

## Army Nursing Notes.

Lord Justice Romer and the other members of the Hospital Inquiry Commission have left Cape Town for England on board the *Kinfauns Castle*.

Mrs. Makins, R.R.C., the wife of Mr. Makins, of St. Thomas', who has returned to England after several months' nursing in South Africa, pays a well-deserved meed of appreciation in the press to the work of the women of the Colonies during the war, as follows:—

"Having recently returned from South Africa, where I have been nursing for several months in the Cape and Orange River Colonies, I am able to speak with knowledge of the unceasing aid offered to our sick and wounded in hospitals and ambulance trains during the war by our colonial sisters. As in England I am surprised to find so many people quite ignorant of the generous help given, often by our less prosperous kinswomen, will you be so good as to allow me to repeat a few facts? Almost every train at the stations where it stopped while carrying sick and wounded was met on the platform by ladies, arranged for by their committees to carry fresh milk, beef-tea, eggs, and fruit to the invalids. This was not done spasmodically, but continuously until there was no further need for it. I know in some cases the kind donors went without these delicacies themselves to give to the sick. In No. 1 Hospital, Wynberg, we had a continuous, almost daily gift, of fresh milk, jellies, blancmanges, and cakes for the Tommies. I am told the same arrangements were carried out in Natal. Lastly; I must speak of the Good Hope Society affiliated to our Red Cross. The South African ladies made charming holland bags, containing the following articles: pyjama suit, towel, soap, brush, comb, and tooth brush, sponge and bag. Each Tommy in the train received one of these kit bags, also the officers, the only difference for the latter being the difference of a pair of felt slippers. My feeling is that everyone gave most lovingly of their best, and without ostentation, and their efforts have scarcely received the recognition they deserve."

The *Revue du Cercle Militaire* contains an interesting account of the work done by, and present state of, the Société Française de Secours aux Blessés Militaires. The Society has just despatched to China, to accompany the French contingent of the Allied Forces in that country, two field hospitals with a complete equipment of doctors, nurses, orderlies, material, etc., comprising, among others, eight surgeons, ten sick attendants, and twenty Sisters of the Order of St. Vincent-de-Paul. Together the two hospitals will be able to accommodate nearly 400 patients. In case of France becoming involved in a Continental War the Society would be able to place at the disposal of the sick and wounded 18,024 beds in the territorial hospitals, 2,600 beds in auxiliary hospitals, and dressings and medical necessaries for the immediate use of 21,074 patients; the whole of a value of £78,800.

## Notes on Practical Nursing.

## MALE CATHETER CASES.

A QUESTION which is constantly coming before us is:—'Is it right for Sisters and nurses in hospitals where there are resident medical men, to be asked to pass the catheter on adult male patients?' A country Matron writes us this week that she is just losing a most valuable Sister, because she has refused to do this. This Matron is of opinion that Sisters and nurses should never be asked to perform this office for male patients, except in a case of emergency, or in private work, where the doctor is not available.

With this view we entirely agree. Where there is a resident medical staff we are of opinion that the duty of passing catheters on male patients should be understood to belong to their department, and it would be well if all Hospital Committees made a rule to this effect. Resident medical officers, in common with Sisters and nurses, should have their regular hours on and off duty, so that they may relieve each other, and in small hospitals where there is only one resident medical man, when there is a case in the male wards which requires the periodical passing of the catheter, then he should arrange his times off duty so that he may be on the spot when the performance of this office is necessary. In country hospitals, where there is no distinct understanding on this subject, if the resident staff are somewhat easy-going, there is, without doubt, a tendency to accept the many social invitations which are showered upon popular bachelors and to leave the performance of uninteresting routine duties to the nursing staff. This should not be permitted.

We are asked, further, whether it was the practice at St. Bartholomew's, during our term of office as Matron, for nurses to pass the catheter on male patients. It certainly was not. It is true, when we were first appointed, no definite instructions had been given to the nursing staff on this matter. The question brought to our notice on one occasion, when making a round of inspection of the wards at night. We found the nurse in charge of one ward, with the house-surgeon, behind the screens round a patient's bed, where the house-surgeon was engaged in passing a catheter. The excuse given by the nurse was that she "had to hold the candle." Having considered the matter, we saw no valid reason why the candle might not have been placed to give the necessary light, without being held by the nurse, or even why the gas, which was directly over the bed, should not have been turned up during the house-surgeon's visit, for a few minutes, if necessary, though we venture to think

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