

The Hydra: the magazine of Craiglockhart War Hospital

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EDITORIAL

(The Editor will be pleased to consider articles, verses, and line-drawings, not only from members of the Officers' Club, but from the outside public. Articles should consist of not more than 1000 words, and should be written on one side of the paper only. All contributions should be addressed to the Editor, "The Hydra," Craiglockhart War Hospital, Slateford, Midlothian.)

"Iam defecta vigent renovato robore membra."—Lucan

Renaissances are now fashionable. The Editorial despair which we recorded in our last number has been relieved. Our contributors no longer have to be pursued to their bedrooms : with that modesty so characteristic of the English-speaking peoples, they seek the Editor out on some secluded spot and, with a deprecatory smile, thrust into his willing hand some priceless masterpiece of wit or pathos, beseeching him at the same time to "be sure and burn it" should it be unsuitable.

But this is only one department in which the Renaissance is felt. Almost every section of the Club has shaken off its Christmas lethargy and now bounds forward into the great unknown. Never was the Debating Society so prosperous. In the hall a show-case has appeared in which the products of our industry stand naked and unashamed before an astounded world. The Field Club rambles yet further afield, the Camera Club develops, the Choral Society booms, while in the garden, Mr Miller informs us, everything is lovely. Last, but by no means least, a Literary Society has been formed.

The results of our competition on the Antaeus legend have been distinctly encouraging. Though the number of competitors was small, the standard of work was extraordinarily high. The winning drawing was submitted by Mr Robertson and is reproduced facing page 33. Treating the legend in a somewhat unconventional manner, Mr Robertson shows us the youth Antaeus leading back into the green paths of nature the tired warrior at whose soul the horrors of darkness still clutch. Round his feet wood fairies and brownies dance, while beyond in the sunrise, there stretches through the quiet ploughlands the path to the Golden City.

Another chairman of the Club has left us. We tender to Capt. Evans our best thanks for his valuable work.

The loss of Mr Catt has been a serious blow to our concerts. It will be hard to find a successor so indefatigable and genial. Mr Catt's office as organiser of our concerts was one of many trials and disappointments, but few thanks. His knowledge of how concerts should be run and his engaging way with artists greatly contributed to the extraordinary high level to which the Craiglockhart Saturday night concerts have attained. We take this opportunity of thanking him on behalf of the Club for his splendid work.

NOTES AND NEWS

Major Ruggles and Captain Hall, of the United States Army, have left us, having been called away at very short notice for service in France. We thank them for all their kindness towards us, and wish them the best of luck in their new work.

Our thanks are due to Miss Marion Newbigin, D.Sc., of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, for this month's leading article.

On Tuesday, 15th January, Miss Pagan gave a lecture on Ibsen's play, "The Master Builder."

A Literary Society has been formed, and on 24th January Mr Paterson read a paper on "Poetry : its Place in Modern Life."

On 29th January Mr Morley Fletcher gave a lecture on "The Value of Craftsmanship."

The result of our last month's competition is announced in the Editorial.

SOME TALES OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION.

By Marion I. Newbigin

ALTHOUGH our papers here have devoted a considerable amount of space to the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, information in regard to the actual Russian Revolution has been somewhat scanty, and English books on the subject are few. French correspondents were more candid at the time, and already some interesting books have appeared in French. Two of these may be specially mentioned. M. Claude Anet was correspondent of a French paper in Petrograd at the actual outbreak, and has published as "La Revolution russe" an exceedingly entertaining account of his experiences during the critical months from March to May last year. An English translation of this book is now available, containing some photographic illustrations, and it may be cordially recommended as light and excellent reading.

M. Anet was half-amused, half-irritated by what he saw and heard. Both feelings are perhaps widely shared here by those who have followed the course of events, with a tendency for the latter to predominate. For the sake of fairness, therefore, it is well to supplement this book by another, whose author is nothing if not serious, as well as sympathetic at least with the "Moderates," who had the upper hand during his visit. The book referred to is M. Emile Vandervelde's "Trois Aspects de la Revolution russe."

The author was a member of a party of three Belgian Socialists who visited Russia in May and June of last year. The party went to express sympathy with the revolutionary cause, and to discuss with the Russian Socialists the question of the Stockholm Conference. Like M. Anet, they visited both the army and the town of Petrograd, and like him they have some

entertaining tales to tell ; although, as already hinted, M. Anet's frank appreciation of absurdities is absent. The flippantly-disposed, however, may find that to take all the incidents of the Russian Revolution seriously only renders them more delicately ludicrous—if only Messieurs the Bolsheviks could have chosen a more suitable time for their scheme of recreating the world, after a pattern " made in Germany," in the Germany of the Social Democrats.

One anecdote which both authors relate, and which has also been published in this country, but seems to deserve repetition, is the famous "Tale of the Thirteen Sacks," which, save for its rather tame ending, is worthy of " The Arabian Nights." The temptation to embroider the story is great, but it shall be resisted here as far as human nature permits.

In the early days of the Revolution, the workmen of one of the large factories of Petrograd succeeded, presumably by methods which have proved effective west of that town, in getting their wages tripled—quite a notable success in its way. Now mark the sequel. A peremptory message was sent one fine day to the Board of Directors, thirteen in number, instructing them to come at once to receive a deputation of workmen. 'They obeyed, for needs must, and were confronted with the deputation, bearing thirteen sacks. One of its members acted as spokesman - a sign this of great moderation, for, if M. Anet is to be believed, the business side of the Revolution is considerably handicapped by the general tendency for all parties to speak at once in deliberative assemblies. But he hints that this tendency is counterbalanced by the willingness of the general audience to pass all motions proposed by acclamation, even when they contradict each other.

Our spokesman then begins, and launches into an elaborate arithmetical calculation, which must obviously have taken the best brains of the factory. But then, by a convenient revolutionary rule, workmen engaged in considering measures for the general welfare of themselves and their fellows can draw their pay, even though they do not find time, in the midst of more interesting affairs, to put in any work. The arithmetical calculation is as follows : - The rise of wages had added 8 roubles [1 rouble is nominally about 2s.] per day to the wages of each of the 5000 workmen in the factory. But, clearly, this rise, won by the Revolution, should have been granted at the beginning of the war, and the directors owed the difference to their employees. Eight roubles a day due to 5000 workmen makes 40,000 roubles. Reckoning three hundred working days in the year, this becomes 12,000,000 roubles per annum, or 36,000,000 roubles for the three years of the war. The spokesman expressed the willingness of the deputation to carry away this sum (about £3,600,000) either in gold or notes in the thirteen sacks. If, however, the directors proved recalcitrant, the sacks would equally well serve for their transport, and the Neva, which runs conveniently near the factory, could, they indicated, be relied upon to sweep away the sacks and their contents.

The directors seem to have been more taken aback than we should expect of men living in

such stirring times. Some of them seem even to have been so ill-advised as to embark upon a dissertation on the nature of capital. But on this subject the members of the deputation, like some people nearer home, held very clearly-defined views. The board room in which the interview took place contained, as they pointed out, a safe. Now what is the object of a safe if not to contain gold and bank-notes ? To which they added that, in view of the difficulties of distribution, and the nature of their clientele, the directors would perceive that it was necessary that only notes of small denominations should be supplied. They did not, however, wish to show themselves unreasonable, and would allow a period of twenty-four hours for the directors to make their arrangements. Meantime, an armed guard would keep the door, to insure the necessary repose of mind.

One suspects that the guard soon seized the opportunity to celebrate with their companions the success of the Revolution in draughts of hot tea or basins of cabbage soup—in the absence of more fiery liquor. The directors at least contrived to send a piteous appeal for succour to the Minister of Labour. This gentleman responded in true revolutionary fashion. Realising in a moment that for the Russian revolutionary talking is a joy before which even collecting millions in sacks pales, he invited the workmen's delegates to come and have a chat with him. They responded eagerly, and the parties engaged in a pleasant conversation, during which the Minister contrived to interpolate some general statements on the difficulty of turning machinery, equipment, and stock into notes of small denominations at twenty-four hours' notice. With great candour, the workmen admitted that this was an aspect of the question that had not occurred to them. After the talk, the workmen returned to the factory, unlocked the door, shook hands warmly with their prisoners, announced that they forgave the debt, and that all should be as it had been—which it was. Thus one may regenerate the world—at least in Russia !

M. Vandervelde rather unkindly describes the action of the workmen as one of the " sottises " which in Russia, as elsewhere, accompany the apprenticeship to liberty. But after all revolutions pass—leaving the world more or less as it was before—and human nature remains, and the student of that strange mystery will doubtless always prize this simple and delightful tale. Is not, in the same way, the blackness of " Easter Week " in Ireland relieved for the philosophic by that entertaining story of the Dublin lady who assisted in looting a bootmaker's shop, but was horror-struck to find that her fellows were such " thieves " that she could not leave her valuable spoil for a moment with impunity, even in order to collect more ?

M. Vandervelde has another story to tell which is not without significance. Pending, its speedy conversion into the kingdom of heaven, Russia has become, he says, the kingdom of talk. Further, there are no private conversations in Russia, any more than there are private fights in Ireland,—anybody can take part. Thus if, as often happens, two workmen in a factory begin to discuss politics, the whole workshop gradually joins in, and as the discussion

becomes animated, others from neighbouring departments also drop their tools in order to participate. In the early summer of last year, when an offensive was in contemplation, the effect was unfortunate, and the Belgians were asked to explain to the workmen the necessity for maintaining production.

At one important munition factory a member of the party had arranged to address the day-shift as its members came off duty at three in the afternoon. On arriving at two-forty-five, the speaker found, rather to his astonishment that the room was already full. He was informed by the manager that, from fear of missing anything, machines had been stopped by the workmen at two-thirty.

He gave his address, and just as he was finishing, a considerable disturbance announced the arrival in the hall of the members of the night-shift. These had learnt of the meeting, and, terrified at the thought of losing an opportunity for hearing the human voice, had resolved to take part in the proceedings. With great self-control, however, they had waited in the silent workshops till all late-comers had put in an appearance, for punctuality is not a Russian characteristic.

On the arrival of the whole gang, the speaker was asked to begin again for the sake of the new-comers. This he did amid great enthusiasm, his appeal for steady and continuous work being warmly applauded. By this time it was four o'clock, and the workshops were still silent. But the most interesting part of the entertainment was still to begin. Having listened with patience the workmen naturally thought that their turn had come, and asked permission to ask questions. Two hours passed in this delightful occupation, punctuated by appeals from the Belgian speaker to the workmen to give practical effect to the enthusiasm which they expressed so loudly. They agreed at once, but added always that a few more questions must first be put and answered. When six o'clock came, the lecturer became impatient, and refused—with some bluntness—to be a party to any further stoppage. The works manager, who presided, expressed some astonishment, saying in a phrase in which it is impossible not to suspect irony, though our author appears oblivious of this, that another half-hour would neither make nor mar the country's output of munitions.

M. Vandervelde seems surprised at this attitude, but, a little later in his book, he speaks with some bitterness of the attitude of the business men towards the Revolution. They show, he says, a disconcerting tendency to refuse their aid, to sulk instead of assisting with all their strength in the process of reconstruction. There is, in short, he says, something of the nature of a strike of the "bourgeois." Unfortunate bourgeois, whose very existence is a crime against the new order, whose actions and passivity are equally objectionable ! What, one may well ask, can a manager do in face of workmen who triple their wages, diminish their hours of work, and within those hours work or not as the fancy takes them ? But this leads us to serious ground which we have no desire to tread here. The only object of this sketch is to suggest that the books we have mentioned are very well worth both reading and

consideration, and throw many interesting sidelights on the facts which the daily papers are now presenting to us, and which often seem to require interpretation.

SNOW.

Snowflake !
Have the grey heavens burst to-day—
Angels their feathers blown away ?
Blown away
Blowing away,
Now fast
Now slow,
On purposeless aimless
Delicate toe.
Playthings of air
Everywhere,
Wonderful waterful
Splashes of snow,
Floating along,
Fragilely strong,
Sighing to earth,
Then wistfully wantonly
Dying at birth.
Snowflake !
Would we could send you back to say
We like the feathers to blow this way.

C. G. R.

BATTERSEA.

The rain blows up from the river :
The rain blows up from the sea.
The first drops shiver the river's cold mirror,

The yellow lights quiver and dance on the river,
Like paths to tempt us the way of the river
Against the rain that beats up from the sea.

Hunched in the dark on the trees and the roofs by the rain driven-river
The cold birds shiver
And long for the spring that blows after the raindrops
Out of the darkness, up from the sea.

Iris Barry.

WHEN BINKS WAS BORED.

ANYWHERE else it would have been a night for waking dreams. Curly, who is a sentimentalist, declared that a gentle little breeze had wafted on it the smell of mignonette and clover. After the recent inferno--they used a much shorter word to express it in the C.T.—it was a heavenly stillness.

But Binks was bored. The beautiful evening was being absolutely wasted with a few subs. as company and a recently captured trench as setting. Frivolous asses, these young subs. ! (His own promotion was three days old.) He thought of Simone down at the base, of the blue sea that lapped the shore, and of eyes that were bluer than the summer skies, and moodily he leant against the parapet and kicked himself.

Twenty yards from the bombing block was the Hun, near enough to be companionable, but not far enough off to be comfortable. He could hear one of the beggars cough, and the husky, half-smothered sound jarred on his rasped nerves.

"Nothing doing," said Binks. "Gad, its the dullest war in history."

Now this was ungrateful, for quite recently the powers that be had provided a rare night of excitement to which the Allies owed that bit of trench. One couldn't reasonably blame Sir Douglas, for how was he to know that Lieut. Algernon Vincent Fitzpatrick (commonly called Binks) liked things to be moving all the time.

" Look here, my lad," he said suddenly, "you'll have your lights put out if I hear that cough again."

It was so still that he stood tense and waited. Fritz might have overheard Binks muttering his threat for there was silence for what seemed a long spell—silence, that is, save for the occasional crack of a rifle and a far-off rumble. It came at last, however, a hoarse choked cough that sounded as if Fritz would be very sick presently, and that might have convinced even Binks that his friend was coughing from necessity and not for pleasure or to irritate his near neighbours, the British Army.

Binks was still bored as he picked out his bomb from the recess beside him and fingered the safety pin.

" You've asked for it," he murmured softly, " and now you'll get it. Here goes my little lightning cough cure."

Another bark—short and sharp this time—from over the way, and with an evil glint in his eye Binks pulled the pin and lobbed the bomb over. In our trench we had the first inkling of something up and we heard the explosion followed by deep curses. . . . The Hun had been settling down for the night, and if we had only known as much German among us we could have heard him asking what the blinking Englishers were up to now. How should they know that Binks was bored, and that in his boredom he was as querulous as another man in his cups.

For about as long as it takes me to tell you there was silence—and no cough. It was the sort of silence that makes you all alert, and it was followed by more curses and a shower of the latest extra special brand of stick bombs. Guttural curses I don't in the least object to, but stick bombs I abominate. So I went to help Binks at the bombing block, and the corporal who is his faithful shadow came alongside.

" Reprisals are in fashion," said Binks. " Let's give 'em what the Prime Minister talks about."

So he threw a bomb for sport, and I threw one to keep it company, and the corporal threw two over to make sure. Now the Boche isn't to be expected to take that sort of thing quietly, but he was even more cross than we anticipated. Perhaps we put the wind up him. No doubt he thought we were up to some fresh move—a little private strafe of our own—and these things, experience has taught him, have a nasty habit of developing. Very soon No. 4 platoon, a little bewildered that it had had no instructions beforehand, and quite at sea as to the origin of the fight, were getting into it with their jackets off, so to speak, and a corresponding number of squareheads were as busy as our men. The noise of the exploding bombs grew frequent, the night was darkening down, and a desultory rifle fire had opened. The Lewis-gun opened a conversation on our right and was answered back peremptorily by the growl of the Hun Maxim.

The mantle of boredom fell from Binks as he straightened up.

" Looks almost as if there was a battle somewhere," and he glanced at the trail of light in which a " minnie " arrived like a star turn entering in the lime-light turned full on.

Two green lights and a red shot up suddenly.

" Creme de menthe for two and a cherry brandy for the lady," said Binks. " S.O.S.—there's trouble brewing."

" Your doing, too, you fathead. Couldn't you let sleeping dogs lie? Hello, there's somebody on the 'phone."

Binks replied. I couldn't hear what they asked at the other end—but he mentioned the gratuitous throwing of stick bombs demanding a reply by return, and forgot to say anything about his preliminary missiles. He came back grinning cheerfully.

" Only the adjutant," he said. " I told him we were all right. He wanted me to explain, but I said we were rather busy, and I'd send an explanation in writing on A.F. umpty-three before 7 ac emma to-morrow."

He broke off: " Fritz has the wind up. There goes his artillery in response to his lights. The see-e-e-wish and the crump of the shells and the deafening report of the " minnies " was growing more intense, and the song of the German guns was soon a duet in which the dominant note was ours. The Hun line over the way began to take on the appearance of a Brock's benefit night. Red lights, orange streamers, the pale flicker of the gun flashes, and rockets of every hue showed up vividly against the now velvet blackness of the night. The Vickers had joined in, and their rat-tat-tap blended with the screech of the shrapnel and H.E. All round Very lights shot up trying to pierce the darkness. Bursts of shrapnel stabbed the night with balls of yellow flame.

As Binks had told the adjutant, we were rather busy ; and I didn't see him again until the rumpus was dying down.

"You think it's funny, I suppose," I muttered gruffly, for Lieut. Algernon Vincent Fitzpatrick (commonly called Binks) has his own sense of humour. " If there's much more of it I'll send in my resignation."

" Good lad, never mind. Think how Fritz is feeling. It's his night's pleasure spoiled. Worry the Hun as much as you can, it's always done in the best army circles, and it's a lovely evening—ow----" Binks clutched his arm, and with the instinct of the times I felt for my field-dressing. " Hit ? " I asked.

" No, fathead I I bit myself in the arm. Guess it's a pukka Blighty." He set his teeth as the blood gushed out, and then Simone's eyes flashed before him and he grinned more cheerfully. " The base will do," he said. And the base it was.

It was only a little strafe, the sort of thing G.H.Q. doesn't trouble to report, but in the language of the communiques " all our objectives were gained." A pet patient at the officers' hospital where Simone is a V.A D., Binks is no longer bored.

M. & E. HUNTER.

COMPOSITION.

I tell you candidly
I don't know how I write.
If frogs blink dubiously

When they first see
The mass of black and white
Which they've produced,
I quite appreciate their feeling.

IRIS BARRY.

A VISION.

... It seemed to me that Princes Street looked rather strange as I walked along it, although everything appeared to be going on as usual. The motor-bus, as it passed me, backfired - as buses always do when anywhere near me - causing me to start in the way that sets a hall-mark on the denizens of Craiglockhart. Yet somehow things were not quite real, but had an air of intangibility, of mysterious isolation. Pondering dimly upon this, and yet being unable to concentrate my faculties sufficiently to grasp the problem or think of a reason for my impressions, I walked towards the Post Office. As I passed the Mound I looked automatically to see the crowd round the tank. ... Surely my eyes didn't deceive me! No! But the strangeness of it! For in the place where the tank had stood there reposed a huge tub, in the mouth of which sat an old man with a long and ragged grey beard and unkempt hair, dressed in a long flowing robe of some coarse material. His gaze, which appeared to me to express a rather scornful contempt, was wandering hither and thither among the crowd of passers-by, who, strangely enough, did not appear to be aware of his presence in their midst.

" Good heavens ! " I mentally ejaculated. " It can't be Diogenes ! "

I felt impelled to go to him but how could I talk to him ? In my most academic moments I had never tried to converse in classical Greek. Would a ghost understand modern English ? Speak to him I must, and I resolved to try the effect of my mother tongue. I stepped up to him and attracted his attention.

" Hallo, Diogenes, old thing ! How's your father "

The only effect of this tentative opening was to cause him to fix me with a perfect glare.

" I must say," I went on, " your manners haven't improved with age if one can judge from your stare ; and how a confounded old anachronism like you got let loose in Edinburgh I'm hanged if I can fathom. I was always brought up to believe that you shuffled off this mortal coil in the year 322 B.C."

" I will pardon your impertinence since it arises from crass ignorance," he replied in a caustic tone. " Know that some vain-glorious and boasting articles appeared some time since in the Stygian Standard, belauding this city to the skies, and believed to have been written by one William Drummond of Hawthornden. The rival journal, the Orcus Observer, countered with

just praise of Athens, and the controversy waxing hot, the King of Hades decided that the opposing factions should each send a representative to visit the respective cities. Among the ancients I was elected for this purpose, although my majority over that prating fellow Demosthenes was very small."

" How curious, old man," I observed. " So it is true, then, that there is no peace for the wicked down there."

" Your impertinence is most--"

" Don't mention it," I interrupted. " You mustn't mind me ; that's my little way. I'm sorry I'm not a native, but as nobody else seems in a hurry to volunteer, perhaps you would like me to trot you round a bit and spin the yarn ? "

" Proceed ! " he said, and, taking up a long staff, prepared to follow me.

" Here," I began, in my grandest manner, " we have the one and only Princes Street. This spacious thoroughfare, on one side of which retail trade flourishes, and whose other side is intended for the contemplation of nature rather good that, eh ? and - and frowned upon by the beetling crag known as the Castle Rock, is now a happy hunting-ground for flappers -

" Define the term 'flapper' ! " he snapped.

" Well, you see," I said, racking my brains for a true definition of that rather elusive creature, " a flapper is a fluffy little bird in her teens, just on the verge of putting her hair up, and whose chief occupation consists in getting innocent young men to treat her to tea and the pictures."

" Your definitions are couched in words as unintelligible as the original term," he said. "

Nevertheless, I am glad to find that the youthful modern female is so passionately devoted to art."

" Art ? " I queried, puzzled. " Oh, you priceless old thing! " I burst out when his meaning became clear. " What a bloomer you've made! It isn't that sort of pictures at all it's the movies Charlie Chaplin, you know, the funniest man on earth, and Mary Pickford in " The Divorced Wife," a thrilling drama in four parts."

" You speak in mysteries," he replied, " and mysteries that have an unseemly savour. We will dismiss the topic. Have you no peripatetic philosophers in this town with a train of enthusiastic followers zealous in the search for truth? "

" Hardly," I said. " You see, that sort of thing isn't done nowadays. If you go up to the castle a guide will take you round. He's peri - what d'ye call it ? - well enough, and from what I remember of him he's a philosopher. Whether he tells you the truth or not is a matter for his own conscience."

Merely grunting at this rather subtle suggestion of mine my companion walked on looking fixedly at a row of cable-cars, which had naturally broken down as though to welcome him, and from which I therefore drew his attention with all speed.

"We have several theatres in the town," I ventured, pausing at the West End and pointing down the Lothian Road. " Down there are the King's and the Lyceum, both jolly good theatres."

" And in them, I suppose, are represented the plays of those very fair British dramatists, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Marlowe, Beaumont, and Fletcher," he said. " I thought I detected a quotation from the works of the first named in your otherwise unmeaning jargon about 'old beans ' and so forth."

" Oh, no !" I replied. "They are all back numbers. Nowadays all we want is something pretty with a catchy song or two, no plot to bother our brains with, and a leg parade."

" What is a leg parade ?" he enquired.

" Well, you see," I answered, " the chorus girls all wear—er--- rather abbreviated skirts. In fact, their skirts rarely reach below the knee."

" Shades of Aristotle ! " muttered the cynic. " Yet we in Greece all thought the drama a most serious form of art ! These barbarians seem to have gone a shade further to the dogs than Aristophanes !"

" Nobody is serious these days," I said. " It's much harder to be light-hearted than solemn."

" What are these people dressed alike in drab-coloured material, with polished brass-work ?" he asked irrelevantly.

" They're soldiers," I replied. " They'll be home on leave or convalescent from wounds received in action."

" I suppose they foregather and recount their glorious deeds and listen to the recital of the heroic feats of their ancestors ?"

" Not a bit ! They don't talk 'shop ' : they're out to enjoy themselves as much as possible. There's nothing glorious in muddy trenches, and war nowadays isn't as simple a matter as the siege of Troy."

At these words he seemed to become sullenly angry and walked along looking at the buildings with a most scornful expression on his aged countenance. Stopping at length he turned to me and said, " My mind is made up. My report, which will be published in full in the *Orcus Observer*, will fully vindicate the views of the ancients, for I find this city full of hideous buildings compared with which my tub is a Parthenon ; your theatre is debased, your women frivolous ; your soldiers are unmindful of glory, and your language a garbled and unintelligible version of a once pleasant tongue – "

He had been emphasising his harangue by tapping me on the shoulder, and eventually this tapping became my whole consciousness, for the street became misty and his voice sounded as from afar. I struggled against a sense of impotence, and then, in addition to the tapping on my shoulder, I became aware of a voice, soft, clear, insistent. . . .

" Wake up ! Wake up ! ! You'll be too late for breakfast !"

C. WAKELIN SCOTT.

GOLDEN ACRE: AN ALLEGORY

(CRAIGLOCKHART AND GOLDEN ACRE—FARE 3d.)

Have you ever been to the Golden Acre
Where the farmers plough with a silver share?
Its richness would tempt the soul of a Quaker,
For it rains in sapphires and diamonds there.

Then heed, and go down the Street of Princes
(For that's the way to the Acre of Gold),
With its ladies fair as the bloom of quinces,
But not so bitter to taste, I'm told.

And see you go down the street unsmiling
Look not to the left hand nor the right,
Nor heed princesses, howe'er beguiling,
Till the Golden Acre comes in sight.

I shall never win to the Golden Acre,
For, whenever the Princes' Street I see,
Some princess always asks me to take her
To the House of Pictures to drink some tea.

H.

"THE HYDRA" LITERARY SELF-EDUCATOR SERIES

Question. What is a magazine ?

Answer. A magazine is an illustration (a) of the inherent optimism of the human race ; (b) of the futility of human endeavour.

Q. Why is a magazine an illustration of the optimism of the human race ?

A. Because in its advertisement columns it illustrates the credulous belief of a section of humanity in its own superlative worth.

Q. Is this belief ever justified ?

A. Occasionally, but in a commercial sense only.

Q. Why is a magazine an illustration of the futility of human endeavour?

A. Because it contains a number of things called articles whose futility is only equalled by the endeavour required to obtain them.

Q. Who supplies the endeavour ?

A. 'The editor supplies the endeavour.

Q. How is this endeavour manifested ?

A. It is manifested by the use of threats, flattery, and, more rarely, pecuniary remuneration.

Q. Why does the editor use these means to obtain articles ?

A. Because he is the editor, and can obtain articles in no other way.

Q. What is an editor ?

A. An editor is (a) the reason for the existence of a magazine ; (b) a symbol of that cult called higher parasitism of intellect ; (c) a nuisance to unwilling contributors.

Q. Is there any other reason than the editor for the existence of a magazine ?

A. Yes; the business manager.

Q. What is a business manager?

A. A business manager is a man who loves the darkness better than the light, whose left hand knows not what his right hand does, but who ends an honoured existence in affluence.

Q. What is an article ?

A. An article is the product resulting from the interaction of ambition, vanity, and alcohol in the cranial cavity of a contributor.

Q. What is a contributor ?

A. A contributor is the representative of the subject races. He and the editor are complementary in a mathematical sense only.

Q. Name three types of magazine.

A. Magazines are (a) recreational, (b) occupational, (c) dissipational.

Q. To which type does The Hydra belong ?

A. To all three. It provides recreation for the editor, occupation for the contributor, and dissipation for the business manager.

Q. Are there any other kinds of magazine ?

A. Yes. There is the educative and select magazine.

Q. What is an educative and select magazine ?

A. It is a magazine which fills a long felt want to its own entire satisfaction.

Q. Is The Hydra an educative and select magazine ?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the price of a magazine ?

A. It is usually excessive.

Q. Is the price of The Hydra excessive ?

A. No. For sixpence a reader can see his own name in print.

Q. What is a reader ?

A. Readers are divided into two classes : (a) contributors ; (b) the general public.

Q. What is the general public

A. The general public is a myth.

THE WINDMILL

Was it your ugliness,
A painter stopped and painted you,
You dull old thing with arms askew ?
Those two great things
You call your wings,
Are they a joke because the ground
Is so monotonous around ?
Or are they there to tantalise
Some tired old bird who not too wise
Wanted a perch ?
That pot-shaped thing behind
Seems there to mock the wind.
You have no head, no grace, no clothes ;
Ask any well-known wind that blows,
And any decent rooster knows
You're hideous.

C. G. R.

THE OPPOSITE SEX

(FOR MEN ONLY.)

As this article deals with the fair sex, it should be the " Leader," but seeing that your's truly wrote it, it isn't.

A woman leads in most things. She did in the garden of old ; she leads men to heaven or . . . elsewhere. She does (when possible) in the world of fashion, and still yearns to lead in politics. She even tries to " W.A.A.C. " us at our own game, and has donned khaki accordingly. It's not playing cricket. 'Tis colossally greedy, and somebody ought to write home about it. Nature never intended women to occupy the position they do. Why on earth they should have all the finery is an enigma to me. The lion has the mane ; the stag his antlers ; the peacock his feathers, and chanticleer his comb, but women, not men, have the clothes. She is, therefore, an usurper, and has no more right to fashion's throne than—than—I have.

The opposite sex ! Yes ! They have been opposite me for a long time, but I never seem to get any nearer to them. Ever since I put golden syrup upon my sister's hair-brushes, and a music hall programme in her prayer book, I have failed (to put it in the vulgar vernacular of some men) to " hit it" with the dear things. At the age of 17, whilst I was at school, I "bumped" into and was enamoured of a lady, whose age was only known to herself. She had kept it a secret for 18 years, she said ; she then informed me that if any one found it out it would practically amount to a miracle, as she had told nobody since she was 18. However, she would have nothing to do with me when I "guessed" her age, and, as far as I know, she is still on the mantel-piece. I then began to look round me in pastures new, and having seen at a soirée what I thought to be my fate (so it was), asked for the pleasure of a dance. She replied (very audibly) that she was " very particular whom she danced with." Of course it was really vulgar of her, so I retorted : "Well, you see, I'm not." She tells all her friends more than my past history now.

Another woman asked me, whilst at dinner, what I thought to be a very pertinent question : " Do you consider yourself good-looking ?" she asked. " Yes, I do," was my response. There was a murmur of disapproval amongst the plainest, for this was a "terminological inexactitude" that they did not like. From the men came a low, indistinct sound that endorsed the opinion of the ladies.

I don't pretend to know how many women there are to each man nowadays, but this I do know, they (the women) are doing their best to blind our eyes to the enormous difference. In fact, most of them, bless them, carry on as if the average was quite the other way round.

As there are many women, so have they many ways in which to attract us. If a woman is pretty or has a good figure, she generally will affect to take very little notice of men (unless, of course, she is a—well —flirt), for she knows in her heart that she is seen. Officers forget their topography (excepting contours) when they see her. If she is in doubt about it, she will look in a shop window that has a mirror in it ; she can see there without letting them know she sees them see. (I'm getting " all at sea" by the look of it.) Others there are who become " sporty," talk slang, chew cigarettes (looks near the knuckle, don't you know), and play at being worldly, whilst some have even taken to the policeman's beat, to get their own back, by running some of us in.

Of course the vast majority of girls are much too sweet to take up these little hobbies, for they know that their proper place is the home or hospital, and they know also that they will lose their power over the best of us (the men that matter) when once their refining influence is no longer felt.

Here in hospital, perhaps, we see them at their best. The maternal instinct, which should be predominant in every good woman's nature, has an opportunity of exercising its wonderful faculty for comforting. It's a pity my room's so small. I can't get more than six in at a time.

I remember, at a certain big hospital in London, a Sister whose whole soul was in her work, and whose one object in life was to see her patients get "back to the land," as it were. She was the embodiment of goodness and kindness, and all who were fortunate enough to come in contact with her felt the better for it. A lady (who, under the circumstances, must be nameless) came to visit me, and I told her of my admiration for the work done by this Sister. She was so struck by it, that when the Sister came in to "touch up" things, she insisted upon her going out and having a good long rest, poor thing, assuring her that she would arrange to make me "comfy" for the afternoon. I am still thinking it over, especially as the lady in question altered all the flowers, photographs, and position of the chairs, etc., in the room.

Disraeli must have understood women, for it is reported of him that upon one occasion, whilst at dinner, a lady sitting next him did nothing but talk politics—possibly because she thought he would like it. At the end of her somewhat lengthy harangue, however, Disraeli turned, and looking at her as straight as he dared, whispered these two words, "you darling!" It sufficed.

I remember, on one occasion, I fully made up my mind to eradicate all thought of them from out my life, and accordingly went to a little girl for whom I had formed a strong attachment to tell her so. She just nestled "right under" my arm, took a deep breath, sighed, and looked up. I believe her hair "accidentally" came down and fell about her shoulders, too. And I! Well, I couldn't; it was impossible and quite out of the question.

All my good resolutions, all my firm, strong, grand authority and will were swept aside by the mere touch of a willow wand. 'Tis so the god Eros wages war, and we men haven't the ghost of a chance with him.

"What is a girl? Ah! What is a girl?"

A morsel of ribbons, sweet frills and lace;

A mischievous elf with an angel's face:

A thorn that has teased me:

A rose that has pleased;

A will-o'-the-wisp for eluding my chase.

And that is a girl.

What is a girl?

A riddle whose meaning I never could guess,

With 'no` on her tongue, when her heart would say 'yes.'
Half artful, half simple,
Half pout and half dimple,
Whole eyes oft betray what her lips would repress—
And that is a girl."

This article, as stated above, is for men only; that being so, you may be that the opposite sex, with that natural inborn inquisitiveness which is their heritage,, will be sure to read it. To them I beg to tender my manifold apologies for presuming to discuss them at all, but hasten to say that I have at least given them something to talk about over their teacups, and that I have not said a millionth part of what they are probably saying about themselves and us at the present moment.

L.K. Hollamby.

THE IDEAL PATIENT

He was an ideal patient
(From an M.O.'s point of view)
We buried him at midnight
Near a big old-fashion'd yew.
He floated in one forenoon,
Greeted Matron with a sob,
Then an M. O. came to sound him
(My! his clothes just hung around him),
And the Treasurer soon found him
To relieve him of two bob.
His doctor told him plainly,
If he'd work he'd soon be well,
And, by gum! he worked like thunder—
Filled his bedroom-mates with wonder ;
Some "got out " and some " went under,"
Said they'd had one taste of --- !
He saw the chart of " ATIONS,"
Cut out " DISSIP" of that ilk,
Followed carefully each arrow,
Chose the path that men call narrow—

Cards just chilled him to the marrow ;
But he loved his glass of milk.

He rose at six each morning,
Took cold swims, made woolly rugs;
He did all sorts of woodwork,
Painted pretty things on mugs.
He kept his bedroom tidy,
And he always made his bed.
He never said to his M.O.,
" I've got an awful head "
He took up Agriculture,
Helped the Scouts and B.T.C..
He had no use for passes,
And he never missed P.T.

He stayed in bed one morning,
Heaved a sigh of deep relief . . . ,
A scared doc came to sound him,
Felt his pulse—began to pound him.
In a last long sleep he found him--
But no patients died of grief.

He was an ideal patient
(From an M.O.'s point of view)—
We buried him at midnight
Near a big old-fashion'd yew.

G. H. BAYLIS

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

SIR, —As a constant reader of that most useful branch of hospital activity, The Hydra, I presume to trespass to the extent of a few lines in your columns in order to relieve my congested brain of an overflow in such a manner as may be beneficial both to The Hydra and to myself.

In judging the merits of such a periodical as this, there are two facts which we must consider and allow to modify our opinions.

In the first place, the fluctuating population which this hospital contains can never constitute

a very fertile soil in which to cultivate the finest flowers of literature. Any such flowers are bound to be rare, and possibly accidental discoveries on the part of you, sir, as the editor. Whether you have discovered any such up till the present is a matter of opinion. Your task as a searcher you have fulfilled so admirably as to become at times an almost intolerable nuisance.

The second fact is, that even in this fluctuating population, comparatively few men come forward voluntarily to do any work at all. Surely among a hundred and eighty of us there might be found more than half-a-dozen who are prepared to sit in the silence room for a few hours for the sake of the Hospital magazine, and who, if unable to climb to the heights of the great gods of literature and art, can at least, from a lesser and possibly more useful altitude, delight our hearts by drawing aside for a few minutes the dark veil which seems at present to hang between us and the lighter, but none the less essential things of life.

But now for the magazine as it is. For three things, sir, I give you and your satellites on the staff credit—for the cover, the paper, and the price. The cover is a masterpiece worthy of a much wider circulation than it appears likely to get here. The paper is a pleasure to see and handle, and far better than I have seen in any other hospital magazine, and in common, I believe, with most readers I trust that this feature will be kept unimpaired. Thirdly, the price is, to quote a popular advertisement, within the reach of all.

But, sir, there is a reverse side to this pleasant picture. After delighting our souls with paying sixpence, gazing on the cover, and running our fingers easily through the paper, when we come to some of the subject matter we realise the truth of the quotation at the head of the January Editorial, "The dream is dulled."

When I read the application of the Antaeus fable I was profoundly shocked and grieved. For months I have been trying my best to forget the meaning of the word "work." This article brought me back to earth with a crash which might have revived Antaeus, but which almost killed me.

Close upon this article comes a thing called "Desire." I presume that it is a poem since each line begins with a capital letter, but to me it seems a compound of the Song of Solomon and some of Walt Whitman's most pernicious productions, written by a disciple of Browning in an acute attack of delirium tremens. I admit that I have not got the artistic temperament, and if this is one of its manifestations I don't want it. It was with much cause that the girl in the article wept.

Again, what useful function does the "Episode" serve? Do we all not realise the contrast between peace and war, and are we not all familiar enough with death that we should be compelled to harrow our souls by the perusal of the magnification of a commonplace and all too familiar incident?

Following this I read "Unspoken," and am profoundly of the opinion that the title should have been "Unwritten."

"Post War Prophecies" is better. Though cheap in every sense, and not excelling in literary

merit, it has the advantage that it requires no intelligence for its appreciation. This sort of thing is also easy to write, and I commend it for the perusal of willing but timed would-be contributors.

The notes on the various activities of the Hospital are good, and ought to serve a useful purpose in enlightening new victims and letting them know that Craiglockhart is not a relic of the prison system of the dark ages.

The " We Hear " column, and to a lesser degree the Editorial and such verses as "Beads " were, I suppose, quite useful for filling space.

Does it not strike you, sir, that The Hydra is running the risk of extinction through a well-meant but futile attempt to preserve a high literary standard? Every number up to date has contained some articles which had a high literary value, but there have also been some woeful attempts at literature gone astray. What we want is a magazine which, while giving us an impression of the more serious work done in the Hospital, will also enable us to laugh at one another, to laugh at our own idiosyncrasies and those of other people. Personally, I should thoroughly enjoy an article recounting how, on a memorable occasion, a certain padre was found sitting in the corridor weeping because he was not a bishop, having previously removed his leggings so that his black stockings might simulate gaiters.

Sir, it is only by broadening the basis of the magazine so that everybody can not only enjoy its articles but can also write them, that you can make it a success. Give us an opportunity of telling each other what fools we all are, and we shall soon become wiser and happier men, but do not let us make fools of ourselves and depress others with maudlin sentimentality disguised as literature and immoral articles glorifying work. —I am, etc. TROUBLED READER.

[We are always pleased to receive letters of appreciation from our readers, but fear that our correspondent's brain must have been particularly congested when he wrote this letter. The only other explanation of such a monument of ineptitude is that his taste is not sufficiently developed for him to appreciate the excellent literary fare which we provide. We shall not attempt to deal with his criticisms in detail, as most of them are so cheap and superficial as to be negligible. If, however, our correspondent can himself produce any verse which he considers superior to that which we have printed, we should be delighted to receive it. So far he has contented himself with criticism, always easy and seldom justified.

As for the suggestion with which he concludes, we have our own ideas about running a magazine and refuse to be daunted by well-meaning but ignorant correspondents. Is it our imagination, or do we detect a note of disappointment running through his outpouring? Can it be that he himself submitted some gem of literature which we felt bound in consideration for our readers to refuse? We wonder. His request for "an opportunity of telling each other what fools we all are" is granted, and we take this opportunity of registering our editorial opinion of "Troubled Reader."—Ed.]

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

PUZZLED.—What you require is occupation, recreation, dissipation. See official Schema.

PATH TO PARNASSUS.—Try our new route – arrowroot.

DEBATER. —We have ourselves noticed that eloquence is a national characteristic of the Celt. For another famous example, see the Prime Minister.

STUDENT OF THE DRAMA.—Mr Milton informs us that he considers the production of "Seven Days' Leave" impracticable at the present time.

CRITIC.—We regret that your dramatic criticism, entitled "A Foul Play," has been lost. Does it refer to anything produced in this Hospital

COLD FEET.— Anyway, hot water bottles are unhealthy.

MUSIC LOVER.— 1. The musical director's methods are original. 2. He does not instruct the orchestra in physical training. 3. We understand that the object of the concealment of the orchestra by palms is to enable patients to concentrate their attention on the music.

ANTAEUS.—When wrestling with Hercules, both feet should be placed on the ground .

Tripping inadmissible.

ETIQUETTE.— No, it is not considered good form to take more than five cups of coffee at night.. Some one else besides yourself may want some.

REGINALD.—Sorry your memory is bad on Saturday mornings. We understand the Treasurer has the number of your room.

DHOBY WALLAH—A good laundry is Messrs Black and White. See specimen on notice board (unlaundried).

ANXIOUS.—Your handkerchief has been found.

FINANCIER —If you really don't know where to get your registered letters, we will gladly fetch them for you.

HERO WORSHIPPER.—We understand that the Committee have purchased the following songs with a view to presenting them to the departing Chairman:— S. "When you Come Home, Dear." "God Send You Back to Me." " Until." " Absent. We Don't Want to Lose You"; also " I Didn't Want to Do It ; and "They Didn't Believe Me."

CLARENCE. —We are authorised to contradict the rumour that a Beagling Club, to be called "The Princes Street Harriers," is to be formed in connection with this Hospital.

ORPHEUS.— 1. The piece to which you refer was, we believe, " Bric-à-Brac," not the "Anvil Chorus." 2. Probably in civil life a blacksmith.

EPISCOPALIAN.— For information about the Scottish Churches Disestablishment Act (1913) we should advise you to consult Mr Paterson.

AMATEUR.—We are sorry you missed the matinee. Charity is the sport of kings. It is not true that the conductor had a nut thrown at him. The children were most appreciative. CHORAL

—Glad you are nursing your voice.

RENAISSANCE. —Sorry you cannot sleep. Try a cold bath at 2 a.m. every morning, followed by an hour's concentration on the show-case. Should that not have the desired effect, light a fire in your bedroom. This never fails to produce results.

EMBITTERED.--We have not the slightest idea which is the worst tramway system in the world.

PLATONIC FRIEND.—After reading your letter, we suggest Platoonic as a more appropriate pseudonym.

NELLIE.—If the man says he loves you, and won't pay your fare to Tollcross, he is not worth worrying about. Our advice is : Break it off!

PERCY.—We shall not try to dissuade you. "Trixie's" advice carries weight.

INCROYANT.—All we can say is that, if you see it in The Hydra, it is so.

MEDICO. —You are right. With some people blood pressure is their tender point. With us it is our circulation. You can help us in this.

BANG GOES SAXPENCE—Our business manager has still a few war-ships to dispose of. Room 77.

BLUE BAND.— No. "All Dressed Up and No Place to Go" was not written by the author of "Paradise Lost."

ETYMOLOGIST.—The word " barrage" is derived from the French barrage, meaning barrage.

STATISTICIAN. -4000 copies of The Hydra, placed end to end, would form a bridge equal in length to a large piece of string.

GUNNER.—Regret that up to the time of going to press your suspender has not arrived at the Lost Property Office.

MAISIE.—So sorry that we were unable to give away a blouse-pattern with the January number. Our Lady Correspondent spends all her time in a tea queue. (This is strictly on the Q.T.)

VIGNETTE

A shimmering haze
All golden and blue,
Like a network of lace
With the sky showing through,
Lies over the garden. Brown bumble-bees woo
The sensuous rose
In an amorous croon ;
The lily's eyes close
In a languorous swoon,
And the leaves droop inert on this warm afternoon.

The pink petals sift
On the soft-breathing air ;
Blue butterflies drift,
And with exquisite care
Poise so lightly the flowers are scarcely aware.

LEONORA.

CLUB NOTES

Craiglockhart War Hospital Officers' Club.

Chairman Capt. BARRY O'BRIEN.

Hon. Treasurer Capt. G. MARSHALL.

Hon. Secretary Mr J. H. GAUDON.

General.—The Club provides all writing materials, papers and periodicals, and soap in the lavatories ; all gratuities are paid to the staff out of Club funds, and among other advantages which may be enjoyed by members, we may mention the following :—Bridge, chess, draughts, the use of a telephone, and classes in various languages and engineering. Concerts (Mr Milton, Secretary). —There is a fine concert every week. The C.W.H. orchestra is quite renowned. All can help.

Debating Society (Mr Wood, Secretary). —Meets every Wednesday, at 8 p.m. Come along and argue !

Model Yacht Club (Mr Murray, Secretary).—This Club is very popular. About twenty model yachts have been built in the workshop.

Camera Club (Mr N. Wood, Secretary).—Meetings are held every Sunday at 8 o'clock. Competitions are run and prizes given. There is a completely equipped dark room in the basement.

Field Club (Mr Miller, Secretary).—A lecture is held weekly, every Monday at 8 o'clock, and an optical lantern has been purchased by the Club to illustrate the various subjects. Weekly excursions are made to the Edinburgh region, which is being systematically surveyed.

Boys' Training Club (Mr Waterhouse, Secretary).--Officers lecture and assist Boy Scout movement.

Workshop (Mr Smith, Secretary). — A completely fitted workshop on the premises provides for any branch of workmanship.

Billiards (Mr Wright, Secretary).—There are two billiard tables, and the Club is endeavouring to add another at an early date. Competitions are held monthly. No charge for a game !

Golf (Mr Waterhouse, Secretary).—Several sets of clubs are provided for use of Members.

Competitions are organised. Golf balls can be purchased from the tobacco stall. Beginners can be assisted by the representative.

Tennis, Badminton, Croquet, Bowls, etc. (Mr Milton, Secretary).—All the materials for these games are provided and competitions held monthly.

Agriculture and Gardening (Mr Miller, Secretary).—Every facility is given for those interested, including lectures at the East of Scotland College of Agriculture.

Indoor Games (Mr Arnott, Secretary).—The Secretary will be pleased to have any suggestions for entertainments during the winter evenings.

Choral Society (Mr Bayley, Secretary).— A meeting is held every Tuesday at 8 o'clock. Come and help.

Fine Arts Society (Mr King, Secretary). Classes in all subjects are held at the Edinburgh College of Art to which officers are invited.

Arts and Crafts (Mr W. A. C. Scott, Secretary). — Instruction is given in rug making, wood carving, decorative art pottery, wood block printing, etc. Materials to be had from the showcase.

Literary Society (Mr Lewis, Secretary).— A paper is read each week.

Magazine (Mr Bonner, Editor).—This worthy chronicle of all our doings, etc., adds interest to our stay here. Send an article along!

Tobacco Stall (Mr Proctor, Club Steward). —Little need be said to advertise the boon this offers to all !

Library (Mr Simpson, Librarian).—Books to suit all tastes. Additions monthly.

Laundry (Mr White).—Laundry collected and delivered at special contract prices. Laundry must be ready each week by 10 a.m. on Sunday.

Church Notices.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

Sundays, 3rd February and 17th February. 8.30 a.m. Holy Communion. Room 6. 10.00 Morning Prayer and Address. Concert Room.

PRESBYTERIAN.

Sundays, 10th February and 24th February. 10 a.m. Morning Service and Address. Concert Room.

BIBLE STUDY CIRCLE.

A meeting is held on Thursdays at 8 p.m. in Room 6 for the study of the Gospel according to St John. New members are welcomed each week.

R. B. WINSER, C.F., C. of E.

Concerts.

On the 12th January we were treated—or maltreated, as the case may be—with a " triple bill." I have heard officers offer up thanksgivings that it was not a quadruple bill.

"BROWNE WITH AN E,"—We led off with one of those good old "screaming farces" which are carried through with "lightning speed and automatic precision," the only drawback being that the actual performance was rather stumbling and inaccurate, and not funny. The ladies, with the assistance of a loud-voiced prompter, interpreted their parts with admirable skill. Of the gentlemen the less said the better, with the exception, perhaps, of the Frenchman. What a wonderful word is "perhaps"! The juvenile lead made love as if he had been sentenced to do so by a general court-martial, and the German, who should have been a pompous and comical old gentleman, was common-place and dull. The redeeming feature of the sketch was the cattish temper of "Mrs Browne with an E." The cast was as follows:

—

Graf von Donner, etc. Mr J.S.D. Lloyd.

Mr Robert Browne. Mr A.D. Fleming.

Mrs Gushington Nervesby . Miss Muriel McDougal

M. Vinfran Parjour Capt. M. Barry O'Brien.

Mrs Robert Browne Miss Douglass McDougal

Miss Excelsiora Peak Miss V. Kelly.

The second sketch was entitled "The Monkey's Paw." It was, as the programme warned us, an "extremely dramatic sketch," and it was admirably acted by Capt. M. Barry O'Brien and Miss Lilian Stennis, who, by the way, has earned our gratitude on several previous occasions. The other parts were comparatively insignificant, and were taken without offence (to us). The only blot on this otherwise commendable performance was a spoonerism on the part of the leading man, which was due more to hunger than to inefficiency. The cast was as follows:

—

Mr White . Capt. M. Barry O'Brien.

Mrs White . Miss Lilian Stennis

Herbert . Mr J. S. D. Lloyd.

S.M. Morris Mr M. Milton

Mr Sampson Mr E. Wood.

"A LITTLE FOWL PLAY."—The last sketch appealed most to me. It harmonised with my nature. It was one of those sketches composed of empty humour and refined idiocy. The leading man played his part with such conviction that I am sure he was a thief in civil life. He deserved that chicken. His wife was a splendid example of innocence lured into crime by the influence of a mean mind. In the main, however, she was a sweet and loving wife, though somewhat vacillating in purpose. Mr Tolbooth was a dear old gentleman, despite his language at the telephone. He deserved to lose that chicken. The butcher boy was—well, a butcher boy; it led one to speculate on the actor's civil occupation.

But there is no doubt that the servant, Mary, was the great success, and we congratulate her (or, perhaps, it was the producer) on her rendering of a low but real comedy part. The

caste was as follows :-

Gilbert Warren Mr M. Milton.

Sybil Warren Miss Muriel McDougal.

Mary . Miss Douglass M'Dougal.

Mr Tolbooth Mr A. D. Fleming.

Boy Mr E. H. Catt

The usual thanks are to be tendered to the orchestra, under the rhythmic and almost serpentine guidance of Mr Proctor, and extra congratulations to the noble army of scene-shifters under Mr Catt.

" Noises off," whoever they were, deserve special mention, especially in the case of Fowl Play," which seemed to consist of alternate sentences and noises off ! We also offer our hearty congratulations to Mr Smith on the excellent lighting effects in " The Monkey's Paw." Such things as moonlight, flickering candles, and total darkness were produced with great success.

POLLY

Owing to the wretched weather conditions, the concert on 19th January threatened to be a fiasco. Most of the artistes were unable to get out to the Hospital, and while telephones were bussing out apologies, the stage manager was almost at his wits' end. In spite of everything, however, the concert was a success. The audience was even more appreciative than usual—if that be possible at Craiglockhart.

Mr Catt gave quite a good impersonation of George Robey in his song, " In Other Words." The topical verses that were introduced were particularly popular.

The real saviour of the situation was Mr Eric Scott, and his songs at the piano were encores again and again. If he had sung all night, he would still have found that group of enthusiasts at the back of the hall clamouring for another encore. One thing is certain—Mr Scott's throat was more tired than his audience when he finished his last song.

The little sketch, "The Man in the Street," was very well done by Mrs Queen, Mr Catt and Mr E. Wood. Mr Wood's acting as the old father was particularly good. It was evident, however, that the beverage supplied for him by the management was not exactly what he was used to.

The orchestra was most heroic in its efforts throughout the evening. Though at less than half its strength, it was called upon to do more than double its usual work, and numerous awkward gaps in the programme were whiled away to the strains of " Tina," " High Jinks," and our dear old friends, " Amina" and " Stars and Stripes."

The weather conditions being better, the concert on 26th January was a greater success than that of the week previous. Our old friend Mr Eric Masters was with us again. This time, we noted with awe, he was camouflaged behind wondrous green tabs. These however did not affect his vocal powers, and repeated calls for "encores" showed that his popularity is

still in the ascendant among us. Particularly good was his rendering of the Prologue to "I'Pagliacci."

Miss Eva Higgs' fine contralto voice was heard to good effect in numerous songs. The audience was especially charmed by her "Three Fishers went a-Sailing" and "Soul o' Mine." Miss Thompson's violin solos were delicately executed. Even the builders of the second tower of Babel were forced to stop work to listen.

Mr Steger was at the top of his form. He is one of the singers of whom we never tire.

Mr Carter gave us "Mandalay" and two coster songs. He is better as a Cockney than as an elocutionist, but I do wish he had had pearly buttons on his trousers ; it might have helped him. His cheery manner and self-confidence were, at any rate, well suited to the part.

As our pessimists prophesied, something untoward was bound to happen during the evening. This week the lights went out, and, by way of a little irony, they went out just as the orchestra was starting the "Morning, Noon, and Night" overture. The shades of night fell with alarming abruptness ; but the orchestra is never at a loss, and, after a few moments, they had switched into dear old "Amina.—Like the poor, "Amina" is always with us—" and very nice, too !"

The orchestra also gave us "Americana" and "Maritana," and, as an encore, the "Marche Harmoreske," composed by Messrs Harcourt and Murray.

GYP.

Debating Society.

Chairman— Capt. GIBSON.

Secretary—Mr E. WOOD.

The past month has been most successful, not only with regard to the increase of membership, but also in the quality of the speaking.

We have also been remarkably fortunate in discovering many excellent speakers amongst the new members. With great pleasure we welcome Major Ruggles, whose contributions to the debates have been most valuable—so much so, that, like Oliver Twist, we ask for more, and still more. We hope to persuade him to take the lead at an important debate in the near future.

Very welcome, too, are Capt. Marshall and Messrs Hall, Milton, White, Boyd, and Hunter, who have already most worthily filled the gaps caused by the departure of old members.

There seems to be an idea abroad that every one who attends a debate is expected to speak. On the contrary, we welcome, most heartily, the listeners ; many members of the Officers' Club have a temporary difficulty in speaking, but we shall be only too glad to see them, and can promise them interest and entertainment.

The Debating Society has established itself upon a firm basis of popularity, and is, at the present time, one of the most successful branches of the Officers' Club. Why? The answer, surely, is obvious—it is because members coming once, become thoroughly in-terested, and

thereafter are regular attenders.

Come and enjoy the flourish of Captain O'Brien's oratorical shillelah, the music and poetry of Mr Paterson's delightful contributions, the geometrical exactitudes of Padre Griffiths, the plaintive confidences of Mr Milton, the--well, come and fix your own adjectives ; my stock is running out, and I have mentioned only a few of our regular speakers. We meet every Wednesday, at 8 o'clock, in the Light Diet Room.

DEBATING CHARACTERS.

Mr MILTON. Affable and communicative ; ingratiating and confidential, with more than a touch of plaintive wit, and a child-like desire to induce others to share his misfortunes.

Capt. O'BRIEN. The iron hand in the velvet glove ; apologetic but firm ; his tactful assumption of omniscience on the part of the chairman is only equalled by his apologetic certainty of the rights of his own case.

Capt. MARSHALL. A vivid illuminant of the paths of truth with a hatred of man-made motor laws surprising in one so gentle ; a sublime faith in the rectitude of humanity, and a voice which he might make a little more use of, complete a beautiful and child-like character.

Model Yacht Club.

Secretary —Lieut. H. GARBOIS MURRAY.

We are glad to see that, despite the departure of many old yacht owners, numerous newcomers have shown a keen interest in the work of this Club. Mr Harcourt is at present engaged on the construction of a model "half-rater," with which he hopes to challenge the supremacy of the champion, "Cruiskeen III."

It is hoped that other members will avail themselves of the tools and facilities of the workshop in a similar manner, and thus make our next regatta (to be held at an early date) a really sporting event. All information regarding the purchase of wood, tools, design, etc. , can be had from the Secretary, Room 27, at any time.

Camera Club.

Chairman—Mr G. E. PHILLIPS.

Secretary—Mr N. WOOD.

Members of Committee—Mr S. SMITH and Mr MORTON.

The weather during the past month has made it difficult to get much work done out of doors, but the Club has been active in other ways.

Mr S. Smith read some interesting and instructive papers on the production of good pictures, giving demonstrations of developing, intensification, and reduction, and also of printing on various types of paper.

The practical use of these demonstrations has been proved by the successful results obtained by members of the Club in their own experiments afterwards. Mr Dawson also gave

a demonstration of mounting, together with some useful notes on harmony, colour, and texture in relation to mounts, to which Mr G. E. Phillips added a few words on passe partout mounting.

The photographic cabinet has been removed by Messrs Watson, who found that it did not pay its way. Its disappearance has certainly made very little difference to the activities of the Club, and it may therefore be assumed that Watson's were not without grounds for their action.

In point of fact, the Club has considerably increased its activities, and several new ideas have been started during the last few weeks, among which may be mentioned the Weekly Rambles.

Each week a suitable ramble is to be arranged, so that members may be able to meet together, and with, it is hoped, mutual advantage, help and criticise each other's efforts. It is confidently expected that these rambles will become one of the pleasantest features of the Club, and members would do well to avail themselves of the opportunities thus offered. One of the outstanding features of these outings will be expert criticism and advice on the choice of subjects and the best way of taking them, by Mr S. Smith, who has kindly promised to place his wide knowledge of the subject at the disposal of members.

It has been decided to devote a part of each meeting to the criticism of members' prints. It is hoped that members will take full advantage of this opportunity for mutual criticism.

Weekly competitions are still to be continued and prizes awarded, but in future competitors will be charged a small entrance fee.

Field Club.

This Club exists for the study of nature and animal life in a popular way, and has, as one of its chief aims, the correlation of abstract knowledge with its practical application in the surrounding country, and the inter-relation of one science with another.

In furtherance of these ideas, meetings are held weekly on Mondays, when a paper is read on some subject of interest and discussed. There are also various sections devoting attention to a particular subject, and reports on the progress made in the knowledge of these subjects are given from time to time.

Then, for the development of the practical side, and for obtaining information of various subjects and local industries, excursions are made on Fridays to some place of interest. As no specialised, scientific, or other knowledge is necessary to derive benefit from the papers read, and as the meeting is conducted in an informal and conversational way, it is hoped, and strongly urged, that more officers will take advantage of this Club's efforts to supply a few hours' diversion and pleasant and profitable intercourse.

On 28th December a meeting was held, when an interesting discussion took place on the commencement and development of habits and instinct in animals. This was followed by some microscopic work to discover and identify various forms of pond life.

On 31st December an excellent paper on 'The City on the Nor' Loch'—an introductory

survey of Edinburgh—was given by Mr Robertson. The development and growth of the city was sketched in a general manner from its earliest beginning, and it was shown how the rude shelter and fortifications of primitive man grew with advancing intelligence until it became the stronghold of medieval times, with the resulting township clustered beside it. Modern progress, with its enlargements, widened views, and scope for bigger efforts, caused the natural extension and encroachment on the outlying districts, and gave, in process of time, Edinburgh of the present day.

The lecture was greatly enjoyed by those present, and was illustrated on a blackboard by a diagram built up and filled in as the lecturer proceeded from point to point in the history.

On 7th January there was a microscopic demonstration by Mr N. Wood and Mr Richardson, bacteriologist of the City Hospital, of bacilli which cause various diseases in animals and man. The slides were very interesting and highly educative to a layman in this subject. On 14th January a lecture, illustrated by lantern slides kindly lent by Principal Bradley of the Royal Dick Veterinary College on, "Some Bacteriological Diseases in animals", was given by Mr N. Wood. The essayist spoke of common diseases in horses, pigs, fowl, and shell fish, such as glanders, swine fever, cholera, typhoid, and tuberculosis. The lantern slides showed the germs of these diseases.

A conversation on the subject followed, and much interesting information was disclosed by the essayist and Major Ruggles, who was present and took part in the discussion.

While inclement weather and the festivities of the season interfered with the attendance at the excursions, nevertheless the outings were quite enjoyable and informative.

A visit to Gray's Mill Farm was made on 21st December. The live stock was inspected and discussed, and last season's crops, to the cutting and gathering of which the officers had given much help, were favourably commented on.

A number of officers paid a visit to the Royal Geographical Society's rooms on 4th January. They were shown over the building by one of the members, and the facilities for spending a quiet hour in reading books from a well-stocked library, and periodicals and magazines, so generously granted by the Committee to officers here, were duly appreciated and appraised. Roslyn was the objective on 11th January. This excursion was taken part in by members of the Camera Club, and the outing was made more enjoyable and interesting by their presence. The old castle was visited, the party being conducted over it by the keeper, who explained and showed the various parts of note about this ancient, historical relic. After a fine repast, the party visited the carpet factory of Messrs Widnell & Stewart, permission for this being kindly granted by the proprietors, through the good offices of Lieut. Stewart on our behalf. The various processes of carpet-making were seen — washing and bleaching the threads, winding from hanks to reels, printing the threads and fixing the dye, arranging the threads as a pattern on a frame, and the weaving into a fabric. Some interesting features about dyes and dyeing were then explained by the chemist of the factory.

An excursion to the Botanical Gardens had to be postponed owing to weather conditions.

Attention is drawn to the notices giving particulars as to the use of rooms of various Edinburgh scientific societies by officers, and also to the agricultural classes which are held in the East of Scotland Agricultural College on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and in Room 6 on Wednesdays.

The Club has lost the services of a very valuable member in Lieut. Chase, who has acted as Secretary for the Club since its beginning, and has done much by untiring effort to bring its usefulness before the officers by arranging lantern lectures, papers, and excursions for their relaxation and enjoyment. We here record our high appreciation of his good work.

Boys' Training Club.

Secretary—Mr A. S. WATERHOUSE.

The main objects of the Boys' Training Club are as follows :—

- I. To help the boys of Edinburgh by getting in touch with the Boy Scout movement and Board Schools, and providing instruction in subjects of interest to them which they do not meet in the ordinary routine, trying to stimulate in them self-discipline and respect.
2. To encourage officers who are patients in this Hospital to take an interest in the movement, and to arrange classes for them in subjects in which they are interested, in the hope that the mental occupation thus provided will be of benefit to them.
3. To carry out an engineering scheme, as a branch of the Club, the object of which is to bring those officers who are interested in engineering and motor engineering into touch with workshops and motor garages, where they can work.

During the past month, at Tynecastle School, Gorgie, physical culture classes have been held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Mr Dundas, Mr Wood, Mr Crine, and Mr Coates have been in charge of these. The map-reading and signalling classes have had to be dropped for the present, owing to the impossibility of fitting them into the school time-table.

Two classes, consisting of boys from North Merchiston Board School, have been held each week at the Hospital, one on Wednesdays, in field engineering, at present under the supervision of Mr Lauder, and the other on Thursdays, in topography, under Mr Diver and Mr Bayley.

Mr Sillery takes a class in ju-jitsu and drill at the Church Lads' Brigade, Slateford, on Wednesdays, and another class in the same subject at the Edinburgh Working Lads' Industrial Home at Fountainbridge. Assistance at these two places is urgently required.

Boy Scouts' Association.—Instructors are required immediately for the signalling class of the 15th Edinburgh Troop at the Scout Hall, Albany Street, on Mondays.

The following classes are held each week :—

Wednesday.—Bugling : Mr Harcourt, Mr Wray. Signalling - 44th Edinburgh Troop: Mr Rich, Mr Bignell.

Friday. -- Aeronautics — 12th Edinburgh Troop : Mr Swann, Mr Ingram, Mr Fox, Mr Lauder.

Instruction for Scout Badges 4th Edinburgh Troop : Mr Wray.

Saturday.- Scout Work--4th Edinburgh Troop : Mr Wray.

Arrangements are being made to assist the Western District Boy Scouts in their County Flag Competition in February. Notices in regard to this will appear later.

The Club wishes to warmly thank the following officers who have lately offered their services: — Capt. Gordon-Marshall, Capt. FitzGerald, Mr Scudamore, Mr Drewitt, Mr Coates, Mr Crine, Mr Lauder, and Mr Atkinson. At the time of writing, the usual situation has been reversed, and instead of having difficulty in finding instructors for classes, we are having difficulty in finding classes for instructors, which is really a satisfactory position.

The Club also owes a large debt of gratitude to the M.O.'s, and especially Capt. Brock, for their interest and assistance in all our various branches.

It is again necessary to emphasise to all instructors the importance of giving suitable notice, whenever possible, in cases where they find themselves unable to attend classes. There is then a chance of finding a substitute, or, failing this, the boys can be notified.

Engineering.-The Tynecastle workshops have been closed during the Christmas and New Year holidays, but will be open again for the use of officers before the end of January. Notices in this regard will appear later on the notice board. All those interested in engineering or motor engineering should avail themselves of the exceptional opportunities provided by these workshops.

Golf.

Secretary—Mr A. S. WATERHOUSE.

Even the most enthusiastic of golfers have been forced to give in to the weather conditions during the greater part of this last month. Three attempts were made to hold a medal competition at Baberton, but on each occasion a fall of snow made play impossible. If luck turns, and there is any chance whatsoever, this competition will be held before the end of January. It is hoped that the entries will be as large as on previous occasions.

During the fortnight including the Christmas and New Year holidays, the local club (M. E. G. C.) opened its full course of 18 holes. This gave players new fields to explore, and the experiences of " the hill " were many and various. Some scientific putts were made on the new greens.

New arrivals at the Hospital are cordially invited to join the Club, and those wishing to be handicapped are asked to add their names to the list on the notice board.

For some considerable time now, through the courtesy of the members, officers from this Hospital have been entitled to play on several of the best courses in the Edinburgh district without fees of any kind. Thus golfers here have had exceptional opportunities. But it has become imperative to strongly emphasise the fact that we are not members of these clubs, and are there solely as visitors through the kindness of the club authorities. Officers who intend in the future to avail themselves of these privileges are requested not only to make

themselves thoroughly familiar with the rules and regulations of the clubs they visit, but to strictly adhere to them, in addition to the recognised rules of the game. If this is not done, we will find these privileges withdrawn from us.

Agriculture and Gardening.

Secretary--Mr M. MILLER.

The poultry and gardening section has lost the valuable help and knowledge of Mr Laing, who, by unflinching and constant attention, has brought much success and improvement to both departments.

The gardening has been stopped by the weather, but it is hoped that when milder weather appears, allotments will be quite the best activity here.

Agricultural work has been highly popular this month. The most outstanding feature was a day's threshing. The sheaves of three stacks of oats and wheat were put through the mill, and the results of the day's work were seen in 40 sacks of 18 stones each. The work at present on hand is ploughing and dressing potatoes for market, and additional helpers in this would be highly acceptable.

The thanks of the officers who are interested in this work are extended to the tenants, Mr and Mrs Jamieson, for the facilities for practical experience in farm work so readily granted, and for many kindnesses so heartily given.

The classes at the Agricultural College have been resumed, and while the attendance at them is fair, it is hoped more officers will take advantage of the kindness of the College authorities in forming these classes for their benefit. For full particulars see notice board in

Choral Society.

Choirmaster— C. WAKELIN SCOTT.

Secretary-- Y. A. BAYLEY.

It is largely owing to Mr Bayley that the Choral Society owes its inauguration, and the support it has already received leads us to believe that it will soon be one of the most flourishing activities of the Club. The first meeting was held on 17th January, when a large number participated and gave an excellent account of themselves. After such a promising start we confidently expect to be giving an item to the Concert programme very shortly, as there is plenty of scope among choruses, which are both high-class and popular. Our thanks are due to the C.O. and the Matron for their kind support.

In addition to the weekly rehearsals, it is proposed that small classes should be held especially for those who want to know something of staff notation. Any information can be obtained from the Secretary or Choirmaster.

Arts and Crafts.

We wish to draw attention to the show case in the hall. Its object is not merely to gratify our personal vanity, but to demonstrate what a little care and ingenuity will produce. Here are

water-colours, rugs, wood carvings, examples of wood block printing, decorative pottery and a very fine model boat. Not one of these is beyond the capabilities of any one who will devote a few hours each day to his hobby. It is hoped that the show case will encourage others to take up some department of the Arts and Crafts as an " occupation." They will undoubtedly find it an entertaining and, in many cases, lucrative form of enjoyment.

RUG AND MAT-MAKING.

Quite a number of patients have taken up this interesting and useful hobby, and some splendid rugs have already been made, samples of which are on view in the show case. Very many thanks are due to Miss Holcroft, who visits the Hospital each Tuesday and Friday morning at 10.45, for the purpose of giving every assistance to the " rug workers," actual or incipient. It was a happy inspiration of Miss MacBean, the Matron, to obtain Miss Holcroft's valuable services for us. The work is simple, and merely requires patience, which quality our M.O.s say we should try to possess!

Are you making a rug?

Why not start away RIGHT NOW ?

DECORATIVE POTTERY.

Miss Watson will be very pleased to help any officers interested in this subject on Fridays at 3 p.m. in the Light Diet Room. Materials may be obtained from the show case on application to Mr W. A. C. Scott.

Library.

Librarian-- Mr F. G. SIMPSON.

There is a good library in the Hospital from which officers can borrow books one at a time. The library contains about 250 volumes. In addition, any one wishing to read a book not in the library can procure it from the lending library in Edinburgh through the librarian. The hours during which the library is open are posted on the notice board, but the librarian will be pleased to issue books at any time that he is in the hospital.

INVOCATION

Mother of gods and men receive us now :
Foredone with fear we stagger through the night
Where shapes of doom pursue us, ghostly arms
Reach out to grasp our spent and shivering souls.
Mother of gods and men, we pray to thee,

Men desperate with dread ; O hear our prayer,
And soothe us on thy bosom ; grant that we,
Lulled by the peace of all eternal things,
The woods and fields and immemorial hills,
May drink of quietude and fear no more.
And thou,
Son of the great All-mother, in whose ear
The music of her streams for ever croons,
Whose path the elves and woodland spirits haunt
And birds and all the small fieldfaring folk,
Lover of all green ways and windy slopes,
God of renewing by the earth renewed,
O hear !
Speak to us now, that in thy sacred place
The choric chant of many rushing woods,
Swelled on the mighty organ of the wind,
May drive in a great avalanche of sound
From our sick souls all deathly whisperings.
Give us again the dream O shining one,
The dream that we have lost ; and to our eyes,
Dull with the lapse of long and weary days,
With wandering in the twilight haunts of fear,
Reveal the way through the old quiet fields,
By plough and pasturage, by wood and moor,
Leading us up from hell's dim shadowlands
To the far sunrise where on the edge of day
Is set the Golden City of our Dreams.

G. A.