

BILLETS

"'Tis but a tent, where takes his one night's rest,

A sultan to the realms of death addrest;
The Sultan rises—and the dark Ferrash
Strikes—and prepares it for another
guest."

—Omar. K.

Billets naturally divide themselves into two classes:

1. The objectionable.
2. The still more objectionable.

If it is not objectionable, it is not a billet—and thereby hangs a tale. The word "Billet" is derived from the two curiously obsolete and obscure words, "Bill" and "Et"; "Bill" being the general term for the ordinary, everyday, God-fearing private, and "Et" being the ignominious way of expressing the past tense of the verb "to eat". Thus the original word was "the place where Bill et" or rather "ate". Of course, when the growth of scientific war pointed out the futility and folly of the troops eating, (except on very rare occasions) the "et" became meaningless and is merely retained out of deference to its antiquity. Selah.

Great care and judgment has to be exercised in the selection of billets. For instance, there are cases where a satisfactorily damp floor is found with walls suitably punctured with holes to offer as little resistance to the wind as possible—and yet the roof is fairly water-tight. Such a billet is, of course, useless, and a number of tiles must be removed from the roof to make it habitable. On the other hand, a perfectly satisfactory billet may be discovered whose roof does not arrest the raindrops and whose walls allow the fitful breeze to pass merrily thru' them—and yet the billet may not be close enough to the proverbial and eternal garbage pile that lingers at the front of every properly constructed farm house.

Billets are warmed in a rather curious way. A number of logs having no particular utility in the earth below, the Heaven above, or the waters under the earth, are placed in one corner of the billet. By the subtle power of suggestion the occupants think of wood, hence fire, and finally the state of being warm. This is supposed to suffuse heat into the imaginative soldiers' limbs and warm the ruby drops that visit his sad heart—or words to that effect. However, should he proceed to follow out this line of

thought by kindling a fire, he will soon be convinced of the error of his ways. The owner will point out in his faultless French and inimitable calisthenics how said logs are the uncarved legs of some futurist grand piano or perchance the petrified remains of some of his esteemed ancestors. In any case the chorus is the same and invariably winds up in the same old refrain of many, many francs. 'Tis then that one reflects on the superior properties of a Mills bomb.

It is a curious fact that a billet is invariably left perfectly clean and is just as invariably found dirty by the incoming troops. The latter profanely wonder if a troop of South Sea Islanders were having a cannibalistic war-dance or whether the billet had merely been selected as a city dump.

Like all poisons, billets are labelled thusly: 1 Bed--26 men. The one bed in the label is merely the overflowing of the billeting party's humour and like many other things mentioned in labels, is merely a literary flourish. Twenty-six men in the label means that with great difficulty 13 men may be crowded in if they remain in a vertical position. And with these few words we will subside.

—D.F.M.

The Psalm of the Ford

The Ford is my car; I shall not want another.

It maketh me lie down (beneath it);
It seareth my soul.

It leadeth me into paths of ridicule
(for its name sake).

Yea, though I ride in the valleys, I
am towed up the hills.

I fear much evil when it is with me.

It prepareth breakdowns for me in
the presence of mine enemies.

It disjointeth my limbs with toil.

My carburetor runneth over

Surely if it follow me all the days of
my life I shall dwell in the house
of the insane forever.

SELAH.

The sparkling frost lay on the grass,
It covered, too, the trees;
And through my periscopic glass
I watched the Fritzes freeze.

—The Chaplain.

DECORATIONS

Order of Danilo, 4th Class
(Montenegro)

Major P. F. Villiers.

D.S.O.

Lt.-Col. G. E. McCuaig, Major W. F. Kemp, Major P. F. Villiers.

Military Cross

Capt. W. M. Hart, Capt. R. M. Luton,
Capt. H. McL. Urquhart, Lieut. E. Gowen.

D.C.M.

C.S.M. W. D. Mackie.

Military Medal

Corpl. T. Eaton, Lce.-Corpl. J. Magneison, Lce.-Corpl. J. E. King; Ptes. T. G. Lrossley, A. Carter, W. Allard, J. R. Shaw, W. Gordon, F. C. French, C. Sheppard, F. Shirley, D. Robertson, G. North, A. Fraser.

Mentioned in Despatches

Major P. F. Villiers, Major H. F. MacDonald, Lieut. F. M. Bressy.

Lt.-Col. V. C. Buchanan, D.S.O. (killed in action), Major G. E. McCuaig, D.S.O., Major K. M. Perry, D.S.O., Capt. W. F. Peterman, Lieut. J. J. Richardson, Sergt. L. F. Bell, Lce.-Corpl. R. Bell.

Lt.-Col. R. P. Clark, M.C., Major G. McCombe, Capt. F. Higginson, Capt. W. M. Pearce, Sergt. H. B. Symonds, Sergt. J. W. Yates.

Lt.-Col. C. E. Bent, Major G. G. Archibald, Major J. W. Forbes, Major W. P. Malone, Sergt. C. S. Jones, Lce.-Corpl. H. F. A. Ellins.

Lt.-Col. J. E. Leckie, D.S.O., Major C. W. Peek, Major W. F. Kemp, Major S. H. Goodall (killed in action), R.Q.-M.S. D. McN. Johnston, C.S.M. G. F. Palmer, Sergt. F. Douglas, A.-Sergt. H. A. Morley, Pte. G. A. N. McLeod.

Behind the Times

It had poured all day and the Sub. emerging from his dug-out, remarked to his batman that it looked like the Flood.

"The what, sir?" enquired the batman.

"The Flood, I said. Haven't you read of the Great Flood and Noah and the Ark?" the Sub asked him.

"No, sir. I haven't seen a paper for three days."

Apart he sits, aloft from every joy.

His comrades pass without a word or sally.

What is his crime? Why, he's the bugler boy

Who blew "fall in" before he blew "reveille."