

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS NET

PART I.

# THE WESTERN FRONT

DRAWINGS BY  
MUIRHEAD BONE



WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
**GENERAL SIR DOUGLAS HAIG**  
G.C.B., G.C.V.O., K.C.I.E., A.D.C.

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY OF THE WAR OFFICE  
FROM THE OFFICES OF "COUNTRY LIFE," LTD.,  
20, TAVISTOCK STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON

## THE VIRGIN OF ALBERT

*Cover Illustration*

The grandiose modern church of Albert is almost completely ruined by German shells. The tall west tower is shattered into a crooked stalk of brickwork. On its summit, which is here shown, a huge gilt figure of the Virgin, with the Child held up in her hands, has been struck out of the upright by a shell and juts out precariously over the street. It is visible for several miles round, and a half-serious local belief has grown up that when the figure falls the war will end.

## A VILLAGE ON THE SOMME

*Title-page Illustration*

A typical Picardy village about twelve miles behind the British front of November, 1916, and near our point of junction with the French. The drawing gives a glimpse of the ordinary life of such villages during the period of their occupation by British soldiers.

# THE WESTERN FRONT

DRAWINGS BY  
MUIRHEAD BONE



WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
GENERAL SIR DOUGLAS HAIG  
G.C.B., G.C.V.O., K.C.I.E., A.D.C.

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY OF THE WAR OFFICE  
FROM THE OFFICES OF "COUNTRY LIFE," LTD.,  
29, TAVISTOCK STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON  
MCMXVII

I have been asked to write a foreword to Mr. Muirhead Bone's drawings. This I am glad to do, as they illustrate admirably the daily life of the troops under my command.

The conditions under which we live in France are so different from those to which people at home are accustomed, that no pen, however skilful, can explain them without the aid of the pencil.

The destruction caused by war, the wide areas of devastation, the vast mechanical agencies essential in war, both for transport and the offensive, the masses of supplies required, and the wonderful cheerfulness and indomitable courage of the soldiers under varying climatic conditions, are worthy subjects for the artist who aims at recording for all time the spirit of the age in which he has lived.

It has been said that the portrait and the picture are invaluable aids to the right reading of history. From this point of view I welcome, on behalf of the Army that I have the honour to command, this series of drawings, as a permanent record in pencil of the duties which our soldiers have been called upon to perform, and the quality and manner of its performance.

*D. Haig. Genl.*

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS,  
*November, 1916*



## THE WESTERN FRONT

**T**HE British line in France and Belgium runs through country of three kinds, and each kind is like a part of England. Between the Somme and Arras a British soldier often feels that he has not quite left the place of his training on Salisbury Plain. The main roads may be different, with their endless rows of sentinel trees, and the farms are mostly clustered into villages, where they turn their backs to the streets. More of the land, too, is tilled. But the ground has the same large and gentle undulation; and these great rollers are made, as in Wiltshire, of pure chalk coated with only a little brown clay. There are the same wide prospects, the same lack of streams and ponds, the same ledges and curious carvings of the soil; and journeys on foot seem long, as they do on our downs, because so much of the road before you is visible while you march.

A little north of Arras there begins, almost at a turn of the road, a black country, where men of the South Lancashires feel at home and grant that the landscape has some of the points of Wigan. It is the region of Loos and Vermelles and Bully Grenay, most of it level ground on which the only eminences are the refuse-heaps of coal mines. Across this level the eye feels its way from one well-known stack of pit-head buildings and winding machinery to another. They are, to an English eye, strangely lofty and stand out like lighthouses over a sea. The villages near their feet are commonly "model" or "garden," with all the houses built well, as parts of one plan. As in Lancashire, farming and mining go on side by side, and in August the corn is grey with a mixture of blown dusts from collieries and from the road.

The next change is not abrupt, like the first; but it is as great. Near Ypres you are on the sands, though yet twenty miles from the sea. Here you have a sense of being in a place still alive but pensioned off by nature after its work was done. You feel it at Rye and Winchelsea, at Ravenna, and at any place which the sea has once made great and then abandoned. The wide Ypres landscape drawn by Mr. Bone was all mellow on sunny days at the end of July with the warm brown and yellow of many good crops. Almost up to the British front it was farmed minutely and intensely; in spring I had seen a man ploughing a field where a German shell, on the average, dropped every day. But all this countryside has the brooding quietude of a sort of honourable old age, dignity and pensiveness and comfort behind its natural rampart of sand dunes, but not the stir of life at full pressure.

Into this vari-coloured belt of landscape, some ninety miles long, and into its cities and villages, the war has brought strange violences of effort and several different degrees of desolation. Some villages are dead

and buried, like Pozieres, where you must dig to find where a house stood. There are cities dead, but with their bones still above ground. Ypres is one: many walls stand where they did, but grass is growing among the broken stones and bits of stained glass on the floor of the Cloth Hall, and at noon a visitor's footsteps ring and echo in the empty streets like those of a belated wayfarer in midnight Oxford. "How doth the city sit desolate that once was full of people!" Again, there are towns like Arras, whose flesh, though torn, has life in it still, and seems to feel a new wound from each shell, though there be no man there to be hit. These are the broader differences between one part of the front and another. In any one place there are minor caprices of destruction or survival. Mr. Bone has drawn the top of the Albert Church tower, a building that was ugly when it was whole, but now is famous for its impending figure of the Virgin, knocked by artillery fire into a singular diving attitude, with the Child in her outstretched hands. Of the two or three buildings unharmed in Arras one is the oldest house in the town and another was Robespierre's birthplace.

In the fields, as you near the front line, you note an ascending scale of desolation. It is most clear on the battlefield of the Somme. First you pass across two or three miles of land on which so many shells fall, or used to fall, that it has not been tilled for two years. It is a waste, but a green waste, where not trodden brown by horses and men. It is gay in summer with poppies, convolvulus and cornflowers. Among the thistles and coarse grass you see self-sown shoots of the old crops, of beet, mustard and corn. Beyond this zone of land merely thrown idle you reach the ultimate desert where nothing but men and rats can live. Here even the weeds have been rooted up and buried by shells, the houses are ground down to brick-dust and lime and mixed with the earth, which is constantly turned up and turned up again by more shells and kept loose and soft. The trees, broken half-way up their trunks and stripped of leaves and branches, look curiously haggard and sinister.

It is hoped that Mr. Bone's drawings will give a new insight into the spirit in which the battle of freedom is being fought. An artist does not merely draw ruined churches and houses, guards and lorries, doctors and wounded men. It is for him to make us see something more than we do even when we see all these with our own eyes—to make visible by his art the staunchness and patience, the faithful absorption in the next duty, the humour and human decency and good nature—all the strains of character and emotion that go to make up the temper of Britain at war.

G.H.Q., FRANCE,

*November, 1916*



I  
GENERAL SIR DOUGLAS HAIG  
G.C.B., G.C.V.O., K.C.I.E., A.D.C.



GRAND'PLACE AND RUINS OF THE  
CLOTH HALL, YPRES

The gaunt emptiness of Ypres is expressed in this drawing, done from the doorway of a ruined church in a neighbouring square. The grass has grown long this summer on the Grand'Place and is creeping up over the heaps of ruins. The only continuous sound in Ypres is that of birds, which sing in it as if it were country.





## A STREET IN YPRES

In the distance is seen what remains of the Cloth Hall. On the right a wall long left unsupported is bending to its fall. The crash of such a fall is one of the few sounds that now break the silence of Ypres, where the visitor starts at the noise of a distant footfall in the grass-grown streets.



## DISTANT VIEW OF YPRES

The Ypres salient is here seen from a knoll some six miles south-west of the city, which is marked, near the centre of the drawing, by the dominant ruin of the cathedral. The German front line is on the heights beyond, Hooze being a little to the spectator's right of the city and Zillebeke slightly more to the right again. Dickebusch lies about half way between the eye and Ypres. The fields in sight are covered with crops, varied by good woodland. To a visitor coming from the Somme battlefield the landscape looks rich and almost peaceful.





## A VILLAGE CHURCH IN FLANDERS

All round this church there is the quiet of a desert. The drawing was made from within a house opposite; the fall of its entire front provided an extensive window view.



## THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME

An exciting moment in the fighting for the summit ridge of the battlefield in August, 1916. All the British guns have just burst into action and our infantry are advancing unseen in the cloud of smoke on the sky-line. The puffs of smoke high in the air are from bursting shrapnel. The battle is seen from King George's Hill, near the old German front line, taken on July 1st, 1916. Below, among the ravaged trees, are the ruins of Mametz; beyond them, Mametz Wood; beyond it, again, the wood of Bazentin-le-Petit.





VII.

“TANKS”

In this fine drawing Mr. Bone has seen the “Tank” in its major aspect, as a grim and daunting engine of war.



VIII

RUINED GERMAN TRENCHES,  
NEAR CONTALMAISON

The drawing shows a former German front-line trench reduced by our artillery fire, before an advance, to a mass of capricious looking irregularities in the ground. The German barbed wire entanglements are seen destroyed by our shell fire to open the way for our attacking troops.





IX

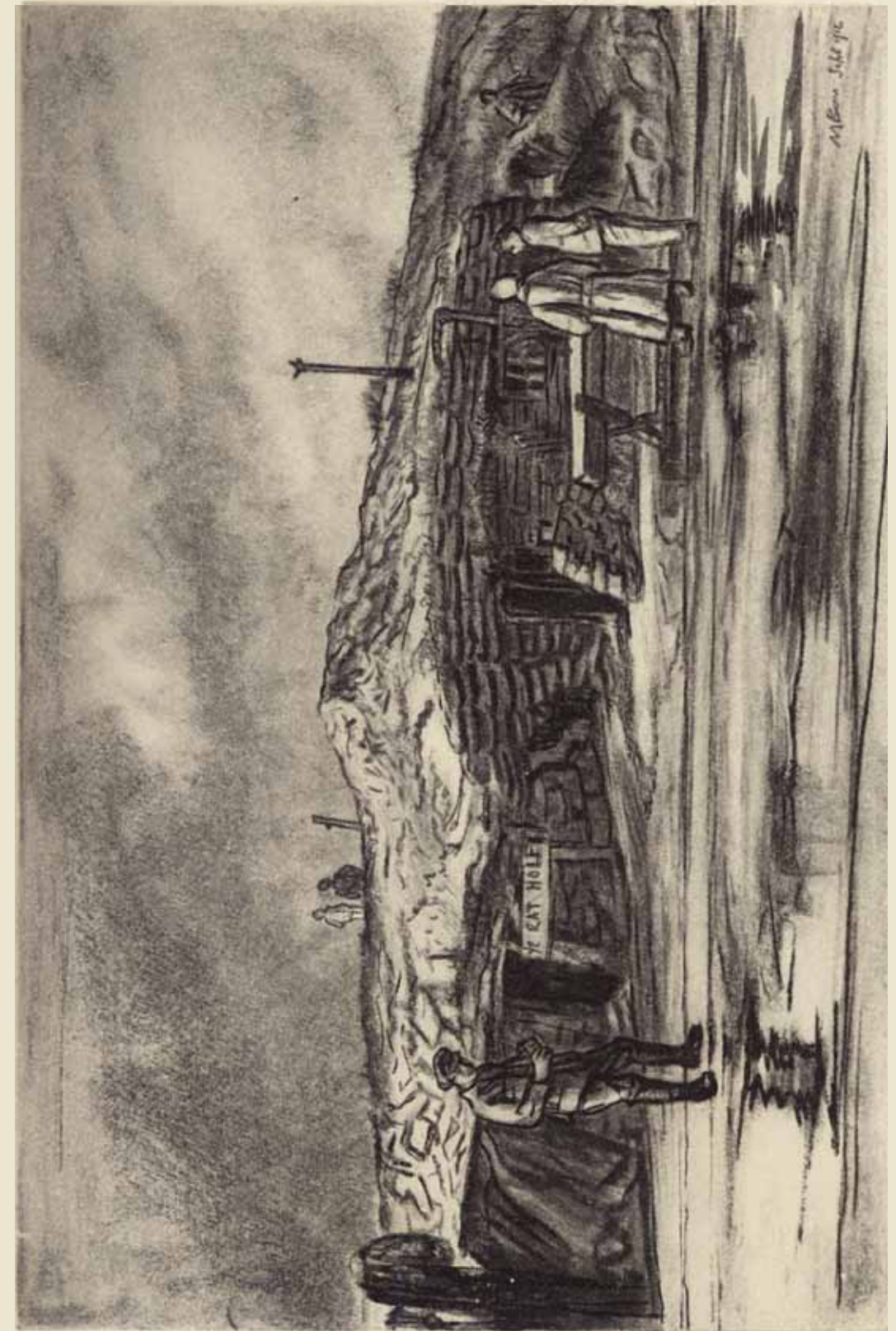
THE NIGHT PICKET

The hour is Retreat and a Sergeant-Major is inspecting the three men for duty at a one-man post during the coming night. Each man in turn will do two hours' duty, followed by four hours' rest. The fine austere drawing of the sunset, the wide waste spaces, the intent men mounting picket and the men off duty strolling at ease, is imbued with the spirit of the region just behind our front.



## DUG-OUTS

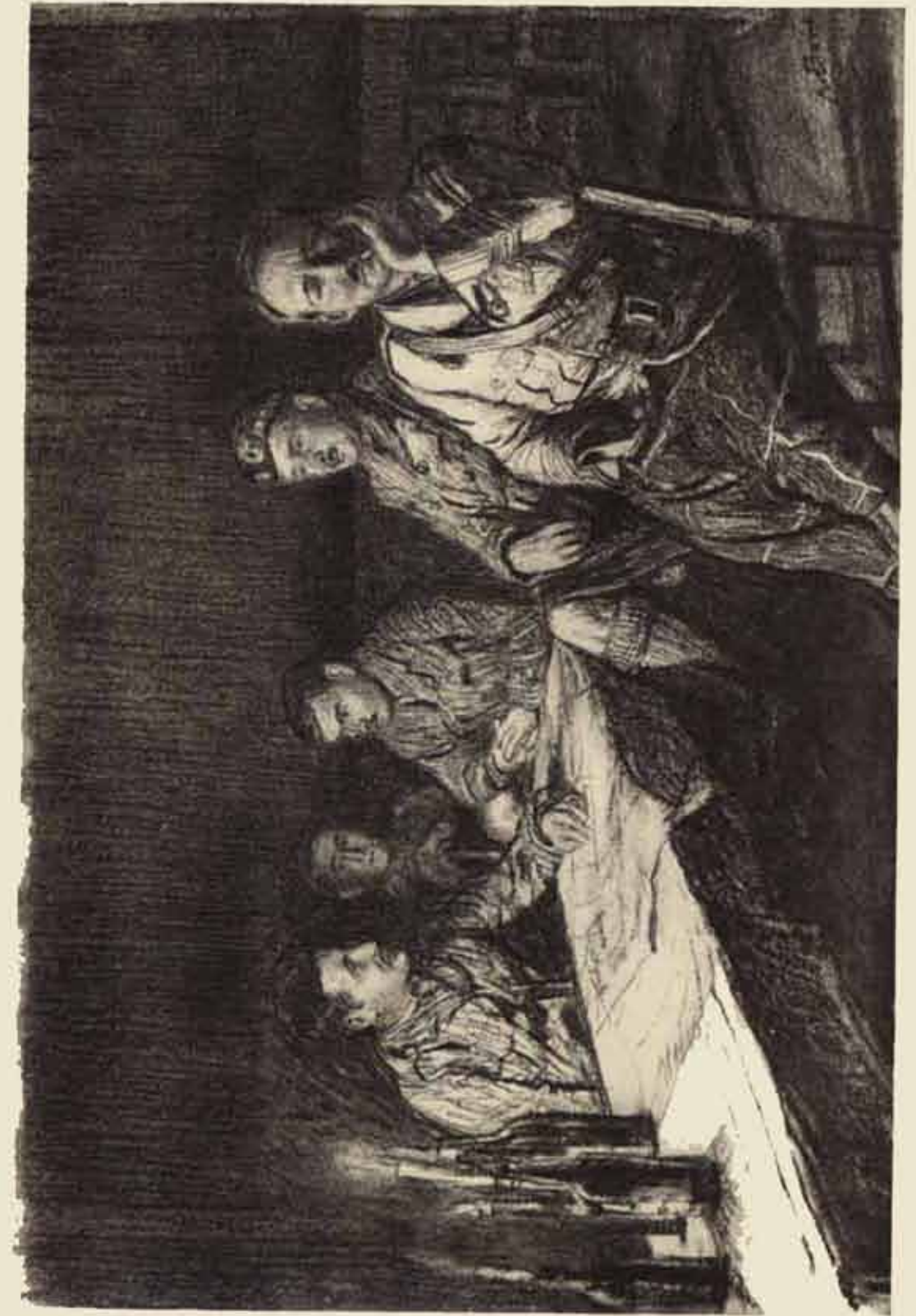
A small hamlet of sand-bagged dug-outs a little behind the front line, seen during a passing lift of the clouds at the end of a wet day. Many dug-outs, like the one on the left, bear such names as "The Rat Hole," "It," "Some Dug-out, believe ma," "The Old Curiosity Shop" and "The Ritz." On the right, a shelf in the outer wall of sand-bags is decorated with flowers in pots.





GORDON HIGHLANDERS :  
OFFICERS' MESS

In the bare dancing hall of a village inn behind the Somme Front. The artist has found means to interpret with the utmost sympathy and power the extraordinary romantic quality that there often is about a Highland mess in France, created by the rude setting, the primitive half light amidst cavernous gloom, and the spectator's sense of an enveloping world of strange dangers and adventures.





## WAITING FOR THE WOUNDED

A British advance has just begun, and the surgeons of a Divisional Collecting Station near the Somme are awaiting the arrival of the first laden stretcher-bearers. In a few minutes the three officers will be at work, perhaps for twenty-four hours on end. At one Casualty Clearing Station a distinguished surgeon performed, without resting, nineteen difficult operations, each lasting more than an hour, in cases of severe abdominal wounds, where delay would have meant the loss of life. In almost every case the man was saved. Another surgeon operated for thirty-six hours without relief. Such devotion is not exceptional in the R.A.M.C.





## THE HAPPY WARRIOR

The place is a field dressing station. The wounded Grenadier Guardsman in the foreground on the left, wearing a German helmet and eating bread and jam, had brought in as prisoner the German who is sitting on the right with his hand to his face. The Guardsman indicated the German to the artist, and said, "Won't you draw my pal here, too, Sir? He and me had a turn-up this morning when we took their trench, and he jabbed me in the arm and I jabbed him in the eye, and we're the best of friends." Other Germans are sitting in attitudes characteristic of newly-made prisoners.



XIV (a and b)

### RED CROSS BARGES ON THE SOMME

Many wounded or sick soldiers, British and French, are brought by river or canal from near the front to near a base hospital or the sea. The motion is easy, the men have good air and quiet; any who are well enough to be on deck have pleasant and changeful surroundings to look at. The English have fitted up for this purpose many of the large, square-built and bluff-bowed—almost box-like—French canal boats. They are towed, in pairs, by small tugs. The French Red Cross uses barges driven by engines placed aft.





## AT A BASE STATION

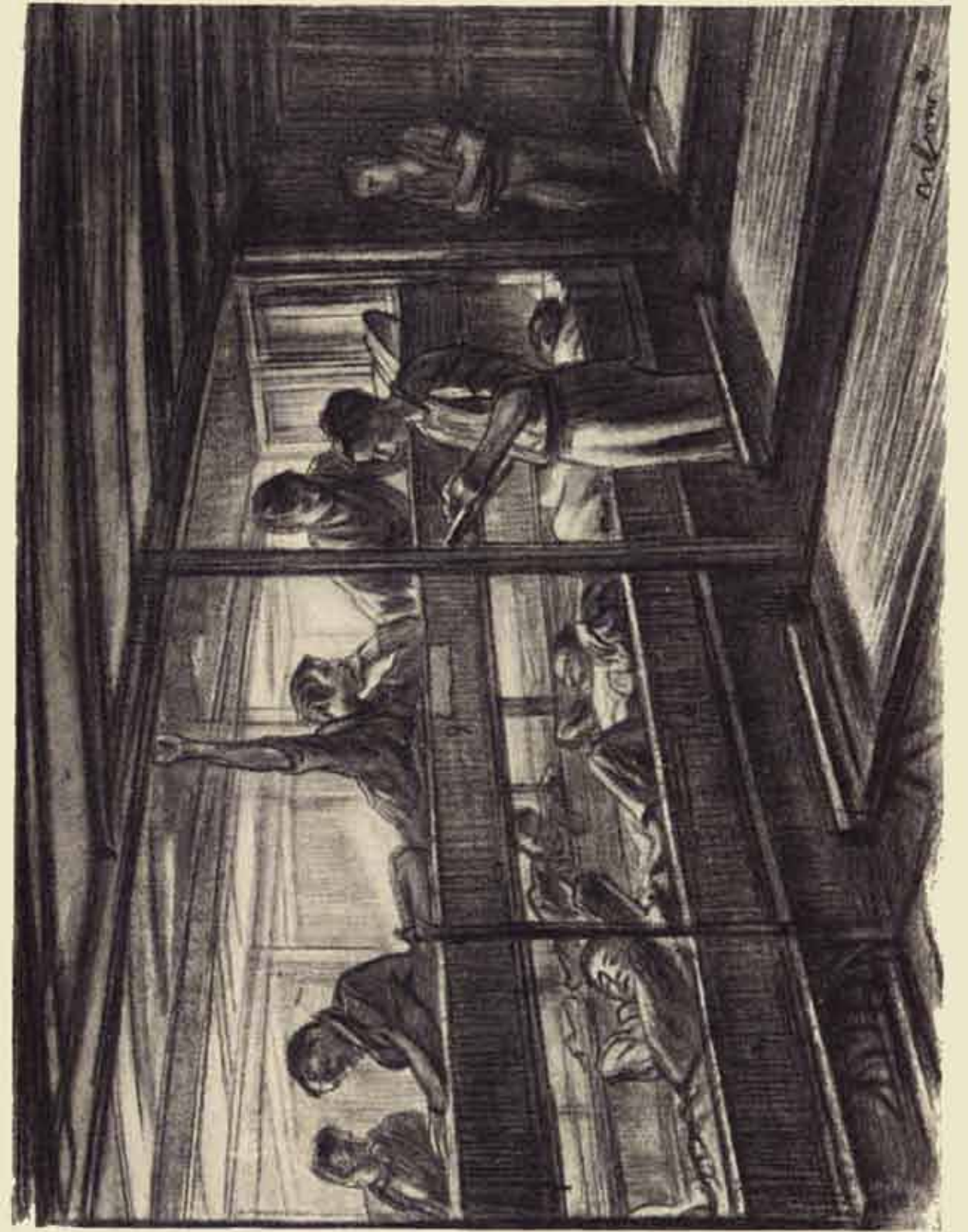
A midnight scene at a base railway station. Train-loads of "walking wounded" on their way to England are met at any hour of the day or night by V.A.D. workers who offer the men hot tea or cocoa, and bread and butter. The quality of the food, and the manner of the gift, give extraordinary pleasure to the tired men.





## ON A HOSPITAL SHIP

The boat here is an old one; in newer boats the accommodation is finer, but the drawing shows the ordinary mode of bedding the patients in double tiers of continuous bunks. At some point in the passage an R.A.M.C. orderly asks every patient to what part of "Blighty" he belongs, and an effort is made to send him to a hospital near his home. The orderly's approach, as he makes his rounds, is always eagerly awaited throughout the ship by the wounded men.





XVII

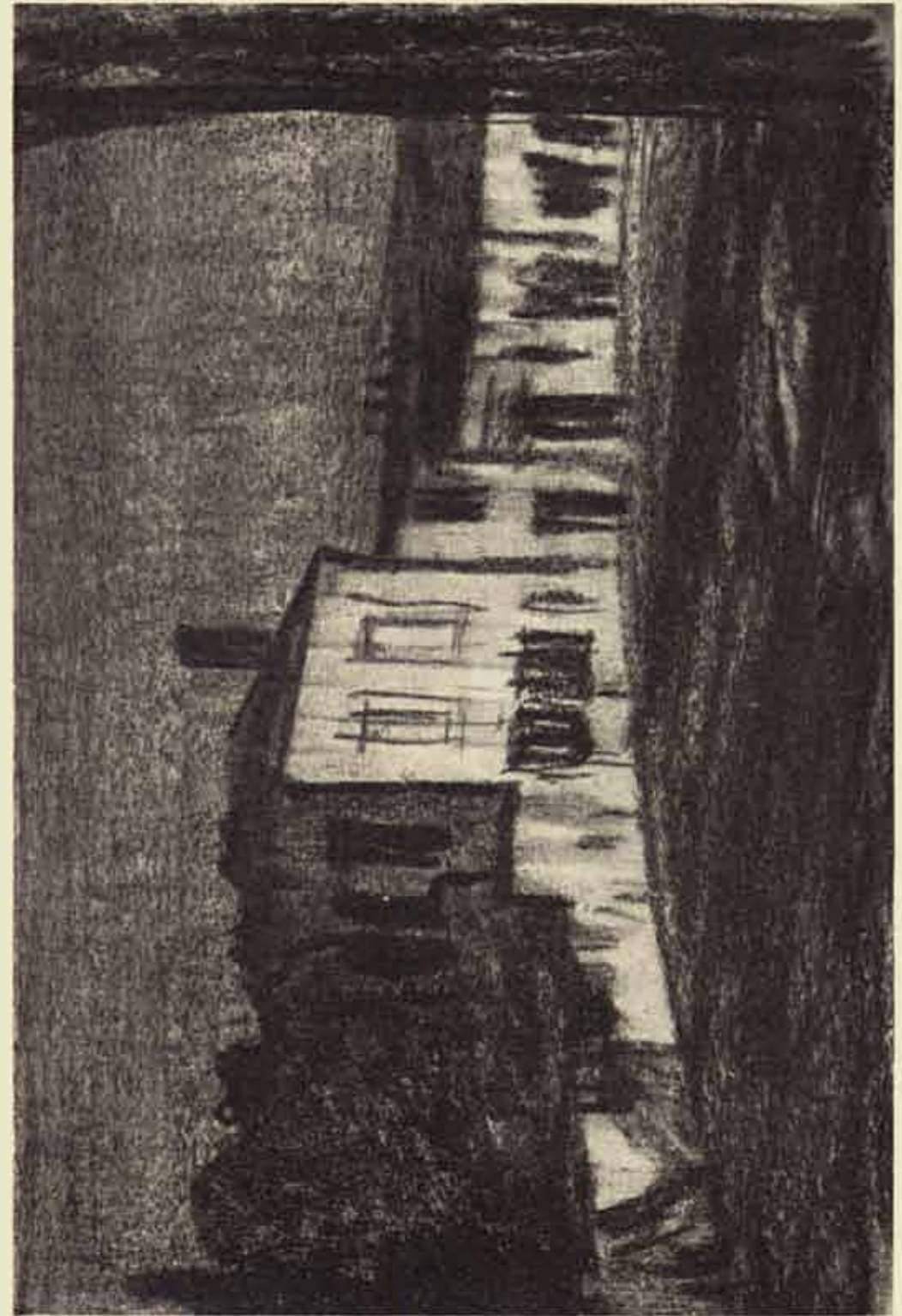
DISEMBARKED TROOPS WAITING  
TO MARCH OFF

An every-day scene at the French ports where our men land. Whatever may come after, there are few moments so thrilling to an untravelled soldier of the New Army as those in which he awaits the order to march off into the unknown, with all the strange events of war before him.



## SOLDIERS' BILLETS—MOONLIGHT

The unusually comfortable quarters of a Company in reserve while other Companies of its Battalion are in the firing and support trenches, two or three miles further up. Reserve billets are more often under ground, sometimes in the cellars of ruined houses. A thick covering of ruins above gives complete security against shell fire.

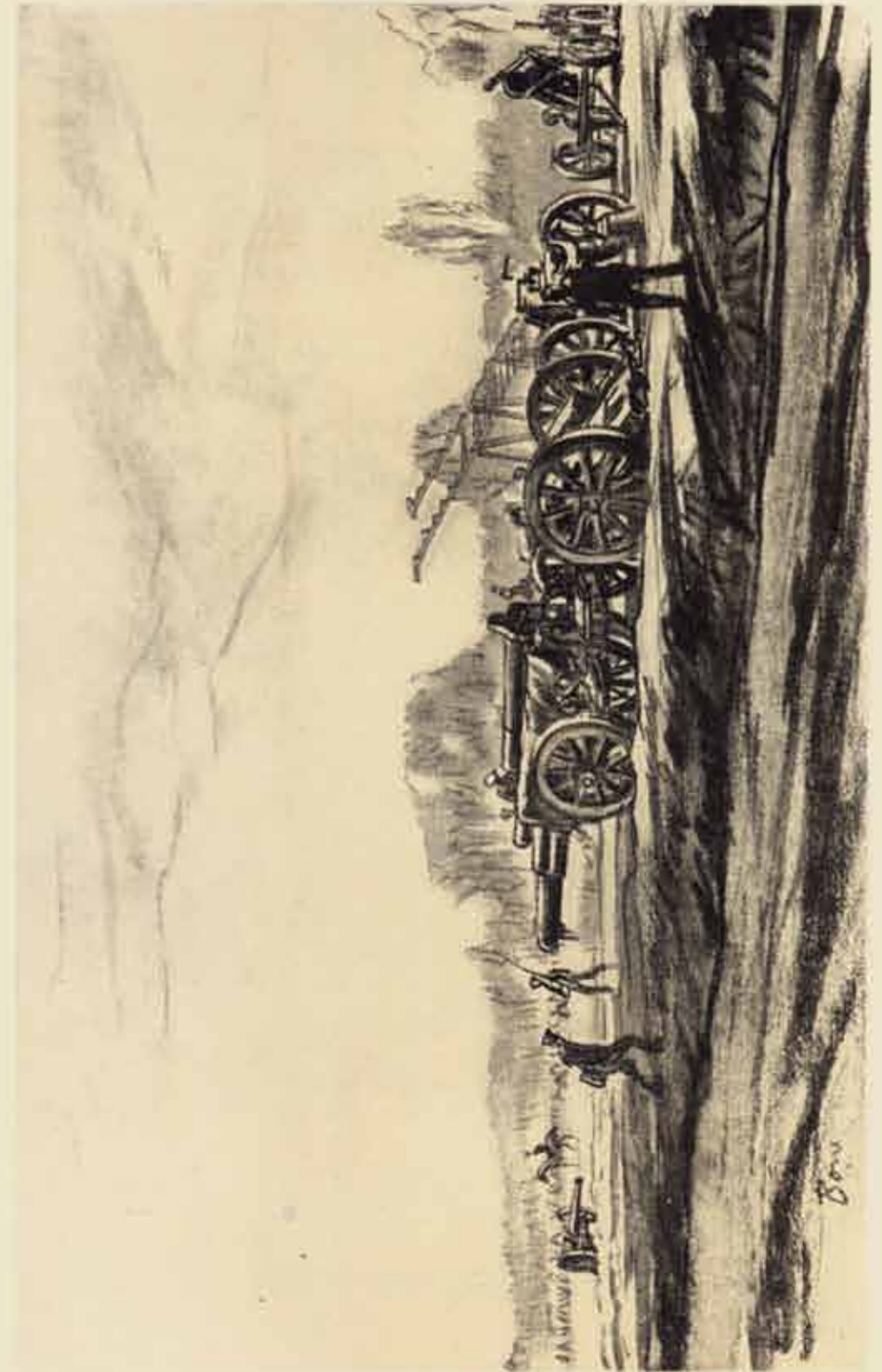




XIX

A GUN HOSPITAL

Many wounded or worn guns, of all calibres, are brought back for treatment to "hospitals" which do not fly the Red Cross. Here are a few invalided "heavies." The gun on the extreme right is the first British 9.2 that came to France. Like most of our heavy guns she has been christened by her crew and bears the punning inscription, "Lizzie, Somme Strafer."



## AN OBSERVATION POST

The lower part of the first of the ladders leading up to an artillery observation post in the top of a tall tree. It commanded a large part of the Somme battlefield until the summit ridge was won; every detail of several successful British advances could be watched from the tree-top. The battle has now left it far in the rear, and it is disused.





# The Western Front

Drawings by MUIRHEAD BONE

EDITION DE LUXE.      Size 20 by 15 inches.

A selection of Mr. Muirhead Bone's drawings on "The Western Front" will be published in facsimile on a larger scale than in this work. They will be reproduced in colours by a special process and printed on extra quality paper. The drawings will be published in a series of folios measuring 20 by 15 inches. Each folio, price 10s. 6d. net, will contain 10 plates. The following drawings will be included in Part I. of the Edition de Luxe :

1. GENERAL SIR DOUGLAS HAIG
2. DISTANT VIEW OF YPRES
3. GRAND' PLACE & VIEW OF THE CLOTH HALL, YPRES
4. BATTLE OF THE SOMME
5. OFFICERS OF THE GORDON HIGHLANDERS
6. A GUN HOSPITAL
7. THE TANKS
8. WATCHING OUR ARTILLERY FIRE ON TRONES WOOD FROM MONTAUBAN
9. AMIENS CATHEDRAL
10. THE NIGHT PICKET

Certain subjects will be obtainable separately at a cost of 2s. 6d. each

*A special large size facsimile reproduction, 28 by 20½ inches, of Mr. Muirhead Bone's Superb Drawing of the Tanks will be obtainable, price 5/- each net.*

---

## EXHIBITION OF DRAWINGS

Mr. Muirhead Bone's original drawings for the publication "THE WESTERN FRONT" will be exhibited in a London Gallery in January on behalf of the British Red Cross Fund. Further particulars will be announced in the Daily Press.

LONDON :  
PRINTED BY HUDSON & KEARNS, LTD.