

Beckshill.

The corporal tripped down the line at one-forty to the minute. Suddenly he halted in front of a bunch of rookies, took his direction from the sun and the four horizons, sniffed his head to the front, and stood at ease. The whole affair was done with the quickness of a fly on a hot stove. He seemed to take an interest in it. The rookies grinned from one to another, but there was one wise man. "Beckshill," he whispered, from the corner of his mouth, to the man next him.

"Beckswat?" returned the man in an undertone.

"Beckshill," advised the wise one.

"Who?"

"Corporal."

"What 'bout him?"

"Lots of ginger."

"Where?"

"Beckshill."

"Sugar too?"

"No, ginger."

"Don't like it."

"Great stuff on parade."

"What?"

"Ginger."

The man next stared in dismay. Ginger and Beckshill were bouncing around in his dome like a couple of flies in a drum. Just then he felt a dig in the ribs, and the wise one nodded ahead to where two men were pacing up and down the parade in feverish heat, completing each about—turn with a little hop. To most of the rookies this looked as though they might be playing "Here we go gathering nuts in May," but not so to the wise one. He gave a sly wink of commendation to the man next, and whispered from the same corner of his mouth, "Beckshill."

"Where?"

"Out there—S.M. and the sergeant. Pipe the hop; smart stuff that."

The man next looked from the rigid corporal to the hopping N.C.O.s in the limelight, in quick succession.

"Thought y'said it was the corp."

"What?"

"Beckshill."

"Sure."

"Not those two guys?"

"Sure, that's Beckshill."

"Say, y' can't kid the foolish; got 'em all here now but the old lady."

This was all the petrified corporal could stand. He swung round on his hinges and yelled—"Cut out that talking. Where d' y' think y'are; at a picnic? Cut it out—chugit."



The Rum Ration.

Yes, it's very nice to drop into the "Y" for a cup of free coffee and a biscuit, as you come out of the trenches weary and half-frozen. It is even nicer to sit down to a dish of steak, fried onions, and mashed potatoes (yes, we do see such things on rare occasions). It is really delightful to get a day's pass, and go off to some town where the French civies will put you up a gorgeous feed of eggs and chips, supplemented by green peas, and peaches from the canteen.

But there is one short magic word which chases all these fancies from the mind. Shrapnell Bill would not take all the eggs and potatoes, all the fruit and chocolate, with all the luxury and profusion of the officers' mess, for his little tot of rum.

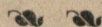
Yes, I've said it. Tommy surely likes his rum. Just why, I never could fathom. It's nasty, choky, burning stuff—and only a thimbleful at that. If I were the Sergt.-Major now, or this Q.M.S.—but there, one must not divulge secrets of military importance.

The boys in the forward area are supposed to receive extra consideration in the matter of rum. Sometimes the Q.M. forces the jar so full that it bursts on the road up. Happily, our drivers are all teetotalers, and therefore above suspicion.

Our O.C. is an officer of strong temperance principles. He knows to a drop how much rum a private can swallow without physical or moral deterioration; and he has a measure cut down-to-order, with which to administer the ration on these moral but not very spiritual premises.

For my own part, I can't see why the boys make so much bother about their rum. Give me half a pint of good brandy every night, and a double Scotch in the morning, and I don't care if I never see the pesky stuff.

"BOMBER," France.



There was an old lady from Lens,
Set eggs under one of her hens;
Though the chicks never came,
The eggs were quite game,
Like the kind that the ration-man sends.