

**"The Great War: the standard history of the all-Europe conflict", serial publication edited by H.W. Wilson: part 132: "How the wounded were bought home"**

**Publication/Creation**

1917

**Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/hwkprstn>

**License and attribution**

You have permission to make copies of this work under a Creative Commons, Attribution, Non-commercial license.

Non-commercial use includes private study, academic research, teaching, and other activities that are not primarily intended for, or directed towards, commercial advantage or private monetary compensation. See the Legal Code for further information.

Image source should be attributed as specified in the full catalogue record. If no source is given the image should be attributed to Wellcome Collection.



Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

Week ending February 24th, 1917.

[Registered for Canadian Magazine Post.

Part 132. HOW THE WOUNDED WERE BROUGHT HOME. 7d. Net.



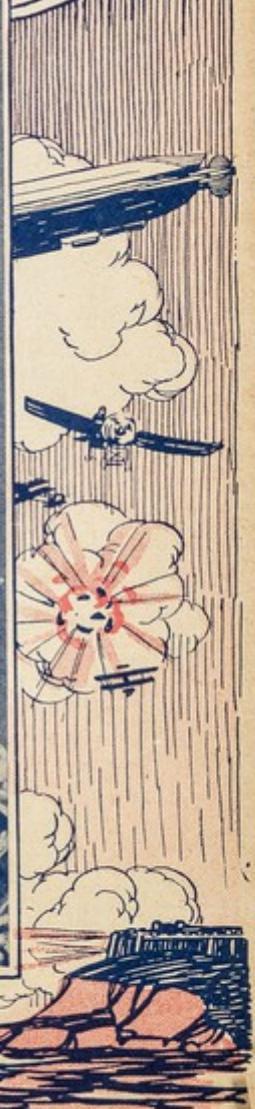
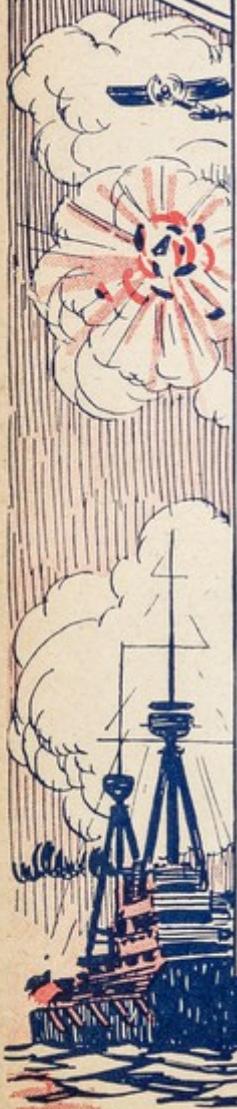
The

# GREAT WAR

THE STANDARD HISTORY OF THE ALL-EUROPE CONFLICT

*Edited by H.W. Wilson, author of*

*"With the Flag to Pretoria," "Japan's Fight for Freedom," etc.*



Vol. VIII.]

Surgeon-General Sir Alfred Keogh, G.C.B.,  
Director-General of the Army Medical Services.

(Photo by Elliott & Fry.)

# The Great War

EDITORS  
H. W. WILSON  
J. A. HAMMERTON

## EDITORIAL

MR. BASIL CLARKE'S account of How the Wounded were Brought Home ends in this part of THE GREAT WAR, and, as indicated in our notes last week, is followed by the beginning of Mr. Edward Wright's story of the French Counter-Offensive at Verdun, which was so glorious for France.

### *German Life in War Time*

IN a forthcoming issue will appear a chapter describing Life in Germany During the Second Year of the War, written by Mr. Frederic William Wile, author of "Men Around the Kaiser," "The Assault," etc., and for many years Berlin correspondent of "The Daily Mail." His singularly intimate knowledge of the German people and German life marks Mr. Wile out as easily the first authority to be asked to deal with this subject, the one most competent to read between the lines of the German official reports on domestic conditions and the orders with respect to food supply and distribution in the various Germanic States. He has also maintained access to sources of information not generally available, and his resulting account can be accepted as true to the facts and of historical interest and importance.

### *The Great Zeppelin Cable*

MR. WILSON'S suggestion in his recent chapter on the airship raids of 1916—that the great central cable found in the L33 brought down in Essex was a novel feature of airship construction, the existence of which no one in this country had suspected—has brought us a most interesting letter from Mr. G. T. Pardoe, of Worthing. As long ago as April, 1916, he deduced the existence of this central longitudinal stay (cable or bolt) and outlined its functions in a letter to "The Engineer," published in that journal. "As regards the separation of the compartments, I suggest that the main gasbag is separated into compartments by simple diaphragms, which are 'seized' on each side at centre to a longitudinal bolt or stay running from end to end of the balloon.

"THESE diaphragms may be further supported by radiating stays similar to the cords of a parachute. The diaphragms, then, support a difference of pressure by a series of local oval panels in the material of the diaphragm." In several other respects Mr. Pardoe's letter of last April proved to contain, as he puts it, a "paraphrase" in advance of the account of the L33 given by Mr. Wilson after inspection of the dirigible. Mr. Pardoe goes on modestly to say that, beyond the technical knowledge possessed by every engineer, he had no knowledge of the gasbags other than that open to every member of the public, and he concludes with the comforting remark that therefore he is disposed to think that there are just as good brains in this country as there are in Hunland, or are ever likely to be. We think so, too.

### *The Navy and the Camera*

A CORRESPONDENT, Mr. O. I. Ellis, of Hong-Kong, writes to the Editors that he is one of the subscribers in that outpost of Empire who are carefully preserving and

having bound into volumes their weekly parts of THE GREAT WAR, and that its arrival there is a regular source of interest. He is particularly anxious, in view of the restrictions imposed upon the publication by the censorship, that an effort should be made to include in the pages of THE GREAT WAR, before its termination, photographic representations of all the British battleships that have distinguished themselves, as well as those that have gone down with their gallant crews beneath the wave. This is a matter which has been engaging the consideration of the Editors for some time, as they have felt that it would be desirable if, before the termination of the work, the authorities permit it, to include those photographs among the various other matters that will go to form our appendices. There are quite good and obvious reasons, however, why no photographs of British battleships should be circulated while the war is still in progress.

### *A Panorama of the War*

THE new number of our very remarkable little contemporary, "The War Illustrated," published on Saturday, February 17th, is the first of a new volume, and the occasion is worthy of a note. That publication, which is issued under the same auspices as THE GREAT WAR, and has a very distinct and individual mission, is one of the outstanding successes of weekly pictorial journalism. It has solved the hitherto most difficult problem—how to produce a periodical that would be at once a lively and interesting weekly paper and a pictorial record of permanent value. "The War Illustrated" has filled both rôles admirably. As a panorama of the war it could not be improved upon, but the editor, by maintaining a particularly high level of literary excellence, as well as exerting every effort to secure the earliest and fullest service of war photographs, has stamped it with a character all its own as a periodical of high-class reading for thoughtful people. Recently we directed attention to the remarkable series of articles on "Great Issues of the War" still appearing in its columns, to which many of the foremost publicists of the day are contributing.

### *Some Important Features*

AMONG new features, Mr. Hamilton Fyfe is to contribute an important series of "Untold Stories from Rumania's Tragedy," and a set of very interesting articles is announced descriptive of the fighting men of our Allies, Mr. Hamilton Fyfe dealing with the Russian, Mr. Basil Clarke with the Rumanian, Mr. H. Charles Woods with the Serbian, and so on. In the issue of February 17th, which is peculiarly rich in pictorial interest, another remarkable series begins: "The Soldier in Battle," being an intimate revelation of the emotions experienced by a soldier-journalist who fought through the Battles of the Somme. The editor announces many new and attractive features in addition to a pictorial "Who's Who in the War," and Mr. Max Pemberton's brilliant "Battle Pictures of the War" are to be continued in view of the great success which has attended their publication. Altogether, our readers who wish a cheap periodical to send to their friends at the front or with the Fleet, or to send abroad as an interesting and patriotic mirror of the war, will not find anything to equal "The War Illustrated," at 2d. weekly.

An eerie thing it was to walk here in the dark, picking your way by tapping with your stick the broken bricks of which the road was made; then, suddenly, to find the whole world lit up as with a ghostly moonlight. Each light stayed only long enough to reveal the grim signs

**Meeting the ambulance**

of war immediately about you. It might be only the stretcher-bearers whom you noticed in their queer iron helmets—making still queerer shadows—all marching in step, with their stretcher and its silent burden, rocking rhythmically up and down to each step they were taking. Or a flare might disclose to you the barren countryside, all shell-heaps and shell-holes, with here and there a tree disfigured by shell till its few remaining branches, broken short, stood out hideously, like gnarled, rheumatic fingers clawing greedily at an unreachable sky. Once a flare revealed to me what I thought at first were figures of men sleeping out in the open. But their poses were not those of sleep. Legs, top-booted, stretched out sprawlingly from under stiff-looking greatcoats; arms reached out unnaturally to clasp distant clouts of clay; and a sleeper's head might lie in a pool of water and trouble him not at all. For they would never wake up, those sleepers. The little round caps they wore showed them to be Germans.

After going about half a mile along that road I saw, some twenty yards off, the red glow of a cigarette upon a face behind it. A man was leaning, smoking, against a

motor-ambulance which was hiding under a bank, without lights. This was the nearest point to which a motor could approach the trenches. The driver stood by while the R.A.M.C. men opened its back canvas flaps and lifted the stretcher into the dark body of the vehicle. "Will you ride in the van or do you care for a walk?" asked my guide, an R.A.M.C. captain. I was anxious not to lose touch with the patient, but on being assured that I should overtake him at the next stopping-place I agreed to walk. One man got in the waggon with the patient, the others stood by to see him start away. "Good-bye, Jack," said one of them to him as the engine began to turn. "Hope it's one that will take you back to 'Blighty.'" The speaker was Harry Droilesden. With this good wish—the best wish you can wish any wounded British Tommy—he drew off and turned once more with the stretcher-bearers towards Beaumont-Hamel—Beaumont-Hamel with its mud and its shell-holes and its star-shells and its dead. For myself I was glad to be leaving that war-worn spot and all its dangers behind me.

**Still within shell-range**

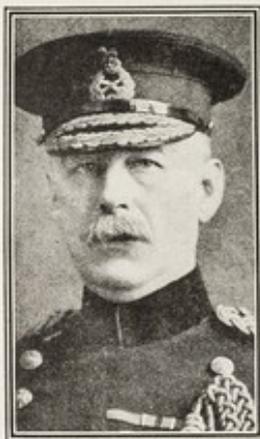
I said something of the sort to the captain, adding that adventures and dangers and risks were the pleasantest things in the world—when they were well behind you and you were through them. I even found myself stepping out with vigour, under the stimulus of this idea of danger faced and at last successfully passed.



EMBARKING BRITISH WOUNDED ON A HOSPITAL SHIP IN MESOPOTAMIA.

Various causes, chiefly climatic, contributed to aggravate the discomfort of the wounded in Mesopotamia. The Tigris, however, provided a smooth passage for their removal in hospital ships to the base. After General

Townshend was forced by starvation to surrender Kut-el-Amara, the Turks, by general consent chivalrous foes, allowed him to send all his wounded by this means to the British lines lower down the river.



*[Litho & Frg.]*  
SIR ALFRED KEOGH, G.C.B.  
Reappointed Director-General of the A.M.S. after the outbreak of the war. He occupied the same position from 1904 to 1910.

which showed with a faint pale-green light in the darkness. "Yes," he went on. "They usually begin shelling for working-parties about this time, and you never know quite which district they'll pick upon."

He explained that both sides did most of their work in the trenches—such as trench-digging and repairing, dug-out making, wire-laying and so on—at night, and that working-parties were sent up from villages and camps behind the lines to do it. At night, therefore, the Germans began to shell these villages and the roads leading from them in the hope of hitting working-parties while they were assembling or were moving up to the lines along the roads. "They might begin any minute to drop them on this road," he concluded.

I pulled my shrapnel helmet till it hung more protectingly over the nape of my neck, and walked on with my enthusiasm distinctly modified. Five minutes later, as we plodded along that dark, uneven road, the shelling began sure enough. But the spot which the enemy had chosen that evening was not our own immediate neighbourhood but the village to which we were walking and to which John Oldham and his motor-ambulance had gone on. This was the village of Maily Maillet. It lay a few miles before us, and the German shells on their way to it passed over our heads. We could hear each of them, first behind us, a thin piercing whine which gradually rose in pitch and grew louder as the shell passed overhead,

**Motor control post**

then grew faint again. A second or two later we heard the boom of the shell's explosion in the neighbourhood of Maily Maillet. Some shells, we noticed, passed over without being followed by any "crump" from the village. We heard the explanation later, which was that a number of them were "duds," having failed to "go off."

I am afraid I loitered just a little on the road to Maily. One excellent excuse I found for doing so was to turn

"Depends on what your idea of danger is," he replied. "You are not likely to be sniped here or mined or blown to bits with a hand-bomb as you were in Beaumont-Hamel. That's true enough, but there are enough dirty roads to death to be found in this area to suit my appetite any day. In fact, about this time of day I would feel safer in the trenches than where we are at the moment."

He looked at his watch, the luminous figures of

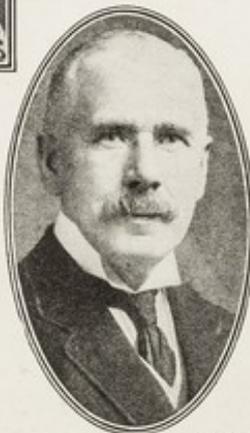
aside to see the motor control post. It was a ruined homestead by the roadside, the roof of which had been patched up with tarpaulin sheets and the walls with sand-bags. Thus repaired, it made a quite presentable shelter in spite of all the German shells had done. A man with a rifle and a lantern hawled: "Who goes there?" as we approached in the darkness.

An R.A.M.C. sergeant was in command of the place, and with one or two helpers he arranged for a regular service of ambulance-cars between Beaumont-Hamel collecting post and Maily Maillet behind, and for any extra cars that might be summoned by runner. In a little book which he showed us by lamp-light he had the time of the "runner's" arrival and the time the car was despatched.

Apparently the most advanced posts of the field ambulance organisation had not attained to the luxury of a telephone service yet. But seeing that even the gunners had all their work cut out to maintain telephone lines over these shell-swept areas, a telephone corps for the R.A.M.C. was probably too much to ask for.

We came out into the darkness of the Maily road again to find that the British guns had taken up the challenge of the enemy's "strafe" and were replying with rather more energy than the enemy was showing. I gathered, in fact, that the British policy of retaliation at this period of the war was grossly generous, the general idea, both in battery and in trench, being to send back six times the quantity of whatever the Germans "sent over." Thus,

if any German infantryman in a playful moment pitched up a hand-grenade to drop into your trench, the scheme of things was promptly to throw six back. Should a German gunnery officer, to gratify a whim or a visitor—as I myself have been gratified by gunnery officers, who as a genus just love to say: "This is how she does it," and then to fire off their biggest gun, much to the shock of that visitor's ears and system



*[Litho & Frg.]*  
SIR W. A. LANE, BART., C.B.  
Distinguished surgeon who was awarded the C.B. for his valuable services to the R.A.M.C. during the war.



*[Litho & Frg.]*  
SIR B. G. MOYNIHAN, C.B.  
Mentioned in despatches for his services in the war, Lieut.-Col. Sir Berkeley Moynihan, of the R.A.M.C. was awarded the C.B. early in 1917.

—well, should a German gunner give way to such a weakness, the British gunner felt in all politeness bound promptly to fire off six shells as big or bigger; and if he felt particularly active that night he would not stop at six times. Another little disinterestedness about the British gunners that struck me was this—that none of them seemed inclined to throw work on "the other fellow." Thus, if six shots



*[Litho & Frg.]*  
LT.-COL. HENRY DAVY, C.B.  
Consulting physician to the Southern Command, who was given the C.B. early in 1917 for his work in the R.A.M.C.

Retaliation by  
six to one

or so were needed to keep up the fair proportion of six shots for one shot sent over by some chance German battery, every single battery that heard the shot seemed to think the task of answering was its own especial prerogative and not that of "the other battery" round the corner.

It is only in this way that I can explain the extraordinary response given to those score or so of German shells that flew over our heads on the Mailly road that night. Every British battery for miles around seemed to have awakened from its slumbers by those shots, and to

**Advanced dressing-station**—be working now like a railway breakdown gang for vigour. Batteries to the right of us, batteries to the left and in

front of us, all were barking away in wonderful fashion. The white-blue flashes of field-guns and long guns, the pink flashes of "hows"—as howitzers are called—lit up the earth. To add to the sky effects the Germans, becoming nervous of an attack, perhaps, began to send up star-shells and flares in great quantities.

To stand thus, in a quiet country lane, hearing the amazing barks of many different guns and the whine of many different shells, and to see gnarled and shattered trees jump out at you, black and still and horrible against momentary backgrounds of livid flame, struck me as the most unreal thing I had ever experienced. But for one's ever-conscious knowledge of its full horror and deadly reality, one would have thought it all a product of stage-craft rather than of war.

From among the mud and ruins of Mailly Maillet—which had suffered from the gun fire of British, French, and German alike in its day—my guide picked out a little house with whitewashed walls, standing alone in a ruined garden. Every window of the house was broken, and curtains of felt or flannel, fastened only at the top, had been hung inside to cover up the wooden window-frames. If you watched these curtains closely you would notice that they flapped with every gun that was fired in the neighbourhood, and with every German shell that arrived in the village. The house had escaped major damage. A chimney-pot or two had been hit, and there were jagged chunks out of the wall in one or two places; but little else. The one great German shell that would have "done for" that place and demolished it entirely had repented at the last moment and failed to explode. It lay on the little back lawn for all eyes to see by day and for all shins to hit by night—a "dud." You fell over it when you walked into the back garden at nights. It was the usual thing, in fact, for your host in that house to say, if you spoke of going out of doors for a breath of air at nights: "Don't fall over the shell."

That house was an "Advanced Dressing-Station," an important link in the medical scheme of things out at the war. Its commanding officer was the captain who had kindly acted as my guide to Beaumont-Hamel, an excellent soul from far New Zealand. "Now, this advanced dressing-station," he had begun, when we entered, "receives wounded from its regimental aid posts at Beaumont and —. But I won't tell you another word till you've had some tea, so you can put that notebook away for a spell and—WAIT!"—this last word in a shout. I thought he was joking still, but a rosy-cheeked orderly

put his head inside the door and said, "Yes, sir?" Tea was ordered, and I made the discovery that the orderly's name was Wait.

"Your patient, Oldham, is all safe and sound in the cellars," the captain added, "and will not be going farther for an hour or so, so you can put your mind at rest. He won't escape you."

"Why in the cellars?" I asked.

"Because," he answered, "whenever the village is being shelled, as it was when we came in, all the patients we may have in here at the time are carried down into the cellars. They'll come up again when it's over. Get some tea!"

The captain had poured me out a tin mug of tea from a tin teapot. Toast had come in on a tin plate, and butter lay near at hand in a tin can.

"Milk, orderly!" sang out the captain.

"I'll have to get some more out, sir," said the orderly, "and the—er—the gentleman there is sitting on it."

The upturned wooden case which served me for a chair was rummaged in, and from it was produced a tin labelled "Milk." The orderly jabbed the spike of his jack-knife



WOUNDED SLUNG ABOARD A RED CROSS SHIP IN A BOX-STRETCHER. Box-stretchers were among the ingenious contrivances utilised for getting the wounded men aboard the hospital ships in a way that should minimise their discomfort. These box-stretchers, it will be observed, were sufficiently large to take two men who were not too badly wounded to be able to sit up.

cleverly through the lid in two places, one on each side, and when he upturned the tin over my tea mug there flowed milk from the lower hole, excellent stuff of the density of cream, while through the upper hole of the tin lid went in air to take the place of the milk that came out. The day of thick and sticky canned milk was over.

Over tea and toast and jam I had time to take stock of the queer room in which we sat. It was the captain's bed-room, sitting-room, dining-room, reception-room, and office all in one. The walls were of plain, whitewashed plaster, and the windows—or rather the window-holes—were covered with sacking, which flapped listlessly in the wind and heavily at every gun shot or shell fall outside.

The one lamp of the place stood in the middle of our table. Its glass mantle had been broken and repaired—very dexterously, I thought—with surgical sticking-plaster. Its flame threw firm, black shadows of you on to the whitewashed wall behind. Some busy soul had occupied himself in tracing out these shadows of men as they sat at the table, and the wall was covered with charcoal silhouettes. One aquiline portrait was labelled "McMurtrie," another was labelled "Torrance"—former

An officer's quarters

occupants, no doubt, of this primitive little billet. The captain's camp bed lay in a far corner among some boxes of tinned milk, petrol-cans, and other stores. A bright fire of wood flickered in a rusty little grate, sharing about equally with the plastered lamp the duty of lighting the room.

After tea I found John Oldham again. He was in a cellar, with low-arched roof, lying on his back on a stretcher under a blanket, just above the edge of which appeared the glowing tip of a cigarette and his face.

"How goes it now?" I asked him. He grinned, and said, in a voice full of mock woefulness: "Well, Ah'm just about as well as can be expected, thank ye, sir."

Other patients lying on their backs on the cellar-flags near him all laughed at this, and I gathered from a friendly corporal that this was the recognised reply of Tommies who, while feeling in pretty good spirits, were anxious not to be regarded as well enough to be sent back to the trenches. For a little hospital treatment, even in the dark cellar of a shelled villa, came like a spell of paradise to lads who had been weeks in the dreadful trenches of the Somme. Not that Oldham, with his thigh wound, ever stood any risk of being sent back. Still, it pleased him and his sense of mischief, as active in him as in all good soldiers, to pretend that he was shirking going back. It was one of the forms of humour at the front to pretend to be "funking" or shirking. As they lay helpless I could hear them joking one to another about their illnesses and wounds. I remember one big fellow, whose face had been half blown away by a shell, and who, when he thought no officer was about, said, in a mock, pathetic voice, for his fellows to hear: "I think I could just take a little gruel now, doctor." And then he himself and all his pals laughed as at a joke of priceless merit—the truth being, of course, that if he did manage to eat even a little gruel that would be all that he could manage. But that same spirit of fun-making seemed to hang about some of our British wounded even to the end; they died mocking their wounds.

As soon as the shelling stopped the patients were carried to more airy quarters upstairs. The change was, no doubt, welcome enough, for the fire which had been lit in the cellar to take the chill and dankness off the place was behaving badly and sending more of its smoke into the cellar than up the chimney. The orderlies were coughing heartily enough, but the patients seemed not to notice it. The Somme had, apparently, made any other conditions seem comfortable. The stone steps leading to the basement had been covered with a smooth plank, and up this inclined plane the patients' stretchers were slid with greater ease and steadiness than would have been possible if they had had to be carried. "It's as good as th' toboggan at Blackpool," said one voice; and from the voice and the accent—which made "pool" rhyme with the word "foal," as a Piccadilly "johnny" might pronounce it—I recognised friend Oldham, of Lancashire.

From the cellar the patients, who numbered perhaps a dozen, were carried to more airy quarters in the attics. Here they lay anxiously speculating as to their fate. Would they be kept here for a day or two and then sent back to the trenches, or would they be passed on to a base hospital or to "Blighty"? This last was what every man hoped for; but, of course, for all of them it was impossible. Slight cases of injury or sickness would lie here perhaps for a day or two and then go back to duty. Others might go only a little way down the lines of communication, there to lie up till better. Others might get as far as the sea-coast of France to one or other of the base hospitals. Every type and condition of hospital, in fact, between the trenches and home would sift out some patients for treatment, and only the lucky few would ever achieve their dream of being sent home to "Blighty" and seeing their friends once more. Once when I went upstairs to have another look at the patients a discussion was going on between two or three of them as to their respective chances of being sent home. They were lying on their stretchers, some smoking and talking, others asleep. A solitary lamp shed a faint, flickering light over their recumbent forms.

"Ay," said one voice, as though in disputation over some point a neighbour had raised, "it's true enough that I've only a bullet wound in the arm, as you say, but I've got a touch o' bronchitis an' all! Heard the orderly say so when he heard me wheezin'!"

"That's all very well," said another voice, "but did he write it down on yer ticket? You could have 'hydrophobie' also, an' it wouldn't help you two-penn'orth if th' doc. didn't write it down on yer ticket!" (The ticket to which he referred was the little label—white for non-dangerous cases, red and white for dangerous cases—which was tied to the jacket of every patient at the regimental aid post, and which, with any necessary emendations or additions made at intermediate dressing-stations, went with the case and symptoms.)

"Can't say as it's on my ticket, as I knows on." Here the voice was raised to call to the orderly, who was not far away: "Hi, matey, you might read us out what's written on my ticket!"

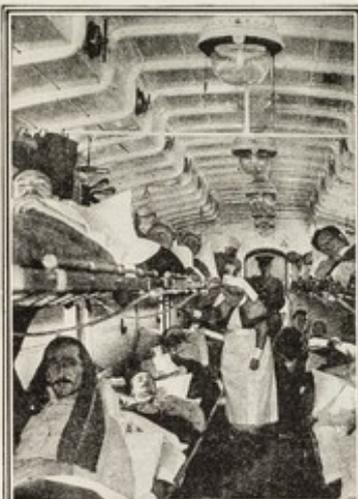
"Wait till daylight, and get to sleep, my lad," said the orderly not unkindly. "It's latish. You ought all on yer to be getting a bit o' sleep instead of chattering away there like a girls' school. Be good lads an' get to sleep." He reminded me of a mother. There was silence for a while in the little whitewashed attic, and then the voice went on in a whisper: "Yer bronchitis will be a good help if it's on yer ticket. We'll read it in the mornin'." My chance is pretty all right, I think. I've got a 'temperature,' besides my wound. 'Undred it were when it were last took. Pretty good that! They think a lot about temperatures. Orderly told me so. Very particular about temperatures." So they talked, on their stretchers, in that dimly-lighted attic. Oldham, I noticed, was asleep.



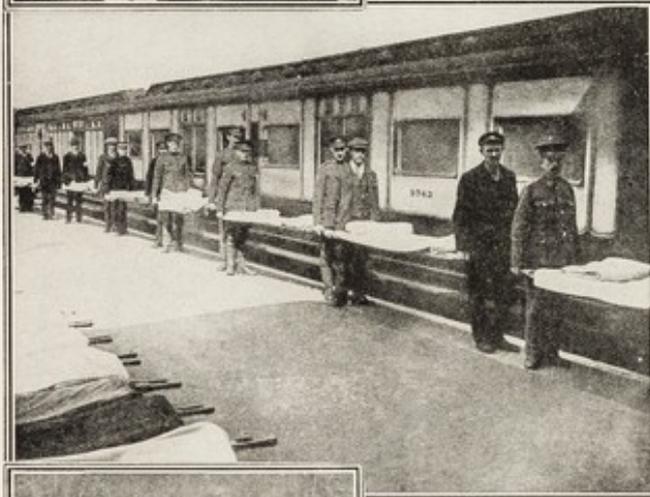
WOUNDED MEN CROSSING THE CHANNEL.

"Walking cases"—that is to say, wounded men who were able to move about by themselves—could enjoy the sea-breezes on deck during the Channel crossing en route for hospitals at home.

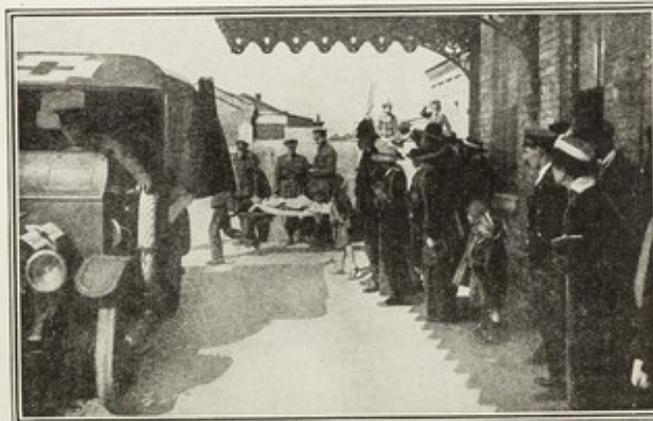
Patients and their  
"tickets"



Hoisting cot-cases on shore by crane from the hospital ship for transference to the train alongside the quay. Left: Interior of a corridor ward in the hospital train.



Right: Stretcher cases arranged on the platform ready to be placed in the train. Left: Ambulance men lined up at the station waiting to disembark the wounded.



"Special" cases coming ashore from the hospital ship. Right: The end of the journey. Carrying the patients from the station to the ambulances waiting to convey them to the hospital where, if within the competence of man, their cure would be completed.

SCENES ON THE HIGHWAY OF SUFFERING: FROM PAIN TO HOME AND HEALTH.



THE DUCHESS OF CONNAUGHT AT THE CANADIANS' HOSPITAL, TAPLOW.  
Mrs. Astor opened a hospital for wounded Canadians near Taplow, and the first task the Duchess of Connaught performed when she returned to England in 1916, after the Duke retired from the Governor-Generalship of the Dominion, was to visit the Canadians under treatment there.

I went downstairs again, and into the room opposite the doctor's. This was the receiving-room and dressing-room. A big Primus stove sent up a dull droning from a point near the empty fireplace. By lamp-light a surgeon was dressing a dark-red gash in a man's back. Another patient waited near, sitting on a form. Very interested he seemed in all that was being done to his colleague. He caught an orderly's eye, and, speaking with difficulty through a swollen mouth, he explained his case. "Small tube blew out of our gun. Got me fair in the teeth it did, and laid out a tidy few of them on the floor. Guess I'll have to have a nice new set of top ones from the dentist when I get home. Fancy me wiv' a nice set o' false teeth! Won't I be a swank!" And he laughed at the prospect.

A huge box stood in the middle of the floor, and every now and again the dressers threw into it bits of wound-stained lint. With these grim tokens of war and casualty it was full. "We empty it once a day in slack times,"

**Anti-tetanus  
injection**

said an orderly, "and three, four, five, or even twenty times a day in busy times." I noticed that one of the treatments meted out to all wounded dressed at this station was a hypodermic injection of some white-coloured fluid. This was to guard against the deadly disease tetanus, or lockjaw, the germs of which live and thrive in the yellow mud of the Somme. As it was almost impossible that any wound incurred in this district could have escaped contact with mud, the anti-tetanus injection was given in every case.

John Oldham was sent farther down the line that night, and I went in the same motor-ambulance with him. It was moonlight now, and the gun fire had ceased, though an occasional star-shell soared into the air and whitened the sky over in the direction of the German lines. The roads were quiet. At first we talked—he lying on his stretcher on the right side of the car, I sitting on the seat on the other side. He told me he was a spinner by trade, and that he and many other spinners had joined up at the beginning of the war in a Pals' battalion recruited in the

neighbouring city of Manchester. He went on to tell me of his pals and what had happened to them, and of the places they had been in on the line. But, sitting there in the darkness of the ambulance-wagon, rocked by the lurches of the car on the uneven road, he seemed to tire. His voice became more of a monotone, and I ceased to answer any of his remarks; and, sure enough, before many minutes he was asleep again. I turned aside the back flap of the car and looked out. The moon, though hidden now, was sending a soft luminousness over things. Now and again we passed a soldier in an iron helmet plodding along the road. In one ruined home-stead, without roof, was a tiny fire, round which three or four soldiers were sitting. The earth round about was strewn with barrel-shaped coils. The spot was a barbed-wire "dump." Once we passed a little train of supply-waggon, empty and halted by the roadside. A lantern glowed under each tarpaulin roof, showing that each was in use as a tent or shelter. From one wagon, in passing, I saw the faint, blue light of a Primus stove. Between

the two sides of the wagon were frames of wood with sacking stretched tightly across them to serve as beds.

Sentries and military police with lanterns were posted along the roads at intervals, but they did not trouble us much. Our driver and his car—which did this particular run many times a day—were too well known for them to need to stop us. And so, in good time, we arrived at the next halting-place for wounded from this particular part of the Somme front. It was a "main dressing-station," and it was in the village of Bertrandcourt.

Switching sharply to the right, our car passed under a brick archway and into a big open square. It had been the yard of a farm, and was flanked on all four sides by low farm buildings—those curious buildings of bricks and beams and plaster common to all the farming villages of the Somme. In normal times that farmyard at this time of night would have been dark and quiet, save, perhaps, for the lowing of cattle in the byres. But now dim lights twinkled from every side of the square, and uniformed men, some carrying lanterns, were moving busily about.

A little squad of R.A.M.C. orderlies came at a trot to meet our incoming car, and as we came to a standstill they formed up in line at our back without question or word, each man ready to make things easier for any poor wounded lad that might be inside. As the canvas flap of the wagon was pulled aside I stood up and leapt out, but before I reached the ground stout arms caught me suddenly under the armpits and lowered me to the ground as gently as though my twelve-stone weight had been twelve pounds. "Take it gently, sir," said a reproving voice, "you might 'appen to do yourself harm if you don't go gently." In the dark they had mistaken me for a wounded officer—as was natural, perhaps, seeing that I was riding in an ambulance-motor and that my uniform was that of an officer. I may mention now that on all my journey from the front to home R.A.M.C. men of all grades showed the same inclination to treat me as an invalid. I had to explain to them that I was neither wounded nor ill, but even then they would sometimes look me over carefully for a casualty

card, or "field medical card" as it is called. Some of them seemed disappointed that they could do nothing for me; and the way they leapt away to help any wounded Tommy or officer was evidence enough of their real keenness.

The commanding officer of this main dressing-station—an R.A.M.C. colonel—had himself come out to see what cases our ambulance-car and others behind it had brought along. I made myself known to him, and presented my

**Feeding the wounded**

credentials. He took me with him while he saw to the disposal of the cases, and then said I must have something to eat before I looked over the station in more detail.

Along a muddy lane we plodded to a little white cottage, by the door of which we painted the words, "Officers' Mess. Field Ambulance. No.—" In a plain kitchen some half-dozen officers were sitting round a rusty fire-grate before a fire which shed a thin fog of smoke into the room. A lamp-light shone upon the remains of dinner—for dinner, late in this busy camp, was just over. I made there the acquaintance of officers some of whom (as I learned later) had given up medical practices and positions at home to come out and "do their bit," and it was no rare thing to see streaks of silver in the hair of an officer wearing the modest two stars of a lieutenant. An orderly of size and venerable age found me some mutton and cabbage on a tin plate, and, in a confidential whisper, asked me whether I would like whisky-and-water or tea. I have noticed before, in Canada and elsewhere, how hard work in primitive conditions conduces to the tea habit. When I remarked something of the sort to the colonel he mentioned that almost the only drink and the only thing asked for by the wounded men and sick who came up from the trenches was tea. "They are offered cocoa or coffee or soup, or a hot meat-drink of some kind, but almost all of them," he said, "ask for tea."

"It's a curious thing, too," added the colonel, as we walked down the lane again to the station later, "that they won't eat meat. At first, when they come in, muddy and tired and weak, they don't seem to want anything much, but a mug of hot tea brightens them up, and then they feel they can eat. And what do you think they like best? Bread-and-jam! Wounded Tommies, who will not look at sandwiches or meat-stew or anything else will eat ravenously of bread-and-jam. My own belief is that you can't do better for a wounded man, especially walking wounded, than feed them up, and I have watched a good deal to see the thing that they like best. Bread-and-jam comes an easy first."

By this time we were in the receiving-room of the dressing-station. A barn had been provided with a canvas roof and partitions, and also with a big waterproof ground-sheet for a

flooring. Acetylene lamps gave quite a good working light, and the chamber was kept at a pleasant warmth by a circular stove, the flue-pipe of which passed through a tin panel let into the canvas sides of the chamber. This tin-plate—it was no more than a petrol-tin cut up and flattened out—struck me as an ingenious way of overcoming the risk of a fire in the canvas wall due to a too hot flue-pipe.

The first thing that happened to every wounded man who entered that reception chamber was to have details taken of his name, regiment, wound, and conditions as shown on his little field medical card, and after that to be fed, washed, and tidied up, and given new garments if necessary. Most wounded were able to walk, and they were told to pass over to the refreshment buffet, which, with a bright light of its own, stood in a separate partition under the presidency of a cheery-faced orderly in shirt-sleeves and a white apron. Before him was a counter filled with eatables. His opening question to each man was this: "Now, my lad, tea, coffee, cocoa, soup, or



PRINCESS PATRICIA OF CONNAUGHT VISITING WOUNDED CANADIANS.

Wounded soldiers readily relieved the tedium of convalescence with unaccustomed tasks, and many and wonderful were the things which many of them learned to make. Princess Patricia, whose name will ever be linked with that of one of the many brave regiments from the Western Dominion, interested herself in this soldiers' special form of art needlework. Men of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry were among the earliest of overseas troops to take part in the war on the Western front.

stew?" It might have been all one word and one dish by the businesslike way he rattled it off. But the Tommies understood all right, and one and all chose tea. As he filled mug after mug it struck me that he did it more by his sense of touch and weight than by sight, for his eyes were roaming about all over the wounded, and his lips were repeating again and again the cheerful invitation: "It's all right, my boys, pick up anything you fancy. It's all yours, and it's there to be eaten." And with his eyes and a nod of the head he would beckon to any soldier who seemed to be hanging back and press him to choose something from among the great platefuls of sandwiches, bread-and-butter, bread-and-jam, cake, and so on which filled the counter. The artillery man with the damaged mouth mumbled, on being pressed to eat, that he could not eat anything because of his sore jaws, whereupon the attendant



WOUNDED BRITISH OFFICERS AT CHATEAU D'OEX.

Comrades in misfortune who spent eighteen months in a German prison before they were transferred to Chateau D'Oex, in Switzerland. Seated (right), Lieut.-Col. Maxwell Earle, D.S.O., Grenadier Guards, and (left) Capt. Henderson, London Scottish. Standing (right), Major R. A. Birley, R.F.A., and (left) Lieut. T. Dobson, R.N.D.

said: "Oh, I'll soon fix you." He busied himself behind the counter for a minute and then presented the artilleryman with a basin of hot bread-and-milk.

The stretcher cases lying in another canvas partition were feeding or being fed by orderlies when I went in to see how friend Oldham was getting along. "Just had a cup o' real good tea," he said cheerily, "and now I am going to slip my face round this." And he held up for my inspection a big slice of bread-and-jam. "Makes you hungry motorin'," he added quite seriously. My mind went back to that solemn and jolting night ride of ours in the darkness of the motor-ambulance car, and I thought I had never heard the word "motorin'" more curiously applied.

There was to be no transport of wounded that night to stations farther down the line, and when I left the main

dressing-station for the officers' mess again the patients had been "bedded down" for the night. The colonel had taken me round various dark canvas wards, with an electric pocket torch to light us, promising me a more detailed "look round" in the morning, and I walked up the lane with him to the mess with curious memory pictures going through my mind of recumbent figures of wounded men in all positions—pictures of men with placid faces, calmly sleeping, of men with faces furrowed by pain, of men lying with bodies bent and limbs awkwardly extended—and all these pictures were cut out in circles from surrounding blackness by the white glow of a pocket torch. It was as though I had been in a dark room, watching lantern slides on a screen; circular slides showing poor wounded, bandaged, and "splinted" humanity in vivid lantern pictures.

I slept that night on a camp bed in a cottage in the village. There had been some discussion in the mess earlier as to where I should be billeted, and someone had said: "In the padre's billet." The padre was away on leave, it seemed, so I was given his bed. They took me along a muddy lane, then through a gate in a wall and up a garden path to a white, low-roofed cottage. In a ground-floor room, littered with ornaments and furniture and luggage, were two soldiers' beds. By the light of my candle I could see that a man was already asleep in one of them. Upon the other, a few inches above the wooden floor, were some blankets and an officer's greatcoat. Three stars on a black ground on the shoulders told me that it was the padre's. May I thank him now for the comfort of his greatcoat that night. For it was bitter cold.

I did not feel like sleep. For a time I lay awake with the candle on the floor near my face, watching the flickering shadows it threw upon the whitewashed ceiling. Everything was quiet save for the ticking of a watch

Halted for the  
night

somewhere in my neighbour's clothes and the quiet moaning of the wind in the wide chimney of the cottage. Then he began to breathe heavily, and in a minute a loud voice came to me from his bed, saying: "Look here, you'll have to get those waggons into better shelter than this, and quick, too." "Sorry, what's that you say?" I replied. He did not answer. He was asleep. I learnt next day that he was an officer of motor transport. His cares were evidently following him in his dreams.

At length I seized my boot, and with the heel of it knocked out the candle, trying then to sleep. But after perhaps ten minutes the solemn "crump" of a shell somewhere in the neighbourhood made me wide awake once more. I listened for another. It came along, and though it was well distant the cottage and my bed gave a little shiver. There came another, and I felt certain I heard the fall of a "dud" shell in the near neighbourhood of the cottage. I felt for the candle and found it, but there were no matches. I got up and searched, but could find none. The room was inky dark. Feeling my way I found the door, went out into the passage and opened the front door. A cold wind rushed in. Here in my pyjamas I stood watching the restless swaying of the bushes in the garden and the white flashes of guns and star-shells in the sky away to the east. There was not a sound in the village of Bertrandcourt; not a light. The moon, behind banks of clouds, cast a filmy pale-blue light on the white walls of the cottage. If shells were causing those dull, flat thuds that I could hear every now and again, certainly no one was taking any notice. I went back and crept in among the blankets and the greatcoat once more, and was half asleep when sounds, as of a fierce quarrel—in French—and moans came from the neighbouring room of the cottage. For two or three minutes it went on in most amazing and unnatural fashion—all in one voice, till I guessed that here again was someone talking in his sleep—some old Frenchman apparently infirm and short of breath, for he gasped as he talked and scolded.

An orderly standing at my bedside with a candle woke me next morning. Then he flung back the heavy wooden shutters and let the morning sunshine into the room.

As I stood washing, the door of the further room opened, and out came the queerest old man. He was dressed in some quaint dressing-gown and a little black skull cap, from under the sides of which protruded fuzzy tufts of silvery hair. His head, under the skull cap, seemed to taper almost to a point. He had a round, clean-shaven face, ruddy as an apple; heavy white eyebrows, and beneath them little twinkling eyes of extraordinary brilliance. As I did not know him from Adam I was not a little surprised when he trotted up to me playfully, and with many smiles patted me on the bare back.



A HAVEN OF REST.

Chateau d'Oex, Switzerland, where British sick and wounded, released from Germany, were sent for internment.



GUESTS OF THE POLYTECHNIC AT LUCERNE.

A number of French and British prisoners of war interned in Switzerland were sent to the hospital at Lucerne, which was specially arranged for operations rendered necessary by faulty treatment by German surgeons. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Mitchell entertained this party at the Polytechnic Chalets, Lucerne.

"You Engleeshman? Yes? Very bon," he said, all in one breath. "Germans—Allemands—no bon, no bon." He shook his head fiercely, then he calmly looked me over as I stood there in my pyjama trousers. He stroked my baro arms, and went on: "You soldier? Engleesh soldier? Very bon, very bon." He never waited for an answer to anything, but went on: "You marié? You got pretty wife, very bon, yes?" I could not help grinning, and he continued: "Bon, very bon." He passed his hand over my chest and back, then hit me on the chest with his fist.

"You fort, yes? Very strong, very bon, yes?" I replied in French to the effect that I was very well, thank you.

He cocked his old head on one side. Then he turned, and, repeating:

"Very bon, very bon, very bon," he trotted back to his own room.

I learned later that the old gentleman was the village curé—very old indeed, though growing younger in manner every day. It was his cottage in which I had slept. The war had upset his mind very much, and he was very, very old; so I felt glad I had not chased him out the bedroom with my shaving-brush as I had once thought of doing.

The main dressing-station at Bertrandcourt, seen by daylight, looked much bigger than it had done the night before; one saw that in addition to all its farm buildings, made habitable and usable by canvas roofs, floors, and partitions, it had also many canvas

marquees, stretching out into the orchard behind. Here, too, was a dug-out for "shelly" days, as my guide expressed it, capable of sheltering a hundred patients if need be. This was one of the best specimens of British-made dug-outs I saw on the Somme, and it disposed effectually of the statements one often heard that only the Germans could build dug-outs.

The equipment of the main dressing-station was considerably more extensive than that of either the advance dressing-station or the aid post. Quite extensive medical work could be done here if necessary. One interesting feature was the oxygen tent, in which stood an oxygen cylinder with a cunning little contrivance (made from

Equipment of dressing station



OFF FOR A TRIP ON THE THAMES.

Grateful London overlooked nothing that could contribute to the pleasure of the convalescent wounded. Thames steamers, which had long lain idle at their moorings, were recommissioned to take them on trips up and down the river.

a petrol-can, a tin bath of water, and some tubing), with which oxygen could be administered to half a dozen patients at once from the one cylinder. An incinerator was busily at work in one corner of the grounds, making a merry smoke of its own. In another corner were good-sized kitchens with cooks busily at work. As I walked round with the colonel, men were busy improving the pathways between the various tents or wards by laying "duck-boards" upon them. Duck-boards laid on wet and slippery mud make perhaps the most slippery pathway possible—a pathway most dangerous and difficult for a wounded man or for a stretcher-party. But this path can be made "non-skid" by the simple device of laying wire-netting such as is used for chicken-runs over the surface of the wood. This plan had been followed at Bertrandcourt, and the paths were quite safe and comfortable under foot.

Oldham had passed a fair night in one of the canvas wards of the dressing-station, and it was decided to send him on that day to the next medical post on the long journey home—a casualty clearing-station. He heard the news secretly from me with a pleased grin, for it was not always an easy thing for a wounded man to learn whether he was to be moved and what his destination was. In fact, he could be kept at any of these medical posts on the line, if his case was capable of treatment there—and if there was room to spare—and eventually he would be sent back to his regiment without ever getting nearer to the one great place he hoped to go to—"Blighty." Every move farther down, therefore, was regarded as a "score." The parties of wounded leaving any medical post for the one lower down were all smiles and good-humour. They would be that much nearer "Blighty."

One point interested me as the big "Bulldog" motor-ambulance car was being loaded up with its freight of wounded. The driver was signing his name in a book

held open for him by the sergeant in charge of the camp "pack store." The sergeant explained to me that every article found on a wounded man had to be accounted for on every stage of the journey from trench downwards. Every wounded man's pocket possessions and luggage were entered on printed forms, item for item—knife, watch, rings—even down to simple, valueless things such as "a key-ring without keys," which item I saw figuring solemnly on the list of personal possessions of my friend Oldham. The driver of any car receiving a patient had to give a receipt for any kit and personal possessions of the patients he received. When he delivered his patient to the next medical post he took a receipt from the keeper of that station's pack store, into which they were put



LEAVING THE TEMPLE PIER.

A party of wounded soldiers embarked at Temple Pier on board the Port of London Authority's steamer Conservator for a day on the Thames.

pending the wounded man's recovery or removal to another post. In the case of officers all luggage, as well as equipment, had to be signed and accounted for in the same way. The list of a man's belongings had at the first opportunity to be signed by the man himself as being correct. In the case of an officer his servant's signature was regarded as sufficient. If a man were too ill to sign, then one of his officers had to sign. Money and jewellery and other small valuables were put in a little bag and tied upon the patient.

Our carload for the journey to the next post consisted of five patients and myself as inside passengers. There were only two stretcher cases—Oldham and a young Scottish soldier, who, though suffering from a most painful shell wound, lay quietly on his back smoking cigarettes. The other passengers were "sitters," as walking wounded or sick were called for purposes of transport. Among them was a young officer suffering very badly from bronchitis. He spent much of the journey apologising to me—and himself I think—for having left the trenches. He was ill and so weak that he only just failed to be a stretcher case. He seemed terribly depressed—not so

much by his illness as at having to "throw up the sponge," as he termed it, and leave his work. "Stuck it as long as I could," he told me. Then there was silence in the car for perhaps five minutes. I was thinking of something else when he turned to me again and said: "Wouldn't have cared if I could have stuck it till we were relieved." Another pause for coughing, and then: "We'd only another day to go." He made more remarks of like nature before the journey was finished. His failure was on his mind, it was clear.

It became cold as the sun sank, and one could see that the patients tired. The men sat or lay with closed eyes. There was no talking for the last half-hour of our journey. When at last we ran into the casualty clearing-station, beyond Puchevillers, it was dusk. A gang of German prisoners, who had been doing some path-making about the camp, were forming up under their escort ready for the march home to their barbed-wire camp across the fields. Our car was unloaded by orderlies, whose first care was to get the patients to the receiving-shed, where their names and particulars were taken, and then on to the refreshment buffet. For the first step towards curing a wounded man

Casualty clearing-station

at this medical post, as at all previous posts, seemed to be to feed him—very sound treatment, too, so the wounded appeared to think. Within half an hour sick and wounded alike were snug under blankets.

A casualty clearing-station was the nearest medical post to the battle-front that had something of the permanence and the resources of a real hospital. This casualty clearing-station covered several acres of ground. Its buildings were all huts or canvas marquees, it is true, but in them was to be found the most complete surgical and medical equipment, even to X-ray department, pathological department, and the rest. Here also, for the first time on the Via Dolorosa which the wounded man followed to get from the front to his home, were to be found women—British nursing Sisters. It was one of the greatest moments of that journey for the wounded Tommy—that moment when he met a British woman once more, perhaps for the first time after weeks and weeks in the trenches with not a soul within miles, either friend or enemy, but men.



WOUNDED MEN WHO ENJOYED A DAY AT THE ZOO. Australians from the Dardanelles at the Zoological Gardens. Many people arranged to give outings to the convalescent wounded soldiers, and the Zoo—with rides on the baby elephant for the youngsters—proved unfailingly attractive to a large number of them.

The effect which this presence of their countrywomen had on the wounded struck me as remarkable. I watched friend Oldham being carried into his ward. He was tired and inert. As the men orderlies attended to him he lay listless and irresponsive even to pain when they moved him. The lamps were just being lit. He took no notice of anything. Then a Sister came quietly into the ward. At the voice of a woman speaking English, Oldham's eyes opened wide at once; he raised his head from his bed to see who had spoken. Other eyes than his opened, too. Of the new patients in that ward there was not one save those already asleep who did not become agog



HAPPY HOURS IN THE GROUNDS OF ONE OF THE LONDON MILITARY HOSPITALS.

It was a pleasant time for the wounded men and their families when visiting day came round, and more especially when convalescence and climatic conditions enabled the reunions to take place in the open air. In

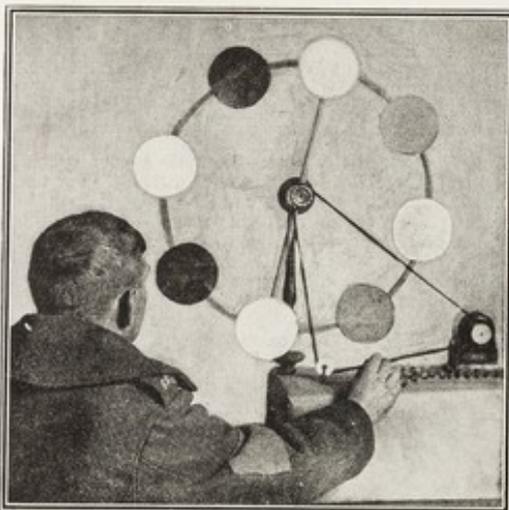
this large hospital at Bethnal Green a concert-theatre was erected in the grounds, and the wounded men and their visitors were able to enjoy the music provided for them by a goodly band of performers.

with interest at the sound of an Englishwoman's voice. They followed her about the ward with their eyes. She stood still when her work was done and spoke to the soldier in the bed nearest her. They chatted for three or four minutes, and one could see the interest of the wounded man in his steadfast gaze upon her. There was a pause in the talk, but he still looked at her. Then, feeling perhaps that some little apology for this was due from him, he said: "Do you know,

**Women nurses and the wounded** Sister, you're the first Englishwoman I've seen or heard speak for over forty weeks."

I had a word or two with her later. She was a comely, motherly woman of thirty-five or so. "The Tommies seem interested to find their countrywomen here, Sister," I said.

"Yes," she replied, "it's funny, isn't it? I don't think there are many new patients come along here from the front who don't pass some remark to the Sisters to show that they are glad to see us. They will watch you all round the ward, and some of them, if you don't happen to speak to them, will speak to you, just asking you some little question or other. They like to keep us talking.



MAGIC WHEEL TO "MESSAGE" NERVES.

Revolving wheels, which brought a constant succession of different colors before the eye, were tried in treating men with nerves shattered by shell-shock, the idea being that the optical effect "massaged" the nerves.

We've all noticed it. Poor fellows, they tell us sometimes that it does them more good than medicine to see an Englishwoman again, and I am sure it's not just soldier's 'blarney,' you know, because they are so serious and polite to us, and tell us about their homes and their wives and mothers and sweethearts. Perhaps it is that the sight of women again makes them think of home and makes them forget for a time the dreadful things they have been seeing and feeling out yonder." She nodded her head in the direction of the German lines, whence the sound of gun fire came now faint and distant.

When Sister had left the ward I walked over to Oldham's bed. I had noticed his interested eye on Sister and me as we had stood talking. "It looks a bit more like civilisation to see an Englishwoman again, doesn't it?" I said, being anxious to know what he thought of it. "By gum, it does that there!" he said warmly. "Makes you kind of feel," he said, with pent brows that showed something of his effort to express his thoughts—"makes you kind of feel—" He stopped. He was very weak and

worn. His nether lip trembled for a second like that of a little boy and tears rolled down his cheeks. Poor lad!

An orderly came bustling along with an extra blanket, and without looking at the patient's face, he went through several bustling manoeuvres—with especial vigour, I thought. "Now you're more in parade order, my son," he said, as he finished. "Give us a shout if you want anything!" I was standing at the foot of the cot looking about the canvas ward, so as not to seem to see the patient's little lapse. The orderly stood by me, and with his back to Oldham said in a low voice: "I seen him upset 'isself, sir. They very often breaks down for a minute just when they arrives. I never lets on I sees 'em, but just finds a bit o' somethink to do about their beds, breezy-like, you know, sir, and you talks a bit to 'em, breezy-like, and they pick up in a second. When his wounds is redressed, you won't hear so much as a 'mew' from 'im, no matter how we hurts him. I expect, sir, it's just the bit of 'omesickness breakin' out of them when they're weak-like!"

The point, apart from its greater size and better equipment, that distinguished a casualty clearing-station from earlier medical posts on the road home was that it was, generally speaking, on a railway. It was intended for the surgical treatment and the safe housing of wounded until such time as they were fit for sending back to their units, or for transport to some hospital of a more permanent nature. A railway ran alongside the casualty clearing-station of Puchevillers, and, as I walked round that side of the camp with the commanding officer, an ambulance train shunted slowly into position in the nearest siding, ready to take down to the coast a new load of wounded. It was a train of great length—seventeen long coaches in all—and they were coloured a pale khaki brown and a deep brown, almost black, with red crosses on a white ground coming at frequent intervals on their sides. The train seemed empty, but my guide climbed up to the door of a coach on which were painted the letters "C.O." (commanding officer), and along the narrow corridor inside the coach we met that officer himself coming out to meet us. He wore the three stars of a captain, as did also his assistant, a young man perhaps half his age. The older officer had been a lecturer and examiner in medicine at one of the leading universities of Scotland, and now, after twenty odd years spent in turning out medical men and officers for the R.A.M.C., he had left this work to come out and "do his bit" as an officer himself. One of the many oddities of his position was that men whom he himself had trained were now in the Service high above him. Some of them had to give him orders—for which in some cases they apologised profusely—still calling him "Sir," as in their old student days.

Learning that I wished to travel in a train down to a "base" with a load of wounded, the train commandant pressed me very warmly to make my quarters with him until such time as the train should start, an offer of which I thankfully took advantage. I spent three days with that train as my home—most comfortable and most interesting days, too.

The train officers' coach was an English railway coach of the ordinary corridor type, but divided in the middle of the corridor by a door. At each end of the coach was a little sitting-room, and towards the centre were separate compartments, used as private bed-sitting-rooms by officers of the staff. The captain and his helper and I had one end of the coach up to the divvying door; the other half was occupied by the three nursing Sisters attached to the train staff. The forty or fifty male orderlies, nurses, cooks, etc., who constituted the remainder of the train staff were housed at the other end of the train. In the middle of the train were the kitchens and administration coaches. All the other coaches were "wards" for wounded and sick. The last coach of the train—that is to say, the one immediately behind ours—was the isolation ward for infectious



*General Mangin, who commanded the troops that recaptured Douaumont, October 24th, 1916.*



*French soldiers in the sleeping-cabin of a bomb-proof casemate in recaptured Vaux Fort.*



*Verdun in 1916: Its streets sand-bagged, shell-shattered, but still French.*



*Verdun, heroic city of France, viewed after the siege of 1916 from the spire of the Eglise du Collège.*

cases, should there be any. Thus the medical men of the train and the Sisters could visit from their coach either the wounded wards or the isolation ward, whereas all the patients and orderlies were cut off from the isolation ward, unless they visited it by passing through the officers' and Sisters' quarters.

In these small but cosy quarters that night I dined excellently, chatted with the commandant, and slept. Sitting there on a bleak siding in that tiny cabin, with the wind playing shrill little tunes through our ventilators, reminded me very much of being quartered in a yacht lying in some harbour or quiet waterway. Just before turning

City of tents  
and wood huts

in that night I did look out of the window, half expecting to see water about us; but the moonlight shone only on the quiet siding and the casualty clearing-station

round about us, upon the wet canvas tents of which it threw a faintly glimmering sheen like that of shot silk. Once in the night a train passed us, from which came the murmur of innumerable voices and a most curious stamping noise, like the clumsy beating of many wooden drums. I leaned up on my elbow to see what made it. The train was full of soldiers. They were stamping their feet on the carriage floors to keep warm.

On the following day, after a breakfast of "ration" bacon—which struck me as the best bacon I had tasted since the war made good bacon impossible for civilians—I looked more closely into that little city of tents and wood huts that formed the casualty clearing-station of Puchevillers. This was one of the normal casualty clearing-stations of our Somme front. There were special clearing-stations elsewhere for special types of casualty. For instance, stomach wounds all went direct from the advanced dressing-station or main dressing-station to a casualty clearing-station specially set apart for stomach cases; head wounds all went to another casualty clearing-station direct. Other cases came to a clearing-station of the type of Puchevillers. The size of the place was considerable. It covered many acres of ground, and had its roads and cinder-paths laid out with all the trimness and permanency of a home hospital. There was a wooden pavilion, too, with a piano and a concert-room, from which, as I passed it, came the sound of a woman's singing. "Practising for the camp concert to-morrow," my guide explained.

I looked in at the camp officers' mess that morning, and was not sorry I had taken up quarters in the ambulance train; for the officers' mess-room was a tent—into which the cutting wind found innumerable entrances—warmed by one small stove. Lunch was just over, and four or five medical men were huddled round the stove having a smoke before going back to their duties. Of what those duties consisted I could form some idea later in the afternoon, when the commandant took me into the operating-theatre, a big marquee lit by a blaze of artificial light. Here three operations were being done at once. There were operating-tables for twice as many. The place reeked of chloroform. Three supine figures, partly naked, lay inert on tables. Sitting by the head of each was an anaesthetist, patiently dropping chloroform on to the mask that covered each gently moaning mouth. White-coated surgeons with bare arms and dark rubber gloves were cutting and probing and cleansing away the corruption caused by bullet and shell and bomb; white-robed nursing Sisters stood by with bowl and swab and other appurtenances of this craft ready for handing to the surgeon at even a nod from him.

I walked back from the operating-theatre to my quarters in the ambulance train with my respect—and distaste—for a surgeon's handiwork both enhanced. Poor Oldham was to go through something of the same sort later on; but my resistance to chloroform fumes had not been sufficiently cultivated as yet to enable me to stop and see him through, as I had intended. Rather did I feel that yearning for a cup of tea such as the sick and wounded Tommies felt, and I climbed from the siding into our



MRS. ST. CLAIR STOBART.

Mrs. Stobart was one of the British nurse-heroines of Serbia during the period of that gallant kingdom's most terrible trial. Her field hospital did invaluable work, and she was devoted in her attention to the poor Serbian refugees as well as to the wounded. Mrs. Stobart received the Serbian Order of St. Sava and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

railway carriage full of hope, for I had caught the passing glance of an orderly carrying a teapot. Alas! it was going to the Sisters' sitting-room in that *terra incognita* at the other end of the coach. But I was in luck that day, for on entering the commandant's cabin he informed me that I had been invited to take tea with the Sisters that afternoon. He himself took me along and presented me to them—Sister Paul, Sister Mahoney, and Sister Thompson.

Very shyly and very kindly they gave me tea from their excellent brew. This with their Garibaldi biscuits and Scottish shortbread proved an excellent antidote to chloroform fumes and surgical sights, and I found my joy in life slowly returning under their cheery stimulus.

Good, jolly women were those nursing Sisters, practical, natural and friendly as are most British women who have seen life and done things and faced the world. As I sat chatting with them it dawned upon me that, with the brief exception already noted, I had not spoken to an Englishwoman for five weeks, and I realised faintly some of that queer satisfaction which the Tommies showed when they came, after weeks of men and war, to set eyes on a country-woman once more.

Preparing the  
hospital train

The day of the train's departure came at last. A medical transport officer mounted to the footboard of our carriage and announced the news through the window. "We'll make you half a cargo here," he said, "and then you can back up to Varennes for the rest of your load. You'll have something over four hundred in all 'liers and sitters.'"



MOTOR HOSPITAL.

Operating-theatres on wheels, which proved of great value to surgeons in the field, were simply and efficiently designed and arranged for emergency work.

Everyone in the train seemed glad at the news, for pleasant idleness in a siding did not seem to appeal to them at all. "Oh, yes," said one of the Sisters to me, "we'd sooner be running with a load of patients than be standing doing nothing." People who are in love with their work can talk like that. Soon both the camp and the train were all activity. A big Belgian locomotive, in control of an English driver, backed slowly down on to us from somewhere and coupled up. Before long a new and pleasing warmth was creeping through the train from the steam-pipes in every coach. Big double doors in the centre of each ward-coach were thrown open. Train orderlies with masses of blankets, pillows, hot-water bottles, and cushions were scurrying along the train leaving little "dumps" of these things at the end of each coach. Other orderlies seized them and began the making up of beds on the iron-frame bedsteads that stood three by three, one above another, ship fashion, along the sides of the coaches. The kitchen coach was a pleasing litter of peeled potatoes and food tins, steaming coppers and roaring fires, with half a dozen men galvanised into double activity by sudden orders for "lunch for four hundred" in two hours' time. Such an order would tax a shore hotel on the fringe of a Covent Garden, let alone an ambulance train tucked away in a remote French siding where not even a loaf could be bought.

In the camp "ashore" things were just as active. I followed round one canvas ward-tent an orderly who was tying upon some patients' stretchers a little strip of red

ribbon and on others a strip of white. I little thought that I was watching the distribution of pleasure and pain such as only a wounded Tommy can know. But the glittering, glad eyes of the lads who received a red ribbon and the smothered groans of those who were given a white showed me that the distinction was of great moment to these men. One poor lad who had been leaning up in bed watching with feverish eyes the orderly with his ribbons and his written lists, fell back with a groan on seeing a white ribbon tied to the handle of his stretcher.

Colours of  
pleasure and pain

The red ribbon was the distinguishing mark for patients who were to go on the outgoing train to the coast, perhaps even to "Blighty." The white was to mark those who were to stay behind. The soldier's only recompense for being wounded is to be sent home. To get the white ribbon, therefore, was hard.

Orderlies came into the tents in couples and carried out the stretchers bearing the red ribbons. There were great leave-takings. Some of the men had been as long as a fortnight at the clearing-station, and a fortnight in a sick-tent is the equivalent of months of ordinary life, especially so far as the making of friendships goes. "So long, old pal; better luck to you with the next train down. If I get 'ome I'll go and see your folks as I promised. So long,



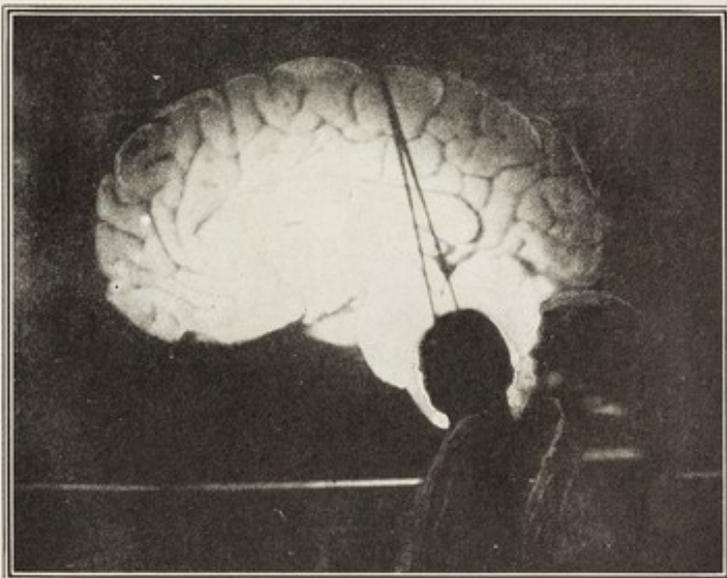
REMOVING THE PATIENT AFTER SURGICAL ATTENTION.

Testing the field operating-theatre, which was presented to Italy by the Wounded Allies' Relief Committee before it left London. Everything was arranged for maintaining perfect steadiness while the theatre was in use for the great purpose for which it was designed.

old lad." And a hand from a bed in the dimness of the tent waved to another hand that was waving from a stretcher being carried out towards daylight and the train, and perhaps "Blighty." Glad were the eyes of the men on those moving stretchers, but they left heavy, weary eyes in the tents behind them.

No sooner had the last "red" stretcher been borne on its way than from the other end of the tent, casually, and as though by accident, strolled "Sister." She went round the beds doing little tasks and talking to the patients as she worked. It was by no accident that she came. I accused her later of a motive in coming. "Yes," she admitted with a smile. "I knew the last patient had gone, and I came along just to have a look at those who were left. Train time is one of their bad times, you see, when they are not going." Then she began to busy herself again with the patients. I don't know just how much or how important

work those British nursing Sisters did at Puchevillers, but whether that work was much or little, important or trivial, their mere presence and womanly good sense and kindness were a tremendous help to the curative resources of the station. Let me say here, too, that right through our hospitals in France—and in Britain for that matter—good womanly nursing and sympathy, so far as I saw it, had everywhere a curative value that vied with that of any medicine. It was whispered to me in the base hospitals nearer the coast that Sisters and nurses were expected to be more "distant and dignified," that they were kept under a much stricter discipline, and that the reason of this was the number of distinguished visitors—women among them—who came to these places with a sort of policeman's eye for everybody and everything, especially for their fellow-women, the nurses and Sisters. If this accusation was true the Army and the nation suffered a loss.



HUMAN BRAIN SHOWN BY THE EPIDIASCOPE.

By means of the epidiascope opaque objects can be projected on a screen in natural colours, microscopic subjects being highly magnified. The light used is 10,000 c.p. electric arcs playing on a series of mirrors. This photograph was taken at Bedford College for Women.

Outside the tent-wards orderlies were lifting the stretchers on to pair-wheeled, rubber-tyred ambulances. Upon one of these each patient was wheeled by an orderly along the smooth cinder-paths of the camp to the train siding. Friend Oldham was there,

At "Blighty  
Junction"

all smiles and good spirits. Morning mist was on the ground, and it was cold and cheerless enough, but there was not a man who did not look happy. And when they caught sight for the first time of the name of that simple railway siding, posted in white letters on a black signboard, more than one hand went up from under a stretcher coverlet and more than one throat raised a little shout of pleasure, for the name of that siding was—"Blighty Junction."

The joke may strike one as simple enough, but to those poor lads it was priceless. "Blighty Junction!" they chuckled. "Very good, that is; very good!" And they continued to smile at the happy memory of it. Or was it perhaps at the happy memories and prospects it evoked?

There were some handshakings, much shouting of "Good-bye!" and "Good luck!" Patients had to shake hands with orderlies who had tended them, and there were one or two surgeons I noticed who had friends among the patients. "I want to thank you for all you've done for me, sir," I heard one lad saying to an R.A.M.C. officer, who before he donned the King's khaki was a specialist of some repute. "Oh, that's all right; don't speak of that," said the surgeon cheerily as he took the hand that reached out from under the coverlet and shook it. "Good luck to you, lad, and let me know how that leg of yours goes on." The boy was lifted into the train, and as his orderly tucked him into his bed the patient was saying: "What he done for me would have cost any 'civvy' (civilian) a hundred guineas—no less. He never operates for less than that. Took my leg off for nothink, 'e did—for nothink. I meant shakin' and wiv 'im afore I left."

The train was slowly on the move by this time. The steam of the engine added its whiteness to that of the mist, and the casualty clearing-station of Puchevillers was blurred out for us tent by tent as it were. The last figure I made out was an orderly with his wheeled ambulance

empty going back towards camp. He turned to wave us another good-bye.

The casualty clearing-station at Varennes, which emerged suddenly from the mist, after an hour or two of slow running and stopping, was very like Puchevillers, but here they brought down the wounded men's stretchers to the train either by hand or loaded upon trucks on a hand railway. Three on a truck, laid crossways upon it, the wounded were rolled along rails made of wood, which left the camp by three paths, meeting the ambulance train at right angles. From here they were lifted into the train. To learn what the task of carrying the wounded is like I was allowed to take one stretcher along the little platform beside the train. Its occupant was a thirteen-stone Irish soldier. After going some fifty yards with him I realised better—and with aching arms—the work done in the trenches, where men might have to carry a wounded comrade for a thousand yards or more, and over rough ground and slippery mud instead of on a smooth plank platform, before they could put down their burden—to go back for another.

Before getting back into our carriage the train commandant and I had a word with the engine-driver, whom it was odd to see pull himself smartly to attention. Before the war he had been a driver on a Midland Railway engine at Leicester and Derby, and when volunteer drivers were called for he had responded. He wore dark blue overalls and a peaked blue cap on which were the crown and the "R.E." of the Royal Engineers Corps. He dabbed a handful of oily cotton-waste into his pocket, I noticed, ere he saluted the commandant.

Out of sound  
of war

We steamed slowly away from Varennes in the half-light of a wintry afternoon. The guns up at the line were booming a dull and distant note, and as we crawled farther away they grew feebler and feebler, and finally faded out. Thus did we leave the war behind us at last—and even to me, unwounded, its absence was a relief. For five weeks I had lived ever within sound of the guns and their rumbling drone, near or distant, and though one becomes used to



AN AMERICAN BENEFACTRESS.  
Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt in the American Hospital at Neuilly, near Paris, of which she was one of the founders.

their sound, the absence of it comes as a relief. To wounded men it is an especial relief. Medical officers at aid posts, advance dressing-stations, main dressing-stations and casualty clearing-stations alike, had assured me that of all the things a wounded Tommy resents most about these places is the fact that the guns and the din of battle can still be heard from them. Often, of course, the wounded lying in these places had to be carried down into cellars and dug-outs to avoid shell fire, and in their weak and helpless state this, I was told, annoyed them beyond measure.

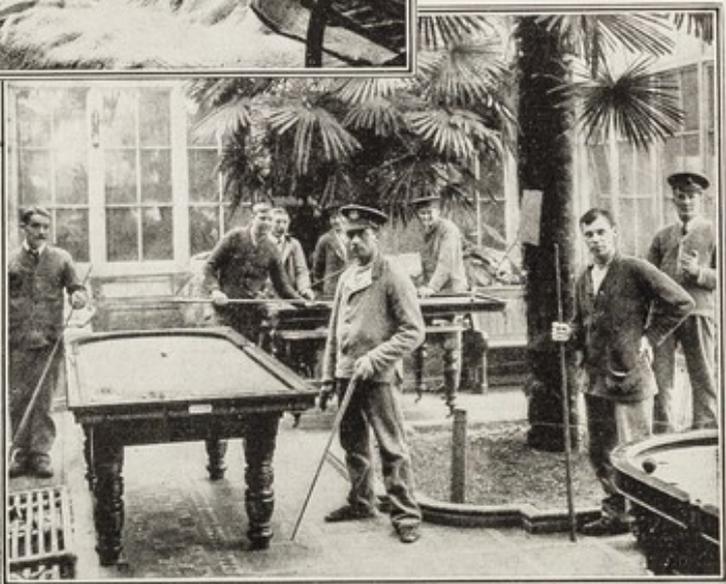
The next coach forward from ours was the wounded officers' coach. Half of it had been converted into a little saloon for use as a mess by "walking" cases, or "sitters," as they are called on the train. I looked in in the course of the afternoon, and found half a dozen or more officers pretty comfortable, reading, or sleeping in easy-chairs. One party were playing bridge.

Further along this coach were officers' stretcher cases. Among them I found a young Flying Corps lieutenant, whose machine I had seen hit by a German "Archie" gun one day when I went into the trenches beyond Beaumont-Hamel. The engine of the machine had been carried away, and the machine had half floated, half fallen to earth. The airman was not hurt by the fall, which occurred, fortunately, just inside our lines, but a shrapnel fragment had hit him in the back. He was very cheery, and we had an interesting chat. He could have

#### Patients on the train

been hardly more than twenty. I passed through the kitchens on my way forward in the train, and the quartermaster, a genial Irishman, once retired but now returned to the Colours, invited me to sample some broth that was just being served out to the patients. It was made from tinned "Maconochie," with added water, seasoning, and beef-juice—and excellent fare it was.

As I stood taking my broth a bright little orderly caught sight of me as he dashed through the coach with a tier of mugs, and, pulling himself smartly to attention, asked: "Can you speak German, sir?" If so, would I help him with some sick German prisoners who were in his ward. He was anxious not to give them the wrong kind of food, he said, but to continue the diet they had been having in the casualty



GROWING HEALTH WHERE ORCHIDS ONCE WERE GROWN.

Highbury, the beautiful Birmingham home of the late Joseph Chamberlain, was converted into a V.A.D. hospital. Billiard and bagatelle tables were placed for the amusement of convalescent soldiers in the house once devoted to the famous orchids with which Mr. Chamberlain was associated in the public mind.

clearing-station. I went along with him and asked the Germans, of whom there were eleven, what each had been having to eat. There is, perhaps, no race which answers a question about food more readily than the German. Several robust-looking men among them said they had been having meat and chicken and bread and—as one man expressed it enthusiastically—"Alles was gut ist" (everything that is good). Another poor soul in spectacles said he had been given only rice-pudding and milk, "for eating gave him great 'belly pains,'" he added, dolorously. He was a poor, feeble little fellow and had worked as a chemist in Germany. The war, he said, had undermined him quite. He was not strong before, but now he was like

a gnat ("So wie eine Mücke"). He had been very kindly treated, he said, as a prisoner. Another of the Germans had been captured in Beaumont-Hamel. Our shell fire, he said, had been dreadful; but, as all the garrison were well underground, they thought to be able to hold the place. Their officers had said that the British were fools even to attack it, and had prophesied that we should have finally to leave off the direct assault and try some other means.

Cigarettes were being served out to the British soldiers by Sister Paul from a big tray. Before she came to the Germans I had handed them a few of my own, fearing that they would get none. The quartermaster passed at the time and said: "You needn't have done that, sir; we give them a smoke or two. All fare alike in this train, Germans and all. When a man's sick or knocked out of action that's excuse enough for treating him kindly."

Certainly the British Tommies, who fought the Germans—

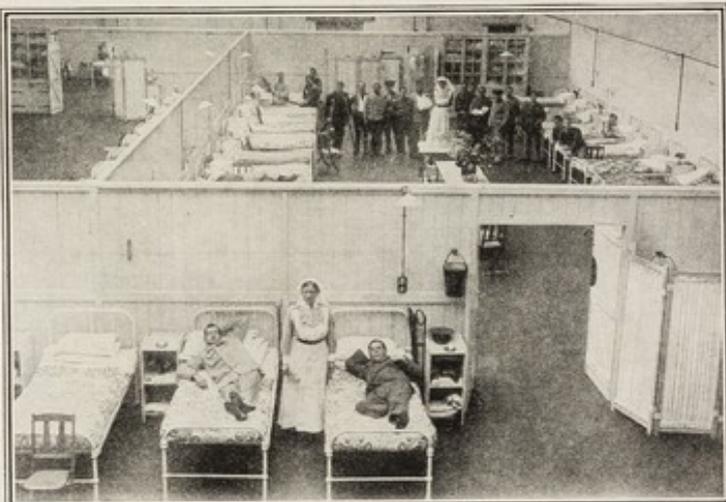
#### The give-and-take of war

whose view ought, therefore, to count for at least as much as those of people who didn't fight him—always treated the German prisoners and wounded in a friendly way. In that train, though they could not speak together, they were exchanging friendly signs and nods. Some exchanged small souvenirs. One German soldier had a British bullet that had been taken out of his lungs. A British Tommy, who had come from the same part of the line, asked to see it. As he weighed it in his hand, looking thoughtfully before him, he said to his nearest pal: "It would be a very funny thing if I had shot that bullet, wouldn't it? But who knows I didn't?" He looked at the German, who,

of course, understood nothing. Then the speaker made a curious request to me: "Tell him what I have just said, sir." With some curiosity I translated for the German this odd speculation. He smiled and shrugged his shoulders, and replied calmly as he puffed at his cigarette: "That doesn't matter to me. Perhaps I shot him." Thus impartially and dispassionately was the give-and-take of war recognised by soldiers who had fought and suffered. It was something of a lesson, perhaps, for less tolerant people who have not fought.

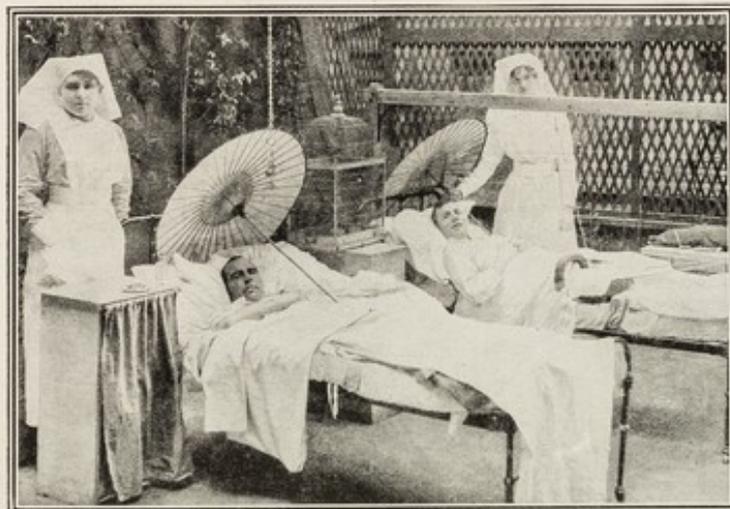
Tea in the commandant's cabin that afternoon was a hurried affair for all save me. There was much work to be done, and I was left alone with my second cup. The lamps

had been lit. Outside the weather was raw and dark, with some mist. The long, heavy train was rumbling rhythmically at a sober pace over the metals. The electric light in the white ceiling brightened and waned at slow, regular intervals. I sat back in the comfortable seat watching it, and with my mind wandering, dreamily perhaps, over the events of the day and that week, and earlier weeks. I had seen these young soldiers, or their kind, in the full vigour and rigour of war—war that admitted of no comfort, no softness, or even gentleness; grim, hard, unfeeling war, coldly callous and horrible. Now these among them had got their quietus—some for a time, some for a longer time, some for ever—for not all among that trainful of wounded men would pull through. You would have thought to find them much subdued. I had looked for traces of this, and had seen hardly one. Even as I sat there they began singing comic songs. I walked along to the first ward-coach. A chorus



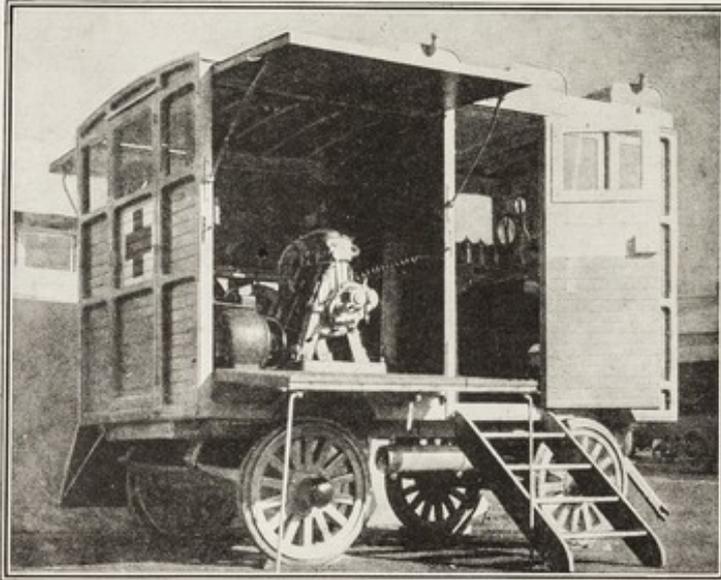
CLIVEDEN HOSPITAL: JUST BEFORE VISITING HOURS.

Visitors' Day, one of great expectancy in every hospital, was a day of especial interest for soldiers wounded in the war and for their friends. This photograph shows a ward in the Cliveden Hospital prepared for the admission of visitors.



OPEN-AIR TREATMENT AT THE COULTER HOSPITAL.

Corner of the open-air ward at the Coulter Hospital, Grosvenor Square. Londoners became very familiar with the picturesque sight of these hospital wards set up on the leads and balconies of the great houses, where wounded men got full benefit of the air.



MOVABLE ICE-MAKING PLANT AND KITCHEN.

The equipment of the British Army Medical Service was as near perfection as human organisation can attain, and was the only matter in respect of which Germany frankly admitted British superiority and imitated British methods. This was one of the Red Cross vans containing ice-making plant and kitchen.

song was in full progress. The words of it struck me cold. They were singing this:

*3*

I want to go home, I want to go home— I  
 don't want to go to the trench-es no more, Where Jack Johnsons  
 tum-ble, and whiz bangs ga-lore. Car-ry me o-ver the  
 sea,..... Where the A-li-mans can't shipe at me!..... Oh,  
 my! I'm too young to die— I just want to go home!

A not inappropriate song, you say, for wounded men to sing. True enough. But not as they sang it. They were singing it as a comic song, with laughing faces. I stood, almost in horror, watching one poor wreck of humanity, whose face peeping from a mass of bandages was almost whiter than his wrappings, as he sang "Oh, my! I'm too young to die!" actually with a happy grin, and with his one remaining hand beating time above his stretcher. He wore the "dangerous case" ticket, red and white, and had death written all over him. One of the surgeons

who saw my fascinated gaze halted for a second as he passed me to say, in a grim sotto voce, "He'll do well if he gets his wish." "Shouldn't they stop him?" I asked. "Not a bit of it!" he said cheerily. "That's the spirit that may help him dodge death after all. I like to hear them." From this song they turned to queer songs of their own making, sung to hymn tunes—songs that scoffed at duty and war and death, and many serious things—in fun. Finding that

they were in a mood for music, the ward Sister disappeared, and in a few minutes an orderly appeared carrying a gramophone and some records. Some light music and songs were played, and the men listened from their beds with keen attention. And then it remained for that gramophone to reveal in them their real nature—a gentler, deeper nature than that shown in their songs laughing at death. The orderly put on a record of a little violin and piano piece. The Sister had said it was getting too late for more music; it was bed-time. But in answer to several pleadings she had said they could play one more record if they chose a "quiet one" that would not disturb men who by now were ready for sleep. The piece opened with a haunting little melody, almost like a cradle-song. I jotted down the few bars of it which are given below.

The violin played the melody with its childish thirds and sixths, played it softly, wistfully, soothingly, naively (Fritz Kreisler, I think, was the player), and the piano accompaniment, coming faintly and with that strange

*Some*

elfin tinkle that the gramophone lends to the piano's tone, had about it a curious prettiness and sweetness like distant and tuneful fairy bells. The ward grew quiet; men who half an hour before had been singing a lusty defiance to all the gentler moods of life, listened now with rapt eyes and with faces curiously relaxed, like those of sufferers suddenly released from pain.

#### Influence of music

The second movement of the piece was struggling and fretful music. The men fidgeted a little and some closed their eyes. But the opening refrain, in all its childishness, came back again before long, and again they listened—listened as a sleepy child to a mother's crooning. The piece finished. They did not speak. The instrument was picked up and carried away without one remonstrance. They did not even look; they lay there with closed eyes as though to keep with them for the night the visions and the thought-pictures to which that plaintive child-music had given rise. The lights were turned down. Soon there was not a sound save an occasional sigh and the rhythmical rumble of the train over the metals. And I caught myself tiptoeing out of that coach as I might have done out of a children's nursery. Poor lads! Right through the livelong day they had been full of "go," "full of fight," full, even though wounded, of the healthy animal spirits which the British soldier, like every healthy child, knows. But with the evening, and dark, and the coming of weariness due to their weakness, the softer, gentler side of their nature shone through—shone through at the subtle crooning of a gentle bit of music. It might have been a mother song and they little toddling, sleepy tots again.

I asked the Sister later to show me the gramophone, for on it I had noticed a little brass plate and some printing.

The printing said: "From Members of the Dunhill Parish Church, Dumbartonshire, Rev. Dugald Clarke, October, 1916." I thought the givers of that gramophone and my unknown namesake the minister would like to know something of the pleasure they had given by their gift.

The train stopped during the night at the long, deserted platform of a deserted station, Abbéville, I think. The commandant jumped out and beckoned me to follow him. He walked to the front of the train before it had started again, boarded it and walked through, inspecting each ward and coach on his way. The patients were asleep. You could stand at the end of a ward-coach and count before you thirty-six beds, in threes, one above another as on board ship, and see in each bed some figure of pain. The dimness of the lighting seemed to make even more grotesque the strange and unnatural positions in which wounded men lie. Here and there an arm or leg extended from a bunk, and part way across the narrow passage between the beds. You had to walk carefully so as not to touch it and disturb the sleeper. You had to take care also not to tread on the men of the undermost bunks, some of whom preferred to hang limbs or shoulders half out of bed and on the floor. "They find the position that is most comfortable," said the captain, "and we try to let them lie as they like."

Once, I remember, a battered and bandaged hand suddenly reached out right in front of me as I passed along the narrow centre aisle and hung most pleadingly, and so it seemed in the half-light, like that of a beggar in a Bible picture asking for alms. The captain had gone on in front. I thought the patient wanted someone to look at his hand, but a glance at his eyes showed me he was sound asleep. Involuntarily the paining limb had stretched out suppliantly, seeming to beg for itself for ease from its pain, to plead for itself while the owner slept. I took the hand and gently put it back across the patient's heaving chest

Reaching the  
coast

and under the sling from which it had escaped. He sighed, but did not even open his eyes, then lay peacefully. Unseen by me, the commandant had turned back to wait for me and had been watching me from the end of the coach. "We shall have to find you a job in the train's nursing crew," he said with a smile.

Near the door of the next coach Sister Mahoney was putting a hot-water bottle to a sleeping man's feet. The captain felt the man's pulse and asked her some questions. They spoke in whispers. On the corner of the man's bed hung the little red-and-white "danger" ticket. I recognised in the patient the singer of "I'm too young to die."

We reached the coast in the wee small hours. Motor-cars in scores it seemed, and bearers in dozens, were there. By the wan light of white arc lamps the stretchers were lifted out of the train; some of the patients did not wake, and were carried over the cobbled streets of the old French

town to base hospitals, there to rest till cured or till ready for sending oversea to that longed-for haven of all wounded, "Old Blighty." One glimpse of the busy workers and motor-men and orderlies as friend Oldham was carried indoors at one of these hospitals, and I turned away. No need for me to describe a base hospital again. Oldham would be in safe keeping and would not be moved again for at least many hours. I should find him again. I walked back through the quiet streets. No bed was to be had, but I slept quite soundly that night on a wooden form in the railway transport office at the station, with a small heap of railway guides for a pillow. The corporal in charge of the office, formerly a clerk at the Railway Clearing House, London, made me a sandwich and a cup of tea. A deep rumble shook my form an hour later. It was my ambulance train going back to the front for another load of wounded.

"Blighty" at  
last

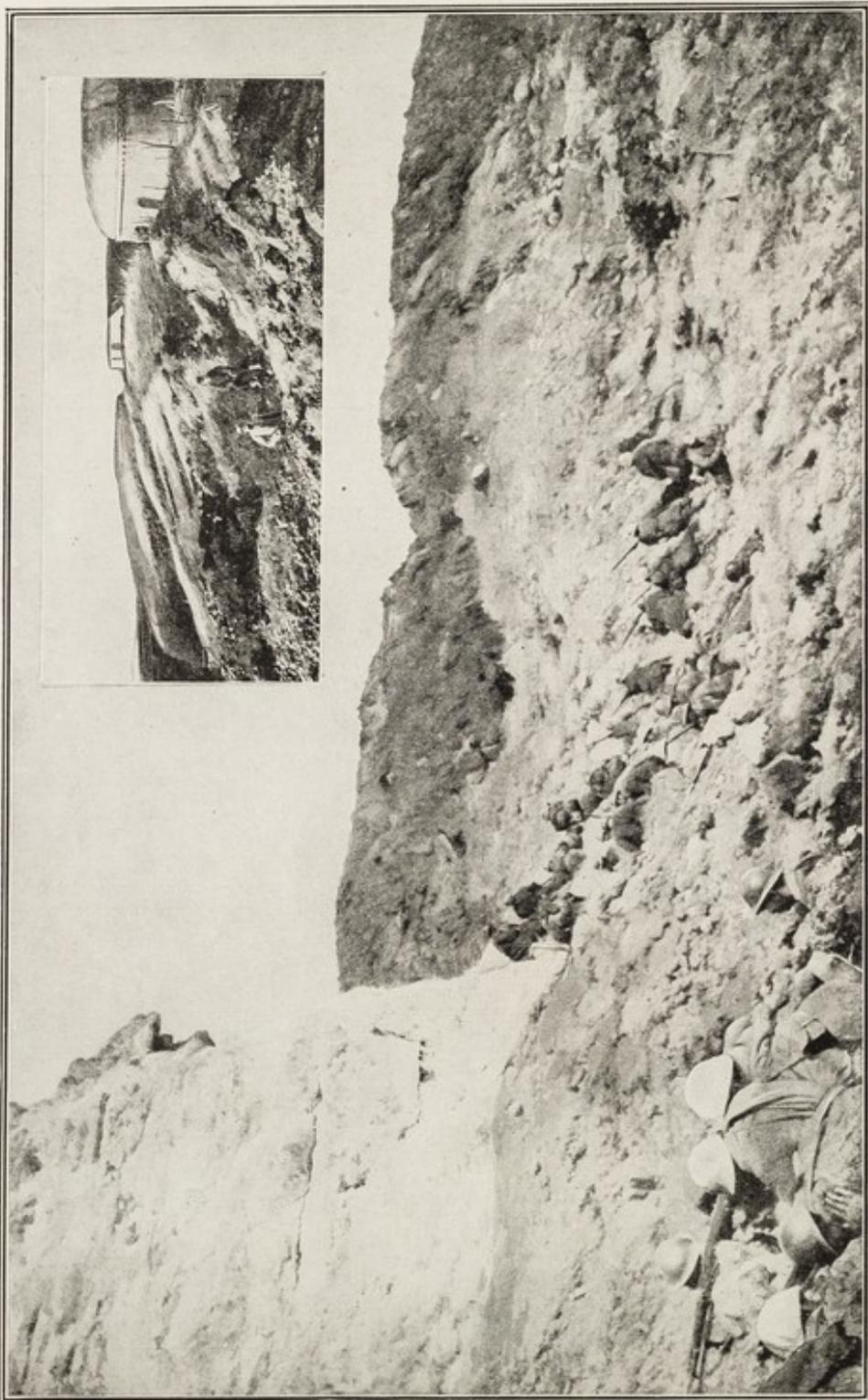
A big ship, painted a bright apple green and bearing on its side a mammoth Red Cross, waited at the quayside not many days later. Again the string of motor-ambulances, again the careful carrying of maimed men on stretchers—Oldham among them, the lucky ones—again the filling of bed bunks one above another. And then the big green ship glided noiselessly away from the quayside of that old French port. She flew a red-and-white flag as the sign of her merciful calling, and when daylight ebbed at last and the sun sank into a mush of heavy brassy clouds away on the sky-line, she lighted up a girdle of green lamps about her waist—a girdle as of rich sparkling emeralds that enveloped her all about. Set among them on each side, as in rubies, were red lights in the form of the great Red Cross.

In the pallid light of an early morning a magic word went to and fro among the worn men who filled the cabins fore and aft of that apple-green ship. That word made lame men and sick men drag themselves up in bed on their elbows; it made men who could even hobble get out of bed to look out of the port-holes. And through those little brass-ringed circles of weather-smeared glass they gazed rapturously at the dark grey slabs of a dock wall, at the black-timbered walls and the wet, slate roof of some dock warehouse, at a dock crane with thin outstretched arm that reared backwards and upwards till lost to sight in the mist. The rain fell. Fog rose from the yellow-green water of the dock. An old man hobbled from under a shelter to a plump bollard near the dockside. He looked at the murky sky both to north and to south. Then into that dock he spat deliberately. That was what those worn soldiers gazed out upon through the little round brass-rimmed windows, and their eyes sparkled with moisture at the mere sight. Throats moved without words issuing forth, till at last pent-up feelings found vent in one hoarse murmur—"Blighty!"



WOUNDED SOLDIERS ENTERTAINED AT VOLUNTEER SPORTS.

Sports at North Ealing arranged for the entertainment of wounded men by the London Volunteer Rifles. The visitors were watching a ceremonial parade.



**RUINS OF THE ARMoured CONCRETE FORT DOUAMONT ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF VERDUN.**

Two views of Fort Douaumont, a focus of some of the fiercest fighting in the Battles of Verdun. Its proclamations that he ever issued. Retaken by the French and lost again, it was finally capture by the Germans on February 26th, 1916, provided from the Kaiser out of the most famous capture by them in their magnificently successful counter-offensive towards the close of the year.



POILUS ADVANCING

CHAPTER CLXII.

TO THE ATTACK.

## THE COUNTER-OFFENSIVE OF THE ARMY OF VERDUN.

By Edward Wright.

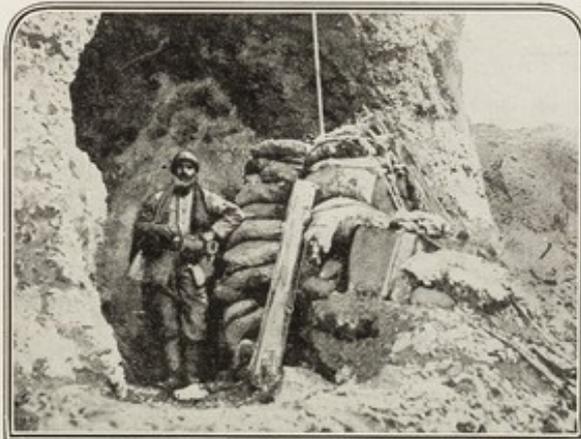
Noyon and Falkenhayn's Miss—Nivelle Awaits His 16 in. and 20 in. Guns—Germans Vainly Attempt to Distract the French—Terrific Battle of Thiaumont—Knife-like Drive Against Souville Fort—New German Method of Infiltration—Crown Prince's Army Exhausted—Nivelle Wins Mastery of the Air—Brandenburg Troops Reproached for Cowardice—Hindenburg Prepares a French Victory—Remarkable Genius of General Nivelle—The Storming Return to Thiaumont—Enemy Provoked to Attack—Battle Around Souville Fort—The Deceptive Tactics of General Nivelle—Germans Move Half their Guns from Verdun—How the British Army Helped the Army of Verdun—Nivelle Uncovers His New Big Guns—Consternation of Enemy—30,000 Frenchmen against 63,000 Germans—Swift and Smashing Victory of Douaumont—Strange Adventure of a Zouave—The "Black Friends of France" and the Heroism of a Sahara Prince—Ironic German Staff Publication—Lardemelle's Division Advances on Vaux—Enemy Retires without Battle—Superb Engineering Feat by General Nivelle—New French Commander-in-Chief—Retirement of Crown Prince—Battle of Vacherauville—German Line Pierced on Pepper Hill—Great French Flanking Movement on Louvemont—Passaga's Division Storms into Bezonvaux—Extraordinary Gains and Small Losses—Significance of General Nivelle's New System of Attack.

**W**HEN, in the last week of June, 1916, the guns on either side the Somme thundered a message of relief to Verdun, the situation around the citadel of Lorraine was such as to cause anxiety. At a disastrous sacrifice of men and material General von Falkenhayn had penetrated to the inner ring of defence of the gateway of the Meuse. But it can now be frankly stated that Falkenhayn made a mistake in strategy in selecting Verdun for a concentration of two thousand guns and a million and a half men. The sector he should have attacked, in the judgment of French military authorities, was that between Lassigny and Soissons. At the point of this angle was the historic town of Noyon, held by the Germans, and only fifty miles from Paris. An overwhelming and sustained thrust from Noyon, if conducted with as much success as the preliminary drive at Verdun, might have alarmed the French people and provoked a premature reaction from the British Army. Noyon, it can now be admitted, was the real point of hazard in the view of the French Staff. Our allies did not fear the actual

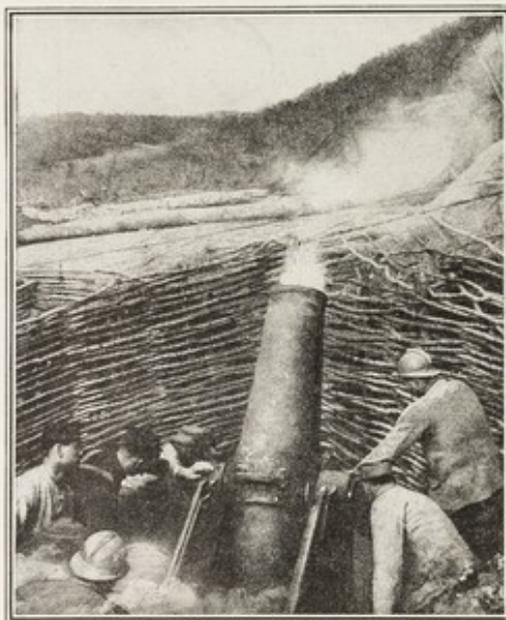
piercing of their line, but the spirit of the public might have been disturbed if a battle had opened with unparalleled violence only fifty miles from the capital.

As Falkenhayn aimed above all at a moral effect on French opinion, he failed in the aim which led him to concentrate against Verdun. It was his superior railway facilities in the Metz area and the desire to increase the prestige of the heir to the Hohenzollern throne that led him to select Verdun as his grand objective. Even had he taken Verdun he would not have seriously weakened the French

front. For on the western bank of the Meuse the French held another line of fortified hills that would probably have cost the German Army another half a million casualties to capture. Behind the western heights of the Meuse the French had a third great line of defence in the upland Forest of Argonne, and again behind the Forest of Argonne, going towards Paris, was the long line of cliffs of High Champagne. Having regard to the superb condition of the French Army and the experienced skill of its chiefs, the attack on Verdun did not, from the beginning, promise any decisive break in the



*French official photograph.*  
**FORT VAUX'S ONLY ENTRANCE AFTER THE BOMBARDMENT.**  
 How effective had been the terrific bombardment by the French which caused the Germans to evacuate Fort Vaux is seen in this photograph of the only way that was left by which the French could enter when they finally retook the stronghold.



AN OLD MONARCH OF WAR.

French monster mortar at Verdun. In ten days this old warrior hurled nearly a thousand shells, each of 1,200 lb., at the enemy. The French soldiers knew and liked its roar.

French line, such as the enemy produced in Galicia in 1915 and in Rumania in 1916.

It is said that Marshal Joffre was relieved when the expected thrust occurred at Verdun instead of at Noyon. The Noyon problem had been openly debated in the French Senate by that past-master in the art of upsetting Ministries, M. Georges Clemenceau. For political reasons the French Commander-in-Chief was glad that the blow fell where it did. It enabled him to give Sir Douglas Haig four more months to train the new British levies and accumulate munitions.

France also required time to produce in effective quantities her new 16 in. howitzer, which was a complete answer to the old 16.8 in. Krupp howitzer. By June, 1916, the speeding up of French munitions of war was fairly complete. In fact, little more could be done without entirely new machinery in the way of peat furnaces to increase the native resources of France. She had lost most of her iron-fields around Verdun, and most of her coal-mines around Lille. To supply the place of black coal, she had developed her "white coal," and erected an extraordinary number of turbines and dynamos in the Alps and other centres of water-power.

Then, with help from British and American steel-makers and colliery owners, the captains of French industry enormously extended their output. In January, 1915, the total production of small French shells was only 65,000

a day. It was nearly double in six months, and later increased to a great figure which it is best not to state. But it was more than forty times the production of the French light shell in August, 1914. The rate of production of light field artillery was increased thirty times; that of heavy artillery twenty-four times; while the manufacture of heavy shell was ninety times as great, and the manufacture of machine-guns one hundred and seventy times as great. The French 16 in. howitzer was ready for action on a large scale in July, 1916, and in an astonishingly short time it was succeeded by a masterpiece of appalling range and smashing force—the 20.8 in. Creusot.

It was the production of the 16 in. gun and the approaching completion of the 20.8 in. monster, with an abundance of shell of these calibres, that inspired the French commander with confidence in the issue of the Verdun campaign. There were not, however, immediately available sufficient guns and shell of the new type to enable a double offensive to be conducted on both the Somme and the Meuse. Neither France nor Great Britain, in the summer of 1916, had arrived at such a pitch of power in munition manufacture as would allow them to press the enemy to breaking point by hammering simultaneously from Verdun, from both sides of the Somme, and from Loos and Arras.

The army of Verdun under General Nivelle had still to stand on the defensive, for lack of heavy artillery and heavy shell, in order to allow the armies of General Foch to co-operate with the British forces in further wearing down the enemy's strength. But the heroic defenders of the gateway of Lorraine knew that the first part of their work was completed, and that they would swing forth in a counter-offensive in the autumn. On June 12th, 1916, an Order of the Day arrived from General Joffre. He said:

The plan matured by the Councils of the Coalition is now being fully put into execution. Soldiers of Verdun! It is to your heroic resistance that this is due. Your defence was the indispensable condition for success. On that rest our victories, now close at hand; for that is what has created in the general theatre of war in Europe the situation, out of which will arise to-morrow the definite victory of our cause.

On June 23rd, General Nivelle issued the following order:

The hour is decisive. The Germans, feeling themselves hemmed in on all sides, are delivering furious and desperate attacks in the hope of reaching the doors of Verdun before they are themselves attacked by the united forces of the allied armies. Comrades, you will not let them pass! Your country calls for yet this supreme effort from you. The army of Verdun will not allow itself to be overawed by shells or by that German infantry whose efforts it has smashed for the past four months. The army of Verdun will know how to maintain its glory intact.



A STRONGHOLD OF FRANCE IN FRENCH KEEPING AGAIN.

Despite the terrific intensity of the many bombardments to which it was subjected, and the mass of metal hurled upon it, much of the interior of Fort Vaux was found intact when the French reoccupied it in November, 1916.



ON THE WAY TO THE RELIEF OF THE GLORIOUS FRONT LINE NEAR VERDUN.  
 Behind all that was left of a shell-destroyed wood in the neighbourhood of Thiaumont—to the north of Verdun—the French Poilus had a brief rest on their journey to the relief of their comrades in the front line, and to taking their part in the driving back of the enemy.

On the day on which General Nivelle's order was issued the British guns opened their bombardment from Ypres to the Somme, and warned Falkenhayn of what was about to happen. The German Chief of Staff thereupon asked the commander who was in active control of the Crown Prince's army to make one more attempt to snatch a decision at Verdun. It will be remembered that General Nivelle had recovered, on June 23rd, the northern key position of Thiaumont Work, between Douaumont and the ridge of Froide Terre. The recovery of this fortified height left the enemy powerless to close upon the old inner Fort of Souville. Souville Fort had been constructed, with the neighbouring north-eastern Fort of Tavannes, after the war of 1870, and before the invention of the high-explosive shell in 1886. The two old forts were therefore of little direct, practical value against the enemy's gigantic array of heavy siege ordnance, ranging from 16.8 in. Berthas to the 8 in. howitzer which was the principal German weapon against Verdun. The 8 in. howitzer had a range of about six miles, and was employed in parks, and not in batteries, to produce an overwhelming hurricane of trench-smashing shell.

**Struggle for Thiaumont**

Towards the end of June the Germans turned hundreds of these 8 in. guns upon the Thiaumont Work and Souville and Tavannes Forts and Froide Terre. Then after days of bombardment, which the French guns answered with telling vigour, a terrific infantry battle raged in and around Thiaumont.

The French lost the work, but stormed back on the morning of June 30th, through a series of dreadful hostile curtain fires, and recovered the position. In the afternoon the Germans returned in dense columns, and were mowed down by gun fire and machine-gun fire. By persistent pressure of packed waves of attack the Germans at last re-entered the work at three o'clock in the afternoon,

but at half-past four they were again thrown out by strong storming columns of French infantry.

The next day the German commander made another succession of grand attacks on Thiaumont, and apparently, in his report to the Great Staff, claimed to have entered it, after a struggle of forty-eight hours. He attacked on a wide front from the Damloup Hill eastward to the height of Froide Terre northward, and while pressing the French on both these flanks, drove in at the centre, which was Thiaumont. But the Second French Army stood firm all along the line on the historic day when the Allies were breaking the German defences on either side of the Somme.

**Premature German claims**

The German eastern wing stormed up and into Damloup, rising south of Vaux Fort. The French surged back and recovered Damloup, were again driven out on July 3rd, and once more went back and re-established themselves on Damloup. Meanwhile, the awful struggle on the Thiaumont Hill went on with increasing fury, each side concentrating by telephone control the fire of all available heavy guns, over a wide arc, upon the few furlongs of the coveted key position.

The Crown Prince was in one of those desperate positions in which German Army commanders on the western front were frequently placed, owing to over-confidence. He had rashly claimed, in a public communiqué, to have reconquered the Thiaumont Work.

He also claimed to have conquered and occupied the Damloup Hill. And though the French were in both positions, he brazened out his false claims, while using his men up by the forty thousand in order to palliate by ultimate success the mistaken reports he had made to his own General Headquarters. The Berlin communiqué of July 4th was written in an extraordinary style. It ran: "The reputed official French reports regarding the recapture of the Thiaumont Work and the Damloup battery are

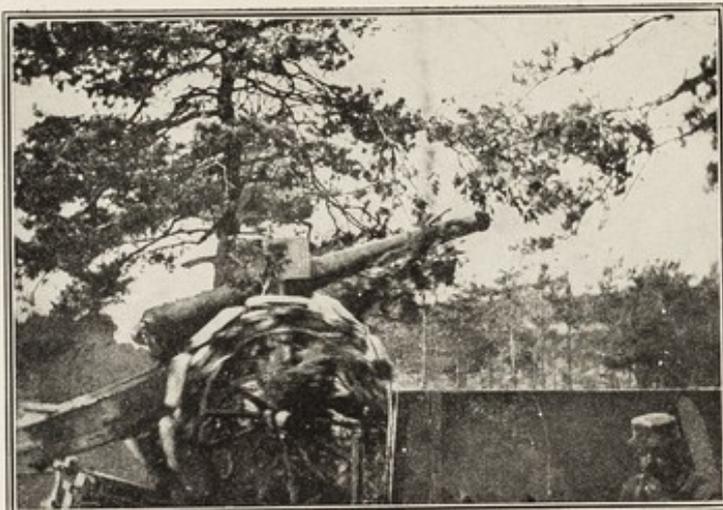
invented fables." Somebody was very angry, but whether it was the Crown Prince and General von Mudra who were vexed with themselves, or Ludendorff and Hindenburg who were raging at the mistake of the younger Hohenzollern, is not clear. At an inordinate waste of life in the Fifth German Army under the Crown Prince, the Chief of Staff at last managed to cover up the early false claim in regard to Thiaumont Work by burying the hill in explosions of heavy shell and launching column after column of storming infantry, who regained the work for the fourth time. The French troops remained in immediate contact with the position, and at Damloup Hill, in spite of violent bombardments and continual infantry actions, they continued in possession.

The enemy's recovery of Thiaumont was an affair of importance. It again opened the way for an advance upon the old inner defences of Verdun, and enabled Falkenhayn to proceed with his plan of obtaining a success on the Meuse that would divert French forces and munitions from the Somme. The village of Fleury, lying at the mouth of the long Vaux ravine and giving access to the slopes of Souville Fort, became the immediate objective of the enemy's operations.

After a long and intense bombardment, in which Verdun Cathedral was spitefully smitten with salvos of heavy shell, the German infantry was launched on July 7th against the French positions between Thiaumont and Fleury. The Germans took the front French line, but were completely thrown out of it by a French counter-attack, and when night fell the defending front was unbroken. Another prolonged artillery preparation went on for four days. Then on July 11th the hostile infantry made an assault on a large scale, closing upon Damloup Hill, Fumin and Le Chenois Woods, Vaux-Chapitre Wood, Fleury village, and the ground south of Thiaumont.

General Nivelle and his brilliant lieutenant, General Mangin, had no reason to expose their men to great wastage. They gave ground at last at Damloup, as this position was exposed to flanking fires from Vaux Fort, Vaux, and the eastern plain. It had been held while the shattered wood behind it, Laufée Wood, was strongly entrenched and linked more firmly with the three wooded heights running north-westward and known as Le Chenois Wood, Fumin Wood, and Chapitre Wood. These four woods, seamed with trenches, dotted with redoubts, and lined with deep communicating ways, formed the real defences of the two old forts, Souville and Tavannes, rising immediately behind them. The enemy was badly defeated in all the woodland battles, and though he got a footing in Chenois and Fumin Woods, the French returned in the night and recovered most of the ground, so that the capture of Damloup cost the German commander the best part of two divisions. The enemy was being worn down at Verdun as well as on the Somme, for the losses of the Verdun army were slight when compared with those of the Crown Prince's army.

After the vain grand attack of July 11th the Chief of Staff to the Crown Prince concentrated two fresh divisions for a different kind of attack. He tried a knife-like drive along a very narrow front, at the village of Fleury, directly against Souville Fort. The grey columns massed in the



WELL-MASKED FRENCH GUN ON THE VERDUN FRONT.

Maintaining the guns at points providing the maximum of efficiency with the minimum of exposure was one of the problems on a front where long shelling had destroyed most natural cover. Any such remaining stretch of woodland as this proved valuable for masking artillery from aerial observation.

old formation into the valley where the ruins of the Chapel of Sainte Fine scarcely showed in the chaos of shell-holes below Souville Fort. As brigade after brigade was shattered by shell fire and raked by machine-gun fire, the enemy brigadiers employed an extraordinary method in order to maintain the strength of their attacking front. The method was known as infiltration. It appears to have been first worked out by General von Mudra in the Verdun operations, and it testified to the mechanical perfection of the Prussian drill system.

Each reeling and heavily punished mass, at a signal, re-formed in such a way as to leave lanes running almost straight from the front to the rear. Through these lanes a fresh brigade then advanced in sections and, smartly opening fan-wise at the head of the fighting-line, furiously continued the action. All this was done on a closely engaged front, with both the outworn force and the fresh force maintaining the attack during the manoeuvre of infiltration.

This new and remarkable way of driving home an assault at any cost had been prepared by several months of practice. As the British and French did on the Somme, so the Germans did before them at Verdun. They reproduced the hostile positions in great detail on a large practice ground behind their own lines, and also constructed a copy of their own attacking parallel. Then over the model works they continually worked their troops and practised the new infiltration technique of massed attack, until the operation was carried out with mechanical precision.

But on July 12th the French light field-gun and the French machine-gun sadly interfered with the funnels of fresh troops that came through the broken brigades up the slopes to the fort. The inclines were held impregnably, and at the close of the day all that the Germans gained was a little ground at the cross-roads between Vaux and Fleury and around the ruins of Sainte Fine Chapel.

This great but fruitless effort exhausted the forces under the Crown Prince. Before his Chief of Staff could arrange another operation the British Army broke the second German line on the Bazentin ridge and compelled Falkenhayn to collect men and guns from Verdun and pour all available shell towards the Somme. Verdun was relieved.

Costly and  
vain attacks

Fleury. The Germans took the front French line, but were completely thrown out of it by a French counter-attack, and

New method of  
massed attack

## Did You Get—

the Publishers' Official Binding Cases for "THE GREAT WAR?"

## Did You Send—

your weekly parts, along with the Cases, to be bound into handsome and durable volumes—making a splendid addition to your library shelves?

## If You Did—

—then "Wisdom is justified of her children." But, if you did not, it is not yet too late.

# BUT

—if your weekly parts of "THE GREAT WAR" are still lying around loose—you will be wise in acting NOW, while the Binding Cases are still procurable

## AND REMEMBER—

a Magnificent Photogravure Frontispiece for each volume is presented FREE with the Publishers' Binding Cases. The subject for Volume 7 is:

*"Dublins and Munsters Returning from the Victory at Ginchy"*

Half Leather Binding.  
In rich scarlet leather  
and full gilt backs

**4/6**  
each  
binding case

Cloth Binding. A rich  
wine-coloured case—  
strong and lasting

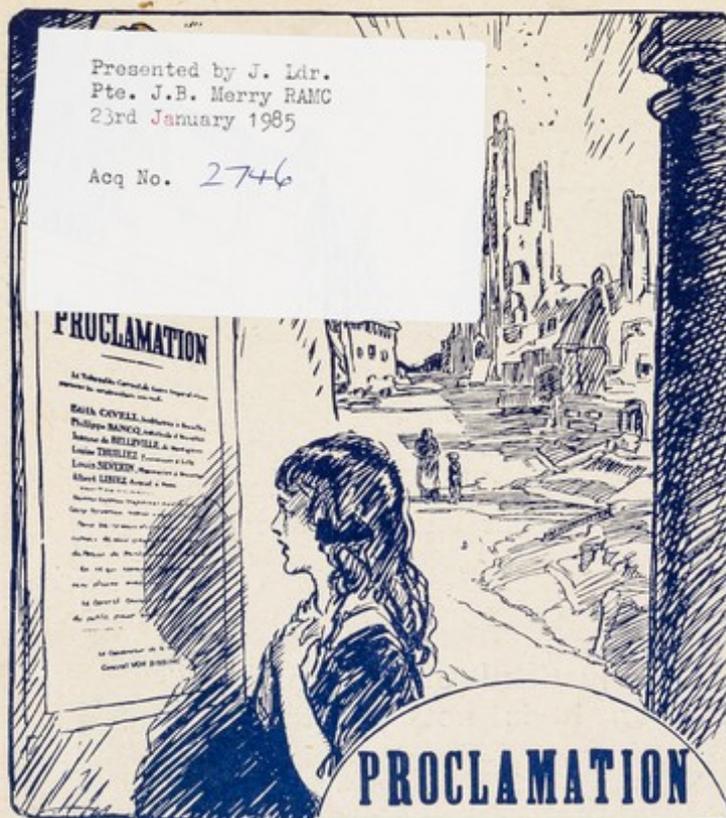
**2/6**  
each  
binding case

**YOU** can obtain the cases at the above prices from the newsagent who supplies you with the parts—  
or, post free, for 4/11 and 2/11 respectively from the publishers:

**The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, London, E.C.**

Presented by J. Ldr.  
Pte. J.B. Merry RAMC  
23rd January 1985

Acq No. 2746



## THE CASE PROVED!

Huns' Utter  
Defiance of  
Civilisation  
and Hague  
Convention

Reprints of the  
Original German  
Proclamations in  
Belgium, with  
translations, are  
given in the

## LONDON MAGAZINE for March

READ THE ABOVE FOR YOURSELF—ALSO

**"The Kaiser's Puppet"**  
The Life-Story of Dr. Von Bethmann-Hollweg

**"The Truth About  
the U-Boat Peril"**

By PERCIVAL A. HISLAM

and other Striking, Topical Articles

THERE IS ALSO MUCH FASCINATING FICTION

in the March

## LONDON Magazine

Sevenpence Net

Printed and published by the AMALGAMATED PRESS, LIMITED, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.  
Published by Gordon & Gotch in Australia and New Zealand; by The Central News Agency, Ltd., in South Africa; by The Standard Literature Co., 13/1, Old Court House Street, Calcutta;  
and The Imperial News Co., Toronto and Montreal in Canada. Advertisement applications should be made to The Advertisement Manager, The Fleetway House, Farringdon St., London, E.C.  
INLAND and ABROAD 6d. per copy, post free. CANADA 84d. per copy, post free.