

"Bruce In Khaki"

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EDITORIAL

"I've always been since quite a lad
 Merry and gay when things went bad.
 That is a way I've always had
 Cause I'm 'orrible reckless."

Recall if you will one of the tedious route marches preparatory to one of our recent schemes. As we plodded on mile after mile and blisters, aches, pains and grouches came, how extremely aggravating it was to have the chap beside you whistle and sing. Why should he be so much content when everything in your world was so distasteful and with every pace a cuss wavered on the tip of your tongue.

He is an optimist, you know it and when everything is said and done you envy him. He reminds you of the man who saw the ark and when he was asked if he'd embark, up to his neck made this remark, "It's only a shower." It is apparent the need of optimism in the army. A soldier grouches whenever the spirit moves him, that is his privilege, the pessimist taking advantage of it, but the optimist never.

He objects to many things but never complains in as many words. He considers himself fortunate when last in line for mess that there is any dinner at all. Route marches tend to bring enthusiasm as he sympathizes with some other unfortunate on individual training. He smiles contentedly when he must walk from Guildford and is thankful that he has legs with which to evade the M. P's.

Being confined to camp limits brings satisfaction since he has heard adverse reports on Wandsworth. Humour too accompanies optimism and hand in hand they walk among us.

For several months I have watched

one of the men of the Bruce Battalion. He is the most confirmed optimist I have ever seen. Perhaps you already know him too, but for convenience we will abbreviate his name to "Bill."

One of his companions some months ago looked for diphtheria and caught it, and accordingly Bill and the remainder of the platoon were for quarantine. Some necessarily complained, but he remarked "Better this than mumps." Eventually the quarantine was lifted and they were reinstated in their hut. The orderly Sergeant immediately warned several of them for a coal yard fatigue. Bill was one but only exclaimed "This is better than being loaned to Corpl. Davis for duration."

Nothing shakes his faith in the idea that there is always something worse than that in which he is engaged. A pessimist oftimes thinks this too, but his trouble is that he is for ever imagining that it is going to happen next.

Bill was marching with the Battalion through Bramshott Camp when we were depositing the colours and was heard to tell some complaining companions to shut up and consider themselves fortunate that they were not all officers and have to ride.

If one was blessed with journalistic talents he could write for ever on the doings of this same chap. Never a day passes but some bad job is made the best of. At one dinner parade his portion of meat was exceptionally small but his only remark was "I'm glad it isn't fish."

He chuckles with glee when rain keeps him from going out on pass and compares his present situation with the recent bivouac when it also rained but when he couldn't get in. And this chap doing the same work as everyone else finds his pack lighter and the journey shorter. He at once helps himself and his more downcast companions.

By taking things as they come does not always spell good fortune, and one day trouble came to Bill. He was hurried away to the hospital and there on his little white cot he hums to himself