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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 VIII.—(Cont'd.)

Tom recognised the new-comer although he had not seen him for months. It was Penrose who had been with him in Lancashire, and who had received his commission immediately after his arrival in Surrey.

"You know me, sir!" cried Tom, still holding on to the other; "you know I would not do a thing without reason, sir! Make him a prisoner, he's been giving information to the enemy!"

"Prove it!" said Waterman.
"Yes, I will prove it!" panted Tom. "Make him a prisoner, sir; I tell you he's been communicating with the enemy. I saw him not a minute ago!"

"What has he done?" asked Penrose.

"I saw him take a piece of paper from his pocket which was fastened to something heavy; then he threw it over the sand-bags towards the German lines. I tell you, sir, I saw him do it! Make him a prisoner."

By this time others had come up, and Waterman, who Tom had released somewhat, laughed uneasily. "He's either a fool or a madman," he said; "he attacked me without a moment's warning, and without the slightest reason."

"Hold him fast, sir," cried Tom. "I'll soon prove to you whether it's without the slightest reason. Promise me you won't let him go, sir?"

Penrose, who had grasped the situation, replied quickly: "Of course I shall not let him go, but you must prove your accusation, Pollard. Where are you going?"

"I am going to get the paper he threw towards the German trenches," cried Tom. "That's it, sir, hold him fast!"

Tom was so excited that he had forgotten all about military rules and regulations. He acted just as he would have acted had he caught any one doing an outrageous deed before the war.

Waterman began to shout aloud, but Penrose was too quick for him. He placed his hand on the other's mouth, and said quietly, "No you don't, sir."

"Do you know what you are doing, Lieutenant?" said Waterman. "You are attacking your superior officer. Take away your men and let me go at once."

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THE BEST WAY TO SEND MONEY TO THE BOYS IN THE TRENCHES

Waterman had been able to throw the stone, or how near it might be to the German trench. But his eyes were young and keen; every faculty was more than ordinarily tense and active, and Tom was in deadly earnest. He had started to do this thing, and he would do it.

Presently he saw a white spot on the ground, and he felt as though hammers were beating against his temples. Crouching low, he made his way towards it, but he had only gone a few steps when he discerned the form of a man, apparently with the same object in view, creeping from a German trench. Like lightning Tom made a dash for it, but the other was nearer than he, and by the time he had reached it the German had secured it. As far as he could judge they were about half-way between the two lines, and he knew the danger of the task he had set himself. In a vague way he wondered whether the Germans had seen him, he also wondered whether the British were watching him. But this did not trouble him much; the one thought which filled his mind was that he must at all hazards secure the paper which Waterman had thrown.

Without hesitating a second, and without making a sound, he threw himself upon the German and well-nigh bore him to the ground. Then followed a hand-to-hand struggle, the details of which Tom was never clear about. As a lad he had been a football player and had made good muscle; he had played half-back for the Bradford football club for several seasons, and although he was by no means a giant, he was well built and strong. During the time he had been in the Army, too, every muscle in his body had been developed to its fullest capacity; his severe training told in his favor now, and Tom never dreamt of giving in. On the other hand, however, the German was a big, heavy man and he also had undergone a severe training.

Tom felt his antagonist weakening; he knew it by his gurgling breath and his weakening grasp. He himself was also well-nigh spent, although he was not quite exhausted. Then, fearing lest the apparent weakness of his opponent was only a ruse by which he might gain advantage, Tom determined on an old football trick. A second later the German's shoulder blade snapped like a match, and Tom, seizing the paper, rushed back towards the English lines.

He had only fifty yards to cover, but such a fifty yards! His legs seemed of lead, too, while his head was swimming. No sooner had he commenced to stagger back, than the Germans opened fire on him; a hundred bullets whistled by him, while he heard yells of rage coming from the enemy's trenches.

He felt his strength leaving him, his head was swimming, his breath came in short, difficult gasps, and he knew he was wounded. He suffered no great pain, but by the burning sensations in his left arm and in his right shoulder he knew that the German bullets must have struck him. More than once he stumbled and fell.

He felt himself going blind; he heard cries from the English trenches which seemed like cheers, but he could see nothing, and the cries seemed to be a long, long way off. Still he struggled on. "I must get in! I must get in!" was the thought which possessed his bewildered brain. Then he fell heavily; after that all became dark.

When he returned to consciousness it seemed to him as though he saw a number of ghostly faces around him. He had a sort of feeling that he was dead, and that those faces belonged to the spirit world; but in a few seconds they became clearer.

"That's better, Tom, that's better! You are all right. You did it, lad! You did it!"

"Stand back there, and give him air. Heavens! There hasn't been a braver thing done by any man in the Army!"

He heard all this, but not clearly. They seemed to be stray sentences, uttered by many voices. But it didn't matter; only one thing mattered. Had he done what he had set out to do?

"Have you got it?" he gasped.
"Got it! I should think we have," it was Major Blundell who spoke. "It's all right, Pollard, you've done the trick."

"Have I, sir?" said Tom. "I—I feel very strange."
"You will soon get over it, you are only pumped!"

(To be continued.)

B. C. FIRE LOSSES HEAVY.

Survey Shows Need For Looking After Burnt-Over Areas.

Few people realize the enormous damage which has been caused by forest fires in years past. This damage has taken place in every province of the Dominion. An illuminating example is afforded by the investigation of forest resources of British Columbia, upon which the Commission of Conservation has been engaged during the past four years. This investigation shows that on 95,000 square miles the timber has been uselessly destroyed by fire, mostly many years ago. The amount of timber so destroyed is estimated to be not less than 650,000 million feet, or about twenty-two times as much as the total that has ever been cut by the lumbermen in that province. Putting the loss in another way, this timber is equivalent to almost twice the amount of saw timber now standing in the province, and to nearly as much saw timber as is now standing in the forests of all Canada.

Much of the area burned over con-

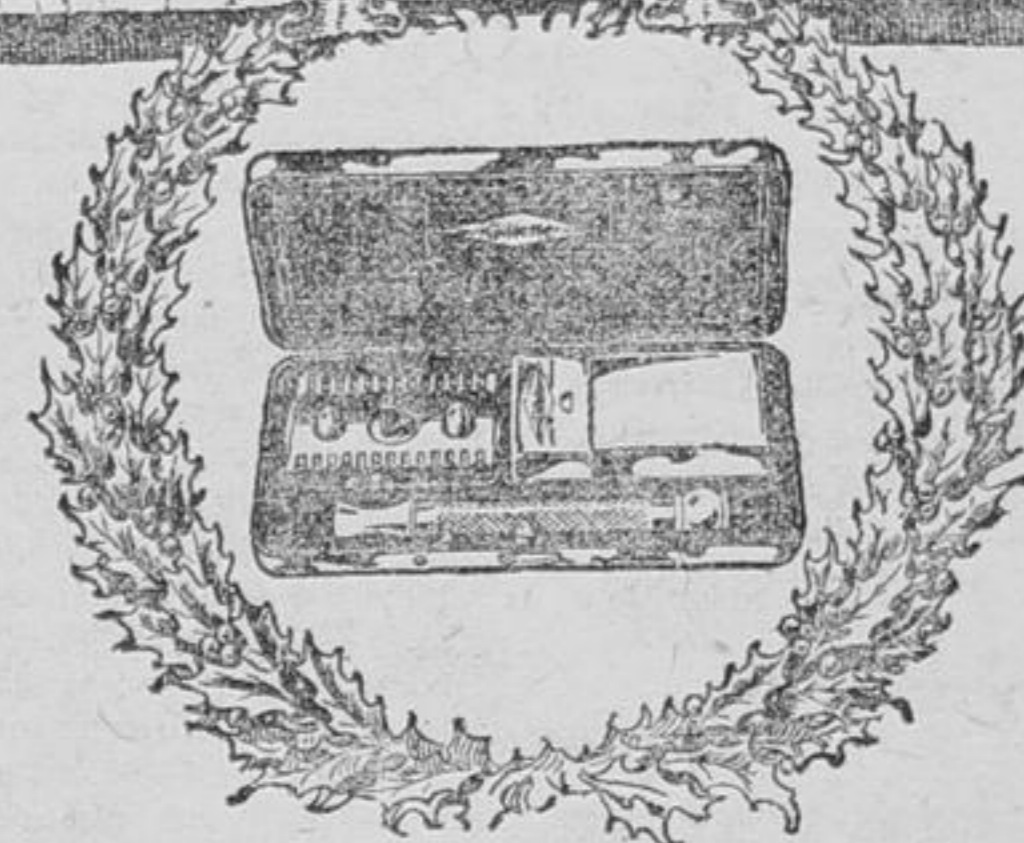


tains young forest growth which, if protected from further destruction, will, in time, furnish the basis for enormous industrial development on our Pacific coast. If we assume that the 97,000 square miles of cut-over and burned-over lands should be made to produce an average of only 100 board feet per acre per annum, the total increment would amount to 6,200 million feet per year, or about 5 times the present annual cut. That this estimate is by no means beyond the

bounds of reason is shown by measurements of growth which have actually been made.

Many deaths from pneumonia can be avoided if the simple and common laws of health are observed. Proper clothing, attention to the personal hygiene routine and regular habits are all essential in preparing the bodily resistance against the winter diseases.

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