be a great blazing and burning of balloons, frantic work at the winches which pulled them to earth and the ballooning section would send messages to the aerodrome whose duty it was to protect them, apologizing for awakening the squadron from its beauty sleep, but begging to report that hostile aircraft had arrived, had performed its dirty work and had departed with apparent impunity.

The "Sausage-Killer" was due at 11:20, and at 11:18 Tam saw one solitary airplane sweep across the sky, and he would bring him along the line of the O. B.'s. Apparently, the "Sausage-Killer" was not so blessed in the matter of sight as Tam, for the scout was on his tail and was pumping nickel through his tractor's screw before the destroyer of innocent gas-bags realized what had happened.

"It was a noble end," said Tam after he had landed, "and I'm so sure that he would have cared to be counted out in any other circumstances; for the shepherd likes to do amongst his sheep and the captain on his bridge, and this gas-bag was a noble end."

"What of it, Tam?" asked Blackie.

"I'm not so sure he's dead in the corporeal sense," said Tam cautiously, "but he is removed from the roll of effective."

So far from being dead, the "Sausage-Killer," who, appropriately enough, was ludicrously like a young butcher, with his red fat face and his cold blue eye, was very much alive and had a grievance.

"Where did that man drop from?" he demanded truculently, "I didn't see him."

"I'm sorry," said Blackie; "if we had known that we would have got him to ring a bell or wave a flag."

"That's irrelevant," said the German officer severely.

"It is the best we can do, dear lad," said Blackie, and didn't trouble to invite him to lunch.

"Tam, you've done so well," said the squadron leader at that meal, "that I can see you being appointed official guardian angel to the O. B.'s. You are going to bring you some flowers."

"And a testimonial with a purse of gold," suggested Croucher, the youngest of the flyers.

"I'm not desirous of popularity," said Tam modestly, "I'm against me principles to accept any other presents than signers, and even these I'm loath to accept unless they're good ones."

He looked at his wrist watch, folded his serviette and rose from the mess-table with a little nod to the president.

It was a gratifying fact, which Blackie had remarked, that Second Lieutenant, late Sergeant, Tam had taken to water. He showed neither awkwardness nor shyness, but this was consonant with his habit of aloofness. Once attune your mind to the reception of the unexpected so that even the great and vital facts of life and death leave you unshaken and unmoved, and the lesser questions are adjusted with ease.

Tam had new quarters, his batman had become his servant, certain little comforts which were absent from the bunk were discoverable in the cozy little room he now occupied.

His day's work was finished and he was bound on an expedition which was one part business and nine parts joyride, frank and undisguised, for the squadron-car had been placed at his disposal. The road to Amiens was dry, the sun was up, and the sky was blue, and behind him was the satisfactory sense of good work well done, for the "Sausage-Killer" was at that moment on his way back to the base, sitting vis-a-vis with a grimy young military gentleman who cuddled his bayonet and a fixed bayonet with one hand and played scales on a mouth-organ with the other, softly, since he was a more learner, and this was an opportunity for making joyful noises without incurring the opprobrium of his superiors.

Tam enjoyed the beauty and freshness of the early afternoon, every minute of it. He drove slowly, his eyes wandering occasionally from the road to make a professional scrutiny of the skies. He spotted the lonely watches of 30 Squad, for and about, for 30 had vowed many oaths that they would catch the "Sausage-Killer," and had even initiated a sweepstakes for the lucky man who crashed him.

At a certain quiet restaurant on the Grand Place he found a girl waiting for him, a girl in soiled khaki, critically examining the menu.

She looked up with a smile as the young man came in, hung his cap upon a peg and drew out the chair opposite.

"I have ordered the tea, though it is awfully early," she said; "but tell me what you have been doing all the morning."

She spoke with an air of proprietorship, a tone which marked the progress of this strange friendship, which had indeed gone very far since Tam's violent introduction to Vera Lamorne on the Amiens road.

"Well," said Tam, and hesitated.

"Please don't give me a dry report," she warned him. "I want the real story, with all its proper fixings."

"How shall I start?" asked Tam.

"You start with the beginning of the day. Now, properly, Tam."

Her slim finger threatened him.

"Is it literature you'd be wanting?" asked Tam shyly.

She nodded, and Tam shut his eyes and began after the style of an amateur elocutionist.

"The dawn broke fair and bonny and the fairest rays of the rising sun fell upon the sleeping 'Sausage-Killer'."

"Who is the 'Sausage-Killer'?" asked the girl, startled.

"He'll be the villain of the piece, I'm thinking," said Tam, "but if ye interrupt—"

"I am sorry," murmured the girl, apologetically.

She sat with her elbows on the table, her chin resting on her clasped hands and her eyes fixed on Tam, eyes that danced with amusement and admiration, and with just that hint of tenderness that you might expect in the proud mother showing off the accomplishments of her first-born.

"Tell about the head of the 'Sausage-Killer,'" Tam went on, "batman's shaven crown w' sat radiance. There was a discreet tap at the door, and Wilhelm MacBethmann, his faithful retainer, staggered in, bearing his cup of corn coffee."

"Rise, mein Herr," says he, "get out of bed ma bonnie laird."

"What of it, is it Angus?" says the "Sausage-Killer," sitting up and rubbing his eyes.

"It's seven, your Majesty," says MacBethmann, "shall I lay out yer synthetic sausage or shall I try up yesterday's sausagekraut?"

"But the 'Sausage-Killer' shakes his head.

"Mon Angus," he says, "A've had a heinous dream. A' dreamt, says he, that A' went for to kill a wee sausage and A' dived for him and missed him and before A' could recover, the sausage bit me. 'Tis a warning," says he, "S'ir," says MacBethmann, trebling in every limb and even in his neck, "ye'd be wise no' to go out the day."

But the proud "Sausage-Killer" rises himself to his full length.

"Unhand ma pants, Angus," says he, "ma duty calls," and away goes the pair.

Tam nodded.

"There was no damage?" he asked anxiously.

"Not very much in one way," she said, "he missed the hospital but got the surgery and poor Hector—"

She stopped and he saw tears in her eyes. "Ye don't tell me?" he asked, starting.

She nodded.

"Puir Hector; well that's too bad, puir wee little feller!"

"Everybody is awfully upset about it," he said, "a cheery little chap. He was killed quite—"

She hesitated to give the grisly details, but Tam, who had seen the effect of high explosive bombs, had no difficulty in reconstructing the scene where Hector laid down his life for his adopted country.

When he got back to the aerodrome that night he found that the bombing

a quick, red angry flash appear in the clouds and something whistled past his head. The guns had got the altitude of the bombers to a nicety and Tam grinned.

By this time Blackie's lights were out of sight and Tam was alone. He looked down at his compass and the quivering needle now pointed to his right, which meant he was on the homeward track. He kept what he thought was a straight course, but the needle swung round so that it pointed toward him. He barked over again to the right and swore as he saw the needle spin round as though some invisible finger was twisting it.

Now the airplane compass is subject to fits of madness.

There are dozens of explanations as to why such things occur, but the recollection of a few of these did not materially assist the scout. The thing

a little figure started out. Tam saw the rifle in his hand and caught the glimmer of a bayonet. "You English!" said a voice.

"Scotch," said Tam severely.

"Aha!" There was a note of exultation. "You English—escaped prisoner! I had you arrested and with me to the Commandant of Camp 74 you shall go."

"Is it English ye're speakin'?" said Tam.

The little man came closer to him. He stood four feet three and he was very fat. He wore no uniform, and was evidently one of those patriotic souls who undertake spare-time guard duty. His presence was explained by his greetings. Some men had escaped from the German prison-camp seven miles away and he was one of the sentries who were watching the road.

"You come mit me, vorwärts!" Tam obeyed meekly and stepped out to the hut.

"I keep you here. Presently the Herr Lieutenant will come and you shall go back."

He walked into the hut and waited in silence while the little man struck a match and lit an oil-lamp. The sentry fixed the glass chimney and turned to face the muzzle of Tam's automatic pistol.

"Sit down, ma wee frien!" said Tam; "let ma take that gun away from ye before ye hairt yeerself—maifairl Heaven!"

He was staring at the little man, but it was not the obvious terror of the civilian which fascinated him. It was the big, white, unshaven face, the long upper lip, and the low corrugated brow under the stiff-bristled hair, the small twinkling eyes, and the broad, almost animal nose that held him for a moment speechless.

"Hector O'Brien!" gasped Tam, and almost lost his grasp of the situation in the discovery of this amazing likeness. "A' thought the low corrugated brow was dead," said Tam. "Oh, Hector, we have missed ye!"

The little man, his shaking hands upraised, could only chatter incoherently. It needed this to complete the resemblance to the deceased mascot of One-Three-One.

"Ma puir wee man," said Tam, as he scientifically tied the hands of the prisoner, "so the Gairmans got ye after all."

"You shall suffer great punishment," he said, "for ye have betrayed yer frien by offer a protest. Presently the Herr Lieutenant will come with his motor-car."

"And bless ye for those encouraging words," said Tam. "Now will ye tell me how many soldiers are coming along?"

"Four—six—"

"Make it ten," said Tam, examining the magazine of his pistol. "A' can manage w' ten, but if there's eleven, A' shall have to fight 'im in a vulgar way w' ma fists. Ye'll see here," said he, "and ye will not speak."

He went to the untidy bed, and taking a coarse sackcloth sheet he wound

it about the man's mouth. Then he went to the door and waited.

Presently he heard the hum of the car, and saw two twinkling lights coming from the eastward. Nearer and nearer came the motor-car and pulled up with a jerk before the hut.

There were two men, a chauffeur and an officer, climbed and entered, in the tonneau. The officer opened the door of the car and stepped down.

"Is it ma frien ye're calling?" he asked softly. "And will ye pit up yer hands?"

"Who—who—" demanded the officer.

"Dinna make a noise like an owl," said Tam, "or ye will frighten the wee birds. Get out of that, McClusky." This to the chauffeur.

He searched them inside the hut and searched them. The officer had come provisionally equipped with a pair of handcuffs, which Tam used to fasten the well-born and the low-born together. Then he made an examination of the car, and to his joy discovered six cans of petrol for in this deserted region where petrol stores are non-existent a patrol car carries two days' supply.

He brought his three prisoners out, loosened the bonds of the little man, and after a little persuasion succeeded in inducing his three unwilling porters to carry the tin across the rough field to where his plane was standing.

In what perforce he indulged, what bitter and satirical things he said of Germans and Germany is not recorded. They stood in abject silence while he replenished his store of petrol and then—

"Up wi' ye," said he to Hector O'Brien's counterpart.

"For why?" asked the affrighted man.

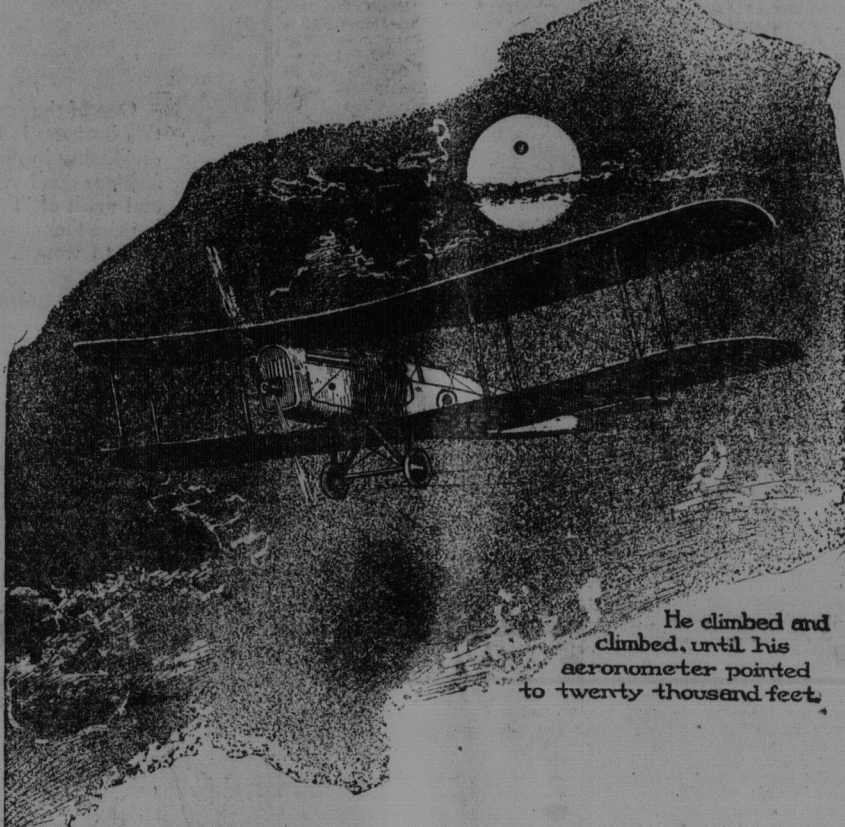
"Up wi' ye," said a Tam, sternly; "climb into that seat and fix the belt around ye, quick—A'm taking ye back to yer home!"

His pistol-point was very urgent and the little man scrambled up behind the pilot's seat.

Now ye, McClusky," said Tam, following him and deftly strapping himself, "ye'll turn that propeller—pull it down so, d'ye hear me, ye miserable chauffeur!"

The man obeyed. He pulled over the propeller-blade twice, then jumped back as with a roar the engine started. As the airplane began to move, first slowly and then gathering speed, with every second, Tam saw the two men break into a run toward the road and the waiting motor-car.

Behind him he felt rather than heard slight grunts and groans from his unhappy passenger, and then at the edge of the field he brought up the elevator and the little scout, roaring like a thousand express trains, shot up through the mist and disappeared from the watchers on the road in the low-hanging clouds, bearing east the bearded and saddened staff of One-Three-One Hector O'Brien's under study.



He climbed and climbed, until his aerodrometer pointed to twenty thousand feet.

two feller to meet his doom at the hands of the terror of the Skies."

"That's you," said the girl.

"Ye're a good guesser," said Tam, pouring out the tea the waiter had brought. "Do ye take sugar or are ye a victim of the diabetes?"

"Did you kill him?" asked the girl.

"Poetically and in a military sense the 'Sausage-Killer' is dead," said Tam; "as a human being he is still alive, being detained during his Majesty's displeasure."

"You will tell me the rest won't you?" she pleaded. With her, Tam invariably ended his romances at this point where they could only be continued by the relation of his own prowess, "and I'm glad you brought him down—it makes me shudder to see the balloons burning. Oh, and do you know they bombed Number One-Three-One last night?"

"Ye don't say!"

There was amazement in his look, but there was pain, too. The traditions of the air service had become his traditions. A breach of the unwritten code, that period of life wherein youth absorbs its most vivid and most eradicate impressions, had coincided with the two years he had spent in his new environment.

He understood nothing of the army and its intimate life, of its fierce and wholesome code. He could only wonder at the courage and the endurance of those men on the ground who were cheerful in all circumstances. They amazed and in a sense depressed him. He had been horrified to see snipers bayonetted without mercy, without being given a chance to surrender, not realizing that the sniper is outside all concession and cannot claim any of the rough courtesies of war.

He had placed his enemy on a pedestal, and it hurt almost as much to know that the German fell short of his conception as it would have had one of his own comrades been guilty of an unpardonable act.

Hospitals had been bombed before, but there was a chink in the armor, a deriding nightbird had dropped his pills in ignorance of what lay beneath him. Of late, however, hospitals and clearing stations had been attacked, with such persistence that there was very little doubt that the enemy was deliberately carrying out a hideous plan.

"Ye don't say?" he repeated, and the girl noticed that his voice was a little husky. "Were ye?" he hesitated.

"I was on convoy duty, fortunately," said the girl, "but that doesn't save you in the daytime, and I have been bombed lots of times, although the red cross on the top of the ambulance is quite clear—"

of hospitals was the subject which was exciting the mess to the exclusion of all others.

"It's positively ghastly that a decent lot of fellows like German airmen can do such diabolical things," said Blackie; "we are so helpless. We can't go along and bomb his collecting stations."

"Fritz's material is deteriorating," said a wing commander; "there's not enough gentlemen to go round. Everybody who knows Germany expected this to happen. You don't suppose fellows like Bolcke or Immelmann or Richthoven would have done such a swinish thing?"

That same night One-Three-One was bombed again, this time with more disastrous results. One of the raiders was brought down by Blackie himself, who shot both the pilot and the observer, but the raid was only one of many.

The news came through in the morning that a systematic bombing of flying hospitals had been undertaken from Tynes to the Somme. At two o'clock that afternoon Blackie summoned his squadron.

"There's a retaliation stunt on tonight," he explained; "we are getting up a scratch raid into Germany. You fellows will be in for it. Tam, you will be my second in command."

At ten o'clock that night the squadron rose and headed eastward. The moon was at its full, but there was a heavy ground mist, and at six thousand feet a thin layer of clouds which afforded the raiders a little cover.

Tam was on the left of the diamond formation, flying a thousand feet above the bombers, and for an hour and a half his eyes were glued upon the signal light of his leaders. Presently their objective came into sight: a spangle of lights on the ground. You could follow the streets and the circular sweep of the big Central Platz and even distinguish the bridges across the Rhine, then of a sudden the lights blurred and became indistinct and Tam muttered an impatient "Tchik" for the squadron was running into a cloud-bank which might be small but was more likely to be fairly extensive. They were still able to distinguish the locality, and three spears of red flame in the very center of the town marked the falling of the first bombs. Then all the prominent lights went out, and the mist caught the feeble flickers from the houses, but after a while these too faded and died. In their places appeared the bright, staring faces of the searchlights as they swept the clouds.

Tam saw the flash of guns, saw the red flame-flowers of the bombs burst to life and die, and straining his eyes through the mist caught the faint signal of his leader. He barked round and ran into a thicker pall of fog and began climbing. As he turned he saw

to do was to get clear of the clouds and take his direction by the stars. He climbed and climbed, until his aerodrometer pointed to twenty thousand feet. By this time it was necessary to employ the apparatus which was out of order when he suddenly dived up into the light of a cold moon. He looked around, seeking the polestar, and found it on his left. So all the time he had been running eastward.

And then his engine began to miss. Tam was a philosopher and a misanthrope never expects miracles. He understood his engine as a good jockey understands his horse. He pushed the nose of his machine earthward and placed down through an interminable bank of clouds until he found a gray country-side running up to meet him. There were no houses, no lights, nothing but a wide expanse of country dotted with sparse copse.

There was sufficient light to enable him to select a landing-place, and he came down in the middle of a big pasture on the edge of a forest of giant trees.

He unstrapped himself and climbed down, stretching his limbs before he took a gentle trot around the machine to restore his circulation. Then he climbed back into the fuselage and tinkered at the engine. He knew what was wrong and remedied the mischief in a quarter of an hour. Then he inspected his petrol supply and whistled. He had made a rough calculation and he knew within a few miles how far he was in the interior of Germany, and by the character of the country he knew he was in the marshy lands of Oosenburg, and there was scarcely enough petrol to reach the Rhine.

He left his machine, slipped an automatic pistol into the pocket of his overcoat and went on a voyage of exploration.

Half a mile from where he landed he struck what he gathered was a high-road and proceeded cautiously, for the high-road would probably be patrolled, the more so if the noise of his machine had been correctly interpreted, though it was in his favor that he had shut off his engines and had planned down for five miles without a sound.

There was nobody in sight. To the left the road stretched in the diffused moonlight, a straight white ribbon broken by any habitation. To the right he discerned a small hut, and as he walked. He had taken a dozen steps when a voice challenged him in German. At this point the road was sunken and it was from the shadow of the cutting that the challenge came. "Hallo," said Tam in English, and

Thomas Ellis Sent
Up For Trial On
Murder Charge

Alleged to Have Caused the
Death of His Wife at Harmony—Peculiar Circumstances Attached to Case.

Special to The Standard.

Charlottetown, P. E. I., Feb. 25.—The preliminary inquiry in the case of Thomas Corbett Ellis, of Harmony, charged with the murder of his wife, came to a close today, when the Magistrate Alexander Campbell, sent up the prisoner for trial before the Supreme Court. Yesterday the evidence for the prosecution was concluded, and the Court adjourned till this forenoon, when it met. Lieut. E. S. Strong, counsel for the prisoner, said that his client wished to answer the question put to him by the Magistrate yesterday, viz: "You have heard the evidence; have you anything to say?"

The prisoner replied: "I am absolutely innocent of the charge, but reserve my defence."

The Magistrate then referred to the salient features of the evidence, pointing out that it had been stated that when the prisoner went over to Murray's to telephone to Dr. Stewart, he had stated that his wife had committed suicide. On the other hand, evidence had been submitted to show that anyone looking into the room could not see the wound in the throat, and the prisoner stated that he had looked into the room, but did not go in before telephoning to the doctor. The Magistrate also referred to that part of the evidence wherein it stated that Mrs. Ellis, senior, had heard a noise from the direction of the room of the deceased, but had not notified the rest of the family about it at the time. These are all matters which require further investigation, said the Magistrate, who also made reference to the evidence given by Colonel J. S. Jenkins, M. D., who testified that he was extremely unlikely that the wound in the throat was self-inflicted, but though he would not definitely say that it was done by some other person.

Appropos of Mimeographs, the head of one firm says "I don't see how we ever get along without it." A. Milne Fraser, Jas. A. Little, Mgr., 37 Dock Street, St. John, N. B.

EGYPT'S PROBLEMS

Possible Conferences in London on Situation.

(Daily Express Correspondent.)

Cairo, Feb. 22.—The tone of Zaghlul's reply to the Nationalist leaders in Egypt is attributed to his desire to retain the support of the extremists. A member of the Milner Mission stated in an interview that he did not consider the door to discussions closed.

He emphasized the salient features of Zaghlul's letter—first, the impossible conditions attached to discussions here and abroad, second, Zaghlul's apparent willingness to discuss the Egyptian question unconditionally in Europe. He foreshadowed the possibility of a conference in London after the Mission had returned to which leading Egyptians would be invited.

Sinnott Hanna Bey, one of the Nationalist leaders, violently attacks Mohamed Said, the Prime Minister, in today's "Akhar". He accuses him of secretly leading a movement injurious to his own sacred cause, with the object of creating an abyss between the nation and the Nationalist delegation, fearing that Egyptian independence would terminate his own political career.

A NEW HONOR (?)

(The Wesleyan)

We have often noted how Nova Scotians had done themselves honor abroad. The latest honor (?) is reported from Ottawa. After a banquet, the male white slaves to habit were threatened with gastritis because their usual dose of after-dinner nicotine was delayed, on account of the presence of ladies. It was really a distressing situation but the Chairman gave "a sign of relief" when he found "everyone hastily lighting up a cigar, cigarette, or the old pipe." There was a lady from Nova Scotia, wife of one of the educational delegates, monachantly putting away at a cigarette. "From that moment the party brightened up perceptibly," by "this worldly wise woman who had relieved the tense situation." What a happy deliverance! The heroine's name should not be kept in oblivion.

We understand the scientists say it would be a serious matter if the race of women generally became tobacco smokers, but, after all, so far as right is concerned why should not women have as much liberty as men to smoke, and chew, and spit? Why not?