

### St. John Ambulance Brigade.

WE learn from the *Times* the following interesting facts concerning the report of the active service detachment of the St. John Ambulance Brigade during the recent crisis in the South African Republic. The Prince of Wales, it will be remembered, is Grand Prior of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, under whose direction the brigade works.

As soon as intelligence had been received that hostilities had broken out in the South African Republic, arrangements were made by Mr. J. A. Liebmann, Secretary-General in South Africa, for the despatch of Nurses and material for the relief of the wounded. An advertisement in the *Cape Times*, calling for volunteers, was answered by two ladies—Lady Ernestine Brudenel-Bruce and Mrs. E. Goodwin-Green—and by five gentlemen. It was clearly understood that the services of all members would be absolutely gratuitous, and that each one would pay his or her own personal expenses. The detachment received a free pass over the Cape Government Railways, and reached Pretoria on January 6th. Mr. Liebmann complains that at the Transvaal border the ladies of the detachment were subjected to the indignity of a personal search, notwithstanding that he showed to the officials General Goodenough's credential, and that even the equipment was searched by the Custom House officers. Sir Jacobus de Wet and Commandant-General Joubert heartily accepted the proffered services. It was decided that half of the detachment and stores should go to, and remain inside, Johannesburg, to be ready in case of emergency, and that the other half should proceed to Krugersdorp and remain there, with the burgher forces if necessary. Safe conduct was granted, and the Netherlands Railway Company not only sent the detachment free to Johannesburg and subsequently to Krugersdorp, but also refunded the cost of tickets from Viljoon's Drift to Pretoria, and conveyed them free of charge on the return journey from Krugersdorp to Vaal River Bridge.

As soon as arms were laid down, Mr. Liebmann proceeded to Krugersdorp, where he met Drs. Viljoen and Dyer, the medical officers in charge of the temporary field hospital, who eagerly accepted the help offered. At the temporary hospital there were at the date of arrival forty patients—35 of Dr. Jameson's men and five burghers. The members of the detachment were then assigned their various duties, and quarters were found for them. The report goes on to state:—

"The internal arrangements for the management of the Hospital left a great deal to be desired, a fact which was no doubt almost wholly due—first, to there being no responsible head on the medical staff; and secondly, to the fact that the person who figured as Matron had absolutely no previous experience of Nursing or Hospital management. To mention merely one amongst many things—instead of there being proper days and hours set apart for visitors, the patients were disturbed, worried, and annoyed by people who came to the Hospital purely out of morbid curiosity at all hours of the day and evening, evidently regarding the sufferers in the light of imprisoned wild beasts and the Hospital itself as a cheap kind of raree show."

With regard to the wounds received by Dr. Jameson's men and the burghers, the following interesting points may be noted:—"As regards the nature of the wounds, there were no incised wounds, neither bayonets nor swords having been used. All injuries were gun-shot wounds. Those made by the Lee-Metford were much cleaner and healed much quicker, almost all by first intention. One burgher, shot through the lungs, left the Hospital a few days after admission, convalescent. The entrance orifice of the bullets was exceedingly small, and few of the larger vessels having been divided, the hæmorrhage was, in consequence, slight, the wound closing almost immediately on itself. The exit was about the size of the entrance, and in all cases was much smaller than that made by the Martini. Where the bullet, however, had struck the bone (as in the head wound of a burgher) it completely shattered it. The wounds inflicted by the Martini were of a much more serious nature—viz., larger, jagged, slow-healing, with bad entrance and worse exit." "Judging from personal observation," Mr. Liebmann says, "I should say that there cannot be a doubt that the Lee-Metford bullet is inferior to the now antiquated Martini as a 'manslaying' projectile. It certainly has not the power which it should possess of putting a man *hors de combat*. Dr. Viljoen, district surgeon, Krugersdorp, reported to me that some of Dr. Jameson's men had what he called 'explosive' bullets. I have been given to understand that specimens of these bullets have been forwarded to all the Consuls of foreign nations at Pretoria." Mr. Liebmann, after an examination which he describes, denies that the bullets were explosive, and adds:—"I have entered in some detail into this question, as I think it best that the lie regarding explosive bullets should be strangled officially and at once, and no room left for the slightest doubt as to the nature of the projectiles used."

On January 21st eleven wounded were transported from Krugersdorp to Pretoria. "Absolutely no arrangements had been made for the reception of the patients at the railway station by the Pretoria Hospital authorities, although I was informed by Dr. Mehliss that telegraphic information had been despatched to Pretoria, notifying the arrival of the wounded. Not a waggon, not a stretcher, not an attendant was there, and had it not been for the equipment that the detachment took up and used on this occasion, the condition of the wounded would have been pitiable indeed. Three of the wounded succumbed to their injuries during our service at Krugersdorp." Mr. Liebmann expresses his thanks to the officials of the Cape Government Railways, especially to Mr. T. R. Price and to Mr. Moore, and to Mr. Platen of the Netherlands Railway, who did everything to facilitate and expedite the transport of men and stores, and to Dr. Viljoen and to Dr. J. E. Dyer, for the unvarying kindness and courtesy shown to the detachment at all times. Before he left the Hospital the doctors addressed letters to Mr. Liebmann speaking of his help as invaluable and the zeal of the detachment as untiring. The detachment returned to Cape Town in February, after thanking General Joubert for the facilities afforded them and the courtesy and kindness with which they had been treated.

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