

to foam at the mouth. Somebody's been feeding you meat again, I says, only I says it to myself.

"What do you mean dismounting on that side," he says.

"Don't you get off on the off side," I says.

I won't put down what he said, Bill, because the censer might see it, and then he'd get into trouble, for using that langwidge on parade. By sifting his words carefully I learnt that a horse's right side is his offside, and his left side is his near side, and you get on and off on the near side.

Of course, Bill, that's only when a horse is willing. The horse ain't so particular as the sergeant major.

Well, we started away alright; we just walked the horses over to the riding school, and for a while we walked them around the circle, then the S.M. cracks his whip and yells, "Ter-r-rot," and the horses started to do as he said. That's when I begin to lose my confidence, Bill. The S.M. says: "Hurry in with your horses," which was all very well, but your muscles will get sore and numb and you just bounce around like riding in a Toronto street car.

Then he yells "Halt," and "Dismount," which was the kindest words I'd heard that morning. But we were hardly off before he says "Cross stirrups." That's just the same, Bill, as in the old days when they used to say, "Bring on the thumb-screws." You put the stirrups across the horse's back, and when you get on you got no place to put your feet. They just dangle.

"Well, Bill, we hadn't been going more than five minutes when I felt like my cap was hanging on the top end of my spine, and all my insides was churned and turned over, and, I knew I'd never get my stomach and lungs, etc., straightened out again. You hear people say, Bill, their heart was in their mouth, but, gee Bill, there wasn't nothing in me that wasn't hitting the back of my teeth. Sometimes I was behind the horse's neck, and then I would work my passage back behind the saddle. It was a stormy voyage. If that horse is as sore where I hit him as I am, he should have a poultice from his ears back.

I went overboard at the first turn, Bill.

Maybe it was because the track wasn't banked. Gee, it was good to have something solid to put your feet on, and not have to sit. And the fool horse, instead of running away and letting me chase it and get some rest running, he stands there and looks at me like he was saying, "Why did you leave me so soon." For the rest of the morning I was like the electric light here, on and off all the time. I ain't been to France, Bill, but I do know something about the horrors of war.

When we were going back to the stables we met a traction engine. I ain't quite clear about what happened, Bill, but before long I found myself in the village. I got a confused recollection of automobiles trying to jump ditches and nursemaids pulling perambulators over hedges and a crowd yelling. Only maybe it wasn't a crowd but the people strung out over about two miles of road.

I don't know how I stayed on the horse's back, Bill. I guess I did because I had to. Anyway, we came back quiet, and the sergeant-major says he thought I said I couldn't ride.

"I've a mind to have you up for office," he says, "for breaking parade." He said he thought I done it on purpose. Ain't some people suspicious, Bill?

It reminded me of Limpy Harper what came back from France. About four days after they went in the trenches a whizz-bang hit the trench and Limpy helped carry back some of the guys what had got it bad. When they got back to the dressing station Limpy was all over blood and was all in. He says they grabbed him and put him in the ambulance and sent him down the line, thinking he was wounded. It was done so quick he didn't know where he was going.

He didn't get back for some days, and when he reported they gave him twenty days' detention for being absent without leave. Of course, Bill, I only know what Limpy says, and if you believe him he should have got the V.C. about every day he was there.

Well, Bill, I guess I'll go to bed now and rest. We got to ride again to-morrow and I got a hunch that that sergeant major is going to try and get me. Don't take any wooden money, Bill.

BERT.