

Our Foreign Letters.

FROM NATAL.

21st July, 1900.

DEAR EDITOR,
—Since receiving the NURSING RECORD last week I see that you cannot have received my first letter, written from Maritz-



burg. My last was simply scribbled off at odd moments. When will this dreadful war be over? It is nearly three months since I last wrote to you, and it seems no nearer being ended now than it did then. As you will see, we have been moved from Chieveley up to Newcastle. We came on Whit-Monday, and it is no small undertaking to move a large hospital, tents, equipment, cattle, and many other things. When we arrived here General Buller was only a few miles away, at Majuba, and we could hear all the fighting there, and at Laing's Nek, for two days—the whole of one Friday (about the second week in June) and most of Saturday—the guns never ceased firing. From Signal Hill, a hill close to us, the fighting could be seen, but we were quite content with hearing. People talk of the glories of war, etc. If they could see it as we have done they would soon change that word for another. One evening lately I stumbled over a rifle belonging to a patient who had just come in, and picking it up I felt to see how sharp the bayonet was, and remarked I hoped it had never been used. The patient, who was a bad enteric, quite brightened up, and said, "Oh but it has; it has been through three Boers!" Newcastle is a pretty place. High mountains, and here and there clusters of trees, houses, and a few shops; but most of these have been robbed and spoiled by the Boers. But it has not got that wild loveliness of Chieveley, where there was nothing but Kaffir kraals near us. We were about the first people to come up here after the troops; in fact, we had to wait until the line was repaired enough for us to travel on, as all the bridges and culverts had been blown up. We had to cross over rivers, etc., on wooden trestles, with lines on, and some parts of the journey were not allowed to go at a greater rate than four miles an hour. It was an interesting journey. After passing Colenso and Ladysmith it was all new to us.

Sunday's River and Elands Laagte came first. At the latter place an armoured train was standing on a siding, all riddled with holes. Some parts of the way we seemed to be amongst and on the sides of high rocky mountains, then through miles of veldt, and up near this side, after passing Glencoe and Dundee, all the grass had been burnt and the ground was quite black. The Boers had set fire to it as they came along, for which I have heard different reasons given, one for the smoke to hide the direction they were retreating in, and to keep our troops back, and another that the khaki could be seen so much plainer on the black ground. Once near Majuba, which we can hardly believe, but is perfectly true, the

Boers left their killed and wounded when they set fire to the grass, and they were burnt. The camp here has been made very nice, large Indian tents instead of the small bell tents, and as a patient remarked to me this morning: "This is not a bad place, we seem to get everything we want here," and Tommy was not wrong, everything in reason they do seem to get, and the Red Cross with their clothing have been so good in sending things. No. 14 General Hospital is supposed to be on the way to take over this hospital, and then we go on again, higher up, as we keep near the front as a rule. Our work is pretty much the same as it has been for the last few months, except lately owing to the fighting up this way, we have had more wounded in again. Pneumonia too is rather bad, owing to the hot sun in the day, and then such bitterly cold nights. This is the windy season, which is rather trying when living in tents. It comes in such fearful gusts, you expect the whole tent to come down and to be buried in it, not to speak of the times you have to lean out of bed at night and strap down the bottom of it, which is blowing out and letting you have a view of the country round about. Notwithstanding, we, none of us, would care to change our tents for a house. Next comes the rainy season, and it will be wading about in the wet grass. They say there are parties of Boers at different parts round about here, but how far it is true I cannot say. Last night there were two search lights being used on the hills round about Newcastle and in the Dundee direction. We often see one being used, but I never saw them have two before. Over 900 Gordon Highlanders had their camp here, but they moved higher up the country about a week ago, we quite miss them, as we could see their camp quite plainly from ours, and often hear their pipes and drums. I am afraid I have very little news to write about this week, as one day is so much like another. Two of our greatest trials in the nursing of our enterics have been the mouths and backs, when it was very hot, and the patients had to be carried on stretchers a distance, the backs would be sore in 24 hours almost, and oh the mouths during the heat, and the flies used to be so troublesome, we had to keep white net over the patients' heads, at present that is not so bad. I sincerely hope before another hot season comes the war will all be over.

A. N. R.

FROM RUSSIA.

MOSQUITOES.

Mosquitoes are getting a good deal of attention now-a-days, so perhaps a word or two from one who has, so to speak, been brought up among them, would be of interest. Perhaps it is not universally known that mosquitoes abound in Russia; they do not come out of an evening only, as is apparently the case in some other places, but they are with us all day and all night, through June at all events; often we get a second and more troublesome crop in August.

There is a remark in Steevens' book, "from Cape Town to Ladysmith" which is applicable if one can apply large things to small, to mosquitoes. He says something to the effect, "that if in a besieged town you keep thinking of the shells, and of how you can get out of their path, all the time, you will soon be half mad with nervousness," now I say that if once you try to get away from the mosquitoes life becomes a burden to you; and life

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