

**Army Nursing Notes.**

In accordance with the telegram from Lord Kitchener, the eleven Nursing Sisters of the Army Nursing Service Reserve, whose names are subjoined, proceeded to South Africa in the S.S. "Canada," on the 12th inst:—

S. Smythe, S. M. Paterson, M. T. Neville, A. M. Breen, E. E. Wraxall, S. W. J. Hadden, C. Duncan, E. Reynolds, E. M. Hodgson, L. E. Colston, and J. Murdoch.

The Secretary of State for War has also received a telegram from Lord Kitchener to the effect that any comforts which private individuals may desire to send out for the troops, in view of the approaching winter in South Africa, would be most acceptable, and should be despatched as early as possible.

Miss A. F. Grist, Superintendent Sister of the Cambridge Hospital, Aldershot, makes an earnest appeal for gifts of top-coats and underclothing for invalids from the Aldershot garrison, her supply being nearly exhausted, and there being "still great numbers discharged from the Service from our wards."

Dr. Anna Hamilton, the eminent medical woman, whose Thesis on Nursing before the Faculty of Medicine of Montpellier, created so much discussion in France, sends us the following translation, the extract of an article written by "Sister Korthals," of the Dutch Ambulance working in South Africa, which appeared in the new Dutch nursing paper *Nosokomos*.

"For about two years I stayed in South Africa as nurse of the South African Railway Company. I received an order to come to work from the English at their taking of Waterval-Onder, to engage myself to the hospital, where I stayed two months—Sept. to 3rd Nov. 1900—under English orders. Afterwards, like many others, I was sent away. During the last two weeks I worked with the English nurses (15—31 Oct.). Their way of nursing the sick is beyond any description, and many times I said to myself: 'Are those nurses, or ladies taking a pleasure trip in South Africa?' To describe their occupations, I must say beforehand that they did absolutely nothing, and the same work which was done before by one Dutch nurse was done by two English nurses and one orderly. It was he, in fact, who did all the work. The ladies meanwhile settled down to read, or did nothing, without a thought for the patients. It happened that a bad patient (serious case) begged the nurse for a glass of water. Instead of giving it herself, she called loudly to the orderly, who was in the next ward, thus waking up all the patients. Then she said: 'Orderly, please, a glass of water,' and didn't trouble any more about the patient, though the water was standing just in front of her. In other ways also they were quite as careless. When, for instance, they were

on duty, they came into the ward by 10.30 or 11 instead of 10 o'clock. When the Dutch nurse came into the ward at 7 a.m., the English nurse had already vanished an hour before. Therefore, not to leave the patients alone, we came into the wards one hour before our time to begin work. We didn't find then any patients washed, or any beds made. Everything was in the most pitiful disorder, which showed how conscientiously the night work had been done! It happened even that a Dutch nurse awakened in the night to attend some wounded in the village after a small struggle, had to go up into the ward to fetch some dressings, and found the night sister sleeping on a vacant bed in a small room which was usually tenanted by an officer and a Tommy. In their ways of giving the medicines, these sisters had rather strange ideas. Anyhow, it happened several times that the doctor, when he went round in the morning, saw that most patients who had malaria had temperatures, and when he enquired whether they had carefully taken the quinine, he heard from each and all that they had had none, though the night before he had given clear orders to this effect. In this country, to act thus towards malarial patients is simply senseless, not to say more. The charting of temperatures was ignored and other details also; they simply did nothing, though the doctor had written everything carefully in the book of each ward."

Dr. Anna Hamilton adds:—

"Herewith is a translation I have just made of French translation of a Dutch paper which has been sent to me to prove that all the good I say of English nurses in my thesis is a mistake and that they are as bad as possible.

It seems to me that it can only be the amateur nurses that have acted thus, but since my thesis was published I have constantly received similar criticisms. Is there no possibility of publishing some rules of the A.N.S., showing that the real nurses cannot act thus, and that all those alluded to were sham ones?

I should think that politics ought to be kept out of these questions and that one or more of the Dutch nursing papers ought to consent to publish an answer to correct this unfortunate description of real and pretence nurses. Might you not describe the uniform of the real ones and other details which would help those who saw those bad nurses, to understand they were not genuine ones?

I have written a paper to explain this misunderstanding in the "Bulletin International des Societies de la Croix-Rouge," published by the International Committee of Geneva, but it is not much known except just by all the Committees of the world."

The English nursing world is indeed indebted to Dr. Hamilton for her most generous advocacy of its members. But does not this interest in our affairs in the foreign Press prove how very important it is that British women, as the pioneers of efficient trained nursing, should be most careful in conduct when working abroad, and also that their profession should be so organized that it would be impossible for vain and unscrupulous amateurs to pose as "trained nurses."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)