

Canadian Hospital

GRANVILLE
CHATHAM HOUSE

News

YARROW HOME
TOWNLEY CASTLE

VOL. IV

RAMSGATE, FEBRUARY 10, 1917

No. 6

WORK AS AN ANTIDOTE

ANY medical officer in a large military hospital who will take the trouble to look beyond the formal medical history sheets, or the cold calculating case sheets, will find human interest, stories of intensest humour or pathos. These ceaseless casualties carry in their breasts pent up passions and possibilities with which it is well in spare moments to make acquaintance. The rigid discipline of army life dare not be relaxed, but for the nonce the role of patient gives a chance for delving into hidden depths of character and proclivities which yields surprising results. One day a Canadian citizen soldier found himself in the battle line confronted by a situation hitherto unknown throughout his sturdy and nerveless existence. Day after day horrible experiences befell his comrades, and many a time he admits a momentary terror and trembling when some particularly heavy concussion occurred close by his side. Merely momentary—then he carried on calm and collected.

Months passed in the difficult round of daily duties. A day came when a heavy shell, bursting close above his head, sent a fragment through his steel helmet, and the concussion threw him along the trench like chaff before the wind. It's such a common story these days. His wound was of no account, but the shock was paramount. Hearing gone, brain befuddled, nerves at the highest tension, his days were ghastly and his nights were hell. In the first Imperial hospital to which he came he tried to draw, to sketch, to colour. It was work he loved, and gradually the congenial task began to push out the hideous fear. Many and many a picture he copied and coloured; as the pictures progressed his powers returned.

When he entered the Granville our little paper made its appeal, and to-day, and every day, he is drawing and working with an added purpose. His progress towards the recovery of his hearing and nerve stability is rapid and reassuring. The Granville Arts and Crafts are admirable as therapeutic measures. When one gets the patient's point of view one can prescribe congenial and purposeful work. It is the only real antidote.

O. C. J. W.