Among Us Mortals

The Demobilization Camp

by W. E. HILL

"Well, be good to yourself, sergeant!" Things begin to look rosy even to the guy who, the minute he was out of the army, was going to "knock hell out of the top sergeant"; with your discharge in your pocket, the red stripe on your arm, all ready to go home and pull the hero stuff—Oh, boy!

"No more hick town for me! Me and my pal are going to New York, grab a couple of swell jobs and live like Cæsars!"

"Now, then, you men, snap into it!" Lieutenant Lovely has been detailed to take the depot brigade out on the parade ground to play games—to keep up the morale while the final papers are prepared at headquarters. There's no telling when they will be ready to sign, as the two men who know all about making them out are home on furlough. In the meantime Lieutenant Lovely, never very good at games, has started the men on "Drop the handkerchief." Some one in the crowd has just suggested a game of "Postoffice."

"All them pretty lookin' second lieutenants have better jobs than they ever had before, that's why they're keepin' us here in camp so long—for them to have somethin' to do!" "Red," whose discharge has been sidetracked, believes he has reached the bottom of things.

Private Herman Kidney, of Polkcenter, hopes the company commander will get his point of view and hand him transportation to New York instead of Polkcenter. Polkcenter being fifty miles from this camp and New York five hundred, Polkcenter has it.

"Next morning the bride says to the groom, 'Oh, Henry,' she says"——A busy day in the personnel office, where no one is interested in rushing any but his own discharge.

It took three Senators, a member of the Military Committee and a Governor to get Lewis this far out of the army, and now, the personnel office having lost a part of his service record, there's no telling when he will be discharged. Lieutenant Pratt, just refused a week's furlough, is unsympathetic when consulted. "It may be three months, it may be a year," he tells Lewis.