

MY OPERATION.

My first impression of hospital was good! I was welcomed with open arms in spite of, or perhaps on account of, my dilapidated ankle, and speedily found myself tucked comfortably in bed in a cosy ward. My peace was soon disturbed, however, by a sorrowful private with a bald head, who came with a full fountain-pen and a ream or so of paper, to take down my "history." I couldn't quite see what that had to do with my ankle, but I felt amiable, and told him all my doings since birthday number one. Then he kindly enquired after my family, and I was so pleased that I told him all about my relations and ancestors, their hobbies, peculiarities and pets; and when the stock ran out I invented a few more, which took me back to Willie the Conqueror. Here the ink ran out, so he had to throw up the job!

Then came the M.O. He asked me how I felt, and I told him I was fine, except for my ankle slightly out of repair. He asked me to put out my tongue—again I couldn't see the connection! He tapped my chest and listened. Tapped again and listened! He looked up in a very disappointed manner and said there was nothing wrong there! I said I was sorry but it wasn't my fault. He said never mind, he'd try somewhere else. When

dropping them like skittles! But on they came, wave after wave! My rifle jammed!—they were at our wire! I struggled with my bolt—then something hit me and I fell, doubled up. I felt myself going—everything grew strangely quiet. I opened my eyes and looked up, and saw:

A blurred Sister, and a sorrowful private with a blurred bald head, standing by the bed. A voice from a long way off said, "How do you feel? It's all over." "Oh, go to blazes!" said I, "I want to sleep." And I did!!

KRITICOS.

OUR 'ERB.

(Being the conversation of 'Erb's mother and Mrs. Grubbs, the "lidy" next door.)

"O' course, I says to 'im afore he went away, 'Erb, I says, don't you go a-playing any larks wi' they there French 'ussies, I says, cos I remember right well the ass 'ee was a walking out of Lizzie 'Oskins. I knows what 'ee gets up to when 'ee gets took like that; why, Lor' bless yer, Mrs. Grubbs, the brass 'ee spent on 'er would a' kept me an' you in two-pennorths fer a month! Why I tells yer, tea an' winkles every blooming night it were, and 'is poor old mother waiting 'ome a-dieing for a



THE GRANVILLE OFFICERS.

he got down to my ankle he brightened up a lot, and appeared really pleased when he announced that I was an operation case.

Next day my diet consisted of: Beef tea, pints, one; and castor oil, ditto, ditto.

The morning after that I was dressed in a pyjama suit with no front entrance, laid on a limber, and whirled into a place tasting of ether and porridge. They placed me carefully to command a fine view of a splendid collection of tools designed for carving the human carcase and chipping off odd bits of one's anatomy. Then two genial ghosts appeared—one grabbed an armful of carving tools, the other grabbed me. He placed a smelly rigging over my nose and said "Breathe," which was quite unnecessary, as breathing has been a regular habit of mine for years! I breathed. A little buzzer started in my head—I started floating, up and down, round and round—then I was sinking, sinking!

The sergeant poked his head in the dug-out and yelled, "Quick, boys, they're coming!" I grabbed my rifle and jumped for the firing platform. Shells were bursting everywhere—machine-guns rattling. Suddenly the artillery ceased, and I saw a grey line rise over the enemy parapet and pour towards us. We blazed away,

drop, and my old 'un just got two months wi'out the option; but what did 'Erb care, s'long as 'ee 'ad 'er ter fool arrawnd with; 'ere y'are, ma! 'ee'd say, 'ere's a tanner; gahn and buy yourself sommat. Now I arks yer, Mrs. Grubb, 'ow far will a tanner go with gin at fourpence. Rediclus, I calls it, told him so once I did, and what 'o yer think 'ee says. "Why the 'ell don't yer tike in washing?" Haya! says I, want yer poor old ma to wash, and arter me a-bringing 'im up likes as what I 'ad; disgraceful I calls it. An' now 'ee writes a letter as Mr. Muggings at the Blue Owl reads fer me, saying as 'ow 'ee be getting spliced with some minx as aint got no respectable nime like me an' you, Mrs. Grubbs, but calls 'er-self Madelaine Lafondee. I'll Madelaine 'er when I gets 'old on 'er; you just wait, I'll teach 'er to rob a poor old mother of her drop o' tiddly, for I tells yer, Mrs. Grubbs, 'ow does 'ee think I'm going to live, with me old man still got five weeks ter run, if 'ee gives 'is seperation money ter some French 'ussie as drinks shampain an' don't know a drop o' Plymouth if she tastes it!

"Ah! I tells yer, Mrs. Grubbs, it's a'ard, 'ard world fer us mothers. Well, it's six o'clock, an' I've got fivpence, let's go rawnd ter th' Owl. Madelaine Lafondee, I'll dee her," etc., etc.

H.S.S.