

from sickness than from wounds. It seems to be undeniable that the preparations made, even for the assistance of the wounded, on more than one occasion, were hopelessly defective; with the result that an incalculable amount of unnecessary suffering was caused. And when this occurred with regard to the wounded in battle—a matter which must have been considered and arranged for—the mortality and suffering caused by inadequate provision for those attacked by fever and disease—which to a certain extent may have been greater than could have been foreseen—must have been deplorable. It is not too harsh a judgment to affirm that the medical department of the army was unable to fulfil its duty; and we have no hesitation in saying that, to a considerable extent, the failure may be ascribed to the want of sufficient assistance, and especially to the lack of an adequate corps of nurses.

If educated and well-trained nurses had been placed in charge of the nursing on the Hospital Ships, it is incredible that the actual neglect of the sick and wounded soldiers, such as that described in the Press last week, and now reprinted in these columns, could possibly have occurred. Take, for example, the semi-official statements that "on board the transport steamer *Concho* there were only fifty-eight bunks in the foul hold, and into these were packed 150 sufferers without mattresses or blankets. The drainage from the decks filtered through, there was no ice aboard, and the supply of water received on June the 1st had become putrid" (when the vessel left Santiago, on July the 23rd). "No food was to be had except the coarsest, no clothing, no drugs or disinfectants. The sick aboard became worse, the healthy became ill, and the conditions were revolting. Five men died during the week's voyage, and many more are not expected to live, as the result of the hardships they underwent." The secret of these ghastly facts is undoubtedly to be found in the absence of any adequate nursing arrangements.

Instead, however, of criticising our American cousins, we would rather point the moral, in the case of our own nation. We have already expressed the opinion that the nursing arrangements made for the forthcoming Soudan expedition are most inadequate, and that the Egyptian Government—that is to say, to a large extent, the English Government—have incurred a very serious responsibility by refusing the generous offer of Mr. Harmsworth to

provide an efficient nursing corps for the expedition, entirely at his own expense. The sufferings which our soldiers underwent, after the battle on the Atbara, were needless, and therefore cruel. And we cannot but fear that those sufferings will be repeated to a certain extent, if not actually increased, during the coming struggle to reach and capture Khartoum.

The British army and the Indian army are both most inadequately provided with an efficient staff of trained nurses. In the former instance, an outbreak of war would find us in a state of unpreparedness; while in the latter we have reason to believe that a large amount of unnecessary suffering and loss of life constantly occurs throughout our Eastern Dependency, in consequence of the inadequate corps of nurses at present employed. We earnestly trust, then, that the terrible results which have occurred from this cause during the Spanish-American war may have the good effect of directing the attention of our own and other nations to the importance of possessing an adequate and efficient Nursing Corps for their naval and military organizations.

Annotations.

RATE-SUPPORTED HOSPITALS.

THE question as to how our hospitals shall in future be supported, is one which is demanding serious attention at the present time. For instance, it was stated at the recent meeting of the Hospital Sunday Fund that the collection for the fund had not been so small since 1885, and the Hon. Sydney Holland seriously proposed that in future Hospitals should be partially supported by a voluntary rate. There is no doubt that the Prince of Wales' Fund is in part responsible for the diminution in the amount subscribed to the Hospital Sunday Fund, and we fully expect that the Annual Reports of Hospitals will show a diminution in their subscription list. We do not quite comprehend the suggestion as to a "voluntary rate," as this practically exists at the present time. With regard to a compulsory rate, there are many, and strong objections to this plan, but still we consider it preferable to control by a semi-private Council, which absolutely declines to give the Press information concerning its management. That nearly all the gentlemen

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