

Letters from Soldiers

Campaigning in the Balkans — The Thirty-second Foot-Slogging.

An interesting letter from Pte. Tim Healy, 2nd Royal Irish Fusiliers, "Somewhere in the Balkans":—
Though not a Westralian myself, I take a great interest in all matters pertaining to the State, as my parents have been resident in that part of the Commonwealth for some years. I am a regular soldier myself, and have seen service in India (where I met Harry Smith, the "Cinema-Wallah," from Mount-street, Perth), and have been getting "The Sunday Times" regularly from my people at Victoria Park for the past five years. No one is more proud than myself of the gallant deeds performed by the Australians at Gallipoli (I have a young brother in the 16th Battalion), and it grieves me to hear that they have to leave the job unfinished, but perhaps that was for the best. At various times I have seen letters in your columns from Gallipoli, so I thought a scribble from the Balkans would be acceptable. (Most certainly.—"S.T.") Anyway, here goes. My division sailed from France after a year's hard fighting, including the battles of St. Eloi, Ypres, Armentieres and various other minor engagements. We had an exciting voyage, dodging submarines, and made our first halt at Lemnos, where we anchored for 24 hours. My brother was on the island at the time, but as I couldn't obtain permission to get ashore, I had to content myself by gazing wistfully for a whole day at the half-mile of "briny" that separated Jack and me and wondering

If you saw me this minute you'd blush
red with shame.
But never mind, Mary, 'twill soon be
all o'er,
And then I'll come back to Ould
Mourne once more,
And you'll keep the promise that you
made to me
Where the Mountains of Mourne
sweep down to the sea.

But, Mary, supposing I don't come at
all—
For there's always the chance that in
battle I'll fall—
Then you'll know that I died like the
rest of my race
Awaiting the foe with a smile on my
face.
But we'll trust in Him Who Reigns
High Above
To let me return to the colleen I love,
And, Mary, I know that you're praying
for me
Where the Mountains of Mourne
sweep down to the sea.

Extracts from a letter from Gunner
L. A. Sage, Australian Field Artil-
lery:—"Am now fully recovered from
my scratches and ready to take the
field. The people of England are very
kind to us. To give you an idea I
might mention that on one occasion
Queen Alexandra and the Grand
Duchess George of Russia waited on
us at table, and the kindness of the
nurses! We are soldiers, but these
women are making martyrs of them-
selves, the way they slave to make us
comfortable. The people themselves
cannot do enough for us, and in hos-
pital I used to get letters from people
I had never heard of. The other day
I was waited on at breakfast by a
lady who invited me to lunch with
her. You cannot imagine how I looked
when on my waiting friend's arriv-
ing home I found she had not less
than 30 servants at her command, and
was addressed as 'Your Grace.'"

Mrs. Slattery, of Thompson-road