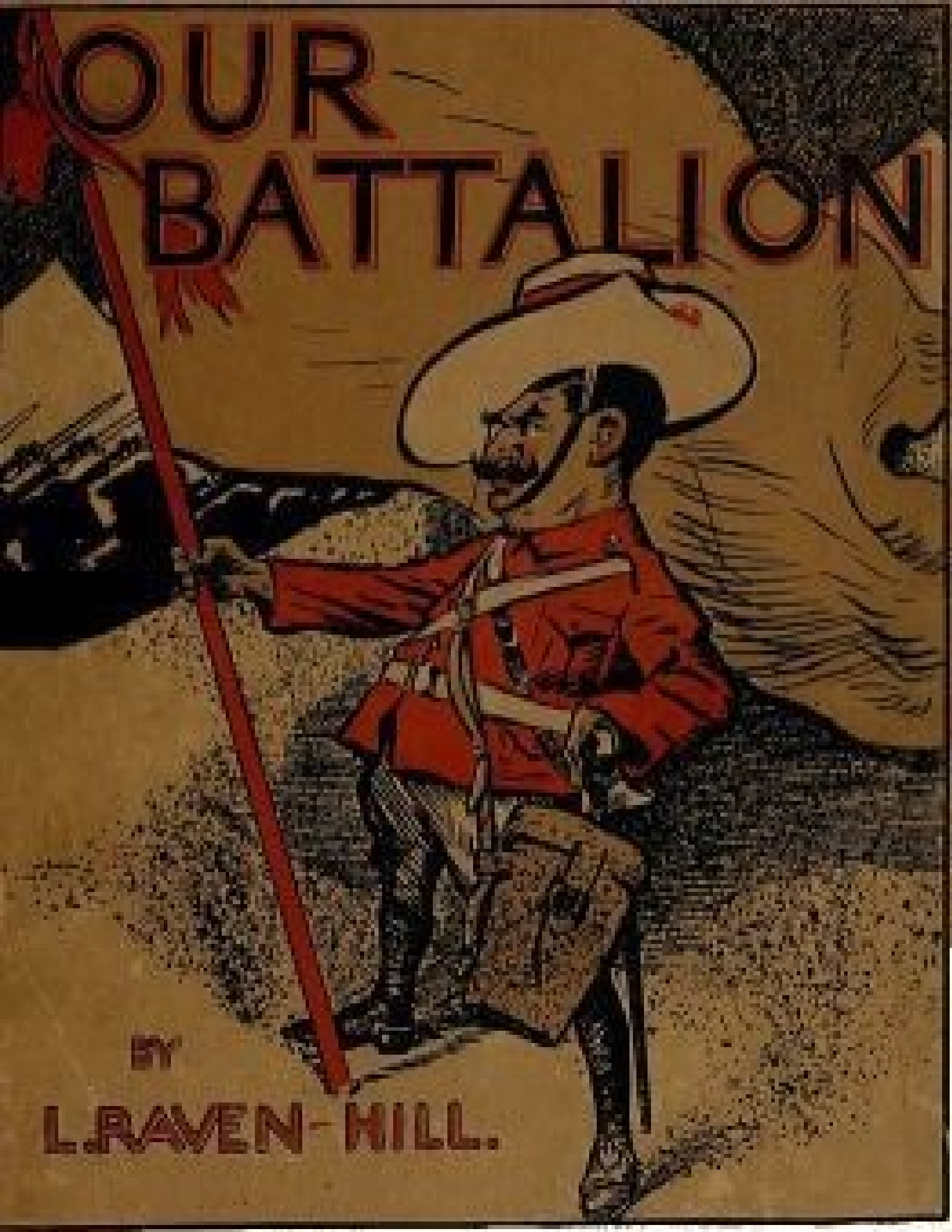




OUR BATTALION

BY
L. RAVEN-HILL.

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OUR BATTALION.

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Sentry: "Sunrises are all bloomin' fine in their way, but I'd rather be in bed."

Our Battalion

**Being some slight impressions of
His Majesty's Auxiliary Forces,
in Camp and Elsewhere.**

BY

L. RAVEN-HILL.

"An' you're sent to penny-fights an' Aldershot it."

RUDYARD KIPLING.

LONDON:
"PUNCH" OFFICE, 10, BOUVERIE ST., E.C.
1902.

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	PAGE
Recruits	9
On Instructin'	14
The System	19
On the G.O.C.	28

<u>The Seven Ages of the Volunteer</u>	32
<u>What Might Happen</u>	34
<u>The Lost Patrol</u>	47
Camp Diaries:	
<u>No. 1. Lt.-Col. Sir Digby Sandilands, M.P.</u>	59
<u>No. 2. Capt. and Adj. "Jerry" Benson</u>	66
<u>No. 3. 2nd Lieutenant Fitzgerald Lawless</u>	78
<u>No. 4. Pte. Timothy Simmons</u>	93
<u>Blank Cartridges</u>	102

	PAGE
<u>3 a.m.</u>	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
<u>The "Manual"</u>	13
<u>Not to be Trifled with</u>	17
<u>Flag-wagging</u>	18
<u>Our First Puttie Parade</u>	24-25
<u>Field Training</u>	27
<u>The Firing Exercise</u>	35
<u>Our Review</u>	40-41
<u>Army Orders</u>	43
<u>Patrols</u>	46
<u>A Fair Samaritan</u>	51
<u>Our N.C.O.'s (No. 1)</u>	52
<u>Our N.C.O.'s (No. 2)</u>	53
<u>Hints for Patrols</u>	54

<u>The Best Laid Schemes, etc.</u>	56-57
<u>A Conundrum</u>	65
<u>Studies</u>	70
<u>Ambushed</u>	72-73
<u>Field-Day Reflections</u>	75
<u>Tactics</u>	76
<u>Field-Day Tragedies</u>	77
<u>Philosophies</u>	85
<u>M.G.</u>	86
<u>More Army Reforms</u>	88-89
<u>On Guard</u>	91
<u>A Misunderstanding</u>	92
<u>Outposts</u>	101
<u>At Last!</u>	104-105
<u>Off Duty</u>	108
<u>Trouble in the Band</u>	109

Our Battalion.

RECRUITS.

The boy hesitated as he looked down the wet street of the little country town.

"I've 'arf a mind not to go," he said, "blessed if I ain't——;" then, after a pause, with hands in pockets and coat collar turned up, he lounged off, muttering, "I'll see what Bill ses."

Bill was waiting at the corner, looking somewhat sheepishly at the miscellaneous display in a "general" shop window.

"Goin'?" he said, as the other came up. "Don't think I shall—at any rate not to-night."

A depressing silence ensued, until a smart lad, with belt and bayonet, came by whistling and hailed them.

"Wot O! Bill; you ought to be down at the ord'ly room by now, the sergeant's bin there ever so long. I told 'im I'd bring you two along to-night. Wot are you scared about?" he continued, eyeing them critically.

"Ain't scared about nothing; we was only waiting till the rain cleared off."

"Well, 'urry up, I've got to go to the Arm'ry."

"All right," said the first boy. "Come on, Bill."

The boys stared furtively round the orderly-room, a little box partitioned off from the disused malt-house that served as drill shed. On the walls were highly-coloured posters, setting forth the various advantages of his Majesty's services, while in the corner a jumble of arms and equipment and a half-opened case of rifles caused them to nudge each other. A huge Sergeant was writing at a table covered with Army forms, drill books, and parade registers, amongst which a couple of cartridges attracted their attention.

"Ball cartridge, mark four," whispered the leading lad carelessly to the others.

"Ullo, what's this?" said the Sergeant. "Recruits? That's right. Shut the door be'ind you, an' keep out the cold. I'm glad to see the lads about here is waking up, an' I wish more 'ud copy their example! Them cripples in the next village ain't got enough spirit to get up a dog-fight, let alone learn 'ow to 'andle a rifle; all they're fit for is funerals. Now let's look at you," he continued, and the deep-set grey eyes ran swiftly over the lads. "You'll do all right. Now, listen to me; afore ye signs on, I've got to read over a lot o' reg'lashuns to ye, so as you'll clearly understand what ye're promisin' to do. Now reg'lashuns is like Acts of Parlyment, no two persons can agree as to what they mean, so you won't understand them, probably; but that's not important, as my experience of the ways o' Gov'mint teaches me that they'll be altered shortly, so there's no need for ye to worry. But the *one* thing ye have to do is, to do as ye're told; attend to that now. It's the blessid privilege of the volunteer to endeavour to make himself a soldier in spite of all obstacles, an' what the reg'lar takes months to learn, an' the militia weeks, 'e 'as to try and do in *days*, so 'tis no picnic if 'e's goin' to do 'is duty. An' duty don't mean church parades, an' the annual dinner, an' as little else as you can; duty means everything you can possibly do, an' it's the pride of a good lad, that if there's an extry job o' work to be done, e's the lad that'll do it; for there's none better than a keen Volunteer, an' no one worse than a slack one, that'll turn up smart when the drinks is free, but is most unduly anxious about 'is master's business on other occasions, a nuisance to 'is sergeant, 'is captin', 'is colonel, an' 'is country; an' if I thought you were that sort I'd send ye to the right-about now, but I think, by yer looks, ye have the makings o' soldiers. Now, if there's anything ye want to know, now's the time to ask. What's that? Ye don't know if ye're up to standard? Fancy a lad 'avin' the face to ask me that! Why, when I was a boy, with a couple o' corks in me heels, an' a wisp o' straw under me waistcut, I'd a' passed for a giant. When you've learnt to throw a chest and hold yer heads up, yer own mothers won't know yer. Now, after I've read over these 'ere reg'lashuns, ye'll sign these papers, an' when the doctor's passed you, go an' tell yer best girls that ye'll 'ave yer futtygraphs took d'rectly yer uniforms is ready. You will p'rade at seven o'clock, sharp, mind ye, nex' Monday."



"Recruitin's a funny business!" muttered the Sergeant; officially Colour-Sergeant Instructor of E Company 1st Downshire Volunteer Rifles, a Battalion scattered over half a county, unofficially "Tiny," for the most obvious reasons. "'Tis a funny business, at least in these parts; p'raps it's different in London and them

'ere big towns, but if we told 'em all we was supposed to tell 'em, as it's laid down, 'twould frighten 'arf of 'em off the job; while if yer tell 'em in their own way, yer can get 'em to do anything. They say ye must *lead* a Volunteer, not *drive* 'im, but 'pon me soul I think a judicious push is what 'e wants mostly."

The "Manual."

Instructor: "Now the hobject of these 'ere hexercises is to haccustom the recruit to 'is rifle so as 'e can 'andle it in a light an' heasy manner, same as I do this 'ere cane."

ON INSTRUCTIN'.

"**T**iny" was in a shocking temper.

"No one thinks 'igher of the Volunteers than I do," he said to the Junior Subaltern. "But now an' then they gives me the fair 'ump. Look at this 'ere las' business. Fust of all they 'olds out as they ought to be considered part of the country's forces, instead of being shoved out of the way, so to speak. Quite right. Bimeby along comes a reg'lashun as they don't like. Wot do they do then? Take it quiet like the harmy does, an' do the best they can? No, they writes to the papers and gets up in the 'Ouse and kicks up a row till it's knocked off. A reg'lashun *hain't* a reg'lashun when it applies to Volunteers. If that's their notion o' discipline, no wonder the reg'lars looks down on 'em. What if it did send their numbers down a bit; the rest 'ud be all the better for it: some good men would 'ave to go, but you take it from me, Sir, the best of 'em would manage to stay. If a lad ain't fond enough of it to give up enough time to make a soldier of 'isself, 'e oughtn't to join, an' if there ain't enough of 'em who do it, the sooner they're made to the better; there's plenty as can find time enough for football or anything o' that sort, but duty don't suit them. 'It's a free country,' ses they. It is, Sir. It's a good deal too free in more ways than one.

"Not but what you wants tact, Sir, in dealin' with Volunteers. For instance, you

comes down to drill the recruits, an' instead of a crowd of intelligent lads, all anxious for to learn the rudiments o' squad drill, you find a lonely and depressed lookin' lad, that would 'ave recollected an engagement connected with a drink in about two minutes. Now, what are you to do? You can't call it a drill, and it'll take the heart out of 'im if you send 'im off. An' mind you, often it's none so easy in a country Battalion, with one company 'ere an' another there, an' a detachment in the nex' village, for the best of lads to put his drills in. There aint no drill 'alls with canteen attachments, and sergeants' mess, an' readin' rooms, so as a chap can pass a pleasant evening any time 'e likes; that's doin' it in style, Sir. But what are you goin' to do? 'Fall in,' ses you, 'an' dress by the right. Stop that talkin' in the ranks,' ses you. 'I'm glad to see there's *one* recruit at least as is fond of 'is duty, tho' 'e'd look better,' ses you, 'if 'e'd 'old 'is 'ead up. Now actin',' ses you, 'as a rear rank, the front rank not being in their places, and 'aving been numbered off from the right which you 'aven't, and supposin' the first two men is elsewhere, what would you do on the command "Form fours?" It's not a guessin' competition,' ses you. 'Don't know,' ses 'e. 'Well, you'll learn in time,' ses you. 'We will now proceed to something which is not laid down in the drill book, an' on which the Reg'lashuns,' ses you, 'is discreetly silent. Whenever you 'appen to be on sentry go an' the 'armless passer by that 'as been celebratin' 'is birthday won't listen to yer words o' wisdom, but wants to 'ug you round the neck, don't bring yer baynit down to the charge, or any foolishness of that sort, although you've bin expressly told to do it, but gently but firmly drop the butt on 'is toes, an' you'll experience all the delight o' hurtin' a fellow creature, without,' ses you, 'any unpleasantness at the inquiry afterwards. Right turn. Dismiss,' ses you. 'Return the arms to the racks quietly an' without noise, an' tell the rest of the squad when you see 'em that you know a bit more than they do.'"

Not to be trifled with.

Sentry: "'Alt! who goes there?"

Private: "Whoy, Jarge! Don't 'ee know I?"

Sentry: "'Corse I do; but where be goin'?"

Flag-wagging.

Newly-enlisted Yeoman: "Somebody—tell—those—silly—idiots—to stop—frightenin'—my—horse!"

THE SYSTEM.

"I don't know whether you've observed it or not, Sir," said "Tiny" to the Junior Subaltern, "but in this great an' glorious country no one ever starts on a job without providing 'imself with something to throw the blame on in case 'e loses the trick. Sometimes they blame procedure an' sometimes the Constitution; in our case 'tis the System. What that system is no one even pretends to know. In one respect it's like the Reg'lashuns; everybody starts off in the same way when discussing of 'em. You never yet met anyone that didn't preface 'is remarks on the subject with 'As far as I can understand,' an' that's about as far as 'e *can*."

"The ord'nary man that runs a bank, or a railway, or a hire-purchase pianner works, would think to 'isself, "Ere's the old country, bless 'er, an' ere's the boys to defend 'er. Now, if the brutal an' licentious foe is dumped down on these 'ere shores, 'e won't go c'lectin' seaweed, neither will 'e pause for to admire the landscape, but, d'rectly the pistol's fired, 'e'll get off the mark, an' make a bee line for the winning post. Now the question is, can these boys stop 'im or can they not? If they can, they must be got ready for the job, an' if they can't, we ain't running a Charity Bazaar, and I ain't going to pay anything for what's worth nothing, so we'll 'ave to think up something else.' But that haint the way they looks at it, bless yer 'eart. 'Why, you've forgotten the votes,' ses the Gov'mint. 'What in the name o' goodness 'as that got to do with it?' ses the plain man. 'Poor hinnocent creature!' ses the Gov'mint, an' turns an' addresses the deputation:—

"Friends! Fellow citizens! Gallant an' patriotic defenders of our island 'ome! You are unique in the history of this terrestrial sphere. There is not another country,' ses he, 'as would treat you as you're treated here. Yer self-sacrificin' spirit is the joy o' me heart, an' if there's not enough troops to go round I will allow you to line the back streets when processions is on, but yer "present arms"

is a disgrace an' yer marchin' past makes me cold down the spine. Yer shooting—well, we will pass that. But for your sense o' duty the curse of conscription would be weighin' on us, so let me point out the necessity of keeping your numbers up.'

"But to answer the question of me noble friend, we 'ave not forgotten the great object for which you exist. In the disastrous an' unparalleled catastrophe of foreign invasion, which we 'ope will never come to pass, but which, if it does, we trust will happen when the Opposition is in power—if, I say, at that momentuous time, you should be found unequal to the task, our plans is made. If our opponents is in, we shall demand a General Election an' promptly proceed to throw them out; but, if by some mistake we should be managing the vessel o' state at the time, we shall throw the blame on our predecessors for neglecting to train you properly. So our minds is easy as to the future. 'There's some guns we don't want in the corner, an' you can wear putties if you pay for them yourselves,' ses the Gov'mint, 'an' we trust to you to vote straight at the nex' Election.'

**"Very," ses the
General.**

"Then the Volunteer Off'cer, being by nature contrary, wants to know something about 'is duties an' ses to the Gov'mint, 'Yer remarks is excellent an' to the point, but what can I do to correct me errors?' 'Anything you like,' ses the Gov'mint, cheerfully, 'that's not agin the Reg'lashuns.' 'I give up my time,' ses the Volunteer, 'an' pay for nearly everything out of my own pocket, an' I'm anxious for to learn, but I ain't a prophet,' ses 'e. 'Give me someone to teach me.' 'I'll do anything you like in reason,' ses the Gov'mint, 'but I will not train you.' 'Tell me how to teach myself, then,' ses the Volunteer. 'I don't know an' I don't care,' ses the Gov'mint, 'but I'll spare the time to examine you if you pay yer expenses. An' meanwhile I will regard you in the light of a nuisance.' An' so matters 'ave stood, the Volunteer trying to do 'is best an' the Gov'mint doin' its level to stop 'im at it.

"But now, along comes the General. 'Th' Army's not big enough,' 'e ses. 'we must 'ave more men or I won't be responsible for breakages,' 'e ses. 'Serious?' ses the Gov'mint. 'Very,' ses the General. 'What am I to do?' ses the Gov'mint. 'Conscrip,' ses the General. 'I daren't,' ses the Gov'mint in a whisper; 'the Opposition 'ud get in at the next election.' 'The country requires it,' ses the General. 'Does it?' ses the

Gov'mint. 'It requires *us* more; it would be as much as my place is worth to ask every man to do his duty, an' besides, there's me brave and devoted Volunteers.' 'They'll never be any real good till they have the M'litia Ballot be'ind 'em,' ses the General. 'They're asking for it themselves,' ses he. 'Never will I consent to force any one,' ses the Gov'mint, 'in this Land of Freedom.' 'Something must be done,' ses the General. 'Ah,' ses the Gov'mint, 'I have it! Crowd them—I mean the Volunteers—for all you're worth, an' if anything busts, we can throw the blame on them. Increase the work an' cut down the pay, 'tis a sound business principle. Now to turn to more important questions. Is the new cap to have a peak, or is it not? An' who is it to be named after?'"

Our First Puttie Parade.

Field Training.

Captain of Cadet Corps: "I've come over to ask you if you would mind my cadets running over your land for once, Mr. Stubbles. I want to give them a little field work."

Stubbles: "Wull I dunno as I've got any objection, 's long as they don't do no damage; but whatever kind o' dog be they now? I know o' 'arriers an' beagles, but I never 'eard tell o' that sort afore."

ON THE G.O.C.

"The Junior Off'cers," said "Tiny" to the youngest Subaltern, "is on the whole as smart an' efficient a lot of young gents as I'd wish to see, fond o' their work, eager to learn, an' ready to take suggestions from their Comp'ny Instructors, but if you listen to them you'd think they was Generals. They may not know 'ow to c'mmand a comp'ny as they should, but there never was one of 'em who, after being a week at Aldershot, but what could have devised an' carried out a course of trainin' that would have been twice as good an' ten times more suitable to the requiremints of *their* Battalion at any rate.

"It's true they don't go into details, but they're sure of the results. 'But,' I ses, 'think of the poor man that's in charge of all these 'ere Auxiliary Forces, d'you think 'e got the billet for 'is looks?' I ses. 'The General,' ses you, 'can't know the Volunteer like the Volunteer 'isself does.' 'Now, put yerself in his place,' ses I, 'an' let's work the sum out to four places o' decimals. To commence with,' ses I, 'the first thing 'e does on being appointed to the job is to go an' 'ave a chat with the Gov'mint on the subjec'. Ses he, 'I've bin studyin' the thing.' 'I know ye 'ave,' ses the Gov'mint; 'that's why you've got the place. We want a man as understan's the machine; it wants over'aulin' before we goes on tour with it. Not simply washin' out the bearin's an' replatin' the 'andle bars, but takin' to bits, an' shovin' together agin. Yer predecessor, poor man, did 'is best, but——, well, *de mortuis*, you know, *de mortuis*.' A sweet sentimint, Sir, but one tendin' to untruthfulness. 'So,' ses the Gov'mint, 'you see 'ow the matter stands. 'Ere is the great mass of patriotic defenders of this glorious country, ready to be trained into a force that shall be the envy an' hatred of every Foreign Power. 'Tis a noble an' inspirin' prospec' that unrolls itself before you, an' one that should stimulate yer vital energies to their utmost; the 'arder the work to you, the greater the glory to us. You 'ave a free 'and in the matter.'

""Well,' ses the General, 'takin' into consideration that, if the Volunteers is ever wanted, they'll be wanted in a hurry, I should suggest that they might be advantageously employed in fitting themselves for the task.' 'Excellent,' ses the Gov'mint; 'why ever wasn't it thought of before? Go on,' ses he. 'They should be trained,' ses the General, 'to the use of the most modern weapons, an' practised in the lessons which we 'ave learned by bitter experience, to the end that, in the

event of an invasion, threatened or actual, every unit shall be able to take the field without delay, sufficiently organised an' equipped to carry it through a short campaign.' 'Marvellous!' ses the Gov'mint. 'It's my dream realised. I will be interviewed on the matter to-morrow.' 'Of course,' ses the General, 'this will undoubtedly entail a certain amount of hextra expense.' 'Not another word!' ses the Gov'mint. 'All bets is off! Train 'em, give 'em transport, stand 'em on their 'eads, or teach 'em to sing; anything you like as long as it don't cost anything. Take a fresh start,' ses 'e.

"So the General sits down with 'is Staff an' 'ammers away at it, an' cuts down the bills till 'e ain't givin' more than fifteen pence for 'arf-a-crown's worth of stuff, an' by an' by, round comes the Gov'mint. 'I've dropped in to see 'ow we're getting on,' ses 'e. 'Some of the corps,' ses the General, 'wants training in one way, I find, an' some in others, so I propose that the Commanding Off'cers of the various districts should adapt the training to the requirements of the troops under their command, an' should carry it out wherever we consider it would be most advantageous.' 'Splendid,' ses the Gov'mint. 'Speak it into the funnygraph that I may listen to it by nights. We'll do it,' ses 'e, 'at some future date. Just now I want ye to get 'em all together in one spot where the correspondents of the Daily Press can see an' realize from their own personal observation what a mighty weapon we are creatin'. The spectacle of tens of thousands of our brave defenders practisin' together the evolutions of war will be amazin' to them. Never again will they dare assert that we are neglectin' the defences of the country. The next three elections,' ses the Gov'mint, 'ought to be certs.'

"'But,' ses the G.O.C., 'there won't be space to train quarter of them properly.' 'Oh, never mind,' ses the Gov'mint, 'give 'em enough room to turn round, an' stick a sintry on every telegraph pole, an' tell 'em it's all practice; they won't know any better. Hevins an' earth! I ought to be playin' Bridge with Lady Betty by now! Tar-tar,' ses 'e; 'be good.'

"'Well,' ses the G.O.C., goin' to the sideboard an' mixing a couple o' stiff ones, 'wash it down with that,' 'e ses, givin' one to 'is Staff. 'Well, of all the dam nonsense!' 'e ses, fallin' into a chair. "'Twas ever thus,' ses the Staff, bein' by nature poetic.

"An' now, Sir," said "Tiny" to the Junior Subaltern, "things bein' like this, what would *you* do under the circumstances?"

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

The Seven Ages of the Volunteer.

At first the raw Recruit, unused
to arms
And awkward at his drill,
thinking the "manual"
The very deuce. Then the bold
"Lance,"
Quick to salute, and glad to
have escaped
His turn as orderly. And then
The Sergeant, full of wrath
because
His section, squad, or what you
will,
Misunderstand him, and do fail
To grasp the thing he drives at.
Then he's a "Sub," and cannot
for the world
Imagine how on earth they ever
did without him,
Don't you know.
And after that he's Captain, and
at first
Wakes up his company, but as
the years go on
He slackens, and betimes he
wonders
If it is not time to chuck it, as it
were.
A Major then, and now
bestrides a "gee,"

Thanking his lucky stars the
"double" does
No longer make him gasp.
Lastly, the Colonel, sporting
the bold V.D.,
Wishing to goodness he had not
to put
His hand to pocket to such
great extent; but dreading, all
the same,
The time when he must, in the
course of things,
Retire.

WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN.

"I would like to get 'old of some of the gentry as writes to the papers on warlike topics," said "Tiny" to the world at large, "more especially them that takes the Volunteers under their special care. I would unfold me mind to them. Now 'ere's one of 'em as 'olds the opinion that shootin's *everything*, an' 'e quotes the opinion of a furriner who 'as bin through the war an' ses the first thing a soldier needs is to shoot well, an' the next thing is to shoot well, an' the last thing is to shoot well. Now that's all right, but me worthy friend misses the first point, which is that it refers to a *soldier*, an' not a civilian. So 'e jumps off from the wrong place to start with. 'Then,' ses 'e, 'teach 'em to shoot, an' take 'em down to the carefully selected position an' 'ave the distances marked off, an' the Boers 'ave taught us that under these circumstances good rifle shots is a match for trained troops.' Now there's where 'e run's the wrong side of the post. In the fust place this 'ere country ain't the Transvaal, an' what 'ud be first rate out there 'ud be all wrong 'ere; an' in the nex' place, is it just by good shootin' the Boers 'ave done what they 'ave? Don't think I despise shootin', but drivin' comfortable to the range an' gettin' up to the firin' line is two different things.

The Firing Exercise.

Our own thoughtful Subaltern has carefully studied the new firing positions, and has also read that "methods must be improvised for utilizing the fire of two or even more ranks," and, by the above arrangement, he hopes to fulfil both conditions.

"I will ask you one question: 'If the King's prize man can only walk ten miles, an' 'e 'as to march twenty, how many bullseyes is 'e likely to make when 'e's fallen out an' lying in the ambulance? For there'll be no goin' down comfortable to a camp that's bin arranged an' catered for months before, an' finding yer tent up an' the tea ready. There'll be no breaking you in soft an' easy, so that at the end of the week too many of you won't fall out on a twenty-five mile field day. The bloomin' foe won't study yer convenience, an' you'll get no notice before and of the picnic. The Foreign Power that 'as made up its mind for a slap at us will not advertize that it'll 'old a remnant sale in the metropolis on the first of nex' month. Our relations will be most friendly with 'im 'till all of a sudden 'e ses, "Ere goes

for London.' There'll be a navy fight first, an' twill be no ordinary one, for 'e'll lose two ships to our one, cheerfully, if 'e can clear the Channel for a week.

"We 'ope 'e won't manage it, and we don't think 'e will, but *if* 'e does, it'll be no week's camp then. The orders one day, the assembly nex' mornin' an' the trains waitin'. 'Arf the camp kettles ain't 'ere, Sir.' 'Can't be helped, you'll have to manage as best you can.' 'No room for that baggage. Chuck it out, anywhere.' 'All in? Right away!' Heaven help the man that 'as forgot to stuff his haversack with a ration! Twenty-four hours they'll be before they have a chance of a meal, an' then, Heaven help the corps twice over as 'asn't been used to feeding itself, or that 'asn't give a thought to how to meet an emergency like this! Quartermaster, Captain, or Corporal, anyone as knows his job at the camp kitchen, will be worth his weight in gold then, an' that's only the start.

"Tired an' stale, the lads 'll work like niggers at the trenches, but before they're finished the order will come to get to somewhere without delay, the enemy not 'aving been kind enough to fall in with our plans. No trains this time, the lines being blocked. Twenty miles before nex' mornin', an' all baggage to be left be'ind. The boys will stay in the ranks till they drop, an' where they drop they will stay. The ambulance? That's for the fighting line. 'Ave ye ever seen a stiff field day? An' that's child's play. Lucky the Battalion that can feed its men that night.

"'We're in reserve, thank God!' they'll cry, though every mother's son is only wishful to fight, an' they'll fall asleep by companies till the section commanders kick 'em to wake up. 'Battalion will advance!' 'Halt!' 'Lie down!' 'Advance!' 'Halt!' 'Lie down!' 'Retire!' 'Halt!' 'You've had an easy day, Colonel. Hold your men in readiness to attack at nightfall.'

"Mile after mile through the mud. 'What are we going to do, Dick?' 'Spoil their beauty sleep; they've been kept at it two days, and if we——.' 'Stop that talking

in the ranks! Close up there! What's that?' 'One of their patrols, Sir.' 'Push on, boys, push on! It's come at last.'

"Men, their picquets are on that hill, ready for us. We are going to take it, and hold it to the last man. The Battalion will form for attack.'

"You'll want *soldiers* then, gents; an' you must 'ave 'em ready before'and."

Our Review

Army Orders.

Great care should be exercised in reconnoitring woods.

(1) The simple mudcrusher thought it would be rather sporting to entrap the mounted scout and laid his plans accordingly.

(2) And the scout thought it was only his duty to bag the mudcrusher, so, disregarding his enemy's fire, he started to round him up.

(3) *Scout:* "Halt! You're my——"

(4) "—— My prisoner, I think!"

Patrols.

***Scout:* "There's a pub down there right enough, but there's an officer coming up the hill."**

***Corporal:* "Over the bank, boys; an' take cover behind those ricks!"**

THE LOST PATROL.

By the JUNIOR SUBALTERN.

Wonder what we shall do to-day? It seems as if we'd been here for weeks, although this is only the third day; but I suppose one's first camp always seems like that. It *is* different from anything else; the drill I've done before don't help me a little bit. It's all very well to pass exams an' get *P.S.* after your name in the Army List, but that don't do much good out on a field day, as far as I can see.

Here comes my noble Captain. He's a bit of a slacker, I fancy. Wish he'd buck the men up more in their drill. They were simply awful yesterday, *I* thought, but he didn't seem to notice it; in fact, I rather imagined he didn't approve of my goin' for 'em in the way I did. By Jove, if I said "Wake up those men," once, I must have said it a hundred times.

"What's that? I'm attached to X Company to-day, as young Jackson is on the sick list? What beastly rot! Why, they're the worst company we've got. Chance for me to wake 'em up? That's all bally fine, but——all right, I'm off." This is a lively look-out. My goodness, they *are* a lot! and their Captain don't seem up to much either——"Yes, Sir. Very good, Sir. Take No. 1 Section and join the advanced party?" "But——er——I've never——" "Hurry up, for goodness sake, the Adjutant's looking as black as thunder." "Oh, *let* him."

"What *am* I to do? Straight along till I come to the cross roads, take the N.E. one, and keep on till I come in touch with the enemy? But——" "Just ready, Sir. I am only asking for final instruc——" "Oh, No. 1 Section, right turn, quick march." Oh, bother, I've forgotten to slope the arms. "Slope arms, there!" By gad, that's a pretty poor start. What *is* the Adjutant howling about? "That isn't the way to march an advanced guard. Where are my flankers?" "Just going to send them out, Sir." "Where's the section commander? On the sick list? Who is in charge then? Oh, you, Corporal. Have you ever been in an advanced guard before? No? Why——oh, it's your first camp, is it? Any of the men been used to this sort of thing? You don't fancy so. Well, we must do the best we can. Take two men and examine that little wood on the right. I will halt the section at the corner till you rejoin."

Ullo, what does this cyclist want? "Captain Jones says, will I push on at once, as I'm stopping the whole column." "Oh! Forward." Hang me if I see the good of sending out flankers if you can't wait for them to examine anything. "Step out there, men, we're blocking the column." Well, here are the cross roads. Oh, my sainted aunt, *Five*, an' not a blessed sign-post!

"Any of you men know which is the way to Muddiford? No?" I wonder which is the N.E. road. I thought it was all bally rot getting maps and compasses, but I wish to goodness I had now. If there was only a gleam of sunshine it would help, but you can't even guess where the sun is through these clouds. Oh, damn that cyclist! Oh, the Adjutant's swearing like old boots? Well, here goes. "Take the turning down the hill, boys, and push ahead as hard as you can." Thank goodness we seem to have got clear of 'em now, and by the powers, here's a villager.

"I say, is this right for Muddiford?" Why, we are coming away from it! What the dickens am I to do? "Is there a short cut from here?" "Yes! yes! Down that lane, across the common to the wood, straight on till you get to the path, and that will take us right on to the main road long before the rest of the column can get there." Cheap at half-a-crown.

"Fall in there. You shall have a rest when we pick the column up, we're a bit off the track. Yes, yes, over the fields and straight through the wood. Get ahead! What the deuce are you men opening out like that for? You've always been told to spread out when going through a wood? Oh, all right." If they lose themselves it's their look-out. Where is this beastly path? At last! Which way do we go? Oh, er—er, curse it, that fellow didn't tell me. Let's see, we turned to the left and then again, so I think it must be to the right. Well, it can't be helped—here goes.

I daren't own up to the men that I haven't a notion where we are, but I haven't, and that's a fact. How this infernal path does wind about! "What's that, Corporal? Here's a *sort* of a road? *This* isn't a main road. Well, the men must have a rest, so —Where's the rest of the section? There aren't more than half of them here. Expect they've gone back the way they came?" I'm beginning to wish *I* had too.

"Corporal, there's no doubt that we've lost touch with the column. We must work our way along the road till we come across a house and find out where we are; unfortunately, I forgot to bring my map with me." *At last!* a cottage. The men had better rest while I make a few inquiries. "Oh, you're a stranger in these parts? But, my good woman, is there any place where I can find——The Red Lion? Where's that? Just down the road, where those soldiers are running to?" Well, I'm——!

A Fair Samaritan.

Our N.C.O.'s (No. 1).

Captain: "Look here, Corporal, you know the great object of the new system is to train the N.C.O.'s to act on their own initiative and responsibility. Now I want you to take a couple of men—understand? Two men, and advance along the main road and select a position commanding a good view of the road, where your sentry can see without being seen—understand? Now you should choose if possible a place giving some shelter for your men, as you are to imagine you've got to occupy it for twenty-four hours, and it ought to be so chosen that you could offer a certain amount of resistance if attacked—understand? You're in absolute

command, and you are to do whatever you think best under the circumstances, keeping in mind the object for which you were sent out—understand?"

Corporal: "Yessir."

Our N.C.O.'s (No. 2).

The Position the Corporal selected.

Hints for Patrols.

"When reconnoitring a village, one of the inhabitants should be detained and questioned."

The Best Laid Schemes, etc.

That able and efficient officer, Captain Smith, had prepared a really beautiful ambush that would have put the opposing force out of action without a doubt, had not this happened just before the psychological moment!

No. 1.

Lt.-Col. Sir DIGBY SANDILANDS, M.P.

Saturday.—Wretched morning. Hunter tells me the barometer is falling again. We really get terribly bad luck with the weather. I know what it will be—we shall get to camp wet through, and find everything absolutely sodden. Wish I had sent Hunter on yesterday to look after things. Lady Sandilands says it's perfectly absurd going on a day like this; suggests that I should go later when everything is straight. Women take the most extraordinary views of one's duty to the country, but really, under the circumstances, I almost wish it were feasible.

Williams has just come up to say that Brown Bess is very lame, shall he get Sultan ready? It is really most annoying: he positively hates the band, while old Bess is as steady as a rock.

Sharpe & Sharpe write me about those mortgages. I really ought to see them. If I caught the express to town I could settle the matter, and then get to the camp about the time the Battalion should arrive. Major Strahan would take charge of them; he rather likes doing it, I fancy. If there's nothing important to see to I think that's what I must do, but it is extremely annoying after looking forward to the week and making all arrangements.

The girls very disappointed; say it's not worth while going to see the Battalion start if I'm not there. Promise them they shall have a wire letting them know the exact time of our return. They say that's not the same thing, as we invariably come back smothered in dust and looking generally disreputable. They seem to regard the whole thing as a mild form of amusement for them. Have arranged everything with the Adjutant. Capital fellow. Really relieves me of no end of little worries.



Sunday.—Arrived rather later than I expected last night. Found they had had rather a bad time getting here, but everything seemed all right; hope it is; always like the men to start camp in a good temper. We parade fairly strong, but men not so smart as I should like to see them. I must impress it on the company officers to look after that sort of thing rather more carefully.

Church parade not improved by slight drizzle; but the chaplain very sensibly shortened the service. Quite forgot to provide myself with anything for the collection; asked the Adjutant if he could lend me something; he had only half-a-crown and a sovereign; so—well, I suppose it's for a good cause. Inspected camp this afternoon, seems fairly comfortable. Our mess president tells me he has had a lot of bother with the caterers, but he hopes it will be better in a day or two. I sincerely hope it will.

Monday.—Passed a terribly bad night. Camp may be a pleasant change for younger men, but it really is a great trial in many ways for commanding officers. I find one misses what are usually termed, I believe, "home comforts." The work to-day is to be confined to sections and the training of the N.C.O.'s. This new drill reads simple enough in the book, but the men don't seem to catch on to it as quickly as they should; but really everything has so changed of late years that one hardly likes to criticize. Spoke to the Adjutant about it; he says they're doing quite as well as he expected. Very irritating order from headquarters to the effect that as we are a manoeuvres camp, officers will not dine in mess dress. A most senseless order; if they allow us mess tents and board floors, and things of that sort, why on earth can't they allow us to dine as gentlemen?

Reserves.

Tuesday.—Weather improving, am happy to say. To-day's training, I believe, is to be left in the hands of the company commanders; field officers to exercise general supervision. On the whole, not bad, although I doubt if they will be able to carry out my commands as intelligently as I could wish without a tremendous amount of explanation. I must impress upon them the importance of grasping the idea of the commands, at the same time acting on their own initiative, otherwise we shall have endless confusion.

Wednesday.—Something about living in the open that has a very stimulating

effect upon one. Made quite an excellent breakfast. The Adjutant gave a most interesting lecture on outpost work before we started; he mentioned several points that I don't mind confessing had slipped my memory. I feel sure, with a little careful instruction, the efficiency of the Volunteer Force would be enormously increased. Must refer to it in the House on earliest opportunity. Did an attack with the Brigade this afternoon; very disappointing. Up to certain stage everything went well, but, as attack developed, got in some way mixed up with the Blankshires, who were, undoubtedly, far out of their proper line. Had slight argument with their C.O. Dear old chap, of course, but absolutely pig-headed. Would not see my point. G.O.C.'s remarks rather uncalled for, under the circumstances. Had to speak to several of the company officers about letting their men get out of hand. The various Adjutants seem to regard the matter with an amount of levity which I don't altogether approve of. Mess very uproarious to-night; most unnecessarily so in my opinion. Heard afterwards one of the subalterns had given a lecture on "Tactics, as he understood them."

Thursday.—Inspection to-day. Passed off fairly satisfactorily; faults found of course, but that's inevitable. A weary, worrying business. Every one seems out of temper. Thank goodness, that's over for a year.

Friday.—Every prospect of a hot day of course, on the one occasion that we should rejoice in a cloudy sky. Hope there will be no trouble with the water-cart. Got the Battalion away early, so could give the men a rest before commencing operations.

Don't quite know what we're intended to be doing or where we're going. Somewhat awkward, as I haven't been able to tell Williams where to meet me with spare horse and a sandwich. Rather a joke (or the reverse) if I had to patronize the water-cart!

Did exceedingly well. Complimented on the way I handled the Battalion in awkward position. Very trying march back, but men stuck to it well. Will back a country Battalion against a town one any time for a stiff day's work, although they may not be so smart. Ordered extra ration of beer, or its equivalent, to be

issued to each man. Capital camp fire at night, and some very good choruses. Great pity that just as we have got into our stride, so to speak, we have to break up. Nothing like camp for the men. Wish we could have more of it. Must bring up the question of extended camps in the House.

A Camp Fire.



Saturday.—Brought Battalion home. Never knew the men march better, and every man looks as hard as nails. The girls say I look years younger. Quite sorry to get back.

A Conundrum.

1st Umpire: "I say, Jimmy, which would you consider the most sporting thing to do—award both sides the palm of victory, or put 'em both out of action?"

No. 2.

Capt. and Adj. "JERRY" BENSON.

Saturday.—I don't think I ever felt less inclined to get up in my life. It is simply dreadful to contemplate the fact that for the next week there won't be a moment's peace for me after 5 A.M. And something horrible is sure to happen—either the Sergeant Major will go sick, or the Colonel's wine will be corked, or I shall be asked to explain things.

The Station Master seems unduly flurried for one of his years—says we shall block the whole line if we don't get away soon. Had no idea the railway system of the country was so easily upset. What is the matter with the youth Thompson? Oh, he is in charge of the baggage for the time being. It seems to excite him very much. Fortunately, baggage has a nice little way of turning up in the long run, somehow. I wish they wouldn't ask me what sort of work we shall do in camp; they must think I'm a sort of military encyclopædia. Frightful scene detraining, Volunteers always remind me of flustered hens on these occasions.

Sunday.—"Oh those dreadful bugles!" Usual church parade. The Colonel is certain to forget his purse, so I'll take a sovereign for him. His expression when he sees I've nothing less, will be touching. As a spectacle, effect somewhat marred by the presence of a cyclist in violent tweeds.

Monday.—Really a very amusing day. The struggles of the various Company officers simply fascinating to watch, they have so many ways of doing the same thing. I have never been able to fathom the mind of the Volunteer N.C.O., but I should think he conceives his duty consists of remaining eternally in rear of his men. I asked one what he thought he was placed in charge of a section for, and he answered very truthfully that he didn't know. I think I must get him sent out in charge of a patrol when the Brigadier is about, he will be so pleased. Someone asked me what I thought of the men's drill. I said it was very interesting, and that I'd seen regulars do it quite as badly.

Tuesday.—Had a most elaborate Brigade drill, which I believe we are not supposed to do, but it afforded me great joy. Everyone else seemed to loathe it. The Colonel got rather worried, which was a nuisance, as I had to keep at his elbow to put him right. I don't think any one really knows what to do, but if you only take long enough about any movement, you generally get a fresh command before you've got absolutely wrong. By some miracle we didn't get quite in a muddle, which was a pity, as the Brigadier would have given everybody the most awful "dirt." Felt quite sorry when it was over. The Colonel uttered a heart-felt "Thank God!"

Wednesday.—A most amusing little field day. I think we did everything we should not have done. Not a soul paid the faintest attention to cover, and when we got into the quite open country everyone took the opportunity to reform the lines. I pulled up a Subaltern who was doing it in the most barefaced manner; he was very cheerful about it, said it would save no end of confusion, and it was much easier to do "out here" than when you were "bottled up in a bally wood!" I should rather like to know what the men think of field days. The issue of blank ammunition usually keeps them quite cheerful for the first half-hour; then, if they happen to be in reserve they get very sulky and think they're being "done in the eye," and when they eventually get into the firing line, they loose off every round they have as fast as possible, and from that moment take no further interest in the proceedings.

Thursday.—Annual Inspection to-day. Took every precaution, carefully coached two companies in piquet duties, and put the rest in reserve. Told the Captains if they had any old soldiers in the ranks to put them in the responsible positions. Thank goodness the Chief invariably asks the same questions, so hadn't to bother about other things. It would be too dreadful if he started dodging us. I wish officers would *not* say they've received no instructions about all sorts of things. It may be perfectly true, but you can't get them to see that they ought to say anything but that. Had rather a fright when I heard the G.O.C. was paying a

surprise visit to the outposts, but something kept him off us. The Sergeant Major said we should get an awful wiggling over the camp, as it wasn't half cleaned up, so had to get the Colonel to keep lunch going as long as possible. Men turned out for inspection better than I expected, but one wretched youth in No. 1 Company got his bayonet jammed. Thought we were in for it, but luckily his struggles were so pathetic that the Chief had to laugh, and forgot to make any nasty remarks until he'd almost finished the inspection. We might train a humorously-minded boy to do something of the sort every time.

Friday.—Usual wind-up field day. Did "pooja" to everything I could think of, in the hope of being placed in reserve, but it didn't come off. Had a positively dreadful time. Our portion of the firing line seemed to fascinate the G.O.C., nothing would make him go away. Gave us frightful "dirt" because the men insisted on standing up to see the Commander-in-Chief and Staff go by, when they were supposed to be under cover and lying down. One of the Staff got off rather smart thing—said the Volunteers combined the minimum of expense with the maximum of inefficiency.

Saturday.—Broke camp. I don't know which is worse, getting to camp or coming away from it. It doesn't matter what arrangements you make, it always results in hopeless confusion, and everybody goes about cursing somebody or something. I shall keep out of the way as much as possible, and I shall go on leave directly we get back.

The Hired "Charger" is not a Thing of Beauty!

Studies.

Serious Major: "You ought to look in to-night, youngster, we shall be having a 'Kriegspiel' on."

Frivolous Sub.: "What's that, Sir?"

Major: "Don't you know? Why it's the War Game."

Sub.: "Never heard of it! Can you make any money at it?"

Ambushed!

Extract from Officer's Diary.—"Had lunch, practically on an unsuspected wasp's nest, and had to clear out, each man collaring whatever he could lay hands on. The Colonel was the last to quit the field of battle."

Field-Day Reflections.

Field Officer (a little out of touch for the time being): "I wish to goodness our corps had stuck to their scarlet instead of goin' into this infernal khaki; you used to be able to spot 'em at any distance, but now I'm hanged if I can tell *where* they are!"

Tactics.

Slim Subaltern: "Not out of action? I should jolly well think you were, though! Why I've been simply pumping lead into you for the last ten minutes!"

Captain of Opposing Force: "That's all very fine, but it all depends on the range you were firing at."

Slim Subaltern: "Don't you worry about that, cocky; I had one section sightin' at eight hundred, another at nine, 'nother at one thou, an' t'other at 'leven hundred!"

Field-Day Tragedies.

"Ullo, Dicky! Where's your Company? Lost?"

"No, not lost, but gone before!"

No. 3.

2nd Lieut. FITZGERALD LAWLESS.

Saturday.—Utter rot limiting a fellow's baggage; I've simply chucked it. If there was any need, I could live in one shirt just as well as the next man, but I expect the Sergeant Major will think it his duty to point out that two kit bags, a hold-all, plus the regulation tin box, is almost up to field officer form, but I can't do it with less. I'm sure the amount of stuff the sergeants' mess take with 'em is simply appalling.

Trust our mess president will provide for our carnal appetites by the way, but shall take the precaution of laying in a small stock on my own.

Had huge jest with young Simpkins in the train. Rotted him about his new Sam Browne equipment; told him it wasn't on right, so we had it off him, and regularly trussed him up in it; he got awfully wrathful, so we sat him in a corner while Jackson read "Hints for Young Officers" to him.

Found my tent pitched close to the Colonel's; rather a good egg, as they won't be able to try any larks on this time. That young ass Blenkinsop, who was baggage officer, has lost one of my kit bags, and pretty well smashed up the other things. Had the cheek to say it was lucky the only really efficient Sub. in the Battalion in charge, or the baggage would never have got here. Gathered from the tone of his remarks that he'd had a pretty healthy time of it.



Sunday.—Seems quite good to hear the bugles going once more. Church parade. Infernal nuisance having to wear busbies—always feel like a bally Hungarian bandsman. As usual, forgot about the collection, so had to apply to Watney, who, being a parson's son, is up to these moves; result—put in half-a-crown. Fancy Watney regards it as a little private field day, as he invariably has half-crowns and nothing else. Told me afterwards he'd lent five.

Spent most of this afternoon trying to instil some measure of tidiness into my servant.



Monday.—On duty. Inspected the grub first thing. Awfully good chap our Quartermaster; tried to show me how to spot bully beef. 'Pon my soul I think the real work of a Battalion is done off the scenes, as it were. How the deuce they manage to feed nine hundred beggars without a regular fuss, beats me.

No complaints about the breakfast. My own a bit off, as I was late.

Preliminary training and drills. Been trying to hammer a little knowledge into our N.C.O.'s. The non-commissioned man may be the backbone of the army, but I'll be hanged if he is of the Volunteers. Went round lines at dinner. Two or three complaints; either too much fat or too little gravy. Got rather good wheeze for these occasions; nearly always come from an untidy lot, so invariably say I never take complaints from a dirty tent; makes 'em very sick. Turned out the guards; good thing in principle, generally a bally farce in practice.

Tuesday.—Had to dig young Brown out of his tent about 2 A.M.; his man hadn't slacked off the tent ropes, and as there was rather a heavy dew, the whole show collapsed. Fancy B. thought the camp had been rushed, as we discovered him clutching his sword. His lamp had been knocked over, and he was soaked in paraffin, and smelt vilely. Rotted B. about it all day.

Foiled about in rear of my half company most of the time, as the Captain was enjoying himself bossing everything; he might just as well have given me a separate job to do. Got rather hauled over the coals for not seeing that the men laid out their bedding properly. Asked the Sergeant Major what the regulation way was. Wish he wouldn't *always* preface his information with "I should have thought, Sir, that that was one of the *first* things an officer should know."

Rather a lark after mess; got young B. down and christened him "Violet de Parme," while Jackson played "Taint all lavender." Suspected B. of harbouring thoughts of revenge, so collared a syphon of soda, and after putting out my light crawled outside and waited for him. Just as he started letting the tent down, sallied forth and let fly the soda at him. Stirred up the Colonel, so had to lie awfully doggo.

Wednesday.—Colonel rather grumpy about being disturbed. Did a futile Brigade attack to-day. Got told off as escort to some machine guns. Asked the Johnnie in command of 'em what he was going to do. Said he didn't know, but thought they wanted him to keep out of the way, and interrupt the attack as little as possible. M.G.'s usually looked on as a nuisance, I fancy. I suggested it would be rather sporting if we worked out well to a flank, and then imagined ourselves ambushed, and bolted back on the main body; give 'em awfully great opportunity of showing what they could do in an emergency, but he wouldn't rise to it. Simply a lovely chance lost of rotting up the show. Think I shall put in for the gun section next year.

The Gun Team.

Went over to the Wildshires in the evening. Awfully sporting lot. Found 'em having chariot races in armchairs with obstacles. Being a guest, was asked to be passenger; nothing broken but the chair. Musical lot, too. Have great formula when they want a song from anyone, "Will you come to the piano, or will you be fetched?" They generally come. Rather late before I got back. Never knew a camp with so many confounded tent ropes.



Thursday.—Annual inspection. Filthy day. Inspected every ten minutes, with slight interval for showers. Was hurried off to a piquet. Rushed out patrols and sentries somewhere. Got told to alter 'em. If you wanted to know anything you were told to ask some one else. Always the same game. Hardly a soul knows what they're supposed to be doing. You're not certain yourself, and if you are, you haven't time to tell your men. So everyone produces little red books, and studies "What to do and How to do it," by "One who thinks he knows." No wonder the regulars jibe at us; it's astonishing we're as good as we are. Everybody a bit off to-day.



Friday.—Paraded half an hour earlier, as we had about seven miles to march to the rendezvous. Tried to stop my fellows from emptying their water-bottles at the first halt. It would do 'em good if the water-cart got lost for once, and they

had to make the contents of their bottles last them the day.

Find we're to act as rearguard to something. Got told off to occupy a bit of a wood right away on the flank. Thank goodness they haven't told me what to do or how long to hold on, or anything, so I shall get out of touch as soon as I can and play off my own bat. Rather good little wood. Men awfully keen on the job. Soon after we occupied position, spotted party of the enemy coming through gap in the hills. Couldn't see them very well on account of the haze, so waited till they got fairly near, and then gave 'em a volley. They sent an orderly over to know what the deuce I meant by firing on the ambulance. Felt rather an ass, but found out afterwards every party they had passed had paid them the same compliment. Soon after scout came in with news of enemy. I wanted to ambush 'em, but some silly fool fired without orders, so it became a regular attack. Put three companies out of action before we retired, but cut it rather too fine, and a few of my chaps got collared. Found the rest of the rearguard had cleared before. Some of 'em mistook us for the bally foe, and blazed into us like old boots. Rotted 'em no end when we got up to them. Everything got in the most awful muddle after a bit; no one knew who was which. After the "Cease fire" sounded came across a lot of chaps firing like mad at anybody who came near. Told 'em the "Cease fire" had gone. "'Cease fire' be damned!" said one of them. "We ain't had a look in till now!"

Rather rough time getting back to camp. Thought at one time half my lot were going to fall out, so went for 'em like anything. Called 'em a "bally lot of school-girls out for a Sunday-school treat," which upset them somewhat, so they bucked up and not one caved in, although we were all pretty well "baked."

Awfully festive night. The Wildshires had a camp fire, nearly all the Brigade turned out. Any amount of choruses. Had fearful "rag" afterwards. Scotson got hold of a wheelbarrow, formed a machine-gun detachment, and rushed the Southshires' lines. Awfully "pi" lot, and got very sick. Whenever they started to object charged 'em with the "Maxim," and drove 'em to earth. When I got back found my tent struck and a note on it begging me not to disturb the Colonel when pitching it. Got out my blankets, rolled up in them, and slept outside.



Saturday.—Find I'm stuck in charge of the baggage. Must see if I can manage it without the usual row. Rather nice fellow is the A.S.C. in charge of transport.

Told him we'd got it all ready, and he needn't worry. Shall just have time for my fellows to get breakfast and then slip into it. Everything seems all serene, so I'll get a bite myself.

Oh, my Aunt Maria! I wish if they give a fellow a job to do they'd leave him to do it. Found everybody pitching the stuff up into the wagons anyhow. How ever it got sorted out, goodness knows. Had rather a row with the A.S.C. chap; told him he was muddling everything up. Seemed to think a Volunteer can't possibly know anything, but considering half my men come from the railway, I'll back them against all comers for loading a truck. Started at last, about half an hour late. More trouble at the station; only two trucks there instead of the five indented for. My stock of ornamental profanity barely sufficient for the occasion. Finally managed somehow. Loaded up passenger coaches, horse boxes, anything; but men awfully sulky. Thought they were going to curse the Major when he wanted to know why everything wasn't done. Got rotted by young Blenkinsop for mucking the show up. Major awfully good chap on these occasions; told me it's absolutely unavoidable when we have to manage to get a day's work done in about three hours. Told ripping good jest against himself when *he* was on baggage duty years ago. Must try it again next year to see if I can do it differently. Only one or two things gone wrong after all, by some miracle.

Home again. Feel rather tired. Jolly good camp, though. Hope next year's will be as good.

Off Duty.

Philosophies.

"Chargin'," said the Junior Subaltern, "is all bally rot; and when we carried a beastly sword it was positively dangerous. You blew your whistle, bolted out in front of your men, howled 'Char-r-r-ge!' shoved your foot in a hole, or got the scabbard between your legs an' came a regular mucker, and then some idiot behind either jumped on you or tripped over you, an' most likely prodded you with his bally bayonet."

M.G.

Extract from Diary.—"We got our Maxim into a capital position on the flank, but before we could fire a shot we were put out of action for some time."

More Army Reforms.

Our only Sub.: "Awful tommy rot big Battalions, don't you know; ever so much jollier with just the mess an' the band."

On Guard.

Officer of the day (who believes in making sure that every man knows his work): "Ah? What are you?" (*No answer.*)

"Er! What are your orders?" (*No answer.*)

"What the dooce are you doing here?"

Recruit (on sentry go for the first time): "Please, zur, I bz waitin' for they to tell I to come to tay!"

A Misunderstanding.

Colonel (to recruit who has forgotten to salute him): "What Company do you belong to?"

Recruit (mindful of his civil occupation): "Th—Th—The Gas Company, please, Sir!"

No. 4.

Pte. TIMOTHY SIMMONS.

Saturday.—'Ad a bit of a row with the old man afore starting; 'e wants me to give mother 'arf my camp pay, same as if it were wages. Told 'im I would if I could, so I expect there'll be more rows when we gets back. Said good-bye to Mary, an' told her if I 'eard of any goings on with Bill Jenkins, as could go to camp if 'e wanted to right enough, I'd spoil 'is face for 'im. She said I ought to be walkin' 'er out instead o' wastin' my time playin' at soldiers, an' that Bill's a very sensible chap. I ses as 'e's a waster an' a perfect bloomin' idjet at drill, always a throwin' us out. Jawin' with 'er made me a bit late for parade, but our leftenant didn't seem to mind for a wonder. Usually 'is temper's awful if things don't go as he likes. He cocked 'is bloomin' eye-glass at me, tho', in a way as made me think 'e was going to start cussin'. Twasn't bad with all the village looking on, an' we marched off in

style.

Got told off to the baggage guard at the station. Blessed if I don't think it was for being late for p'rade. Warn't sorry when the train started, as one of the chaps 'ad got hold of four bottles of beer as was all right. Just before the train stops our Serjint, 'e ses, "Look after our own company's baggage, an' never mind what anybody ses." But we 'adn't more than about started when a off'cer on a horse comes along an' wants to know who's in charge an' where is 'e. I tells 'im, an' then he ses we can't be all day over the job, an' we're to put all this lot into that truck. We ses we was told to put it in t'other. "Put it where *I* tell you," 'e ses. Bimeby along comes our off'cer, an' just takes one look at us, an' then started fairly in. As our Corp'ril said afterwards, it were a treat. I'd 'ave given the price of a pint to 'ave been able to sit still an' listen to 'im, an' yet to look at 'im in the ordinary way you'd think he couldn't get further than "Dash it all!" Then up comes the off'cer on the 'orse. "Are you in charge of this guard?" ses 'e. "Yes," ses our off'cer. "Well, you'll never get away at this rate, an' there's three more Battalions to detrain after you, an' I must 'ave those trucks back from the camp by six o'clock." "Very good; they will be here," ses our man. "Not at this rate," ses t'other. "My dear fellow," ses our off'cer, "my men aint regulars, but they can manage it all right in their own way if you'll leave 'em alone; but you're simply muddlin' us up now." "Can't help that," ses t'other. "I'm only responsible for the trucks, and they must be got away at once." "I'm responsible for the baggage," ses our man. "Either leave the job to me or take the whole thing over." "Oh, do as you like. I don't care a damn," ses the one on the 'orse. "No more do I," ses our off'cer. So we gets it together somehow an' marches off, the bloomin' traction-engine a-goin' about five miles an 'our an' we tryin' to keep up, all of us cussin' at everything. Don't catch me on a baggage guard again in a 'urry.



Sunday.—Bit tired to-day. Couldn't get much sleep las' night; some of the chaps 'adn't been to camp afore, an' wouldn't shake down quiet. Kep' growlin' at everything. Off'cer comes round wantin' to know what the noise were about. I tells 'im as George Hitchins 'udn't shut up, an' let us get to sleep. "'It 'im on the 'ed with a boot," ses the off'cer, an' I 'ad a bloomin' good mind to. Church p'rade in the mornin'. Never 'eard a blessed word till we got to the hymns. Dinner pretty right, but could 'ave done with more of it. Beer at the canteen not 'arf as good as we gets at the old "King's Arms." Went out with some of our chaps in the

afternoon an' 'ad a sleep in a wood. Not 'arf a bad day. If t'were goin' to be all same as this, I wouldn't mind.

Monday.—Jack Houghton, as was Tent Orderly to-day, goes an' trips over one of the tent ropes when he were bringing the coffee, an' spilt most of it. Tried to get some more, but couldn't, so docked 'im of 'is share; even then we was precious short. Section drill all the morning. Never saw the off'cers so savage—nothing would please them; they're fairly easy all the year, but they makes up for it in camp. Not but what some of the chaps want it—lots of 'em goes on enough to break a feller's 'eart, an' then we all gets the blame.

That there Houghton got hold of the wrong kettle at dinner an' come back with No. 5's grub, which, as they're only seven in their tent to our eight, warn't good enough. Complained to the off'cer as come round. 'E said if we couldn't look after ourselves better than that, we must take the consequences. That's all very fine, but it don't feed us. Made Houghton stand 'arf a gallon to the tent. 'E ses camp's a bloomin' swindle. If there's one thing I 'ates it is cleaning up the camp; the other companies chucks their rubbish into our lines, but t'aint no use to say so, you only gets shut up.

On the Range.

Got jawed at for a bit o' dirt in my rifle as you couldn't see. "Clean it again," ses our Lieutenant. "I've cleaned the thing forty times," I ses. "Forty-one's your lucky number," 'e ses; "try again." Went for a stroll in the evenin', but these 'ere camps is too far away from anything to please me.

Tuesday.—My day as Tent Orderly. I never see such a lot of chaps to grumble as our tent. Fust of all the bread warn't right, then I 'adn't got enough coffee, an' the bacon was done too much—why 'adn't I kicked up a row? "Look 'ere," I ses, "you bloomin' well take wot you gets, an' if you aint satisfied you complain to the off'cer of the day; 'e won't stand much of yer lip. I know my work," I ses, "an' I done it."

Had to peel a reg'lar pile of taters, twice as many as they ought to want. "There," I ses to our company cook, "'ow's that?" "Why, you've bin an' wasted nigh on 'arf of 'em," 'e ses. "An' then yer tent will be hollerin' out as I cheats 'em. *I know 'em,*" 'e ses. An' sure enough they did, only it were the gravy as they didn't like this time. I shall be bloomin' glad when I'm a Sergint, an' 'as a mess to ourselves. 'Ad narrow shave of being late for p'rade. You aint got no time to spare when you're Orderly.

Thought nothing would satisfy our off'cers to-day. We was trying all sorts of things like they does 'em at the war, an' we was fairly sick of it, but the Colonel 'e rides by an' sings out as we was the best company 'e'd seen that morning, so that was all right, an' we didn't mind being shoved about.



Wednesday.—We was practised in advanced guard the first thing this morning, all the companies working separate. After a bit, I'm blowed if yer could tell what any of 'em was at, they was so mixed up. Afore we starts, our Captain 'e explains to us what we was supposed to do; 'e may 'ave understood what 'e was drivin' at, but I'm blest if any of us did. 'Owever, after a bit I begins to see what we was meant to be doin', an' bimeby the Captain 'e tells me to take two men as a patrol to examine a wood as was near by. D'rectly we was out of sight one of 'em starts playin' the goat, till I gives 'im a shove in the back wi' the butt just to remind 'im as I was in command. The Major come along jist then an' asks me what we was? I tells 'im as we were a patrol, an' 'e tells me the proper way to do it, an' what to report to the Captain.

After breakfast we was out again doin' outposts. Wish they wouldn't 'ave so much make believe about it. Supposin' now they puts yer in a group as sentries. "The henemy," they ses, "is somewhere over there, an' you've to watch that bit o' country in front of you; the countersign's 'Bunkum,' an' you've to keep under cover." Well, there aint no henemy, an' nothin' aint goin' to 'appen, an' yer wouldn't know wot to do if it did, so you just lies down an' smokes till the "assembly" goes, an' then you comes back. It may teach officers something, but it don't teach us much.

As we was out for the day only 'ad a sort o' bread an' water picnic instead of dinner, which we 'as when we gets back to camp. We was put through what they calls an attack drill after, but I didn't think much of it; started off with about

twenty yards between you an' the next man, an' then as we advanced, they comes crowdin' up from be'ind till the firin' line were like a bloomin' football scrimmage, with about four different Battalions all atop o' one another, an' loosin' off right an' left whether they was in front or be'ind. "'Ere," I ses to Ted Parminter, "this aint no place for us, it's too bloomin' dangerous. I'm going to be a casualty." An' we drops be'ind. "Wot bally rot!" I 'eard one off'cer say, an' I quite agreed with 'im.

Thursday.—Everyone 'ad to clean the bloomin' camp twice over to-day, as we was to be inspected. I niver seen such a place for getting dirty; you brushes yerself down an' blacks yer boots an' polishes up yer rifle, an' in ten minutes you are that covered in dust as you look as if you 'adn't washed for a week.

Got sent out with a patrol again. Saw a General ridin' along our way, so we got be'ind an 'edge till 'e'd gone by. Just after we got back to the picket another General comes along an' asks all sorts of questions, an' didn't seem to think much of the answers 'e got. We was all 'oping it were over for the day, when along comes a whole lot o' Generals all together, and one of 'em calls out to us to fall in. We gets up an' begins dusting ourselves down a bit, when 'e yells at us for not being in our places at once, an' goes for us 'ot an' strong; then 'e starts asking questions as made me shiver. All of a sudden 'e ses: "Who was in charge of the last patrol as went out?" The Captain calls me up, and the General ses, "Where did you go?" I tells 'im I went as far as the wood. "See anything of the enemy?" 'e ses. "There weren't none there," I ses. "How do you know?" ses 'e; "you ar'n't allowed to enter the woods about here." "Well, Sir," I ses, "we didn't go in, but there's only two places where anybody could get in without doing damage, and there weren't no footmarks there." "What forage can I get down there?" 'e ses. "There's about three ton o' bad 'ay, Sir, at one of the cottages, but it aint worth 'aulin'," I ses, an' 'e tells me to fall back in the ranks, which I was precious glad to do. Our Captain said, when they was gone, as 'ow I'd answered very well, an' 'ow I ought to go for a stripe. I said as I should like to.

Paraded in the afternoon for the reg'lar inspection; was kept out in the burnin' sun standing still for about two hours while another General walked round an' looked at our buttons an' boots, an' found fault with every blessed thing. They seems to think yer kit is made to look at, not to use. As I ses to Ted in the canteen after, "We comes to camp for trainin', an' this 'ere's nothing but wastin'

time, as could be done at 'ome anywhere."

Friday.—Revelly 'arf 'our earlier this morning, as we 'ad a longish march to do. Precious 'ot it were, too, an' we were main glad to get a rest before beginning operations. Don't know what we was supposed to be doin', but we got posted on the side of an 'ill where we could 'ave seen everything as was goin' on, but d'rectly you gets up to 'ave a look some one starts bellerin', "Lie down there!" till we all got the bloomin' 'ump. After a bit they takes us back the way we come and we lay down again, then they advances us up the 'ill again; then they shifts us about all over the shop, backerds an' forrards, till we didn't know where we was. At last a off'cer comes galloping over to our Colonel and they seemed to be 'avin' a few words, and we advances an' 'alts, advances an' 'alts, for about a hour an' a 'arf, an' then just as we was getting up to the firing line an' thinkin' this was a bit of all right at last, the bugles go, "Cease fire." "Taint fair," ses Dick Jennings; "let's shoot the bloomin' humpire." Getting back to camp were a bit thick, 'ow we did it without fallin' out I don't know. No one who aint done it theirselves knows wot marchin' ten mile in fours on a road two inches deep in dust is like; yer rifle weighs about a ton, an' yer water's gone at the first 'alt. The bloomin' band as ought to 'ave met us an' played us 'ome, went an' lost itself, an' never showed up till we was almost back to camp. Colonel 'e's give out as every man is to 'ave a hextra pint issued to 'im. I 'ad three more on my own; 'ad a bit of a sing-song in the evenin', but we was too tired to do much.

Saturday.—Regular scrimmage striking tents an' getting blankets an' baggage together, but got it done some'ow—a regular nigger drivin' sort of job.

Felt quite sorry when we fell in on p'rade for the last time. Camp's stiffish work an' everybody grumbles, but it aint bad fun on the whole; an' after all a chap as 'as been to camp is worth half-a-dozen as 'asn't, you learns things there that you can't learn nohow else, no matter 'ow clever you are.

Outposts.

Both the sentry and the group indulge in a little "Nap."

What the service would be without the Junior Subaltern the Junior Subaltern cannot imagine.

Do not anathematize the genius who formulates the Regulations. He is quite right, if you could but understand him.

Gun practice with obsolete weapons is instructive. One cannot know too much of the history of one's country.

A sealed pattern at the War Office is something different from the kit you have just purchased.

At Last!

Private Jones having contrived to sit upon his bayonet, the various ambulances and bearer sections get a look in.

The expenses of the officer's dress should be reduced whenever possible. Abolish ten shillings worth of lace, and substitute three buttons at three-and-sixpence apiece. There is only a slight difference, but every little helps.

Rifles should be cleaned very carefully: one man should hold the rifle, and the other should manipulate the "pull-through."

The difference between field service kit and parade dress is very marked. You wear out the one and grow out of the other.

Off Duty.

That enthusiastic Volunteer, Jack Rackett, holds that, while in camp, you should consider yourself a soldier for the time being; but, he says, Tommy has a "deuced good time, don't you know!"

Trouble in the Band.

Bugler: "'Ere, if you go on increasin' at this rate, Fatty, you'll 'ave to send in your resignation. You won't be able to reach the middle o' the drum soon!"

You may be traffic manager of a railway, but you cannot know as much about a baggage train as a Second Lieutenant in the Army Service Corps who has been at it for a week.

Now this is the creed of the Subaltern.—

The Subaltern knows everything and does everything.

The Captain knows (?) everything and does nothing.

The Major knows nothing and does nothing.

There is such a thing as too much enthusiasm, and when, after joining the Signalling section, Edwin's fond epistles took the above form, Angelina decided that it was time to break off the engagement.

If you want to know anything always ask the Adjutant; recollect that he has nothing to do but to attend to *you*.

No water-cart is perfect. You may abuse it without incurring rebuke.

When in doubt say you have received no instructions.

Many rules apply equally well in civil and military life. If you are in a responsible position, never do anything till you are absolutely pushed.

Presenting arms never killed the enemy, neither has physical drill, but each helps to make a soldier.

It is curious how an indifferent shot always gets a badly sighted rifle issued to him.

"Intelligence in the obeyin' of commands," said "Tiny," "is of the utmost importance. If you are with an off'cer as knows 'is work you may close yer eyes and rest in peace, an' just do as you're told without worryin'. But they differ. There's that little devil with the eyeglass now, if 'e's takin' you an' you see me convenient to 'is elbow you can be easy in your minds an' jump to the word, but if, by misfortune, 'e's out there alone, keep yer wits about yer an' step off slow, for 'As you were' an' 'Mark time' is favourite commands with 'im.'"

"Discipline is a good word; it fills the mouth and makes the chest swell with the sound, but it's easier to spell than to explain," said "Tiny." "I have not my patent-instalment-plan Dictionary with me, but 'tis in the nature of obedience, only more so. Any fool can do as 'e's told, but the disciplined man will do it even when 'e thinks it's wrong—not, I want ye to understand, just because it's an order, but because 'e ses to 'imself: this is for a reason as I don't know on. F'rinstance, when the father told the boy to slip into the orchard an' shin up a tree an' collar all the apples 'e could, that boy didn't hesitate, but started 'tooty sweet,' as the French say. Now, thinks 'e as 'e goes along, 'Wot's the little game? The apples is rotten, the dawg's about, an' the farmer 'll catch me for sure. It can't be for the sake of getting me a lammin', cos,' says he, 'the ole man likes doin' that 'isself. I don't 'arf like the looks of it,' 'e says, 'but I'll take me precautions:' with that he shoves a bone in 'is pocket to amuse the tripe hound if he gets too pressing, an' takes a stone or two for the farmer, an' by the end of the campaign comes back to find that the enemy's attention 'aving been diverted to the orchard, the ole man 'as cleaned out the hen roost, an' there's a hot supper an' general rejoicings."

**"All exercises should generally conclude with a conference,
at which Officers and Non-commissioned Officers should be encouraged
to explain any action they may have taken." *Vide Army Orders, 1901.***

Transcriber's Note:

The original hyphenation, spelling and grammar have been preserved.

Page 21, "Reglashuns" changed to "Reg'lashuns" [Ed. for consistency]

Page 99, 'anywhere.' changed to 'anywhere.'"

Page 111, "isself" changed to "'isself"

END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK OUR BATTALION

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