

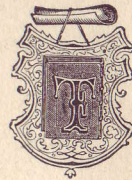
HOSPITAL TRANSPORTS.

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of the

EMBARKATION OF THE SICK AND WOUNDED
FROM THE PENINSULA OF VIRGINIA
IN THE SUMMER OF
1862.

*Compiled and Published at the request of the
Sanitary Commission.*



Boston :

TICKNOR AND FIELDS.

1863.

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DEDICATION.

—♦—
TO THE MEMORIES OF

J. M. GRYMES, M. D.,

*sometimes Surgeon in charge of the Hospital Transport
Dana's Whaler, and, at the time of his death, Surgeon to
the temporary Home for disabled soldiers, of the Sanitary
Commission at Washington ;—*

WILLIAM PLATT, JUNIOR, ESQ.,

*late a Relief Agent of the Sanitary Commission, who
died from the effect of prolonged exposure and excessive
exertion in pushing succor to the wounded during and
after the battles of South Mountain, Crampton's Gap, and
Antietam ;—*

Lieut.-Col. JOSEPH BRIDGHAM CURTIS, U.S.V.,
*formerly of the Engineer Corps of the Central Park of
New York, afterwards of the central staff of the Sani-
tary Commission, who fell while leading his regiment to
the assault of the rebel works at Fredericksburg, De-
cember, 1862 ;—*

RUDD C. HOPKINS, M. D.,

*formerly Superintendent of the Lunatic Asylum of Ohio,
late a General Inspector of the Sanitary Commission,*

and who died in its service, while on the river passage from Memphis to Cincinnati;—

MRS. FANNY SWAN WARRINER,

who bore heroically to the end a woman's part in war, having died at Louisville, Kentucky, on her way home from the Head-quarters Relief Station of the Sanitary Commission with the Army of the Tennessee,—of disease there contracted;—

DAVID BOSWELL REID, M. D.,

Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh; Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of London; Member of the Medico-Chirurgical Society of St. Petersburg; formerly Director of Ventilation at the Houses of Parliament of Great Britain; late Professor of Physiology and Hygiene at the University of Wisconsin; at the time of his death, Special Inspector of the Ventilation of Hospitals of the Sanitary Commission;—and

Surgeon ROBERT WARE, U. S. V.,

for several years physician in charge of the largest Dispensary District in Boston, afterwards a General Inspector of the Sanitary Commission, and Surgeon of its Relief Stations at Yorktown, White House, and Berkeley, lastly Surgeon of Volunteers. He fell at his post in the works at Washington, North Carolina, during its bombardment by the rebels, March, 1863.

INTRODUCTION.

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THE Sanitary Commission, grateful for the generous confidence reposed in it by the public, would be glad to meet and justify that confidence by a circumstantial account of its operations in field and hospital, from the first day of its existence to the present. It might, perhaps, without undue boasting, show such a picture of what has been accomplished as would stimulate, to the last degree, the interest and the liberality of loyal hearts, if this were required. But the immense mass of details which such an account must involve, would prove nearly as laborious in the reading as in the performance, overwhelming rather than enlightening all who have not been personally engaged in the work. The intense interest which the ser-

vice inspires in those devoted to it, lightens what might, under other circumstances, seem wearisome duties; but a minute description of the ceaseless round of consultations, examinations, correspondence, journeys, accounts, distributions, required of the Commission as trustee of the public bounty, could not be expected to prove interesting to others.

The most that the Commission can at present be called upon to offer, or the public be likely to accept, is such brief accounts of single sections in the various departments of its labor, as may indicate the general method and spirit extending through the whole. In accordance with this plan, from time to time, the Commission has published reports covering a single battle-field, or a term of one round of visits to the hospitals, or the results of its arrangements for the care of disabled and discharged soldiers for a stated period. There is one branch of the service, however, which has as yet had no such public record,—that of the Hospital Transports. In order to supply this omission in some

measure, the Commission has caused to be placed in the hands of a manager of the "Woman's Central Army Relief Association of New York," a quantity of letters and other papers, containing observations made at the time, and on the spot, by those in its service who assisted in the embarkation and care of the sick and wounded on the peninsula of Virginia in 1862. Passages from these have been selected and arranged with a view to give within moderate compass as many particulars as may be necessary to show the scope of the enterprise, and the position which it held as an aid to the government, together with the difficulties and the success, the disappointments and satisfactions, with which it was attended. The plan is limited to the Atlantic hospital transports, and to the period of embarkation of the patients upon them, for the sake of compactness and completeness in the grouping of incidents. A similar service in the Western rivers the same year was larger in its scope, and in some of its arrangements more satisfactory, but it was at the same time less homogeneous in character.

For the style of the letters quoted, this only need be said: they were, for the most part, addressed to intimate friends, with no thought that they could ever go beyond them, or, as in the case of those addressed by the Secretary to the President of the Commission, were in the nature of familiar and confidential reports; nearly all were written hastily, in some chance interruption to severe labor,—often with a pencil, while passing in a boat from one vessel to another. Passages may be found which are not merely descriptive of the Hospital Transport service, but they contain thoughts springing from the occasion, and which will serve to fasten pictures of scenes and circumstances with which that service was associated, and which are now historical.*

It should be understood that the ac-

* The letters were all written by two officers of the Commission and six ladies serving with them. As the different writers are quoted from in succession, and the same occurrences are often described from more than one point of view, a capital letter at the head of a paragraph will indicate the change from one writer to another. The officers will be known by the letters A. and B.; the ladies, by the letters M. and N.

count is not intended to be complete in any respect, and that no attempt has been made to give public credit to individuals for their services, whatever these may have been. It is known that to do so in some cases where public gratitude is most deserved would give pain; to do so in all cases would greatly swell the bulk of the volume. In general terms only it may be said, that among the surgeons who freely gave their aid in the enterprise were numbered some of the leading members of the profession,—among those who served as administrative officers, matrons, and nurses, the most honored historical families of New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania were represented. The class termed Ward-masters was mainly composed of medical students of two years, with some young men of Philadelphia who had had previous experience in caring for sick soldiers in the noble local charities of that city. It included, also, some students of theology. The responsibility for the detail of care of the patients was chiefly with this class, and the devot-

edness, pliability, and practical talent with which they generally met this responsibility was too remarkable to be passed without at least this simple reference to it as one of a class of facts of the war.

It is a secondary object of the recital to make evident, from narrations of actual experience, what is sometimes required for supplying the unavoidable deficiencies of government service in emergencies. Not to have sprung at once into a thorough practical knowledge of what the dread contingencies of war require, is no just cause of reproach to a peaceful people like ourselves, who, meaning peace, sought only to "ensue it"; but not to thoroughly learn our duty under such an experience as we are passing through, would indeed bring shame upon our name.

It is no common nation's task that we have undertaken, and only craven souls will lose heart in finding that it cannot be light or short in the sacrifices which it demands of us. True and far-seeing lovers of their country, as they regard the sufferings of those uncomplaining men who

fought for us in the Peninsula, — men who, though perhaps but green soldiers in the field, proved, one and all, heroes upon the bed of pain and in the hour of death, will be led to the reflection, "This is what it costs a republic to have nursed rebellion tenderly at its breast." We know that the barbarous spirit with which the chances of war first were dared in this gambling scheme of reckless ambition, will prolong it, when resistance to the law can no longer avail for anything but the gratification of the personal vindictive hate of the disappointed conspirators. And we know that if we do well the work the pecuniary cost of which we are throwing so heavily upon our posterity, this will be the last of such schemes. The more we feel its cost ourselves, the more resolute shall we be that, when done, this work shall have been done once for all. The more ready shall we be to meet whatever sacrifice it may yet require of us; the more ready to truly say, "Our loyalty is without conditions; success at this point or that, this year or next, we do not ask; we have elected our

leaders, and we accept what they have the ability to give us. It is enough that in this nation, standing firmly upon its declaration of equal rights to all, no gleam of peace can ever be seen to fall upon a rebel in arms."

The deepest solicitude that all unnecessary suffering should be avoided in carrying on the war, is not in the least degree inconsistent with this sentiment, provided only it be guided and constrained by a true appreciation of the duties and the necessities of war. On the contrary, patriotism and humanity have one origin, and each strengthens the other in every heart. Whatever, then, leads the public to truly comprehend what the rebellion costs, and at the same time inculcates a right spirit of humane provision against the unnecessary suffering of war, must foster a sound and healthy public sentiment.

Such, it is hoped, may be the influence of this little volume, to the introduction of which only this further explanation will be required by the reader.

A sudden transfer of the scene of active

war from the high banks of the Potomac to a low and swampy region, intersected with a net-work of rivers and creeks, early in the summer of 1862, required appliances for the proper care of the sick and wounded which did not appear to have been contemplated in the government arrangements. Seeing this, with the approval of the Medical Bureau, a proposal was made to the Quartermaster-General to allow the Sanitary Commission to take in hand some of the transport steamboats of his department, of which a large number were at that time lying idle, to fit them up and furnish them in all respects suitably for the reception and care of sick and wounded men, providing surgeons and other necessary attendance, without cost to government. After tedious delays and disappointments of various kinds,—one fine large boat having been assigned, partially furnished by the Commission, and then withdrawn,—an order was at length received, authorizing the Commission to take possession of any of the government transports, not in actual use, which might be at that time lying at Alexandria.

The only vessel then lying at Alexandria stanch enough for the ocean passage from Virginia to New York or Boston, proved to be the *Daniel Webster*, an old Pacific Coast steamer of small capacity. She had been recently used for transporting troops, and had been "stripped of everything movable but dirt,"—so that the labor of adapting her to the purpose in view was not a light one.

This vessel was assigned to the Commission on the 25th of April. Provisional engagements had previously been made, in New York and Philadelphia, with the persons afterwards employed as her hospital company. These were telegraphed for, the moment the order was received, and the refitting of the ship commenced,—at which point we turn to the narratives of those engaged in the work.

HOSPITAL TRANSPORTS.

HOSPITAL TRANSPORTS.

CHAPTER I.

(A.) Hospital Transport *Daniel Webster*,
Cheseman's Creek, April 30, 1862.

I received General Meigs's order under which this ship came into our hands on Friday. She was then at Alexandria, and could not be got over the shoals to Washington. It was not till near night that I was able to get a lighter, and this, after one trip, was taken off to carry reinforcements to McDowell at Fredericksburg. I succeeded before daylight of Saturday in getting a tug at work, and by the next morning, Sunday, had her hold full. At eleven o'clock got the hospital company on board, but the commissaries failed in their engagements, and at last I had to send off a foraging-party at Alexandria for beef. Finally at four o'clock, D., who had gone after E., and E., who had gone after beef, arrived simultaneously from different directions. With E. came the beef, and we at once got under way.

We had six medical students, twenty men nurses (volunteers all), four surgeons, four ladies, a dozen contrabands (field hands), three carpenters, and half a dozen miscellaneous passengers. There were, besides, five of us members of the Sanitary Commission and of the central staff, with one of the Philadelphia associates, eight military officers, ninety soldiers (convalescents, returning to their regiments), some quartermaster's mechanics, and a short ship's crew and officers. The ship has a house aft, with state-rooms for thirty, and an old-fashioned packet-saloon below, with state-rooms opening out of it; and all forward of the engine-rooms, a big steerage, or "tween decks," which had been fitted with shelves, some of them fifteen feet deep, in which the soldiers had been carried to the Peninsula, packed in layers.

I organized all our Commission people at sunset on Sunday, in two watches, sea-fashion; appointed watch-officers, and have worked since, night and day, refitting ship. We broke up all the transport arrangements, — they were in a filthy condition, — thoroughly scraped, washed, and scrubbed the whole ship from stem to stern, inside and out; whitewashed the steerage; knocked away the bulkheads of the wings of

the engine-room section, so as to get a thorough draft from stem to stern; then set to fitting and furnishing new bunks; started a new house on deck, forward; made and fitted an apothecary's shop; and when we arrived at Cheeseman's Creek were ready for patients.

(M.) It was a bright day, the river peaceful and shining. Just as we started, the little gun-boat *Fisher* passed up, bringing, all on a string, five rebel craft which she had just taken in the Rappahannock. Late in the afternoon we passed the "stone fleet," eight boats, all ready to sink in the channel, in case the *Merri-mack* should try to run up the Potomac. The rebels having taken up all the buoys, at dark we had to come to anchor.

Sunday, the first day, was gone. As for us, we had spent it, sitting on deck, sewing upon a hospital flag, fifteen by eight, and singing hymns to take the edge off of this secular occupation. Just after we had anchored, a chaplain was discovered among the soldiers; and in half an hour we got together for service, and an "unprepared" discourse upon charity, much like unprepared discourses in general. Quite another thing was the singing of the contrabands, who all came in and stood in a row so black, at the dark end

of the cabin, that I could see neither eyes nor teeth. But they sung heartily, and everybody followed them.

(A.) *Cheeseman's Creek.*—I went ashore to report our arrival to the Medical Director. On our way up the harbor,—a shallow river-mouth, with low, pine-covered banks, in which there are now about four hundred steamboats and small transport-craft,—I hailed the steamboat *Daniel Webster* No. 2, which carries the — Regiment New York Volunteers, and let the Colonel know that his wife was among our nurses. This morning I received his acknowledgments in the form of a check for \$ 1,000 for the Commission, accompanied by what was still better, a note of the most hearty and appreciative recognition of what the Commission had done for the relief of the soldiers.

Picking our way among all the craft, and keeping out of the way of the tugs and tenders which were flying about, we landed on a large meadow where were a number of wall-tents, one labelled "Office of Quartermaster's Department"; another, "Telegraph Office"; another, "Post-Office"; another, "Office of Land Transportation"; another, "Harbor-Master," &c., &c. One contained a number of prisoners, brought

in the day before, and, of course, well-guarded. Ordnance and forage barges lay along the shore, with a few big guns, and piles of shot and shell, just landed. The ground was crowded;—orderlies holding horses; lounging, dirty soldiers; killers and fatigue-parties at work in relays; sentries; Quartermaster's people, white and black; and a hundred army wagons loading with forage and biscuit-boxes from the barges. I went at once to Colonel Ingalls, at the Quartermaster's office. He was kind, prompt, decisive; horses were ordered for us, and we soon rode off through a swamp-forest, the air full of the roar of falling trees and the shouts of teamsters and working-parties of soldiers, the former trying to navigate their wagons, and the latter making corduroy roads for them. The original country roads had all been used up; it was difficult even to ford across them, when we had occasion to do so, on horseback. The army wagons, each drawn by six mules, and with very light loads, were jerked about frightfully. We passed many wrecks, and some horses which had sunk and been smothered. Some wagons were loaded with gun-beds and heavy rope screens for embrasures; and we saw eight or ten mortars, each on a truck by itself, and drawn by from sixteen to twenty-four horses. At the first open ground we found cav-

ally exercising ; then a cavalry camp, then a bit of wood, then rising dry ground, and our road ran through more camps. Then, coming in the midst of these camps, to the crest of a low swell, we opened suddenly a grand view of the valley of York River, a country something like the valley of the Raritan, at Eagleswood and opposite, but with less wood, more piny and more diversified, the river much broader, a mile and a half, perhaps, across. On the slope before us — nearly flat, with an inclination toward the river — was a space of several hundred acres, clear land, and a camp for some twenty to forty thousand men ; shelter-tents, and all alive. It was a magnificent scene, the camp and all beyond, as we came upon it suddenly — right into it, at full gallop. The military “effect” was heightened now and then by a crashing report of artillery.

In the midst of the camp we came upon a long rack, — a pole on crotched sticks, — at which were fastened a score or more of horses. “We must stop here,” said Dr. C. “They don’t let you ride in.” And that was all to show that we had reached Head-quarters.

It was an aristocratic quarter of the town, when you came to look at the clean tents and turf, but there were no flags or signs to distinguish it. We walked to the tent of the Medical

Director, and just then there came another of those crashing reports. “They have been keeping that up all night,” said the Doctor. “That is n’t the enemy!” “Yes.” “Is he so near?” “O yes! we are quite within range here.”

The medical arrangements seem to be deplorably insufficient. The Commission is at this time actually distributing daily of hospital supplies much more than the government.*

(B) *May 1st.* No patients on board yet ; ship getting a final polish. Got up early and found the *Elisabeth* coming alongside for stores. The Commission has here at present, besides the *Daniel Webster*, one or two store-ships, and the *Wilson Small*, a boat of light draught, fitted up as a little hospital, to run up creeks and bring down sick and wounded to the transports. She is under the care of Dr. C., and has her little supply of hospital clothing, beds, food, &c., always ready for chance service. There is also a well-supplied storehouse ashore.

In sight are the abandoned rebel quarters at Shipping Point, now used as hospitals by one of our divisions ; a number of log-huts finely built, but on low and filthy ground, surrounded by

* See Appendix A.

earthworks, which are rained on half the time and fiercely shone on the other half, and from which are exhaling deadly vapors all the time, a death-place for scores of our men who are piled in there, covered with vermin, dying with their uniforms on and collars up,—dying of fever.

I attended this afternoon to the systematic arrangement of the commissariat stores down aft, sent a telegram for more supplies to Baltimore, arranged for stowing the contrabands and putting bunks in the new deck-ward, and then put two ladies and a nice supply of oranges, tea, lemons, wine, &c., &c. on a small boat, and started them with —— to Ship Point Hospital, where four poor fellows died last night. Of course there is that vitally important medical etiquette to observe, here as elsewhere, and we must approach carefully, when we would not frustrate our own plans;—and so it is. “——, suppose you go ashore and ask whether it will be agreeable to have the ladies come over and visit the hospital,—just to walk through and talk with the men.” So the ladies have gone “to talk with the men,” with spirit-lamps, and farina, and lemons, and brandy, and clean clothes, and expect to have an improving conversation. After the party was off, sent orders to Fort Monroe

for special supplies; received Dr. Tripler, who dined with us; furnished wine, tea, bread, to a surgeon who had been told that the Commission's flag was flying here, and had come seven miles across the swamps, and rowed out to us in a small boat to try for these things.

(M.) By dark the *Wilson Small* came alongside with our first patients, thirty-five in number, who were carefully lifted on board and swung through the hatches on their stretchers. In half an hour they had all been tea'd and coffeed and refreshed by the nurses, and shortly after were all undressed and put to bed clean and comfortable, and in a droll state of grateful wonder; the bad cases of fever furnished with sponges and cologne-water for bathing, and wine and water or brandy-toddy for drinking, and a man to watch them, and ward-masters up and down the wards, and a young doctor in the apothecary's shop, and to-day (May 3d) they are all better.

Meantime additional supplies arrived from Washington, Baltimore, and Fortress Monroe, and a surgeon and nurses of our company were busy daily on shore at the Ship Point Hospital, dispensing stores, and doing what they could for the poor fellows there, who seemed to us in want of everything. One hundred and

ninety patients have now come on board ; eighteen miles some of them say they have been brought in the ambulances (large statement of exhausted fellows jolted over corduroy roads).

. We ladies arrange our days into three watches, and then a promiscuous one for any of us, as the night work may demand, after eight o'clock. Take Sunday, for instance.

It was ——'s and ——'s watch from seven to twelve. So they were up and had hot breakfast ready in our pantry, which is amidships between the forward and aft wards ; ward-masters on the port and starboard sides for each ward, to watch the distribution of the food, and no promiscuous rushing about allowed ; the number for coffee and the number for tea marked in the ward diet-books under the head of Breakfast, and the number for house-diet, or for beef-tea and toddy, &c., marked also ; so that when the Hospital company learns to count straight, — an achievement of some difficulty, apparently, — there will be no opportunity for confusion. After breakfast we all assembled in the forward or sickest ward, and Dr. G. read the simple prayers for those at sea and for the sick. Our whole company and all the patients were together. It was good to have the service then and there. Our poor sick fellows lay all about us in their beds and listened

quietly. As the prayer for the dying was finished, a soldier close by the Doctor had ended his strife.

After twelve, our watch came on, and till four we gave out clean clothes, handkerchiefs, cologne, clothes to the nurses, and served the dinner, consulting the diet-books again. The house-diet, which was all distributed from our pantry, was nice thick soup and rice-pudding, and we made, over our spirit-lamps, the beef-tea and gruels for special cases. So with little cares came four o'clock, and with it clean hands and our own dinner ; after which the other two ladies came on for the last watch, which included tea. Then there was beef-tea and punch to be made for use during the night ; and so the day for us ended with our sitting in the pantry and talking over evils to be remedied, and should the soiled clothes be sewed up in canvas-bags and trailed behind the ship, or hung at the stern, or headed up in barrels and steam-washed when the ship got in ? We crawled up into our bunks that night amid a tremendous firing of big guns, and woke up in the morning to the announcement that Yorktown was evacuated.

(M.) While we were lying anchored off Ship Point, down in the Gulf, New Orleans had

surrendered quietly, and round the corner from us Fort Macon had been taken. What was it all to us, so long as the beef-tea was ready at the right moment?

CHAPTER II.

(A.) *May 5th.* On Sunday the *Ocean Queen*, coming up from Old Point, grounded about five miles off the harbor, and I went down and put a few beds and men on board to assume a footing. She had been brought to Old Point with the intention of using her to amuse the *Merrimack*, and had therefore been stripped of everything not necessary to the subsistence of the small crew.

(M.) On the way back, at eight in the evening, found that a great part of the army fleet, three hundred or more steamboats full of life, all before scattered for miles about the harbor, had been collected in close order and steam up. A number of heavy steamers swept past also, each with a tow a quarter of a mile long, making on the dark evening a long line of light and life. It was strange to see these floating cities melt away; the colored lights from the rigging going out one by one, and the bands and bugle-calls growing faint and far.

(A.) I had sent the *Webster* to sea, and with Mrs. — and sister, B., and some two or three others, started in the *Small* to go to the telegraph and mail, and to bury the body of a patient who had died in the night. It was raining hard. When we reached the shore there was no post-office, no telegraph, — nothing of the military station left, except some wagons and transports. Our storehouse was a mile back. I left a portion of our party to move the goods from it on board the barge, and started in the *Small* for Yorktown, to which I presumed Head-quarters would have been moved. On getting out of the harbor, we saw that the *Queen* was under way. It turned out that she had been ordered to Yorktown by the Harbor-Master. As she was lying-to, to sound the channel, we came up with her, and I went on board, after which — the *Small* going ahead to feel the way — we had a magnificent sail to Yorktown, the river so full of vessels that it was like getting up the Thames, only the lead was constantly going, “By the mark, five! A quarter less six!” and so on. Noble river! and a noble ship! Ahead, above all the fleet of three hundred transports, there were a dozen men-of-war. With our hospital flag at the fore, we slowly but boldly passed through the squadron, and came to anchor, the

biggest ship of all, in the advance, — only one gunboat, as a picket-guard, being above us. I went ashore with the Captain and the young men, but could find no telegraph, and no officer of the general staff; and as many men had been killed and wounded by the torpedo-traps, — infernal machines set by the rebels, — we were not allowed to enter the fortified lines of Yorktown. So, picking up a hospital cot and stretcher left by the enemy, I took boat again to return to the ship, leaving the Captain and others ashore. As I pulled out through the vessels at the wharf, I saw to my surprise two small “stern-wheel” steamboats coming alongside the *Queen*, one on each side. Hastening on board, I found that these boats were loaded with sick men, whom an officer in charge was about to throw off upon the *Queen*. They were the sick of regiments which had been ordered suddenly forward last night, and which were at this very moment engaged in the battle of Williamsburg; we could hear the roar of artillery. They had been sent during the night by ambulances to the shore of Wormley’s Creek, where a large number had been left, the officer assured me, lying on the ground in the rain, without food or attendance. His orders were to take them upon the “stern-wheelers,” as many as both would carry, find

the *Ocean Queen*, and put them upon her. I protested. The *Queen* at present was a mere hulk, without beds, bedding, or food even for her crew, and without a surgeon. It was obvious that the men were, many of them, very ill. Some were, in fact, in a dying state.

They were largely typhoid-fever patients; and having been for twenty-four hours without nourishment, wet from exposure to the storm, and many of them racked by the motion of the ambulances over those frightful swamp corduroy roads (which I described the other day) into delirium, I was sure that many would die if they long failed to receive most careful medical treatment, with stimulants, nourishment, and warmth, no one of which could at that time be got for them on the *Queen*. The officer, however, insisted. I determined to go ashore to look for a surgeon, or if possible to find Colonel Ingalls, the transport quartermaster, a gentleman, and a most energetic and sagacious officer. I put the two ship's officers each at a gangway, with instructions to let no one come on board till I returned, and to use force, if necessary. I found a surgeon — a civilian — who was willing to help us, and pulled back, finding to my disgust, when I reached the ship, that the miserable first officer had given way, and every man

who could walk of the patients had been taken on board. The glorious women had hunted out a barrel containing some Indian meal from some dark place where it had been lost sight of, in the depths of the ship, and were already ladling out hot gruel, which they had made of it; and the poor, pale, emaciated, shivering wretches were lying anywhere, on the cabin floors, crying with sobbing, trembling voices, "God bless you, Miss! God bless you!" as it was given to them from the ship's deck-buckets. I never saw such misery or such gratitude. My rebel stretcher came at once in play, and, after distributing forty dollars among the half-mutinous, superstitious, beastly Portuguese crew and pantry servants, I got them at work bringing on the patients who were too feeble to be led on board. It was a slow and tedious process. By the blessing of God, before it was over, B., with Dr. Ware, — the two very best men I ever saw for such an emergency, — came with the *Elizabeth* from Cheeseman's Creek, and the Captain with the students from the shore. There were straw, bed-sacks and blankets, besides stimulants and medicines, on the *Elizabeth*, and the Captain's authority soon added all the ship's force to the working party on her, filling beds and hoisting out bales of blankets. B. went on shore,

found a rebel cow at pasture, shot her, and brought off the beef, with another surgeon. By ten o'clock at night, every sick man was in a warm bed, and had received medical treatment; and beef-tea and milk-punch had been served to all who required it. But for three of them even the women could do nothing but pray, and close their eyes.

At half past ten, I went aboard the *Small*, intending to run to Fortress Monroe for additional supplies. It was stormy and thick, and I could not induce the Captain to go out till daylight. We reached Old Point about nine, A. M. I got breakfast in the hotel, and then to Head-quarters. While in the telegraph-room, a message was received, which was whispered between the operators; a minute afterwards a gun was fired, and the long roll beat; the infantry fell in on the parade, the artillery hurried to the ramparts and manned the heavy guns, and powder-carts were moving up the inclines. I asked, "What's all this?" "Telegram from Newport's News that the *Merrimack* is coming out!" She did not come beyond Sewall's Point, however.

The boat from Baltimore brought six excellent New York surgeons, twenty-six nurses, and ten surgical dressers (medical students). I got them all on the *Small*, and having succeeded in ob-

taining the more important supplies in limited quantities, at noon left for Yorktown. On reaching here we found the "stern-wheelers" again alongside, and over three hundred patients on board; many very sick indeed, some delirious, some comatose, some fairly *in articulo*. The assistant surgeons, left behind at the abandoned camps, are too anxious to be rid of them, so as to move with their regiments, and have surgery of war. And as their orders authorize it, they hurry them off to us in this style, after a day's ride in army wagons, without springs, over such a country without roads as I described last week. They were horribly filthy, and there was no time to clean them, often not to undress them, as, sick and fainting, they were lifted on board.

About noon the next day I completed a hospital organization of such forces as I had, dividing the cabins and the upper steerage of the ship into five wards, for the bad cases, each ward having one surgeon, two ward-masters, and four nurses, — the two latter classes in watches; besides these, some assistant nurses and servants, convalescent soldiers, and contrabands. In these wards only the very sick — chiefly cases of typhoid fever — were taken. By cutting away bulkheads, and getting wind-

sails rigged, they were fairly well ventilated. I had to offer \$200 for the repair of damages before this could be secured, however. All the rest of the ship was the sixth ward, in which the hernias, rheumatisms, bronchitises, lame and worn-out men were placed, organized in squads of fifty each, with a squad-master to draw their rations of house-diet.

To get proper food for all, decently cooked and distributed, has given me more concern than anything else. The ship servants are brutes, and our supply of utensils was cruelly short. Fortunately the Captain is a good-hearted and resolute man, and the ladies — God knows what we should have done without them! — have contrived to make some chafing-dishes with which the kitchen is pieced out wonderfully. Just think of it for a moment. Here were one hundred miserably sick and dying men, forced upon us before we had been an hour on board; and tug after tug swarming round the great ship, before we had a nail out of a box, and when there were but ten pounds of Indian meal and two spoons to feed them with. No account could do justice to the faithful industry of the medical students and young men: how we all got through with it, I hardly know; but one idea is distinct, — that every man had a

good place to sleep in, and something hot to eat daily, and that the sickest had every essential that could have been given them in their own homes. . . .

B. was all this time driving everything to obtain supplies, while the sick kept coming faster than we could get anything ready for them. The last thing essential was more beef. B. at length got hold of a couple of draught cattle of Franklin's division, left behind in their advance by steamboats, and while these were being killed and dressed, we filled up to nine hundred patients.

To avoid having more pushed on board, I had the Captain heave short; so the moment that B.'s boat came, and the beef could be hoisted up, the steamer was under way, and before night, no doubt, was well out to sea.

I then went on board the *Small* to drop down, quite ill for the time from want of sleep and from fatigue. A few hours' rest and a quiet dinner brought me all right, however, and at sunset I set out with B. to look after the sick ashore.

One of the strange effects, upon all concerned as workers on these hospital ships, in the heart

of all misery and pain, and part of it, seems to have been the quieting of all excitement of feeling and of expression, — a sort of apparent stoicism granted for the occasion. A slight illustration of this quietness, which was characteristic of most of the hospital party, is given in the following passage from a letter of one of the ladies on the *Ocean Queen* : —

“It seems a strange thing that the sight of such misery, such death in life, should have been accepted by us all so quietly as it was. We were simply eyes and hands for those three days. Great, strong men were dying about us ; in nearly every ward some one was going. Yesterday one of the students called me to go with him and say whether I had taken the name of a dead man in the forward cabin the day he came in. He was a strong, handsome fellow, raving mad when brought in, and lying now, the day after, with pink cheeks and peaceful look. I had tried to get his name, and once he seemed to understand, and screeched out at the top of his voice, ‘John H. Miller,’ but whether it was his own name or that of some friend he wanted, I don’t know ; we could not find out. All the record I had of him was from my diet-list : ‘Miller, — forward cabin, port side, number 119. Beef-tea and punch.’

“Last night Dr. Ware came to me to know how much floor-room we had. The immense saloon of the aft cabin was filled with mattresses so thickly placed that there was hardly stepping-room between them, and as I swung my lantern along the rows of pale faces, it showed me another strong man dead. N. had been working hard over him, but it was useless. He opened his eyes when she called ‘Henry’ clearly in his ear, and gave her a chance to pour brandy down his throat ; but all did no good ; he died quietly while she was helping some one else, and my lantern showed him gone. We are changed by all this contact with terror, else how could I deliberately turn my lantern on his face, and say to the doctor behind me, ‘Is that man dead?’ and then stand coolly while he examined him, listened, and pronounced him ‘dead.’ I could not have quietly said a year ago, ‘That will make one more bed, then, Doctor.’ Sick men were waiting on deck in the cold, though, and every few feet of cabin floor were precious. So they took the dead man out, and put him to sleep in his coffin on deck. We had to climb over another soldier lying up there quiet as he, to get at the blankets to keep the living warm.”

The business of feeding men by hundreds at short notice, in confined spaces, and with the aid of very limited cooking facilities, is one which can hardly be appreciated by those who have only heard, not seen, how it is accomplished. It takes good heads as well as good hearts, strong will as well as strong limbs, to avoid ruinous confusion. After a battle, when men are brought in so rapidly that they have to be piled in almost without reference to their being human beings, and every one raving for drink first and then for nourishment, it requires strong nerves to be able to attend to them properly. Habit and system are the two great aids, — or rather system first of all, if possible ; though system in such cases grows out of experience. Happily system has ruled in the work of the Sanitary Commission, and such success as has attended its operations is chiefly due to this, as every one must have observed who had an opportunity to witness the difference between its doings and those having the same end in view, but carried on without well-studied or sufficiently comprehensive plans.

But in these Atlantic Floating Hospitals the difficulties were very great. The desideratum is a practicable diet, simple yet nourishing, abundant and not injurious ; always ready, yet varied enough to avoid the danger of satiety, which is

ever threatening the sick man, whose chance of recovery may hang on his ability to eat his food with relish. In this arduous part of the Hospital Transport duty, the ladies were able to be especially useful ; their sympathy and good judgment coming constantly in play, and the supply of fruits, jellies, and a variety of delicacies being generally so liberal as to afford full scope to their powers. But in dealing with hundreds and thousands of men, many of whom are not particularly in danger, but yet obliged to lie in beds for wounds to heal, it is necessary to provide on a scale so large as puts mere delicacies, or the ordinary resources of the sick-room, quite out of the question. It is utterly futile to attempt treating each one of four or five hundred patients as if we had him alone in a private family ; and patients, as well as nurses and friends, must learn this after very little experience. But it is practicable here, as elsewhere, to accomplish much that is beneficial and comfortable by judicious system firmly carried out. To avoid collisions, and vain attempts to perform impossibilities, after a short experience, but careful study of what was really needed, rules were established which proved in practice nearly perfect in the matter of preventing delay and disappointment, while the result satisfied the

patients in general quite as well as we can hope to satisfy sick men who have fitful appetites. As the suggestion may prove applicable to other cases, the established routine is given in full in the Appendix (B.)

CHAPTER III.

JUST before the *Ocean Queen* left, a reinforcement of ladies and servants arrived from New York. A part of these were put on the *Queen*; temporary quarters were found for the remainder on the *Wilson Small*. Sick men were at this time being carted into Yorktown from the various abandoned camps in the vicinity, and the Sanitary party going on shore after the departure of the *Queen*, these were found lying in tiers in the muddy streets, while tents were being pitched and houses cleared for their accommodation. Several wagon-loads of hospital supplies were sent to them from the store-boats of the Commission; twenty-five dollars were given to the surgeon in charge, to be used to stimulate the exertions of his limited force of attendants, and for the purchase of odds and ends, and he was informed that, if more should be required, it would be provided by the Commission, and then the company started on their little boat for West Point, where a battle was reported in progress.

(M.) *West Point, May 9th.* — We arrived here early this morning. The whole field of battle is open like a map before us. A white flag flies from a small house just below us. We are along-side a transport on which an officer was yesterday wounded by a shell thrown from a battery which had been concealed behind this house, upon which the same flag was then flying. Another transport near us has a shot-hole through her smoke-stack. There are three or four thousand men along the shore, and more constantly arriving and disembarking by the pontoons, with artillery and horses. As I write, a blue column is moving off, the bayonets glistening far into the woods. We are sending off small stores, called for by the Commission's Inspectors ashore, who are visiting the extemporized hospitals, and are also supplying some of the gunboats' sick-bays with fruits and ice.

Just here a steamboat, loaded with sick and wounded, came along-side of us; a transport, made use of as a hospital on the occasion, but needing almost everything.

The more dangerously wounded upon this transport were transferred to the *Small*, and three ladies, with surgical dressers and servants, beef-tea, lemonade, ice, and stimulants, went to the assistance of the others, remaining with

them till, after a transshipment at Yorktown, they were lodged in shore hospitals at Fortress Monroe.

(A.) The *Small* received the dangerous cases, several of amputation among them; the operations had been performed on the field. One died at midnight. I had great difficulty, at first, in our now very crowded little boat, in restraining individual zeal within the requirements of order and tranquillity; but I believe I succeeded, and as soon as the women began to experience the value of the discipline, they fell into it finely, and all behaved in the best manner possible. I put those on our boat in watches, rigidly excluding from that part of the boat where the wounded men were placed all who were not absolutely required on duty. The poor fellows were nearly all soon coaxed asleep, and the man who died passed away, and his body was removed without its being known to his nearest neighbor. We had on board Dr. Ware and two of the students, noble young fellows, zealous, orderly, and discreet.

I think all the men who have any chance for recovery look better this morning. One man (amputation of thigh) who seemed nearly gone when he came on board, staring wildly, and

muttering unintelligibly, lifted his hand toward me as I came into the cabin this morning; and smiled when I bent over him. The nurse told me that he said to her on waking from a sound sleep, just at sunrise, "You have saved my life for my wife, good woman." There are several officers among them; one a hero, who led his company against a regiment, pushing it back, but losing one fifth of his men, and getting a shot through the lungs. There is Corporal C——, too, who has lost his leg, and who says he bears no malice against the man who shot him, but he hopes some day to meet and punish the wretch who kicked him on his wounded leg, after he was laid helpless.

(M.) *May 11th.*—Three of our wounded men died during the night. Everything was done for them; they could not have had more care in their own homes. Our little boat is so crowded that the well sleep on the upper deck, all under cover being occupied by the wounded; and, the small outfit of china, etc. being needed for the sick, we take our meat and potatoes on slices of bread for plates, and make the top of a stove our domestic board.

As intelligence had come through telegraph from Washington that the *Ocean Queen* had been taken on her arrival at New York, against all remonstrance, for other purposes, the *S. R. Spaulding*, a large, seaworthy vessel, though lamentably inferior for a hospital to the magnificent *Ocean Queen*, was obtained in her place. She was fitted for carrying cavalry, with stalls for horses, and at this time filled with stable odor, and needed coal and water as well as complete interior reconstruction.

The *Daniel Webster*, arriving at Yorktown on her return from New York, could not get into the wharf-berth which had been secured for her near the hospital; a tug was consequently procured, which being run alternately with the *Small*, between sunset and twelve o'clock at night, two hundred and forty sick and wounded were taken off and put comfortably to bed. After this her hospital service was reorganized so as to transfer from her all the force that could possibly be spared, and to put on her any of the company whom it was necessary to part with. An estimate was made of the stores requisite for her home trip, and at daylight what she could spare was put on board the *Small*, and she steamed off on her second trip to New York, eighteen hours after she arrived. Everything is noted as

going on admirably in the loading of the *Webster*, each man knowing his place, and not trying to do the duty of others. The discipline maintained by Dr. Grymes was most satisfactory, and the corps of ladies and nurses work as if they had been doing this thing wisely and well all their lives.*

At 9 A. M., the *Webster* started on her second trip, and there was time to look after the other vessels which were being fitted for the service. One company had been put at work on the *Elm City*, and another on the *Knickerbocker*, both these river boats having been handed over by the Quartermaster's Department to the Commission, to be fitted for hospital service. Stores had also been ordered to the *State of Maine*, a government hospital in need. All was found proceeding well with the limited force on the *Elm City*; but the *Knickerbocker*, where was she?

(M.) *Steamboat Knickerbocker, May 13th.* — If my letter smells of Yellow B, it has a right

* Since the above was written, we have heard with deep regret of the death of Dr. Grymes. Wherever he served, his labors were singularly wise and efficient; with exceeding gentleness and quietness of manner he combined much energy of will, and to thorough skill was added a loving heart, and a rare devotedness of purpose.

to, as my paper is the cover of the sugar-box. Since I last wrote, we have been jerking about from boat to boat, fitting up one, and starting her off, then doing the same by another. We came on board this boat Saturday night. She had then about two hundred wounded men on board, taken from the Williamsburg fight, and bound for Fort Monroe, two of the ladies and assistants to look after the sick during the few hours' run, and others to get things on hand, and fit up the wards. We had fifty-six Commission beds made on the upper ward floor that night, and were ready to go on shore at Fort Monroe after the three and a half hours from Yorktown. Dr. C. came on board and had all the men carefully removed to the Hygeia Hospital, and we improved the opportunity to get some roses from the garden for our wounded men left on the *Small*, and to see Mr. Lincoln driving past to take possession of Norfolk. We lay at the fort all night, and were blown awake the next morning by the explosion of the *Mer-rimack*, when I found to my amazement that along-side of us lay the *Daniel Webster*, No. 2, Government hospital, with four or five of our Commission company on board, whom we had left at Yorktown. She ran, in passing, along-side our supply ships, (all our boats of the Sanitary

Commission are known by their flags,) just after we came away, and begged for help. Mr. A. tossed on board everything necessary, including two ladies, two surgeons, and blankets, and started them off after us to the Fortress, with two hundred badly wounded men. They had been wholly uncared for till our people got on board. They did all they could for them in so short a time, washed them, gave them good suppers and breakfasts, and Drs. W. and W. dressed the worst wounds, watching them all night as tenderly as women could. This boat was all the next day unloading her sick; they were miserably wounded, and had to be lifted with great care. We on the *Knickerbocker* started up the river again, and anchored off Yorktown. We wanted a stove for our hospital kitchen on board, which has to be kept distinct from the kitchen of the ship's crew; so we went ashore with — to seize upon anything we could find; poked about in all the rebel barracks, asked all the soldiers we met about it, and finally came upon the sutler's hut, — sutler of the *Enfans Perdus*, who was cooking something nice for the officers' mess over a stove with *four* places for pots! This was too much to stand, so under a written authority given to "Dr. Olmsted" by the Quartermaster of this department, we pro-

ceeded to rake out the sutler's fire and lift his pots off; — and he offered us his cart and mule to drag the stove to the boat, and would take no pay! So, through the wretched town, filled with the *dibris* of huts and camp furniture, old blankets, dirty cast-off clothing, smashed gun-carriages, exploded guns, vermin and filth everywhere, — and along the sandy shore covered with cannon-balls, tossed into the river, and rolled back, — we followed the mule, a triumphant procession, waving our broken bits of stove-pipe and iron pot-covers. I left a polite message for the "Colonel perdu," — which had to stand him in place of his lost dinner, — and I shall never understand what was the matter with that sutler, whose self-sacrifice secured our three hundred men their meals promptly.

The next morning the *Knickerbocker*, to the surprise of the Commission, was not to be found. They searched the fleet twice through for us, but in vain, and finally heard at the Quartermaster's office, that a requisition had been received at midnight for a boat to go at once to the advance of the army, on the Pamunkey River, and the *Knickerbocker* had been taken for it, the fact of her having been assigned to the Commission being entirely forgotten. The only mitigation of the anxieties of those who re-

mained, for the ladies on board, was the assurance that the boat would soon return. Meantime, we, on board, sailed up the Pamunkey, getting a fine chance to perfect the hospital arrangements. We unpacked tins and clothing, filled a linen closet in each ward, had beds put in order for three hundred, got up our stove, set kitchen in order, filled store closets, and arranged a black-hole with a lock to it, where oranges grow, and brandy and wine are stored box upon box; and on reaching Franklin's head-quarters, the messenger transacted his business, we landed a file of soldiers and a surgeon of the division, who had shown us great kindness on the voyage, and were allowed to push off again unmolested. The army lay all along the shore, and General Franklin's head-quarters were in a large store-house back from the river. We found on our return to Yorktown every one at work fitting up the *Spaulding*.

An order had been obtained from the Quartermaster for the planks and boards of some rebel platforms, with which to put up bunks, etc., and a gang of contrabands were set at the business. While this was going on, a visit was

made to the surgeon in charge of the shore hospitals, with whom, after debate, it was agreed that the *Elm City* should be made ready by two o'clock to take on the sick who were waiting transport near the shore. The *State of Maine* was at the same time to be supplied and made ready to follow without delay. Going on board the *Small* again to carry out these arrangements, A. was met by a note from the Quartermaster enclosing a telegram from the Medical Director of the army at Williamsburg, demanding a boat provided with "*straw and water to be ready to take on two hundred sick and wounded within two hours at Queen's Creek.*" The despatch concluded, "This is of the utmost urgency. See the Sanitary Commission." The only boat in the fleet that had a fair supply of water on board was the *Elm City*, already assigned for other duty, and she had no stores of food. There was about one day's supply of provisions for two hundred men on the *Small*, and A. wrote at once to the surgeon in charge of the shore hospitals, that, to meet an order of the Medical Director, it had become necessary to change the arrangements just before made with him. He would have to withdraw the *Elm City*, but as supplies could be sent immediately to the *State of Maine*, she could be got

ready before night to take her place. The *Small* was then put in motion, and first the *Elm City* was hailed in passing, with orders to "fire up and heave short, and be all ready to move in half an hour," thence to the *Alida*, which was sent with the supplies to the *State of Maine*, and then back past the *Elm City*, ordering her to follow, and so in good time up to the mouth of Queen's Creek, by the side of the *Kennebec*, loading with wounded Secession prisoners, brought out of the creek by light-draft stern-wheelers. The process of embarkation, witnessed at a point some distance up the creek, was rude, careless, and quite unnecessarily painful; the miserable wretches of rebels being made to climb a plank, set up at an angle of forty-five degrees, which they could only do by the aid of a rope thrown to them from the deck. Strange to say, they themselves made no complaint, but appeared to think that they were well treated. So much for habit. The only assistance the Commission could render was to make the pathway less slippery by nailing cleats closely together across the steep planks. To do this, nails were bought of an old man near by, who at first asserted decidedly that not a nail could be found on his premises, until he was offered one dollar for twenty-five, when an abundant supply was discovered.

Notwithstanding the Medical Director's telegram, that the case was one of the "utmost urgency," no sick men were found at the place of embarkation on the creek, nor could any be heard of nearer than at Williamsburg. Proceeding thither, with great difficulty, — passing on the way directly through the field of the late battle, — A. inquired of the first man he met after entering the town, "Where is the hospital?" "The hospital, sir? Every house in the town is a hospital; you cannot go amiss for one." And this seemed to be literally true. Finding the Medical Director, he learned that he thought it important to relieve the hospitals by transportation as fast as he, in any way, could; but not supposing it possible that the telegraphic order could be literally complied with, he had taken no measures as yet to send the two hundred patients in question to the place appointed for embarkation. It was agreed, however, that a convoy of ambulances should be started at daylight, and A. returned to the mouth of Queen's Creek, and despatched B. with the *Small* to Yorktown to bring up additional stores from the *Elm City*, upon which the half-completed work of filling bed-sacks and other preparations also continued through the night. With the first boat-load of the wounded

brought off in the morning, arose one of those conflicts of authority which so often embarrassed the Commission at this time in its work.

(A.) At the first step I was met by a Brigade Surgeon coming on board from the *Kennebec*, who went about giving orders over my head, changing my arrangements. As he persisted, and refused to compromise after I showed my written authority from the Medical Director, I told him that I should allow no sick to come on board until I was satisfied with the arrangements. He then declared that he should go to the Medical Director. "The very thing I want, and I will go with you. Meantime the sick, if any arrive, shall come on board, and Dr. Ware, here, will see to their disposition, if you please." He assented, and we then went to the landing and saw the lighter again loaded with sick, in the same manner as yesterday. When she was full, the surgeon said he should return upon her to the *Elm City*. "But I thought we were to go together to the Medical Director, sir!" "I have concluded not to do so, but have written to inform him that my authority is questioned." I deemed it best, after this, to go again to the Medical Director myself, and, after a tedious delay, got passage on a forage-wagon loaded

with oats. What with the continuous atmosphere of thick yellow dust, and the jar of the heavy wagon over execrable roads, this was a hard ride.

I found the Medical Director, got a copy of an order which the Brigade Surgeon should have received yesterday, but which had failed of transmission to him, which failure justified officially his assertion of authority over *any* transport coming at that time to that anchorage.

Returned to the landing, and, the lighters having grounded, waited there, on the bank of the creek, with a hundred sick men, being devoured by mosquitoes and sand-flies. On reaching the *Elm City*, found that, owing to the conflict of authority, and consequent imperfect system, as well as to the insufficient number of attendants, the sick were but slowly and with difficulty taken care of. Including the hundred coming off with me, the number on board was already over four hundred, or twice as many as the Medical Director had estimated, or I had had reason to calculate on in the supply of water, medicine, and stores.

After sunset I went again up the creek, and found eight men on the beach, left there sick, without a single attendant or friend within four miles, while, only the night before, two of our

teamsters had been waylaid and murdered, as was supposed, by the farmers of the vicinity, (guerilla fighting as they call it,) in the edge of the neighboring woods. After taking them on board the small boat, I asked who had charge of the party, wishing to make sure that no stragglers were left. A man was pointed out, who, because he was stronger or more helpful than the rest, seemed to have been regarded by them as their leader, though he had no appointment. He was able to answer my inquiries satisfactorily, and then as he sat by my side, while I steered the boat, he told me about himself. His name was Corcoran. After the battle of Williamsburg he felt sick. There was an order to march, but his Captain said, "Good God! Corcoran, you are not fit to march. Go into the town and get into a hospital." He walked three miles carrying his knapsack, and when he came to a hospital the surgeon told him he must bring a note from his Captain, and refused to receive him. He went out, and, as he was now very ill, he crawled into something like a milk-wagon and fell asleep. He was awakened by a man who pulled him out by his feet, so that he fell heavily on the ground and was hurt. He begged the man — a Secessionist, he supposed — for some water, and he gave him

some; and when he saw how sick he was, he said he would not have pulled him out only that he wanted to use his wagon. Corcoran then tried to walk away, but had not gone far when he fell, and probably fainted. By and by a negro man woke him up, and asked if he should not help him to a hospital. The negro man was very kind, but when they came to a hospital the doctor said he could not take him in, because he "had n't a bit of a note." Corcoran said, "For God's sake, Doctor, do give me room to lie down here somewhere; it's not much room I'll take anyhow, and I can't go about any longer!" It was then three days since he had tasted food. The doctor told him he could lie down, and he had not been up since till to-day.

I have repeated the whole of this story as I heard it, while we were floating slowly down the river, because the poor man who told it me died soon after we got on board, kindly attended in his last moments by our Sisters of Mercy. A letter to his mother was found in his pocket, and one of the ladies is writing to her.

This morning we returned to Yorktown, and took on the *Elm City* thirty more sick from a steamboat which had brought them from Cumberland on the Pamunkey.

At ten o'clock the *Elm City* left for Washington with 440 patients. . . . After noon I went ashore, called on the surgeon in charge of the hospitals and the Military Governor, made our arrangements for a trip up the river to collect scattered sick, and to tow our *Wilson Small* up to West Point for repairs. She has been knocked into and run against by all the big boats till she is completely disabled. Returning on board for this purpose, was met by an officer with a telegram, begging that a boat might be immediately despatched to Bigelow's Landing, where an ambulance-train master had reported that "a hundred sick had been left on the ground in the rain, without attendance or food, to die." Bigelow's Landing being up a narrow, shoal, crooked creek, we ran about the harbor looking in vain for a boat of sufficiently light draught to send there. At length we determined to take our whole Sanitary fleet to the mouth of the creek, and, leaving the *Alida* and *Knickerbocker* outside, try to get up with the *Elizabeth*, for we had no single vessel, large or small, in itself, suitably provided.

We ran to the *Knickerbocker*, but before we could get her under way a steamboat, in charge of a military surgeon, came along-side, and a letter was handed me, begging that I would take

care of one hundred and fifty sick men who had been taken on at West Point early in the morning, and who had had no nourishment during the day. It was sunset, stormy and cold. I at first hesitated, on account of the greater need of those at Bigelow's Landing, but the surgeon in charge having induced me to take a look into the cabin, I changed my mind. The little room was as full as it could be crammed of sick soldiers, sitting on the floor; there was not room to lie down. Only two or three were at full length; one of these was dying, — was dead the next time I looked in. It was frightfully dirty, and the air suffocating.

We immediately began taking them on board the *Knickerbocker*. . . . It is now midnight. B. and Dr. Ware started with a part of our company and the two supply-boats, five hours ago, for Queen's Creek, with the intention of getting them to the sick at Bigelow's Landing, if possible; if not, to go up in the yawl and canoe with supplies and firewood, and do whatever should be found possible for their relief. Two of the ladies went with them. The rest are giving beef-tea and brandy and water to the sick on the *Knickerbocker*, now numbering three hundred.

(M.) The floors of lower and upper decks are covered with beds. The men all have tremendous appetites, lazily sleeping and eating, — never miss a meal three times a day. If it were possible to have great eating-houses and wayside places, where volunteers could break down and sleep and doze for ten days or so, the men forced upon us by the medical authorities here and sent North would be doing good work in their regiments, — a good bath, seven days' rest, and twenty-one good meals are all they need. — is housekeeper on this boat, and great pails of tea and trays of bread and butter, and rice and sugar, go all around the decks for breakfast. Good thick soup and bread for dinner, and breakfast repeated, at tea-time. "Peter," with six long-shore Maryland oystermen (darkeys) runs the hospital kitchen, and has a daily struggle for the daily bread with the incorrigible fellows who shirk work, and for each meal protest against everything, and have three times a day to be brought round by highly colored blandishments. The sickest men, especially the one hundred and fifty last taken on, have plenty of beef-tea and cool drinks, made in the ladies' pantry, and all of them are now undressed and in clean, comfortable beds.

(A.) I am quite at a loss to know what I shall do to-morrow. Unless additional force arrives we certainly cannot meet another emergency. It will not be surprising if this letter is found somewhat incoherent, for I have fallen asleep several times while writing it, hoping all the time that B. might arrive. We have a cold northeast storm and thick weather, and I conclude that his expedition is unable to get down, and I may go to sleep for the night. I have just been through the vessel, and find nearly all the patients sleeping quietly, and with every indication of comfort.

May 16th. I fell so soundly asleep, that, fifteen minutes after I finished writing the above last night, it had to be several times repeated to me before I could understand where I was and what it all meant when the officer of the watch came to tell me that the supply boats were making fast to us, with over a hundred more sick. Anchoring the *Alida* at the mouth, B. had attempted to get up the creek with the *Elizabeth*, but, as I had feared, she went aground. Going on with the yawl, he found one of the steam-lighters at anchor with over a hundred sick and wounded men lying on the deck, who were soaked, not merely with rain, but from having been obliged to wade out to her in water knee-

deep. He learned that, further up the creek, a few men, too badly wounded to stand, or too weak to wade off to the boat, had been left behind. No persuasion could induce the captain to return for them, but a threat to report him at head-quarters, at length made him fire up and go back. Eight were found just where I found eight on my night trip up the same creek a few nights before, some in a nearly dying condition. Having brought them off to the lighter, and served stimulants to them, she was run down the creek to the supply-boats, the freight-rooms of which had, in the mean time, been as well as possible arranged to accommodate the patients.

One of the ladies engaged in this night expedition of the *Elizabeth* gives the following account of it in a letter to a friend.

(N.) Not a moment is lost,—Mr. B. would not even let me go for a shawl,—and the tug is off. The *Elizabeth* is our store-tender or supply-boat; her main deck is piled from deck to deck with boxes. The first thing done is to pick out six cases of pillows, six of quilts, one of brandy, and one cask of bread. Then all the rest is lowered into the hold. Meantime I make for the kitchen, where I find a remarkable old anty and a fire. I dive into her pots and pans,

I wheedle her out of her green tea (the black having given out), and soon I have eight buckets full of tea, and pyramids of bread and butter. The cleared main-deck is spread with two layers of quilts, and rows of pillows a man's length apart. The poor fellows are led or carried on board, and stowed side by side as close as can be. We feed them with spoonfuls of brandy and water; they are utterly broken down, wet through, some of them raving with fever. All are without food for one day, some for two days. After all are laid down, Miss G. and I give them their supper, and they sink down again. Any one who looks over such a deck as that, and sees the suffering, despondent attitudes of the men, and their worn frames and faces, knows what war is better than the sight of wounds can teach it. We could only take ninety; more had to go in a small tug-boat which accompanied us. Mr. B. and the doctor went on board of her, to give sustenance to the men, and in the mean time the *Elizabeth* started on the homeward trip. So the care of her men came to me. Fortunately only a dozen or two were very ill, and none died. Still I felt anxious; six of them were out of their mind, one had tried to destroy himself three times that day, and was drenched through, having been

dragged out of the water, into which he had thrown himself just before we reached him. When we reached the *Knickerbocker*, Dr. Ware came on board, and gave me some general directions, after which I got along very well; my only disaster had been that I gave morphine to a man who actually screamed with rheumatism and cramp. I supposed morphine would not hurt him, and it was a mercy to others to stop the noise, instead of which I made him perfectly crazy, and had the greatest trouble in soothing him. We did not move them that night, and the next morning, after getting them all washed, I went off guard, and Mrs. M. and Mrs. N. came on board with their breakfast from the *Knickerbocker*, where the one hundred and eighty men were stowed and cared for. Soon afterwards my men were transferred to her. She still lies along-side, and we take care of her. She is beautifully in order; everything right and orderly. It is a real pleasure to give the men their meals. The ward-masters are all appointed, and the orderlies know their duty. She will probably leave to-morrow. As for the ladies, they are just what they should be, efficient, wise, active as cats, merry, light-hearted, thoroughbred, and without the fearful tone of self-devotedness about them that sad

experience makes one expect in benevolent women. We all know in our hearts that it is thorough enjoyment to be down here; *it is life*, in short, and we would n't be anywhere else (in view of our enjoyment) for anything in the world. I hope people will continue to sustain this great work. Hundreds of lives are being saved by it. I have seen with my own eyes, in one week, fifty men who must have died anywhere but here, and many more who probably would have done so. I speak of lives saved only; the amount of suffering saved is incalculable. The Commission keep up the work at great expense. It has six large vessels now running from here. Government furnishes these, and the bare rations of the men, (or is supposed to do so,) but the real expenses of supply fall on the Commission; in fact, *everything* that makes the power and excellence of the work is supplied by the Commission. If people ask what they shall send, say, "Money, *money*, stimulants, and articles of sick-food."

(A.) I went through the *Elizabeth* soon after she came along-side, and all who were awake were very ready to say they wanted for nothing. We concluded to let them remain where they were for the rest of the night. They had been on

the creek shore from ten to fourteen hours, without a physician or a single attendant, a particle of food or a drop of drink, and this on a cold, foggy day, with rain and mist after nightfall. With half a dozen exceptions, they are marvelously well this morning, and profoundly grateful for the kindness which, I need not say, the ladies are extending to them. I am as yet unable to make up my mind what to do with them. The cold northeasterly storm continues.

May 17th. Our poor little *Wilson Small* since her first patching has been run into again and again, and for some days has been so broken up, that the poor little thing can't raise steam even. We have been towed about by our supply-boats, and to-day shall quit her while she goes to Baltimore for repairs. We can't leave her without real regret, even to go temporarily on board the *Spaulding*, one of the finest vessels of her size that I ever saw. We go on slowly with our fittings, having but poor lumber and only four carpenters. We have had, however, a detail, ordered by the military governor, of the "Infant Purdys," as the boys call the *Enfans Perdus*, to fetch and carry, and shall have the *Spaulding* after next filling the *Daniel Webster* and the *Elm City*, both which should be here before to-morrow night. We sent off the *Knickerbocker*

this morning at daylight to Washington, with two hundred and seventy sick and wounded. There are two ladies for each watch, and the value of their service in the minor superintendence is incalculable.

The twenty ladies who came from New York were really a great godsend, although at first, with no boat to assign them to, we did not know what to do with them. They have all worked like heroes night and day, and though the duty required of them is frequently of the most disagreeable and trying character, I have never seen one of them flinch for a moment. Yesterday, I chanced to observe, *apropos* to an excessively hard night's work, that all our hardships would be very satisfactory to recall by and by, when Miss M. said earnestly, "Recall! why, I never had half the present satisfaction in any week of my life before!" and there was a general murmur of concurrence. If you could see the difference between the men on our transports, and those on the vessels managed directly by government, — rude as the means at our command are, and although we do all we can to aid the latter, — you would better understand the incentive and the reward of exertion. . . . The conduct of the patients is always fine; — patient, brave, patriotic. I am surprised

and delighted by it. We have sent details of the ladies with every vessel, and have now remaining with us only four, besides the hired Crimean nurse, Mrs. —.

Captain —, whom I spoke of as mortally wounded, and whom we had kept in the cabin of the *Wilson Small* since our visit to West Point, we sent off this morning on the *Knickerbocker* feeling quite jolly and with a fair prospect of speedy recovery. I don't doubt he would have died but for good nursing and surgery, as he had exhausting internal hemorrhages.

We had two deaths on board last night, — one a fine fellow of sixteen, of pneumonia, in the lower deck ward, and a convalescent in the upper after ward. The latter came out of his room, saying he was faint, and wanted water, and, while the attendant turned for it, sprang over the guards into the water below. A boat was lowered, and efforts made to find him, but he must have struck his head, and, being stunned, did not rise.

CHAPTER IV.

(A.) We are lying in the *Spaulding* just below a burnt railroad-bridge, on the Pamunkey River, and, as usual, in the middle of the fleet of forage boats. The shores are at once wooded and wonderful to the water's edge, the fulness of midsummer with the vivid and tender green of Southern spring. Up the banks, where the trees will let us look between them, lie great fields of wheat, tall and fresh, and taking the sunshine for miles. The river winds constantly, — returning upon itself every half-mile or so, and we seem sometimes lying in a little wooded lake without inlet or outlet. It is startling to find, so far from the sea, a river whose name we hardly knew two weeks ago, where our anchor drops in three fathoms of water and our great ship turns freely either way with the tide. Our smoke-stacks are almost swept by the hanging branches as we move, and great schooners are drawn up under the banks, tied to the trees; the *Spaulding* herself lies in the shade of an elm-tree which is a landmark for miles up and down.