

### Army Nursing Notes.

THE Hospital Commission has arrived at Cape Town and begun its work.

By the courtesy of the Secretary of State for War, we are able to state that Nursing Sisters A. B. Jackson and T. L. Corlyon, of the Army Nursing Reserve, embarked for South Africa on Saturday last.

The American hospital ship *Maine* is now in Chinese waters, with the object of receiving American, English, and other sick and wounded. She is equipped and maintained by a Committee of American Ladies in London and as her expenses on this new mission will be greater than those incurred during her voyage to South Africa, the Committee is appealing for additional aid, and will be glad to receive contributions from donors of British, as well as American nationality. Subscriptions may be sent to Mrs. Adair, at the Headquarters, 30, Curzon Street; Mrs. Arthur Paget, 35, Belgrave Square; Mrs. Bradley Martin, 4, Chesterfield Gardens, and to the Hon. Treasurer, Mrs. Ronalds, 7, Cadogan Place, S.W.

The staff of the Portland Hospital arrived at Southampton on Saturday last by the transport *Canada*, and were welcomed by the Duke of Portland and Major-General the Hon. Herbert Eaton, Hon. Secretary of the hospital. The returning Nursing Sisters were Sisters Davies, Russell, and Pretty, Sister Cox-Davies having been transferred to work at Pretoria. Sister Pretty's many friends will be glad to know that, in spite of her serious attack of enteric fever, she is in excellent spirits, and hopes, after a brief rest, to resume her work again.

It was reported at the last Board meeting of the London Temperance Hospital, that Sister Richardson had been invalided home from Bloemfontein, where she had contracted enteric fever whilst nursing the sick and wounded soldiers; and that Sister Davidson was stationed at Kroonstadt and Sister Pertwee at Orange River.

Mrs. Richardson (wife of Colonel John Crow Richardson, of the 3rd Glamorgan Rifle Volunteers) writes of her experiences at Bloemfontein, more especially in connection with St. Michael's Home, where the Sisters gave up four school-rooms to the military authorities for use as a hospital, as follows:—

"When the outbreak of enteric was at its height, during the months of April, May, and June, every

available place was unavoidably overcrowded. For instance, one camp hospital, nominally accommodating 760 patients, received 1,700 at once. Beds and stretchers were placed so closely together that it was difficult to attend to their needs, and the drain on the Red Cross stores was enormous, while the line being constantly blocked made it often impossible to get them through. Besides this, the town itself was in great need of supplies, and could not contribute to the needs of the Army that arrived so quickly and unexpectedly. No doubt, enteric and dysentery were contracted to a great extent at Paardeberg and during the forced march to Bloemfontein, as the troops drank the impure water of the Modder River, and were often unable to obtain any other. Then began the sad tale of disease which has caused more deaths than the battlefields, and which even the advent of colder weather failed at first to check. Army doctors, nursing sisters, orderlies, all suffered severely, and a long, sad train of funerals wended its way day after day to the cemetery on the hills till the numbers rose to hundreds. But the Army medical staff worked well during all this time, and I believe that complaints which reach the Old Country arise chiefly from those who have failed to realise the overwhelming hardships and difficulties which surrounded the work on all sides.

A Cape Colonist, with over a quarter of a century's experience in South Africa, writes to the *Times*:—

"From the very outset of the campaign those responsible for the administration of the medical services have, to use a vulgar phrase, given themselves away over and over again.

"I make no reflection whatever against any member of the Royal Army Medical Corps, from the Director-General down to the latest joined sub. They have all worked manfully and gallantly against tremendous difficulties and obstacles. They have been called upon to make bricks without straw. The straw should have been provided by Parliament, by the English nation; and as regards the medical service it never has been.

"Anyone who has watched the career of the Army Medical Department for the last twenty years, its manifold struggles within and without, its annual breakdowns on Salisbury Plain during the autumn manoeuvres, cannot feel in the least bit surprised it has over and over again broken down in this present war. Let me ask whether it is true that two months after the war had broken out there were no proper beds, mattresses, or bedding at De Aar and Orange River stations on the main line between Capetown and Modder River; that at the disastrous battle of Magersfontein a very large quantity of surgical dressings were supplied by the National Aid Society, and had it not been for such opportune assistance there would not have been sufficient dressings for the seven or eight hundred wounded. There is no excuse by quoting distance or difficulties of transport. The battle was fought five miles from the railway, the main line between Capetown and Kimberley. The wounded were taken to a field hospital and as quickly as possible rattled along five hundred miles of railway to Capetown. What delightful visions are conjured up at the words 'field hospital'! What horrors in reality! The field hospitals I have seen are composed of bell tents or

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