

## Captain Hemming Faces a Change 15

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light of early spring. He did not sight the colonel immediately, and, going over to a wardrobe, hung up his cap and greatcoat. He was in "undress" uniform — his blue serge tunic somewhat shabby, but his riding-breeches and high, spurred boots smart and new. The colonel coughed.

Though the captain's greeting was prompt and polite, it did not hide his surprise.

"I dropped in to speak about Tomilson — he seems in a bad way," the other explained. Tomilson was a full private — in both rank and condition.

Hemming advised leniency in this case. He had a soft heart for the men, in spite of his abrupt diction, and the uncompromising glare of his single eye-glass. When the commanding officer was about to take his departure, the captain asked him to wait a minute. His manner was as cool as ever.

"I intend resigning my commission, sir. I decided on the course some days ago, and meant to speak to you after parade to-morrow," he said.

"Bless me," exclaimed the colonel, "what the devil have you been up to?"

The other smiled, — a somewhat thin smile, — and replied that he had not disgraced the regiment, or done anything low. "But 'm down to my pay again," he exclaimed, "and I can't live on that."