

## HEROES ALL.

### UNDER THE LIGHTS OF LONDON.

#### WELFARE OF NEW ZEALAND SOLDIERS.

#### HOW THE RED TRIANGLE HELPS.

He was a merry English Tommy in London on week-end leave, and he waltzed his heavy kit towards the entrance of the Y.M.C.A. hut at Euston, much as a good-natured dancer pilots a weighty partner through a crowded hall. The hour was midnight, but in these days of warfare one hour is like another in restless London.

"Just over from France?" we asked as we passed him, outward bound.

His lilting song ended as, with a ring of pride, he answered, "Yus, an' I'm one of the Dardanelles 'eroes, too."

One of the Dardanelles heroes, and still in the thick of the fight. Optimistic of the result on the Western Front, and bent on making the most of the leave that had been won by months of hard fighting. Already false friends had started him off in the wrong direction, but a glimpse of the brightly shining Red Triangle had brought him back to the "good old Y.M.C.A.," and "mighty glad he was to be there." Tommy's case is typical of the thousands of soldiers from all parts of the Empire who daily and nightly encounter the allurements and snares of cosmopolitan London. And here the Y.M.C.A. is doing as fine a work as in the actual fighting zone. Soldiers are after all very human; they are safest when they are busy, and during times of relaxation are apt to drift with the tide.

#### SIGN OF THE TRIANGLE.

Since the war began the Red Triangle has become the most familiar of safety signs along the streams of life that ceaselessly flow through this vast, illusive, magnetic London. We have seen sufficient during a fortnight's leave to make us realise why a distinguished statesman spoke of the Y.M.C.A. as "one of the seven wonders of the war." That was many months ago, and the work is daily growing to bigger dimensions. Every centre of population through out the Metropolis and the endless

chain of suburbs has its Y.M.C.A. Institute, with attractive exterior and home-like touches inside; near the big railway stations and other places of congested traffic are Red Triangle Bureaux—rest places by the wayside—where soldiers may read or write, or learn how to find their way about London; and places of interest are made accessible daily to large parties of soldiers under the guidance of ladies and elderly gentlemen, who are "doing their bit" as voluntary Y.M.C.A. workers. Most especially are the women of England playing a magnificent part in almost every phase of war-time work.

#### NEW ZEALANDERS FIRST.

The commissioners who came to England and France on behalf of the Y.M.C.A. in New Zealand have acted on the principle of providing the best for those who are farthest away from home. They have succeeded in making the Shakespeare Hut—headquarters for the New Zealand work—the most attractive Y.M.C.A. soldiers' institute in all England. At least that is our opinion, and we have seen many.

We came to London through country that was aglow with the touch of early spring—fields that a fortnight earlier had been under snow were ankle-deep in grass; the matchless English trees were donning their summer leafage; the winding lanes were made picturesque by budding hedges and primroses by the million, and the fruit trees blossomed massively in token of a bountiful yield. Truly a country worth fighting for.

From Waterloo Station we were piloted by a Y.M.C.A. officer through the mysteries of the wonderful tube system of underground railways to that busy part of London, Tottenham Court Road, and thence by a very short route to the Shakespeare Hut. That week-end there were 1000 of our men on leave in London, and fully one-third were accommodated at the Shakespeare Hut. The New Zealanders are very proud of their London headquarters. The men marched en masse from the station, formed a queue past the booking office, and, having secured their beds, were given advice as to the best way of spending their four days' leave. Some went round in small groups with honorary guides; others went on the Y.M.C.A. omnibus tour (seeing the principal

sights of London at a cost of 4s); and others again went out in search of family friends. Meanwhile the Hut continued to be the lively rendezvous of soldiers from all parts of the Empire and of members of all branches of the service. Although New Zealand troops have preference, they are by no means the only users of the "best Hut in London."

#### SPIRIT OF THE TIMES.

The Shakespeare Hut is adjacent to the British Museum, and stands on a spacious corner allotment valued at not less than £70,000. Its use has been granted by the Shakespeare Society for the term of the war and a specified period after. The style of the building is that of a huge bungalow, and the furnishings are as comfortable as the design is artistic. The main entrance leads into a spacious lounge and an equally extensive cafe, separated only by a dividing lattice. Off these radiate a quiet room, with writing accommodation for 90 or 100 men; a billiard room, with three full-sized tables; a concert hall (including a most artistic stage) to seat 500 or 600 soldiers; and dormitories containing beds sufficient for 400 men. Add to these hot and cold baths, cloak room, hairdressing saloon, and other convenient appointments, and we realise something of the bigness and completeness of the place.

#### SIX O'CLOCK.

'Tis after six, and he's not in!  
The children hear her voice grow  
sad,  
And wonder if they should begin  
Their tea or—wait for dad!

'Tis pay-day; but despair's not yet!  
She'll keep the good meal warm  
awhile;  
But seven strikes, her eyes grow wet,  
And all have ceased to smile.

The children, settled safe in bed,  
She sits alone, with fear to start,  
And ev'ry hour, with tones of lead,  
Seems striking at her heart.

Then on her knees, distraught in  
mind,  
She prays, while words and sobs  
e'er mix,  
"Oh, God, grant laws of any kind  
That send men home at six."

—M.T.T., in the "S.M. Herald."