

day, or the ground was lower and more boggy. Men were subjected to great privations and suffered untold hardships. "Trench foot" has now almost entirely disappeared and conditions in the trenches are altogether better.

"Were you standing long in the water?" I asked them.

"We've been in it night and day since Sunday," they replied—and this was Friday!

"Was the water deep?" I asked.

"The mud was up to the waist," one answered; "an' poor Bill Goggins stepped in a 'ole in the trench an' were drowned afore we could get to 'im."

Another spoke up: "A lad from my platoon got into a part of the trench that were like a quicksand, on'y 'e went down so fast—like as if there was a suction from below. We seen 'im goin', an' 'e called fer 'elp, but w'en we got to 'im 'e were down to 'is chin, an' we couldn't pull 'im back."

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed in horror, "was he drowned, too?"

"'E were that, sir. It were jolly 'ard to see 'im go, an' us right there!" and there were tears in the good fellow's eyes as he spoke.

"Climb into the motor, boys," I said. "We'll try to make up a little for the hell you've all been through."

There were others who had been severely wounded; some with broken arms or legs; some shot through the head or chest. It was wonderful to see the gentleness and kindness of our own rough lads as they lifted them tenderly from bed to stretcher and carried them from the train to the waiting ambulances.

I stepped inside the train for a moment. It was a marvel of a hospital on wheels. It had comfortable spring beds and mattresses and soft woollen blankets. There were kitchens, a dispensary, an emergency operating-room, and even bathrooms. A staff of medical officers, nurses and trained orderlies did all which human

power can do to make the men comfortable during a trying journey. Every man had had his supper, and his wounds had been dressed *en route* as scientifically and carefully as if he had been in a base hospital.

The ambulances rolled slowly away from the train with their precious loads, the drivers cautiously picking their way along the smoothest parts of the road; for to the man with a broken leg or arm the slightest jolt causes pain.

We saw the boys again at the entrance to the hospital, lying in rows on stretchers or standing patiently in line, waiting until their names and numbers were duly recorded. Each one, as this procedure was completed, was given a little card on which the name of his ward and the number of his bed was written. He was then conducted or carried to his allotted place.

How tired they looked as they sat wearily upon the edge of their beds, waiting for the orderlies to come and assist them to undress! But even here they were able to smile and crack their little jokes from bed to bed.

As soon as they were undressed they underwent a refreshing bath, in which they revelled after their weeks of dirty work and mud. After the bath came clean, warm pajamas, a cup of hot cocoa or soup, a slice of bread and butter, and last, but to the soldier never least, a cigarette.

To him the cigarette is the panacea for all ills. I have seen men die with a cigarette between their lips—the last favour they had requested on earth. If the soldier is in pain, he smokes for comfort; if he is restless, he smokes for solace; when he receives good news, he smokes for joy; if the news is bad, he smokes for consolation; if he is well, he smokes; when he is ill, he smokes. But good news or bad, sick or well, he *always* smokes.

As I entered the ward, a Highlander, not yet undressed, was sitting up on the side of his bed puffing contentedly at his cigarette.