

Greenock under the name of the *General Werder* in 1874 for the North German Lloyd Company. She was afterwards turned into a tourist yacht under the name of the *Midnight Sun*, and her latest owners in that character were Messrs. Lunn and Perowne. New engines and boilers were put into her in 1893. This rather lends colour to the suggestion that the vessel is not in all respects precisely up to date. That, of course, does not prove that she is not perfectly fit for the work she is now doing. But in view of what has been said, I think it might be well if the committee in charge of the ship took the present opportunity of having her thoroughly surveyed and overhauled."

The *British Medical Journal* has secured a very intelligent and candid special correspondent at Cape Town, who has the moral courage to courteously point out "one or two directions in which the military machinery is showing signs of strain."

Writing last week of the Station Hospital at Cape Town, he says:—

"The station hospital has to-day about 350 patients, with accommodation in marquees available for another 150 or more—that is, it is practically a general hospital. But a general hospital has a staff calculated for 520 beds. The station hospital has a staff for about half that number, and owing to the exigencies of the war has gone on expanding and expanding until the work is fairly beyond the power of the staff. The medical officer in charge has no secretary, no divisional officers, only a small staff of civil surgeons, of whom only one has had any military experience, and who are, moreover, being constantly changed. He has 37 of the R.A.M.C. all told, including sergeant-major and clerks. There are in addition 24 R.A.M.C. belonging to other units (but these are constantly being withdrawn)—1 man from the Militia Medical Staff Corps, 23 of the Cape Medical Staff Corps, 9 St. John men from England, and 11 others. But it must be remembered that none of these, except the R.A.M.C., are fully trained, and that fatigues are exceptionally heavy, mainly owing to the constant transfer of patients from one part to another, and to the constant erection and re-erection of marquees in the attempt to adjust the accommodation to the exigencies of the patients. The number of men on fatigue duty daily has of late been on an average 25. Beside 2 wardmasters, 19 or 20 special night orderlies are regularly detailed. This means three nights in bed for the staff, and even then four of the proper wards, two detached huts (80 beds), two quite detached iron huts (80 beds), a marquee camp (at a long distance away with 90 patients), and sundry marquees are without any attendant after five p.m. It is true that every effort is made to put the more serious cases into the better attended wards; but, carry that as far as you may, the wards left to themselves at night contain many cases for whom supervision is necessary. Discipline, of course, must go to the wall, and even this attenuated staff is being depleted by the transfer of a sergeant and four corporals to the two additional companies of the Cape Medical Staff Corps now being raised. These are for

bearer purposes, and the material coming forward appears to me to be indifferent. To add to the difficulty, the already overworked orderly officers at the station hospital are charged with the duty of examining numbers of recruits.

NEED FOR MORE ORDERLIES AND NURSES.

I blame no local authority for all this. The Medical Department has no real reserve, and the material for replenishing is not forthcoming. You can easily make a good light horse trooper out of your average colonial, but the same does not hold good on the medical side.

Weighty as are the objections to nurses, the weightiest being the difficulty of accommodating them, I see no way out of the trouble but falling back upon the colonial nurses. Three nursing sisters, Miss Thomas of the Army Nursing Service, and two volunteers (Mrs. Bond and Mrs. Withycombe) have just joined, and are working in the enteric and pneumonia wards."

The "Colonial nurses" in Cape Colony must feel highly honoured at the suggestion that their services should be utilised as a *dernier resort*! But surely trained nurses are needed in the station hospitals at any price—we have said so all along.

Private letters throw side lights on the nursing question at the front; but as there is an unwritten law that no Sister shall express an opinion for publication, one is not justified in making public their views. Everything points to the necessity for a Superintendent of a Nursing Department at the Cape, and as the War Office has failed to provide for the maintenance of discipline amongst the army of nurses sent to South Africa, those responsible have only themselves to blame for the lack of organization which has resulted.

It is reported that a case of bubonic plague has occurred at Cape Town, on a transport from Rosario. Should this dreaded disease obtain a foothold at the Cape at the present time, the situation will, indeed, be a serious one.

TO OUR HEROES—GREETINGS.

Throughout our Empire's breadth a glory lies,
Born not alone of Prowess, Fire, and Blood.
O wasted band of heroes! who withstood
Want, Famine, and Despair; before your eyes
Gleamed Mirage of Relief: which ever fled.
Yet calm you waited; with prophetic sight
Piercing beyond that region of the Dead.
Hard pressed, to conquer through enduring night;
And you, our men, who with undaunted will
Scaled frowning steeps—braved bullets' murd'rous
hail,
Against whom Art and Craft could not prevail;
Who fell back, but to charge with greater skill.
O Victors all! a tribute at your feet
An Empire lays, with proud, glad eyes to scan
The noble ends which made your victory sweet—
Faith, Honour, Duty, Brotherhood to Man.

E. K. P.

—From the "Westminster Gazette."

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