

deferred to gloom and disillusion, and the orderly Sergeant assumes a fiercely triumphant expression.

"Twenty-eight days Field Punishment number one," murmurs the Captain ruminatively, "or a court-martial"—this just loud enough for the accused to hear. The latter's left leg sags a trifle, and consternation o'er-spreads his visage.

"In view, Smith," says the Captain aloud, "in view of your previous good record, I will deal with you myself. Four days dixie washing, and you will attend all parades!"

Before Private Smith has time to heave a sigh of relief the C.S.M.'s voice breaks on the air, "Left turn! Left wheel, quick march!"

"A good man, Sergeant-Major," says the Captain with a smile. "Have to scare 'em a bit at times, what?"

Battalion Orderly Room is generally a very imposing affair, calculated to put fear into the hearts of all save the most hardened criminals. At times the array is formidable, as many as thirty—witnesses, escort, and prisoners—being lined up outside the orderly room door under the vigilant eye of the Regimental Sergeant-Major. It is easy to see which is which, even were not the "dress" different. The prisoners are in clean fatigue, wearing no accoutrement or equipment beyond the eternal smoke-helmet. The escort are in light marching order, and grasp in their left hands a naked bayonet, point upwards, resting along the forearm. The witnesses wear their belts. Most of the accused have a hang-dog look, some an air of defiance.

"Escort and prisoners. . . . Shun!"

The Colonel passes into orderly room, where the Adjutant, the Battalion Orderly Officer, and Officer witnesses in the cases to be disposed of await him, all coming rigidly to attention as he enters. In orderly room, or "office" as the men usually call it, the Colonel commands the deference paid to a high court judge. He is not merely a C.O., he is an Institution.

The R.S.M. hovers in the background, waiting for orders to call the accused and witnesses in the first case. The C.O. fusses with the papers on his desk, hums and haws, and finally decides which case he will take first. The Adjutant stands near him, a sheaf of papers in his hand, like a learned crown counsel.

Not infrequently the trend of a case depends on whether the C.O. lunched well, or if the G.O.C. strafed or complimented him the last time they held palaver. Even colonels are human.

"Charge against Private Maconochie, No. 170298, drunk," etc., reads the Adjutant.

After the evidence has been heard the Colonel, having had no explanation or defence from the accused, proceeds to pass sentence. This being a first "drunk" he cannot do very much but talk, and talk he does.

"You were drunk, Thomkins. You were found in a state of absolutely sodden intoxication, found in the main street of Ablainle-Petit at 4 p.m. in the afternoon. You were so drunk that the evidence quotes you as sleeping on the side-walk. You are a disgrace to the regiment, Thomkins! You outrage the first principles of decency, you cast a slur on your battalion. You deliberately, of set purpose, intoxicate yourself at an early hour of the afternoon. I have a good mind to remand for a Field General Court-martial. Then you would be shot! Shot, do you understand? But I shall deal with you myself. I shall not permit the name of this battalion to be besmirched by you. Reprimanded! Reprimanded! Do you hear, sir!"

(Voice of the R.S.M., north front.)
"Right turn. Right wheel; quick march!"

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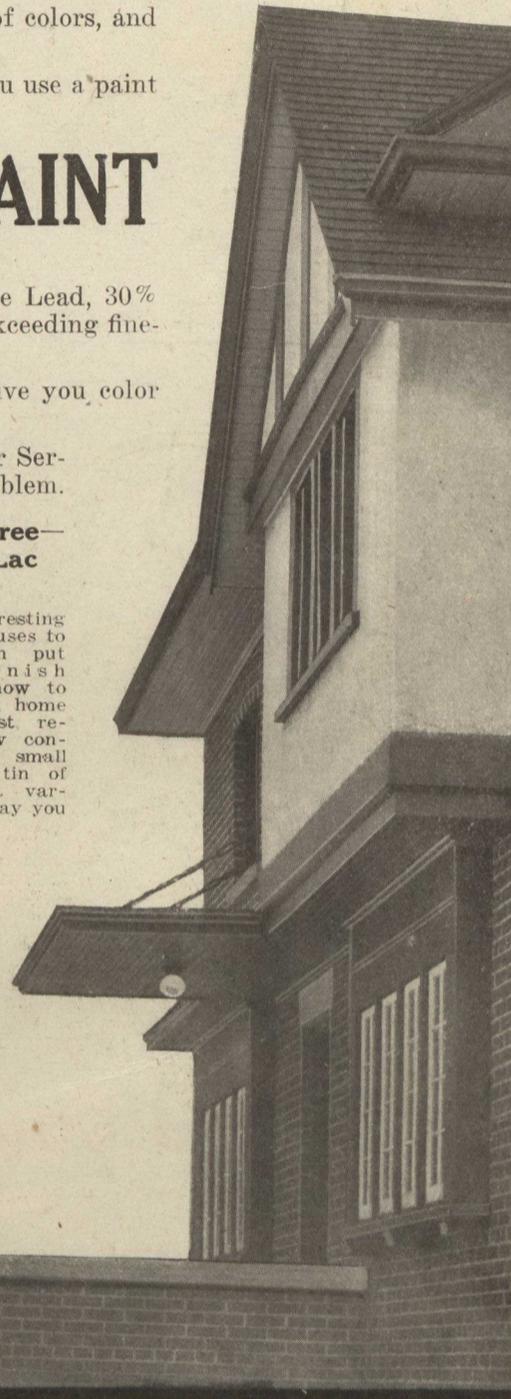
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