

convalescent patients. They seemed to me to eat most ravenously and in enormous quantities, yet they looked thin and worn. I wondered if the open-air life produced these appetites. But one day one of them said, quite simply, that they had all, up country, had such very poor and monotonous food that when they saw a good table with plenty and variety they felt they could hardly satisfy their hunger. That was all they ever said, and in about a week their appetites became normal.

I think a flaw in the system has been the want of superintendence. Each general hospital, of which there are something under thirty, has a Netley sister at the head, and she is undoubted mistress of all she surveys, within the limits of army regulations; but most mixed parties have been sent to the field and stationary hospitals. Perhaps a London hospital sister, two co-operatives, a nurse from some provincial hospital, a nurse from some little civil hospital in the wilds of Africa, a nurse who has done private nursing for herself in her own home, have all been sent together to some outlying station hospital entirely on an equality. If even two are sent to my mind it is productive of peace and prudence if one is over the other; where there are more, I am sure it is better. The best nurses should, I think, have been selected by the doctors as superintendents, and should have been called nursing sisters; the rest should have taken subordinate positions and been called army nurses, addressed as nurse, and expected to do nurses' work. Many women, even with the best intentions, are not fit to be set down, away from all previous influences, and left to order their lives as seems good to themselves. From the system as it is at present have arisen the few scandals and the many failures in nursing in this great war, and it has, I am certain, destroyed the after-career of hundreds of good nurses. Another weak point, if I am to say honestly what I think, is with the orderlies; they do not appear to me to be the right class of men. They are above half the work, and not up to the other half. The regular scrubber, who, under the ward sister, does the rough work in a civil hospital, as a matter of course is lacking, and the men are not up to the work of a good male nurse. They are too often rough to the patients, greedy, lazy, and, I fear, dishonest. One of our great troubles was caused by this. We took over halls with beautiful new white floors, and we gave them back stained from end to end from want of proper scrubbing. A wipe-up was all the orderlies ever gave to any accident on the floor, and to get the ward well cleaned was an impossibility. No one attached to the military was willing to give the thorough cleaning a ward in a civil hospital gets daily as a matter of course, and there were great and serious sanitary faults from the same reason. The men were all too superior to do it; the nurses,

of course, had neither strength nor time, until in one large hall the superintending nurse, with a small watering-can of mercurial lotion and a big mop, mopped out the ward herself for two or three days, after which the orderlies slowly took to mopping it out themselves. They were all too superior for scrubbers' work, and a sick or wounded man cannot be left with any peace of mind to their care, for, as I say, they are not up to the work of a well-trained nurse. I should have thought that the best soldiers and best-educated men would have been chosen for the army corps and thoroughly trained, like a probationer in a hospital, and made to do their real nursing properly, or degraded. The larger number should be from a lower class of men, and be bearers, scrubbers, and regular cleaners and washers. The difficulty we had in getting washing done for a thousand sick in our worn-out town, with scarcely a bar of soap within 500 miles, was unspeakable, yet the orderlies spent nearly all their time in idling about the guard-room: I heard one surgeon-major say that his sergeant was "no more good than a sick headache," and others must often have thought as much.

It seems to me that in the African campaign infinite care has been taken of the sick. The hospitals themselves, excepting always the camp hospitals, have really shown how much can be done with few appliances and in the roughest surroundings; the hospital trains have been marvels of ingenuity in the way of saving pain, and the greatest care has been taken on the hospital ships. The generals, when in town, have visited both the general and field hospitals daily; ladies have been ready at all hours and times to cook, to sew, to fetch and carry, to write letters, to read, to help in every way. Of the doctors it does not become me to speak; but their part on the field and in the hospital alike has been noble. One doctor told me of another who went on calmly dressing a wound, scarcely looking up until it was done, although forty bullets fell either close to him or through parts of his clothing or dressings while he was doing it. And in criticising sanitary measures it should not be forgotten how the microbes of disease are continually carried in the proboscis of a mosquito, or what a plague of mosquitoes we had all through Africa in the year 1900.

Returning from the Front.

The following Nursing Sisters are now on their way home from South Africa:—

In the *Mohawk*:—Sisters A. Myring and C. Meany. Due at Southampton on October 7th.

In the *Greek*:—Sisters E. S. Chadborn, G. L. Shelley, and E. L. Fisher. Due on October 9th.

In the *Galeka*:—Sisters L. Sands, E. M. Sansbury, and A. Sutton. Due on October 8th.

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