

### Army Nursing Notes.

Some idea of the tortures which our sick soldiers suffer in South Africa can be gathered from the graphic account given in a letter home by Mrs. A. W. Bowers, in describing her visits to the hospital at De Aar. This lady describes the pitiable plight of the sick and wounded lying on the floor without beds, undivested of their military clothing, their outer coat rolled up to serve as a pillow, and, from lack of soap and other necessities, remaining unwashed. From her letter we gather that these poor fellows were entirely dependent upon male nursing, with the exception of the kindly amateur assistance given by women in the town. This letter, which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*, has naturally aroused the sympathy of those at home, and Mrs. Bowers' mother, to whom the letter was addressed says that, not only will pillows be gratefully accepted, but also d'oyleys, serviettes, and paper fans. The hospital is positively swarming with flies, which drop into basins and jugs containing delicacies for the patients, and this can only be prevented by covering the vessels with d'oyleys, etc., which also give the room and the food a more pleasing appearance. The patients, particularly the very weak, are greatly tormented by the flies on their faces, and it is possible that with paper fans, which are so very light, these merciless pests could be beaten off by the sufferers. Then, again, the hospital is not provided with anything like a sufficient supply of soap, and the poor fellows lie abed unwashed for days at a stretch. If the articles enumerated were sent by sympathisers in this country to Mrs. A. W. Bowers, 85, De Aar, South Africa, they would, we are assured, be gladly accepted by the hospital authorities.

The *Daily Mail* deserves well of the nation, and the Absent-minded Beggar corps which speeds the parting soldier at Southampton, and welcomes him from South Africa on arrival home, was a novel and practical suggestion of the brilliant Editor, which once more shames the almost criminal incapacity of those who staff our War Office. We learn, from the *Daily Mail* of Tuesday, that:—

The A.M.B. had a busy time at Southampton yesterday, when 208 sick and wounded were landed from the transport Canada. The men had been told at St. Vincent what to expect when they arrived at Southampton, and no sooner had they hopped or limped down the gangway than they made for the free telegram office. Then they proceeded to breakfast, and made short work of the steaming hot soup and coffee. Fifty-four men, shivering in khaki, were given great coats, and a couple of dozen men unable to walk without assistance were presented with walking sticks. Scarcely a man among them had a single thick undergarment, and

they regarded the bundles of warm clothing distributed to each one of them as veritable godsend. Some had not even boots to walk ashore in, and these were, of course, supplied. There were warm blankets for the stretcher cases (of which there were eight), and A.M.B. cigarettes for all.

Under these circumstances we are not surprised to read of the following reports of deaths at sea:—

3399 Pte. E. Lafford, 2nd Gloucester Rgt., from Pneumonia, Jan. 11, on board s.s. Kildonan Castle.  
14428 Driver C. Rye, 76th Bn. Rl. Fd. Arty., from Pneumonia, Jan. 17th, on board s.s. Cymric.  
2517 Pte. R. Quick, 2nd Gloucester Rgt., from Pneumonia, Jan. 11th, on board s.s. Cymric.  
1995 Pte. R. Oakley, 2nd Gloucester Rgt., from Pneumonia, Jan. 13th, on board s.s. Cymric.

We learn that Lord Roberts is interesting himself in the welfare of our soldiers at Cape Town, and he could not do better than order that every sick soldier, shipped for home, should be provided with an outfit of warm clothing to reduce his present chances of dying at sea of pneumonia after convalescence from wounds suffered in the defence of our Empire.

News has been received of the arrival of the *Maine* at Cape Town on Sunday last. This is most welcome tidings, as, since the information of her bad journey to Las Palmas has been made public, there has been considerable concern in nursing circles as to her welfare. She left London on December 23rd, and arrived at Cape Town on the 21st of January. She has, therefore, been twenty-nine days making the journey, which can be accomplished in seventeen days by a good steamer. We hope that the War Office will learn the wisdom of trying the sea-going capacity of hospital ships by a trial trip, and will not, in future, send them on a long voyage straight out of dock before their fitness and safety have been tested.

Advices from Pretoria state that enteric fever is making terrible ravages there.

A nurse in the Estcourt Hospital writes of the Beacon Hill fight:—"The East Surrey were in a dip and the West Surrey mistook them for Boers and fired upon them. And now the West Surrey keep coming all day, bringing presents for the wounded men, and when they hear the groans they turn away, saying, 'God forgive us! That is our work!'"

The supply of shirts in Maritzburg Hospital ran so short at one time that the wounded had to be dressed in "Nightingales" with frills round the neck. The men were intensely amused at these garments, and begged leave to keep them as mementoes.

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