

## Interview with Sister Gray.

### NURSING ON THE HOSPITAL SHIP COROMANDEL.

SISTER GRAY, newly home from the Ashanti Expedition, was in her cosy little sitting-room in "Quarters" at the Coldstream Guards Hospital, and very kindly consented to give some Nursing details of the "bloodless" expedition now closed. So many readers of the RECORD followed with keen interest the meagre information which could be obtained on the Nursing of the troops that a chat with Sister Gray on the subject will assuredly be welcome.

"It was so nice to receive the NURSING RECORD while we were away," said Sister Gray.

"Every Nurse in England congratulates the Sisters on their safe return, and especially on the fact that the Expedition was so peaceful—"

"But the soldiers were so dreadfully disappointed, and you know I have been so long in the service that I feel just like one of them. So that while we did not want any serious wounds we should have liked a few superficial 'hurts' just to make the men happy. You can't imagine how down-hearted they felt that there was no chance of scars and broken bones. Up to the very end they hoped and hoped. Even on the homeward march, with King Prempeh and the Queen Mother prisoners, they did not lose all heart. They thought the natives would make an attempt to rescue their King, and then—well, we might have had some war patients."

"But you had plenty of invalids?"

"Oh, yes; but the soldiers were not content with fever, they wanted what they call 'something more real,' though Gold Coast fever would seem very real to most people."

As Sister Gray talks of her soldiers in her charming Scotch accent her face glows with enthusiasm and affection. "I have lived with them so long," she says, "that I can't help being attached to them." It is easy to realise why the soldiers are so devoted to this sympathetic Sister, who shares keenly their joys and sorrows and knows few other than military interests.

"At first all the soldiers were in such high spirits at the thought of action and so eager to be sent forward that they refused to "knock up"; but the fever seemed to seize quickly hold of them as they became depressed and out of spirits when a suspicion arose that the natives wouldn't show fight. The West Yorkshire Regiment, having been quartered for some time in India previously, suffered the most."

"Did any of the Sisters get fever?"

"We were very fortunate. One Sister had a temperature above 103°, but I said, 'Don't take your temperature again or you will be sure to feel worse!' And next day she was much better and the attack passed off. I did not feel ill till I came home; if you remember, the day we arrived was bitterly cold—such a change from the climate we had been in, and I took cold, but it is nearly gone now. Of course the Sisters had the advantage of being all the time on ship-board. We were anchored one and a-half miles from Cape Coast Castle, which is very malarial. And the sea breezes helped us wonderfully. The Base Hospital, with sixty beds, was at the Castle, and another one of the same size at Prahsu."

"A point very interesting to the Nurses is as to the special treatment of the fever cases."

"Of course the principal thing is to bring down the temperature. For this the first treatment is to give ice-cold enemata. Ice-cold sponging and packing is the next thing. And it is wonderful to see how the patients respond to these remedies. Oh, yes; we had loads of ice. Then, of course, the nourishment—usually milk and beef-tea—is most important. But the essential of nursing these cases is to watch the condition of the patient from hour to hour. Changes take place so rapidly that the patient may easily slip off if every change be not very carefully noted."

"Are there any lung complications?"

"I never saw or heard of the fever resulting in lung mischief. Every possible comfort was afforded to the patients on the ship, the diet was splendid, and it is impossible to speak too highly of the work of the medical staff. Throughout, their enthusiasm and devotion are beyond praise." In answer to an enquiry, "Oh, yes; stimulants were allowed to the fever patients, but not generally until they were to some extent on the mend. There was a great deal of delirium among them."

"Wasn't it too hot to wear your present uniform?"

"Indeed it was," said Sister Gray, smiling at the question. "We wore light grey *very* thin beige; we did not discard our Army scarlet cloaks, but we had them of the thinnest possible material. And 'handkerchief' caps were worn instead of those with 'bows' under the chin. The bows would soon have looked very raggy. The climate takes even the Scotch energy out of one," she concluded smilingly.

"Do you think by taking special precautions it is possible to reduce the risks of fever?"

"Yes, decidedly, in such a climate it is most important to wear flannel next the skin and cholera belts. That was the first thing we insisted on our patients doing. And at night

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