

A Glimpse of Active Service.

MRS. LUDLOW—wife of Major Ludlow, who did such good work in connection with the Commissariat Department during the siege of Ladysmith—who, as a Bart's Nurse, and subsequently as Matron of the Royal Free Hospital is well known to many nurses in this country, is now at home and has many interesting details to tell of her terrible experiences as a Nursing Sister during the siege of Ladysmith. As to her own actual share of the work done by the little band of Sisters—all too small—she is exceedingly reticent; but those who know the uniformly high standard of her work, and her practical organizing ability, must be sure that Mrs. Ludlow's services must have been of great value. It was difficult to realize, sitting in a London hotel, surrounded by all the commonplace accessories which we are accustomed to consider necessities, that the trim and dainty woman who described so graphically and yet so modestly the nursing of the sick during the siege of Ladysmith, had recently been in the midst of scenes which have thrilled the world, and had subsisted on the quarter rations—when she, in common with other Sisters, had not deprived herself of some of these for the sake of her patients—which were carefully doled out to the inhabitants, and knew the taste of the bully beef which, so the Tommies declared, was the same as had been served to them in the last war, nearly five-and-twenty years ago, they “knew it by the brand.”

Mrs. Ludlow's story is best told in her own words:—

“I began work,” she said, “on October 13th, in the Station Hospital at Maritzburg, where I was sent to relieve three Army Nursing Sisters, Sister Superintendent Dowse, and Sisters Noble and Bond, who had gone up to Ladysmith to be ready for the Dundee wounded, who were expected there but who never came, and on the following Monday, with three other Sisters, I was summoned to Ladysmith in anticipation of the Elandslaagte fight. We had a most enthusiastic send-off from Maritzburg, Colonel and Mrs. Johnstone being amongst the most cordial of our well-wishers. As we went down the line we saw that the country was heavily entrenched by Boers, while the bridges were guarded by British sentries. We arrived at Ladysmith early in the morning in drizzling rain, and found that there was nowhere for us to go except the Cricket Pavilion, where other Sisters were already sleeping on the bar, or counter. On the following Saturday, we had grim evidence of the proximity of war, as the Town Hall and three of the churches were

prepared to receive the Elandslaagte wounded, who arrived at 11.30 p.m. I was given charge by Superintendent Sister Dowse, of the Town Hall, where Sister Bond, of the Army Nursing Service, had charge of the Operation Theatre, all the most severely wounded, therefore, passed through the Town Hall. Sister Dowse and Sister Noble took charge of the churches. The whole of Saturday night, Sunday, and Sunday night, we were taking in wounded and dying cases, and I was most ably assisted by Sister Hill, and four other civil Sisters attached to the Army Nursing Service. On the Monday morning the bombardment began, and during that week we took in the Lombard's Kop and Reitfontein wounded under heavy bombarding. On the Tuesday a notice was issued by General White that all the civil population were to leave within 24 hours, before the line was cut. They all left on the Wednesday, including many of the wounded, amongst whom was General Pretorius, who was a patient of mine.

Well, we were shelled for a week, and then an officer was sent out, under a flag of truce by General White, to ask if the wounded could be removed to a place of safety. Under very strict conditions we were allowed to move to Intombi Spruit, two and a half miles out of Ladysmith, where, on the right side of the railway, a large military hospital of marquees was erected. On the left of the railway was a civil camp where those employees of the railway, who could not be spared until the line was cut, were allowed to live. The numbers were further swelled by the Dundee prisoners, who were sent down after the line was cut. We were situated on a swamp surrounded by hills, on which the Boer guns were fixed. The largest of these hills was Bulwana, on which was Long Tom. We were so near them that we could see the Boers smoking their pipes, or preparing their food. All the shells fired into Ladysmith had to go over the Hospital, and it was not unusual for the sentries to get a panic when some desultory firing would take place.

In the early days when the wounded were able to have every luxury they did excellently, but soon after the first disappointment at Colenso occurred provisions were more carefully served out, and after each disappointment these became less and less until we were reduced to quarter rations. This necessary measure, of course, affected the wounded, many of whom, moreover, developed enteric, of which disease we sometimes had as many as 50 or 60 cases a day.

After a time the patients were very depressed and hard to reassure, some of the nurses also became ill, and altogether our resources were

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