

More about the "Maine."

A CHAT WITH Mr. ELLSWORTH & Mr. NASH.

MR. ELLSWORTH and Mr. Nash, graduate nurses of the Mills Training School, Bellevue Hospital, New York, who have just returned on board the American hospital ship *Maine*, were very full of news when a representative of the NURSING RECORD called upon them in the hope of hearing something of their recent experiences. It is most evident that these male nurses are most keenly interested in their work from a professional point of view, and highly competent to perform it. Their views on nursing matters are extremely interesting, for it must not be forgotten that in this country the thoroughly trained male nurse does not exist.

"You have heard what a terrible time we had in the Bay on the way out," said Mr. Ellsworth, "but after Las Palmas we had a delightful voyage to the Cape. When we arrived there we found a great deal going on, Lord Roberts had just arrived, and everyone was astir. The American ladies there entertained us at a reception at the Mount Nelson House Hotel, the whole of the nursing staff of the ship was invited. We took up with us from the Cape to Durban four British surgeons, and ten nurses. We had it rough for a while after we left the Cape. The storm disabled the awning of the aft deck, and bent the railings. Not as bad as the Bay do you say? Well, of course, the bad weather did not last so long, but while it lasted it was as bad as anything I have ever seen. The hail storm was frightful.

When we got to Durban we lay in the harbour for a week, and a few alterations were made in the ship before we received any patients. On February 5th we took on board 61 patients from Pietermaritzburg. They were mostly gun-shot wounds, surgical cases, rheumatism and dysentery. The way the wounds healed was marvellous. Some of the patients were shot through the head, in another the bullet passed through the thigh and out below the knee and then something turned its course and it again entered the knee lower down." Here Mr. Nash produced a piece of shell which he had discovered, and removed, in a chest wound in a patient under his care. A small but evil, jagged, looking thing. No wonder the wound refused to heal, and suggested exploration with a probe. In the case of another patient the bullet entered the upper middle third of the left arm, and lodged one inch from the heart. The man was anxious to have it removed, and to take it home as a memento of the fight, but the doctors decided that it would be dangerous to remove it, so he brought it home

another way, but he made an excellent recovery. Other cases, again, were shot through the lungs. On the 7th February, 78 more cases (mostly surgical) were received from Maritzburg by the Red Cross train. From this time the wards were kept filled until the ship left for home. The staff were very busy for the last week with new admissions, and transfers from the other hospital ships, the *Nubia* and the *Lismore Castle*, in the harbour. The patients were very pleased with their beds, and, indeed, with most things. "What did we think of the British soldier as a patient? He is a very good one, cheerful and contented with all that is done for him, and not in the least exacting." Those on regular diet had their meals at 8, 12, and 5, with biscuits at 8.30 p.m. Those who were on light diet had also broth at 10 and milk at 3, while those on fluid diet were fed every two hours. Patients who were allowed up turned in at 9 o'clock and were called at 7 in the morning. Mr. Ellsworth and Mr. Nash with Mr. Kuder were responsible for the nursing (both day and night) of the *Columbia* ward, containing 56 beds. The surgeon at first was Major Cabell, but, when he returned to the United States, Dr. Weber took charge. At first there were as many as 24 surgical dressings a day to be done. The *Britannia* ward was in charge of Dr. Rodman, the nurses were Mr. Hastings on the port side, and Mr. Gillies on the starboard side, and Mr. Bates and Mr. Ruth were on night duty. The *Whitelaw Reid* ward was nursed by Sisters Macpherson and MacVean with Mr. Austin on night duty, and the officers' ward, which was in Dr. Weber's charge by Sisters Manley and Ludekens, Mr. Reilly being the night nurse. Mr. McClintock had charge of the operating theatre.

It is interesting to learn that the cases of dysentery did well under a course of bismuth and Dover's powders. Some of the severer cases were treated with injections, these being of nitrate of silver, or quinine, or boric acid. Of two cases of typhoid one proved to be complicated by tuberculosis, and died; the other, which made a good recovery, was treated with plunge baths.

With the exception of four, all the nursing staff had the opportunity of going up to the front, and have brought away with them mementoes of the war. Three days after the relief of Ladysmith, Mr. Ellsworth and a colleague went over the battle field of Colenso and the vicinity. The railway was not open, but, through the kindness of members of the South African Light Horse, they were able to obtain horses. They also rode into Ladysmith, and saw the condition of the town, and the unmistakable signs on the faces of the inhabitants that relief only came just in time. Provisions

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)