

"TAKE IN" DAY AT A CASUALTY CLEARING STATION.

The work at a Clearing Station is, of course, very different from that of a General Hospital. There are no such luxuries as beds or sheets, but the patients lie on stretchers with a couple or more blankets, a pillow, and a large mackintosh (called a ground sheet) under them to cover the stretcher. "Take In" comes regularly so many days a week, and lasts from midnight to midnight. Plenty of dressings need to be prepared beforehand, the theatre put in readiness and the cooks are responsible for having beef tea, hot milk, or food of some sort all ready. Generally there is not much of a rush till about nine or ten in the morning, then a stream of ambulances pours up till all or nearly all the available space is filled up. Schools are very often used as Clearing Stations.

As the patients come in from the ambulances they are diagnosed as surgical or medical. The severe cases or "Lyers" go to the part of the building chosen and prepared for them, and the "Sitters" or less injured take what place is left. Each case on entrance is given a white card on which is written his name, regimental number, corps and spaces left for the medical officer to fill in the diagnosis, treatment, age and religion. The medical officer must also decide whether the patient will be evacuated lying (stretcher case), and if so puts a large "L" on the card, otherwise he is put on the list of sitting cases (able to sit up in the train). A tin disc with the number of the space where the stretcher will lie is also sent in with each admission. When the medical officer has examined all the patients the discs and cards are collected and taken to the office so that the sergeant major knows how many beds are filled and the clerks can enter the names and particulars in the books.

As soon as the patients are admitted they are

given a feed of some sort and then all wounds are dressed. After this the stretcher cases are given a blanket bath, while those who are able to walk can go themselves and get a thorough wash—which is much appreciated. For the severely injured there are pyjama suits and the others get clean shirts and socks—if they have worn their present underclothing for more than a week (more likely to have been several weeks!).

The cheerfulness of the men is wonderful—always ready to make the best of everything. It is noticeable that almost the first thing a wounded

man asks for is a drink of water—they all seem to crave for it as soon as they are hit. The next most popular item is the beloved "Woodbine," and thanks to the many kind friends at home there is generally a supply of these to give round as soon as a convoy of wounded arrives.

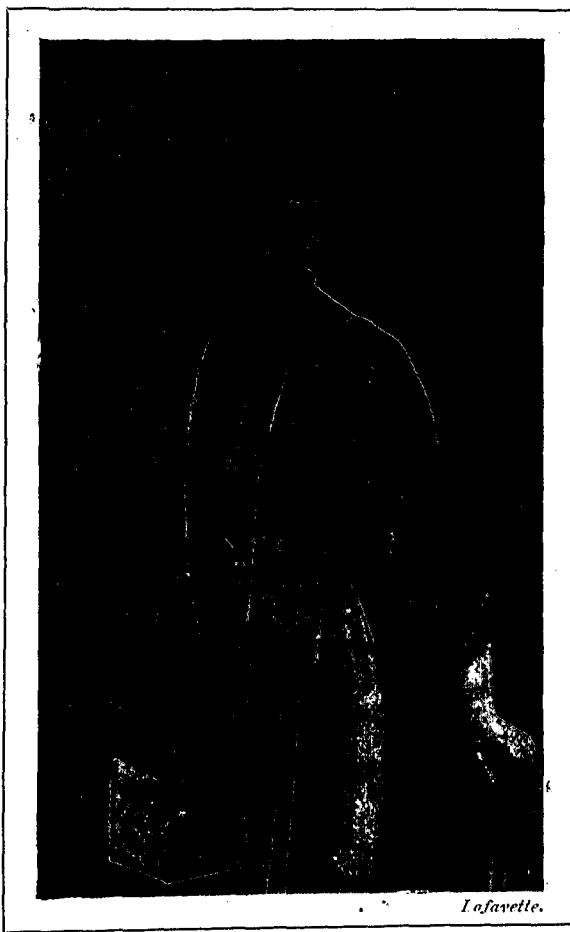
Unless there has been very heavy fighting all these men get a night's rest and next day the majority are evacuated, going on to a General Hospital. Occasionally it is only possible to keep them a few hours and then they have to move on to make room for a fresh convoy. Those only requiring a few days' rest and treatment to make them fit again are kept in the clearing Station and either return to "duty" or go to a Convalescent Camp for a few days more.

Diets are not a difficult matter as it is a choice of "Milk" or "Field Rations."

Before evacuation each man must have a label tied on his coat with full particulars about him—the nature of his injury and treatment given. Those dangerously ill or with wounds needing careful attention have red borders to their labels. Little bags with the man's name on are given to the stretcher cases and their personal belongings put inside as so often the kit is lost or too much damaged to be of use again.

It is a marvel how well operation cases do and how quickly they are able to be moved on to a Base Hospital.

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