

In elegant language, appealing to their better selves and so on, ad lib. The gorge of the platoon rose at that and further devilment was incubated. A score of accidents happened with the seventh platoon. Twenty men developed an epidemic of rheumatism in the knees. Others complained of whatever other ailments would serve to irritate Charles Fitzmaurice. His bearing day by day became less cocky, but more belligerent, and then suddenly brightened on a day when he appeared at mess with a split lip.

"E—Mister Jones," the Colonel began, "I was going to speak to you about your platoon. Now—"

"If you please, Colonel," said Charles Fitzmaurice, "I think there'll be no more trouble with Number Seven, sir. I—I've found the trouble."

"Found it, eh?" said the Colonel. "Well... that's good news. Meantime you'd better do something for that lip. It looks bad."

"Yes, sir," said Jones, saluted and retired.

He had privately thrashed a big Scotch-Canadian in his platoon about dawn that very morning. The Scotch-Canadian had been the ring-leader of the mischief-makers, but had been betrayed by drink and Jones' batman. Jones had seized his opportunity.

THE newly-fledged officer feels at first all the importance and all the privileges of his position with very little of his responsibility. Presently the newness wears off his uniform and he comes to real grips with his platoon, finding that even men are, after all, almost like children, and have to be looked after almost as closely. That is, of course, after the subaltern has got to know them as Charles Fitzmaurice Jones got to know his. After he proved his physical superiority to the Scotch-Canadian, Jones discovered a new respect in the "Sir" with which his batman handed him his tie in the mornings and a new alacrity in the saluting. Presently his men began coming to him with their troubles. He was called upon to make peace between two brothers whose dispute arose out of a question of theological belief. He had to enter into the original question and determine which of two certain ways of receiving an infant into a church—neither of the brothers was married—would be the best form of soul insurance. He decided skillfully in favour of both—the details of that manoeuvre are too intricate to be told in this space. In another case—the battalion was still in the city where it had been recruited—he was called upon to pacify the wife of one of his men, who insisted that she "knew" his pay was more than he said it was and that he was "holding out" on her. Another man, a husky, red-headed colossus, was being pursued by a black-haired widow with matrimonial intentions. Jones' intervention saved the day by giving the frightened giant courage to resist seduction. Some borrowed money from him and some paid it back. Some had money, didn't know what was the best way to leave it behind them and required advice. In short, Jones became lawyer, doctor, priestly adviser, friend and father to his sixty. And the seventh platoon began to work smoothly.

CHARLES FITZMAURICE JONES, lieutenant with the seventh platoon, brought up the tail end of a long and weary column seeking new billets in the course of a certain manoeuvre at the front. The column was as nearly fagged as a good battalion will ever admit. It was a cold fall day, with rain overhead and muck underfoot, and if the muck had had half a chance it would have frozen. As the column approached a certain point on the road it was met by officers who directed the different platoons to various billets. Jones' platoon, coming last, was sent the farthest away—to a farmhouse kept by an old woman and her husband, the husband a cripple. Up the road, then up the lane to the farm-house, marched the seventh with its lieutenant. They were too tired to whistle, too hungry to talk. At the farm-house, while the men grounded arms, the old woman argued with Jones, half in French, half in English.

"But I will not let you into the barn," she said, in effect, "on account of the peas. They have never been threshed and if all you men go in there to sleep they will be ruined."

"But it is necessary," Jones insisted.

Finally the key to the little barn was produced and room for forty men found there. Fires were lighted in the courtyard and grub commenced by the men, while Jones looked for quarters for the rest of his men. Some had already found half-sheltered spots for themselves. They were the resourceful ones, but a final handful, less self-reliant, had to be squeezed into shelter somehow or another. Before nine o'clock Jones had all his men provided for. He came back to the fires and shared what food was to be had, his batman helping. That done, the platoon retired, each to his crowded resting-place—and Jones himself to the narrow, dry strip of frozen ground next the wall of the house and protected from the rain by the low-over-hanging eaves. Jones



FRITZ'S THREE-PLY BARBED WIRE.

This photograph shows a few of the entanglements about Verdun. But the barb wire through which the Poilus are so cautiously stealing is not French. It is the barbed wire of the German of which Norman Hall in his book, "Kitchener's Mob," said: "One of the men (British listening patrol) brought with him a piece of barbed wire, clipped from the German entanglement. 'Taffy, 'ave a look at this 'ere. Threeply stuff wot you can 'ardly get yer nippers through. Tyke it to Captain Stevens. I 'eard 'im say 'e's wantin' a bit to show to one of the artillery blokes. 'E's got a bet on with 'im that it's three-ply wire.'"

had the worst sleeping place of all. That was why he was a good officer.

There may be those who would say the seventh platoon did not appreciate these things. It growled and grumbled. It scowled and, on occasion, cursed. Jones never wasted words on it, nor did it waste thought on him, apparently. But when Jones, again at the tail of the column, fainted from unsuspected heart weakness on a long march one day, the end platoon took turns in carrying him among them. They wanted to send him to hospital, but he, reviving, insisted he could walk—so they compromised by carrying him. Then, when a big shell buried

Jones in earth, the seventh platoon dug him out in the face of many whizz-bangs and saved him at the cost of three of their own lives.

CHARLES FITZMAURICE JONES was "done in" by a stray bullet one night as he led a working party out into no man's land. The seventh platoon did not mourn. It went on with its work—digging a trench under the very nose of the Germans. It carried him back just before dawn and buried him by orders under the shadow of the Ploegstrete wood. It had "made" him and he made the platoon. There is little left of that seventh platoon now.



A SNAPSHOT THE SIZE OF A POSTAGE STAMP.

Down in the corner of this stealthy photograph was a miniature showing what it was enlarged from, no bigger than a postage stamp. If the soldiers making this cautious advance on an enemy trench had to be so cat-like, there was small chance of any camera-man handling a tripod or any camera bigger than his hand.