









I summoned "Local Board 163" in Court Martial proceedings

CONSCRIPT 2989

EXPERIENCES OF A DRAFTED MAN

ILLUSTRATED BY
H. B. MARTIN

2 Camp, Savings
" "



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TO
MY MOTHER AND FATHER

and every other Mother and Father, who spend hours wondering about the welfare of their son, this book is dedicated. And with it comes the assurance that life in the big cantonment contains a full measure of real happiness, and that all hardships are mitigated by a sense of humor which develops even in the worst of pessimists. We are contented, for to compensate for the absence of you and all that you mean, comes the knowledge that we are doing everything that brave men and women, the world over, would have us do at times like these. We are doing a man's work and by the token of the service flag in your window you should know that the days of patched trousers, darned stocking, of toy fire engines, play soldiers, and noisy drums, were not spent in vain.

CONSCRIPT 2989

Thursday:

ONCE when I was an enthusiastic freshman (it seems ages ago) I joined a Latin society that had for its inspiration the phrase, *forsan haec olim meminisse juvabit*.

All I can remember about the society is the motto, and there is nothing particularly pleasant about the recollection, either. But somehow to-night that fool phrase comes back to me and makes a pessimist of me right off. I wonder how pleasant these things are going to be and whether I will want to remember them hereafter. Perhaps I won't have much choice. I'll probably remember them whether I want to or not. Already my first eight hours of active service as Conscript 2989 have some sharp edges sticking out which I am likely to remember, though many of them are far from pleasant.

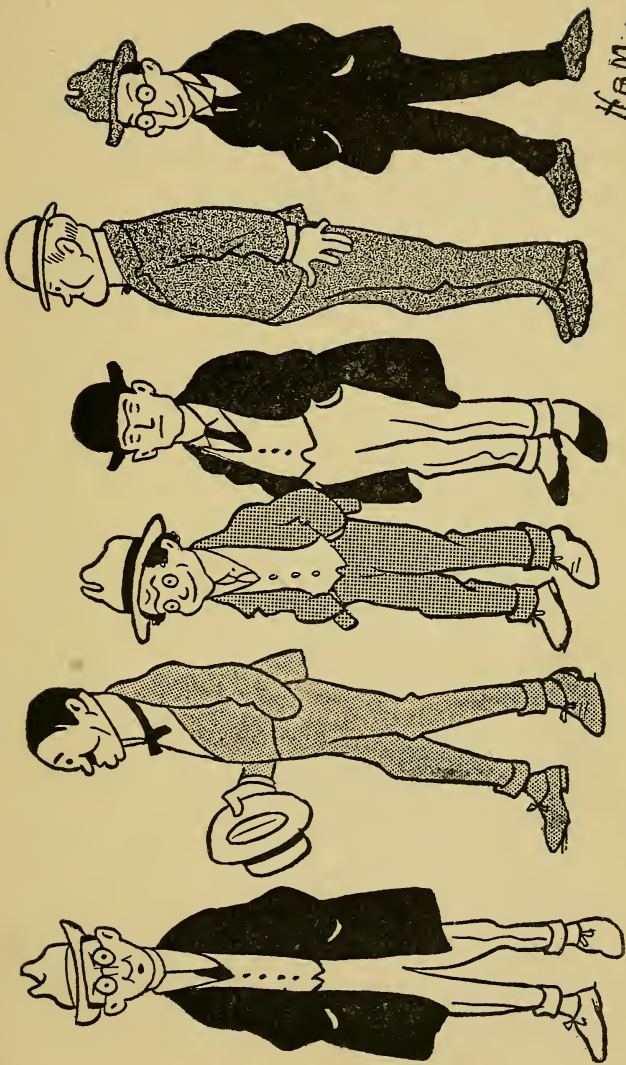
I am now truly a member of the army of the great unwashed and unwashable—no, I take that back. They are washable. I saw a grizzly old

Sergeant herding four of them out to the wash-room this evening. Each of them carried a formidable square of yellow soap and a most unhappy expression. But the Sergeant looked pleased with his detail.

Never in my wildest flights of fancy can I picture some of these men as soldiers. Slavs, Poles, Italians, Greeks, a sprinkling of Chinese and Japs—Jews with expressionless faces, and what not, are all about me. I'm in a barracks with 270 of them, and so far I've found a half dozen men who could speak English without an accent. Is it possible to make soldiers of these fellows? Well, if muscle and bone (principally bone) is what is wanted for material, they have got it here with a vengeance. But, then, from the looks of things they have been doing wonders and they may make creditable soldiers of them at that. Goodness knows, they may even make a soldier out of me, which would be a miracle. Here's hoping.

Friday:

I only need to glance back over the page I wrote last night to see how *I* felt. This con-

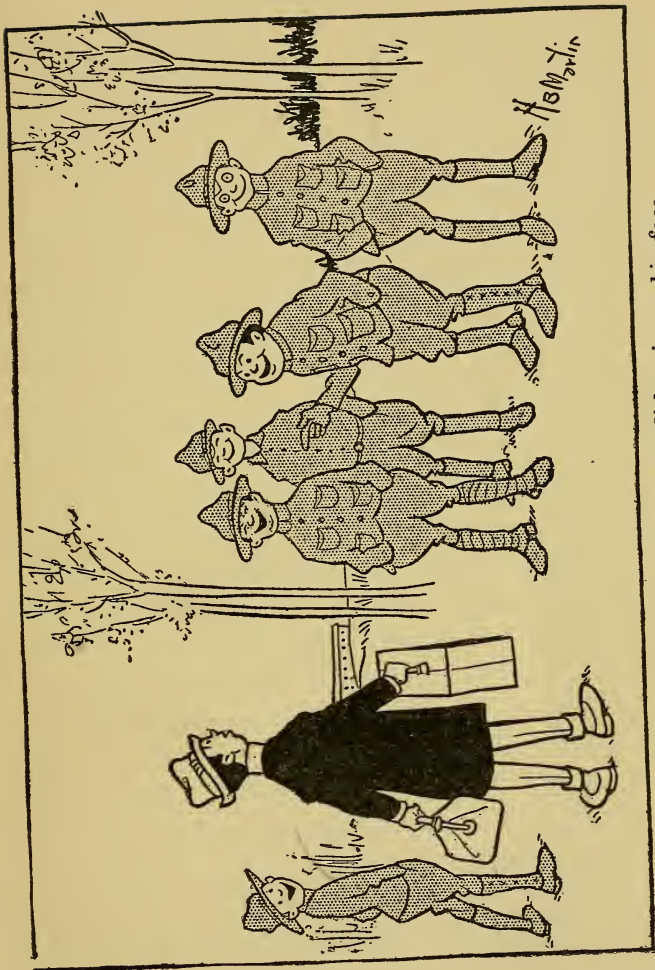


them—

Never in my wildest flights of fancy can I picture some of these men as soldiers

scripting must have gotten under my skin a little deeper than I thought. I'll admit I was homesick, and I guess it made me a little testy. I think I really should tear that page out and begin over. It isn't exactly fair, and, besides, it doesn't fulfil the function of a diary, anyway, which, I take it, is a record of events and things—not a criticism of everybody in general and an opportunity to give vent to disagreeable feelings.

From a "close-up" view yesterday may have seemed like a trying day, but to-night it looks a lot different and a lot more interesting. I must confess that all the "good-byes," and the bands, and the weeping mothers and sweethearts, and the handshakes, and the pompous old turtles (who dodged the draft in the Civil War or bought substitutes) who slapped you on the back and told you how they wished they were young again, along with the arrival of the "Kaiser Kanners," who unquestionably were "kanners" of another variety, and the parade and the Home Guard and the dozen and one "Comfort Kits" that every one handed you, and the mystery of what was to come, and the scared look on every one's face, including



Every one of them had a fiendish grin on his face

my own, and the vacant feeling in the pit of one's stomach, superinduced by sandwiches and coffee, fudge, oranges and chocolates in lieu of a real meal, did get on my nerves.

But, hang it, when I look back we got a great farewell, at that. And the local Board did things up mighty well. I find myself possessed of a razor, razor strop, wrist watch, two pocket knives, unbreakable mirror, drinking cup and a lot of other things that I never expected to own or need. I haven't the remotest idea where many of them came from.

Then there was that long, almost never ending train ride, which seemed to be taking me on an unbearable distance from the place I really felt I belonged.

And the arrival; all I saw when I tumbled off the train were thousands of unpainted buildings and millions of fellows in khaki, and every one of them had a fiendish grin on his face as he shouted: "Oh, you rookey. Wait, just wait; you'll get yours! When they bring on the needle. Oh, the needle."

I had a vague idea of what the "needle" might be, but it wasn't pleasant to hear about it from every one I met. But I guess there

were a lot of fellows who were not quite certain what this threatening "needle" was. Foolishly two of them asked one of the Sergeants who met us at the train and what they heard in reply to their queries made them paler than they were before, if that were possible. Thereafter, for the rest of the afternoon and evening, the "needle" was the subject of earnest conversation among us all, and the doubts and misgivings about that instrument of torture, coupled with a thoroughly good case of homesickness on the part of every one of us helped to make a pleasant (?) evening. And that most of us worried until far into the night is certain. I know I did, and the Italian on my left cried himself to sleep, and didn't try to hide his unhappiness either. Oh, it was a delightful evening, all things considered.

Forty-seven of us, all from my own district, came down together, and while we remained in one group there was a measure of consolation to be had for us all. But our hopes that we would stay together at camp were dashed immediately we got off the train. In fact we were so thoroughly split up that I managed to get into a squad composed entirely of for-

eigners, and I'm still with them. But the prospects of a change are excellent.

Quite as docile as sheep, and just as ignorant, we were marched down one camp street after another. My friends of foreign extraction, with due regard for anything that looked like a uniform, saluted every one that passed, and they were tolerably busy until we were halted outside of our present abode, a big two-story, unpainted barracks building.

Here mess kits were served to each of us, and though we did not know the combination that unlocked the mysterious looking things, we were glad to get them, because they added so much to the dozen and one things we were already carrying. Then, completely smothering us, came two tremendous horse blankets and a comforter. Those comforters were everything their name implies. Not only did they afford warmth, but amusement as well. They ranged in shades from baby blue and pink to cerise and lavender, and some one with a sense of humour must have distributed them. The stout, pudgy, black-haired Italian to my left reposes under the voluminous folds of a beautiful pink creation, and across the room

sits a huge Irishman, with hands as big as hams and shoulders of a giant, with a baby blue comforter wrapped about him. Mine is a bewitching old rose. But, believe me, it's there with the quality if it isn't much on looks. I found that out last night.

Then, after the Sergeant showed us where we bunked and where we could expect to find something to eat about supper time, every one left us severely alone, which was mostly what we wanted, because we all had a lot on our mind between homesickness and that blessed "needle." But there



A baby blue comforter wrapped about him

was some work to do, such as stuffing mattresses with hay, sweeping out the barracks and similar occupations until bed time.

Some one, who had evidently heard some weird tales about the punishment meted out to

those who overslept at camp, brought an alarm clock along with him, and the blooming thing went off at 4 A.M. Of course we got up, switched the lights on over head, and proceeded to get dressed with that resigned now-what-are-you-going-to-do-with-us air.

But dressing was interrupted by a string of the most beautiful cusses I ever heard, coming downstairs just in advance of a mighty mad looking Sergeant:

“Who in —— tarnation bow-wows has got that —— alarm clock? Pitch it out the —— window, and git back to bed.”

It went and we went. But that's as far as we could go. Thoughts of the “needle” and other forms of torture which we were to face in a few short hours kept most of us awake until a quarter after five, when every officer in camp began to blow letter-carrier whistles. Then we all got up and were introduced to some physical exercises guaranteed to stretch every muscle in our makeup. I took a cold shower bath after mine, and was the object of interest of the entire barracks. Great stuff (I mean the shower).

Most of us might have been tolerably happy



An alarm clock went off at 4 A.M.

after that, if it hadn't been for the fact that every man in uniform made some evil suggestion about the "needle." And when they saw us all, white and corpsey looking and more or less unsteady on our legs, line up in front of the barracks and march off under our Second Lieutenant, the groans and sorry faces they feigned were enough to make one's blood run cold. And then we got the "needle."

I, for one, was disappointed, and so were most of the rest of us. But there were a few who didn't give themselves a chance to be disappointed. They promptly fainted: not because of the injection but because of the state of their nerves which they all admitted afterward. There were a few things about the examination calculated to scare a man to death such as the question: "In case you are shot and killed to whom do you wish six months' pay to be sent?" Many of us stammered a bit before answering.

After that we stripped, lined up and started on our way. Then measured, marked and finger-printed, we arrived before a physician who stamped a quarter section under the left shoulder blade with a sponge covered with

iodine, while another one scratched the skin on our upper arm to mark the acreage to be covered by a vaccination. We moved on to two more physicians, and while one dug a hunk out



Jabbed at the iodine mark and pulled the trigger

of our arm and inserted vaccine in place of the skin removed, the other man, with a villainously long hypodermic, jabbed at the iodine mark and pulled the trigger. And now, by George, if any one else around here tries to kid me into worrying about anything at all, I'm going to talk back proper. They sure had me scared

stiff and I'll admit it. Why, hang it, I would rather have had typhoid than face that "needle" before I really knew what it amounted to. But here I am, with germs variously estimated at from 15,000 to 250,000 circulating around inside of me, due to said "needle," and aside from a little wooziness in the head, and a sore shoulder, I'm quite contented and ready to turn in. Good-night.

Saturday:

The serum injections of yesterday produced some queer, and in one case unfortunate, results. Last night after taps were sounded and lights were out, I lay awake a long time in spite of the fact I was very tired.

Couldn't understand it, and my arm and back were as sore as could be. Hour after hour wore on, and I couldn't get to sleep. Some did, however, and I had a regular frog's chorus of snores to keep me company. I became a veritable specialist in snores and wheezes and grunts. Every time I heard a new variety I formed mental pictures of the men who probably made them.

Then the chorus was interrupted by some one not far from me who called out mournfully: "Oh, my back, my back! The needle!" Then in sharper tones: "Count off. 1-2-3-4." I wondered what horrors his overwrought nerves were causing him to dream of.

But when I did get to sleep I slept soundly, certainly, for they told me this morning that one chap had become seriously ill, and had been carried from the barracks to an ambulance and whisked away to the hospital sometime during the small hours of the morning. It seems that he had an excess of germs circulating around inside of him, due to the fact that he did not know enough to move on after the doctor had given him the first injection, and the physician, looking only for the nearest iodine spot, shot him twice in the same place.

However, I am reasonably certain I'll sleep to-night all right, for I've been pulling stumps all day, or rather during the time I wasn't learning to recognize my right foot from my left, and a few other things that every man thinks he knows until some one takes the pains to expose his ignorance. Oh, I have the qualities of a really capable soldier in me—if some

one can find them. As an infantryman I'm a much better stump puller. I proved that this afternoon. I have a beautiful double handful of blisters, not to mention a ruined suit of clothes and hopeless shoes, to my credit in this war of exterminating the Hun. I hope we get uniforms soon, because if we don't, I'll be going about clad in my old rose comforter and some summer underclothes.

Stump pulling is rough on clothes, but it certainly is an appetite builder. I've discovered already that it is good policy to be among the first on line with a mess kit, then if you can bolt your beef a-la-mode fast enough, and get outside and wash up your kit, you stand a good chance of joining the last of the line, thereby getting a second helping. Indeed, several fellows have it down to such a science already, that they get three helpings before the cook begins to say things.

The barracks is beginning to look picturesque. The atmosphere of a western mining camp, arranged for stage purposes, prevails. The Italians, swarthy-faced, heavy-featured fellows, for the most part, gather in little groups, smoke villainous pipes and play

cards incessantly, whenever they are allowed much time in the barracks. Our Semitic friends linger in the vicinity of the door that leads to the mess hall and kitchen, especially



Italians gather in little groups

about meal time. And their mess kits are always handy. Nicknames have already become common, and we have among us such worthies as Fat, Doc, Peck's Bad Boy, Toney, Binkie, Shortie, Shrimp, Simp and Pop. The last name has been applied to me, inspired, no doubt, by the suggestion of baldness aloft.

Sunday:

Didn't sleep much last night, for some reason. Think I was too tired. This is the third night I've lost time. Beginning to feel it now. But no one else seemed to sleep well either, or at least they didn't go to sleep right off. Lights out at ten and all supposed to be "tucked in." Then came various remarks from the darkness; choice, unprintable remarks about the Kaiser, the Government, the Sergeant, certain Corporals, who doubtless heard all their well-wishers had to say, but could not identify the speakers. Indeed, it struck me that the fellows had hit upon a choice way of telling certain non-coms what they thought of them, without the possibility of getting in bad. Then arguments started in the darkness, and the vocal combatants were urged on by catcalls and encouraging yells from various sections of the unlighted room, and presently shoes started flying.

About that time the Top Sergeant upstairs woke up, and decided to investigate. Silence fell in the big room when the stairs, creaking under his weight, gave warning that the crusty

old veteran of fifteen years' service with the Regulars was on his way down.

The door opened and a pocket flashlight began to travel from cot to cot. But strangely



The Top Sergeant made the round of the cots

enough every one was slumbering contentedly, and some even snoring. The Top Sergeant made the round of the cots, reached the door and "doused his glim."

Then with a most impressive introduction of profanity he remarked that "The next —, —, son-of-a-bandmaster, who started any-

thing would spend the rest of the night out on the porch in his underclothes," whereupon some wag from the darkness replied: "Put t' Kaiser out there, he started it." While others sweetly remarked: "Good-night *Sergeant*." "Pleasant dreams, dear." "Come kiss me good-night." and "Don't forget to tuck us all in."

But things eventually subsided and I dozed off, only to be awakened later by some one kissing me on the cheek. It was startling to say the least, and I sat up. I thought perhaps the *Sergeant* had come back to say good-night. Then it happened again, only this time on my hand, and I heard an eager little whine, and a sniff-sniff-sniffing that told me plainly a dog was beside my cot.

I chirped encouragingly and up he came. Then he dived between the blankets and burrowing deep worked his way down to the foot of my cot. Evidently he had slept in army cots before. All my efforts to dislodge him were futile and I knew that unless I got up and unmade my bed he would not come out. So I left him, and he in gratitude kept my feet warm.

This morning he appeared at reveille, waking

me up with his frantic efforts to dig himself to light again and kissing me good-morning, by way of showing his appreciation. He was just a plain yellow dog, with a lop ear and a habit of wagging all over when he could not get enough expression in his stump of a tail. Attached to a strap that he wore in place of a collar was a tag on which was scrawled: "Presented to Local Board No. 163—Hold the fort for we are coming." I concluded that if they held onto the fort, when they arrived, as well as they held onto their dog it wasn't worth while having them come at all.

"Local Board No. 163" stood guard on the foot of my bed, or rather, sat guard, until I got dressed, and although he created no end of interest among the rest of the fellows in the room, who whistled and called to him, he refused to leave his new-found "bunkie." He just sat tight. He even stayed when I got up to go, but he looked at me with a most reproachful air, as if to say, "I think a lot of you even though you do want to leave me."

He remained after every one had left the room and when I returned an hour later to get my mess kit for breakfast, he was still there.

But the rattle of mess tins must have suggested something to him for when I got up to go this time he was right beside me, and he even braved the crush at the mess-hall door to stick near me.

That dog never had so much to eat in all his young life as he got for breakfast that morning. First he visited our Japanese cook, who liked him and proved it by giving him a piece of meat. Then he visited the kitchen police, who found something for him, after which he made the rounds of the mess tables, coming back to me actually bloated with food. He looked up at me and I'll swear he grinned and tried to say: "This is the life—eh, Ol' Top?"

"Local Board No. 163" has already become a favourite, but with all his petting from his many well-wishers, he seems to want to call me Boss. He's on the cot beside me now as I write, snoring with disgusting impoliteness, but I guess, being just a plain yellow dog, he don't know any better.

This has been a day of visitors, and little work. Early this morning they began to arrive. I never saw so many motor cars anywhere, except at football games, or the races.

And girls; thousands of them, and pretty, too. But shucks, I'm outclassed. In fact I began to feel like my dog to-day. I'll admit it was pretty soft for the fellows who had uniforms,



Pretty soft for the fellows who had uniforms

but for the poor tramps like myself, who still wear their civilian clothes (or what is left of them, which isn't very much all told) it was sort of a lonesome day.

Then there were the lucky fellows who had passes to leave camp. They looked fine, tramping down the road toward the station. Of

course they were all uniformed; they are not allowed to leave camp unless they are.

But "Local Board No. 163" and I take consolation in the fact that perhaps next Sunday we will be all spick and span in a nice new uniform, and then we'll strike for a pass, too, and go home and swagger about a bit ourselves.

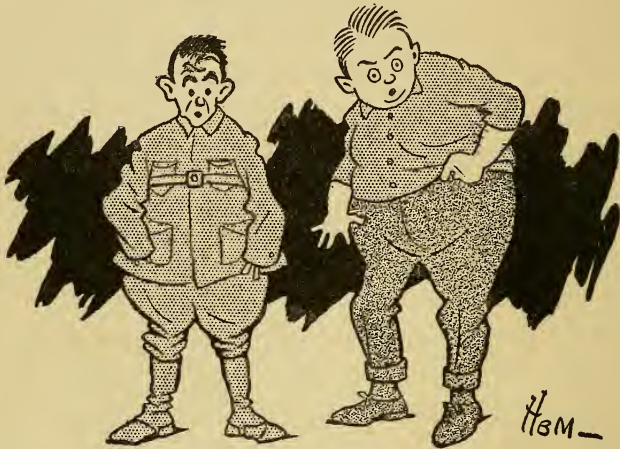
Feeling delightfully tired and sleepy; and I know I'll "press some of the creases out o' my blankets" to-night. This place seems almost comfortable and homelike now, and the men—well I've changed my original opinion of them considerably. They all (or most of them) have their hearts in the right place, and there aren't so many muckers as I thought there might be. In fact I'm beginning to like things mighty well; really enjoying myself. Only, hang it, I think I'm getting a good case of hives. Haven't been afflicted thus for about five years. If they keep up I'll report to the hospital shortly. "Come on 'Local Board No. 163' we'll turn in."

Monday:

Several things of importance happened to-day. For one thing we got some clothes. I say *some* clothes advisedly, for I'm not all clothed yet, being minus such important articles as an undershirt, socks and shoes. But those I brought from home, though sanctified and made holey by arduous labours in other fields, will do for the present. I possess a pair of winter breeches and a summer coat, but what matters that. It is sufficient to know that they fit, which is not the case in several instances, notably in that of friends Fat and Shrimp, who, I have learned, were not optimistic from the first about being fitted properly. It seems that from years of experience they have both learned never to expect to be fitted anywhere, anyhow. Fat's shirt covers him with an effort, but that is all. He can't find a shoehorn with which to get into his breeches. As for Shrimp: his belt is pulled tight about his chest and the sleeves of his tunic are rolled up to where his elbows should be, only to disclose the tips of his fingers.

But I must confess to a grave error right

here. It startled me this evening at retreat. Indeed, several things startled me this evening at retreat, including my fast developing case of hives.



His belt is pulled tight about his chest

A few days ago I made some rather boorish and very sarcastic remarks about the possibilities of ever making soldiers out of the men I found myself among. I humbly take it all back and eat mud by way of apology. Khaki, a campaign hat and a shave, together with a certain amount of training in how to stand up

straight and step off correctly, have made a vast difference. Why, hang it, I'm mighty proud to belong to this company. Jews, Italians, Poles, etc., all look like fighters; act like fighters; and a lot of them are fighters, too. Why they are soldiers already, and glad of it. Which leads me to state quite modestly the surprising fact that I think I am nearly a soldier, too, and gol-dinged set up about it. Honestly we looked fine this evening. What if there were a few misfits? A process of barter and exchange has already eliminated a great deal of that (save in the cases of Fat and



Back to civilian clothes until a special uniform is built

Shrimp, who have gone back to civilian clothes until special uniforms are built for them) and when we lined up and snapped to attention while the band over on Tower Hill played "The Star Spangled Banner" and the old flag came slowly down, we looked like real soldiers every inch. We knew it, too, and I'll bet there wasn't a prouder company in the entire camp.

Of course, I had to gum up the ceremony. But I guess I'll pay for it to-morrow. Here's how it happened:

We've been drilling, drilling, drilling, all day to-day, drilling with a vengeance, and now we can do squads right and right front into line with as much pep and vigour as a company of Regulars. Our Sergeant said so, which is some admission for the old moss-back to make. Of course, we were tired. I was about ready to drop in my tracks when five o'clock came, which is time for evening parade or retreat; a very impressive ceremony by the way. My hives had been bothering me all day, and every time we were at ease, I got in some likely scratches in itchy places.

One beautiful lump developed right under my arm just at five o'clock. Holy smokes, how it did itch! It was just as if something had staked an oil claim right there and wasn't losing any time about drilling a well. Of course, standing at attention a chap can't scratch, at least he's not supposed to—but I did. I tried to show extreme fortitude. I stood and stood and stood, and the darned thing kept boring and boring and boring. Then

when the Lieutenants had their backs turned and stood at salute while the flag came down, I took a chance and scratched.

That First Lieutenant of ours either has eyes in the back of his head or else the Sergeant is a tattletale. Anyhow, after the ceremonies and before we were dismissed, I was commanded to step out, whereupon I was given a most beautiful call down, after which I said, "thank you, sir" to a detail as kitchen police, for the next week to come starting to-morrow.

When I got back here to my barracks the first thing I did was to peel off my shirt and look for that hive. I caught him. And then the whole terrible plot to get me detailed as kitchen policeman was revealed. "Local Board No. 163" has fleas; or, rather, he had 'em.

I've got 'em now—no, wrong again. I got rid of them, or I hope I did.



I picked him up in one hand and a cake of yellow soap in the other.

Upon making the hideous discovery, I summoned "Local Board No. 163" in court martial proceedings. He was guilty; I could see it by the way his spirit sagged in the middle when I began to cross-question him. I picked him up in one hand and a cake of yellow soap and a towel in the other, and we proceeded toward the shower baths. Bur-r-r-r but that water was cold. "Local Board No. 163" didn't enjoy it either, but I could with justice assure him that this form of punishment hurt me as much as it did him, and what is more I am likely to suffer a heap worse to-morrow.

"Local Board No. 163," you sleep *under* the bed to-night.

Tuesday:

Too blasted tired to write to-night. I did a whole winter's work this morning. Shovelled nine tons (almost) of coal into the coal bin, as a starter. Then peeled a sack of potatoes, scrubbed an acre of floor and a half-acre of table tops and benches, washed twenty ash cans, and other kitchen utensils and—oh, I'm too tired now, think I'll wait until to-morrow.

“Local Board No. 163” sleeps *out on the porch* to-night.

Wednesday:

Still kitchen policing. Yesterday I thought I had pulled some job when I peeled an ash can full of potatoes, but that was nothing. To-day I got a better one. I had to peel the same amount of potatoes, only they were in a wash-boiler this time. Yes, right off the fire. I can't see why the Government has to serve potatoes with the jackets off anyway. Why don't they let the men peel them? They are just as well able to do it as we are. If some one ever wants to invent a choice way of punishing refractory prisoners in jail I suggest they send said refractors into the kitchen and give them the gentle job of peeling hot potatoes, by the washboilerful.

I have a side partner on the kitchen police. His name is O'Flynn and he runs into even better luck than I do. To-day he shared the job of peeling “hot ones” with me. Yesterday while I had the little task of peeling 'em raw, he was handed the nice detail of attending to

twelve pounds of onions; a tearful occasion, until some one with a conscience suggested that he get a bucket of water and peel them under water. O'Flynn got the water, with the remark that if he waited just a little longer the onion pan would have been full of tears, which he assumed would have served just as well.

O'Flynn is kitchen policing because he tried to come into the barracks after taps. Lights out at ten and O'Flynn arrived about 2 G.M. He avoided the fire-guard successfully and went around to the back of the barracks. There he jimmied a window with his pocket knife and got it opened, only to have it fall on his neck when he was about half-way in. By way of exercise he put his elbow through it. Then to add to the situation he found himself in the darkened mess hall instead of the dormitory, and the noise he made when he knocked over several benches naturally grated on the Sergeant's nerves. Said Sergeant arrived in the hall in his union suit about the time O'Flynn had untangled himself, and, after cussing him out to perfection, he handed the Irishman a week at kitchen policing.

“And now,” said O’Flynn, “t’ next time I come in through t’ windey, I’ll stay out.”

A week of this and I’ll be able to qualify as a first rate housekeeper for a lumber camp. Already I can lay down a few very necessary rules which the average housewife will appreciate, as for instance:—

1. Never take it for granted that a man has only one appetite. We have two hundred and seventy men here, but they carry around an aggregate of six hundred appetites.

2. Never plunge your hands into an ash can full of greasy water without first removing your wrist watch.

3. Never attempt to mop up after your men folk. Just turn the hose on, lash the nozzle to a convenient table leg and walk away and forget about it.

4. In carrying out a pan full of hot ashes never grab the handle. Thrust a stick through it, it saves the temper and the floor.

5. Never let any one kid you into trying to take the black off the kitchen pans with sapolio, rather throw the pans away.

Delightfully brief and entertaining job, that of removing the black from ash cans that are

used to cook soup in. Our Mess Sergeant, the pirate, noticed that for about three seconds during this afternoon I wasn't doing anything in particular, so he gave me a cake of sapolio



Never let anyone kid you into trying to take the
black off the kitchen pans

and a mop and told me to get busy and shine up the outside of the pots and pans and get all the black off. I went to it and stuck—until our Jap cook, the slant-eyed angel, came in about two hours later and told me the honourable ash cans always got blacked up again so what's the

use; and anyhow he wanted to use the mop. I almost kissed him.

Thank goodness the coal shovelling is all over with. Finished it yesterday. To-day during my moments of leisure I split a few cords of kindling wood and carried it into the kitchen, but I like splitting wood better than heaving coal when it comes to making a choice.

I've been very popular with "Local Board No. 163," since I've been in the kitchen. Honestly, if that dog had intelligence enough, I could almost believe that he induced that flea to start this dirty work, for he's the only one in the whole company who has benefited by it. He hangs around the galley all the time and is waxing fat, prosperous and greasy; greasy because he got in the way of some dishwater that was being emptied out the back door. And now I'll have to give him another scrubbing before we turn in, or he'll be crawling in under my blankets again.

Strange I haven't received any letters yet. Some chaps are lucky. Letters seem to make a big difference in things, even if it's only listening in on some other fellow's. Every one reads letters out loud so that we can all

enjoy them, for letters, no matter whom they are from, are real events here and one always gets a sinking feeling when he discovers there aren't any for him.

Thursday:

Real luck at last. No more kitchen policing, thank goodness. It all happened thus:

About the time we had cleaned up the remains of breakfast and I was getting ready to turn out for "settin' ups," along comes the Captain with two Lieutenants in tow, all with official looking papers. We lined up and he looked us all over very critically. Then he read:

"Any members of this company qualified to fill the following positions, step one pace," and a list of occupations followed that included everything from barber to horse trainer and stage carpenter. Quite a few of us stepped out. About ten of the Italian contingent responded at the word barber. Fat came forward as stage carpenter, and when he said artist I stepped three paces forward instead of one and, saluting, handed him my recom-



Fat was looking for the same barracks

mendation for the Camouflage Corps. I knew I wasn't doing quite the proper thing. But you see we were all young and innocent of such things as military courtesy, and the Captain overlooked the fact that one pace didn't mean three, and after he had mentally debated the question of calling me down in front of the company and had given me the benefit of inexperience, he read the recommendation.

The result was that I was ordered to report immediately to the 2-6 Company, 5-2 Depot Battalion. And with visions of avoiding physical exercises for about two hours and the preparing of a midday meal, I needed no urging. I gathered up my bed, hay mattress, blankets and all and proceeded to find the barracks of the 2-6 Company, 5-2 Depot Battalion.

Of course, it had to be located at the other end of the twenty-four square miles of reservation. But I had company. Fat, loaded down like a dromedary under bed, blankets, a suitcase and all, was looking for the same barracks. So we started on our wanderings together, hopeful of finding our new home before dinner was served.

We found it. And we found a lot of other

fellows looking for the same home. It seems this Depot Battalion, of which I am now a part, is composed entirely of specialists, lawyers, linguists, engineers, artists, architects, carpenters and what not, and just about the time we were being transferred, other specialists were being selected from other companies and sent on their way to the Headquarters Divisions of the various regiments. So our corner of the camp has been quite popular all day, with men staggering in under loads of personal belongings like a lot of gipsies looking for new places to hang their O.D's.

We, I mean Fat and myself, are among a different class of fellows now and this moving business has changed my opinion of the camp. From a hit or miss proposition as it first appeared, it has become a very systematic and well-organized cantonment. It is being worked out like a gigantic piece of machinery and there isn't any question in my mind now but that we will all, sooner or later, fit into the places where we will be able to serve the Government best. Here I have been trying for months to discover how I can get into the Camouflage Corps, which so far as I could learn was a mythical organi-

zation which no one knew very much about. Meanwhile, I have been hoping to keep out of the draft army for fear of being side-tracked



Material for the camouflage unit

and given a bayonet, instead of a paint brush, to beat the Huns with.

And here I am conscripted, and inside of a week singled out as material for the Camouflage unit, with a nice place waiting for me to stay until said unit

needs me. They are doing it up in really businesslike fashion and no doubting it.

But in the shuffle I've lost my dog. He's only been with me a few days and he's done nothing but get me into trouble all the time, yet I miss the little beggar. He wasn't about when I gathered up my belongings this morning, and I haven't had time to look him up all day. Perhaps, before taps I'll wander down

to the other barracks and see if I can find him.

Friday:

Real work began in earnest here this morning, for the officers in command of the various companies of the Headquarters Divisions, or Depot Battalions, or whatever it is these particular departments are called, are determined to rush our drill instructions as fast as possible, because there is no telling when any one or any number of us will be needed somewhere else in the U. S. A. or in France, all of which sounds promising for a quick change. I'm willing, and I sure hope it's France.

Our day is just filled full of hay-footing and straw-footing and squads righting and all that sort of thing. I am learning things gradually by dint of much cussing on the part of our Sergeant, who is also late of the Regular, and who certainly has as choice a vocabulary as our former drillmaster.

We must have a very capable Mess Sergeant in this barracks, for the meals here are mighty good; better than those we received in the other

barracks. We actually had ice cream and tea this noon, a thing unheard of in most of the barracks.

And our cook is a wonder. He's an old cockney sea-dog, who looks like a regular buccaneer, and he has a parrot, too, whom he calls



Our cook looked like a regular buccaneer.

Jock. Jock spends most of his time sitting on the edge of the coal bin shrieking "Lazy Pig." But neither Jock nor his master has a sense of humour; the cook gets mad when he finds a man trying to ring in a third helping and when he gets mad, Jock screams: "Lazy pig, lazy pig," and dances up and down in a frenzy.

I went back to the old barracks last night, to find the place almost filled with new men, all worried looking and pale, and much disturbed over that first night horror, the "needle." I didn't relieve their mental

anguish a particle, which was most unchristian-like.

Several of the men remaining from the former company told me that most of the original company had been split up between the "Suicide Club" which is the machine gun companies, the transportation division and the infantry. As for "Local Board No. 163" no one had seen him about. Possibly he has become disgusted with high-toned individuals who object to fleas, and has gone off and joined the infantry. Well I wish him luck.

I really believe I'm taking a very deep interest in this soldiering after all. I didn't think I would at first, but now I find I'm watching the colour of my hat cord with interest. I want to see it lose its newness and get faded-out looking, like a regular soldier's hat cord.

Saturday:

On the camp calendar, to-day is marked down as a half-holiday, which is another one of the pleasant little jokes they have down here. It is a half-holiday. We quit drilling at twelve o'clock. But there is a Sunday ceremony they

have called inspection and sometimes when the Lieutenant wants to leave camp early on Sunday he decides to hold inspection on Saturday afternoon.

About twelve o'clock some one reminds some one else that the aforementioned ceremony is on the program of weekly events, and thereby spoils the whole pleasure for the day. At inspection the Lieutenant saunters through the barracks, inspects the beds and the stacks of underclothing, socks and similar equipment piled thereon, and if said underclothing, etc., do not show signs of recent acquaintance with soap and water, almost anything is likely to happen.

And, of course, since no one is systematic about doing washing, all the dirty clothing and extra socks pile up until Saturday, and then on the half-holiday the scrubbing tables in the rear of the barracks are the most popular playgrounds.

The washing process is interesting. Every one lines up and dips into the same basin of water. Government soap is supplied in quantities, so are the scrubbing brushes. One lays his jeans and undershirt out nice and smooth

on a long table, pours a basin of water over them, applies the soap as if it were a holy-stone until the underclothing is covered with a soft yellow scum. And then he spends the rest of the afternoon trying to get the soap off. The more lather a chap makes the better washerman he is, from all appearances.

The rear of the barracks on a Saturday afternoon looks like a string of tenement house backyards, with flapping garments hanging from everything, including the electric light wires, and men in various degrees of attirement stand around waiting for the garments to get dry. Oh, you daren't leave them and go off on some other mission while the wind does its duty. You simply have to stick and keep a careful eye on everything you own, otherwise:—well it works on the principle that the man who grabs the most is the best-dressed man for the following week, and if you are not there to prove ownership you are liable to find a pocket handkerchief where your undershirt was and the handkerchief isn't always what it was originally intended to be.

I did manage to get my wash done and gathered up in time to see the last ten minutes of

a Gaelic football game over on the parade grounds. But next week I'm going to take the advice of the Sergeant who suggests that I follow the example of Regular Army men and wash each piece as it becomes soiled. I wonder if I am systematic enough for that?

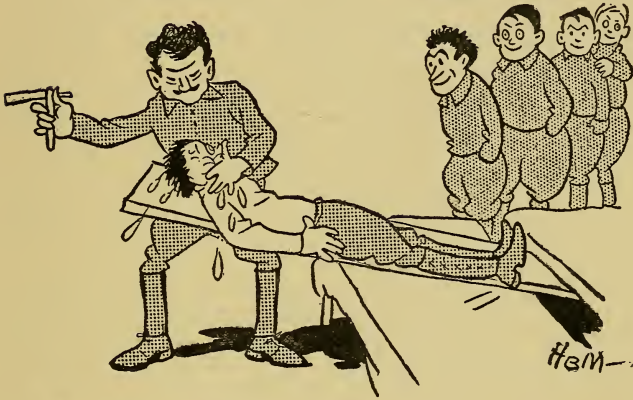
Sunday:

No I didn't draw a pass. I've been around camp the whole bloomin' day, but there were about fifteen thousand lucky fellows who did draw passes. I saw them going down in groups for every train to the city since four o'clock yesterday afternoon. But Fat and I seem to be a bit unlucky. Poor Fat, he has wanted a pass to get home and see his mother ever since he has been here. But a pass wouldn't do him much good. He hasn't any uniform yet. Still waiting for the army tailors to get busy. I wouldn't be surprised if they shipped him to France with no more Government property than a khaki shirt. We've been consoling each other most of the day. Fat's a good chap and a mighty likeable fellow.

It has been a day of rest, however, for all

except Giuseppi, the company's barber. He has done a tremendous business; shaved every one, from the Captain down.

Giuseppi's methods are unique and interest-



Giuseppi's methods are unique and interesting

ing. Somewhere he found two planks, which he brought into the dormitory, and, by catching the lower ends under the iron work of one cot and propping them against the side of another, he contrived an affair that resembles remotely a steamer chair. Line forms to the right. Bring your own brush and shaving stick and do

your own lathering for a quick and effective shave.

I can't guess how many he shaved. The line stretched the length of the dormitory from breakfast to dinner time. The men dabbed their brush into a single basin of cold water and moistened their faces while standing in line. Then as they moved on they soaped and lathered their own faces and rubbed it in thoroughly. And by the time they reached the plank their bristles needed only a final application of lather and Giuseppi got busy with the razor.

He is a wonder. All he did this morning was strop and shave, strop and shave, and at ten cents a head—no I mean face—(twenty cents a head, only no hair cut on Sunday) I guess he made a fair week's wages. As each victim left the planks, said victim wiped the remaining lather from his face, ears and nose and applied his own talcum powder.

Perhaps Giuseppi's business was increased by his announcement: "No shava for tree days now. To-morrow I getta da needle for twice times. No can use my arm vara moch."

Which reminds me that I am scheduled for my second inoculation to-morrow.

I have been discovering some of the unknown who are in our midst. Unearthed a popular song writer (whose income before he adopted the dollar-a-day job for Uncle Sam was reputed to be \$10,000 a year). I didn't unearth him really. He bobbed up this morning, when several of the fellows were playing mouth organs, and now, behold, he's organizing a glee club. Then there is a linguist, who is fresh from the biggest financial institution in the world where he handled all their French and Spanish translation work. He has started a class in French which is in session for an hour every evening. We are all *Parlez vous*-ing with more or less (mostly more) inaccuracies. But what we lack in accent and correct pronunciation we make up for in genuine Parisian gestures. Oh, we're there all right.

Another of our enterprising members is a well-known landscape gardener, who, in co-operation with one of our several architects, has organized a campaign for a "barracks beautiful," all of which doesn't mean very much to most of us, but gives them a good opportunity

to dispose of their spare time. Our afternoons have been spent in pulling stumps in the vicinity of the barracks and grading the street and dooryard until now no one would ever recognize it for the same place. But the landscape gardener has carried the work a bit further and with the assistance of several of us, including myself, gone off into the woods and dug up a score or more of pine and cedar saplings about five feet high. These have been transplanted in the form of a hedge around our barracks, on top of a tiny terrace, and they certainly soften the outlines of the unpainted building and add a touch of that which is lacking in the vicinity of most of the structures.

He, the landscaper, has placed whitewashed stones at conspicuous corners, too, and on either side of our tiny porch he has worked out the number of the company and the number of the division in concrete letters, which the camp orderly scrubs industriously every morning to keep them white and presentable. The job of camp orderly, by the way, is the worst job a man can be detailed to here, being one degree lower than kitchen police; and since I know mighty well the rigours of that, I'm going to

steer clear of this other form of punishment, if it is humanly possible to do so.

The Sunday crop of visitors flocked to camp as usual to-day and I entertained several who did not come to see me especially, but who brought along such delightful lunch that I felt constrained to show them about and be pleasant to them at least while the lunch lasted.

Monday:

We were excused from drill this morning for the purposes of being shod and getting our second inoculation. Getting our shoes was the most interesting and least painful of the two.

After being shot (in the left arm this time) we proceeded to the Q. M., where in one portion of his domain shoes were being issued, two pairs to a man, one pair for work and the other for rest and fatigue.

Of course, immediately the fitting began the men started to protest that they were insulted by being given shoes too large for them. But that didn't disturb the shoe man, who merely told them to mind their own business and he'd

take care of their feet, which belonged to the Government anyhow.

Standing on a flat surface in stocking feet, each man was loaded with a fifty pound bag of sand.



Each man was loaded with a fifty pound bag of sand.

Then when his feet had spread as much as they possibly could, measurements were taken from every angle, just exactly as if the shoes were to be built especially for the foot they were to adorn. The collection of figures was then gone over, and compared with a chart, after which two pairs of shoes were found corre-

sponding with the dimensions covered by number so-and-so. I've forgotten what my number is, but I will confess that while the shoes are several sizes larger than I would ever think of buying in a shoe store, I have never had anything on my feet that gripped my heels and instep and ankles so firmly and yet allowed me room enough to wiggle my toes around. The dress shoes and the trench brogans of un-

finished leather with half-inch soles filled with hobs, and steel plated heels, feel more comfortable than any shoes I have ever owned, and I



“I like t’ geev da Kais a keek in da face
wid-a dose shoes”

gratefully accepted the two pairs issued to me and left for my quarters.

On my way up the road I passed an Italian who seemed so pleased with his new footwear that he just couldn’t help exhibiting them to me. “Look,” he said, waving his huge foot, shod with the trench shoes, about promiscuously, “look ad da shoos. I like t’ geev da Kais a

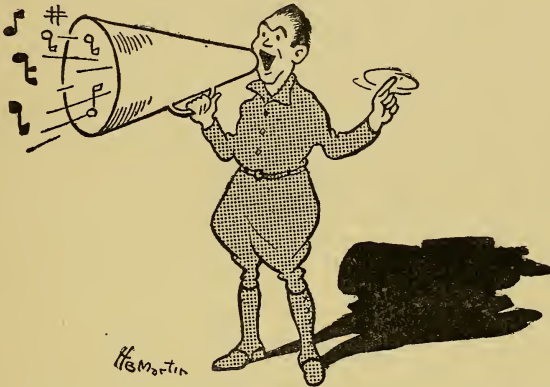
keek in da face wid-a dose shoos. Bet he no smile some more dan." Then he added, by way of showing his qualifications to muss up the Kaiser, "I belonga to ah wreckin' crew sometimes when I don't come down here."

Tuesday:

SWEAR; If you can't think of anything else to say, but do it softly—very, very softly, so no one else but yourself will hear you.

Thus reads the sign that hangs over the door of the Y. M. C. A. shack, at the end of our camp street. That's what I call social work humanized. The Y. M. C. A. here is the most human institution in this big, rawly human community. It is the thing that puts the soul in soldier as one chap expresses it. And because it is that way, and because the men feel at home and have a real time, and can smoke and put their feet on the table, they think the red triangle is the best little symbol about the big camp. The "'Sociation'" is making thousands of friends every day among these strapping

big, two-fisted fellows who really never knew what the organization was. It's bully. We all wander over there sometime during every eve-



Our \$10,000 a year song writer

ning, if it's only to listen to a new record on the phonograph.

The shacks (I don't know how many there are, but there must be at least a dozen of them) are the centres of amusement and entertainment for us all. And we have some corking concerts and other forms of entertainments there. I don't think I'll ever forget our \$10,000 a year song writer as he appeared last night, for instance, standing on top of the

piano, his hair all mussed up and his army shirt opened at the throat, singing a solo through a megaphone. And it was some solo! About fifteen hundred huskies in khaki stood around and listened to him and joined in on the choruses.

Then they have lectures: "Ten Years as a Lumber Jack," "Farthest North," by a certain well-known explorer; "My First Year of the Big War," and similar subjects appear on the bulletin boards every other night. Nothing of the Sunday School variety about that sort of thing.

And our prize fights!

I'm all excited yet over the one I saw to-night. It was a whale of a battle; I mean the last one was, there being several on the program. The fellows fight for passes to go home on Sunday and the decision is left up to the onlookers. And if we don't make the scrappers work for those passes, then no "pugs" ever did work.

Most of the boxers are former pugilists who have been gathered up in the draft net, and so long as they can get a chance to put on the gloves they are just as pleased to be here as anywhere

else from all appearances. But sometimes the scrappers aren't "pugs" at that; just plain citizens who possibly have been shadow boxing in the secrecy of their bedrooms for the past ten years and longing for courage enough to step into the ring with a real fighter and discover how good (or how bad) they are. They are getting the opportunity here all right, and some of them are uncovering a likely line of jabs and counters. One fair-haired youngster downed a mighty pugnacious-looking Italian a few nights ago.

But to-night's final was a winner. Three scraps had been pulled off with real enthusiasm and after the final round, there was a call for more material, but no one in the crowd came forward to put on the gloves. There were calls and jeers and all that sort of thing, then suddenly out from the crowd stepped a soggy-looking, little red-haired fellow.

Yells of "Yah Redney!" "Hi Redney!" "Good boy Brick Top!"

Redney blushed considerably and held up his hand for silence. And when he got it he explained.

"I ain't a-going to fight no one but our Mess

Sergeant. That's what I'm out here for, and I'll stick here till he comes."

Calls for Mess Sergeant. He wasn't present. A speeding messenger from Red's company hurried out through the night to find him. Ten minutes later, said Sergeant, a soggy-looking chap himself, was brought in and amid yells from the crowd he stepped inside the ring. He looked once at Brick Top, then spat on his hands and said:

"Where's them gloves?"

Gloves were produced and laced on, then without the preliminary handshake they squared off and went to it. And what a battle! They didn't stop for rounds, or time out, or anything. They just ducked and punched and whaled away at each other until the blood began to spatter all over and still they kept at it. I don't know what the misunderstanding between them was and didn't find out, but they sure meant to settle the thing once and for all.

And the spectators; they went wild.

For ten minutes steadily the fighters milled and I never saw a better slugging match. The Sergeant had had more experience in boxing, that was certain, but what Red lacked in skill



They didn't stop for rounds, or time out, or anything.

he made up for in hitting power. Every time his glove met the Sergeant's face it smacked as loud as a hand clap.

Then just when it seemed as if they must be tired out, there was a sudden clash and a whirl of fists and Redney ducked away and started one from the floor. It was an uppercut and it found a clean hole between the Sergeant's two arms, and met him flush on the point of the jaw. He staggered, tried to fall into a clinch, missed the elusive Redney and went down with a thump.

"1-2-3-4-5-6-" counted the referee.

The Sergeant rolled over and tried to get up. "Don't hold me down; lemme at him," he said huskily. But no one was holding him down. It was his refractory nerves. They wouldn't obey his will power.

"7-8-9-10," tolled off the fateful numbers. Then what a yell went up for Redney, and Red, almost all in, himself, evidently had satisfied his grudge, for he went over and helped stand the groggy Sergeant on his feet.

And all agreed it was some battle.

But the Y.M. shacks aren't dedicated to prize fights and swearing and concerts entirely.

They are the nearest approach to home or club life that most of us come in contact with for weeks at a stretch. The big, open hearths with their crackling logs are mighty fine places to spend a pleasant hour or two. Then there are the writing tables, and the reading rooms with their books and magazines, and the phonographs.

The other night I saw a great big fellow, with burly fists and a stubbly beard on his chin (it must have been the night before his bi-weekly shave, which is as often as most of us can find time—or the inclination to use a razor) snuggled up close to the phonograph and listening attentively to the “Swanee River,” which he was playing as softly as the instrument would permit, and now and then he would blow his nose in a big handkerchief and wipe suspicious signs of moisture from the corners of his eyes. He was having a regular sad drunk and enjoying every moment of it. I’ll bet he thought he was the most homesick mortal in camp.

Then there are the telephone booths. Every night there is a line of at least fifty men waiting patiently for a chance in the booth. At a dollar

a call they ring up the folks in the city and have five minutes' chat with them, just by way of warding off an attack of homesickness. I've used the booth five dollars' worth to date.

These army breeches I'm wearing, I noticed to-night, are very comfortable. I like the deep, straight pockets in them. I think I'll have my civilian suit made with those kind of pockets hereafter. But I haven't gotten over the habit of pulling them up each time I sit down so that they won't get baggy at the knees.

Wednesday:

Found my dog!

I was over in another section of the cantonment this morning, for a few moments between drill and mess call, and there was "Local Board No. 163" as big as life, trotting along beside a chap I knew. It was Billy Allen. The dog recognized me and so did Billy and we stopped a while and compared notes.

Billy had the worst hard luck story in respect to the Draft of any man I know. He's an old National Guardsman, having enlisted soon after we left school together. Spent eight

years in the infantry, and went to the Border. He left the service after he got back and a little later when a call came for men for the Officers' Reserve Corps he applied and was accepted, for the second camp. Meanwhile he had registered as a man of draft age. Then came his call for Officers' Training Camp, where he was making out famously; so well in fact that he was recommended for the airplane service.

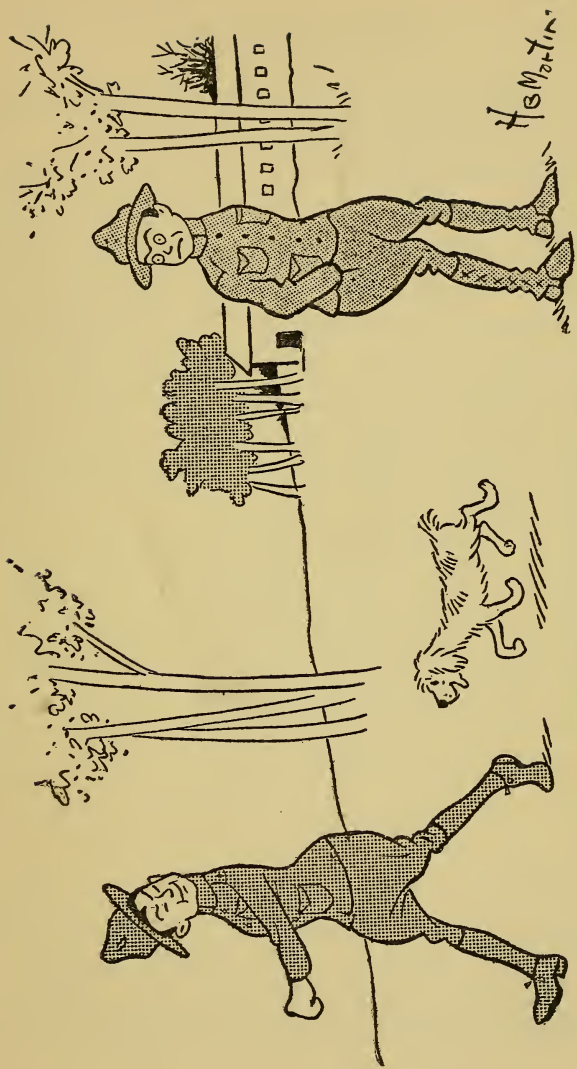
But the recommendation was as far as he got. The drawing had meanwhile been made in Washington, he was well up in the list and one fine day he received a notice to appear for examination. Of course he passed and was accepted. That yanked him out of the Officers' Reserve and now he's down here, a private in the "Suicide Club," with Buck Winters, an old classmate of both of us, his commanding officer.

I told him about "Local Board No. 163" whom he had dubbed "Mut" because he looked it. First we were going to match for the dog, but we decided, after a moment's reflection, to let him choose his master. Billy said good-bye and walked one way and I walked the other and

the dog, after a moment's hesitation, went with Billy. And so I lost my dog a second time. I guess he didn't like my cold water treatment for fleas.

An interesting thing happened here to-day that just shows how vast this huge cantonment is. The cot next to Fat and two below me has been vacant ever since we have been here. To-night a chap came in from the barracks next door, bag and baggage, and took possession of it. Fat made his acquaintance right off, and the newcomer told him that he had been transferred to this company about the time we were—a week or so ago—and since no one told him where to go or where to bunk he went to the barracks next door and took a cot.

But he really belonged in here and was a member of our squad, which for some mysterious reason had always remained a seven-man squad, with the eighth man assigned to it but never heard from. Every roll call he had been marked absent, and he had been put down as a deserter and an alarm sent out for him through the country. At the present moment the New York police are searching diligently for him.



I guess he didn't like my cold water treatment for fleas

And all the time he has been within a biscuit toss of his proper place.

Over in the other company he was an outcast, and they didn't know what to do with him. They were on the point of sending him back to the city as an interloper when somehow the mistake was discovered and he was summoned to report over here. The interesting part of it is, that he is an expert accountant, and his specialty is searching out mistakes that other people make in the way of misplaced figures and things.

So far as the police were concerned, he said, he didn't care much, for the last place they would ever look for him was down here. Speaking of deserters, I noticed three sets of finger-prints on our bulletin board which means that three men have taken French leave and they have prices on their heads, already.

Thursday:

This has been a moist and soggy day. I don't know that I have ever seen so much rain before in one storm as I have to-day. Before daylight it began; a perfect downpour, so vio-

lent that for reveille we lined up in the mess hall. None of us ventured out to wash up, but those of us who missed a cold sprinkle the most had merely to poke our heads out of the windows for a moment and then reach for a towel. Some wetness.

The camp is a veritable sea of mud, and those who go outdoors at all do so to the imminent peril of becoming mired and never returning. From the mess-hall windows at breakfast we could watch the big heavy motor truck of the transportation train, skidding and sloshing about in the road, down which flooded a perfect torrent of muddy rain water. Several of them became hopelessly stuck in the sticky mud, and their drivers abandoned them and raced for cover in the Y. M. C. A. shack. Officers and men everywhere have given up all idea of outdoor work and the camp streets look forlorn and deserted. They stretch away down the hill to fade into the misty blur of the rain itself, and on either hand stand the long, unpainted barracks buildings, with dripping eaves and rain blowing in sheets from their tinned and tar-papered roofs. Outside, it is a dismal, deserted-looking cantonment, with scarcely a

sign of life, save now and then a venturesome canine mascot scuttling from one sheltered spot to another.

Drilling, of course, is utterly impossible and the nearest approach we have had to anything resembling military training to-day is a lecture on sanitation in the mess hall by the First Lieutenant.

But the rain has not dampened our desires for amusement and as a result the interior of the sleeping quarters presents, at the present time, a picture that only a Remington could do justice to. Atmosphere sticks out all over the place. Army overcoats, tunics, variegated comforters, blankets, mess kits, sweaters and flannel shirts are hanging from every peg, and men are sprawled on their cots, in various attitude, some trying hard to sleep, some writing, one man thoughtfully locating the notes of a new tune on a mouth organ, while another over in the corner—an Italian—is the centre of an enthusiastic group, while he plays doleful things on an old accordion he has smuggled into camp. The air is blue with tobacco smoke.

A number of us are writing, including myself,

but the chief centres of interest are the two big poker games and the big crap game down at the end of the room.

They are all playing with that oppressive quietness that portends big stakes. I was startled a while ago upon walking over to the nearest group to discover eighty dollars, in ones, fives, and tens on the top of the army cot that served as a table in a single jack pot, and they were still betting. Our two Regular Army Sergeants are members of one group and Fat is sitting in at another. From the length of time he has stayed and the smile on his face, I can only guess that luck is with him for once.

But it has failed a lot of others. Now and then a man leaves one game or the other, looking sort of hopeless. There is always some one to take his place, however.

One of these fellows, gone broke, hit upon a happy idea which caused no end of interest for an hour or two this afternoon. After he had gone broke he left the game and sat thoughtfully on the edge of his cot for a while. Then he dug down into his duffel bag under his cot and brought forth a razor. Speedily he made up some raffle tickets on

slips of note paper and presently, with the razor in one hand and his campaign hat in the other, he started through the room selling chances on the razor at a dime a chance. The raffle was held over in our corner, and one lucky chap got the razor, easily worth two fifty, for a single dime and the erstwhile owner, with five dollars worth of change in his pockets, returned to the game.

That started the raffle bug, and presently a wrist watch was put up, then another razor of the safety variety, a fountain pen, an extra hand knitted sweater which some one had luckily acquired, several boxes of crackers which every one took a chance on at a cent a chance and a variety of other things. But the crackers were the most popular and that helped one ingenious and venturesome chap to evolve a money-making scheme.

In the height of the rainstorm, he was seen to don his slicker, and hurry out into the storm. He splashed all the way over to the Post Exchange (about half a mile) to return a half-hour later with four pies for which he had paid forty cents each and three dozen boxes of crackers all in good condition. The crackers

went for double their value and the pies he successfully split up into twelve fair-sized portions which sold for ten cents each. That trip in the rain netted him nearly seven dollars he told me, and that seven dollars later on, invested in the crap game, trebled itself; so, all things considered, he has had a more or less successful day.

Friday:

It is fast getting home to me now that in spite of the heterogeneous conglomeration, of races and creeds and languages, the National Army is going to be the real thing as a fighting force after all. Every one is keen for the thing now that the first violent attacks of homesickness have worn off and they are going at their work of becoming soldiers with a will, except, of course, for a few: the conscientious objectors; and their life is no merry one. They are mighty unpopular, as numerous black eyes attest. Every one takes the slightest opportunity to emphasize their displeasure at the stand these men have taken. And some of them are going around here under a cloud.

For instance, the one in the Machine Gun outfit who drills in pumps and summer suit but who has the pleasure of knowing that after his soldiering is all over with, he has three years to spend in Atlanta or some other Federal jail for little things he has done and views he has expressed.

We have one of the breed in our company, a Jew; and he's the most unpopular man in the outfit, even among those of his own race. All of this variety, (the "objectors" I mean), who have come to my notice, are sorry specimens of manhood for the most part and I can't blame an able-bodied chap for despising them.

The foreign element is taking hold like real Americans. It is interesting to get their slant on the whole affair. Many of them didn't want to come. They had their own ideas of army life, suggested, doubtless, by tales they have heard of service in the European armies of former days. But when they were called they came; and behold, when they arrived and lived through the first days, they were surprised to find that they still were treated like human beings, had certain indisputable rights, were fed well and cared for properly and

worked under officers who took a genuine interest in their welfare. This was something most unexpected. Right off they decided that they were going to get all they could out of this



“Make-a me strong, make-a me beeg, an’ best-a
make-a me good American”

new life and give in return faithful and honest service.

“It’s fine, I like it,” assured a little Italian friend of mine in the infantry. “I like it because it help make me spick good English, make-a me strong, make-a me beeg an’ best-a

what is, make-a me good American, jus like-a de boss Lieuten'."

And in that last sentence, I believe, lies the charm of it all to most of the foreigners. They have learned that America and things American are fine and clean and good and their ambition now is to become a real American "jus like-a de boss Lieuten'." And when they get to be real Americans, they are going to be proud of the fact and they are going to fight to prove it; that's certain.

The camp is still soggy to-day and we have drilled ankle deep in mud. My feet have been wet from the time I stepped out of the barracks until an hour ago, when I changed my socks and put on my dress shoes. But shucks, what appetites we brought back with us from the parade grounds. I never did care for fish, but I'll be hanged if I didn't eat three helpings of the creamed salmon and spaghetti to-night.

A new wrinkle has developed here. We find out what the fellows are going to have for supper in nearby barracks and if the feed promises to be better than what we are to have several of us take our mess tins and go

over and stand in line there. The Mess Sergeant never knows the difference.

Saturday:

Sad news this evening. Only twenty-five per cent. of each company is to be allowed to go home to-morrow, because of the disorder and general trouble at the railroad terminal last Sunday. And the twenty-five per cent. is to be drawn out of a hat. No chance for Fat or me, that's certain. We're mighty unlucky when it comes to passes and we are laying odds now that neither of us will get permission to go to the city. Anyhow, Fat is still in the same predicament. If he does get a pass he won't be able to leave the camp.

At the present writing we are all waiting for the mess call. And immediately after mess the Sergeant will do the drawing of the names for the passes. If I am not among the lucky ones I'm going to try and—there goes the mess call!

Sunday:

I am ready to die with a smile on my lips and a great happiness in my heart, for I've spent one night between clean sheets, on a really soft bed. I've eaten with a silver knife and fork from real dishes and—whispered softly—in the privacy of my own home I had a glass of beer!

No, I wasn't lucky (neither was Fat) but I think I put something over on Uncle Sam.

The passes for the city were drawn for as per schedule and since I was down at the bottom of the list I was not included in the first twenty-five per cent. The passes issued read for New York City, and the men holding them were privileged to leave by certain trains, being marched down to the station under the watchful eye of the Second Lieutenant.

Then, after these men were all away, came the opportunity for the men who lived near the camp and the men who wanted to visit nearby towns to apply for leave. This was my opportunity. I applied for thirty-six hours' leave to visit the town of R——, twenty miles distant, and secured it.

Back in the barracks an interesting scene was taking place, scores of tickets of leave had been handed out to the men, to take the night and following day off, but to get out of camp they must be able to pass inspection with perfect and well-fitting equipment, and since all of us had not our full outfit, we had to hustle around and borrow articles of clothing that would fit and look satisfactory. I, for instance, have a full winter uniform except for overcoat (which I have not received) and tunic, the one I am wearing being a summer coat of cotton and hardly matching the wool trousers I possess. So I had to join the crowd who were bartering, exchanging and renting uniforms. And since the first men to leave had done the same thing to a certain extent, there was not much desirable clothing left in the barracks. Overcoats were going at a dollar a day and breeches and jackets for fifty cents each. After a diligent search I did find a chap who had a winter tunic and summer trousers and, wonder of wonders, his jacket fit me perfectly. We made an exchange and I borrowed an overcoat at one dollar for the day, from a chap who was not leaving camp, and sallied forth.

Tramping down Twenty-third Avenue (the streets are all named here and our barracks is on Fourteenth Street and Third Avenue), whom should I behold but friend Billy, bound in the same direction. He had had the same inspiration as I and he, too, had a pass for R—. We wandered on together, but upon reaching the railroad station, our hopes of getting to our destination were dashed. There were no more trains for R— until the morning!

We wept. But our tears didn't blind us to the fact that there were occasional machines passing along the highway. So we walked out and stood there in the moonlight and looked as lonesome and forlorn as possible.

And the first machine to come along was a beautiful big Pierce Arrow limousine, with an old dowager, a pleasant and generous old soul, its single occupant, save of course the chauffeur. We went to R— in style; and, moreover, we went there in a hurry, for with khaki in the machine the chauffeur assumed that he had the right of way and full permission to wreck the speed laws.

At R— we looked up time tables and dis-

covered that we could get a train into the city at ten-thirty, which was not so bad. Then, because our passes really limited us to R—, we concluded that it was only fair to the Government to at least eat a meal in that town and since we were both hungry in spite of our recent mess, we searched for a restaurant.

We found one; a French restaurant, which looked peculiarly deserted. The door was locked, for some strange reason, yet there were several men in aprons inside apparently hard at work. We rattled on the door and in a moment the frowning proprietor came forward. But the frown changed to a smile when he saw us. It was the khaki. He unbolted the door and, with a ceremonious bow, welcomed us in, then closed the door and bolted it.

And then he explained that this was a new restaurant not yet opened for patronage. He expected to open up in a day or maybe two. But, of course, he could not turn away two hungry soldiers, never. *Merci non!* He had nothing to serve us with, but what were our desires? Express them and he would send out for the provisions, cook them and serve them. Steak! Indeed, yes. In twenty minutes we

would have a wonderful steak, French fried potatoes, salad, coffee and ice cream. Jean would attend to it.

And Jean did. He rustled up the steak and the rest and we alone occupied the restaurant, and soon were eating the most delicious piece of beef we believed we had ever put our teeth through. The bill! Nothing; nothing at all—what?—well if we insist, one dollar each. Thank you! And now here is a pen and some ink. You will please autograph each bill and behold, when you return from glorious France, covered with glorious glory, you should come in and see these two bills—the first money taken in at the restaurant—framed and hanging there over the desk. And so, I suppose, the future generation of visitors to R—— will be able to view these immortal monuments to our—I don't know what, unless it be our khaki uniforms—hanging there in the French restaurant possibly surrounded by wreaths as each anniversary of day before yesterday rolls 'round.

We got the ten-thirty train for the city, and we almost got into trouble too; or at least I did, for as we hurried into the smoker whom

should I see sitting buried in a magazine but the First Lieutenant of our Company. Had he made the trip the same way we did? I don't know and, of course, I didn't ask. We just walked through the car very swiftly and he never looked up.

It was fifteen minutes of midnight when I arrived home, let myself in with my latch key which I have been carrying as a silent reminder of my former terrifically wild (?) career; routed out the folks, and sat swathed in bath-robe and dressing-gown until 3 o'clock, just talking. It was bully. And then I tumbled into my own bed and slept and slept and slept. I woke up at reveille all right—(it was just daylight)—grinned, rolled over and slept and slept and slept some more.

Then I had a real bath in a real tub with real hot water, and a lot of real things to eat and real cigars to smoke and real friends to talk with until five o'clock in the afternoon, when I crawled into my regimentals once more, and went out to meet Billy by appointment.

Going back via R—— route (which was necessary) curtailed our leave which really continues until to-morrow morning at reveille,

but then we were very happy; so happy that when we arrived in R—— we chartered a taxicab for the twenty mile drive out here and now I'm nearly frozen through from the cold wind that blew in at us. And I'm tired, too, but I'm happy and ready to turn in ten minutes before taps.

Monday:

I'll need no "Melody in Snore Minor" to lull me to sleep to-night, for I am thoroughly weary. It was intimated a day or so ago that our training would be hurried a little so that we would be ready for a quick shift at any time. But hurried doesn't exactly describe it. It looks like an early fall drive to me.

We began at the beginning, this morning, and had our squad drills all over again, and somehow in the juggling about of men to make up our company formation I managed to get last place in line, and pivot man in the front rank of the last squad.

Before to-day I've been in the rear rank and had a screen of front-rank men to cover up any

blunders I might make, but being in the first file gave me stage fright. And, of course, with the stage fright I bungled;—forgot which was left and which was right. We began by facing, and first chance I managed to turn left when the command was right. That blunder made me more self-conscious. If I had had to talk I'm sure I would have stuttered. As it was I stammered with my feet.

Then "About Face."

I faced about all right, only I pivoted on a stump root that some stupid had forgotten to dig out. The result was I lost my balance, and made several movements instead of one before I came to position.

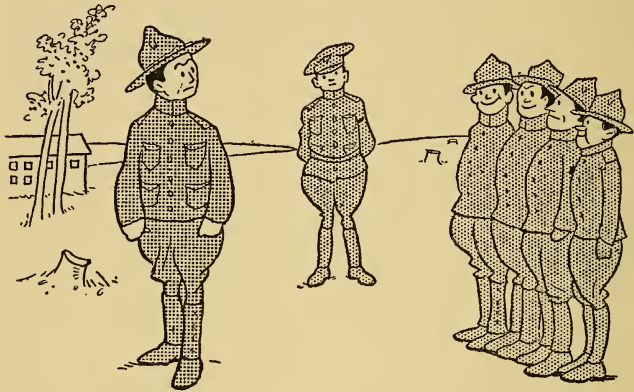
At drills the Sergeants, who do most of the drilling, are equipped with sticks about a yard long so that they can poke a rear-rank man in the back without disturbing the front-rank men, and thus call attention to blunders. Being a rear-rank man on the about face, I presently felt the stick poking into my ribs and the command:

"You step out here."

I stepped out, and was requested, along with much language, to go up in front of the com-

pany and give a demonstration in the proper method of "about facing."

My self-consciousness fled immediately. I was mad. I wanted to talk back, and make a



A demonstration in the proper method of "about facing"

few remarks about the Sergeant and the stump and things. But I suddenly thought of a tour of kitchen police and restrained myself. Instead I about faced with such energy that the Sergeant knew I was boiling inside, and being a decent sort of a chap, he sent me back to the ranks after a couple of demonstrations, instead of keeping me out there for

fifteen minutes as I have seen them do to some fellows.

After that I felt more at ease in the front rank. All morning long we ambled across the landscape, doing squad and company movements. It was just drill, drill, drill, for fifty out of every sixty minutes, the ten minutes being allowed as rest periods. We reviewed all our previous instructions and worked up to the point of forming company fronts, with the movements of right and left front into line and on right into line, and as pivot man, I think I did mighty well. Our squad never stepped off a pace ahead of time on any of the formations. And when we were marching back to the barracks at mess time, the Sergeant came up beside me, and remarked, by way of apology for hauling me out of the ranks earlier in the morning, that I was doing good pivot work.

Perhaps we didn't enjoy mess! Three helpings of navy beans for me with pineapple marmalade, and a piece of salt pork on the side, not to mention three cups of coffee and three slices of bread. I sure had luck on the mess line to-day.

This afternoon the First Lieutenant took

charge of the company, and he had us tramping all over the landscape again, doing the same sort of close order manœuvres, and when we lined up just before retreat he announced that we would have rifles to-morrow morning.

It is interesting to see how rumours travel and gather force in the barracks. Some one, somehow, heard that an artist and a stenographer from our company are to sail for France in a day or two. Of course, all my friends have come to the conclusion that I am the artist. A chap told me about it at mess this evening, and since then several dozen have looked me up to shake hands with me and tell me good-bye, with such remarks as: "Hear you have orders to sail for France to-morrow; great." "They tell me you got a commission from Washington and that you are going across in a day or two," or, "Say, you're a lucky chap; where'd you get the drag down in Washington?"

But these queries fail absolutely to thrill me. I am quite calm and undisturbed. I deny any "drag" whatever, and I know that I am not the artist mentioned in the order for transfer, if there is any such order, which I doubt. This is only about the *n*th time that same

rumour has been afloat as a result of which I have bade good-bye to my friends about every other day only to discover myself still with them a week later with the same old rumour bobbing up again.

Tuesday:

I'm really a soldier. I know the manual of arms.

This morning, true to the First Lieutenant's prediction, we drilled with rifles and now I am quite convinced of the truth of the old saying that a gun is dangerous without lock, stock, or barrel. Fat turned around suddenly when he had his rifle over his shoulder and poked the muzzle of it into my mouth; a regular Happy Hooligan performance, and now I have a split (and considerably puffed) lip and a loose tooth to my credit in this horrible war.

We were marched over to one of the infantry barracks on the edge of the big parade grounds and there we found our rifles; I mean ours for the day only, because there are hardly enough in camp to equip us all yet and we have to take turns using them. In the same way

there is only one field piece to each artillery company, but that doesn't seem to worry the artillery men much.

They are doing some real drilling over on the other side of the camp. I was surprised to discover a company at work digging trenches, another company practising throwing hand grenades, with stones representing the deadly Mill's bombs, still another group constructing parapets of sand bags, and working out machine gun emplacements, and in the distance artillery companies hovering about a sleek looking gun, learning the complicated parts and where and how the animals are served.

Krags, instead of Springfields, are the rifles available for drilling purposes here, and for the first hour this morning we devoted our time to learning the floor plan of the thing. I was getting along famously until Fat interrupted my investigations with the muzzle of his weapon.

Soon after that we started drilling. And I think it is to our credit that before noon we had mastered all the movements and that our pieces snapped up to position with real vigour.

“Let me hear them hands slap them pieces,” said the Sergeant; then “*Ri—sholler—harms!* One-two-three-four! Pep, that’s it, pep an’ snap. Slap ’em hard. *Ordah—harms!* One-two-three! *Done* drop ’em—*done* slam ’em down. Nex’ man slams ’em gits kitchen p’lice.”

So we drilled until our arms ached, and rifles that weighed about eight pounds at the beginning of the drill seemed to have increased to fifty pounds, and felt as long as telephone poles. Perhaps we weren’t glad when our First Lieutenant put a stop to the punishment and started us in the general direction of the mess hall.

And we had beef stew for dinner; beef stew with rich brown gravy, such as our old biscuit shooter alone can make.

But after mess we were back at it again. Only this time it was bayonet practice, but not of the variety pictured in most magazines. We haven’t reached the stage of charging trenches and swinging bundles of sticks. Such advanced work comes later.

Bayonets are awkward, ugly things, and I could not help being grateful that Fat took it

into his head to poke me in the mouth with his rifle this morning instead of this afternoon. If he had waited until after mess he wouldn't have split my lip; he would have cut my head off. When I saw him with bayonet fixed I gave him a wide radius of action. Indeed I avoided him as if he were a plague.

In open, or extended, order we lined up on the parade grounds in front of one of these movable elevated platforms. Our Second Lieutenant mounted this, and with a bayoneted rifle in hand went through the various lunges, thrusts and parries of the bayonet manual, meanwhile giving us a lecture, to the effect that no matter what the War Department intended to do with us, a knowledge of bayonet fighting would be essential. He assured us that the logical weapon for an American soldier was the rifle. One of our birthrights is markmanship and another is bayonet fighting. He briefly cantered over a century and a half of history of the Republic and pointed out how we had won fame and honour with bullet and bayonet, and he wound up by telling us that every American soldier should prepare himself so that he would be as dangerous to fool with

as a stick of dynamite. Picture good-natured Fat impersonating a stick of dynamite.

Then we went at it. We lunged and thrust and parried until perspiration began to stand out on our foreheads. From the corner of my eye I had a vision of Fat trying to disguise himself as a high explosive. Every time he lunged, he would scowl viciously and emit a loud grunt. I discovered a few moments ago, however, that it was a case of over-eating at mess time that caused him to grunt and frown every time he tried to move very fast; not a desire to look ferocious, although I guess it passed for that in the eyes of the instructor.

And now I'm told we are to get this sort of training daily for a long period; close order formation in the morning, with rifle and bayonet drill in the afternoon and later on we will do skirmish work, trench work and open order work with rifles. Some of the infantry companies are already doing that. I was treated to the spectacle of two companies scurrying across the upper end of the parade grounds like so many rabbits. Now and then they would fling themselves down on their stomachs and

begin snapping away merrily with empty rifles at an imaginary enemy.

We are a tired-looking company to-night. Already half the cots are filled with men, some of them snoring lustily and it is only a quarter to ten.

Wednesday:

There are a lot of things calculated to stir a chap's sentimental streak about this camp, particularly the nights; moonlight nights like to-night for instance. Every hard outline of the huge place is softened under the blue-black mantle of night, and the disagreeable things are lost in the heavy shadows and the moonlight floods the open places, and glistens on the rows upon rows of tin roofs and tall, gaunt-looking tin smoke-stacks. Watch-fires (a sanitary precaution) blaze in their deep holes in the rear of each barracks building, and the lonesome fire-guard, bundled in his overcoat and with rifle over his shoulder, stands silhouetted against the night sky beside each flaring pit.

Out on the main streets of the camp are thousands of fellows in khaki, walking aim-

lessly up and down, while in the by-streets between the barracks buildings one sees shadowy figures and glowing cigarette ends moving about in the darkness. Through the tiny panes of each barracks window, partly obscured by overcoats and sweaters which dangle from pegs inside, filters a warm yellow light, and as one moves down the row, one hears from one building the music of an accordion and the rhythmic shuffle of feet which tells of a "stag" dance being held in the mess hall; while from another comes the soft plunk-plunking of a banjo and the occasional drone of a mouth organ that seeks after harmony, but only succeeds with an effort.

Off to the right toward the parade grounds some fellows are singing and their songs sound mighty good in the moonlight. And from far beyond where the thick pine woods stand out black against the sky comes faintly the hooting of a distant owl.

On the main streets that skirt the outer edge of the cantonment on three sides, the arc lights glisten, like rows of far off diamonds against the velvet of a jewel box, and here and there, where two twinkle, like low-hung stars, stand

out the Y.M. shacks where the men are gathering for an evening's recreation.

It is wonderful to wander out such nights as these. Bundled in a sweater to keep out the chill of evening, and with only my pipe for company, I often go tramping off through the by-streets of the camp. The smoke of the hundreds of watch-fires is wafted to me on every breeze and in wood smoke there is a charm; the charm of camping out. Never in my life will I smell the smoke of burning pine wood, but that these nights will come trooping through my memory, and I'm certain that I will be homesick then and want to come back and live them all over again.

And the things I often see:—the fire-guard for instance, who alone out there behind the barracks was trying hard to read a letter by the light of his flickering watch-fire. Was it a letter he had just received and could not wait to open, or was it a letter that he had read many, many times before and was rereading once again? Then the lonesome dog who sat out in the company street and stared up solemnly at the moon, like a lone wolf on the prairie. What instincts

were being waked within him by the moonlight? And the silhouette through the window of the chap sitting on his cot patiently plying needle and thread and the two fellows who leaned against the jacketed field piece in front of an artillery barracks and talked in whispers, while through the opened door of the buildings on either hand came the noise of a rousing good time within.

Then the tramp up Tower Hill, where the headquarters building with its darkened windows like sightless eyes stands out from the sparse remains of the pine woods, flecked here and there with patches of moonlight.

Far off across the great camp, and across the tops of the pines one can dimly see from the top of the hill the ocean with the moonlight flashing on its surface, and occasionally comes a breath of chilled salt air that stirs a longing, vague and fleeting, as the ocean has always stirred a longing in the soul of the adventurer. From here one can look down upon the great camp. Thousands and thousands of roofs stand out in the moonlight, and the watch-fires twinkle in orderly rows up and down each camp street. Far off to the left are the big

machine shops and forges of the construction company, the forge fires glowing red against the night, while faintly comes the far-off ring of anvils. Those forge fires, like the bakery fires, never die.

To the eastward is the railroad terminal with its panting engines and its medley of noises, while nearer at hand but in the same direction is the transport headquarters with its ceaselessly moving caravan of rumbling, grumbling army trucks. All combines to make a picture that holds one spell-bound.

The days here are pleasant indeed, but the nights are almost intoxicating. They cast a spell upon me and leave a memory that can never fade.

Monday:

This place looks like a growing mining town somewhere out West, but for real atmosphere, the civilian camp, outside the reservation, has the cantonment looking really civilized. I went out there this evening after mess; for I heard that there was a cigar store included in the outfit, and the impression I got was a lasting one. Everything of the frontier was there save the

saloons and the gambling halls. Shacks, tents (rows upon rows of them), lean-tos and all forms of domiciles. And the men who walked the streets were of every variety, including real lumber jabs in mackinaws and spiked boots, who had come down to cut away the timber; Italians, Poles, Swedes, Slavs and what not, and a real cowgirl, in short skirts and high leather boots, with a silk handkerchief scarf, sombrero and a big thirty-eight strapped to her hip. She, I learned, runs a motor bus between the civilian camp and the nearest towns.

Cook fires twinkled outside of the tents, lights showed through the canvas walls reflecting the huge, grotesque, shadowy figures of the occupants. From one emanated the strains of an accordion and from another the babble of voices that suggested a quarrel over a card game.

I found the cigar store. I found other stores, too, just shacks thrown together, but carrying a stock of everything in the line of wearing apparel and eatables. One displayed the sign of "Jack's Unsurpassable Lunch," another "The Elite," and another "The Emporium." There were hundreds of squalid booth-like structures

besides, where a host of curious things were for sale to the hordes of big-fisted, deep-chested men who were brought there to build the cantonment. But they tell me that the civilian camp is fast breaking up now, for the cantonment is almost completed. The remount stables for the artillery, the refrigerating plant and the huge bakery are all that remain to be built and the labourers are leaving in big groups.

The temporary bakery (I passed it to-night on my way back to camp) is represented by a double line of tents, before each of which is a big field baking oven, its coal fire glowing from lower doors like huge, red eyes and its gaunt smoke-stack reaching upward to terminate in a cloud of black smoke which ascends higher and higher in long, graceful spirals until it is lost in the darkness of the night.

Before these ovens work the bakers, in khaki, of course, but each swathed in a flowing white apron. With sleeves rolled up and shirts opened at the throat, they wield their long bakers' paddles, and as they pass to and fro in the dull red firelight, they look elfish and grotesque; exactly like a lot of gnome bakers

off in the "nowheres" baking bread for some ferocious ogre who bids them work incessantly.

And these loaves they bake are indeed loaves for ogres; huge affairs two feet long and as big 'round their rich brown girth as pumpkins. In "sheets" of a dozen each they are brought from the fire and placed steaming hot on a nearby table where an expert breaks them apart and tests the tenderness of their fibre and searches for signs of doughiness. These bakers are all of the Regular Army now, but not long since czars of dingy cellar bakeries located anywhere from Boston to San Francisco. But the ogre has called them together and here like gnomes they work, eight hours each in three shifts and the oven fires are kept burning always.

Still we drill, drill, drill. This morning was spent in manœuvring and tramping over the wet and soggy countryside in company formation, and this afternoon, by way of variety, we were given a few hours fatigue duty in the line of uprooting more stumps and gnarled tentacles, that seem to have rooted themselves in China. But our hands are hard and leathery now and our muscles no longer creak and pain

under the stress. I've added four pounds to my former weight and I have never felt more fit in my life.



They seemed to have rooted themselves in China

Tuesday:

The cost of high living here is enormous. The stoop-shouldered, shrewd-eyed, flinty-hearted Yankee clerks behind the broad counters of the "Post Exchange" disdain anything less than a quarter. Dimes and nickels are chicken-feed, and pennies—impossible. If

a chap buys one apple at five cents or one pear or one banana (always green and a long way from being ripe) he has to hide himself in the crowd to escape the baleful eye of these grasping sharks. Five cent crackers sell two boxes for a quarter, penny candies are five cents each, cigars and cigarettes are considerably above normal in price and considerably below in quality, and ice cream sells for ten cents a gram.

But none of us has grown up. We are all like big boys and we spend with no thought of to-morrow. Mess over, we all hie out to the two main roads that lead to the "Post Exchange," jingling coins in our trouser pockets. The "Exchange" itself is a long, low unpainted building like all other buildings here with tiny back country windows, half-obscurcd by garments hanging within which leave only a few dirty squares for the dull yellow light to show through.

The doors are broad and through them streams a never ending line of troopers, some coming, some going. Inside, the place resembles nothing more than a huge up-country general store with shelves upon shelves stacked

high with cracker boxes, shoe boxes, hardware and goodness only knows what not, while from the rafters hang heavy coats, sweaters, lanterns, huge stalks of green bananas, hams, bacon, boots and a lot of useless things that only gullible soldiers who feel a yearning to spend their money really purchase. But this spending of money somehow seems to bring us closer to civilization for the moment and we join the churning mass of men within, whose hobnailed shoes produce a great pounding and scraping sound and whose voices are raised in a constant babble of conversation which only the sharp ting, ting of the cash register bells can punctuate.

We mill around with the crowd, and soon are pushed against a counter. Something attracts our eye. We feel a desire to possess it. We buy it, and start milling about the room again until presently we are near the door. Then we step out into the night again and join one of the groups of loiterers or sit about on boxes and piles of lumber, where we devour our purchase, if it happens to be in the line of crackers (which is usually the case), or admire it, if it happens to be a pocket flash lamp, a fountain

pen or something else that we really never have had any use for.

The small-town idea prevails even in the city of thirty thousand lonesome men. The "Post Exchange" and the "Post Office" are the two centres of interest. First we wander to one, and then we wander to the other, then with time on our hands we join the stream of men going up one side of the road "just walkin'" and when we reach the point where most of the crowd turns back, we turn back, too, and continue our "walkin'," with no particular place to go, until the streets begin to get deserted and it is time for the town to close up. Then we disappear, too, and for an hour occupy ourselves in the barracks until taps are sounded and lights are out, when we go to bed; the place I'm headed for now, so soon as I put the top on my fountain pen.

Wednesday:

SICK CALL



That's the call that brings out all the shirkers. They line up in the morning and present all sorts of ailments from sore throat to heart disease.

The line is especially long on mornings when they know we are in for two hours of "settin'-ups" or when some especially hard detail such as camp orderly or kitchen police has been handed out. A day in the hospital will relieve one of all these duties. This morning I was on the long line. But I hasten to explain that *I* was sick (that's what they all say, of course,) with chills and a scrapy feeling in my throat; and since we are forbidden to take any medicine of our own, I shame-facedly line up with the rest of them. There were about twenty all told and the doctor made short work of us.

“What’s the matter with you?” very cross.

“I-I-I-here—it hurts,” said one, pointing to his back and looking quite scared. The M. D. poked his finger into the spot designated.

“Man you’re not sick,” said the doctor in a very startling manner, “you’re almost dead, only you won’t lie down. You’ve dislocated a couple of vertibraes, ruptured a half-dozen ligaments and like as not you have a chronic case of pneumonia. The only thing that I can recommend for you is two hours of strenuous exercise. You may pull through and you may not.” Then, with a malicious grin, he turned to the next man and the first invalid shuffled off, mumbling something about horse doctors without any horse sense.

Two out of twenty of us got by. The rest went to work. I was one of the two. I had a slight temperature and an inflamed throat. Nothing serious, but report to the hospital. I did. And the best thing about the hospital was the fact that there were two sheets on the bed and I had an abbreviated flannel nightshirt to sleep in. Three big pills, the size of bullets and just as deadly, and then I turned in, went to sleep and slept right through mess time.

Four o'clock I was feeling very much better and ravenously hungry and at five o'clock I was discharged as cured. I don't know what I was cured of, but I'm feeling much spryer just now after three helpings of beef stew and apple marmalade and I'm ready to turn in and sleep some more.

Thursday:

If there is one thing that I want to remember more than anything else about this Conscript Camp it is the spectacle I witnessed and took part in this evening.

Fancy if you can Tower Hill with its big headquarters building snuggled in among the scattered and gaunt pines, the tall, ungainly water-tank propped up on all too spindly-looking stilts. On top of this a single figure thrown in bold relief by the golden yellow light of a big watch-fire, beating time with his baton, and below him, clothing the slopes of the hill five thousand men, his chorus, thundering forth across the starlit night "Columbia the Gem of the Ocean." That chorus was wonderful; that

crowd was wonderful; everything about it was wonderful.

We were all singing; thousands of fellows in khaki, some snuggled in their big army overcoats, some puffed out like pouter pigeons with the sweaters they had piled on under their tunics against the cold chill of night. Intermingled were the lumber jacks and labourers from the civilian camp, most of them in gay mackinaws and caps; with now and then an officer immaculately clad in clean cut uniform, or a Y. M. C. A. man in grey-green suit with red circle and triangle gleaming in the fire-light. And how well they could sing; I have never heard a more stirring chorus and as we raised our voices loud and clear shivery thrills raced up and down our spines, and we were stirred to the highest pitch of patriotic fervor. Indeed, there were some among us who could find no better way of expressing the emotion that swelled within save by tears. They cried. I was one of them.

“America” and “Dixie” and “Maryland” followed and every one produced its own thrill and its own heartache. Never was there anything more stirring. Never was there anything

finer. We sang till our voices were husky and the great chorus surged loud and clear across the night, until it must have echoed against the crags of the Rhine and caused the Hun to shudder.

Then the breaking up of the big meeting, when groups detached themselves and wandered out of the fitful flicker of the dying fire-light into the misty blue blackness of the night, still singing. Out through the streets of the camp we tramped, stepping to the cadence of our own songs. We were all happy, very, very happy and draft or no draft, down in our hearts we all knew that we were in the very place we were meant to be, and we were doing the very things that we should do, and that when the time came we would do other and greater things with as much eagerness and enthusiasm as we had sung up there on Tower Hill to-night.

The whole camp was singing even after the concert, but the character of the songs changed. "Over There" swelled forth everywhere and "The Yankees Are Coming" was chanted in every street. Out toward our own barracks our little group swung, passing the railroad

siding where, partly shrouded in the canvas jackets, new artillery pieces were waiting to be moved in the morning. A cheer for these and a cheer for everything and anything that suggested patriotism, and on we tramped, brimming over with enthusiasm.

And now I'm back to the barracks again, but the mysteries of the night and the spell of the whole wonderful occasion is still over me and I know I shall lie awake a long, long time and think and dream of all that waits for me in the not very distant future. And the promises I made myself up there on Tower Hill will all be fulfilled, that's certain.

Friday:

Momentous news. We of the headquarters company, or rather eighty-seven of us, start Monday on the first leg of that longed-for journey to France. We go to a Southern training camp where new units are being formed into which each of us will fit. And along with this news came the announcement that none of us will be given a pass to go home for a last good-bye. This has stirred the men more than

the news of the transfer South. Several impromptu indignation meetings were held this morning and this afternoon, just after mess, a real demonstration took place in the mess hall and most of the eighty-seven of us were loud in our assertions that we would go home anyway, even though we were arrested for desertion afterward.

This little incident served to impress upon me more than anything else the freedom that is accorded the men of this new American Army, for behold, before the meeting broke up a Lieutenant came in and addressed us on the penalties for desertion, the difficulty of dealing with headstrong soldiers and similar subjects, and then when we all felt and looked like slackers he announced that although orders had gone forth that no passes were to be granted, our commanding officer, knowing our feeling in the matter, was at that time trying very hard to arrange to secure permission for the men to go home over Saturday night and Sunday. As I left the mess hall I wondered vaguely how such a mass meeting would have been treated in the German Army, for instance, and I thanked my lucky stars that I was an American.

But there are a thousand and one things remaining to be accomplished to-day. I have been hurrying from one place to another since reveille and now at taps all that I should do is not done yet. But to-morrow is another day.

First of all we were rushed off to receive our third and fourth inoculations together. Then came the announcement that we would be relieved of all our winter clothing and given a complete summer outfit instead, for it appears there is no need for woollens in this Southland camp to which we are going.

And between times, there were a score of personal things I wanted to do, not the least of which was to join the line of waiting men before the telephone booths in the Y. M. C. A. shacks to tell them at home the news of our going. In all this, poor Fat seems to be sadly left out, for he is not among the fellows who are to leave. He stands helplessly by and watches the hurry and bustle going on about him, and sometimes I think there is a sad, wistful sort of a look in his big, good-natured face, for I know he doesn't like the idea of staying here when the snow begins to fall and winds whistle disconsolately around the corners of the

barracks building. I am glad that *I* will not have to spend the winter here and I'm sorry, too, that Fat is not to be with me.

Saturday:

To-day, for the first time since I have been here, I had visitors. Those at home, eager to get a glimpse of their soldier-boy in his native haunts, came down to see things as they are. I'm quite certain that the general arrangement of the barracks, with its cluttered appearance suggested by many pairs of shoes standing around and many hats and coats and old sweaters hanging about, did not accord with mother's ideas of good housekeeping.



A soldier-boy in his native haunts

And she assured me that many of the old rose, pink and baby blue comforters would not have suffered from a washing, all of which I had never

noticed before, until she drew my attention to it. She intimated, too, that my dish towel and my hand towel would never testify as to my respectable up-bringing, and she felt that I should make a practice of taking off those abominably heavy trench shoes in the evening and putting on a pair of slippers which she would send down to me. She thought that a bath-robe might come in handy for lounging in the evening and perhaps after we got comfortably settled in our Southern quarters, she might send one of the big, roomy library chairs down to me, for she did not approve of one's sitting on one's bed the way most of us did. She deplored the total lack of chairs about the barracks and she was quite sure that taking an ice cold shower out in that horrible big tin building would certainly result in innumerable cases of influenza, if nothing more serious. She's a dear old mother and I don't know that I have ever appreciated her so much as I have since I've been down here.

Then with my visitors caring for themselves for a while, and mother chumming up with the always affable Fat, whom she took quite a fancy to, I hurried about my work of being re-outfitted

with summer uniforms. Fortunately they allowed me to retain my overcoat (which I received but a few days ago) until we are ready to entrain.

Then came the passes. The officer was successful and we who are to go South are given a release from duty until to-morrow night at retreat. Other passes were distributed, too, and Fat fortunate for once, yet unfortunate, got one to go home until Monday morning. But poor Fat! Still the military tailors lag and now that he has the pass that he has been trying to get for this last month, he cannot use it, for he is not properly uniformed to leave the cantonment, having still just his flannel shirt. He tried frantically to borrow parts of a uniform to fit him and while he could find a pair of breeches that he could get into, a jacket was lacking, so in disgust, and with a most unhappy smile, he gave it up and went over to the Y.M. telephone booth to ask his mother to come down and visit him over Sunday.

And to-night there are no taps for me, for I am home once more and writing this at my own desk. We all came home together and had a

bully trip and now, after the best dinner I have eaten in many a day, I shall see a real show at a real theatre, and sit up as late as I choose and when I go to bed I will be between clean sheets again and there will be no officers' whistles to wake me in the morning.

Sunday:

Back again, but back to a sad and very unhappy barracks. Fat, poor, poor Fat, who felt downcast because he was not going South, has gone on a far longer journey. It is the first tragedy that has come into our life here in our barracks and with the thoughts of the breaking up of the big family on the morrow, and the homesickness, that most of us feel because of our all too brief trips home, has cast a gloom over us all.

Unfortunate Fat, done out of using his pass by the slowness of the army tailors, telephoned home yesterday to have his mother come out to see him. At train time this morning he was at the terminal awaiting her arrival. But in the shifting of the cars back and forth in the yard an accident happened and Fat, in the way of

it, was one of its victims. Both his legs were crushed and he was hurried away to the hospital.

Meanwhile, his grey-haired old mother arrived and stood about the terminal hour after hour wondering why he did not come for her, and it was not until late this afternoon that one of the boys in our company thought to go down and try and find her; which, fortunately, was not too late to bid her son good-bye.

And now we are on the eve of our departure. As I came through the terminal an hour ago the troop train, a long line of nondescript coaches, was being made up. As each car was made ready it was shunted into line by the ever-grumbling engine and to-morrow at daybreak all will be ready for us. Then we will go and some of us will be sorry, and some of us will be glad. As for myself, all that I can say is "Adieu, camp," and if the place I am bound for, wherever it may be, holds the charms that I've found here, I'll be happy.

Monday:

The mere suggestion of troop movements has a thrill to it, and we have had a lot of thrills to-day.

After a long period of restless waiting, and good-byes to every one and everything about the old barracks, came the command to fall in.

Then in summer uniforms, and each with a big blue barracks bag crowded with personal belongings, extra uniform, shoes, blanket and what not, on our shoulders, we lined up, shouted last farewells and stepped off, down the barracks street and out toward the railroad



I was alone in line

station. There was no whistling nor singing for we were all very solemn, and I was lonesome, for I was alone in line, the only member of our entire squad to go.

We came upon other columns of fellows,

coming from other companies, bound with us for this Southern camp. On we marched to the terminal. Here confusion reigned for a while, for hundreds of men in khaki were scattered everywhere, all bending under blue duffel bags, and wondering what was to happen next.

But soon we were entrained, and then with locomotive whistles hooting, and heads bobbing from every car window, we said farewell to The Camp. And with the leave-taking our spirits seemed to rise, for there was singing and whistling and horse play once more as the big cantonment faded from view behind its fringe of pine woods.

Our first impression was that we would travel all the way to Georgia in the cars we had been assigned to, but, fortunately, this was not true, for after a long and tedious trip we detrained again at a ferry terminal in Brooklyn. Here, too, was confusion. It was late in the afternoon, and we were hungry. Every candy stand, and handy store was patronized until the officers interfered. Then came the big, old fashioned side-wheeled ferries, and we were hustled aboard.

Soon the old craft swung out into the river

and with churning paddles we headed down stream.

It was just sunset. Far down the bay, beyond Governor's Island and Liberty, a great, fiery red disc was setting in a haze of smoke and mist from the city, while to our right and left on the river banks, lights began to twinkle, and overhead strings of diamonds draped each gracefully arching bridge. Past the Navy Yard we swung, with cheers from the crews of three destroyers in the river. Tugs and steamers and passing sound night boats greeted us with whistles, and we lined the rails and cheered back.

Soon we churned under the last of the bridges and began to make our tortoise-like way around the Battery. Lights were glimmering through the violet haze that shrouded the mass of sky-touching buildings, and in the foreground were hurrying throngs of men and women wending their way through Battery Park toward the ferries.

Up the North River, the skyline of the huge cities changed and grew more impressive, as one building after another came out of the mass and stood alone against the blue-black

Eastern night sky. Ferries criss-crossing in the darkness, leaving sparkling trails of light that danced on the water, crowded close to us at times, and the mass of men and women huddled on the windswept decks, cheered us on our way. Thus did we say our last good-bye to the big city—and we said it solemnly and thoughtfully, too, for many of us know that we are going on the long, long journey and will never see that skyline again.

The crowds in the terminal, as we hurried from ferry to the railroad yard, cheered us, too, and men rushed out to shake hands with us and crowded cigarettes and cigars into our pockets as we marched on.

We had been told that the Red Cross would feed us. It did, to the extent of a single sandwich and a cup of coffee, hastily snatched as we wended our way through the railroad yard to the train.

Long tourist sleepers are our lot. They stood on a siding, dimly lighted with a single candle at either end of the car when we climbed into them and were assigned to our seats. We are settled now, and rolling swiftly across Jersey. Lights have been turned on, and the

interior of the car looks very strange with the big blue duffel bags swinging from every hook and swaying as the train rounds each curve. But we are all very quiet, and many of us are thinking. We are all homesick that is certain, and hungry, too, and wondering about the future.

Tuesday:

We are rolling through Virginia into the sunset.

For twenty hours we have been crowded into these cars, and we are cramped and tired, but feeling happier with all. Two to a berth, we tried to sleep last night. But sleep was impossible. I was up most of the night, standing at the upper end of the car looking out the window, while my new-found bunkie tried hard to get in a few winks. He wasn't successful.

At midnight we ran through a little station called Brandy, and there in a pounding rain-storm, under the light of a smoky, yellow oil lamp, stood a solitary soldierly-looking figure, a boy, bare-footed and with head uncovered and his rain-soaked cap held over his heart in a

salute. He alone had been watching for the troop train.

Sometime after daylight, at Charlottesville, our train stopped for water. All signs of the rain had cleared, hundreds of boys, black and white, and men and women swarmed to the station to greet us. Our canteens were passed out of the windows for water, and hot coffee and thick sandwiches of home-made bread and jelly and delicious ham were given to us by a committee of very old women who had been up since long before daylight awaiting our arrival. Rations were served to us after we pulled out of the station, consisting of bread and hard crackers, and a can of tomatoes and a can of beans for every six men.

By way of diversion we began to play poker for the beans, and a pair of jacks left me breakfastless, except for the coffee and sandwich I was fortunate enough to get at Charlottesville. And that is all I have had since seven o'clock and it is now half-past four.

At one station along the line, where we laid over for a few moments, several fellows, acting as Sergeants, were sent out to buy food for our company. But the train pulled out without

them. Goodness knows where they are now, but the saddest part of it is that they didn't bring back the eats.

Wednesday:

We are travelling through a land of gold and red and green, with huge dabs of white marking the cotton fields. And we are hungry no longer.

At Cornellia the train stopped for half an hour, and the fellows, all but famished, made a wild rush for the door, and sweeping aside such obstructions as angry Sergeants took the town by storm. About seven hundred soldiers descended upon it, and bought everything in the eating line that they could possibly find, even to whole cheeses, huge stalks of bananas, and cases of honey. We ate, and we flooded the town with money. Never has Cornellia seen such a busy half-hour in its history, and never did the stores do such a tremendous business.

We held up the troop train while we satisfied our appetites. But what of it! We are happy now, with tight belts and plenty of cigarettes to smoke, so why worry!

Never in my life have I seen so many negroes.

They swarm about the train at every stop we make, chalk their initials on the cars (as every one else has done) sing songs, cheer and just bubble over with enthusiasm. Last night, while our train was on a siding, an old fellow somehow got inside the car and did a wild buck and wing dance in the aisle for pennies that were tossed from every bunk. And this morning another old fellow, with a bag of cotton on his back, came a little too close to the windows of the troop train. Eager hands seized the bag and pulled it from his shoulders, and presently the cotton was being distributed among the men as souvenirs.

And now we are only twenty miles from Atlanta, and the fellows are beginning to pack up their belongings. Some are trying hard to shave in a crowded wash-room, for the long train ride has left us all appearing a little the worse for wear and we want to enter our new home as presentable as possible.

I wonder what this new home will be like? Camp X is the cantonment and I am told that it is bigger than the place we left, but if it is half as pleasant we will be satisfied.

THE END

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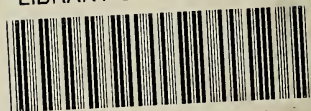
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