

Editorial.

ENTERIC STALKS THE BRITISH ARMY.

HE question of sanitation in regard to the British Army is one which, so far, has not received the attention which its extreme importance demands. Mr. Burdett-Coutts, M.P., has once more directed public attention to the question by asking the Secretary of State for War whether No. 8 General Hospital, one of the two largest hospitals at Bloemfontein, has remained on the same site for over ten months, the ground being thoroughly infected with enteric poison in consequence of the number of enteric cases treated there during and since the epidemic of last year, and whether, in view of the increased rate of mortality from enteric in South Africa, immediate inquiry will be made as to why this hospital camp, in accordance with recognised principles of sanitation, should not have been long since removed to a new site. He also asks for the number of enteric cases admitted to this hospital, and the number of deaths from the same disease for six months. It has been stated that enteric fever is a disease which follows in the wake of the British Army, and that in India, before the British occupation, it was unknown. If the first elements of sanitation are neglected, it is not surprising that the track of our Army should be marked by subsequent enteric fever.

But the fact that this disease is so prevalent amongst our troops brings out another point, namely, the need for a liberal supply of thoroughly trained female nurses for service in military hospitals in time of war. It is not the wounded so much as the sick who require assiduous and skilled nursing, and in cases of enteric fever it is universally recognised that. to a greater extent than in most diseases, it is nursing which pulls the patient through. In our civil hospitals it is not unusual for two special nurses to be assigned to a bad case of enteric fever, and the same allowance is considered necessary for a private patient. When, therefore, we consider the number of sick and wounded in the present war, and the number of trained nurses employed, we recognise that they are but a drop in the ocean, and it is not too much to say that many lives have been lost which might have been saved had the proportion of nurses employed borne a greater resemblance to that found necessary in our civil hospitals.



