

SOME NOTES ON THE WORK OF FIELD HOSPITALS.

BY A NURSE IN A FIELD HOSPITAL.

The wounded are fortunate if they are within ambulance distance of a Field Hospital. When one has seen a badly wounded man brought in, covered with mud, tortured with pain and cold, with field dressings, certainly, but, in many cases, hours, even days, of exposure endured before even these could be applied, then one realises the boon these hospitals are, and what splendid work they do, with first-rate surgery and skilled nursing, always seeing the worst of a case through before letting the patient embark on the long tedious journey to the base hospital.

That our Field Hospitals are valued by our Allies as well as by our own wounded, one has only to say a few words to them to find out, though occasionally it is only when the evacuating order has been given, and the stretcher is ready by the bedside to take them to the ambulance that they show, by a few words of gratitude and regret, their appreciation of what has been done for them, as one gives them a final hand-shake, and a "bonne chance." Others, however, are continually congratulating themselves on being in such good hands, in preference even to hospitals of their own nationality. They are not accustomed to the unceasing care and attention they get in English-staffed hospitals, and they think it a wonderful thing never to be left, night or day—always a "soeur" within call. The constant dressing of wounds, too, instead of a dab of iodine once in twenty-four hours—which is all the care many of the hospitals seem able to give—is to them a surprising experience.

There, to the booming chorus of guns only a few miles away, with often through the day a bout of shelling or a Taube raid to be got through, looking from bed to bed at these splendid men, hardly one of whom is without some limb gone, one cannot wonder that their nerves are shaken for the time and that the strain of the bombardments, while they last, is almost more than they can bear, and is far more trying for them than for those who are hale and well. Some of them pathetically apologise, saying that they used not to be afraid. In the same way, when some of these terrible wounds are being dressed, they seem to give way entirely and lose all control, their piteous cries making the dressing, under difficult conditions to begin with, even harder to carry out satisfactorily. When, however, they explain and say: "You must forgive me, it is not of my own wish I do this, I wouldn't if I could help it," one is completely disarmed and feels that no trouble is too much in order to try and make up a little to these men whose lives and pursuits, as men, are ruined for ever.

When there is time to listen, which there seldom is, many of them have interesting stories to tell.

One man had been a prisoner for some weeks, till one day, seeing the sentry at the gates of the factory where he was working was asleep, he and five others got past him and escaped. He hid in a wood for two days, without food, then got something to eat and a change of clothes at a farm, and eventually rejoined his regiment.

The Germans who were brought in, though quite docile and easy to deal with in hospital, were, one and all, firmly convinced that England made the war, in spite of every argument to prove the contrary.

THE CARE OF THE WOUNDED.

The Bishop of London, speaking in a sermon of his visit to the Front, said that one of the most touching things he was allowed to do on the other side of the water was to consecrate all the graves of our soldiers he could find.

We are glad to know that co-operation is now to exist between the Army Council and the public health authorities in regard to sanitary matters. How much sickness and how many deaths would have been saved had the following orders been put in force last August.

The following orders to medical officers of health are included in the circular issued by the Local Government Board:—

"The county medical officer of health should obtain from the district medical officer of health each week information (a) of the occurrence of any military cases of infectious disease which have come to his knowledge in the district; and (b) of any new movements of troops into or out of the district which are known to him."

In view of the occurrence of sporadic cases of cerebro-spinal meningitis ("spotted fever") in the civil population, arrangements have been made for visits by a bacteriologist where required and for the laboratory examination of material obtained from the contacts of cases. Corresponding arrangements have been made by the Army Council for military cases. The Lords of the Admiralty have also asked the Local Government Board to co-operate with them in regard to sanitary affairs.

Notes are appended on the inspection of billets and camps by medical officers of health. Notice of proposed billeting must be sent to these officers, who may advise as to the prevalence of infectious disease in the place and as regards water supply or sanitary matters. Regular inspections of the billets are carried out, and recommendations made. The same principles are applied to camps; and it is laid down that overcrowding shall not take place in huts or similar places. Special precautions are outlined in respect of typhoid fever and cerebro-spinal meningitis.

Arrangements have been made for the inspection of food prepared by Government contractors for the Army Service Corps. It is advised that special

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