

# "OVER THE TOP"

By An American Arthur Guy Empey  
Soldier Who Went Machine Gunner, Serving in France

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## CHAPTER XXVI—Continued.

The presence of the R. A. M. C. men did not seem to disturb the raiders. Because many a joke made in an undertone, was passed along the winding column, as to who would be first to take a ride on one of the stretchers. This was generally followed by a wish that, if you were to be the one, the wound would be a "cushy Blighty one."

The stretcher bearers, no doubt, hoping that, if they did have to carry anyone to the rear, he would be small and light. Perhaps they looked at me when wishing, because I could feel an uncomfortable, boring sensation between my shoulder blades. They got their wish all right.

Going up this trench, about every sixty yards or so we would pass a lonely sentry, who in a whisper would wish us "the best of luck, mates." We would blind at him under our breaths; that Jonah phrase to us sounded very ominous.

Without any casualties the minaret troop arrived at Suicide ditch, the front-line trench. Previously, a wiring party of the Royal Engineers had cut a lane through our barbed wire to enable us to get out into No Man's Land.

Crawling through this lane, our party of twenty took up an extended-order formation about one yard apart. We had a tap code arranged for our movements while in No Man's Land, because for various reasons it is not safe to carry on a heated conversation a few yards in front of Fritz' lines. The officer was on the right of the line, while I was on the extreme left. Two taps from the right would be passed down the line until I received them, then I would send back one tap. The officer, in receiving this one tap, would know that his order had gone down the whole line, had been understood, and that the party was ready to obey the two-tap signal. Two taps meant that we were to crawl forward slowly—and believe me, very slowly—for five yards, and then halt to await further instructions. Three taps meant, when you arrived within striking distance of the German trench, rush it and inflict as many casualties as possible, secure a couple of prisoners, and then back to your own lines with the speed clutch open. Four taps meant, "I have gotten you into a position from which it is impossible for me to extricate you, so you are on your own."

After getting Tommy into a mess on the western front he is generally told that he is "on his own." This means, "Save your skin in any way possible." Tommy loves to be "on his own" behind the lines, but not during a trench raid. The star shells from the German lines were falling in front of us, therefore we were safe. After about twenty minutes we entered the star shell zone. A star shell from the German lines fell about five yards in the rear and to the right of me; we hugged the ground and held our breath until it burned out. The smoke from the star shell traveled along the ground and crossed over the middle of our line. Some Tommy sneezed. The smoke had gotten up his nose. We crouched on the ground, cursing the offender under our breath, and waited the volley that generally ensues when the Germans have heard a noise in No Man's Land. Nothing happened. We received two taps and crawled forward slowly for five yards; no doubt the officer believed what Old Pepper had said, "Personally I believe that that part of the German trench is unoccupied." By being careful and remaining motionless when the star shells fell behind us, we reached the German barbed wire without mishap. Then the fun began. I was scared stiff as it is ticklish work cutting your way through wire when about thirty feet in front of you there is a line of Boches looking out into No Man's Land with their rifles lying across the parapet, straining every sense to see or hear what is going on in No Man's Land; because at night, Fritz never knows when a bomb with his name and number on it will come hurtling through the air aimed in the direction of Berlin. The man on the right, one man in the center and myself on the extreme left were equipped with wire cutters. These are insulated with soft rubber not because the German wires are charged with electricity, but to prevent the cutters rubbing against the barbed wire stakes, which are of iron, and making a noise which may warn the inmates of the trench that someone is getting fresh in their front yard. There is only one way to cut a barbed wire without noise and through costly experience Tommy has become an expert in doing this. You must grasp the wire about two inches from the stake in your right hand and cut between the stake and

strands of the cut barbed wire on the ground, waiting for a challenge and the inevitable volley of rifle fire. Nothing happened. I suppose the fellow who cut the barbed wire improperly was the one who had sneezed about half an hour previously. What we wished him would never make his new year a happy one.

The officer, in my opinion, at the noise of the wire should have given the four-tap signal, which meant, "On your own, get back to your trenches as quickly as possible," but again he must have relied on the spiel that Old Pepper had given us in the dugout, "Personally I believe that that part of the German trench is unoccupied." Anyway, we got careless, but not so careless that we sang patriotic songs or made any unnecessary noise.

During the intervals of falling star shells we carried on with our wire cutting until at last we succeeded in getting through the German barbed wire. At this point we were only ten feet from the German trenches. If we were discovered, we were like rats in a trap. Our way was cut off unless we ran along the wire to the narrow lane we had cut through. With our hearts in our mouths we waited for the three-tap signal to rush the German trench. Three taps had gotten about halfway down the line when suddenly about ten to twenty German star shells were fired all along the trench and landed in the barbed wire in rear of us, turning night into day and silhouetting us against the wall of light made by the flares. In the glaring light we were confronted by the following unpleasant scene.

All along the German trench, at about three-foot intervals, stood a big Prussian guardsman with his rifle at the aim, and then we found out why we had not been challenged when the man sneezed and the barbed wire had been improperly cut. About three feet in front of the trench they had constructed a single fence of barbed wire and we knew our chances were one thousand to one of returning alive. We could not rush their trench on account of this second defense. Then



in "Blighty."

in front of me the challenge, "Halt," given in English rang out, and one of the finest things I have ever heard on the western front took place.

From the middle of our line some Tommy answered the challenge with, "Aw, go to h—l." It must have been the man who had sneezed or who had improperly cut the barbed wire; he wanted to show Fritz that he could die game. Then came the volley. Machine guns were turned loose and several bombs were thrown in our rear. The Boche in front of me was looking down his sight. This fellow might have, under ordinary circumstances, been handsome, but when I viewed him from the front of his rifle he had the goblins of childhood imagination relegated to the shade.

Then came a flash in front of me, the flare of his rifle—and my head seemed to burst. A bullet had hit me on the left side of my face about half an inch from my eye, smashing the cheek bones. I put my hand to my face and fell forward, biting the ground and kicking my feet. I thought I was dying, but, do you know, my past life did not unfold before me the way it does in novels.

The blood was streaming down my tunic, and the pain was awful. When I came to I said to myself, "Emp, old boy, you belong in Jersey City, and you'd better get back there as quickly as possible."

The bullets were cracking overhead. I crawled a few feet back to the German barbed wire, and in a stooping position, guiding myself by the wire, I went down the line looking for the lane we had cut through. Before reaching this lane I came to a limp form which seemed like a bag of oats hanging over the wire. In the dim light I could see that its hands were blackened, and knew it was the body of one of my mates. I put my hand on his head, the top of which had been blown off by a bomb. My fingers sank into the hole. I pulled my hand back

full of blood and brains, then I went crazy with fear and horror and rushed along the wire until I came to our lane. I had just turned down this lane when something inside of me seemed to say, "Look around." I did so; a bullet caught me on the left shoulder. It did not hurt much, just felt as if someone had punched me in the back, and then my left side went numb. My arm was dangling like a rag. I fell forward in a sitting position. But all the fear had left me and I was consumed with rage and cursed the German trenches. With my right hand I felt in my tunic for my first-aid or shell dressing. In feeling over my tunic my hand came in contact with one of the bombs which I carried. Gripping it, I pulled the pin out with my teeth and blindly threw it towards the German trench. I must have been out of my head, because I was only ten feet from the trench and took a chance of being mangled. If the bomb had failed to go into the trench I would have been blown to bits by the explosion of my own bomb.

By the flare of the explosion of the bomb, which luckily landed in their trench, I saw one big Boche throw up his arms and fall backwards, while his rifle flew into the air. Another one wilted and fell forward across the sandbags—then blackness.

Realizing what a foolhardy and risky thing I had done, I was again seized with a horrible fear. I dragged myself to my feet and ran madly down the lane through the barbed wire, stumbling over cut wires, tearing my uniform, and lacerating my hands and legs. Just as I was about to reach No Man's Land again, that same voice seemed to say, "Turn around." I did so, when, "crack," another bullet caught me, this time in the left shoulder about one-half inch away from the other wound. Then it was taps for me. The lights went out.

When I came to I was crouching in a hole in No Man's Land. This shell hole was about three feet deep, so that it brought my head a few inches below the level of the ground. How I reached this hole I will never know. German "typewriters" were traversing back and forth in No Man's Land, the bullets biting the edge of my shell hole and throwing dirt all over me.

Overhead shrapnel was bursting. I could hear the fragments slap the ground. Then I went out once more. When I came to everything was silence and darkness in No Man's Land. I was soaked with blood and a big gap from the wound in my cheek was hanging over my mouth. The blood running from this gap choked me. Out of the corner of my mouth I would try and blow it back, but it would not move. I reached for my shell dressing and tried, with one hand, to bandage my face to prevent the flow. I had an awful horror of bleeding to death and was getting very faint. You would have laughed if you had seen my ludicrous attempts at bandaging with one hand. The pains in my wounded shoulder were awful and I was getting sick at the stomach. I gave up the bandaging stunt as a bad job, and then fainted.

When I came to, hell was let loose. An intense bombardment was on, and on the whole my position was decidedly unpleasant. Then, suddenly, our barrage ceased. The silence almost hurt, but not for long, because Fritz turned loose with shrapnel, machine guns, and rifle fire. Then all along our line came a cheer and our boys came over the top in a charge. The first wave was composed of "Jocks." They were a magnificent sight, kilts, flapping in the wind, bare knees showing, and their bayonets glistening. In the first wave that passed my shell hole, one of the "Jocks," an immense fellow, about six feet two inches in height jumped right over me. On the right and left of me several soldiers in colored kilts were huddled on the ground, then over came the second wave, also "Jocks." One young Scotie, when he came abreast of my shell hole, leaped into the air, his rifle shooting out of his hands, landing about six feet in front of him, bayonet first, and stuck in the ground, the butt trembling. This impressed me greatly.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

U-Boats Have Murdered Thousands. There is a danger lest familiarity, even with such a monstrous crime as unrestricted U-boat warfare, should breed indifference to its enormity, says an exchange. Therefore, it is well to bear in mind that, except when the attack is made on fighting ships or transports carrying fighting men, the torpedoing of ships and sending men to their death far out at sea, is simply murder, unredeemed by any extenuating circumstances whatsoever. Just how great a bill of indictment is being drawn up by the German admiralty against itself is seen in the statement given by the government leader in the house of commons that up to February, 1918, the German U-boats had killed 14,120 non-combatant British men, women and children. This he noted, is exclusive of the murders done upon peoples of other nationalities.

The Drawback.

She—His wife made a man of him  
He—Yes, but anybody that looks him can tell it is a home-made job

## BALLOON IN WAR DOES GREAT WORK

"ELEPHANTS" USED FOR OBSERVATION AND TO DIRECT FIRE OF BATTERIES.

## PILOTS PARACHUTE JUMPERS

Thousand Community Labor Boards Have Been Organized—Gun Production for Army Grows Rapidly—Iron Rations Ordered.

(From Committee on Public Information.)  
Washington.—Up to a few years ago, in the public mind, all balloons were associated with parachute jumpers, county fairs and circuses. They were used very much like their rival the old side show, full of freaks, solely to draw a crowd. Today Uncle Sam is making balloons and training their operators for distinctly another purpose. The ungainly old balloon of circus days is now a rival of its smarter and more modern brother, the airplane, in the job of being eyes for the army and navy. A dead industry was revived when the war balloon was originated.

Swinging far aloft at the end of a cable, these "elephants," as they are now called, support trained observers who, by means of powerful field glasses and telephones, give range and direction to batteries. These in turn, with well directed shots, put enemy batteries out of business and break up infantry formations for attack. A stationary balloon four or five thousand feet in the air is an ideal place for an observer.

So Uncle Sam's parachute jumpers are being instructed today, not as entertainers to draw and thrill crowds by "leaps from the clouds," but for their own personal safety and the safety of their records made at high elevations, when a shell or an enemy airplane rips their balloon and they have to jump. For although their balloon may be destroyed, the men in the basket usually come safely to earth and bring their maps and photographs with them. It is a life full of excitement these men of the balloon lead, and to be a member one has to have plenty of nerve, courage and daring in his makeup.

Aviators take off their hats to the balloon men. One recently returned American air pilot told of an adventure he had on a trial trip in a balloon; how interested he was becoming in the work of the observer as the latter explained the great panorama outstretched below him; when suddenly the balloon man interrupted his talk to see that his parachute straps were O. K., climbed to the edge of the basket, shouted: "Beat it; follow me," and disappeared over the side. The aviator said he took one look at the windlass pulling the balloon to earth below, another at the oncoming enemy plane and said to himself, "Not for mine." He said he did not have the courage to jump and did not. Fortunately the enemy plane was beaten off by allied planes before it could get any nearer.

Provost Marshal General Crowder was requested by the British embassy to give notice to the fact that British subjects, including declarants, who had registered before July 30, 1918, may enlist voluntarily in the British or Canadian army up to and including September 23, 1918. Those who registered on August 24, 1918, may so enlist up to and including September 23, 1918. Those who register on September 12, 1918, may so enlist up to and including October 12, 1918.

During the period so allowed for voluntary enlistment, British subjects may apply for exemption to the British ambassador.

At the end of the period allowed for voluntary enlistment, British subjects, in each of these classes, may no longer enlist in the British or Canadian army; but unless exempted by the British ambassador, they become liable to military service and may claim exemption under the United States Selective Service law.

Experiments in laundering shoes are being conducted at various camps by the conservation reclamation division of the quartermaster corps. The method used is the same employed by the American expeditionary forces.

A solution composed of one quart of strong disinfectant to 50 gallons of water was used to wash about 200 army shoes in a standard laundry machine. The solution used is germicide, antiseptic and deodorant. After 14 minutes' washing, the shoes were removed, dried for about an hour and then resoled. The results were found to be highly satisfactory. After the shoes are laundered and repaired they are greased with dubbing to make them more pliable and at the same time to preserve the leather.

## Your Taffeta Underskirt.

Taffeta has an unenviable reputation for splitting or cracking. True, the chiffon taffeta is trying hard to work up a better reputation with excellent results. But if your taffeta underskirt when you first get it is dipped in water and then hung up without wringing to dry, the silk will not crack so readily.

## Tub Silk Blouses.

When it comes to the more substantial tub blouses tub silks still

Recent reports show that approximately 1,000 community labor boards of the United States employment service have been organized or are in final process of organization. Between 700 and 800 of them are ready to function and some already have begun work.

Full and partial returns from 39 states and the District of Columbia give a total of 915 boards completed or in formation while four other states, two of them large industrial commonwealths, report the organization of boards but not the number. The five remaining states failed to report.

Each community labor board is composed of three members, one representing the community's employers, the second it employees and the third, who is chairman, the United States employment service. The employers' and employees' members are chosen by their respective local organizations, their appointment being approved by the director general of the employment service. It is the work of the community boards to generally supervise the recruitment and distribution of workers for war production, the actual recruiting and distributing being done by the local offices and agents of the employment service, including the agents of the public service reserve.

The federal directors of employment for the states have been notified by the director general to rush the organization of the boards for their states and their functioning as quickly as possible in order to provide relief for short-handed war industries.

Some facts about guns and munitions told by the secretary of war:

We are constructing a big gun plant at Neville Island. We signed a contract with United States Steel corporation to build and operate without profit this plant for guns of the larger calibers. This is the biggest plant of this kind ever conceived and will build guns of not less than 14 inch. The site is just below Pittsburgh and covers about 1,000 acres. The housing will be on the hills south of the island. The amount of money involved is \$150,000,000 which is being supplied by the United States government. This plant will handle a tremendous amount of material, and will be retained by the government after the war.

We have shipped two hundred and fifty 155-mm. howitzers to France. We are producing between 25,000 and 30,000 machine guns per month. Of Browning heavy 6,000 to 7,000; Browning light automatic rifle from 8,000 to 9,000 per month.

We are making about 1,200 motor tractors per month. We are turning out all the smokeless powder we need now.

The production of rifles has been about 200,000 per month.

We produce more than 50,000 pistols and revolvers per month.

Orders have been given for the supply of one million emergency rations by the subsistence division of the quartermaster corps. The emergency ration corresponds to the iron ration of the British troops. It is carried in an air-tight, gas-proof container and is sufficient to maintain a man for one day, sustaining his full strength and vigor. It is strapped in the pack of the soldier going over the top and may be used only according to the instructions given when the emergency ration is issued.

The emergency ration is composed of ground meat and wheat compressed into a cake. There is also a block of sweet chocolate. The bread and wheat component may be eaten dry or, if possible, stirred into cold water. The cake, when boiled for five minutes in three pints of water, results in a very palatable soup, or when boiled in one pint of water for five minutes it makes porridge which may be eaten hot or cold. When cold, it may be sliced and fried, if bacon or other fat is available. The chocolate component of the emergency ration may be eaten dry or made into hot chocolate.

The quartermaster corps has just completed purchases of large quantities of foodstuffs for distribution by the American Red Cross. The food will be shipped to France, Switzerland and Denmark and used for civilian relief and at prison camps.

The order includes more than 2,500,000 pounds of hard bread; 250,000 pounds of oatmeal; 333,333 pounds of fresh beef and more than 500,000 cans of baked beans. Purchases also have been made for the Red Cross of 205,000 cans of fish flakes. These flakes are a combination of haddock and shad. About 350 pounds of fresh fish are required to make 100 pounds of fish flakes.

Purchases also are being made by the subsistence division of the quartermaster corps of foodstuffs for use at American rest camps in England and France. Purchase for rest camps include more luxuries than are issued in the regular ration. Owing to the shortage of tonnage, canned corn and peas and other fancy staples are not now being sent overseas for general use, but sufficient quantities are available for men in rest camps and for the wounded in the hospitals.

lead, though there are many good linen tailored blouses in both the heavy and sheer weaves. The fanciful Chinese and Japanese silks and some new effects in wash silk crepes are much used, as is the ever-popular crepe in wonderful lines of plain as well as in striped and fancy effects.

Charming soft turbans are brocade and fur.

Real flax is a great favorite for brassieres.

## IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By Rev. P. B. FITZWATER, D. D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)  
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## LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 22

### FRUITS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

LESSON TEXTS—Matthew 25:14-30; 5:12.

GOLDEN TEXT—All things are yours; . . . and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.—I Corinthians 3:21-23.

DEVOTIONAL READING—Galatians 6:16-25.

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS—Psalms 17:15; Isaiah 51:11; Acts 16:25; Romans 2:10; 5:1-2.

**I. The Parable of the Talents.**  
This parable, like that of the Ten Virgins, is associated with the second coming of Christ. In both instances there is evident an unpreparedness on the part of the people. In the first case there is failure of the inward life; in the second, there is failure to use the gifts which have been entrusted to them. The first was failure to watch; the second was failure to work. By talents is meant, the gifts which God has entrusted to his servants. It may be natural endowments, special endowments of the Spirit, or it may be the gospel of Jesus Christ. With reference to these talents note:

1. Their distribution (vv. 14, 15).

(1) A sovereign one. The servants belong to the Lord as well as the money. (2) An intelligent one. The distribution was made on the basis of the ability of each servant. The reason one man received one talent was because the Lord knew that he would be incapable of using two or five. (3) A purposeful one. The talents were given to be traded with. They were not given for the servant's own use, but stock-in-trade for the enrichment of the master.

2. Employment of the talents (vv. 16-18).

In this employment all the servants recognized that the talents did not belong to them. The two-talented man and the five-talented man put their talents to use, which resulted in a large increase. It is always true that the right use of talents increases them. The one-talented man hid his in the earth. The unmistakable sign of the one-talented man is that he is hiding his talent. The two-talented and five-talented men are always busy.

3. The accounting for the talents (vv. 19-30).

(1) Its certainty. There is a day coming when the Lord's servants shall give an account to him for the use they have made of their talents. (2) The time of. This is at the coming of the Lord. Those who are using their talents will rejoice when the Lord comes that they may present unto him their talents with increase. But the one-talented man will have fear and dread against that day. (3) The judgments announced. To the faithful there was reward. This reward consisted of praise: "Well done"; promotion: "ruler over many things"; and entrance "upon the joy of the Lord." For the faithless one there was awful punishment which consisted of reproach—"slothful"; being stripped and cast into outer darkness.

4. Characteristics of the Subjects of the Kingdom (Matt. 5:1-12).

These beatitudes are connected with each other with the strictest order of logical sequence. They set forth the characteristics of those who are subjects of the kingdom. They fall into three groups: four in the first, three in the second, and two in the third.

1. Poverty of spirit (v. 3). To be poor in spirit does not mean to be without money, but to come to the end of self, to be in a state of absolute spiritual beggary, having no power to alter his condition or make himself better.

2. A profound grief because of this spiritual bankruptcy (v. 4). The mourning here is not because of external cares, but a keen consciousness of guilt before a holy God.

3. A humble submission to God's will and obedience to his commands without asking the reason why (v. 5). This is the outgrowth of mourning for spiritual insolvency.

4. An intense longing to conform to the laws of the kingdom (v. 6). Having received the righteousness of Christ as a free gift, every desire of his soul is to be filled with righteousness.

5. Merciful (v. 7). At this stage the subjects of the kingdom take on the character of the King. Christ was merciful; his followers will be likewise.

6. Purity of heart (v. 8). This heart purity begins by having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience with the blood of Christ, and is maintained by living in fellowship with him. Those who have pure hearts can see God everywhere.

7. Peacemakers (v. 9). Those who have been reconciled to God by Christ not only live in peace, but diffuse peace. 8. Suffering for Christ's sake (v. 10). The world hated Christ and crucified him. Those who live for him shall suffer persecution (II Timothy 3:12).

9. Suffer reproach (v. 11). It means suffering under false charges. In such case we shall glory in it because it brings great reward in heaven.

## Quote the Bible.

Scholars may quote Plato in their studies, but the hearts of millions will quote the Bible at their daily toil, and draw strength from its inspiration as the meadows draw it from the brook way.