

One outcome of the present war will, we hope, be to place military nursing on a sound professional basis. The Army Nursing Reserve, as at present organized, is managed on narrow and undesirable lines. The personal selection of candidates should be placed in the hands of professional persons, and should not be a royal prerogative. We have, on a former occasion, pointed out the confusion which must ensue, were the appointment of medical men placed in the hands of the Prince of Wales.

We learn that Miss Monck Mason (Sister Abernethy), of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, leaves for South Africa on Saturday next, and that Miss Skillman (Sister Hope) goes out in January. St. Bartholomew's Hospital has, therefore, supplied a considerable number of efficient nurses at this crisis.

The American Hospital Ship *Maine* sailed for South Africa on Saturday last. She did not, however, take her full staff of nurses, for the reason that Mr. Green, one of the number, is seriously ill; and Mr. Speer, who was detailed originally to look after him, refused to leave him. As we understand that, in the opinion of Mr. Huxley, the medical man who is attending Mr. Green, it would have seriously endangered his life to move him on board the *Maine* in his present condition, we think that Mr. Speer's action in staying with his sick comrade is worthy of all commendation. He, as well as his colleagues, was kept upon accompanying the *Maine* on her errand of humanity, but it appeared to him that his duty to humanity began with his sick friend, and we think he was right.

We also understand that Mr. Vallance, Mr. Cole, and Mr. Crick, have, for reasons of their own, refused to sail on the *Maine*. Their reasons have not been made public, but they have been expressed in writing and handed in, through Mr. Vanduzer, to Mrs. Ronalds, the Treasurer of the *Maine* Fund. Doubtless, an amicable understanding will be arrived at.

Sir William MacCormac reports that 800 wounded have passed through Chieveley Hospital, and that the field was cleared of wounded by five o'clock on the evening of the battle. He adds that the volunteer ambulance corps did splendid work, and that the field hospital completely and promptly met a great emergency. All concerned, concludes Sir William MacCormac, deserve the fullest praise.

Four train-loads of wounded from Colenso have arrived at Pietermaritzburg. It is expected that warships will shortly be used as hospitals.

A number of cases of dysentery, and enteric fever, and some deaths, are reported at Ladysmith. This is serious news, and it is, therefore, a special satisfaction to know that there are many well trained nurses in the town.

The following very interesting letter, dated Durban, November 11th, was received the other day by a London lady from her daughter, a nurse:—

"I was sorry not to write last mail, but can you imagine I was in Ladysmith nursing the wounded? Last Saturday week, after posting my letter to you, I was wired for by the military authorities to proceed to Ladysmith at once. I left on the Saturday evening, October 28th, and was the only woman allowed to pass—with my Red Cross band round my arm none dared to stop me.

What a sight met me on my arrival—the Red Cross flag flying in every direction, the market square one mass of tents containing the wounded, who were also accommodated in the Town Hall, churches, chapels, and halls. I got my orders to proceed to the top of the hill to the hospital there, and all Sunday we were operating. None of us went to bed Sunday, Monday, or Tuesday night—the ambulance wagon constantly bringing us in the wounded and dying. Oh, I cannot describe to you the horrors of war! To see our brave, loyal soldiers smashed, and yet so patient and good! My heart ached when one and another was pronounced by the doctors as hopeless. 'Bullet through the lungs.' Worse than all was on the Tuesday.

During Monday's skirmishing we lost so many men, and the Gloucesters and Irish Fusiliers were taken prisoners. We had twenty-six men brought in to us who had been wounded on the Monday, lay out in the open veldt all that day and night, and were discovered by the ambulance wagon on Tuesday. Never, never can I forget their intense thirst and their joy at having their wounds attended to. We were operating, amputating all Tuesday night, and they were dying all around us. I washed twenty men all alone. Some were put under the X Rays for the bullets. I, with many other nurses, including the Netley Sisters, had many narrow escapes. During Monday the enemy kept shelling the town, and a shell fell right at Nurse M.'s and my feet. On Wednesday the twenty-four hours' truce was over which was granted by General White to the enemy to bury their dead and attend to the wounded. We were all up and ready for the Boers to shell the town, and no one who was not there can ever imagine what we felt like when 'Long Tom' began to fire, and our big guns were not in position then.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)