

Army Nursing Notes.

Her Majesty the Queen has sent to the Maharajah of Scindia the following message in acknowledgement of his gift of a hospital ship for the use of the troops in China: "Must ask your Highness accept my warmest thanks for your splendid gift, hospital ship, which has touched me deeply."

The nurses who sailed on the *Dunvegan Castle* to work in the Imperial Yeomanry Johannesburg Branch Hospital, have arrived safely at their destination.

Lord Roberts has asked for 50 more trained nurses, and nurses are being hurried to South Africa every week; and the following 20 members of the Army Nursing Reserve sail for the Cape on Saturday, 4th August:—Nursing Sisters A. S. Liell, M. E. Howell, E. Seddon-Smith, H. Anderson, J. Halliday, A. French, A. M. B. Usher-Somers, M. Clements, M. Hodges, L. L. Watts, A. E. Smith, M. M. Tunley, A. B. Hill, A. E. Andre, M. Henderson, M. B. Bennett, F. Puddicombe, A. M. Wright, M. Barton, E. Johnson.

So-called "colonial nurses," in reality in many instances, English trained nurses working all over South Africa in a civil capacity, have borne the brunt of the nursing during the terrible sieges, and towards the front. We hope some influential persons will take means to place before the home authorities who distribute thanks and rewards, the invaluable services of these devoted women. The fact that they had gone forth in the wake of the flag to nurse in our colonies, before the exciting times of war, is a proof of their true patriotism.

The South African Hospitals Commission have been busy taking evidence during the past week, and leave England for South Africa on Saturday, 4th August.

At the first sitting of the Commission, the President, Lord Justice Romer, stated that, if desired by witnesses, their evidence would be taken privately. This arrangement has no advantages from our point of view. A witness who has not the moral courage to give his evidence publicly is best left alone, and such a method enables persons to make statements which are not open to criticism. For instance, the Committee of the Army Nursing Service Reserve should be called upon to explain their complete

lack of nursing organization, for having, during the three years previous to the war, failed to provide special education in military nursing for their members, or even to adopt the certificated standard of efficiency. Such evidence given *in camera* might be distinctly prejudicial to future reform.

Many interesting witnesses have, however, spoken frankly. Colonel J. Steevens, C.B., Principal Ordnance Officer, replying to questions as to the reserve of hospital equipment when the war broke out, said that actually they had only one base hospital of 520 beds in store, although the original field force decided upon to go out required four general hospitals of 520 beds and four stationary hospitals.

Mr. Watson Cheyne brought out the fact that at Driefontein they had proof that the ambulance was insufficient in numbers. The battle was over at dark, and the next morning Lord Roberts, on going over the ground about 6 o'clock, found about 20 wounded on the ground. There were only four ambulances. The proper complement should have been 20, each wagon accommodating two lying down and two sitting. This being so, it was quite impossible to collect the wounded for several hours.

Mr. Watson Cheyne also said the orderlies did their best, but they were untrained men, and if their best was not good, that was another matter. It was generally remarked that the St. John's Ambulance men were not good, owing to their want of training.

Surgeon-General J. Jameson, Director-General of the Army Medical Department, gave some particulars of the working of his department. He said: "Immediately the war broke out it was found that the medical *personnel* for two Army Corps and a cavalry brigade were exhausted."

The Rev. R. H. Orford said everything was done which could be done, but he admitted that at Bloemfontein it was impossible, in some cases, to undress the patients for a fortnight.

There were about 60 patients in the hospital, but there were no nurses. The nursing work was all done by orderlies, who did their work splendidly. The greatest difficulty they had was in getting fresh milk. The food was of good quality. The patients, as he had said, were lying in their clothing, but that was absolutely inevitable!!

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)