

promptly brought, receiving within ten minutes every possible care and attention, all wounds dressed, etc.

Then came an order that as the whole force had to advance at once to Omdurman, the hospital tents must be immediately struck, everything packed up and loaded on their camels, and the wounded cleared out within five minutes. Where were they to go? By a providential chance there happened to be moored to the bank a barge stacked with artillery ammunition. On to this our 145 wounded were hastily carried, and thus effectually separated from all medical comforts except a few tins of bovril, which could be brought on board. However, beyond spirit lamps there was no means of cooking, consequently the majority of cases, many requiring all the support they could obtain during their first hours, were obliged to go without till 10 the next morning. To add to their discomfort, Egyptian soldiers came to fetch ammunition, yelling to each other in the way all that have ever been in the East know too well. They stumbled over our men in their frantic haste; the boxes fell about, some opened but of course this was war and not a quiet sick room. The wounded Lancers were now finding their way down to the barge, and by the end of the second fight not another man could have been squeezed on board. They were simply packed like sardines. The digging of the graves had to be abandoned for lack of time and hands, the dead had to be placed along with the living on the barge to prevent mutilation, and there they remained emitting sickening effluvia till the following day, when they were buried at Omdurman.

There was an extraordinary obliviousness in not appreciating the fact that the Dervishes were again coming on, and if they had at all succeeded, or had delayed their second attack until our force advanced nearer to Omdurman, the whole of the hospital and baggage camels, left entirely unprotected, must have been sacrificed, as even the Reserve brigade had followed with the rest, the gunboats were accompanying the army upstream, there was literally nothing to prevent a handful of Dervish riflemen despatching our wounded, even if, as was actually suggested in case of molestation, the barge might be poled off into mid-stream, and drift—rudderless of course—northwards with a current going at the rate of 5 miles an hour. Northward they would have found no protecting gunboat or troops of any kind, and could perfectly easily have been "potted" from the bank by any stray enemy. As it was, numbers of Baggara horsemen actually came and watered within 400 yards of the barge, causing the greatest uneasiness to those in charge. Mercifully for us, the attack was delivered when it was, on the rear brigade, which fortunately happened to be General Macdonald's, and he was able to drive it off, defeating them. So the barge remained at least unmolested, and towards evening a tardy steamer towed it up first beyond Omdurman, then down again, eventually tying it up close to the town walls, inside of which the din and yells went on all night. Officers and men had of course only the deck to lie on, till native beds were procured next day. There were only three or four surgeons with orderlies to attend to the 145 wounded. The operations had to be performed on irregular piles of ammunition boxes without any protection; the breeze blew away the chloroform as it was being administered, and the thin planks overhead, even if they have been joined together, would have afforded insufficient protection against the

piercing rays of a burning sun, when the temperature registered 119° in the shade. The three equipped hospital barges never appeared till next day, when it was considered undesirable to move the worst cases again, so they were afterwards used for conveying the sick down the river. The officers unfortunately could not get their valises or clothes, though the barge did not leave camp till 6 a.m. on September 4th, and only had such change of garments as their friends were able to supply them out of their own scanty wardrobes.

The Egyptian Brigades of course fared worse. They had station and field hospitals, and at the front a principal medical officer, one senior medical officer, and four surgeons. There were also native surgeons, but British officers in the Egyptian Army naturally do not care about being treated by them for a serious injury. Their wounded were carried down and laid on the bank, and afterwards put on stray barges. With the best will in the world it was impossible to dress all their wounds, and they complained bitterly through the night of not having had any attention.

By Government agreement English officers serving in the Egyptian Army are not rationed, and this applies equally when they are in hospital. Consequently they had to provide their own beef tea, milk, etc., sharing their small stores as far as possible with their men. Later on in the day their barges were towed up and down the river to Omdurman. A week afterwards the surgeon in charge of a badly wounded officer, absolutely declined the responsibility of allowing him to travel as ordered on a terribly dirty and overcrowded old Dervish steamer, where there was no shelter and not a square yard of space available, so he was brought down in comfort on another steamer.

The British officers cannot speak in high enough terms of the unflagging care and attention they and the men received from the surgeons on the voyage down and in the hospital at Abadia. They all agreed that nothing could have been kinder, and, under all the circumstances, no arrangements better for their comfort, everything being perfectly equipped and well ordered.

Those who, on arrival at Assouan, found the *Mayflower*, with its nurses and luxuries on board, provided by the National Aid Society were overflowing with its praises, whilst the men expressed their desire to continue voyaging up and down the river on it till perfectly cured, a request which obviously had to be refused, as the boat had to return at once from Cairo to fetch further convoys from the front."

### A Roman Hospital.

THE discovery of a "hospital" amongst the Roman ruins at Baden, in Canton Aargau, is of considerable interest, because we possess no literary document, Greek or Roman, which throws light upon the question whether the Ancients had any institutions corresponding to our hospitals. though Hippocrates, speaks of his observations upon the sick persons in the Temple of Æsculapius. The excavations at Baden have laid bare a building containing fourteen small rooms, together with a number of articles which evidently served for the use of Roman physicians and surgeons, as pincettes, tubes, spatulas, spoons, measures, caustics, ointment boxes, &c. The experts conclude that these "finds" indicate the building to have served as the hospital for the Fourth and Fifth Legions, which had their standing quarters on the spot.

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