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ALES and STOUT

# WAR VERSE and PROSE

SELECTED BY A.T.M.  
(6)

## THE WINNER.

The Englishman's a funny foe—  
He fumbles;  
At starting he is very slow  
And stumbles.

His timing isn't very good,  
Appalling,  
I've never even understood  
Such stalling.

He seems to like to miss the ball  
By inches;  
He likes to be against the wall  
In pinches.

He staggers all around the ring  
The blighter,  
You'd never think him from his swing  
A fighter.

He takes it often on the chin  
This stout boy:  
But when he seems to be all in . . .  
LOOK OUT, BOY.

He lets his arms fall to his side,  
(Yes, maybe)  
But when they think that he has died,  
Oh, baby,

He staggers, reels and jolly well  
Gets thinner—  
But at the end he gets the yell—  
"THE WINNER."  
—From "The New York Sun."

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE SEA GULL.

Be sure of this—no British gull  
Will ever find an air raid dull  
So long as he can score a hit  
(Direct) upon a Messerschmidt.

\* \* \* \* \*

## GERMAN AIRMAN.

His hair was fair as summer sun,  
His eyes were azure blue;  
And he was purest swine and brute  
At less than twenty-two.

\* \* \* \* \*

## CHANGING TASTES.

Our tastes change as we mature.  
Little girls like painted dolls; little  
boys like soldiers. When they grew  
up the girls like the soldiers and the  
boys go after the painted dolls.

# THE BLUE EXPRESS

## Western Desert Railway

"The railway construction group has one of the toughest jobs in Egypt. They are continually bombed and strafed, and have to work in sandstorms, while there is always a shortage of water. The construction group is one of the finest in the world," commented a New Zealand soldier who has returned from the Middle East. He added that the New Zealanders liked working with the Indians, and there threatened to be a big row once when there was a proposal to take their Indian working colleagues away.

The train running over the line built in the Middle East across the desert from Alexandria to Tobruk, it was stated, was known as the Blue Express. When one of the three German columns which made the last enemy advance in Libya started to make for the railway, every bit of rolling stock was evacuated, and as many damaged tanks and guns as possible were loaded on the railway and brought back, so that not a single locomotive fell into the enemy hands. Numbers of drivers and firemen had been killed or wounded in operating trains over the desert railway. It was hazardous work, as the noise of the train made it impossible often to hear the approach of hostile planes, which machinegunned the engine crews.

# GOSSIP

There's always the person  
In every town,  
Who has nothing to do  
But run others down.

They seem to delight  
In painting one black;  
They're friends to your face  
And foes to your back.

They never have thought  
For the one they condemn;  
Who perhaps by comparison  
Is far better than them.

If they'd examine the fruit  
Of their own family tree,  
They'd perhaps be content  
To let others be.

So here's some advice,  
For whom it applies,  
Just keep a still tongue  
For gossip breeds lies.  
—J.P., Ngaruawahia.

# SOLDIERS' "CIVIES"

## A Difficult Wartime Problem

Almost as vexing as the age-old query of "Where do flies go in the winter time" is the question of what happens to soldiers' "civies" in wartime. In the early stages of the war many soldiers erred in disposing of all their civilian clothes to find themselves in a difficult position on discharge when they had only the mufti grant (then £7/10/- and now increased to £12/10/-) to outfit themselves completely.

When troops are mobilized for overseas service the Army now sends back to the civil address nominated by the soldier any civilian clothes he has in camp. Few soldiers, however, take a full wardrobe into camp, and it is still in their own interests to make adequate arrangements for the care of their civilian clothing while they are away. This is not always easy for single men, and it presents some difficulties for the wives of some married men. For instance, wives who stay "put" sometimes find that their husband's clothes take up too much room whether left in a wardrobe or carefully folded in a trunk. Those who decide to go home to mother for the duration or move into smaller or cheaper living quarters are faced with the prospect of lugging a heavy suitcase about.

Unless careful attention and frequent airing are given to stored clothes there is the probability that in time they will go mildewy or become hopelessly crushed.

There has yet to be inaugurated in New Zealand a "park your civies" service, but one exists in Sydney where a big department store provides it for 7/6 a year. This firm first dry cleans and thoroughly deodorizes a suit. Then it is pressed, hung on a wooden coathanger and sealed in a bag. All possible precautions are taken against moths and the suit is periodically inspected. There may not be much profit in such a service for 7/6 a year, but it is a boon to soldiers.

When it comes to refitting themselves for civilian life after discharge from the Army, New Zealand soldiers are generously treated with coupons. Those with six months' service and under 12 months get a book of 26 coupons in addition to the full 26 M (in the new books, O) coupons in the civilian ration book. Personnel with more than 12 months' service receive an issue sufficient to cover the purchase of a complete new wardrobe.

On discharge a soldier is allowed to retain the articles of military kit issued to him on loan—greatcoat, battledress, cap, hat and kitbag. This leaves him with two sets of underclothing, and boots. While the coupon allowance is very fair, it still would be an impossible job for a soldier to refit himself on the £12/10/- mufti allowance. A good new suit would account for most, if not all, of this sum. While clothing cannot be purchased without coupons, the most generous supply of these is still not much use without money.

The reason why the average man is not a hero to his valet is because he hasn't got one.

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