

Doctor and myself from bed to bed only disappearing at intervals, to turn up again with a face yellow and green, but with a smile on her lips, and the twinkle—that wrought such havoc among the male hearts on board—in her eyes. But the “choppy” sea and the smell of dinner were too much for her at last, and my staff had all retired before we had got a single patient comfortable.

A few very lazy and unsatisfactory orderlies, were sent by the ward master to report to me; and in my ignorance I suggested that they got all the patients undressed and into bed, for the stretcher cases had only been placed on the berths mostly on the top of the bedclothes. Then we found that there was not a single night shirt, sleeping suit, or towel provided for the patients. As many of the outer garments as the men would part with were removed, and their thick and not very clean under garments were allowed to remain on. I must not dwell long on the first few days of the voyage, when chaos reigned. Patient after patient was found to have a temperature of 104 degs. and upwards; one man had an afternoon temperature of 106 degs. nearly the whole way home; another had double pneumonia, and was delirious and very noisy.

There were several enterics, who got hæmorrhage; and many men who had been through the siege of Ladysmith or Kimberley, and whose nerves as well as bodies had gone to rack. The wounded—even where the wound was made by an expanding bullet—made good progress, and, except the daily dressings, did not give much trouble.

The “Shammers” were numerous at first. They became fewer when they found that the routine treatment was a dose of castor oil and a diet of condensed milk.

Probably the orderlies were one's greatest trouble. I knew little of military etiquette, and the civilian doctor knew less. On the second or third day on board, I sent a lad to find two orderlies, who were supposed to be on duty. One did not come at all, and the other came after a long time, and was very indignant; it seemed I had sent a private with orders to “his highness,” and he was a corporal. Then I saw mutiny ahead, and I gathered all the orderlies and every man who had been showing authority into the hospital. I closed the door, and put my back to it. While I was waiting for attention, I sent up a note of thankfulness that for several months I had been working among the Tommies, “for the good of their souls,” and that I understood something of the machinery, that in most cases took the place of grey matter in their brain box. I explained in a few words that I did not understand military discipline, neither did I wish to, that the doctor in command was a civilian, I was Superintendent, and that the ship from that day forth would be conducted on the lines of a civilian hospital.

Then, as an example, I told the orderly, who acknowledged he knew I had sent for him, but who did not obey, to leave the hospital, and take his place with the hammock men. The one who after a time obeyed grudgingly was also dismissed from

the hospital, but was allowed to have his meals in the mess room.

This done, I relieved all the orderlies from hospital duty, and called for volunteers. We had a good number of volunteers, more than we needed, and some of them were men I had known at the camp and soldiers' homes. I began with the new volunteers by explaining that any man who was insubordinate I should report to the Colonel and have put in the guard room; but that those who remained on duty until we arrived at Southampton I would do my best for, with their superior officers.

From that day onward things went more smoothly, our volunteers were very far from perfect, but they were infinitely better than the scum of the army that we had started with. There was not a man put in the guard room during the voyage, nor any one reported.

The doctor paid me the compliment of leaving most things to the nurses (I did not consider it a compliment at the time) but he upheld my authority with the men loyally.

We had 600 patients of a sort, and six nurses also of a sort. I was the only one of the six who had received a three years' certificate.

Understaffed as we were, we tried to carry out the usual hospital treatment with the worst cases. Sometimes twenty patients would require sponging for high temperatures in an evening.

Sister Brown (the handsome nurse) was in charge of several of these, and we were surprised that they did not seem to benefit by the sponging, until one day we found a slop basin with a teacupful of water in it beside a berth, and found this had been used for sponging not one, but two or three enterics. Afterwards “the Second in Command” had more than her fair share of work; she had never seen a typhoid patient sponged, so she watched while one was done, helped with another, and then on her own account sponged several.

It was not always easy work either, the men in the lower berths were troublesome enough, if one had a long back and was obliged to duck under the berth above to attend to the patient. But it was still more awkward to stand on the lower berth, hold on with one hand to the one above, and make the patient comfortable while the ship rolled and tumbled. One felt that if one had a little spare time one could be very sea-sick.

Sister Brown had a very meek husband, who worked like a machine, and was more trustworthy than his pretty wife. I found it a good plan to remember “the two were one,” and hold him responsible for her share of the work as well as his own. Sometimes, however, this did not work. On one occasion a case of hæmorrhage occurred among her patients. I found it out when going the usual mid-day rounds, and reported it to the medical officer, who was pleased to storm a good deal and blame everybody present. When some remedies had been applied, and the patient had recovered slightly, Sister Brown sauntered in looking very cool and pretty; we were then in the tropics.

“I have just been to the refrigerator, Sister,”

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