

can be produced at an approximate cost of \$23 per acre the first year, and \$19 per acre thereafter. This figure includes the growing of the plants, fertilizer, cultivation, harvesting, and distilling. A plantation of horsemint will not have to be replanted oftener than once in five years, and under average conditions may continue to give a good yield for a still longer time. After the first year a material reduction can be made in the cost of fertilizers if the distilled herb is returned to the soil. These facts account for the reduction in the cost of production after the first year.

Correspondence.

THE SINKING OF THE SUSSEX.

(From Our Special Correspondent Aboard.)

MILITARY HOSPITAL, ———, ENGLAND,
April 17, 1916.

Mr. Editor: Having passed through some of the experiences of a wounded Tommy since March 24, I am writing you today with a new point of view. I was on board the *Sussex* on that date, bound for a Red Cross hospital in France. When a torpedo struck us, I was fortunate enough to come off with only a fractured tibia, though many standing near did not fare so well. Some were killed outright and others died before help reached us. Fortunately the ship floated.

About midnight, after nine hours of waiting, a British destroyer came alongside to take off the wounded. I happened to be the first to go over the side. A flexible stretcher was sent on board. It was made of strips of bamboo laid lengthwise and covered with canvas. They rolled me in it like a big papoose, ropes were wound around me, two loops passed over a hook and I was pulled aloft to swing for a moment from the davits.

Below, I could just make out a group of figures on the dark deck of the destroyer, for every light had been extinguished. Then I was lowered to the destroyer and sailors gently untied the fastenings. There was trouble with the knots and one of the group shouted up to the officer on the deck of the *Sussex*, "Sir, let some 'un do the next lad as can tie a knot." The answer came back, "You never mind. I done that job myself." Still in the stretcher, they bore me along the dark deck past shadows I thought were guns, along a narrow passage and down a ladder into a brightly lighted room. Here a couple of men helped me into the chief engineer's bunk, and strapped me in lest the ship should roll. There was a young medical officer on board who attended the more serious cases. He was what is called in the Navy a surgeon's probationer and was, as I learned later, a third year medical student from Glasgow.

About five in the morning I was carried on deck. We were evidently in a harbor, but the only lights came from a hospital ship alongside. She had a row of green lights from bow to stern, which seemed to steam in the morning mist. Above shone a cross of red and white lights. I passed over the gang-plank on the shoulders of four stretcher bearers, through a double line of orderlies, down into the ship's kitchen and through the buffet window into a ward prepared for perhaps 30 patients. The beds were arranged with heads toward the stern. The frames were fastened to the floor and the springs suspended so as to

swing like hammocks when the ship rolled. Medical officers moved from bed to bed examining the wounded as they were brought in. Nurses, or sisters as they are called in the army, hurried about, dressed in gray uniforms and red capes, with white caps which fluttered out behind them. An hour after our arrival every patient had been attended, one man had been borne off for amputation, the medical officers and extra nurses had disappeared, and two sisters remained in charge. Everything had been done with surprising quickness and precision. I looked about the room. It seemed somehow familiar, and a nurse, passing, explained that this was a sister ship to the *Sussex*, which had been changed into a hospital after the commencement of the war. The ward had not long before been the ship's dining-room. An orderly brought in some bovril and later bread and milk.

That afternoon we were loaded on to ambulance which came down to the pier. I lay beside George Crocker, a Harvard undergraduate, who had been on his way to a French Red Cross. He was quite unconscious from concussion of the brain, and his knee was dislocated as well. The ambulance jolted fearfully (it was a Ford) and an orderly had to hold Crocker to prevent his being shaken from the stretcher. I thought of the Ford ambulances that are said to have done such splendid work in the Vosges Mountains, and wondered how the passengers fared.

An order had come down from the War Office that we were to be taken into the Military Hospital, in spite of the fact that we were civilians and, for the most part, aliens. The local civilian hospital seems to have been full. We were lifted through the window of a low, brick hut, into a ward where rows of neat white beds awaited us. The former occupants had that morning been rushed off to a convalescent home so as to make room. Our clothes were taken, searched, and put away, and, after baths, we were soon in bed. A number of the patients were suffering from shock more than anything else, and these slept most of the time for several days. After that they left the hospital one by one until now only Crocker and I remain.

The beds have been filled with soldiers, some from "overseas," but most from the troops training about here. Many of the latter are Derby recruits who have been sent in for operations such as hernia or with sprained ankles, etc. These Derby men are a more heterogeneous assortment than their predecessors. Gentlemen of the better classes are being made into privates as well as officers, and in many cases privates of some experience are being trained as officers even though they drop their h's. On my left lies a man, a butcher by trade, who talks such thick cockney one can hardly understand him. On my right lies a banker who is evidently well educated. He has told me of marching and drilling which left his long-unused muscles stiff and sore, of nights spent on the barrack floors, and of rough meals with men entirely uncongenial. The time for consideration of the individual's feelings is past; England at last understands what the war has brought.

Tommy's day at the hospital begins at five in the morning, when he is washed and has his bed made by the night orderly and nurse. His first voluntary act is to borrow a match from a "mate" and light his cigarette. The day orderlies come on duty at 6 o'clock, and at 7.30 breakfast is brought from the cook-house, in great pails. If some of the patients are able to be up, they toast enough bread for the ward before the open-hearth fire. There is no means of heating except this. As far as possible, each man is held responsible for the care of his own plate, bowl, knife, fork and spoon. After breakfast comes a great scrubbing and sweeping, followed by tea in the middle of the morning. The medical officer makes rounds and the dressings are done. At noon comes a dinner which, although it may be neither daintily prepared nor even hot, is yet sufficient in amount. During the meal an orderly officer enters and demands, in a loud

voice, if there are any complaints. The ward orderly, speaking for everyone, replies, "No, sir."

In the afternoon, if it is "movie day," the convalescents don their blue woolen suits and red ties, and go off to the "pictures" in charge of a non-commissioned officer. Here they will be admitted free, shown to the best seats and served with tea and biscuits during the performance. On visiting afternoons, poor Tommy is talked to by good ladies who, no doubt, wish to cheer him up but often succeed in making him very uncomfortable. Afternoon tea is served in the ward and any soldier who has denied himself an egg at breakfast may have one then.

The orderly medical officer makes a hurried round before bed-time and, after a cup of soup, Tommy goes to sleep at 8 o'clock,— if he can.

The regular army nurses are required in many cases to serve on hospital ship, hospital train and at base hospital in rotation. They are assisted now by Voluntary Aid Detachment nurses, or V. A. D.'s, girls of little or no previous training who are under the supervision of St. John's Ambulance. As far as possible, these V. A. D.'s are replacing the orderlies who are being sent overseas to do the heavier hospital work there.

Sincerely yours,

W. G. P.

AN EXPERIENCE UNDER ETHER.

MILTON, MASS., May 18, 1916.

Mr. Editor: On my rounds the other day one of my patients, now a young woman in the early twenties, handed me the enclosed manuscript which she had written as a composite of several experiences with ether anesthesia.

About twelve years ago the late Dr. Maurice H. Richardson operated upon her for chronic appendicitis, and I could not but regret that he did not know of this fantasy that followed his brilliant operation, as I know how responsive he was to such concomitants of his art.

It has been my experience that it is not unusual for patients to dread anesthesia after the first experience, excepting during childbirth, and yet the explanation for that is often somewhat indefinite. It is, therefore, with more than usual interest that I have read this flight in an "Ether Train," and with the thought that others might equally appreciate it, I hand it to you.

Yours very truly,

WALTER A. LANE, M.D.

THE ETHER TRAIN.

The train was rushing along through darkness and roaring noise. Inside, it was stuffy and dim. There was something the matter with every man on board, but like many a queer person each seemed to look on his peculiarity as an advantage.

One man had a tail, which was fastened not only at the conventional place, but also between his shoulders. It looked like the handle of a pitcher. With this individual I began conversation, for I always like to be neighborly.

"Rather close in this train," I remarked. "Had I been asked, I should have said it smelled badly of ether."

"You may object to that," he replied somewhat snappishly, "but I am above such things. I have trained the hairs of my tail through my lungs and nothing can hurt me."

"Ah," said I, impressively, "but if you have a bad appendix, your tail won't help you in the least."

A look of terror convulsed his features.

"Well, here's where I get off to have it out," he yelled.

And with singular abruptness and agility he dove backward through the window.

"Good riddance!" said a voice behind me, "He was bad for the baby."

I addressed myself next to two cigar merchants. They had tongues fastened to their lower front teeth, like the frog I had once dissected, and they kept flipping them out to taste their cigar wrappings.

"It is a new plan," I remarked, "to use ether for fuel. I can't say I like it myself."

"The smell doesn't bother us in the least," they answered, with the same irritating superiority. "Nothing can hurt us because....."

"Your tongue won't help you in the least," I interrupted, "if you have a bad appendix."

With sudden fear they screamed, "Here's where we get off to have them out."

As their heels disappeared through the window, a voice behind me said "Good riddance!"

I thought the same myself, for the place was intolerably stuffy, and getting smaller every minute.

There was a man with huge white lobes to his ears. They were a foot long and had diamond earrings in them.

"Now for him," I thought.

"Doesn't this place strike you as ill ventilated?" I asked.

"If it did," he answered, with an ill-bred sneer, "I would cover my mouth with my ears."

"That won't help you in the least..." I began.

But with a fearful grimace, he interrupted, "Here's where I get off to have it out."

His method of exit was different from that of the others. He grew large. The train at the same time shrank, shutting me in. He disappeared on all sides: and the place became blackness that pressed against me like prickly rubber. This lasted a century. Then the train shut up inside me, and I was free.

I opened my eyes on the light of day and the kind face of a nurse. I tried to speak. I tried twice. Then my numbed lips obeyed and formed the words: "Where did I get off to have it out?"

CORRECTION AS TO NAPOLEON'S WOUNDS.

Boston, June 9, 1916.

Mr. Editor: In my letter June 1, p. 813, your proof-reader was liberal (to imitate the British love for a pun and for a quaint phrase), to a degree; he should not have added "M.D." to my name.

Some of Napoleon's battle-wounds can now be specified (fuller references being given in my prior letter):

At Toulon: slight wound on head from spent ball (*Æsculape*, 1913, III, 228); from bayonet, above knee (O'Meara, II, 229; de Las Cases, I, part 2, 67).

At Arcola: sundry injuries and perhaps the greatest danger during his life (O'Meara, II, 227; II, 61; I, 199; *Æsculape*, 1913, III, 228, etc.).

At Alexandria: bullet-graze, nearly fatal (Blackwood's, 1912, CXCI, at 501).

At Damanhor, horse-kick, apparently more serious than stated in *Boston Med. and Surg. Journ.*, April 20, 1916, at 581 (see *Æsculape*, 1913, III, 228).

At Marengo, slight, from cannon-ball (O'Meara, II, 227-9).

At Eckmühl, toe (O'Meara, I, 199).

At Ratisbon, heel (illustrated at *Æsculape*, 1913, III, 228; 1914, IV, 225; etc.).

At Arcis-sur-Aube, where he urged his horse over a smoking shell; after the explosion he emerged "covered with contusions and ecchymoses in great number" (see *Æsculape*, 1913, III, at 230). Similar bruises, etc., he received elsewhere while having eighteen other horses killed under him (as to this see O'Meara, II, 229), during the sixty odd battles in which he took part.

ALFRED ELA.