

gin at once. We had to give our first concert immediately, and this was something I did not quite expect. It was my first experience of the kind and I shall never forget it. The hall was large—indeed it was a tent open at the sides. The audience was already assembled, some of them on stretchers, some wheeled in bath chairs, some limping, some hopping, every one of them broken and mutilated in this great cause for you and for me. When I saw all those helpless men my heart misgave me. How could I make them laugh? These poor broken lads.

I am going to tell you something I never told in public before—an admission of a woman's weakness. I went behind that tent and had a good howl. A first experience is always trying—like addressing a Canadian Club for the first time. Those wounded boys, I shall never forget them. There was a lump in my throat and a mist before my eyes; yet, as I watched them, I realized their wonderful courage and endurance. One of the boys I noticed was bandaged just like a mummy, in fact more so than like a human being. Only one eye was visible, but it was a very bright eye. His left arm was in a sling and the right was not there at all. His lower limbs were bandaged; yet in that condition he managed to give me a wink with his good eye. As the concert went on he called to a friend to wipe that eye because the tears were coming from it; but they were tears of laughter that were rolling down his cheeks. Then there were boys on the other side of the room who had decided to sit together because each of them had lost an arm and they wished to clap their remaining hands together in order to give applause at the proper moments. Think, gentlemen, of the magnificence of those wonderful heroes. There was another who had a thumb and finger missing from one hand, and he told me with glee that he was left handed, and seemed to think it was a great joke that the Germans had spared his left hand and taken from him something that he did not miss at all. God knows they have given their best to us, and it is a privilege to be able to do anything that might make them forget for a little time the agony they have gone through.

There was much work waiting to be done after we left there, and as soon as tea was over motors were waiting to take us to the military camp where our evening concerts were to be given. At the hut or tent where the concert was to be given we found it packed with soldiers, men jammed together from the platform to the back of the room. There they were, perspiring, suffocating almost, a chok-

ing mass of them, all of them smoking. Think of that atmosphere. It got thicker and thicker, bluer and bluer, till at the end of the concert we could not see across the room. It was like pea-soup. We heard the cheers from them even before we arrived. It was these cheers that told me of one danger that threatens our boys who are in France. They are well looked after, well fed and well equipped, and when they are in the trenches they are well sheltered most of the time. But they have to face one danger, and that is the danger of monotony. It is monotony that drives a man to drink or to gambling, or drives him to something worse. And those cheers told me that the men realized that here was a change from the monotony, from military discipline. Here were men from home, civilians, some girls, some nice girls even. So we began, and they settled down for the evening's entertainment. What a chance for one! If you are chosen to go to France you can look on yourself as hall marked because you will speedily find that Tommy understands music, that he can both play and sing himself; that many of them have gone from the stage. You will find he is a fine critic. We were, therefore, on our mettle, and gave the best we could.

I wish you could have seen these men. They hung on every word, and when it was over then came the encores, not one or two of them, but five or six, and I have known some of our artists to have given no less than fifteen encores. So that if you are going to France you will know that you must have an extensive repertoire. For one reason Tommy chooses his own songs and his own encores. You will hear such a dialogue as this: "Sy, Miss, give us Annie Laurie, will yer?" And before the artist could comply another voice would say scornfully—"Annie Laurie, not much. Give us Philadelphia, Miss; don't mind 'im." And then "That ain't a lady's song, you blighter!"

When they saw my blackboard they did not like it. Nobody told them I had it with me, and on the way over everybody strafed it. In the Old Country it was not so bad, but I had to take it with me to France, for blackboards do not grow behind trenches. They strafed it at Waterloo, however, where the porter said to me: "Ahahacakbaba." The strafing continued in France where my fellow artists would say, "Make way for the Dreadnought." I did not mind that, but I was a little concerned when Tommy took a dislike to it. He had had much to do with blackboards before and he did not associate them with entertainments. In fact I believe he thought he was going to learn something. In order to cheer