

Army Nursing Notes.

The hospital ship *Simla* is on her way home with sick and wounded. Major Deeble, Royal Army Medical Corps, is in charge, and Civil Surgeon Strafford and Nursing Sisters M. E. Clare and H. Gray are also on board for duty on the voyage.

Lord Roberts dealt promptly and effectively with the situation at Johannesburg when he found the hospitals there in an unsatisfactory condition. He ordered everything that was lacking "to be obtained at once, regulations permitting or not."

According to the *Express*, Lord Wolseley is one of those who advocate the employment of female nurses in the army. It reports him to have said:—"A man, be he never so sympathetic, cannot under any circumstances administer to the little comforts of the sufferer in the same way that a woman does. Often when I have been bundled about like a log by a rough, hairy orderly, I have felt I would give all I possessed for the tender care and gentle hands of a woman."

The Cape Cambrian Society, Cape Town, has contributed £32 15s. 11d. to the Welsh Hospital, "towards erecting on the spot a memorial recording the names of the doctors and nursing sister who died at the post of duty, to be for all time a memorial of their work."

The Hospital Commission has continued its sitting at Bloemfontein, and the evidence given appears to be of a somewhat contradictory nature. General Kelly-Kenny spoke up for the orderlies, who, he said, behaved well and, on occasion, did a great deal of work in addition to their own.

Surgeon-General Wilson contradicted the figures given by Mr. Burdett-Coutts and Mr. Murray Guthrie, in relation to the death-rates in private hospitals being lower than in military ones. Exactly the reverse was, he said, the case.

Dr. Roberts said the statements of the civil surgeons had been exaggerated.

Nurse Holland said she had seen veldt sores, which were very prevalent, but no bed sores arising from inattention.

The appointment of oculists to the Army is recommended by Lord Kesteven, who stated to the Commission that there was only one in South Africa

The Commission, after visiting the hospitals in Bloemfontein, proceeded to Kroonstad, travelling only by day in order to avoid danger from the enemy.

Dr. Leigh Canney, in a letter to the *Standard*, says that the most important question in relation to the nursing question in South Africa is in danger of being entirely overlooked by the Hospital Commission—the question of prevention. The questions to be decided are:—(1) Prevention. Could the epidemics of typhoid and dysentery have been prevented? (2) Amelioration. Could the conditions of the sufferers have been ameliorated? He points out that if the first question is answered in the affirmative, the second has little or no importance, but that the only recognition which the question of prevention has received has been Mr. Wyndham's statement in the House of Commons that, in anticipation of such outbreaks as have taken place, recommendations were made that each unit of 100 men should be supplied with a sterilising filter; and Sir Walter Foster's suggestion of a Sanitary Commission. So far, the Commissioners have made no published enquiries on the preventive measures employed. All attention has been fixed on the Amelioration question only.

While every one would agree if the Commission came to the conclusion that, in the future, matters as regards amelioration might be made more comfortable, Dr. Canney thinks that the medical profession, having a regard to the preventibility of typhoid and dysentery, would regard with regret any steps towards amelioration if these steps should lull the War Office or the public into the view that these things are inevitable and must be endured. He is of opinion that the answer to Mr. Wyndham's question in the House of Commons on June 29th—"Could the evil which they point to have been avoided, either by a keener foresight or by a more lavish provision on the part of the Home Government, or by greater zeal and intelligence on the part of our officers, and more especially on the part of the Royal Army Medical Corps in South Africa?"—is that by greater zeal, foresight, and intelligence on the part of our officers in South Africa, and at the War Office, but not necessarily on the part of the Royal Army Medical Corps, the evil would have been avoided, the War finished earlier, and enormous expense saved. He thinks that the Commission must decide why one of the two systems by which typhoid and dysentery are largely prevented was not carried out, namely—(a) filtration, or (b) boiling of all water used for drinking purposes.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)