

TO THE DOCTORS

Issue after issue of the LISTENING POST invariably brought forth some protest from some injured party. The padre would jump on us because we were distinctly "wet" in all our news items. He claimed that we praised rum, extolled beer and gin, had no virtue; furthermore, there was no health in us. The kilties frowned upon our scotch jokes as ill-timed or worse. One threatened the editor with everything but a drink because he permitted some correspondent to state "That outside of the bag-pipes we carried no frightfulness into Germany." We met the greatest resistance from the medical profession. The battalion Medical Officer continually reminded us that we were ridiculing an honoured profession. We would hint to him that he was not like the old family doctor back home. Eventually, war broke out seriously between the trench press and the Medicos. We reproduce a couple of stories that got the M. O's goat:

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DOCTORS LESS COURTEOUS THAN IN PRE-WAR DAYS

"PROFESSIONAL MANNER DEAD"

Before the war, when one went to a doctor, was it his custom to belittle one's ailments, to deprecate one's symptoms, to smile cynically at the monologue of one's aches and pains? It was not! Since the beginning of the war there has been a deplorable falling off in the traditional courtesy of the medical profession.

In former times, if one went to him with a persistent pain in the side, a slight feeling of lassitude, and mild insomnia the verdict was rarely ever anything less than appendicitis. Nowadays such a complaint would be received coldly, even scornfully. How sad that one can no longer become ill! Oh, the delights of those diseaseful days! Then microbes lurked in every corner, bacteria lay in wait momentarily, germs worked overtime. But now, the acquisition of any really dangerous ailment seems impossible. Perhaps the introductory scowl of the Battalion Medical Officer checks its growth. Perhaps the brusqueness of his greeting chills its budding activity. What tender little germ, with all the potentialities of typhoid, say, could endure the shame of being classed "Bowels—No. 9"? No, the ignominy is too great. It would simply refuse to develop.

Before enlisting one was the happy prey of imminent, stealthy disease. Now one is proof against even the most trivial illness.

There is just one consolation left. When one goes sick with any complaint, from leprosy to cauliflower ear, no longer does one have to say: "Aw, Doc, have a heart! I'm a poor man. I can't afford an operation!"

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After that story was printed we received a mild rebuke from the A.D.M.S. at G.H.Q. We were informed to centre our ill-mannered humour on to the rations or the French climate. It was pointed out that there

existed too many leadswingers in the army without having the trench press giving them moral support. We frankly informed him that we believed in leadswinging, and we were only too pleased to have such a thing as a trench journal back us up on our own proposition. We borrowed ten francs from him and promised that the next article on the medical profession would not mention anything about the war. Fortunately, we got hit and were down at the base when the following appeared:

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A NEAR THING

"Good morning, Doctor," said David Jones as he entered the sanctum of a great physician whose work at the front had earned him many honours and decorations during the Great War, "I'm feeling rather out of sorts."

"Bowels all right?" was the gruff query from the medico.

"Yes," said Jones, in a slightly puzzled tone. He had known the Doctor from the early days of his practice, and was not quite prepared for such a brusque reception.

"Humph!" grunted the Doctor, "have you been warned for work to-night?"

"I always do the greater part of my work in the evening," answered Jones almost indignantly, as he thought of the piles of correspondence awaiting him at his office.

"I thought as much," remarked the Doctor meaningly. "Strange you should suddenly feel so queer just as your duties are about to begin. Here," he continued, tipping a few small pills into an envelope, "take two of these after each meal, and on no account fail to do your usual amount of work. It won't harm you in the least. Don't let me see you here again for a week at least," he enjoined. "Your face is far too familiar to me."

Completely mystified and not a little angry, David Jones jerked his pocket-book out and asked in frigid tones, "What do I owe you for this-er-treatment?"

"Owe me!" stammered the Doctor, quite taken aback as he suddenly remembered that the war, which had long provided a living for him mending the hurt and brow-beating the malingers, was now at an end. "Owe me! hm-hm-Mr. Jones, pardon me," he begged in the soft professional tone of his pre-war practice. "Now that I come to look at you, you are unquestionably very ill, indeed. Let me take your temperature! Good heavens, man, there is no time to be lost. I'll call a taxi—no, better, I'll have my car round here in a moment. You must go to bed without a moment's delay. I shall accompany you and remain with you until the crisis is past. Work? Certainly not! It might easily prove fatal to a man in your present weakened condition. You mustn't think of working for three months. I shall outline a special dietary and