

their share of the fight for France. Both the soldiers and the women told of the terrible sufferings of the wounded who had, in many cases, to be left for days untended, so that they died of gangrene. They did not grumble, but they said of some comrade, whose life had been sacrificed in this way: "Ah, si seulement on avait pu le soigner on l'aurait sauvé. C'était un brave." The fact that it has been impossible to attend to all cases in time is corroborated again and again. Many cases reach the base hospitals too late for operation. I saw an English lad in one of the Paris hospitals, who was dying of septic poisoning; and yet he had only had two fingers shot off. Another man had lain for days without attention, and when his clothes were taken off the skin of his back came with them. There is a lot of tetanus, but whether this is contracted lying out on the field of battle only or also later, lying on the straw of the railways' vans, I am not clear. Opinions about the efficacy of serum appears to vary also.

At a station near Paris we came upon British troops. When they found we were English they looked delighted and ran along by the train shaking our hands. They looked very smart and confident; but I had a pang when we passed a very long train of British wounded—not a hospital train but just luggage vans arranged for the purpose. I was told there were no proper hospital trains running to Paris, but that may be a mistake. The various ambulances in Paris fetch the wounded from the stations outside and take them to the base hospital. The fine American hospital established in the empty Lycée at Neuilly has a train of 30 motor ambulances which is doing splendid work. I was talking to one of the directors of the hospital when one of these convoys arrived. They are converted taxis. The body is removed and replaced by an ambulance body, which holds two stretchers side by side, and has a canvas cover. The cost of the transmutation is £10. The director told me that it was found that a number of little cars was much more "handy" than a fewer number of large cars, as they could be more quickly loaded and with less suffering for the wounded. The leading car carried the surgeon and his assistants, and the others were manned by the chauffeur who is also a trained stretcher bearer, and a stretcher bearer.

There appear to be plenty of base hospitals in France, both in Paris and elsewhere. Indeed, many of them are still more or less empty. But it appeared to me that there were great needs for which, as far as I know, no provision was being made. I am speaking more particularly about the French arrangements, which of course affect the British wounded also; and we must realise that the French have far greater numbers of difficulties to contend with than we have. One such need is a number of temporary hospitals in the lines of communication, so that the worst wounded could be taken out of the cars or trains and operated on before it is too late. A large supply of motor ambulances may cover the

difficulty at present, but can they do so when the lines of communication become larger—as we most sincerely hope they will—or when the weather becomes severe.

Then, as your article in a recent issue showed, the wounded suffer terribly in the long journeys from lack of such things as nurses could well give. I was told that it is impossible to send nurses with most of the trains, because there is no communication between one coach and another. But is there any reason why each train should not carry a certain number of suitable trained women who could stay with the worst cases or pass from coach to coach at the halts. Some of the terrible suffering could at least be mitigated by trained nursing.

Then it struck me, though of course I may be mistaken, that a Matron-in-Chief over all the British voluntary hospitals would be a great advantage. Such a Matron should be a professional woman, appointed by the War Office, and she should have charge of the inspection of the nursing arrangements of the voluntary hospitals and ambulances. She would have her headquarters office in Paris and she would inspect hospitals elsewhere and see that the arrangements for nursing and domestic management were adequate. In this way a great deal of confusion, overlapping, and understaffing would be avoided.

I also venture to think that if we ever have another war the whole of the voluntary nursing arrangements should be managed by a body under the War Office. Such a body should consist of professional nurses and other experts only, and be nominated by the War Office and the Societies which are giving such generous aid, and the British Red Cross, and the St. John Ambulance Association. Such a body would have the confidence of the War Offices of the various allied nations, and would reconcile all differences for the sake of the common weal. E. L. C. EDEN.

THE CARE OF THE WOUNDED.

The King and Queen on Saturday last, visited St. Mark's College, Chelsea, which is now filled up as the Second London General (Military) Hospital, and spent a couple of hours among the sick and wounded. Both the King and Queen made a special point of speaking to every patient from the front, and the King learned from one of the soldiers that the Uhlans had been christened, "ewe-lambs." They were greatly pleased with all the arrangements for the comfort of the patients—which was naturally very gratifying to the medical staff, the Principal Matron, Miss Darbyshire; Miss Riddell, the Matron, and the nursing staff, who had worked so hard to make St. Mark's College an up-to-date military hospital.

The Union of the Women of France has inaugurated a service of hospital barges for the wounded. Thus the splendid system of waterways in Northern France will be utilized. The barges will carry surgeons and nurses, and form

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)