

100 patients under my own charge—killing work from the nature of the case—delirious, fretting, strong men, every third man wanting a nurse to himself." She goes on to describe the arduous character of the nursing, and tells of the delirious men starting off to look for their wives and families. "I am regularly called in to field wanderers in the other wards. 'Oh, Sister, there's a man out!' is a phrase I shall long remember."

Of the sick prisoners Miss Kingsley writes:—

"A most civil set of men those we have are mostly of the *Beivolner* class, men who the big Boer farmers allowed to live on their farms and cultivate an allotment in return for their services when required; but they are a courtly set of people, they never take a thing from you without a 'thank you'; when they are not delirious they obey every word you say."

Her account of her presence in the Simon's Town Hospital is simple and direct:—

"To make a long story short, I went to the P.M.O., General Wilson, and said I was out to help in any way he pleased. He said, 'Will you go to Simon's Town to the Boer prisoners?'—evidently expecting I wouldn't. I said, 'If that's what you want done, yes.' It was. Those prisoners were dying in a way the British authorities, properly so called, did not approve of."

Miss Stopford Green points out that—

"The details of the want of preparation for sickness were written before the controversy as to hospitals in South Africa. It will be remembered that they were written from the very base of supplies, the centre where the whole army stores were massed together. The belated work of organization was at length done at Simon's Town, at what heavy cost! Dr. Carré, who tells in what a high degree the success of the work was due to Miss Kingsley, tells, too, how that excessive labour broke her strength and led to her death."

We commend to the notice of our readers a letter in the *Spectator*, on "Our Medical Department in South Africa," from Mr. T. W. D. Edmonds, Hon. Sec. Durban (Government) Hospital. We regret that pressure on our space prevents our printing it in full. Mr. Edmonds writes:—

"I send you by this mail a copy of the *Advertiser* containing a 'Volunteer's Experience' of the 'Seamy Side of War.' This may appear to you a highly-coloured and probably exaggerated statement of the condition of things medical at the seat of war, especially after the strongly favourable utterances of several eminent surgeons and medical men. To us Colonists, however, who have been but too familiar with this 'seamy side of war,' they do not so appear. These items of the indictment have been fully sustained, viz.:—

- (1) The incompetence of a very considerable number of the Army doctors.
- (2) The brutality of the medical orderlies.
- (3) The criminal lack (at the front) of invalid-accessories, such as changes of clothes, restoratives, convalescent comforts, etc.
- (4) The great difference between the attentions paid to the men by the Army medical officers and the civilian doctors—not at all in favour of the former.

"With reference to Nos. 1 and 4 (which should go together), it would seem as if the "system"—which is obviously a cast-iron obsolete one—is more at fault than the men. The civilian doctors frequently succeeded because they were free to use (at their own expense) remedies that were not permitted to the Army doctor,—as, for instance, when a dose of brandy was urgent, and unprocurable because the party whose signature was imperative was not just then accessible. Of the second count in the indictment, the brutality of the orderlies, evidence will have to be carefully sifted, lest a whole class suffer through the *laches* of a few. With regard to the third, it is sufficient to state that more than a thousand suits of pyjamas were made by the ladies of Durban and forwarded at the urgent request of the medical officer at the front for use of the wounded, who but for this timely assistance would have had to remain in their blood-soiled clothes, while the needed changes were hopelessly mixed up with other supplies at the Point. Instances of this sort of thing have been common talk, and if the Commission are honestly desirous of getting at the truth evidence enough will be forthcoming to convince the most sceptical. It will not, however, be obtained from 'Tommy Atkins.' You might just as easily get an Eton boy to name the culprit as to get from 'Thomas Atkins' a complaint of any kind. He would be a marked man in his regiment if it once got out. Neither will evidence of any considerable weight be got from the Army medical officer, and this for reasons apparent. The best evidence obtainable will be, first, from such of the Colonists as have been through or in the hospital—especially of those hospitals which are attached to the base of the army in action—not base hospitals, they are generally pretty fair, but their different attachments and offshoots. Second, from such civil medicos as have been requested from time to time to render such services as leave of absence would permit. Thirdly, from *qualified* nurses and attendants on voluntary ambulance associations. From either of these sources and from all, independent, unbiassed testimony will be obtained; testimony, too, of a condition of things that the great doctors who have been sent out to report have had no opportunity of noticing.

"It would be interesting as well as important to ascertain how many deaths in any given hospital, say from enteric, were cases of relapse. Unless the evidence brought to our notice here in Durban is very unreliable, the diet allowed "Tommy" when discharged from the overcrowded enteric ward of the hospital has been such as to ensure his return at the earliest possible moment, and for such cases there is no recovery, because of the perforations resulting from the unsuitable diet."

An Army Nursing Sister at Maritzburg writes in a contemporary:—

"One thing we have all decided; and this is, that in future white wars both hospitals and women nurses must be carried nearer the front. Then, according to present arrangements, base hospitals are too far from the fighting line. Cases too bad to stand a jolting journey have had to be nursed on the spot by any kind of untrained man who happened to be available. Of course, we realise that proper accommodation for women nurses could not be provided within the fighting area; but it is better that the temporary comfort of a few dozen strong, healthy young women should be

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