

# "OVER THE TOP"

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

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## EMPEY LEARNS HOW THE TOMMIES ARE FED IN THE FRONT-LINE TRENCH AND BACK OF IT.

**Synopsis.**—Fired by the sinking of the Lusitania, with the loss of American lives, Arthur Guy Empey, an American living in Jersey City, goes to England and enlists as a private in the British army. After a short experience as a recruiting officer in London, he is sent to training quarters in France, where he first hears the sound of big guns and makes the acquaintance of "cooties." After a brief period of training Empey's company is sent into the front-line trenches, where he takes his first turn on the fire step while the bullets whiz overhead.

### CHAPTER VI.—Continued.

After dinner I tried to wash out the dixie with cold water and a rag, and learned another maxim of the trenches—"It can't be done." I slyly watched one of the older men from another section, and was horrified to see him throw into his dixie four or five double handfuls of mud. Then he poured in some water, and with his hands scoured the dixie inside and out. I thought he was taking an awful risk. Supposing the cook should have seen him? After half an hour of unsuccessful efforts I returned my dixie to the cook shack, being careful to put on the cover, and returned to the billet. Pretty soon the cook poked his head in the door and shouted: "Hey, Yank, come out here and clean your dixie!" I protested that I had wasted a half-hour on it already, and had used up my only remaining shirt in the attempt. With a look of disdain he exclaimed: "Blow me, your shirt! Why in — didn't you use mud?"

Without a word in reply I got busy with the mud, and soon my dixie was bright and shining. Most of the afternoon was spent by the men writing letters home. I used my spare time to chop wood for the cook and go with the quartermaster to draw coal. I got back just in time to issue our third meal, which consisted of hot tea. I rinsed out my dixie and returned it to the cookhouse, and went back to the billet with an exhilarated feeling that my day's labor was done. I had fallen asleep on the straw when once again the cook appeared in the door of the billet with: "Blime me, you Yanks are lazy. Who in — a-goin' to draw the water for the mornin' tea? Do you think I'm a-goin' to? Well, I'm not," and he left. I filled the dixie with water from an old squeaking well, and once again lay down in the straw.

### CHAPTER VII.

**Rations.**  
Just dozing off; Mr. Lance Corporal butted in. In Tommy's eyes a lance corporal is one degree below a private. In the corporal's eyes he is one degree above a general. He ordered me to go with him and help him draw the next day's rations, also told me to take my waterproof. Every evening, from each platoon or machine-gun section, a lance corporal and private go to the quartermaster sergeant at the company stores and draw rations for the following day. The "quarter," as the quartermaster sergeant is called, receives daily from the orderly room (captain's office) a slip showing the number of men entitled to rations, so there is no chance of putting anything over on him. Many arguments take place between the "quarter" and the platoon noncom, but the former always wins out. Tommy says the "quarter" got his job because he was a burglar in civil life. Then I spread the waterproof sheet on the ground, while the quartermaster's batman dumped the rations on it. The corporal was smoking a fag. I carried the rations back to the billet. The corporal was still smoking a fag.



Taking Provisions to the Front

How I envied him. But when the issue commenced my envy died, and I realized that the first requisite of a non-commissioned officer on active service is diplomacy. There were 19 men in our section, and they soon formed a semicircle around us after the corporal had called out, "Rations up."

The quartermaster sergeant had given a slip to the corporal on which was written a list of the rations. Sitting on the floor, using a wooden box as a table, the issue commenced. On the left of the corporal the rations were piled. They consisted of the following:

Six loaves of fresh bread, each loaf of a different size, perhaps one out of the six being as flat as a pancake, the result of an army service corps man placing a box of bully beef on it during transportation.

Three tins of jam, one apple and the other two plum.

Seventeen Bermuda onions, all different sizes.

A piece of cheese in the shape of a wedge.

Two one-pound tins of butter.

A handful of raisins.

A tin of biscuits, or as Tommy calls them "jaw breakers."

A bottle of mustard pickles.

The "bully beef," spuds, condensed milk, fresh meat, bacon and "Maconochie rations" (a can filled with meat, vegetables and greasy water), had been turned over to the company cook to make a stew for next day's dinner. He also received the tea, sugar, salt, pepper and flour.

Scratching his head, the corporal studied the slip issued to him by the quarter. Then in a slow, mystified voice he read out, "No. 1 section, 19 men. Bread, loaves, six." He looked puzzled and soliloquized in a musing voice:

"Six loaves, nineteen men. Let's see, that's three in a loaf for fifteen men—well, to make it even, four of you'll have to muck in on one loaf."

The four that got stuck made a howl, but to no avail. The bread was dished out. Pretty soon from a far corner of the billet, three indignant Tommies accosted the corporal with:

"What do you call this, a loaf of bread? Looks more like a snippling plate."

The corporal answered: "Well, don't blame me, I didn't bake it; somebody's got to get it, so shut up until I dish out these blinkin' rations."

Then the corporal started on the jam.

"Jam, three tins—apple one, plum two. Nineteen men, three tins. Six in a tin makes twelve men for two tins, seven in the remaining tin."

He passed around the jam, and there was another riot. Some didn't like apple, while others who received plum were partial to apple. After a while differences were adjusted and the issue went on.

"Bermuda onions, seventeen."

The corporal avoided a row by saying that he did not want an onion, and I said they make your breath smell, so I guessed I would do without one too. The corporal looked his gratitude.

"Cheese, pounds, two."

The corporal borrowed a jackknife (corporals are always borrowing), and sliced the cheese—each slicing bringing forth a pert remark from the on-lookers as to the corporal's eyesight. "Raisins, ounces, eight."

By this time the corporal's nerves had gone west, and in despair he said that the raisins were to be turned over to the cook for "duff" (plum pudding). This decision elicited a little "grousing," but quiet was finally restored. "Biscuits, tins, one."

With his borrowed jackknife, the corporal opened the tin of biscuits, and told everyone to help themselves—no body responded to this invitation. Tommy is "fed up" with biscuits.

"Butter, tins, two."

"Nine in one, ten in the other."

Another rumpus.

"Pickles, mustard, bottles, one."

Nineteen names were put in a steel helmet, the last one out winning the pickles. On the next issue there were only 18 names, as the winner is eliminated until every man in the section has won a bottle.

The raffle is closely watched, because Tommy is suspicious when it comes to gambling with his rations.

At the different French estaminets in the village and at the canteens Tommy buys fresh eggs, milk, bread and pastry. Occasionally when he is flush, he invests in a tin of pears or apricots. His pay is only a shilling a day, 24 cents, or a cent an hour. Just imagine, a cent an hour for being under fire—not much chance of getting rich out there.

When he goes into the fire trench (front line), Tommy's menu takes a tumble. He carries in his haversack what the government calls emergency or iron rations. They are not supposed to be opened until Tommy dies of starvation. They consist of one tin of bully beef, four biscuits, a little tin which contains tea, sugar and Oxo cubes (concentrated beef tablets). These are only to be used when the enemy establishes a curtain of shell fire on the communication trenches, thus preventing the "carrying in" of rations, or when in an attack a body of troops has been cut off from its base of supplies.

The rations are brought up at night by the company transport. This is a section of the company in charge of the quartermaster sergeant, composed of men, mules and limbers (two-wheeled wagons), which supplies Tommy's wants while in the front line. They are constantly under shell fire. The rations are unloaded at the entrance to the communication trenches and are "carried in" by men detailed for that purpose. The quartermaster sergeant never goes into the front-line trench. He doesn't have to, and I have never heard of one volunteering to do so.

The company sergeant major sorts the rations and sends them in.

Tommy's trench rations consist of all the bully beef he can eat, biscuits, cheese, tinned butter (sometimes 17 men to a tin), jam or marmalade, and occasionally fresh bread (ten to a loaf). When it is possible he gets tea and stew.

When things are quiet, and Fritz is behaving like a gentleman, which seldom happens, Tommy has the opportunity of making dessert. This is "trench pudding." It is made from broken biscuits, condensed milk, jam—a little water added, slightly flavored with mud—put into a canteen and cooked over a little spirit stove known as "Tommy's cooker."

(A firm in Blighty widely advertises these cookers as a necessity for the men in the trenches. Gullible people buy them—ship them to the Tommies, who, immediately upon receipt of same throw them over the parapet. Sometimes a Tommy falls for the ad, and uses the cooker in a dugout to the disgust and discomfort of the other occupants.)

This mess is stirred up in a tin and allowed to simmer over the flames from the cooker until Tommy decides that it has reached sufficient (guelike) consistency. He takes his bayonet and by means of the handle carries the mess up in the front trench to cool. After it has cooled off he tries to eat it. Generally one or two Tommies in a section have cast-iron stomachs and the tin is soon emptied. Once I tasted trench pudding, but only once.

In addition to the regular ration issue Tommy uses another channel to enlarge his menu.

In the English papers a "Lonely Soldier" column is run. This is for the soldiers at the front who are supposed to be without friends or relatives. They write to the papers and their names are published. Girls and women in England answer them, and send out parcels of foodstuffs, cigarettes, candy, etc. I have known a "lonely" soldier to receive as many as five parcels and eleven letters in one week.

Empey realizes for the first time how death lurks in the trenches when a comrade falls by his side. He tells about it in the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Acting Director of the Sunday School Course of the Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.)  
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### LESSON FOR MARCH 24

#### JESUS MINISTERING TO THE MULTITUDES.

LESSON TEXT—Mark 6:32-56.  
GOLDEN TEXT—The son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.—Matt. 20:28.

DEVOTIONAL READING—John 6:35-40.  
ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS—Exodus 16:14-18; Matt. 25:31-46; Luke 4:16-21; James 1:27; Rev. 17.

PRIMARY TOPIC—Jesus a helper at all times.  
MEMORY VERSE—Be of good cheer: it is I, be not afraid.—Mark 6:50

INTERMEDIATE TOPIC—Helping the needy.

SENIOR AND ADULT TOPIC—(?)

This parable marks the high level of the year of popularity in the life of our Lord. It is such an important miracle as to be the only one recorded by all four gospel writers. The returning disciples (v. 31) are urged by the Master to come with him into a desert place and rest and also that he might comfort their hearts over the death of John the Baptist. "They had no leisure." Jesus knew the need and also the proper use of leisure, but the multitude would not grant him this but flocked to his retreat in the desert. They followed that they might listen to his gracious words, or behold some new wonder, but Jesus also saw and ministered, (v. 24). Carlyle said he saw in England "forty million people mostly flogs." Not so with Jesus; he saw and was moved, not with sarcasm, but with a compassion that took the form of teaching (v. 34). It is better to teach a man how to help himself than to help the man without the teaching. We also infer that the soul of a man is of more value than his body. It is not enough, however, to say "God bless you; be warmed and fed," when a man is hungry. Sympathy must issue in action.

#### A Great Task.

John tells us of the conversation with Phillip. Phillip lived in Bethsaida nearby, but to feed this multitude was too great a task, even with his knowledge and resources (John 6:5, 7). Yet we need not be surprised at Phillip's slowness of faith. Moses in a similar case was once nonplussed as to how to feed the thousands in the wilderness (see Numbers 11:21-33). The central fact concerns neither the need nor our poverty, but the absolute surrender of our all—however little—to God.

Another disciple, Andrew, who had brought his brother, Simon Peter, to the Savior, in his desperation found a boy whose mother had thoughtfully provided him with a lunch consisting of five barley biscuits and two small dried herrings (John 6:9). This is a great commentary on the tide of interest at this time—that even this hungry boy should have forgotten his lunch; the circumstances emphasized the helplessness of the disciples in order that Jesus might show his power. His command "Give ye them," (v. 37) teaches us that we are to give what we have, not to look to others, nor to do our charity by proxy (Pro. 11:24, 25). Again the Savior asks his disciples to seek (v. 38) as though he would teach them the boundless resources of his kingdom. Give what you have and he will bless and increase it to meet the needs of the multitude. The secret of success points to the moment when he took the loaves and looking up (to God who also saw their needs), he blessed it.

#### Living Bread.

This conversation process was a stinging rebuke to the orientals, and is being emphasized in these days of food conservation in connection with war needs. Too long we have been prodigal of God's marvelous bounties. God gives us that we may use; and we lose it unless it is shared. Jesus, the living bread, (John 6:48) will satisfy hunger and give life. As bread generates in the human body heat, energy, vitality and power, so he will feed the hungry souls of men. We have at hand the Word. It is for lack of it that men die in the deepest and truest sense of that Word. The poverty and perplexity of the disciples in the presence of similar great need, is being repeated over and over again, and yet how faithless it is. We have not enough to feed the multitude. Our few loaves of comfort, amusement, counsel, etc., will not sustain them in the present world's crisis; but when we break unto them the living bread, it meets the deep hunger of the human heart; and they will have enough and to spare if they will only eat it. In these days when the emphasis is being laid on material bread for the sustenance of the nation, there is great danger lest we forget the necessity of breaking the living bread to the starving multitudes of the world. We must maintain the supremacy of the spiritual, or lack the dynamic to provide the material.

How true the words of the late Dr. Maltbie Davenport Babcock:

Back of the loaf is the snowy flour;  
Back of the flour the mill;  
And back of the mill is the wheat,  
And the showers, and the sun,  
And the Father's will.

The problem which the disciples could not meet, Jesus discerned and solved. As they co-operated with him and gave of that which he had first blessed, each had a basketful to take away and thus was well repaid for sharing with the multitude.

## What Well Dressed Women Will Wear

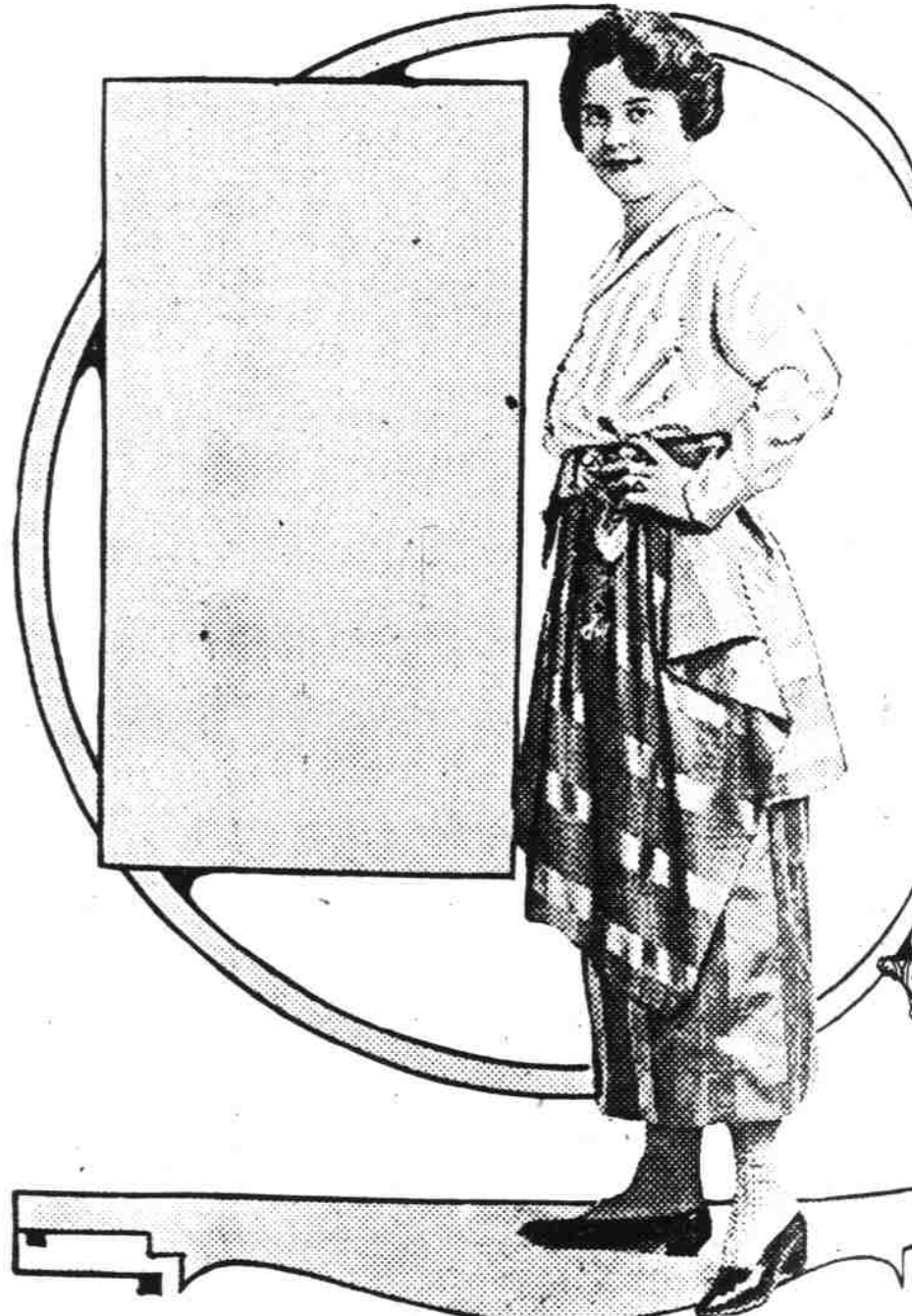


SUITS THAT LOOK LIKE SPRING.

Here is a group of suits for spring that even the unpracticed eye—at a glance—will perceive to be quite unlike the suits of yesterday. Their designers have wandered into green fields and pastures new, gathering ideas, and are displaying the results of their wanderings now in suits that have many interesting style features. They appear to have centered attention on coats and to have agreed that skirts shall be plain, hang straight, or show a little narrowing toward the bottom, and reach at least to the shoe top.

In coats the most noticeable innovation is the uneven line at the bottom of the coat skirt. There is only an occasional coat that is even at the bottom edge, but this variety is good style always. Another new feature in coats is the fitted-in lines at the back, which are achieved by new methods of cutting and shaping, that almost vie with semifitted models in point of numbers. There are many coats that fail to close at the front, and some whose only closing point is at the waistline. These open models are worn with light waistcoats in some cases, or over blouses that are glimpsed at the waist.

At the left of the picture a very graceful and clever coat has pointed fronts and its skirt is set on to a



TUNIC SKIRT OF STRIPED SILK.

double-breasted body ending in a belt across the front. There is a little ripple in the skirt of the coat, which slopes upward from the front and across the back. Some models of this kind are very short at the back. The collar and cuffs are of satin with white polka dots and the skirt narrows toward the hem.

At the right of the picture the suit of serge maintains more mannish lines, but reverses the order of things shown in the other suit. Its coat slopes down in a curved line across the back, and is one of the longest models shown. It is worn over a low-cut vest of white wash satin and has a satin overcollar. The edges are bound with narrow silk braid and strips of this braid, with two bone buttons finish the cuff. The skirt is plain and hangs almost straight.

Little sketches elsewhere in the picture reveal the diversity of the new styles. Assortments of suits that every woman's satisfaction of satisfying and preferences when selection.

The dressy, separate made a history for itself its welcome every great day is ushered in. Its rival, the sports skirt of silk is sure and there is no end to the and color combinations thing of beauty this spring.

Two or three shades of stripes and plaids, or contrasting colors, or color bars in black or white, signs as we find in the choice unlimited, but have been developed into attractive of the new spring.

The season is dominated styles, each with many is the skirt laid in plain waistline and the other skirt. The plaited skirt as the tunic, but it is ing, and may be fitted to good style for women of their reckoning.

Tunics, like coats, are even in length. They

Julia B...