

THE ONTARIO STRETCHER.

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OCTOBER, 1916.

The past month has seen a number of changes in the personnel of the unit, and we regret that such is the case. These changes have been brought about by divers causes, but whatever the cause, they have all been keenly felt, as each departure has taken one from our midst whom we had learned to know and respect for his own particular good characteristics. Since this unit was first organised there has existed among the members of the staff a spirit of good-fellowship, co-operation, and camaraderie hard to find elsewhere. This has been a big asset to the welfare of the hospital, and the staff has worked in complete harmony, everyone willing to assist the other when such assistance was required.

The first break came a couple of months ago, when Captains Lawson, McArthur and Aitken went to No. 4 General Hospital at Salonika. Then Captains Graham and Frapp went to hospitals in France, and Captain Jepson to the C. C. D. at Shorncliffe. Next to leave us was our first Chaplain, Captain Vipond, who was transferred to Buxton; and shortly after his departure Captain Ryan left for Canada, but we have lately received the good news that he is returning. Our first loss in September was Captain Muncaster, who went to Bearwood. Then Lieut.-Colonel Cameron was recalled by the University of Toronto to carry on his work in surgery there; and Captain Currey went home on leave. We feel sure every Medical Officer is only too willing to serve his country in whatever position those in authority believe him most qualified to fill; yet we regret very much that it has been thought advisable to deplete our ranks to such an extent. Pleasant associations and friendships are always severed with more or less heartburnings; and to us it has been no pleasant task to say good-bye to those men who have been such congenial companions, and capable officers. Should "that destiny which shapes our ends" prevent those who have already gone from meeting us again, we can only wish them Good luck! and say to them with all sincerity, "It has been worth no small sacrifice to have known them as we have; and that there shall always remain a very warm place in our hearts and memories for every missing member of the Mess."

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Aerial visitors to this section of the country have been quite common of late, and not only from what we have read, but from what we have actually seen. Apparently this is "open season" for Zepps, and the "hunters" are hard on the trail on every occasion that presents itself. The "hunting" has been good, and as a result within the last month the Huns have lost four of their "prides of the air"—their vaunted invaders of England. We stood in our doorways and watched the beams of countless searchlights pick out an intruder in the black, starless sky, hold it in their powerful glare, despite its frantic endeavours to escape their seemingly endless field of vision, while spots of fire like shooting meteors, played about it in legion, as evidence that our guns were strenuously resenting its presence. Then a well-directed shot having reached its intended goal, a red glow appeared in the white light of the searchlights, took definite shape, and illuminated our entire sky with the intensity of its fire. It glowed and paled, then glowed more intensely, sinking all the while, separated into two smaller masses of flame on its downward journey, and disappeared from our gaze behind the intervening hills, as we added our cheers to swell the vociferous expressions of jubilation echoing through the countryside. Then, shivering with cold and excitement, but with increased confidence in our aerial defences, we went back to bed, and left the far-reaching eyes of the searchlights to continue their vigilance.

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We have received copies of the "Landsean Gazette," the "Canadian Red Cross Special," and the "First Eastern Hospital Gazette," and wish to compliment them all

on their excellent journalistic efforts. The "Landsean Gazette" is the official organ of the A.D.M.S. personnel, Canadians, London, and is a breezy little journal, bubbling with wit. We extend our thanks for its very complimentary remarks about us, and trust we shall maintain the reputation it gives us.

The "Canadian Red Cross Special" is published at the Canadian Hospital at Buxton, where our late Editor, Captain Vipond, is now stationed. It is a newsy, well-written four-page sheet.

The "First Eastern General Hospital Gazette" is published weekly in magazine form, and abounds in humorous articles and well-drawn caricatures.

We offer again to these, our closest contemporaries, our heartiest congratulations, and wish them every success in the field of journalism.

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Our readers no doubt will notice the additional names on our Editorial Staff, beginning with this issue. The addition was a necessary one, and is bearing fruit already, not only in the increase of matter for publication, but also in the character of the work. It is desired to make the paper as representative of the unit as possible, and in order to do so more channels of communication were required, to reach the different sources of news items, and to stir up flagging interest. The new members have taken to the work with energy and enthusiasm, with the result that this month we have more copy than we can use, and it is necessary to hold some over till next month. We hope this spirit will be communicated to others who we know are "hiding their light behind a bushel," and cause them to drop their mantle of modesty, and shine forth as beacon lights in the Realm of Literature. Of course we are not alluding to the Nursing Sisters, but should that old adage about "If the cap, etc.," be applicable—well, 'nuff said.

We wish to thank the members of the unit and the patients who have helped, either by news items or original contributions, and trust they will keep up the good work.

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In a very few more days, six months will have flown since our unit sadly watched the Canadian shore fade slowly into dimness, and bravely faced a future in an almost unknown field of action. Our arrival and early days in Orpington are now but memories—not always pleasant—yet filled with new and interesting experiences, congenial friendships, and associations far from unpleasant. Summer is gone, autumn will soon be over, and shortly that season of Christmas cheer will be upon us. Many of us look forward with mingled feelings of pleasure and apprehension to spending that usually happy time in England under so different climatic conditions, different associations, and to a large extent, different customs. We will enjoy, no doubt, many of the festivities so prominent at this season—the entertainments, and the various amusements and cheer, which, saddened as they must be, contribute so pleasantly to the birthday all Christian nations celebrate. And yet, we feel sure, it will be a time when our thoughts and longings for home, and friends and families will be most acute. To many it will be the first Christmas spent out of their native land, separated from their friends, and we can only hope every individual member of our unit will be prepared to assist cheerfully in making our holiday season happy and enjoyable. The patients, especially, who are unable to take an active part, must be looked after—and we feel sure, from our knowledge of the staff, there need be no fears that everything humanly possible will be done to brighten and cheer each of them. Our friends at home are doubtless sending many gifts, comforts and bundles of cheer to the men in the trenches. Let us hope they will not forget we have here many who have spent many dreary days and nights in those hellish holes, and are now paying the penalty, cheerful and

uncomplaining. Let us remember with thankfulness that our burdens, compared with many, are comparatively light, and let us forget our little self-sympathy and put forth our best efforts to make Christmas at the Ontario Military Hospital happy and full of cheer, and an occasion long to be remembered by everyone within our gates.

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LIEUT.-COL. CAMERON.



Another of our officers has departed. Lieut.-Colonel I. H. Cameron, for six months chief of the surgical staff of this institution, has returned on leave to Canada, to resume his duties in connection with the surgical department of Toronto University. In Colonel Cameron the hospital loses one of its ablest and most revered officers, a man whose sterling worth and unfailing good nature has won the love and respect of all who worked with him both here and elsewhere. For forty years he has been connected with the teaching of surgery in the Province of Ontario, and for twenty-five years was Professor of Surgery in Toronto University. In addition, he is very well known in the British Isles, and has the honour of holding fellowships in the Royal Colleges of Surgery of England, Ireland and Scotland. Early in the war he offered his services to the Canadian Government, and was appointed to the staff of Taplow Hospital. After six months' successful work in that institution he was transferred to the Ontario Military Hospital to superintend the completion and equipment of the same, and to take charge until the staff was appointed. When the institution was organised and work begun, he continued as chief surgeon, and to his unceasing work and tireless energy the present efficiency of that branch of the service is in great measure due.

The evening before his departure was the occasion for a dinner in the Officers' Mess. After the King's health, the Officer Commanding, supported by Lieut.-Colonel Chambers, proposed the health of our departing comrade. Both expressed the regret which we all feel at his loss, and the hope that he may some day be returned to us. Replying, Lieut.-Colonel Cameron, in a brief but polished and elegant speech, thanked his messmates for their assistance and for their tokens of esteem, and good wishes for the future. He stated that he rather expected that he would be sent back here at some future date, as he understood that he had only been granted some months' leave of absence.

We wish him Godspeed and a safe journey, and hope that his new sphere of activity will be as pleasant to himself and those about him as it has been in the past, and that he may always have a very pleasant memory of his sojourn in the Ontario Military Hospital.

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CAPT. MUNCASTER.

Changes in the staff here seem to be the order of late, and we no sooner become acquainted with a man than he is taken from us. On September 10th Captain W. H. Muncaster, our Presbyterian Chaplain, was transferred to Bearwood Convalescent Hospital to act as Chaplain there. Capt. Muncaster came to us from Shorncliffe, and was not here very long before he had found a warm spot in all our hearts, by his lovable disposition, and other fine qualities. As a Chaplain he found favour with all, and was ever solicitous for the welfare of his "flock." Besides his rank as Chaplain, Capt. Muncaster is a qualified Captain in the Combatant Forces, and did duty as such in Calgary before coming to England. We all miss him greatly, and especially the "Stretcher," for his valuable help as a journalist was always ungrudgingly given. We wish him every success in his new sphere, and hope to meet him again.