

Smithy

By

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Freeditorial 

Smithy

1. — THE ADJUTANT'S MADNESS

MILITARY "crime" is not crime at all, as we law-abiding citizens recognize it. The outbreak in the Anchester Regiment was not a very serious affair; from what I can gather, it mostly took the form of breaking out of barracks after "lights out."

But, explained Smithy, it got a bit too thick, and one of the consequences was that the guard was doubled, pickets were strengthened, and the ranks of the regimental military police were, as a temporary measure, considerably augmented. I explain this for the benefit of my military readers, who may wonder how it was that both Smithy and Nobby Clark happened to be together on Number One post on the night of The Adjutant's Madness.

"I was tellin' the troops only the other night," said Smithy, "what would 'appen if they didn't give over actin' the billy goat.

" 'Some of you bloomin' recruits,' I sez, 'think you're doin' somethin' very wonderful, climbin' over the wall, an' goin' into town when you ought to be in bed asleep; but it's the likes of me, an' Nobby, and 'Appy Johnson, chaps with twelve years' service, who's got to suffer. I'll bet you old Uncle Bill will start doublin' the guard to-morrer.'

" 'Don't be down 'arted; Nobby sez; 'take a brighter view of life, Smithy.'

"Sure enough, next day it came out in orders that the guard was to be doubled, an' me an' Nobby was for it.

"When we mounted guard, the Adjutant, old Umferville, came over an' inspected us.

" 'Who's first relief on Number One post?' 'e sez.

" 'Clark an' Smith, sir,' sez the sergeant.

" 'I don't want you chaps to make too much noise walkin' about, or shoutin',' sez the Adjutant, an' I'm blowed if 'is face wasn't as red as a piller-box.

" 'What's the matter with Uncle Bill?' sez Nobby, as we was marchin' off.

" 'I believe 'e's frightened about somethin',' I sez, puzzled.

"Number One post is between the back of the Adjutant's 'ouse and the wall where the chaps nip over. It used to be the Colonel's 'ouse; but when Uncle Bill got married a couple of years ago, the Colonel generously 'anded it over, an' took an 'ouse in town that wasn't so damp.

"It was the most excitin' guard me an' Nobby ever did, an' it was all through Uncle Bill. You never saw such goin's on in your life. 'E dodged in an' out of 'is 'ouse all day long. 'E'd start to walk across the square, then stop, as if 'e'd forgot something, then walk back to the 'ouse, then walk out again, then stop an' bite 'is nails an' stare more ghashtly at nothin'.

"Once as 'e was passin', me an' Nobby shouldered arms to 'im, an' e stopped dead an' looked at us. 'E didn't move, but stood stock still for about five minutes starin' at me an' Nobby, sayin' nothin', an' me and Nobby felt quite uncomfortable.

" 'Everything all right, sentry?' 'e sez at last.

" 'Yes, sir,' sez me an' Nobby.

" 'Sentry—' 'e sez, then stopped.

" 'Which one, sir?' sez Nobby, an' the officer stared.

" 'Are there two of you?' 'e sez.

" 'Yes, sir,' sez me an' Nobby, an' e got very red an' muttered somethin' an' walked off.

"We was talkin' about it in the guardroom that night when we was drinkin' our guard allowance—one pint a man, accordin' to regulations. All the other chaps 'ad noticed Uncle Bill's strangeness, too.

" 'It's drink,' sez Nobby, shakin' 'is 'ead. 'Wot a pity to see a pore young chap go wrong, all for the sake of the cursed liquor—after you with that pot, Smithy.'

" 'You've 'ad your whack, Nobby,' I sez; 'don't come it on a pal.'

" 'Did I?' sez Nobby. 'I must 'ave been thinkin' of the Adjutant.'

" 'I think 'es 'aunted,' sez a chap from 'D'—a young chap.

" 'Aunted!' sez Nobby, scornful. 'Why, there ain't no ghosts after Christmas, fat'ead!'

" 'Never mind about Christmas,' sez the young chap; 'it's my belief 'es 'aunted, there's a spirit or somethin' follerin' 'im about.'

'Dry up,' sez Nobby, shudderin', for me an' im was on the worst relief, ten to midnight, an' four to six.

"When we mounted at 'last post' Nobby sez to me:—

" 'Do you think there's anythin' in that ghost idea, Smith?'

" 'No,' I sez. 'Still,' I sez, 'you never know.'

" 'What's that?' sez Nobby, pointin' to a shadder movin' along the wall. So I shouts

" 'Alt!—who goes there? '

"It turned out to be little Bobby Burns tryin' to break out of barracks, an' me an' Nobby captured 'im an' shoved 'im in the clink.

"Just before twelve me an' Nobby was standin' at ease, when we 'eard a most 'orrid groan. We jumps round with our 'arts in our mouths, an' there was the Adjutant in is overcoat an' slippers.

" 'What the dickens are you starin' at?' 'e sez.

" 'Beg pardon, sir,' stammers Nobby, 'I thought you was a ghost!'

"But the Adjutant didn't seem to 'ear what we said. 'E just walks up an' down mutterin' to hisself. Bimeby 'e sez, 'Keep a sharp look-out, an' don't make too much noise—d'ye hear, you Clark ; d'ye 'ear, you Smith?' 'e sez fiercely.

" 'Yes, sir,' sez me an' Nobby; an' then the Adjutant went indoors.

" 'Drink,' sez Nobby solemnly. 'Let this be a warnin' to you, Smithy.'

"When we come on duty again at four in the mornin', the two chaps we relieved looked scared out of their lives. 'I shall be bloomin' glad when its daylight,' sez one of 'em; 'we've 'ad an 'orrid time.'

" 'Ow so?' sez Nobby.

" 'The Adjutant's gone orf 'is napper: mad, that's wot 'e is,' sez the chap. ' 'E's bin walkin' up an' down talkin' to 'isself an' moanin' an' chuckin' 'is arms about.'

" 'Nice thing, ain't it?' sez Nobby, after we was posted; 'if you ask me—why, 'ere the beggar comes again.'

" 'What shall we do?' I sez.

" 'Wait till 'e gets violent, then bang 'im with the butt of your rifle.'

" 'You do it,' I sez.

" 'No, you'd better do it, Smithy; you're the oldest soldier!'

"Up comes Umferville, and I'll take my oath there was tears in 'is eyes.

" 'Sentry' 'e sez in a chokin' voice, 'challenge all persons approachin' your post.'

" 'Yes, sir,' sez me an' Nobby.

" 'Don't allow nobody to pass without challengin', ' 'e sez wildly, an' then run back to 'is 'ouse like mad.

" 'Balmy,' sez Nobby; 'let's go an' tell the sergeant.'

" 'Better wait,' I sez. So we waited.

" 'The beggar 'ain't bin to bed,' sez Nobby after a bit, 'there's lights in all the rooms.'

" 'I wonder what 'is missus thinks,' I sez, an' I felt sorry for Mrs. Umferville, who's a lady bred an' born.

"It wanted about an hour to daybreak when out rushes the Adjutant again an' makes straight for us.

" 'Ere 'e comes,' I sez, liftin' up the butt of my rifle. 'Nobby, you're evidence that I only 'it 'im to save your life,' I sez.

" 'Your life!' sez Nobby hastily.

"Up comes Umferville, sort of laughin' an' cryin'.

" 'Sentry,' e sez, 'wot about your orders?'

" 'Wot orders, sir?' I sez.

" 'Some one's come into barracks,' 'e sez excitedly, an' you 'aven't challenged 'im.'

" 'E ain't passed 'ere,' sez me an' Nobby together.

" 'Yes, 'e 'as,' sez the Adjutant. 'Listen'

"We listens.

" 'Ear anythin'?' sez the Adjutant.

Suddenly Nobby lets out a yell.

" 'Guard, turn out,' 'e shouts, an' out come the guard with a run.

" 'Wot's up?' sez the sergeant of the guard.

" 'Present arms!' sez Nobby, 'to the Adjutant's new baby,' 'e sez."

2. — MILITARY MOTORING

"WHAT'LL be the badge for that?" asked Smithy

We were talking of the new course of military motoring that is contemplated.

"Cross' guns for marksman, cross' flags for signaller, cross' swords for instructor, cross' choppers for pioneer." mused Smithy.

"Cross pedestrians for military chauffeur," said I humorously.

"Cross corpses, if I know anything about it," said Smithy pessimistically. "Some of the chaps I know who are goin' in for motorin' I wouldn't trust with a clock-work p'rambulator."

"As you say," I began. "There—"

"Let alone motor-cars," interrupted Smithy gloomily.

"Of course there are—"

"Let alone bloomin' motor-cars," repeated Smithy, with a knowing nod of his head.

"I suppose," he went on, "you don't happen to know Spud Murphy, of 'B'—he's doin' duty now, but he used to be groom-of-the-chambers to Major What's-his-name?"

I know hundreds of Spud Murphys; but I could not recall this particular one.

"You wouldn't think," said Smithy, impressively, that a tin-eyed rooster with four years' service, a low down cellar-flapper from Islington that joined the Army to get away from the police, would 'ave the neck to apply for a job as shover to a choof-choof?"

"I should imagine," I remarked gently, "that the position of chauffeur requires —"

"Well," went on the indignant Smithy, "this unmentionable person did. You know Uncle Bill?"

I owned up to an acquaintance with that very kindly young officer, Captain Umfreville, of Smithy's battalion.

"Uncle Bill," said the irreverent soldier, "is one of the widest chaps in the regiment. There was a man in town who was agent for all kinds of motor-cars, but the one he was most fond of was a little thing he invented hisself. A four-horse-power machine with bicycle wheels. He called it the 'Ravin' Jupiter,' and it was one of them run-away-and-play-whilst-papa-mends-the-carburator sort of machines.

"Well, Uncle Bill turns up in barrack one day as large as life, sittin' in a sort of bassinette and steam roller combined. He'd bought a 'Ravin' Jupiter,' and, what's more, he'd got it cheap.

"People used to larf, especially when it hurt somebody; but Uncle Bill knew a thing or two.

"A week afterwards he turned up with a ninety-horse-power Little Nipper, or Nipper Minor, or something of the sort.

"His 'Ravin' Jupiter' had gone wrong, and while it was bein' righted the maker had lent him this car.

"I can tell you," said Smithy, with a reminiscent grin, "that old Uncle Bill didn't use that 'Ravin' Jupiter' three times a year; mostly he was cuttin' round the country in the Nipper, or a Damyer, or a Poosher, wot was lent him while the 'Ravin' ' car was gettin' a new inside.

The artfulness of Captain Umfreville caused Smithy a few minutes' amusement.

Then he returned with a scowl to the enormities of the miserable Spud Murphy.

"Spud comes to me one day an' sez, 'I'm goin' to be Bill's shover.'

" 'Bill's how much?' I sez.

" 'Bill's choofer,' he sez.

" 'Wot do you know about motor-cars?' I sez.

" 'E larfs. 'Never you mind,' e sez; 'I've driv' an ingin before now,' e sez.

" 'Beer ingin?' I sez.

" 'No,' e sez, 'a real ingin at a sawmills.'

"So Spud got his job," Smithy went on, "an' for a week he was messin' about the parade ground doin' fancy work, with Uncle Bill sittin' by his side givin' instructions.

"We used to sit outside the canteen and watch him and the officer.

" 'E used to play on the thing with his 'ands and feet, and the tunes 'e got out of it was extr'ord'nary. Bill was a wonderful instructor.

" 'Mark time on that blanky clutch,' he'd yell, and Spud would put his foot on the brake-pedal.

" 'The other foot, you soor,' Bill'd shout, he 'avin' been in India with the other battalion.

" 'Arf right!' And Spud would give the steerin'-wheel a yank to the left, an' the language of the captain was a disgrace to his company.

"I tell you Spud perspired, but he persevered, too, and used to work in little bits he learnt at the sawmill, and one day he comes up to me as pleased as Punch, an' waves a bit o' blue paper.

" 'I've got me licence,' he sez.

" 'O,' sez Nobby Clark—a caution, he is—I suppose they'll let you out without a chain now,' 'e sez.

" 'Don't you be funny,' sez Spud; 'I'm a licensed shover.'

" 'What's that?' I sez. 'French for beer-can boy at a sawmills? '

"Well, right enough, about a week after, me and a couple of chaps was walkin' out in the country—it was a Sunday—when we 'eard a motor- car comin' up behind.

" 'Hoomp ! Hoomp ! Hoomp!'

"Then, like a flash of dirty lightnin', somethin' dashed past in a cloud of dust, and there was me and the other chaps covered all over with muck, and a smell in the air like a paraffin stove.

"Bimeby," resumed Smithy, "we comes up with a motor-car pulled up at the side of a road with somebody crawlin' underneath.

" 'There's only one man in the world that takes fourteen boots,' sez Nobby, 'and that's Spud Murphy;' so we pulls 'im out.

" 'Now, then, you men,' sez Spud, doin' the haughty act, 'just leave me alone, will yer?'

"What's up, Spud?' I sez.

" 'The off 'ind cylinder 'as come into contact with the sparkin' plug,' sez Spud, as bold as brass.

" 'Sawmills,' sez Nobby Clark softly.

" 'Wot are you goin' to do?' I sez, and the other chaps started lookin' underneath too.

" 'I shall petrolize the trembler, and throw back the clutch into the ignition coil,' sez Spud, shuttin' 'is eyes and thinkin'.

" 'Sawmills,' sez Nobby Clark quite plainly.

"Spud give him a look, then dives underneath the car with a spanner, while me an' Nobby tried to see what made the fog'orn work.

" 'Oomph!'

" 'Ere,' sez Spud Murphy, underneath the car, 'just you leave that 'orn alone.'

" 'Oomph!'

"Spud wriggled out from under the car with a spanner in one 'and and a oilcan in the other.

" 'E was red in the face, an' as wild as anything.

" 'Didn't I tell you to leave it alone?' 'e sez to Nobby.

" 'Sawmills!' sez Nobby; and that's why Spud 'it 'im."

Smithy heaved a sigh.

"Take my tip, don't you ever try to separate two chaps when one chap has a spanner in his 'and," he said, and continued:—

"Well, Spud lost 'is job, for a couple of red-caps came up an' pinched 'im, an' the car 'ad to be dragged home by a fatigue party, and Uncle Bill drives his own car now; he's fed up with military shovers, and won't 'ave another."

"How do you know?" I asked curiously.

"I offered to drive for 'im," said Smithy modestly.

3. — ADVERTISING THE ARMY

"IT's a great thing, getting a staff billet," remarked Private Smithy, resplendent in mufti of the hand-me-down pepper-and-salt variety. Smithy wore mufti consequent upon his recent appointment as groom to Major Somebody-or-Other, Deputy-Assistant-Adjutant-General (a) to Goodness- Knows-What-District.

"It's a relief to get out of regimentals," he sighed, self-consciously thrusting fingers into unaccustomed pockets. I ventured to murmur that he looked ever so much better in a scarlet coat and white belt, but Smithy demurred.

"Red tunics is all right in a way," he remarked philosophically, "but give me a smart civilian suit, turn-down collar, and a pair of brown boots for a change." At Smithy's request I "waited a bit " whilst he explored a small tobacconist's in

the High Street.

He returned after a short absence, red in the face, but triumphant.

"Seven for a shilling—and an imitation crocodile leather case thrown in," he explained. "Have one?" Smithy added, with the air of a connoisseur, that it was "almost impossible to buy a good cigar under tuppence."

Two draws convinced me that it was quite as impossible to get the genuine article at the rate of a shilling for seven.

"The red coat attracts a few, I'll admit," resumed Smithy. "I've known two silly jossers in my time who've joined the Army for the sake of the scarlet. One got his ticket three months after."

"Ticket," I may say in parenthesis, is the terse barrack-room formula for certificate of discharge.

"Colour blind, 'e was," Smithy went on, with an amused smile. "No, red coats don't bring recruits, nor," added Smithy emphatically, "nothing that the War Office ever did brings recruits." We were passing a hoarding as he spoke, and suddenly clutching my arm, he stopped dead and pointed to a placard. It was neatly printed in red and blue, and was about the size of a newspaper contents bill. It ran :

**RECRUITS WANTED
FOR EVERY BRANCH OF
THE ARMY
GOD SAVE THE KING!**

I nodded, and we resumed our walk.

"God save the King!" repeated Smithy flippantly. "God save the King if he don't get no more recruits than that there notice will bring him!" and Smithy laughed sarcastically.

He was silent for a while, and so occupied with his thoughts that I was able to drop my cigar down a friendly drain without observation.

"They can't get recruits nowadays," he resumed at length, and then, striking off at a tangent, "Why do fellers enlist?"

I thought it might be for the glory of a noble profession, and ventured to express this thought.

Smithy's reply was conveyed in one coarse, contemptuous word.

"Do you know why I enlisted?" he asked.

I did not hazard an opinion, and he continued: "Broke," he said tersely. "Broke to the wide, wide world; out of a job and had a row with the girl—but mostly I

was out of a job.

"Show me a soldier," said Smithy, with a sort of gloomy enthusiasm, "and I'll show you a man who at some time or other has got down to his last tanner.

"Mind you," he added cautiously, "there are thousands of chaps in the Army—sergeants on the strength and all that, who've got on well and 'ave educated themselves—they'll tell you, if you ask 'em, why they 'listed; it's because they struck pa with a roll of music and ran away from home."

Smithy ended this speech in a hoarse falsetto, presumably in imitation of some person or persons unknown.

"Why!" I know a man—quartermaster-sergeant, who's got two houses of his own, and can vamp the accompaniment to any song you like. When he 'listed he walked into barracks on his uppers.

"And now he's got two houses—being a quartermaster-sergeant," added Smithy darkly, and not a little vaguely.

"And so long as the War Office is the War Office," he went on, "you'll always have an army of hard-ups. Because why?"

"Because," I submitted rather sadly, "the greater bulk of the population—"

"Not a bit," said the optimist, demolishing the results of systematic observation with a fine disregard for statistics. "Not a bit. It's because the War Office don't know what attracts soldiers.

"Why! may I be (three expurgated words) if I didn't see a bill the other day outside St. George's Barracks—it was called 'The Advantages of the Army'—and what do you think the pictures on it were about?

"One showed what a happy life a fine young feller could lead in the Royal Engineers. Picture of two pore Tommies in their shirt-sleeves carrying about a ton of wood, whilst three others was diggin' a big hole in the ground. 'Bridge-buildin' and Trenchin',' said the picture.

"Didn't you buy one of them books they was advertising so much last year?" Smithy asked abruptly.

I confessed.

"Did they send you a book showing you the advantages of buying a—what-do-you-call-it Britannia?"

I owned up to three pamphlets, eight letters, and a telegram.

"Ah !" said Smithy craftily, "and did they send you a picture showing you how you might get the brokers in if you didn't pay your instalment? No, of course they didn't. Well, this 'ere bill had six pictures. A pore slave of a lancer cleanin' his saddlery—advantages of the cavalry; a Tommy got up in marchin' order,

with fifty pounds of equipment on his back—advantages of the Line ; and so on. What made 'em stop short of havin' one showin' Tommy being frog-marched to the clink," added Smithy, with gentle irony, "an' labellin' it. 'Advantages of the Canteen,' I can't imagine."

"What would attract a desirable class of recruits to the Army?" I made bold to ask.

"You'll laugh when I tell you," said Smithy very seriously. "A neat uniform for walkin' out; neat regulation boots instead of beetle crushers; a cap that ain't a pastrycook's cap.

"Make your bloomin' soldier advertise the Army make him look so as every counter-jumpin', quill-pushin' board-school boy who thinks 'es a cut above Tommy will be proud to change clothes with him. Dress him as ugly as you like for fightin'; but when he's at home, where he'll meet his pals and, likely as not, the girl he left his happy home for, give him a uniform that a civilian might envy." Smithy grew warm.

"If you want to show the advantages of the Army in pictures, give a picture of a soldier as he fancies himself best. Show his institutes; show him playin' billiards; show him in India lyin' on 'is charpoy with a bloomin' nigger servant taking orf his boots and another one pullin' a punkah. Show him in China ridin' like a lord in a ricksha; show him in his white helmet smokin' a cigar—ten for four annas—or in Gibraltar seein' a bull- fight; but don't show him in his shirt-sleeves carryin' coal!"

I was saying good-bye to Smithy when Nobby Clark of " B " Company met us.

Rude criticism of Smithy's civilian clothes was followed by a proposal that Smithy should accompany Nobby for a stroll round the town.

Smithy drew himself up.

"I hope, Private Clark," he said haughtily, " that I respect myself too highly to be seen walking about the streets with a common soldier!"

4. — ARMY MANNERS

Officers commanding regiments are instructed to note among their subordinates such defects as shortness of temper or weakness of character likely to harm them in their career. —vide Army Order.

I STEPPED back quickly on to the kerb; the cab wheel that brushed against the sleeve of my coat splattered me with black mud.

The cabman threw over his shoulder the rudest expression he could summon at the moment, and I, who am a terrific linguist where the bad language of foreign countries is concerned, fired off three choice morsels of Tamil, which, had they been translated, would have brought that cabman back thirsting for my blood.

Smithy, from a place of safety on the pavement, chuckled.

"Don't lose your temper," advised my military friend—on furlough, by the way, and spending the Christmas holidays with a married sister off Portobello Road. "Puttin' down bad temper's a new Army reform." We had crossed the road in safety and were walking up Queen Victoria Street.

"Wot we want in the Army nowadays is politeness; bad language we can't abide; if we can't be good soldiers, let's be little gentlemen. The Anchester Regiment is the politest regiment goin' ; they call us the 'After you's'; our motto is, 'Quo fus et gloria ducunt,' which means, 'It's far better to be decent than glorious'; in fact—"

"In fact you're talking a lot of rot," I said irritably. Smithy smiled in a superior way.

"The other day," he went on, without taking further notice of my interruption, "we 'ad a lecture; Uncle Bill it was, the chap that 'ad the motor-car. 'Company will parade at 11 a.m. in "B" Company's barrack-room for a lecture on military manners, by Captain Umfreville.'

"We all like lectures," explained Smithy; "you can sit down to 'em, an' there's generally a fire in the room. Well, Uncle Bill starts off with a long yarn about a new Army Order, sayin' that chaps must not lose their tempers with other chaps; they ought to be polite an' kind an' courteous, an' he finishes up by sayin' he hoped he'd see an improvement in the company, that before we let our angry passions rise we ought to count twenty.

"After lecture we all goes over to the canteen; me an' Nobby Clark an' Spud Murphy an' Ugly Johnson.

All the chaps was talkin' about Uncle Bill's lecture, an' a chap of the 'G' Company says they's bin havin' a lecture too, about losin' your temper, in fact, the whole bloomin' regiment was lectured on it.

"We take it in turns to buy beer," explained Smithy; "this day it happened to be Spud's turn, but he seemed to forget it.

" 'Pardon me, Spud,' sez Nobby, as polite as you please, 'talkin' about beer—'

" 'I wasn't talkin' about beer, dear friend,' sez Spud, liftin' his cap.

" 'Well,' sez Nobby, tryin' to smile in a friendly manner, 'suppose you talk about it—comrade?'

"Nobby nearly choked sayin 'Comrade,' owin' to his hatin' Spud Murphy worse than poison.

"So Spud shuts his eyes an' makes a noise like a chap thinkin'. 'Um—m—ah—oh, yus,' et cet'ra, whilst me an' the other chaps stood gaspin' for a drink.

" 'When you've done makin' faces,' sez Nobby, gettin' red in the face, 'p'raps, gallant comrade, you'll buy some beer.'

" 'It ain't my turn, dear Nobby,' sez Spud, as bold as brass.

"Nobby sort of went blue.

" 'Not your turn!' 'e sez in an 'usky voice, 'not your turn—gallant soldier; not your bloomin' turn—brother?'

" 'No,' sez Spud shortly; 'I bought it yesterday—comrade.'

"Nobby looks round at all the chaps who was watchin' 'im be polite to Spud, an' sez:—

" 'Bought it yesterday—comrade? Why, you funny-faced perisher, it was Me wot bought it yesterday!'

" 'Be polite,' sez Spud; 'don't lose your temper,' 'e sez 'or you'll be gettin. what you're askin' for,' 'e sez.

" 'Wot's that?' sez Nobby, 'beer, you daylight robber, you thievin' recruit!'

" 'Wot you're askin' for—comrade,' sez Spud, still tryin' to be polite, 'is a thick ear.' "

Smithy went on to a faithful recital of what Private Clark had said in response to this threat of personal violence.

For reasons purely private I suppress the lurid details.

"So at last Nobby paid for his own pint," Smithy resumed, "and sat in a comer by hisself, countin' twenty. For about a week after the barracks was like a Sunday school.

"The orderly sergeant comin' round to warn chaps for duty was like a parson givin' out notices just before the collection.

" 'Is Private Jordan here?' sez the sergeant.

" 'Yes, Sergeant,' sez Jerry Jordan.

" 'I regret that I must warn you for picket duty to-morrow evenin'.'

" 'Thank you kindly, Sergeant,' sez Jerry, who'd made arrangements to take his girl out that night.

" 'Is Private Purser here?'

" 'Yes, Sergeant, at your service,' sez Long Purser.

" 'It's my painful duty to inform you that you must appear at company office tomorrow morning to answer the charge of not complying with an order.'

" 'Don't mention it, Sergeant,' said Purser.

"One night Nobby comes to me an' sez, 'Look 'ere, Smithy, I'm about fed up with this countin' business.'

" 'Are you, comrade?' I sez.

" 'Not so much of the "comrade," ' sez Nobby nastily; 'I'm gettin' tired of hearin' Spud Murphy call me "ole friend" an' "chummy" an' "comrade," an' the very next time he comes snackin' me, I'll put him through the mill.'

" 'Will you, dear friend?' sez I.

" 'Yes, I will, fat 'ead,' sez Nobby.

"Next day, me an' Nobby bein' orderly men, we went down to the cookhouse about four o'clock to draw the tea.

"Spud's our cook; so Nobby sez to 'im:—

" 'Ullo, greasy, wot's the price of drippin'?' Spud's got a second-class certificate, so rather fancies hisself.

" 'Be a little more polite, Private Clark,' 'e sez in a loud voice so's the sergeant-cook could hear.

"So Nobby sez something to him.

" 'Did you 'ear that!' sez Spud in an 'orrified voice.

"So Nobby sez something else to 'im.

" 'Don't use that language in this clean cook'ouse.' sez Spud loudly, but the sergeant didn't take no notice. 'I'm surprised at you, Private Clark, losin' your temper like that.'

"So Nobby sez something else to 'im.

" 'Say that again,' sez Spud, takin' off his coat.

" 'Count twenty,' sez Nobby, with a sneer, 'like I do.'

" 'Say that again,' sez Spud, so Nobby did."

Smithy paused to ruminate on that joyous memory.

"We got 'em apart at last, an' the sergeant-cook fell-in four of us to put 'em both in the guard-room.

"Next morning they was both up at company office. an' Uncle Bill sez, 'Did you count twenty, Clark? '

" 'Yes, sir,' sez Nobby, 'five at a time,' 'e sez.

" 'I ought to send you before the Colonel,' sez Uncle Bill, but I won't; you'll be

both let orf with a caution.' "

"That was very sporting on the part of Umfreville," I remarked in some surprise.

"Yes," said Smithy, with a ghost of a smile. "Uncle Bill doesn't like takin' men before the Colonel."

"Why?" I asked.

"Him an' the Colonel ain't on speaking terms," explained Smithy naïvely.

5. — THE UMPIRE

SMITHY sprawled lazily on the grassy cliff. A gentle breeze blew in from the south, and the glassy, sunlit sea was dotted with laden transport boats.

Grazing within a radius afforded by the loose rein that Smithy held was the major's horse. In the soiled mustard-coloured garb that the soldier affects on manoeuvres, Smithy had followed both Red and Blue forces, for Major Somebody-or-other, whose serf he was, had been umpiring.

"If," said Smithy reflectively, "if we'd fought with umpires in South Africa, who do you think would have won?"

"I can tell you," he went on, without waiting for an answer. "Take Ladysmith. Why, if that job had been part of manoeuvres, you'd have seen twenty little umpires come streaking up in their Panniers and Napiers and Baby Peugeot, blinding the Boers with dust, and they'd have had a conference on Wagon Hill and then they'd 've sent for George White.

" 'Good mornin', Sir George,' they'd say. 'Fine weather we're havin'. 'Ow are the birds in this part of the world? My fifty-horse-power Damyer put up a dozen brace between here and Colenso,' they'd say. Then Sir George would talk about the shootin'.

" 'Oh, by the way,' sez the umpire, 'wot about Ladysmith?'

" 'Wot about it?' sez Sir George.

" 'Well,' sez one of the umpires, polishin' his motor-goggles, 'I think you're out of action, don't you?'

"Sir George gets huffy.

" 'Nothin' of the sort,' he sez; 'I can hold Ladysmith for months and months,' he sez.

"Then all the umpires larf, except one with spectacles.

" 'Pardon me,' sez this one, 'you don't seem to understand that the strategic

defensive calls for the preponderance of the tactical defensive—'

" 'You dry up,' sez Sir George quick; 'I'm goin' to hold Ladysmith as long as we've got boots to eat.'

"But he'd have had to give way before the umpires, and Ladysmith would have gone in.

"Then," went on the great man, "take Colenso. The umpires would 'ave gone up to Botha—no, I don't know how they'd have got to him unless they went up in a balloon—and there would be me bold Botha directin' the fire of the First Loyal Sjamboks.

" 'Cease fire,' shout the umpires, and Botha stares. 'Wot for?' he sez.

"You're defeated,' sez the umpire, and then goes on affably: 'What sort of a season are you havin' in this part of the world? Nice weather for the crops, By the bye, as I was comin' along in my ninety-four horse-power Wolseley, I put up twenty brace—'

"Then Botha gets mad.

" 'What the howling raadzaal do you mean by sayin' that I'm defeated, when I've got a position here that I could hold for a month of Sundays?' he sez as wild as anything.

"The umpire gets very stiff.

" 'I'd have you know, General, that you're not allowed to hold this position.'

"Why?' sez Botha, very astonished.

"Because it's out of bounds,' sez the umpire and so we'd have got Colenso."

Smithy stopped to watch a bare-footed sailor, with two little yellow and red hand-flags, wave erratic arms seaward.

He spelt out the message, having some knowledge of the semaphore.

"Make—your—own—arrangements," spelt Smithy, and added, with a dry laugh, "That's just the bloomin' thing the umpires don't allow for.

"I remember once," he continued, with unaccustomed animation, "when we were messing about after De Wet. You know the sort of thing—twenty miles a day in every direction. Every night we used to come up to the place where De Wet was the night before. There was half a battalion of Ours, one squadron of scallywags, two squadron of bushrangers, and a couple of pom-poms.

"Well, one day, when we wasn't exactly lookin' for De Wet, De Wet was lookin' for us, and you can bet he found us!

"Before we knew where he was he'd got our horses, and we was all lyin' flat on our chests envyin' the little ants that had as much cover as they wanted.

"We'd been shootin' away for about an hour, and it was easy to see we were pretty well surrounded.

"There was a sort of general in charge of our three columns, and he was twenty miles away with the other two.

"Bimeby we got a helio message from him—'Make the best arrangements you can; I can't get to you under six hours.' So our old man, and the scallywag captain—Somebody's Horse it was—an' the Australian major, had a sort of council of war underneath a water-barrel.

" 'Well, gentlemen,' sez our old man, 'I'm afraid we're pipped,' he sez; 'rightly speakin',' he sez, 'we ought to shove up the white flag,' he sez; but I give everybody fair warnin',' he sez, 'that I'll shoot the man who as much as blows his nose with a white handkerchief,' he sez, with a wicked laugh.

"And the scallywag and the bushranger and the little gunner who had just crawled up, said, 'Hear, hear!'

"Then our old man goes on: 'The main body of the enemy is in a donga three hundred yards to our left,' he sez, 'and we've got to get that donga,' sez our old man."

Smithy's eyes were far away.

"Bimeby," he went on, "I heard the old man shouting, 'Concentrate your fire on that donga,' he sez ; then after a bit, when the dust begins to go up, he yells, 'Fix bayonets!' "

Smithy turned and looked me squarely in the face. "What would the umpire have said?" he asked. Why, we'd have been bloomin' well decimated—but we wasn't. The Boers didn't wait for the bayonet—they pushed off, and we got away with the guns.

"There's only one kind of war," said Smithy sagely, "and that's the kind that hurts. When the chap that's playin' the real game makes a misdeal or revokes, there's no reshuffle. If he puts up a big bluff and it comes off, he's a great man, and gets his picture in the papers. If it don't come off, why—"

Smithy's silence was eloquent.

"Umpires in war," he went on, "are food and feet and fingers—fingers for holdin' on to positions where, rightly, you should 'a' been kicked off.

"I know regiments that could never be put out action unless every man was killed—what's an umpire goin' to do with a lot like that?" he demanded. Somewhere down on the shingly beach below to a stentorian voice roared:

"Smith!"

Smith rose with alacrity.

"Comin', sir," he shouted. Then, as he led his officer's charger seaward, he turned.

"He's an umpire," he said, with a jerk of his thumb toward the beach, "but he's a very decent chap otherwise."

6. — ERUDITION

"IT was read out in reg'mental orders," said Smithy, "on the 9.30 parade, that a new lot of books 'ad arrived for the lib'ry. 'Suitable books for the Soldier,' it said, so that afternoon me an' Nobby goes over to the coffee-shop where the lib'ry is to 'ave a look. There was lots of other chaps there, an' we 'ad to take our turn.

"All the chaps was shoutin', 'Come on, Mac, give me that red one,' an' poor old Macmanus got 'isself all tied up in a knot tryin' to put down the names of the chaps that took out the new books. When it come to me an' Nobby's turn there was only two books left. Nobby got a blue one an' I got a red one.

" 'Wot's yours, Smithy?' sez Nobby, an' I read it out: 'Temp'rance Statistics of the Army in India.'

" 'Who Stat What's-'is-name?' sez Nobby.

" 'Some bloomin' teetotaller,' I sez. 'Wot's yours?'

" 'Ydraulics for Garrison Artillery,' 'e sez. 'Whose she, I wonder?'

"Spud Murphy got a book about 'Tactics in the Crimea,' George Botter (of 'G') got a yaller book about 'Afghanistan in Relation to the Frontier Question,' Mouldy Thompson got a big book about 'The 'Istory of the Army Service Corps,' whilst old 'Appy Johnson got the best of the lot, 'Records an' Nicknames of the British Army.'

"We all takes our books to the barrack-room, an' there was me an' Nobby an' all the rest of the chaps sittin' down 'oldin' our 'eads tryin' to understand what the books was about.

"When we gets over to the canteen that night everybody was tryin' to show off.

"Spud comes strollin' up to where me an' Nobby was sittin'.

" 'Ullo, Nob,' 'e sez.

" 'Ullo!' sez Nobby; 'what do you want, funny face?'

"Spud sits down alongside of me an' Nobby.

" 'Talkin' about the Crimea—' 'e sez, like a chap sayin' a piece.

" 'I wasn't talkin' about the Crimea,' sez Nobby.

" 'Ave" you ever noticed that a great strategic opportunity was lost—'

"Nobby puts down the can 'e was drinkin' out of.

" "Old 'ard,' 'e sez. I think I grasp your meanin', Spud. You're referrin', unless I am mistaken, to the time when the garrison artillery didn't start workin' their 'ydraulics in a proper manner.'

" 'No, I ain't,' snaps Spud. I'm talkin' about the tactics in the Crimea.'

" 'An' I'm talkin' about 'ydraulics,' sez Nobby, as calm as a cucumber, 'becos that's the book that I'm a-readin'.'

"It was pretty sickenin'," explained Smithy, "wot with George Botter tryin' to pretend 'e knew all about Afghanistan, an' 'Appy Johnson wantin' to make bets about who was the first colonel of the Anchesters. Mouldy Thompson got to 'igh words with a driver of the A.S.C. about the Army Service Corps.

" 'I suppose you don't know, Cocky,' sez Mouldy to this chap, 'that the old A.S.C. used to be called the Muck Train?'

" 'No, I don't,' sez the A.S.C. chap nastily, 'an' wot's more, I don't see no call to go makin' personal remarks.'

" 'Where no offence is meant, it is 'oped that no offence will be took,' sez Mouldy. 'Well, as I was sayin', the Muck Train—'

" 'Shut up,' sez the A.S.C. chap, 'or 'I'll shut you up.'

"Just before 'fust post' me an' Nobby was sittin' in the corner talkin' about 'ydraulics and drink, when in come Gus Ward of the R.A.M.C.

"Up goes Mouldy to 'im as pleased as anything.

" 'D'you know what they call the Medical Staff?' sez Mouldy.

"The medical bloke looks over 'is pot an' sez nothin'."

"They call 'em the "Linseed Lancers,'" sez Mouldy, laughin'.

"The medical finished 'is beer, puts down 'is pot, and sez to Mouldy:

" 'Do you know what I call you?' 'e sez.

" 'Don't be naaty,' sez Mouldy; 'this is in a book.

" 'In a book, is it?' sez the medical. 'Well, you homoeopathic, subcutaneous mnemonic, what I'm going to call you won't be found in any book.'

"So then the medical chap started callin' Mouldy all the things 'e could remember at the minute, an' finished up with a few words out of the sick report.

"You must understand," explained Smithy, "that all the bloomin' battalion was on the same lay. There they was the next afternoon lyin' in their cots a readin' an' a mutterin' an' gettin' ready to show off.

"Wastin' their time"—Smithy was indignant—"an' well knowin' that we 'aven't got a decent bowler in the regiment. I didn't see anything of Nobby till I went over to the canteen that night. Everybody was talkin' about everything—all talkin' together. Suddenly I 'eard Nobby's voice:

" 'No, you're wrong, Mouldy,' 'e sez; 'you're wrong about the artillery.'

" 'Wrong!' sez Mouldy, very indignant; 'ow do you know?'

" 'Because I do,' sez Nobby, 'an' what's more, Spud Murphy's wrong about the army in the Crimea, an' George Botter's talkin' through 'is 'at about Afghanistan, an' Dusty Miller's silly when 'e sez that Athens is in Germany (Dusty got a book on the decay of the classy or somethin' of the sort), an' when Billy Mason gits up an' talks about Africa—I've got a word to say.'

"An' with that old Nobby starts to criticise everybody, not confinin' hisself to 'ydraulics, you understand, but goin' all over the shop.

"Bimeby, old Spud Murphy, who'd been dazed by Nobby tellin' 'im a lot about the battle of Alma, strikes 'is for'ead an' shouts:

" 'Old 'ard, Nobby—I see your little game—it's A's what your talkin' about.'

" 'What d'ye mean?' sez Nobby, goin' red.

" 'Why,' sez Spud, excited, 'you're talkin' about Abukir an' Abyssinia an' adjutants an' ants—they're all A's,' roars Spud.

" 'Well,' sez Nobby, 'wot about it?'

" 'Ask 'im a C question, somebody,' shouts Spud, gleeful.

" 'Wot about crocodiles?' sez Dusty.

" 'Crocodiles an' alligators are all the same,' sez Nobby. 'Everybody knows that.'

" 'Ear, 'ear,' I sez; an' the other chaps said the same.

" 'Well,' sez Spud, thinkin', 'I'll give you a "M"—wot about monkeys?'

"Nobby thought a bit.

" 'Apes,' 'e begins, 'was first invented—' 'Monkeys!' sez Spud.

" 'Apes an' monkeys are all the same,' sez Nobby.

" 'Well, tell us somethin' about Colonels—that's a C,' sez Spud, who was gettin' wild.

"It took Nobby a long time to think this out, then 'e starts:

" 'Adjutants was first invented—'

" 'I thought so,' sez Spud, joyful. 'P'raps you'll tell me when 'Cyclopaedias was invented—fortnightly 'cyclopedias, wot you buy for sevenpence,' sez Spud.

"An' Nobby looked quite uncomfortable."

7. — BERTIE

"YOU don't 'appen to know our Bertie, do you?" asked Private Smith; "'E's a new chap only just joined from the depot: 'ighly educated an' all that: one of the struck-pa-with-a-roll-of-music-and-enlisted sort of fellows."

Smithy paused to ruminate upon the accomplished Bertie.

"I've 'eard 'im use words that wasn't in any dictionary," Smithy continued with enthusiasm, "an' 'e's settled arguments we've 'ad in the canteen without so much as lookin' in a book.

"There was a bit of a friendly discussion the other night about 'ow much alch'ol there was in beer, an' 'ow many pints it'd take to poison a chap. Gus Ward, the medical staff chap, worked it all out on a bit of paper, but some of the other chaps said 'e was talkin' through 'is 'at.

"To settle it—none of the other chaps would come outside when Gussie invited 'em—we sent over for Bertie.

"Over comes Bertie with a wot-can-I-do-for-you-my-poor-child sort of smile, an' we puts the question to 'im.

" 'Twenty-two gallons an' a pint,' sez Bertie prompt.

" 'You're a liar!' sez Nobby, an' the medical chap asked Bertie to come outside an' settle the question.

" 'Don't be absurd,' sez Bertie. 'Nobody can tell me anything about alch'ol: it was discovered by a monk in 1320, when 'e was searchin' for the philosopher's stone. It is known at Lloyd's as a deadly sporadic an—'

" 'Shut up,' sez Nobby; 'we don't want to know the geography an' 'istory of it, we want to know 'ow many pints of beer it takes to kill a chap.'

" 'Thirty-one gallons an' two pints, as said before,' sez Bertie, huffily; 'an' in future, Private Clark, I don't want you to send for me to settle canteen controversialities.'

" 'Wot's that last word?' sez Nobby, after Bertie had gone. 'Somethin' insultin', I'll lay.'

BERTIE'S ALMA MATER

"Me an' Nobby 'appened to be over at the coffee shop next night—it was the night before pay day, or we wouldn't 'ave been wastin' our time—when in comes Bertie.

" 'E's got an 'orrid languid way of lookin' round, an' it was a minute or two

before 'e spots me an' Nob.

" 'Ullo, Clark,' 'e sez, with a nod just the same as if 'e was an officer. 'Ullo, Smithy.'

" 'Ullo, face,' sez Nobby, who's always got a kind word for every one.

" 'I'm gettin' tired of this sort of life,' sez Bertie, in a weary voice. 'I've got too much wot the French call savoir faire.'

" 'See a doctor,' sez Nobby, 'or take plenty of exercise, like I do.'

" 'You misunderstand me, Clark,' sez Bertie, with a sad smile. 'But, there, 'ow should you know, my poor feller?'

" 'Bertie,' sez Nobby.

" 'What?' sez Bertie.

" 'Don't call me a "pore feller,'" sez Nobby, 'or I'll give you a dig in the eye.'

" 'Don't lose your temper, Clark,' sez Bertie, hasty. 'What I meant to say was, you can't be expected to comprehend 'ow it feels for a chap who's drove 'is own brougham to be ordered about by cads of officers, cads an' bounders that my alma mater wouldn't 'ave in 'er set.'

" 'Who's she?' sez. Nobby.

" 'My rich aunt,' sez Bertie.

" 'Livin' in the Marylebone Road?' sez Nobby.

" 'No,' sez Bertie, carelessly: 'Porchester Gate.'

" 'Ah,' sez Nobby, thoughtful, 'that's a work'ouse that must 'ave been built quite lately—'ow London grows, to be sure.'

"Bertie smiled an' shook 'is 'ead.

" 'Ah, Clark!' 'e sez with a pityin' look, 'there's a good old French sayin' that goes, "Ontry noo sivvoo play," which means, "Don't argue with a fool.'

" 'There's another good ole French proverb, sez Nobby, 'that sez, "Chuprao soor.'"

" 'What does that mean?' sez Bertie surprised, so Nobby told 'im.

THE BUN-WALLAH

"Bertie wasn't what you might call popular with the troops. For one thing 'e used long words that nobody even 'eard before, an' for the other, 'e was a bun-wallah of the worst kind."

(It is, I might say, one of the wilful fallacies of the Army that teetotallers live entirely on lemonade and buns.)

"We don't mind so much a chap bein' a teetotaller; every man to 'is taste, an'

I've known some very good chaps in that line, but Bertie used to carry 'is fads a bit too far.

"For instance, 'e got me an' Nobby one night down to an A.T.A. (Army Temperance Association) meetin', an' so worked on Nobby's feelin's, by promisin' to lend him 'arf a crown till pay day, that Nobby ups an' signs the pledge.

" 'I feel a diff'rent man already,' sez Nobby, after Bertie 'ad parted with the money, 'I do, indeed.'

" 'Ah,' sez Bertie, proudly, 'you'll feel better when you've 'ad a week of it. Don't let your boon companions lure you back to the old 'abit,' 'e sez.

" 'No fear,' sez Nobby, putting the 'arf-crown in 'is pocket.

" 'Not so much of the boon companions, Bertie,' I sez, knowin' what 'e was eayin' was a smack for me.

" 'When: they offer you the pot—refuse it like a man,' sez Bertie, working hisself up to a great state.

" 'I will,' sez Nobby.

" 'Look 'ere,' sez Bertie, excitedly, 'come up to the canteen now, an' put yourself to the test.'

" 'Right you are,' sez Nobby, quick; 'let's 'urry up before it's shut.'

"So we all went up to the canteen, an' the first thing that 'appened when we got inside was Dusty Miller offerin' Nobby 'arf a gallon can. _ "'Drink 'arty, Nobby,' sez Dusty.

"Nobby looks at the can, then looks at Bertie, an' Bertie was smilin' 'appily all over 'is face."

" 'No,' sez Nobby, chokin', 'no, Dusty, you mean well, but I'm on the tack—on the lemonade tack,' 'e sez. 'Good Nobby,' sez Bertie.

" 'Let me take one last look at the cursed stuff,' sez Nobby, takin' the pot in 'is 'and; 'one last sniff,' 'e sez, 'one last taste o' the poison,' 'e sez, an' before we knew what 'ad 'appened 'e'd 'arf emptied the can.

" 'It's no good, Bertie,' 'e sez sadly, 'the temptation is too strong, it's in me blood,' 'e sez. 'You can 'ave your 'arf-crown back on pay day.'"

"What chaps didn't like about Bertie most was the way 'e was always goin' on about 'is come-down in the world, 'ow e might have been livin' up in the West End, goin' to theatres every night of 'is life, an' drinkin' port wine with 'is meals, if 'e 'adn't been such a fool as to enlist.

"One night when 'e was' playin' billiards in the library Nobby got Bertie to settle a point whether an earl was an 'igher rank than a countess,

" 'A countess, of course,' sez Bertie.

" 'For why?' sez Nobby.

"Bertie gave a pityin' sort of laugh.

" 'A countess is a lady count, an' a count is next to a marquis,' 'e see.

" 'Ow do you know?' sez Nobby.

"Bertie gave a sort of a tired sigh, an' looked at the ceilin'.

" 'My dear Clark,' 'e sez, 'it ain't for me to boast of the people I met before I come down in the world, but I might say I've met certain parties—no names mentioned—that our officers ain't even on speakin' terms with.'

" 'In shops?' sez Nobby.

" 'No, in country 'ouses,' sez Bertie stiffly.

" 'Leave off pullin' Bertie's leg,' sez Spud Murphy, who always likes to get a rise out of Nobby. 'Anybody can see Bertie's mixed with 'igh-class people.'

"We was all silent for a bit, watchin' Dusty Miller, who was playin' Mouldy Turner a hundred up, tackle an' 'ard-lines cannon.

"We was very interested in it, epecially Bertie, who, couldn't take 'is eyes from the cloth.

"Dusty fluked 'is cannon an' missed the next shot, an' then Nobby got a sort of inspiration, an' calls out to. Bertie:

" 'Call the game, marker!'

" 'Seventy-six plays forty-two: spot to play, sir,' sez Bertie, absent- mindedly.

8. — NOBBY'S PART

"I DIDN'T see you at our piece," remarked Smithy.

"I mean," he explained, "the Grand Amateur Performance of The Soldier's Revenge, played by the Regimental Dramatic Club, on behalf of the new wing of the Anchester Lunatic Asylum." Smithy stopped to clear the stem of his pipe with a hairpin. I regarded him suspiciously—and the hairpin with inward misgivings.

"There was about two dozen of our chaps in the piece," he resumed, "and the band was goin' to play durin' the intervals. Some of 'em—our chaps, I mean, not the band—was goin' to be soldiers, some of 'em was servants, some of 'em was villagers, but half of 'em was 'rioters' in the last act. "'B' Company and 'F' tossed up to see who'd be rioters and 'B' won, so 'F' had to be policemen.

"Nobby Clark comes to me the day before the performance an' sez, 'Look here, Smithy, come an' act.' "'The goat?' I sez.

" 'No,' he sez, 'come an' be Mike Dolan, the Escaped Convict, in Act IV.,' he sez; 'Fatty can't get into the clothes,' he sez.

" 'No, thanks,' I sez. 'If you want Escaped Convicts, apply to "C" Company — there's lots of chaps there that would do it natural,' I sez.

" 'Don't you be gay,' sez Nobby, 'or else you'll strain your funny bone. I'm goin' to be a gentleman visitor in Act II.—one of the 'ouse party.' "'One of the gentlemen that washes up the plates?' I sez.

" 'Loud larfter,' sez Nobby, sarcastically. 'I'm goin' to be a good shepherd in the last act,' he sez, 'an' when the rioters are goin' to bash the police I say, "'Old! what would you do, rash men?" an' then I tell 'em to think about their wives an' children,' he sez. "It was pretty sickenin' them last two days in barracks before the performance. There was Jimmy Spender walkin' about holdin' his head an' mutterin'; 'My lord, my lord, the enemy is on us; fly for your life!' an' Smiler Williams walkin' up an' down the square after 'lights out' talkin' to hisself, 'Come, comrades, let us drink to the 'ealth of our noble commander,' till Smiler's company officer, Captain Darby, gave him seven days for creatin' a disturbance in barracks after lights out. Ugly Johnson broke his collar-bone when he was rehearsin' his rescue from a burnin' buildin'.

"A lot of chaps was supposed to catch him in a blanket as he jumped out of a winder, sayin', 'A British soldier fears nothin'; but the chaps who was holdin' the blanket larfed so much at Ugly's mug, that they hadn't the strength to catch him." Smithy laughed, too, at the recollection.

"Well, the night come, an', havin' bought two seats in the gallery, I goes round to the house where Nobby's girl lives an' asked her to come an' see the play.

" 'Nobby won't like my goin' out with you,' sez Nobby's girl.

" 'Don't worry about that,' I sez; 'he'd have sent you a ticket hisself, only he's so shy,' I sez. So she put on her things," said Smithy, vaguely, "and went." "We got two front seats where we could see everything, an' after the band gave a selection and the officers an' their ladies, an' the Bishop, an' the Mayor had come in, the curtain went up, an' there was Nobby strollin' about with a gun under his arm, pretendin' to be an actor. "Bimeby the old squire come in with his lovely daughter. 'Ah, Captain Beecher,' she sez to Nobby—she was a real actress, too—'why, it seems like old times to see you at "Silverton Grange."

" 'Bai Jove!' sez Nobby, twistin' his moustache like he'd seen his superiors do. 'Bai Jove,' he sez, an' then he forgot what to say. "'The pleasure is mutual,' sez a holler voice from behind the, scenes.

" 'The pleasure is beautiful,' sez poor Nobby, still twistin' his moustache.

"After a bit the old squire was murdered by Monty Warne, of 'H,' dressed up like a burglar, an' he did it well, too," commended Smithy, "stranglin' him so much that they had to send out for three-pennorth of brandy to bring him round.

"In the second act Nobby was supposed to be a visitor in evenin' dress.

" 'Don't he look fine?' sez Nobby's girl.

"Nobby didn't have much fo say in that act, except when young Fisher, who's got a baker's shop in the Highstreet, was falsely accused of murder, an' then Nobby seized his hand, an' said, 'I believe you to be an innocent man,' an' we all said, 'Hear, hear.' "It was really Smiler Willinms who ought've said that line, as Nobby was really supposed to be a villain, an' Smiler an' Nobby had words about it afterwards, till Nobby explained that young Fisher had promised him a job when he left the Army, an' he wanted to keep in with him.

"But the last scene was best," continued Smithy, "when the hungry rioters of 'B' come face to face with the policemen of 'F,' an' Nobby comes down to the footlights dressed up as a parson, and says, 'Hold!' "Just as he started to say his little piece one of the policemen, tryin' to be funny, hit him in the chest with a truncheon.

" 'Hold hard,' sez Nobby, forgettin' all about the piece; 'wot are you tryin' to do, Corky?'—speakin' to Corky Speddings, who hit him.

" 'Go on with the piece,' sez Corky, who was wild because had had nothin' to say in the play.

"Nobby took orf his parson's hat an' raised it an' said, 'Hold! What would you do, rash—' then another policeman threw a bit of bread at him. "Before anybody know what was happenin', Nobby dropped his hat an' landed the nearest policeman on the nose, an' then there was the most realistic riot that has ever been on a stage.

"Next mornin' Nobby asked me what I thought of his performance.

" 'Fine,' I sez.

" 'Do you think so?' he sez, very pleased, 'Don't you wish you could act, Smithy, an' take the part of a young lord or something?'

" 'I can act,' I sez. 'I was actin' last night—The Absent Soldier.' ""Talk sense,' sez Nobby, puzzled; 'you hadn't got a part.'

" 'Oh yes I had,' I sez.

" 'What part?' sez Nobby.

" 'Your part,' I sez.

"But Nobby didn't understand."

9. — THE CLAIRVOYANT

"DO you believe in ghosts?" asked Private Smithy.

"What kind of ghosts?" I asked cautiously.

"There's a chap in H Company," explained Smithy—"his name's Turner, Mouldy Turner, we call him, owin' to his havin' been a moulder by trade. You never saw such a chap in your lifo," said Smithy enthusiastically. "Give him a pack o' cards an' a table an' he'll tell you things about your past life wot you've never heard before.

"He charges tuppence a time, an' it's worth it. I had twopenn'orth myself the other day.

" 'Smithy,' he sez, dealin' out the cards all over the table, you're expectin' a letter from a dark man.'

" 'No, I ain't,' I sez.

" 'Well, you'll get it, he sez. 'It will bring good news.'

"An' sure enough," said Smithy, impassively, "that very afternoon Spud Murphy paid me two shillin's he borrered on the manoeuvres."

"But," I expostulated, "that wasn't a letter."

"It was better than a letter," said the satisfied Smithy.

"Well, old Mouldy counts the cards, seven to the left an' seven to the right.

" 'There's a fair woman wot loves you,' sez Mouldy.

" 'How fair?,' I sez, thinkin' of all the red-haired gals I know.

" 'Pretty fair,' sez Mouldy, 'you're goin' on a long journey acorse the sea.'

WHAT NOBBY SAW

" 'Battersea?' sez Nobby, who was lookin on.

" 'You shut up, Nobby,' I sez, 'go on, Mouldy.'

" 'Tho nine o' spades,' sez Mouldy, scowlin' like anything at Nobby, 'is a sign of death. You'll hear of a friend dyin'. Not much ot a friend, either, but a ignorant chap with big feet,' he sez.

" 'You leave my feet alone,' sez Nobby.

"All the chaps used to come to Mouldy, an' he was doin' well. I could see Nobby didn't like the way Mouldy was rakin' in the iron, an' one night, when me an' a few chaps was in the canteen torkin' about how teetotallers die when they get into a hot climate, Pug Williams came dashin' in, lookin' as white as a

ghost.

" 'Nobby Clark's took ill!' he sez, an' we rushes over to the barrack-room to find old Nobby sittin' on his bed with a horrible stare in his eye.

" 'Wot's up, Nobby?' I sez, and just then Mouldy Turner comes in.

" 'I see,' sez Nobby, in a moany sort of voice, 'I see a public house.'

" 'You'vo seen too many public houses,' sez Mouldy, hastily.

" 'The inside of a public house, sez Nobby.

" 'That's the part I mean,' sez Mouldy.

" 'I see a man with side whiskers an' a big watch-chain,' sez Nobby moanily; 'he's servin' be'ind the counter, an' there's a red-faced gel with yeller hair a-countin' money. Her name's Gertie,' sez Nobby, holding his forehead. "Old Mouldy's jaw dropped an' he went white.

" 'Where's my George? Where's my soldier boy?' moans Nobby, 'that's what she's a-sayin' of.'

"Mouldy's face got red.

" 'Boys,' sez Mouldy, in a scared voice, 'old Nobby's got second-sight; he's a seein' the pub I go to up in London an' my young lady.'

" 'Where's my brave soldier?' sez Nobby, groanin'; 'that's what she's a- sayin' of; where is my brave soldier wot rescued the colonel at Paardeberg?'

" 'He's a wnderin' now,' sez Mouldy, blushin'.

" 'Let's take him to the, hospital,' sez Pug Williams, but just at that minuto Nobby sort of woke up.

" 'Where am I?' he sez faintly.

"We told him what he'd been sayin', an' tried to persuade him to go to bed an' sleep it off.

"The next day the news got about that Nobby was second-sighted, an' when me and Nobby went to get our dinner pint all the chaps crowded round an' asked him to give a performance.

"It appeared from what Nobby told 'em that he'd always been second-sighted, an' when he was a kid he had to wear spectacles.

FORTUNES

" 'Can you tell fortunes, Nobby?' sez Oatsey.

" 'I can with hands, sez Nobby, lookin' at Mouldy; 'not with cards. Cards,' he sez, 'is swindlin'.'

"Can you tell mine, Nobby?' sez Pug Williams, holdin' out hid hand.

" 'Certainly,' sez Nobby, who'd known Pug all his life, an' went to school with him.

" 'You was born under an unlucky star,' sez Nobby, lookin' at the hand.

" 'That's quite right,' sez Pug, quite proud.

" 'At School you was always gettin' into trouble,' sez Nobby, who happened to know that Pug did six months at a truant school.

" 'That's right!' sez Pug, highly delighted.

" 'You've had a lot a trouble through a dark man,' sez Nobby, knowin' that Pug got forty-two days for knockin' a nigger about, when the reg'ment was in India.

" 'Marvellous!' sez Pug.

"From that day Nobby made money. Chaps used to come from every company to get their fortune told. Mouldy an' his cards did no bus'ness at all.

"Nobby charged thruppence a hand, cash on the nail; fourpence if he 'ad to wait till pay day.

"For sixpence Nobby used to have a fit an' see things. Sometimes two chaps would club together, an' then Nobby would have two fits for ninepence.

"One day up comes Ugly Johnson, of 'D.'

" 'I want you to tell my fortune, Nobby,' he sez.

" 'Cross me hand with silver, pretty lady,' sez Nobby.

" 'Don't snack a chap about his face,' sez Ugly, very fierce.

" 'No offence, Ugly,' sez Nobby.

" 'And I ain't go'in' to cioss your bloomin' hand with silver,' sez Ugly, 'cos I've only got three'apence.'

" 'That'll do, sez Nobby, who never let a customer go.

" 'You've got a long life in front of you,' sez Nobby, lookin' at the hands.

" 'Ah,' sez Ugly.

" 'You've 'ad a stormy career in the past,' sez Nobby, 'but all will come right!'

" 'Ah,' sez Ugly.

" 'You've been crosed in love,' sez Nobby.

" 'That's a lie,' sez Ugly.

" 'So it is,' sez Nobby, lookin' close at Ugly's paw, 'wot I thought was the crosed-in-love line is only dirt. You've got a sensitive 'art, you think everybody's passin' remarks about your face,' sez Nobby.

SPIRITS

" 'Never mind about my face,' snarls Ugly.

" 'I don't mind it,' sez Nobby, 'even if other people do,' he sez.

"Well, old Ugly got mad an' went round puttin' it about that Nobby couldn't tell fortunes for nuts, and Mouldy sez that Nobby was tellin' a lot of lies an' makin' fun of the chaps, an' business began to fall orf.

"One afternoon Nobby sez to me, 'Smithy, trade's bad.'

" 'Is it?' I sez.

" 'Yes,' he sez, 'it's about time I had another fit.'

" 'Have it now,' I sez, 'don't mind me.'

"That night, when we was all cleanin' up for commondin' officer's parade, an' the barrack-room was full, Nobby suddenly stood up, moanin' like anything.

" 'I see!' he sez starin' about him, 'a man with a ugly mug. 'E's a- standing' on the blink—I mean brink of destruction.'

"We all walks over an' looks at Nobby. He was a ghastly sight, rollin' his eyes an' moanin'.

" 'I see a chap,' sez Nobby, twistin' about as if he'd swollered a corkscrew, 'wot pretends to tell fortunes by cards. 'E's standin' on the brink of destruction too.'

" 'Wake up, Nobby,' I sez, soothin' him; 'it's all right.'

" 'I see,' began Nobby again, an' just at that minute in walks the colour-sergeant.

"He looks at Nobby rollin' an' squirmin' about, an' then sez to me:

" 'Are you the oldest soldier here, Smith?'

" 'Yes, colour-sergeant,' I sez.

" 'Well,' sez the colour bloke, 'take a couple of men an' put Private Clark in the guardroom.'

" 'Wot for?' sez Nobby, wakin' up sudden from his trance.

" 'Drunk,' sez the colour-sargeant.

" 'I ain't drunk,' roars Nobby, very indignant.

" 'Pretendin' to be drunk, then,' sez the colour-sergeant; 'that's worse.'

" 'I'm seein' spirits,' sez Nobby.

" 'You've, been drinkin' 'em,' sez the colour bloke, an' Nobby was so wild that it took six of us to get him to the guairdroom.

"You might say seven," added Smithy, "for Old Mouldy did the work of two

men."

10. — BOOTS

Young and growing soldiers are prone to wear boots that are too small and too narrow mainly because of their smart appearance. —Army Council Memorandum to Officers.

"I SHOULDN'T like to be on the Army Council," said Smithy, with all seriousness.

I looked at my young military friend with feigned surprise.

"No, I ain't coddin'," he said earnestly. "I s'pose it's a good job; but never 'avin' been an officer, I can't say what it's like. But stands to reason it's a wearin' sort of life.

"Suppose the Army Council's meetin' to-day, the orderly on duty lights a fire, gets out new pens and blottin' paper, an' Army Form B47, just the same as if it was a court-martial—and," said Smithy, as a brilliant idea came to him— "it is a court-martial, and the Army's the prisoner.

"Well, in comes the Court, all in civilian clothes, Lyttelton in a soft felt 'at, an' Plumer in a red necktie, and Douglas got up to the nines.

" 'Wot's on to-day?' sez Lyttelton.

"Reformin' the Army,' sez all the others together.

" 'Rot,' sez Lyttelton. 'I don't believe the Army wants reformin'—except reformin' back to the place it was when civilians started holdin' post-mortems on it.'

" 'Ear, 'ear,' sez all the Army Council, except Lord Don't-Know-Who, who looked embarrassed, 'e bein' a civilian.

"Wot about tight boots?' sez Some One after a long pause, durin' which the Financial Secretary was doin' sums on the blottin' paper an' crossin' 'em out when 'e found they was wrong.

" 'Ah,' sez Some One Else, 'wot about tight boots?' So they all sits round givin' their opinions why soldiers should be Ugly and Comfortable.

"Well, after a bit they make up an order:—

"No lady-killin' boots allowed. Soldiers in possession of boots weighin' eight ounces will immediately exchange them for boots of the Regulation (or Policeman) Pattern, weighin' four pound. 'Fiat experimentum in corpore vili,' or 'If necessary make the experiment on a villainous corporal.'

"Yours truly,

"THE ARMY COUNCIL."

"Then they all get up an' stretch their legs.

" 'What's on to-morrer?' sez one.

" 'Army Reform,' sez the President; 'an' let's see you all 'ere at nine, sharp.'

"Then they all go home to their little flats, an' read the newspapers, an' wish they was Japanese sittin' tight in front of Kuropatkin instead of bein' soldiers tryin' to reform the Army so as to suit civilians' ideas.

"Sometimes it's boots, sometimes it's swearin', sometimes it's 'air—an' the 'smart, soldier-like appearance' order: this new order about boots, though, rather takes it."

Smithy's "It" is fairly obvious.

"They was talkin' about it in the canteen yesterday, when me an' Nobby went over to get our dinner beer.

"Wilkie—that red-lookin' chap with the shavin'-brush moustache—was puttin' it about that the order was only meant for 'B' Company.

" 'Don't none of you chaps get worried about it,' sez Wilkie, who's an 'H' chap. 'This 'ere order's only meant for chaps with big feet tryin' to pretend they're Cinderellas.'

" 'Meanin' me, Wilkie?' sez Nobby.

" 'No names, no pack drill,' sez Wilkie.

" 'Meanin' me, you red-'aired Bloomsbury scavenger?' sez Nobby.

" 'If the cap—meanin' to say the boot—fits you, Private Clark, lace it up,' sez Wilkie; 'an', what's more.' 'e sez, 'don't forget the last Army order about swearin' an' losin' your temper.'

"Next day," continued Smithy, "was commandin' officers' parade, an' when the company officers walked round the ranks there was trouble.

." 'Where's your boots?' sez the captain to young Skipper Mainland.

" 'Under my trousers,' sez Skipper.

" 'Too small,' sez the officer; 'put this man down for a new pair, colour-sergeant.'

" 'What's these, Clark?' sez the officer.

" 'My feet, sir,' sez Nobby, gettin' red in the face.

"Beg pardon,' sez the officer, I thought they was a pontoon section,' 'e sez and we all laughed.

"I tell you," said Smithy enthusiastically, "our officer's a comic chap.

"That night you couldn't get into the 'Igh Street for feet. All the chaps was wearin' their biggest boots, an' one chap standin' on the kerb got 'is toes run over by a tramcar the other side of the street—in a manner of speaking," corrected Smithy hastily.

" 'Oo should we meet when me an' Nobby was strollin' down Church Lane but Wilkie. Nice toonic, smart tight trousers with officers' stripes in 'em, saucy little boots, an' a cane with a silver knob on the end of it—that's Wilkie.

" 'Hullo, Wilkie,' sez Nobby, 'wot Christmas-tree did you blow orf of?'

"Wilkie looked a bit pleased with hissself, an' was goin' to say somethin', when up comes the Provost Sergeant with 'is badge on 'is sleeve.

" 'Evenin', Sergeant,' sez Wilkie very pleasant.

"But the Provost Sergeant didn't say nothin', only looked at Wilkie's feet

" 'Nice weather for this time of the year,' sez Wilkie. 'It is indeed,' e sez.

"But Provost Sergeant only stared at Wilkie's feet.

"So Wilkie got red in the face.

" 'Beg pardon, sergeant,' e sez; 'nothing wrong, I 'ope?'

"The Provost just kept on lookin'. Then 'e said, speakin' slowly, like a chap recitin':

" 'The proper fittin' of boots on which the marchin' of an army depends is a matter of the first importance,' 'e sez.

"Wilkie looks at 'im; so did me an' Nobby.

" 'I don't do no marchin' in these boots,' sez Wilkie, an' my boots an' Nobby's sort of shuffled into the gutter out of sight.

" 'Young soldiers,' sez the Provost Sergeant, takin' no notice of what Wilkie said, are prone—'

" 'Are what?' sez Wilkie.

" 'Are prone to take a boot too short—in fact,' sez the Provost Sergeant, 'where did you get them ridiculous lady's shoes from, Mr. Bloomin' Wilkie? '

" 'I got 'em,' sez Wilkie, from—.

" 'No man who wasn't a lunatic would wear such fal-lal; they was meant for women, not soldiers.'

" 'I got 'em—' sez Wilkie.

" 'Makin' yourself a laughin'-stock,' sez the Provost, gettin' wild, 'wearin' boots that nobody but a fat-headed, dandified, ijiotic recruit would think of

disgracin' 'is foot by puttin' inside.'

" 'I got 'em off the Colonel's groom,' sez Wilkie, short.

" 'Where'd 'e get 'em?' sez the Provost.

" 'They're a pair of the Colonel's old 'uns,' sez Wilkie, what 'e got rid of—they was too big,' e sez."

11. — JU-JITSU

POLITICS form no part of the barrack-room debating society. Mr. Atkins lives in a world of his own, and is not interested in the subjects that agitate his civilian brother.

He is interested in personalities, certainly, and Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Rosebery are very real persons to him; but talk about the respective merits of Free Trade and Protection and he will yawn. Very high politics, politics that make for war; parliamentary proceedings that have direct bearing upon pay, promotion, and uniform, are of the first importance; and does an hon. member ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the refusal of the proprietor of the "Green Man" to supply two soldiers in uniform with liquid refreshment, that hon. member may be certain that he will achieve a popularity out of all proportion to the service he has rendered the Army.

High politics include, of course, the Russo-Japanese War. As to the cause of that unhappy conflict no opinion is offered, since that is a matter which does not greatly concern the soldier; but the conduct of the campaign has won unstinted admiration for the plucky little Easterners.

I learnt this much from Smithy (we were watching an Army Cup match), and I learnt also that the popularity of a foreign Power may easily be exploited with profit.

"We 'ad a long talk about it the other night down in our room. Dusty Miller—him with the crooked nose—said that the Japs was winnin' because they'd got a better rifle than the Russians. Jimmy Walters said it was because the officers was more friendly with the men than what ours was.

" 'All you chaps are talkin' through your 'eads,' sez Nobby; 'it ain't rifles, it ain't guns, and it ain't officers.'

" 'You know a fat lot,' Spud Murphy stuck in, 'If it ain't none of them, what is it?'

" 'Jue Jitsoo,' sez Nobby, with a cough.

" 'Who's she, Nobby?' I sez, an' all the other chaps said the same.

"Jue Jitsoo,' sez Nobby slowly, 'is a sort of thing that you hit a chap without touchin' him, in a manner of speakin'.'

" 'Talk sense, Nobby,' sez Spud, 'an',' he sez, 'don't try to talk about things you don't know nothin' about.'

" 'I'll show you what I mean,' sez Nobby, gettin' up from 'is cot. 'I read about it in a book I bought—come 'ere, Dusty.'

" 'What for?' sez Dusty, shrinkin' back.

" 'I want to show you 'ow it's done,' sez Nobby, takin' orf 'is coat an' rolling up 'is sleeves.

" 'Show Smithy,' sez Dusty.

" 'Show Spud,' I sez, very hasty.

"Spud didn't like the idea, but Nobby said it was all right.

" 'If you 'urt me,' sez Spud, threatenin', 'it's me an' you for it, Nobby.'

" 'Don't cry,' sez Nobby, takin' 'old of Spud's arm an' then started to explain.

" 'Suppose you're a thief,' e sez.

" 'No snacks,' sez Spud.

" 'Suppose you come up to me on pay-night an' try to pick my pocket.'

" 'You ain't ever got anything on a pay-night,' sez Spud, with a larf.

" 'Well,' went on Nobby, not takin' any notice of Spud, 'I just ketch 'old of you like this—an' that—an' there you are.'

"An' before Spud knew what was happenin' there he was, on the floor—whack!

" 'Don't you do that again,' sez Spud, gettin' up.

" 'Now,' sez Nobby, gettin' Spud by the throat, 'suppose you're a dangerous criminal an' I'm a policeman—'

" 'Leggo,' sez Spud, strugglin'.

" 'I just push you in the face, kick your leg, butt you with my 'ead—and there you are!' An' down went Spud on 'is back—bang!

" 'Look 'ere,' sez Spud—he never could take a joke—'look 'ere,' he sez, 'don't you try your funny tricks on me, Nobby, or—'

" 'What's the good of gettin' out of temper,' sez Nobby, an' we all said the same, so did a lot of chaps who'd come up from the room downstairs when they 'eard Spud fall. So we told him it was for the good of the reg'ment, an' we was all learnin' Ju-What's-its-name, an' we said no one else was strong enough to be, experimented on, an' so we calmed him down, an' he said he'd go on

bein' an experiment.

" 'Suppose I'm a robber,' sez Nobby, 'an' try to pinch your watch. Now what you've got to do is to catch 'old of my throat an' 'arf strangle me.'

" 'I can do that,' sez Spud, brightenin' up.

" 'An' what I've got to do is to prevent you,' sez Nobby. 'Now here I come, pretendin' to lift your watch.'

"It was as good as a pantomime to watch Spud waitin' to land one on Nobby when 'e got close enough; but somehow when Spud jumped forward to choke Nobby, Nobby wasn't there, an' down went Spud all in a 'eap.

" 'E got up, feelin' 'is legs to see if they was broke, an' Shiner Williams, who happened only to arrive at that minute, asked Nobby to do it again, because he wasn't lookin' at the time.

" 'That's what you call Ju-jitsoo, is it?' sez Spud.

" 'Yes,' sez Nobby, puttin' on 'is coat, 'that's why the Japs always win, an' the Russians always lose.'

" 'That's Ju-jitsoo, is it!' sez Spud, takin' orf 'is coat.

" 'That's it, Spud,' sez Nobby. 'I 'ope it'll be a lesson to you—I don't charge you anything for learnin' you—but I'm willin' to give lessons at fourpence a time to any young military gentleman present. Who'll 'ave four-penn'oth?'

" 'That's Ju-jitsoo, is it ' sez Spud, in a sort of dream; an' that 'e makes a rush, an' knocks poor old Nobby over an' sits on him.

" 'What's the Ju-jitsoo for this, Nobby?' sez Spud, givin' him a punch.

" 'Lemme get up,' sez Nobby.

" 'Suppose you're a big-footed liar of a soldier what gets flattened out an' sat on for bein' too comic—what do you do next?' sez Spud, givin' Nobby a smack on the 'ead.

" 'I haven't read that part yet,' gasps Nobby 'Let me get up an' 'ave a dekko at the book.'

" 'Let 'im get up, Spud,' I sez.

" 'Hullo, Smithy,' sez Spud, 'what are you stickin' your ugly nose in for?'

" 'Never mind my nose,' I sez ; 'let Nobby get up, or I'll give you a wipe in the eye,' I sez.

" 'I see,' sez Spud. 'Ju-jitsoo means always havin' a fat-'eaded pal handy to take your part,' he sez"

12. — THE NEW OFFICER

"THE officer," said Private Smithy, of the 1st Anchesters, "is a new officer. It isn't the new kind of uniform, or the new Salvation Army cap, or the new silly way of wearing his shoulder sash. He's a changed officer, if you understand. He don't look no different, and in many ways he's not altered a bit. He still plays polo an' bridge—what's bridge?"

I explained.

"Well, he still does all these things just about as much as ever he did, but I tell you 'e's an astounding blighter in many ways."

"It ain't so long ago," reflected this monunment of the First Army Corps, "when officers used to come on parade at 10 a.m.—commanding officers' parade drill order—and we used to look at 'em hard to discover whether we'd seen 'em before. They used to troop down from the officers' mess buttoning up their brown gloves and hooking on their swords under their patrol jackets. They'd stand about for a minute or two yawnin' their blankey 'eads orf an' then the bugled sound 'Officers come and be blowed,' an' they'd fall in.

"Well, the colour-sergeant was always waitin' for 'em.

" 'What's on this mornin',' says me fine captain.

" 'Battalion drill, sir,' says the flag.

" 'Oh, dash battalion drill,' sez the captain, walkin' round an' inspectin' the company. Take this man's name, colour-sergeant, for wearing his pouoh on the right side.'

" 'Beg pardon, sir,' sez the flag, 'they're wore on the right side.'

" 'So they are,' sez the intelligent captain, givin' a casual glance along the line. 'Well, take his name for 'aving a dirty belt.'

" 'Right, sir,' sez the colour-sergeant.

DRILL—OLD STYLE

"When the inspection was over the officer would draw his sword and read the writin' on it, and draw noughts and crosses with it on the ground; then fall in six paces ahead of the centre of his company. Bimeby he'd see something 'appening to the company ahead of his.

"What's gain' on there, "colour-sergeant'?' he'd ask.

" 'Formin' fours, sir, sez the colour-sergeant.

" 'Oh, I forgot all about, that, sez his nibs. 'Company! Form fours!' an' not a man moves

" 'You 'aven't numbered 'em, sir,' sez the colour-sergeant.

" 'Hey?' sez the captain, gettin' red. 'Then why the dickens ain't they numbered when they fall in? Number off from the right, an' be quick about it.'

"Then comes the battalion drill," continued Smithy, with a sad, reminiscent smile. "The colonel shouts something.

" 'Wbat's that he saad, colour-sergeant,' sez the officer.

" 'Into line, right form, sir,' sez the flag.

" 'What do I do?' sez the captain.

" 'Turn half-right, sir, and wait for the word "march,'" whispers the flag.

"And right through the drill it was the same. Sometimes the captain was right, sometimes he was wrong. Sometimes he had the whole company jumbled up in horrid confusion, and the colonel would come prancing atong and say things he was probably sorry for afterwards.

"Well, an hour of this sort of thing went on, and then it was 'Right turn—Dismiss,' and the officer would run away and change his sword an' uniform for a Sunday suit an' a panamar hat, and we didn't see him again till to-morrow."

CONVERTED OFFICERS

Smithy raised himself on his elbow and addressed the orderly man staggering tentward with a big kettle of steaming tea.

Would the orderly man be so kind as to give Smithy a basin of tea and save him the trouble of coming to the tent for it. Without checking his career, the orderly man remarked, "Oh, yes, why not, not 'arf. Would Smithy like him (the orderly man) to drink it for him (Smithy)? Did he want waiting on? Should he fetch it in a feeding bottle?" and sundry other ejaculations of a bitterly satirical character.

Whereupon Smithy, realising that the enemy was rapidly getting out of range, delivered a rapid feu de joie of personalities, calculated to annoy and distress a young and ambitious orderly man.

" 'Pon my word," said Smithy gloomily, "these blanked Brodericks are gettin' worse an' worse; the men 'ave changed as much as the officers."

"How have the officers changed?" I asked.

"I was going to tell you,' said Smithy. "As I said before, it's only' an inward change. You know soldiers, don't you?"

"I do."

"Well, you've seen Tommy get converted—get religion, haven't you? He drops the wet canteen, and spends his time in the library playin' bagatelle with other bun-wallahs. The cloth is always torn, and the cues 'ave no tips," added Smithy inconsequently. "He goes to chapel on week nights and shows up the

regiment by prayin' in public; joins the Templars with fancy grips and passwords and sashes. Well, beyond giving up booze and saying 'confound' instead of '——' or '——' or '——', there ain't much difference, outwardly at least. He still parts his hair; he still mashes the girls; he still does all things 'uman—except swear and drink.

"So it is with the officer—'e's changed inwardly. He plays polo and golf—which is a, rotten game in my opinion—and motors.

"But somehow we seem to see more of him than we used. He comes nosing around at all hours of the day. He does colour-sergeants' work and corporal's work—in fact, he knows as much about soldiering now as we do. He doesn't make mistakes on parade; he turns up at the rifle range even when it ain't his turn for duty; he'll take a dozen chaps out into the country and teach them how to sketch; he spends a lot of his spare time learning flag-wagging—in fact, in fact," said Smith, struggling for a climax, "he's a more astoundin' person than ever."

TACTICS UP TO DATE

Smithy refilled and relit his pipe and ruminated for some moments.

"Yesterday," said he, "the little man French had us out attackin' or defendin'—I don't know which—a bit of a village, over there.' Smithy pointed vaguely. "I was with a half company under Mr. Brick-Taylor—he gets his company next month. We've got a new colour-sergeant from the second battalion who's been used to giving officers tips all his life.

"We were scoutin' ahead, and we sighted the enemy outside a pub near Frinham. We could see them, they couldn't see us.

" 'Git into that donga,' sez the officer, pointin' to a big, deep ditch.

" 'Beg pardon, sir,' says the flag, 'I think you ought to extend the men and retire, sir.'

" 'Oh, you do, do you?' sez the orficer, 'well, I don't; get into the donga as quick as you can.'

" 'Beg pardon, sir,' sez the flag, 'but the book sez—'

" 'What book?' sez the orficer.

" 'Drill book, sir,' sez the colour-bloke.

" 'Never read it,' sez the little man as calm as you please.

" 'I'm takin' cover and hidin', because I once got plugged in the neck by a Mauser bullet for not doin' so. I am not retiring in open order accordin' to the book because I tried something like it at Magersfontein and appeared in all the London papers the next mornin' as 'dangerously.'

A bugle call rang out sharp and clear, a dozen tents disgorged one or two men, who buttoned their coats as they hurried to the guard tent.

"Defaulters," said Smithy, shifting his position to one of greater comfort; "all young soldiers, an' punishment's good for 'em—it's surprisin' how a few kicks help a man in the Army."

13. — THE AGITATOR

"HEARD about our secret society?" asked Smithy.

I assured him that I had not heard the faintest whisper of anything so alarming. Smithy laughed, as though he had suddenly remembered something amusing.

"Chap named Oats—Shaker Oats we call him—got nine months' service, an' to hear him talk you'd a-thought he was born in Buckin'ham Palace, the side he put on.

"He blew into the Army when no one was lookin', and he was so surprised to find hisself in airproof clothes an' boots that didn't let in the showery weather that he began to swell; and when he'd got used to not feelin' hungry he began to let on about the way the pore soldier was treated, an' how civilians thought soldiers was dogs, an' how we was defendin' the Empire for a shillin' to day whilst bits of putty-faced boys earnin' a pound a week was walkin' out our girls.

"One day Nobby comes to me an' sez, 'Where's Oatsey?'

" 'Defendin' the Empire,' I sez, 'by learnin' which end of the rifle the bang comes from!'—for Oatsey about that time was doin' his recruit's course of musketry.

" 'Heard about the secret society?' sez Nobby.

" 'Good Templars?' I sez.

" 'No, Oatsey's,' sez Nobby.

"It appears that Oatsey got a lot of chaps together in the wet canteen an' told 'em he was goin' to form to secret society called 'The Pore Soldiers' Anti-Slavery League.' The chaps wouldn't listen to him at first, but he paid for a pint all round an' told 'em all about it.

"The news that Oatsey was havin' a meetin' an' standin' free beer got out, an' Nobby Clark was nearly trampled to death tryin' to get into the canteen to second old Oatsey's motion.

"Well, they got a lot of rules out, an' a new kind of grip invented by Nobby, an'

a password, an' a sign, so that everybody should know a brother.'

"It didn't want no password or sign, or grip either.

"You couldn't miss the brothers. They used to sit round Oatsey, sayin' 'Hear, hear,' while Oatsey was payin' for the beer, an' when Oatsey had spent all his money, one of the brothers would rise an' move that the meetin' should adjourn till next pay-day.

" 'Our motter is,' Oatsey would say, 'a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, an' one man's as good as another'; an' the general idea was that the secret society should be a trade union of soldiers.

"There was lots of special ideas, but most of 'em wasn't worth mentionin'.

"One was that every brother should pay for his own beer. Oatsey put that in hisself, an' it nearly broke up the society.

"Me and Nobby didn't go to any of the meetin's after that rule was made. Oatsey said that all the Army would join if we once got it fairly started.

"S'pose we was at war.

"The 1st Anchesters (the Anchester branch of the Pore Soldiers' Anti-Slavery League, as it'd be then) would be waitin' to attack.

"Up gallops one of the glitterin' staff.

" 'Take your battalion forward, Colonel Gollingham,' he sez.

" 'Very good, sir,' sez the Colonel, an' orders the bugler to sound the advance.

"Not a chap moves.

" 'What the somethin' bad does this mean?' yells the Colonel. 'Advance! you unmentionable horrors!'

"Then Oatsey steps out of the ranks—him bein' the perpetual President of the League—with all his sashes an' decorations on.

" 'Beg pardon, sir,' he sez, 'we can't go on. A fair day's work for a fair day's pay,' he sez, 'is a motter we all adore, an' we've done our eight hours already.'

" 'But,' sez the Colonel, 'think of the regiment—think of yourselves—think of the country.'

" 'There ain't no joy in workin' unless you're workin' for yourself,' Oatsey sez gloomily; 'the country can look after itself, an' as to the trade—I mean the reg'ment—we only do what we do because we're paid for it.'

"By this time the Colonel's half orf his head.

" 'But the enemy—you blitherin' flat-footed ass—they'll defeat us—they'll—'

" 'We're indifferent to the enemy,' sez Oatsey proudly, 'an' the sooner they know it the better.'

"Or p'raps," Smithy went on, letting his fancy run free, "p'raps we're advancin' in workin' hours, an' suddenly Oatsey shouts out, 'Halt!'"

"Along comes the Colonel, sayin' 'Rotterdam' as fast as he can.

" 'What's the meanin' of this?' he sez.

" 'Very sorry,' sez Oatsey, as cool as you please, 'but we can't charge alongside of the North Wessex Regiment.'

" 'Why?' sez the Colonel, among other things.

" 'Because,' sez Oatsey, 'the North Wessex is a non-union regiment,' he sez, an' wot's more, the Colonel of the Wessex has got shares in a tied-house brewery, wot's a monopoly.'

" 'Think of the honour of the country,' sez the pore old Colonel.

" 'I can't,' sez Oatsey, as bold as brass, 'an' wot's more, I can't let the members—I mean the men— think either; it would overstrain their physical capacity,' sez Oatsey.

"So we get defeated again," said Smithy, with some relish. "Sometimes the Army would stand out for extra overtime, just when the enemy was gettin' guns into position; sometimes we'd want to knock off on Saturdays at two o'clock. Sometimes, at the minute the enemy was goin' to strike, we'd strike too.

"That was Oatsey's idea.

"He said one man was as good as another, an' every man that worked for hisself was workin' for the country, an' it didn't much matter about the country, anyway.

"One night I met Nobby Clark down town.

" 'Smithy,' he sez ' do you want to join another secret society?"

" ' Who's payin' for the beer this time?' I sez.

" 'Nobody,' sez Nobby, larfin'.

" 'Wot's it called?' I sez.

" 'The Society for Givin' Old Oatsey a Barrack-Room Court-Martial,' sez Nobby.

" 'Put me down as a honor'y member,' I sez quick.

"That night when Oatsey was defendin' the Empire by sleepin' in his cot, me an' Nobby an' Bill Tasker an' Pug Williams an' a few more chaps pulled him out of bed by the leg.

" 'Wot's up?' sez Oatsey, nubb'n his eyes.

" 'The Empire's in danger,' sez Nobby.

" 'No larks!' sez Oatsey, tryin' to get up.

"So we sat him on a form an' read the funeral service out of his own Prayer Book. Then Nobby, bein' the President of the Court, sez:—

" 'Private Oatsey, you are charged, accordin' to King's Regulations an' the manual of Military Law, with conspirin' with others not yet in custody—'

" 'You drunk my beer, anyway,' sez Oatsey.

" 'Don't make your crime worse, young feller.' sez Nobby—' With mutiny an' other crimes too numerous to mention. With tryin' to form a silly fool of a league an' cetrer, an' cetrer.'

"So they sentenced him," said Smithy cheerfully.

"To what?" I asked.

"To punishment," answered Smithy evasively.

"Anyway, that broke up our secret society, for old Oatsey paraded at the orderly-room the next mornin' an' asked to be transferred to another reg'ment. He said the Anchesters was so noisy they made his head ache."

14. — MISSING WORDS

MANY years ago a popular periodical offered a pound a week for life as a prize for the solution of a problem.

It is one of the glorious traditions of the British Army that this prize went to a soldier.

Since when, as Smithy pointed out, newspaper competitions have enjoyed considerable popularity in the junior service.

I am inclined to agree with my military friend that sufficient attention has not been paid to the soldier in the matter of competitions, and although, as I am willing to admit, there were points about Private Clark's venture which border perilously close upon the illegal, not to say criminal, I share Smithy's admiration for the genius of the inventor.

"A chap named Macpherson—the chap that said 'e was as good as the Colonel if 'e'd bin born in diff'rent circumstances—won a prize from the Anchester Guardian," said Smithy. "We all went in for it, me an' Nobby Clark, Spud Murphy, 'Appy Johnson, Dusty Miller—oh, an' a lot of us.

"The competition was to fill in a word at the end of a line. It went some'ow like this:—

" 'The British soldier is renowned all the world over for his pluck. On the

march nothin' is so remarkable as his tremendous—'

"You 'ad to fill in a bit of paper with the last word that wasn't there, and send it in.

"I put 'weariness,' Spud put 'grousin,' Dusty Miller put 'stiffness,' 'Appy Johnson got a word out of the dictionary, 'acumen,' another chap in 'H' put 'thirst,' an' Nobby sent two papers—they cost a penny each too—one with 'feet,' an' the other with 'corns.'

"It appears that old Mac sent in 'endurance,' an' got the prize, an' Nobby was very wild, an' said it wasn't fair to use words that wasn't in the dictionary.

" 'E got more friendly towards night, though, an' when old Mac come into the canteen for 'is supper beer, Nobby walks up to 'im an' shakes 'ands.

" 'Good luck to you, Mac,' sez Nobby, 'I'm very glad it's you that's got it,' 'e sez; if it'd been anybody else they wouldn't 'ave offered to share all round, share an' share alike.'

" 'No more don't I,' sez Mac, short an' sweet.

" 'Don't say that, Mac,' sez Nobby, very hurt; don't say that, an' you a Socialist, too.'

" 'I ain't a Socialist when I've got any money,' sez Mac 'it's only poverty that makes men Socialists.'

" 'Ain't you goin' to share, you long-'aired Anarchist?' sez Nobby.

" 'No,' sez Mac, 'I ain't.'

"Old Nobby thought a bit. 'Well, don't, 'e sez, an' something else.

" 'Go there yourself,' sez Mac.

"Next mornin' after the eleven o'clock parade Nobby comes to me an' sez:—

" 'Comin' in my competition, Smithy?'

" 'Wot competition?' I sez.

" 'A new one I've got up for the troops,' 'e sez, an', sure enough, 'e wasn't jokin', for it was all over barracks that Nobby was offerin' two quid to anybody who answered a question what he writ on a bit of paper in the canteen.

"This was the competition. Nobby put down this on a paper.

" 'NOTICE

" 'I have writ down two words, an' the first chap who comes up to me and gives me sixpence an' says them will have two pounds.'

"Of course, nobody believed old Nobby, but 'e showed 'em the two sovereigns an' the paper with the words on, all sealed up with sealin'-wax, an' by and by Weary Walker, of 'G,' sez, 'Well, I'll 'ave sixpennorth. 'Ere's your tanner,

Nobby—is it "Good mornin'?" ' "

" 'No,' sez Nobby, prompt.

"So then Tiny White spent sixpence, an' said: 'Wot, Nobby!' But Nobby shook 'is 'ead an' bought a pint of beer with the money.

"Chaps come from every company to try then luck. Some said, 'Nice day'; some said, 'How's things?' some said 'Buck up,' but Nobby only shook 'is 'ead an' took the money.

"Our corporal got fed up with people always rushin' into our barrack-room just as we were going to 'ave dinner.

" 'I've got it, Nobby,' they'd say, tremblin' with excitement.

" 'Give us your money first,' sez Nobby; an' they'd part like birds.

" 'It's "Shoulder arms" ' they'd say, or 'Mark time,' or 'Form fours,' an' 'old out their mits for the two pounds.

" 'Wrong,' sez Nobby sadly, an' they'd go away quite disappointed.

"One day our corporal, Pidgin' Partridge, the chap with the funny face, said, 'Look here, Clark, if any more of them corner boys of 'H' come running in at dinner-time, I'll say two words. "Guard room," they'll be, an' don't you forget it.'

"Well, it got about somehow that the two words Nobby put down was what you'd call a chap who dropped a rifle on your toe, or breathed on your buttons, or put an oil rag on your white belt, an' for three days the troops used to come up to Nobby, pay 'im sixpence, an' swear at him.

"One night when Nobby was out in town, old Tom Coke of 'G ' comes runnin' into my barrack-room.

" 'Where's Nobby?' 'e sez.

" 'Down town,' I sez.

" 'I've thought of the two words,' 'e sez, all in a twitter. 'Where can I find 'im?'

" 'Down at the theatre seein' The Gallant Soldier Lad.'

" 'In the gallery or in the pit?' 'e sez.

" 'In the private boxes, fat'ed,' I sez, and 'e runs out.

"It appears Nobby was sittin' in the front row of the gallery, when old Cokey came in and spotted 'im.

"The villain was smokin' a cigarette an' tellin' the 'ero that 'e was only a common soldier, an' all the girls in the audience was snivellin', and al the chaps was blowin' their noses, when Cokey shouts:

" 'Nobby!'

"Nobby looks round, an' so did the audience.

" 'Catch this tanner, Nobby,' an' Cokey threw a sixpence.

"Nobby 'adn't got the face to catch it, so it fell on the 'ead of a young militia officer in the stalls.

" 'Turn 'im out!' shouts everybody, an' the villain on the stage lit another cigarette.

" 'It's blank, blank!' shouts Cokey, strugglin' with a chucker-out.

"Well, the end of it was that old Cokey got seven days for usin' horrible language in a public theatre and creatin' a disturbance.

"Then it got about that the two words was what you'd say to a chap if you wanted to stand treat, an' 'arf a dozen fellers paid sixpence to say, 'Drink up,' 'Ave another,' an' 'What's yours?' but Nobby always said 'Beer,' an' took their sixpences.

"They got fed up after a bit: Nobby 'ad collected thirty-seven an' six, an' nobody managed to guess the words.

" 'Let's see that paper, Nobby,' sez Spud Murphy one night; 'we're tired of payin' you tanners, and we're goin' to give the riddle up. What's the words?'

"Nobby looked at me 'an sort of considered.

" 'I'll give you all another chance,' ' e sez, 'at 'arf price.'

"But there was no takers.

" 'Let's see the paper, Nobby,' sez Mac, who'd spent two an' six on five guesses.

" 'What paper?' sez Nobby.

" 'The paper them words are on,' sez Spud.

"Nobby thought a bit, then took the paper from 'is pocket an' broke the sealin'-wax.

"All the chaps crowded round when Nobby opened the paper, an' looked over 'is shoulder.

" 'Why, there's nothin' written on it at all!' sez Spud Murphy, very indignant.

Nobby looked surprised.

" 'I must 'ave forgotten to put 'em down,' ' e sez.

" 'Ere, Smithy, lend us a bit of pencil, an' I'll put 'em down now,' ' e sez."

"YOU mustn't think," warned Smithy, "that soldiers are soft or silly, or easily got over, just because Nobby Clark's got a way of takin' 'em in."

"Nobby's got what I call an artful way, an' there's no doubt at all," added Private Smith, impressively, "that what Nobby don't know ain't worth knowin'.

"We was havin' a talk the other night about cricket. Well, everybody knows that 'B' Company is the worst cricket company in the regiment, an' the other chaps was chaffin' me an' Nobby about it.

" 'Look 'ere, Spud,' sez Nobby, solemnly, 'when you talk about us not knowin' how to play cricket you're only showin' up your ignorance. It's you that don't know how to play cricket—real cricket.'

" 'How so, Nobby?' sez Spud.

" 'Why, sez Nobby, 'you chaps don't play accordin' to the new military rules.'

" 'What new rules?' sez Spud.

"So Nobby explained a few of the new rules for military players, an' everybody was very surprised' to hear 'em.

" 'Where did you pick 'em up?' sez Spud, suspiciously.

" 'When I was a referee,' 'e sez.

" 'You mean umpire,' sez Spud.

" 'It's called referee under the new rules,' sez Nobby, calmly.

" 'It's my belief,' sez Spud Murphy, 'you don't know anything about the new rules.'

"Still," explained Smithy, with an admiring wag of his head, "it was easy to see that a lot of chaps believed old Nobby—especially chaps of our company—when Nobby told 'em that if the game'd been played under proper rules they wouldn't 'ave lost a match last year, an' the end of it was our company agreed to play 'G'—the best cricket company in the regiment—an' Nobby offered to be referee.

"Spud Murphy wanted two referees, but Nobby said that wasn't allowed under the new rules. So Spud. 'ad to be content—although 'e groused! like anything an' refused to play for us.

" 'Let 'im play for "G",' sez Nobby, and Spud was allowed to play for the other side.

"There was lots of bets on the game, an' Spud made a bit of row because he 'eard that Nobby was backin' 'B' company very heavy.

" 'Umpires ain't allowed to bet,' sez Spud, an' Nobby referred 'im to the new rules. Spud went all over the town tryin' to buy a book of the new rules, but

couldn't.

"Everybody went over to the cricket ground to see the match, an' Nobby was there with a book under his arm.

"The other side won the toss, an' Crawley an' Spud Murphy was the first men in, an' I could see Spud didn't 'arf like it.

" 'None of your larks, Nobby,' sez Spud.

" 'Go on, my man,' sez Nobby, very haughtily, 'attend to your business, an' don't talk to the referee.'

" 'If you give me out,' sez Spud, wettin' 'is hand, an' catchin' hold of the bat, 'you just look out for yourself.'

" 'Out!' sez Nobby.

" 'What for?' roars Spud, an' all the chaps come runnin' up.

" 'I warn you off the field,' sez Nobby, firmly, 'for threatenin' the referee.'

"There was an 'orrible row, an' one of the chaps went over an' brought Corporal Mason, who's a football referee, to decide it. 'E come over 'an said 'e didn't know anything about cricket, but if Spud insulted the referee, 'e'd have to leave the field, which Spud did amid loud cheers from 'B' Company.

"In one way an' another," said Smithy, "Nobby got all the 'G' chaps out for eleven.

"Spiky Brown was put out for hittin' a ball outside the boundary, old 'Ampshire Giles got run out naturally, Billy Pain was out for makin' remarks to the referee, two other chaps was out for hittin' the ball with the wrong side of the bat, an' the rest was out under one of Nobby's new rules.

"Me an' 'Appy Johnson was the first to bat for our side, an' Billy Pain was the bowler.

"The first ball I got I just managed to touch, an' it" sort of glanced off my bat into Spud Murphy's hands.

"How's that?' yells Spud.

" 'Not out!' sez Nobby.

" 'It is out!' roars Spud, indignantly.

" 'What did you want to ask me for?' sez Nobby, 'if you knew all about it? Go on with the game.'

"But they wouldn't go on until Nobby explained the rule. It appears, by Nobby's rule, a chap that's been warned off the field by the referee ain't allowed to get a man out, either by catchin' or bowlin'.

" 'It's part of the punishment, Spud,' sez Nobby, sadly. 'I can't help you, my

poor feller; I didn't make the rules,'

" 'I don't know so much about that,' sez Spud, fiercely.

"We went on with the game, an' bimeby a ball come along an' sent my middie stump flyin'.

" 'How's that?' sez the bowler.

"Nobby hesitated for a bit an' looks at the stumps, an' then looks at me.

" 'How's that!' shouts 'G' Company, very wild.

" 'Out,' sez Nobby, 'quite out, by the rules of the game.'

"After this 'G' Company began to brighten up a bit; they could see there was something in Nobby's rules after all.

"There was a bit of sensation in court, in a manner of speakin', a few minutes after, when 'Appy Johnson gave 'is bat a swing backward an' knocked the bails off.

" 'How's that?' shouts the wicket-keeper.

" 'Not out,' sez Nobby, very prompt.

" 'Why not?' shouts Spud Murphy, gettin' red in the face. Nobby turns on 'im sternly. 'I've 'ad to speak to you once before, young feller, an' if I 'ave any more cheek from you, I'll deal severely with you.'

" 'But why ain't 'Appy out?' sez Spud, very persistent.

"Nobby thought an' thought, while everybody stood waitin', an' then, when 'e couldn't think of anything to say, 'e sez: 'I refuse to discuss the matter; go on with the game.'

" 'Appy got out after a bit by bein' clean bowled, an' although Nobby said it was a 'no ball,'e allowed 'Appy to go out, becos the other side was doin' so badly.

"The game stood eleven all when our last man, Dusty Miller, went in, an' the excitement was intense.

"Before the play atarted, Nobby goes up to Dusty an' starts givin' him tips.

" 'What you want to do, Dusty,' sez Nobby,, 'is to keep well in front of the wicket, an' if you see the ball comin' straight for the stumps, put your bat down so as it can't get past. Get a bye if possible, because that's easiest, an—'

" 'Ere!' interrupts Spud Murphy, who was gettin' quite vexed, 'ere, Nobby, you're the bloomin' umpire; you ain't allowed to give tips.'

" 'Ho! ain't I?' sez Nobby, indignant. 'Ain't allowed to give tips, when I've got four shillin's on the game?'

" 'No,' roars Spud.

" 'Proceed with the game,' sez Nobby politely, 'an' keep your face closed, Mr. Murphy, if you please.'

"Dusty ciid very well," commended Smithy. "All the balls that come straight for the wicket 'e stopped, either with his bat or with his leg, an' Nobby patted him on the back once and said 'Bravo.'

" 'Then a nice slow ball come along, an' Dusty, bein' encouraged by what Nobby said, went 'arf way down the pitch to meet it.

" 'E gave it such a sort of swingin' round-about cut an' drove it be'ind 'im.

"It would 'ave got a boundary, only Nobby appeared to be standin' in the way.

"The ball caught 'im in the middle of the chest, an' down dropped Nobby, blue in the face an' gaspin'.

"We all gathered round, an' Gus Ward, who was lookin' on, gave Nobby some artificial—what-do-you-call-it?—sort of dumb-bell exercise for drowned people.

"Bimeby Nobby came round, an' 'e glares at Dusty.

" 'Are you 'urt, Nobby?' sez Dusty, anxious.

" 'Urt!' gasps Nobby, faintly; 'yes, I am,' 'e sez, 'but you!—you're "out" an' warned orf the field by the new rules,' 'e sez."

16. — THE CHEF

"THE thing about the Army, that's the most curious," said the informing Smithy, "is that you never know what a chap's been before he enlisted.

"You see a smart-lookin' chap, smart tunic, white belt, little boots, an' a nice curl down over 'is for-'ead, an' you say to yourself, 'That chap was a gentleman before 'e enlisted, I'll bet;' but the chances are he was only a costermonger.

"Similarly you see a chap untidy, a chap who don't like shavin', an' generally keeps hissself to hissself, an' you put 'im down as a corner boy, when the chances are he's 'ad a good education, an' as likely as not 'e's been a chap like you—made 'is livin' by puttin' bits in the paper.

"There's quite a lot of respectable young fellers in the Army supposed to be single who dursen't go near a work'ouse for fear 'arf a dozen little 'eads will pop over the wall an' start shoutin' 'Father!' an' visa versa.

"I don't trouble my 'ead very much about what a chap's been, although I've often wondered what Nobby was before 'e enlisted.

"We 'ad a bit of an argument about it the other day when Nobby was out, an'

Spud Murphy said he thought Nobby must 'ave been somethin' that gets money without work.

" 'I'll bet,' sez Spuds, 'if you look on Nobby's attestation paper you'll see 'im described as a "labourer," like all chaps are that don't like work.'

"Dusty Miller thought Nobby must 'ave been a railway porter, because 'e never gets pally with a chap unless 'e's got some money.

"At any rate," said Smithy, with a faint grin, "the question was, in a manner of speaking settled, for a few days after Nobby was sent for to the orderly-room an' paraded before the Adjutant.

" 'I see,' sez the Adjutant, who was looking over Nobby's papers, 'that you describe yourself as a "cook"—is that right?'

" 'Yes, sir,' sez Nobby, without battin' an eye.

" 'What sort of a cook are you?' says the Adjutant, lookin' 'ard at Nobby.

" 'Very good, sir,' sez Nobby modestly.

" 'Well,' sez the Adjutant, 'we're tryin' a new system of messin', so you can report yourself to the master cook for duty—you're "B" Company's cook.'

"There was tremendous excitement in 'B' when it got out that Nobby was the new cook. Spud Murphy went up an' saw the Adjutant, an' asked to be transferred to another company.

" 'I don't want to say anything about Private Clark, sir,' 'e sez, 'but I'm a very delikit eater, an' Clark an' me ain't good friends.'

"All the chaps got round Nobby in the barrack room, an' started firin' questions at him.

" 'What are you going to make us, Nobby?' they sez.

" 'Wait an' see,' sez Nobby, cautious.

" 'Are you a French cook, Nobby?' sez Weary Thompson.

" 'A bit French,' sez Nobby, 'an' a bit Spanish. I'm what you call a chef.'

" 'What's that, Nobby?'

" 'That's the bit of French I was tellin' you about,' sez 'e.

"Nobby went into the town an' bought a cookery book that tells you 'ow to take stains out of silk dresses an' 'ow to clean old pictures, an' started studyin' this for all 'e was worth.

"Nobby took over the duty on Monday, and after havin' a few words with the master cook about some kit the sergeant missed as soon as Nobby come on duty, he sort of calmed him by tellin' him about a few French dishes ed learnt about.

" 'We'll 'ave some " Poulett de Anchester" to-day,' sez Nobby.

" 'What's that?' sez the master cook—Sergeant Brown, the fat sergeant, you know.

" 'Roast chicken an' caper sauce,' sez Nobby, proudly.

" 'Don't be a fool, Clark,' sez the sergeant, nastily. 'We 'aven't got any chicken, you know that.'

" 'Then we'll have pot pourri,' sez Nobby very quick.

" 'What's that?' sez the sergeant, bewildered.

" 'Anything we got,' sez Nobby.

"Everybody was talkin' about the dinner, an' we was all wonderin' what we'd got in the way of food.

"Spud Murphy got his name took on the ten o'clock parade for speakin' in the ranks.

" 'This afternoon,' 'e sez, very gloomy, 'the pioneers'll be wheelin' a barrer round the square, ringin' a bell an' shoutin' "Bring out your dead," the same as it was at the great fire or London.'

"When the cook-house bugle went there wasn't a man of 'B' left in the canteen—they was all sittin' tight in the barrack-room waitin' for the orderly man to bring in the dinner.

"It come up all 'ot and steamin'.

"There was potatoes an' cabbage an' a curious-lookin' lot of meat an' stuff. Spud Murphy looks over it, sniffs, an' sez: 'I'll have some potato and cabbage.'

"As a matter of fact," explained Smithy, "the dinner was very nice indeed, an' Spud began to feel small when we told 'im how we was enjoyin' it.

"When we'd nearly finished it, there was a bit of a commotion outside, an' in rushes a chap from 'C' Company. He dashes up to the table an' takes a long look at the tin the dinner come up in, an' then shouts:

" 'Ere! you bloomin' thieves, you're got our dinner, an' we've got yours.'

" 'Well.' sez the corporal, very kindly, 'you're welcome to it.'

" 'Ho are we!' sez the 'C' man, shakin' his 'ead fiercely. 'Well, just come an' 'ave a look at the stuff we've got.'

"So we all finished up our dinner quick, with the 'C' chap lookin' on with tears in his eyes, an' walks over to 'C' Company room. The dinner was steamin' on the table, an' everybody was standin' a long way off lookin' wild an' hungry.

" 'What's up?' sez our corporal.

" 'That,' sez the corporal of the other room, very agitated, 'that's what's up,' sez

'e, pointin' to the dinner.

"We all looked at it; it looked all right. We smelt it; it smelt all right.

" 'Taste it,' sez the other corporal.

"Our corporal 'esitated a bit, then sampled the gravy.

"Just then the orderly officer arrived to ask if there was any complaints. 'E was just goin' to ask when 'e saw our corporal.

" 'What's the matter with Corporal White?' 'e sez; 'is 'e took ill?'

" 'No sir,' sez the other corporal, an' then explains about the dinner, whilst me and another chap assisted our corporal into the fresh air.

"When we got back the officer was talkin'.

" 'Send for Private Clark,' he sez. So they did, an' in a minute in walks Nobby lookin' very pleased with hisself —one of our chaps had told him what a success our dinner was, an' he thought the orderly officer had sent for 'im to show the 'C' cook 'ow to make a dinner.

"I will say," said Smithy, enthusiastically, "old Nobby looked every inch a shef! White coat, white 'at, an' very nearly white apron.

" 'Clark,' sez the orderly sternly. 'did you prepare this?'

"Nobby was surprised to see 'B's dinner in 'C's room, but 'e looked at it, an' sez, 'Yes.'

" 'What do you call it?' sez the officer.

" 'Pot pourri,' sez Nobby, boldly.

" 'Why pot pourri?' sez the officer.

"Nobby thought a bit.

" 'Because it's poured out of a pot,' 'e sez.

"The officer looks very 'ard at Nobby.

" 'What's this?' 'e sez, stirrin' a curious lookin' thing round with 'is cane.

"Nobby looks at it an' gasps, an' just then the master cook, who'd been sent for;, come in.

" 'Sergeant!' Nobby sez, quite excited, 'look at this!' The sergeant looked, an' he gasped,

" 'P'raps,' sez , Nobby, sternly. 'you'll apologise now for accusin' me or stealin' your blackin' brush.'

I MET Smithy in the High Street, and I will not attempt to deny that Smithy did not seem the least bit pleased to see me. He was in uniform, hence I conjectured that he had lost his job as groom to Major-Somebody-or-Other on the Staff.

"Fact is," confessed Smithy, in answer to my re-proaches, "I'm a bit down on newspaper chaps just now."

This was indeed mournful news.

From the day I had first met Private Smithy of the 1st Anchester Regiment, at Orange River Station, when he gave a memorable reproof to the haughty C.I.V., down, so to speak, to yesterday, Smithy's regard and esteem for the members of my profession had been most flattering.

"It's hard enough," complained Smithy bitterly, "when they won't put your bits in the paper; but when they do, and, what's more," he added, with rising wrath, "they put your blue-light name to it, why—why, it's emphatically, unprintably hard!"

And Smithy relapsed into a moody silence.

"Nobby Clark sez to me," he resumed, plunging into the thick of his grievance, "'e sez, 'Smithy, how much money've you got?'

"'Four dee,' I sez—and it was three days off pay-day," added Smithy, in vindication of his penury.

"'Go and borryer a couple of bob from the flag,' 'e sez.

"'You go,' I sez.

"'I've been,' he sez sadly.

"'So 'ave I,' I sez.

"'What did 'e say?' sez Nobby, an' I told him.

"You wouldn't think a man with a colour-sergeant's rank would use such language, would you?" asked Smithy, who gave me verbatim the "flag's" insulting reply to Smithy's modest demands.

"'Well,' sez Nobby, 'we must git some money somewhere; what about puttin' a bit in the papers?'

"'What shall we put?' I sez, catchin' on to the idea, for a chap I know—Fatty James, of 'B' Company—got ten shillings once for writin' to a paper that a picture of a sheep and a fence meant 'Ramsgate.'

"'Make something up,' sez Nobby; so me an' im went over to the library an' thought an' thought an' thought." Smithy lowered his voice to a reverential huskiness at the recollection of that evening of tremendous mental exertion.

"After about two hours," he resumed thoughtfully, "we made up a piece." He stopped beneath a street lamp, and produced a soiled half-sheet of notepaper, bearing the regimental crest.

"I copied it," he said simply, and I read:

"We are give to understand upon the highest unimpechible authority that a severe muttiny broke out in the barracks of the Anchester Regiment on Friday last at 10 o'clock oweing to the uppish conduct of a certain colour-sargent of B Company trying to come the old soldier over the gallant heros of that famous regiment. We think this should be put a stop to at once as much bloodshed would not take place if certain parties knew where to draw the line."

I handed the paper back to Smithy.

"What do you think of that?" he asked anxiously. I gave it my unqualified approval.

"Well," resumed the sensationalist, "we sent it to the Anchester Gazette, an' they put a bit of it in, an' sends me half a james."

Which, to be exact, is ten shillings, a handsome reward, considering the Gazette had evidently omitted the more startling portion of the news.

"So me and Nobby writes another bit," Smithy went on—" 'ere it is." A second soiled fragment of history was produced:

"We hear from two who knows that another horrible muttiny came off at the barracks of the Anchester Regiment yesterday at 1.35, oweing to a certain party being a bit too clever and talking big in the canteen about his rich relations."

"That," explained Smithy hastily, "was a party named Briggs, who's got an uncle in the linen-drapin' line."

"Did they print that?" I asked.

"No," said Smithy, with a cough. "I got a letter from the head man: 'Dear sir, we're tired of mutinies try us with something else.' "

Smithy had the sarcastic message by heart.

"So we did," he went on gloomily; "so we did. Nobby an' me, we thought an' thought for two days."

" 'Let's say there was a horrible fire in barracks,' he sez.

" 'No,' I sez, 'let's say there was a horrible suicide in "B" Company,' I sez.

" 'No,' sez Nobby, who's got a down on 'D' owin' to the company cook an' him being bad friends, 'let's say "D" Company has been horribly poisoned to death owin' to the way the meat's cooked!'

"Well," said Smithy, with a sigh, "we thought of everything, from a horrible

discovery in the officers' quarters to the quartermaster-sergeant doin' a horrible bunk with the pay, till at last old Nobby says. 'I've got it!'

"I've got it," repeated Smithy, with a groan.

" 'Is it a horrible?' I sez,

" 'No,' sez Nobby, 'it ain't; it's Fanny,' he sez.

" 'Oh!' I sez. 'Is it a horrible murder of the Colonel's daughter?' I sez—we call her Fanny," Smithy explained.

" 'She's a nice girl,' sez Nobby, sort of musin'.

" 'I've never noticed it,' I sez.

" 'She ought to be married,' sez Nobby. 'Let's marry 'er to some one.'

"So me an' Nobby sat up half the night tryin' to think who we could marry her to. He started with the doctor, who got Nobby seven days for shammin' toothache, and then we thought of the Adjutant, who's always on my collar; but bimeby we said let bygorns be bygorns, an' we married her to the General."

I gasped, for General Stucker, blank old Stucker as he is nicknamed, because of the choice and variety of his expletives, is the most peppery old warrior in the British Army.

"We married her to the General," and Smithy's native sense of humour was responsible for the faint chuckle he gave. "Here—read this."

Another friendly lamp-post obliged.

"We beg to announce with much pleasure that Miss Fanny Gollingham our colonel's daughter is walking out with General Stucker whose heroic conduct is greatly admired and the happy couple will soon leave on their honeymoon, We hope kind friends will rally round they being the first to help others."

"Did they print that?" I asked in an awestruck whisper.

"They did," said Smithy in a pained undertone.

"Well?" I asked.

"It was Nobby Clark who done it " said Smithy explosively; "he sez, 'Let's sign it "Captain Clark of 'B' " and "Major Smith of 'H,' " for a lark.'

" 'Where's the lark?' I sez.

" 'Why, fathead,' he sez, 'they won't put it in unless they think we know all about it,' he sez; so we signed it."

Smithy drew a crumpled newspaper cutting from his pocket:

"We are happy, on the authority of Major Smith, of H Company, and Captain Clark, of B, to announce the engagement of Major-General Sir George

Stucker, K.C.B., to the eldest daughter of Lieut.-Colonel Gollingham. The wedding will be celebrated at an early date, and Major Smith is to be best man."

I handed the cutting back.

"Major Smith best man!" I murmured in amazement. "So that's why you lost your job?"

"Yes" said Smithy bitterly; "Nobby put that bit in when I wasn't lookin'!"

18. — THE PHOTOGRAPHER

The War Office requests Officers Commanding Units to submit photographs and films suitable for conversion into lantern slides.

—War Office Memorandum.

The Officer Commanding wishes to notify N.C.O.'s and men in possession of cameras that all reasonable facilities will be given them for the purpose of securing photographs portraying Army life.

—"A" Company's orders.

"It appears," explained Private Smith, "that they want to advertise the Army with a magic lantern. They've got a bit tired of showin' a picture of a soldier in marchin' order, an' callin' it 'the advantages of the Army.'

"We was talkin' about it the other night down in the 'Ole in the Wall, me an' Nobby Clark an' a new chap of 'A'—I forget his right name for the minute, but we call 'im Smiley—an' Spud Murphy, an' 'Appy Johnson.

" 'Wot's the idea, Nobby?' sez Spud, who's been gettin' on friendly terms with me an' Nobby lately; 'wot do they want our photos for?'

" 'I don't know,' sez Nobby, 'but me an' Smithy are goin' in for it—ain't we, Smithy?'

" 'No,' I sez.

" 'Me an' Smithy's got a camera,' sez Nobby, takin' no notice of wot I said, 'an' to—morrer we are goin' round barracks to see what we can do in the photo line.'

"I thought old Nobby was coddin', but 'e wasn't, for up 'e comes next mornin' with one of them ooncertina machines that pull in an' out, an' at ten o'clock up goes Nobby to the Orderly Room an' asks to see the old man.

NOBBY VOLUNTEERS

" 'Well, Clark,' sez the Colonel, 'what do you want?'

" 'Beg pardon, sir,' sez Nobby, 'but me an' Smithy's got a camera, an' we'd like to take a few photos for the War Office,'

"The old man was as pleased as Punch. 'Very good; very good, indeed,' sez 'e. Sergeant—Major, see that Smith an' Clark are excused all parades for a week,' 'e sez. 'Is that what you want?'

" 'Yes, sir,' sez Nobby.

"So me an' Nobby walked about for the rest of the week doin' nothin, an' the other chaps was very wild.

"We used to go an' watch 'em on parade an' pretend to take snapshots of 'em.

"Nobby caused a bit of unpleasantness by sayin' to the Adjutant that 'e'd like to take a photograph of the regiment on parade in full marchin' order.

" 'You ought to know better,' sez Spud Murphy, very fierce. 'I'm surprised at you, Nobby. There ain't another marchin' order parade for a month, an' 'ere you've been an' got orders put in for one to—morrer.'

"All the chaps in the room who was busy cleanin' their straps an' packin their valises said 'Ear, 'ear,' but me an' Nobby sat on a bed cot doin' nothin'.

" 'You wait till you see yourselves in a magic lantern,' sez Nobby. 'An', besides,' 'e sez, 'I'm goin' to take a lot of you chaps by yourselves to—morrow.'

" 'Free?' sez Spud, eagerly.

" 'Don't be a miser,' sez Nobby, sternly; 'don't be, a miser, Spud, A tanner won't break you, will it? It costs me that.'

" 'Ow do you do it, Nobby?' sez Smiler.'

HOW IT IS DONE

" 'It's as simple as drinkin', sez Nobby, gettin' down 'is camera. I point it at yoU, push this button, an' you're took in a minute.'

"Well, Nobby kept the regiment standing half an hour on parade next morning waitin' for the sun to come out.

"Me an' him was in the corner of the parade ground, 'im 'oldin' 'is camera, me waggin' my 'ead backward an forward, tryin' to look as if I knew all about it, an' the battalion standin' stiff to attention."

"Bimeby the sdjutant sings out:

" 'Ave you taken it?'

" 'No, sir,' sings out Nobby.

" 'Well, 'urry up,' sez he; an' Nobby obeys orders an' pushes the button.

" 'I want to see that picture to—morrer,' sez the Adjutant.

" 'Yessir,' sez Nobby.

"Some'ow old Nobby was a bit depressed all that day. After tea 'e sez to me:

" 'Smithy, come for a walk in town; I want to 'ave a bit of a chin wag.'

" 'Smithy,' 'e sez when we got out that night, 'do you know anything about photos?'

" 'No,' I sez.

" 'No more don't I,' 'e sez, with a sort of sigh.

" 'What!' I sez.

" 'No,' 'e sez, 'I don't know a bloomin' thing about it. I bought this camera from a chap down the 'Igh Street. 'E sold it cheap, bein' sligh'ly damaged. It 'adn't got one of its parts. I forget which. Any'ow, the chap said it didn't matter.'

THE PHOTO SHOP

" 'Look 'ere, Nobby,' I sez, stoppin' in the street, 'ave you got the monkey box with you?'

" 'Yes,' 'e sez, 'I never let it out of my sight,' an' 'e pulls it out of his overcoat pocket.

" 'We'll take in to that chap that takes photos, an' see what's wrong withit.'

"So we took it into the photo shop; an' Nobby tells the chap all about it. The chap looks at the camera for a bit, an' me an' Nobby looks at 'im very anxious.'

" 'What do you want me to do?'

" 'Take out the photos we've took,' sez Nobby.

" 'You've took, Nobby; not me,' I sez.

" 'We're both in, Smithy,' sez Nobby."

" 'There ain't no photos,' sez the photo chap.

" 'No photos!' sez me an' Nobby together, an' Nobby went pale.

" 'No,' sez the photo chap, 'their ain't no films.'

" 'Hey?' sez Nobby.

" 'Nor no lens neither,' sez the photo chap.

" 'Does that make any difference?' sez Nobby.

" 'You've done it!' I sez, an' I told the photo chap all about 'ow Nobby took the picture of the regiment on parade, an' ow the Adjutant sez 'e wanted a copy of the photo to—morrow.

" 'Where was it took?' sez the photo chap.

" 'On parade,' I sez.

A SCOTCH REVIVAL

" 'I've got a photo of a regiment at 'ome took on that very parade,' sez the photo chap. 'I'll tell you what I'll do when I get 'ome to—night; I'll! send it on to you. You can say you took it, an' it'll be all right.'

"Old Nobby brightens up wonderful.

" 'Is it our regiment?' 'e sez.

" 'No,' sez the photo chap; 'but it's so small, you can't tell what regiment it is.'

" 'That'll do,' sez Nobby. 'Send it straight to the Adjutant.' An' we both went back to barracks 'ighly satisfied.

"Next mornin' we was sent for to the orderly room.

" 'Good mornin' Clark; good mornin', Smith,' sez the Adjutant, when 'e saw us. 'Nice photograph that you sent us.'

" 'Yes, sir,' sez Nobby; but I said nothin'.

" 'Took it yourself?' sez the Adjutant.

" 'Yes, sir,' sez Nobby.

" 'Ah,' sez the Adjutant, very affable, 'the Colonel is very interested in it.'

" 'Very glad to 'ear that, sir,' sez Nobby.

"The Adjutant took the_ photo from 'is pocket an' 'anded it to Nobby.

"Nobby looks at it: so did. Then we saluted an' went back to the barrack—room.

"Nobby didn't speak for a long time. When 'e did, 'e said something about the photo chap, an' then——

" 'Was there anything I said to the photo chap last night that'd make 'im think we was 'Ighlanders, Smithy?'"

19. — THE BOOKMAKER

"THERE'S lots of chaps," said Smithy, "who are walkin' about the streets without keepers who ought by rights to be down at the master tailor's bein' measured for strait weskets."

It was Smithy's Saturday to Monday vacation, which he had agreed to spend at my house. Smithy takes a delight in the discussion of all kinds of gloomy subjects. He revels in the Positively Dreadful and is keenly interested in the Indescribably Ghastly.

We had spent a pleasant Saturday evening. Starting with How it Feels to be

Hung, we had moved by easy stages to Murder as a Fine Art; thence to the vexed question, Should Executions be Public? which I think we threshed out very thoroughly. We drifted to Criminal Lunacy, taking a short cut by way of Suicide, and it was at this point that Smithy expressed his doubt regarding the sanity of the majority of his fellow-creatures.

"With some chaps it's gels," philosophized Smithy; they get quite balmy about 'em. I know one chap—a very good character, too, with a couple of badges—who writes poetry to his gel.

"There's a chap!" said Smithy hopelessly, "plays the concertina like—like Paddyrisky," he illustrated daringly, "an' you see him sittin' down night after night chewin' his pen like—anything.

"There he sits—Cole's his name—thinkin' an' frownin' and writin' an' scratchin' out again.

" 'Wot rhymes with 'dear'?" he sez to Nobby Clark.

" 'Beer,' sez Nobby as quick as lightnin'.

" 'That won't do,' sez poor Cole. 'Wot rhymes with 'waken'?"

" 'Eggs an' bacon,' sez Nobby.

" 'That won't do, either,' sez poor old Cole, and goes on scribblin' an' scratchin' out. Bimeby he sez:

" 'What rhymes with 'bell'?"

"So Nobby tells him, an' old Cole gets offended. 'I'm writin' to my gel,' he sez, 'an' I can't use that sort of language.'

"So he goes on writin' an' arskin' advice an' not takin' it. He spends nights an' nights writin' a poem about love, an' when his gel gets it, she thinks old Cole's been drinkin', an' she don't notice the words come in rhyme at the end of the lines till she's read it twice—an' then she thinks it's an accident."

Private Cole was evidently one of Smithy's eligible, for an Institute of Restraint.

"Then there's Yatesey—Yatesey of 'C'—he's another of 'em," resumed Smithy indignantly; "no, Yatesey don't write poetry, far from it. Yatesey is wot I call a dangerous lunatic. I don't so much mind a chap wot writes poetry, or even a chap wot collects stamps an' is always tryin' to swap a blue Cape of Good Hope for a pink Channel Island, but Yatesey is worse."

"Yatesey " is Smithyesque for "Yates," I may remark in passing.

"Yatesey's got a bit of money wot his father sends him from time to time. Some weeks it's a dollar, some weeks it's a couple of shillin's, just how the coke business happens to be.

"Yatesey wouldn't be a bad chap if it wasn't for his system.

"When Nobby Clark is short of money, he lures old Yatesey into the wet canteen and gets him to talk about it.

" 'I think I'd like you to talk about that system of yours, Yatesey,' sez Nobby—I tell you Nobby's one of the artfullest chaps goin'—'I've got an idea I'd like to have it explained, I've got a little bit of money left me by an uncle wot went abroad.'

"Yatesey's system is a sort of mixture. You back a first favourite for a shillin' an' if it don't come orf you back a second favourite next day for two shillin's, if that don't come orf you back the third favourite the next day for four shillin's, and by that time you've got no money left, so you can't lose much money at it," explained Smithy lucidly.

"Nobby comes to me one day an' sez:

" 'I'm gettin' fed up with this chap an' his bloomin' system. It's no joke, Smithy, listenin' for an hour about how Nazzems could beat Pretty Bertie if the distance wasn't so far an' the weights was different.'

"Yatesey," explained Smithy, "used to sit down with a book of form an' a ready reckoner, an' work out how much money he'd make if he only had a startin' capital of a hundred pounds, but he never used to do no bettin' hisself till Nobby persuaded him. Some days he'd sit down with his little books an' his pint of beer an' buy a pub, an' a dogcart, an' marry a young lady in the High Street. Another day he'd go round the world on a motor-car, smokin' shillin' cigars; another day he'd buy his discharge an' then go an' give a bit of his mind to the sergeant-major, an' drive out of barracks in his own carriage, throwin' five-pound notes away out of the winder.

"I must say," confessed Smithy, "his system looked all right on paper, but I found out afterwards that when it didn't exactly work out he used to pretend to hisself that the horse he ought've backed accordin' to his system was another one altogether.

"Well, to get back to Nobby

" 'Smithy,' sez he, lookin' round to see if nobody was listenin', 'Smithy, you've come into a tidy bit of money.'

" 'Have I?' I sez.

" 'Yes' he sez, 'your grandmother's left you a small fortune,' he sez, with a wink.

" 'Go to!' I sez.

" 'Wot's more,' sez Nobby, 'you're goin' to make a book.'

" 'Wot sort of a book?' I sez, puzzled, an' then Nobby tells me, an' next mornin'

when Yatesey comes along an' slips a bit of paper into my hand with a couple of bob I thanked him kindly.

" 'Nonsuch, 2s. to win,' sez the paper, so I gave a shillin' to Nobby an' kept one for myself an' tore the paper up.

"Nobby comes up to me that night—

" 'It's all right,' he sez, 'Nonsuch was a bad ninth,' so we spent the two shillin's.

"Next day Yatesey gives me another paper an' our shillin's.

" 'Sooner, 4s. to win,' sez the paper, so me and Nobby divided the money.

" 'Sooner didn't win,' sez Nobby that night. 'He stopped to scratch his ear an' dead-heated with the starter.' So we had a very pleasant evenin'.

"Old Yatesey looked a bit tired next mornin', but he turned up with a bit of paper an' eight shillin's, an' I shook hands with him, an' Nobby called him a true sportsman.

" 'Pride of Devonshire, 8s. to win,' sez the paper. So me an' Nobby had four shillin's each."

Smithy helped himself to a fill of Craven.

"That night Nobby comes up lookin' ill. 'Pride of Devonshire won,' he sez, 'at ten to one,' he sez.

"An', sure enough, along comes old Yatesey, lookin' as pleased as Punch.

" 'I'll trouble you for four pound eight,' he sez.

" 'Wait a bit, young feller,' I sez sternly. 'Saturday's my settlin' day,' I sez, an' Nobby chips in:

" 'I'm surprised at you, Yatesey, a true sportsman like you, come worryin' Smithy for a paltry four quid,' he sez, 'it'd serve you right if Smithy wouldn't bet with you again,' he sez, and Yatesey begged pardon an' hoped no offence was taken where none was meant.

"Me an' Nobby went down town to think it out," continued Smithy.

" 'Let's give him back his eight shillin's an' owe him the rest,' I sez; 'tell him it was a joke.'

"Nobby was readin' the sportin' in the Evening News, an' bimeby he gave a yell.

" 'Pride of Devonshire's disqualified,' he sez, 'for borin' an' crossin',' he sez.

"So we spent the eight shillin's and went back to barracks to break the news to Yatesey.

"Next mornin' Yatesey didn't turn up with his paper so me an' Nobby went down to see him.

" 'No,' sez Yatesey, 'that system wasn't much good—it don't make no allowances for a horse bein' disqualified,' he sez. 'I'm workin' out a new system altogether.'

" 'When you've got it worked out,' I sez, 'let's hear from you.'"

20. — BACK TO CIVIL LIFE

PRIVATE SMITH TALKS VERY SERIOUSLY

"It's only nacheral," said Smithy, "that a feller that's been doin' nothin' for a livin' for seven years gits the idea into his 'ead that as soon as 'es out of the Army 'e can go on doin' nothin' an' live comfortable.

"A chap generally enlists because 'e's very 'ard up, or there ain't no work to be got. If you understand me rightly, a chap's pushed into the, Army by the crowd of out-of-works behind him, an' by the time 'e's got his breath, 'an' is full up with Army rations, an' finds 'e's got plenty of elbow room, 'e begins to forget all about the crowd outside, an' when his seven years' service is nearly in 'e begins to fancy that 'e really enlisted for the love of the thing, an' not because 'e was feelin' peckish.

"Then the Colonel sends for 'im.

" 'Ah, Thompson,' sez the Colonel, 'eartily, 'I understand you're goin' away on the reserve?'

" 'Yes, sir,' sez Thompson.

" 'Do you think that's wise?' sez the Colonel.

"Ho, yes,' sez the clever chap, oockily.

" 'It's very 'ard in civilian life just now,' sez the Colonel. 'What are you goin' to do for a livin'?'

" 'Anything,' sez the clever Chap, prompt.

" 'Humph!' sez the Colonel; 'that means "nothing"—are you sure you won't sign on for another five years?'

" 'I'll watch it,' sez the clever chap.

BACK TO CIVIL LIFE

"So he goes away in a pair of loud check trousis an' a Trilby 'at, an' a tuppenny cigar, to show 'is independence.

" 'E gits up to London, goes 'ome to see his people, 'as a couple of drinks, goes to a music-'all, an' spends a sovereign as free as you please. For a week 'e's as 'appy as a king. Gets up what time 'e likes, an' don't shave unless 'e wants to.

" 'E's got no sergeants an' corporals to bully 'im, no officers to salute, no fatigues, an' no drills, an' when 'e goes out in town 'e needn't look clean unless 'e feels inclined.

"After a week of riotous livin', most of 'is money bein' spent, 'e pops off to look for work in 'is loud check trousis with the beer stains, an' 'is Trilby 'at a bit out of shape.

" 'Want a job, do you?' sez the ohap where 'e goes to. 'What can you do?'

" 'Anything,' sez the clever chap.

" 'Outside!' sez the chap at the works. 'We don't want "anything" fellers here.'

" 'What's your last job?' sez another feller 'e applies to.

" 'Army,' sez the clever chap, producin' 'is discharge.

" 'What can you do?' sez the foreman.

"The clever chap's learnt a lesson, so 'e's a bit cautious.

" 'Messenger,' 'e sez.

" 'We've got boys for messengers, sez the foreman.

" 'Timekeeper,' sez the clever chap.

" 'We've got a clock for that.'

" 'Caretaker,' sez the clever chap.

" 'We don't want no sleepin' partners,' sez the foreman.

" 'Well,' sez the clever chap, desperate, 'hall porter.'

" 'We ain't got a hall,' sez the foreman.

"What some of these clever jossers want," said Smithy, scornfully, "is a job where there ain't any work to do—jobs you can lay down an' watch; old men's jobs, boys' jobs, jobs that don't blister a chap's 'ands, an' that's why all the bloomin' Soldiers' 'Elp Associations in the world won't do any good, because there ain't enough of them jobs to go round.

FREEDOM

"The other day Spud Murphy gave it out that as soon as his seven years was in he was going to leave. He was" talkin' to me an' Nobby about it.

" 'No more bloomin' soldierin' for me, thank you,' sez Spud.

" 'Don't thank me,' sez Nobby.

" 'I'm goin' to be a free man.' sez Spud, 'like I was before I enlisted.'

" 'Ah!' sez Nobby, lookin' up to the sky with a smile.

" 'When you chaps are bein' turned out of bed at six in the mornin' I shall be

gettin' my eye down, nice an' snug.'

" 'Ah!' sez Nobby.

" 'No more church parades, no more kit inspections, no more bloomin' guards,' sez Spud.

" 'No,' sez Nobby, getting up—we was eittin' oh the grass in the cricket field—'No,' sez Nobby, sadly. 'You'll be a free man, free to get your livin' or starve. There won't be no kit inspection, 'cos you'll 'ave no kit to show, nor no guards either, becos' nobody would trust you to guard a threepenny-bit. Pore feller,' sez Nobby, shaking his 'ead an' lookin' at Spud, 'pore old Spud.'

"Spud ain't goin' away," Smithy went on to explain, "because Nobby put it about in barracks that 'e was only leavin' the army because the doctor wouldn't pass him for an extension of service, an' just to show Nobby was a liar Spud went an' took on for another five years.

"If you understand," said Smithy earnestly, "it ain't the chap's fault that 'e can't get a job when 'e leaves the service, it's the Army's. A chap that 'as to leave civil life because 'e ain't got a trade in his 'ands can't expect to go back to civil life an' find a job sittin' up on its 'ind-legs an' beggin'"

"WHAT CAN YOU DO?"

"The Army don't teach 'im nothin'," continued Smithy, seriously, "except to turn about by numbers, an' not to talk back to his superiors, an that's not much use for civil life.

"When 'is time's up 'e goes out an' asks Civil Life to find him work.

" 'What can you do?' sez Civil Life.

" 'Stand erect, with me feet at at an angle of forty-five degrees, 'ead up, shoulders back, an' me 'ands 'ung loosely by me side, thumbs in rear of the seams of me trousis,' sez the Army.

" 'Very sorry,' sez Civil Life, but we 'aven't got a job like that. Can you do anything else?'

" 'Yes,' sez the Army, 'I can challenge all persons approachin' my post between tattoo an' reveille, turn out the guard to generals an' all armed parties, an' take charge of all Government property in view of me post,' sez the Army.

" 'Can you fix a 'lectric bell?' sez Civil Life.

" 'No,' sez the Army.

" 'Can you drive a traction engine?' sez Civil Life.

" 'No,' sez the Army.

" 'Can you make a box, or set a line of type, or draw a plan, or make out a specification, or do anything that the crowd round the docks can't do?'

" 'No.' sez the Army.

" 'Well,' sez Civil Life, regretful, 'you'd better join the mob at the docks—an' you'll find the Salvation Army shelter down the second turnin' on the right.'

"Seven years!" said; Smithy, reflectively, "an' about two years of that spare time. A chap could learn anything in seven years—if there was anybody to teach 'im.

" 'Teach me a trade,' sez the Army.

" 'Good gracious!' sez the Country, 'orrified. 'I couldn't think of such a thing—don't I clothe you, an' feed you, an' pay you?'

" 'Yes,' sez the Army; but teach me something—if it's only makin' mats, like you do in prison, or carpentering, like you do in work'ouses an' reformat'ry schools.'

" 'But,' sez the Country, very agitated, 'if I teach you this you'll be competin' with the taxpayer.'

" 'That's all right,' sez the Army, 'I want to be a taxpayer myself.'"

21. — BROTHERS

I MYSELF would be the last man in the world to suspect Nobby Clark of justifying or attempting to justify the questionable conduct of his father. He had a clear appreciation both of his parent's genius and shortcomings, and valued both at their worth. That is how I read his attitude of mind. I think Private Clark is possessed of a large charity of mind. I imagine that he is generous and lenient in some degrees when he finds himself reviewing his father's acts, but if, in his filial respect, he cannot condemn, there is a certain irony in his tone when he tells these stories which makes it quite apparent that he does not condone.

"Me father was highly respected by his family," explained Nobby once. "Uncle Jim, Uncle George, an' Uncle Alf couldn't say enough about father an' the way he was looked up to by all his relations.

"Uncle Alf wouldn't have anybody but father to bail him out, an' the way Uncle Jim's family used to come and live with us when Uncle Jim was doin' four months for jumpin' on a policeman, was very touchin'.

"Then in the summer-time, when there was no unemployed work going on, Uncle George used to come an' pay us a visit, an' once I remember all three uncles with their families came at once.

" 'You're a true brother,' sez Uncle George; 'an' if you can ever make a bit out

of me or Alf or Jim you're free to do so.'

" 'Hear, hear,' sez me other uncles.

"Father kept the advice in his mind, an' the first time there was a reward offered for Uncle Jim ('believed to be concerned with others in breakin' an' enterin') father stepped in an' took the prize.

" 'It ain't much that I can do to get back the money they've cost me,' sez me father; 'but what I can do I will do with a cheerful heart.'

"Father went to see Uncle Jim in Wormwood Scrubs.

" 'I didn't think you'd put me away for six months.' sez Uncle Jim.

" 'I didn't think I would myself,' sez father. I thought you'd get two years.'

"Relations are best apart, especially poor relations, if you don't happen to be so poor as them, an' I've never known, so far as the army goes, any brothers who lived together in harmony longer than four months.

"It stands to reason, in a way, that brothers get on badly. They know each other too well, an' half the secret of keepin' friends with another feller is not to know anythin' about him, except the side he cares to show.

"Brothers are fairly common in the army, because soldierin' runs in some families like measles, an' crooked noses, but the two strangest brothers I ever know'd was the Joneses—B. Jones an' H. Jones. It was a long time before we knew they was brothers, because one of 'em was in 'B' Company an' the other in 'H'—that's how they got their initials.

"The first time I ever thought they was brothers was when H. Jones came into B. Jones's room an' borrowed his blackin' brushes without askin'. That was a pretty sure sign they was related. They never walked out in town together, never drank together, an' one took as much notice of the other as if he'd been a fly on the wall.

"I sez to one of 'em—to 'B.'—

" 'You're a funny sort of feller,' sez I, 'not to have anythin' to do with your own brother—it don't seem natural.'

" 'What don't seem natural to me,' he sez politely. 'is for you to see anybody else's business goin' on without wantin' to stick your long ugly nose in!'

" 'B. Jones,' I sez sternly. 'I'm actin' for the best; as man to man, for the sake of peace an' harmony, an' for two pins I'd swipe the head off you.'

"I left 'em alone after that, but me an' the other chaps used to wonder what it was that'd, so to speak, come between two brotherly hearts.

" 'I shouldn't be surprised,' sez Spud Murphy, 'if one of 'em hasn't done the other out of the family property; I've read cases like it in books.'

"Spud always was a bit romantic, an' that was the sort of book he read.

" 'Perhaps B.'s the real heir to the property, an' H. is a changeling,' he sez, 'perhaps the wicked earl done 'em both out—'

" 'To be continued in our next,' sez Smithy, very nasty, 'perhaps they're only ordinary brothers who are fed up with one another, just as me an' Nobby are fed up with you.'

"It wasn't long after this that Mr. Kroojer began pilin' his burjers on the border, an' the Anchester Regiment, bein'—though I say it as shouldn't—one of the best regiments in the army, was sent out.

"It was tough work in South Africa, the toughest work that most soldiers have done, an' somehow the Anchesters always got in the hot an' hungry places.

"We hadn't been in the country three months before we had a casualty list as long as the Rowley Mile, an' what with the closin' up of the ranks, an' the reconstruction of companies, B. Jones an' H. Jones got into the same company.

"Considerin' we was fightin' every day, an' livin' on half rations most of the time, you'd have thought that these two chaps would have shown a more companionable spirit, but not they. Somehow war, an' the dangers of war, made no difference. They was on noddin' terms, borrered little things from one another, but each went his own way.

"If they'd been people in books they'd been fallin' on one another's necks after every fight, but they was just ordinary folks an' did nothin.'

"This went on all through the war, an' toward the end our battalion was ordered out to march with a convoy through the Western Transvaal.

"Our job was to guard it, an' it needed a bit of guardin'.

"We'd hardly got ten miles out of Klerksdorp when Dela Rey come down on us, an' it took us four hours to fight his commando off. Next day De Wet, who was in that neighbourhood, saw us an' came along to pick us up. But it was our early closin' day, an' De Wet went away sick an' sorry. Then when we was half-way on our journey, three commandoes combined to settle us for good, an' at dawn one mornin' began a fight which lasted till sunset. We held a little hill to the right of the convoy, an' this position bore the whole of the attack.

"It was the only time durin' the war that I ever saw the Boers charge a position, an' twice that day we had to give way before their attacks. When night came, one out of every four men had been hit.

"We posted strong guards that night expectin' an attack, an' we got all we expected.

"Firin' began before sun-up. Some of the Boers took up a position on a ridge where they could shoot from good cover, an' two companies were ordered to

clear the ridge. A an' B companies went an' did it. We took the position with the bayonet, an' then found that it wasn't worth holdin'.

"We got the order to retire on our main post, an' started to march away. Half-way down the slope lay a wounded Boer. He wasn't a real Boer, bein' a half-breed nigger, but as we passed he raised himself up an' shouted 'Water!'

" 'Fall out Jones,' sez the officer, an' give that man a drink.'

"What happened exactly I don't know. We went marchin' on, leavin' Jones behind, an' suddenly I heard the crack of a rifle, an' looked round. The half-breed was runnin' like mad toward the Boer lines, a rifle in his hand, an' poor B. Jones lay very quiet on the hillside.

" 'Shoot that man!' shouts the officer, an' a dozen men dropped on their knees an' fired at the flyin' murderer, but he dropped over the crest of the rise as quick as a flash.

"We doubled back an' carried the poor chap into camp, but it was all up with him, we could see that much. He was shot through the chest, an' we carried him carefully to the rear.

"Soon after this, the Boers returned to the attack, an' we was so busily engaged wonderin' when we'd be wounded ourselves that we had no time to think of B. Jones.

"At one o'clock that afternoon the Boer firin' went suddenly quiet, an' half an hour later we heard a faraway pom-pom come into action, an' knew a relief force was on its way.

"Methuen it was, with his column, an' most of us were very glad to see him. We had time now to count heads, an' see who was up an' who was down.

"That," said Nobby sadly, "is always the worse part of war. It's the part where a corporal an' twelve men go off with spades, an' another party sews men up in blankets—men you've spoke to that mornin'; men you've larked with, an' drank with.

"I was fixin' up me kit an' givin' me rifle a clean, when H. Jones strolled up.

"He nodded to me an' Smithy.

" 'I hear me young brother's down,' he sez, quiet.

"Yes, H.,' I sez.

" 'How did it happen?' sez H. Jones. So I told him.

" 'What like was this nigger?' he asked after I finished.

"As well as I could I described him. He was easy to describe, because he had a big yeller face an a crop of woolly hair.

" 'Come along,' he sez, after a bit, 'an' see me brother—he's a pal of yours, ain't

he?'

"We found poor B. lyin' on the ground, on the shady side of an ox-wagon. The doctor was there, an' when he saw H. he took him aside.

" 'I suppose you know your brother is dyin'?' he sez, an' H. nodded, then turned to his brother.

" 'How goes it, Jack?' he sez gentle, an' poor B. grinned.

" 'So so,' he sez weakly, 'me number's up.'

" 'So they was tellin' me,' sez H. 'Well, we've all got to go through it sooner or later.'

"The dyin' man nodded, an' for a little while neither of 'em spoke.

" 'Got any message to mother?' sez H., an' the poor chap on the ground nodded again.

" 'Give her my kind regards,' he sez. ' Take care of yourself, Fred.'

"It seemed strange to me," said Nobby, thoughtfully, "that these two brothers, one of them dyin', should talk so calm one with the other, an' I never realized till then how little a feller like me knows about the big things of life, an' death.

"Poor old B. died an hour later, an' his brother was with him to the last. After it was all over he came to me.

" 'Nobby,' he sez, 'which way did the Boers go?'

"As it happened I'd heard one of Methuen's staff officers describin' the line of march the Boers were takin', so I was able to tell him.

" 'Thanks,' he sez. That night he deserted.

"What happened afterwards I heard from a Boer prisoner who told one of our sergeants.

"H. Jones left the camp soon after midnight, an' dodgin' the sentries, an' the outposts, he made his way in the direction of the Boers. For two days he tramped, sleepin' at night on the open veldt an' with nothin' to eat but a biscuit he took away with him.

"He was found by a Boer patrol, an' as luck would have it, was taken to the very commando that held the ridge.

"By all accounts, the chap in charge was a young lawyer who'd been educated in England an' spoke English better than H. Jones ever could hope to speak it.

" 'Hullo!' he sez, when H. was marched before him, 'an' that the devil do you want?'

" 'I'm lookin' for the feller that killed me young brother,' says H.

"The young commandant shook his 'head with a little smile.

" 'I'm afraid,' he sez very gently, 'there are many people in this unfortunate country who are lookin' for the man who killed their brothers.'

" 'My brother was murdered,' says H. doggedly, an' told the tale.

" 'I don't believe any of me men would have done such a thing,' he sez. 'What sort of a man was it?'

"So H. described him, an' the young lawyer frowned.

" 'Bring Van Huis here,' he sez to a Boer, an' by an' by the man he sent for came—a half-bred Dutchman with a dash of Hottentot in him.

" 'Oh, Van Huis,' sez the Commandant careless, 'they tell me you killed an English soldier at Valtspruit the other day?'

"The man grinned.

" 'Ja,' he sez 'I shot him dead.'

" 'Tell me how you did it,' sez the Commandant, pickin' his teeth with a splinter of wood.

" 'Hear,' sez the half-breed, 'I called him to bring me water, then I shot him.'

"The Commandant nodded.

" 'That was very clever,' he sez, 'so clever that I am goin' to hang you to that tree, an' this soldier shall be your executioner.'

"H. Jones came back with an escort of Boers, an' was placed under arrest, until the C.O. read the letter that the Boer Commandant sent, then he was released.

" 'What I can't understand,' sez Smithy to me afterwards, is, how is it that these two chaps, who never took any notice of one another—'

"But I stopped old Smithy because I knew what he was going to say.

" 'Friends are friends,' I sez, 'an' brothers are brothers—,' then I stopped too, for what more can you say than that?'"

22. — THE GHOST OF HEILBRON KOPJE

NOBBY CLARK, by all showing, is a man of great humanity. I have known him to do things that would make him very angry did he know I knew.

I have seen him, on a certain march—which lasted some six weeks, and was the most fatuous, futile, and wicked operation of the whole war—share his scanty rations with a man he hated. I have seen him by sickbeds as tender as a woman. It is said that in a certain fight on the Vaal River, where the grass caught fire, and the wounded lay helplessly sizzling in the flames, he and

Private Smith went again and again into this perfect hell of torment to carry their wounded fellows to safety.

It is said, too, and, I do not doubt, with truth, that they lied their way out of a Victoria Cross, stoutly affirming that they took no part in the rescue, and persisting in the statement that those who thought they saw them were suffering from hallucinations, or, as Nobby put it coarsely, were drunk.

Knowing that deep down in the bottom of his heart Nobby Clark is a sentimentalist, and that away back in the base of his brain he is a shrewd, common-sense individual, the story of the ghost of the Hussar officer leaves me in an unsatisfactory condition of doubt. Is it Nobby's heart or Nobby's head that directs the recital? The facts, such as he gives me, I offer to the world in general, and the Psychological Research Society in particular.

"Me father," said Private Clark, by way of introduction, "was a feller who believed in ghosts. We used to have a family ghost when we lived at Clark's Hall, Bermondsey, but it was seized for rent, along with our other valuables.

"It used to walk the picture-gallery in the east wing," said Nobby, with a far-away look in his eye, an' father was very proud of it. Some said it was the ghost of Sir Guy de Clark, who was executed at Tower Hill; some said it was the ghost of Bill Clark, who was executed at Newgate; some said it was rats, an' I expect one of the three ideas was right.

"Nobody ever saw it but father, because it was one of them snobbish ghosts that never appeared to common people.

"Father used to see it on Christmas night, an' that was always a sign for mother to send for the doctor.

"Hullo, Clark,' sez the doctor, 'been seein' that ghost of yours?"

" 'Yes, sir,' sez father.

" 'Hum!' sez the doctor, feelin' his pulse, 'did u see anythin' else?"

" 'Yes, sir,' sez father. 'I saw a lot of pink beetles an' a mouse with an elephant's head.'

"Then the doctor would write his prescription, an' father would be a teetotaller for months an' months.

"If I said our family ghost was pinched for rent, I'm bein' what you might call exaggeracious. What happened was that father got an execution in for rent, an' him an' the broker's man got into a friendly argument as to how much whisky a man can drink without dyin'. Father went down to the grocer's an' swapped two coal tickets for two bottles, an' the broker's man obligingly sat down to prove his words.... It seems that he saw our ghost, an' the ghost must have took a likin' to him, for the broker's man wouldn't talk about anything but that ghost

an' the other animals he saw for days an' days after. It was bad business for the broker's man, because whilst he was in his trance father an' mother got all the furniture out of the house an' disappeared.

"I never took much stock of ghosts meself, an' didn't believe in 'em till the South African War." Nobby was silent for a little while, and his face grew suddenly serious and old looking.

"If you think what I'm goin' to tell you is a lie, you needn't be frightened to tell me," he said. "I don't understand the rights of it meself, an' don't expect I ever shall.

"When we was in South Africa, durin' the second half of the war, we went down to a place called Heilbron in the O.R.C.

"There had been fightin' there, but the only fight we saw was between Darkie Williams an' Tom Sparrer of 'G' for the championship of the Anchesters, Darkie winnin' in two rounds owin' to his havin' filled his boxin' glove with sand.

"But De Wet was in the neighbourhood, browsin' round, an' though we never got a shot at him, there was enough excitement in the possibility of his getting' a shot at us that we were kept fairly busy. There was another regiment at Heilbron at the time—the Warwicks I think it was, or the '8th of Kings'—an' they'd been there long before we were.

"In a station like Heilbron all sorts an' kinds of duty had to be done; there were guards, pickets an' outlyin' pickets, flyin' sentries an' patrols, an' if a chap wasn't on one, he was on another, but I did every one of 'em before it came to me duty to do flyin' sentry. Me beat was two miles long, from the base guard to 'Hussars Kopje.'

"It was called 'Hussars Kopje' because in one of the early fights of the war the Hussars took this little hill after a fight in which they lost an officer.

"Flyin' sentry isn't such a bad job, partly because a feller was on his own. He could have a smoke, an' so long as he covered the ground, an' kept his eyes open, he was doin' all that was expected of him.

"It was a lonely walk over a deserted bit of country, but the night I went on flyin' sentry duty there was a full moon.

"Three men an' a corporal, that was the flyin' guard, an' we took over duty from the other regiment.

"Just before the old guard marched off, one of the fellows sez:—

" 'Don't any of you fellers go up "Hussars Kop." '

" 'For why?' I sez.

" 'Because of the ghost,' sez the feller, it'll probably scare you chaps, bein' new

to the game.'

" 'If it don't scare a woolly-headed Warwickshire cow-chaser,' I sez politely, it won't scare a feller of the Dashin' Anchesters.'

" 'You'll dash all right,' sez the Warwick, when that ghost comes after you.'

"Soon after this the Warwicks marched off.

" 'Don't go up that kopje—keep to the road,' sings out the Warwick as he left, an' havin' shouted a few insultin' remarks after him, we settled down to the guard.

"I was first relief, an' went straight out on me two-mile walk. I had me rifle loaded an' slung, with the safety catch down, an' with me hands in me overcoat pockets, the night bein' rather cold, I loafed along.

"Half-way to the kopje, I came up to a mounted patrol of the Imperial Yeomanry, an' after I'd given him me opinion of yeomen in general, an' he'd been very candid about foot-sloggers, we parted bad friends.

" 'Look out for the ghost,' he sez.

" 'Mind you don't fall off that horse,' I sez.

"I'd gone a little way when I heard him come canterin' after me.

" 'Hi, Tommy,' he called, an' I turned round.

" 'Not so much of the Tommy,' I sez, 'or I'll stick a pin in your gallant charger!'

" 'No offence,' sez the yeoman, an' then went on to tell me about the ghost. I hadn't took much notice of the yarn till then, an' I got a bit interested.

" 'I've never seen it,' sez the yeoman, 'but one of our sergeants did. Let's go up the kopje together an' see what it's like.'

" 'Catch me climbin' a hill,' I sez, 'when I can walk on the nice level road.'

" 'You're afraid,' he sez.

" 'I am,' I sez. 'I'm afraid of tirin' me feet.'

"We continued discussin' the matter till we came up to the hill, an' all the time I was gettin' more an' more curious. When he put his horse at the kopje, I sez:

—

" 'All right, I'll come up with you—I ain't seen a ghost for years.'

"It was a kopje as like as two pins any other kopje I've seen.

"There were thousands similar to it in South Africa. A gentle rise covered with boulders an' stunted bush, with big stones underfoot to make the goin' worse.

"It was, as I've told you, a bright, moonlight night, a clear sky an' not a breath of wind stirrin', an' as we got farther an' farther up the side of the hill, the

country sort of unrolled itself beneath. Over to the north, an' seemin'ly under our feet, was the lights of Heilbron. Yon could hear sentries challengin' in the town, an' even the tramp of their feet as they marched up an' down.

"I was warm enough by the time I reached the top, an' me an' the yeoman stopped an' looked round.

" 'Where's your ghost?' I sez.

"I'd hardly got the words out of me mouth when I had a queer sensation. I didn't hear anythin', or see anythin', but I knew that there was somebody behind me, an' I spun round, slippin' me rifle from me shoulder.

"An' then I saw.

"Comin' up the hill, the same way we had come, was an officer. He was in full kit, with his helmet tilted over his eyes, an' he was walkin' slowly.

"Me heart was in me mouth at first, but when I saw it was an officer I recovered.

" 'Visitin' rounds,' I sez to the yeoman; but the yeoman said nothin', an' his horse started snortin' an' rearin'.

"The officer was comin' very slowly, with his head bent down as though he was lookin' for somethin' on the ground. Now an' again he'd stop, an' look left an' right, but always on the ground.

" 'What's he lost?' I sez in a low voice.

"He didn't seem to notice us, though we stood out clear enough in the moonlight, an' I brought my rifle to the port.

" 'Halt! Who comes there?' I sez, but he took no notice.

"Nearer an' nearer he came, his eyes bent on the ground, an' I challenged again

" 'Halt! Who comes there?'

"Then he looked up, an' I saw that I was talkin' to a dead man!

"It was the face of a man who was dead: a grey face with a little red mark just above his right eye.

"I staggered back; then, as the yeoman put spurs to his horse, an' went clatterin' an' blunderin' down the other side of the hill, I caught hold of his stirrup-leather an' run with him....

"The other fellers of the guard said I'd been moonstruck, an' the corporal of the guard smelt me breath, but none of 'em took the trouble to go up the kopje and investigate.

"Next mornin', when the guard was relieved, I was sent for to orderly room.

" 'I understand you saw a ghost, Clark?' sez the Colonel.

" 'Yes, sir,' I sez, an' told 'im all about it.

"Now the rum thing was that the Colonel didn't laugh. He listened very quietly, noddin' his head, an' sayin' nothin. When I finished he sez:—

" 'This is all true, you have been tellin' me?'

" 'Yes, sir,' I sez, 'I'm willin' to take me oath.'

"He said no more, an' I went back to me tent.

"The fellers didn't half roast me. Even Smithy called me a liar, an' 'Nobby's ghost' was the talk of the camp for weeks.

"After the war was over, we was ordered home.

"I forget the name of the ship we came home on, but I think it was the 'Drayton Grange.' We brought home a lot of 'details,' Engineers, Army Service Corps, an' two squadrons of the 22nd Hussars.

"After we'd all settled down an' got to know one another, we used to have little bow-wows on the fo'c'sle head, an' spent a lot of time tellin' one another what gallant fellers we'd been.

"There was a Hussar chap named Paul.

" 'The most curious thing I've ever seen,' he sez one afternoon, when we were all gassin', 'was the taking of Hussar Kop—any of you chaps know it, it's near Heilbron?'

"There was a bit of a laugh when he said this, an' the chaps all looked at me.

" 'We had a young officer,' sez the Hussar, 'Lieutenant Enden, his name was—a regular boy. He was engaged to a young lady in Canterbury, an' I've never seen a feller so much in love in me life. Used to carry her picture in a little gold locket round his neck. I've seen him, when he thought nobody was lookin', take it out, an' have a dekkko.

" 'Well, about this fight I was speakin' of. The Boers held the kopje, an' two squadrons of Ours was sent to dislodge 'em. There wasn't such a number of the enemy on the kop that we couldn't tackle 'em.

" 'We galloped up to the foot of the hill an' dismounted under the cover of a little ridge, an' then we began to go up, takin' cover as best we could.

" 'Lieutenant Enden was leadin' us, crouchin' behind such rocks as he could find, an' dodgin' from boulder to boulder.

" 'Suddenly I see him stand up an' clasp his hand to his breast. I thought at first he was shot, but as he began lookin' around, left an' right searchin' the ground, I knew he'd lost somethin'—an' guessed it was the locket.

" 'He stood up with the bullets whistlin' round him, his eyes travellin' over the ground—an' then he collapsed!

" 'Shot stone dead, he was....

" 'We buried him at the foot of the hill... an' we never found the locket.' "

Nobby stopped here and blew his nose vigorously.

"There are times," he said, "when I think of Heilbron, an' the kopje outside the town, an' a grey-faced young officer, searchin', searchin', searchin' for ever an' ever for that locket he lost. An' when I think of him I want to cry."

23. — SACRIFICE

ACCORDING to a man's environments so his life is, so his tragedies are, and his end will be.

To be mauled by a lion is an extraordinary and painful experience that comes to very few of us. Yet it is the common lot of the menagerie attendant. So with the soldier, whether living here in peaceful England or going about his duty in Bombay, Karachi, or some like place, his life, shaped by environment, is full of that incident which makes for tragedy.

There are conditions of life so colourless, so even, that the slightest deviation from the smooth and normal flow of existence stands out as a landmark to be looked back upon and discussed for a score of years.

The sedate Government office, with its days made up of returns, dockets, references and cross-references, remembers vividly that remarkable day in '83 when young Swink upset the red ink over the Public Works ledger—Swink himself, now a stout veteran of forty-four, will reconstruct the scene for you. At the vicarage at Bascombe-cum-Marsh, how often do they talk of that memorable Sunday when the dear Bishop drank a wine-glassful of vinegar under the impression that it was Château Lafayette?

In a thousand peaceful homes, the extraordinary happening that is retailed through the ages is very small potatoes, indeed, and well may their worthy occupants shake their heads doubtingly when I talk of the abnormalities of army life. For death in terrible guise is on calling terms with the regiment. He comes, not in conscious majesty, as one who knows that panic will grip the heart of all who observe him, but apologetically, rather like a man slighted.

When we, in the army, with stately march and bowed head, follow the laden gun-carriage to the little military cemetery, and come back merrily, with the band playing unseemly tunes, you call us "callous," and are a little shocked, but the explanation is this: we are teaching the young recruits that this grisly monster is not so terrible a fellow; not one to be shivered over or shuddered at, but one to be treated with a certain amount of good-natured contempt.

"When we was stationed in England," said Smithy, apropos, "an' when we was on manoeuvres, we pitched a camp one Saturday near a little village, an' the Colonel got the local parson to come along an' chew the mop on Sunday. He was a nice young feller, but he'd never seen real solders before, an' it worried him. By all accounts he sat up half the night makin' up his sermon, an' then he come along an' preached about what fine soldiers the ancient Israelites was, an' how we ought to be like 'em. An' he sez that when we was killed, an' if we happened to have time to think the matter over, we should realize that it was all for a good cause, an' take it in good part.

"When the sermon was over, an' we was dismissed, he walked round the camp talkin' to the men. Of course, everybody was polite. It was 'yessir,' an' 'no, sir,' an' Nobby, who's one of the best, even went so far as to promise to call round at the church that night. But what was surprisin' about this parson was he would talk about dyin', an' accordin' to him, a chap ought to use all his spare time to sit down quietly by hisself an' say, 'Well, here's another day nearer the grave.' It was a comic idea, but it didn't catch on.

"Now, there's lots of fellers in the world who think like him, that to be good you've got to have a dial as long as a wet week, an' that the surest sign of badness is gladness.

"It's a wrong idea, an' the proof is this that the best man that ever wore a uniform was the happiest—and that man was Father John Stronard, C.F.

"The first time I ever saw Father John was in Aldershot in '94. He ran a soldiers' home in North Camp, an' was one of those fellers with a thin, refined face, that had 'Priest' written all over him. He wasn't an R.C., for all that. He was Church, very High Church, so some of the chaps said, an' wore little medals on his watch chain. But high or low, he was the whitest kind of white man that ever lived. He was friends with all the other chaplains—that's the best sign. Friends with 'em all, from Father O'Leary to Mr. Stemm, the Baptist lay preacher. He'd got no fads, he smoked a big fat pipe all day, an' was ready to put on the gloves with any feller that thought he had the beatin' of him. He never threw religion at you, but when a man acted the goat, you'd see that man go miles out of his way to avoid Father John.

"Fellers trusted him an' told him things. There was a wild devil in Ours called Cross. Cross by name and crook by nature. There wasn't a decent-minded man of Ours who would have anything to do with him. It wasn't that his language was bad—it was worse than that. After he started swearin' you felt that the room ought to be disinfected.

"One day on the ranges, firin' our annual course, we was usin' a new cartridge, 'Mark 10.'

"Nobby was lyin' alongside of me, an' was passin' sarcastic remarks about the

markers.

"He fired a round, an' got an 'outer'; then he tried to pull back the breech block.

" 'Hullo,' sez Nobby, she's jammed.'

"It took him nigh on five minutes to get the exploded cartridge out, then he whistled, got up, an' walked to the officer in charge.

" 'Beg pardon, sir,' sez Nobby, 'see this?'

"He held up the cartridge.

"The officer-boy, who hadn't been from Sandhurst a week or so, frowned most terrible, an' sez, 'What's wrong with it?'

" 'It's split all up the side, sir,' Nobby sez, 'an' this is the second time it's happened—the cartridges are defective!'

"If the officer-boy had known cow-heel from tripe he'd have called up the officer in charge, who was at another part of the range, but bein' only a kid at the game, an' not wishin' to take advice from a private, he sez, very stern:—

" 'Go back to your place, me man, an' don't talk nonsense.'

"So Nobby came back an' lay down.

"By an' by, the Colour-sergeant come up. 'Why aren't you firing, Clark?' he sez, an' Nobby told him.

"The 'flag' took the cartridge, an' looked at it, an' shouted, 'Cease fire!'

"Up dashed the officer-boy.

" 'What the dickens is wrong, Colour-sergeant ' he sez angrily.

" 'Defective cartridges, sir,' sez the 'flag.'

" 'Who said so?' sez the officer. 'Go on firin' till I tell you to stop.'

"So we went on firin' for two minutes, an' then the breech block of Sam Cross's rifle blew out, an' Sam went down screamin', with half his face shot off.

"I'm not going to tell you how the officer was tried an' cashiered, or how the ammunition was called in, an' the fuss the papers made about it.

"When Cross got back to his senses, the first man he asked for was Father John, an' Father John was at the hospital before you could say knife. Practically he didn't leave him for two days an' nights. He was with him when the doctors operated on poor old Sam, an' with him through the night when it was a toss-up whether the patient would live or die, an' with him for a couple of hours every day till Sam was turned out of hospital cured.

"Now the rum thing about it was this, that although he'd sent for the Father, an' although they was together so long, not one word of religion passed between

them.

"At first Father John used to only sit an' read in his soft voice—bits out of books—an' then, when young Sam got better an' could talk, they'd discuss the coal business what Sam's brother was in, an' county cricket, an' things like that, but for all this, Sam came back to the battalion a new man.

"The only thing that was ever said, was said before witnesses, an' that was the day before Sam came out.

He walked with the Father to the door of the ward, an' stood a bit awkward tryin' to put the words together.

" 'Father,' he sez, sudden, 'how could a chap like me get to be a chap like you?'

" 'How d'ye mean, Sam?' sez Father John.

" 'I mean,' sez Sam, 'you're a man same as me, barrin' education; how did you get to be patient, an' gentle, an' all?'

" 'By sacrifice,' sez Father John sadly.

"That was Sam's motto when he came back to barracks. He'd got the idea in a dim sort of way into his thick head, that sacrifice meant not doin' somethin' you wanted to do, an' doin' things you didn't want to do.

"Sometimes the devil in him got up; an' I've seen him standin' by his bed-cot, with the veins in his forehead swollen an' his eyes glarin' at somebody who had annoyed him, but he wouldn't speak, an' his hands would be clenched till the knuckles were white—then you'd see his lips move, an' you could almost read the word 'sacrifice' on his lips.

"Then the regiment was ordered to India, an' we left the padre behind. He marched down to the station by Sam's side, an' he shook hands with him on the platform. I believe that poor Sam never felt anything so much as he did that partin', but he 'stuck it'—he was learnin' his lesson.

"We hadn't been in India a year, movin' from station to station, before a feller by the name of Dah Yussef, who was a sort of head thief in the hills, came down an' burned a village, killed a lot of people, an' carried off some women an' cattle. He was a pukka badmash, was old Joseph, an' this was about the ninth dacoity he'd committed in the year, the Government lookin' on an' sendin' polite messages to him, askin' him to kindly return the goods an' no questions would be asked. We was stationed on the border, an' naturally we was very bitter about the Government not doin' anything.

" 'It's a scandal,' sez Nobby, very indignant. 'I've a good mind to write home to the Islington Gazette about it. It's this Liberal Government,' sez Nobby, gloomily.

" 'It's a Conservative Government in now,' I sez, but Nobby sez it didn't affect

the argument.

"Old Joseph, or Yussef, or whatever his name was, naturally got bolder an' bolder, an' not satisfied with raiding the villages near his hills, he came farther into the open, an' started ructions almost on the plains.

"That's what the Government of India was waitin' for. The Guides an' a battalion of Ghoorkas was waitin' doggo, an' came by forced march, an' the Anchesters, the Wessex, the Punjab Lancers, an' two batteries of Artillery was sent off at a minutes' notice to call on Uncle Joseph.

"We got the order at midnight, an' by daybreak we was twelve miles on the road.

"It was supposed to be one of them cut an' come again campaigns, all over in ten minutes, but the Government had left it a little bit too late, an' the Afridis were up in arms. We fought two sharp battles, an' then the enemy retired an' took up a strong position on the foothills. We shelled 'em, but we couldn't shift 'em then the Guides, the Ghoorkas, an' the Anchesters tried to take the position by assault—but we failed.

"The General in command drew us off, an' we waited for reinforcements. They came in twenty-four hours the Kents, Lancasters, an' a battery of howitzers—an' with 'em came Father John. He was in India for duty, an' although we hadn't known it, he'd been there for some time.

"Nobby, watchin' the reinforcements march in, was the first to spot him, in his khaki uniform, an' with the black Maltese cross on his collar. Nobby dashed back to our lines lookin' for Sam Cross, an' found him sittin' down quietly, drinkin' cold tea.

" 'Sam,' sez Nobby, very excited, 'who do you think's turned up?'

" 'Father John,' sez Sam, calmly, an' Nobby was rather disappointed, because he wanted to create a little sensation.

" 'I had a feelin' he was comin',' sez Sam, gettin' up, but I didn't durst go down to see 'em marchin' in, for fear I'd be disappointed. No,' he sez, shakin' his head at Nobby's question, 'I didn't know he was in India.'

"Nobby told me afterwards it made his flesh creep to hear him—it was like listenin' to a man that's in the habit of seein' ghosts. Nobody saw 'em meet, but when I met Sam comin' from the Kent's lines—where the padre's tent was—his eyes were red, like a man who'd been cryin'.

"Next mornin' we formed up for the grand assault. Soon after daybreak the guns got into action, the howitzers goin' close up under the escort of the Guides' Cavalry, an' shellin' the sangar, where the enemy was lyin' as thick as bees in a hive. At eleven o'clock the infantry moved, the Guides an' the Anchesters on the enemy's front, the Ghoorkas an' the Wessex on the left, the

Kents an' Punjabis on the right, and the Lancasters in reserve. I've only got a dim idea of what the fight was like. We went ahead by short rushes from cover to cover. The air seemed to be filled with flyin' bullets, an' the enemy had got an old gun into position, an' was dealin' out bits of scrap-iron at regular intervals.

"It was terrible hard, when we began the ascent of the hill, for the ground was broken up, an' big boulders 'an stones came flyin' down to meet us. These were worse than the bullets. We'd got into a tight place, with a big, deep nullah in front of us, an' between us an' the enemy, an' we lay down firin' steady. The nullah had to be crossed, an' we had to rest before we could do it, in the face of the fire. We could hear the chaps on the right come into action, an' from where we was we could see the Ghoorkas an' Wessex comin' up on the left, an' I was just wonderin' why it was that the Wessex, which is a rotten regiment in peace time, should be such a decent corps in war time, when I heard Sam Cross shout, 'Go back—go back, for God's sake, Father John!'

"I looked round.

"Father John was comin' up the hill behind us—not foolhardy, but takin' cover.

"Sam's face was white, but the padre was smilin' when he reached us. His big pipe was in his mouth, an' he crouched down behind the little rampart of stones that protected us, with a pleasant nod.

"Personally, I thought it was a bit silly of him to come into danger like this, but I found out afterwards that he'd heard the General say that the success of the fight would depend upon the Guides an' the Anchesters. You see, the intelligence staff knew nothing about the big nullah on the hill, an' even we who was lyin' along the side of it, didn't know what a terrible business it would be crossin' it, for it ran so that it was fully exposed to the enemy's fire, an' every man who scrambled out on the other side could be picked off by the enemy's marksmen.

"When Father John knew what we were in for he came up. Lyin' down there, with his pipe goin' he was full of spirits, an' made some of our youngsters, who'd got a bit fidgety, cheerful, too.

" 'Sing,' he sez, as the fire got heavier an' heavier.

" 'What shall we sing, Father?' sez Nobby.

" 'Anything,' sez Father John, an' he started us goin' with 'Where are the boys of the Old Brigade?' an' from one end of the line to the other we roared the chorus :—

'Steadily, shoulder to shoulder,

Steadily, blade by blade;

Steady an' strong,

Marchin' along—

Like the boys of the Old Brigade.'

"In the middle of it the helio from headquarters began to wink, an' by an' by the order was passed down the lines, 'Get ready!'

"Then, when there came a slackenin' of fire from the enemy, our bugle went, 'Come along! come along! come along, Anchesters!'—that's our regimental call—an' the 'Advance!'

"We were in the nullah an' over the edge of it before the execution began. The minute I reached the other side I could see the danger. Up the hill, as far as the nullah, the ground had been steep an' covered with big stones—it was from this nullah that they'd rolled the boulders down on us. Now, we were on a gentle slope, as bare of cover as a soup-plate, an' there was no protection from the fire from the ridge above.

"The Guides on our right got the first blast of the storm, an' they went down in little patches, as if some blight had struck 'em, passin' a man here, an' takin' a man there.

"Steady, the Anchesters!' yelled the Adjutant; 'fix bayonets!'

"We was a hundred an' fifty yards from the position, an' I braced myself for the run.

" 'Charge!'

"With a yell that was almost like a scream, we dashed forward. I never ran so fast, or with any less effort, in my life.

"The bullets made a noise like a gramophone before the tune starts, an' I've got an idea that I saw a feller fallin', but I hadn't time to notice properly before I'd followed Nobby over the breastworks.

"Nobby is the finest bayonet fighter in the regiment, an' the second man he met was dead before the first one had fallen.

"I got home with the bayonet on a big Afridi, who made a slice at me with his big knife, an' then someone fell against me with a cough. In a fraction of a second, as I half turned to see who it was, I saw an Afridi pass his knife through Sam Crow.

"Then two fellers came at me—I got the first, easy. I parried a blow, an' gave him a short-arm thrust that brought him down—an' the other feller was shot dead by Captain Marsham, an' then the 'cease fire' sounded.

"I looked round. Nobby, who never loses an opportunity for business, was pickin' up all the valuable-lookin' articles, such as gold-mounted swords,

within reach. I was thinkin', regretful, of poor Sam, when, to my astonishment, he came up. He was bleedin' from a cut head, where some Afridi had got home on him, but there was no other sign of injury.

" 'Smithy,' he sez, quietly, come an' help me with Father John—I—I mustn't lift him.'

" 'Good God,' whispers Nobby, droppin' his swords, 'not—not—?'

"Sam nodded.

" 'Father John was killed as we came over there.' He pointed to the ramparts.

"He made no sign of grief, not even that evenin', when we laid the Father in a deep grave at the foot of the hills—an' he was the only man who didn't cry as we buried the greatest an' kindest of Christians an' friends.

"Sam only stood, with his bandaged head an' his white face; swayin' a little from side to side. Me an' Nobby, in our rough way, tried to cheer him when we got back to the camp—although we wasn't feeling any too cheerful ourselves, for some good men went out that day. But he was as calm as possible.

" 'It's only proper that Father John should die that way,' he said. 'It's the right end—sacrifice. He risked his life because he wanted to help us.'

"He put his hand to his side as though he was in pain, an' he was, too, though we didn't guess it.

" 'I thought,' he went on, 'that Father John would like we to see him put away nice an' comfortable—that's why I kept alive!'

"He said this all so calm that I didn't understand what he meant.

" 'Let me down gently,' he sez, an' Nobby saw the blood on his lips, an' put his arms round him.

"We lowered him carefully down, an' two doctors came. Sam lay very still an' quiet.

"They stripped off his coat. His shirt was caked with blood, an' one of the doctors whistled as he saw the wound.

" 'Is he dead, sir?' whispered Nobby.

"The doctor nodded.

" 'How he has lived for six hours with a knife wound in his heart,' he said, 'God knows. Why, by every law of science, he ought to have been dead this morning!'

"The Adjutant came up.

" 'How do you account for it, doctor?' he asked.

"The doctor shook his head an' couldn't say, but me an' Nobby could have

explained. It was love, an' will, an' sacrifice that kept poor Sam alive—but mostly sacrifice."

THE END

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