

The Smart Draftee.

(Reprinted from *The Veteran*).

In submitting to his returned brothers-in-arms this little satire upon married life *v.* death, the author wishes to make a few explanations:—

Firstly, "R.D.G." stands for Regimental Depot Group, where the casualties, such of them as are able to walk, are sent to be allocated to "jobs" in England, or for return to Canada, according to the nature and extent of their injuries.

Secondly, the draftees like to make use of the "old timers'" canteen, because they learn a lot about the front line, and get divers stories related to them, which raise in them a spirit of emulation.

Some home-tie usually develops between men who have never seen each other, but have known someone who knew someone else who was married to so-and-so who was a first cousin of Bill Smith's of Canned Meat Corners, Ontario, or elsewhere. However flimsy the pretext of friendship, photos are freely shown of the girl, or the missus and kids ("Gee, aren't the kids fat?" etc.). Then the draftee, becoming fully trained, is ordered to France, and sorrowfully takes leave of his "old timer" friend. The "old timer," knowing what the poor draftee has got to face, wishes he could take his place. These, then, are the facts that led to the following verses being written by an "old timer," who contributes, when he has time, soldier stories, etc., to *The Veteran*.

Two soldier lads in the canteen sat,
And the beer was flowing free.
And the question arose in their friendly chat,
As to what they would rather be.
For one was a war-worn R.D.G.,
The other a young and smart draftee.

Now the draftee lad had the most to say
(I've noticed draftees are built that way),
And he spoke of his horses, his grain, his farm,
And he told of his girl and her infinite charm,
And a photo he showed to the R.D.G.
Of the maiden who loved this smart draftee.

But the R.D.G. didn't care one jot
For the farm, or the grain, or the girl he'd got.
"When I volunteered," he remarked, "my friend,
I had money to spend and money to lend;
But the years are long—I've been serving three!"
"Then more fool you," said the smart draftee.

"I'm a pauper now," said the R.D.G.,
"But I've done my 'bit,' and I plainly see,
That I'll never be rich in this world again;
I've been paid with sorrow and scars and pain.
Still, I've got no right to grouse, you see,
I'm alive!"—"So am I," said the smart draftee.

"Well, well I remember near Ypres town,
When the Fritzies shells were a-thundering down—"
"Oh! To hell with the war," said the draftee smart,
"What price leaving home and a nice sweetheart?"
"Well, I did that too," said the R.D.G.
"And I had to come," said the smart draftee.

The talk swayed this way and then swayed that
As the soldier lads in the canteen sat,
One nursing his wounds and the fights he'd fought,
The other the loss of his fun and sport.
But before they left they were chums, you see,
For the R.D.G. liked the smart draftee.

The moon shone pale on a summer night,
And the band played cheerfully,
For a draft was leaving to join the fight,
And solemnly sad was the R.D.G.
As a hand he shook, he wished 'twas he
Going back in the place of the smart draftee.

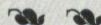
Oh! we all have heard of the Hun advance,
How our boys retired o'er the fields of France,
How they fought to the last in the o'erwhelming sweep.
Well—one who is sleeping his last long sleep
Is the kid who was chums with the R.D.G.
With his face to the foe fell the young draftee.

A Canadian town was ablaze with flags,
While the town band murdered the latest "rags,"
'Twas a welcome home from the land o'er-seas,
Of the wounded and war-worn R.D.G.
And to meet him there came with expectancy
The sweetheart who once loved the smart draftee.

Nowadays on a farm where the cattle roam,
Where the grain grows high round a prosperous home,
The R.D.G. in the evening breeze,
Sits and indulges in memories.
An aged and care-worn man is he,
This friend of a long dead smart draftee.

The sun sinks low in the western sky,
The birds to their nests in the green trees fly,
The voice of the shrew comes from out of the shack,
"Hey, Bill, come in or I'll break your neck";
And Bill obeys, with a wish that he
Could exchange once more with the smart draftee.

H. MACKNIGHT.



Those Civvy Clothes.

We all have our eyes on those civvy clothes, and look forward to the day when we shall don them and walk into the office of the patriotic employ, and "demand" a job as one of the boys. In theory he should at once hand you a billet, but what about the financial side of the transaction? Sentiment will neither fill your stomach nor pay dividends. Can you offer a return in services which will justify your claim to a job? If you cannot, it is time to start thinking about it, and get bushed up in your job. By the way, have you reached your ambition yet? Do you want to get a better job? If you do, you must "produce the goods," or there will be nothing doing. Khaki College offers you a chance to learn anything of use to you, either in farm, factory, or office, and it costs nothing. Come and see what others are doing. There is a splendid reference library, open day and evening, at Sutton Place. Look it over, and see if there is something useful, and whilst there look the class list over. You will find something there that just fits your job. Remember it costs nothing, the Government pays whilst you learn. Join when you like, and leave when you like. There is no compulsion. Ask the Officer i/c Education in your unit to tell you all about it. The Khaki College is the place where the men who are going to make money assemble and spend their time getting ready to put on better civvy clothes and earn bigger salaries. The ladder of success has rungs made up of study and industry, and Khaki College has a lease of them all, but they are free to you.