

The Medical Service of the Soudan Expedition.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *British Medical Journal* while defending in the main the medical organization during the Soudan war, makes the following remarks: "The fact of the matter is that our little wars, with only a handful of sick and wounded men to be dealt with, have rather spoiled both officers and men, who expect the luxuries of civilization in the heart of the Soudan. War cannot be made with rose-water, and should we ever engage in a European war, the sick and wounded may have to learn a sad lesson of real suffering and privation, when the number of wounded to be dealt with may be so great that hours, if not days, may elapse before they can all be attended to. Such complaints as deficiency of champagne in the field, and that the personal appearance of the nurses at the base did not entirely satisfy the sick and wounded officers, have, it is stated, been made, but the latter, at any rate, is probably a joke. There is one point, however, on which we would strongly insist, and that is that general officers who cut down medical requirements should take their full share of the responsibility when the medical organization is attacked. It is unjust to the Medical Service that such attacks should be published, that no official inquiry is made, and that the authority really responsible should maintain a judicious silence. The medical organization of any expedition is submitted in detail to the general officer commanding, and it is rarely that medical requirements are approved in their entirety. If, in the first phase, of the Khartoum Expedition, the medical staff was insufficient, the responsibility rests with the Sirdar, unless he can prove that the demands of the medical authorities were met in full.

General Russell rightly remarks, 'Success is the first consideration in military operations.' If a general officer considers that to obtain this success involves a reduction in the *personnel* and *materiel* of the Medical Department, it is his duty to decide, but the responsibility is also his, and if afterwards the Medical Department be attacked, it is his duty to come forward and bear this responsibility.

The lesson of the Egyptian War of 1882 will not easily be forgotten by the Medical Department of the Army. It was the military authorities who decided that the base hospitals should be established at Goza and Cyprus; it was the military authorities who left the ship *Carthage* at Alexandria when the entire force was moved round to Ismailia; and it was the military authorities who, in ignorance of the difference between a field and a base hospital, most unjustly cast the entire

blame of inevitable shortcomings on the medical department. This is not likely to happen again, and not only will the medical requirements of the present expedition leave nothing to be desired, but Surgeon-General Taylor, the principal medical officer of the force, will see that his reasonable requirements are complied with, and if not, will fix the blame where it is due."

At Rest.

MEMBERS of the Registered Nurses' Society will learn with unfeigned regret of the death of Miss Marie Gibson, the Assistant Secretary of their Society. They will be glad to know that a member of the Society she has served so faithfully and well was with Miss Gibson when she died, in the early hours of the morning on Monday last. It became evident some eighteen months ago that Miss Gibson had pulmonary tubercular disease, and the whole of this year she has been increasingly ill. For the last two months, she has been a patient in a Nursing Home, in Beaumont Street, where she has had every care and attention, and as she became more seriously ill, and needed special nurses, members of the Registered Nurses' Society willingly undertook this duty. For the last three weeks, Sister Lidyard has been with her during the day, and the night duty has been undertaken by Sisters Cartwright, Warriner, and Fawkes, by all of whom "dear little Gibbie" was held in deep affection.

It is not too much to say that the Registered Nurses' Society owes a great debt to Miss Gibson's fidelity to its interests. In its early days, when, owing to the treachery of others, the Society was passing through a grave crisis, Miss Gibson, was invited to desert her duty, but refused to betray the Society. To the very last, her interest in the welfare of the Society and all its members was deep and keen, and with her death the Registered Nurses lose a most true friend. Those who knew Miss Gibson, could not fail to respect and love her. Her quiet, steady, conscientious, devotion to duty compelled warm admiration, while her modest and unassuming manner was refreshing in these days of show and pushfulness. Those who nursed her, tell how, throughout her long and trying illness, her quiet, gentle ways were maintained in an unusual degree. "She is not a bit of trouble, and is always contented," her nurses said of her. To the last day, she enjoyed seeing her intimate friends, and always gave them a bright welcome. To her personal friends she endeared herself by her many lovable qualities, and for them the world will be the poorer that she has left it.

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