

The *Manchester Guardian* publishes a week's diary of a young Australian soldier of work inside a "tank" during fighting. He reports that his experience was not altogether pleasant at first, tank sickness being as bad as sea-sickness until you get seasoned.

A Kerry lady with the Indian Expeditionary Force writes to a friend from Mesopotamia:—

"MY DEAR B.—Have you got the letter I wrote you from the *Syria*? I hope so, as in that I explained why my mails in future must be so slow. From here I think it takes ten days for our letters to reach Bombay. When we got to Busra we found we were not really stopping there, and after spending a night at the Hospital there we embarked again on a paddle steamer, and had a three days' trip up the Tigris to Amara, where we are now. It was a lovely trip, just like a picnic. We did not travel at night. There were six sisters—one an Irish Sister in the Indian Nursing service. We had such a jolly time. I was sorry when it came to an end. It was lovely at Busra, and for some distance up the river to the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates, near where the Garden of Eden is supposed to have been. It is not much to look at now, and there are new buildings in progress there that spoil the look of it. I can feel with the perspiring Tommy who said: 'It would take no blooming hangel with a sword to drive him out of 'ere now.' After leaving this the palm trees are seldom met with, and crops of sugar-cane are the only form of tillage you see. We passed by many Arab encampments, and the women came down to the banks to sell us fowls, eggs, or melons. Their dress is the same to-day as you see in the old Bible pictures. The women all wear a kind of black robe, almost like a Sister of Mercy, but the men dress in very bright garments. At night all their cattle and horses are brought into the zareba, lest they be stolen, and fires are lighted to keep off the jackals. Ezra's Tomb is another place of interest on the way. The tomb is a sort of round temple of white tiles half-way up, and the upper part of blue. It is an interesting occupation to dream of the many events of Sacred History associated with the place for many thousands of years back. But I wonder if the Arabs of those times (if there were any) had any equivalent for the Eighth Commandment. Their present-day descendants here certainly appear to observe neither the one nor the other. They rob wholesale here despite the strict watch kept on them. I have not been here quite a week, so the novelty has not worn off yet. We are doing our nursing in tents, or rather huts with mud walls, about 6 feet high, and the upper parts and roofs of bamboo matting. The floors are earthen, and you go ankle deep in the dust. The patients are not nearly so ill as those I had at Bombay, and now that the heat is not so great (it is still about 112), there is not so much illness. In September the cold weather sets in. There is little or no fighting, as we have no wounded in hospital. Our hospital is right on the bank of

the Tigris. The place looks flat and bare in the glare of the sun by day, but all that changes at sunset. It loses all its harsh aspects and glows a real Eden once more. You'd never tire watching it. At night, too, it is lovely. We all sleep out of doors for coolness. We have each a little hut of our own, and our camp outfit. The town, if you could call it one, is a short distance from here, and the Red Cross steam launch goes up and down several times a day, so we get there as often as we wish, but are not allowed into the native bazaars without a military escort when we do any shopping. We can get most things we want here, but at treble the ordinary prices of course. We are always so thirsty you just want to drink all day long. No wonder Kipling says:—

'Place me somewhere east of Suez,
Where a man can raise a thirst.'

There are two other Irish Sisters here, awfully nice girls both. Don't worry about me, as I would not have missed coming out here for anything.

"D. O. S."

FRACTURED LIMBS IN PLASTER AND OPERATIONS UNDER LOCAL ANÆSTHETICS.

A Sister writes: "It has been my lot to do duty amongst French wounded with an English staff, and at present I am nursing them with a French staff entirely. The French surgeons simplify the conveyance of their 'fracture' cases from the Front hospitals by placing the limb in some instances almost immediately in plaster; but, in addition to the usual method, iron supports are also inserted—that is to say, after several layers of bandaging a semi-circular piece of iron one-inch wide, having horizontal ends, is placed against the limb and directly over the wound; after which the plaster of Paris bandage is continued as before. We are receiving most of our fractures in such like position. The method is obviously simple and—at the same time—saves incalculable further injury whilst the wounded are in transit to the base hospital. In this hospital, the majority of operative cases are performed with the aid of a local anæsthetic, called 'novocain.' It has its advantages and disadvantages, insomuch as there is not the same amount of fear as when a general anæsthetic is administered; also there are no after effects of sickness or nausea; on the other hand, the patient is fully conscious of the proceedings in the theatre, and it is a question as to how much courage he has to withstand the operation, whether major or minor. Should the operation be prolonged beyond the effects of the novocain, then a general anæsthetic is sometimes given, but very little is required. Recently an excision of the right kidney was performed within an hour under the foregoing method of local anæsthesia, also a very severe empyema was opened."

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