

## Autobiography of a Respirator.

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"HOT things, these, Bill," said my owner, as he flung me down on the ground with a sigh of relief. We had just come out of the trenches, where we had been for several days. The soldiers were pleased to have a change, and settled down to talk or to sleep. While they are resting I will tell you my story.

I have not lived very long. The first thing I can remember is being thrown in a heap of hundreds of other respirators like myself. I remember hearing someone come and say, as they turned us over, "I can hardly realise it! I really am pleased! I knew the girls would willingly respond to the appeal, but to have two thousand ready so soon is more than I ever expected." I was then packed off in a parcel with ninety-nine others. No! I didn't count them. I heard the young lady who packed us say so. Then, for a long time we were knocked and banged about unmercifully, which was very uncomfortable, as we were packed very tightly.

The next time I saw daylight was when we were being unpacked, and I heard someone, whom I afterwards found to be an officer, exclaim with fervour "Thank goodness! They have come at last. This poisonous gas is killing the men off in dozens." We were hastily distributed. I and another respirator were given to Private Tom Jones, who, after the officer had been endeavouring for at least ten minutes to explain to him our various virtues and uses, turned us over dubiously, and said in a troubled voice, "Here's a queer bit, Bill. How do they expect us to get these over our heads? It seems as though these were meant for babies, not for fellows with heads like—like—balloons," he ended desperately. But in a short time he became quite used to us, and even seemed disposed to be friendly.

We went into the trenches and then I had my first glimpse of war. The noise was deafening. Bullets and shells were flying through the air. Close at hand, between the shrill