

work is exacting, and when they march out they are pretty much like the bunch of faded lilies described by a writer of fame—"not dead, but infinitely weary." For the rest period they are, as a rule, removed far back from the firing-line and housed in billets. And let me say this—it must not be supposed that rest means inactivity, for trench life is sedentary and the men must be kept in form; consequently there are parades, usually of four hours per day, for physical exercise, company drill, route marches, or bathing parade. But the most welcome parade of all, and the one that gives the least trouble to the Orderly Sergeants, is the pay parade. All are on time. We are now supplied with bank-books, and at stated intervals we draw about two francs a day. The balance accumulates.

A billeting party is sent out the day before relief; their business is to commandeer three or four farms, as the case may be, in close proximity, sufficient for the Battalion, having sleeping accommodation for the men, accommodation for the transport, and a house to be utilised as an orderly room, officers' mess, etc. To the uninitiated the word "billet" may sound as if the men were lodged in houses with comfortable beds, clean linen, and all the usual comforts of ordinary civilized life. Disabuse your mind of that! You have a choice of three resting-places. You may find a lodging for the night in a manger or a barn; you may erect your own bivouac, or last and best of all, you may sleep in the open with the heavens as a canopy. Once get accustomed to sleep in the open, and you will never seek the shelter of a roof. All you require is a waterproof sheet and perhaps a couple of blankets, or better still, a sleeping sack. At first you find it hard to sleep after daybreak; the sun and the birds—for they give glory to God at an early hour—are disturbing factors; the whole of nature seems to call for activity; but you soon accustom yourself to your new surroundings and sleep until the sound of reveille. Here you get away from the plague of rats and the foetid atmosphere of crowded barn life. I wonder how many have read that charming description Robert Louis Stevenson gives of a tour in northern France. I think it is called "A night among the pines." I would