

Army Nursing Notes.

It is an open secret how deeply the gentle heart of the Princess of Wales has been moved by the suffering of the sick and wounded during the war, and rumour has it that neither she nor the Duchess of Argyll have been satisfied by existing methods of organization for providing nursing care for our brave soldiers.

We were not surprised to learn that the Princess of Wales was anxious to send out more nurses, and that on Friday last she paid a private visit to the London Hospital, where a pretty and touching ceremony took place in the nurses' garden, where 100 nurses were assembled.

The Hon. Sydney Holland, Chairman of the Hospital, presented the 20 nurses selected from the hospital staff for service in South Africa, at the expense of funds at the Princess's disposal. The Princess spoke to the nurses in turn, and, after tying round their arms her own badge, presented to each a warm Shetland shawl and rug. Each nurse will take with her a box filled with medical necessities for typhoid. The Princess is also sending with them two large boxes of presents for soldiers whom they may have to nurse.

The 20 nurses selected sailed for the Cape in the transport *Assaye* on Wednesday last, their names being:—Miss H. O. Luckie, Sister-in-Charge, and Misses M. S. Baines, E. Baldrey, L. Bristow, E. Fry, A. Gore, C. Hanbury, M. M. Holloway, L. Humphreys, I. Lawson, B. E. Lloyd, E. E. C. Marsh, K. Parminter, G. B. Robertson, E. Smyth, V. P. Squire, M. E. Tate, C. E. A. Thorpe, A. Thomas, and E. Whistler.

Since our last issue, blast and counter-blast has resounded through the Commons, dealing in no conciliatory spirit with the composition of the South African Hospitals Commission. Mr. Burdett-Coutts objects to the inclusion of Professor Cunningham, of Dublin, on the Commission, because this gentleman holds a paid appointment under the War Office, viz., that of examiner for the Army Medical Staff, and in this objection, which Mr. Balfour pooh-poohed, we think all fair-minded people will uphold him.

Mr. Coutts writes to the press and says:—

"I leave it to all fair-minded men to answer the following questions:—

"1. Do the above facts bear out Mr. Balfour's statement in the House, evidently based on imperfect information, that 'these medical men have no connection with the Army Medical Department'?"

"2. Is it right that there should be any one on this committee who is connected in any way with either the War Office or the Army Medical Department?"

"I would urge that the committee should be absolutely impartial in its constitution, and that in a case like this, where organized interests and influences are necessarily arrayed on one side, these latter should not be reflected in the faintest degree on the body appointed.

"If the issue before the committee were simply the exoneration or blame of certain officials or departments for past errors or deficiencies, the matter need hardly be pressed; but its real object is one of far greater importance, for it concerns the health and life of our future armies in time of war. Absolute impartiality, therefore, in the constitution of the committee and the conduct of the inquiry is a vital necessity."

It is a pity that, in discussing this, members of the medical profession do "protest too much," but the letter sent by Mr. Page, a member of the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, to the *Times*, is admirable in text and tone. "Were the sufferings of our men in South Africa preventable?" That is the question. "Inquiry upon that point, and that alone in all its bearings," says Mr. Page, "is the thing for which a committee was desired, and no "medical hole and corner" investigation will satisfy those of the medical profession who are Englishmen first and doctors afterwards. The singular infelicity with which the nomination of the Committee was handled by Mr. Balfour in the House of Commons is hardly a just pretext for an onslaught on the whole medical profession. Members of it are, in my belief, not less anxious than the rest of the community for the truth to be learned by disinterested searching inquiry, that blame, if blame there be, shall be brought home to those who deserve it, be they Ministers or departments, soldiers or doctors, here or abroad."

As at present arranged, the Commission is composed of Lord Justice Romer, Dr. Church, President of the College of Physicians, Professor Cunningham, of Trinity College, Dublin, Sir David Richmond, and Mr. Harrison, the general manager of the London and North-Western Railway Company.

In letter No. 7, addressed by Mr. Burdett-Coutts, and published in the *Times* after the "bomb," although written before it—the crux of the whole question is most ably dealt with—the question of untrained male *versus* trained female nurses for sick soldiers, from which we quote as follows:—

"A careful examination of the whole question, for which there is hardly space in these letters, has brought us to the conclusion that the absence or totally inad-

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