

# The Conning Tower

## THE THEATRE PARTY

There were eight of them.  
Four men and four women.  
The curtain had been up on the second act  
For fifteen minutes.  
The hostess, bare as Circe  
And very nearly as fat  
Came first,  
And blocked the aisle,  
Just as the lipping ingénue  
Ran to the telephone  
Clapping her hands.  
The altercation with the gray-gowned usher  
Conducted in a Piping Rock manner  
But a Ninety-ninth Street accent  
Followed naturally.  
The whole house swore inaudibly  
But no one went to kill.  
"Sadie, darling, you go first  
With Valentine (a pop-eyed youth.)  
No, that won't do, of course,  
You sat together at the Ritz.  
You go, dear Mr. Gleed  
And sit upon your coat,  
Such laughter. He was small.)  
And now you, dear Rosalind,  
And I'll give you Alfred Smith,  
Alfred, no holding hands, you wicked boy,  
I have an eagle eye.  
Dear me, the curtain's up!  
I think they might have waited till we came.  
No, no, not next your wife, dear Judge.  
That will never do.  
Charlie, you creep in with Mrs. Jones  
And repeat the jokes to her.  
You have her one good ear.  
Now, Gladys, you with Tom,  
(Tom of the glistening top,  
White tie, Tuxedo, puckered shirt)  
That's right, Geraldine, in you go,  
But watch your orchids, sweet.  
They've dragged the poor man's toupée off.  
So sorry, here it is.  
Now you, you rascal, Fred,  
And as the play goes on  
I'll tell you all about my early years  
In our home town."  
And although—will you believe it?—  
The whole house swears inaudibly  
No one goes to kill.  
(How anæmic are these times!)

COSMO HAMILTON.

## DULCINEA VISITS WASHINGTON SQUARE

Dearest Chuck!—I've just read my Tribune and the "sweet boy" whom I mentioned in my last letter as sitting down opposite me in Polly's has answered me and it's in rhymed poetry with long lines and everything and I would be just as thrilled as I could be if he hadn't made two just awful mistakes.

He says the girl who owns that Pekinese pup is a "blondish dame." Now in the first place that is a very questionable way to speak about any lady, don't you think? or do you? And in the second place that Pekinese pup woman is a horrible brunette, and I am the blonde who has a dog, and it's Susie, and she's a poodle and not a Pekinese, and if anybody wants to hurt me terribly they only have to say something about Susie that I don't like or mix Susie up with some other dog she doesn't like.

And that isn't all, by any means. No, sir! He said I wouldn't take any notice of him and Heaven knows I nearly strained my eyes out looking at his old pompadour and he kept on listening to the chatter of that girl who is the Village guide and didn't pay any more attention to me than as though I hadn't been there at all!

I tell you it's just another illusion broken and I'm glad I woke up in time. I might have known it anyhow from the verses he wrote in The Tower last year. And did you hear him brag about his old Tower watch?

But life is so short to spend one's time on such people, is what I always say. I have a lot of lovely things to tell you about everything but I'm going to breakfast with Susie now and I guess I'll have to ask you to wait for the details later. But let me just apologize for spelling Polly's wrong all this time. I thought it was Polly's because I thought all restaurants here were Italian, and George says he comes from Springfield, Mass. Just think of that! The world is a queer place after all, when you come to think of it.

Well, "so long" for this time.

To think of that fellow trying to fool me by saying I've got such "wonder eyes!"

By the way, did you ever go to the Black Cat? My dear, you must. More about it later. It's just delicious!

Hastily but lovingly,  
DULCY.

## OUR OWN RHYMED REVIEW

"Bottoms Up," by George Jean Nathan. Philip Goodman Co., N. Y.)  
Of all the writers I have read upon our well known drama  
There's only one whom I have any faith in.  
In silhouette he stands against the modern panorama  
Of critics—and his name is George Jean Nathan.

In "Bottoms Up," his latest book upon that institution  
Peculiar to society—the stage,  
Although I must admit he brings no nearer to solution  
The dramatic problems of the age.

He floods with light the follies of theatrical tradition.  
His s. of h. elastic and resilient,  
Is one that brands this satirist a master word magician,  
An epigrammatic paragrapher brilliant.

There is a play in "Bottoms Up"—each speech is but one letter—  
A funny sketch; nor does his speed diminish  
In "Fanny's Second Play," which goes G. Bernard Shaw one better,  
In short, a clever book from start to finish.

ON SEEING RED  
I'm in a cell at Sing Sing.  
They're going to electrocute me to-morrow. For murder.  
I killed a man, one of my countrymen. An Englishman.  
I shot him, cut his throat and kicked his dead body.  
I'm glad I did.  
I fought two years in the trenches for England.  
There's a bullet in my chest, another in one knee.  
My lungs are gone—the gas.  
I hated the Germans, I loved the cries of their dying.  
I laughed as I slaughtered and maimed.  
I was given a cross and sent to New York on leave.  
I was in a club, with American soldiers.  
A strong young man entered.  
They told me he was a rich Englishman  
Who had come to New York with his money  
To escape the war taxes  
And enlistment.  
They introduced me to him.  
He held out a flashy hand.  
He said, condescendingly, "Ah, I'm glad to meet one of our boys."  
His boys!  
Then I knew what real hate was.  
They're going to electrocute me to-morrow. For murder.

JEROME BEATTY.

When I want a little lay off  
And would rest my weary ribs  
I just apprehend a day off  
Thank you, thank you, dear contribs.  
F. P. A.

# The Birth of New Nations

## PALESTINE

By ISAAC DON LEVINE  
Author of "The Russian Revolution"

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The Jewish question, the oldest of all the national problems now awaiting solution at the hands of the coming peace conference, has completely changed its aspects during the Great War.

The Russian revolution had a profound effect on the fate of the world's Jewry, as the complete emancipation of more than half of the Jewish race removed some of the urgent necessities in the Jewish situation.

And yet there are enough causes left for the discussion and solution of the Jewish problem at the international gathering that will decide the world's new order of life.

### Jewish Problem 2,000 Years Old

The problem of the Jew is nearly two thousand years old. It first came into existence when Rome destroyed, in A. D. 70, the Jewish state in Palestine, exiling its inhabitants. Robbed of its home, the Jewish nation was dispersed to all the corners of the Roman Empire. There seemed little chance that it would survive as an individual entity. Even as the ten tribes of Israel had been assimilated by their captors, so the Judean Hebrews were destined to lose their nationalistic identity.

But while the Hebrews were going into exile a great power, arisen from their midst, was developing in humanity. It was to be the savior of the human race, the civilizer of a barbarous world. It was to organize life on new bases, justice and love. And as this power—Christianity—grew and expanded it exercised a conserving influence over the dispersed Jews. But this influence was not woken of love and justice, but, on the other hand, of hatred and persecution.

Had Christianity come into existence three centuries later there would have, in all probability, no longer existed a Jewish people on earth. For it was the violence and corruption of organized Christendom that was largely responsible for the remarkable religious revival that occurred in the midst of the scattered Jews in the early centuries of our era. The fact that Christianity was at its beginning but a new Hebrew sect was another big factor in the production of the conditions that kept Messianic Judaism alive, with greater vigor than ever. The treatment accorded the Hebrews and their holy places by the Christian Romans, which was atrocious and inhuman, only fanned the spirit of nationalism.

The preservation of the Jew during the last eighteen and a half centuries is perhaps the most phenomenal thing in the history of nations. It is sometimes referred to as a puzzle and sometimes as a miracle. It is neither. The explanation for it is to be found in two main factors. One is religious and the other economic.

### Talmud Guide of Dispersed People

The spread and activities of Christianity provoked the religious factor. The leading Hebrews saw the danger of absorption of their race soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, and decided to prevent it by a flood of restrictive laws. The law of Moses was interpreted in various ways by the rabbinical schools for the purpose of keeping the Jewish nation and religion intact. These interpretations, called the Talmud, became for centuries to come the guide of the dispersed people.

Along with the religious segregation of the Jews, there developed a potent economic factor. Persecuted, oppressed and driven from place to place, the Jews were forced to turn to trading as a means for daily existence. Thus the famous Jewish aptitude for business and commerce came into being. When a body of men is confined to certain limits, interchange necessarily becomes their leading occupation. Trading, being but a form of communal life, was, therefore, only the result of the conditions in which the Jews lived. As the Jews were usually the pioneers in commerce wherever they settled, that in itself segregated them from the rest of the population, helping them to conserve their national characteristics.

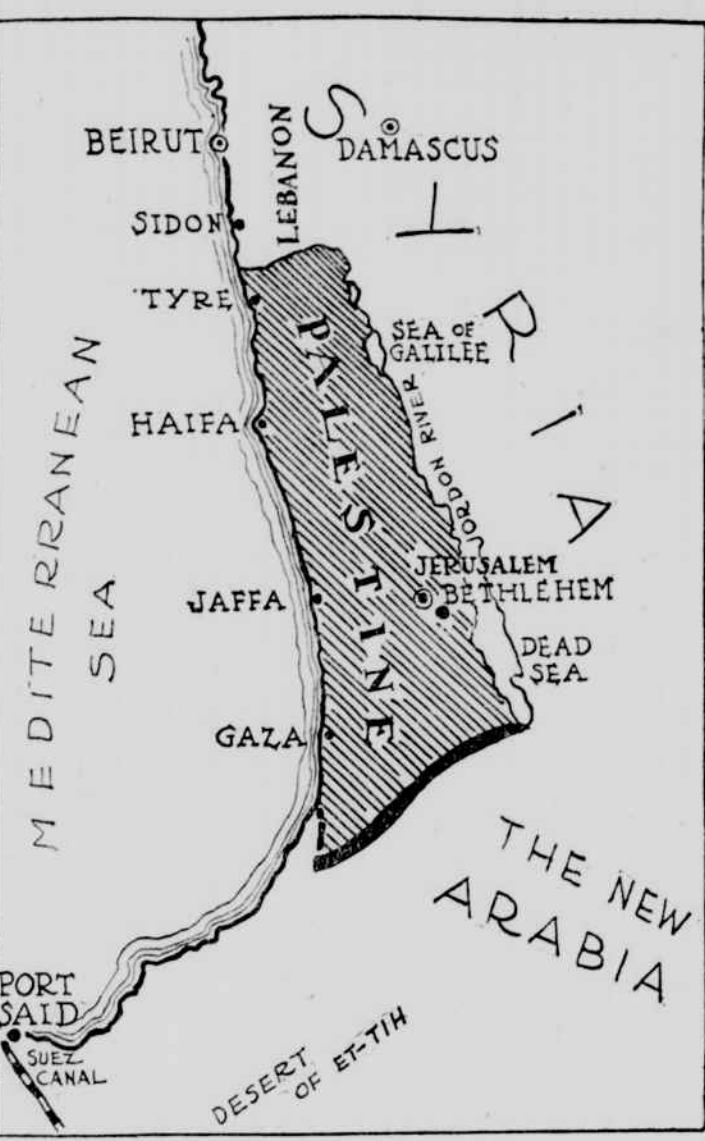
The remarkable history of the Jew in Goluth, or exile, is the tale of two parallel forces—religious and economic—endeavoring to keep him from being submerged in the seething caldron of nations and races in evolution. Wandering from land to land, spreading all over the surface of the globe, the people without a country continued to stick to their national institutions and to passionately yearn for their lost fatherland. Organized Christianity, instead of uprooting the law of Moses, only fortified its position.

### Jewish Religion National

Since the Jewish religion is intensely a national one, fundamentally bound up with the Holy Land, it is a big mistake to regard the Jews as professors of a certain faith only. The Jews are a nation. Their religion is devoted almost entirely to the perpetuation of that idea.

The return to Palestine became a subject for daily prayer in the synagogue immediately after the disruption of the Jewish state. The fact that it is almost two thousand years since that event occurred should not in the least affect the Jewish claim to Palestine. If anything, it should add to the strength of that claim.

Indeed, it is because the Jewish problem is so old and painful that it must be settled at the conclusion of the great war. The services of the Jew to humanity have been incalculable. The idea of God was contributed to the world by the Jews. The ideals of Christianity sprang from a Jewish founder. In return the Jews were slaughtered, tortured and maltreated almost in every Christian country. The



THE NEW JUDEA

holy Crusades upon which Christendom embarked cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of Jews. The Spanish Inquisition still forever remains a bloody stain on the pages of Christianity's history.

But even more important to the modern world was the Jewish contribution to the commercial development of the world. The Jewish migration from country to country marks the path of economic progress in mankind. Arabia reached its zenith in civilization when Jewish life centered there. The gradual economic and political rise of Islam in the medieval ages was largely caused by the large influx of Jews to the country. Spain's power rapidly declined after the Jews were driven out of the country, while Holland, which opened its gates to the exiles, became the leading commercial nation in the world. The stream of Jewish migration then turned eastward. Germany, Poland and Russia were in turn developed economically by the Jews, while in England, France and America their commercial role was by no means secondary.

### Oppression Caused Migration

The reason for Jewish migration was the oppression to which they were subjected in the countries in which they settled. After developing a certain territory, competition with the native population and the rise of the defensive. This economic factor would strengthen the hostile attitude toward him. Persecutions would increase. The Jew would be forced to look for a new promised land. Such a land was Russia, when first entered that country. The same was true of Germany and Poland.

Up to a comparatively short time ago the Jewish problem was really but a matter of safe exiles. The Jewish emigration was the ultimate goal of the Jew's daily life. In his spiritual realm he dreamed of a new, bright future. That future was invariably connected with Palestine. And Palestine was no practical side to this national feeling. The Jews considered themselves a nation without a country, and it was left to a divine messenger to restore their country to them. As modern civilization developed, the intolerable condition of the Jews became a burning political question in every advanced state. In England the Jewish problem came up for solution in 1859, when Cromwell converted to the cause of the exiled race. Other countries were not so quick to recognize the justice of allowing the Jews freedom. In America the Jews played a very important financial role during the Revolutionary War.

### Jew Financed Washington

Washington was financed by a Jew in his campaigns. The French Revolution was the beginning of a strong Jewish emancipation movement throughout Europe. France led, and Napoleon even summoned a Jewish Assembly. Italy, Austria and Germany proceeded, after France, to gradually enlarge the Jew with the rest of the population. The nineteenth century saw practically half of the world's Jewry legally emancipated.

The Jewish problem took definite shape at the end of the last century. It was noted that in those countries where the Jews had been emancipated there originated an anti-Semitic movement. Germany was the birthplace of this modern anti-Semitism. The other half of the world, Russia and Rumania, where more than half of the world's Jewry lived, persecutions were intensified.

In spite of the Berlin treaty of 1878, which Rumania bound herself to grant equal rights to her Jewish inhabitants, the condition of the Rumanian Jews grew worse. In Russia a series of massacres occurred in the early '80s, and since then the several million Russian Jews have undergone one of the bloodiest periods in the history of their race.

### Eyes Turned to Holy Land

The situation of the Eastern Jew and the anti-Semitic movement in the West were responsible for the transformation of the Jewish national hopes into practical aspirations. Many Jewish leaders turned their eyes toward the Holy Land, seeking a way toward the return of the scattered Jews to the land of their fathers.

After the pogroms in Russia in 1882 a society was formed in Odessa, called the "Lovers of Zion," devoted to the cause of Jewish colonization in Palestine. Groups of young students pioneered a back-to-Palestine movement that marks the beginning of the Jewish national effort to regain the country of which they had been disseminated more than eighteen centuries before.

Barren Palestine became the centre of pilgrimage to many patriotic Jews. With enormous energy the immigrants tackled the difficulties of cultivating the long neglected soil of the Holy Land. Assisted by Jews all over the world, colonies began to spring into existence one after another. These colonies flourished and prospered. At the same time the little nucleus

of a future Jewish state in Palestine became the fountain source for a revival of the ancient Hebrew language. While the Palestinian colonists were comparatively few, and could not possibly be considered as a solution of the Jewish problem, the renaissance of the Hebrew tongue and culture proved a potent factor in the cementing and cultivating of Jewish national opinion.

### Jews Favored State

When Dr. Theodore Herzl, a Vienna journalist, came out in 1895 with the bold proposal of a Jewish state in Palestine he found the Jews of all the countries of the world ready to join him in a movement to erect a home for the Jewish people. This was the political Zionism born. It appealed to the suffering masses everywhere. An international Jewish congress was held to launch the Zionist movement. It proved very successful. The oppressed Eastern Jew naturally threw itself with great enthusiasm into the ranks of the Zionists. Under the leadership of Herzl, who was idolized by his followers, the movement rapidly expanded in all directions.

But all the attempts of Herzl to reach some kind of an understanding with the Ottoman ruler proved futile. In despair he turned to Britain for help, and was offered Uganda, a territory in Central Africa, as a colonization centre for Jewish emigrants. Most of the Zionists rejected the Uganda offer, thus causing a split in the ranks of the organization.

Since the death of Herzl, in 1904, Zionism turned from political activity to a practical one. Many new colonies were established in Palestine, and many educational and financial institutions. The overthrow of the Sultan by the Young Turks at first encouraged the Jews, but later, when the Young Turks on the part of the new governors to the Zionist aspirations. But this encouragement was soon dispelled.

### Anti-Semitism on Decline

To-day anti-Semitism may be considered definitely on the decline. The Russian revolution freed the six million Jews who were enslaved and persecuted by Czarism. Rumania has, through her King, promised complete Jewish emancipation. The Jewish problem therefore resolves itself into a nationalistic question, rather than an urgent life-emancipation.

Since an influential and considerable body of Jews who define themselves as Jews, in spite of the fact that they profess no particular religion. They are Jewish nationals. There is a profound sentiment for Palestine among the orthodox Jews, who form the overwhelming majority of the world's Jewry. These two elements stand for a Jewish state in Palestine.

Opposed to them are two insignificant bodies of Jewish opinion. One is composed of the so-called assimilators, who believe that the Jews should seek assimilation with the peoples in whose midst they live. The other consists of Jews who see in Judaism nothing but a religious teaching. Both views are theoretical and are contradicted by reality.

The fact is that the Jewish rank and file is supporting the present demand for a Palestinian state with surprising unanimity. Of course, the bulk of the Jews will not leave their native lands, where new opportunities are being opened to them, to migrate to their new national home. But large numbers of the Polish Jewry does not promise to be very bright in the near future. And there are many thousands of Russian Jews who will leave their native country with enthusiasm for Palestine.

The best reason for the solution of the Jewish problem is the unquestionable existence of a powerful nationalistic ferment in the Jewish midst. To countries where it flourishes most, the Jewish nationals in this country, for instance, could very properly be told to move to Palestine, as here all must be Americans. The same would hold true of Russia or Austria.

### Jews Should Become Nation

The great powers must recognize that their failure to build a Jewish centre in Palestine would amount to the preservation within their midst of a people who are becoming more and more conscious of their nationalism. Neither the United States nor Russia nor England nor any other country can afford to cultivate nations within nations. The Jews should become a nation with a territory of their own, where they could perpetuate their culture and national identity.

That the Allies have recognized this principle is evidenced by their attitude toward the Jewish question. Britain, France, Italy and the United States, as well as Russia, have declared themselves in favor of a Jewish Palestine. The leader of the Socialist conference at Stockholm, Camille Haysmans, has also announced his support of such a project.

The dream of centuries is about to be realized. The wandering Jew will be brought back to his home by a better humanity, concluding the long nightmare of Jewish suffering and oppression.

# The War in the Mountains

## IV

### Only a Few Steps Higher Up

By Rudyard Kipling

This is the fourth of five articles by Rudyard Kipling describing the amazing campaign among the Alps that is being waged by Italy. Mr. Kipling has just returned from the Italian front, where he has had opportunities to see battles on snow-covered peaks and over ground where mountain goats can hardly move safely. The fifth article will appear on Wednesday.

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For a special job, specialists; but for all jobs, youth above everything! That portion of the Italian frontier where men must mountaineer as well as climb is held with Alpine regiments. The corps is recruited from the people who inhabit, and know what is in the mind of, the mountains—men used to carrying loads along eighteen inch paths round thousand-foot drops. Their talk is the slang of mountains, with a special word for every mood and state of snow, ice or rock, as elaborately particular as a Zulu's talk when he is describing his cattle. They wear a smash hat adorned with one eagle feather (worn down to an honorable stump now); the nails upon their boots resemble and are kept as sharp as the fangs of wolves; their eyes are like our airmen's eyes; their walk on their own ground suggests the sea; and a more cheery set of hard-bitten, clean-skinned, steady-eyed young devils I have never yet had the honor to meet.

"What do you do?" I was foolish enough to demand of them from the security of a messroom seven thousand feet up among pines and snows. For the moment the forest cut off the oppression of the mountain view.

"Oh, come and see," said those joyous children. "We are working a few steps higher up the road. It is only a few steps."

### Wilderness of Crag and Fissures

They took me by car above the timber line on the edge of the basin, to the steep foot of a prominent rock wall which I had seen approaching, for hours back, along the road. Twenty or thirty miles away the pillared mass of it had looked no more than implacably hostile—much as Mont Blanc looked from the lake. Coming nearer it had grown steeper, and a wilderness of wrathful crags and fissures had revealed itself. At close range from almost directly below the thing, one perceived, went up sheer, where it did not bulge outward, like a ship's side at launching. Every monstrous detail of its face, etched by sunshine through utterly clear air, crashed upon the sight at once, overwhelming the mind as a new world might, wearying the eye as a gigantically enlarged photograph does.

### Gravel Road Through Snow Tunnel

It was hidden again by a snow tunnel wide enough for a vehicle and two mules. The tunnel was dingy brown where its roof was thick, and lighted by an unearthly blue glare where it was thin, till it broke into blinding daylight where the May heat had melted out the arch of it. But there was graded gravel underfoot all the way, and swilling gutters carried off the snowdrift on either side. In the open or in the dark, Italy makes but one kind of road.

"This is our new road," the joyous children explained. "It isn't quite finished, so if you'll sit on this mule we'll take you the last few steps, only a few steps higher."

I looked up again between the towering snowbanks. There were not even wrinkles on the face of the mountain now, but horrible, smooth, honey-colored thumbs and pinnacles, clustered like candle drippings round the main core of unaffected rock, and the whole framing of it bent toward me.

The road was a gruel of gravel, stones and working parties. No one hurried; no one got in his neighbor's way; there were very few orders; but even as the mule hoisted herself up and round the pegged-out turns of it the road seemed to be drawing itself into shape.

### Just a Mere "Grocery Line"

There are little engine houses at the foot of some of the Swiss bobbins which for fifty centuries used to hoist sportsmen and their bobsleds up to the top again by funicular. The same arrangement stood on a platform nicked out of the rock, with the very same smell of raw planks, petrol and snow and the same crunch of crampons on slushy ground. But instead of the cog railway, a steel wire, support on frail struts and carrying a steel latticed basket, ran up the face of the rock at an angle which need not be specified. Qua railway, it was

nothing—the merest grocery line, they explained—and, indeed, one had seen larger and higher ones in the valleys lower down; but a certain nakedness of rock and snow beneath and sideways blasts of air out of funnels and rifts that we slid past made it interesting.

### Eagle's Nest Of a World

At the terminus, four or five hundred feet overhead (we were more than two thousand feet above the mess-house in the pines), there was a system—it suggested the marks that old ivy prints on a wall after you peel it off—of legends and paths of slushy, trampled snow, connecting the barracks, the cook-house, the officers' mess' and, I presume, the parade ground of the garrison. If the cook dropped a bucket, he had to go down six hundred feet to retrieve it. If a visitor went too far around a corner to admire the panoramas he became visible to unartistic Austrians who promptly loosed off a shrapnel. All this eagle's nest of a world in two dimensions boiled with young life and energy as the planks and girders, the packages of other stuff came up the aerial; and the mountain above leaned outward over it all, hundreds of feet yet to the top.

### Real Work Higher Up

"Our real work is a little higher up—only a few steps," they urged. But I recalled that it was Dante himself who says how bitter it is to climb up and down other people's stairs. Besides, their work was of no interest to any one except the enemy around the corner. It was just the regular routine of these parts. They outlined it for the visitor.

You climb up a fissure of a rock chimney—by shoulder or knee-work such as mountaineers understand—and at night for cause, because, by day, the enemy drops stones down the chimney. One Alpine company took a fortnight of winter nights to work up one such chimney, but then they had to carry machine guns, and some other things, with them. ("By the way, some of our machine guns are of French manufacture, so our Machine Gun Corps' souvenir—please, take it; we want you to have it—represents the heads of France and Italy side by side.")

### Special Work On Mountain Top

And when you emerge from your chimney—which it is best to do in storm or gale, since nailed boots on rock make a noise—you find either that you command the enemy's post on the top, in which case you destroy him, or cut him off from supplies by gunning the only goatpath that brings them; or you find the enemy commands you from some unsuspected cornice or knob of rock. Then you go down again—if you can—and try elsewhere. And that is how it is done all along that section of frontier where the ground does not let you do otherwise.

### Special Work On Mountain Top

Special work is somewhat different. You select a mountain top which you have reason to believe is filled with the enemy and all his works. You effect a lodgement there with your teeth and toenails; you mine into the solid rock with compressed airdrills for as many hundred yards as you calculate may be necessary. When you have finished, you fill your galleries with nitroglycerine and blow the top off the mountain. Then you occupy the crater with men and machine guns as fast as you can. Thus you secure your dominating position from which you can gain other positions, by the same means.

"But surely you know all about this. You've seen the Castelletto," some one said.

It stood outside in the sunshine, a rifted bastion crowned with peaks like the roots of molar teeth. The largest peak had gone. A chasm, a crater, a vast rockslide took its place.

Yes, I had seen the Castelletto, but I was interested to see the men who had blown it up.

"Oh, he did that. That's him."

second lieutenant and men lived in tents, before wire rope railways were made—a long time ago.

"And your battalion did it all?"

"No—no; not all, by any means, but—before we'd finished with the Castelletto we were miners and mechanics and all sorts of things we never expected to be. That is the way of this war."

### Wagner Reduced To a Whisper

Given a rock wall that curves over in a sounding board behind and above a zealous band, to concentrate the melody, and rock ribs on either side to shoot the tune down a thousand feet on to hard snowfields below, and thunderous echoes from every cranny and cul-de-sac along half a mile of resonant mountain face, the result, I do assure you, reduces Wagner to a whisper. That they warned Austria was nothing—she was only just around the corner—but it seemed to me that all Italy must hear them across those gulfs of thin air. They brayed, they neighed, and they roared; the bandmen's faces puckered with mirth behind the brasses, and the mountains faithfully trumpeted forth their insults all over again.

The Company March did not provoke any applause—I expect the enemy had heard it too often. We embarked on national anthems. The "Marseillaise" was but a succes d'estime, drawing a perfunctory shrapnel or so, but when the hand gave them and the whole accusing arch of heaven the "Brabançonne" the enemy were much moved.

"I told you they had no taste," said a young faun on a rock shelf; "still, it shows that the swine have a conscience."

But some folk never know when to stop; besides, it was time for the working parties to be coming in off the roads. So announcement was made from high overhead to our unseen audience that the performance was ended and they need not applaud any longer. It was put a little more curtly than this, and it sounded exactly like ears being boxed.

The silence spread with the great shadow of the rock towers across the snow; there were tapping and clinking and an occasional stone-slide far up the mountainside; the aerial railway carried on as usual; the working parties knocked off and piled tools, and the night shifts began.

### With Death For Company

The last I saw of the joyous children was a cluster of gnomelike figures a furlong overhead, standing, for there was no visible foothold, on nothing. They separated and went about their jobs as single dots, moving up or sideways on the face of the rock, till they disappeared into it like ants. Their real work lay "only a few steps higher up," where the observation posts, the sentries, the supports and all the rest live on ground compared with which the baboon tracks 'round the mess and the barracks are level pavement. Those rounds must be taken in every weather and light; that is, made at 11,000 feet, with death for company under each foot, and the width of a foot at each step, at every step of the most uneventful round. Frosty-glazed rock, where a blunt-nailed boot slips once and no more; mountain blasts round the corner of ledges before the body is braced to them; a knob of rotten shale crumbling beneath the hand; an ankle twisted at the bottom of a ninety-foot rift; a roaring descent of rocks loosened by snow from some corner the sun has undermined through the day—these are a few of the risks they face going from and returning to the coffee and the gramophones at the mess, "In the ordinary discharge of their duties."

A turn of the downward road shut them and their world from sight—never to be seen again by my eyes, but the hot youth, the overplus of strength, the happy, unconsidered insolence of it all, the gravity, beautifully maintained over the coffee cups, but relaxed when the hand played to the enemy, and the genuine, boyish kindness will remain with me. But, behind it all, fine as the steel wire ropes, implacable as the mountain, one was conscious of the hardness of their race.

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