

Army Nursing Notes.

It is terribly sad to see daily the long lists of deaths (casualties, we are somewhat brutally accustomed to call them) which appear now in the papers. Dysentery, typhoid fever and pneumonia are working sad havoc as well as shot and shell. When we think that each such casualty means a desolated home, and hearts bereaved, we realize something of the horrors of war.

The total number of nurses, according to the Under Secretary of State for War, employed in South Africa, is 514, at rates of pay varying from £30 a year, with allowances, in the case of the Army Nursing Service, to two guineas a week in the case of those employed locally or accompanying invalids home. About 2,000 applications for such employment were received, but no record has been kept to show how many offered their services free of charge.

This poor pay contrasts very unfavourably with that given to the medical officers. Mr. Wyndham stated in the House of Commons, in answer to a question by Mr. Weir, that the highest pay drawn by officers is £1,752 per annum, and the lowest £336 17s. 6d. All the civil surgeons in South Africa receive £428 17s. 6d. a year, and the consulting surgeons £5,000 a year each. Over 3,000 offers of service have been received from medical men, but no record has been kept of those who offered gratuitous service.

May we hope that the attention of the public may be called by some generous M.P. after Easter in the House, to the miserable rate of pay of trained nurses on active service. Their work is of a most arduous nature, and dangerous to health, the number of nurses provided by the authorities being inadequate to enable them to perform their duties efficiently without an immense mental and physical strain. We are of opinion that not less than £2 2s. od. a week should be paid to all the thoroughly trained Nursing Sisters sent on active service. This was the salary paid to each Nursing Sister sent to Greece by the *Daily Chronicle* National Fund during the late war, and it is most discreditable that the War Office authorities should have offered these invaluable workers remuneration at the present wretched rate.

The allowance for uniform of about £6 7s. od. is also altogether inadequate, and most of the nurses have been compelled to spend a large

sum of money to provide their necessary clothing. £15 was the allowance granted to the Greek corps, and a suitable amount of uniform and kit for foreign service cannot be procured for less.

Of course, Nursing Sisters will be called unpatriotic if they hint that their salary and allowances are on a mean scale; all the same, one would respect women more if they would cease to accept for their skilled labour a pittance which depreciates it in the opinion of the employer and the public. The public have given lavishly in support of the sick and wounded, and we feel sure that those at home realise that good nursing is the greatest luxury their money can provide. It is time that the public should tackle the Army Nursing Reserve Committee on this question of the nurses' pay, for it is that Committee which is primarily to blame for the inefficient scale of remuneration; and considering how it is constituted, the lack of generosity is not surprising.

Neither is it surprising to learn, from the *Melbourne Argus*, that the niggardly treatment of the Army Nurses by the Imperial Government is condemned, and that the paper in question opened a collection in aid of the efficient equipment of the Victorian nurses who are now in South Africa.

MANY of our readers will be pleased to hear of the safety and well-being of Miss H. Lawrence and Miss Oxley, late Matron and Sister at the Longton Hospital. These ladies are now both Sisters at the Kimberley Hospital, the former having experienced all the horrors and privations of the siege.

Miss Lawrence writes:—"Many people were nearly frantic with terror at the awful bombarding with the 100lb. shells, and hid down the diamond mines, and in the shelters they had dug in their gardens. Most nurses were too busy to find time for fear, but a strange sort of stillness as if one were going through some solemn service in church took possession of one, whilst the fearful noise of these shells hurtled through the air. I think this feeling was more marked when the Boers began firing in the grey of the dawn."

In view of the advent of the winter season at the Cape, renewed special appeals for comforts for the troops are now being made. As to the choice of articles, we may point out that the correspondent of the *Daily Mail* at Bloemfontein, Mr. Julian Ralph, telegraphed on Saturday last:

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