

E. A. Hamilton



The Great War

1914 - 1919

SOUTHAMPTON PUBLIC LIBRARIES	
No.	
17 AUG 1966	
LIBRARY	HS ^{unusu}
CR	d [HS h]

✓ 6.69

CENTRAL REFERENCE LIBRARY
CIVIC CENTRE SOUTHAMPTON
Tel. 23865 After Hours 24014

8 Abbot's Way
Southampton

The European War 1914.

Appreciated Aid at Avenue Hall.

Among the crowds of people who passed along the Avenue on Sunday evening there must have been many who observed a notice which had been put up outside the Avenue Lecture Hall, to the effect that it was open to soldiers as a reading and writing-room. This excellent idea originated with the ladies of the Avenue Congregational Church upon Sunday morning. Needless to say, the deacons readily gave their consent, and the idea took practical effect by Sunday afternoon. The hall is in a most convenient position, being situated as it were, just on the edge of the Common, and to see the manner in which the men are making use of it does the heart good. Looking in on Thursday morning, I found about twenty soldiers, all deeply intent upon their letter-writing. Writing materials and stamps are provided. Besides the writing and reading tables there are refreshment tables, which looked very pretty, flowers and fruit being tastefully arranged upon them. I had to go into the "kitchen" to find representatives of the ladies who are responsible for this much appreciated, quiet retreat. It was impressed upon me that though the members of the Avenue Congregational Church planned it all in the first place, offers and help and gifts in stamps, money, and provisions are being received every day from friends outside the church, and that, as one lady said with a smile, "the scheme is quite undenominational." The stores include bread, butter, cheese, tea, coffee, cocoa, sugar, ginger-beer, etc. There is also plenty of fruit, and cigarettes are provided. Serving has sometimes to be done quickly. "Yesterday we gave eighty men bread and cheese and lemonade in about fifteen minutes," said one of the organisers. On the other hand, there are men of the Army Service Corps who go in daily and are becoming "quite old friends." In the evening, I am told, the hall is always full. My interest was aroused with regard to the number of stamps used each day. "On Monday stamps to the value of £2 10s. were given to the men," was the reply to my query. "Yesterday (i.e. Wednesday) over eleven hundred letters and postcards were despatched, and about five pounds' worth of stamps must have been used." Many of the soldiers, of course, do not require that stamps should be given them, but these are glad of the conveniences for correspondence—and theirs at present is far from casual—which await them at the Avenue Hall. Members of the congregation arranged for the provision of seventeen beds for soldiers at private houses in the vicinity. The helpfulness and kindness which radiate from the centre of the Avenue Congregational Church are things to cheer us all.

Southampton Times Aug. 15. 1914.

Troops on their way to the Docks, passing the Avenue Lecture Hall, which has been converted into a reading room for them, seldom fail to raise a hearty cheer.

Splendid Work of the Avenue Church.

Typical of the spirit which prevails throughout the nation that the soldier really matters is the provision which has been made for the troops this week at the schoolroom adjoining the Avenue Church. Here a willing body of helpers has waited on them with practically everything they really needed—and all gratis. In addition to letter-writing facilities, illustrated journals and papers are lying about on the many tables for their perusal, while there is no stint of refreshments. Even cigars, cigarettes, and tobacco are served out to the soldiers. The idea was mooted at the chapel on Sunday morning. By half-past two that afternoon the hall was in order for the troops. The work has gradually expanded, and is now by no means restricted to that denomination, for many outside have rallied to their help, and it is under the supervision of a Committee who are open to, and do receive, provisions and money from all quarters. Money, indeed, is to be preferred, for then they can more easily regulate their stock. The Chapel Corps of the Boys' Life Brigade is on the premises, and performs many handy little services for the soldiers, including the recording and posting of their letters, of which there have already been over three thousand.

A fine instance of the admirable service the hall is rendering occurred on Wednesday morning, when about eighty of the Royal Flying Corps trooped in. For several hours they had had no refreshments whatever, and as there was then little prospect of them securing any for the next few hours, one may well imagine with what joy they welcomed the hospitality extended to them, even although they were hastily summoned away when they had been there but barely fifteen minutes. It was a pleasant, if brief, pause for them. The Third Echelon have been there while awaiting orders for embarkation.

As a mark of their heartfelt gratitude—although we have been informed by several that it was but a poor representation of what they felt—a pleasing presentation was made by the troops to the workers last evening. It took the form of a handsome silver epergne, and a framed group, which was accompanied by a book signed by 136 names. They wrote:—The following warrant officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of his Majesty's forces desire to convey to the subscribers and workers of the Avenue Congregational Church their thanks and their appreciation for the kindness bestowed on them during their stay in Southampton pending embarkation for the European War, 1914. No words of ours can sufficiently express our appreciation of the efforts of all those who so kindly co-operated in our interests. The kindness and forethought which has been extended to us will never be forgotten by his Majesty's troops, who have been fortunate enough to be able to avail themselves of the same. The memory of the people of Southampton will long live in our minds.

In making the presentation, Sergeant-Major Smith, of the Royal Engineers, spoke of the gratitude which they all felt, and the gifts were received by Mr. J. T. Hamilton, J.P., on behalf of the workers. The company were afterwards entertained with an organ recital by Mr. Pearson, and all were impressed when Sergeant Morfit, of the R.A.M.C., sang a couple of sacred solos. The presentation will certainly form an interesting memento in years to come of the stirring times in which we live.

Southampton Echo. Aug. 15. 1914

Citizens and Soldiers.

Townpeople's Experience of Tommy Atkins.

The last two weeks will long be remembered by the citizens whose ancestors witnessed the departure of England's troops for Creecy in 1316. Almost as soon as war was declared this port was fastened upon as the chief port of embarkation, and the ancient Southampton Common was chosen as the "Rest Camp." Never in its long history has the Common, with its 360 acres, presented such a spectacle. No wonder thousands have visited it day by day. The first sign of activity was the coming of the motors. Some great heavy load-drawing vehicles, some the lighter London taxicab, and intermixed with them the beautiful cars used by the officers alone. Registration marks were conspicuous by their absence, and speed limits seemed to be "non-exist"! Next came the Army Service Corps, who soon added to the well-known beauties of the Common the picturesqueness of a tented field. Then came the horses. First those which had been commandeered, then the regular Cavalry horses, ridden and driven by the smart men in khaki who are to lead these self-same horses into battle. So much of the coming and going took place at night that one would leave the Common at ten o'clock to find that by the morning change had come over the scene, and that those soldiers with whom one had been conversing had quickly given place to those destined in their turn also to as quickly disappear. As it is with all of us so it is with the soldier—rest has to give place to work, and work to rest.

When we reflect that it was only on the fourth of the month that war was declared it is astonishing that by the eighteenth the nation could be informed that the whole Expeditionary Force, with all their transport wagons, horses, and guns, had been safely landed in France, and that "without a single casualty." There can be no doubt that smart business men were at the head of the arrangements. Our "Nation of shopkeepers," as Napoleon called us, thus showed those qualities which belong to business men of affairs.

Under Sealed Orders.

From the moment when Southampton Docks were barricaded off and taken possession of by the military authorities, absolutely nothing was allowed to leak out as to what was going on inside. "What ship are you going by, Sergeant?" "You must ask Kitchener, sir." "To what port are you bound, captain?" "Even my wife does not know; I steam out under sealed orders!" It were idle to deny that there was inconvenience to Southampton traders during those days of embarkation, but what was that to the supreme importance of the nation at large of the quick departure of troops who are to inspire our allies with fighting strength and encourage them in keeping back the invader of their hearths and homes! Certain it is that as little inconvenience as possible was caused by the Military Commandants of whose courteous treatment we cannot speak too highly.

The citizens are not a little proud of the part they played. The appearance of the first soldier gave rise to the beneficent thought as to what could be done for his comfort while here. "Let us provide him with a reading and writing room. How uncomfortable for him to have to scribble his postcards on his comrade's back, and that sometimes mid pouring rain." Promptly a hall, which was most adventitiously placed on the edge of the Common, was decorated with the Union Jack and thrown open, with the announcement that all writing materials were supplied free. The result has been that every day since—from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.—the hall has been attended by a large number of soldiers, who have taken the fullest advantage of the facilities afforded. Some 10,000 or more letters and postcards have been posted from the hall. In nearly every case the postage stamps have been given by the generous public. Many a mother and many a wife or sister, who would perhaps have remained in anxiety, has received messages, which to her must have been comforting. Soon it was found that to men tired with long journeying a good meal would be a boon, so the supply of free refreshments was added and plenty of cigarettes and tobacco. And, later on, the means of washing were set up, all of which is being much appreciated by the men. Not only at this hall, but on various parts of the Common, refreshments have been supplied free by enthusiastic lady workers. The St. John Ambulance have done right nobly in this way, and the Y.M.C.A. have a large marquee well patronised. The citizens have really treated the troops most kindly, all seeming to be wishful to do something to show appreciation of what our soldiers are about to undergo for our native land. Will the men ever forget the numerous baskets of apples and plums which people have distributed to them as they have passed through the town?

Brains and Brawn.

Let us remark a little upon the soldier as we have seen him and talked with him on the Common or around our own tables—for some have voluntarily housed the men when the elements have been unpropitious. He is a better type of man than those who left our shores for the South African war. His morale is good. He is intelligent and knows exactly the points upon which England has been forced to war with Germany. He is not a mere fighting machine compulsorily driven; his heart is in the business. He is brave. He knows the risks. He knows where the German military system is superior to our own, and he knows wherein we have the advantage. He has much faith in the open formation of the English as against the solid massing of the German. He knows how to profit by his South African experience. His bravery does not hide from his eyes his duty to those at home. Those who have a little property have availed themselves of the use of the writing room at the hall for making their wills. "You see, sir," said one with grim pathos, "I may stop a few bullets!" Perhaps one is naturally drawn in conversation towards those of their number who are the best informed, but casual conversations lead to the conclusion that in our army to-day are an exceptionally large number—amongst the ordinary troopers—who are highly enlightened men. Here is one who tells that he has joined just recently because he has been a chauffeur and his master has for four years been touring over the Continent. He, the chauffeur, consequently knowing every main road in Europe, hopes, therefore, that he may be of some service.

Here is another—just an ordinary trooper—who speaks every European language except Russian. He surely must serve a most useful capacity.

They had no bands of music as they passed. They marched as with a quiet determination. Said a bandsman trooper: "My clarionette, sir? That and all our musical instruments are left behind. We are leaving the music until we return; we go now to fight not to play." So on they go, brave fellows, and the fervent "God bless you" which we heard from many in the crowd is re-echoed by us all.

W. H. R.

SOUTHAMPTON AND THE SOLDIERS.

To the Editor of the "Southern Daily Echo."

Sir,—I should be glad if you could spare me a small space in your valuable paper to express my gratitude to the Corporation tram authorities for their kindness to the troops during their short stay at this place; also to thank the authorities who have so generously placed the reading and writing room near the Common for the express purpose of troops bidding farewell to their relatives and friends left behind.

These concessions, I may say, are greatly appreciated by all ranks, and the men will always remember the good feeling existent of the inhabitants of Southampton.—Yours very sincerely,

A SOLDIER.

Sailors' Home, Southampton.

THE REST CAMP.

To the Editor of the "Southern Daily Echo."

Sir,—Will you permit us through your valuable paper to express to all the inhabitants of Southampton our heartiest thanks for all their more than kindness to us all during our stay in the camp. The great heartiness of the ladies who have done so much is beyond words, and makes us feel more than ever the great honour, besides duty, it is for us to be able to give our very best to our country in the hour of her need. We are cheered and encouraged to look forward to our victorious return, and a future visit to Southampton. We especially express thanks to the ladies who have visited the camp at a very late hour with food and smokes for the men whose duties did not allow for them to accept the hospitality at the Avenue Hall, and the nurse, who has been an Angel of Mercy to so many of us, trudging bravely through amongst the men with so many kind and cheering words and little comforts, many of which only a mother or sister could think of. God bless her and all the others who have thought so kindly of the "Tomnies" on the grass.

With renewed thanks to all, Sir, we are yours,

35 GRATEFUL SOLDIERS.

The Southampton Y.M.C.A. has a marquee on the Common, and here, also, refreshments are provided, a small charge being made for tinned foods, lemonade, tea, coffee, etc., while fruit is given away in large quantities. All that is given in kind to the Y.M.C.A. is distributed free. Here, as at the St. John Ambulance tent, a great many letters and postcards are written by the soldiers. Impromptu concerts are held in the marquee at night. On my way back I called at the Avenue Lecture Hall, which for nearly a fortnight has been in use as a reading, writing, and refreshment room. My visit happened to coincide with one of those exciting moments when the ladies rush to the door, through the gate, and even on to the road, to say good-bye to soldiers who are going. Cavalry men these were, and they startled their fine mounts with the loud cheers which they raised for their friends at the Avenue Hall.

An Array of Souvenirs.

There I noticed the visitors' book, and, turning over its pages, saw that each man had written the name of his regiment and his home address. In many cases the latter is preceded by the word "wife." In the ante-room I found the secretary, Mr. H. B. Lankester, who said that, by the finish of the week ending August 15th, 5,957 letters were known to have been despatched. In reality the number was larger, records not having been kept in the first place. Three thousand, three hundred, and forty-five was the total last Sunday, which was also a very busy day for the ladies in the refreshment department. About 800 meals were served. Mr. Lankester showed me the silver epergne which the Headquarters Staff of the 3rd Echelon gave to the workers at the Avenue Hall, and which, filled with roses, looked charmingly pretty. I also saw some of the photographs which have been given to the same workers. Beneath one group is the following inscription: "The junior ranks, Army Service Corps, 3rd Echelon, will ever treasure grateful memories for the unparalleled kindness and generosity extended to them (during their sojourn at Southampton prior to embarkation for the European War, 1914) by the Avenue Congregational Church, Southampton." Beneath another photograph "warrant officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of His Majesty's Forces" convey to the workers and subscribers (the latter, Mr. Lankester tells me, continue their generosity) similar thanks and appreciation.

Yet another treasure at the Avenue Hall is an Army Book, between the trim white covers of which are written the names of men who represent practically every branch of military service. Mr. Lankester says that the most welcome gifts at present are picture postcards with local views, and tobacco in small packets. The men are pleased to be able to send pictures of the Common and the Avenue to their families, and they prefer pipes to cigarettes. I was told of a pretty incident which took place at the Avenue Hall. An old lady, who is an old age pensioner, spent a shilling upon postcards and stamps for the soldiers. Great was her delight when she was asked to distribute these amongst the men. "I had only a shilling I could spare," she said, "and I prayed I might spend it right." Then she proceeded to hand round her picture postcards. Gifts of money should be sent to the treasurer, Mr. H. B. Cox.

Aug. 15th 1914
Southampton Times

000

"We will write to you. We won't forget Southampton, and we are all coming back," say the soldiers at the Avenue Hall, to the ladies who supply them with refreshments, and who have transformed the hall into a reading and writing room. Hundreds of letters are written each day; stamps, as well as note paper and envelopes, being supplied. About £5 pounds worth of stamps were used one day this week. One soldier who came into the writing-room asked what town he was in. Others remembered Southampton well, and recalled the stampede of horses from Baddesley Common. In thanking the ladies for all they are doing a Colonel said: "This is practical Christianity indeed." I hear that the idea of the use of the Hall as a writing-room originated with the ladies of the Avenue Congregational Church. Needless to say the consent of the deacons was readily obtained, and the room was opened on Sunday. Friends from outside have contributed gladly. The hat was passed round on the County and Banister Park Bowling Greens with the result that £6 was immediately collected. It will be gratifying to be assured that the excellent arrangements can be maintained until the occasion for them has passed.

Southern Echo. Aug. 19. 1914

THE REST CAMP.

To the Editor of the "Southern Daily Echo."
 Sir,—Would you allow me, on behalf of my comrades, to express to the citizens of Southampton our heartfelt thanks for the many kindnesses shown to us during our stay in the town? We have all appreciated very much the food and cigarettes supplied to us at all times on the camp, but especially at Avenue Hall, where the ladies have, doubtless at great inconvenience to themselves, been distributing tea, etc., to the troops, and have at all times made many a soldier happier in this struggle now taking place. We leave Southampton determined to do our duty for our King and country and people, with the satisfaction of knowing that all hearts in this town are with us in our struggle for supremacy, and that our return is waited by all. I shall never forget this visit, nor shall my comrades, who are continually talking about the kindness they have received, and I hope the ladies and gentlemen at Avenue Hall will accept this in the spirit it is written from the troopers of this regiment. Again thanking all and wishing everybody God-speed, from

C SQUADRON
 3rd KING'S OWN HUSSARS.
 SHORNCLIFFE.

GRATEFUL TROOPS.

To the Editor of the "Southern Daily Echo."

Dear Sir,—I wonder if you would be kind enough to find room for this letter in your columns, as you have so kindly found room for so many from my thankful comrades?

Through the medium of your widely-circulated paper a great many of my chums wish to thank the kind young lady who sits by the roadside at the top of the Avenue from early morning until twilight doing general needlework for us soldiers. She is very welcome, and is kept amply employed, as I can assure you that we get all sorts and sizes served out to us under the circumstances. But she, like the many others of our kind friends, seems to be untiring.

I must not forget the Congregational Room, as it is now called. They are still carrying out their grand work. In the room there are not only writing materials, stamps, etc., but books, papers, and magazines that "may be taken away." They are giving bachelors' buttons, housewives, and I forgot to mention that there are cigarettes on the tables, and refreshments at the bottom of the room.

Then there is the St. John Ambulance tent at the top of the Common, where there are free refreshments.

I wish also to tender our heartfelt thanks for the numerous gifts of fruit, etc., and also the bags of fancy cakes, pork pies, rolls, and cheese that arrive regularly every evening, accompanied by a couple of large baskets of bananas and pears.

In concluding my letter, dear Editor, I wish to state that the troops in general will never forget the kind-hearted way in which we have been treated by the Southamptonians.

Yours thankfully,

ONE IN THE RANKS,
 A.S.C.

The Rest Camp, Southampton.

OUR SOLDIERS' GRATITUDE.

To the Editor of the "Southern Daily Echo."

Sir,—Will you please allow me, through your columns, to thank all the people of Southampton for the splendid way they have treated us during our stay here? We deeply appreciate the kindness we have received, and it gives us such a good heart to know that we are leaving people behind who are worthy of any hardships we might have to endure through the war. I am sure it is much harder to bear the anxiety of waiting and watching for news of us that are going than to be in the thick of it oneself. Again thanking everyone for so many kindnesses we have received, especially the Congregational Church in the Avenue,

Yours gratefully,

For Brother Comrades,
 ERNEST GRANT,
 Army Service Corps.

HOW TROOPS LEFT SOUTHAMPTON.

Lusty Thanks for Free Church Help.

SOLDIERS MARCH TO THE PEOPLE'S SONGS.

Only news Aug. 19th 1914.

Stirring scenes were witnessed in Southampton, from which port the bulk of the Expeditionary Force sailed for France. A huge rest camp was established on the Common, and regiment after regiment marched through the town to the docks. That was the extent of the public knowledge. Excluded from the docks, and having the railway level crossing which spans the road leading from the town station to the docks blotted out from sight by huge barriers, they knew nothing of the endless procession of trains packed with soldiers, which deposited their khaki-clad occupants alongside the transports in the dead of night.

Before the camp was completed detachments of cavalry arrived, and were billeted in the local hotels; and it was quite a common spectacle to see stalwart troopers with shirt sleeves tucked up assisting the maids in the kitchen. By the time the infantry and artillery put in an appearance the camp was ready.

Help from the Public.

Every regiment was directed straight to its quarters without any delay or confusion. The guns were packed in one part, the motor lorries in another, and one spot, right away from the main camp, was used for stabling remounts. The inhabitants of the town thronged the approaches to the Common at all hours, and were quick to render useful service. The Tramways' Committee permitted all soldiers to travel on the cars free. The members of the Avenue Congregational Church arranged the schoolroom as a reading and writing room. They even provided postage stamps. Willing helpers from outside flocked to assist the Avenue Congregationalists, who were soon able to add refreshments and cigarettes to their gifts.

Troops arriving after a long march, or longer railway journey, appreciated this kindly thought, and last week several hundreds subscribed a penny or twopence each to present the church with a silver epergne.

Whenever a regiment marched past the Avenue Church the men give three lusty cheers for the lady workers. A band of ladies served hot coffee and cakes at an

Southern Echo Aug 24th

THE HOSPITABLE SWISS.

Miss Hamilton's Experiences.

Miss G. Hamilton, of the staff of the University College, Southampton, who is a daughter of Mr. J. T. Hamilton, J.P., of Southampton, has arrived home after holiday experiences in Switzerland of a most interesting character. She reached Southampton yesterday afternoon, her father having received a telegram announcing her arrival in London earlier in the day. Some of Miss Hamilton's experiences were referred to in a letter to her father, which we were permitted to publish a few days ago, and this we are now able to supplement. Before Miss Hamilton left Geneva, English visitors there were advised to remain in their hotels and pensions waiting information regarding the train service, which the French Government had undertaken to provide for the safe conduct of English tourists. In her endeavour to reach home Miss Hamilton started at 5.35 on Wednesday morning last, reaching London about 11 o'clock yesterday morning. The journey was most interesting and pleasant, the only inconvenience experienced being a detention at Dijon, where the travellers had to change, and most of them were glad to get a little sleep on the benches in the station. In the circumstances the journey was fairly rapid. There were a good many stoppages, and at each of these the English people met with the greatest of enthusiasm, cries of "Vive l'Angleterre!" being raised at every station. Every need of the travellers was met, the French folk resolutely refusing to receive payment for their services. There was no grumbling, first-class passengers travelled in third-class carriages, and everybody sought to help those who were in difficulties. Money was readily lent, and every possible assistance provided by those in better circumstances for their less fortunate fellow-travellers. On arrival in Paris provision was made to convey the travellers by bus to the Gare du Nord at the charge of five francs, and the journey was then continued to Boulogne, this stage occupying about twelve hours. On the way, at a point which it is unnecessary to mention, the travellers saw a portion of the British Expeditionary Force, and greeted them with hearty cheers, which were warmly responded to. Miss Hamilton, who has been taking a course of French studies at the University in Geneva, assures those who have relatives still in Switzerland that there is not the smallest need for anxiety, for there is no doubt that the French Government will make provision in the course of a short time for all. She adds that Swiss people have been most anxious to make the stay of English visitors a most pleasant one. Hotel proprietors have readily given credit to English people having no money, taking I.O.U.'s instead of cash. Everywhere English people are treated most kindly. As far as Miss Hamilton could ascertain, the sympathies of the Swiss were with the Allies in their struggle.

Avenue Lecture Hall Helpers



*Photos Taken by H. G. Martin of the
Aug. 16, 1914. [Carabinieri*

CORRESPONDENCE.

SOLDIERS' GRATITUDE.

To the Editor of the "Southern Daily Echo."

Sir,—I wish you would be kind enough to find a small space in your paper, as it is the only way of expressing our thanks to the ladies and gentlemen in attendance at the Avenue Home Hall for their kindness in the way they have treated the soldiers who have returned from France

Yours obediently,

PTE. WM. MACKAY.
PTE. W. J. CHANCE.

Sept. 24

Sept. 24. 1914





The Avenue
Free Churchman
Sept. 1914.

MONTHLY NOTES.

August, 1914, will never be forgotten by those who have lived through its days and nights of transcendent interest and excitement. Our own fair city has been very much at the heart of things, and Southamptonians have seen and heard enough of the sights and sounds of war preparation to last them for the rest of their lives. As our gallant soldiers came and went in their thousands to fight our battles, all hearts went out to them in sympathy and gratitude; and many were the fervent "God bless you!" as, without drum or fife or martial music of any kind, the fine fellows marched away to war.

The unique position of our Church, on the edge of the Common with its Rest Camp, and by the side of the Avenue through which every regiment marched from the camp to the place of embarkation, seemed to make it imperative that something worthy of the occasion should be attempted which would meet some of the needs of the troops. The idea caught on at once, and the afternoon of the day of its inception saw our Lecture Hall open for the free use of the soldiers of the King. In response to a notice from the desk during the morning service,

a liberal supply of stationery, pictorial postcards (our guests had a distinct preference for those with views of Southampton), cigarettes, magazines, illustrated newspapers, &c., was on the tables by two o'clock, and, with the full sanction of the officer in charge of the Rest Camp, the soldiers were quick to respond to the invitation, "Come, for all things are now ready." It was soon manifest that to add free refreshments to the bill of fare was an absolute necessity. No sooner said than done. With the utmost liberality Avenue friends rose to the occasion. The sinews of war were readily provided, and ladies of the Church and congregation gave freely and willingly of their time and energy to make our soldiers welcome, comfortable, and happy. Quite a number of our male workers also joined in the work, with the utmost satisfaction to themselves and profit and pleasure to the men who visited the Hall. Perhaps the opportunity and means of writing to the loved ones left behind was more appreciated than anything else provided for their comfort. During the first three and a half weeks of the work no fewer than 25,000 letters and postcards were written by the soldiers. The record number for a single day was reached on August 16th, when 3,345 were actually written and posted. The Boys of the Life Brigade have been most useful in many ways, running messages, stamping, recording, and posting the soldiers' letters, and we are much interested in hearing from Captain Furminger, O.C., that he has found among our soliders several officers of the B.L.B., both past and present.

And so the good work, at a cost of £50 per week, goes on, and it is only too evident that the end is not yet. But, be it near or far, the Hall will be kept open for the use of the troops so long as it is required. The helpers have thrown themselves into this work with a whole-hearted devotion that has brought its own reward, and to say that the soldiers have appreciated to the full what it has been a great privilege to do for them is to put it mildly indeed, for, almost without exception, they have expressed their gratitude in the warmest fashion.

epergne, with suitable inscription to the effect that the subscribers, several of the non-com. officers and men, wished to leave behind them this token of their thanks for kindness received during their sojourn with us. Their gift may be seen every Sunday on the table in the centre of the Church Choir.

We have pleasure in printing also the letter received from Major Hume, Commanding the 6th Dragoon Guards, who writes:

"Major Hume and the Officers of the Carabiniers wish to tender their most grateful thanks to the Pastor and members of the Congregational Church, Southampton Common, for their generosity and hospitality to the non-commissioned officers and men of this regiment.

"He has heard nothing but repeated words of appreciation, and particularly are the ladies who are assisting to be individually thanked for their labours in making the British soldier so happy and contented at a time when very many are leaving those behind them whom they may never see again, and to whom, therefore, the very thoughtful provision of materials for correspondence is doubly appreciated. 'A' and 'B' Squadrons of the Carabiniers will never forget the disinterested hospitality of your community.

"(Signed) W. HUME, Major.

"Southampton Common Camp,
 "16th August, 1914."

We humbly thank God that it has been our high privilege to minister to the comfort and well-being of our gallant soldiers. At the same time, we earnestly pray that, this war being brought to a close, victorious for the Allied Armies, never again may a similar service be expected of the Avenue Church.

A private soldier, before leaving for the Front, wrote and handed the following to one of our workers:

"Southampton.

"Just a soldier going to the Front, I wish to thank you all for your kindness to me. I am away from home, but have found good friends, inspired by God, that have proved true Christians. God bless you all and help you in your good work.

"L. E. B., Royal Engineers."

A Staff-Sergeant of the Army Ordnance Corps writes from the Continent to one of the Lecture Hall lady helpers. No address is given, but the letter was "passed by the Censor." He says:

"No doubt you are aware that we must not mention our whereabouts or the movements of our troops. We had a nice sea trip, but on a very dirty coal boat. I should like you to have heard the remarks of all those who had received such kindness at the hands of the Avenue party. My word! how we missed you all, and the nice food. We are all in one large school, and as we pass each other you can hear remarks such as 'Tea or coffee?' 'Would you like some lemonade?' 'Bread and butter or a bun?' 'Can I get you anything?' 'You haven't gone yet!' 'Would you mind putting your auto. in my book?' etc., etc. This proves that you are all still in our memory, and I'm sure will remain so. We are all of the one opinion that we have never met with such kindness during the whole of our service, and we feel that we did not do enough to show our appreciation of the same."

A pleasing incident of the month was the presentation to the Church of a handsome silver-plated

The Avenue
Free Churchmans.
Sept. 15th 1914.

A LADY WORKER'S NOTES.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—

At your request, I am sending you a few notes of my personal experiences amongst the soldiers at the Avenue Hall during the last three weeks. One of them said to me, "We never expected to receive such kindness and generosity here. I only wish, ma'am, we could have this Hall put on wheels to follow us round Belgium"! Another remarked, "We never shall forget the kindness of the Southampton ladies; if we were in a palace, madam, we couldn't be served better!" On overhearing me say to another lady how heartily the troops cheered as they marched and rode past the Hall, a soldier having tea near exclaimed, "You all *well* deserve it, ma'am; we *never* can thank you enough."

Enquiry was made as to who was our "chaplain," and on mentioning Mr. Spencer's name two of the soldiers wrote it down fully in their note-books, and said they should let us know how they got on at the Front. All the men who received New Testaments and separate Gospels were very pleased to have them. The Scripture Gift Mission, on my application, most generously made a grant of 400 copies. Many of the men said they would try to read some every day. Another worker, who had bought and distributed a large number of copies, told me that men who had seen the Gospels their comrades had, came and asked for copies, and accepted them most gratefully. I had a serious talk with two young soldiers who were sitting alone. One commenced the conversation by saying, "It's a good thing we've got God as our Father, isn't it, ma'am?" I replied, "Indeed it is, and that He is all-powerful in this time of world-wide trouble." Then I told them of the beautiful anthem we had sung in the adjoining church a Sunday or two before, "He is Lord of lords, and King of kings," and said, "We must put our trust in Him in this great conflict: He knows who is fighting for the right," and the two young fellows heartily assented.

A number of older men one day were looking at the pictures in their Gospels, and in connection with one showing the walls of Jerusalem, were much interested in the explanation I gave them of the parable of the rich man, and the camel going through the eye of the needle. Another time, when some men were warmly expressing their gratitude to the Avenue ladies and gentlemen, I said to them, "Well, we are delighted to do it for you, but this is only a little outward sign of our good wishes and sympathy. We shall all remember you earnestly in prayer when you are at the Front; pray for yourselves, and remember we in Southampton are still showing our Christian interest in you all in that way."

One man with the "North Staffs" badge on his shoulder remarked, "Perhaps you don't think, ma'am, that some of us look very fit. Well, you see, I'm a miner, and it's a very different thing working down in the mines to being out in the open air as we are now on this Common. It's a beautiful place. I've never seen a nicer town; I only wish my home was here." And several of his comrades concurred in these sentiments. A soldier from Canterbury said, with tears in his eyes, "I've never had such kindness shown me anywhere in *all* my life. I'll never forget you." These men had been travelling from 2 a.m., and had had no refreshment until they reached our Hall between 4 and 5 p.m. Their thankfulness at being able to get a wash and brush-up, and then to sit down and partake of a bountiful tea, and to receive such a hearty welcome, was almost more than they could express. I am sure that, for our part, our hearts felt brimming over with happiness that we were privileged to do something for these brave fellows, and to our minds came the remembrance of the words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," "I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink," and "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto these, My brethren, ye have done it unto Me"; and this helped to keep some of the hot and weary workers going on cheerfully through many hours on duty, and to bear the continual strain and excitement. I think some of our congregation in their quiet homes can hardly realise the scenes in our Lecture Hall lately. On Sundays, the 16th and 30th August especially, hundreds of soldiers poured into the building (over 800 meals were given on the former date, and about 2,000 on the latter). Three or four long tables are not enough sometimes to serve all the men requiring food and drink at the same time, besides the tables used for writing and the chairs round the Hall where the men read and play draughts. Two thousand four hundred letters and postcards were written in the Hall on the 30th. Men have come from Netley connected with the Ambulance Corps, also soldiers quartered at the Sailors' Home; those who are guarding the Docks (who told me they sleep on straw in the sheds), those on duty at the bridges, besides hundreds from our own and Baddesley Common. I have talked with Scotch, Irish, and Welshmen, and all the workers are agreed that they never came across a better behaved lot of men. The large quantity of "housewives" that have been given away have been greatly appreciated. One of our khaki uniformed friends on receiving a very superior one said, "It's almost too good to use; I think, madam, I shall keep it until I return home—if I ever do." We begged him to take it to Belgium, and he then informed us that he was a very good "needleman." He helped his sisters at home (they are dressmakers), and said, with pardonable pride, that he could cut out blouses, and do buttonholes quicker and better than they could! He mentioned various kinds of work he could do, and said he had learned it when he was out in Burmah. He was a superior young fellow, and much interested some of the workers with his intelligent conversation. He had been

connected officially with the Good Templars and Rechabites, and said he had been with the troops in different parts of the world, but he had never seen a more sober, steady lot of men than this Army is composed of. Another gift which has been much appreciated by the men is that of small round tins of vaseline; we wished we had many more of them. The pathos of the time is occasionally brought vividly before us. A man showed me a photograph of his two pretty little girls, aged three and five. The tears came into his eyes as he spoke of them, and a comrade sitting opposite at the tea-table said, "Oh, all right, old chap, I'll look after them if you don't come back." Another man told me he had had to break up his little home in Ireland and send his wife and children to her people over here; and another worker told me she heard one soldier discussing with another a letter just received, in which the sorrowful wife said she had no money. What was she to do? Must she sell up the furniture to buy food for the children and herself? I could mention many more interesting facts, but must refrain. In conclusion I must say that I am certain that this exhibition of practical Christianity at our Hall will have far-reaching effects for good, and, if possible, we *must* continue it as long as there is need. We who are in the midst of it are gladly giving of our money, goods, time, and strength, but we cannot keep on with the two first. We gratefully acknowledge the very generous support that has been given us by the public and the personal work of many friends of other churches, but perhaps there are some who have not yet fully responded to the appeal for assistance made on the 30th. We earnestly beg them to consider if they cannot give some more financial help, or contribute provisions, stationery, and other articles for the benefit of the men who are going to fight on our behalf to maintain our national honour, to assist a grievously wronged nation, to help our Allies in defending their frontier, and to preserve the peace and integrity of our own beloved land.

We cannot hold on many days longer at the Hall unless we are very generously supported. Who will help the "Soldiers of the King"?

ONE OF THE WORKERS.

The Avenue Free Churchman
Oct. 1. 1914

"THE SOLDIERS' HOME."

We gladly use the title often on the lips of the soldiers and on the letters addressed to them at the Hall. We still feel and desire to express heartfelt thanks to the many helpers who give time and strength and skilled service so cheerfully and generously; also to the many friends in the Church and elsewhere who provide the funds necessary, and gifts in kind. A recent report from the hon. Treasurer (Mr. H. B. Cox) showed that £250 had been given and spent, and it is estimated that an equal amount has been given in goods of all kinds.

Fifty thousand letters have been written in the Hall. The first half were stamped gratis by us. Since then the authorities have undertaken to collect and deliver them free of charge. It remains to find the stationery. A short time ago this was causing us some anxiety. But now an anonymous friend has provided a large quantity of notepaper and envelopes with printed headings. The envelopes bear the legend:

"Posted from The Avenue Soldiers' Reception Hall,
Southampton,"
together with a motto. One is—

"It's a long way to Tipperary!"

Another—

"D'ye ken John French with his eye sae clear?"

Another—

"Gentlemen, The King."

Four mottoes upon the notepaper (only one on each sheet) are as follows:

"Written in The Avenue Soldiers' Reception Hall,
Southampton"

"We are fighting for a worthy purpose, and we shall not lay down our arms until that purpose has been fully achieved."

The KING'S Speech.

"Home of brave men and the girls they adore!
Fearless, peerless, Thy land, my land,
Glory be with her, and peace evermore."

Charles Mackay.

"Green fields of England! wheresoe'er
Across this watery waste we fare,
One image at our hearts we bear,
Green fields of England, everywhere."

Clough.

"We sweep the seas!
On waters far and near
Our signals flash, and write in fire
Our meanings clear!"

"No other land, no other race
Can match our British men,
They've won a thousand fights before,
They'll win again!"

Marie Corelli.

Needless to say, this attention has been tremendously appreciated by thousands of grateful letter-writers. One wishes it were permissible to give the name of the donor with such ideas, taste, and liberality.

Through the kindness of helpers, other handsome gifts of stationery have been received from well-known wholesale houses.

Three or four groups of men have added interest to the work during the past months. First there were four Belgian soldiers, happy in their welcome to Southampton, in spite of the horrors through which they and theirs have passed. Then came the Canadians. The first batch mounted the platform by invitation, and one of them gave a particularly neat speech. Later in the month we had the pleasure of welcoming two little groups of Indian soldiers, a further instance of the solidarity of our Empire in the great cause. And we have been able to succour men arriving back from the front, and others from distant camps, supplying their needs till they could get in touch with the arrangements made officially.

New features are the hymn-singing on Sunday evenings, closing with prayer; Tuesday evening, lectures by members of the University College Staff, the first by Dr. Hill, on "Our Empire, and why we fight for it"; and gramophone "concerts."

Refreshments are now served only from 7—10, except on Sunday when a start is made at 4. Urgent cases can be provided for at any time.

There is still the same deep human interest in scores of individual cases, and the work as a whole, appeals as strongly as ever. Our income is not quite so good as formerly, no doubt owing to many new special claims. But we are confident that all our friends will rally and support this work which has been so obviously given to us.

A special appeal is made by the Lady Workers for flowers, whether cut or in pots. It has been possible to decorate the Hall freely hitherto; but with gardens becoming denuded the matter is now somewhat difficult. Such gifts may be sent to the Hall any morning, and will be gratefully received.

* * *

"THE SOLDIERS' HOME."

Our guests are still with us, and are still welcome. The *personnel* alters from week to week, sometimes from day to day, but they are all members of one great body—the British Army. Among them are many whom we come to know intimately and esteem highly.

We are thankful for some large donations and many smaller; often considerable gifts are sent by people who have heard of our work or have seen some account of it. We have a balance on the right side notwithstanding the great drain daily.

The Helpers-in-Charge, both in the Hall and kitchen, do yeoman service; the Helpers' only complaint is that they do not have enough turns, on account of the splendid number of volunteers.

To the excellent description of the work given last month, which brought in several handsome donations, may be added a few features:—

Twenty-four men arrived late one night. They had escorted German prisoners. They had lost their kits, and had had no "change" for several weeks; it was late at night, and they had no money. They were supplied with a good meal, wash, and shave, shirts, socks, handkerchiefs, "housewives," bootlaces, khaki Testaments, pencils, boracic ointment, bachelor buttons, pipes, tobacco, and cigarettes. Since then the "Outfitting and Hosiery" Department has extended. We are grateful to the Red Cross Working Party and to many other kind ladies for making this possible. Many of the soldiers have had visitors—wives and little children. Especially was this the case with the Yorkshiremen a few weeks ago, and again more recently with those returned from Malta, Gibraltar, Egypt, and South Africa. Several ladies received these visitors into their own homes, and satisfactory arrangements were made for many others. Two flashlight photos of the Hall full of soldiers have been taken, and two concerts have been held. A good deal of talent was discovered among the men.

It is a good work. The Helpers are very happy in their privilege, and it is a great satisfaction to know that the lives of many of the soldiers are brightened, and in some cases the influence is still deeper.

* * *

WOUNDED SOLDIERS' TRIBUTE TO THE LATE MR. J. T. HAMILTON.

To the Editor of the "Southern Daily Echo."
Sir,—Would you be good enough to let us express, through your valuable medium, the profound sympathy of us soldiers in Ward 42a, Surgical, with the relatives of the late Mr. Hamilton, whose death occurred on Saturday last? We owe Mr. Hamilton and his family a debt of gratitude for the kindly and generous gifts they have sent to our ward, and hope that our appreciation may in some measure comfort Mrs. Hamilton, her sons, and daughters.—We are, dear sir, yours faithfully,

L. L. WITTON, Corporal, 2nd K.O.S. Borderers, wounded at Cambrai.

F. W. LONG, Private, 1st D.C.L.I., wounded at Cambrai.

W. FACEY, Private, 1st Somerset L.I., wounded at Cambrai.

A. G. F. KANE, Private, K.O.S.B., wounded at Cambrai.

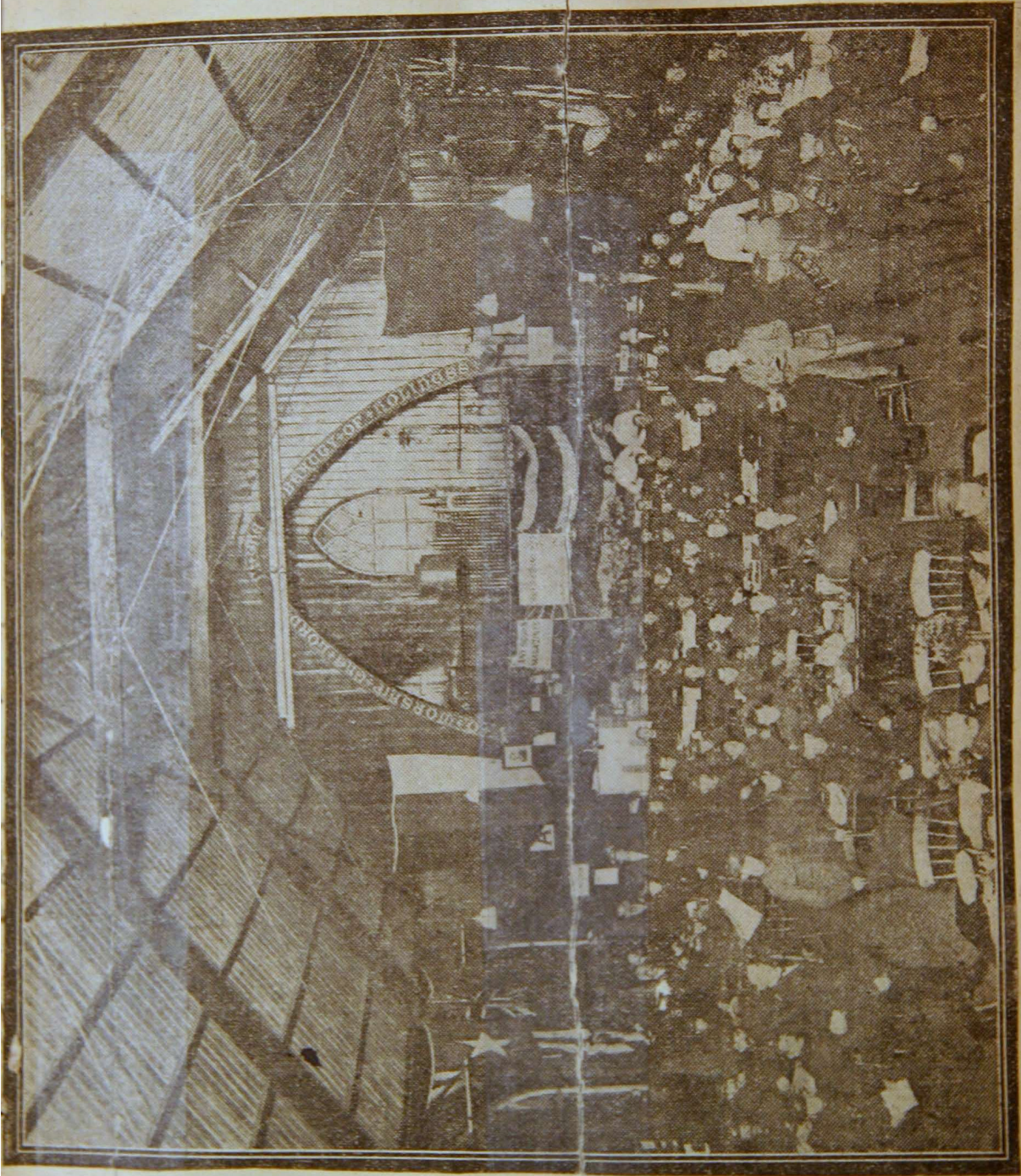
E. C. WILLIAMS, Private, M.T.A.S.C., wounded at Peronne.

W. HANDYSIDE, Private, 1st R.W. Kent, wounded at Cambrai.

C. SCARLET, Lance-Corporal, 3rd Worcesters, wounded at Cambrai.

Ward 42a, Surgical Division, R.V. Hospital, Netley, 22nd September, 1914.

The Avenue Free Churchman.
Nov. 1st



THE AVENUE HALL.

THE WORK AT THE AVENUE HALL : HOME."

"A HOME AWAY FROM

If ever the history of the part played by Southampton during the war comes to be written the town will have nothing with which to reproach itself. Every demand of an official kind has been met, as we know, by a splendid public spirit and all the resources of established organisations. But the presence in this neighbourhood of large numbers of troops has meant many claims, other than those of an official nature, on the generosity, kindness, and energy of the local public. It is extremely gratifying to know, therefore, that these claims, too, have aroused a response that could not have been improved upon by any other town in the United Kingdom.

In the present article, and in those of a similar character which are to appear in these columns, we hope to give an outline of some of the voluntary activities that have come into existence as a result of Southampton's unofficial, but none the less deeply patriotic, desire to do whatever was possible for the mental, moral, and physical welfare of those of our gallant soldiers who have found themselves stationed for a longer or shorter length of time within the boundaries of the borough.

THE COMFORT OF TOMMY ATKINS.

Among the first of the institutions to make organised arrangements for the reception and comfort of Tommy Atkins was the Avenue Congregational Church. The position of the church was peculiarly favourable for such an enterprise. Not only was it situated within a stone's throw of the Rest Camp on the Common, it was also provided with eminently suitable accommodation. What was more important still, the minister, church officers, and congregation were animated with a real desire for service.

The project, which has since assumed such large proportions and has been attended with such magnificently far-reaching results, was inaugurated as early as August 9th, or within a week of the declaration of war and the first military preparations in this district. Some notion of the enthusiasm with which the matter was taken up may be gained from a mere mention of the fact that on the afternoon of the day that saw the inception of the idea the commodious Lecture Hall, adjoining the church, was thrown open for the free use of the soldiers.

GIFTS AND WORKERS.

From that day to the present time the work has gone forward without let or hindrance, growing steadily both in proportions and in effectiveness, and sustained by a spirit on the part of the organisers and workers than which nothing could be more effective or more creditable. A numerous band of really capable and enthusiastic workers, indeed, were forthcoming from the very start, but their task would have been a difficult one had it not been for the generosity of a whole host of friends, whose gifts in money and in kind have enabled practically all demands to be met and every difficulty overcome.

Nor in any department of the work at the Avenue Church has a narrow spirit of parochialism been allowed to dominate. As the minister, the Rev. H. T. Spencer, who is the hon. secretary, and Mr. H. B. Cox, who is the hon. treasurer, have recently stated in the public press, many of the best workers and supporters are drawn from a much larger community than that associated with the Avenue Church. Thus it may be said, without for one moment detracting from the splendid achievements of the church itself, that Southampton at large has had a share.

EVERY WANT SUPPLIED.

When this "Soldiers' Home," as it has been called, began its valuable activities the developments which have since taken place were scarcely anticipated. At first appeals were made for stationery, pictorial postcards, cigarettes, pipes, tobacco, magazines, illustrated papers; but it was soon discovered that free refreshments would become a necessity. No sooner was this need felt than it was supplied; and after that—the amount of work entailed was very great—it was a comparatively easy development to the provision of razors and other appliances of the toilet, and to the holding of concerts and lectures, and the teaching of the French language to the more studiously inclined of the guests.

"D'YE KEN JOHN FRENCH?"

A visit to the Lecture Hall at the present time is quite an interesting experience. In the hall itself every convenience that kind thought can devise has been provided. A great feature, of course, is the accommodation for letter-writing, and the liberal supply of the necessary materials. Each of the numerous tables—just now charmingly decorated with autumn flowers and foliage—has its supply of special stationery, the gift of anonymous friends. The paper is placed in handsome little stationery cabinets. The envelopes bear the legend:—

"Posted from the Avenue Soldiers' Reception Hall, Southampton,"

together with a motto, one of which is—

"It's a long way to Tipperary";

another,

"D'ye ken John French with his eyes sae clear!"

and another,

"Gentlemen—the King!" and several others.

REMARKABLE NOTE HEADINGS.

On each sheet of notepaper are printed the words:

"Written in the Avenue Soldiers' Reception Hall, Southampton,"

together with one of the following mottos:—

"We are fighting for a worthy purpose, and we shall not lay down our arms until that purpose has been fully achieved."

The King's Speech.

"Home of brave men and the girls they adore!
Fearless, peerless, Thy land, my land,
Glory be with her, and peace evermore."

Charles Mackay.

"Green fields of England! wheresoe'er
Across this watery waste we fare,
One image at our hearts we bear,
Green fields of England, everywhere."

Clough.

"We sweep the seas!

On waters far and near
Our signals flash, and write in fire
Our meanings clear!

"No other land, no other race
Can match our British men,
They've won a thousand fights before,
They'll win again!"

Marie Corelli.

LETTERS BY THE THOUSAND.

Some idea of the enormous amount of correspondence indicted at these tables may be formed from the fact that up to the end of last week no fewer than 58,069 letters had been sent from the hall since it was opened for its present purposes. Indeed, up to quite recently there was an average of 5,000 letters per week.

There are no restrictions as to smoking, and this fact, coupled with the liberal supply of pipes, tobacco, and cigarettes is, as may well be imagined, very highly appreciated. The two bagatelle tables and the draughtsmen, etc., are in constant use; and it may be mentioned in passing that offers have already been received to provide the hall with one more bagatelle table, and also a small-size billiard table.

Behind the hall is the kitchen, where the refreshments are prepared. The staff that look after this department number no fewer than 50 helpers.

GALLONS OF TEA.

There is rather an amusing history in connection with the refreshment department. When the work at the hall got fully under way, refreshments were provided practically throughout the day and evening as well. All kinds of delicacies too were provided, including apple tarts, puddings, and such like. Presently an intimation from the military authorities curtailed the hours during which refreshments were served—they are now from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. on week days, and from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Sundays—and knocked off some of the more elaborate dainties from the bill of fare.

As it is, however, the quantities of provisions consumed are astonishing. As many as 150 gallons, for instance, of tea have been prepared in one day.

LECTURES FOR TOMMY ATKINS.

The choir vestry has been set apart for the French classes—conducted by two French gentlemen—which are of the utmost value. In the small hall adjoining weekly lectures are given by professors from the Hartley University College, also by the Principal, Dr. Alex Hill, and these have been very highly appreciated by the more studious of the soldiers. The old engine-room has been pressed into service as a barber's shop, supervised by Mr. Knight, and, thanks to the gift of three loads of clinkers from the Gas Company, a space behind the halls has been transformed into an admirable washing-yard.

There are many other activities that call for mention. The mending department, for instance, has been of great use. Quarters too have been found for soldiers' wives, either free or at nominal cost, while hundreds of useful articles, such as shirts, socks, mufflers, and packets of boracic ointment have been provided free.

THE SPIRITUAL SIDE.

It may also be mentioned that during the early days of the war the Committee changed a lot of French money at the full rate of 9½d. per franc, although the actual rate of exchange at the time was only 5d.

That the spiritual side of the work is not forgotten is manifested by the thousands of khaki testaments and gospels that have been distributed among the men. Of course the Committee have been greatly helped by the many kind donors and subscribers, whose generosity has been of incalculable service. Handsome contributions have been received from the staffs of Messrs. Edwin Jones and Co. and other firms, and from the children of several of the local schools, while the clerical work has been considerably facilitated by the loan of an Underwood typewriter by the makers.

PRAISE FOR THE WORKERS.

To the workers themselves very cordial praise is due. They number in all some 150, who give their services according to rota. Al-

though all have given invaluable help a few who have taken positions of responsibility may perhaps be mentioned. The idea originated with Mrs. J. T. Harrison, Mrs. W. H. Rowland, and Miss Lankester as the result of a visit to the Common, during which they observed a number of soldiers reduced to the expedient of writing letters with their comrades' backs as desks. Mr. Harold Lankester acted as hon. secretary during the first few weeks, and to his genius the excellent organisation is largely due. Mrs. T. H. Smith is in charge of the refreshment department, assisted in the making of the tea and coffee by Mr. A. Osborne. Among the ladies who have ably superintended the procuring of the shirts, socks, etc., are Mrs. H. Bowyer and Miss Robinson. Mr. J. A. Jordan has seen to the clearing up of the hall every night, and its arrangement every morning. His principal helper formerly was Mr. Cyril Hamilton, and is now Professor Watkin, together with Mr. A. E. Henley, who also acts as assistant-secretary.

"LORD KITCHENER"—A BLACK PET.

Whether he can be included as a "helper" or not is a matter of doubt, but certainly among the most popular frequenters of the hall is "Lord Kitchener," a black kitten presented to the Committee by one of the soldiers. "Kitchener" was in rather a poor way physically when he first made his appearance, but he is now as fat and sleek as any cat in Southampton, and is an immense favourite with everybody.

It is only necessary to take a peep at the hall practically any evening to see how thoroughly advantage is taken of its facilities. "Gentlemen in khaki" are everywhere, reading, smoking, letter-writing, playing bagatelle, and talking. Everybody is jolly, and the whole place is pervaded by the true spirit of comradeship.

To enter into further details in connection with this admirable work at the Avenue Hall is unnecessary, although there are several minor activities which have not been mentioned. No account of this "Soldiers' Home," however, would be complete without some reference to the way in which it is regarded by the soldiers themselves.

WHAT THE SOLDIERS SAY.

To say that they are thoroughly appreciative conveys a totally inadequate idea of the enthusiastic gratitude felt towards the institution, and everybody connected with it, by the thousands who have benefited. Many are the letters of heartfelt acknowledgment that have been written not only from the troops while in Southampton, but from those who have passed through the town and are now at the front. The men look upon the institution as a "home away from home," and for the spirit of genuine Christian friendship in which they have been welcomed they frankly agree that they cannot find words to express the deep sincerity of their thanks.

All that remains to be said is that the splendid work at the Avenue Hall is necessarily very expensive, and that the Committee are appealing to the Southampton public for that financial support which it is earnestly to be hoped will continue to be forthcoming, in order that everything may still be provided quite free of charge to the men. The work has the cordial approval of the City Commandant and other officers, and the hall and entire arrangements have undergone searching inspection by the Military Medical Officer of Health.

*From the Hampshire Advertiser
Nov. 11th 1914.*

1/2

"THE SOLDIERS' HOME."

We have had another very busy month with one of two brief quiet intervals. It is extremely gratifying to be able to report that we have received many generous donations during November, including several pounds collected by Miss Windebank from school teachers, and £1 from the Girls' Grammar School. The total receipts in cash amount now to £342, without counting the handsome sum realised by Mr. Brightiff's Lecture on noses, which will be not less than £35. 67,000 letters have now been written in the Hall.

The men were delighted to welcome Madame Strathearn, of London, on November 17th, who charmed them for two hours by her splendid singing. And they expressed hearty appreciation of the services of Mrs. Norton-Child's Mandoline Band on December 1st. They were deeply touched when the following letter was read to them:—

"NORTHAM INFANTS' SCHOOL,
23/11/14.

"DEAR SOLDIERS,—Please we saved our ha'pennies and farthings to buy these cigarettes for you, and I hope you will be pleased with them."

"My name is Norah Vokes, and I was seven years old on September 10th.

"My daddy was a brave soldier like you, but I never saw him, because he died before I was born.

"Your little friend,
"NORAH."

Rumour has been busy for some weeks as to the closing of the Camp on the Common for the winter. All we can say is that there are still many men there, and that so long as men are encamped there it is our duty and our pleasure to do our utmost for them. The Ladies' Committee is now considering the provision of Christmas cheer and entertainment.

The ladies thank most heartily all those who have responded to the request for a supply of flowers and plants, and appeal for further and regular gifts of flowers, foliage, berries, etc.

* * *

*The Avenue Free Churchman
Dec. 1st 1914*

ROLL OF HONOUR.

Attention is called to the handsome and artistic Roll of Honour designed, painted, and written by Mr. C. H. Brightiff. It contains the names of those connected with our Church and congregation who are serving in the Army and Navy. It is intended to read these names in the Church on the first Sunday of each month, that special prayer may be offered for our friends, and the names are given here that they may be remembered in our private prayers.

Capt. F. W. Andrews, 5th Hants Territorials.
Capt. T. Kerr, H.M.S. Rewa.
Lieut. F. Hamilton, Hants R.G.A. Territorials.
Lieut. R. Mead, 5th Hants Territorials.
Corpl. A. Coombs, Cheshires (Kitchener's).
Corpl. C. H. Laver, Artists' Rifles.
Corpl. Maurice Lane, R.A.M.C.
Horace Bartholomew, Royal Engineers Territorials.
Leonard Bassett, 5th Hants Territorials.
Raymond J. Carter, 5th Hants Reserves.
Leonard A. Crook, Queen Victoria Rifles Territorials.
George Douglas, Hants Carabineers Territorials.
Basil Foot, Hants R.G.A. Territorials.
Mr. J. G. Fordyce, H.M.S. Armadale Castle.
Dudley Kimber, Hants R.G.A. Territorials.
Basil L. Laver, Artists' Rifles.
Gordon W. Nicoll, London Scottish.
Dudley Phippard, U.P.S. (Kitchener's).
Leonard Pinhorn, H.M.S. Hogue, assistant paymaster. Killed in action.
Maurice Spearpoint, Hants R.H.A. Territorials.
S. Widgey, 4th Dorsets.

*Send H. B. Cox *
to C. H. Hamilton
The Avenue Free Churchman
Dec. 1st 1914.*

Holly and Khaki.

The Tommies' Christmas at Southampton.

Most of us, I suppose, have this week seen soldiers with sprigs of holly in their hats. I met a number of them coming down the Avenue one day, and they all wore holly and were all splashed with mud. The face of one of them remains with me as a memory portrait. He was mounted upon a very muddy horse, and he laughed as he rode, for all the world as if he were setting out for a banquet. His hat was pushed back upon his head, and the bright red berries contrasted with the drab of mud and khaki, and were only a little redder than his ruddy cheeks. This time last year I was writing "something about Christmas," and received an inspiration from the sight of the holly bushes on the Common. I was reminded of the lines in which Andrew Lang pleads with older people to be merry at Christmas-time, "though half we sigh"—

"Though some are dead, and some are fled
To lands of summer over sea,
The holly berry keeps his red,
The merry children keep their glee."

Holly and Christmas are inseparable in our English minds, but this year we have holly, Christmas, and khaki. The holly on the Common is plucked by soldiers awaiting orders to go to the front. When they go they wear a sprig of it.

"It is only a week from Christmas," writes a "Daily Chronicle" special correspondent, from North-East France, "and already the spirit of Noel is hovering over this town, banishing for a few happy hours from the minds of many the gloom and melancholy caused by this slaughter of millions. British soldiers go about the streets adorned with sprigs of mistletoe, for this is a mistletoe country. The very trains which go down to railhead are being decorated with the twigs, and many of the shop fronts are taking on that Christmasy appearance which causes the child to gape his nose to the window in delight and arrests the steps of the grown-up. Holly, however, is absent from the scene." So that the holly from Southampton which reaches the "mistletoe country" will be welcome. Cheerful, and essentially English, it will speak not only of Christmas, but of home.

Arrangements at Avenue Hall.

At the Avenue Hall, where the soldiers have been made so genuinely welcome since the beginning of the war, I was told that there would be a special tea on Christmas Day, followed by an entertainment arranged by Mr. Harold Lancaster, the hon. secretary of this very popular soldiers' rest room. Some of the soldiers upon receiving the invitation for Christmas Day, which took the form of a ticket, said that they did not know whether they would be in Southampton for Christmas or not. But for those who went away before Christmas the voluntary workers at the Hall provided something in the way of Christmas cheer—at least, that was how it struck me when I saw the ladies running out into the road with cups of hot tea and coffee and plates of sandwiches and cake, which they handed to the men who were marching or riding by.

"You'll find someone who will take the cup lower down the road," shouted a girl to a mounted soldier as she stretched her arm upwards in order to hand him a drink. The little incident revealed to me with what good sense Tommy's friends at the Avenue Hall mix their generosity. Sure enough, too, I met a helper, lower down the road, with a tray of empty cups. "Merry Christmas," called the soldiers, and perhaps because the wish was not returned with every sign of confidence in its fulfilment, broke into their classic cry, "Are we downhearted?" Perhaps I imagined a slight emphasis on the "we." It was then that I noticed the soldier whose expression seemed to me so symbolic of the spirit of our men—the men who are causing even the Germans to wonder whether laughter is not the bravest thing in the world.

A very merry Christmas party was given to the soldiers at the hall (gaily decorated for the occasion) adjoining the Carlton Baptist Church on Tuesday evening. Mrs. Savill was the promoter of the entertainment, and among many who helped to make the evening an unequalled success were Captain Barnard, R.N., Commander Eldred, R.N., and the Rev. F. W. Duncombe and Mrs. Duncombe. Several ladies and gentlemen provided a capital musical programme, and a number of amusing competitions were arranged, very acceptable prizes being given. Of the 150 soldiers who were entertained not one left without a Christmas present. The hall, which, till recently, was run by Red Cross workers as a soldiers' rest room, will remain open as such, but is now under the direction of the Pastor of the church, the Rev. F. W. Duncombe, who told me on Wednesday that though the Christmas party was over, there would be reasonable attractions at the hall on Christmas Day.

Southampton Times, Dec. 26th 1918.

Muddy, But Merry.

Roadside Refreshments in the Rain.

Striking scenes have marked the march through Southampton of some thousands of troops who had a weary tramp from just beyond Winchester. The state of the roads and the heavy downpour of rain made the journey seem endless, and it was apparent that some of the soldiers, with their heavy kits and equipment, had had just about enough of it when they had finished their march. In these circumstances, the generosity of the people was "twice blessed," and the troops were indeed grateful for the hot tea and bread and butter and cake handed to them along the route. Everyone seemed eager to have a hand in the distribution. Women, men, and even children could be seen running about with large jugs of hot tea, and the Tommies were greatly impressed with this indication of goodwill. Whole households, including servants, turned out heavily laden with the "good cheer," and people of all classes seemed to vie with each other in helping Tommy along the road.

Perhaps the most striking scene was witnessed in the Avenue on Sunday. Troops were continually passing, and the authorities at the Avenue Church organised a seemingly inexhaustible supply of tea, coffee, cakes, and bread and butter. A marked feature was the help given by soldiers stationed on the Common, who delighted to serve their comrades as they passed along. Hour after hour the Church authorities busied themselves in the preparation of the supplies. There was never any slackening off, and, to use Tommy's phrase, "the tea went down well!" The willing helpers were very heartily thanked by the soldiers, the feelings often finding expression in a resounding cheer, and the men declared that they would never forget the kindness of the Southampton folk.

Nearly all the troops passed along the Avenue and St. Mary's Road, and large crowds turned out to give them a parting cheer. Although the conditions on Saturday and Sunday were most depressing, the men refused to be downhearted, although a few men were obliged to fall out. Many of the men were bespattered with mud, their camping ground having been turned into something of a quagmire by the continual rains, but they were as merry as could be expected under the circumstances.

They still had the old songs going, but one battalion which passed through the town appeared to think that it was now quite unnecessary to remind Southampton folk that "It's a long way to Tipperary." Nor did they repeat the impertinent question, "Who were you with last night?" but they had reached a higher plane, with the result that they gave a new version of the chorus of a revivalist hymn as follows:—

When the ro-ro-roll is called out yonder,
When the ro-ro-roll is called out yonder,
When the ro-ro-roll is called out yonder,
When the roll is called in Berlin
WE'LL BE THERE.

*Southampton Times Dec 26th
1914*

Comforts for Soldiers.

The soldiers in the town have been overwhelmed with benevolence. A week or two after the outbreak of war the French Consul and Madame Barthelemy founded a Franco-British Society "to assist soldiers." The Southampton Division of the Red Cross Society established itself at the Victoria Rooms. Most practical, perhaps, of the schemes is that which has its home at the Avenue Lecture Hall. Here the soldiers daily find at once a lounge, a library, a writing-room, and a dining-hall. The funds needed to keep this establishment going are considerable, but the letters the organisers constantly receive show how much it is appreciated at the Rest Camp. The

*Southampton Incidents of
1914. A Local Review
of its Events.
Southampton Times 2.1.15.*

Canada and the War.

American Lady's Impressions of Empire's Loyalty.

The following extract from a letter written by a Nebraska lady to an American lady resident in this country will be read at the present juncture with a good deal of interest. Describing a trip from the United States to Canada, she says:—
"The Welland Canal was guarded, and at Niagara Falls all the power houses were closed and under heavy guard. Every bridge that I went on had guards at either end. It was all significant and all surprising to me. I had not realised that Canada would be involved, until there arose an emergency or some crisis. I went on by boat all the way to Quebec, through the beautiful Thousand Isles and down the magnificent St. Lawrence. Isn't it a splendid river? At Quebec all was astir. The first call for troops had been issued—25,000 of them. The French and British flags were flying together everywhere. You cannot possibly imagine what a strange impression that gave me. And often the Belgian colours were added. The streets were full of marching soldiers and there was martial music everywhere. Up in the front of what we would call the 'Armory,' though they had another name for it, there was continual drilling going on, first one company and then another being whipped into line. While I was there they voted a 50 million dollars tax; what a bagatelle it seems now. That went into effect next morning. I expressed my surprise to some of the Canadians I met, saying I had never dreamed that Canada would be in the war from the start; that I, of course, presumed that, should England be in straits and require help, she would be ready to assist, but certainly not that she would take part in the initial struggle. I wish you could have heard the replies and seen the solemnity with which they assured me that England's trouble was their trouble, that anything that concerned the Mother Country was their concern as well, and that they stood shoulder to shoulder for her defence. Oh, it was magnificent! It was splendid! I had never witnessed anything that compared with such patriotism. I tell you it is a wonderful Government that can hold its people together like that. And look what they have done—Australia as well, and South Africa, and even India, where they seem to us to be aliens. I am without words to express my admiration for any government or for any form of government that can accomplish what I saw manifested in Canada. It stirred me to the very depths of my being. I had admired England before, now I revere her. I cannot be made to believe that such a government, such a people as that, can ever be overcome or supplanted by a system such as the Kaiser typifies. As for him, I wake up in the night to call him, and that which he represents and embodies, anathema. He has been the veriest hypocrite that ever trod the earth, deceiving nations with his pretended peace propaganda, while covertly preparing to annihilate them. If there is a God of Justice, no such form of government as he represents can ever triumph in the end and rule the world. I am satisfied that is his ambition; and I believe his end will follow, in one way or another, that of Napoleon."

Southampton Times. 2.1.15.

THE SOLDIERS' HOME.

Much regular work has been done well and faithfully by the "staff," but two outstanding events have rendered the month memorable.

I suppose we must observe, even in a private magazine like this, a certain amount of discretion as to the names of regiments and dates. Well then, on a certain Sunday and Monday many thousands of soldiers passed the Hall after a long and fatiguing march. The refreshment tables were carried out to the front of the Hall, and throughout the afternoon and evening of the two days the soldiers were fed literally upon the march. A few of the officers allowed the men to halt; but, generally, the work meant handing cups of tea and coffee to the soldiers, and collecting the empties lower down the Avenue. Thus many thousand cups of beverage were given, and mountains of bread and butter and other food consumed.

On the Monday afternoon, while this was in full swing, several hundred other troops arrived upon the Common, stormed the Hall, and clamoured for refreshments. Their wants, too, were supplied, and later a hundred of them slept in the Small Hall or the Hall itself. Indeed, it has become a regular thing to let bodies of men sleep in the Small Hall during the wet weather.

The other special feature of the month was the high tea on Christmas Day, followed by an entertainment and distribution of presents. It is impossible to name all the ladies and gentlemen who helped Mrs. T. H. Smith by gifts and service to prepare and dispense the sumptuous tea. Mrs. F. W. Smith, Miss Robinson, Miss E. Hamilton, and Mrs. H. Bowyer were responsible for the presents, and at their request Mr. H. B. Lankester provided an excellent entertainment—cinema and concert—which Mr. F. W. Smith conducted, in Mr. Lankester's absence, through bereavement. Mr. A. Trim, assisted by "Holly" and "Mistletoe," made an ideal Father Christmas.

Though the attendance was not so large as had been expected, owing to unexpected military movements and private leave, all the donors and workers felt amply repaid by the privilege of bringing a real bit of Christmas to a hundred otherwise lonely and homeless men.

Many friends who witnessed the "Feeding of the Multitudes" sent liberal donations towards the extra expense. The contribution of one lady was £30!

*The Avenue Free Church-
man. Jan. 1st 1915.*

Sticking to It. Church-Workers who Haven't Tired of the Soldiers.

There have been several references in these columns to the work that is being done on behalf of the soldiers by local churches, but I make no apology for taking up the story once more, for the simple reason that the story is still going on, and will continue till the greater story of the war, in relation to which it is as a subordinate theme, reaches what we all hope and believe will be a triumphant conclusion. Last August I tried to express my admiration for the wonderful promptitude with which the members of the Avenue Congregational Church threw open their lecture hall as a Soldiers' Rest. But perseverance is a quality quite as essential as, and perhaps even more admirable than, promptitude.

There were many people, not only in Southampton, but all over the country, who, in the early days of the war, felt that they could "do anything for the soldiers," but whose comparatively shallow enthusiasm has since evaporated in sentiment. They have grown tired of their knitting, or their invalid cookery, or of spending a whole day a week at a soldiers' recreation room; they fight shy of meetings, and declare that they are suffering from the newest complaint, "committeitis." But there are others, the real enthusiasts, who are sticking to it—no phrase in good English occurs to me that expresses their loyalty and their sheer hard work half so well. All other real enthusiasts in Southampton, and they are many, will agree that, in a consideration of local manifestations of this fine spirit, we must put the workers at the Avenue Hall right on top.

They had advantages: I was going to say natural advantages, which is, after all, not wide of the mark, considering the situation of the Church almost on the edge of the Common. They are on the main route, and the lecture hall lends itself well to the purpose. It was also the first recreation room opened for soldiers in Southampton in connection with the present war. But the chief reasons for its extreme popularity with the men probably lie deeper than these, which are not of a kind to determine definitely the success of any such undertaking. "This is the finest place I've been in," I heard a young Territorial say in the Avenue Hall, one evening this week. He told us of other soldiers' rooms he had been glad to take advantage of on his way south, but "this," he said, "beats 'em all. It's topping." "Topping," it is, with its writing-tables, post office, billiards, piano, and liberal supply of refreshments. "When a chap told me you could get tea here for nothing," continued our young friend from the Midlands, "I nearly called him a li—." "It's a good thing you didn't," interrupted a lady-helper. "You would have had to eat your words, you know." The boy appeared to have eaten a good tea, at any rate, and he dropped a coin in the collecting-box on the table at which the helper-in-charge for the day sits, before he moved on to decide between looking at the illustrated papers or writing a letter home.

"Very few of the men pass the box by." I was told. "Yesterday we had well over a pound in it." At the "post office" stamps may be bought, letters left to be dispatched—the postman calls four times a day—and letters and parcels directed to the Avenue Hall asked for. A list of names of the men for whom these are waiting is kept up just inside the Hall. Notepaper, envelopes, and picture postcards are provided free of charge. The notepaper is interesting. One sheet which I picked up was headed as follows:—Written in the Avenue Soldiers' Reception Hall, Southampton, from which nearly 100,000 letters and cards have been sent since August, 1914.

When Peace Will Come :

"We shall never sheathe the sword, which we have not lightly drawn, until Belgium recovers in full measure all and more than all that she has sacrificed; until France is adequately secured against the menace of aggression; until the rights of the smaller nationalities of Europe are placed upon an unassailable foundation; until the military domination of Prussia is wholly and finally destroyed."—Mr. Asquith, Prime Minister.

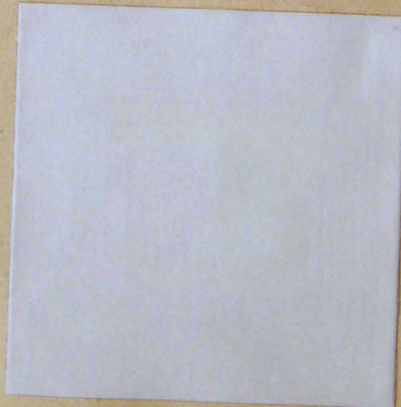
"France will not lay down her arms until she has regained for ever the provinces which were torn from her by force, restored heroic Belgium to the fullness of her material prosperity and political independence, and broken Prussian militarism, so that they may eventually reconstruct a regenerated Empire founded upon justice and right."—M. Viviani, French Prime Minister.

These headings—they are varied—are surely an excellent idea. Picture the homes to which the letters are sent. How depressed everyone in the family feels now that the boys have gone! Or perhaps it is an only son who has answered his country's call, and the downheartedness following upon his departure amounts to a sense of desolation. It is very easy for the women folk to get a little bitter, to feel that "King and Country" are only words, after all, and "how do we know the country's cause is worth the risk of our lad's life?" Here are answers to such questionings, and appearing, as they do, at the head of the boy's letter, they are sure to be read. Many thousand khaki Testaments and Gospels, and many hundred shirts, socks, mufflers, and "housewives" have been given away at the Avenue Hall. There is also a constant demand for boracic ointment, which is always to be had for the asking. About fifty complete sets of under-clothing have been provided. The shaving, washing, laundry, and mending departments are much appreciated by the men, who are also often glad to take the opportunity of having their coats dried. Large numbers of men have slept in the Hall and in the small hall close by.

During a recent influx of soldiers into the town, the workers at the Avenue Hall have been on duty almost till the small hours, providing food for hundreds of hungry men. The Rev. H. T. Spencer, M.A., M.Sc., minister of the Church, and Mrs. Spencer are among the hardest workers, and Mr. Spencer's popularity with the men is unbounded. "Mr. Spencer is nearly always here," said a lady to me. "And the reason he has not looked in this evening is that he is 'knocked up.' He has been working here till one o'clock in the morning." Mr. Spencer is sticking to it. Nearly £600 has been given to the Avenue Soldiers' Recreation Room in cash, and the value in kind has been quite as large.

Among so many splendid workers it is difficult to choose names for special mention, but the following ladies and gentlemen are the regular helpers-in-charge:—Miss Robinson, Miss E. Hamilton, Mrs. F. W. Smith, Miss Snow, Mrs. Walter Bowyer, Mrs. H. Bowyer, Mrs. J. Stephens, Mrs. H. Cox, and Miss Renison and Messrs. Stewart, Weekes, J. C. Smith, Rose, B. Tilly, A. C. Hallett, and Deagon. The ladies who superintend the kitchen (and to whose lot it falls to order cake and sugar by the hundredweight!) are Mrs. Spencer, Mrs. Harrison, Mrs. Bance, Mrs. Leach, Mrs. Foot, Miss Angell, and Mrs. Francis. It will be seen that not all the helpers are members of the Avenue Congregational Church, assistance in this, as in other ways, having been forthcoming from members of other churches and other denominations from the start. Many are the letters which are received at the Hall from the soldiers after they have gone away, and also from their wives. I believe the workers think almost as much of these expressions of gratitude and appreciation as they do of the presentations which have been made by officers and men, though these, needless to say, will form a more lasting memorial of the part which the Avenue Church played in the days of the Great War.

Sidon Times



Part of the 17th Division passing the Avenue Hall
early Tuesday July 13th morning.



Army Service Corps
A hall for Refreshments outside
Avenue Hall



Royal Field Artillery
On the march.





Returning the cups*Signalling Stores
Getting ready to start
17th Division*

Early Breakfasts from the Avenue Hall.

The workers at the Avenue Soldiers' Reception Hall continue to break records. Ninety loaves of bread were cut up one night after nine o'clock, and one morning during the present week helpers, among them the Minister, the Rev. H. T. Spencer, M.A., M.Sc., were on duty from 4.30 a.m. onwards. They began work only a little later the two following mornings. Systematic arrangements were made for the workers assembled over-night and put up cake, bread and butter, sandwiches, etc., in packets, which were handed to the men, together with cups of tea, coffee, lemonade, and, needless to say, cigarettes. Motorists and cyclists rode out and informed the officers and Sectional Commanders of the preparation, and every section halted for a few minutes, the line extending from Alma Road to beyond Winn Road, and in some cases nearly to the tram terminus. Supply tables were placed not only in front of Avenue Church, but at intervals to Winn Road, and even beyond. Thus it was possible to give every man food and drink, and when the halt was long enough, to water most of the horses. Officers and men were most grateful, assuring the workers that the provision made was most acceptable. The cost of such an undertaking is heavy, but already the workers and some of the spectators have contributed more than £30 towards it. Should this paragraph meet the eye of anyone who approves of this "Welcome to Southampton," given to the men about to fight for us, many of them, alas! to die for us, the Hall Committee will be glad to receive further donations. These should be sent to the Treasurer, Avenue Soldiers' Hall. A receipt will be given, and it is hoped to publish the complete list of donors in the course of a few days.

Satin Home 17.2.18

THIS is written from a town from which soldiers have set out for the wars in all periods of our history—a thought that is in our minds sometimes as we watch the boys in khaki go. Though, truth to tell, we do not give much consideration to the wars of other ages, which seem as unreal as this war seemed impossible, before it happened. This war, this monstrous, almost intolerable war, has us in its grip, and often our mental faculties seem dulled as we watch the soldiers in their thousands and in their tens of thousands marching through the streets of our old, old town.

At the beginning of the war they were hurried through silently in the dead of night; few of us knew of their passing. Then, as the need for secrecy decreased, we were given glimpses of our departing men, and, later, there came a memorable week-end, when all the large camps in the district seemed to be emptied at once, and tramp, tramp, tramp, night and day, the boys passed under our windows. And

those of us who do not live upon the main street could hear the sounds of the soldiers' feet in the quiet night; and do you think they could stay in bed? Why, no, the streets were lined as in the daytime with men and women who wanted to clasp the soldiers' hands; to give them cigarettes; to wish them "all the luck," and to tell them what to do with the Kaiser. From the first there has been very little cheering. We cannot cheer; for whatever we do we must smile, and if we cheered, I do not think we could continue to smile.



*Their
Songs.*

And the boys understand; let there be no mistake about that. They know how near the tears are to the women's eyes; they know how the tarcoats of the men who stand with their hats in their hands are hurting them.

If I were a poet perhaps I could describe the sympathy which exists between the men who are going and the men and women who have to stay at home. It can be felt in the very air. But, of course, it is not voiced. A dear old woman may return a Tommy's "Good-bye, grannie," with a "God bless you, my lad," but for the most part our god-speeds are expressed in hand-shakes, in the waving of handkerchiefs, and even in light jests, because it is the spirit of the jest that matters. The boys themselves raise their familiar shouts: "Are we down-hearted?" "No-o-o!" "Can we shoot straight?" "Ye-e-s!" And very frequently they sing.

"Do you think the soldiers sing 'Tipperary' as often as they are supposed to do?" said a Londoner to me once. All I know is that the words and the strain of

"Tipperary" are impressed upon our brains here, including the little variation after the phrase, "sweetest girl I know." Everyone who has heard the soldiers sing the song knows what I mean! But there are other prime favourites, among them, "Who's Your Lady Friend?" and, more recently, "Till the Boys Come Home."

The other night we heard "Men of Harlech" splendidly sung. The Welshmen sing their national songs more frequently, perhaps, than do the Scotchmen and the Irishmen theirs; but as all soldiers sing "Annie Laurie," and "Tipperary" may now stand for the Irish sentiment, it is perhaps a little hard to judge. Hymn-tunes are always popular, particularly one to which "Sun of my soul" is sung to in church. It must be admitted that Tommy selects his own words. Sometimes we wake to hear snatches of song as the soldiers pass, and never does their going seem more sad or more strange than at that mysterious hour.

The indomitable spirit of our men; how it lifts us, the stay-at-homes, so that we have strength to play our dull, safe parts! At a church hall, on the main road, which has been used as a soldiers' rest since the beginning of the war, meals are provided for the departing men. Yes, really, meals, for bags of food are handed to them, as well as the inevitable and ever-welcome packets of cigarettes. Drinks are well managed, too, for cups of tea and coffee and soup, and glasses of lemonade, are quickly served, and further down the road the refreshed soldier finds a helper from the hall—a pretty girl nine times out of ten—waiting with an empty tray upon which he places the drinking vessel. It is very charming to see a slim, young girl, with outstretched arms, reaching up to a mounted soldier, whether it be to assist him in the matter of refreshments or to clasp his hand in token of sympathy and good-fellowship as he goes.

For he is going; he may not come back. That is the burden of our thoughts. In autumn, winter, spring and summer we have watched the soldiers go, and the year will soon have swung round again. Sometimes our watching seems to grow harder to bear. We have accumulated so many memories of the other boys who have gone. Yet we continue to wave our handkerchiefs, and we know that we shall smile—in spite of all—till the boys come back!

MARGUERITE GASTON.

Daily Chronicle

*Saturday 24th 1915
July.*

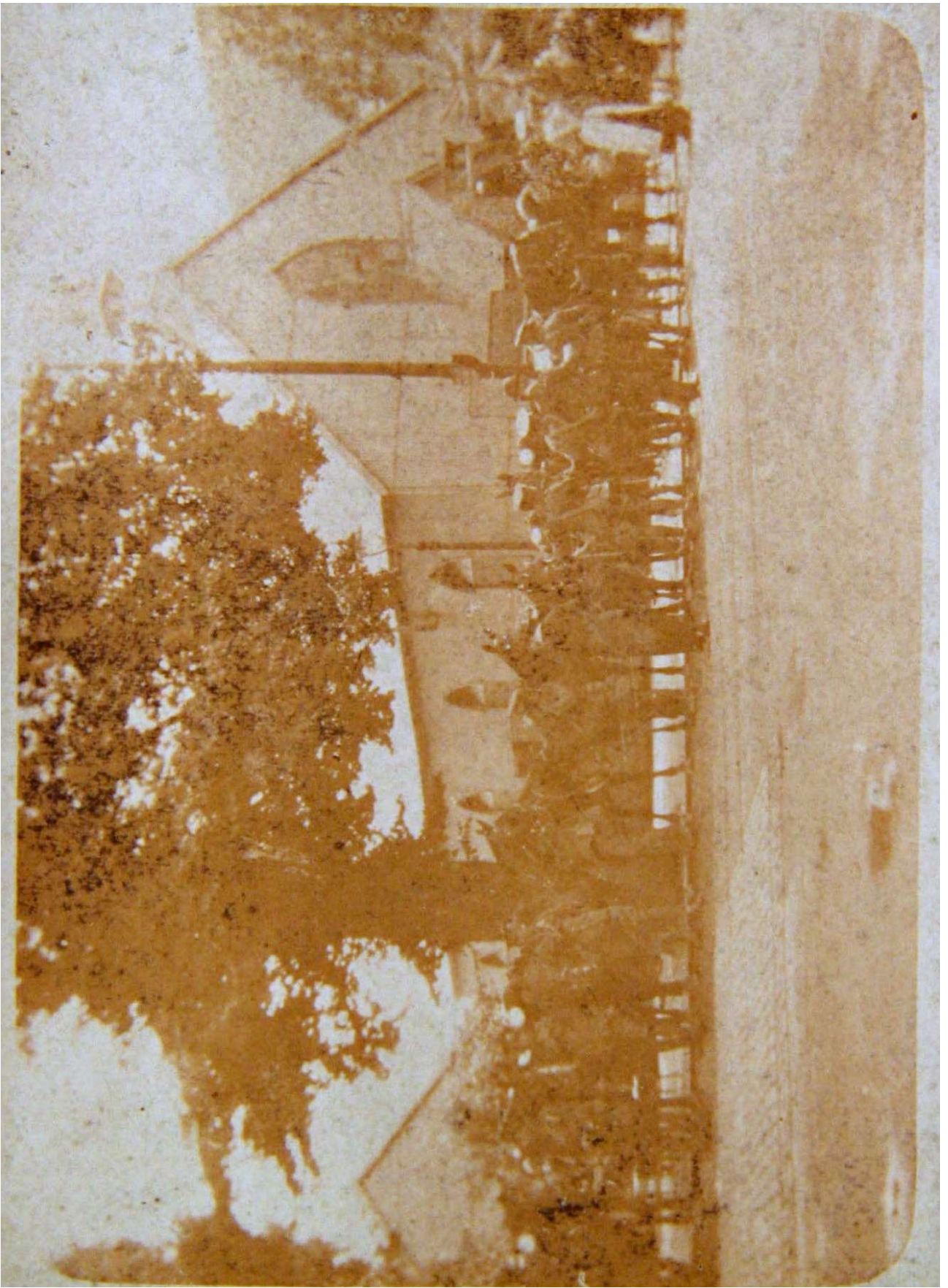
July 15th 1915. 17th Division



Army Service Corps



Taking a bite
The Yorkshire Dragoons







Cyclist Corps.

THE SOLDIERS' HOME.

Early in the month we were busy with large parties of men encamped on the Common for a few hours, or a day or two, *en route* for the front.

On July 7th we had an excellent concert for the men, given by Madame Russell Lloyd, together with pupils and friends. We have had no systematic entertainment since then, but several ladies and gentlemen have given music on various evenings.

Busy scenes were witnessed during the week commencing July 12th. We received definite information that troops would be passing the Hall in the early morning hours, and were encouraged to provide refreshments for them after their long march. Large bodies of soldiers have been thus welcomed and fed in past months, in a more or less haphazard way. More systematic arrangements were, however, made on this occasion. Overnight the workers assembled, and put up cake, bread and butter, etc., and were ready at half-past four in the morning to hand these packets to each man, together with cups of coffee, tea, and lemonade. Cigarettes and post-cards were also provided. Motorists and cyclists rode out and informed the officers and sectional commanders of the preparation, and every section halted for a few minutes. Supply tables were placed, not only in front of Avenue Church, but at intervals to Winn Road, and even beyond. Thus it was possible to give every man food and drink, and, when the halt was long enough, to water most of the horses.

It was a good thing to see foot soldiers sitting on the pavement in front of the Church taking their breakfast; officers and others dismounted and partaking of refreshments; waggons and guns drawn by six horses and mules lined up all the way to Winn Road, sometimes nearly to the tram terminus; numbers of people ministering to the wants of the men, and amateur ostlers giving water to thirsty horses and coaxing shy mules. Officers and men were most grateful, assuring the donors that the provision made was most acceptable. Of course, the cost of such an undertaking is very great; but already the workers and some of the spectators have contributed £82, thus covering the outlay.

The workers felt it to be a great privilege to give this "Welcome to Southampton" to men about to fight for us, many, alas! to die for us. Indeed, jolly as the men are, the pathos of the scene is so great that some of our workers shrink from it. But we are ready for the next rush, and are earmarking the balance in hand upon this occasion for the next.

Avenue Churchman Aug. 1st 1915

can. Everyone is delighted with the success that has attended the opening of the soldiers rest rooms and recreation halls. What a happy atmosphere there is at the Avenue Hall, for instance! The soldiers say the helpers are real friends to them; some of the ladies, indeed, might almost be their sisters or mothers. There does not seem to be anything missing in such a place. The craving for human sympathy is being satisfied.

Satan Juries Aug. 7th 1915



ON A MAIN ROAD TO THE FRONT.

The Pipers Play and Women Smile Through Tears.

There is at Southampton a handsome and wide road which, crossing a well-wooded park or common, runs on through the heart of the town. Along this road, since the fateful 4th of August last, have marched many divisions of our dear soldiers, going out to France or to the Dardanelles. Residents along the route have been awakened by the tramp of feet and have thrown their windows open to look out, awed and thrilled, and to will them victory as they passed. On the green and daisy-sprinkled verge of the common women and men have stood in the spring sunshine, gazing with pride and wistfulness at marching hosts of the men who knew how to die.

On winter mornings, with snow on the road and snow in the air, the Highlanders have swung along this wide highway with their bagpipes neighing Valkyrie songs of battle. Little children who ran to see the soldiers pass, as I ran to see the Crimean men in '54, will remember the sight when their own heads are grey, and will tell the young men and maidens yet unborn how they beheld with their own eyes the great British armies marching to fight in the great war. English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, and Canadian soldiers have passed this way.

MAGNIFICENT AND TERRIBLE.

Nearly a year ago came the first regiments of the Expeditionary Force, highly trained soldiers from the Aldershot command, laughing, cheering, singing "Tipperary." And all through the year at intervals others followed them, so that by night and by day, in the bright spring and the sultry summer weather, in the mellow autumn and in the bleak or rainy winter, the people of Southampton have been free to witness this moving fragment of the historic awakening of the British nation. A great privilege, a magnificent and terrible experience. "I have seen the regiments pass," a lady said to me, "until I cannot bear it any more. I have cried, and I have wished that I could cry myself to sleep, and sleep till the dreadful war is over." But then she added: "Of course that was cowardly. We must do what we can to help or cheer the men who camp near us, or march through on their way to the point of embarkation. However much it hurts we must do our poor little best."

Many of the Southampton women, having seen so many of our soldiers march bravely away, and having seen so many of them brought back wounded or lamed, feel like the one who spoke to me, and they have done and are doing all they can. One of their many helpful and wise works was the opening of the Avenue Hall as a recreation room for soldiers in camp and on the line of march. This hall is well placed, close to the main route, and not far from the camping ground on the common. Here the men may smoke, play billiards and other games, and, best of all, write letters. What this letter writing means will be apparent when I say that from this hall alone, since the outbreak of the war, over a hundred thousand soldiers' letters have been written.

Not long ago a Lancashire brigade was encamped on the common. Many of the men's wives came up to see them, and came up expecting to get back from Southampton to Lancashire in one day. These women were well taken care of, one wealthy lady throwing open her house to them. It was a kindly act. A few days since a friend told me he had a letter from the Dardanelles informing him that of one Lancashire regiment in the Gallipoli Peninsula only one officer and a hundred men remained in the firing line. So dearly were the glories of the Five Beaches paid for. Many of those who died in that heroic landing marched down this very Avenue-road, and many of them rested or took tea or wrote their letters in this unpretentious but hospitable hall.

The British soldier at the front has an insatiable appetite for writing paper and envelopes. A sergeant writes to his sister, "You may send me some writing blocks if you like, dear, for paper here is expensive and difficult to get." A young dragoon at the front whom I asked to let me know of anything he wanted answered, "What we most want is writing paper and envelopes. We should like also some tooth paste and a pair of nail scissors." The "we" is characteristic. At the front Tommy thinks and speaks for himself and chums.

"AND SO THEY RODE AWAY."

But the Southampton ladies do not stop inside their admirable institute in the Avenue-road. When they hear of troops marching through they bestir themselves to find refreshment for man and beast. A few days ago some cavalry marched along this historic road. The ladies prepared tea and coffee and bags of sandwiches. They arranged a line of tables some fifty yards apart under the trees and served the tired and hungry troopers as the various detachments arrived. The first party came in as early as half-past four in the morning, but the ladies were ready for them.

One of the ladies told me about this good work. "You should have seen the men's eyes as they rode past our stalls, wondering what it all meant and whether or no a halt would be called. Then when the order was given to halt and dismount they fell to without a sound, just as we should if we were tired and hungry and thirsty and a breakfast seemed to fall from the skies. When these rode off we got ready for the next. The last party rode up about nine o'clock. Some of them had been in the saddle since one in the morning, so you may guess they were ready. And we gave the mules and horses water, which they appreciated. The work was done by many hands and so was done quickly. Before we could realise that one party had arrived they had cheered and ridden away. One of the officers rode down the whole line and saluted all the helpers by way of thanks. You know, these soldiers don't realise that they are doing anything extraordinary. But every time one of them said 'Thank you' I had to say 'Thank you' in return, and I felt a great deal more than I said. One group of cyclists found time to serenade us. They sang a beautiful little part song, 'Farewell, Ladies,' but the order to mount broke off the second verse abruptly." The lady sighed. "And so," she said, "those brave men rode away."

THE BASHFUL KILTIE.

Some of the Gordon Highlanders had arrived the day I was there, and the ladies tried to engage one of them in conversation, but he was a bashful giant, and after a few short answers and as many uneasy looks he said he had some shopping to do and made his escape. One day, a lady told me, a couple of wounded soldiers came and looked at her over her garden hedge as she was tending her flowers. She spoke to them and found them rather shy, and, thinking they would get on better with a man, she sent her husband to talk with them. But her husband came back and said, "It is you they want to talk to. They have been half a year at the front and have hardly spoken to a woman since they left England." "Of course," said the lady, "I went to them, and very soon they were talking to me quite freely."

I asked the lady what they talked about, and she said, "Oh, they talked about their homes and their wives and children. They love to talk about home, the dears." While we were thus talking there came into the institute a remarkably handsome young fellow in the uniform of a Highlander. He was at once greeted by a lady who knew him, and with whom he turned to walk out of the hall. When he turned I saw that he had lost his right arm. He was one of the Canadian Highlanders, they told me, and is not yet eighteen years old. Somebody's darling, and peradventure the somebody will be glad to get him back, even at the cost of his good right arm.

The Weekly Dispatch.

*By Robert Blackford.
Aug. 8th 1915*

*In Squander Camps.
R. Blackford.*

HOUSEWIVES v. INCOMPETENTS.

There are still, I suppose, some misguided male persons of little faith who pretend that women ought not to have a vote. But I am one of those who look forward in the sure and certain hope of seeing our spending departments run by women. A woman of average intelligence and experience turns pale with indignant astonishment when she hears of good bread being thrown away by the hundreds of loaves.

The women who run the Avenue Hall refreshment department would have made those loaves into thousands of sandwiches for the marching troops. Put a live woman down in one of those squander camps where sides of bacon are thrown to the pigs and in a month's time there will not be enough waste fat to grease a pair of boots.

The Weekly Dispatch. 8/5/15

Brothers in Arms.

Mr. Geoffrey H. Hamilton, who has been gazetted to a second lieutenancy in the Hants R.G.A., is the fourth son of our late townsman, Mr. J. T. Hamilton, J.P., and is already on active service at the front in Princess Patricia's Canadian Battalion. It will be remembered that the third son of the late Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Frank C., who is Mr. W. H. Rowland's partner, holds a captaincy in the Hants R.G.A.



The Avenue Hall. August. 1915.

TOMMY'S THANKS.

SOUTHAMPTON THE BEST OF ALL.

The Mayor of Southampton (Alderman W. Bagshaw) has received the following letter from a soldier recently quartered in the town, who subscribes himself "One of them":—"I am one of the — draft about to depart for the front, and I cannot go away without thanking the public of Southampton for their kindness to us soldiers during our short stay here. Of all the places we have been in Southampton has been the best. The sociability of the people here has cheered us all up, and helped to send us out in that spirit of liveliness for which Tommies are well known. On behalf of all our draft let me thank both you and your citizens for their kindness to us—a kindness which will never be forgotten."

AN APPRECIATION.

To the Editor of the "Southern Daily Echo."

Sir,—A few nights ago we were sitting in our dugout on our return from the trenches, discussing some of the more interesting events of our training in "Old England." One which received considerably more comment than any other was that last kindly attention given to us by some of the ladies and gentlemen of your town. I refer to the distribution of refreshments in The Avenue as we were passing through on our way to the Docks. Perhaps at the time our gratitude was not very apparent, but I can assure you that after our tedious march the refreshments were more than appreciated.

We do not know who our benefactors were, but I am desired on behalf of many of the men of the 93rd (and I am sure the rest join us) to thank them through you for the kindly action which made yet another pleasant memory on the eve of our departure.

Trusting that I am not causing you any great inconvenience.

I remain, yours respectfully,

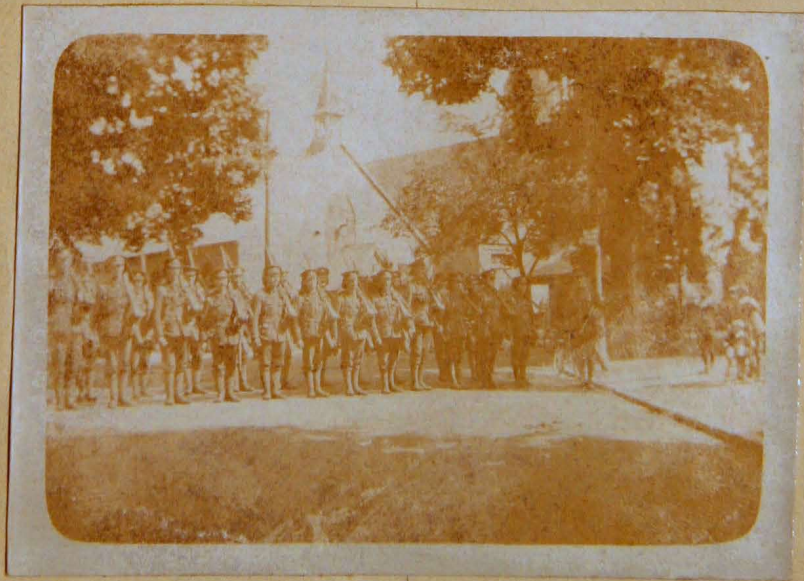
"A SAPPER."

Southern Echo. Aug. 21st

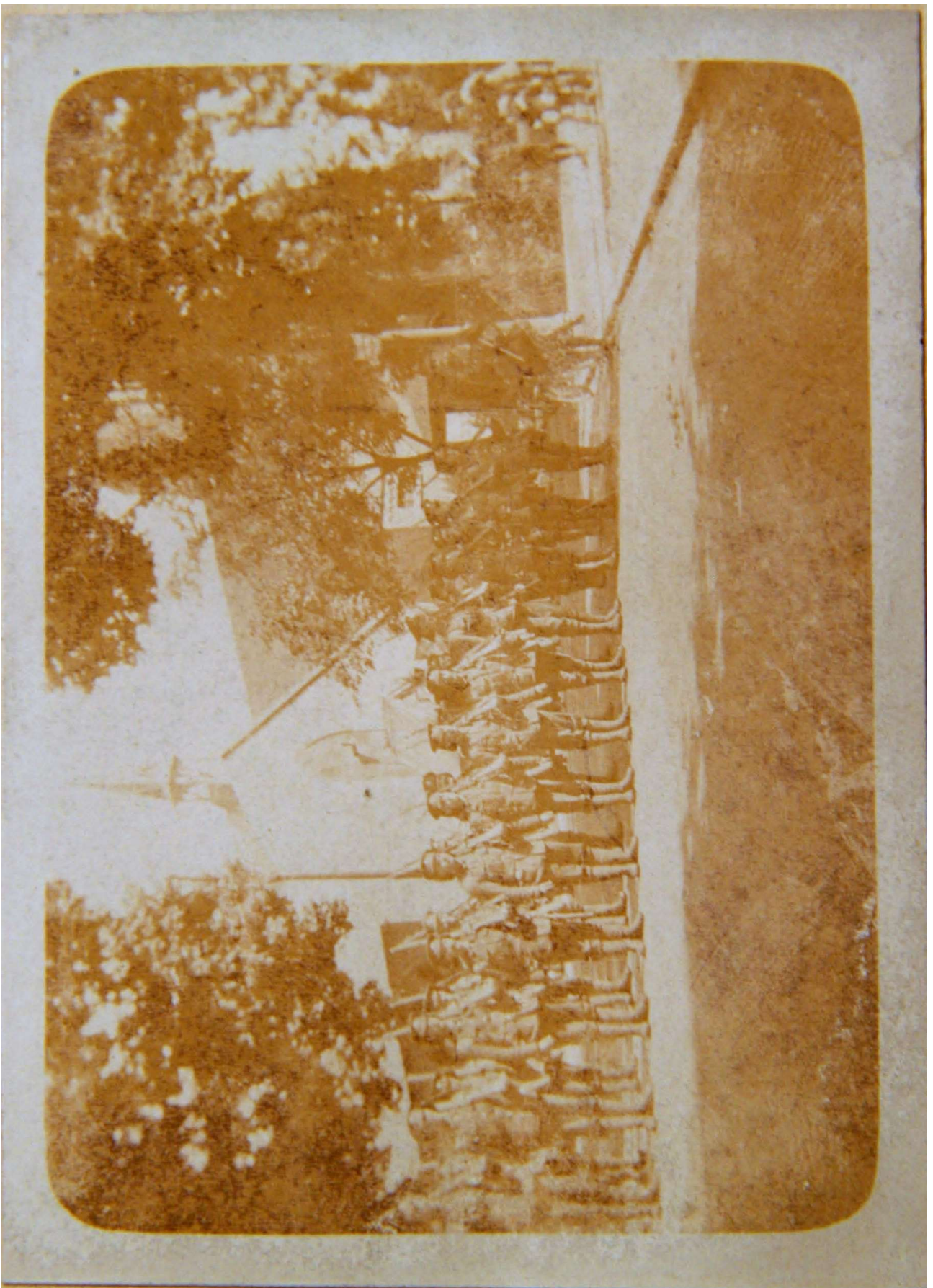
Southern Echo. Aug. 31st

1915.











The 1st Detachment Cavalry on their way to the Dock.

Aug. 17th 1915.

BEFRIENDING THE SOLDIERS.

Hospitable Work at Southampton.

Ever since last August, when the Expeditionary Force sailed, Avenue Congregational Church, Southampton, has been carrying on a useful work among the soldiers using the camp on the Common as a resting-place on their way to and from the front. A Soldiers' Home has been open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day, furnished with writing-tables, refreshments, games, books and papers, and facilities for washing, shaving and drying clothes. Shirts, socks, gloves, mufflers, sweets, cigarettes, &c., have been given in hundreds to the soldiers, and thousands of Testaments and Gospels have been distributed. Some 27,000 postage stamps were in the early days given free. They are now the only things charged for. Whole divisions of the Army marching from the country to the docks for embarkation have enjoyed the benefits connected with this camp work. In July the workers were engaged all night giving breakfasts to a division that had marched through the night. The tables were spread in the Avenue, and the men halted to drink tea and coffee, &c., and to receive paper bags of food. This work alone cost £78. Last week was one of the busiest the workers have had. Night after night the hall was crowded. During the week 6,454 letters were written and posted in the hall, and the men disposed of 250 gallons of bread, 7cwt. of cake, 125lb. of butter, and 60 gallons of milk. As many as 207 gallons of tea and coffee were drunk in one day, and 36 gallons of lemonade. The cost of all this was about £60. Since last August over £1,000 has been raised and spent, apart from the gifts of food, clothing, stationery, tobacco, &c., estimated at £800. Now for the first time the work is involving the church in debt, just at the moment when crowds of new troops are passing through, and when the work is most useful. The soldiers themselves are most grateful for what is done for them. Rev. H. T. Spencer, M.A., M.Sc. (52, Gordon-avenue, Southampton), and the treasurer, Mr. H. B. Lankester (Bassett Lodge, Bassett, Southampton), would be thankful to receive financial help towards this good work.

The Christian World.

Aug. 26th 1915.

THE SOLDIERS' HOME.

At our last Finance Committee, held a fortnight ago, it was reported that we had received £1,220 in cash since the outbreak of war, and had spent £1,132. Since then these figures have increased, especially the latter, for we have had many very busy days in September; in fact, the Hall was often so congested in the evening that it was difficult to do the work, even when as many as possible had been drafted into the Small Hall. We have had some very interesting gifts recently, amongst others an entire Sunday's offertory (more than £8) from St. Edmund's Roman Catholic Church; the harvest collection from Totton Congregational Church, £2 3s., and a quantity of vegetables. Then special and grateful mention must be made of the kindness of Mr. F. R. Benson, the great Shakespearean actor, who gave a lecture at the Theatre on Friday afternoon, October 1st, entitled "Shakespeare and the War, the Murderous Machiavel," dividing the proceeds between the Carlton Rest and Avenue Hall. Our share amounted to £6 5s.

A great feature lately has been the dispatch home of hundreds of parcels of recruits' clothing as the men of the navy battalions have donned their khaki. The number of letters posted in the Hall is well over 115,000; of course, many more have been written. And as there are always far more men in the Hall who are not writing than there are scribes, we can form some idea of the numbers of men who have used the Hall. Five thick folio volumes have been filled with the names and addresses of our visitors, but these are only a proportion of the total.

We continue to receive letters from the front expressing grateful recollections of the Hall. And, alas! we hear too often of some of our guests who will never return.

* * *

Agnes Chasman.

Oct. 1st 1915



Going up to the Rest Camp.
August. 1915.



How the German prisoners were marched along the streets of Southampton. They were the first of the captives in the great fight to be brought to England. Several bore traces of the severe combat.



More of the captives landing at Southampton. Pictures of the arrival appeared in the later editions of yesterday's Daily Sketch, the first paper to publish photographs of the latest German prisoners.

Prisoners taken in the British Advance in the West, ~~Sept 1915~~ Sept 1915.

Daily Sketch. Oct 1915.

Oct 1st
9. Eds.

Shakespeare and the War.

MR. F. R. BENSON LECTURES AT
SOUTHAMPTON.

There was a capital attendance at the Grand Theatre this afternoon, when Mr. F. R. Benson, who is appearing there in repertoire during the week, delivered a lecture on "Shakespeare and the War." Admission to the Theatre, kindly lent for the occasion by Mrs. Mouillot, the lessee, was by silver collection, and the entire proceeds were devoted to swell the funds of the Avenue and Carlton Sailors' and Soldiers' Rest Rooms, which have rendered such excellent service during the war.

The Rev. E. Neville Lovett, who presided, remarked that to associate the name of the ordinary man with Shakespeare was to make that man somewhat ridiculous, but to associate Mr. Benson with Shakespeare was merely to do Shakespeare honour. He was not a person who knew much about the actor's art, but he thought he knew a good man and good work when he saw them, and he sometimes knew, though not always, what it was that made for righteousness, and for these reasons he felt it a great honour to introduce Mr. Benson as a lecturer, because the latter required no introduction to any audience in England in his own particular line. There had been very few people who had led the English people as Shakespeare had done, and though he could only dimly guess what Mr. Benson would say on the subject of Shakespeare and the War, he was quite clear about this, that the man who was a leader in the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth was likely to have a good deal to say to them to-day, and he knew of no living man through whose mouth he could so well speak as that of Mr. Benson.

Mr. Benson, in the course of his lecture, said that in some sense he had tried to deserve the title of being one of Shakespeare's harbingers, and he would try to shortly explain what Shakespeare had to say in the day of our peril. Another excuse for addressing them was that his earliest recollections were with the streams of Hampshire, the Itchen and the Test, and one of his earliest recollections was that of being brought to see the Docks. What was the crisis that they had to face; what was the message and counsel that Shakespeare could give them? Shakespeare was a challenge to armed force, a trumpet note to people to care for those things that really mattered, and never passed away. Shakespeare was the greatest poet, because he was the greatest Statesman, and the greatest Statesman because he was the greatest poet. The greatest soldier was always the greatest gentleman. In Shakespeare's specious days the foundations were laid of the greatest Empire the world had ever known by such men as Drake and Grenville, Raleigh and Sir Philip Sidney. They could do well to study a page of German history when the dictum was at one time mostly borne out and fought for that the greatest privilege was the right to die for the Fatherland. Alas, that dictum had become blotted and blurred into the dogma of Imperial domination. Shakespeare saw the Machiavellism which brought Greece, Rome, and Babylon to doom, destroyed the power of the Papal States, wrecked Spain, and would wreck the German Empire—

the Machiavellian idea that might was right, and the end justified the means if that end was success. The final fate of Germany would be the fate of Richard III., a conscience-stricken caiff crowned with care." How the Oriental mind must be laughing at the boasted superiority of Empire which, after centuries of civilisation, could find no way of settling their differences except this disastrous war. "Kindness is even nobler than revenge." On that maxim the British Empire had been built up, and Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and all the corners of the world had rallied to the flag.

"Come the three corners of the world in arms, and we shall shock them; nought shall make us rue, if England to itself do rest but true." Tommy Atkins, the perfect gentleman and the peerless Knight, was finding a way out, and he did not think there would be any submerged ~~land~~ after this war. He believed that the slums would give way to the garden city, and that there would be equal opportunities for all.

On the motion of the Rev. H. T. Spencer, who gave some interesting figures relating to the work of the Avenue and Carlton Rest Rooms, a cordial vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. Benson.

THE SOLDIERS' HOME.

Another month has passed. We shall never forget it. Some of the days have been quiet enough, especially at the very end. But Thursday, October 7th, and Sunday-Wednesday, October 24th-27th! It was computed that there were over 2,000 men in the hall on each of those nights, except 27th. Not only the hall, but the small hall also was crowded with men.

We have had two excellent concerts for the soldiers during the month: one by the Class Teachers' Association on the 13th, the other by Madame Grace Hobbs and friends on the 27th. The Class Teachers gave, as usual, an admirable entertainment. Madame Hobbs' party included some of the best musicians in Southampton, and they gave a very fine concert under most trying conditions, the hall being so crowded. We offer them apologies for the conditions, and heartfelt gratitude for their splendid performance.

At the Finance Committee on October 22nd, it was stated that the income to date was £1,327 11s. 7d., and the expenditure £1,226 10s. 3d. The busy days since then will have reduced the balance. A donation of £9 1s. was reported from the County Bowling Club; £13 2s. 4d. from Above Bar Church, being a quarter of the proceeds of Prof. Firmin Swinnen's Organ Recitals; and £17 2s. 3d. from Mr. Withers' Recital (this last amount to be increased).

It is gratifying to know that the soldiers put £26 3s. 2d. in the voluntary collecting boxes in the Hall during September. On Sunday, October 24th, they gave more than £3, and on some of the other busy days 30s.

Nov. 1915.

The Avenue Chycho

THE SOLDIERS' HOME.

Our story repeats itself. That is to say, we have great rushes for a few days, taxing all our energies and resources to the full, then a brief lull, then crescendo, and so on. The men appear to be more and more grateful, if possible, and the workers are realising more than ever from the men's words and subsequent letters what a great value their work has for the men. The present method of bringing men to the Camp for a few days only in large numbers is bringing us into contact with far more men than in the old days when certain troops were resident near us for months. Of course, in the earliest days the men stayed for a very brief time; and we have never been without drafts passing through.

At the last Finance Meeting the Treasurer reported receipts amounting to £1,451 19s. 5d., and expenditure to £1,396 2s. Both items have grown considerably during the past fortnight. Mention should be made of the kindness of Mr. H. Laver, who helped us most generously during his stay in England. On his return to South Africa he collected £50 from his friends there and sent it to us. But for this help we should have been without money once or twice recently. A very acceptable gift of £12 8s. came from the Liberal Club, and we are deeply grateful to the Class Teachers' Association Concert Party. These friends have given eighty concerts to soldiers in halls, hospitals, etc. They offered us a concert on November 24th to raise funds for our work. They arranged and carried through a splendid programme, sold the tickets, crowded the Hall, and secured the handsome sum of £16 for our funds. The gentlemen of the party kindly turned the Hall out on the previous evening, arranging it as a Concert Hall, and reversed the process after the concert, preparing the Hall again for use by the soldiers next day. We have not space to print the excellent programme, increased by eight or ten encores, but we wish to thank most heartily those who served us so well:—Miss Mary Campbell, Miss May McLachlan, Miss Lawrie Vine, the Misses Weston, Miss L. Hallum, Messrs. Coar, Adcock, Norris, Stickland, Gosham, and F. R. Bassett; also Mr. R. H. Davis and his party of stewards.

THE SOLDIERS' HOME.

During three days in the first week of December, when the — Division was going through the town to embark, the opportunity was again taken to give refreshments to the troops passing the Hall. This act of farewell hospitality the men received with the greatest gratitude and appreciation. Many of the officers also most gladly availed themselves of the helpers' invitation. The refreshments consisted of a slice of bread and butter and a piece of cake packed in a paper bag, also coffee and tea. On two days the helpers worked in the pouring rain, and the liquid refreshments were kept hot in two boilers, installed outside the Hall doors, and constantly supplied from the kitchens. Many thousands of men left for the Docks cheered and invigorated by this practical help. During the whole of the week also the Hall was crowded to overflowing every evening.

The following items are typical of a six days' purchase of supplies this month:—67 gallons milk, 229 gallons bread, 560 pounds sugar, 1 ton 2 hundredweight cake (35,000 big slices), 252 pounds jam, 2 hundredweight butter. The cake and bread bill for one week amounted to £54, milk to £5 10s., and so on. The total amount received since August 9th, 1914, is £1,662, and heavy as this expense has been lately there is still a good working balance. This sum does not include the value of presents in kind, roughly estimated at a further £1,000. The Class Teachers' Concert mentioned last month as having produced £16 actually yielded £20; Mr. Laver's South African collection has been increased from £50 to £65; Miss Eathorne's dramatic recital added £31 4s. to the funds.

Other troops coming from a distance marched past on December 22nd, 23rd, and 24th. We were unable to supply those coming on the 22nd to any great extent, being taken by surprise; but very satisfactory provision was made on the 23rd.

A special tea and entertainment was provided on Christmas Day. Most of the 200 guests had been travelling all day, and had abandoned all hope of Christmas cheer; their delight and ours in entertaining them was all the greater. By the kindness of several friends sausage rolls, mince pies, oranges, crackers, sweets, and cigarettes *ad lib.* were added to the ordinary fare, and an excellent concert was given by Miss Forbes, Miss Clift, Miss W. King, Mrs. Eathorne, and Mr. Lankester, with Miss Aubrey, Miss F. King, and Mrs. Clift as accompanists.

Revenue Checkman
Dec. 1st 1915.

Revenue Checkman
Jan 2nd 1916.

Retrospect.

Local Happenings in Nineteen Fifteen.

July.

Towards the middle of the month there was a scene of great activity in connection with the Avenue Soldiers' Rest Hall. Helpers were busy from as early as 4.30 a.m., but it is possible that even that record has since been broken. The work there and at similar halls continues to receive the support of the public in a generous measure.

S. Times Jan. 12th 1916.

The following are typical of many written expressions of gratitude received during the month:—

* * * * *

"B.E.F., France.

"To Ladies of the Avenue Soldiers' Hall, Southampton.

"On behalf of the N.C.O.'s and men of No. 2 Platoon of the above battalion, I wish to convey our sincere thanks for your great kindness in giving us all coffee, etc., on our line of march to Southampton, 3rd inst., also for your good wishes.

"Wishing you all a happy Christmas and help in your good work,

"Yours sincerely,

"W. O. J * * * *

"2nd. Lt."

"To the supporters of Avenue Hall, Southampton, Soldiers' and Sailors' Recreation Room.

"Many happy years for the many happy hours I have spent at the Avenue.

"R.A.M.C. (T.)"

The following lines have been written by a wounded soldier, Lance-Corporal C. Kinglerlee (Mon.), and handed to a worker in the Hall:—

HARK TO YOUR COUNTRY CALLING.

Hark to your country calling;
Will you stand by and jeer?
Think of your comrades falling,
Fighting for all they hold dear.

What if our shores were invaded?
What if the foe were near?
Could you see women and children
Gazing with horror and fear?

Think of poor ruined Belgium,
Think also of struggling France.
Oh, won't you join in the fight, lads,
To make those Germans dance?

They have tried with their poisonous gases
To beat the Allies so brave,
But each of them is determined
To try their honour to save.

Then arise to your country's calling,
And answer that call with a will,
And prove to these murderous foemen
That England breeds heroes still.

*Avenue Free Churchman
Jan. 12th 1916*

Alderman in France.

Ex-Mayor's Exciting Experiences in Trenches.

The party were escorted by officers to the front trenches of two of the British divisions. "We were anxious to see all we could," said the ex-Mayor, "and I believe our eagerness was a source of anxiety to the officers who were responsible for us. The enemy was by no means idle, and shot and shell whizzed over our heads as we moved forward. We went as far as we could in our motors, and did the rest of the journey on foot. At times we had almost to crawl along. Scarcely had we left the motor when a shell exploded not far from the car, and two pieces of shrapnel were embedded in the upholstery at the rear of the car. There was keen competition among us for the possession of those pieces, and I have brought one of them, and the other has gone to Bristol. Yes, it was an exciting time, but it was worth all the trouble of wading in the mud. We saw some unforgettable things, which made a deep impression on us, and which, I am sure, will make us more eager than ever to do anything we can to help the brave fellows who are always in the zone of danger."

Local Kindnesses Recalled.

A somewhat singular feature of the visit was that the Alderman did not meet a single Southampton man. Of course, there are hundreds out there, but he did not happen to fall in with them. He made an effort to see Lieut. Blake-way, the son of a colleague on the Council, but without success. "But," added the ex-Mayor, "I met many men who have a vivid remembrance of Southampton, and of the kindness of the townfolk. I fell in with a lot of men who passed through here. Some of them told me that they marched from Winchester, and they will never forget the kindness of the people at the Avenue Hall, who turned out early in the morning with an abundant supply of tea, coffee and cakes. The men recalled that kindness with gratitude and spoke with genuine sincerity of the goodness of the workers there, and I was asked to let them know how much it was appreciated."

*Southampton Times
Jan. 29th 1916*

The following letters from some of our former guests are interesting :—

Mediterranean Expeditionary Force,
12th January, 1916.

Dear Sir,—I thought that possibly you might like to have a line to know that we are going on very well, and mostly are in good health.

We are still on the sea and passed land yesterday, after seeing nothing but open sea for over four days, but again we are out of sight of land; but not for long, we hope. The trouble is that I cannot tell you where we are. Nevertheless, we are safe and well, and in the keeping of our heavenly Father above.

I am writing on behalf of the Second Eastern General Hospital Draft from Brighton, and every one desires me to thank you and the kind lady helpers for the good time we had at the Avenue Hall. We trust that support may be given for you to continue with the work.

The food on board is grand, and I am glad to say we have comfortable beds, not the floor.

We have some chaplains on board, and services were held last Sunday, which we attended, and were greatly enjoyed.

The weather here is wonderfully warm, just like the middle of July or August, and now the sea is very calm, while the sunset every evening is a sight to see. I have never seen such a sight in England.

Kindest regards and best wishes from every one of the 2nd Eastern (Brighton) Boys to yourself and all the helpers of Avenue Hall from

Yours sincerely,
SAMUEL FORSHAW.

* * *

The other is from one of our Avenue soldier boys who was invalided home from the East. He says :—
"The morning I left M— to go aboard the B—, an R.A.M.C. unit came out to relieve the unit then there. They had been stationed at Southampton, and I told them I was a Southamptonian and asked if they knew the Avenue Hall. They said they did, and were very enthusiastic in its praise. That was between two and three thousand miles from England."

* * *

MALTA, January.

DEAR MR.—, This is just a letter from Malta to you from a grateful soldier, to show you that your efforts to make myself, as well as thousands of other men, happy and at home have been appreciated. I suppose you will be still as busy as ever, feeding and entertaining by the hundred, and I can tell you that you are doing a fine work at Southampton,

and as long as I live I will never forget the happy times I had there during my three weeks' stay at the camp. If you have not had a letter from anyone else, I might as well tell you that it took ten days to get here, and the weather was rough, rougher even in the Mediterranean than in the Bay of Biscay, and somehow or other the ship had been unevenly loaded, for she leaned to port side the whole of the voyage. The last two nights we were on board we had a concert, the first being arranged by the chaplain on board, the artists being supplied by the privates, and the second one by the staff. They were two very pleasant evenings, and were much enjoyed by all. Malta can be styled as one vast hospital, for the Island is full of them, and the harbour is seldom without a hospital ship in it. The hospitals here are mostly under canvas the whole year round on account of it being so warm, and each hospital specialises for its own disease. The hospital I am in specialises for a skin disease known as "Scabies," which is very infectious. There are as many, if not more, Indians here than Englishmen, and for anybody like myself, who has never come into contact with them before, they are quite an interesting study. They do all their own cooking, etc., and observe their religious customs and superstitions with great zeal. For instance, they take great care that as you walk past them your shadow does not cross over their food as it is being cooked. And curious dishes they make, too. One Indian gave me a little taste of curry (I think it was), and laughed as he saw the effect it had on me, for it nearly burnt my tongue off; then he put a big piece in his own mouth and said, "Sugar to me." I could go on relating little incidents that have happened, and are happening every day, but time does not permit, as I have such a lot to write to, but I will write again in the near future.

I remain,

Sincerely yours,
E. B. D.

* * *

The Avenue Sea Churchmen

Jan. 1st



Photo taken on the Sunday
referred to in letter below.
The son is the soldier on
the right.

Workers have received the following amongst other interesting letters:—

“ Birmingham, 1916.

“ DEAR MADAM,

“ When my son reached Southampton (after serving in the trenches for twelve months) on Sunday last, he was penniless and had no friends, and has since told me of the welcome and assistance he received at the hands of yourself and your friends. His appreciation of your kindness is beyond his power to express, and I wish to thank you again on his behalf, as well as for myself, for the grand work you are doing for our gallant boys. He also mentioned the most helpful service he attended at the chapel in the evening, and specially mentioned the solo “ O for the wings of a dove,” which will live in his memory for a long time.

“ Presuming that your work is voluntary, I shall be obliged if you will accept the enclosed money order for 10s. as a slight acknowledgment of your valuable work.

“ Yours faithfully,

“ H. A. S.”

“ Suez, Egypt,
“ January, 1916.

“ DEAR MISS ^E Hazell

“ In keeping with my promise I beg to offer a brief account of my experiences since I left Southampton.”

After a long and interesting account of the voyage to the East the writer says:

“ After three days we received orders to pack up in readiness for Cape Hellas for evacuation purposes. Consequently we set sail at 4 p.m. on the 25th December for Hellas.

“ The bitter cold, the constant whirr of bullets, and the explosions of trench bombs kept us very much awake. Sometimes we wondered whether the night was going to last for the duration of the war. The only star of hope lay in the thought of evacuation. We were as those who wait for the morning light and yet not knowing what the day would mean. At last it came, and opened quietly (for war), and we felt a wee bit more comfortable when the heat of the sun began to be felt. However, about eleven o'clock the big guns on both sides began to be very lively, occasional sandbags came tumbling over the parapet, and scores of pieces of shrapnel and shells came into the trench. Do as we would we could not bring ourselves to regard them with contempt, as did the famous Inniskillings who defended the part of the line we were responsible for. I'm afraid we often caused them no little amusement.

“ Dinner was out of the question. It was only about four in the afternoon that food, or rather the