

OUR FOREIGN LETTER.

A FINE FLOATING HOSPITAL.

"The transformation from liner to Red Cross Ship of the fine steamer *Ebani* has made of her a marvellously perfect hospital, and makes us realise that we too are at war 'on our own,'" writes a South African correspondent. "You will see from the enclosed report that we are quite up-to-date."

The main wards are on the upper 'tween deck, and there are two wards on the lower 'tween deck. Wards A and B are forward and are for surgical cases, each of them containing 34 cots. The hatch into B ward is fitted with a cot lift, which will enable invalids to be removed from deck to the upper and lower 'tween decks, and is, of course, suitable for the use of patients to come up on deck.

C ward is fitted for natives and contains 19 cots. D ward has 36 cots for medical cases. E ward, for enteric cases, has 10 cots, and F ward is for officers and contains 16 cots, giving a total of 149 cots on the upper 'tween deck.

OPERATING ROOM.

On the lower 'tween deck, ward G has 28 cots, and ward H 22 cots for surgical cases, giving a total for both decks of 199 cots.

On the top, or boat deck, there are two isolation rooms for infectious cases, whilst the ship's hospital has been converted into an operating room and consulting room, and these lead out of a well-equipped dispensary. The operating room contains an operating table, instrument case, steriliser, and contains every necessity usual in a well-equipped operating theatre and dispensary.

COTS AND BATHROOMS.

The whole of the ordinary passenger accommodation has been set aside for the use of the staff. Fully 50 per cent. of the cots are swing cots or are fixed as required. Seven bathrooms have been erected and fitted with hot and cold water, whilst the sanitary arrangements are thoroughly modern and efficient throughout. In wards B and D there are two pantries elaborately fitted with sinks, hot presses, and cupboards. The ship's gallery is in itself very commodious, but in order that the hospital work may not be impeded in any way, an emergency galley has been built and fitted for the use of the crew.

STORE AND OTHER CUPBOARDS.

The Ladies' Committee has done excellent work on board, and is responsible for the provision of well-fitted linen and store cupboards, lavishly equipped with shelves. The old postal or mail room of the steamer is now fitted as a pack room and provided with lockers for 200 patients, thus enabling all their effects to be kept separately; these are properly numbered according to wards.

A proper disinfecting apparatus is being provided. The lighting 'tween decks is very good indeed, and, in addition to stationary fans, portable fans have been installed for the comfort of patients.

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"OR SING A SANG AT LEAST."*

The War has brought forth many books and many verses, good, bad, and indifferent. It has produced, too, many efforts to help and be helpful, some again of each kind.

This little book is both verse and help, printed privately to aid the Belgian Relief Fund, by a Scotch minister and his daughter. Virile and tender, it is one to read and re-read.

What America, as a neutral power, might have done to stay the Massacre of the Innocents, and did not do, is written here in burning words. The keen disappointment felt by many of us in the attitude not alone of Germany's ruler, but of her people, towards ourselves; our despair that her boasted civilisation led not upwards, but backwards into barbarism, find just expression:

" . . . Hush, let us go:

Her deepest fall is that she does not know."

Those of us who cared for her in the past find their painful disenchantment voiced, their belief that, arraigned at the bar of history, she can only be adjudged guilty, confirmed in words which scathe and sting. The thoughts we think, but *will* not, cannot speak, many of them are here set down.

And yet, after all, it is the home scenes and the homely touches in the shorter poems which appeal to us most. "Hairst" (harvest), with its lit of—

"An O, ma bonnie laddie
In the Laigh Countree,"

is the voice of thousands of wives and maidens, for its sorrow and its courage.

"But O, I wadna hae him here,
For a' ma heart's sae sair;
Whaur should he be but whaur he is,
Should I ne'er see him mair?
Wha wants a cooard for a lad?
'Twere better far tae dee;
But O, ma bonnie laddie
In the Laigh Countree!"

Something akin to it we have met in that blunt posture of the little servant-girl: "Well, Bill, if you're 'listed it's 'Yes,' but if you're not, it's 'No.'"

"The Red Reaper—Autumn, 1914," catches at our hearts:

"O nevermore we'll watch the great moon
throwing

The harvest fields into a happy trance!
Henceforth its light will cast the Shadow mowing
Dark swathes on fields of Flanders and of
France!"

And equally does "Killed in Action" appeal to us.

One reads the little volume with a constantly changing mind, now grave, now gay; at one

* "Or Sing a Sang at Least"; War and other verses, John S. Carroll, Katalen Mary Carroll, Innis-ail, Newlands, Glasgow. 6d.

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