

Clearings.

France.

December.

1917.

FOREWORD.

ACTIVE SERVICE does not provide the most ideal conditions for literary ventures, nor do the wreck and strain of war offer the best imaginable incentives to authorship. Nevertheless, the contents of this booklet have been written by the Members of No. 4 CANADIAN CASUALTY CLEARING STATION only a little distance behind the British lines where they curve through Northern France, and this short foreword is penned in a battle area where the guns are never silent.

The work of preparation has been done amid many distractions and interruptions, but considering that less than three months elapsed between the first conception of the idea and the dispatch of the completed work for censorship; and remembering the difficulties with which printers and publishers have to contend at the present time, its appearance cannot be said to have been unduly delayed.

From its inception the aims of the Editorial Committee have been to make "CLEARINGS" original and representative in character, and to produce a booklet that will be considered a not unworthy memorial of the first eighteen months of the Unit's service. Whether or not these aims have been realized we leave to the judgment of those for whom the production is intended. Of one thing we are assured, that judgment will not be lacking in kindness or sympathy.

As it leaves our hands, our most earnest hope is that its appearance will cause no disappointment, but rather an abundance of satisfaction and pleasure. Some day, when our trying task is done and the blessings of peace and unchallenged justice have returned to the earth, "No. 4" will cease to be, and exist only in memory. But if in the coming years the pages of "CLEARINGS" have power to recall the friendship and devotion which flowered in the days of our trials abroad, and set us thinking affectionately of comrades who have passed from our life, then the labour involved in preparing them will have been paid for far beyond its greatest worth.

THE EDITOR.