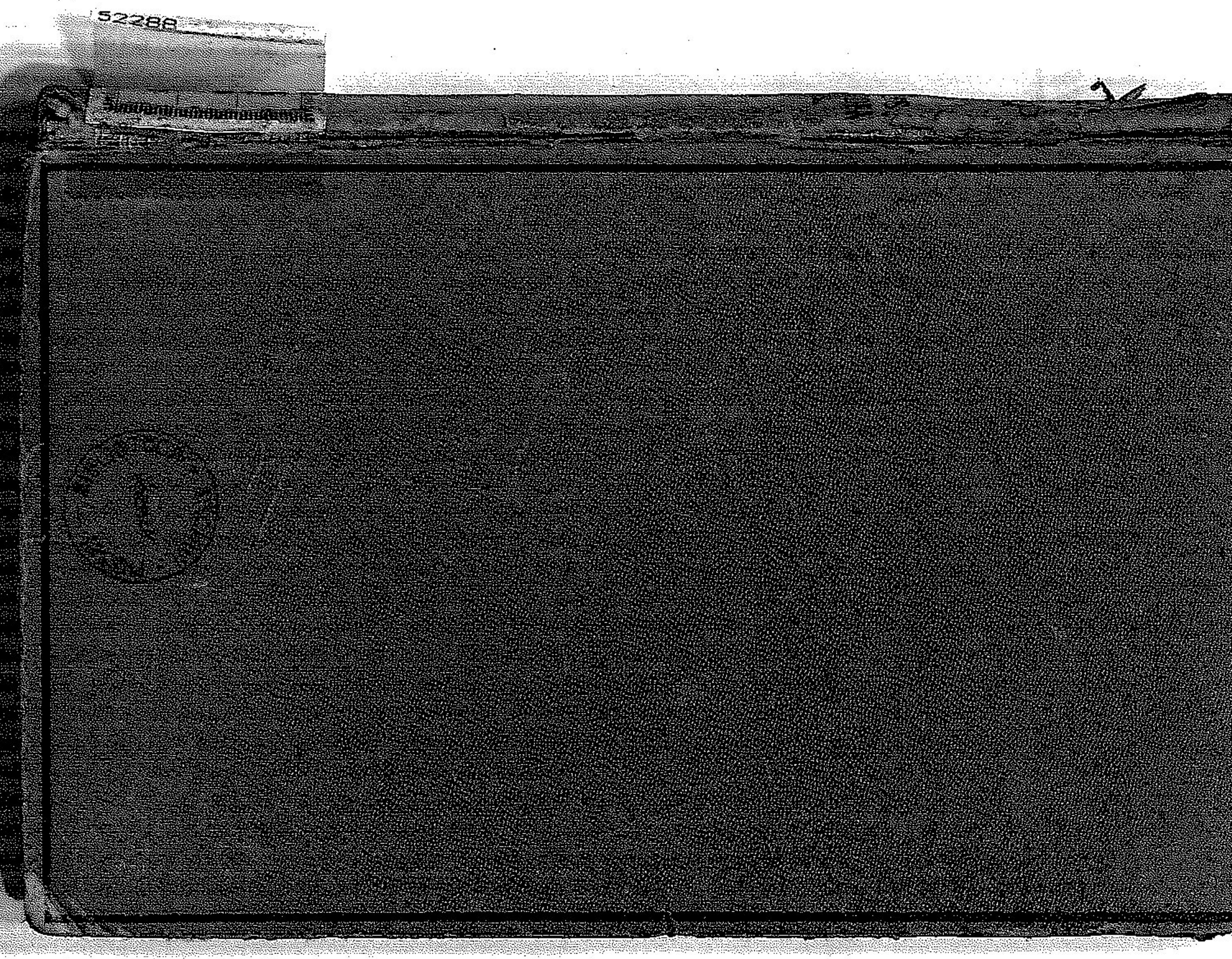

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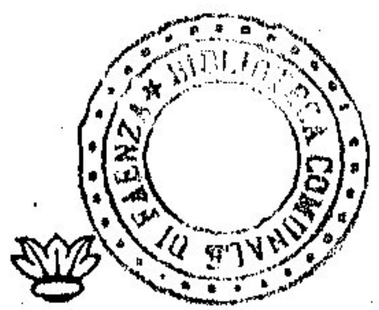
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FAENZA REST CAMP

A Story of the Mediterranean L. of C.

By

Lt.-Colonel H. S. SCOTT-HARDEN, F.R.G.S.



LONDON: HUTCHINSON & CO.
:: 34, *PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.* ::

PREFACE

IN the spring of 1917 enemy submarine warfare became such a menace to the transports conveying troops, and to Hospital ships carrying sick and wounded across the Mediterranean, that it was necessary to open a new route. In spite of the vigilance of the escorts provided by British, French, and Japanese destroyers, the U-boats had a great advantage in secret hiding-places and bases along the coasts, where they could safely lie and replenish their stores. In fact, the Mediterranean with its islands dotted about the deep waters became a happy-hunting-sea for the pirates to carry on their dirty work—work which forms a dark chapter as far as the Germans are concerned in the war.

Whether a scheme to bring troops overland through Italy and France in case of necessity had been prearranged, I do not know. Anyhow, when the authorities realised that something had to be done to safeguard the lives of those waiting to come home on leave, and also of drafts being sent out to the Eastern theatres of war, plans seemed to have materialised very rapidly. These plans not only meant the complete co-operation of the British, French, and Italian governments, but considerable thought and organisation regarding the supply of rolling stock and coal ; and also the use of the lines. Early in May, a conference was held at General Headquarters, France, when many of those selected for appointments on the new L. of C. were present. Preliminary arrangements were discussed and plans drawn up. A few days later the various staffs were selected and sent to their destinations. This was the beginning of the Eastern lines of communication with Cherbourg as the northern base, and Taranto at the heel of Italy at the other end of the line—a distance of about fourteen hundred miles. At both these places there were to be large camps, and between them, in order to give the troops twenty-four hours' rest, two more camps were to be built, one at St. Germain near Lyons, which was the headquarters of the line, and another at Faenza

near Bologna in Italy. The overland journey was to take about seven days.

It can be well understood that arrangements in connection with their movements required most careful consideration regarding personnel, and considerable materials to carry it out. It meant that a large staff was necessary, and that every department in the Army should have its representatives in some capacity of the organisation in the camps and along the route.

The line was in operation for two and a half years, and approximately six hundred and fifty thousand officers, petty officers, warrant officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the Royal Navy, the Army, the Royal Air Force, Merchant Service and Labour units, from every theatre of war, and from every part of the empire, passed through the camps and over the route.

Probably every unit in the Army List was represented, as well as Cadets, Y.M.C.A., and Church Army officials, Distressed British Seamen, and a number of civilians, including many women and children travelling under military arrangements.

This book has been written at the request of many who travelled in troop trains through France and Italy, to or from Salonica and other parts of the East.

I would like to state that Faenza Camp and its dependencies on the Adriatic was made and maintained entirely by officers holding Territorial or temporary commissions, who gave me the greatest assistance by their loyalty and devotion to duty at all times. Without their help Faenza could never have attained such a popularity amongst soldiers. The Rest Camp during the two and a half years of its existence probably cost the State less than any other institution of the sort in any theatre of war where the great game of soldiering was played.

The writer hopes that readers will not be too severe with their criticisms of a book which, he trusts, will not only serve as a remembrance to those who knew the overland route through Italy, but also will show the many difficulties which he and his staff had to contend with in trying to make them happy in a rest camp on the Mediterranean L. of C.

1920. H. S. S. H.

CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE - - - - - - - - - iii

CHAPTER I

ON THE WESTERN FRONT—ORDERS TO PROCEED TO ITALY—JOURNEY TO LYONS—A REST CAMP ON THE MEDITERRANEAN L. OF C.—A FRONTIER R.T.O.—FROM MODANE TO BOLOGNA *via* TURIN—BOLOGNA - - - - - 9

CHAPTER II

ARRIVAL AT FAENZA—ASSISTANCE FROM STAFF AND FRIENDS—FAENZA A TYPICAL PROVINCIAL ITALIAN TOWN—THE FIRST CONTINGENT OF BRITISH SOLDIERS—A SELF-MADE N.C.O—MAKING PLANS FOR BUILDING A MODEL CAMP—THE ARMY RAILWAY TRAFFIC OFFICIALS - - - - 17

CHAPTER III

AN INDIAN CAMP—VISITS FROM ITALIAN OFFICIALS—THE VAUDEVILLE THEATRE—RAVENNA—A REGENT STREET AT FAENZA—THE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE CANTEEN—THE OFFICERS' MESS—APPRECIATION FROM OFFICERS IN TRANSIT—THE RESULT OF THE CAPORETTO DISASTER—A NEW RÉGIME—THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF COMMUNICATIONS - 29

CHAPTER IV

WORK OF THE ROYAL ENGINEERS—ATHLETIC SPORTS—A FOOTBALL MATCH IN BOLOGNA—DESCRIPTION FROM AN ITALIAN NEWSPAPER—CAMP WORK AND THE SMALL STAFF TO CARRY IT OUT—SOME MEN WE MET—STORIES AND REMINISCENCES OF OFFICERS PASSING THROUGH—THE VILLA RIPOSO AND SOME REMARKS—THE OFFICERS' CAMP—CUTTINGS FROM A PAPER—THE AUSTRALIANS—SOME OTHER VISITORS—BRITISH AND ITALIAN TROOP TRAINS - 44

PAGE

CHAPTER V

AN OFFICERS' MESS-HOUSE—ST.-MARTIN'S-IN-THE-FIELDS CHURCH IN ITALY—CASTELLAMARE AND OTHER POSTS ON THE ADRIATIC LINE—VISIT FROM THE KING OF ITALY—FOURTEENTH OF JULY DEMONSTRATIONS IN ITALY—THE REPUBLIC OF SAN MARINO AND ELECTION OF CAPTAINS REGENT—BATTALIONS FOR FRANCE—SHOP KEEPERS AND THEIR ADVERTISEMENTS—ENTERTAINMENTS AT THE OPERA HOUSE—PRISONERS OF WAR FROM KUT - - - 61

CHAPTER VI

FLORENCE HOSPITALITY—"CARO VIVERE" STRIKES—OFFER OF HELP FROM ITALIAN OFFICERS—DUTIES OF AN AREA-COMMANDANT IN ITALY—RESPONSIBILITIES OF A COMMANDANT—EARTHQUAKE SHOCKS AT FAENZA—ST. SOPHIA AND BORGO SAN LORENZO—A JEWISH BATTALION—ARRIVAL OF SERBIAN CHILDREN—CIVILIANS TRAVELLING ON MILITARY TRAINS—THE BRITISH WEST INDIES REGIMENT - - 74

CHAPTER VII

THE AMERICAN Y.M.C.A.—THE HOSPITAL AND ITS WORK—A BRITISH SOLDIER'S CEMETERY IN ITALY—THE GENOVA CAVALRY—GALLANT ITALIAN DRAGOONS—TRIESTE AND FIUME—FEELINGS TOWARDS THE ENGLISH—ECONOMIC LIFE IN ITALY—FRIENDSHIP WITH THE ITALIANS—EFFECT OF DEMOBILISATION—WORK OF THE ROYAL ARMY SERVICE CORPS—THE NAVY AND ARMY CANTEEN BOARD—SOME CAMP CHARACTERS - - - - - - - 87

CHAPTER VIII

THE LAST PHASE—VISITS FROM MEMBERS OF DISPOSAL BOARD (MINISTRY OF MUNITIONS)—TWO TRAINS HELD UP OWING TO RAILWAY STRIKES—BEHAVIOUR OF TROOPS—A GOOD IMPRESSION—A REVIEW—CLOSING DOWN AND SALE OF THE CAMP—THE LAST DAYS—DEPARTURE - - - - 100

MEMORIES - - - - - - - - 108

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FACING PAGE

HOISTING THE UNION JACK OVER HEADQUARTERS - 8

ST. MARTIN'S-IN-THE-FIELDS CHURCH - - - - 60

H.M. THE KING OF ITALY IN CONVERSATION WITH THE COMMANDANT - - - - - - - 66

SAN MARINO - - - - - - - 68

LO STROZZINO, FLORENCE - - - - - 78

THE BRITISH CEMETERY, FAENZA - - - - 86

OFFICERS' HUTS, PERMANENT STAFF - - - - 94

HOMEWARD BOUND - - - - - - 104

ERRATA.

Page 57, line 31, for *Toronto* read *Taranto.*

Page 65, line 35, for *mess* read *men's.*

PAGE

CHAPTER V

AN OFFICERS' MESS-HOUSE—ST.-MARTIN'S-IN-THE-FIELDS CHURCH IN ITALY—CASTELLAMARE AND OTHER POSTS ON THE ADRIATIC LINE—VISIT FROM THE KING OF ITALY—FOURTEENTH OF JULY DEMONSTRATIONS IN ITALY—THE REPUBLIC OF SAN MARINO AND ELECTION OF CAPTAINS REGENT—BATTALIONS FOR FRANCE—SHOP KEEPERS AND THEIR ADVERTISEMENTS—ENTERTAINMENTS AT THE OPERA HOUSE—PRISONERS OF WAR FROM KUT - - - - 61

IN ITALY—FRIENDSHIP WITH THE ITALIANS—EFFECT OF DEMOBILISATION—WORK OF THE ROYAL ARMY SERVICE CORPS—THE NAVY AND ARMY CANTEEN BOARD—SOME CAMP CHARACTERS - - - - - - - 87

CHAPTER VIII

THE LAST PHASE—VISITS FROM MEMBERS OF DISPOSAL BOARD (MINISTRY OF MUNITIONS)—TWO TRAINS HELD UP OWING TO RAILWAY STRIKES—BEHAVIOUR OF TROOPS—A GOOD IMPRESSION—A REVIEW—CLOSING DOWN AND SALE OF THE CAMP—THE LAST DAYS—DEPARTURE - - - - 100

MEMORIES - - - - - - - - - 108

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FACING PAGE

HOISTING THE UNION JACK OVER HEADQUARTERS - 8

PARK LANE, LEADING TO PICCADILLY - - - 16

THE BILLIARD SALOON, SHAFTESBURY AVENUE - - 20

H. E. LT.-GENERAL SEGATO VISITS THE INDIAN CAMP - 28

THE CORPORALS' LOUNGE, LEICESTER SQUARE - - 32

THE CAFÉ ROYAL, REGENT STREET - - - 38

THE ARMY AND NAVY STORES, BROMPTON ROAD - 40

THE RECREATION GROUNDS - - - - 46

A COSY CORNER IN THE OFFICERS' CAMP - - 54

ST. MARTIN'S-IN-THE-FIELDS CHURCH - - - 60

H.M. THE KING OF ITALY IN CONVERSATION WITH THE COMMANDANT - - - - - - 66

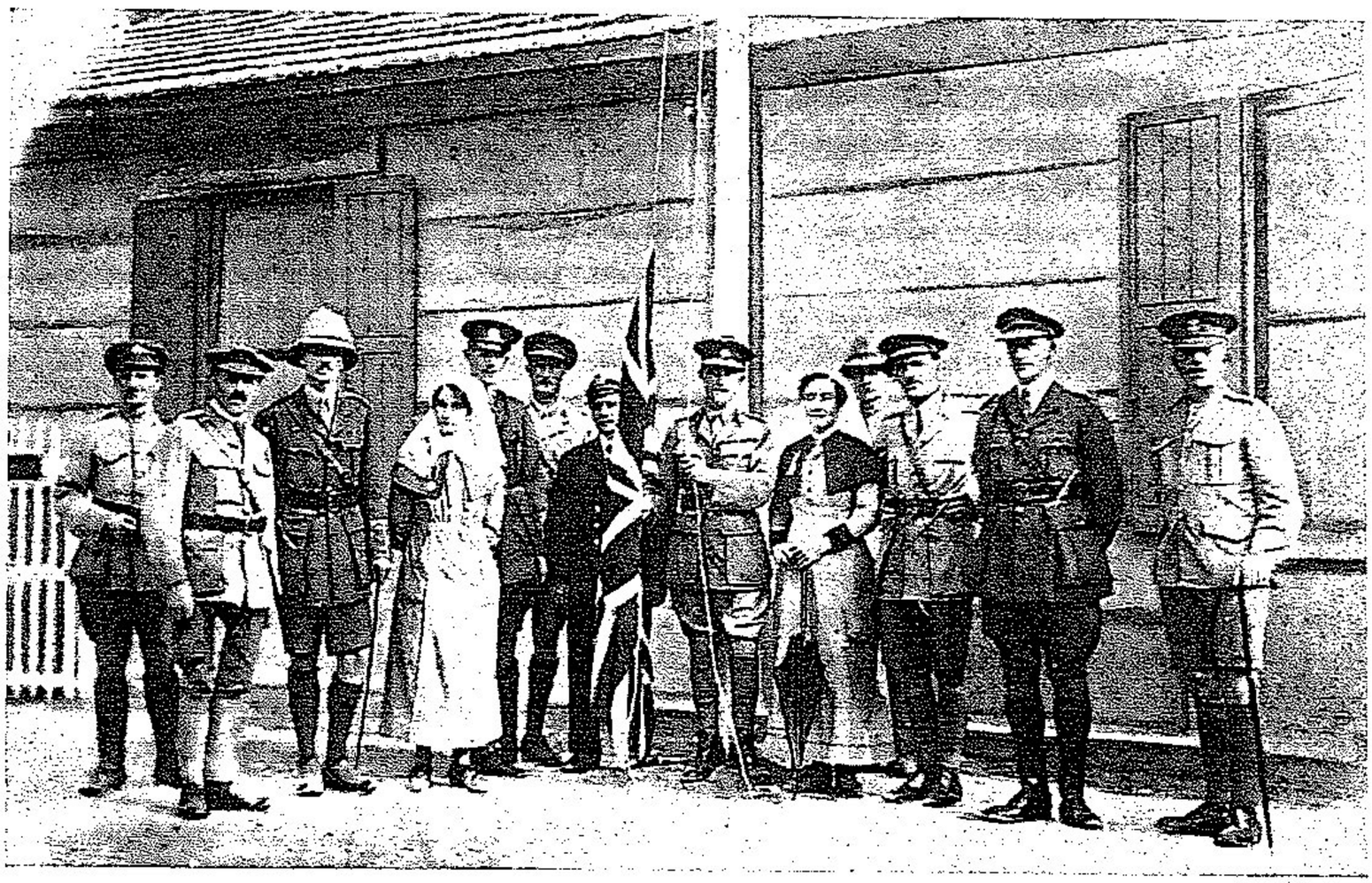
SAN MARINO - - - - - - 68

LO STROZZINO, FLORENCE - - - - 78

THE BRITISH CEMETERY, FAENZA - - - 86

OFFICERS' HUTS, PERMANENT STAFF - - - 94

HOMEWARD BOUND - - - - - 104



HOISTING THE UNION JACK OVER THE HEADQUARTERS. [*To face page* 8.



FAENZA REST CAMP

CHAPTER I

On the Western Front—Orders to Proceed to Italy—Journey to Lyons—A Rest Camp on the Mediterranean L. of C.—A Frontier R.T.O.—From Modane to Bologna *via* Turin—Bologna.

WHEN the line was being organised, I was commandant of a devasted "area" in Northern France, and Town major of one of those villages near St. Eloi, which had suffered so much from shell-fire that only a few houses were left standing intact amongst the ruins. From my office window I looked on fields, once fully cultivated, now camping-grounds for troops between lines of old trenches and dug-outs. Here and there were cages for German prisoners. In the distance the walls of Arras Cathedral peeped through the trees. As I sat listening to the sounds of heavy gun-fire and watching observation balloons, a motor cyclist drew up at the door. I thought it was probably a message from Corps Headquarters to find billets for a brigade coming out of the line to rest. this being the special job of a Town major, and, as many who filled these posts know from experience, it was often extremely difficult work to carry out, although everyone expected accommodation whenever they appeared, at any time of the day and night.

The orders brought by the despatch-rider on that hot summer afternoon were instructing me to proceed to Italy. One certainly never knew where one might be sent to, but this came as a sudden and somewhat unexpected surprise—orders to proceed forthwith to take up the duties as commandant of a Rest Camp seemed too good to be true. After

two years in France, and with the existing circumstances, the move was a welcome change.

"Forthwith" may mean at once, to-morrow, or even a day or two later, according to the disposition of the individual and the ideas and wishes of the immediate superior officer. It also depends on the nature of the job, details of handing over, and when it is possible to leave.

As it sometimes happens that orders are cancelled, I lost no time in handing over.

The date of departure, which had to be notified, was very early the following morning.

The last night in that village near Arras was one to be remembered.

The walls of my house shook from a terrific bombardment all along the line from the Vimy Ridge to Oppy, and a Boche airman at about 11 p.m., or twenty-three hours, successfully dropped several bombs in a neighbouring garden about fifty yards away.

My batman, whom I discovered whilst he was acting as an attendant at some Corps' baths on the Scarpe, and who was a butler in private life, asked if he could accompany me to Italy. To the sounds of one of the heaviest artillery duels which had been heard for weeks, he packed up my kit, and a few souvenirs which we had collected from the trenches.

It was therefore a sudden and dramatic change of scene when the next morning we started on our long journey in a car kindly lent by the S.M.T.O., which, being interpreted, means "Senior Mechanical Transport Officer," one to be on very good terms with when leave is due, or a move is on the *tapis*.

The road from Arras to Amiens *vía* Doullens, as everyone knows, passes through Beaumetz and many little villages, each one bringing back some recollection of the war, especially the famous corner house known as "La Bel Air." Each kilomètre now took one farther away from the trenches and the sound of guns, and the scenes brought back many happy moments, mingled, alas! with sadness through loss of friends.

I thought afterwards, when the Germans poured through Ham and Peronne and Albert and were even close to Amiens, of the peaceful villages and hamlets and their fields of corn, which

we had passed as we approached the old cathedral city from the uplands on that Sunday morning full of summer sunshine.

As we entered the streets of Amiens, full of soldiers, both British and French, no one would have dreamed that within a few months every third house in the place would have suffered from shell-fire and that the inhabitants would have taken refuge in their cellars.

The following evening I reached Lyons and duly presented myself at the Headquarters of the new line.

* * *

The first words the General said to me were, "Well, are you glad you have come?" To which I replied, "Yes, very, sir, but I don't know how I managed to get here." His answer was, "I asked for you."

The interview being over, I made my way to the heads of the various departments and from there was given much information about the work I had to do. It appeared that the camp at Faenza had already been started, but the state of affairs there was not altogether satisfactory and my mission was to go and put things right, being given a free hand to do so. The following morning the General motored me to St. Germain to see what a Rest Camp looked like. The arrangements there made a great impression on my mind. The site was probably the best which could be secured, but it was not a good one, especially in wet weather; the valley where the camp was pitched required an enormous amount of drainage, and even then it would be muddy. In summer, as one saw it, it was delightful, and I wondered if I could make a camp like it in Italy. The Commandant, who had been for many years in South Africa, had made a hobby of growing vegetables and rearing pigs, and I was taken to see both the ploughed land and the pigsties.

In connection with the pigs, there is an anecdote which may perhaps now be told. It appeared that one morning, when the animals were inspected, it was found that they had been put on the Staff, for blue tabs were painted on their backs. This was a practical joke by some young officers who resented the rules and regulations of the establishment. Whether it is true or not, I cannot say, but the story was passed down the line.

With best wishes from the G.O.C. and Staff, and having

made many notes regarding one's duties and Rest Camps in general, I started for Modane, which was the Clapham Junction of the long route and the jumping-off place for Rome.

***

Modane was an interesting and important point of the journey. Not only because it was the frontier station, where, later, trains full of British soldiers were to pass, but also because it was there that the Faenza command commenced. And I would add, to use an official way of introducing the last and often the most important paragraph of a letter, that the command stretched as far as Castellamare on the Adriatic, a distance of four hundred miles in one direction, and along the Italian Riviera to Vintimiglia in another.

***

The R.T O. at Modane in those days was a most genial person and an agreeable companion. He was expert at his job, and by his kindness and courtesy he earned the thanks and praise of all who passed his way, and the O.B.E. One of his chief employments—and he was kept fully occupied—was meeting officials of high rank, and securing for them and their friends suitable accommodation on the trains. There were more "brass hats" collected at Modane station than I had seen even at a Corps Headquarters in France. They were either coming from or going to all parts of the world *via* Rome. The R.T.O. at the frontier was obviously a man to know and to know well. Even the stationmasters, both French and Italian, sank into insignificance beside him, and the custom-house officials seemed entirely at his command. He was the uncrowned king of the Mont Cenis tunnel from a military point of view, and not one of Thomas Cook & Sons' officials could compete with him in knowledge of trains or how to secure a sleeping-berth. One of his many duties was to arrange rendezvous between Intelligence agents. Another was to meet officers' wives, and see that they were placed under proper escort to their destinations.

When I arrived at Modane, after presenting my credentials in the shape of a "movement order" and a chit of introduction, I received in return a great deal of help. Moreover, the journey to Turin, my next stop, was comfortably arranged on the following day. Whilst waiting at Modane the R.T.O.

showed me the lost-luggage department, and there one saw in that interesting place the most extraordinary collection of articles which it would be possible to find. What it must have been like, twelve months later, I cannot conceive, as all the troops changed trains here and usually parted with some of their baggage. On the platform was a pile of mail-bags of letters, parcels, etc., from London, Paris, and Lyons. These were forwarded to the nearest towns where troops were stationed through the Italian postal service, as there were at that time no military post-offices in Italy.

Just before my train started my R.T.O. friend said in his usual diplomatic way, "I must introduce you to Mrs. ——; she is the wife of a naval officer and is going to Venice. You might escort her as far as Turin." For the first time then, I realised one had left the zone of war where no ladies could travel, for in Italy there were no such restrictions until after the Caporetto disaster.

The views round Aix-les-Bains and Chambery had been very beautiful, especially when the train skirted the lake, but as one emerged from the long tunnel under the heights of the Col de Frejus, still capped with snow, one felt that here was a country at war yet untouched by the enemy. The Italian army was still holding that great mountain-barrier and guarding the passes from Trentino to the Isonzo, which lead to the Plains of Lombardy and Venetia. I thought what a pleasure it would be for the British soldier to travel through these valleys bathed in sunshine; and what an education for him to see a country which d'Annunzio once called "a museum of antiquities, a kind of hostelry, a pleasure-resort under a sky painted over with Prussian blue for the benefit of international honeymooners."

***

Turin was a blaze of light. How different from London, where it was difficult to find one's way about the streets at night! Evidently there were no fears of attacks by the knights of the air here in Italy. Every shop, restaurant and place of amusement was illuminated and might have been placarded in huge letters, "Business as usual." The station presented a lively scene, and amongst the crowds of travellers there were a few British Tommies. I asked where these men

were going and found that they belonged to the Artillery up in the mountains, at Montfalcone and Gradisca. They had been invalided for a few weeks' rest in the British Red Cross Hospital, the gift of Mr.—now Sir Walter—Becker, K.B.E. On the platform, too, were groups of Italian soldiers, the men in grey, well-fed, well-clothed and happy, even on the small pay they receive. As Turin was to be one of the halts on the line of the Mediterranean L. of C., I enquired what arrangements had been made, and found that a suitable place was selected for a camp some distance outside the station. There, kitchens and ablution benches were in course of being erected, so that troops could have hot tea and a wash. This was to be one of the many *halte repas* on the journey, and as trains in the early days were not provided with travelling cookers, it was most important that these stopping-places should be well organised and suitably staffed to carry out the duties. The spot chosen was well outside of, and away from, the attractions of the station. This was a lucky find, for the British soldiers and sailors returning from leave might have caused considerable trouble in Turin, judging from incidents which occurred later on, further down the line.

Turin has always been somewhat of a cosmopolitan city, and in pre-war days was much frequented by business men from Germany. I am told that even a day or two after the armistice was signed a German firm opened a shoe-shop in one of the main streets and successfully carried on trade by selling boots and shoes at a cheaper rate than any other establishment in the place.

***

From Turin the Adriatic line, which was that taken by the old P. and O. express trains, passes through the wine-growing country of Asti to Alessandria, and close to the battle-field of Marengo, where Napoleon displayed such brilliant proofs of his military capacity, in his defeat of the Austrians.

From Alessandria the line runs due east to Tortona, and thence on to Voghera and Piacenza. At the latter city the old Roman road, the "Via Emilia," starts and continues on through Rimini to Rome.

From a railway and geographical point of view it would have been much better if the Mediterranean L. of C. Rest Camp in Italy had been built at Voghera, situated as this

place is at the junction of two main lines. Had it been foreseen that British Divisions were likely to be sent to Italy, Faenza would probably never have been selected. And later when the Inspector-General of Communications took up his headquarters at Tortona, near the Base at Aquata, I believe it was on the cards that the Rest Camp would be moved to Voghera.

At the time when I made my first journey into Italy during the war, very few British officers in uniform had been seen in the trains, and one's presence amongst the travellers caused considerable interest. The carriages were crowded and it did not seem to matter whether a passenger possessed a first, second, or even third-class ticket. They just got in wherever they liked and the railway officials looked on and said nothing. The ticket-collectors who occasionally made an appearance *en route* took no notice of the state of affairs, and I was surprised to find that they did not seem to mind whether I had a ticket or not, for I was only once asked to produce a movement order. The Italian officers one met on the trains, although seemingly quite ignorant of the badges of rank on British uniforms, were always courteous and polite, and I have frequently been offered a seat by a young officer who said he wished to stand in the corridor.

At each station on the journey (and the express train stopped whenever it was possible) more people appeared to be waiting on the platform to get in. Nobody seemed to want to get out; and when we finally reached Bologna there were as many as ten passengers with luggage of sorts in a compartment marked for six places, and the corridors were packed.

***

The first views of Bologna, whichever way it is approached by train, make it apparent to the visitor that it must have passed through many interesting times. The towers, one of which is seven feet out of the perpendicular, are alone reminiscent of historical events. They rise up from all parts of the city, which is built under the picturesque spurs of the Apennines.

The heights immediately round the walls to the south are covered with forts which appear like great sentry-boxes guarding the city.

For ages Bologna has been celebrated all over the civilised world as a centre of learning, and its University and Colleges

of Medicine still stand high in the minds of the greatest students of the present time.

From a railway point of view Bologna was one of the most important places in Italy during the war. Practically every line from the south passes through the city. It was through this station that most of the British troop-trains passed *en route* to the Piave; and every train on the Mediterranean L. of C. stopped there. It has been estimated by the authorities, and I do not think the numbers are exaggerated, that seven hundred and fifty thousand British soldiers must have passed through the station in two and a half years. Bologna is the headquarters of the VIth Italian Territorial Army Corps, and it was from this city and the districts round that many of the famous Bersaglieri regiments found their recruits, and the ranks of the brave "Arditi" were filled. During the war the streets and cafés were always crowded with soldiers; in fact, Bologna was a veritable *place d'armes*.

Although not possessing the artistic attractions of Florence, or the restaurants, shops, and places of amusement of Milan, Bologna, like all large cities, has its own particular interest.

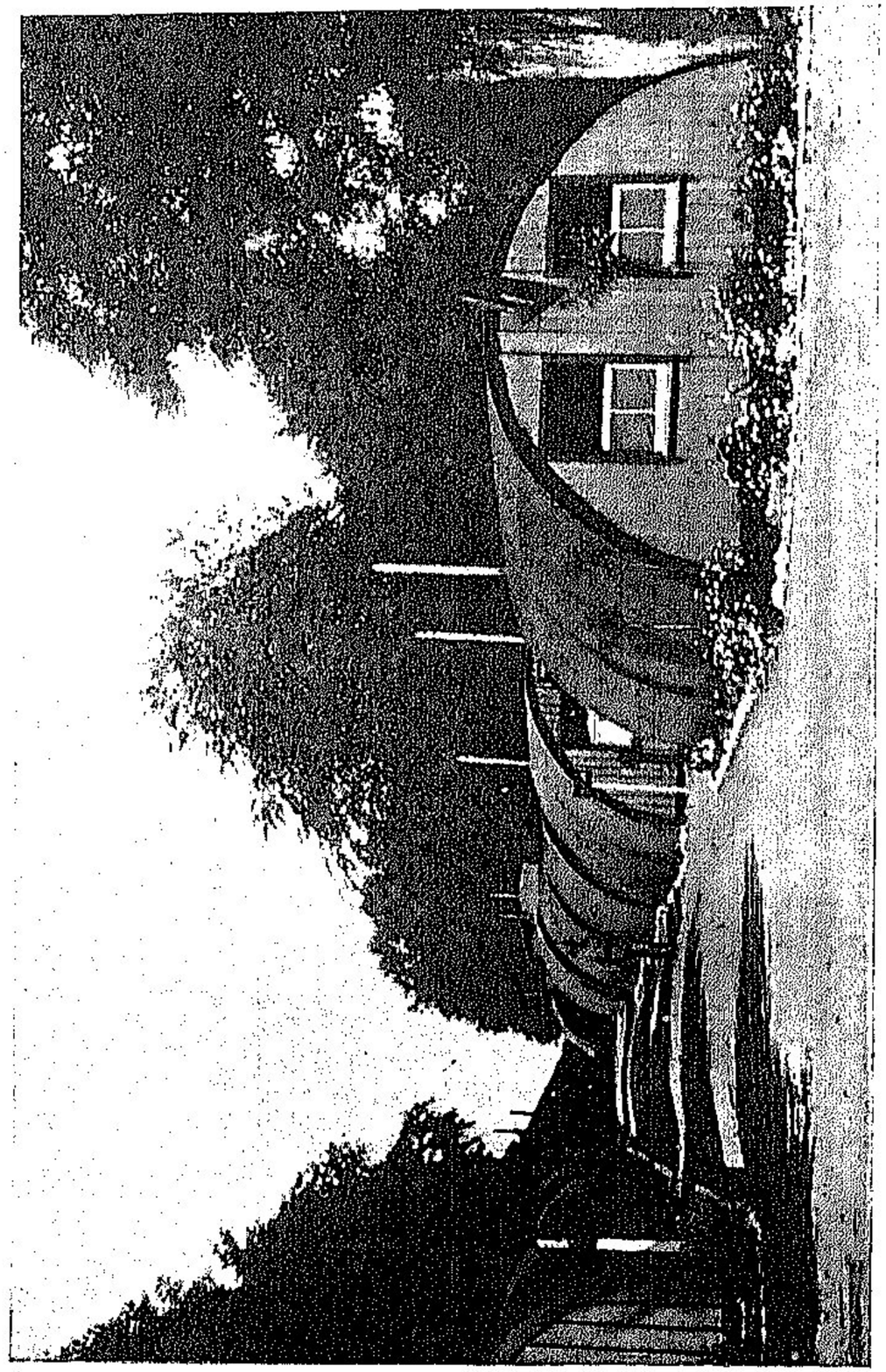
Few cities in Italy can claim such beautiful old palaces and such well-built streets. Nor are there to be found elsewhere in the country, I'm told, so many wealthy families in any city of the same size.

The English residents are few in number, but they were always most hospitable to the staff at Faenza and to any officers who were temporarily attached for duty.

The officials, both civil and military, did everything in their power to help us, and the military hospitals were always ready to take in any sick or injured men.

Although Bologna was free from attacks from the air, every precaution was taken to safeguard the ancient monuments. The statue of Neptune in the Piazza was completely covered with sandbags and timber, and it was only after the declaration of peace that we were able to see this work of art, which is considered of such great value.

Bologna is the birthplace of many famous men in Italian history; and the Bolognese are proud of the fact that Torricelli, who invented the barometer in 1643, and also Marconi, are numbered amongst her sons.



PARK LANE, LEADING TO PICCADILLY. [*To face page* 16.

CHAPTER II

Arrival at Faenza—Assistance from Staff and Friends—Faenza a Typical Provincial Italian Town—The First Contingent of British Soldiers—A Self-Made N.C.O.—Making Plans for Building a Model Camp—The Army Railway Traffic Officials.

I ARRIVED at Faenza at a time when the whole population was indoors. Even the station officials and the cabman who drove me to the Corona Hotel in a prehistoric bus seemed to resent having to meet the midday train.

The R.T.O. and his assistant, both wearing khaki drill and helmets, as the thermometer registered ninety-three degrees in the shade, seemed to be the only energetic people on the platform.

With their assistance my servant managed to collect our kits and get them into the vehicle, in which we drove along an avenue of beautiful chestnuts in full leaf, and then through the deserted streets to the Piazza.

This was my introduction to a place which was for two and a half years to become my home.

***

Whoever was responsible for selecting the sites and for making the necessary arrangements with the local authorities on behalf of the British Government for the Camps at Faenza certainly deserves praise. I doubt if a better camping-ground for troops could possibly have been found anywhere in Europe.

Outside the city walls of the town was a cavalry parade-ground and a typical Indian maidan. The land was admirably suited for building purposes. The water was good and plentiful, coming straight from the Apennines, the slopes of which were covered with cultivation and

foliage. An important feature of the ground was that it was surrounded by avenues of lime-trees, which would offer in summer shade to the troops—men who wanted, above everything else, rest and relaxation after their long and monotonous train journey.

The large expanse of turf would also serve as fields for recreation. The hard ground of a cattle-market was suitable for huts and other buildings necessary for the accommodation and comfort of both officers and men.

It was an ideal spot for a Rest Camp and within twenty minutes' walk of the station on the main Adriatic line. The approach was by a country road which might have been a lane in Devonshire.

All-important, too, was the fact that the inhabitants were most friendly, and the officials with whom one was to come into contact were anxious to do everything in their power to assist. With a good staff and with workmen and materials and above everything else a free hand, it was clear that we could build a camp here which would be a credit to England and her Army. It would be a perfect resting-place for troops who would come from every theatre of war and all parts of the Empire. There would also be men passing through who had been prisoners of war and undergone great hardships, and others who had served for months in the East, and who were entitled to every comfort and consideration which could be given them.

Surely this Rest Camp in Faenza could and should be not only a half-way halt, but far more than that. It should be a "Home from Home" establishment, and it was "up to" those who had been selected for the job to carry out the work and make it such a place.

Our one great advantage, if one may be permitted to say so, was the fact that we were a long way from Headquarters and those who might interfere with our plans. All we wanted were materials and men to carry out the work. G.H.Q., France, was not interested in our existence, so we were not likely to be visited by any officials from the Western Front. Again, those from Paris who wished to inspect Taranto (and there were a good many) went there and back as quickly and as comfortably as possible, wisely breaking the journey at Rome.

Faenza was off the beaten track. Left alone, and providing we did not ask for financial assistance, it was easy to make a good start in life, hoping that results would be satisfactory and meet with approval when later some Inspecting-officer did come our way.

The first person to come and see what was going on was one who in private life had made a considerable amount of money in business, and who had risen very rapidly in rank during the war. We were a little bit afraid of this temporary Major-General, I must confess. Our fears, however, were soon put on a safe footing, as he seemed to approve of the work, and he sanctioned the expenditure of a certain amount of money on buildings and things necessary for the comfort of the men.

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It was not, however, until some months later that an officer with experience of soldiers arrived on the scene.

This was shortly after the Army had come into Italy. It appears that very little information about the Camps and the line generally had been supplied to this General, who, when he reached the railway-station, thought the Rest Camp consisted of a few huts and tents in a siding close to the railway track ! ! ! Even the War Office did not know that already the camp was of some considerable size, or, if they did, officers in transit were not given much information in their instructions before leaving England regarding the route, which might have been done with advantage.

The General in question evidently considered that in an hour or so he could complete his inspection, as he had made all arrangements to leave early next day.

After a hurried glance round before dinner at the Mess, he was later asked to attend a performance at the Vaudeville theatre. The surprise which he evinced at all the arrangements preceded a decided alteration in his movements. He stayed two days in the camp.

At the termination of his visit he was particularly interested to hear that he had only seen the beginning of our work.

I wish he had paid us another visit twelve months later,

when we could have shown him the model village as it appeared when all the plans made with my Adjutant and D.O.R.E. had materialised. They included baths, a club-house for officers, a large mess-room and kitchens, and other buildings for reading and writing. Furthermore, the village green on which this camp was to be built was to be converted into an attractive park with rose-gardens and beds of flowers, and it was to be laid out with paths, pergolas, and palms. The latter were to be placed in those large terra-cotta vases which are so noticeable in Italian gardens and which give a touch of colour to the surroundings.

In the main camp used by the N.C.O.'s and men, streets would be built, each street called after some well-known thoroughfare in London. This would give the men a feeling of home. If possible there would be a billiard-room, boxing-ring, and cinema hall. The canteen was to be a spacious building where four to five hundred men could take shelter in bad weather. Each hut where the men slept would be named after some county or town in Blighty, and the dining-halls would be called after railway-stations in London. Foot-ball and cricket grounds would come as a matter of course.

For the summer months we should have a beer-garden for the men, and attractive places out of doors for the senior non-commissioned ranks.

In order to keep the men interested, so that they would not be tempted to break out of camp and visit the town, celebrated for its wine and pretty women, the idea was to try to arrange for a street of shops where souvenirs and, in fact, everything which appeals to the soldier, could be purchased at reasonable prices and sold by attractive young ladies who would be in attendance at the stalls.

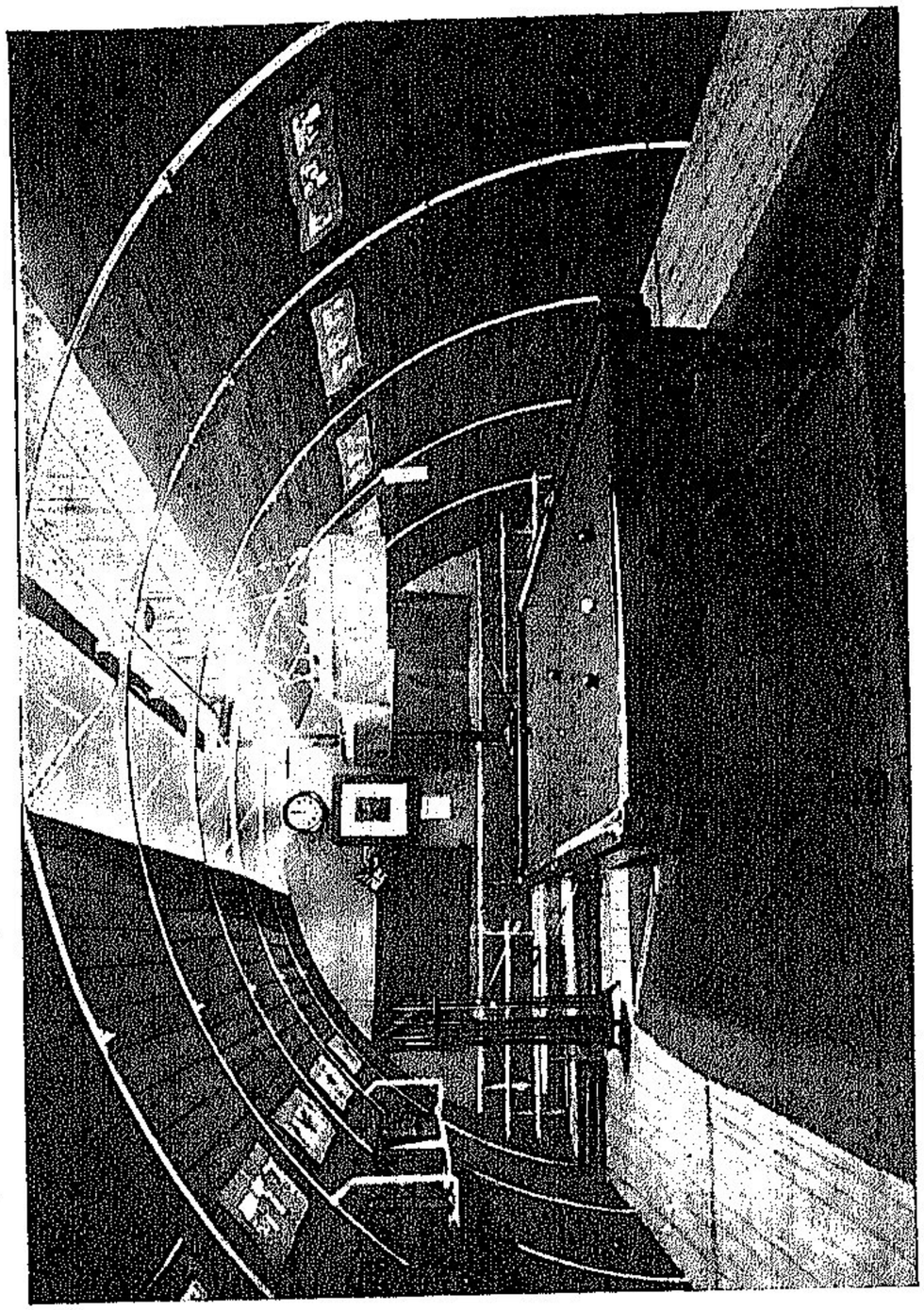
In this main camp there would be gardens where men of the permanent staff could grow their own vegetables.

This was the general idea and we discussed many plans, which I was very hopeful of being able to carry out.

The miniature white city was, in fact, to be unlike anything else of the sort that had ever been attempted before for the comfort of officers and men in time of war.

All this required a great deal of organisation.

As these plans were made, I could not help thinking of



THE BILLIARD SALOON, SHAFTESBURY AVENUE. [*To face page 20.*

many who travel down to Monte Carlo by the P.L.M. Railway and who should remember that the letters P.L.M. on the carriage cushions stand for three things necessary when you go into the gambling-rooms, and hope to win—*viz.*, pluck, luck, and money.

To build a Rest Camp all three are wanted, with organisation, initiative, and hard work thrown in, and perhaps above everything else complete co-operation of the staff.

Pluck was certainly required to start the institutions and the street of shops. I realised that they would pay their way and provide funds for other ventures and for everything that could not be squeezed out of the Heads of Government Departments, or the Financial Adviser.

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Months later, when our plans had succeeded, we were able from the profits to give the troops passing through extras in the shape of fresh vegetables and fruit with the meals, which were much appreciated. It was also possible to keep the troops provided with every sort of article for recreation, and to pay hotel expenses of concert parties from Florence, and even from England, if the authorities had allowed them to come out. There was also sufficient to give donations to local charities and to hire a furnished villa by the seaside where the N.C.O.'s and men of the permanent staff could have a holiday and bathing.

When the camp was finally closed in November, 1919, a considerable sum of money was handed over to the Command Paymaster according to instructions from Headquarters.

But all this could not have been accomplished unless some kind people in the district and in Florence had given us assistance to start the show.

From these loyal and patriotic friends and from subscriptions from certain officers, the Vaudeville theatre was decorated and scenery was purchased. An entertainment and sports' fund was also started.

Perhaps the greatest bit of luck we had was the gift of a full-sized English billiard-table from Mr. J. W. Dearbergh of Lo Strozzino, Florence, who not only gave us his table but put something into the pockets as well.

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Faenza, the old Faventium of the Romans, is perhaps best known as the birthplace of "Faience pottery." There are at present several factories working in the town, but the workmanship cannot be compared with that of a century ago, judging from the beautiful designs and colouring of the pottery only seen in the Museum and some private collections. The pottery is known in Italy as Majolica.

With the arrival of the British, the trade revived, but the articles produced are the sort of things which can be bought at many places frequented by tourists on the Continent.

Faenza is a typical Italian provincial market-town of some fifteen thousand inhabitants, and is in the centre of the rich agricultural province of Romagna. Built on the great Roman road, Via Emilia, it lies at the foot of the Apennines and is surrounded by a city wall. The gates are imposing structures with shields in stone and inscriptions reminiscent of bygone days.

Through these stately and decorative portals roads lead to Imola and Forli, to Ravenna and to Florence, the latter being only sixty miles away on the other side of the mountains across the plains of Tuscany. In the Middle Ages the history of Faenza is that of a score of other Italian towns, always at war with each other, the great local families fighting for possession. Finally the place came under the domination of the Popes early in the fourteenth century, and it remained in their power until the unification of Italy. It is interesting to know that in March, 1376, Sir John Hawkwood, the celebrated English soldier of fortune fighting in the service of Pope Gregory XI., sacked the town, and in doing so massacred, it is said, some four thousand inhabitants.

Faenza is the centre of one of the best fruit districts in Italy. It is especially noted for peaches of wonderful size and excellent flavour. In 1917 and 1918 peaches were so plentiful that they were practically given away to the men. At the height of the season peaches the size of a fairly large orange cost about twopence-halfpenny each.

Apples and pears were also of great size in the same year. In a garden adjoining the officers' camp several pears picked from a tree weighed from ten to twelve ounces each. The

crop of grapes, both red and white, was also especially good. Bunches of white grapes which would be sold for half a sovereign in London cost less than a shilling.

Almost every householder in the town and certainly every farmer, makes his own wine for the season. The local wines are of exceptionally good quality.

A large bottle of good red wine can be obtained for sixpence, and wine if purchased by the demijohn would work out at about fourpence a litre. This wine is very much better than the French *vin ordinaire*, and should have a good sale on the London markets. The vines in this part of Italy are not grown small and low in bushes as one sees them on the slopes of the Southern Hills; they are suspended from the branches of mulberry and other trees, making the country in summer resemble a huge garden. Each field is full of cultivation in a frame of green boughs twisted and entwined some six or eight feet above the ground.

The contadina are hard-working people, and when most of their men-folk were at the war they carried on the work on the land so that the crops did not suffer much by their absence.

They not only kept the home fires burning, but they looked after the cattle and, with the children, tilled the ground with the oxen, and filled their barns with produce.

When the time comes to bring in the harvest of grapes, the roads leading to the towns are blocked by carts with huge casks filled with juicy fruit; the drivers lie asleep at full length on the top, and the horses with their jingling bells, generally led by a donkey, take them safely home.

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It was not surprising that the arrival of the "Inglese" during the great European war should have caused a considerable amount of interest among the inhabitants of the sleepy old town of Faenza, especially as very few of the Faentini had seen any other uniforms but those of their own soldiers.

When Mr. Thomas Atkins came along singing "Tipperary," then unknown in Italy, except where the Artillery had been in the mountains, and at the same time making himself quite at home, the man in the street took a kindly liking to him at once.

The British soldier is just the same all the world over. He looks and acts like a gentleman, and this war has certainly proved that he fights like one as well. On arrival in a strange place, he takes more interest in his own affairs than other people's. Without being able to speak a word of the language, he generally manages to get what he wants. Furthermore, he spends his money freely. He quickly makes acquaintances without being too ready to make friends until he is sure of his ground.

Although the inhabitants of Faenza and the country folks who live in the hamlets around the town took far more interest in their crops and cattle and in their vineyards than in matters pertaining to war, they were quite ready to make friends with the British, as they knew we were allies. They also had heard that we had materially helped to stop the Germans at Mons.

Now the people of Romagna are not organ-grinders. They are essentially of agricultural habits, tastes, and occupation; hence the character of the British soldier appealed to them, and there is no doubt that with our arrival they became much more interested in the war than they had ever been before.

When the first contingent, which was a detachment of a Labour Corps, or rather a collection of men marked B.II. from various units, suddenly arrived in their town, their curiosity was roused.

People even rose from their *siestas* to see the Inglese pass through the streets.

Records do not show who was responsible for the selection of the men first sent for garrison duty in Italy, but one can well imagine some Sergeant-Major at a base detail camp "somewhere in France" picking out those he wanted to see the last of, and had an opportunity to send away. Be that as it may, I am sure that a more unrepresentative party of soldiers wearing uniform could hardly have been found. The party was commanded by a Captain who at sixty years of age had been given a commission in a Labour Corps.

This officer, with a grey beard and whiskers, a few weeks previously had been preaching on Sundays from his pulpit in some village in a remote part of England or Wales, and it would have been better perhaps if he had never left his congregation.

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The representatives of our Army under this old gentleman's command were marched from the station to their temporary billets in the centre of the town by an acting-sergeant who had from all accounts been very rapidly promoted.

It appears he had entrained five days before as a private soldier with two good-conduct stripes on his arm. Seeing that there was no N.C.O. on the train, and being gifted with a vast amount of initiative and cheek, he slipped off one of these stripes and made himself a Lance-Corporal. As no one seemed to question the action, and thinking that this rank was not good enough, he shortly afterwards put up the other stripe, and before the journey was half over one morning he appeared as a full Corporal.

On detraining at Faenza, this enterprising Scotchman, who had once been in a service battalion of the Black Watch, was a sergeant in his own right, and wearing, too, at the side of his helmet, tilted at an angle like a glengarry, the red hackle of the Royal Highlanders. In private life, I am told, he was a featherweight boxer in a travelling circus in Scotland.

When I arrived to take over command, I was greeted with a salute made by a motion of the hand and the arm with fingers pointed upwards, well in the centre of the forehead, a salute as precocious as the attitude of the individual who had risen to the rank of acting Sergeant-Major of the camp.

This self-made N.C.O. was followed about the streets by an interested crowd of small Italian boys, whilst some people wondered how it was possible that such men could have stood up against the Germans in 1914.

These first impressions were unfortunately far-reaching in their effects and required a good deal of living down, and it was not until many months later, when a battalion of the Australians and bearded Sikh warriors made an appearance, that the real types of our fighting men were seen and appreciated.

Fortunately the Royal Engineers sent out to Italy were of a different stamp and category, and amongst them were some of the best specimens of British workmen who were put into khaki. By their appearance, conduct, hard work, and skill they created a very good impression amongst the Italians,

especially amongst those hired labourers who assisted in making roads and concrete floorings to houses, at which they are masters of the art.

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Long before it was possible to get the camp in order, the first train with British troops, commanded, by the way, by Lieut.-Col. Burgess of the Gloucester Regiment, who afterwards won the V.C. in Salonica, arrived.

They could not have given a very good account of "the show" as it was then, with the limited and inexperienced staff of low-category personnel to look after them and to provide them with food. For there was not a man who could cut up or cook a side of frozen beef. It was a question of dishing out a stew of "bully" and issuing bread and other parts of the rations.

There was, however, some satisfaction in knowing that other Rest Camps on the line were not in a much more forward state at the time.

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Now, the railway traffic staff no doubt had many difficulties, but I can never forgive them for allowing (as they frequently did at this particular period) trains from the north and south to overlap in the middle of the journey. It was not fair to the troops travelling, and was not playing the game with the Commandant and staff of the Camp.

The Transportation staff sat in their offices in Paris or Rome, and did not realise all we had to contend with. It is true that the Directors of Railway traffic and their assistants had, as a rule, not seen any military service before. Few of them had the experience of a campaign. They were engineers and Railway officials from India and other parts of the Empire given high and important temporary military rank according to the posts they held. They probably knew a good deal about trains from a civilian point of view, but they had no knowledge of discipline, interior economy, the King's regulations, or the Army Act.

They did not think of the responsibilities of a Commandant in having to deal with a train full of officers and men numbering some eight hundred of all ranks, thrown upon

him and his small staff for twenty-four hours without any reasonable warning. In 1917, when the Mediterranean L. of C. was opened, and again, even twelve months after, there seemed to be a want of co-operation between the military railway officials and the heads of the other departments.

It is not to be wondered at, then, that complaints were made and even questions asked in the House of Commons, about the arrangements for troops on the long Overland route.

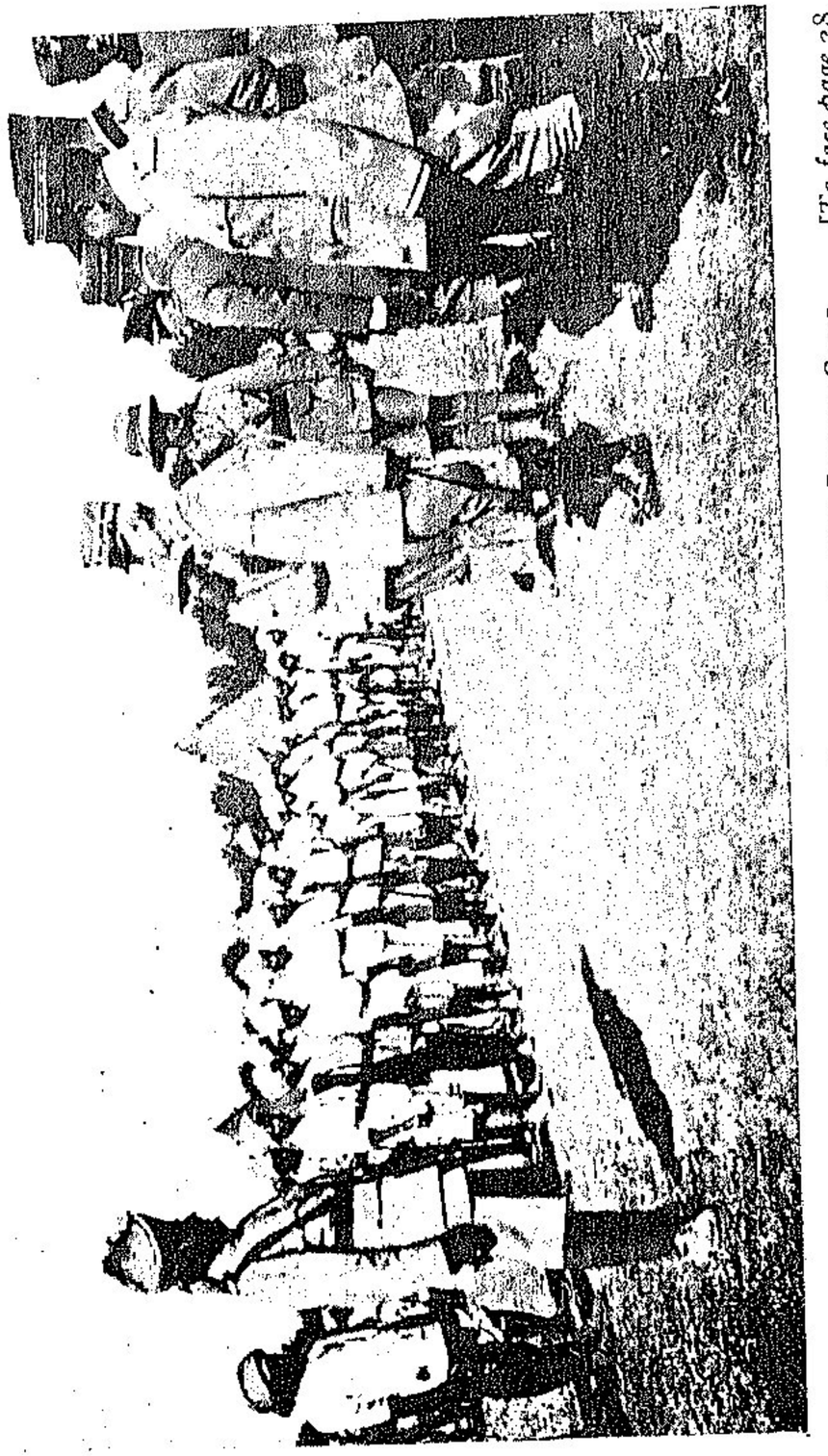
Furthermore, officers were sent into Italy as R.T.O.'s who could not speak the language, which surely should have been a *sine qua non*. And in more than one case men who had not received a day's military training of any sort were ordered out to take up positions which they could not possibly be expected to fill.

Some of these men had only bought their uniform a few days before they left England. Why the senior officers of the Traffic Department did not travel about on the line to see what was going on and what was wanted, is best known to themselves. If they had done so in the early days probably the administration would have been better, and each troop train would have been put in charge of an officer specially selected for the work, as was done in France with such good results. It was only during the last few months (and after a period of two years) that conducting officers with their adjutants and quartermasters were appointed. And on the last south-bound train, in October, 1919, there were actually three officers sent out to learn the job! . . . These officers returned (the line being closed) without having been employed in their train capacities at all.

What a difference it would have made for the comfort of the men and how much easier for the Camp Commandants, who were helpless regarding the organisation of the train personnel, if better arrangements had been made in 1917, or even a year later. One would not have had tales of woe from almost every officer commanding a troop-train for over two years!

There was certainly never any shortage of officers who could have done and would have liked the work.

Fortunately both the permanent R.T.O.'s at Faenza spoke Italian and took the greatest interest in their duties. If they had not done so we never should have been able to carry on.



H.E. Lt.-General Luigi Segato visits the Indian Camp. [*To face page 28.*

CHAPTER III

An Indian Camp—Visits from Italian Officials—The Vaudeville Theatre—Ravenna—A Regent Street at Faenza—The Expeditionary Force Canteen—The Officers' Mess—Appreciation from Officers in Transit—The Result of the Caporetto Disaster—A New Régime—The Inspector-General of Communications.

IT will give some idea of the traffic on the overland route to the East, and work in the camps on the line, when it is known that after barely two months, thirty-three thousand officers and men had passed through and been accommodated and fed. It was fortunate for all that it was summer, and a comparatively dry summer, too; and it was especially lucky for the companies of coloured Labour Corps who arrived from India and Egypt. For these a special camping-ground was made, with a hospital attached, and a white building known as the Clayton Disinfector. This particular building, by the way, was erected to satisfy the Italian medical authorities, who were afraid some plague or dreadful Asiatic disease might be brought into the country. The house in question was never used for the purpose for which it was built, as it would not work, but it put matters right from a sanitary point of view, and after all was not an expensive white elephant at three hundred pounds.

* * *

Now if the British Tommy had caused a certain amount of interest on his arrival, the Burmese, Bhootias and men from the Chin Hills, carrying umbrellas, cooking utensils, and all their worldly possessions on their backs, fairly took the town and the Italians by storm. Where these men were going, and what they were going to do when they got there, was not our business, but the question was asked me by a Colonel of the Royal Italian Army one evening as we watched two Hindoos squatting by a *chula*

making *chupatees*. I could not answer him. All we knew was that they were bound for France. Somebody suggested that they were the advance guard of bearers, butlers, sweepers, etc., of the Sikhs, who might be coming along after. Anyhow, they created such an amount of interest that it was necessary to have double lines of barbed wire fencing to keep off the visitors. But this was child's play compared to the nights when the "Gippys" and men from the Soudan put in an appearance. Then we had sentries between the wires and outside too, and policemen with thick sticks walking about the compound. We took no chances with these fellows, some of whom, it was reported, had broken out of another Rest Camp and made a night of it in a village, with disastrous results.

I must say that the officers in charge of these Labour Corps had their men well in hand. Many of the companies from India had been enlisted by those who brought them over, and they were splendidly organised units.

This was specially noticeable with the Santhalls, who were experts at digging, and marched in with their shovels ready for work—work which we particularly wanted done too, for when it rains in this part of Italy it comes down like the monsoon. The camp had not then been drained, and we saw no chance of getting it done. So one evening I said to my Adjutant, "This is an opportunity which must not be lost; we must keep one hundred of these fellows to get the camp ready for others." And we did.

For this action I was asked to give my reasons in writing, to satisfy the heads of the Labour Department in France, who, when they discovered these men were missing, were very annoyed.

Fortunately my superior officer in Paris backed me up, as he knew there must have been some very good reason for it, and by the same post in which I was required to give an explanation, I received a letter from the Chief of the Staff telling me not to be worried over the incident.

The action saved the situation at Faenza, as we had a dry camping-ground for the rest of the time, and for twenty thousand natives who used it. These Santhalls not only drained the land, but they built compounds where the different

castes could cook separately; they also made *chulas* for their fires. In fact, they did splendid work in Italy, and now that the war is over, I would mention they also helped to make a tennis-court as well—and a very good one, too, which gave officers all the exercise they wanted to keep them fit.

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The whole work of the Camp was now progressing slowly but surely.

> "Each morning sees some task begun,
> Each evening sees it close."

Longfellow's words from "The Village Blacksmith" were truly realised here. Everything seemed to be planning out as arranged.

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The Italian military officials from Bologna and from other garrison towns who paid visits to the camp seemed lost in admiration and surprise of all that was being done for the British soldiers, and especially of the great work of sanitation.

One day a General said to me as he walked round:

"Why do you do all this? Is it necessary?"

To which one could only reply:

"It is our custom and my duty."

The Italians seemed to think that we spent far too much money on the comfort for our men, probably because so little was done by their own officers for their soldiers. They always ended by saying, "Of course, you have so much money!"

But I ventured to point out that it did not cost much to turn a tin hut into a theatre, or a recreation-room, or to put pictures on the walls, and make gardens, or even to whitewash the stones.

"Besides," I said, "most of these things are done by the men themselves in their spare time. They like to do it. It amuses and interests them."

The British soldier only wants someone to take an interest in his welfare and to give him a lead and he will do the rest himself. Once you inspire the men with *esprit de corps*, everything else is easy. This camp was to be their home, and an Englishman's home is his castle. It was to be a model home, too, better, we hoped, than any other of the sort. The

men realised this and worked in the evenings after their duties were over.

It was splendid to see them take so much pride in it all. It was particularly noticeable on Sundays, when prizes were given for the cleanest huts, the best kits, and the prettiest gardens. There was friendly rivalry and competition amongst the men, and it was often difficult to award the prizes. No pre-war barrack-rooms could have been better kept than many of the huts, and the result was shown not only as regards their work but also in their general behaviour and, above everything else, in the regard for discipline.

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One of the great events in the autumn of 1917 was the opening of the Vaudeville Theatre in Shaftesbury Avenue.

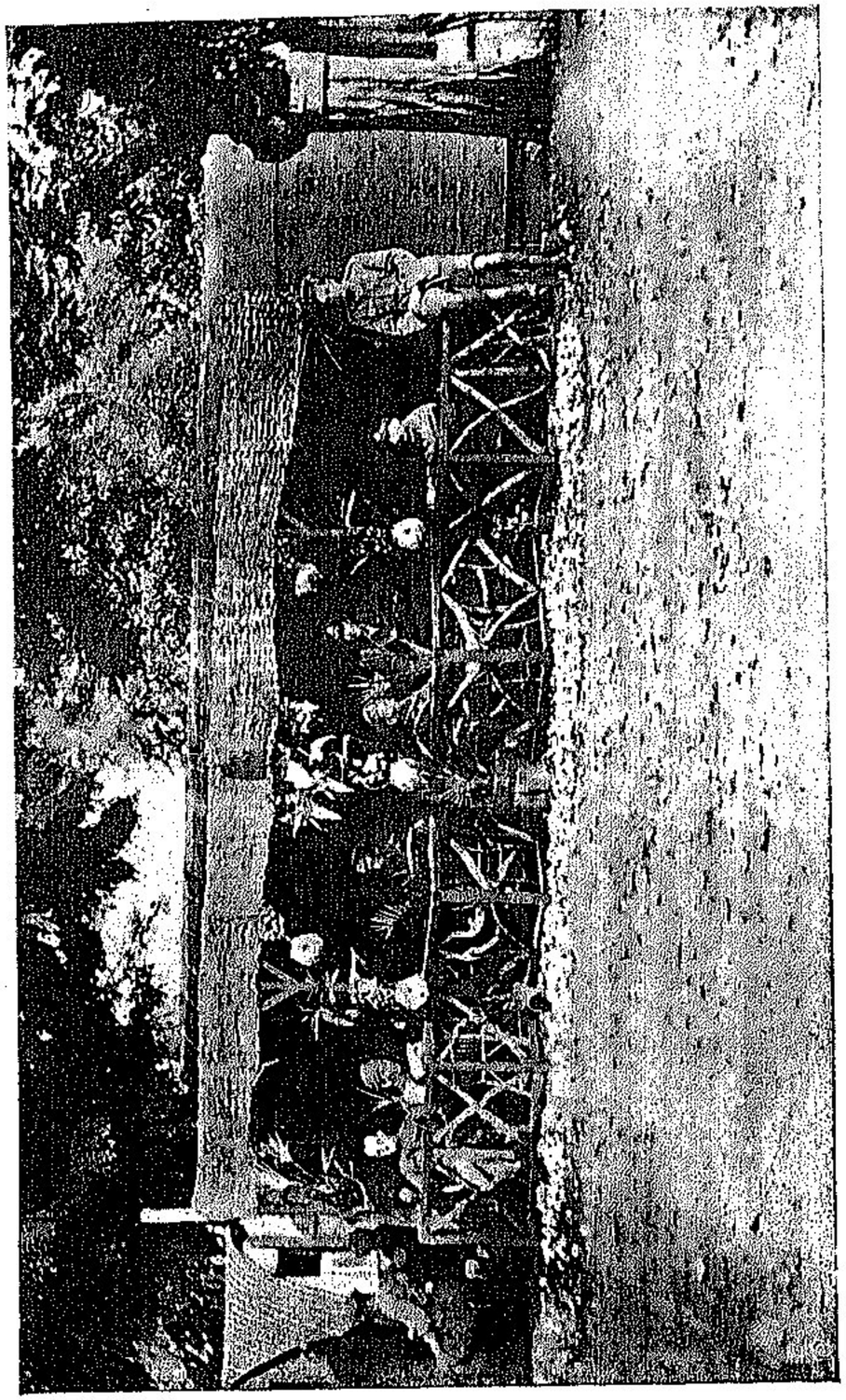
Now it so happened at this time there was in hospital a well-known artist on the London music-halls. This soldier had fractured his ankle whilst getting into a train. And a fractured ankle takes a long time to mend, especially in the Army.

Private Sullivan was a driver in the M.T. branch of the Royal Army Service Corps, *en route* to Mesopotamia.

When he was discharged from hospital he was not fit for heavy work, and in the interest of the service it was most desirable that he should remain at Faenza!

There were, however, difficulties regarding this. Head-quarters might object and "Records" ask questions. So whenever an inspecting officer came round (fortunately not very often), Sullivan was told to make himself scarce, either by going down to the M.T. Depot, or to take a walk in the country. In this way the unit to which he belonged never saw him, and thousands of men were made cheery by his talents and hard work.

When "Records" made enquiries, he was shown as attending hospital, which was true. I fancy this was not the only case in the Army of a man being temporarily lost. When Pte. Sullivan came out of hospital he took over the management of the Vaudeville, which was an enlarged Nissen hut—and at no cost to the Government. So the Financial Adviser was not asked to build a playhouse.



THE CORPORALS' LOUNGE, LEICESTER SQUARE. *[To face page 32.*

Sullivan not only did this, but he designed costumes and painted the scenery, organised a concert party and wrote sketches and was responsible for the following verses, which were sung and received with much enthusiasm by the audiences who had visited these camps.

THE MEDITERRANEAN L. OF C.
OR
THREE REST CAMPS

With Apologies to Camp Commandants on the Line.

No. 1: Cherbourg.

Sure a little walk from off the boat when you are feeling queer,
From Bully Beef and Sickness, lack of sleep and loss of Beer,
It brings you to a British Camp that's pitched upon a slope,
And slope you would if " Red Caps " only held out any hope.
Now this camp, the first instalment of many more you'll know,
Is full of all those wond'rous things from whom all blessings flow.
Dante, in writing his great book, " Experiences in Purg.,"
Must certainly have had in mind the Rest Camp at Cherbourg.

No. 2: St. Germain.

A little rain and sleet and fog fell from the sky one day,
And settled in a river bed, at a place near Lyons way.
The Engineers they found it and tried to build a pier;
The M.O. said, " Let's drain it—build a second Rest Camp here "
So they dotted it with Nissen Huts, and ditches too they dug,
And those that No. 1 had spared went slogging thro' the mud;
And when the place looked like a bog with snow and sleet and rain
They put an E.F. canteen here, and called it St. Germain.

For obvious reasons, No. 3, Faenza, is omitted.

No. 4: Taranto.

Now the largest of the spots for troops selected on this line
Is right down south away from here—the climate is sublime;
Mosquitoes there as large as cats will drag you from your bed,
Your overdose of quinine makes strange buzzings through your head.
You pray to get your orders, just to Egypt's sunny clime,
Or to Palestine or India, where you'll have a d—— good time;
But any place away from where the perfumed breezes blow,
And the dust that lies about the camp we know as Taranto.

At Christmas, "Old Bill" was produced and ran for a week, and was much appreciated by all those who were able to get in to see it, as the hall only held some four hundred people. Those who could not get in scrambled on to the roof and looked through the ventilators.

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In the early autumn of 1917 there was a rush of troop trains from France. On these were many senior officers who had found their way home on leave some weeks previously, either by sea or *via* Rome. They were now returning overland to their destinations. Now Generals did not often travel on troop-trains: they were wise. They travelled by the Rapide.

One day, however, there appeared two Brigadiers who had seen considerable service in Mesopotamia. Each claimed that he was the first general officer to enter Bagdad. After showing them round the camps, it was suggested that we should run over to Ravenna, where I had to call on the Divisional Commander. They readily availed themselves of the opportunity. *En route* to the dead city strange things were told about the campaign up the Tigris; very much more than it was possible to read in the papers. Even the correspondents of the *Daily Mail* had not heard them, and if they had it would be difficult to write about.

After duly presenting our cards at Headquarters we proceeded to visit the sights, with the aid of a guide who had evidently seen better times.

Unfortunately most of the mosaics at the Church of San Vitale were covered with sandbags, as a protection from bombs. We were, however, able to see those wonderful Byzantine works of art at the tomb of Galla Placida, and at St. Apollinare. Why the Germans and Austrians attacked Ravenna, with its memorials of past ages, is beyond understanding. As Sir Sidney Low says in his book, "Italy and the War," "The cultured Realists of the armed empires, in their fury against the relics of past civilisations, have not often found their power equal to their malice. There is certainly no excuse for such destruction, which, however, happily was not as great as the ravagers wished it to be." Fortunately, no great damage was done at Ravenna.

Owing to the proximity of Ravenna, which was barely

twenty-five miles away from Faenza, later many officers were able to relieve the monotony of their journey overland by visiting the deserted city of Placida and Theodoric. They were able to add to their experiences a view of Dante's Tomb and the house—now the Italian Divisional Headquarter Offices—where Byron spent many days of his life courting the Countess Guiccioli, in spite of his love for the lady at Colwich Hall.

Although it might be called by some people who wished to be officious, a "joy ride" going to Ravenna, yet one felt it was an excusable one, and after the armistice we were able to send over non-commissioned officers and men as part of the programme for education, which was so strongly advocated and boomed by the War Office, though in Italy it never really succeeded.

The excursion formed a very enjoyable outing. As a soldier said, "It was something to write home about." And judging from their letters, they thoroughly appreciated the trip.

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Before giving some descriptions of men one met, which, owing to the fact that over thirty-five thousand officers passed through the Camp, forms the most interesting part of this story, something must now be told about the organisation and building of the place made for their benefit.

Our attentions were firstly directed to a public thoroughfare which passed right through the main Camps. In order to secure privacy it was necessary to close this road, which had not been given to us by the local authorities, neither were they inclined to listen to our requests for it. Already vendors of unripe fruits and ice-creams had taken up a stand there, and, as can be imagined, were a source of trouble and danger to the health of the troops. My only chance of clearing away these people (who had every right there), was to lay the case before the military authorities and ask permission to take the road in as part of the Camp. The Headquarters of the line had now gone to Paris, two days' journey away, so could obviously do nothing. I therefore decided not to approach them on the subject, but play my cards with the Command of the 6th Italian Army Corps at Bologna.

General Segato and his staff were accordingly asked over to see the Camp. The General, a most approachable and courteous gentleman, who had commanded an Army Corps in the Cadore, was received on arrival with a salute from an appropriate guard of honour. This was provided from details of some units passing through who had been carefully drilled by the Adjutant, and the guard would have done credit to any line battalion even in pre-war days.

An inspection of the Camp followed, and before we had settled down to lunch—carefully arranged by the mess president under the trees—we had received permission to close the road in a military sense. The authority, too, was in writing.

That night the Royal Engineers made barricades. Before the Faentini awoke the following morning, a British soldier stood at the gate pointing to notices in Italian to the effect that no one was permitted to enter without a pass.

Having got rid of the ice-cream men and women with barrows, the next point was to have shops of our own where the men could buy fruit and other things they wanted which they could not procure at the canteen. This was more difficult than closing the main road. At first no one would venture (for the Italians, as a rule, are not enterprising business people) to make an outlay of their money by erecting a stall. It also seemed impossible to get any young ladies to serve in the shops.

Now the official interpreter attached to the Camp possessed a batman, who knew everyone in the town. This soldier servant was a man of remarkable character and disposition and was a general favourite with the staff because he was always ready to carry out any errands. He did any sort of job for a small commission, and he did it at once. If anything was wanted, Antonio Drei was the man to get it.

The situation of the shops no sooner had been explained to him, and the rules and regulations regarding the organisation laid down, than Drei produced an enterprising individual, who was a tailor in the place, and who came forward with an offer, the result being that an up-to-date fruit stall was opened in Regent Street. So successful was the business that in a few hours after the kiosk was opened it was completely sold out. In a short time the ex-tailor opened a café and then a

shop for cheap jewellery. Before the summer of 1918 there were twelve of these little kiosks, including a miniature Army and Navy Stores, and a Café Royal. They were all doing well; in fact, at times it was difficult to get near some of the shops owing to the crowd.

Picture post-cards, writing materials, and maps were bought up as fast as they could be sold. Souvenirs of every description appeared, and there was a run on silk shawls which could be passed through a ring.

The scene was like that at a country fair, only with the stalls full of articles which the soldier wanted. Regent Street at Faenza became celebrated all over the Eastern theatres of war, and we were told that men from Bagdad, Baku, and Batoum looked forward to coming there to shop.

It was certainly a great success and a notable feature of the Camp. Moreover, it kept men from wanting to break out of bounds and going into the town, where all sorts of temptations would come their way.

The closest supervision, however, had to be kept on the stalls, and rules strictly adhered to in order to enforce discipline.

The street was constantly patrolled by a soldier who, before the war, was a London policeman. It is a remarkable fact that during all the months the Camp was open and these Italians worked in it, there was never any serious trouble. On one or two occasions a shop had to be closed because the prices were too high according to the rate of exchange, but wine or liquors were never brought in—and the Italians must have had many requests from soldiers and sailors to supply them with *vino*.

It was, no doubt, a great attraction to the troops, many of whom had been away from England for two or even three years in Mesopotamia, Palestine or on the Struma front. They not only found everything they wanted in the Camp, but they were served by pretty, well-dressed Italian women, many of whom, judging from the remarks, soon learnt to speak a little English. It was often very amusing to listen to the conversations between the men and the girls. At the fruit stall one day a soldier who had two wound stripes, the 1914 star, and who had evidently been in France, said to the attendant, "Avez-vous apples, miss?" The reply was,

"To-day, niente. In English, napoo." They soon picked up soldiers' slang.

If any of the young ladies showed signs of flirtation or familiarity, she was at once brought up to the orderly room, interviewed by the Adjutant, and either reprimanded or sent away to her home.

On one occasion I missed one of the assistants at the Army and Navy Stores. On questioning the Sergeant-Major, I was told that she had been kissed by a Corporal and was sent away in disgrace for a month. It was not a great offence, especially as she was a very pretty girl. Probably the Corporal had not had such an opportunity for years, or perhaps he was on his way out to "Mespot," and it might be his last chance.

Fortunately for the lady, during the time the punishment lasted the King's birthday came along, and she was then allowed to return. She reappeared wearing a wonderful coloured bow in her hair for the occasion.

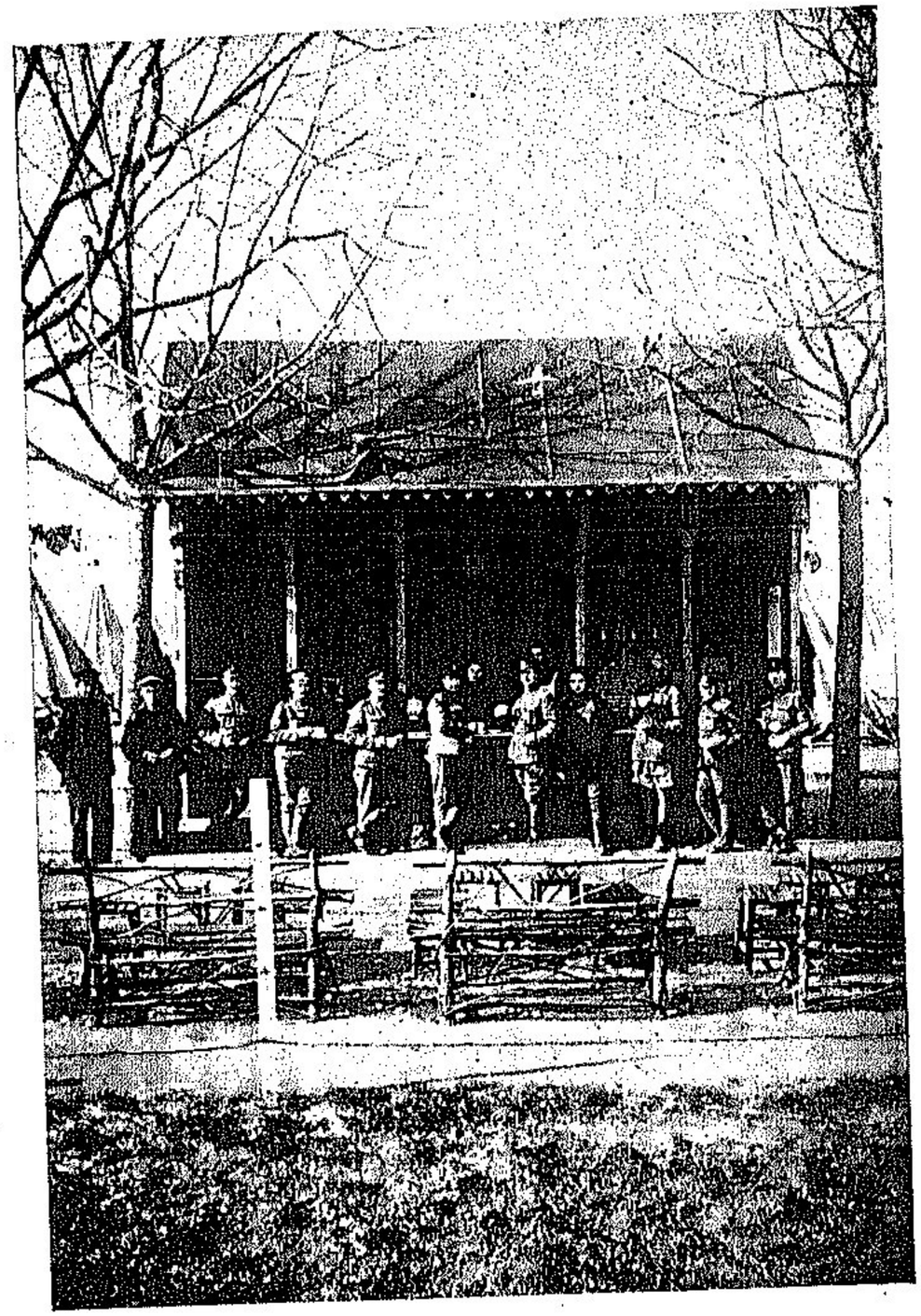
When you continued your walk along Regent Street you passed over Knightsbridge to Brompton Road, and under the shade of an avenue of lime-trees you found yourself at the Belle Vue Beer Garden. Here Thomas Atkins could sit in the shade and have his glass of iced beer for twopence-halfpenny whilst listening to the music of an Italian orchestra.

The Beer Garden was run by an Italian waiter from Rome, and was in summer one of the most popular places in the Camp, and was certainly a great boon to the men.

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Now for some reason or other—I think, perhaps, it was jealousy (anyhow we will put it down to that)—the officials at the head of the Expeditionary Force Canteens took a strong objection to our Beer Garden, and also our shops. In fact, they did everything in their power to suppress them, and a senior officer was sent out from London on a visit to see what was going on in our part of the world. It was quite a nice joy-ride for him.

The Expeditionary Force Canteen thought that the shops interfered with their business, and that the sale of beer in the gardens affected their trade at the canteen bar. There was a certain amount of truth in this, but the Expeditionary Force



THE CAFÉ ROYALE, REGENT STREET, IN WINTER

[*To face page* 38

Canteen was not there entirely to make profits. The canteens were built in order to give officers and men stores at a cheap rate, and to supply them with goods which could not be bought elsewhere. In other words, the canteens were for the benefit of the soldiers—at least, so one imagined. Now if the Expeditionary Force Canteen had wanted to do so, they could not have built shops or made a beer garden, and they certainly could not have employed young ladies to serve behind the counters, so why should they have felt grieved? They also felt hurt that the officers' mess and the club were not in their hands, but if they had been, as several officers passing through remarked, Faenza would never have become so popular.

Fortunately the Inspector-General of Communications took our part and he saw the advantages of our organisation and administration, also how much it was appreciated by all who came into the Camp. Even he had difficulties with the Canteen officials, who were very powerful and important people.

"I have been fighting your battles again," he said to me one day later, when he came to Camp, and I knew by his expression what he meant. It was the "Beer Garden," and it was satisfactory to know that he had won, and that the men would still have their iced drinks under the trees, and the Italian orchestra would go on playing.

Yes, there is no doubt that the Canteen officials objected on business grounds, and it was business which seemed to be foremost in their minds.

Happily for us, all this changed when the Navy and Army Canteen Board took over, as will be shown by results in another chapter.

One has only to remember the remarks of some officers from distant fields of operations to realise what all the arrangements in the Model Camp (as it was called) meant to those who had had experiences elsewhere. For the benefit of the gentlemen who wished to run the show themselves and from their offices several hundred miles away, I repeat the words of two O.C. trains, with apologies for doing so.

"A real Rest Camp where every comfort is provided for officers and men."

"After seeing a few camps in Egypt, France, and Italy, I

have no hesitation in saying that this is by far the best run that we have yet seen."

***

"No complaints; nothing but praise," said an officer one day to me. "Faenza Camp is almost unique among Rest Camps, insomuch as the accommodation and catering for the wants of tired officers and men in transit are recognised as the *raison d'être* of the Camp and of its staff."

Surely these words would have been sufficient to squash any people who interfered with our work if they had been sent to the Quartermaster-General at the War Office.

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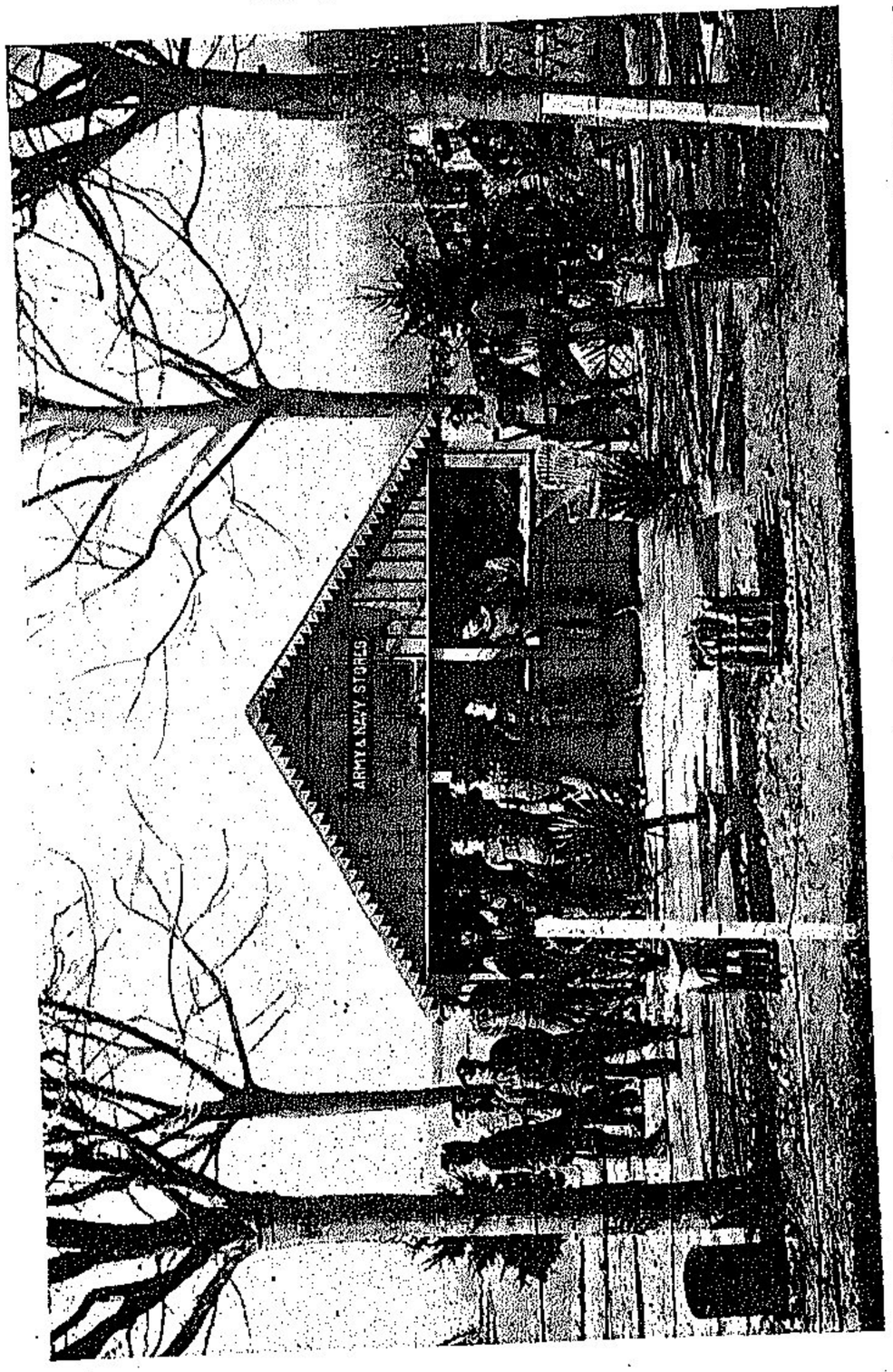
One of the star turns of the Camp was the Officers' Mess. Now the waitresses at the Mess had a good deal to do with the success of that establishment. The fame of "Miss Lena," we were often told, spread wherever British officers, who had made the overland journey, met. This young lady acted as interpreter, and in that capacity earned the respect and admiration of everyone; even the *London Times* mentioned her name in an article entitled "The Last Stage, or Home from Salonica."

"Whatever time you eat your dinner—" wrote a correspondent, "and troop-trains are not always punctual—there is the *séduisante* Miss Lena to talk charming American-English to you, and somebody asks the orchestra to play 'For she is the only Girl in the World,' and everyone joins in with maudlin fervour."

By her charming manner and tact Lena made everyone feel at home. To Generals, Field Officers, Subalterns, Midshipmen, young men in the Royal Air Force, skippers of merchant vessels, or Distressed British Seamen, she was always the same. If anything went wrong with the cuisine or the drinks, a smile and American-English expression of regret put it right. Unfortunately Miss Lena demobilised herself some months before the Camp closed. It is said, because she became engaged to and was going to marry a British officer. If that was the case I am sure everyone who knew Faenza will wish her good luck.

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In October, 1917, there were rumours that there had been



THE ARMY AND NAVY STORES, BROMPTON ROAD. [*To face page 40.*

a military disaster in the mountains on the North-Eastern frontier of Italy. At the same time we received orders that the " Meloc " line would be temporarily closed. A further wire stated that several trains of our troops were to be expected from Udine.

Already we had dealt with trains from that direction when most of the Artillery left Italy for Egypt (and as things turned out it was fortunate for them they had gone). But some gunners with their guns remained. It was the personnel of these batteries that we expected. Now when the Austrians came through the open door at Caporetto they very nearly succeeded in cutting off our troops from any means of retreat. Evidence of the hurried departure of our men from the north, and their difficulties in getting away at all, was seen by the appearances of the officers and men who arrived in our Camp and by the extraordinary collection of articles which came with them. The men, who were departmental details attached to our batteries, lost everything. The officers were no better off.

We laid out the *débris* from the train, and a wonderful heap of articles appeared. The only thing that was worth having was a bottle of white vermouth which was saved from the officers' mess at Cividale.

Who would have ever imagined after the hard work of her Army and brilliant victories against the Austrians, that Italy would be invaded and that her most productive agricultural districts and northern towns would be occupied and raided ?

It was a hard blow, especially when the Italians were within sight of the promised land. For Trieste had appeared in the distance under the eyes of the gunners sitting on the heights above Monfalcone.

. . . . . .

But the unexpected often happens in times of war, and it had come here close to us in Italy. It had come, too, with dramatic suddenness, and no one knew where the disaster would end. It looked as if the Austrians might even take Venice, and reach the P.O., in which case our line of communications through Italy would be threatened. We might have had to move suddenly to a more suitable and safer place

on the other side of the Apennines, when the southern route *via* Rome would be used.

Fortunately the Italians stood firm on the Piave River, which, to use the words of Lord Cavan, "is to their everlasting credit." Venice was saved by the Duke of Aosta's Third Army.

With the advance of the Austrians and retreat of the Army came train-loads of refugees who presented a most pitiful appearance. These people poured down from the plains of Venetia and even from Venice itself, accommodation being found for them all along the Adriatic coast.

Our favourite seaside resort at Riccione of happy remembrances was overrun by women and children, who had not much left, although they still clung to and wore on all occasions the famous long, fringed shawls.

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With the arrival of the Fourteenth Corps under Lord Cavan, and with General Plumer as G.O.C., another chapter in the history of the war commenced, and another phase opened for the Mediterranean L. of C. Although still under the War Office, the line came under the separate commands in France and Italy. The whole system was reorganised.

Voghera, which had been one of our outposts and where we had built a halting-place for troops, passed into other hands. It suddenly became an important military centre, through which most of the units passed on their way from France *via* the Riviera and Genoa, or through Modane *via* Mont Cenis to the Piave.

An Inspector-General of Communications was appointed, and for the third time in six months we came under a new chief. This was not uncommon in the great war, especially in France.

When the change came there was the inevitable call for "Returns," which worried us considerably more than the officers and men passing through our hands. They finally sent the Adjutant into hospital and his chief clerk away for a rest, whilst the D.O.R.E. had to extend his office premises and the Supply Depot ask for assistance in the way of clerks.

However, when the G.Q.C. did come, he found a telegram waiting for him to say that he had been made a K.C.B. This was a good start for an inspection. He was therefore in a particularly happy mood and in spite of being an expert on the all-important question of man power, helped us considerably. Fortunately the Camp was now to a great extent completed; and even the Director of Works, who accompanied the General, could not complain of excessive expenses. He said, "Your D.O.R.E. is very clever. He makes things look expensive, but really they cost very little." And they did.

After the visit of these officials we felt it was an advantage to have friends near at hand, especially those who understood everything which was being done for the men and who appreciated our efforts in that direction. We not only received encouragement but authority to make further additions.

Unfortunately this General was taken away a few months later, and replaced by one who I think did not take quite such an interest in our welfare I may be mistaken on this. point, and if so I can only offer him apologies for saying so. In any case our work was not so highly appreciated.

CHAPTER IV

Work of the Royal Engineers—Athletic Sports—A Football Match in Bologna: Description from an Italian Newspaper—Camp Work and the Small Staff to Carry it out—Some Men We met—Stories and Reminiscences of Officers Passing Through—The Villa Riposo and Some Remarks—The Officers' Camp—Cuttings from a Paper—The Australians—Some Other Visitors—British and Italian Troop-Trains.

THE rapidity with which the British divisions were transferred to the Italian front showed the urgent necessity of their presence there.

The railway arrangements were an example of perfect organisation and excellent "Q" staff-work. In less than three weeks the move had been entirely completed. During this period of inaction, as far as the "Meloc" line was concerned—for it had necessarily to be closed for troops coming and going to the East—the Departmental officers at Faenza were kept busy day and night sending stores to various places on the line. Parties of Royal Engineers had to be dispatched with materials to build temporary camps on the Italian Riviera, and even as far as La Bocca, near Cannes. Complete camp equipment for twelve hundred men was sent to Ventimiglia, and *halte repas* were opened at Albenga and Savonna.

A temporary camp was built at Bologna station in less than forty-eight hours, which was a great performance on the part of the Royal Engineers.

Whilst the staff and fighting units, and the numerous officials who follow an army in the field, were taking up their positions and settling into billets in the forward areas, along the Piave, we kept our own men fit by physical training, which was a change from the ordinary camp routine.

Football games with the Italians, who were very keen on learning our sports, were arranged, and caused good feeling and comradeship between the two armies.

A celebrated match took place in Bologna against a so-called local team who had invited a few professionals from outside to help them. The events of that Sunday afternoon are certainly worth recording as part of the "Recollections" of Faenza Camp.

At that time the British soldier was exceedingly popular in Italy, and on this particular day the inhabitants of Bologna certainly showed their feelings. The officers and men were received on arrival with great enthusiasm, entertained by the local authorities and escorted through the streets of the city by hundreds of young men and women, the former with flags and the ladies offering bunches of flowers. The victors of an English cup-tie final could not have had a greater reception on returning home after winning the match. At the commencement of the game, the ball was kicked off by the General Officer commanding the Army Corps, and the Commandant of the British Camp was also asked to give it a touch, and was presented in the middle of the football ground with a huge bouquet of flowers. Some four thousand people were present, which, in those days, was a record for a football match in Italy. The following remarks from an Italian paper give, perhaps, a better idea of the affair than my own description.

EXTRACT FROM *Il Piccolo Avvenire d'Italia*, SUNDAY, 10TH MARCH, 1918

THE ARRIVAL OF THE SQUADRON OF THE ALLIES

AN ENTHUSIASTIC DEMONSTRATION

"At about 10.30 a.m. a great crowd began to gather in the Station Square and grew to immense proportions as the time passed to welcome the British guests, who, as it was announced, were coming by the 11 a.m. train from Faenza.

"The authorities were already on the spot, the representatives of various associations with their flags, as well as all the representatives of several schools, when we were told that the British football team were to arrive by motor-car.

"While we were waiting for their arrival amongst great excitement and waving of flags in the sun, we noticed among those who were present, besides the members of the Bologna Football Club Committee, the organisers of the meeting.

"The various representatives formed a square before the station, the Military, Sporting and Patriotic Associations, as well as the pupils of various schools who were in front of the entrance to the station. On the other side were the representatives of the 'Institution of the Sons of the People,' in their characteristic uniform, called 'Vittorino da Feltre Institution.' Then came the students of the Higher Schools, Board Schools, and the School for Girls. In the middle was the Garrison Band with a fanfare of trumpets.

"The Allied Squad arrived in the Station Square at 11.45 a.m. on a monumental motor lorry, all embellished with Italian and British flags. From the crowd a tremendous applause was heard, the flags were lowered in salute and the band of the Garrison began to play the British National Anthem, 'God Save the King.'

"Thirty bold young men jumped out of the motor and were drawn up in line and stood to attention. They remained so until the British National Anthem was over, amidst the renewed applause of the public crowd.

"Whilst the applause was renewed, the G.O.C. and Senator Pini were presented to the British officers. The British Commandant, after the usual and most cordial exchange of compliments with the Italian authorities and Members of the Committee, made a brief speech in English to all those present.

"The procession then formed up whilst the girl students offered flowers to their guests, amongst whom a Scotchman drew great attention

"The Bands began playing the Royal Italian March and the British National Anthem alternately.

"The procession was headed by the Garrison Band. Then came the authorities and the officers of high rank, Italian and British, the British Squad composed of thirty young men, the various associations and schools. Along the route great applause was given our Allies, showers of flowers were thrown them from the windows, amidst the waving of flags. In



THE RECREATION GROUNDS. [*To face page 46.*

the streets wild enthusiasm was shown right up to the Hotel d'Italie, where the citizens made another great demonstration in favour of the British guests, who thanked them from the top of the Hotel Terrace.

"While we are going to press, at the Villa Hercolani a football match is in progress, causing immense interest to all the spectators."

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At Faenza, the inhabitants became, after a time, quite accustomed to our sports, but some people never quite understood why they should not take a short cut across the field of play on a bicycle, and even drive a trotting horse amongst the players whilst the game was proceeding, much to the annoyance of the keen young Yorkshire officer who invariably acted as referee.

The local youths did not seem to understand that the ball sometimes went between the posts, for they crowded in the mouth of the goal. Here one generally saw a collection of men balancing themselves on cycles who were occasionally considerably disturbed.

Boxing, which had never been seen before in these parts, appealed to them even more than football, and when there was any fighting not only the young men of the town wanted invitations, but they wished to bring all their relations, including ladies and children, with them. They regarded boxing as humorous exercise more than a form of sport.

When the Jewish Battalion came along there were some really good bouts which caused great interest amongst the Italians. And when the championships of the Italian L. of C. were held at Faenza, the first two rows of seats round the ring were filled with Italian officers, the Mayor of the town and all the local officials of importance. On this occasion the assistant Director of Physical Training from the Forward Area arrived to act as referee. He admitted that he had no idea that there was such a large camp in Italy, and that if he had known we should have had his valuable help, as well as gifts of some of the athletic and sporting gear which found the way to the fighting units. This, of course, would

have been of great use, for we wanted everything we could get hold of for troops in transit.

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When a sporting event is going to take place, the Italians rely on advertisements to attract a crowd, although apparently they do not want to make money at the gate, for the charges are ridiculously small.

The advertisements appear in all the papers, the town is placarded, and the event is written up in the Press. I frequently saw notices in the streets to the effect that a British team from Faenza would play football against a local one on the following Sunday afternoon, before we were approached on the subject. At a memorable allied sports meeting held in Bologna on one occasion, we were interested to see in the papers that representatives from all the allied nations would take part in the games. A strong detachment from the Royal Britannic Navy was advertised to be present. We made a special point of being there.

When the day came, the Senior Service was represented by a few men selected from the crew of a merchant ship lying at Livorno, the nearest port where a cargo vessel happened to be at the time.

***

As everyone knows, the Italian officers are expert performers with the sabre or the foil, and we were able to see many exhibitions of this art, which forms part of an officer's course of training. At every barracks in the country there is a gymnasium in which officers have to spend a certain time each day. Cavalry officers seem to take to the exercise and games more than those in infantry regiments.

They are also masters of the art of making their horses descend down impossible-looking banks which, in fact, look like precipices. They lead their horses up them again with surprising skill. These performances are carried out whenever there is an opportunity. At Faenza, on the steep slopes of a ground excavated for building purposes, we witnessed some extraordinary feats of horsemanship. The horses, however, seem to enjoy it more than some of the men.

***

With the movement of troops to the Italian front completed, the line, in November, 1917, once more opened for its

normal traffic, and large leave parties from Salonica were sent through. Sometimes as many as three trains arrived in one day. Each train, with over eight hundred officers, N.C.O.'s and men on board, came into the station, and although we were only instructed to build accommodation for one hundred and twenty officers, as many as three hundred have arrived within twenty-four hours.

This, of course, meant great work for the staff, consisting, as it did at the time, of only two officers, *viz.*, a Commandant and an Adjutant—for we were without a Quartermaster. It was also a tax on the resources of the Supply depot, especially the Bakery Section of the Army Service Corps, who supplied each train with two days' bread per man, and never failed.

***

By the end of the year 1917 (during a period of five and a half months) seventy thousand officers and men had actually passed through the Camps. It would hardly have been possible in any other place during the war to have met soldiers who had seen so much of the campaigns in every part of the world and to have had opportunities to hear their experiences.

I made a habit of going to the station to meet the trains, and by doing so, was not only able to welcome officers before they went up to the Rest Camp, which I think, from what they said, they appreciated, but was able to give officers some idea of what they might expect when they got there. Some asked if they might go into town and make their own arrangements. They said, "We have had enough of Rest Camps." I don't think they meant to be rude. Afterwards they used to come up and apologise when they had met their pals who had been up to the Camp. That was very gratifying. Also when we saw them off, officers and sometimes N.C.O.'s used to thank one of the staff for all they had done. Letters of appreciation were frequently sent from places on the line. This, of course, was very pleasing, but after all it was one's duty to make them comfortable and happy. From the remarks we often wondered what happened elsewhere and why our Camp was so differently run. It seemed so easy and so natural to do that which we had been sent out to perform.

***

I often used to have a chat with officers in the gardens of the club, and it was interesting to hear some of their stories.

One who had been captured early in the war by the Germans, gave a description of how he escaped by jumping from a train after knocking down a sentry, and how later he made his way into Holland. "I did not speak to a soul for ten days until I had crossed the frontier," he said.

Another told the story of life in a German fortress and the way he made good his escape. It appears that he was engaged in his spare time painting scenery for some theatrical entertainment to be got up by the prisoners of war.

In order to keep his kit clean he borrowed some overalls from a German official in return for a tip. It was disguised in this suit that he made good his escape.

He described most vividly how he walked through a town at night, and gave accounts of places and descriptions of people he saw on the route. He told us how he lay up during the day in an old barn, in a wood or under a haystack. "I thought I was caught one evening, and only twelve miles from the frontier," he said.

It appeared that the Germans, when they knew that a prisoner had escaped, signalled to the men all over the country. It was well known that they had some secret way of communicating with each other, when the trackers had evidently got news of their prey, but no one knew how they did it.

Sitting under a thick hedge, late one afternoon, waiting for darkness, this officer heard the sounds of birds calling at intervals round the fields. The noises were evidently made on pipes.

"This was the signal," he said.

"Darkness, however, saved me, as the Germans failed to find the spot where I lay, although a cyclist passed within a few yards. That night I reached the river near the frontier, crossed it and before daylight was safe."

Apparently the escaped officers formed themselves into a club somewhere in London, and there related the various experiences they had gone through.

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One officer who had been with armoured cars in North Russia, and on five different fronts, was now going to the

sixth. Surely that was a record for one individual. He wore the ribbon of the D.S.O., the Military Cross, and four or five foreign decorations, and probably added a few more to his collection before he was demobilised.

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An officer of the Indian Cavalry told the tale of the manœuvres which led up to that brilliant dash of mounted troops across the desert to Aleppo—a movement which terminated in the capture of practically the whole of the Turkish Army and which was one of the greatest tactical and strategical achievements of modern times. This officer was with the leading squadron. They arrived, he said, half an hour too late to capture General Liman, von Sanders, and his chief staff officers who escaped in motor-cars. Shortly after the British arrived, a German aeroplane came down near the Headquarters expecting to deliver despatches to one of their own staff! This story, with more interesting details, will no doubt some day find a place in the History of the War.

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Another officer was with Captain Selous when he was killed in East Africa. He had helped to bury the famous sportsman under a tree in a country where the hunter of big game would most probably have wished to die. The young officer who related the story of Selous's death and burial had first seen service in the war with a contingent of South African Horse, and was one of the first to ride into "German West." He explained how the Germans had mined the approach to a place where some of our soldiers had been buried, hoping that when our men came near the graves, they would be blown up. This was one of the ways the "kultured race" carried out their war of hate, he said. "We paid them back for it, later on," he added. But how, he did not venture to say.

Another interesting person we saw was Colonel Lawrence, who, from being an Oxford Don, became Generalissimo of the Arab forces and Commander-in-Chief to the King of Hedjas' Army.

***

One did not get the same opportunities of talking to soldiers, but one Sunday afternoon, whilst watching a game of football, someone pointed out an Indian N.C.O. who had won

the Victoria Cross. I went up and spoke a few words in Hindustani to this gallant soldier who had ridden twice through the fire-swept zone carrying messages, and each time his horse had been killed under him. He put his hand to the pocket of his khaki tunic and from it brought out the coveted decoration, which had been presented to him a week before by the King.

***

I remember one morning standing by a shop in Regent Street watching a man who before the war had lived a life of pleasure. He had made sufficient money in the goldfields of Rhodesia to enjoy a winter on the Riviera, and was one of the few who had made money at Monte Carlo.

When the call to arms came, before Kitchener raised the new army, he tried for a commission, but failed to get one on account of his age, as in those days the only possible opening was in the Army Service Corps or Intelligence Department. Neither appealed to him at the time, so he promptly enlisted as a trooper in a Yeomanry regiment.

At the barracks, when asked by the medical officer, "How old do you allow yourself to be?" he replied, "Forty-five," but when volunteers were asked for to fill up ranks in the line regiments, at the real age of fifty-seven, he was the first to step forward. A few days later he marched up to St. Martin's Camp, near Boulogne, with a rifle over his shoulder and a full kit on his back.

This man went "over the top" on ten occasions, and won the Military Medal. He was finally invalided out of the service on the pension of a private soldier, but not before he had been promoted Acting Post Corporal at some depot in Ireland whilst waiting for his discharge. Such men—and there were, no doubt, many of them—helped to make England what it is to-day. After the war I met him again. He was going back to Monte Carlo, none the worse for his experiences as a private soldier in the trenches.

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A train from the south had arrived very early one day, and was not due out until late that night; on it was an old friend. We had served together in South Africa and Somaliland in 1903.

"I have got to go and call on the Deputy of the Province; will you come for a drive with me? It will be interesting, as we shall have to cross the Rubicon to get there," I said.

My friend was not quite sure what I meant, but when it was explained that the Rubicon, the real old Rubicon river, was actually in existence and close to the house where I intended to go at Savignano di Romagna, he decided to come. *En route* we talked of times when we had lived together in the Boer War and chasing the Mad Mullah, long before the days of aeroplanes.

"Yes," he said, "if men had learned to fly when Dundonald went round to Acton Holmes, or when the Lancashire Brigade were on the heights of Spion Kop, we should never have retired back over the Tugela and Pieters Hill would never have been fought."

One day, a gunner Lieutenant-Colonel arrived; he was wearing the D.C.M. ribbon, which seemed somewhat out of place on his coat. Then suddenly I remembered. . . . He had lost his commission and enlisted as a private soldier, and by his distinguished services in East Africa had won back his rank.

His name a few days before had appeared in the *Honours Gazette*. So I said: "I see that you have got the O.B.E., Colonel." To which he replied: "Good heavens, I don't suppose I need wear it!"

That was only just after the military division of the order had been instituted, and the thin red line had not appeared on the ribbon.

Every war medal from the time of Tel-el-Kebir, and every sort of decoration, both British and foreign, could at times have been seen in the officers' mess. It was not an unusual sight to see six officers sitting at the same table and each one with a D.S.O.

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Distinguished oarsmen who had rowed in the 'Varsity boat race, a winner of the Wingfield and Diamond Skulls, cricketers who had made centuries for Oxford and Cambridge, International footballers and amateur boxing champions collected together at this half-way house.

Amongst the temporary gentlemen there were scholars, schoolmasters, literary men and artists and representatives from every public school in England.

Several naval officers had been in the battle of Jutland.

One train was commanded by a very senior P. & O. skipper. Before the war he had been master of one of the largest passenger-steamers of that line. He was, by the way, one of the best O.C. trains who came our way.

The time and place to meet these people was just before the gong was beaten by the old stout waiter (whose face is familiar to many thousands of British officers) for lunch or dinner outside the Villa Riposo.

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The Villa Riposo, or House of Rest, was intended to be a surprise to those who had been travelling for three days and nights in a troop train. It was nothing more or less than a camouflaged hospital Nissen hut, with sections taken away from each side. To this hut an anteroom was very cleverly built on one side, and on the other a kitchen and servants' quarters.

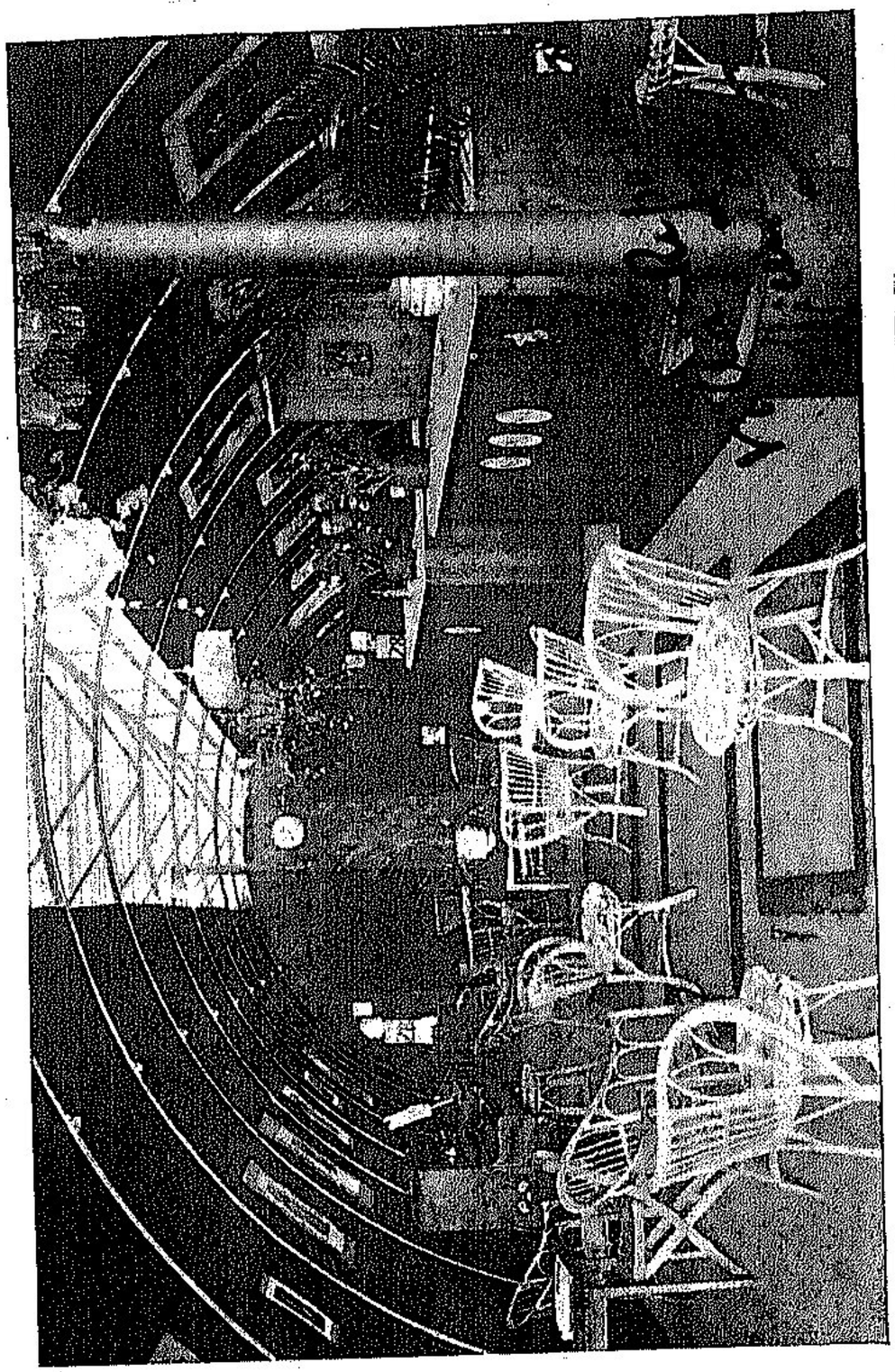
The interior of this place, known as the officers' club, was furnished with wicker chairs and seats. The tables were covered with the latest London papers and other literature. The rounded walls were stained and each section was picked out with white paint. On these were placed large posters from the London theatres and music-halls.

Other pictures, either decorative or artistic, and pleasing to the eye of the various visitors, filled up the vacant spaces. Notices, information cards, and advertisements completed the scene. There were also tables for bridge and for writing letters, and a stand of old books made in majolica, which invariably deceived those who attempted to open them.

In the evening the club was lighted by electric lamps covered with pink shades.

From the roof of this hostelry (the rendezvous for weary travellers), hung pots and ferns and flowering plants. In summer the open doors and windows led to the gardens and to lawns, under the shade of spreading chestnut trees, while in the cold, damp months and when mist hung thickly over the land, the Villa changed into a winter garden with logs burning on dogs a century old and placed in a large open grate of the extension.

The steward who presided over this establishment was one John Timms, for ten years a butler in Belgravia. At the Villa



A Cosy Corner in the Officers' Camp. [*To face page 54.*

Riposo he was Lance-Corporal Timms of a Labour Company in which he had done "his bit" somewhere behind the Ypres Salient.

Now the success of the Villa Riposo—and I think one can say it was a success—was largely due to the hard work as well as the devotion to duty which Timms displayed, and to those who followed in his footsteps and who had learnt the duties and tricks of the trade under his guidance and direction.

The profits on this institution helped to pay for everything in the Camp, both for the comfort of the officers and the men.

Adjacent to the club were the baths. It was here that the officers invariably let themselves go when they were splashing about in a tub, especially after a long journey.

In fact, the bath-house was a sort of intelligence headquarters of the Camp, in the same way that the barber's shop in Port Arthur was said to be for the Japanese during the siege of that famous Far Eastern fortress.

Our shaving-saloon was a very different place. It was run by a stationer from the town, as no barber in that part of Italy would condescend to open a shop on Mondays, the customs and unwritten laws of Romagna not permitting hair-cutting and shaving to be performed on that day.

Near the barber's shop an Italian, who had seen better days in some hotel in the Condamine at Monaco, cleaned boots and attempted to polish belts for a few *soldi*. The various shops, reading- and writing-rooms and lounges, completed the Camp as far as the officers in transit were concerned.

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The ground on which this Camp was made was surrounded by a drive along which plane-trees had been planted a century or more ago. It is not surprising, therefore, that this sudden transformation caused a certain amount of interest, when after the day's work officers sat round the mess-tables lighted by Venetian lamps hanging from the trees. The doings in the British Camps were a source of amusement for the Faentini, especially in the summer evenings. This upheaval of their village green and the turning of it into a garden of flowering shrubs and rose-trees was past their understanding. "Why all this labour and trouble for so short a time?" they said.

And when the mowing-machines appeared in the early

mornings they stood and wondered at the performance; especially when officers in their shirt-sleeves took a little exercise by cutting the grass before breakfast.

Over each hut was the name of some battle, such as Oudenarde, Malplaquet, Minden, Lucknow, and Waterloo. These puzzled every civilian and a good many Italian officers, until it was explained that they represented honours won by regiments of the British Army.

"I thought all these officers who were passing through belonged to the new army," an Italian once remarked. As a matter of fact, ninety per cent. of them did, but the tradition was there.

***

The officers of the permanent staff were housed in little cottages at the end of this compound, each being built in a different way, like detached villas in a model village or suburban town. Every house had its ingle-nook and fireplace, and was designed and furnished according to the taste of the tenants.

The main Camp was just as comfortable; in fact, it had most of the attractions. "A grateful visitor," who signed himself as such, in an article for some paper, either the *Balkan News* or a war journal which was published in Cairo, made the following remarks about it, which give a fairly good description of the place:

"It is midday in June, and sunny with the clear blue Italian sky. I make my way after lunching under the plane-trees to the main camp, admirably chosen under robinias and elms. Here we find other small gardens allotted to the men. Each hut has its section of ground, and each tries to outdo the other in splendour with roses, pansies, geraniums, and sweet-peas. The Headquarters Office garden (in charge of the Sergeant-Major) and the avenue called The Mall, reminds one of our home villa gardens, resplendent with roses and with other flowers and bright-looking shrubs."

And he added:

"I have served in eight different regiments and travelled

in twenty-two different countries, and this is the most comfortable and wonderful institution I have yet found."

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In order to know if the men were happy and had everything they wanted, I frequently used to go and sit amongst them during the concerts or entertainments in the recreation rooms. On one occasion I sat next to an Australian soldier who seemed an exceptionally well-educated and informed man. I asked him how he liked the Camp.

"It is the first time I have felt at home since I left Melbourne," he said.

The "diggers" had a reputation of giving considerable trouble in Rest Camps, and if they did not like the arrangements made for them they had a way of their own for showing their feelings.

Personally we found the Australians some of the best disciplined and behaved troops who ever passed through Faenza. I told this to my friend who sat next to me at the concert and after we had had a long conversation about Australia, I told him that I was the Commandant, and was very pleased to hear all he had to say. I was not surprised when he said that he was the grandson of a former Prime Minister of Victoria. After shaking hands with the soldier, I remarked that some day he might follow in his grandfather's footsteps.

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Now the Australian officers took an extraordinary interest in their men, partly from the fact that they were just a little bit afraid of how their boys would be treated in a Rest Camp. Also because they knew their men much better than the Imperial officers in charge of troops in transit. These officers had little or no chance, as they were detailed to take command of leave parties and details of units they had never seen before they entrained at Toronto, or reported for duty at Southampton.

The great trouble with Australians was that they had so much money, several of the men being more or less millionaires.

Many of them wanted to see the sights; in fact, I think they considered that it was their privilege to do so. So in order to prevent trouble, on several occasions we marched the "Aussies" through the town to the station, not only because they were such splendid-looking

men and so well turned out, but I thought it would do no harm to let the Italians see some samples of the men from overseas.

Instead of being an anxiety, it was a pleasure to have the Australians and New Zealanders with us. They were treated as men, and they realised it, and as my friend in the concert room remarked: "If the rowdy ones give trouble, you have only got to send for me and my chums."

I am sure they would have settled the matter in a few minutes. There was no necessity. None of the staff at Faenza were "counted out." And when they do count you out, you must look for trouble, as many staff officers know.

The following letter arrived one day from London, and gives an illustration of how the Australians show their appreciation for any kindness.

"LONDON.

"*February 13th*, 1918.

"TO THE COMMANDANT,
"Rest Camp, Faenza.

"DEAR COLONEL,

"I wish again to express my extreme appreciation of the splendid treatment handed out by yourself and staff to myself and the officers and other ranks under my command. It was of such a character that I shall not forget it in a hurry, and stands out as easily the most pleasant feature of our journey.

"I attach herewith a copy of a memo in my Voyage Report to Australian Headquarters, and hope it will convey to you some little idea of how we appreciated your efforts on our behalf.

"EXTRACT.

"'I wish to place on record my extreme appreciation of the most excellent treatment which was handed out to us at the Rest Camp at Faenza, Italy. Here the men were given a good hot meal and bathing facilities, and also recreation and everything which could be thought of was done for their comfort. To sum it up, this Rest Camp, for the excellence of its administration and general principles, stands out far and away above everything else on the line of march.'

"Believe me to be, yours very sincerely,

"(*signed*) F. W. HARCOMBE, Lieut.-Colonel, A.I.F."

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The people who gave the most trouble in Camp were the crews of trawlers, mine-sweepers and other seafaring men in uniform who did not belong to the Royal Navy. No doubt at their work they were splendid, but on land, and with their pockets full of money, they were quite impossible to deal with. These men probably never touched a drop of alcohol at sea, but when they were suddenly thrown in the middle of a long train journey into a place where wine was plentiful and where drinks were cheap they let themselves go.

The result was that it was extremely difficult to get some of them back to the station. One of these gentlemen, after visiting several cafés, rolled into an hotel and asked for a *Bääs*. The head waiter did not realise that he wanted beer, but helped him upstairs to a room where he could have a bath! The stairs were too much for him, and as the door of the bath-room was opened he collapsed inside on the floor, where he was discovered by the A.P.M. just in time to be taken to the train. It was unfortunate that these sailor men in uniform were often taken by the Italians for officers of the Royal Navy.

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One certainly required a keen sense of humour to pass over some incidents without being seriously annoyed with the offenders.

The high-water mark of impertinence was reached by a young man in uniform who had arrived from Egypt or Salonica. In spite of a notice to the effect that a part of the compound belonged only to the permanent staff, who, by the way, had done all in their power to make this person happy, he penetrated into our kitchen and requested the chef to wash his socks, in which he had been travelling for many days, and probably nights too.

A very temporary gentleman sent in a complaint through the bath attendant to the effect that the shower bath did not suit him. He expected a plunge, and possibly a marble one with attendants and a manicure establishment as well.

It is regretted that marble baths were not available, but if the Camp had continued perhaps even these would have been provided. For a marble bath in Italy, especially at the rate of exchange, is not expensive to construct even in a Rest

Camp. Regarding this incident, I would mention that some staff officers who were with General Chetwode in Palestine returned with wonderful tales about the bathing and ablution arrangements at the palatial mansion built by the Kaiser near Jerusalem. Even they appreciated our trickling showers at Faenza.

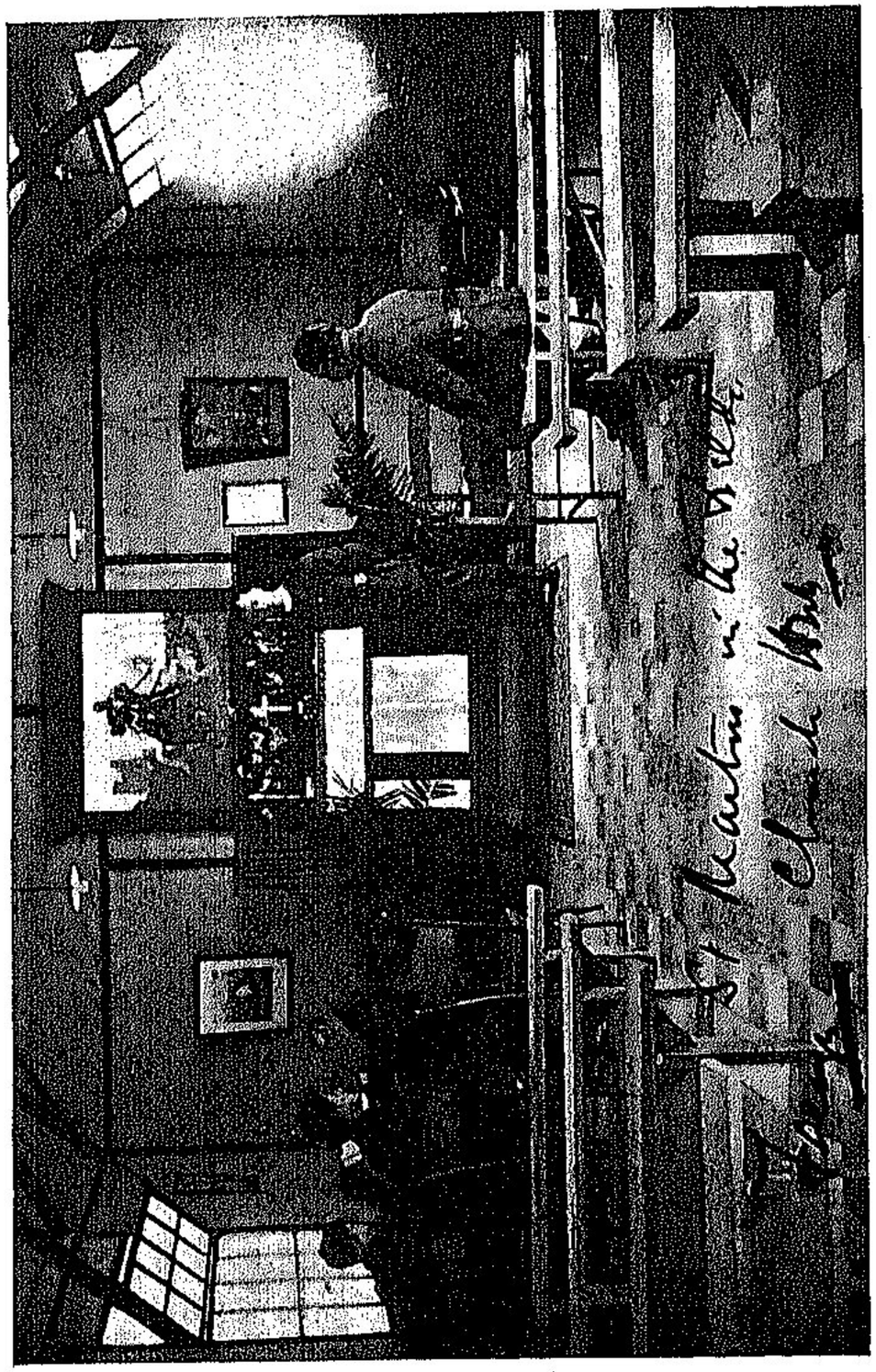
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Frequently our troop-trains and the Italian *tradottas* carrying their officers and men to and from the front arrived at the railway station at the same time. The khaki and grey-clothed soldiers fraternised together on the platforms. The Italian uniform is made of good strong cloth; much of it, I understand, comes from England, and is very serviceable. It always looked neat, and was a contrast to the varied kits in which our fellows from every part of the world appeared. Soldiers in kilts, trousers, "shorts" and breeches could always be found at the station, and every sort of shoe-leather, from field-boots to canvas slippers, might be seen when troops were in the sidings.

The British Tommy always has a sense of humour, and our troop trains, consisting of first and second-class compartments and trucks, were invariably covered with pictures in chalk. Humorous remarks and notices, such as "Express to Blighty," or "All in the Pink here," "Allenby's Own," and "We give one tin of Bully Beef for five Eggs," were printed in huge letters on the sides of the trucks.

As the trains pulled into the siding, whether they were from the North with men going out to the East or returning from leave, or from the South, with others *en route* to England, it was always the same. Every compartment was full of cheery faces.

The British soldier always seemed to be merry under any conditions—and at times he was not too comfortable on the trains of the Mediterranean L. of C.—whereas the Italians generally appeared morose and with a fed-up-with-the-war look about them.



[To face page 60.

ST. MARTIN'S-IN-THE-FIELDS.

CHAPTER V

An Officers' Mess-house—St. Martin's-in-the-Fields Church in Italy—Castellamare and Other Posts on the Adriatic Line—Visit from the King of Italy—Fourteenth of July Demonstrations in Italy—The Republic of San Marino and Election of Captains Regent—Battalions for France—Shop-keepers and Their Advertisements—Entertainments at the Opera House—Prisoners of War from Kut.

WHILST the French were defending Verdun and the British checking the German advance on Amiens, our troops were helping the Italians to hold up the Austrians on the Piave—not a very difficult business judging from accounts which came down the line. In fact, soldiering in Italy was a picnic compared to the trenches on the Ypres salient, or, for the matter of that, anywhere on the Western front.

From the time the divisions left France and made their memorable journey along the French and Italian Rivieras, when they were welcomed and fêted all along the route to Genova, until Lord Cavan crossed the Piave and drove the Austrians back across the occupied territory, there was no serious engagement.

The passage of the troops to and from the East, however, continued, and after General Allenby's success the numbers were doubled, for both Palestine and Egypt were able to send home their leave parties. In one month twenty thousand troops came into the station.

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In order to give the officers a larger room than that used at an hotel, during the spring of 1918 a magnificent mess-house was erected. This building, which accommodated two hundred at a sitting, was decorated inside like an Old English hall, with imitation oak beams from which were suspended artistic iron

lamps. The walls were covered with oil paintings, engravings, and armour, the latter manufactured in the town by a man who was an expert at this sort of work. It was impossible to get the genuine article, and the hall was not complete without it.

The hall, named after Lord Kitchener's victory at Khartoum, as officers who passed through will remember, was a most attractive place for the weary traveller, especially when the orchestra played all the latest tunes from the London theatres and Italian operas. It was here also that the local authorities were entertained, and on special occasions, when permission was granted after the armistice, there were dances especially for the young ladies of the town, who not only brought their fathers and mothers with them, but—much to our annoyance—all their near relations, including uncles and aunts and cousins as well.

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Now to complete the model village it was necessary to build a church, and the padre, formerly a London curate, who was doing duty at the time did a great deal towards persuading the D.O.R.E. to use some of his spare materials for the work.

The church, which also served as a reading-room, received the name of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, after the church in Trafalgar Square, and a short time after it was opened a beautiful picture of the patron saint was painted by Mr. Wilfred Thompson, of Florence, for the altar. The picture, now at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields in London, forms part of a war memorial, and represents St. Martin on a grey charger giving half his cloak to a beggar. The painter has represented the soldier wearing armour of the Middle Ages, which was painted in part from armour of the fifteenth century, and it may be of interest to know that all details of the armour, the saddles, and the trappings of the horse have been carefully reproduced from contemporary works, so that the picture gives a fair idea of how a mounted man looked at that date.

As St. Martin was associated with Amiens and fought against the Huns outside Rheims, it was particularly appropriate that our church should be called after him. At the time it was opened Amiens was actually being shelled by the Boche and the British Army was fighting the Germans in the country round.

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The Royal Engineers, who made such a success of these buildings, had, apart from their work in the camp, a considerable amount to do elsewhere, for the Faenza Area Command extended for a hundred miles along the Adriatic Coast, and halts for troops at various places along the line had to be made. Of these Castellamare was the most important, especially in summer, as it enabled the troops to bathe in the sea. For this purpose five hundred sets of bathing costumes were kept there and an officer was specially appointed to supervise the parades.

Now unfortunately the British were never very popular at this seaside resort. From the time the first troop-trains began to pass through until a few months before the line closed Castellamare was almost always in trouble.

It appears that when one of the first contingents arrived a Sergeant, who was looked upon as above suspicion, entered a café with some companions and ordered drinks. As payment he tendered that which most people, especially foreigners, would believe to be a one-pound English note. In return for this the N.C.O. in question received a few lire after paying for the wine.

The proprietor, who evidently thought he had made a good bargain on the rate of exchange, duly presented the note to be cashed at a bank, when, to his astonishment, he discovered that the paper was worthless.

It was nothing more nor less than a ticket for a cinema entertainment.

This incident caused a considerable amount of stir amongst the inhabitants in such a small place and set the ball of distrust and animosity rolling. It reached its height when a certain Carabinieri on duty at the station jumped on the step of a compartment full of Tommies, hoping to get a cigarette. Instead of this he was deprived of his Napoleonic hat, which a soldier thought he would like to take away as a souvenir.

Finally the stationmaster—who was a very officious person—unfortunately received a large piece of melon on the broad and decorative gold band of his cap.

These small affairs, however, did not arouse the anger of the high officials of the railway, as they regarded the matters as trivial and practical jokes; but when some hundred Welsh miners who were being released from active service and sent home to work decided to raid the shops in the town, there was serious trouble and further complications arose. It required all the tact of the staff to put matters right with the authorities.

Ancona was another *enfant terrible* in the Faenza area.

This particular part of the line gained an unpopular notoriety for the thefts on the troop-trains. Even in the old P. and O. Express days things were frequently missed *en route* to Brindisi along the Adriatic route, but during the movement of British troops the light-fingered Italians reaped a harvest.

For months hardly a train arrived at Faenza without some report of lost kit.

As a rule boots were taken while the men were asleep. Belts, haversacks, and tunics also seemed to attract the attention of the thieves, who were supposed to be railway officials such as brakesmen, lamp-lighters, and others.

No one ever discovered where the articles went to. It completely beat the Provost Branch of the Army on the L. of C. even when officers' clothes mysteriously disappeared from their compartments.

On one occasion, however, the thief was caught. A strong box which looked as if it might have contained valuables, because it was chained to the sides of the brake van was taken away during a halt at night, and the man who took it had not only a disappointment but received a very rough time. This particular box contained a pet monkey, and when the lid was opened the animal, dressed in a khaki uniform, with the rank of a Lance-Corporal, suddenly jumped out and bit the thief badly in the face, with the result that he was taken to hospital for medical treatment. The monkey, who had no use for anyone but British soldiers, was found the following day by his master, who was in such distress that he was allowed to go back to look for Master Jack, and discovered him sitting on the roof of a wayside station buffet.

The camp at Ancona was later moved to Falconara, the railway junction for Rome, and here another bathing establishment was built. This place satisfactorily served its purpose

until a violent wind and rainstorm carried most of it into the Adriatic, which promptly terminated its existence—fortunately just at the moment when it was to be closed.

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During the summer of 1918 the King of Italy paid a series of visits to places in the vicinity of Bologna.

His Majesty happened to be at Riccione inspecting the garrison, which supplied guards along the coast at a time when some of our Camp staff were at the Rest House there for the week-end. His Excellency the Army Corps Commander, when he heard that we were anxious to see the parade, informed the King, who desired that we should be presented. The King, dressed in the uniform of a private soldier except for badges of rank and with one ribbon on his tunic, spoke to each British officer, asking each questions about his duties in the Camp. In course of conversation he said: "I have seen your soldiers at the front. I know what splendid men they are. I have seen English battalions on parade, and I know how well they can drill." Then he added: "I shall hope to come and see your Camp at Faenza later on."

I said we should be very much honoured with a visit, and that I knew the officers and men would appreciate it.

Some weeks afterwards we received information that the King was coming to the town, and that he would be pleased to see the Camp.

His Majesty's movements, however, were not known to us until a few hours before his arrival, and there was only just time to acquaint our Headquarters of the fact. Unfortunately our General was away, and no other staff officers could be sent over for the occasion, which was a pity, especially as His Majesty was evidently impressed with all he saw and expressed his interest at the organisation and admiration of all the arrangements.

Accompanied by his personal staff and some officers from the Comando Supremo, he made a complete inspection of the Camp, and with keen eyes looked at the mess quarters, kitchens, and dining-halls. Nothing seemed to escape him, and many questions were asked about clothing and food.

The white loaves made with Canadian flour and so different

from the brown bread everywhere seen in Italy, even at the best hotels, impressed the Italian officers immensely.

"Your artillery in 1917 used to live on our men's rations," said the King. "They particularly liked the soup," he added.

"I'm told that your soldiers live just as well as their officers," I said.

"Sometimes even better," was the reply—in perfect English, too, for King Victor Emanuel conversed most freely in our language and without an accent.

One might easily have been talking to one of our own staff officers. There was not even the slightest sign or appearance of the "brass hat" attitude about His Majesty, dressed in his simple grey uniform. For some unknown reason, our immediate superiors seemed to resent the royal visit to our Camp. They thought the King had been specially invited, and expressed their views very strongly on the subject. I don't think we were ever forgiven, although we had nothing to do with the arrangements.

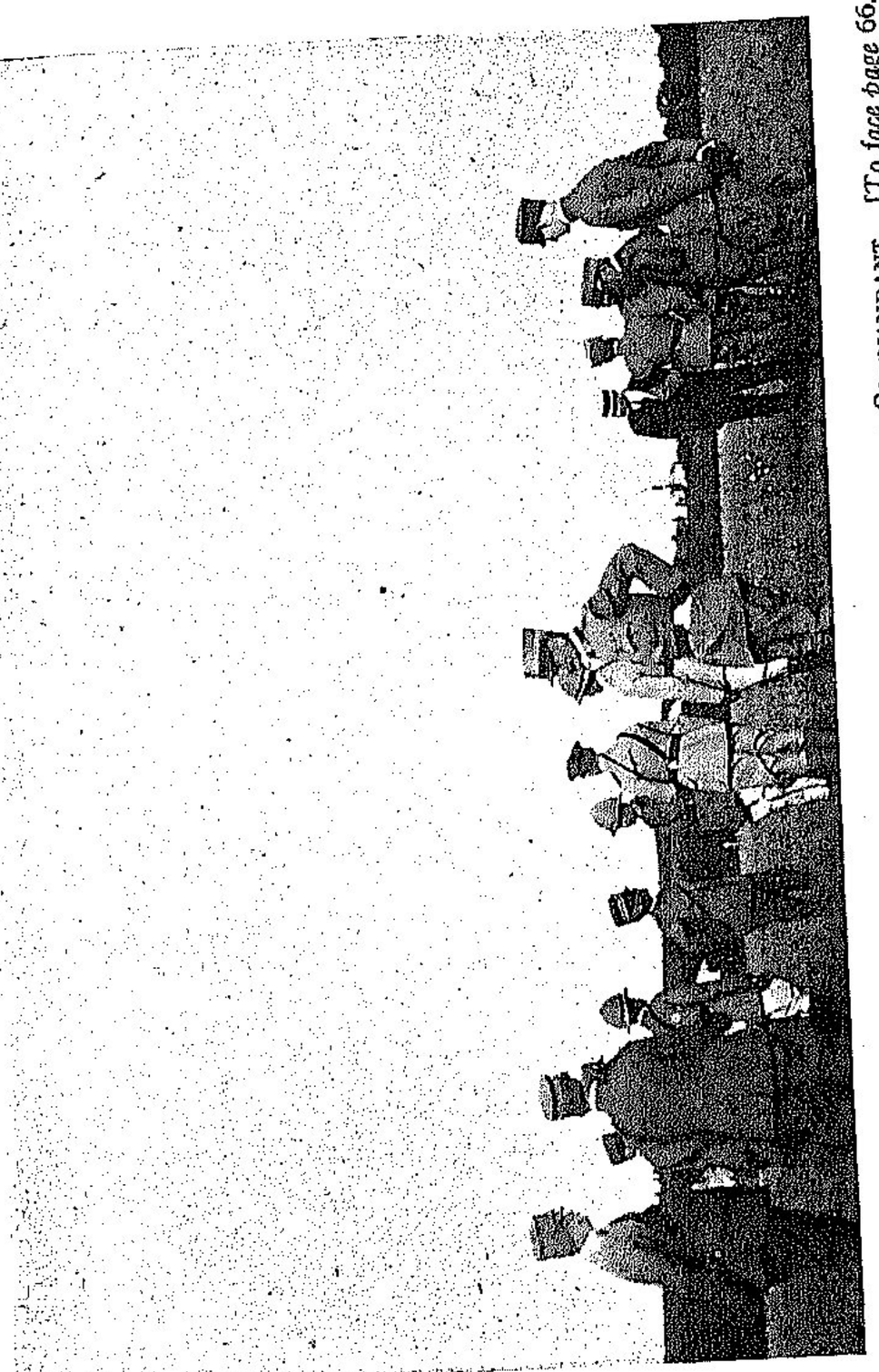
At the same time, I cannot help thinking the visit did good, as the Camp was in perfect order and a credit to our Army and those in command of the whole line, for which they got both the *kudos* and the reward.

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About this time, instructions were received from Rome for us to send officers to various places in Italy in order to represent the British Army at certain *fêtes* which were being organised for the fourteenth of July. Perugia, Pesaro, and Florence were the towns named. This gave us an opportunity for an outing and a chance to see something of the country without asking for leave.

Perugia seemed the most important; so the best-looking officers were selected for that particular place, and the *liaison* officer, who was very voluble, accompanied them. This party thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Florence also needed attention on this occasion. Here the organisers had made a great effort at propaganda, and the Navy, under the command of a young officer, assisted by a subaltern with special qualities for making himself popular, together with powers of conversation, was covered with glory every time its members appeared in the streets.



H.M. THE KING OF ITALY IN CONVERSATION WITH THE COMMANDANT. [*To face page 66.*

Now although most of us had been over twelve months in Italy and picked up a certain amount of Italian, it could hardly be expected that we should be able to make speeches in the language; it was therefore rather alarming on our arrival at Pesaro, which is the capital of a large province and a fashionable seaside resort in summer, to find the Piazza thronged with people ready to listen to orations from the delegates of the various allied countries. France, Belgium, Serbia, and the Szecho-Slavs had chosen officers not only well versed in Italian, but specially selected on account of their abilities to talk. The proceedings commenced with addresses from the balcony of the Prefecture, delivered by Italians. A procession to Garibaldi's statue followed. Neither of these functions needed any great effort.

When, however, after a banquet, it was arranged that everyone should accompany the officials to the Opera House, and that each representative was expected in turn to address the audience, I thought that our military representative in Rome might have sent someone to this important place who could make a speech in Italian.

I shall never forget the scene in the Rossini Theatre, filled as it was with people dressed in their summer evening costumes, and with the boxes decorated with flowers and flags; neither can I ever forget the moment when I was asked to step forward to the centre of the stage and speak to the audience. I only said half a dozen words, which seemed to amuse the people in the house, and then I had to go through the trying ordeal of being embraced on both cheeks by the General Officer Commanding the station.

***

Another official function to which as Commandant of the District I was asked to attend was the installation of the two Captains Regent at San Marino. This ceremony takes place twice a year, on April 1st and November 1st.

This unique independent republic, the smallest in Europe, lies on the eastern spurs of the Apennines, some fifteen miles from Rimini.

Within an area of some thirty-three square miles the fifteen thousand inhabitants have kept their independence

and their light blue and white flag of liberty flying through all the troublous times in the country round.

The capital, which from below looks about impossible to reach by motor, is built high up in a rock, from the heights of which one looks over the maritime plain and far across the Adriatic. On the top is a well-built town, with its Government buildings, a cathedral, and a network of narrow streets, many being made of steps, on both sides of which are shops where vendors of postcards, stamps, and souvenirs of the place wait for visitors, hoping to do a little business.

The Government consists of sixty members of council, chosen from the nobles and rural land-owners, who elect the presidents.

On the day of installation these gentlemen, dressed in cloaks and caps bordered with ermine, are escorted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Minister of Foreign Affairs and other officials of the state to the Court House, where they solemnly take the oath.

Then, led by the Army, some hundred men in light blue and silver uniforms, with a fanfare of trumpets sounding, they march to the church to receive the blessing from the bishop.

It is a quaint ceremony within the walls of this lofty city, at peace with the world from time immemorial.

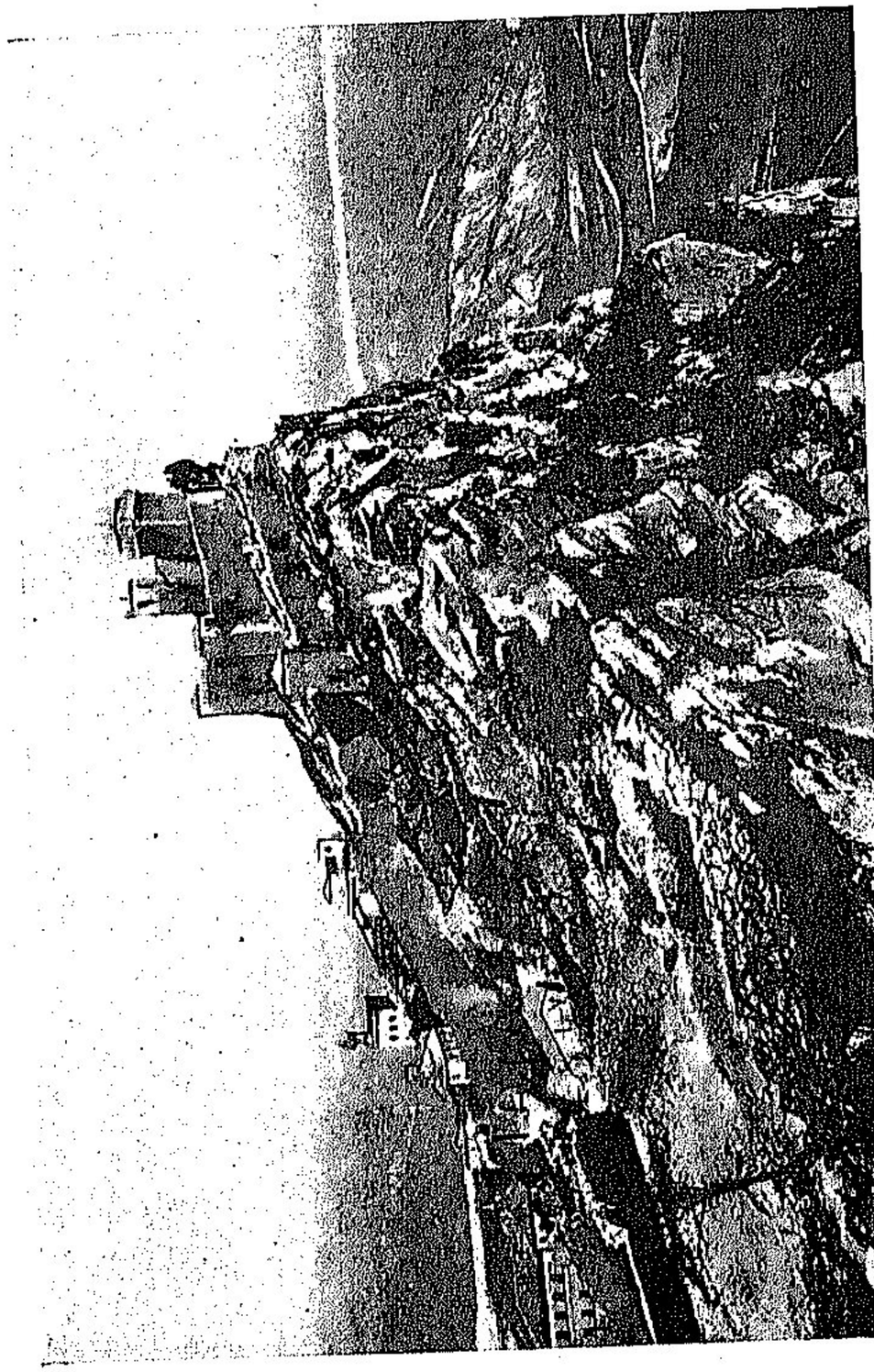
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In the early summer of 1918, in order to reinforce our army from the Western front, certain battalions were withdrawn from the Near East and travelled overland to France *via* Faenza. It was a pleasure and privilege to have these organised and disciplined fighting units in camp.

The officers and men made a great impression amongst the inhabitants.

Unfortunately many of the battalions passed through the station at night, and all we could do was to provide hot water for tea, give them fresh bread and facilities for purchasing stores at a canteen erected in the station yard.

On one occasion a Highland regiment marched with their pipes playing through the streets in the early hours of the morning, and this fairly roused the Faentini. From behind the half-opened doors and windows appeared heads of people, wondering what all the noise was about! The march of the



SAN MARINO.

[*To face page 68.*

Cameron men along the Corzo Mazzini and over the cobble-stones of the Piazza was perhaps disturbing, but the men thoroughly enjoyed the exercise and a chance of seeing an Italian town.

Altogether thirty-eight thousand men, of forty battalions, passed through. This proved the usefulness of the line in time of need, apart from the purpose for which it was intended. It also showed that the Italian railway system was one of the many advantages gained by the Allies when Italy cut herself away from the Triple Alliance and entered the war. It would have been difficult at that time to have sent troops round by sea, and I doubt if it could have been done, owing to the scarcity of ships and difficulties of safe navigation.

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If the sound of the bagpipes jarred on the musical ears of the Italians, and the roll of the drums disturbed their *siestas*, there were compensations. The British officers who poured into the town spent their money freely. Shop-keepers, who before the arrival of the Inglese were on the verge of bankruptcy, suddenly became rich. The manufacture of Faience, the one-time industry of the place, revived to such an extent that the demand was far greater than the supply. Almost every shop, whether a tailor's establishment or an umbrella stall, offered pottery for sale, and every British regimental crest was to be found on ash-trays, plates and ornaments of every description.

The local breweries made fortunes by supplying the canteens and cafés with beer. Hotels seized the opportunity of custom, and raised the pre-war prices from six to twenty-five lires per diem.

Banks profited by the exchange, and notices appeared in shop-windows all over the town to the effect that cheques could be cashed and that English was spoken.

Even barbers condescended to oblige in Camp although they religiously kept to their custom not to open on Mondays in the town.

Applications were received almost daily from small shop-keepers or their assistants for permission to open kiosks in the Camp. In the officers' compound an enterprising merchant erected a magnificent establishment for the sale of Venetian

wares, pictures, and jewellery, which appealed to the visitors who were anxious to take home souvenirs. Silk shawls were bought up as fast as they could be secured at a kiosk which gloried in the name of "Old England."

If the advertisements over the shops were calculated to catch the eye, they were not always able to draw the young officers inside. They were, anyhow, humorous enough to attract the attention of passers-by. Here is a sample of one given away in the streets—

Pay a visit to
Oppis artistic Store
Souvenir
of all cities of Italy
English Spocken
on parle Francais

Faenza—Shaving Bank
connected

The profit of this harvest was to be seen at the opera when people who, before the Inglese came, were only able to purchase seats in the floor of the house now appeared in boxes. Even the young ladies who sold sweets, cakes and fruits, and post-cards in Camp arrayed themselves in fashionable costumes and looked down on their poorer relations sitting in the cheaper places below.

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Even in the small towns of Italy the operas were well produced, and the orchestras could be very favourably compared with those in large continental cities, and would draw big audiences in London. The principals were generally first-class, even if the chorus and the scenery left something to be desired. Officers passing through frequently had opportunities of hearing really good music and operas, such as *Lorelei*, which are seldom heard in England. A tenor with a wonderful voice who sang at Faenza in the autumn of 1919 was to be heard at Monte Carlo in the height of the season a few months later.

The Italians, as everyone knows, are above everything else a musical people. Every town possesses its opera house, at

which are produced the works of Paggliaci, Puccini, or Verdi. People will sit for hours and listen to the music. The houses are packed, and those who have been working all day in the fields will come in from long distances and pay large prices for seats and even standing room.

. . . . . .

When the British garrison at Faenza decided to take the Opera House for three nights in order to celebrate the victory over the Central Powers with a vaudeville entertainment, it was a bold move on the part of the organisers, and the inhabitants were a little averse to allowing their hall to be used.

They had not forgotten the Scotch music, and some wondered if the bare-kneed Highlanders would bring out their pipes on this occasion. It took a good deal of propaganda to persuade them that they would be amused, even if the English songs did not appeal to their tastes. The energetic and versatile D.A.P.M., who was a past master in the art of arranging shows, very cleverly managed to get together some sixty young Italian girls. He trained them in a really wonderful way to sing English tunes and to dance, with the result that their parents and all their friends and relations came to see their performance.

Although the programme was well arranged, the stage effects admirably carried out and the flowers and decorations something new to the audience, the English attempt at a musical evening was regarded as a somewhat humorous affair. The last "turn" was the appearance of a small child on the stage, carried on the shoulders of a soldier in marching order, and together they sang "Tipperary."

This performance, owing to the wonderful scenery, reminds me of an incident related by several officers who passed through the Camp on their way to England from South Russia. Several versions came to my ears, but that told to me one evening in the club was probably correct.

"I suppose, Colonel, you are never tired of hearing how much officers appreciate all you and the staff have done. You know Faenza is well known everywhere," said an officer, and he continued: "It may interest you to know that at an entertainment given by a divisional concert party at Tiflis in South Russia a few weeks ago, the final scene in the sketch

represented a beautiful garden with decorative surroundings. In the distance was a Camp, and leading to it, at one side of the stage, was an English cottage covered with roses. The heroine of the play—who was also the hero—lay asleep on a bank near a wood. Suddenly she awoke from a dream, and looking round, exclaimed : ' Where am I ? Is this heaven or Faenza Rest Camp ? ' "

" How did the audience take it ? " I asked.

The reply was, " With cheers."

This little story appealed to me so much, I cannot help inserting it here. It was far more pleasing than anything we had ever heard before, even when some kind General ventured to express his approval of the arrangements.

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About this time instructions were received from Headquarters that a troop-train specially provisioned and with travelling kitchens would arrive on a certain day. The train contained a large number of British officers and men who had been prisoners of war in Turkey. The orders further stated that extra rations were to be issued, and every possible arrangement should be made for the comfort of the party.

It was unanimously decided by the heads of all departments that Faenza should give them a really good time. As may be seen from a message left behind, the reputation of the Camp was upheld. Even the Italian caterer for the officers—a man very difficult to move and one who might easily have made a small fortune if he had been inclined—rose to the occasion. The fatted calf was killed, and champagne, manufactured locally, which was quite a good substitute for the real thing, was supplied. The N.C.O.'s were suitably entertained by the Sergeants' and Corporals' messes, and the shop-keepers in Regent Street and Knightsbridge made a present of wine for the men.

There had been a good many cheery evenings in Camp, but when these prisoners of war, most of whom had been through the siege of Kut and the trying marches afterwards, appeared, we did our best to make them forget their past experiences.

All along the route from Constantinople this party had been *fêted*, and as one of the men said when he was eating a large plate of roast pork surrounded by fresh vegetables, " We have done nothing but eat and sleep since we started on the journey, but this is the best meal and the best time we have had. We feel already at home."

And they deserved every bit of it all, for hard work, ill-treatment, and privations were written on many faces. Young and strong as these boys, born and bred in Hampshire and on the Norfolk coast, had been, it was a case of the survival of the fittest who came through. All the others had either given up their lives in the long, long trail through the desert or during the months of captivity amongst the Turks in the mountains beyond.

Non-commissioned officers and men had apparently been treated alike, and although when Kut surrendered the officers had specially asked that they might remain with their men, probably realising what would happen, the request was not allowed. The officers were sent off on donkeys and the other ranks were driven along like animals across the hot sands, often with nothing to eat all day but a handful of corn, and with no water to quench their thirst. It is to be wondered that any survived. Now as they sat and listened to " Every Little While," or " Raggin' Through the Rye," and—for Miss Lena—" If You Were the Only Girl in the World," when everyone joined in the chorus, the past seemed to be forgotten. They were homeward-bound at last, and this was a break in the journey before the last stage. It was a halt which will probably never be forgotten by many. The orchestra played the latest songs from the London music-halls and on this occasion, by special request, Garli, the tailor with the wonderful voice, who once sang at Covent Garden, and Antonelli, the violinist, surpassed themselves after dinner, to the evident delight of men who had not heard such music since they left England.

This is the little note they left behind—

' Eighty-two British officers, lately prisoners of war in Turkey, find themselves, at last, really ' honoured guests.' They realise for the first time for several years that they are free men at last, and beg to thank their kind entertainers most sincerely for a very pleasant evening."

It was certainly a privilege to be able to do a little, if it was only to give them a feeling of freedom and the first touch of home, before they reached England.

CHAPTER VI

Florence Hospitality—"Caro Vivere" Strikes—Offer of Help from Italian Officers—Duties of an Area Commandant in Italy—Responsibilities of a Commandant—Earthquake Shocks at Faenza—St. Sophia and Borgo San Lorenzo—A Jewish Battalion—Arrival of Serbian Children—Civilians Travelling on Military Trains—The British West Indies Regiment.

WHEN the British fighting-force under General Plumer, and later under Lord Cavan, settled down into their winter quarters in the forward areas, Italy was divided into administrative commands. The large cities of Parma, Modena, and Bologna on the main line of railway, as well as Florence, remained in the Faenza area.

Of these, Florence, the centre of old Italian life, and famous in the drama of Italian history, was naturally of the greatest interest.

Only one hundred kilomètres away from us by rail or road—for the line follows the road as far as it can until it disappears through numerous tunnels in the mountains—it was not a long journey, and every one of the staff was at times able to visit this delightful city, with its vast treasures of art. It is unnecessary here to mention any of those glorious churches and decorations with which Florence is adorned, or the pictures that fill her galleries; suffice to say that the city of Dante and of Michael Angelo was interesting to anyone who could spend a few days or even a few hours' leave within her hospitable walls.

One can never forget the kindness which was shown, and the hospitality which was extended to everyone who wore British uniform; and especially to those officers who were quartered at Faenza whilst the British Camp was there.

Directly the Camp was started, and during the many

months of its existence, Florentine society was interested in the welfare of the men. Both British and American residents paid us visits and brought or sent literature of every description. Concert-parties consisting of amateur artists, who had to get up at 4.30 a.m. on cold winter mornings in order to catch a train leaving at 6—trains invariably start at most inconvenient hours in Italy—frequently came to entertain the troops. Elderly ladies who could not sing or dance, knitted socks and other articles for the comfort of the soldiers, whilst others started and ran a club on the lines of that well-known establishment, "A Corner of Blighty," in the Place Vendôme at Paris. The club on the Lung Arno in Florence was for the benefit of anyone in khaki who wanted a free tea, or to be chaperoned round the sights of the city. Last, but not least, some of the residents opened the doors of their villas to convalescent officers, and their hospitality was much appreciated.

For months an American gentleman and his wife not only lent their house as a home for sick officers, but they personally looked after these young men and drove them all over the country in their car. Probably never before had these fellows chances of visiting places such as Vallambrosa, or the villas at Fiesole, renowned for their architecture and gardens, and of seeing something of social life in Florence, which appeals to so many English and Americans, and is often denied to the tourist.

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If war has brought disease, disaster, and death into so many homes in the Empire, it has given great facilities to many who fought for their country to see the world, and also to meet all sorts and conditions of people. An Australian soldier, born and bred on a sheep-run in Queensland, once said to me:

"I have been on four different battle-fronts, and am being sent to England for three weeks' leave at the Government expense. It has been a wonderful education, and, apart from the war, which I would not have missed for anything, I have been well repaid for coming over."

Although it has been stated on many occasions in the Press that there was a detachment of British soldiers stationed

during the war at Florence, this was not the case. The British Army there consisted of two military foot-policemen, whose chief duty was to meet trains and to give English visitors in uniform any assistance. They succeeded in carrying out this work in such an able manner and also in making friends with the English colony in such a way that their presence became almost a necessity. So much so that when it was found necessary to withdraw these "red caps," owing to want of staff, and trouble elsewhere, a request was sent from several British residents to Headquarters to have these N.C.O.'s immediately returned.

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If the British soldier during the war never suffered from want of good food, thanks to the splendid organisation and arrangements of the Army Service Corps, one realised the trying times which most people had to go through in England. The same shortage was not felt in Italy; not until the early spring of 1919 were there any great hardships in the Italian homes. People had practically everything they wanted except coal. In the hotels of the large cities ample food was obtainable, and the shops were well filled with supplies. Butter and sugar were the only articles which were prohibited for sale. Prices, too, were not raised to the same extent as they were in other countries, and when any signs of profiteering commenced there was a general outcry throughout the land.

I happened to be in Florence at a time when strong action took place against the "Caro Vivere." Every shop was closed, the street cars had stopped running, and the only traffic in the city was that of Government motors and military vehicles. The entire population, with the exception of a few male pedestrians, remained indoors. Any sign of trouble brought soldiers to the spot immediately, for the Government at once took up the matter and acted in a way which might with advantage have been copied by the other countries.

In less than twenty-four hours the riots were at an end and the shop-keepers had been brought to reason. Stores were opened and business was resumed, but the prices of food and articles of clothing were considerably reduced.

These "Caro Vivere" strikes were not only confined to Florence, they were general throughout Northern Italy, and

they were settled quickly by Government action in all parts of the country.

In Bologna, which is a shopping centre for a very large and rich agricultural district, and therefore particularly busy on market-days, the prices of clothing were reduced twenty-five per cent. after the strikes. At the rate of exchange this made them extraordinarily cheap.

A good pair of walking-boots for town wear might have been bought for twelve shillings, and material for dresses was half the price ladies paid for the same things in England. Furniture and household articles, so well made in Italy, were equally inexpensive.

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At the time of the "Caro Vivere" strikes, the Commander of the Italian garrison, who was always ready to assist us, called at my office and suggested that he should send up an armed guard. It was feared that there might be some trouble in the British Camp at Faenza, owing to the fact that we had large stores of flour and tinned food, and also as the canteen was stocked with supplies.

Some months previously we had been asked by the official propaganda agency in Florence to have photographs taken at our Army Service Corps Depot showing the sacks of flour and sugar with Canadian and other marks on them. These pictures were printed in order to satisfy the minds of the people, who had been told that the British soldier was living on Italian products. This was German propaganda admirably organised and carried out with some successful results, especially amongst a certain class of peasants whose sons were still in the Army.

Already extra troops with machine-guns had been drafted into Romagna. Every town—especially such places as Bologna, Imola, Forli, and Cessana, well known as centres of Republican agitation—was full of soldiers as a precaution against political trouble.

When Colonel Giusti arrived with his kind offer of help, I replied that as long as the young men who were amusing themselves by driving about the country waving red flags from commandeered motor-cars did not come into the Camp and did not attempt to interfere with our affairs, there would be no necessity for assistance. In fact, the presence of an

armed Italian guard outside the British Camp might provoke ill-feeling and possibly cause some untoward insult to our flag, and international complications might follow.

"And if they do make a hostile demonstration, what will you do?" he said.

The reply was: "I shall not use any bullets or bayonets; I shall make an issue of cigarettes instead. A hundred boxes of 'Pall Mall' or 'Abdullas' would keep all these fellows quiet for a week."

This was probably true. Fortunately, no ill feeling of any sort was ever shown towards us in that part of Italy; and in Florence, where things did not look at all pleasant during the general strike, the respect for the British uniform was always most marked.

To give an illustration of this.

During the strike in that city, when things looked black, some people who had done a great deal for our officers and men in camp and were worthy of any assistance we could render in time of trouble, were forced to leave their villa at Bellosguardo and take refuge in an hotel in the town.

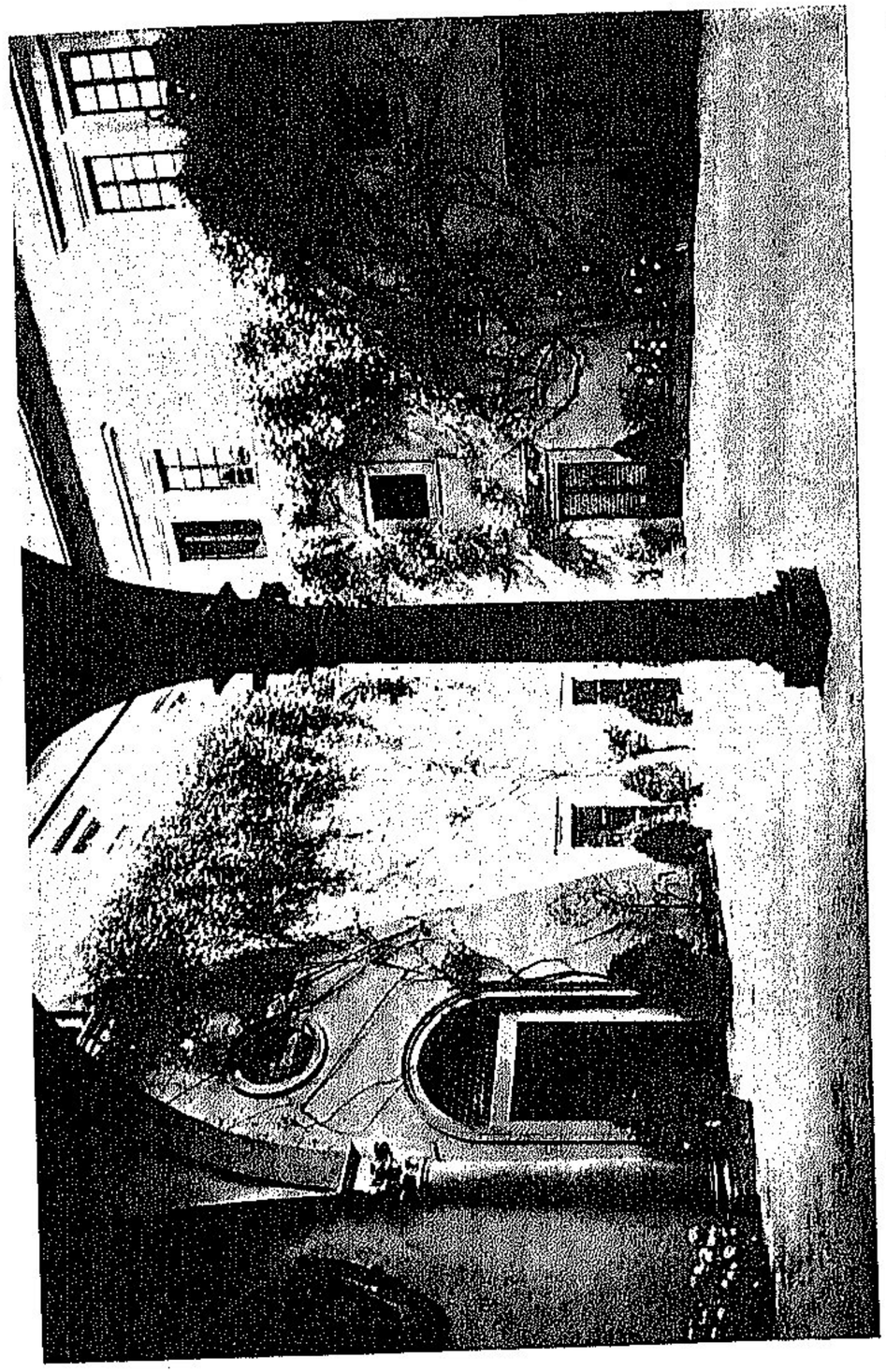
Their own house was guarded by Carabinieri, their silver and valuables concealed, and wine, I believe, buried somewhere in the garden. When a British military car arrived on the scene, although no private motors were allowed in the streets for fear of being attacked, these friends of ours were able to return to their villa, driven by a soldier in uniform, with a British officer beside him.

Even the crowd which had collected at a street corner, waiting to loot a shoe-shop which had overcharged its customers, made way for the motor in question to pass by.

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The duties of an Area Commandant in central Italy differed very widely from those of an officer holding the same position in Northern France. In France one had very little to do with the higher officials of the province or district, which was as a rule almost entirely under the administration of Divisional, Corps or Army Headquarters.

In Italy, where the areas were far more extensive, comprising, as in the case of Faenza, several provinces, and hundreds of square miles of territory, it was not only necessary to act



Lo Strozzino, Bellosguardo, Florence. [*To face page 78.*

as military representative of Great Britain, but to be a sort of proconsul as well. Tact and diplomacy were as much required and as important as knowledge of that most useful little Red Book known as the Field Service Regulations, as well as the Army Act. With our headquarter staff in Paris—which was the case for several months—the post of a Commandant in Italy not only needed initiative but it required judgment of action. It was necessary to be in close touch with the higher commands of the Italian army and with the civil authorities, and to discuss matters with them—matters which in other theatres of war would be handled by the General Staff

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When the British Army came into Italy, in November, 1917, the method of communication with Italian officials changed as a matter of course. A *liaison* officer was appointed at Faenza in place of an interpreter. This in many ways was a great advantage, but having made friends in the early days with all the important people in the district, they were always approachable in time of need, and any sort of trouble was easily smoothed over. It was pleasing to know that our Government recognised the help and the services which the Italian officials rendered to us in this part of Italy. Lieutenant-General Luigi Segato, commanding the 6th Army Corps at Bologna, was made an honorary K.C.M.G., and the Sotto Prefetto and Mayor of Faenza each received the O.B.E.

It is to be regretted that the Commander of the garrison and the Chief of Police were not also rewarded for their valuable assistance. They would have appreciated an Order far more than the civilians, especially as they could have always worn the ribbon in uniform, whereas the Mayor and Sotto Prefetto would probably keep the O.B.E. in a glass case, and never have an opportunity to wear the ribbon of the decoration.

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If the cities of Romagna, with the exception of Ravenna, were fortunate to escape being shelled and bombed by the enemy, the country was on several occasions during the war badly shaken by earthquakes.

Twice whilst the British Camp was standing and occupied by our troops there were shocks felt which almost entirely destroyed some villages in the district.

In the peaceful valley of the Monto, under Mount Falterona, St. Sophia suffered to such an extent that hardly a habitable dwelling was left for the population. In a few seconds on a Sunday morning the beautiful church was a mass of ruins—fortunately just after the congregation had left the building, and the hospital, with its well-equipped operating-theatre, was a large heap of *débris*.

I motored out to the scene to enquire if any help could be rendered. On arrival I found a battalion of Italian soldiers already on the spot and hard at work. In a few hours they had erected a camp by the riverside with their small military sheets (which are part of their soldiers' equipment on service); each man carries one sheet and a short pole, and four of these make a *tente d'abri*. Even in the month of November, as it was then, when snow was beginning to fall, the people seemed quite happy. All that we could do was to lend them some motor transport so that timber could be carried out for the erection of huts.

In the summer of 1919 there were more shocks; several officers and men in our camp felt sick at the trembling of the earth, and animals, especially dogs, showed signs of fear. This proved a much worse earthquake than the previous one.

Houses dotted about the valley leading over the mountains to Florence were shattered, and the large village of Borgo San Lorenzo was so badly shaken that huge buildings had crashed to the ground. There were even more pitiful scenes here than one had witnessed at St. Sophia.

The dome of a church attached to a convent had fallen in. On the walls, now open to the heavens above, there still hung sacred pictures, and a large crucifix with a figure of Christ above the high altar. I spoke to the Sister Superior, who was overwhelmed with grief. Tears fell from her eyes as she told me how miraculously she and three sisters had been saved. They were at prayer in a small chapel adjoining the church when the shock and disaster came. They heard the great roof and the buildings fall and wondered if this was the end of all things. The little room which she showed me where they knelt was untouched, yet all the buildings round were a mass of ruins. With money given by some friends in Florence and by contributions from the officers' club, we were able to

send these women stores from our canteen. It was the only way we could show our sympathy for the poor nuns, and it was little enough to do for them.

How useful some of our Nissen huts, so easily transported and so quickly put together, would have been to these homeless people! Why the Italian Government, who are apparently always ready to assist the distressed in their country, did not purchase some of the huts from the British in Italy when the camps were finally closed and sold, I cannot imagine. The huts at Faenza were certainly offered to the War Office at Rome, and at a very reasonable price, too, but the military authorities said they did not want them. They were finally sold to a private individual, and six months afterwards some of them, I understand, were still standing on the old camping-ground at Faenza. Anyhow, it is satisfactory to know the Government got some money and that there was no "dump" in this part of Italy about which questions could be asked in the House.

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After the movement of the special trains with battalions to France before the final "push," which led to the great advance, and terminated with the re-occupation of Mons, the arrival at Faenza of units entirely composed of Jews, and wearing the uniform and badges of the Royal Fusiliers, was perhaps of more interest than the ordinary trains of drafts and details which we had been accustomed to see.

The first Jewish Battalion, commanded by Lieut.-Col. Patterson, D.S.O., of lion-hunting fame, marched up from the station with a considerable amount of discipline and no small idea of military bearing. The men had been chiefly recruited from the London district and their ranks had been completed by many who had evidently, judging from their accent, travelled across the Atlantic, and included a numbers of tailors from New York and other parts of the United States.

The N.C.O.'s were picked apparently from every regiment in the Army, and they were undoubtedly some of the finest men we had seen.

After weeks of training near Plymouth, this battalion on the eve of its departure overseas, *en route* to the Holy Land, had marched through the city of London with bayonets fixed

(a privilege which is only extended to a few regiments in the Army, including the Royal Fusiliers), and had been received and welcomed by the Lord Mayor. We were informed that the motto of the regiment was " No advance without security." They certainly advanced in fours to the tune of the " British Grenadiers " through the streets of Faenza in the most approved military fashion, and with assurance, carrying aloft in the breeze their light blue and white flags. Their behaviour in Camp was excellent, and the talent and cleverness they showed in the boxing ring and on the stage were equal to the way in which they bargained at the shops in Regent Street, or gambled and played cards when the police were not looking in remote corners of the grounds. A few articles from the sergeants' mess were missing after their departure, but as there was no inventory, and other troops were in the Camp at the time, we must give the Jews the benefit of the doubt. " *Honi soit qui mal y pense.*"

The Jewish hymn, which they sang in the canteen after the evening entertainment, was evidence of their *esprit de corps*, and their enjoyment and appreciation of a few hours' rest and recreation on the journey to Palestine.

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It would be interesting to know if Rest Camps in France, even at St. Germain and Cherbourg, or anywhere else during the war, were constructed to accommodate women and children as well as soldiers.

On the Mediterranean L. of C. however, it was necessary to be prepared at any hour of the day or night to receive a telegram to the effect that the details on a train from Taranto included " some women and children."

These were generally wives and families of non-commissioned officers from Malta, and were not difficult to manage, especially at an hotel, where they were carefully looked after by the Quartermaster, who thoroughly understood how to make them happy. The expenses were always paid by the General Fund.

It was a different matter, however, and required considerable organisation when some sixty Serbian boys and girls, whose parents had been killed by the Bulgars and who were being sent to England at the Government expense, to be educated, suddenly arrived.

Fortunately they were in charge of a few men and women who spoke their language. With the approval of these people it was decided to bring the whole party up to Camp and to give the children a day out in the country under supervision of the Padre.

In fact, a sort of school treat was arranged for the occasion, which ended in a big tea consisting of rations supplemented by buns and cakes made in the bakery.

I often wondered what became of these orphans, who appeared to be sons and daughters of the better class of Serbian people.

They were clean, well dressed and well behaved, and judging from the remarks made by one of the elder boys, who spoke a little English, they thoroughly enjoyed the journey and took the greatest interest in everything they saw *en route*.

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The Serbian children were very much easier to handle than some of the civilians who travelled by military troop-trains, and who resented any sort of discipline or rules and regulations connected with the Rest Camp.

These people, who were either dockyard employees or Inland Water Department officials, travelled with second-class tickets. This meant on the Mediterranean L. of C. accommodation of sorts in either first, second, or third-class compartments, or even an open truck.

They were not officers, N.C.O.'s or men, so the nearest approach to their standing in the Army seemed to be that of warrant rank, and accordingly they were so placed in the Camp. But this did not please them, and they collected round the orderly room requesting an interview with the Commandant, whom they generally called the " boss," the " old man," or the " guv'nor." With ample funds at their disposal, and, according to their own ideas, the freedom of any city they happened to pass through, it was natural enough that they showed their displeasure at being kept within the limits of a military compound and military discipline.

At stations on the journey these civilian " temporary gentlemen " frequently descended on to the platform and wandered into the streets of the town, caring little whether their

train went on without them and knowing the habits of troop-trains ; also, with the knowledge that a passenger train would sooner or later come along, they chanced being able to pick up their baggage and their friends before they reached their destination.

As regards catching up the train, there was comparatively little risk. Their disappearance, however, caused a considerable amount of anxiety to the train officials, as well as annoyance to the A.P.M.'s department, who received endless telegrams and messages from the M.F.P. all along the line.

As an example of this. One morning two I.W.D. gentlemen were brought into the Commandant's office. They had apparently left their train at Parma, and were found by a military policeman on the platform, waiting for an express to take them on. After many apologies, one said :

" You know, we had a most enjoyable time. We struck a fellow in a café who spoke English and he showed us all the sights in Bologne."

He meant Bologna.

" And where did you sleep ? " I asked.

" We did not sleep anywhere, you see ; we went to the opera and that was not over until midnight, and we caught the one o'clock train to Faenza."

Then the other man, who was an Australian, added :

" My word ! the music in Italy is fine."

It was impossible to punish these people, as they were not under military law.

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By the end of July, 1918, when the Camp had been going for a little more than twelve months, over two hundred thousand troops from east and west had passed through the gates.

Of these sixteen thousand were officers and twenty thousand were coloured men from various parts of the Empire. Amongst the latter were several battalions from the West Indies, chiefly composed of men recruited from sugar and other plantations in Trinidad and Jamaica.

These units, clothed and equipped like European regiments, accommodated and rationed as British soldiers, were organised on the lines of the old Regular West India regiments.

On arrival in France they were turned over to the Labour Corps, and their officers stated that the men had done exceptionally good work on the roads and in the villages at the front, which, as everyone knows, might have been anywhere from Etaples to the Vimy Ridge.

When, however, some ten thousand of these dark gentlemen with English names were handed over to the Italian Expeditionary Force, they evidently made up their minds that they had been sent down to Italy for a " rest cure " after their strenuous time on the Western front.

Most of them were either " fed up " with soldiering, or the Italian climate was not conducive to any sort of energy.

Life in the Rest Camp evidently appealed to their West Indian temperament. As long as they got plenty of food—especially bread and jam—and the canteen was well stocked with chewing-gum, they were perfectly contented to while away the time eating, sleeping, and playing cricket.

When, however, they discovered that they were still on military service, for which they were enlisted and paid, they resented the bugle call for reveillé and routine of work which followed during the day.

The result, as can be expected, led to very serious trouble, and several incidents happened at Taranto when the strongest disciplinary action had to be taken.

One can only imagine that the various battalions of Labour men from the West Indies had to be kept in Europe long after their services were required because there were not enough ships to take them home.

They were certainly not of much use in Italy. It is worth recording for the benefit of the tax-payer that two of these battalions, numbering some forty officers and sixteen hundred other ranks, passed through our station four times ! They apparently had a special trip back to France at the Government expense ; perhaps to relieve the monotony of life at the southern Italian base-port. Anyhow, they came along with faces grinning like schoolboys out for a holiday, and showing sets of wonderful white teeth.

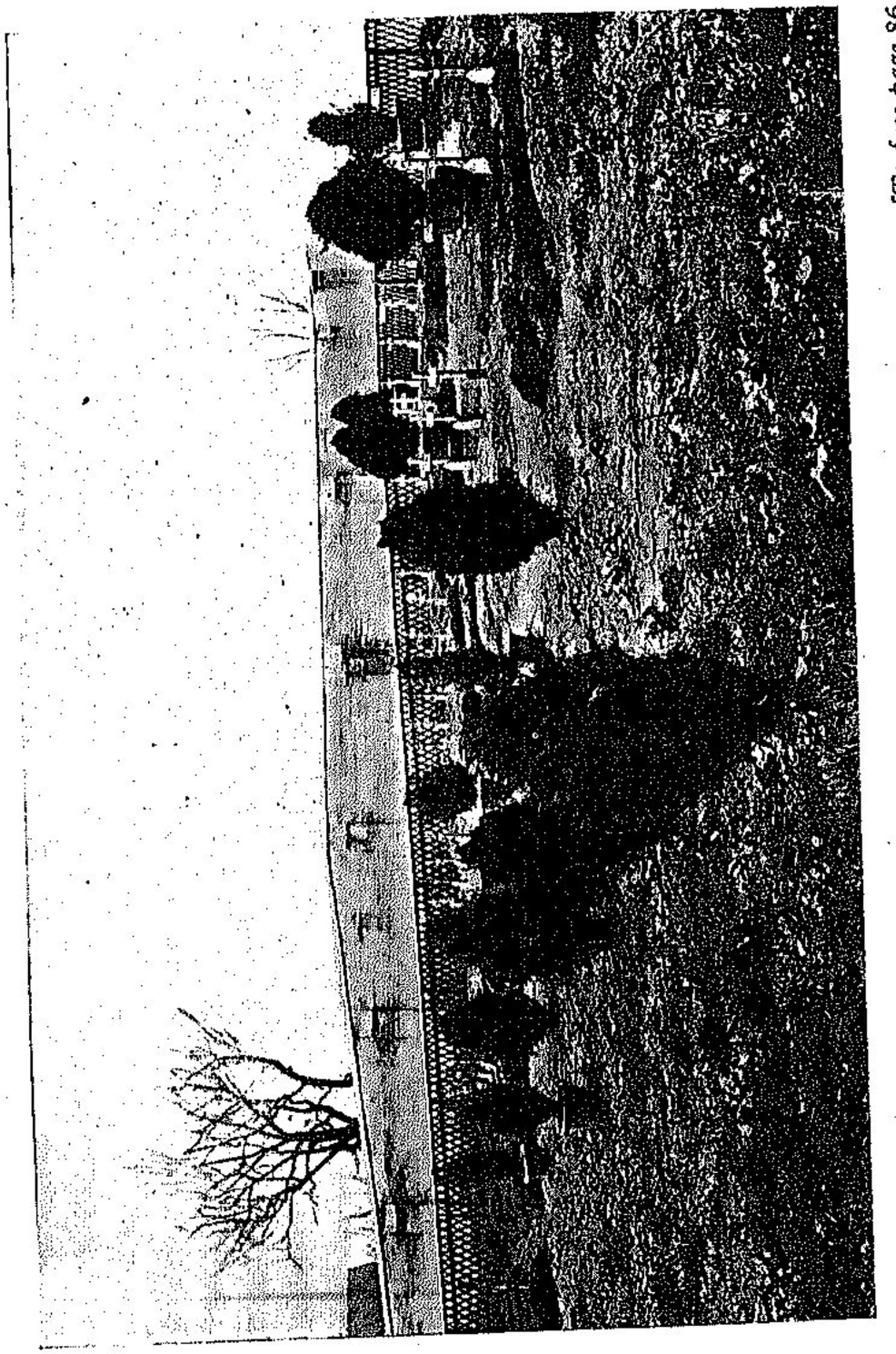
To give them their due, there were good, bad, and indifferent characters amongst the B.W.I.'s, and the good were very good.

When these dark gentlemen walked out on pass, they were always well turned out ; their large boots—and they wore the largest possible sizes—were as shining as their black faces. Their behaviour in the town of Faenza was all that could be desired. In hospital they were like overgrown children, and quite happy with plenty of sweet puddings, golden syrup, and picture papers.

Special " medical comforts " were provided by a thoughtful M.O., who in private life was a country doctor and knew how to look after his patients, putting aside any sort of red tape which might come in the way.

By his initiative, energy, and powers of persuasion with the Royal Engineers, he " wangled "—if such a slang term can be used—much for his hospital, with the result that the buildings and compound were a picture of neatness and order.

The attendants not only grew their own vegetables, but they bought and fattened up turkeys, hoping that the birds might be useful at Christmas. Sad to relate, like many other things on the Line, the turkeys disappeared—the night before they should have been killed !



[To face page 86.

THE BRITISH CEMETERY, FAENZA.

CHAPTER VII

The American Y.M.C.A.—The Hospital and its Work—A British Soldiers' Cemetery in Italy—The Genova Cavalry—Gallant Italian Dragoons—Trieste and Fiume—Feelings Towards the English—Economic Life in Italy—Friendship with the Italians—Effect of Demobilisation—Work of the Royal Army Service Corps—The Navy and Army Canteen Board—Some Camp Characters.

LONG before the summer of 1918 had passed, Italy was flooded with representatives from the various societies and associations which followed the American Army in France.

These ladies and gentlemen in khaki uniform not only succeeded in their efforts to win popularity in every town in the country, but with the vast funds at their disposal they provided a considerable number of comforts for the Italian soldiers and organised entertainments for the Allied troops. Now the Italian soldier, although well fed and looked after in many ways, had not been accustomed to these attentions in time of war. He did not understand the idea, and was loath to leave his haunts at the cafés or estaminets.

When the men in grey realised that all this was being done for their special benefit, and that their Allies, the British soldiers, were also asked to participate in these advantages, they began to join in the amusements which were so carefully and thoroughly well organised.

The Opera di Fratellanza Universale, under the direction of the American Y.M.C.A., with Headquarters at Bologna, was perhaps the largest and best-known institution of the sort in Italy, and from this office emanated organisations for the amusement of the British and Italian soldiers all through Romagna. The officers and men who passed through the

British Camp at Faenza owe the American officials a debt of gratitude for their work.

If our hospitals wanted gramophones or the men any sort of sporting materials, the American Y.M.C.A. gave them.

When the officers required lawn tennis, nets or balls, these were immediately sent out.

Literature and writing materials were provided whenever they were asked for, and concert parties would come and entertain the troops.

When on one occasion two trains containing sixty officers and twelve hundred other ranks were unavoidably held up for more than ten days owing to a railway strike in England, the director of the Y.M.C.A. in Bologna at once arranged to send a cinema show to the Camp. He not only did this, but the representatives of this society came themselves to play base-ball and other games with our soldiers.

The work of the Americans in our part of Italy was worthy of their flag, and they deserve the greatest praise for the way they carried out their mission.

The permanent staff at Faenza will certainly always remember the many kindnesses received and the entertainments which were given under the auspices of the Fratellanza Universale.

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Now the soldier, as everyone knows, is a sentimental individual, except when he is in the trenches or "going over the top."

Even the feelings of the hardest of hard cases—and there were many of them, at times, amongst the half-million of men who passed through Faenza—can be reached through the words and music of a song.

When a celebrated Italian sang in English "My Little Grey Home in the West," it brought tears to the eyes of many who probably had not seen their houses or families for years. There is perhaps no place like a Rest Camp in war-time where the character of Mr. Thomas Atkins comes out and is seen at its best or at its worst.

It is especially noticeable in hospital, when a strong man is lying helpless with fever or stricken by the influenza epidemic.

We had many opportunities of studying types of men, for at times the wards of the military hospital at Faenza were

full of such cases and the medical officers and sisters in charge, especially the latter, got little and often no rest from their arduous duties.

Although for the first few weeks of the Camp's existence there were only a small building and some large Nissen huts available for the sick, when the sudden influx of patients came a splendid ward for fifty beds had been constructed by the Royal Engineers, who at the same time, with their usual thoughtfulness and ability, made a large verandah without much extra expense. Here also a number of beds could be placed in summer, and men recovering were able to lie out under the shade of the limes and watch the troops marching in and out.

The officers had light and airy rooms, and every comfort was provided by the matron from funds given by the Red Cross.

The operating-chamber was complete with all necessary requirements; in fact, there was everything which could be expected in such a small hospital.

When X-ray or bacteriological work was required, the medical officers had only to ask the Italian medical authorities in the town for help, which they were ready to give at any time, especially as they were exceedingly well paid for their services.

A camp neatly laid out with gardens and a badminton court where they could get a little recreation, were built for the nursing sisters, the V.A.D.'s, and lady drivers of the Red Cross cars.

These ladies were very happy and comfortable in their miniature village of tin huts, and I think were sorry to leave when the end came.

The hospital was frequently visited by members of the Italian Army medical staff and the officials of the Corpo Sanitario, who were loud in the praises of all the arrangements, which they were not always able to make for their own people, especially when they entered the war unprepared.

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It was sad to see men who had served for months together without being able to get leave, and who had been travelling for days, suddenly struck down with influenza and carried off

the trains which were taking them every hour nearer to their homes.

It was sadder still when some of these poor fellows were buried in the British cemetery half-way across the long overland route.

They, however, could not have a more beautiful or more peaceful resting-place than the plot of land given to us by the municipality close to the Italian military cemetery, under the slopes of the Apennines. The graveyard is surrounded by a fence of trellis-work on which are placed the names of the countries where the soldiers served. In the centre stands a cement Ionic cross. The cross, contrary to the ideas of the Graves Commission, who, by the way, did not give us much help, was designed by the Royal Engineers and made by Italians in memory of one who worked with them in our Camp and who unfortunately lost his life when bathing at Riccione on the Adriatic coast.

It may be interesting to the friends and relatives of those who lie buried at Faenza to know that the last parade which was held in the Camp on All Souls' Day, and on the eve of our departure from Italy, was to attend a service at the cemetery in order to honour the dead we were leaving behind.

The service, which was most impressive, was attended by many of the local authorities, civil and military, and a touching address was given by the Commander of the Italian Garrison, who, with his officers, sent a beautiful wreath in memory of the British soldiers.

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Of the many Italian officers we met and who served with us in Romagna, none were so kind and courteous, so sympathetic, hospitable, and friendly as those of the Genova Cavalry.

Most of the officers of this regiment bore famous family names and old historic titles. Many of them spoke English, and one at least had been educated at Eton.

Several rode Irish horses, and the Colonel had taken part in the Horse Show at Olympia, and was one of those who helped to win King Edward's Gold Cup for Italy, and which was won by the Russians in 1914 and is now missing. A strong feeling of friendship and *camaraderie* was at once formed between us and the Genova Cavalry, and on the anniversary of the Battle of Briccheto, which is always kept by the regiment, just as Minden is with the Old Twentieth, all our officers were honoured guests at the luncheon, to which as a rule only past and present officers of the regiment and special friends are invited.

The Genova Dragoons, who were quartered at Faenza for some months before the "Great Push" in Italy, had covered themselves with glory earlier in the war at Pozzuolo del Friuli. They had helped to check the Austrians, who had poured through the open gap at Caporetto and reached the plains beneath the mountains.

Not only were the officers on the most friendly terms with us, but their non-commissioned officers and men mingled freely with ours.

There was that *camaraderie* which should exist always between allied troops.

The officers also took the liveliest interest in their men's games, which is often an exception in the Italian Army.

"I want my men to play football," said the Colonel. "I shall send them up every day to practise with yours, if you do not mind." With the result that soon afterwards a Yorkshire lad might often have been seen instructing Antonio or Luigi how to "dribble" and "pass," whilst others coached the Dragoons in the high and long jumps. The Italians soon proved they were no mean performers and were strong and fit enough to beat our best team at a memorable tug-of-war competition.

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When Lord Cavan was placed in command of the 10th Italian Army and led them with such dash across the Piave, the fourteenth British Corps was foremost in the attack, driving the Austrians many miles out of the territory they had occupied for months.

Long before details were published, people in the streets began to talk about the retreat of the enemy, and the Press was full of the great achievements of the Italian Army.

The words, "La piu grande Italia," were heard once more, and even the Contadini, who had taken so little interest in military matters, began to discuss the war and the aftermath of it all. There is no doubt at the moment of victory the Anglo-Saxon race was intensely popular in the country.

If we had dragged the Italians into the war—which many people in this part of Italy believed—they knew that we had in no small manner helped to defeat the Germans who began all the trouble. The Italian Press, however, gave the British troops who had fought side by side with their own very little *kudos* for their work on the Italian front. It was particularly pleasing, therefore, for me to receive a letter from the Colonel of the Genova Cavalry written near the Tagliamento some short time after the success: a letter in which the Italian Dragoons expressed their recognition of the active part played by our men in the victory.

"Bravo! the British, especially the Scotchmen who opened the road to our regiment," wrote the Colonel.

The Scotchmen were the Gordon Highlanders, who, with the Honourable Artillery Company of London, I believe, were actually the first troops across the swollen river. It was then that the Gordons lost their commanding officer as well as many men, who were drowned in the deep waters. The officers and men of the Genova Cavalry, whose motto is, "*Soit à pied, soit à cheval, mon honneur est sans égal,*" showed by their remarks their soldierly spirit and sporting instinct.

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One, however, felt things were not quite the same as they had been. This was to a great extent owing to the unfortunate international complications regarding Trieste and Fiume, and the questions of President Wilson's Fourteen Points and the Treaty of London.

In spite of the Armistice, we could no longer discuss the war with our friends and Allies who a short time before had spoken so openly and without reserve on all topics.

It was noticeable amongst a certain type of young Italian officer one met in the streets of Bologna and even in Faenza, where, to quote the words so often used by the Mayor of the town, we had "by length of residence and knowledge of the place, become almost *cittadini.*"

The officers were not so respectful as they had been. In restaurants and cafés, according to their custom, they always rise and salute a senior officer when he enters. This practice was not always now carried out.

Trieste and Fiume were considered as important to their existence as Alsace-Lorraine is to that of France.

These ports, they said, must be under their adminstration and their flag, and they looked to England to settle the question The feeling drifted into social circles.

When the wife of a prominent official in the town was asked to tea, she replied: "I cannot come any more to your Camp unless you give us Fiume"!

These words were, of course, unnecessary and the excuse an absurd one to make. They, however, showed the thought of a large part of the community.

If these feelings were shown towards us, they were even more marked with the Americans, who had done so much in Italy for the soldiers.

Their popularity, which had risen to such a height chiefly owing to the efforts of the Y.M.C.A., suddenly fell to freezing-point, and there was an outcry throughout the land from Turin to Taranto and from Ravenna to Roma against Wilson, who a few weeks before had received such a royal reception wherever the President's train stopped.

The terms of peace, although hailed with joy throughout the world, did not ease matters in Italy as far as we were concerned, although the higher military officials and the civilian representatives of the Government always extended the hand of friendship.

As an illustration of this: the Commander of the Italian Army Corps who had previously proposed several officers of the permanent staff for foreign decorations, made a point of coming over and presenting these himself.

The Prefetto of Ravenna, who represents the Government and is the most important person in the district, not only entertained us at his residence but made arrangements for many N.C.O.'s and men of the Camp to visit the places of historical interest in the wonderful old city.

The Sotto Prefetto at Faenza gave a magnificent afternoon reception and dance in our honour, and boxes at the opera were always placed at our disposal.

In Florence we were equally well received, and during the big race-meeting at Rome in March, 1919, when there was a decided ill-feeling towards the Americans, British officers were

welcomed, although when we won the International Steeplechase open to and ridden by officers in uniform on horses which had been at the front, the victory was not as popular as it might have been.

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In our turn we kept "open house" in the Camp for any Italian officers as well as for our own inspecting officers, and to others who visited the Camp. In this way we tried to keep up the reputation of the Army, and it enabled us to remain on terms of the closest friendship with our Allies to the end.

As can be imagined, our work was not as easy as it seemed to the casual visitor. There was and still is an impression amongst Italians that their part in the war has not been sufficiently understood in England. They think that it is not realised that they have lost half a million of men, killed, and that Italy has spent some eight milliards of lire, which is practically all her pre-war wealth.

"We are trusting to England to see us through," remarked a Government civil official one day. "Not only as regards our claims, but for assistance and support," he added.

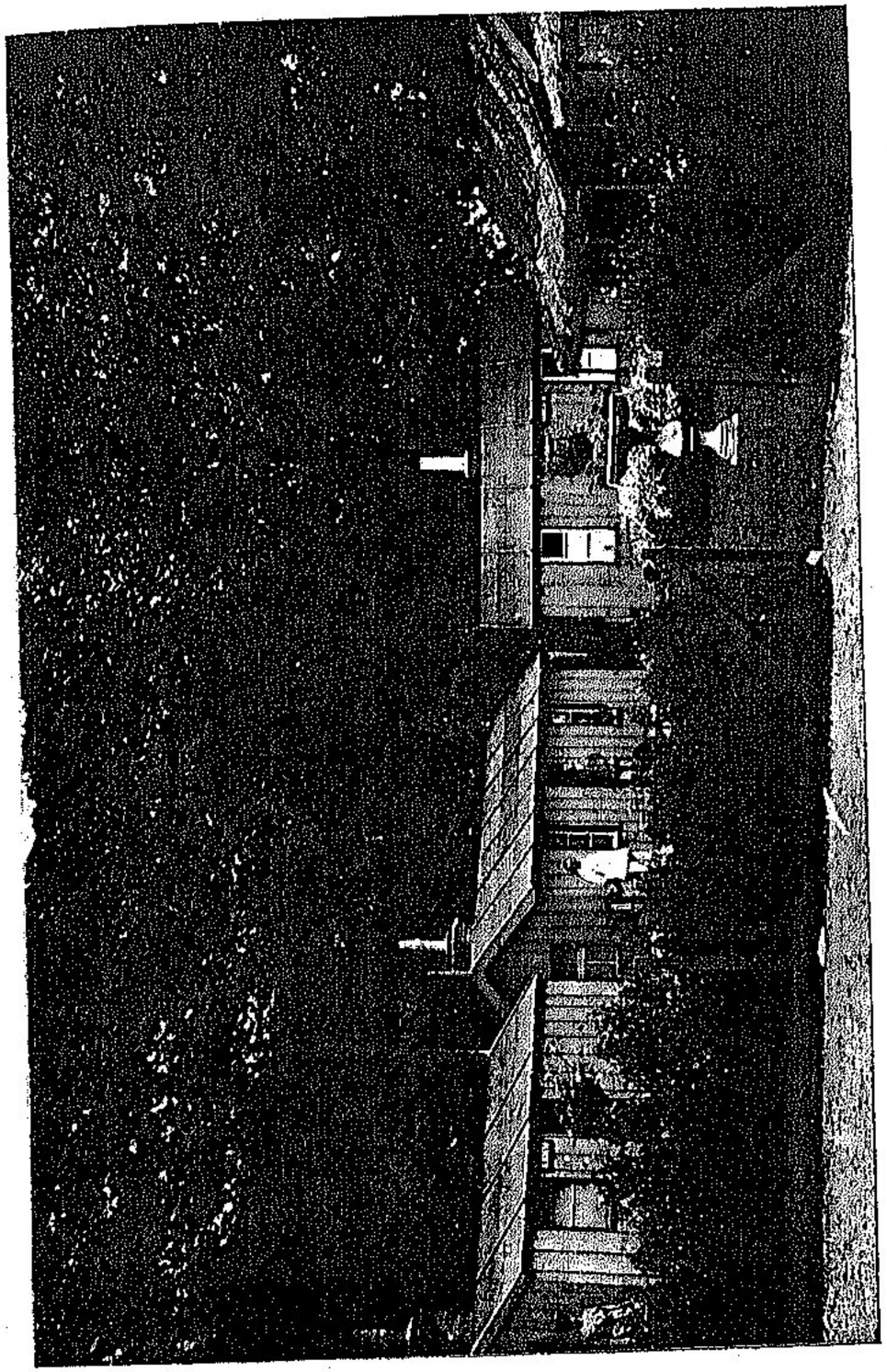
The one great assistance they wanted, and still require, is coal. Italy wants about eight million tons of coal a year, and she cannot possibly get it at present. She also expects to pay a reasonable price for it. At present, owing to the rate of exchange, it is somewhere between eight hundred and one thousand lire per ton.

Now it is quite clear that Italy must export articles in order to pay for imports. In order to pay for coal, cotton, wool, etc., Italy must export silk, fruit, and wine.

"In the district round Faenza there is surely a great opportunity for dealing with English markets," I said to an owner of large vineyards and a manufacturer of wine one day when he came to see the Camp. "Why don't you send your excellent wine to England, and with the wonderful fruit, such as peaches, put up a factory where these could be tinned. Instead I see a huge building being erected where, I am told, ladies' corsets are to be made!"

He laughed, and seemed quite contented to sell his wine in Bologna and to wine merchants and hotels in other towns in the province.

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OFFICERS' HUTS, PERMANENT STAFF. [*To face page 94.*

When the large stores of sugar from the Army Service Corps depots in Italy were bought up at about threepence a pound, it was an opportunity for some enterprising person to make a start with a jam-factory, yet nothing has been done. Italy and the Italians rely too much on their sun and soil and the great supply of water with which the country is everywhere so well provided.

If she wants to be rich—and there seems to be no reason why she should not share in the world's wealth—her industrious workers must go into many more lines of business than the manufacture of motor-cars and vermouth with which they occupy themselves at present. If they do this they will soon share in the fortunes of other countries and Italy will have every support necessary to her economic life.

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On Empire Day, the last one we could celebrate in Italy, it was decided to give a garden-party to which most of the inhabitants of Faenza were invited. We had hoped that there would be no troop-train arriving that day to interfere with the entertainment, which required the presence of the whole staff, especially the R.T.O., who spoke Italian. When all arrangements were made, and on the eve of the "show," a telegram was received stating that two hundred officers would detrain the following morning and consequently would spend the day with us! I remember going to meet these gentlemen. As they streamed down the station yard to assemble at the gate, a dozen or more very senior officers and some twenty red-tabbed members of the staff appeared amongst the crowd. After welcoming the travellers, the usual short speech giving instructions for the day was made. Then in a few words the situation was carefully explained and a cordial invitation extended to the visitors to attend the *fête*.

"If any of you gentlemen would care to help entertain the guests, we shall be more than obliged to you," I said. "You will find yourselves amongst some very charming young ladies who will be delighted to meet you."

At this, of course, there was a smile of amusement on some of the faces, and a certain amount of interest shown by the junior ranks.

I am not quite sure if all the senior officers appreciated the situation. A Colonel wearing the ribbon of the Bath, and I think a C.M.G. as well, and who probably had in time of war

commanded a brigade, evidently disliked troop-trains and Rest Camps. He may have had good reason for doing so, or perhaps he was disappointed at not having permission to proceed home *vîâ* Rome. Anyhow, he showed his feelings by refusing a lift up to the Camp in a motor.

Sixty per cent. of the officers attended the "At Home," and most of them thoroughly enjoyed it, including the O.C. of the train, whose remarks in the visitors' book before leaving were:

"The arrangements for us and treatment we had at this camp are such that Faenza will always be a happy memory."

And a young officer who evidently appreciated the party wrote in the visitors' book:

"Why only six hours here?"

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With the War Office hard at work demobilising every officer and man who could be spared from any of the Expeditionary Forces, even the staffs at the Rest Camps on the line, which surely should have been kept up to strength all the time, were badly hit by loss of men. At one period one was afraid to send men home on leave because they were either caught by the embarkation officers acting under orders and sent back to be demobilised, or they "demobbed" themselves. The trees of every department on the Mediterranean L. of C. were daily losing their leaves, which were being collected at the dispersal areas and scattered in due course all over the kingdom.

The Faenza tree, with its branches along the coast, was gradually looking bare. By July very few of the old hands remained, and the duties had to be carried on by reinforcements who took little or no interest in their duties, as they had not volunteered for an Army of occupation and were for the most part pivotal men waiting their turns to go home.

In fact, at times it was extremely difficult to keep the work of the establishment going at all. In June over thirty-five thousand troops passed through the gates, which meant that well over one thousand men had to be fed each day.

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During this trying time the Royal Army Service Corps, which had made such a name for itself in the war and

thoroughly gained the honour conferred on them by the King, never failed. The supply depot at Faenza, especially the field bakery, upheld the reputation of the Corps. Bakers were often working day and night to meet the demands.

It was a comfort, however, to know that these men were well housed and looked after by their officers, who always took the greatest interest in their welfare. It was also a pleasure to be able to give some of them a few days' rest at a time by the sea, and occasional trips into the country in their lorries, which were as hard worked as the ovens.

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It was at this stage that an important change was made with the administration of the canteens. The E.F.C. was taken over by the Navy and Army Canteen Board, and officers were brought into the department who had commanded and fought alongside men in the field.

They therefore knew the wants of the soldier and they used every means in their power to supply them. This was most satisfactory. When some fifteen hundred to two thousand men were often resting for a few hours only in Camp many of them had to go back to the trains unsupplied with stores owing to the difficulties in being served at one establishment.

The officers of the N.A.C.B. realised this and immediately opened other shops. They not only did this, but they started small canteens at other places on the line, which relieved the pressure at Faenza and enabled officers and men to get things on the journey.

In the officers' compound they erected a hut close to the club-house, which was a great boon to those who only had a short time to spare.

"I have been waiting for you for a long time," I said to the officer in charge of the N.A.C.B., when he explained his ideas shortly after his arrival. "This is what we wanted months ago, but I could not get anything done. Go ahead at once before it is too late," I added.

In a few days all these improvements were in working order and most successful. Business and large profits were not the only consideration; the officers and men on their long journey from distant countries wanted as much attention —even more at times—than those in the forward areas of

Italy; yet it had not been realised—or was it because our line was not in the limelight and did not attract the attention of the staff so much as at Montebelluno, Pavia, or Vicenza and other places where the Army of the I.E.F. was resting?

I spoke to a travel-stained soldier one day in Camp and asked him where he had been serving.

"My journey started in Upper Burmah nearly two years ago," he said. "It has taken me through India, Mesopotamia, Persia, and the Caucasus. Batum reached bottom level. This place is quite at the top, in a class apart."

I asked him why.

"Because you can get everything you want. You have not got to fight your way into the dining-hall and canteen, and when you get there everything a soldier wants is supplied at once," he replied.

The N.A.C.B. were a great improvement in many ways to the E.F.C. The officers knew their jobs and were not afraid of work.

***

There were several men connected with the staff of this Rest Camp who, although their thoughts and ambitions were far from those in the theatrical profession, from a business point of view might easily have made a living on the music-hall stage.

There was one individual who, before he was called up and put into khaki, earned a livelihood by driving sheep and cattle from one part of the country to another. This particular soldier could not under any circumstances adapt himself to military ways, either as regards the manner in which he put on his clothes or the routine he followed.

He preferred to sleep under a hedge (according to his custom and habits in pre-war time) and to do his work by moonlight. Not even the presence of a General Officer could persuade him to stand at attention, salute, or even discontinue smoking a clay pipe. This man was given a job which thoroughly suited his mode of living, *viz.*, of cleaning up the Camp, which duties he satisfactorily carried out after everyone else had gone to bed.

I mention this because on one particular occasion, when we were short of labour, an Inspecting officer descended upon

us one evening to visit the Camp. This "brass hat" arrived just at a time when the Camp was full of men on their way home to be demobilised, and their idea of cleaning up the place before they left did not appeal to them as it would have done perhaps many months before.

The officer, whose hobby was kitchens, cooking, and cleanliness, was an early riser. He expressed his wishes to start his inspection before breakfast the following morning—perhaps to see what the place was like before there had been sufficient time for a clean-up. When he reached the camp about 8 A.M. (which was hardly playing the game), he saw spotless, clean dining-halls, with bread cut up by a machine in baskets on the tables, ready for breakfast, and bright "dixies" waiting in rows for tea, which was being made in spick and span Soyers stoves. In fact, the camp was in perfect order in every way.

An old soldier, and one who knew something about the interior economy of the Army, he evidently did not think it would be possible to have made the Camp, in the time, such a picture of perfection. It was a surprise. With brooms, brushes, and whitewash, the toiler of the night had accomplished, with a few of his pals, a wonderful bit of work, because the adjutant had told them he wanted a really good show.

These men of the lowest category were no use in the fighting line or to appear on a guard of honour or even an inspection parade, but they possessed a vast amount of loyalty, *esprit de corps* and pride in their own camp.

Their letters home not only showed this, and that they were "in the pink," but that they hoped to stop where they were "for the duration"; also that they appreciated all that was done to make them happy. Some of the men who had been marked "A" and were sent up to the front even returned to Faenza to spend a few days' leave in the Camp they helped to make.

"I am surprised you spend your leave here," I said to a sapper N.C.O. who had come from the Piave. "Why didn't you go home?" His reply was that he was not due for leave to the United Kingdom yet and that Faenza was the nearest approach to home.

With such men the building of a camp was not as difficult as it might have been.

CHAPTER VIII

The Last Phase—Visits from Members of Disposal Board (Ministry of Munitions)—Two Trains held up owing to Railway Strikes—Behaviour of Troops—A Good Impression—A Review—Closing Down and Sale of the Camp—The Last Days—Departure.

BY the end of August, 1919, there were signs that the life of the Mediterranean L. of C. for the traffic of troops, and that of the Rest Camps in Italy, was drawing to a close. This became evident from the fact that fewer trains were passing along the route, and also because officers coming home from the East gave us the useful information that ships were again being used to carry troops round by sea to Marseilles and to England.

We had also received a visit from a commission composed of officials from the Ministry of Munitions, who were making a report on the prospects of the disposal of Goverument property in Italy. This was undoubtedly, as far as we were concerned, the beginning of the end.

No one, however, at that date could tell us exactly when that end would come, and we had to " carry on " as usual with a staff which was weekly, almost daily, diminishing owing to demobilisation.

When the members of the Disposal Board arrived, they came on a day when the Camp was full of officers and men. They were therefore able to see the place at its best, and at its real value.

I think they went away with a very good impression of the usefulness of the half-way house on the line.

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Apart from the reduced traffic in September, the railway strikes in England gave us certain periods of inaction from the usual routine, and at a time, too, when it was most needed. At

the moment when the news came through to Headquarters in Italy that no troops were to be sent to the United Kingdom, and that all leave was stopped owing to the general railway strike, two trains of officers and men, numbering some seventeen hundred, all ranks, including a detachment of sailors, were travelling slowly, according to the fashion of troop-trains, along the Adriatic coast, *en route* to Faenza. No information regarding the actual state of affairs in England had, however, reached us until some time after these troops had detrained at our station in the usual manner. The first news I received that the trains were not allowed by the Capo Stazione to proceed on the journey northwards was a message from the acting R.T.O. asking what he should do under the circumstances. Without any definite instructions from Headquarters it was difficult to know how to act on such an occasion. As there was no communication by telephone with G.H.Q., I immediately jumped into a car and motored into Bologna in order to try and find one of the heads of the Italian railways, who perhaps might have been able to give some reasons for the Faenza station-master's action. After driving from office to office I eventually got in touch with an official at his private residence, but all he could tell me was that a message had been received from Rome advising them that one British military train was to be stopped at Faenza.

No reason was given, nor any indication as to how long the delay might be.

This was not very satisfactory, but it was better than nothing, and threw some light on the state of affairs. As a last resource, I returned to the railway station at Bologna, where the assistant Capo Stazione informed me that one British troop-train from Faenza was shortly expected in their station! This was interesting, and showed how little they knew. Fortunately I had arranged that the troops should sleep on the trains until some orders were received, and when I returned to Camp, about midnight, both trains were still in the station at Faenza, and everyone in them was comfortably settled down for the night.

The following morning the necessary instructions and reasons for the orders being issued arrived from Headquarters. The telegram had taken nearly forty-eight hours to reach us!

It was at once decided to bring all the troops, together with their baggage, from these trains to Camp.

This was not so difficult as to find room for their accommodation, owing to the fact that a few days previously we had started to pack up previous to closing down. This gives some idea of the difficulties a Camp Commandant on the L. of C. had to contend with, especially when it must be remembered that hot meals should always be ready on arrival of troops.

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Now the presence of these soldiers and sailors in Faenza, especially at this stage of affairs, was an interesting chapter in the history of the Camp and of the town, and worth recording.

The parties, under officers detailed for the duty, came from Constantinople, Palestine, and Egypt, and were composed of men from almost every unit in the Army; they represented every branch of both services, and included a detachment of Royal Marines.

Fortunately the trains were exceedingly well organised, and they were in charge of officers who not only knew the work of conducting troops over a long journey (not an easy task), but took a keen and lively interest in the men temporarily placed under them.

This had not always been the case with officers commanding drafts; in fact, at times there had been such a want of energy on the part of some that representations had to be made to the War Office, the result being the appointment of permanent train officials.

With these two trains the specially appointed staff proved invaluable.

. . . . . .

A new lease of life had once again suddenly come to the Camp, and everything that could be done for the comfort of the officers and men was arranged

The athletic gear, even the cricket bats so kindly sent out by the M.C.C. from Lords', months before, at the request of Lord Hawke, and every sort of recreation material was utilised Concerts and cinema shows were got up, and the

billiard room and other institutions made for the permanent staff were thrown open to the troops in transit.

As days went on the good behaviour of the men had a far-reaching effect amongst the local inhabitants, who had already begun to show a certain amount of anxiety as to how long the British intended to occupy their public recreation grounds.

. . . . . .

For the first time the town was in bounds to troops of all ranks. This was a venture which might have proved a failure and perhaps have ended in considerable trouble. It, however, proved a success. The discipline was so good and the conduct so excellent that the men thoroughly earned the privilege extended to them. Out of the seventeen hundred men in Camp there was only one case of drunkenness in fifteen days, and this at a time when most of them had finished with soldiering, as they had known it, and in a place, too, where temptations were met at every street corner of the town. I cannot emphasise too strongly the fact that the behaviour and bearing of both the officers and men from these two trains, during their enforced halt, which must have been trying to many half-way through their homeward journey, went a long way towards showing the Italians what the British soldier is made of in time of peace.

If the Italian soldier and civilian of the same class partakes heavily of strong *vino*, he can stand it. It is the exception to see a drunken man in the street. If the British Tommy touches the same wine, it knocks him right over at once, and unless some pal can put him quietly away, he invariably advertises his dissipation to the discredit of everyone else in khaki.

***

One day whilst these troops were in Camp, I asked the Commanding Officers of the trains if they thought it would be possible to hold a parade.

"The Corps Commander at Bologna wishes to pay a farewell visit to the Camp. I would like him to see the men, as we have never had such an opportunity before. This would be an appropriate termination to our stay in Italy," I said.

The idea not only met with their approval, but they wished to show how the troops could march past. The men themselves were full of enthusiasm, and when the day came, although they had never drilled together before, they went past the saluting base like a well-trained battalion, and it left a lasting impression on the Italian staff officers as well as the civilians from the town and district who were present on the occasion.

***

In October it was definitely decided by the War Office to close the line at an early date, and once more we were visited by members of the Disposal Board, who this time came to decide the fate of the Camp.

Apparently in the first instance all the British Government buildings were offered to the Italian War Department, but for some reason the authorities at Rome declined the offer as regards Faenza, although the huts and tents seemed so suitable for accommodating troops.

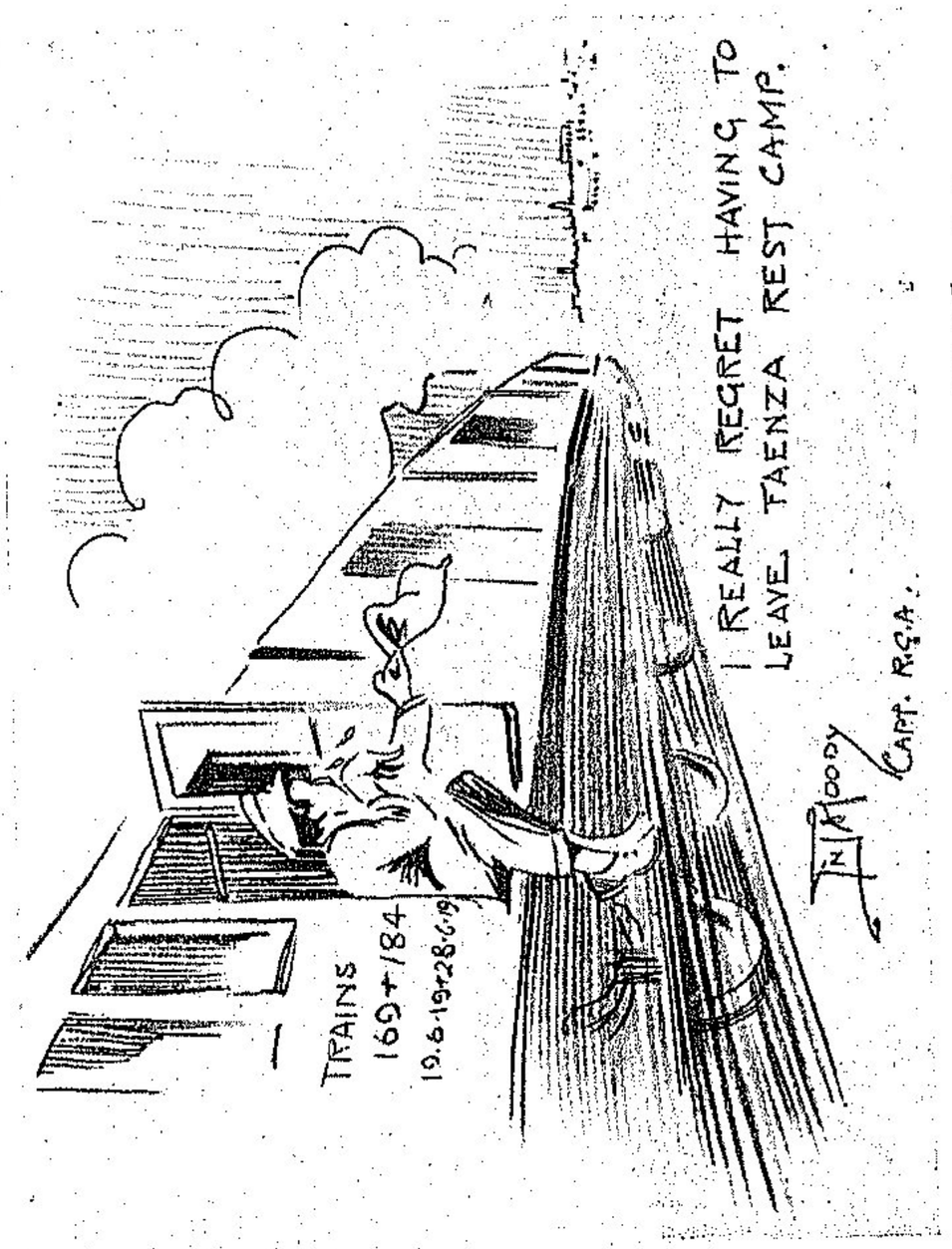
On November 1st the last military train passed through the station. A fortnight later the whole of the Camp equipment, materials, stores, etc., etc., as well as the large stock of supplies, including flour and sugar belonging to the Army Service Corps depôt, all the mechanical transport and Red Cross cars passed into the hands of one individual, who unfortunately had no opposition to his bid for them.

That this gentleman got a good bargain there is no doubt, but it probably paid the Government to sell *en bloc* rather than to keep a staff on the spot for weeks, perhaps even months, until the property had been disposed of, as apparently has been the case elsewhere.

***

On November 10th the staff left by special train. On this occasion the popularity of the British was certainly shown by the inhabitants of Faenza, despite an undercurrent of ill-feeling which sometimes came to the surface.

The Sotto Prefetto and his wife were present on the platform, and the Mayor and his assistants and nearly all the officials of the town came to say good-bye. The Commander



HOMEWARD BOUND. [*To face page* 104.

of the Garrison, his Adjutant, most of the officers and the Chief of Police, who, by the way, had always been so helpful to our Provosts Marshal, made a point of being there. The crowd of people was so great at the station that it was impossible to move about.

* * * * * *

If we had done our job from a military point of view, it was pleasing to know also that we were leaving Faenza after two and a half years' residence there with a clean sheet, and with the greatest respect from the civilian population amongst whom we had lived.

It was satisfactory to know that the honour and the word of English gentlemen, which is so much thought of all over the civilised world, had been upheld in this part of Italy.

As the train moved out, the band of the Cavalry Depôt played our National Anthem.

***

A few days later the Union Jack was formally hauled down and the buildings were handed over to the purchaser. That evening I had my last look round the Camp (now a deserted village), through which troops in numbers more than the personnel of twenty-seven divisions had passed in twenty-eight months.

It may not be a record for a Rest Camp during the war, but it is unique owing to the fact that the troops represented every arm of the service and came from every battle-front and from every part of the Empire.

The table on the following page gives some details.

It was sad to leave the little wooden houses so carefully built, so well arranged, and where so many happy days and cheery evenings had been spent by the log fires in the ingle-nooks. Even if our slumbers had been disturbed at the break of day by those hard-working Faentini washerwomen beating wet clothes on the stones on the banks of the canal near us, there were compensations. For had not the Italian workmen and youths from the town often serenaded us with delightful tunes on their mandolines, and, for a few *soldi* or cigarettes, played charming music? In the spring, too, nightingales had sung us to sleep from the trees above.

NUMBERS OF TROOPS PASSED THROUGH THE REST CAMP AT FAENZA FROM JULY, 1917, TO NOVEMBER, 1919

YEAR	MONTH	OFFICERS	OTHER RANKS	INDIANS	BRITISH WEST INDIANS	TOTALS
1917	July	591	8,293	3,112		
	August	1,372	13,638	5,807		
	September	556	8,020	3,153		
	October	1,163	11,671	2,103		
	November	408	2,980	938		
	December	252	4,043			68,100
1918	January	2,086	16,649	826	2,568	
	February	2,271	17,439	2,232		
	March	1,948	16,456	3,862	1,196	
	April	536	6,403	9	1,772	
	May	850	11,898		1,260	
	June	1,708	12,331			
	July	1,370	9,518			
	August	1,904	14,809	3,040		
	September	2,314	20,723	2,634		
	October	2,566	16,368	1,063		
	November	2,306	18,247	2,292	4,571	
	December	1,474	18,569			228,082
1919	January	1,422	24,666			
	February	3,159	40,745			
	March	1,188	46,849			
	April	1,360	30,421		2,586	
	May	1,662	24,012		2,917	
	June	1,995	34,438		2,264	
	July	1,115	18,729			
	August	672	8,036		92	
	September	403	4,171			
	October	298	6,155			
	November	140	5,260			264,076
Special Trains to France		..	..	..		37,185
					Grand Total	597,443

On the morning of departure, for the last time I looked out of the window of my hut across the grounds of the officers' compound—once a beautiful garden of roses, now cold-looking and grey under the autumnal sky and clothed only with remnants of the past.

In a few hours the Camp had been shorn of all its glory, for during the night hungry hands had torn up the flowers and shrubs, and trampled on the neat beds and borders. Before my eyes all the trouble, thought, and labour of months lay scattered about. Even the red letter-box, which was an exact replica of those in the streets of London, was rolled over on its side in the mud.

My thoughts and those of my D.O.R.E., who was with me, went back to the moments when all this work had been planned, in the summer of 1917.

An unborn child then, for days and months we had watched the Camp grow up and mature, living its life, doing its duty, to the end.

MEMORIES

MEMORIES will remain of many officers who had served on the staff, some for only a short time; men who in private life were either country doctors, parsons, engineers, or clerks, and others who in pre-war days were "something in the city." Each in his own way had helped with the work in the Camp.

There are memories of amusing stories and anecdotes about golf related by an Irishman when we were bored or feeling somewhat downhearted at distressing news from the Western front; memories of those lunches and dinners in the comfortable tin hut which was inwardly so decorative that even Major Nissen would hardly have recognised his clever invention; of dinners under the trees in the garden; of entertainments at the Club for our friends from Florence and Rome; also of strenuous sets of tennis on the hard court, and games with our pet monkey "Jackoo," who departed this life from eating a box of sulphur matches.

And last, but not least, recollection of meetings to try and help the Mess President out of difficulties whilst he steered the boat through troubled waters caused by demobilisation.

It is satisfactory to know that those for whom the Camp was made have more than appreciated its existence, and that it has given to many a restful break and a touch of home on their journeys overland to and from all parts of the world.

After all, as a disappointed officer remarked one evening when we were looking over the *Peace Gazette*, with its long list of names, and when Rest Camps on the L. of C. in Italy seem to have been forgotten, "The best reward of a thing well done is to have done it."

"Good-bye for ever, Faenza," wrote a correspondent to

the *Times* after two visits. "You did your best to cheer us up when we went out. You made us yet happier coming home; we shall always think of you gratefully."

Surely these words are a sufficient reward!

From the Visitors' Book

A few words in various languages written by officers and found in the visitors' book at the Villa Riposo before the doors closed, are given below. The remarks have been very carefully selected from many pages so that they cannot hurt the feelings of any officials at other Rest Camps, whether dumps, sold, defunct, or are still in existence.

Faenza first, others also run.

Un petit morceau de toute droite!

Sehr Gut.
Verboten, all others.
(From a prisoner of war who had been at Ruhleben.)

A model of comfort and organisation.

Has a world-wide reputation, but the actual thing is far beyond expectation.

From Palestine, India, East Africa, etc., we had been warned not to miss this camp. Thank God we didn't.

"Et Haec Reminisce juvabit."

First line of the Norwegian National Anthem:
"Javi elsner dette landet" og Faenza Rest Camp er for mig deus bedte del.

Translation:

"Yes, we love this land," and the Rest Camp at Faenza is for me the best part.

A hame frae hame.

Ochen charascha.

British Officers' Rest Camps are invariably good, but this is *some*.—An officer of the U.S.A.

Quies Kateer.

" Sab chiz tik hai—Bahut achcha."

The dream picture of a real Rest Camp actually fulfilled.

The only Rest Camp in the British Army. Report follows.—By an Intelligence Officer, and One Who Knows (?)

Why only five hours here ?

Very many thanks. Were it not for the fact that we are going in the right direction, we would ask for nothing better than to prolong our visit.

Has every Rest Camp failed us ?
Never let the sting be true.
For someone runs Faenza,
And runs it well for you.

Nulli Secundus.

Just discovered a " posse " as good as Australia and the staff Bloques know how to handle it.—An " Aussie."

Wedi Teithio Mynyddoedd,
Llech wedd an a chymoedd,
A llawer o diroedd blinderus ;
Nid oes un lle mor swynol,
Na man mor ddymunol
A chartref Bach Siriol Cyswrus.

Translation :

After travelling o'er mountain ledges and valleys, and over many lands of tiresome travel, no place is so charming, no place so peaceful as this sweet little comfortable home.

Ylle hwn yw'r tebycaf i
Qartref w'y wedi gyfarfod.

Translation :

This place is the most like home that I have known.

Regretfully we come to " the end of a perfect day " in a perfect Rest Camp.

The best-run Rest Camp in the whole of the Expedition. Bar none. A pity O.C.'s other camps in the East are not sent here for instruction.
(Perhaps this should be omitted.)

The officers of train 196 wish to express their high appreciation of the Rest Camp, and of the staff. We can assure them that this Camp has attained a world fame, and thousands of officers and other ranks have been mighty grateful for their stay here.

THE END

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Messrs. Hutchinson & Co.

are pleased to give the following particulars of many important New Books for the Autumn, 1920, and also a splendid list of New Novels, which, as will be seen by the undermentioned names, are almost all by the Leading Authors.

STEPHEN McKENNA
KATHYLN RHODES
H. DE VERE STACPOOLE
C. N. and A. M. WILLIAMSON
RIDER HAGGARD
GILBERT FRANKAU
ANTHONY HOPE
MARY WEBB
PIERRE BENOIT
RAFAEL SABATINI
E. F. BENSON
MRS. BELLOC LOWNDES
R. W. CAMPBELL
LOUISE JORDAN MILN
E. NESBIT
NORMA LORIMER
MRS. ALFRED SIDGWICK and CROSBIE GARSTIN
MARGARET BAILLIE SAUNDERS
DOROTA FLATAU
MABEL BARNES-GRUNDY
ANTHONY LUDOVICI
ROBIN RICHARDS
DIANA PATRICK
MRS. BAILLIE REYNOLDS
FUTABATEI
HAROLD MACGRATH
ISABEL C. CLARKE
PEGGY WEBLING
TALBOT MUNDY
CURTIS YORKE
G. B. BURGIN
M. MORGAN GIBBON
MRS. WILFRID WARD

Hutchinson's New Novels. 8/6 Net

"She" Meets Allan — By RIDER HAGGARD

Author of " She," " King Solomon's Mines," etc.

Another fine story of adventure and daring deeds in the hidden heart of Africa. Allan Quatermain, whose exploits have been eagerly followed by thousands of readers all over the world, makes a journey into the Interior to try to learn the mysteries of life and death from the lovely lips of the immortal She, and with Umslopogaas and Hans, companions of his former travels, has many stirring adventures on the way. But there is more than mere adventure in Sir Rider Haggard's latest book, for beneath the clash of arms and the roar of wild beasts there is a deep psychological significance for all who are able to see beneath the surface of things. It is one of the finest things he has done.

The Dummy Hand

By C. N. and A. M. WILLIAMSON

Authors of " The Lightning Conductor," etc.

The fascinating and beautiful Marise Sorel, a famous American actress, fell in love with Lord Severance, but circumstances forced her into a sudden and dramatic marriage with John Garth, a powerful and original man of her own people, and the most amazing consequences follow swiftly one upon the other.

This is a sensational and intriguing story, full of movement and with a strong human appeal. It is equal to anything we have ever had from these gifted and popular writers.

Uncle Jeremy — By G. B. BURGIN

MR. BURGIN'S SIXTIETH NOVEL.

To celebrate the production of his sixtieth novel, one for every year of his life, Mr. G. B. Burgin has written " Uncle Jeremy," the scene of which is mainly laid in the little Canadian township of Moose Village. There the disgruntled hero, who has quarrelled with his fiancé, the purse-proud daughter of a soda-water millionaire, meets with a wealthy and cultured Indian family who are tired of the luxury of New York and re-visit the scenes of their childhood. The intrigue which follows, and the benevolent intervention of " Uncle Jeremy " when things go wrong, constitute a charming and exciting story, written with all the vigour and freshness of youth.

The Unknown Road — By CURTIS YORKE

Author of " Joyce," " The Level Track," etc.

In her new novel Curtis Yorke tells the story of a delightful girl earning her own living alone in London. Her temptations and problems are described with sympathy and insight, and the picture of life under present-day conditions in a great city is realistically presented. A vivid and thoroughly interesting story such as we always expect and invariably get from this popular novelist.

Hutchinson's New Novels. 8/6 Net

Seeds of Enchantment — By GILBERT FRANKAU

Author of " Peter Jackson, Cigar Merchant," etc.

The scene of Gilbert Frankau's latest novel is laid in that mysterious, still unexplored country of Indo-China, 1,000 miles from the sea. Here he gives us the adventures of a party of white men who travelled into the Interior in search of a magic bean which brings happiness to all who eat it, and was said to be in the sole possession of a secret French colony, descendants of some early settlers.

Writing with the same vivid realism that made Peter Jackson the success of its season, Mr. Frankau opens up a new territory for fiction, and takes his readers right into the steamy, tangled jungles with their buried cities, or up on to the cool and delicious hills where the Daughters of Enchantment entertain the explorers. This is a fine, stirring novel which will be greatly appreciated by all who like to read of Adventure and Romance in a world very different from the one in which most of us have to live.

The House in Dormer Forest — By MARY WEBB

Author of " Gone to Earth," and " The Golden Arrow."

A powerful drama of life in the last century, in which Love, Beauty, and Romance and the tragedy of an inevitable fate are depicted with the clever, distinctive touch which has placed Mary Webb among the foremost of our modern authors. She writes of ordinary people, plunged unthinkingly into an extraordinary maze of destiny; and of quiet, uneventful lives which crash unexpectedly into tremendous depths of suffering, or soar radiantly to passionate heights of joy. This is a book which stands alone in its lofty idealism and the primitive grandeur of its conception; it deals with the fundamental instincts of humanity and has a great deal more before it than the ephemeral successes of most modern fiction.

The Queen of Atlantis — By PIERRE BENOIT

Author of " Count Philip," etc.

In the heart of the Great Sahara, two French officers, Morhange and Saint-Avit, discover a hidden city, the last stronghold of the long-lost Kingdom of Atlantis, where Queen Antinea, a ghoulish but beautiful woman, rules her subjects with terrible ferocity. Rejecting her love, Morhange suffers cruelly at her hands, and the ghastly hall in which the mummified remains of her former victims are stored is the scene of a gruesome tragedy, Saint-Avit, escaping across the desert, alone surviving to tell the tale.

Pierre Benoit is hailed in France as a second Rider Haggard, and this novel, which was crowned by the French Academy as the best of its year, has already sold over 100,000 copies.

The *Times* Literary Supplement, in a review running to a column and a half, says: " There is romance, there is excitement, there is love. It is an absorbing story . . . and one that will be particularly interesting to English readers."

Lady Trent's Daughter By ISABEL C. CLARKE

Author of " The Elstones," " Julian," etc.

Olave Trent, brought up in the absence of her mother by her aunt in an old-fashioned house and on old-fashioned lines, falls in love with Guy Quinn, a promising young writer who, unknown to her, is already engaged to her mother. Of the difficulties arising out of this unusual situation Miss Clarke has written a capital story, and the struggle between love and self-interest in the minds of the two women is poignantly portrayed.

The Roman Catholic faith, which is at first an obstacle to the lovers, becomes eventually the means of bringing them together, and this aspect of the book is treated with the sympathy and understanding which has already made Miss Clarke the acknowledged successor to the late Mgr. R. H. Benson.

Comedy Corner By PEGGY WEBLING

Author of " In Our Street," " The Scent Shop," etc.

Peggy Webling's latest book is a long novel of many characters and diverse interests. Winnie Borrow, the quaint, loving little heroine, has a chequered career from humble circumstances to a certain proud position, and, after a period of sorrow and humiliation, reaches at last a safe harbour of refuge. A pleasant heart-moving story which all women will like.

Becky & Co.

By MARGARET BAILLIE SAUNDERS

Author of " Lady Q," " Litany Lane," etc.

Becky Damer has an enthusiasm for bygone London, which results in her offering half her house to an order of Franciscan Sisters. The ensuing situation of a young and charming woman managing at the same time a work-room full of girls, a convent of nuns, and three rival lovers next door is full of amusing incident.

This book with its delightful cameos of Kensington, the Minories and the Tower, will appeal to all lovers of London: the contrast between Lady St. Cloud—the embodiment of the spirit of older Kensington—and the saucy work-girls is decidedly piquant. It is a capital story.

Scaramouche By RAFAEL SABATINI

Author of " The Trampling of the Lilies," etc.

Mr. Sabatini has the unusual gift of enlivening with a powerful imagination the great facts of history; he inspires the dry bones with new life and takes us back into the romantic past as few modern writers can do. His latest novel, dealing with the ever-fascinating period of the French Revolution, tells the story of a young aristocrat, who was hailed as the leader of the Revolutionists, and a beautiful girl whom he adored. Their love story, against a vivid background of thrilling events, forms a powerful and picturesque romance.

Hutchinson's New Novels. 8/6 Net

Lady Lilith By STEPHEN McKENNA

Author of " Sonia," " Sonia Married," etc.

Lady Barbara Neave is a clever, impulsive Society girl who plunges recklessly into one escapade after another with disastrous consequences to her reputation. Her love affairs are exceptionally exhilarating and original, and she is a constant source of delight to her friends and terror to her family.

Mr. McKenna has a special insight into the character of the modern girl, and he writes with intimate knowledge of the doings of the so-called Smart Set, echoes of which only are usually allowed to appear in print. " Lady Lilith " is a brilliant, realistic book, a worthy successor to the ever-popular " Sonia," and " Sonia Married."

The Golden Apple By KATHLYN RHODES

Author of " The Lure of the Desert," " The Desert Dreamers," etc.

A thrilling new story by this famous writer, whose marvellous interpretation of the fire and passion of the East has made her one of the most widely read of all living authors.

The intrigues of the beautiful Lady Lucia Holland, the struggles of Victor Romney, co-respondent in her husband's divorce suit, to escape her toils, the delicious love-story of pretty Valerie Rivers, and the machinations of the vile Count Paolo Rossi, all combine to make a novel of striking power and originality.

Over half a million copies of Kathlyn Rhodes' novels have already been sold.

Queen Lucia By E. F. BENSON

Author of " Dodo," " Robin Linnet," etc.

This is another of Mr. Benson's characteristic society novels, full of entertaining dialogue, stimulating and amusing throughout. He goes this time into a small country town for his setting, and introduces us to some delightfully well-bred and simple people, who are exploited by a cunning Indian Guru, or teacher.

His story is a good-natured satire on the various crazes which from time to time attract the idle rich, and particularly on the type of women to whom they appeal. Queen Lucia, with her enthusiasms and absurdities, is a delightful creation worthy to rank with the immortal Dodo.

The Eye of Zeitoon By TALBOT MUNDY

Author of " The Ivory Trail," etc.

A particularly thrilling adventure story which tells of a little nation of people living in an impregnable mountain fortress of Zeitoon and of their leader and king, known as the Eye of Zeitoon. In a series of vivid pen-pictures one follows the tragic story of the Armenian people, whose land the Turk has made red with Christian blood, together with the exploits of three modern crusaders, daring, laughing, reckless, Anglo-Saxon lads, and the romance of Maga, a wild gipsy daughter of the dawn, who fights, hates, and loves with the full force of her passionate nature.

A grand story of Romantic Love, hand in hand with Brave Adventure.

Hutchinson's New Novels. 8/6 Net

Out of the Vasty Deep

By MRS. BELLOC LOWNDES

Author of "The Lonely House," etc.

A thrilling story of a man whose wives died under suspicious circumstances and a girl whose psychic faculty was employed with remarkable results. Throughout the whole book there is an eerie influence which is deeply impressive, and the network of mystery and intrigue in which the chief characters are involved makes enthralling reading from beginning to end. It is a clever, ingenious novel which men and women alike will enjoy.

Raw Virginity

By ANTHONY LUDOVICI

Author of "Mansel Fellowes," "Catherine Doyle," etc.

Mr. Ludovici is one of our clever modern young men who look with a very critical eye upon men, manners and morals—particularly the latter. His point of view is original; he sees life from an angle quite his own. The story of a mother and her two girls, each anxious to find a husband, is intensely real, and the tragedy of suppressed passion that hovers over the whole book is one that will find an echo in many a lonely heart. With the unfortunate preponderance of women amongst us, this problem of the unmarried girl is one that cannot be ignored. Mr. Ludovici has tackled it with courage and sincerity, and has written a novel that is bound to be read and discussed.

The Man with Three Names

By HAROLD MacGRATH

Author of "The Man on the Box," etc.

Under one name he captured the book world. Under another he was fighting in a great human cause against the father of the girl he loved. The third was a name that must not be known. Love, honour, and many beautiful things of life would be seared by the disclosure. But his enemy knew that the tale of every man's life has an unwritten chapter, and secretly, unrelentingly, he strove to find it out. How the mystery is solved makes a climax that leaves the reader on the tide of emotion.

This is a magnificent human story that will stir the hearts of all who appreciate a good tale of mystery and love.

Not Known Here

By MRS. WILFRID WARD

Author of "The Light Behind," "Great Possessions," etc.

A boy whose mother had married a second time believes himself to be the son of a German, and therefore bound, on the outbreak of war, to those who revolted every instinct of his nature, until his mother confesses to him that he is in reality an Englishman. The struggle between the boy's anxiety to hide his mother's shame, and at the same time to serve his country, makes a most powerful and moving story which touches at times the very bedrock of human sympathy. It is a book that few will be able to read without real emotion.

Hutchinson's New Novels. 8/6 Net

Cold Blood

By ROBIN RICHARDS

A PARTICULARLY STRIKING AND ORIGINAL FIRST NOVEL

Holt, by whose fiendish ingenuity a ghastly murder is committed by an innocent boy, is one of the most vicious and terrible criminals ever conceived. His bland, cultured methods and the devilish craftiness with which he forces his pathetic little victim to his doom, together with a plot which never loses its grip for one moment, make a book which will stir the imagination of the most *blasé* reader and hold him in thrall until the last page.

This is not an ordinary story of murder and mystery; it is like a film of real life, showing a picture of commonplace, everyday people who are engulfed in a gruesome tragedy and carried along against their will by the force of circumstances they can neither prevent nor understand.

Mr. Richards, who is a son-in-law of Maurice Hewlett, has certainly come to stay. His first novel is one of the most arresting pieces of fiction ever written, and gives him at once a place in the front rank of modern novelists.

The Incredible Honeymoon

By E. NESBIT

Author of "The Red House," "Daphne in Fitzroy Street," etc.

Edward Basingstoke, who took to the country lanes for adventure, fell in with one of the most delightful girls in creation. But there were certain obstacles and difficulties, and to circumvent these the two went through a marriage which was one in name only, but which enabled them to live an Arcadian gipsy life together in company with the dog Charles, a fascinating but obstreperous beast.

This is the old story of love at first sight, yet one that is always new. There is a freshness and charm about it that will allure even the most hardened novel reader. It is a kindly, wholesome book which has only to become known to be greatly in demand.

An Adopted Husband

By FUTABATEI

The First Japanese Novel ever translated into English.

This is a particularly interesting book, not only as a rare example of modern Japanese literature, but also because it gives us for the first time a true picture of everyday Japanese life as seen by one of themselves, and brings us closely into touch with many of their unknown habits and customs.

The story is founded on a strange Japanese custom of adopting a husband for a daughter where there is no son to carry on the family name; and in Tetsuya, the pathetic little man whose life was made a burden to him by his relations, and Sayo-ko, the girl he really loved, we realise that Japan has problems of domestic life very like our own.

As a revelation of the hitherto carefully guarded privacy of Eastern life this book is one of the most striking and original works of the present day.

Hutchinson's New Novels. 8/6 Net

A Mender of Images By NORMA LORIMER

Author of "A Wife out of Egypt," etc.

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