

## RUGGS—R.O.T.C.

BY WILLIAM ADDLEMAN GANOE

### I

It was only because it was the middle of the night that the barracks of Company Number 1 lay quiet. Even at that solitary hour the squares of moonlight from its sliding windows revealed two long huddled rows of Gold Medal cots creaking with the turnings of one hundred and sixty restless sleepers.

Down toward the end of Squad 15, Joseph Morley Ruggs lay wrapped in dreams more troubled than was his wont. The 'Meter' was standing before him, writing with a feathered sword in a giant book, 'Thou art weighed in the balance and found—' The words kept spreading until the *d* was crushed against the edge of the page. The Meter's eyes became flaming nozzles, which shot waves of gas into Ruggs's unmasked face. There was a crashing sound of many bands, playing mostly upon cymbals.

All at once the 'U.S.' on the Meter's collar and the silver bars on his shoulders became incandescent, his body lengthened out like Aladdin's genie, and he slowly disappeared upward in a whirl of smoke, mounted on the shaft of a rifle grenade—and Ruggs was left alone, holding in his hand a rectangular parchment headed, 'Honorable Discharge from the Service of the United States.'

When he raised his head Alice, with sorrowful eyes, was looking him through and through—Alice, whom he had left a month before with the

trembling words of acquiescence on her lips and a kiss of hope at his departure. There she stood, shaking a finger of scorn at the paper of Failure in his hand.

The earth was giving way under him. As he sank lower and lower, voices grew abundant about him; and there arose a continuous clatter of riflebolts, bayonets, and mess-tins. A bugle somewhere was sounding the assembly. The company in the dusky distance was falling in under arms; the corporals were about to report, and he, Candidate Ruggs, would be absent.

He tried to hurry over dressing himself; but his arms worked in jerks, and when he attempted to run, his legs merely pulled and pushed back and forth heavily in one spot. Frantically he struggled to make headway against the solid air, but in vain. With a supreme effort he lunged forward—and came down at the side of his cot on both feet, with a resounding shock that made the boards of the flimsy barracks rattle.

'For Gawd's sake,' growled the Duke of Squad 15, rising on his elbow, 'don't you get enough settin'-up stuff in the daytime without jarrin' your muscles when decent folks sleep?'

'Who fell into the trench?' inquired Naughty, his legal mind going to the bottom of the matter.

'No use tryin' to sleep around here,' continued the Duke with a groan. 'Got to get a pass and lock yourself in a hotel over Saturday and Sunday.'

Some one in the middle of barracks

was attempting to search out with a pocket-flash the cause of the excitement.

'Use of — star — shells — specially successful — 'gainst active enemy — in No Man's Land,' droned the great voice of small Squirmy in a far corner.

And the disturbance subsided with several chuckles, allowing Ruggs to dispose himself upon his rumpled sheets without further fire upon him.

In the morning, as he stood in ranks at reveille, he was secretly relieved to note the Meter's normal appearance, and his life-sized pencil, though that active instrument was spelling out death to some career possibly at that moment. Degradation to the name of Ruggs had not yet come; the chance to be included among the commissioned few at the end of camp lay before him as a possibility.

He was wakened smartly from his musings. 'Dress up, put up your arm! you still asleep?'

The Duke, who had been a sergeant in the National Guard for six years, realized that, since the Meter was near at hand, it was a fortunate time to make penetrating corrections. The awe and respect which had bestowed on him the name of Duke on account of his knowledge of the rudiments, were now, in the squad over which he had tyrannized as acting corporal, beginning to wane.

Ruggs put up his arm, every bristling hair of his mouse-colored head erect with fury. It was difficult for a man fifteen years out of college, who had by dint of energy and foresight worked his way to the superintendency of one of the largest banking houses in the East, to take orders from a grocery clerk much younger and of slight education. 'Every kind of military communication should be impersonal.' These words of the Meter came to him opportunely. He fastened his mind on

the details for the following day which the first sergeant was then reading out, and was rewarded.

'For company commander to-morrow — Ruggs!'

'He-re!' His voice came all cracked and husky.

'You'd better get onto those drill regs and get up that company stuff,' admonished the Duke at breakfast. 'I always find I can get along better after givin' it a once-over, no matter how well I know it.'

Ruggs made no reply. He was lost in the thought of the chance he had waited for through thirty-five days of slavery. His opportunity had come.

It was a red-letter day because of another circumstance. For the first time he had been called by name by the Meter at the morning conference.

The elation was so great that, when a note from Alice in the noon mail told him that she would spend the week-end near the camp, he had only time to reflect on what joy his success in handling the company would bring her. Every spare minute during the afternoon and evening he concentrated on close-order drill. Not satisfied with the snatches thus taken, he disappeared after taps, with his books and a small improvised stool, into the lavatory, where there was still a faint light from two badly arranged bulbs. There he delved into combat work and reviewed the company drill. It was one o'clock before he crawled dizzily into bed, with reveille before him at five-thirty.

He woke at five with a start. This was the day of his trial. Although he had stood at the head of ventures involving millions, no day of his life had seemed to him so full of hazard. The fact that he had made good in civil life, he understood, meant nothing in his favor in a military way. For only the previous week Cyrus Long, an industrial manager, with a salary of fifteen

thousand a year, had been told plainly by the Meter that he could not make good. And Cy had left with the first failure of a lifetime in his wake.

When Ruggs, making every inch of his five feet eleven count as the Meter approached, commanded 'Company, attention!' his accent was very unlike the ideal one he had planned to use. He noted the men in ranks eying him as much as to say, 'Well, how are you going to handle us this morning?'

'Give the company ten minutes' close-order drill, after which proceed with fifteen minutes of extended order under battle conditions.'

The Meter shot the words out in two definite explosions.

It was the first time that such instructions had been issued, but Ruggs asked no questions.

'Squads right!' he sang out (meaning secretly squads left); then added, 'March!' in a surprised and subdued tone that he had not intended.

On the whole the first of the drill went along fairly well, except that at times some of the men were unable to hear his commands, and *he* knew that *they* knew that he continually meant *right* when he said *left*, and vice versa; facts which did not add to his authority. But he was too honest to 'bluff' the matter before the Meter, each time admitting the error by a loud 'As you were!' and setting them straight without delay.

When the extended order part of the drill began, he inadvertently made his deployment so that one flank fanned out across the commanding officer's lawn.

'Halt your company!' roared the Meter. 'Company commander report here!'

Ruggs yelled a demoralized 'Halt!' and ran to the captain.

'Who's in command of this company?'

'I am, sir.'

'It does n't appear so; or possibly you wanted them to dance over the colonel's lawn?'

'No, sir.'

'Then why did you put them there?'

'I did n't mean to, sir.'

'You did n't mean *not* to, did you?'

'No, sir.'

'You lead your command out over a fire-swept zone, and after it is decimated, you make a report that you did n't mean to place it there. How will that look when the dead are counted?'

'Not very well, sir.'

'Go place your company where it belongs.'

Ruggs saluted and ran toward the centre of the line, yelling at the top of his lungs, 'Assemble, *assemble*, ASSEMBLE *over here!*'

'Come back!' shouted the Meter.

But Ruggs was so intent on gathering up the trampers of the colonel's lawn that he did not hear.

'Company commander — Mr. Ruggs!' repeated the Meter, putting all his power against his diaphragm.

Ruggs returned, his thick chest heaving, his hair matted, and a drop of perspiration clinging to the end of his big Roman nose.

'How was this drill to be conducted?' snapped his torturer.

'Under battle conditions, sir.'

'Do you suppose that the company stretched over a space of two hundred yards, while the barrage fire was going on, could hear such caterwauling as you've been attempting? What should you do?'

'Use whistle and signal, sir.'

'Have I not directed you to do so heretofore?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Either malicious or wooden — take your choice! Proceed with your drill.'

Cut to the quick, Ruggs thought hard what to do in his predicament.

The studious, sleepless night was beginning to tell on him, but he called to his memory the signal for 'Assemble' and blew a stout blast on his whistle. He felt the Meter behind his back making damaging notes in the book, and the glances of his fellows before him betraying pity and superiority. The number of errors increased with the length of the drill. Each time the Meter summoned him, the criticisms were more caustic. At last he waved his arms in unknown combinations and directions. But whenever the Meter stopped him, he was able, with much teeth-gritting that made his jaw muscles swell his cheeks, to set the movement straight without excitement.

In the afternoon, during a march along the road, the Meter directed the company to be halted and its commander to report to him.

'Mr. Ruggs, you see that little bluff about four hundred yards to the left of this road?'

'Yes, sir.'

'You have been marching along here as the advance party to your advance guard, when suddenly you receive a burst of fire from that bluff, which you estimate to be directed by about a platoon. What do you do?'

'I'd tell them to —'

'I did n't ask you what you'd tell. I asked you what you'd do.'

'I'd put them, sir —'

'Put who?'

'I'd put the company —'

'You speak of the company as if it were a bird-cage or a jack-knife.'

'Sir, I just wanted —'

'I just asked you what YOU would do, — do you get it?'

By this time Ruggs was so aroused that every fibre of his mind was alert. Instead of being more confused, he was able to concentrate more acutely than before. He pulled his whistle from his pocket and blew it almost in the

Meter's face, at the same time signaling to the company to deploy and lie down.

'That will do,' snorted the Meter. 'March your company back to barracks!'

Ruggs replaced his whistle in his pocket in a hang-dog way which showed that he was convinced that his doom was sealed.

'Squads right!' he commanded. 'As you were! I mean, squads left! — Oh, steady! Squads right about! March!'

The company, at route step, had become a ripple of mirth from end to end.

'O Ruggsie!' shouted the Duke, 'I know a good civilian tailor!'

The remark brought on a quantity of local laughter, and Naughty did not help matters much by starting, 'Keep the home fires burning.'

That evening the flank of Company Number 1 individually condoled with Ruggs, who was trying to decipher how he could be so full of so many different kinds of mistakes.

'He's got the raspberry all right,' commented the Duke, before a large group including Ruggs.

The 'raspberry,' be it said, was the name applied to the Sword of Damocles suspended by the Meter. When he called a failing candidate into the orderly room and implied that a resignation would be in order, that lost soul was known the company over as 'getting the raspberry,' or 'rasp.'

## II

Just before taps, after life had become subdued through study, the small red-headed form of Squirmy was observed making its way to the centre of the long room. He was dressed in a black overcoat fished from the bottom of a trunk. A white tie torn from a stricken sheet made a flaring bow at his

neck, and goggles and an old cap-cover served as headgear. He carried in his hand a Webster's Unabridged, which he placed on an old box previously used for the same purpose.

'St! The Exhorter of Squad 21!' came in whispers from a dozen throats, and the room became still.

Squirmy searched his half-dressed congregation witheringly over the tops of his spectacles. Then from his small body proceeded slow tones of thunder,—

'And the Lord said unto Moses, "Squads right!" (Dramatic pause.)

'But Moses — not being a military man — commanded, "Squads left!" (Longer pause.)

'And great — was the confusion — among the candid-ites.

'Peace be with you,' he concluded, pointing an accusing finger at Ruggs; and the company went to bed holding their abdomens.

After the last drill on Saturday Alice arrived with her machine, chauffeur, and chaperone. When she spied Ruggs across the parade, with twenty-two pounds of office flabbiness gone, his hardened muscles holding his shoulders and neck erect underneath his khaki, an unmistakable admiration filled her wide hazel eyes.

For a moment his gladness was unalloyed, and the disappointments of crowded barracks and tangled drills faded utterly away. But as the day wore on, the pleasure grew limp in the face of the bleak future. His mind was repeatedly met with the question, 'Shall I tell her?' and he always turned on himself with the reply, 'I am not yet through.'

The unacknowledged dullness between them finally drove them into the distraction of a movie theatre. There, in the darkness, she caught stealthy glimpses of his tightened jaw and distressed face.

'It's going to be very hard on him; he'll be so disappointed,' she said to herself.

At the same time, while apparently following the antics of Mary Pickford, he was thinking, 'It's going to be so hard on her! She'll be so disappointed in me!'

When she had gone, and he found himself once more seated on his bunk in desolation, he berated himself violently:—

'I must have treated her badly. This will not do. I've never given up before. I've got to pull myself up to my best if it be only a corporal's job. It's better to be a *man* than a higher-up anyway. Good God, I can serve better by going where I'm put than where I want to *be put*! True patriotism, after all, is filling the niche whatever —'

'Say, Ruggsie,' burst in the Duke from the side door, 'big doin's here Monday. Big review for a Russian general. This company is goin' to be divided into two — A and B companies.'

Ruggsie was silent.

'Don't you care anything about it?' continued the Duke.

'I'm not interested in reviews — to be frank.'

'Say, old fellow, you don't need to get so down because you tied up that drill the other day. Course, there's a great deal to know about this military game. At first I was pretty green myself. May be in a second camp you can get onto the stuff.'

Ruggs was not desirous of discussing the matter with the Duke, who, having been given the natural opportunity, filled the gap with conversation.

'You know the Meter called me and that Reserve Lieutenant Sullivan into the orderly room and told us we were goin' to be in command of the two companies. He went over with us just



how we were goin' to do. He's a first-rate chap — the Meter is. First we line up along the road near the gate, and then we march to the parade-ground and review. I know every command I'm goin' to give right down in order — could say 'em off backwards. That's the way to know your drill.'

At supper the Duke leaned over the table toward Vance, a broker from Wall Street who had spent the previous summer at Plattsburg, and observed confidentially, —

'Do you know, Vance, I'd like to have you as my first lieutenant when I'm a captain. You suit me O.K. I like the way you drill.'

Vance, immaculately neat and clean-shaven, acknowledged the remark with a bow and went on eating. Mortimer, just out of Dartmouth, aged twenty-two, gazed at the Duke with that deference with which Gareth first looked upon Lancelot.

At three o'clock Monday afternoon the twenty companies of the training camp were drawn up ready to display themselves to the Russian general. Automobiles were parked thickly on the roadways, making a black, gray, and brown banded circle around the parade-ground. Under the dense fringe of trees, the many-colored gowns of the women edged the green like a thick hedge of sweet peas. The heat and stillness had settled down over the camp tensely.

The dignitary, eagerly awaited, was overdue. The Duke, as he wiped the perspiration from his hat-band in front of the long column of companies standing at ease, congratulated himself on the certainty with which he would give the appropriate commands at various points before him on the level stretch of grass. Conscious fingering of his pistol-holster indicated his belief in the Meter's choice.

A half-hour passed and the general

had not arrived. All at once, the band, contrary to plan, started to move diagonally across the parade-ground. A mounted orderly popped out from a group of regular officers and galloped straight toward the Duke.

'The major's compliments,' he announced. 'The ceremony along the road-side will be dispensed with. You are to march your company to the line for review at once, sir.'

The field music struck up adjutant's call, which was the signal for the first company to form line.

'Squads left!' shouted the Duke in most military fashion.

It was the command that he had rehearsed to start the company from the roadway to the ceremony proper, an opposite direction from the one toward the spot where the line should now be formed.

'March!' he added, without seeing his error. And the company wheeled off toward the woods away from the visitors, away from the band, away from everybody.

'Damn me!' he muttered, looking back over his shoulder at the vanishing goal. Then he roared, 'Column left! March!'

Again he had steered the head of the column in an opposite direction from the one intended. B and C companies were now directly between his objective and his organization, which was marching farther away with every step. He realized that he had taken time enough to be well on the way toward, instead of away from, the spot where the adjutant was waiting for him.

'Squadsleftmarch!' he bellowed desperately.

The company, in the shape of an L, not having completed the turn in column, now accordioned its flanks toward each other, intermingling inextricably. The organization became at once a crowd of fellows with rifles.

'Halt! Halt! Halt!' the Duke exploded; and immediately fell into helpless bewilderment.

There was a dreadful pause, during which beads of perspiration dropped from his face, making black spots on his starched clothing. His arm and fingers twitched and he blinked horribly.

'What a steady influence he'll have on Vancel!' whispered some one near Ruggs, who, through compassion, was unable to feel mirthful.

The same orderly galloped up for the second time and delivered an ultimatum from the major in no uncertain language. Several platoon leaders sprang forward and succeeded in getting the company started in the right direction. But the strain had weakened the Duke's nerve to such an extent that he was slow in dressing his company and failed to give 'Eyes, right' in time, when actually passing in review under the scrutiny of the general himself.

And all this time the Meter had been hovering about, using his eyes mightily and his mouth not at all.

Back in barracks when ranks were broken, there were no remarks made openly on the leadership of the Duke. He had been a trusty drill-master and, it was reported, had a 'stand-in' with the Meter. It was not discreet to taunt him.

Indeed, it had been such a soakingly hot proceeding — the whole review — that most of the men were glad enough to grasp what little comfort they could without more ado. The extra marching beforehand had not helped to cool them off, mentally or physically. Under the single thin roof that separated them from the sun, the atmosphere, besides being hot, was excessively oppressive. As soon as they could get rid of their rifles, belts, and coats, they tossed them away in any direction.

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Those who arrived inside first, and consequently had a chance for the shower-bath, peeled off every soggy garment.

They were in this chaotic state of dishabille when a cry rose from the first squad, 'Man the port-holes!' Immediately one hundred and sixty male beings struggled for a view from the eastern windows.

'It's the general — the whole party!' exclaimed one of the first.

'They're coming in here,' volunteered another.

The crowd surged back and the voice of the acting first sergeant could be heard in an effort to prepare the company for inspection. They hurled their belongings into place with the speed and accuracy of postal clerks. Two nude unfortunates were without ceremony ejected into the cold world on the side of barracks farthest from the Russian advance. History does not record what ever became of them. A bather clad only in a scant towel and a scanter piece of soap, while making his entrance from the shower where he had splashed in ignorance of the coming invasion, was, to his amazement and resentment, forced suddenly into the lavatory, where, he was given to understand, he must remain. Ruggs, most incompletely dressed, coiled himself up underneath his cot behind two lusty suitcases.

When the general came down the aisle, the candidates standing fully clad at the foot of their bunks, at 'attention,' gave the impression of having waited for him nonchalantly in that position ever since the review. Mattress-covers were smoothed, bedding folded, clothing hung neatly, and all evidence of hurry or confusion effaced.

But the Meter smiled a Mona Lisa smile as the door closed upon generals, colonels, aides-de-camp, and himself.

'Rest,' shouted the acting first ser-

geant, and the company collapsed into tumultuous laughter. Wet underclothing, matches, and cigarettes, were hauled from beneath mattresses, equipment from behind pillows, and knickknacks from yawning shoe-tops.

In the midst of all this turmoil one of the doors reopened and the Meter stepped inside. Some one near him murmured a half-hearted 'Attention!' and all who were within earshot arose — all except one. At that moment Ruggs found himself halfway up from between the cots, his head and body upright and his legs fast asleep under him.

'Mr. Ruggs, I seem to see more of you than I did a moment ago.'

If the Meter had returned for a purpose, all idea of it vanished now, for he turned and disappeared, leaving Ruggs to bear his chagrin and to blush down as far as his legs.

That night Squirmy took his text from the book of Currussians, and gave a splendid and inspiring talk on how Moses, although he had been found by the King's daughter in the bulrushes, had nothing on Ruggs, who was discovered by the King himself among the valises. 'And be it said,' concluded the exhorter, 'that both foundlings wore the same uniform.'

### III

The first of August was close at hand. Rumors kept coming up like the dawn 'on the road to Mandalay.' The 'makes' (those recommended for commissions), it was said, had already had their names sent to Washington. Before and after drills, members of the company were being constantly summoned into the orderly room for interviews, the purport of which was leaking out through the camp. A reserve captain had been given his walking papers. Squirmy was to be a second

lieutenant; Naughty, a first lieutenant; and Vance, a captain.

The Duke had just been summoned. As he made his way up the aisle to the front of barracks, hushed whispers ran around from circle to circle, 'Will he get a captaincy or just a lieutenantcy out of it?' And many a covetous eye followed his retreating figure.

At dinner he had not returned. In the afternoon and during the next day his place in the squad was vacant. It began to be rumored that he had been sent away on some special detail, perhaps to France.

In the evening Ruggs, having finished his supper early, was surprised to find the Duke in civilian attire sitting on the cot he had occupied, which was now divested of all its former accompaniments.

'Good-bye,' began the Duke, extending a cold hand rather ungraciously. 'Jus' turned in all my stuff.'

'Leaving?' queried Ruggs.

'Yep, got the rasp all right!'

There was an awkward pause, which was filled by the Duke's interest in the lock of his suitcase, after which he continued haltingly, —

'Meter called me in and told me no use to stay here — said my experience was all right — but because I'd had so much, he expected more. Told me any man that got fussed up and could n't get out of an easy hole without help after six years' trainin' was no good for leadin' men. Said he could n't trust men's lives to me, and so he could n't give me a commission. Gave me a lot of guff like that, with no sense to it. He's a hell of a man!'

'Do you mean to say you're discharged — and that's all?' Ruggs was plainly astounded.

'You bet; that's the end of the little Duke of Squad 15. Be good to yourself. Say good-bye to the fellows for me, will you?'



Several men strolled back from supper. The Duke casting a furtive glance in their direction as much as to say, 'I don't care to meet any of them any more,' added a 'So long,' and disappeared, suitcase in hand, through the side door.

'What chance for me,' thought Ruggs, 'if the Duke gets the raspberry?'

That night he carefully smoothed out a civilian suit and placed it on a hanger at the head of his cot. He also wrote several letters to business friends at home. He did not write to Alice.

Excitement for the next few days was severe. Some were not eating their meals, few were sleeping much, and all were stale. The physical training had truly been intensive, but the mental strain had been breaking. Friends greeted each other in a preoccupied way, and the nightly singing had grown feeble.

As for Ruggs, he looked forward to the acceptance of his discharge with as much grace as possible. He had striven honestly, and had apparently made of himself only an object for laughter, but he was far from giving up. Several candidates had confided to him their disappointment, as they would have liked, they said, to see him gain a commission. Indeed they had felt all along that he was going to make good.

Yet the day of his reckoning seemed never to materialize. Men went into the orderly room, and came out with hectic smiles of relief or sickly efforts at cheerfulness, while he watched and waited.

One day, after the first drill, Vance was sitting on his bunk talking finances, when a voice from the other end of the barracks called out, —

'The following men report in the orderly room at once!'

The silence was crisp. Then the voice continued with a list of about

ten names, toward the end of which was Ruggs.

'Good-bye, Vance,' said he, rising. He put on his coat and brushed his clothing and shoes carefully.

Vance eyed him narrowly and pityingly during the operation, as much as to say, 'There's no use taking any more pains with those clothes; you'll never need them again.'

Ruggs caught the look and understood.

'You see I can't get out of the habit,' he confessed. 'It's not so much the clothes as — as — myself.'

At the orderly room door he waited a small eternity before his name was called.

Once inside he found himself for the first time alone with the Meter. Under his scrutiny heretofore Ruggs had felt himself to be merely number one of the rear rank needful of correction. And yet the victim felt that he could part from the captain with no feeling of resentment at the blow he was about to receive.

'Mr. Ruggs!'

The Estimator of Destinies wheeled in his chair and cast a look of brotherly frankness into Ruggs's eyes.

'Yes, sir.'

'Mr. Ruggs, you've been here almost three months.'

'Yes, sir.'

'I have n't time to mince matters with you. You have one great failing which I'm going to dwell upon. You attempt to do too many things at once. In the military service you are compelled to consider what is best for the moment. Nothing changes so fast or furiously as a military situation. Don't forecast what you'll do next so much as figure what you'll do *now*. Make your men be of the greatest use in the team right *now* — understand? What you'd be liable to do would be a certain amount of banking in the

trenches. While you'd be speculating on how much interest your venture would bring you to-morrow, a gas wave comes over to-day and finds your men without masks. Be ready for the thing at issue. You've got to take this matter in hand at once and overcome it.'

Ruggs acknowledged to himself that his difficulties were all too plainly exposed. He had tried to compass the whole of drill regulations in a single night. He had been so interested in what he was going to do to the enemy after he reached the bluff, that he had forgotten to give the proper signals to start the company on its mission. If only he had understood the correct method of approach at the beginning!

'That,' went on the Meter, as if in continuation of Ruggs's thoughts, 'has been your downfall.'

There was a knock at the door. In answer to the captain's 'Come in,' a thick official document was handed him.

'Be seated, Mr. Ruggs. Pardon me while I read this!'

It took some time for the perusal, during which Ruggs saw light in the shape of a new plan.

'Captain,' he inquired, as the Meter looked up, 'is there any chance for me to get into another camp or could n't you recommend me?'

'Second camp!' cried the Meter, staring at Ruggs as if the candidate were bereft of reason. 'Second camp! You'll get all the second camp that's coming to you. The whole purpose of this camp is to pick out the proper wood-pulp — that's all. None of you is capable of being an officer now; but the men I've chosen, I hope have the makings. You yourself have two assets: first, a knowledge of men, and second, the power to think under stress. In another month you'll be training rookies from the draft. What I wanted to tell you was, you'd better look

out for your failing when you're the first lieutenant, instead of the captain, of that company of yours. Do you understand?'

Ruggs understood and managed to retire. Outside, he leaned against the building to steady his knees, and pressed his hands into his pockets to keep his fingers from trembling.

'Sorry about it, old chap!' spoke up one of those waiting near the entry.

Ruggs realized how the shock must have affected his features. The incident gave him an idea.

When he had recovered sufficiently to go back to his bunk, Vance, in a rather conventional and perfunctory tone, inquired about the outcome.

'Oh,' the dissembling Ruggs declared, 'the Meter said he'd let me stay on till the end of camp for the training. I'd get, if I wanted to.'

It was enough for Vance, and those standing about refrained from asking embarrassing questions. For the next four days Ruggs was treated as one who has just lost his entire family in a wreck. On the evening of the fifth day, after supper, a reserve officer from headquarters appeared in barracks with a list, the substance of which he said could be disclosed to the public. When he had finished reading the first lieutenants every eye glared at Ruggs; and when the list was completed there was a rush for blankets and the victim. How many times Ruggs's feet hit the ceiling, he never quite remembered.

Later, Squirmy gave a very helpful talk on Joseph, who was sold by his brothers down into Egypt after they had hidden him under a bushel. 'Ah! gentlemen,' he exhorted, '*this* time little Joey sold his brothers. Little Joey Ruggs is going to have a coat of many colors and be ruler over many!'

And again the fun turned on Ruggs, but he stole away and wired Alice.

## SOME BLANK MISGIVINGS

BY GEORGE BOAS

I AM sitting in Carruthers Hall giving an examination in Elementary English Composition. To be sure, I have no business here, for this is a university which enjoys the Honor System. These young Americans before me are distinguished from almost all others: they are allowed to use their sense of right and wrong; they punish their own offenders. The force of public opinion is enough to prevent cheating. And yet I am here. It is suggested by my superiors that my help may be wanted.

And so here I come at nine o'clock, and here I sit behind the desk on the raised platform. It is fortunate that it is raised, one can see appeals for aid so much more easily. My knowledge that I must lend a helping hand prevents my concentrating on this very delightful volume of Propertius, which I have brought along to make my altruism seem less aggressive. My presence must not be misinterpreted. It would never do to let the students think that I was watching them.

What a mass of ritual for something so simple! I sometimes think that it was the ritual which attracted me to this dismal profession. To ascend a platform every day, to lecture, to see one's words being eagerly copied into notebooks, to be applauded at the end of the semester, to be called 'Professor,' all these are signs of majesty. And then, to make out examinations by whose results a boy's life may be determined: this surely is a Nietzschean existence. Here is one's opportunity to exercise one's Will to Power.

Before me sit one hundred and fifty men who have taken my course for a year. They are now trying to answer questions in such a way as to show me that they know more than I think they do. Some of them will surprise me and I shall know that my questions were ill-chosen. Most of them will live up to my expectations, however, and as I plod through their books I shall see my early predictions verified.

Hopkins will return to me my every thought, phrased in my most individual manner; he will stand forth as a man whose generous mind disdains a failure to agree with an authority. Clarkson will jumble 'clearness' with 'emphasis,' 'coherence' with 'unity,' and write page after page in self-exposure. Mason will denounce everything he has heard this term as so much rubbish, and rage violently against all instruction. I sympathize with Mason. Smith will misinterpret each question and weep over my unfairness in flunking him. Lyons will write calmly and quietly a book of sense, not brilliant, not original, but honest and correct. Wheelwright will have a great deal of brilliance and very little correctness. And so it goes. Before one of the three hours is up, Wilson will slap his papers together, briskly throw them on my desk, wish me a happy vacation, and stride out swinging his hat. He too will wonder at my unfairness in a week or two.

There is Baker in the back row showing distress signals. Baker is an excellent mining engineer, but, curiously