

# The Hydra: journal of the Craiglockhart War Hospital

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## NOTES AND NEWS.

### Harvesting.

A good start was made early last week by the officers who have come forward to give the farmers a hand at this critical time. We were all very shy of it for the first day or two, but we soon learned the gentle art of "stooking," for without a doubt there is a knack in this job, as in most others, as was proved to us when the first gust of wind came - only those "stooks" with plenty of "leg" survived the efforts spent over them.

It is a splendid hobby, this, out in the fresh air doing really useful work, with all the beauty of the countryside around one - a fine cure for those with slender appetites, and for those to whom sleep comes in the early hours only.

At times even we old warriors are tempted to forget "there is a war on," were it not for the fact that we are apt to associate "stooking" with that awful bugbear of arm-drill "piling arms." In fact, we have tried stooking by numbers, but it is "no bon."

A few of the more enthusiastic war-workers are turning out to work when some of the more unfortunate patients are just beginning to close their eyes for a couple of hours' sleep before the gong sounds. It takes some doing, this early rising, and when nurse calls us at 5.30, "ack-emma," we are apt to agree with Harry Lauder that "it is nice to get up in the morning, but it's nicer to lie in your bed!" We must confess, however, that the thought of losing the good, wholesome farmer's breakfast, with plenty of sugar (don't all rush at once!), weighs heavily with us, and after rubbing our eyes for a minute or two we "jump to it."

There are three farms in the neighbourhood at which officers from the hospital are helping for a few hours daily. The farmers are very short-handed, and every little helps both the farmer and the country generally. There is still a need for more volunteers, and Mr Young, who has charge of the arrangements, will welcome any others who are willing to join the happy throng and "be a farmer's boy."

### Model Yacht Club.

The club continues to grow in size, and almost every week brings at least one new enthusiast to join in the interesting pastime of model yacht-building and racing.

So far most progress has been made on the sailing-boat side, but several mechanically-propelled boats are being built, and it is hoped that sufficient of these vessels may be ready to compete in some racing events shortly.

There was some very good racing on Monday, 3rd September, when a Regatta for sailing-boats was held. The wind was steady and blowing right down the pond, and the weather bright and sunny.

Twelve yachts competed, including three new untried vessels, "Pompey," Capt. Foster; "White Wings," Mr Beers; and "Thistle," Mr Brand. As usual, "Mystery," Messrs Howe and Braggins, was a hot favourite, and these two keen sportsmen had many supporters. For some reason, however, "Mystery" was not sailing well, her head continually falling off the wind, and it was only by reducing her head sail that this fault was eventually remedied somewhat.

Being such a large field, there was naturally a good deal of fouling; in one sailing, indeed, only one boat got over the course without being disqualified. This chance only makes the racing more exciting, as a boat, though leading slightly from the start, is never safe until actually through the finishing line.

An interesting event was the third, which was under lower sail only, top-sails not being allowed. This was pulled off easily by Mr Beers' "White Wings," with Capt. Sillars' "Sunshine" second.

Results of racing as follows:-

#### FIRST EVENT.

*Winner*, "Sunshine," Capt. Sillars.

*Second Prize*, "Navahoe," Mr Mortleman.

*Third Prize*, "The Scot," Mr Rhind.

#### SECOND EVENT.

*Winner*, "The Scot," Mr Rhind.

*Second Prize*, "Mayflower," Mr Cuffe.

*Third Prize*, "Pompey," Capt. Foster.

#### THIRD EVENT (no topsails).

*Winner*, "White Wings," Mr Beers.

*Second Prize*, "Sunshine," Capt. Sillars.

*Third Prize*, "Mystery," Messrs Braggins & Howe.

### Golf.

Our match against Mortonhall Club ended in rather heavy defeat, by 9 matches to 2. A Foursomes Bogey Competition was held at Barnton on 29th August, and resulted in a win for Capt. Sherriff and Lieut. Eyre, second prize going to Major Bingham and Capt. Gilling. A "Novices" Competition was held on the local links; the best score for each hole on two cards

was taken, and half the player's handicap allowed. This competition was won by Lieut. Davies, with Capt. Ferguson second. A pleasant day was spent at Mortonhall on 7th inst., when a Bogey Competition took place. This was won by Capt. Ballingall with a score of 3 up on Bogey (receiving 7 strokes), Capt. Boah being second with a score of 2 up on Bogey (handicap + 1).

### **Camera Club.**

On 19th ult., Capt. Sampson gave an interesting lecture on "How to Choose a Picture," detailing the pitfalls to be avoided and the features to be welcomed. A discussion followed. The same evening prizes were awarded to - (1) Mr Kershaw, and (2) Mr Brand; and highly commended class to Messrs Rodgers and Rouse.

The following week (Major Hunter presiding) Mr Wadman gave a very interesting paper on "The Importance and Intimate Relationship of Photographic Measures," instancing many facts and bases more or less ignored by the novice, and the consequent failure to do well.

In an open competition Mr Kershaw was adjudged winner of the weekly competition with his delicately treated "Reeds," and Mr Brand next with his study of a simple subject.

On 2nd September (Major Hunter in the chair), no paper having been promised, general photographic matters were discussed before a very good meeting. Capt. Sampson took his formal farewell, and Capt. Mackenzie took up the post of Secretary. Capt. Anderson, R.A.M.C., agreed to read a paper on "X-Ray Photography" at the next meeting.

Mr Morgan has succeeded Mr Bright as purveyor of photographic material, and will welcome inquiries and purchasers. There is no need to ask for a late pass for the reason that one is short of this or that. Mr Morgan can supply anything in reason, and if he does not possess it, give him an order.

We notice that several ardent cameraists use our shop and dark-room - and, *en passant*, our hypo - but do not seem to have any use for us as a photographic section, and we grow grey in pondering over the why and wherefore. We hope they do not consider us too "small bones," and we promise them we are not musty technicalists prone to talk "over their heads." Will they please give us a look up on Sunday evenings at 8.30, armed with pipes and prints, and enjoy a pleasant hour or so chatting "shop"? We feel sure they will not regret it.

### **TO GIRLS.**

If on the beach at past high noon,  
Indulging in that luscious boon -  
Sprawling,

Be careful, should perchance appear,  
A cameraist, slowly, near -

Crawling.

Be sure he is on mischief bent,  
For it is not a heaven-sent

Calling;

As is proved when prints appear,  
Showing ankles, knees - and other gear  
Appalling.

So quickly put such scum to rout,  
If it can be done without

Brawling;

But if too late - you're on the plate! -

Visit on him a ruffian's fate -

A mauling.

C.R.W.

### **Field Club.**

On Monday, 27th August, we had a further digest of papers given at previous meetings. The first of these, dealing with the metaphysics of plants, treated in particular the sensitiveness of growing tissue to gravity. This fact was much discussed, and it was shown that the term "gravity" was a misleading one, since this tendency of roots to turn earthwards under all normal conditions was most probably due to an electro-magnetic influence.

Perhaps the most important matter debated during a *resume* of the paper on "Bees," given by Mr Quayle, was the extraordinary phenomena of the character of the breeding of the queen bee, an insect throwing offspring according to circumstances. As a virgin, or "unmated" mother, under circumstances where the female egg cell proceed to develop independently and without fusion with a male sperm cell, "fatherless" males (drones) are produced. The normal process of gamo-genesis gives both females (workers) and males. An instance, in animal life, of what has been described as "unpaternate" young, was introduced - that of the common frog, developing tadpoles and even adult frogs.

A reference to the present general classification of birds, and to the causes of bird variation noticed in some of the inhabitants of the upper moorlands and other Scottish districts, brought us in touch with Mr Bayley's paper on "The Birds of Midlothian" of the previous week. Illustrations of some of the more startling and curious wing notes, imitative cries, and

bird noises - the call, the alarm, and serenade - which did not overrule the mere power of imagination of the imitator, and the sudden discovery of a roguish hawfinch "nipping" raspberries, stimulated our appetite, as does a fresh lemon on the dinner table, for the splendid assemblage of "viands" provided by the general discussion which followed. To record the prodigal luxuries of this garrulous feast, animated by many superlative perorations, reviving the rollocking memories and striking landmarks of bygone days, a reference to annotations in F.C.S.B. (Field Club scribbling book) must first be made.

An ample tureen of superbly-coloured pottage, made from some hundreds of fine blue hares from the mountains, had a boned duck - one of a splendid day's bag of eighty - swimming in its centre. At the other end of the table, arranged in wedge-shaped flight order, were some grand flocks of geese - big fellows of the species that nest in these parts - flanked on one side by rows and rows of swifts, lately observed alive near by, a corncrake, and some coot; and, on the other, by the tempting delicacies of bombarded pheasant, golden plover, and an Indian myna *a la daube*.

To these succeeded that masterpiece of culinary art, a Brobdingnagian "Fife Pie," in which the bodies of cormorants (previously buried a fortnight to ripen!), all manner of sporting wild fowl, shoals of blackbirds and starlings, blue rocks and every variety of pigeon from the ancient dove-cotes, were embalmed in sweet nectar, and well-bedewed with an epicurean brand of honey wines brought from the East. The irreconcilable ingredients of this single dish were adorned by a puffin in nuptial dress, holding in its enormous beak six live eels, in eclectic company with a number of wonderful little migrants, the willow wrens. A custard, made from lapwing's eggs, offered a pleasant relief after these vaster inventions; and the repast closed with a dash of oysters, cracked by the oyster catcher from mid air, and a pomepetone of young eagles, whose disappearance to localities hitherto unknown, was at last revealed.

A paper on "Sport with Rod and Line off the South Irish Coast," given by Mr Wadman, on Monday, 3rd September, proved very attractive. A jaunting-car to Ballycotton - a fine centre - takes one to a positive "El Dorado" for big sea fish. Here the fisherman will find truly sporting waters, and, in the aggregate, far better and larger-sized fish than anywhere else; mighty congers, halibut just short of a cwt., skate up to 100 lbs., haddocks, cod, grey mullet, pont, pollock, and other varieties. In deep sea fishing the old law of the survival of the fittest holds good, and the case of might is right manifested by the big fish preying upon the smaller. Of the value of this kind of sport as a healthy holiday relaxation it is, perhaps, a platitude to mention.

Association with the charmingly simple Irish home-life - albeit much fish and potatoes - particularly with the conservative mannerisms and typical peculiarities of these jolly old longshoremen, not only helps to keep the day going, but with the exercise of negotiating an

old "whaler" through some fifteen fathoms of water to secure some of the finest bottom fish, savours it with just a spice of danger.

Mr Wadman was heartily thanked for his "sporty" paper. Some of his amusing and hair-raising anecdotes we heard *de camera* will be recorded in another issue.

An afternoon's visit to the Royal Observatory on 7th September, kindly arranged for us by Major Bryce, was much enjoyed. Professor Sampson showed us over the very valuable library, exhibiting many early works of the ancient astrologers, including Ptolemy, Isaac Newton's principae and Napier's canon of logarithms. A fine collection of modern photographs of the lunar system were seen, and many of the instruments and clocks. Our sincerest thanks are due to Professor Sampson for giving his valuable time, and for kindly entertaining the party to tea afterwards.

## LITTLE PIERRE

It is a terribly hot day, and the streets of the city by the sea are thronged with busy people. Trams are full, soldiers, civies, and be-shawled women choke the platforms of the trams speeding away in all directions. The shops have their sun-blinds down, and the whole world and his wife appear to be struggling to get to their destinations. The cafes are doing good business, and the paper women are vending their wares with a ready sale, for war is in the air and every one is anxious to glean any tidings. The blue smoked *paysan* is leading his dog-drawn cart, the smartly-dressed widow, with a little long-legged girl in white by her side, gives contrast to the long line of khaki infantry just arriving at the docks and winding its way along with a brisk march that speaks much and gives a confidence to the people who line the kerbs to watch them go by.

Clang, clang, clang, and the line of military heroes inclines a little to allow a tram to glide past. Masts and funnels project beyond the house-tops, and the docks, which extend for miles, are one seething mass of activity. A human formicarium is hard at it, loading and unloading; guns and horses are being slung from the bowels of the giant leviathans, which, having disgorged the contents of their vast holds, will return from whence they came to fetch more material for the grim process of emancipation from the cruel talons of enforced war.

Steam-trains pass through the streets, bearing their grim freights for the front. Guns, steel girders, railroad sets, shells, timber corrugated iron, metalling, tar, oil, mysterious crates covered with mystic symbols, all pass by in a continuous stream towards the outskirts of the town.

Here a batch of German prisoners, under an armed guard, march past, with their trousers and breeches bearing the well-known letters painted as large as possible in healthy black



paint - P.G. - one letter on each leg. The poilus in charge are well satisfied with their wards in chancery, and the sun glints on their bayonets as they turn the corner.

In one corner of the docks is a batch of *prisonniers de guerre* sorting an offensive mound of potatoes, the cargo of a captured German tramp sailing under a false flag for Rotterdam. A large lazy Uhlan stops his work to watch a long procession of artillery drift by on its way to the rest camp on the hill overlooking the town.

It is easy to tell what is passing in his mind as he gazes with sullen interest on the spectacle, and muses on the fates of his "camarades," for whom those machines of war are destined. The cavalcade has disappeared from his view, although he can still hear the sound of its wheels over the cobbles, and he returns to his labours with a glad heart that he will not have to face their music, and that his share of the fighting is over. A grim smile passes across his ugly face as he pauses to think with some satisfaction of the barbarous and wanton cruelties he has perpetrated on his way from Germany - the homes he has demolished, the helpless girls and women he has violated, the little children whose irreparable injuries cry to heaven for vengeance, and whose prayers are being heard by the arrival of these countless munitions of war. It is these brave khaki men who have come to see things righted, who are going to answer those prayers, and drive the shameless Boche from the Garden of Europe with their flaming swords of retribution and of justice.

At the dock-gates is a little boy. He is hanging about waiting. He cannot be more than eight, and his cheeks are pale and tear-stained. He's a well-made little chap, but is pale and thin. His deep blue eyes have an anxious glint in them, but his whole face lights up as we march out, and, like a little Spartan, he falls in and keeps pace. Now running, now walking, he keeps with us as we pass along the busy streets. We have just arrived, and are now making our way to No. 2 Camp, up on the hill overlooking the town on this side and the bay on the other. He speaks not a word to any one, but trots along with a zeal of considerable import. He has no hat, but the sun does not worry him; his short-clipped hair is all the covering he needs to his little oval bullet head.

Children dodge out from doorways and side streets and clamour for "souvenir," "pennee," and "sous." With little out-stretched hands they run along side in all their little grimyness, and clap their dirty palms in delight if all they receive is a smile or a kindly glance. "Inglees!" "Inglees!" "Bon Inglees!" and their little raucous voices give a pleasing jar to the welcome which is extended to us as we march along our route. Windows are open, women are waving, and the girls in the shops give a friendly wave of their hand as we glance at them in passing.

It is a long and dusty march through the town, and the cobbles are not the best things for marching on. Past the Bourse, along the Boulevards, whilst the traffic is held up to give us passage, then the Hotel de Ville is left on the right, and soon we arrive at the Dique. Here we



halt. And, hullo, who's this? Why, it's our little brave from the dock-gates. He has marched quite three miles, and is as fresh as when we first saw him.

Dismounting, I approach him, and, with a real live salute of a French soldier, he says in a sweet little voice without a tremor: "Bon jour, Monsieur le Capitaine."

So in my best French I return the compliment and question him.

"What is your name, little one?"

"My name is Pierre."

"How old are you?"

"Nearly nine, m'sieur."

"This is a long way for you to come, isn't it?"

"No, this is not far. You are only half-way yet."

"How do you know, Pierre?"

"Because I always come with the Ingles soldiers."

"Not every day, surely?"

"M'sieur, I wait at the docks for them, and go with them every day to their camp."

"But why, Pierre?"

"They have come to find the Boche who killed my father. They are all going to find him for me - they have promised to find him for me."

"Your father, Pierre? They killed him?"

"Yes; they killed him with a bayonet when he was wounded. My father was a big soldier; he was a dragoon, and he was wounded. And the Boche came and killed him, and the doctor, M'sieur le Major, whilst he was making him well. The Boche he killed them both with a big bayonet."

"How terrible, Pierre. Where do you live?"

"I live anywhere, m'sieur. Sometimes on the beach, sometimes on the trucks; last night I slept - 'sh - in the hay on the jetty."

"But have you no home here, Pierre?"

"Non, m'sieur. My home was at Neuville St Vaast."

"But have you no mother or anybody here belonging to you?"

"My dear mamma, m'sieur, and my dear sister Annette, they were both taken into the German trenches. My dear mamma - I hear her screams now. My dear Annette - she is fifteen, and she cried and held on to mamma. My dear mamma told me to run fast to Mont St Eloy for safety, and I ran, but I got lost, and I have never seen them since."

"How did you get right down here, Pierre?"

"I hid in the trains. I came to find the Ingles soldiers. And they have all promised to find the man for me who killed my father, and those who took my dear mamma and Annette. Will you

try and find them for me? Oh, m'sieur, do try and find those men. Ask all your soldiers to find them too."

"Poor little Pierre! Of course I will."

His face cleared, and, looking me straight in the eyes, he replied:

"It is a promise! You have promised me this!"

"I will do all I can, Pierre."

It is time to fall in and get under way again. There is a stiff hill to climb yet.

All is ready, and we commence our steady march to the camp. It's a broiling hot day, and as we mount higher the breeze off the sea invigorates and cools. At last we arrive, and who is standing there at the entrance but my little Pierre.

He sees me, runs up, and kisses my hand fervently. "You have promised me!"

It's a good walk back for him - it is quite five miles; and, as he turns to retrace his steps, he calls out:

"Vous m'avez promis, m'sieur!"

A wave of my hand, and a salute from him, and he is gone.

Weeks have gone by and troops are still arriving, and Pierre, little Pierre, labouring under his great obsession, still waits at the dock-gates and follows them up to the rest camp every day. Day in, day out, he still runs by their side, asking for nothing except the promise that they will all try and find the Boche who killed his father, and the devils who dragged away his mother and sister.

He does not know that his mother and sister are dead, and the men who took them to their dug-outs too, and that some Ingles soldiers found their bodies, when they stormed the enemy parapets, and further, that every Hun in those trenches was bayoneted through and through and through for also violating the Red Cross.

Poor little Pierre! Brave little son, worthy child of fearless France! - if he could only know that the other man he is looking for is a huge ugly Uhlan, with a big P.G. on his breeches, sorting potatoes inside those very dock-gates!

### **Extract from ye Chronicles of Wilfred de Salope, Knight.**

THE castle that is called Craiglockhart doth stand perilous near unto two rival holds, the House of the Poor and eke the Asyle of the Loony Ones, so that many seekers of the latter abodes have oft been beguiled unto this castle unwitting; some of whom, as soon as they perceived their error, departed hastily away, and some of whom yet remain.

For indeed it is an abode of much invitingness, where men may well repose from the noise of battle; where hunger is but seldom endured; where no strong liquors tempt the heart to sin, and where all dangerous arms may be laid aside - nay, perforce must be surrendered. For myself, when taking up lodgement herein, did lay my firearm by my pallet-side, as it had long been my wont; but lo! at morn it was utterly vanished away, doubtless by the hand of some Elaine who would fain in her own bower keep it from rust or soilure. Or else it lieth in the dungeons underneath - dark and noisome places, where the foul creeping things that infest the accoutrements fetched from Flanders do lurk unto this day.

No man knoweth the secret windings of these dungeons, nor what passeth betimes in the room that is called the Dark Room. But certes, there moveth a mystery about the castle, and a familiar spirit walketh the corridor by the very light of day. He it is that maketh so familiar with the knights' belts that do hang there, and with the clubs and batons of all the warriors. Likewise certain volumes that I would fain peruse in the night season do unaccountably melt away.

These happenings are the more strange for that the place is often blessed by a holy man. 'Tis a true and honest friar, as is proven by this, that whereas he sayeth grace before meat, rarely doth he make thanks-giving after it.

Of great loftiness is this castle, and its stairways exceeding tedious to mount. I have observed, from afar and cautiously, a device whereby a man may ascend to the topmost regions and do no climbing. But its workings are kened only of the menials. For these have need of such comforts more than the knights, being in sooth weary meagre wights and forlorn.

These same obey the hests of none but the Chief Lord of the Castle, the Knight out of Fife. Both doughty and courteous is he, of noble aspect and right jovial demeanour, and beloved by all that have dealings with him. Seldom doth he administer rebukes. Yet no knight of his hostel feasteth privily at midnight, or walketh abroad without the azure token of infirmity, or loitereth beyond the precincts at unseemly hours, but the Great Knight is surely aware of it. Faithful damosels are at his bidding to keep his records, and to cover his fair white papers with many intricate screeds, for the edification of our daily lives. The same do know the names of all the warriors that do continually come and go; they know also their years, and their ranks, and whether they have won their spurs or wear them on probation; they know their private abiding places, and of what kindred be their maladies. But more than these things they have no mind to know. Nor durst any knight set foot in their bower at any time.

No moat encompasseth the strong-hold, save a broad cincture of gravel which maketh an exceeding hideous noise when walked upon by night. So is the castle marvellous difficult of access by night, the postern windows, moreover, being very stoutly barred.

Now the manner in which the knights disport themselves, and how the skilled leeches do succour them, and the fair sisters how they practise upon them sundry healing arts, shall be duly set forth upon some other occasion.

## CONCERTS.

September 1.

When we had come to the end of the perfect day, as described by the overture "Morning, Noon, and Night," and when the applause for Mr Langridge had reluctantly died down, our eyes were rejoiced by some charming dancing by Miss Jackson. The fairy Mustard Seed does not remember so delightful an elf in all the revels of Titania.

Scotch Kelly is indeed an "Inimitable Comedian" - and an interesting case of pathology aiding therapeutics. As a swaggering parade-ground soldier he certainly out-swaggers Harry Lauder; perhaps because his anecdotes savour more spicily of the barrack-room. We liked his story of the sergeant who told him to take his moustache off, and so apparently he did "Old Bill" (Mr Gage) at his listening-post in the wings, for after Old Bill's first song, "Where did that one go?" he decided his walrus-moustache must go too. Thus the sea-lion roared all the more gently, "like any sucking dove." (You really must read "Midsummer Night's Dream," especially if you liked the enchanting Valse Triste.)

Without Mr Hubbard's songs, the orchestra would again have provided the finest music of the evening. We hope he is preparing plenty of encores for his next appearance.

Mr Baylis scored great success with his coon songs. Space forbids us to be sentimental about "Mad Karoo." Mustard Seed is a little yellow god, but there is no green in his eye.

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The whole of the evening on the 8th September was devoted to the performance of the delightful little comedy, "The Marriage of Kitty." Mrs Arthur Queen and Party supplied the caste, and the performance was very well received by a large audience. While the comedy itself does not strike one as coming from the pen of a genius, the story is very pretty and fascinating, and affords quite good material for a couple of hours' entertainment. The caste was individually good, yet we somehow felt that there was a lack of cohesion, probably due to short preparation and insufficient rehearsal. Mrs Queen, as Kitty, was very charming indeed, her part in the first and second acts was really very well done, but she did not seem quite so happy in the third act. Altogether, we think we have seen Mrs Queen to better advantage. Miss Jenny Jackson, as the Peruvian Widow, gave a rather different portrayal of the character to the customary one; nevertheless it was a very creditable performance - it is

a very difficult part for an amateur. Mr Travers, as the Solicitor, and Mr N. Rowe, as Sir Reginald Belsize, acted their parts with vigour and a good insight to the characters portrayed. They have not, however, yet learned that most difficult achievement of accommodating the voice to the necessities of the room, without any *apparent* effort.

Miss Molly Maclaren took the part of the French Maid, and Mr R.K. Swan the Butler. The audience thoroughly enjoyed the play, and enthusiastically applauded Mrs Queen and Party. A great deal of our Saturday entertainments owe their success to the kindness of Mrs Queen and her friends. We hope she will continue it for our appreciation.

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On Monday, 10th, a special performance of "Sweet Lavender" was given. The play is a choice morsel of English Comedy, typical of Pinero's work, in which humour and pathos are served up in a saleable blend.

The performance does Mrs Pockett, the producer, great honour. We have many less creditable on the London stage. Only those who have worked on our little stage know the hundred-and-one little difficulties that must be contended with to make a really successful show, and the performance on Monday evening surely stands out as the greatest thing that has been done here. Mr J.W.G. Pockett, as Dick Phenyll, was a performance that will live in our memories for many years. It was, like his make-up, a work of consummate art. The part of Lavender was taken by Miss Blanche Leiper, who never lost her sweetness for a moment, and won the hearts of the whole audience. Mrs Stewart Bell, as Mrs Gillfillan, and Mrs Walter Turner, as her daughter Minnie, gave a very finished performance, and added much to the success of the play.

Mr Hubbard, as the young American, was excellent, he seemed to fall into the part as if it were made for him. We are pleased to find he has abilities in this direction; he will be a great help to our future productions. Mr Mayes, as the adopted son and lover of Lavender, had a very difficult part, and, despite a little obvious nervousness, carried it through with pleasing success. Major Bingham, as Mr Geoffrey Wedderburn, was surprisingly good. Mr Robin played the part of the hairdresser, and Mr Baylis, the fashionable physician, and both added to the success.

Mrs Pockett, in addition to producing the play, took the part of Ruth Holt the housekeeper. Her work in this part was quite up to the supreme standard we have grown to expect from her.

## MINUTES OF THE LAST GENERAL MEETING.

The usual monthly General Meeting of Officers was held on 9th Sept. 1917, Major Bingham in the chair. The minutes of the last general meeting were read by the Secretary and confirmed.

The Treasurer made a financial statement, which, after some discussion, was adopted.

Mr Mayes moved that the entrance fee of 5s. be abolished, and the weekly subscription revert to 2s. instead of 1s. 6d., as at present. This was seconded by Capt. Gilling and carried unanimously.

### ELECTION OF COMMITTEES.

Owing to several members of the Committees shortly leaving, the following members were elected:-

*To form Central Committee.*

Chairman Capt. Evans.

Treasurer Capt. Gilling.

Secretary Mr Rigden.

House Steward and Tobacco. Mr Proctor.

Laundry and Library. Mr Birch.

*To form, with Central Committee, General Committee.*

Golf Mr Boak.

Tennis & Badminton Mr De Wilton.

Photography Capt. M'Kenzie.

Magazine Mr Owen.

Bowls and Croquet Mr Davison.

Field Club Mr Chase.

Yacht Club and Workshop Mr Braggins.

Billiards Mr P. Turner.

Agriculture Mr Bird.

Entertainments Capt. Williams.

Languages Mr Brook.

Debating Society Mr Berrington.

The question of re-covering one of the billiard tables was discussed and estimates submitted. After discussion, it was resolved to accept the tender for £8, 8s.

It was proposed that a magic lantern be purchased, and estimates for cost of same were submitted, but, after lengthy discussion, it was decided not to purchase.

A vote of thanks was returned to the retiring officers, to which the Chairman suitably replied, and specially mentioned the splendid services rendered by Mr Pockett.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed.

*Hon. Sec.*

## THE REAR-GUARD.

(Hindenburg Line, April 1917.)

Groping along the tunnel, step by step,  
He winked his prying torch with patching glare  
From side to side, and sniffed the unwholesome air.

Tins, boxes, bottles, shapes too vague to know,  
A mirror smashed, the mattress from a bed;  
And he, exploring fifty feet below,  
The rosy gloom of battle overhead.

Lurching, he grabbed the wall; saw someone lie  
Humped at his feet, half-hidden by a rug,  
And stooped to give the sleeper's arm a tug.  
"I'm looking for head-quarters." No reply.  
"God blast your neck!" (for days *he'd* had no sleep),  
"Get up and guide me through this stinking place."  
Savage, he kicked a soft, unanswering heap,  
And flashed his beam across the livid face  
Terribly glaring up, whose eyes yet wore  
Agony dying hard ten days before;  
And fists of fingers clutched a blackening wound

Alone he staggered on until he found  
Dawn's ghost that filtered down a shafted stair  
To the dazed, muttering creatures underground  
Who hear the boom of shells in muffled sound.  
Then, with the sweat of horror in his hair,  
He climbed through darkness to the twilight air,  
Unloading hell behind him, step by step.

S.S.