

THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 1918

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The Casualty Clearing Station

Impressions of a Visit Which Will Bring Proud Feeling of Ease For Soldier Lads to Folks at Home

(By Lucy Amy, Special Correspondent of The Times with the Canadian Forces in France.)

With the Canadian Forces, France, July 23—My impressions of the battle's casualties have altered. I would not be little them; I know now that many of the fears of sensitiveness and inexperience have no foundation in the actual treatment of the men who face the enemy and carry away the marks of it. My personal knowledge does not extend to the field ambulances, where the wounded receive first treatment, but the workings of the casualty clearing station, to which they are carried from the field ambulances, I have watched every case that arrives. Each group serves a definite sector of the front by a system of alterations which prevents overcrowding in accommodation or work.

The group I have interested myself in is half Canadian. The wounded are delivered in lots of 200 to each station in succession, so that surgical cases might receive proper attention. In quiet times any one hospital of the group may receive patients only at intervals of several days; but each is always prepared to work night and day when the casualties are heavy. Indeed, there is no night there. Only recently it happened that the wounded arriving at one hospital were largely surgical cases, and six teams of operators worked all night.

Simply put, the needs of the wounded count before everything else.

The cases are taken in at a receiving tent where doctors examine each as it arrives and decide what must be done. The serious ones receive first attention, whether medical or surgical, special doc-

tors being reserved for each branch. The wards are double roofed tents with sides that may be lifted. Dry board floors and comfortable cots are matters of course, and the rest that is not the personal care of the medical officer in charge is attended to, as in any hospital at home, by nurses and orderlies.

Of the nurses little need be said; their record has been too often established, their whole-hearted care proven. Ask the boys themselves. The most severe test of personal concern occurred when bombs fell on the Canadian base hospitals and at another French town whose name has not yet been made public. The nurses stuck to their places. Of the orderlies more later.

The treatment of the patient is not entirely physical. It is a care of the C. O. to introduce psychology into therapeutics. A station I have in mind—a Winnipeg unit originally and still retaining its original adjunct and a Winnipeg C. O.—has a special building for entertainment, where divisional shows and moving pictures appear, and where programmes are sometimes arranged by the staff. Frequently a passing band, or the musicians of a battalion in the neighborhood, drop in and play. There are never many days in succession without some such mental stimulant and relief from the strain of suffering and loneliness.

The sphere of the casualty clearing station is evident from its name. It accepts the sick and wounded who have already undergone emergency treatment in the field ambulances and dressing stations. In the case of the wounded, it operates where time counts. Those too sick or too badly wounded to be sent further, it treats as an ordinary hospital would. It also keeps those whose disability is of such a trivial nature as to make shipment to the base hospitals or England a waste of time and energy.

It is the medical attention in almost immediate touch with the front, sufficiently complete to give every man his best chance, sufficiently cursory to keep before it that its primary concern is to be in a position at all times to deal instantly with the fresh wounds of battle. Thus operations that may wait are shipped to the permanent establishments in the rear or in England, as well as sickness and convalescence requiring weeks or months of attention.

The most pleasing feature of the routine of the clearing station is the sympathy and kindness of the staff. Education to the rear is performed largely by orderlies who are themselves a stage removed from physical fitness; and they are in a position to understand. I have watched hundreds of patients being evacuated to the Red Cross trains, and not a single instance of harshness or heartlessness has come to my notice, though every case was included, from the high-

er officers to Chinese laborers and irritating mental cases. The walking cases are moved by bus or ambulance. Stretcher cases are rolled from the evacuation tent on rubber-tired trolleys and gently lifted into the ambulances. At the train the same care is taken. Not once have I heard even a groan, though these were the most severe wounds and recent operations.

An incident connected with the very first case I saw removed to the train opened my eyes. I do not know the nature of the case, but the young lad on the stretcher was suffering physically and mentally; there were tears in his eyes as his stretcher glided quietly into the train. And one of the orderlies cheerily waved a hand after him.

"You'll soon be smiling now, old chap," he called. And the boy smiled there and then.

A bus full of walking East Indians rolled up to the train, and rather drowsily from their wounds and from inexperience, they clambered from the upper deck. It happened to be an American hospital train receiving the patients. For a few seconds the Indians lined up inactively, and then, one by one, they were helped by the orderlies.

A round-faced orderly in the nearest car doorway waved his hand at them. "Come along, boys. We've got some well seats here for you."

For a long time I hesitated about inspecting the transfer inside from the stretcher to the cots. (That is one detail of evacuation which seems to call for further investigation.) But my reluctance was unwarranted. Within were such cheery comradeship and co-operation between patients and orderlies that the worst cases rested at last on the cots without more than a twinge.

From first to last, after all these years of bloodshed and the millions of deaths that have passed through the hospitals without cease, I have seen no such gentleness and obvious personal sympathy as the staff of civilian hospitals at home.

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But inside is every provision for comfort and convenience. Each car has its own dynamo and accumulators, with electric lights and heat stations, and three portable fans. To each car is a dispensing kitchenette and a water supply of 160 gallons. There are plunge and shower baths, and the most complete appliances for emergency, four distinct compartments for infectious and contagious diseases, steam heating, and hot water heating for the entire train. The main trunk is made to let down and form the back for the lower bunk as a seat for walking cases. To each bunk are a cigarette tray and a tiny table for the patient's possessions.

The staff differs from that of the British train, consisting of three doctors, instead of two doctors and three nurses.

During loading the stream of ambulances forms an endless chain between the clearing stations and the train, four or five cars loading at once under the supervision of a member of the clearing station staff.

Complete as is the system at these half-way hospitals between the front lines and the base, their accomplishments are human. The military official with the hardest opinion of the press yet encountered in my experience is the C. O. of a Canadian casualty clearing station. An enthusiastic representative of a "Canadian" paper published in London, in his efforts to make justice to what he saw, dilated upon the marvels of a clearing station that could change its location and be re-established complete for operation in twenty minutes.

Out here I am impressed with the fact that the bigger the accomplishment the less does it seek publicity. Which does not disprove that publicity is owing equally to the actors in the great drama and to the folks at home who have no other means of keeping in touch with the events and conditions surrounding the struggle to which all their thoughts are bent.

Not a man who has to move about, but a slight application of "Putnam's" softens the thick tissue and cures the bunion quickly. Just as good for warts, bumps, and callouses is Putnam's Painless Corn Extractor. Use no other, 25c. at all dealers.

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PROVISIONS OF M.S.A. ARE MISUNDERSTOOD

Limitation to 100,000 Men for Reinforcements Does Not Prevent Calling Out of Other Classes.

Ottawa, Aug. 20—In an official statement issued tonight it was stated that a misunderstanding of the terms of the military service act has given rise to the impression in certain quarters that the limit of 100,000 men applies to the number enlisted or recruited under the act. It is difficult to understand upon what electric lights and heat stations, and three portable fans. To each car is a dispensing kitchenette and a water supply of 160 gallons. There are plunge and shower baths, and the most complete appliances for emergency, four distinct compartments for infectious and contagious diseases, steam heating, and hot water heating for the entire train. The main trunk is made to let down and form the back for the lower bunk as a seat for walking cases. To each bunk are a cigarette tray and a tiny table for the patient's possessions.

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Men's Calf Boots.....\$3.98
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Men's Low Shoes—G. A. Slater's make.....\$2.98
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Such annoying symptoms as heat flashes, nervousness, backache, headache, irritability and "the blues," may be speedily conquered by the system restored to normal conditions by this famous root and herb remedy Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

If any complication prevents themselves write the Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Mass., for suggestions how to overcome them. The result of forty years experience is at your service and your letter held in strict confidence.

vice overseas and it is upon the reinforcements to be provided that paragraph 4 section 18 imposes the limitation. The section empowering the government-in-council to call out the different classes covered by the act imposes no restrictions upon the number.

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Lipton's Very Special at 42c.
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2 lb. tin of Pure Strawberry Jam.....42c.
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Red Salmon, 1 lb. tin.....\$2.10 doz.
Finest Shelled Walnuts.....85c. lb.
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Very Special at 40c.
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4 cakes Life Bony Soap.....25c.
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H. A. Brand Oleomargarine.....35c. lb.
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MacLaren's Lipton's Pure Gold or Jell-O Powders, all flavors, 10c. pkgs.
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Canadian Peaches, 28c. 20c. tin
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15c. tin Devilled Meat.....39c. tin
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