

U. S. SANITARY COMMISSION.

No. 38.

REPORT

ON THE

CONDITION

OF

CAMPS AND HOSPITALS

AT

CAIRO AND VICINITY, PADUCAH AND
ST. LOUIS,

BY REV. W. W. PATTON AND R. N. ISHAM, M. D.,
OF THE CHICAGO BRANCH OF THE U. S. SANITARY COMMISSION

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November 26th, 1861. }

TO THE U. S. SANITARY COMMISSION :

GENTS :

The following Report is based upon observations made by a Committee of our number, appointed for that purpose, who have recently visited and carefully examined the Camps and Hospitals at Cairo, Bird's Point, Camp Holt, Mound City, Paducah, and St. Louis. Believing it to present a just picture of the Sanitary condition of the troops at these localities at the time of the inspection, in accordance with your request it is respectfully submitted for publication

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EXTRACTS

FROM THE

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE, TO VISIT CAMPS AND HOSPITALS.

The Committee appointed to visit the Camps and Hospitals at and near Cairo, and also by personal inspection and conference to ascertain the plan of operations pursued by the Sanitary Committee of St. Louis, beg leave to report—

That as soon as practicable, they entered upon the duties assigned, and visited Cairo, Bird's Point, Camp Holt, Mound City, Paducah and St. Louis, making diligent inspection of Camps and Hospitals, and seeking information from all intelligent persons, official and unofficial. They are happy to state that every facility was afforded them by the officers of the army of all grades, and that the expenses of travel, so far as conveyances were concerned, were assumed by the United States government. The Committee would express their particular indebtedness to the kind assistance of Rev. Mr. FOLSOM, City Missionary at Cairo; Dr. AIGNER, representative at the same place of the United States Sanitary Commission; to Drs. HEWIT and HARTSHORN, the Medical Director and Brigade Surgeon at Paducah; and to Capt. J. CHEEVER, of St. Louis. Without the services of these gentlemen, which were freely volunteered, the labors of the Committee would have been much retarded, and far less satisfactory.

The Camps and Hospitals visited by your Committee, pertained to the following bodies of troops, to wit: the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 18th, 22d, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 40th and 41st Regiments of *Illinois* Volunteers, with the Chicago Light Artillery and Capt. Buel's Battery, the men of the latter being principally from Illinois; the 2d and 7th Regiments of *Iowa* Volunteers; the 11th and 23d *Indiana* Volunteers, and the 8th *Missouri*, besides numerous Regiments represented miscellaneously in the general Hospitals at St. Louis. The results of their ob-

servations and inquiries may better be stated in connection with the several localities visited, than by a tedious catalogical and somewhat repetitious account of the separate Regiments.

The first point to which attention was directed was

CAIRO, ILLINOIS,

where are encamped about five thousand troops. The Committee called upon Gen. McClermand and obtained his approval of their proposed inquiries; and also upon Dr. Simmons, the Medical Director of that department, and Dr. Brinton, his temporary assistant; after which, they visited, in turn, the Regimental Hospitals and the Post Hospital, with the exception of one Regiment of Cavalry. The general sanitary condition of the Camps and Hospitals at Cairo was not what it should be, in view of the medical force on the ground, the time that the troops have been stationed there, and the repeated visits of members of the U. S. Sanitary Commission. In many cases, the sick were crowded into narrow quarters, in old and dirty buildings, not properly lighted and ventilated, and with a scanty supply of articles necessary to comfort and recovery. There was a marked difference discernible, however, between the Hospitals under the charge of different surgeons, some appearing to have all that was essential, and others to lack nearly everything. In very few cases, however, were the cots furnished with any kind of mattresses or pillows, a blanket taking the place of the former, and the soldier's overcoat or knapsack forming a rough substitute for the latter. Patients complained of being cold at night and sore in their bodies, from the thinness and hardness of their beds. From a lack of shirts and drawers, as well as hospital blankets, and also of stoves for warming the wards, the sick wore their ordinary clothing. The supply of ticks (to be filled with straw) at the Medical Purveyor's is for double cots, while the Hospitals are furnished almost exclusively with single cots. As the most unfavorable case, the Committee would specify the Regimental Hospital of ———, Col. ———, Surgeon ———,* in which were ninety patients, in crowded and filthy rooms, with a great lack of bed vessels and spittoons, the most of the beds being supplied with a disgusting heap of sawdust on the floor, for purposes of expectoration. Some of the sick lay upon hay on the floor; a foetid odor pervaded the wards; the convalescents were huddled together in groups, wherever a vacant corner could be found. There were no shirts nor drawers, and the men, however ill, and though near to death, were in their ordinary clothes, with their overcoats for pillows! And this Regiment was encamped in its own district, where the privates and officers resided, and could easily have ap-

* The names are suppressed, for the present, in the printed Report, to give opportunity for reform.

pealed to the benevolent in behalf of the sick. Plainly, the Surgeon was ill-informed as to his duty and rights, or was grossly inefficient, and the officers heedless of the condition of the men. There had been two hundred cases of measles in the Regiment, and sixty such cases were then in the Hospital, accounting, in part, for its crowded condition.

Another instructive case, is that of the ———, Col. ———, Surgeon ———,* This Regiment has been noted for its sick-list, as many as two hundred and sixty cases having been reported at one time. There are now about fifty cases in Hospital. The building was small, but very neat and clean, and the Surgeon appeared earnest and intelligent as to his duty, but complained that the general officers of the Regiment manifested no sympathies with his labors, and gave no heed to his suggestions. In the frequent removals, he had never been consulted as to the location of the camps, and had been over-ruled when he had offered remonstrance, as, for instance, in Missouri, where, on one occasion, the camp was placed by the side of a swamp, in which casks were sunk, and the water distributed to the men! Your Committee visited the Regiment, and found them at dinner, at 11 o'clock, A.M.; nobody ordering the time of the meals, and the cooking being done by the men, in turn, of each small mess of ten or twelve, instead of cooks being hired for the entire Regiment, or at least for each Company. They lodged in board barracks, which had been previously used by other Regiments, and needed to be thoroughly cleaned, aired and whitewashed within and without. Eight or ten feet back of the barracks ran an open drain, full of filth. In fact, nothing was wanting to ensure disease. The officers were represented as mutually at variance, and busy only in strife and selfish ambitions.

The Post Hospital, under Dr. Burke, has just taken possession of a new brick building, where suitable accommodations will soon be provided. At present, the patients lack many things essential to comfort, but the general appearance of the Hospital is creditable.

Calling at the office of the Medical Purveyor (Dr. Taggart), your Committee learned that there was a scant supply of blankets for Hospital use, and also of single cot ticks, and, just at present, of medical stores generally. Also, that the Medical Department in Cairo could not, in the emergency, draw upon the very abundant supplies supposed to be at Chicago, under charge of Dr. Blaney, the Medical Purveyor; though it has since appeared that these supplies were greatly overrated as to their quantity, and that they were deposited in Chicago simply for the field service of Regiments going to the war, and not for general Hospital purposes.

Dr. Simmons, the Medical Director, stated that he was out of supplies, but was expecting them in a week or ten days. He kindly mentioned the articles which it would be well to secure, in addition to those furnished

* The names are suppressed, as before.

by the Government, of which a list will be given in another place, based upon information obtained from many sources.

The Committee had frequent and valuable interviews with Dr. Aigner, for the present resident Inspector of the U. S. Sanitary Commission, who accompanied the Committee during one afternoon, and whose familiarity with the condition of the troops was of essential aid. He regarded the formation of the Chicago Commission as of prime importance, and his hints as to the work to be done by it are embodied elsewhere.

The Committee next proceeded to

BIRD'S POINT, MISSOURI,

where were seven Regiments encamped. These were, on the whole, in fair condition, as to location, tents, sanitary arrangements, and condition of Hospitals, though lacking many desirable comforts. One Regiment only (the Iowa 2nd) was in a specially sick condition, having 255 on the sick list, thirty-seven of these in one Company. It has since been ordered to St. Louis, to recruit, and has proceeded thither.

From Bird's Point the Committee passed to the Camp at

FORT HOLT, KENTUCKY,

where they found but two Regiments, which were well encamped, and enjoyed good health; their few sick were well cared for, in essential respects, by surgeons who seemed to understand their duty.

The next place visited was

MOUND CITY, ILLINOIS,

seven miles up the Ohio River from Cairo. A single Regiment is stationed here, into whose Hospital, under the care of Dr. Stahl, the Committee went, and found a satisfactory state of affairs. * * * * *

At this place the "Simmons' General Hospital" has been established for all the troops of that region, and a block of six or eight brick stores is being accommodated to Hospital purposes as fast and as thoroughly as the scanty supply of money by the United States Government will allow. The Brigade Surgeon, Dr. Franklin, seems to be intelligent, and active in his work. There are two hundred and thirty patients at present, but the number will soon double or treble. There is great need of sheets, comforters, blankets, shirts, and drawers. There are but three hundred sheets at present, or only one-quarter of the least number necessary.

Next the Committee proceeded to

PADUCAH, KENTUCKY,

where there are about eight thousand troops. One of the Committee (Dr. Isham) was unable to remain longer than a few hours, during which

he visited one Camp, that of the Illinois 12th, Col. McArthur; Surgeon, Dr. Wardner, of this city—a model Camp in all particulars, (as was also the 11th Indiana, Col. McGuinness; Surgeon, Dr. Fry) and, as a consequence, with very few sick men, and those convalescent. The remaining member of the Committee made a very thorough visitation of all the Camps and Hospitals, kindly accompanied throughout by Drs. Hewit and Hartshorn. The condition of Sanitary affairs was creditable in every Regiment but one, which was changing its quarters that very day, in order to inaugurate a better system. This favorable state of things was owing to the presence of an excellent Medical Staff, and to the organization of the surgeons into a Medical Society, which meets twice a week, to consult upon professional and official duties and measures.

The Post Hospital is in the spacious and beautifully-situated Court-House. The main ward is fifty-nine feet long, forty feet wide, and thirty feet high, and the next thirty by forty feet, and of the same height. The others were all lofty and commodious. The nurses are "Sisters of the Holy Cross," and all the arrangements are of a complete character. It is attended by the Regimental surgeons, two at a time, for a fortnight, aided by Dr. Kay, the resident assistant surgeon. Dr. Hartshorn was at present superintending it. During the month of September there were treated in all the Hospitals at Paducah, two thousand nine hundred cases, with but twenty-one deaths. The diseases were measles, camp diarrhoea, and dysentery, pneumonia and low fevers taking a typhoid character.

In some of the camps the tents were too small and crowded, and of very poor material. But one, as far as remembered, was supplied throughout with the admirable "Fremont Tent." The men of Capt. Buel's Battery were suffering, even to many cases of illness, from exposure, through want of thick clothing, they having only the summer supply. Your Committee took measures, subsequently, to bring the matter to the notice of the proper authorities at Cairo and St. Louis.

Before speaking of the visit of the Committee to St. Louis, which was mainly for the purposes of consultation, they will state some of the

CAUSES OF THE EXISTING DESTITUTION.

The U. S. Government professes to supply the real wants of the soldier, in health and in illness, and honestly means and seeks to do so; but an actual deficiency of comforts for the sick arises at present—

1.—From the unexpected fact and extent of the war, which took the nation by surprise, and found the government wholly unprepared for the supply of so vast an army as it has been compelled to call into the field. With the utmost energy, there must be a temporary deficiency in some articles, and a want of money in the hands of the Quartermasters and Medical Purveyors, to purchase necessary supplies on the spot.

2.—From supplies not being always in the place where they will be most available to those who need them. As a matter of fact, immense stores may be accumulated at one point, when there is a scarcity at another; while there seems to be no official method of transferring them from one point to the other. There may be no fault in this; and the blame may be in the negligence of the Medical Director in not making his requisitions upon the East in due time, or it may lie in a lack of transportation, owing to the crowded condition of the railroads.

3.—From the ignorance and inefficiency of Surgeons, who know not how to draw their supplies, nor to what they are entitled. This is a very common difficulty, and arises from the manner in which medical as well as military officers obtain their appointments.

4.—From the fact that the government does not undertake to furnish various articles that are useful to the sick, especially when convalescing, both in the way of food and clothing.

5.—It ought also to be added, for the information of those who have sent supplies to part of the Hospitals now reported destitute, that some of the articles sent, such as shirts, are worn away by needy, convalescent soldiers on their departure; and others, such as sheets, have been allowed by the Surgeons to lie unwashed, and thus unused.

In view of these various occasions of deficiency, your Committee are able, as the result of their observations and inquiries, to recommend an appeal to the benevolent public to supply the following articles for the 1,100 soldiers* now sick in the various places named.

BEDDING.—Sheets, pillows and pillow-cases; mattress ticks, for cots, 30 inches wide; comforters and blankets.

CLOTHING.—Flannel shirts (buttoning all the way down in front), flannel drawers, with a string around the waist; slippers, plain dressing gowns or wrappers, burial clothes, oiled silk, clean rags, chintz bed covers, handkerchiefs, woolen socks and mittens, and fine tooth combs.

FOOD.—Jellies, canned and dried fruits, and Sage for tea.

NO Wines and Liquors. The U. S. Government supplies a stated quantity of brandy and wine to each Surgeon, sufficient for ordinary Hospital consumption. When an uncommon number of special cases requiring alcoholic stimulants is on hand, the Surgeon can make a special requisition for the necessary supply. The Surgeon is required to account strictly to the Government for all the liquors which *it* furnishes. It is better, therefore, that *none should be furnished from private sources*, as it is liable to be improperly used, and, in some instances, has been.

* The number is now largely increased.

MISCELLANEOUS.—Sponges (large); low tables, or desks, to be set on top of the beds of convalescing patients, to lay food or books or writing paper on, chess-men, draughts, and other amusing games free from gambling uses; back numbers of Harper's and Atlantic magazines; pictorial papers; *recent* secular and religious papers; also books, secular and religious, of all kinds, that are entertaining and useful, and stationery.

IMPORTANCE OF A CENTRAL ORGANIZATION.

The necessity of a central organization in this State, to receive and forward such articles, was impressed upon your Committee, by all that they saw and heard, as the only method of securing local organizations in all the towns, and thus eliciting the needed supplies, and of making an honest and intelligent distribution of articles, according to the actual wants of the different hospitals. At present, the supply is imperfect in character, and very intermittent and uncertain; is frequently sent to an inappropriate locality, and sometimes falls into incompetent or dishonest hands. Not seldom the donors omit to pre-pay the freight, and sometimes a box is received at a Hospital with freight charges exceeding the value of the contents! All such difficulties may be avoided by a central agency, and such the officers and soldiers desire to see established. The Committee would add a word upon

THE CONNECTION OF HEALTH AND MORALS IN THE ARMY.

The U. S. Government very properly recognizes the importance of moral and religious influences in the army, by the appointment of a Chaplain to each Regiment, and the forbidding, by army regulations, sundry immoralities among the troops. The wisdom of this consists, not merely in the national recognition of Christianity thus manifested, nor yet simply in the spiritual improvement of the soldiers and the protection from ruinous influences of the thousands of young men drawn away from the restraints of home; but also in its relation to the physical and mental condition of the army most favorable to military efficiency. Vice of every kind saps the health and destroys the discipline of an army. Hence the officers, from the general in command downward, should give their full sanction to all appropriate moral and religious influences that can be introduced into camp life. By example, and the careful arrangement of military plans and methods, they should lead the army to respect the Sabbath and public worship, and should suppress profanity, intemperance, gambling and licentiousness. Your Committee are sorry to report, however, that this department of duty, so important even in a sanitary and disciplinary view, is greatly neglected, especially as regards the observance of the Sabbath and the suppression of profanity and licentiousness. What they saw with their own eyes, and heard with their own ears, everywhere, was sufficient to fill them with grief and alarm. They will not enter

into particulars in this Report, but they could not satisfy their consciences as members of the Sanitary Commission, without alluding to this prolific source of disease and military weakness.

The Chairman of your Committee, alone, was able to visit

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI,

his associate, greatly to the regret of both, finding it impossible to remain absent longer from his professional duties. The Sanitary Committee of St. Louis consists of the following well-known gentlemen: James E. Yeatman, Esq.; C. S. Greeley, Esq.; J. B. Johnson, M. D.; George Partridge, Esq., and Rev. Dr. Wm. G. Elliot, whose labors are unremitting, and whose work is on a vast scale, and of the greatest importance. It was the privilege of your Committee to attend one of their meetings, and to receive courteous attention. They are independent of the United States Sanitary Commission at Washington, though co-operative therewith. They have under their charge several Hospitals, as follows:

1. One situated on the corner of Fifth and Chestnut streets, in a new marble building, approximating in size the "Sherman House" in this city, built for stores and offices, but never before occupied. This will accommodate about six hundred patients, and is nearly full. It is admirably fitted up (as are all the Hospitals under their care) with every convenience needed by the sick, as your Committee learned by personal inspection. In this building the Sanitary Committee have their office.

2. A second, nearly as large, in a new building erected for a hotel, but not before used, on Fourth street, between Morgan and Franklin Avenues. This also will accommodate about six hundred patients, and has now three hundred and forty.

3. A building, also just finished, and intended for a new House of Refuge, which will accommodate five hundred, and nearly that number is now there.

4. "The Good Samaritan Hospital" building, used by the Homœopathic practitioners of Medicine, who have kindly accommodated the sick soldiers. It will receive one hundred and fifty, and has now one hundred and twenty.

5. A building opposite the Fair Grounds, which will afford room for one hundred and twenty, and now contains eighty.

6. Besides these buildings, part of the City Hospital is used, and there are about eighty soldiers there.

7. Yet further, an arrangement has just been made to relieve these Hospitals from the numbers crowding in, by appropriating a portion of the barracks at Camp Benton, in the city near the Fair Grounds, to receive the convalescent patients to the number of one thousand. The number of patients in all the Hospitals, is now about sixteen hundred.

It must be understood that these are all general Hospitals, and are additional to the small Regimental Hospitals (one to each Regiment) usually located in tents, and containing from twenty to forty patients of the less alarming type. The attending physicians of these general Hospitals are principally detailed by the Medical Director as Special Assistant Surgeons, from the Medical Faculty of the city; only about six out of twenty being Army Surgeons. Sick and wounded soldiers have been sent to St. Louis from all parts of the State, but vast numbers of them are now scattered through the interior towns in a suffering condition.

The ladies of St. Louis have afforded great assistance by their donations and their personal attendance in the Hospitals, smoothing the pillow of the sick and dying soldier, writing letters to his friends, and cheering the sad-hearted by words and deeds of love. Said a sick soldier to one of the Sanitary Committee, the day your Committee was there: "We have had an angel in our ward this morning; a good lady came with a large basket of flowers and presented each soldier with a bouquet, and we are all so happy!" And there lay one poor fellow on his back, who had lost both arms, and on his breast, close up to his chin, was his bouquet, where he could inhale its fragrance, while his face told more than words could, how grateful he was to the giver.

Many boxes of articles for the sick have been received from New England, and also from Illinois, designated for the Illinois troops in Missouri, and some money has been contributed in a public way; but the incidental expenses, not included in Government supplies, have been met by private solicitations.

Such is a brief account of the action of your Committee and the results of their inquiries. A memorandum is attached, giving the number of the sick and wounded in each Hospital visited. Minute statements on various points touched upon in this document will be given orally, based on memoranda taken upon the spot, and embodying the observations of your Committee and the testimony and conclusions of competent witnesses and judges whom it was their privilege to meet.

All of which is respectfully submitted by

WM. W. PATTON, } *Committee of*
RALPH N. ISHAM, M.D., } *Visitation.*

Chicago, Ill., Oct. 31, 1861.

APPENDIX.

HOSPITAL MEMORANDA BY REGIMENTS.

- ILLINOIS 7TH.—Col. Cook; Surgeons, Metcalf and Hamilton. *Camp Holt Ky.* 16 patients.
- ILLINOIS 8TH.—Col. Oglesby; Surgeon, Trowbridge. Two Hospitals. 30 patients at *Cairo, Ill.*, and 20 at *Bird's Point, Mo.*
- ILLINOIS 9TH.—Col. Mercer; Surgeon, Hamilton. About 30 patients. *Paducah, Ky.*
- ILLINOIS 10TH.—Col. Morgan; Surgeon, Stahl. About 30 patients. *Mound City, Ill.*
- ILLINOIS 11TH.—Col. Wallace; Surgeon, Long. 38 patients. *Bird's Point, Mo.*
- ILLINOIS 12TH.—Col. McArthur; Surgeon, Wardner. 38 patients. *Paducah.*
- ILLINOIS 18TH.—Col. Lawler; Surgeon, Davis. 50 patients. *Cairo, Ill.*
- ILLINOIS 22D.—Col. Dougherty; Surgeon, Coatesworth. 25 patients.—*Bird's Point, Mo.*
- ILLINOIS 28TH.—Col. Johnson; Surgeon, Bringherst. 20 patients (75 on sick list). *Bird's Point, Mo.*
- ILLINOIS 29TH.—Col. Rearden; Surgeon, Guard. 40 patients. *Cairo, Ill.*
- ILLINOIS 30TH.—Col. Fouck; Surgeon, Gordon. 21 patients. *Cairo, Ill.*
- ILLINOIS 31ST.—Col. Logan; Surgeon, Million. 90 patients. *Cairo, Ill.*
- ILLINOIS 40TH.—Col. Hicks; Surgeon, Thompson. 33 patients. *Paducah.*
- ILLINOIS 41ST.—Col. Pugh; Surgeon, Gray. 15 patients. *Paducah, Ky.*
- CHICAGO LIGHT ARTILLERY, Capt. Buel's Battery, &c., &c. (Detached Companies); Surgeon, Bowman. 27 patients. *Paducah, Ky.*
- IOWA 2ND.—Col. Tuttle; Surgeon and Assistant both sick and absent. 20 patients in Regimental Hospital, but 60 others in Post Hospital, and 195 on the sick list, 37 in one Company. Gone since to *St. Louis, Mo.*
- IOWA 7TH.—Col. Lanman; Surgeon,———. 30 patients. *Bird's Point, Mo.*
- MISSOURI 8TH.—Col. M. L. Smith; no Surgeon; Assistant, Taft. About 30 patients. *Paducah, Ky.*
- MISSOURI MERRILL'S HORSE REGIMENT.—Surgeon, Knickerbocker. 30 patients. *St. Louis.*
- INDIANA 11TH.—Col. McGuinness; Surgeon, T. W. Fry. 21 patients. *Paducah, Ky.*
- INDIANA 23RD.—Col. Sanderson; Surgeon, Thos. R. Austin. 25 patients. *Paducah, Ky.*
- POST HOSPITAL, CAIRO.—Surgeon, Dr. Burke. 90 patients.
- "SIMMONS' GENERAL HOSPITAL," MOUND CITY.—Surgeon, Dr. Franklin. 230 patients.
- POST HOSPITAL, PADUCAH.—93 patients. Assistant Surgeon, Dr. Ray.

Total number in Hospital, as above, *one thousand and sixty-three.*

N. B.—Many others were on the sick lists of the Regiments, but were not in the Hospitals.