

The Hydra: journal of the Craiglockhart War Hospital

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EDITORIAL.

Half-past nine in the evening, with its attendant refreshments, has always been the most popular time of the day, and yet we have noticed many forlorn faces of late turning disconsolately from the table. When we sympathetically inquired the reason, we discovered that there was little tea and no sugar, and that this was but the beginning of troubles. Eventually, in piteous plight, we may be reduced to imploring a paternal government to send us back again to the Front to save us from starvation, and the medical boards of the future may be empowered to pass us for "General Service and a pound of tea."

This is, we understand, a result of the war. What people will do when they can no longer blame the war, is a problem bristling with awful possibilities. They may commence to tell the truth, and we cannot bear that at any price. But this is only one of the many questions arising from the war that are over-shadowed by the tea and sugar problem. Much more serious, to our literary mind, is the menace to the humour of the future. No humorous story, or farce, or pantomime is complete without a stout mother-in-law, or at least an aged spinster. Yet both threaten to vanish. The Food Controller's work has dealt a terrible blow to corpulence in mothers-in-law, and a thin one is worse than useless.

The spinster's case is more subtle. The modern woman, or rather the old one in a different phase, has found her height of expression in the flapper; and the maiden lady of fifty has shortened her skirts, lowered her blouse, found some hair, and become a damosel of seventeen. This is an awful accusation to bring forward, but those who visit Princes Street in the afternoon can verify for themselves. If this should not satisfy them, we should like to hear their explanation of another phenomenon, that in Edinburgh there appears to be no cats. Dead donkeys are known to be rare, but live cats are like the poor, usually, and are, moreover, the very hall-mark of the "old maid." But cats there are none, and we fear, therefore, that the old maid has vanished too, to compete with her younger sisters.

This competition germs seems particularly active at present, and billiards and tennis have already succumbed, while the golfers are developing symptoms. The editorial offices have been disinfected, but as no antitoxin is available, the Magazine may yet fall a victim. Notice of any symptoms will be given later, but, meanwhile, our contributors might prepare for the worst by turning out a stock of their literary efforts. As a hobby, we heartily recommend it to all.

NOTES AND NEWS.

General Meeting.

A General Meeting of the Club was held on the 4th June 1917 in the Lounge.

Owing to the Chairman (Mr Judge) having returned to duty, the Treasurer (Mr Sandison) was elected to the Chair for the meeting.

It is very gratifying to know that the balance of the Club funds is on the credit side at last, and we hope and believe they will stay there. We congratulate our Treasurer on his financial report.

It was decided to elect a Central Committee of five to settle any sudden business that might arise. Captain Nathan was elected Chairman, Mr Ricketts, Hon. Secretary, Mr Sandison, Treasurer, and Captain Davis and Captain Austin members of the Central Committee, to act in co-operation with the officers superintending the various branches of the Club activities.

A. RICKETTS, *Hon. Secy.*

Badminton.

Indoor games have naturally had to stand aside in favour of other forms of amusement made possible by the delightful weather we have had during the past fortnight, but the return of all the racquets from their temporary indisposition will undoubtedly be much appreciated on the first wet day.

Lawn Tennis.

The grass courts have been in excellent condition of late, and have had a good deal of use. The handicap tournament has been well supported and is now in full swing. Many of the competitors are displaying great enthusiasm, but so far, we are informed, there has been only one casualty. It is to be hoped that the keenness of the players will not lead to too much *voluntary rolling of the courts.*

Golf.

The golf course has been well patronised during the past fortnight, and it is hoped in the next few days that it may be possible to organise handicap and foursome tournaments. As was announced at the general meeting, alterations have had to be made, and the new arrangements are now complete. The golf club have decided that they must make a small

charge to patients using the course. The tickets may be obtained from Lieut. Pearce, room 87, between 9 and 10 in the morning, and 1 and 2 in the afternoon.

There are now four-three right-hand and one left-hand-complete sets of clubs available, which may be had from the benevolent gentleman mentioned above at the same times as tickets. Members wishing to borrow the clubs will be pleased to hear that the hall orderly now has a cloth for wiping the heads after use, so that they will in future be able to return the clubs in a clean condition.

Swimming.

This form of exercise has for some reason become very popular lately; we have been asked to point out that the maximum benefit is only obtained if the bath is taken early, 6 a.m. being the best time. Water polo has been started; any one interested in this sport may obtain particulars regarding the practices from Captain Austin.

Gardening.

"Mary, Mary, quite contrary, how does your garden grow?" we have repeated several times during the last few days, but at the time of going to press no reply was to hand. A walk around the garden, however, revealed the explanation. The summer offensive has been launched simultaneously by weeds of all nationalities, and all the reserves of energy of the G. & P.K. Association have undoubtedly had to be thrown into the counter-attack.

On the whole, the garden at present is looking very well, and reflects great credit on our hard-working brethren. Not only is all the ground planted, but all the crops are in a very flourishing condition; there is one particular potato patch in the south-eastern corner which absolutely made our mouths water.

Poultry.

The chicks are making great progress; they have recently removed their place of abode, and may now be found under the trees in the extreme south-east corner of the grounds-58 in all, and 16 of our own breeding. Mother-hen, we understand, has become very proud of late, undoubtedly owing to the new *Ford* coop in which she is living. This excellent contrivance is the product of the ingenuity of one of our members, and deserves to become as well known to poultry keepers as the Ford car is to motorists, although, we hope, for a somewhat different reason.

Billiards.

Owing to the fine weather and large entry the tournament has proved a long drawn-out affair, and consequently lost a lot of its interest.

A good game was that between Major Bryce and Evans, "peels" being called at 44 and 109, but "Taffy," risking G.S., laid the Major out on the post.

Nicholl, after winning his first game by 50, scratched his name out of the tournament, and, inebriated by success, retired to bed for two days. Who was it said he had gone for the "long rest"?

At time of going to press the semi-finals have yet to be played, and should prove interesting and close games.

Players desirous of refreshing their "musketry" are requested not to assume the "prone" position on the tables, but on the lawn!

Those who contend that "potting the white" is not the game, will find this disproved by looking into the billiard-room. Any time between breakfast and bed-time should find the two exponents present!

Concerts.

The concert of 9th June was quite up to the standard of previous entertainments, a fact that is additionally gratifying when one notices the large number of Hospital patients in the programme. The Orchestra opened with "La Czarina," which they played with a lively swing, and which seemed to cheer every one. The curtain then rose on Mr Pockett in the character of George Formby. His difficulty on occasions in getting beyond "the corner of the street" only added to the humour, and the audience was loth to let him go. Mrs Turner then sang "Bird of Love Divine" in a sweet soprano, and was followed by Capt. Markham in "A Fallen Star." Mr Birch, who was on the programme, was not well enough to appear, and Capt. Lecomber deputised with rollicking old sea chanty. Miss Marie Thomson has become so well known at our Saturday concerts that her song, "Catch not my Breath," requires no comment, for it was sung in her usual finished style. Mr Pockett then reappeared in "Did you see the crowd in Piccadilly?" After noticing his walk, few people had any desire to see anything else, even in that famous thoroughfare. Capt. Lecomber, who has a light tenor voice, followed with "Sympathy," after which Mrs Turner sang "Rosebud," and charmed us all. Capt. Markham sang a folk-song in the guise of a country yokel, and recited "Gunga Din" as an encore. Miss Thomson returned and gave us "The Loom" very tenderly, after which the Orchestra scored yet another success with "Bric-a-Brac." Act 3 of "Leah Kleschna," which was then played, was a short act, and could not compare with the first and second for dramatic power. Mrs

Queen in the title *role*, Mr Clark as Paul Sylvaine, and Mr Scotchburn as General Berton were all good, but had few opportunities of displaying their powers, while Mrs Stuart Bell as Madame Berton, and Miss Armour as her daughter Claire succeeded in making the utmost of their small parts. The concert ended with "The Choristers," a valse, finely rendered by the Orchestra.

The Orchestra opened on the 16th June with a two-step, "Coontown Chimes," after which Mr Birch sang "Glorious Devon" in a powerful baritone. Our old friend Mr Scotchburn then appeared as "A man of superior parts," in his usual Robey Make-up. We were sorry to see that he remembered most of his lines this time: he is so much funnier when he does not know them, and the prompter has to do the work. We were pleased to welcome new artistes in the Rev. J. Jardine and Mr Boulby, the former in humorous recitations, and the latter in humorous songs. We hope to see both again. Mrs Stuart Bell was very sweet and pathetic in "Caller Herrin," but we noticed several patients eyeing her catch dubiously, as if apprehensive of the morrow's breakfast. Mr Birch sang "Galilee," and Mrs Turner delighted every one with "Sincerity." After a somewhat protracted pause, the curtain rose on the fourth act of "Leah Kleschna." Major St John Spencer, who was to have played Kleschna, was unfortunately too ill to act, while his under-study, Capt. Markham, had been sent temporarily to another hospital-but, rather than drop the play, it was decided to carry on with Mr Clark reading and acting the part of Kleschna. This difficult feat he accomplished with signal success, and we beg to congratulate him on his performance. Mr Pockett, as Schram, was even greater in this than in the first act, and he had a worthy partner in the Leah of Mrs Queen, who seemed to live her part rather than act it, while Mr Christopher, as Raoul Berton, was again very good. After a somewhat long selection from "The Country Girl," an epilogue was played, in which Mr Clark appeared in his original character of Paul Sylvaine, but, apart from the excellent "Mother Charlotte" of Mrs Stuart Bell, it calls for no comment. We congratulate Mr Pockett and all the caste on their achievement during the last month, and hope to see more dramatic ventures in the future.

Acknowledgements.

We have much pleasure in acknowledging the following donations to the Hospital:-

Lady Cawdor. Eggs (sea-maw's).

Miss Reid. Eggs.

Red Cross. Eggs.

The Matron. 42 chickens and 3 hens.

Mr Turrie Peebles. Eggs.

MODERN ADVERTISING.

[FOREWORD. - The success which apparently attends the conversational advertisement, framed on American lines, and usually of a competitive nature, has induced us to include such a feature, and so bring The Hydra up to the lowest ebb of modern journalism.]

DO YOU WANT VICTORY - A RAPID VICTORY?

Help to win the War quickly!

We will show you how - and charge you nothing

We have nothing to sell

You can help to win, and really help. We don't care if you are a 2nd Lieutenant, Brigade Major, Divisional Sanitary Officer, or even an Adjutant !

You can help by improving your brain power. We can make you into a Napoleon, Gengiz Khan, or any other great military man you prefer. After all, what is the difference between you and Napoleon? Napoleon had brains, and you-(deleted by Censor as being liable to encourage the enemy).

Join our National Brain Fag League. We have placed three good men in good comfortable positions in a home for the feeble-minded last year.

You are patriotic. You want to help. Don't stop reading - go right on. Think how pleased *she* will be when she knows that the final victory was achieved twenty years earlier than expected, as a result of your efforts.

We will now show you how you can improve your brain power!

We are building a Competition to solve difficult problems - problems that really occur in war time. When you have solved one or two of them, you will find your brains developing up to the level of a Staff Officer.

After solving half a dozen, you will find yourself reaching the Napoleon class, or that of any other great general you would prefer to equal in sheer genius.

The Editor, in order to be certain of results, will be pleased to hold tutorial classes (strictly limited to 200 in each class), at a fee of 50 guineas an hour per head. If this isn't National Service, we don't know what is!

To ensure your getting positions as Field Marshals, etc. - for that is what you will become, and that is how you will end the war quickly-the Editor has got into touch with leaders of all shades of political thought, except those with the yellow streak, who have agreed that you shall undertake the positions immediately you are fit for them, even though, in carrying this through in the face of bitter opposition, they offend those of their constituents who are jealous of your success; and, further than this, sugar, bread, butter, tunics, and all war accessories, including alcoholic drinks, will be sold to you at pre-war prices, "for the duration," and think of this, for ten years afterwards! ! As our expert, who devises the problems, is away at the front, we can only give you one problem this week.

He has done wonderful work there, capturing several hundred prisoners himself, and spiking several 9.2 guns with his bayonet. This never appeared in the papers, but we are permitted to make it known, as the authorities now realise how valuable our work will be in the near future, and gives us every encouragement.

If you really want to help your country, don't forget the tutorial classes. The fees can be paid in the War Loan-but strictly in advance.

Here is the first problem:-

Problems of the Great War - No.1

When you meet ten Generals in a front-line trench, all of whom insist on your demonstrating your new and patent method of throwing six Mills' bombs in different directions at once, do you address them as "Sir," or "Sirs," or merely "Gentlemen," as if you were the Managing Director at a Board Meeting - or an alienist meeting the Committee of a Lunatic Asylum.

Further, how would you salute them in view of the fact that your method which you are trying at the moment involves the use of both hands, and you are also withdrawing the pins of two bombs with your teeth, holding them (the bombs) to your mouth with your feet.

NOTES (in order to solve the problem):-

(1) You have not had your rum ration.

(2) You are particularly anxious to be polite, in view of the fact that you have incurred heavy bridge debts to your Colonel, your Major, O.C. Signals, and the Transport Officer in the hope of being transferred to the A.S.C., because your four best girls say they will marry you after the war if you get medals for (a) valour, (b) hard work, (c) intelligence, and you are going to win the medals and the girls.

(3) You can't tell which is the Senior General as the Bosche has run out of Very lights, and they all appear equally fierce, and, in point of fact, at the moment falling over one another, and then, in their enthusiasm, using language that you never use.

As a further encouragement, the following valuable prizes are offered, were any needed:-

1. A tin of bully beef.
2. Half a rum ration (before the Sergeant has had his whack).
3. Third to 99th prize, $1/4$, $1/8$, $1/16$, $1/32$, and so on, of a rum ration.

Think of the past month-or is it six months, gentle reader?

100th prize. One-millionth part of the sum which will be saved to the nation by the war ending earlier, as a result of the improvement in brain power (if any) shown by the competitors after entering this fascinating test of intelligence. Winner to pay fees of Arbitration Board, which must consist of a C.O., who has never said a cross word to a Sub., an O.C. Laundries, and a private who can prove that he has never said that he was fed-up with the war, and that he has seen at least one Boche during each month of the war since August 1914. (Two Boches in one month and none in the next will not fulfil the condition.) Note further that, in any case, the Editor's decision will be final-Board or no Board-and that this prize will not be awarded unless the competitors have shown, in his opinion (and the Editor shall be the sole judge of this), one-hundredth of the intelligence of that shown by the average O.C. Theatres.

Both sexes willingly admitted. The Editor has arranged with Mrs P--so that she will talk every politician to death if any obstruction is placed in the way of our lady competitors taking the highest rank in the army. Times are changing now. Don't forget to bring your fees.

We appeal to you to do your best, and, re-member this, simply by entering this competition not only will you sway the fate of Empires, but you may win one of our valuable prizes; and, more than this, if you do your worst, your income tax, and that of the dozens who will (we hope) have an income in 1950, will not be more than 25s in the £!

[*Note.* - In view of the vital need of the Empire, the Editor is at liberty to hold tutorial classes from 9 A.M. to 4 A.M. the next morning-any or every day.]

E. P. G.

ONE OF MY LITTLE TROUBLES.

It was at my first interview with the doctor that he suggested a hobby. The idea quite appealed to me. I had had several hobbies in my schoolboy days, I told him, and would think the matter over.

That evening I went to bed very tired, as the result of playing a very strenuous game of bowls, so instead of reading as usual, as I smoked my last pipe I lay thinking, and my thoughts turned to hobbies. When doctor first mentioned the matter earlier in the day, the choice of a hobby seemed quite simple, but calmer reflection revealed all manner of difficulties.

Now, let me see, I thought my first hobby was - white mice. Quite out of the question here, some ass would go and let them out, and I shuddered at the thought of even one mouse at large amongst so many nurses. My next hobby was collecting butterflies ; this would take me out in the fresh air, a very good thing no doubt, but I was rather doubtful as to what the A.P.M. would do if he saw an officer in uniform, probably without a hat and perspiring at every pore, with half a draper's shop cunningly fixed to the end of a retired fishing-rod, frantically endeavouring to secure a beautiful painted lady.*

Then there were snakes - that was a great idea. I had had more fun out of my snakes than any other of my schoolboy hobbies ; you see, so far I have failed to discover the cage from which a snake cannot find a way out sooner or later, and that is where the fun comes in. I, or perhaps I should say some-body else, invariably found my pets in a bed. The only thing that troubled me was - would the doctor agree to snakes? I had a vague suspicion that his idea of a hobby was some-thing strenuous - like gardening or carpentry. Gardening, too much like hard work for me, I thought, as I settled myself with the intention of going to sleep.

I had hardly closed my eyes before I was dreaming that I was gardening - first I was catching huge grey slugs at night with my electric torch ; then I saw myself on a hot day, bathed in perspiration, making frantic efforts to chase a fugitive earwig down the prickly branches of a gooseberry bush ; then, thank heavens, I woke up. Sleep was out of the question, so I returned to my meditations, and before I went down for my swim I had my case complete. I had arguments against every hobby I could think of.

. "How are you feeling today?" asked my cheery medico when I saw him next morning.

"A little shaky," I replied.

"Sleep well?"

"No, I could not sleep, that beastly hobby idea worried me."

"Well, what are you thinking of doing?" said he, with an encouraging smile.

"Nothing!" I replied, with all the determination I could muster.

"Oh, but you must do something," said doctor thoughtfully. "You want something to occupy your mind. Why not do, eh - a little carpentry or fretwork?"

I exhibited my left hand, which still bears the marks of my one and only struggle with a chisel, and explained that the staff had quite enough to do without having to repair my mangled remains. "I should not mind," I said, "keeping a few snakes."

"Snakes!" he exclaimed.

"Catching frogs for their food is rather exhausting," I continued, "but as I have known them go for six months and more without food, I think I could manage it."

"I did not mean anything like that," said doctor, hastily. "How about gardening?"

I knew that would come sooner or later, and literally hurled my reply at him almost before he had finished speaking.

"My dear doctor, I do not know the difference between a radish and a rhubarb plant ; I should hoe up all the crop and leave all the weeds, or something like that."

I could see by his face that I had scored - the vision of Lord Devonport was before his eyes. I chuckled ; for the first time in my life I was one up on the doctor. But my triumph was short lived.

He took up the attack again - "Well, photography then," he said, smiling.

I gasped ; photography was the one thing I *had not* thought of last night, and you may not believe me, nevertheless it is a fact, despite my three years' experience in the army, I could not think of an excuse - reason,+ I mean, of course, - why I should not take up photography.

LUNI.

- *The painted lady is a butterfly ; there are two species, one winged and the other wingless, the latter species being the more common - ED.
- + I now know several, and shall be pleased to supply them to any new patient free of charge. I believe that several of the Sisters will be delighted to supply several more.

THE CHRONICLES OF A V.O.S.

(Very old Subaltern.)

BY "JACK POINT."

CHAPTER VII.

A MEDICAL BOARD AND OTHER IMPORTANT MATTERS.

At the end of my two months' sick leave there came in natural sequence a Medical Board. Now this Board was at half-past ten sharp, at Westminster, and I could easily have flown in the small hours, been "boarded," returned to Hendon, and flown again in the evening-but I didn't. I made it an excuse to sleep as late as eight thirty and 'phoned for a seat at the matinee - I should say *the* matinee, for it was, of course, the same play which had made the porter so friendly towards me, and the "Colonel" so doubtful of my sense of duty.

The Board marked me fit for light duty at home, and I at once wired to the draft producing battalion (where I now am) for leave to finish my "ticket" at Hendon.

My disgraceful slackness, combined with bad weather, had made me rather backward, but I am glad to say of "Colonel" Pierre-point that when he heard of my plight he behaved in a magnificent way, giving me instructions himself, putting another "some bus" at my disposal, and finally pushing my "ticket" through just before my leave expired.

This all happened during the two following weeks-but the concern of the moment is the matinee for which I had taken a seat.

I was late in arriving at the theatre, and when I got there the first act was in full swing. You know how, when you take your seat in a theatre, your first concern is for your hat and coat-the play coming second, and, as I told you before, that I am only observant when there is nothing of importance to observe, you will not be surprised to hear that I was in the stalls nearly five minutes before I realised the caste had been altered.

There was the chief principal boy right enough, his back turned for the moment towards me, but his hair, which up to date had been copper coloured and had matched the leather jerkin which he wore, was now extremely fair, cut short to the neck, and of a texture and radiance which flouted any suggestion of the artificial.

I had not time to feel that queer little fellow who lives under the cigarette-case in my left breast pocket jump more than twice when the boy turned - and behold he was Master Nasmyth.

I had always followed that play attentively, but my previous attention was mere casual interest beside the magic spell which now held me. I was sitting on a cloud above the horizon with not a soul near me - Pauline (I called her Pauline for that moment, and would have done better if I had called her Paul) was living, not acting, that extraordinary beautiful part in front of me. I don't remember who first acted it, but had she been there she would have gone home from the theatre a sad woman - she would have pitched her make-up box on to the nearest fire and never acted again.

I woke up to find the very same old Colonel of Artillery beside me who had blown his nose so violently the first time I had seen the piece. He was not blowing it now - he was merely

wagging his head to the music and picking tear-drops out of his eye-sockets with one finger. He had just enough self-consciousness left to want his fellow play-goers to think that he was scratching his face. I met him outside after the third act - the most beautiful act, perhaps in the play - the act where the principal boy stretches out his hands to the audience and says...

Well, never mind what he says - but Master Paul said it magnificently.

"Think of her, my boy" - what do I think of her?

"Damme, I've seen this play never less than half a dozen times every year it has been produced, and I've never seen that part better done - never."

"She's a marvel - a wonder - a miracle - a - give me a whisky and soda, miss, and be quick about it - what? out of drinking hours? oh -"

"My God, when I was in Simla - and that was back in eighty-eight - I saw Mrs Cornelius Brandon - a judge's wife she was - Lady Teazle, and I have never seen a finer actress since, professional or amateur; but this Miss er - er" (he referred to his programme) "Miss Nasmyth can give even her points."

"What - you were in Simla too? Oh, in fourteen - hah, not the same place now, I dare say."

"Gad, those were the days - I was a young captain then on the staff, and look at me now - heigh ho!"

"What's that? Friend of yours? Then tell her from me she's a miracle, d'ye see? Tell her Colonel Vansittart of the Simla Dramatic Club said she was a miracle. Will you do it?"

"What - curtain going up?"

This last was addressed to my friend the porter, who had come to warn me - as he always did now - and so back we went to our seats. During the last act I could distinctly hear Colonel Vansittart muttering "a miracle" - "God bless her" and "Best I've seen" at intervals - and I loved him for it.

I very nearly offered to introduce him, but eventually decided that I did not really know Miss Nasmyth well enough to introduce other members of my exalted profession on such short acquaintance. Nevertheless, I did give her his message. He was so keen on it that he stopped me on my way out to remind me - and she was delighted, vowing that he must be a dear old fellow, and almost hinting that she would have liked to have met him.

"And you really think I was good, Mr Broadacre!" she kept on saying. "How sweet of you."

The our talk was interrupted by one of the finest bouquets I have ever seen.

"The darling," cried Master Nasmyth, "it's the first one I've ever had. I wonder who it can be from?"

There was no name, and the dresser told us it had been brought by a mysterious errand boy who had been given five shillings to keep his mouth shut. But I recognised it - I had seen it in a florist's window just up the street, and I calculated that between the fall of the curtain and

the moment of the bouquet's arrival, there was just time for a grey haired Colonel of Artillery to walk as far as the florists, pay cash for, and despatch it to the stage door by a messenger boy - rendered temporarily swift with wings of silver.

Miss Nasmyth played that chief part right up till the last night, for the real chief principal boy, poor soul, had developed an attack of pneumonia which laid him low for nearly two months - and I happen to know that he received a generous half, not only of Colonel Vansittart's bouquet, but also of all the flowers and chocolates which Master Nasmyth had showered upon him during quite the most successful run that the great master's Christmas play had ever enjoyed.

I can't help thinking that this was rather charming of Master Nasmyth.

CHAPTER VIII.

FRITZ GETS THE BEST OF THE ARGUMENT.

When I left "Colonel" Pierrepont's School equipped with my "ticket" I repaired to a R.F.C.S.I. at nowhere in particular. (We are now getting to military matters and must be careful about names of places.)

I spent a month there, and, to be candid, I disliked every moment of it, a Flying Corps School of Instruction (or R.F.C.S.I., to put it shortly) is where the budding airman learns - or fails to learn, as the case may be - all about engines, rigging, observing, and such like things - in fact, he learns every part of his work as a flying officer except how to manage an aeroplane, and as the interest attached to such things is only technical, I will skip the R.F.C.S.I. and commence writing my chapter at X squadron, to which I was posted on the completion of my course. I soon found out that "some bus" on which I had been so proud to take my "ticket" was a very out of date machine indeed, and that all the aero jargon which I had been at such pains to acquire whilst at Hendon was looked on in the Flying Corps with utter horror and amazement. I had to start again very nearly from the beginning, and the way my Flight Commander - a lad of about Christopher Ormston's age - bully-ragged me when I flew badly, very nearly made me feel young again. In fact, I really believe it would have done so had not my fellow "Huns" (we are all "Huns" till we gets our wings) insisted on calling me "Grandpa." This surname of mine gave Christina and Miss Nasmyth so much innocent amusement that I could not help feeling glad I had written and told them of it.

The squadron was very near London - a matter of an hour by rail or thirty minutes by motor - and in London was still being played a marvellous piece of which the hero-heroine was "a miracle, damme!" I was therefore much tempted to run up to town twice a week to see it-but didn't.

Miss Nasmyth wrote and forbade me. She told me I was not to come and see her act, but I to do my duty and learn flying - this was not like Hendon had been, and I could not afford to spend late nights and fly at five in the morning on top of them. I must be in bed by ten every night of the week, or she would know the reason why. What business of hers she thought my health was, I should have very much liked to ask, but she was rather masterful about it, and so in the end I gave way. Things went on like this till I was promoted to the second highest machine upon the list (no "buses" in the Flying Corps!) and did my first "solo" flight on it. It turned out to be the best I had ever done, and both my new Flight Commander and the original little man who had chased me round so patted me on the back and prophesied great and wonderful things. (I only say this lest in what happened afterwards you should think me useless.) The same night was to see the last performance of Miss Nasmyth's play and I longed to be there. I figured it out that I could dash up to town after evening flying, be at the theatre by eight - if I gave up my dinner - and then - I simply couldn't resist it, and so scribbled my name on the leave-slip and went. I was cunning about it - oh, yes, deuced cunning. I took a seat in the front row of the dress circle instead of the stalls, so that Miss Nasmyth should not have a chance of spotting me-as she had told me she could always do.

Two hours after landing my machine I was in the theatre, or, to be more accurate, far above the clouds, and looking down upon the enchanted island where Paul Nasmyth, Esq., was wont to have his marvellous adventures. Whenever I *did* happen to return to mere natural life it was to notice that the audience was even more sympathetic than usual.

From his first appearance on the stage they were Master Paul's sworn boon companions. From the child of nine, seated by its nurse, to the Dowager Countess who had come to give the children a treat and expected to be bored, they were carried out of their several everyday minds and compelled to join in any and every wild adventure that might be toward.

Were there fairies? Small hands which should have been beneath the clothes two hours or even three hours ago - but then, it's only once a year after all - clapped themselves sore.

Were there bad bold men to be fought, aye, and vanquished by Paul and his friends? Her ladyship's begemmed fingers twitched convulsively upon the edge of the box as if longing to grasp the household poker and join in the fray.

And last of all - when Master Paul stood there beside that other figure which you would know so well If I were to give away the name, the woods behind them and the fairy music swelling up from the orchestra in front, the entire audience (young and old) went mad. The curtain hurried up and down again and again, and could not do it often enough. There were cries of "Speech! speech!" and the names of nearly every member of the caste were shouted in turn. The grown-up members, the children, the girl who was taking Master Nasmyth's original part - even the bad bold man had to come on and bow. The stage was littered with flowers, chocolates, and children's comical toys.

And I do believe those good people would be standing there and bowing to-day had not the orchestra struck up "God save the King."

Take a good look at my heroine as she stands in the full glare of the footlights, bowing and smiling, almost crying for sheer joy and triumph. For you must leave her alone now for a page or two and hear some more about this tiresome V.O.S.

I reached squadron headquarters at two in the morning, and when I got up at five I felt like death. I need not describe the feeling further, some of us know it only too well - that all head and mouth and stomach feeling.

I got into my machine and prepared to start. "Petrol on?" - "Petrol on." "Contact?" - "Contact." Whirr! goes the propellor - test for revolutions - throttle down - mechanics pull away the "chocks" from the wheels - open throttle - and then off we go.

I had never in all my life felt worse in the air; it was a bad morning, too, and I swayed all over the place. I was only up ten minutes before I felt I must either land or be ill.

Nose down - throttle down - now we're near the earth - feel the control lever gently as we near the ground - the ground- O Lord, too soon! I missed the earth - flew parallel to it for a few yards, then "pancaked." With a crunch the undercarriage went. I heard the Flight Commander shout something violent but I didn't care - the whole aerodrome was going round.....

When I came to, the Squadron Medical Officer told me that I was for sick leave pending examination by a Board - and when the Board saw me they banged me on the heart and shook their heads.

I shall never be a flying man now, and so I shall never have the last word in that argument with Fritz. But I saw Pauline in her glory, and that is at least something to be thankful for.

CHAPTER IX.

MY ARRIVAL AT SPRINGLEY.

After my hurried exit from the Flying Corps I retired to a convalescent home for a couple of weeks to wait further orders and to recuperate. And it was there that I got a wonderful letter from Pauline - I can't go on calling her Miss Nasmyth any longer - telling me how sorry she was for me and rebuking me gently, ever so gently, for having brought on my silly heart attack by coming to see her play her great part in the Christmas play for the last time. Her four pages were so full of understanding and sympathy that on reading them I somehow realised for the first time what my feelings towards her were. The secret was out at last - I loved her.

I cannot say that I was very happy in realising this, for a one-sided love affair is a dismal business at best, and though Pauline might be foolish enough to think me a good sort of fellow in my way, I could hardly expect her to love me. Still, I decided, after thinking the matter over for a bit, that love was an unaccountable power which out of sheer perversity ran away when we sought it and came bounding back if we affected to take no interest in it, and that if I were doomed to love Pauline to despair it was only "kismet," and must be looked on as such. "It is written," says the Mahometan, "the will of Allah be done." A lazy doctrine, but a comfortable and, on the whole, not an unsound one.

At last my orders came, and I turned my face to the north - a seven hours' railway journey in front of me. I arrived at Coalville just after my usual dinner hour, and reached the village of East Springley at nine.

George, the assistant adjutant, met me at the station, and put me into a billet just as I have since put so many others. It was a large villa in a block of like villas, and its furniture consisted mainly of its occupants' camp kit. My own camp kit had left me somewhere round about Coalville, and George hoped it would arrive by itself next day - thanking Heaven meanwhile that a fellow, whose name I will omit, was on leave so that I could sleep in his bed.

I had just got between the blankets when the door opened, and who should come in but Hammond, one of my oldest and greatest friends. He and I had been at Eton and Sandhurst together, and he was one senior to me in the regiment. I had not seen him since I was hit, and had no idea that he was up at Springley. Of course we had a long buck, during which I gathered that he was senior subaltern, and that all the other subalterns were a lot of young cubs, and that the owner of my bed was quite the worst. We were interrupted by the entry of the Elder Twin - so called for purpose of distinction. This was the Battalion Bombing Officer, and Hammond explained that he was not in his usual form on account of his twin brother being away on service.

Thirdly came up Charles, a fellow with brilliant red hair, and a Military Cross. He wasn't really called Charles, but had acquired the name on the strength of his likeness to a well-known film actor - and, indeed, the resemblance was striking when he had his cap on.

The Elder Twin was very glum because Major Waters - the Draft Conducting Officer - had commandeered his room to play bridge in, and was likely to continue playing bridge up till the small hours. Poor Twin had no redress, as the Major had come there by the special invitation of Topleigh, who was Twin's room mate. Hammond and Charles eventually retired to another room which they shared, and Twin went downstairs vowing to break up the bridge party by undressing and going to bed in full view of the players.

I then slept.

Next morning Charles bounded into the room - reminding me more forcibly than ever of his distinguished namesake - with the news that the *real* owner of the bed had arrived unexpectedly at midnight.

I hastened to express my regret for causing him annoyance, but Charles would have none of it.

"Don't worry, old chap, it was quite all right. The Twin and Topleigh met him on the doorstep and kicked him out. Topleigh was simply ripping 'Is your name Jones?' he asked. 'No' 'Then get out! we don't want you here!'"

Charles lay back in the camp chair and howled with laughter.

"If you must make such an unmentionable din, for God's sake don't make it here," said a voice outside, and then one of the best looking fellows I've ever seen came in - this was Topleigh. He would have none of my apologies for having been the cause of his sally into the cold night with nothing on but thin pyjamas.

"Don't mention it," he said, with a depreciating wave of the hand, "I'd been wanting to do it for weeks!"

Poor Topleigh, I never saw him again, as I went to the recruit detachment at West Springley that afternoon and stayed there a couple of months.

He meanwhile went out, and I suppose they must have had a vacancy for a Second Lieutenant in the great army, which, we are told, will one day overthrow the hosts of darkness, because he made the supreme sacrifice for his country within a fortnight of landing in France. "Greater love hath no man - -"

But this is supposed to be a cheerful story.

The recruit detachment was only three miles away, but it was the longest three miles I have ever struck. Somehow one never seemed to be able to cover it; I can't give any adequate reason, only - one just didn't. It was commanded by Major Blackburn, whom I had known well in India, and who had commanded the battalion I was serving with when I became a V.O.S. I need hardly say how glad I was to meet him again, and to do any work he chose to give me.

The first job of work I took over was musketry - the miniature range - and in the two months during which I ran it I had every chance of studying the genus recruit in his various shapes and forms.

There was the old soldier - back to the army - who clicked his heels when he gave you his target and was really sad when, his age having betrayed his eyesight, there was nothing on it.

The boy under age - cursing his luck because another year must pass before he would be old enough to fight - keen as mustard, and doing all he knew to copy the old soldier's style - knowing little, and recking less, of his not quite so enviable points.

The ordinary A1 man - not so good as the boy - long years of civil life having gone ill to shape him for the army - but every bit as ready and willing to learn and to do his best.

Last, the C1 garrison duty man - poor fellow, we must speak kindly of him. What if he did forget to stand at attention and say "sir" to an officer? - we can't unlearn a lifetime's lessons in three weeks! What if he did drive Major Blackburn to the verge of apoplexy by never, never getting into the correct firing position! In nine cases out of ten he was slightly deformed and the position was an impossibility for him, and even were this not so, Geordie finds the miniature rifle a very different implement from the miner's pick - and he can't grasp new things as quickly as you or I can.

They were an excellent lot taken all round, and my days on the range at West Springley were happy ones in consequence.

The second job of work I took over was the mess presidency - and I hated it. Yes, I hated it with a hate which in a certain country across the North Sea would, I am sure, have procured for me a decoration - possibly a title.

Most fellows hate mess presidency, but I doubt they can surpass or even equal my hate. It is a super-hate.

This being so I will not waste it by cramming it into the fag end of a chapter, but will start a new one and give you the full benefit of it.

(To be continued.)

WHEN!

When you have sunk to the nethermost hell
And bathed in its fiery rain,
And the giant Despair, would keep you there,
And every hope seems slain;
Then know that it is time to rise
To seek the fight again.

But when you have seen God's glory shine
And beckon you from the sky,
While your wounds are dressed, and your soul finds rest,

And troubles pass you by;
Then glance no more on the strife beneath
'Tis time for you to die.

CAROLUS.

THE PATCHWORK QUILT.

I promised you some stories of the street. I think the best one I know is of the American who was "doing" Scotland. Having visited Edinburgh and Abbotsford, and one or two other places of interest in the east of Scotland, he resolved to pay a visit to the great industrial city of the west. Stepping out of the train at Queen Street station, he found himself in George Square, and promptly concluded that the best plan was to secure the services of some street urchin to point out to him the principal places in Central Glasgow. The boy was immediately at hand, a smart little fellow, who lost no time in imparting the desired information to the travelling Yank. "That's the Municipal Buildin's ower there, and yon's the General Post Office, and this is the Merchants' Hoose." Then, pointing to the column in the centre of the Square, he said "An' that's Sir Walter Scott's monument, it's the biggest monument in Scotland."

"Ah," said the Yankee, adjusting his monocle, and surveying the monument from top to foot, "it's just about the size of our three cent cigars in New York." But the boy was not confounded; he was only amused, and resolved to wait for *his* chance. It was not long in coming, for presently they came face to face with a very large ship's steel propeller shaft that had been made in some engineering works, and was being conveyed, on a couple of trolleys drawn by about twenty horses, to the shipbuilding yard with a view to being fitted in the ship. The American, again adjusting his monocle, surveyed the moving sight, and asked his omniscient young guide, "Pray, what may that be, my boy?" The boy's chance had come. With an air of nonchalance he remarked - "Oh, they're gettin' a new club up in St Vincent Street, and that's the kitchen poker."

I wonder if it was the same intelligent boy who was asked the direction to some place in Glasgow, and who gave the needed information thus:- "Ye juist gang up there and turn intae Parliamentary Road, and gang along a bit, an' ye'll come tae a big public hoose on the richt haun'side, an' when ye come oot o' that, it's juist fornent ye."

A little Edinburgh lad was employed as a telegraph boy, and he had a telegram to deliver to Mr Smith, the grocer in the High Street, a pompous individual though he served behind the counter. The boy entered the shop, and as he threw the telegram down on the counter, he read aloud from the back of the enclosing envelope, "Smith 41 High Street." "Why don't you

say *Mr Smith?*" said the pompous grocer. "That wad be anither ha'penny," replied the intelligent and accurate messenger.

Yet another incident from the "boy in the street." A very small boy was encountered in the street by a benevolent old gentleman. The boy was evidently in great grief and distress of mind, and the nice old gentleman kindly inquired of him, "What is the matter, my little fellow?" At first no answer could come - nothing but sobs. But after a little gentle comforting the boy managed to impart some information in this sort of way - "Eh, eh, eh, bahoo, ma mither's gane away - bahoo - aho - an' drooned a' the wee kittens." "Oh what a shame," said the aged benevolent one. "Aye," continued the sobbing little one, "an' she promised I wis tae get doin' it."

PARTING.

Go - for we go together - where you are
There must I be, being yours beyond control;
All have I given you, heart and thought and soul,
And asked one recompense - to be no bar
Across your path in life, nor ever war
Your strange free genius, rounded, strong, and whole.
For you the larger life, the farther goal.
The great world striving - let me watch afar,
And love and serve and wait - and keep always
The feeling of your presence, there as here.
For all the bitter distance of earth's ways
Is nothing, from that Haven, where with-out fear
Our Souls have met and spoken, these last days.
Now go - for love itself goes with you - dear.

SYNJIN.

ARRIVALS.

Majors:- Campbell, Canadians; Hutchinson, R.F.A.; R.W. Wilson, A.C.D.; Sanderson, R.G.A.

Captains:- F. Peppe, R.F.A.; S.F. Fooks, London Regiment; A. Douglas, A.V.C.; A. Clayton, Border Regiment; J. Hunter, H.L.I.; J. Russell, H.L.I. ; R.W.A. Williams, Manchester Regiment; E.C. Griffith, Lancers.

Lieuts.:- Lloyd, Suffolk Regiment; D. Lauder, Manchester Regiment; R. Johnston, R.E.; J.E. Jones, R.E.; H.F. Payne, K.R.R.

2nd Lieuts:- M.B. Pugh, S.W.B.; Stirling, R.F.A.; C. Lee, E. Surrey; H. Fuller, R.F.C.; W. Bradley,; R.J.E. Orr, R.G.A.; H. Bright, Yorks Regiment ; J.D.R. Scott, R.F.C.; C.F. Gamon, M.G.C.; A.E. Inglis, R.W.F.; C. Clark, R.W. Kent; J.W. Thorogood, Middlesex Regiment; W.H. Brown, R.W.K.; H. Phillips, R. Warwick R.; C. Morley, R.F.; G. Hathorne, Cameron Highlanders.

DEPARTURES.

Captains:- D. Barr, E. Lancs.; O. Grace, Yorks. Regiment; Skrimshire, R.G.A.; Dr Rochev.

Lieuts:- S. H. Luht, Welsh Regiment; Douglas, A.V.C.

2nd Lieuts:- A.E. Gibson, London Regiment; K. Brodie, Dorset Regiment; H.T. Edwards, R.F.; Jenkinson. King's Liverpool; I. Boddy, R.F.A.; H. Smart, Bedford Regiment; Trainor, R.F.C.; Gamon, M.G.C.; L. Evans, R.F.