

# The Hydra: journal of the Craiglockhart War Hospital

No. 3 May 26<sup>th</sup> 1917

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Contents	Page
▪ Editorial	2
▪ The Shamrock	3
▪ Notes and News	3
▪ The Dachshund's Lament	9
▪ Correspondence	10
▪ The Chronicles of a V.O.S (Very Old Subaltern)	10
▪ The V.A.D.'s Lament	14
▪ Caveman and The Trenchman	15
▪ A Collier's Thowts	18
▪ Concerts	19
▪ [Hi! Come along! Turn Out!]	21

## EDITORIAL.

In this, the third issue of our periodical, we feel that we have made our position impregnable, for - and even the streets of Ascalon may hear our joyous note - we have at length secured that hall mark of a modern magazine, a serial. This is - but please respect our editorial confidence - the centre of a deep laid scheme, and we have sought long before we discovered a story suitable to our purpose. Each instalment will, we trust, prove sufficiently full of anecdote to be readable by itself, but, while we do not intend to use ancient device, "to be continued in our next," in the middle of a dramatic situation, it is hoped that our readers will be sufficiently interested in the continuity of the whole to remain subscribers even when they leave us.

If the plan succeeds, not only will subscribers be enabled to keep in touch with their haven of rest, but also, and this to anxious editorial eyes seems of paramount importance, *The Hydra's* circulation will attain unheard-of figures.

If twenty officers leave us per month, seventy per cent of which become subscribers, and of these nineteen per cent, only subscribe for one quarter, what will our circulation be in 1950, neglecting the birth rate and taking the value of (pi) to the tenth place of decimals? Work it out: we can't!

Some of the contributions in our last issue appear to have hurt the feelings of a number of our readers. From remarks which have been dropped, in some cases almost hurled, we gather that the gentlemen in question have not yet succeeded in "gratifying their own vanity." We sympathise with them and can only urge them to continue trying, but in deference to both parties we assure them that no insult was intended.

Thinking of promenades reminds us that the Zoo is very popular at present in the Hospital. Many of our readers take an interest in various and peculiar specimens, and we have reason to believe that the interest is reciprocated. A few days ago a visitor from the Hydro was gazing at a lonely monkey in a cage. The animal returned his gaze with wonder, although used to its human visitors. It was obviously perturbed. Finally it scratched itself vigorously and bolted to a hole at the back of its cage whence it produced six little ones to see the newphenomenon [*sic*]. As the officer remarked, while he beat a hasty retreat, why should it look at him. Why, indeed?

We are afraid that this is deplorably frivolous for an editorial, and we hope our readers will forgive our indiscretion, but when the weather is unspeakable, topics of the day are barred, "Notes and News" chronicle all events, and something has to be written somehow - *que voulez vous?* More-over, one should be prepared to sacrifice something to find an editor in an optimistic mood. Carry on!

## THE SHAMROCK.

Dear little shamrock from over the sea,  
Plucked by my colleen who's waiting for me,  
Say, is her smile just as winsome and gay?  
Did she weep often when I went away?  
Does she still sing? Does the colour still glow  
Soft in her cheeks, as it used to, I know?  
Cherished and watched in her garden you grew;  
Dear little shamrock, I'm jealous of you!

SYNJIN.

## NOTES AND NEWS.

### Badminton.

So fickle has the weather proved during the last fortnight that despite the counter attraction of tennis, the popularity of badminton is as evident as of yore. The courts are in constant use, so much so that the demand for shuttles has exceeded the supply. This, however, is no excuse for the careless treatment meted out to them, while the number of broken rackets points more to misuse than hard play. The very fact that these are provided by the Club for general use should guarantee much greater care of them than is at present evinced.

The untimely end of the last badminton handicap has rather deterred us from starting another. So much time is wasted in playing off the rounds that a large number of the competitors invariably leave before the tournament comes to an end. If, however, people are anxious to try again, a time limit might be imposed on each round, and the handicap carried through to a successful conclusion.

In future, rubber shoes (or slippers) must always be worn, as thick leather soles damage the floor as well as severely handicapping their wearer.

Beyond this there is little to say. The standard of play, as a whole, has improved considerably, and much more *finesse* and science is entering into the game.

### **Lawn Tennis.**

A sudden burst of sunshine enabled us to use the tennis lawns with the advent of May, somewhat earlier than was expected. The number of players, however, is still small.

The reason for this lies probably in the absence of the necessary kit and equipment, for the Club only undertakes to provide the balls, nets, etc. The play, so far, is not of a very high standard. A difficulty is found, after playing badminton, both in keeping the ball in the courts and also in timing it correctly. As the season progresses, however, this ought to disappear, and we hope more players will come forward. Meanwhile, the gardeners, no doubt, will appreciate help in the rolling.

### **The Baths.**

Several complaints have reached us about the low temperature of the swimming bath a few days ago, which, while invigorating to those who went merely for a plunge and a few minutes' swim, was too extreme for those who wished to make a longer stay. The attendance fell off considerably, and, apart from the early morning "plungers," there were few swimmers. However, the temperature appears to have risen slightly during the last day or two, and we hope that would-be bathers will not be deterred.

One other point has also cropped up. There have been a number of minor accidents, owing to the instability of the diving steps, which are apt to slip upon the tiled floor. Could not these be fastened down in some way to obviate any risk? If it were done, more people might be induced to dive, or make an attempt.

Some time ago it was suggested that the House should purchase a water polo ball, but no enthusiasm was shown, and the idea was dropped. If, however, any good swimmers would like to play the game in sufficient numbers, the Committee might be asked to reconsider their decision.

### **Bowls.**

During the momentary glimpse of summer, and inspired, perhaps, by a visit of "Young England" to Edinburgh and the memories which the name of Drake recalls, a number of officers started ye ancient and honourable game of bowls. Several very good players appeared, some of whom, we believe, have represented their county, and these would doubtless encourage and advise any beginners at the game. It is important that rubber shoes should be worn, as holes are easily made in the green; and we take this opportunity of asking officers, taking the evening air; to refrain from using the Bowling Green for their strolls.

### **Carpentry Room.**

Much destructive misuse has been made of the tools in the Carpentry Room, and in the interests of the genuine carpenters we ask our readers to see that this shall cease in the future.

### **Papers And Periodicals.**

Several notices have from time to time been posted up on the subject of the papers provided by the Committee. In spite of this, papers and periodicals are still being removed from the Lounge and Reading Room, and mutilated. If this continues it will be futile to continue supplying papers for the House, and we appeal to every one to put a stop to it at once.

### **Cricket.**

Since our last issue the Cricket Club has been fortunate in securing the use of the Merchiston College ground for practice and games. The prospects for the season seem very good. Mr Dickinson is a fine bat and a very good fast bowler, while his fielding leaves little to be desired. Mr Nicholl, another county man, is an excellent field and a good bat, while his bowling will be useful on a dry wicket. Mr Evans, the captain, is a good forcing bat and a good fielder, and will prove an enormous power to the side. Our other bowlers are Mr Lake, who is very much out of form at present, and Mr Perkins, who keeps a good length and has medium pace. One of our mainstays, however, is Major Bryce, who, although some twenty years have elapsed since his cricketing days, is still a sound bat, with a good eye. Mr Downs is another pretty bat, while Mr Mayes plays a very steady and a sound game. Mr Bishop, too, ought to make some runs; Mr Davis is a smart field, and Mr Bulger is a good all-round man. Our main difficulty lies in our lack of practice. Every one is out of form, and the fielding especially is very bad. As the season goes on, however, this should improve.

#### *War Hospital, Craiglockhart, v. Merchiston School.*

On Wednesday, 9th May, the first match of the season was played by the Hospital against Merchiston School on the school ground. We won the toss and went in to bat in a drizzling rain. Dickinson and Evans opened the innings well, though the latter was fortunate in being missed at point when he had scored 5. The first wicket fell for 32 runs, when Dickinson, who made some pretty shots, was caught at wicket. Nicholl was unfortunate in being run out, as the slipperiness of the ground gave him no chance of retrieving his mistake. Some stand was made after the fall of the fourth wicket when Major Bryce joined Evans at the wicket. Together they brought the score to 76, when Evans hit the ball on to his wicket. His innings stands out as far the best: he played consistently throughout and brought off some excellent drives. Of the remaining batsmen, Bishop alone reached double figures, contributing a useful

10. The whole side was out for 93. After tea, when the school went in, the rain had practically stopped, but the state of the ground was bad, especially for fielders, the majority of whom had no nails in their boots. MacKinnon and Stewart batted well, with 11 and 19 respectively. Wighton was responsible for a 5, the highest hit of the day, but soon succumbed to the bowling of Dickinson. With 6 wickets down for 79, corresponding to 6 for 80 in our case, the match promised an exciting finish. After a change, however, in our bowling, the school pulled up considerably, Corstorphine scoring 13 and Simpson 17, including the winning shot. Cook was left not out with a rather lucky innings of 19, bringing the total to 120, thereby leaving the school fairly comfortable winners.

In bowling, all the honours go to Dickinson. The school stood up against him pluckily, as he is a fast bowler of considerable experience. His analysis was 6 wickets for 24 runs. The scores were as follows:-

*War Hospital, Craiglockhart.*

Mr Dickinson, c Guest, b Robertson	18
Mr Evans, b Cook	34
Mr Perkins, b Corstorphine	0
Mr Nicholl, run out	5
Mr Downs, b Wighton	0
Major Bryce, c Robertson, b Wighton	14
Mr Bishop, c Wighton, b Corstorphine	10
Mr Lake, b Wighton	0
Mr Davies, b Wighton	0
Mr Mayes, not out	0
Mr Tappenden, c Mackinnon, b Robertson	5
Byes 5, leg-bye 1, wide 1	7
 TOTAL	 93

*Merchiston School.*

Mackinnon, b Dickinson	11
Mackintosh, b Lake	3
Stewart, b Dickinson	19
Wighton, b Dickinson	10
Gourlay, b Dickinson	4
Corstorphine, c Downs, b Perkins	3
Simpson, b Dickinson	17
Robertson, c and b Perkins	6

Cook, not out	19
Mann, b Dickinson	0
Guest, c Major Bryce, b Downs	5
Byes 5, wides 7, no-ball 1	13
 TOTAL	 120

### **Golf.**

We are glad to see that the number of enthusiastic golfers has steadily grown, in spite of the fact that the course is no longer free. One result, perhaps, of this is that a large number of clubs have been strained and even broken. All breakages should be reported immediately to Mr Davidson as soon as they occur. The number of complete sets of House clubs is small, and we hope, therefore, that officers playing a single will try to manage with one bag between them. In this way twice as many players can be equipped, while at no great loss to any one.

### **Gardening.**

The gardeners of late have been very busy, and have now under cultivation all the land at their disposal. Onions and swedes jostle with turnips and carrots, and rows of beet blush for shame at the mustard and cress; cabbages and cauliflowers rear attenuated heads, and peas and beans should soon peep coyly forth; while, greatest triumph of all, there is a hidden treasure of potatoes. When potatoes take the place of bank notes a future generation will cry blessings on the heads of the gardeners of to-day, and the G. and P. K. Association will be accorded the honour which is its due.

### **Poultry Keeping.**

Since our last issue a much larger "run" has been obtained for the poultry, and the carpenters are busy building houses and coops. A consignment of day-old chicks are expected any day, and when they come the poultry venture will be well launched. We wish the poultry keepers more luck with their chicks than they had with their incubator, and hope that they will soon be in a position to enjoy the fruits of their labours.

### **Billiards.**

Business in the billiard room, nearly always brisk, has received a still greater impetus from the influx of new members, many of whom we hope to see figuring in the next handicap.

Quite a number of the new men have evidently "been there before" as far as billiards are concerned, one or two in particular laying themselves open to the time honoured accusation of a misspent youth.

Major Bryce scored a popular victory in the last handicap, this being the second time that he has topped the bill. (Handicappers please note.) Mr Dickinson, whom many people fancied, played a poor game in the final. It is evident, however, from his previous performances that 30 is much too big a start for him, and I do not think that he will get as much again.

Of late, a great improvement has been noticeable in the manner in which the tables are treated, and I feel sure that this agreeable state of things will continue. Billiards differs from many games in that there is rarely an umpire or referee present to enforce the rules, and consequently a great amount of slackness has crept into the game. All of us know the tired feeling we get when we have to use the "jigger" or the "fishing tackle," but it must be remembered that there is all the more obligation to observe the rules, because there is no one there to enforce them.

### **The Stage.**

No praise is too great for the excellent management of the Saturday evening concerts, but we are very pleased to welcome a new feature in the form of a play, written and produced by patients in the Hospital. There is a tendency towards dramatic work, which is providing a delightful change from the usual concert programme, and when, in addition to producing and acting, the Hospital can write its own plays, we feel that the stage has become a very integral part of the hospital treatment, and we hope that the "Colonel's Love Story" will prove but the first of a series of original plays.

### **General Meeting.**

A general meeting of the Club was held on the 7th May 1917, in the Lounge, and the constitution of the Club was amended and signed. After this somewhat lengthy business, and a number of red herring had been removed from the trail, the Club proceeded to consider the treasurer's report. This still showed a deficit, against which must be set a large supply of stores, and which is largely owing to the outstanding debts left by the old regime. We congratulate Mr Sandison on the marvellous way he has evolved order out of the chaotic accounts on which he had to work.

Major M'Lagan, the chairman, and Mr Harraton, the secretary, who are leaving us shortly, then resigned, and Mr Judge and Mr Clark were elected in their respective places. Major Spencer, Captain Watt, Captain Buchanan, and Mr Downes were then elected members of the committee, and the meeting came to an end. Fuller information will be learned at the



next general meeting from the late secretary's minutes, which our reporter utterly failed to decipher.

## THE DACHSHUND'S LAMENT.

*Note.* - Discussion has been raised as to whether the Dachshund, which is popularly supposed to be of German origin, is not in reality the old English turnspit or badger-hound.

I vas ein leetle English dog,  
Not Sherman, Himmel, no.  
Mein mistress all der papers haf  
Mein pedigree to show.  
A turnshpit or a badger-hound -  
Ach, ja, dat vell might be -  
*A dachshund* or a *truffel-dog*?  
Mein dear goot freindt - not *me*.  
Ven Cruel English make der var  
Upon our cultured "Huns"  
Mein mistress take me up to town  
To see der vet at vonce -  
Und den she take me to der church  
Und gif me English name,  
Zo, ven you call me "Sherman dog,"  
It vas ein beastly shame.

Ach, ateful shentlemens und cruel -  
If you had any sence  
You'd see how quick der neighbours' dog  
Und I vas make der freindts:  
*He* vas ein schnub-nose bull dog pup  
Und English through and through:-  
Zo vhy you call me "Sherman dog"  
Ven I vas English too?

C. H. M.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

SIR, - In no carping or critical spirit may I draw your attention to a slip in "Synjin's" latinity on page 10 of your last issue, where he puts as the heading of his storyette "Causa Belli"?

The correct Latin is undoubtedly "casus belli," - in fact the only phrase admissible, - and the only translation one can read into "Causa Belli" is "for the sake of war," or words to that effect, which makes the thing absurd.

[Sigma]

[While we are glad to welcome any correspondence, and thank [Sigma] for his letter, we do not agree with his final statement. "For the sake of the war" appears to us quite suitable a title as, if not more so, than "Casus belli." It was for the sake of the war that the gentleman of the story became a special constable and thus endured hardship, and we would not like to accuse Synjin's latinity on this score. ED.].

## THE CHRONICLES OF A V.O.S. (Very Old Subaltern.)

By "JACK POINT."

*These are the pages which a Jester took  
From out of life and made into a book;  
Then, having made it, ran unto his friends  
Waving it in his hands and crying - 'Look.'*

### CHAPTER I: THE ONES WHO WORK.

Now the draft finding battalion of the Green Fusiliers may be divided into two classes - the ones who work (really work), and the others.

We may dismiss the "others" with a single word - they are of no material importance. They are heralded by War Office letters and by telegrams - they come - and they go.

They usually refer to the poor old regiment as the "Greens"; affect patterns of uniform for which you may search the Dress Regulations in vain - and are the curse of poor old Hammond's (the senior subaltern's) life.

I remember one of them who had so many little coloured patches to cut off when he arrived here that it took the Sergeant Master Tailor a week to do it, after which that efficient and trusted N.C.O. "went sick" with nerves. Enough of them - they do not concern my story.

Nor for that matter do the ones who work, except in so much as they bring the reader round to myself. A round about way of telling one man's story, but you must allow me to set about it in my own way. It's my story after all - and no one is compelling you to read it!

With the exception of the Bombing Officer and the Company Commanders, the ones who work are usually to be found in the orderly room.

I would include the Signalling and Physical Training Officers as well, but as we are always having new ones, it would take up too much time.

Now the orderly room - seen, let us suppose, from the point of view of a newly arrived officer - is on this wise. Opposite the door is a magnificent table with a standard lamp, an inkstand made like a side-drum, and a regimental crest above it on the wall. Behind this is the C.O.

The C.O. is amphibious (as is also the Senior Major, who sits at the table on the right). That is to say, he works both in and out of the orderly room. It is a nice problem to solve whether he works harder in or out, but no matter.

Two tables to the right and two to the left hold the Senior Major, Adjutant, Assistant Adjutant, and myself. The Adjutant's table is marked by a telephone receiver, which always has a proud look about it, and in as few words as possible I'll tell you why.

Once a young officer came to join and did not salute the C.O. The Adjutant, who has a gruff and chilling voice, took him to task, after which he saluted everything in the room, including that telephone receiver.

My table is tucked away behind the stove which makes me uncommonly warm, excepting when the stove goes out, when I feel uncommonly cold.

In front of the stove Gustavus and Adolphus lie at their ease, and these are the only people in the room who do not work - one can't when one's a dog. Adolphus belongs to the C.O., and his honest face positively shines with reflected glory. Gustavus belongs to Mrs Plumtree of the village, and is attached to the Adjutant for duty.

On and off Quartermaster-Sergeant Fortescue glides in with letters and "things to sign." I could write a long (and intolerably dull) essay on things to sign, and a three volume treatise on Quartermaster-Sergeant Fortescue. This wonderful man has a room to himself across the passage where typewriters click and pens scratch all day. It also contains that delightful instrument, the "Roneo," which by the mere turning of a handle will produce in the twinkling of an eye enough daily orders for an army. I often go and watch it working when I am feeling melancholy and want to be cheered up.

Once or twice a day the Medical Officer bursts into the room like a whirlwind, and in one motion salutes the C.O., talks to the Senior Major, quarrels with the Adjutant, cautions the Assistant ditto on his health, does his business with the lot of them, salutes and clears out.

I did not mean to tell you about the Medical Officer, as I have a spite against him for cutting down my smoking; but then, on the other hand, he is most emphatically one of the ones who work, and almost as stimulating in his ways as the "Roneo."

And now for myself.

I do not really know, to be honest, why I am allowed to live in the orderly room, but I suppose I must come in handy at times or they wouldn't keep me. Another reason may be, that I am too old and decrepit to be of any use elsewhere!

Anyhow, here I am.

I am not half as great, of course, as the Assistant Adjutant, and I never feel that my table really belongs to me, as I have to turn out of it when young officers join, and are told to fill up forms.

Still, I always hope I am of some use, though I cannot help thinking at times that I am no better than an old horse who, long years past his work, has been turned out to grass by a kind-hearted master.

If that is so, well, so be it.

I am certainly of no use anywhere outside England, so that the best I can do is to vegetate here as a broken soldier may, and perform such odd jobs as the best of regiments sees fit to trust me with.

My age? I thought you would ask that. I do not think I can tell you. You see, I have only known you now for one page - and I am a shy man.

Be content to know that I am old enough to sit and look on when the regimental eleven wrestles in mortal conflict with the hated Coalshires, and old enough to provoke a mild titter when I mention active service to a Medical Board.

And yet, three years ago, I was devilish young! "The world's a queer place," as Quartermaster-Sergeant Fortescue would say.

## **Chapter II: HOW I BECAME A V.O.S.**

I remarked at the end of the last chapter that I was devilish young three years ago - and I sincerely hope that these words, being in the nature of a riddle, have made you curious as to how I am now so very old.

It is due to two causes.

Firstly (you have probably guessed it), the "All Highest."

Secondly, my beautiful but otherwise not very remarkable cousin, Joan Broadacre.

I try to persuade myself that it was all Joan - it is so much more interesting that way - and I give you fair warning that in the ensuing pages I shall try and impress you with the same opinion; and yet - by the beloved pipe which I am now smoking - I have my doubts.

I want to be as rude to Joan as possible, and so, when I have told you that her photograph hangs by a piece of orderly room red tape against my mirror, and that I always mean to wipe my razor on it after shaving, but somehow never do - I will drop her coldly and put the "All Highest" first.

In a trench to the east of a village which has since changed its nationality, there used to be a peculiarly repulsive listening post. This was early in the war - and rumour had it that the listening post had once been a wine cellar. I did a lot of spade work there in consequence, but had no luck.

At the moment I am writing of, however, it was held by Germans of a notoriously evil kind. They were backed up by Minnie and Minerva - two ladies afflicted with catarrh who used to cough up explosives to the tune of one hundred and fifty English pounds every ten minutes with the most unfailing regularity.

At about nine in the morning a formidable party composed of Masterman, Uncle Bert, The Little Man, myself, and all the choicest ruffians of two companies, headed by a vicious lance-corporal, advanced on the listening post carrying every bomb which could be found.

It was shortly after this that I commenced digging for the rumoured wine. During that show Masterman gave us an exhibition of his celebrated "Boche Rifle Trick" - a game he used to play from time to time right up to the day when he fell at the head of his company - leading a forlorn hope with two field dressings on his body, and words on his lips which I may not write here.

This trick consisted of going up to any German loop-hole and pulling a rifle out of it - if you were shot at and hit you lost a point, and if you were killed the German was considered to have won. Quite simple, of course - but the deuce of a lot of knack required.

To make a long story short, the vicious lance-corporal, two solid looking Geordies, and myself held the listening post, prospected for wine and doubted the likelihood of further existence in the present world till late in the afternoon, when Minnie and Minerva removed the supports which lay between us and the company, and we "made a strategical shortening of the line" before a body of twenty Germans who were working round to cut us off.

An attempt to retake the place failed owing to shortage of bombs, and we resigned ourselves to sitting at as disrespectful a distance as the circumstances would allow, and taking shots at the new tenants with any lethal thing we could lay our hands on. There the matter might have ended, and I might be devilish young to-day, had not the Captain of the relieving company taken a fancy to occupying such parts of the listening post and its environs as the Germans had not already "taken over."

The men were all dead beat - for what has been five minutes of indifferent literature to you, was twelve hours inferno to us - and it was arranged that the Fusiliers should first hand over, and that when this was done, I should lead the relief up as far as it was good for them to go - see them well settled down and follow on with two orderlies.

I rather believe I suggested this myself - but I am quite sure, as the whole thing from here on is very blurred in my memory - at any rate, if I did it was from no heroic motives, but simply because I thought that I and my two companions would stand a good chance of cadging a lift back to "Wipers" on a transport waggon.

We started off, the relief and myself, and were twenty yards of the place when I saw the shovels of a German working party going up and down against the blue night sky as they tossed earth over the parados.

Our party stopped, and the relieving Captain and I crawled up and peeped in - we could hear grunts and mutterings, but could see nothing. Bombs were collected, and while we wait for them to come up, I may remark that whoever said that a knowledge of the ground was a valuable asset to a Commander in the field, knew nothing of what he was talking about. It was for this very knowledge that I had to go in front.

Two of our bombs burst inside, and round the corner we went. I shouted for a rifle as my revolver had emptied itself almost at once. A German rose from the darkness and bolted - I fired at him, but the damn thing wasn't loaded and he escaped. Some one let off a rifle close to my ear, and I cursed him for being clumsy. A thing like a jam-pot on a stick bounced and fell at my feet - there was an explosion - and now the Medical Boards smile and the battalion eleven can dispense with my services.

*(To be continued.)*

## **THE V.A.D.'S LAMENT.**

There was so much I might have said,  
So much I wished to say,  
So many tender loving things  
Before you went away.

Yet now I stand with tear-wet face,  
And eyes that sadly strain  
To watch a distant puff of smoke  
Behind a vanished train

Because instead of telling you  
Just how I loved you so,  
I solemnly shook hands and said -  
"Good-bye, old thing! Cheer-oh!"

K.

## CAVEMAN AND TRENCH-MAN.

"Alt, who goes there?" sang out the sentry, as a weird figure, undoubtedly not one of our allies, approached in the moonlight up a communication trench.

After challenging again, he fired - yet the figure still approached. Somewhat perturbed, he pumped off five rounds rapid, but the figure still drew closer. By this time he was recognisable as a hairy, dark, degenerate creature, completely unclothed and of enormous size.

"Who the 'ell may you be - Chief Intelligence Officer of King Mumbo Jumbo?" asked the sentry, thinking he was some unhappy village idiot who had wandered into the trenches.

"I came to congratulate you," said the figure, in excellent English.

"O-oh! Well, pray be seated; I've loosed so much lead into your bloomin 'ide that you'll need the M.O. before you talk much more nonsense. Anywye, we'll take you before an orficer. 'Ere, Bill, take this cove before an orficer - you'll find one down Princes Street - he's a poor loony who likes bein' 'ere."

"Come on, stick-in-the-mud," said Bill. "Advance down that trench at a slow march, and don't you try any funny gimes - I've got my b'ynet just be'ind you."

"But I think I've made a mistake, sir; will you take me before a French General, please? It is the French I wish to congratulate.

"Don't call me sir - only orficers and the sergeant-major - an' you carry on right away, even if you are a loony," said Bill, ferociously.

Perceiving by gestures what was required of him, the figure passed along the trench until they reached the Adjutant's dug-out.

"Got a funny bloke 'ere, sir," said Bill. "I think he's a loony who's got up 'ere, but we thought he might be a spy, so we just brought 'im along to you, sir."

"All right," said the Adjutant, a fiery martinet - albeit the Colonel's blue-eyed darling - placing a revolver on the table beside him. "What is your name?"

"Groor, sir."

"What?"

"Groor - it means the hunter of bears, sir."

"Doesn't matter what it means! What nationality are you?"

"French, I think, sir."

"Why don't you know? Are you German?"

"Certainly not, sir. The Teutonic branch of the Indo-Aryan group diverged from the parent stock a hundred thousand years before my birth."

"Yes, yes but you might be a naturalised German."

"That, sir is an impossibility, as far as I can see. You might be a natural German or not a German, but nothing else."

"Don't suggest that I am German," said the irate interrogator. "And stand to attention when you speak to me. Private Thompson, show this creature how to stand to attention." (Private Thompson falls over his rifle, swears, and ultimately stands as straight as the dug-out will permit.) "Now, why don't you wear clothes?"

"It has never been my custom, sir."

"Don't the police make you?"

"No one has ever made me do anything," - proudly.

"What! don't lie to me or I'll have you shot as a spy."

"Well, a cave bear made me run once, but that was before I learnt to use a flint axe."

Private Thompson, who has slowly been overcome by an unaccountable dread which even overcomes his fear for the Adjutant, suddenly broke in:

"P-p-please, sir, there's s-something funny about this man. The s-sentry filled him full of lead, and-and-he seems to like it, sir."

"What do you make of it, Private Thompson?"

"Well, sir, it's something mysterious" - the sound of his voice was reassuring him - "like them spirit-rapping things - or else 'e's balmy. I d-don't like it, sir."

"Have you had your ration of rum to-night?"

"Yes, sir two."

"I thought so. How did you get two?"

"Well, sir, it's like this 'ere. Private Jones and I are a-courtin' of the same girl, and she said as how she'd marry the man who gave up his rum, and old Jones, bein' a bit of a mug, sir, believed 'er."

"Humph! I'll look into that to-morrow. Don't stand there shaking, curse you! What's the matter with you?"

"Please, sir, I didn't join the army for this sort of thing. It ain't natural-like; there's an 'ell of a lot of shelling in the next trench - 'adn't I better go there, sir?"

"No you don't, Private Thompson. Your orders are to stand here, and use your bayonet, if



necessary."

"Please, sir, a b'ynet's not much good."

Silence.

"Now, is it true that you were fired at point-blank several times and not wounded?"

"That is so," replied the *fons et origo* of the whole trouble.

"Do you mean to say that one of my men can't hit a man at three yards in six shots?"

"I can explain it, sir, but it is not easy."

"Carry on."

"The fact of the matter is, sir, that I am a disembodied spirit, and I have come to congratulate the French General.

"Is that the reason why you wear no clothes?"

"In life, sir, I wore none, and we spirits who seek to get in touch with living humanity always try to reproduce the conditions under which we lived - not only for ease of recognition, but also in order to avoid shocking those whom we hope to meet."

A gasp from Private Thompson.

"Then whom do you claim to have been in your earthly life? Not Rector or Imperator or the rest of the spirit-rapping crowd," said the Adjutant, who knew something of seances and mediums.

"I know nothing of the people you mention, sir, but perhaps you will understand when I tell you that I am the Neanderthal man, the primitive cave man, who hunted the cave bear, and drew those sketches as well as he could on the wall of his cave - the sketches your scientific men call caricatures, although I understand that these last started with Beerbohm, or, at least, so we decided at our last meeting - for we take an interest in art on the astral plane - and I am here to congratulate the French General on behalf of my colleagues."

"Why do you want to congratulate him?"

"I wish to congratulate him as a representative of civilisation. It is 300,000 years since I roamed on earth and lived in caves - or at least Professor Keith says something like that - and I am come to congratulate him. I have watched civilisation, as you call it. I have seen the drift man, the man of the hills, the men of wattled huts. I have seen the rise of cities and the men of mean cottages, the dweller in palaces, and the last development of democracy, the flat dweller; and now from cave man you have risen in these thousands of years to the trench man, the zenith of humanity. And I would fain rub noses with my descendant, that French General who, representing humanity, has realised that alone can mankind reach perfection by living in contact with the earth, the clay, the mother of us all; living as I, the cave man, did, the life of valour, of courage, and of virtue, as you call it, spending all one's life in clay and mud, awaiting for days in freezing slime the movement of one's adversary, until, when enfeebled, one's children prepare the feast, and one passes down the festive board, a little tough and stringy, yet giving strength to their limbs and courage to their hearts; and

after that the fermented drink goes round and they praise their parent, the mighty hunter of the cave bear."

"Humph," rejoined the slightly bewildered Adjutant, "that's not quite the meaning of trench warfare. Perhaps I can explain."

Boom! *Boom!* BOOM!!!

As they crawled out of the shattered dug-out, an orderly tore up.

"Colonel wants you, sir - German's attacking."

"Tell the Colonel I'm coming. Thompson, take this man to the S.P.R. Don't lose him, and give him a drink, if you like; he may be a German scientific illusion."

"Take him to whom, sir, the A.P.M.?" asked the genuinely disturbed Thompson.

"No," roared the vanishing Adjutant, "he deals with Second Lieutenants, chiefly - the Society for Psychical Research."

"Oh, Gawd!" gasped the quivering Thompson. "This war's a -"

We regret that the conclusion of Private Thompson's remark was drowned by the bombardment.

E. R. GRIEVESON.

## **A COLLIER'S THOWTS.**

Ah'm a Yorkshire lad,  
Ah'd be varry glad  
Ter be aht o' this 'ere 'oil;  
Ah'm fair dahn sick  
For t'swing ov a pick  
Wheer me mates is gettin' t'coail.

Ah'm noan badly tret,  
Ah knows that an' yet  
There's times when ah'm stalled and maddled,  
Wi t'craze to be aht  
And laikin' abart  
At hoam wi' t'bras as ah've addled.

Ter be aht at dawn,  
On a summer morn,  
Hearin' t'owd cock pheasant's "krek,"

An' watchin me chonce,  
Ter lead t'keepers a donce,  
An' sam howd o' t'owd birds neck.  
Ah'd gie 'arf me brass  
Ter hear ahr owd lass  
Say "Coom thy ways inter thy tea";  
It wouldn't be long  
Afore ah'd be throng,  
She'd noan be kept waitin' for me.  
Well, ah've ta'en up me tooils,  
It's nobbut waik fooils  
As jacks up afore a job's done;  
But t'varry first day  
As we'm finished, ah'll say,  
Good-bye! and ter-wi' t'owd Hun.

TYKE.

## CONCERTS.

Yes, "Todgers could do it when it liked."

I don't know why I should fire off with a quotation from "Martin Chuzzlewit," but it seems appropriate. Let me discuss it with you, sweet people. It seems that the Musical Director reported sick, or something like that, and it was the general opinion that the concerts would be "Na poo." But no! Every one buckled to nobly, with the result that the show of the 12th was one of the best, if not the best show, that has ever been seen at Craiglockhart. To begin with, Mr Lidbury (I haven't put in his qualifications - there are so many that I forget them) conducted the orchestra with great *elan* and success. All I can say is that, *apres la guerre*, Lidbury never need be hard up for a job. The Empire or the Hippodrome would pay him thousands for that delicate little wave of the left hand alone! However, more of this anon. Mr Seager came and gave us some whistling solos, which were very pleasing. But what is Seager doing in Edinburgh after his discharge from Hospital? We think dark thoughts! Mr Clark gave us a little topical song, written by himself. It's a funny thing what shell shock will do for a man. It sometimes turns howling idiots into talented men, and *vice versa*! Never mind, Mr Clark got in a hit at us all. Miss Scott sang "O thou billowy Harvest Field," in her

usual brilliant style, followed by Miss Thinn with a recitation, "The Little Officers." Miss Thinn recited well, and the piece went down well, but why should she speak of "funny little officers"? Personally, I am 5ft. 10 in., not a bit funny to look at; am married, and have heavy responsibilities! [That's enough. - ED.] Mr Scotchburn sang "I've had a glass of Ginger Wine," in his usual character of George Robey. Dear old Scotchburn (he took me out to tea yesterday so I have to be nice to him) was great, and scored one of the successes of the evening by forgetting his lines and coddling the audience it was all part of the show! Splendid! Miss Watson sang "Just my Love" very sweetly, and was well applauded. Mr Lidbury and his orchestra played a selection from "The Country Girl," which was cheered until the welkin rang again. The noise was so great that it brought Major Bryce from the bedside of a sick friend, or from the hand of poker, I don't know which. When the noise had subsided, not, however, until an encore had been given, the curtain rose on a couple of scenes from "The Merchant of Venice." The first was where Bassanio tries to raise the wind in order to do a bit of courting - love, by the way, being a very expensive game; and the second scene was where Shylock, Antonio, and Bassanio forgather and agree to the famous bond. Mr Christopher as Shylock. Capt. Markham as Antonio, and Mr Clark as Bassanio, were all extremely good, the costumes and the make-up being fine. Mr Birch sang "Down the Vale," which went down very well, but I am inclined to think that Birch is in too much of a hurry to get his song over. If he took it more quietly it would go much better. Miss Scott sang the "Ave Maria," followed by the Bell Symphony Quartet. They played "When you come home" and "Keep the home fires burning" as an encore, both of which sounded very charming. Miss Campbell finished up a delightful programme with two songs, which she sang in her dainty manner. Rumour hath it that Miss Campbell is appearing next week. We all hope so. Thus finished one of the most successful concerts in the annals of the Hospital, and now we must wait and see (rotten phrase that) what next week brings forth. Let's hope it will be even better.

Before reading my criticism of Saturday's concert I want you all clearly to understand that I ought to be in bed, not sitting up writing piffle. I'm really very ill, and my medical adviser is not sure whether I am suffering from advanced senile decay or house-maid's knee. So do not become vexed or pained, dear readers, if this article isn't quite up to my usual style. [Get on with it. - ED] Well, to make a start, Mr Lidbury and his orchestra played "Destiny," which I am given to understand is a waltz - a nice thing, and well rendered. Mr Harraton came on and sang "Tiddleypom," one of Pellisier's songs. Harraton's get-up was striking, and created a large amount of merriment. Mr Griffiths was to have sung, but could not appear, so Mr Pocket nobly stepped into the breach. He did very well, but it was evidently a case of "wind up," as I could see his bonny bare knees shaking! Miss King sang "Sink, Red Sun," very charmingly, and Mr Clark gave us two recitations, "How we Saved the Barge," and "The Lighthouse Keeper's Story." Both of these we have heard before, but every one appreciated. Why does Clark recite things that bring in a reference to strong drink? It's very cruel to tantalise us, especially in times like these. Captain Bee gave us some stories and some tunes

on a one-stringed fiddle that he made out of a cigar box, a broom handle, and a piece of wire. It was hardly equal to a "Strad," but the effect was good, and was enjoyed by all. Mr Scotchburn gave a character sketch, called "Mrs Lilac O'Grady," that was reminiscent of poor Fred Emney as "Mrs May." Scotchburn's costume and make-up were exceptionally good, and brought forth laughter all round.

The Orchestra played a selection from "Three Cheers," which I don't think much of as music. Mr Lidbury and his merry party, however, played it with their usual *finesse*. Miss King sang "The Smile of Spring," followed by Surgeon Donaldson, R.N.V.R., with two of Harry Lauder's songs. Mr Donaldson came a long way to sing to us, which he did in topping style, and I take this opportunity of thanking him in print for his kindness. Then came the turn of the evening, a sketch entitled "The Colonel's Love Story," written by Captain Markham. It was a comedy with a little serious touch of pathos, and the audience took it in the right style. Mrs Nesbyt, played by Mrs Bell, has a daughter, Nancy (Mrs Queen), and, sad to relate, they are very poor. Colonel Tremayne, C.B. (Captain Markham), a rich old boy, is in love with Nancy, who accepts his offer of marriage to save her mother. The arrival of Captain Lennard (Mr Christopher), Nancy's lover, rather complicates things, but the Colonel, learning the true state of affairs, releases Nancy, and the curtain goes down on the two lovers locked in each other's arms. Mrs Queen made an excellent Nancy, and Mrs Bell was good as the ambitious mother; not forgetting Captain Markham, the author, who made a fine Colonel Tremayne. Christopher was rather nervous, and if anything overdid his part, but put some life into a show that was getting perhaps a wee bit too serious. Considering that it was the first appearance of the sketch, it went very smoothly, being well staged and well acted. A pleasant evening was ended by the Orchestra playing a march called "The Hydra," after our famous magazine, composed by Miss Ella Moore Grieve, our pianist, and dedicated to the Hospital. I take this opportunity of thanking Miss Grieve, on behalf of the Hospital, for the splendid work she has done in connection with our concerts, and I think I am right when I say that everybody greatly appreciates it.

"PEAS-BLOSSOM."

## HI! COME ALONG! TURN OUT!

Hi! come along! Turn out!  
Hark to the fearsome shout.  
What is it? Fire or flood?  
Or awful battle rout?

Nay, gentle stranger, calm  
You dread. That great alarm  
Means only that it's time to rise,  
'Tis Sister ----'s morning psalm.