

Post cart travelling in South Africa is not unpleasant; the cart is a light two-wheel vehicle, with a hood over it, and carries from four to six people. Four hardy horses travel at a good pace, which is very exhilarating; pillows and a luncheon basket, however, should always be carried, as it is difficult to procure food at the little Dutch hovels where you may stop to water the horses, and, as the cart has no springs, and the road is often a mere waggon track over the veldt, covered with ruts and boulders, over which the cart bumps and re-bounds like a cork, a pillow is a great comfort for a ten or twelve hours' journey, and for night travelling on the railway.

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Never shall I forget our first sensations, and how our spirits sank, when we came in sight of the camp which was to be our home. Low corrugated iron houses like sheds or barns in appearance, in some cases the walls built of mud bricks, baked in the sun, with iron roofs, and none more than one storey high, the mine on one side, and low stoney hills and barren veldts all around, with scarcely a vestige of vegetation, except the low scrub and bushes. The hill up which we were driven to the hospital appeared to be the rubbish heap of the camp. We were received on our arrival by a Nurse from a colonial hospital, who had been sent to take charge for three months until a Matron and Nurse could be procured. To English eyes, everything appeared poverty-stricken to a degree. We were conducted into the sitting-room, which had a boarded floor (most of the floors were of dried mud), but without a vestige of carpet or matting; there were two or three articles of furniture covered with very dirty cretonne, the walls also were sufficiently dirty, and the ceiling, a canvas one, through which, we afterwards found, the rain sometimes soaked. We had supper off the remains of a cold shoulder of mutton, and some very weak tea, and found, to our disgust, that there were only three knives and three tumblers, and other things in proportion, for the use of ourselves and the white patients.

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After supper, it being dark, the Nurse took a lantern to conduct us over the place, the Kafir wards being detached and situated on the slope of the hill at the back. The patients (native) lay in total darkness—we were told that they were never allowed lights—smoking their pipes, and expectorating about the earthen floor. We were glad to go to bed that night to rest our aching limbs, and to forget all the discomfort. Our bedrooms were boarded and ceiled, the only rooms in the Hospital which were so. We were aroused next morning by the clanking of chains, and discovered that native convicts came every morning, under the charge of a black guard, to clean the Kafir wards. There was only *one servant*

—a Kafir—to do the kitchen work and the most simple cooking.

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The Nurse, who had been in charge, left us a few days afterwards to return to her own Hospital, and the Matron immediately began to bring things into something like order and cleanliness—bottomless chairs were re-seated, furniture re-covered, cupboards turned out, and she paid a man out of her own pocket to colour-wash the walls of the sitting-room; native beds and blankets, which were full of all kinds of vermin, were washed and scoured. All was done at very little expense except that of soap and water; convict labour could be procurable for nothing, but as the convicts were very lazy, and the guards useless, they required to be goaded on to do anything. Patients soon began to flow in, but I need not here enter into details of the labour of the next few months; the Matron fell ill with what is known as "camp fever," and she had not been six weeks on her feet again before I was laid up with the same. Still, after a time, things began to work more smoothly. We found the people hospitable, and our own personal friends very kind. It was a free life, and a happy one, in spite of the hard work and annoyances of various kinds, from which we generally managed to extract a good deal of amusement.

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Travelling into the interior of South Africa has now been much facilitated by the completion of the railway from Cape Town, through the Free State to Johannesburg in the Transvaal, though, for the eastern provinces, it would probably be better to go *via* Natal or East London. On the high table-lands of the Orange Free State and Transvaal, although the summers are intensely hot, and the thinnest clothing of all kinds requisite as for India, yet the winter from beginning of May to end of August is often very cold, with bitter winds, sharp frosts at night, even snow sometimes being known, and the warmest clothing, even furs, are then a great comfort. This cold season is more felt after being a year or two in the country than at first. In the Colony, the temperature is more even.

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Clothing of all kinds is very expensive up country, especially dress materials and shoes; indeed, I think the most economical plan is to leave your measure with a dressmaker in England, and have dresses sent out as you require them. It is better that a Nurse going to the Colonies should be registered and a member of the R.B.N.A., as it gives her a recognised position among those who may know nothing of the respective merits of the various English hospitals. In conclusion, I would say that I think it a great mistake for any Nurse to go to South Africa *to be trained*; let her first secure a good English training, as that will be invaluable to her wherever she may go.

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