

## TEA TALK.

October has been rather a quiet month in the Sisters' Mess. The only breaks out of the ordinary running were an impromptu dance given for Lieut. Shenstone and Lieut. B. McKenzie, who were spending a couple of days at the Officers' Mess, and the masquerade which is reported in another item.

We are glad to welcome Sister McCann, who has been taken on the strength, making another of our number who has seen service abroad. Sister McCann is a native of Perth, Ontario, and a graduate of Mercy Hospital, Chicago, U.S.A., and was attached to No. 23 General Hospital, the Chicago unit, while nursing in France.

"Oh to be in England when April is here" became a very familiar quotation to us all after our arrival here last spring, but "Oh to be in England when December is here" was a different story, so we immediately turned out attention to making the Mess-rooms cosy and homely, which with new bright chintz curtains and prettily-shaded lights, promise a charming rendezvous for the long winter evenings. Then there is a secret about those new attractions known only to the Sisters, and for once they won't tell.

We are glad to report the progress of our sick members. Sister Martin has recovered, and is enjoying three weeks' leave. Sister Ruddick is also back on duty after a rest at Margate. Sister Langman is progressing nicely, but is yet unable to leave the hospital.

Each month brings changes and sorrows to some of our number. This month has brought the sad news to Sister Harper of the death of her brother, who was killed in action in France. Sister Tait has also received news from Canada of the death of her father. The sincere and heartfelt sympathy of the staff is extended to these two Sisters in their bereavement.

Vacations are still being enjoyed. Sister Pinhey has just returned from Liverpool,

and Sisters Cass and Marsden from tripping in the ever-popular Emerald Isle. Sister Mills has also returned, after a delightful holiday.

Miss Nicholson, of Bromley, with some friends, came over to have tea with Sister Radcliffe.

Everybody has his troubles, so it is said, but we really do think one of the hardest things one has to bear is his own mistakes. For several days no one could understand why a certain Sister had such a troubled expression, until in a burst of confidence she told of a "frightfully stupid mistake" she had made by putting a letter intended for her very best beau in the wrong envelope, and later found she had sent it to the very last girl in the world whom she wanted to know about her affairs. We really sympathise, and do hope no complications will arise.

Lieut. Harold Weldon, C.E., spent a couple of days with his sister before going to France.

Home Sister McAdams has returned from a delightful vacation at Folkestone.

Miss M. Jacobs, A.D.M.S. Staff, looks fit after a vacation at St. Margaret's Bay and Folkestone.

We are trying to find out the name of the Orderly Officer who made rounds not long since wearing his spurs upside down.

Sister Weldon was the fortunate recipient of £5 from friends in Canada, to buy comforts for the patients. Those at home would be greatly gratified at the pleasure given by these small sums. For instance, the gramophone given by Sister Sinclair's young niece has helped to make many a dull day pass pleasantly.

In answer to an enquiry.—K. R. and O. says, Chapter MCIXVI, par. —th:—"No officer shall allow a dog or other animal to sleep on his bed unless he can produce a certificate to the effect that the said dog or other animal has previously had a flea-

destroying bath." We hope no uncomfortable experience has led up to this enquiry.

We are sorry to report the inevitable changes in our staff, among which is the transfer to France of Sister Mattice, Assistant Matron. Serving in France since the beginning of the war, she went through trying experiences and hard work, which brought credit and admiration to those noble first contingent Sisters, and she received in recognition the R.R.C. It was much against her wish that she was sent back to England for the rest she deserved, and I believe waited none too patiently for orders to return to France. Her thoughtfulness and courtesy made her liked by all, and her career will be watched with interest by all who knew her.

We are also very sorry to lose Sister Reid, who has been transferred for a few months to Bearwood Canadian Hospital. She is greatly missed around the Mess, but we hope to have her back with us later.

Can anyone tell us why the cinder path stops at the Officers' quarters, and if the Sisters may send their shoes down there to be cleaned, in consequence of having to tramp through the mud?

Sister Russill was the lucky one to get a trip back to Canada on a transport. We all envied her good fortune, and hope "the powers that be" will send a few more of us.

Sister Draffin has gone to Queen Alexandra Hospital, London, suffering from bronchitis. We all hope for a quick recovery.

## HALLOW E'EN AT THE SISTER'S MESS.

"In the dark all cats are gray," and the adage was applicable to the masquerade at the Sisters' Mess on Hallow E'en, when one failed to recognise her best friend.

The room had a weird and spooky appearance; softly-shaded lights decorated with black cats and owls, and the ever-popular Jack O'Lanterns, made one feel that even in war-time there was still a little romance left in this funny old world, and unbelievable as it may seem, the practical Nursing Sisters were really interested in trying to determine their fate.

The Witches' Den was a most awe-inspiring place, lighted only by a Jack O'Lantern. One was ushered into a veritable cave of mystery, and one's fate seemed to hang on a very slender thread, until assured by the Soothsayers that there were few dark crosses in one's path. I believe there were some happy times predicted for some of the Sisters, which you may be sure will be watched with interest.

Mrs. MacPherson, whose kindly smile was enhanced by a Red Cross dress, and Matron Smith, a charming Martha Washington, received the guests, amid roars of laughter, as they appeared.

Sunny Jim fed Force to the Gypsy Queen, and Sis Hopkins danced with a splendid Highlander. The Australians would have been justly proud of their representative had they seen her one-stepping with a handsome Canadian cowboy.

One's heart went back to the good old summer-time when one saw the Bathing Girls. A Virginian Beauty chatted gaily with a Knight of the Eighteenth Century, and Carmen could not have wished a more handsome Toreador. The Cheshire Cat danced with delight when the handsome Huntress on her wonderful hobby horse won the prize for the most original costume.

The Gold-Dust Twins escorted the Gaiety Girl; and after the Sergeant Cook was put through the third degree she was found "not guilty" of compounding Macaroni and Cheese.

As a special treat the Two-Year-Old of the family was allowed to sit up with her dolls to amuse the Baby.

The Summer Boys liked the Japanese lady, and the Officers with their characteristic blasé air looked eagerly around for the Flapper, who unfortunately did not appear.

A touch of dignity was given by the White Sister, who looked demurely on, and shrank back as the two Ghosts suddenly appeared in the wake of a poor Wounded Hero who had just arrived from the Front.

And then refreshments: cider, doughnuts, and apples, and a beautiful Hallow E'en cake, which was cut by the Matron, who told all to watch carefully for the favours, which would surely determine our fate. In future years, "when nuts are cracked and tales are told," our first Hallow E'en in England will be remembered as a huge success.

KEN.

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