

Imaginary Interviews.

III.—MR. POND OF THE EXAMINING ROOM.

Before entering the Examining Room I listened outside the closed door. There was a confused murmur of voices, and distinct groans could be heard; but suddenly a clear, firm voice rang out: "All right, Pte. Swinger. Sit down there, take off your boots and show your feet to Capt. Lark. Corporal Dodge, get on the bed for examination, and Sgt. Growl we sha'n't want you today. Come again in the morning. What! You have been here three mornings already? Well another one won't do any harm then."

This, I concluded, was the voice of Mr. Pond, and my heart sank into my boots. But plucking up my courage I sent in my card, and received an answer that "Mr. Pond would see me at 12.30."

I was really surprised to hear from the conversation of the patient's how badly they were treated, and what an incompetent set of men there were on the Examining Board. This seemed especially the case with men who were marked "fit" or "light duty." I decided that I would mention the matter when I saw Mr. Pond.

Every now again the inner door opened and Mr. Pond had only to speak the word, for men to spring up and follow him in. One man tried to get in before his turn, but Mr. Pond, in a few crisp words, made him feel so small, that he crept into a corner and stayed there all morning.

At last the room was empty, and I ventured to open the inner door and go inside. Here I was by a little man with glasses, and before I knew what was happening, he had me in a chair and was passing electricity through all my limbs. If Mr. Pond hadn't rescued me, I believe I should have been killed. When I recovered I found that I was alone with my deliverer. I began to thank him, but he cut me short by saying: "See that pile of sticks and crutches in the corner? They belonged to men who came in here, lame, and walked out cured. Men come in here, blind, and our hypnotist causes them to see in five minutes. They come in dumb, and the little man with the electricity makes them speak directly." I said that I could quite believe it. "This department, of which I have charge, is the finest of its kind in England, and probably the whole world. What we say to-day, the medical profession says tomorrow." I ventured to speak here of the men that I had heard grumbling in the ante-room.

"Leadswingers, Sir, Leadswingers. They ought to be back in the firing line long ago. They want to get back to Canada, and if they can get past the 'board,' they certainly deserve to."

The bugle for lunch cut short my interview here, but I felt that I had been amply repaid for my three hours wait, and shall long remember my five minutes in the Granville Examining Room.

DRUB.