

THE PICKLE.

"VISITORS to-night," said the 'staff.' "What have you got for supper?"

"Just the usual lay-out," answered the mess cook; "bully-beef on the half-shell, cheese, jam."

"Pity," responded the staff, looking worried. "This is a man who can help us out quite a lot, and I'd like to give him a good show. If the canteen wasn't closed we might do something," he added, regretfully.

"There's always the pickle," suggested the cook.



THE SHOCK TROOPS.

Canadian: "Halt! I guess you'd better take your wind—huh!"

"Good idea," commended the staff; "we'll have the old reliable."

When supper-time came the mess table was decorated with the usual fare, and in the place of honour stood the pickle. It was no ordinary pickle—that could be seen at a glance. A war pickle, this, of triple-tested durability and of an appalling colour. In civilian life it had masqueraded as a young onion, but after going through the hardening processes of a great pickle plant owned by an army contractor, it bore no further resemblance to any known variety of vegetable. Above all,

what marked it out from its one-time fellows was its size. How it had ever been got into the bottle eludes imagination. The only solution could be that it had subsequently swelled, and yet had retained its unwholesome colour and a surface of proved impenetrability, so that neither by cunning nor by brute force could it be coaxed or dragged from its lair. In turn every member of the mess had tried his skill and wasted his temper on it. It bore the scar of many a fork-thrust, but no one had ever been able to carry a tactical success to a strategic victory.

The visitor entered, and was placed by the S.M. in the seat of the privileged.

"Now, just help yourself to anything in sight," said the 'major.' "Tisn't much of a lay-out, but the best we can do at present. Have some pickles," he added, nonchalantly, as the visiting quartermaster-sergeant took a slice of bully-beef.

Every eye in the mess expressed an uneasy aloofness as the stranger grasped the bottle. He pressed his fork against the circumference of the pickle. Nothing happened. He pressed harder. The pickle never budged. The veins stood out on our visitor's forehead; he clenched his teeth and drove with all his might. The pickle suddenly dodged, bobbed about a little, and then went to sleep again. For the ensuing five minutes the visitor cajoled the pickle with a gentle fork. We knew that was quite hopeless. Then he became angry. He lunged and stabbed. It was useless. Supper was forgotten; the contest absorbed all eyes. Our visitor became aware of it, and his discomfiture was evident. He harpooned the more vigorously. Still no result. At last, in an access of rage such as no senior N.C.O. has a right to indulge in, he dashed the bottle on to the table. There was a crashing of glass and a deluge of watery vinegar, and the pickle shot out of sight on to the floor.

The visitor rose. "Thank you for a splendid evening's exercise," he remarked, and made for the door.

The S.M. raised his cup. "To a brave and resolute comrade," he declaimed. "Missing—believed killed!"

We drank to the pickle, standing and in silence.

The Casualty Draft.

THEY call them the "Breeze" as soon as they're warned;

They've the battle breeze glint in their eye.
For Fritz has terrors for none of this crowd,
And B. C. men know how to die.

Each one of the "Breeze" is a gold-stripe man,
And he knows what he's up against, too;
And there isn't a one who's an "also ran"—
There's some trouble for Fritz in this crew!

No more P.T., or in other words, "Jerks,"
They'll be holding the line or advancing.
They will harry the Huns or tackle the Turks
Instead of that gol-darned step-dancing.

But they haven't all finished with jerks for good,
For blighties are frequent, and then
There's the hospital, leave, and some pain withstood,
Then "Pip Toc" or "Jerks" once again.