

The Commissioners went down to Netley on Friday, and interviewed some of the men returned sick and wounded. "Tommie" is a first-class fellow, and he goes to war expecting to rough it, and it is no surprise to him whatever to be wounded, left to die on the veldt; if rescued, jolted for miles over the stones in an ox-waggon, dumped down in a puddle in a verminous blanket, despatched by rail in an open truck, shunted on to a siding for half a day at a time, made to walk and stand at attention whilst suffering from enteric, the sergeant meanwhile making all sorts of irrelevant enquiries; or, on the other hand, to find himself in clover in a civil hospital, petted, made much of, smiled upon by ladies of quality and Nursing Sisters. "Tommie" is a philosopher, and he takes matters calmly, and if we wait for him to "kick up a blooming bobbery" in his own vernacular, before reorganizing the Army Medical Department, necessary reforms for the saving of life and limb, will never be made.

Of the seventy men examined by the Commission at Netley, the majority were not dissatisfied. To quote a few replies:—

No. 10 said he was in hospital at Colenso. In bell tent for a week. No blankets, only a big coat. Removed and got a stretcher and two blankets. Had to crawl about 200 yards to the trench because they had no bed utensils, and some of them had to lie out all night, being too weak to get back. Did not suffer from want of clothes. It was hot weather. It was only in wet weather they felt the want. Did not expect things as well at the front as at the base.

No. 13. Suffered from dysentery at Elands-laagte. Went into field hospital. Sometimes eight or nine in a tent. Had milk and ship biscuits. Went to Modderspruit Hospital. Had an insolent orderly, who, if asked for anything, told them to get it themselves. He was two or three months there. Shifted to another hospital where everything was convenient. There were no utensils, but that could not be helped. As they got down the country they had everything for their convenience.

No. 14. Sick at East London. In Green Hospital. Had to go 200 yards to trenches on two sticks. Only one orderly with 20 or 30 men to look after them. Cannot expect much comfort in little field hospitals.

No. 15. Had both jaws broken at Krugersdorp, taken to general hospital, Bloemfontein.

Had bruises on back and side, and was told to sleep on the floor. Objected, and they gave him a stretcher, and afterwards took it away. The orderlies did not make them comfortable, and he had to pay twopence for hot water.

No. 16. In bell tent at Bloemfontein. Had read a good lot about discomforts, but had nothing to complain of. The orderlies might have done better. Did not pay anything for hot water. Would sooner have thumped the orderly than pay him for doing his duty.

No. 17. Got leg broken at Paardeberg. Had a bad time for 36 hours in train, with leg in splint. Could not move, and no attendant and no convenience.

No. 18. Wounded on Spion Kop. Made very comfortable. No one took their rations—they only had a biscuit.

No. 19. Lost leg at Elandslaagte. Nothing to complain of. Did not expect to be looked after as if he had been at home.

No. 20. Lost leg at Pieter's Hill. Rather short of food at Chieveley, but no fault to find with nurses or doctors.

No. 21. Shot in knee at Driefontein. Left out in the sun at the field dressing station without water. Lord Roberts and staff came by and gave them tea and water out of their own bottles. Afterwards well looked after by New South Wales orderlies.

Some of the witnesses spoke of losing money while in hospital. They generally spoke of being well treated on the return voyage, though in two or three instances they had suffered from neglect at the hands of the doctors and attendants.

On Monday more evidence was taken in London. Mr. Murray Guthrie, who went out with the American Hospital, and who was later appointed by Lord Roberts at Bloemfontein to distribute comforts sent from home, gave valuable evidence. He said a great many people spoke of the want of organizing power on the part of the Royal Army Medical Corps. He went to the No. 8 General Hospital at Bloemfontein, where there were 1,300 or 1,400 cases under canvas a mile from the town. The Sister Superintendent told him they were overcrowded. The marquees were good. When they got to the tents the men were lying on the ground very much crowded. The Sister said it was impossible to attempt to nurse the men in the state they

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