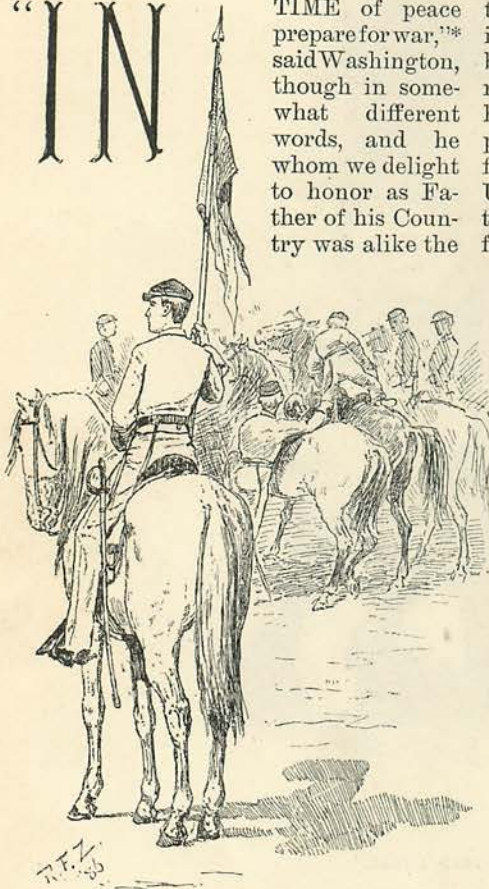


CADET LIFE AT WEST POINT.

BY CHARLES KING, U.S.A.

IN



TIME of peace prepare for war,"* said Washington, though in somewhat different words, and he whom we delight to honor as Father of his Country was alike the

to nearly all. Yale and Harvard, its seniors by another century and more, are barely mentioned in some States and Territories where West Point is as a household word. It is emphatically the people's school, for its pupils are summoned from every Congressional district in the Union. It is democratic to an extent that no other school can hope to attain, for here, as nowhere else, the rank, riches,

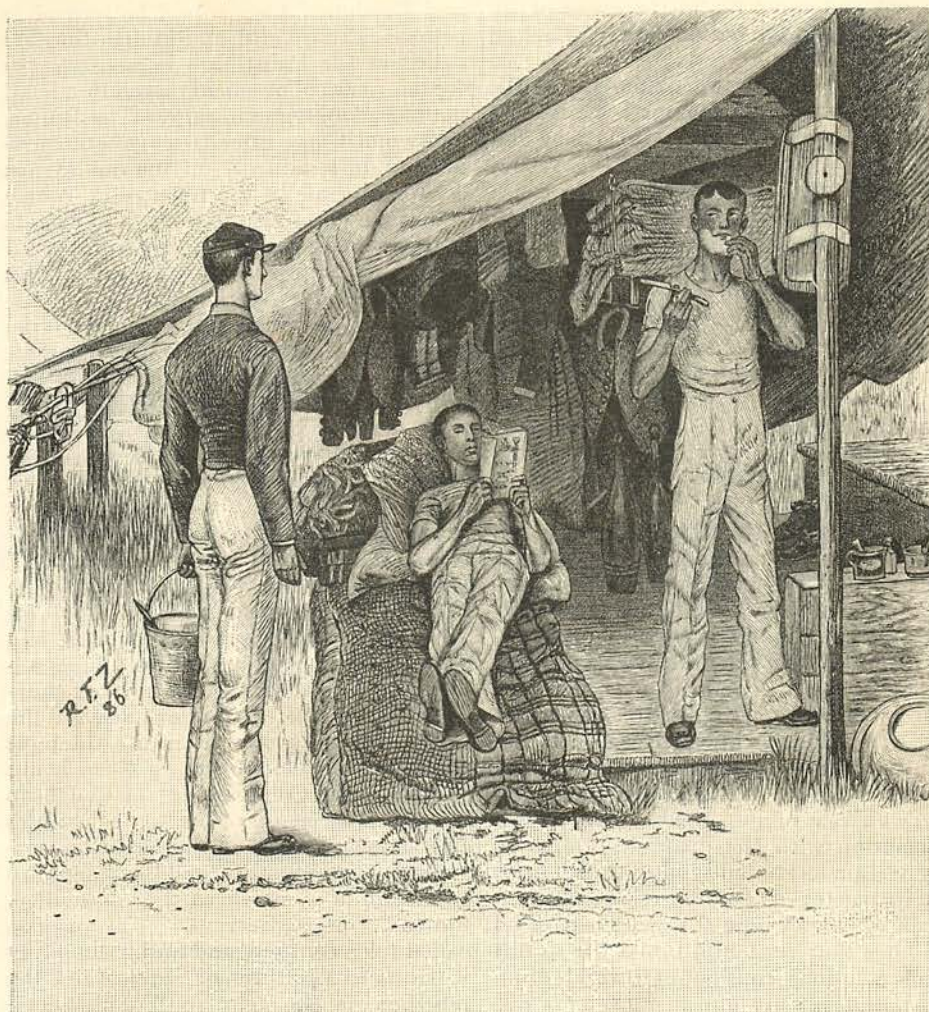
and prominence of parents avail as nothing, and every man stands on his own merits. Two-thirds of those appointed find no place on the final class list, and the son of a President has been distanced in the race the son of a bricklayer won. It is the people's school because it is open to all, rich or poor, black or white, Romanist, Protestant, or Mormon. The nation demands of its aspirant only that he shall be perfect in physique, of good moral character, and well grounded in the studies of the public schools, that he may be fitted for a training which in rigor and exaction has no parallel in America. Fifty years ago—before we had such public schools—the standard of admission was necessarily low, and three-fourths of those who easily passed the entrance examination proved subsequently unable to grapple with the problems of the four years' course. Thousands of dollars were wasted in feeding, clothing, and turning away

father, if not the founder, of the nation's Military Academy at West Point. Possibly in those very days when he rested under Arnold's roof-tree in the rock-bound fortress of the Hudson Highlands he noted the strange topography that seemed to fit the spot for the great purpose to which it has been devoted. Certain it is that our traditions tell us George Washington declared it the very place for the soldier school of the United States, and here, early in the century, the Corps of Engineers laid its corner-stone, and became the foster-parents of the infant academy.

Its history and its purpose are known

* "To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual ways of preserving peace."—Washington's Address to Congress, January 8, 1790.

scores of incompetents. Wisely the authorities decreed a higher standard of admission as the facilities for meeting it were spread throughout the land. Disappointed parents and offended Congressmen made loud denunciation of the change, and declared the new standard one that Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, and soldiers like them could never have passed, forgetful of the fact that times too had utterly changed, and that men of the mettle of those very three, were they boys again and had the opportunities of the boys of to-day, would need no lowering of the bars. The public schools give all the standard calls for, and it was to keep step with the progress of the age that a far-sighted Academic Board decided on the change. West Point would have



FIRST CLASS MAGNATES.

fallen hopelessly behind had it maintained the gauge of '46.

Well known as are its name and purposes, West Point to nine-tenths of our people is in its inner life as a sealed book. At other institutions the young man pays some five hundred dollars yearly to be a student; at West Point the institution pays the scholar. Herein lies one secret of its discipline. Not only does the government lay before the fortunate holder of a cadetship an excellent education and a life position in a high and honorable profession, but it pays him for his efforts to win the final prize. The student knows none of the cares or privations, and few of

the temptations, of a large proportion of his fellow-toilers at the hundred colleges that adorn our land. He is abundantly clothed, warmed, housed, fed—provided for in every way. He has no expenses that his income does not amply meet; he has little or nothing to distract his mind from his studies; he cannot envy the dress or style of his wealthy classmates, for the son of a Vanderbilt must wear, and has worn, the same garb that warms the back of the hod carrier's boy. Freely supplied with provision against every healthful need, fully taught every manly and graceful accomplishment, finely schooled in science and in soldier lore, carefully

nursed and cared for in the event of illness or injury, the nation's pupil is indeed a favored boy.

But lavish as is the nation in all the appointments of its famous school, there is no cent thrown away. For every dollar spent on the education of his future officers "Uncle Sam" demands—and has good right to demand—full recompense. In return for all these benefits the young cadet must bind himself to four years of submission to the avuncular will; to four years of hard study, of prescribed exercise, of close seclusion, of prompt and cheerful subordination to rigid discipline; to four years of a life every day and hour of which is planned for him beforehand; and he must willingly yield himself to the preconcerted moulding, or give place to one who can and will.

The casual visitor to the academy sees in cadet life only a vision of military exercises, of gallant, graceful forms, of faultless uniforms and glittering arms, of bewildering "hops" and "germans," of moonlight camps amid the grandest scenery on the continent, of romance and chivalry all athrob with the stirring strains of martial music; but he who knows it well knows it to be four years of rigorous preparation for a profession that is full of demands upon every energy of manhood. In years of association with the dear old Point—as boy visitor, as student youth, as graduate and instructor—the writer can recall hundreds of cases where the cadet bemoaned the fates that sent him into a life so full of monotonous routine and rigid discipline, and yet not one instance of a discharged cadet who did not sincerely regret his failure and banishment.

To succeed at West Point a young man must have good natural ability, and more than the average capacity for application. To be happy there, he must be heart, soul, and enthusiastically a soldier. Without a fervent love for the profession he adopts, there must come days and weeks when he will groan in weariness of spirit—so depressing does the wintry monotony become.

A glimpse at the brighter side is best to be had during the annual encampment, when from mid-June until the end of August the Corps of Cadets deserts the gray stone barracks, and pitches its white tents among the trees along the eastern edge of the broad plateau.

Three classes—Seniors, Sophomores,

and Freshmen they would be termed in college—First, Third, and Fourth they are called at the Point—are here assembled for ten weeks of practical instruction in all manner of matters military. The Junior, or Second Class, after two years of unremitting duty, is away on the one almost delirious break in the four years' course—that one brief visit to home and fireside that is vouchsafed during the third summer of cadet life—the only visit so long as the cadet shall wear the gray.

In camp, as in barracks, the corps is organized as a battalion of four companies, with the full complement of officers and non-commissioned officers selected from their own ranks. It is a proud thing to be head of the class, and prospective possessor of a commission in the engineers, but even this dignity pales in cadet eyes in presence of those luminaries of the First Class—the adjutant and "first captain." Having served one year as a private in the Fourth Class, the cadet becomes eligible for appointment to the grade of corporal, and some twenty out of a hundred young soldiers are decorated with the coveted chevrons of gold-lace. Another year, and the same number become sergeants, the most soldierly and reliable among them being chosen by the Commandant of Cadets to be the first sergeants of the four companies and sergeant-major of the battalion—positions which require "grit" and determination quite as much as they do ability, for the "orderly sergeant," as he was called for a century, and still is called by veterans of the wars of Mexico and the rebellion, is the very soul of the company. One year more, and the Second Class men become First Class, and the most "military" and meritorious of their number step into the proudest offices of the whole course: the young soldiers who wear the plumes and chevrons of the adjutant and captains are probably envied as they will not again be for years. He may not realize it at the time, but a "First Class officer" ranks far higher in the little world at West Point than the same youth graduated and promoted (?) to the grade of junior subaltern at a frontier post.

A day in camp is best observed late in August. By this time all the corps are well shaken down into their positions. The new cadets, or "plebes," are all thoroughly uniformed, drilled, and in their places in the battalion, and everything is moving with the clock-like regularity that

is so characteristic of the academy. With the "furlough class" away, there are perhaps two hundred and twenty young soldiers tenting there close under the grass-grown parapets of old Fort Clinton, and their surroundings would inspire a heart of stone. The broad glistening Hudson, bursting its way through the gorge of the Appalachians from the north, comes sweeping down that magnificent "reach" from Newburgh, and under the rocky flanks of Breakneck, Bull Hill, and old Cro' Nest, swirls around the jagged point of Constitution Island, and then is shouldered completely out of its course by the bold, jutting promontory that springs out from the mountain and stems the sweeping tide. The river beats in vain upon its adamant, and, flung aside, turns abruptly eastward, feels its way around the stubborn bluff, and thence flows once more southward, "unvexed to the sea."

North and east the Point is hemmed in by the mighty river, west and south by the rock-ribbed Highlands. The plateau, little by little, has been levelled and graded, until to-day it is a broad, beautiful, grass-grown plain, bounded on the west by the cozy homes of the officers and professors, on the south by the stately barracks, the grim, old-fashioned "Academic," the Grecian chapel, and the domed turrets of the Library. Skirting the precipitous river-banks, a broad, graded road encloses the plateau on the north and east, and others, as level and carefully kept, border it on west and south, and nearly bisect it along the meridian. Covered with well-cropped turf, the western half of "the plain" is devoted to infantry drills; the batteries and the crunching hoofs of the horses are limited to the gravel of the eastern half. All around are the rocky heights, trimmed with pine and fir and cedar, with here and there a peep at the stony parapet of some old redoubt or battery thrown up in the days of the Revolution. The square-built hostelry, once and for years known as Roe's, stands perched at the northeast limit of the plain. Statues in bronze or marble gleam here and there amid the foliage, and tell of deeds of heroism and devotion on the part of the sons of the old academy. The tall white staff glistens against the dark background of the Highlands, and throws to the breeze, high over all, the brilliant colors of the Stars and Stripes; and on the easternmost verge of the broad

plateau lies the camp ground, the summer home of the Corps of Cadets.

Laid out in mathematical regularity, with well-gravelled pathways, sentry posts, and "color line," and shaded by beautiful trees, the encampment, like everything else at West Point, is so exquisitely trim and neat as to have little resemblance to the "tented field" as seen in actual service on the frontier. The white tents gleam in accurate ranks that look as though they were pitched by aid of the "straight-edge" rule. Farthest to the west are the guard and visitors' tents; then comes an open space between them and the color line, along which the arms are stacked every bright day. It is in this space that the camp ceremonies—guard mounting, dress parade, and the weekly inspections—take place. Immediately behind the color line are the tents of the four companies, two inward-facing rows to each, with a broad alley, known as the "general parade," separating the right and left wings. The company streets run east and west perpendicularly to the color line, and the tents of the cadet officers are pitched looking west along the streets of their respective companies. Behind the rows of company officers' tents, and opposite the right and left of camp, are the larger domiciles of those cadet magnates the adjutant and quartermaster. Back still farther are the double tents of the four army officers who are the immediate commanders and instructors of the four companies; and behind them all, at the rear of camp, is the big "marquee" of the Commandant of Cadets. Dotted about the rear of camp are the little tents occupied by the drum boy "orderlies," the boot-blacks, varnishers, etc.; and around them all, day and night, paces the chain of sentries, which, posted in mid-June, is never removed until the simultaneous fall of every tent on the 28th of August.

One day is the counterpart of another as the end of camp draws nigh, and the visitor who would take a peep at the inner phases of cadet life must have a "friend at court," and be an early riser. Let us suppose that in your desire to have a nearer view of those slender striplings you have invoked the aid of some one of the officers on duty at the Point. He tells you to be prepared to "make a day of it," warns you to be called at 5 A.M., and is waiting for you on the hotel piazza when you appear. Muffled in your overcoats,

for these late August mornings are sharply cold, you walk briskly down the graded path leading to camp. A faint, drowsy gleam as of a lantern is visible at the guard tents, and the gas jets along the sentry posts have the sickly glare that early morning gives to all. Camp lies still as a grave, dim and ghostly, but all the eastern sky is lighting up with the radiance of coming morn, and the hoary battlements of "Old Fort Put," and the crags of Cro' Nest overhanging the sleeping Point, are alternately wreathed with wisps of cloud and roseate in reflection from the orient. Not a sound is heard as you near the sentry lines, but you may never hope to slip in unobserved. Keeping beyond hail of the guard tents, your conductor purposely leads you down by Fort Clinton's dark parapet, and you are close to the ghostly white village, when there is sudden gleam and rattle among the trees, a flash of steel, as a cadet rifle comes down to "charge bayonet," a stern young voice challenges, "Who comes there?" and before you stands a vigilant sentry, the dew dripping from the visor of his forage cap, the collar of his overcoat well muffled about his ears. "Friends with the countersign," is your conductor's prompt reply. "Halt, friends! advance one with the countersign," orders the sentinel, and at the uncompromising mandate, while you "stand fast," your friend steps up to that levelled bayonet, and over its threatening point whispers some cabalistic word that in the twinkling of an eye changes the whole attitude of the guard from one of fierce suspicion to respectful attention. "Advance, friends," he says, as his heels come together and his rifle to the "carry" with simultaneous click; and there he stands like a gray and white statue as you cross his guarded land, and penetrate without further hinderance the forbidden limits.

Sound sleepers are the boys, thanks to all their vigorous exercise, undoubted excellence of digestion, and presumable clearness of conscience. In ten minutes, by the inexorable rules of West Point, every mother's son in that camp must be up and doing, but among the tents not a soul as yet is stirring. In the gathering light you can see the sentries at the south and east slowly pacing their posts, and mark that the main guard is astir. A squad of little drummer boys is hastening across the plain toward camp; a corporal

marches two silent youths in gray to the dew-dripping field-piece that stands at the northeast angle; the tips of the tents are gaining a rosy tint; the skies across the Hudson are gorgeous in their coloring; the mist is creeping from the stream that goes swirling down the silent reach; you hear a dull thud or two as the gunners ram home their cartridge, and the low-toned chatter of the drum boys as they brace their batter heads and look expectantly at the gilded hands of the big clock in the "Academic" tower across the plain. Suddenly there comes the mellow stroke of the bell, and with it a belching cloud of smoke and flame from the black muzzle of the gun, a thundering roar, and at the same instant the shrill music of the fifes and resonant rattle of the drums as they break into the stirring rolls of the *reveille*. It is enough to rouse the Seven Sleepers.

One after another tent flaps are raised, and still drowsy heads peer forth, and then by dozens, erect, slender, buttoned to the throat in their snug-fitting "coatees," and looking all legs in their trim white trousers, the young fellows swarm upon the company streets; but as yet all are "plebes"—the oldsters are in no such hurry to leave their warm blankets, and have learned the value of every military minute. The drums are playing their thundering march around camp; dozens of time-saving plebes, bucket-laden, are scurrying off in the direction of the water tanks, and come back ready for their *al fresco* ablutions. If there be any who, like Fitz-James and Roderick,

"mutter their soldier matins by,"

we see nothing of it. Once more the drums have resumed the roll of the *reveille*, then suddenly cease. There comes a brief interval of silence, during which the company streets fill up with forms in gray and white. Then, sharp, quick, imperative, the "assembly," or "second call," is rattled on the drums. "Fall in!" order the sergeants, and like a flash each company springs into two long columns of files; for there is not an instant to lose. Every man must be in his place at the last tap of the inexorable drum—not twenty seconds from the first—and there it is. "Left face," orders each first sergeant at the instant, while his classmate and senior file-closer, the second sergeant, even as he answers to his own name, makes



mental note of the two or three luckless wights who come tearing into ranks just one "differential of a second" too late to get there before the final tap, and though they may be his own classmates and in-

timate friends, those fellows will figure in the day's delinquency books as "late at *re-veille*." Roll-call at West Point is a revelation to the uninitiated. The first sergeant rattles off his list of sergeants, corporals, and then, in alphabetical order, the privates, never hesitating a second. He uses no list, no book, no card. Those seventy or eighty names are graven in his memory, and even as he calls each name he knows the voice that should answer "Here," and his vigilant eye notes the sponsor. It is all over in half a minute. While the ranks at his single word scatter like sheep, he makes his brief soldierly report to the grave young captain, who stands near the flank, and the first duty of the day is over. The captains report to the adjutant or the officer of the day, as may be the custom at the time. Absentees, if any, are promptly hunted up. Off come the gray coats as bedding is piled, tent floors are swept, and tent walls raised for ventilation, and in another half-hour the drums are merrily rattling away on the old army tune "Pease upon a Trencher"—



MARCHING TO THE MESS-HALL.

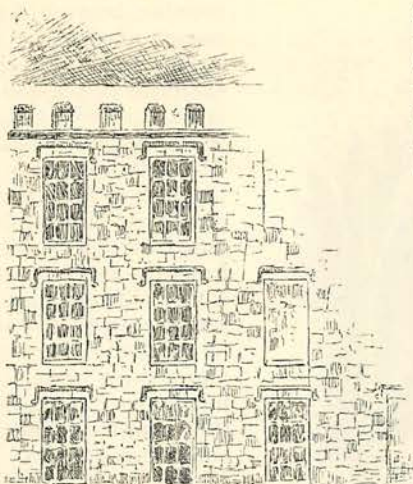
the soldier signal for breakfast. Again the ranks are formed, rolls are called, the sergeants march their companies to the color line, the officers take their stations, the ringing voice of the "first captain"—the senior cadet officer—orders attention, swings the battalion into column of platoons to the left, then "Forward—guide right—march!" and to the stirring, old-fashioned music of the fifes and drums away they go across the broad level of the cavalry plain until they reach the main road; down the shaded lane between the chapel and the massive façade of the ugly old "Academic"; down past the beautiful pile of the new "Head-quarters" and the grassy terrace beyond, and then each platoon wheels in succession to the right, springily mounts the broad stone steps, and is swallowed up in the massive portals of the Mess-hall.

Just so for years, with the same buoyant, elastic tread, in the same solid ranks, have the nation's pupils marched to their daily bread. Faces that grew bronzed and bearded and lined with thought and care were bright and smooth-shaven and full of pluck and hope under the little blue forage caps, and forms that grew massive and stalwart, or feeble and shattered with honorable wounds, were all once clad in the tight-fitting uniform "coatee." Grant, silent, patient, and invincible; Sherman, brilliant, nervous, and quick; Sheridan, fiery, meteoric, burning with fight and energy; Lee, skilful and chivalric; Jackson, daring to the verge of recklessness, prayerful to the verge of fanaticism; Hancock, knightly and superb on every field; Thomas, leonine, steadfast, and indomitable; Meade, loyal, dutiful, and resolute; McPherson, Sedgwick, and Reynolds, magnificent even in death; Stuart, cavalier trooper and bold rider; Longstreet, grim war-dog of the Confederacy; Sidney Johnston and Charles F. Smith, twin types of soldierly grace and grandeur; dark-eyed, dapper Beauregard; saturnine Halleck; priestly Polk; scientific and staff-schooled McClellan; "Joe" Johnston, Sherman's last armed antagonist; Hood and Hardee, Hill, Ewell, Ramseur, Rosser, Armistead, Garnett, Kemper, Pickett, Sumner, Franklin, Porter, Heintzelman, Burnside, Hooker, Buford, Bayard, Howard, Rosecrans, Schofield, Stanley, Warren, Gibbon, Ord, Hunt, Getty, Humphreys—a host of names famous in the annals of the great war and distinguished in the history of the na-

tion—all in their time, to the same old tunes of the fife and drum, marched at the command of the cadet first captain, thrice each day, to take their soldier rations at the Mess-hall.

True, the Mess-hall itself is a far handsomer building, as to exterior and interior, than the original affair to which our greatest soldiers were marched, and even in the last ten years great changes have been made in the domestic economies of the cadet. Time was when both table fare and service were far inferior to what they are to-day, and far shabbier than they should have been at the time; but now the Mess-hall challenges inspection. Vigilant officers have taken it in hand and made it a model. Few institutions can show a better refectory; none can exhibit better appetites.

Cheerful conversation promotes good digestion, say the doctors, and the clatter of tongues as the boys settle to their work exceeds the racket of knife and fork on the responsive crockery. There is a Babel of voices, an odd intermingling of dialects; for every section of our broad Union is there represented, and no cliques are encouraged. South Carolina hobnobs with her old enemy Massachusetts; creole blood from Louisiana is warmed by coffee from the same urn that starts the sluggish veins of the Pennsylvania Dutchman; soft-voiced sons of Georgia and Kentucky elide their "r's" and swap merry *badinage* with a fellow whose backwoods whang proclaims the "Pike" from Missouri; a swarthy Californian rips out some half-Spanish, half-savage expletive in excited controversy with his New England *vis-à-vis*, whose wildest flight in the possibilities of blasphemy is "Gosh all hemlock!" and a youth whose clear blue eyes and the blondest hair and skin imaginable proclaim him a Norseman who hails from a Scandinavian district in Minnesota happens along at the instant, with the red sash of the "officer of the day" over his shoulder, and the gentleman from the Golden Gate puts a bridle on his tongue forthwith. The officer of the day is "on honor" to note in his report every violation of academic regulations, and profanity is one of them. Were the Californian his bosom friend, and dismissal the penalty of his offence, there could be no middle course. The word of honor of the cadet is the *ne plus ultra* of West Point ethics; there is no



datory incursion upon the orchards or vineyards below the Point; but even to save himself or his best friend from punishment he draws the line at one thing—he won't lie. When a cadet says he has or has not done this or that, you can endorse the statement.

And so, when the cadet lieutenant from Minnesota reports his classmate from California for "using profane language," the latter never thinks of questioning the report or of reproaching the reporter. It is a matter of duty and honor, and that is the end of it. California not only gets a formidable figure on the demerit books, but for many a weary Saturday afternoon he will have to confine himself to his room, or else "walk extra," equipped as a sentinel, up and down the area of barracks.

But breakfast is over,



WALKING AN EXTRA.

going behind or beyond it. It is the first lesson taught the youngster on joining. It is preached in wordless sermons every day and hour of his four years' course. It is the last thing of his education he is apt to forget. Like other boys, he has his fun, his faults, his vices, and his "scrapes." He may violate every one of the few hundred regulations that have been evolved from year to year; he may "cut" church, "run it" to the Falls or other unhallowed resort; he may even make a pre-

time is up; the first captain makes quick but searching inspection of each table to see that there has been no wastage; the army "officer in charge," who is required to breakfast, dine, and sup on the identical fare

which is laid before the cadets, comes forth from the steward's room and goes on to inspect the kitchen. Each company in succession receives the order to rise, and out



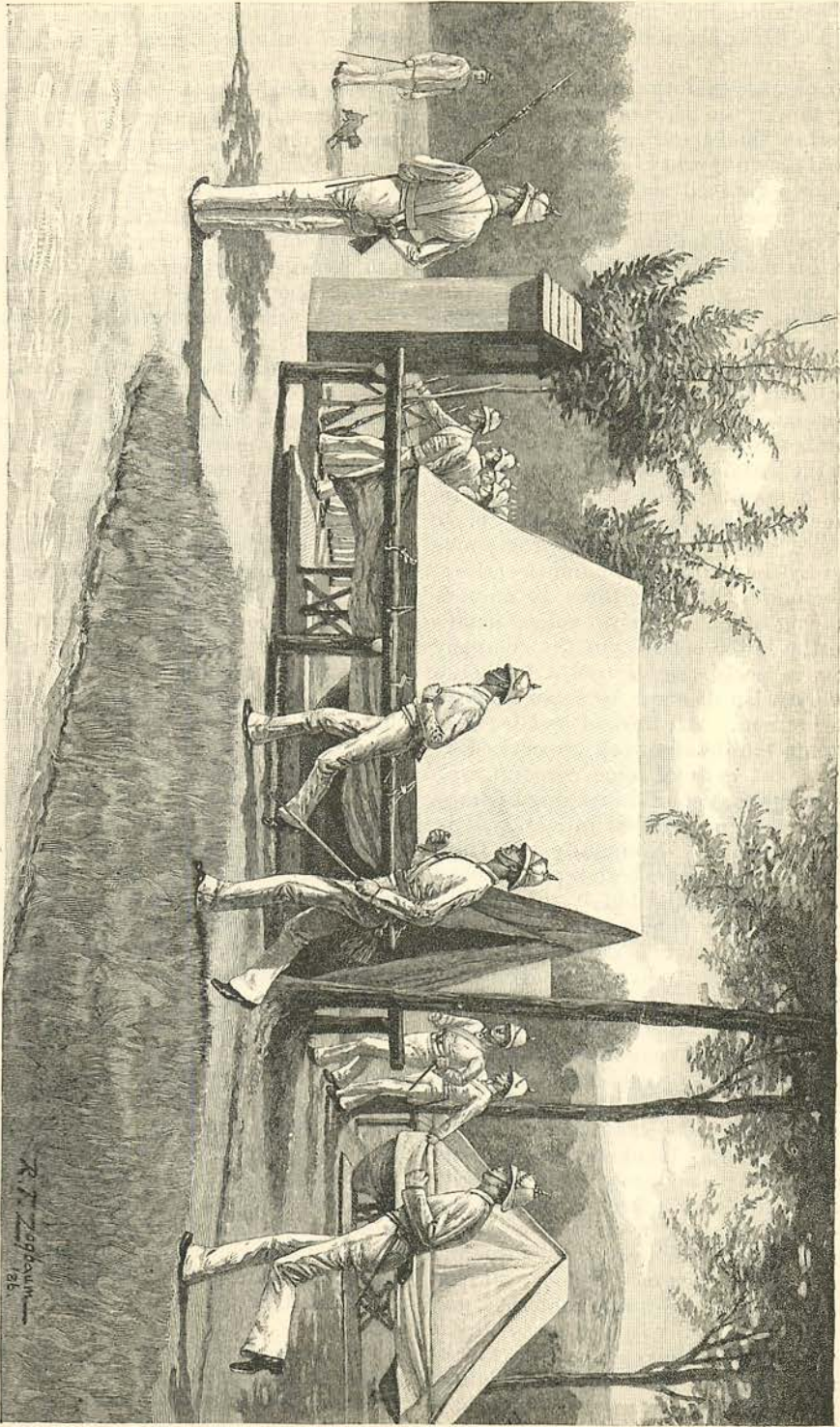
OFFICER OF THE DAY.

into the air and sunshine, leaping down the steps, go the youngsters; quickly they spring into ranks, and suddenly every voice but one is stilled—the omnipotent first captain again—and by his command the platoons wheel northward, and once more to lively music the battalion marches briskly away. The sentry on No. 6 salutes as they cross his post; one instant they stand motionless after wheeling into line, and then, at the command, “Break ranks—march!” scatter like a great covey of quail all over camp.

Next comes morning drill, the most un-

popular, because the most monotonous. For nearly an hour the battalion is exercised in the manual of arms, and though this drill is one which is taken up “by battalion” only a fortnight or so each year, it is of trifling interest to spectators, and a purely perfunctory matter with the corps. Years ago, when the veteran Scott was chief of our little army, and its manœuvres were of the ponderous Prussian school, the “manual,” under such commandants as Major Worth and Charles F. Smith, was a miracle of precision and beauty, and the old-fashioned smooth-bore cadet muskets, with shining bands and barrels, were brought to the “present,” “charge,” or “order” with a simultaneous crash that could be heard across the Hudson, and every motion of hand or finger was clock-work. But with the adoption of the light-infantry tactics here came a change that few failed to see. Possibly more of the spirit of the tactics of Hardee and Upton has been adopted by the corps than those eminent authors ever intended; certain it is that when unhindered the battalion of cadets will slap through the manual of arms with an easy grace that is peculiar to itself, and with small attention, after the initiatory “squad drills,” to the finer points of the tactics. The general effect is attractive and business-like, it is all so deft and quick, but the old precision of movement can no longer be claimed for it. The “manual” is a matter to which our crack regiments in the National Guard give great prominence and careful teaching; with the Corps of Cadets it is of minor importance, and only when some new Commandant happens in, or a “tactical officer” who is a stickler for points, is there any attempt to hammer

"TURN OUT THE GUARD!"



R. T. Zappavigna
1865

the battalion into mechanical accuracy again. There is a brief reaction, some sharp drilling "by the numbers" for a week or two; then the matter is gradually forgotten in the press of something more important, and the corps easily slips back into its own jaunty, *nonchalant* style, and keen-eyed citizen-soldiers who have run up from the armories of the Seventh or Twenty-second, in New York, note how this motion or the other is slighted, and wonder what it means. It simply means that at the Point and in the regular service the old Prussian precision is a thing of the past; officers, cadets, and soldiers have a dozen things of far greater importance to think of and attend to; celerity is the word; and yet—were it hinted to the battalion that the "manual" was to be overhauled this particular day on parade, the whole command would "brace up" and execute the entire programme in a way that would confound the critics.

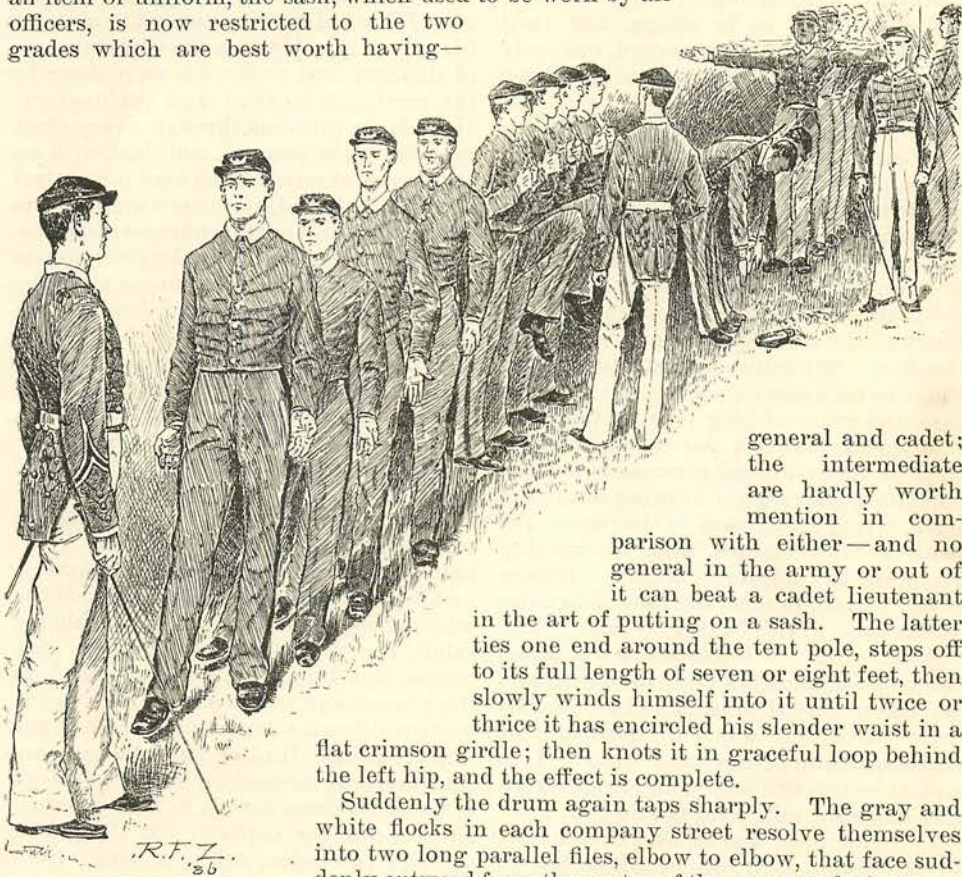
Morning drill over, there is another scattering to tents. Busy "police" details from the lower classes put the company streets in perfect order; not a feather, a match, a wisp of straw, or scrap of paper is to be seen. All around and between the tents the details work, supervised by the vigilant eyes of some corporal, who well knows that should anything be amiss at inspection, no one but himself will be held responsible. Nominally the Third and Fourth classes are both represented on each "police detail," but if the bulk of the work be not done to this day by the "plebes," the system is radically changed from that of twenty-five years ago, when they did all of it.

Busy preparation is going on in each of the tents. Three, sometimes four, cadets are the occupants of each, and one of the inmates is "orderly." His business it is to see that the wooden tent floor is carefully swept, the blankets, pillows, and "comforters" accurately and squarely piled in the easternmost corner of the floor and farthest from the company street; spare shoes neatly polished and aligned at the back of the floor; all candles, candlesticks, cleaning materials, and miscellaneous items stowed away in the tin candle box which stands at the foot of the rear tent pole just behind the butts of the polished rifles; all belts, sabres, bayonet scabbards, and other equipments dusted, and hanging from their pegs on the rear tent pole; the jaunty dress hats

perched on their appropriate shelf; all woollen clothing, overcoats, coatees, riding jackets, etc., neatly swung on a rack beneath the ridge-pole; all other clothing, including white trousers, belts, gloves, collars, and the like, stowed in the "locker"—a West Point expression for a long wooden box, about the size and shape of a coffin case, painted a dull green, and utterly innocent of lock or key. It is divided into four compartments, each a hollow cube of about eighteen inches cross section, each with separate lid, inside which are tacked some straps for brushes, shaving implements, etc.; and this locker is the sole stowaway the cadet can have for his summer belongings. Such books as are needed or permitted in camp must be neatly piled at the rear end of the locker, and behind it is stowed the broom. The white stone-ware washbowl rests, bottom outward, against the floor near the front end of the locker; the water bucket stands close beside it; a little wooden-framed mirror is perched on the front tent pole; and every item must be of the prescribed pattern, and purchased at the cadet commissary store, even to the soap that is placed behind the washbowl. Hypercritical visitors have been known to inquire if each piece of soap must be worn to uniform thickness, but the sarcasm has fallen harmless upon the armor of West Point authority. Every article has its prescribed place, and must be nowhere else, or the young gentleman whose name stands topmost on the little "orderly board" that decks the front tent pole will hear of it through the delinquency book within the next twenty-four hours. It would take the uninitiated visitor half a day to put one of these tents in proper order for inspection, but the expert "yearling" will do it in three minutes, and as the first drum taps for morning parade he issues from his domicile, buttoned to the throat in faultlessly fitting uniform, his collar, belts, gloves, cuffs, and trousers of glistening white, his shoes, belt plates, and brasses gleaming with polish, and his rifle in perfect order: a cambric handkerchief could not flick a particle of dust from his attire.

The company grounds are picturesque sights at this hour. Up by the guard tents numbers of gayly dressed spectators are sauntering in to take their accustomed seats in the grove at the west end. The band, headed by its stately drum-major,

comes marching across the plain from its barracks below the hill. A group of officers approaches from the distant "mess," and the sentry on No. 1 rattles his piece to "arms port," and the heights re-echo to his stentorian shout, "Turn out the guard—Commandant of Cadets!" or his similar announcement of the approach of some equally exalted functionary; the members of the guard scramble for the arm racks, seize their rifles, form ranks, and present arms with a unanimity and precision that would delight any man not accustomed to such displays of adulation. Down in camp, the company streets are alive with cadets in full dress awaiting the "fall in" signal of the second drum, and along the row of company officers' tents a dozen young satraps are winding themselves into their sashes as none but cadets ever think of doing, and only cadets succeed in obtaining so excellent a final effect. As an item of uniform, the sash, which used to be worn by all officers, is now restricted to the two grades which are best worth having—



PLEBE DRILL.

general and cadet; the intermediate are hardly worth mention in comparison with either—and no general in the army or out of it can beat a cadet lieutenant in the art of putting on a sash. The latter ties one end around the tent pole, steps off to its full length of seven or eight feet, then slowly winds himself into it until twice or thrice it has encircled his slender waist in a flat crimson girdle; then knots it in graceful loop behind the left hip, and the effect is complete.

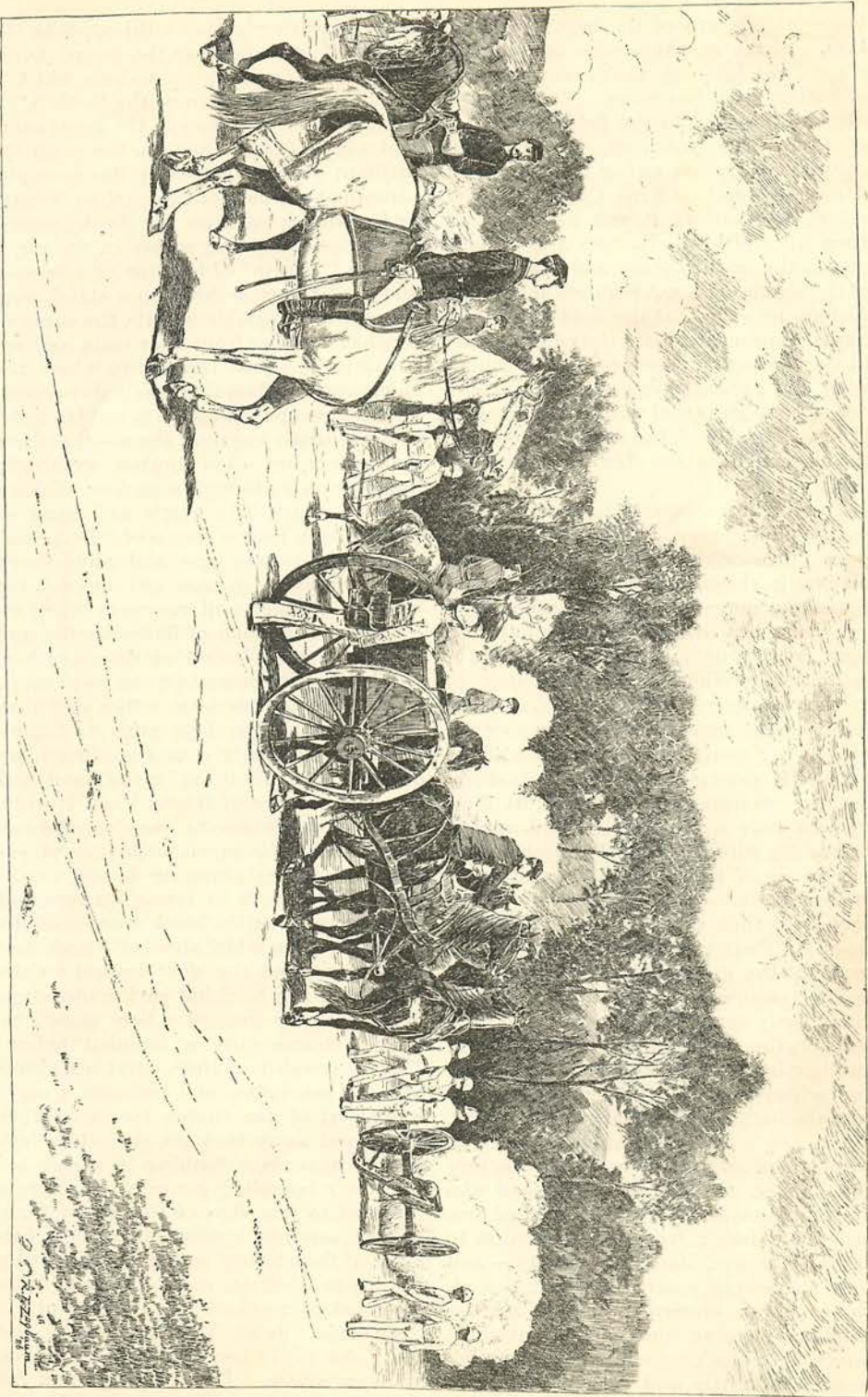
Suddenly the drum again taps sharply. The gray and white flocks in each company street resolve themselves into two long parallel files, elbow to elbow, that face suddenly outward from the centre of the camp at the last tap; the glistening rifles spring up to "support arms," and each first sergeant calls off his roll as though the last thing he were thinking of was the answering "here"; one after another the white-gloved hands snap the pieces down to the "carry" and "order" as each man answers to his name; the sergeant faces his captain with soldierly salute and takes his post; the captain whips out his shining sword; the lieutenants step to their posts—and then begins the sharp inspection. Man after man is passed under the scrutinizing eye of the young officer. A speck of rust about the rifle, a dingy belt plate, a soiled or rumbled collar, a tear in the glove, a spot on the trousers, dust on the shoes, a single button missing or unfastened, any one of these or similar solecisms, be it on part of First Class man or plebe, tent-mate or stranger, friend or foe, will probably be noted on the company delinquency book that day, and published by the adjutant to the whole battalion the next evening. The captain

is a man of few words; to the upper-class man a mere look tells what is amiss; to the plebe he frequently adds a brief admonition or reproof. Poor young bears! they have a host of troubles to encounter, and a thousand things to learn in less than a month. To see them, even when not in ranks or on duty, walking about camp, during their first summer at the Point, with their little fingers pressed to the seams of their trousers, and the palms of their hands flat to the front, so that the shoulders *have* to be square, and their backs flat as an ironing-board, one only wonders that even old age can ever bend or bow them.

Inspection over, there is a moment's breathing spell. Then the adjutant, with his sergeant-major and markers, appears at the head of the general parade, raises his hand in signal to the band, the drum-major whirls his baton, drums and fifes strike up the lively notes of "adjutant's call," the full band crashes into the martial melody of a spirited quickstep, and the four companies come striding forth. There is no moment's delay, but with the ease and grace of long practice the adjutant forms the line, the captains march their perfectly drilled commands to their appointed places, guides spring out to the front, ranks are dressed to the centre, the band abruptly ceases, and the ringing voice of the adjutant orders, "Guides posts!" Each in turn, the four companies are brought to the "carry," "order," and "parade rest," the drum-major whirls his baton again, there is a flourish of trumpets and drums, and then band and field music come "trooping" down in front of that statuesque line of gray and white. It is a sight well worth seeing any bright summer morning, and there are hosts of lookers on—mothers, sisters, and sweethearts by the dozen, each one of whom has in those motionless ranks some especial cadet who is the central object of her thoughts, however general may be the flow of conversation. Back to its post goes the band, after a bewildering countermarch, near the sentry on No. 6; there is another flourish, another abrupt stop to the music, and in its place there rings upon the morning air the clear young voice of the adjutant as he calls the line to attention, opens the ranks, then comes gleaming down to the centre, turns sharply to the right in front of the colors, and with quick, springy steps the most

envied youth at the Point stalks out to the front, halts midway to the commanding officer, faces about, and at his next word arms clash to the "present." Once more he faces the dark blue figure standing solitary at the front, lowers his sword in graceful salute, and reports: "Sir, the parade is formed." The officer in command may be a hero of a dozen battles and "brevets," but to lookers on, cadet and civilian, 'tis safe to say he is an object of small consequence as compared with the graceful stripling who takes his place at his side. Possibly it is the consciousness of this fact that makes his own share in the ceremony so brief and perfunctory. He puts the battalion through a very short exercise in the manual, and then, with an air of evident relief, turns over the control of affairs to the adjutant once more. The first sergeants and the plume-crested colossus of a drum-major make their precise reports; then with simultaneous clash the officers return swords, and face toward the centre; the adjutant and his fellow-magnates close in front of the colors, face the commanding officer in a long line of black plumes and red sashes. "Forward, guide centre!" is the adjutant's next command, and at the word "march" the band again strikes up, and with perfect alignment a full score of young captains and subalterns march jauntily to the front, halt short at six yards from the lonely-looking party in sombre blue, together the white-gloved hands are raised in soldierly salute, together they drop, and the statuesque line becomes a scattering flock as the plumes and sashes scurry back to the tents, whither the companies march at the same instant. It often happens in camp that morning inspection follows instead of precedes dress parade as time is short. In this case the captains put their men through the ordeal while a detail from each company, conducted by the first sergeant, is proceeding to another, guard-mounting, the prettiest ceremony of the day.

To all but those "marching on" with the new guard this half-hour is the brightest between the rising and setting of the sun, for the moment inspection is over all cadets not on duty and who have friends among the lady spectators are mingling with them back of the guard tents, and fun and flirtation begin forthwith. It is a short half-hour, for all too soon the warning drum is thundering again, and



THE LIGHT BATTERY.

leave-takings are of the briefest description. Sharp at the stroke of nine the classes are again in ranks, and the hour of battery drill has come. The "plebes" march stiffly out to the field guns south of camp; the yearlings, wheeling into column of sections, swing jauntily off under their detail of First Class officers to where the battery horses have already been hitched to the limbers and caissons out on the cavalry plain, and that portion of the senior class not required as chiefs of platoon or section at the field batteries is already springing down the winding path to the "sea-coast" battery at the water's edge, and presently you will hear a thunder of great guns that will stun all Orange County—or would, but for the barriers of the massive hills that shut us in on every side.

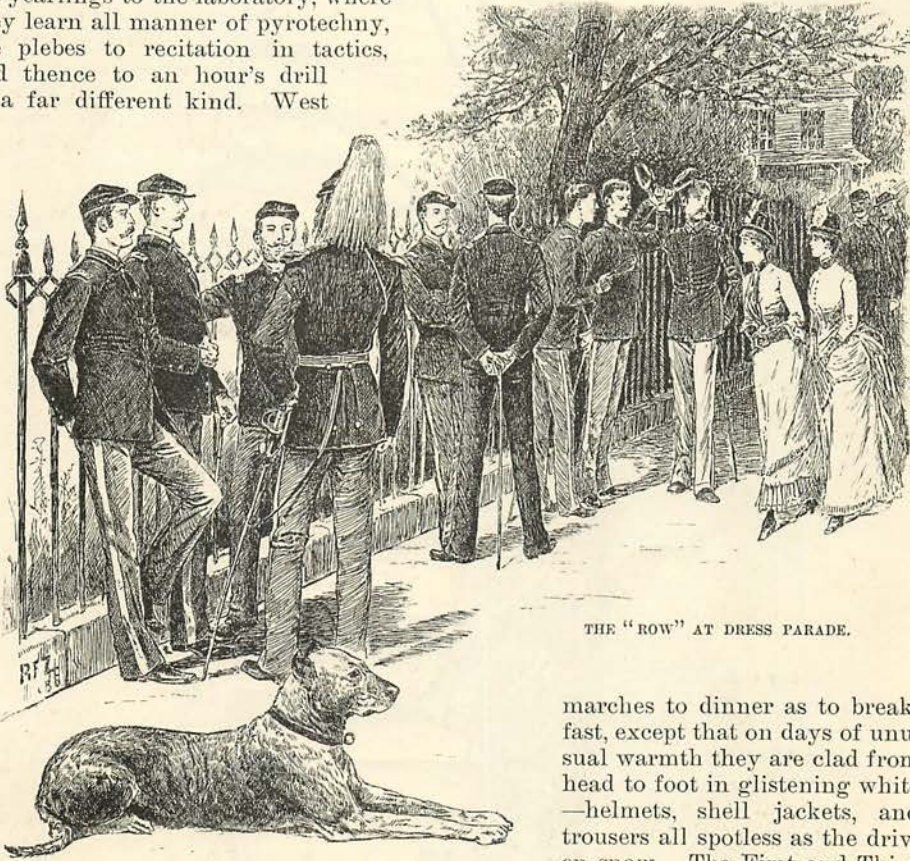
The liveliest spectacle, however, is here on the plain, for of all the drills and exercises in which the cadet excels he is at his best in those of the mounted service. Daring horsemen are the youngsters after two years' practice in the riding hall, and light battery drill is a famous place for exhibition. Watch the boys as they go to their stations. The seniors, in their riding dress, gauntlets, and cavalry sabres, swing easily into the saddles of the somewhat vicious-looking steeds that are held in readiness for them, adjust their stirrups, take a preliminary and surreptitious dig with their spurred heels to test the mettle of their nags, then clatter off to their posts to look over the horses and drivers of their detachments. The yearlings in their natty shell jackets stand ready at the guns; the bugle blares the signal "cannoneers mount," and, like so many agile monkeys, they spring to their seats on the ammunition chests, and with another bugle blast, and rumble of hoof and wheel and clink of trunnion, away goes the battery down the gravelly plain. There are a few preliminary moves to warm them up to their work; the battery commander, a young artillery officer who knows his trade, swings them to and fro, faster and faster, from one formation to other—column, line, and battery—and then, as though ordered to check the advance of an enemy swarming up the heights and give him canister at short range, with cracking whips and plunging steeds and rattle and roar of hoof and wheel, and hoarse-throated commands and stirring bugle peals, up the plain they

come at tearing gallop until opposite the crowd of spectators at the guard tents, when there is a short, sudden blast, a simultaneous shout from the "chiefs," a vision of rearing horses as the lieutenants and sergeants halt short on line with the brilliant guidon—generally the most picturesque horseman of the warlike throng, and *always* posted on the flank nearest the ladies—a flash of sabres in the air, a sudden "rein in" of the line of caissons, and gradual settle down to a stand, long before which, nimble as cats, the cannon-eers have sprung from their seats, and are streaking it across the gap to where the chiefs are seated on their excited chargers. Around sweep the guns with sudden swirl that well-nigh capsize them—the three youngsters on each limber seemingly hanging on as though seated on sticking plasters—there is a rattle and bang of pintle-hooks, hoarse shouts of "Drive on" to the gun teams; gray and white forms leap and sway in and out among the wheels; sponges and rammers whirl in air; there is a belch of flame, smoke, and thunder-cloud, a bellowing roar; another, another—half a dozen in quick succession; a thick sulphurous haze settles down on the plain and envelops guns and gunners; and suddenly comes another blare of bugle. "Cease firing" is the shout, and the mimic scene of Buena Vista is over. Even before the smoke has cleared away another order is given, with prompt, exciting response; plunging horses, cracking whips, a rush of teams, limbers, and caissons between the black muzzles of the guns; a sudden whirl about of wheels and handspikes, and the next instant smoke and flame are belching in thunder-claps over the very ground where stood the waiting teams only a moment before. Then comes still another signal, a stowing away of handspikes and rammers, a rapid rein-about of the limber teams, another blare, and away they go, the white legs of the cannon-eers flashing in a race beside their bounding guns; a rush across the road to the edge of the grassy level beyond, another sudden whirl into battery, a thundering salute to the rocky heights to the west, an echoing roar from the great columbiads and Parrotts at the "sea-coast" down by the Hudson, and the Point fairly trembles with the shock and concussion. There is no hour of the day to match the excitement and *élan* of that of battery drill.

Ten o'clock puts an end to it. Back come all the classes to their tents, the yearlings glowing with exhilaration and life, the plebes big with prospective achievements in the same line, the First Class men dignified and deliberate, as becomes their station. There is but short respite. By 10.30 the drum again summons all to ranks, and away they go, in long, white-legged columns, the seniors to pontoon drill down at the bay, the yearlings to the laboratory, where they learn all manner of pyrotechny, the plebes to recitation in tactics, and thence to an hour's drill of a far different kind. West

ners of a gentleman association with refined and cultured women is simply indispensable. Hence the now inflexible rule that every cadet must learn to dance, as he does to ride, fence, shoot, spar, and swim, and before he begins his long tussle with mathematics and science the embryo soldier is turned over to the daily ministrations of a Turveydrop.

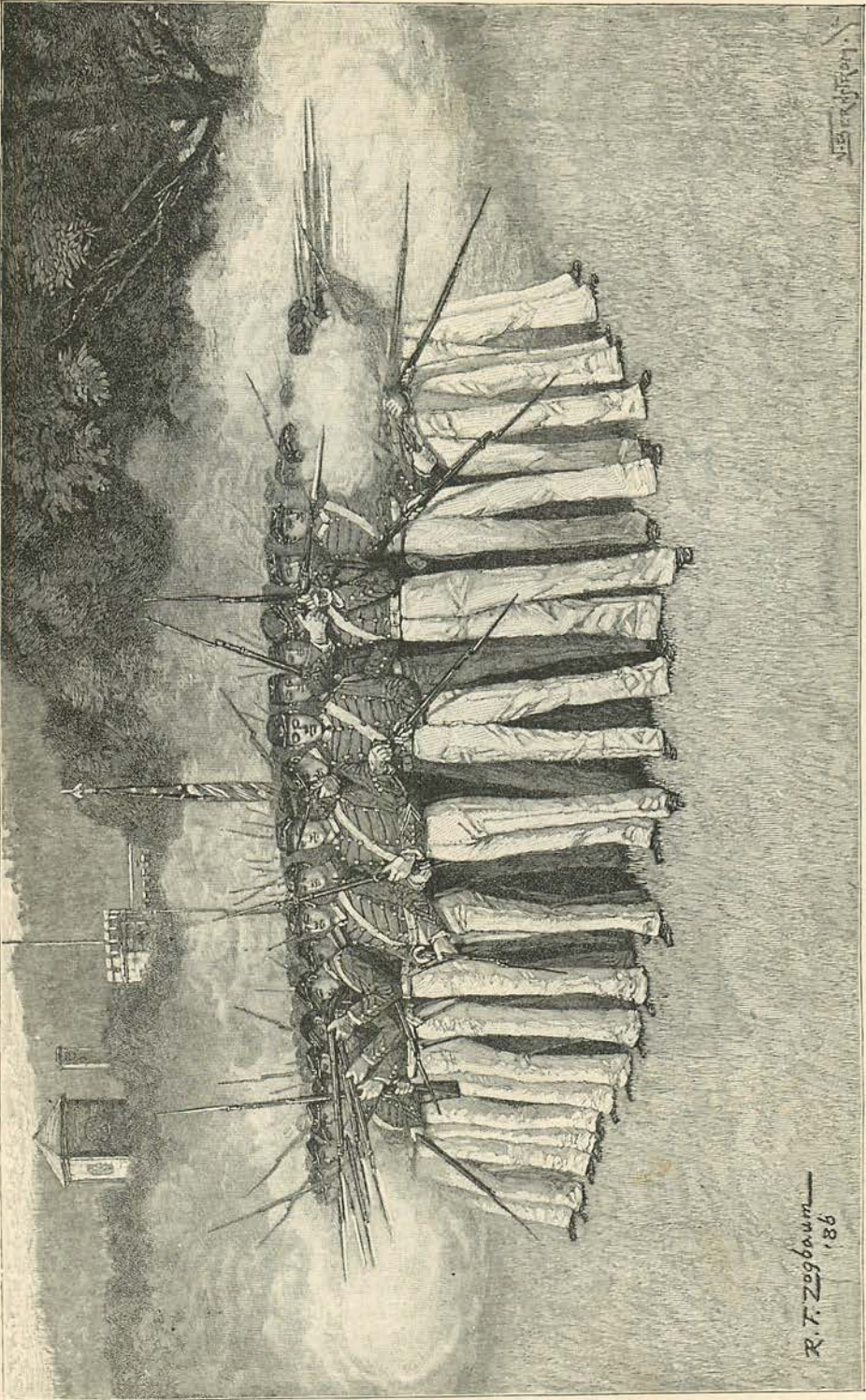
At one o'clock the whole battalion



THE "ROW" AT DRESS PARADE.

Point aims to make its graduates gentlemen as well as soldiers, and gentlemen must mingle in society to gain there the polish and ease which should mark the well-bred man. Good dancers have always been found among the cadets, but for years this was an elective accomplishment. Observant officers noted that as a rule only those cadets who danced were apt to seek the society of ladies, and every one knows that in "forming" the man-

marches to dinner as to breakfast, except that on days of unusual warmth they are clad from head to foot in glistening white—helmets, shell jackets, and trousers all spotless as the driven snow. The First and Third classes take their turns with the dancing teacher during the early afternoon. At four o'clock "police call" sounds, and the entire space within the line of sentries is scrupulously "spruced up" by details from the lower classes. The whole battalion forms under arms as the sun goes westering down, and with the long skirmish lines firing in advance or retreat, rallying on the reserves and around the colors, or deploying at the run, volleying at imaginary charges of cavalry, or picking off the distant leaders of a smoke-shrouded adversary, all to the



RALLY ON THE COLORS.

ringing accompaniment of skirmish calls on the key-bugles, the scene is beautiful and inspiring.

The Point begins toward sundown to fill up with carriages and omnibuses (General Scott always insisted on *omnibi*) from the many summer resorts along the river-bank below, and when the drum taps for evening parade the throng of spectators is far greater than at "troop," and the ceremony is still more stately. The bang of the sunset gun and the flutter to earth of the great garrison flag add vivid interest to nervous souls, and sometimes lead to sudden capsizing of camp-stools with their startled occupants, and to a consequently perceptible seismic effect on the usually stolid line. "Laughing in ranks" is one among the million military misdemeanors for which a cadet can acquire demerit, and a broad grin, be it noiseless as a kitten's footfall, is "laughter" in the inexorable military sense.

And so from sunrise to sunset, after which comes the march to supper, the day has been one of ceaseless duty and instruction, but so full of life, variety, and spirited movement that it is not in camp that the cadet finds cause to chafe at the monotony. There have even been blissful morning hours for the two dozen young fellows relieved at half past eight from guard duty, and given until dinner roll-call to recuperate. These may roam at will over the heights and ravines to the west, look down from the battlements of

Fort Putnam upon that superb panorama of earth and water, the rock-bound promontory with its tented field, the glistening ribbon of river stretching away northward through the great gorge of the Highlands, the distant spires of Newburgh, the faint, mist-wreathed outlines of the Catskills — oh, what a view to look back upon in af-

ter years of isolation on the frontier, in lonely scout amid wastes of desert sage-brush and alkali! If the day be warm, the cadet may visit the bath-houses over near Target Hill, and tempt the swift tides of the Hudson under the wary eye of the German *Schwimmmeister*, who is so proud of the experts he makes in general athletics and with fist and foil and broadsword.

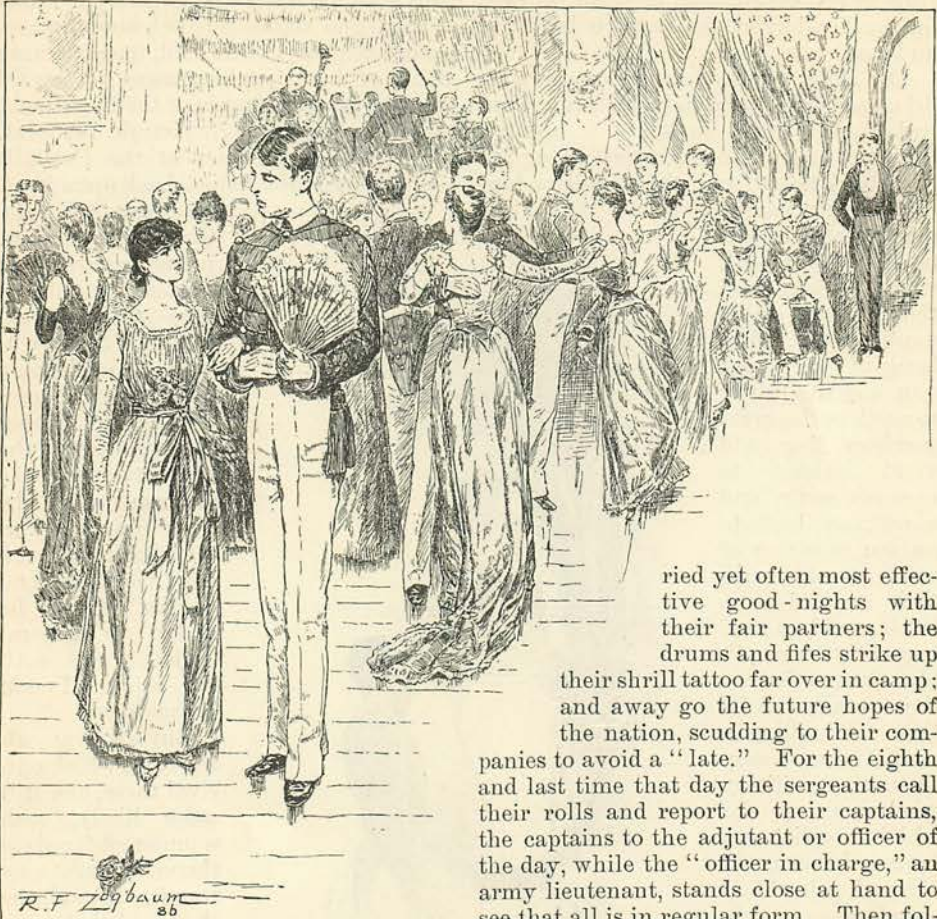
But there are attractions which outrival these, and still more likely, with some sweet-faced enslaver, the cadet may wander through the shades of that ever-beautiful "Chain Battery" walk, that long since resigned its official title in favor of one so infinitely more descriptive — Flirtation — and there barter his buttons for smiles that may serve to sweeten only the idle chat of a summer's hour, or inthrall him in a web of silken memories

that will bind him close and closer, a willing victim in her maiden toils. Every decade our statisticians labor over the question of the shifting centre of population of these United States, but no controversy arises as to the actual centre of flirtation: all authorities unite on West Point.

Evening is our young soldier's gala



ON "FLIRTATION."



THE GRADUATING HOP.

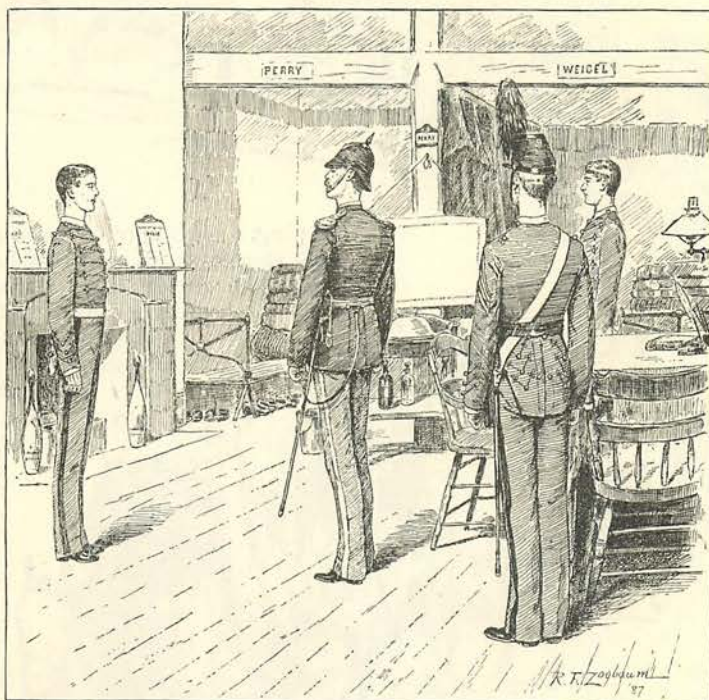
time. Three nights a week the grim corridors of the old "Academic" are alive with music, laughter, the swish of silken skirts, and animated movement to and fro of dozens of fair girls in dainty evening dress, and of slender cavaliers in gray and white, often brightened with crimson sash and glittering chevrons. Even the "hops" are run on military time. Precisely at the appointed hour the floor-manager signals to his musicians, and the first dance begins. Precisely at the designated moment, be it in the very midst of dreamy waltz or spirited Lancers, the inevitable and inexorable drum crashes through the resounding corridors its imperious summons; the dancers scurry away to the dressing-rooms; the ladies are bundled into the waiting 'buses or led away by faithful chaperons; the gray and white cavaliers exchange hur-

ried yet often most effective good-nights with their fair partners; the drums and fifes strike up their shrill tattoo far over in camp; and away go the future hopes of the nation, scudding to their companies to avoid a "late." For the eighth and last time that day the sergeants call their rolls and report to their captains, the captains to the adjutant or officer of the day, while the "officer in charge," an army lieutenant, stands close at hand to see that all is in regular form. Then follow ten minutes' chat, subdued scuffle and laughter in the company streets while the youngsters are making down their beds for the night (nothing but blankets on the hard tent floors); then comes a sudden single tap on the snare-drum at the guard tents, sharp orders of "Put out those lights!" two more similar taps, and before the last has died away the darkness of Erebus has settled down on camp, and all is silent as the grave.

For a few minutes the cadet officers patrol their company streets to insure order, and then the officers of the guard are left in charge. The sentries pace their silent posts, watchful, wary, for they know not when, nor how, nor how many disturbers may appear, and the faintest lack of efficiency is visited by prompt punishment. "I did not see," or "I did not hear," is an excuse that is never accepted, for sentries must be all eyes, ears, wits, and pluck. Even First Class men when on post are

subjected to manifold tests of their knowledge of sentry duty, but to the plebe the first few nights on guard are of vivid interest. Time was when, as a means of making these youthful guardsmen experts in their art, the authorities "winked" at what was known as "devilng plebes on post"—a species of horse-play that had infinite zest for all the participants except the plebe. Spectres, spooks, goblins damned, ghosts of André and Arnold, "great hi-yankidanks," cavalry on broomsticks,

its tents at the tap of the drum, and marches with flying colors to the great gray barracks. Here the young soldiers are housed for the long academic year, and for ten months of unremitting study. So long as the weather will permit, there is one drill each afternoon but Saturday and Sunday, the weekly inspection of the battalion under arms, and the daily guard mount and parade, but now everything is subordinated to the mental training, and a dozen articles the size of this could give but faint de-



SUNDAY MORNING INSPECTION.

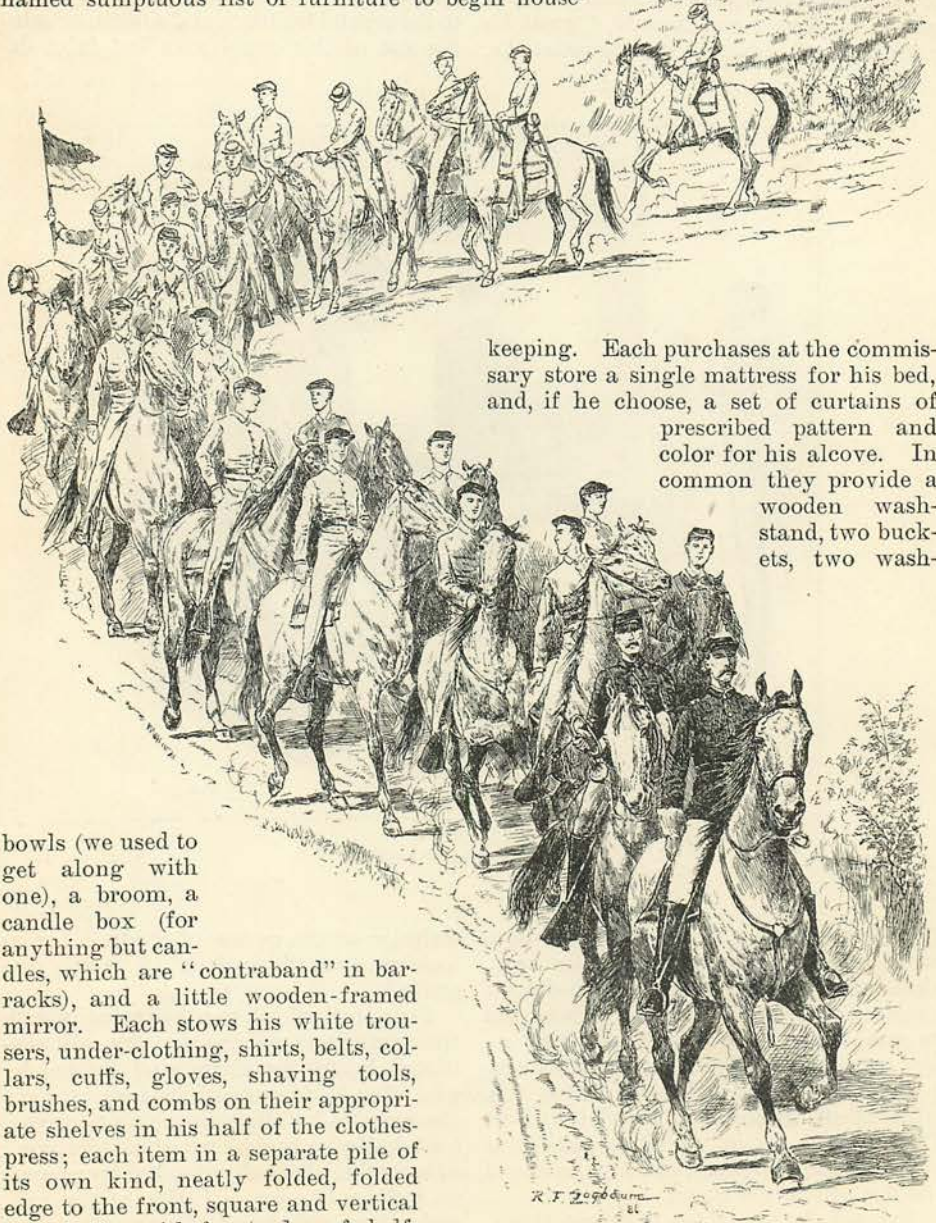
light batteries of wheelbarrows, cow-boys with lassos—each and all must be seen, challenged, halted, until examined by a corporal of the guard, and as all were apt to come at the same instant, and from every possible direction, the unlucky sentry was often at his wits' end; often, too, whirled off his post and roped into Fort Clinton ditch. But "devilng plebes," as conducted in the rough old days, is one of the lost arts at the Point.

Barrack life is a far different thing. On the 28th of August the "furlough class" returns to duty, the corps strikes

description of the course of study. Let us look rather to the mode of life as now prescribed.

Four stories high are the barracks, with spacious cellars underneath; dry, well ventilated, heated by steam, and lighted by gas. Ten hallways with iron stairs pierce the massive building from front to rear, each hallway being termed a "division" of barracks. Each division has four rooms on a floor, two on each side of the hall, and all rooms except those in the great towers are of the same size, shape, and finish. The end farthest from the win-

dow is partitioned off into two alcoves, with a cross-piece for curtains. Each alcove contains an iron bedstead against the wall, and a row of iron hooks against the partition. Each room is furnished with a stout table, an iron mantel, a double set of open shelves called a "clothes-press," a little shelf for helmets and dress hats, a wooden arm rack, and wooden pegs for caps and accoutrements. Two cadets, as a rule, occupy each room, each having an alcove to himself and the above-named sumptuous list of furniture to begin house-

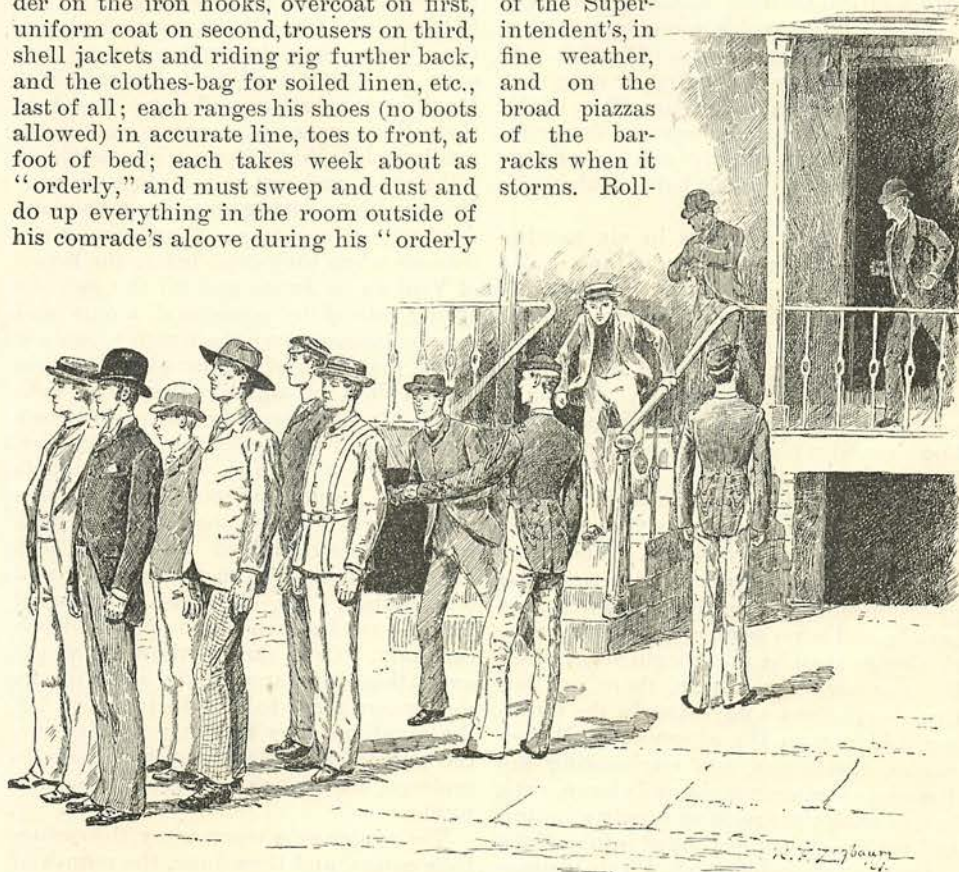


keeping. Each purchases at the commissary store a single mattress for his bed, and, if he choose, a set of curtains of prescribed pattern and color for his alcove. In common they provide a wooden washstand, two buckets, two wash-

bowls (we used to get along with one), a broom, a candle box (for anything but candles, which are "contraband" in barracks), and a little wooden-framed mirror. Each stows his white trousers, under-clothing, shirts, belts, collars, cuffs, gloves, shaving tools, brushes, and combs on their appropriate shelves in his half of the clothes-press; each item in a separate pile of its own kind, neatly folded, folded edge to the front, square and vertical and on line with front edge of shelf. All books except those in actual use are squarely stood up, backs to front,

against the wall on top of clothes-press. Each cadet neatly prints his name and puts it over his shelves, his accoutrements, his alcove, and in the slips of the "orderly board"; each folds his bedding, mattress and all, on the head of his bedstead, and not until tattoo can it be taken down; each hangs his clothing in prescribed order on the iron hooks, overcoat on first, uniform coat on second, trousers on third, shell jackets and riding rig further back, and the clothes-bag for soiled linen, etc., last of all; each ranges his shoes (no boots allowed) in accurate line, toes to front, at foot of bed; each takes week about as "orderly," and must sweep and dust and do up everything in the room outside of his comrade's alcove during his "orderly

is incomplete as to interior detail), dust his furniture, and prepare for the inspection which must come at the next roll of the drum. Then he has his early breakfast, and time for some study before recitations begin at eight. Guard is mounted with all formality on the infantry plain, in front of the Superintendent's, in fine weather, and on the broad piazzas of the barracks when it storms. Roll-



"CANDIDATES TURN OUT PROMPTLY!"

week," and from the first of September until the middle of June he can count on that room's being inspected at least twice each day and sometimes oftener, and on being himself "spotted" on the demerit books if the least thing be found out of place or in disorder.

At daybreak the roar of the *reveille* gun and the thunder of the drums summon him to roll-call, and he goes down those iron stairs four and five at a jump. After that he has half an hour in which to sweep, settle things, make up his bed, wash and dress for the day (*reveille* garb

calls are as regular, though not as frequent, as in camp, but from 8 A.M. to 1 P.M. no cadet can enter any room in barracks except his own, or leave his own except to go to recitation. From 2 until 4 P.M. the same rule obtains. At 4.15 in spring and fall are the artillery or infantry drills, and at some seasons the riding lessons of the Third Class. At sunset is the inevitable "retreat" parade; then an hour, perhaps, for exercise and relaxation. Supper in due course, and half an hour afterward the bugle wails the dismal "call to quarters," which summons every cadet to his room.

In ten minutes the sentries inspect. "All right?" they ask, as they make their hurried visit to the different rooms, and the answer covers a multitude of things, but is conclusive; and so the evening study hours begin. You may pass the brightly lighted front of barracks any wintry evening and hear not a sound but the tramp of the sentries on the lower floor. A cadet who quits his room to visit that of a comrade does it at no little risk. If seen or heard by the sentry, or caught at it by the "tactical officer" or officer of the day, he is booked for certain demerits, and the punishment of "extras," or confinement during the one hebdomadal half-holiday.

One hundred demerits in six months will sever the connection of any cadet with the academy and the military service; and with very small exercise of ingenuity a cadet can pick up the entire number in a single day, and do it without leaving his room either. It was a cadet tradition that the gifted Edgar Allan Poe showed a phenomenal ability in that line.

Rigid as is the discipline and unbending the routine, time fairly flies through those months of barrack life. The cadet marches to his recitations with the same precision and silence that he marches to parade, and is no sooner out of one recitation-room than he must begin preparation for another. As a rule, there are but three recitations a day—two in the morning and one in the afternoon. Mathematics, mechanics, and engineering are disposed of between eight and eleven, each half of each class reciting ninety minutes, and each class being divided into sections of ten to twelve cadets to facilitate instruction. Each section has its own recitation-room, and its own instructor in the person of a young officer who is especially skilled in the science or study being pursued. From eleven until one, chemistry, geology, French, and Spanish are the main topics; and in the drowsy afternoons history, law, and drawing keep the youngsters busy. All this sounds as though the work were sedentary, and that no exercise crept in, but such is far from the case. The plebes have their daily gymnastics under a skilful teacher, and the three upper classes have the liveliest kind of exercise in their lessons in horsemanship. West Point riding deserves a chapter by itself, for it would be a revelation to the city schools.

Bareback, with crossed stirrups, with every kind of a horse except an easy one, the boys have to rough it for a year or more before they get a foot-rest. The big, gloomy riding-hall has its agile tenants day after day during the fall and winter months, and few indeed are the boys who are not time and again rolled in the tan-bark or pitched headlong over the hurdles. A cat with its reputed plurality of lives would be dead a dozen times over in taking half the chances those laughing youngsters will eagerly seek in their three years at cavalry and light-artillery drill, but it seems impossible to kill a cadet, and just as hard to scare one. More reckless, daring, graceful riding one need never look to see than among the Seniors when they come before the Board of Visitors in June; and all through the spring, varied by occasional scouts and reconnoissances over the rough mountain roads, the drills of the cavalry battalion on the plain are sights that one can never tire of watching; while after an hour's "running at the heads," or leaping hurdles bareback, picking up handkerchiefs from the ground, or mounting and dismounting at a gallop, the boys come back from the hall covered with glory, and tan-bark, but with famous appetites and few bruises. No, there is no especial lack of exercise even in the weeks of hardest study. Only during those dread examinations in January do some of the youngsters seem to lose their color; but the questions they then have to answer, the two weeks' ordeal they then have to undergo, are enough to scare an encyclopædia.

The winter soon wears away, the spring-time comes, and then June, the month of roses—and graduation. Even as the stalwart Seniors are passing their final examinations the Point begins to fill up with several score of young strangers—shy, suspicious youths, in civilian garb of a dozen different fashions, but in singularly unanimous frame of mind. One and all they have heard rumor of the rough usages that formerly surrounded the initiation of the new cadet, and are on the watch for similar demonstrations. No graduate will attempt to deny that there was a time in the history of the academy when there was a vast deal of "hazing," and that it was continued for the entire period of camp; but the "plebes" themselves would seldom make complaint or

give information of their tormentors; nine out of ten took it all grimly or good-humoredly, and those who whined or protested at all were sure to be the head devils of the next year's work. "Deviling" was ordinarily conducted with rare discrimination; those young men who were "solid," self-respecting, putting on no airs, and minding their own business, managed to get along with very little trouble; whereas the yearlings went wild with ecstasy over a bumptious new-comer with a high opinion of himself. His life was made a burden to him, and no mistake. Still, no bodily harm was ever inflicted except through some unforeseen accident. Hazing as conducted at one time or other in every college in the United States has had far more that was really harmful about it than the system as it prevailed at the Point; but the latter was public property, and far more notice was taken accordingly. At most colleges, too, it was the meek and most friendless of the Freshmen who came in for the liveliest hazing; the rich and influential had means of escape. At West Point the very opposite was the case: the higher in rank or riches was the father, the more presumably had the son to be "taken down," to reach the rabidly democratic standard of the corps.

In course of time, however, public sentiment set in very strongly against the practice. It took hard work to uproot it, for the ingenuity and activity of the corps are something phenomenal; but the thing has been done, and to-day the ancient and objectionable custom is but the shadow of a formerly vigorous substance. The plebes are drilled as sharply and disciplined as thoroughly as ever before, the line of demarcation between theirs and the senior classes is still maintained, but the tricks and pranks, the fagging that rendered life a burden, and the "yanking" that made night hideous, and with them all that had a tendency to the harmful, have been practically abolished.

In three-quarters of a century of usefulness and success the Point has known no era of higher scholarship, of sounder discipline, and of more brilliant promise than that which culminates with the administration of the last five years; and the report of the Board of Visitors of 1886, several of whose number were animated by an unusually searching spirit of investigation, and stimulated possibly by complaints of undue severity and needless restrictions, has stamped its every military feature, drill, discipline, and instruction, with the seal of its unqualified approval.

