

their efficiency, by the care and attention shown to the sick and wounded, and by their general appearance of comfort. I can assure you that all branches of the Service have been loud in their praise of the way that the sick and wounded were looked after both in the hospitals and on the field, and I may tell you that I have not heard a single adverse criticism with regard to the working of the medical arrangements." The Director-General in a Special Order, has recorded his extreme appreciation of the services rendered by the Corps which have earned this commendation. We may, perhaps, be permitted to add our congratulations to the Director-General, Surgeon-General Jameson, C.B., and the officers of his staff, upon whom fell the duty of making the preliminary arrangements in this country."

THE SEAMY SIDE OF WAR.*

(From a Lay Correspondent.)

THE RECENT SOUDAN EXPEDITIONS.

Now that every eulogistic epithet has been exhausted in describing the brilliant achievements in the Sudan, it may interest some of the public to turn for a short space towards the seamy side of the campaign just completed.

THE FIRST ADVANCE: ATBARA.

After the battle of the Atbara last spring, indignant protests were heard against the insufficient provision that had been made for sick and wounded. The British brigade of four battalions numbered over 3,000 men. For this force one principal medical officer, six surgeons, and about sixteen orderlies were considered adequate, whereas there should have been at least thirty of the former and 120 of the latter. Protests in the proper quarters were repeatedly made, but unheeded. Requisitions for further staff were not forwarded or recommended. The state of affairs however, came to the knowledge of Sir Francis Grenfell in Cairo, who despatched additional detachments, which would have reached the front in ample time for the battle; but at Assouan, the confines of the Sirdar's jurisdiction, these were met with the information that their services were not required, and that permission to proceed would be withheld. This it would seem was done solely to save expense and to economise transport. The old foolish policy, and a selfish one.

The British brigade at the Atbara suffered 120 casualties, many of them being extremely serious and ultimately fatal. One of the surgeons had been sent down a few days previously in charge of a sick convoy, leaving therefore only five with a handful of orderlies to be present at the battle. They worked all day like heroes, but it was unfair upon them to set them such a task manifestly beyond their powers to cope with properly. Like the rest of the force they had marched the eleven miles through the previous night, then came the fight at daybreak, and at 4 p.m., owing to military exigencies, the whole army had to march back the 11 miles, the more slightly wounded being carried in cacolets on camels, the remainder by native soldiers, who being wholly unaccustomed to such duties, and having to traverse very rough ground, let their burdens slip and fall, causing tortures to the sufferers. Some

battalions volunteered to carry their own wounded but were not allowed, though the services of company officers and men had been gratefully accepted, and indeed were indispensable in rendering such assistance as they could on the field, by carrying the wounded into shady spots, giving them beef-tea, etc., out of their private stores. This and similar necessary comforts were sadly deficient, even if there had been hands available to cook, but all were too well employed in dressing wounds, etc. This melancholy convoy did not cover the 11 miles till 2 a.m. on the following morning. The medical staff, by this time fairly exhausted, again attended as far as possible, to the more urgent cases, and the march was resumed on the same day and the next, till the 40 miles to Atbara Camp Hospital were accomplished. Here, being so shorthanded, fatigue parties had to be told off for hospital work, washing the wounds, their officers themselves helping to do what they could, for the surgeons and orderlies were absolutely overworked and deadbeat. Let us imagine what would have happened if even one of the five medical officers had been wounded, for all took their chance in the fighting line; or had our casualties been greater. Had they been doubled, for instance, the lamentable consequences would have been appalling.

The Egyptian cases, which brought the total up to 500, were in yet worse plight, their very much smaller medical staff being absolutely unable to tackle the demands made upon them. They were natives, it is true, and accustomed to hardship; but a wounded man of whatever race deserves the relief to suffering, which the skill of the surgeon, and the attention of trained orderlies can alone afford. Moreover, the English officers of the Egyptian force are dependent upon the hospital arrangements of the Egyptian army. Authorities who have never had other than native troops under their command, seem either to grow callous or under-value human lives, and when they suddenly find themselves with British soldiers added to their force appear apt to ignore or forget the considerably higher value with which Tommy Atkins's life and usefulness are regarded.

THE SECOND ADVANCE: OMDURMAN.

When the above facts came to the knowledge of the Home Government, it put its foot down and rightly insisted, regardless of all opposition and false economy, that steps should be taken to prevent the recurrence of such defects in the advance on Omdurman. Consequently over 80 surgeons and about 250 orderlies were ordered from England to supplement those already in Egypt. This, after amply supplying all the hospitals on the lines of communication, left 70 medical officers and about 200 men to accompany the British brigades at the front. This was a lavish allowance. September 2nd dawned, and found all ready in their places. There were three completely equipped hospital barges, with medical officers, orderlies, and every comfort on board. Let us try to judge of the consternation caused when it was discovered just before the battle began that these three barges with all their staffs had been ordered across the river for some inexplicable reason. There was no steamer available to bring them back. All preparations and forethought were thus completely thwarted. There was still the field hospital and one installed in a mud house in thorough working order; into these and under a large tree the wounded were

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[previous page](#)

[next page](#)