



FATHERS IN CAMP

And Families On Trains

of home-made biscuits, and of all the mothers and the children and the tins of biscuits to see Father, who's in camp. For Father can't get home every week-end, and so Mother and the children go to see him instead.

Or perhaps it's a brother or a nephew or a sweetheart or a son who's in camp, so as well as mothers and children there are middle-aged and elderly men and women, and young girls who may be either sisters or sweethearts or cousins. And perhaps there are one or two people like me, who aren't going to see anybody in particular but just to see a camp on Visitors' Day.

Conversation Piece

The carriage is full. Everybody talks. Mothers say "Don't dear," mindedly to children who are drawing designs on the window pane with grubby

more day of regret for you. But by

starting NOW with De Witt's Antacid

Powder you ensure instant relief from

the first dose . . . permanent freedom

from dreaded pains after meals . . .

return of an eat-what-you-like digestion.

De Witt's Antacid Powder neutralises

excess acid in the stomach, the cause of

griping pains. It soothes and protects

the stomach lining and actually helps

to digest your food. Get a supply of DeWitt's Antacid Powder to-day. Take

a dose or two and see how quickly this

remedy stops your pain and misery.

and est what you like.

70U don't take flowers, you don't fingers, and less absent-mindedly to infants take grapes or oranges, but you who are squirming to reach a neighbour's do take large fruit cakes and tins glasses. School age and pre-school age of home-made biscuits, and of children ask questions: "Why does the course, the children. And every Sunday train make such a funny noise, Grandafternoon two special visitors' trains take ma?" "Why does Dad live in such a all the mothers and the children and the funny place?" and the classic "Why is that lady wearing such a funny hat?'

> Opposite me two young ladies are discussing Bill. Bill, it appears, is a Second Lieutenant now and is going to show them round the Officers' Mess. Fur Cap thinks perhaps it's a bad thing for Bill, getting a commission. He was quite conceited enough to begin with and what will he be like now? Red Turban thinks it's good for a man to have a certain amount of self-confidence, and anyway Bill's never been what she calls conceited. Is it true what Dick said at the cabaret about Bill being interested in some girl in Auckland? asks Fur Cap. No, says Red Turban authoritatively, he probably meant Heather, and she's his cousin.

There's Not Much to Look At

The train moves slowly, far too slowly for all the people in it. "Why don't they put an express on?" the elderly lady across the aisle demands of her husband. "Surely they needn't stop for ten minutes at all these ridiculous little stations."

The train overhears her and is stung to activity. Summoning all its resources it devours the last five miles in ten minutes and draws up choking and gasping at the station.

The passengers alight, and are borne off in groups by figures in khaki. A tall young man with glasses attaches himself to the elderly couple. "Hello, Mum, hello, Dad. Glad you managed to make it." and marshals them self-consciously through the crowd. The two children from the end seat hurl themselves upon a youngish man with a moustache. "Hi. Dad, look, I brought you my train that I got for my birthday," says the six-year-old son. The three-year-old daughter contents herself with saying "Daddy!" and stretching out both arms to be picked up. I notice with regret that Bill does not seem to be on the platform to meet Red Turban and Fur Cap. Does this prove that he is conceited or that Duty has detained him?

The laughing groups of mufti and khaki stream through the gate. I feel conscious both of my lack of company and of specific purpose, for it seems obvious that nobody but a fifth columnist would come to a camp just to look around. And it isn't as if, apart from the people, there was much to look at. Broad gravelled roadways set severely at right angles, and rows and rows of green painted huts.

Absentee Family

It's a relief to run into Douglas, and he tells me he's quite pleased to have someone to show round, though his idea of showing someone round is to begin with the perimeter of the camp and walk in decreasing squares till you come to the centre, and then starting walking in Women and the Home

increasing squares till by going-home time you've come to the outside of the camp again. It appears that Joan was coming and bringing the baby, but she wired to say that the baby seemed to be getting something — she hoped it wasn't whooping cough—so she couldn't come after all. And Douglas couldn't get leave to go home and make sure it wasn't whooping cough. And having seen Joan the previous day I'm able to assure him that it isn't whooping cough, but that young Denis certainly had some sort of cold. This cheers Douglas up, he calls a halt outside Everyman's Hut and suggests a cup of tea.

There's another corporal at our table whom Douglas knows. Visitors' Day doesn't mean a thing to him, he explains, because he knows no one in town and his home's in another province. But he got a letter yesterday from his five-yearold Alex. I expect his mother helped him with it, he adds, as he hands over the laboriously pencilled script, and I read that Alex is missing Dad, that Jane has a new doll, and that Alex wants to know when Dad's coming home to see the new pony. The corporal folds the letter carefully and puts its back in his pocket book.

Zero Hour

We go outside into the sunshine, where there seem to be hundreds of people just walking up and down, and the women are laughing and talking to their escorts as if they hadn't been walking with thin shoes on miles of gravel. And that must be Bill, walking with the girl in the red turban, and it's obvious no Auckland ghost walks between them. And just behind is Fur Cap with another Second Lieutenant.

We pass a dormitory, open at both ends to the sun and the public view. On the steps a small child in a pink woollen frock plays with a koala bear, and a small boy drags his toy lorry from one end to the other.

It's almost half-past four, and the crowd is moving towards the main gate and the railway station. There's a long wait for the train, but there are plans to be made for following week-ends, and children create diversions by dropping toys on the railway line and by asking daddy when he's coming home, which starts long discussions between Mother and Dad as to how long the war can possibly last and whether Dad is likely to get transferred. But at last the train puffs in.

People don't talk so much going back. A young woman on the seat opposite me takes out a novel and reads resolutely, but every now and then she falls into a daydream, happy daydreams, judging by her half-smile. Mothers are sitting quietly, planning an after-the-war future for husbands and families, and listening with only half an ear to the conversation of their parents-in-law about how well Keith is looking and how this camp life is the best thing out for him. Perhaps they don't altogether agree. And the children, of course, are making more noise than all the adults put together. Not the eager noises they made

(Continued on next page)



"I feel it my duty to let you know the instant relief I have obtained by taking De Witt's Antacid Powder. I suffered with terrible pains in my stomach and my mother-in-law advised De Witt's Antacid Powder. Getting at my wits' end, I decided to try it. I could not believe that anything could act so magically. The first dose brought relief, and now my trouble is ended. I can eat and enjoy anything. There is one regret-I did not start taking De Witt's Antacid Powder earlier. Mrs. W. L. C.





