

empty house. The heavy luggage had not been brought up, of course, at this time, and here again we were indebted to local officers for the loan of blankets.

Daylight was breaking as the battalion settled down to its first night's rest in England. With the dawn came the song of birds, and to many of us who had never known England, this was a revelation. After a few hours' sleep came breakfast and the business of bringing order out of chaos. Within an incredibly short time, thanks to good organization and excellent discipline, the battalion was comparatively well settled and down to work in its new home.

A point that struck most of us very forcibly that first day in England was the remarkable similarity between the climate and flora of this country and those of Victoria. Strange as it may seem, those of us who are Victorians felt more at home here than we had done in any part of Canada after leaving Vancouver Island.

The military aspect of the place became apparent as soon as we moved abroad. On every hand one came across bodies of troops at rest or on the march, and from all quarters of the compass came the stirring notes of bugles. The first day was devoted to getting settled and acquainted. Our men discovered a host of brother Jocks close by them in the South African Scottish, and became fast friends immediately. Our officers received a welcome from officers of many units, who were untiring in their efforts to make us feel at home. In fact, we straightway came face to face with an exemplification of that splendid *bon camaraderie* that is characteristic among all of His Majesty's forces in these stirring times.

By the following day the Officers' Mess had been established in a splendid building formerly used as a soldier's club and built from the proceeds of Regimental Institute funds accumulated during the South African War. On Thursday, the 13th, the day following our arrival, the battalion carried out its first route march in England, and evoked favourable comment. The next day a muster parade was held, when all ranks attended and were checked against the nominal roll of the battalion by representatives of the Imperial authorities. We had not been settled long before officers and men were ordered off on special instructional courses. Six subalterns were warned to leave immediately for Shorncliffe to begin a three months' course of instruction there; Captain Okell and Lieutenant Gray were told off to attend Machine Gun and Musketry Courses respectively at Aldershot; Lieutenant McDiamiad was selected to take bayonet fighting at the same place; and four subalterns, with 40 non-commissioned officers and men, were dispatched to Bramshott for instruction in entrenchments.

Saturday brought three welcome announcements, viz., that the battalion would adopt the kilt of the beautiful Douglas tartan; that six clear days' leave would be granted the entire battalion; and that the men would receive pay at once. The work of telling off the first 50 per cent. for leave developed news of many an interesting prodigal's return. Many a man who had been knocking about the far Canadian West for from 10 to 25 years stood on the tip-toe of expectancy at the imminent re-union with dear ones at home. In granting first leave preference was given to men with relatives in the British Isles, and when the list was finally completed it was interesting to note how they scattered from the Orkney Islands to Land's End. On Tuesday the first lot were marched to a special train and bowled out of Bordon Station "all jubilant with song." Let the war go on, but home first.

On Monday afternoon—the battalion meanwhile having made the acquaintance of the ubiquitous "brass-hat," as the Tommy is wont to term a staff officer—the battalion, or what was left of it, fell in on its own parade ground for its first review on English soil. Every man of any rank was keen to

make a good showing, and according to capable spectators the regiment did very well. Owing to the temporary indisposition of Lieutenant-Colonel Lorne Ross, the battalion was commanded by Major A. E. Christie, D.S.O. The inspecting officer was Lord Brooke, Commanding the Fourth Canadian Division. His Lordship was accompanied by Colonel Ironsides, and other very distinguished officers, and his Lordship was pleased to make a thorough inspection of the whole battalion, following which we marched past in column of route.

All in all, the Scots are settling down in their new home with creditable alacrity and steadiness of purpose. We like "Blighty," and we mean to do our utmost to make "Blighty" like us.

INTERESTING ITEMS

Between 1811 and 1814 Wellington's Army lost eighty-one per cent. of its officers wounded.

Field-Marshal Sir John French got the most practical part of his training in Canada.

The Hohenzollerns, in spite of their arrogance and all-mightiest airs, are really the royal upstarts of Europe; two centuries ago their ancestors were obscure counts, who were lords of fewer acres than many of our nobles possess to-day, and whose subjects were too few to people a small English town. It was not until just over two centuries ago that any one of them wore a crown as king.

Ferdinand, Tsar of Bulgaria, is not quite fifty-five years of age.

In 1887 Ferdinand was nothing more than a half-pay lieutenant of Hussars in the Austrian service. Prince Alexander of Battenberg, who then occupied the throne, was kidnapped, and abdicated. Ferdinand was chosen by the National Assembly to succeed him, and he has reigned ever since.

Formerly, at any rate, Ferdinand was very fond of England and the English. His magnificent summer palace at Varna, on the Black Sea, he used to describe as "My Osborne," and "My Sandringham," after British Royal residences.

Far more boy babies than usual are being born at the present time, for the increase in the number of boys is one of the curious results of a big war.

The worst of war is the turning of men's thoughts from constructive to destructive work.

Medals have already been struck in Germany to commemorate more than eighty-five "victories" during the present war.

Lieutenant L. F. Hay, Black Watch, who was one of the ushers at the recent wedding of Mr. John French, Sir John French's elder son, is the tallest officer in the British Army, standing 6ft. 10in.

The Military Cross, our latest decoration for heroic soldiers, is made of silver, with the Imperial Crown on each arm, and the letters "G. R. I." in the centre. The Cross hangs from a white ribbon with a purple stripe.

Hardly one wound in ten is the result of a direct hit nowadays. Most of our casualties are from spent shots, shrapnel bullets, and splinters.

The men of the French Army wear their identification discs round their wrists. British soldiers wear them round their necks.

There are twenty miles of trenches to every line of front, so that between Switzerland and the North Sea the British and French Armies have at least 10,000 miles of trenches to guard and keep in order.

I believe a raid will come, and that we shall see foreign troops on our shores. Then it will be for every man capable of bearing arms to do his part.—Lord Derby.

We spend as much in a fortnight over the present war as we spent on the Crimean War from start to finish. The cost of the Crimean War to this country was £80,000,000.