

BRITISH MASSEUSES HELP INDIAN SOLDIERS BACK TO RECOVERY.

Ministering to crippled soldiers in a number of Indian hospitals to-day are capable British masseuses. These girls, members of the Chartered Society of Massage and Medical Gymnastics, are applying the wide knowledge gained from long practical experience in British hospitals to helping Indian troops to regain the use of atrophied muscles.

This is one service which can truthfully be said to be rendered with a smile, and its effects are to be seen in the willingness with which the lame and the halt respond to the healing touch and carry through the various remedial exercises with regulated weights, dumb-bells, Indian clubs, pedalling on a stationary bicycle and the medicine ball.

Happiness in their vocation and in their surroundings is the keynote of the successful work now being carried out by three of these masseuses in a Karachi hospital. They are

Miss Mary R. Rogers, of Chackmore, Bucks.; Miss C. M. Nicolson, of Gullane (East Lothian) and St. Andrews (Fife); and Miss Mabel L. Ritchie, of Warmit (Fife) and Dundee.

Since arriving in India last November these cheerful "maids of the Massage Corps" have had ample opportunity to study life in the country at close quarters and get really to know the Indian soldier. In turn the ordinary Sepoy has come to appreciate the patience and unflinching kindness of these sisters from over the seas.

Miss Rogers, who had her training at the Royal Hospital at Buxton, later worked at St. John's Hospital, Lewisham, London, and also at the Royal Infirmary at Derby. She was a member of a party of 13 members of the Massage Corps detailed for work in India. Her first impression of India was at Bombay. For her, the lack of greenery and freshness left behind in England was made up by the gaily coloured clothes worn by the Indians and the background of fine buildings.

"After a month spent at Poona, some of us were sent to Karachi," she said. "We worked among British troops, but soon were posted to the Indian hospital. At first we were rather terrified to find ourselves surrounded by so many dark faces, chattering away in a language which was then unknown to us. Now we have learned to appreciate them and some of their difficulties in this vast land. We spend our working days teaching them to use their damaged limbs—many of them war injuries. It is exhausting work, but very well worth while, and they do appreciate it, and co-operate with us, making our war effort pleasant and happy"

In the absence of a knowledge of Hindustani, treatment has had to be carried out more by example than by command, and Miss Nicolson amusingly describes the scene in the Massage Department:—

"It was with a certain amount of trepidation that we entered the department for the first time and we were a little apprehensive as to how our attentions would be received. If the patients provided an interest for us, we provided an equal interest for them. The appearance of the 'Sister Miss Sahib' was greeted with frank stares; our every move was watched. To us their simple naïveté was something new and rather attractive.

"From the outset it was apparent that a knowledge of their language was essential. Perhaps it was our sudden attack or our businesslike air. Anyhow, out of the mêlée emerged some sort of order.

"The patients were most willing to co-operate and to help us out with the language difficulty. About a dozen men stood round while we were treating one patient, all offering suggestions and interpretations."



EASY DOES IT. YOU MUST LEARN TO WALK] AGAIN BEFORE YOU CAN RUN.

Miss Nicolson underwent training at St. Thomas's Hospital, London, and afterwards served at the Kettering District General Hospital Clinic and the Dundee Orthopaedic Clinic.

Of a more philosophical turn of mind, Miss Ritchie, who was trained at the Glasgow Western Infirmary and worked at the Glasgow Rheumatic and Orthopaedic Centre and the Dundee Royal Infirmary, tells of their six months in the country as a period in which they had been "learning" India.

"We have learned not a mass of statistics; not a jumble

of meaningless figures. Any armchair traveller can do this without stirring from his fireside. Rather we have gained a new outlook on life. We have learned of new peoples, new ways of living, and above all, we have learned how much we still have to learn about India, and furthermore, how much the majority of British people still have to—and must—learn about this great country and its inhabitants."

Miss Ritchie said that India had been described as a land of "innate courtesy." This statement summed up her impressions of India after almost daily contact with a fairly representative cross-section of its peoples:—

"Never for one moment since we set foot on Indian soil have we felt anything else but welcome. To quote only one example—the language difficulty. This presented an almost insurmountable obstacle. Nevertheless, due entirely to whole-hearted co-operation from all classes and communities of Indian life, conversation at any time is as simple and enlightening as found in very few other lands."

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