

CHRISTMAS, 1917 — IN FRANCE —

A Touching Story of the Scenes Witnessed and the Ceremonies Participated in by an American Nurse in a British Hospital Behind the Front in the Trying Days of the World War.

(The following is taken from the December number of the Pacific Legion—the copy of a Salem subscriber; this being the official publication of the American Legion, Department of Oregon.)

(Mrs. Faustman, who was an army nurse with 21 months of overseas service, lived in Coquille, Ore., following the war, but her husband developed tuberculosis, which contracted during service, and she has been engaged in nursing him back to health for the past year at Tucson, Arizona. The following sketch depicts the Christmas holiday arranged by the American nurses in a British hospital, back of the Flanders front in 1917.)

Having charge of a British hospital and being behind a British front our patients were almost all British—English, Scotch, Irish, Welsh, New Zealanders, Australians, Canadians and South Africans. Coming from such different points of the globe they were very different from each other and most of all different from our own American boys, one of whom did occasionally drift back to us; but having the only American staff headquarters, the American boys on that front were sent back to our hospital.

Now and then we came across an American who had joined the Canadians and in our hearts there always a feeling of thankfulness that, since misfortune had fallen upon them, they had fallen to our care, for no matter how much we might care for the boys of other lands, these were OURS, our very own.

The Christmas season was coming on apace and great preparations were going forward to make those days as happy as possible for our patients. Then gloom fell for word was sent back to clear the hospitals of every possible patient, for those higher up expected the Germans to launch a great drive with the coming of the holidays.

In accordance with orders the officers went through the wards marking every patient—unless he was absolutely beyond being moved—either for England (the ever-legendary "Blighty") or for continental camp, or for B. D. A. which is "base detail" and means a speedy return to the lines.

Even the convalescent camp would be a dreary place with an absence of all attempts to make things a bit happy and homelike for those boys so far from home, for there were no nurses in the convalescent camps and only a very few doctors and orderlies for the patients were supposed to need only a period of rest before being fit for active duty again.

It was strangely enough even the patients who had been in the much-desired Blighty were downcast because, for the being, our hospital had become the nearest thing to home they had known in a long time. If they were sent to England they would not have time to get leave to visit their homes for Christmas and they would spend the day in a strange hospital, among nurses and orderlies with whom they had not had time to become accustomed. And as so often happened in those days, they would probably be sent to the very furthest end of the line so that even a visit from home folks would be out of the question.

The boys' faces were not the only ones that were sorrowful, for the question arose: If these boys were sent away and no others came to take their places, what would we do to occupy our hands and keep our thoughts from straying toward our own homeland, dearer a thousand times since we had left her?

They came word this unless the expected drive took place and it became absolutely necessary to clear the hospital, none of the boys would be sent away except at their own request. Faces brightened and fingers began to fly as the decorations to be used in the wards.

Most of the wards were made up of four square canvas tents, connected by canvas covered corridors. The tents were double with an air space between so that they were quite warm, especially as there was a heater in each tent. Later we found that these tents, or marquees, were not nearly so drafty as the wooden huts or French barracks that were put up to replace them.

Now the boys to make their own particular portion of the ward the most attractive, each planning their own decorations. In one ward the patient built a very ingenious air plane covering it with gay crepe paper. This was only one of the things that their imagination took. Gay crepe paper, evergreen branches and mistletoe were everywhere.

Some club or society of American women had taken it upon themselves as their part of the Christmas celebration to provide a comfort bag for every patient in our hospital.

The bags which were given us for our patients we emptied, dividing the contents as evenly as we could among the boys, for some of the bags contained many pleasant surprises while others were very ordinary. One of the boys had expressed the wish for a mouth organ. Fortunately there was one among the other things so that was put aside for him. In the same way we tried to see that each patient had some special wish gratified, or at least received something especially nice.

Then we put the things into large new socks procured from the Red Cross and we ourselves added nuts, oranges and apples.

On Christmas morning we finished our work as quickly as possible, then one of the boys dressed up as Santa Claus and the Xmas

stockings were distributed. There was much laughter and gay chatter over the Santa and soon came with its Xmas dinner.

The Captain in our ward had divided it into two parts, offering a prize to the half putting on the best program that evening, so the afternoon passed in preparations for that evening. I doubt if a single nurse took any time off duty that day, for we dared not give ourselves a moment for thought, for homesickness would have caught us in its relentless grip.

In our ward we had been ordering jello and canned fruit from the commissary for some weeks. These were supposed to be used only for the sickest patient who could not have general diet. But we had been getting it little by little and guarding it jealously for this day. Early in the afternoon we prepared this, adding oranges and nuts to the canned fruits so that we had a very delicious jello for the boys that evening. This was especially acceptable as that meal was a very sketchy affair due to the time, energy and the amount of supplies used on the dinner.

After the evening's work was finished we all gathered in one part of the ward and the program began. It was very varied and showed much unsuspected talent. Chief among these was a Scotchman, who gave a toast in broadest Scotch. Original poems were delivered, songs of every variety were sung, but the climax of the evening came when a young Irish lad of nineteen sang to us. He had a strong sense of the dramatic and the picturesque. His wonderfully developed body had suffered no loss of beauty even though he wore the very unbecoming hospital suit. His head was raised with infinite pride and self assurance and he looked like a young god as he sang to us in a voice like the deepest organ—a voice that gripped our hearts and made us long to reach upward higher and better things.

It was a fitting close to a day each one of us—patients, doctors, orderlies and nurses—had spent trying to bring a bit of happiness to others, thereby brightening the day for ourselves, for "Happiness is a perfume you cannot spill on others without getting a few drops on yourself."



Dr. and Mrs. Benjamin Blatchford have as their house guests Dr. Blatchford's brother and wife, Rev. and Mrs. Thomas Blatchford of London, Ont. Rev. Mr. Blatchford, who is a retired Methodist minister, arrived in Salem with his wife on Friday evening and will remain until after the Christmas holidays.

Mrs. Oscar Zeller was hostess for a delightful meeting of the Adolphe club on Wednesday. Mrs. Lawrence Imish was an invited guest for the afternoon, and also lucky winner of the high score. Refreshments followed the playing.

The club group included Mrs. Oral Lemmon, Mrs. Earl Paulsen, Mrs. Paul Chapler, Mrs. Armin Berger, Mrs. Jesse George, Mrs. George Nelson, Mrs. Reed Rowland, Mrs. James Teed, and the hostess, Mrs. Oscar Zeller.

Mrs. G. Ed Ross will substitute for Miss Nina McNary, teacher of the Baraca-Philathea class of the First Baptist church, on account of the illness of Miss McNary.

At the election of officers Friday at the meeting of Hal Hibbard auxiliary, Mrs. H. Thompson was re-elected president, appointing Mrs. Woolpert and Mrs. Bertleson to the respective offices of secretary and treasurer. Other officers named are: Senior vice president, Mrs. Carrie Chase; junior vice president, Miss Ruth Humphrey; chairman, Mrs. Ruth Brant; conductor, Mrs. Percy Eugh; assistant, Mrs. Ida May Seymour; guard, Mrs. May Sammons; assistant guard, Mrs. Mary Raymond; patriotic instructor, Mrs. Marie Baker; historian, Mrs. Mary Miller; musician, Mrs. Walter; reporter, Mrs. Myrtle Adams. Mrs. Hyde, department president, of Hillsboro, will be present for the installation which will occur at the meeting on the first Friday in January.

A number of Salem matrons were guests yesterday afternoon in Corvallis for Mrs. Jessie Stewart's tea at the Phi Beta Pi house.

Christmas music has a charm that the carols escape, weaving a Yuletide spell that gives the message in all its loveliness, and on Friday night of this week when the MacDowell club Christmas choruses appears at the First Presbyterian church all music lovers have a treat in store.

The soloists of the evening are to be Mrs. Arthur J. Rahn, Mrs. Ada Miller Harris and Mr. A. A. Schramm. Mr. Schramm, a well known tenor coming here from Corvallis, who will be accompanied by Lucille Egan Schramm.

The program will include not only choruses and solos from the "Messiah," but a group of the most beautiful Christmas carols, of especial note among these being the lovely "Hymn to the Madonna." The men's voices and the alto part, so peculiarly effective in the rendition of the carols, will be emphasized under the direction

of Mr. W. H. Boyer. This will be his first Salem appearance since assuming the directorship of the local MacDowell club.

Miss Dorothy Pearce will play the piano accompaniments of the evening while Prof. T. S. Roberts

will preside at the organ. The personnel of the augmented chorus includes Mrs. Ada Miller Harris, Mrs. Grant, Bonnell, Mrs. E. H. Hobson, Mrs. Ruth Johas Newmeyer, Mrs. C. A. Kells, Susan Varty, Mrs. J. C. Currie, Mrs. G.

C. Bellinger, Mrs. J. L. Darby, Mrs. D. J. Ritchie, Mrs. F. H. Thompson, Mrs. C. B. Webb, Mrs. Martin Fereshetian, Mrs. C. E. Bates, Mrs. Mason Bishop, Mrs. T. H. Galloway, Mrs. J. E. Law, Mrs. G. L. Sherman, Mrs. Earl

Simpson, Mrs. George E. Allen, Mrs. Evangeline Burlette Long, Mrs. Mark McCallister, Mrs. Arthur J. Rahn, Mrs. Merle Rosecrans, Mrs. J. Chambers, Miss Esther Hansen, Miss Alice Judd, Miss Gladys Raffety, Miss Lucille Em-

mons, Miss Caroline Nerod, Miss Gussie Niles, Miss Nellie Schwab, Miss Gertrude Bakin, Miss Lucille Jaskoski, Miss Maxine Buren, Miss Marian Wyman, Don Young, Harry Pierson, Harry Peary, Leonard Chadwick, W. T. Jenks, F. R.

Rock, Frank Kellogg, John Chur- rington, F. L. Peterson, F. N. Meyers, Clifford Hulsey, Don Roberts, R. D. Barton, Jake Fuh- rer, John Morris, Leslie Springer, Vernon Tyler, H. T. Love and Dan Ladgenburg.



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