

RETALIATION.

Scene: Battalion Headquarters Signal Office.

Period: Eighteen months ago.

Time: Any time Fritz shelled our front line.

Coy. Sig. Station: Hallo, H.Q.!

H.Q.: Hallo!

C.S.S.: The Coy. Commander wishes to hold converse with the Adjutant.

H.Q.: Hold on a sec. till I get him.

Coy. Comdr.: That you, Walker?

Adjt.: Yes. That you, Bert? How's things?

C.C.: We want some retaliation. The Hun is strafing my front line with 5.9's—about five a minute coming over. (Time now 3.25 p.m.)

Adjt.: I'll get that for you right away, Bert.

Adjt. to Runner: Get me the F.O.O.

F.O.O.: Did you send for me, sir?

Adjt.: Yes, want some retaliation on (66666—) right away. Fritz is shelling with 5.9's—about five a minute coming over.

F.O.O.: Very good, sir. I'll have it in a minute.

F.O.O. to Artillery Sigs.: Get me Brigade immediately.

Art. Sig.: Yes, sir. (Time now 3.30 p.m.)

Art. Sig. to F.O.O.: Been calling Brigade for three minutes and can't get them.

F.O.O.: Dash it all! What's the matter with these people? Is the line down?

Art. Sig.: No, sir; I can hear a faint buzz on the line.

Coy. S.S.: Hello, H.Q.! Get the Adjutant for the C.O.

Adjt.: Hullo, Bert! What's the trouble?

Coy. O.C.: No retaliation coming, Walker; Fritz is still dropping them around.

Adjt.: I'm right after it, Bert.

Coy. O.C.: All right, Walker; thanks. Get it good and heavy.

F.O.O. to H.Q. Inf. Sig.: Try and get me the —th Artillery Brigade through your Infantry Brigade.

H.Q. Sig.: Yes, sir. (Sigs. call Brigade for two minutes.)

Inf. Bde.: Hallo!

H.Q. Sigs.: Can you put me through to the —th Artillery Brigade?

H.Q. Sig.: Yes; hang on a second till I get them.

(Inf. Bde. calls Art. Bde. for three minutes.)

F.O.O. to Art. Bde.: F.O.O. speaking. I want to speak to the Orderly Officer, please.

Art. Bde.: Yes, sir; I'll send out for him.

Art. Ord. Off.: Hallo! Orderly Officer speaking.

F.O.O.: That you, Reg.? This is Alf. Say, old boy, I want retaliation on —. The Boches are strafing the Infantry with 5.9's.

Art. O.O.: How heavy are they strafing, Alf?

F.O.O.: About five a minute, Reg.

Art. O.O.: All right; I'll get that for you immediately.

(Time now 3.45 p.m.)

Coy. Sig. Stn.: Hallo, H.Q.!

H.Q.: Hallo!

C.S.S.: The O.C. wants to speak to the Adjutant.

H.Q.: All right; the Adjutant is here. Put the O.C. on.

Adjt.: Yes, Bert. How is the retaliation?

Coy. O.C.: Retaliation be hanged! Not a d—d thing coming over. The Hun has stopped shelling now. I want the retaliation stopped. Say, what's the trouble down there? I asked for retaliation half an hour ago, and not even a whiz-bang was fired. Are we getting short of ammunition?

Adjt.: All right, Bert; don't get sore. We've only just got hold of the Artillery. Are you sure you don't want twenty rounds of heavies put over?