



Poetry and Prose

During WWI postcards were produced with a poem giving a satirical account of a soldier's life in a training camp. These postcards had the camp name at the top and within the poem. Each postcard had similar if not identical wording as recorded below.

Codford Camp

There's an isolated, desolated spot I'd like to mention,
Where all you hear is "Stand at Ease," "Slope Arms,"
"Quick March," "Attention."

It's miles away from anywhere, by Gad, it is a rum 'un,
A chap lived there for fifty years and never saw a woman.

There are lots of little huts, dotted here and there
For those who have to live inside, I've offered many a prayer,
Inside the huts there's RATS as big as any Nanny Goat,
Last night a soldier saw One Fitting on his Overcoat.

For Breakfast every morning, just like Old Mother Hubbard,
You Double round the bloomin' Hut and jump up at the cupboard
Sometimes you get bacon, and sometimes "lively" cheese,
That forms Platoon upon your plate, Orders Arms and Stands at Ease.

It's sludge up to the eyebrows, you get it in your ears,
But into it you've got to go without a sign of fear,
And when you've had a bath of sludge, you just set to and groom,
And get cleaned up for next Parade, or else it's "Orderly Room."

Week in. week out, from morn till night, with full Pack and a rifle,
Like Jack and Jill, you climb the hills, of course that's just a trifle,
"Slope Arms," "Fix Bayonets," then "Present" they fairly put you through it.
And as you stagger to your hut, the Sergeant shouts "Jump to it."

There's another kind of drill, especially invented for the Army,
I think they call it Swedish, and it nearly drives you barmy:
This blinking drill it does you good, it makes your bones go tender
You can coil yourself up like a snake and crawl beneath the fender.

With tunics, boots and putties off, you quickly get the habit,
You gallop up and down the hills just like a blooming rabbit,
"Heads Backward Bend," "Arms Upward Stretch," "Heels Raise," then "Ranks Change Places,"
And later on they make you put your kneecaps where your face is.

Now when this War is over and we've captured Kaiser Billy,
To shoot him would be merciful and absolutely silly,
Just send him down to CODFORD, there among the Rats and Clay
And I'll bet he won't be long before he droops and fades away.

BUT WE'RE STILL "MERRY AND BRIGHT"