



# The LIGHT in the CLEARING

by IRVING BAEHLLER

This is a story that takes you back to the busy days and simple lives led by our American ancestors three-quarters of a century ago, when character was formed in the home. What was true of the little northern New York community in which most of the action is laid also may be said of American rustic life of the time in general. We want you to read the new serial

## The Light in the Clearing

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Leave Elizabeth City	X-10:03 A. M.	X-11:35 A. M.
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" Mackays		1:20 P. M.
" Columbia	Y-2:40 P. M.	12:04 A. M.
" Belhaven	Y-3:00 P. M.	1:55 A. M.
" Pinetown	X-2:20 P. M.	1:30 A. M.
" Washington	3:00 P. M.	1:55 A. M.
" New Bern	4:35 P. M.	4:00 A. M.
" Oriental	7:30 P. M.	Y-12:10 P. M.
" Morehead City	7:45 P. M.	X-10:50 A. M.
" Beaufort	8:05 P. M.	11:10 A. M.
" Goldsboro	8:45 P. M.	6:35 A. M.

	No. 38
Leave Elizabeth City	11:00 A. M.
Arrive Suffolk	2:20 P. M.

Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, only.

	No. 4	No. 2	No. 6
Leave Elizabeth City	X-6:00 A. M.	3:00 P. M.	Z-3:30 P. M.
Arrive Norfolk	8:10 A. M.	4:50 P. M.	5:30 P. M.

X Daily  
Y Daily except Sunday  
Z Local between Elizabeth City and Norfolk.  
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### The Conscientious Objector; or, Coming Through Under Fire

By  
Sergeant Arthur Guy Empey  
Author of "Over the Top,"  
"First Call," Etc.

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

(Copyright, 1917, by The McClure Newspaper Syndicate)

"What do I think of a blinkin' conscientious objector?" answered Ike Honey from the corner of the frebay. "Well, what with this bloomin' war on and blokes goin' west by the thousands, a pacifist or conscientious objector is one of two things, he's either a blinkin' coward or a bloody pro-German. But it's funny the way some of them blighters, with their West End ideas back in Blighty, changes their minds when they gets out here in the mud, and gets their first glimpse of a wooden cross. It's either a firin' squad up against a wall, a bloomin' V. C. (Victoria Cross) or a 'rest in peace' sign over their nappers for them. A strange thing it is, but true; those blokes never go through the trenches in an ordinary way like we do; it's a case of extremes, no in-between stuff.

"Next time you're on a burial party, take a look at the third cross from the left in the fourth row as you enter the cemetery. You know that path that leads through the orchard just off the entrance of that big R. E. (Royal Engineers) dugout; well, under that cross rests a bloke who back in Blighty professed to be a pacifist. He wouldn't blinkin' well volunteer, not likely; they had to draft him, an' when they did he refused to fight, so they stuck him in the N. C. C. (noncombatant corps) and handed him a pick and shovel and put him to repairin' roads and diggin' graves. Well, it didn't take long before he was properly fed up with his job, and he threw down the pick and shovel and grabbed up a rifle an' bayonet. Oh, yes, he clicked it all right and went west. In fact he was buried in one o' the graves he helped to dig. I suppose some o' those college officers called it the 'iron of fate,' or some other blinkin' high-sounding phrase, but we knows that it was only common ordinary luck, 'cause we all knows that if you're going to get it, you'll get it, no matter if you're a gentleman's son or a bloomin' chimney sweep.

"This blighter I'm telling about was in my platoon when I was in C company, an' he used to give me the proper pip with his arguments against fighting and the jikes o' that.

"The first time I met him was in St. Armand; our 'bat' was in the rest billets awaitin' a new draft before going up the line again. You see we had clicked it pretty rough at Fromelles, an' a platoon looked like a blinkin' squad when it lined up for parade. I was playing 'house' in that estaminet right across from that bashed-in church on the corner when his labor battalion came through and took over billets just opposite from the estaminet. I was sitting near a window and watched them pass. A sorrier bunch of specimens of men I never saw; it turned my blinkin' stomach to look at them, what with their pasty faces, stooped-over shoulders and straggling gait. Right then and there I admired the Germans for their system of universal military training. If England had of had a little more of it there never would have been a war and right now we would be in Blighty with our wives and nippers, instead of sitting here in these bloody ditches waitin' for a shell to come over with our name and number on it.

"After the labor battalion took over billets several of them came into the estaminet and sat at a table near me. They started to discuss the war and voice their opinions about the 'top hats' at home. This bloke I'm talkin' about was the loudest of the bunch; he seemed to have a grouch on everything in general. I listened to him a few minutes chucking his weight about until it bloody well got on my nerves. Chucking up my game of house—and I had paid half a franc for my board, too—I leaned over to him and said:

"You must be one of those bloomin' conscientious objectors we reads about



"You Must Be One of Them Bloomin' Conscientious Objectors."

In the papers, one o' those blighters who don't believe in fightin' but is willing to sit back in Blighty and let us blokes out here do your bloody fightin' for you, while you gets a blinkin' good screw (salary) sitting on a high stool in some office.

"He turned to me and answered: 'It's the likes o' you who volunteered for this war what keeps it goin'. If you had all refused to go at first, there

wouldn't be any war!'

"I couldn't see it his way at all, and went right back at him with: 'Yes, and if it wasn't for us volunteerin', the bloody German flag would now be flyin' over Buckingham palace and King George would be in the Tower of London.'

"He thought a minute or two and answered: 'Well, what of it; one flag's as good as another, and as for the bloomin' king what did he ever do for you but make you pay taxes so he could bloomin' well sit around doing nothin'?''

"This was too much for me, that blinkin' jellyfish a slingin' mud at our king, so I lost my temper, and taking my glass of vin rouge in my hand I leaned over close to him and said: 'When you mentions the king's name it is customary to drink his health. Perhaps he never did anything special for me, but I have never done anything special for him, and even at that I've done a damned sight more than you have for him, so take this wine and drink his health, or I'll dent that napper of yours so you won't be able to wear that tin hat of yours.'

"He got kind of pale and answered: 'Drink to the king's health; not likely. It's through him and his bloody Top Hats in parliament that I'm out here. Why in the blinkin' hell don't he do his own fighting and let us poor blokes alone?'

"I saw red and was just goin' to hit him, when a big Irishman out of the Royal Irish Rifles next to me grabs the glass of wine from my hand, and looking the blighter in the face yells at him:

"Well, if the king ain't done nothing for you English, he's done less for us Irish, but I volunteered to come out here for him, and here I am, and glad of it too, and hopes some day to get into Berlin with the king's forces. You won't drink his health; well you can bathe his health.' With that he threw the wine into the blighter's face and smashed him in the nose with his fist. The fellow went over like a log with the Irishman still again' for him. If we hadn't of pulled him off I think he would have killed that conscientious objector. The military police came in to see what all the row was about. I had clicked three days C. B. (confined to barracks) and didn't want to get arrested, so in the confusion I made tracks for my billet.

"The next time I met the bloke was when we buried old Smith out of the tenth platoon in the cemetery at La Tasse. He was one of the grave diggers. All during the burial service he stood looking at the Union Jack with a queer look on his face. When old Smith was lowered into the ground and the dirt was thrown on him the conscientious objector—Watkins was his name—came over to me and said: 'I hear he (pointing at old Smith's grave) is forty-eight years old and has left a wife and three nippers back in Blighty. He was too old for the draft, wasn't he? Then he must have volunteered.'

"I answered: 'Of course he volunteered, and there he lies, deadlier than I—; but I'll wager a quid his wife and kids will be proud of him—and hat's more than your kids will be about you.'

"He sneaked off without answering. Three days later I nearly dropped dead when our lance corporal came into our billet with a bloody nose and a beautifully trimmed lamp. When I asked him how he got knocked about he told me that a fellow out of the non-combatant corps named Watkins had nussed him up just because he had alled him a white-livered coward.

"Watkins ducked twenty-one days number one on the wheel, and when his sentence was finished they transferred him to a fighting unit, and bang! into our platoon he comes.

"Many a talk I had with him about that pacifist stuff—he hadn't changed a bit in his ideas—but he kept his mouth shut about the king and the Top Hats at home.

"Then we went into the trenches and I knew his finish was near. A firing squad or 'rest in peace' was to be his lot; they all get one or the other sooner or later.

"After two days in, Fritz got rough and opened up with a pretty stiff bombardment.

"Watkins was in the fourth squad in a dugout in the support trench when a 'Minnie' registered a direct hit on the roof and caved her in. Every one but Watkins was killed. How he escaped was a marvel, the rest of the squad being smashed up something awful. We collected the pieces and buried them the next day. Watkins helped dig the graves.

"For two days Watkins scarcely spoke a word, just went round with a faraway look on his face.

"On the third night after the burial, volunteers were called for a bombing raid, and I could scarcely believe my ears when I heard that Watkins had volunteered. It was the truth all right—he went along.

"We crawled out in No Man's land under cover of our barrage and waited. Watkins was next to me. Suddenly a star shell went up and we roused down in its light. I was laying so that I could see Watkins—blime me—he had no rifle or bayonet. 'I whispered over to him: 'Where's your rifle? He answered: 'I threw it away.' Before I had time to reply, the signal to rush the German trench was given and I lost sight of him.

"It was rough going in the German trench, and we had quite a little of hand-to-hand fighting. Star shells were going up all around us. One of our blokes in front of me was just going around the corner of a traverse when a big German got him through the throat with his bayonet and he went down. Something sprang past me like a wildcat and closed with the Fritz. They both went down together. Just then another German came at me from the entrance of a jagout and I was busy. I managed to get him. Then our Lieutenant and two men came round and gave the order to get back to our trenches. The Lieutenant stumbled over the three sodies in front of us. One of them groaned. It was Watkins all right. Unarmed he had sprang at the German and with his bare hands had choked him to death, but he had a nasty jagred bayonet wound in his right side.

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We managed to get him back to our trenches, but he died on the stretcher. Before cashing in he looked up at the lieutenant and with a grin on his face said: 'Tell the bloomin' king and the Top Hats at home that I died for England, and I hope that like old



And Then He Died.

smith, my nippers will be proud of their father. God save the king, an' then he died.

"We buried him next morning. No opinion of conscientious objectors and pacifists has not changed. They're either cowards or pro-Germans. "You see Watkins wasn't either; he was a soldier of the king, and a damned good one, too."

THE END.

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