

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,480

SATURDAY, AUGUST 28, 1915.

Vol. LV.

EDITORIAL.

PRISONERS AND CAPTIVES.

No classes affected by the war are more entitled to our practical sympathy than the prisoners and captives in the hands of the enemy. To the sick and wounded we offer our homage, nothing is too good for them, and they are profoundly aware that this is the feeling of the nation. The atmosphere in which they are enveloped from the time they enter a British hospital, at home or abroad, is one of appreciation, respect, affection, and it is one which engenders a sense of comfort, well being, and hopefulness even in those most sorely stricken. To realize this we have only to go to such a home of healing and hope as St. Dunstan's Lodge, Regent's Park, where the saddest cases of all are probably to be found, men young, strong, active, with the greater part of life before them, hopelessly blind for so long as it shall last. Yet such is their environment that the principal impression received by the visitor is one of cheeriness and hopefulness.

The burden which would be too great for them to bear alone is lightened, and to some degree lifted, because it is shared by those who have set themselves to find all the alleviation possible in the present, to extend to the men the tenderness which heals, and the hopefulness which invigorates, and to demonstrate to them that though so much has been lost, life still has many good things in store.

But think of those others, weary, depressed, dispirited, who find no such environment in which to recover their equilibrium. On the contrary, they are suspect, alien, and living in an atmosphere directly antagonistic to all they hold dear, and which, however much they may battle against it, must affect their outlook and their spirits. Day after day they must brace themselves for the mon-

otonous life, with the knowledge that no certain limit is put to it, and that the virtue required of them is that of unlimited endurance.

To these prisoners of war a knowledge that they are remembered, and appreciated, must have an influence beyond the actual physical relief afforded, and the method indicated by Lady Victoria Herbert brings the possibility of showing practical sympathy within reach of most people.

Writing to the press from 5, Stratford Place, W., Lady Victoria says:—

“For some months past I have been sending parcels of food, tobacco, and other comforts to military prisoners in Germany, and have been successful in getting many individuals ‘adopted’ by benevolent persons at home. Under this system each person adopts one or more prisoners, and undertakes to look after them. There are at present some 262 prisons and hospitals where our men are interned, and most of them can expect but little help from their own homes, even though their friends and relations spare all they can.

“To those who are willing to adopt prisoners I will gladly send the names of men with addresses and instructions how to forward parcels. A parcel of goods sent once a fortnight will probably suffice for the needs of one prisoner. ‘Food and a little plug of tobacco’ are the things most frequently asked for. The parcel should be carefully and strongly packed, preferably in stout cardboard and strong paper. There is no postage to be paid.”

There are many who are asking what they can do to help at the present time who might find a most useful outlet for their energies in this direction, it needs neither strength nor skill to dispatch a parcel to a given address once a fortnight. It needs, it is true, some cash, saved, and well saved, at the cost, perhaps, of self-denial.

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