

# Private "Ginger"— As Seen Through the Barbed Wire

By  
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"First Call," Etc.

Mr. Empey's Experiences During His Seventeen Months in the First Line Trenches of the British Army in France

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There were six of us. "Curly" Wallace was called "Curly" because he had the cutest little Della Fox, or spit curl, as the gum-chewers call it, you ever saw. Wallace was proud of that curl, and gave it the best of attention and care. He was Scotch.

"Happy" Houghton earned his nickname by his constant smile and happy disposition. He was English, a Londoner.

"Hungry" Foxcroft really earned his title. He took special pains that our rations would not become mildewed by lying around too long in the dampness of our dugout. He was English; also from London.

"Key" Honney, dubbed "Key" because in one of our theatrical attempts he took the part of "Key Cohnstein," and made quite a hit. English, via London.

"Dick" Turpin, called "Dick" in memory of the notorious highwayman. He used to help the quartermaster sergeant, so the name was very appropriate. He was Irish, from Dublin.

I was the sixth. The boys put the prefix "Yank" to my name, because I was American and hailed from the "Big Town" behind the statue of liberty.

The six of us composed the crew of gun No. 2 of the —th brigade machine company. We were machine gunners and our gun was the Vickers, light, 303, water-cooled.

It was a rainy afternoon in June, and we were sitting in our dugout in the front-line trench, about 300 yards from the German lines.

If you should ask a Tommy Atkins "What is a dugout?" he would look at you in astonishment, and pity you for your apparent lack of education, would answer, "What's a dugout? Why a dugout is a—well, a dugout's a dugout." Only being a Tommy pro tem in my case meaning "for duration of war"—I will try to describe to the best of my ability this particular dugout.

A dugout is a hole in the ground. Gets its name because it is dug out by the Royal Engineers, or R. E.'s as we call them. It is used to shelter the men in the trenches from shell fire. They also sleep in it, or try to. From our point of view, its main use is to drain the trenches of muddy water and give us rheumatism. It also makes a good hotel for rats. These guests look upon us as intruders and complain that we overcrowd the place. Occasionally we give in to them, and take a turn in the trench to rest ourselves.

Our dugout was about twenty feet deep, or, at least, there were twenty wooden steps leading down to it. The ceiling and walls were braced by heavy, square-cut timbers. Over the timbers in the ceiling sheets of corrugated iron were spread to keep the wet earth from falling in on us. The entrance was heavily sandbagged and very narrow; there was only room for one person to leave or enter at a time. The ceiling was six feet high and the floor space was ten feet by six feet. Through the ceiling a six-inch square airshaft was cut. We used to take turns sleeping under this in wet weather.

The timbers bracing the walls were driven full of nails to hang our equipment on. After our ammunition, belt-filling machine, equipment, rifles, etc., had been stored away, there was not much space for six men to live, not forgetting the rats.

It was very dark in the dugout, and as we were only issued a candle and a half every twenty-four hours we had to economize on light. We betide the last man who left the candle burning!

In this hotel of ours we would sit around the lonely candle and through a thick haze of tobacco smoke would recount our different experiences at various points of the line where we had been, or spin yarns about home. Sometimes we would write a letter, when we were fortunate enough to be near the candle. At other times we'd sit for an hour without saying a word, listening to a German over in the enemy's front trench playing a cornet. My, how that Boche could play! Just to make us hate the war he'd play "Swanee River," "Home, Sweet Home," or "Over the Waves." The latter was my favorite. During his recital our trenches were strangely quiet. Never a shot from either side.

Sometimes, when he had finished, Key Honney would go into the trench and play on his harmonica. As soon as we'd see that harmonica come out it was a case of "duck down low" for the Germans would be sure, when the first strains reached them, to send over "five rounds rapid." We hated that harmonica. More than once we checked one over the top, but he'd sit down, write a letter, and in about ten

days' time would receive, through the mail a little oblong package, and we'd know we were in for some more "five rounds rapid." We didn't blame the Germans.

Still, that harmonica had its uses. Often we would get downhearted and "fed up" with the war, and "grouse" at everything in general. Then Key would reach in his pocket and out would come that instrument of torture. We would then realize there were worse things than war, and cheer up accordingly.

On this particular rainy afternoon in June we were in a talkative mood. Perhaps it was due to the fact that Curly Wallace had made his "Tommy's cooker" do what it was supposed to do—make water boil in an hour and a half. A "Tommy's cooker" is a spirit stove which is very widely advertised as a suitable gift to the men in the trenches. Many were sent out, and many were thrown away.

Anyway, the "cooker" lived up to its reputation for once, though a little behind its advertised schedule in making water boil. Curly passed around the result of his efforts, in the form of an ammunition tin half full of fairly good tea. We each took a good swig, lighted a cigarette—they had "come up" with the rations the night before—and settled back against the damp earthen walls of the dugout, to see who could tell the biggest lie. For a few minutes silence reigned—no one seemed to care to be the first to break in.

Then Dick Turpin, turning to me, asked:

"Remember Burton of A company? Think he was in the Third platoon; the fellow that was recommended for the V. C. and refused it. Got the commendation for rescuing his platoon commander under fire."

I answered in the affirmative and Dick "carried on" with: "I never could see into that affair, because they seemed to be the worst of enemies. The officer was always picking on him; used to have him 'on the crime sheet' for the least offense. Got him several days of extra pack drill, and once he clicked twenty-one days' crucifixion"—(field punishment No. 1, tied to a limber wheel two hours per day for twenty-one days).

"No matter what dirty fatigue or working party came along, Burton's name was sure to head the list."

"This Burton appeared to be a surly sort of a chap, kept to himself a whole lot, always brooding, didn't have many friends in the company, either. There seemed to be something on his mind."

"Most of the company men said his sweetheart back in Blighty had thrown him down for some other bloke."

Happy Houghton butted in: "That's the way with this world, always hammering at a fellow. Well, I know this Burton, and there's not a better mate in the world, so let that sink into your nappers."

"Don't get sore, Happy," said Honney. "If you don't mind, let's have the story. I meant no offense. Just naturally curious, that's all. You can't deny that the whole affair has been quite a mystery to the brigade. Spit it out and get it off your chest."

"Let's have it, Happy," we all chimed in chorus.

Happy, somewhat mollified, lighted a cigarette, took two or three puffs, and started:

"Well, it was this way, but don't ask any questions until I am through."

"You know Burton isn't what you'd call a prize beauty when it comes to looks. He's about five, six in height,

her to see a football game at the college; he was playing on the team, so she had to sit it out alone. During this 'sitting it out,' she met Huston and the trouble started. He was dead gone on her and she liked him, so he made hay while the sun was shining.

"She didn't exactly turn Ginger down, but he was no boob and saw how things were, so he eased out of the running, although it almost broke his heart; he certainly loved that girl."

"This state of affairs widened the gap between Huston and Burton. They hated each other pretty fiercely, but Burton never went out of his way to show it, while Huston took every opportunity to vent his spleen. Ginger saw Betty very seldom, and when he did, she was generally accompanied by Huston."

"Then the war came; Ginger immediately enlisted as a private. He could have had a commission, but did not want to take a chance of having to mix with Huston."

"A few weeks after Ginger's enlistment, Huston joined too—was losing prestige in Betty's eyes by staying in muffs. He went into the O. T. C.—(officers' training corps). In seven months he received his commission and was drafted to France. Ginger had been out three months."

"Before leaving, Huston proposed to Betty and was accepted. By one of the many strange coincidences that happen in this world Huston was sent to the battalion and company that Ginger was in and was put in command of Ginger's platoon. Then things happened."

"Ginger could hardly believe his eyes when he first saw Huston and knew he was to be his platoon commander. He knew he was in for it good and plenty."

"That night Huston sent for Ginger and had a talk with him. Tried to make him believe that he harbored no animosity, detailed him as mail orderly, the first act of a campaign of petty cruelty. By being mail orderly Ginger would have to handle Betty's letters to Huston and Huston's letters to her, Ginger saw through it immediately and his hate burned stronger. From that night on it was one indignity after another, just a merciless persecution, but Ginger never complained; just stored up each new act and swore vengeance."

"It came to such a pass that Ginger could bear it no longer; he decided to kill Huston and only waited for a favorable opportunity to present itself. I think it was only his love for Betty which had held him back so long; he couldn't bear the thought of her grieving for her dead lover."

"One night, in the front-line trench, orders were received that after an hour's intense bombardment of the enemy's lines the company would go over the top at four-thirty the next morning. Huston was to go over with the first wave, while Ginger was in the second. Here was his chance."

"All that night he crouched on the fire step, musing and brooding, nursing his revenge. He prayed to Betty to forgive him for what he was going to do."

"After the bombardment the next morning over went the first wave, a line of bayonets and madly cheering men. Ginger only saw one in that crowd; his eyes never left Huston. His finger twitched and caressed the trigger of his rifle—his long-looked-for opportunity had come."

"The first wave had gone about sixty yards when Ginger let out a curse. Huston had been hit and was down, and he saw his revenge slipping through his fingers. But no, Huston was not dead; he was trying to rise to his feet; he was up, hopping on one leg, with the blood pouring from the other. Then he fell again, but was soon sitting up bandaging his wounded leg, using a tourniquet from his first-aid packet."

"A surge of unholy joy ran through Ginger. Lifting the safety latch on his rifle, unheeding the rain of bullets which were ripping and tearing the sand-bagged parapet about him, he took deliberate aim at Huston. Then he saw a vision of Betty, dressed in black, with tear-stained eyes. With a muttered curse Ginger threw the rifle from him, climbed over the parapet and raced across No Man's land. No act of his should bring tears to Betty's brown eyes. He would save her worthless lover and then get killed himself—it didn't matter."

"Reaching Huston he hissed at him: 'Damn you, I was going to kill you, but I won't. I'll carry you back to Betty. But always remember it was the man you robbed who saved your worthless life, you despicable skunk!'"

"Huston murmured: 'Forgive me, Burton, but for God's sake get me out of this. I'll be killed—for God's sake, man, hurry, hurry!'"

"That's it, is it? Whine, damn you, whine! It's music to my ears, Lieutenant Huston begging a 'bally boulder' for his life, and the boulder giving it to him. I would to God that Betty could see and hear you now."

"With that Ginger stooped and, by main strength, lifted Huston onto his back and staggered toward our lines. The bullets and pieces of shrapnel were cracking and 'swishing' all around. He had gone about fifty yards when a piece of shell hit his left arm just below the shoulder. Down he went, Huston with him, but was soon up, his left arm dangling and swinging at his side. Turning to Huston, who was lying on his back, he said: 'I'm hard hit—it's your life or mine. We're only ten yards from our trench; try to make it on your own. You ought to be able to crawl in.'"

"But Huston answered: 'Burton, don't leave me—I am bleeding to death. For the love of God get me in! You can have Betty, money, anything I

have, it is all yours—just save my life. Answer me, man, answer—"

"You want my answer, do you? Well, take it and damn you!" With that Ginger slapped the officer in the face; then, grabbing him by the collar with his right arm, the blood soaking his tunic from the shell wound in his left, Ginger slowly dragged Huston to the trench and fainted. A mighty cheer went up from our lines. Stretcher bearers took them both to an advanced first-aid post, and their journey to Blighty and Betty was started.

On the trip over Ginger never regained consciousness. They landed in a hospital in England and were put in beds next to each other. Ginger was taken up into the 'pictures' (operating theater), where his arm was amputated at the shoulder. Huston's wound was slight; bullet through the calf of leg.

"While Ginger was coming out of ether he told all he knew. A Red



A Red-Cross Nurse With Tear-Dimmed Eyes Was Holding His Hand.

Cross nurse, with tear-dimmed eyes, was holding his hand. Occasionally she would look across at Huston in the next bed; he would slowly nod his head at each questioning glance of hers, while the red blood of shame mounted to his temples.

"Then Ginger came to. He saw a beautiful vision. Thought he was dreaming. Sitting by his bed, dressed in a Red Cross nurse's uniform, was Betty, Huston's Betty, holding his hand. Betty, with tears in her eyes, but this time tears of joy. The sweat came out on his forehead—I couldn't be true. He gasped out the one word, 'Betty!'"

"Stooping over, the vision kissed him on the lips and murmured, 'My Ginger, you have come back to Betty.'"

"Then he slept. Next morning the colonel of the hospital came to Ginger's bedside and congratulated him, telling him that he had been recommended for the V. C. Ginger refused the V. C. from the government; said he had not earned it, would not give the reasons but persisted in his refusal. They can't force you to take a V. C."

"Five months later Ginger and Betty were married. She cuts his meat for him now; says that all his faults were contained in his left arm. He lost that. So, you see, Ginger was somewhat of a man, after all, wasn't he, mates?"

We agreed that he was. I asked Happy how he came to know these details. He answered:

"Well, Yank, Betty happens to be my sister. Gimme a fag, some one. I am about talked out, and, anyway, we've only got a few minutes before 'stand to.'"

Just then the voice of our sergeant sounded from the mouth of the dug out: "Equipment on! Stand to!"

So it was a case of turn out and mount our gun on the parapet. It was just getting dark. We would dismount it at "stand down" in the morning. Tommy is like an owl, sleeps in the day and watches at night. It was a miserable night, rainy and chilly. The mud in the trenches in some places was up to our knees. We knew we were in for it and wished we were back in Blighty, where one can at least change his clothes when they get wet instead of waiting for a sunny day to dry them. At times we have been wet for a fortnight.

# The KITCHEN CABINET

Discipline is doing what you don't want to do. It is resisting a lower desire in order to indulge a higher.—Dr. Crane.

## WAYS TO USE CEREALS.

Cereals are always associated with breakfast, although they may be eaten daily in other forms than breakfast food.

**Rice Souffle.**—Take one cupful of cooked rice, one cupful of white sauce and three eggs. Whip the yolks of the eggs until thick, add the white sauce and cooked rice, then fold in the stiffly beaten whites of the eggs. Bake as an omelet. Tomato sauce or grated cheese may be added for variety.

**Fruit Drop Cookies.**—Take two and a half cupfuls of rolled oats, ground; one-half cupful of sugar, one quarter cupful of corn syrup, one half teaspoonful of salt, one tablespoonful of fat, two well-beaten eggs, one-half cupful of chopped dates or raisins, one teaspoonful of vanilla. Mix as usual and drop by spoonfuls on a greased baking sheet.

**Corn and Barley Salad Wafers.**—Take one and one-half cupfuls of barley, one cupful of cornmeal, two tablespoonfuls of fat, two teaspoonfuls of salt, with milk or water to make a mixture to roll out very thin. Cut in shapes and bake in a hot oven. Cheese may be added by sprinkling it over the dough just before cutting out.

**Cornmeal and Rice Waffles.**—Mix and sift one-half cupful each of cornmeal and wheat flour, one-half teaspoonful of soda, one teaspoonful of salt and a cupful of sour milk, two eggs, a cupful of boiled rice and a tablespoonful of melted fat.

**Indian Pudding.**—Add three-quarters of a cupful of cornmeal to a pint of hot milk; let it cool for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally; add a half cupful of molasses, salt, two eggs and a cupful of chopped suet. Put into a baking dish; add a quart of cold milk and a half cupful of raisins. Bake for four or five hours. Stir for the first half of the cooking occasionally and dredge with flour to make a rich brown crust with the suet. Sugar may be substituted for the molasses if the flavor is not enjoyed.

**Corn Oysters.**—Take one can of corn, two eggs, two tablespoonfuls of melted butter, one teaspoonful of baking powder and one-half cupful of flour. Season with salt and pepper. Fry on a hot greased griddle.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth  
e'er gave,  
Await alike the inevitable hour:  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

## THE SCHOOL LUNCHEON.

The basket lunch for child or grown-up is harder to prepare than the meal served at home as there are many foods that do not carry well or must be served hot. This limits the choice and extra care must be taken to make the basket luncheon attractive as well as satisfying.

By the use of waxed or paraffin paper moist foods may be carried, which formerly had to be omitted. Paper cups and small glasses are a great help, as custards, canned fruits and jellies and jams as well as other semi-solid foods may be carried.

Corn bread in times past was never served cold yet it toasts well and is good as a sandwich bread. The filling of any sandwich should be moist enough to make it palatable.

A common fault with most mothers is putting too much into the basket. If the child attends school where a hot soup or hot drink is served daily the luncheon will be packed with that consideration. The day is not far away when the hot dish will be a part of every school lunch.

A baked apple or pear is always a good luncheon dish. They may be baked or served uncooked.

In packing the lunch basket put the things the least likely to crush in the bottom and always have tucked in an out of the way corner a bit of candy, a cube or two of sugar or a fig or a few dates; such surprises delight the heart of a child.

Paper napkins are inexpensive and should be supplied so that the child may use one to spread over his desk.

Here are a few sandwich fillings: Peanut butter mixed with a little salad dressing or milk and chopped olives. One-half cupful of dates, one-fourth cupful of nutmeats, ground and mixed, moistened with salad dressing or cream.

Honey mixed with chopped pecans or any local nut. Honey with cream or cottage cheese is another good filling.

One-fourth of a cupful of orange marmalade with two tablespoonfuls of chopped nuts. Or any jelly or jam makes a good filling.

**Earnestness Welcome.**  
One gets very tired of chatter some times. And when someone comes who is thoughtful, who is earnest, who talks that he may reveal something worth while, because he has some treasure through which the world may profit then what a difference. How the mind throws off its staleness and freshness under the wind that cuts, maybe, as it heals. How the soul refreshes itself how the heart takes courage and the spirit rises to meet the message.—Exchange.

**Cow Known as Great Mother.**  
Long before the birth of the gods the way was being prepared for the apotheosis of the cow. The life giving cowry-amulet, one of primitive man's earliest elixirs of life, eventually became personified as the Great Mother. In course of time the cow's maternal function in supplying milk for human children brought about her identification with the Great Mother. The moon, also, as the controller of womankind, was another of her forms.

**Daily Thought.**  
Charity itself consists in acting justly and faithfully in whatever office, business and employment a person is engaged.—Swedenborg.

What shall I have for dinner?  
What shall I have for tea?  
An omelet, a chop, or steak  
Or a savory fricassee?

## DELICIOUS HOT BREADS.

Although wheatless days in America are now a thing of the past, we have learned to like many of the substitutes and many a family will continue to use them, even with wheat flour free as usual.

**Potato Biscuits.**—Take one cupful of mashed potato, one cupful of flour, four teaspoonfuls of baking powder, one-half teaspoonful of salt, one tablespoonful of butter substitute, one tablespoonful of lard and one-half cupful of milk. Mix and sift the dry ingredients. Add these to the potatoes, using a spatula. Add the fat and gradually add the milk. Toss on a floured board and roll out to one-half inch in thickness. Cut in shape with a cutter and place in greased pans. Bake twelve to fifteen minutes.

**Barley and Oats Shortcake.**—Take two cupfuls of barley flour, one and one-half cupfuls of ground oats, one teaspoonful each of salt and sugar, four tablespoonfuls of fat, a pinch of soda and four teaspoonfuls of baking powder, one cupful of water. Mix and bake as usual.

**Cornflour Shortcake.**—Take two and two-thirds cupfuls of corn flour, four teaspoonfuls of baking powder, one teaspoonful of salt, one tablespoonful of sugar, six tablespoonfuls of fat and one cupful of milk or water. Mix and bake as usual.

**Oatmeal Biscuits.**—Take one and one-quarter cupfuls of flour, one and one-half teaspoonfuls of baking powder, two tablespoonfuls of sugar, one-half teaspoonful of salt, six tablespoonfuls of shortening and one and one-third cupfuls of oatmeal, with two-thirds of a cupful of water. Mix, adding more water if needed to make a soft dough. Roll out thin on a floured board and cut with a biscuit cutter. Bake in a moderate oven one-half hour. Less time is taken in baking if the oatmeal is parched before using.

**Cornmeal Griddle Cakes.**—Take one cupful of cornmeal, add one cupful of scalded milk, one egg, two teaspoonfuls of baking powder, a tablespoonful each of melted shortening and molasses. Scald the meal with the milk and when cool add the other ingredients. Mix well and bake on a hot griddle.

The woman who increases the efficiency of her home is demonstrating the most practical kind of patriotism.

## A FEW CANDIES.

The foundation for so many of the French candies is made from fondant. To prepare the fondant take four cupfuls of granulated sugar, one and one-half cupfuls of cold water, one-fourth of a teaspoonful of cream of tartar or a tablespoonful of corn syrup. Set on the back part of the range and let stand until the sugar is dissolved. Boil, washing down the sides to keep it from graining. The hand may be dipped into cold water quickly brushing down the sides of the pan, or a swab of white cloth may be used. Cook the syrup until a soft ball is made when dropped in cold water. Pour the syrup out on a marble slab or large platter lightly greased. Do not scrape out the sauceman or allow the last of the syrup to drip from the pan as any grainy portion will cause the whole to grain. Work the edges with a wooden spoon, turn toward the center, then knead until the mass is white and firm. Let stand for an hour or two then pack in bowl, cover with a cloth and let stand overnight. The next day the fondant will improve it.

To make bon-bons, add any desired flavoring and color to a small portion of fondant, then dip in melted chocolate or thinned fondant, melted over hot water.

Chopped fruit of different kinds may be mixed with fondant dipped in chocolate or uncolored fondant and decorated with half a nutmeat. To make the chocolate creams that are very soft in the center, take it off before it makes a soft ball to handle. Then mix as before and put out on ice to freeze. Make in balls white very cold and dip, then they will have the very soft creamy centers.

**Double Fudge.**—Boil together seven minutes two cupfuls of sugar, one-half cupful of cream, two squares of chocolate and a tablespoonful of butter; beat and pour into a buttered tin to cool. Boil together two cupfuls of granulated sugar, half a cupful of cream and a tablespoonful of butter and cook ten minutes. Add a teaspoonful of vanilla, beat and pour on top of the fudge in the pan. When cool, cut in squares.

Nellie Maxwell