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induce decisive moral action, and to enable it to throw off the *vis inertia* which holds so many down.

Much more might doubtless be said about the singular gifts of this remarkable man, but let this suffice. I will only add that, with all his remarkable gifts and his unprecedented success in his own line of work, I have hardly ever known a more utterly modest man. I could never detect any signs of elation in him, even in his palmiest days, and I believe it was the same to the end. Surely one cannot think of the close of that unique career without recalling the words of the Hebrew prophet: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

W. HAY M. H. AITKEN.



#### ART. V.—HOSPITALS AND NATIONAL GRATITUDE.

**A** FRIEND of mine was talking to me the other day about his life in a great Northern city, and he said that whenever he felt put out, or worried, or cross, or vexed, or depressed, because things had not been going on as he wished, he went into one or other of the great hospitals, and what he saw there always sent him home calm, refreshed, and contented. He saw men and women racked with pain, weakened with fever, separated from their homes and all that was dearest to them by the terrible stroke of disease, unable to earn their living, and reduced to the greatest prostration, yet all of them quiet, patient, and uncomplaining, grateful for the attentions they received, trustful in the skill of physician and nurse, and hopeful that by God's mercy they would soon be restored to their friends and callings. The sight of so much privation and misery so cheerfully borne made him ashamed of being disturbed and petulant at the little daily accidental troubles of life, so infinitely less in their importance than the real tragedies which were gathered in the hospital ward. And the glimpse of the blessed and holy work of the hospital, all the able minds devoted to the alleviation of pain and the cure of illness, all the gentle hands soothing the long hours of weariness and waiting, made him realize that there were things to be done in life far nobler and more soul-satisfying than the details of business, and he understood how small and passing were the trifles that had annoyed him, and how great and eternal was the work of mercy and doing good.

And even if you cannot all pay visits to hospitals, like my

friend, yet it is not difficult to picture to yourself the beauty and glory of their work. At any moment you can remember that there are in the hospitals of London no less than 7,000 patients occupying beds, and being treated with all the tenderness and skill that kindness of heart and long study and experience can provide. Think of it! At any moment of the year always the 7,000, with their pale, wistful faces and their weakened bodies. The individuals come and go, they get better and return home, but others are waiting anxiously to take their places. Always the 7,000. They are the people whom you have been meeting about the streets—the men on the scaffolds, the builders, bricklayers, and artisans who erect your houses, the engineers and plate-layers who see to your travelling, assembled from all the toiling millions of London, or their wives and daughters, disabled by accident or sickness, and taken from the homes where they were needed. Think of it! At any moment in the year 7,000 homes from which father or mother or one of the bread-winners has been carried away, to give them a chance of recovering their life. What a never-ending mass of sorrow and suffering!

And there is another fact that will impress your mind if you will try and follow it. The number of all, both in-patients and out-patients, who are treated by the hospitals and dispensaries of London during the year reaches the enormous total of 1,788,564. That is equal to two and a half Manchesters and Salfords, or three Liverpools. You can gather from that how enormous the work is, and how it needs the active, hearty co-operation of everybody. By putting it in another way it sounds, if possible, even more tremendous. For the surgical cases were 818,000; the medical, or those arising from diseases of lungs, heart, and stomach, were 616,000; eye affections were 122,000; there were 113,000 children treated; the women who came with special diseases were 77,000; the cases of throat and ear were 48,000; the cases of skin disease were 43,000; consumption provided 31,000, paralysis 16,000; and there were 14,000 cases of fever. It is well, I think, when we are reminding ourselves about this great Christian duty of healing the sick, that we should have, at any rate, some kind of idea of the gigantic amount of suffering with which in this enormous city we have to deal, and try to make our efforts proportionate.

I would ask you to remember that the population of London is increasing annually by at least 50,000, and that the increase is chiefly amongst the poorer classes, the very men and women who depend for their health on the hospitals and dispensaries. And in the meantime the hospitals do not increase. It is true

that two years ago, by the generosity of the Corporation of the City of London and of one of the City companies, a ward long empty was opened in St. Thomas's; but St. Thomas's, alas! still has other empty wards, and every hospital has to lament the deplorable fact of scores of empty beds from want of funds. Every hospital except the few that are endowed has great difficulty every year in making up its balance-sheet. The pressure comes from the increasing numbers requiring treatment both for a lengthened stay and as outdoor patients, and the pressure increases every year.

It is not creditable to us that the collections in our churches for this Christlike work, the sign of a heart that is touched by Christian love, the test that will be applied to each at the awful Day of Judgment, reaches so small a sum. Even in the very best years our church and chapel collections do not rise above £38,000, and that is indeed a trifling amount when distributed among two or three thousand places of worship of all denominations. It is to private gifts that the fund owes any general increase in any particular year. One year when we got £60,000, nearly £22,000 consisted of private gifts. Last year, when we got £53,000, over £15,000 was from the like private generosity. Our Sunday collections are only 1½d. per head of the whole 5,000,000 of people who form the population of the Metropolitan area. It is a ridiculous and contemptible proportion; it is a grave accusation against the pretended Christianity of London; it will be a very formidable accusation against us in the day of reckoning. "I was sick," our Lord will say in that day; "one million seven hundred and eighty-eight thousand five hundred and sixty sick persons in a year represented Me in point of illness and disease in one year in that great city of yours. Did ye visit Me?" "Lord," London would have to reply, "we visited Thee to the extent of three-halfpence per head of our population." It is quite clear that most of us are making a mere pretence of giving. We give something that we do not feel at all.

And yet what causes of thankfulness we have this year! Do you remember the dark days of January and February, when repulse followed repulse, and deaths, slaughter and capture were frequent and humiliating, and the commanders seemed to be labouring heavily without much hope, and we began to doubt whether the rulers of the country realized the tremendous task they had in hand, and sorrow was coming in quick and sharp succession to many a home, and wise men were wondering whether the turn for Britain's weakness had not at length arrived, as the turn had come in old days for that of Athens, Rome, and Spain, and most of the foreign nations were deriding us with a genuine hatred, and gleefully

predicting our rapid decline and fall? And then do you remember how the nation turned itself to humbleness and prayer, and repented of the days of superciliousness and overweening confidence, and became serious and strenuous, and strengthened the hands of its rulers; and the citizens of London led the way, and, under the apt and vigorous hand of the Chief Magistrate, set a prompt and patriotic example which was followed by the whole Empire? Do you remember how we were comforted when Canada vied with Australia, and New Zealand with Natal and Cape Colony, in coming to the aid of the Mother-Country in perplexities and difficulties that were not of her own seeking? Do you remember how the reservists came forward to a man, and left their homes, and took their places in the ranks; and not only the reservists, but the veterans, at the personal request of the Queen, to the number of 35,000 or 40,000? Above all, do you remember how the great soldier of many victories—and not only that, but the great Christian gentleman—with an unstained record, although his heart was broken for the loss of his only son, went out to repair our misfortunes? Do you remember how quietly and unostentatiously he worked, and never spoke of his plans till they were carried out into fact? First there came the relief of Kimberley; and while we were still rejoicing and wondering, there was the swift stroke of Paardeberg, and the surrender of a formidable General and his army; then came the triumphant occupation of Bloemfontein, the capital of one of the invading Republics; then it became possible for Ladysmith to be rescued; next came the easy occupation of Johannesburg, followed by the glorious deliverance of the heroic garrison of Mafeking; and by that time our ebullitions of joy were so exuberant that we had hardly enough enthusiasm left for the occupation of Pretoria, the capital of the original aggressor. The vast number of prisoners, which has been such a foul disgrace to a mighty Empire invaded by two Republics of peasant farmers, have for the most part been released. Since then victory has followed after victory, sure and swift, and the end is in view. Was ever situation better described than in the inspired words of the 107th Psalm?—

“ Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
Being fast bound in misery and iron;  
Because they rebelled against the word of God,  
And contemned the counsel of the Most High,  
Therefore He brought down their heart with labour;  
They fell down, and there was none to help.  
Then cried they unto the Lord in their trouble,  
And He saved them out of their distresses.  
He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,  
And brake their bonds in sunder.

Fools because of their transgressions,  
And because of their iniquities, are afflicted,  
Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble,  
And He saveth them out of their distresses.  
He sent His word and healed them,  
And delivered them from their destruction.  
Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness,  
And for His wonderful works to the children of men!  
And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving,  
And declare His works with rejoicing!"

Is there not, then, abundant reason for thankfulness? I know that the heart of this country has been unusually stirred to generosity. The Lord Mayor's Mansion House Fund for the sufferers by the war is rapidly approaching a million. The Indian Famine Fund is over a quarter of a million. There was the fund for Ottawa, the fund for the evicted colonists, the fund for the families of officers, smaller funds of every description. Multitudes of kindly acts have been done in private. All this is as it should be, and we may reasonably be proud of our people. But, oh! how hard it would be if those who are suffering at home just as heroically, in silence and obscurity, should for that reason appeal in vain this memorable year! Think of the 7,000 who are in the beds of the hospital this moment; think of the 7,000 who are waiting to succeed them, and again another and another in endless succession. Think of the 1,788,000 yearly needing the healing hand! No brilliant correspondent chronicles their woes; no countless multitudes read telegrams twice a day to learn about their troubles, their bearing, their patient, uncomplaining deaths. No crowds rejoice when they are released and cured. Yet they are always with us, and their calamities are terribly real. Bitter sorrow is carried into more humble homes by daily illness and casualty than by everything that has happened in the war. More deaths occur in a year in London through accidents than have been recorded in the whole war through bullet and shell. To these things our hearts should always be open, but more especially in this year of great liberality and unwonted enthusiasm.

For you should remember that the story of the war and the efficiency of our hospitals are intimately bound up together. Never was an army sent out from our shores so admirably equipped in all respects as the great host that has been fighting the cause of liberty in South Africa, and that through the brilliant ability and foresight of our able Commander-in-Chief, Lord Wolseley, and his staff. But on no department of that equipment can we look with such unmitigated satisfaction as on the hospital arrangements. Think of the scenes in old days, before the chloroform of Sir James Simpson or the

antiseptic treatment of Lord Lister! The scenes of butchery in the surgeons' tent after the battle were worse than the terrors of the battle itself—shrieks, groans, hasty amputations, agonizing deaths. Now all is calm and peaceful, and the soldier-lad, as he loses his limb, dreams of mother and home. Then fever, pyæmia and gangrene swept through the field-hospital like a pestilence: now the recovery of the wounded seems almost miraculous. The change is all owing to the great system which you are to-day asked to support, in which skill is acquired and discoveries made. Defects in the practical application of the system are obviously owing to the enormous difficulties of transport along a single line of 1,500 miles, constantly broken and blocked.

I ask all, then, let it not be said of this glorious year that the people of London excelled themselves in enthusiasm for their soldiers, and poured forth money with unstinted hand, but neglected the victims of disease and injury and the pressure of civilization at home.

One, at any rate, intends to give more than ever. One philanthropist has already given £10,000, and will give more if we can raise the fund to £100,000. That is what we ought to do—a victory we non-combatants at home can readily achieve, if we only be as self-sacrificing as those who have come forward to fight the battles of the Queen.

If you think with pity of the mother in her lonely cottage, weeping for her boy who fell at Colenso or Magersfontein or Spion Kop or Paardeberg, think with thankfulness of some other mother, no less loving, no less poor, with son or husband restored to her by the skill of some great house of mercy in London.

By the recovery of those whom you love at the front, by the glorious memory of those whom God has called to Himself, by the successes which He has granted us, by your thankfulness for all His goodness to this nation, by your loyalty to this great city, by your philanthropic zeal for its Christian institutions, by your desire that this memorable year should suffer no blot, by your unspeakable gratitude for the skill of surgeon and physician in rescuing you and your beloved at home from sickness and death, by your love for your Master, to whose Divine heart the cause of the sick and suffering was very dear, I urge all Christians to determine by His grace to double their offering this year! Let the great flame of enthusiasm which has warmed the hearts of our people through and through embrace not only the victims of the African struggle, but those also at our own doors, whose pangs and griefs are as great, but who have no trumpet-tongued renown to make their necessities known.

WILLIAM SINCLAIR.