

"The correspondent describes a complete journey with a party of this character, starting at a station near Lahore, where invalids have been collected from the frontier districts, and proceeding slowly downwards to Bombay, picking up further detachments at the principal stations *en route*.

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In his narrative we are first introduced to the men "camping on an open plain in tents, with straw to lie upon, and nothing but barrack rations to eat, cooked and served anyhow." They make a long journey by train and turn out into another camp, where there is no Hospital nor Hospital diet, and scarcely any medicine beyond that carried in a small "Field Companion" by the Medical Officer in charge and a young apothecary assisting him.

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The journey continues in the same way with stoppages and changes from one train to another, and about half a dozen halts for a day or so, the men being in tents at each halt, and still on barrack rations. The writer speaks with special indignation of the cruelty of keeping dysentery patients, of whom there were a large number, on ordinary rations, without any attempt at Hospital diet. To show the extent of the suffering, he states that by the time Deolalia Depôt was reached, there were nearly 500 invalids in the party, of whom more than half were certified as requiring lying-down accommodation; that is to say, over 250 were practically too ill to walk, either from dysentery, consumption, liver disease, or malarial fever, and at each stoppage had to be helped from train to camp, and *vice versa*, by their more robust companions. Apparently at all these points it was a case of the sick helping the sick. At Deolalia there is a stoppage of several weeks for the purpose of performing various red-tape formalities, adjusting a few pence in the accounts of poor wretches with one foot in the grave, and so on.

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At last Bombay is reached. The preparations for shipping the men on to the troopship are not complete, and the men are left lying or standing about for several hours before "flats" come to take them off. Here is a picture of the condition of things on board the troopship:—

"It was pretty well mid-day when we embarked, and in the middle of March you can imagine what the heat was like. The ship was packed by the time we arrived with time-expired men. Gangways were blocked with baggage, and the miscellaneous concourse of staff officers, natives and others always to be seen on the departure of a troopship. There were on board one Sergeant, a Corporal, and three privates of the Medical Staff Corps; this was the staff to assist

in getting nearly five hundred sick men on board, and attending to them. And what was the accommodation? The Hospital was fitted with *thirty beds only*. The less severe cases were lumped in with the other troops on board, many of them on the lower troop-deck. The rest of the poor devils were accommodated in cots slung on the port side of the main troop-deck, the starboard side being occupied by time-expired men. The cots were slung touching each other, or nearly so, many of them close to the engines; and by no possible means could any of these poor bedridden creatures be lifted up on to the crowded upper-deck for a mouthful of fresh air. I can only leave you to imagine the horrors of the voyage. Not a few of the men were in a condition so offensive, that we had to make a shift to screen them off with canvas, but do what we might, we could not keep down the odour. Imagine, if you can, the condition of things in the Red Sea, with syphilis, consumption, liver ulcer, dysentery, malarial fever, and a dozen other diseases, cooped up cheek by jowl in the 'tween decks of a crowded troopship. We put seven of them overboard on the voyage—several others had died on the way down to Bombay—and all arrived in England worse than when they left India, instead of benefited, as, under a proper system, many of them might have been, by the sea voyage.

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Again, the Hospital in the Indian troopship is by regulation a 'non-dieted' Hospital. This means a Hospital where invalids get ordinary barrack rations, but the medical officers have power to order 'Hospital comforts.' But how on earth can you cook soups and delicacies for sick men when the galleys are crammed with cooks and food is in course of preparation for some 700 time-expired men, to say nothing of about seventy officers, women and children, and the crew of the ship? Tommy, when he is well, will eat most things, but Tommy, when he is ill, is no better than the most dyspeptic alderman in the City of London. As a physiological fact, it may be confidently asserted that there is no difference between the stomach of a ploughman in a state of sickness and that of a Prince. But on board this troopship, men so ill that you could hardly have coaxed their appetite with the choicest dish that a French *chef* could place before them, had to be fed, under all the trying circumstances of a sea voyage, on 'bully beef,' preserved potatoes, and hunks of greasy salt junk.

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Another incident impressed me most painfully. We coaled at Malta—merely for the reason that coals are a shilling or two cheaper there than at Bombay. We did what we could with screens to keep the coal-dust from the patients, but do what we would, the dust penetrated everywhere. It lay thick on the cots, and the air was full of it. We had among the rest at least half-a-dozen cases of phthisis, and no words can describe the horrible torture thus inflicted upon some of them by the dust. Though I am accustomed to sad sights, I felt my blood boil with indignation as I saw the emaciated bodies of these poor wretches torn and

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