

# Red Cross Society

### What It Has Done and What It Is Doing in the World.

By Lieut.-Col. G. Sterling Ryerson, M. D., in the Canadian Magazine.

The following article by Lieut.-Col. Ryerson, M. D., Canadian Red Cross commissioner in South Africa, appears in the April number of the Canadian Magazine: The spontaneous outbreak of loyalty evoked by the South African war found its expression in a desire to do something. Almost every young, able-bodied man wished to see his Queen and country at the front. Most energetic and sympathetic young women wished to bind the wounds and soothe the aching hours of British heroes. Other older and more practical persons, knowing that all cannot serve their country in the field, set to work to put in motion the machinery of the Red Cross Society, to afford practical relief to those whom duty and chance called to the front.

Students of military medicine have no difficulty in recalling the awful methods of treatment adopted by the surgeons of the armies of old. In the auditorium of the faculty of medicine of Paris a large part of the wall d'en face is decorated with a mural painting by Jerome, of a battle scene. It represents Ponce in the act of amputating the leg of a man by the old-fashioned knife, while the King hands him the red-hot cauterizing iron wherewith to seal the bleeding, palpitating stump. The unfortunate patient is held down by strong men, with whom he struggles in his agony. Beneath the painting is the legend, "Le Roi hate leurs efforts de recompense leur zele." In our days kings and war officers have not been so prompt to recompense the zeal of the medical department. On the contrary, the army doctor has been severely overlooked. Time brings its revenge. The South African war brings this revenge that the much-abused army doctor bears costs of his own hands. The Red Cross Society, by doing everything which lies in his power to allay pain and alleviate suffering, and fearlessly exposing his life for others. But zealous and efficient as may be the medical department of the army, there is still room for voluntary aid. No nation has yet found it possible to maintain a medical department large enough to meet the requirements of an army in the field. Therefore organized voluntary assistance is a necessity of war.

One has only to recall the scenes of horror of the Crimean war, when across the mental view there flits the gentle form of the "lady with the lamp," Florence Nightingale. An old general has been reported to have once told me that the most awful night of his life was that which followed the battle of the Alma. Thousands of British soldiers lay strewn on the field. Without adequate assistance he could do but little. The wounded were lying in shrieks and cries of the wounded. Soon there came another horror. Cholera stalked abroad and laid his cold hand on many a brave heart, which soon was still.

The scenes of the Crimea were repeated in the war between France and Sardinia on the one side and Austria on the other in 1859-60. It had its culmination in the great battle of Solferino, which took place on 24th June, 1859. Three hundred thousand men faced each other in deadly array. On a line five miles long, for fifteen hours, the cannon roared, the muskets cracked, the cavalry charged and the bayonet drank deep draughts of blood. As the wounded lay on the ground, the artillery and cavalry charged over them. The dead and wounded lay commingled in heaps. When all was done and the echoes of the cannon had died away in the stillness of an Alpine night, there arose other sounds, the wailing of the wounded, the victorious French lost 17,000 men and the Austrians 20,000 killed and wounded. "Twas a glorious victory." What pen can describe the horrors revealed by the rising sun after a night of rain? Ambulances and doctors were few and far between. The wounded lay on the ground until lock-jaw, gangrene and exhaustion carried them off. Castles, Solferino and other towns were soon filled to overflowing with those able to crawl. At first the townspeople viewed them with compassion, and brought clean water, soups and chaps, but there seemed no end, and the most charitable wearied in well-doing. The wounded lay about the streets, starved and neglected, piteously begging for food and water. I shall forbear to relate the awful scenes in the hospitals. Voluntary aid began to arrive. One Canadian doctor came from Paris to render what assistance he could. Late Dr. Norman Bethune. Thousands of lives were wasted for lack of timely aid.

It happened that among the civilians who chanced to be present was a Swiss gentleman of means named Henri Dunant, who, with his servant, was travelling in Northern Italy. He was so deeply impressed with the horrors of the situation, the necessity for organized voluntary aid, appealed irresistibly to him, that he set to work to organize. After the war he travelled from court to court in Europe endeavoring to obtain support and endorsement for a scheme of international benevolence and relief in war. He was so far successful that in 1863 a conference was held at Geneva of representatives of the great powers and of certain humane bodies, particularly the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. On the 24th October, 1864, the convention of Geneva was ratified by the high signatory powers. By its provisions all hospitals, hospital materiel, medical officers and attendants became neutral. A surgeon in discharge of his duties cannot be held as a prisoner. Hence we read of all medical officers, medical corps, attendants and wounded passing into the hands of the Boers at Dundee. When the patients were sufficiently recovered the medical officers and men of the army medical corps were returned unharmed to the British lines. When on duty during an action, a brassard or armband, a red cross on a white ground, is worn by medical officers, who must not at the same time carry arms. All hospitals are indicated by a large flag bearing a red cross, with arms of equal length, on a white

ground, being the reverse of the Swiss national ensign, white on a red ground. This flag was adopted out of compliment to Switzerland, in which country the conference was held. All persons in attendance on or in houses sheltering wounded are protected by the red cross flag. The Red Cross Society is an international organization having its headquarters at Geneva. Each country has its own central committee, which is autonomous, with sub-committees in various towns and cities. It is the only officially authorized channel of communication of voluntary aid in war. The funds and stores at the seat of war are administered by a chief commissioner with the aid of local committees, the whole working in consonance with the principal medical officer.

The establishment of a colonial branch was a step in a new direction. Until the Canadian branch of the British Red Cross Society was formed by the writer in 1897, no colonial branch had been formed by any country. The appointment of a Canadian Red Cross commissioner was the necessary corollary of the organization of the branch. Like the sending of the Canadian contingent, it is another concession to the new imperialism. Under the convention, colonies cannot establish independent committees. The British Red Cross Society has expended very large sums of money in giving practical aid in war. Beginning with the Franco-Prussian war in 1870, it sent stores, money and surgical aid to the seat of war. The Russo-Turkish war, 1878; the Egyptian war, 1881-1883; the Sudan war, the Matabelle war and the Turco-Greek war afforded opportunities for work of which it availed itself. During the present South African war, it works on a large scale, maintaining two hospital ships and three hospital trains, which have been fitted up in a most complete manner at great expense. It sends out also large quantities of medical and personal comforts.

The Canadian contingent has been abundantly supplied with cash, medical and personal comforts by its aid. The Red Cross Society seeks to alleviate distress and suffering in war irrespective of nationality, color or creed. A wounded Boer is as safe under the Red Cross as a wounded Britisher or a Kaffir.

The Red Cross is the emblem of the greatest organization of humane endeavor in the world, and it is fitting that the close of the nineteenth century should see it doing its greatest work on the blood-stained fields of South Africa, a sign of hope and help for the sick and wounded in war. I ask the reader to consider the condition of these fields and after its adoption by all civilized nations. If it is no longer legitimate to shed blood and murder the helpless sick and wounded in their beds, it is because of the humane and civilizing propaganda of the Red Cross Society. Nations are now satisfied to put armies bare of combat without exterminating them. Humanity can never pay its debt of gratitude to Henri Dunant. Yet he was discovered a few years ago a pauper in an almshouse, having spent his all in furthering his humane scheme. Needless to say no sooner were his needs known than money flowed in, so that he is now surrounded by every comfort. How few of the world's benefactors are rewarded in accordance with their merits! To the Red Cross again thousands owe their lives. Untold suffering has been prevented by its strength and influence. How many more widows and orphans would have been made but for its protecting folds! It is idle to say there will be no more war. While man has pugnacity he will fight and enjoy fighting. Only when he becomes an angel, will he cease to let us be thankful that in the Red Cross Society there exists an organization which mitigates the effect of his inborn destructiveness. It deserves the cordial support of the public.

### MURPHY OF THE IRISH FUSILIERS.

The Latest London Music-Hall Song. You may talk of Julius Caesar, or describe the Queen of Spain, But they couldn't hold a candle, boys, to Murphy; You might travel out to Timbuctoo and back to town again, Still you couldn't find the equal there of Murphy. He could make the ladies love him, he could make the peevish quack, He's the pride of every wedding, and the backbone of a wake; He had got all the materials to make Dunant's shake, And the droll of the Fusiliers was Murphy.

Chorus: Murphy was a terror, Murphy was a scamp, He could hold more whisky than any boy in camp; But when it came to trason, in spite of threys and jeers, He fought for Queen and country, boys, in the Irish Fusiliers.

Says Murphy, "Cheers for Kimberley and the defence it made; Here's three times three for Kekewich," shouts Murphy; "And the gallant Irish leader, of our cavalry belted, Who is driving Boers in front of him," says Murphy. "Now the Boers when learning languages have had a nasty wrench, though they're foreigners to show them how positions to entrench; Still, we're teaching them some English, and they've learnt a bit of French; French is giving them French polishing," says Murphy.

"The order was for Peter's Hill—they took it double quick," says Murphy; "Sure the Scotch went up 'long side of us," says Murphy; "Ay, the Irish boys were working till beyond they did the trick— Sure 'n' told the Queen is proud of us," says Murphy. "We now can cheer Majuba Day, and mark it with a star, And, sure, Irish White of Ladysmith, fears neither wound nor scar. But the best of all the Irish boys is Bob of Kandahar; Oh! Lord Roberts is the general for Murphy."

"There are Irishmen, I'm told, who for our enemies give cheers; But they none of them are fighting men," says Murphy.

"For the friends of those who try to kill the Irish Fusiliers, They are mighty pleasant Irishmen," says Murphy.

"On one place, the field of battle, they'll take care they're never seen; They may talk their petty treason, or may wave their flags of green, But they can't stop Irish soldiers, who are fighting for the Queen; Sure, God bless her, we would die for her," says Murphy.

# The Art of Campaigning

### Some Lessons of the War—The Soldier's Equipment of To-Day.

### The Enormous Importance of Invisibility—Field Glasses For Troops.

The field equipment of the British soldier is a very different thing to-day from what it was twenty years ago, says a correspondent of the London Times. England's many little wars, if they have not afforded much training in generalship, have taught valuable lessons in the no less important art of campaigning.

Amid failures, unexpected, yet natural enough, to surprise a mobile enemy in a strange country, or to carry strong defensive position with relatively small attacking forces, England has rather overlooked her success in matters almost as vital as generalship itself. That no other nation could so expeditiously have dispatched a considerable army across 6,000 miles of sea may be taken for granted. But it is also quite probable that no other nation would have made such admirable arrangements for the provisioning of the troops when once sent to the front or for the treatment of the wounded after a battle, or have equipped its soldiers so serviceably for the task of fighting and campaigning.

On the whole, the British soldier is well equipped. Khaki is an excellent fighting color and almost invisible against the ordinary background of the South African veldt at any distance over 500 yards. The puttee is a better marching legging than any form of gaiter; it is a little clumsy to put on, but it supports the calf and never gets hopelessly sodden and shapeless, as a leather gaiter does by prolonged immersion in water or mud. The flannel shirt and campaign vest which go under the khaki, as well as the great coat which goes over it, would serve to keep the soldier warm in almost any climate, and have certainly proved sufficient in South Africa. Still there are various points with regard to which the experience of the present war goes to show that improvements might well be effected.

### The Great Lesson Taught

by this war—a war fought with modern firearms, and, as a rule, on open ground—is the enormous importance of invisibility. At the distances at which modern rifles fire is effective a little precaution is quite sufficient to make men almost invisible to the naked eye, except when standing up against the sky line. The conditions of such invisibility are determined by a few elementary optical rules. The general effect of a soldier's uniform and equipment at a long range should be neutral colored and as much as possible blurred against the background. It should present no bright surfaces, and no sharp angles. Buttons, buckles or tin pannikins, in strong sunshine any bright metallic object, however small, is visible for hundreds of yards after the dull khaki uniform has become invisible. The production of a pair of aluminum field-glasses, the only optical instrument which will hold its own in a field of bullets from trenches a pile off, while an uncovered tin water bottle may mean a hot five minutes' attention from a Vickers-Nordenfeldt quick-firer.

Broad patches of color differing markedly from the background or from the color of the sky are equally objectionable. The dark greatcoat shows very plainly on the soldier's back when lying down, and has been no doubt responsible for many stray shots. Still more fatal has been the dark green kit, which proved such an excellent target to the Boers at Glendalag and Magersfontein. Even small patches or bands, if of a different material from the rest of the uniform and reflecting the light in a different manner, such as the polished leather of an officer's Sam Brown belt or the black strap of rifle regiments, attract attention at considerable distance. In fact it is an open question whether leather had not better be ousted altogether from the soldier's equipment in favor of other material for belts, shoulder straps, even cartridge pouches. Leather is expensive, heavy, and when once wetted and dried again stiff and uncomfortable. Whether polished or pipelined, it requires a lot of attention to keep smart, and thereby at once becomes dangerous.

But it is not essential to invisibility that

### The Soldier's Uniform

should be of one color. It would be quite possible to clothe soldiers in all the colors of the rainbow, provided no one stripe exceeded, say, one inch in width. The general effect at a distance would be a neutral gray due to the blending of the different colors. There are a dozen or more different colors whose general effect at long range would be practically the same as that of khaki. This optical fact has a direct bearing on the practical question of the soldier's uniform.

One of the first things that this war ought to put an end to is the historic red coat of the British soldier. It is absurd that our soldiers and volunteers should wear a uniform which is useless for the purposes of war in England or France just as much as in South Africa. At the same time the exigencies of recruiting or a volunteer army demand something smarter than plain dirty khaki. That such a smartness can be attained with a generally neutral colored uniform is shown by many of our volunteer regiments and by the Australian troops. There would not be the least difficulty in devising a large variety of smart uniforms practically as invisible as khaki. That such a distance over 200 yards. All that is necessary is that certain elementary optical rules regarding the blending of colors should be observed, and that no separate patch of bright color should exceed a certain size. The same

thing will have to apply to the kilt. No one wishes to do away with the Highlander's kilt. It is a first-rate uniform for marching, especially for hill climbing, and its thick folds around the body render it a warm and healthy costume for sleeping out at night. But to wear the kilt in its present form is simply to court death. The dark patch it presents is easily visible at ranges where khaki trousers and puttees are indistinguishable from the background. In this war the Highlander regiments have been wearing ridiculous looking improvised aprons of khaki, but these have no protection to them when lying flat on their faces. But it is by no means necessary that in future

All Highland Regiments should be reduced to wearing khaki kilts. All that is wanted is a tartan with a somewhat lighter ground color, whose general effect at a distance should be that of khaki. It ought not to be beyond the capacity of some authority versed in tartan lore to devise a safe and yet pleasing service tartan for each Highland regiment. The old tartan might be preserved for officers' full dress and parade uniforms.

A similar application of optical rules will be necessary in the case of officers' uniforms. This war had lasted but a very few days before the British and Boer commanders realized that, unless they wished to lose all their officers in the first few engagements of the campaign, it was essential that they should discard swords, cross belts, and in fact everything which distinguished them from the common soldier. But, important though it is that the officers should do everything to avoid being picked off unnecessarily by the enemy's sharpshooters, it is no less important that soldiers should be able easily to recognize their officers. Nothing conduces more easily to a rout of regular soldiers than an uncertainty as to the whereabouts of their officers.

The helmet is in every respect inferior to the felt hat worn by the Boers and by many of England's colonial contingents. It is extremely visible. In many instances in recent engagements, British soldiers, after having their helmet torn off and prepared running the risk of sunstroke incurred by being for hours under an African sun. With regard to other details of the soldier's dress, everything should be easy fitting, for comfort as well as for show. The old notions of smartness derived from days when men stood or advanced shoulder to shoulder like a stone wall, the days of Fontenoy and Waterloo, must give way to modern notions of utility. The modern soldier's uniform must be such as will enable him to move easily, to walk, run or climb, and which he can wear with least discomfort day and night—for a week or more on end, if need be. It should fit loosely, especially at the neck. A soldier's clothes should

### Have Plenty of Pockets.

in which to stow provisions or any other odds and ends that may be useful to him in the march and during or after a battle. It is a good sign of the times that the Imperial Yeomanry are to wear, not tunics, but Norfolk jackets. The soldier's baggage has been the matter of so much expert study and experiment that it could be rash to offer much criticism. The ordinary infantryman would seem that the system of strapping miscellaneous paraphernalia round the soldier might be simplified. A comprehensive Rucksack like that carried by the Swiss guides, and hung well in the small of the back, will carry all the impediments of an infantry soldier except his greatcoat. The haversack should be done away with, and such rations as a soldier would want to carry when going out to action in light kit without his sword, and other necessities, should be put in his pockets. If the haversack is kept, however, it should be made stronger. There have been frequent complaints of haversacks being unequal to the strain which Tommy Atkins puts upon them.

Of course the extra risk attending to officers can never be done away with by similarity of equipment. But the risk can be greatly minimized. The most striking revolution in officers' equipment due to this war is the abolition of the sword. The uselessness in modern infantry fighting ought to have been realized long ago, but there was no military reformer bold enough to carry its abolition into practice. Now, however, it is to be hoped the sword will disappear, and all, even from the parade ground, to join the halberd, mace, battle-axe and other primitive weapons. The officers of the future will carry a rifle like the private, and will have to be a crack shot. In addition to his rifle he will also have the bayonet, and perhaps a revolver. The most important weapon of the officer, however, is his field-glass. Every officer—and not only every officer, but every sergeant and corporal—should have a good pair of field-glasses, and every officer, and at least one officer in every infantry company or cavalry troop, should have a telescope as well.

### MR. DOOLEY DEFINES A POET.

The Archway Road Literary Club was holding a meeting at Molly Donahue's, and Mr. Donahue and Mr. Dooley engaged in an analytical discussion of poets and poetry.

"Why shud men, grown men, write poetry?" Mr. Donahue demanded, with a great show of spirit.

"Well," said Mr. Dooley, "it is with them that a poet's man with some-thing to say that he hasn't thought out. Now, ye'er in a way, Malachi, a pote. Whin ye'er at home bustin' to express yourself, an' not knowin' exactly what it is ye want to say, or how ye ought to say it, if ye knew, ye have th' makin' of a pote in ye. Ye needn't look savage. Ye'll never be wan while ye feel strong about your troubles. A pote doesn't feel really bad. He only thinks he does. He's able to find wurruds to pour out his heart in, an' he comes th' morn' morn' fr' to cut up th' wurruds into proper len'th an' have thim fit into each other like matched furin'. Think iv a man sittin' down with a woid passion in his heart, an' he thry'n' to measure it with a pocket-ruler. Th' man that's riled mad, that's mad clear through, can't speak plainly. He splutters as ye do, avick. That's war reason I'm agin poetry. There ar-re other reasons, but that's wan. 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