

The Hydra: journal of the Craiglockhart War Hospital

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EDITORIAL.

[The Editor will be glad to receive any literary contributions and sketches. These may take any form and may be signed or anonymous. They should be placed in the letter rack in the pigeon hole marked 'Editor,' and contributors are reminded that all copy should be in at least a week before the publication of the issue for which it is intended.]

So few contributions have been put on the rack that the Editor still remains in that uncomfortable situation.

The results of the story and verse prize competition, announced in last issue, took the eloquent form of the schoolboy's essay "On the results of Idleness" - a blank page.

Of similar candour would be a complete catalogue of our contemporaries who can offer better prices than our own, for, by arrangement with the House Committee, the charge of the Magazine will henceforward be included in the Club Subscription of 2s. To non-residents the price remains as before.

The competition is still running on the old lines - like the Edinburgh tramways.

The other day, we were returning from the printer's by tram. A mathematician was trying to convince us that in a rolling wheel, the point touching the ground has no motion whatsoever. We failed to see this at first, but after a little experience of the behaviour of that tram, we quite believed it. Had you been with us, you would have adhered as firmly to the same ground. The tram lay on it like a log.

A poor simile, you say - But not inapt. The inventor of trams cautiously named his invention from a Scandinavian word *trom*, a log or block. Clearly he was a cleverer fellow than is commonly supposed.

The tram, then, lay like a log. Meanwhile, certain Hydrans saw an opportunity for a little shopping, and took in their nightly provisions of gas mantles, biscuits, tea, cocoa, and possibly other beverages, such as ***. (This word deficient in Proof. - Printer)

Whilst members of the Field Club gathered a good collection of moss, which by now had established itself on the wheels of the vehicle.

For our part, we took up *The Hydra*, and, descending from our platform, tried to look at it from its audience's point of view. On examining the Magazine, we were satisfied that it had *not been overcharged*. For the magazine platform worked freely, in both senses; though perhaps it was a little too easily depressed, even by dummies. And someone had evidently imagined it contained a gas escape hole.

* * *

Presently, the following conversation was over-heard (much over-heard):-

1st Passenger: "Wot's a'ydra?"

2nd Do. "A snake on a stick, first invented by Moses; now the badge of the R.A.M.C."

1st Do. "I thought it was a place where ye took life in bawths, in a number insultin' to such as you an' me, but right enough for officers 'ome from the trenches."

3rd Do. "Yer both wrong. A 'ydra's a 'undred 'eaded serpent, and the 'eads grew again as fast as cut off, signifyin' these 'ere officers at Craiglockhart; for as soon as one gets too uppish, like, they cut 'im off the strength, an' another comes up in 'is place."

NOTES AND NEWS.

Field Club.

Our second meeting opened with a discussion of the aim, scope, and constitution of the Club. A general survey of the Edinburgh area and the Firth of Forth was then given by Major Bryce and Captain Brock, it being hoped that the Club's excursions in the ensuing weeks may deal with the various sections of this region in detail. The Forth basin was considered from hill-top to sea - that is, from the Pentland watershed on the south to the "Riggin' of Fife" on the north. On the Lothian and the Fife side of the Firth alike geographical zones are represented, namely, the heather region, with its game and its huntsmen, the pastoral hill-slopes below that, with their sheep and shepherds, the agricultural plain of Lothian, and, finally, the sea coast, with its fishing and shipping industries.

At the first organised excursion of the Club, held on Friday, 27th July, a beginning was made with the detailed, first-hand inspection of our geographical "region." We began with the shore of the Firth, and with the lower reaches of one of our characteristics Lothian rivers (the Almond, in this case). A party of officers (including members of the Camera Club) went out by train to Davidson's Mains, made from thence for the shore, got a magnificent view of the

great estuary (blue as the Mediterranean or the Lake di Garda), proceeded westward to the mouth of the Almond, and, finally, up the wooded glen of that river to Cramond Brig.

At our next excursion we shall probably try the hills.

The Camera Club.

Two meetings have been held, and both were successful in attendance. There is no doubt that the Club has come to stay for it is working well and going strong. The installation of the "supply depot" within the sacred precincts of our hostelry has already proved a pukka success. The supply has not been equal to the demand, and the goods have gone like hot cakes. Mr Shuter has been indefatigable in his capacity of "shopkeeper." Mr Baylis has very kindly taken on the responsible duties of "manager of the photographic bureau" and "keeper of the records." A goodly selection of prints at the second meeting proved of great interest.

On Friday we were invited by the Field Club to join them in an outing, and had a most excellent time. Strawberries and cream *ad lib* for tea at Barnton were not the least of the joys that came our way. For those who want to make some fine pictures let me commend them to the river at Barnton. They will be well repaid for a ramble thereabouts. We beg to announce that a competition is open this week, and will be voted upon at the next meeting. So, let's all get busy this week, and trot out some surprises on Sunday next at 9 p.m. It will be worth it. The winning photographs will be exhibited during the following week in the lounge.

For the benefit of those who are not already in the know - and there are still a few - allow us to notify you that the Camera Club meets every Sunday evening at 9 p.m. So come along and don't be shy. There is no collection.

THE SECRETARY.

Cricket.

Although we seem to have quite a number of cricketers amongst our recent arrivals, it is still very difficult to put out a good team for a hospital the size of ours. If patients would be less backward in coming forward, we are sure it would be more beneficial both for the eleven and for ourselves, as it is quite impossible to approach every member of the Club in order to discover whether he is a cricketer or not.

The bowling of our eleven is decidedly weak. Although we have one or two bowlers who have done quite useful work for the eleven, we still require several more. This weakness in bowling is shown very clearly by the results of our last matches. We should be glad if this could be remedied.

It would perhaps be unfair to say too much about our fielding. It certainly has not been good - one cannot expect it from a hospital eleven - but we do hope for improvement in the future and for no more wild "throwing in."

WAR HOSPITAL v. EDINBURGH ACADEMY.

On Monday, 16th July, we again met the Academy on their own ground. We won the toss, and went into bat in glorious sunshine. Gilling and Kershaw opened the innings. The one feature of the match, as far as we are concerned, was the splendid century made by Gilling. He is a most consistent batsman, and has made very useful scores in all matches he has played for the Hydro. We declare with 215 runs for eight wickets, leaving the Academy two hours to get the runs. They opened in good style, and when stumps were drawn they were 134 for two wickets.

Kershaw took an excellent catch from Capon's bowling whilst fielding in the country. Both Kershaw and Butler batted well.

The scores were as follows:-

Hospital.

Capt. Gilling, c Gillespie, b Paterson	120
Mr Kershaw, c Thorburn, b Paterson	23
Mr Brand, b Paterson	13
Mr Lake, b Gregor	3
Mr Watt, b Gregor	3
Major Bingham, c and b M'Connell	7
Mr Butler, not out	29
Capt. Capon, c M'Connell, b Paterson	6
Mr Berk, b Paterson	0
Capt. Stevens, not out	6
Mr Hathom, did not bat	
Byes 2, wides 2, no-ball 1	5
- - -	
Total	215
- - -	

Academy.

M'Connell, c Kershaw, b Capon	42
Walker, c and b Kershaw	13
Weir, not out	59
Stevenson, not out	12

Byes 5, leg-byes 2, wide 1	8
- - -	
Total (for 2 wickets)	134
- - -	

WAR HOSPITAL v. A. And S. H.

On Thursday, 26th July, we played the A. and S.H., again on the Grange ground. We lost the toss and had to field. Their runs soon began to pile up, and through lack of bowlers and bad fielding 200 appeared on the board for the loss of only five wickets. At 220 they declared, leaving us one and a half hours to get the runs. We, unfortunately, made a mess of things, and only made 88, though Butler batted well.

The scores were as follows:-

A. And S. H.

Mr Wilkinson, c Stephens, b Butler	37
Mr Busby, b Kershaw	106
Mr Vint, c Watt, b Bingham	17
Capt. Fowler, b Stevens	17
Lt. Col. Tweedie, b Stevens	2
Mr Mathieson, not out	5
Mr Davies, not out	16
Byes 14, leg-byes 2, no-balls 4	20
- - -	
Total (for 5 wickets)	220
- - -	

Hospital.

Mr Kershaw, c Davies, b Forsyth	7
Major Bingham, b Forsyth	2
Major Bryce, b Nash	3
Capt. Stevens, c Stewart, b Nash	6
Major Hope, b Busby	12
Mr Butler, c Stewart, b Forsyth	29
Mr A.L. Watt, b Forsyth	16
Mr A.M. Watt, b Davies	7
Mr Crouchley, b Forsyth	0
Mr Berk, c Davies, b Forsyth	2
Mr Pearce, not out	0
Byes 4	4
- - -	

Total

88

- - -

Golf.

We are glad to report that in our return match with the M.E.G.C. we managed to carry off the laurels, winning by 6-3. All the singles were won and one foursome.

Mr Scott and Mr Cruickshank again scored, whilst Capt. Gilling, a new member of the team, scored an easy victory by 5-4.

Apart from this very little has happened in the golf, but we hope to arrange another tournament this week.

Bowls.

A competition, arranged by the Committee, Capt. Foster, Mr Davidson, and Mr Beers, is now in progress. There are thirty-six entries, whose handicapping has been a difficult matter, but we anticipate some very close games. The results of the match played on 1st August with a crack Edinburgh Bowling Club will be given in our next issue.

Tennis.

The tennis courts have been in great demand lately, and, whilst several of our best and most enthusiastic players have gone, others have arrived, and already appear to be taking a keen interest in the game.

Although the last tournament met the inevitable fate of tennis tournaments, another is being arranged. It has been decided to fix dates for the completion of each round for the forthcoming one, and players are earnestly requested to arrange their games accordingly.

It is hoped to arrange another tournament on the American system during August, and this should provide some very enjoyable games.

In future, the condition of the lawns will depend entirely upon the efforts of the players, and the lawn mowers can always be found in the garage, whilst the roller can always be seen in one corner of the lawns.

Four racquets are being provided by the Club, and it is hoped these will provide opportunities for play for members who may have the inclination to learn the game whilst in the Hospital.

NOTES FROM BOWHILL.

Croquet.

The mixed tournament resulted in a victory for Miss Guild and Major Sandercock after an exciting game, their opponents - Miss Payne and Mr Rosenberg - being four hoops ahead at one period of the game.

Badminton.

The new court has now been marked out, and the tournament will commence next week.

Fishing.

The trout are as coy as ever, and our two lochs have been abandoned in despair for the past week or so. Messrs Goodman and Smart returned one day with forty-six perch, and were accused of poisoning the waters. On Monday last these two officers also hooked four pike, averaging three-and-a-half pounds apiece - a record for Bowhill.

Billiards.

Capt. Kavanagh won our first tournament from Laing, who received 70 in 250. Kavanagh leaves to-day for Craiglockhart with his prize. It would be well to keep an eye on him.

Photography.

Much activity has been shown, especially on the croquet lawn in the afternoon. Photographs of all the ladies, either playing croquet, smiling, eating, talking, or picking flowers or strawberries, adorn our rooms. Mr Clark's view of the neighbourhood are in great demand, and he must find it a costly popularity.

Tennis.

There is no court at Bowhill, but many invitations to play are received from ladies and gentlemen in the neighbourhood.

Many thanks are due to Mrs Steel of Philiphaugh, Mrs Steel of Manor Hill, Mrs Pringle - Pattison of The Haining, Mrs Alexander of Thirladean, and, through them, to many others who have opened their courts to us.

Concerts.

Last Saturday's show was a *tour de force* and Mr Payne is to be highly complimented on organising such a splendid concert.

The misses Kinloch and Goodman sang delightfully, and Miss Somerville's recitations were very clever. Mr Laing also recited "Devil-may-care" and "On Juhon River" with much force, and caused a general recurrence of shell-shock.

But the *piece de resistance* was an operatic quintette, with Mr Lytton as a much harassed Rigoletto, and Major Sandercock and Messrs Payne, Kirby, and Brown as the Huns who were tired of Verdi and wanted to play it in ragtime. Some topical verses by Major Sandercock and others set to well-known tunes also provided much amusement.

Mr Payne sang humorous songs in his usual sad manner, and Mr Goodman, jun., sang and also played the banjo cleverly.

Altogether it was a "howling" success.

Officers at Craiglockhart will be pleased to hear that Mr Sandison has not been allowed to retire altogether from public life.

After a stormy debate on the constitution of the House Club at an extraordinary general meeting held last week, Mr Sandison was unanimously chosen as a member of the sub-committee appointed to revise the constitution. This was a punishment for raising several points of order.

WHY WORRY!

Make for yourself a good strong box,
Fashion each part with great care,
And when you are troubled, dear reader,
Just "bung" all your troubles in there;
Hide there all thought of your failures,
And each bitter cup that you quaff,
Lock all your heartaches within it,
Then sit on the lid, friend, and laugh.

SYNJIN.

ELISE.

Night was creeping over the land, and the rain was beating down in torrents. The road from La Mardelle to Mont St Valour was a living stream of terrified people, with waggons, carts, and every conceivable vehicle that could be pressed into service, piled high with household goods. Some of the less fortunate were on foot, bearing their burdens on their backs, all hurrying madly along to safety. The air resounded with cracking whips, shoutings of the men, the screaming of hysterical women, and the piteous crying of little children.

The never-ending stream of fleeing villagers was a sight that in itself was enough to fill the bravest hearts with fear. The booming of the guns over the eastern crest signalled the approaching army of assassins who devastated every place and destroyed every living thing in its course. Ruin was its wake. Already the village was almost *demoli*, and hundreds of honest, simple, unoffending women and children lay buried beneath the fallen houses; and those who were not yet dead were crying to heaven in the *miserere mei* of their last anguish. The street was full of shell holes, broken houses spread their *debris* across the road, and fire was raging in several quarters of the stricken village. Trees were falling before the hail of shells as corn before the scythe, and the spirit of Death had spread his mantle over this hitherto happy little town. Boom! boom! boom! Every second the Prussians rung the knell of death with their artillery.

Away along the road tumbled the frantic crowd, hurrying with all they cherished in the world; obsessed with panic, they struggled, a heterogeneous mass, seeking safety in flight.

In their midst shells were falling and decimating them as they fled. Carts overturned, the ditches filled in places with mangled bodies, onward they fled before the tidal wave of barbarism that laughed at their anguish and scorned them in its arrogance.

In this long line of fleeing people a young girl about eighteen, with her dark curly hair floating in the wind, soaked with rain, and her beautiful eyes glistening with terror, stepped out of the moving throng to look back. She laid down her bundle, gazed at the awfulness she was leaving behind, and hid her face in her hands, whilst she prayed. It was the greatest crisis of her life, and Elise, whose mother and father were buried 'neath the ruins, was torn with grief. For away, between the village and the rising ground beyond, was the one bravest hero of France, and he was in his place with the others defending with his life the onrush of the invaders, and, like the other brave sons of France, was striving for the laurels of victory, and stemming the mighty torrent of Prussian militarism for the sakes of those who could not defend themselves.

"God spare my Antoine. O God, spare him for me. He is now all that is left to me." Poor little Elise, her little face terror-stricken and white as death, picked up her bundle, and, sobbing

hysterically, rejoined the moving throng, splashing her way through the churned-up road, and soaked to the skin.

Some two weeks later she woke to find herself in a strange place. Consciousness had returned, and she lay in a little white bed in a long room with many others.

"Don't wake up," said a soft, sweet voice, and, looking up, she saw a sister of mercy standing by her side. "Keep quite quiet, and you will soon be well."

Where was she? What had happened? What did it all mean?

She began to look about her, and though unable to move but slightly, she realised that she was in a place where she had never been before.

"There's a dear," said a voice; "you will soon be well now. Close your eyes and try to sleep.

Elise put out her hand and held the sister's. "Is he safe? Oh, tell me. Where is Antoine?" "He is all right, dear," replied the nurse. "Don't be anxious. Try and sleep."

And little Elise did as she was told.

It was many weeks before Elise could go out into the convent garden in a wheeled chair. But the days were slipping by, and every day she was wheeled out into the sun, where she could see the flowers and listen to the birds in the trees. And the larks would look down from above and sing to her. The blackbird that used to come every afternoon would always perch on the same branch, and, gazing down at a frail little girl wrapped in blankets, sing her his song of happiness, and cheer her with his melody of spring.

They were weary weeks for the little patient, waiting for the roses to return to her cheeks and the lustre to her dark blue eyes.

And every day the old abbe would come and sit by her side and read to her of God's great love, enchanted gardens, and the flowers wherein the fairies dwelt. And poor little Elise, with her eyes wide open, would listen and think - but her thoughts were far away. Her little heart was beating with anxiety, and at times she felt as though she would choke. The gentle sisters would try and comfort her when they saw her battling against the tears that would insist on coming.

By degrees her colour returned, and she was able to walk alone, and she would ramble around the gardens, fingering a little gold crucifix that hung around her neck. No one had ever asked her about it, but it never left her.

Some months elapsed, and little Elise, now strong and almost recovered, was able to learn lace making, so the sisters had placed her with some good ladies in the town for the purpose.

Up to now, the old abbe had always avoided breaking the news to her, but, fearing that further procrastination was useless, he stopped her one Sunday when she was leaving the church and walked home with her.

And when they gained the convent garden, he led her to a seat under the trees. "My dear little lady," said he, "you have passed through a very long and painful illness, and, thanks to God, you have been spared. You have been spared for great works, and your nobleness has increased with grace."

"What is it? Oh, abbe, my dear friend," She cried, "you have news of him. Tell me quickly."

"Child I have news, and seeing that further anxiety is only likely to gradually pull you back, God has given it into my hands to tell you."

"Yes, quick, abbe. He is lost to me? Don't, I pray you, keep me in suspense. I can bear anything now. Tell me, I beg you. I am strong, and God has given me courage."

"Well, child," and the old man took the little pale hands in his, "Antoine gave up his soul to God for you and for France."

The little girl seemed quite calm, but appreciably stiffened, and, controlling herself, enquired with streaming eyes, "Tell me, dear abbe, tell me how he died." And she held tightly the little golden token that hung upon her breast.

"Brave little one, I will tell you all I know." And, with tears in his eyes the old man recounted the story of how Antoine had been in the front trenches, and fought like a tiger, never flinching, never looking back; had been seen to slay eight Germans, and would have continued to lead his men but for an unlucky shell which burst close by and buried him.

That he had been killed instantly, and that France to-day, La Belle France, was mourning for him, one of her bravest sons. His bravery had filled everybody who witnessed it with awe. France has reason to be proud. And so had Elise. God had given her the love of a hero, the highest love that any girl could have.

All through the story Elise looked fixedly at the abbe, remembering every word, seeing vividly the picture of courage and daring in the man to whom she had given her whole heart. At the conclusion of the narrative she wept quietly in her sorrow. Her tears, despite her smiling face, would flow. She felt so proud that her lover had given his life for her and for France. She thanked God that he was so brave, and through the darkness of her sorrow there penetrated the brilliant beam of pride.

"And where is he buried, abbe?" she asked presently.

"They found him, little one, and he lies now in a little military cemetery under the shadows of the towers of the cathedral on the hill."

"At Mont St Valor?" she asked.

"The same," replied the priest.

It was just a year since the awful night on which she had fled with the panic - stricken crowd from the quiet and calm little hamlet. The time had passed in placid resignation to the

inevitable, and Elise had been able to earn enough to keep herself, for her needs were small. But to-day, the anniversary of her lover's great sacrifice, found her leaving the station of Mont St Valor, bearing a wreath. The place had been handed over to the brave British soldiers and they were now holding that part of the line.

Her trim little figure in black drew respect from everybody who passed, seeing by what she was carrying the nature of her errand. At the gate of the Garden of Peace she met a priest, and enquired the location of her lover's resting - place. He took her into the little chapel, and found the number in the register.

The sun was shining through the trees, and the towers of the broken cathedral on the hill were standing like majestic sentinels over the little valley 'neath the *bois*.

After diligently searching and wending her way along the paths, she found the little cross that bore the name she loved. There was his name, and the date, and the familiar legend, "*Mort pout le patrie*." She laid her offering beneath the cross, and knelt down.

With her face in her hands, she wept as she asked God to take her, too - to take her to him who loved her.

Presently she heard the step on the gravel near by of someone who had come on a mission like hers, and although she did not look up, she intuitively felt that someone's shadow had fallen across her as she knelt. Could it be the gardener?

Suddenly a feeling of inestimable relief seemed to come to her. It was as though something had come to comfort her.

The person, seeing her kneeling, came and knelt beside her, and she glanced discreetly out of the corner of her eye between her fingers. It was an interpreter. Possibly a comrade of Antoine's on the same errand.

Presently she looked up, and their eyes met.

"Antoine! - my" - but she collapsed in his arms.

"Elise, my beautiful Elise. I've come back."

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

By "JACK POINT."

Chapter XIV.

THE QUARREL WHICH AROSE BETWEEN THEM.

As we might well imagine, Peter, being young and thoughtless, took Hammond's kindness very much in the wrong way - in a word, he took advantage of it!

I don't know why I am telling you this story, except that it comes in somewhere hereabouts, and that there is food for reflection in it.

When you have once begun to treat a person, inferior both in position and age to yourself, as an equal, it is not easy to put him in his place, and the longer you go on so treating him the more difficult will the process of putting in place become, and most assuredly, unless he is a perfect character - and heaven knows, there are few enough perfect characters knocking about in this world - the putting in place must sooner or later become an absolute necessity. If you disregard this rule the old proverb of familiarity and contempt will be brought home to you in a forcible and painful way.

Many a fond parent, I daresay, has found reason to curse the folly which made him or her to give that darling child every blessed thing it chose to cry for. The darling child, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, grew up thoroughly spoilt, the fond parent's authority was reduced to nil, and the family became a sad one.

I wonder, my reader, if your mother cried when she saw your father spank you for the first time. I wonder if she thought him a hard, hard man - probably she did.

But I'll lay very long odds that, a few years later, comparing you with Mrs Smith's, Brown's or Robinson's spoilt brat, she found good cause to bless the day, the action, and your father's sound commonsense.

Hammond behaved foolishly, we must admit, because Peter, with a really good spanking once a week, would have turned out a capital fellow.

Matters continued in this way for a month or more, and then the trouble began.

It was annoying for me all along to see this young ruffian pulling my old friend's leg at every moment of the day, but till the storm burst I could do nothing to stop it, Hammond being the most headstrong of fellows.

I afterwards found out that his forbearance with young Master Peter originated from a bygone love affair, which I shall not on any account tell you about, Peter being so like the principal figure in that story that he might have been her brother.

Hammond opened the ball by making repeated but very fainthearted efforts to curb Peter's spirits, with the result that Peter got extremely bored with him. He used to adopt a fatherly manner, and Peter, by the nine gods, was no man to father.

The upshot of this was, that whatever good influence Hammond may ever have had on the boy melted like snow in front of a furnace door, and Peter commenced to go to the devil with extreme rapidity.

I do not see any particular reason why I should be specific, so, beyond saying that our young friend spent a good many more nights out of mess than he had any need to do, that he seldom caught the right train from Coalville, and that his journeyings on these occasions were not directed towards the dwelling place of his family, I will leave his fallings from grace to your imagination.

I fear that I do not come out of this narrative as well as I might, because I looked on for such a long time before taking any active part in it. Peter might have listened to me if I had got hold of him in the right way. He never forgot how I had taken the burden of Mess Presidency off his shoulders, and always respected people who could do what he (in this case most emphatically) could not.

Poor Peter, with all his shortcomings he was a good boy at heart. I cannot somehow bring myself - now that the pen is actually in my hand - to write as hardly of him as I had intended to.

Hammond was obsessed with the goodness of his friend's nature, and it took him nearly a week to see what even my dull wits saw at once, and when he saw it it worried him devilishly. Still, even when he was put face to face with bare facts, he could not believe his ears. He rushed like a whirlwind on the Elder Twin and Charles, accusing them of having led Peter astray, and telling them that the business must be set to rights, and at once, or he would know the reason why.

By all reports Hammond did not put this very nicely, and so you will see what truly excellent fellows Charles and the Twins were when, faced with an utterly libellous accusation, they did not turn on Hammond in anger, but rather sympathised with him and offered to do all they could to put things straight.

He also came to me about it, and we talked on the subject from nine-thirty one evening till midnight, and when we stopped we were no forrarder than when we started.

If Hammond needed any corroboration of Charles' and the Twin's protestation of innocence, I was able to give it to him. I even remarked that in my humble opinion Hammond had not done a wise thing in letting Charles and the Twin deal with Peter, as Peter would be very likely to guess that he had put them up to it, and would then have some cause for complaint against him, whereas, had he attacked the matter himself in person, he would have been perfectly within his rights, and Peter could have said nothing.

As opposed to this again there was the outstanding fact that, owing to his foolish kindness, Hammond's influence over Peter was nil, while Charles' and the Twin's, on the other hand, was considerable.

The matter struck us both as being fraught with difficulties on every hand, and we scratched our silly old heads quite a lot over it.

On the whole, I was rather glad when it took a final turn the next day, and adjusted itself automatically without our help - thus rendering myself at least free from all responsibility.

Peter tackled Hammond between breakfast and 8.45 a.m. parade. I saw them start off from the mess together, and guessed how the affair had gone when I heard Hammond give the wrong word of command to his company and swear at his men - two things which he never by any chance did under normal conditions.

He gave me a rough outline of the interview afterwards. I had been perfectly right for once, and had only erred on the side of leniency. When a lad, with his view on life yet in the melting pot, is fated to pass his days in a big city teeming with life of every description, these things do happen. What is it Shakespeare says, - "the means to do ill deeds"? Eh, well, it was all a very great pity, and nobody's particular fault except his who first invented the evil, and who now is such an adept at finding work for idle hands! Peter had openly defied Hammond. Looking at the whole miserable business in the cold, relentless light of hard commonsense, Hammond was powerless. One cannot deal with this sort of an affair as with a matter of discipline!

And yet matters went on just the same.

Perhaps it was just as well that Peter was rather a young ass after all.

Having once got the better of Hammond on what you must allow was an important point, he imagined him vanquished for good.

"Under his thumb!" - and this was where Master Peter came to grief. You see he did not know Hammond as well as I did.

If only he could have been down by the river on that day when a foolish coach steered Hammond into the bank in the final heat of the junior sculling, and had seen, as I did, how Hammond pushed himself out - caught up all but one of the thirty lengths that the accident had lost him, and then took his undeserved beating with a laugh - how he clapped the winner on the shoulder and congratulated him heartily - if, I say, he could have seen and heard all these things, he would never have been so silly as to take Hammond for a weak man. Of course, he was very young, and can be forgiven an error in judgement which would have been inexcusable in a wiser and older man - still, I don't know.

(To be continued.)

THE RUMINATIONS OF A MARLING SPIKE.

"'Andsome be as 'andsome do," mused old Marling Spike aloud, "and they did me 'andsome, they did. As I was a'gwine ter say, this 'ere war is about the most comfer'ble pastime what ever was. It's a puffick recreation - that's what /calls it," and, clearing his cheek, he expectorated out of the window and settled down to tell us all about it.

"It's not as if I'm pertickler sort o'chap, but just one o' they there ordinary blokes what loves 'is ease and plenty o' luxury on top, as the sayin' is. O' course they looked arter us very well up in the front line, and there wasn't not nobody what wouldn't 'ave done anythink for anybody. When the C.O. used ter come round and pat us on the back and shake us by the 'and we was as proud as fellers could be. Many's the time 'e's come up ter me and said, 'Bivins,' - or rather 'Joe' ('e often used ter call me 'Joe'), - 'Joe, you're a good feller, 'ave a cigar,' and then I'd say, 'Thank'ee, sir, it's very kind o' you,' and then 'e'd take me by the arm and lead me to the Officers' Mess and order brandies and sodas for two. But there, our officers was all splendid fellers, and they was all alike, every one o' 'em, and couldn't do enough for yer. I remembers once our Regimental Sergeant-Major a' comin' up ter me and sayin', 'Mr Bivins, you've 'ad a 'ard day, go and lie down on my bed.' Well, I could 'ardly believe it, no more'n you can, 'specially seein' as 'ow 'e'd earned the nick-name o' Satan the Fire-eater' wherever 'e'd been afore. An' just as I laid down an' done as 'e told me, who should come round but the Horderly Officer, an' seein' me there - Joe Bivins - a'lyin on the Sergeant-Major's bed, 'e comes up ter me an' sez, 'e sez, 'What's yer name, my man? Ain't yer feelin' well?' 'Yes, sir,' sez I, respeckable like, 'but I'm obeyin' horders,' 'Oh,' 'e sez, sez 'e, 'I've got some Ho-de-Colone which was sent me by me best gal. I'll run and get it for yer,' an' off 'e goes, as the sayin' is, an' sure enough, back 'e comes an' makes an' awful fuss o' me. 'E dabbed it on me nose, wiped me heyebrahs an' cleaned me ears with it, an' sez, 'Don't you get hup awhile, you just stay where you are, Joe. I'll send the Steward along ter yer d'reckly with some sammin mayonaise and some caveyhar sandwiches.' An' blimey, if 'e didn't go an' do it! Well o' course, when I fust come out, I thought as 'ow we was gwine to 'ave a rough time of it, as the sayin' is. Instead o' that, they simply decoyed us pore working chaps out 'ere for the pure purpose o' makin a fuss of us. The Major, 'e was a fine feller, too. 'E sent me a bottle o' port, 'with 'is best,' and there was plenty more where it come from. Well, o' course, arter six months o' this sort o' thing, it's no wonder that I really was taken very ill. I 'ad a narsty 'eadache come on, an' the doctor 'e come along, an' 'e felt me tongue an' looked at me pulse, and told me to stop in bed. The Senior Captain was very hupset an' sent me 'is heiderdown quilt, an air piller, a rubber 'ot-water-bottle, an' one o' them there pictures-scopes - you know - one o' them there things what you puts a picture in and then peeps through two little windeys - to amoose meself with whilst I was in bed. And they wasn't 'arf some pictures! Pretty gals, - ladies in tights in the Garden of Heden, fairies peepin' round

rocks by the side o' the river, an' the most beautiful mermaids what ever winked their eyes at a sailor man.

"They sent out search parties to gather flowers along the trenches, so that they could make my bunk more cheerful than what it was. Two pore fellers got sniped whilst pickin' some dandelions, an' never come back. Arter lingering in all this luxury for some time, an' ignorant of 'ow really bad I was, they sent me down one night, in a beautiful motor-car (which the Colonel 'ad procured from 'Eadquarters for me) to the main dressing station. When I got there, the driver 'anded a letter from the Colonel to the Sergeant 'oo received me, an' presently down comes the Colonel o' the Field Ambulance and shakes 'ands with me. 'It's a little rest you want,' sez he, 'you've 'ad a 'ard life of it hup there in front. I'll see what I can do for yer, Mr Bivins, tomorrer,' an' 'e 'as me brought hupstairs to a most wonderful bedroom in the 'Chatto,' an' I was put to bed in a big 4-poster with silk curtains and nice white bedclothes. Then 'e sends me hup a bottle o' champagne. 'E was a dook, 'e was, an' if I'd been the Prince o' Wales 'isself 'e couldn't 'ave made a bigger fuss o' me. Did I sleep? Not a wink. I was that comfer'ble I couldn't close me heyes. I'd never 'ad such luxury in me life.

"The followin' mornin' 'e telephoned to the General at 'Eadquarters, an' the old gentleman 'isself come down ter see me. I shall never forget 'is kindness - oh, they do look arter yer in the British Army, they do - an' 'e was kindness itself. A real gent, I calls 'im. 'Why, dang me, if it isn't dear old Joe, 'sez 'e, shakin' me by the 'and, 'you've been 'avin' a 'ard time up in the lines, pore feller. I'm goin' ter drive yer meself ter Boulogne, so get slippy, Joe. We've got two hours an' a 'arf to catch the next boat ter Blighty. I'm goin' to send yer for a nice little 'oliday, and then when you comes back you'll be quite yer old self again.' 'Thank'ee kindly, sir,' sez I, overflowin' with gratitood, an' me 'eart was that full I couldn't hutter a word. Well, I gets inter me clothes, as the sayin' is, an' 'e 'as me carried down the stairs an' lifted inter the back seat of 'is car, and then the dear old gent 'ops in beside me. A couple o' pillars, an' a rest fer me feet, an' a nice fur rug ter keep the dust off, an' then away we get. I can see 'is little flag now, a' flutterin' in the wind in front, as we tore along the roads, through the villages, hup an' down the 'ills, and the blessed old 'ooter a 'ootin' away like anythin', as the sayin' is, an' yer couldn't see out tyres for dust. 'Arfway, we stopped an' ad some lunch out o' the luncheon basket which the General always carried with 'im, so 'e said, so as to be hindependent like. There was lobster salad and chicken in jelly, chewed meat done up in pasties, 'ot-'ouse peaches, an' strawberries an' cream, an' I don't know 'ow many bottles o' fizz. Oh, it makes me smack me lips ter think of it. Whether we stayed too long over lunch, or whether the 'shover' took the wrong turnin', I don't know, but we arrived at the jetty in time ter see the boat well out of harbour, an' goin' like 'oly smoke, as the sayin' is. Lumme! You oughter 'ave 'eard that old General swear! I never knew anyone so profuse in their apologies, an' I can 'ear 'is language now as 'e stamped hup and down the pier. 'I won't be done!' 'e yelled. 'Damme, I won't! You shall go at once, Mr Bivins, whatever the cost!' An' so sayin' 'e drove us to the

Naval Transport Hoffice, an' straight-way chartered a destroyer. When they saw 'oo it was, an' what 'e wanted, they 'ad one of H.M. warships brought round to the jetty. As I got aboard, the old General, with tears in 'is heyes, pressed a £5 note on me as 'e shook me by the 'and, and wished me 'Good luck, me boy! All the best, an' 'ave a good time, an' whatever you do, don't you 'urry back!' I was so grateful again that me tongue stuck to the roof of me mouth, an' I couldn't speak a word, as the sayin' is. 'Ow we raced acrost that Channel was a marvel, an' we arrived in Blighty an hour before the boat what I should 'ave come on. When I got ashore, there was a fine motor-car awaitin' for me to take me 'ome, an' they puts me and me kit on it, and away we comes. Oh, 'ow we travelled! We 'ad more grub aboard the car an' some more fizz, an' they takes me right to me 'ouse, an' tells me that I'm not on no account to think o' goin' back until the Commander-in-Chief 'isself writes ter me. Every day I was 'ome a £10 note come by post from the War office - 'With His Majesty's grateful thanks and appreciation' - an' I 'ad the greatest difficulty in the world to know what to do with it. I never 'ad so much wealth in me life. Well, arter three months of it, I couldn't stick it no longer. What with all the liquor restrictions an' the rotten food I was glad to get a move on. So, as the C.-I.-C. 'adn't written, I went hup ter see 'im meself. 'E was awfly kind ter me, 'e was. More 'and shakin's, a big whisky an' soda, an' a long cigar, an' I told 'im straight that if 'e didn't send me back ter France pretty quick, I should run away from 'ome and get acrost there on me own. The result was that 'e gave me the D.C.M. there and then in 'is hoffice with 'is very own 'ands, and the next day 'is own car come for me and took me ter the jetty, with 'is apologies for not bein' able to come with me 'isself. An' so I got back, an' 'ere I am, just as you see me, an' if all this 'ere molly-coddlin' an' kindness an' 'eart-breakin' generosity don't soon cease, I shall be a physical wreck within a month. Thank'ee Chicken-face, it's very kind o' yer - I don't mind if I do."

And pushing his tin mug across for further replenishment he once more cleared his cheek and expectorated out of the window.

POST PRANDIAL.

It was a little supper among kindred spirits, and when the cloth was removed from the table, nearly everyone obliged with a song, except the chairman. "As a matter of fact," he said apologetically, "my voice is somewhat like the sound of a brick being rubbed along the panels of a door." The excuse was put down to the good man's innate modesty. "Very well, then, gentlemen," said the chairman, "if you think you can stand it, here goes." Long before he had finished his song the audience fidgeted in their seats, and when he sat down there was a deep silence. Then the hush was broken by a braw Scot at the end of the table.

"Man", he exclaimed, "yer singin's no' up to much, but yer veracity's just awfu'. Ye were richt aboot that brick."

SYNJIN.

CONCERTS.

The programme of the concert held on 21st July was a refreshing change. It consisted of three parts, the first of individual items, followed by a thrilling playlet entitled "The Burglar and the Girl," and completed by a very successful pierrot party.

The individual items were all good. Miss Geddes gave us an accomplished rendering of "The Fairlings," and thoroughly deserved her enthusiastic encore. We hope to hear her again. Mr Gage sang "The Eve of Crecy," which was quite a new song to most of us. Mr Gage has the power to grip his audience, though his style just lacks that suggestion of hidden power which is so essential. Mr Birch sang with buoyancy and good effect.

The little play was quite powerfully acted by Mrs Arthur Queen, as "the Girl," and Mr Norman Rowe, as "the Burglar." The plot was well sustained; it was full of thrills and surprises, and Mrs Queen carried off the climax with great force.

The pierrot party gave a delightful entertainment; each item was good, and the whole show ran with perfect smoothness - a quality usually so lacking in amateur pierrots.

At the concert on the 28th July, several performers made their first appearance in the Hydro. Major Bingham gave us an exhibition of his prodigious memory. Mr Mortleman has a good strong voice, and was much appreciated in "Shipmates o' Mine,"

Mr Lewy gave us a humorous turn, entitled "She Wants to Marry Me." Mr Pearce sang "The Deathless Army," and was well applauded. We think he would do better with lighter music; the song was a little too heavy for his voice. Mr Scotchburn was really very funny in his wizardisms, and Mr Baylis' topical song was thoroughly enjoyed. Mr Gage recited "The Last of his Race." It is a very beautiful story, and equally difficult to recite. Mr Gage did fairly well, though his intonation was somewhat monotonous, and articulation weak. Miss Goldie Scott sang delightfully, and with perfect modulation; her rendering of Braga's Serenata with violin obligato was particularly pleasing.

The latter part of the programme was taken up by the performance of the trial scene from "Merchants of Venice."

Mr and Mrs Isaacson took the principal parts, and showed a considerable insight into these great characters. Mrs Isaacson's elocution was charming. The remaining characters were of course, only background to these two, but were all well played. Mr Pocket thoroughly convinced us that he was annoyed at the whole business.

The orchestra has now been taken over by Capt. Williams, Mr Bates having left. During the interval on Saturday the orchestra played Reinecke's "Vorspiel," which was well applauded, though the performance was much marred by loud conversation.

"PEAS BLOSSOM."

ARRIVALS.

Majors:- R.E.N. North, E. Surreys; L.C. Hope, Dorsets; J. Laidley, Royal Scots; M. Farrant, R.F.A.

Captains:- J.F. Harford, Manchesters; R.G. Sillars, A & S. H., and Signal Service, R.E.; V.E. Inglefield, E. Yorks; C.M.S. Shore, R.F.A.; R.L. Ferguson, R.A.M.C.

Lieuts.:- C.R. Wadman, R.F.A.; A. Proctor, Oxford & Bucks.; C.B. Boah, Liverpools; F.L. Brooks, M.G.C.; R.E. Conder, R.F.C.; A. Stewart Graham, R.A.M.C.

2nd Lieuts.:- H.R. Hole, London att. R.F.C.; Macintosh, Seaforths; Seigfried Sassoon, R.W.F.; L.M. Thomson, R.F.C., Spec. Res.; C.I. Eyre, Yorks.; A.M. Watt, M.T., A.S.C.; D. Robertson, R.G.A.; E.E. Myers, A.S.C.; P.G. Lythgoe, R.G.A.; W.L. Morgan, London; A.H. Denley, London; B.J. Hamm, Worcesters; D.D. Law, Gordons; W. Silleng, R.G.A.; G.L. Swain, Manchesters; G.R. Allard, M.G.C.; W.A.C. Scott, A.S.C.; H. White, R.G.A.

DEPARTURES.

Majors:- W. St. J. Spencer, E. Surreys; C.B. Hutchinson, R.F.A.

Captains:- Stewart Bates, Middlesex; D. Barr, E. Lancs.; A. Clayton, Border; R.A. Mester, S.W.B.

Lieuts.:- B.S. Godard, Border; P.H. Leppard, R. Berks; T.C. Lake, R.F.A.; D. Morgan-Rees, R.W.F.; H. Capon, M.G.C.; R.H. Allen, M.G.C.; W.H.S. Curryer, R.F.A.; G. Kay, R.F.; E.B. Keevil, Wilts.; J. Bell, Yorks.

2nd Lieuts.:- H.K. Elphinstone, Yorks.; H.P. Nicholl, Leicesters; J. Morrison, Gordons; L. Evans, R.F.; H.B. Harris, S.A.I.; G.A. Taylor, London.