

From Miss H. H. Montefiore.

The Bombing of London.

"When I wrote to you of our happy First Aid Post I little thought of what the sequel would be.

"Early in September the Nazi Air Force was hurled against London. We became quite used to day raids, and took shelter quite mechanically when Mona wailed her long banshee, weird, unearthly sounds, and usually quickly emerged when 'Clara's' rather more hopeful tones were heard.

"The shelters in London are marvellously arranged—well lit up by electricity, benches for all, and very kind A.R.P. wardens, men or women, who comfort and reassure anyone old or frightened. The sleeping shelters to which regular customers repair night after night, have sleeping bunks provided, a really well-equipped First Aid station where Red Cross nurses attend, visits by trained nurses and doctors, means of procuring a hot cup of tea or cocoa, and ample ventilation. These have all been provided since night raids have become a regular feature of the war. The long drone of the German planes, followed by intense anti-aircraft firing, and then the thud of the bombs (the whistling variety being particularly trying), became our waited visitors night after night.

"Our beautiful First Aid Post, over which we had spent hours of patient scouring and cleaning, where brass door knobs and taps shone like the sun, was to receive a visit from the dreaded bomb. At midnight, when all the staff on duty were lying down, quite suddenly the building shook, every bit of glass flew in splinters from windows and ventilators, doors sprung from their hinges, a wall outside and our shelter where we had so often spent hours during raids were no more. A high explosive had fallen just outside and made a huge crater, while the blast had caused havoc in our midst.

"Marvellous to relate, though glass covered every camp bed and a door was blown on to one of the staff, no one was hurt beyond bruises and shaking. The next day, over a sea of glass and splinters, well protected in Wellingtons and mackintoshes, the staff worked like Trojans, and managed to save all our equipment. We were moved over to the Convent in the same grounds and made everything as neat and spick and span as could be.

"However, peace was not to be ours; some incendiary bombs were dropped on the Convent and a fire destroyed the Convent Hall and Chapel.

"Two nights after, an explosive bomb dropped in the garden, blew out all our windows, and glass filled our beautiful First Aid Room once more.

"Yet again incendiaries were dropped in numbers in the garden, and the staff worked with stirrup pumps and sand buckets, and kept the fire under control till the firemen came up and dealt efficiently with the fierce flames.

"After this we had to move from the building to one not far away, but it was indeed sad to leave our post and the lovely garden where we had spent many hours in the hot summer sun.

"But were we downhearted? No, most emphatically.

"We have done all we can to make our new post bright, shining and cheerful as was the old, and are ready again to deal with any casualties which may come our way.

"However long the war may last, there will be brave men and women to do their best to relieve pain and discomfort. Hitler may destroy our Bodies, but never our Souls."

From Portia Holman.

Portia Holman wrote from the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, London:

"This is said to be the second safest building in London. It is a most odd life we tread, never going out at night except when every ten days or so we have nights off in the country; but it is very safe, very comfortable and free from all sorts of bother that everyone else in London has to go through just to get to and from work and be fed. I have been here a month and working very hard most of it. Though we never have many children in at one time, we have a big turnover and quite a lot of work. We have a country branch, and I go down there once a fortnight to see the children I have sent down and the other cases they get without reference to us.

"The Economics Adviser to the Australian High Commissioner has written a document which is intended to go to the Continent. I saw it through a friend in the Civil Service and did some work on it, and have been invited to join him and others in an informal committee. In the meantime he has come to live nextdoor to the hospital in the bottom of a block of flats where almost the only three people I know left in London also live. It is curious that there should be this preference for this much be-bombed area, but it is heaven-sent for me, as I can see the inmates without technically 'being out'. I like to see my own friends instead of my medical colleagues from time to time; Great Ormond Street is rather a shadow of its former glory.

"I had one very good piece of luck at the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital in making a great friend of the Senior Physician who is not only a good doctor but a good person and particularly keen on Children's Medicine. What is more, she has a lovely house in the country where she has