



UNDER THE RED CROSS

1914 — GORDON CASTLE — 1919

"To record the use of this dwelling as an Auxiliary Hospital during the Great War, and the thanks of the Scottish Branch, British Red Cross Society, to the generous donor - April 1919."

At the north-west door of Gordon Castle a passer-by may notice the foregoing superscription on a small shield, the only indication that the Flag of the Royal Red Cross Society was displayed there from 1914 to 1919. With the passing of the years memories quickly fade, and ere it is too late the story of Gordon Castle Auxiliary Hospital and its generous Ducal host may be set, forth in brief outline.

THE DUKE AND THE GREAT WAR

When we come to look on the Great War in retrospect, the keenest interest attaching to it will probably centre more and more with each one of us in the part played by the particular group to which we happen to belong, radiating from our family, our village, our parish, our county, our country, our colony, our Empire.

While the great struggle was actually in progress, we were rightly interested only in the efforts of the whole which meant victory or defeat, but in the event we take the result for granted, and we shall concentrate most of all on the individuals and groups of individuals known to ourselves who helped to win through.

To some people this may seem an excess of deplorable parochialism, but our Empire - to use a word that is really foreign to our genius, as General Smuts was very quick to see - owes its strength to "parochialism", the health of the whole depending on the health of every part which, as we have good reason to know, can be highly individualistic.

The interest of the North-East of Scotland in its own contribution does not, however, begin with the present War, for we in this "Corner" have a long and intimate experience of raising troops; and, indeed, nowhere, perhaps, has the Territorial system of soldiering - by which, of course, one does not refer exclusively to the Volunteer movement - made a more powerful appeal.

The county feeling and rivalry, which is strong all over the country; is peculiarly so in our part of the world, which remains to this day, despite all the advance of locomotion, cut off from the rest of the kingdom by those "very lofty mountains" which have made us in some respects a peculiar people, as Bishop Elphinstone clearly saw when he founded the University of Aberdeen more than four centuries ago. Our Corner is more or less an end in itself geographically and in some respects otherwise, a fact that is symbolised by the preservation of a very vigorous vernacular, which is perhaps the most idiosyncratic type Of Scots spoken anywhere.

The dwellers therein can hardly be called Celtic, but their shutoff position gives them precisely the same sense of clannishness which we associate with the "Highlands" and that feeling proved of the utmost value in the second half of the 18th century especially when utilised by the personal influence of the great overlords in the raising of troops.

In the intervening century many changes have occurred, but the character of the people has remained very much the same; and if the martial spirit - which is a very different thing from the military spirit - has been latent for lack of opportunity, it has been always there ready to be awakened into fresh life at the touch of danger.

Not only so, it has become even more valuable than ever it was before in a purely military sense owing to the fact that modern soldiering is to a far greater extent than ever a matter of brains as well as bravery, of "horse sense" as much as heroism, and sound sense is happily an asset of frequent occurrence in our "Corner".

The changes that have occurred have transferred the business of raising troops from the individual, however influential, to the State itself; but notwithstanding that, the *modus operandi* of bringing men to the Colours in 1914 had a startling family resemblance to the methods which were employed in the latter half of the 18th century. when our "Corner" raised several regiments, the 4th Duke of Gordon, assisted by his fascinating consort, Jane Maxwell, having himself been responsible for the raising of four different Regiments between 1759 and 1794, together with two Companies for other regiments, while as a Lord Lieutenant he was actively involved in organising Volunteers and Militia.

The local, or Lord Lieutenant's, share in the business, representing a local, as opposed to a centralised War Office method, was immensely helped by the Haldane System, which had been partly anticipated by the Territorial recruiting movement of 1872, and the "linked battalion" system of 1891. While all this increased the interest of the people of the district in soldiering, it did not remove the necessity and the value of the personal interest which characterised the 16th century.

It was a stroke of peculiarly good fortune that the personal equation necessary in the head of the County should find such an admirable representative as the Duke of Richmond, the Lord Lieutenant both of Banffshire and of Moray. The Duke since his succession has so closely identified himself with the North that we are apt to think only of the Gordon strain in him and all that that implies. But on his male, or Lennox side, he has even a closer association with professional soldiering than the Gordons ever had.

The Dukes of Richmond from the very first have been associated with the Regular Army. The 2nd Duke fought at Dettingen and became a General; the 3rd Duke rose to be a Field-Marshal. The 4th was present at Waterloo, and was assisted by his wife, Lady Charlotte Gordon, in giving the great ball before the battle; their son, the 5th Duke, was Military Secretary to Wellington in the Peninsula, was wounded at Orthez and fought at Waterloo; while their grandson, Sir Wilbraham Oates Lennox, won the Victoria Cross at Inkerman. The 6th Duke, who was in the Blues, was ADC to Wellington for ten years; and the present Duke entered the Grenadier Guards 51 years ago, and became associated in 1876 with the 3rd Royal Sussex, of which battalion he is still honorary Colonel. His Grace has also seen active service, for he and his three sons - all of them in the Brigade of Guards - fought in the South African War, the eldest hauling down the Boer flag on the Volksraad at Pretoria, transferring it, by the way, to the Gordon Castle armoury.

His Grace's long association with the Militia, strengthened by the fact that he was also a member of the Royal Commission on the Militia and Volunteer Forces, enabled him to make a study of the local as well as the State conditions of soldiering, and his knowledge of the situation in the North was made still more intimate by the fact of his being President of the Territorial Associations of Banffshire and Moray, where his landed interests largely lie. This, added to his wide knowledge of civilianship and to his native tact and good nature, enabled the Duke to speak with a simplicity and a sincerity which never failed to tell with a people who are simple and sincere themselves. His aid as a recruiter in the dread months immediately following the outbreak of hostilities, and in the midst of his own personal sorrow, was of first rate importance.

In all weathers he covered the whole county from far off Tomintoul and the Braes of Glenlivet to the sea, moving down into Strathbogie, the original cradle of the Gordons in the north; and if he had to make the same demand on every occasion, he did it with a fine perception of his audience which never failed to win a hearty response.

That is because the Duke understands, as so many of our modern landlords do not understand, the enormous value of the personal equation, which becomes really greater than ever as the State becomes more democratised. The value of this elementary fact was completely grasped by King Edward, himself the possessor of rare personality, when he summoned the Lords Lieutenant to Buckingham Palace in support of the Haldane Territorial scheme. His Majesty knew that vague phrases about "National Defence" especially when promulgated by a vast impersonal organisation like the War Office and its soulless bureaucracy, would never gain a hearing, as the question would do if studied and set forth in every county by the Lord Lieutenant and his immediate deputies; and the King proved a far truer prophet than many of his advisers, especially of the professional military class, for whom personality, almost by the very nature of their calling, tends to become a negligible fact.

The Duke's interest in the matter of Territorial recruiting and soldiering is not merely attached to affairs of the day. It has extended backwards and has been greatly reinforced by the classic recruiting achievements of his ancestors, the 4th Duke of Gordon and Jean Maxwell, which are symbolised at Gordon Castle, in the splendid and unique collection of military trophies which His Grace has inventoried with rare patience and knowledge, and he had the faith to see, like Kipling for whom "Romance brought up the 9.15" that the glamour of another day is not dead, but that it is only slumbering and can be wakened with fresh life when occasion calls.

Although the years made it impossible for the Duke to go to the Front, much less over the top, yet the force of family tradition and personal experience had trained His Grace to play his part in the Great War and its welter. This preparation was, of course, a very different thing from that on which the Germans relied. We have been told *ad nauseum* of their marvellous "efficiency", of their being ready "to the last button" but as a matter of fact it is no paradox to say that the German was less prepared for war, or rather its results, than any of the nations that rose in resistance. It is true that Bernhard had pictured the alternative *Weltmacht odor Niedergang*, a word that is translatable by almost any Banffshire man without even a knowledge of German - but the alternative of "downfall" was inconceivable to such an intensely self-satisfied people, for if they thought perpetually of *der Tag* they never for a moment considered *die Nacht*, which has now descended upon them with a grim blackness.

Now the Duke, like all sensible people, was conscious from the very first of the price to be paid. His youngest son, Lord Bernard, fell in action in November 1914, and he knew that the toll would be heavy among the men he took from the plough in the fertile lands of his shires. Thus while he went through the recruiting campaign it was not with that paroxysm of patriotism which marked the enemy. There was nothing in him of a prophet come down from Pisgah to rouse the people of the valleys, only to return to the peaks and the great silences.

He saw at once the necessity of taking care of those who had answered the call to the Colours, by establishing a Hospital in Gordon Castle, where the wounded of almost every Unit, in our mighty Army have been cared for while as the official head of two counties he has had much to do with the plans of reconstruction which Peace demands. He is, therefore, completely in tune with the spirit of the times, not merely because he lives in a day when public opinion pays more consideration than ever to those things, but because he inherits the instinct of the Muse of Gordon, which was far before its time in looking after the interests of those who lived upon its lands and who suffered on foreign fields.

In this the ducal Gordons took up a very different attitude from the State, which has been extraordinarily callous in the matter of treatment of old soldiers, even down to comparatively recent times, when Crimean veterans have had to be supported by charity, and by the aid of music hall entertainments specially set up to keep the wolf from the door. The vast amount of documentary data in the Charter Room at Gordon Castle show that the future of the soldiers raised by Jane Maxwell and her husband were a first care in their consideration. After the Peninsular and Waterloo campaigns the Duke of Gordon settled many old soldiers on little crofts on his vast domains, and in many cases the grandsons and great-grandsons of these men have fought in the Great War, frequently in the famous Regiment which His Grace gave to the State. One at these huts, as we should now call it, standing on the peak of a hill overlooking Dufftown, still recalls those days, for it bears the name of "Maya" after the battle in which its first occupant had fought. and we have often heard the late County Clerk of Banff describe how his own grandfather "Old Waterloo" used to meet "Maya", the two old fellows fighting out their battles with a keen sense of rivalry as to which was the harder fight.

Private endeavour of this kind has now been replaced, as it ought to be, by the recognition of the State. Indeed, as a staunch Conservative publicist recently pointed out, the situation has come to this, that the State having conscripted the man, the man is proceeding to conscript the State. In his capacity of a Lord Lieutenant the Duke will have much to do with the direction of the State's reconstructive measures, and with his long experience of soldiering, local administration, and with his deep interest in the people of the North, he may be trusted to do the work that falls to his hand with a fine sense of what is best for everybody concerned.

JOHN MALCOLM BULLOCH

GORDON CASTLE AND THE GORDON LENNOX FAMILY

On August a 1914, the British Empire entered on the hazards of the Great War. The least militarist, perhaps, of all the Allied Powers, with the smallest Standing Army in proportion to population of any of them, she became, as the struggle developed, and its manifold attendant needs were emphasised. literally a nation in arms. Her whole manhood banded themselves in serried ranks at home and in the Dominions against the common foe. From the beginning it was realised that with armies massed in gigantic numbers. casualties in the field must be on a scale unprecedented in the history of the human race. Prescience of the kind was, unhappily, justified by events. For what had been foreseen, however, preparations had been made.

The Red Cross movement, called to exercise a new virility and to expend its beneficent activities on a scale hitherto undreamt of, became one of the mightiest organisations in the land in its care of broken, wounded, and battle-stricken men. All over the country there were called into being Voluntary Aid Detachments, the members of which freely gave their services on behalf of the ever-growing work. Numerous existing hospital buildings and administrative staffs came into the vast organisation. Halls were converted for the time being to the pressing needs of hospital work. Great, landed proprietors, bearing names that have been familiar to the nation and the Empire for centuries, handed over family seats, with all their accompaniments of comfort, their evidences of age-long culture, and their brilliant natural surroundings, to the clamant necessities of the day. This great crusade of mercy was the silver lining of the sombre war cloud.

Amidst the bitterness and gloom of all the great struggle, the nation responded with noble and high-hearted generosity to the claims of the suffering. High and low, rich and poor, man, woman, and child paid their tithes to the great charity in riches, in personal service, and in sympathy.

In these northeastern parts there were many beneficent institutions in existence during the years of war. Their number and importance emphasised the wide-spread extent of that universal desire to give help, in some definite form, to the country in its hour of direst peril and to the gallant men who were fighting its battles. All did most useful and admirable work, and any association with one or another of them must be for all time a happy memory to many soldiers so brought into contact, perhaps for the first time, with conditions of life in the North of Scotland.

One of the largest of these VAD Hospitals was established at Gordon Castle, the stately northern home of the Duke of Richmond and Gordon. Among patients, medical officers, and nursing staff it enjoyed the very highest reputation. Those of the public who knew something of the great work that was carried on in it realised the supreme value that it proved in the physical rebuilding of many war-worn and shattered men.

The princely scale of generosity and the large-hearted outlook that characterised every provision sought to be made on its behalf by the nobleman whose family seat it was; the high measure of professional ability and resourcefulness that were leading features of its administration throughout its whole career; the happy, home-like environment that made of all connected with it, whether patients or staff, like one large, united family party, despite ever-recurring changes in its members; the abundant provision that was made for the entertainment of the patients, in the hospital buildings and out-of-doors as well, the matchless scenic charm of the surroundings - green sward, spreading trees with their magnificent verdure, gardens all brilliant with bright, joyous colours in the long and delightful summer season, or clad with the sombre delicacies of the colder months; the distant hills, the roll and rush of the swiftly flowing waters of the Spey, and the boom of the billows that came up the valley from the seashore - such a happy combination of unsparing human effort in the brightest and most appealing of natural conditions, gave the Gordon Castle Hospital a name and a reputation that made it outstanding among all the kindred institutions of the North.

It was opened as a Hospital on November 26th, 1914, as such It was closed on May 4th, 1919. In the interval there passed through it no fewer than 2,718 patients, drawn from every part of the United Kingdom and from many parts of the British Empire. Begun with 30 beds, it rose quickly to be a Hospital of 100 beds. In this short summary there is embodied the essential history of the establishment in its material sense. What all its magnificent and generously conceived arrangements have meant in the restoration to health and strength of these many hundreds of men who had been the victims of the most cruel war on record, who reached this safe home of refuge broken in body and depressed, it may have been, sometimes in mind, cannot be estimated in mere words. Such valuations go beyond the material. We have no adequate recompense for the physician who restores us to health in sickness for the value of his services is inestimable. Nor can we in full measure appreciate the extent to which the generosity and self-sacrifice of one of our most public spirited nobles contributed in the restoration to health of the many shattered men who were so long his honoured guests.

And It was only in accordance with things historical and in agreement with the intimate association of the Duke and his family with the passing events of those tragic years, that in this way the name of Gordon Castle should be closely linked with the more humane side of a condition of war. The family has an ancient war record. Eight hundred years ago Adam de Gordon fell with the King at the Siege of Alnwick, and since those far-off times the history of the House of Gordon has ever been closely interwoven with that of our country. Sir Adam Gordon fought with Bruce at Bannockburn, the Earl of Huntly, who founded the Castle of Bog of Gight, as Lord Superior of the Highland territories saw active service in many fields of an unhappy and distracted Scotland. Another Earl of Huntly commanded the left wing of the Scots at Culloden; another fought at Pinkie, and yet another fought for Queen Mary in the South, while his brother, he of Auchindoune, sought to hold the North for her. Scotland's great soldier, Montrose, was at Bog of Gight, at the height of his marvellous career, when his oldest son, Lord Graham, then in his 16th year, died, and was buried in the neighbouring kirk of Bellie. Lord Gordon, who fought at Auldearn, lies in the Gordon aisle of the old church of St Machar, Aberdeen. The first Duke of Gordon made the historic defence of the Castle of Edinburgh for King James. The second joined Mar's army and fought at Sheriffmuir. The fourth raised four large contingents of troops for the Government, including the Gordon Highlanders, and there is little need to recall the part that tradition attributes to his beautiful, fascinating, and daring Duchess, Jane Maxwell. The fifth Duke was in turn Colonel of the Gordon Highlanders, of the Black Watch, of the Royal Scots, and of the Scots Fusilier Guards - later known as the Scots Guards - and was badly wounded in action with the Gordon Highlanders. The historic ball of Charlotte Gordon, Duchess of Richmond, represented the "sound or revelry" on the night before Quatre Bras, as told by Byron in matchless verse. The fifth Duke of Richmond was the favourite officer of Wellington, and the hero of many a struggle on the battlefields of the Peninsula; the wound he received at Orthez was pronounced to be mortal - he was struck in the chest by a musket ball which was never extracted - but there was a gleam of hope, and youth and a good constitution pulled him through. He lived to be of much service to his brother campaigners and was beloved of all ranks.

As a testimonial to the esteem in which he was held, his fellow soldiers presented him some thirty years later with a magnificent silver group representing His Grace in the costume of a peer directing the attention of Britannia to the figures of Mars and Neptune, and bearing the inscription - "Presented on the thirty-eighth anniversary of the battle of Vittoria to His Grace the Duke of Richmond, KG, by the recipients of the war medal, in grateful remembrance of his long and unwearied efforts on their behalf as a token of admiration and esteem from his humbler brethren In arms". As Earl of March, the present Duke of Richmond and Gordon went to South Africa at the head of his regiment and all his three sons served with distinction in that campaign, Lord Settrington as aide-de-camp to Lord Roberts, Lord Esme Gordon Lennox with the Scots Guards, and Lord Bernard Gordon Lennox with the Grenadier Guards.

And when the trumpet once more sounded the call to arms in those autumn days of 1914, members of the house of Richmond and Gordon sprang into the breach with the ardour and chivalry characteristic of the race. Lord Esme was twice wounded, on both occasions dangerously; Lord Bernard fills a soldier's grave in France. In the dark days of the great German offensive of '18 Lord Settrington, a young Irish Guardsman, was amongst those who dashed over from England to stem the tide, but was captured shortly afterwards, and till the armistice was prisoner in Germany. Immediately on his release he volunteered and was accepted for service in Russia, but towards the close of the short summer's campaign in that distracted country, fell mortally wounded and died in hospital there. Lieutenant Victor Gordon Lennox, Grenadier Guards, the Duke's nephew, was also wounded whilst serving in France.

The duties of the Duke lay at home, and they were discharged with a conscientiousness and fidelity that won the esteem and admiration of all ranks of society. The war had been only three months begun when, as we have seen, his northern seat became one of the finest homes that the Red Cross Society had in its keeping in Scotland. In the organisation of this movement throughout Morayshire, the Duchess of Northumberland, then Countess Percy, had taken a prominent part as President of the County branch of The Scottish Red Cross Society, and when His Grace gave over the Castle in November 1914, her experience as an organiser proved of the greatest service to him, and Her Grace maintained a close connection with Gordon Castle Hospital throughout the whole war. But her record by no means ends there, for in Middlesex she acted as Deputy President of the Red Cross Society and was moreover head of Syon House VAD Hospital, one of the Northumberland ducal residences. The other lady members of the family, also did useful work in the great cause.

As His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of the Counties of Banff and Elgin, His Grace the Duke of Richmond and Gordon undertook in those years in war a vast amount of most useful and valued work. During a period of over four years, in a time of difficulty and stress without parallel in our annals, there was displayed abundant evidence of the many and varied labours in which the Duke ungrudgingly engaged in seeking to promote the paramount interests of the nation and Empire. His guidance of the recruiting movement in the critical early days of the conflict was an inspiration to the whole county of Banff. He visited every part of it, laying before the different communities the nature of the crisis with which the British Empire was faced. Always in the forefront of each charitable movement on behalf of the Red Cross or war relief funds, the efforts of His Grace were tireless.

The whole North of Scotland can testify to the words of fearless hope and the unshaken belief in the final issue of the struggle that characterised his public utterances throughout those fateful years, and can bear witness how justly events confirmed his words. Every scheme of benevolence launched, every work suggested for the promotion of the great national ends in view, found the powerful influence of the Duke exercised on their behalf. Such was the nobleman who became the host of all these many hundreds of wounded and broken men; such is something, a mere touch on the fringe, of the martial achievements of the family whose northern seat became the home and temporary retreat of men from all parts of the Empire who had suffered wounds in course of the prolonged and gigantic struggle, and whose memories of "Bonnie Castle Gordon" and all the kindly goodwill there experienced will ever be of the happiest and most grateful kind.

GORDON CASTLE HOSPITAL. ITS WARDS AND ENVIRONMENTS.

The hospitable doors of Gordon Castle were opened for wounded soldiers on November 26th, 1914, and for the fifty-four succeeding months it was never empty, discharging in the interval work that will never be forgotten, and the efficacy of which is to be seen to-day in the many men who, in those quiet and bright surroundings, regained strength of body and a renewed outlook on life and on life's affairs, after experiences that were fitted to shatter the strongest nerves. The first contingent consisted of 24 men, all of the old Regulars, members of that "Contemptible Little Army" that gave their bodies as a living rampart against the hordes of Germany, and whose fame this country will cherish so long as it and its history endure.

Thirty beds were at the beginning allotted to the functions of the Hospital, but soon the needs of the situation grew, and it required an accommodation of 100 beds, and as previously stated there passed through in the course of its history no fewer than 2,718 non-commissioned officers and men. They came to Gordon Castle for the most part from the 1st Scottish General Hospital, Aberdeen, but several contingents came also from Glasgow. Among such a number of men there were of course all sorts of wounds, and many serious and severe cot cases had to receive the constant attention of the medical superintendent and nursing staff.

There were instances in which the period of residence extended to six weeks and two months, but one month was a usual period for the invigorating air of the North and the kindly services of the staff to work their charm. Every detail for the furtherance of the comfort and well-being of the patients was studied and carried out with that large measure of efficiency that put the Gordon Castle Hospital on the high plane that it deservedly reached in the minds of all professional authorities.

The matron was regularly warned from Aberdeen of the number of patients she would receive and the time of their arrival on Speyside. She at once notified the Chief of the Morayshire Transport Department, and the soldiers found waiting them at the village station skilled helpers and a speedy means of travel to their new home. Those in the locality, who possessed them, sent their motor cars to help in the work of transport, some privately owned cars coming even from Elgin, and the Duke's car was always available when His Grace was in the North. Later the allocation of a regular Red Cross motor ambulance for Morayshire proved of great service in conveying the soldier patients of the Castle Hospital.

This department of transport was the first introduction of the soldiers to the arrangements in their home of the immediate future, and the admirably efficient manner in which it was ever conducted, waiting and delays being entirely unknown, was a fitting illustration of what their experiences were to be throughout their period of residence.

Some forty rooms of the Castle were given over to the purposes of the Hospital. The entire west wing was used for the needs of the hospital proper; the men's recreation rooms and the accommodation required for the purposes of administration were provided. In the central section of the building, the nurses had their rooms in the east wing, and the matron and sisters in the west. About one-half of the Castle was thus given over to the services of the Red Cross organisation, the wards in the hospital numbering 15, while the accommodation in each varied from four to fourteen beds.

The men's recreation room was, as might be expected, an apartment that was largely and steadily occupied. It was in the central part of the Castle, on the ground floor, cheerfully lighted by five windows, with a spacious outlook over the wooded sward in the direction of the Firth, furnished cosily with couches and comfortable chairs, with a generous supply of books and other reading matter, with a piano and a gramophone in one corner, and provided with facilities for games - cards, bagatelle, chess, draughts, and the like. The highly polished floor suggested the pleasures of the ballroom, and here in the evenings the shaded lights shone down on numerous dancing parties. In which memory of the pains and vicissitudes of the past was chased away by quip and prank and happy jest and the rhythm of the sprightly feet of many young folks.

Next to the recreation room was the matron's office, the headquarters of all the work of the Hospital administration. Nearby was the staff dining room, a cosy, quaint arch-roofed apartment with an outlook to the sunny south, where the eye rested with pleasure on the Castle gardens that extended in front, with a near background of majestic trees and a further vista of pine-clad hills. Among the furnishings of the room was a fine old clock of date 1780, made by John Gartly, Aberdeen - Duke Alexander had this clock made to give time to the many stagecoach drivers passing through the village of Fochabers. Previously the time for the district had been reckoned from the famed old dial and the loop meridian at the Castle, which method, however, left the inhabitants too much at the mercy of the vagaries of King Sol, whereas the clock was over faithful, never more so than in its new and pleasant task of marking the hours of refreshment of the devoted band of nurses. Just at hand was the men's dining room, well lit by three windows looking seaward. and with its seating and table accommodation and its decorated walls fitted to entertain, as it did every day throughout these years, large and happy companies of recuperating soldiers, who in the bracing climate of the North. and for once free from all care and worry, developed a very gratifying appetite.

The kitchen of course was not far away. It was manned - not manned, for they were all ladies, so let us say managed - throughout the whole period of the career of the Hospital by an able staff who recognised in a thoroughly practical way the value that attractively cooked food exercises on the *genus* man at all times, and not least when well on the way to complete physical recovery from an exhausting illness.

Further along the corridor with its setting of antlers was the surgery, furnished and fitted up by the Duke of Richmond and Gordon and his daughter Countess Percy, in a manner so complete and convenient as to delight the heart of any medical attendant. Its white walls were of a purity that befitted the high functions of the room, and every convenience was at hand - surgical lavatory, medicine cupboards, electrical sterilising plant, electrical heating arrangements, and all the furnishings of a thoroughly up-to-date place of the kind, His Grace being resolved that in this highly Important department of the work of the institution nothing should be wanting for the promotion of the wellbeing of the patients.

In this survey of the different branches of the establishment, special mention must be made of one of the most picturesque of all the apartments, one that, from its particular decorations and its happy social associations, will be forever engraved in the hearts and memories of the patients - the Circle. Properly so named from its appearance and shape. It rises by a lofty arched dome to a ring of windows at the roof by which it is lighted. Right up the walls and the circular ceiling rises until one's gaze is lost in wonder, tier after tier of grand antlers that one day adorned the heads of lordly deer in the Glenfiddich Forest - a highly picturesque and very pretty sight, appealing strongly to those hundreds of city lads whose previous acquaintance with the noble heads of the red deer of Scotland had been confined to the printed picture or to a scene on canvas in some gallery, so that one can well understand the extraordinary interest they took in a room whose walls were decorated with these heads to the number of no fewer than 480 representing the trophies of many stirring days in the forest and the chief glories of many a handsome "beast". There was also a complete circle of old-time fire buckets of the Castle. most of them inscribed with a "G", denoting that they had come from the old Gordon days and in all likelihood used when the east wing was burned down in 1816. In other respects the Circle will have an abiding place in the affections and memories of these many soldier lads, for in it they spent endless happy hours. That it should be kept thoroughly warm was a matter to which the Duke saw with care, and it was done in an efficient way by means of radiators. A couple of billiard tables were seldom without players, some of the soldiers showing a remarkable skill in the game. Here, too, many of the concerts and whist drives were held, entertainments so numerous that their number was soon lost sight of. The five wards downstairs were used, as required, for cot cases, of which, as has been said, many were of a serious nature, and all the eleven wards that were reached from the Circle were bright and sunny rooms, looking out on vistas of wood and sward, garden and hill, while the structural arrangements were such that the ward door had merely to be opened to enable a patient, who might be too ill and weak to be present, to hear the concerts as the programme proceeded with all the distinctness he would have experienced had he been in the Circle itself. That the wards were ever neat and tidy and made pretty and attractive as the tasteful hands of devoted nurses could make them it is not necessary to say. For these wards of the Castle Hospital tended by volunteers under the skilled guidance of Matron and Sisters would, in every respect, have borne detailed comparison with those of any other regular institution of this nature in the land. Many a hard day and many an anxious night were spent here by these tireless ladies, and the fact is to be understood, and something of what it meant will be appreciated, when there is considered the circumstance that frequently there were forty or more cot cases needing constant attention and care.

In convenient proximity to the wards upstairs in the Circle was the pretty and elegant room of the matron, looking out to the bright and sunny south, its graceful furnishings and adornments including souvenir portraits of the Duke of Richmond and Gordon and of Brigadier-General Lord Esme Gordon Lennox, who was nursed back to health in part by the latest matron of the hospital, Miss Davidson. Adjacent to her apartment was the cosy room of the Sisters, who, throughout all the history of the Hospital, proved tireless in their skilled and gracious work. The largest upstairs ward, facetiously known as the Zoo, had fourteen beds. It was pleasantly warmed by a couple of spacious fireplaces, and its three windows to the north-west took in a remarkable panoramic view of massive, lusty trees, the golf course, and rolling acres of cultivated field, with glimpses of the dancing waters of the Spey appearing through mighty limbs of forest monarchs. On the upstairs, ground, and basement floors of the Circle were fitted up by the Duke baths and washing rooms for the men, the simple fact being that the Hospital never in all its history wanted a thing that His Grace did not at once provide, and how the boys appreciated the fact was apparent in many gratifying ways.

The walls of one of the outer wards - the wards apart from the main hospital block - had, as highly appropriate adornments, handsome models of Spey fish that had fallen captive to the rods of successive Castle house parties. These outside wards were under the immediate charge of a sergeant orderly, who saw that everything was kept and done right, a duty that was on the whole easy of execution, for nothing in all the atmosphere of the Hospital was more remarkable than that, due to the generous, sympathetic, and helpful spirit that ever presided over it these lads were made to feel that they were really just one large family party. Guided by gentle and kindly influences, they came at once under the power or the essential genius of the institution, and on the whole were happy, merry, and well disciplined.

In sunny days, rows of beds were put out in the gardens where the patients found themselves in surroundings fitted to appeal with power to the eye that can see, and in the fragrance of a spot where beauty and charm are infinite, they were reinvigorated physically by the soft pure air coming down the valley from the pine woods. There were dozens of seats specially provided by His Grace - single seats, reclining chairs and comforts and conveniences of the kind came from the same bountiful hand: a revolving shelter, the gift of Mr McCorquodale, Dalchroy, was found, on occasions, a great boon, so that outside, as inside, provision was made for every need, with the one end in view, that of restoring to health and strength and to a fresh outlook on life's affairs, men who had suffered in the great cataclysm of modern war.

THE HOSPITAL STAFF

In all its officials and in all its staff, the Hospital was throughout its career most fortunate, and to that fact is to be attributed to a large extent the abounding measure of success that attended every item of its fine record of achievement. All were animated by the same inspiration, all had one common outlook - the benefit of the men who were within its hospitable walls, and when that was satisfied they felt that their reward was full and complete.

The institution was under the direct cognisance and supervision of that most merciful of all human institutions - the Society of the Red Cross - and, while its administration was in the hands of the Medical Officer and Matron, the directing and consulting power of the organisation in its broader outlines lay with Colonel Scott Riddell, the Red Cross Commissioner of the North-eastern district; the Officer Commanding 1st Scottish General Hospital; Sir George Bentsen, Chairman of the Scottish Red Cross Society; the visiting medical officers of the Scottish Command, and the Medical Officer of the Hospital. Her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland took a most active and personal interest in the work and arrangements of the Hospital, the results of the discretion and wisdom of her guiding hand being very apparent throughout. all its most successful career.

Dr Mann, Fochabers, was the first Medical Officer, and with the Duke of Richmond and Gordon and Countess Percy he worked and planned for the general furnishing, equipping, and staffing in the opening days. For a year and a half, until compelled by indifferent health to voyage to Southern Seas, Dr Mann was unceasing in his labours at the Hospital, giving ungrudgingly the whole of his time to the wounded soldiers under his care. He was succeeded by Major Taylor, who, in addition to all his medical and military duties, had on his shoulders during these years of war the responsibilities of the position of Provost of Keith, but in accordance with the old and true adage that, it is the busiest man who can as a rule undertake yet some more work, Major Taylor proved himself ever the most skilful, kindly, and tireless of medical attendants.

The Hospital was also fortunate in the succession of skilful and accomplished ladies who were at the head of the nursing staff. At first, the matron was Mrs Inch, who had been a nurse in India, and who was at the time resident in Fochabers. After a little while she was succeeded by Miss Ingram, both ladies doing valued work. Miss Ingram was succeeded by Miss Ethel Burgess, who was matron at Gordon Castle for a period of two years and nine months. She was a member of the Sussex Red Cross Detachment, and before coming North was superintendent of the Bognor Detachment in that county. To Miss Burgess fell important work of administration and the carrying out of the plans of organisation under Countess Percy and the medical officers. Her services were held in the highest appreciation by patients and authorities alike, so that when family claims demanded a return to her home in the South, the affection her work had inspired was shown in many parting gifts from friends in the district. From October 1917, down to the time of the closing of the Hospital, the matron was Miss E B Davidson, a lady who, by her intuition, her tact, her training, her "will to conquer" every difficulty that might emerge in the multifarious duties of the establishment, left behind her a memory of most able and admirable work. Miss Davidson, who received her training at St George's Hospital, London, had before her regular appointment at Gordon Castle aided as interim matron for a couple of months in the spring of 1917, and her selection for the honourable and onerous post was due largely to the success of her able work then. She had previously been matron of the Cullen VAD Hospital, and was specially complimented for her work there by General Culling, of the Army Medical Service. On Leys Castle, Inverness, being opened as an Auxiliary Hospital, Miss Davidson was appointed matron, and she held that position when she was selected for Gordon Castle.

During her highly capable management, Gordon Castle Hospital had its fullest complement of soldiers, with many relays of serious cot cases, and the kindly care and skilful attendance bestowed on the men made the Hospital increasingly popular. It is a remarkable fact, and illustrates, in a fitting way the high professional abilities of the nursing heads of the establishment, that both Miss Burgess and Miss Davidson were awarded the Royal Red Cross decoration in recognition of their valuable services under the Red Cross Society in connection with the war.

The Hospital had for a time the services of one Sister, but when numbers began to mount up to the nineties and a hundred, and when so many serious cases began to come regularly in, Major Taylor found it necessary to appoint an additional Sister, and from February 1918 onwards there were two ladies fully trained and qualified in every way, who held that position on the staff - Sister Macbeath and Sister Buchan. When the number of orthopaedic cases began to be numerous, it was found necessary to appoint a masseuse as well, and her good and faithful work was to be seen in the restored efficiency of the lads who came under her professional care. The general nursing staff came voluntarily from the ladies of Elginshire. They came from every Speyside parish and from Elgin, Lhanbryde, and Lossiemouth, only too glad to be allowed to be of service to men who had been wounded and broken in fighting for the great cause that our country had espoused, and lavished on their charges a whole world of loving labour and tender sympathy. They nursed their patients; they danced of an evening with them, they were their entertainers at many a happy meeting, proving in all things the brightest, the cheeriest, and the most delightful of companions, a veritable tonic in their own bright selves.

A Quartermaster was responsible for the housekeeping duties and had the care of the men's clothing, and a party of ladies came regularly on a similar mission from Fochabers, mending rents, supervising linen and performing other homely but highly valued duties of the kind. This was a great help to the Hospital, and the loving labours of these ladies, as is only right, should be put on record.

Throughout the greater part of the history of the Hospital there was an official cook - an important functionary, indeed, in the eyes of recuperating soldiers - and the kitchen department was all along characterised by the same high measure of efficiency that pertained to the general administration of the institution.

In accordance with the usages of Hospital management there was a House Committee that met monthly to pass accounts and to arrange for any additional equipment that might be required.

The duties of the staff were often heavy and exacting, but their most trying time came in the autumn of 1918, when the great influenza scourge fell heavy on the countryside, and in its ravages spared not even those already victimised in war. Patient and Nurse at the Castle alike were stricken. As may well be imagined it was a period of grave anxiety, for influenza, with pneumonia, the kindred malady that so often followed on, was sweeping off man, woman, and child, not only in this county, but throughout the world. With eight of the Staff and many soldier patients down, matters looked most serious. Those of the Staff who were spared strove nobly to cope with the work that fell heavier and heavier on them with each fresh victim.

But things might well have been strained to breaking point had not servants of the ducal household come to their aid in the emergency and, with a courage and devotion gratefully appreciated by the responsible members of the Staff, shouldered some of the burdens till the strain relaxed.

Yet another period of great anxiety for the Staff followed shortly afterwards when the dreaded smallpox was diagnosed in one patient, but the quarantine measures that were immediately instituted were so effective that this terrible malady, despite its highly contagious nature, was confined to the one patient in whom it first appeared.

In matters of health the Hospital throughout its career was most fortunate, thanks in large measure to the exercise of the high professional skill and care immediately available, and all those who took a responsible part in its administration had reason to congratulate themselves on its immunity from vitally serious epidemics and kindred troubles.

GORDON CASTLE HOSPITAL. SOLDIERS' RECREATIONS

Wet or sunshine, summer or winter, the men had provided for them an infinite variety of games and amusements. There was no opportunity of their being bored at Gordon Castle Hospital. Every minute of every day was capable of being utilised in some pleasant fashion or other, and, inside and outside, the physical and moral environment was such, that men left it with reluctance. One young fellow, indeed, left it recovered; he appeared within its familiar walls in the course of an hour or two. He had gone as far as Orbliston, had turned back, and wished again to be an inmate - an incident that justifies the accepted reputation of the Hospital as being one of the very best in the whole North of Scotland. There were indoor games of all sorts - billiards, bagatelle, cards, draughts, chess, and so on leap to the mind as among those that were the most popular. The Duke of Richmond and Gordon himself saw to it that there was an abundance of newspapers and pictorial matter. The concerts were endless in number, and many were graced by the presence and the performance of artistes of high standing. In not a few of the patients there were found musical and entertaining abilities of quite an exceptional order; many members of the staff were similarly gifted, so that within the Hospital itself there were resources of the kind to quite a wonderful extent. In this lighter but exceedingly important side of the activities of the establishment, a warm leader and coadjutor was ever found in Miss Davidson, who spared no effort to make the Hospital one of the most pleasant, attractive, and delightful of temporary retreats. Dances were got up on short notice - the accommodation was there, there was always a member of the staff or some other one ready to provide the music, and the hours of many a joyous evening were pleasantly whiled away in this infectious cheerful form of amusement. Outside friends rallied to help in a most gratifying and unselfish way. His Grace himself, on several occasions, brought artistes from a distance. Pleasant evenings were given by parties from Aberdeen, Inverurie, Huntly, Keith, Elgin, Buckle, &c; by the ever-welcome Fochabers Concert Company and other local ladies, gentlemen, and children; travelling companies that were in the vicinity gave their services ungrudgingly; while at entertainments held in the Institute Hall, Fochabers, the soldiers were frequently the honoured guests of the evening.

And let it be recalled that amongst these soldiers there were found the most discriminating of critics, for they included lads of quite outstanding musical talent, some of them as singers, some of them as instrumentalists. Memorable, too, are some of the fine contributions of the staff, and many will long have in mind the artistic clear-toned voice of one popular nurse.

The numerous original sketches and fancy dress dances with their happy nights of hilarious preparation were special favourites with the soldiers. There were other days, marked as with a white stone, when drives and picnics were enjoyed. Most attractive outings were provided by the generosity of His Grace himself, whose car was ever at the service of his guests when it was needed for a purpose of the kind. Always a red letter day was that of the long and lovely drive up Speyside to Dalchroy, in Advie, where Mr McCorquodale for a considerable period of the war maintained during the summer months a home for eight patients from Gordon Castle. Mr McCorquodale was in other ways a warm friend of the Hospital. He sent from time to time the wherewithal with which to procure some additional comforts for the men, and his repeated kindly acts of thoughtfulness are remembered with gratitude today by many a gallant soldier lad. There were picnics to Buckie, Garmouth, Lossiemouth, Spey Bay, and other places within driving reach.

The soldiers were often privately entertained in home circles, and various friends gave suppers following upon the concerts. Many a pleasant evening was beguiled, too, by the fascination of whist drives, billiard tournaments, and dances, and in the quieter corners some curious battle experiences came to be modestly related in moments of confidence, and glimpses were sometimes had of family associations which were fitted to make powerful appeal. One instance may be mentioned to illustrate what is said. Among the soldiers who were at the Hospital in the early months of 1919 was Private Dennis Dolan, RASC. He was a hero of Mons and had honours in addition to the Star - the DCM, the Belgian Croix de Guerre, and the French Croix. Descended from a long family line of soldiers, Private Dolan was one of nine brothers who went out with the old "Contemptibles" in 1914, and all of whom came safely through the war. Private Dolan was the only one in a Service Corps, the others being in combatant regiments, and strange to say he alone of the nine was wounded. His honours and wounds were got in connection with the rescue of wounded under gunfire. The brothers have a big aggregate of honours to add to those already in the family - Peninsular, Crimean, Indian Mutiny, South African, &c. The father is a veteran Royal Scot and holds two letters of congratulation from the King, and one from the Prime Minister. That is a little bit of family history that will be cherished among all the appealing memories of the Hospital.

Outdoor games were immediately at hand, for within the extensive surroundings of the Castle were all facilities for such sports as golf, cricket, football, quoits, croquet, boating, and hockey; in the season there was skating, and, by the generous direction of His Grace, anglers had an opportunity of trying their skill in some of the most famous salmon pools in Scotland.

His Grace's overflowing sympathy with wounded and suffering men has been noted from time to time in the foregoing pages, but in addition there was the warm personal touch that illumined it all. All the writing paper that was used in the Hospital was the gift of His Grace.

Daily and weekly papers, illustrated papers, monthly magazines he provided in profusion. Game came regularly from the same bountiful hand, venison in its season afforded a novel delicacy, every week regularly a supply of fish arrived at the Hospital from His Grace, the Castle Gardens provided vegetables; for the first year of the Hospital this most generous of friends supplied the whole of the large amount of fuel that the necessities of the institution claimed; his gifts of cigarettes and comforts of the kind were constant and endless; the whole of the rooms were arranged and put in order for their new uses, necessitating in some cases considerable structural alterations, at the expense of this princely donor. His Grace, when in residence at the Castle, visited the wards regularly, and took a warm interest in many of the lads. He liked himself to give pictorial papers to the badly wounded who might be confined to bed or might be unable to walk; he liked to have a little sympathetic chat with them, and he entered with sympathy into their little schemes and projects; he knew what a great treat and satisfaction it was to the angling soldier and to his folks at home alike for the soldier angler to be able to send to his people a Spey fish he had himself caught, and one day proudly remembered no doubt by the Lovat Scout concerned, there was sent to His Majesty, who has himself fished these noble waters, a beautiful salmon, with a label attached to it telling that it had been captured by a wounded soldier of the Gordon Castle Hospital.

When some of the lads left, they found among their new belongings a lordly set of antlers, gifts of His Grace, that in their homes will ever be cherished as prized trophies. The grounds, the gardens, and all around were ever free to the men. When they desired it they were shown over the rooms of the Castle. For the more important entertainments they had the use of the magnificent ducal dining-room, which His Grace had fitted up with a stage and all the appropriate appurtenances of a concert hall, and towards the close of the Hospital dances also were held in this room. In every way that a thoughtful mind and a generous heart could suggest the Duke sought to promote the comfort, happiness, and wellbeing of those thousands of lads who found a temporary retreat under his roof-tree.

Small wonder is it, therefore, that there should have been received at the Hospital countless letters of thanks and appreciation, emanating from grateful hearts, expressive of their sense of indebtedness to the head of the noble family of whose home they had been inmates and of the loving care and devotion expended on their behalf by every member of the administrative staff.

There can be easily understood the feelings of interest and pleasure with which His Grace's soldier-guests took advantage of the frequent opportunities afforded of inspecting the valuable and historic treasures that, gathered in many lands and around which cling memories and associations of a most interesting kind, find a home at Gordon Castle.

And, as might be expected, there was great interest shown in the unique collection that is here of weapons, battle trophies, and regimental colours, constituting in their variety and in their personal associations one of the most valuable and appealing collections of the kind that is in private possession in this country. Small wonder that the soldiers lingered long over many of these historic specimens, and spent here hours of the most lively interest in their tour of inspection.

Swords they saw in profusion, ranging in antiquity from a mighty two-handed weapon that had seen the early dawn of civilisation to the finished Court dress rapier of the last century; real Andrea Feraras that had duelled in the sixteenth century, and still retained their cunning suppleness and strength that defy the imitation of the modern armourer; old broadswords that had struck a stout blow for the Covenant; Highland back-swords that had been drawn at Culloden, sabres that dashing French dragoons had wielded at Waterloo; the tulwar with which Tippoo Sahib had fought to the death at Seringapatam; the scimitar that had decapitated the enemies of Ali Pasha, the sword of the Spanish King Joseph, and others, many others, were there, all emanating a halo of old-world romance and bye-gone chivalry in the eyes of those who had looked on modern war through its acrid fumes of explosives and clouds of poison gas. Bows, crossbows, spears, halberds. stiletos. dirks, daggers, targets, matchlocks, flintlocks, blunderbusses, duelling pistols. hunting knives, bayonets, almost all the paraphernalia of war and the chase from all climes and all ages were there represented.

Of special interest to the soldier-patients were the old tattered colours that had waved in the van of our famous Scottish regiments in many a fierce fought battle in Flanders and the Peninsula The oldest complete Stand of Colours of the oldest regiment in the British Army - the Royal Scots - claimed the homage of all the soldiers who behold it. Of great interest to the gallant Gordon was the old yellow silk flag of Jane Maxwell, the 4th Duchess of Gordon. who had played such a great part in the recruiting of the first two battalions of that renowned Highland regiment.

Amongst the trophies was the Boer flag that had flown over the Volksraad during the South African War, till lowered by its captors. At least one of the soldier-patients had seen this flag taken down by Lord Settrington on that occasion, and the sight of it again in the Castle must to him have been fraught with the reminiscences of the strenuous campaign of the dusty veldt.

Such is the barest outline of what by His Grace's thoughtful consideration was seen in this department of the private treasures of the Castle by the soldiers who occupied its wards, but it is sufficient to indicate the abounding interest with which the historic collection was inspected by those lads from all parts of the Empire.

An end, however, comes to all things. An end came to the Great. War. And so, in course, came an end also to the gracious activities of the Gordon Castle Hospital. That day came on 4th May 1919. The Castle and its permanent staff returned to the ways of the old routine. An Army Medical Officer no longer made his calls. Matron went, Sisters went, the nursing staff returned to their homes in the county, the soldiers departed, the wards were silent. The institution and its work, of the value of which no estimate can be too extravagant, remain now only in memory.

But so long as memory lasts so long will these thousands of men from throughout the British Empire have imprinted in their minds and hearts a deep and overflowing sense of the bountiful and over-abounding hospitality and generosity of the head of the historic House of Gordon; of the warm and genuine kindness and consideration and skilled treatment showered upon them, not once or twice, but always, by hospital staff and friends; the wealth of affectionate service they ever enjoyed; and one can well believe that today.

And in days yet to come, there are, and will be, recalled with supreme satisfaction and gratitude the long, happy summer days, the bright and merry winter evenings, spent in and around the northern family seat of the noble Duke, and that these lads will cherish while they live memories of the loving goodwill with which on all hands they were dowered in convalescent days spent within sound and reach of the storied Spey.

WB

A WAR-TIME GALA DAY

During the course of the War, Gordon Castle was more even than the seat of one of the finest auxiliary hospitals in Scotland. It was ever the centre, the mainspring, of countless activities on behalf of war charities that became more and more necessary with the prolongation of the struggle. Every summer saw an effort made to reinforce the resources of one or other of the deserving relief funds, and the soldier-patients of the Castle not only took hearty interest in these efforts, but in many practical ways did what they could to promote their success.

Perhaps the best known and most successful of these philanthropic schemes was the great Fête at the Castle in the autumn of 1916. The peoples of Banffshire and Morayshire will long remember the festivities of that glorious September day when the spirit of cheery optimism and infectious good-fellowship completely dispelled the gloom of the dull, lowering war-clouds, and effaced the thoughts of the deathly thunders that then growled unceasingly on the Somme. That the Fête was such an enormous success cannot be wondered at, when it is recalled that it was on behalf of a fund to provide comforts for those renowned Highland Regiments - the Gordons and Seaforths - at that moment battling gallantly in far Picardy, adding laurels to their crests and honour to the motherland in the fierce-fought struggle for Bapaume; and their fellow-countrymen of Banff and Morayshire testified the high appreciation in which their gallantry was held in the festive crowds that assembled before the historic old Castle on that lovely autumn day. From all parts of the counties they came to Fochabers - by rail and by road, by coach, by car, and by cycle. Pedestrians by the thousand streamed towards the various entrances to the Castle, and never did the old tower in its five hundred years' existence lord it over a more animated gathering. The Castle surroundings, exquisitely lovely at all times, seemed in truth to have adorned themselves with new splendours for the occasion. The gardens were aglow with living colours that waved joyously in every breeze, as if also imbued with the spirit of the day. All around, great stately trees of massive girth and mighty branches, as yet lightly touched by the hues of autumn, gave grateful shade from the warm harvest sun.

In his capacity of Lord Lieutenant of the Counties of Banff and Elgin, and in keeping with the tradition that has ever closely associated the House of Gordon with the famous Highland Regiments, His Grace, the present Duke, presided over the vast assembly, and early in the afternoon he opened the proceedings with a short speech that summed up in a few happily chosen sentences the aims and purposes of the gathering. The further proceedings of the day were thereupon inaugurated and carried out according to a lengthy and carefully prepared programme.

The sports events were hotly contested, and His Grace and Lady Caroline Gordon Lennox, who fulfilled the onerous duties of judges in many of the items, had no light task before them. But, though the sports claimed the attention of a large audience, they were by no means the only features of interest. Open dancing boards were never without patrons. At another point a talented young lady gave exhibition performances in classical dancing. In another quarter an auctioneer, presiding over some brisk bidding, sold gift articles at fabulous prices in the sacred name of charity. Here the "Gipsies of Epping" in a gay caravan unfolded the future to all aspirants. In a shady nook a scientific necromancer read the fates as graven on the palms of clients.

Military bands from Fort George, and the town bands of Buckie and Elgin, discoursed excellent music throughout all the proceedings. The colonnade to the east of the Castle was converted for the day into a series of stalls, presided over by Countess Percy, ably aided by willing assistants, and here game, dairy produce, fruit, flowers, sweets, and tobacco were retailed to a steady stream of patrons. Three great marquees, well equipped and staffed by voluntary helpers, strove to cope with the arduous task of catering refreshments to the spectators, who thronged thither by hundreds.

The familiar blue of the soldier-patients of the district hospitals was conspicuous as they merged here and there amid the crowds. Some hobbled on crutches, others limped with the aid of sticks, some had arms supported by slings, others wore bandages round their heads, but all smoked the inevitable cigarette, and testified their enjoyment of the day in cheery smiles and ready laughter. That the fighting spirit was not yet dead in them, or their aim marred by the "Blighty touch", the effigies of Big and Little Willie or Von Tirpitz - the wartime substitutes for Aunt Sally - could bear abundant testimony. A pleasing feature of the day was the generous provision in the programme that was made for the convalescent patients. Their pillow fight was a star item, and provoked much merriment amongst the spectators, for, despite their obvious physical handicap, the comparative inoffensiveness of their weapons, and the amicable nature of the hatred, they displayed much the same energy and dash in this action as had won them fame in the give-and-take of Beaumont Hamel or the hand-to-hand encounters of Devil's Wood.

An attraction that claimed the interest of a great number of the assembly was the big marquee in which a collection of War relics was on exhibition. Here grim souvenirs of old-time wars lay cheek by jowl with yet grimmer trophies of the greatest of wars. The tulwar of Tippoo Sahib lay beside the bayonet of a Brandenburger - a toy-like bombard of the early fifteenth century contrasted with a German field gun that had spat death on the Gordons at Loos. Here, too, was the standard made by Jean Maxwell for recruiting the second battalion of the Gordons, and innumerable trophies of the prowess of that gallant regiment throughout the wars of the last two centuries were also on view.

Perfect to the end, the day wore on with never a hitch to mar the harmony. The fall of evening brought with it the close of the day's proceedings before one could realise how fast the winged hours had sped.

The prize distribution was the concluding item of the programme, and the success of the day could well be gauged in the cheers of the huge crowd that thronged round the platform where Countess Percy and Lady Caroline Gordon Lennox presented to each winner a fitting trophy of his prowess amidst general applause and congratulation.

Then with the strains of music still ringing in their ears, the great gathering slowly dispersed in minimum little groups laughing and chatting gaily, heavy hearts and anxious thoughts cast to the winds by the magic touch of hope that breathed throughout. the long day's good fellowship.

JT

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