# ERKS' WORK

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE ROYAL NEW ZEALAND AIR FORCE STATION • OHAKEA

FEBRUARY • 1941

# Contents

## FOREWORD.

(By Wing Commander F. E. T. Hewlett, D.S.O., O.B.E.)

When I was asked what I thought of the idea of producing an OHAKEA Magazine my reactions were: "Yes, provided it is a good one." I have seen many Station periodicals and some of them have been poor stuff and only of interest to the contributors. This, I believe, is different. You, the readers, are the judges.

A Station periodical can be of inestimable value principally because it can ginger up that most essential quality of efficiency, a Station spirit or esprit de corps which makes us all proud of serving in "a good show" as opposed to being a little ashamed of being members of a weak or badly-disciplined Station.

Our job being what it is, we at Ohakea have a fairly large floating population of people who leave us to go to all the various corners of the earth where New Zealanders are doing their stuff.

To all Ohakeans, wherever you may be, we hope that our first effort in publication will remind you of your old Station, and I for one wish you all the best and hope that you will find time to look us up upon your return, or before that, send us a contribution for our next number.

# EDITORIAL.

For some obscure reason, it seems to be the thing to profess trepidation when starting a Magazine of this kind. Being innocent as babes of all such gentlemanly instincts, we can admit nothing but profound relief. Perhaps we should apologise for this oversight: perhaps we should apologise for the Magazine. Again we confess abysmal ignorance of good form. But there is, we would suggest, some shadow of excuse.

This venture was conceived months ago. Much thought was given to it—perhaps we should say squandered. Hopes were high, ambition soared, and, as is so often the case, came a cropper. Whether it was the paper shortage, we do not know. At all events, nothing happened. True, a lone, worthy soul with an ex-professional interest made regular pilgrimage to the Editorial Office. The Guardhouse stirred, but the Station as a whole was in a coma. Rouse it? As well try to rouse a mountain by shouting into a cave. By and by, however, taking its own good time, a minute trickle appeared. We settled ouselves glumly down to watch, and in due course a tiny pile had materialised. Meanwhile Christmas had come and gone. At length, patience exhausted and nerves frayed, it was decided to make the leap. Here we are at the bottom, a fully-formed whelp. What is to happen to us we do not know. An Editorial Staff cannot make a Magazine out of nothing. If this thing is to survive, it must be nursed by the whole Station, which calls for fairly general effort. Now that a start has been made, perhaps the rest will not be so hard. That no longer lies with us. However, we may not be unduly optimistic in hoping so.

January, 1941.

## THE COMMANDING OFFICER.

The following is a very brief review of the career of Wing Commanded F. E. T. Hewlett, D.S.O. O.B.E., who assumed command of this Station in August, 1940.

Born in London, 31/1/1891.

Entered Royal Navy as Cadet and passed through R.N. Colleges Osbourne and Dartmouth.

Gazetted as Midshipman, R.N., 1908, and Sub-Lieut., R.N., 1912.

Learnt to fly at Mrs. Hewlett's School, Brooklands (his mother) and got his International Pilot's Certificate, No. 156, on November 11th, 1911.

Joined Naval Wing of Royal Flying Corps and worked on Seaplane experimental design as test pilot and flying instructor till start of war, 1914.

Commanded Dunkirk Seaplane Base, 1914-15 and 16 as Squadron Commander and awarded O.B.E. as Director of Seaplane Design Air Board, 1917.

1918, Commanded 63 Wing as Lieut.-Colonel R.A.F. and awarded D.S.O.

After the war was granted permanent Commission in R.A.F. as Squadron Leader and promoted to Wing Commander, 1923, and Group Captain, 1930.

Commanded R.A.F. Base, Calshot, twice, was sent on R.A.F. commission to select the Singapore Base in 1923, and was Senior Air Force Officer of H.M.S. Furious (aircraft carrier) for a year.

On retirement as Group Captain joined his family in N.Z. and settled in Tauranga.

Worked as a garage mechanic in Tauranga and opened own motor business in 1935.

Started a vineyard for making wine at Tauranga.

Chairman of Tauranga Chamber of Commerce, 1938-39.

Gazetted Wing Commander, R.N.Z.A.F., 12th August, 1939.

## THE HISTORY OF THE R.N.Z.A.F. STATION, OHAKEA, 1939.

When war broke out between Britain and France, on the one side, and Germany on the other, the 4th of September, 1939, found us, in New Zealand, by no means unprepared. Apart from military and naval preparations, this Dominion had numerous aerodromes and camps already established for the training of pilots, observers, etc. But those in authority were not satisfied, even then, that all had been done, and it was decided to open another air-station.

Exactly nine days after hostilities in Europe had broken out, Ohakea Air-Station was born!

On the morning of September 12th, 1939, the first airman arrived. He was A.C.I. R. B. Smith, shortly to be promoted to Corporal, and now, unfortunately, deceased.

How his heart would have glowed, could he have looked into the future, and seen to what an extent the empty site would eventually be covered by costly buildings, and peopled by upwards of a thousand airmen.

Two days later, reinforcements arrived, consisting of A/Sergt. (now F/Sergt.) W. S. Smith; L.A.C. (now Sergt.) N. A. Millar; A.C.I. (now Corporal) K. McGill, and A.C.I. now L.A.C.) P. A. Hines. At once the task of establishing the Station was commenced, and these five airmen lost no time in showing the rest of the world what New Zealanders could do when called upon in an emergency.

On September 18th, the little party was joined by Flight Lieutenant (now Squadron Leader) E. G. Gedge, M.C., and Flight Lieutenant E. N. Rabone, the former taking over as Commanding Officer, while the latter acted as Station Adjutant.

Warrant-Officer Baker came next with ten of the Station Staff and preparations were at once made for the advent of the first draft of recruits who were due to arrive on the following day, viz., September 20th.

Previous to these arrivals, the Public Works Department had been in possession of the ground for some considerable time, but, although the work of constructing the camp was well in hand, none of the permanent buildings had been completed. The existing Air Staff messed in the P.W.D. camp, and as the kitchens were not ready when the recruits arrived, they were given their first meal—breakfast—in Palmerston North, before leaving for camp. In any case, the limited accommodation of the P.W.D. mess hut would have been hopelessly overtaxed by the invasion of Flights of hungry

recruits, but Sergeant Perreau proved a tower of strength. By superhuman efforts, he managed to get one of the stoves working, and on September 30th the first meal was cooked on the Station.

The following day was a busy one for all concerned, and an important one in the history of Ohakea. The first task was the attesting of all the recruits, and taking their measurements for uniforms, the latter, always to be remembered in the life of a man, be he airman, soldier or sailor. Later the recruits were organised into Flights, and, until the following morning, employed in interior economy.

From a Headquarters point of view, September 24th was a very important day in the annals of Ohakea, for on that date the first Routine Orders were published, together with provisional Station Standing Orders. Although this does not sound very exciting, it was something to be proud of when it is realised that every copy had to be typed by hand. As the only typewriter on the Station was a small portable one owned by Flight Lieutenant Rabone, this was no mean feat. However, by making an early start, sufficient copies were turned out by 1600 hours to supply all the notice-boards.

Perhaps the 25th of September, 1939, was actually the most momentous occasion in the history of Ohakea, and one little likely to be forgotten by those who were on the Station at that time. This never-to-be-forgotten event was the first Squadron parade!

What a scene it was!

As a parade it was unique—and as a fashion display it could not be paralleled! Every description of dress appeared, from the latest creation of the Dominion's most select tailors, right down to the lowly flannel bags—in fact, one recruit even had the temerity to appear in—plus fours! The remarks of his fellows were, as may be imagined, more expressive than polite, and anything but polite. They indicated, in unmistakable language, that "plus fours" were simply not the correct dress for such an occasion. However, bright plumage does not necesasrily make fine birds, and what these young airmen recruits lacked in sartorial adornment, they certainly made up for in—enthusiasm.

The aforementioned default was soon remedied, for, on the 26th the majority of the men were enabled to exchange their motley clothing for suits of navy blue combination—overalls, the regulation work-dress of the Air Force. After that, the parade ground had a less upsetting appearance, although the variety of civilian headgear left much to be desired.

Another incident that marks September, 1939, as being the most fateful month, occurred on the 26th. This was the arrival on the flying-field of the first plane, No. 2KAAC,

piloted by Squadron Leader (now Wing Commander) Gibson!

All training was immediately interrupted as all eyes—even the instructors'—were at once turned on the visitor. How these young airmen must have longed to have been the pilot. It is safe to say that their heads were too full of calculations as to when they would be able to emulate Squadron Leader Gibson, to hold details of such an uninteresting movement as flight drill! They were also beginning to discover that the term "aircraftsman" did not imply that they would spend most of their time flying through the air, but that the instrument they would manipulate mostly is described in requisition orders as brooms—common—with handle!

September 29th was a red-letter day in the recruits' calendar, but all ointment is said to contain a fly—and they found one in theirs. Issues were made that day, for the first time, of Air Force uniforms, but, alas—no caps! To complete their discomfiture, the Commanding Officer issued an edict that recruits could not go on leave unless they were properly dressed—viz., in uniform, complete with cap!

Heavens! What a disappointment to these embyro airmen who had been cherishing enchanting visions of creating great impressions on the hearts of the fair sex. However, fortune smiled on their adversity, for, a scant half-hour before the leave bus was due on the Saturday, word flashed round from one end of the camp to the other, that Stores had received a box of airman's caps!

A wild rush was made to the Store at once, and many were the excuses offered as to why they, in particular, should be issued with caps immediately. Much to everyone's surprise, the Stores people displayed, for the first time, an air of goodwill towards all men, and issued caps as far as they would go. Half-an-hour later, the leave bus departed, laden with happy airmen, impatient to get home, and feeling very important. Their one idea being to impress upon their friends that they were all Squadron Leaders, etc., at the least. In fact, one budding airman even went so far as to claim the high honour of Wing Commander!

Exactly one month after war broke out, tragedy touched this young Air Station. On the 3rd of October, the first fatality occurred, culminating with the sudden death of A.C.I. C. H. Tayler.

A week later, on October 9th, all ranks paraded for dental examination, and great were the expectations of many an airman, who had visions of extensive free dental treatment. Unhappily, these were doomed to disappointment, as nothing further was done in the matter for many a long day.

Meanwhile, the leisure hours of the airmen had not been forgotten, and on October 9th the first entertainment was

given in the Social Hall. The Palmerston North Little Theatre Society presented three excellent one-act plays. The Social Hall was not the splendid room it is to-day, for the building had not been completed, nor was it furnished. Entry to the hall had to be made by means of a temporary staircase, specially erected for the occasion. Nevertheless, by extraordinary efforts of organisation, the artists and personnel of the Station were marshalled into the hall and the function held.

Perhaps the greatest red-letter day in the lives of those who partook of No. 1 Recruit Course was on October 18th, for on that day they completed their training and were posted to their different Stations as full-blown airmen! History relates that on arrival at their new Stations, the drafts were still "full-blown"—but not with pride.

On the 23rd, No. 2 Recruit Course marched in, and in addition, sixteen observers arrived to undergo recruit training prior to the commencement of the Observers' Course.

Changes in administration were made on November 9th, when Squadron Leader A. G. Gerrand assumed command of the Station and Flight Lieutenant Gedge, M.C. took over the duties of Adjutant.

An upward step in the status of the Station took place on November 20th, when Ohakea ceased to be a Recruit Depot and was elevated to the position of Air Observers' Training School. The first classes of gunnery commenced on that day. This followed the completion of No. 2 Recruit Course, and the posting of the men to their various Stations on November 15th.

December 12th saw the culmination of the airmen's ambitions, viz., the despatch of the first draft for overseas duty. This was No. 1 Air Gunners' Course.

A day to be remembered by senior N.C.O.s was December 13th, when the Sergeants' Mess was officially opened. Judging by the lack of enthusiasm on the following day, the opening ceremony must have been an unqualified success.

Group Captain L. M. Isitt, Acting Chief of the Air Staff, made his first official visit to the Station on December 19th.

On December 23rd, the Station closed down for our first Christmas leave, bringing to an end our first year of service as an Air Station.

(To be continued).

## A TAVERN BRAWL.

Coming in out of the piercing cold of a Canadian winter, the atmosphere in the low-ceilinged, underground bar of the Ignace Hotel seemed almost stifling. The bar was packed with a motley crowd of lumberjacks and railroaders, and most of them being Swedes, Russians and the like, it would not be described as a rose garden. What with the double-tracking of the C.P.R., the lumber and tie camps and the rock-cuts on the G.T.P. twenty-five miles north, there was a constant stream of men coming and going, and trade in the hotel was brisk. We four—out of a tie-camp for Christmas—were the only English-speaking patrons of the bar, and, following the precepts of the woods, we promptly proceeded to "liquor up."

After dinner, Billy Welch, an American, getting tired of just drinking, started two of the foreigners matching coins for drinks, and soon had them all doing it.

Rowley Green, a big Yorkshireman, and I, watched the fun with languid interest, between drinks. The fourth member of our party was an Irishman, named Pat Maguire, and true to his salt, had to go stirring up trouble. Mixing with the crowd, he eventually tapped a dish-faced Swede on the arm.

"The son uv a gun's chaytin' ye, bhoy," he declared, jerking a thumb at a huge, black-bearded Russian who was "matching" with the Swede. (He wasn't, but that didn't matter to Pat). Oley promptly hit the Russian on the nose and grabbed a handful of the other's face-fungus. Ivan retaliated with a bear-like hug and tried to swing Oley off his feet.

Meanwhile, Bill and Pat had started several more fights, and by the time they had wound their way through the crowd, to where Rowley and I were standing at the end of the bar, a general melee was taking place.

Although Ignace is a divisional point on the main line of the C.P.R., it is only a tiny hamlet, and there are no police nearer than Fort William or Kenora, a hundred and fifty miles away in either direction. In those days—that was the winter of 1906-07, and Christmas Eve—Western Canada was not quite as law-abiding as it is now, although there was little real crime. In complete defiance of the law, everyone carried a weapon of some sort, either on his belt or in his hip-pocket. Needless to say, we four all had guns. I could see things were likely to become serious, so immediately made plans for our safety.

"Look here, Rowley," I shouted above the uproar, "at the first shot, you take the light at this end. Pat'll take the middle one, and I'll get the one at the far end. Bill can look after the lamp behind the bar." All agreed, and we surreptitiously drew our guns. Presently, at the far end of the room, where a bunch of Russians were mounting as many Swedes and other Bohunks, a knife flashed, and a shot sounded almost at once.

"Let her go, boys!" I yelled, and took a quick snap at the far lamp. Three shots rang out as one, almost in my ears, nearly deafening me, and, instantly the room was plunged into Stygian darkness. A door slammed behind the bar as the bar-tender fled for his life.

Deeming discretion to be the better part of valour, I ducked under the bar-flap, which, fortunately happened to be at my end, taking with me a nearly full bottle of rye. Between drinks, I smote lustily at any figure that attempted to invade my lair, with either bottle or gun—the latter for preference. Where the other three were I didn't know—it was a case of every man for himself.

The noise was deafening, and th room reeked with the smell of spirit liquor and powder smoke. Shouts of anger in half-a-dozen different languages, yells of pain, the stamp and scuffle of heavy feet, a thud as somebody hit wall or floor, mingled with the crack of revolvers and the tinkle of broken glass!

Although it seemed like an hour to me, scarcely ten minutes could have elapsed before I caught a gleam of light appearing behind the bar. The narrow door was flung back, and framed in its opening, stood the hotelkeeper, a .45 Colt in each fist. Behind him, on a step higher, the bar-tender gave autumn-leaf imitations with a couple of candles.

That was our cue!

It took but a moment for us four to emerge from our hiding-places and get busy, separating the madly-fighting foreigners.

"I'm much obliged to your guys," the hotelkeeper said to us, when peace was restored, and the last battered combatant had been thrown out into the snow. "I guess we'll liquor up—but not here; there don't seem to be any left!"

He was right; there wasn't!

The bar-tender fetched some more lamps, and by their light, we surveyed the damage. There were bullet-holes everywhere! The long bar was grooved and splintered as if struck by shrapnel; every mirror was starred or cracked. Blood, glass, and plaster from the walls and ceiling was everywhere, and, in a corner, amid broken bottles, pools of

blood and spilt liquor, lay the still body of the black-bearded Russian.

"Where's he hit?" inquired the hotelkeeper, and I turned him over, exposing a round blue hole in the middle of his forehead.

"Hmph! He'll be easy, then," was the nonchalant but enigmatical comment, and he led the way upstairs.

After supper, at his request, we picked up the dead Russian and carried him out by the back way. Plodding with our burden through the deep snow, the hotelkeeper led us to a clump of pine, close to the railroad tracks, a good half-mile away, where the line took a sharp curve.

"We always put 'em here, if we can!" he said, after directing us to lay the body between the rail, with the head on the steel. He explained that the train would come round the curve too quickly for the engineer to pull up in time, and when he did stop, all evidence as to how the man actually died, would be destroyed.

"It saves trouble, you see—and there's lots more Bohunks where he came from," he concluded with a careless shrug. "The verdict'll be another drunk got caught by the train."

And so it was!

—L.A.C. BURNSIDE.

## EPITAPHS.

"Believe a woman, or an epitaph,
Or any other thing that's false."

I've spent many hours in the days gone by, wandering through some old graveyards in the Mother Country looking for epitaphs on headstones. An epitaph is an inscription found on a tomb. The origin of these inscriptions is probably as old as the tombs. These epitaphs were first of all common among the Greeks and Romans.

As a general rule, Romans usually preceded their epitaphs with the initials "D.M.," which in Latin reads Diis Manibus, that is, "To the Nether Gods." Then followed the name, office, and age of the particular person, and a conclusion which informed the reader by whom, or for what reasons the inscription was erected.

The use of epitaphs among the English nation started about the 11th century, and at that time were written in Latin. At the present time they are to be found in all current European languages. It is a very interesting pastime, on entering any churchyard, to scan the various graves and take note of the epitaphs inscribed thereon. On the one hand they will be found to be excellent examples of perfect poetry or prose, as the case may be, while on the other hand some of the inscriptions are apt to cause great amusement, due mostly perhaps to their ambiguity. Some of the following are typical examples of the aforementioned. This epitaph is one found in an Ulster churchyard:—

"Erected to the memory of
John Phillips.
Accidentally shot as a mark of affection
by his brother."

Again at Llanmynech, in Montgomeryshire, this amusing inscription greets the wanderer's eye:—

"In memory of Margaret.
Erected by her grieving children.
What is home without a mother?
Peace, perfect peace!"

The next is really a "pun" on words, and is quite neatly composed. It relates to a solicitor by name John Strange, and runs as follows:—

"Here lies an honest lawyer,
And that is Strange."

The above inscriptions are of the more humorous type.

Note should, however, be taken of one or two of the more dignified and classical examples. An example of William Cowper's epitaph on a dog named "Fop," who belonged to a certain lady, shows what an affection existed between a dog and his mistress :—

"Though once a puppy and though Fop by name,
Here moulders one whose bones some honour claim,
Yes—the indignant shade of Fop replies,
And worn with vain pursuit, man also dies."

In conclusion, it may be said that no article on epitaphs is complete without reference to the magnificent epitaph written by the immortal R. L. Stevenson for himself. On account of ill-health Stevenson was always travelling about to find a climate which would suit him. He died at Vailima, in the island of Samoa. In after-time a large tomb of the Samoan fashion, built of great blocks of cement, was placed upon his grave. On either side there is a bronze plate, the one bearing a token of respect in the Samoan language, the other bearing his own famous requiem :—

"Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie,
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.
This be the verse you grave for me,
Here he lies where he longed to be,
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter, home from the hill."

I wonder what epitaph will be written over the airman who crashes with such force as to finish up 300 feet below ground level, as I did . . . in the Link Trainer.

PADRE HART.

## "THE RUDDY-YAP OF OMAR THE AIRMAN."

Awake! for Vincent in the dusk of night
Has made a drone that puts my sleep to flight:
And lo! the pilot of the plane has caught
The full blast of fury of my wretched plight.
Dreaming when that pilot's plane was in the sky,
I heard a voice within the canteen cry,
"Drink up, my hearties, and fill the jug,
Before the vintage in the kegs go dry."
And, as the bell rang, those who stood before
The canteen shouted: "Open, then, the door!
You know how little time we have to stay,
And, once we've sampled may return no more."
Now the full moon stimulating old desires,
The pious airman to the shower retires,
Where the water from the spray cools his ardour—
But his mind perspires.
Airman indeed I am with all my pose,
With a ring-sleeved tunic—well, who knows;
But still the plane her power will yield,
And still this drone by the river grows.
The pilot's lips are locked; he's in a jamn;
High-minded passenger cries "Damn, damn, damn."
"Godam the passenger," cries the ace,
"Here's where I join my own ancestral clan."
Come, fill the tank, and on the morn of Spring,
The Junkers, Messerschmitt our guns to fling:
This bird of mine has but a little way
To fly—and lo—we are on his wing.
And look—a thousand sky-birds with the day
Awoke—and a thousand scattered in the bay:
And this great squadron that brought them down,
Shall take Goering, Goebbels and Hitler away.
But come with our airman and leave the lot
Of Goering, Goebbels and Hitler forgot:
Let Mussie lay about him as he will,
Or Japan cry, "Pardon"—heed them not.

—PEDRO.

## THE THINGS THE AIR FORCE TAUGHT HIM.

Now Johnny was a simple bloke,
Who one September day
Did join the R.N.Z.A.F.,
A hero's part to play.
They sent him to Ohakea,
Some rookie drill to do,
'Tis in the contract, mark yer,
Of all men who wear the blue.
They gave him a big uniform,
And boots black ankle two,
A hat that would'nt fit him
And combinations blue.
But they gave him no umbrella,
And it really was a shame
To see that bald old fella'
Out drilling in the rain.
They gave him broom and polish,
Bucket and rags galore,
And said, "No don't get snobbish,
Get cracking on that floor."
And when he'd scrubbed for half a mile
In a building called headquarters,
The sergeant told him with a smile
He'd make a damned good porter.
Then they made him guard-commander
On a dark and stormy night,
And he walked all round Ohakea
Just a bald, bad-tempered bite.
For they woke him at eleven,
And they woke him up at four,
And when the poor cow got to bed
They woke him up some more.
"You'll have saveloys for supper,
And tea, all piping hot."
But the tea was without sugar,
And the savs. all had the bot.
They gave him leave on Saturday
And so he went to town,
And with his little hard-earned pay
His sorrows tried to drown.
And having got inebriated,
To a party he did wander,
And there a blue-eyed blonde he dated
On whom his little all did squander.

And when his money all was gone,
  Back to the camp they brought him,
And so here ends the doleful song
  Of some things the Air Force taught him.

—By E.W.W.D.J.

## WHO'S WHO IN THE OFFICERS' MESS.

F/L TURNER.

He has more goodness in his little finger than you have in your whole body. (Swift).

Banish plump Jack, and banish all the world. (Henry IV).

Very like a whale. (Hamlet).

F/L WALKER.

I'll put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes. (Midsummer Night's Dream).

Behold! I am a woman-hater. Not one of them do I trust. Nay, not one can deceive and allure me. For I have their numbers, all of them. (Mrs. Solomon).

The least among them was Wisenheimer, who was abbreviated and whose hair was thin upon the top. (Mrs. Solomon).

A.P/O. FILMER.

My wish . . (not now, but only while a lad)
That womankind had but one rosy mouth,
To kiss them all, from north to south.
(Byron).

Oh Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?
(Romeo and Juliet).

F/O IRVINE.

He is not afraid of the cook. (Mrs. Solomon).

F/O ARKWRIGHT

From college youths which are fresher than spring asparagus, and more tender than spring lamb, oh deliver me! (Mrs. Solomon).

S/L CARTER.

He muttereth unto his wife: "Lo! I will go unto a quiet corner for a cigar"—and behold, he wandereth into many corners, and returneth by a circular route. (Mrs. Solomon).

F/O GRIFFITHS.

O for a falconer's voice,
To lure this tassel-gentle back again.
(Romeo and Juliet).

An aeroplane no longer produces awe and wonder amongst an uninitiated public. (A.P/O. Conklin).

There is a pleasure in being mad, which none but madmen know. (Dryden).

F/L JOHNSTONE.

Let us accept the legend that the man of letters is an imbecile. A tradition so carefully fostered must have some use in it. (Gould).

It is a fallacy that the colour red maddens a bull. ("You're wrong about that.")

F/O RANSOM.

Verily, my daughter, an husband is a good thing. He giveth the house a "finished" look, even as a rubber plant or a door-plate. (Mrs. Solomon).

F/O HARVEY.

And the damsel was interested, and she said: "Go on!" (Mrs. Solomon).

S/L TRANCRED, A.F.C.

Said one: "Folks of a surly Tapster tell,
And daub his Visage with the Smoke of Hell;
They talk of some strict Testing of us—Pish!
He's a Good Fellow, and 'twill all be well."
(Omar).

Fill me with the old familar juice,
Methinks I might recover by-and-bye!
(Omar).

S/L BRAYE, D.F.C.

It were all one,
That I should love a bright particular star,
And think to wed it.
(All's Well that Ends Well).

And, strange to tell, among that Earthen Lot,
Some could articulate, while others not.
(Omar).

F/L BUSCH.

Of manners gentle, of affections mild;
In wit, a man; simplicity, a child.
(Pope).

With his own hands he runneth the lawnmower and washeth the dog. (Mrs. Solomon).

F/L ASHCROFT.

Indeed, indeed, repentance oft before
I swore—but was I sober when I swore?
And then and then came Spring, and Rose-in-hand
My threadbare Penitence apieces tore.
(Omar).

S/L GEDGE, M.C.

Yet I shall temper so
Justice with mercy.

(Milton).

Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness. (Cowper).

PADRE.

Set those persons down with me to pray,
And you shall see who has the properest notion
Of getting into heaven the shortest way.

(Byron).

Of right and wrong he taught
Truths as refined as ever Athens heard;
And, strange to tell, he practis'd what he preached.

(Armstrong).

F/O BLUNDELL.

How little, O my daughter, how exceeding little shall satisfy the heart of a woman. (Sayings of Mrs. Solomon).

CAPT. HARDWICKE SMITH, N.Z.M.C.

Is there no hope? the sick man said;
The silent doctor shook his head:
And took his leave with signs of sorrow,
Despairing of his fee to-morrow.

(Gay).

F/O WILES.

And I looked at him, and smiled sadly. (Mr. Solomon).

Oh! how many torments shall lie in the small circle of a wedding ring! (Colley Cibber).

F/L ROBERTSON.

Let me play the lion, too; I will roar that
I will do any man's heart good to hear me.
I will roar that I will make the duke say—
Let him roar again, Let him roar again.

(Midsummer Night's Dream).

No woman would ever marry if she had not the chance of mortality for a release. (Gay).

F/L GOLDINGHAM.

I'll tell him what you say, and so farewell. (Peele).

P/O EATON.

But yonder I see my Corydon, and a sweet swain it is, Heaven knows. (Farquhar).

P/O MACMILLAN.

So comes a reckoning when the banquets o'er,
The dreadful reckoning, and men smile no more.
(Gay).

F/O THORNTON.

And lately by the Tavern Door agape,
Came stealing through the dusk an Angel Shape
Bearing a Vessel on his shoulder; and
He bid me taste of it; and 'twas—the Grape!
(Omar).

F/O GRAY.

Mark how he sitteth afar off and talketh of love in the abstract. (Mrs. Solomon).

The devil was sick, the devil a monk would be,
The devil was well, the devil a monk was he.
(Rabelais).

METEOROLOGIST: MR. WATTS (M.Sc.).

The dawn is overcast, the morning lowers,
Heavily, in clouds, brings on the day,
The great, th' important day, big with fate.
(Addison).

The barometer is an ingenious instrument which indicates what kind of weather we are having. (Devil's Dictionary).

## A TRUE STORY.

A group of soldiers surrounded a minute imp of an Egyptian boy in one of the huts at Zeitoun. The boy held a pop-gun into the muzzle of which was stuck a table knife. The child was an expert at rifle drill.

The orderly-corporal hurried through the crowd but was halted by the imp with the gun.

"'Alt! 'oo go dere?" he challenged.

"Go and get ————!" was the impolite rejoinder.

Like a flash, the miniature sentry returned to the slope with the nonchalant remark, "Pass, Australia!" He knew his men!

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## L. S. WELD, Marton.

## STONEHENGE.

I write this article hoping that it will be of interest to those of our men who in the days to come will visit the Motherland, and in their spare moments seek pleasure in seeing some of the ancient landmarks.

Stonehenge, with its mysterious origin, seldom fails to exert a fascination upon those who see it for the first time. How long elapsed until its erection, from the days when the first settlers crossed into Britain from the Continent and fought for a place in the sun with the wild beasts of the swamp and forests, will probably never be known.

The builders of this huge structure, being without graven or written speech, have left no record of their day or generation. That they posessed energy, ambition, and perseverance, allied to engineering skill of no mean order, is as evident as that they were being of thew and sinew. It seems reasonable to suppose that Stonehenge was built during a time of peace and prosperity, and that it formed the central shrine of a powerful early race. The builders passed away to be forgotten as a dream; their burial mounds lie around on the plain and beyond it in almost uncounted numbers; but while its gaunt ribs remain, men will continue to speculate about the origin and purpose of this great circle of stones which prehistoric inhabitants of Britain set up and made the riddle of the centuries.

The Welsh historian, Nennius (c810 A.D.) mentions Stonehenge, and states that the stones were erected in memory of four hundred and sixty British nobles here massacred by Saxon Hengist in 472. This massacre, suggestively called "Bradychiad y Cyllyll Hirion" ("The Treachery of the Long Knives") probably did take place here, though the Temple was then much older than any English Cathedral is to-day.

Two kinds of stones were used in the making of Stonehenge, and experts in lithology have decided that the "Foreign" or Blue stones have come from the Prescelly Range in Pembrokeshire, my home country. The other stones are of local origin, and were found near the plain itself. There are huge stones to be found still, though in decreasing numbers, scattered all over the plain. The general name for them is "Sarsen," but the country folk, always picturesquely-minded, call them "Grey Wethers," and indeed in North Wilts it is not hard to conjure up their poetic resemblance to a flock of Titanic sheep reclining at ease upon the pasturage of the Downs. The alternative name "Sarsen" has an interesting derivation. It is a corruption of the word "Saracen." But

what have Saracens to do with Wiltshire? Frankly, nothing. If I remember rightly a Sarasen is an Arabian, an adherent of Mohammedanism, and never have I seen or heard of Arabian tribes making war against our primitive fathers. The name has come to these stones from Stonehenge itself, and is a part of that ever-increasing confusion of ideas which has been bequeathed to us by our ancestors of the middle ages. To them, all circles and megalithic monuments were the work of heathens, if not of the devil himself. Heathenism and all its works were roundly condemned, whether Celtic, Mohammedan, or Pagan; and the condemnation was as concise and complete as the phrase "Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics" of the Prayer Book to-day. In early days the Saracen stood for all that was antagonistic to Christianity. Consequently the stones of Stonehenge were Saracen or heathen stones, which the Wiltshire tongue has shortened in due time to "Sarsen."

The Middle Ages produced a famous legend regarding one of the largest stones that comprise the circle of stonehenge, called the "Friar's Heel." It is a monolith of unwrought stone standing sixteen feet high. Such untrimmed stones are to be found all over the world in connection with religious rites. Even the Jews were not without this early cult of stone-worship. "Among the smooth stones of the valley is thy portion," writes the Prophet Isaiah. In Christian times the customed continued. The Council of Tours, as late as A.D. 657, excluded from Christianity all worshippers of upright stones; while Canute forbade the barbarous worship of stones, trees, fountains, and heavenly bodies. At one, therefore, this huge unwrought monolith suggests religion, and probably one of the earliest and most primitive forms of worship. And this being obviously connected with non-Christian rites, it is not surprising to find that it has the following "Devil Legend" attached to it.

According to this story the Devil determined one day to undertake some great and stupendous work, for the like of which he is famous throughout the world. His new intention was to transport some huge stones from Ireland to the great stoneless waste of Salisbury Plain, and having bought over the old woman in whose garden they were, he flew over with them to England, but dropped one into the Avon, where it is still to be seen. He alighted on the Plain and made haste to set up the stones in a mysterious way, so as to puzzle people and divert them from holier things. When more than half had been placed upright he was suddenly interrupted by a passing Friar, who suddenly, recognising the enemy of souls, took to his heels. Enraged at his discovery by the Friar, the Devil, who had just taken up a stone to poise it

upon its two uprights, hurled it at the holy man and struck him on the heel. The Friar's sanctity was evidently greater than his personal courage, for it was the stone and not the Friar which suffered most from the impact. (I can hear the Editor say, "sort of thing that would happen if a huge stone was hurled at Padre Hart." Even to-day the huge impress of the Friar's heel is to be seen on the stone. As usual, Dawn, the Devil's invariable frustrator, came and spoilt things, causing him to leave the work only half finished, thus accounting for so many of the stones being left prostrate. This legend, it will be seen, is neither strikingly different from the host of other Devil Legends, nor conspicuously more improbable than several of the earlier scientific theories of Stonehenge.

PADRE HART.


The Whopping big fish that got away!

## THE OFFICERS' MESS.

It was her first visit to the camp and she felt somewhat overawed when her stalwart son took her round and showed her the various buildings. The canteen, the gymn., H.Q., the dormitories were all visited in turn.

"That's the Sergeant's Mess," the youth remarked casually, pointing a contemptuous thumb towards some curtained windows, in one of which a canary in a cage was singing lustily.

"Lumme," Ma muttered, in round-eyed interest. "Mess?" she thought. "What's that?"

"There's the Officers' Mess," she was told a little later, and words failed her when she tried to grasp the apparent magnificence of the building. "A palace fit for a king," was her mental comment, as they passed on. Suddenly, she grasped its meaning.

After being treated to tea in the Y.M.C.A., she bade her airman son good-bye and left for home.

Back once more in the old farm kitchen she prepared supper mechanically, her thoughts far away.

Suddenly she stopped and almost ran outside to the back, where she stopped and surveyed, with troubled gaze, a tiny wooden building, that seemed to be shrinking bashfully behind some bushes.

"Garge!" she called, when heavy footsteps sounded behind her, denoting the presence of her husband.

"Ay, lass; what be it?"

"Garge, ye'll have to build a better place than yon," she told him, pointing a contemptuous finger at the little building. "Up at the camp, the Sergeants have a better place than our cottage, while the Officers have a palace fit for a king. We can't let our Alf come back an' use a thing like that. 'Taint decent!"

L.A.C. BURNSIDE.

## PERMANENT PASS.

The messroom gong was gonging,
As the boys lined up for kai;
Just watch their happy faces,
Don't ask the reason why.
They grabbed a plate for porridge,
And another one for hash,
As with eyes upon the sergeant
To the tables made a dash.

When they were nicely seated
That magic word began:
It's "Pass" the mik and sugar,
Then "Pass" the —— jam.
Just "Pass" the cow-grease, cobber,
One young "spark" yells out;
Another, "Pass" the blinkin' marmalade,
Can't you hear me shout?

You hear a deep voice yelling:
"Pass" me up a cup;
Which is answered by an A.C.2:
Go and wash one up.
It's "Pass" me this, and "Pass" me that,
A bloke's quite in a fog;
As in between each mouthful
He does this "Passing" job.

At last they all are settled,
Their jaws work with a will,
But still a voice keeps moaning:
"Pass" the teapot, Bill.
The same old cry at dinner,
The same old cry at tea;
So just before you're seated,
"Pass" everything you see.

—L.H.G.

## TEN LITTLE AIRMEN.

Ten little airmen flew across the Rhine,
One met a Heinkel and then there were nine.
Nine little airmen came home rather late,
The sentry arrested one, and then there were eight.
Eight little airmen dreamt they were in heaven,
One died and went there, and then there were seven.
Seven little airmen thought planes and beer would mix,
One tried to prove it, and then there were six.
Six little airmen tried a bomb-dive,
One hit a barbed-wire fence and then there were five.
Five little airmen thought they'd go to war,
One failed to pass the doc. and then there were four.
Four little airmen went out on the spree,
The Black Maria collected one and then there were three.
Three little airmen, over Berlin flew,
One took a nose-dive and then there were two.
Two little airmen thought the war was fun,
Tried to capture Hitler—and then there was one.
The last little airman, not to be outdone,
Fuelled his plane with whiskey—and then there were none!

L.A.C. BURNSIDE.

## THINGS WE OUGHT TO KNOW.

1. Which L.A.C. told his girl the initials meant Lieutenant, Acting Colonel?
2. Which patrolman came in the gate backwards, and said he was going out?
3. What ex-barman thought riggers were bottles?
4. Which sergeant said "damn" when he meant "jam," after catching his fingers in the hotel door?
5. Which officer said, "Kiss me, sentry," instead of "Good-night"?
6. Who named feet and gristle corned beef?
7. Which corporal patted his saveloys?
8. Which transport driver slept with his boots on?
9. Who signed the early call book "Bull Dust"?
10. Who put pepper in the cat's milk?
11. What "civvie" thought the Air Force was a pump?
12. Who, from married quarters, went into a hangar to buy a prop. on wash-day?

—L.H.G.

## BELIEVE IT OR NOT.

(A "Part Annual" Episode).

It was Saturday night, and the agricultural show was proceeding in fine style, with its merry round of activities, when two airmen walked into the grounds somewhat dejectedly, in search of, shall we say, for the purpose of the narrative, a certain specie of hen. After patting a bulldog or two without even so much as the slightest glimpse of a pretty girl, there came from the far corner of the exhibition building into which they had passed, a loud but unmistakable "packy-eck, packy-eck!" of a love-sick hen. The boys pricked up their ears, looked at each other in mild surprise, then with minds made up, hastily went in search of the poor forlorn hen. They found her with head cocked rather pitifully on one side in a small wire cage, and their hearts went out to her. However, before they could introduce themselves the hen became suddenly perk, and, jauntily tossing her head in the air, let go a beautiful cackle, "packy-eck! packy-eck!" that even the shyest rooster would have difficulty in resisting. The airmen turned to each other in astonishment, then facing again the expectant hen they both cried out in reply to her brief overture, "packy-eck, packy-eck!" The hen was delighted, and looking at the boys with a knowing eye, immediately laid an egg. The airmen again looked at each other, this time with growing alarm, then without stopping to offer congratulations, made a desperate effort to reach the exit. An attendant having watched with interest this extraordinary phenomenon, followed in hot pursuit, waving his arms in the air and yelling in a voice that seemed to echo throughout the entire building, "Air Force! Air Force! Here's your egg. Take it back to camp and have it for breakfast."

L. A. C. WHITEMAN.

M.O.: "Many on sick parade to-day, orderly?"

Orderly: "No, sir; only one. He came in yesterday wanting something for hay-fever."

M.O.: "Hay-fever? What did you give him?"

Orderly: "Two No. 9's, sir. He's too scared to sneeze now an' wants light duty!"

## AN EXPOSURE.

The average civilian no doubt believes implicitly that the dreaded S.S. exists only in those lands of fear ruled over by Hitler and people of that ilk, but any airman of the R.N.Z.A.F. Station, Ohakea, could, and does, inform them that this is not correct.

A branch of the S.S. is firmly established on this Station, although its members will strenuously deny the fact.

The local S.S. is divided into two divisions, the higher division, the Ogpu (officially known as Disciplinarians) and the lower division, the Gestapo (officially known as the Service Police).

Both these divisions are ruled over by a man who is known as the Station Warrant Officer, although most airmen have a number of names for the same person, appropriate no doubt, but not, definitely not, polite.

The workings of the Ogpu in particular are so delightfully simple and apparently above board, that even the most discerning individual will be lulled into a false sense of security, but it is a fact that as soon as a new Squadron is formed the S.W.O. very kindly and considerately appoints a Disciplinarian to it. The wise Commander will treat this individual with a degree of restraint, while the unwary takes him to his bosom, but either way, sooner or later, it will be realised that a member of the Ogpu has been cleverly planted in their midst to inform his Chief of their every move. (Perhaps this exposure may help to dispel the suggested clairyvoyant power usually attributed to this indiivdual).

The Chief of the S.S. resides (that is when he is not prowling around the Station) in the Castle, and in his office are two of his key men, one an Ogpu and the other a Gestapo man. (NOTE.—It is a wise precaution to avoid personal contact with either of these).

It might be well to mention here that the Chief apparently does not sleep and certainly resents any airman sleeping, especially at 0630 hours. Many an airman has been forcibly awakened at this ungodly hour (much to the amusement of the other occupants of the room, may it be said) and has found this dreaded individual standing at the foot of the bed writing in a small black book.

On these occasions the Chief's vocabulary seems to be somewhat limited, as the most he seems to be able to say is: "Get out—my office at 9."

To the uninitiated this might appear to be an invitation to a pleasant little cup of tea and a chat, but to the older

hands, it is an indication that negotiations should immediately be put in hand for the loan of a reliable alarm clock, because the Chief seems to be of the opinion that if an airman fails to have his feet on the deck at 0630 hours he can quite easily rise at 0530 hours for the next few days.

It might be as well to explain this little recreation a little further.

The "caught" airman must rise at 0530 hours, dress, shave and clean his buttons, and then present himself at the Headquarters of the Gestapo (officially known as the Guard House and sometimes facetiously known as the Old Men's Home).

Here a senior member of the Gestapo critically examines the airman from top to toe and invariably finds a fault that requires the airman to return to his quarters and get back to the Guard House under a time limit that usually would only allow the man to travel half the distance.

This merry little game continues until the airman either looks and feels like a "Guardsman" or is carried to the Station Hospital a nervous wreck.

Even there the airman's troubles are far from over, because the Medical Officer and the S.W.O. seem to work in very close harmony; in fact, it has been rumoured that the Medical Officer is actually a highly-placed member of the S.S.

The Head of the S.S. has never apparently heard of "dress reform" or "comfortable clothing for men," because he displays a remarkably narrow view of what a well-dressed airman should wear.

Apparently all buttons are meant to be done up, canvas shoes are not issued to wear on parade or around the Station, and most remarkable of all, he insists that caps and jackets are issued to wear.

This individual also displays marked interest in the contents of wardrobes, cupboards, etc., and insists that beds should be made his way every day, absolutely no encouragement is given to individuality in these matters.

Hair-cuts is another matter on which he has decided ideas. Having reached the age when his hair is no longer his "crowning glory," he looks with marked disfavour on carefully brushed and marcelled coiffures in lieu of caps F.S.

Another matter on which it would appear he takes a rather narrow view, is walking on the grass, and having never apparently heard the "call of spring," is of the opinion that the grass is to look at.

Even the High Priests of War are not immune from disfavour through this; in fact, history relates that on one occasion he looked darkly on the High Priest of All for this

offence.

Another sore point is the parking of motor-cycles, apparently even if an airman purchases a motor-cycle he must park it where the S.S. decrees, even though it is usually most inconvenient to do so.

The penalty for incorrect parking is confiscation of the cycle. Recently an airman having had his cycle taken by a member of the Ogpu rushed down to the Castle and demanded to be admitted to the inner lair of the Mogul. On being taken into the august presence immediately burst out in rightful indignation, "You can't do that," to which the Chief replied, "I have, so what?" To this rather one-sided argument the airman had no suitable reply at the moment, so was flung into the outer darkness, still minus his motor-cycle.

In all these matters the Chief is ably assisted by the lesser lights in the Ogpu, who at times display even a narrower point of view, especially as to the amount of liquor that an airman can hold and the times that lights are to be put out in the barrack-rooms.

Not satisfied with this, they will insist that all airmen must march to and from work when all medical authorities are of the opinion that a quiet stroll before and after meals is beneficial to the health.

Once again it must be noted than an appeal to the Medical Officer on this matter is entirely useless, as he is also cast in this militaristic mould.

The Ogpu, it must be said in their favour, do live unto themselves, but not so the Gestapo, for except for the leaders of this body, they live among us, eat among us, and certainly drink among us.

The private life of an airman is to them an open book.

They insist on knowing when an airman leaves the Station, when he returns, and where he has been, writing this information in a book for the world to see and the S.W.O. in particular.

If through no fault of his own, an airman arrives back late, the Sub-Chief of the Gestapo fixes him with a baleful eye, dips his pen in the red ink and marks a large cross in the book against this particular airman's name, and utters those awful words, "You are under arrest." Not satisfied with this, next morning at 1000 hours he appears in the Squadron Commander's office and without even a blush, reveals to all present, the time the airman left the Station, the time he returned, together with any conversation the airman may have had with him the previous night. He is usually supported in this by the local member of the Ogpu.

The Squadron Commander, instead of turning a deaf ear to all this idle chatter, appears to believe implicitly all that

the S.S. tell him, and instead of protecting an innocent airman from them, carelessly passes him back to their clutches by pronouncing the words, "Seven days C.C."

On one memorable occasion one Commander actually did show signs of making a stand in favour of the downtrodden airman, but lo, the Chief, quickly informed of the trend of affairs, appeared in person, and all good intentions crashed to the ground. To cover up the fact that he had experienced a moment of weakness, he awarded the poor airman 14 days C.C.

Well, some day this war will be over and the poor airman will once again enjoy the privilege of civilian life, but it would be just their luck if the S.W.O. left the Service and was appointed Commisisoner of Police.

"HIS NIBS."

## THE CHINESE ARMOURER.

We seek him here, we seek him there,
We seek the blighter everywhere;
No one has seen him, but everyone knows,
That when he's around, it's trouble he sows.
He's always about when work we commence,
For one of his names is "Ah Punk Dense";
But his names are many, as many as flies,
For instance, "Who Dit It" also applies.
When flaps are on, and bombs are to load,
Our Chinky blows in to get in the road;
He forgets about fuses, and pulling out pins,
He "spanners the works," he's a boxful of sins,
He tries timing guns, he thinks he's the "tops,"
Two biffs and a bang and away go our props.
He pleases himself when guns are to clean,
He leaves them all dirty—of course he's not seen;
At testing out fuses he's a little bit "wonky,"
For when the bomb drops, the fuse box is "konky."
When the lockup is empty and no tools can be got,
It's a ten-to-one bet, he's swiped up the lot.
When doors are to open and chests to unlock,
He swipes up the keys and is gone like a shot;
There are things that he does that are hard to explain,
He just about driven poor sergeant insane;
So here's to the day this Chinky we get,
By hokey, we wringa his plurry old neck.

—ANON.

## SLIPPERY.

Serves old Musso's right. What did he expect if he stepped on Greece?

## THE OLD LADY'S MISTAKE.

A tough old Digger, who has joined the Air Force at patrolman, is stranded in Auckland. He meets a dear old lady, who put hims through his paces.

O.L.: "Marvellous! I am proud of you! It's men like you who make us feel safe in bed during the night!"

Digger: "But, lady———"

O.I.: "Oh, I know you don't like being flattered, but nothing is too good for you, and . . . "

Digger: "But, lady . . . "

O.L.: "As I was about to say when you interrupted me —just imagine the nerve after having been through the last war, too! I think it's wonderful!"

Digger: "But, lady———"

O.L.: "Now, don't tell me it's just a job of work. I know differently! It takes great strength of character and nerve force to fly at such heights and machine-gun enemy planes—not to mention dropping bombs under terrific shell-fire!"

Digger: "But, lady; I don't———"

O.L.: "Yes, Yes! I know all about it! I read my newspapers—and the way you boys stand up to the strain—especially after your terrible experiences in the last war!"

Digger: "But, lady; I don't———"

O.L.: "Never mind. You must come along and meet my niece, Miss Tait."

Digger (accidentally treading on Old Lady's toe in his excitement): "Oh! My mistake, lady."

O.L.: "What? Your Miss Tait? Isn't that wonderful? Don't tell me that your Miss Tait is my Miss Tait?"

Digger: "But, lady———"

O.L.: "This is too thrilling for words! Fancy your knowing my niece! I always thought she rather fancied men older than herself—but I'm very proud to think she chose such a hero as you!"

Digger: "But, lady; let me———"

O.L.: "I'm quite convinced you are a hero! Look at all those pretty ribbons on your breast—and that wonderful steely look in your eyes! Ah! Here's a taxi. You simply must come home with me. Molly will be so thrilled to see you!"

Digger (wiping perspiration from his brow): "Cripes!"

(Arriving at Old Lady's home, they enter sitting-room).

O.L.: "Now, just sit down and make yourself comfortable. I'll call Molly."

Digger: "But, lady; I———"

O.L.: "Mo-olly! Moll-lly! Here's your hero from the Air Force!"

(Molly, who has been hitting it up with a Pilot Officer named Jim, replies).

Molly: "Oh, Jim! You darling! I knew you would pluck up enough courage to come and call for me! I didn't expect you so soon, though."

Digger: "Excuse, me missus. I'd better go———"

O.L.: "My dear man! You can't go up to her yet—she's dressing! She won't be long, now."

Molly (from bedroom upstairs): "I say, Jim! Didn't you say you had night-flying on to-night? Or was that just an excuse to give me a pleasant surprise?"

O.L.: "Night-flying? Do you mean you fly in the dark? Oh! You must tell me all about it! How clever you are! What is it like? You must tell us after tea—and your experiences in the last war, too! You have been to the war, haven't you? I suppose you teach the young fellows what to do now—those wonderful boys—just left school and college—who risk their lives a thousand times, for the like of Molly and me!"

Molly: "I'm ready, now dear, and I'm wearing that jolly, uncrushable frock you admired so much the other night! Now, shut your eyes, boy, and I'll tell you when to open them."

Digger (in a desperate whisper): "Hell! What on earth shall I do?"

Molly: "Heavens! Aunty! Aunty! Who the dickens is this hard-bitten old imposter? Where on earth did you pick him up?"

O.L.: "He told me you were his Miss Tait!"

Digger: "You got me wrong, lady; I———"

Molly: "His 'Miss Tait!' I like his cheek! Why, I've never even seen the old reprobate before in my life!"

Digger: "It's all a mistake, lady. I———"

Molly: "I should jolly well think it is a mistake! You ought to be ashamed of yourself—a man of your age, taking advantage of an old lady and imposing on her like this!"

Digger: "I say, miss, give us a break, won't you? I've been trying to explain to your Aunt for the last hour, but I couldn't get a word in edgeways! She just rushed me off me bloomin' feet!"

Molly: "But didn't you tell her I was your 'Miss Tait'?

Digger: "Don't rub it in, miss."

O.L.: "Come along, you two—tea's ready—and don't quarrel! I don't care tuppence if he is an imposter. He was a soldier in the last war—and he's in it again. I've a

very warm corner in my heart for an old soldier—sinner or no sinner!"

Molly (after hearing the truth at last): "Considering the circumstances, I suppose you're scarcely to blame, Mr.——?"

Digger: "My friends all call me 'Bill,' miss."

Molly: "So you're forgiven, Bill. I know what Auntie is like, once she gets going. You must forgive me for all that hard things I said to you, too. I take 'em all back—and if you're not my Jim—well, I expect you're someone else's 'Bill'!"

Digger: "Hamdudellah mabsoot lateer!"

(In pious tone. In other words, "Thank the Lord, I'm out o' that!")

Curtain.

—PEDRO.

## BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.

If you have a grey-haired mother
In the homestead far away,
Sit down and write that letter
You put off day by day.
Don't wait until her tired steps
Reach heaven's pearly gate,
But tell her that you care for her,
Before it is Too Late.
Those tender words unspoken,
That message never sent,
Makes her burden heavier,
Which some day you'll repent.
It only takes one moment
Those few words to translate,
So get your pen and hurry,
Before it is Too Late.
Her seeds of life are withering,
Her toilsome days are past,
She has done her duty nobly,
With her back unto the mast.
So take from me this sound advice
And no longer hesitate,
But send that line to mother,
Before it is Too Late.

—S.H.G.

## CURRENT NEWS.

Straight from the Beer Taps.

Some of the guards are complaining that they don't know the officers when they come in the gate. That's nothing new! It's an old saying that it's a wise child that knoweth its own father.

Judging by the frequent appearance of saveloys on the supper table, dog-owners on the Station would do well to keep a close eye on their pets.

The painting of light standards on the main roads of the Station will fill a long-felt want—cars will be able to miss them now.

The clock in the common-room has been stopped for some time. Is that a hint that in the canteen there is also "no tick"?

Several of the mess-boys have been seen practicing at the dart-board. It is to be hoped they have fell designs on the O.O.—or the caterer.

It has been reported that the Service Police Corps was full—not the whole corps, surely!

We have noticed that the canteen has been closed while night flying is in progress. Surely no airman would be so foolish as to attempt to fly in!

A new order says that the duty-driver shall sleep in the guardroom. Some unfeeling persons have been heard to say it is the right place for him.

It is officially denied that the guardhouse is to be used as a cafe for summer visitors.

The report that the closing of the main gates at 2760 hours is to keep the guards from wandering into Bulls is incorrect. It is to keep the cows from coming in and waking the sentry.

The report that the sergt. in the dry canteen is contemplating putting up a sign that reads, "In God, we trust—all others, cash," is incorrect. He trusts no one.

An airman complained that he found a worm in his cabbage. Even a worm will turn—an airman's stomach.

THE STATION IDIOT.


"For Pete's sake 'El Pus,' I can't hang on much longer!

## DEEDS AND MISDEEDS OF THE INSTITUTE.

The Institute Committee's Minute Book, in its accounts of meetings, shows alternately a long screed and a very short one. A cursory glance at the book, therefore, would give the impression that the Committee sometimes does more or less. (Joke over!)

No doubt it is the general impression of the average airman that the Institute does very little, although if the true facts were known, the general comfort and happiness of the Station is to a large extent reliant on the quiet, unheralded work of this small Committee.

In the early days of the Station the entertainments such as dances and concerts helped to keep the Institute before the airmen in a way they understood. Now that such functions are more or less impracticable, one can scarcely expect the works of the Committee to be appreciated.

The supply of easy chairs and couches; of ping-pong sets; the maintenance of pianos and billiard tables; the fitting of radio plugs to all single rooms; the supply of weekly and daily papers; the supply of sports equipment; of infra-red lamps to the Station Hospital; the purchase of a wrestling ring for the gymn.—all these, and dozens of other activities, are of course, not sufficient proof that the Institute is still alive!! But we venture to say that the very airmen who do not realise the work that is being done would be the first to liken the Station to a concentration camp if these facilities and comforts did not exist. This outlook is, of course, quite unintentional.

May it be suggested, therefore, that the few misdeeds of the Service Institute be forgotten, and that the deeds be remembered and appreciated as they justly deserve.

In the meantime we say, "Men of the Institute Committee, carry on the good work."

Dental Officer: "What is the matter with this man, orderly?"

New Orderly: "The M.O.'s sent 'im over, sir, ter 'ave all 'is teeth out. 'E says 'e's got diahroea!"

# EGYPT.

Egypt is one of the oldest countries in the world, and is called the Land of the Pharaohs. One reads of these Pharaohs, or Kings of Egypt, in the Bible as far back as the Old Testament. In the time of Christ we read of how Joseph and Mary fled into Egypt with the Holy baby, Strangely enough the customs, even the dress of the Egyptians of to-day, amongst almost all the women, rich and poor, and amongst the men of the lower class mostly, are exactly the same as in the time of Christ. One sees the streets of Cairo, Alexandria, and indeed, all the towns, thronged with women, their faces almost hidden by the "Yashmack," a veil, sometimes white, sometimes black, which covers the lower part of the face, leaving the eyes only exposed, and, as with their plain black dress, they wear a black hood over their faces, very little is to be seen of a native woman's face as a rule. But there is always an exception to every rule, and in this case when a woman or girl is good looking, she wears a very thin yashmack and then you can see more than her eyes. The Egyptian law does not oblige a woman to veil herself, but it says, "if thy beauty cause strife amongst men, then it were better that it should be hid," and as there never was a woman yet who believed herself to be really ugly, they all veil themselves, even the ugliest old hags. The men, different from men of European countries, are the butterflies of Egypt. They wear the most beautiful colours in their Galahibers and cloaks. With the rich, the Galahiber, a straight garment to the feet, is made of striped silk, the cloak of fine cloth embroidered with gold; with the poor, it is of cotton, and now they wear a European overcoat, but perhaps the most picturesque dress is that of the Bedouins, a tribe that lives in tents, mostly in the desert. They wear only a fine white blanket, draped in graceful folds around their bodies, and are a most dignified race. Their women folk do not cover their faces, but they tattoo them, each tribe having a different mark.

A "Sais," or runner, wears another very picturesque dress. These unfortunate men (there are generaly two of them) have to run in front of the carriage of a high official and clear the way for him. They generally die young, as the strain of running so fast is too much for their hearts, though nowadays in these times of motors a sais is not often seen, and they are generally employed as footmen.

A few of the old sheiks or chiefs of villages still wear the native dress, even to the Khedive's receptions, where His

Highness and every one else is in European dress. Of course every Egyptian from the Khedive downwards wears the native "Tarbusch," or red cap, which is somewhat the shape of a flower pot, with a black tassel on top, and all officials in the Egyptian service of every nation must wear it too. The Egyptian seldom takes his tarbusch off, as it is considered an insult to uncover your head before your equal or superior.

Now we come to the customs of the country. I will commence with a wedding, which is a great event for the bridegroom, but the poor bride only has the doubtful joy of driving through the streets in a carriage, with both windows shut and the blinds pulled down, and with a heavy covering thrown right over the carriage so that she must be nearly suffocated. But of course she must not be seen by anyone, for even the bridegroom does not see her till after the marriage.

Another custom which may give the bride pleasure is that all her household belongings are paraded through the streets on open carts—gaudy plush suites of furniture, pots and pans, looking-glasses, of which there are many, and even the bedroom furniture. Now the bridegroom has much feasting; the food is served in a bowl and each guest dips into the middle for what he fancies, as no forks are used. And the bridegroom has a band, and oh, such a band; music there is none, but noise there is plenty, and he trails through the town with a long train of musicians, camels and carriages to mosque, and is finally escorted by friends of his own age with lighted torches, music and uproar to his veiled bride, when for the first time he is allowed to lift her veil and look at her.

An Egyptian funeral is very different to a European one. To begin with, the body is not put in a coffin as with us, but wrapped in numerous white cloths very much in the same way as mummies are. It is then put into a long narrow wooden box on four legs, with a short pole standing up at one end. On this pole, if it is a man who has died, his tarbusch is placed; if a woman, a lock of her hair. The body is laid in this bier and covered with a cloth, and in this it is carried to the grave, followed by relations and paid mourners, the men chanting a sort of melancholy dirge, the women wailing and screeching and waving black rags towards the bier. On arriving at the cemetery the body in its grave cloths is lowered just as it is into the grave and then covered up. On Friday morning, the Sunday of the Mohammedans, the women go to the cemetery and eat their breakfast with the dead, chattering and laughing all the time.

The procession of the Holy Carpet is the Mohammedans' greatest religious ceremony. Every year a large green and gold carpet is woven. It is very beautiful, and when finished it is taken with great show and ceremony through the streets of Cairo. Then it is taken by train to Suez and through the streets and down to the docks, where it is put on board the Khedivial steamer and taken to Jeddah, and from there across the desert to Mecca, where it is blessed and laid over the tomb of Mohamed, the founder of their religion. Here it remains for a year till the new carpet is brought again from Cairo; then the old one is returned, cut up into small squares and distributed amongst the numerous mosques. This happens every year. Directly one carpet has left they start to make a new one. In the olden days it was made by the ladies of the harem, but now it is made by professional carpet makers, and when it is finished it is taken to the Citadel, where His Highness goes to inspect it. Then it is conveyed through the streets on poles by about eighty men to a large mosque or church, where it is hung, and almost everyone is allowed to see it if they obtain a pass. Here it remains for one night and great religious ceremonies take place and many prayers are offered up. The carpet is then folded and placed in a small tent, and put on the back of a white camel, followed by a band, men in uniform, more camels, donkeys, men on horses, and thousands of Arabs on foot. The pilgrimage to Mecca is the great event of a Mohammedan's life, as when they have undertaken this journey they feel certain of going to their heaven, though hundreds of them die on the way, as the have to undergo the most awful privations—crowding in thousands in the steerage of a ship to Jeddah, and then having to walk from there to Mecca across the desert.

The public history of Egypt is written on the walls of the temples, and the private history is written on the tombs, all in "Hieroglyphics," or "picture" characters.

But the language of Hieroglyphics died soon after 300 A.D. The knowledge of the characters was completely lost, and for many centuries there was no clue as to the meaning of these picture characters until the year 1800 when the "Rosetta Stone" was discovered, on which the same inscription was written in three different forms—Hieroglyphic, Demotic and Greek—and although the inscription was not very long, it was sufficient to enable the students gradually to unravel the meaning of the picture characters, and to discover some of the past history.

The Rosetta Stone is in the British Museum in London.

Egypt is a land of mystery. Like in "Peter Pan" it is

a sort of "never never" land where all sorts of wonderful things happen. They believe in all sorts of things which we cannot swallow.

For instance, when a house was being reconstructed for my father in the Arsenal at Alexandria, a "Holy Man's" tomb was found in one of the underground rooms, and as the Mohammedans think a great deal of these Holy Tombs, or tombs of their saints, my father thought it was not right to have it in a private room occupied by Christians, so he had a wall built separating it from the rest of the house, and a door made opening into the public street for "the Faithful" to enter by.

The Arabs were very delighted and excited at this. One Arabic newspaper enlarged upon it, and said that Allah, their prophet, had appeared to Gedge Pasha three times in the night, and the third time seized him by the collar of his pyjamas and dragged him downstairs, followed by the "Sit"—that is, my mother—in her nightdress, her hair down, and a candle in her hand.

Another Arabic paper said that Gedge Pasha had sent all the way to Mecca for the stone to build the wall with. Even a well-educated Arab said to my father, "Oh, Pasha, you must have had an inspiration."

Animal life, with the exception of the beautiful little Arab ponies and donkeys, is most uninteresting. There is the camel, which you know, is about the ugliest and most ungainly brute ever seen, and the Arabs use them in towns for carrying heavy loads such as sand and stone for building purposes, and also "burseen," a kind of clover.

The camel squats on the ground while the panier bags at its sides are being loaded, and it generally protests loudly all the time, by making the most horrible groans, and if it thinks the load is too heavy, nothing will induce it to get on its legs again, until it is lightened. All the camels look mangy and old, with the exception of the coastguard ones; these are fine, well-kept animals, and very swift. It is very difficult to ride a camel till you are used to it; it makes many people very sick. You know it is sometimes called the "Ship of the Desert," and it almost always makes you ache all over for days after you have been for a ride. They are vicious brutes, too, and many natives die of hydrophobia from their bite.

Another hideous brute is the ghamous, which takes the place of our cow. The milk is very rich, but almost white in colour. There is a tradition in Egypt, that after God

made the cow, the devil coming to have a look, burst out laughing, and declared he could do better himself with his eyes shut. God took him at his word. The devil set to work, and produced the ghamous.

The donkeys are very different from the European ones, much smaller and more graceful; prettier altogether, and they do not seem to suffer quite so much agony when they lift up their beautiful voices.

There are, of course, heaps of crocodiles in the Nile, and these are hideous creatures. One of the most interestingthings in Egypt is the "searabean," the ancient religious beetle, and it is quite wonderful to watch it pushing with its hind legs a huge piece of mud, about ten times its own size. The scarabeans, the grasshoppers and the locusts still cause the same serious ravages as they did in the time of Moses, so you see it's a great mistake to suppose that Moses did away with the plagues. They are still there in the summer; the whole ground swarming with tiny little frogs, and the air is full of their croakings—such a volume of sound to come from such small bodies.

Now all this is about Egypt generally, but I should like to talk about Alexandria, where my father was stationed. First of all I will describe the journey out.

You can either go overland through different parts of Europe, or all the way by sea. With our usual extravagance, we will take the overland route.

We start from London, and take the train to Dover on that filthy line—the London, Chatham and Dover. Then we cross to Calais, one of the nastiest crossings I know of, on a rough day. The last time I went to Egypt, when I arrived at Calais it was snowing hard, and I hardly knew what I was doing. I was recommended by a gentleman to take dinner, so I went into a restaurant close by and was served with some frog, I should imagine; after being swindled out of the little money I had, I took the train to Marseilles without any of my luggage at all. I was then told it was coming on by another train. After a tedious two-days' journey, we arrived at Marseilles, and I felt absolutely lost, having no idea what to do next.

I hailed the last carriage, but it was bagged before I had a look in, so I just went down to the boat in the cart with the luggage. I travelled by the North German Lloyd, and after five days of rolling and pitching, we entered the outer port of Alexandria, the famous town founded by Alexander the Great, the town where once dwelt the beautiful Queen Cleopatra.

The harbour of Alexandria is one of the finest in the world, but it is not beautiful, and though very large, it is hardly large enough for the shipping out there, which has increased very much of late years. The outer harbour is sheltered by an enormous breakwater of loose stones, which stands the force of the water much better than a made wall. The inner harbour is sheltered by the point of Ras-el-Tin. On this point stands the lighthouse, and the English Military Hospital. Till two years ago, there was only one pass into the harbour, the Boghas Pass, and this was too shallow to allow large ships to enter by, but now there is a second one which enables any ship to enter; it is called the New Boghas Pass.

The Arab quarter is very interesting to newcomers, though it is filthy and smelly in the extreme. Here you see a swarming crowd — men, women and children, crying, running, shouting, buying, selling, quarrelling; the children half-naked, generally filthy, and often with sore eyes covered with flies. The shops are nothing but square sheds, with no doors or windows, and they "shut up shop" by hanging a piece of matting in front of their wares. At night time, these shops are lit by large paraffin lamps, and sometimes by flaring torches; then dirt and shabbiness is hidden and everything looks very picturesque, particularly the fruit shops and brass shops. But the shop most patronised by Europeans is the one where they sell carpets and rugs; some of these are very beautiful and very expensive, and the older he carpet, the more you have to pay; but it is advisable to take someone with you who speaks Arabic and understands carpets, before attempting to buy, for somewhat like Aladdin's uncle, they will sell you new carpets for old. You must give yourself plenty of time at these shops, as you have to bargain. The carpet-seller will name a price, with no idea of getting it; you promptly offer half; he protests, but comes down a little in price, and you go up a little, and this goes on for days, or even weeks, till you both agree to a fair price. There is one thing to be said about these shops —you never leave them without taking something away with you, and how you wish you hadn't, for you are on the fidget the whole way driving home again, until you can retire to the privacy of your own bedroom.

Leaving the Arab town behind, you arrive into the quarter inhabited by Europeans and the rich Egyptians. Here you have broad streets, huge houses, fine shops, and gay cafes, and very fine square called "Mohamed Ali Square," in the middle of which stands a life-size statue of Mohamet Ali, seated on a beautiful Arab horse. He was the founder

of the reigning dynasty, but died in a madhouse.

Alexandria is not at all an Eastern-looking town; in fact, it is very cosmopolitan. People of all nationalities live there, and if a business man wishes to get an appointment, he must be able to speak English, French, Italian and Arabic, to get on. There are very few places of interest, and I suppose that is why tourists seldom stop in Alexandria. There is Aboukir Bay, where Nelson fought, there is Pompey's Pillar, which is made out of one piece of granite, there is a small museum, and an underground place where Egyptians used to live hundreds of years ago, and that is about all. Now Cairo, the capital of Egypt, is much more Eastern-looking, in spite of the thousands of tourists that yearly visit this gay city, and there are many more interesting places to visit. First, there is the Citadel, which can be reached by carriage, as it stands high above the town on a hill. From here, you get a magnificent view of Cairo, and the desert, which stretches far away into the distance. On this hill is the alabaster mosque where is to be seen the tomb of Mahomet Ali.

There are many beautiful mosques, where Christians are allowed to enter, if they either take their shoes off, or cover them with large quaint soft leather ones kept outside the mosques for this purpose. There is a most beautiful museum filled with mummies, quaint vases, jewels and precious stones, taken from the tombs of the once powerful Kings of Egypt. There are the bazaars, which are long covered-in alleys with small shops on either side, where all the products of the East are exposed for sale, besides German and Manchester imitations, which one meets everywhere.

Here are carpets, curtains, carved wood inlaid with mother-of-pearl and ivory, old weapons, perfumes, jewels, precious stones, silks, and all kinds of brass and copperware; here many a morning may be passed without a dull moment, but if you are wise, you will not take much money with you, for the bazaar merchant is a clever humbug, and over a cup of Turkish coffee, which they offer to you with many bows and pretty compliments, he will wheedle you out of your last piastre, and get you into debt for more.

And last, but not least, there are the pyramids of Ghizeh. To get to these, you cross the Nile, and drive for about twenty minutes through a beautiful avenue, which was made so that Empress Eugenie might drive comfortably to the pyramids at the time of the opening of the Suez Canal. The pyramids and the sphinx are on the borders of the desert.

Many people have speculated rather wildly about the object of pyramids, but Egyptologists have come to

the conclusion that they are tombs; as one man said, "the gigantic and for ever impenetrable casing of a mummy." Some are enormous. The one at Gizeh, the tomb of Khafea "the Great," is 472 feet high (about the height of St. Paul's Cathedral); and there is another 481 feet high; but they are of all sizes, even down to 20 feet high.

The Royal Tombs are chambers with shelves for the mummies to lie on, in the centre of the pyramid, and are reached by low, narrow tunnels through which you have to stoop and crawl and slide up and down the slopes. It was evident that the builders thought it necessary to try and secrete the whereabouts of these chambers, for there are decoy approaches and galleries leading nowhere, and even deep shafts cut in the passage which to-day you have to be helped over by guides, and were evidently intended for traps for the unwary robber who might try to get the jewels of the buried kings. Pliny says that there were 366,000 men employed for 20 years in building "the Great" Pyramid.

About a quarter of a mile from "the Great" Pyramid is the Sphinx, called "the sun in his resting place." The body is 140 feet long, and the front paw is about 50 feet long, so you can see it is an enormous thing.

The subject of Egypt is so great, and the interests are so many in all the customs and monuments, that it is difficult to know when to stop. The country has, of course, been through the usual routine of being occupied in ancient times by the Persians, Greeks, Romans; during the Middle Ages by the Arabs and Turks, and in recent times by the English.

—E.G.G.


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