

A LOOK IN THE FACE OF A FRIEND.

Miss M. H. Conquest relates in the *Edmonton Bulletin*, Alberta, Canada, the following incident which occurred in a Red Cross outpost.

'Way up north, there's a silent drama of life that must be seen to be appreciated. You get a glimpse of it now and then from the reports that come to hand from those brave dwellers of the distant places, whose business it is to stand on guard for health.

Saturday night and 30 below. The Swiss truck-driver had a big load to deliver to the little hospital. An eagerly looked for load of new beds and bedroom comforts. In the little wards, filled to capacity, a man sat up all night long, hugging his splintered knee, waiting with the courage of the north in his blood, waiting for the new beds from the city of Edmonton.

An old pioneer northsman lay dying in the little lonely northern hospital. For twenty years, off and on, he had worked with the stock on a farm sixty miles away.

The end was near—the old man felt it. There was but one wish uppermost in his mind. He must see his old employer again. That was all he asked of life—a look in the face of a friend!

Sixty miles distant was the homestead, but what are miles to men of the north? Death was calling—and life heard—and obeyed the summons.

Over an unbroken trail three horsemen in relays made the sixty-mile journey, in weather far below zero. Ten o'clock at night and a household asleep, when the rider arrived with his tale of the dying man's request.

Out of bed sprang the man of the house, hurrying into his clothes, while a horse was saddled ready for the long trip. On, on, through the cold country, with the shining stars overhead and the crunching cakes of snow and ice underfoot. Seven silent hours of hard riding through the midnight and the silver dawn.

A life hung in the balance in the little hospital with one great desire unfulfilled—the spirit calling to death to stay his hand till sight was satisfied once again.

The horseman reined in his horse at the gate—rider and steed looking like spirits from the ice country. The strange white of the horseman's ears told the story of frostbite and suffering. His eyes, congealed with icicles, asked the mute question: "In time, or too late?"

Thank God—just in time. The angel of death was hovering near, but the Spirit of Eternal Love had granted the prayer of the spirit of human love, and the old stockman still breathed.

There was silence in the ward as the traveller entered. No time this for language, when the heart is too full for speech. The sick man beamed upon his friend, who stood there looking strangely shy and still, twisting his cap in his hand.

Shining from the satisfaction of his heart's desire fulfilled, the dying man's eyes looked longingly at his friend as he uttered the one word, "Hello." The other smiled gently, too, and said softly, "Hello."

That was all—one touch of nature at the entrance of the valley of the shadow of death.

More than a volume of words, greater than a hand-clasp, the language of the soul shining in the eyes of the two men, whose simple greeting was "Hello."

All day long the rider of the night sat by his man's bedside—little said—yet the silence was charged with the spirit of sympathy and affection. "Greater love hath no man than this."

When death called the old man, the gallant rider sat by with a look on his face as one who has been privileged to take part in some sacred service.

Turning to the Red Cross sister, he remarked quietly, "I'm sure glad I came in, nurse."

REVIEW.

THE FIRST RED CROSS.*

One of the many advantages of the British College of Nurses is that its Fellows and Members bring to its notice and give into its keeping, valuable and interesting books not always widely known.

Recently, Miss Dorothy Snell, S.R.N., F.B.C.N., Matron of the Scuola Convitto Regina Elena, Policlinico Hospital, Rome, presented to the Library of the College the life of a saint little known, whose story is told by Cecilia Oldmeadow, under the title of "The First Red Cross."

In her preface, the writer states: "Two years before the war, when going through a course of Red Cross Nursing, I became greatly interested in the life of St. Camillus de Lellis. After a good deal of research, it seemed clear to me that he was the true founder of the Red Cross, and that he had never been given credit for the marvellous work he organised and carried through in military nursing. . . . It seems amazing that his biographers have never recognised Camillus as the Red Cross Saint until we realise that Faber published his translation (of his biography by two of his disciples) some ten years before the idea of an international Red Cross had been formulated by the Governments of Europe at the instigation of M. Henri Dunant."

Mrs. Oldmeadow writes: "Camillus de Lellis, the true originator of the Red Cross, is to nine hundred and ninety-nine Englishmen out of a thousand not even a name. Yet it was to the great heart and vigorous brain of this Catholic Saint, whom we may unhesitatingly christen 'The Red Cross Saint,' that the first organised Red Cross work is due, and to the same holy man we can trace the idea of the first Field Ambulances."

"To put in a nutshell the life of St. Camillus de Lellis. He belonged to a noble and distinguished family; he was a soldier; and in youth a great gambler. In his twenty-fifth year a sudden inspiration of grace, prepared for by a long smothered desire to become a Franciscan Friar, changed his heart and life. Thereafter he gave himself entirely to the reform of nursing, and to effect this purpose founded an Order of nursing priests which exists to this day. The 'Ministers of the Sick,' as they were called by Camillus himself, nurse all kinds of sick persons without consideration of creed, in private houses, in public and private hospitals, and on the battlefield. There is also a sort of Second Order of women, who undertake the same voluntary and devoted work. The Order had spread well over Europe and into South America before it fell upon the days of persecution. Badly decimated as it has been, it has never 'gone under,' and it flourishes well to-day in Italy, Belgium, Ireland and Germany, in Spain and Holland."

"The distinguishing badge Camillus chose for his Order to wear upon their black habits was a Red Cross similar in size, shape and material to that of the Red Cross organisation familiar now to all. . . .

"St. Camillus seems called to be the patron of military nursing in a special manner. The badge of the Red Cross has always been associated with Christian arms, although the popular mind may not have directly connected it with them. The famous victory of Constantine in 312 was heralded, as everyone knows, by the miraculous vision of the cross in the sky, with its motto, 'In hoc signo vinces.' Hitherto, not one of the biographers of Camillus seems to have noticed that the battle of Saxa Rubra, after the vision, was fought and won on October 28th, a date which

*Burns Oates & Washbourne, Ltd., 28, Orchard Street, London, W.1, and 8-10, Paternoster Row, E.C.4. 4s. 6d.

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