

"OVER THE TOP"

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

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CHAPTER XXV—Continued.

When we took over the front line we received an awful shock. The Germans displayed signboards over the top of their trench showing the names that we had called their trenches. The signs read "Fair," "Fact," "Fate," and "Fancy," and so on, according to the code names on our map. Then to rub it in, they hoisted some more signs which read, "Come on, we are ready, stupid English."

It is still a mystery to me how they obtained this knowledge. There had been no raids or prisoners taken, so it must have been the work of spies in our own lines.

Three or four days before the big push we tried to shatter Fritz's nerves by feint attacks, and partially succeeded as the official reports of July 1 show.

Although we were constantly bombarding their lines day and night, still we fooled the Germans several times. This was accomplished by throwing an intense barrage into his lines—then using smoke shells we would put a curtain of white smoke across No Man's Land, completely obstructing his view of our trenches, and would raise our curtain of fire as if in an actual attack. All down our trenches the men would shout and cheer, and Fritz would turn loose with machine-gun, rifle, and shrapnel fire, thinking we were coming over.

After three or four of these dummy attacks his nerves must have been near the breaking point.

On June 24, 1916, at 9:40 in the morning our guns opened up, and hell was let loose. The din was terrific, a constant boom-boom-boom in your ear.

At night the sky was a red glare. Our bombardment had lasted about two hours when Fritz started replying. Although we were sending over ten shells to his one, our casualties were heavy. There was a constant stream of stretchers coming out of the communication trenches and burial parties were a common sight.

In the dugouts the noise of the guns almost hurt. You had the same sensation as when riding on the subway you enter the tube under the river going to Brooklyn—a sort of pressure on the ear drums, and the ground constantly trembling.

The roads behind the trenches were very dangerous because Boche shrapnel was constantly bursting over them. We avoided these dangerous spots by crossing through open fields.

The destruction in the German lines was awful and I really felt sorry for them because I realized how they must be clicking it.

From our front-line trench, every now and again, we could hear sharp whistle blasts in the German trenches. These blasts were the signals for stretcher bearers, and meant the wounding or killing of some German in the service of his fatherland.

Atwell and I had a tough time of it, patrolling the different trenches at night, but after a while got used to it.

My old outfit, the machine gun company, was stationed in huge elephant dugouts about four hundred yards behind the front-line trench—they were in reserve. Occasionally I would stop in their dugout and have a confab with my former mates. Although we tried to be jolly, still, there was a lurking feeling of impending disaster. Each man was wondering, if, after the signal, "Over the top with the best of luck," had been sounded, would he still be alive or would he be lying "somewhere in France." In an old dilapidated house, the walls of which were scarred with machine-gun bullets, No. 3 section of the machine gun company had its quarters. The company's cooks prepared the meals in this billet. On the fifth evening of the bombardment a German eight-inch shell registered a direct hit on the billet and wiped out ten men who were asleep in the supposedly bomb-proof cellar. They were buried the next day and I attended the funeral.

CHAPTER XXVI.

All Quiet (?) on the Western Front. At brigade headquarters I happened to overhear a conversation between our G. O. C. (general officer commanding) and the divisional commander. From this conversation I learned that we were to bombard the German lines for eight days, and on the first of July the "big push" was to commence.

In a few days orders were issued to that effect, and it was common property all along the line.

On the afternoon of the eighth day of our "strafing," Atwell and I were sitting in the front-line trench smoking pipes and making out our reports of the previous night's tour of the trenches, which we had to turn in to headquarters the following day, when an order was passed down the trench that Old Pepper requested twenty volunteers to go over on a trench raid that night to try and get a few German prisoners for information purposes. I immediately volunteered for this job, and shook hands with Atwell, and went to the rear to give my name to the officers in charge of the raiding party.

I was accepted, worse luck.

At 9:45 that night we reported to the brigade headquarters dugout to receive instructions from Old Pepper.

After reaching this dugout we lined up in a semicircle around him, and he addressed us as follows:

"All I want you boys to do is to go over to the German lines tonight, surprise them, secure a couple of prisoners, and return immediately. Our artillery has bombarded that section of the line for two days and personally I believe that that part of the German trench is unoccupied, so just get a couple of prisoners and return as quickly as possible."

The sergeant on my right, in an undertone, whispered to me:

"Say, Yank, how are we going to get a couple of prisoners if the old fool thinks 'personally that that part of the trench is unoccupied,'—sounds kind of fishy, doesn't it mate?"

I had a funny sinking sensation in my stomach, and my tin hat felt as if it weighed about a ton and my enthusiasm was melting away. Old Pepper must have heard the sergeant speak because he turned in his direction and in a thundering voice asked:

"What did you say?"

The sergeant with a scarlet look on his face and his knees trembling, smartly saluted and answered:

"Nothing, sir."

Old Pepper said:

"Well, don't say it so loudly the next time."

Then Old Pepper continued:

"In this section of the German trenches there are two or three machine guns which our artillery, in the last two or three days, has been un-



Receiving First Aid.

able to tape. These guns command the sector where two of our communication trenches join the front line, and as the brigade is to go over the top tomorrow morning I want to capture two or three men from these guns' crews, and from them I may be able to obtain valuable information as to the exact location of the guns, and our artillery will therefore be able to demolish them before the attack, and thus prevent our losing a lot of men while using these communication trenches to bring up re-enforcements."

These were the instructions he gave us:

"Take off your identification disks; strip your uniforms of all numerals, insignia, etc., leave your papers with your captains, because I don't want the Boches to know what regiments are against them as this would be valuable information to them in our attack tomorrow and I don't want any of you to be taken alive. What I want is two prisoners and if I get them I have a way which will make them divulge all necessary information as to their guns. You have your choice of two weapons—you may carry your 'persuaders' or your knuckle knives, and each man will arm himself with four Mills bombs, these to be used only in case of emergency."

A persuader is Tommy's nickname for a club carried by the bombers. It is about two feet long, thin at one end and very thick at the other. The thick end is studded with sharp steel spikes, while through the center of the club there is a nine-inch lead bar, to give it weight and balance. When you get a prisoner all you have to do is just stick this club up in front of him, and believe me, the prisoner's patriotism for "Deutschland ueber Alles" fades away and he very willingly obeys the orders of his captor. If, however, the prisoner gets high-toned and refuses to follow you, simply "persuade" him by first removing his tin hat, and then—well, the use of the lead weight in the persuader is demonstrated, and Tommy looks for another prisoner.

The knuckle knife is a dagger affair, the blade of which is about eight inches long with a heavy steel guard

over the grip. This guard is studded with steel projections. At night in a trench, which is only about three to four feet wide, it makes a very handy weapon. One punch in the face generally shatters a man's jaw and you can get him with the knife as he goes down.

Then we had what we called our "come-alongs." These are strands of barbed wire about three feet long, made into a noose at one end; at the other end, the barbs are cut off and Tommy slips his wrist through a loop to get a good grip on the wire. If the prisoner wants to argue the point, why just place the large loop around his neck and no matter if Tommy wishes to return to his trenches at the walk, trot, or gallop, Fritz is perfectly agreeable to maintain Tommy's rate of speed.

We were ordered to black our faces and hands. For this reason; At night, the English and Germans use what they call star shells, a sort of rocket affair. They are fired from a large pistol about twenty inches long, which is held over the sandbag parapet of the trench, and discharged into the air. These star shells attain a height of about sixty feet, and a range of from fifty to seventy-five yards. When they hit the ground they explode, throwing out a strong calcium light which lights up the ground in a circle of a radius of between ten to fifteen yards. They also have a parachute star shell which, after reaching a height of about sixty feet, explodes. A parachute unfolds and slowly floats to the ground, lighting up a large circle in No Man's Land. The official name of the star shell is a "Very-light." Very-lights are used to prevent night surprise attacks on the trenches. If a star shell falls in front of you, or between you and the German lines, you are safe from detection, as the enemy cannot see you through the bright curtain of light. But if it falls behind you, as Tommy says, "you get in the star shell zone," then the fun begins; you have to lie flat on your stomach and remain absolutely motionless until the light of the shell dies out. This takes anywhere from forty to seventy seconds. If you haven't time to fall to the ground you must remain absolutely still in whatever position you were in when the light exploded; it is advisable not to breathe, as Fritz has an eye like an eagle when he thinks you are knocking at his door. When a star shell is burning in Tommy's rear he can hold his breath for a week.

You blacken your face and hands so that the light from the star shells will not reflect on your pale face. In a trench raid there is quite sufficient reason for your face to be pale. If you don't believe me, try it just once.

Then another reason for blackening your face and hands is that, after you have entered the German trench at night, "white face" means Germans, "black face" English. Coming around a traverse you see a white face in front of you. With a prayer and wishing Fritz "the best o' luck," you introduce him to your "persuader" or knuckle knife.

A little later we arrived at the communication trench named Whisky street, which led to the fire trench at the point we were to go over the top and out in front.

In our rear were four stretcher bearers and a corps of the R. A. M. C. carrying a pouch containing medicines and first-aid appliances. Kind of a grim reminder to us that our expedition was not going to be exactly a picnic. The order of things was reversed. In civilian life the doctors generally come first, with the undertakers tagging in the rear and then the insurance man, but in our case, the undertakers were leading, with the doctors trailing behind, minus the insurance adjuster.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Is Anyone Old in New York?

In Bruce Barton's novel, "The Making of George Grotton," the author says: "No one is old in New York. They drain in every year from all parts of the country—millions of men, young and vibrant. They stay and work, and grow into middle age; and then suddenly they vanish. One may walk for blocks on Fifth avenue or Broadway and hardly see anyone over fifty. Where do they go to? No one seems ever to die; no funerals clog the traffic. There are plenty of funerals, of course, but you don't notice them as you do in a little town. I have wandered for hours in the big woods, wondering where the birds go when they die; and never yet have I run across the body of a dead bird. What becomes of old birds? What becomes of old New Yorkers? These are twin mysteries to me. I cannot unravel them."

Got Along Without Metals.

The cliff dwellers knew nothing of the use of metals. Their knives were made from the bones of the deer, highly polished and very sharp. Their household utensils consisted of pottery jars and casks made of fiber and covered with a substance resembling modern varnish. Although the earliest cliff dwellers were prehistoric, cave dwellers have existed in almost every age of the world.

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By REV. F. E. FITZWATER, D. D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)
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LESSON FOR AUGUST 4

GROWING STRONGER.

LESSON TEXTS—Luke 2:42-52; II Peter 1:5-7.
(MAY BE USED WITH TEMPERANCE APPLICATIONS.)

GOLDEN TEXT—But the path of the righteous is as the dawning light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.—Proverbs 4:18.

DEVOTIONAL READING—Ephesians 6:10-12.

PRIMARY LESSON MATERIAL—Luke 2:42-52.

INTERMEDIATE, SENIOR AND ADULT TOPIC—The kind of strength we need; getting it; using it.

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL—Isaiah 40:29-31; Ephesians 3:14-21; Philippians 4:13-12.

I. Jesus Christ Growing (Luke 2:42-52).

While Christ was indeed divine, his deity did not interfere with his development as a human being. The processes of his physical, mental, and spiritual growth were the same as those of any human being.

1. Jesus tarrying behind at Jerusalem (vv. 42, 43).

At the age of twelve a Jewish child took his place as a worshipper in the temple. He was considered a "child of the law." Being conscious of his mission, when Joseph and his mother were returning from attendance at the Passover, he tarried behind to enter the temple and inquired into the meaning of the ordinances of God's House. He had an alert, eager mind, which inquired after the truth, especially the truth concerning his Father's House. His heart yearned after his Father.

2. Jesus found in the temple (vv. 44-50).

When Joseph and Jesus' mother had gone some distance on their return journey they perceived that Jesus was missing, and sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. Not finding him there, they turned back to Jerusalem where they found him in the temple.

(1) He was "sitting" (v. 46) showing that he was no passing visitor or sightseer. He was perfectly at home in his Father's House.

(2) He was "hearing" the teachers of God's Word (v. 46). This shows he was eager to learn God's will.

(3) He asked questions (v. 46). The growing mind is inquisitive. It more than receives that which is taught; it inquires after.

(4) He answered questions (v. 42). His answers showed great wisdom. It was not an exhibition of his divine wisdom, but an expression of the workings of a perfect human mind suffused by the Holy Spirit.

3. Mary's complaint (vv. 48-50).

She remonstrates with him for his behavior. He made no apology, showing that he was more than the son of Mary; God was his Father.

4. Jesus obedient (v. 51).

Though he was conscious of his divine being and mission, he lived a life of filial obedience.

5. Jesus' development (v. 52).

I. was

(1) Mental—"Increased in wisdom."

(2) Physical—"Stature."

(3) Spiritual—"Favor with God and man."

II. Growth in Grace (II Peter 1:3-11).

This is not growth into grace, but growth in it. We get into grace by the new birth. This new nature which has its source in God must be developed in order that our lives be fruitful for God (v. 8), that they bear testimony to the cleansing power of Christ's blood (v. 9), and that we may have assurance of salvation (v. 10). The following are lines of growth:

1. "Virtue" (v. 5).

Virtue here means energy or courage. This is not "added" as in the Authorized Version, but as in the Revised Version which reads: "In your faith supply virtue." It means increase by growth, not by external junction. Faith is the root from which spring all these excellencies.

2. "Knowledge" (v. 5).

This means a right understanding, a practical knowledge.

3. "Temperance" (v. 6).

Temperance means self-control. This self-control extends to all the affairs of life. Practical knowledge will supply to itself the government of all appetites.

4. "Patience" (v. 6).

This means endurance. Having control of self within, there will be endurance of that without.

5. "Godliness" (v. 6).

This means piety, reverence for God, the submission of the human will to the will of God. This is a part of that practical knowledge which we are obliged to supply.

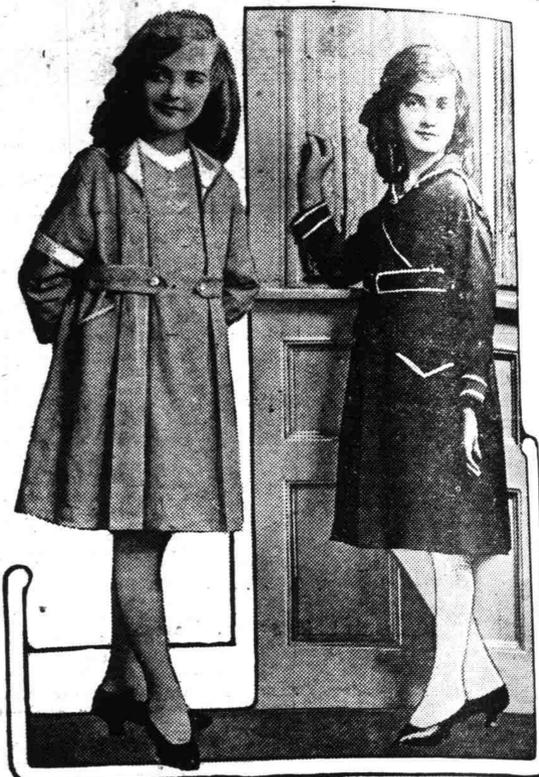
6. "Brotherly kindness" (v. 7).

Love of the brethren must be developed in godliness. The proof that one is godly is that he loves the brethren (I John 5:1). This means the special love of Christians for each other.

7. "Charity" (v. 7).

This is love. Peter's climax is reached in love. Out of faith, which is the root, springs this seven-fold fruit. In order to prevent apostasy, Peter calls all to be diligent in the development of these graces. All such shall endure.

Concerning School Frocks for Fall



All the long procession of maids, from kindergarten tot to college girl, will be fittingly clad this fall in simple and substantial clothes. Whether it is because of the war or for other reasons, the new frocks for children are unusually plain and they are the forerunners of fall styles. It is unlikely that anything very different will follow them for they are tastefully designed. School outfits may be got underway now with success assured since all straws that show which way the winds of fashion blow, point toward simplicity of design as a dominant feature of coming styles.

Furthermore, it is the part of patriotism to make over and use again all woolen clothes. Dresses that cannot be remodeled for grown people will serve in place of new goods for making children's frocks and this conservation of woolen materials is something to be proud of. At the right of the picture above there is a dark serge frock for a girl of eight years or more which has every requirement of a successful school dress and suggests a model for a made-over dress. It has a plain bodice and plaited skirt. It is brightened with white braid and has two very practical pockets. But what will delight its wearer more are its soldierly touches in the shoulder straps and narrow strap that extends

from the belt over the right shoulder to the belt again. Any of the dark colors in wool dress goods will look well made in this way.

The frock at the left is successful in either wool or cotton. It is pictured made of plain chambray with bandings and collar of white pique. Its new features appear in the band on one sleeve in the management of the collar and in the slit pocket at the right side of the skirt.

Serge and Georgette.

Very effective are dresses of a combination of navy blue serge and georgette. A brand-new model in this combination is made with a narrow skirt and a sleeveless jacket of the serge, having a full-length panel in the back. Georgette makes the sleeves and fills in the front in a sort of apron effect, and this section is headed in brilliant colors, a fringe of beads across the front of the apron, which reaches to the knees, repeating the color of the embroidery motif.

In Dyeing Anything.

Remember, in dyeing anything, that to get the best results the things that you dye must be free from dirt. Ball them clean in a boiler of water and then rinse them thoroughly in clear cold water.

Hand-Sewing on Undermuslin



Women who sew well find needlework among the pleasantest of occupations during the long, warm days of midsummer. It is a good time in which to make up undermuslins and grace the sheer soft materials that are used these days for underclothes with hand sewing and fancy stitches. These harmonize with the dainty fabrics used better than machine work.

Only lightweight and sheer weaves of cotton and silk concern the maker of underwear in these times. The choice lies among soft, washable silks and satins, including much crepe de chine and other wash silks, and batiste, cotton crepe and nainsook. In silks, crepe de chine is the favorite and in cottons, batiste. Both these are liked in light pink and flesh color as well as they are in white, and it is likely that the number of garments made in pink exceeds that made in white. The favorite finish for crepe de chine is Val or cluny lace, French knots, hemstitching, fine tucks and a little embroidery. Recently considerable fllet has been used in night-dresses.

The long-sleeved nightdress appears to be a thing of the past. Of the two models shown in the picture one has very short kimono sleeves and the other is sleeveless. The gown at the left is of white batiste with a short yoke

made of fllet lace and swiss embroidery. The body is hemstitched to a piece of plain heading. The fullness in the skirt is arranged in tucks, very fine and run in by hand and the skirt also hemstitched to the heading. No sort of undermuslin may be called finished without a touch of color in ribbon that is fashioned into rosettes or bows and ends. Pink satin ribbon is threaded through the heading in this slip-over gown and tied in a rosette with knotted loops and ends at the front. Small bows of it are perched on each sleeve.

Crepe de chine in flesh color with fine Val edging and insertion makes the simple gown shown on the right figure. Parallel groups of very narrow tucks in clusters of four shape the garment about the waistline. The neck and sleeves are finished with a wide edging and a narrower insertion is let in at the bust as shown in the picture. An envelope chemise to wear. These garments of crepe de chine are favored by many women because they launder so easily. Cotton crepes are liked on this account and do not require ironing.

Julia Bottrandy