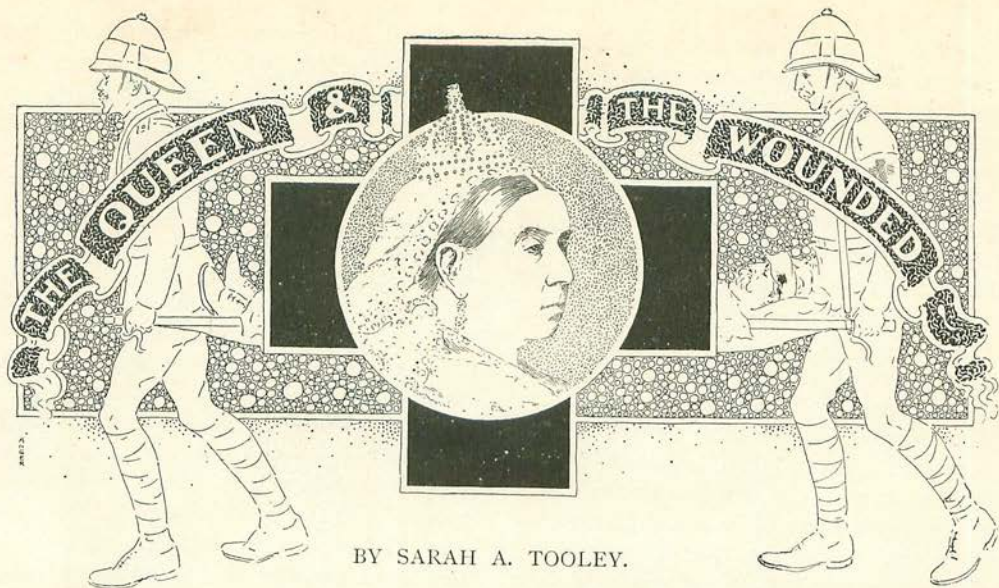


*From a photograph by Gregory Straud.*

CONVALESCENT SOLDIERS ON THE PIER IN FRONT OF NETLEY HOSPITAL.





BY SARAH A. TOOLEY.

THE martial words of Queen Elizabeth addressed to the soldiers at Tilbury as they set out to repel the Spanish invader—"I myself will be your general and your judge, and the rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field"—form a remarkable contrast to the sentiments expressed by Queen Victoria on the foundation of Netley Hospital. "Loving my dear brave Army as I do," wrote the Queen, "and having seen so many of my poor sick and wounded soldiers, I shall watch over the work with maternal anxiety." In both is the same feeling of the responsibility of a monarch towards the brave men who defend the throne and country at the risk of life and the cost of inevitable suffering; but while the imperious Elizabeth Tudor recognises only personal glory and reward in her famous harangue, our present beloved Queen strikes the womanly note of sympathy and solace in all that she says or writes regarding the soldiers; and manifest as this was at the time of the Crimea, it is, if anything, more accentuated to-day.

The state visits which the Queen has recently paid to Netley and other military hospitals do not give an adequate idea of the continuous interest which she takes in the condition of the wounded. The newspapers record a Royal visit, and we read of decorations and official receptions, of the

progress of the Queen in her chair round the wards, and of the sympathetic words which she utters at the bedsides of the sufferers. In a couple of hours the affair is over, down come the flags, anxious officials breathe freely that all has passed off so well, and the patients chat with loyal enthusiasm about Her Majesty's kindness and sympathy, and carefully dry and press the flowers which she has given to them. The Queen's visit is over, and the public hear nothing further. But not a single case which caused the Queen concern during the tour of inspection is forgotten, and daily inquiries are made on Her Majesty's behalf until the patient is convalescent, or has escaped from suffering to the Great Beyond. More particularly is this the case at Netley, which, from its proximity to Osborne, comes more than any other hospital under the Queen's ken. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that she is as intimately acquainted with the history of the most serious cases there as are the surgeons. Since the wounded began to arrive from South Africa, Miss Norman, the Lady Superintendent at Netley, has by the Queen's request supplied her with detailed accounts of the worst cases, noting each change in their condition and every new development. All such accounts are being filed by Her Majesty's secretary as a history of that side of the war which shows the price paid in human



suffering. Choice flowers from the gardens at Osborne are constantly sent to the hospital, and fancy woollen goods and various little comforts from time to time find their way into the wards by the Queen's kind thought.

The Royal Victoria Hospital at Netley is itself a lasting tribute to the Queen's concern for the comfort of the wounded soldiers. At the time of the Crimea she was much grieved to see the cheerless places to which the sick and injured were sent on their return home. After inspecting the barracks at Chatham, she wrote a sharp remonstrance to the War Minister, pointing out that the wards were more like prisons than hospitals, as the windows were so high that no one could look out of them, a bit of practical observation which shows that the Queen realised the effect of surroundings on the mind and their relation to the health of a patient. The proposition to have hulks prepared for the reception of the wounded was met by Her Majesty with the objection that "a hulk is a very gloomy place, and these poor men require their spirits to be cheered as much as to have their physical sufferings attended to," adding the tender words: "The Queen is particularly anxious on this subject, which is, she may truly say, constantly in her thoughts, as indeed is everything connected with her beloved troops who have fought so bravely and borne so heroically all their sufferings and privations."

It was entirely owing to the Queen's initiative that Netley Hospital, which has proved the forerunner of Woolwich and other military hospitals in this country, was built. She laid the foundation stone in May 1856, and watched with maternal solicitude the progress of an institution which was the first of its kind in the country, and remains one of the finest in Europe. The situation, specially selected by the Queen, is an ideal one for a sanatorium. The hospital, an imposing structure of red brick with white facings, and having a frontage of a quarter of a mile in length, stands on a gentle rise upon the shore of Southampton Water. Lawns planted with firs and evergreen shrubs slope down to the edge of the water. A shady avenue leads to a pier where the convalescents can lounge in the sunshine and inhale

the sea-wafted ozone. Across the rippling expanse of water, which, as I saw it on a glorious spring day, was reflecting the blue of the sky overhead, stretched the Garden of England. A little farther down the Solent is Royal Osborne. The patients were thronging the great gravel walk in front of the hospital, and made picturesque groups of colour in the undress uniform of trousers and sack coat in bright blue, not unlike the dress of a Paris *ouvrier*. Their appearance was more suggestive of a colony of bluejackets than soldiers.

"You have a beautiful place here," I said to one of the convalescents who was wheeling a sick comrade in a chair. "Yes, it is pleasant enough," said the man dubiously, "but it is better to be outside. I caught my disease from exposure after the Stormberg affair," he continued, "and I suppose I shall never know what it is to have health again. My brother was killed, and we were the only two sons, and it's bad for the old woman at home. We were Reservists earning a comfortable living when the war broke out," and there was a quiver in the brave fellow's lips and a mournful shake of the head, when I further questioned him about Stormberg which told only too eloquently of the terrible memory which the disastrous engagement called up.

The invalid whom the Stormberg hero was wheeling about was Corporal Gray, one of the longest inmates at Netley, and one in whom the Queen has taken a special interest. He is a comparatively young man, and has a singularly handsome and refined face, although his poor body was quivering all over with paralysis, the result of sunstroke in India. "The Queen has spoken to me three times," said Corporal Gray, with a flush of pride, "and she has given me flowers with her own hands, and she has my photograph." And so I passed on from group to group of sufferers, and there was always the same tale of the Queen's kindness and sympathy, and the same grateful glance in the direction of Osborne, as though in that spot was the heart whose tenderness never flagged.

Sad as was the sight of the maimed and weakly ones outside in the spring sunshine, it was truly pitiful to go round the surgical cases in some of the wards, all fresh from



the battlefields of South Africa. One does not wonder that the Queen's emotion was beyond control when at her last visit she moved from cot to cot and saw the sad wrecks of stalwart manhood. Yet the poor fellows talked of the curious vagaries of bullets—how they popped in at the head or the socket of the eye and came out at unexpected places—with a grim humour. One man had a bullet, and the piece of his ankle-bone which it had shivered, carefully

granddaughter sent it to me yesterday, and they tell me she worked it herself." With difficulty putting his hand under his pillow, he proudly drew forth an envelope, inscribed with the words, "For Private Moss, from Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein." "That is what she sent with it," he continued, as he cast a look of satisfaction at the gay covering which made his bed a conspicuous object in the ward.

Princess Victoria had crocheted the



*From a photograph by Stephen Cribb, Southsea.*

THE QUEEN'S ARRIVAL AT NETLEY.

preserved in an old purse under his pillow. He was recovering from his wound, and meditated at no distant date wearing the Boer bullet as a pendant to his watch-chain. Many of the men displayed trophies of the war—bullets, pieces of shells, and the hats of some of the enemy. One poor fellow lying sadly helpless upon his back was the envy of the ward by reason of the smart counterpane which covered his cot. "What a pretty, warm covering you have!" I said. "Yes, ma'am," was the reply; "the Queen's

counterpane in stripes of red and white wool, just that combination of bright colour which pleases masculine taste, and I am sure Private Moss was profoundly thankful that the Royal donor had not afflicted his eyesight with the everlasting khaki which kind ladies, with a singular lack of imagination, seem to think is the only colour which the soldiers of this campaign care to look at. Poor fellows! Just as though it were not the one thing to recall all their sufferings. In khaki suits have they lain moaning on



that pitiless veldt waiting until succour came ; they have seen comrades in khaki lowered into the hastily dug graves, or watched them weltering in their life blood ; regiments in khaki have assailed impossible heights to be mown down like grass before the scythe, or marched, drenched, gaunt, and hungry, over the interminable Karroo. Fashion may decree that women are to wear the colour in honour of the brave, but it is a grim piece of irony to flood the military hospitals with khaki comforters, khaki socks, and khaki tam-o'-shanters, and is enough to drive poor wounded Tommy to language more expressive than polite.

Turning from the cot of Private Moss, of counterpane fame, I had a little chat with a group of patients in the first stage of convalescence seated on comfortable chairs round the blazing fire in the ward. They had the appearance of a working party. Some were knitting socks, others shawls, and the more artistic and skilful were working belts for themselves in pretty patterns in cross-stitch on canvas. These belts are Tommy's particular weakness ; he works his name or initials on the front, and the remainder is filled in with designs in many colours—the brighter the better. But, alas ! the working party had been thrown into direst grief by an announcement, just received from the sister of the ward, that the supply of bright-coloured wools was quite exhausted, and that she had nothing to give them but khaki, of which fifty pounds had that morning been sent to the hospital by some well-intentioned, but mistaken donor. One knows the irritation of not being able to match one's embroidery silk, but it is as nothing compared to the despair of a handsome young private, with a waistbelt three parts completed in a Greek pattern of red and white, who is told that there is no more wool to be had but khaki. He can face the crossing of the Tugela or the Modder, climb Spion Kop in a hailstorm of bullets, eat horseflesh in Ladysmith or starving dogs in Mafeking, and do forced marches without sleep or food, but the shattered dream of a belt is beyond his endurance. Words of comfort sympathetically spoken elicited confidences, and I found that there were some of the

working party who had entertained an ambition for belts worked in coloured silks. "They would look fine," was the unanimous opinion uttered with bated breath, and eager faces looked up from knitting, crochet-work, and cross-stitch. "I have seen one done in silk," said a sergeant of the Scots Greys, and all eyes were turned upon him. "It was in very fine stitching, and had a background of a darkish red and a pattern in blue and yellow, zig-zag like, and the name was worked in——" A stifled groan stopped the description. "Are you in pain?" I questioned. He shook his head mournfully, and following the direction of his eyes I saw a sister advancing with an armful of khaki wool.

Needless to say, the fancy work done by the patients at Netley has not escaped the Queen's notice. She was much interested during one of her visits to see a soldier knitting a shawl. Recently Her Majesty sent word that she would be pleased to accept something worked by the men. A soldier skilled in woollen patchwork was entrusted with the honour of making a cushion for the Queen, which was in due course forwarded to Windsor and is kindly treasured by Her Majesty. I found that another cushion was in course of preparation for Princess Victoria, who, with Princess Christian, generally accompanies the Queen in her visits to the hospital and is a great favourite with the men. It is, of course, impossible in such a huge building as Netley for the Queen to pass through all the wards, and during a recent visit when she had gone out into the corridor and was about to depart, it came to her knowledge that great disappointment prevailed in the wards where she had not been able to go. Turning to Princess Victoria, the Queen said : "Will you take the soldiers in those wards some flowers for me?" The young Princess set off with alacrity, and the men relate how quickly she ran from ward to ward, leaving a bunch of flowers at each cot.

One of the cases at Netley which had elicited special sympathy from the Queen was that of Sergeant George, of the Scots Fusiliers, who was struck by a shell at the Battle of Estcourt, and sustained concussion



of the brain, which rendered him unconscious for a considerable period. After a time there came an awakening, and he was able to recognise his wife, who had come to live near the hospital in order to be

and he sank back again into a state of complete unconsciousness. It was indeed a pitiful sight to see this brave, strong man thus laid low, to watch the eyes which saw nothing, and listen to the laboured breathing.



THE QUEEN'S ARRIVAL AT THE HERBERT HOSPITAL, WOOLWICH.

able to visit him. For a time it seemed that there was hope of partial recovery, and Sergeant George was able to leave his bed and be wheeled about in a chair in the corridors by his wife. Then came a relapse,

Now and again the wasted hand wandered mechanically to the head, as though to indicate where the trouble lay. The young wife, pale and worn with many weeks of hoping against hope, and by these later days



of watching for the end, sat beside the cot, tenderly stroking the cheek or the brow of the dying man. But in the midst of her grief she regained a look of brightness as she told me of the Queen's kindness to her husband, of the constant inquiries made about him, and spoke of the interest he had taken, during a brief period of consciousness, in the flowers given him by the Queen, which she had dried and pressed.

In the same ward where Sergeant George lay were men rendered helpless from bullet wounds, some of an extraordinary character. One case was that of a Highlander who at Modder River received a bullet above the temple which passed at the back of the eye, totally destroying it and coming out through the palate. All spoke of the sympathetic interest which the Queen took in their cases, how her wheeled chair was brought close beside them, and she thanked them for their bravery, listened to the doctor's account of their injuries, and, divining that nothing would be more gratifying to old campaigners than news of the war, requested that the latest telegram of Lord Roberts's victories should be read in the wards. The Queen tried to cheer one poor fellow who was afraid of the possible amputation of an arm by saying to him, after expressing a hope that the operation might not be necessary: "Do you know that General Cronje has surrendered with some thousands of prisoners?"

Here and there in the wards at Netley one sees a man who is the proud possessor of a Queen's chocolate-box. He displays the treasure with pride, and tells you what he proposes to do with it when he is able to return home. "Mine is going with me to 'Oirland' this evening," said one joyous convalescent, "for, bedad, I am myself again." "Won't you give it me for a present?" said the ward sister. Pat's good-natured face fell, and there was a terrible struggle with native chivalry. "Miss," said he, "I wouldn't sell me box, not for fifty pounds."

The greater number of the wounded from South Africa at Netley had by the vicissitudes of war missed receiving their chocolate-boxes. The Queen had, however, given

orders that boxes should be sent to each man who had not received one.

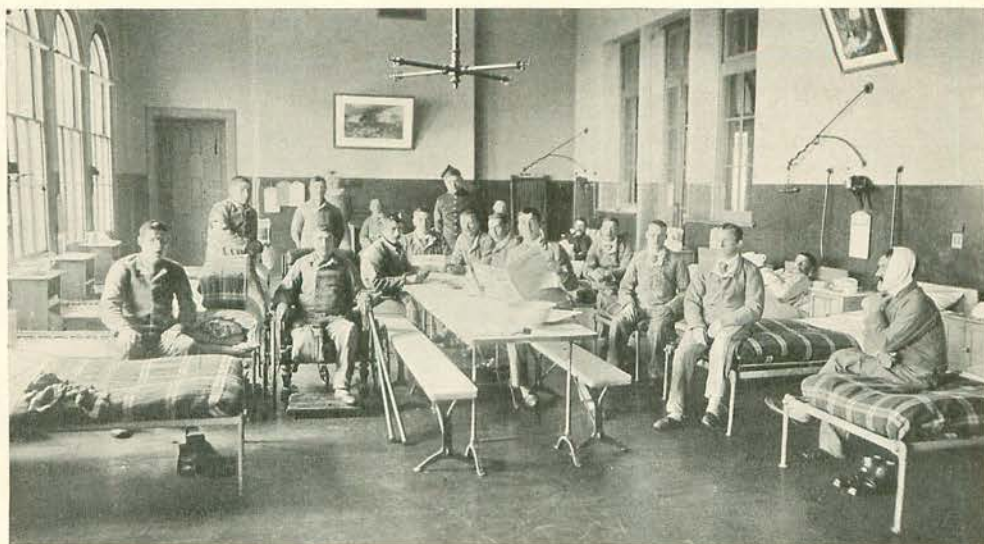
I was told that every mail-boat from the Cape to Southampton carries on an average two thousand unclaimed letters for soldiers, so it is small wonder that some of the chocolate-boxes have missed the intended recipients. In one of the ground-floor corridors the names of unclaimed letters are posted up, and the list is becoming a very long one. How much of tragedy and romance lies hidden behind that official category—letters to which no reply will ever come, and over which loving hearts will grieve!

The case of Private Humphreys, of the 2nd Lancashire Regiment, has been of the greatest interest to the Queen. At Estcourt he was carrying his chocolate-box in his haversack; a Mauser bullet struck it, and became imbedded in the chocolate, and thus the man's life was saved. When Her Majesty was told of the occurrence she requested that the box, with the bullet, should be sent to her, as she desired to have it as a memento of the war. Needless to say, Private Humphreys was only too glad to yield up the treasure to its original donor.

It has always been the Queen's wish that the invalided soldiers should suffer as little restriction during hospital life as can be made consistent with the regulation of a large institution, and this is very apparent at Netley, where the men group together, and, except in the critical surgical cases, are allowed a good deal of latitude in rising and retiring and disposing of their time. Neither orderlies nor nurses appear to be in constant attendance in the wards, although the patients receive visits from the medical officers at stated intervals, and the Lady Superintendent makes a daily round of all the wards. On the counterpane of one cot was pinned a written intimation to all whom it might concern: "No one is to give this man food without orders from the medical officer." The patient under the quilt looked as though he did not appreciate his *menu*!

The latest expression of the Queen's care and thought for her wounded soldiers is the branch railway which she has caused to be made to connect Netley Hospital directly





*From a photograph by Stephen Cridd, Southsea.*

ONE OF THE WARDS, NETLEY HOSPITAL.

with the docks at Southampton. Her Majesty has also taken a great interest in the erection of the German Huts, the name given to a colony of small, white, one-story houses arranged in rows, with spaces like streets between, in a piece of open ground a little removed from the hospital. Each hut is practically a small ward with cots ranged on either side. They are very bright and cheerful, and through the low windows the patients have a pleasant prospect of green meadows. The huts are a sad reminder of the suffering entailed on the soldiers by this sad war. Although Netley can accommodate seventeen hundred patients, this outside colony has been found necessary to meet the extra demand made by the wounded returning from the front.

Colonel Charlton is the principal medical officer at Netley, and he and Mrs. Charlton are unwearied in their efforts to make the hospital a real home to the men. There is an excellent reading- and recreation-room, which presents an animated appearance of an evening when various games are in progress.

Although the hospital which the Queen originated, and which bears her name, claims her first attention, she does not bestow exclusive favours on Netley. The wounded at Haslar Hospital, Gosport, were made

happy by a Royal visit, and the Herbert Hospital, Woolwich, had a grand fête day to itself on the occasion of the Queen's visit in March. This hospital is a model one of its kind, and was built in memory of Sydney Herbert, whose name is imperishably connected with schemes for the betterment of the conditions of the soldiers during the Crimean War. It is beautifully situated amid miles of open country, and all the internal arrangements go like clockwork under the kindly but firm superintendence of Colonel Bourke, the chief medical officer. I made the tour of the hospital under his guidance immediately after the visit of the Queen, and had an excellent opportunity of witnessing the pleasure which it had given to the sufferers. The Queen's low, sweet voice seemed to have specially impressed them. "I have read in books that she had a sweet voice, but I could never have believed it sounded so beautiful if I had not heard her speak at my cot-side," said one poor fellow. There were a great number of men belonging to the Irish regiments which suffered so terribly at Colenso, and these received special notice from the Queen. One enthusiastic son of Erin, of the Connaught Rangers, was boastfully exclaiming that the Queen had said to him: "Me son, I feel so sorry for



you." The case of Private King, who was shot thirteen times at Colenso, brought tears to the Queen's eyes as she heard the story of his heroism—how, in spite of wound after wound, he kept his place in the fighting line until he could stand no

belonged, she said: "Then you will know my grandson, Prince Christian Victor?" and Princess Christian bent eagerly forward to hear news of her son, who is a major in this man's battalion.

Her Majesty passed from cot to cot and



*From a photograph by Stephen Cribb, Southsea.*

INTERIOR OF ONE OF THE NETLEY HUTS.

longer. A touch of the sympathy which makes the whole world kin occurred when the Queen came to the cot of a young private of the King's Royal Rifles. He had been hit by a shell which burst his right eyeball, and when the Queen heard the name of the regiment to which he

ward to ward, visiting in all a hundred and fourteen cases, addressing a few words to each individually, and listening to the account of their injuries. "Tell the Queen all about the poor men," Princess Christian said to the Lady Superintendent; "she loves to hear everything regarding them."

