

Experiences of a Nurse early in the War

To the Editor.

Some weeks ago I went over to England on No 1 N.Z. Hospital ship, the sisters were very kind to me. Miss Kelly asked me if I would send you a short account my experiences for your journal.

I am enclosing same, if you would care to have them. I am now at No 7 Stationary Hospital, B.E.F.—Yours sincerely,
J. E. Trotter, Q.A.I.M.N.S.R.

[We have great pleasure in publishing the account sent by Sister Trotter of the very trying experiences early in the war of the British nurses.—Ed.]

August 19th, 1914.

I left Charing Cross station, London, at 8.30 a.m. for Folkstone, crossed to Ostend, and then by train to Brussels. We arrived at the hotel about 7 p.m., to be told that the situation was more serious than was expected, and that the Germans might enter the town at any time. They arrived early on August 20th. I was sent to the Hospital St. Jean, where I slept. Next day I had to go to the Hospital St. Pierre, on night duty. I was in a ward with twelve fully armed Germans; pistols under their pillows, rifles by the side of their beds. I as quite alone. At first I felt rather nervous, but it was no good worrying, as I was only one to twelve and if they wanted to kill me I stood no chance. I was on night duty for one week. After that I was put on day duty thirty-one beds, with one other nurse and a man. The patients were wounded Germans. These were nursed, and as soon as they were well enough to be moved they were sent back to Germany. They told us the news. One day they said they had taken General French prisoner, and that he had a guard of six officers and forty soldiers. I did not believe that. One Sunday I saw a lot of their naval men marching through Brussels, and asked the German patients what they were doing on land. They said they had smashed up the English Navy; so as there was no further use for them on the sea, they had come on land to help the soldiers. The following Wednesday five of these men were

brought in wounded. I asked, where were the others? They told me they had been killed outside Paris. In time it got a little on one's nerves to hear of nothing but German victories. We were not supposed to see any English papers. If you were seen with any, or known to have any but those the Germans had printed, there was an order you were to be shot. We did get an English paper all the same, now and then, though it was often a week or fortnight old. The latter part of the time I was in Brussels I was on night duty in one ward with Germans, and in another with Belgian prisoners. The last three weeks we were there we packed every morning and unpacked every night, as we were told to be ready to start any time, and that we were to be taken prisoners to Germany. Through the American Consul this was altered, and we were told we were to go to Holland. On October 5th an order came from the German General that we were all to be at the station at one o'clock. We arrived at the station put our luggage in the train, and took our seats. Three minutes before it was time to start we were all told to get out. Away the train went with American passengers. We sat at the station until four o'clock, when we were told to go back, and meet at the house, where the doctor in charge of the Red Cross party was staying, at 8 a.m. October 6th. We arrived and had roll call, and a German doctor came to see if we were all there. One nurse had not turned up. We were again sent back and told to be at the station at one o'clock, and that if we were not all there he would not promise what would happen to us. Again we met outside the station, our names were called by a German officer, and it was a funny sight to see each nurse struggle into the station with her luggage. At last all the nurses were through, but the doctors were left sitting on the kerb outside. After a time they were also told they could come in and bring their luggage with them. In time the train arrived, we put our baggage in and took our seats. We were packed tight together in third class carriages, narrow seats, no cushions. In ever so many carriages there