

!-?-!-?-!-?

This is what happened in Ward 19 on the night of the Zepp Raid. Sergeant Whatley going through some stunts.

No. 1.



2 a.m.—CRASH!

No. 2.



Boom!

No. 3.



"COME ON, SISTER, LET'S SEE THE FUN!"

No. 4.



"I CAN'T SEE IT!"

THE PATIENTS.

Hitherto in issues of this periodical a considerable amount of space has been devoted to describing and commenting on various aspects of this hospital, its equipment, personnel, buildings, etc., but very little has been told about those who form by far the most numerous portion of our community, and who, though possibly not an actual part of the hospital, are more or less essential to its existence, and to whose good opinions the institution is indebted for its reputation, viz., the patients.

Gathered from all the base hospitals in France and elsewhere, and from all portions of the battle-front, their numbers embrace representatives of every country of our world-wide Empire—lanky Australians, wiry Canadians, sturdy Scotsmen, witty Irishmen, with English Tommies predominating in point of numbers. Any ward might well be regarded as a miniature Imperial conference, with but few parts of the Empire unrepresented. It is interesting, also, to try to estimate what troops are taking part in active operations by observing the proportion of each nationality in incoming convoys.

Patients in general are very docile and good-natured creatures, though exceptions are by no means rare. As a rule, however, the quarrelsome and discontented are those whose wounds are very slight, or men suffering from chronic complaints, to which they were subject before enlistment, and whose sole ambition is to get out of bounds and have a good time. Such cases in a general hospital, however, thanks to the custom of "pushing them along," are rather rare. On the other hand, in many instances, the very best patients, and those who are most grateful for any little attentions paid them, are the poor fellows, too weak even to raise their heads from the pillows, victims of Gas, Gangrene, or other forms of severe infection.

The good fellowship amongst the inhabitants of a ward is most remarkable, probably a proof of the old saw that "Misery likes company"; a box of "goodies" arriving for anybody is invariably shared by all, as far as its contents will allow, and the one to go without is generally the recipient himself: "others first" appears to be the universal motto.

The rapidity with which new arrivals make the acquaintance of the older "lodgers," and of one another, must be rather a shock to our English friends—that is, if there is any truth in the hackneyed story about the two Englishmen who were shipwrecked on a desert island, and would not speak to each other because they had not been properly introduced. English Tommies, however, are among the first to

get on intimate terms with their neighbours. The willingness with which convalescent patients labour to help their less fortunate fellow sufferers deserves more than a passing comment. This is most conspicuous when a new convoy arrives, when one-armed and one-legged convalescents hustle around helping to bathe, feed, and even dress the newcomers; and it is remarkable that the men who have had the hardest times, and been closest to the Great Divide, are always the most eager and most intelligent workers.

Among many people at home, there is an impression that as soon as a man is knocked out his interest in the war, for the time-being, vanishes, and that it is only the slightly wounded soldier, who is able to continue the fight for a while, buoyed up by the excitement, and continues to follow the fortunes of his comrades. Such is not the case, however. In fact, the first duty of an "up" patient, when washing and breakfast are over, is, by an unwritten law not promulgated from the Orderly Room, to go in search of a newspaper, and if possible bring the newsboy to the ward or secure a fair sample of his stock before it falls to the agent of a rival ward. All the daily papers are read in the ward long before it is possible to get them in a Mess Room. A fresh success is always evident, and the health of the patients seems to improve in proportion as fortune favours our side. A sort of "sweet revenge" can be read in the faces of many a wreck of humanity. An air-raid may cause a little disturbance to some, but when the news is circulated that the raider is down, the effect is as good as a tonic. Interest fail when a man is hit! Never! It is only beginning; it has just been really brought home to him that there is a war on.

A great deal has been written in our papers about optimists and pessimists, but the proper place to see an optimistic pessimist is in a hospital ward. On arrival patients are, generally, and, always after a stormy Channel voyage, considerably "upset" and depressed. When asked how things are going, all they know is that "Our battalion was badly cut up," or "Only a few of us are left," or "Our Division is all gone." After a few nights' rest in a comfortable bed, and a good bath and breakfast, similar inquiries elicit such replies as "We gave 'em good and plenty," "We're going right ahead," "We did not lose so many after all; and look at all the 'blighters' we got." From thenceforth, as their wounds heal, their spirits rise, and though viewing things squarely, and knowing the difficult task ahead, they all agree that success is in sight, and that things never looked better. When a man begins to see things blue, it is time to investigate his chart, and look for complications.

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