

a new one! May his batman preserve himself in one piece.

More yells of "Guard turn out!" Support my tottering footsteps! Our—that is to say my dug-out is on fire. . . . Confusion. . . . Calm. . . . I have no dug-out, no anything. . . . This is, pardonnez-moi, a Hell of a war!

## Adjutants

**I**F Fate cherishes an especial grievance against you, you will be made an Adjutant.

One of those bright beautiful mornings, when all the world is young and, generally speaking, festive, the sword of Damocles will descend upon you, and you will be called to the Presence, and told you are to be Adjutant. You will, perhaps, be rather inclined to think yourself a deuce of a fellow on that account. You will acquire a pair of spurs, and expect to be treated with respect. You will, in fact, feel that you are a person of some importance, quite the latest model in good little soldiers. You may—and this is the most cruel irony of all—be complimented on your appointment by your brother officers.

Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, saith the preacher!

As soon as you become the "voice of the C.O.," you lose every friend you ever possessed. You are just about as popular as the proverbial skunk at a garden party. It takes only two days to find this out.

The evening of the second day you decide to have a drink, Orderly Room or no Orderly Room. You make this rash decision, and you tell the Orderly-Room Sergeant—only heaven knows when he sleeps—that you are going out.

"I will be back in half an hour," you say.

Then you go forth to seek for George—George, your pal, your intimate, your bosom friend. You find George in your old Coy. headquarters, and a pity of self-pity sweeps over you as you cross the threshold and see the other fellows there: George, Henry, John, and the rest.

"Come and have a—" you begin cheerily. Suddenly, in the frosty silence you hear a cool, passionless voice remark,

"Good evening, Sir!"

It is George, the man you loved and trusted, whom you looked on as a friend and brother.

"George, come and have a—" again the words stick in your throat. George answers, in tones from which all amity, peace, and goodwill towards men have vanished:

"Thanks very much, sir"—oh baleful little word—"but I've just started a game of poker."

Dimly light dawns in your little brain; you realize the full extent of your disabilities, and you know that all is over. You are the Adjutant—the voice of the C.O.!

Sadly, with the last glimmer of Adjutant pride and pomp cast from out your soul, you return to Orderly Room, drinkless, friendless, and alone.

"The Staff Captain has been ringing you up, sir. He wants to know if the summary of evidence . . ." and so on. In frenzied desperation you seize the telephone. Incidentally you call the Staff Captain away from his dinner. What he says, no self-respecting man—not even an Adjutant—could reveal without laying bare the most lacer-

ated portions of his innermost feelings.

You go to bed, a sadder and a wiser man, wondering if you could go back to the Company, even as the most junior sub., were you to make an impassioned appeal to the C.O.

About 1 a.m. some one comes in and awakens you.

"Message from Brigade, sir."

With an uncontrite heart you read it: "Forward to this office immediately a complete nominal roll of all men of your unit who have served continuously for nine months without leave." That takes two hours, and necessitates the awakening of all unit commanders, as the last Adjutant kept no record. In psychic waves you feel curses raining on you through the still night. Having made an application—in writing—to the C.O., to be returned to duty, you go to bed.

At 3.30 a.m. you are awakened again. "Movement order from Brigade, sir!"

This time you say nothing. All power of speech is lost. The entire regiment curses you, while by the light of a guttering candle you write a movement order, "operation order number"—what the deuce is the number anyhow. The Colonel is—shall we say—indisposed as to temper, and the companies get half an hour to fall in, ready to march off. One Company loses the way, and does not arrive at the starting-point.

"Did you specify the starting-point quite clearly, Mr. Jones?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where did you say it was?"

"One hundred yards south of the N' in Candin, sir."

"There are two N's in Candin, Mr. Jones; two N's! How can you expect a company commander to know which N? Gross carelessness. Gross carelessness. Go and find the Company, please."

"Yessir."

You find the Company only just out of billets, after scouring the miserable country around the wrong N' for fifteen minutes, and falling off your horse into one of those infernal ditches.

The battalion moves off half an hour later, and the C.O. has lots to say about it. He also remarks that his late Adjutant was "a good horse-man"—a bitter reflection!

There is absolutely no hope for an Adjutant. If he is a good man at the "job" everybody hates him. If he is feeble the C.O. hates him. The Brigade staff hate him on principle. If he kow-tows to them they trample on him with both feet, if he does not they set snares for him, and keep him up all night. He is expected to know everything: K. R. and O. backwards and forwards, divisional drill, and the training of a section. Routine for the cure of housemaid's knee in mules, and the whole compendium of Military Law. He is never off duty, and even his soul is not his own. He is, in fact, The Adjutant.

Sometimes people try to be nice to him. They mean well. They will come into the Orderly Room and say: "Oh, Mr. Jones, can you tell me where the 119th Reserve Battery of the 83rd Reserve Stokes Gun Coy. is situated?" Of course, Adjutants know every-

thing. And when you admit ignorance they look at you with pained surprise, and go to Brigade.

"I asked the Adjutant of the—th Battalion, but he did not seem to know."

Adjutants die young.

## Soft Jobs

**T**HIS war has produced a new type of military man—so called—to wit: the seeker after soft jobs. He flourishes in large numbers in training areas; he grows luxuriantly around headquarters staffs, and a certain kind of hybrid—a combination of a slacker and a soldier—is to be found a few miles to the rear of the firing line in France and Flanders. There are some of him in every rank, from the top of the tree to the bottom. If he is a natural-born soft-jobber he never leaves his training area—not even on a Cook's tour. Should the



A Combination of Slacker and Soldier.

virus be latent, he will develop an attack, acute or mild, after one tour in the trenches, or when one of our own batteries has fired a salvo close by him.

If he is affected by very mild germs he may stand a month or two in the firing line in some sector where fighting troops are sent for a rest and reorganization. Broadly speaking, therefore, he belongs to one of three classes, of which the second class is perhaps the worst.

There are some men who join the army without the least intention of ever keeping less than the breadth of the English Channel between themselves and fighting territory. Not for them the "glorious" battle-fields, not for them the sweat and toil and purgatory of fighting for their country. Nothing at all for them in fact, save a ribbon and a barless medal, good quarters, perfect safety, staff pay, week-end leave, with a few extra days thrown in as a reward for their valuable services, and—a soft job!

They are the militesques of our armies. The men who try hard to be soldiers, and who only succeed in being soldier-like beings erect upon two legs, with all the outward semblance of a soldier. Yet even their lives are

not safe. They run grave risks by day and by night in the service of their country.

Zeppelins!

There is an air of bustle and excitement around the officers' quarters in the training camp to-day. Batmen—hoary-haired veterans with six ribbons, whom no M.O. could be induced to pass for active service, even by tears—rush madly hither and thither, parleying in odd moments of Lady-smith, Kabul to Kandahar, and "swod-dies." Head-quarters look grave, tense, strained.

In the ante-room to the mess stand soda syphons and much "B. & W." There are gathered there most of the officers of two regiments—base battalions, with permanent training staffs. In the five seats of honour recline nonchalantly two majors, one captain, and two subalterns. (O.C. Lewis gun school, O.C. nothing in particular, Assistant O.C. Lewis gun school, Deputy Assistant Adjutant.) They are smoking large, fat cigars, and consuming many drinks. Are they not the heroes of the hour? When the sun rises well into the heavens to-morrow they will set forth on a desperate journey.

They are going on a Cook's tour of two weeks' duration to the trenches! (So that they can have the medal!) In the morning, with bad headaches, they depart. In Boulogne they spend twelve hours of riotous life ("Let us eat and drink," says the O.C. nothing in particular, "for to-morrow, don't-cher-know!") They arrive in due course at Battalion battle H.Q. The majors have the best time, as they stay with the C.O., drink his Scotch, and do the bombing officer and the M.G.O. out of a bed.

The rest of them are right up among the companies, where they are an infernal nuisance. About 11 "pip emma" Fritz starts fire-works, and finishes up with a bombing attack on the left flank. The O.C. nothing in particular stops at B.H.Q. The O.C. Lewis gun school mistakes the first general head-quarters line (one kilometre in rear) for the front line, and goes back with shell-shock, having been in the centre of a barrage caused by one 5.9 two hundred yards north. The Assistant Assistant gets into the main bomb store in the front line, and stops there, and the Assistant O. C. Lewis gun school remains in Coy. H.Q. and looks after the batmen. The Deputy Assistant Adjutant gets out into the trench, finds some bombers doing nothing, gets hold of a couple of bombs, makes for the worst noise, and carries on as a soldier should.

After the show the O.C. nothing in particular tells the Colonel all his theories on counter-attack, and goes sick in the morning for the remaining period of his tour; the other twain stand easy, and the Deputy Assistant Adjutant makes an application for transfer to the Battalion. Incidentally he is recommended for the military cross.

When the four previously mentioned return to England they all of them apply for better soft jobs, on the strength of recent experiences at the front. The one man who threw up his soft job to become junior subaltern in a fighting regiment is killed in the next "show" before his recommendation for a decoration has been finally approved.

Fiat justitia, ruat coelum.