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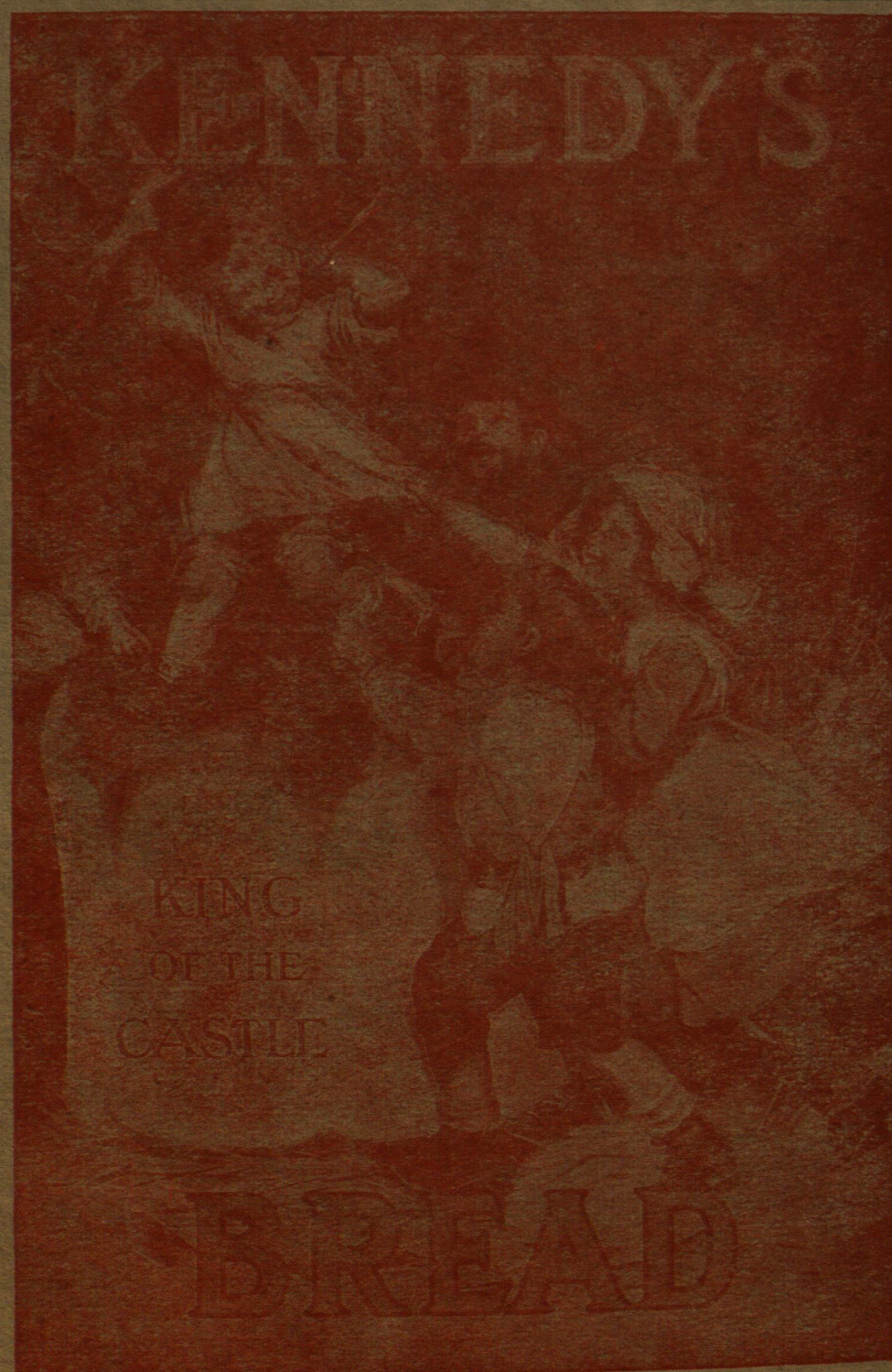
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An τ-Όζλάς

Vol. V. No. 24.

DECEMBER 18, 1926.

Price FOURPENCE

A CHRISTMAS TRAGEDY IN THE SERGEANTS' MESS.



The Cook (brightly)—“ Well, which of you Ginks found the Sixpence in the Pudding? ”

An t-Ogláic

DECEMBER 18, 1926.

Cóinnrád ag an Easagtóir.

NODLAIG.

CHRISTMAS in Barracks this year should be much more enjoyable than any of its predecessors. Every twelvemonth since the establishment of the Army has seen us more settled in our ways, more attuned to military routine, more cognisant of the facilities available for recreation. We have come to realise that, with intelligent co-operation, Christmas in Barracks can be made as happy for those who remain on duty as for those who are fortunate enough to secure leave. It is, of course, very pleasant to be able to visit relatives and friends at such a period, but, with the fine spirit of camaraderie which now exists throughout the Army, every unit is a family group, as it were, and in the company of good comrades there is much to compensate one for inability to obtain leave. Thanks to a better realisation of their opportunities by the men themselves and better organisation for the purpose, there should be no lack of Christmas entertainments in Barracks this year, even where they are without the assistance of such an admirable "Soldiers' Friend" as the Portobello Institute.

In his Christmas message to the Officers and men, printed on this page, the Minister for Defence is able to pay tribute to the "marked and continuous improvement in the efficiency and morale of the troops." The Minister speaks with the knowledge born of intimate association, but outside observers, even those who were very little in sympathy with us a few years back, are frequently heard nowadays freely admitting the remarkable progress that

MINISTER FOR DEFENCE

SENDS

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS TO THE SOLDIERS OF IRELAND.



Officers and Men of the Army:

Another year has passed and it is once again my privilege to extend cordial Christmas Greetings to the Officers and Men of the



Dec., 1926.

Irish Army. The year that is closing has witnessed marked and continuous improvement in the efficiency and morale of the troops. We must not relax our efforts in this direction, but continue to set a high standard and always strive to maintain it.

I am sure that every member of the Defence Forces fully realises these obligations and will earnestly endeavour to fulfil them so that the Army may continue—an exemplar for the Nation.

PEADAR O hAODHA,

Aire Cosanta.

has been made by our young Army. We want to foster that opinion by every means in our power until all our countrymen, whose opinion is worth having, will point to their soldiers with pride as worthy descendants of warrior forefathers—an Army of which any nation might justifiably be proud. The ideal which the Minister for Defence has set before us is a fine one, and one towards which all our energies should be directed—to make the Army in the future as in the past "an exemplar for the Nation."

Cuirfíó uimhir na seachtaine seo cuíann críoc le dian saothar na bliadna, agus cuirfíó sé dá imleabhar eile le sreataib faoi "An tOgláic" atá ag casadh le freasrait ar an Arm óm d'útrachtas oílis in ainm na siotcána is na veigmeine agus do deín sé le tinn cogair is éirísh.

Suirimíó Nodlaig doibinn suairc cun ar léigheomí go léir; agus suirimíó go d'fuirgíó i rit na bliadna nua sae sonas is séan; agus, más é toil. De é, mianta a gcorrde go rial pairsing.

CHRISTMAS IN THE 'TAN' DAYS

Experiences of the late General Michael Collins, the Minister for Defence and Major-General Cronin, Q.M.G.

"ON THE RUN" IN CO. TIPPERARY.

Twice Held-up and Searched by "Tans" on Christmas Eve.

By MAJOR-GENERAL CRONIN, Q.M.G. (in an interview).

Major-General Cronin, the present Quartermaster-General, recalls Christmas, 1920, as the most exciting he experienced. The previous Christmas he spent in Wormwood Scrubbs, "So," as he remarked with a smile, "there is not much to write about that."

The approach of the great Christmas festival in 1920 found the future Q.M.G. in command of the 4th Battalion, Tipperary No. 1 Brigade. The Tipperary Column had been temporarily disbanded for Christmas after having carried out some operations, and the young O.C. went to meet the members of his Battalion who had been attached to it and who were reporting home.

All the Battalions had contributed to the column, and the 4th had given six men—more than any of the others. The O.C. saw the men "fixed up" for Christmas, and then decided to spend the season in his own townland, even though it was not possible for him to sleep under his own roof.

He reached Toolorrha, County Tipperary, on Christmas Eve, and found a despatch awaiting him, requesting his attendance at a Brigade Council meeting to be held at twelve noon on Christmas Day, at Beggars Seat, Nenagh.

The 25th was a hard, bright day and the O.C. of the 4th Battalion started off in good time on a push bicycle to cover the sixteen miles between his home and the place of meeting. But the Black-and-Tans were not observing the festival as a holiday either, and he was twice held up by lorry patrols, the second occasion being just outside the town of Nenagh. This was particularly awkward, as he was carrying two reports for the Brigade Council.

The "Tans" did not recognise the man whom they had stopped, nevertheless they subjected himself and his bicycle to a very thorough search on each occasion. They found nothing whatever in the shape of incriminating documents, and reluctantly allowed him to proceed on his way.

And on arriving at the Council meet-

ing he unscrewed his bicycle pump and extracted therefrom the two documents which would have been such a nice Christmas Box for the Black-and-Tans if they had come across them.

Commandant McCormack, who had come down from G.H.Q. and whom the O.C. of the 4th Battalion now met for the first time, presided at the meeting,



at which the future Q.M.G. was entrusted with a number of instructions to be given to the different Battalions. On his way home from the meeting he found the countryside simply infested with the enemy forces, the roads being almost impassable for this reason. Time and again he had to make wide detours, to cut across the fields, and to lie in wait until the coast was clear. It was seven o'clock in the morning when he finally reached Toolorrha, although he had retained the bicycle through all the vicissitudes and utilised it whenever possible.

Nothing in particular happened then until New Year's Day, 1921, when the subject of this sketch attended a small party and dance given in a neighbour's house. Despite the ever imminent danger the function was very successful and all present were thoroughly enjoying themselves when, about ten o'clock, a boy rushed in with the news that the Black-and-Tans were coming—that there were three lorries of them only a few hundred yards distant.

In a twinkling the house was emptied of all the guests, and all signs of a large social gathering removed.

But minutes passed, and the unwelcome visitors did not put in an appearance. The people in the house, tense with expectation, wondered what had happened. Had the "Tans" gone hunting in some other direction?

They had not. They made their appearance eventually, and duly searched the house, but they had other matters than man hunting to occupy their minds and did not linger on the scene.

At a sharp bend in the road near a bridge the foremost lorry had crashed into the wall and overturned. All the occupants were more or less injured, the most serious case being a member of the R.I.C., who sustained a fractured thigh.

The injured policeman was the only member of the raiding party who could identify one very-much-wanted Felix Cronin, and had been brought along by the "Tans" specially for that purpose.

At the moment, however, all he wanted to identify was a doctor, and the chief concern of his companions was to procure medical assistance as speedily as possible.

After their departure the man they were looking for coolly returned to the house and spent the night there.

Bright and early the next morning he was astir again, and luckily so. He had not left the house very long when it was again visited by the Black-and-Tans—a different party this time. Again they drew blank.

During the following week the O.C. of the 4th Battalion and his comrades were not idle, but nothing special happened.

On the morning of Twelfth Day came bad news from Dublin. In the course of a raid by British forces documents had been found giving the names of the Officers Commanding the Cork, Limerick and Tipperary Brigades and, amongst others, the name of the O.C., 4th Tipperary Battalion.

A despatch from Brigade Headquarters warned the last-named officer to be very careful not to allow himself to be arrested under any condition. A sinister postscript was added:—

"If cornered; sell your life as dearly as possible."

The Quartermaster-General still has that warning despatch that he received on the 6th January, 1921.

IN GAOL WITH MINISTER OF DEFENCE.

INFLUENZA AND BAFFLED ESCAPE PROJECT DID NOT MAR CHRISTMAS.

By COMMDT. W. J. BRENNAN-WHITMORE, General Staff.

The most exciting Christmastide which I experienced during the Anglo-Irish struggle was undoubtedly that which was spent in Usk Gaol, Monmouthshire, Wales, as a prisoner under the faked "German Plot." It was more exciting even than the Christmastide in Frongoch in 1916. It was chiefly remarkable for the incidents which led up to it.

Amongst our many resolves was that of "breaking-gaol." We determined to get out of gaol en masse, and we worked long and arduous to achieve it; but as a matter of fact only four succeeded—owing to circumstances over which we had no control.

We were lodged in the female portion of the gaol. Profiting by our experience in Frongoch, we decided to run the gaol on "our own," appointing a Commandant, and even doing our own cooking. This gave us a measure of control without which we could never have succeeded in our plans even to the extent we did.

There were not more than a score or so lodged in Usk; but some of them attained to high rank in the new Ireland, namely, Mr. Peadar Hughes, T.D., who became Minister of Defence, and Mr. Joseph McGrath, who became a Major-General in the Army and Minister of Industry and Commerce. We occupied the centre floor, thus leaving the bottom and top ones vacant. We were very closely watched at first, but eventually our guardians were satisfied that their pre-conceived notions of the "wild Irish" were erroneous. They thawed considerably towards us, we obtained greater latitude, and by degrees widened out all our little privileges.

When we had definitely made up our minds to escape, our first desire was to learn the geography of the surrounding country. Such a knowledge was absolutely essential to a clean get-a-way in case our outside arrangements broke down. To this end we choose to exercise in the top corridor, on the plea

that it enabled us to view the country and see what Wales was like. After a few minutes an argument arose between Con Donovan and Joe Birrell. The latter asserted that he had seen a train pass along a ridge of country. Donovan asserted that he was dreaming, as the railway was on the other side of the prison. We all joined in the argument, taking different sides; and after a little while the warder, who was at the end of the corridor, strolled up to see what all the noisy talk was about. He was appealed to, as one who knew the lay of the land, to decide who was right. When he told us the side the railway was on we professed not to be quite satisfied, and one of the boys produced a piece of chalk and began to chalk on the floor his ideas of where the railway was. The warder, quite friendly and wholly unsuspecting, took the chalk and marked out on the floor a complete plan of Usk and the surrounding towns. It was then only a matter of asking him the mileage of the different towns. That gave us our bearings very effectively.

Our next problem was to solve getting out of the cells. The warders carried their bunch of keys on a hook on the side—and slightly to the rear—of their tunics. One evening whilst we were regaling one of the warders with Irish stories, standing round him in a group, Geo. Geraghty—a mason by trade—actually took measurements, and a plan of the lands of the master key of the cells. We then had sent into us a key with the block unfixed, and a couple of files. How we got in the key and files is a story in itself. Thus we were far on the solution to the opening of the cells.

In every prison door there is a small trap-door through which food can be passed. We put in a claim to have these trap-doors left open on a plea of more air. We found that a tall man, putting his arm through this trap-door could just manage to put the key into the lock of the cell and open it. As

Joe McGrath's cell was the first locked every night, and as he could reach the lock from the inside, he was selected for the job of opening the cells.

When the key was ready a couple of the boys stayed in the corridor one evening to try it on the lock of one of the cells. The key broke in the lock, leaving the head inside, and we were in a sweat of excitement. Geraghty raced to the kitchen and got the carving knife. Using this as a turn-screw the lock was taken off the cell door. We did not know the minute a warder would come round; and it was rapidly nearing locking up time. However, the lock was successfully taken off, the head of the key extracted, and the lock put back—a bare two minutes or so before the warder came round.

The second key which we got in worked quite successfully. We were now able to open our cells at will and get into the corridor. An examination proved that by unscrewing the lock of the door-gateway at the outer end of the ground floor corridor we could get out into the yard in which we exercised. For obvious reasons tampering with this was left to the last moment.

We had now progressed so far that we knew the lie of the country outside; and when the warders had locked us up and retired for the night, we were able to open our cells and get out into the yard. Naturally we were in high jinks, and were convinced that we would not be in durance vile for Christmas. Nothing in the world is so depressing as the prospect of having to spend Christmas in gaol.

The only obstacle that was now between us and freedom was the high gaol wall. This obstacle was somewhat aggravated by the fact that the top of the wall was round and did not lend itself to a hook or similar device. Luck favoured us in tackling this.

Handball was one of our favourite games, and, as we frequently struck the ball over the top, we agitated for a netting to put on the top at one point. This was conceded after some time. One day a tradesman warder arrived in our yard with a long ladder, netting, and uprights for the top of the wall. The uprights were made of lengths of tubing, to which were rivetted curved pieces of metal binding, the whole resembling an unusually large fork. We wandered over to watch the operations, and Geo. Geraghty, Peadar Hughes and some of the others began to admire the "forks." On the plea that they were not very strong one of the

boys pressed a fork down in the ground lengthways, thus leaving a clear impression of the size and shape of the curve of the top of the wall in the soft ground.

Along the top of the kitchen window was an iron curtain rod. This, after much labour, was bent and shaped until it corresponded to our ground plan. A collapsible stick was next devised by which this curved rod, which had attached to it a rope ladder, could be hoisted to the top of the wall. Freedom was very near. We had been in gaol since May; October was now with us, and its short days favoured our work, because we had succeeded in getting an extra half-hour's exercise in the yard after tea. This exercise was taken in the dark; and was only granted under promise that we would not escape during it.

One night whilst we were so exercising, the ladder was cautiously hoisted to the top of the wall, and Peadar Hughes, being physically the heaviest of the prisoners, stood on the bottom rung and tested it for stability. It stood the test nobly.

All our obstacles were now overcoming; and it only required final arrangements with our friends outside to make the "break." It all sounds very easy and simple; but in fact it was far otherwise; and our resourcefulness was often taxed to its utmost limits to keep the warders' attention off our labours, and many times we only avoided discovery by a hair's-breadth.

Every step in our progress was promptly reported to our friends outside, and they on their part spared no effort to assist us. Eventually we received word that we should break out on a certain night, and that motors would be waiting to convey us to the night mail train. We calculated that normally we would not be missed until 8 a.m., by which time we would actually have landed in Dublin. There seemed, then, nothing between us and a happy Christmas at home in Ireland.

The time had now arrived when it was necessary to "doctor" the doorway into the yard. A few of us were engaged easing the screws one night just before lock-up. One was holding a bit of candle, whilst the others worked at the screws. Suddenly Barney Mellows struck the candle a smart blow, completely quenching it, and began to call "puss-puss-puss." We had got a pet cat a short time before this incident; and, without question, we all began to pretend to look for the cat. In a minute or two

a warder came round the corner, and, on being asked if he saw the kitten, kindly began to help in the search. He was gradually led away to another corridor whilst most of those engaged on the job returned quietly and finished doctoring the lock.

Our plans were now complete. It only required the word "GO" from our friends outside; and, perhaps, the hardest task of all was to sit in patience, knowing all was ready on our side, for that word of release.

There is an old saying that "The best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft a-glee." It was so in our case. Just as the fateful night drew

farewell, and simply disappeared into the night.

Their escape was not discovered until the next morning when frantic excitement reigned in the gaol. It was extremely comic to see some of the places that they looked in for four hefty men. They were nearly a couple of hours searching before the abandoned ladder was discovered, and the gaol authorities then knew that they had taken the long, long trail.

The rest of us then settled down to make the best of the situation. It did not seem so bad having to spend Christmas in gaol now that four of our comrades had made a clean get-away



CELL USED AS ORATORY IN USK GAOL.

nigh, the 'flu—which was then raging all over the world—struck down most of the prisoners. Poor Dick Coleman, the brightest and gayest little soul amongst us, breathed out his last. Con Donovan, and myself only survived by a miracle.

The prisoners simply were not physically capable of the strain of an escape. Then came word that we were to be shifted to Gloucester Gaol; and the knell of all our hopes seemed sounded. It was evident that, despite all our efforts, Christmas would have to be spent in gaol. After a long discussion it was decided that a limited number who had escaped the worst ravages of the disease should go. So on a particular night Joe McGrath, Barney Mellows, George Geraghty, and Frank Shouldice bid us a very affectionate

—especially as they had no outside assistance. A double cell was converted into a chapel, and we decorated it for Christmas. No one worked harder at this devout work than Mr. Peadar Hughes. Great quantities of gifts had been sent into us, and, except for Con Donovan and myself—being still too weak to participate in the festivities—a very enjoyable Christmas was experienced.

A Scottish proverb: "Never be the first to say, 'What's yours?'"

His Wife: "Don't forget, my dear, that many a man owes his success in life to his wife."

Her Husband: "And don't you forget, my dear, that many a man owes his wife to his success in life."

A CHRISTMAS DINNER AT THE GRESHAM.

The Narrowest of Michael Collins's Many Escapes from Capture.

It is a very curious thing to reflect that, in the closing months of 1920, when horror was being piled upon horror in Ireland, when the English campaign of frightfulness was at its highest activity, the English Prime Minister was actually endeavouring through secret intermediaries to open negotiations with Sinn Féin with a view of peace and a "settlement." Michael Collins, hunted from post to pillar, cycling daily through holds-up and searches in the streets, with his papers hidden in his socks, sleeping nightly in different houses, often next door to a house that was being raided, found himself, as Acting President of Dail Eireann, engaged in discussing offers from Mr. Lloyd George for a Truce and a Peace Conference.

The remarkable story of these secret negotiations has not been made public until now when it is given in detail in ex-Commandant-General Piarais Beaslai's book, "Michael Collins and the Making of a New Ireland." For those details we must refer our readers to the book, but the author has very kindly given us permission to extract from the volume details of a dramatic incident

* Phoenix Publishing Company, Ltd.

in which the Irish Leader was the central figure, and which happened whilst those negotiations were in progress.

On the morning of Christmas Eve, 1920 (says Beaslai), De Valera arrived secretly in Dublin, with the assistance of Collins's agents, and Collins met him and had a long colloquy. That same evening Collins had probably the narrowest of his many escapes from capture.

The Christmas season had not brought about any abatement of the activity of English military and Black and Tans in Dublin. Raids, arrests and holds-up continued as busily as ever, and one man was raided for and arrested on the morning of Christmas Day.

On the evening of December 24th, Michael Collins, Tobin, Cullen, Gearoid O'Sullivan, and Rory O'Connor decided to dine together in a private room at the Gresham. They were unable to get a private room, and accordingly had their meal in the public dining-room. Just as they had finished their dinner, a waiter told them that a gang of Auxiliaries were in the hall, enquiring for the party who had been looking for a private room. Evidently some spy had sent word to the Castle. They had barely time to think of a story when the Auxiliaries rushed in on them, held

them up and interrogated them. Collins, pretending to be indignant, rose and attempted to push his way out. He had nearly got away when he was stopped by the officer in charge.

They all gave false names and addresses. The officer in charge searched Collins and found in his possession an Ordnance Survey map. On one corner of this Collins had scribbled the words "6 Refills," to remind himself of something. The officer pounced on this and declared it was "six rifles." Collins succeeded in convincing him that the word was "refills"—his clear writing never left room for ambiguity—and made some remarks about the different kinds of notebooks with refills which he used in his work. The officer's attention was distracted by this from the point of asking what he wanted an Ordnance Survey map for.

The officer remained very suspicious. He took out a photograph, ran his hand through Collins's hair, and compared his face with that in the photograph. That it was a trying moment for Collins may well be imagined, but he still kept on his cheery smile. At the same time he had his eye fixed on the revolver in the officer's holster, prepared, if the officer showed any sign of recognising him, or arresting him on suspicion, to snatch the revolver and try to fight his way out. The officer's scrutiny was so prolonged that he had just decided to do this, and was preparing for the spring, when the man turned away.

The Auxiliaries departed, having let the greatest possible capture of their lives slip through their hands.



A "NAP" AFTER "LIGHTS OUT." PUZZLE: FIND THE SERGEANT-MAJOR.



IN CAPTIVITY

From "WITH THE IRISH IN FRONGOCH."

By COMMANDANT W. J. BRENNAN-WHITMORE, General Staff.

(Being the Forty-Fourth instalment of the History of the Anglo-Irish War.)

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[NOTE—After the Rising in 1916, all the Volunteers who took part in it, and very many who did not, were "swept up" by the R.I.C. and British Military, and hastily conveyed to various English jails. From these they were later concentrated in an Internment Camp, at Frongoch, Wales.—EDITOR.]

CHAPTER XXXI.

ON this last occasion when we were shifted down to the South Camp, the only hospital in occupation was the one with the entrance door to the right of the archway. "Buckshot" in his endeavour to complete the breach, as he imagined, stated that he would allow none of the South Camp prisoners into this hospital for fear that they might corrupt the North Camp patients.

He had the other hospital opened up for our reception should any of us take so seriously bad as that our lives would be in danger, in which eventuality the doctors would be graciously pleased to attend to us. We were asked to draw the rations; and cook the food for the North Camp patients. This we refused to do, for reasons which shall appear in due course. We were also asked to furnish a hospital fatigue party of four prisoners to clean up the hospital occupied by the North Camp patients. We told the authorities "to go and get four of the turkey-cocks" to do it. These refusals, of course, only tended to confirm the authorities in their erroneous opinion that a bad split had occurred between us. In reality!

By compelling the authorities to have the meals of the North Camp patients prepared therein, and brought down by bearer we established three lines of communication. A fourth line was established by the prisoner who brought down the parcels and letters for these patients. Now, each of these prisoners coming from the North Camp always was loaded with goods *supposed* to be for the North Camp patients, but in reality for the prisoners undergoing punishment in the South.

An armed sentry was on the door of the hospital so that none of us could get in to the patients. But as I have already explained in the description of the Camp, the lavatory of the hospital was in the form of a corrugated iron annex. This was connected to the

outer wall of the hospital by a short, narrow passage, made also of corrugated iron. Thus there were two tiny recesses—one on each side—between the hospital wall and the lavatory. There were also two windows in the passage. When darkness settled down the prisoners always promenaded round the compound for exercise before locking up. It was then that specially selected prisoners dropped into these recesses, and the patients inside passed out the parcels for the men in the South Camp.

Similarly, instructions were sent by heliograph to the North Camp that the four prisoners coming down each morning on Hospital fatigue were to wear their overcoats, and to stuff their pockets with packets of tea, cocoa, etc. These were emptied into the bottom of the hospital ash-bin, and later on the contents were emptied into the ash-pit in our compound, and here again specially detailed prisoners retrieved the treasure trove. In this way no less than five lines of communication or supplies were established between the North and South Camps under the very nose of the authorities. Nor did our ingenuity cease here.

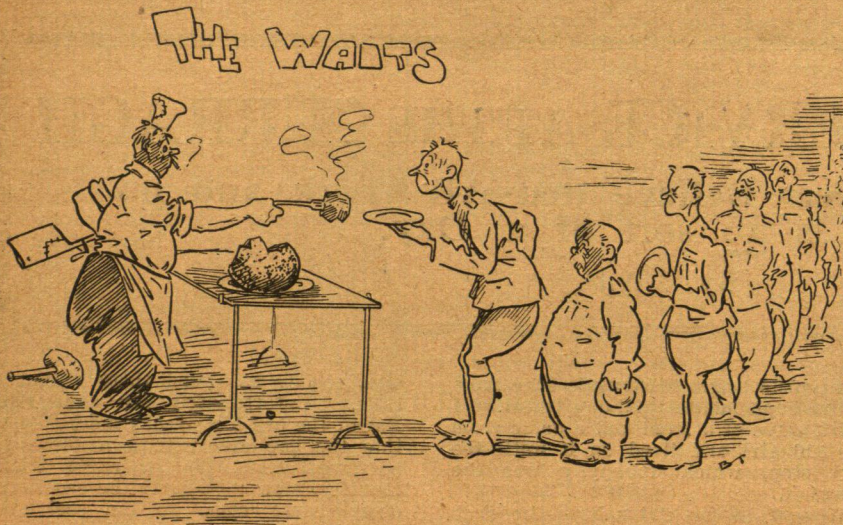
We took care that the ash-pit fatigue, which was intended to demean us, should now be turned to our profit. The only milk we had in Camp was the condensed and preserved variety; and in a large number of ways considerable quantities of tinned food were used in the Camp. These old tins were collected and taken away to the incinerator. They were not thrown into it, as they would not burn, but were cast in a heap beside it. We now sent word to the North Camp that they were to save up the empty tins, pack them with foodstuffs, tobacco, papers, etc., and tie a piece of string round each tin so filled. The tins were then collected by the fatigue party in the usual way, and emptied out beside the incinerator. Then our party went for the cart, and

whilst engaged burning our refuse they kept picking up the tins with string on them and slipping them into their pockets, and into satchels under their overcoats. In this way a sixth line of supplies was established.

Father Stafford had now to say morning Mass in the North and South Camps alternately. He was, of course, always attended by prisoner altar servants. His bag was a large substantial one, whereas his vestments were of the slim, field-service pattern. When his bag arrived in the North Camp it was packed with tobacco, cigarettes, papers, letters, etc. It was then locked and carried down to the South Camp, where, needless to say, it was quickly emptied of its contents. Of course, Father Stafford had no knowledge whatever of the contraband usage to which his kit-bag was being put. Hence our seventh and last line of supplies.

One thing the Leaders could not do, and that was to keep the men from flaunting their tobacco supplies in the face of the authorities by smoking in the outer compound. It was, perhaps, under the circumstances, a pardonable vanity. It also had the effect of proving that the authorities could no more deprive us of our luxuries than they could conscript our comrades. No day passed but some new phase of our life taught us the power and effectiveness of the Sinn Féin policy of intelligently applied passive resistance when adopted and carried out by courageous and tenacious men.

The politicians having failed to break our spirit, and having equally failed to demean us in the eyes of our countrymen, had yet the audacity to claim kudos for our release! They claimed that it was their exertions, their power, and their influence which secured our release. In this unvarnished and exaggerated account of the state of



affairs in Frongoch Camp, as well as the physical courage and mentality of the prisoners interned therein, the honest and intelligent readers can see for themselves the true cause of our release. That cause was political embarrassment, and a frantic endeavour to make political capital out of us at the last extreme.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ONE copy of *The Independent* which came to us contained an extract that "the London *Evening Standard* hears that the Government intend, without undue delay, to unconditionally release a considerable number of Irish prisoners awaiting trial in England, the clemency to be applied in stages and by degrees."

That announcement threw us into a momentary ferment. We felt that the authorities as a last extreme were seeking to seize our "refugees" by the stratagem of releasing the rest of us. We imagined that they argued that if we would not answer our names to the ordinary roll-call, we would answer pretty smartly to a release list. The matter was debated in its every aspect and bearing in each dormitory for several consecutive nights. At last, by an overwhelming majority the prisoners in the South Camp decided to refuse even unconditional release unless it applied to every prisoner without distinction, and without any necessity of revealing our identity! I frankly confess that I was very nearly crying with pride and joy of the men the night that decision was arrived at. And no wonder.

There were 300 full-blooded Irishmen, filled with a yearning love of liberty, and longing for their motherland. The rigour of their punishment for that love was beginning to unmistakably tell upon them. Christmas, that time of peace and joy was fast approaching. Everything tended to make our release doubly welcome to us at the moment.

Yet they had given forth this mo-

mentous decision to refuse even unconditional release, rather than leave their comrades in the lurch!

But the weeks dragged by and there was no sign of our decision being put to the test. And when at last the *Daily Mail* announced that "Ample sup-

plies of geese, bacon, potatoes and other vegetables, and bread and cheese, tea and sugar will be provided for the Irish prisoners in Frongoch Camp and Reading and Aylesbury Gaols during the Christmas season by the committee in Manchester, co-operating with the Dublin and London committees," we concluded that Christmas, 1916, would not be spent in Eire. We settled down to make ourselves as happy as could be. It was strange the effect that this announcement had. Men who seemed most anxious for their release now seemed to become suddenly quite content with their lot.

"If I don't get home for Christmas," one of them remarked to me, "I would just as soon stop here for the next twelve months. I believe that we can do more good for the country here than if we were released."

I heartily agreed with him.

On the morning of Thursday, the 21st December, one of the prisoners told me that the Censor—Lieut. Bevan—was looking for me. Without going to him, I crossed the outer compound so that he could see me if he wished. I met him face to face just as I emerged from the inner compound.

(To be continued).



Sergeant (who has enjoyed his Christmas dinner at home)—"For Heaven's sake, Maggie, take that infernal overall off! I never want to think of Christmas pudden again!"

NEXT WEEK!

SPECIAL FEATURES.

English Officers' Christmas in Ireland in 1602. Translation of a unique Latin MS.

Munition-making in the "Tan" Days.

Exclusive Story by Major Furlong.

ORDER NOW TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT.

TOO LATE!

Notes kindly supplied by "Sparks" (4th Battn., Castlebar), "Peacemaker" (Islandbridge), "Bubbles" (6th Brigade H.Q.), and our correspondent in the 21st Battalion reached us too late for inclusion in this issue.

The Students' Page and this week's instalment of "The Sword of O'Malley" are unavoidably held over.

Our new serial, "The Rebels," by J. McDonnell Bodkin, will commence in an early issue.

'ON ACTIVE SERVICE' AT THE CURRAGH

The Student Officers Believe that All Work and no Play is no sort of a Day.

By J.A.P.

A lot of people have been worried by the title of these articles as previously announced. They—according to the whispers which have reached me—have been speculating as to how far I would “blow the gaff.” They will be glad to know that, so far as I am aware, there is no “gaff” (whatever that may be) to blow.

My original idea (as more or less foreshadowed in the advertisements) was to give a full, true and particular account of my (and a few score other good fellows') experiences as Student Officers at the Army School of Instruction. We were afflicted with the usual diseases of Student Officers the world over—Sandhurst and Fort Leavenworth, to mention two extremes would probably parallel the A.S.I. amazingly and you could find our duplicates in France, Germany, and wherever there is a country which maintains an Armed Force according to Queensbury—paradon, “League of Nations” rules. Student Officers, so far as I can see, have every claim to the liberties of University Students. If the embryo medicos, lawyers, and the rest have a certain licence, surely we, the soldiers of the country, should be permitted a similar latitude while we are “learning how to shoot,” and a few other things. And if, in the following few columns I appear to be treating the matter as a joke, I do not think it will be beyond your perspicacity to realise that, nevertheless the men (Student Officers) were learning their trade—and learning it through a hard gruelling. If I make laughter out of it, you will kindly realise that I am not “getting at” anybody. We were all Soldier Students doing our damndest to be efficient and, if I poke fun, it will be (I hope) accepted as the good-natured humour of a gink who realised that his “sparring partner” was doing (like himself) his best. Now, let's get on with the work, as Collins used to say, before and after the Treaty.

WE ARRIVE.

The Bunch that had the honour of being associated with me started from G.H.Q. Several real soldiers came out and said “Good-bye” to us. Those who had been through it said farewell in a disconcertingly heartfelt fashion. The others didn't care: you could see them thinking. “Thank the pigs, we're rid of old So-an'-so for three months.” Just before the tally clicked

the typists began to struggle back from their euphemistic mid-day meal. I got a wave of a hand and a smile from the 116 girl and lived on it until the first stop, which unhappily was the Curragh.

We got to the Curragh in the drab end of a diluted Spring evening and unlimbered stiffly. The first thing I saw was that artist of ours aggressively uniformed. He said: “Good God! you don't mean to say they've sent you down on a Course?”

Well—you know what I mean—he might have been more tactful about it.

Anyway he dragged me around to the one and only Fagan (Orderly Sergeant, A.S.I., otherwise known as the Student Officers' ONLY FRIEND) and by the graces that were I booked a billet for two chums and myself—carefully reserving the back room for the last-mentioned. And before I go any further I would like to pay a tribute to our (the Three Musketeers') episcopal batman (his name was Bishop) since retired to the wilderness of civilian life, for the way he “mothered” us. Fagan picked him, and Fagan is a darned good judge of batmen.

Thus we came to anchor and, later, discovered a Student Officers' Mess—and Bar. Which latter somewhat mitigated the dryness of our official reception and the Spartan Friday evening meal.

REVEILLE.

If the Editor had received this article in time (but it is reaching him only at the last minute) I would like him to have put in a few bars of music representing “Reveille”—so that anybody who knew it could play it even on a tin-whistle “wid a bend in de middle like de Panah.” Reveille is a jolly fine call—for other people. I always appreciated it when I was lying in bed with severe abdominal pains or biliously-impaired eyesight, or anything else I could think of, that the M.O. couldn't prove I hadn't. Fagan was a terrible nuisance when you felt that way—he knows too much about medicine.

As a general rule the first thing you knew about Reveille in my purgatorial days was the episcopal Batman coming in stormily about 6.30 and saying “The Quarter-dress has gone, sir,” and grabbing the most of your clothing, bar breeches, and disappearing to give it a frenzied polish. Later on dire vengeance overtook the bugler and there

was nobody to sound these strenuous calls. Unfortunately the unutterable Fagan (he has his streaky side) stepped into the gap and with a motor horn borrowed from my erstwhile friend Maurice, blew “Come to the cookhouse door, boys; come to the cookhouse door.” Which was unfair in every sense, particularly in view of the fact that there was no breakfast until after “P.T.”

But Fagan's lungs were better than any bugle. Whether it was five minutes to seven or 08-55 hours his “On Parade, gentle—men!” (giving us the benefit of the doubt) was a stentorian hint that nobody could ignore. (Struth; I've tried to dress myself in civies since as quickly as I got into the old breeches and leggings, and wet equipment—not to mention my bedfellow Rifle 99, but I've never got near my Curragh record for speed—6.50, in bed. 7.00 hours, on PARADE. I wonder how I did it.)

THE MESS PRESIDENT.

We numbered about 140 when I was at the A.S.I., including the circus stars, the bomb-throwing infants, and the people who were trying to teach the Lee-Enfield better than it knew. They hadn't a dining hall big enough to hold us all and allow free knife-and-fork play, so we were allotted two dining halls. And we were allowed to take complete control of our messing arrangements, subject to the supervision of the School Q.M. (with whom be peace). We elected a Mess President, a Vice-President (to take control of the lower hall), Secretary, Treasurer, and Committee, to see that we were fed properly, subject to the supervision of the School Q.M. It was a great idea and it worked out all right—that is to say, it might have been worse.

After the first few meals there was a distinct bias against the School Q.M. (a personal friend of mine and a noble gentleman struggling gallantly against the heavy odds). Towards the end of the first week the views of the Student Officers on the subject of grub had become somewhat embittered and they had forgotten the Q.M. in the immediate presence of the Mess President.

He had a very hard row to hoe, that Mess President of ours. Apart from myself I think there were few people who appreciated all that he had to put up with. But, by gosh, that poor hound had a rotten time. There was a legend about “extra rations,” but 90



per cent of the Student Officers failed to see them. The other ten per cent. were members of the Mess Committee.

The Mess President also had to submit to being assailed in his billet at all sorts of unlicensed hours, either by the N.C.O. in charge of waiters, who complained that he could not empty the Mess of Student Officers at the scheduled hour and invited the M.P. (guardedly) to come over and throw them out; or by Student Officers who were seeking food and comfort within the prohibited limits and wanted the N.C.O. i/c Waiters to be hanged, drawn and quartered immediately.

And apart from all these things, there were the complaints about the kippers. The kippers, which made their appearance on fast days, were not supposed to be of an ancient vintage, but when one approached them, treading as delicately as Agod (see Defence Forces (Temporary) Provision Act, Chapter 3,750, verse 59) one realised that they would have been more bearable if they had been embalmed with their contemporary Tut-ank-ahmen.

And the sausages. The difference between an "issue" sausage and a civilian sausage is that the latter is near the mark and the former is well over it—though I don't agree with the chap who said the "issue" sausages were mostly composed of sawdust. I don't think it is sawdust.

They were wont to make discoveries in their porridge—shell-backed insectivora and things of that sort—and talk bitingly to the Mess President about them. They commented (with adjectives) on the remarkable fact that if there were twelve men at a table and eleven wanted soft-boiled eggs on a Friday morning they were sure to get them hard-boiled whilst the last of the dozen who wanted his eggs more or less *au naturel* got them served to him *a la paving stones*. Not being able to attack the Q.M. they hurled half-bricks at the Mess President.

He had a rotten job.
I know—I was him.

MANY ADVENTURES.

I would like to tell you ALL about our life down there, but a greater

than I say, "Boil down that mush of yours, we want this Christmas number varied and bright." So I can only give you a synopsis. I would like to tell you all about our deeds of derring-do on the fields of Kildare when "J.J." took us out for tactical manœuvres and occasionally forgot about us (the harrowing tale of "The Lost Platoon" is yet to be written). I would like to dwell on the resourcefulness of Comrade Fagan in every emergency. It would give me infinite pleasure to show up the duds who dodged "P.T." and explain how they did it. I would simply love to dwell on my prowess in bayonet fighting. Brother Thomson has taken a mean advantage of the fact that I was matched against the smallest of the Cadets and has presented a libellous picture of young O'M. and myself which (to show how large-minded I am) I present herewith.

As a matter of fact I was an absolute dab at bayonet fighting. I could make ferocious grunts which pleased even that bloodthirsty Sergeant Instructor of ours, and I could make faces like a dozen ancient Japanese war masks—two very essential factors in bayonet fighting, I gathered.



There were a lot of hefty men on our "Course." Eamon, F—, and myself were neck-and-neck for the heavyweight championship, but Eamon was the most spacious. On a windy day in the Curragh (and when isn't there a windy day down there?) his squad use to manœuvre so as to place his generous form between the wind and their nobility. Thomson has endeavoured to portray the rear rank sheltering behind Eamon, but I hope my fellow-campaigner brings an action for libel against him. I don't mind about the rear rank; Thomson hasn't been half-truthful enough about them—they were a lot of weak-kneed duds taking a mean advantage of an outstanding personality. He may have been a wind-screen, but he never got the "wind-up" as they did. Thomson is no dam good, anyway, at portraying Homeric figures—look at that one he has done of me.

Some day, in the intervals of the work which nobody at G.H.Q. believes I do, I am going to write a pathetic ballad about Fagan's kid—do not mis-

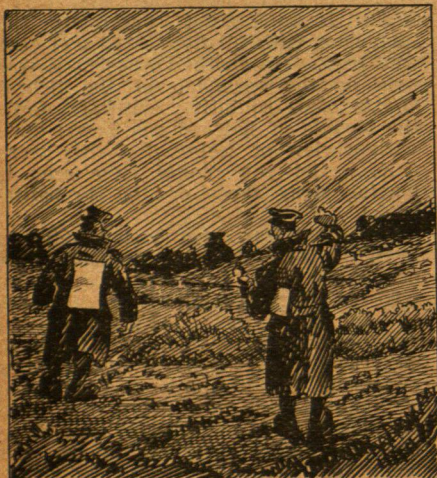
understand me—the School Orderly Sergeant is unfettered matrimonially—it was the offspring of one of those four-footed goats which assist the Curragh sheep battalions in making the landscape colourful for the Student Officers' uniforms. Fagan's original idea was that the kid should make a tasty meal, but the other N.C.O.'s in the School, touched by the pristine, plaintive beauty of the little thing, persuaded him to stay the slaughtering hand. So the kid waxed egotistical environment of the N.C.O.'s Mess. It began to think it owned the A.S.I. One morning it insisted upon helping Sergeant Cook with the "Markers: Right Dress" stunt, surveying the alignment with a critical eye and ears well back. On another occasion it was seen on the verandah of the School O/C.'s office squinting carefully down the barrels of half-a-dozen Lewis guns with a view of seeing that they were O.K. And you should have seen it butting stray sheep out of its bailiwick!

Our Field Day deserves a chapter to itself. I could be very eloquent about our Field Day. In fact, most of us who took part in it were very eloquent at the time—their language earned many courtmartial that day. I believe we actually covered about fifteen miles of ground, but it was wonderfully like a hundred—did you every try foot-slogging with full equipment over those Curragh plains ploughed up by the hoofs of potential Derby winners? No? I thought not; otherwise you wouldn't be laughing at this paragraph.

The only rest we got—after a brief spell out Kildare way where I had a most interesting chat in a dry ditch with a Lewis gun expert who used to sing "Seaghan O Duibhir a Ghleanna" in the billet directly back of mine (I didn't associate him with the vocalist at the time, or that Lewis gun crew would have been one man short)—the only rest we got was when we were ordered to "take cover." Thomson has a drawing hereabouts showing my Section "taking cover." He says the two ginks in the foreground are eating oranges, so it's not what you thought it was.



There is a good deal to be said about that Field Day, but it must wait. You made allowances for the fact that your pals, with whose marksmanship you were acquainted, were shooting off ball ammunition enthusiastically, and took position accordingly, but the Vickers and Thompson guns were no respectors of persons and had a nasty habit of firing at an elevation of barely six feet from a distance of a few yards behind you in the last gallant exhibition by the "shock" troops. And you couldn't make allowance for the agricultural sandwiches and tea which they dished out to us after the battle. By



discarding about half a loaf of bread, cut haphazardly with a hatchet into hunks, and placing the available meat between the thinnest surviving slices you achieved something eatable. After which you carefully emptied the tea on to the grassy sward and went down to the field canteen and had a bottle of stout—two, if there was a chum near by.

THE NIGHT MARCH.

Almost from the moment of our arrival at the School we were regaled by the natives with tales of dark doings under cover of night. There were sinister hints that we might be yanked out of bed in the small hours with a bugle sounding the "Alarm" and made to "stand-to" in pyjamas for an hour or so "on a cold and frosty morning." Later we heard that pyjamas were not *de rigueur* and that one was supposed to turn out as gildy as on the seven o'clock parade—buttons polished, chin scraped, rifle at the correct slope and all the rest of it. ("Stand steady, gentlemen, please. This is the tenth week of the Course and you can't stand steady yet. Stand steady, gentlemen, please." I loved to think of Sergeant Cook in his little old dug-out murmuring that slogan continually in his dreams).

Anyhow it didn't happen in our time. I think that we really should have got up a subscription for the bugler who vanished—for you can't very well have a night "Alarm" without a bugler, and it was probably his disappearance into the Ewigkeit which saved us. The nearest we got to this nocturnal Sturm

und Drang (said he, speaking German like the back page of the dictionary) was when they let us loose on the Night March. You know the idea—each squad leader is handed a sealed envelope somewhere about midnight and marched down with his collection to some point outside the barbed wire, where he breaks the seal and finds a slip of paper inscribed something like this:—

98	E.S.E.
304	l.b.w.
604	N.B.G.
70-104°	
3000-360°	

Then he splits the gang into two and ornaments the backs of one-half with serviettes or leaves from one of those Agaconda books. The other half are given prismatic compasses and allotted one of the whited sepulchres apiece. The Squad Commander, in a firm "tone of voice" as the good books say, then gives the order "9,000 paces on a bearing of 75." Whereupon the gang disappears dolefully in different directions into the darkness.

It's a good game if well played. My squad were unlucky right from the start. We had a dud Squad Commander. He was worse than a dud; he was a punctured pumpkin. What he did NOT know about the prismatic compass and all its bearings astonished even Captain Thomson after the tenth lecture. He couldn't tell the Pole Star or dear little Cassiopea from the searchlight on the Water Tower. The nearest approach he could get to a Representative Fraction was to visualise the smallest member of his squad.

I felt very keenly myself about being led out into the wild and woolly Curragh plains after dark by this monument of incompetence, and in the interests of suffering humanity as represented by No. 1 Squad I appealed to Captain Thomson to put another man in his place. He said:

"No, Jap.; you'll have to take them out."

I've had a suspicion for a long time that Thomson doesn't like me. His alleged portraits of me gave me the first hint and this business of putting me in charge of a Squad for a Night March proved it. The Squad, however, seemed to think it proved that he didn't like them. Afterwards they said the arrangement had its advantages: they said they could see their Squad Commander further than any other Squad could see its Commander. Only they were in doubt sometimes as to whether it was really him or an architectural excrescence in the landscape. Before that night was over I became inured to conversations like this:—

The gentleman with the table decoration pinned to his back—"640 paces."

The gentleman with the prismatic compass—"I make it 625. It's those damned short legs of yours again. Now where do we go from here? Now 350 yards on a bearing of 75 degrees—that means you head straight for that big stump of a tree over there."

He of the Decoration—That's not a tree.

The Compass Bearer (sardonically)—Well, what is it—a green elephant.

The Decorated—I think it's that Squad Commander of ours.

The Other—Nonsense; it's a ruin of some sort.

His Pal—That's what I said.

The Compass Bearer (sniffing audibly)—It's dam like his cigarettes anyway.

The Other (also sniffing)—Yes; nobody else around here smokes the Assassin brand.

The Compass Bearer—All right. Head for it anyway, an' for the love of Mike take man-length strides. How the blazes do you think I'm going to map out this if you're taking three paces to every two yards.

They move on.

You know they did not properly appreciate me in that Squad. I mean that while I mightn't be a whale on the proper care and treatment of a prismatic compass I certainly did know enough to keep the gang together. They would have been lost without me. When I saw them going off in various directions from a given point on what purported to be the same bearing I brought them back and made them start over again. And, as soon as they had finished telling me what they thought of me, they used to start and argue with each other as to who was right. None of them was except Martin. He didn't argue: he just picked up a



cadet and decorated him with the Order of the Napkin and headed out unhesitatingly into the hinterland. I followed him, pausing at intervals to retrieve strays from the surrounding gloom.

Wonderful what a distorted view of things you get at night! We discovered an ancient Irish rath and sat on the lip of it and talked in an awed manner about the bygone glories of our race. And the next time we were hiking across the plain in daylight we found it was only a dip in the ground. And we descended perilously into rocky ravines and clambered up the opposite

slope—and discovered next time we were out that way that they were merely ditches.

My Squad wasn't the worst. We met a disconsolate figure in the starlight who had lost his travelling companion, and having left him we discovered the lost one searching for him. And the remarks they made about each other almost set the furze on fire. I utilised them as awful examples and delivered a pithy little homily to my crowd based on the idea "There, but for the Grace of God and my assistance, go you." The audience showed itself sadly unappreciative.

One or two of the bright young lads in my covey must have put some lemonade in their water bottles before starting out. I had to point out that absolute silence was essential in this night reconnaissance business and that their efforts at singing could be justified only on the ground that the weird noise would scare a potential enemy. I had also to point out to one of the compass sleuths that he was addressing his remarks on direction to an impassive Curragh sheep, his partner having disappeared a good while before.

Two of the bunch had distinctly original ideas as to bearings. While the rest of us were content to follow Martin blindly (having got tired of arguing) this couple showed a painful conscientiousness. They took bearings with elaborate care and argued at each bend about the number of paces. Several times in their eccentric ramblings they crossed our path, as shown by the line "B" in the accompanying diagram, but the extraordinary fact was that they traversed exactly the same distance. As we waited in the roadway near Stand House we saw them bearing directly down upon us, grim and purposeful.

"Halt!" ordered the Compass Bearer as his companion reached the roadway.

"How much is that?"

"959 yards," said the other treader of the corkscrew path.

Curiously enough Martin had made it exactly that distance and had called out the fact to a comrade up the road just as the first of the late comers reached the road.

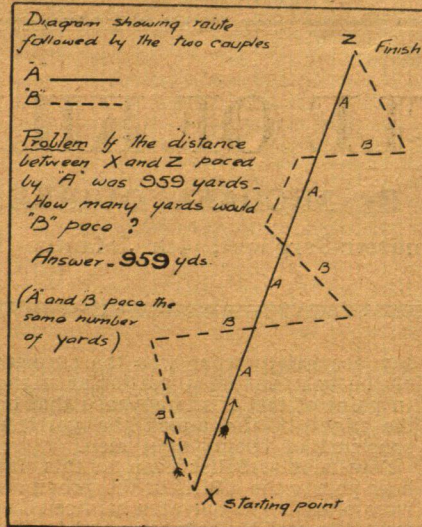
"I make it 2,520 yards," said the last man in.

"Not at all," said his guide, "959 yards just where the toe of my right boot is."

—Well, I ask you!

The rest of the Squad gave it up after that and we started for home under the guidance of Martin, who utilised two cadets as markers in order to speed up the journey. We held an undeviating line for the lights of the camp, struggling through acres (as it seemed) of furze, dipping into mysterious valleys filled with thick white fog, surmounting desperate obstacles (none of which could ever again be discovered) and eventually coming out on the road just below the Magazine in the cold dreary false dawn.

It began to drizzle as we marched into Camp, but our hearts were light. As Mess President I had arranged with



the School Q.M. to have the bar specially opened for us about 3 a.m. and we were looking forward to hot lemonade, and ginger wine, and exhilarating things like that. We planned

joyfully as we swung down the North Road how we would have "just two," or maybe, four, and then toddle across to billet and bed with the proud consciousness that "Something accomplished, something done, had earned a night's repose." In our mind's eyes we saw the cheerful bar with the sardine tins brightly parked amongst the apples and oranges, the herrings in tomato sauce smiling a welcome from behind the serried ranks of the cigarettes, and the beautiful bottles of raspberry cordial and lime juice (used solely for ornamental purposes) twinkling on the shelves. We felt that Sergeant Moynihan was one of the finest fellows in the Army. Too bad to keep him up so late: we would have to show him that we appreciated it.

We needn't have worried. The bar was closed!

There are some incidents too poignant for words. This was one of them.

And the Q.M. said the next day:

"Bless my soul! I thought the Night March was to-night and I gave instructions that it was to be kept open until ye came back—to-night."

J.A.P.



THE BATTLE OF KILMALLOCK.

By MICHAEL QUIRKE,

Company Quartermaster-Sergeant, 4th Infantry Battalion, Castlebar.

The frequent appeals of the Editor encourages me to forward an account of the fight for the R.I.C. Barracks, Kilmallock, in which I was an humble participant.

The successful attack on the R.I.C. Barracks in Ballylanders on the night of the 29th April put great heart into the I.R.A. of that part of Tipperary. The booty, which was secured after the taking of this enemy stronghold, consisted of seven carbines, five Webley revolvers, some hundreds of rounds of .303 ammunition, and some few rounds of .45 revolver ammunition. This was a most welcome addition to our armament, which was very low indeed.

It was felt that this very material addition to our resources, together with the experience in this type of fighting which we had gained, enabled us to take on a much stronger force of the enemy. It was almost immediately decided that we would attack and capture Kilmallock R.I.C. Barracks.

Our Intelligence Service was at once put to work on this barrack with the object of ascertaining its full fighting strength; the dispositions for defence, and the routine and movements of the garrison. It was discovered that the normal strength of the barrack consisted of two sergeants and eighteen men. The barrack was a very substantial one; and all the windows were steel-shuttered and slotted to enable rifles to be fired through them. In addition to a plentiful supply of ammunition, the garrison was well provided with rifle grenades and Mills bombs. In short, the police were in the position of an exceptionally strong military force with every prospect of holding out for days against even overwhelming numbers.

The barrack, however, had one drawback, of which it was felt great advantage could be taken by daring attackers. Situated in the main street of the village, it was a rather low, squat structure, strongly built, but overlooked by higher buildings adjacent to it. This gave the attackers, provided they could occupy these buildings successfully, a dominant position over those in the barracks.

With regard to the movements of the garrison it was learned that, whilst normally the strength was two sergeants and eighteen constables, this number varied almost nightly. Individual R.I.C. men came and departed by train on special plain clothes duty. Occasionally they came by Crossley tender, so that it was never possible to

say accurately what was the strength of the garrison on a particular night. In point of fact it so happened that on the night of the attack the garrison consisted of twenty-eight men.

Few people realise even to this day how poorly the I.R.A. in the provinces were armed. In our area service rifles were few and far between; and for the attack on this stronghold the greatest difficulty was experienced in getting even thirty rifles. Some twenty rifles were scattered through the East Lime-rick and South Tipperary districts. These were ones that had been retained and concealed following the counter-marching order in 1916. It was one of these—an old German 7 mm. Mauser—which I had possessed since 1915—that I was armed with.

Finally our gallant and fearless leader, Sean Forde, decided that the night of the attack was to be the 27th May, 1920—just one month after the successful attack on Ballylanders, which we hoped to completely eclipse.

Preparations for the attack were pushed steadily forward. On the previous day I was detailed by Comdt. Sean Lynch, my Battalion Commander, to convey by horse and cart eleven hundred rounds of .303 ammunition from the house of "Sack" Hayes, Kilross, to the house of David Clancy, near Kilfinane, a distance of about eight miles, on the main road leading from Kilmallock to Tipperary town.

At the appointed hour I met Comdt. Lynch and another comrade at Hayes', and, having loaded up the ammunition, set out on what was a very hazardous journey. I had to traverse a frequently patrolled main road, on which people were frequently held up, questioned and searched. In this journey I was preceded by two cyclist scouts.

In the course of the journey, however, the scouts seemed to lose sight of the fact that they were rapidly out-distancing me, but this error on their part had very fortunate results for me indeed.

Midway between Kilross and Kilfinane, at a place called Garryspillane, I observed in the distance the rapid approach of two military lorries laden with British soldiers and R.I.C. men. There was no possible means of avoiding them, as I had nowhere to turn into, and was within their vision as soon as they were in mine.

They were a remarkably unsuspicious patrol. The two cyclists were allowed to pass unnoticed, and were too far ahead in any case to have given me

an unseen warning of the approach of the enemy. Luckily they did not attempt any signal, but simply cycled past. As the lorries approached I jumped down off the cart, and ran to the horse's head, holding up my hand at the same time for the lorries to slow down. The horse was naturally mettlesome, and I judged it best to put on a bold front, and take full advantage of the horse's restlessness.

The lorries considerably enough slowed down and stopped (which was more than I bargained for), and two soldiers and one R.I.C. man got off a lorry and came over and assisted me to lead the horse to the rear of their cars.

Needless to say, I thanked them profusely for their kindness, and lost no time in getting on the car and hastening on my way. It was a nerve-racking few minutes. What trifles great events turn upon. Had my two comrades been the proper distance ahead they would almost certainly have given some kind of warning, which would, in all probability, have been observed by the oncoming enemy and their suspicions aroused with fatal consequences. Again had the R.I.C. man, when he was down on the road, evinced any curiosity, discovery was almost inevitable. However, the rest of the journey was made without incident, and I deposited the ammunition in Clancy's quite convenient to the town of Kilmallock.

The rifles, some ammunition and all available shot-guns were dumped on the western side of Kilmallock, under the personal supervision of Sean Forde; and the greater portion of ammunition, bombs and explosives was dumped on the eastern side, under the supervision of Comdt. Lynch.

It was too much to hope that so strong a barrack could be carried by a short, sharp attack. It would obviously have to be besieged. This constituted the greatest part of our task, because a protracted fight would certainly lead to the possibility of reinforcements coming to the relief of the garrison. Our force was too small for the risk to be lightly regarded.

All available help in the entire district was accordingly mobilised at 9 o'clock on the night of the attack, and all main roads, bye-roads, and railway tracks for a radius of about fifteen miles around Kilmallock were rendered impassable for any form of traffic. A prodigious amount of labour went into this work, but it was voluntarily, cheerfully and effectively done, and it was

well indeed that it was so, for the barrack proved a far tougher proposition even than we had counted upon.

All preliminaries having been completed, the mobilisation of the attackers began. At 8 o'clock on the night of the 27th May, 1920, eighteen men from my Battalion concentrated at Garryspillane cross-roads, all in possession of bicycles, and proceeded to Kilmallock direct, to join forces with other detachments from West Limerick and East Clare.

Amongst these eighteen were the Scanlons and O'Briens, of Gortbally; the Crowleys and Crawfords, of Ballylanders; Sean Lynch, Liam Fraher, Ned Tobin, and Denny Hannigan, all of whom in later years distinguished themselves in the Active Service Units which operated in the East Limerick and South Tipperary areas.

Owing to the thoroughness of the obstructions over the roads our progress towards Kilmallock was very slow. The detachment I was with arrived in the town about 10.30 p.m., and linked up with the main body to the west of Kilmallock, under the Command of Sean Forde.

About thirty men, each of whom was recommended by his local commander, were now specially selected, armed with the best of the rifles, given a plentiful supply of ammunition, and detailed for the direct attack on the barracks. The remaining men, to the number of about forty, armed with shot-guns and all sorts of miniature weapons, were detailed to guard minor entrances and exits.

Our detachment, that is to say, those detailed for the direct attack, was next divided into five sections, each choosing its own leader. The unanimous choice of my section was Tim Crowley. His home was afterwards mined and burned out, he himself being sentenced to fifteen years' penal servitude.

Each section received detailed instructions concerning the various buildings surrounding the barrack which they were to occupy and fortify. Clery's Hotel fell to our lot.

This extensive building stood directly in front of the barrack and afforded an excellent commanding position, being about twice the height of the barrack. Our Intelligence had reported the previous day that Clery's could not be entered either by front or rear so late at night; and in order to make sure of admission the following plan was adopted:

One of the I.R.A. was detailed to proceed to Kilmallock by evening train in the guise of a commercial traveller, and book a bed for the night in Clery's. This would ensure having a man of our own inside to let us in; and it also meant that he would get a pretty good knowledge of the occupants and the interior arrangements.

This simple plan worked splendidly. The instant our Section leader tapped gently at the door our comrade inside laid down the book he was reading and opened wide the door, thus enabling us to enter quietly and take possession.

Houses all round the barrack were by now occupied, and the work of fortifying them began. Each man barricaded

the window allotted to him with whatever material was available to his hand. Needless to say, the material available was not ideal for the purpose, and but a sorry substitute for the steel-shuttered windows opposite. But a high spirit of confidence animated us; and by 11.30 p.m. we were all at our allotted posts, with loaded rifles at the ready, waiting with what patience we could for the signal to begin the attack.

About six paces from the gable-end of the barracks, facing south-west, another building towered above it. From the roof of the building our gallant leader was to give three flashes of a lamp, which was the signal to begin the attack.

All eyes were now straining towards this point. There was no sign of life or activity from the barrack; and we seemed to have made our occupation of the surrounding houses without arousing any suspicions.

Suddenly from the roof-top three flash of light winked out into the night; and was instantly answered by the roar of thirty rifles. At the same moment our gallant leader cast a 56lb. weight crashing through the slates of the barrack roof. Two other 56lb. weights followed in quick succession, their crashing noise passing almost unnoticed in the din of rifles and bursting bombs.

This unique method of breaking a fort was very effective, causing a large gaping hole in the roof. Into this opening our leader, from his position on the roof, hurled bottle after bottle of petrol.

The bottle broke into smithreens and saturated the roof with petrol. Then our leader hurled bomb after bomb into this petrol-soaked breach. Each bomb burst with terrific force, causing considerable damage but completely failing to set the roof on fire.

Meanwhile the fight was raging fiercely all round the barrack. The large garrison had manned every loop hole, and were returning a hot fire to our attack. It looked as if we would not succeed in forcing them either to surrender or evacuate. The bombing of the petrol-soaked roof, upon which great hopes had been set, did not appear to be working out to our great expectations and unless some other means of reducing the structure of the building was brought into play it was evident that bomb and rifle fire would be unavailing.

It was under those conditions that the real genius of our leader rose to the occasion. He detailed a small party of those guarding the exits to proceed to a yard in the town where there was an American paraffin oil car. The car had arrived in the evening and put into one of the yards, the driver staying overnight in the town. It was the tank-shaped type so commonly used in distributing supplies to country traders, and contained a huge quantity of paraffin oil. This car was now brought up the street, and with considerable difficulty and danger placed in juxtaposition to the barracks. By means of a hose this supply of paraffin was now poured into the breach in the roof. For the best part of an hour, right in the centre of the battle zone, this stream of

paraffin was kept playing on the roof. Then another Mills bomb hurled into the breach had the desired effect, and the roof burst into a blaze. Even after the roof had taken fire the stream of paraffin was kept playing on the roof, with the result that in a few minutes it became a roaring furnace.

The battle for possession of this stronghold of the enemy raged without intermission from midnight to 2 a.m. At that hour our leader flashed out the "Cease fire" signal from his perch on the housetop. It was almost instantly obeyed by the attackers, and the only sound was that from the fire of the defenders, who continued to fire intermittently.

It was a weird night; and one which the participants are never likely to forget—the smoke of burst bombs and the burning roof, billowing around the building, the sudden comparative quiet after the fierce noise of the conflict, the red, hungry flames shooting skyward out of the doomed building.

The garrison was called on to surrender; but the reply was, "No surrender," followed by a volley of rifle and grenade fire.

Instantly the three flashes of light for the "Open fire" winked out from the housetop and the battle was again in full swing. For upwards of three more hours the building—the fire of which was increasing every moment—was subjected to a continuous attack.

During all this time the defenders, who showed remarkable courage and pertinacity, directed their main efforts against Clery's Hotel. They endeavoured to make this position untenable by a continuous attack with rifle grenades. In this they were considerably handicapped by our elevated position and the fact that the street space between the two buildings was filled with dense smoke. Owing largely to these facts, I believe, they failed to get a single one of their grenades in through any of the windows occupied by us. None the less our position was rather precarious. Grenade after grenade hit the front wall, dropped to the ground and burst with terrific force. These repeated concussions were causing considerable damage to the lower portion of the front of the hotel.

The first pale fingers of the summer dawn were now beginning to lighten the summer sky. The fight had been waged for over five hours and the entire barrack was little better than a roaring furnace. The position of the defenders was hopeless, as it was quite impossible to conceive human beings able to remain any longer in the building.

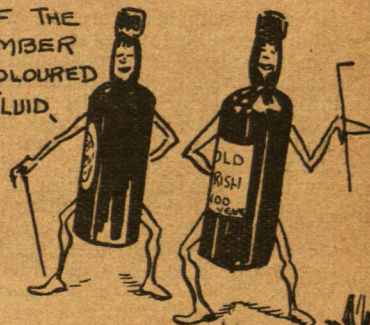
Once more the "Cease fire" signal flashed out. Silence again took the place of conflict. The garrison, for the last time, were called upon to "Surrender." Their answer was "Never," followed by a few shots.

The fight then recommenced and was continued up to about a quarter to six o'clock. About that hour the entire roof fell in, amidst frantic cheering from the attackers. Flames, sparks, and clouds of smoke now shot skyward, giving a weird red tinge to the whole scene. The defenders had by this time

How To Be Happy Though Christmas



- A BOTTLE OR TWO
OF THE
AMBER
COLOURED
FLUID.



REQUIRED = A FEW XMAS
PUDDINGS -



GEESSE
TURKEYS

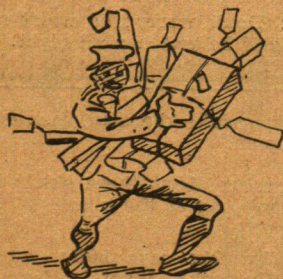
A STRONG
CORKSCREW -



SOME MISTLETOE IF - (BETTER NOT PERHAPS)



FRUIT -
(NOT IN TINS)



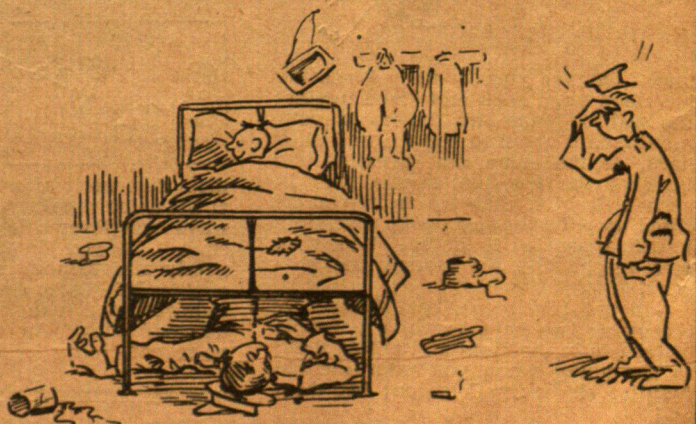
GET A FEW PRESENTS - - FOR YOUR BEST GIRL - IF YOU HAVE MORE THAN ONE
EXERCISE A LITTLE TACT -



COME ALONG
YOU
TEETOTALERS!



COLLECT A FEW
THIRSTY FRIENDS
AND GET BUST -



AFTER WHICH IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER
WHETHER YOU SLEEP IN OR UNDER
YOUR BED -

CHRISTMAS TRICKS

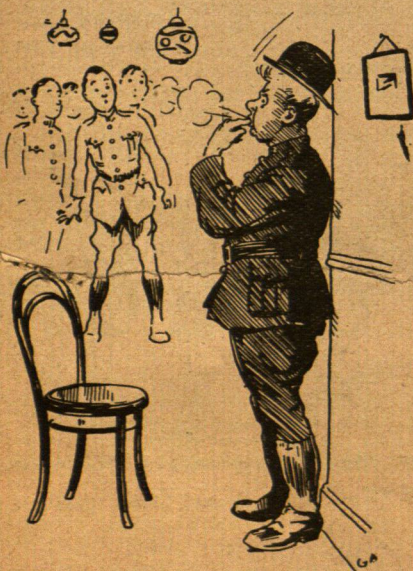
(Continued from p. 18.)

blow into the bag when the books will topple over.

If there is somebody present whom you don't exactly love place a small cork in the neck of a bottle and ask him to blow the cork into the vessel. As the cork is much smaller than the neck of the bottle, he will think it's a gift and will blow like h—, that is to say, he will blow vigorously. And the cork will fly out and hit him in the face, causing shrieks of laughter from the delighted audience. To do the trick, blow gently through a pipe-stem held against the cork and it will slide into the bottle.

"COME ON; LIFT THEM UP!"

This trick affords a splendid opportunity of "taking off" the B.S.M., but the time and place should be carefully selected. Borrow a bowler hat (it is a sound maxim always to perform tricks with other people's property—you



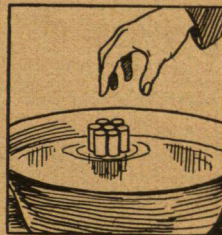
might damage your own). Place the hat upon your head and stand against the wall. Place two fingers in your mouth, as if about to whistle, and blow hard, at the same time pressing the back of the hat against the wall in such a fashion that the front part is tilted up. To the ingenuous spectators it will appear as if the act of blowing was responsible for moving the chapeau.

A better result can be obtained by borrowing two hats, coaching a couple of friends in the stunt and telling them to get going when you utter the old familiar slogan: "Come on; lift them up!"

"UP, CORK!"

As indicated a few paragraphs ago, the idea of these few fool tricks is to utilise such apparatus as may be to hand at the moment. Now when there

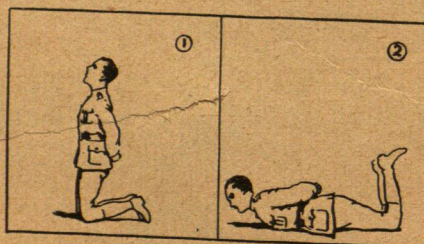
are a lot of "dead soldiers" lying around, as is likely to happen at Christmastide, it is a fairly safe bet that there will be a few corks. When a cork is thrown into a basin of water (or other liquid) it floats on its side. Ask some cocksure gink to make one float upright, and when he has abandoned the attempt show him how it is done (this is another "easy money" trick if you can find anyone to make a bet).



Take seven corks; stand one upright and group the rest in an upright position around it. Grasp them firmly with one hand, plunge them into a basin of water and hold them under in this position for a few moments. When you bring them to the surface, the corks are glued together by capillary attraction and will remain as you have placed them—upright.

LET THE OTHER FELLOW DO THIS.

Before the Yuletide festivities have become too aggressive ask for a volunteer to kneel on the floor, clasp his hands behind his back and fall straight for-



ward. If you can get a volunteer you and the rest of the audience are lucky. Our pictures will give an idea (1) and (2) of what is wanted. The bottom picture shows how **not** to do it.

After a few misguided ginks have more or less damaged their beauty do the trick yourself.



All you have to do to avoid disaster is to **take a very deep breath**, thoroughly expanding the lungs, and hold them full until after the fall is made, at the same time turning the head sideways and thrown back as far as possible. If you do this you will fall gently and without any crash into the position of Fig 2. Pretty good nerve is required, and it is to be distinctly understood that "An t-Oglach" accepts no responsibility for damage.



It: The Sergeant-Major would give me a telling off if he saw me dancing.

She: Don't worry; he won't see you dancing if he watches all night.

Clothes make the man, lack of them, the woman.

One thing about these skirts is that they don't bag at the knees.

Dorothy Dix says ladies weep less now. My gosh! What is there left to cry for?

Lecturer says flappers' clothes resemble dish-rags. He'd better leave the country before some flapper finds out what a dish-rag looks like.

"Children," said a teacher, "be diligent and steadfast, and you will succeed. Take the case of George Washington. Do you remember my telling you of the great difficulty George Washington had to contend with?"

"Yes, ma'am," said a little boy. "He couldn't tell a lie."

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— for great
“B.B.”

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A SEASONABLE SPASM.

By "ME LARKIE."

A Toast.

To every Gink I know,
Here's Health.
To every Gink I owe,
Here's Wealth.
To every Gink in Clink
To Palship's Chain a Link,
To all a Toast I'll drink,
Here's Luck.
("And may the wing of friendship
never moult a feather."—Ned).

To every one and all;
To those in Fortune—and otherwise,
To brother Ginks and Gildy N.C.O.s,
To every Pal—be he Saint or Sinner,
A Happy and a Merry Christmas.
(You know, you can't fool me—that
last bit doesn't rhyme.—Ned).

Christmas comes but once a year,
Now that is out of date,
A few Rehearsals—here and there,
The "Spirits" elevate.

Now Berlin is a wise old town,
And that you'll sure agree,
It beats the 'Bello for renown,
For it's always on the "Spree."

Here's to Christmas thrice a year,
My toast's a trifle Banal,
This year we'll beat Berlin with cheer
In the 'Bello on the Canal.
(Prize of Solingen razor—slightly
bent—offered to reader who succeeds in
rhyming "Banal" with "Canal."—
Ned).

Christmas this year in the 'Bello pro-
mises to be one of the best yet. Pre-
parations for the "DO" are well in
hands. The "Lambs," the "Snake-
charmers," and, of course, "Joner's
Own," are vying with each other as to
who shall have the jolliest time. Time
(and the "Sick Reports") will tell. A
great time is, however, in store for all,
and the kiddies in the barracks will—
thanks to the Institute Committee—not
be overlooked. The Big Christmas Tree
"Spasm" promises to be a great suc-
cess. The Cinderella for the men on
Boxing Night will, I can assure you, be
"the Biz." So here's luck.

To our pals to Guard on Christmas
Day:

Hard luck, old chap,
You've clicked hard lines.
Rathmines clock says,
"Rathmines—Hard Times."

Your Man: "Why do they call it
Christmas, sargin'?"

Sergeant (a trifle liverish): "Who's
they?"

Your Man: "I'm 'they'."

Sergeant: "Well, 'they' shouldn't
aix such damn silly questions. Get
on with your cleaning."

The six o'clock aim—"Oblivion."

A newspaper asks, "Why turkeys are
called gobblers." We should smile—
drop into the 'Bello at Christmas dinner
and you'll know.

A little pain—a little blame,
A laugh—least you may sigh,
A little gain—a little fame,
Your time's "punched"—then "Good-
Bye-e-e."

"Wind-up" is the "Interest" a Gink
pays on "Trouble" before it becomes
due.

Musketry Instructor: "Are you laugh-
ing at me?"

Mac: "No, sargin'."

Instructor: "Well, what the heck else
is there to laugh at."

Holly leaves are going to be plentiful
this year. But you see the demand for
Christmas leaves.

Overheard at our dance:—

She: (a trifle antique, plus awkward):
"This is my favourite dance—is it
yours?"

Mac (a trifle squashed): "It was."

A good civilian lives up to his reputa-
tion—and a good soldier lives down his
crime sheet.

He (a trifle "fresh"): "A penny
stamp, Miss, please."

She: "Hello, didn't I meet you at the
Portobello Dance?"

He (a trifle "mixed"): "Oh—er—
give me twelve penny ones, please."

A shark caught off the Orkney Is-
lands had a piece of boat timber in its
stomach. That's nothing; why, the
fish we had for last Friday's dinner
had a piece of the Ark in it.

Mac: "I believe that the B.S.-Major is
going to hang up his stocking this
year."

Gink: "Aye, put a sock in it."

Musketry Instructor: "Are you
troubled with things dancing before the
target?"

Mac: "No such luck, sargin'. I
haven't been paid since I've handed in
my pay book."

Our old half-section, Marcus Aurelius,
is credited with the aphorism: "Many
hands; light labour." Silly josses; he
never watched our Pioneers at "work."

A naturalist states that birds have
three kinds of notes. Call notes, song
notes, and love notes. Some of the
'Bello "birds" that I know have notes
—not for long though—on pay night.
And you can't grouse, Ned, with all
your Battalion Notes. So that's that!
(I've made a note of it.—Ned).

The Super Optimist: The Gink who
hung up the mistletoe in the Armourer's
Shop.

Overheard in the Gym. (as your man
Mac was arranging some green sods):
"Hi, Mac, this is going to be a Christ-
mas Tree Spasm, not the Brigade
sports."

The Optimist: The Gink who hung up
his stocking outside the Pioneers' Bunk.

An American doctor states that crimi-
nals can be cured by a fruit diet. Well,
the 27th Battn. Mess must have an aw-
fully good opinion of the "Records" staff.

Gink: "Hi, sargin,' the window in
the billet is broken, and the leaves are
blowing in."

Sergeant: "Well, what the dickens do
you want to blow in—mistletoe and
Christmas Trees."

1st Sergeant: "That lad, Dan, got the
'stick' again this morning—he had a lot
of common sense—I wonder whom he
got it from."

2nd Sergeant: "It must have been
from you. I've got all mine yet."

Sergeant-Major: "I say, Orderly, this
chair is all covered with duds. What
do you mean by it?"

Orderly: "Well, it's not my fault—no
person has been sitting on it for
weeks."

A Traditional Barrack Air—WIND-
UP.

Percy: "Just imagine, I'm in love.
I have four different girls."

Gink: "Aye, Cupid must have got
you with a Lewis gun."

A fresh gink was strolling along with
a fag in his mouth and he passed an
officer but failed to salute. The officer
stopped him and inquired why he did
not salute. "Oh," said "your man,"
"Me Sergeant-Major told me never to
salute an officer with a cigarette in my
mouth."

A gink was drawing a "sight" on
the blackboard of the Musketry class.
He was certainly no great artist, and,
with an apologetic smile, he informed
the sergeant that he hadn't much prac-
tice at drawing.

The sergeant smiled—(they sometimes
do)—as he gently murmured: "Oh, all
you want, Mac, is practice, and you
can commence this afternoon drawing
coal for the billets."

Christmas is coming, niff the smell
Of roast beef done exceeding well.
With turkey, veg., and some mince pie,
Cookie's favourite furnity.
There's good times coming and good
draught beer,
So no post-mortems—It's 'Bello cheer.

This week's slogan:—"Here's luck,
lads,"

"ME LARKIE."

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G.H.Q. CALLING.

That Musketry Course Again.

Instructor: "Mention some of the characteristics of the Lewis gun?"

Gink: "It is an air-cooled, gas-operated and fed by the hand." (Chuck, chuck, little Birdie.)

A short poem in answer to A.F.117 query on Jimmy Keyes' idea of Kilkenny was "strafed" last week, so we will have to wait until we meet the genial 117 in person, and then! When Greek meets Greek—bang, crash, wallop?!?! (I have forgotten that "poem," but it must have been pretty bad if it was worse than some of the stuff that has slipped in.—Ned.)

We have often asked ourselves who are so well fed as the Clerks? Why only last week they all had two breakfasts one morning. What more do ye want—cocktails?

A scientist tells us that mice have a great liking for shiny articles. We presume he means two-legged mice, judging by our kits.

Bed-time Stories, No. 3.

N.C.O.: "I don't want you men to address me as 'Yes, sir, and No, sir.'"

Gink: "But we insist on it, Sargent!"

Jane: "You may imagine that I love you, but you don't know what is in my heart."

He: "Oh, yes I do, I am a Medical Orderly." (Distant noise of Sal Volatile bottles bursting.—Ned.)

B.F.W.: "Anyone seen my coat?"

Engineer (erecting hut at Main Gate): "Hey, Bill, what was it we stuffed that crack with?"

We are all placed in a very awkward position. We have received orders to burnish our mugs and plates. How is it done? We wonder. Could Harry enlighten us? (Did you ever shave without a mug?—Ned.)

In view of the heavy demands Christmas makes on one's purse, we think it only fair to dish out the "non-combatants" with "a double" tap at Christmas.

This poem is just such a simple thing,

And yet it fills this space,

Just as a scoffer fills his seat

While filling up his face.

(This chap is such a simple snipe, he thinks we're short of stuff. But really, though we're used to tripe, we cannot stand the guff.—Ned.)

Some cooks leave, others don't leave much. Eh! Luke?

Tombstones speak up for a man when he's down for good. (But we always thought the good went aloft.—Ned.)

N.C.O.: "Did you tell the fellows I was a liar?"

Gink: "Naw. I think they know it.

Those "Oxford Bags."

Have just seen a gent with Oxfords who had to take three steps before his pants moved. (Hellup!—Ned.)

If I had legs

Like some of those eggs

That roll their socks down low,

I'd take no chance

With floppy pants,

Lest the skinny things should show.

Our Question Bureau.

Question: "How many soldiers work in G.H.Q.?"

Answer: "Soldier's Sweetheart."

Answer: Less than half of them, sweetheart.

The girl that asked that question is beautiful,

but dumb. She probably thinks that Bay Rum is what they sell in ferries.

(We will now sing, by special request, "A Life on the Marcel wave."—Ned.)

Someone suggested that a ban be placed on chewing gum in the Army, as men do not present a military appearance with their jaws doing double time. He said a mouthful.

Silent contempt is the way to express yourself when the other guy's bigger than you.

The latest thing in a soldier's uniform is the guy who arrived back six days over leave.

Things we Would Like to Know.

Where is John Brown's kit?

Who is Nelson's Column?

What "Me Larkie" thinks of the Charleston as an after-breakfast exercise?

What Joe Butterley thinks of Cow Serum and vaccination?

Had the storm the other night anything to do with the droop in "Sapper's" "tache"?

What the general opinion is of the Lewis machine gun?

Is Jimmy to be our Father Christmas again this year? Mind the briquettes, Jimmy!

What does Bob Thompson think of the "non-combatants"?

What happened to Johnny Boyle's "tache"?

What John thought of last week's notes?

This Week's War Cry.

"March at ease—properly at ease everywhere!"

"IXION."



SPECIAL SERVICES, KILKENNY

Christmas comes but once a year, I hope this "Number" brings you cheer, With "extra rations" coming up, And liquids, too, you are in luck, I'll do my best to make you smile, If I succeed it's well worth while, So I'll ask you now to drink a toast (I know you will without the roast) To every Officer, N.C.O. and man Who does his duty when he can; We offer for the usual reason Another very enjoyable night on Friday, 9th Dec.

On Sunday, 5th instant, we had a very successful Whist Drive in Barracks. The ever "Genial George" presented the prizes which had been won on the previous Sunday (28th ult.)—Miss Doyle, Married Quarters, 1st prize; Miss Brennan, sealed No.; Private O'Neill, "B" Coy., 1st prize; "99," Phelan, 2nd. We are promised another very enjoyable night on Friday, 9th Dec.

Soldier (to M.O.): "I've swallowed an oil bottle, Dr.

M.O.: "Don't worry, lad, you'll pull through!"

Who is the Transport man who likes to be called a Tan?

(Yes, Ned), he asked the M.T.C. and C.M.P. to call him "Tan." He says "He'll put the wind up the P.A. Sergt."

An A.N.C.O. of the C.M.P. has turned his attention to sketching. He says "he was a born cartoonist."

What has the Office Boy to say?

Orderly Sergt.: "Get up out of these beds," Pte. Wilson: "Shure ye think it's the 'Imperial' we're in; these are only railway lines, Sargin."

"Trying times," said the Adjutant, as he signed Sergt. Blank's 25th charge sheet.

Who said the "Engineers" were only a "Frame" up?

There's a "Rudolph Valentino" in the Transport at Kilkenny.

And believe me, when I tell you, his admirers they are many;

'Twas but lately he arrived, and said the place was hard to live in;

But if he doesn't like it, all he has to do is "give in."

"S." says "I'm a 'phone operator by profession."

I'd a thought it was more of a "calling" than a profession.

"Kew M.S. says "that his youngster spends most of his time sucking his toes." Rather young to be trying to make ends meet— isn't it?

M. B.: "Your girl says 'she doesn't run after you.' Perhaps not, but (as your man, Mull, says) a rat trap doesn't run after rats, but still they are caught just the same. So be careful! be careful!"

Overheard outside the Barrack Gate—"Is it a fact, Lil, that Martin proposed on a post-card?" "Yes, May, but I refused, as I wouldn't have a fellow that didn't care tuppence for me."

The train stopped longer than was usual at Gowran station.

The Guard: "What are you waiting for, driver—Eh?"

Driver: "Sure and can't you see that the signal is against me."

The Guard: "Well, and it's mighty particular you're getting all of a sudden."

Tommie says: "There's nothing like the song of a good old 'Crossley'."

What about "Any Lorry," Tom? (Police!—Ned.)

Said a bald-headed man, "I've the Flu,

And to cure it, now what shall I do?"

Said his wife: "Try fresh air or since your cranium's bare,

Read a hair raising novel or two!"

When are the gramophone records being changed in the Sergts' Mess? We are listening to the same seven for the last two months.

Kilkenny Stock Exchange.

Jellies, shakey; Guinness, rising; Smithwicks, going down; Meat, nibbled at; Kilkenny Marble, firmer; "Rock," bottom price 70s.; Bread, harder; Clothing, no change (this week); Proficiency Pay, stuck, indifferent.

The Boxing Tournament was brought to a very successful ending on Wednesday, 8th inst. On Tuesday, 7th inst., the premier Company "B," 20th Battalion, won six of the twelve bouts. Pte. Walsh, "A" Coy., was disqualified in the third round final of the heavyweights, the fight being awarded to Pte. Byrne, "C" Coy. Pte. Twohig, "B" Coy., beat Brown, "B" Coy., final middleweights. Pte. Murphy, "B" Coy., was awarded the fight against "Boy" McCormick, "A" Coy., who retired early in the first round owing to a sprained thumb.

The Rev. Fr. Drea, C.F., who distributed the prizes, said that he hoped to see more aspirants in the next Novices' Tournament, as it was such a noble and manly sport.

There were three special contests. The first

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between "Spud" Murphy, Bgde. Staff, and "One-Punch" Hannigan, "A" Coy. After an extra round the fight was awarded to "One-Punch" on points. "Spud," who treated us to a splendid exhibition of the Tango and Charleston (all in one), lacked the force that tells.

Cpl. Hogan, M.T.C. v. Pte. Treacy, A.S.C., fought a very hard fight. Cpl. Hogan was declared the winner on points. Treacy, who fought well and took a lot of punishment, would with a little training prove a very tough proposition.

The special feature of the night was a three two-minutes round contest between, as the M.C. announced, C.Q.M.S. Phelan (better known as "Gaffney, the man who stands for Labour") and "The Terror of Queen's Co." Pte. Fitzpatrick, "B" Co. This was a blindfolded contest. The fight was declared a draw after an extra round, and the prize divided. The officials were—Capt. Gallagher, Brigade Staff, and Lt. McKenna, H.Q. Coy., judges; B.S.M. Howlett, referee, and C.S. Cummins, time-keeper, with the ever-genial and irresistible George, M.C.

"Soapex" has returned after fourteen days' leave, and, mind you, he looked wonderfully fit and well after his sojourn in the Metropolis.

The 20th Battalion Hurling team travelled to Templemore on the 9th inst., where they met and defeated 15th Battalion in the semi-final of the Chaplain's Cup. The match took place in the People's Park before a good attendance, about 200 of the 12th Battalion being present. Private Dalton (20th Batt.) retired early in the first half owing to an injury to his head, and was replaced by Private Burke. From the outset it could be easily seen that the 20th would be the victors. It was a very clean game all through. The final scores were:—20th Batt., 13 goals 5 points; 15th Batt., 1 goal 4 points.

Cpl. D. O'Neill had charge of the whistle.

The tide may ebb, the tide may flow,
Recruits may come, trained soldiers go.
P.A.s depart in bitter pain,
Kilkenny's loss, to Naas a gain.
The old year out and the new one in—
And still we have the B.S.M.

And to the black-peaked P.A.s,
Who have such winning little ways,
And to the affable "Unwashed"
(They're not so "Dusty" when they're
"Boshed").

To Georgie, Begley, and Nolan three,
Who from our wrath will never flee;
To all attached, to un-attached,
Including those in the 'Li'l ol' Patch,"
To the 20th Battalion, old friends and new,
I say "Chin, Chin," but not "a Jew."

This week's slogan:—"An extra round."

"A.F. 117."

ATHLONE SIGNAL COMPANY.

Holly and mistletoe are fairly good signs of Christmas, but the surest sign in Army life is the deluge of passes submitted to the Company Office for leave. "Some do be lucky and some don't," as our friend "Matty" says, but let's hope the majority of us will "strike oil." There is one consolation anyway for those whom the "exigencies of the service" cannot spare in the fact that they may be sure of a jolly good time in Barracks, judging from the preparations being made.

There is a strong rumour afloat that Tom C— intends giving up Army life and taking on a very tempting theatrical offer. He has asked me to give this a categorical denial.

There is just as little truth in the rumour that Paddy and Sammy are taking up classical dancing as a profession. We may now rest assured that our work-tired nerves will continue to be soothed by the rhythm of the graceful movements of the Siamese Twins and by the divine voice of Tom C— for an indefinite period. (That's five bob you owe me now, Tom C—).

Our detachment in Finner is progressing very satisfactorily, and we are informed here that the young sheep of the fold, when sometimes tempted to wander, are carefully and tenderly drawn back.

The N.C.O.s of the Barracks are busily engaged in learning the words of command in Irish. One very enthusiastic Non-Com., when marching the N.C.O.s across the square to the Irish class, thought to himself that there was no good learning a thing without practising it, so on meeting an Officer on his right flank he gave the order in very good Irish, "Eves left!" These little things will happen for a time, we suppose,

but if it was a tactical error, still and all, it was a step in the right direction!!

This week's slogan:—"Roll on, Christmas, and let's have some nuts."

(You seem to have plenty of nuts there already. —Ned.)

"GRID LEAK."

SPECIAL SERVICES, CURRAGH.

We beg to extend to the General Officer Commanding, Major-General McEoin, our heartiest congratulations on his recovery from his recent illness, and welcome him back to duty again.

All hands seem to be preparing for Christmas. A little bird has told us that there is a regular epidemic of cards, presents, etc., and judging by the number of sample applications for leave passes for the festive season that our sleuth hound has observed scrawled on the walls, gable ends, and wireless masts, we have come to the conclusion that there will be nobody wants to be shown the way to go home.

On Wednesday, the 8th inst., Beresford hurling team played a friendly game against the 8th Battalion. The result was a win for Beresford by 5 goals to 1. We trust this is a good omen for our hurling team in its future engagements. We are glad to see that the 8th Battalion intend to accept our billiard challenge, and we are looking forward to a tussle with our old rivals in yet another sphere of sport.

A Ditty of the M.T.C.

The Poets sing of heroes bold,
Of deeds on land and sea,
But not a word of "Combustion" Ginks,
The lads of the M.T.C.

A rattling Ford, a flying "Lance,"
Or speedy Crossley, too;
It doesn't matter—take a chance,—
It don't belong to you.

They'll whisk you here and everywhere,
While petrol's in the can;
That's if the thing don't break in two,
And leave you "also ran."

With a smile that cheers, they're at the wheel,
And the thing it flies or groans;
They laugh if it means a couple of years,
Or a dozen broken bones.

We know all this just from hearsay,
'Cause they're chaps we seldom see;
We just believe a certain per cent.—
But here's luck to the M.T.C.

Next week our "prize" poet will sing to you in the deaf and dumb language, accompanied by the tambourine, that famous lyric of his own composing known as "The Horse Soldier's Lament," or "Who slipped the Saddle Soap into Sammy's soup." So get your ears well back, you lads of the H.T.C.; watch the little ball hop and sing with all your might.

(And perhaps it won't happen—in these pages. —Ned.)

To all those who turn over the page when they see "Curragh Special Services"

We wish you a very Happy Christmas; to our readers and those who sympathise with in our afflictions, we wish the same.

"PERCIVAL."

ISLANDBRIDGE BARRACKS, DUBLIN.

My notes of last week seemed to arouse a lot of curiosity around here. Everywhere it is the one question: "Who is He?" "Would it be this bloke?" "Would it be that?" Well, chums, it's just like this:—

"I'm not in this Barrack a very long time, But each day that you see me, I'm mixing up lime."

I came here from the Curragh, of this there's no doubt;

I came in on my feet; but my exit's in doubt. When you know this about me, I know you will laugh.

But I don't give a hang, for I'm one of the staff. At mixing up whitewash they say I'm a rattler. But at mixing up ink, I say I'm 'The Tatler.'"

(Say, you haven't been sending yourself a wire about anything, have you?—Ned.)

Heard in the Cookhouse.—"The hen that laid that egg must be a long time dead."

"What do a certain Staff think of Belgian coal? I know they call sticks sticks. But I wonder what they called the coal."

"Yes, sir," said the Chef, "they'll get their lunch, but I think it will be to-morrow."

Sentry (to "Your Man"): "What time is it, Mac?"

"Your Man": "You should know; you're supposed to be keeping a watch."

"THE TATLER."

8th BATTALION, CURRAGH.

The Basket Ball competitions mentioned in my notes of last week are postponed for an indefinite period owing to the Gymnasium School being engaged for boxing and theatrical purposes. It really looks as if there will be no games played at this side of Christmas. (Ah, well; perhaps it is a far, far better thing they do than you might have done.—Ned.)

The men's Billiards Tournament is progressing very satisfactorily. By the time these notes are in print the tourney should be in its concluding stages. The competition is causing much excitement amongst the men, particularly as to who will have the honour of recording the score for the highest break. The "Sailor" held this distinction until Pte. Dowling of "B" Coy. came along to beat it.

The Billiard Challenge issued to the Officers by the Sergeants has been accepted, and the first round is nearly completed. We hope to be able to publish the full scores in our notes of next week.

The competition for the Command Billiard Shield is to take place very shortly. It is hoped that we will be able to select a team to add yet another trophy to our small collection.

We regret to hear of the nervous breakdown which befel that popular athlete, Lieut. P. Dalton, 5th Bn. We hope he will soon be fully restored to his normal health and fit for the field again.

Our footballers travelled to Kildare on the 8th inst. to engage the Artillery Corps in a friendly match. Although we did not field our full team we came out victorious, with the score of 7 points to nil.

On the same date our hurling team met Beresford Barracks in a return friendly match, but owing to the great majority of our hurriers accompanying the footballers to Kildare, we could only field a very weak team. Beresford caught us guessing this time, and stole a well deserved victory over us.

It is proposed to run off an Inter-Coy. Football and Hurling Tournament on the League system. A set of silver medals is to go to the winners. This news has caused much comment as regards the talent the Coys. can produce. The "old men's" lot is the principle obstacle to be overcome by the other Coys., and with the transfer of "Milo" into "C" Coy. I will not be surprised if "C" does not carry off the football honours. It is not easy to forecast the champion hurling Coy.

The results of the first night's Novice Boxing Competitions for the Chaplain's Cup are as follows:—

Cruiser Weights—Pte. Smullen, A.M.C., beat Sgt. Whelan, 8th Bn., on points.

Middleweights—Pte. Murphy, A.M.C., beat Cpl. O'Flaherty, 8th Bn. O'Flaherty had to retire in first round owing to damaged nose.

Welters—Pte. Leech, A.M.C., beat Pte. Brannigan, 8th Bn., on points.

Lights—Pte. Buckley, A.M.C., beat Pte. Green, 8th Bn., on points.

Feathers—Pte. O'Neill, 8th Bn., k.o. Pte. Doyle, A.M.C., in first round.

Bantams—Pte. McCrossan, 8th Bn., beat Pte. O'Neill, A.M.C., on points. A ding-dong fight. McCrossan forcing the pace through every round. With a bit more experience, McCrossan should make one of the best bantams in the Command.

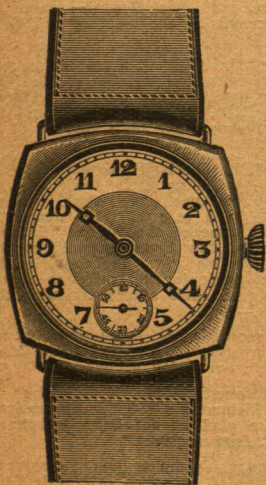
Flyweights—Pte. McDonald, 8th Bn., beat Pte. Spirell, A.M.C., on points. This was no doubt the best fight of the evening. McDonald, being the more aggressive, earned a well deserved verdict.

It will be noticed that only the two units entered for the Novice Competition. The winners will be awarded the Chaplain's Cup, but at the time of going to press a controversy exists as to the winners.

We have one more fight, and if we are lucky to win it, the Medical Corps and ourselves will have tied, each having won four fights. A full account of how we stand for the Trophy, along with an account of the second night's boxing, will appear in my next issue.

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24th BATTALION, DUNDALK.

The Boxing Tournament mentioned some time ago was held in the Town Hall on Monday, 6th inst. It is regretted that owing to circumstances beyond control, only nine bouts were staged instead of ten. However, a good programme was presented. The local man, Murray, although unsuccessful, put up a creditable display against Wright, of Phoenix B.C. The fight went the entire six rounds. Burns, of "C" Company, is to be congratulated on the winning of his fight, which was easily the best of the night. Thanks to Capt. O'Brien and Capt. O'Beirne, everything passed off without a hitch. S.M. Cork, in his capacity as M.C., could hardly be surpassed. At the conclusion the cups were presented to the winners by Capt. Kavanagh, in the absence of Commdt. Ryan.

Capt. Lyons and Sgt. McKeown have returned from the Curragh on the completion of their course.

What was the cause of all the digging in the Married Quarters recently? Surely "Ginger" didn't expect to get a coal seam there!

Is it a lucky omen to get a letter marked C.O.D.? "Ted" doesn't think so.

The Medical Officer absolutely refuses to disclose the name of the Corporal who went sick with "embargo" in his back.

"Joe," in sending out his special Christmas Cards has wished everyone a very Happy Christmas and a "prostrate" New Year.

We have been asked to extend the sympathies of all concerned to "Sparks," of the Engineers, on his recent illness.

"NORTHERN LIGHTS."



EASTERN COMMAND H.Q. COMPANY.

Owing to the close approach of Christmas, all interest is centred on how to celebrate most fittingly that great festival. However, that does not affect the seven a side football, there being three matches played for the week ending, 11th inst. "L" drew with "A," scores 3-2 each; "P" w.o. "C"; "K" drew with "D," scores 1-3 each.

The best game was that between "A" team, captained by Sgt. Higgins, and "L" team. Play was fast and furious throughout. Sgt. Higgins, Cpl. Daly and Pte. Spittle played prominently and were responsible for "A's" score. For "L," Lt. Duffy, Cpl. Kavanagh and Lt. O'Brien. Referee, "Kit" Mullally.

A meeting was held in the Recreation Room, Collins Barracks, at 11 a.m. on 7th Nov., 1926, representative of the Command, H.Q. Battalion, the Rev. Sean Pigott, C.F., presiding, to form hurling and football teams to be affiliated with the Dublin (Junior) County Board. The following resolutions were adopted:—(1) "That the new club be called 'Collins Club.'" (2) "That membership should extend to all units in Barracks, with the exception of men already playing for other Co. Dublin teams or McKee." (3) "That only one hurling and one football team be formed." Sergeant Thos. Boyle, sec. pro tem., was instructed to call a meeting for 11 a.m., 8th inst., which would be representative of all units in Barracks to appoint a committee, elect captains for the teams, appoint delegates to the Dublin (Jr.) County Board, arrange affiliation, fees, etc.

The Billiard Handicap is now into the fifth round, and ere these notes appear in print we expect to see the semi-finalists at it. A great match was witnessed between Pte. O'Shea and Pte. O'Connell, both of Command H.Q. Company, on Monday night, 6th inst. O'Shea won after a most brilliant display of "cuenmanship," and is now in the fourth round. It is worthy of note that O'Shea is an all-Ireland footballer, and played prominently for McKee in the match between McKee and Civic Guards at Croke Park, on Sunday, 5th inst. He is captain of one of the Command seven a side teams, and also plays for his home county—Leix.

Coal of different nations has caused a little heat here. "Ginger" says "we'll be all speaking German and 'guessin'" next week" under the influence of the German and Yankee coal.

Some fun recently over coal "Shay" found.

A most successful whist drive took place in the Recreation Room, Collins Barracks, on Tues-

day night, the 7th inst. Pte. Finnegan was in charge, and conducted the drive in a very satisfactory and creditable manner. The prize-winners, each of whom received a box of one hundred "Players" cigarettes, were Pte. Stoney, "C" Coy., 19th Battn.; Pte. Reid, "A" Coy., 19th Battn.; Pte. Feraly, "B" Coy., 19th Battn.; Pte. Bowes, "A" Coy., 19th Battn.; Pte. Ryan, "C" Coy., 19th Battn.; Pte. Ryan, "B" Coy., 19th Battn.; Pte. Hussey, "D" Coy., 21st Battn.; Pte. "Bud" Armstrong, Command H.Q.; Pte. Malone, A.C.C.; Pte. "Ned" Le Estrange, Brigade H.Q.; Pte. Cunningham, A.S.C., and Pte. Costelloe, Pay and Accounts.

All good wishes and success to Pte. Spencer on his return to civilian life. Spencer was a great favourite with the boys of the Company, and although they gave him a farewell speech and three lusty cheers, their hearts were sad at losing a comrade who had endeared himself to all.

The same may be said of Pte. E. McGowan, of "An t-Oglach" razor joke fame. The Company join with the "scribe" in again wishing them all success and prosperity in their new sphere in life, and, incidentally, a Happy Christmas, which wish we also extend to all past members of the Command Coy.

Fine sight:—"Moran at the Piano."

This Week's Fairy Tale.

Orderly Officer (to prisoner in guardroom):

"Well, soldier, what are you in for?"

Prisoner: "Refusing to go on a week-end, sir."

In reply to "A.F. 117," I would like to state that Peter is still here the biggest bloke in the Barracks. It is rumoured that a fight is being arranged between him and "Big Bill Jones," for fifteen pints a-side on Christmas Eve.

This week's slogan: "You're better wantin' it."

A Happy Christmas to all the "Scribes." (Including me? Ned.)



"ARD AIRGID."

A.C.E., GRIFFITH BARRACKS, DUBLIN.

The argumentative abilities of our famous football team, which were their principal feature, have been ably sustained by our Billiard enthusiasts, judging by the heated arguments heard recently. The cause of all the row is that some misguided individual, bored with the solemn calm of the Barracks, proposed a Billiard Handicap, which is now well under way.

The statistical ability shown by discontented entrants (who are surprisingly modest) who suggest that the official handicapper flattered them, should be taken advantage of by the Ministry of Finance or some other dealers in figures.

It is perfectly clear that if our old friend, "The Ref" who, without his consent, is taken at zero, can give a certain player a 40 start in 200 that the latter cannot be expected to play him level. The answer to the problem, of course is a lemon.

"The Little Man" who deals extensively in figures was most vociferous at the injustice of only being X10, but lost his argument by beating his opponent, a well-known racing "fan" connected with the meat trade.

"Joe the Linnet," who performs solos on the typewriter, easily disposed of his opponent. (Funny, isn't it a "linnet" beating a "finch?")

"Bet-you-a-dollar" has taken to the game like a duck to water, and though off the 50 mark did not do as well as he did in the recent Group cross-country run, when, according to himself, he did the four miles in twenty minutes.

"Long Jenny," of whom very little has been heard recently disposed of "Machine-gun Jackie" by the narrowest margin.

To avoid anxious inquiries from an interested quarter, we may state that the Barrack Maintenance Staff are not engaged in this tourney. As they are only visible after dark, the conditions would be altogether too favourable.

Sorry, Ned, that you had to publish my notes in the "Stop Press Column" of your issue dated the 4th instant. The fault was not mine, but that of a "Fiszig"—(Isn't that a good word?) I may add that the said "Fiszig" is the Ref's assistant in the production of an opposition journal, viz., Part 11 Orders, better known as "The Budget" and probably that accounts for the hold up.

Speaking on behalf of the Record(s) Billiard

team, "McLarkie" said quite a lot of nice things about us recently. In fact he made us blush. Thanks old bean, but we always like to take strangers in and do them well (though we didn't succeed on that occasion in doing for the Records team). However, drop around any old time and you will be sure of a hearty welcome, even from the Sergt.-Major. At any rate by the time these notes appear we will have renewed our acquaintance with the Records team, and hope that the result of the meeting will be to our liking.

I agree that "McLarkie's" Sergt.-Major must be hot stuff, but ours is a member of the "845 Club." (If you don't believe me ask "Tinori" or "The Little Man.") Anyhow, I would like to know if a "Bishop" can be a member of the "Mustard" Club.

To the boys of the Special Services Pay Section No. 2, who have taken up their abode here, we extend a hearty welcome. We trust, however, that it will not be a case of "the nearer the church, etc.," as some of the "ginks" in these parts believe that the first duty of a good soldier is to draw his pay. Certainly, as Ned would remark, a jingle in the pocket is a great aid to morale. (And half a loaf is better than working all day.—Ned.)

We have to report strained relations between the "Station Director" and "The Little Man." Mysterious letters are being exchanged.

The transport question has been shelved for the present. "Richmond 2 L.O." is disappointed, but the men are glad at not being left to the mercy of the "food torturer."

Our cross-country champion has discovered a new use for castor oil. Applied externally before going to bed it has added considerably to the difficulties of the W.D. Laundry in washing sheets.

This week's slogan:—"Hard luck."

(The exclusive copyright of one of the "bats." He repeated it 772 times in the course of one hour.) (Yet another statistician, eh?—Ned.)

"CAT'S WHISKER."



15th BATTALION, LIMERICK.

To develop ourselves morally, intellectually and physically should be the aim of every soldier. In the Army we have the means whereby we can develop ourselves in these ways. There are many sources of moral development at our disposal in this Battalion. In fact the good influences of our surroundings coupled with the good influences of the surroundings we have left behind are enough to make us exhibit the morality that becometh soldiers of Ireland. We would have made great progress along the paths of morality if the very few of us ceased to use the vulgarisms and uncouth expressions which we are prone to use sometimes—expressions which the alien Army were remarkable for. Giving thought to our intellectual development, the Library and the Battalion School are for us the two principal means. Reading, if carried out in the proper manner, and not for the excitement which the drift of the book might contain, would undoubtedly be the means of adding untold wealth to our intellectual acumen. Then again there is the Battalion School. A soldier whose penmanship, arithmetic, etc., are not up to the required standard would be very foolish if he did not avail himself of such great opportunities. As far as physical culture is concerned, the drill and P.T. of the daily programme do their part. Outside these we have another great means, i.e., sports. It is regrettable to notice the large number of soldiers that take little or no part in these sports, except in so far as to spectate and criticise. A man who might be last in a race is sometimes alluded to as a "chancer" by some soldier spectator. Such a spirit should not exist amongst soldiers. All should try and try again. It is a game man that will "chance his arm," win or lose.

Our tailor sat with needle sewing cross-legged upon the table;

He stitched and sewed and hemmed and tucked as hard as he was able.

Johnny is our tailor's name: of prime boys he is a one;

He works all day without a stop from dawn to setting sun.

Which is a wonder after all, for, as hard as he may try,

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On the 9th inst. the 15th Battalion and the 20th Battalion met in football at Templemore. Now we heard that the 20th Battalion won, and by what we don't know. You see the scores were so numerous. Now that's torn it. We congratulate the 20th Battalion on their victory. However, we would like them to know that when we meet again we will try and get the Cork team to give us a hand. Special congratulations to Ptes. Keane, Sanders, Geoghan and Culleton—old mates of mine in "C" Block, Gough Barracks, Curragh.

Clerk to Shoemaker: "By the way, Peter, have you the change of a threepenny bit?"

Peter: "I have. Why?"

Clerk: "Well, you see, I see no orders posted in this shop forbidding gratuities."

We are eagerly looking forward to the next dance in the Gym. The last being such a success, a chock full house is expected on Thursday night, the 16th inst. We hear that the band is to be changed. How about giving the famous Battalion "Boneist" a try?

Sir James Craig's Policy.—Not one inch.

Battalion Barber's Policy.—Not one half-inch.

The re-play of the final in the Battalion Inter-Coy. Football Championship will be played off on Sunday, the 12th inst. "D" Company prospects are sound. They possess the dash and determination so very beneficial to a team. H.Q. Coy. will have to mark them men closely and go for the ball and when in possession deliver immediately. To indulge in fancy work against a team like "D" Company's would be fatal.

Miss Drifter (to Cpl. Pants): "I see, dearie, that you have grown a moustache."

Cpl. Pants: "Quite so, Miss Drifter; it sprung up all in one night."

Miss Drifter: "That so dearie? But what will the Barrack accountant say when he finds another hard scrubber deficient?"

Squibs: "Where were you going the time you were coming back?"

Squalls: "I was coming up down below there."

Company Doings.

"A" Company.—We welcome back to our midst again again our Coy. Commander, Capt. Sean O'Meara. We hope that he has experienced every success in his recent course.

"B" Company.—A reminder from the Scribe:—
Is "An t-Oglach" always welcome to the boys of Garryowen?

Well "An t-Oglach" means the Army, and the Army is our own.

(Loud cheers in the Editorial sanctum.—Ned.)

"C" Company.—Every success in civilian life to Cpl. Lenon and Pte. Kehoe, who were recently discharged from the Forces.

"D" Company.—Success to Pte. McCabe on his departure into civilian life. We are very thankful to Ned for augmenting our notes in the issue for week 27th ult. Certainly I think that he is deserving of first prize. (Aye, but for what purpose?—Ned.)

We are glad to see Sgt. Con Canavan back from the A.S.I., and we hope that he had every success in his course.

"H.Q." Company.—We extend a hearty welcome to Col. Purtil, who has arrived here from the 27th Battalion. This poor Company is the "cynosure of all (official) eyes."

The Battalion slogan:—"I hear we won."

We take this opportunity to wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas and a very Prosperous New Year. (I suppose I rank as a reader.—Ned.)

"GARRYOWEN."

20th BATT., KILKENNY.

On Wednesday, 7th inst., a splendid programme was presented in the shape of the finals of the Inter-Company Boxing Competition.

The first bout was between O'Keeffe of "B" Coy. and Walsh, "A" Coy. O'Keeffe retired in the first round, and justly so, his opponent being much too heavy for him. In this case the Boxing Committee would appear to have overlooked the fact that there is such a factor to be considered as weight.

In the second fight Byrne, "C" Coy., beat Phelan, "B" Coy., on points, after a very hard battle, in which Phelan took some severe punishment.

The third fight was a disappointing show, Byrne, "D" Coy., forcing Twohig, "B" Coy., to retire in the first round.

Bullock, "B" Coy., who was matched against Brown of the same Coy., refused to fight.

McCormack, "A" Coy., after a very good display, knocked out Lunney, "D" Coy.

This completed the semi-finals. The following three special matches were then fought:—Hannigan, "A" Coy., v. Murphy, Brigade Staff. Hannigan won on points. Hogan, A.T.C. v. Tracey, A.S.C. Contrary to popular opinion, Hogan was awarded the decision. Duggan, "A" Coy., made short work of McNally, "C" Coy., knocking him out in the first round.

The finals then were fought. The first was the 10-11 st. contest, Byrne, "C" Coy., v. Walsh, "A" Coy. Both looked none the worse for their previous fights. In the second round Walsh floored Byrne and fouled by striking before his man was up. Walsh's foul was probably more the result of over-excitement rather than deliberate purpose.

In the second final (9-10 stone) Brown, "B" Coy., was matched against Twohig, "B" Coy., and after a splendid fight Twohig won on points.

The last fight was the final of the competition for men under 9 stone, Murphy, "B" Coy., meeting McCormack, "A" Coy. Murphy had rather a soft fight and knocked out his opponent in the second round.

The prizes, which consisted of orders for suits of clothes, made to measure, the cloth to be chosen by each winner, were distributed by Rev. Fr. Drea, C.F. Amongst those present who took a keen interest in the fighting were Colonel Hogan and the Commanding Officer.

On Thursday our Battalion hurling team met the 15th Battalion team in the Chaplain's Cup. The result was:—20th Batt., 44 pts.; 15th Batt., 4 pts. Shall we describe the match. Garryowen? Perhaps better not: we might goad you to do something desperate. (You will note that "Garryowen" has also given up the attempt to describe the game.—Ned.)

Elephants are really rare, of course, but it is well known here where a white one of the species may be found after 6 o'clock or so.

"THE PREMIER."

23rd BATT., PORTOBELLO.

On Sunday evening, the 5th inst., the Portobello Dramatic Society held their second concert in aid of the Children's Christmas Tree Fund, and, judging by the dimensions of the audience, it should be financially successful.

I need not here expand in praise of the quality of the entertainment: let it suffice to say that the "Prison Scene" from "Maritana" was the centre of a really artistic programme, produced by Miss Teresa Owens. The cast included Miss Mann, Miss Joan Burke, Captain O'Carroll and Sergeant Tom Bourke, with full chorus.

This opera scene, which is a new innovation in the 'Bello, was enjoyed to the utmost by an appreciative audience.

A very good sketch, the "Counter Charm," by Bernard Duffy, was staged by the Portobello Troupe, the adventures of the various characters being followed with hearty laughter. Miss Kathleen O'Neill gave a forceful rendering of "Mrs. Mulvey," being ably supported by Miss Albany ("Nora Kinsella"). Miss McAffister ("Mrs. Hearty"), Pte. Bermingham ("Joe Hearty"). One of the treats of the evening was the orches-

tra. The programme concluded with the singing of the "Soldier's Song."

This week we welcome back to the 'Bello Capt. Thomas Cullen and Sergeant Bill Devine, who have been on a course at the Curragh.

Our deepest sympathy is conveyed to Lieutenant Charles Darbey on his recent sad bereavement. The Lieutenant himself gave a transfusion of blood, which, however, was unavailing.

The attendance at the weekly dance was small from this Batt., the majority of the boys being on duty. The spirit has again moved the poet to comment:

The shades of eve were falling fast,
As whispers through the Billet passed:
"Take down your gun, and pull it through,
You're for Stand-To, You're for Stand-To."

The winter wind sighs ooh, woo, woo
Around each block and down each flue;
Each soldier must its words construe:
"You're for Stand-To, You're for Stand-To."

Yes, ten are we, from old "H.Q."
We take our twist at duties new,
And Clerks their work in Breeches do,
They're on Stand-To, They're on Stand-To.

Policemen, with a stony eye,
Will bar the gate when we draw nigh,
And murmur soft: "You can't pass through,
You're on Stand-To, You're on Stand-To."

The girls will sigh, and shed some tears,
For days to them will seem like years;
But have no fear; they will be true,
They're on Stand-To, They're on Stand-To.

(This may not be exactly up to the Yeats' standard, but if all our poets could do as well more of them would get into print.—Ned.)

Tommy Morgan again met Garda Chase at Limerick on Friday, the 10th inst. The Garda just gained a narrow victory, on the referee's decision, thus avenging his former defeat at Portobello. O'Donnell beat Downey at the Curragh on points, on the 11th inst.

The coal strike is still seriously affecting the "Wet" Canteen. The old fireplace is still the colour of the goods that come over the counter.

Our consignment of Library books has now arrived—a mighty chest "stuffed" full of the best efforts of the most famous authors—history, travel, adventure, and fiction. All tastes in literature are catered for, and the troops in Portobello are indeed indebted to the Brigade Institute Committee.

This week's slogan:—"Can I go to the Canteen, Sergeant?"

"COLLAR BADGE."

12th BATTALION, TEMPLEMORE.

On Thursday, 9th inst., the 15th Batt., Limerick, and the 20th Batt., Kilkenny, met at the Town Park, Templemore, in the Hurling Semi-Final for the Chaplain's Cup.

During the progress of the match I heard a certain soldier (not from this Batt.) remarking: "Wait 'till you see in next week's 'An t-Oglach' about this brilliant display." I don't exactly know who it was that he referred to, but, for my own part, I always make it a point to report on such matters without fear, favour, or otherwise.

Anyhow the "brilliant display," unfortunately was all on one side, for the 15th proved no match for their opponents. The "Clansmen of Osory" showed the result of consistent training and had matters all their own way. Each man of that team was worth his place, but the most outstanding of Kilkenny's fifteen was Con Keane, a Cashel man. This (the 20th) Batt. bids fair to hold premier honours in Army hurling as well as premier honours in training of a military nature.

The following conversation took place recently during a lecture on Scouting:—

Sgt.: "How would you find west by this watch, O'Brien?"

O'Brien: "By throwing it out the window, Sergeant."

Sgt.: "In the name of common-sense, what do you mean?"

O'Brien: "Sure, Sergeant, won't it go west when you throw it out the window?"

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Overheard at a Barrack entertainment:—

She: "Oh, Sergeant, you appear to be terribly hard-hearted."

Sgt.: "Not at all, dearie, that's only my committee badge that you feel."

Sergeant (observing some of his platoon at the dance): "Great Scot! look at all the oil they have in their hair!"

Squad Corporal: "A blooming sight more than they have in their rifles anyhow."

Christmas is fast approaching. Much of the old-time glamour has of late years disappeared from that festival. However, we of the Twelfth hope to enter into the spirit of Christmas thoroughly this year. This is not suggesting that we look forward to the Christmas spirit entering into us.

We had Dinny O'Neill from G.H.Q. (himself a great hurler) here for to referee the hurling match 15th v. 20th Batts. He had a stroll around our Barracks, and he pretending not to know "Ros Cairbre." (Life is full of little tragedies, isn't it?—Ned.)

Your Man (returning boots to C.Q.M.S.): "Quarter, these boots are too big for me."
Quarter: "That's better than to be getting too big for your boots anyway."

"ROS CAIRBRE."



22nd BATT., PORTOBELLO.

Here we are. Here we are. Here we are again! The old battery is up and doing with our shoulders to the wheel. "An t-Oglach" must not be let down. (Editorial applause.—Ned.) The shock troops are in the line!

Well, Ned, old flick, twist thy old brain-box, for thy work will be increased. Hold thy wrath in check, dear Ned; hold thy wrath in check. (Carry on: I'm a-holding.—Ned.)

Our congrats. to the 23rd Ginks on their victory over the Curragh boys may be a trifle late; but,

nevertheless, it loses nothing of its sincerity by that, and we hope we are congratulating the ultimate winners of the Services Cup.

To those comrades of ours who have returned to civilian life we extend our sincere wishes for their success in whatever sphere they may occupy. ("Once a soldier always a soldier." Who told us we would know them by their boots, dear old fellow campaigner of mine?—Ned.)

We wish Cpl. P. Burke and Pte. Billy Barr every success during their course at Eastern Command School of Instruction. (A fellow-feeling.—Ned.)

Boxing in the Battalion has almost come to a stand still since the departure to civilian life of Ptes. Tracy and Braeken. Consequently we were in the unenviable position of not having a representative at any of the recent tournaments in the 'Bello. We are informed that there are some of the 7th Battn. Ginks who have come amongst us real handy with the mitts, and as an inter-company competition in the Battn. is in contemplation, we hope to see all the budding Dempseys and Tunneys up and doing. A word to the C.S.M. is all you want; he will do the rest. There is we feel sure plenty of talent in our midst and it only requires digging out. (Not "in."—Ned.) But what we lack in boxers we make up for in runners with interest, and under the able leader-

ship of C. S. Husband our boys expect to make the knights of the road go all out.

The runner ginks deserve great credit for the way they have settled down to the work.

Disciples of the Charleston demur at the prohibition of this dance and are trying as an alternative to introduce the Black Bottom. Some ginks who would chance their arms at anything would do well as contortionists in a travelling circus.

Who said a certain clerk in the Battery Orderly Room is a "spick and span" dancer?

The handball ginks are going great guns, and there will be battles royal when Coyle, Dowling, Achilles and Sergt. Monnelly meet.

Christmas comes but once a year, and everyone is looking forward to the festival, and the Knuts are out for a rollicking time. The B.S.M.'s duty roster is going through a series of alterations. (Poor old John.)

Things we Would Like to Know.

Why did the Battn. Police colour their billet the same as their armlets?

Who said "Spud" is in training with a smiler by his side?

Who offered congrats. to Sergt. C. on winning the snooker handicap, and then said only for his trainer he would not have won it?

Who was the gink who "tee-hee'd" our B.S.M. when he wheeled out the Brigade S.M. at billiards?

What is the name of the senior N.C.O. who is joining the Benedicts shortly?

Who causes the scarcity of marmalade in the Sergeants' Mess?

Did the Battn. Wireless fiend get Balrothery on his soapbox set yet? And does he expect us to believe that he can get Chili on this contraption? We know he can get chilly without it, especially since our coal ration was reduced.

This week's slogan:—"You're not entitled till it."

"SPARK PLUG."

REMEMBER DATES.

PLEASE GIVE DATES of all happenings. What is "last Friday" when you are writing may be "last Friday fortnight" when the date of the issue containing your notes is taken into account.

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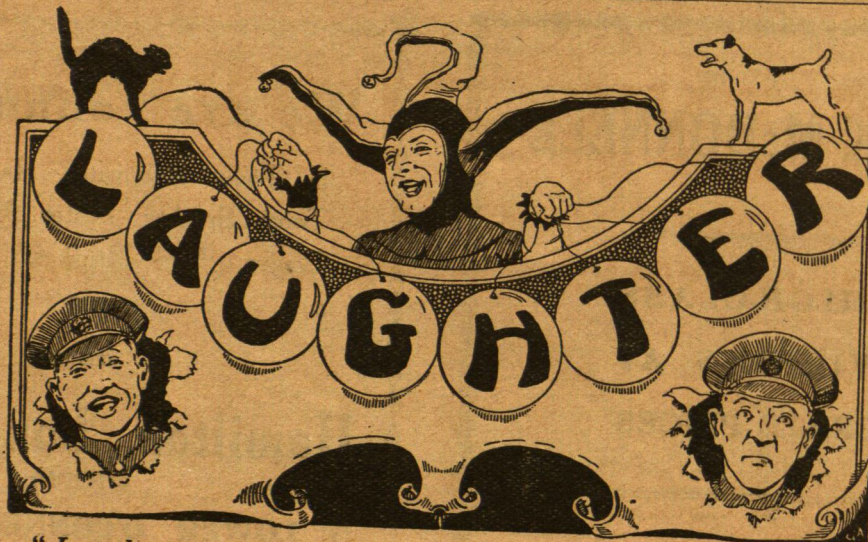
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*"Laughter is the one gift that God has denied to beasts
and birds."—Pearse.*

Officer (to Orderly Room Clerk): This
is disgraceful, Murphy. I am in the
office before you every morning.

Murphy (guilelessly): Yes, sir; I
have always been taught to give pre-
cedence to my superiors.

*Prize of Solingen Razor awarded to Pte. G.
Costelloe, Army Pay Office No. 2, Collins
Barracks, Dublin.*

According to an actor, the one idea
in the heads of gallery patrons is boos.
It seems a queer way to spell it,
though.

At the A.S.I.—Student Officer: "Sir,
I have neither pencil nor paper."
Instructor: "What would you think
of a soldier who went to battle without
rifle or ammunition."
"I would think he was an officer, sir."

Two Jews were shipwrecked and after
drifting several days in a small boat
Goldberg said to Lewis: "Look! Look!
I see a sail!"

Lewis answered: "Vat's the use? We
got no samples!"

Aeroplanes are cheap enough these
days, says a technical journal. It isn't
the initial outlay on an aeroplane, it's
the upkeep.

Incidentally, an aeroplane enables a
man to move in the higher circles.

Formerly a female impersonator wore
a wig; now he gets a hair cut.

A millionaire recently cut his only son
off with a shilling. Bobbed his heir,
in fact.

A pessimist is a man who thinks the
world is against him . . . and what
is more, he is right.

Women are jealous creatures; they
are even jealous of their own noses,
for no woman will allow her nose to
shine in society.

Every man finds the perfect girl
sooner or later. Some men keep on
finding her.

The Height of Embarrassment: Two
eyes meeting through a keyhole.

"My dressmaker wrote to dad that
she would make no more dresses for
me until her account is settled."

"And what did he say?"
"Wrote her a letter of thanks."

It's easy enough to be merry,
When life is a bright rosy wreath;
But the man worth while,
Is the chap who can smile,
When the dentist's filling his teeth!

Southern France reports a rain of
mud—which is the first hint we've had
they were pulling off an election over
there.

The crisis had come. The time for
dilly-dallying was past. He had to
choose between the two girls.

The Spaniard, or the English girl,
which? That was his problem.

The question that exercised his mind
was which of them held the money-
bags. For this was no love affair—just
a sordid matter of money.

Frowns puckered his forehead as he
realised the importance of the decision.
A right choice spelt wealth; a wrong
one, penury. And he had nothing to
guide him!

For a long time he sat still, thinking,
thinking. At last he roused himself.
He would let Chance decide for him—
have recourse to the time-honoured
method of tossing for it.

"It's the only way," he muttered,
taking a coin from his pocket.

"Heads, the Spaniard! Tails, the
English girl!" he said, as he sent the
coin spinning into the air.

Eagerly he ran to the spot where it
fell.

Tails! The English girl! So be it
"Damn these alternatives," he said,
as he put in EVA for No. 7 down.

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