

# HERE & THERE.

## Mental Meanderings of a Temporale, Temporary Transient Officer.

**A** MONTH ago we were there; to-day we are here; but the "there" of to-day was the "here" of a month ago. And what a change between the here and the there. And yet there is "much of a muchness," in spirit at least, whether one's lot for duty be cast in a large general military hospital in the Hop County went to receive its convoys of badly battered fresh from the battlefield once or twice a week, or in a Red Cross "Special," of one third the capacity, improvised out of a hydro in the bracing altitude of Buxton to which are sent only those who have been hit by rheumatism, shell shock and kindred ailments. The dominating desire is the same in both places alike on the part of staff and patients.

Although one feels out of it so far as active service is concerned, when one's "dug-out" is a comfortable room in a one-time hydro and the heaviest charge to be faced is that of a conscientious taxi driver, and the only gassing is that of the natural mineral waters in which one is permitted to dive and swim daily; nevertheless the work of the "Red Cross Special" must count for not a little in the sum of Canada's effort in the Great War; it already counts for very much in the lives of the poor fellows who, arriving in divers pains of body and of mind have gone forth or are about to go forth, as strong men, with crutches cast aside, joints and bones no longer as one perpetual toothache, and with minds and nerves as clear of depression as a subaltern's bank account is of a credit balance a week before pay day.

There is a taxi cab driver on the stand fifty yards away from the Hospital, who ought to be at the front. He would earn promotion rapidly as a strategist, particularly when it came to making a charge. Walking down the hill from the station we enquired of a Tommy at the corner, where the Canadian Red Cross Hospital was situated. "Just up the hill, Sir, near the top. You can't miss it." Of course, as all Buxton sojourners know, the hill is one continuous curve. To one who has not been a Buxton sojourner, "Up the hill, Sir, near the top," sounded ominous on a warm day. Less than fifty yards up the hill we met a cab stand. That settled it. We answered, "Taxi, Sir," and with "Canadian Red Cross Hospital!" immediately proceeded down the hill over the ground we had already covered on foot. "Canadian Red Cross," I said. "Where are you going?" brought from the chauffeur "Just going to turn round, Sir." He "turned round"; dashed over the same hundred yards again, and another 70 yards which brought us round the bend, and we were there, that is, here. In all, including the "turning round," we had travelled in the taxi less than 200 yards, and had walked over 400. Bending Buxton is the undoing of impatient arrivals, and the enriching of knowing cab drivers.

It is excellent amusement to hear the questions and comments from good Buxton people who "never saw a baseball match before." It is hardly surpassed by the questions and comments of those good Canadian people who "never saw a cricket match before."

There is a batman in the Officers' quarters who is nothing if he is not thorough. Recently his officer asked him to go to Boots and get a bottle of Maltine Cascara and if they had not any in stock to order a bottle for immediate delivery. "That's a pretty hard word to remember, Sir. Will you please write it down?" So "Maltine Cascara for Capt. ———, Canadian Red Cross Hospital" was written down. In ten minutes the batman again solicited, "They have not got that book in stock Sir, but they are sending up to the publishers and will have a copy down for you to-morrow." "What are you talking about? What book?" "Why, Sir, that book you wrote down, 'Malt' something that you told me to go to the bookshop for." Which is the more worthy of record: the readiness of the book seller to obtain a copy of "Maltine Cascara" from the publishers, or the desire of the orderly to be killed when he realized his mistake we have not yet decided.

How we always wished to strafe (only we did not know the word in those days) that unfortunate type of Englishman who used to come to Canada with such a restricted mental outlook, cramped vision, and limited experience of men, places, and things that he could see nothing commendable in Canada and in things Canadian. Everything and everybody were disadvantageously compared to "the way it is at home," not infrequently "at home." In his unripened intellect and verdant mind, love for England was synonymous with disparagement of things Canadian. He was a thorn in the flesh; a weariness; a trial to be borne patiently for the sake of pity and courtesy when he drivelled his tasteless drivel "in company," but a thing to be struffed unmercifully for his own sake and for the sake of the country he hailed from, when private opportunity presented itself. And now in England we must not infrequently the Canadian counterpart, the same tasteless being of unripened intellect, verdant mind, cramped vision, and limited experience, whose love for Canada is forsooth voiced in whining disparagement of England and things English. Strafe the grousers, English and Canadian, who fail to see that the best advertisement for their own birthland is that it breeds a type of mind that is courteously apprehensive of the good things of the other land, and is courteously content to make the best of things which are not so good.

That night the Zeppelins dropped bombs near London town. And one great Zep, in fiery flame enveloped, came crashing down. A roaring wind round Buxton disturbed the slumbers of the Quartermaster. The more the gentle things he said of banging doors and flapping blinds, the more they banged and flapped—and faster.

His patience soon was quite exhausted; in wrathful mood—and in pyjamas too, He sprang from bed and dashed from room (he was a pretty picture entre nous). An open window here and unlatched doors both here and there—the nimble fingered captain made one and all secure. And so nocturnal troubles ended, smiled happily; but alas! his joy was premature. We've often noticed when all seems well and bright some unexpected, painful thing occurs; And so good Captain Thurger found—when, returning in the dark, he trod upon his spurs. He forgot the old adage to look before —. With saddened heart and tingling toe he leaped at once for bed. So agile was our quartermaster—being spurred on—he overleaped; the wall received his head. Our good Q.M. is a man of many parts, but ne'er before had he essayed the role of battering ram. And, pious soul he is, he finished his nocturnal gambols with a fervent, loud and resonant "amen."

The date has not yet been fixed for the supper to all the married members of the mess with which Capt. Macdonald desires—at least we hope so—to commemorate the arrival of a little daughter across the sea. It—that is, the news—came by wireless a few days ago, and the additional smile and happy look the while Captain Macdonald extracts a molar or treats a nerve, is accounted for thereby.

It is necessary to suggest that participation in feasts in commemoration of the joys of paternity be limited to the married members of the mess, as one means of penalising the selfishly unmarried section. It is a grievance with the preponderating majority of the mess that there is an unmarried section. However, we have been keeping an observant eye on that section, and while he is still young we should not be surprised if there were a young wife before the war ends. And in the years to come, although he would not be younger, he would have Younger(yettes, and, back in Canada, he would constantly be calling together his old-time brother officers at Buxton to celebrate the birth of the youngest Younger(yette).

It is a great advantage for a mess to have a chef for a cook and a cook for a chef. We have both and all in one. We are thankful. But we know when envy will do its deadly work on digestion already badly tormented and tempers sorely marred by uncooking cooks.

At the last business meeting of the mess it was decided that Thursday be Visitors' night. Seems unnecessary to specialise when we have a distinguished Guest at the head of the table every night!

The billiard tournament has been won by Captain Macdonald. This has rendered unnecessary a motion by Col. Oullin to amend the original decision that the prize be a billiard cue. Our gallant visitors motion sought relief not only for the padre, who was defeated by seven in the semi-final, but more especially for the rest of the mess and particularly for the patient Colonel, and provided that "in the event of the padre winning the tournament the prize be changed to a crate of matches."

We once were of a mess where there was an officer greatly skilled in surgery and in other things. We liked him well on many counts. One point of affinity was that we both a-hungered nightly about an hour before—or after—midnight. Among the things, other than surgery in which that good man was skilled was midnight marauding. He had a keen scent for victuals. Darkness of night hindered him not. As a burglar he would have got his majority very rapidly. Hidden receptacles were but an incentive. Empty handed he would start down darkened corridors, returning with a muchness of biscuits and cheese and maybe an orange or two. Many a time and oft did that good man save us—and himself—from the pain of nocturnal hunger. Often have we blessed his burglarious instincts. In course of time we left that mess and left behind that friend, philosopher and guide, but to the new mess took the old nocturnal hunger. Again we found another three starred fellow-man who, while he murmured "worms," gave ready help and led the way to where he thought the biscuits were. Of steps and turns there was no end and a few things fell before we reached the switch. With that turned on all seemed easy, but the light that shone on the cheffonier, together with the noise of fallen things spread far beyond a hungry man's intent. Cook's mate, M.P., and last, but not least, O.C., were quickly on the scene. Satisfaction that a Zeppelin bomb had not arrived was voiced. Shade of Sherstone, Your Marauding Myerby, King of Victual burglars, we see thy smile if supercilious yet kindly pity at our of-time nightly hunger, unappeased.

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## Fun, Facts & Fancies.

### INTERESTING FACTS.

There is only one venomous snake in Great Britain—the adder. You may recognize this by the black zigzag line down its back, and the black mark on its head.

One of the mountains in Ceylon has a remarkable shadow. Instead of lying on the ground, it appears to rise up like a veil in front of the observer. This is due to mist.

The Bishop of London is called upon to pay £4276 13s. 8d. out of his official income of £10,000. This still leaves the Bishop an income in excess of that of a Cabinet Minister.

So-called white elephants are light grey in colour. The lightest ever seen in Siam was one brought over to Bangkok by a European circus; but the rains fell and the paint came off.

"Penny weddings," formerly so popular in certain parts of Scotland, were those where the guests were each charged the sum of one penny—equivalent to the present shilling—for the privilege of being present.

In the East ground rice is used to detect criminals, the idea being that fear makes the roof of the mouth dry, and that a criminal overcome by fear consequently finds it almost impossible to swallow any hard substance with ease.

### TAKING THE BLAME.

"What is the difference between firmness and obstinacy?" asked a young lady of her fiancé. "Firmness," was his gallant reply, "is a noble characteristic of women; obstinacy is a lamentable defect in men."

### MADE A MISTAKE.

Johnnie was fishing one day when he lost his footing and fell in to the river. A gentleman on the bank was helping him out, and said: "How did you come to fall in?" "I didn't come to fall in," was the reply. "I came to fish."

### A BAD LOT.

When charged with being drunk and disorderly, and asked what he had to say for himself, the prisoner gazed pensively at the magistrate, smoothed down a remnant of grey hair, and said: "Your honour, man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn. I'm not as debased as Swift, as profligate as Byron, as dissipated as Poe, as debauched as ———." "That will do," thundered the magistrate. "Ten days. And officers take a list of those names and run 'em in. They're as bad a lot as he is."

### MARK TWAIN'S HUMOUR.

When Mark Twain, in his early days, was editor of a Missouri paper, a superstitious subscriber wrote to him saying that he had found a spider in his paper, and asking him whether that was a sign of good or bad. The humorist wrote him this answer, and printed it:—"Old Subscriber.—Finding a spider in your paper was neither good luck nor bad luck for you. The spider was merely looking over our paper to see which merchant is not advertising, so that he can go to that store, spin his web across the door, and lead a life of undisturbed peace ever afterwards."

### PERFECTLY SOBER.

A captain in the army was called to answer a charge of being intoxicated. Among those questioned was an Irish orderly, who protested vigorously that the allegation was a slander—that he was sure the captain was perfectly sober. "Why are you so sure that Captain Blank was sober that evening?" he was asked. "Did he speak to you upon his return to his quarters?" "He did, sir." "What did he say?" "He told me to be shure an' call him early in the mornin', sir." "And did the captain say why he wished to be called early?" "Yis, sir; he did, sir. He said he was goin' to be Queen o' the May, sir," responded the orderly, with convincing gravity.

### IT BELONGED TO HIM.

A great sensation was created the other day at a certain station just previous to the starting of the morning express. The guard was about to start the train when a fussy and fat old gentleman trotted up to him and said: "Wait a minute, will you, please, while I—"

"Impossible, sir," said the guard, putting the whistle to his lips. "But you must wait!" cried the old gentleman excitedly. "There's a man's leg under the wheel."

"Good gracious! Where is he?" inquired the horror-stricken guard. "Hold on there!"

Be hurried after the old gentleman while a couple of porters jumped down on to the line amid great excitement. After a short search one of the porters handed up a rush basket containing a large leg of mutton.

"Thank you!" said the old gentleman. "What do you mean, sir?" roared the guard. "You said—"

"I said a man's leg was under the wheel, and so it was. I paid for this leg, and if it isn't mine I should like to know to whom it belongs." Then the train moved on.

We might easily manage, if we would only take the burden appointed for us each day: but we choose to increase our trouble by carrying yesterday's stock over again to-day, and adding to-morrow's burden to our load before we are required to bear it.—Newton.

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