

system clear he would trace the movements of the soldier from the time he fell wounded on the battle-field to the period of his reaching his home in England.

To each battery or battalion a medical officer is attached, and under his orders four men from each Company, specially trained in Ambulance work, are set apart. It is the duty of these men when a soldier falls wounded, to come forward to give First Aid to the Injured, to control hæmorrhage, to apply rough splints, administer stimulants and to take steps to ensure that the identity of a wounded man be not lost.

For this purpose note-books are provided, to which are attached counterfoils, as in a cheque-book. On a sheet of this is entered a list of the injuries, the name, number, regiment, and all other particulars regarding the wounded soldier. A copy is made on the counterfoil, the label is torn and slipped over the button of his uniform, and the patient then passes from fighting line duly identified and labelled.

The lecturer remarked in passing that no doubt his audience had largely formed their estimate of the British Army from the Reviews held in the London parks; it might therefore somewhat surprise them to hear that Tommy Atkins did not go into action wearing the beautiful and complex uniform which had come to be considered inseparable from the military man. It is impossible during action to distinguish between a Highlander and a Sapper. All distinction is lost by the adoption of a uniform "khaki"—a kind of brown linen. Most of our wars being fought in the tropics, it is imperative that a cool, light dress should be worn.

This uniformity of clothing renders identity more difficult, but by the system of making inquiries on the scene of action from fellow-fighters, or from the man himself, there is very little danger of confusion. Through the descriptive label on the man's coat, he can be passed on to the rear and home, and full information can be telegraphed home.

In a late engagement in the tropics, owing to this organised system, full descriptions and particulars of dead and wounded were known in London almost as soon as if the fighting had taken place in a suburb of the Metropolis.

The importance of the changes which have taken place in the Medical Service might be indicated by the fact that at the battle of the Alma, although only 1,500 men were wounded, our Army was absolutely handicapped in its movements, and was delayed for four days in its pursuit of the Russians, because the component regiments of the British Army had to remain and look after their injured comrades. The Russian Army during the four days' delay fell back on Sebastopol, fortified it, and held the long and destructive siege so well known to history.

The old plan of each regiment caring for its own wounded has been abandoned, as it may lead to the complete blocking and standing-still of the forces in action. Under the present system first assistance is given on the field by the Ambulance Corps.

Next in order comes the action of the Bearer Companies. A Bearer Company consists of about sixty men, officered and provided with necessaries in the shape of soup, stores, bandages, quinine, chloroform, operation tents and waterproof coverings. These Bearer Companies send out men in all directions to gather the wounded from every regiment, and convey them to the collecting stations. Under this system there is little chance of the wounded lying out to be frozen, to be trodden down by the Artillery, or to

be murdered by marauders. They can be made perfectly comfortable, and well fed on their journey to the Collecting Stations. The central idea of the Bearer Companies is to continually pass the wounded *back* to the field Hospitals. After an action it therefore becomes possible to pass a man from the battle-field to Collecting Station, to Dressing Station, and to open-air Hospitals or tents, in the course of one night.

In these Hospitals waterproof sheets serve as beds, there is a full equipment of pewter and enamel ware, a large supply of tabloids—compressed quinine "cartridges"—condensed medical comforts and concentrated foods. It forms a complete going machine, and does its work perfectly if properly manned and equipped, and irrespective of climate, as well amid snow and ice as in the tropics.

To regard war from the Reviews in the Parks was entirely erroneous. War in reality means want, suffering, pain, dirt, and savagery. He could not over-estimate the supreme importance of the work performed by the washermen, nor could he recount the awful sufferings in the past from the then almost impossibility of getting soiled linen washed. It had to be remembered that there were no sewage works on the battle-field, and water was not obtained by turning on taps from the main. All the dejecta of the patients—typhoid and other—must be carried away and dealt with. It was of no use talking of antiseptic surgery when the ground outside the tents was thick with untreated dejecta. War means squalor, dirt, savagery and misery. At Ismaila thousands of sheets, towels and linen used and soiled by typhoid patients could not be dealt with from the absence of laundry arrangements. The linen was put on board ship and sent to Cyprus—a three days' journey. The authorities there were unable to deal with it, and shipped it off to Alexandria, where it was washed by Marines in the harbour and returned to Ismaila. In 1885 at the Suakim Hospital, Harper Twelvetree's washing machines and washermen solved the difficulty.

In the Egyptian campaign enormous suffering fell on the sick from scarcity of water-carriers; in many instances this duty was cheerfully undertaken by the medical officers. But Parliament and public opinion has now granted efficient service and sufficient staff for the relief of our wounded soldiers, and the horrors of the past cannot be repeated.

From the Field Hospitals the wounded are conveyed to the Base Hospital, which may be 1,000 miles from the scene of action.

Fearful suffering is entailed by the convoy of the sick and wounded, in stretchers and dhoolies, such long distances. An Empire is built up by the terrible privations of Tommy Atkins.

All along the line of communications Hospital stations are placed at convenient distances for the wounded to rest at night after being conveyed, often under a tropical burning sun, for twelve or fifteen miles. The journey may take a month, travelling by day, and resting by night at wayside Hospitals till the Base Hospital is reached. Thence he is transferred to Hospital ships and thence home. But if sufficiently well he must rejoin the fighting force.

Col. Evatt's lecture was most cordially received, and the audience expressed the utmost enthusiasm at the clearness and eloquence of the address. After a short discussion the party adjourned to the tea-room for refreshment and social converse. All were agreed on the value of the information that had been given.

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