

Commission of Maurice Burnett as Lieutenant in the RAMC. With certificate of mention in despatches, 1915, and an extract from the "Radio Times", 1929, re the Battle of Shaiba, Mesopotamia, in which Burnett was killed

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RAMC 1018



The War of 1914-1918.
Royal Army Medical Corps
Lt. M. Burnett

was mentioned in a Despatch from
Lieutenant General Sir. A. A. Barrett, K.C.B. K.C.V.O.
dated 31st March 1915

for gallant and distinguished services in the Field.
I have it in command from the King to record His Majesty's
high appreciation of the services rendered.

Christmas. Churchill

Secretary of State for War.

War Office
Whitehall, S.W.
1st March 1919.

A REVUE STAR'S VIEWS ON REVUES.

MORRIS HARVEY was the compere of the 'Nine O'clock Revue' (a radio-adaptation of which is to be broadcast this week) when it ran at the Little Theatre in 1922.

IN view of the fact that we are going to broadcast *The Nine o'Clock Revue* which Harold Simpson and I wrote for the Little Theatre some years ago, the editor of *The Radio Times* has asked me to jot down a few impressions and reminiscences of revue in general, and broadcast revue in particular. I feel as if I were back at school and had an examination paper in front of me.

'State what you know about revue, its cause and effect. What was its origin and why? Give reasons and draw a map.'

I think I was in the first revue ever produced in England, that is to say, the first entertainment actually called a revue. And then it wasn't; it was written by the late George R. Sims, produced at the Palace Theatre, and called *The Palace Review*. Years before that I remember two shows—one called *Pot Pourri* and another one earlier still, I think, called *Under the Clock*. Both these were essentially revues, but the actual word had not yet been invented. Of course *The Follies*, with the late H. G. Pelissier, in which I appeared for about four years, was pure revue from start to finish.



I am looking forward to doing *The Nine o'Clock* over the microphone; it ran for over a year at the Little Theatre, and I enjoyed every minute of it, even though I had to change my clothes about sixteen times during each performance, and—think of it!—for the radio performance we shan't have to change at all—not

even the scenery. Broadcasting simplifies this kind of entertainment tremendously because the whole secret of it is pace and no waiting.

Of course, revue, like all other forms of entertainment, including the weather, is constantly changing; the present craze for dancing, although it had started when we did *The Nine o'Clock*, was not then at its height. We depended more on our dialogue, which is why it is particularly suitable for broadcasting. Personally, I shall not dance when we broadcast the show. I am proud of my reputation of being the worst dancer in the theatrical profession; it saves me a great deal of physical fatigue. Of course, listeners would be spared the agony of seeing me if I danced, but it is safer for me not to do it, all the same, as they might hear me.

One of the questions in my examination paper set me by the editor is: 'Why are there not more satirical, topical items in revue, as in Continental shows?'

Is satire not popular in England? Well, I think one of the reasons why revue was so long in coming to England after it had been popular on the Continent, was the fact

that living caricatures of eminent personages are more or less forbidden here by the Censor, and the early revues in Paris, where I believe revue was actually born, more or less depended on this form of humour. Also I have found that burlesque or travesty has only a limited audience here. Quite recently, when I was appearing in a cabaret in a West End restaurant, I could not find the right kind of items to suit the audience.

I suddenly remembered a song, a burlesque ballad, which had never failed to cause great amusement when I sang it to my friends. It was really a 'nonsense' song, an absurd travesty on the bathos of the over-sentimental song. I tried it one night. Most of the audience took me seriously, and resented being, as they thought, preached at. You see, the song dealt, in a comic way, with the subject of temperance, so had it been serious it would have been slightly out of place in a restaurant at supper-time. Next day I had a note from the manager asking me to delete the song as he did not consider my voice suitable for a sentimental ballad.

Another question on my paper is: 'Could one produce a revue without "stars"?' Well, the same question might be asked about a play or any form of entertainment, and I think the answer is: yes, if the play or revue is so brilliantly conceived and written by the author or authors that it only requires an adequate representation; but a revue would have to be extraordinarily clever for that. Bernard Shaw might do one, but in that case you would have your 'star' in the author. I think the revue public who come in after dinner almost invariably want to know 'who's in it' before they buy their seats. A play is written and then cast, a revue is cast first and then written, and the authors have to invent sketches, stunts, and material generally to fit the 'stars' who are engaged, and if they are not given good opportunities the show, however clever otherwise, will almost invariably fail.

Personally, I consider that there is a place in revue for every type of performer and entertainer—singers, dancers, acrobats, jugglers, musicians; but if there are sketches up it to be played there must be some actors to act them. I have been appearing in revue for over twenty years. I am a poor singer, a hopeless dancer, no acrobat at all, not much of a juggler, and I can play no musical instrument; all I have done is

a little acting, just ordinary acting, so I now hope to go into legitimate plays and leave revue to more nimble folk. In fact, I'll never appear in revue again—until the next time.



MUSIC AND BROADCASTING.

(Continued from page 57)

his efforts. It is, indeed, only rational to suppose it would be so. Only the over-modest among us are precluded, by the puny stature of our efforts, from emulating the example of the great ones of the earth. The contention, therefore, that, under the influence of wireless, people will prefer more and more to listen rather than to perform (that is, to be passive rather than active participants in the art of music), is not supported by the facts of the case. Indeed, so far is it from being near the truth, that one might almost contend with safety that never, since Elizabethan days—justly considered as the most prolific flowering-time of music in these islands—has there been such a widespread and active interest in this particular branch of the arts. Music is enjoying a renaissance it has never enjoyed before. If such is the position within seven years of broadcasting, what may not be achieved when broadcasting is as old, for instance, as the newspapers?

This, then, has been the great achievement of the wireless, in so far as music is concerned, in England: by lifting the ban of unfamiliarity, by making us more and more closely acquainted with good music, by inducing in every one of us a musical consciousness, it has paved the way to an intelligent understanding of music that is without parallel in history. What the result of this may be it is impossible to conjecture. The whole progress of music must, of necessity, be speeded up. Where the level of the demand is raised, the level of the supply must rise with it.

Such results, then, surely more than justify the adventurous nature of the policy that, since the beginning, has governed the B.B.C. in its choice of broadcast music. But any adventurousness, by the very nature of things, brings its penalties. To be always just a little ahead of the times is not to court popularity. And even today, when the level of musical appreciation is as high as it is, there are found plenty to complain against the advisability of such a policy. Here is not the place to set forth an apology for the work of any particular composer. This much, however, may be said: if the policy of the B.B.C., in musical matters, has achieved the surprising results it has been admitted to achieve, may not that policy of far-sightedness and adventurousness be allowed, to the extent of an occasional concert, its logical consequence—even when the result is a kind of music that may seem to unfamiliarized ears the very voice of chaos?

ROBIN HEY.

No wireless receiving apparatus, crystal or valve, may be installed or worked, without a Post Office licence. Such licences may be obtained at any Post Office at which Money Order business is transacted, price 10s. Neglect to obtain a licence is likely to lead to prosecution.

THE BATTLE OF SHAIBA.

In this vivid and soldierly account of the failure of the Turks to retake Basra, on April 14, 1915, listeners will find a useful 'background' for the broadcast from London, on Wednesday of this week, of a Military Ceremonial arranged in honour of the 2nd Battalion, the Norfolk Regiment (which suffered severe losses in the battle), and relayed from the grounds of the Regimental Mess, Aldershot.

FOR some time prior to the battle the Turks had been collecting troops at Nakallah, on the Euphrates, some twenty miles to the north of Shaiba, with the object of recapturing Basra. Shaiba is situated about eight miles west of Basra. During the dry season the road between the two places runs over the dry desert; during the rainy season the whole countryside is flooded with about three to four feet of water. This will give the reader an idea of the difficulty of maintaining a force at Shaiba, as everything had to be sent out by pack mules.

Shaiba as a place consisted of a number of fortified country houses to which some of the wealthy Basra inhabitants used to retire as a refuge from the intense heat of the summer.

Ever since the British occupied Basra, Shaiba had been occupied by a small force. Owing to the situation becoming more serious early in April, 1915, further reinforcements were sent out. The 18th Indian Infantry Brigade—in which the 2nd Battalion the Norfolk Regiment formed the British Battalion—was therefore ordered to join the 16th Infantry Brigade, which, together with the Indian Cavalry Brigade and four Batteries R.A., were already at Shaiba. The British position was fortified with barbed wire and fairly good trenches.

There were several ridges and knolls in front of the position, and about six miles to the south-west lay Barjisiyeh Wood, so the Turks were able to find a certain amount of cover for their advance.

By April 12 the Turks had collected some 10,000 to 12,000 men. The battle opened soon after dawn. A and B Coys. of the Battalion, with the machine-gun section, occupied trenches in the south salient. Artillery fire continued all day, and the enemy succeeded in digging in within sixty yards of the south salient. The enemy attacked with grenades at 9 p.m., but was repulsed. On the following morning the enemy had withdrawn towards Barjisiyeh. The Battalion had spent a hot time in repelling the numerous Turkish attacks. Our



2nd. BATT.
NORFOLK
REGIMENT

machine gun was sent to help the 48th Pioneers. Corp. Waller was in charge of this gun. He was seriously wounded and continued to work the gun for some hours afterwards. He was awarded the D.C.M. Lieut. Farebrother, the machine-gun officer, was wounded while sitting his guns. He was awarded the M.C. for his gallant conduct. Thirteen other ranks were wounded. The following day was spent in turning out isolated parties of snipers and clearing the vicinity of the camp.

On the third day Sir Charles Melliss, V.C., K.C.B., commanding the 6th Division, decided to move out with the whole of his force to clear

up the situation. It must be remembered that at this time neither side in Mesopotamia possessed aeroplanes. We left camp at 8 a.m. The Battalion, with the 18th Brigade, were on the left. At about 10.30 a.m. we were sent over to the right, which brought us near South Mound. This was owing to the information brought in by the cavalry that the enemy was holding an entrenched position on the edge of Barjisiyeh Wood. As soon as the leading infantry went over the ridge, a heavy rattle of musketry commenced and a certain amount of shell fire, but the latter did little or no damage.

The Cavalry Brigade was sent out to cover our right flank. The 6th Division H.Q. took up a commanding position at the head of the glacis-like slope which led down to Barjisiyeh. This was at 11 a.m. It was a very hot day, and the mirage was so bad that we could see only a haze like a lake as we advanced. There was not a particle of cover for our men from the moment they crossed the ridge and advanced down the slope. One heard nothing but the deafening noise of musketry and gunfire. The Turkish machine-guns were good and exacted a heavy toll of our men. Our medical officer, Captain Burnett, was killed early in the day while attending to a wounded man. The Battalion managed to get within about 400 yards of the

Turkish trenches, but the rifle and machine-gun fire was so intense that we could get no further.

The commanding officer, Colonel Peebles, D.S.O., asked for more artillery support. Unfortunately all the H.Q. signallers and artillery personnel with the forward observation post of the Battery were either killed or wounded, so the Adjutant, Captain de Grey, took a flag and got into touch with the Battery headquarters. The situation now was that further advance seemed hopeless, and a retirement would have been equally impossible. Our General did not hesitate. At about 3 p.m. the message came through: 'Push forward at all costs. Take enemy's trench.' Fortunately the artillery support was now very good. On receipt of this message, Colonel Peebles rose up and shouted: 'Come on, the Ninth!' Thus the Battalion charged forward, cheering—bayonets fixed and officers waving drawn swords. This being the last occasion on which officers carried swords in action.

This gave an impetus to the whole line, and forward went the men of Norfolk, Dorset, bearded warriors of Rajputana, and our comrades of the Mahratta regiments. This proved too much for the Turks; they fled, and chaos reigned supreme in their midst. Their General, Suliman Askari Bey, ordered a counter-attack by his reserves, but the reserves had already packed up and would play no more; so the gallant general drew his revolver and shot himself in the wood. By 5 p.m. the firing had ceased, and masses of the enemy were seen in full flight on the far horizon. The order came to march back to camp. The Battalion—what remained of us—fell in. The Battalion had been very weak that morning, only about 300 all ranks. Out of that number we lost thirty-three killed or died of wounds, and ninety-five wounded. The second-in-command, Major F. de B. Bell, died of wounds, and Regt.-Sergt.-Major Semmence was killed. After having collected our wounded and sent them back on mule and pony carts—for we did not possess ambulances in those days—we rejoined the Brigade and retired unmolested to camp. Thus ended the Turkish attempt to re-take Basra. Like the Spanish Armada of old, they advanced full of confidence, and it was rumoured that a medal had been struck for the recapture of Basra, and pro-Turks in the city had laid in a stock of bunting to decorate their houses.

Sir Charles Melliss issued a special order of the day in which he described the fight as 'a soldiers' battle,' and recommended that it be inscribed as a battle honour on the colours of the units that took part in it.

SAMUEL PEPYS, LISTENER.

By R. M. Freeman.

Part-author of *The New Pepys' Diary of the Great War*, etc.

March 23.—Followed the boat-race on the wireless, with very good content in Cambridge heading Oxford from the start; so to continue gapping them till, by the time they come to Mordlake, they have gapped them clean out of the hunt. But Lord! How blessed a thing it is for a man that he can now attend the boat-race cozily by his own fireside, from start to finish, instead of being jostled and hustled to death almost in the crowds on the tow-path, and lucky if he catch but 1 fleeting squint of the boats even so!

At the Club this night old M. Fossulton (that was once upp at Univ. under Franck Bright, whom they called The Mugger and his 3 pretty daughters The Muglets) stands to it most obstinately that the dead-heat in 1877 was noe such thing, but Oxford nosed home by 10 f, and so at first the judge signalled it, but was by some means cozened into going back on his signal. Which is an old wheeze that Fossulton do trot out to comfort himself every time Cambridge wins, and hath, poor man, had occasion to do this pretty often of late years, God be praised for it.

March 24. (Lord's Day, Palm Sunday).—Again so fayr like-a-summer day that we in 2 minds, my wife and I, betwixt M. Blick

and Parson Greenfields. So to settle the matter by tossing—heads, Blick, tails Greenfields, and come down tails to my great content. So sailed it to Box Hill, thence a-foot to pretty little Mickleham and here eat lunch at *The Running Horse*, with a he-waiter to attend us, a good civill fellow, yet would always myself rather chuse she-waiters, being, I think defter as well as trimmer, though this is not my wife's opinion. So through the Church-yard and up hill to the Downs, which be steeper than it looks, especially after eating lunch, and when we come to the top were fain to sit awhile mending our bellows. By-the-by, take the old Roman Road towards Epsom and soon resting again, hard by us was a company of youths and maids, all without hatts, that have a portable sett with them, and they sit round it hearing the overture to *Hansel and Gretel*: which up here among the hills and woods do make the most ravishing musick, so as I was moved to hold my wife's hand and call her 'brown-eyes' and she calls me 'Quiff' (being our old courting names for each other). Till presently a spyder adoun her back-neck breaks the spell and am then no longer 'Quiff' (but 'butter-fingers'), and then taunting names, by my tardy bunglings (as she terchly calls them) in fishing this damned spyder out of my wife's back-neck.

GOYA, by J. C. Squire. (Continued from page 65.)

Painter. Goya continued, during the Napoleonic Wars, to keep in with all parties and paint all parties, storing up saturnine reflections in his satirical mind. Later, he migrated to France, and died at Bordeaux in 1830, nearly blind.

His volume of work was very great—paintings, etchings, lithographs. He is best known by his portraits of ladies with mantillas and fans, and gentlemen in wigs and uniforms—sparkling, realistic things with fleeting expressions brilliantly snatched. But he is, among connoisseurs, equally well known by his sketches from the general life around him. There were the paintings of popular fairs, and carnivals, and bull-fights: wonderfully vigorous, fluent, and life-like. There were also etchings and drawings, including the celebrated series, the 'Caprichos.' Of these, many anticipated the great French caricaturists in style and the decadents in subject: he may have thought he was expressing his disgust at garrottings and murders, scourgings, and violations, and tortures, asylums and leper-hospitals, but there is a certain unwholesome gloating evident in the very power and frequency of his renderings. He was not purely morbid, but he wasn't entirely healthy: he dwelt upon atrocities a shade too long. Healthy or not, he had an amazingly keen eye and hand. He was one of the fathers of modern painting, and he has never quite had his due.

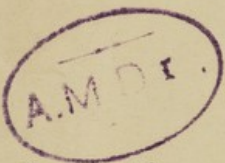
ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE.

1^B.

66 Maurice's Mentions of Despatches
 Captain Maurice Burnett RAMC
 killed Shaiba Mesopotamia
 April 14 - 1915
 Surgeon General W. F. Burnett attached to
 1502²⁰⁰ 3rd Norfolk Regt
 as Medical Officer
 9 Cambridge Gardens,

Richmond

Surrey.



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Secretary,

WAR OFFICE,

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RAMC 1918

MS 3D

George R. I.

George

by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India, &c.

to Our Trusty and well beloved Maurice Burnell, Greeting.

We, reposing especial Trust and Confidence in your Loyalty, Ability and good Conduct, do by these Presents Constitute and Appoint you to be an Officer in Our Royal Army Medical Corps from the Twenty-sixth day of January 1912. You are therefore carefully and diligently to discharge your Duty as such in the Rank of Lieutenant in Our Land Forces, or in such higher Rank as We may from time to time hereafter be pleased to appoint you to, of which a notification will be made in the London Gazette, by doing and performing all and all manner of things thereunto belonging, as required by the established Regulations of Our Service, exercising authority according to the Rules and Discipline of War over junior Officers of Our Royal Army Medical Corps and Subordinates employed in Our Army Medical Service, and over the Soldiers of Our Royal Army Medical Corps, and over all Officers and Soldiers attached thereto, and over all Patients in Military Hospitals, and observing and following yourself under the same Rules and Discipline, such orders and directions from time to time as you shall receive from Us, or any your Superior Officer, in pursuance of the Trust We hereby repose in you.

Given at Our Court at Saint James's the Twenty-second day of February 1912 in the Second Year of Our Reign.

By His Majesty's Command.

Maurice Burnell,
Lieutenant,
Land Forces.

W. Wood
W. Wood

RAMC 1018

M. Burnett,

Lieutenant.

Land Forces.

Royal Army
Medical Corps.

23. 3. '12.

