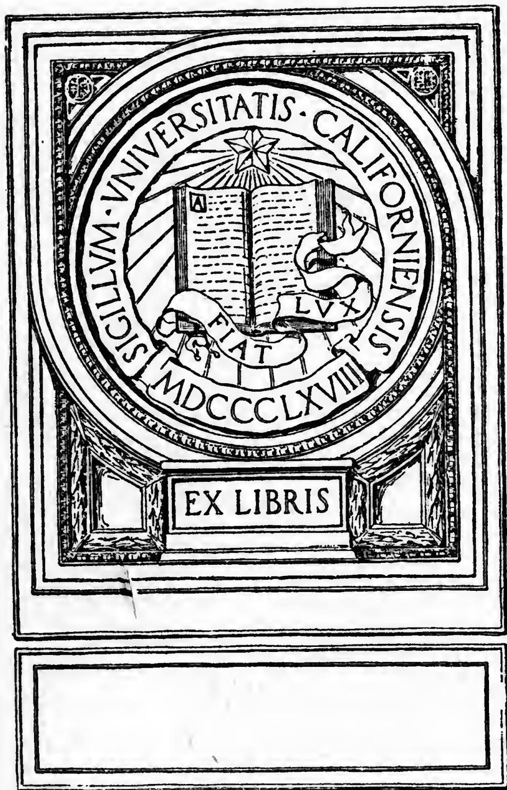
All profits from sale given to "The Times" Fund for the Sick and Wounded

THE WAY OF THE RED CROSS

With a Preface by QUEEN ALEXANDRA

Published for "The Times" BY HODDER & STOUGHTON WARWICK SQ. LONDON, E.C.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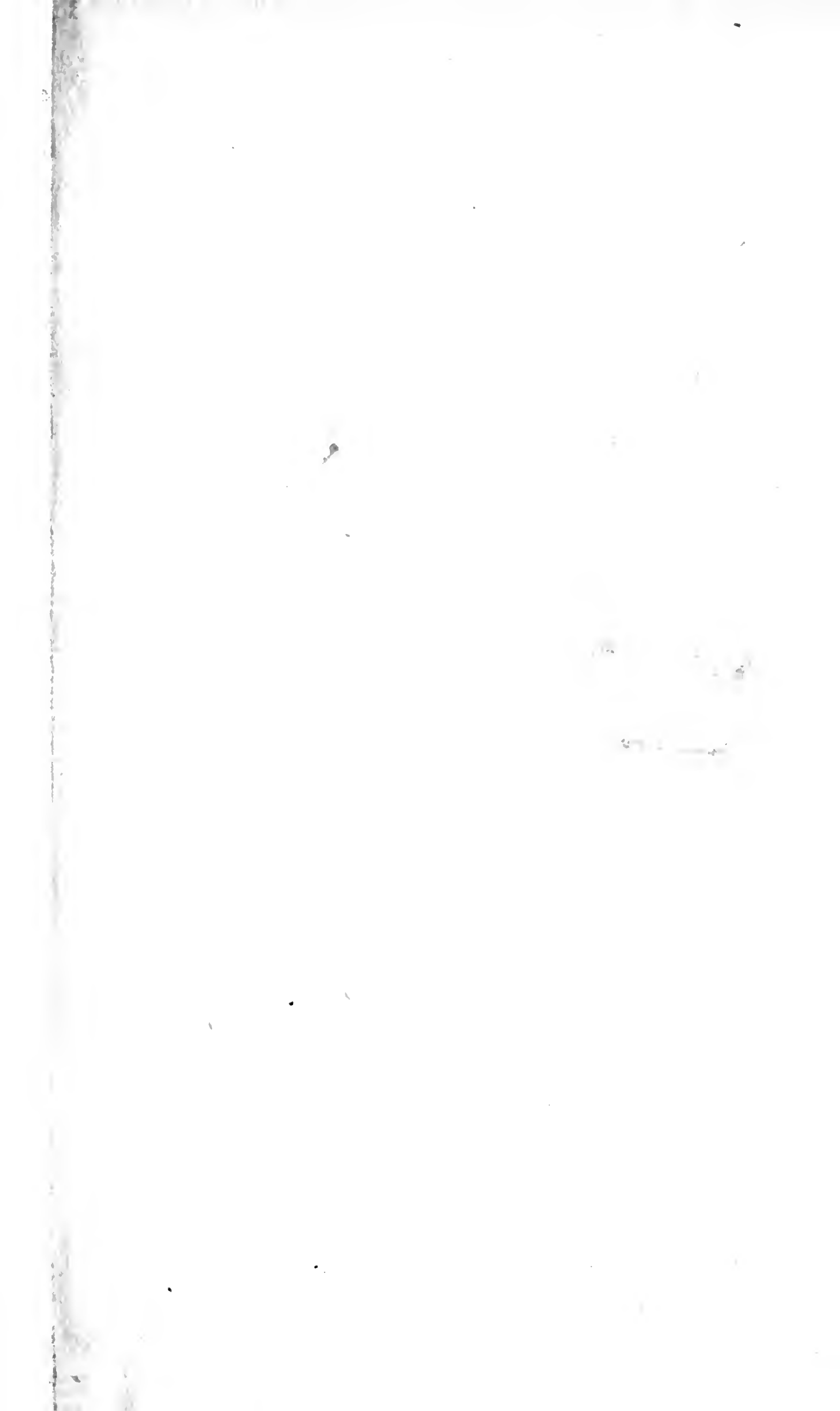

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THE WAY OF THE RED CROSS

Having been asked to add a few words to this book, "THE WAY OF THE RED CROSS," it gives me the greatest pleasure to take this opportunity to thank every individual Nurse, one and all, who is nursing our brave wounded soldiers and sailors—for their splendid and unequalled devotion and gallantry on their behalf—for which I and the whole nation owe them our undying and unfailing debt of gratitude.

Alexandra

THE WAY OF THE RED CROSS

BY

E. CHARLES VIVIAN

AND

J. E. HODDER WILLIAMS

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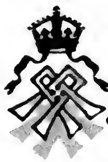

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INTRODUCTION

THE profits from the sale of this book are devoted to *The Times* fund for the sick and wounded, which is divided between the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John. One of the good things that, in this time of war, remain to the men of pen and office chair is their power to pay, and ask others to pay, that the road may be smoothed, over which travel the maimed bodies of our heroes.

If as a result of the publication of this book, one short stretch of the way is rendered a little less rough, we shall be very thankful.

We had hoped in its pages to present a complete record of Red Cross work, so that the reader might see it throughly and see it whole. In that we are conscious of failure, but have this consolation that

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success within the covers of a single volume were impossible, so many, so varied, are the noble deeds of heroism daily wrought under the symbol which, to friend and foe, is sacred to suffering and self-sacrifice.

And so we have been compelled to content ourselves with a general survey of the work and a few typical instances of how this organisation of pity and healing is served in individual cases, things seen and heard during the last few weeks, while we were allowed to join the ranks of that noble army of men and women who follow the Way of the Red Cross.

. . . . . .

For help and information so generously accorded, we desire to thank Surgeon-General Sir Arthur Sloggett, Director-General of Medical Services Overseas, Sir Savile Crossley, Bart., Lieutenant-Colonel Wake, Sir Courtauld Thomson, the Honourable Arthur Stanley, Sir Herbert and Lady Perrott, Mr. E. A. Ridsdale, Sir Robert Hudson, Georgiana, Countess of Dudley, Sir

Frederick Treves, Bart., Sir George Beatson, Sir William Garstin, Lord Robert Cecil, Major C. C. Fleming, Major Black, Lieutenant Buckley, Sir Warren Crooke Lawless, Dr. J. H. Yolland, Mr. Hastings, and many others.

E. C. V.
J. E. H. W.

LONDON, *March,* 1915

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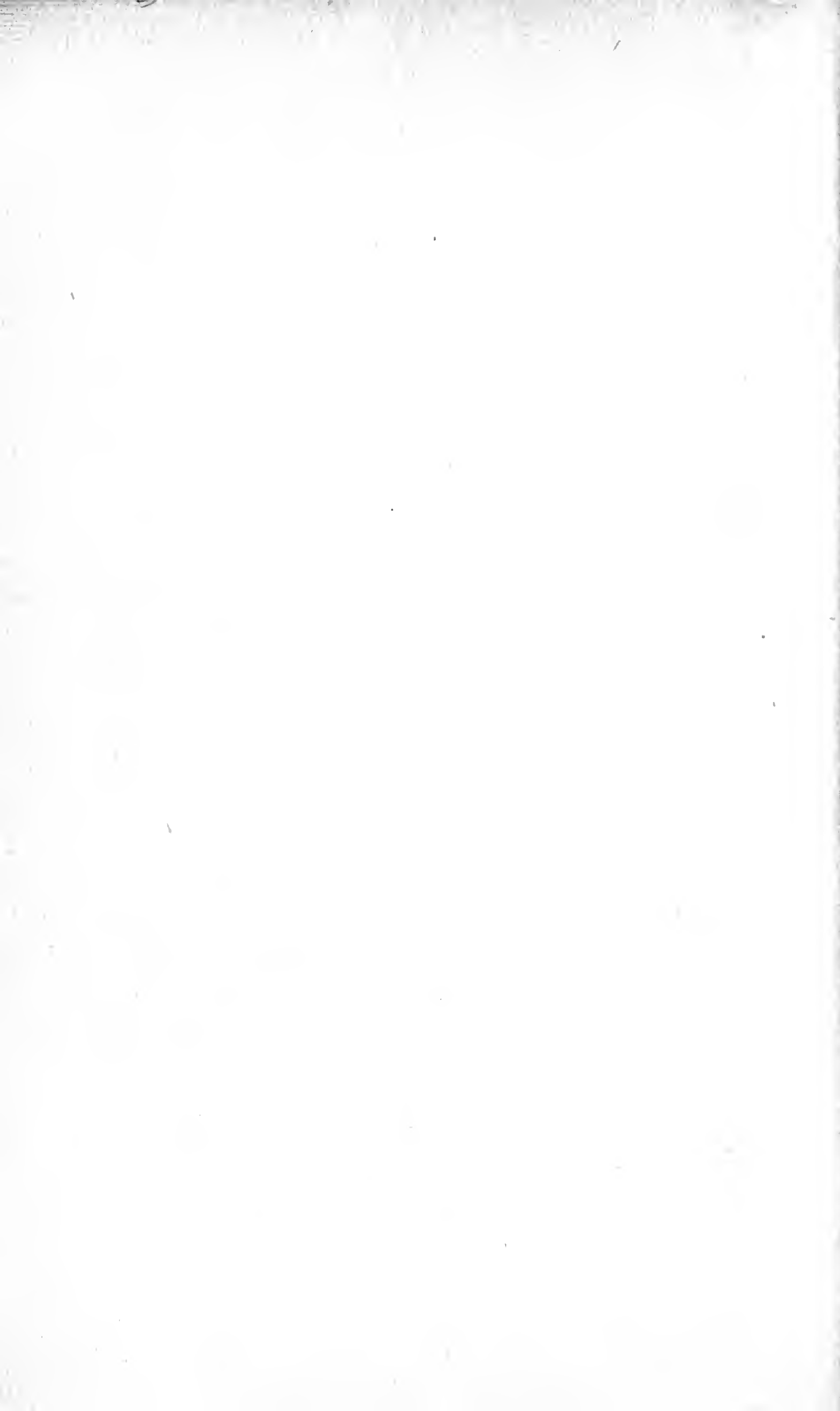
PART I
ABROAD

ALADDIN'S LAMP



UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

I

ALADDIN'S LAMP

MILITARY administration divides the care of the wounded into three definite parts, classified under the heads of collecting zone, evacuating zone, and distributing zone. The collecting zone is represented by the actual area of conflict, and its medical and nursing staffs consist of the medical establishments with combatant units, together with the field ambulances, staffed by surgeons and men of the Royal Army Medical Corps. The evacuating zone is occupied by "clearing hospitals" and ambulance trains, and it is in these latter that the nurses get nearest to the actual firing line. The distributing zone, which forms the third area, is officially stated to consist of "stationary hospitals, general hospitals, convalescent depots, hospital ships, and military hospitals outside the theatre of war." In this third zone lies practically all the work of the

lady nurse, and it is in this zone that the British Red Cross Society and St. John Ambulance Association have found their principal field of activity.

But a consideration of the work accomplished by the Order of St. John and the British Red Cross Society, or of the nursing and medical services as a whole, would be useless without some idea of the material on which they have to work. For the constitution of the British Army as a voluntary force has set the Army apart from the ordinary life of the nation, and the man in the street is ignorant of the difference between a field ambulance and a clearing hospital. In order to define the work of the medical service of the Army it is necessary to follow the men whom that service concerns from the firing line to the hospital at the base, to indicate needs and the way in which they are met, and to give some idea of the means employed to meet them. To walk into a hospital and collect the impressions of wounded men is an easy matter, but it is not sufficient for a clear understanding of the care of the wounded, for this work demands a vast and complicated organisation; the nursing is but a part

of the work, albeit a very important part; there are the organisation, administration, and equipment of the service to be considered.

In connection with these, it must be understood that although the nation had made provision in a medical sense against any emergency that could be foreseen, the colossal and utterly unforeseen task involved by the present war rendered the medical staff inadequate, so far as official preparations are concerned. The total number of officers and men of the Royal Army Medical Corps on the 1st of October, 1913 (the latest figures available prior to the outbreak of hostilities), was 4,798, and this, when sanitary detachments and staffs of field ambulances have been deducted, is altogether an insufficient number for dealing with the casualties of the British Expeditionary Force, engaged, as it is at present, in a war of unparalleled magnitude. For only a nation bent on aggressive war would make adequate preparations for such a war as this, and thus at the outbreak of hostilities Germany was the only combatant nation that was fully prepared, either in a military or a medical sense.

Deficiencies in the British medical service have been met by voluntary aid: for instance, in

one of the general hospitals at the base station of the Expeditionary Force most of the surgeons in the various wards were civilians up to the time of the outbreak in August; and, of the staff of nursing sisters, only the matron and a minority of the nursing sisters are members of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, all the rest having been drawn either from one or other of the great civilian hospitals, or from the ranks of the Red Cross voluntary workers. One of the great London hospitals alone, up to the time of writing, has sent out over a hundred of its trained nurses, and others have contributed of their staffs in proportion. If the official medical and nursing staffs of the Army had alone been available for the care of the sick and wounded from the firing line, then the British Army would have been in sorry case, for the emergency was too great. Against all reasonable emergencies provision was made, but a situation such as this demands, not an official effort, but the energy of the whole nation.

It is practically impossible to define where the activities of the British Red Cross Society,—hand in hand with which the St. John Ambulance Association must always be understood,—begin,

or where they end, for the work of the various organisations is so interlinked that one is constantly finding evidence of unsuspected support and assistance of one branch by another. Thus, in one of the wards of a big base hospital I found a matron of the Army Nursing Service, sisters of all kinds, military and voluntary surgeons, and a mixture of Red Cross and regulation equipment which defied classification. The one thing which was completely and convincingly apparent was that the hospital was fully equipped, "and," said one of the nursing sisters, "the Red Cross Society has been wonderful. We have come to look on it as a sort of 'Aladdin's lamp,' for we have only to ask for a thing, and we get it."

She pointed with pride to a number of feather pillows which she was fitting into their cases. "This is the very last thing we asked for," she said, "for we had to think of necessities first. But you know what a hard, unsympathetic thing the regulation bolster is, and you can guess how much we wanted something of this sort, especially in cases of wounds in the head and back. Now we have them, thanks to the Red Cross Society, and there seems nothing left to ask for—except ash trays."

A curious need in a hospital, this last, but a very real one, for all that. For the men are allowed to smoke what and when they please, and in these hospitals at the base and along the lines of communication they have no means of disposing of their cigarette ends and ashes, burnt matches, and the like. In some cases the nurses have bought the ash trays out of their own money, but they have already done enough for the service of the wounded without being asked to spend their own—often small—means in the purchase of items of hospital equipment,—and the ash trays will be provided like other needed things.

So much for the interior of the hospitals, for this is a typical case. Outside, the Red Cross Society has been no less an "Aladdin's lamp," for among the busy fleet of motor ambulances that hurry hither and thither from ambulance train to hospital, from hospital to hospital ship, and on half a hundred other errands, it seems that two out of every three vehicles have "British Red Cross Society" marked on their varied bonnets or on their uniform grey curtains. And in every department to which one may turn it is the same; the Red Cross Society has done something, provided something, or

arranged something, always on the most liberal and comprehensive scale. The voicing of a need, apparently, is equivalent to the provision to meet the need, and " Aladdin's lamp " is an apt descriptive phrase for this truly great organisation that has sprung into activity to supplement official channels of supply.

For head-quarters at the Boulogne base, there is the Hôtel de Paris, where a multitudinous staff toils at the business of organisation. One little man of this staff, who talked freely about his work after coming back to his own hotel at seven in the evening, was very anxious to know what the opinion of outsiders was with regard to the Red Cross work.

" They wouldn't have me in the firing line," he explained, " so I've come out to do my bit this way. I'm a chartered accountant when I'm in London, and here—well, I'm just one little item, not even at the head of a department. I ought to be in uniform, but haven't had time to get it yet—I've only been here a week or two. We work twelve hours a day, and it's a seven-day week.

" I've had one half-day off since I started work—

had to take it, for one can't keep on at figures day after day, as we have to do, without a break once in a while. I'm going back to-night to make up for lost time—shan't get finished till about midnight. One thing that strikes me is that we begin our days too late at home. When I'm at home, I start out at about nine o'clock, and get to work by half-past, but here we are in the office at eight, and work on till between six and seven. In one day we had 2,500 wounded in, and sent 700 out to the hospital ship—and it's no use trying to explain the amount of clerical work that number involves. But we had to get it done. And we did it.

"I think we do our bit down here at the base, and if they give medals to the people in the hospitals we, who are on the administrative staff, ought to have them too. I gave up a good job to come out—felt it was my duty to come, like a good many more, and—what do they think of the work of the Red Cross people, away over in England?"

It was a persistent query, this, of what they thought of the workers; a query put by every helper to every visitor. But a survey of the hospital work at the base is sufficient to determine

that one cannot separate the work of the "Red Cross people" from that of the Regular staff and of other organisations working for the welfare of the Army, for all are intermingled, interlinked, and a noteworthy feature is the splendid concord in which they work. Here and there are inefficients —they are inseparable from such a gigantic effort as this, but they are very few in comparison with the magnitude of the work. Two thousand five hundred wounded in one day: the figures are sufficient to give an idea of the work awaiting administrative and nursing staffs alike.

On the face of it, no place could be less fitted to form a base for hospital work, as far as accommodation goes, but the difficulty has been overcome by commandeering various buildings which were intended for, and have served, far different purposes. The Kursaal houses No. 13 General Hospital, one of the largest in the town. The Hôtel de Paris, as already mentioned, is the Red Cross headquarters, and the Hôtel Derveaux acts as headquarters for the Director-General of Medical Services. The Hôtel Christol, again, formed the original home of the Allied Forces base hospital, and throughout all the town it is the same—the

most unexpected places are marked with the Red Cross, and apportioned to the use of the wounded. Away up on the Calais road are the two Indian hospitals, side by side, with little brown men standing sentries at their gates, and all ingress barred. In driving sleet these sentries stand with truly Eastern immobility, and little children inspect them with all the curiosity of childhood.

The heavy ambulance trains run down on to the quay, where motor ambulances wait to bear away their sorrowful burdens. The familiar " Compagnie Internationale de wagons-lits " carriages—how one recalls the thrill at passing through the Douane at Calais, and looking at the sunlit words " Menton-Ventimille! "—have been commandeered by the dozen, their sides diversified by big red crosses painted on white ground; and now, as the most comfortable of European railway rolling stock, they play a part in conveying the wounded from the firing line—or the immediate rear of the firing line—to the base. On arrival, each train is met by the nursing staff, the wounded men are furnished with hot drinks and cigarettes, and conveyed without delay to the hospitals to which they have been apportioned. Everything is done in orderly, methodi-

cal fashion ; the confusion one might expect to see arising from the irruption of thousands of wounded in a day does not exist. The staff seems competent to cope with all needs, all emergencies.

It has been truly said that in war economy must be disregarded, and the controllers of forces must be prepared to waste in order to attain their ends. This is no less true of the care of wounded ; not that there must be deliberate waste, but there must be no thought of economy when human lives are at stake. The principle is well exemplified in the organisation of these base hospitals, for the care of the men is considered without regard to cost. The best of nursing, the best means of transport, the best of surgeons and physicians, are at work, and for such men as come down from the trenches and the firing line the best is none too good. And in men and women and goods the Red Cross organisations have given the very best, with results that cannot be overestimated ;—all drawn from the voluntary spirit of the nation. Aladdin's lamp, did we say ? Surely a well of Elim with inexhaustible waters of healing.

. . . . .

Up in the Kursaal, they are proud, now, that they were first to arrive and deal with the rush of wounded from the fighting that raged from Armentières to Ypres. At the outset, "No. 13" was destined for Belgium, and the staff had even got as far as Ostend—but fortunately, had not unpacked their equipment—when, owing to the fall of Antwerp, Ostend became untenable as a base. So they came back, and, after nine days of wandering and wondering, put into Boulogne and took up their quarters in the Kursaal, utilising every nook and corner with the exception of the theatre, where the stepped and sloping floor made occupation impossible for hospital use. Alas! even the boxes were stepped, and thus unfit for the erection of beds. When you think of and see the need you hate that theatre.

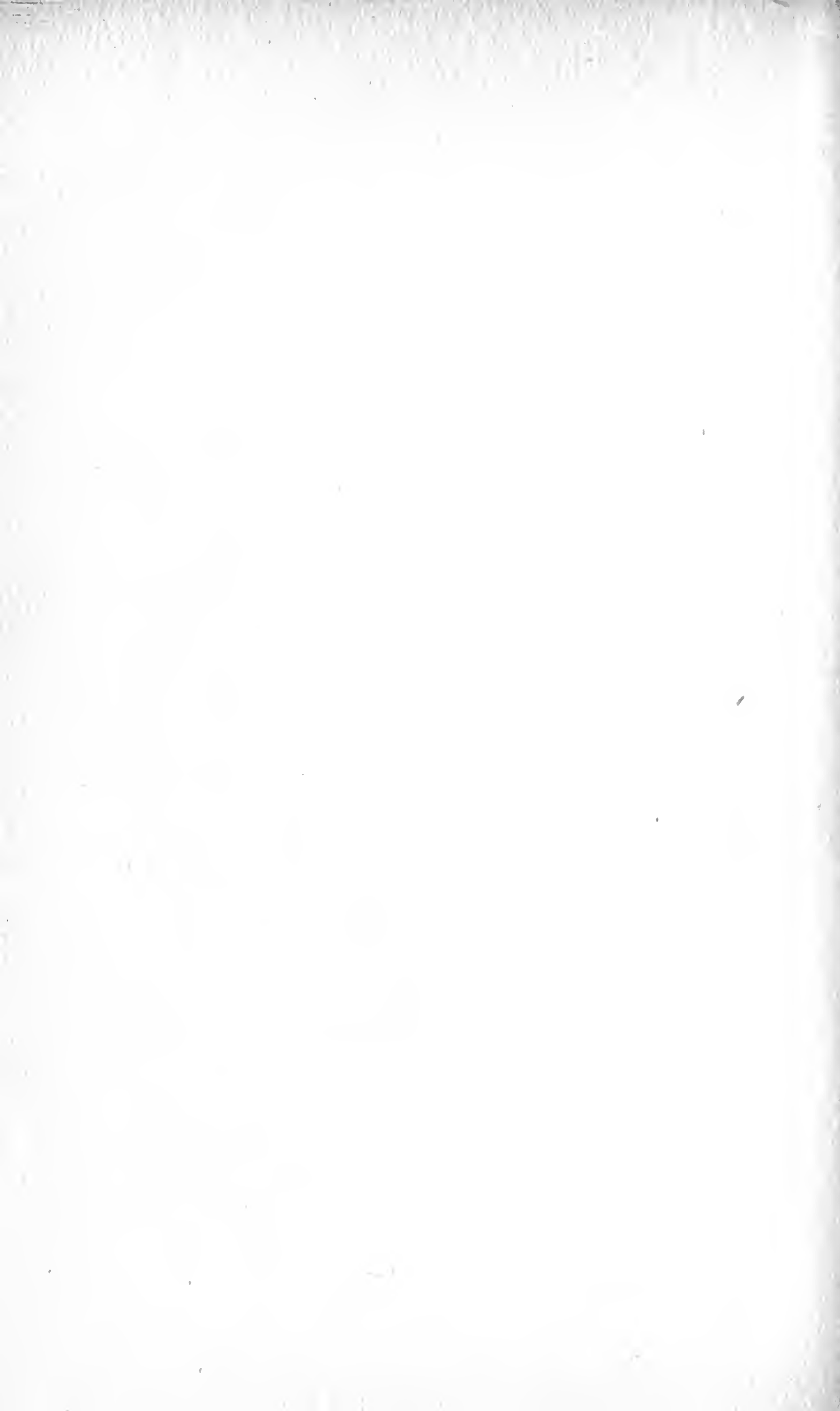
A block on the line, due, some said, to a refugee train being derailed, gave two clear days for the fitting up of the Kursaal as a hospital; every item of equipment had to be prepared, and even the lockers had to be screwed together, since they were packed flat in separate planks to save space in transport. Floors had to be scrubbed, carpets taken up and rolled away, bedding got out and

prepared, during those two days, and the staff was not half of what was available later for the work. And then, with a clear line, the rush of wounded began ; in a week there were hurried into Boulogne over 20,000 wounded and sick men, among them many very critical surgical cases. Every bedstead in the Kursaal was filled, and down on the floor, between the bedsteads, the comparatively light cases were accommodated on mattresses, so that the whole building was packed. As men grew fit to be moved, and as hospital ships were available, the patients were shipped off to England, and always the incoming stream persisted, while doctors and nurses worked in a way that is worthy of mention in dispatches just as are the deeds of the troops at the front. "From seven in the morning till nine at night," said one of the sisters, "and we had no time to eat."

Later, the means of aid grew greater, and the flood of wounded steadied to a stream that balanced the outflow to hospital ships and rest camps—of which one at Rouen takes the men less seriously wounded and fits them for the firing line again. But day after day surgeons and nursing sisters are kept busy, and as beds empty they fill again.

No break, no pause in this work that deals with one of the ugliest sides of war,—the work to which the Red Cross organisations have contributed so largely, and with such magnificent results.

THE GUARDSMAN



II

THE GUARDSMAN

IN the big "baccarat ward" of the Kursaal, there are certain fittings which could not be removed when the baccarat room was transformed into a hospital ward, and the result is a series of violent contrasts. There are the great bay windows that give on to the sea front, the painted ceiling, with its oval of lights and garish pictured scenes—looking down on rows of narrow beds, each of which contains a burden of pain. Beneath the gilded plaster of the arching walls the nurses work and the doctors move, and in the rows of little beds men wait to be marked out to the hospital ships. The hall has sheltered upwards of five hundred patients at one time, when that heavy freight of wounded came down from Ypres.

Only a few months since, brilliant, pleasure-seeking throngs gathered round the tables in this spacious hall, while at intervals there would sound through opening doors the monotonous cry—

"*Faites vos jeux, messieurs, faites vos jeux.*" The croupier has given place to the doctor, the garish crowds have made way for the sombre pathos of little beds in ordered rows, but so thoroughly does a place retain its atmosphere that, as I sat in the baccarat ward and listened to the stories of wounded men, I seemed to hear at intervals the faint echo of the croupier's call:

"*Faites vos jeux, messieurs. . . . Les jeux sont faits?*"

The subdued laugh of a convalescent man, the quick footsteps of the nurses, the occasional tinkle of a glass, had some strange—even grotesque—fitness, in such a place as this. The Kursaal! Moans for gay music, and slow pain for swift laughter; for the show and finery and bright disorder of its former occupants, neat rows of beds, bandaged heads and limbs—the broken wreckage of war on the sands of pleasure. Yet amid this human wreckage, throughout the patient, unselfish effort that makes men whole again, that other impression persists:

"*Faites vos jeux, messieurs! . . . Messieurs, faites vos jeux.*"

In one of these beds I found a man who had a

tale to tell, as have most of these wounded. Many of the stories have in them an element of fiction, but it happened that I had known this man in old time, and, stumbling across him by accident here, knew him sufficiently well—and knew that he would not attempt to romance to me, whatever he might do with other people—to be certain of a real story, such as would illustrate the work done by the hospital staff and the way in which men come in from the firing line. I found him sitting bolt upright in his bed, a whiskered, swarthy Celt, who, with one leg permanently shortened by a Prussian bullet to the extent of about two inches, knew that his days as a soldier were ended. He told his story with all the imagination of the Celt, yet with a directness that vouched for its truth. With nerves still quivering from shock, he spoke with curious halting breaks, sometimes stammering and sometimes hunting for a word to express his meaning. He sat up, he told me, in order that he might look out to the sea beyond which England lay, and he wished the weather were clearer, for he had an idea that in clear weather it might be possible to see the coast from the windows of the

baccarat ward. I give his story as it was given to me ; not, indeed, in his own words, but the sense of it as he told it to me without the odd pauses that he made, and the effect of weakness and pain that his hesitating speech so poignantly conveyed.

And this is the story.

We mobilised at Dunbar on the 7th of August, and my time on the reserve was finished on the 16th—if they'd waited another fortnight I shouldn't be here now, looking forward to about sixpence a day pension and a leg that'll make me nigh on useless. There was nothing wrong with the way we mobilised, for everything was ready—just as if they'd been waiting for years for us to come up and get our clothes and equipment. We went down to Aldershot, and there they drafted men like me to form a reserve squadron for the Guards. We were 1st Lifeguards—and me a Dragoon all my service ! I made a likely Lifeguard, though.

I seem to forget lots of things—it's a bit of a muddle when I look back past the time when I was wounded. I remember we had to fetch remounts from Farnham and all over the place,

and we got a half-day of practice with the new short rifle—I'd never seen one before—and then they drafted us out to land somewhere on the Belgian coast. I don't know, now, exactly where we landed; I heard we were going to take some of the pressure off Antwerp, and there we were, shoved into a country that was never meant for cavalry to fight in, for there wasn't cover for a mouse on that flat ground, let alone for a horse. Blank something or other they called the place where we landed, and then we went off for Antwerp. Days? I don't know how many days or when anything happened till I was wounded, for one day was just like another, and we marched and marched. . . .

We were going up toward Antwerp, as far as I knew, and then we got the news that Antwerp had fallen, and we just had to clear out, mighty quick. Days and days of hard trekking, and I didn't know where we were going—lots of us didn't know. And then one day we came on some Death's Heads—I remember that pretty well.

It was a sudden business. We were just riding along, and all at once we got the order—"Form troop!" and then—"Charge!" No word about

gallop or anything—just the charge. I couldn't tell you how many there were of us, nor how many there were of them—just saw the beggars ahead, and then we were going at them, just like a parade charge. They weren't ready—some of them were sideways on, and they seemed all huddled up and trying to run away, but we just went through them, and broke on the other side, and formed up again and came back at them—same as we used to do—you remember—on parade in Africa. There were twenty-nine of them dead, and I don't know how many wounded. I know I got three, as easy as riding-school practice.

Eh, but that new sword is a lovely thing in a charge! You don't even have to thrust—it just goes through a man as you ride. It's a lovely sword to use—the old one isn't a patch on it. You just point at a man, and tumble him out of his saddle like a riding-school dummy with a practice blade. It's great, riding in a charge with that sword. And they couldn't seem to do anything to us—they seemed afraid. I don't think much of the Death's Head Hussars, for all the fuss they make about them. We just played with them.

"*Faites vos jeux, messieurs!*"

After that we trekked on, and we got tired of carrying helmets and lances we had captured. We used to give them away in the Belgian villages. and I guess they've proved death warrants for many a poor beggar that thanked us for them and gave us things for them, for the Germans have been all over that country since, and if they found civilians with their Death's Heads' helmets,—well! . . . And we trekked on, fighting sometimes, but it was all dismounted work—we never got a chance for another charge like that one. Trenches, and us cavalry! We could have done lots more if we had had some infantry for support, but we were all cavalry, and the number threes had to hold the horses while the rest of us held the trenches.

A monotonous business, you bet your life, that trekking on and trenching. Sometimes we came up against Uhlans, but they always ran away. One day I got a Uhlan's badge, and I gave it to a Belgian kid—I suppose they've shot the poor little beggar for having it, before this. We could never get near the Uhlans—only got a shot at them from a long way off.

My leg? Yes, I'm just coming to that, but things get so mixed in my mind, and it's hard to

remember what happened first. But it was somewhere round by when we were going on towards Lille (he pronounced it "Lily"), and I don't know where we were, only that we had got out of the very open country and were digging trenches every night. It had got cold, then, and wet most of the days—it was no picnic, any of the time, and the last was the worst of it. We had no infantry, as I told you, and we had to retire—I was dismounted at the time—and then I got a bullet through my leg—it was like a wasp sting, only worse. I tried to crawl, but I got left behind, and that night I lay out, and Lord! wasn't it cold! Not half!

All through the night I lay out in the open, and the pain of my leg was so bad that I couldn't have slept even if the cold would have let me. I didn't know where our chaps were, nor where I was, and I thought my number was up, for sure. In the morning some Uhlans came along, and one of them saw I was alive, so he plonked three shots at me, and every one of them went into that same leg—see, there's the holes the bullets made! Plonked three shots into me, and me lying there wounded too bad to move! That's what *they* are, the Uhlans.

I can't tell you what that felt like—only I know the time when that brute was potting at me was the longest year I'll ever live through. You see, I knew he meant to kill me, and I couldn't do anything—I just had to wait, as helpless as if I was already dead, while he played with me like a cat with a mouse.

Les jeux sonts faits ?

But he didn't finish me—their shooting was rotten, always. I lay out there thirty-six hours altogether, before our chaps could come back and get at me. It wasn't anybody's fault—they couldn't have got there before—I was just one of the unlucky ones. They took me up, and—Lord, the pain of it when they moved me!

They took me back to somewhere—don't ask me where it was, for I don't know no more than Adam—where there was some R.A.M.C. men. They dressed the wounds in my leg and put it in splints, and I was stuck on one of the ambulance wagons and carted off, out of the way. That's all the fighting I'll ever see, for my leg won't let me ride again, and they can't put me in the infantry, with one leg two inches shorter than the other.

They're very good to you on the ambulance

trains—I had a berth in a real first-class carriage, one with a lot of foreign words on it—something about " fuming " for smoke, and things like that. They treated us like toffs, and when we got here I had a drink and a smoke—something hot and good to drink, it was—and then up here to the hospital to get properly attended to. They took all sorts of care of us on the way down.

And here ? Well, they're mighty good to us, and don't these doctors know their business ! No half larks about them ! I had the first good night's sleep since leaving England when I got in here.

We talk among ourselves, a little, sometimes, but these chaps swing the lead a bit, some of them. They want you to believe—well, you see that little chap in the bed over there ? He tried to make the sister believe he had captured three Uhlans all his own self—and he ain't as big as sixpennorth of coppers. But some of them—they've done things. That man over there—he'd got one leg shot away altogether and the other one was just dragging, and he pulled himself along the ground with his hands for nearly a hundred yards—eh, you'd never believe half the things they've done! Think of it ! Pulled himself along with his hands !

Eh, but it's good to have somebody to talk to—I haven't talked like this for three weeks—it's three weeks since I came in here. I sit up and look out at the sea, and I lie here and count the lights. I started on the lights round the ceiling there, and there's three hundred and twenty-six of them—I've counted them times enough to know. Then I started on counting the gilt beads on the wall, and the people in the pictures up there. Yesterday the doctor came and bent my leg for the first time, and he's coming to bend it again to-night. Pain? Don't talk about it! It's like—like nothing you can think of for pain. But they're good, these doctors, and the sisters too. They don't get time to talk to us—they're on the run all the time, with all the fellows they have to look after.

You see that chap over there—the one sitting reading? He's a German, and we've got some of the Prussian Guard in here—caught 'em at Ypres (which he pronounced "Wipers"). There's a many of 'em won't go back to Germany till the war's over, and there's a many of 'em will never go back—like the ones I got in that charge. When I saw some of the things they'd done in Belgium, I was glad I'd killed them three.

That man over there—he was hit just under the belt, and he'll never see England again. They've put him on one of the Red Cross air beds, and that's about the last. . . . He's so thin, they say. . . . The chaps that can get about sit alongside him and talk to him, and he tells 'em how he'll be home before long, and what he's going to do. But he'll never see home again—half his inside's gone. Shells—half the wounds are shell wounds—more than half, for they can't shoot with their rifles, not like our chaps shoot.

And there was one in this bed next to me—the bed on that side—a nice chap. He was cavalry, too, and he came from Dumfries. He'd been on Benson's column in Africa, which was a picnic to this, as they say, though Diamond Hill wasn't too much of a picnic, and neither was Belfast, as you know. We used to talk, and he knew he'd never see home again—he went west the other night, two—no, it must have been three nights ago. He'd been telling me, in the morning, what he'd do if ever he got back to Dumfries, and they carried him out that night. I'd been asleep, a bit—we'd talked, and then he went off into a doze, and I went to sleep too, and when I waked up the bed

was empty. I sat up and looked out of the window, and it was all dark, but the rain had stopped and the stars were out. I felt somehow glad the clouds had cleared off and the stars were out, because—you know how you think queer things sometimes—well I thought how that poor beggar had an awful long journey in front of him, and it seemed only right that he should have a clear night for the start. . . .

Les jeux sont faits? Rien ne va plus!

. . . . .

Eh, but it's good to talk to somebody from outside. I lie here and count the lights—they say this place was all gilt and carpets before the beds were put in for us. I count the lights and look out of the window and see the stars sometimes, but it's mostly cloudy and raining, now. I'll be home in a month, to tell them what war is like, and talk—just as I've talked to you.

I think of that chap in the next bed—the one that died—and sometimes I wake with the horrors, over that Uhlan who shot me while I was lying out wounded. My nerves are all to pieces, and I think I see his rifle pointed at me. . . .

It was just hell, and then this—the trouble they

take over you. . . . Plenty to smoke—I get tired of smoking. See this pipe? It ought to have a medal, for I had it in Africa—it's seen two campaigns. And now it's about done—like me. It'll go to no more wars. If you run across any more of "A" Squadron, remember me to the boys.

By the time he had finished his story the oval of lights around the ceiling had been switched on, for he had talked very slowly, and with many pauses. When he spoke of the Uhlan who shot him as he lay out wounded, it was evident that the terror of that minute was still with him. The sisters were moving about on their evening rounds, and the doctors were at work in the ward, so I left this man to count the lights a little longer, and to think over the comrade who had gone out beyond the swing of the tides into clear starlight, on that very long journey which so many have taken from the battlefields of Belgium and France.

The raucous voice of the croupier was still. In its place I heard the kindly echo of the old Westminster call, *Who goes home?*

THE DOCTOR

III

THE DOCTOR

"AND so you want to know about the Red Cross work," he said. "Well, we're uncommon glad there *is* a Red Cross Society. You see that air bed—where they're just moving the man on to it? We have to thank the Red Cross people for things like that—air beds and pillows, and all the little luxuries that we want for the bad cases. It has made a wonderful difference, being able to get things."

I spoke of having seen cases other than actual wounds.

"We get a number of neurasthenic cases," he said. "There's one sitting over by the door there. The constant shell fire on them in the trenches does it, and they come in partially deaf, absolutely apathetic and depressed—pitiable cases. They get right in time, of course, but they all need absolute quiet and careful treatment in convales-

cent homes, if ever they are to be pulled back to normal health again. And here and there a case of insanity—they go through awful experiences before they come in here, and it's too much for the nerves with some men. The insanity cases recover, as a rule—it's the neurasthenic cases that are the trouble. One can't rouse them."

He drifted into talk of the fitting-up of the hospital, in the first days—when the line was blocked and there were only two clear days to prepare. "There was a carpet in here," he said, "a thick pile thing that we had rolled up and carried out—it took about forty men to carry it away. This makes a fine ward—I ventilate it a bit too much for the tastes of some of them, but it's best to have the error on the right side, as far as that goes. But they're wonderful, these men. Never a word of complaint—they stand the pain and all the rest of it, and do little things for each other. . . ."

We walked along the ward, and passed a bed on which sat an anæsthetiser at the head, while at the foot a surgeon clipped away gangrened flesh from the stump of an amputated limb. It was a commonplace, here. Chubby Cupids looked out

from among gilt mouldings on to the narrow beds and hospital lockers.

"It's a rum mixture," said the doctor, looking up at the wall.

"They talk of eye cases," I suggested.

"Lots of them," he answered, "some with one eye gone, some with both destroyed. It comes from shots or shell splinters passing across the front of their heads, without touching the brain. In some ways those cases are the most pitiful of all—if you look round, you'll see plenty of bandaged heads. There's a man in London, they tell me, stone blind, who spends every minute of his spare time in visiting the men in the hospitals who have been blinded in the war, and trying to cheer them up by telling them the compensations he has found. When you reckon up that he's not long been blind himself——"

I had already counted about twenty men, on whom the bandages covered either one or both the eyes, and—strange how the unnumbered blessing suddenly flashes upon you and counts for everything—I saw, with eyes that see, the work of that blind man in London, whose own great loss is the great gain of so many.

" Lots of tetanus," the doctor said. He mentioned one of the most famous of London surgeons. " We've got him with four assistants working away in a basement, and he's stopping tetanus in scores and scores of cases—saving lives by the hundred. When the bacilli are discovered, we inject anti-toxin before the disease develops, and there you are."

He strolled on a few steps, with a glance at each bed that he passed. The men looked up at him rather anxiously, for it lay in his power to mark them out for England or to the convalescent camp.

" I've got a new way of amputation, too," he announced, and went into distinctly unpleasant surgical details. " Saves two or three inches more of a limb than the other way."

I suggested that the experience gained was valuable.

" It's unique," he agreed. " More practical surgery in a week than one could get in ten years in an ordinary practice. And all kinds—every class of case. Legs, intestinal, head cases—I'm most interested in the head cases, though."

He gave more details, ending with an encomium on the courage and patience of the men. " It's a

privilege to work among such patients," he declared. "One could never believe, without seeing, the way they stand things."

He pointed out a bed in the far corner of the ward.

"Not the man sitting up—the one next him, on the left. He came in with half his jaw shot away and all the muscles laid bare on the side of his neck, as well as a broken collar-bone. There was a big lump at the back of the shoulder, and at first we thought it was hemorrhage, but the second day it had got so painful that I judged it best to operate, though there was danger in doing it. And it wasn't hemorrhage—it was the top of a shell—the piece that the fuse is screwed into, a lump of iron about as big as a teacup. And now that man will get well and go back to England—he lost sixty ounces of blood over it after coming in here, as well as what he lost before he got here. Oh, you'll find some marvellous recoveries among them."

He mused for a minute, and then shook hands.

"Talk all you like to the patients," he said, "but don't stop too long talking to the sisters—they have all their work cut out and little time for talking."

With that he went on his way, and a little later I saw him busied over one of his "head cases." Meanwhile I sat down beside a man in a suit of pyjamas, who, I ascertained, had been a corporal in an Irish regiment. He had one arm left, and I expressed sympathy with him.

"Ah, shure, it might have been worse," he answered. "It might have been my head, and what thin?"

The philosophy of this was unanswerable, so I congratulated him on his pyjamas, where other men had to be content with mere shirts.

"I got 'em up by Armentières," he explained. "An ould Frenchman gave 'em to me, and on the whole I'd rather have a shirt for day wear—but shure you can't have everything you want."

He paused, expectantly, till the doctor had passed on.

"I was thinkin', perhaps he'd mark me out for England," he explained. "I'm nearly well enough to travel, now, and though they're mighty good to us here I'd rather be home. The doctor, there, he's a mighty clever man, shure he is, but I wish he'd mark me out."

He was reluctant to talk about his experiences

in the trenches. " We were down on the Aisne, and it was hot work there," he admitted—" very hot. Then they moved us up to Armentières, and it was round there that I got this. Ah, but they're beasts an' not men at all, the Germans. The things I've seen—old men and women shot. . . ."

I left him trying to pronounce " Ypres " correctly, and absolutely certain that he would be home with the " ould folks " within the month. He would have to face life a one-armed man, but he was quite cheerful about it.

" Some haven't even one arm to go back with," he declared.

At the door by which one enters the ward I came on one of the neurasthenic cases, a big hussar who sat on the floor with his head propped between his hands, and his case sheet, on which the particulars of his disease were inscribed, laid across his knees. He looked up at the man in the bed by the door.

" Is this the hospital ? " he asked.

" Yes," said the other man, " you're in the hospital, all right."

" Eh ? " said the hussar, as if he had not heard distinctly.

" It is the hospital," the other man answered.

" Hospital ? " the hussar queried. " Who said anything about hospital ? "

With that his head fell forward again on his hands, and he sat, a picture of misery, on the floor. He was dirty and unshaven, fresh from the work round Ypres, whence the men came deafened by the incessant roar of the exploding shells. Later, he would be given a bath and sent to bed, though from a surgical point of view there was nothing wrong with him. He looked utterly exhausted and depressed, nothing more.

As the doctor said, there is need for extreme care in dealing with such cases as that of the hussar, for there is a danger that they may, if improperly handled at the outset, go back to civilian life as mental wrecks, with their nerves permanently shattered and their intellects clouded. In each case a period of complete rest and quiet is necessary, away from the sight and sound of things military. Surgical cases are simple by comparison with these mental wrecks, whose final recovery is a matter for the consideration, not of the base hospitals, but of the convalescent establishments in England, the places that come more directly and completely under the control of the Red Cross, where time

and room are not of so much account as at the base.

. . . . .

There are, in the hospitals in France, probably more civilian doctors who have volunteered for the work than there are R.A.M.C. surgeons, and the way in which these men have gone out is not the least noteworthy feature of voluntary work. In many cases they have left good practices—and a medical man's practice is a thing that suffers more through neglect than through anything; no substitute can hold a practice together for any length of time. Yet these men have gone out to the work, giving up good incomes for military pay, not as a matter of brief enthusiasm, but for the period of the war. Some among them are at the very top of their profession, specialists of the first rank—but they give their services for the benefit of the troops in the spirit that animates all Red Cross workers. As to how they work, the lady superintendent of one of the hospitals declared: " On the first day of a big rush the surgeons were operating from twelve noon until midnight, and I don't think any of us went to bed for the first thirty-six hours." And again, " The nurses have

been admirable. It is not possible to say enough of what has been accomplished by them and by the surgeons and physicians. They have done splendid work."

The work is not yet half done, and the need for voluntary effort is greater than ever. It only requires that this be known. It has been insinuated in some quarters that, with the passing of first enthusiasms, though the workers stick to their tasks in a manner beyond all praise, the general public are apt to lose sight of the need for effort, and to slacken in their support of Red Cross activities. But, consider! If, in any measure, a nation fails in the maintenance of voluntary effort for the care of the sick and wounded in war; if sufficient support is not forthcoming, for as long as the need exists, to ensure adequate provision being made for this noble work, then that nation will have failed in one of the greatest trusts ever reposed in it, failed in that tenderness and sympathy which overcomes the wrath of war. Of the British nation that shall of a truth never be said.

THE SERGEANT'S STORY

IV

THE SERGEANT'S STORY

SO well have the Red Cross organisations attended to the material needs of the hospitals in France that only one permanent and crying need (excepting always the need for continuance and support of Red Cross activities) remains: the need for fruit. The men are allowed to smoke all they like, but, as thirst is always attendant on loss of blood, they would very naturally lay down pipe or cigarette for an orange, apple, or bunch of grapes —the value of which things in the eyes of the giver is multiplied by ten in the mouth of the patient. Naturally, the Red Cross people are not in a position to supply fruit, which should be purchased on the spot, if possible; in any case it cannot be transported from England in large quantities. Several times I went down to the markets and bought big baskets of any fruit available to take up to the hospitals, and it was as a drop in a

bucket, for had I taken a cab load every day it would not have been enough. It seems that the need must remain, for it is difficult to see how it could be filled.

This merely in passing. I set out to tell the story of the sergeant of an infantry regiment, who was in the first of the fighting, and went down from Mons to the Aisne, and on to Ypres before a German shell sent him back from the firing line. The sister pointed him out to me, in a bed near the door by which one enters the ward, a gaudy corner of a great painted room that was designed for things far other than the crowded rows of hospital beds on its floors. " He has been there for three weeks," the sister said, " and you'll find him interesting. He'll be glad of somebody to talk to."

So I went to the sergeant. He was reading a two-day-old paper. By way of a bribe, I took him four of the best of my apples, and for these he was very grateful.

" But you might give two of them to my chum over there, sir," he said, and indicated his chum, a swarthy artilleryman with a bandage round his head and his arm in a sling. I took two of the

apples to the artilleryman, and came back, to sit on the sergeant's bed and listen.

"The papers are all full up with London Scottish," he remarked by way of opening. "I wonder whether anyone has heard of my old regiment—we did about twenty times what the London Scottish did once, and out of the men that first came out to Mons there aren't enough of us left to sweep up. I was one of the last of them when I came away, three weeks ago."

I suggested that the London Scottish were not to blame for newspapers.

"Quite so, sir," the sergeant agreed. "There's one or two of 'em in here, and they curse about it as much as any of the rest of us—they know it ain't fair to the Army to set one lot above all the rest, like that. But these newspaper men, they don't know a squad from a squadron, and some of the lies they print are enough to make a man laugh, if they weren't so silly. Here's one chap talking about fifteen-pounder heavy guns, drawn by traction engines. I wonder he hasn't got a six-horse team to pull a rifle into position. There was another one, the other day, telling how a driver of artillery loaded and fired his gun—I'd like my

chum over there to get at him and tell him things."

I suggested that the newspaper men often wrote so badly that the printer had to make bits up out of his head.

"Just so," he agreed, "but you know how it is. We lie here in bed with nothing to do and no chance of a talk to outside folks, and little things get big. Most of the time I think about home, and whether I'll be fit to be moved home soon. They're long days, in here, and longer nights, though the sisters and doctors are as good as they can be to us."

I induced him, after a time, to tell his story of the war, and of the many stories that I heard it was the most completely typical of the work of the infantry, as the story of the cavalryman, already related, was most typical of the work of the mounted men in the campaign. More and more I was impressed with the extreme quiet of these men in the hospitals. They spoke no more loudly than was absolutely necessary, and there was common to them a difficulty in finding words to express themselves, something between indecision and stammering that made their speech slow. Most

of them were like this, though there were youngsters eager to tell of their experiences—and as a rule the proverbial grain of salt was necessary with their narratives. But the sergeant spoke very slowly, and convincingly, as if he tried to keep to actual fact, and at the same time found the facts almost too big to express.

This is what he told me.

I don't remember much of what we did round Mons, but I do remember that it was summer, and there was a bayoneted woman that we found. . . . That was one of the first of the things that gave us an idea of what the Germans were like. And then there were men of my company blown all to pieces by a shell—pieces of them lying about, and their blood on my clothes—I began to feel what war was like when that happened, and when I remembered that dead woman.

And the first of the fighting—things so far back as that have gone hazy, for so much has happened since. But I seem to remember masses of the Germans coming on at us, so that the more we shot the more there seemed to be. We hadn't got the trenches then that we made later—there

was no time to make them, though we dug ourselves in as best we could, and there were a lot who got hit in the legs and the back by shell fire. The German shell fire was murderous, but their infantry used to come on firing from the hip, without taking any aim at all, as if the mere noise of their rifles would scare us. I really believe they thought it would.

I've seen the best of my friends in the regiment shot, and helped to bury a many of them—but we were so busy that we hadn't time to think much about things like that. We marched for three weeks on the retreat, day and night marching, till men nearly fell asleep as they walked, and you just went on and on till the order to halt came as a sort of surprise. But it was summer then, and though it rained sometimes we were well fed and pretty comfortable. Our officers looked after us well. It was nearly all marching, that three weeks, though we got into some pretty tight corners. Once the Engineers were only just in time in blowing up a bridge behind us—it cost them some men to do it, and that got us out, or I wouldn't be here now.

Then we came to what they call the battle of

the Marne, but my regiment didn't see much of that. We had to advance again, and we chased the Germans, but there wasn't much in it, for us. We got up to the Aisne, and were kept on the move most of the time. It was pretty sickening, some nights, to get all of a lather of sweat at digging ourselves in and then be told that we had to go on and give up the trenches we had dug—but things like that can't be helped in war.

At last we got stuck round Vailly. We made proper trenches there, and I expect they're held yet, unless the chaps who relieved us have gone forward from them. Time after time the German infantry tried to drive us out, but they didn't seem to like our bayonets, and never got very close to us. One funny thing about it was that you could never tell whether you had killed a man or whether somebody else had rolled him over. I think I must have knocked out scores, but I can't be sure that I ever hit one.

It was at Vailly that we began to see chaps getting what we called "shellitis." They got sort of dazed by the shell fire, some of them, and would do anything to get out of the firing line. I think

most of them were not quite right in their heads—it was too much for them to stand. There was one man of my section came to me and said he wanted to see the doctor, and I told him he couldn't get out of the trench to look for the doctor, or he'd be shot right off. I told him to wait till it was dusk, and then go. That night, when I asked for him, he couldn't be found anywhere, and at last one chap told me he had gone out nearly as soon as the sun had set, to look for the doctor. You couldn't blame him—he had lost his nerve altogether, and was better out of it, for the sake of the rest of us. It wouldn't do for that sort of thing to spread in the trenches, and I think it's catching if a man gets it and the others see too much of him.

Those "shellitis" men are queer. They just sit about and don't care what happens—you can't rouse them, except with something to eat or with a smoke, and they don't care much about that, even. They seem just dazed and silly, and I've seen good men go like that. In the fighting round Vailly, which was about the worst we had, we dropped down into regular burrows of trenches, and it was the constant booming of shells on those

trenches that made the "shellitis" cases. You'd see a man gradually get quiet in his ways—maybe one of the cheeriest and best—and there was no stopping it in him anyway. He'd get quieter and quieter, and some of them would cry like babies, especially the married ones. I'm a married man myself, and I've done a good bit of thinking about my wife and two children, odd times in the trenches, but I never got near "shellitis"—the booming didn't affect my nerves that way.

We hadn't much bayonet work, for as a rule the Germans wouldn't wait for it. But the battalion next to us did a charge—with empty rifles. You know how it generally is in a night attack. The line goes forward, and some beggar keeps on getting nervouser and nervouser, and when the line is about fifty yards off charging the silly fool lets off a round and gives the whole game away. Well, the commanding officer of this battalion made up his mind nothing of that sort was going to happen, so he made all his men unload and go out with bayonets fixed on empty rifles. They got there, too—cleared out a German trench like digging out rabbits: they said it was hot work,

when they returned, but they looked as if they'd enjoyed getting a little bit of their own back.

My chum in the next bed swears he's been into Lille, after the troops left Vailly and came up to the north, but I tell him he must have mistaken somewhere else for Lille. He sticks to it, though, and you can't get him out of thinking he's been into Lille.

When the shell fire got slack round Vailly, we were drawn back and relieved by French troops. They took us back clear out of the firing line, and marched us some of the way up toward Armentières. The weather was still pretty good, and we enjoyed the marching after the cramped sitting still in trenches. It was a rest, more or less. We entrained for some of the way, and finished up somewhere round Armentières. All the time round Armentières and Ypres was stiff work, and it was up by Ypres that I got my wound.

We had been holding a line behind a railway embankment all one day, and then we got an order to advance over the embankment and dig ourselves in on the other side. The Germans were emptying coal boxes all round us, but we went over that embankment and grubbed away on the

other side till we had made ourselves fairly safe, and then the shells opened on us. It was too thick for anything, and I wonder there was a man of us left. We were ordered to go back, and I stayed to see my section away. Then, after they had gone, I started to help a wounded man to get away—I couldn't leave him. It was while I was trying to help him that I got caught by a splinter of shrapnel right up in between the shoulder-blades, and it was like a coal hammer hitting me. It smashed my collar-bone and a couple of ribs, and I spit blood for days—the lung was damaged. Like a coal hammer, it was, and I just went down on my face and lay there, with the coal boxes being emptied all round me, but I couldn't bother about them, somehow. There was no pain, at first, but I felt sort of numb all over.

That must have been at about seven o'clock, for I remember it was just beginning to get dark. After a time I managed to crawl out of the open into a trench, and I lay there and watched the big coal boxes burst and tear up the earth—I thought my number was up then, sure, especially when one of them spattered earth over me. When it got dark the doctor came out looking for me and

for the other wounded, and he fixed me up comfortably in the trench, and then did what he could for me till the stretcher-bearers should come. He gave me something out of his flask, too, to make the pain easier—you know, he needn't have done that, unless he'd liked. He was a good man, that doctor of ours, and a brave man, too, for he went around those trenches looking for wounded as if there wasn't such a thing as a German shell in the world.

He certainly made the pain a lot easier, and after that I half-dozed till about midnight, when the stretcher-men came out to hunt for me. They had to cross the embankment to get back to where our men were, and the side of it was all muddy and slippery, so I knew they couldn't get me up it in the stretcher. I got them to put the stretcher down on the other side of the embankment, and they carried me along to the bottom of it, and then tried to help me up the slippery side. One of them got his hand under my arm and tried to help me up—do you know what that feels like, when you've had your collar-bone smashed and two ribs broken? I had to beg him to let go, and then somehow I managed to crawl up that side

and down the other, slipping and sliding about as if I had been drunk. Then they put me on the stretcher and carted me off, but they had to go across ploughed fields and all sorts of bad ground, and I'm a heavy man—it was too much for them. They got help somehow—I don't remember clearly, for I'd been lying out long enough to get a little light-headed with the pain, but I know we came to a hut of some sort after a time, and then my wound was dressed again. In the morning I was put on an ambulance and carted off to the ambulance train. It was like a hospital itself, that train, everything up to date and just so, and I came down here in it without any more trouble. And I've been here three weeks, waiting to get well enough to go home.

You'd never believe what life in the trenches is like till you've had some of it. Some of the fellows have beards like goats, and worse, and they're all grimed with mud and rifle grease till you can't see their skins—clothes caked with mud, and faces like Kafirs. But they're a cheery lot, on the whole. When the coal boxes come over they make jokes about them—nothing seems to spoil the fun for our chaps. I've got my bit of shrapnel packed

away—the one that knocked me out—and I'm taking it home with me for my wife to keep.

The worst trouble, next to " shellitis," is rheumatic—since the wet weather started some of the men have got it, and most of them stick the pain and stay in the trenches in spite of it. But it's a bad thing, and there's no way of dodging it, as far as I can see. You hear men moaning in their sleep with pain—when they get a chance to sleep, and you know it's only rheumatic, but it sounds bad for all that.

We get some queer sights and sounds in here, too. A boy over the other side of the ward kept shouting all the night before last for his " mammy." " Mammy, mammy," he kept on, all night, and we couldn't get any sleep for his shouting—they carried him out yesterday, and he'll get a firing party over his grave. Some of them call girls' names, and all sorts of things, and when the doctor comes round to dress their wounds there's generally a good bit of shouting—they can't help it. I believe I shouted a bit, when I first came in, but I'm getting over it now, and they'll send me home soon. It's my lung that's keeping me here,

they say—the collar-bone is pretty near sound again, now.

They are wonderfully good to us here, though there's no denying it's a dull business lying on your back for three weeks, and somebody like this to talk to is a godsend. My chum over there is not a bad chap, but you say all you've got to say in less than three weeks, and we get very nearly sick of the sight of each other's faces sometimes—you know how it is. And the sisters and doctors are too busy to talk to us—they've got all they can do. We get everything we can ask for—it's a lot better than an ordinary hospital for troops in peace time.

There is the story: not, indeed, in the actual words in which it was told, but as far as possible reproducing the man. He himself has since come home to England, and is now, at the time of writing, with the wife and children of whom he spoke. So complete a thing is modern surgery, too, that he will go back to take his part again in the work that goes on until the final victory.

There was, during the South African war, much voluntary work, but neither the war nor the

work was on such a scale as in this campaign. Yet, though in this case the work is on so large a scale, it is free of the mistakes and muddling that characterised the South African war. So far as the medical services are concerned it is free of the discord and antipathies of that time, and to-day the voluntary and regular services work together, each glad of the presence and aid of the other. The spirit of the work is different, methods are different and better, and the results are incomparably better than those of the South African campaign. The ambulance service, the hospital equipment and service, and the fitting and working of the ambulance trains, all bear splendid witness to the energies of the Red Cross workers, and for the rest there is the testimony of the wounded men themselves, of which some indication may be gathered here.

"NURSE!"

V

"NURSE!"

ON entering by the main doorway of the hospital, I came directly into the first of the wards (for space in the buildings apportioned to hospital work is too valuable to be wasted) and looked on what seemed a huddle of beds. On one of these beds two khaki-clad, shirt-sleeved doctors worked over an unconscious man, and there was the reek of an anæsthetic: I passed on from that point, and looked round for the sister to whom I had promised some fruit the day before. I set down a huge basket of apples on the floor, and saw the matron, who regarded me with suspicion. I hastened to show her the pass which had been granted me for visiting the hospital.

"I know," she said; "I was not thinking of that. It is of more importance to know who is the dangerous person bringing apples into the ward."

I assured her that the apples would be given to

the sisters for distribution, and that none of the men would receive them direct from me.

"That alters the case," said the matron, looking relieved. "The abdominal cases must not have fruit."

With a renewed assurance on the subject I passed on, and found the nursing sister engaged in dressing a wound. She talked as she worked, and at a little distance another nurse was busy with bandages and scissors.

"We are rather slack to-day," said the sister, having acknowledged the apples. "There are only a few fresh cases in. So many of them get rheumatic, just as if they hadn't enough pain without that."

Then she explained how they came in, sometimes with their clothes still wet from the trenches, and nearly always grimed and mud-marked almost out of recognition.

So far, it seems, the trained staff of nurses available for military requirements has been practically sufficient for the hospitals in France, though at times, and in different places, the voluntary workers have been called in to meet exceptional conditions, and a certain number of voluntary nurses are kept as a reserve in case of

need. But these base hospitals, retaining only the worst cases—and these only as long as they must, for the sake of others following on from the firing line—need the very best of surgical and medical aid, and the most highly trained nursing service that can be obtained.

Not that the voluntary aid woman worker has no place in France, for there are a hundred and one forms of activity in which she is usefully engaged. But, with the foresight that has characterised all Red Cross provision in this war, the majority of the voluntary aid women workers are retained in England, where, under less strenuous conditions and with better means of tuition, they fit themselves, while caring for the returning sick and wounded, for the more strenuous work of service in the base hospitals.

The very method and attitude of the nurses in the base hospitals bespeaks the absolute necessity for full efficiency on the part of the staff; whether these women who work among the troops in the base hospitals belong to Red Cross, Regular Service, or any auxiliary staff, they know their work, and would have little patience with those who do not. This is less to be wondered at when it is

remembered that nearly every case is a very serious one—the less serious cases being sent out as soon as they are fit to be moved to make room for others. In matters where a slip would mean death, there is no room for the beginner—and yet the trained staff is only just adequate to the needs of the hospitals.

"The men are so patient," said the sister, "and they have gone through such awful experiences that one feels ashamed, sometimes, in listening to them. *We* grumble, now and again, for lack of a blanket, or even for smaller things, and these men have been up to their waists in water, unable to get food—all sorts of things; and many of them know they will go out permanent cripples. But they never grumble, no matter what they've gone through or what the pain is."

She hurried off to attend to a case that had just come in from the operating theatre, and I sat down to talk to a chubby-faced boy of the Lincolns, who had come down from Ypres (*he* called it "Ippers") with a leg broken by a shrapnel fragment.

"They keep on going out to the operatin' room and comin' back, all day," he said, "and the sisters

are on their feet all day—they never get a rest. I wonder at her stoppin' to talk to you."

I suggested that the apples might have been partially responsible, and he grinned, knowing that one or more of those apples would find him in due course. In the far corner of the ward somebody said "jam," and there was a general laugh.

"It's that chap over there," the boy of the Lincolns explained to me. "He was a bit light-headed when he came in, and wanted jam with everything he had—he even asked for jam when they gave him some soup. So they all joke him about his jam, now, and tell him he ought to have jam in his tea."

He pointed out a man who lay very still in the next bed but one, and enlarged on the case. The man had been brought in a fortnight before, a mere breathing body, completely paralysed, and unable to respond when spoken to. First his eyes had moved, and then he had moved a hand slightly, but he had not yet spoken.

"You wouldn't believe how pleased the doctor and sister were when the letters came round this morning," said the boy of the Lincolns. "The man

with the letters called out that chap's name, and he reached out his hand as if he wanted the letter —he couldn't speak to ask for it, so he reached out, and they gave it to him—and he read it. The sister turned over for him when he had read one side. They say he'll get all right again, now—shot in the back, shell fire."

I got him to talk of himself, and found that he had been in the fighting along the Aisne, and had gone from near Vailly up toward Armentières when the battle line shifted to north-western France. "We marched some of the way," he said, "and took the train the rest. It's better to march, though—the French people are good to us, and it's more free and easy, like."

I found that he had a grievance of sorts in that he was not to be sent home, but to one of the rest camps in France. "And then they'll send me back to the firin' line," he concluded regretfully. "Not that I mind goin' back, but I should like to have gone home first. It would have been nearly worth while to get a worse wound, if I could have gone home for a bit of a furlough."

Next to him was a stubbly-whiskered sergeant, who seemed to have forgotten how to smile. He

also had been in the trenches along the position of the Aisne, and had gone up to Armentières and Ypres. I asked him when he received his wound.

"About ten o'clock yesterday morning," he said.

It was then about five o'clock in the evening, and here was a man who, less than thirty-six hours before, had been in the firing line. It made the war a very near and real thing, and these hospitals themselves seemed hardly safe places in which to put helpless men, though in reality they were as safe as if the Channel lay between the firing line and the rows of beds.

. . . . .

If the average domestic servant were asked to do the work that these nursing sisters accomplish every day, she would desert without giving notice, for the ordinary conception of nursing, and especially of nursing in military hospitals, bears little or no relation to the reality. From the days of great Florence Nightingale up to the present time the nurses in military hospitals have been regarded as angelic beings who smooth the pillows of the sick soldiers and take their last messages for home, vary-

ing the work by going out on to the actual battlefield with cups of water and other poetic things for the recently wounded. Out of these impressions came the partly trained and tremendously willing "voluntary helpers," who at the outset knew nothing of the uglier side of nursing, nothing of the long hours and hard physical work involved. The very fact that they knew so little of what lay before them makes their persistent heroism all the finer. Many of the voluntary nurses took up their training, in the first place, with no thought of war really coming, and rather as a recreation; but, when the actual need came, they took on the work that war involved without pause or question, and, when the initial excitement had carried them over the first few weeks of war conditions, they stuck to what are at best unpleasant tasks with real courage and fortitude.

For there is no romance in nursing, though on the part of the nurses there is the sheer heroism demanded of any man or woman who sets out to do, and keeps on doing, unpleasant things. The nurse who goes to look for romance at the front must take it with her. It is clear that she does so, for nothing but love of humanity and selfless-

ness—the very soul of romance—could enable these noble women to do what they do. There is demanded of these women twelve hours and more of every day, Sundays included, devoted to hard work, much of which is of a distinctly menial nature, and much of which is positively unpleasant. There is no romance in dressing and bandaging the stumps of limbs, in washing gangrened wounds, or in feeding men paralysed by shell fire or too weak to feed themselves. On the face of it, nursing is the business of one who can overlook unpleasant physical facts and go on; in reality, it demands the very highest and best form of self-sacrifice of which human nature is capable; not the sudden, unthinking bravery that accomplishes brilliant things, but steady courage, which will carry one through day after day of sordid littlenesses. One's own desires, one's own weariness, must be put aside, for nursing demands the ultimate effort, and the ultimate care, that men or women can give.

One has only to consider the nature of the work to realise all that is demanded of the workers. No matter how unpleasant the tasks may be, for the sake of the patients the same attitude must

be preserved; there is unvarying cheerfulness, always a word of encouragement for a man in pain, a selflessness, rather than an unselfishness, which give these women a high place beside the great heroes of the war.

ONE NIGHT

VI

ONE NIGHT

FOR the most part, the way of the Red Cross is the way of common tasks well done, and of small happenings carefully controlled, a " way " of heroic details. And that, too, when its history is written, will no doubt be the final story of this greatest of all wars. In the apparent trifles of Red Cross work a great duty has been voluntarily performed, a great task accomplished—so far as one may speak in retrospect of a work that is still going on.

But, here and there, the story of the war and the story of the Red Cross are lighted by brilliant, spectacular heroism. The chance for splendid deeds falls to very few. It fell to this man. These happenings of a night tell the story of one of those few who, as is the case with the men who count in any work, saw nothing wonderful in that which he did. When the call came, he was ready—" as any

man might be," he would say. But it was a glorious night, as you will read.

You must know that passes signed by the highest military authorities are necessary to get anywhere near the firing line in France or Belgium, no matter what one's business may be or what may be the rank of the one who desires to pass. This, then, is the tale, plain and unvarnished, of an Irishman who borrowed a car in order to go to the firing line and pick up a wounded officer. The owner of the car had been asked to undertake the duty, and he, known to everybody as one of the principal Red Cross men, had sheaves of passes, permanent and otherwise, to take him everywhere. But at the last minute he was called away, so he lent his car to the Irishman and himself went to attend to the business of getting a complete motor convoy ready for work. With an ordinary French passport and a few unimportant documents which only afforded safe conduct in rear of the French lines—with not a single paper authorising his journey in the vicinity of the English lines, the Irishman set out. He was as plausible as his countrymen usually are, and he had a well-merited belief in himself and his luck.

The Irishman and his driver started in the early morning: at noon they fell in with a battery of artillery, and here the element of luck began to make appearance—only began, though. For the officer in command was an old pal of the Irishman, and, instead of promptly ordering him back as would have happened if they had not been personally acquainted, he gave him of his best and sent him on the way up to the front with various directions to make his task easier. The car—which, by the way, carried over 3,000 wounded French and British soldiers before it came back to England with its owner (can any words do justice to the load of suffering carried on those four wheels within a few months?)—ran into Braisne at about three o'clock in the afternoon. Here they expected to pick up the wounded officer. The Irishman learned that the man whom he had hoped to take back to the hospital was dead. He was not permitted to return at once, however, but was bidden to stay in the vicinity of the church for the night. In the church lay some two hundred wounded. A Scotsman on duty there asked for passes, and, on seeing their documents, ordered them out. On being told whom they had come to

fetch, however, he let them wait by the church, and both driver and Irishman curled up in the car to get some sleep, if the cold would let them.

At midnight the medical officer in charge at Braisne came to the car and turned them out. There was, he said, a wounded officer of the Suffolks lying at Chesney, four miles away, along a road that was under shell and rifle fire for the whole of the distance. A motor cyclist had brought in the news. It was a hazardous journey, at the best, but—would they go?

They set out. They found that the shell fire was not so very severe after all, but the road seemed more than four miles—until they came to a signpost, and found out that they had taken the wrong road. With the aid of the signpost and a map they discovered their error, and started on the way back to Braisne, where they were halted by a corporal, who had grave doubts as to their identity. Thus they lost an hour and a half, and, having satisfied the corporal as to their identity, and obtained fresh directions from a railwayman, they started out afresh.

This time they did not wait long for evidence that they were on the right road. A sentry stopped

them and asked for English passes. Without these, he said, it was absolutely impossible to allow them to proceed. The Irishman asked the sentry what corps he belonged to, and, on being informed, gave the name of the colonel and asked to see him, and of two majors of the corps, who were personal friends of his and would do equally well. The sentry said that the colonel was asleep and he dared not waken him, while the two majors were away. Still, on the strength of the Irishman knowing them so well the sentry let the car pass on its errand. Possibly he knew that, a mile further up the road, they would be stopped again.

They were stopped again, and again asked for English passes. The Irishman repeated his query as to what regiment the sentry belonged to, and was told "The Munsters." "Yes," said the Irishman, "and where do you come from?" "Killarney," said the sentry. A few more questions established the fact that the sentry's mother was a tenant of the Irishman's mother's uncle in Ireland. They shook hands over this and the car went on.

Twice the luck had held on this one drive, but a third time, in the course of the four miles, a

sentry called halt, and even the Irishman feared that the run had ended. This third sentry was a canny Scot, "with no flies on him," as the Irishman expressed it. He inspected the French passport and other papers minutely, but nothing but real English passes would satisfy that Scot. The Irishman was about to order the car round, when he had a new idea. He offered to leave with the Scot every French pass he possessed—and they were many—as security against his return, and after some consideration the Scot agreed. He warned them that the road ahead was literally ripped by shell fire, especially for the next quarter of a mile, and was unfit for travelling. "Let her go," said the Irishman. His luck had held so far.

"Except for shells bursting round the car, and the noise of the guns firing, there was nothing out of the ordinary about that road," said the Irishman, afterwards. "We got through and met no danger.—Ah, sure, you don't call shells anything, do you ?—and we got our man and came back. This wounded officer had been in his quarters when he got wind of a German creeping round to get him, so he ran out with a revolver to get the German—when another of them caught him—

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wounded him in the foot. He was in great pain when we picked him up—it was just his luck."

There was nothing but a field dressing on the injured foot, and the Irishman set out to convey the wounded man back to Braisne as quickly as possible. On reaching the canny Scot, the French passes were picked up; the second sentry along the road made no demur about passing the party back, but the first of the three had secured a reinforcement of six men to take the party in the car dead or alive if they refused to stop and give account of themselves. The presence of the wounded officer, however, authenticated the story they had told on going out, and they passed on, reaching Braisne about four o'clock in the morning.

The wounded officer was unloaded, and a report of the journey made to the medical officer in charge. The corporal who, in the first part of the night, had had doubts as to the genuineness of their errand, came forward and reported that the car had been under fire for the greater part of the journey, and in consequence of this the matter was specially mentioned in dispatches. On the following day the Irishman conveyed the wounded officer to a château, where a hospital had been

established well back from the firing line; three other bad cases were taken as well, to make up a load, and, on arrival, it was found that the château was already crowded. The difficulty was overcome by taking away an equal number of convalescent patients in the car, and with these, of course, went the official document giving full particulars of the cases. On arrival at the base, however, the official document turned out to be an order for pipes and tobacco—a little error of which the Irishman could appreciate the humour.

The run was one of many that the Irishman made and is still making. He has the luck that waits on brave men, and a happy knack of making friends—or finding them—everywhere. His adventures would fill a volume. His escapes another.

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ON WHEELS

VII

ON WHEELS

IN the absence of real news, people subsist on rumours, but there are some rumours for which it is impossible to account, unless it is that sheer perverseness starts them. There was one which floated about Boulogne a few weeks ago to the effect that two thousand wounded men had been left unattended all night on the platform of the Gare Maritime. I traced it back to a lady, who said she had had it from a Red Cross man—but I could never find the man. It was a lie, of course, for on the night which the rumour concerned I saw the only ambulance train of the day come in, and it contained about two hundred men. Further, the platforms of the Gare Maritime would hardly hold two thousand wounded. It stands as an instance of the evil that men do, thoughtlessly and otherwise.

The strangest impressions are to be gleaned

from the buildings in which hospitals are located. Near the firing line, rows of wounded men are lying in the shadow of the altar under the pitiful eyes of the Christ, and churches and wounded inmates alike have more than once been destroyed by the German shells. Down at the base the Kursaal forms one of the largest of the hospitals, and, as the reader has already seen, in all the wards are traces of the gaieties of the past. Other hospitals have been located in hotels, and the moulded ceilings, fantastically ornate electric lights, and general air of gorgeous splendour, are oddly out of keeping with the rows of narrow beds, and the gaunt and unshaven occupants.

The more one sees of Red Cross work, the more one appreciates its magnitude. Without blare of trumpets, without advertisement or even an average amount of notice, there has grown up in time of peace an organisation which has been found fitted to cope with the colossal and utterly unexpected problems of this war; and, whether one considers the supplementary aid that is being rendered to the military medical services on the Continent or the voluntary aid work in this country, the extent to which such aid has made

itself felt, and the co-ordinated efficiency of the workers, bespeak aim and purpose such as has, perhaps, never before been shown in the history of nations. Let it be remembered that all the initial organisation, all the preliminary work that has made possible the accomplishment of such great things in time of need, was voluntary and honorary; there was no spirit of sacrifice evinced by the mass of the people until the war called it forth, but there were a few who foresaw, and built up a system against, such a need as this which the Red Cross workers satisfy to-day. We are inclined to make much of the workers in the field, but it would be well for us to remember the workers who, though little heard of now, made preparations for these days of stress and ensured that the maximum of result should accrue from the voluntary efforts of the nation.

There is, at the same time, such a multitude of workers who, having given their all, can give no more, that one feels it impossible to do full justice to their work in the limits of one volume. Many branches of activity must go quite unmentioned in these pages, since it is beyond one's power to see and gain intimate knowledge of the whole.

Some incidents and some personalities stand out ; the wounded themselves are of deep human interest, as reflecting in a measure the work that is being done in their behalf, but there are many workers who seem to court obscurity rather than notice.

On landing in France, you are struck first of all by the veritable fleets of motor ambulances that wait on the quays, and traverse the streets ;—motor ambulances sufficient even for the needs of such times as that week or so when over twenty thousand wounded came down from the stubborn defence of Ypres, when every chauffeur was working until he nearly slept as he drove, when even the magnificent provision made by the Red Cross Society and St. John Ambulance Corps and kindred organisations was only just enough for the work. They have their slack times, of course, but war is not like an ordinary business : it demands preparations that shall be adequate to all demands, the ability to give to the uttermost, and that at once, when need arises. Thus big Rolls-Royce waits beside light Ford, and a Daimler stands by some old car which, though on its last wheels, still represents the will to give the best in one's

power—and all are alike in the possession of an ambulance interior and grey curtains on which is painted a big red cross. It may be that the drivers will seek a lee against the bitter wind throughout the day, and again it may be that some will do their hundred and more miles before the day is ended. It may be, even, that all will be required to do their uttermost, for a day of heavy attacks at the front sends down all that the service can manage and clear away to the hospitals.

As in the work of the hospitals, there is no visible halo of glory attached to the job of these drivers—nothing but hard work. They could get more thrills out of their driving abilities in England, for here they must go carefully for the sake of their burdens, and make the best of bad roads, by night or day, wet or fine, on monotonous routes that all know to a gun-carriage rut. They are just workmen, items in a great plan, but, as one of the Red Cross staff said, they are all "doing their bit"—they are necessary items, and thus as much entitled to honour as those to whom fall the chance of the Victoria Cross.

There is one feature of the work, almost absent from England, which the toilers among the wounded have absorbed from the country in which

their work lies. That is the patience of France, the attitude toward the war. Humanly speaking, it is impossible that such a people should be other than victors in the war, for this is not the France of '70, with a Third Empire to divide the country against itself. It is a people waiting confidently, in utter faith, for the end to which all have given of their all, lives and goods alike, a nation facing trial in strength. France is free of hysteria, steadfast and strong, and the British workers in France have gained the spirit of France, a spirit which sees the end as so certain that there is no need to speak it, no reason in impatience or in questioning. The strongest impression of this was gathered, not from France itself, but from a newspaper poster displayed on the Embankment in London. The poster queried—"Is Joffre Wrong?" and bore as its heading the title of a popular periodical. After a sight of France and a consciousness of the spirit of France, it was a thing of shame—certainly it was a thing which in France would have been torn down from the hoarding it disgraced, and destroyed without delay, and that by no official hand. The temper of the people would not have tolerated such an insult.

Thus France, and thus the spirit of France in the Red Cross workers in France. The war is too great an enterprise for question on the part of any, a work to which the nation has put its hand, and to which such of the British as are in the country have put their hands, to do their best in the consciousness that their cause is right, and will prevail.

Before quitting the survey of Red Cross work on the Continent to take account of what is being done at home, it would be worth while to estimate what the voluntary effort of this country on behalf of the wounded amounts to. As already stated, the total strength of the regular medical service of the British Army,—the Royal Army Medical Corps, was under five thousand officers and men, according to the latest available official figures. For the needs of the Regular Army, for any emergency that could be foreseen, the number was sufficient, but the magnitude of this war beggared all reckoning, invalidated all estimates. From that total must be deducted the surgeons and non-commissioned officers and men serving with units in the field, and also the staff of the field ambulances. Then there must be deducted the sanitary staffs in the field,

devoted to the preservation of fitness rather than the care of the temporarily unfit. Further deductions must be made for home stations, for medical officers at recruiting stations, sanitary officers and men, and the hundred and one needs incidental to the raising of a new army. Yet again, the equipment of the Corps was sufficient for its numbers, but no more, and a brief pause for reflection will show that the regular medical staff is insufficient, in this present war, for field and home service, both as regards officers and men, and as regards equipment: just as the Army itself had to be augmented, so must its medical service be increased. But, in addition to field and home service, there are these base hospitals to which wounded men have come—it is the limit of demand that has been made on them—at the rate of twenty thousand a week; and, if there were Regular Service alone to depend on, there would have been neither men nor women in sufficient numbers to care for this multitude of wounded, most of whom needed the extreme care that sick men can claim.

One actual instance may be given, at the risk of repetition: in one hospital, of which one out of nearly a dozen wards contained over four hundred

wounded men, there were on the staff a minority of nurses of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service—all the rest were Territorial or other voluntary workers. Of the equipment of this hospital the Red Cross Society and kindred organisations had provided every feather pillow, every air bed, and contributed materially toward the rest of the equipment. Bare necessities, it is true, were provided officially, but the men for whom these hospitals have been established deserve far more than bare necessities; to them should be given all that they desire, for they have offered life itself in the service of their country and of humanity—and it is the chief concern of the Red Cross Society and its kindred organisations to see that the best is given, as freely as need be.

The work must go on, and it is only by the will and aid of the British people that it can go on. The need will grow with the lengthening days. That the springs whence comes this aid may not fail there is an urgent call for trained workers and for financial support. Surely, surely no one can hold back any gift at such a time as this when so many have already given all.

Part II
AT HOME

THE RED CROSS

I

THE RED CROSS

IF there be any foundation for the legends of King Arthur and his Round Table, it may be assumed that in his time there was some rude approximation to the spirit which animates Red Cross workers to-day, but the first traces of definite care for the sick and wounded of war come from the time of the Crusades, in which the tending of the wounded became a spiritual duty, though not a matter of organised effort. The Red Cross knight of Spenser's "Faerie Queene" had predecessors, individuals bent on the alleviation of pain, but definite and concerted effort to avert the waste of life and avoidable suffering entailed by the prosecution of any campaign is quite a modern affair.

Undoubtedly, Florence Nightingale and her band of nurses in the Crimea were the originators of what has now grown into and is definitely known

as Red Cross work. They were pioneers, not so much in the fact that they worked to such a Christ-like end, but in the manner of their work, the organised character of their effort. Sixty years ago the first beginnings of hygienic treatment were made, and the ladies who went out to the Crimean hospitals, more especially their chief, went with a knowledge of sanitation as it was understood in those days. Their work was not so much a matter of smoothing pillows and taking last messages as of restoring disorder to order, ensuring conditions of cleanliness, and like matters which would seem to us of to-day as elementary and obvious necessities. They brought concerted and organised effort to bear on what had hitherto been a matter of spasmodic and inefficient management, and their work bore fruit in preventing avoidable waste of lives, and thus increasing the efficiency of an army in the field or the trenches. For it stands to reason that, with two armies, say, of a strength of fifty thousand each, that army which nurses its wounded and gets them back to the firing line in greater numbers and with the greater speed will be the more efficient of the two. Quite apart from the humanitarian side of Red Cross

work, there is the utilitarian aspect of the matter of caring for wounded and otherwise temporarily unfit men; it is not only a noble work, but a very useful and profitable one—profitable to the workers, because beneficial to the nation for which they work.

Actual and visible result of the work in the Crimean war came to light in the foundation, in 1870, of the National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War, which was the first Red Cross Association to be established in England. Of this Society Lord Rothschild said, at the inaugural meeting of the present Red Cross Society in 1905:

"When the Franco-German war broke out in 1870, that gallant soldier, the late Lord Wantage, who had planted the colours of his regiment on the heights of the Alma, for which he received the Victoria Cross, and who had served with distinction all through the campaign in the Crimea—Lord Wantage, who knew from experience the misery and sufferings of wounded and sick soldiers in a campaign, who was aware of how little was done in those days to alleviate the suffering of men fighting for the honour and glory of their Sovereign and country, took advantage of the rules of the new

Geneva Convention to start the Society over which he long presided, namely, 'The National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War.' His Majesty the King was the Patron of that Society, and His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught was one of the trustees. The great work accomplished by this Society has been worthy of its distinguished founder, and of the country in which it originated. From the time of its foundation in 1870 to the present year (1905) it has expended nearly £500,000 in assisting the sick and wounded in war."

Some details of the actual work accomplished may be of interest. It provided, in the Franco-German war, £223,717 for the supply of transport, food, clothing, medical stores, and grants in aid of local funds. In that campaign the Society employed nearly two hundred agents, surgeons, nurses, etc., and established more than half a dozen central depots in France and Germany for the distribution of stores. It provided aid for the Zulu campaign of 1879 and for the first Boer war in 1881. The Society expended no less than £33,922 in the Egyptian campaign of 1884–85 in the employment of surgeons and nurses, in the provision of steamers, launches, and other river craft, and in the forward-

ing of medical and surgical supplies to the front. During the South African war of 1899–1902 the expenditure of the Society was £162,296. Twenty-one commissioners and agents were employed, grants in aid were given, clothing and medical and other stores were provided, the hospital ship *Princess of Wales* was chartered, and a hospital train, the *Princess Christian*, was purchased. During this last-named campaign the work was carried out in connection with and under the direction of the Central British Red Cross Committee.

This latter Committee formed the body known later as the "Central British Red Cross Council," and came into being in 1898. In that year, at the request of the Secretary of State for War, representatives of the National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War, of the St. John Ambulance Association, and of the Army Nursing Service Reserve, were invited to take part in an informal council with a view to considering the advantages that would be derived in time of war from bringing Societies in touch with the Army Medical Service in time of peace. On the 19th of January, 1899, the Secretary of State for War

notified his official recognition of the Central British Red Cross Committee, and on the 27th of November, 1902, the Foreign Office notified all Foreign Chancelleries that the Central British Red Cross Committee was the only body authorised to deal with Red Cross matters throughout the Empire. In May of 1904 the title of the Committee was altered to "Central British Red Cross Council."

The *personnel* of the Council was finally composed of three representatives of the National Aid Society, and two representatives each from the St. John Ambulance Association, the Army Nursing Service Reserve, and the St. Andrew's Ambulance Association. The Chairman was Lord Knutsford, the Hon. Treasurer Sir John Furley, and the Hon. Secretary Major T. McCulloch, R.A.M.C.

On July 17th, 1905, the National Aid Society and the Red Cross Council were fused in one, and as the British Red Cross Society they have carried on their work since, preparing, up to August of 1914, for the colossal work on which the Society is engaged during the period of the present war.

It must be understood, and the point is one that cannot be insisted on too much, that the work of the Society is supplementary. Its primary object,

of course, is to furnish aid to the sick and wounded in time of war, and such aid, as is stated in the official description of the objects of the Society, must necessarily be supplementary to that furnished by the medical departments of the Navy and Army. It is assumed that upon those two departments rests the responsibility for provision for the casualties of war, and that the Society will offer such additional comforts and such general help as may be considered beyond the reasonable scope of the official bodies. The need—an urgent one—for the existence of such a body as the Red Cross Society arises out of the fact that, with the voluntary system on which the *personnel* of the Navy, and especially of the Army, of this country is based, it is impossible that the medical provisions of the two services should be maintained in time of peace at the standard demanded by the stress of war.

In the meantime, one might ask, what is the part played in Red Cross work by the St. John Ambulance Association? This Association was founded primarily for military needs, and under its auspices classes have been established throughout the country with a view to imparting instruc-

tion in first-aid work. The object of these classes was to ensure that, in case of street accidents, and the injuries which befall men in the course of their normal occupations, there should be a section of the public trained and able to render first aid, not in any way to interfere with the work of medical and surgical men, but to render assistance pending the medical man's arrival. For, in case of a casualty, nine-tenths of the onlookers have no idea of the way to render aid, and the other tenth set to work to do the wrong thing. The St. John Ambulance Association, by training men and women to a knowledge of and familiarity with the needs that arise in common accidents, has rendered good service to the country in ensuring that there shall be a proportion of the population that understands the principles of first aid.

But, although dealing to so great an extent with emergencies that arise out of the incidents of normal life, the St. John Ambulance Association has also rendered good service in time of war. Its trained men went out to the South African campaign in large numbers, and served beside the men of the R.A.M.C. during that war, with credit both to themselves and to the Association re-

sponsible for their training. For the nature of such a work as that of the Red Cross Society and the St. John Ambulance Association prevents their standing aside in case of need, no matter what the need may be, and the men of the Order of St. John, trained for the emergencies of a time of peace, have proved themselves able to cope with the needs of a time of war. And, for the period of the present war, the activities of both the British Red Cross Society and the St. John Ambulance Association are co-ordinated under one directorate.

PEACE AND WAR

II

PEACE AND WAR

IT has been found from experience that, when war is imminent, the public come forward with offers of medical and surgical aid to such generous extent that the offers are apt to be overwhelming in number and embarrassing in kind. Further, the tendency of the public is to organise, like fraternising with like, so that, if no central authority were constituted, there would be hundreds of small societies and organisations, differing in kind and in method, out of which confusion would arise.

In order to avoid such a state of affairs, the Admiralty and War Office have accorded their official recognition to the British Red Cross Society as the organisation responsible for the Red Cross movement throughout the British Empire, and have agreed that in time of war all voluntary offers of assistance made in Great Britain and Ireland shall reach them only through the channels of the

Society, with the exception of those coming from or already arranged with the Ambulance Department of the Order of St. John, and the St. Andrew's Association, for the supply of *personnel.* It is therefore one of the objects of the British Red Cross Society to examine, systematise, and co-ordinate all offers of help, and, by preventing waste and overlapping, to render them of the utmost possible value.

In order to be fully prepared to undertake this most responsible duty, it is part of the work of the Red Cross Society in time of peace to ascertain and tabulate the extent and nature of the voluntary aid which can be depended on, or expected, in the event of war, and to keep the medical departments of the Navy and Army fully informed as to what assistance may be relied on from such sources. The business of the Society has been to make itself acquainted with the qualifications as to *personnel* required by the medical departments of the Army and Navy, and with all such particulars as to equipment and material which may be approved of by the departments from time to time. By means of this knowledge, the Society is in a position to ensure that all proposals of aid shall be in accord-

ance with the requirements of those departments of the Navy and Army which are responsible for the care of the sick and wounded in war. For voluntary aid, unless it accords precisely in every detail with the requirements of the Naval and Military authorities, is a doubtful advantage or even a hindrance.

Further, voluntary aid associations, however perfectly organised, are not entitled to recognition, protection, or neutrality, under the terms of the Geneva Convention, and in the theatre of war have only such status as the belligerents may choose to accord them as an act of grace. At the meetings of the International Red Cross Society in times of peace, also, only one central authority is recognised from each country belonging to the Society; contributing bodies are *invited* to send delegates, but stress is laid on the fact that these delegates are merely invited to attend as the guests of the Society; they are in no sense members thereof, and the invitation extended to them is merely an act of courtesy on the part of the Society; the members of the Society attend its meetings by right.

The organisation of the British Red Cross

Society does not admit of the collection or preparation of materials or stores in time of peace, but a feature of the work of the Society is that it ascertains where and on what terms the necessary supplies can be obtained when the need for them arises. In time of war the Society places itself and its resources at the disposal of the Naval and Military authorities, acts under the direction of those authorities, and engages that all aid at its disposal shall be administered only in such manner as those authorities prescribe.

The British Red Cross Society is concerned not only with the organisation of Red Cross work in the British Isles, but throughout all the Empire, and it acts as a medium of communication with the Red Cross associations of other countries. In each of the colonies a branch society has been formed—necessarily a branch, since the British Empire is recognised by the International Red Cross Society as regards Red Cross work only through the British Society. The colonial branches of the Society have done good work since the outbreak of hostilities; the Australian branch, for instance, has contributed to the extent of over £50,000 to the work among the wounded on the Continent, and the Canadian

and South African branches have also made exceedingly useful contributions to the work.

With regard to finances, there was at the time of the formation of the Society a certain sum in the hands of the National Aid Society, and the interest on this sum sufficed for such organisation and preparation as was made in time of peace—it was resolved that the capital should remain intact until war actually broke out. It was left to the discretion of the Council of the Society as to whether they should appeal to the public for subscriptions in the event of war. There is a further sum raised by means of the subscriptions of members and associates, which, subject to a certain small tax which defrays the purely local expenses of Red Cross branches, is set aside untouched until the outbreak of war.

The rules under which the Society was constituted enacted that the Society should be governed by the Council of the Society, which, appointed in the first place by their Majesties the King and Queen at the formation of the Society on the 17th of July, 1905, has power to appoint annually an executive committee, this committee undertaking the organisation of the Society and regulating and

managing the business of the Society. All matters of finance are in the hands of the committee, which, however, is not permitted to enter into any financial engagements that are not covered by the sum granted annually by the Council for the working of the Society.

With regard to the formation of branches of the Society for the furtherance of Red Cross work in local centres, such branches, subject to the charter of the Society, are self-managing, and are empowered to make such standing orders as are thought fit for the transaction of their own business; they are answerable only to the Council of the Society for their transactions, and are empowered to enrol members and associates of the Society.

In the actual working of the Society, it was found that the Executive Committee, as appointed by the Council of the Society, was not sufficiently in touch with the working of the various branches to exercise full control over such preparations as were made for war in time of peace. Consisting mainly of eminent surgeons and business men, the committee was essentially a headquarters body, and for the effective control of outside work an "advisory board" was constituted, with power

only to make recommendations to the committee as regards the work of the various branches of the Society. In practice, the recommendations of the advisory board have always been followed, and have contributed in large degree to the efficiency of the Society as a whole.

With the establishment of the Territorial Force, the "Voluntary Aid Detachments" enrolled by the various branches of the Society became one of the most important branches of activity. The constitution of the medical department of the Territorial Force provided for the equipment and staffing of "field ambulances," a term which must not be understood in the narrow sense of an ambulance vehicle and a couple of drivers and orderlies, since it implies a surgical and nursing staff of over two hundred officers and men per "ambulance"; there is also full provision for the tending and comfort of the sick at the base hospitals which would be established in case of invasion, a contingency against which the Territorial Force was constituted. But there was a gap in the constitution of the medical service; while the "field ambulances" made every provision for the needs of the wounded on the field and with the

fighting force, and the base hospitals assured their comfort in the time between admission and recovery, there was no provision made for the clearing hospitals and transport which must exist between firing line and base. This gap the British Red Cross Society and the St. John Ambulance Association undertook to fill in case of need, and this has been done, in the case of the Red Cross Society—which, by the way, has undertaken by far the greater part of the work—by Voluntary Aid Detachments established throughout the country.

It is a point worthy of insistence that the composition and constitution of the Territorial Force were designed with a view to the effective combating of an invasion of England, and thus the constitution of the V.A.D. had to be on similar lines—that is, with a view to meeting the needs of the men wounded and incapacitated in the work of repelling an invasion. The whole scheme was so worked out that, no matter what the point might be at which an invasion might take place, there would be an efficient service for tending and transporting the wounded of the Territorial Force from the firing line to such base hospitals as might

be established. For instance, if invasion had been accomplished on the north-eastern coast, and base hospitals had been established somewhere between London and Salisbury, there would have been clearing hospitals immediately in rear of the force drawn up to combat the invaders, ambulance trains to convey the wounded to stationary hospitals, and further means of transport to take the men on to the base. For every foreseeable emergency a scheme of action was worked out to cover all needs, and a chain of V.A.D. workers was available in all directions; the preparations were as complete as they were inconspicuous—for few people, outside those immediately interested in Red Cross work, had any idea of the amount of training and preparation that went to the formation of the Voluntary Aid Detachments.

As to the composition and training of the V.A.D., it is practically on the same lines as the rest of the Territorial system—with the noteworthy exception that training and service are purely voluntary. It may be urged that the Territorial service itself is voluntary, but it is so in a different sense; a Territorial soldier voluntarily signs a contract—to put it in business terms—by

which he renders himself liable for service in case he is called on, and liable to penalties in case he does not fulfil the terms of his contract. A Red Cross worker, on the other hand, is bound by no such contract; as member of a Voluntary Aid Detachment, he or she is expected to complete a certain number of drills or attendances in order to attain efficiency, and to come up for work in case of mobilisation—but the obligation is purely a moral one, and no penalty attaches to non-compliance with the requirements of the detachment. It is one of the rules governing the conduct of the Society that all work shall be purely voluntary, and it is one of the triumphs of Red Cross organisation and work that voluntary workers have so willingly submitted to discipline.

"THOROUGH"

III

"THOROUGH"

ALL Red Cross work, of course, comes through the Order of St. John and the British Red Cross Society, and this is true of Scotland as well as of the rest of the kingdom. But, although conforming to Red Cross rules, Scotland has wisely elected to work as one body, under one central authority —in the same way that an English county works. For all practical purposes Scotland is organised just as an English county is organised, and with true Scottish independence the Scottish Society has elected to be self-supporting—it makes no claim for funds on the Pall Mall headquarters; it audits its own accounts, collects its own funds, aud sends out its own workers and supplies. There is already in France a hospital of two hundred beds, the raising and equipment of which has been the care of the Scottish Red Cross folk; there are rest stations at the principal railway stations in the country, V.A.D. hospitals for the care of sick

and wounded from the Regular hospitals, and such places as Springburn, which receives trainloads of wounded direct from Southampton and deals with them in such a way that the men thank the fate that sent them there rather than to a Regular establishment.

Springburn, that part of it which is now a hospital, was at the outbreak of the war part of the administrative building of one of the largest engineering enterprises in the country, and the firm which owns the building has carried out all structural alterations requisite to the formation of a hospital. The matron's office, the consulting room, the dispensary, and other offices of the hospital were formerly drawing offices ; the wards—long, lofty rooms, well lighted and fitted for their purpose, were offices ; the kitchen and lavatory and bath accommodation have required little alteration ; the operating theatre has been tiled and fitted out in such a way that no hospital possesses a better one, and the X-ray apparatus is housed in one of the strong-rooms of the firm. All these alterations have been carried out at no cost to the Red Cross Society, and carried out in such a way that the place might have been a hos-

pital from the date that it was first erected. On the day that I went over the hospital there were many visitors; a special group clustered round the bed of a V.C. man, who with pardonable pride was telling how he had won the coveted decoration; here and there a famous surgeon paused to say a word to one or other of the patients, and always he won a smile from the men—one could see that they were well content with their surroundings and the care that was bestowed on them. Up in a corner bed we came to a case of frostbite—the worst that has yet come into Springburn. A youngster with blue-looking feet, then in process of being dressed, told how he had stood in water over his knees for many hours. "There were gum boots for the men that had to splash across the fields, but they wouldn't let us wear them in the trenches," he said. "They wouldn't have been any use if we had had them, for the water would have been over the tops."

He flinched a little as the nurse touched one toe.

"Hurt you?" the surgeon inquired.

"Pretty bad," the youngster answered.

"That's good," said the surgeon, "it shows that it's getting well again."

He looked little more than a boy, this frost-bitten soldier of a south-country regiment. He lay between a London Scot and a Gordon Highlander, who watched the dressing of his feet with evident interest. The Gordon man smiled and said he was getting better.

"I'll be away back soon," he remarked.

There are a hundred and fifty beds in the Springburn hospital, and of these over a hundred and twenty were occupied on the day that I saw them. To each ward four rows of beds, tended by quiet, efficient women. Springburn is a miniature of all Scotland, giving of the very best of the country to the wounded, and understanding that the best is none too good.

It was just one phase of the work, and there are many phases.

There are the stores in St. Andrew's Hall at Glasgow, whence 206,967 garments and other articles had been sent out for the use of the troops before the end of January, 1915. These things have gone to France, to Belgium, to Servia, to Indian hospitals, to the Navy, the Canadian contingent—anywhere that a need was found to exist. Cigarettes by the thousand, tobacco by

the hundred pounds, books and magazines by the case. The stores at Edinburgh and Dundee have played their part as well, and a letter from one of the French Red Cross hospitals in Paris acknowledges: "I am more than touched by your kind letter which I received this morning. Since our work has started we have never received anything like so large a gift at one time."

A feature of this work is the amazingly small staff with which it has been accomplished; the Glasgow headquarters is controlled and run by a staff of eight workers, and the St. Andrew's Hall store is managed by a staff of seven. When you compare this with the number of garments and goods packed and sent out you will see that there is no waste of time or effort.

From the Scottish Section of the Rouen hospital Private Donald M'Donald wrote: "Dear Lady—I feel it a great pleasure to me to be the occupant of the Margaret Paisley bed. I am sixty-two years of age and three months. I am the oldest soldier in the firing line of the British Army, and I am progressing very well. I lost one son at Mons, and have three still serving."

In these mere glimpses at the way of the Red

Cross we must pass by many things with brief mention and no more, but there is room for a second's pause beside the bed of this grand old fighter, proud of his long service and of his four sons, of whom one has given life itself to the cause for which father and sons alike are fighting.

In Scotland each county is directly responsible to the central headquarters, which divides the whole country into four districts and takes charge of all. There are the Western, Central-Eastern, North-Eastern, and Eastern districts, each of which is under the orders of and responsible to the central headquarters for its doings. Each district has organised hospitals and convalescent homes, a transport service, and rest stations, these last staffed by V.A.D. workers as is laid down in the schedule of voluntary aid. In addition, each district has contributed toward the work in France. On the day that I visited Springburn part of a Scottish convoy of 58 motor ambulances and 100 drivers paraded in Glasgow for a final inspection before being sent out to France.

Back at the beginning of things, realising that the task before them was a stupendous one, the heads of the Scottish Red Cross Society set about

making such preparations as time allowed. It was definitely announced, in the first place, that all civilian aid for the present campaign must come through the British Red Cross Society, and that the work in Scotland had been delegated by the British Society to the Scottish branch. Then seven parent committees were formed, the four districts were appointed, each under a Red Cross Commissioner, who was to be available to assist the counties of his district and see that all work was done on proper and economical lines, and to establish a central depôt for the reception and issue of goods and stores. Subsequently the work of the auxiliary hospitals and convalescent homes also devolved on the district commissioners. A Red Cross fund was created for Scotland, increased office accommodation and staff were obtained, a supply of medical and surgical stores and £1,500 worth of underclothing and other comforts were purchased; and, with this as preliminary organisation, the Scottish branch began its work.

Now, the chief point that stands out in connection with this work is the eminently businesslike way in which it has been accomplished. There is available an exact return of every penny spent,

of every garment and comfort despatched, of every bed established, and of every member of staff sent out to work. Receipts and expenditure are noted down to the last penny, and those who work and those who give alike can tell the result of their efforts. The task undertaken was a gigantic one, but it has not been allowed to get beyond the capacities of the workers, who retain as ordered and efficient control as in the first days of preparation.

That is the business side of the work, and it is easily defined, a point so prominent as to call for comment. But it is not so easy to define and describe the whole-hearted enthusiasm, the kindness and patriotic spirit of these Scottish workers. One might tell how they work in the hospitals, how they pack and despatch the stores, how they manage the rest stations—one might go on describing and come no nearer to a definition of the spirit in which the work is done. There is kindness, and gentleness, and courtesy, backed by the knowledge that full repayment can never be made to the men for whom the work is done; there is, from the head of the Scottish Society to the last-enrolled worker, evidence of Scottish thoroughness in all things.

A PAIR OF CRUTCHES

IV

A PAIR OF CRUTCHES

"THERE'S a vaccination sheath missing from this package, and that wretched peroxide of hydrogen is leaking again."

The speaker was, not as one might imagine, a chemist's or surgical instrument maker's assistant, but a lady of society who has been photographed and paragraphed as society ladies are in times of peace, and who now gives all her time and energy to the uninteresting and monotonous business of packing stores in the Red Cross headquarters. Uninteresting though it may be, it is a very necessary part of the work of the Red Cross organisation, and it is a work, too, that calls for application and patience in no small degree.

Now let us be honest about this matter, you and I, and admit quite frankly that when we read of society ladies,—whose names and portraits are familiar to us from the pages of the illustrated

papers,—engaging in philanthropic enterprises, we picture them elegantly gowned, surrounded by a number of paid secretaries, gossiping away an idle hour or two in a luxuriously appointed, unapproachable sanctum: just, in a word, "playing at work."

And now let us, you and I, make honourable amend.

It was what they called a "slack" day at the Red Cross headquarters in Pall Mall, so slack, indeed, that the lady in charge of the packing felt quite sure that she would be able to get away at seven that evening with no accumulation of work to greet her at nine the next morning. For the office hours—plain deal and cane chair office hours—are nine till seven, punctual in the morning, overtime at night if necessary. And those who so willingly and enthusiastically work in the packing of the stores do not come late, and certainly do not go early. Discipline has taken its place in society. Some idea of the volume of stores and transport work undertaken by the British Red Cross Society may be gathered from the fact that in the one week ending October 28th the number of cases sent abroad was 2,166, weighing nearly 500 tons.

Of these the greater part were dispatched to Boulogne and Calais, smaller consignments going to Paris, Dieppe, Bethune, and St. Malo. In addition, 29 hospitals in England were supplied with stores amounting to 126 cases. In a single week in October garments to the number of 53,787 were issued, and purchases to the amount of some £1,500 were made in the same week, including 1,000 blankets ; while a sum of £2,235 was expended upon purely medical stores during this period.

On the day that I visited the stores department only five hundred wounded landed in this country —only five hundred—and so to fill up spare moments the ladies were packing for Servia, Montenegro, and East Africa. *They* were packing, I say. When I had gone round the long shelves, of which each compartment is, like some stock-room in a great warehouse, filled with every kind of medical requirement—bandages of lint, bales of absorbent cotton, syringes and porous plasters, oxygen and innumerable bottles of tablets, tetanus and typhoid vaccines, cases of needles, spools of plaster, tourniquets, hypodermic cases, forceps, bandage winders, packets of waterproof gauze,

hot-water bottles by the hundred, of every colour, shape, and size; when I had seen how one of the ladies went from shelf to shelf collecting the items of a long requisition list which had just come in from one of the hospitals, then said I tentatively, "I suppose these will go down to the packers to be attended to?"

"Certainly not," answered the lady in charge of the work, "we shall pack them ourselves."

And they did—expert packing, too.

These ladies, to put it in the language that the business man understands, and that they understand, and justly expect to be applied to themselves—these ladies, then, have "taken this job in hand." Remark has already been made of the way in which, at the base hospitals over in France, they say the Red Cross is like Aladdin's lamp: these ladies are the genii behind the lamp. They fulfil the demand as soon as made. Knowing as they do the frailty of human nature they leave as little as possible to chance. They collect, they pack, and now they send a messenger with every large consignment to ensure its certain delivery. Just a messenger in khaki, but Gabriel could scarcely be more welcome than that khaki figure is to the anxious

doctor in France or England who, when one comes to think of it, can do little enough unless the ladies at this great base supply his needs. I did not think of it at the time, for everything was so like the daily routine of commercial life, but now this packing business forms a background to the thought of the lives—so precious lives, of the pains—so grievous pains, that wait on these ladies of the Medical Stores Department.

Every now and then a man came in from the dispatch department to carry away a box or large case, but he is the only man who enters that great medical store on business, with the exception, of course, of the administrator of the work, who with his able assistant controls the whole of the stores department of Red Cross work.

Figures, such as have already been quoted, give little idea of the magnitude and intricacy of the work of this stores department, although the fact that its contents are insured for £50,000 does convey something. In the basements, where they tackle the heavy packing, one may meet with a man who talks in thousands of cases—all marked with the Red Cross and the Star of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. When he has to dispatch many

thousands a day he is happy; when the demand is so great that it seems impossible to cope with all requirements, as it was in the tremendous days after the Ypres battle, he simply grows more cheerful. He was a little depressed the day I saw him because things were "quiet." He brightened when he was told it had been decided to pack from two to three thousand cases ready for emergencies—for the time when the advance begins. If you remember those cases when you read of the advance in the newspapers you will understand a little of war. I have seen them once—and now see them every day.

Upstairs in another department another of these wonderful ladies and her helpers juggle with blankets, towels, underclothes, bed jackets, jerseys, knee-caps, gloves, scarves, woollen slippers, body belts, flannel vests, flannel pants, pyjamas, operation gowns, mufflers, rugs, socks, sheets, suits, overcoats, games, and writing paper. A heavy job this, for the packages are often bulky, and the sorting of gifts in kind and the purchasing of other requirements is a serious business—but then, you see, these ladies are now serious business women. They will admit to you that at the outset

it was a little puzzling, that people took a good deal for granted on their requisition forms, that the writing of the medical profession was illegible and even elliptical—notoriously so at times. But to-day these things are matter of course, and these ladies feel capable of tackling the outfit of the whole army. It is, indeed, with a feeling of regret that they acknowledge they can do nothing for a man till he is incapacitated. "Then he is *ours*," said one of the principal workers here in the stores department. Which means just this—no less, and it cannot mean more—that she and her associates provide for his every physical need and material comfort. "He is *ours*," they say. They look well after their belongings in the Stores Department of the Red Cross.

. . . . . .

In the thrill of all this work, in the delight of being able to do something to help, in the very fatigue of the long-houred day, one loses sight and memory of what lies behind and beyond all this activity.

"Six pairs of crutches, how many splints did you say?—now for the bandages." One of the ladies was checking a list in the basement.

" We're running short of chloroform. Will you order in a new supply ? " called a lady upstairs.

It was very matter of fact—the office routine so familiar to us through many peaceful years.

But—outside—a young lieutenant, a mere boy in khaki, was trying to alight from a taxi on unaccustomed crutches.

On his right leg the khaki ended above the knee —above where his knee had been.

Have you ever noticed the cruel glint on a brand-new pair of crutches ?

THE KING'S SOLDIER'S COUNSEL

V

THE KING'S SOLDIER'S COUNSEL

ONE good excuse can be found for describing the Red Cross Headquarters in Pall Mall by such a time-worn phrase as a " hive of industry," and that one consists in the fact that it takes a variety of bees to make a hive—were they all workers, or all queens, or all drones (a much maligned variety of bee) the work of the hive could not go on. In the Red Cross Headquarters they are all workers, but their tasks differ even more than do those of the different bees that go to make up a hive. As I waited to catch the eye of the commissionaire—who seems to have an uncanny knowledge of the movements of all workers in the building, I saw a famous surgeon, an equally well-known society woman, and a boy scout pass outward through the glass doors, while at the same time there entered a servant girl and the King of Portugal—and the servant girl had an appointment with a peer who was working in the building.

In the first place, the "headquarters" signified the workrooms of the officials of the Society before the present war began, those whose work as a result of the Balkan War ended with the coming of this mightier task—whose work, it may be said in passing, was to build up the skeleton on which this great organisation rests. At the present time, however, most of the rooms at "headquarters" are occupied by those who may, without offence, be termed amateurs, men and women famous in other walks of life, whose services the Red Cross has as readily absorbed as they were enthusiastically offered.

It is curious to note how the atmosphere changes as one goes on from room to room.

Outside one door a little crowd of officers waited in the narrow passage. Among them was a peppery gentleman with an imaginary grievance, who pushed his way to the front of the group with—"I *insist* on seeing him!" More patient was a West End specialist, whose hours under ordinary circumstances are worth many guineas, but who inquired quite patiently whether the occupant of the room "could spare a minute after he had seen all the others." On the other side of the door, in

spite of all the fuss and bother in the corridor, was just the quiet consulting-room of the great surgeon who sat at his desk with clasped hands. Through those firm, sensitive hands, which at sight suggest the surgeon who cuts and destroys in order to heal, pass the whole *personnel* of the Red Cross.

A printed page is quickly read, and it is but seldom that one pauses to think over the full meaning of printed words—but here surely is room for pause, when one thinks what a wealth of devotion and sacrifice those hands have gathered to the use of the wounded of our Army—how with a stroke of the pen they have changed a famous surgeon or physician into a khaki labourer in an improvised operating theatre just in rear of the firing line, or into an insignificant healer in a base hospital ; how they have sent out medical students as dressers—made men of purpose out of the cheery boys who larked as students will after lectures in the hospitals ; how the knowledge and skill of this man, who sits behind the door marked "*Personnel,*" have doubled and trebled the enthusiasm of the workers whom he has approved for this service —this great service of the Red Cross. Here is a master of war surgery and doctoring who passes the

surgeons, doctors, and dressers to the work with the wounded, and the fact that *he* has approved them goes far toward making them the workers they are.

In another part of the building there are two small rooms which might have been moved bodily from chambers in the Temple. They are occupied by a King's Counsel who as I entered was studying a brief, and considering a telegram to be dispatched to an important witness in his client's case. The client was the servant girl who preceded the King of Portugal into Headquarters; the witness was the clergyman of the country parish from which she came, who could vouch for her identity. And the case? Well, the case was Death *v.* the servant's soldier brother, now lying grievously wounded, in the base hospital at Boulogne.

It is a case in which we must call another witness for full comprehension of the details. That other witness is a man in Boulogne, surely one of the kindest men who ever walked—if ever this should meet his eye, he may remember lunching once or twice at the same table as myself in the Hôtel Metropole in Boulogne, just after the rush of wounded down from Ypres. He likes, I feel certain,

to work quietly and in his own way—anonymously, and free of the mass of correspondence with which publication of his name would certainly overwhelm him. His record, previous to this war, may be found in any work of reference: how he started in the Marines, fought in the Soudan, commanded Camel Corps in the Nile Expedition, was wounded at El Teb, had his right leg amputated after Metemneh, and has since been unceasingly engaged in public work—a past, this, such as rightly entitles a man nearing seventy to life's restful evening. But he will not have it so.

In and out of the hospitals of Boulogne, day after day, walks this kindest of men, intent on his mission of cheer and comfort, just as another man, himself blind, tries to bring consolation to the wounded who have lost their sight. This man has the record of his own thirty years of useful life with one leg amputated, and he has, above all, the knack of making men see his point of view—they gain hope as they talk to him, probably because he is utterly sincere. Chiefly, however, he tries to find out the wounded soldier for whom there is little or no hope of recovery, and to arrange that the soldier's relatives shall be given

the chance to visit him before the end comes. As I write this, there lies in one of the base hospitals at Boulogne a private with both legs frost-bitten ; one, and perhaps both, will have to be amputated —if he survives his present attack of dysentery.

" He is very cheerful," writes this man who is giving his age to the service of the wounded, " and doesn't realise how bad he is. I think his sister should come at once. Can it be arranged ? "

There ends the evidence of this witness. The sister—the servant girl—has been found, and she starts the next morning for Boulogne. What that start means to such a girl, who has never been out of England before, one may guess. She has to be provided with money, with a passport, and with minute instructions—it is all in the hands of this K.C., who must get the photograph to put on the passport, see that the instructions are complete, and that the servant understands them thoroughly—that she will go through to the end of her journey without hitch or delay—for delay might mean so much !

" Have we got Ada Emily's photograph ? " the K.C. asks. " You remember we sent her to the photographer, and she was to bring back the

duplicates this afternoon. . . . That's all clear, then, and now for the evidence of the clergyman, that Ada Emily *is* really Ada Emily. . . ." And when Ada Emily stands beside the bed in that base hospital at Boulogne, then and not till then will the K.C. feel that he has fulfilled his duty to his unseen client—one of the men who is dying that you and I may live.

You may have noticed from time to time, in the papers, how inquiries for the wounded and missing are being answered in the most remarkable way, and it is not until one has visited these two quiet rooms, with their card indexes and files, that one realises what even a single inquiry means. In the early days of the tragic retreat the K.C. went to France to discover what he could of a relative who was "missing," and from that day onward he became the counsel for thousands of clients. For the real reason for his occupation of these two rooms is the discovery of the missing and news of the wounded—this matter of the sending out of relatives is a side issue.

The K.C.'s two rooms are known as the "Wounded and Missing Department," and the number of inquiries received *and answered satis-*

factorily already runs into thousands. There is indexing of inquiries, classification of details received, checking of identification discs to be attended to—even the exhumation of bodies from the trenches into which they have been thrown after battle, with re-burial and the reading of the funeral service over the new and ordered graves. Men reach hospital from the trenches in such a nerve-racked condition that their evidence has to be checked and counter-checked by questioning other men, and thus every " inquiry case " may necessitate the catechism of four or five men. It is a task that only a man versed in the taking and sifting of evidence, and a man capable of picking out the main point from a host of irrelevancies—one who by capacity and training alike is fitted for such a multiple task—could take in hand.

Here is the case of, let us say, Lieutenant John Brown. Mrs. Brown wants to get news of her son, who was known to be in a certain attack that took place near Ypres toward the end of October. Since that time she has been unable to get any information as to whether her son is dead or wounded or a prisoner.

The Department inscribes all known particulars on a card, which is sent out to the hospitals abroad. A system has been perfected by which every hospital in France has its inquiry staff for this work, and another system is in the making to place similar workers in hospitals on this side the Channel. In every hospital to which this name is sent, every man of the regiment to which the missing officer belonged is asked if he can furnish any particulars, and the daily reports which come to the Department are scrutinised for matter bearing on this particular inquiry.

Thus we find Lieutenant Brown mentioned together with four other officers of his regiment in the daily report from Boulogne on December 7th, when a private of the regiment stated that "about the 20th of October we were attacked from front and rear in the early dawn, and Lieutenant Brown was missing afterwards. I was in the affair. I cannot say if Lieutenant Brown was killed, wounded, or taken prisoner. We had to retire and the Germans took the trench, for the time—I was wounded before it was recaptured."

A footnote to the report states—"A very good witness, this, for a private." Very little in this,

but still it is some confirmation of the original story, and it is forwarded to the inquirer. Then, on the 21st of December, comes a further note in the daily bulletin from Boulogne. A certain Private Smith states: "It was about 2½ miles beyond Ypres. We had relieved the Buffs in the trenches. For one day we were under artillery and snipers' fire, and the next morning the enemy charged in two divisions. While we were dealing with this first charge, which was finally beaten off, another division got through to the right, cut up a company that was supporting us there, and then took us in flank and rear. I and others were ordered by Lieutenant Brown to go back and obtain new rifles and ammunition, our rifles having been put out of action. The last I saw of the lieutenant was that he was wounded and trying to rally a few men, being absolutely surrounded by the enemy, who were then rushing forward, chanting their war cry, and were at a distance of twenty yards from Lieutenant Brown's party. There was no knowledge of the lieutenant after this. It was the second time he had been wounded, and he only joined the regiment a week before Hazebrouck."

The next witness in the case is a sergeant, who

said, when questioned by the Red Cross inquirer in hospital at Boulogne, that he had been in the battle in which Lieutenant Brown was last seen, though not near enough to tell what finally became of the lieutenant. "Some troops to the right of us had to give way temporarily, and the position of the company with which Lieutenant Brown was at the time was consequently attacked both front and rear. Very few got away. There was no chance of searching the ground, as the Germans remained in possession of it for a day or two before we could drive them back again. A captain whom I knew was with this party and was known to be captured." A comment on this report by the inquirer in the hospital adds—"The sergeant was pretty sure Lieutenant Brown was killed, but in the absence of any conclusive reason I have not said so in the report."

The last report, on December 27th, contains the statement of a major of the missing officer's regiment. This statement refers to four officers, including the lieutenant, and, after giving details of place and date which corroborate the previous witnesses, adds—"These four officers were cut off and surrounded by the enemy coming behind. About

a hundred officers and men got through, but could tell nothing. Two officers were known to be taken, but nothing could be learned regarding Lieutenant Brown."

And there the story ends. "So many of them end that way," said the King's soldier's counsel sadly. Later, the missing man's mother wrote to say that she had heard that her son was wounded and a prisoner, and later still she wrote again to say that she had found that the wounded prisoner was not her son, after all. It may be that the Department will yet obtain definite news of the lieutenant, and it may be that till the end of the war no further word will come through, and perhaps the last word has already been written. But—the reports from which these details are taken concern some score of cases apiece, and each report is one day's work in one hospital. There are thousands of such inquiries being dealt with by the King's soldier's counsel, and to each inquiry the same painstaking care is allotted. Lieutenant Brown is but one among a host, and from that may be judged what the work of the Department really means.

Thus the evidence—in this typical case fairly

clear, but at times most contradictory—is collated, and the K.C. weighs the probabilities. Often he and his co-workers are behind the inquiries for which other people get the credit, though it must not be forgotten that the work has been very greatly assisted by those who have sent information from the front, and also by the War Office. The details of the work are business-like, legal; the work is all under the supervision of a member of a great house whose name is written large across the pages of English history. The bowed and broad shoulders of that house are hereditary—can it be that in the years that are past they were bowed and broadened in anticipation of the load of the nation's sorrow that lies on them now?

For think. In the "Department" it is all legal and business-like, but there is a depth of pathos about the work that only those who scan the casualty lists day by day, fearing and yet hoping, can realise to the full. In the long record of the war's sorrow are there more pitiful lines than these in a report signed by two distinguished names which has just reached the Department: "In the garden by the railway platform nine English were buried: their graves were indicated by two

or three crosses, but the names, which had once been written in ink or pencil, were completely obliterated by the rains. . . . *There we found ninety-two graves of British officers and men; seven of these were marked with crosses bearing the names of the dead. I asked that these crosses should be varnished to protect them from the weather.*"

"It is hard to lose him."—It is a mother's letter. —"All the light seems to have gone out of my life, and it has made an old man of his father. He was always a good son; he has given his life for his country, and no man can do more. But if only I knew where he was buried!"

Then the counsel for the King's soldiers adds another to his list of cases, but of this search for the graves of brave men he will say very little—it is the saddest part of his work. Here, before the nameless graves for which he has found names, silence is his homage, and ours.

You and I who tend with loving hands the graves in which our loved are laid, of our pity let us remember those who know not where *their* dead may rest, think with gratitude of him who with infinite patience and reverence searches the tram-

pled, blood-soaked fields of France that he may bring some ray of comfort to a single broken heart.

And in the end, when the King's soldier's counsel has done his work, the mother writes again :

" I have much to be thankful for, as I have been able to find out everything about him. He is buried in a little churchyard at a village called Longueville, and he did not suffer, as he was killed instantly. I have been fortunate in finding out. . . ."

It is a great work, this of the King's soldier's counsel, a work as touching as the heroism of mothers who, having given their dearest to their country, can yet find " much to be thankful for " in that they know at last where their dead are laid

V.A.D.

VI

V.A.D.

THE first scheme for the organisation of Voluntary Aid Detachments was issued on the 16th of August, 1909, by the Secretary of State for War, but the Army Council found it expedient to issue a revision of this, and the revised scheme was published by the War Office at the beginning of 1911. Under this revised scheme, the British Red Cross Society is the body recommended to the County Territorial Associations for the carrying out of the work of voluntary aid to sick and wounded in the event of war occurring in the home territory. It must be repeated that all preparations in connection with the Territorial scheme were made with a view to this eventuality.

Under the scheme of 1911, by the 31st of January 1914 the British Red Cross Society had raised and registered at the War Office no less than 1,903 detachments, with a total staff of 55,156. At the outset it was recognised that the number of

voluntary aid societies existing in the country gave evidence of the need for a definite central authority, since many of these societies had no connection with each other, and were liable to attempt to act independently, with the result that their spheres of action would overlap in some directions, while in others they would not extend widely enough, thus causing a serious loss in efficiency when the available material was considered. Thus under the Red Cross Society voluntary aid was co-ordinated, and, in pursuance of the Territorial scheme, a "county" system was adopted.

It is stated in the War Office scheme that "The medical organisation of the Territorial Force is sufficiently complete to meet the immediate requirements of the combatant troops on the march and in action, as it provides medical establishments and units which accompany the troops. It also provides general hospitals; but, inasmuch as it lacks some of the medical units which are to be found in the expeditionary force of the Regular Army and in all armies on the Continent, it is incomplete. The units which it lacks are clearing hospitals, stationary hospitals, ambulance trains, and other formations.

"A clearing hospital is a mobile unit which receives the sick and wounded from the field ambulances, and transfers them, by various methods, to the stationary hospitals which may become established at various points on the lines of communication, and to the ambulance trains. It is important that field ambulances should not be encumbered with casualties, otherwise the mobility of the fighting troops is interfered with.

"Stationary hospitals are hospitals established at various points along the lines of communication, and necessarily are temporary, their locations varying with the lines up which reinforcements are proceeding, or down which casualties are being forwarded."

In the scheme, ambulance trains are divided into three classes, permanent, temporary, and improvised, titles which carry their own descriptions, to a certain extent. Under the heading of "other formations," the scheme points out the necessity for the establishment of entraining stations, where the wounded are loaded on to the ambulance trains; rest stations, where sick and wounded are halted on their way from the front

either for the night or for refreshments and attendance on urgent cases; private hospitals, which "should be complete in every respect for the treatment of either surgical or medical or both classes of cases"; convalescent homes, to provide accommodation for officers and men who, requiring no further definite treatment, are fit for discharge from hospital but not to return to duty. In the case of the private hospitals and convalescent homes it is laid down in the scheme that "the expenses in connection with upkeep should be met entirely by private funds."

Further, the scheme states that "The medical service of the Territorial Force has no establishment for carrying out the duties in connection with the above-named organisations. This scheme has been devised with the object of giving to those members of the civil population, who, from motives of patriotism and sympathy for the sick and wounded, are desirous of offering their services for the performance of these various duties, an opportunity of allowing themselves and their efforts to be organised and co-ordinated efficiently, so that the sick and wounded may derive the fullest possible benefit."

There is appended to this a list of the duties that would be required in the utilisation of all local resources in case of need, the fitting out of whole villages and small towns into temporary hospitals, the formation of rest stations, collection and distribution of material for clearing hospitals and rest stations, and the management of such depots of material. And it must be understood that all this was not merely—and is not merely—an augmentation of the complete medical service of the Territorial Force in case of invasion, but that in such event it would be an *absolute necessity*, and its provision entirely dependent on the resources and organisation of the Red Cross workers. The nature and extent of the scheme is a staggering revelation of the work that the British Red Cross Society has undertaken and carried through so successfully. We who talk glibly enough of Red Cross doings may pause, in realising the extent and nature of this scheme, to consider how much thought and effort has gone to the recruiting of voluntary aid detachments, the planning out of voluntary aid work, and the provision of material in the event of invasion. The mapping out and provision for one route alone, from

firing line to base, is a task over which one may well pause and wonder, while to draw up and recruit the aid for a scheme that should be efficient in case of invasion at any point is a business that calls for more than a pause.

A definite scale has been laid down for the formation of each Voluntary Aid Detachment. "There will be two classes, consisting of men and women," says the official form, and, in the case of the men's class, the total strength is fifty-six officers and men. At the head is the commandant, preferably an officer of any branch of His Majesty's Army, retired and not liable to recall. A medical officer, of course, is appointed to each detachment, and the other officers are the quartermaster and the pharmacist. The rank and file are divided into four sections of twelve men each, and to each section a section leader is appointed. The object of having four sections is to enable small places in rural districts to organise single sections, four of which may be combined to form a complete detachment. For registration as a detachment, 70 per cent of the specified strength must be recruited. Unless otherwise qualified, all candidates for enrolment in a voluntary aid detachment

must either be in possession of a first-aid certificate, or must produce such a certificate within twelve months from the date of enrolment.

The men's detachments must be thoroughly trained as stretcher-bearers, and to a certain extent as male nurses. The principal duties of the men consist in carrying sick and wounded by stretchers, and, when necessary, in preparing means of transport by road or rail, in converting local buildings or whole villages into temporary hospitals, and in disinfecting buildings, etc. Thus a certain proportion of carpenters, mechanics, and clerks are regarded as essential to the formation of a complete detachment.

The training of the detachment, although fairly fully laid down in the manuals of the Society, is left for the commandant of the detachment, in conjunction with the medical officer, to formulate. In case of the temporary absence of the commandant, the command of the detachment devolves on the medical officer, who is also charged with endeavouring to arrange that, if possible, the men of the detachment shall attend some local hospital for instruction in their duties. The quartermaster of each detachment is charged with

the care of all equipment and stores, and all appliances used in the formation of rest stations, temporary and clearing hospitals. To him would fall the collection of all materials and articles of equipment which may have been promised to the Red Cross branch in the district in which the detachment is located. The pharmacist, in the absence of all or any of the senior officers, takes over their duties, dispenses medicines, keeps charge of instruments and medical and surgical appliances, issues requisitions, and is responsible to the medical officer for the carrying out of these duties. He is also expected to attend drills with the rest of the detachment. The section leaders correspond to the N.C.O.'s of the R.A.M.C., and are responsible that the men of their sections are acquainted with the duties they would have to perform in time of war. Out of the rank and file a detachment is expected to maintain at least three men trained in clerical work relating to the sick and wounded, and the rest are trained as are R.A.M.C. orderlies, for the most part.

The women's detachments are each to consist of twenty-three members. The commandant may be either man or woman, and not necessarily a doctor,

but, in this last case, a medical officer should be attached to the section. Under the commandant is a lady superintendent, who should be a trained nurse; a quartermaster, who may be either man or woman; a pharmacist if available, reckoned as supernumerary and not included in the strength of the detachment; and twenty rank and file, of whom four should be fully trained as cooks.

The work of the commandant and medical officer is the same as that of these officers in the men's detachment. Drills and training are mainly left to the lady superintendent, who, subject to the approval of the commandant, arranges for the attendance of members of the detachment at the practice and instruction which should be periodically given.

The organisation of Voluntary Aid Detachments in the manner outlined above is charged on the County Associations of the Territorial Force, who, however, are empowered and recommended to delegate the formation of detachments to the British Red Cross Society, which is prepared to carry out the scheme on the lines suggested, and is the only body that the War Office is prepared to

recognise for this purpose in cases where the County Associations do not directly undertake the work.

By means of the Voluntary Aid Detachments throughout the country, a definite and complete machinery was set up for dealing with such problems as might arise out of an invasion, and were not accounted for in the Territorial scheme. But the actual emergency, both in its nature and its magnitude, was one that could not have been foreseen. It may be said that the whole Territorial scheme was nullified by the fact that invasion did not take place, and consequently, at the outbreak of hostilities, the Voluntary Aid Detachment scheme was, apparently, ineffective—except for such of the members of the detachments as went to service in France. This ineffectiveness, however, was only apparent, for with the German invasion of Belgium there was suddenly thrust on this country, in addition to the wounded men in its own Expeditionary Force, sent back from France, a matter of 15,000 or more Belgians, in need of medical and surgical aid. The Regular hospitals were rapidly filling with men from Mons, Cambrai, and other actions of the great retreat, and the

establishments of the V.A.D. found their first uses in meeting the needs of these Belgians.

In this the Voluntary Aid hospitals, quite distinct from the Voluntary Aid Detachments, came into use. A Voluntary Aid hospital may be staffed by a Voluntary Aid Detachment, and in some cases it is, but more often hospitals have been offered for service complete with staff, or have been staffed in other ways. In many cases complete hospitals have been offered by private individuals ; in other cases, certain beds have been set aside in private hospitals for the reception of military cases ; private houses have been transformed into hospital establishments—on the whole, the offers of voluntary aid on the part of the people of the country have been beyond all expectation, and it lay with the Red Cross Society to co-ordinate the work, and render it effective to the fullest possible degree.

In order to meet needs that arose the War Office made a grant of two shillings per day for each occupied bed in Voluntary Aid hospitals, but experience showed that this sum was not sufficient to cover daily needs, and the grant was increased to three shillings per bed. A little reflection on the

needs of a number of hospital patients will show that much still remained to be provided, and here the Red Cross Society has found one of its chief problems. Except for this three shillings a day per occupied bed, and a sum granted toward the upkeep of certain motor ambulance services in this country, the Society has been entirely dependent on voluntary contributions. Quite apart from the work done in France, and the provision made there for the comfort of the wounded, the amount of provision the Society has been called on to make for the wounded, with the work it has been called on to do in England, is colossal. The way in which needs and emergencies have been met is a triumph of organising ability, and affords adequate testimony to the preparations made in time of peace, preparations of purely voluntary workers against a national need.

A chapter in its history to which the Society will always be able to point with pride is the way in which the Voluntary Aid service was organised so as to deal, not only with the influx of Belgian refugees, but with the thousands of British troops who came wounded from the French battle-fields when it seemed that all available space had already

been occupied by the Belgians. Although these men practically doubled the numbers on the hands of voluntary workers, all were accommodated and well cared for.

"It should be borne in mind," says one of the official forms of the Society, "that the Society's aid consists only of additional comforts and of such general help as may be considered beyond the reasonable scope of the medical departments of the Navy and Army, under whose control the Society will act in time of war."

Thus stands the promise of the Society—it may be judged, from the work that the Society and its branches and affiliated societies have performed, how much greater than the mere promise has been the fulfilment.

The work must go on: the Society do more than it has done. This task of a nation is only at its beginnings; it is for the nation to see that every need is met, and the work maintained for as long as the needs exist.

MOBILISE !

VII

MOBILISE!

THE letters "D.S.O." convey a definite meaning, one that we knew and appreciated before the war. But V.A.D. meant little enough to any of us then. Now it is in itself an order of distinguished service.

The story of the mobilisation of the V.A.D. in the county through which I toured is a romance. In the late hours of Tuesday, the thirteenth of October, a telegram was dispatched from headquarters: "Mobilise all your hospitals at once. Notify names of places, stations and numbers of beds available at each to Transport Officer, Folkestone Harbour. Large number of wounded arrive to-night."

At eleven o'clock that night the message was acted upon. By midday of the next day three thousand wounded Belgians were in bed in the hospitals mobilised and prepared by the Voluntary

Aid Detachments, a feat which stands as a unique record in speed and efficiency.

In order to appreciate the nature of the feat it is necessary to understand the conditions under which it was accomplished. In the first place, all the accommodation and equipment and stores of these detachments, at the time the message was received, consisted of promises, promises for the most part made in days of peace. Nothing else. Here a contributor to the scheme had signed her name to a promise of a bedstead and bedding; here another had said that a certain amount of hospital clothing should be available if necessary; yet another had promised the use of a house as a hospital; and another had undertaken to provide certain stores of food or drugs. At eleven o'clock at night, or as soon after that hour as the telephone, telegraph, or police-conveyed messages reached the commandant of each detachment, that particular commandant had to set about the collection and preparation of the promised equipment and stores. Certain people had agreed to attend to the transport and collection of necessary stores and furniture, and these people had to be turned out of their beds and set to work. Others,

members of the detachments, had got very busy, and very quickly busy in antisepticising and scrubbing out empty houses, village halls—even a motor garage, in one case. Ranges had to be prepared for cooking, bedsteads had to be put up as they arrived, beds made, arrangements fixed up for the conveyance of the wounded from the railway stations to the improvised hospitals. In the space of twelve hours the promises made, some with never a thought that they would have to be fulfilled, had to materialise. Throughout the county the detachments of the British Red Cross, of the St. John Voluntary Aid, and of the Territorial Force Association, were mobilised to the number of ninety-six; church and village halls, chapel schoolrooms and empty dwelling-houses, all somewhat desolate-looking in the dawn hours, were transformed into cheery, warm, and comfortable wards, and the brightening touch of vases of flowers was not lacking.

In every instance, when that next day the wounded Belgian soldiers arrived at the railway stations, they were met by nurses who provided them with hot soup and coffee, while the members of the men's detachments were ready to convey

each soldier to the motor transport awaiting him. Out of the ninety-six mobilised detachments there was not one which failed to carry out its duty to the full—a self-imposed duty, be it remembered.

Thus the mobilisation and its value. A survey of the material and staff with which it was accomplished may be of equal interest.

There is one hospital formed out of a private house which, for some reason or other, had stood vacant for fourteen years : the owner had promised that the house should be devoted to the use of the local voluntary aid detachment in case mobilisation ever happened, but, like the majority of such promises, the fact that this was made with no expectation of its ever having to be fulfilled in no way qualified its fulfilment. The house, containing about a score of rooms, stands in an ideal position near a main line of rail, and high up, overlooking the surrounding country.

Fourteen years' disuse is responsible for many disadvantages ; from attic to basement the house had to be scrubbed and antiseptically treated ; certain contrivances had to be effected, and here the local carpenters and builders gave their

services and materials without thought of payment; the local gas company fitted in a gas stove and all required fittings for light without cost; while the post office headquarters supplied a telephone for hospital use. The final adjunct, an operating theatre, was fitted out in a manner equal to that of the great permanent hospitals, with zinc tiling, rounded corners, sterilising apparatus, and operating-table. Each room has its complement of beds and lockers, and, at the time of writing, is occupied either by wounded Belgian or British soldiers. There are two trained nurses, and the rest of the staff, possessed of first-aid certificates at the outset, are now practically equivalent to fully trained nurses, for they have taken up the work with the determination to make themselves efficient.

Another of these hospitals was, prior to the mobilisation, a Sunday-school building. In the large room which formed the school four rows of beds are placed, the side rows being slightly raised above those in the centre. At a first glance one might conclude that the place had always been a hospital, so well has the transformation been effected; a smaller room is set aside as the lady-

quartermaster's store, other smaller rooms are used as small wards for serious cases, and a bath-room has been improvised with a geyser to remedy the deficiency of a hot-water supply.

Yet another "hospital" was a village club, and here the transformation is no less effective. The ingenuity displayed in making an operating theatre out of an entrance passage here is worth noting; the theatre is well lighted, well warmed, and well ventilated. There is a dining-hall for the convalescent patients, and a separate dining-room for the nurses, and the wards are all that hospital wards should be. In another case one is called on to note the bedside lockers, fashioned out of soap and sugar boxes, fixed on legs and painted and varnished.

There is, in one of the prettiest parts of the county, a mansion which has been given over to voluntary aid work for the period of the war, together with a cook and three servants, and a sum of £25 per week to assist in the maintenance of the work. In this case acres of ground are at the service of the patients, an operating theatre is fitted with every requirement, and the wards, retaining much of their former furniture as ordinary dwelling- and bedrooms, are such as wounded and

sick soldiers would never find in Regular hospitals. Two trained nurses are included in the staff, and in addition to the medical officer in charge of the hospital there are a consulting physician and a consulting surgeon whose names are household words in the medical world. The lady-quarter-master has, in addition to the charge of all stores, the business of provisioning about seventy patients and staff every day—she is on duty from seven in the morning till seven at night, and her home is two miles distant. The rest of the staff are similarly situated as regards distance and hours of work.

Away down in the heart of the county half of a big motor garage and hunting stables has been turned into a hospital, and here, in addition to a fully equipped operating theatre, an X-ray apparatus is fitted. The grooms' cubicles have been turned into small wards, connected by a long central corridor, and these wards are filled with wounded Belgian and British troops. This detachment in the motor garage deserves special mention for the proof it so successfully affords of difficulties, apparently insuperable, overcome.

In pre-war days there were few who believed

in the voluntary aid detachments. They might be good for first-aid work, for the formation of rest stations and for the treatment of very minor cases, but in these things, said the majority, lay the limits of their use. There was a trained nurse to each detachment, but the remainder of the staff were amateurs, liable to make the mistakes and be guilty of the lapses of amateurs—they could never be of any real service in case of urgent need. So said the majority of onlookers, and they found hilarious justification in the early days of August, when some over-enthusiastic members of a voluntary aid detachment seized on two soldiers who fell out on a route march, took them willy-nilly off for treatment, only to find that one was suffering from corns and the other had been indulging in what colonials know as a " jag " the night before, with the result that his head ached badly. There was, in these days of eager waiting, when all the neighbours wondered and laughed, a notable affair in one village where competition for patients was so great that civilians went about in fear lest they should be attacked by dizziness in the street and torn to pieces by rival detachments fighting for their care.

Neither of these incidents is any too well authenticated, and the actual facts of voluntary aid work reveal an amazing amount of toil and self-sacrifice, once the need and opportunity arose; of resource and adaptability on the part of the ladies engaged in the hospital work, and of the officers and men of the men's detachments, who perform the supplementary duties. There were, in those first days, nurses who fainted at the sight of blood and shuddered at the business of dressing wounds—these drawbacks were unavoidable at the outset, just as they are unavoidable in the training of nurses in large permanent hospitals. There were many who shed tears at parting with favourite patients, and regarded the work too personally, and there were some who would not make nurses if they were kept at the business for years. But these drawbacks to the work have disappeared—the voluntary aid nurse, at the present time, is very nearly equivalent to the trained nurse. She regards a case as a case and nothing more, and is glad to get a bed emptied of its convalescent patient for the sake of the duty attaching to the next case which will occupy that particular bed. These voluntary aid hospitals are handling and

curing cases of all kinds, are engaged in serious operations, and are performing such work as is done at the Herbert Hospital at Woolwich, or at any other Regular military hospital. They are taking a definite and recognised place in the military medical scheme, and their staffs, ladies of the ordinary civilian population of the country, giving their services week after week without question or thought of reward other than the consciousness of a good work accomplished, are worthy of all honour and all praise.

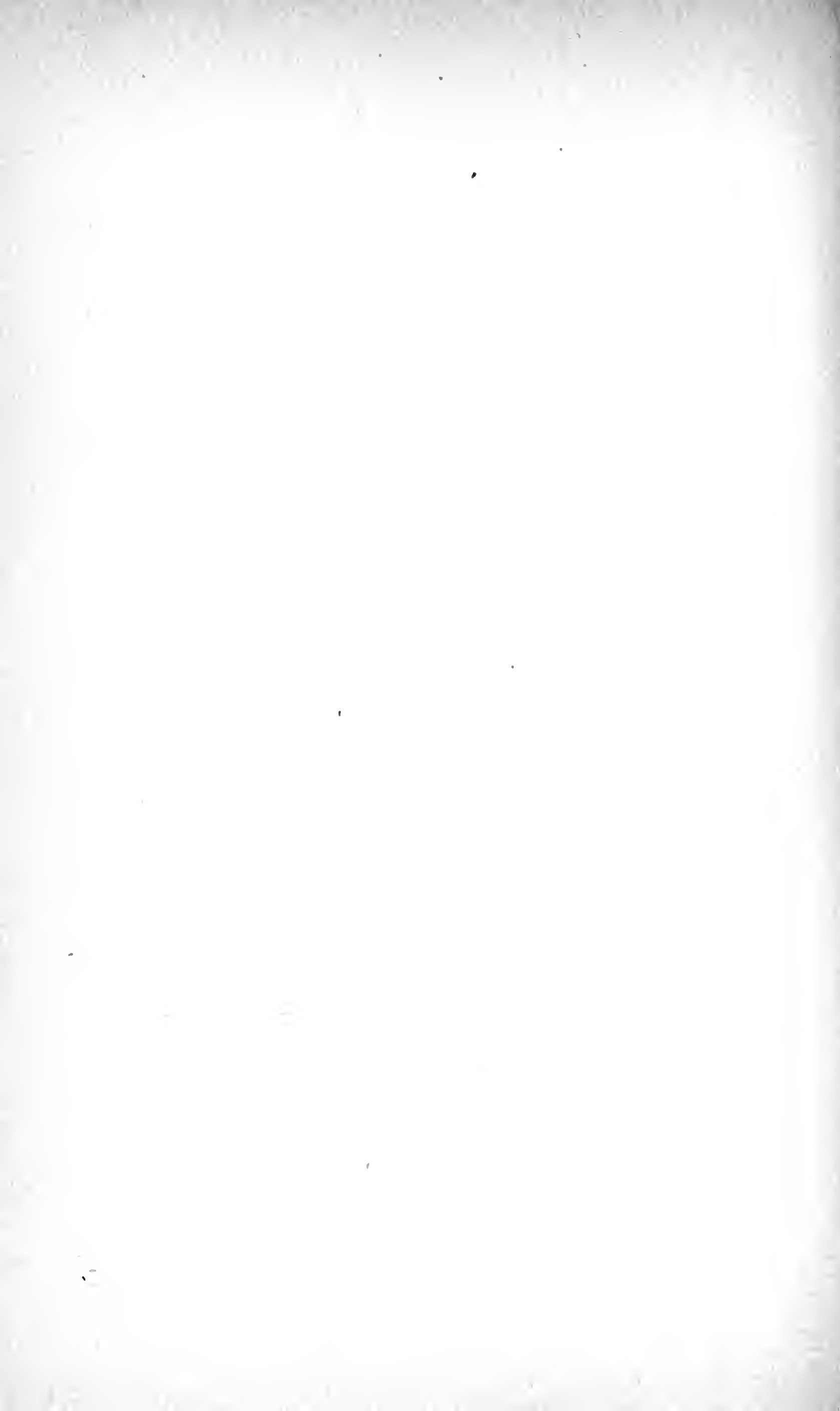
And, as in the case of the British Red Cross Society itself, the work of the pioneers should be recognised at its full value. For three years prior to the war a few men and women secured promises of aid, of stores, and of equipment, planned and worked at the scheme of voluntary aid in the face of some hostile criticism—and of much ridicule. Had they yielded to the pressure of the majority, stopped at first-aid work and left the rest to chance—well, the three thousand wounded Belgians who landed at Folkestone would have found themselves little better cared for here than in their own devastated country, for at the time of their landing there was no accommodation

available in the Regular hospitals, and to the Voluntary Aid Detachments is due the credit of their housing and nursing.

Let it be said, also, that those who promised stores and equipment have most loyally fulfilled their promises. Replacement at the present time, even of small items, was often a matter of difficulty —the things given might be badly needed by the givers, but they were given without question or delay, none the less.

The work is one which stands as a notable achievement on the part of the people concerned, and as a thing to which organisers and workers alike will be able to point with pride in after years, when the war and its needs and emergencies are a sad, yet proud, memory.

THE TROOPER



VIII

THE TROOPER

I FOUND the trooper in a small hospital not twenty miles from London, a daintily appointed haven as different from the ordinary military hospital as a Pullman car is from a horse-box. The trooper looked a young fellow of twenty or thereabouts, but as he talked of things he had seen and done he might have been a man of forty, at times. And they told me that when he first came into the hospital he had looked an old man. No wonder. He had seen the camps after the famous L Battery R.H.A. had been almost annihilated. Everywhere you looked there was destruction, blood, death. "The horses, poor things, could not get away, as they were tied down by head-ropes. Men trying to get guns into action, or to get horses loose, were shot as they stood. You cannot imagine what it looked like after the Germans were got under. . . . But it was all

cleared up as well as could be, and we buried friend and foe in the same graves." In spite of it all, because of it all, he longed to get back. As he talked, the true cavalryman's love and understanding of a horse kept coming to the front of the conversation. When he spoke of going back you could see him thrill at the feel of his horse—Ah, but just to be in the saddle again, to feel the soft velvet of her nose, to feel her sensitive quiver of delight beneath his touch!

The trooper went out on August 16th, and the brigade of which he formed a unit took up its position on the Belgian frontier, away back in the time when it was summer and open-air life was not synonymous with mud and frost-bite. The brigade, having taken up position, set out a line of outposts. "We will put out outposts," said one of the officers in the hearing of the men, "but it's practically certain that they won't come this way."

For two days, said this trooper, there was nothing doing, and then the brigade moved toward Mons. He was not very clear as to what happened round Mons, except that they drove back German patrols as these advanced, and retired perforce in the face of vastly superior numbers.

"If I live to be a hundred and fifty, I shall never make up for the sleep I lost in those three weeks," he said, "and the infantry were worse off than we were, for we could sleep while we rode, some of the time."

He would talk little about casualties. "We had to say good-bye to most of our best chums," he remarked, "but then, that's what war is. Look here! I got two presents on Christmas morning—*that's war.*" And he took from his pocket the Christmas card from the King and Queen, and looked at it proudly, as well he might. The other—a letter in his own handwriting to a chum at the front, returned with the grim word "Deceased" written right across the envelope. "Both by the same post—on Christmas morning—*that's what war is.*

"And the horses—I had a horse that I'd ridden for fourteen months, and he'd never been near the sick lines. He was blown to pieces by a shell that sailed over me, and after that I got a remount and rode him two days—I had to shoot him then, for he had a raw place on his back nearly as big as a table. If it had been possible to get at a vet., to get some dressing or something . . . but it wasn't. You know what it was like on the retreat.

"And then I walked, with the transport, or anyhow—we had to keep on going."

I asked after an officer I had known, who was one of the first to be killed.

"I *saw* him killed," said the trooper. "It was on September 1st, and I wasn't more than twenty yards away from him at the time. We were in dismounted action at the time, and he was in rear of the line. He was knocked over by a maxim bullet and knew he was a goner. He handed his pocket-book and a photograph of himself and his wife to his servant, and then another bullet finished him—we couldn't have done anything for him, in any case, for he was too badly hit the first time. He was one of the first to go out of his regiment."

He spoke of the retreat as a thing to remember for all time, but his story was more personal than descriptive of large happenings. How the transport got lost, and for three days men and horses alike had to subsist as best they could; how on each day's march the regiments composing the brigade crossed and recrossed each other's path: "For days you wouldn't see the regiment that should have been next you, and there were times,

even, when a squadron would seem lost—but we were never lost, really. It was wonderful, the way the troops were handled, and yet no man knew what was coming or where we were going. Our men wanted to stop and fight, times and again—we got sick of everlastingly retreating, and would have risked anything for the chance of a good scrap—but it wasn't to be. 'We'll keep going on,' said our officer, 'as long as we have four legs or even two legs to carry us.' There came a day when he said to us, 'Light up your cigarettes, boys.' We understood. We walked up the village street feeling sure it was the end. But somehow we pulled through."

When the retreat finished, he and his fellows saw little of the advance. "We were somewhere north-east of Paris, and we just pushed on forward instead of everlastingly going back—that was all. We came up to the Aisne to relieve the Guards, and crossed a pontoon bridge under shell fire. We relieved the Guards in the trenches for a couple of days, and then went back for a time, and after that we went up to relieve them again, but they said they'd rather stay where they were, so we didn't take over that time. Then we went

up to the west, up toward Belgium again; there was one occasion when my squadron got caught between the shell fire of the Germans and the shells from our guns—we were in the safety zone between the two, with shells whizzing both ways over our heads, and one man swore he heard two shells meet in mid-air. That's a thing that might happen twenty times in one day, and might not happen again in the whole war—whether he really heard it or no I can't say, but he said he did.

"We were stuck there between the two lots of guns, and the squadron officer sent an orderly back to headquarters to know what he was to do. Of course, he got told to stay where he was, and that was what we did. We stuck there till night, when the shell fire stopped; then we got out and back to our own lines, with never a man hurt. Later we went in for trench work, which is no business for cavalry. You have to leave every third man behind to look after the horses, and it's no fool's game, taking charge of four horses all the time, except when you're on duty in the trenches.

"Then I got hit, through the ankle, and there's some bits of bone to come away yet. I've been keeping the bits of bone as they are taken out—

like having a double tooth pulled out of your foot, it is, but you get used to it—but I've lost one or two bits already—souvenir-hunters, I suppose. I was hit at twenty minutes past two in the afternoon, and it was late at night before I could get attended to. I got carted to some infantry place where they bound up the wound with my field dressing, and then put on a horse ambulance, and carted twelve miles to the ambulance train. They ran us on to St. Omer, but that was full up, so they took us on to Calais—and that was worse. Finally they shipped us on a boat that had just been fitted up for hospital work, and when we got out of harbour and fairly on the way the doctors found that the panniers that should have been full of medical and surgical things to dress and treat us with were empty. They did what they could, but of course they could do hardly nothing with no appliances, and I had to come on here before I could get properly seen to."

Regarding the actual journey, he remembered practically nothing; it is stated, however, that at the station of arrival his chum refused doggedly and absolutely to part from him—they had shared sitting room in the train. For a part of the

journey he had stood on his undamaged leg, and the fatigue, and pain of his wound, had induced a state that bordered on delirium by the time the journey ended.

But he knew enough to determine that he and his chum should go to the same hospital. And they did.

"I hadn't been here five minutes before I was under chloroform, and the doctor says he only saved my leg by a matter of hours. The splinter that did the mischief was still in the wound, and it had set up poisoning. It's better now—I've been here nine weeks, and I suppose it'll be another nine weeks before I can go back.

"But I was all right till I got that wound. I'd have been content to go on trekking and having a shot at them whenever I could, the way we were doing—but it wasn't to be. It's odd to look back and think how many of my best pals have gone altogether, and here am I . . . and my horse—fourteen months and never near the sick lines, and then blown to pieces like that!

"I remember once being on sentry go over the horses at night. I found a horse in pain. I knew the corporal it belonged to, and he went for a

veterinary officer, who told us the horse was suffering from colic. He did what he could for it, and then went away. The corporal stopped up all night with it, but in the morning it died. The corporal told me he would rather have been shot than have known that his horse died in pain. I can tell you he was never the same man again, after he lost one of his best chums, his horse. He's been wounded since."

He looked round the ward, replete with every comfort. In one bed lay a boy, a civilian patient, who had been listening intently to every word of the story, and the cavalryman smiled at him. It was evident that these two were great friends. "We tell the visitors he was wounded at Mons," he said, with a laugh.

"I'm sorry for the poor beggars that have to go to Regular hospitals," said the trooper. "They should try a bit of this, and then they'd know what hospital is like. Everything—yes, everything—try one of my cigarettes."

He compared dates with a little infantryman who occupied another bed in the ward, and they tried to remember where it was they had been located on the Aisne, but the name eluded them.

"It was some river—some little river that flows by Paris." I suggested the Ourcq, but apparently it was some other river. When I left them they were still surmising and suggesting.

Now, if you will take a walk round such a voluntary establishment as this hospital, and then take a walk round a purely military hospital, you will see the value of the voluntary aid that has been rendered in connection with the wounded. Not that the surgical treatment, or the nursing, is any better than that of Regular hospitals, for probably it is not, but the air of the place is different. There is discipline, but it is of a different kind, and there are various small refinements which men appreciate immensely, things of which R.A.M.C. orderlies, kind and capable as they are, never think in the way that a woman thinks. In a military hospital a man gets a mug for his tea or milk, but when I entered the ward in which I found the trooper, he was drinking out of a cup—and there was a saucer as well. These are tiny things, but they are things of which official equipment takes no cognisance—and they make all the difference to the men under treatment. For the wounded there is permission to smoke in

Regular hospitals: in these voluntary establishments the men are invited to smoke; it amounts to exactly the same thing, but the spirit is different, and the men know it. I have seen no men in Regular hospitals, among the wounded, who were so content with their treatment as in the voluntary aid establishments.

It is no fault of the Army, or of the men composing the Army. In a hospital run by the R.A.M.C. the sergeant-major *must* maintain his authority, the hospital police must make men keep bounds and hours, and the sergeants and corporals must maintain discipline in the wards—it is a necessity of the system that these things should be. And yet in the civilian establishments these things are not; the men are on their honour, in a way, and they play the game as soldiers should—and do, with infinite benefit to themselves, and a strong contrast between the two systems visible to the onlooker.

THE POSSIBLE IMPOSSIBLE

IX

THE POSSIBLE IMPOSSIBLE

THE history of the Order of St. John, though it embodies the first beginnings of work on behalf of the sick and wounded, is far too long for even a sketch of it to be given here. We must be content to record the founding of the Order in the year A.D. 1050, when some Italian merchants obtained permission to found a hospital at Jerusalem, and the first founding of the Order in Britain in the year 1100, when Jourdain de Brisset, a wealthy Norman baron, erected a beautiful priory at Clerkenwell and bestowed it on the Hospitallers, as the members of the Order of St. John were called. Portions of St. John's Gate, at Clerkenwell, where the present headquarters of the Order are housed, date from the time of the priory, and here, in the heart of London's most commercial quarter, the atmosphere of past days clings round a work that, in contrast to the com-

merce with which it is surrounded, is purest charity. The great priory has gone, given place to tram-lines and warehouses, but in the rooms over the old gate the English "langue" of the Order pursues its work, "blessed by God, and useful to man." Political and military significance has gone out from the Order, but its present work is such that, when the ultimate values of things come to be considered, its worth—in the very highest sense—will set the Order of to-day far above the powerful organisation which occupied Malta and Tripoli, helped to bring down the Knights Templars, and exercised a political influence over all the civilised world.

In times of peace the Order has founded and assisted cottage hospitals and convalescent homes, and promoted means and opportunities of training nurses for the sick poor, as well as establishing ambulance-litters for the conveyance of sick and injured in colliery and mining districts, and maintaining that great "ambulance brigade" by which the Order is best known throughout the country. In consequence of these peaceful activities, the Order, and especially the St. John Ambulance Brigade, has come to be looked on as purely a

peace organisation, an impression which is entirely contrary to fact.

As long ago as the year 1878, the St. John Ambulance Brigade was formed at Woolwich, with a view, in the first place, to providing a supplementary corps of hospital orderlies to the Army Hospital Corps, as the medical organisation of the Army was then called. So good was the result that the idea struck one of the founders of the brigade to train bodies of men in similar fashion throughout the country, with a further view to rendering first aid to injured men in time of peace. Thus the peace organisation was an offshoot from the volunteer corps of military inception. But, first and foremost, the Brigade was intended for military use, a fact which is not nearly well enough known.

Its value was recognised at a review of the Brigade by King Edward, when 15,000 men paraded for inspection. The King made some remark to the general officer who accompanied him, with regard to the work of the men, and the reply—"We couldn't go to war without them, Your Majesty," is as true to-day as at the time of that parade.

In proof of this, it may be well to state that over 5,000 men of the Brigade have been appointed to the Military Home Hospital Reserve: which means over 5,000 men of the R.A.M.C. have been released for service with the expeditionary force, and their places taken in the military hospitals of home stations by the men of the St. John Ambulance Brigade. Under the rules of the Order these men had been so trained that they were able to take over the work of the R.A.M.C. without any training from the military authorities—and there was no other reserve of men available from which such a force could be drawn. Had it not been for the St. John Ambulance Brigade, there would not have been 5,000 R.A.M.C. men available for service abroad; or, if these men had been taken, the home hospitals would have been deficient by that number of staff.

Further, the Naval Auxiliary Sick Berth Reserve has been staffed by the St. John Ambulance Brigade, employing a total of nearly 1,700 men; the Naval expeditionary force has taken nearly 500 men of the Brigade as medical orderlies; the R.A.M.C. has taken from the Brigade, in addition to men who have enlisted other than through the

Order, upwards of 700 men; while another 400 and more have gone to Red Cross and private hospitals in France. And all these men are trained to their work, capable of taking their places beside R.A.M.C. orderlies and doing similar work without further training. For this alone, apart from the remainder of the work of the Order, it is still true that "we couldn't go to war without them."

One of the least known and most valuable sections of the work of the Order is its activity in India. At home there are many activities on behalf of sick and wounded, and what the various co-ordinated societies have done for British troops at the front and at home, the Order of St. John *alone* has done for the Indian expeditionary force. The provision of comforts for the sick and wounded, the sending out of ambulances and drivers, and the establishment of hospitals for the Indians, have been the peculiar care of the St. John Ambulance Association.

It was originally intended that a hospital should be established at Alexandria, and a smaller subsidiary hospital at Marseilles, in which the men could be placed on discharge from the base hospital and before they could be conveyed to Alexandria.

While the arrangements for these two hospitals were under consideration, however, a change in plans had to be made owing to the difficulty of conveying the wounded in a reasonable time from the fighting line in Belgium and the North of France to Marseilles. It then became necessary to arrange for the establishment of a hospital in a suitable place in England, and, with the approval of Lord Kitchener, it was determined to establish the hospital at Brockenhurst Park in the New Forest. The medical staff of the hospital consists of retired officers of the Indian medical service; sixteen nurses have been recruited by the Order for service with the hospital, and the thirty English orderlies employed were also selected by the Order, which has given £10,000 for the equipment of the hospital. Six hundred beds are provided for, and in site, equipment and staff the enterprise forms evidence of the thoroughness and efficiency with which the work of the Order is conducted. Another 500-bed hospital, staffed and equipped by the Order, is, at the time of writing, ready to set out for service in France.

One might go on with dry statistics of the work accomplished by the Order in this war, and come

no nearer to a realisation of the immense effort that has been made, the good that has been and is being accomplished. One might speak of the voluntary and entirely unpaid ambulance drivers sent out to France by the Order, of the trained nurses it has provided, the great work of organisation that is being done in the atmosphere of past days at St. John's Gate in Clerkenwell, the self-sacrifice of the orderlies who have gone, ready trained, to the work of R.A.M.C. men in Britain and abroad. But, apart from dry relations of facts, there is a letter sent home by one of the lady workers of the Order who is serving in France, a letter far more eloquent in its simplicity than any description penned by an outsider.

> "Dear ——," it begins. "For ever so long I have meant to write you a good letter, but I've been so ill that the day's work has been too much for me. They brought me up here for a change (La Comte, Pas de Calais), I can't call it a rest, and we promptly began to get in the wounded into this handsome château, and have had our hands very full ever since. It pays to be up here: we get the men before they are

utterly exhausted by days of suffering. Twelve to twenty hours, it takes. You see, they are taken out of the trenches at night, so if they are wounded early in the day they wait all day, but if they are wounded at night they go right off and arrive at —— in the night and early morning. That is the railhead, now. They tried to run a train to ——, but it was shelled, so they had to give it up. Our ambulances leave here in the morning and are back in two hours, and they are two very hard-working ambulances with perfectly splendid drivers who are much overworked, as are the cars. I don't believe there are any two ambulances in France that do all our two do, and we shall never cease to bless you and those who lent them to us. If you could see the grateful, happy faces up there in the transformed *salon,* under its tapestries and mirrors, and hear them comment on the short, easy journey compared with what they endured from the trenches to ——! The battle is raging to-day. We can distinctly hear the machine guns above the thunder of the big guns, and the continual wickedness of it is sickening. One of the men was telling me of

the brilliant British work on their left, and the whole relation between the Armies is good to see. 'Alone, France would have been swamped,' they say, and bless the Allies.

"To go back to the ambulances. Their other job, besides bringing the wounded here to save them a day's wait and train journeys, is to evacuate bad cases, long cases, radiograph cases, etc., to ——, and to take cases straight from —— to ——. Once the hundred beds down there are full up, the cars come again to work here, for they don't get well in a day, and the desperate cases we take to ——. There all the equipment is much more perfect, water supply, etc., so our heaviest surgical work is there. Here, however, the theatre sister (Miss —— that St. John sent us) has managed by her own and Dr. ——'s ingenious arrangement to rig up a wonderful little operating theatre in what I should say had been the laundry, and really it's amazing how, without any money, the transformation has been managed; beds lent and given for the wards, sheets borrowed, packing cases made into tables, and the family, who are most obliging, packed into some rooms,

the nurses like sardines in others, the doctors about to be tucked away in the lodge, and so forth.

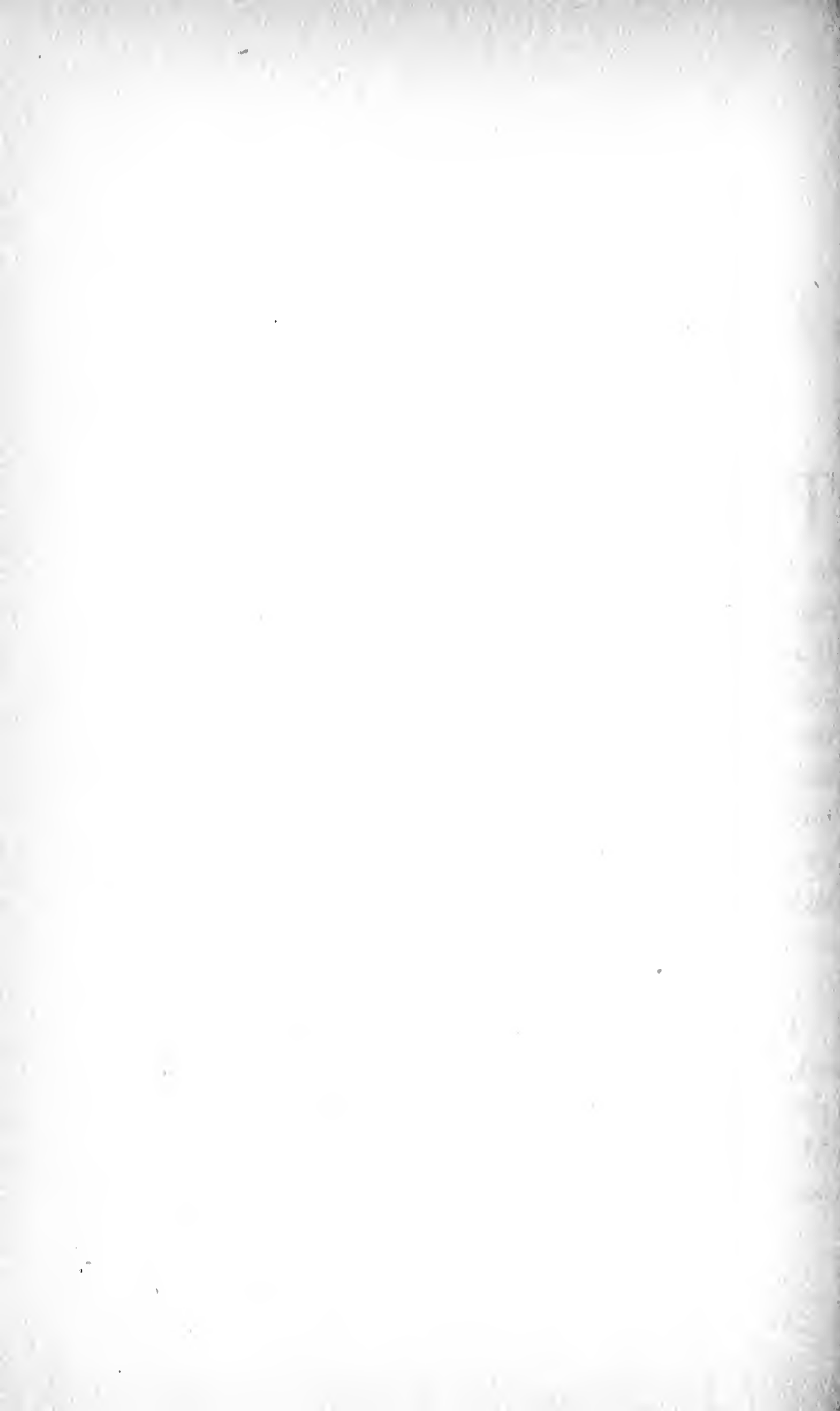
"To-morrow I go to ——, a bit better in health, though still rather a feeble imitation of a real live woman, pleasing result of having tried to do the impossible for four months—and having succeeded.

"Very sincerely yours,

"——."

Just one woman, her name unrecorded, working with others unknown in places unknown, trying to do the impossible for *four months*—and succeeding.

QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S WALKING-STICK



X

QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S WALKING-STICK

TWO brown men sat on a garden seat in the pale sunshine. Between them sat a soldier in hospital "blues." They chatted and smoked cigarettes. It was a little picture of content, though the brown men were bandaged and the soldier had a pair of crutches lying idle for the minute beside him. Other Indian soldiers moved about the grounds of the improvised hospital, and each one carried a stick. Even the two who talked with the man in "blues" kept a tight grip on their sticks,—plain, solid walking-sticks, each with a silver or white-metal band round it just below the grip.

Thereby hangs a story. When these Indian soldiers first came wounded to the hospital each was presented with a turban by Her Majesty Queen Alexandra, since their own turbans had been lost, torn or otherwise damaged in the fighting in France.

But these turbans were presents from the Queen, you see, and so instead of wearing them they packed them away in paper very, very carefully, so that they might show their royal gifts untarnished and unsullied when they got back to their own country. And now since they will not wear the turbans the gracious lady gives them sticks and mufflers.

Lest he should lose it, every man of them guards his stick as if it were of pure gold and diamond studded. When they go to meals they take their sticks; when they go to bed they put their sticks under the mattresses; a football has been provided for the use of the convalescent patients, and the Indians, when they are able to join in the game, play each with a stick under his arm. For the Queen has given these sticks, and, whatever is to be lost by the accidents of life, *they* shall be guarded and kept. And they shall be prized in the homes of their children's children for ever.

They have a passion for souvenirs, these brown gentlemen, and when they leave they hope to carry with them mementoes of their stay in an English hospital. So the sisters, who are responsible for the completeness of equipment in their several wards, have to inspect the men very carefully as they are

going out, lest some item should be missing. One man appeared recently to have put on much weight since he arrived at the hospital, and on examination he proved to have a blanket wrapped, belt fashion, round his waist. Another walked very gingerly, as if wounded in the leg, but he had only suffered in his hand. Owing to his very delicate way of walking he was taken out and examined. Then was it ascertained that he had concealed in his trousers two enamelled plates, which he wanted to take back as souvenirs of his stay in the hospital.

There are, at the time of writing, five hundred beds in this hospital at Netley—the Red Cross hospital there—and out of all the staff only one man belongs to the Regular military medical service—the commandant. He has watched the huts spring up on bare ground, and has introduced several innovations in the way of hospital management which call for comment. For instance, with the exception of one drain which he found ready for use in the ground, he has set up this town of huts with absolutely no underground drainage. Utter and devastating unsanitary failure was prophesied for the experiment, but it has proved thoroughly

successful, and there is not a more sanitary or healthy place in use under either Regular or voluntary management. A second and equally important experiment, tried here for the first time outside India, is the nursing of Indian soldiers by white nurses. Here again failure and confusion were prophesied, for many things had been said about the dangers and difficulties attendant on such a course, and it was generally regarded as impossible.

The reality is a series of very neat, very clean huts, tenanted by the wounded Indians, and each cared for by a European orderly and a sister. In each ward is placed a non-commissioned officer from some native regiment, who is responsible for the discipline of the men in the ward. The men are cheery and contented, and the sisters enjoy their work.

"It is an experience I am glad to have had," said one of the sisters. "I don't know their language, and they don't know mine, but we manage to understand each other, and we get on very well together. No, there is never any trouble with them—they are all so good it is a pleasure to nurse them."

The commandant had spent sufficient time in the Indian medical service to understand the ways of the native troops, so, when he learned that 200 wounded Indians were to be the first patients in his hospital, he sent down to Southampton and "bought up every spittoon I could lay hands on. I put one spittoon down on each side of each bed, and knew then that they had no excuse for cigarette ends, burnt matches, and the like, lying about the floor of the wards. And in a day or two they understood—there has been no more trouble about untidiness."

The wards were testimony for the truth of the statement. They were tenanted by Pathans, Sikhs, Gurkhas—every kind out from the fighting in France, and tenanted, too, in this mid-afternoon by convalescent British soldiers who had come to talk to their brown chums. Some wards are set apart for the use of white men, and there the Indians visit, for among the wounded British soldiers in this hospital are men who have spent years of their service in India, and the Indian troops are glad to have a talk with white men who have served in the same stations as themselves.

Unlike the Voluntary Aid hospitals which have come into being in the country, this Netley establishment has been built for its purpose—there has been no need for adaptation. Counties and individuals have given huts for use as wards, as recreation rooms, and as quarters for the staff—a famous actress gave the operating theatre, in which three operations had taken place on the day that I saw it. There is an X-ray hut, fitted with the most modern apparatus, and kept busy by the needs of the patients. There is about the hospital as a whole a thing that is typical of all these Red Cross hospitals—an air of comfort, supplementary to the actual provision of necessities. For instance, in addition to the ordinary store of clothing and necessities which forms a part of every military hospital, there is at this Netley Red Cross hospital a separate store filled with every kind of warm clothing and underclothing, which is given to men who, on going out, are deficient in any article they may need. There is a library on some of the shelves of the store for the use of patients in the hospital, and, as a whole, it may be said, more than mere necessaries are considered and provided against.

Except for the commandant, every member of the staff is a voluntary worker. The nurses have been selected by the British Red Cross Society, and the orderlies have been provided from Red Cross Voluntary Aid detachments throughout the country—from Radnorshire to Cumberland have they set out for service, and the service is such that a R.A.M.C. man could do no better. There is an artist who has temporarily abandoned a promising career to take up the work of nursing the wounded ; there is an Egyptologist who, owing to his organising abilities, has been given non-commissioned rank with less delay than generally happens in the Regular service ; there are all sorts and classes, but they are alike in a keenness for their work which makes discipline easy and the running of the hospital a clockwork matter. Of what body of 150 men, gathered in like circumstances, could it be said that there has not been one single case of misbehaviour of any kind ? Yet this is true of the orderlies of the Netley Red Cross Hospital.

To the average soldier Netley means much, and this is especially true of the soldier who, in normal times, has gone out on foreign service.

Broken in frontier campaigns, fever-wrecked from West Africa, or damaged in fighting for the Empire on any class of service, the soldier looks to Netley as the great place of recuperation from all ills. Its long front is one of the last sights on the mainland as he leaves England, and one of the first to meet his eye on his return; and Netley itself has stood, for years past, as the centre of all that is best in military medical research. Meaning so much to the British soldier, it is fitting that, to these wounded Indians who have come to England for recovery, Netley should stand for such care and attention as they have never found before. It is eminently fitting, too, that the Red Cross hospital at Netley should be one to which the workers can point with such peculiar pride. Ill would it be to say that any one of the many Red Cross establishments is "the best," but it is safe to say that in this particular hospital all that is best and most fitting for the nursing of the wounded is embodied.

In a corner bed of one of the Indian wards lay a smiling Gurkha. "He has been lying there for two months with a compound fracture of the thigh, and he is the life of the ward," said the sister.

"We have never had a complaint from him all the time, and he is so grateful for what we are able to do for him."

The man smiled, and the commandant turned toward him. "You are getting fat—positively fat," he said, in the vernacular, and the man laughed. Two tall Sikhs and two or three chubby Gurkha men standing by their beds also laughed, and the sister laughed.

Broken limbs and bandages, men crippled for life and men recovering to go back to the horror that is war—and laughter! It was good to hear.

SOLDATS BELGES

XI

SOLDATS BELGES

OUT of the ruin and desolation of Belgium, and out of the flight of its inhabitants, have come romances by the score. If you visit the hospitals of the country in which Belgians have been placed, you will find in nearly every one of them such stories as would shame the wildest flights of fiction.

In one of the Red Cross hospitals which has housed a number of Belgians, it was customary to take the wounded men out for motor drives as soon as they were sufficiently advanced toward convalescence. One day a car was out on a country road with four convalescents in it, when suddenly one of the men apparently went raving mad. He yelled in a wild mixture of Flemish and French for the driver to "halt!" Finding that of no avail he started to throttle him as the only possible way of stopping the car. As soon as it had come to a

standstill he jumped out on to the road and ran back to where a woman and child were walking. The woman was his wife, and the child was his child: he had left them in Belgium when he answered the call to arms, and from that day onward had neither seen nor heard news of them. Knowing what the Germans had made of Belgium, he had given them up for dead, long since, for his home had been situated in the line of the German advance.

I asked one of these Belgians, a man with his arm broken by a splinter of shell, what he intended to do when he had recovered. He spoke good English, this man, and answered without hesitation that he meant to go back to the Army and kill Germans—he wanted to go back. Now, as a rule, this sentiment is unusual. The Belgian Army is a very new organisation, and most of the men who have fought and have come out wounded have had such experience of war as makes them reluctant to plunge in again—they are not like the men of a professional army, but civilians who have fought bravely while there was need, and now make way for the more fully trained troops of their allies, willing to go back if called, but a little doubtful

of their own powers, after the terrible things they have endured. But here was one asking to return, and I questioned the reason for this desire.

"Look you," he answered. "I saw my wife shot, and my father and mother murdered, and my daughter taken away—if God is good, they have killed her too, for it is better so for her. I have lost all, and now I will go back to shoot Germans until they kill me, for there is nothing else left for me. It is all I have to live for, to shoot Germans until I am dead. There is no more use for me in living."

They said of him that he talked very little to his fellows in the dainty little Red Cross hospital, but brooded most of the time. When he talked, it was of going back, as he had talked to me. He was a man of middle age, and looked as if he might have had many more years of life and happiness. He brooded, a striking reminder of war and its horrors, among these friendly English nurses who could cheer all the other patients with their ministrations. He sat as a vivid contrast to the work of healing, the renewal of hope and life that went on about him—the strings of his life had been broken.

In one hospital not twenty miles from London were, until recently, two wounded Belgian soldiers from the same regiment ; before the war they had been fellow-townsmen ; they had fought side by side, and, wounded, by some strange chance had been placed side by side in the hospital ward. One of them had heard nothing of his wife and children since leaving his own country ; he knew that the town in which he had lived before the war had been wrecked and sacked by the Germans, and felt that his wife and children might be dead, they might be in England—they might be anywhere, but from the day of his leaving them he had heard nothing of them. He talked with his fellow-townsman about them, and wondered, sometimes hoping, sometimes feeling that there was no longer room for hope. He asked people to make inquiries for him, if it were possible, among the crowds of refugees in the country—he would give anything, do anything, if only he could find his wife and children again. A great talker, he talked always of his wife and children. "Oui, oui," he would say as they told him the war news. "Ça avance, lentement, lentement—mais c'est ma femme, vous comprenez. Je lui écris—on fait des enquêtes, mais—pas de mot."

His fellow-townsman in the next bed, with whom he talked at times about this in the way that a man will, had seen a massacre of women and children by the Germans, and had seen the other man's wife fall among the victims. But he dared not, he could not, tell the other man what he had seen. He whispered it to visitors, and wondered what he should do about it, but kept silence when his friend talked of finding his wife again, for he dared not tell.

So the one man wondered and questioned, hoping still that he might see the wife and children who counted more than aught else on earth with him—and the other man carried the story of their fate. If that situation were put in a work of fiction, it would stand as so far beyond the bounds of possibility as to discredit the author.

But the story does not end there—its conclusion is more improbable still. It happened that one night a concert was given at the hospital in which these two men were housed. The wounded, the convalescent, the nurses, and the visitors of the evening had just finished singing the Belgian national anthem, when suddenly, at the end of a long passage which led to the hall, a tremendous

hammering was heard. The door was opened, and from the darkness of night outside there came blinking into the hall a little Belgian woman carrying a portmanteau. They had no time to question her, for as her eyes grew used to the light she gave a great cry and simply flew along the passage. At the other end of the hall, standing at attention as the anthem was being sung, was her husband, he who had wondered and worried; beside him was the friend who had seen her fall before the fire of German rifles, and who could not tell; and those who heard the woman's cry say that it will remain in their ears for all time.

They say, those who witnessed the scene, that it was one of the most wonderful they can ever know. Description is futile in the face of such drama as this, and any attempt at description would be banal, beside the reality.

It may be said, however, that the story told by the other man, concerning the shooting of the woman, was quite true. She had been one of a batch of victims of German brutality, and had fallen with the rest—but had crawled away unscathed—her husband's comrade had seen her fall, and naturally had concluded that she was dead.

That she should come back from the grave in such fashion as this makes drama of the highest order out of what is far too often unrelieved tragedy.

The story of her wanderings is in itself a romance. First of all, she had placed her children in the care of various relatives in Belgium, and then had packed her belongings and started to walk from Brussels to Flushing, a distance of about seventy miles. At points on the way she was able to beg an occasional lift in a cart, but for the most part she walked, carrying her portmanteau all the way, and from Flushing she managed to get over to Folkestone, where she began to make enquiries. She was given the address of the Belgian headquarters in London, where she tramped to get her husband's address. Then, knowing that he was in a little country town in the south of England, she began to feel near her journey's end—but it must have seemed to her that she was still a long way off, for the people could not understand her when she asked, and it was difficult to get them to comprehend anything.

Late at night she arrived at the little country station. All lights had been extinguished; from house to house she made enquiries, and at last, as

the concert closed, she came to the house where the Belgian and Red Cross flags told her of the journey's end.

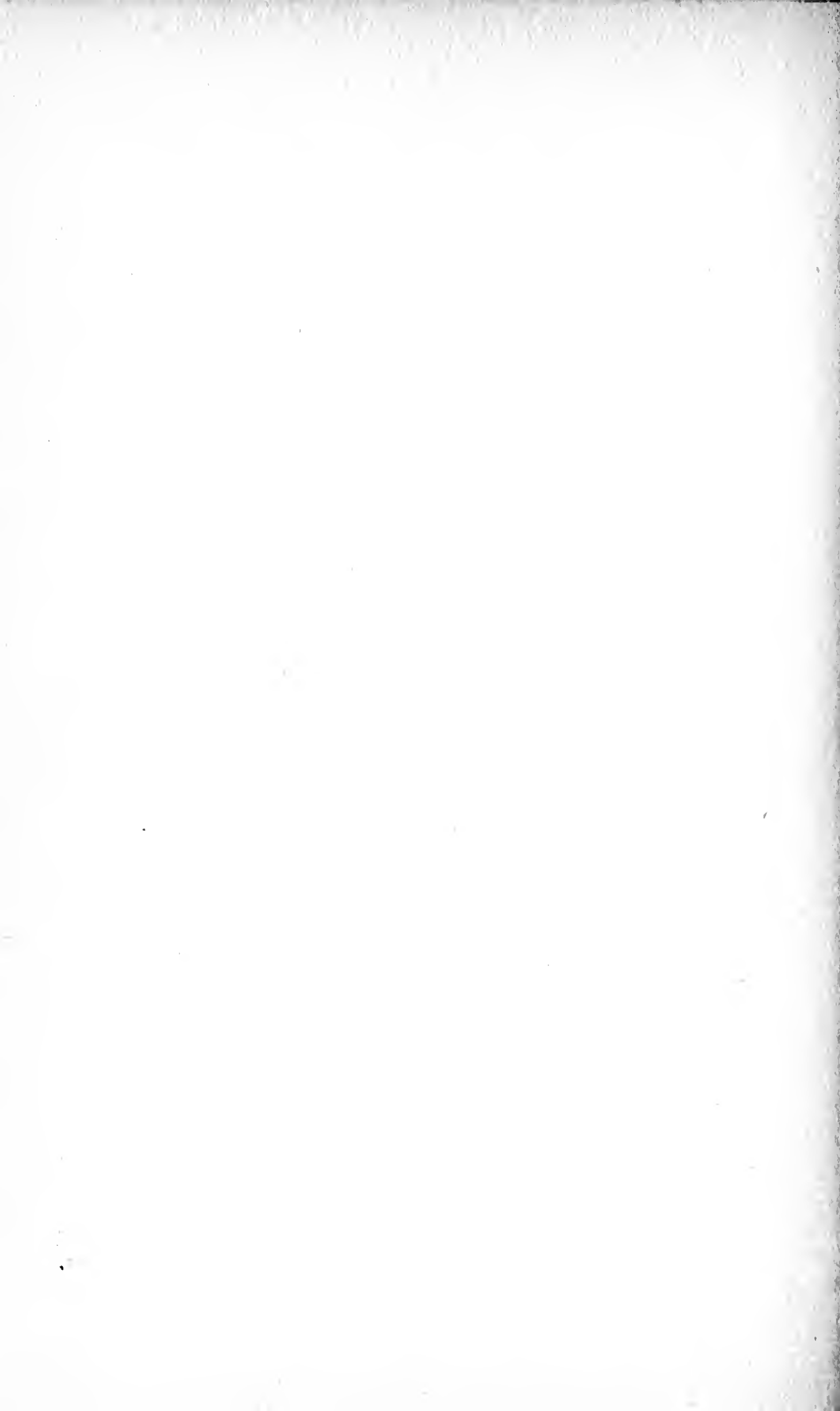
At the present time, both she and her husband are housed in a refugee home close to the hospital. The husband, crippled with sciatica, has been discharged from the hospital, and every day his wife goes in to do some mending—it is her way of repayment. And now, since love can find a way over or through every difficulty, she is making plans to go back to Brussels and bring over the children, for the crippled soldier wants them with him in the safety of England—England that can never quite repay the heroism out of which have come such romances as this.

One could tell so many striking stories of these Belgians who have been nursed under the Red Cross, but let this one suffice. It may be that it explains a little the spirit of the young men of that heroic country, and the spirit, too, of the mothers who send them forth. An old Belgian woman had tramped across her own country in search of her son, who had been wounded in the early fighting. She followed him from place to place, going to infinite trouble to learn news of him, and

always following on a day or two too late. So, following on, she learned that he had been taken to England, and she followed still. Among the many thousands of Belgian refugees in England it was hard to trace an inconspicuous one, but she never lost heart, and prosecuted her search, helped as far as was possible by the people with whom she came in contact. She found, at last, that her son had been taken to a certain Red Cross hospital, half the country's length distant from the point to which her search had carried her, and she set out for that hospital, only to find on arrival that her boy had recovered. Two days before he had gone back to join the Belgian Army again, and take his place in the ranks.

Her search had lasted many weeks, and only mothers can tell what its end meant to her, but she accepted the news of her son's departure with the splendid heroism that has characterised all the race of Belgians in the tragedy of their country.

"It is well," she said to the Red Cross nurse. "He will do his duty. It is good to know that he is strong again."



"WASHING UP"

XII

"WASHING UP"

THOSE who know anything of Kipling's Ortheris understand that, so far as ordinary civilian life and doings are concerned, he was not a very attractive figure. And to this day there are many of the class of Ortheris in the Army. They were looked on, before the war, as not altogether desirable characters; it was generally considered that the Army was the best place for them, since they were out of the way and could do no mischief there. For the most part, their good qualities went unrecognised. They were "common" soldiers.

But life will never again be quite the same for any of us, for Britain must bear the marks of this war for ever—scars, honours, and crape—and the values of men and things are already changing: social conditions are becoming different: what war has cleansed shall never again be called

common, and these "undesirables" have proved themselves clean-souled, even great-souled, in the stress of the fighting. Outwardly, they may be unprepossessing in appearance and character, but we are learning, we are discovering, every day.

A certain Ortheris landed in a Voluntary Aid hospital—let us be frank about him and say that he was an unattractive little man, with a face all blotched, with front teeth missing, an apology for a nose, and a shaven yellow head. He had had both feet frostbitten in the trench work in France, but he was going back in a week, and longing to go. He cared particularly about nobody, and nobody cares particularly about or is dependent on him—a man without a home or home ties. He took the King's shilling, long before the war began, because his appearance was against him with employers, and he was generally regarded as no good at anything.

He has been in the trenches day after day, doing his bit, but he has no story to tell about it—men of his kind are inarticulate over the realities of war.

"Had a bad time?"

"I know some wot's 'ad wuss."

"Foot hurt?"

"No, it don't—not 'alf."

"Pretty rough, that trench business, isn't it?"

"It ain't exactly a pantomime."

That was about the sum total of his conversation on the journey from the military hospital to which he had first been brought to the country Voluntary Aid Hospital to which he had been drafted; he preferred to sit silent in the motor and watch the countryside. Some of Kitchener's new levies marched past us, and his "Wot O!" meant a great deal. Later, I asked one of the nurses about him, describing him as "my ugly little friend." But the nurse was up in arms at once.

"It's a pity England isn't peopled altogether with men like your ugly little friend, as you call him," she said indignantly. "He's a perfect little gentleman. The pluck of him—the politeness, and the determination! He begged to be taken out for long walks every day, so that he might get his foot into walking order, though he could only just hobble at first. He couldn't thank us enough for what we did for him—always afraid he was a bother, always asking if he could lend a hand, and

all the time thinking about how he could get back. It's men like your ugly little friend"—the scorn of it!—"who will finish the war."

Six months ago that nurse was a young lady of infinite leisure. She had her own maid, her own motor-car. Her life was spent in very pleasant places. Now, as she is not very experienced in nursing, she spends the long days in the scullery of the hospital, washing the dishes for the fifty patients—such men as this Ortheris of the trenches. She knows him well, for, when she has an hour off, the hospital commandant lets her take some of the men out for a walk, and this one, who wants to exercise his frostbitten foot and get fit to go back, is one of those who go for walks with her.

"Washing dishes," the outsider will say, "probably for an hour once a week — the sort of eccentricity that a lady performs once in a while for a fashionable charity. Just to make a show—something to talk about—I've seen them at it at bazaars. . . ."

But that estimate must go the way of all preconceived notions about V.A.D. work, for one of the most striking things in the whole organisation

is its discipline. The commandant commands; the hours are long, the work strenuous; the hours must be kept, and the work must be done—there is little or no paid help. And, such is the spirit of these women of England that—although the romance and thrill of unexpected things, the enthusiasm born of semi-ignorance that marked the first days, have passed—there are still so many waiting that if one falls out by reason of ill-health, or—what is most uncommon, by shirking—there is a long and eager waiting list to fill all vacant places.

"I suppose you have never done anything of this kind before," I asked one of the nurses in the pause after the soldiers' evening meal.

"We had never done *anything* before," she answered.

They have laid aside all the delightful past of a woman's life — it is as nothing, now, and this work is everything. After five months of the work, too; it is not a transient enthusiasm.

"Fine!" you comment. Yes, but it has its sadder side, for these women will never be the same again. They have seen the ugly things of life; they have learned what a few of us know—and those

few regret the knowledge—what this body of our humiliation means. It is no kid-glove work that they do—a suppurating wound with a tube in it is not a pretty sight; dirt is not a pretty thing. Gangrenous flesh, torn, crushed limbs—ah! these are very horrible. These nurses may have pitied and even sorrowed over such things in the past, if ever chance gave them a passing contact with suffering, but now they have touched and handled —uglier and more ghastly things than can be written.

Do not imagine that the girls alone have done their part. Wives and mothers who have earned their rest, but refuse to take it, are sharing in this work, while business men, who in normal times would count it unforgivable if dinner were delayed on their return from the City, now forgo home comforts without complaint and spend their spare time in doing "odd jobs" for the hospitals, in running errands, in motoring patients about—helping as best they can, tired always, blundering often, but doing their best to help their "women-folk." Listen to the conversation in a suburban train: "My wife—she's wonderful! Up at seven in the morning, off to the hospital, never a minute

late—I tell you the women of this country—they are splendid!" This work has called up no one class, no one type, but all classes and all types—it has been made a family work, in which father and mother and daughter are doing their part. And the sons are in the trenches of France.

There is an absence of heroics in these Voluntary Aid hospitals, and for the most part there are small duties and worries—the small things that grow big from the fact that *all* must be done. It is no light thing to put into unaccustomed hands the catering for fifty hungry men at two shillings a day, including all medical requirements, yet the lady-quartermasters do this day after day, having never undertaken such work before—the most any of them had done was to supervise the working of her own household. There was at first the language difficulty to be overcome, but the flow of French now is wonderful when necessity draws it forth, especially when the convalescent Belgian discovers that he can buy the best chocolate at the "Pig and Whistle," and disappears in the evening to sample that chocolate!

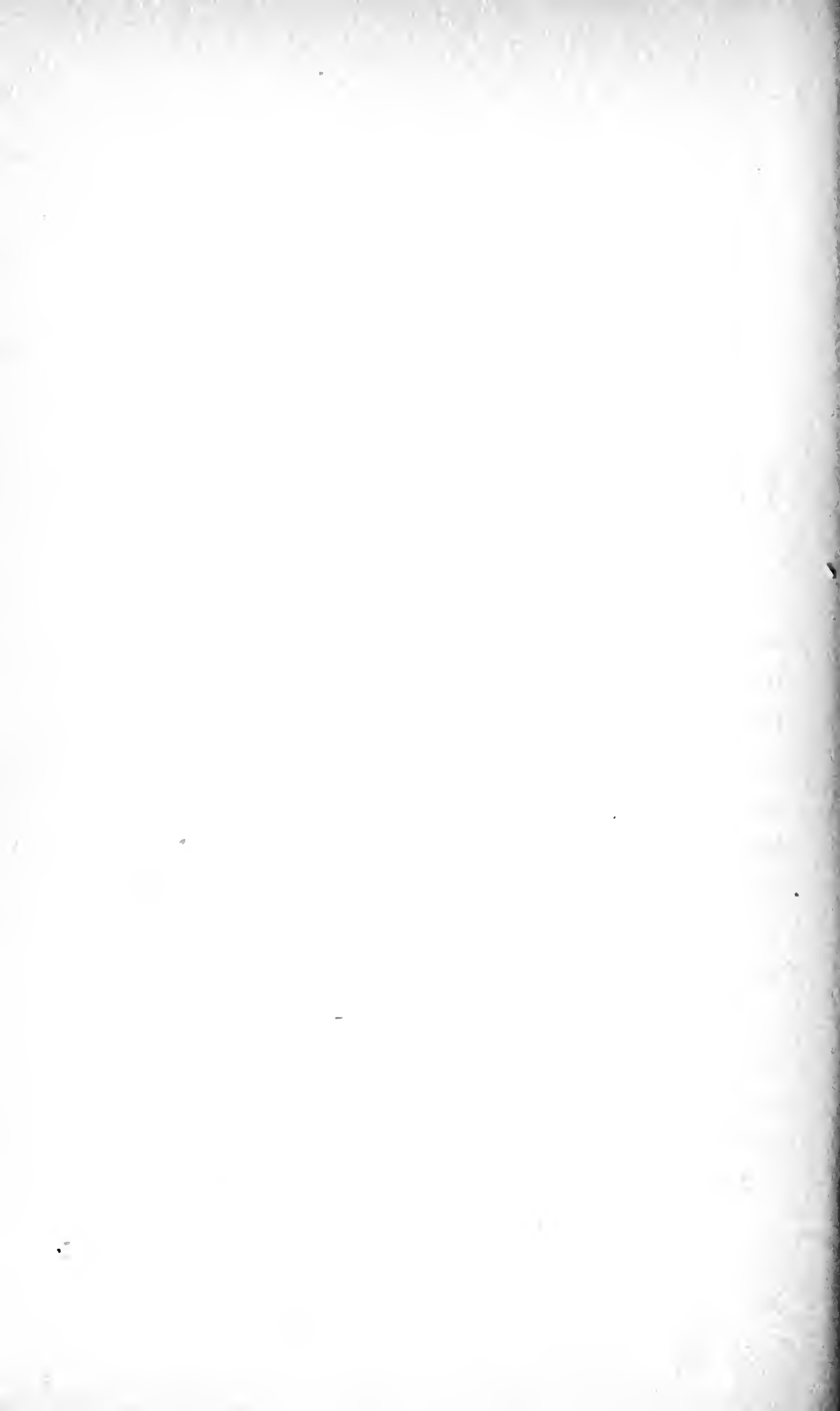
It was with the Belgians that the nurses had their first experience of war, and that has helped,

I think, in their appreciation of the other side, the tragic heroism that has come out of the world-war. They cannot say enough of the bravery and devotion of the little Belgian shopkeepers—who saved Europe, be it remembered. "Think of it," they say, "just children, or just the kind of men we have bought from in the shops. Not soldiers at all as you and I understand the term, but delicate, sensitive men of the towns; rough, undisciplined men of the country—still full of fight, still confident, still determined. And their wonderful appreciation of all that is done for them—their courtesy. . . ."

They have proved, these Belgians, to a class that was attracted by temperament to a surface cynicism, that the cause does mean something in warfare. For in old time, before the war, we should have smiled at the suggestion that such men as these had any chance against the most highly trained army of Europe. Sight of these men is enough to increase one's belief in the value of a good cause, for in some ways they are so little soldiers—and yet in other ways they are the finest soldiers in the world, for a just cause is part of their armament.

" It's an honour to wash up for them," said the lady with her maid and her car. She has washed up for them through sixteen weeks, and will go on washing up for them for years if the commandant needs her services.

BEYOND THE HOSPITAL GATES



XIII

BEYOND THE HOSPITAL GATES

BEYOND the hospital gates you might think that the activities of the Red Cross are at an end. But it is not so. Many men, on leaving the hospitals, though healed of their most grievous hurts, are not whole again in body or mind. Shattered nerves are worse to cure than splintered bones, and many suffer from both. They need a long period of rest without further treatment, or with modified treatment. Suitable convalescent homes for the reception of these men, offered for the use of the Red Cross Society, have in the majority of cases been handed straight over to the military medical authorities. But sufficient work is still done directly by the Society to call forth from the great lady at the head of the convalescent homes department the remark that she is just "a maid of all work."

She is kept very fully employed, for there are

many problems, delicate and difficult, confronting this serious lady who works all day and thinks out schemes at night for helping wounded officers and men who, having started on the road to complete recovery, stand in need of much rest and care before going back to the work in France, or, permanently incapacitated for service, back to their homes, having done their part. The solution of these problems is not merely a matter of hard work. It requires tact and gentle womanliness and a great experience of and sympathy with the idiosyncrasies of military nature.

Some reference has already been made to the cases of neurasthenia which occur both in the course of naval and military active service. The following extracts from a letter from the wife of one of these cases, a man who was sent to one of the convalescent homes of the Society, will give some idea of the work the department is doing.

" I do wish you could see my husband now. He looks a different person and feels it, and it is the greatest joy to me to see him gaining strength every day, and gradually getting back his usual spirits and energy. We simply love this place, and I am quite sure that the Red Cross Society could not

send convalescent officers to a better spot. The weather has been perfect for the last week . . . the snow perfect for ski-ing, and the ice-rink is a great attraction. We are doing more skating at present, as the ski-ing is too strenuous for my husband.

"This little hotel is most comfortable and quite big enough, unless our numbers grow. The people in charge are most kind and thoughtful for everyone, and it makes such a difference having someone like that here. I do hope more officers will take advantage of the Red Cross generosity, for I am sure that after a few weeks in such perfect surroundings any of them would be able to go back perfectly fit for active service. I myself feel ten years younger, and I am glad to say my babies are well and happy at home."

One such letter, with heartfelt gratitude in every line, would justify the effort that is being made, and the lady receives many. There are many branches of activity in connection with the treatment of convalescent patients, and the way in which institutions, and especially hotels, have contributed to the work is worthy of remark. Several of the principal London hotels have set

aside rooms for the use of single officers, and suites for the use of those who are married—in this matter the Cecil took the lead, and now many others have followed. At coast resorts many of the hotels have provided free accommodation for convalescent officers, with a radiant heat treatment, very effective in certain cases, which has been placed at the disposal of the Society for use on such cases as may be thought advisable—at a nominal charge in the case of officers, and absolutely free to non-commissioned officers and men. "Urgent cases may be sent at once," wrote the principal responsible for the treatment, "as we have this branch already working, and a note from your Society will ensure the patients receiving prompt attention. We shall be very pleased to do this, because we know it is the treatment that can in most cases effect a rapid cure in regard to sprains, stiffness after fracture, rheumatism and similar disorders."

At Bath and Harrogate the waters have been placed at the disposal of Red Cross patients, free of all cost to the patients or to the Society, and at both these places convalescent homes have been established for men, while accommodation has been found for the officers in the hotels. Throughout the

country private houses have been given to the Society for use as convalescent homes, both for officers and men. There is in process of formation a convalescent home for those saddest of all cases, men who have lost their sight, as so many have done on the battlefields of France and Belgium. This home, when completed, will be devoted entirely to housing the blind, who will be taught the best ways of making use of their lives in a dark world.

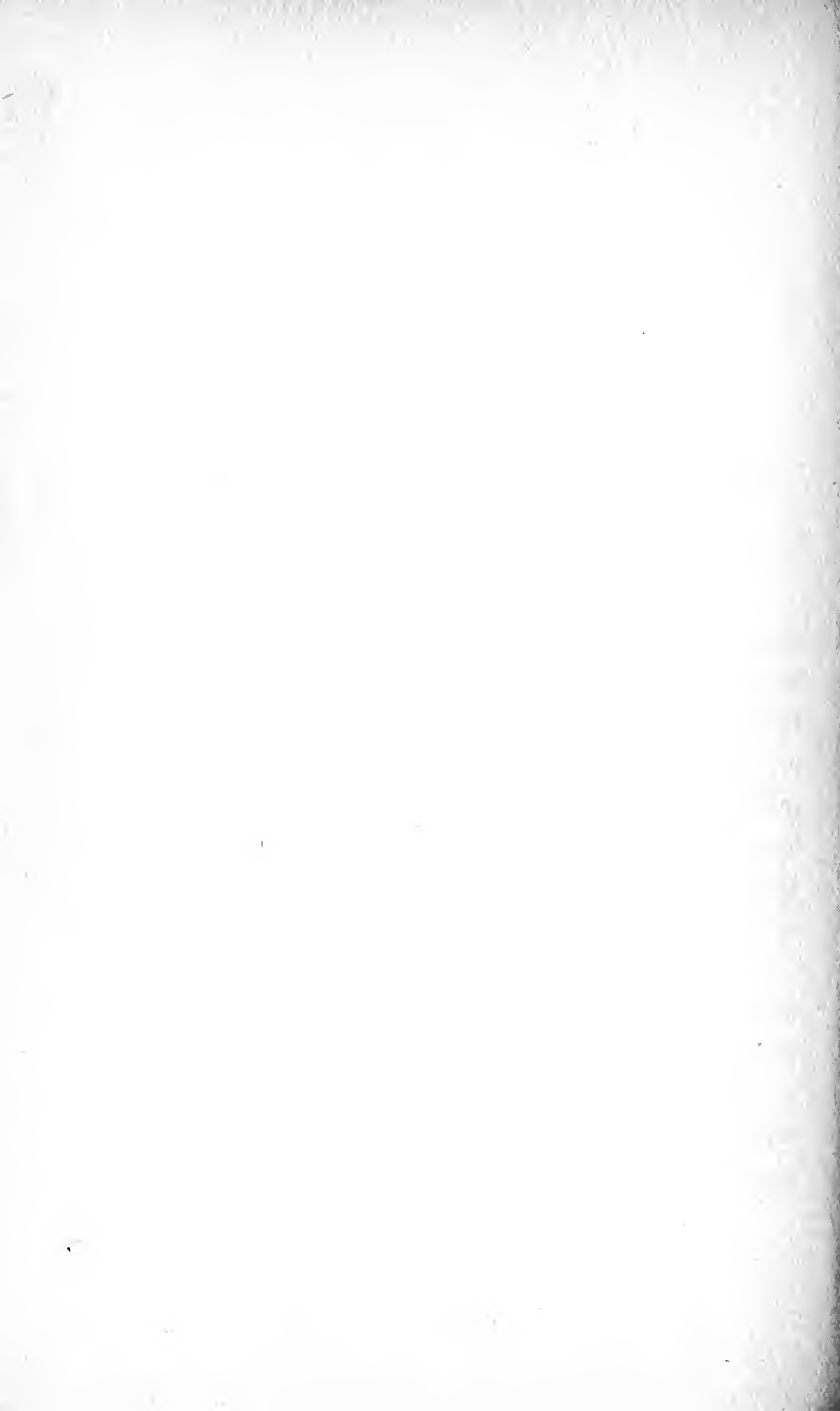
To understand what all this work means, one must reckon up the various sources of aid, the classes of men to be provided for, their very varying needs, and then try to calculate what the co-ordination of the whole implies. It is only a branch of the activities of the Society, but it means dealing with hotels and established homes in Britain and abroad; gathering in the statistics of private houses which offer whole or part accommodation, examining all that is offered in order to make certain of its suitability for the purpose for which it is offered — and then, on the other hand, turning to the various cases which stand in need of assistance and fitting them into the accommodation provided. Apart from the other work of the Society, there is in this con-

valescent department of the Red Cross Society a business—one which had to be organised on business lines, and has to be run with minute attention to detail.

"Those three men—nerve cases. . . . I think we can find room for them at Brighton. Will you wire at once, please? . . . Two beds vacant at Cannes. The very place for those officers who are leaving hospital to-day. We can squeeze another into that Swiss place. Can he catch the boat train to-morrow? . . ."

So it goes on, and such letters as that quoted above come back. The lady and those who tirelessly help her have a wonderful reward now. I wonder if they ever picture the arrival at the front of the officer they have saved from himself, have helped back to his bravest self. Probably they have no time for such imaginings. But in his work, when he does return, they have their reward.

THE GUNNER



XIV

THE GUNNER

"YOU know," he would say to his mates in the workshop, "Ahm nut a scholar, like sum o' ye. But A've seen a bit o' life."

For he was an ex-soldier, this gunner. He had gone from India to Africa for the South African war, finished his time in Africa, and then come out from the service to begin work again in a Sheffield machine shop. There for four years he played an inconspicuous part, and on Sundays he wore above the top left-hand pocket of his vest the King's and Queen's South African ribbons. He was proud of these ribbons.

The assassination at Sarajevo left him totally unmoved. Never having heard of Franz Ferdinand before, he wondered why such a fuss was made over a "little tin-pot prince," away out in a country where killing was an everyday business. He began to take an interest in international affairs at the

end of July, and when war was actually declared he had the whole situation off by heart. " It'll be an everlasting disgrace if this country don't chip in," he asserted, when pay-night came round, " and if it don't, hang me if I don't run off and volunteer for service with the French army."

But the country " chipped in," so he stuck to his post in the machine shop, and debated over events with his mates. At home he discussed things with his wife, and at times he made heroic resolves about buying only one evening paper every day. But those resolves never came to anything.

" Happen they'll want thee to go ? " his wife asked him nearly every morning of the first fortnight.

" Happen there's men withaht wives to think abaht," he would answer, with an air of evasion. Then he would get away to work, lest she should question him more closely. For as the rumours grew of how the British troops were going out, he began to feel the pull of old associations. His battery would go out ; some of the men he had known and lived with would go out, his own fighting heart had already gone out—and he—why should he be missing ? He remembered the smell

of the horses—even a brewer's dray passing him in the street would recall that—and in thought he handled his equipment again and prepared for the turnout that still sounded every morning, though he no longer heard it.

The news of Mons worried him, and the fact that a new army was forming spoilt the flavour of his tobacco for him. The posters in the streets with their "We want men," and similar phrases, seemed to speak directly to him. The new gramophone in the front room lost its powers of attraction; even "Tak' me back to Yorkshire," his favourite record, seemed tinny and unmusical, for the rattle of the guns on the road and the clank of harness were in his mind. The guns were going out—and here was he in a machine shop! Men whom he knew—single men, it was true—were volunteering. Eight years of life with the guns were fretting him every minute of the day, and they wanted men, over there in France.

Early in September he came home from the works on pay-day and put down all his wages except one shilling on the table. His wife looked first at the little pile of coin, and then at him.

"Ah mun go," he said. "Evans is away, and

he's got two lads to worry abaht, while we ha' nowt. Ah mun go, lass, Ah mun go."

It was his own form of patriotism that had forced the decision, for patriotism is as diverse as men in its means of expression; it was the fact that the men he had known and lived with for so long were out there doing their bit, and they wanted help. His wife made no protest, for she was not that sort of woman.

"Happen I knew tha'd go," she said quietly.

They arranged things as best they could. She was to go back to her home, and, by going out to work, supplement the allowance he could make her out of his pay. They speculated on the probable time that would elapse before his return, and then he took out his discharge papers and made his way to the recruiting office, where he passed back into the army without trouble. Before setting out for his training depot, he asked for leave to go back and bid his wife good-bye once more, and they gave him leave for a couple of hours. At the end of that time he came back again, and was sent down to the south of England to draw his kit, drill, and in various ways fit himself for the tasks that lay before him.

He tried to get back to his old battery, made applications through official channels and in the official ways to that end, but with no result. In the middle of November he went out to France with a battery of brand-new guns as full corporal. There was a transient feeling of pride in the promotion, but he would have given it all to be back in the old battery with his pals who had gone through the bad days of Mons and had called for help. Still, this new battery would be helping them. . . .

He had had some varied experiences in South Africa, and had seen some mud there, at times, but the mud round Armentières was beyond all description. And in South Africa there had been intervals between actions, but here round Armentières was action front and right and left every day, until to his trained eyes those brand-new guns began to look sorry old things for want of external cleaning, and the grooves in the bore of his own particular gun showed signs of wear. From a pattern of mud on the trail one day a member of the gun crew named it Aunt Mary—he said it looked like Aunt Mary—and by that name the gun was known thenceforward.

The corporal who had been a gunner and a machine-shop hand in Sheffield was proud of Aunt Mary, more especially when the officer commanding the brigade complimented him on some specially good work she had done. But there was not much time to be proud of anything, for life was mainly a scrambling business of mud and loading and aiming and hurried meals. One day a big howitzer shell landed squarely in the right section of the battery and silenced a gun and the better part of its crew for all time: the corporal saw the incident, and though it made him feel physically sick he was glad it had not been Aunt Mary and her crew that suffered so. Not for the sake of his own life or the lives of the men of his section, but because Aunt Mary counted for something, and he had reason to be proud of her. He calculated his place on the roll of the battery, and understood that he would be sergeant at nightfall, thanks to the howitzer shell. But he would rather have been without the extra stripe, if . . . well, war's war.

There was the rattle of rifle fire away to the right front, the steady pounding of the guns, the screech and thundering of the big howitzer shells that made pits in the earth out in front, stretcher bearers

hurrying, and Aunt Mary doing her work as if at a practice camp—and this was war! Then another big howitzer shell came a little nearer, its explosion even spattering mud over Aunt Mary's crew, and then——

The corporal who had been a gunner, and who, farther back, had been a machine-shop hand in Sheffield, tried to get up on his feet after a blank period. But he found he had only one foot left—though he felt no pain, one leg had been taken clean off by the explosion of a howitzer shell, and the other was broken: the pain would come later. Aunt Mary was twisted and battered out of the semblance of a gun, and of the men of the section most were lying as he was lying. Most of them, he realised, would never get up again. Well, it was all in the day's work.

In a very little time the stretcher bearers came his way, and took what was left of him out of range of the howitzer shells. He was chloroformed and operated on, and the next thing he remembered was the hospital train, which went on and on, slowly and apparently for ever—an infinity of pain. In the journey was an interval of delirium, during which he filled the long corridor-car with snatches

of his favourite song, in that musical voice which is given to Yorkshiremen among the many gifts of God—

"*Tak' me back to Yorkshire . . . ony owd tahn'll do.*"

But of that he knew nothing.

When, at the final halt, he was very carefully lifted out of the train, and given a hot drink and a cigarette by a quiet, busy little nurse, he recognised the Gare Maritime, having had it for his first impression of France as he was going up country—years and years ago, it seemed now.

"I am afraid you're in great pain," said the little nurse.

"Ah cum fra' Sheffield," he replied, and though she was a southerner she understood the implied reproof and apologised.

An ambulance hurried off through the cobbled streets, bearing him to the hospital. At last he was placed in a comfortable bed, his wounds were dressed, and he was left alone.

He did not feel sleepy, but lay and thought. He would be a one-legged man when he got back, unable to work at the shops, probably. There would be a pension, somewhere about a shilling a

day, he guessed. The doctor had said something about "internal hæmorrhage," and though he was no scholar he knew what that meant. It referred to the constant pain in his side, up under the arm —they had given that wound only a rapid dressing before he had been put in the ambulance train, for it was not the sort of thing that could be treated to any extent on the field.

An infantryman with his arm in a sling came and sat on the corporal's bed and asked if there were anything he could do, and the corporal, mindful of the internal hæmorrhage and of the fact that the nursing sister was a very busy woman, asked the infantryman if he would mind writing a letter home for him. The infantryman got paper and pencil, put the paper on top of the corporal's locker and a basin on it to keep it steady, since his left hand could not perform that office, and said, "Fire away."

"My dear wife," the corporal dictated. "I am in hospital, having been wounded, not very badly. I was lucky, for several of the men on my gun was killed right out. I shall be able to write to you myself in a week or two, and expect

to get sent home as soon as I can be moved. With best love and kisses."

The infantryman wrote "signed" in brackets, for he had been an orderly-room clerk in his time, and added the corporal's name. Then he brought along a packet of cigarettes, and though the corporal was a pipe-smoker he was much too tired and in pain to mention the fact. "Ah weant smoke yet," he said.

The infantryman went away, and left him to watch the work of the ward. The sister bustled round, very busy over various cases, but there was nothing she could do for him just then, and he knew it. He wondered how long it would be before he could get sent home, and then he saw two men who had been talking together look round at him. At that he knew he would not go home any more, probably because of that internal hæmorrhage.

He remembered that he had asked for leave to go back and bid his wife good-bye again—he was glad he had done that, as far as it was in him then to be glad of anything. He remembered how she had said that she knew he would go, and wondered if she had known, too, that he would not return.

Inconsequently he remembered the gramophone that would now be standing unused in the front room, and the record he had put on hundreds of times—

" *Tak' me back to Yorkshire.*"

He wished he could see his wife just once more, but . . . well, it was all in the day's work.

Slowly, and with great pain, he moved so that he could look out of the window. It only involved moving his head and neck, but the agony was terrible. And yet he felt he must just look out at the sea, far beyond which lay Sheffield and the machine shops, and the home he had left in order to help the battery that had gone through the days of Mons. The funnel of a steamer pitching in the grey wastes of the Channel caught his eye. For an instant he thought he saw the smoke pouring out from the factory chimneys of Sheffield. He smiled in great content.

The sister, seeing him move, came over to his bed and asked if he wanted anything. But he continued to look out at the sea.

" It's a long, long way——" he said.

She understood that there was nothing she could do for him—nothing that any human being could

do. Then a thought struck her, and, bending over him, she imitated as best she could the friendly tones of the north :

" Good night, lad."

He turned slowly and smiled up at her with dim eyes—it was not *her* voice that recalled him to full consciousness for the minute—it was not her face that he saw bent down toward his own.

" Good neet . . . lass."

POSTSCRIPT

CAN you and I ever do enough for men such as these? Is there *nothing* left for us to give?

"The women of this country—they are splendid!" Have you and I done *all we can* to help them?

The Red Cross work is costing £1 a minute. Soon the call will come for even greater sums. Every copy sold of *The Way of the Red Cross* adds appreciably to *The Times* Fund for the Sick and the Wounded. If as a result of its publication any reader feels moved to send a further contribution, this may be addressed to the publishers, Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton, St. Paul's House, Warwick Square, London, E.C., *marked, The Way of the Red Cross,* and will be duly acknowledged in the columns of *The Times.*

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