

**FOOD FOR REFLECTION.**

By GEORGE WETHERILL EARL, JR.

Of course you know Mrs. Jack Kent—Mazie Masters that was? Well Mazie and I had a little affair of the heart. No, I am not sighing—the wound is healed. As for Mazie—well, Mazie is Mrs. Kent. Heart wounds frequently heal without the long-ribbed, ever pulsating scar. Ask Mazie.

Before I left the transport City of Peking with my company—"K" of the 54th Volunteers—to tramp through the wilds of Lugon in chase of the wily Filipino, I carefully tied up Mazie's letters—dear, sweet letters they were, too—together with sundry partly-worn gloves, delicately violet-scented handkerchiefs, hair-pins, and other trifles to numerous to mention; wrapped them in oilskin, sealed surreptitiously in the ship's commissary office with government sealing-wax; and placed them in a flat emergency ration tin, the contents of which I had hastily removed; after which I secreted the tin in the depths of my haversack. If you have ever had the experience of carrying a heavy ration-laden haversack suspended by an entirely too narrow strap across your shoulder in tropical hiking, you cannot know the agony caused by the aforementioned strap as it burnt and ate into sensitive flesh. Tempted to throw it away, you ask? Often—the men in my company to a man, relieved themselves of these heart-breaking burdens when the five days rations they contained became exhausted. But poor me! There was the treasured tin down in the depths of my haversack. . . . Yes, I suppose I should have worn those letters next my heart, but the package was too bulky.

At night, when our tired and often hungry outfit bivouacked, awaited the too soon coming of dawn, I would take the tin from its hiding-place and fondle it.

"Why don't you open that emergency ration and have a whack at it?" I frequently was asked.

"Too precious!" was my invariable rejoinder.

We followed the illusive native army along the killing sandy shore-line of Laguna de Bay, through the montes of Cavite, until six months of fruitless hiking brought our outfit north again to Bacoor, within easy reach of Manila and home mail.

My heart almost stopped beating while the mail was distributed to the waiting bunch of officers and company mail orderlies in the adjutant's office. The first letter handed me was in Mazie's inimitable, imitative English handwriting—post-marked three months back. Then came numerous papers and magazines, and letters from my immediate family, and last of all another letter from Mazie, with a post-mark seven months old. "Can she be it?" was my thought as I quickly hid myself in the native shack which had been assigned to me as quarters.

I opened the letter dated letter. It contained but a few lines. Our engagement had been a mistake. . . . Mazie had met Jack Kent. . . . They were made for each other. . . . What should she do with my ring? My letters—she always would keep. She had asked Jack's advice. "Treasure them up," he had told her, "They are peaches."

Hot under the collar? Phew! Don't mention it; I'd have those letters back and return hers with a dignified and cold reply. My fountain pen fairly sailed over the white paper with sputter and scratch. In this the moment of inspiration, I was interrupted—a knock at my closed lattice-like door.

"Come in!" An orderly entered. "The adjutant's compliments, sir." And he handed me an order directing the company commanders to draw three days' subsistence, two days' field rations, and one day's emergency rations, as the regiment was to change station.

When the proper ration returns were prepared and signed, and the subsistence drawn from the commissary. I went back to my shack and the unfinished letter, and scribbled away for dear life—time was now a precious commodity, I was adding my signature when a knock again interrupted me. My quarter-master sergeant entered burdened with my food for the next two or perhaps three days.

"Thank you, sergeant," I said to him, when he suggested that he pack my haversack.

Do you know, I read and reread that letter in the ill-lighted interior of my shack until my eyes ached; then folded, sealed, and addressed it.

"Lord!" I exclaimed. I've forgot her letters!" and went to the peg where the sergeant had hung my stuffed haversack, reached into its depths and drew out the tin. Do you know, I foolishly kissed that yellow painted thing several times before I realized what I was doing, and, with tear-filled eyes, carefully wrapped it together with my letter, placed the proper address on the package, then walked over to the adjutant's office, dropped it, with a huge sigh, into the waiting mail-pouch, and immediately proceeded to prepare my company for its two or three days' hike.

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Let us send you a full copy of Mr. Strongman's letter and some other literature on the subject. Just mention this paper.

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That change of station will ever be a nightmare to me in more senses than one. It should have been accomplished in two days easy going, but unreliable guides, broken bridges, and many unthought of obstacles placed on the trail by the cunning insurgents, delayed our advance. At the end of the second day out we had hardly covered two-thirds of the distance.

The men arose grumbling on the morning of the third day, and sullenly went about the preparation of their breakfast. There was almost a mutiny when they discovered the emergency ration contained no coffee—concentrated or otherwise. A mixture of tea and sugar was supposed to take its place. I thanked my lucky stars that, owing to the forethought of my quarter-master sergeant, I had sufficient field rations remaining for two meals.

The trail became more practicable as the day lengthened, but the men, no matter how much the urging, only went forward in a dispirited manner. When the sun had dropped below the western horizon, we were still some miles from our destination. The men threw their tired and hungry bodies along the trail-side and murmured in their discontent.

I built a small fire, put my half-filled tin cup among its embers in anticipation of a cup of emergency tea, and prepared to open my ration tin. I was reaching into my haversack for this much coveted article, when an orderly interrupted me:

"Adjutant's compliment, sir. Commanding officer directs the march be continued." Indang—our new station—at last. The men soon ceased their grumbling, rations in plenty were supplied. That night I occupied the well-equipped native house of an irconcilable insurgent.

Time fairly flew. Our new station was in a long since pacified locality, and we lived in such comfort as was in keeping with the obtaining conditions. Some two months later I received the announcement of Mazie's marriage, and in the same mail a letter addressed in her characteristic chirography. She had received my letter and the accompanying tin, and would consider them as a wedding gift—particularly as my letter was so touching. She had read it to Jack: "Do you know, poor Jack had tears in his eyes before I had finished. He said: 'Mazie, that fellow's heart is in the right place.'"

Wasn't that a pretty kettle of fish?—adding insult to injury. But I was slightly appeased. There was a postscript:

The tin of letters I will hold sacred. I promise Jack shall not see them until I am an old, old woman, and then only to prove to him, if necessary, that he wasn't the only pebble.

I formally congratulated Mr. and Mrs. Kent in the very next mail, and then—forgot it. Year had taken wings to itself when I received another letter from Mazie. She had a son. This is what she wrote: "He shall be a soldier in emulation of your splendid achievements in the Philippines."

Hot stuff, wasn't it? I guess it meant a silver cup or pap spoon. But they had grabbed

bed the wrong porcine individual by the ear, if it did. That soldier-intended son took his pap from plebeian glass, china, or pewter, so far as I was concerned.

By the time another year had almost winged towards eternity I had returned from the Philippines and been mustered out of the volunteer service. I was busily engaged at my old desk in my father's counting-house, when I received, through military channels, with many official indorsements, a communication from the Chief Commissary of Subsistence, United States Army.

The last indorsement read: "Sir I am directed by the Military Secretary to forward you the inclosed Emergency Ration Tin and contents found among the commissary supplies turned in to the Commissary of Subsistence, Department of the Philippines, to be credited to your Company. You are indebted to the United States Government in the sum of thirty-one (31) cents for one Emergency Ration Issue unauthorized."

When I removed the cover the tin fell from my hands. My ejaculations brought several of my fellow clerks to my side. We all stood gazing in surprize at an assortment of letters, gloves, filmy handkerchiefs, and hairpins spread upon the floor in painful confusion. A slight odor of long confined violet perfume scented the air.

**Decadent London.**

"The Englishman who succeeds is hardly ever a Londoner; the Englishman who fails completely is almost always a Londoner."

This is the statement which a special correspondent of the Times, who has been travelling in Canada and part of the United States, says he has heard everywhere. The correspondent visited Mr. Edison at his laboratory in New Jersey. "Say, what's the matter with your people over there?" he exclaimed. "I've had to close down my phonograph factory in England—what's the name of the place? I've forgotten; somewhere near London. All the others in Europe plying. But we couldn't make that one pay. We get good work out of the French and the Belgians and the Germans and Austrians, but the English—no good. Mind, I'm not speaking of the English mechanic; none better in the world. I'm talking of the common laboring man you pick up on the streets. What is it? Too much booze, or general deterioration, or what?"

**SPECIALIST WAS BAFFLED.**

**Child Tortured with Eczema.**

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Once again the unequalled merit of Zam-Buk as a healer of skin diseases has been demonstrated, this time at Lunenburg Co., N. S.

Mr. D. G. Mossman, of that place, says:—"My little girl, now nearly three years old, when about four months of age began to be afflicted with eczema, I consulted a specialist who did his best for the poor little thing, but the disease baffled him, and after a long trial I was obliged to admit that his treatment was not doing any good. Then I tried various remedies which were advised by friends, but with no better result."

Next I called in another doctor—still the disease continued to spread! It began in the form of small spots and pustules on the child's head. These increased in size and discharged. The discharge seemed to spread infection to other parts, and bit by bit the diseased area increased until at last the poor child's head and face seemed to be one great sore.

"When the second doctor failed to give any relief, I was at a loss what to do. Someone who had tried Zam-Buk strongly advised me to give it a trial, and I did so. The first few applications didn't seem to have any effect at all, but although not apparent it must have been attacking the very roots of the disease, for after persevering with the treatment for a little while noted a marked improvement. Encouraged by this we continued with Zam-Buk and left off everything else. The disease was gradually subdued, the itching grew less acute, and the little one's suffering was relieved. Then the area of the sores grew less and less, and in the end every trace of the dreadful eczema was removed. Not only so, but there has been no scarring or marking left to disfigure the child's face."

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**His Father.**

Town Visitor (to small applicant for a holiday)—"What is your father?"

Small Applicant—"E's me father."

T. V.—"Yes, but what is he?"

S. A.—"Oh, 'e's me stepfather."

T. V.—"Yes, yes. But what does he do? Does he sweep chimney or drive busses, or what?"

S. A. (with a dawning light of comprehension)—"O-o-w! No, 'e ain't done nothin' since we've 'ad 'im."—Home Herald.

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