

COUNTRY FOLK SHUN WAR CLOUDS

English Farmers Talk of Weather as European Nations Rearm

NEW YORK, Jan. 27—Nobody knows how he got there, where he came from or why. His age is unknown, and since his origins are lost in the mists of antiquity he is a national monument, or at any rate has his name in black-letter on the beautifully tinted ordnance survey maps of Southern England.

He is the Long Man of Wilmington—a primitive 240 feet high, cut into the soft South Down chalk, in rude outline against the steep side of Windover Hill. Holding a colossal staff in either hand, he looks out from the long, high, treeless ramparts of the Downs, across the busy Weald of Sussex, as he has done for centuries. Perhaps it is doubtful whether he was there when the Romans came, but he must recall more than one party of the marauding Danes, looting and burning their way among the coast villages. He probably observed William the Conqueror's men when they landed around the corner of Pevensey, and he has watched many invasions of a different kind since then.

Saw Progress of Civilization
They were the invasions of time and change and the complexities of civilization. He saw the post roads creep out to link up the countryside at his feet, and the railways presently follow them, and the motor roads follow the railways. He observed the ever-growing crowds of 'trippers' invading the south coast towns on bank holidays; more recently he has been watching new developments. Brighton, which is scarcely farther from Central London than Port Jefferson, say, is from Pennsylvania station, has been turning from a shore resort into a suburb.

The commuting trains do it in an hour flat, and the suburban 'developments' are creeping more and more insistently up the valleys on to the lower fringe of the Downs themselves.

Villages Still There
Some of the quiet country villages have already been swallowed by the retractor; some of the country pubs, where only a few years ago walkers stopped for their beer and bread and cheese and rustic conversation, have been replaced by pseudo-Tudor hotels run by the great brewing combines.

Some others have been taken by enterprising young men of the gentleman class, restored and tea-shopped, and had their prices raised. But only some.

The Downs themselves are still there, rising out of the midst of this modernity in their great, smooth, desolate swales, covered with their smooth and springy turf, where the sheep graze among the tumuli dating from Neolithic times, as remote and isolated as the sheep on a Nevada ranch. Tucked into the draws, away from the coast, the English country villages are still there, and the Long Man himself is still there.

He again is watching the road over which the new military invasion, now possible once more, may come, if it does come. He looks out now on squadrons of pursuit aviation, humming along through the great cumulus cloud and patches of blue sky above the Weald, a fragile and dubious defense for the complex and vulnerable civilization spread below.

Long Man Unmoved
The watchers who waited in the mists and rain beside their beacon pyres in 1588 have been replaced by elaborate networks of telephonic communications and volunteer observers, ready to catch the first drone of the hostile bombing fleets coming up across the channel. Those possibly destructive wings are large over Southern England. But the Long Man remains unmoved and, since he is scarcely an object of military significance, will doubtless still remain after they have come and gone.

The country pubs and village inns along the South Downs were some of the several spots in Europe where I heard nobody ask when the next war was coming, nobody mention aviation or gas defense or politics or Adolf Hitler, or even, for that matter, Mrs. Wallis Simpson.

People Are Gay
There was a poster on a village wall about the autumn manoeuvres. I examined it, thinking it would be a warning to the population concerning its part in anti-gas drills or mobilization or something of the sort, but it referred simply to the times and places at which farmers should en-

ter claim for crop damage.

The people in the pubs talked about the weather and each other. They joshed the barmaids and played shove ha'penny with great skill on finely polished boards, the ha'pennies being specially smoothed counters stamped to imitate the old French coinage.

They discussed the growing nuisance of the 'caravan' squatters, the British caravan is, of course, the time-honored prototype of the automobile trailer, and how the local council was clearing these persons out by assessing them for taxes.

And they had some more beer and talked again about the weather, as rain or sunshine alternated in the neatly walled village street outside and the Downs lifted beyond in their primitive desolation, swept by cloud and wind and as empty to the skies as they have been since the Old Stone Age, and will be into an incalculable future.

I grant that the South Downs are a peculiar formation, a freak of geology raising a primitive island in the midst of our crowding modern civilization of a sort not found so close beside the other great centres of European population. I grant that the Long Man is a person of no particular historical or artistic importance; possibly it was wrong to be impressed by him to the extent that I was and frivolous to present him as the concluding exhibit in a series of observations on the political and economic state of modern Europe. I doubt that he will get into any of the textbooks on the origins of the coming war.

Yet something about him and his surroundings did impress me with the deep-rooted foundations, the long, long history and the indestructible calm and common sense of the common man of Europe. For all his appalling civilization, he is not so far, I sometimes think, from Neolithic

Tea for every Taste

"SALADA" TEA

IRONY OF CHRISTMAS AT THE FRONT

The Veteran Looks Backward at the War That Was Fought to End All Wars

NEW YORK, Jan. 27—"Looking back on the war that was to end all war," said the veteran, "you can think of nothing worse or more ironic than Christmas at the front. While surplused clergy in the homeland preached peace on earth, good will to men you dodged trench mortars, raided the enemy at night or repelled his raids and tried to keep from freezing to death. For you the star of Bethlehem was a Very light revealing a mass of ragged shell holes beyond a barrier of barbed wire.

"Your outfit held a section of line between Armentieres and La Bassée. The German trenches ran along the lower slopes of Aubers Ridge and were comparatively dry. Yours wound for miles through swamps in which trenches in the proper sense of the word could not be dug. The front line trench, so-called, was merely a zig-zag slot between a parapet and parados of black muck held together with stakes and wire mesh. Duckboards that were being constantly smashed by shell and mortar fire afforded a precarious pathway over water and ooze anywhere from six inches to three feet deep.

"Communication trenches, where they existed, were likewise muck barricades, and full of foul slime. In many places duckboards ran across the open marsh between the front and support lines. After a bombardment your front line barricade looked like a sieve and snipers took constant toll of men splashing across the open gaps. Dugouts were out of the question in the marshland, and flimsy huts built of bags of mud and roofed with corrugated iron were your only protection. Where these did not exist you lived, ate and slept in the open trench exposed to the rain and snow of a bitter Flanders winter.

"Your tour of front line duty was six days during which you were seldom warm or your clothes completely dry. Then you trudged out through the marshes to a ruined farm where you drew two lice-infested blankets and slept in a draughty barn heated by an improvised stove kept going with stolen wood. Those six days out of the front line were ironically term-

ed "relief," but two or three nights back on the war that was to end all war," said the veteran, "you can think of nothing worse or more ironic than Christmas at the front. While surplused clergy in the homeland preached peace on earth, good will to men you dodged trench mortars, raided the enemy at night or repelled his raids and tried to keep from freezing to death. For you the star of Bethlehem was a Very light revealing a mass of ragged shell holes beyond a barrier of barbed wire.

"But the rest periods gave you a chance to buy food—the inevitable 'oeufs avec pommes de terres frites' and occasionally 'bifteck'—and drink beer and cheap wine in estaminets which continued to do business well within range of the German guns. Sometimes you got a hot bath, either in the big vats of an abandoned brewery or under improvised showers installed by your own engineers. You turned in your dirty shirt and underwear and received others that, while clean, were full of lice larvae that hatched out immediately.

"The six days were soon over and you trudged back in the dark, often in rain and snow, along muddy roads which were perfect compared with the nightmare of the communication trenches. On the way up you stopped and drew hip-length rubber boots which were all right until you sank in mud up to the knees and had the devil's own time getting out. You completed the relief at 10 a.m. and began sentry duty, three men to each fire bay. One man stood up looking over the parapet for an hour, with the second man sitting beside him. The third man slept on the firestep until it was time to relieve one of his comrades. In addition to this you were liable to be called for trench patrol or, what was infinitely more dangerous, a scouting patrol in No Man's Land.

"At dawn you responded with every other man in the front line to the 'stand to' order and for an hour, until day had fully broken, manned the firestep on the alert for attack. In the evening, during the hour of dusk you stood to again. The rest of the day you spent cleaning up and repairing the trench, dozing whenever you could. Severe cold weather was a blessing in disguise for then you

CHARGED WITH MANSLAUGHTER

SUMMERSIDE, Jan. 28—Jos. Gallant, 22, of Leoville, Prince county, was charged with manslaughter as a result of the death in hospital here of Leo Peters, 30, former Rumford, Me., truck driver. Gallant was released on bail of \$7,500 and will appear for preliminary hearing at Alberton Feb. 2. Peters, a native of St. Louis, P.E.I., died of head injuries Sunday, four days after he had attended a dance at nearby Palmer's Road. Police said they believed he received his injuries in a fight at the dance hall. He was unconscious two days before he was taken to hospital.

could slide along the ice instead of squelching through mud and water. Sandbagged muck froze and strengthened the barricades. Here and there were charcoal braziers around which you gathered and on which you warmed food. Your bread, butter, bacon and jam came up frozen and considering the difficulties of transporting supplies you were lucky to get any at all. Your mainstay as always was hardtack and corned beef.

"You took no blankets into the line but in winter wore a leather jerkin under your greatcoat. If you got wet and froze, you stayed that way. And despite the rubber boots your feet were damp and icy for the whole six dreary days. Mud, rats, snow and lice—the monotonous spells back up to the line made you grow accustomed to them. War, you thought was drably uninspiring, more like a conflict between two armies of moles and equally sensible.

"Christmas brought no change in the deadly routine, except that rats ate half of the plum pudding you had sent out from home. Gunners hammered away at each other across the marshes. You dodged a bombardment of the fearsome minnewerfer while your trench mortar artists gave the foe a present of sixty-pound pineapples. Synthetic hate replaced the Christmas spirit as far as the enemy was concerned. It was, of course, difficult for the khaki-clad moles to feel any goodwill, even in the abstract, towards the moles in field gray, for the khaki moles and the field-gray moles were at war."

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