

Christmas 1917

THIS is a time when all men rest awhile—a time of family re-union—a time to consider matters requiring "setting right."

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The Great-West Life Assurance Co.

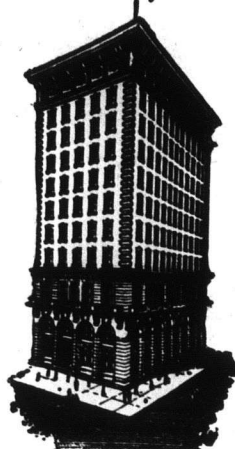
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buckskin. Six dollars and twenty-five cents a pound F.O.B. here! It certainly looked like a wonderful chance to make a nice bunch of money, for, you know, I can buy whole hides for that within two hundred miles of here."

"Well?" the second man queried interestedly.

"I'm to give my answer in the morning," the first speaker went on, "and it will have to be no! You see," he hurried on, "the buyer stipulated five thousand pounds. If they can't get that much, why they don't want any. Well, I asked for a day's time when the offer was made me this morning. I thought there was a possibility I might be able to fill it. But when I checked up, I realized how utterly impossible it was. The most I ever handled in a season before was five hundred pounds, and I'm the biggest buyer in town. In fact, I don't think any of the other fur dealers bother with it. And you know I wouldn't if it hadn't been for Seger's request the last time I was in New York. It seems his house supplies some place where they make burnt leather work—fancy pillow covers, ornamental table tops and such stuff like that, you know—and the buckskin is used for some specially fine work."

"And now this house wants a big order?" the second man questioned.

"Oh, no. This is an entirely different party. He's a buyer for the British army. Very dignified old duck. It seems they need a lot of buckskin. He wouldn't say just what for; but evidently he's anxious to get it, for—after getting my name

As Haskins finished, the younger man rose courteously to his feet. "My name's Garland," he said, holding out his hand, "and I sure will be glad to talk business with you."

Haskins took the extended hand, remarking as he shook it: "Mine's Haskins, Joe Haskins of Fort Norman."

The meeting over, Garland introduced the second man.

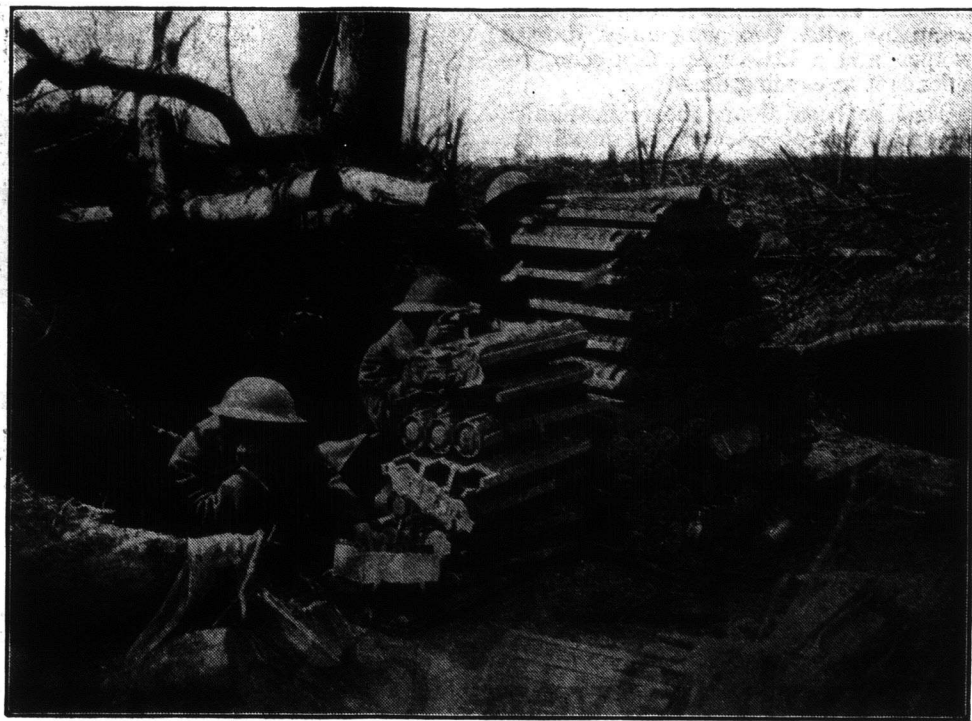
"This is Mr. Pearson, my father-in-law. Our wives are away for a holiday, so we're dining out for a few evenings," he explained, adding smilingly, "when the cats are away the mice will play, you know."

Then they turned once more to business and Haskins, drawing up his chair, began a rapid outlining of his plan of filling the five thousand pound buckskin contract. When he had finished, Garland was sitting gripping the edges of his chair, his eyes shining, his face alight with enthusiasm and excited interest born of the graphic description with which Haskins concluded his story.

After a minute, Garland said, an odd wondering in his tone: "And to think I've been here in this city, and buying fur right from the north country for seven years now and never heard a word about what you've just told us!"

Then his father-in-law chimed in: "Now you bring it to mind, I do remember hearing tales something like that. But it was a long time ago, and I'd clean forgotten. But it certainly offers a solution."

Haskins nodded. "Yes," he admitted "I guess there ain't many people in the



An old pile of German ammunition makes a good observation post for some Canadian observers.

from Seger in New York, where it seems he first tried—he travels clear across the continent to see me personally. But he says anything less than five thousand isn't worth bothering with. And now, of course, I'll have to decline the contract," he concluded in regretful tone.

Upon the listening northman the words had a remarkable effect, for with the hearing had come to him brilliant ideas.

Five thousand pounds of buckskin by October! Why, that was possible—a little difficult, perhaps, but possible. Before his mind's eye drifted again a scene viewed by him so many times in the past. Afire with the idea he got to his feet. Usually so diffident at meeting strangers, he now forgot all shyness as he approached and came to a stop before the two men whose conversation he had just overheard.

They were both well dressed, with the keen, alert faces of up-to-date business men; one of them was well past middle age, while the other was perhaps twenty-five or thirty.

"Excuse me," Haskins said, without a trace of embarrassment, "I just happened to overhear your talk, and I think I can deliver five thousand pounds of buckskin by the time you mention."

Both men had glanced up startled with Haskins' first word, into their eyes coming that coldly suspicious light with which the average man greets the advances of a total stranger. In the eyes of the younger, however, the look had quickly given place to one of pleased hopefulness, while into the other's had come mild interest.

outside world know." Then, turning the conversation back to the business of the moment: "Well, how are we going to go into this thing?" Without waiting for a reply, he proceeded: "Of course you could go and hire a half a dozen breeds and try to carry the thing through yourself. You might even be successful. But not knowing the country—and let me tell you there's just certain points you got to be at to be successful—I hardly think it's likely. On the other hand you're in touch with the buyer, so I can't go it alone."

Garland nodded and replied: "Under the circumstances, as you know the price I've been offered, I suppose I can't offer you less than five a pound, seeing as you would have to do all the work and take all the risk. That would leave me a dollar and a quarter profit. Certainly a nice little sum for not having to raise a hand. But"—his voice grew eager—"to tell you the truth, your story has so interested me that I want to go, too. I want to have a hand in filling the contract. At the same time I can see everything as you have described it, and have the excitement and the outdoor life. So, what do you say to going partners with me, and we'll split the profits fifty-fifty?"

"Garland was so pathetically eager, that Haskins was forced to smile. But there was something likeable about the young man, and Haskins noted also that he was well set up and no weakling. "Well," he said, after a moment, "it means a lot of hard work, and to you who ain't used

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