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**EDITORIAL.**

**ORGANISED CRUELTY.**

From the beginning of the war rumours have been current of the deliberate cruelty and insult shown to British wounded prisoners by their German captors. This is now supported by a Report on the treatment of British prisoners of war during their transport from France and Belgium—covering the period August-December, 1914—issued as a White Paper.

The Report states that the treatment accorded to British prisoners was "a remarkable record of organized cruelty" and where, in rare individual instances the guards in charge of the prisoners, actuated by humanity, did procure food and water for them, they begged their prisoners to say "No," if asked by an officer whether food had been given them.

The organized cruelty to British prisoners, for which the German Imperial Government was responsible, includes the following methods (1) Careful neglect to give medical treatment to wounded prisoners (during journeys which lasted two to five days).

(2) Overcrowding of officers and men—wounded and unwounded—usually in uncleaned and manurious horse and cattle trucks.

(3) Non-provision of sanitary accommodation. Elementary requirements of decency and cleanliness were constantly refused.

(4) Deliberate deprivation of food and water. The German Red Cross Nurses habitually declined to supply the British prisoners.

(5) Differential treatment of British and French prisoners with the object of degrading the British. At all stages of the

journey British prisoners were displayed to the execration of the crowd.

The charge which touches us most closely is that the German "Red Cross Nurses" behaved with systematic cruelty to our wounded. The psychology of the German nation is so incomprehensible that, it may be, the wave of utter brutality in which it is engulfed has overwhelmed even the nurses. Trained in habits of docility, and unquestioning obedience to authority, they may have permitted themselves to forget their duty as nurses, to allow suffering to go unrelieved, and even to revile the sufferers. But the nurses constantly referred to in the White Paper are not the professional nurses of peace time, but the "German Red Cross Nurses," who have no right to the title of trained nurse, and trained nurses in this country have suffered so much from confusion with pseudo-nurses, and from being held responsible for their undisciplined behaviour, that it is only just to suspend judgment until we know that the incredible cruelty to our wounded has been practised by the trained German nurses.

The report states that these Red Cross nurses deliberately spat in the faces of the wounded, spat in the water they offered them, showed food to starving prisoners and then removed it, calling the attention of the crowd and observing that it was "not for swine," brought water and soup in cans and poured it out on the platform in front of our wounded men, refused anything to the British, however desperate their need; and an officer was compelled by a "nurse" to walk naked from his stretcher to an improvised hospital 100 yards away, after she had called up a sentry to forcibly remove the blanket which was his only covering.

The blood of British women must be turned to water if they forget these insults.

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