

"WHAT EVERYBODY KNOWS."

THE night was quiet: all was still
 Within the wood;
 The cuckoo sounded every hour,
 Just as it should.
 Sleep reigned supreme, save where a few
 Engaged in toil,
 Building new dug-outs, filling bags
 With sandy soil.

Midnight drew on. 'Twas one o'clock,
 And very dark;
 The building party were compelled
 To cease their work.
 No longer could they dimly see
 What each one did;
 And if the blind shall lead the blind,
 Someone will skid.

So back into the long dug-outs
 The party crawls,
 And courts a well-earned slumber
 Within its walls.
 But suddenly upon the air
 A summons comes—
 A sound which rises far above
 The roar of guns!

It strikes a note of terror deep
 Into the heart;
 It rouses men from slumber sweet
 With sudden start.
 What can it be? the long-drawn wail
 Of Claxton horn?
 Not once, or twice, but many times,
 It sounds forlorn.

But when the mists of sleepiness
 Are chased away,
 And consciousness returns again
 Like break of day,
 Immediately they understand
 The horn's sweet voice:
 "The Huns have let off gas somewhere
 Upon our boys."

And all with one accord do make
 A sudden grab:
 "Where's my gas helmet? Where the —
 Is the — bag?"
 A flannel shroud is pulled on quick
 Over the head;
 The tube is seized between the teeth,
 And held like mad.

And forth from the dug-out doors
 Issues a stream—
 Like some weird birds of darkest night
 They surely seem—
 Of hooded, goggled, masked
 Humanity;
 Beneath the hoods—alas!—unmasked
 Profanity.

The goggles somehow fail to be
 Just where their eyes
 Are trying to peer through (at least,
 So I surmise);

For in the ditches, over stumps,
 They headlong fall,
 Losing their iron rations, kits,
 Rifles, and all.

Yet through it all they cling like fun
 Unto their masks,
 Almost as tight as Scotchmen cling
 Unto their flasks;
 And all the powers persuasive of
 The B.S.M.
 Cannot induce a man to roll
 His up again.

"There's no gas here as yet," he yells;
 "It's down the line.
 Take off your helmets; see and smell:
 The night is fine."
 But all they seemed to hear was just
 The one word "gas";
 They cling unto the flannel masks,
 A frenzied mass.

And by-and-by it trickles through
 A brilliant brain
 That someone has been fooling them
 This once again;
 And cautiously he lifts his mask,
 And smells the air,
 And finds that, after all, indeed
 There's nothing there.

So sheepishly, and one by one,
 They breathe again,
 And ask each other furiously,
 "Just what's the game?"
 "Who blew the Claxton horn? and why?"
 "Where's the alarm?"
 Well! Someone was anxious to protect
 His men from harm.

P.

□ □ □

AN APPRECIATION.

WE tried to feel modest about the initial number of this paper, and hoped it would take the place it was designed to fill. However, several letters of appreciation have found their way into the Colonel's hands, which show that our efforts seem to have met with approval even outside the boundaries of our own Battalion.

We can only hope that the matter, rather than the form in which the matter is presented, has found favour. Yet we cannot help being touched by the kind words of one who was formerly in command of the Victoria Rifles, and is now filling the important position of G.O.C., Valcartier Camp, to whom a copy of our paper had been sent.

To Brigadier-General Wilson we are very grateful for his inspiring letter, which is reproduced below, in order that the message contained in it may reach all ranks in the Battalion for whom it is intended.

VALCARTIER CAMP, QUE.,
 26th June, 1916.

Lieut.-Colonel JOHN A. GUNN,
 Officer Commanding, 24th Can. B'n, Victoria Rifles of Canada,
 Army Post Office, France.

DEAR COLONEL GUNN,

I am this morning in receipt of Vol. I., No. 1, of THE VICS PATROL, published 3rd June, 1916, and have read the contents of same with the greatest of interest and pleasure. I have been particularly impressed with the Roll of Honour, the names of the heroes who have given up their lives in defence of Canada and the Empire in this great struggle. All honour to the dear boys who have made the supreme sacrifice! It is true they have died a few years before their time, but their memories will live for ever and be held in reverence and admiration by generations to come. I congratulate you and your Regiment on this splendid publication.

Kindly give my warmest regards to all ranks in your Corps.
 With best wishes for yourself, believe me,

Yours sincerely,

E. W. WILSON, Brig.-General.



TWO
 COMPANY
 SERGEANT-
 MAJORS.

