



TOMMY

By Joseph Hocking

Author of "All for a Scrap of Paper," "Dearer Than Life," etc. Published by Hodder & Stoughton, Limited, London and Toronto

CHAPTER II.—(Cont'd.)

As Christmas drew near, Tom became more and more uncomfortable, even although the blandishments of Polly Powell grew more powerful. He had attended two recruiting meetings, but they seemed to him half-hearted and unconvincing. He still saw no reason why he should "do his bit." When he was asked why he didn't join, he mentioned the names of several young fellows who also held back.

"Why should I go," he would say, "when so-and-so and so-and-so stay at home? They are manufacturers' sons, and they are no better nor me. Let them enlist as privates, and then I'll see about it."

When the New Year came a big recruiting meeting was announced at the great hall of the Mechanics' Institute. It was advertised that a man who had been to Belgium, and had witnessed what had taken place, was to be the chief speaker. At first Polly Powell tried to persuade Tom not to go, and would probably have been successful had there not been a dance that night to which Polly had been invited. Tom, not being a dancer, was not eligible for the occasion, so he made his way to the meeting.

That meeting marked an era in Tom's life. Little by little the speaker gripped the attention of the audience until the interest became intense and almost painful. He described what he had seen, he gave terrible proofs of the ghastly butchery, and made it clear to the audience what the war really meant. He showed that not only was the power of England at stake, but the welfare of humanity trembled in the balance. He related authenticated stories of what the Germans said they would do when they came to England. As Tom listened he heard the sound of the advancing Huns, saw towns and villages laid waste, saw the women of England debauched and outraged, saw the reign of devils.

"By God!" he exclaimed aloud, "I can't stand this!" His words reached the speaker, who made the most of them. "Yes," he cried, "if the young men of England hang back, if they fail to love their country, if they care nothing about the honor or sacredness of womanhood, if they prefer their own ease, their own paltry pleasures, before duty; if they would rather go to cinema shows, or hang around public-house doors than play the game like Englishmen, this, and more than this, will take place. The England that we own and love will be lost for ever. Liberty will be gone, we shall be a nation in chains, while our women will be the playthings of inhuman devils. That is the problem which every man has to consider.

"What are you going to do? Let me put it another way. If we win this war, if the glory of England is maintained, and if she remains as she has always been—
"The home of the brave and free,
The land of liberty,
To whom shall we owe it? Who will have been our saviours? It will be the lads who have sacrificed everything to do their duty."
A great cheer arose from the audience, and Tom scarcely realising what he was doing, shouted and cheered with the rest.

"But if we lose," continued the speaker, "if the Germans break our lines and come to England, if we are beaten, to whom shall we owe it? Who will be responsible? It will be the shirkers, the cowards! Look, you young men!" he cried passionately. "Thousands and tens of thousands of our brave fellows are at this time in the trenches; fighting, suffering, dying. What for? For England, for England's honor, for the safety of her women, for the sacredness of our lives, for you: while you, you skulk at home smoking your cigarettes, go to your places of amusement, and drink your beer. Don't you realise that you are playing the coward?"

Then the speaker made his last appeal, clear, impassioned, convincing. "What are you going to do, you young men?" he cried. "We don't want conscripts, but free men who come out cheerfully, willingly, gladly to do their duty to their King, Country, and God. Who will be the first?"

He stood on the platform waiting amidst breathless silence. "Will you wait until you are forced?" "No! By God, no!" said Tom, and starting to his feet he walked to the platform and gave his name. Thus Tom became a soldier. "That doesn't say so?" said Tom's mother when, that night, he told her what he had done. "Ay, I have." "Then thou'st goin' for a sodger." "Ay."

CHAPTER III.

Tom made his way to the Thorn and Thistle, but was informed that Polly would not be home until eleven o'clock. He therefore wandered about the town until that time, and again appeared at the public-house door. But it was not until twelve o'clock that Polly made her appearance. "Anything the matter, Tom?" she asked.

"Ay, I have joined the Army." "Thou'st noan been such a fool?" "I have noan been a fool," said Tom, "I couldn't help it." Polly Powell looked at him rather angrily, then she said: "If you have done it, what do you want to speak to me about it for?"

"I shall be off to-morrow," replied Tom. "The recruiting officer told me I must report at the Town Hall to-morrow morning at ten o'clock." "Where will you go?" she asked. "I don't know," said Tom. "Well, what are you waiting for?" "I thought," said Tom, "that is—I thought as I was going away I'd—
"Look here, Polly, you are going to keep true to me while I'm away, aren't you?"

"I never thought much of soldiers," said Polly. "Besides—"
"Besides what?" asked Tom. "Look here, Polly, I gave up Alice Lister for you, and if you had been at that meeting you would see as how I couldn't do anything else."
"Do you think you might get a commission and be an officer?" asked the girl.

"I never thought about that," said Tom. Polly hesitated a second, then she said: "Of course I'll be true to you, Tom. There, good night, I must go in."
The next morning as Tom was making his way towards the Town Hall he met Alice Lister. At first he was going to pass her by without notice, but when he saw the look on her face he stopped. She came towards him with outstretched hand. "Tom," she said, "I've heard about last night, and it was splendid of you. I am glad you were the first. I am told that your going up in that way led scores of others to go."
"Have you heard that?" said Tom. "I never thought of it."
"I am sure you will be a good soldier, Tom. We are all proud of you, and—and we shall be thinking about you, and praying for you."
Tom laughed uneasily. "I thought you had forgotten all about me, Alice," he said.

TO GARNER CROP WEST NEEDS MEN

THE "IMPERIOUS URGENCY" OF CONSERVING GRAIN YIELD.

Survey Conducted by Canadian Northern Indicates Need of 25,000 Men Along Its Lines.

The successful harvesting of the crop in Western Canada this season is what Ex-Premier Asquith of Great Britain would term "a matter of imperious urgency."

Since men began to sow grain west of the Great Lakes, there has never been so much depending upon the yield of grain in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta as there is this year. The Canadian Northern Railway, with lines gridironing the productive sections in the west, has already concluded a survey as to labour needs, and the prospects of the wages to be paid, and has announced that 25,000 men will be required to help the farmers garner the crops in the territory it serves. The indications are that the average wages will be around three dollars a day. A further conference between the representatives of the Government, the railways and the farmers is to be held, when further details will be brought out.

The farming situation in Ontario may not permit of sending as much help as in former seasons, but nothing should be left undone on the farms and in the towns to give the western farmers the assistance of which they stand to-day in urgent need.

The Dairy Farmer's Ten Commandments.

Mr. Charles Christodoro has issued what he calls "Ten Commandments for the Dairy Farmer" as follows:
Keep healthy cows.
Select good producers.
Use only pure bred bulls.
Feed liberally an approved ration.
Produce the feed.
Keep barn clean and aired.
Keep the cows comfortable.
Be considerate to the cows.
Provide shade and wind protection.
Feed and milk regularly.

DOMINION FROM SEA TO SEA.

The Idea of Our Country's Name Came From the 72nd Psalm.

The British North America Act which made Canada a Dominion came into force on July 1, 1867, and that original essay in Dominion self-government has richly justified the faith and foresight of those who undertook it, says the Glasgow Herald.

The Convention sat in a room in the Westminster Palace Hotel, in London, which is now the smoking-room of the National Liberal Club. A tablet fixed in the wall records the fact that in this chamber the delegates conferred. Those who took part in the proceedings are all dead. Sir Charles Tupper was the last survivor, and he died at a ripe old age a very few years ago. The word "Dominion" was suggested by the Bible.

Sir Leonard Tilley had been reading in the 72nd Psalm "He shall have dominion from sea to sea," and thought the passage applicable to Canada.

IF FOOD DISAGREES DRINK HOT WATER

When food lies like lead in the stomach and you have that uncomfortable, distended feeling, it is because of insufficient blood supply to the stomach, combined with acid and food fermentation. In such cases try the plan now followed in many hospitals and advised by many eminent physicians of taking a teaspoonful of pure bisurated magnesia in half a glass of water, as hot as you can comfortably drink it. The hot water draws the blood to the stomach and the bisurated magnesia, as any physician can tell you, instantly neutralizes the acid and stops the food fermentation. Try this simple plan and you will be astonished at the immediate feeling of relief and comfort that always follows the restoration of the normal process of digestion. People who find it inconvenient at times to secure hot water and travelers who are frequently obliged to take hasty meals poorly prepared, should always take two or three five-grain tablets of Bisurated Magnesia after meals to prevent fermentation and neutralize the acid in their stomach.

SHELLS LIKE THUNDERCLAP

British Shrapnel Explodes More Quietly than Does German.

Writing from British field headquarters, Edward P. Bell, says:—
Listening to the explosion—continuous as I write—of British and German shrapnel shells, one notes a striking difference in the sounds produced. The British shells make a comparatively soft report, while the German projectiles make a piercing, shattering sound like that of a terrible thunderclap. Moreover, the subsequent sounds are different, those from the German shells being more sibilant in quality and greater in volume than those from the British shells.

Which shell is the more destructive I cannot say. The German has a sharper, louder report, due to the fact that it is charged not only with shrapnel bullets, but with high explosive materials. This material bursts the steel shell case so that the whistling noises following are caused by a mixture of bullets and fragments of steel.

The British shell case, on the other hand, does not burst. It remains intact and pours its bullets from the shell mouth as a shotgun pours its shot; thus perhaps the bullets are brought to bear more effectively in a definite direction. Certainly the British must have some good reason for using the type employed.

Brother Fritz's penchant for "frightfulness" shows itself in all he does. There is probably no doubt, as regards his high explosive shrapnel shell, that he reasons that, whether it is really more destructive than the other or not, it is calculated to produce greater fright—a thing which commanders always must fight against among their troops. Happily for the British army, Tommy Atkins is about the hardest man to scare that ever wore a uniform.

Success with poultry means work, and the work must be given when needed.

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HOW TO TEST DIAMONDS.

Simple Methods to Determine if Gems Are Genuine Or Not.

The public is frequently deceived in regard to the sale of jewelry and precious stones and the authorities have issued a statement upon the accurate testing of diamonds.

When a diamond is quite clean and dry, the following experiment should be tried: Place on the surface a tiny drop of water and then take a needle or pin and try to move the drop about. If the diamond is genuine, the drop can be rolled about intact. On the other hand, where the gem is an imitation the water spreads directly it is touched with the needle-point.

Another very good test may be carried out with a tumbler of water. Into this put the suspected article and examine its appearance. A real diamond will show up in the water with a startling clearness, and it can never be confounded with the water. On the other hand, the imitation looks indefinite and it is sometimes difficult to see it at all.

Not To Be Cheated.

Little John had been extra specially good that afternoon, and father felt amiably inclined.

"Papa," piped John, "can I have a banana?"

"Yes, certainly, sonny."

"Papa, if I was twins would you give the other boy a banana too?"

"Yes, of course."

"Well, papa, you aren't going to cheat me out of another banana just because I'm all in one piece, are you?"

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