

EN PASSANT SUR LE FRONT.

SOME people are of the impression that the life of the active service soldier is one of constant strenuous struggle and incessant, untold peril. Their idea of trench life is that Tommy Atkins and Jack Canuck are one perpetual cyclone, that is ever wont to work sorrow and great havoc among the Huns.

But the soldier is not always in a big "set-to"; for, though action is ever taking place along some portion of the wide-flung line, the section involved in the fray is but relatively small, and usually different troops are engaged in those several actions, even when they occur frequently at the same point in the line.

A far different life is the lot of those "pro tem." not actually in the trenches or in support or reserve for same. After putting in certain periods in the forefront of the vast stage, whose footlights are (at night) the flares, and whose scenic effects are provided by star shells (which constantly spring from out the darkness of the field), the flash of guns and bursting shells—from this theatre these men withdraw to the background, to reserve huts or farm billets, quite behind the noises of war. Here they are given such drill and exercise as keeps them in condition; baths and sports are on the list. As for the remaining time, they are left chiefly to their own pursuits.

Much is done for the khaki lads in the way of entertainment. The Y.M.C.A. has now been well established, and is doing great work; here and there a show is arranged. That brings us to one of our recent outings to —

Shortly after dinner we set out for that town. We passed along the ridges, and saw all the hollow valleys that lay between. There seemed but two locations for the villages, either in a valley bottom or on the summit of a hill.

One thing strange about these hills is that they appear to change from point to point as one travels on the road. Under the sun the tiled roofs were bright scarlet, and looked well against the bright green fields, and the big château on the dark wooded hill stood out white against the trees. The sun was bright, and the steady wind blew across the land as we marched along and so made the town. — was filled with soldiers—on duty and rest—outnumbering the civic population one hundred times. Passing through the square, the regimental air echoing from wall to wall—all watchers tingling with that thrill one feels when is heard the martial blare and the tramp of soldiers' feet—we came to a half-Eastern modelled theatre, and filled the place. The long, narrow hall, with high walls and Gothic roof, was all adrape with flags. The walls were flanked with clustered flags of France, while the front above the stage held the Allies' and their friends' (a point for notice was the absence of the Stars and Stripes).

First came a reel of movies—some flighty love affair—then on the screen were shown the portraits of our King and War Lords of land and sea. These (as could be expected from those who follow their lead) were greeted with lusty cheers. Then came a dinky minstrel show, where they ably aped humorous trifles of a soldier's life, both in trench and out. The parodies, set to catchy ragtime tunes, were a great hit; and not lacking were they in cultured music, which was as well enjoyed, if not so uproariously, as that in lighter vein. Hits

and take-offs on officer and man were typical, and all enjoyed. At the end, all standing with heart and will gave the National Anthem. All thanks to the 3rd Field Ambulance Corps, who arranged the matter of the play, and thanks to the 49th Battalion for the music of their band.

Leaving the hall, we marched from the town as night was setting in. All the hills seemed to crowd in close as it grew darker, but as we marched the moon rose in the dark blue sky, and the stars became bright and numerous. At such times the thoughts fain do drift afar from scenes of war, and seek those channels rich in store of memories of the life that's gone before—old associations, old companions, and home ties. Much good it does a soldier to wander far from the battlefield and lose himself in reverie. Thus light of heart and with a growing weariness did we tread that moonlit land, until at last we came upon our billet. After tea we tumbled in and sank to sleep to dream again of home.

A LANCE JACK.

—**—

SPORTS.

WHILE, generally speaking, the weather has been far from favourable, yet the men have taken every advantage to indulge in sport, and especially in their favourite pastime—football.

On Christmas Day, which during the early afternoon turned out to be fine, the Battalion played the 6th Field Ambulance, and after a closely contested game, in which the honours were about equal, the F.A. were returned winners by the score of 2-1. This was an excellent game, and but for a little lack in team work (which our opponents have had time to practise) on our part, the result might have been different. The band was

present, and this, with the fast and fiercely contested match, kept the big crowd in good spirits.

Early in January we also played the 31st, and lost by the same score after a spirited game.

When we reached our so-called rest camp a sports committee was formed and a schedule of inter-Company matches arranged, also a programme for a field day, but unfortunately our expectations were rudely jolted when we suddenly got orders that the Battalion was to move. However, great interest was shown in the football matches, of which up to the time of writing five have been played. "A" Company beat "C" 3-1, and "D" 5-1. "B" Company beat H.Q. 2-0, and "C" 3-1, and "D" beat H.Q. 3-2, thus ending for the time being our football schedule with "A" and "B" Companies on top sharing equal honours. (It is questionable if "A" will ever admit this.)

The men had looked forward with a great deal of interest to the sports promised them when on "rest," and it is regrettable that our programme was spoilt owing to our sudden call back to the trenches, which, for the time being, we were trying to forget.

—**—

TOMMY'S TOAST.

Doggast your ugly squirming face,
Great heathen of the sausage race;
S'n may your carcase find a place
In some auld midden.



Q. M.: "I can't give you a new tin without the lid. Where is it?"

Tommy: "Weel, Sir, ye see it wiz like this. Up I goes and drawed the dinner, when along comes a whizz-bang and takes it oot o' my hand."

Q. M. to Q. M.S. (with deep emotion): "For God's sake give him a mess tin."