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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK JOHN BROWN: CONFESSIONS OF A NEW
ARMY CADET ***

JOHN BROWN

CONFESSIONS OF A NEW ARMY CADET

BY

R. W. CAMPBELL

Author of

'Private Spud Tamson;' 'Sgt. Spud Tamson, V.C.;' 'Donald and Helen;'
'The Mixed Division;' 'The Kangaroo Marines;' and
'Dorothy, V.A.D., and the Doctor'

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[iv]

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[v]

DEDICATED
TO
THE OFFICERS
OF
THE 51ST AND 52ND DIVISIONS
MANY OF WHOM I HAD THE GREAT
HONOUR AND PLEASURE TO
INSTRUCT IN THE
RUDIMENTS OF WAR

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JOHN BROWN.

CHAPTER I.

THE CADET SCHOOL.

I.

NO doubt you have seen, in the highways and byways, a lot of youths in khaki with white bands round their caps. These 'boys' are called cadets, and are usually men home from the front to train for commissions. In Sandhurst they are officially styled gentlemen cadets; but apparently we are not supposed to be gentlemen—we're just cadets. Funny, isn't it? But that's the way of the army.

Well, my name is John Brown—a very ordinary name—and I'm one of those fellows. Before the war I evaded toil by becoming a student, and spent a lot of time on 'ologies and 'osophies. Now I'm learning to be a *pukka* officer, and the leader of sixty men to the cannon's mouth.

When I left my battalion for the cadet school I shed no tears. They were in the trenches, or, rather, in the mud. And it cost a pair of brand-new boots to get on to the road. However, I survived, and in due time landed at Windmoor. This is a 'blasted heath,' swept by the winds, and isolated from picture-shows, barmaids, and revues; not a petticoat in sight, and at every corner a notice which amounts to: 'England expects that every cadet this day will do his duty.'

'This is no Utopia,' I muttered, falling into the first hut by the way. Ye gods! There was an old colonel, with eyes like a hawk and cheeks like dumplings; and what do you think he was doing? *Cutting his corns.*

'What the—why the—who the devil *are* you, sah?'

'John Brown, sir,' I said meekly, for never in my life had I seen such a perfect relic of the Napoleonic wars.

'Get to blazes out of this, John Brown!' he roared, putting his fat feet on the floor and banging the door. I was again alone—on the blasted heath. The old gent inside was Colonel Eat-All, the commandant. Rumour says he devoured two dervishes at Omdurman. I stumbled on once more, and found the orderly-room.

'This way,' said Sergeant-Major Kneesup, introducing me to the adjutant. I clicked my heels in the style of a Guardsman, and saluted like a railway signal.

'Well?' said a blasé-looking gent with three pips, looking up at me from his papers.

'John Brown, sir.'

'Who sent you here?'

'The War Office.'

'Umph! I know nothing about you. You had better go back to your regiment for your papers.'

'But I can't go all the way to France, sir.'

'Well, no—perhaps not. Wait a minute,' he said, ringing a bell. A clerk answered.

'Have you any papers dealing with Cadet John Brown?'

'Yes, sir. Came a fortnight ago.'

'Thank you. That's all.' The clerk went out.

'Oh, it's all right, Brown. Just go over to No. 1 Company. You'll see Sergeant-Major Smartem there. He'll fix you up. Good luck!' he concluded with a genial smile.

I saluted and went out, marvelling at the *methods* of the British Army.

I dug out the sergeant-major, and again announced that I was John Brown.

'That's a fine name to go to bed with.'

'It's the one my mother gave me.'

'Oh, well, you can't help it. Here's your blankets; there's your bed. You'll get your equipment to-morrow. Shove this white band on

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your cap. Tea's at five o'clock. The lavatory's down there. That's the canteen over yonder. And when you want writing-paper, hymns, or free salvation, there's a Y.M.C.A. down the road. Now, push off—*John Brown.*'

I was extremely grateful for all this information in tabloid form, but I had a lurking suspicion that my name was going to be a subject of rude jest. However, I am an optimist. I pitched my bag into a corner of the hut, pulled out a little book called *The Pleasures of Hope*, and commenced to read till tea-time. But I was disturbed. Cadet after cadet came filing in. They were all new and rather green, except one man, called Beefy Jones.

'What a ruddy place for a cadet school!' he roared.

'My dear chap, it is designed to protect our morality,' muttered a spectacled youth, who looked like (and proved to be) an ex-parson.

'Morality! After all that time at the front! What a jest!' exclaimed Beefy, banging his kit down.

In half-an-hour we were all good pals. Beefy confided to me that he had a ripping girl five miles away, and she had a jolly sister. If I wanted an intro., it was all right. He would fix it up. While the ex-parson—Billy Greens by name—suggested that I might help him to hand out the hymn-books at Sunday services. I promised to do so. (My father was in the Diplomatic Service.) And so twenty of us settled down to life in our hut at Windmoor Cadet School.

Tea-time proved that the rations were good, and when Lieutenant Blessem (our platoon officer) came round for complaints, we shouted, 'None, sir.'

'That's a good start,' he said with a smile. 'I want you boys to be happy here. If you're in trouble, or want to know anything, come down to my hut and I'll help you. But remember this, boys'—

'What, sir?' said Beefy.

'This platoon has got to be top-hole at everything.'

'Hear, hear, sir!' we roared, rattling our plates as he went out. Blessem was a sport. After tea we got piles of books thrown at us, as well as the standing orders of the school—a moral code akin to the Koran, insisting on sobriety, sincerity, and big salaams. These orders endorsed the ancient theory that women and wine are the root of all evil.

Beefy grinned, then shoved me on the back of his motor-bike and whirled me over to Sweetville, where I was introduced to Adela, a peach of a girl, who had never been kissed. What luck!

It was 7 P.M. when I met Adela. I kissed her at 9; promised to marry her at 9.15; and at 9.30 (to the minute) Beefy and I were answering roll-call at the camp five miles away. Some hustle—eh, what?

We made our beds down and got in between the blankets. About 'Lights out' there was an infernal din outside the hut. Somebody was running round shouting, 'John Brown! Where the 'ell's John Brown?' Then some fifty huts started a chorus of—

'John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave,
As we go marching along,' &c., &c.

Beefy led the chorus in our own hut—much to my annoyance. At last the door opened, and the sergeant-major bawled, 'Silence!' They shut up. He next inquired if John Brown lived there.

'Yes, sergeant-major. Here I am.'

'Telegram for you.'

'Oh, thanks,' I muttered, thinking it was some wonderful effusion from Adela. On opening the brown envelope I read: 'Sending you cough-drops, Keating's powder, and body-belt.—MOTHER.'

As the lights went down I thought of the dear, good soul who was so careful of my welfare. Mothers may be silly, but they *always love their boys.*

II.

Next morning we were routed out at reveille, and hunted off to tub ourselves in an open-air wash-house. One fellow, 'Ginger Thomson,' objected. We carried him out and flung him into the bath—clothes and all. There was no early parade that day, so we got ready for the commandant's inspection at 10 A.M. This was a real good show. We were formed up in close column of platoons. At 10

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A.M. (to the minute) Colonel Eat-All came bouncing on to the parade-ground—like a great Rugby football—dressed in khaki and splashed with ribbons. He had every decoration from the Order of the Blue Nile to a Companionship of Serajobitch (with swords). My word, he looked his part! I trembled.

'Well, gentlemen,' he said, 'I'm glad to meet you. I hope we'll get on together, but I'll have no nonsense, no slacking, and no back-answers. I've trained lions, burglars, and Gurkhas, and have commanded everything from mule transport to camel corps. You're here to work—*work*. And when I've finished with you, you'll be fit to scale the Alps, and eat Germans or smelling Bulgars. You won't get strategy out of the *Bystander* or tactics from the *Pink-Un*. The infantry drill book is better than Nat Gould, and *Needham's Tactics* more important than the sexual stuff of Oscar Wilde. Keep out in the open air, and don't hug the stove and the tea-pot. Get your tummies hard, so that you can live on boot-leather, horse-flesh, and cinders. War is to the strong, and you've got to be supermen—and gentlemen. We produce no jelly-fish in this emporium. We want "white men" and leaders. We're up against the Hun. He isn't a d—fool! Get that out of your headpieces. If you are going to beat him, you have got to know the tricks of Boney, the science of Maude, and the dare-devil tactics of Allenby. You can get all this *here*, if you pay attention and carry out your job. Good luck to you!' And off he stamped, to the amusement of all. As he passed my platoon he caught sight of me. My mouth was open.

'What's your name, my lad?'

'John Brown, sir.'

'Well, if you keep your mouth open like that in Mesopotamia, you'll catch everything from black cholera to cerebro-spinal meningitis. Keep your mouth shut—John Brown!'

From that day every cadet in the battalion took up the gag of, '*Keep your mouth shut—John Brown!*'

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CHAPTER II.

THE SERGEANT-MAJOR FROM THE GUARDS.

CADET schools are not perfect military academies; nevertheless, they are interesting resorts. This school was not only a fount of learning, but a school for manners and—in a way—a minor university. Although, as I have said, I was a student of 'osophies and 'ologies before the war, the discovery that my knowledge was limited soon came to me. This is a happy condition, and the only basis whereon to achieve future success. For all that, I am no groveller at the feet of lecturers. An officer must form his own opinions, and if I am going to be of any use in this military business, I must riddle the wheat from the chaff, and gather the harvest into my store. To be independent in thought is not uppish. It is personality! Personality is the whole thing in war, but never despise—*the other fellow*.

Now I have to make a confession. Before the war, when I was blundering around with golf-clubs and feminine charmers, the Brigade of Guards often passed my way. This seemed a wonderful machine, officered by men whom I imagined to be Beau Brummells and Byrons. Well-drilled automatons was all I thought of them. To me they were just fancy soldiers and ornaments of the Court. But who would say that now? Think of Ypres! And remember Cambrai! When the line was broken and my brigade was 'bu'st,' they came up like Trojans. They crossed the lines of trenches almost dressing by the right. Their faces were set, their bayonets shone, and they dived into hell and destruction with a valour that was amazing. They saved the British Army—and fifty men on the General Staff their jobs.

Salute the Guards!

Now, at this school where I, John Brown, was sent to learn the arts of war, our sergeant-major was from the Scots Guards. He was a wonderful man! When he drilled us I hated him like the Kaiser, but when he had finished with us I felt a smarter man. Beefy Jones and I agreed that Sergeant-Major Kneesup was much too German, and yet, somehow, we wouldn't have given him to the Germans for quids. Oh, he was a big fish on parade. In appearance he was like a well-cut statue. His eyes were of the X-ray kind. He could tell when there was a hole in your socks, or cotton-wool (instead of a heavy great-coat) in your pack. When he shouted he was like a fog-horn, and every command was finished with a *click* that gave you the jumps. Before we went on parade we cursed him, and vowed we would see him far enough before we jumped about like automatic toys; but when we got there he simply threw us about like kids. *The man was a marvel*.

That first parade! Oh, what a nightmare! Some of us were a bit late, for in the army you've got to be standing on parade five minutes before the hour allotted. The S.M. said nothing, but when the hour struck he bellowed 'Shun!' in a way that made half of us drop our rifles with fright.

'Pick 'em up! Pick 'em up! Look sharp!'

I gripped my gun with a shiver, and knew the squad were about to enter Dante's Inferno.

'Squad!... Shun!... As you were!' he roared. 'When I say "*Shun!*" come up to it... There's cobwebs in your brains, and wax in your ears.... Stand still, that man with the egg on his mouth, and hair like Caruso.... I can see *all* of you.... I am a blanket octopus, I am.

'Squad!... Shun!... Still!... Not a move!... There's a long-nosed gentleman twiddling his little fingers as if he's got St Vitus Dance.... This isn't a home for epileptics or a sanatorium for delirium tremens.... It's an officers' school, and I belong to the Brigade of Guards.... Twenty-five years' service, five medals, and the D.C.M.... I've drilled kings, princes, field-marsals, yokels, and hobos; and, by Gawd! I'll drill you off the face of the earth.... By the right—quick march!' And off we stepped.

'He's a bit thick,' mumbled Beefy to me.

Now, Beefy had hardly worked his lips when he made the remark, but the eagle eye of that S.M. had caught the culprit.

'Squad—halt!'

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We stopped in terror, and poor old Beefy began to perspire with fright.

'Now, I'll have no talking on the march, and no back-answers.... Discipline is discipline! If you can't keep your mouth shut on the square, you'll jabber on a night attack.... I'm the gramophone in this business.... I can read your thoughts and see your brains.... To me you're all as plain as a pikestaff.... I've only seen you ten minutes, but I've ticked off the lame, the lazy, the insubordinate, and the mad.... I'm Sherlock Holmes, I am. By the right—quick march!... A full step now! Shoulders square.... Heads erect.... March like the Guards.... Left—right—left.... Left.... Left—right—left.... Right—form!... Slowly now—slowly!... Swing round like a gate! Get back, that man with the nicotine on his fingers and the brilliantine running down his neck.... Forward—by the right!

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'Keep your dressing, there. By Gawd! I could get the Chinese Militia or the Boys' Brigade to beat you at this game. Heads up, or you'll drop your eyeballs.... Straighten your legs like sticks, and don't double your backs like dudes in Bond Street. About turn!... By the left.... Keep your hands down.... Never mind the sweat on the brow.... Let the flies lick it off.... Keep up. Keep up.... You'd never make a show at Buckingham Palace or Hyde Park.... If you can't drill, you can't beat the Germans.... Keep your dressing, there!... When the Brigade of Guards went into action at Ypres, they marched by the right and filled the gaps of the dead to keep a straight line.... When I fought at Belmont and Graspan, my company marched into action with whiskers, eyeballs, and tummies all in line.... That's the thing to put the fear of God into the enemy. Squad—halt!... Not a move!... Order—arms!... Stand at—ease! As you were! Who said "easy"?... None of your infantry dodges here. That's all right for an armed mob—not for me. Squad—stand easy!'

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'He's the ruddy limit,' said Beefy.

'Yes. This isn't a school. It's a bally penitentiary,' I said, wiping the perspiration off my brow. My shirt was sticking to my back, and I felt beastly uncomfortable. At the moment I hated Sergeant-Major Kneesup, but yet in my real heart I admired him. He was a man's man, hard as nails, merciless to the inefficient, but the A and the Z of that wonderful system which has made the Brigade of Guards a terror to every despot in Germany. As we looked at him walking up and down the square he resembled a true-born aristocrat, and yet he was once a ploughman. A wonderful product of a hard, yet marvellous, system.

'Squad—shun!... Stand—easy! Now, come round here, boys. I'm going to talk with you.'

The term 'boys' melted our fears, and we gathered about him.

'It's like this! A lot of you imagine when you get knocked about that it's a sort of punishment; for I know your thoughts. I've been through all this. When I joined the Guards we did the old-fashioned slope. They used to stick you close to a wall, and if you were not smart the wall tore all the skin off your fingers when you chucked the rifle up. That has been done away with, but the old-fashioned discipline remains. Some of you may think it brutal, but, believe me, it gets results. It makes men smart. It makes them obey. It turns them into gentlemen. I used to be a ploughman—now I've got a pension, a little pub, and a farm. I wouldn't call the Kaiser my cousin, and I learned *everything* in the Guards.'

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'But don't you think we need more intelligence and less of this Peninsular stuff, sergeant-major?'

'Not a bit less. Men are still the same—very human. Let drill, discipline, and orders slide, and your men will get panicky for the want of it. Now take my tip: all of you boys are going to be officers, so model your drill on mine. Your men will hate you at first, just as you hate me when I'm knocking you about; but when your colonel turns round and says, "Lieutenant John Brown has the smartest-drilled platoon in this battalion," the men will lick your boots for you. Tommy's a funny fellow. He doesn't really admire a slack officer. He likes the officer who knows his job. If you want to get them up to the scratch, drill like the Brigade of Guards.'

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'But, look here, sergeant-major, aren't other corps as good as the Guards?' I inquired.

'Certainly, my boy. But still I must tell you this, that the Guards are nearly always kept in reserve, not because they are pets, but to save awkward situations. It's not we that should be saying it, but you'll admit that at Cambrai we managed to keep things right, eh?'

'By Jove, you did!' exclaimed a few of the cadets who had been there.

'Whatever regiment you join, you've got to feel and believe that your regiment is *It*. Every regiment has different traditions. There's the Old Devons, Wilts, Surreys, and all the Highland corps. They're wonderful stuff. And if I dared to talk to them about the Guards they'd bash my head in. And quite right, too! That's *esprit de corps*. But at the moment you are all cadets. You belong to no regiment, and if I can hand on any of the good ideas I've got from other good men, you will profit by it.'

'But it's ruddy hard to learn from you, sergeant-major,' piped Beefy, who was still steaming with perspiration.

'My dear boy, I'm mild compared to some. When I was a "rookie" I used to come in with my feet bleeding, my heart pumping like an engine, and limbs like lead. You don't really know what drill is. I'm mild—real mild. And when you've finished here we'll all part good friends. Don't worry! A number nine pill will help you through all right. You're too fat. Now, fall in!'

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For the next half-hour he knocked us about like ninepins. Every nerve, every muscle, was on the jump. He knew every trick of drill, and turned us inside-out. To an observer it must have been a treat to watch him. But to us it was more or less hell. Yet he quickened our wits and roused our ardour so that every man Jack said, 'Well, it's up to us to knock spots off the Guards.' And that was his real and only aim, for he was a true soldier. He dismissed us with a smile, and said we weren't really a bad lot. We rejoiced.

I was so delighted after the 'Dismiss' that I commenced to throw my rifle up in the air, and catch it.

'Hi, there!' shouted the S.M.

'Yes, sir.'

'What's your name?'

'John Brown, sir.'

'Carry your arms properly—*John Brown*.'

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CHAPTER III.

CUSTOMS OF THE SERVICE.

I.

THE old 'com.' fairly caught me out at the 'prelim.' We had a general knowledge paper set—a fairly easy thing. I finished mine in about half-an-hour; then, getting bored waiting for Beefy, I started to write some skittish answers for my own amusement. Beefy, who is a practical joker, got hold of these, and when we were asked to pass our papers up, substituted the wretched things for my real answers. Just to show you how I put my foot in it, here are samples of the silly tripe I concocted.

(Q.) What is meant by strategy? (A.) Giving a fellow a thick ear—suddenly.

(Q.) Explain the term Tactics. (A.) Correct handling of a platoon when passing a brewery.

(Q.) What is an outpost? (A.) A military mortuary.

(Q.) What is meant by camouflage? (A.) Wearing a Burberry to hide a hole in your pants.

(Q.) Who is Allenby? (A.) The fellow who *didn't* make a mess of Gaza. [20]

(Q.) What should an officer always say to the men? (A.) 'Get your hair cut.'

Now, just imagine what the old 'com.' thought of me when he went through this piffle. I was in a blue funk. To make matters worse, it was Saturday and leave-day. Adela had got her mother and father off to a Red Cross bazaar, and she had engaged the drawing-room for us—all to ourselves. Beefy and her sister had commandeered the dining-room. This heavenly prospect was damped by a terrible cloud.

'Cheer up, John Brown,' said Beefy.

'That's all jolly fine, Beefy. You've let me down, and if I get chucked out, it's all your fault.'

'You're a ruddy pessimist. The old colonel is a sport. He'll be tickled to death. Of course, he will probably have you up, make a hellifa fuss, &c.; but when you go out he'll burst with laughter. You have got no humour, you silly ass. And you forget that the old chap used to do things at Sandhurst. Hang it all! it's only a rag; and if there's trouble, John, I'll own up. I'm not a sneak.'

'Fall in for lecture,' shouted the C.S.M. 'And, I say,' he added.

'What, sergeant-major?' [21]

'Is John Brown here?'

'Yes.'

'You're for orderly-room after the lecture. Make your will out. You're going to be hanged, drawn, and quartered.'

'Right-o!' I answered, making the best of a bad job.

II.

We then marched away to the lecture-hall to hear the adjutant on his favourite topic—'Customs of the Service.' He was not a bad lecturer, and quite funny at times. We called him 'Blasé Percy.' He had been at Mons, the Marne, and Ypres. Half his nose was off; he had a glass eye, a dummy hand, a silver plate in his tummy, and a game leg. Poor chap! no wonder he was *blasé*. For all that, he was a sport, and had the Legion of Honour.

'Now, gentlemen,' he said, 'when you've finished wiping your feet on the tables, I'll start. You've got to go through it, so don't go to sleep. My lecture is "The Customs of the Service." When you leave here you will have commissions. And when you join your regiments, try to do "the correct thing." Don't lurch into your new battalion like an actor-manager looking for trouble. Slide in quietly, just like a little dawg. If you're not humble by nature, look as humble as you can. When reporting to the adjutant, don't have a woodbine between your lips and your hands in your pockets. He will eat you alive. When I was a sub. I saved myself an awful lot of trouble by cutting the English Dictionary down to two words—"Yes, sir." If you're not [22]

brainy, that's quite a good scheme. The adjutant will mark you down as decent and harmless, and the men won't know. Of course, this beastly war has upset our easy old system. You've got to be intelligent to please the newspapers. It's a bit of a bore, but the best people are trying to do it, and it's good to be in the fashion. At the same time, it isn't the correct thing to argue the point with majors and colonels. They are big-bugs in the military scheme, and should an old gentleman announce in the anteroom that Macedonia is in Texas, or that Florrie Forde is the wife of President Wilson, don't call him a liar. You will make him unhappy, and when he gets you on parade, he'll most likely twist your tail. Use your brains, certainly; but don't advertise them—that's bad form.

'A man is judged by little things, and it is very easy to discover a man's temperament and schooling. For example, in one battalion to which I was attached, a gorgeous youth barged in and presented his card to the adjutant as if he were a commercial traveller. Mark you, he was only joining his battalion that day; but the adjutant was amused to read the following:

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<i>LIEUT. TED TIDDLEWINKS, Esq.,</i>	
<i>1st Batt. Bombing Buffs.</i>	
Tel. address:	Red Villa,
"Hustle."	Tooting.

'Now, that visiting-card was all right for "The Bing Boys," but it was no good for an officer of His Majesty's Service. I agree it wouldn't prevent our going on with the war. And I am glad to say it was no indication of the real ability of dear old Ted, as he turned out to be. But officers are officers. We control the actions of millions of men, and it's not at all a bad thing to make the British Army a school for etiquette and good manners. Ted, I may tell you, was an advertising agent in civil life. He simply couldn't help getting that card printed. From his telegraphic address you will observe he was a hustler, and we can do with lots of men like him. However, the adjutant handed him over to me, and I got him to dump his one thousand gold-edged, red-lettered visiting-cards into the ashpit, and gave him a bit of pasteboard like this:

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<i>MR TED TIDDLEWINKS,,</i>
<i>1st Batt. Bombing Buffs.</i>

'Thus was he shorn of all his guilt, his Esq., his Red Villa, Tooting, tel. address, and all the fripperies of Suburbia. No officer requires a brass band or a newspaper poster to announce his commission or importance. The uniform is good enough, and it's a mighty good kit, too. Ted was such a good fellow, so willing, so generous, and afterwards so brave that we adopted him as a regimental mascot. He's now a captain, a D.S.O. And what do you think that devil Ted is going to do next week?'

'What, sir?' I asked.

'He's going to marry my sister.'

'Hear, hear!'

'My sister, I may tell you, is a jolly good-looking gel—so is Ted good-looking—and when she asked my benediction, I wired: "God bless you, Red Villa and all."

'Another point. Don't start attempting to tip adjutants and colonels. You may be very rich, and imagine that if you send me a gold cigar-case studded with diamonds I shall pass you out for your commission. Personally, I should have no hesitation in court-martialing a man who did so. I recall a youth named Solomon M'Isaaks, who blew in from the Argentine. Out there he had to deal with grafters and twisters. To get business he had to give palm-oil by the gallon. He was not at all a desirable fellow. He wanted short cuts to success, and didn't like the daily grind of orderly officer, drill, marching, &c. Somehow or other he suddenly conceived the idea that by patronage he might buy a colonelcy or a brigadier's job. So he started to throw fivers about like hot peas, and ended up by sending a cheque to a brigade major. That finished him. He was booted out. If there is one thing we ought to be proud of, it is that the British Army has not the graft of South America. Merit counts, although I'm just afraid a sneak soft-soaps his way occasionally by

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acting the part of Uriah Heap.

'I may also tell you there are hundreds of little things you have got to know. For example, when the commanding officer enters the anteroom every officer must promptly rise to attention—as a mark of respect. Colonels do not insist on this from mere vanity. It is really discipline, and as all of you may be colonels some day, you will realise the benefit of the system. Another custom is, when you meet the C.O., the major, or the adjutant in the morning, salute smartly, and say, "Good-morning, sir." If the C.O. had occasion the day before to reprimand you for some error, make a point of saying a cheerful "Good-morning," and he will *then* know that you are no petty-minded individual.

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'Remember your table manners. For dinner assemble in the anteroom five minutes before the time. Allow the C.O. and seniors to lead the way to the table, and take your seats quietly. Don't eat with your knife; and when you finish a course, put your knife and fork together. When a mess servant sees a new officer leave his knife and fork sprawling all over the plate he says nothing—but he thinks a lot. He really believes the delinquent is not a gentleman. And it is most important that officers should convey to all ranks that they have a knowledge of the courtesies which are the hall-mark of all well-trained people.

'Of course, you may say, "What has all this got to do with winning the war?" My reply is, it is *the whole scheme*. For example, the German officer is quite a brave man, but he is not a gentleman. His manners to the German soldiers are the manners of a brute. He never uses "please," seldom "thanks;" while Faith, Hope, and Charity are absent from his curriculum. His whole life is based on brute-power, the penal code, and—*orders*. What a difference from the British Army! Our discipline is the firmest, yet the kindest, in the world, simply because cadets and *all* officers have had their noses shoved on the grindstone by sergeant-majors, lecturers, and seniors, who insist that if you fail in your duty, and neglect to cultivate the love and the friendship of your men, then you are absolutely no use to the British Army.

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'Again, when you want to leave the mess table before the mess president does so, you must go and ask his permission. On a guest-night you must not leave the room, except on a point of duty; and you should remain with the guests of the evening till they go.

'Here are a few more hints in brief, which I call the Subaltern's Ten Commandments.

'(1) Thou shalt drink soda-water.

'(2) Thou shalt not wear pink socks or yellow shoes, or carry Mills grenades on leave with the pin half-out.

'(3) Thou shalt not address generals as "Dear old Charlie."

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'(4) Thou shalt not kiss V.A.D.'s—*in public*.

'(5) Thou shalt aspire to the V.C.—if thou cannot become an R.T.O.

'(6) Thou shalt smile, even when thy calf has "stopped one."

'(7) Thou shalt permit the men to sing, dance, and be merry, for on the morrow they may die.

'(8) Thou shalt covet the Kaiser's blood, his ox, and his ass, and everything that is the Kaiser's.

'(9) Thou shalt be chivalrous.

'(10) Honour thy King and serve thy Motherland, that thy labours may gain unto thee three pips and a D.S.O.

'I think that is all just now, gentlemen,' concluded the adjutant. 'Fall out, please.'

III.

At other times this most excellent lecture would have cheered me up, but the coming ordeal made me tremble, and I shuffled to the orderly-room with a heavy, heavy heart. I wasn't worrying so much about what the 'Old Man' was going to say; it was the thought of my leave's being ruthlessly cancelled that made me sick of life. Adela—alone in the drawing-room—waiting for me. To be denied that hour of crowded life seemed like cutting the legs off a race-horse.

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As I passed the orderly-room I saw the commandant had a fierce and livery look, for it was a raw, wet morning.

'Quick march—right wheel—left wheel—halt!—Hands back!—

John Brown, sir,' announced the sergeant-major.

The 'com.' looked up. His eyes were sparkling fire, his moustache was like that of a walrus, his cheeks were puffed with wrath, and his neck *was* red. He struck terror into my soul, and I quaked like a schoolboy. I didn't know, of course, that this was the official orderly-room manner, specially cultivated by ancient mandarins to impress all tyros with the majesty of military law.

'Well, young man,' he blurted out, 'I have seen your effusion. It's all right for *Comic Cuts*, but it's a personal affront to me. Do you think the army and the war a cock-eyed revue for flippant cadets to throw their mocking tosh'—

'Really, sir, I'm—I'm'—

'Silence, d— you! You, a future officer, get an examination-paper given you, and you deliberately sit down and turn it into a music-hall farce. It's outrageous! It's a scandal! You're a disgrace! When I commanded the Fuzzy-Wuzzy Camel Corps I would have shot an officer for such an offence. Do you realise the enormity of your crime? It's almost treason. Under the Manual of Military Law I can do anything with you for this. And if I were the C.I.C. I might order you to be strung up by the thumbs. What do you mean, sah? What the devil do you mean, sah?' he concluded, stabbing the blotting-paper with a pen and making it break into a thousand fragments.

It was impressive—awe-inspiring! I felt like a worm between two stones. I am five feet ten inches, but at the moment I seemed no higher than a grease-spot.

'Please, sir, I'—

"Please" be d—! Speak like a soldier.'

'I did two papers, sir—the correct one and this one. Unfortunately this silly one was sent up. I did it for my own amusement. I'm most awfully sorry, sir.'

'You're most *awfully* sorry, are you? Where is the proper paper, then?' he roared.

'Here, sir,' I said, handing it over.

His eye quickly scanned it over. 'Humph! saves your bacon, my lad. I was preparing to heave you out, bag and baggage. However, you're a youngster. I've got boys of my own. I'll give you a chance. Come again and you'll be shot! Now, are you due for leave to-day?'

'I hope you won't stop it, sir. I've an important engagement with a tailor about my uniform.'

'Did you say a tailor or—a lady?' he inquired, looking deep into my eyes.

'A—lady, sir.'

'Well, I have no desire that an innocent person should suffer for your misdeeds. You can have your leave. But never come here again—John Brown.'

'Thank you, sir.'

I was marched out. As the orderly-room closed I heard the 'Old Man' burst into laughter, and say to the adjutant, 'By Jove! we put the wind up that young bounder.'

'Yes, *sir*,' replied the adjutant.

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CHAPTER IV.

WHAT WE TALKED ABOUT.

NO doubt our military dons believed that after drill we swotted Haking, Needham, Infantry Training, and Stonewall Jackson, not forgetting *Notes from the Front*, and all the pamphlets on soldiers' bunions, number nine pills, &c. We certainly did swot—when they were looking or moving around. But a cadet's day is a strenuous day. From 6 A.M. to 4 P.M. running, drilling, lectures, and physical jerks feed up the best of men, and we were glad to leave shop and gather together round the fire. There we unbared our souls, and made no bones about it. Army life is an open life, a much manlier life than even the public school. There's no beastly fagging, no 'bloods,' but a universal hate of the prig and the prude. War is a wonderful leveller. And at this school there was a regular mix up of breeds and classes.

These men were all tried men. They had fought the Boche. Some had the M.M. or the D.C.M. There were butchers and bakers, jockeys, bookies, honours men, and backwoods adventurers. They were the cream of courage, but—excepting Billy Greens—not the soul of the Church. Fighting-men are really primitive. They have seen life—and tasted it. Women and wine had passed their way. For all that, they were not sickly neurotics, revelling in literary slime. They could tell a yarn, of course, but that was no evidence of decadence or softness. Men who can beat the Boche are not soft-bottomed sultans. They were hard as flint, yet as gentle as babes.

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In my own hut there were many characters. Ginger Thomson, for example—the queer beggar who wouldn't wash. But he had the M.M., as well as the French Military Medal, and a brilliant record at Oxford. He entertained us when he dissected our professors, and it was good to hear him cross swords with Billy Greens, the ex-parson. Greens hadn't the chest of a hen, but he was the Church militant. He was a plucky little devil, and if any man interfered with his evening devotions, Greens would get up and fight. Nobby Clarke was a howling Radical lawyer, inclined to argue the point; while Tosher Johnson was a Canadian cow-puncher. There were others, not forgetting Beefy Jones, the lustiest beggar who ever carried a gun. So, when gathered round, we were interesting. One night we discussed religion.

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'Men can't be intellectual and godly, old chap,' declared Ginger. 'If you want us all to sing psalms and chant "Holy, Holy," you'll have to close the schools and breed us like heifers and hogs. To be a Rationalist, one need not be a morality-wrecker. Many unbelievers are clean—cleaner than those who attend communion on Sunday and break all the Commandments on Monday. Clean up the Church, and I'll be a parson.'

'How can we clean it up, when you're destroying any little good we can do?' exclaimed Billy Greens. 'We're not supermen—we're human. We can't perform miracles; and I'll tell you this, old chap, religion is a bulwark for the poor, the sick, and the blind. Destroy the Church and you'll destroy the last shreds of public decency and restraint. Your doctrine will plunge us into the moral laxity of the Huns. We're fighting for God in this war, and that's why I'm in. I loathe the whole armour, but I won't throw it off till we rid the world of this canker and curse. This is a holy war.'

'Well, Billy, I'm giving you a hand, although my views are not your views. Personally, if all the padres were good fellows like you, I would cut out my doubting and inquiring brain, and become a sidesman in your parish church. Religion is all right; it's the average parson who is all wrong. Some are the fag-ends of humanity; others are ordained Don Juans; many are mercenary adventurers; and only a few are like you—real good men, who believe in what they preach. Hang it all, Billy! half your parsons are not men; they're women in breeks. You're about the only man I've seen fit to be Archbishop of Canterbury. When I'm Premier, you'll get the job.'

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'Hear, hear!' echoed the boys, for Billy Greens was a popular chap.

'Your flattery's well meant, Ginger, but I've no need of it. I can carry my own bat. You're not morally bad. Indeed, you're on a higher plane than many. But, for all that, your intellect makes you

dangerous. And it's up to me to keep you in order. In this hut I'm the Church militant, and if you convert any of these boys to your doubting Rationalist creed, I'll take it out of your skin.'

'By Gad, Billy! I *do* like your pluck. You're a white man, if you are a parson. I'll be a real good boy,' murmured Ginger, who in his heart had a swelling love for the plucky little padre.

'I'll vote you in as a bishop too, when I get into Parliament,' interjected Nobby Clarke. [36]

'Thanks, Nobby; but you're a rotten Radical. I've no use for your Mumbo-Jumbo trickery and Manchester morality. Your crowd is a mixed bunch of twisters and prudes. You sing the Auld Hundred on Sunday, and pull down the Established Church on Monday.'

'Good old Billy!' shouted Ginger.

'My dear old Pieface, your Church won't be any good till you get Disestablishment. As long as padres have got security of tenure, they won't work. They regard a living as an investment. All you can get them to do is to play bowls, read Elinor Glyn, and drink whisky with the squires. They're the enemies of freedom, Free Trade'—

'And Free Beer,' piped Beefy.

'Yes, they are political mandarins who want to keep the Old Country in chains. The Liberal Party will save all you High Brows from revolution and anarchy. Yet you won't thank us. You gobble the *Morning Post*, chew the *Spectator*, and lick the feet of Arthur Balfour. You Tories are a damned lot of nose-wipers and job-seekers. You haven't the stomach of a fly.'

'What about Haldane?' roared Beefy, who got his politics from the *Daily Mail*.

'Well, what about him?' [37]

'The *Daily Mail* says his soul is in Germany.'

'If you read the *Daily News* you would find that it was his Expeditionary Force which landed in France in 1914, and his Territorial Force which warded off invasion. All your Tory Government did when in power was to change the design of Tommy's shirt-tail and hand out caps made in Germany. You're great fellows for political swank and eye-wash, but you haven't the brains of a hen. And even in your Tory Coalition Government you've got to get Lloyd George to pull you through.'

'Nobby!' cried Ginger.

'What?'

'I'm fighting your constituency at the next election. You're a pest, a peril, and a blighter. And if the Boche doesn't kill you, I'll smite you dead on the platform as soon as you whisper Free Trade. Free Trade will ruin the Empire. We're going to have Protection, even if I've got to lay you out on a shutter of the *Daily News*. And I'll bribe the hooligans to smash up the printing-machines of the *Manchester Guardian*. You Radicals have got to be destroyed.'

'Gentlemen,' said Nobby, striking an oratorical pose, 'look at this unwashed pro-consul from Oxford. He's really afraid of Advanced Liberals passing a Utopian measure that every citizen must be washed. And he, the product of culture, the flower of chivalry, the superman, would bribe the toughs to smash up the *Manchester Guardian*! Oh Ginger, thy name is Autocracy!' [38]

'Yours is Democracy, and it's a pretty rotten creed. You're rushing us into a Republic, with a President in overalls, and Cabinet Ministers who drop their h's, and snore when they're sucking their soup. You won't be happy till you see field-m Marshals as bus-conductors and admirals as A.B.'s. You'll cut off the Colonies and let us fizzle out as the inglorious scrap-heap of a once glorious old Empire. Nobby, you're a politician and a public fraud.'

'Is he?' said Tosher Johnson, the Canadian.

We all looked up with a start. Tosher was a dark horse.

'Yes,' Ginger retorted with emphasis.

'Well, I guess Nobby's Free Trade is all bosh, but he's a man of push and go. You're too durned slow for a funeral over here. Your hoofs are sticking in the feudal mud. An earthquake's the only thing to stop your browsing on Homer and chewing the rag about "form." This is the Dollar Age. Make good or go under. You wowsers from Oxford and Cambridge want your blinkers taken off. The classics cut no ice in this age. Homer, Socrates, and Plato won't sever the ham-strings of the Hun. When you were pottering around on Shakespeare, Tennyson, golf, tennis, and "Rugger," the Hun was [39]

dumping his goods in Canada and every bush town in the Empire. It makes me sick to hear all this gaw-damned talk in your papers. You're a fine people, but you only crawl. You won't run. If you don't get a spark under your old machinery, this old scheme will peter out like Spain and Rome.'

'Rotten materialism,' shouted Ginger. 'Your philosophy is "guessing," your soul is "calculating," and you're clean gone on "results." You've been taught no history. Old things you don't know or understand. And when you land in the Old Country, you want to bring your commercial morality into the only decent Government in the world. You're all jolly good fellows. Fine soldiers! Good citizens! But you're dollar-mad, and have no bottom in your politics or finance. Smuts is a Colonial, but he doesn't talk like you.'

'He was at Cambridge. Good old Cambridge!' shouted Beefy.

'Yes,' answered Ginger. 'Smuts is about the only man you've produced at Cambridge. He refused to play the giddy goat, and put his nose down on the classics, logic, history, and law. That's what you want, Johnson.'

'Not for me, old chicken. Homer never built the C.P.R., Shakespeare ain't a bit of use on a Calgary beef-ranch, and Darwin's theory won't milk a Holstein or a Jersey. A clear head, a strong back, and a good riding-leg cut ice in these times. Business is business. And dollars keep up men and munitions. You ain't wise, Ginger.'

'Well, boys,' said I, butting in, 'we've discussed everything from bishops to Free Trade and the classics, but we are getting muddled and fogged. This fellow Ginger from Oxford is paralysing our repartee and logic, and old Tosher wants to make the Old Land into a dollar-factory. It seems to me that the main issue raised by this howling Radical, Nobby Clarke, is whether we shall vote for Bolsheviks or Imperialists. I don't quite agree with high-browed Ginger, nor do I support all the materialism of Tosher. But the future is clearly a titanic contest between Republicanism and Imperialism. I move we put it to the vote.'

'Certainly,' shouted Ginger.

Result:

Republicanism	1 (Tosher)
Imperialism	23
Imperialist Majority	<u>22</u>

'Nobby!' shouted Tosher, after the vote.

'What?'

'You're a gaw-damned Tory, after all.'

'No—I'm a lawyer.'

Lights out!

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CHAPTER V.

A CANADIAN NEWSPAPER.

ONE evening I was seeking for something to read, when my eye lighted on a strange-looking newspaper with American sort of headings. I picked it up. It was *The Shack Valley Times*, a typical Canadian production, bright, brief, personal, and amusing. I got all the milk records of the Dominion, the price of wheat, the names of the mayor's last set of twins, and an obituary notice of a famous race-horse. 'Good!' I thought, turning over the page. Lo and behold! there was a huge photo of Tosher and a full-page heading:

'SHACK VALLEY'S NEW NAPOLEON, TOSHER JOHNSON, THE MAN-EATER, GOES TO SCHOOL FOR FIELD-MARSHALS. SPECIAL INTERVIEW.'

'The boys and girls in Shack Valley,' ran the editorial introduction, 'will be real glad to know that Tosher Johnson of this city is making good. When he left here in 1915 he said he was out to win the war. Since then he has been collecting scalps on the Western front. He has slosed no less than twenty Germans, and his name is famous from Boulogne to Verdun.

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'Our correspondent, Jim Penman, at present with the Canadian Forces, was fortunate enough to secure a special interview with our gallant townsman, who thus unbosomed himself: "Tell the boys of Shack Valley that I'm pushin' real hard in the fireworks business, and have got the option of a corner lot in Ypres to shove old Kaiser Bill into when we Canadians get him. It isn't all beer and dollars out here. It's all mud and death by instalments. Since leavin' home I've lost my false teeth, two stones off my corporation, and my Sunday School character. They've turned me into a white-tusked Khalifa, bent on canning Huns and catchin' curios for the Shack Valley girls."

"All the married men of Shack Valley who want to get quit of their wives ought to book right here. There's free passes up to the Sudden Death Establishment, and a photo-man to take your chivvy when you're passing in your checks. I've been near it, but the Devil doesn't want me yet. I've had my pants blown clean away to Berlin, my sittin'-down place peppered with shrapnel; the beef of my legs is lyin' up in Bapaume; and there's blood from my nose around La Bassée. I've been choked with the Kaiser's lavatory gas, and got chucked to heaven one night along with a horse and an automobile. Oh my, I did want to go home!

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"Still, it ain't bad! I was made a lance-corporal for rescuing the captain's bottle of whisky under a bombardment, and a full corporal for collaring three pimple-headed Huns who came over to ask me the time. Why, I'm just real good at the butchering business. I've got a jab-knife and a bludgeon dotted with nails. When I'm bored stiff I hops over, clubs a few German waiters on the top knot, and brings back the latest news from the Crown Prince's doss-house behind the line. They calls me 'Butcher Bill,' and stuck a tin medal on my chest for flopping out a fat fellow who wanted to take a lease of our front line. Talk about pictures! Why, this is the best picture-show out of Toronto.

"Oh, you can tell the boys they've given me the Military Medal for doin' a little job on a dark night. It was dirty work at the cross-roads. A fight for a hole—a shell-hole. They wanted it, and we wanted it. So we staked our pitch and said, 'Come on.' I cut a pound o' steak out o' a German lieutenant, and made three widows in Potsdam. Had to be done! No Shack Valley boy's goin' to lie down to them fellows. Oh, it's a hellifa life!

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"Now I'm in a school for officers. They reckon Tosher is push-and-go stuff, and want to rig me out as a big-gun in the fightin' business. I ain't at all keen, for you've got to be respectable, and when you're wearing one pip, you're barred from asking a lady, 'Is this the way to Bond Street?' There's a real first-class crowd here—remittance men, cow-punchers, log-rollers, grafters, and let-me-downs, not forgetting sky-pilots and kids from school. But they're bright boys, and can jaw on anything from eugenics to corn cure.

Why, it's just good to think o' the stuff that wants the King's commission. Some are all 'side,' and some need it. And they're all gaw-damn Tories, except one, and he's a lawyer. (I'm watchin' this fellow.)

"They teaches me how to eat sardines without using a knife, and how to chew an orange without splashing my dial. And you can bet your boots they show me how to do the big salaams to the Great Boss. It's a wonderful business! When I get back I'll know how to wipe my feet on the mayor's mat. They call it 'form,' and they think we wild fellows from Shack Valley are the ruddiest lot of gum-chewing hobos that ever wore an army shirt and climbed up a gun. But I'm givin' them hot stuff, an' teachin' them that we from out West ain't one-eyed chicks from lop-brained Alabama.

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"Still, it ain't a bad institooshun, and the girls round here are prime. I can get a kiss for a maple-leaf, and a wife by giving a nod.

"Oh, boys, it's a hellifa fine war! Give Laurier a miss and come right over. The way to heaven's cheap, and all funeral expenses paid.

"Besides, *the beer's real good.*"

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CHAPTER VI.

THE MODERN GIRL.

I.

IN peace or war we cannot do without the ladies. They brighten this weary world, cheer us when we are in the depths, and tend us 'when pain and anguish wring the brow.' Our mothers mould our characters, our sisters help to keep us clean, while other men's sisters provide the love and the inspiration so needful to man. And war is good for the business of Cupid. Danger gives admiration scope, and promotes the deeper affection.

Adela was my star. When drill and lectures were done, I basked in her smiles and played the old, old game. But, like all women, she loved to tease. It was, therefore, in keeping with her character to send me the following:

'MY DEAR JOHNNIE,—Don't come on Saturday, as I shall be engaged. We are having two Australians to lunch, and shall be busy all day. You will understand. Love.

ADELA.'

That was all she said. Two Australians! I felt annoyed, for these Cornstalks are the deadly rivals of the British Army. One of them had stolen my little French girl in La Bassée, while another had eloped with my V.A.D. from a Strand hotel. No, it wasn't good enough, and I loudly swore.

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'What's wrong, John?' inquired Beefy.

'Adela is booked for Saturday. The Anzacs are cutting me out. I'm fed up!'

'I'm in your boat too, old chap. Her sister is apparently on the same stunt. She sent me word this morning, but I am not worrying. There's lots of girls in this world. A little change will do us good. I'm fed up being respectable. Women *are* the limit. They're getting too sure of themselves. They're like trout—want a lot of playing before you land them. There's nothing like cold indifference to bring them round.'

'You're an authority, Beefy.'

'Well—yes. I've paid for my experience. I've loved everything from a parlour-maid to a general's daughter. They're all the same. As Kipling says:

The colonel's lady
And Judy O'Grady
Are sisters under their skin.

'Pursue them, lavish the wealth of a millionaire on them, yield them your life and soul, and they'll go round the corner to—*the other fellow*.

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They're contrary,
And they're wary;
They're devils till they die.'

'You're a cynic, Beefy. You've met the wrong sort. You can't expect barmaids and ballet-girls to have souls. They trade their charms and squander their affections, but the real decent kind are not half-bad. I've a weakness for the opposite sex.'

'Oh, you're a ruddy idealist. You're always up in the moon. You're too trusting. One can't trust a woman. If I had my way, I'd go over to the system of the Moslems.'

'You're *blasé*, Beefy. You have had such a good time that you think the world has gone wrong. What's the good of being a cynic? I'm not posing, old chap, but I do think there's a lot of goodness in modern girls if you care to search for it. Why, they're real sports! Look what they're doing to win the war. They're nursing, driving, ploughing, and cooking, without a grouse. It's a great revelation! This war has given them their opportunity. You can't put these girls into harems after the war. Your mentality is crooked, Beefy.'

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'Per-haps! All the same, I'm convinced the modern girl is neurotic. I may be *blasé* and all that, but I'd much sooner have the steady old Mid-Victorian type than these short-skirted creatures,

who love a naval man on Monday and elope with a soldier on Tuesday. Seems to me they want only a good time. A fellow with a Rolls-Royce has a better chance than a man with a Ford. Women judge you by your cheque-book. They want to hook the fellow who can give them everything from a pug-nosed poodle to a collar of diamonds. They're nearly all adventuresses, and the only chap they understand is the primitive one who spansks them hard when they get into their tantrums. Women are all right when they're mastered. We men are long-suffering, and much too generous to the average girl.'

'Love keeps a woman straight, Beefy.'

'Yes—love and the whip. Force appeals to women. They admire pugilists, and even the most beautiful women like to marry big, strong, ugly, powerful creatures—Neros rather than Apollos. I tell you, John, that women to-day are as primitive as Eve.'

'You're a jealous devil, Beefy. You want your own way. Freedom apparently is made for you, and not for the girl. I'm no great Christian, but I do think if you trust a girl she will always play the game.'

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'Oh, you're a blinkin' ass!'

'Why?'

'Adela has just told you not to come to-day, as she is busy with the Anzacs. And yet you talk about trust!'

'That's true. Still, on reflection, it would be an impertinence for us to warn all the other fellows off the track. If I'm annoyed, I'm not going to be narrow-minded about it. Besides, I'm not engaged to the girl. I've an open mind so far as a mate is concerned. I'm simply looking around, and I won't endorse your barbarian creeds. Why, Beefy, you're almost a Hun where the other sex is concerned. Come on, you silly old ass; let's go and get some fresh air.'

'All right, John Bunyan,' mumbled Beefy, shoving on his cap and sauntering out of the camp.

II.

We took a train to the nearest town, a manufacturing place, alive with munition-girls and other war-workers. As we ambled along we had time to observe the manners and methods of the crowd. A healthy Amazon gave us 'the glad eye.'

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'There, John, didn't I tell you they're as primitive as in the Bronze Age?'

'That's just the fun of the uneducated. Hang it all! I thought you rather liked that sort of thing.'

'That's not the point. What I want to prove is this. You can "pick up" almost every girl in this street. These girls are man-mad.'

'You judge by superficial things. Of course, there may be a little in what you say; but you must remember that men now and after the war will be scarce in the marriage-market. I'm sorry for all the nice girls who are being left on the perch. As for the lady who smiled, she doesn't represent her sex. You know it, too, but you are simply bent on "chewing the rag." You're a fat-headed old'—

'Excuse me,' said a sweet-faced girl at that moment, touching my arm.

'Yes,' I answered, a little abashed.

'Are you in the Cadet Battalion at Windmoor?'

'Yes,' I replied more pleasantly, observing how charming she and her companion looked. Beefy was grinning like a nigger.

'I wonder if you could give this note to your fellow-cadet, Robert Clarke.'

'Oh, Nobby Clarke.'

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'I believe you call him "Nobby."'

'Certainly—delighted! May I have the pleasure of telling him the name of the sender?'

'His sister—Marjory. I do hope you will excuse my asking you, but I want him to come to-morrow for tea, and I thought I should meet somebody from the camp. I was rather nervous about stopping you, for you appeared so engrossed in some discussion.'

'Yes, we were discussing girls. My friend here is a bit of a cynic.'

'Don't believe him,' interjected Beefy.

'I think you are all very gay at the Cadet School. Now, will you

excuse me? My sister and I have to go on to hospital. We're V.A.D.'s, you know.'

'Oh, don't go yet,' pleaded Beefy. 'I wonder if we may ask you to tea at the picture-house.'

'It's hardly conventional, is it?'

'But it's war-time, Miss Clarke, and of course—we know your brother. He will be quite pleased, I am sure.'

'That sounds consoling to my conscience.' Then, turning, she called her sister Hilda over, and away we went to the tea-rooms.

They were well-educated and most charming girls, and Marjory dispensed tea like a duchess.

'Do tell me, Mr Brown, what you two were fighting about when I stopped you.'

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'A simple matter. Beefy, here, was saying women are neurotic and cheap these days. I took a brief in defence of your sex—that's all.'

'Mr Jones is saucy, I think,' muttered Marjory, just as she was about to put her pretty teeth into a cherry-cake.

'Perhaps; but don't you think you girls get it all your own way these days?' answered Beefy.

'Yes, after thousands of years of bondage. It was surely time to break the shackles. We've been cooped up like canaries. There's a big difference between freedom and folly. I don't think the average girl makes a mess of things. Ours is not the easy path you think, Mr Jones. Why shouldn't we do things? We can't all get married, so we have to carve out our careers. If we do have our innocent pleasures, I think we work mighty hard for them, especially in war-time.'

'Yes; but aren't you girls a fickle lot?'

'That depends on the sort of girl. Many of you boys chase powdered creatures, who are as brainless as they are hopeless. They are the moths who rush at every bright candle, but they don't represent the nice girls in the provinces or away in the decent West-End homes. These stupid girls are getting our sex a bad name. You boys are so silly.—Do have more tea,' she said, peering into Beefy's cup.

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'Thanks—I will.'

'I think you boys learn a lot of nonsense when you go to public schools. Some schools have a rotten atmosphere. You dabble in Wilde and Zola, and feed yourselves on Oriental and degenerate trash. What you want is fresh air and plenty of tennis or golf with real nice girls! You won't get the best of our sex at stage-doors or in saloon-bars. And that's where many boys form their views. However, we've got the vote, and we'll help you through. Have a cherry-cake.'

'Come, come, Miss Clarke! You're not all saints; you know that.'

'Granted, Mr Jones. But what about the men? Don't you think there are faults on both sides? The world was never perfect, and never will be, but it's silly to abuse each other. Come now, let's be friends. You're much too nice to have those silly cynical views. I really think you're just arguing the point.'

'Not exactly. Just look at the bunch of girls around us here. They've got bags of flour on their faces, red paint all over their lips, and they *do* fancy themselves. They'll pick up anything in trousers.'

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'These are the drones, not the busy bees. All the best girls, like the best boys, are helping to win the war. They haven't time to idle all day here. But the average man is a queer creature. He doesn't want a "W.A.A.C.," a "Wren," or even a humbly dressed "V.A.D." They haven't got enough frills or fripperies. When he gets his leave he hobnobs with the girl slackers. After a day he is disillusioned; then he turns round on the sex. You men are so inconsistent. You want the lilies, but you always grasp the deadly nightshades. Do have another cake.'

'Ah, well, you're different,' mumbled Beefy.

'Thanks—but I'm really "feeding the brute." You boys want mothering. It doesn't do to let you have it all your own way. The world, somehow, has gone mad. This war is making all of us catty. It's much nicer to be chummy, isn't it?'

'Yes, I think you are right on the chummy point.'

'Good! You're really not so pagan as I imagined. At first I thought you were a wild man of the woods.'

'I thought girls preferred that kind.'

'Perhaps; but they're not reliable. Still, I believe the average girl

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likes a blend of the saint and the sinner.'

'You women are certainly a mystery.'

'To a man—yes. That's our armour. You are all so fickle that we daren't put all our goods in the window. You're really better when on the end of a string and kept in suspense. It stops you chasing our rivals. Women have no use for polygamy. When we find a good thing we hang on to it.'

'We're certainly not so subtle as women.'

'That's easily explained. You are the hunter; we are the hunted. We need a lot of tricks to dodge you. For all that, a woman is quite simple. What she really craves for is affection. That's what she is here for; give her that and she'll give you the moon.'

'Well, you're a marvel.'

'No; I'm only a girl.'

'But other girls don't talk like you.'

'More's the pity! You men are so scarce that girls frequently sink opinions and principles to catch you. It's really not worth the trouble. There are more things in heaven and earth than chocolates or trousers. Why should a girl let a man be the great I-Am? It's not good for him! It makes him a Turk! Equality of intellect and opportunity is surely reasonable.'

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'By Jove! I believe you're a suffragette.'

'Why not? You've had it all your own way for centuries. You've flooded the world with materialism. There *are* better things. Surely you don't want us to be German Fraus—fat frumps, exclusively absorbed in cooking, kids, and kirks. You need Idealism. Girls have more of it than men. And it's your pagan code that's really upset our sex. You'd sooner have omelet than love.'

'But we must have omelets.'

'Omelets, without love, are like chickens without breasts. You don't want a woman simply to preside over jam-jars. If the German women had only asserted themselves there would never have been a war.'

'Explain.'

'You must know that German women were locked in their kitchens, trained to prostrate themselves at the feet of man, and squashed when they asserted the sweeter and more reasonable philosophy which women have been given, so as to neutralise the barbarism of the world.'

'There's something in that, I grant you,' conceded Beefy.

'Now you are really coming round.'

'You are such a good advocate, you know. But I never thought pretty girls like you could be suffragettes. You don't need to be.'

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'Heavens! What a thought! Must a suffragette have flat feet and a pug-nose? It isn't really a question of votes; it's a question of broadening out our philosophy and making the world more happy. There will be no more Hohenzollerns once we take a hand in the legislation of the world.'

'I'll vote for you—by Jove, I will!'

'How nice of you!' said Marjory, smiling sweetly and collecting her umbrella, gloves, &c.

'Must you go?' I asked regretfully. The discussion had been so interesting.

'Oh yes; we're on duty at four. Now, good-bye, Mr Brown.—Good-bye, Mr Jones.'

'Good-bye. Oh, by the way'—

'What?'

'Will you come to tea again?'

'Delighted.... Good-bye.' And away she and her sister went—a couple of dream-pictures in the garb of the V.A.D.

As they disappeared I turned to Beefy and said, 'Well, old chap, what about women now?'

'Marvellous! Marvellous!'

I thought so too, for I had been thinking hard about Adela.

Was she flirting with the Australians?

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CHAPTER VII.

PSYCHOLOGY.

‘WHAT’S the stunt to-day?’ inquired Ginger one wet morning.

‘Lecture,’ I answered.

‘What on?’

‘Psychology.’

‘A precious lot of psychology we’ll get in this school. They know as much about it as they do about Mars. I’m fed up with these army lecturers. They make me sick. They’re parrots, and all cribbing from one another.’

‘But this is a new man.’

‘Oh, well, we’ll give him a hearing,’ said Ginger, picking up his notebook and sauntering over to the lecture-room.

What Ginger said was partly true, for many of the lecturers bored us stiff. A few of them were dug-outs who got their theories of modern war from the daily papers. Others were well-meaning men, but often they lacked originality. Army training had repressed their individuality, and they were apparently afraid to break conventions. When a good man did come along the dead-heads seemed to get jealous, and the brilliant rebel quietly disappeared. The army will not be an army proper till jealousy is made bad form.

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When we had assembled, Captain Cheerall entered briskly, looked at us—and—smiled. A good beginning! We decided not to sleep, but to plumb his depths.

‘Gentlemen, you may smoke, if you like. I find it breeds a friendly feeling.’

‘Good chap!’ mumbled Beefy.

‘Now that all your chimneys are going, I want to have a chat with you about Psychology; but before I start, let me say to you—don’t hesitate to pull me up if you disagree. Ask as many questions as you like, for I loathe the ancient method which places the lecturer on the pedestal of a mandarin, and forces facts down unwilling throats.’

‘The goods!’ I whispered.

‘Psychology, in brief, is the science which classifies and analyses the phenomena of the human mind. As an old army officer, I regret to say we knew precious little about it before the war. Some of the Staff College men had it as a side-line. Haking, in his somewhat rambling book on *Company Training*, struck the first intelligent notes on the subject. Colonel Fuller of the “Ox and Bucks” tried to drag it into the arena of military training. Here and there an isolated enthusiast worked out his own pet theories. But, broadly speaking, our army knew nothing about it. The French Army, however, was more progressive. Several French officers had produced excellent books on the subject prior to 1914. And in the French military academies psychology was a term well known to every student. Germany also worked at it, but not so effectively as France. Many of the Russian generals, such as Brussiloff, the Grand Duke, and Alexeieff, were keen students of the science.

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‘Why, then, did we know little about it? The answer is this. We are a conservative people. We are mentally lazy. We resent new ideas, mainly because they disturb our happy old ways. Let us admit our faults, for it is the negation of all sound work to cover up errors in military training.

‘Psychology is not so difficult as people think. Professors make it difficult when they ramble off into bewildering scientific phenomena instead of getting down to earth. This game is really a study of what the other fellow is thinking; how his thoughts affect his actions; and the sum total of his intellectual output. You do not require to be a university don to grip its essentials. Common-sense, ordinary intelligence, and organised study will give you the rudiments. And no man has a better opportunity to exploit the science than the army officer. He commands all types, all creeds. In his daily work he is rubbing against the efficient and the inefficient, the alert and the lethargic, the successful and the failure. If you, as future officers, will make it your duty to observe the mental meanderings of your units, you will quickly discover the road to high command. By knowing your men, you can handle them. By classifying and treating

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them as mere units, you will eventually cause anything from a mutiny to a disaster in face of the enemy.

'All of you, I hope, will shortly command platoons. You will then have sixty men to rule. You will find your job easy or difficult, according to your ability tactfully to enforce your orders, to create in the minds of your men the belief that you are a more powerful personality, and to get out of all ranks the maximum of work with the minimum of friction. Take an example. When I entered this room I did so in a very alert manner. That was not accidental; it was deliberate. I was determined to impress on you that I was no straggler. Next, I reached this desk, then smiled. Why? To make you feel you were not dealing with a ferocious martinet who uses his rank to enforce his orders and opinions. Thirdly, I said you could smoke. This suggestion smashed any remaining vestige of rank or distinction, so far as this actual lecture is concerned. *I came here to get at you.*'

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'You've got us, sir,' said Ginger.

'Thank you,' he answered, amidst laughter. 'To carry this particular argument to its final conclusion, let me say I do not know the gentleman who said, "You've got us, sir," but, from his appearance, I imagine he is an intellectual, bored stiff with military formalities, and regards me as a Heaven-sent Harry Lauder to cheer him up.' (Loud laughter.)

'Your laughter, gentlemen, I accept, not as a mere compliment, but as evidence of a mental sympathy. In brief, we now understand each other. And that is the basis of good work and military efficiency. Therefore, when you get command of your platoons, this will be your first duty. *Know your men.*

'When I say you must know your men, I do not mean that you should disregard any of the regulations laid down for the personal conduct of an officer. Stupid familiarity breeds contempt. If you start addressing the sergeant as "old chap," the corporal as "Bill," and a man as "Tommy," your prestige will fall to zero, and your men will regard you as a priceless buffoon! On the other hand, there is absolutely no need to be a snob, a martinet, or an autocrat. A martinet is a man of limited intellect, afraid of his own inferior knowledge. An autocrat is usually a bully like the Kaiser. My tip is, to act the part of a quiet and courteous British gentleman, with just a suggestion of reserve to frighten off a cad who desires to exploit your very good nature. But your greatest asset is knowledge. Ability engenders respect. Tact retains respect. And psychology enables you to exploit that respect in the very best interests of His Majesty's Service.

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'Let us still keep to the platoon. The first man you will meet will be the platoon sergeant. Supposing you have mastered this science of the mind, and your knowledge enables you to see that the sergeant is, by temperament, what the Scots call "dour;" he may also be quick-tempered, inclined to resent criticism—in short, "touchy." Now you are up against something. You must remember that temperament is either hereditary or the result of environment. Again, you may discover that this man is otherwise an excellent soldier. Your acquaintance with psychology will immediately suggest to you that your sergeant will have to be handled with kid gloves, even to the extent of openly conceding a point now and again to his little whims. That is common-sense. No sergeant is perfect, and no officer is perfect; and it would be the height of folly and presumption for any new subaltern to give an otherwise excellent N.C.O. a dog's life. Be patient, well-meaning, and courteous, and in a month's time the sergeant will, metaphorically, lick your boots.

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'There are other N.C.O.'s in the platoon. In our present-day armies, as you know, these non-coms. are frequently men of social standing, and—more important—men of character. Degrees are as common as peas in the ranks to-day. All are open-eyed and certainly democratic. Such men are sensitive. But they are *not* Bolsheviks. They are intensely critical, but equally patriotic. They have only one standard of measurement—BRAINS. This is an embarrassing situation to an officer who is simply "a son of his father"—nothing more. But it is not at all a bad atmosphere for a gentleman of culture, vigour, and enthusiasm. Certainly there is a demand for the higher qualities of leadership. To a keen soldier this is a most glorious incentive. You will not succeed unless your will, your personality, and your merits are predominant. You have got to be

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top-dog. But you must never obtrude your rank as the badge of that right. To go on parade with the feeling that there is a guardroom behind you to enforce your whims and ill-balanced opinions is madness. The guardroom is really meant for the criminal and the hopeless fool. Knowing your job and knowing your men will really result in less crime, less discontent, and the creation of a happy and efficient unit. This aim is perfectly easy to a student of psychology, provided he has the will which springs from health and broad-based culture.

'Another important point. When your company commander desires to make new N.C.O.'s, he will, if he knows his job, consult you as to the best men in your platoon. Here you must be careful. The unthinking and brainless sub. is frequently attracted by shallow and insincere qualities. A man who soft-soaps his fads and carries "tales" may strike him as "a ripping chap—just the man for the stripe." On the other hand, a good officer's servant, a successful regimental policeman, or an obliging company clerk may figure high in his estimation, to the detriment of other men possessed of CHARACTER, EDUCATION, and DETERMINATION. To pass these men by is to commit a great offence against efficiency. Indeed, if ten thousand stupid subalterns selected ten thousand stupid individuals as platoon sergeants, and these N.C.O.'s were all together in a great push, what would happen? DISASTER!

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'I am not here to frighten you; but I am here to kill that damnably dangerous theory that platoon drill, and nothing more, is all a soldier requires to know. We have had enough of this fetich. We are fighting the Germans. They are no fools. Unless you realise the serious responsibility of your high office, you are utterly useless for the Service.

'Again, you will have to father, guide, train, and lead the men—the glorious MEN. I hope you will not regard this as "a beastly bore," but as a privilege. The men who died at Mons, who leapt forward from the Marne, who barred the gates at Ypres, and stemmed disaster at Cambrai are no servile, cringing crew. They are Cavaliers and—GENTLEMEN. Remember that! Open out your heart, but keep your head. You will find in your platoons dukes' sons and cooks' sons, aspiring generals—and some ruddy fools. Occasionally you may strike a desperado—a man who does not give a tinker's curse for officers, cells, or a firing-squad. When you run across this type you must go easy. A wrong word, and the man may spring from the ranks and strike you down. And it is here that psychology comes to your aid. Study the man from all angles, and you will discover some little thing which touches his real soul. It may be a little act of kindness. For example, I once had a man who had knifed a policeman in civil life. He was a desperado. The N.C.O.'s were afraid of him. They could do nothing with him except chuck him in the guardroom. This made him worse, and I was really afraid of his committing murder. One day when out walking I met him alone on the road. I did not expect him to salute me. But he did. So I said, "Well, Smith, are you having a walk?"

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"Yes, sir, away from the—— misery. I'm fed up and nearly off my chump. I'll desert."

"Have a cigarette," I answered.

"Thanks," he grunted, but a little flicker in his eyes suggested surprise. Very tactfully I led him out into the country, talking about anything and everything till we struck the top of a mound. This, as you know, was quite an unusual procedure for an officer; but I was dealing with a desperate man, and I was going to have no murder in my company.

"Sit down, Smith," I suggested.

"I think I will," he grunted.

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'I gave him another cigarette, and in twenty minutes' time he was in a most friendly mood. His brutality—which was really superficial—was melting.

"Now, Smith, I'm your company commander. What's the trouble? Let's have it out, man to man. They say you loathe the army and hate your officers."

"That's a—— lie, sir. I don't hate my officers."

"What is it, then?"

"I hate Sergeant B——. He's a swine. He rags me. I'll murder him!" he shouted. There was an ungovernable madness in his eyes.

"Steady, Smith," I said. "Let's talk quietly. Have another

cigarette.”

He took one, and his gust of passion passed away.

“Then you are either going to commit a murder or desert; is that it?”

“Exactly, sir. I’ve nothing against you. You’ve been hard, but square. I’ve got my dues. When I’m wrong I takes my punishment. I likes my officers; but I hates the— sergeants, specially Sergeant B —.”

‘Now, this Sergeant B— was a good soldier, but he could not tell the difference between an undergraduate and a ploughman. He used men like machines, and had given me a lot of trouble. At the same time, Smith was no Christian. Yet, somehow, I felt all his offences resulted from misdirected energy. So I said, “Look here, Smith; you’ll go back to barracks. And to-night you must declare a truce between yourself and your so-called enemies. To-morrow morning you will come and see me at the company orderly-room, when I shall have an interesting proposition to put before you. Will you do so?”

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“Yes, sir,” he grunted, after a long pause.

I left him to wander back to barracks. Next morning he turned up shaved, boots shining, and buttons cleaned. I checked my expression of surprise and opened out.

“Now, Smith, I’ve been diagnosing your case. You’re over-healthy and naturally mischievous. Your hatred for sergeants is really jealousy. I think in some things you are a strong-minded man. In short, you want to lead, and not to be led. If I could get inside your brain-pot I might discover a lurking ambition to be an N.C.O. and throw your weight about.”

‘He burst out laughing, and I felt I had got him.

“To-night you will appear in orders as lance-corporal, and you will be transferred to Sergeant Jones’s platoon. I shall expect you to go to school to improve your education. And here is a week-end pass to celebrate your good fortune. Finally, Smith, I hope to God you will never be before me again, for crime in my company breaks my heart. I’m treating you as a gentleman. And I’m quite sure you will always be one. Fall out, please.”

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‘Smith saluted like a Guardsman, turned about, and ceased to be a public nuisance.

‘Sergeant-Major Smith died at Mons.’

When the lecturer finished this anecdote, a terrific cheering burst from all the school, and there was just a suggestion of something dim about the lecturer’s eyes. He was thinking of how Sergeant-Major Smith had held up a whole German battalion when all his officers were wiped out.

I hope you will excuse my giving you this story of Smith. But, really, that is better than all the pamphlets on psychology. Smith might have ended up on the gallows. Instead of that, he died as a warrant-officer and a hero. You will now see how important it is to study the human mind. And I hold that if you can master the mental meandering of your platoons, you may rightly aspire to the General Staff. When you are a G.S.O., *III*, *II*, or *I*, you will realise what platoons, companies, regiments, and brigades *can* do, and will *never* issue orders likely to cause discontent and endanger our *moral*.

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‘Now, the psychology of your own army is an important thing, but the psychology of the enemy is doubly important. We are up against a most cunning, brutal, and ungentlemanly foe. Great victories can be secured only by clever reading of enemy thought, and astute counter-tactics. Take the battle of the Marne. Joffre brilliantly defeated the Germans, *not* by superior man or gun power, but by superior strategy, based on a correct reading of the enemy’s power, vanity, and historical beliefs. In this work we also assisted. The Germans were stupid enough to believe that Lord French would throw the B.E.F. into Belgium. This was the German scheme and their dream. Lord French declined the bait, and the Germans lost precious days before they found out their stupid analysis of our psychology. As for Joffre, he certainly had no intention (originally) to fight it out at the Marne, but the blunder of a French general before Namur compelled him to select this field. His retirement was a glorious trick in which he pandered to the Paris dream of Von Kluck, tickled the enveloping theories of the Crown Prince, and drugged the whole German nation—Kaiser and all—into the belief that the end of France was near. Time and again he resisted tempting

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opportunities for a general action, till the Marne was reached. Then, when the German General Staff was drunk with victory, when their line was lengthened, their munitionment and rationing tedious and difficult, their troops tired with their hitherto magnificent marching, he launched his blow—faulty in parts, but staggering and effective as a whole. With a *crash* he killed the Paris dream. With a *bound* he swept corps after corps of the hardest-trained troops in the world into a tragic rout and irredeemable disaster. The Marne was the defeat of Germany. Since then they have simply been fighting for terms. And this glorious victory, for which we ought to thank our God, was helped immensely by the ability to read the enemy's mind, and the refusal to accept *his* preconceived theories of the Allies' action in such a war.

'Since the Marne we have improved. Take Byng's thrust at Cambrai. For three years we used preliminary bombardments before making a great assault. And at Cambrai the enemy *knew* of our coming attack. *But he waited for our bombardment.* Instead of that, Byng's men took up their beds—and walked for miles into the enemy's lines. This was entirely unexpected, and therefore successful. Byng, I say, is a most excellent student of psychology.

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'But we must also admit that the enemy has improved. At Cambrai we massed our reserves *in the centre* to meet the counter-attack which would be launched in accordance with *known* German tactics. The Germans, however, discovered the weakness of both of our flanks, and struck sledge-hammer blows. Had it not been for the supreme courage of the Guards, of London and Highland Territorials, Cambrai might have been the funeral of our High Command. This proves that we have no monopoly of psychology.

'While I ask you to respect and never underrate the power of the enemy, do not fear the enemy. And do not believe he is superior. The German clings with frenzied energy to trench warfare. He is afraid of the open—afraid of the British and the French in open manoeuvre. He remembers the Marne. He remembers the Russian push into north Germany, the success of Brussiloff in Galicia, the brilliant strategy of Maude, and the glorious work of Allenby and Smuts. In open warfare we can beat the German to a frazzle because of our mental alacrity, willingness to scrap original orders, and to adapt ourselves to sudden and unexpected onslaughts. The German is a worker, a thruster, and a courageous fellow; but a mere handful of troops, with only shrapnel and bayonets, held up one million Huns at Ypres. Lord French outmanoeuvred the enemy there. Ypres was the grave of German Push-and-Go.

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'The German is helpless in open warfare.

'The enemy is not afraid of shells or bayonet, but he is afraid of superior intelligence. The camouflage of Allied military thought is more distressing to Germany than lyddite or gas. Our naval policy in refusing to disclose the facts about the number of German submarines sunk, and *how* we have sunk them, is destroying the *moral* of the German Navy. Our counter-propaganda is smashing his propaganda. While he may console himself with the Russian Revolution, he is suffering the fires of hell from the intervention of America. This suffering is easily explained. The American brain is the most resourceful, the most subtle, the most deadly in the world. I am speaking commercially, of course. No Von Kühlmann, Ballin, Hindenburg, or Von Boy-ed can master it. The American discovery and exposure of the German plot in Mexico was a masterly feat in intelligence. The use of German ships to transport American troops to France is a business-like answer to Germany's submarine campaign. The prompt organisation of an American Propaganda Department in Switzerland, to inform the enemy—*free of charge*—about his impending doom, is excellent. Ford's creation of anti-submarine boats, which are being turned out like sausages, will stagger the gentlemen of Kiel. In short, the American knows the German. American aid is the death of Germany, in the military, political, and commercial sense of the term. And the entry of America, like our own entry into this war, was due to faulty German psychology, a stupid reading of the national mind, failure to understand the spirit and soul of America—as of Britain—as well as blind reliance on bluff, bombast, rapine, terror, corruption, and assassination for the intimidation of neutrals.

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'The Allies are more intelligent than the Germans.

'Now, gentlemen, I have shown you the tremendous importance of psychology, in the work of platoons, regiments, armies, and

embassies. You must study the subject. You don't need to go to Oxford. You can do it in your own hut. Look at your neighbour! Study his face, his eyes, his talk, his facial expressions and physical actions. Watch him at work. See whether he slacks or pulls, fights or funks, tells the truth or dodges the truth. You will feel at sea for a long time, but in the end your eye and brain will enable you to see the hero and the fool, and instinctively to sense the coming thought or action of an opponent. Psychology gives you the wisdom of the old, the touch of the blind, the sense of the tried, and a general strength which is irresistible. This gift will enable you to create an uncomfortable apprehension in the mind of the enemy—a sense of something tragic; a feeling that there are bombs under the earth and above the earth; that *something* which destroys the nerves of the German nation and the German High Command.

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'That's all, gentlemen,' he concluded.

We gave him a mighty cheer.

'Oh, by the way, any questions?' he ejaculated.

No one got up. All seemed satisfied; but just as he was turning away, Ginger Thomson jumped to his feet.

'Sir.'

'Yes?'

'I want to tell you something. Before we came in here we were arguing the point about rotten lectures and rotten lecturers. But I feel we owe you much. You have helped us a lot. We all hope you will come again, sir.'

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'Delighted! Oh, by the way, I missed a most important point. You can never apply this science—to a woman.'

'What about a girl, sir?' we all asked.

'Hopeless! Good-afternoon.'

We burst out laughing as he turned away. Thus he left us as he met us—smiling.

There's something in psychology.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE VALUE OF SPORT.

I.

IT all started in a simple way. We were sitting about the hut, smoking and reading, when Beefy blew in with the information that he had managed to get the company officer to challenge B Company (our deadly rivals) to a cross-country run next day.

'Are they taking it on?' asked Ginger.

'You bet they are. And I hope we knock lumps off them. They are a lousy lot; always swinging the lead about being top-dogs. It's up to us to squash them.'

'You ought to be pole-axed,' muttered Ginger.

'Why?'

'Haven't we got enough to do without plugging for ten miles through mud, brambles, cows' dung, and water? If you'd develop your old fat head, you'd do better. Cross-country run—confound you!' and he hit Beefy with a barrack pillow.

'Silly ass! You're a book-sucking hog. You want a run to shake your liver up. Every blessed thing that comes up, you veto it. Why can't you follow the crowd?' [81]

'That's for you, with your Clapham instincts and shallow brain. You think Rugger and such like the be-all and end-all of our existence. Sport was invented only to keep down your adipose tissue and turn you into a decent citizen. I've got beyond that. Joseph Conrad will do me to-morrow. I'm not on for your "follow the crowd" business.'

All this talk, although it sounds hostile, was not really so. It was that frank byplay so characteristic of the army. Ginger regarded Beefy as an over-healthy animal, only fit for Rugger and philandering; while Beefy held the view that Ginger's physical laziness was a menace to the company and the Empire. In short, Beefy was all sport and Ginger was all books. Each was a champion in that controversy which threatens to remodel our present public school system.

'Come on, boys,' I said; 'gather round the fire and let's have this out. Is Beefy right or wrong?'

'He is, and he isn't,' said Billy Greens, looking up from his beautifully kept notebook. 'When he talks about beating B Company I'm with him. But behind it all is that insane idea that games make the superman, and those who won't play are damned. Sport is all right in its own place.' [82]

'Hear, hear, old Pieface!' commented Ginger.

'It's like this, boys,' said Nobby Clarke. 'Beefy is an ass, in the mental sense of the term. And he knows it. He's hanging on to this Games Committee job for all he's worth. His whole reasoning is this: "The company commander is an old Blue. If I [Beefy] can't pull through with my headpiece, I'll pull through with my zest for games." And he'll do it, for the old commandant believes in sportsmen. Beefy will make a jolly good sub., but a rotten general. He will carry out any order, and his rude health might even get him the V.C., but he couldn't give an intelligent order to save his life. He's a prize-fighter, not an officer. After the war you'll see him as a chucker-out at a pub., or throwing cannon-balls about the music-hall stage.'

'That's your rotten Nonconformist creed,' shouted Beefy. 'You got that in one of those suburban schools where they breed lawyers, Radicals, and Socialists. You can't see any good in the public school system. I'm not a saint, I know; but I do things in the light, and am not afraid to talk about them. You're a measly Covenanter. You couldn't do ten miles at a trot to save your old face. But you *can* argue the point, and pose as a moralist. I know your type. If games have made me a healthy animal, I rejoice. I can take my punishment. Nobby, you're a ruddy fool.' [83]

'Question!' ejaculated Tosher.

'Oh! Here's this "gaw-damned" materialist again,' remarked Ginger maliciously.

'These two beauties [Ginger and Beefy] are wash-outs. One's

from Oxford; the other's from Cambridge. Oxford has made Ginger into a cock-eyed wowser, and Cambridge has turned Beefy into a base-ball looney. Ginger couldn't sell ham, and Beefy can't write a decent letter. One's all Homer; the other's all beef. Out there [Canada] these fellows don't cut ice. They can't work, and they won't work. You can see them with their tongues hanging out in Calgary saloons, or cow-punching on Armour's beef-canning stations. They ain't soft, but they ain't wise. They're all right in dress-suits doing the fox-trot, but in dungarees—why, they just make me smile. And this prime cup of oxo [Beefy] has got a lien on sport, but I'd get a bush-whacking kid to lick him soft at wrestling, and knock him sick at running. You're all jaw and no push in this gaw-damned island.'

'Now, I wonder if you're right,' said Billy, closing his notebook with a snap and jumping up.

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'I guess so.'

'Give him fits, old Pieface,' shouted Ginger.

'What are your qualifications to act as judge?'

'I'm nootral, and they make us wise out West.'

'But you've only seen the froth of things, and not the substance. Ginger isn't Oxford, and Beefy isn't Cambridge. Ten minutes in the Old Country doesn't confer the right to shake us up and blow traditions into smithereens.'

'Tradition's all moonshine, Billy.'

'Perhaps; but all your grain-lumpers and pork-packers come here for wives and knighthoods. You'd sell your soul to sleep in Buckingham Palace, and pawn your trousers to eat with the Cecils.'

'Certainly,' said Tosher, 'if we wanted to push through a twenty-thousand-dollar deal.'

'But aren't we sportsmen? That's the point.'

'Sure! But sport won't pay the rent or win the war, old child. You can't kill Huns with hockey-sticks, or use tennis-balls in a barrage. Horse-sense and push-an'-go is a live scheme. You're real good, real kind; but it makes me tired to see the nootrals selling your grub to the Kaiser, and using your papers to get the plans of the latest push. You ain't wise over here.'

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'And what's good about us? Anything?'

'Your soul. It's as clean as the brook, and true as Lincoln. You're fools; but you ain't willing fools. You're old; but yet you're green. This island is a happy hunting-ground for Jews, Germans, and assassins. But we can't see you fall. The Old Land is Our Land. It's the Old Home, Billy, and that's why I'm in. God help the Huns when I go out! I'll go "West" before this land goes "West." But, say, I've got to go. I'm dining with a real live lord. He wants to see a bucking broncho from the West. Cheerio, boys!' and Tosher stepped out into the night.

'Well, that's the greatest artist Canada has produced,' said Ginger.

'That's the true Imperialism,' shouted Nobby, 'but you don't understand it. All the drivel you got in the Union won't wash in practical politics. Tosher can make rings round you, and'—

'Look here, boys,' I said; 'let's choke Nobby and Ginger off. The question before the House is sport. We've got to run the other company to-morrow, and it's up to us to see Beefy through. It's a matter of *esprit de corps*, and we can't allow the other crowd to beat us. Sport is the backbone of the army. A good sportsman is usually a gentleman. All the Rugger men are either dead, wounded, fighting, or training for commissions. If they can't sell night-shirts or soap, they *can* obey orders, and there's no doubt they played the game in August 1914. Never mind about "after the war." We can leave that to Nobby's crowd. They'll be running the show. We shall be much happier ranching or hoofing it with the Lost Legion. It will be a much better thing to beat the other company to-morrow than to sit here reading all the Socialistic tripe of H. G. Wells or the maudlin political tosh of Morley. D— it all, there's a war on! If Ginger and Nobby won't turn up to-morrow, then they are rotters, and we should out them.'

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'Duck them,' muttered Beefy.

'How the— do you know we sha'n't be there to-morrow?' roared Ginger, getting roused.

'You've vetoed the run, haven't you?'

II.

It was a cold, crisp day, with a keen, but healthy, breeze. The ground was not too hard, and excellent for the show. We were delighted, for there's nothing like a glorious scramble across God's green acres. It cleans the lungs, refreshes the brain, and gives one a zest for the things that matter. I am no marvel at the business, yet in pitting one's strength against a fellow-man in friendly rivalry, one does acquire the sporting instinct, which is a fair instinct. And to an officer it *does* give a sense of values, a ready appreciation of all that is good in human nature.

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Our company officer, Captain Bloggs, was delighted with the weather prospect. He was an old Blue, and he *did* want his 'boys' to knock spots off the other company. And, strange to say, when we all turned out in running attire, we found Ginger, Nobby, and Tosher already there. There was a suspicion of malicious fun in Ginger's eyes. I scented something, and said, 'Look here, Beefy; there's some move on. These fellows are grinning like cats.'

'Oh, d—— them! they won't be in my way. They're soft, and out of training'——

Bang! went the pistol just then. We went off. Two hundred men in running-kit make a pretty show. Our school, I may rightly say, were the cream of manhood, chosen spartans, and a sight for the gods. This was no preparatory school scramble. These fellows were all in splendid condition, and it was a treat to slog along and watch them. How easily they ambled, limbs and will working in perfect harmony! Hurdles and dikes were taken with an easy bound; no puffing, no exertion, no ungainly slithering on the other side. Just a leap and over. I am quite sure that two hundred Hun cadets could not have done so well. Then we reached the open, the crowd spread out, and the stragglers were more easily marked. These were the elderly men, but right merrily they did their best. *They wanted to win*. Wasn't that a perfect spirit? And isn't it the basis of our true nature? We may love to be top-dog, but we *do* prefer to get it off our own bat. If we have been very foolish in worshipping cups, caps, and blazers before the war, still it helped us at Mons, and certainly at Ypres. As I watched these fine fellows sprint by my side something welled into my heart; it was the pride of school, the pride of race, the mysterious something which makes us give our all to keep the old flag flying. I may be no Christian, but I do love my fellow-men and my country.

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'Hello! the game's opening,' I muttered on looking ahead. I was a bit behind, for I had been dreaming. Away in the front was Beefy. He was heavy, but a splendid athlete. His staying-power was good, and he had no nerves. With all his faults, Beefy was a sportsman, and if there was one man consumed with the craving for victory, it was he. I saw a long figure slogging steadily by his side. The style caught my fancy, so I pushed on, and found it was Ginger. Close behind was Billy Greens, the parson, and gently dodging by him was Nobby. Where was Tosher? I looked behind. He was dogging me. I smiled, but inwardly. I was just a bit cut. These men were out for 'blood.'

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I spurted out of my stride, hell for leather, took a good-sized dike, then pushed hard across a wide meadow. It was good going, and my nerves were all out. This was unwise, but I didn't want Tosher to head me off. On reaching a wood I looked back. He was just behind. With a curse I dashed on, but my foot went plump into a rabbit-hole, and I was violently thrown, wrenching my ankle.

'Are you hurt, old boy?' asked Tosher.

'Yes,' I grunted.

'Looks bad. Wait and I'll get you a bandage.'

He ran to a stream, tore the two arms off his running-shirt, soaked them, came back, and bandaged the now swollen foot.

'You had better go on now, Tosher. I'll hobble home.'

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'No, child. I reckon I'll carry you.'

'Get off, man. I'll manage somehow.'

However, it was useless. I was hoisted on his back and carried through the ranks of the grinning stragglers, who shouted, 'Did ums do it—John Brown?'

I did feel an ass.

III.

Beefy, however, was keeping the flag flying. He saw Ginger, but paid no attention to him. His eye was on Corporal Jason, the leading man of the other company, and a magnificent harrier. This fellow had to be beaten at all costs. He was not 'all out'—his pace was too steady; so Beefy plugged a couple of yards behind him. For four miles this went on, and all the while Ginger ambled as easily as a deer. He was one of those who are natural athletes, and who do not need to train. Nature endows them with amazing reserve-power. All the time Ginger was studying the bulldog tenacity of Beefy—the steady plod, the quick eye and brain following Corporal Jason's every move. It was like dog tracking dog; and yet it wasn't. Above the cunning byplay was the soul of *esprit de corps*. Both were out to win. *And both meant to.*

They reached a wide stretch of pasture-land. Jason stretched himself and pushed on. Beefy followed, a little blown, yet able to hold. The supreme test was near. Ginger saw Beefy clench his jaws, raise his head, and point out the toes to get the fullest stride on the green-sward. Jason was undoubtedly the better man, but there was that *something* which kept his rival fighting on.

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Ginger commenced to admire Beefy.

At last they reached the open track near the camp. Ahead was the winning-post. There an excited crowd had gathered, including Captain Bloggs, who was fearfully anxious as he watched the struggle between Jason and Beefy.

'Go on, Jason!'

'Stick it, Beefy!'

These cries rent the air, and for a second threw Beefy off guard. Jason made a terrific spurt. With an almost superhuman effort Beefy recovered and levelled up. Close behind was that amazing devil, Ginger, *ambling easily*. Somehow, no one counted Ginger as being in the piece. He simply looked like a runner-up—nothing more.

'Hell for leather, Jason!'

'Come on, Beefy!'

These were the last cries. Jason made another magnificent leap; the prize seemed his, but his foot slipped on the wet soil, and Beefy shot past.

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'You're winning, Beefy! Go hard!'

It looked like that. *Then*, just ten yards from the tape, all were dumbfounded to see Ginger leap forward like a deer and breast the line three yards ahead of Beefy Jones.

A terrific cheering burst from the spectators, but my heart was sick for poor old Beefy. However, as he burst through the tape he collided with Ginger, and shouted, 'Good, Ginger—we've won—and I'm happy!'

'Yes—the Oxford finish.'

'All right, old cock; come and have a Cambridge bath.'

Ginger used up a whole cake of Sunlight soap.

• • • • •

That night Billy Greens found Beefy reading a serious-looking book.

'What are you swotting?'

'Oh, one of Ginger's books.'

'What's the subject?'

"'How to be Happy though Intelligent.'"

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CHAPTER IX.

JOHN BROWN'S LETTERS.

DEAR SIR,—We are specialists in pedigrees, family crests, and armorial bearings. Since the raising of the New Armies we have furnished no fewer than 25,385 officers with Family Trees and correct Escutcheons. We have innumerable requests daily for similar services.

The success of our scheme has been most gratifying. Hundreds of our clients have secured Staff Appointments and married society ladies through our labours.

We have now decided to open our field to include all Military Cadets, and would draw your attention to the importance of your name (Brown) and its ancestral greatness.

Our work is divided into various periods. For example, a Family Tree dating to the Norman Period costs £5, 5s. 0d.; the Tudor Period, £4, 4s. 0d.; Stewart Period, £3, 3s. 0d.; and the Lloyd George Period, 2s. 6d.

We have discovered that your ancestor, Harold de Vere Browne, landed at Hastings as an Esquire to the Duc de Polonski, a warrior in the service of William the Conqueror.

We shall be pleased to complete your genealogical tree.

TERMS, CASH.

Yours respectfully,

DODGEM & DODGEM,
Pedigree Merchants.

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DEAR SIR,—May we draw your attention to the use of our Bureau as a means of meeting desirable and highly recommended ladies with a view to matrimony? In the past year we have successfully negotiated over three hundred happy unions between officers and our clients. At present we have the following on our lists:

(1) Society Lady, young, beautiful, no means, but willing to meet a gentleman with £10,000 a year.

(2) Widow, middle class, age 40, income £150, desires to meet quiet, respectable young man.

(3) Actress, charming and beautiful, desires to wed wealthy man who does not object to visitors.

(4) Barmaid, 25, good-looking, capital £50, wishes to marry Sergeant-Major (Life Guards preferred).

(5) Cook, plain but honest, capital £25, would like to meet widower, *not necessarily a teetotaler*.

These are just a few of our clients. Should you be interested, we shall be pleased to arrange an interview, or to send photos prior to the meeting.

Interview, £1. Successful Contract, £10.

TERMS—SPOT CASH.

Yours truly,

LENSKY & TROTIN,
Matrimonial Agency, Ltd.

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DEAR SIR,—We beg to enclose our catalogue, patterns, and book of letters from satisfied clients. We have supplied uniforms to Raisuli, Li Hung Chang, and King Dinizulu.

Our stock is the finest in town. Cut excellent, and finish superb. *We are the people.*

Owing to officers' accounts being 'overdrawn,' our terms are CASH WITH ORDER.—

Yours truly,

DO-ALL & DO-EM,
Military Tailors.

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VILLA PETITE,
WASHOUT-ON-SEA.

DEAR SIR,—My sister and I are two well-known society ladies,

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anxious to help our country. Since 1914 we have made it our duty to look after canaries and pet-birds belonging to Officers of the Old Army. The high cost of feeding-stuffs has, however, compelled us to appeal for subscriptions in this great work.

We have, therefore, decided to make our aim ONE MILLION SIXPENCES.

Your sixpence will be gratefully accepted.—

Yours sincerely,

MAUDE SLIPPEM.

P.S.—Please send stamped addressed envelope for your receipt.

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RECRUITING OFFICE,
SLOWTOWN, LANCS.

JOHN BROWN,—You are hereby instructed to report for Army Service on May 24th. As this is the seventh notice sent you, your failure to comply will entail a warrant for your arrest.

JOHN MUDDLE-MEN, *Lieut.,
Recruiting Officer.*

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RUSTIC MANOR,
BERKS.

MY DEAREST BOY,—I have been worrying a lot about you since the rainy weather started. I hope your boots are not letting in, and that you have not got a cold. I wired Harrods to-day to send you a Chest-Warmer, felt soles, and a box of Gregory Powder.

I am glad to hear that you have got a clergyman in your hut, and that you go with him so often to Communion. And I am sure you will not waste your leisure hours with those brainless girls who are always luring young men into wicked paths.

The rector called to-day, and I asked him what books I should send you. He suggested *Good Words*, *Life of David Livingstone*, and the *Parish Magazine*. I have sent them off.

I was quite shocked to hear you had a Radical in your hut. I didn't know Radicals got commissions. There must be corruption somewhere, and I am going to write to *The Times*.

When do you expect to get a Brigade?

I think that is all just now. Oh, I forgot. Take a spoonful of the Gregory's every morning before breakfast. Your dear father did that for twenty years.

Lots of love to you, my own dear boy, from

YOUR LOVING MOTHER.

• • • • •

SWEETVILLE.

MY DEAREST JOHNNIE,—Why have you stayed away so long? Is it because I had to entertain my two Australian friends? Surely that is unreasonable. Now, I am not so jealous as you are. For example, Marjory Clarke and her sister Hilda have told me of the interesting afternoon you all had together in the picture-house. I was so pleased to hear you were in such good company. But, a week later, I was so sorry to learn that you and Beefy had been silly again, sporting about with two low-class girls in the local hotel. You are such a puzzle. Yet I can't help liking you. Do come over on Saturday! There's a good boy!—Your loving

ADELA.

CHAPTER X.

MAKING UP WITH ADELA.

ADELA'S last letter certainly made me feel a silly ass. Somehow, it upset my usual happy trend of thought. I couldn't work, and my soul was torn with conflicting emotions. One moment I hated her; the next I loved her. Then the Devil would whisper in my ear, 'What has she got to do with it, John Brown? Sow your wild oats. Have your fun. Everybody's doin' it.'

Privately speaking, Adela was right; but this righteousness annoyed me. She wasn't my sister or my mater, and yet she was giving me fits for having a bit of fun. Still, Adela was sweet. She had a way with her. The attraction was both physical and spiritual. She had that sort of healthy figure which makes a student of eugenics stop in the street and mutter, 'Here's the model girl!' Adela was also a ripping hockey-player, and one of the best at tennis. When men saw her knocking about with a racquet she seemed irresistible. They wanted to know her—wanted to kiss her. And she liked a bit of fun; but she wasn't a fool. A girl who can live in a country parish without getting a sticky label on her name must be rather decent.

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Somehow, she balanced my emotions. After indulging in sloppy things for a time, she would say, 'Come on, John; don't be decadent. Let's talk.' Then we separated our chairs, smoked cigarettes, and chatted away about Kipling, Galsworthy, Hardy, Byron, and Shelley.

Adela could talk. In the country she had found time to think. Her observations were so very shrewd and sane that I often said to myself, 'This girl would make a topping wife and mother.' I pictured her with rosy-cheeked kiddies playing in a garden. You needn't say that was silly. The best people do it.

And yet she had dropped me (*pro tem.*) for these Australians!

However, affection will out. I wanted to see Adela again; and Beefy wanted to see her sister. You see, Beefy was a little bored kissing barmaids, and longed for something more congenial. As a matter of fact, Beefy was commencing to *think*. This was a revolution.

'Come on, John. Jump on. We'll go and see somebody decent to-day,' he said.

Away we went, and in twenty minutes Adela and I were alone in the lovely conservatory overlooking a beautiful country-side. And didn't Adela look well! She had such a nice short skirt which showed her dainty ankles. But it was in her face and eyes I found rest and consolation.

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Adela was clean.

'Have a smoke, John. They're State Express,' she said, pushing the box over. 'And here's a cup of white coffee.' This tempting beverage was served in a charming cup. As she passed it I touched her hand—accidentally, of course. I was thrilled. 'Now, Johnnie,' she said very quietly, 'let's have this thing out. I hate being bad friends, and I don't like to hear my pals being discussed by cooks and kitchen-maids.'

'You're jealous,' I said maliciously.

'I'm jealous for your uniform, not for you. My brother has the D.S.O., and he wouldn't make an ass of himself—at least, not in a local hotel. You haven't learnt wisdom, old boy.'

'Well, you're to blame. Why did you toddle off with those Australians?'

'What a babe you are! You and Beefy must have a weak kink. Can't we see other people? And don't you think you're just a little presumptuous?'

'Perhaps. But I didn't break any commandments, I can assure you.'

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'You don't need to break a commandment to be a fool. People don't judge by the great things. They sum you up from little things. When they find cadets hobnobbing with barmaids and fooling around with chorus-girls, they think and talk a lot.'

'Oh, be a sport, for Heaven's sake! One would think you were at a Dorcas Society,' I said, getting rattled.

'Very well, Johnnie, if you're going to be rude, and not man enough to face things out, you can go. Men may be scarce, but girls,

at least, have a sense of decency and pride.'

'Awfully sorry, old girl. Really, I didn't mean to be nasty. But, you know, you are making a song about it. I'm really sorry, or I shouldn't be here. I've been dying to come all the time. I vowed I would never see you again. But here I am. It's all you!'

She smiled. She was a woman, after all. (Between you and me, Adela was a bit soft on your humble.)

'You'll never do it again, will you?'

'Never—honest Injun!'

'Very well, you're pardoned. And here's a kiss.'

'You're a sport, Adela. But what about those other fellows?'

'The Australians?'

'Yes.'

'They're very nice people. When they want to come here, they can do so. It isn't for you to decide. Cheeky boy!'

'Then you can't be my special charmer.'

'Who wants to be? Do you imagine we girls are going to allow you to label us "Special" or "One of the Crowd"? Johnnie, you're the limit!'

'That's my ultimatum!'

'You're a silly kid. If you met those two Australians, you would be charmed. We have got to give hospitality to our relatives.'

'Oh, then, they're related?'

'Yes—very old friends of the family.'

'That makes a difference, Adela.'

'Still, they're interesting, although they're relatives. I'm just longing to see them again. You may come, too, and guard me, if you like.'

'I won't!'

'Oh!'

'Do you think, Adela, I'm going to play second fiddle to your bush-whacking cousins? Not at all! There's always the barmaid for me.'

'Really, I despair of you. You're as narrow as can be. But I'm going to be loyal to my friends.'

'All right, Adela; I'm off,' I said, getting up in a theatrical way. I didn't really mean to go. I wanted to test her. But I was so amazed at her cool acceptance of my dramatic exit that I repeated, 'Adela, I'm off,' and went to the door.

She followed me out, quietly helped me on with my coat, and, just as I lifted my hat, she burst out laughing.

'What are you laughing at?'

'You, you silly boy.'

'Oh!'

'If I showed you the photo of the Australians, the joke would be apparent.'

'Well, show it to me,' I said, glad of finding any excuse to stay.

'Very well. Off with your coat!'

I took it off.

'Now, come in here;' and she led the way to the drawing-room. We stepped across to the mantelpiece, and she lifted a photo. 'There's the two Australians,' she said, with a grin.

I looked at the photo of two beautiful Australian girls in nursing-uniform, and muttered, 'By Jove, what charming girls!'

'Are you satisfied now, old King Jealousy?'

'Yes; but why didn't you tell me when you wrote the letter?'

'Why?'

'Yes.'

'For a very womanly reason.'

'What is it?' I ejaculated, a little annoyed.

'These girls are so handsome, I couldn't afford to take risks. Don't you know that old music-hall song?'

'What?'

'"Never Introduce your Donah to a Pal."'

'Oh, that's it, is it? You were afraid of them collaring Beefy and me.'

'Yes, old boy; I'm like you—jealous.'

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'You needn't have worried, Adela. I really like you.'

'Do you, Johnnie?' she eagerly exclaimed.

'Yes,' I answered.

As her head got mixed up with my khaki sleeves, I heard her murmuring, 'Don't be a silly ass again—John Brown.'

CHAPTER XI.

THE NOISE OF WAR.

THE best way to understand war is to grasp the thoughts and the feelings of the soldier in action. Our newspaper correspondents have attempted to interpret the soldier's feelings for us, but have failed, mainly because they are not soldiers, and their stuff is written in comparative comfort. It is fashionable to 'write up' the soldier advancing to the cannon's mouth as if he were going to Brighton for a week-end. This is ridiculous, for this reason, that the soldier is just human, and when facing death he experiences all the symptoms of an invalid who is about to undergo a serious operation. But to make the whole thing clear to you, let me reproduce a little discussion we had in our hut one night.

It was Beefy who broached the subject by a casual remark to the effect that when he went over the top at Loos he felt as if he wanted to go home—quick.

'That's just how I felt,' said Billy Greens.

We gathered round the last speaker and asked him to go on.

'Oh, well, let me be frank, and say I was never in such a funk in all my life. I am sure many more felt the same; but, of course, we never said so. What heartened me to go on was the remark our colonel made as he went over the top. He said, "Look here, men; the Boche is just as frightened as we are, so come on." This idea gave me comfort. Still, my knees were groggy, and I believe if I had met a Hun then it would have been a bad show for me.'

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'What made you go forward?' I asked him.

'Discipline, and the knowledge that if I funk'd, my name would stick in the mud for ever. I am not a hero, and I believe thousands feel like that. We are really a race of pacifists; but, for all that, I hold that a pacifist nation in arms is much more deadly than a nation nurtured on the themes of Bernhardt. None of us is in this business because he likes it. Personally, I loathe the whole scheme. It is ghastly. Still we, apparently, can only end it by fighting, and that is why I and many others are in.'

'What frightened you most, Billy?'

'Oh, the noise—the terrible noise. If it weren't for the high explosives I believe war wouldn't be half bad. But it is the noise which has a demoralising effect on the educated brain. It stuns, unnerves, and creates a thousand fears. Mind you, I don't think it has the same effect on a navy, a miner, or any sort of manual labourer. These men have no nerves, and for that reason I think they are the best private soldiers. The duller the brain, the less the suffering. But modern war is a terrible thing for the highly sensitive and highly skilled.'

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'Did you reach your objective all right?' asked Ginger.

'Yes. I saw the C.O. ahead, waving us on, and I went. The man seemed so brave that one really couldn't let him down, so we just followed. But I was still nervous. Then I saw the C.O. fall. He was shot through the stomach. I went mad. I wanted to kill some one. When I got to the first line of the Huns I saw a big fellow skulking away. I shot him—*dead*. After that I wanted more. God forgive me for the feeling, but I'm sure it was the primitive lust to kill. It's in us all. Education seemed but a veneer. When it was all over I went into a corner and prayed. Ugh! it's a horrible business,' concluded Billy.

'Yes, we all have much the same experience,' added Nobby Clarke. 'Personally, it wasn't the thought of death that worried me, but the secret fear of getting a stomach-wound, and being left out in No Man's Land. And I believe almost every officer and man has the same secret dread. The reason, I think, is that an abdominal wound is usually fatal or crippling, and a man does not like to picture a bayonet or a lump of shrapnel in his tummy. If a scientist could devise a light bullet-proof abdominal belt, I believe that men would go forward much quicker and more confidently.'

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'Do you think the Hun has the same fear?' I asked.

'I think the Hun is even more afraid of a stomach-wound than we are. Man to man, he is not our equal in bayonet-fighting. It may be lack of training, but I imagine it really is due to the fact that he is flabby and no sportsman. For example, in the one bayonet-fight

which I was in, *not one* of the Huns stood up to us. They flung their rifles away and squealed like pigs. Cold steel to a German is worse than gas or shells. The Hun is terror-stricken when he sees the knife of the Gurkha.'

'Who do you think are really best with the bayonet, Nobby?' asked Billy.

'I imagine the Russians are really top-dog. You see, they are primitive, and educated to the knife. Like all semi-civilised peoples, the Russians can stand the most awful punishment. The Bulgarians are also good. Still, it is a fact that the Irish can beat them. In that little scrap between some Irishmen and Bulgarians during the retirement in Macedonia, the Irishmen won. The Irish, like the Scots, are fiery, almost mad, in action. Once they are roused, nothing will stop them.'

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'What was your experience, Ginger?' I asked, switching the discussion back to its original point.

'The five minutes before going over were worse than the whole day's fighting. We had too much time to think, and my imagination was running riot. I didn't feel like a soldier. I felt like a lamb going to the slaughter. What really impressed me was how men could live in such a barrage. Worse, the thousands of bullets which were whistling, cracking, and splashing over and against the parapet seemed to whisper death was near. Of course, I had forgotten that it takes about a thousand rounds to secure one dead man. However, it is wonderful what example and training *will* do. I believe that, no matter how funky a man may feel, if he has been to a good school he immediately thinks, "What will they say in school if I make a bad show?" Training is also useful. Months of discipline tell. But the greatest asset is the bearing of the officer and the N.C.O. Fortunately, we had a splendid company commander. He could mask his feelings. While I believe the man was suffering just as we were suffering, he walked down the line smiling, cheering, and inspiring. When the time came to go, he was first over, and we followed like deer.

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'Once we were over, I seemed to be too excited to suffer from nervous troubles. The noise, the shouting, the running, and the sight of the Huns bolting, somehow, carried us along. The plight of the enemy also raised the sporting instinct, and we followed as if out shooting hares. Again, I did feel a *true* hate of the Hun. Belgium and Serbia seemed to flash through my brain, with the result that I was out for results. One Hun fired at me point-blank, but missed. I shoved my bayonet into him. To me it was the most awful physical sensation. I felt sick, but I withdrew automatically, as if I had been at bayonet-drill. There was no more time to moralise, for I was fighting for my life. It isn't a healthy business. I believe we, as a nation, abhor it; none the less I feel, without bragging, that, once at close quarters, we can always beat the Hun.'

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'Yes, Ginger; and the war has proved that we are not the decadent nation many thought we were,' I remarked.

'By no means, John. Trafalgar, Waterloo, Inkermann, and Tel-el-kebir are mere skirmishes compared to Ypres, Loos, and Cambrai. Nelson's or Wellington's men never endured the sufferings of the men to-day. It is really wonderful how this city-bred, over-civilised nation has stuck it out. But another war of this kind would send the world insane. It's the noise—the *awful* noise—that is playing the devil with the nerves of all.'

What Ginger said about the noise was true. Noise is the worst feature of war, and in military hospitals you find patients reverting again and again to this theme. And seldom do our men profess a liking for war. The experiences of Billy, Nobby, and Ginger are characteristic of thousands. They carry on out of a sense of duty, a love of country, and an innate conviction that the only way to end this horrible scourge is to punish its authors and apostles. The world will never be clean and joyful until we absolutely crush the horrible mentality of the ruling German. The sword is not a good investment. He who lives by it, perishes by it. And it does seem awful that this bloodshed, misery, madness, and sorrow should have been thrust on a happy world by men whose real aim is power, wealth, loot, and lust. This war ought to end war. Ordeal by battle may suit our pagan philosophers. But there is no doubt that once we have settled this matter with Germany, the nations of the earth will refuse to resort to arms again. To ensure this honourable aim, Germany ought to compel her kings, princes, ambassadors, and statesmen to serve as

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privates in the present war.

The noise—*the terrible noise*—would convince them of the madness of it all.

CHAPTER XII.

BLASE-BONES FROM SANDWURSE.

I.

SANDWURSE is a very wonderful place. It has produced some exalted men, but, like all institutions, it occasionally throws out a prig. This doesn't happen very often, but when it occurs the specimen is a real one. And it was the bad fortune of our hitherto happy platoon to be saddled with one of the species. Our dear old platoon officer, Lieutenant Blessem, was found fit for duty, and departed, amid the tears of our hut. We loved that man. He was so kind, so considerate, so interested; and he wasn't a sneak. Even Ginger admired him, and that was a compliment from our platoon high-brow. Lieutenant Blase-Bones then blew in.

We saw him approach the hut from our window. What a gorgeous Nut—all brilliantine, brown polish, and brasso!

'Some lad!' muttered Ginger, scenting trouble.

'He looks as if he couldn't help it,' I remarked.

'Looks a ruddy ass,' mumbled Beefy.

Then the door banged, and the sergeant-major shouted, 'Stand to your beds!'

We sprang to attention, and Blase-Bones entered as if he were the conqueror of Bagdad, Berlin, and Timbuctoo. He had a monocle—of course.

'This hut looks like a beah-garden. Open that windah theah,' he said, looking at me.

I obeyed. Twelve months in the ranks had taught me a lot.

'Whose bed is this?' he said, on arriving at Ginger's doss-house.

I must own it looked the bally limit. But even the old commandant had never checked it. The C.O.'s view was that we were there to train and be educated, *not* wearied with pipeclay and eye-wash.

'It's mine, sir,' answered Ginger.

'Clean it up. Look smart!'

With a groan, Ginger leisurely commenced to bundle H. G. Wells, Conrad, Haking, Browning, and Zola into a long-suffering box.

'Are these your boots?' he asked Tosher.

'Guess they are,' said the Canadian casually.

'"Sir," when you speak to an officer.'

Tosher grinned. Fortunately this levity went unnoticed. And then Blase-Bones arrived at Billy Greens's doss. Billy, as you know, was a parson, highly strung, very nervous, and afraid of all military mandarins. We, who knew him, loved him; for Billy was the biggest-hearted man ever made. We shielded him from a good deal of trouble, and we were shocked when the new platoon officer, realising Billy's nervousness, pounced on him. Here was a chance to show off and impress the hut that the new platoon commander was a mighty smart fellow!

'Is this your bed?' he asked.

'Y-e-s, sir,' said Billy, his hands twitching.

'Most untidy! What an example! How can you expect to be an officer?'

'I've never been checked be-fore, sir.'

'Hold your tongue! Tidy it up.—And, I say, sergeant-major.'

'Yes, sir.'

'Inspect this hut in an hour's time, and report to me.'

'Very good, sir.'

Off he went, swinging his cane in a brainless manner, and leaving behind him a well of hate and scorn. This man had in ten minutes smashed our happy home, and given us a prospect of h—— for the next two months.

'Old Army!' said Ginger ironically, as the door banged.

'No, Ginger; he's the fag-end of the system, but he isn't a patch on the other good fellows,' I answered.

'He's a prize prig, anyway. He's out for trouble; but I fancy we

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can do him in.'

'Sure thing,' grunted Tosher.

'He's only a boy—a foolish boy,' commented Billy, who was indeed a most tolerant man.

'I'll tell you what he is,' remarked Beefy. 'He's a ruddy inefficient swine, chucked out of some crack battalion.'

And that was about right!

II.

Next day Blase-Bones had us all up for a lecture.

'You know, you fellows need a lot of bucking up. Of course, I can see that, being New Army men, you're a bit handicapped. And I think it's an awful pity, don't you know, that you couldn't have gone to Sandwurse. However, it's my good fortune to be in command.' (How he loved that word!) 'If you will pay attention to me, I hope to pull you through.'

'God help us!' mumbled Ginger, who was at the back.

'What's that?' he inquired.

'I was just saying, sir, how much you'd help us.'

'I see—I see,' he muttered, but quite convinced that Ginger was pulling his leg. However, he had a face of brass, and continued: 'I want your huts smartened up. They ought to be like a ship's deck, with everything in order. And there's too much "fug," too many d—— novels lying around. I saw one yesterday by that beastly fellow, H. G. Wells. If you feel you want to read, get Kipling and the *Morning Post*.'

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'Do you permit the *Daily News*, sir?' inquired Nobby, in such a humble (but assumed) manner that Blase-Bones thought Nobby was actually appealing to his profound knowledge.

'Certainly not! But I should be awfully pleased to write you a list of papers and books, if you care to have it. I'm sure they would help you to understand the war. Another thing! I addressed one man yesterday, and he did not say "sir" when replying. This must not occur again. It's rotten bad form, and I won't have it! Won't have it! Dismiss!'

Ginger rose with a groan. All his Oxford Imperialism had vanished. He wanted to be a murderer and a revolutionary. We took him to the canteen and gave him a drink. He recovered!

'Say, boys, I reckon we've got to get busy,' said Tosher that evening.

'Your proposition?' demanded Ginger.

'Anything from slicing to lynching. I guess the world ain't any the richer for that production.'

'We'll catch him, duck him, and d—— the consequences.'

'Tar and feather him,' suggested Beefy.

'I think you are all very stupid,' remarked Billy. 'Why should you worry yourself about an atom? He can't go too far. The company officer will see to that. Give him a full rope and he'll hang himself.' Billy Greens was afraid of revolt.

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'Well, boys, I'm a lawyer,' submitted Nobby. 'This man may be an ass; but he's got the Manual of Military Law behind him, and don't forget it. We're in the army, "don't you know," and this youth would come out top-dog. Again, I'm too jolly lazy to entertain the thought of getting chucked for my commission, and sent back to do orderly-man. Therefore, I say, give him rope, and, as the padre says, he'll hang himself.'

'Meantime we suffer,' commented Ginger.

'That suffering, old chap, is not as bad as fighting the Boche.'

'Isn't it?'

'Let's vote for Nobby's idea,' I said. 'We don't want to make bally fools of ourselves. Besides, there's the reputation of the school, *and* the old commandant. I don't think we ought to let the Old Man down. He's been good to us.'

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'That's right, John! That's right!' exclaimed the padre, glad to think a budding mutiny was being quelled.

'Oh, very well. We'll study the brute,' concluded Ginger, recalling the lecture on psychology.

III.

For the next fortnight we had a dog's life. The company commander, who was a real good chap, didn't notice it. He was such a perfect sport and gentleman that he concluded his new officer was the same. Billy and I, however, threw our influence into the scales of neutrality, for Tosher and Ginger, when roused, were of violent temper. They were such good pals that we were not a little afraid of their rapidly fraying temper.

At last the storm-clouds burst.

At morning parade Blase-Bones was inspecting the platoon. He was in a bad mood. When he reached Ginger he remarked, 'What do you mean by coming out with such shocking boots?'

'It was wet yesterday, sir. I've tried to polish them. I've done my best.'

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'Your best is not *my* best. Understand?'

'No, sir.'

'You're insolent.'

'No, sir. I'm endeavouring to understand you.'

'I know your type. Enough!'

'I shall feel much obliged, sir, if you will cease to be personal.'

'Take his name, sergeant-major.'

Ginger was mad.

'There's dust on your belt. Why?' Blase-Bones now asked Tosher.

'I'm real sorry,' answered the Canadian.

'"Sir," when you answer me.'

'You ain't wise, boy.'

'Silence!—Take his name.'

Tosher's hands quivered; then he stood still, his face pale with suppressed anger.

I went through that morning's drill sick as a dog. And the only solution I could discover was that Blase-Bones was either ignorant or mad. But that didn't alter the plight of Ginger or Tosher. I trembled to think what might happen. As they were cadets, a high code of discipline was expected of them, and this had been observed under our former platoon commander. Indeed, our platoon had the highest marks in sports and examinations. Yet this awful prig had smashed it all up. If I was sorry for Ginger and Tosher, I was more sorry for the commandant. This affair would break the Old Man's heart. However, I did not know that the colonel had already weighed Blase-Bones up. He was a shrewd judge of character, a man of stern moods, but a just C.O. and a gentleman.

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Finally, he *understood* Canadians.

IV.

Ginger and Tosher, with an escort, of which I formed part, were before the colonel. The Old Man, I could see, was pained and sad. This was the first real 'dust-up' in the school. Blase-Bones gave his evidence. Then the colonel sorrowfully raised his head, and quietly asked, 'Well, men, what have you got to say?'

'I regret, sir, committing a breach of discipline,' said Ginger, 'but my old officers in my own regiment never addressed me in such a manner. Lieutenant Blase-Bones apparently has a contempt for the New Army. I belong to the First Hundred Thousand, and I decline to be treated in this way. The commission is nothing to me, sir, and I desire to be returned to my battalion. This officer has not heard a shot fired in the war.'

Blase-Bones turned ghastly white.

'Is that all you have to say?' inquired the 'com.'

'Yes, sir.'

'And your defence?' he asked Tosher.

'I'm just real sorry, colonel, to waste your time. But since this foolish boy blew into our shack, there's been nothing but gaw-damns and muttered revolution. Why, sir, we were the happiest bunch of kids in the British Army when Old Bobby Blessem was boss of the show.'

'You mean Lieutenant Blessem, I presume,' said the colonel, correcting him.

'I guess you're right, colonel; but you know in the Western world we talk free and mean no offence.'

'I quite understand,' answered the C.O. tactfully. 'Go on.' There

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was a twinkle in the corner of the C.O.'s eyes.

'I'm a Canadian, sir. I'm here to give the Old Land a lift against these blasted Huns. But I ain't here to be knocked around by flannel-headed hobos.'

'Just a minute, Johnson,' said the colonel. 'I am asking for your defence, and as a future officer you must realise that expressions of opinion have no bearing on the case. You are charged with dirty equipment and insolence. Please keep to the first.'

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'Sure, sir! My belt was clean as it was for the Prince o' Wales's inspection in France. What's good enough for the son of a king is good enough for any two-pipped child in this institooshun. As for insolence, I reckon we Canadians ain't out to grovel at the feet of snobs, though we don't mind givin' a "sir" now and again to a white man like yourself.'

'But don't you see that a young officer, unacquainted with the Canadian temperament, might misinterpret your attitude?'

'Maybe, colonel; but it's up to you to educate this child. I'm no chicken in the fighting business. Out West I make ten thousand dollars a year. Seems to me that your old machinery's all wrong. And I guess you can't do me in as long as these things are hanging around my figure,' concluded Tosher, throwing the Military Medal and the D.C.M. on the table.

Blase-Bones was trembling. I felt sorry for the ass.

There was a strange silence in the room for a couple of minutes. The colonel was outwardly studying conduct-sheets, but in reality he was weighing up in his own mind how he could maintain justice without letting an officer down in front of the rank and file. It was an awkward position. Much depended on his decision. He knew there was a whole Canadian Government behind Tosher, and a House of Commons behind Ginger. He also knew that if he muddled the issue, the War Office might promptly lift him out of his job. The commandant, as one of the old school, was nobly striving to bring the Manual of Military Law into line with the blunt (but honest) democracy of the New Army and the Canadian Force.

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At last he looked up at Ginger and inquired, 'Will you take my punishment?'

'Yes, sir.' Ginger had complete confidence in the C.O.

'And you?' he asked Tosher.

'I guess I will, colonel, if it doesn't mean time in a stone-breakin' institooshun.'

'Very well! In my opinion there's been a great lack of tact on the part of your officer, just as there has been a great lack of sense on your part. It is not for you to reply on parade. If you have a grievance, come to me. I'm paid to keep everybody in order. I'm going to punish you for that. If there is no discipline, there is no army. You, as future officers, must realise that. Both of you will be confined to camp for a week. Understand?'

'Yes, sir.'

'But,' said the colonel, 'I request your platoon commander to apologise to you here in my presence. You are good soldiers. You have both been honoured by the King. Your officer has no right to cast aspersions on the New Army, and to conduct his work in a manner calculated to stir hostility. I won't have it.—Please apologise, Mr Blase-Bones.'

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'I'm—exceedingly sorry. I'm just afraid I've made a—mistake. I hope you will pardon me,' muttered the crestfallen subaltern.

'Fall out, men,' said the C.O. kindly.

We were marched out, Ginger and Tosher quite well pleased with the colonel's verdict.

The C.O. knew his job.

V.

That night Colonel Eat-All went to his quarters weary and worn. The affair had made him most unhappy. He was just afraid of what the Canadian *might* do. However, on opening the door of his hut, he was surprised to see a beautiful bowl of red roses on the table. He called his servant and asked where they came from.

'Don't know, sir. When I came back after tea they were there.'

'That's all, thank you.'

The colonel went forward and picked up the bunch of flowers.

There was a tiny label attached. On the label he read: 'To our Dear Old Colonel—from two Defaulters.'

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Something fell on the Old Man's hand. It was a tear.

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BATTALION ORDERS [a week later].

Lieutenant Blase-Bones, having left to rejoin his unit, is struck off the strength of the Battalion.

(Verb. sap.)

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CHAPTER XIII.

OUR DEAR OLD COMMANDANT.

IF we thought a lot of our school, and did our best to keep up its good name, this was due not to a swelling admiration of the military system, but mainly to a sense of patriotism. It was also a tribute of respect to our commandant. He was not a brilliant man, and in some things was an absolute fire-eater. However, his bark was worse than his bite, and he improved on acquaintance. The Old Man was sincere. He was no sneak. There was nothing petty in his decisions, and little things revealed a passionate love of his 'boys' rather than a selfish love of his job. In his day he had been a gallant soldier and 'a bit of a lad.' As a man of the world, he understood human nature, and his one desire was to have a happy and successful unit.

He had a hard-working but not a brilliant staff. Brilliant men are scarce as instructors in cadet schools. The military system, even to-day, is not kind to brilliance. It is afraid of genius. Genius even in this war has too often been attacked and destroyed. On the other hand, it is just to note that the brilliant men who have *survived* the ordeal of jealousy are all at the front, and therefore beyond the reach of cadet schools. What a pity! For in these cadet schools men hunger for more light and congenial thought. Captain Cheerall, I may say, was the great exception. It is good to write such things. The War Office ought certainly to know them. The reason it *doesn't know* is that those who are running these schools are afraid to be frank. Push-and-go is not appreciated by certain soft-jobbers in the Home Commands; and they have a quiet but brutal way of dispensing with men who want to be 'American' and revolutionise our whole system of military education.

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It is imagined by military mandarins that we cadets don't know and don't see anything. What a blunder! At our school, and at every other cadet school, you can find the cream of intellect studying for commissions. The nation is in arms. And many a lecturer ignores the fact that he is talking to men with the highest university degrees. These men in our school never declared they had nothing to learn. Indeed, they promptly realised their appalling deficiencies in military education. They hungered for learning. When they got a little, they wanted more; and a good lecturer always left the room to the accompaniment of resounding cheers. This attitude of cadets is in striking contrast with the attitude of those who regard them as 'a d—— lot of Tommies who want knocking about.' We never objected to being knocked about, even by the sergeant-major from the Guards. But what we did resent was the visit of silly old fools, who talked a lot of rot and gave us no intellectual food. We were not blind, and all of us had 'been out.' If we were deficient in higher strategy, we had a share of common-sense. Had a War Office inspector tumbled into our midst disguised as a cadet, he would have heard frank appreciation of all that was good, and a damning indictment of all that was bad. The greatest weakness of the military system is that it declines to be told, seldom asks for suggestions, and is up against an intellectual aristocracy. This fear of intellect has been our curse in this war. And only one statesman has fought for 'The New School.' That man is David Lloyd George. But even Lloyd George has found that he cannot entirely eradicate the fossilised follies of the old régime.

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For all that, we were not unhappy. When we ceased to analyse the appalling anomalies of the military system, we enjoyed ourselves. Army life does teach fellowship and breed great friendships. Our hut was tenanted by a band of brothers. Our company commander was a 'sport,' and the C.O. had rid us of our platoon commander, who was a prize prig and an insufferable snob. We got a new platoon commander, Lieutenant Damall, who was an intellectual rebel, a first-class soldier, a fine lecturer, and a jolly good chap. The general routine of the school was stiff, yet bearable. But it would have been an absolute joy if more brains had been knocking around. However, the sheet-anchor, the personality, the father, friend, jailer, and general entertainer, was the dear old commandant. He would come on parade and play h—— with everybody, turn us upside-down, call us fat-heads and duffers, then wind up with, 'You know, boys, I curse you because I love you. And I

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do want to be proud of you. I want to see you all generals and V. C.'s. Buck up, for Heaven's sake, or, by Gad, I'll have you shot!' and off he would stump, pretending he was in a devil of a temper. In reality the Old Man was playing quite a clever game. He had that wonderful secret of knowing how to 'curse' a man, and yet make a man smile and do his best. He was not brilliant—but he was wise. And he was jolly good fun.

'You know, gentlemen,' he said one day at a lecture, 'I was a bit of a lad when I was young. An awful blood! Wouldn't call a duke my cousin, and was measured for everything—even my ties. Of course, that was in the good old days when we had nothing but nigger wars, and we used to spend nearly all our time hunting foxes or struggling to get in at stage doors. I was jolly good at that.'

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'When I joined my battalion a colour-sergeant was told off to carry me about. This fellow had to think for me, even on parade. He was always at my elbow whispering the words of command—for which I can assure you I often thanked the Lord. For, to be perfectly frank with you, like many young officers, I was a bit of an ass. I achieved fame at a general's inspection by giving my company the command "Trail arms!" instead of "Present!" for which I got six months' marked drill on the square. They gave me no leave; wouldn't even allow me to pop out and see my best girl (as I allow you to do); but from 9 A. M. till 4 P. M. an old sergeant gave me dyspepsia, colic, and lumbago by marching, counter-marching, and doubling on that terrible barrack square. I wore out two pairs of boots, and was almost excommunicated by the garrison chaplain owing to the awful language which I used after those parades. It was a bitter lesson; but it did me good, although I didn't think so at the time. I am just afraid I was a saucy young devil.'

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'Of course, in those days a subaltern was very small fry. He was merely a "fag" in the regimental system. It was very dangerous to think—it still is a bit dangerous to do so—and the great secret of success was to eliminate any trace of personality or originality. As a sarcastic old major remarked, all he demanded of a subaltern was to be strong in the back and soft in the head. In passing, I may say I was awfully popular with this old chap. Perhaps I was up to his marvellous standard. I led him to think so, for I readily found out that the line of least resistance was the one which assured a calm and charming life. You may think that a terrible revelation, but if you study the British Army in the 'seventies, you will see that it would have been disastrous for any man of mediocre talent to start thrusting out his hand for the field-marshal's baton.'

'Company commanders in those days directed operations from the anterooms or their bedrooms, and we long-suffering, fat-headed subs. fetched and carried for them. They were the drones, and we were the working-bees. At least, we thought we were, but what we actually did was this. We received our orders, then went to the company office and simply passed them on. The colour-sergeants were really the foremen of works. These old N.C.O.'s were marvellous men—men of great attainments, and men whose abilities were not rewarded as they are to-day. Under the old system the officer was a god, not to be defiled by mere toil or clear thinking. Our daily task commenced about 10 A. M., and finished about noon. When we had to work in the afternoon we always talked about resigning our commissions. We had an extraordinary view that we were there to enjoy ourselves and look pretty, and it was most unfair to burden our brains with $5+5=10$.

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'I am telling you these things, not because I long for those old times again. When I see you boys doing so many interesting things to-day, I feel I must teach you to abhor shams, to face facts, and to tell the truth. In those days I couldn't see the hollowness and the rottenness of it all. I see it now, for I have no illusions. War is a brutal business. Facts predominate. If you have the moral courage to get up in front of your men and admit an error, and seek for light and co-operation, you will show evidence of greatness.'

'We were very pretty in those days. I rejoiced in my figure, which, as with all fashionable officers, was kept in order by common or garden corsets. When we went out in review order we were a sight for the girls and—"the mob." The men were just as smart. Indeed, a battalion looked like a thousand dandies out of a cutter's window. I have an affection for that aspect of the past. It is no crime to be a well-dressed man. Even to-day it is most important that an officer should look the picture of a clean, alert, and well-groomed British gentleman. That is an aid to discipline. Every Tommy is an

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aristocrat. As one of my men once remarked, "I likes my orficer to look a ruddy toff." Of course, there was a great weakness in this system. It was overdone. We concentrated on brass bands, pipeclay, and eye-wash. The men were mere automatons; the discipline was harsh, in some cases brutal; while strategy and tactics were not worshipped as we worship them now. This was not our fault. It was due to the age. The German menace was not even dreamt of. We had only frontier skirmishes to deal with. And we all enlisted—for fun.

'As for training, it was not at all intelligent. We did field-days in full-dress uniforms, busbies, cross-belts, and all the glitter used on review parades. Even in India troops wore European clothing, and died by the hundred from heat apoplexy. The frontal attack was the summit of our knowledge, and "form square" for savage warfare our one great stunt. It looked pretty. And it was this damnable craving for prettiness which hindered the development of military training. Of course, I did not know that then. To me life was one huge jest. But I had a rude awakening.

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'In a frontier skirmish, my regiment was attacking a difficult position held by some of the hill tribes. The C.O., who was a charming old gentleman, but no soldier, decided on the usual thing—a frontal attack. We went forward. Two companies were almost annihilated. The senior major, a fairly able man, who was leading the attack, decided it was suicide to go farther, and ordered the retirement. We went back. The colonel demanded an explanation. The major very respectfully pointed out the stupidity of the arrangement, and suggested a feint attack on the front, combined with an enveloping movement round both flanks.

"Bosh!" replied the Old Man. He ordered us forward again. Another company was decimated, and fortunately the colonel was among the casualties. If he had lived, he would have killed every man by his stupid tactics. The major then withdrew the battalion. That night he made arrangements for another attack at dawn. One hundred men were sent to make a feint at the front, and two hundred more were divided into two columns to attack the right and left flanks. The remainder were in reserve. At dawn we carried out his orders. Two hours afterwards we had captured the position, three hundred of the enemy, one gun, and lots of loot.

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'Our casualties in that attack were fifty-five.

'Our previous casualties were about three hundred and fifty.

'This to me was a revelation of the use of brains, and an indication that brains can save human life. From that day, gentlemen, I honestly tried to be intelligent. But I had to go warily. I swotted up Napoleon and Frederick the Great—in *secret*; for it was considered bad form to be a student. Even then I did not quite appreciate the terrible dangers of such false "form." However, I had the courage to chuck my fashionable regiment and become a soldier of fortune in the Indian and Egyptian Armies. From those two great and immortal men, Kitchener and Roberts, I acquired any little knowledge I possess. Still, I am not a marvellous soldier—and know it. But one thing I have been taught, and that is—sincerity.

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'When I make a blunder, I have no hesitation in cutting my losses. Nor am I afraid of criticism or suggestion. You may find this lacking in certain spheres of military life. But do not despair. Do your duty! Be loyal! And attempt no far-reaching reforms unless you have the genius and the courage to carry them out. Otherwise you will only batter your head against a brick wall. Progress is with you, and you are all young. I wish I were sitting with you as a cadet, and not talking to you with the rank of a colonel. In this war my age seems a curse. Your field is wide and your opportunities are illimitable. To the keen soldier this *is* a day of glory!

'For all that, I do not say our system is perfect. And I am not going to insist that the best men are always pushed on. But I do believe the system is improving. And I can assure you that I am doing my best to smash false barriers. I am not popular with certain people for this. Popularity is nothing to me. I have boys of my own. While I think this is a good school, I quite realise it is not a perfect school. We have not cut the old shackles yet, but we are getting on. You are young and impatient. I know your dreams. I know your hopes. I know how you grouse, and I often hear some of you say, "Oh, here's that frosted old dug-out again." But I am quite sure you don't mean anything—just as I am quite convinced you try your best.

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'Frankly, gentlemen, you have much to be grateful for. You are

getting in this school as much knowledge as the old army officer got in twenty years. It may not be issued in palatable or popular form. It may jar your temperament, but the "stuff" is there, if you care to pick it up. I cannot talk to you like Sir Oliver Lodge or fascinate you like Lord Rosebery. I am a plain soldier. My staff are plain soldiers, but they are hard workers. They are doing their best for you, and it is up to you to do your best for them. If I, your colonel, have the courage to come and tell you of my own deficiencies, surely you boys will have the pluck to do a little heart-searching. You must also study the Service as a whole, and not in parts. Believe me, the British Army is a proud and glorious institution. The traditions are high. Great men have come from our ranks. In this war our arms are belauded with chivalry. Ours is no mercenary host, no band of knaves or babe-assassins. We fight a good fight. While I am no great Christian, I do believe we are the New Crusaders. This is a Holy Crusade.

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'To sum up my theme, let me say I have told you of the jolly but inefficient past simply to show the marvellous advance made in military education, how we have blundered through to a more sensible and useful system. If you feel there are imperfections to-day, you would have been shocked had you soldiered in the 'seventies. For all that, I do not want you to feel contented—not even with me. A healthy discontent is a sign of a progressive mind. Always look forward. Always endeavour to develop new ideas and produce fresh thoughts. But in doing so, try to incorporate the best from the past. Shatter stupid tradition, certainly; but remember this, gentlemen—if your fathers are old, they are also wise with experience. And never insult old age or scorn good counsel.

'Yours is a high calling. Yours is a noble cause. You are all my boys, and I want to be proud of you. When you go from here I shall watch your careers. If you feel you have any respect for me and this school—imperfect as it is—then I ask you to honour the King, play the game, be good citizens and gallant British officers. That's all.'

When the Old Man finished an extraordinary thing happened. Tosher, the Canadian, jumped up on the table and shouted, 'Three cheers for the good old colonel!' Our wild hurrahs almost burst the roof.

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'Thank you, boys,' said the C.O. quietly, and hurried away. He was afraid of his emotions.

Oh, we did love our dear old commandant!

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CHAPTER XIV.

NOT UNDERSTOOD.

DO not believe that we of the New Army are blood-thirsty Bernhardis, always talking about offensives and what not. Not a bit of it! Ninety-nine per cent. of us loathe the whole business, and seventy-five per cent. are opponents of militarism. Indeed, I think we may rightly be described as an army of pacifists in defence of our beliefs. No decent-minded Briton desires to compete with the brutal philosophy of the Hun. The man who says he likes war is either a liar or a Shylock in the supply department. The best way to end war is for the German nation to reduce the German General Staff to the ranks, and let them suffer such a bombardment as we gave the German Tommies prior to the battle of the Somme.

Shell-fire kills militarism.

The great New Army is a successful army, because it has a cause. Its *moral* is largely based on our love of freedom, truth, ease, and peace at our own fireside. We are a peace-loving people. A navy we have always regarded as an expensive business, the army as a luxury, war as a d— nuisance and a most uncomfortable affair. War interferes with our commerce, our studies, our games, and our pleasures. War kills and mangles men who have been made in the image of God. It wrecks nations, countries, and homes; brings into millions of lives suffering, poverty, anger, despair, madness, and soul-racking sorrow. It is the most foul, ghastly, ungodly thing that man ever created.

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War is hell—a suffering hell, a grisly hell.

Every man in the New Army thinks that. And it is most important you should realise our point of view; otherwise you will be unable to understand our psychology, and the reason for our carrying on. Of course, you may never have heard that side before. You are not to blame. Newspaper correspondents at the front send home the most awful 'tripe' about us. They actually dare to say we 'like it.' When we read such things we laugh. Perhaps the poor devils are not entirely at fault. Some bright gent who is director-general of *moral* may consider it necessary that they should produce this piffle. But such a view is rather an insult to our education. We can penetrate official camouflage, sometimes enjoy it, but all the same this sort of stuff is not good for the army or the nation. It breeds illusions. Illusions of this order eventually become a danger to the State. Much better to speak the truth, to show war in all its vile nakedness—show it in operation with blood, bayonets, and a brutal barrage blowing horses and men to bits, and motor-cars sky-high. Britishers can face this, for we are a race of stoics. But what Britishers cannot understand is that extraordinary diplomacy which says we must camouflage heavy casualties, hide disasters, whitewash blunders, and instil in the minds of a shivering British public that the Front is really 'not so bad as they say.' The Front is a vile and a hellish place.

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But it was the Germans who made it so.

That is the whole alphabet of our cause. We are in this military business because we hate it. The position is such that if we refuse to fight, our lives, our homes, our businesses, our mothers, wives, and sweethearts, will be at the mercy of that awful devil who says he is the image of God—the Kaiser. We must fight, or fizzle out. Snowden, Ramsay Macdonald, and men of that kidney are foolish and dangerous counsellors. Their methods, if successful, mean that Pacifism—the true Pacifism—is dead for ever, and we should be compelled to deify the sword and applaud the philosophy which condones rape, murder, burglary, and all the abominable dogmas of Berlin.

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And yet our instructors never took up that line.

Very few of the Old Army men have plumbed the depths of the New Army. Privately, we think many of them are afraid of our intellects. They seldom get down to earth with us, and often seek refuge in the discipline which can hold us off. They are brave men, and, with a few exceptions, are gentlemen. But they believe we are swashbuckling imperialists, when in reality we are pacifists fighting for peace *now* and—*for ever*. The professional military mind is in many ways admirable. It is honest, direct, and cannot compromise.

When it damns, it damns. But it is not elastic; it takes in slowly. Even now, after four years of war, you will not get 50 per cent. of Old Army men to give you a correct analysis of our psychology. This is a pity, and accounts for any friction of which you may hear.

At the school we were not understood.

Apparently it is considered indispensable to give 'the new fellows' a lot of talk about the King, the Empire, the Cause, and 'the Correct Thing.' This is quite all right when presented by capable men, who will at least recognise that we have been to school. But when an old red-cheeked blunderbuss pops into the school on a visit of inspection, and commences to ladle out this stuff like a Jingo orator on a soap-box, we squirm and silently rebel. We hate all this empty talk. Our King, our Empire, and 'the Correct Thing' have nothing to do with the making of this war. It is the Germans' war—the Kaiser's war. Lip-service is of little use to the monarchy or the Empire. We are not flag-waggers. We are plain, home-loving shopkeepers in arms. We do not question the right of King George or ignore the Empire's existence; but we are all determined, with the aid of God, bayonet, and high explosive, to root out the Kaiser, his chiefs, and all their works, because they and their foul gospel mean the moral ruin and the brutal domination of the world. On enlistment, when we held up our hands and swore by Almighty God 'to defend His Majesty, his heirs and successors,' *we meant it*; but we do think that in our terms of service there should be a contract that we be understood.

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For all that, you must not believe that we New Army men resent *intelligent* discipline or *intelligent* superiors. Oh no! We, I think, have the ability to distinguish between the system and the men who live under it. While we hate militarism, we have a deep and lasting affection for many of the professional soldiers. And it is this personal bond between officers and men that has helped to make the New Army effective. Their views are not our views, but their personal devotion and example are priceless assets in such a war. Indeed, the good officer is usually a good man. What always impressed us was the strong religious convictions of men like Maude, Kitchener, and Robertson. Example is the keynote of the true British officer. There are many instances to prove my contention. General Maude in Mesopotamia ordered all his officers and men to refrain from drinking or eating anything offered by a native. Yet, when receiving a native deputation, who offered him the hospitality of the country, he, like a courteous gentleman, realising how hurt and offended these simple natives would be if he refused, took the proffered cup, which reeked of cholera, and—DIED. There is no greater example of chivalry, and it is just that sort of chivalry which has endeared the best men of the Old Army to all in the New.

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Again, there is that noble story of an air-raid on London when our barrage was rotten, and somebody in the War Office phoned to an aerodrome for some one to go up.

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'We can't. The weather's against us. It's suicide,' replied the air commander.

'You must do something,' was the final order.

The air commander, realising that it simply meant ordering a junior to go to his death, went up himself, and was KILLED!

In Mesopotamia, a naval cutter was ordered to rush a bridge and break the boom across the river. The commander knew it meant death to the man who did it. So he took the hatchet himself, jumped over the bow, and commenced to hack at the hawsers. He was shot DEAD.

Now, this sort of thing, and this sort of man, we appreciate. Personal bravery is a quality which can stir and develop the best in tyros at the military game. It was these glorious soldiers who gave the New Army the confidence to go on, the ability to stick it, and showed us the need for some sort of discipline, and the use of comradeship and *esprit de corps* to effect our purpose. What I want you to appreciate thoroughly is this: Militarism is a hateful creed, but the military life does show whether a man has 'guts.' War is not our business as a nation, but in war we, I think, are one of the toughest and bravest peoples on earth. The forte of the New Army is its intelligent grasp of the principles for which we are fighting. But only one British general has said we are out to destroy the brutal doctrines of war.

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That general was Sir William Robertson.

Now, at the school we got all sorts of excellent technical stuff

which was absolutely necessary, and which we thoroughly appreciated. But we did not get what I have been writing about. We often talked about this. And all of us were agreed that it is dangerous to neglect the frank discussion of the principles, the politics, and the creeds which affect a nation in arms. War to-day is a complicated business. An officer must not only have mastered the technicalities of the military profession; he must be acquainted with the broad principles of high policy which guide the action of his army. He must appreciate the value of *moral*, and the need of educating it and sustaining it. But he cannot do so if he ignores the principles for which five millions have enlisted. It is all very well to know how to 'form fours' and 'slope arms;' but if an officer cannot distinguish Hindenburg from Liebknecht, Lloyd George from Lenin, Enver Pasha from the simple Turk, or Clemenceau from Bolo, then he is NOT educated. This knowledge can be given either in pamphlet form or in a couple of lectures. At present the voice of the New Army man is drowned by the louder cries of 'the old school.'

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I am only a youthful person at this business, but I do feel that in this great and terrible war we should have an opportunity to pop our ideas into a collecting-box which will be taken direct to the War Office and opened by a bright, sympathetic young soldier of the General Staff.

Sir Henry Wilson will agree.

He, like General Maude, is a man of imagination.

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CHAPTER XV.

MOTHER COMES TO SCHOOL.

YOU will have noticed ere this what a dear old soul my mater is. How tender her love! How trusting in all things! To an artist she is a dream-picture. So quaint, yet so dignified; so innocent, yet so human. When dressed in black brocade, with white collar and cuffs, with her silver-haired ringlets hanging on each side of her head, she looks a charming Victorian. Just the sort of old lady you see stepping out of an ancient picture-gallery. She is of the past—the beautiful past—when life was slow, yet kind and true.

She lives in a rustic manor in sleepy old Berks. There she is sheltered from the storms. Her four interests in life are *The Times*, the Tory Party, her Wyandottes, and—ME. Whatever our modern Delanes say, my mater endorses with emphasis. When Lloyd George was appointed Premier, she had no sleep for four nights; and had it not been for the reassuring leader in *The Times*, the mater might have been tempted to stuff a bomb in a highly flavoured dead Wyandotte and send it to 10 Downing Street. However, I did my best to assure her that David was thoroughly respectable, and that his Conservative colleagues would look after him. That ended all opposition. [152]

She has implicit faith in me. I am the idol of her heart. This devotion is really embarrassing. I am not worthy of it. At school I had learnt more than the classics. Now, the mater loathes liquor, and she has a dread of girls. Her boy must be kept from the hussies at all costs. In this age—indeed, in all ages—that has been impracticable. But it made me a sort of hypocrite, for I would not have shattered that dear old lady's illusions for all the wealth of Carnegie. Yet, somehow, I also felt that her sweet faith always kept me within bounds. A man could not be a bounder with a mother like Mrs John Brown. Still, like all youths, I was having my 'fling,' and out of your 'fling' comes strength or ruin. Life is a series of temptations. The man who can taste and leave them goes forward. The man who is ensnared is damned.

We have all got to go through the mill.

As I have said, the mater is innocent in affairs of the world, especially in military matters. She mixes things up. For example, an 'offensive' she thought was a nasty smell at the Front. One day she inquired, 'John, when are they going to make Douglas Haig a sergeant-major? I am sure he deserves it. Don't you think I should write to *The Times*?' [153]

'You mean a field-marshal, mater.'

'What's that?'

'Oh, field-marshal is the highest. He carries a baton.'

'What a common thing to do!'

'Why, mater?'

'Well, I thought it was only stupid policemen who did that. *The army is very strange, my boy.*'

I did my best to enlighten the dear old lady, but I had no success. When colonels and majors came to tea, she called them corporals or sergeants, to the enjoyment of all. They never disillusioned her. She was such a kind old soul. And now that I am a military cadet, she had got the idea that I am a most important person. She confided in Aunt Jane's ear that I should soon be a 'brass hat.'

'What's that?' asked Aunt Jane.

'Oh, the pretty men who ride in front of the band and give orders.'

'How nice!'

Aunt Jane was mater's youngest sister. She was almost forty-five, unmarried, quite a fine woman to look at, and a good soul. When I was at school she used to send me mince-pies, plum-puddings, and cigarettes. (Mater didn't know about the cigarettes.) [154]

The greatest weakness the old lady has is jumping to conclusions. Like a silly ass, I had written and said I had caught a cold on a route march, owing to the awful weather.

She replied:

'MY DEAREST BOY,—How shocked I was to hear you had got a cold on

such a day! It is abominable to think that boys are taken out on a wet day. You might have died! I am so annoyed about this that I have asked our Member to put a question in the House. I have also written to *The Times*. It is shocking!—Your loving

MOTHER.'

When I got this I almost had apoplexy. Something had to be done. I wired the Member: 'For Heaven's sake don't put mother's question! Writing.' And I also wired to *The Times*. That saved the situation.

The mater couldn't understand war; nor did she realise that soldiers are not mollicoddles. She didn't mind my dying at the Front, but she *did* object to my getting a cold at home. Rather a mixed-up point of view, but quite motherly. And there are lots of mothers like that, as I have since discovered. [155]

This route march incident apparently decided her visit to our school. Aunt Jane was invited to accompany her. She was delighted. The two old dears simply wired: 'Coming to see you. Ask the rector to let you off.'

The rector! How the old 'com.' would have laughed if he had seen the telegram! The mater gave me no clue as to how she would come, or when I might expect her. However, I knew Aunt Jane would look after her. Meantime I asked all my pals to have tea with the ladies at the local hotel. I insisted particularly on Nobby's coming, for I knew she would like to see the Radical.

There was going to be fun.

Unfortunately I was not about when they landed. They came from the junction by motor-car, and were deposited at the gate.

'I don't see John,' said the mater.

'Never mind! We'll soon find him.'

The first man they saw was the commandant. He was looking well that day—the picture of a powerful mandarin. The old ladies got a little nervous. They wondered whether the 'com.' was a fierce sergeant-major or a regimental policeman. He was so impressive! But they tackled him.

'Can you tell me where to find the rector? I want to see my son,' said the mater. [156]

'I'm afraid, madam, there's no rector here,' the old man said with a smile on his face.

'Oh, well, the manager, or whatever you call him. I really don't know the right terms.'

'Well, I'm the commandant.'

'Then you must be the head-master.'

'Exactly!' The colonel blinked. He loathed these civilian terms.

'My boy's name is John Brown.'

'Indeed! He is a very bright boy. I am delighted to meet you. Will you ladies kindly come into the anteroom?' The old sport took them into the mess and gave them afternoon tea. Mother and Aunt Jane enjoyed this immensely.

'I hope you see my boy wears flannel next his skin. He's rather delicate, you know,' ventured the old lady.

'Oh yes. The boys have a platoon commander who acts as a sort of mother. He spansk them when they are naughty, and tucks them up at night.'

'Does John ever give you trouble?'

'Not a bit! He has never been before me. Your boy is a great credit to you. I'm awfully proud of him. Do have some more tea.' [157]

Wasn't the old 'com.' playing the game?

Meantime a dozen officers were scouring the school for me. They discovered me in the gym., having a bayonet-fight with Beefy.

'Come along, Brown. Look smart! Your mother and a friend are here.'

'Oh, thanks, sir.'

I was across at the mess door in a jiffy. As the tea-party was over, the 'com.' and the ladies came out.

'Here's your boy, Mrs Brown. Now, off you go. He may have leave for the day. Good-bye.'

I led them away, and all I could get out of them was, 'What a delightful old gentleman!' Aunt Jane was quite struck with the commandant, and bluntly asked if he was married.

'He's a widower.'

'How interesting!' That was all she said, but I wondered! I wondered!

'Here's our hut, mater.'

As we entered Ginger and Beefy hurriedly pushed some liqueur-bottles under the blankets, while Tosher discreetly flung a rug over a series of wall pictures taken out of the *Sketch* and the *Tatler*.

'This is the Reverend Billy Greens.'

'How pleasant to meet you, Mr Greens! I am so glad you and my boy go to prayers so often.'

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'Yes, we are great friends,' said Billy, tactfully evading discussion of what really was a 'terminological inexactitude' invented by myself.

Ginger and Tosher were next introduced, and then came Nobby.

'Ah! I wanted to meet you, Mr Clarke. You really don't look like a Radical at all. You are much too nice for that.'

'I'm being converted, Mrs Brown,' said Nobby maliciously.

'How splendid!'

'What do you think of our happy home, mater?'

'Well it *does* look untidy. And what a lot of papers and books!' She picked up the *Tatler*. 'John! Do you read this?' she said, pointing to a wonderful picture by 'Fish.'

'Well—no, mater. The Red Cross send us old magazines to use for shaving-papers.'

'I am so glad,' she returned.

I did feel a rotten hypocrite.

'Now, do all of you sleep in those little wooden things?' pointing to the trestle-beds.

'Oh, yes.'

'Dear me! I thought you only got those things in jail. Oh! What's that?' she exclaimed, spotting Adela's photo over my bed. She went nearer, and put up her pince-nez. 'Dear, dear! A girl! A girl, John!'

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'An old friend, mater. She's—she's really quite nice. Her uncle is a vicar.'

'Does she live near here?'

'Well—not quite.'

'I must speak to you about this later.' Then she turned to the boys again, and had a pleasant chat. Meanwhile I had got two cars, and pushed the party into them. We sailed off to the local hotel, where we had a ripping tea. Poor Aunt Jane wasn't in the piece; mother had so many things to ask my friends. They gathered round her, and she simply treated them as her own little boys. Even Ginger enjoyed it. It was so natural, so human, so much like his own dear mater, who was—dead. Her whole concern was about their boots, their clothing, and their spiritual welfare. And did they write every day to their mothers, like her own dear John? Tosher, the materialist, fell head over ears in love with the dear old mater. She taught him to appreciate this fact, that the strength of the Old Country lies in the wonderful women who have suckled a manly and virile race. The party was all too short, and the ladies were sorry to go. We escorted them to the station. Tosher, with true Canadian generosity, bought a huge box of chocolates; Beefy presented some flowers to Aunt Jane; and Ginger, Nobby, and Billy loaded them up with magazines and books.

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'You dear, dear boys!' said mother.

'Good-bye, mater.'

'Good-bye, Aunt Jane,' they all shouted as the two dearest women in the world were whirled away on the south express.

'Good-bye, dear boys.—And, John'—mother shouted.

'Yes, mater?'

'Button up your collar—it's cold!'

• • • • •

'DEAR JOHN,—Will you thank all your friends for such a delightful time? They are such nice boys. By the way, I've found out that your commandant has a sister in the next village.

'We are going to call next week.'

'AUNT JANE.'

THE NEW ARMY OFFICER.

‘THE New Army Officer is the finest production of the twentieth century,’ said Captain Cheerall at one of his lectures. ‘He is as fascinating as, frequently, he is irritating, for he is no lover of conventions. His success is staggering, particularly to the Germans, and his bravery is the talk of the world. I, of the Old Army, salute the New Crusader; but I am sorry to say a few ancient mandarins don’t. We have to destroy this prejudice, or else remove all those who fail to encourage the bright young men who have led our platoons, companies, and regiments to victory.’

‘The New Officer is an Edison and a Trojan.’

‘While I am proud of that glorious Old Army which I saw bleeding at Mons and expiring at Ypres, I do feel we must cease to talk of the old and concentrate on the new. The New Army is fighting to-day, and it is most discouraging to our latest cavalier to remind him continually of his temporary rank and temporary job.’

‘That word “temporary” ought to be silenced for ever.’

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‘The New Officer has proved that leadership is no monopoly, and that warfare is not difficult to master. He has exploded the theory that it takes twenty years to make a colonel, and forty to make a general. He has shocked our drill-sergeants, and surprised our Napoleons by his ruthless destruction of shams and his nimble seizure of facts. He is the daring, dashing, dauntless Brigadier Gerard.’

‘He is an optimist, and therefore successful.’

‘If the New Officer owes a great deal to his predecessor, his predecessor must also acknowledge his debt. The sincerity, the enthusiasm, the intelligence, and the business ability of the new man have been priceless assets in this war. What *would* this Empire have done without the splendid fellow who chucked his wealth and his pleasures into the dust-heap, and came to us for a job? He was irrepressible! If his chest was small, he bribed men to slip him through. If his heart was diseased, it suddenly became cured. If varicose veins were in his legs, he had them cut out. If he was forty or fifty, he became twenty or thirty. And if he hadn’t experience, he always said, “I’ll d— soon learn.”’

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‘He was a blood-thirsty crusader.’

‘Now, when he joined we were mournful. We looked at him and sighed. “The correct thing,” somehow or other, wasn’t in his keeping. He was inclined to call the colonel “Alf” and the sergeant-major “Bill.” He didn’t know! And, oh dear—his word of command! It was so respectable—so tame! He seemed to apologise to the troops for his presence—yea, his very existence. Yet he was a stickler. He was cursed from dawn till sunset. In those early days he was occasionally insulted and abused. There was a war on, and we regarded him as shell-fodder, and not as human. Let us apologise now. We were worried. The Old Army was dying. The Huns were knocking at the gates, and we, with our old conservative ideas, regarded him as a forlorn hope, and sometimes as “a wash-out.”’

‘How wrong, how terribly unjust, we were!’

‘But he always said, “Yes, sir.” He always smiled. His trust was embarrassing, and his docility staggering. To us, his masters, jailers, and martinets, he yielded a homage which made us feel like gods. His very willingness made us misjudge him and think him a fool. “No guts” was a term frequently on our lips. We, with the vanity of the old and tried, could not see that he was of our blood, our faith, our schooling, our patriotism, and our pride. Of these virtues we imagined we had the monopoly. What insolence! What fools we were!’

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‘But we were worried about the war.’

‘In those anxious, awful days we had no rifles, no uniforms, no equipment to spare; no brass bands, no flashing swords or coloured fripperies of rank and standing. Yet this amazing youth was undaunted. He shoved dummy guns into the hands of his platoon, made trenches with fire-shovels and trowels, used *living* brigadiers for targets, and gave the command, “At the enemy—at four hundred—fire!” The brigadiers woke up and—smiled. The imagination of the New Officer was helpful. He could talk, for he was educated. And he

pictured German armies on the move, German hordes at the double, and to meet them roused his civvy-clad platoon to the heights of devilry and daring, then charged with his little bamboo cane—to glory.

‘By Gad! he always won.

‘Even then we doubted him. We somehow felt he wouldn’t “pan out.” Most excellent for the Boys’ Brigade, or the like; but for a war—well, we should see! At last the uniforms came, the rifles too; but somebody forgot the ammunition. He said, “Oh, that’s the bally War Office again. Let’s carry on with these dummy clips.” Standing, lying, kneeling, and sitting, he taught the wonders of rapid fire, and how to make a “group” on the square head of the pimple-dotted Boche. Jules Verne wasn’t in it! His men made bull’s-eyes on the colonel’s tummy, and riddled the nether regions of the twenty-stone quartermaster.

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‘Then we called him a ruddy swanker.

‘For all that, he went on. The fellow was clean mad to “get out.” We said, “Yes, when we’ve put you through the mill.” And we did! We froze him on the ranges; soaked him on parade; tore his feet on the route march; and almost broke the valves of his heart charging mountains, and doubling for miles in heavy marching order. But he stuck it, and when he came in, stood us a drink, and said, “D— it all, do send us to the Front, sir!”

‘We commenced to think he wasn’t bad.

‘And then he started to think and to do things, for he felt his feet on firmer ground. Red tape he damned. For example, he got fed up ending his letters: “I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant, WILLIAM WINKIE.” And he introduced this reform: “Yours truly, W. WINKIE.”

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‘We were shocked, of course. The other had been done since the time of Moses. This was a most atrocious outrage against the all-holy conventions. An explanation was immediately demanded—in writing. He replied: “I’m a business man, and there’s a war on.”

‘The old brigadier expired with apoplexy.

‘His brevity was startling. Instead of replying, “I beg to acknowledge receipt of yours,” &c., he simply stated, “Received, noted, and filed.”

‘But he did a more startling thing. He actually dethroned the pen and brought the typewriter into the company office. He also enlisted his shorthand clerk, and purchased a small card-index system, with which he created a little bureau, labelled: “Accounts,” “Equipment,” “Correspondence.”

‘This had never been done by the best people, for we always thought it very bad form to make the army business-like. If our fathers had sold shirts, beer, or bacon, we never mentioned it. And we had always been most careful to hide away the prompt, precise, methodical methods of our wealthy parents. We worshipped “form” and hated facts. But this fellow day after day continued, quietly but effectively, to cut out all the appalling bluff and nonsense of centuries. We didn’t like this—at first. Indeed, the ancient adjutant, trained in the methods of Wellington and the Duke of Cambridge, took seriously ill, and—retired.

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‘The C.O. turned in despair to the New Officer.

“I’ll take it on, sir,” he said, “but I must have an absolutely free hand.”

“Why?”

“Well, I’m a business man.”

‘He was so persuasive about his methods that he was permitted to get his foot inside the orderly-room door. Then he shoved his whole personality into it. With a sweep of his pen he returned all the elderly red-tape clerks to duty. In came his shorthand clerks, typewriter, card-index, and books on “system.” There was a bonfire of ancient rubbish, and the erection of neat shelves, methodically arranged and labelled: “Training,” “Finance,” “Correspondence,” “Records,” “Blunders,” “Results.”

‘The C.O. was astonished at the peace, smoothness, and efficiency. He was also amused when the new adjutant suggested that he (the C.O.) might dictate all his letters to the shorthand clerk. “Saves time, sir, and will let you get out to see what is going on.” The Old Man had a shot at this. He discovered that he need only spend half-an-hour on correspondence instead of *three hours*.

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‘Result: he was always on parade, and *training improved*.

'Secretly we admired all this, but some of us got jealous. We grew petty, and showed it in our memos. But he called us up, and said, "Look here, Tom, Dick, and Harry, I'm not here for my health. I'm here for business. If you don't like my methods, you had better move to another battalion."

'And the old C.O. backed him up.

'At last we voiced our true thoughts, and said, "The New Man is an organiser. He can do things. And he does save us a tremendous lot of trouble with the paymaster, the Command, and the War Office." Having paid this homage, we started to go to him for advice on administration. He gave us heaps.

'But we still wondered how he would "pan out" in the field.

'Next, we went out. The New Man was told to entrain the battalion at the station, where a train would be in waiting. When he got there he discovered the R.T.O. had forgotten—the luggage-vans. He asked no questions, but collared two vans on the siding, had them hitched on to the train, loaded up, shoved the troops in, reported "All correct," and we started to move.

"What the devil do you mean taking those vans?" roared the annoyed R.T.O.

"You go and learn your business, sonny. I'm a railway manager. Good-bye."

'We lay back and simply roared with laughter.

'Crossing the Channel, we of the old school were just a bit worried. We had grown to like the new fellow an awful lot. He was so willing, so decent, so obliging, and so keen. Still, we did think he was not quite the type. His business abilities were admirable. But what about leadership?

'This problem had yet to be solved.

'However, we plugged into the trenches, and he started on his new job. He was "jumpy" a little, and felt at sea. But he was a stickler. Above all, he was cheerful. He kept the men happy—fought like a devil with the quartermaster about his company's rations, saw to the rum, stole wood for his men's fires, robbed the A.S.C. of coal and coke, made braziers out of biscuit-boxes, and organised concerts under heavy bombardments. He wasn't afraid to grouse, but he never bucked at a job.

'We did feel immensely grateful.

'Next, the great offensive. What a day! The barrage of the enemy was sheer murder; but he leaped over the bags like a fine British gentleman, and kept his eye on the OBJECTIVE. The C.O. was killed, the major was killed, company commanders were wounded, and the New Man found he was alone.

'His hour had come.

'Some weak fool shouted, "Retire!" but the New Man clapped a revolver to the demoralised man's ear and said, "Go on." He went! The weaker were impressed; the brave were thrilled. Old Army sergeants vowed he was "the goods," and loyally backed him up. And on through hell, through death, and a blood-soaked shambles went the New Crusader with his battalion. The objective was reached, but we had only three hundred men instead of a thousand. There were no bombs, little ammunition, no water, no rations, and the men were *absolutely done*. All round were the bursting shells, the spluttering maxims, the choking gas, and the agonies of war. His flanks were in the air, but he extended his thin line, sent back the runners, dug in, and opened fire.

'On came the Germans.

'But the God of all men was on his side. Providence protects the brave. His fame had trickled down the line, and anxious generals vowed he *would* be supported. Company after company was slaughtered in the attempt. Then up came the Guards—the flower of British chivalry. The Old Crusaders were determined that the New would not be surrounded, jabbed, and crucified. Through that cruel barrage they tramped as if on parade.

'And while they were advancing, the New Man, though weary, wounded, and blood-stained, was fighting a dauntless battle. Three hundred men had dropped to two hundred. His flanks were burst. He was almost surrounded. The bayonets of Potsdam were glittering at his breast, but he cried, "Fight on—fight on! No damn surrender to these Huns!"

"Ay, ay, sir," responded his glorious men.

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'Just as the mad finale was reached, when the fate of the New Man and his heroic battalion seemed sealed, a cheer burst on the air, and the Guards broke through. The Old and the New joined hands, then fought the Hun with cold steel till he squealed like a pig and—RAN.

'Four Guardsmen carried the New Man down the line.

'And then the world—and the Old Army—woke up. The chivalry of ages was in the New Cavalier. His battered and bleeding form was carried through a guard of honour to the place where the sick are healed. Women sent him flowers; old generals paid him homage; and, like a true Britisher, he inquired, "What's all the fuss about? It wasn't I—it was the MEN."

'But the King gave him the Victoria Cross.

'The Guards presented arms.

'The Old Army cheered.

'And the world said, "Well done!"

'I salute the New Army Officer,' concluded Captain Cheerall.

The school jumped to its feet and almost went mad with cheering.

Why don't we have more lectures like that?

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CHAPTER XVII.

STEADY OLD ADELA.

'LEAVE, boys; leave!' shouted Beefy one night, rushing in with battalion orders in his hand.

'When is it?' Ginger asked.

'Next week.'

'How long do we get, Beefy?' I inquired.

'Four days, my boys—four priceless days of priceless fun. Cheero!' he concluded, throwing his cap in the air.

This was excellent news. Leave is our greatest joy in the army. At once we commenced to plan out days of fun and nights of glory. All were rather secret about their arrangements. They were scheming out timetables in which not one lady but many were involved. Nobby, however, confided to me that he was going off to see rather a pretty widow. She was good fun, and had lots of brass. (Nobby was after the brass.) Beefy whispered that he had a wonderful woman in Cambridge, and another in Bath. He was going to see *both*. Tosher, thoroughly practical, decided to investigate the claims of Scottish girls, and see whether a Scottish wife would be a sound investment for his dollars and his affections. Even Billy, the padre, was after a girl—a V.A.D. commandant, slightly over the popular age, but 'a fine woman, a fine woman,' as Billy confidentially remarked. Ginger announced that he was going to have a quiet holiday at the Sweetville Hotel. I said nothing, but thought of—the barmaid.

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My own arrangements were not decided. Like that of every soldier, my visiting list was rather heavy, and in my address-book were the names of pre-war charmers and war charmers. To see them all was quite impossible. Fours days did not allow of that. Like a sub-editor, I had 'to cut down,' and eventually arrived at a very brief, yet interesting, programme. Having learnt something about organisation at the school, I knew how essential it was that there should be no hitch. So I sent off the following telegrams:

MRS BROWN,

RUSTIC MANOR, BERKS.

Getting short leave, but want to go to London to see tailors. Hope you don't mind.

JOHN.

MISS CHARMING,

CHEER-'EM-UP REVUE,

TIDDLEWINKS THEATRE, LONDON.

Getting leave. See you Thursday. Will arrange joy-ride and supper at Ciro's. Wire if all right.

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JOHN.

MISS PLUNGER,

ROWDEENE, BRIGHTON.

Getting leave. What about a taxi-ride to Town and seeing the shows? Let me know.

JOHN.

MADAME PETITE,

BRIGHT VILLA, HAMPSTEAD.

Calling Saturday. Hope Jeanette is at home.

JOHN.

MISS SPRIGHTLY,

MANOR HOUSE, SLEEPVILLE.

Getting leave. Come up to Town on Sunday. Bring closed car. Cheero!

JOHN.

ADELA GORDON,

THE GRANGE, SWEETVILLE.

Getting leave, but want go home to see mater, also the tailor, on important business.

JOHN.

The Replies.

It's all right, dear boy. Love.—

MOTHER.

Sorry, old boy, can't be done. Am running a staff-captain just now.

CHARMING.

Have joined the W.A.A.C.'s. Must be in bed by nine. Almost engaged to flying-man. Sorry.

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PLUNGER.

Regret not at home Saturday. Jeanette now in a convent.

PETITE.

Quite impossible. Recently married an army chaplain.

NO LONGER SPRIGHTLY.

Terribly disappointed. Longing to see you. Never mind the tailor. Do try and come. Love.

ADELA.

These replies came in one by one, and each was like a BOMB. Truly, the war had upset things, and khaki provided a terrific opposition. I was mad, I may tell you. Like the others, I had invested in a first-class sleeping-berth on the London Express, and had arranged for a royal luncheon with the boys *en route*. Now the whole scheme had fizzled out. Of course, I could have gone to see the dear old mater; but as I had told her such a 'whopper,' this would have been rather embarrassing. Wasn't it rotten bad luck? Molly Charming running a staff-captain; Phyllis Plunger in the W.A.A.C.'s; Jeanette, of wonderful memory, in a convent; and Gladys Sprightly actually linked to an army chaplain! I *did* feel offended. Of course, there was Adela—steady old Adela. She was only five miles away, and she was dying to see me. But I didn't want to go, for the very plain reason that she wanted me to come. Whether you agree or not, that is the attitude of the average man. When the Blue Bird of Happiness is in his hand, he does not want it. His eyes look away and afar. Man always desires to chase the unknown, to court the uncertain, and fritter away his time and his manhood pursuing the bubbles and the maddening mirage.

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'You look glum, John,' remarked Beefy that night.

'Yes. My scheme has fizzled out.'

'You're a silly ass.'

'Why?'

'Hang it all! you wire women, asking to see them. That isn't the plan. You don't understand the dear girls.'

'Well, old Bluebeard, what would you do?'

'I simply wire: "Coming to see you. Meet me at So-and-so—certain." That's all! They turn up all right. *It's an order*. Women love to be ordered about. When you start to say "please," they think you're a bally old fool. I'm getting fed up trying to educate you,' concluded Beefy, going off.

On this subject Beefy *was* an authority.

However, I decided to go and see Adela. When all the boys had left I jumped on my bike, and in a short time was sitting in the lovely old garden. It was a charming day. High in the heavens the sun shone gloriously. The earth was a panorama of pastoral beauty, and above The Grange garden birds and bees went blithely on their way. Everything was restful. Everything seemed clean. And I thought it a much better atmosphere than the fug of a London lounge or the sooty surroundings of Oxford Street. And yet there was a longing for the lights that glitter, and the women who *understand*. I was only a boy, and just human. My virtues and vices were not entirely formed. One day I could with ease have become a parson; next, I wanted —'to risk it.' Heredity tells. I had the blood of parsons, soldiers, and dreamers in my veins. In my soul God and the Devil were always struggling for victory. I was the mere tool of moods and passions which had been handed on.

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We are all like that.

Then I looked at Adela. She was reclining in an Oriental hammock reading a book, and between-times picking up a chocolate. She looked calm and restful, without nerves, and with a suggestion of decision in her pose. Adela was not so fetching as a ballet-girl, or so charming as one of those creatures of Mayfair. London women are very hard to beat in the little things which captivate and enthrall. Their experience is gained in a cosmopolitan

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world. They talk with the intellectuals and dance with the fools. And they can charm both.

Adela was of the soil, the fresh, clean-smelling earth which breeds health and strength, and few illusions. She had no tricks, no little bag with a puff for her nose, or the dainty fads of millinery to enhance her complexion or form. Plain skirt, plain blouse, neat stockings, and well-cut shoes. And yet she was well dressed. The girl of taste is not a bag of glad rags. But the real charm of Adela lay in her magnificent physique, and in her personality.

Adela was different.

No man can define a woman's personality. It is as baffling as it is alluring. And what I wondered about was this: Adela knew me, yet I didn't know Adela. A man is an open book even to a schoolgirl. She can find him out in ten minutes, but you will never find a girl out in a thousand years. A man hates this. It is rather an insult to his intellect, but it is a woman's secret and her strength. She knows it, and she uses it, sometimes in a very cruel way, as history proves. Still, it is a gift of nature with which Providence has endowed the sex, which for centuries has been in chains.

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Adela was young. Yet she was 'old.'

'Johnnie,' she said, putting down her book and looking at me, 'why didn't you go to the tailor?'

I had been waiting for that question, so promptly pulled the telegrams out of my pocket, and said, 'That's why,' as I put them in her hand. It was a brutal thing to do, but it was a fair thing. The dons had always insisted on my speaking the truth. Not a bad rule, but quite a rotten scheme with the average girl.

Insincerity has always been popular.

Her brows contracted as she read each reply, and I noted her breast heaving with suspense. She read them over about a dozen times, then, folding them up, handed them back with the remark, 'I thought so!'

'Why did you?'

'You are all the same.'

'But aren't girls good at the game?'

'Yes—some are. Others are different; at least, a few are.'

'You are posing, Adela.'

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'No, Johnnie! I like you, but I can do without you. I haven't much admiration for that sort of thing.'

'If I hadn't shown them to you, you wouldn't have known.'

'Oh yes, I should. I know you. You are quite a nice boy, but, like all nice boys, you've been spoiled. Girls have thrown themselves at you, and you think you may go on like that to the end of the chapter. Nevertheless, I'm rather interested in you.'

'But, Adela, if, as you say, you expected this, why were you so pressing in your invitation? Why did you want to be "one of the crowd"?'

'The maternal instinct.'

'But you are competing with them.'

'Not at all, old boy; I'm doing salvage-work. I'm giving you a breath of fresh air in this beautiful garden; then afternoon tea; next a game of golf; in the evening a stroll over the Downs, with just a kiss or two, without messing you up with rouge or powder. If, after that, you feel that the dolls of Bond Street want you, you must go; for then I'll know you're a decadent, hopelessly neurotic, and bound to end up—a fool.'

'Where did you learn all this, Adela?' I said, getting interested.

'It's an instinct, and, of course, I use my eyes. We girls have been to school, you know.'

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'The war has made you think, I suppose?'

'The war, Johnnie, is messing things up. Women are making themselves cheap. They mean well. They want the boys to have a good time, but both are getting burnt in the process. You have learnt too much in France.'

'But we knew these things before the war, Adela.'

'The war, Johnnie, has made them fashionable—that's the difference. Shell-fire makes you boys neurotic. Your nerves want soothing. But you all go the wrong way about it. It's fresh air and porridge you need, not giggling Jennies, who degrade your manhood.'

'But, hang it all, Adela! if we're beating a brute like the Boche, we can't be hopelessly decadent. You read things in the papers. You've got too much time to think. If you saw the soul of the army, you'd know we are at least "not bad."'

'Perhaps. But why don't you all stick to your games?'

'We try, but you women upset the balance. All the trouble in this world is due either to wine or to women. You're sent to try us, and sometimes you smash us. Despite that, Adela, you are all very charming. And, to be short, if you hadn't been decent, I shouldn't have come to-day. Let's have tea.'

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'Right, you old darling!' she whispered into my ear as she tumbled out of the hammock. Then she set out a dainty table, the maid brought the tea, and, under the arms of some old, waving chestnut-trees, we munched a refreshing snack. We didn't talk much. I was enjoying the scenery, and the presence of Adela; while Her Royal Highness was no doubt wondering what extraordinary creatures we fellows are.

'Now, Johnnie, I think we'll cut the golf, and go over the Downs instead.'

'Any old thing for a quiet life,' I said, rising.

She got her stick, called her favourite dogs, and away we went across the sweet-smelling fields, where the bees hummed in the clover, and the larks sang high overhead. The air was stimulating, the surrounding country beautiful; while the presence of Adela added the final touch to a rustic dream. It was sporting. It was healthy. It was clean. The spirit of romance was there, and the poetic side of my nature was roused to its heights. I certainly did feel that the green vales of the Old Land, and the *real* girls of the Old Land, were indeed our best possessions. Somehow the whole thing appeared to me as a sort of moral lesson, as well as a silent sermon on patriotism.

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I became prouder of my country.

I felt *decent* with Adela.

And so we ambled along, drinking in the joys of nature, and chatting of many things. It wasn't the smart talk of Mayfair, in which I was an expert. It was just straight, frank, none-of-your-damn-nonsense kind, in which we looked at things with our eyes, and not through rose-coloured glasses. And you can talk about many things, once barred, without loss of modesty or self-respect. After all, education has spread. And if education can bring a man and a woman together on an equal plane, our country must benefit. A man wants a girl for a chum, a confidante, and a lifelong companion, and not as a serf, a housekeeper, and just—A COOK.

Yes, that was a memorable day in my life, and it was near the turning-point. The school, with all its deficiencies, was making its mark; while Adela was working hard, although I didn't notice it at the time. From the dear old commandant, too, I had gained the spirit of tolerance and the milk of human kindness. Captain Cheerall had also stirred me to probe and analyse the human soul; while my comrades had given me the joys of friendship and the value of understanding.

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John Brown was beginning to be—A MAN.

After the walk, we had dinner with the family. The mother was a delightful old lady, full of good-nature and shrewd common-sense. The father was equally pleasant; but Winnie, the sister, was down in the depths. She was thinking of Beefy—dear, kind-hearted, devil-may-care, old Beefy.

Women always love the daring Don Juans.

'Let me help you,' said Adela, as I took my coat from the stand about half-past ten.

'Thanks, old girl.'

She lifted it on, then took my arm down the drive. When we got to the gate, she remarked, 'Johnnie, I want you to do something.'

'What, Adela?'

'Give me those telegrams.'

'With pleasure,' I said, handing them over. 'But what are you going to do with them?'

'Burn them,' she answered, striking a match and lighting them there and then. As the last telegram flickered out she kissed me good-night, and said, 'Do try to be a sensible boy, John Brown.'

Next day I bought the engagement-ring.

CHAPTER XVIII.

GENERAL POM-POM.

I.

THE worst of being in a cadet school is the number of inspections you have. Inspectors for trench warfare, gas, bayonet-fighting, administration, general training, &c., &c., keep popping in. Each man believes that his branch is *It*, and should you fail to come up to his requirements, then there's a bad report, a thousand curses, and lots of trouble. All the same, this is absolutely necessary, and keeps specialists and instructors up to the scratch. The greatest defect is this: these people frequently ask for suggestions, but generally fail to back them up. This, I imagine, is due to the apathy of a higher authority, or the obtrusion of the inspector's own point of view. We often talked about this, and our view was that all cadet-school instructors ought to form a corporate body, and demand 'the goods.' By the way, it was whispered that one real good W.O. man was named Browne. He, it is said, invariably endeavoured to get the schools whatever they wanted.

Good old Browne!

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We always liked the visits from the younger men of the staff. They were so bright, so business-like, and they *did* take an interest in all we were doing. Many gave us valuable tips, which were much appreciated. Indeed, were it not for these smarter men, military training would be in a muddle. They are being allowed fair scope; but if the powers that be would only sack all the old fozzlers who are tottering round the various districts and home commands, life would indeed be brighter, and training would be pushed along by the younger men, who at present cannot get full play for all their splendid ideas. We of the New Army belong to the New School. We are willing to learn from a duke or a pauper, but the teacher must have BRAINS. We are not concerned about seniority or foolish traditions. We are out to win this war in the speediest manner possible.

I also think it is a great pity that we never saw *real* generals. We longed for a lecture from Robertson, French, Haig, Allenby, Birdwood, and all the other good fellows who have done so well. We never had one. Of course, such men are doing bigger things at the Front; but some are at home, and others frequently cross the Channel. We would have pawned our shirts to go and hear them, for we do admire them. Certainly we got their ideas in the form of pamphlets. But what's a pamphlet compared to the living man? A mere shadow, and not at all impressive. I am writing this, of course, for a definite purpose. The W.O. will see these lines long before John Brown's book is published, and something, I know, will be done. They always do things in the army when they see them in PRINT.

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After all, what is the use of sending old dug-out generals to talk to cadet schools? Some are nice old gentlemen who have done well in Ashanti or on the Frontier—*in the past*. Others, again, are petty-minded old fools, who simply upset the instructors and give the cadets a thin time. They may be jolly good disciplinarians, and all that sort of thing; but we got our discipline from the best source (a Guards sergeant-major); and when we saw a general, we did expect him to talk sensibly about the war, and not about clean buttons, pipeclay, hair-cuts, and the proper way to stand to attention.

Brass bands and pipeclay never win a war.

Still, some of these ancient mandarins gave us fun. For example, old General Pom-Pom, who was in a bath-chair in August 1914, suddenly found himself elevated to an active job. His great stunt was the carrying of a drill-book in his hand. This was his authority, and Heaven help the man who deviated from the official path! Unless an officer was prepared to slay the Boche according to the text-book, he declared we should lose the ruddy war. He was kept on. Not that the Higher Command had any great belief in him, but no doubt because they imagined he would frighten the life out of the 'undisciplined' stuff who were carrying swords and sporting pips, especially one pip; for one pip was the sign of all that is reckless, careless, inefficient, &c., according to General Pom-Pom.

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II.

But we got to know him. Every unit had a secret-service agent in his office, and when he decided to make a raid on some poor, 'unsuspecting' C.O., a little bird whispered that General Pom-Pom was *en route*.

Out came the whitewash, pipeclay, blanco, brasso, greasy paste, and 'soldier's friend.' Pioneers whitewashed every post—not forgetting the Last Post—and slapped the stuff all round the walls and the doors of the billets.

Pom-Pom was a devil for whitewash.

The band was hauled out by the hair of the head to practise the general salute, while all the men were hustled to get everything shining and—in line. Even the dixies in the cook-houses had to be drawn up according to the style laid down by army architects. Before General Pom-Pom was half-way to the unit, the men were being moved about the square like perfect machines (he loved that), the band was playing 'The British Grenadiers,' and every officer, including the C.O. and the adjutant, were tropically busy on the square.

Pom-Pom galloped on parade. 'Morning, colonel; morning. What's the scheme to-day?'

'Ceremonial drill, sir. The companies are just being exercised; then I'm going to work the battalion.'

'Excellent! Excellent! Nothing like ceremonial stuff for these fellows. Makes 'em smart! Makes 'em smart! By Jove! your band plays well. Reminds me of old days. Good to hear 'em! Good to hear 'em! Let's see your battalion show now, colonel.'

'Very good, sir.'

The battalion was mustered, during which the C.O. would tactfully ask old General Pom-Pom if he would kindly take post at the saluting base.

'Certainly! Certainly!' and off he would trot to the flag-pole. There he sat on his old bus-horse, pouting like a pigeon, and studying his wonderful shadow on the ground. The men, of course, were quite interested. Pom-Pom was, on the whole, very popular with the troops, and they *did* love to swank to the tune of 'The British Grenadiers.'

The band played.

Down came the battalion like a perfect machine. The general straightened himself again.

'Battalion—eyes right!' roared the colonel. The heads came round with a click, and the general saw one thousand cheery, sun-tanned faces.

'Splendid, men! Splendid! You can beat the Guards any day.'

They stalked past as proud as dukes.

Next the C.O. formed them into line; and one thousand well-scrubbed Tommies, with buttons and bayonets glistening, advanced in review order.

'Battalion—halt! General salute—present arms!'

'*Ta—tum—tum—talee, Tiddle—um—tum—talee,*' went the bugles.

'Battalion—slope arms! Order—arms!'

'MAGNIFICENT!' roared Pom-Pom. This shout of praise could be heard miles away. Then he toddled round the billets. His eye caught the whitewash, saw the neat kits, and the cooks' dixies—*all in line*.

'That's all! That's all, colonel! I'm very pleased! I congratulate you on your excellent unit. Morning! Morning!' And off he galloped on his bus-horse.

The colonel smiled and faded away.

III.

General Pom-Pom came to our school one day. He went through the same performance. Even Ginger borrowed my Vinolia to have a wash. Pom-Pom stumped on to the parade in a way that shook the earth, looked at us very keenly, and muttered, 'Good stuff! Good stuff!'

One of his ideas was that a company officer must know the name of every man in his company. While he was inspecting our company he arrived at me.

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'What's this man's name?' he asked Captain Bloggs.

'Eh? Smith, sir.'

'Is that right?' he inquired of me.

'Yes, sir,' I replied with emphasis. I wouldn't have let our company officer down for worlds. After all, it is a good deed to keep an old general happy.

'Where's your pull-through?' he asked Tosher.

'I guess it's broken, general.'

'No d— guessing for me, my lad. Get it mended and shove it in your butt-trap.'

We enjoyed this immensely, and felt that General Pom-Pom could beat Tosher any day.

'Are you married?' he asked Billy Greens, who was always rather pale and carried a worried look.

'No, sir.'

'What are you in civil life?'

'A curate, sir.'

'Thought so! Thought so!' he said, passing on.

We all grinned.

'Ah! You're a musician, aren't you?' he inquired of a youth with lustrous locks.

'No, sir—a Socialist!'

'And you're fighting?'

'Yes, sir.'

'What for?'

'To destroy militarism.'

'Oh!' ... The general hurried away.

After the inspection he gave us a few words. Not much intellectual food, but a lot about the bayonet.

'At 'em when you see 'em come. Give it 'em hot. The short jab in the chin, or the smart thrust in the paunch. They loathe it! They're afraid of it! The bayonet will win the war,' he concluded.

On the whole we enjoyed his visit, and agreed that General Pom-Pom was good fun, kind-hearted, loyal, intensely patriotic—but not the man to win the war.

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CHAPTER XIX.

'THE BOYS.'

ONE thing the school, the war, and my regiment developed; that was a love of my comrades—'The Boys.' What a delightful term! So human! So reminiscent of youth and fun and joy! Each day strengthened this love, till it became almost a passion. This was the true Democracy, for 'The Boys' have no social measures, only the simple standards of Faith, Hope, and Charity. When such comradeship is allied to regimental *esprit de corps*, there is created a *moral* which is invincible. Whatever pain and sorrow the war has brought me, I always gloried in this meeting of the waters. Stripped of the masks created by politicians and Who's-Who snobs, we discovered common aims, common interests, and common ties of affection. Ginger Thomson, the hide-bound prophet of Imperialism, was the sworn comrade of Nobby Clarke, the ramping, raging lion of the Free Trade school; Tosher, the wild Canadian, walked arm-in-arm with Billy, the sweet and refined; and I, the dreamer, plugged along with Beefy, the full-chested Balzac of the camp. In our little hut we ragged with good feeling, and all seemed to look for an opportunity to do a good turn, like the proverbial Boy Scout. It was a manly, a noble, phase of life. Selfishness was absent. Love was triumphant.

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But, oh, the sadness and the madness of the scheme! While our love was being developed, we were training to die. Now, death is nothing. But to one who loves mankind it seemed a scheme of the very devil to breed such god-like men for the shambles. Here were the cream of the race, the flower of strength, the pick of intellect, supermen—with the hand of Death upon them. But that is war as the Kaiser willed it. By a stroke of his pen this proud, inhuman monarch has caused the death and the madness of millions. Oh, cruel monster! If there be a God, then his punishment is assured.

Often I thought of this aspect of war. At night there passed before me the ghosts of my dead comrades—line after line of clean-limbed, open-eyed, fresh-faced heroes of battle. I had marched with them, supped with them, danced with them. Their lives were an open book. No deceit. No camouflage of the roué or the sneak. Their dreams, their loves, their passions, good and bad, I had known. While few were saints in any sense of the term, none were hardened sinners. Their patriotism and self-sacrifice had ennobled them. And they had gone—gone, I believe, to higher and better realms. But what a passage! Crucified on the altar of *Kultur*—gassed, bludgeoned, mangled, tortured, and maddened by the German rules of war. I had seen them go; seen them fall in the trench, with that groan which tears the heart; seen them stagger back while attempting to go over the top. And in that awful No Man's Land, where bullets hum like dragon-flies, and shells scream like drunken sirens, I had seen them stagger, clutch, and writhe in the agony of death.

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How true they were! How brave! And of every class and calling. Duke's son and cook's son, charging, cheering, fighting, and dying in the breach. Ah, how glad I was to have met them, but how sad to part! True, they have not died in vain, but they have left on me, a youth, marks akin to those of sorrowful old age. I was haunted by their eyes, sometimes unnerved when I thought of their screams. And yet I was proud. They had played the game; played it as no troops of Clive or Wellington were ever asked to play it; played it against the most brutal foe this world has ever seen. Your Trojans and your Spartans are mere tyros compared with our men to-day. Far better to be clubbed and speared than suffer the horrors and the madness of modern war.

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When I thought of this murdered manhood, the slaughtered genius, and the wiping out of such noble sires, I felt afraid—afraid for the Old Land, the Old Flag, the Old Home by the hillside. Would all these things remain? Could we still carry on? Would the hog-like Huns, who breed as the vulgar always breed, be able to win 'the war after the war'? Beaten in the field, robbed of victory, would this coarse-grained tribe cunningly exploit the survivors of a finer race? I wondered. For this is a serious aspect of the war. There was no conclusion to my musings, but somehow I did believe that Providence protects the clean. The empires of Hannibal, Nero,

Napoleon, and the Romanoffs are no more. They outraged the laws of peace and goodwill. So I believe that this unfailing law will cripple and dissolve the Empire of Wilhelm. Right is might. That has been our slogan in this great crusade.

Yet we are not a perfect people. The war has judged us and found us wanting. But the war can save us—if *we are wise*. We must search our hearts. The dear boys have died that we might live. How shall we live? Must we go back to the parish pump? Is there no avenue of escape from class war and the devilish tricks of the political machine? Shall the remnants of our army return to be tools of the men who never fought; tools of those who quarrelled for place instead of nobility; mere puppets, hounded to the polling-booth to vote for sneaks and rogues? God forbid! Our slaughtered boys must form the rampart wall against the selfishness and the pettiness which mar our otherwise beautiful country. The old order will *not* do. The eyes of 'The Boys' have been opened. They are thinking; and sometimes their thoughts are bitter. If these thoughts were printed in full our proconsuls would be staggered. There is no hope for Britain if soft-handed, soft-job mandarins retain the reins. Yet 'The Boys' are mute, for they have no Press. They require none. When they return they will sweep away the fools and build a happy land. They are not Bolsheviks, not 'Tories' or 'Radicals.' They are patriots. The patriotism born in suffering is a product of God. You cannot define it, and you can never master it. Do not attempt it. Should you warp, twist, or bend it for mere material ends, you will rouse a bitterness and a madness which may destroy you, as Trotsky has destroyed the real soul of a noble nation. Only honest men can deal with 'The Boys.' Brave men can lead them. Clean men can inspire them. But these leaders will not be found in great numbers amongst the old mandarins—the men who stayed at home. Ah, no! 'The Boys'' standard is bravery. 'White men' they know and understand. The puppets of the party whips they will blow away like chaff whirled before a storm. And out of their suffering will come sanity, peace, goodwill to men and nations.

This is no dream. Those who scoff misunderstand the mentality of our men. The men of Grade I. can dominate Grade II. and Grade III. The five million fighters are men of will. A will steeled in the furnace of 'Hell' can pierce and master the will created in the soft lounges of Mayfair or the I.L.P. halls of Clapham. The veterans of the American Civil War united, rejuvenated, created the wonderful America of today. Our veterans can also rebuild the suffering British Empire. Open out your arms when they come home. Do not disguise your aims. Speak like Lincoln or Emerson. Ask for the truth, and they will deliver it. Kill the fatted calf, and when the feast is done, place the laurels of power upon their brows. They will never deceive you. While they may smash old and useless traditions, they will guard the Flag, respect the Monarchy, and develop the finest, fairest Democracy this world has ever seen. Far better to have the Democracy of the trenches than the Anarchy of Trotsky. *For Heaven's sake, be wise!*

Such is the mentality of our brave boys. Fools will fear it, but straight men will rejoice. The Church can take heart, for the university of war has quickened spiritual thought. Blind as many of these men are, they are seeking, groping for light. Their eyes are scanning the horizon for the idealism which can heal their sorrows and lighten the daily load. The madness of war is causing them to search for gladness. Old theological tricks will not suffice. A broad-based creed, aided by the finest music and social joys, may capture their souls. Women, too, must figure in the scheme. These men, many of them broken, desire to slip into an ivy-clad cottage where sweet Love shall reign, and the prattle of the child drown the memories of the shambles. From their windows they shall gaze in search of the beauties of the valley, the strength of the hill, and the soothing ripples of the ever-rumbling brook. This is the only cure for the horrors of war. Should you give them the pub. and the music-hall, you will perpetuate the follies of Bacchus and the creed of the courtesan.

All this I have learned in billets, camps, and the stricken field. From the stench of the trenches, the oozing blood of the shambles, and the agonised features of the dead I have plucked a moral and a great philosophy. The vanities have departed. Deceits are unfolded; Mammon is exposed. While horrors have unnerved, even unmanned, me, I have found a new Love—Love of 'The Boys.' It is a wonderful Love. It thrills and holds. It rouses and cheers. The soul is filled with

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better things. Great visions pass and repass before my eyes. One feels determined to leave the world a little better than one found it. Yea, one becomes resolved to fight, to suffer, be a martyr, if need be, for the men who have fought and won. Great is our opportunity, great our responsibility. We stand at the cross-roads of morality and materialism. Let us consecrate our lives for these brave men.

My heart swells with a bursting affection. My eyes are dimmed as I think of the dead. I am young, yet I feel old. But my soul is cleaner, stronger, greater through contact with—"The Boys."

The Brave, Dear Boys.

CHAPTER XX.

A JOLLY RAG.

I.

WHEN all had returned from leave, Dame Rumour got busy. Some of the lads had been going it, and their exploits had got abroad. Even Billy, the padre, was in the gossip-market, and Ginger was alleged to have been seen in a two-seater with the famous beauty from the hotel. As for Tosher, it was said he had been doing the heavy with the ladies of Glasgow.

To amuse ourselves, we called a secret meeting and decided to hold a court-martial, Nobby being elected president. The following notice was posted up in the hut:

COURT-MARTIAL.

A Court-Martial will assemble in the Hut
on Friday Evening for the Trial of

BILLY GREENS,
GINGER THOMSON,
and

TOSHER JOHNSON.

All witnesses are warned to attend.

JOHN BROWN, Adjutant.

There was a great rush on the 'early doors.' At 7 P.M. Nobby appeared, dressed up as a stout colonel, with a moustache like Ole Bill. He looked most impressive, and roused a cheer. The members of the court followed. All took their seats, and Billy Greens was ushered in by the court-martial orderly.

'Before proceeding,' said Nobby, 'I should like to know if the accused has any objection, either to me, as president, or to any member of the court.'

'Yes, sir, I object to you,' answered Billy.

'Why?'

'You're a rotten old Radical and—a lawyer.'

'Your objection is out of order. This is a military court, and politics do not enter into the matter. If I am a lawyer, I can assure you there will be no charges—I mean, no six-and-eight.'

'Question!' shouted Ginger.

'Please bludgeon that Imperialist,' commanded the president.

Ginger was gagged. The case was proceeded with.

'Corporal Billy Greens, No. 1 Company of the—th Cadet Battalion, you are charged with (1) Giddiness on leave; (2) Appearing in public with a formidable female; (3) Holding her hand in a tram-car; (4) Acting the goat in a taxi-cab.'

'Do you plead guilty or not guilty?'

'Not guilty.'

'Evidence, please,' ordered the president.

Beefy stepped forward with a ponderous-looking document like the Magna Carta. It was really one of Harrods' voluminous catalogues. Opening it up, he commenced: 'Sir, the accused, who is a gentleman in holy orders, but meantime a soldier, has hitherto borne an excellent character. But we have received reports from the Platoon Secret Service men stating that on his last leave he has been "going it." Apparently he went to a small town near London, and commenced to pay attention to a lady of blameless character, but of formidable appearance, and inclined to be frisky and sentimental when receiving the attention of man.'

'Keep to the point, Mr Jones. Please deal with the first charge,' remarked the president.

'I'm just coming to that, sir,' replied Beefy, turning over Harrods' catalogue. 'The first charge is "Giddiness." Our agents state the accused was wearing a field-marshal's trousers—an offence punishable by death, according to the Manual of Military Law. He also wore bright-yellow shoes and white socks, ornamented with yellow flowers, which I contend betrays a somewhat frivolous mind. Above the neck of his tunic appeared a white india-rubber collar, and sticking out from under his tunic-sleeves were white cuffs,

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ornamented with a balance-sheet of his holiday expenses. He also carried an enormous Malacca cane studded with brass knobs, of the type used by lion-tamers and wealthy Jews. In fact, his whole appearance was that of the Bank 'Oliday kind. Instead of looking like a harmless and shuffling cadet, he really resembled Ole Bill on the burst. So startling was his appearance that a terrier-dog fell off a tram-car, and an ancient cab-horse jumped into an egg-merchant's window. To save further calamity, the local police had to hide him in a furniture-van and remove him to his lodgings.

'The second charge is, "Appearing in public with a formidable female." The lady in question is of uncertain age, but of great stature—six feet high, three feet broad, and built in proportion.'

'Weight and style, I presume,' said the president.

'Yes, sir. I also understand she is the commandant of a V.A.D. Hospital. Prior to the war she was a suffragette who achieved fame by burning down the local bishop's bathroom.'

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'Has the bishop used Pears' since that event?' inquired a member.

'No, sir. I understand he uses the wash-house.—But to resume. When she appeared in public with the accused (she being of massive mould, and he being of bantam measurements), the contrast was striking. In fact, the difference in height was so great that it is stated she carried a small portable telephone to carry on the conversation. He called her "Gertie," and she called him "Pickles." While attempting to enter a very narrow gate in the public park, the lady got wedged, and it is alleged she shouted, "Push me—push me, Pickles." The accused nobly responded, and relieved the lady from an embarrassing position.'

'Was the gate damaged?' asked the president.

'Slightly bent, sir.—Now for the third charge. The lady, who has been trying to "get off" for quite a number of years, was apparently so bucked with her capture that she aired him on every public occasion. They were always riding in tram-cars. On one occasion a local alderman, who has a reputation for "picking up" unattached females, entered the car they were travelling in. The lady, apparently nervous about getting the glad eye from this civic Lothario, muttered, "Hold my hand, Pickles—hold my hand." Like a brave man, he did so. In this simple and trusting manner they completed their journey, to the amusement of all.

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'The final charge is, "Acting the goat in a taxi-cab." Apparently the dear old girl had been overhearing some of the younger V.A.D.'s, her colleagues, relating thrilling experiences of taxi-cabs. She decided to try the experiment, and Pickles drew a pound note from the Penny Savings Bank for that purpose. To avoid observation, they ordered the taxi to meet them in a quiet thoroughfare. But a local press photographer witnessed the amusing struggle of the lady to get inside.

"Pickles!" she shouted.

"Yes, dear," he replied.

"The door is too small. Push me."

'Pickles pushed again, and the lady fell inside. At that moment the camera clicked. Here is the photo, sir;' and Beefy handed over a charcoal drawing of Billy heaving an enormous lady into a vehicle.

Loud laughter in court.

'The taxi-man then received secret instructions from the accused to drive ten times round the park—DEAD SLOW. During this performance several of the local special constables saw the lady with the accused in her arms. At intervals they kissed each other. When they alighted from the cab, our Secret Service men discovered a hair-switch and an upper set of false teeth among the cushions. This, sir, is, I think, complete evidence of frivolous conduct.'

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'I see! I see!' muttered the president, tugging his false moustache. 'Now, Mr Jones, have you any evidence as to how the accused met this lady? Was he introduced, or was it what we in the army term a "pick-up"?''

'So far as I know, they were properly introduced. Some years ago, when the accused was a student, he saw the lady bathing in a crimson dress with lace-curtain frillings. He secured an intro. by the aid of a member of a local Dorcas Society.'

'What about his character?'

'Hitherto most respectable; but I imagine his association with my

friends Messrs. Ginger Thomson and John Brown has, unfortunately, caused him to fall from grace. That's all, sir,' concluded Beefy.

'What have you got to say, my man?' said Nobby, with the air of a Lord Chief-Justice.

'Nothing, sir.'

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'Nothing! My dear old Pieface, this is a serious business. You go on leave; you wear a field-marshal's trousers, a padre's white shirt, shop-assistant's yellow shoes, and you carry a ship-pole for a walking-stick. You cause an innocent dog to fall off a tram-car, and a hitherto respectable horse to jump into an egg-merchant's window, and yet you say, "Nothing." Worse; you try to outdo Charlie Chaplin in a tram-car, and Ole Bill in a taxi. This from a future officer, an ordained padre, and a Tory gentleman will *not* do. It is preposterous! You *must* be shot! *Must* be shot!' roared Nobby with dramatic fervour, which reminded us of the old com. on the bench.

'You're a silly old ass, Nobby!' said Billy.

'That's contempt of court.'

'You're a rotten old Radical!'

'That means execution.'

'And here goes your bench,' shouted Billy, making a running jump at Nobby's table, and kicking it up in the air, sending ink, pens, paper, books, &c. flying right and left.

'Remanded! Remanded!' shouted Nobby, brandishing a poker.

The prisoner was seized and put in 'quod,' or, in other words, let go. His ragging was over.

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'The next prisoner,' demanded the president when the table had been restored to its feet and the papers had been tidied up.

Ginger Thomson was marched in, guarded by an escort, who were armed with wet mops. We knew Ginger!

'Sergeant Ginger Thomson, No. 1 Company, —th Cadet Battalion, you are charged with (1) Posing as a woman-hater; (2) Declining to wash; (3) Joy-riding in a Ford car.'

'Evidence, please, Mr Brown,' ordered the president.

'Sir, this youth, for the past two months, has been posing to all as an enemy of the opposite sex. In a recent discussion he declared that women were soulless, inconstant, mercenary, and loved us only when we had chocolate or plenty of the golden goblins. We believed him to be sincere, and he received homage as the great monk of our platoon. Other remarkable attitudes in controversy convinced many of us that this brilliant but erratic gentleman was simply pulling our legs. By accident we discovered that he is an ardent admirer of the beautiful lady who dispenses ale and bitters at the local hotel. In fact, our agents have procured a grammophone record of a conversation with this fair lady. This is the record,' I added, turning on the gramophone, the record of which had been faked for the occasion.

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'Edison Bell Record.'

Gur-r-r-gurr-r-r-r.

'Hello, old girl; how are you?'

'What cheer, Ginger?'

'Gin and ginger, quick—awful thirst, old girl! Bring it up to the private room.'

'Right-o, dearie!'

Gurr-r-gurr-r-r-gurr.

'There you are, Ginger—don't! The master'll hear us. Oh, my hair!... You've broken my comb. You mustn't kiss me. Oh, Mr Thomson!... 'Oo'd a' thought it?'

Gurr-r-gurr-r-r-gurr.

'You're a dear old thing!'

'And you're a giddy boy.... You mustn't.... If the master sees me sittin' on your knee, there'll be trouble.... Ah, don't!'

Gurr-r-gurr-r-r.

And the record ended, just in time, for Ginger let fly and kicked it to the other end of the room.

'Tie him up! Tie him up!' ordered the president.

It was a tough job, but we managed to get his feet tied, then stood him up before the 'beak.'

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'Carry on, Mr Brown,' commanded Nobby.

'That record, sir, absolutely proves that this man deals in terminological inexactitudes.'

'You mean he is a common or garden chancer?'

'Yes, sir. The second charge is equally serious. He has an objection to soap, and loathes water like a Bolshevik.'

'Has he no soap in his possession?' asked a member.

'Oh yes, sir, a small piece, which he received three years ago on enlistment. This is it:

GINGER'S SOAP. 1915-1918.

'Note the size. He keeps this for kit inspections, and I understand he is to make it a family heirloom after the war.'

'Now for the third charge—"Joy-riding in a Ford." During his leave he was seen several times in a palatial petrol tin-can, accompanied by a fair lady. The lady was holding his hand, and the car was doing a cake-walk down the road. Several roosters and pet-poodles are at present in the mortuary. Two maiden ladies demand his life, and the town council have sent in a bill for two policemen and three lamp-posts. That's all, sir.'

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'Very serious! Very serious!' muttered Nobby, chewing his Ole Bill moustache. 'What about his character?'

'He lost it at St Omer.'

'Oh!'

'Found by the A.P.M. (Assistant Provost-Marshal) singing "Home, Sweet Home," on the top of a lamp-post.'

'Then he is hopeless?'

'Absolutely, sir.'

'Ginger, you are a bad lad,' commented the president. 'Have you anything to say?'

'Yes, sir,' shouted Ginger, seizing a mop out of the escort's hand and charging full tilt at the president. He caught Nobby in the chest and heaved him over in excellent style. But the valiant president arose and shouted, 'Duck him! Duck him!'

Ginger was seized and promptly heaved into the company bathroom. 'You are a lot of blighters,' said he on emerging. However, Ginger was a sport, and took it merrily. When he returned to the courtroom he promptly changed the rôle of prisoner for that of prosecutor.

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III.

'Next prisoner,' ordered the president, after shaking himself and wiping the traces of the mop off his face.

Tosher Johnson was marched in, guarded by two hefty lads. We were taking no risks with the wild Canadian.

'Corporal Tosher Johnson, No. 1 Company, —th Cadet Battalion, you are charged with (1) Worshipping the almighty dollar; (2) Always muttering "gaw-damn;" (3) Pulling a railway alarm-cord; (4) "Swanking it" in Glasgow.'

'Evidence,' commanded the president.

'Sir,' said Ginger, 'the accused is a Canadian, and therefore a mystery. He blew in about 1915 from out West, and reckoned he was *the* man to win the war. His career is like that of all backblockers—most varied and adventurous. He commenced life eating pork-pies in Nova Scotia. At the age of twelve he was assistant to a negro medicine-man, who sold corn-cure at a penny a time. The corn-cure, I may say, was made out of wagon-grease stolen from the C.P.R. Having done in the son of Ham for about a hundred dollars, he went West, where he started a shoe-shining parlour and a horse-betting booth. Next he was seen in a fat-reducing advertisement; after which, he floated a company to supply the ladies of Winnipeg with imitation busts.'

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'In these ventures he was, like all Canucks, highly successful, and therefore plunged into real estate. This is a get-rich-quick scheme. Tosher was a star turn. He took double-page advertisements in the home papers, and sold corner lots to dukes, commoners, and simpletons. When these "duds" went out to stake their plots in Paradise Alley, they discovered their land was in the Arctic regions,

and tenanted only by Eskimos. What did Tosher do? Why, he simply apologised, and said his clerk had made a mistake by *turning the map upside-down!*

'Since then he has had a dollar for his crest, a dollar for his god. He has got money in everything from corn-plaster to chewing-gum, and he reckons to fizzle off this 'ere planet (as he calls it) with about a hundred thousand dollars, earned while chewing cigars and drinking cocktails in Montreal, Toronto, and the mixed-bathing cave up in Banff, Alberta. The fellow's a marvel!'

'Look here, Mr Thomson; this is a court-martial. Evidence! Evidence! We're not here to get the story of how we all lost our money before the war.'

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'Very good, sir! The second charge is, "Always muttering 'gaw-damn.'" That is the motto on his shirts and socks. When he spits it out with a Chicago tang, he means you to know he's no soft-headed fellow from Balliol, but a real son of a gun from Chewing-Gum Land. This historic adjective is joined to "guessing" and "calculating." And he reckons he's real prime, six-shooting, hot stuff in this gaw-damn land of weasels and crows. And he isn't slow! He can talk the head off a Dutchman, pulverise a cockatoo, give you a one-pound note for a tenner, and send you away with a feeling that he's *real good*, and the best kid that ever dropped out of "Taurauntoe."

'The third charge, sir, is, "Pulling a railway alarm-cord" while on leave. Apparently he got into the company of a simple old Scottish gentleman, who was accompanied by his wife and rather charming daughter. Tosher took the corner seat like a conqueror, and muttered, "It was real fine to get away from the gaw-damn Boche."

"Are you just from the Front?" the old gent inquired.

"Yip!" he said, lighting a twopenny havana.

"You're a Canadian, aren't you?"

"Sure!"

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"You fellows are winning the war."

"I guess so."

'And in this vein he went on. He spun them yarns as tall as a wireless mast, relating how he had missed the V.C. by going round the wrong corner, lost the D.S.O. because the gaw-damn officer wasn't there, and was recommended by Joffre for the Legion of Honour for holding up a German army corps with a Woodbine and a six-shooter. These poor, innocent mortals were bewildered. The accused is greater than Louis de Rougemont. He then showed them nicotine-stained fingers, and said it was blood; his vaccination-mark was a cut by a shell; and a birth-mark on his chin was a bit sliced off by a Prussian prince of the gaw-damn Prussian Guard.

'The old gent and his party were thrilled.

"But, say, old friend, have a cigar to chew," remarked Tosher.

"Thanks, I will."

Tosher opened his case, but found it was empty.

"Sorry. I guess I'm run out. Where can I get some?"

"Not till Carlisle. We have two hours to go yet."

"I reckon we pass other bum towns *en route*."

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"Oh yes."

"Well, I guess I'll call the guard," said Tosher, jumping up to the alarm-cord.

"You can't pull that—you'll be fined."

"What? *I'm a Canadian!*" And he pulled the cord. The brakes went on with a bang, and the old guard hurried up along the line.

"Say, old Father Time," shouted Tosher.

"What's up?"

"Stop yer old bus at the next bum town. I want some cigars to chew."

"I'll shove ye in jail!" roared the guard.

"Easy, old child."

"What's your name?"

"My mother christened me Johnson."

"You're a Canadian, I suppose?"

"Yip!"

"All right. I'll show you I'm a Scotsman."

Tosher didn't get the cigars. He got "Five quid, or twenty-one days," at the Police Court.'

'What did he say to that?' inquired the president.

'Oh, he reckoned it was gaw-damn stiff that a bloke who was winnin' the war couldn't get out of an express for cigars.'

'I see! I see!'

'The final charge, sir, is, "'Swanking it' in Glasgow.'" He had a maple-leaf in his cap about the size of a young fir-tree, smoked evil-smelling cheroots the size of a submarine, stopped the traffic when he wanted to cross the road, and tried to elope with all the best-looking women in the town.

"Who are you?" asked an interested lady.

"Tosher Johnson, real prime, and the best kid out of Taurauntoe."

"All right! There's my card. Call and see me to-morrow."

'When Tosher got there her father was waiting for him. *The old man was a brain specialist.* That's all the evidence, sir,' concluded Ginger.

'Johnson,' said the president, 'your career and exploits resemble those of the Arabian Knights and the adventures of Louis de Rougemont. What have you got to say?'

'Well, boss, I guess Ginger is the brother of Ananias, and the uncle of the Kaiser. He's just real good at the story-faking business, and after the war we'll get him to run the *Real Estate News*, and the selling of corner lots in Greenland and Hudson Bay. As for the "Canuck" being top-dog in the lead-swinging business, I reckon that's fizzled out. If Oxford can pan out liars like this 'ere child in the future, we from out West will have to take a back-seat in the boosting business. Why, the fellow 'u'd make his pile hanging around a Calgary beer-bar, telling them how to make a nigger into a white man, and how to turn a thousand dollar notes into ten million of the hard stuff.

'As for "gaw-damn," "guessing," and "calculating," seems to me you need some new language to tickle this old country up. You are a long-faced lot o' wowsers, tied up by regulations and B.C. institooshuns. When you want to meet a prime girl, you need an intro.; and if you're keen on eating with a duke, you've got to show your birth-certificate, and prove your father didn't bring you into this world o' woe without a nine-carat wedding-ring. It makes me real tired to walk around and see your orders: "Keep off the Grass;" "Keep to the Right;" "No Smoking Allowed;" "Private—Trespassers will be Prosecuted."

'That's your whole gaw-damn system. You ain't a free-thinking crowd; you're a bunch of kids kept in order by bamboo canes and laws made by Moses. Even your little rabbits, that we gives to our dawgs, are protected by ancient statoots with about a ton of sealing-wax hanging on the tail.

'As for your women, you don't know how to make them smile. They're the best-lookin' kids on the planet, and they're just real glad that we wild men are over to tickle them up and make them dance. Say, boys, but you are just dead-slow. Why, I can get anything in petticoats, from an heiress to a barmaid, by giving them a Taurauntoe glad eye, and saying, "Come on." You fellows are the fag-end of an old system, and if it weren't for us prime hustlers from out West, you'd be losing this fightin' business.'

'Look here, old cow-punching Bill, this isn't a bally entertainment. It's a court-martial. You're on your trial for your life. What have you got to say?'

'We never says anything out West.'

'What do you do?'

'Shoots!' And Tosher banged three rounds of blank ammunition in the air.

'Seize him! Seize him! He's an outlaw and a desperado!' roared Nobby.

We rushed Tosher, but he let fly at his escort, and seized Nobby in his powerful arms and dumped him out of the window.

Ginger then caught the Canadian's legs and threw him.

'Kamerad! Kamerad!' shouted Tosher.

'All right, we'll let you off, if you stand a drink.'

'Sure! Come on, boys;' and off we went to have another jolly hour at the canteen.

Tosher was a sport, and he kept us laughing all the night.

There's nothing like the army—for jolly good fun!

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CHAPTER XXI.

HISTORY AND ESPRIT DE CORPS.

‘IT is a good thing, gentlemen, to cull the best from the past, and never to ignore it,’ said Captain Cheerall at another lecture. ‘If our fathers frequently blundered through, they did so heroically. No army is blessed with such high traditions, such records of chivalry and glory, as ours; yet, like all other armies, it has frequently failed. We do not claim to have been invincible. We have no desire to get out on the house-tops to boost our army. But we have a right to know and be proud of the battle honours on our flags.’

‘This, you may think, is a new line of thought for me, the arch-priest of the present and the future. Well, my reason for reminding you is this: You are of the new faith, the new school, the New Army. Your success has been wonderful, and in another lecture I have paid tribute to your genius, courage, and patriotism. Now I want to remind you, not of past follies, but of past glories. Military history glows with our splendour. The small-minded person is very apt to remind us of our failures in America during the American War of Independence, our awful blunders in the Crimea, our shameful disorganisation in the early part of the South African War. Such accusations are true. But if you study these failures, get to know *why* we failed and *where* we might have scored, and thus increase your professional knowledge. Never be afraid to admit our errors, but take good care *never* to repeat them. This is a maxim you must ever bear in mind. Even in this war—at Loos, Neuve Chapelle, Cambrai, and Gaza—there are instances where the human machine went wrong, instances which afford you food for serious thought and reflection.

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‘But what I really want to concentrate on to-day is the spirit of the British Army—that unconquerable soul which lightens a disaster, sustains us in reverse, and proclaims to all the world that we Britishers never know when we are beaten. That, gentlemen, is the most priceless asset of our army. To understand this spirit you must look at our history. You must dip into the annals of India, Egypt, Africa, the story of the Peninsular War, or of Waterloo. In these tomes are the deeds of your fathers. Our army never fights better than when it struggles for a moral cause. We conquered Napoleon in the flower of his strength, and in our hour of national weakness, because truth, honour, and decency were on our side.’

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‘I do not say we have always been crusaders. There are wars in which we have played an Imperial game. Yet, after deep reflection, I am convinced some Power or Powers must be predominant in this world, and this leads me to believe that a Power which is based on liberty, equality, and fraternity is the Power entitled to impress its own culture on the world. And we have always been civilising, always pioneering, always trying to leave the world a little cleaner, a little better, than we found it. This work has been supported and made possible by the splendour of British arms.’

‘What you must take from the past is the spirit of your fathers—the simple faith, the sense of duty, the code of honour, and the love of country which have been shown by the best of our men in all our wars. And I do believe no man is cultured or efficient unless he has a knowledge of history. This gives you the reason why. It prevents a gross materialism from entering your soul. It takes self above the battle, and enables you to realise that beyond the trials, the sorrows, and the horrors of war there is a god-like spirit which is clean, noble, and must, therefore, be triumphant. I am not sanctifying war, for I loathe it; but I am deifying the moral force which is behind us, for example, in this war. There never was a cleaner crusade.’

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‘Self-depreciation is characteristic of our race. We laugh at ourselves, we call our brothers fools, and pillory our statesmen and our thinkers. We are so tolerant, and possess such a sense of humour, that no one gets much annoyed. This really is evidence of a certain greatness. It means we are not sensitive, are without nerves, and are always willing to hear the latest buffoon. Now, gentlemen, these are not bad qualities. But unfortunately they are qualities which the German exploits, with the result that he has made our name stink in the nostrils of neutrals. We have been so indifferent,

so careless, that Hun libels have taken root, and now a Britisher is regarded by many neutrals as the swashbuckler of the world. And this vile creed has been imported even into our own country, perhaps into our army, especially among later elements who do not understand why they were conscripted. It is a dangerous growth, and must eventually become a poisonous weed. You must root it out. Regimental history will help you to do so.

‘Whatever regiment you go to, you must first read its records, learn its battle honours, get to know its heroes, study all its personal traditions, and generally imbibe that *something* which has made it wonderful. There you are on sure ground. You can fascinate your men with its stories of valour. You can thrill them with its pride. You can cheer them with its humour. And you can make them love you by displaying that intense devotion to all things pertaining to your regiment. You will not do this in a day. But you can do it in a few months. And *yours* shall be the glory.

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‘Some one has said that the path of duty is where honour lies. Our military histories will corroborate that. White in Ladysmith, Gordon in Khartûm, and Townshend in Kut are good examples of patient courage and unselfish devotion. The death of Captain Oates of the Dragoon Guards is a fine story, if not actually military. This British officer and gentleman, when stricken with disease, walked out into the Antarctic snow to die, rather than burden his companions and bring them to death and disaster. There are thousands of anecdotes of this order. When you read them your spine will thrill at the valour of your fathers.

‘And I should like you to study very closely the spirit of friendship between the British officer and the private soldier. This is a wonderful story. It shows we have discipline, and yet we have none. In other words, it illustrates that we have got things done because the men liked their officers, and not because they “had to.” You have to discover that secret. It is easy to find. Frankness, courtesy, love, and courage are the basic elements of the plan. The gentle patience, the benevolent rule, and the paternal anxiety of our fathers were wonderful things. They made the British Tommy the most faithful, the most willing, the finest soldier in the world. He has no equal. He will never let you down. But you cannot get the best out of him unless you model your personal conduct on the lives of Kitchener, Roberts, Maude, or Wauchope. These four men are pictures of simple British gentlemen, with Christian instincts, a plain sense of duty, an unalterable devotion to their country, and a *magnificent* belief in their fellow-men.

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‘Again, I do want you to feel that a British officer is no vain person, put up for the admiration or the subjugation of the mob. Do not be a sabre-rattler. Let your demeanour to the civilian crowd be one of chivalry. If we are democratic in our politics, all of us, even the private soldiers, are aristocrats in temperament. We loathe a bounder; we hate a prig, scorn a sneak, and curse a knowing fool. Carry the white flower of a blameless life, and champion all things which make for the propagation of truth, civilisation, and honour. You may even take from the German his virtues, but you must leave him his vices. The British officer is watched by millions of neutrals, and it is important that his high calling should earn the approbation of their historians. *Better to die for our chivalry than succumb to the bestial creed and the foul dishonour of the Huns.*

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‘History, I say, will give you much. It will prove that there is a wonderful fire and force in our race. Our island story is very well summed up by Kipling when he says:

What should they know of England
Who only England know?

‘When you have travelled the Seven Seas; when you have walked in the footsteps of frontiersmen, seen the Valhalla of heroes and the sleeping-place of martyrs, watched tribes and nations of all creeds and colours saluting the British officer and the British flag, it is then you feel:

There is a voice divine,
And a mission that is high.

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‘Gentlemen, here is the proof of our liberty and wisdom. At Gallipoli are the graves of free Colonists with no ties to this country except the ties of blood. Their country is a labour country. Imperialism is banned. It is sometimes termed a democracy gone mad. Yet when Germany threw down the gauntlet these freemen

came forth to help the Old Land. They died like Trojans. They died for LOVE. They died that we might live. And their brothers to-day are dying in France. Side by side are those wonderful Canadians, glorious Newfoundlanders, gallant South Africans, brave Indians—indeed, all nations under the British flag. They have not rendered lip-service. They have given the flower of their land that this Old Country, the mother of Democracy, the breeder of nations, and fount of tolerance, shall keep her lamps burning brightly and repel the hordes who would destroy the Crucifix and deify the sword. You can understand this devotion only by a study of the past.

‘When you have mastered military history, you will quickly grasp the value of *esprit de corps*. You will know *why* the Guards would scorn to be called Highlanders; *why* the Highlanders would shoot you if you put them into the Guards; *why* the K.R.R.’s want to beat the Rifle Brigade, and *why* the Rifle Brigade believe they are better than the K.R.R.’s; *why* Dragoons think themselves superior to Hussars, and *why* Hussars would sicken if you named them Dragoons; *why* the R.H.A. believe that the R.F.A. are not fit to lick their boots, and *vice versa*. Unimportant as these things may seem to the uninitiated, they are really the basis of good work and true fellowship. This spirit is the same as the spirit of the public schools. You will not find this spirit in Germany. Force is the gospel of Germany, even in school and in sport. *Force never made a gentleman or a great nation*. Let me tell you a story. A broad-minded German was travelling past the playing-fields of Eton before the war. He saw the boys playing Rugger, Soccer, &c., and immediately ordered his car to stop. He sat for quite a long time looking at the clean, bonny British boys playing their games. Then he jumped up, took off his hat, and shouted, “Ah, mine friends, I would lub to be one Breetish boy!”

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‘That is a very great tribute from an enemy. To you we hand the guardianship of that spirit. You must believe that to “play up, and play the game,” is the noblest thing in life. You must live *not* for self, but for country. Your wealth, your gifts, your pleasures, even your loved ones, must be surrendered at the call of duty. Duty is the keystone of patriotism. And patriotism has made us what we are. The defects of this system are outweighed by its virtues. “The word of an Englishman” is all they ask of a Britisher in the Argentine. *But from a Hun they demand an agreement, stamped, sealed, dated, and witnessed*. What finer tribute can you have to the spirit of our race?’

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‘An army, gentlemen, without a soul is a vile and cruel instrument. It will commit excesses. It will rape, plunder, and demoralise. It will stink in history, like the armies of Attila, Cortes, and the Kaiser. We must avoid that. We cannot do so unless you leave this school with a full knowledge of history, an appreciation of *esprit de corps*, a love of the truth, and an adherence to the principles of justice. You must all be Maudes and not Bernhardis; quit ye like men; do harm to no child, no woman; so conduct yourselves that when you leave France or Belgium the populace will line the route, strewing your path with roses, and shedding tears for the dead who are gone and the living heroes who are returning home.

‘It may be, of course, that many of you will not return, that you may have to suffer torture at the hands of your enemy. Let death have no terrors, for you shall pass to the Valhalla of heroes. Your name shall be inscribed in the page of glory, and your memory shall shine like the sun.

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‘Gentlemen, words fail me. Emotion is knocking at my heart. But I feel that I have shown you the soul of the British Army. Guard it! Cherish it! Fight for it! And when this bloody war is over, the world will take you into its arms, and God will proclaim, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”’

A strange silence fell over the room as the lecturer finished. The spell had not yet passed. Men had been transported from the sordid to the higher things. But when the captain lifted his stick and gloves to go, we burst into a wild hurrah.

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That night Tosher, whom we dubbed ‘the Materialist,’ slipped out of the hut about nine-thirty. He crossed the dark parade-ground, and made for the officers’ quarters. On arriving at Captain Cheerall’s domicile, he knocked at the door.

‘Come in.’

'Say, cap., I'd like to swot up some of that history.'

'I see! What can I do for you?'

'Well, I guess you'd better lend me a book to get on with.'

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'Certainly. Here you are. Anything to oblige a good Canadian.'

'Thanks, cap. And, I say'——

'What?'

'You were real good on that stunt to-day. Good-night, sir.'

'Good-night, Johnson.'

When Tosher got to the hut, he looked at the book. It was entitled
Deeds that Won the Empire.

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CHAPTER XXII.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

THE extraordinary thing in our hut was that the quietest and most decent member of our little society was, in reality, the most powerful. This was Billy Greens, generally known as 'The Padre.' In controversy Ginger or Tosher could simply bowl him out, but for all that there was a sweetness and a kindness about him that made him a very dear pal. He was always so broad, ever willing to understand us, but quietly and effectively he was pitting his moral weight against our immoral and careless code. Billy had no physical strength to speak of. It was really a shame to see him in khaki, for temperamentally he was unfitted for the awful strain. But he was there of his own choosing. As he always said, 'It is a holy war.' This gave him a great standing. He was fighting for a moral cause, and we did think him a cut above the ordinary parson.

Billy Greens was a 'white man.'

His strength lay in his private conduct, which was above suspicion. A fair sportsman, in a 'rag' he took his punishment. We never heard him speaking about 'the Cross' or 'salvation,' but in his own charming way he would lug one or more of us out for a walk, and land us in the Y.M.C.A., where he regaled us with refreshments and kept us to hear the entertainments. And the most amusing thing was that he and Ginger (the so-called Rationalist) were the best of pals. Ginger, however, was no Rationalist; he was just an argumentative beggar, so brilliant that he could flatten every one of us out. At all hours of the day and the night Billy and Ginger were going it, but it was quite evident that the padre was coming out top-dog, and taking the sting out of Ginger's oratory. As a matter of fact, after they had lived three months together, Ginger ceased to batter the Church, and often helped his clerical chum to get up concerts for the Y.M.C.A.

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The padre was making good.

Even Tosher, the dear old dollar-loving Canadian, was a champion of the padre. He was so powerful in the physical sense that he elected himself as a bodyguard. When there was a rough-and-tumble on, Tosher always rescued the gasping curate. There was something real good in the Canadian. If he was no great Christian, he was the best-hearted man in our platoon, and certainly the bravest of the crowd. His M.M. and D.C.M. were evidence of that. And if he did blow his own trumpet, it was not meant seriously, for Tosher, like all Canadians, was fond of 'chewing the rag.' The padre made it his business to take Tosher round all the nice people; indeed, he got Tosher fixed up with a neighbouring merchant's daughter, a most charming girl.

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Tosher ceased to violate the moral code.

So far as Beefy and I were concerned, the padre had a lot of work to do. But he kept at it in his own quiet way, and although we never said it, we secretly felt in touch with a better man, and we always accepted a good deal of his advice. Billy worked on 'the chum principle.' He simply wormed himself into our confidence, with the result that we never cared to offend him. When he called me 'John,' there was something so very paternal in it that I became submissive, and a supporter of Billy, if not a perfect ornament of the Church.

The padre was smashing our lax code.

'You know, John,' he said one night, 'I shall be sorry to leave here.'

'Why?'

'There's a lot of good work going on.'

'Oh!'

'You fellows are not what you were. There's not half the filthy language or the false bravado there used to be. None of those disgusting photos are around now. And nearly all the boys read in the hut at night. They're *thinking*, and that's all we want them to do.'

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'What's done it?'

'Well, the fresh air, the games, the discipline, and the general goodwill. The commandant, of course, is an asset. He's such a dear old man that they feel they must be decent. And unquestionably

Captain Cheerall has been an enormous influence. Just look at all those fellows swotting up military history,' he said, pointing to the crowd with their noses well down on books.

'You like army life, then, padre?'

'Not a bit of it. It has great good in it, and great dangers. All depends on the men you live with. Of course, this is an educated crowd, and they are easy to handle. But I had an awful time in the ranks. And yet I wouldn't have missed this war for worlds. My eyes are open now. I have seen the good in men, also the bad. And I hope it will help me in the future.'

'Do you think we'll be the better for this war—I mean, in the moral sense?'

'That's a big question. I think all the educated men will reason more, and I believe they will glorify the home and a good woman. But for the great crowd I'm not sure.'

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'Why?'

'Well, war loosens things. Women go wrong, and the marriage vows get broken. Men in the ranks are like children. One fool can contaminate a thousand. That's the danger. Still, if we can educate them, and if the parsons will work, we can keep the Old Land going. And, of course, the Y.M.C.A. is a powerful force. I tell you, John, if we had had no Y.M.C.A. in this war, the army would have been a hotbed of drunkenness and immorality. Kitchener was the man who saw this at the beginning. By Jove, that *was* a MAN!'

'You're a Kitchener yourself, Billy.'

'Why?'

'It's you that's cleaning this hut up. You've been a good pal, and we shall be sorry to leave you.'

'Not I, John! Not I!'

'Who, then?'

'The Spirit of God. Good-night, old boy.'

As he walked away a lump came into my throat. I'm a sentimental ass, I know, but still *that's* the sort of padre for AFTER THE WAR.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

WE DISCUSS THE SCHOOL.

‘WELL, boys, in another week we shall have one pip on our sleeves, and be wearing Sam Brownes. Heigh-ho, my lads, for a jolly time! No more guards, no more fatigues, no more school,’ said Beefy one night.

‘Beefy!’ shouted Ginger.

‘What?’

‘You’re a silly ass. The commission, a bottle of “fizz,” and a chorus-girl form your entire outlook. Haven’t you learnt anything here?’

‘Oh yes, a little. I’m quite grateful, and I’ll do my best. I’m not a marvellous fellow with my headpiece—and know it—but I’ll try to do my job. You’re a wet blanket, Ginger. Because a fellow laughs and fools about, you think he hasn’t got guts. Have sense, you silly old book-guzzler.’

‘You’ll make a good bombing officer, Beefy. A strong arm and a soft head are all you require for the Suicide Club,’ remarked Nobby.

‘And you’ll be in the A.S.C., bringing up the bully-beef. A soft job for a Radical. I know your crowd. You curse the public schools, but you push us into the infantry. Nobby, you are a ruddy fraud.’

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‘Let’s sum up the school, boys,’ I said.

‘Right! Lead off,’ commanded Ginger.

‘It isn’t really a bad show. The first time I saw it, it looked a penitentiary; and when I spotted all you toughs dropping in, it promised to be a Hades. But it’s panned out fairly well. There’s a great lack of intellectual meat—a few of the instructors ought to go back to school—but still, we’re cleaner, we’re smarter, we know a few things, and we’ll make at least half-decent subs. And I think we ought to be very thankful, considering that the fellows who received commissions at the beginning of the war got no training at all, but had to go straight to the trenches and find things out. And we have been lucky to have such a good old sport for a “com.,” as well as that priceless chap, Cheerall. He’s the backbone of the school. There has also been a moral improvement. Ginger has had a wash, Beefy doesn’t go out after cooks, Nobby has ceased to pray for Asquith, and Tosher has suddenly become respectable. I think we ought to leave with no grouse, and it’s up to us to give thanks to the commandant and his staff. They’ve treated us well, and done their best.’

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‘I second the motion,’ said Nobby. ‘The school is a useful institution, and on the whole has done good work. They have certainly paid attention to our bodies. We are all healthier, heavier, hardier, and therefore more fit for our job. The great defect is, as John Brown says, a lack of brain-power. But there is this idea in the military system: “A man of action cannot be an intellectual.” And all these old fellows argue, “If they want us to be butchers, they cannot expect us to be professors.” To me this is simply an excuse for mental sloth, and adherence to pre-war pleasure-loving ways. War is a science and a conflict of ideas. The army which is most scientific and has the greatest number of ideas is bound to win. This country of ours is packed with ideas; but we are so conservative, so cursed with classical ways, that it is a crime for a hustler to start pushing his ideas to the front. We’re tied up to seniority, “form,” and rotten old traditions, which simply choke good fellows off. Reverses have improved us, and disasters have helped things on. But why wait for disaster? Why not let every mother’s son contribute some ideas to the war-machine, and so help to end the war?’

‘The soul is certainly sound, as Captain Cheerall says; but what’s the good of a soul if you haven’t got push-and-go? Certainly, we have improved since 1914, and we are going to win this war all right. Still, I am not so sure that youth is having its chance. There are too many old fellows knocking about. What I want to see is all those young G.S.O.’s getting the jobs, and then we’ll have a good time. Look at Cheerall! He’s an absolute treat! There are hundreds of men like him in the Old Army and the New Army. We fellows, who are new to the business, don’t give a tinker’s damn whether an instructor or a staff-officer is a Cecil or a Henderson. We want the goods. We’re willing to learn. We’d pawn our boots to go and hear

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men like Allenby, Robertson, and Wilson; but we've got a contempt for all those old blighters who sneer at us, who think we're not gentlemen, and regard us simply as cannon-fodder. The army isn't democratic enough. It's a close preserve, and we Liberals are going to shake it up. All the same, I don't dislike this school. As John says, the commandant is a dear old father and a gentleman. If it weren't for men like him, we'd all get fed up. As for the sergeant-major, he's a terror, but he *does* know his job, and he has taught us a lot. These men are all right. It's the system that's all wrong. Yet I'm sorry to go, for I have had a good time with you fellows here. One thing the army does teach, and that is friendship. I wouldn't have been out of this job for a fortune, and when we part I'll be a sorry man.'

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'Hear, hear!' roared Beefy.

'Gentlemen,' said Ginger, rising, 'you've just heard my honourable friend, the member for the Manchester School, heave things off his chest. Having done so, he's perfectly happy, for the great secret of keeping such a person in order is to let him talk—talk hard and talk long. He's a most terrible Radical, and should he be the Secretary for War in the next Government, it will be necessary for me to remove him with a BOMB.'

'Keep to the point,' said Nobby.

'Very well, the point is the school. Much of what Nobby has said is true. Now and again we've been terribly bored with the "padding" some of these fellows stuff into their lectures. The majority are afraid to be original. Still, on reflection, I think it fair to say that many never expected they would have to be schoolmasters. Again, nearly all of them were brought up under the old system, when thinking was very bad form. Still, they have worked hard. They have treated us well. The defects which exist are due to the system, and not to the men. Unfortunately a few imagine we are Tommies who have never been to school. They import into their lectures a lot of stuff which is pure bluff and part nonsense. We have seen the defects of the General Staff, and we are prepared to realise all their difficulties, as well as to note their triumphs. But it is sheer nonsense to paint them as supermen. That is a good enough stunt when talking to a platoon who cannot reason things out, and who, if told of little things, would expand them into big things and commence to grouse. But if we are going to be officers, then we want to know all the wrinkles. As Cheerall insists, study *where* we failed, *why* we failed, and *how* we might have avoided failure. It's no good cloaking things. We were at Loos. We were at Cambrai. But it is frequently forgotten that we can see things, for many of us are educated. We're not here for fun; we're here for business.'

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'What is always forgotten by military mandarins is that the nation is in arms. Again we are fighting for our very lives. But I *don't* think we can apply Nobby's sweeping reforms in the middle of a war. Remember Russia! There they abolished the salute. What happened? The army became a mob, and Russia was sold to Germany. The defection of Russia is the condemnation of Democracy—at least, of Lenin's Democracy. And I, for one, am up against all Bolsheviks. Nobby, of course, doesn't mean all this. Still, it takes an Oxford man to balance his impetuous moods and keep the ship right.'

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'Don't swing the lead, Ginger,' cried Nobby.

'I am not swinging it, old chap. Your political strategy is one-sided, and sometimes lacks vision. Frequently you throw out constructive ideas, but you want to achieve them by destructive methods. You can't do that; or, at least, if you do there will be chaos. You keep shouting for Democracy, but you've had it for three hundred years. You really want the moon. I'm with you, heart and soul, when you talk about brains, but I'm up against your method of reform. Go slow, old man. Work your reforms one by one, without creating panic and disorder. There are tremendous forces at work to-day. Unreason and anarchy are rampant. Give the mob its head and this old Empire will tumble like a pack of cards. You condemn Oxford, you curse the classics, you tilt at the historical and true political instinct, and you fail to note that the old system made us what we are—the greatest Empire, the greatest people, one of the most democratic on the earth.'

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'Question,' said Tosher.

'It *is* a question,' retorted Ginger, swinging round towards his interrupter, 'but it's a question concerning your educational defects. You are not taught these things in Canadian schools. It's not your

fault; it's your Government's. But there's no excuse for Nobby. He accepts the whole "Democratic" scheme with all its blunders. You can carry out his ideas in a parish council, but you can't do it with an army. And while I have endorsed a good deal of his plea for intellect, I am not blind to what we have accomplished. He's a lawyer, but he's not judicial, for he has not given the other side of the case. We started with an army of one hundred and seventy thousand strong. We now have an army of five millions. We have increased the corps of officers from ten thousand to one hundred thousand. When we started at Mons we had only shrapnel, and that was short. Now we have the finest Ministry of Munitions in the world. We have shipped an army of millions over the seas, and lost only two thousand men by drowning. Thanks to the navy, of course. There were no such schools of instruction in 1914; now there are hundreds. It's all very wonderful. It has been done slowly, quietly, effectively. True, there have been horrible blunders, and we have had reverses. So has the enemy. But in all manoeuvre battles we have beaten the Germans.'

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'Hear, hear, Ginger!' some of us shouted.

'Now you see where Nobby is wrong. He concentrates on the failures and forgets the triumphs. And that is the greatest defect of his Radical friends. For all that, I'm not going to say we're perfect—no army is perfect—but I do say we, as a nation, have done our best. Certainly, there are much-needed reforms. I'm with Nobby on the subject of brains, but I'm not going to back up his horrible methods of smashing down to build up. You can't do that in war-time! Graft the new on to the old, *and we'll win*.

'As for the school, it has been a priceless boon for fellowship. I've really learnt to love old Nobby, and tried to understand him. And Tosher, the man-eating, constitution-smashing Canadian—well, we've just taken him into our arms! Like all Colonials, he's a good fellow. Then there's Beefy—dear old Beefy—the king of the ballet, the god of the bar, yet the toughest devil who ever came out of Cambridge. He's real good! John Brown, of course, is a dreamer. He revels in romance, girls, and philosophy. You'll find him in a barrage writing to Adela and moralising about the smell. Finally, there's dear old Pieface, the best fellow who ever wore a holy collar.

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'Now, to be serious, boys. I like the school; but I like you more. We've learnt a lot about war; but we've learnt more about each other. We may not live; but if we do, then "The Dauntless Six" will meet at Ciro's, fill a bumper, and drink long and deep to the happiest school-days of our lives.'

'Hear, hear, Ginger!' we shouted as he sat down.

'I guess I've got to get into this business with my feet,' said Tosher.

'Try your head,' mumbled Ginger.

'It's right there, old child, every time,' answered Tosher, touching his forehead. 'We ain't no one-eyed chicks from Alabama; we get our wisdom-teeth in a hard country, where the snow buries you for six months, and the sun bakes you in the summer. Why, it just makes me sad to see the Balliol joint pumping out, "Go slow," "Steady up," and calling old Nobby a Bolshevik. Nobby is the only spring chicken in the crowd—but you don't understand him. He wants to sweep up all your old institooshuns, and give you all a real good time.'

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'Keep to the point, Buffalo Bill,' said Beefy.

'I'm sitting on it, and it's real hard. Now I'm going to skin your eyes. I likes this institooshun. It's durned slow, and there ain't enough ginger in the Old Man. Yet I reckon I've got wise here. They've knocked all the Tommy's grouse out of me, and given me hope of a better land—a commission, a servant, and a waiter to bring me cocktails and fat havanas. They've shown me how to eat an omelet, and warned me off drinking out of a finger-bowl; taught me how to sign myself "Your obedient servant" when I don't feel like it; and to say "sir" to all the chicks that'll want a job from me after the war. They took me in, a tow-headed gum-chewer, and they reckon they're turning me out real prime, first-class, lead-'em-to-Hell stuff. As one of those old professors said, "He was a Canadian when he came; now he's a gentleman."

'Well, boys, I'm real grateful for it all, though I haven't much time for etiquette, and ain't no use at the "How d'ye do?" business. Out West we introduce with revolvers, and get our photo taken when there's a hundred dollars on our head.

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'We ain't here for amusement; we're here to fight. You can't do that with kid gloves. It's red fighting that will kill the Hun—not talking. And, as Nobby says, we need more brains. That's a plain proposition, and I'm his man. However, we haven't been skinned in this saloon bar. The Old Man is a white man. He has been real good to me and you. Our time's been a happy time. I've learned to love the Old Country. We Canadians may be tough, we may even seem white-fanged gunmen, but, I tell you, we're in with you to the end.

'God help the Huns when I go back!'

'Hear, hear, old Tosher! You're the goods,' shouted Billy, rising to wind up our informal discussion.

'And now, boys, a last word. Tosher has shown you the real soul of Canada, the spirit which brings the Canadians over, and in which they die. To us all it is a great revelation. He has been a good pal, just as you all have been, and our time here has been one of joy. Never mind this eternal discussion about brains. Leave that to the powers that be. Look at ourselves. Are we better men? Are we better soldiers? Are we really fit to lead our own clean boys? That to me is the real issue. Somehow, I think we'll do fairly well. We are all agreed about fighting the German. We are determined to do so. In this school they have improved us, and made us more fit for the task. We have had a dear old gentleman for a father; our instructors have all been kind; every one of the staff has done his duty. It is up to us to show our appreciation, and, when we leave here, to serve our God, to honour the King, and die if need be, like true British soldiers.'

We got up silently, and went to bed.

The thought of parting had gripped the soul!

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CHAPTER XXIV.

THE COMMANDANT'S FAREWELL.

THERE was no mock hilarity on the final morning. We had too much to do. Kits had to be packed, books returned, the hut scrubbed out, and everything left shining and in order, for the pride of an army is 'handing over' in a spotless condition. That is always a good test of a well-trained and disciplined unit. Hitherto we had not been bothered about falderals; we were learning and swotting, and the commandant had little use for eye-wash. But this day we knew he expected to see tables—nay, floors—off which a king might eat his food. The 'Old Man' was not disappointed, for we all desired to leave the school with his fatherly benediction.

The boys were a bit sad. Tosher, Beefy, Nobby, Ginger, Billy, and myself—thanks to the good offices of Captain Cheerall—were to be gazetted to the same battalion. This was a piece of luck. But there were other good friends who were being scattered to the four ends of the earth. Many were bound to be killed; others we might never come across again. They were our brothers-in-arms, and we loved them as only men can love. The war and the army had opened our hearts. We men of all classes, all professions, have been linked into a loving community, which only death can sever.

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'Stand to your beds!' roared the sergeant-major. We sprang to attention, and the colonel entered. His keen eye saw everything spotless and shining. He smiled and muttered, 'Splendid, men!—splendid!' and went off round the other huts. When this was over we were marched to the lecture-room to hear the 'com.'s' farewell.

'Gentlemen,' he said, 'this will be a happy day for you. You are going forward. The King's commission will shortly be yours. You will join battalions already famous. The good name of those regiments and the honour of our country will then be in your keeping. We have done our best for you, and I feel you will not let this school down. We have had our hard times, our sad times, also our jolly times, together. No doubt you were often bored, and did your share of grousing. That is only human. If you cannot see a marked improvement in yourselves, I can see it in you. You were more or less rebellious when you arrived. You all had different ideas of discipline, training, tradition, and *esprit de corps*. Many of these ideas were sound; others were not at all practical. But by steady grinding, patient teaching, and persistent application, my staff have created at least a seed-bed in good soil, and it is for you to develop the fruits of our instruction. We have not aimed at making you generals. Our job was to make you subalterns. There are other schools to teach you the arts of the higher command. Perhaps this elementary curriculum was too slow for the more brilliant; but these bright ornaments must remember that in a school like this we have to adapt our arrangements to the intellect of the majority, and not of the minority. The brainy minority can take care of themselves. It is for us to help the less fortunate, and give them confidence and the hall-mark of efficiency. I have a reason for making this remark, for I know we have intellectuals here, and I should regret if they left feeling we have not given them enough.

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'You must also remember that your training has been crammed into four months instead of three years, as we used to put in at Sandhurst. We are at war, and we cannot go into the bowels of everything. Still, considering all our disabilities, such as the absence of many brilliant men at the Front, I do feel we have reason to think that, on the whole, the course has been successful.'

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'Hear, hear, sir!' we shouted.

'I said, at the beginning, you will no doubt feel glad at going forward. I also am glad; but I am sorry too. This has been the most interesting of all my "courses," and there are faces I shall miss, even that of my good Canadian friend, who, I understand, rejoices in the remarkable sobriquet of "Tosher.'" (Loud laughter.) 'I can assure you, gentlemen, I have learnt a lot from you. Here we have a pleasant mixing of the classes and the masses; also a sprinkling of splendid fellows from overseas. This confirms my view that ours is a Democratic army, also an Imperial army. I rejoice! This is a splendid signpost to the future. When the job is done, we shall settle down more friendlily, without the class distinctions and the horrible class war that were the curse of this country prior to 1914. You will also

be interested to hear that, if you men are going forward, I too am about to receive promotion. I am taking unto myself a charming lady'—

We cheered tremendously. (By the way, the lady in question was none other than my aunt Jane!)

'Yes—and next week I leave the school and the army—for ever. I am old now. My day is done. I came back again only to help the Old Land in its hour of pain and woe. Yet I think I have the wisdom of my race. This is a young man's war. It is not for me to keep youth and vigour back; to stand a bulwark against progress, and put back the clock, so that I, a soldier of the past, may continue to enjoy the fruits of command. No! That is folly! We must win this war. Age cannot do it! It is beyond us! To youth we must hand the sword and the laurels! And yet, when I take off my Sam Browne belt and shove on my tweeds, I shall feel like a captain without a ship, like a man without a cause. However, there's my lady. She will help me through!'

'Hear, hear, sir!'

'Another intimation. My successor is Captain Cheerall. This officer is of the Old Army, yet of the New. To me he has been a loyal colleague, a zealous friend, and an invaluable assistant. He is an extraordinary compound of intellect and emotion. Every time he talks to me, I feel I must clap him on the back. The school is, therefore, in good hands. When I have gone, perhaps the intellectuals will not feel so bored.'

'You never bore us, sir,' shouted Ginger, and all of us gave a cheer.

'Thank you, gentlemen. Your kindness will lighten my coming darkness. But it's of you I must speak. Do not think me a great Christian, for I am not. But this war, somehow or other, has brought me face to face with the fact: IT IS A HOLY WAR. We are not out for LOOT. We are out for PRINCIPLES. It is our testing-time. GOD and THE BRUTE are struggling for mastery. The religion, the morality, the safety of nations, mothers, and babes are in your keeping. Should we lose, the Cross will lose. I do beseech you to think it out, to lead clean lives, to go forward with the heart and aim of crusaders. It is not a burden! It is a privilege! There is no question of false glory. It is DUTY! And DUTY is the hall-mark of honour. Would to God that I were as young as you, so that I might fight the good fight and lead you on! Again, you have all got mothers, sisters, sweethearts; some of you have wives, perhaps bonny little babes. It is for you to guard them. The dripping sword must not be seen by their eyes, nor their blood stain your hearths. Think of Belgium! Think of Serbia! Think of Rumania!

'Do not waste your time hating! Your work is KILLING. War is Germany's religion! Brutality is her philosophy! Domination is ever her aim and vaunted creed! *You must destroy the loathsome gods of Germany.*

'Well, gentlemen, I think that is all. I shall watch your careers. I shall keep your records in my study. Each great deed will be noted in my little book. The higher you go, the more I shall be pleased. And never think of me as your commandant. Think of me as your friend, as a father—for to me you're boys, just dear boys, and I love you because you are going forth to help this dear Old Land.

'Good-bye,' he said with emotion, and turned away.

Tosher Johnson led a terrific cheer, and cried, 'Let's carry the Old Man round.' We rushed him, lifted him high on our shoulders, and carried him across to the officers' mess, singing:

'For he's a jolly good fellow,
For he's a jolly good fellow,
For he's a jolly good fellow,
Which no cadet denies.

'Hip—hip—hooray! Hip—hip—hooray! Hip—hip—hooray!'
Thus the New Army parted from the Old.

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