

# KITCHENER'S MOB

By NORMAN HALL.

CHAPTER VIII.—(Cont'd.)

"Missed the blighter!" he said. Then he told me that it wasn't a good place for a sniper's nest at all. For one thing, it was too far back, nearly a half-mile from the German trenches. Furthermore, it was a mistake to plant a nest in a solitary clump of willows such as this: a clump of trees offers too good an aiming mark for artillery: much better to make a position right out in the open. However, so far he had not been annoyed by shell fire. A machine gun had searched for him, but he had adequate cover from machine-gun fire.

"But, wim! You ought to 'a' heard the row when the bullets was a-smackin' against the sandbags! Somebody was a-knockin' at the door, I give you my word!"

However, it wasn't such a "dusty little coop," and he had a good field of fire. He had registered four hits during the day, and he proudly displayed four new notches on a badly notched butt in proof of the fact.

"There's a big 'ole where the artillery pushed in their parapet last night. That's where I caught me last one, 'bout a 'arf-hour ago. A bloke goes by every little while an' forgets to duck 'is napper. Tyke yer field-glasses an' watch me clip the next one. Quarter left it is, this side the old 'ouse with the 'ole in the wall."

I focused my glasses and waited. Presently he said, in a very cool, matter-of-fact voice:—

"There's one comin'. See 'im? 'E's carryin' a plank. You can 'e it stickin' up above the parapet. 'E's a-go'n' to get a nasty one if 'e don't duck w'en he comes to that 'ole."

I found the moving plank and followed it along the trench as it approached nearer and nearer to the opening, and I was guilty of the marksmanship of a professional soldier. I kept thinking, as hard as I could, "Duck, Fritz! Whatever you do, duck when you come to that hole!" And surely enough, he did. The plank was invariably ed into the trench just before the opening was reached, and the top of it reappeared again, a moment later, on the other side of the opening. The sniper was greatly disappointed.

"Now, wouldn't that give you the camel's 'ump?" he said. "I believe you're a Joner to me, matey."

Presently another man carrying a plank went along the trench and he ducked, too.

"Grease off, Jerry!" said the butt-notcher. "Yer bringin' me bad luck. 'Owver, they prob'ly got that place taped. They lost one man there an' they won't lose another, not if they knows it."

I talked with many snipers at different parts of the line. It was interesting to get their points of view, to learn what their reaction was to their work. The butt-notchers were very few. Although snipers invariably took pride in their work, it was the sportsman's pride in good marksmanship rather than the love of killing for its own sake. The general attitude was that of a corporal whom I knew. He never fired hastily, but when he did pull the trigger, his bullet went true to the mark.

"You can't 'elp feelin' sorry for the poor blighters," he would say, "but it's us or them, an' every one of us knows we're gonna get a few of our blokes saved."

I have no doubt that the Germans felt the same way about us. At any rate, they thoroughly believed in the policy of attrition, and in carrying it out they often wasted thousands of rounds in sniping every yard of our parapet. The sound was deafening at times, particularly when there were ruined walls of houses or a row of trees just back of our trenches. The ear-splitting reports were hurled against them and seemed to be shattered into thousands of fragments, the sound rattling and tumbling on until it died away far in the distance.

III. Night Routine

Meanwhile, like furtive inhabitants of an infamous underworld, we remained hidden in our lairs in the day-time, waiting for night when we could creep out of our holes and go about our business under cover of darkness. Sleep is a luxury indulged in but rarely in the first-line trenches. When not on sentry duty at night, the men were organized into trench parties, and sent out in front of the trenches to mend the barbed-wire entanglements which are being constantly destroyed by artillery fire; or, in summer, to cut the tall grass and the weeds which would otherwise offer concealment to enemy listening patrols or bombing parties. Ration fatigues of twenty or thirty men per company went back to meet the battalion transport wagons at some point several miles in rear of the firing-line. There were trench supplies and stores to be brought up as well, and the never-finished business of mending and improving the trenches kept many off-duty men employed during the hours of darkness.

The men on duty in front of the trenches were always in great danger. They worked swiftly and silently, but they were often discovered, in which case the only warning they received was a sudden burst of machine-gun fire. Then would come urgent calls for "Stretcher-bearers!" and soon the wreckage was brought in over the parapet. The stretchers were set down in the bottom of the trench and hasty examinations made by the light of a flash lamp.

"Where's 'e caught it?"

"'Ere it is, through the leg. Tyke 'is puttee off, one of you!"

Gunns Shur-Gain Fertilizer

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Making of Glass Mirrors First Developed in Venice.

They say that a man's first thought on entering a room is, "Where is there a place to sit down?" but a woman's first thought is, "Where is there a mirror?" It has been woman's thought from time immemorial, for from time immemorial there have been mirrors.

It is only since the beginning of the sixteenth century that mirrors have been used as articles of household furniture and decoration, and there are few women of the present day who do not realize and make use of their artistic value in adorning their homes.

The mirrors of antiquity were principally of bronze, highly polished and about the size of an ordinary hand mirror. They were usually provided with a handle and sometimes were mounted on a stand. The principal feature of these ancient mirrors was in the design incised on the back. They belong to the period about 400 to 500 B.C.

During the middle ages, from the twelfth to the end of the fifteenth century, pocket mirrors or small hand mirrors carried at the girdle were considered a necessary part of a lady's toilet.

The method of backing glass with metal for mirrors was well known in the middle ages, though steel and silver mirrors were almost exclusively used. It was in Venice that the making of glass mirrors on a commercial scale was first developed.

Fill your leaky hot-water bag with sand instead of water. Heat the sand in the oven and pour it into the bag through a funnel. It will retain the heat and do the work just as well as water.

"Good morning, Mrs. McCarty! How are all of your folks?" "All pretty well, exceptin' my old man. He's been enjoyin' poor health for some time, but this mornin' he complained of feelin' some better."

The work required, above everything else, cool heads and stout hearts. There was the ever-present danger of meeting an enemy patrol or bombing party, in which case, if they could not be avoided, there would be a hand-to-hand encounter with bayonets, or a noisy exchange of hand-grenades. There was danger, too, of a false alarm started by a nervous sentry. It needs but a moment for such an alarm to become general, so great is the nervous tension at which men live on the firing-line. Terrific fusillades from both sides followed while listening patrols flattened themselves out on the ground, and listened, in no pleasant frame of mind, to the bullets whistling over their heads. But at night, and under the stress of great excitement, men fire high. Strange as it may seem, one is comparatively safe even in the open, when lying flat on the ground.

Bombing affairs were of almost nightly occurrence. This enjoyment of the extremely hazardous adventures which he called "Carryin' an' app'orth o' 'ate to Fritz," a half-penny worth of hate, consisting of six or a dozen hand-grenades which he hurled at the German trenches from the far side of their entanglements. The more hardy spirits often worked their way through the barbed wire and, from a position close under the parapet, they waited for the sound of voices. When they had located the position of the sentries, they tossed their bombs over with deadly effect. The sound of the explosions called forth an immediate and heavy fire from the German trenches. Living close under the very muzzles of the German rifles, the bombers were in no danger unless a party were sent out in search of them. This, of course, constituted the chief element of risk. The strain of waiting for developments was a severe one. I have seen men come in from a "bombing stunt" worn out and trembling from nervous fatigue. And yet many of them enjoyed it, and were sent out night after night. The excitement of the thing worked into their blood.

Throughout the summer there was a great deal more digging to do than fighting, for it was not until the arrival on active service of Kitchener's armies that the construction of the double line of reserve or support trenches was undertaken. From June until September this work was pushed rapidly forward. There were also trenches to be made in advance of the original firing-line, for the purpose of connecting up advanced points and removing dangerous salients. At such times there was no loafing until we had reached a depth sufficient to protect us both from view and from fire. We picked and shovelled with might and main, working in absolute silence, throwing ourselves flat on the ground whenever a trench rocket was sent up from the German lines. Casualties were frequent, but this was inevitable, working as we did, in the open, exposed to every chance shot of an enemy sentry. The stretcher-bearers lay in the tall grass close at hand awaiting the whispered word, "Stretcher-bearers this way!" and they were kept busy during much of the time we were at work, carrying the wounded to the rear.

(To be continued.)

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## Food Control Corner

Rationing is a subject that is receiving much newspaper attention in Canada at present. It is a thing that is as new to us in theory and practice as war was three years and a half ago. That must be the only excuse for some things which are written.

The general assumption is that rationing can be carried out, just as some people thought price-fixing could, by a mere wave of a magic pen. When it is remembered, however, that Canada's seven and a half million people are scattered over an area greater than Europe the question at once arises: "Who is to see to the carrying out of the rationing scheme?"

For rations mean that each family would be under an obligation not to eat more on any day or in any week than a certain set amount of particular foods.

It would not be hard to make a rule that so much bread should be used by each person at a meal. But how many million police would be wanted to attend to the execution of the order? Even the making of orders that would be fair in a large city as compared with a country home, is a difficult little thing to do.

The rationing plan could ignore the "customs of the country?" Yet immediately here a discrepancy arises. One might prescribe the use of beef and wheat in Canada by decree but its incidence would be unequal. There is no beef and wheat in the West as yet, but more fish is not needed "at the front," to anything like the same extent that beef and wheat most urgently are wanted.

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The Unknown Quantity.

A young and pretty school teacher had some visitors one afternoon and thought she would show them what a good class she had. Calling up a bright little boy at the rear of the room she said to him:

"Johnny, if I gave you two cents and your father gave you three cents, how many would you have?"

"Seven," promptly replied Johnny.

The teacher blushed with embarrassment, but tried again. "You can't have understood, Johnny," she said.

"Listen, and I will repeat the question. If I gave you two cents and your father gave you three, how many would you have?"

"Seven," said Johnny again.

"I am surprised at you, Johnny," said the teacher. "How on earth could you have seven?"

"I got two in me pocket," said Johnny.

Where He Was At.

A certain British soldier's letter, according to Punch, runs thus:

"I am sorry I cannot tell you where I am, because I am not allowed to say. But I venture to state that I am not where I was, but where I was before I left here to go where I have just come from."

Seed oats are likely to sell higher this spring and be harder to find than in any season within memory.

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Send Your Answer NOW

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WALKER HOUSE

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route.

Then "drumming"

would be joyous,

And I wouldn't give

a hoot

For all the inconvenience

of

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If there was just one WALKER HOUSE

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I'd hustle like the dickens,

And take orders by the ton.

Say, tryin' them would be

just one big round of solid fun.

I wouldn't mind the rain or sleet,

Or mud, or frost or snow,

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In every town I go.

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## From Erin's Green Isle

NEWS BY MAIL FROM IRELAND'S SHORES.

Happenings in the Emerald Isle of Interest to Irish.

A memorial is to be erected to the late Francis Ormsby, B.L., J.P., who was for over forty years hon. secretary to the Dublin Working Boys' Home.

A cup of tea which was put up for auction at the Linavady Red Cross Fair, realized £11 8s.

Thomas Jenkinson, clerk of Balrothery Union, has had his salary increased £50 in lieu of a war bonus.