

Another contingent of the Scottish Red Cross Hospital, consisting of sixteen nurses and four surgeons, left Glasgow last week for South Africa. The nurses, who were under the care of Miss Henderson, the late Matron of Kennedy Street Hospital, were, before embarking on the *Assaye*, on Wednesday week presented with their badges by Princess Louise (Duchess of Argyll) at Kensington Palace. The contingent will join the Scottish Red Cross Hospital at Kroonstad. The nurses, several of whom have been specially trained in attendance on fever patients, have been sent out to assist in the work at the base hospital of 520 beds, the last instalment of which was sometime ago despatched. The surgeons accompanying this section to the seat of war were Drs. Halmes, Keith, Watt, and Steven. Dr. Beatson, who has been so zealous in the formation of the Scottish Red Cross Hospital, was among those present to bid the contingent farewell.

The freshness and beauty of many of our English nurses at the Cape has struck their Australian colleagues, who have met them there. What does Lady Sykes say to this—tastes differ, we presume.

As much which appears in the following letter has found its way home in private letters from the front, we think we may quote it from *The Times*, especially as the policy of "Hush" has been so distinctly demonstrated in the House during the past week in reference to military nursing affairs:

A COLONIAL VOLUNTEER'S EXPERIENCES.

"A recent number of the *Cape Times* contained a statement by a colonial volunteer as to his treatment in hospital, which attracted a great deal of attention. This young man had gone 8,000 miles to serve the Empire on the field of battle, and he complained bitterly of the 'utter indifference shown to the soldier when he is wounded or sick.' The bearer corps who carried the wounded man off the battlefield are warmly praised. But when he got into the wagon his troubles began. The mules were fresh, the springs were bad, and, of the 11 men in the wagon, half 'were continually on the verge of unconsciousness from the pain caused by the jolting.' At Bloemfontein 'the marquees to which we were consigned were not erected when we arrived, and the men suffering from rheumatism, dysentery, enteric fever, pneumonia, inflammation of bladder, wounds, ague, and loathsome diseases, had either to keep quiet or sit outside in the cold. Many of them had no blankets and a few of them no overcoats. Just as darkness was coming on the erecting of the marquees was finished, and 26 men were sent to the one I was in. A pint of very hot, peppery, and tasty beef tea was served to each man, irrespective of disease, and this, though a blessing to many, was death to others. I found the R.A.M.C. sergeant in charge of our ward an uncouth, uncivil brute, but, after greasing his palm with a sovereign, he did give me a little attention.

Finding that I had some money, he told me that I could buy cocoa, arrowroot, and extra milk from him, and, though at the time I knew I was buying my own and the other patients' food, we would have starved had I not bought from him. Men with money can live fairly well in hospital, for the orderlies are always willing to go out and purchase things for the patients, as they make a profit out of the goods purchased. Wines and spirits ordered for a patient that had no money rarely reached him, as, if the orderly could not sell them, he drank them himself, and often when medicine was ordered a patient the orderly would save himself the trouble of administering it by remarking that it was no (adjective) good giving the man medicine, as he (the patient) would be dead in an hour or so. The medicine glass was a broken measure glass, and I am sure had not been washed for weeks, for all round the outside edge there was a thick rim of dried saliva, and the discharge from sore lips, &c., making it a disgusting thing to take in one's hands, let alone one's lips. All sorts of medicines were administered out of the same glass, and even the thought of it made me sick. Patients were allowed to lie all day, from the doctor's morning visit until his evening inspection, without seeing the orderly, and had to look after each other. This neglect has, no doubt, proved fatal more than once. The men at night would nearly always spend most of the night awake, for the cold was often intense, and the savage attacks made by the lice would keep men in good health awake, let alone men on the verge of death. To give relief from this curse would have been a very easy matter for the authorities—a little kerosene or camphor would have done it—but they took no notice of the scratching, &c., of men. And with regard to the want of clothing, let it be understood that it was generally through no fault or carelessness of the men that they are short of kit. We all know to our cost that clothes do wear out, and no quicker than while on active service. The loss of blankets is due to men being instructed to put them on the transport, so as to be able to travel light, and then the transport is captured, and with it the men's blankets. I have seen at the docks, piles of warm clothing strewn about the sheds, that at Bloemfontein, when I was in hospital there last April, would have saved more lives by far than the things they administered to us. The train journey to Naauwpoort was a painful experience, for it arrived during the night—a cold night—and the patients were left in it until the morning, six or seven together in third class carriages without cushions. Naauwpoort Hospital, however, "was heaven itself." "Fortunately for me," the colonial volunteer said, "I was long enough in that hospital to detect several cases of hospital loafing among the patients, and I can now quite understand the harsh and hard manner of the R.A.M.C. surgeons, otherwise I am afraid that I would have had a very much poorer opinion of them than I have at present. As every man who goes into a military hospital will tell you, the redeeming features of the service are the sisters and civil surgeons. The honours due to these two branches of the medical staff will never be paid I am afraid, and many a poor fellow in their care has entered the next world quite happy in mind because he was not treated as a dog during the last moment of his career in this world. The authorities ask, Why don't you make a complaint? Well, the best answer is that no man makes a complaint a second time. I have seen men

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