

We hope some of the other surgeons at the front will have the courage to tackle this army nursing question; the fact that trained nurses have largely been selected for active service in this war by unprofessional persons, cannot be too severely condemned, and the leaders of the nursing profession have absolutely no confidence in, or respect for the majority of those persons who compose the Committee of the Army Nursing Service Reserve. The organization of the whole thing, as it stands, was a hole and corner business, the medical members having earned notoriety by their unjust and co-ercive attitude towards nurses when acting as members of the Executive Committee of the Royal British Nurses' Association. This little clique must be removed, sooner or later, from all control in nursing affairs,—if efficiency is to be the result.

The scandal to which Sir Alfred Milner discreetly referred in his dispatch last week, has assumed disgraceful proportions in Cape Town, says the *Empire*. The city is infested with nurses whose zeal outruns their discretion, and with women who are nurses only in name. Idle "society" women have invaded the principal coast towns and organized a sort of tourist campaign, in which certain "popular" officers were "contained," and finally captured. The notorious wife of a notorious peer was recently sent back to London in consequence of conduct which was too outrageous even for those feather-brained officers who regard the campaign as a picnic of huge proportions. This lady exchanged the nurses' costume in which she had masqueraded for the uniform of a complacent admirer. Finally, Lord Kitchener sent her home, after she had played many mad pranks.

Unfortunately, she was only one of scores of rich and idle women who went out to "see some fun," and who have not been at all squeamish in the selection of their amusements. It would be no exaggeration to say their conduct has been so scandalous that it has positively shocked all those devoted British ladies who have made heavy sacrifices in order to remain in South Africa to alleviate the sufferings of our soldiers. The Boers are naturally making some bitter remarks. No wonder Sir Alfred Milner is indignant!

The *Australasian* has a picture of the Victorian Nurse Corps taken on board ship, in uniform, and very well they look. They wear grey and scarlet, with the Red Cross on the arm; the pose of Sister Rawson, in the centre, her sweet face downcast, framed in beautiful white hair, is quite evangelistic.

A death from typhus fever is reported from

Pretoria amongst the prisoners. It is to be sincerely hoped it may prove an isolated case.

The articles appearing in the *Daily Mail* from the graphic pen of Mr. Rudyard Kipling, should be read by everyone interested in the nursing of our wounded, and that means that they will be devoured by half the world.

Mr. Kipling writes from "Number Three," the Red Cross Hospital Train, which he accompanied through Cape Colony to pick up the wounded from Lord Roberts' advance on Bloemfontein, and he brings the misery and the suffering and the greatness and the pluck of "Tommie" before us in a flash.

As the wounded are brought in, it is questioned:—

"Were there any sick?"

There were no sick, and the doctors thanked Heaven. They would sooner bring down three trains of wounded than one of sick.

Dysentery that milks the heart out of a man and shames him before his kind; rheumatism, which is the seven devils of toothache, in the marrow of your bones; typhoid of the loaded breath and the silly eye, incontinent and consuming; pneumonia that stabs in the back and drives the poor soul, suffocating and bewildered, through all the hells of delirium—we are clear of these for this journey.

The clean aseptic bullet-kiss and the shell-splinter is all our care."

What "third-year man" could, in a few words, thus demonstrate the signs of disease?

And who does not recognise the useful official autocracy of the average Nursing Sisters in the following little scene?—

"Please, sister, there's a colonel hoppin' about the alley-way."

A sister advances to cut him off. Mere doctors are helpless here. They dare not herd colonels like ostriches. Besides he has one sound leg. He says so.

"But you are to get on to your back and lie down," is the order.

"But, please sister, I feel quite fit."

"But I say so."

A wave of the hand eliminates the colonel. He will hop no more to-night.

Mr. Kipling does not admire the uniform of our Army Nursing Sisters. He says:—"In civilization their uniform is hideous, but out here one sees the use of the square-cut vermilion cape. Everything else is dust-coloured, so a man does not ask where a Sister may be. She leaps to the eye across all the camp." As the copybook states, "It is better to be good than pretty," or, in other words, "It is better that a uniform should be useful rather than ornamental." For ourselves, we much admire the scarlet and grey of our regulars, but the coarse blue cloak and garish red-lined hood of the Reserve, is lacking in taste and utility where dust abounds.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)