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# St. Dunstan's



(Photo, Brunell)

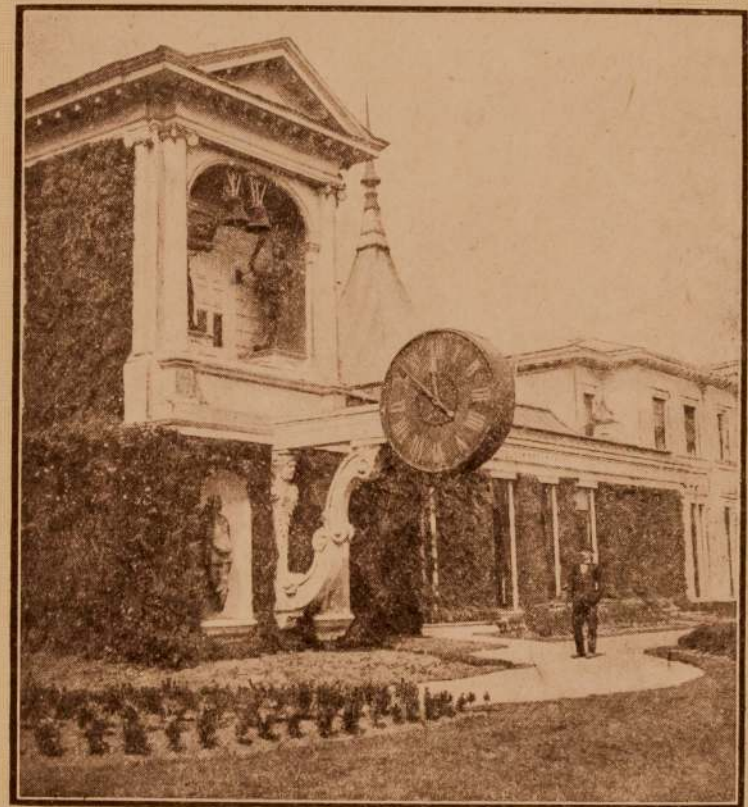
# Revue.



No. 1.

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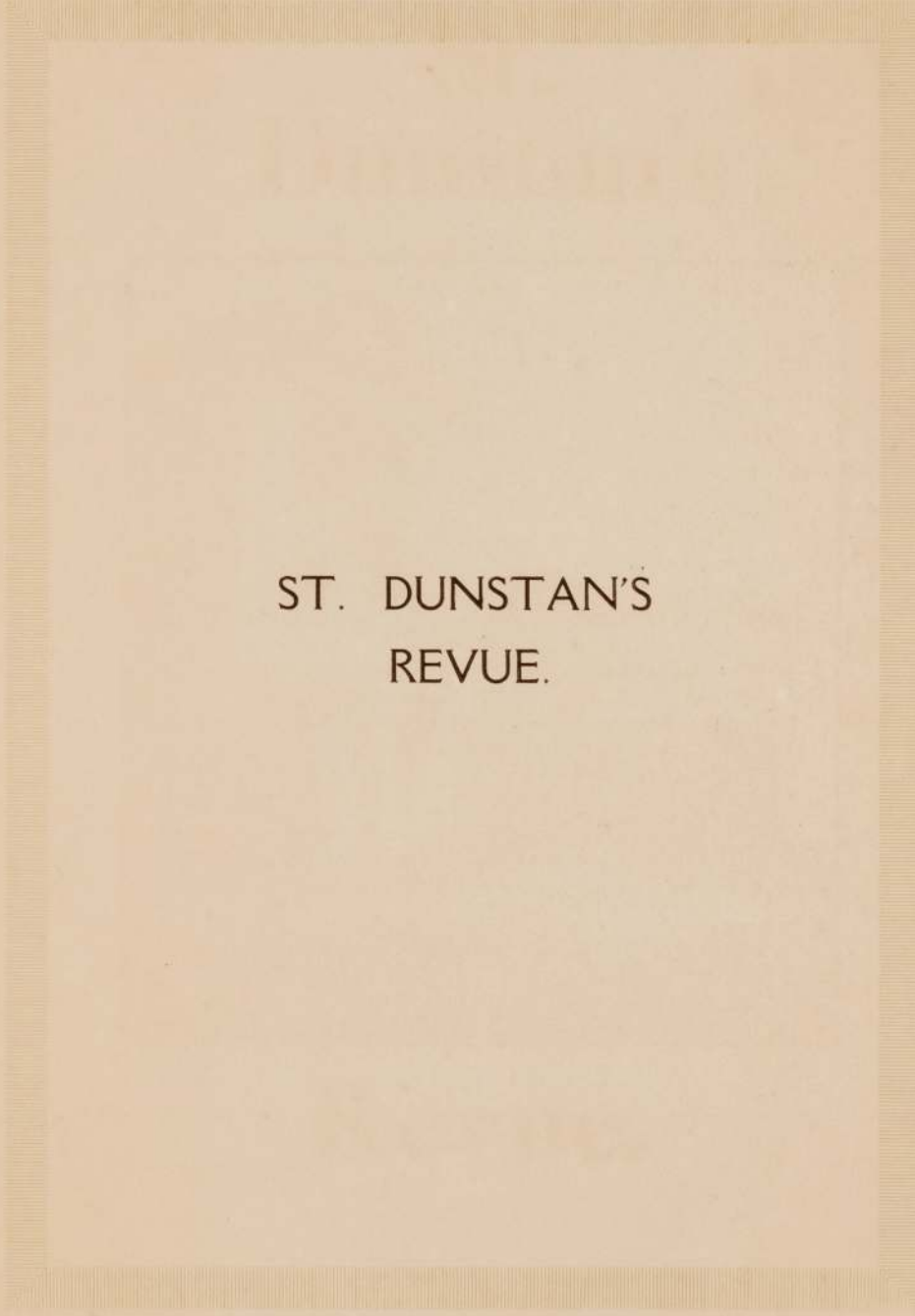
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# ST. DUNSTAN'S ... REVUE ...

No. 1.

JULY 1915.

15. NET.

## Editorial.



T. DUNSTAN'S as you all know is a hostel for blinded soldiers and sailors. What then could be more desirable than a magazine for their benefit which is useless to them? Nobody wants it, and so I consider it my duty to bring one out.

It is not an advertisement of cheap wit, nor is it meant to make you laugh at the expense of others. It merely chronicles a few of the actual happenings at St. Dunstan's. You will, I am sure, agree with me in saying that when one sees such a large number and such a quaint assortment of people as one does here, their doings and sayings should not be allowed to sink unrecorded into utter oblivion.

It is hoped that none of our articles will be considered impertinent or personal, but everyone here is so jolly and full of fun that they cannot help being amused by all who come and go, and even those who stay.

It will probably be remarked "Why do they not bring out their magazine in Braille, so that the officers and men can read it?" That is what we also say, and so, dear reader, if you happen to know Braille we shall be more than grateful to you if you will carry out your own suggestion.

We should also much appreciate any articles for our next issue, and we hope—there being no tax on the hope—to answer all letters and inquiries, which may be addressed to "The Editor, 12, Kensington Gate, W."

## Rowing on the Lake.

THE one thing that has popularised rowing on the lake in the afternoon is the lady coxswain. She is mostly pretty (there are, of course, exceptions), and she is not opposed to a little mild flirtation. She has even been known, when the weather is hot to seclude her oarsman and boat under the leafy boughs that overhang the water, and not to emerge until the time for returning to the quay arrives. At such moments she is lucky if she escapes a growl from the cross-grained individual who makes it his task to spoil the innocent pleasures of the boaters as much as is in his power. Some lady coxswains have been suspected of smoking cigarettes when on duty; but this is the rule rather than the exception.

The male coxswain has not proved a success. He wants a man to scull when he desires to slack, and he is unreasonably keen on style, feathering, etc., when the operator prefers the windmill stroke and a pleasant chat upon his own prowess. Rowing would have died out long ago at St. Dunstan's if it had not been for the feminine element. On occasions there has been an unfortunate shortage of the lady cox, and it has then become the painful duty of the before-mentioned C.G.I. to accost likely-looking young females and solicit their help. This has sometimes proved

successful, but he has more than once been pertly requested to "mind his business."

On the other hand, certain persevering ladies have had to be repulsed, not always with the success which is so continuous in the official reports from the trophies. One charming lady who confesses to seventeen stone is most pertinacious, and as she insists upon a light oarsman to balance matters, much adverse criticism—not always coherent—is bestowed upon her. A few ladies are a trifle too energetic with the ropes, pulling either or both of them with a suddenness and determination that brings the boat's nose into undesirable places. Others indulge in a fire of questions upon the unlucky youths they are steering, which it is to be feared are not always answered with that veracity which usually distinguishes the wounded soldier.

Elderly ladies are the kindest in spirit, but the most unpopular with the boating men, and it becomes the unpleasant task of the C.G.I. to shelve them with a determination which, however, often pales before their superior firmness and grit. Some of the rowers take to their beds in order to escape these benevolent persecutions. Efforts to upset the boats when these ladies succeed in boarding them have hitherto been frustrated; but hope is not yet dead.

The C.G.I. in one of his more uninspired moments, hit upon the uncomfortable idea of rowing at six o'clock in the morning. This was much discouraged by men of St. Dunstan's at first, and it was only kept going by the institution of an early cup of tea, and by one or two beauteous damsels who attached themselves to certain rowers with what results it yet remains to be seen. Competition for the notice of these charmers brings many men from their beds and much, but unvaried comment is indulged in by the unsuccessful. There are several keen sportsmen who turn up in the morning, no matter the weather; but there are few who are only persuaded into regularity by what is not far removed from brute force.

Coxswains (female) are in much demand in the morning. They should be young, good-looking, easily pleased and above all early risers. Without the latter quality, the other points are useless. There is no restriction as to weight, nor is too much self-restraint expected of them, and knowledge of steering may be dispensed with altogether. Indeed, the lady-cox who bothers herself about the technicalities of the tiller is—bless her heart!—a very rare bird.

The sliding seat is much affected by the more adventurous scullers, but they are used independently of the sculls, and it is the boast of some that they can slip up and down twice to one stroke. At present everyone is keen on the coming races, and each is so good

that it is difficult to select. Indeed, it is suspected that the so-far non-selected are of the opinion that the worst have been chosen. If any races are lost, Heaven help the C.G.I. for he will find short shrift at St. Dunstan's.

In conclusion, it is only necessary to add that there is nothing more to be said; and many an essay ends on a less decided note. A word by way of post-script may be devoted to Mr. Johnson, Bob and Jack, who lend and prepare the boats. All honour is due to them for their ability in furnishing sculls and oars that are neither too long or too short for their boats. They have raised this to a fine art; they do it with a cheerfulness that cannot be too highly commended.

Motto for St. Dunstan's Rowing Men: Keep Fit, Get Fitter, and Row without Rows.

○ ○ ○

You never win unless you risk; and the more you risk the more you win.

○ ○ ○

Love is blind and unwise—or it wouldn't be love.

○ ○ ○

When you cannot do your own job, interfere with somebody else's.

○ ○ ○

Scandal comes out with tea as sure as rash with measles.

## To those with Secretarial Aspirations.

With apologies to Rudyard Kipling.

(AFTER "IF.")

If you can turn up early and open letters by the score,  
And take from each a cheque or note for twenty pounds or more,  
If you can enter every penny in a book,  
And never on the money ever dare to cast a look  
Of avarice or desire—

If you can only argue with a man about his pension,  
Then persuade him black is white, and so relieve the tension  
Of his mind about his pay—

If you can deal with people who indulge in workshop wit,  
And never by the sarcasm of such be badly hit,  
And oft be called a "liar"—

If you can mix with Royalty, nor lose the common touch,  
Yet fix up freaks from functions at Muswell Hill and such,  
About the opening of a Show—

If you can keep your temper when everybody raves  
About your room for "boodle," and you wish them in their graves,  
If you can pay out money from early morn till dewy eve,  
Then strike a happy balance without a shilling up your sleeve,

If you can fill each unforgiving sovereign  
With five-and-twenty "bobs," and find them in  
The cash box—

Yours is the Job, and everything that's in it,  
And what is more, my son—You'll be a "Bally Marvel."

"PETTY-CASH."

o o o

## Selina Sings to the Soldiers.

SOME people, when they are asked to sing, have never brought their music. But that was not Selina's way. She was not that kind of young woman. She left to others the excuse that their music had been left at home and that all the songs their hostess

proffers them in exchange are in the wrong key. When somebody or other suggested a "little music," Selina, metaphorically speaking, took a header for the piano. It was never necessary to ask her twice. As a matter of fact, nobody had ever been known to

ask her to sing twice who had ever heard her sing once. By the time the war broke out those of Selina's friends who openly said they loved singing were few and far between.

Then an epidemic of ultimatums broke out in central Europe. England caught the infection and Selina at last got her chance. She began singing to soldiers—anywhere, everywhere—in Y.M.C.A. huts, in hospitals, at tea-parties, wherever a poor wounded Tommy had the chance of getting better. She called it "doing her bit"—though, as one Tommy asserted, after she had sung, that it was the hardest bit to bear which he had ever done—and that was seven days without the option of a fine, to be exact.

St. Dunstan's was her first victim. Not only did she burn to do all she could to help this splendid work, but she was DETERMINED to do it. Nothing would put her off—not even the boy scouts at the door. So one evening towards supper-time she fell upon her prey. Tom, who can see a little, described her to Billy, and Billy, when he heard it, felt for the first time thankful that he could not see. James informed Charlie that, by the look of Selina, he thought she must be "a comic." That is the reason why Charlie, for the first time within living memory, thought music might possibly be more amusing than making mats. So he picked out the one sofa which hasn't a hard surprise in the middle of it, and lit his pipe.

Thus by small acts is history sometimes made. When Miss Hodge, who sat beside him, had sufficiently recovered consciousness after having swallowed one whiff, she began to think of inventing a respirator. Charlie's pipe is supposed by military authorities to be the direct cause of the Hun's accusation that the British were using asphyxiating gases.

Then Selina began to be pleasing. She called Freddie "her dear brave boy"; she suggested that Billy should row her about for hours and hours on the Serpentine; she invited Charlie to tea and cakes at the Express Dairy Company; and she patted Jack's hand and asked him so many questions that "auld Ireland" put her name down on the list of female visitors whom he is convinced are German spies. But Selina had no idea of this. She belonged to that large army of ladies who feel they are being very understanding and sympathetic when they speak in a funereal whisper and ask innumerable questions.

Then she began to sing, and, being determined to cheer everybody up, had selected Tosti's "Good-bye."

At the end of the first verse, Jerry suddenly remembered having seen "wee nut" in the corner of his locker. So HE went away. Then Jack decided that he could best express his inner feelings by going to hammer a heel on a boot. So he, too, departed. Before the end of the second verse, Alec,

who, since he has learnt massage, won't look at a word of less than fourteen syllables, whispered to Archie in a stage whisper that he thought her "Levati Seepuli anguli" must be out of order. He would have elaborated this idea further only the classical word for windpipe dislocated his jaw. Archie giggled so that he upset the equilibrium of Majuba, who counter attacked with his elbow. They finished their battle outside. Under cover of Selina's struggle with the final high notes lots of others were seen to leave the lounge.

However, when the song did at last come to an end there was some ecstatic clapping on the part of the sisters and nurses and the "walkers" who, being there, could not very well get out. Everybody pretended to love Selina's singing, except those for whom she sang. They—poor fellows!—thought they had already been through enough out in Flanders. Consequently, when Selina insisted upon "obliging again,"—this time choosing that fearsome ballad of ten years ago, "If Thou Wert Blind"—there were only a few of the new nurses who hav'nt been at St. Dunstan's long enough to remain unmoved and critical before a perfect galaxy of expensive talent—Billy, who is accustomed to the noise of a dockyard—Mr. Christian, but a man who thinks one hair looks like two dozen is never faint-hearted—Charlie and Charlie's pipe. But Selina did not observe this. She

was no Margaret Cooper. She could not play her own accompaniments, sing and show her teeth all at the same time. Her eyes were glued to the page. But she took the silence of the lounge for appreciation and she doubly underlined the song's bathos. Now nobody in the whole of Balham can make "Thee" and "Me" rhyme with a more heart-rending effect than Selina. She literally wallows in it. That evening at St. Dunstan's she made them sound like the long lane which has no turning. She had got about half a mile along "Thee-e-e-e-e"—when, suddenly, a voice from the sofa cried: "What I should like now would be a sup of BEER!"

The words fell upon Selina's passionate outburst like a cold poultice upon a fevered brow. She never got to the end of her song. The last chord was never struck. From the slippery piano stool she arose like the matron about to say prayers. Her hat was awry, but her dignity was quite straight, thank you.

Miss Morris became suddenly inspired. "We have SO ENJOYED IT," she cried with her most charming Tuesday-afternoon-visitor-smile. Then, suddenly, the emptiness of the lounge seemed to chill even her amiability. "Don't be surprised at the men having disappeared," she murmured, "I—I"—then in desperation—"I think they must have heard Miss Coke tell someone to—to—'come and have his eyes done.'"

It's extraordinary how deaf they are to that appeal, and how easily they manage to hear the dinner bell."

Yet, even then, Selina was not

quite calm. She is now wallowing in that tearful, but happy state, known as "feeling hurt." It makes her complexion even muddier than ever.

o o o

## "Ships that Pass in the Night."

(With apologies to the Officers.)

**A**FTER having attended a séance in the West-end, I headed for Regent's Park, as being one of the coolest places I could think of, the time being 8.30 on a hot summer's evening.

Drifting idly across the roofs of Bedford College, I suddenly realised that near at hand was St. Dunstan's, one of the few sensations of London that I had not yet experienced. The force of this idea carried me straight and with great violence against a certain spike somewhere on the roof of that building (really I think they ought to be more careful, and at St. Dunstan's, of all places).

I entered the hall from the garden side, and came straight upon an excited group of mortals gesticulating round the front door to something that was half hidden in a purring taxi-cab.

They seemed rather unstrung, but after the heat and burden of their day, as I afterwards heard of it, I was not surprised.

"Goodbye—goodbye, don't forget about Thursday," shouted one.

"Oh, shut up!" said another, "it's my turn now."

"Look here, Araminta, do you really mean it about to-morrow night? Oh, well, if you don't want to answer, don't!"

At this juncture, a taller mortal elbowed his way to the window of the taxi and said politely, "Where shall I tell the man to go to?" A small and fluffy head appeared, and the owner told her destination to him. He promptly passed it on to the chauffeur, and as the cab started, he backed into yet another of the crowd, who remarked, without anger, "That was my foot, and I haven't said good-bye yet; however —"

Turning round to find some explanation of this strange scene, I found at my elbow the guardian spirit of the house, who remarked genially—"You here! Well, I never! We've never met since—All right then, we won't mention that! Shall I show you round? I never thought in the old days that I should come to this! But there, I'm getting rather fond

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of them all. Come along into the sitting-room, and I'll introduce you. Don't knock, it's not done here, except on guest-nights. Now that's Marmaduke in the best chair," pointing to the gentleman with the appointment for Thursday—"And the one dispensing drinks is the Ambassador. He takes these little duties on his shoulders and really overworks himself; Why, only last week we had to pack him off to Scarborough, as he got into such a state. He ran half the house himself!"

"That's the man of truth on the sofa! He's a bit depressed just now—as the lady has departed—but he'll be sending for reinforcements shortly, you'll see."

Just then the telephone bell went—"That's for Solomon," said my guide; "He's been on the fidget all the evening." Solomon took up the receiver.

"Is that you, Copeaux? No, it's all right—yes, yes, she has! No good at all! No, of course not, how can you? Yes—they're all here—all right, to-morrow morning, then. Goodbye!"

With a vicious jerk, Marmaduke shifted his foot from the mantle-piece on to the back of a small dog, who protested loudly.

"That poor little wretch might be taken out for a walk, he gets a thin time of it here" said the Ambassador. "Right, let's send for one of the C.F.'s," said the Man of Truth, promptly.

"C.F." I muttered to my companion.—"Chosen Few," he explained—"very few—and

carefully chosen. Come on, we'll go and help fetch them."

The Man at the Door was quickly despatched to the abode of the C.F.'s.

We arrived at the portal, and while the man knocked, my companion entered. I hesitated, still having a remembrance of my earthly days, and being a modest man I preferred to wait until somebody answered.

There was a scuffle inside, and a despairing cry of "Don't come in! What do you want?"—"The Elite demand the presence of some person or persons sufficiently disinterested to sacrifice themselves upon the Altars of Patriotism, and that quickly." Having dropped this bomb, the Man returned to his place of waiting. Taking my courage in both hands, I entered the room. Ah, me! There are some compensations for being a spirit—but I digress.

My friend and I comfortably ensconced ourselves behind a huge pile of freshly washed male attire, which was awaiting the advent of new buttons, and waited for the worst. It came!

"There are the Elite at it again!" said one C.F. "Well I suppose someone must go down, though I'm sure I don't want to!" Cries of "We don't think!"—"And in your off-duty time, too!" "Well, anyway, we had better decide. Who was it last night, 'cause you needn't go again." "You're always amusing at this time of night, Chloe, so up you get, and don't stop to argue."

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"Someone else must go, too, then!" said Chloe: "we always hunt in couples. Come on, Phyllis, you look half dead."

"Bags I the Man of Truth, then!" cries Phyllis. "I want to finish a dispute I'm having with him about the right way to run this establishment. He's got such an inadequate point of view."

"All right, then, I'll take on the other two," agreed Chloe. "I know the Ambassador is going to put in an hour of work before he turns in."

"Well, good-night, everybody, take a good night's rest while

you've got the chance," and the two C.F.'s left the room together.

"Well, thank goodness, I'm going on my holidays soon," said Phyllis, as they went downstairs, "though I should simply hate it if I thought I wasn't coming back again."

"Yes," said Phyllis, "they're rather dears, here we are! Now for it!" And the two C.F.'s opened the sitting-room door, which closed behind them.

"Shall we follow them?" I asked. "No, I think not," said the guardian spirit. "It's all right now, and I'll take you down to the gate."

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## Visitors' Day.

**W**ALKING into the hall at St. Dunstan's on a Tuesday afternoon about half past two, one finds four or five V.A.D.'s waiting to receive instructions from the Matron as to the procedure for the afternoon. The attack is commencing; a corpulent old lady is assisted from her car by the porter and two boy scouts, whilst two cars, a motor-bus, and four taxis, full of visitors, are waiting.

The Matron advances. After saying the usual thing, she turns to hand the visitor on to one of the V.A.D.'s, all of whom have vanished into thin air. Meanwhile, three equally corpulent, and equally old, ladies are shown in,

and the Matron, having finally collected a V.A.D., sends the party off.

Corpulent Old Ladies 1, 2, 3 and 4 (afterwards known as the C.O.L.'s), chorusing: "What a charming garden," immediately rush for the terrace, but are promptly pulled back by their guide, who asks them to come into the dining room first.

C.O.L. 2 breaks loose, and diving into the lower ward, is horrified at the language hurled at her by a man who is changing his clothes there. She is re-collected, and the party once more proceeds. The V.A.D. points out the mystery of the carpet pathways, and the following conversation ensues—



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V.A.D.: "This is the men's dining room."

C.O.L. (4): "Do the men have their meals here?"

V.A.D. (in weary voice) "Yes. It is rather darkened by the new building outside, but we have been obliged to enlarge the room, as the tables are full up already."

C.O.L. (1): "Hav'nt you been building on the outside?"

V.A.D. (snappily): "That is the building I am referring to."

C.O.L. (1): "Do the officers have their meals here?"

V.A.D.: "No. This is the men's dining room. Shall we go through to the lounge now? By the way, I hope you won't mind not talking to the men (it interrupts their work so.)"

Chorus: "Oh, of course not!"

The cortège proceeds.

C.O.L. (1) sees a Braille lesson proceeding on her immediate left, and the temptation is too great. In spite of a large notice requesting visitors not to talk to the workers, she goes up to the table and says: "Do you find it very difficult?" The only reply she can get is, "Who's tha'?" and promptly inquires if the speaker is a Belgian, and on being told that he is Scotch, replies, "Of course, I should have known by your accent," and the poor man goes through the following cross-examination.

C.O.L.: "You have got a lovely place here, hav'nt you?"

"Its all richt, but who's tha'?"

C.O.L.: "My poor fellow, where were you hit?"

"Who's poor?"

C.O.L.: "Are you quite blind?"

"Not much! I'm deaf the noo!" and proceeds with his lessons.

The guide collects the wanderer, and shepherds her flock out on to the terrace.

On catching sight of two men sitting at a green baize table, doing Braille, says "I wonder if that is one of the officers," and dashes up to him, asking, "Were you wounded at the front?" "No, in the eyes."

Complete silence, broken only by a curious noise from the other man, she tries again, and says, "Would you like to come out to tea with us? My daughter would so like to meet you. You will find her so interested in all your work." "Thanks awfully, I should love to come, but I am absolutely full up at present. Will you ask me later on?"

C.O.L.: "Well, we must be going, I hope we hav'nt disturbed your work?" "Oh, not all."

The V.A.D. then proceeds with her covey to the workshops.

The first exhibit is a man making a chicken coop.

C.O.L. (2) at once asks if the men are allowed to keep dogs, but learns that the article is destined for the poultry farm.

They then cross over to the boot repairers' bench, where two or three men are hard at work.

Here they are told that the men do most of the repairs of the household, and they offer to send a consignment of old boots collected from their friends, for the men to experiment on. The Honorary Superintendent mean-

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while says to the V.A.D., in a distinctly audible whisper, "For goodness sake, sell some of these photos if you can. We are only charging 6d. now, to get rid of them"; but the old ladies decline to be enticed, saying that it would remind them too much, and they could not (sniff).

The bargain having failed, they are led by the H.S. to the basket makers' table.

C.O.L. (gazing at one of the workers), "Isn't it tragic?"

H.S.: "Oh, no, he doesn't always work as badly as that."

C.O.L. (Who is something of a sportswoman, follows the lead). "Can I buy a basket?" "Oh certainly, may I have your address? Mrs. who? Oh, yes, two ff's. That will be 5s. Thank you very much.

No, I am afraid you can't take the basket, but I will send you a copy as soon as it is made. Here is your 1s. change. You gave me 6s. Oh, all right, thank you, you keep that for yourself." (Confusion of H.S.) The V.A.D. skilfully steers them outside on to the terrace, and breathes once more. She then takes them round to the front of the house, and after politely telling them the nearest way to Baker Street, leaves them, and returns to the hall to collect another party.

You have only been introduced to four of our visitors, but imagine to yourself half London, and most of the suburbs, all doing the same thing on the same afternoon, and you will have some idea of the amusement to be had out of Visiting day at St. Dunstan's.

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She arrives at the door, and is met by a scout.

"Mr. Pearson? No, I'm afraid he is out,"

She mutters, and stamping with vigour and force

Says "the secretary, I'll see him, he's in, of course,"

"He's engaged at the moment, madam, I fear,"

And stamping again, she mutters, "Oh dear!

Well, if you can't find them, the Matron I'll see."

She is told that the matron is having her tea.

She turns very red, and utters a curse,

Saying "Boy run away, and fetch me a nurse."

"No mam, I fear that *she* is not free."

"Well, who on earth is there that I can see?"

You won't admit me to C.A.P.,

I can't see the secretaries, though there are three,

I am told the matron is having her tea.

And you won't even fetch me a V.A.D.

This is very annoying, you must agree."

But the scout, neither smiling, nor looking away,

Says, "Madam, next Tuesday is Visiting Day."

## An Interview.

"HULLO! Yes, this is 1475 Mayfair. The Secretary? Well, I'm the Secretary. What's that, you want to interview me?"

"Oh! well, aw, say 11.30 at St. Dunstan's."

"No, no, St. Dunstan's, St. Dunstan's. I said S-A-I-N-T Dunstan's, Regent's Park. Yes, that's it."

"Ask for Mr. Fishe—Fishe with the final E."

"Ah, here we are, Mr. Fishe with the final E. I just want to ask you about—"

"Well, aw—as a matter of fact,—I mean, aw—"

"Just so, just so. But I was about to say that I wish to ask you to tell me—"

[Oh!! my word, money again. How can I keep my petty cash straight if you will keep asking for 2½d. every day? There you are, but don't ask again to-morrow, because if you do I—].

"Really Mr. Fishe—with the final E—I am so sorry to occupy the time of a busy man to this extent, but I merely wish to ask you to inform me—"

[Hullo, hullo! No, no, I'm not. I'm the Secretary of St.— Oh, drat that telephone boy, he'll drive me mad].

"Now, Mr. Typesetter, if I can get a minute's peace I am at your service. I was saying that, aw, that I mean, you see, aw, as a matter of fact—"

[Now, look here, Mr. Doorum, if you will continue to interrupt me twice a week for 6d. each time, how in the world do you expect the petty ca—].

[Oh, dear, oh, dear, how much did you say Miss V. A. D.? Oh, this is awful. I shall go mad. The strain is too great. I really think I shall have to resign my position].

"Again, sir, I turn to you. You see how busy I am. I was just telling you, aw—"

[Oh, hang that girl. She's taken away that beastly book again, and I wanted to see what was the total of 3½d. and 1¼d.]

"I really am sorry, Mr. Fishe with the final E, to be here when I see that every moment of your valuable time is given up to unimportant matters, but I only want you to inform me—"

"Pardon me, one moment, Mr. Typesetter."

[What's that, Miss V. A. D.? Shall I be in to dinner, did you say? Well, aw, as a matter of fact I was going—you see—aw, what I mean is—aw—].

Thank you, Mr. Fishe, I quite understand].

"These interruptions, Mr. Typesetter, are most annoying. I was telling you that, aw—"

[Oh, lor, here's Miss Jacobs now. I'm fed up with the whole thing. I shall put a bullet through my—].

[Now, Scout, what do you want? No, I can't, but I will give you a stamp, if you like].

"Don't you agree with me, Mr. Typesetter, that these interruptions are—aw—overpowering? 2½d., 3½d., 6d., 1¼d., and 1d. stamp. How in the world am I to keep things straight? You see I don't even get an opportunity—aw—to answer your first question."

"Quite so, Mr. Fishe with the final E, but do you realize that I

have not yet finished my question? I said on the 'phone that I wanted to interview the Secretary of Pearson's Fresh Air Fund, and I was trying to ask you where he is to be found."

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A prize of £1 1s. will be given for the best article on "Friendship" received on or before the 14th August.

The article should not be more than 1,000 words in length and should be sent in under a pseudonym.

All communications should be addressed to The Editor, "St. Dunstan's Magazine," 12, Kensington Gate, W., whose decision in all cases will be considered as final.

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## The V.A.D.'s:

I SHOULD explain, in case you happen to have seen the ladies in question, that V.A.D. stands neither for "Vicious And Demented," nor for "Vain And Deceitful," but for "Voluntary Aid Detachment."

Their work seems to be somewhat varied, but the term "On Duty" covers everything. Sometimes, however, there are differences of opinion even about this. When you fondly imagine that Miss Claire Voyante is off duty, and talking to

her long lost brother in the hall, you hear that she is merely interviewing "Walkers." Then on the other hand Miss Jolly Polly, seemingly on duty taking round particularly tiresome visitors, is really entertaining her nearest and dearest.

A very large percentage of their day's work is laughing. If by some misfortune they have not got a highly developed sense of humour, they must at once cultivate one. Miss Fortune, on seeing an officer coming into the house on a wet

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afternoon without an overcoat, said to him, "You never wear an overcoat, Mr. Jones!" He replied: "No, I never was." The same lady was going out herself in the evening, also without a coat, and on being asked if she would not take one, said, "No, I never was."

One of the duties of the V.A.D. is to open the men's letters and parcels, when requested to do so. One of the soldiers was sent a pair of very smart men's silk undergarments. Miss Field Roberts opened the parcel, and gave the contents to their owner. The latter, after feeling them carefully, exclaimed, "Well, I never! Have you ever seen anything like that before?" The lady getting up, turned very red, and said in her most crushing manner, "You will kindly mind your own business, young man."

The greater part of the "On-Duty" time is spent with the men.

There is a story of one lady who simply refused to come near the house, in spite of her having been asked to come as a V.A.D. She

said she had been talking to a friend of her's about the five senses, and how the loss of one increased the other four. Her friend had said, "Look at the poor blind, how they smell." This had had the effect of making her avoid every blind man ever since.

Do not imagine that the dear ladies have no frolics of their own. On the contrary, they gave a Ball only the other evening. It started after the men had gone to bed, and was a great success. It is true that only one of the orderlies could steer his partner, but the rest of the ladies were quite happy awaiting their turn. Another of their little amusements is looking after the house watch-dogs. One or two of these famous animals are of rather obscure parentage. These dogs, let me tell you, are a real joy in the life of every V.A.D. at St. Dunstan's.

I have only given you a few small incidents in V.A.D. life, but there is no reason why, after your next visit to the Zoo, you should not come on here and see them for yourself.



