

DREADED GANGRENE.

At Bethune one met for the first time cases of gangrene. This gangrene is due to the soil of the trenches containing a dangerous bacillus or organism which gets into the wounds. This bacillus sets up a form of gangrene which speedily kills the patient. The only resort in many cases was a speedy amputation, and it was unfortunately necessary in a large number of cases to amputate arms and legs for this dreaded infection.

Dr. Barclay, of Waimate, has also been writing home accounts of his work with the Russian Red Cross. The following extracts reprinted from the "Waimate Advertiser," give a terrible picture of the sufferings of the wounded:—

Writing on 14th September, Dr. Barclay describes the base hospital which has been established in the magnificent infantry barracks of the Austrian Cadets. Things are lively around us to-day," he writes. "The Poles and Jews in the town have revolted, and firing and bombs are going off *ad lib*. You would be amused while unpicking seaweed for making pillows, and helping to cut macintosh cloth for draw-sheets, to pause for a moment's rest, just to judge the distance of the last burst of rifle shots. It adds great zest to existence. Under the circumstances we are arming for self-protection, as the Red Cross is not necessarily very sacred in a town fight." Describing the hospital work, Dr. Barclay says there are only two operative surgeons on the staff, with an anesthetist and a physician. "We have four tables going in the operating-room, sometimes from 9 a.m. till dark, but always till 2 p.m. And really I pity many a man, I wish he had died in the

trenches and so, poor devil, must he. It gets too much for me. Many cases put on the tables by the physicians get no anesthetics, and to operate amid the hideous wails and the occasional screams of others is distressing beyond measure. Most of the cases we are dealing with now have lain for a fortnight with compound fractures soaked in decomposing matter, with dressings unchanged, and present pictures of misery and loathsomeness hard to realise. There is no use trying to save most of the limbs. Off they have to come. But they are luckier really than those we try to save, for the agony of changing dressings and splints and attempting to straighten their limbs is much greater than the suspense or fear in the firing line. Many, I have no doubt, wish themselves dead. But the Russian soon recovers his equilibrium. His capacity for good humour and cheerfulness is unbounded, and half an hour afterwards in the ward, the screaming poor beggar of the operating table is making a cigarette, and all smiles, and—yes—and sometimes even grateful."

When those men who could be moved were evacuated they expressed their gratitude in touching manner to the New Zealand surgeon. For some time it was feared that the Russians would have to retire from Lemberg, and preparations were made for moving the hospital equipment and patients. When it was thought that the Austrian army was approaching, the politeness of the inhabitants of the town fell to zero, and occasional revolver shooting became fashionable again, one of the nurses narrowly escaping a bullet. Not speaking Russian, Dr. Barclay cannot converse with his patients; but he has managed to find two little Austrian children whose father was recalled from New York for the army, and they help him with some of the languages, for there are at least three—Polish, German, and Russian—in general use.

Letters from Nurses at the Front

Sister Ella Cooke writes from Bernay—the following extracts are from a letter received last week, and dated December 31st:—

"Just a few lines before the old year dies out. It now needs only half-an-hour till the New Year comes in, and even here we are waiting up to see the old year out. I wonder will this New Year bring us better luck. At 4 a.m. to-day numbers of wounded men straight from the trenches, came into the hospital. Many have been in the trenches for weeks, and several explained to me that they had not had their boots off for four months! You can imagine the state most of them are in. Many have swollen feet and frozen up to the ankles; most I am afraid, will lose both feet, and many the legs up to the knee. I am sure many people do not realise what

this war means unless they could see these poor suffering men. I am also nursing numbers of Germans, and they are really most respectful to me, and very helpful in every way they can. Although as a nation they hate the English they always ask the Frenchmen to send along the "Nurse Anglaise" to them.

Some of them have awful wounds which make one almost sick to look at them, inches deep and long; most seem to have been struck in the back and legs. Many will never be able to fight again, but we must get them well enough to be sent as prisoners to the construction camp about five miles from here. Bernay is about three hours' train journey from Paris."

I hope we shall be able to visit Paris before returning to England.

This is a great centre for volunteers, and