

of the men died. We carried them to the hospital; we civilians did our share that night—carried them across, and the lightning flickered palely behind the kopjes, and the fretful wind swirled around the half-naked bodies of the men on the stretchers. That night the hospital held three times as many men as is allowed by regulations, and that week the hospital staff, from doctors to orderlies, were content with four hours sleep a night.”

“The period of chaos was apparently inaugurated at the beginning of February with the advance on Bloemfontein, and it is fair to suppose terminated as soon after the repairing of the line from the Free State capital to Norval's Pont as possible.”

“It was caused:—

“(1) By a serious epidemic of enteric fever.

“(2) Insufficiency of proper transport either to carry the supplies and hospital accommodation necessary to so large an army or to move the sick back to the railhead.

“(3) An insufficiency of nursing staff immediately to cope with the outbreak.”

Dealing with the question of the training of the rank and file of the R.A.M.C., Mr. Wallace says:—“Now as to the training of the rank and file of the Royal Army Medical Corps. The private of the Royal Army Medical Corps seldom enlists directly into that branch of the service. If the recruit applies at the R.A.M.C. headquarters he is, or was, usually persuaded to serve a training in the Medical Staff Militia. Most of the recruits of the R.A.M.C. are drawn from the auxiliary arm, and a very large proportion is transferred from regiments of the line, either under the regulation which allows young soldiers of less than three months' service to enter one of the Departmental Corps, or else under that which allows men of over a certain service to transfer. It is the exception that men are directly admitted. Unlike other non-departmental regiments, certain educational qualifications and certificates as to character are required before the applicant is finally attested. Take the case of a man who enlists directly without entering the Militia. Once enlisted the recruit is sent off to Aldershot, which is the headquarters of the Corps. Here for a few weeks he does nothing beyond learning a little squad drill; when he is considered to be passably proficient in these exercises, and has thoroughly grasped the difference between column in line and battalion in column, he joins one of the classes of instructions which are periodically formed.

For four hours daily he is instructed in the use of bandages, stretcher drill, the elements of anatomy and physiology, the names and uses of instruments and utensils, and the art of rendering first aid to the wounded.”

“Incidentally he learns to pitch tents, carry coal, scrub floors, march in line, go through the bayonet exercise, and shoot. All no doubt very useful accomplishments for a man whose sole duty is to be the care of the sick and wounded. After passing an oral examination conducted by a Board of Medical officers, the recruit is drafted to one of the larger military hospitals of the United Kingdom—Netley, the Cambridge Hospital, the Royal Infirmary Dublin, Herbert Hospital, etc., etc.”

Here, if the system of training is carried out, “the man commences work in a ward, and by performing the menial labours, and gradually profiting by the example of the senior orderly and the lectures of the medical officer (he accompanies the doctor in his daily round), he becomes in turn an assistant, a full-blown nurse, and, on promotion, a ward master.”

“Speaking generally, however, these are not the lines on which the R.A.M.C. is conducted. More often than not the young recruit is pitchforked into a ward to sink or swim, as the fates decide. More often than not what he learns of actual nursing he is taught by the patient. Not one medical officer in twenty deigns to address any remark to his nurse, other than one upon the brightness of his buttons or the polish on his boots, and twenty-five per cent. of the Royal Army Medical Corps never see the inside of a ward after a couple of months' slipshod training, unless they happen to be on night duty, the men being employed as grooms, clerks, servants, stewards' assistants, sweepers (pioneers), all of which duties might with advantage be performed by other branches of the service. Of all the inner systems of the R.A.M.C. the night system is the most hopelessly insane. There are as a rule men on duty every night in the waiting rooms or wings of a hospital to receive admissions that come in the night, and, if necessary, render first aid. It is reasonable to expect that the men chosen for this duty would be proficient nurses, who could be depended on to effectively perform such duties. In the cases of patients at critical stages of their illnesses, three or more orderlies are 'mounted' over each patient, unless a streak of intelligence such as occasionally illuminates the gloom of hospital administration, has decreed that all serious cases shall be kept

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