



JOKES AND SHOTS ARE EXCHANGED 'TWTIXT LINES

Strange Friendliness Grows Up Between Opponents in the Trenches

FIGHTING STOPS IN DINNER HOUR

Germans Give Concerts—Beef and Sausage Are Barter Medium

London, Dec. 18.—There is an impersonality about this war of 1914 that makes one shudder. Men seem to be killing each other in perfect good nature—almost in fellowship. The only evidence of hatred one discovers on either side is in safe civilian shelter, well back of the lines. Some one told the other day of a Scots sergeant commanding a detachment of German prisoners. One prisoner had the toothache. "Poor man," said the sergeant, "I'll soon have it out for you. Thereby displaying a bit of Christian charity, of a certainty. But the same Scot had half a dozen or more notches on the butt of his gun. He explained that like so many of the better sorts, he was keeping a wee tab on the Germans he had killed. Lately his shooting had fallen off. He thought his rifle was out of

kilter. He had missed two men lately at less than 100 yards—fair standing shots.

On one part of the Calais battle-line the German and British trenches have been worked by traverse within fifty yards of each other. The head that protrudes over either embankment is very apt to be drilled. Therefore the men had to get along on cold snacks. It was impossible for the cooks to get near them with their buckets of hot stew.

"Let's call it off for the dinner-hour," the British called over the intervening space to the Germans.

The enemy agreed heartily. No Englishman can get hungrier than a German. A daily armistice was agreed to, to begin at a given hour and end at a given hour. A signal for the beginning and end of the daily truce was arranged. So that at 12 and 6 o'clock each day the firing stopped, and the men crawled out of the wet, nasty trenches and sat about in the sun and ate and shouted military jokes across the way to each other. When the hour was over they returned to their burrows and began popping away at each other's heads.

Germans Give Concerts.

Both sides are musically inclined. The Germans have the better bands and more of them. Reports from a score of places have told of the evening concert, in which the Germans furnish the melodies and the British a large share of the applause. This does not happen every evening. But some days the British find themselves absolutely starved for music. By various devices they make their need known to the enemy.

"Let's have a sing-song, what?" is the British way of putting it.

Usually the Germans agree. That evening, after firing has stopped—for a part of this factory efficiency with which war is carried on nowadays prescribes that rifle firing is of little value after dusk—the German band parades to a point between the lines. There they play until they are tired, German airs for the most part, but invariably mixing in a few of the favorites of their hostile hosts. An especially good band is certain of enthusiastic applause. Sometimes the Germans have only phonographs and no band. The difference is one of degree only. The canned music hour is amicably enjoyed by both sides.

"We are singing 'Tipperary' all along the line," they told me in Berlin.

It's a catchy little air, is 'Tipperary,' and the simple words are easily learned. So many of the Germans know English that weeks ago they had picked it up from hearing the

fellows in the other trenches sing. They usually sing it better, too, for music is recognized as an aid to the warlike spirit in Germany. The Briton is a singularly toneless bird, but because he likes music he makes an excellent audience. Almost every night, after the day's work is done—these model soldiers refer to fighting as work—some one in the German lines is certain to begin singing the simple little ditties of the Fatherland. If the trenches are near enough a request will be shouted over:

"Won't you sing 'Tipperary' next?"

Big Guns Are Stopped.

And so they sing the army songs of Britain, and tired British soldiers sit in the darkness and listen. Sometimes, though not often, they join

ing to do but sit. Days become impossibly long and dull. Then they arrange target matches. Each side puts up a proper target. The best riflemen on either side take turns in firing upon the other side's selves hidden, but watch the score. Each side signals the result of each shot. There is a story of one angry rifleman who threw down his gun and started single-handed to storm the German trenches.

"The —" he roared at his protesting comrades. "They signalled my bull a magpie."

Food is Exchanged.

The British are particularly well supplied with "bully beef" in the trenches. The Germans all have sausage. As soon as a wounded German begins to

convalesce he is placed on a diet of pork sausage and beer. I've seen this in the Berlin hospitals. Sometimes the British digests rebels at more than a bully and the German epicure wishes to vary his sausage with beef. So that some hungry man runs up a little individual flag.

"A four-pound sausage for three tins of beef" is the usual ratio of exchange.

A Neutral Point—marked by a stone or a tree or a dead man—is selected, and the dieticians leave their guns behind and take their food forward. As the processes of war cannot be halted just because two men want a change of provender, the exchange is usually arranged upon a company scale.

Near Lille a farmer had located his cow stable in a sheltered hollow. Naturally enough, the shells and rifle bullets passed safely over the calm bovian heads. The trenchers on either side discovered the milk awaiting them in the hollow and arrested individual flag.

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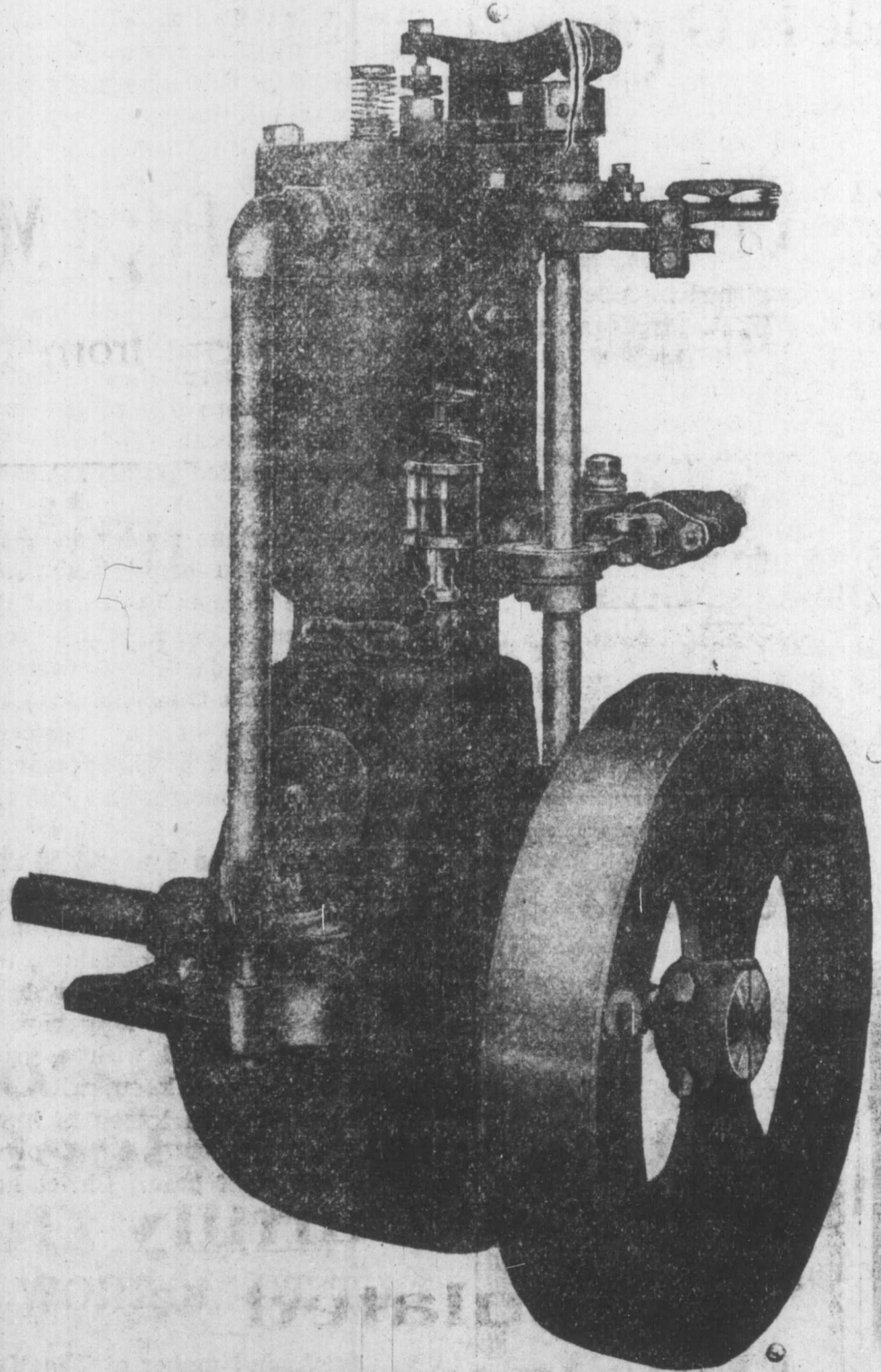
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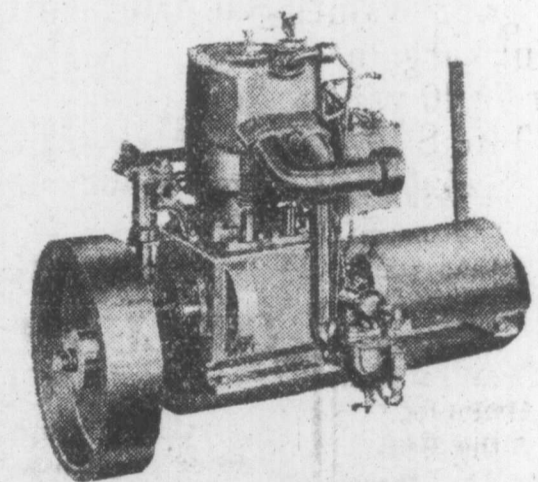
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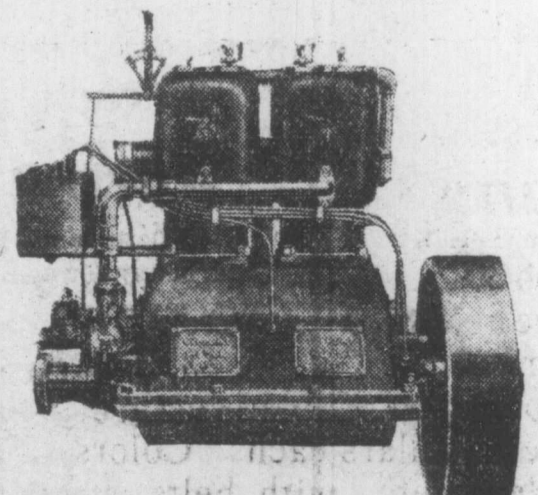
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