

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Artikel in: The Star Weekly.

No Gloom in This Hospital.

Mann, Erika

1942-05-23

Nutzungsbedingungen

Bei zahlreichen Dokumenten auf monacensia-digital.de sind die Urheberrechte bereits abgelaufen. Sie sind gemeinfrei und dürfen ohne weitere Rücksprache mit der Monacensia weiterverwendet werden.

Bei den Dokumenten, bei denen noch Urheberrechte bestehen, müssen für eine Weiterverwendung stets die Rechteinhaber*innen angefragt werden sowie eine Publikationsgenehmigung der Monacensia eingeholt werden. Das Zitatrecht bleibt hiervon unberührt.

Zur Erteilung einer Publikationserlaubnis wenden Sie sich bitte an:

Monacensia im Hildebrandhaus

Literaturarchiv

Adresse: Maria-Theresia-Straße 23, 81675 München

E-Mail: monacensia.literaturarchiv@muenchen.de

Terms of use

The copyrights for numerous documents on monacensia-digital.de have already expired. They are in the public domain and may be reused without further consultation with Monacensia. In the case of documents for which copyrights still exist, the copyright holders must always be contacted for further use and publication permission must be obtained from the Monacensia. The right to quote under copyright law remains unaffected by this. To obtain permission for publication, please contact:

Monacensia im Hildebrandhaus:

Literaturarchiv

Address: Maria-Theresia-Straße 23, 81675 München

E-Mail: monacensia.literaturarchiv@muenchen.de

No Gloom in This Hospital

Here is a clinic in England
run by a Canadian staff
for Canadian soldiers

Erika Mann, author of "The Light in the Piazza" is the daughter of novelist Thomas Mann who fled Nazi Germany in 1933. In Britain, where she wrote this Star Weekly article, she was employed by the B.C. to broadcast propaganda to foreign countries.

By ERIKA MANN
LONDON.

It rained so hard I had to take a taxi, even though the Royal Canadian headquarters is just around the corner from what we American correspondents snobbishly call "our pub". The Savoy hotel is full of American newspapermen and women, all of whom swam out in the morning to "cover" the war.

Well, I wanted to see a field hospital—a Canadian field hospital—and I had been busy arranging for my special permit for the past two days.

For the hundredth time I violently scolded myself for having used up my odd coupons buying four handkerchiefs, one sweater, and one pair of low-heeled shoes, instead of getting myself the one thing prescribed by the English weatherman—a raincoat.

At headquarters, however, I was informed that a special car was to be put at my disposal, and that "our press liaison officer", Lieutenant X., would be ready for me in a minute or so.

Lieutenant X. turned out to be a good-looking, sunburned lad in his late 20's. The hospital, he told me, was about 40 miles away. Sure, every one there was Canadian—doctors, nurses, patients, the entire set-up.

I wondered what the hospital we were to see was really meant for, and why it had been placed so far inland. Well, the whole thing was movable; in fact, the entire equipment could be packed within 40 minutes.

The clinic represented something like a clearing station for Canadian soldiers who were sick, had been wounded, or were victims of an accident; the idea being that a general check-up was made of their condition, that they got the necessary treatment, but were not supposed to stay there for a duration of their invalidity. A special ambulance service was always ready to take them to the more specialized hospitals fit for their particular case.

We left the highway and drove through one of those en-

chant's parks which make England's landscape incomparable. "This too, has been requisitioned by the government," it was explained to me. "It was a duke's estate formerly, but now we are using it as a terminal for all sorts of military vehicles."

We drove up a princely avenue of bare trees, leading to a huge, beautiful old castle. "That's it," I was told.

A Duke's Castle

THE head surgeon was extremely proud of his hos-



Sisters Frances Charlton and Florence Richardson practice bicycle-riding.

pital. It had not been so easy to reconcile the old-fashioned impractical glamour of the place with the needs of modern sanitation. The operating room in particular had caused the doctor

some headache, and the dental department was not yet perfect.

Had there ever been a raid here, I inquired? Well, bombs had fallen, though probably by mistake, or because Jerry had had to get rid of the heavy stuff and they had hit, too. At this point, the head nurse, who had listened to the doctor with an amused smile, interrupted:

"It was nothing but our dear chief's love of cookies, and his habit of baking them himself which at that time saved at least 30 lives. He had been doing it again, you see, and had badly burned his hands, so that he couldn't operate with them for some days. That's why we had refused all the more

serious surgical cases, and why our room under the glass top was empty when the bombs fell."

More nurses entered the room; I liked their becoming light-blue uniforms, their starched white aprons, and their broad, solid leather belts, which gave their appearance the military air. They also wore different badges designating their military rank. Those 21st were soldiers.

"What we are doing now is merely preparatory," one of the girls assured me: "we are really supposed to be in the front line, and I hope we'll be there soon."

Had there been no excitement at all since their arrival in this country? I asked one of the nurses, who was a corporal.

"Not in a strictly war-like sense," she said, "but excitement it was, believe me."

It turned out that only last week my little corporal and five other nurses had gone to London and visited the Queen.

There had been hundreds of nurses from the empire, and only six could be invited from



Canadian nurses bring cheerful smiles as well as medical attention to bomb victims in a hospital in England. The victims, injured during a German air-raid, are H. Judge and H. Owen. The nurses are Sister L. Barrie and Sister E. Macquiston of Montreal General hospital, and Sister J. Byam, of Royal Victoria Hospital, Montreal.

each hospital. Of course, the head nurse went, but the others had gambled for the honor:

"And imagine, I, the youngest of them all, drew one of the winning tickets."

The Queen had talked to each of the girls, and had almost made them forget their terrible nervousness with regard to their farewell curtsy.

"It is strange," the little corporal added, "though there couldn't possibly be any biological difference between the Queen and other human beings, it gives you some pleasant sort of goose flesh to be so near to her."

We went to inspect the operating room, and I was amazed at its shiningly-white, beautifully-metallic, utterly-modern equipment. There was even a special electric reserve apparatus which would still function if all the rest of the lights were put out of commission by enemy action. And all the operating tables, instrument cabinets, X-ray machines, etc., were collapsible or easily transferable.

"All this has come from Canada," the doctor said proudly, "and to my mind, this sort of abundant clinic will be

of tremendous value even after the war. There are still too many places without a good hospital. Suppose an epidemic broke out somewhere, and you cannot possibly move hundreds of patients to the nearest medical centre, but the nearest medical centre can be moved to the patients quickly."

In the surgical department there were about 20 beds to one room; the whiteness of the linen contrasted vividly with the smoky, brown, wood panels of this former library of the castle.

After I had spoken to about a dozen patients, I noticed the suspicion that the majority of all of his surgical patients were motor cycle cases, and was informed that some 60 per cent were.

I found one boy who had had his appendix taken out without ever having seen a motor cycle. He was a sailor, he told me, and had been lucky enough to be ashore when he fell sick, but he expected to return to duty within a week or so.

They were in splendid spirits, all of them, even those suffering from internal illnesses, heart trouble, or had flu.

A member of the Royal Canadian Air Force had had a tough time for quite some while. He had been shot down over the Channel and slightly wounded. He had been in the water for many hours, unable to get himself into his small rubber boat, but forced to reach the rescue float half swimming, half being tossed by the waves. He had also caught pneumonia. He was better now, thanks, but very pale.

The room for war neuritis was entirely empty.

"We haven't had a single case for months," I was told. "We are not made that way," the doctor said.

At this point two clergymen joined us: a Catholic priest and a Protestant minister.

"Let's hope you haven't seen the chapel yet," they said, adding that they wouldn't like to be robbed of the privilege of showing it to me.

While we walked through the long and winding corridors, the two clergymen admitted that the chapel was not really a chapel, but a music salon, which meant that the organ had already been there; all the rest of the things had had to be collected in nearby villages.

I started wondering what had become of Lieutenant X., who had disappeared after my introduction to the head doctor. I was just about to inquire when we entered the last stop on this inspection tour—the dentist's office. And there was my lieutenant.

"O.K.," he said, "I'm all ready. I've been waiting for such an occasion for a long time."

The young dentist said, "Thanks very much. You have been my first patient in months."

One of the nurses asked to be taken along to London.

While driving through the darkening landscape, we were chatting about lots of big and minor things and we were near London when I happened to ask the young nurse how she had enjoyed her trip across the ocean.

"Very much," she said, "and after having been in the water for 10 hours or so, I didn't even feel the cold any more."

"I didn't quite wrap it. 'Tis, 'tis water!" I stupidly repeated.

"Why yes, but I dare say that the rescue job done by the boys of the destroyer which finally picked us up was first rate, and well worth the experience. See this," and she showed me a blue sweater she wore under her coat. "That's what my savior gave me. Heaven knows I wish him well; yet I keep on hoping that he may turn up as a patient before this war is over."

That's the spirit, I thought. Never would that girl have mentioned her dreadful experience had I not asked.