

has come safely through the trials of the siege, although all members of the St. Michael's staff were not equally fortunate, sickness and death having claimed their hostages. Sister Henrietta has had a terribly anxious time, and, we hear, is greatly in need of rest and change, which, we hope, will soon restore her wonderful energies.

Sister C— writes:—

"We had orders to go on to Bloemfontein on April 26th, we started from Kimberley at eleven a.m., and had a nice 'Send off' by the military. The journey was uninteresting except that we went past the scenes of Lord Methuen's recent fightings, etc., Spytfontein, Magersfontein, Modder River, and so on to Orange River; terrible trenches and fortifications everywhere, many graves with their little crosses up to tell the sad tale. We visited the cemetery at Orange River and saw poor Keith Falconer's grave; saw the Hospital, tents, etc., and had dinner there at 6 p.m. At 7 we resumed our journey and got to Naauwpoort at 6 a.m. Friday morning (27th), then we went on past the other battle fields—Spitzkop, Coleskop, and so on by Colesburg to Norvals Pont, they blew up one side of the beautiful bridge across the river. Everywhere one sees the trenches and barbed wire. We arrived at Norvals Pont about 1 p.m. and Springfontein at 6 p.m., there we have a large encampment and it is not far from Wepener, there had been fighting at Springfontein the previous day. We left at 7 and arrived here at 3 a.m., we stayed in the train till 6 a.m. and then reported arrival to the P.M.O. and were sent to the Dame's Institute, formerly a large Dutch School, now headquarters for nearly all the nurses, Military, Reserve, and odd ones. The officers are nursed there. I went on duty that night at St. George's Hospital, my patients 18 officers with all sorts of injuries, there is so much enteric here, in fact, it seems to be a fever den. Food is not very abundant here, it rather reminds one of Kimberley during the siege. I hear sugar is 1s. a lb. and other things equally costly. The nights are very cold."

We regret to notice, in letters which we have received, that there is a tendency, among some of the Members of the Army Nursing Reserve now on active service, to congratulate themselves that no Superintendent of the Nursing Department has been appointed, and that they can do as they like. "We prefer to be independent," as one writes. We are not altogether surprised at this, as the women selected by the Army Nursing Reserve Committee have not always belonged to the ranks of the most highly disciplined, but the very fact that this feeling exists goes to prove the necessity for the appointment of a Departmental Head.

That is rather a good story now told of the amateur nurse in charge of fifty patients at the front. "If the patient's temperature is above 300," she wrote in the Night Instruction Book, "sponge him." The better plan in such a case, of course, is to send for the undertaker.

The American Nursing World.

MATRONS AND NURSES IN COUNCIL.

THE meetings of the Superintendents' Society and the Associated Alumnae, which were held last week in New York, were, in some respects, undoubtedly the most interesting and "live" sessions recorded in the history of either association. The Alumnae had a very practical and well-worked-out set of papers. The improvement in style, in force and in original thinking, over last year, was very noticeable, and the various topics were discussed with keen interest.

The graduates are preparing in real earnest to grasp their various problems and work them out, and the papers suggested different lines along which they will have much work to do.

The Superintendents, on the contrary, had no papers this year, but spent their time in stating the results of the papers read in the last seven years. In that time enough ground has been ploughed and seed sown, to keep them busy for some time tending the crop—uniformity of teaching, shorter hours, three years' courses, national organization, higher education for training school and hospital heads—these plants will have to be diligently encouraged, pruned, and watered for a long while. Some weeding must be done also. One of the weeds that springs up in all seasons is undergraduate private duty, the same old private duty by pupils in training, which is re-appearing here and there in the third year; sometimes, under the guise of more experience for the nurse, sometimes as a device for nursing people of moderate means: not, apparently, taken up as a money-making device pure and simple, and there is encouragement in that at least, for if it is really adopted as an educational experiment only, there is more hope of resisting and persuading it out of existence. When organized nurses begin to bring influence to bear on this and kindred subjects, they can do a great deal, and it was good to hear resolutions passed, by the Associated Alumnae, condemning the practice of undergraduate private duty, and asking the Superintendents to use every means of preventing it.

Most promising of all, at both these meetings, was the widespread readiness evinced, to enter into wider relations with other women both in and out of the profession, and to broaden into a more liberal inclusiveness of association. There seems to be a feeling in the air that we must ally ourselves with other women in other lines of life and work; must become less of a caste, and more active members of society as a whole; also, that membership qualifications must be broadened; that a rational membership would include all, having ideas and aspirations in common, rather than to be limited to those having

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)