

Dr. Arch. Carson, in charge of the nurses aboard, at first suggested they prepare to over-night in the car here. By and by, though, this order was changed; and an escort came to take the nurses to the Cash Register factory, the only haven of refuge, with heat and light, in all that wilderness of flood and storm.

At one, the nursing corps retired, sleeping on the boards of the factory floor. At three-thirty in the morning—two hours and a-half later, that is—they were called.

Miss Margaret Colvin, the nurse who did most for the suffering that first day there at Dayton—the surgical nurse of the Cincinnati Hospital—she gives an interesting account of her experience:—

“It was four in the morning,” she says, “before we really knew what we were to do. Everything was in such confusion; no one up there seemed to know what to do next. We had our wraps, and some of our squad donned their uniforms; but most of the nurses did not.

“At four, they told us we would get breakfast at five; and then, at day-break, we would be assigned to the relief stations about the city.

“A company of University of Cincinnati students, who had volunteered for Red Cross duty, had come up with us on the train; and with two of these, three other nurses, two doctors, and a guide from the Cash Register plant, we went by auto. to the designated point. Of course, we took our medical supplies along with us.

“Our squad, composed of the party as given, were assigned to the Stivers High School. We had a stretcher along with us, and this soon gave the place a hospital aspect.

“At the start we established ourselves on the first floor, but very shortly the water came here, and we were forced on to the second.

“Through the windows we could see boats going about, looking for people. It was bitter cold; but we nurses each had our blankets, and this helped somewhat. Then, too, we put up some gasoline-stoves, for heating things—for there was no gas to cook on in all the town. We never *did* learn where those gasoline-stoves, brought us, had come from; they were old-time ones, and perhaps taken by force from some near-by families.

“Despite the terror and excitement round about we managed to get together a breakfast for the helpers; by that time the patients began coming in. They were wet, frozen, and hungry.

“Almost as soon as they'd got to us and realized they were actually safe, they grew hysterical. Many of them lost their nerve as soon as inside the door—they did not know their own names, and where the hysteria was very bad we were forced to administer medicines hypodermically to them. This, of course, soon quieted the patient.

“Where such procedure was necessary, automobiles were at hand to take them to the hospital.

“Some of our callers had cuts, at the start from flood-wreckage, but soon we came to have a great number of women coming in for bandaging, having cut their fingers in cutting the bread for relief—due to excitement and nervous terror.

“Many of the poor maroons we had to dry off and put to bed, in borrowed clothing, and the bed, of course, just the floor. So soon as these stopped chilling, they felt much better and many of them went out to find their relatives forthwith.

“Meanwhile our own building was bitter cold. The engine room was full of water; there was no place for a fire. We sent the worst-afflicted, therefore, to the hospitals, and the other invalids to the churches, where havens of refuge were established. Of course, we kept a register of all those cared for. It is interesting to relate,” our informant stated, as her eyes clouded at the memory of the sufferings she had witnessed, “that the little girl who kept this record for us had been in a house till the water went up to her neck. Then, at last she was induced to flee, and escaped, first to her roof. Finding this growing unsafe, she passed from roof to roof, till somehow she got on top of a series of railway cars. From these she passed up the train—a very long one—to higher ground, by way of which she came to safety. She had been visiting and her own home, she found, was quite safe. She dried herself, took food, and then went out to help the nurses.

“Another interesting case I will never forget came at the height of the torrent. We had a dear little couple brought in—the girl perhaps eighteen, the boy one year older. They came quivering to the door, the girl was hunting her mother, who had been brought in here. I assured her she was well cared for, having been sent to a warmer place. In one day over a thousand people passed through our hands, but somehow we did seem to remember individual cases. The boy, meanwhile, seemed so attentive to the lass, I felt sure he was either her husband or brother. She was cold, and as I put a sweater on her, I asked her as to him.

“The young man, she stated, had never seen her before—or *vice-versa*—but they had swum Second Street to safety together, ‘And I guess we'll be together for ever after,’ she said.

“Along about afternoon the nurses got word that the Levee had broken and every one fled the hospital, excepting Miss Colvin, two doctors and one or two nurses.

“One of the high-school boys, too, remained—saying, ‘We were as safe here as any place’—for this was a new building, and as the water had been to the second floor and it stood, it would stand again.

“I put medicine and the like in a bag, ready to go higher,” the nurse tells us, “but there came no need. Instead, we joked the soldiers to keep these from running.

“The boys drew our attention, too, to the men we could see looting, and so on. One man made people pay all they had on them—in cases twenty-five dollars—before he would take them to safety.

“Then again we got patients. One man came in with a deep cut in the ankle. He was excited and screaming, and throughout our attending him, insisted on telling me how brave the women had been. Meanwhile, we gave him hot drinks, dressed his wound, and gave him medicine. He

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